BMPF7008:

Introduction to Work Based Learning Module

Proposed Research Question:

How is music performance anxiety experienced differently amongst vocalists that perform regularly within the fields of Musical Theatre, Classical Singing, and Contemporary Commercial Music?

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Glossary of Terms

Classical Singing	Refers to the technically demanding style of singing that is associated with Opera, also known as "Operatic" singing (Bruder and Larrouy-Maestri, 2023).
Contemporary Commercial Music (CCM)	The term Contemporary Commercial Music (CCM) refers to genres of music that are considered “non-classical”, including jazz, pop, rock, folk and blues (Henshaw and Collyer, 2022).
Interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA)	IPA is a qualitative methodology that derives from the philosophical position of phenomenology. It examines lived human experiences as they are interpreted by the individual, as opposed to theory-based preconceptions (Smith and Osborn, 2015).
Music Performance Anxiety (MPA)	MPA is a “natural, emotional, and physiological response to the stress of public performance” (Gómez-López and Sánchez Cabrero, 2023). In severe instances, the effects of MPA can be debilitating for musicians and hinder performance quality, as well as cause psychological distress (Gómez-López and Sánchez Cabrero, 2023).
Musical Theatre (MT)	The fusion of music and drama in which singing is used to act out a story. Singing styles in this genre range from "Legit", similar to that of classical singing, through to more contemporary styles (Edwards and Hoch, 2018). Sometimes, MT is categorised under the umbrella of CCM (Bartlett, 2014), however, for the purpose of this study, it will be treated separately.
Self Concept	Self concept refers to the overall perception that an individual has of themselves based on the totality of their emotions, thoughts and characteristics (Gecas, 1982).
Self Image	Self image is related to the view that an individual has of oneself, based on physical appearance or personality traits (Morin & Racy, 2021, as cited in Schultz, n.d.)
Self Presentation	Self presentational refers to behaviours or motives that individuals adopt in an attempt to convey a

	certain image of themselves to others, in an attempt to control how they are perceived in social contexts (American Psychological Association, 2018).

Project Proposal

Context

Excessive levels of music performance anxiety (MPA) can be debilitating to singers in performance situations, and may contribute to general poor wellbeing (Matei and Ginsborg, 2017). Studies exploring anxiety levels in professional musicians suggest that singers are more vulnerable to psychological distress (Loveday, Goss and Musgrave, 2022; Vaag *et al*., 2015). However, research that explores in depth how this is experienced by singers explicitly is scarce (Henshaw and Collyer, 2022). Professional singers work across a variety of environments and genres that may lead to unique experiences of MPA (Henshaw and Collyer, 2022).

Justification

Studies have shown that the experience of MPA in musicians is impacted by the genre they specialise in (Papageorgi, Creech and Welch, 2011), however, research focusing on the effects of MPA in singers from different disciplines is limited (Henshaw and Collyer, 2022). To address this knowledge gap, this project will qualitatively investigate how MPA is experienced differently by MT, CCM and classical singers, aiming to provide a greater insight into how MPA may uniquely impact singers working within these sectors.

Intended Impact

Many singers rely on a vocal coach for MPA support (Biasutti and Concina, 2014; Mazzarolo, Burwell and Schubert, 2023). As many voice teachers work with singers across multiple genres in studios, conservatoires and drama schools (Edwards and Hoch, 2018), it is essential for practitioners to gain a deeper understanding as to how singers from the unique spheres of contemporary commercial music (CCM), musical theatre (MT) and classical singing might experience MPA differently (Henshaw and Collyer, 2022). The findings of this study may provide some insight to help voice teachers develop effective support strategies, tailored to the individual needs of performers within each field. This could positively contribute to the reduction of high levels of mental distress experienced by singers in different performance contexts (Gómez-López and Sánchez Cabrero, 2023).

Outlined Intention

Interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) is an appropriate approach to investigate the complexities of lived experiences of performance anxiety (PA) (Smith and Osborn, 2015) . Previous IPA studies have used semi-structured interviews to produce data-rich results when investigating PA in music students and athletes (Kabbani, 2022; Robinson and Nigbur, 2018). Small sample sizes allow for a thorough analysis of each case, as well as an in-depth comparison of experiences across each field (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). This study will incorporate semi-structured interviews with a sample of 1 singer from each genre for this purpose. The process of member-checking, a standard procedure for increasing rigour in qualitative studies (Mckim, 2023), will be used to verify transcripts and gain the participants' input on findings. Details of this process can be found in Appendix 1. In alignment with an IPA approach, a homogeneous sample will be determined through purposive sampling (Alase, 2017), in which participants will be identified through the researcher's personal network. Snowball sampling may be used if desired participant numbers from each genre are not reached (Alase, 2017). A GANTT chart timeline for project completion has been created (Appendix 2).

Ethics and Insider Research

All participants will be aged 18 and above. Consent forms will disclose how participant data and anonymity will be protected (Gray, 2009, pp.68–97). Interviews will be recorded for transcription purposes, as disclosed within the consent form. Data will be stored securely in a password protected folder, accessible only to the researcher. Participants are entitled to withdraw from the study freely due to the emotionally distressing nature of this topic (Gray, 2009, pp.68–97). Contact details of mental health support services will be provided.

As a voice practitioner and professional singer, my personal insight into how MPA can be experienced means I act as an insider researcher. Ethical considerations surrounding insider research regarding bias, validity and positionality must be addressed (Fleming, 2018). The completion of a reflexive journal will be paramount to ensure that innate bias resulting from personal experience relating to the study or participants is made transparent (Dodgson, 2019). An important consideration is that personal relationships with participants may increase pressure to take part in interviews, potentially influencing results. Ethical practices will be regularly reflected upon throughout to ensure transparency and validity.

Expected Learning Outcomes

1) Develop a robust interview technique to carry forward into future research projects.
2) Learn to analyse qualitative data appropriately within an IPA framework.
3) Understand the IPA Framework and member-checking process.

Report

Introduction

Music Performance Anxiety (MPA) refers to the experience of persistent apprehension leading up to a musical performance (Kenny, 2011, pp. 83-108). It may present physiological, cognitive, behavioural and emotional symptoms that range from manageable to debilitating (Herman and Clark, 2023), including poor concentration, forgetfulness, sweating (James and Shipley, 2022), panic attacks (Kenny, Davis and Oates, 2004), avoidant or anxious behaviours and feelings of distress or shame (Mahony, Juncos and Winter, 2022). MPA may negatively impact performance ability and if severe enough, can end a professional career (Sandgren, 2009).

Alarmingly, studies have shown that potentially one in three musicians suffer from debilitating MPA (Fernholz et al., 2019). Research suggests that out of all musicians, singers may be more susceptible to MPA, due to pressures such as performing as a soloist or leading an ensemble (Loveday, Goss and Musgrave, 2022; Vaag *et al*., 2015). Various studies have been explored across many fields, including sports, public-speaking and the performing arts, inclusive of dance, acting and music (Matei and Ginsborg, 2017), however, singers are underrepresented in the current research surrounding performance anxiety (PA) (Henshaw and Collyer, 2022).

The number of singers entering lines of professional work across multiple genres is increasing, due to pressures of securing work in a turbulent industry (Bartlett, 2014; Willis-Lynam, 2015). Studies investigating PA in musicians suggest that different genres present unique challenges that may directly impact perceived experiences of MPA (Papageorgi, Creech and Welch, 2011). Many musicians seek the support of their music teachers to find coping strategies for the symptoms arising from these experiences (Mazzarolo, Burwell and Schubert, 2023). However, vocal coaches are often specialists in specific techniques relating to only one genre, such as classical, contemporary, or musical theatre singing (Edwards and Hoch, 2018). It could be suggested that singing teachers need to have an awareness of how the experience of MPA may differ for singers working within the fields of musical theatre (MT), classical singing, and contemporary commercial music (CCM) (Henshaw and Collyer, 2022). This study aims to investigate how these different sectors of the industry may impact the experience of MPA, providing voice practitioners with a valuable insight for shaping meaningful support strategies to meet the unique needs of their students.

Literature Review

Introduction

There is a lack of research into the etiological factors of MPA in vocalists (Kenny, Davis and Oates, 2004). This topic needs further exploration to raise awareness of the similarities and differences in the experiences of MPA in singers working across the genres of MT, CCM and classical music, to help voice practitioners develop meaningful support strategies (Henshaw and Collyer, 2022). This literature review seeks to investigate the potential contributing factors in the experiences of MPA across these genres to highlight current knowledge and potential research gaps that may be valuable topics for further investigation.

MPA in Classical Singers

The vocal expectations of opera singers are highly demanding. Performing in traditionally unamplified spaces, alongside orchestras, whilst maintaining beauty of tone, clarity and stamina requires significant specialised training (Henshaw and Collyer, 2022; McHenry, Evans and Powitzky, 2016). Such elite performance standards are often achieved through “high personal standards of perfection” (Kenny, Davis and Oates, 2004). Perfectionism is a personality trait that can motivate performers to achieve high technical standards, but is often positively correlated to high levels of PA (Butković, Vukojević and Carević, 2021; Besharat et al., 2014; Mor et al., 1995). Furthermore, many opera singers report high levels of health anxiety (Sandgren, 2009) relating to fears of vocal indisposition caused by common colds, allergies or upper respiratory conditions that may impair performance quality, potentially exacerbating MPA (Sandgren, 2009). These factors suggest that classical singers may find the pressure of maintaining optimal vocal function to perform at consistently high standards anxiety inducing.

Opera singers are also expected to have high levels of musical skill and resilience, making the classical industry highly competitive and challenging to break into (Matei and Ginsborg, 2017). Receiving a role within an esteemed opera company is a recognised benchmark of excellence (Kenny, Davis and Oates, 2004). However, a study of classical choral singers highlighted that the accolade of joining a prestigious company does not guarantee protection from MPA, as many opera companies require artists to re-audition every year (Kenny, Davis and Oates, 2004). This puts classical artists in a position of ongoing uncertainty, potentially

leading to financial insecurity, linked to feelings of anxiety and depression within musicians (Kenny, 2011, pp. 83-108). It could be argued that the stress of securing and maintaining jobs within a highly competitive field, combined with the demands for high standard performances and the pressure to maintain optimum vocal health validates feelings of MPA within opera singers, however, the direct contributing factors of MPA in classical singers is currently under researched (Kenny, Davis and Oates, 2004). This gap requires exploration to effectively support the individual needs of opera performers (Kenny, Davis and Oates, 2004).

MPA in MT Singers

Many MT performers face a unique pressure to be a “triple threat”: a consistently excellent singer, dancer and actor simultaneously (James and Shipley, 2022). Whilst there is limited literature that addresses how the combined demand of these disciplines may affect MT performers, research shows that actors, singers and dancers as separate cohorts each face their own psychological challenges (Curtis, 2019). For instance, actors have been shown to display high levels of perfectionistic tendencies when embracing new characters (Bascomb, 2019), and professional dancers have reported distress in performance contexts due to factors such as injury or poor body image (van Winden et al., 2020; Walker and Nordin-Bates, 2010). Additionally, the vocal demands of the MT performer are extensive, due to the need for adaptability when pursuing a range of characters that may require a mix of contemporary and classical techniques (Henshaw and Collyer, 2022). Furthermore, many MT singers reported that they experience increased MPA in audition scenarios. This may be attributed to the additional pressure of securing future income in conjunction with trying to impress the audition panel (James and Shipley, 2022). The exposure to this combination of stressors potentially makes musical theatre artists more vulnerable to PA (Curtis, 2019; James and Shipley, 2022).

Despite this potential vulnerability, a study of MT singers highlighted that some performers avoid taking anxiety medication due to fears of negative side effects that may hinder performances (James and Shipley, 2022). This suggests that singers may prioritise performance quality over the treatment of MPA. Despite reducing physical symptoms of anxiety, medications, such as beta blockers, have been linked to side effects including bronchospasms that constrict the airways, potentially hindering belting technique (Edwards and Borger, 2020; James and Shipley, 2022). Further research is required to determine how side effects of anxiety medication may impact performance quality (James and Shipley,

2022). Additionally, some MT performers may also avoid treatment due to perceived stigmas surrounding mental health within the industry (James and Shipley, 2022; Sheen, 2018). Whilst there are examples of organisations and charities within the sector working to break this stigma (Hemley, 2018; James and Shipley, 2022), this suggests that MT performers may fear judgement when seeking treatment. The impact of avoiding treatment on the experience of MPA in MT singers needs further exploration.

MPA in CCM Singers

The unique and varied environments in which contemporary music is consumed present many challenges for CCM singers. CCM singers often have multiple responsibilities prior to a performance that their classical and MT counterparts do not. Approaching venues to secure gigs, promoting their own performances and attracting new fans are all common challenges for CCM vocalists, requiring a high degree of self-esteem (Henshaw and Collyer, 2022). Typical gig protocol often requires CCM singers to provide and set up equipment and manage their own sound in venues that are poorly suited for live entertainment (e.g. bars, restaurants) (Bartlett, 2014). Whilst the impact of these additional responsibilities on the experience of MPA is under-researched, a study exploring the experiences of MPA in instrumentalists found that popular musicians experience higher levels of anxiety immediately before a performance when compared to classical musicians (Papageorgi, Creech and Welch, 2011). This suggests that additional responsibilities prior to a gig potentially contribute to pre-performance nerves in CCM performers. Additionally, CCM singers often perform in contexts where they are the “lead” musician, when fronting an ensemble or performing as a solo artist (Bartlett, 2014). Studies have shown solo or lead performers show increased rates of anxiety and depression in comparison to ensemble musicians (Gross and Musgrave, 2020, pp. 25-40; Vaag, Bjørngaard and Bjerkeset, 2015). This could be attributed to psychological pressures that arise when the responsibility of success or failure lies solely with one individual (Loveday, Musgrave and Gross, 2022).

Vocally, like MT performers, CCM singers also require high levels of adaptability. Artists are required to utilise a range of stylistic techniques to portray emotionally authentic performances, whilst cover singers must adapt to the tones and timbres of other artists to produce convincing replications (Bartlett, 2014). However, being an exceptional vocalist within CCM does not guarantee work, as contemporary singers are often valued for their aesthetic and individuality above their skill (Henshaw and Collyer, 2022). More research is required to determine the impact of these pressures on the experience of MPA (Henshaw and Collyer, 2022). Insider research focusing on the lived experiences of CCM vocalists is

scarce (Bartlett, 2014), highlighting an important gap in the literature. This needs to be addressed in order to understand how MPA affects CCM singers in greater depth, potentially leading to more effective support within the industry.

Crossovers in experiences of MPA

Undeniably, each genre presents unique pressures for singers, however, the realities of being a professional musician often require singers to perform in genres outside of their field of training to make ends meet (Bruder and Larrouy-Maestri, 2023). Instances in which classical singers crossover into MT, or classically trained performers end up singing in contemporary function bands are far from uncommon (Bartlett, 2014; Willis-Lynam, 2015). This could suggest that many singers face varied challenges across a broad scope of work, and how this impacts their experiences of MPA is currently under-researched. Furthermore, when comparing experiences of MPA specific to certain genres, it is important to consider that many etiological factors of PA are applicable to multiple industries. For example, stigma surrounding MPA has been reported in studies across other industries besides MT, such as dance (Clements, 2022; Robb and Due, 2017), and sports (Björnsson and Baldursson, 2016). Health anxiety surrounding illness and injury is also prevalent in dancers and actors (Searl, Dargin and Bailey, 2019; van Winden et al., 2020). To appropriately compare how MPA is experienced uniquely in singers across multiple disciplines, this topic must be further investigated (Henshaw and Collyer, 2022).

Conclusion

This literature review suggests that those working to support singers experiencing MPA, such as voice teachers, would benefit from gaining an insight into the unique pressures that may arise within each field (Henshaw and Collyer, 2022). The literature highlights some unique challenges that may arise for singers working specifically within each discipline, and suggests that some contributing factors of MPA cross-over the boundaries of industry and genre. This study aims to provide an in-depth exploration into the experiences of MPA in singers from these three disciplines, from which strategies of support may be developed to meet the individual needs of singers suffering from MPA.

Methodology

The literature highlights a lack of research that investigates the experiences of MPA amongst MT, CCM and classical singers (Henshaw and Collyer, 2022). Many existing studies on PA have used quantitative methodologies to investigate the causes, prevalence rates, and potential treatments of MPA, in which statistical data has been collected for clinical analysis (Papageorgi and Welch, 2020). One limitation of quantitative methodologies when researching psychological phenomena is that they are traditionally rooted in the positivist paradigm, and are therefore often not designed to capture the complex nature of emotional or experiential topics, such as MPA (Langdridge, 2007, pp.1–7; Papageorgi and Welch, 2020). Contrastingly, qualitative methodologies provide a more appropriate approach towards exploring phenomena concerned with the subjective nature of human experiences (Langdridge, 2007, pp.1-7). A qualitative research design is compatible with the notion that experiences are given meaning by the interpretation of the human recipient (Bresler and Stake, 2006). To investigate how MPA may be experienced differently in singers from different genres, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is an approach that examines lived experiences in great depth (Smith and Osborn, 2015) and is consequently the approach employed within this study.

IPA comprises three philosophical underpinnings: firstly, phenomenology, relating to the study of human experiences (Gray, 2009, pp.13-38), seeks to understand and examine human experiences as expressed in their own terms, and not according to theoretical preconceptions (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009; Smith and Osborn, 2015). Secondly, IPA is hermeneutic, underpinned by the belief that interpretation is key when examining the complexities of social reality (Gray, 2009, pp.13–38). An IPA researcher interprets the participant's experiences, whilst the participant is trying to make sense of their experiences themselves. (Smith and Osborn, 2015). Finally, IPA is idiographic, with an emphasis on in-depth, systematic analysis (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). IPA seeks to understand specific experiences of participants relating to particular contexts and therefore utilises small samples to allow for detailed analysis (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009).

Methods

In line with an IPA approach, data was collected in the form of semi-structured interviews with three participants (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). Focus groups were also

considered as a potential additional method for triangulation purposes (Gray, 2009, pp.13–38), however, this method was discounted for two reasons. Firstly, a study by Henshaw and Collyer (2022) also discussing the experiences of MPA in classical, CCM and MT singers comparatively is based upon a panel discussion, similar to a focus group. Interviews would therefore provide an alternative perspective from participants. Secondly, whilst focus groups can provide suitable data for IPA in some instances, Smith (2004) advises researchers to approach this cautiously, due to the importance of focusing individual human experiences within IPA. Semi-structured interviews are more consonant with the phenomenological and idiographic underpinnings of IPA (Smith, 2004).

Participants

Due to the sensitive nature of the topic, interest from potential participants was gathered through advertisement of the study on social media, shared to the researcher's personal network of contacts from the music industry. This ensured that all participants willingly volunteered to participate and felt comfortable sharing their experiences of MPA. From the six participants that expressed interest in being involved, three participants - one from each discipline of MT, CMM and classical singing - were purposively selected based on the following eligibility criteria: participants must be aged 18 or above and recognise themselves to be professional or aspiring professional singers currently in professional training. A small sample was deliberate to allow for in-depth, idiographic analysis (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). Each participant (MT: female, age: 32; CS: male, age 27; CCM: female, age: 46) was currently working professionally within their performance discipline at the time of interview, but the classical singer was concurrently completing their final year of undergraduate study.

Procedure

A short interview schedule consisting of six questions was created to provide some structure and direction for each interview (Appendix 3). These were combined with participant specific open-ended questions (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009), allowing participants to expand on their personal experiences (Gray, 2009, pp.369–395). Each interview took place via Zoom, and was scheduled based on participant availability. All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim (Appendix 10), forming the first part of a thorough analysis procedure (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). The process of member-checking was utilised to increase rigour and validity (Mckim, 2023); participants received the transcripts of their interviews and

were given the opportunity to make corrections or a redact sensitive information, to reduce the possibility of misrepresentation in the findings (Mckim, 2023).

Following the member-checking process, interviews were analysed line-by-line, and exploratory initial notes were recorded (Pietkiewicz and Smith, 2014). The first round of initial noting was descriptive, highlighting the participants key thoughts and feelings (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). Secondly, key linguistic elements of the transcript were analysed to provide further meaning to descriptive comments (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). Following this, a conceptual analysis took place to interpret meaning from participant experiences (Appendix 4). The final analysis of the transcript involved the development of emergent themes (Appendix 5). Emergent themes highlight key concepts gathered from each interview (Pietkiewicz and Smith, 2014; Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). Patterns and relationships between these categories were identified to form superordinate themes (Appendix 6). The superordinate themes from each case study were then examined to identify any patterns and higher order qualities across cases (Pietkiewicz and Smith, 2014; Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). These were then organised into a master table of themes (Appendix 7).

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for this study has been granted by the UWTSD ethics committee in compliance with ethics guidelines (Appendix 8). Prior to the interview process, each participant completed an electronic data consent form (Appendix 9), outlining the context and procedure of the study, their right to withdraw at any time, and the steps taken to protect their data and anonymity. All participants gave consent for interviews to be recorded, and all names and personal information were redacted from transcripts. Code names were developed for each performer: MTS (musical theatre singer), CS (classical singer) and CCMS (contemporary commercial music singer). Due to the sensitive nature of the topic, all participants were provided with contact details for mental health services to use at their discretion.

Ethical Considerations of Insider Research

The position of insider researcher can be advantageous throughout the IPA process, as professional knowledge and reflections of the researcher can be drawn upon to help

interpret participant experiences in the conceptual stages of analysis (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009); however, there are ethical issues to be considered (Fleming, 2018). To mitigate the risk of participants feeling uncomfortable to share their experiences of MPA due to pre-existing relationships with the researcher, interview techniques were adapted to build trust and rapport, through the sharing of mutual experiences where appropriate (Fleming, 2018). To minimise the risk of bias, and interpretations too heavily influenced by insider knowledge, a process of setting aside or "bracketing" out preconceptions was achieved through the use of a reflexive journal (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). The concept of Heidigger's "Hermeneutic Circle", in which the analysis of the transcript moves between specific parts and the whole text, was utilised to ensure that any preconceptions were considered and "bracketed out" throughout the analysis process (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009).

Findings and Discussion

The findings of this study suggest that the experiences of MPA between MT, Classical and CCM singers are multifaceted. Each discipline faces unique challenges relating specifically to their field, but simultaneously, there are commonalities in the experience of MPA between performers. Four recurring themes were identified between each performer's experience: 1) MPA impacting self concept 2) Fear of social evaluation, 3) Strategies for mitigating MPA and 4) Industry specific challenges.

Theme one: MPA Impacting Self Concept

The impact of MPA on each performer's self concept was a prominent theme throughout each interview, Each singer citing performance scenarios that had negatively impacted their self image, self perception and self esteem (Hattie, 2014).

MTS explained that throughout their experience at drama school, their severe symptoms of MPA caused them to feel like a "problem" to members of staff due to their "behaviour" during anxiety attacks. They reported feeling punished for interrupting the class, causing MTS to perceive themselves as a nuisance.

> "I'd be put…with my head of year… [they'd] be like "Why are you like this?"... I was being… told off as if I was…a naughty child"

One psychological theory known as Self Determination Theory (SDT) posits that teachers that use pressure-inducing or belittling language in an attempt to motivate students may trigger low self-esteem and increased anxiety (Amoura et al., 2015; Bartholomew et al., 2018). This suggests that the language used by teachers in the drama-school environment may have contributed to high levels of anxiety and a negative self concept in the case of MTS. It could also be interpreted that MTS' felt that social evaluation contributed to their negative self concept, and this is discussed further under the heading **"Theme two: Fear of Social Evaluation".**

CS also reported that throughout their conservatoire training, their self esteem was negatively impacted by internal pressures stemming from perfectionistic tendencies:

> "I myself obsess over high notes… my top notes weren't coming out… so I remember being in the notes session like… depressed"

The literature shows that perfectionism can have both adaptive and maladaptive outcomes for musicians (Butković, Vukojević and Carević, 2021). However, a study of Iranian undergraduate students (Besharat et al., 2014) shows that both self-oriented perfectionism (scrutiny of one's own performance and high personal standards) and socially-prescribed perfectionism (the pressure to meet the expectations of others) were linked to depressive qualities including self-criticism and self-blaming. CS's experience of receiving criticism from teachers on elements of vocal technique that they already internally scrutinise verifies the links between self-oriented and socially-prescribed perfectionism and feelings of depression and low self esteem.

For CCMS, a prominent narrative surrounding self concept was a fear of disappointing themselves, both in the context of musical competency and also in maintaining a certain standard of body image. CCMS made reference to this when discussing triggers of MPA:

> "It's almost…like a self-sabotage… I know I'm not happy at this weight…yet I do it to myself every time."

Studies have shown that musicians are more likely to evaluate their own performances based on internal expectations of themselves stemming from previous performances and high personal standards (Denton and Chaplin, 2015). Whilst for some musicians, internal self-evaluation can be an adaptive tool for creative development (Denton and Chaplin,

2015), studies have shown that “pressure from self” was the leading cause of MPA according to 66% of music and dance students and 88% of professional orchestral musicians (Kenny 2009, as cited in Kenny, 2011, pp. 47-82). CCMS, in the context of maintaining perceived beauty standards, highlighted a negative relationship with their internal expectations of themselves.

> “The pressure…that I put on myself, nobody else is putting it on me…that I put on myself”

There is much evidence to suggest that high expectations of self can lead to maladaptive perfectionism with poor consequences on mental health (Butković, Vukojević and Carević, 2021; Kenny, 2011, pp. 83-108), and contribute to the experience of MPA (Kenny 2009, as cited in Kenny, 2011, pp. 47-82). Similarly to CCMS, CS also cited high personal standards as a contributing factor in their experience of anxiety. When discussing vocal performance standards in classical singing, CS confirmed that their perceived benchmark of excellence was self-inflicted.

> “It’s mostly a benchmark I’ve set myself”.

Overall, these findings suggest that negative self-concept, stemming from low self esteem, internal pressures and maladaptive perfectionism, positively correlates with the experience of MPA. Additionally, it could be interpreted, based on participant responses, that there are links between negative perception of self and fears of social evaluation, as highlighted by MTS and CS in reference to their negative experiences, where external criticism from teachers impacted their self-concept. A study of university students highlighted a strong correlation between self concept and social evaluation (Bosch and Wilbert, 2023). This may be an important consideration for voice practitioners to be aware of when shaping strategies for singers suffering with MPA. SDT research suggests that supportive teaching styles and positive language may increase the self esteem of students (Amoura et al., 2015; Bartholomew et al., 2018; Bosch and Wilbert, 2023). The impact of social evaluation will be discussed further below.

Theme two: Fear of Social Evaluation

Each singer expressed scenarios that were interpreted to cause anxiety linked to “Fears of Social Evaluation” - fears of judgement, failure and making mistakes were interpreted widely across each interview.

Table 1 - Fear of Social Evaluation - Master Table of Themes Extract (Appendix 7)	
Singer	**Quote**
MTS	*"I was very conscious of having… this performance anxiety… can people tell?"*
CS	*"I was… afraid to make any kind sound just in case it was… wrong"*
CCMS	*"What if I let them down?… those kind of worries"*

Within each singer's account, the strongest narratives behind this fear were presented differently. MTS frequently alluded to the idea that it's easier to not try at all, than it is to try and fail. This would result in behaviour motivated by self-presentation, such as avoidance behaviour, or deliberately playing up to their symptoms.

> "[I] became the laughing stock of the year... I, as a defence mechanism… would … make a song and dance out of it… I'm going to fail before you can watch me fail"

Avoiding situations that may result in failure is considered a symptom of atychiphobia, defined as "the irrational fear of failure" (Linton, 2022). Sufferers of atychiphobia tend to avoid situations that put them out of their comfort zone, which is thought to be rooted in social stigmas or concerns around social perceptions of failure (Linton, 2022). If a performer has fears of expanding their comfort zone, this could potentially stunt their technical and creative development. MTS attests to feelings of frustration due to lack of progression caused by MPA in their professional training:

> "It wasn't normal behaviour… "I can't carry on my training like this, I'm getting nothing out of it""

Studies by Kenny (2009, as cited in Kenny, 2011, pp. 47-82) found that 55% of music and dance students, and 71.8% of professional orchestral musicians attributed flaws in their technique to the experience of MPA. This suggests that potentially, MTS found themselves in a vicious cycle, where a fear of failure affected their progression, which in turn triggered feelings of MPA. Current advice for music teachers working with students struggling with atychiphobia is to normalise failure, and remind students of the value in learning from

mistakes (Daubney and Daubney, 2019). MTS' account of drama school suggests that they felt unsupported in instances of perceived failure, which potentially contributed to fears of social evaluation. For many music students, experiences of MPA begin during their musical education, due to pressures linked with high expectations of teachers, rigorous rehearsal schedules and limited access to adequate mental health support (Gómez-López and Sánchez Cabrero, 2023; James and Shipley, 2022). For MTS, the intense schedule and excessive workload of drama school, combined with a perceived lack of support and judgement from faculty, caused significant mental ill-being that resulted in MTS seeking treatment whilst studying.

> "It was… the most stressful four years of my life…there was no well-being support… I was… having full on anxiety attacks twice a day".

In the case of CS, perceived favouritism from staff left them feeling undervalued, causing them to obsess over their technique at the expense of their mental health.

> "On the opera course here… there are clear favourites… I wasn't valued at all".

MTS also described instances in their professional career in which trauma from drama school resurfaced, triggering panic attacks on stage. MTS reported fears of judgements when trying to explain their anxiety to employers.

> "I would revert back to how I was at drama school, I'd be like "I don't want anyone to see me be like this… I'm in a professional job"... If I explained it to anyone, they…thought I was… lazy"

This account highlights potential social stigma surrounding MPA within the MT industry. Studies have shown that some MT performers have felt judged due to negative stereotypes surrounding anxiety within the industry (James and Shipley, 2022). This suggests that perceived stigma may feed into fears of social evaluation for performers. Both CS and CCMS highlighted personal experiences in which they also felt or witnessed the effects of perceived stigma.

> CS: "My girlfriend's in musical theatre, so, with her experience of… drama school, she never really got the time and care that she deserved… to an extent, same here"

> CCMS: “Musical theatre…I’ve had… an insight into that… it would be an industry that would absolutely cripple me”

Stigma surrounding PA has been reported not only within musical theatre performers, but amongst professional athletes, in which PA is often associated with “weakness”, (Björnsson and Baldursson, 2016). Some instrumental musicians also avoid pursuing treatment for fear of judgement (Shaw, Juncos and Winter, 2020). This suggests that negative stereotypes surrounding PA may affect performers from any discipline, presenting challenges for singers struggling with MPA. In recent times, the discussion of anxiety has become more prominent within society (Ansari, 2015), and there are now numerous charities working closely with MPA sufferers across the performing arts, providing necessary support (James and Shipley, 2022). Whilst this may help to reduce stigma, it could be suggested that another important step towards change is for performing arts educators to receive further training on how to support students with MPA, to minimise mental health issues stemming from musical education (Gulliver et al., 2018).

MTS also reported instances where anxiety attacks in performance scenarios or auditions would trigger post-event rumination (PER). PER is defined as the experience of anxiety in social situations in which one is exposed to the scrutiny of others (Nielsen et al., 2017). These experiences caused MTS to question whether or not they should be pursuing the field, due to lack of progress caused by MPA symptoms.

> “To get jobs from it was, for me, just bizarre… It was happening at… auditions, I wasn't getting anywhere… I was getting frustrated… Maybe I’m not meant to do this”.

Studies investigating the relationship between MPA and PER in music students have shown that musicians with high levels of MPA are more likely to have prolonged experiences of PER (Botha, Panebianco and Masenge, 2022; Nielsen et al., 2017). There is evidence to suggest that PER increases the risk of developing mental health issues, such as depression (Botha, Panebianco and Masenge, 2022). This suggests that performers such as MTS would have benefitted from receiving education on strategies for managing rumination and anxiety as part of their training (Botha, Panebianco and Masenge, 2022), to prevent psychological distress following high pressure performance scenarios.

Within the same theme, CS made multiple references to fears of producing a sound that was deemed as unacceptable during their conservatoire training.

> “She was one of those teachers who would stop you all the time if you didn’t do it exactly…as she said…you sort of get afraid to make sounds”

CS’ experience supports the notion that classical singers may feel pressure to meet perceived standards within their vocal performance, such as beauty of tone, projection and clarity (Henshaw and Collyer, 2022; McHenry, Evans and Powitzky, 2016). CS confirmed that the pressure to maintain high levels of vocal technique was significant.

> “We have to produce sound… to go over an orchestra… there’s a lot of pressure on that”

In this instance, CS’s fear of social evaluation potentially stems from so-called “opera purists”; those that wish to see amplification traditions upheld (Dobkin, 2000, as cited in Willis-Lynam, 2015), or from audiences, who may have preconceived expectations based on recordings from legendary opera performers (Henshaw and Collyer, 2022). In the experience of CS, both of these statements are true.

> “The legendary great singers… people would be…wanting it to be a… similar standard… you get people who are incredibly precious about these things…you can do many things wrong”

The pursuit of meeting perceived standards presents challenges for opera singers, as stress and anxiety may be detrimental to vocal function (Henshaw and Collyer, 2022). This, once again, creates a vicious cycle for opera singers when trying to mitigate MPA. CS discussed how symptoms of MPA could be debilitating to the quality of their sound and vocal technique.

> “‘The more you think about what could happen, the more you’re going to tense up”

This challenge is present in singers across all three disciplines, as confirmed by the findings of this study. MTS described experiencing a shaky voice as a result of MPA, whilst CCMS described an unpleasant “lump in the throat” sensation, affecting their ability to hit challenging notes.

> MTS: “It could affect my singing…as if I was shaky but in my voice”

> CCMS: “You feel…almost like it’s strangling you from the inside… you’ve got… tightness… coming up into your vocal cords and into your throat”

It could be suggested that the application of techniques designed to minimise the physical symptoms that impact performance quality could be a useful strategy for mitigating MPA relating to social evaluation (Gómez-López and Sánchez Cabrero, 2023). This is discussed further under the subheading **“Theme three: Strategies for mitigating MPA”.**

CCMS described how comparing themselves to others - also known as “social comparison” (Denton and Chaplin, 2015) - played a big role in their experience of MPA.

> **“**I really struggled with them being really accomplished musicians… playing for years and years and years, and me being this new girl who’s never sung with a band”

Social-comparison theory is a psychological theory in which the effects of evaluating one's own performance by comparing it to someone else’s have been widely researched (Denton and Chaplin, 2015). Studies have shown that it’s possible to draw inspiration and motivation through social-comparison with those performing at superior level (Suls, Martin and Wheeler, 2002). However, research on social-anxiety has shown that many sufferers will make unfavourable comparisons to those around them out of fear of social scrutiny (Goodman et al., 2021). As MPA is largely considered to be a social anxiety disorder (Gómez-López and Sánchez-Cabrero, 2023; Guyon et al., 2022; Kenny, Davis and Oates, 2004; Osborne and Franklin, 2002), this would suggest that CCMS fears how their performance may be perceived by others, affecting their self esteem.

One strategy recommended to voice pedagogues to minimise fears of social evaluation is to create an environment within the classroom or studio in which failure, mistakes and experimentation are celebrated (Daubney and Daubney, 2019). This may be achieved when voice teachers regularly reflect on their own expectations of students and the language they use when offering developmental techniques (Daubney and Daubney, 2019). This strategy is succinct with the recommendations posited in SDT research, surrounding supportive teaching styles that may reduce psychological distress in educational environments (Bartholomew et al., 2018).

Theme three: Strategies for mitigating MPA

Each participant identified the methods, tools and techniques that help to alleviate and prevent symptoms of MPA, including medication, therapy, breathing techniques and alcohol.

Table 2 - Strategies for mitigating MPA- Master Table of Themes Extract (Appendix 7)	
Singer	**Quote**
MTS	*"I take beta-blockers… it's affecting my body"*
CS	*"I've been seeing a therapist…she's given me quite a few techniques… deep psychological breathing"*
CCMS	*"Sometimes having…a little drink before…calms the nerves"*

Each singer identified benefits from utilising these strategies to mitigate MPA. MTS identified that medication made them feel more in control of their symptoms, and CCMS stated that whilst alcohol helped to calm their nerves, what was more effective was a supportive environment (from band members) and a focused mindset. They also expressed interest in trying psychological treatments, such as meditation and mindfulness.

> "What I'd like to do more of, is… mindfulness and meditation to get into that… zone before a gig"

The most prolific treatments for MPA currently are medical - such as the prescription of medications (e.g. beta-blockers) - and psychotherapeutic, (e.g. cognitive behavioural therapy), and both of these treatments must be administered by a trained professional (Shaw, Juncos and Winter, 2020). Studies have shown that many musicians and students prefer to consult with their singing or instrumental teachers for support with MPA, as they are more accessible (Mazzarolo, Burwell and Schubert, 2023; Shaw, Juncos and Winter, 2020). Some musicians also believe there is a stigma attached to seeking help from a psychologist, which may also deter them from treatment (Shaw, Juncos and Winter, 2020). CS anecdotally described a positive experience in confiding with a trusted teacher, boosting their confidence ahead of a performance.

> "I remember speaking to my current teacher… [I was] feeling much more confident… in singing, because of actually just getting some feedback… getting people to actually listen to how I felt"

However, some singing teachers and lecturers do not feel comfortable supporting students with anxiety, due to a lack of access to mental health training (Gulliver et al., 2018; Shaw, Juncos and Winter, 2020). MTS highlighted the difficulties they faced due to teachers that lacked awareness and training in supporting their mental health needs.

> "For a teacher, if they're not experienced with… any form of mental health… what are you going to do?"

This highlights a need for conservatoires and music institutions to provide staff with adequate training to support those with MPA. Voice teachers are often a valued source of support for students, but many don't have access to appropriate psychological training that can adequately prepare them to provide appropriate strategies for mitigating MPA (Curtis, 2019; Gulliver et al., 2018; Shaw, Juncos and Winter, 2020).

Theme four: Industry Specific Challenges

The findings of this study suggest that there are some distinct differences in how MPA is experienced by MT, classical and CCM singers due to environmental factors in which performance takes place within each field. For example, CS describes the unique pressure of singing unamplified over orchestras, whilst CCMS describes how MPA presents itself differently depending on whether you're leading a band, or singing solo with backing tracks.

> "With the band in that you're the front person… you are the one doing…the talking… you've got other human beings and their energy behind you…when you're on your own, you haven't really got that"

MTS also describes the unique pressure of balancing dialogue, costume changes and dance routines within the context of musical theatre.

> "We had *so* much dialogue to learn…we literally didn't go off stage… and we were constantly changing outfits, it was… a lot"

Whilst of course, these experiences lack discipline-specific exclusivity (for example, musical theatre performers may have to sing over orchestras, CCM singers may have to learn dialogue, classical singers may encounter costume changes), the pressures that each singer

describes is reflective of the typical experience of each discipline in the present day (Bartlett, 2014; Henshaw and Collyer, 2022; James and Shipley, 2022).

The frequency in which contributing factors were identified within the analysis process helps to determine the issues most prominent to each singer, which provides a perspective on which issues are most meaningful to their individual experiences. For instance, a significant contributor to MPA for CCMS was a bad fit between their act, the venue and the audience, whilst for MTS, an intense workload and erratic schedule was a recurring theme, and for CS, high expectations from those in the industry to produce certain performance qualities was a key factor (Appendix 7). As the frequency of these themes is based on only one case study per discipline, it is impossible to determine whether the same issues would be just as prominent across a larger sample. However, it does highlight that there may be differences in the issues that contribute to the individual experience of MPA, depending on their musical discipline.

An important consideration, based on the accounts given by CS and CCMS referring to their experiences in MT, also highlight that in many instances, singers don't exclusively experience one discipline across their musical journey. For example, many MT and CCM singers begin by receiving classical training (Bartlett, 2014; Willis-Lynam, 2015), and many classical singers have expanded into MT as the popularity of opera declines (Willis-Lynam, 2015). Many singers also experience issues with their vocal technique when working with voice professionals that don't specialise in or favour other technical approaches (Bartlett, 2014; Edwards and Hoch, 2018; Willis-Lynam, 2015). CCMS, despite receiving training at a drama school, identified a lack of training as the cause of vocal health issues contributing to MPA.

> "Rhythm and blues numbers…they are really demanding on the voice… I haven't got the best technique… I've never actually been properly trained"

It could be interpreted that CCMS feels that training in MT has failed to provide them with suitable techniques that can be applied to challenging CCM styles, contributing to insecurities relating to vocal health. Traditional pedagogy is often rooted in classical technique, which may not be suited to the sonic requirements of certain CCM styles (e.g. growl, vocal fry, glottal onsets) (Bartlett, 2014). It is therefore important that pedagogues are aware of and open-minded to the crossover of techniques, and the specific challenges that are applicable to each discipline in order to effectively support students where the influence

of multiple disciplines may have shaped their musical journey (Bartlett, 2014; Edwards and Hoch, 2018).

Conclusion

A phenomenological approach to the study of MPA within classical, MT and CCM singers has provided insight into the similarities and differences of experiences between each discipline. Factors including the environments in which performance takes place, perceived stigmas within each industry, the unique physical and vocal demands of each genre, and the challenges faced within a rigorous professional training environment may all contribute to the experience of MPA (Bartlett, 2014; Henshaw and Collyer, 2022; Shaw, Juncos and Winter, 2020). Additionally, some of these challenges may equally prevent singers in each field from seeking treatment, for reasons including (but not limited to) fears of judgement or negative side effects (James and Shipley, 2022; Shaw, Juncos and Winter, 2020). Whilst these challenges are unique to the individual experience, shaped by the genre in which they specialise, some common threads were identified within this study that could be considered by voice pedagogues working with a diverse mix of singers. Firstly, MPA may negatively affect a singer's perception of self, or impact their overall mental health, contributing to vicious cycles of anxiety and fear that are difficult to overcome. Voice teachers could seek to create an environment in the classroom or studio in which failure, creative expression and experimentation are celebrated to help mitigate these struggles (Daubney and Daubney, 2019). Secondly, many experiences of MPA stem from fear of social evaluation based on traumatic experiences within the professional training environment, when teachers adopt controlling motivational strategies, or fail to communicate feedback (Amoura et al., 2015; Bartholomew et al., 2018). Thirdly, many singers and music students seek support for MPA from their voice teachers. Therefore, music universities, drama schools and conservatories should strive to provide more accessible training to staff members, so that teachers feel adequately equipped to support singers suffering anxiety (Gulliver et al., 2018). Finally, the industry as a whole must work to reduce the stigma surrounding performance anxiety (Hemley, 2018; James and Shipley, 2022). Further research into the lived experiences of performers can provide valuable insight that could inform the work of charities and professionals working across the performing arts industry, providing a more supportive working environment for all.

Limitations

It should be considered that, in line with an IPA approach, this study is based on a small sample size of only one musician per discipline. Whilst this study may be replicated with a larger population, results may not be generalisable to a larger sample. Additional recommendations for further study could include a phenomenological investigation of the experience MPA of performers across each discipline based around male or female singers exclusively, as studies have shown that female musicians often have a different experience of anxiety compared to male musicians (Kenny, 2011, pp.15-32).

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Appendices

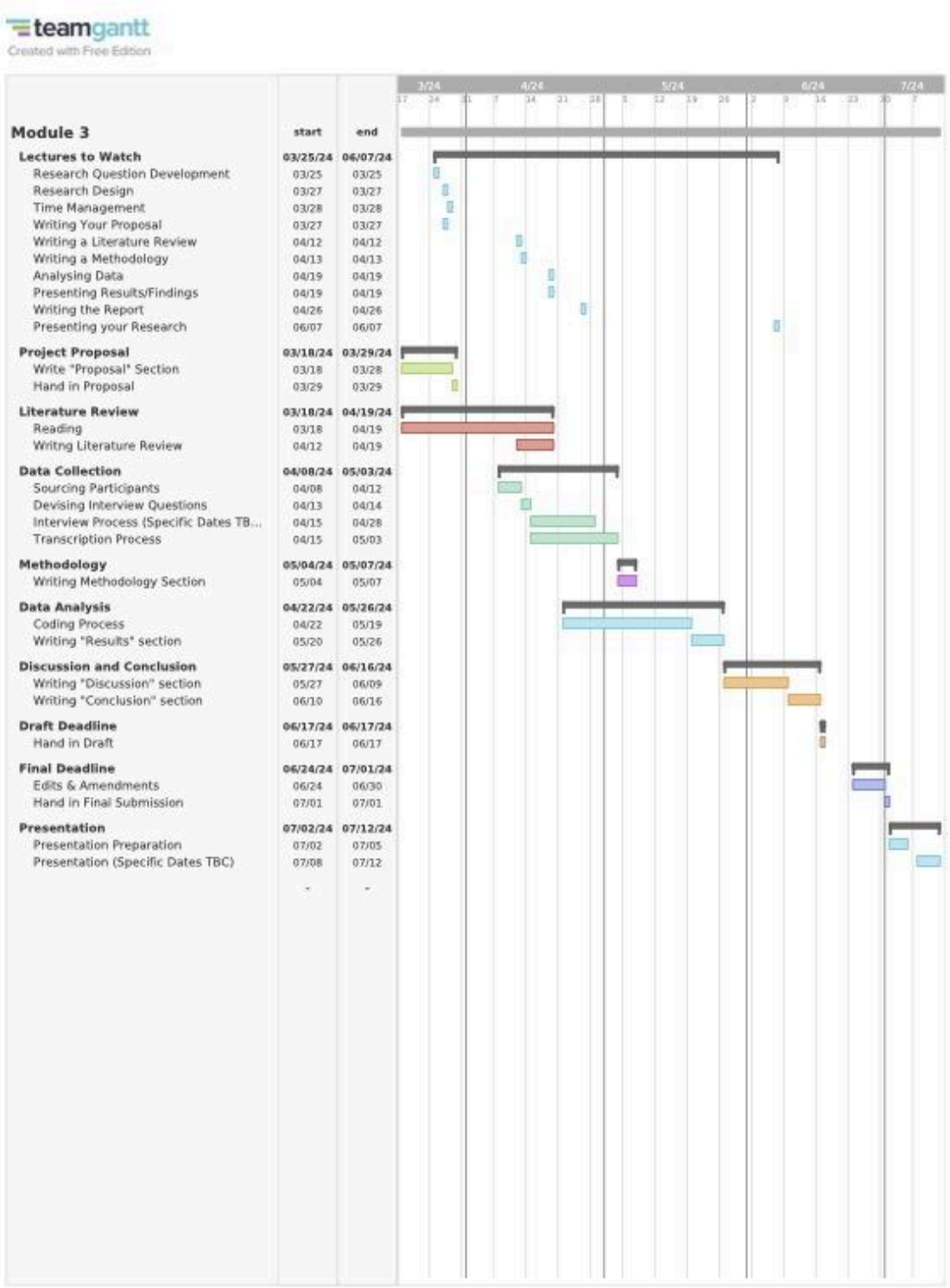
Appendix 1: Member-Checking Strategies

Strategy	Justification	Potential Limitations
Transcriptions of interviews will be returned to participants for them to read and provide input on potential inaccuracies incurred in the transcription process.	• To confirm that words and quotes have been transcribed correctly, to ensure accuracy • Reduces the possibility of misrepresentation when analysing findings (McKim, 2023).	• Participants may wish to withdraw sensitive information from transcripts upon reviewing their original statements, resulting in a deviation from original findings • Time consuming and potentially laborious for participants (Delve, Ho and Limpaecher, 2023; McKim, 2023)
McKim (2023) recommends that four questions (Figure 1) may be used as part of a member-checking procedure in which findings are presented back to participants to seek their input and confirmation.	• To confirm that the meanings of quotes are correctly interpreted • To potential expand upon data based upon the participants input • The four questions in Figure 1 are designed to provide a more structured, rigorous approach to member-checking (McKim, 2023).	• Time consuming for the researcher • May lead to disagreements between participants and the researcher (Delve, Ho and Limpaecher, 2023).

Figure 1: "New Member-Checking Approach" by McKim (2023)

1. After reading through the findings, what are your general thoughts?
2. How accurately do you feel the findings captured your thoughts/experiences?
3. What could be added to the findings to capture your experiences better?
4. If there is anything you would like removed, what would that be and why?

Appendix 2: Timeline for Project Completion



Appendix 3: Interview Schedule

1) When did you begin to experience MPA?
2) How does MPA present itself to you?
3) What situations exacerbate MPA for you?
4) Do you use any strategies to try and prevent MPA?
5) How do you think MPA presents itself to you in your discipline?
6) What do you think needs to change in the industry that would help you with MPA?

Appendix 4: Initial Analysis and Noting Procedure

Appendix 4.1: Initial Analysis - Musical Theatre Singer

KEY:
Plain text - Descriptive Notes
Italic text - Linguistic Notes
Underlined text - Conceptual Notes

Emergent themes	Transcript	Initial Notes
	I: How old are you? MTS: I am 32 I: Amazing, and what age did you start performing? MTS: Um, so I guess professionally, after I graduated, so I was 22. Um, Oh my god - ten years ago - wow. Um, Yeah so, went to drama school, do you want me to go through it? I: Yeah, yeah, go for it	Highlights that drama school is where MPA started
MPA was first experienced at drama school	MTS: Um, it genuinely, it genuinely started when I was at drama school. So I did a foundation year at [a drama school] in [the UK], um, and it was basically an afternoon, well, like an evening class. So, it was like, three days a week, it was whilst I was working, so I kind of didn't know whether I wanted to go down the drama school route or not.	Drama school was the root cause/ the start of the experience of MPA Highlighting an initial understanding of the pressures that come with drama school - balancing work with training

Sacrifice to attend drama school	I couldn't afford it at the time, so I was like, look, I'll dip my toe in, see how I get on, and it was a small, really supportive group, um, but I just started [sigh]... it became an ongoing joke, which	Financial strain of drama school Close knit environment *Joke/silly* = Not taken seriously, a defence mechanism
Not being taken seriously as a result of anxiety	[sigh, "ugh"], it sounds silly, cause maybe that's how I brush it off now, but I'd be having like, say, a singing… we'd have like a, um… acting through song class and we'd be singing at the piano, and half way through a song I would literally just need to,	Symptoms of severe anxiety Halfway through a song - something would worsen the anxiety part way through
A need to escape overwhelming anxiety - unable to cope	like, [smiling] literally need to get out the room, and so I… I don't know why, it was like - I obviously was going through fight or flight, but at the time I did have no clue of that,	*Smiling - trying to downplay the severity of the situation* State Anxiety
	like I'd never had any form of anxiety before, and um, I literally was like pet- like I was just trying to get out of the room, and they were like	*Begins to say "petrified" but downplays it again by changing the wording*
Symptoms of anxiety treated like bad behaviour	"[MTS], what are you doing?".	Suggests being called out - embarrassing
A need to escape overwhelming anxiety - unable to cope	I literally ran down the corrid- I remember I got out the room, everyone's like [short laugh] "What's going on?". I would run down the corridor, would sit in the corridor, and um, I'd have a panic attack, well, like an anxiety attack,	Wanting to escape Made to feel strange or abnormal Flight mode - needing to escape Severe symptoms - *use of the word*

	and I didn't know what it was, I just thought, you know… and to be honest, back then,	*panic initially highlights the severity and the type of emotion* Lack of awareness
Lack of awareness of how MPA may be experienced - "it's just nerves"	because anxiety, performance anxiety, music anxiety, all, all the, well, anxiety and everything else that comes with it, it… it wasn't a thing then. Like, it genuinely wasn't a thing. So, everyone was like "oh, you've just got nerves, like, don't worry, like, you can harness it in other ways, bla bla bla…	Not taken seriously, lack of support/experience/awareness, suggests that MTS was taught the MPA could be a positive thing, trying to use it to get better, not processing, but harnessing it for the benefit of the school Also may suggest that it was taken less seriously because they thought she could do something about it/something with it
	but I mean, this would happen like, [pffft], continuously,	*Pffft - suggests exhaustion upon reflection*
Lack of personal awareness of own anxiety	um, and I didn't know what was going on, I didn't understand it, I, I [stutters]...	Lack of awareness, feeling abnormal, no one to relate to

Feeling guilty for behaviour caused by anxiety	I would just be like [laughs] "I'm so sorry guys" and they'd just be laughing like "Oh! She's off again!' [laughs]	Feeling embarrassed, downplaying Not taken seriously. *Laughter from MTS in interview suggests defence mechanism*
Lack of personal awareness of own anxiety	like… yeah, it was like, I kind of was like, I didn't know what was going on and I needed- I was obviously flight, I was not fighting it at all	Lack of awareness, unable to process emotions, lack of support Unable to cope and push through feelings of MPA
Feeling ashamed of anxiety	because I was just embarrassed [rolls eyes] um, and so, I didn't know what it was, I had no clue, um,	Feelings of shame and embarrassment over MPA. Suggest feeling isolated?
Opposite of avoidant behaviour	and then I decided to go to drama school there, and and um, I remember my singing teacher… I: I am so sorry to interrupt. So you started off part time, and that's where the experiences of anxiety started to kick in, but then you sort of, decided that you would, that you would go full time and… was it a full time course there?	Pushing through and persisting despite anxiety

	MTS: Yeah so it was a um, a three year professional diploma in Musical Theatre, I: Yep, okay, got you	
Opposite of avoidant behaviour	MTS: Um, so I decided to do that, um, I mean but this was going on [shakes head, pause] the whole time, so like I, I knew	Trying to push through anxiety despite long term struggles. Feeling anxiety but not running away from it - could be in line with the literature that suggests performers are likely to persist in situations that trigger anxiety?
Feeling out of control Lack of awareness of how MPA may be experienced - "something is wrong with you"	it was present, but I didn't have any clue how to rein it in, harness it, like, you know, I, I didn't understand what was going on, um, and my teachers would *constantly* be like ["MTS], there's definitely something [laughing] not quite right"...	Suggesting that MTS was told that MPA could be a good thing? Feeling lost, confused *Constantly - implies the feeling that it was relentless* *Trying to laugh it off, downplaying severity*

	um, but I didn't know, I didn't know, like, no one knew what it was!	Lack of awareness and safeguarding? *Repetition of "I didn't know what it was" - suggests helplessness*
Overwhelming pressures linked to attending drama school - time, finances, travel	And, and I had no time to like, do anything about it, because I was literally like - I didn't live in [the town of the drama school], I was commuting on a daily basis to [the town of the drama school], and I was working evenings and weekends, 'cause I was paying for myself to go to drama school, so [stutters], I just didn't have, but that probably wasn't making it any better, because I was having to get to [the town of the drama school] for 8[am], which meant I had to leave where I live for like, I want to say like, half 5?	Heavy workload preventing processing and potential treatment *Literally - suggests being pushed to the limits* Financial pressures, heavy workload Vicious cycle *Stuttering - trying to justify feelings, suggests feeling the need to justify*
	I: Oh my god!	
Lack of self care due to intense workload (lack of sleep)	MTS: And then, yeah, and then because I was working, then I wasn't getting to sleep 'til probably like, 1? So every single night I probably wasn't sleeping - I was maybe getting like, 4… 4 or 5 hours? So [laughing] maybe the sleep deprivation did not help. It probably made it a lot worse, um.	Financial pressures, heavy workload. *Every single night - highlighting the intensity and severity of the situation* Multiple factors contributing to anxiety

Overwhelming pressures linked to attending drama school - time, finances, travel	I: But I suppose if you, you know, 'cause like, I trained in [the town of the drama school] as well and I, obviously I moved 300 miles across the country, but I know what the trains in [the town of the drama school] are like MTS: Yeah [eyes widening] I: And um, I guess you didn't really have much choice really, did you? If, you know, [the town of the drama school] is an expensive place to live MTS: Mmmm I: So I understand why you choose to commute. I work in [the town of the drama school] now and a lot of the students choose to commute [MTS laughs] you know, because of how expensive it is to live there, so I suppose, if you were working to pay for the fees as well, what choice did you have? MTS: Mmmm I: That must have been hard!	*Confirming/agreeing the travel arrangements exacerbated stress* *Confirming/agreeing the financial pressures of training in a drama school far from home*

Feelings of anxiety closely linked to stress Lack of self care due to intense workload - exacerbating anxiety (lack of sleep) Feeling numb A lack of awareness and support within the institution	MTS: Yeah, I mean it was like [eyes widening, pause], the most stressful four years of my life, well , three, three years of my life. Um, [pause] I think to be honest there was just so- it was so stressful, it was… obviously I was very, very stressed [laughing] anyway, and it was coming out in this anxiety, which I didn't know was anxiety, but also then I was so sleep deprived, that it was probably making it a lot worse. And at that point, I mean, I was literally [shaking head, pause] just powering through it, but the [shakes head] without fail - and this sounds so bad, and obviously, back then 'cause there was no, I mean, I went to a drama school that was new, that you know, hadn't got funding yet, it was private, like, there was no well-being support. I mean, that wasn't even a thing then if I'm going to be honest, like let's [laughs].. At drama school, there was no support system. Um, I was definitely, 100% having full on anxiety attacks twice a day, [pause] everyday.	An ordeal *Initially suggesting four years - exaggerating the time as it felt like a bigger ordeal than just three years?* *Laughing- downplaying the severity of the stress caused* All pressures piling on top of MTS resulting in anxiety Heavy workload, no time to rest, not able to take care of oneself, contributing to anxiety Heavy workload, numbness Highlight the severity of the anxiety Trying to defend the drama school for their lack of support? *Laughing - suggests that it's ridiculous that there was no support upon reflection* Lack of support, trained staff, and awareness

Severe ongoing symptoms of anxiety	I: Twice a day, oh my gosh. Did it kind of come out for you in, if you can remember, was it ever in a particular class or was it when you had to perform on your own, or was it literally random, like, can you remember when it used to kind of present itself? MTS: I think the times it used to present itself was, yeah, when I was performing on my own, but obviously like, you'll know, there was *so* much stuff you had to learn, like *continuously,* I mean like, it was ridiculous.	The fact that anxiety attacks happened twice a day might suggest that nothing was done after the first panic attack to prevent further triggers - highlighting a lack of support? Spotlight on them contributed to anxiety - *"I think" and "yeah" maybe highlighting that this was not the main cause or concern* Heavy workload creating feelings of pressure *Emphasis of word continuously - suggests the work load was relentless* Suggests the pressure was daily
Intense workload and very high, sometimes unrealistic, expectations		

Intense workload and very high, sometimes unrealistic, expectations	Like you, every single day you were learning a new thing, and um if, I don't know, by chance we were doing something like [stutters], we were putting on, I don't know, a show, and we had to learn it in a *week* or two weeks or whatever, the fact that I was like, having to try and learn all this material, that… I was struggling so hard to learn the material, um, that that probably wasn't helping and then, kind of, [slight pause] it would come out, [grimaces] but then it would also come out in like a	Heavy workload, struggling to keep up, couldn't meet expectations - feeling like a failure?
Easier to fail than to try and not succeed - fear of humiliation	defence mechanism to like protect me, 'cause it was like a "I really don't know what's going on! [laughing]" [stutters], but to the point though where it was just so much brain fog, like, it was, I think a lot of my training was such a blur, because I literally was just trying to	*Uncomfortable to talk about* Easier to fail than to try- trying and failing would be too painful *Making light of the situation - repetition of "I don't know what's going on" suggests feeling abnormal and alone in her feelings*
Defence mechanism to cope with anxiety - brain fog Feeling numb Feeling lost	exist through it, like, which is not the best way to do it, but everyone has their own way of being able to go through drama school.	Highlighting the emotion of struggle and a coping mechanism - couldn't process the feelings Exhibiting unhealthy behaviours upon reflection that MTS wishes had been handled differently

	I: Of course! It sounds like you, you know, just had so much on your plate between the commute, the job, the drama school, all the material that you were learning, it's understandable - I can totally understand [MTS laughs] how you would have to put some sort of blinkers up to get through that, you know? MTS: Mmmm I: Wow, so yeah, you just mentioned - just to make sure that I understand, so it kind of came out worse when you either were kind of put on the spot… you know, actually, maybe that's something that would be interesting to know. When you sort of felt like you were having to learn all this stuff, and then you mentioned that it would sort of come out sometimes when you would perform by yourself, did you sort of maybe feel, was there like a pressure on you to get it right, or something like that? MTS: Yeah I: What was it about that that was like, particularly exacerbating?	Potentially suggests that MTS hopes they are not the only one

Referring to anxiety as bad behaviour Anxiety not being taken seriously by peers and mentors Easier to fail than to try and not succeed	MTS: Um, I mean like, obviously there's a pressure for everyone to get it right, but I think because I was having this continuous behaviour, and because no one knew what it was, I kind of - this sounds *so* bad- but I kind of became the laughing stock of the year, because everyone was like "here's the clown coming out again" because I, I as a defence mechanism knew it was happening, but would literally try and make a song and dance out of it. I would literally try and make it like, kind of like "oh, I'm going to fail before you can watch me fail, and you know I am going to fail, and then failure for me is like, quite a comfort. Like, I am quite comfortable in failing, which probably is a good [laughing], it's kind of like a good thing if you're going obviously into this industry, [stops laughing] but it's also a bad thing as well,	High expectations from the drama school Like a naughty child Acknowledging her own mistreatment Felt embarrassment, not taken seriously, seen as a joke Easier to fail than try - *Interesting use of the terms 'song and dance' - trying to mask feelings?* Easier to fail than try - potentially suggests the root cause of anxiety, terrified to be seen as trying and failing Suggests that not trying, or deliberately allowing oneself to fail, is more comfortable than trying to succeed and getting it wrong - perfectionistic traits

	and I think that therefore, I don't think I was supported, at all. And to be honest, they didn't know how to support me,	*Laughing, making light of the situation initially, but stops laughing as the conversation moves to the topic of support. Laughing when talking about oneself, again, potentially trying to downplay, back to serious when talking about others, i.e. lack of support from the drama school* Seen as a problem, rather than someone who needed support
A lack of awareness and support within the institution	but also as well like, a lot of time if we, like [pause] if I was up on my own, they'd be like, questioning, *constantly* why I was there. Like, "you shouldn't be here" like, in front of everyone, like "you shouldn't be here, why are you here, you can't afford to be here, you like, clearly can't cope with it here. Why are you here?"	Staff not adequately trained - Lack of support/awareness/experience within the institution Being targeted, under the spotlight *Highlights embarrassment*
Made to feel like a problem due to anxiety	And I'm like, 'well I'm here, and I'm already like, like [laughing] in deep, like, like half way through	Embarrassment over MPA and finances, made to feel not good enough or unworthy

	I had to get like, a career development loan, to like, help me, cause I couldn't keep up the payments, so I was like "No, no, no, no, I'm fully in it,	Trying to stay strong External pressures to stay (finances) and internal pressures to stay (not giving up)
Overwhelming pressures linked to attending drama school - time, finances, travel	[laughs] like, I can't… whether I like it or not"... like,	
	I felt like I had to constantly justify my behaviour, um… but like,	Pressure resulting in feeling trapped
Feeling trapped		Trying to prove that she isn't doing anything wrong - treated like a naughty child - does this suggest that staying at drama school felt like a punishment?
Referring to anxiety as bad behaviour	[shakes head] there was nothing that anyone could do, do you know what I mean?	Feeling helpless
	Like, obviously for a teacher, if they're not experienced with people with any form of mental health, um, illness, at all… you know, what are you going to do? You're trying to keep the class going, and you're trying to obviously not kind of, put a spotlight on it in a negative… I don't know how to explain it.	Suggests a lack of support within the institution, alluding to a lack of training or lack of awareness, or, a lack of other students in the drama school with similar symptoms of
A lack of awareness and training within the institution	I: Yeah,	

	MTS: I don't know how to explain, it's like, you're trying kind of, bring everyone together with me in that moment. And they were supportive, like "Come on [MTS], like keep, like, don't do what you usually do, like, get back into it"	MPA to MTS
Negative stereotypes around MPA	and you know, the longer we knew each other, the longer we trained together, obviously it was a lot better, but the problem was is that,	*Acknowledges encouragement, but framed negatively "don't do what you usually do" like the reaction to MPA was wrong or bad*
	obviously they knew this was an underlying issue, they knew I needed to do something about it,	Getting more comfortable overtime with accepting that she was going to struggle
	but there was nothing I could do about it.	Alludes to feeling judged
Feeling hopeless	And I just used to end up being put, I don't know why this happened, but like, maybe once a week, twice a week, I'd be put in a room with my head of year, and I, we'd have to sit opposite each other and [they'd] be like "Why are you like this? Why are you being-", like as if I was being like, told off as if I was a child, like a naughty child or a naughty kid.	No time for self care Feeling that the schools response was inappropriate or unjustified upon reflection
Inappropriate support	I: Yeah, so, kind of like there was an expectation that you shouldn't be struggling?	Felt punished and patronised
Referring to anxiety as bad behaviour	MTS: Yeah! Like "Why are you? Get on with it. You put yourself in that position, get on with it"	

		You did this to yourself, you knew what you were signing up for, so you can't act like this
Feeling punished for experiencing MPA	I: And they were supportive maybe, it sounds like they were supportive in the sense that they didn't just neglect you, but at the same time kind of not actually giving you the solution it sounds like?	
	MTS: Yeah	
	I: And just saying like "come on, you deal with it", without giving you the tools how? Is that kind of how it felt?	*Confirming there was encouragement, but no hands on, practical or emotional support*
	MTS: Yeah,	
	I: Gosh, what about, when it kind of came to like, um, when you left drama school, and went sort of freelance, performing, you know, professionally, how did it present itself at that point, or did it get better, or?	
	MTS: Well actually, so in my, so, at the beginning of, no, end of the second year, I basically took it upon myself to just go to the Principal and was like "Look, like, you know this is an ongoing	Trying to take control due to lack of

Inability to cope Referring to anxiety as a problem Feeling abnormal and isolated Embarrassment, shame Referring to anxiety as bad behaviour	issue, like, I can't go on like this, like, there's something majorly wrong, like, this is not normal behaviour, no one can understand it, no one's ever witnessed this kind of behaviour, like, it was just so stupid like, being literally like, found by random people, like random staff members in the hallway like, on a daily basis like, "Oh my god, [MTS] is here again, another panic attack", you know like, it wasn't normal behaviour and I was like "I can't carry on [shakes head]... like, I can't carry on my training like this, I'm getting nothing out of it.. I'm	support from the institution Struggling long term - A cry for help, trying to seek support *Highlights inability to cope, speaks about MPA as if it's a sickness* *Feeling the odd one out, "not normal"* Lack of support and understanding within the institution *"No one's ever witnessed" - implies that the MPA was at an extreme level, or that she was made to feel like a very extreme case - shows how much she was made to feel like a problem* Embarrassment, shame Perceived to be a problem to the entire institution. Reacting to severe feelings of MPA in this way is abnormal Using the word "behaviour", referring to a naughty child, doing something wrong

Feeling punished for experiencing MPA An expectation to not be anxious Anxiety negatively impacting performance Referring to anxiety as a problem	basically not even getting put up for, like, in my first year I was like the lead, and then afterwards they were just like [eyes widening] her behaviour…" It's like they gave me the opportunity to go "You need to, kind of, show us what you got" - totally fine, and it all went perfectly fine, perfectly well, but then second year just, it clearly just, it's up and down, I'm like, either like amazing or shockingly, you know, bad. Um, and so basically I said to them, like, "I need to sort this out. I don't know what's wrong with me, and I need, I need to genuinely sort this out". So I went to the doctor and they were like "Look, do you want to take anti-depressants?" and I was like "No, I'm not depressed, I know I'm not depressed". They were like "You can do cognitive behavioural therapy, you can do a course for three months, do this". I was like "I can't though", I was like "I have no time". They were like "Look, you've got to make the time", and so there was a class in [a town in the UK] - I think I did it like, once a week on	Anxiety holding her back, waste of time Being punished for having anxiety An expectation to channel anxiety to improve performance, or to not let anxiety interfere *"It went perfectly fine" "I'm either amazing" - suggests she knows inside she is capable of meeting expectations but is held back by anxiety. "Bad" - suggests anxiety is detrimental to performance* Framing MPA like an illness, like there's something wrong. A cry for help. Seeking treatment Suggests that MTS felt the doctor didn't understand her MPA properly A clash of interests between the

Challenges to balance treatment around training Needing to justify choices relating to mental health care - lack of understanding/support MPA is medically misunderstood	a Thursday or something - and I said to, I said to the principal "Look, I'm paying for my own training, I'm willing to sacrifice that chunk, whatever the class is, and I'll make it up in whatever way, is there- could you let me leave, I think it was like, two hours early on a Thursday, and they were like "Yeah, we need you to, we just need you to help yourself" sort of thing. Um, so I did that, and I really, *really*, really applied myself and I could understand- well, I actually got put in a socially- social anxiety group, which was not what I had [eyes widening], so everyone wouldn't, couldn't speak, like, no one would speak to each other. Like, everyone was mute, and I was the only one talking [laughing] and saying anything, because I was like, "I need to work out what the hell this is!" Like, I need to genuinely… this needs to, like [stutters], something needs to come from this.	doctors and the institution and a lack of understanding/empathy on both sides Having to justify/get permission for own treatment of MPA - suggests a lack of understanding/support, or a fear or punishment Suggests missing training for treatment would be regarded as unacceptable *We need - suggests MTS' behaviour was a problem for the institution* Desperation to get better Feeling misdiagnosed with social anxiety- suggests MTS feels that treatment for social anxiety is not appropriate for MPA *Laughing- Suggests that this form of treatment was perceived by MTS to be ridiculous and unsuitable*

Anxiety interfering with progress Medication having a positive impact Lack of personal awareness of own anxiety	This needs to help me, cause I'm wasting my money and time being here, and if I'm not going to utilise this, then I might as well just…" Do you know what I mean? So I did that, then I got put on beta blockers, and then in my third year, they were like "We can see there's a massive difference. You can - you notice your triggers, you can notice when, [pause] what's going to start the process before even the trigger, if that makes sense. You can acknowledge when it's happening when you're performing, you can sort of-" I could sort of control it, but not, but I could. But I had sort of a bit more of an understanding. I still didn't know it was… I: Performance Anxiety? MTS: No! I had no clue, I was like "I definitely don't have social anxiety [laughing]", I was like "What the frig is this?" [laughing].	Making light of feelings of desperation to get better Anxiety holding her back - financial pressures making her feel trapped to stay and find a solution *Not finishing this sentence implies that another option is unthinkable* Institution noticing progress due to treatment, *Gaining awareness of triggers* *Institution commending her for getting support herself, but failing to provide it for her?* Able to manage the anxiety better, not still not feeling fully in control Feeling a bit lost

MPA is medically misunderstood	I: It's so weird you say that because it is um- as part of my research, I'm learning that is how it is classified MTS: It is, yeah I: Like, it's classified as a social anxiety, so it's really interesting to hear that in the treatment, you didn't feel like it was, sort of, centred around your needs, because it was labelled that way, have I got that right? MTS: Well yeah, because they had nothing for that specific type of anxiety, because anxiety was still new, and then the guy - who's actually a really famous therapist now, a [discloses his nationality] guy, he's um, he's got loads of podcasts and books, and stuff like that - but anyway, he was doing - he was my therapist, and literally - well, we had a group therapy class- after the first class he was like "what are you doing here?" He was like "you literally could lead this whole class". He was like "you're so interested in it, you're the only person that's actually	Feeling lost, misunderstood *Laughing - suggests that it's ridiculous looking back that she wasn't aware it was MPA* MTS felt that diagnosis of social anxiety was inappropriate Upon reflection, there was a lack of awareness of anxiety at the time Suggests that the therapist should have known better

MPA is medically misunderstood	absorbing this information, why are you here?" I was like, "I don't know! I did a blinking test, [laughing] and they put me in this group! And I was like [shrugs] okay!" So… I: So, off the back of the CBT, you mentioned how you suddenly could start to notice your triggers MTS: Yeah I: Do you mind sort of explaining what you realised what potentially was the trigger? MTS: So a trigger was definitely lack of sleep. So, if I had lack of sleep, that would make me get a lot of heart palpitations quite easily.	Highlighting feelings of treatment being inappropriate, but willing to try anything - desperation to get better Highlighting that Social anxiety was not an appropriate diagnosis and the differences between it and MPA
Lack of self care due to intense workload - exacerbating anxiety	So that was before I was even going to perform in any way. Um, I have like a real trigger with time, and I think that's because I might actually be dyslexic, which I need to get tested	Lack of self care contributing to anxiety - suggests the pressures or time commitments of drama school did not allow for the self care required to cope Already on the back foot with anxiety prior to performing

Intense workload and very high, sometimes unrealistic, expectations Lack of additional needs support Intense workload and very high, sometimes unrealistic, expectations	for, because when I was trying to learn all the material, I was like, *really* struggling compared to others, like I don't have issues with spelling, or anything like that, but I just, I think I'm dyslexic in my memory because my sister has that, and so, so that makes total - I mean, I need to sort that out - but that would make total sense now if that is a thing. Um, so I had a trig - my trigger was constantly with time. And so when I, I never felt like I had enough time to learn the stuff so I kind of was just doing this like, guessing game thing and basically, what would happen with every single sort of like, assessment thing we'd have - obviously, you'd have to learn loads of stuff and then perform it in whatever context, you know, all the rehearsals- I *hate* rehearsals, I *dread* rehearsals - that's probably another one of my like, 'cause for me I'd be like	*Time - referring to the lack of time to learn material* Feeling not good enough or not capable enough due to a potential undiagnosed additional need A potential cause of struggles with learning material Reflecting in later life on past struggles *Constantly - suggests that the pressure of learning material quickly was relentless* Not allowed enough time to adequately prepare - leading to fear of not executing material to a high enough standard An unrealistic expectation for all students A situation that exacerbates the feeling on not being adequately prepared - scared to be judged as
Fear of failure Defence mechanism to cope with anxiety - "it's such a blur" Judgement of others due to MPA	[rolls eyes] "Oh my god", 'cause I feel like I'm not grasping it, understanding it, um, and the whole time through rehearsal I'm [shakes head] pants, I'm awful, I'm just… I'm a mess. I'm all over the shop, and then somehow, as soon as we'd get to the performance, like, I don't know how, what would happen, it's like I'd go into - I can't even remember what happened, if that makes sense sometimes, because I'm *so* anxious, it's such a blur, and like, sometimes they'd be like, like my friends would be like "you'll literally just pull it out, out of the hat. Like, I don't know how you do it" And I'd get really high marks and they'd be like, "but you literally didn't know it yesterday! Like, what is going on?" Like, I'm like "I don't know! I'm obviously going into fight now". So, so, I don't… yeah. I don't know! But I mean, I mean there's other triggers, and stuff like that, but I mean, I think my major one was time, because obviously, it was affecting me like [shakes head] every single day. I never had a day off, for like,	lazy, incapable or not good enough Significant feelings of dread If MTS feels unprepared, performance suffers, which triggers anxiety Feeling out of control due to anxiety caused by lack of preparation Feeling out of control, going into autopilot Feeling numb, just trying to get through it Alluding to judgement for getting it right - suggesting that she felt that being anxious was mistaken for being incapable *Suggests belief in oneself, but scared to admit it* Feeling of confusion Multiple sources of anxiety Relentless workload, time pressures

Intense workload leading to lack of self care - no mental break	three years basically. Well, kind of. Well, unless we had a holiday or whatever. So yeah… yeah. I: So once you kind of then left the kind of, super intense training situation, did you find that any of these sort of triggers occurred ever again? Or did it get better once you got out of that particular environment, like how did it kind of, did you struggle with this kind of performance anxiety as you went into work? MTS: Oh yeah. Like, the whole time. I: Right MTS: Like, it's never not been there. I: Was it any different for you when it was like, a professional scenario versus a training scenario? MTS: [Shakes head] Mmm-mmm. I think because when you're training, I don't know if you feel the same, but they try and put	Over emphasis of no time off possibly reflecting how the experience felt as opposed to literally no time off Never able to relax or have fun Acceptance of circumstances Struggling to remember a time without it *"Mmm-mm" - possibly afraid to admit it?*
Industry pressures that exacerbate anxiety Feeling hopeless	you into situations that are very similar to professional situations. So, on a day-to-day basis, obviously it's less pressure, but when you're being put in front of a panel, or casting people, or agents or like, I don't know, like, you're performing at theatres or whatever, it's kind of [shakes head and shudders], well, it is the same thing. So, um, no, and the problem is is that I at least acknowledged and knew that I had it, and what would start it, but the problem was is that sometimes I could control it and sometimes I couldn't. And I had to kind of be like, okay with the fact that, that was what was going to happen, which was really hard,	High expectations Being a professional allows you time to switch off, as opposed to training where you have to be on it every single day High pressure situations that MT performers experience within their professional careers *High pressure situations triggering same feelings of MPA* Acceptance of MPA Feeling out of control - feelings of MPA are unwanted Upsetting, embarrassing *Being "okay" with it - suggests she felt she had to hide it, couldn't seek support, had to get on with it*

Anxiety negatively impacting performance	because I would feel like, I'd be like, on stage, I remembered being in like, pantos, and I would literally just go on stage and I'd be like "Right! I'm having an anxiety attack right now and I actually don't even know my first word". And it literally would be like, it would feel like… it would feel like, 5 minutes had gone past, but obviously, 5 seconds had gone past, and then somehow, it would come out of my mouth and I would just have to get on with it.	*Stuttering, mixes up tenses- perhaps an indication of past and present trauma all blurring into one?* Symptoms of anxiety negatively impacting performance Feeling out of control A blur, feeling numb, symptoms of trauma "The show must go on" mentality - autopilot Can't allow oneself to be consumed by feelings of MPA
State anxiety	Um, but no, I think it's just something I've always suffered with, and I've tried so much, like I've tried like, going to the gym, yoga, um, I do a lot of meditation now, which I think hopefully keeps, I mean, I don't really get that much anxiety in life, unless I'm really stressed or tired, it dips in now and again, but not really, it's very performance based, so…	*The word "just" implies acceptance* *Feeling hopeless* Trying to change lifestyle habits to keep it under control Highlights two same triggers mirrored in the MPA Indicates performance is main trigger

MPA negatively affecting general	I: Yeah, so it's not like you're a super anxious person, MTS: No! I: It's just something about the performance situation, like you say, the time pressure in particular, but also kind of like the work schedule and you know, the amount of work on your shoulders, like, that's the thing about the industry that is really tough. MTS: Yeah! I: Yeah, and so, how would you kind of, feel, like at the end of a performance, or in the lead up to - like, I know you said like, in the lead up to a performance you just kind of had to accept that this was going to happen. How did that feel? 'Cause that must have been a lot on your plate! And then post-show as well. How did you sort of feel afterwards? Were you just exhausted, or…? MTS: Yeah, like I was physically and mentally drained. But any time we'd get towards a performance, of any kind, I would literally be like, I actually, I, I need to get out of this. I don't know how I'm going to get out of this, like, I can't be here, I can't do	Symptoms/effects of MPA A desire to escape the situation Feeling trapped, sad, depressed, regretful

wellbeing Feeling trapped, hopeless MPA is viewed as unprofessional Industry pressures that exacerbate anxiety Feeling isolated MPA is viewed as unprofessional	this, why have I done this to myself, I hate doing this, I hate constantly feeling like this, I don't want anyone to see- like I would revert back to how I was at drama school, I'd be like "I don't want anyone to see me be like this", I was like "I'm in a professional job, like I can't, you can't, you have to take it seriously, I can't just be like "yeah, today I'm not going to do it" like, I wasn't in a job a lot of the time, um, where like, I wasn't in like, high-end professional jobs where there was like an understudy or whatever, and like, no one under- like, no one I knew, [shakes head] not really anyone I knew had anything similar to me. If I explained it to anyone, they kind of just thought I was [pause] lazy,	Anxiety affecting the love of performance Feelings of embarrassment and shame stemming from past trauma Wanting to hide anxiety - fear of judgement Professional pressures, unable to speak up about feelings within the industry. Fear of being considered unprofessional. Highlights the struggles of smaller gigs in which backing out feels like it's not an option Not well discussed or well known, suggests others may be hiding MPA. Highlighting the stigma around MPA in MT *Pause - suggests this may be hard to admit or hard to talk about*

Being judged by others for having MPA - laziness	so I continuously was listed as like, a lazy person, who just would leave everything to the last minute and procrastinate, and it's like "No! I was doing the work [laughing] the whole time!' I: Like, you were the opposite! MTS: [laughing] yeah! I: And so obviously, with kind of like the struggles of kind, you know, knowing that the time pressure of having to learn a show or learn new material was there, and you would have deadlines to meet and you know, you would struggle with learning the material, was there anything that you like, obviously you know, other than like, the therapy and the medication, I know you've mentioned that, but sort of, in the moment, sort of, day-to-day, do you remember kind of what strategies you would try and put in place to like, get around that problem? Like, did you do anything like, were you just kind of like a blagger, did you used to just stand at the back, was there anything that you used to do on a day-to-day basis just to try and make it seem like you had it all together even if you didn't?	Feeling judged, mistaken for being lazy when actually, she was just struggling - unable to talk about feelings, potential cause of anxiety *Laughing implies that she wishes things had been different and that she'd been seen in a different light*

	MTS: Um, I'd try and just get on with it, I've never been a blagger, I wish I could [rolls eyes and smiles] um, never been a blagger, but I would make a joke out of it, because that was my default,	Preparation is key
Defence Mechanisms	like I constantly thought, well, if I make a joke out - well, not make a joke about it literally, but if I basically take the mick out of - "Oh god, oh look, I'm a mess, oh!" you know like, be a bit silly, they'd sort of laugh at me and be like "oh she's a bit clumsy, she's a bit ditsy", and it's not so much… they're not focusing on anything else.	Potentially making a joke out of it as she felt she wouldn't be taken seriously? Less painful to turn it into a joke Doesn't want to draw attention to herself? Less painful for herself not to take her seriously as opposed to everyone else
Being judged by others for having MPA - stupid MPA seen as unprofessional	Like, they know you're going to be nervous, they know that's like, natural, the thing that's hard is obviously when you…	Better to be seen as clumsy or ditsy instead of scared, anxious, or underprepared. Nerves are normal, chronic MPA is deemed as abnormal, and in this case "bad" - making her feel

	it gets too much, and you just freeze, and nothing is coming out of your mouth, that's happened to me before in auditions, and I've been like, there is nothing you can do [laughing].	like she needs to reel in her feelings or mask them
Anxiety negatively impacting performance		Symptoms of MPA negatively impacting performance Auditions are a particularly exacerbating situation Feeling out of control *Laughter - again, trying to make a joke to avoid not being taken seriously*
MPA seen as unprofessional	You can just go again, but you can't just stand there and make excuses, like, "I'm really sorry, I have performance anxiety, and like, I"... cause they're like, "well, you just shouldn't be doing this job then, you should be in this in- if it's that bad, you…" do you know what I mean? It's a, kind of like a… and so I would never want to make excuses for myself [pause]... 'cause you can't. But like, I don't know, it's like a catch 22 situation, it's like.. I: Completely, and you know, I know from studying this topic, that it's absolutely, so common, for performers from all backgrounds, you know, this is why I'm researching it, and you know, from experiencing it myself as well, um, so it is crazy to think that you experienced an attitude from people in the industry of like "well you shouldn't be doing this job" when	MPA in not "acceptable" Seen as unfit to be in the industry Highlights the expectation within MPA to be flawless and perfect all the time She has been made to feel herself that MPA is not a good enough reason to not perform to a high standard Highlights the difficulty of saying something, highlights the difficulty of not saying anything

Lack of support within the industry Industry pressures exacerbating MPA	probably 90% of the performers that came into the room had it in some way, even if they could maybe manage it differently, you know, but, like you say, nerves are part and parcel of the job anyway, but I'm sure not everyone just got "a little bit nervous", you know? I'm sure there are so many people that experience it in different ways, but the fact that you experienced this kind of attitude back of "well you shouldn't be here"... it's really sad. MTS: It is sad, it is sad, because you'd think that people would be more understanding, nowadays than ever, be a bit more, kind of, supportive, positive… I don't know, I just think [sighs], but I just think with this industry, you don't get much chances, and when you do get the chances, you have to grab it by the horns and the problem is is that you don't have time for whatever's going on, and so [shakes head], it's like, there's nothing you can do. Genuinely, nothing you can do.	Suggests that she felt misunderstood, unsupported, and treated in a negative light *Sigh - suggests feeling hopeless* High stakes industry, competition is fierce, stakes are high

Negative view of self - post event rumination Being judged as "underprepared" due to MPA	All I could do was try my best, but the problem was, this was happening like, I mean, I wasn't getting many auditions, and when I was getting auditions for like, good jobs, I was like… it was just… I felt like it was a car crash every time. It clearly wasn't, like, at all, in a lot of cases, but from my perspective of how I could see what - if I was them in that moment, it looks like I don't know what - it looks like I'm underprepared. I: Mmm. So you would, so you've had situations where you've gone into auditions, let's say, and felt like it's been terrible because you've had this anxiety, but then you've managed to book the job, so from your perspective you've kind of been like "How on earth did I..?" MTS: Yeah, I'm like "How on *earth?*" like, "what?! How did they not see it, how did they, how? I mean, I can't… because it's like, if I actually genuinely am having like, an anxiety attack when I'm performing, I have no recollection of what's going on. Like,	Anxiety may affect your career if you let it hold you back Feel like you can't process or seek support, no choice but to get on with it Forced to muddle through despite negative feelings regarding MPA *Negative self talk* MPA negatively impacting performance ability MPA negatively affecting feelings in the audition/performance space Fear of judgement *Repetition - possibly suggests this is hard to admit*

Negative view of self - post event rumination Defence mechanism - easier to fail the to try Negative view of self - post event rumination Anxiety interfering with progress Intense workload and very high, sometimes unrealistic, expectations	everything is so foggy and blurry and, and I'm like, literally just, I mean, glimpses come back, but I don't know what I did, if that makes sense. I literally just got through it. So, to get jobs from it was, for me, just bizarre, and because I kept having the comfort in the failure, like, I was like "why, how am I doing good?" I wasn't like… I was doing okay, but it got to the point though then when like, it was just happening like, for a long period of time, it was happening at a lot of auditions, and I wasn't then getting anywhere, and I was getting frustrated with myself [shakes head]. I kind of was like "Maybe I'm not meant to do this', and then I got a job in a kids, like a fringe kids play, at the - you know [a theatre in the UK], there's like a small theatre on the side and they have loads of like, fringe, like, yeah. I was in a three hander, and we had *so* much dialogue to learn, like [pfft], we literally didn't go off stage the whole time, and we were constantly changing outfits, it was like, a lot, um… and um, I was rehearsing for that and it was like, two days before the dress rehearsal and I was like, I was actually in [the town of the drama school] I was actually in um… is it [names a theatre in	Negative post event rumination Feeling out of control, feeling numb, unable to process Mind shutting down, defence mechanism No enjoyment - an ordeal Imposter syndrome Easier to fail than try Negatively impacting success over time Putting herself down, wishing things could be different Wanting to give up Demanding job, high pressure

Trauma linked to drama school Lack of understanding/support within the industry Anxiety affecting general wellbeing (exhaustion)	the town of the drama school], and um, I literally did what I used to do, I don't know what… I think it was 'cause I was in [the town of the drama school]. I don't know why, I had the link to [the town of the drama school], and I ran out the room. I: Wow MTS: And I then had a full on anxiety attack in the loo, and I ended up speaking to the guy, who was actually um, sort of directing, and he like, asked "What's going on?". I was like "I… [stutters], I can't do this". He was like "[MTS], it's two days before the dress rehearsal", I was like, "I actually can't do this. Like, I just can't. I 'm so exhausted by this, I don't know what is happening, I'm having some form of a trigger here, and like, I can't move through this trigger like, I	*[Pffft] - Indicating a sense that expectations were unreasonable* Trauma - being surrounded by familiar settings triggering severe symptoms of MPA Hiding in the loo - suggests she couldn't be open about her feelings Lack of awareness, feeling the need to give up *Stutter - suggests this was difficult to admit* Unsupportive

Lack of understanding/support within the industry MPA is seen as unprofessional Needing to justify choices relating to mental health care - lack of	can't move through it". Like, it was blocking me, I just couldn't, but I just… "I can't do this". And he was like "No, it'll be fine, we'll come back tomorrow, we'll have one more day of rehearsal, you're doing really well, bla bla bla bla". Got on the train, and I was like, made up in mind like "No, I'm not going back". And that's it, completely quit. I: Wow. What ended up happening with the show, or the play, if you don't mind me asking? MTS: Um, I emailed him, and I just said like, I've never done this before, I've never quit a job, like, a performance job, like I would never do that to anyone, um, I but I, I can't. I have to put my mental health first, and I just can't, and I'm really sorry, and I know, obviously, I don't know how, the shows going to still go ahead,	Too much to bear *Repetition of the word "Can't" - it became too much to cope with* Lack of support from the company, brushing it under the carpet, diminishing her feelings Easier to walk away and potentially jeopardise reputation than to stay An instilled belief that to quit due to MPA would mean being a disappointment
understanding/support Industry pressures exacerbating MPA MPA seen as unprofessional	but in my head I was like, I'm not getting paid a lot for this job, it's a fringe job, it was really disorganised anyway, they had barely any cost- they hadn't sorted out the costumes, we didn't know what we were wearing, there was so much dialogue to learn, they'd given it to us a day before the rehearsals started, and literally it was like, a week and a half of rehearsals, it was all a bit of a mess anyway, um, they were doing it all on the cheap, and I was just like… didn't feel heard at all. I: Right MTS: And I had specifically requested for the script earlier than everyone else, cause I said "Just to let you know…" well I, I couldn't say for what it was, but I said you know, "I am a slow learner, please can I have it before - I would rather have it before so I can get to grips with it on my own, so then I wasn't walking in with this like, anxiety already"	*Repetition of the word "Can't" - it became too much to cope with* Feelings of guilt Not worth the suffering Poor working conditions, potentially contributing to feelings of stress and MPA? Highlighting potential trigger with time and unrealistic expectations of the company Inadequate conditions The show didn't prioritise cast feelings due to disorganisation and too much to handle Shame, or fear of repercussions?

Industry pressures exacerbating MPA	and he was like "yeah, yeah", and every single day he was like "Oh, I'll send it you, I'll send it to you", and like, it obviously it wasn't finished, and it was like [shrugs]. I: So you were kind of like, they didn't even admit that to you, like, they almost like, fobbed you off I suppose and let you think "yeah you can have it early", but actually, they didn't sort of follow through? MTS: Yeah! This was going on for like, two weeks, and like, I understand like, loads of jobs you don't get stuff, you get it really like, you know, short notice,	Making excuses for herself to avoid admitting MPA - fear of being judged? Highlights that preparation is key Dishonest company, or they simply didn't have the capacity to support their cast members whilst trying to finalise the show
Industry pressures exacerbating MPA	I'm not saying that I should have been given special treatment compared to other people, but I was just like [sighs], I don't know, it just put… I left on such a sour note because that was always what I'd dreaded was going to happen, and it actually did happen. I: Yeah	There are similar pressures across the industry - suggests the industry as a whole potentially has issues, as this is the "norm" Suggests that MTS would feel singled out, or made to feel like she had an unfair advantage by asking for support with anxiety prevention

Anxiety affecting general wellbeing- mentally and physically	MTS: But I kind of knew it was going to happen before the shows, and I was like, I'm not willing to put myself… like, I'm not going to crash, like I am really not going to crash on stage, I'm just not going to do it. And I'm not going to do it to them, like, I knew at that time, I wasn't in control anymore and I just had to fess up.	Disheartening, fear inducing experience Able to recognise triggers Unable to face the stress - embarrassing and distressing situation *Repetition of "crash" - emphasises that freezing on stage due to anxiety is a failure* Suggests performance is negatively impacted by anxiety
Needing to justify choices relating to mental health care - lack of understanding/support	But the problem is he didn't know! He went to [the town of the drama school], he was [at another drama school in the same town], yet he did not understand it. He had no one that he could relate to, and I just felt like I was getting deja-vu again, and I was like "oh here we go again".	Anxiety is so bad that it will negatively impact performance Too overwhelming *"Fess up" suggests the need to hide it* The director was unrelatable. Suggests there was no adequate support offered
Stereotypes within the industry	I was taught by all people that went to [the other drama school in the same town], well, a lot of people that went to [the other	

surrounding MPA Trauma stemming from drama school	drama school in the same town], he was from [the other drama school in the same town], all of it just sort of like, I don't know, it sounds really bizarre but like, came together and felt like I was back in that same room again, and I was like 'I can't, I just can't'. I: That makes complete sense, that makes complete sense. So this leads me on quite nicely to sort of like the last few things that I would love to talk to you about. Obviously the musical theatre industry… what do you think needs to change in the musical theatre industry that would like… so let's say, if you could have gone back and the industry could have done more to help you, what would that have been? MTS: Well, I think now, when you train now, it's a whole different [shakes head] story. Nowadays, from my perspective- I don't know if you feel the same - but I feel like they have such big support systems,	Felt the same lack of support in a professional job as she did in training - a vicious cycle embedded in the industry Implies that MTS has a preconception of people that trained in a certain drama school and suggests that they are not supportive - perhaps suggesting that the atmosphere in that drama school was not a supportive one Trauma, feelings from the past recurring
Increased awareness leads to increased support A lack of awareness, support and understanding within the industry Lack of trained staff within institutions	you know, they're accepting of so many different types of people from all different backgrounds, there is no kind of, prejudice against anything, whether that be your race, whether that be your weight, whether that be, I don't know, your mental health, whatever it might be, I feel like it's such a more accepting industry now, and I think that when I trained, I don't think it was, and I've heard of a lot of other horrible situations that have happened to a lot of people in other drama schools and that's really sad and unfortunate, but I just think then, it wasn't important [stutters], no one realised that that is such a key part of your training.	Suggests that MTS has a preconception that MPA support is better today in drama schools, confirming that is wasn't back when she trained Increased awareness today gives MTS the perspective that support systems have improved - again, confirms that there was a lack of awareness and support in her training Suggests is wasn't an inclusive industry at the time that MTS trained It didn't feel acceptable to be different or struggle Other performers have since shared their stories

Made to feel like a problem due to MPA Lack of awareness and support from the institution	You should have a support system who are qualified, who understand, and who can normalise this, like, it's not about "Oh my gosh, you've got an issue, get out, because you're causing… you're, um, interrupting our training. People are paying to be here, why are you interrupting us [MTS]? Why are you being a, a problem? Like, instead of dealing with the problem… there wasn't a problem! But, instead of actually trying to understand, they were just like "We don't want you here!" [stutters], like, so many times I got asked to leave,	Lack of support for MPA is upsetting MTS feels that if her struggles had been made to feel like they were important or a priority, her training and development would have been very different MTS felt that her teachers were not adequately trained to support her, and that professional help should have been accessible. MTS was made to feel abnormal and misunderstood. Made to feel unwelcome due to MPA ***You're*** *interrupting* ***our*** *training - suggests MTS felt unwanted, unwelcomed, like an outsider* Having MPA makes you a problem that negatively effects everyone - may have triggered feelings of guilt and shame

Feeling isolated Need for support from a trained professional	and I was like "No, I'm not leaving, I've paid like everyone else. I understand most people, their parents pay for them to be here, but no, I'm going to be treated exactly the same, you're not get- you're not pushing me out the door". Yeah, that… I just… and I think they're going in the right direction, so I can't really say… there's somethings per se, but I just genuinely think, it's just understanding, having some support, but trained people, because of course your teacher, who's had no… I mean, they might have had their own mental health issues, that… you can't relate, a), you shouldn't relate, b), because it's not professional, and c) you shouldn't… I don't know, [pause] you shouldn't be avoiding it. I: Yeah. Do you feel then if you'd have had more support, um, you know, genuine support in the days of your training, do you feel that the way it's panned out in your professional work would have been different?	Suggests MTS feels she was unfairly treated as a problem with a lack of appropriate support MTS felt that the school didn't want to help her, but they wanted rid of her - easier to deal with, perhaps due to a lack of trained staff? Felt she was treated like she wasn't an equal, unfair treatment Suggests that MTS felt under privileged *"Pushing" implies that she felt deliberately neglected by the college* How things could have been better Lack of professional psychological training made MTS feel that there was no support

Coming to terms with anxiety	MTS: [Pause] I don't know if I'm honest, because I think it will always be something that I'll always have, and always have to, um, know that it's there. It's always going to be there, I've got to accept it, it might come out, it might not come out, I have to kind of work with it, rather than kind of, work against it, and I think that what was happening was that I was continually working against it, which obviously makes it a lot worse. It's not necessarily being like "Oh, maybe if I'd have had the support system, then it wouldn't- I don't know, then it would have gone away, I think it was there obviously for a reason, and it probably didn't help. I mean, there's so many different mental health… um, I wouldn't call them problems, but you know what I mean, like	Felt like her problems were tried to be swept under the rug Can't say for certain whether or not the support would have stopped MPA Needs to learn that it's a part of who she is Learning how to cope with it and use it to her advantage Made to feel that she had to overcome it and change it about herself, as opposed to embracing it Doesn't know if a support system would have actually gotten rif of the MPA - perhaps suggests that the core of the problem runs too deep

Promoting inclusivity and diversity and using it in a positive way	[stutters] if you have ADHD and you're a performer, it's phenomenal, you could just keep performing for days, do you know what I mean? I think actually we should be celebrating these things and harnessing them in the right way, so it can like - do you know what I mean? So it can like, help people.	Shows a belief that mental health issues shouldn't be labelled as "problems" due to her own experiences of feeling like a problem Alluding that some people have it easier than those with MPA- highlighting the severity of MTS' experience The opposite of how she was made to feel - punished, embarrassed, pushed down
Lack of awareness and support within the institution	Um, and I think [shrugs shoulders] they just weren't equipped. I wasn't equipped, no one knew [laughs], no one understood, I don't blame anyone, like, it just is what it is! I: Of course, yeah. Do you think in either… so um, obviously starting in a training capacity, having that support system, like you say, would have help a lot, at least for you to at least feel understood and not like a problem,	Perhaps this suggests that we shouldn't be trying to get rid of MPA, but instead, trying to help performers deal with it in a healthy way that can actually enhance what they do – this belief may stem from always been made to feel like a problem *"It is what it is" suggests that this was normal at the time of her training* Not enough awareness

Avoiding Isolation and unwanted attention Mindfulness techniques for calming anxiety The importance of group support	MTS: Yeah I: Do you think, kind of, nowadays, in a professional context, that the way things are done could be different in a way that would maybe even like, let's say if you were to book a musical theatre job tomorrow, do you think that there's anything that, kind of, within a professional company, could be done to kind of, support people going through a similar thing? MTS: Um, [pause] it's a hard one isn't it. Because you can't- you don't really like, want to single people out, in that sense you're kind of then bringing light to it, and that person might feel like it's a negative thing. It's like, they're pointing you out. I think it's more like… what I've noticed, and I don't know if you had the same experience, but when we were at drama school, in a lot of our voice lessons, you know, we were doing a lot of mindfulness and meditation without us even realising, and you know, a lot of breath work, like, it wasn't like, anything that was far fetched, but it was really grounding, and I think, you know, stuff like that, they could bring into their warm up so that it sort of grounds you, it sort of like, you know, detaches you from whatever you're feeling, in that moment or that day or that week	This approach made MTS feel abnormal, picked on Not addressing it like a punishment or a problem Embarrassment Vocal exercises that contribute to the management of MPA Warm up, voice lesson… doing these things together in a group that is supportive

Awareness and acceptance	or whatever, and just sort of, kind, of, centres you, grounds you, and then you can just start from there and if it kind of, creeps in, just for them to know that you have that, and just be like "It's fine", like, kind of in itself is amazing [laughs]. That would be so helpful in so many ways, because I [stutters], as someone who has it, I wouldn't feel judged, I wouldn't feel like I was an issue and I wouldn't even feel bad if it happened, I'd just be like, "oh, yep, happened again, right, go again!" like, "Carry on! It's no big deal", whereas, I didn't feel like I could do that, and therefore I couldn't work through it, I was kind of like, [shrugs] "Okay, well that's, you know like, that's it". I: Yeah, so if like a professional musical theatre touring company, production company, even if there was just a little bit of awareness, do you mean? MTS! Mmmm	Leaving external stressors at the door Awareness and acceptance *The laugh emphasises the simplicity of this idea* Lack of awareness and acceptance made MTS feel judged Not made to feel like a problem or feel guilty Normalising MPA Negative and unwanted attention brought to it that exacerbated feelings of anxiety

	I: Like, so it was kind of, not, not brought to light in a really obvious way MTS: No I: But, just kind of like, intertwined in the production company ethos, and intertwined you know, like you say, into things like warm ups and rehearsals for everybody MTS: Mmmm I: Then it would benefit those that suffer in a way that doesn't single them out MTS: Mmmm I: Is that kind of what… have I understood what you mean correctly?	
Consideration of feelings A supportive environment in the theatre	MTS: Yeah! Yeah, 100%. I think it's like, obviously everyone feels different things and some people are really confident and some people aren't, but we don't know that, like, there's people that are really confident - well, from the outside - and 100% have probably gone through what I've been through but you would never know, and I think actually, it's more about us all being aware of how we're feeling, and if we're working as a team, as a collective, it's kind of going right, we're going to all support each other, we're here, we're working together, and if you're working for a long time in a contract, you're going to have bad days! But you need that, you know, you need that cast member to be like if some - I dunno, when you're on stage and something goes wrong, you forget a line, they just cover you, you know, all that like, you've got the camaraderie anyway from training, you just have it instilled in you, but it's more like a… it's not just that, it's like, being aware of how people are feeling. And obviously, people are normally going to be tired or moody or, I don't know, like, that's just normal, but I think it's everyone being in touch of how they're feeling, um, and just kind of, accepting it.	You never know what someone is going through Performance anxiety is not always obvious externally Awareness is key Not singling anyone out - community feeling, normalising MPA Other people contributing to ensure that the MPA sufferer does not feel singled out or has unwanted attention drawn to them
Awareness and acceptance	I: Yeah, no that's amazing, thank you so much [MTS]. Actually, I've got one last bonus question that I'm just really intrigued, um, if you don't mind. So, did you ever find other than - 'cause I know you've sort of mentioned that sometimes you used to freeze, um, on stage	Awareness, normalising negative emotions, acceptance

	MTS: Mmmm-hmm I: And feel, you know, like things would become a blur… did you ever experience your anxiety literally affecting your performance? Did you ever have it affect the way you would sing or the way you would perform? MTS? Mmmm-hmm I: How did that present itself?	
Feeling out of control Physical symptoms of MPA Masking MPA due to fear of	MTS: So, for me, it's more physical than mental, so for me… so say for instance, ummm, like for me, that's why I take beta-blockers, because it's not affecting my mind, it's affecting my body and it's calming it down. If say, for instance, I hadn't taken one - sorry, my camera keeps going off - if I hadn't taken one, or say, for instance, I don't know, I was performing in the evening and I'd taken one in the morning, [nodding] I would… I'd shake, I'd sweat profusely, my face would go *so* red, like *so*- and that was always one of things I was very conscious of, having um, this performance anxiety, that I was like, can people tell? Because my face is going so flushed,, it's kind of a bit like -	Physical symptoms of MPA that would present Despite feeling in control in the mind, the body feels out of control Reliance on beta blockers Physical symptoms *"So" implies embarrassment* Physical symptoms drawing unwanted attention - fear of
judgement Physical symptoms debilitating performance Fear of judgement Overthinking and over analysing personal performance	I mean if, obviously you've got makeup on, like, stage make-up, like, they probably can't tell, but obviously when you're hot, you're thinking like, "Is it melting off, like, can they see it, what's going on?" Ummm, it could affect my singing, umm in [sigh], I wouldn't, like, cut out or go off key or… I don't know how to explain it, like as if I was shaky but in my voice. So like, it could be confused with vibrato, so maybe if I'd had too much vibrato, like, vib than say that was, was meant for, I don't know, that song or whatever, or ummm… you could tell, basically. You could definitely tell. I mean, I'd try and mask it, but you could probably tell like, maybe once or twice in that song, ummm... But yeah, like, from my perspective, it would totally [stutters] like, physical, like, you can see it in my voice, you can see it in my face, but I don't know what other people were seeing, so it might just be like, all in my head, if that makes sense? But that is part of anxiety, you're just overthinking what's going on. I: Of course, yeah and did, um, when it used of, kind of, come out physically, so, if you felt that your voice was shaking or your face was flushing, would that make- would that change how the	judgement, not wanting anyone to know Fear around being "outed", trying to mask the issue *Ummms and sigh suggest that it was a strange or uncomfortable sensation* Not obvious that it was performance anxiety, but maybe obvious that something was wrong Feeling like the physical symptoms were "outing" her despite trying everything to hide it Feeling out of control - desperately trying to mask MPA but physical symptoms giving it away Maybe felt betrayed by her own body? Could have made the situation worse

	anxiety felt, like, did it make it worse if you felt like everybody knew or? MTS: Yeah I: Yeah, it made it worse? MTS: [Nods] I: Okay	
Feeling trapped Feeling drained	MTS: I would be going through the motions, so it would just start it, and then I'm full on going through, like [stutters] it just… it's just getting progressively worse and worse and worse… nothing I can do about it, got to carry on, and then as soon as I'd finish the performance in whatever capacity, I would literally- I would be flat out, like I could fall asleep there, because I'd obviously had an anxiety attack on stage, and yeah, but [shrugs]... yeah! [laughs] I: Thank you so much.	*"Going through the motions" suggests that MPA was a vicious cyle that she couldn't break* Vicious cycle, helpless, feeling stuck, feeling trapped Exhausting, draining *Laughing to downplay the severity of negative emotions*

Appendix 4.2: Initial Analysis - Classical Singer

KEY:
Plain text - Descriptive Notes
Italic text - Linguistic Notes
Underlined text - Conceptual Notes

Emergent themes	Transcript	Initial Notes
Natural gift in music from a young age	I: First of all, if you don't mind, could you just clarify how old you are currently, and like, what age did you sort of start performing classical music? CS: Alright, so um, I'm 27 now, eurgh [laughs] and i started singing classical music I would say at around 16, 17 years old with singing exams. I: Right, amazing. Oh, so is that how you got into it, like, through the grade exams? CS: Yeah I did the grade exams, I did, yeah, from mum and dad I did musical theatre, um, and when I did singing exams with them, I had, of course I had to sing, I think I had to do a Bellini song, some italian songs, and um, dad said to me, this suits you, you should have a go and of course, they studied at Guildhall, they did opera, they had the opera singing, so, [information redacted at the request of the participant] I: So you got into it sort of, started off in musical theatre but then kind of went into the classical grade exams, and then sort of found a talent for it, amazing! Okay, so do you remember, sort of when you first experienced any sort of performance anxiety	Young age, starting with singing exams - potentially some pressure? Roots in musical theatre Influenced by family

Progression from "normal" nerves to severe MPA during formal training Controlling teaching style contributing to anxiety Expectations to achieve a certain sound contributing to MPA Feeling not good enough Controlling teaching style contributing to anxiety	CS: Um, well, of course like any other performer, I got nervous for performances, that's just, that's just the done deal, um, but I think, I think when I really felt nervous- extremely nervous to perform was actually in my post-grad, um, so this was, I was, oh god, how old was I in 2020, um, I was about 22, 23? Um, and we had just, um, so I had just switched teacher, um, cos, um, I was, my, my original teacher was, was actually doing [an Opera], in [a foreign country] and so I needed a teacher whilst um, I was still studying. So I went with this, this lady, um, and at the beginning it was great, um, but, she was taking me down a road and myself psychologically was going down a road where I felt like I needed to produce big sounds all the time, and anything less than that was not good enough or disappointing or um, basically yeah, um and I remember um, and she was one of those teachers who would stop you all the time if you didn't do it exactly um, as she said, with no malice, just stop, this, stop, this, stop, this, and you, you sort of get afraid to make sounds.	Common stage fright experience *"But" - implies that the anxiety increased significantly in the post grad* *Reiteration of the word "nervous" signifies the severity of the experience* A significant event The importance of mentorship Teacher potentially exhibiting controlling teaching style? Mental health impacted by the pressure to meet vocal standards Made to feel like a disappointment for not meeting certain vocal standards Potentially a controlling teaching style Suggests a cold demeanour Fear of judgement from the teacher

Feeling like a disappointment	Um, and then the, the pandemic came in, and um, obviously life sort of stopped, and we all, I remember doing some online projects and I felt like whatever I was doing was still not good enough, at all.	Negative self image based on feedback from online projects
Highly vocally demanding repertoire	Um, and the rep I was getting was a lot bigger than I had previously sung and it was incredibly challenging,	Difficulties in meeting expectations
Mental health negatively impacting performance	and it- I just wasn't in the read head space nor vocal space to, to do them to be honest.	Mentally drained Lacking confidence in vocal ability
Perfectionistic tendencies	I did what I could, but that, trying to search for perfectionism and what you think you should sound like is a horrible rabbit hole to go down.	High expectations of sound and vocal qualities Pressure on oneself to deliver perfection - affects mental health or self esteem?
	I: Absolutely, yeah, I can imagine. So, your- so when your teacher used to stop you, you said that there was no like, malice in it, so does that kind of mean that, that she was never, sort of, horrible to you about it?	
	CS: No	
Fear of failure	I: But she would stop you, you know, sort of, frequently?	
	CS: It would be constant. So that, basically, when you're [stutters] yeah, I was basically afraid to make any kind sound just in case it was [signals inverted commas] wrong, um, so to speak, um,	Relentless criticism Fear of not being good enough, affecting confidence
Unable to be creatively expressive due to seeking		Unable to express oneself artistically

perfectionism in technique	and that doesn't lead to any experimentation in your own practise, and that, to me, that translates into your work, you're afraid to go for any kind of ideas, even dramatically sometimes, cause you're focusing on the sound *all* the time, and it really stunts the process and your creative process,	for fear of judgement Too much pressure to sound a certain way - interferes with creativity and potentially hinders other elements of the performance. *"All" - suggest that the pressure causes singers to get stuck in their own head, hung up about their vocal ability*
	um, and I've even felt it, I've even felt it here on the opera course at [a UK conservatoire]. There's [looks out the window to make sure no one can hear] I mean, thankfully they're, I'm in this booth where um, it's completely soundproof so	Industry pressures and high expectations are very much present within conservatoires
Differences in equality among students based on performance	I: Don't feel like you've got to talk about anything you're not comfortable to talk about	Suggests an elitist mentality
	CS: No! I'm totally comfortable with it, um [smiling] there's a lot of politics as well in conservatoires, I'm sure you probably may have got back at uni,	
Value placed on technical ability	I: Yeah, I mean, this is kind of what I'm really interested in, cause there absolutely was, but I'm sure, well, I'm not sure how different it would be, you know, this is kind of what I'm really interested in finding out, is, is kind of the differences, so what was your experience - what's your experience been of that?	Made to feel less worthy due to vocal ability, skills and strengths not appreciated or celebrated if they aren't in line with expectations Comparison and competition between students Perceived favouritism between

Feeling self conscious Feeling out of comfort zone	CS: Well, my experience here, on the opera course here, is that there are clear favourites, um, and I felt like I wasn't valued at all.	teachers and certain students
	Well, at all's a bit strong, I wasn't valued as much as others, um,	Expected to perform material that is out of their comfort zone - potentially making them self conscious
Psychological barriers interfering with progress	and I've been given the wrong repertoire *again* um, for this whole year	Relying on 1-2-1 singing lessons with a trusted teacher for mental health support Mental health issues linked to repertoire selection
Fear of judgement	and um, I've found myself using my singing lessons to try and- my current singing lessons with my current teacher, who's done wonders, who's fantastic - um, I've found myself using those lessons to try sort myself out mentally in order to sing the things which I don't really quite know how to sing yet, um, and	Forced out of comfort zone - fear of judgement or a negative review - heightened pressure Overthinking caused by lack of feedback - worried about unknown outcome Worried about the judgement of others
Overthinking and self doubt	I would have to perform these things in front of people, in front of reviewers, and to be given barely any feedback, good or bad, doesn't really [stutters] it basically made me feel "what the hell are these people thinking? How can I, what can I do, how am I doing?"	*"Manifested" - suggests that the consequences of this overthinking, stress and doubt came out at a later date*
Highly vocally demanding repertoire		

	and it manifested - I definitely remember this year, the academic year, so, Autumn 2023, um, I was given…	Big performance - alluding to a high pressure scenario Struggling to achieve expected sound
Lack of support affecting self esteem	[Zoom crashes] I: I'm sorry, could you just repeat that? CS: I was doing these two italian works um, but I was predominantly in one of them, but I didn't come on until the end to sing essentially the whole act in this big love duet. Um, and, um, I remember especially, I was finding it a little bit difficult,	Frustrated - repertoire not suitable for voice type Flustered - suggests stress, pressure, desperation No help whatsoever - feeling unsupported
Fear of failure	and then, especially when we got to the end of the stud- end of the studio time and into the tech, it just wasn't going well vocally at all, and I was getting so frustrated and so flustered, and there was no help whatsoever from anyone.	Highlights a benchmark that is expected to be hit Fear of judgement from others, fear of letting people down
Feeling unable to be creatively expressive due to seeking perfectionism in technique	And the way I felt was that it's. It's the, sort of the age old thing- can I sing this to an acceptable standard? Um, with um, can I sing this to an acceptable standard and to be fair, I'm such a people pleaser myself, the "will people enjoy it?"	Sacrificing personal enjoyment in favour of pursuing a sound that meets the expectations of others *Shakes head - implies that on reflection, there is some regret to this approach*
Seeking external validation and	instead of "what can I do which makes me enjoy this particular role [shakes head]	At the time, creativity within the performance and connecting with the character felt less important than achieving "the right sound" - highlights how strong this perceived benchmark was enforced

approval for vocal ability MPA contributing to poor overall mental health Unable to cope with pressures and expectations Insecurities in vocal ability leading to overthinking High expectations of oneself contributing to MPA Feeling like a failure	and how can I be creative and do the role as much justice as I can and I completely [stutters] forgot about that because I was so [makes fists] invested in trying to make the music stuff happy, make the directors happy, make the audience happy, um, and yeah, I had, I had a complete breakdown actually. I: Oh {CS], well, I'm not surprised - that's a lot of pressure on your shoulders, a lot! CS: Yeah I: So, with all that pressure then, you know, kind of worries about, worries about it being an "acceptable" sound, worries about people's perceptions of you, and then kind of like yeah, the lack of focus on just like, yourself and your experience, how did that then come out in the performance? Did you find, was there any affect on your performance or was it more like, how you felt in the moment that was affected, or was it kind of post the performance	Feeling like he's got something to prove Trying to meet the expectations of those around him *Makes fists - suggests frustration* Perfectionism so severe it negatively impacts mental health Unable to cope with the pressures of reaching a certain standard Highlights a potential insecurity in high notes Perfectionistic tendencies Feeling like a let down because of inconsistent delivery, despite

The importance of a supportive environment Positive reinforcement mitigating MPA Positive mindset contributes to a successful performance Intense, high pressure training environment Psychological pressure is a detriment to vocal performance	that you sort of like, had to sort of work through that? Basically yeah, like, how did all that pressure like, present itself? CS: Well, um, so, we finished, I, I remember finishing the last orchestra dress rehearsal, um and I myself obsess over high notes, I myself obsess over high notes, so my, my top notes weren't coming out as well as I'd like them to have done and as well as I'd done them before, so I remember being in the notes session like [nods] depressed. So, I remember speaking to my current teacher and um, she invited me up to her place in [a town in the UK] um, to um, just to have the weekend there, 'cause she's partners with my [family member], so I've been up there quite often, um, just to sing and drink, and it's been lovely, so they really took me under their wing and um, we just worked through the piece, the hard bits, and we [smiles] just had fun doing it, and that completely changed… like, it was it was the weekend before the first night, like, two days before the first night, um, and then I remember the warm up, going back to feeling very confident- feeling much more confident and happier in singing, because of actually just getting some feedback and getting people to actually listen to how I felt, and I remember going to the warm up where we would rehearse the duet, and it was the best I'd ever sung it, and everyone just went "how– you've turned this around completely".	material being difficult Seeking support from a trusted teacher Support, a relaxed environment, less intense and less pressure leading to a much more confident approach Support and encouragement helped - suggests that this was not always present within the conservatoire If the mindset is right, the performance improves - this suggests that the wrong mindset could have a detrimental effect Suggests training was often intense, resulting in overthinking and stress. When pressure to get it perfect is lifted, the singer is able to focus better on achieving technique rather than being consumed by thoughts. Suggests that it was difficult to remove pressure within the

Pressure stemming from vocal demands Psychological pressure is a detriment to vocal performance Industry demands contributing to MPA - auditions	Um, so it's amazing what, what one) a break can do, and two) just talking, working through it without any pressure, just seeing how the voice feels, instead of thinking "I need to be able to sing this by this time". Theres a feel- there needs - and I, I'm still discovering this, there needs to be a feeling of just letting it go and seeing what happens, 'cause the more, the more you think about what could happen, the more you're going to tense up, the more you're going to go into fight or flight mode, and then you're just going to be like "huh!' [acts out seizing up]. And, we don't have microphones, so we have to produce sound which is going to go over an orchestra, and that's - there's a lot of pressure on that. I: It's extremely vocally demanding as well, and you know, if you're experiencing all of this pressure that is then meaning that all of that sound can't actually physiologically come out, that must be a really tough thing to get over. CS: Yeah	conservatoire Fear of getting it wrong negatively impacting vocal technique Highlights the importance of correct technique and the pressure to achieve enough power

Industry demands contributing to MPA - finances relying on high standard performance Fear of failure Fear of judgement Lack of positive reinforcement contributes to MPA Overthinking causing feelings of self doubt Fear of judgement MPA affecting emotional connection to performance Negative post-event rumination Feeling out of control	I: Yeah okay, amazing. So, what kind of then- so you've kind of mentioned about um, where you've been in classes um, or you've been in 1-2-1s and you've been stopped an awful lot, and you've mentioned about, sort of, being given repertoire that was sort of, out of your comfort zone, being expected to perform it with not enough time to prep, and you know, an awful lot of pressure, What are the situations that you find yourself in that really like, exacerbate performance anxiety for you? Is it like a, audition scenario, is it in the singing lessons, when it's you 1-2-1, is it when there's an audience watching? Like what are the situations that you find it comes out the worst, or if not the worst, what's like the situation that just exacerbates the experience? CS: I think, I think, well, I've gotten a lot better now but I still get anxious about auditions, because it's such a strange situation to be in, 'cause it's like a forced performance where you're performing to get a job, um, which obviously is not… it's a necessary evil in this world whether you're a classical musician or contemporary or a musical theatre performer. Um, I would - I remember used to finding them incredibly pressurising 'cause I would feel like I would have to perform to a certain standard just to get into any books or just to be considered for anything,	Auditions are an uncomfortable, unnatural and high pressure environment *Evil - suggests that it's a terrifying, challenging situation* Needing to prove oneself and deliver a certain vocal standard to feel good enough Also a pressure to be a certain standard in order to earn a living - financial pressures of the industry Lack of feedback and positive reinforcement exacerbating anxiety - suggests that the audience/panel's reaction can contribute to feelings of MPA Overthinking and self doubt, pressure to meet certain expectations Overthinking the singing, negatively affecting connection to the character and creative side of the performance A vicious cycle of overthinking the

Rejection contributing to negative self esteem Coming to terms with failure affecting self esteem Comparison to others	um, and also with panels, it looks like they show absolutely zero interest whatsoever so, you kind of feel like you're performing to a brick wall - a sentient brick wall. Um, and that's, that can invite feelings of "what are they thinking, um, am I, am I, well, am I good enough, or am I singing well enough for these people?" And then as soon as you do that, you're out of character, you're out of the music, you're out of your interpretation. And um, that really, really got to me, especially after the pandemic when the world was starting to kick back into gear. I think for me, there were these feelings of um, "what's changed, um, this is weird to perform in front of people again, um and yeah, I remember completely flunking an audition once after um, after the pandemic and thinking 'I've never done that before, at all" a	singing, losing the character, feeling frustrated with oneself Pressure to please the audience after a long break - detrimental to performance. Pandemic caused performers to feel more out of control/out of their comfort zone. Suggests feelings of shame or disappointment for having a bad audition? Coming to terms with rejection, suggests a fear of failure. Comparing oneself to others, handling rejection, all contributing to MPA

High personal standards contributing to low self esteem Pressure to meet expectations Adapting performance style to please others Industry expectations surrounding standard of performance Overthinking and self doubt Elitism and traditions in the classical world	nd to actually - as someone who never really "failed" that much beforehand, or, or didn't get into - didn't not get anywhere, it was a lot, and that's another part of performance anxiety, you can, as someone who was a pretty big fish in a small pond beforehand, it's learning how to take rejection, which is another thing. I: Yeah, and transitioning like you say from, you know, just going from grade exams and probably getting really great marks and you know, maybe being, you know, the best singer in the school or the best singer in the choir, then all of a sudden, you know, you move up the ranks and like you say, you're a small fish in a big pond CS: Yeah I: And it's hard to get your head around, isn't it? Um, you mentioned something really interesting, and obviously with my kind of, contemporary background, I'd love to just to pick your brains about that a little bit more. CS: Yeah I: But when you've sort of mentioned- you've mentioned a couple of times about a performance having to be "up to standard". What is like, the - what is the benchmark, or the standard that you keep on referring to, and how do they, sort of highlight the- yeah, what is that benchmark that you feel you, feel like you have to aim for and where does the benchmark come from? Is it, like, is the benchmark the same for everybody in the classical world,	Putting a lot of pressure on oneself - could be based upon a comparison to others A pressure to sound a certain way - self inflicted, but where has this come from? Trying to prove oneself - mum and dad? Teachers? Fear of audience comparing you to legendary opera singers - a pressure to meet a certain standard Self inflicted comparison to others - suggests not feeling good enough Industry pressures to sound a certain way - suggests an elitist environment in which only certain

Industry expectations surrounding standard of performance Pressure to meet expectations exacerbating MPA Unable to be creatively expressive due to seeking perfectionism in technique Pressure to meet expectations exacerbating MPA Seeking perfectionism in technique is a learned behaviour Feeling inferior	or is this a benchmark that you've set yourself? I would love to hear more about that CS: It's mostly a benchmark I've set myself because um, back when I was down spiralling, I listened to - [stutters] I mean, I love listening to all the great singers and everything, but I tried - in hindsight, I tried to emulate a sound closer to them which was not, obviously not my natural voice. Um, but at the same time, I also thought that this- since these were the legendary great singers, this would be - people would be thinking about, well, wanting it to be a sort of, similar standard or something to do with that, that's what I would be thinking. Um, that's not necessarily true, but that's obvs- that's certainly what I was thinking. But also, with the classical world, obviously there's freedom of expression within um, within, but, there is freedom of expression, but within very, um, specific boundaries, depending on the genre and the style of classical music. Um, so you could do certain things in one genre, subgenre, that you couldn't do in another, and you get people who are incredibly precious about these things, who don't really have any lives outside of classical music, to be honest.	sounds are accepted "Rules" within classical music that are set by people within the industry, determining what is deemed an "acceptable" performance *Repetition of "Well-meaning" Suggests that a group of people within the industry want to maintain a certain standard that is traditional.* *"Wrong" - suggests that only certain sounds are accepted, which contributes to feelings of MPA* Unable to express oneself, or make sounds that are not "acceptable" Meeting certain standards set by those within the industry increases anxiety Suggests that upon reflection, there is a regret of trying to sound like the greats rather than focusing on creativity and self expression.

Fear of judgement hindering artistic growth Unable to be creatively expressive due to seeking perfectionism in technique Elitism and traditions in the classical world No voice to express creativity- feeling undervalued and affecting musical progress Breathing and mindset exercises to treat MPA	Mostly by well-meaning - well-meaning, academically inclined people, who have made it into conducting, um or, I say directing to an extent, um, but that's a different story. Um, but you can do many things wrong and I really, really hate that. Because it can, it can, it can just limit your creativity for one, and make you- and again, it would trigger me by making me feel I would have to fit into this person's box and standards by doing these particular things in a- well, in a particular opera. I mean, that's very exciting of you is it, I mean, you're singing like a twentieth century singer, I'm like, "Okay, thank you…" [grimaces]. I: Well, I was just going to ask then, do you find with your classical singing like, do you, is that something that you kind of, crave, is a bit more creative expression, or do you sort of feel like it's more, um, you wish there was more creative expression so that there's less pressure? Like, what's your thoughts on that?	Determination to sing at a certain standard has become learned behaviour as a result of continued pressure within training Made to feel inferior to those teaching, resulting in increased pressure Singing is difficult enough without the need to aim for a certain sound and being made to feel like you're always getting it wrong No room for creative freedom within training, a certain benchmark is enforced that hinders freedom of expression *"What do I think" - suggests an internal conflict, potentially due to the ingrained behaviour mentioned earlier* Elisitism - certain people in the industry influencing those in training to sing in a certain way due to traditions Any sounds that are not in line with traditional standards are deemed as

Focusing on positives of performance Seeking perfectionism in technique is a learned behaviour Expectations to achieve a certain sound contributing to MPA Emotions and mental health can massively impact singing Psychological pressure is a detriment to vocal performance	CS: Um, I, wish that, [stutters] I think it's also, it's also a behaviour which has been ingrained in me, because I've been here for so long. You know, that feeling of "you're a student and you don't know, you know nothing'. Um, there's so much merit and integrity for just like, presenting *something*. And here, certainly with the way the department's run, we feel like we can't do that. And that just, that stunts any particular growth. And I think with, I think musically… um, what do I think musically? I think it's, it's all the same thing when you have people who are really precious - you feel like your opinion is not valued at all, and so that completely- that again, that stunts your creative process by	"wrong", even if they are done with creative licence Seeing a therapist to treat MPA Breathing and mindset exercises to treat MPA Ingrained behaviour is to obsess over flaws in vocal technique due to pressures to achieve a certain sound Focusing on the performance as a whole is more effective than obsessing over vocal technique - the obsession is unhealthy Focusing purely on sound causes you to feel unworthy if you don't meet a certain standard - potentially

Positive mindset mitigates MPA and improves performance Fear of judgement Rejection contributing to negative self esteem Pressure to meet industry expectations Fear of judgement debilitating performance quality Feeling shame for worrying about the opinion of others	offering ideas you know, "bastare", basically. Yeah, um, does that answer your question? I: Yeah, thank you so much, amazing. Okay, so, my next question, what- do you have any strategies that you use to try and deal with or manage performance anxiety? Now that you've kind of had a bit of experience of that feeling, is there anything that you do that you find is helpful? Or do you try anything? CS: Yeah, I, so I, I've been seeing a therapist who works with [others in the industry], um, and she's given me quite a few techniques, a lot of you know, deep psychological breathing, um, listing off three things that went well each time you do a particular run or a performance. Um, things that you would like to work on if, if need be. I: Oh okay, that's interesting! CS: Um, well I, [stutters] it just depends on… it depends, obviously what I would go straight to is vocals and technique. So what I, what I would, what I would, I can see myself doing a lot more now, especially having, especially working at [a famous opera location] and all that experience and everything like that, it was such an eye opening experience, um, just about how, right, okay, so vocals aside, let's, let's think about these things in terms of, in terms of my interpretation, stage stuff, and how that could inform your singing	more of a trigger for MPA Focusing on emotional delivery, switching mindset away from obsessing over perfect technique, benefits performance - less likely to feel not good enough Too much stress can hinder performance Healthy mindset around failure and mistakes allows you to develop your technique in a healthier and more effective way The opinions of others can influence MPA Fear of opinions from teachers from the conservatoire increasing feelings of pressure

	instead of your, instead of just focusing on how you sound, think of the um, much more about what you're singing about, and emotionally, how that involves your singing, because obviously, so much of what we do, our voice is connected to our heart. Um, well, as well as this [gestures to the mind] obviously, scientifically this [still pointing to mind] but emotionally here [gestures to the heart]. And this [still pointing to heart] I, I cannot tell you how much this can do for the voice, instead of going down that technique rabbit hole, just by, just by having a good time [shakes head], it really helps. I try and think "just enjoy yourself", and sometimes if it goes wrong, hey, it goes wrong, but [shakes head] you know what you need to do next time because you're in a better headspace, so you can think technically at that point. I: Yes, yeah, 'cause it's not overwhelmed with the thought of just the pressure and the thoughts of what other people think. CS: Yeah, exactly, the people can, yeah, people can put pressure on you,	Rejection leading to increasing worry about others opinions Fear of being judged by teachers or industry professionals, hindering performance Unable to focus on performance due to being consumed by MPA Worry about delivering a "worthy" performance was detrimental. MPA triggered feelings of shame and disappointment in oneself Suggests that approval was not given regularly in a training scenario- were they trying to instill discipline?
Lack of positive reinforcement from teachers Feel unworthy based upon vocal ability Lack of positive reinforcement from teachers		

	um my [senior teacher] actually came to watch the show at [a famous opera house] and I [stutters], 'cause, he told me the day before and I was like "fuck!" [closes eyes] 'cause I, I can't stand him, okay? [smiling] There's like a whole thing like, he denied, he denied me another job there, to be in an opera where I only sang a hundred bars, and it, yeah, yeah, that's another story. I'm sure [a mutual acquaintance] would be delighted to tell you everything if you talk to her about it! He told me that he was coming to see the show, and I, and I remember that night, I felt like it was the- my worst night, 'cause I just, was just thinking about him in the audience [shakes head] instead of what the hell was actually going on! And I remember vocally it wasn't, it wasn't my best night and I was like 'fuck, I, I can't believe that he got to me'. And I let, and I let that happen myself. 21:51. I: Bless you, yeah, I mean I'm sure it was absolutely incredible CS: Yeah, oh it was great! yeah yeah yeah! Oh I got a lovely email afterwards and I was like [mimicking typing] "oh, okay, thank you, prick!" I: Oh so, he actually gave you some approval afterwards?	Suggests that his tutors only showed support when he received a good opportunity, and did not support his entire journey Teachers that show favouritism make other students feel unworthy
Perfectionistic tendencies contributing to anxiety Responsibilities of being professional Performance continually analysed in a training setting, contributing to fear of not meeting expectations		

Responsibilities of being professional Highly demanding industry Creative freedom in a professional setting helps to mitigate anxiety Heavy workload and intense vocal demands in the training environment Exhaustion due to vocal demands Psychological implications of seeking perfectionism	CS: Yes, well, it's interesting because, oh, yeah, finally got some approval, and also my- so my designer knows him as well and um, eurgh, oh jesus, she kept- so at the pub on the last night- I, I, I won't go on too long, but she came up to me and just said "Well done" and everything, bla bla, and then she saw this guy and um, she said, she said, she said, that he and my usual director said "We didn't want to um, we didn't want- we didn't want it to seem like, too favoritest, but we were really proud of him". I went "fuck off!" I was like "how DARE you say that when you've been showing favouritism for this whole course!" It's rubbish, you get people like that and it's horrendous. I: Yeah, that's crazy CS: It is crazy! I: This kind of leads me really nicely to the next thing I'd like to talk about, 'cause obviously, you've been in training for so long CS: Yeah I: And you've then sort of had this first real professional experience at [a famous opera house] and you mentioned that you did sort of experience some feelings of performance anxiety on that professional run, with you know, your [senior teacher] coming along. Did you, sort of, have um, a different experience of this performance anxiety in a professional setting compared to	MPA stemming from fear of not being good enough, fear of not living up to expectations In professional work, you represent yourself only - adds a certain amount of pressure In a training scenario, performance and technique is being analysed for mistakes constantly, increasing feelings of MPA Always working towards being the highest standard you can be in a professional environment Pressure to always perform at a high standard in the classical world due to expectations within the industry In a professional environment, you have more artistic licence and room to experiment without being judged An expectation within a

Thorough preparation minimises MPA Importance of a healthy mindset Pressure to perform in front of industry experts Preparation and fear of post show implications contribute more to feeling of anxiety than the prestige of the show	the training setting? Or was there - was it better, was it worse, or was it different or, you know… CS: Um I: I'm just kind of intrigued to see if coming out of, going into a different environment, like a professional environment, made you feel differently? CS: I think, well, I, I remember the- some of the studio rehearsals I did get quite anxious about, if things weren't going particularly well, um, and I would go back into college mode a little bit, but the thing is, when, when you're, when you're outside of that college bubble, you're, well, you're sort of on your own. Um [stutters] but the good thing is that the spotlight - you don't feel like you're under a microscope all the time, so if you do have a bad day, well one, you have to accept it and two, you have to figure out how you're going to do that better the next time and it's not, not that there's- not that there's no pressure, course there is pressure, this is very high professional standard work,	conservatoire to always been on top form Conservatoire is a highly vocally demanding environment When there is no freedom of expression or the freedom to make mistakes, it affects you psychologically Thorough preparation and rehearsals without judgement, where there is freedom to get it wrong and have some creative expression, minimises feelings of MPA If you are well prepared and in a good mindset, MPA is more manageable Increased pressure when performing in front of those already established in the industry The strict environment in the conservatoire and the constant high expectations increased MPA

Doesn't identify as professional due to lack of experience Access to mental health support is beneficial in the classical industry Awareness and acceptance of MPA Fear of judgement due to MPA	but at the same time you have, you feel like you have the room to make these mistakes, you feel like you have the room to um, to, to work things out. Most, most of the other guys were marking for nearly for the whole studio process, and I found that incredible. Beause [stutters] we're never encouraged not - we're never encouraged to mark in studio rehearsals, we have to sing, we felt like we had to sing flat out from 10am, all day, and you're- you're knackered! And when you can't do the things you want to do it [stutters, point to the mind] it messes you up. I: That's fascinating, yeah 'cause, you would, from the outside, you would think "oh, the gig would be the place where you feel the spotlight's on you, and the pressure, but what you're saying makes complete sense though about it being the other way round, given the environment you were in, CS: But also, most of your prep is done in that rehearsal time, so if you've done well with that, then the performances, [stutters] in the performances, you should feel fine. I mean I was, for my, um, for the general rehearsal, people were invited to come, and that was my, that was my, that was basically my debut, and I didn't- I didn't feel that nervous [shakes head]	Despite making professional debut and training for eight years, he doesn't identify as a professional opera singer yet Those in professional training should have access to trained mental health professionals to help them deal with pressures of training through therapy There needs to be more awareness

Intense workload and high pressure environment in classical musical similar to that of MT A lack of support across the MT and classical conservatoires Feeling unworthy despite the accolade of receiving a place in a conservatoire More support needed in the industry for those struggling with MPA Industry expectations surrounding standard of performance	and it was- it, it went very well. The premiere, the premiere was still good, obviously [family were] there so that's a little bit of pressure, 'cause obvious- I know they know what they're on about, and bla, bla, bla, bla. But I didn't- I was not quaking, this was my [famous opera house] debut and I wasn't - I, I felt better doing that than any show I've done at [a UK conservatoire], and I think that really says something. I: Wow, that really does, yeah CS: [inaudbible] I: Yeah, that's really interesting. Really, really interesting. Um, what do you think then, in terms of like, the classical industry, what do you think needs to change? CS: Mmm-hmm I: And like, what do you think could have been different about the industry, and the way that it actually works that might have helped your experience? CS: Well, I don't know if I can answer that, I don't think- I don't know if I can answer that properly because, I, I have obviously I've had industry experience, but I'm not an industry professional yet. Um, but from my- from, I, I was… I remember doing some work before I started the opera course, I was in a chorus up in [a location in the UK]	and acceptance of MPA within the classical music industry - suggests there may be some stigma in this field Suggests that the industry is currently not as supportive of MPA as it could be, and singers feel they can't or don't want to share their feelings due to judgement Opera singer can relate to musical theatre singing in terms of intense training, high expectations and elitist standards that put pressure on students, increasing MPA Singers should feel a sense of worthiness when accepted onto a prestigious course, as it's very difficult to receive a place, but they are made to feel unworthy

Traditional high standards of vocal delivery should be achieved in a more supportive environment Traditionally controlling teaching styles within the conservatoire Creative freedom in a professional setting helps to mitigate anxiety	which I'm actually doing again next, um, I think what needs to change, and, I, to an extent, people are doing this, on, at [a famous opera company] on [a program they are running], which I was paid to sing for, they actually have a team of psy- of psychologists on that program, so there is therapy, but if, what I think needs to happen, certainly based on this, in conservatoire, but to an extent in the profession, I think there should be space to just talk about how we're feeling and how and there has- yeah, there has to be a safe space to talk about how we're feeling I think, and be honest with how, and just be honest with what's going on. Um, I think I can't, I don't know, I can't really say because I haven't experienced it as much as I really should… I: But no, I mean, I guess, like, obviously a massive part of your industry is the conservatoire, isn't it? It's the training, like, you're in professional training you know, that's required of you guys for, you know, like, when you compare your training to like a musical theatre, drama school kind of diploma or a contemporary music degree, like, your training process is a lot more extensive, like the formal training process, you know? CS: The formal training process, yes I would say, but the, I, I would compare it to, well, with my girlfriend's in musical theatre, so, with her experience of conservatoire, well, drama school, she'd be in from eight, eight 'til eight, and they, again, college politics, bla, bla, bla, bla, um,	Suggests that praise is only given to a select few, and is not used as a means of support and positive encouragement, triggering feelings of not being good enough High expectations of opera singers - if these are not met, singers are made to feel not good enough Traditional expectations of certain vocal qualities should remain, but trainee singers should not be made
High pressure environment can be detrimental to performance Becoming professional is seen to be "earned"	but she never really got the time and care that she deserved, and [stutters], to an extent, same here. All of us actually feel like we're not good enough, and that's, that's a lot- it's an exclusive course as well, there are twelve people in each year, all of us have a degree of [shakes head] are we good enough? Um, and value, I think, in the pro- in the industry, there should be an emphasis on value to those who need it, there are people who are arrogant and primadonnas and bla, bla, bla - leave them be, but I think just some positive encouragement would be lovely [laughs], to be honest. I: Absolutely, yeah! Yeah that makes total sense 29:14 CS: Not just "this is wrong, this is wrong, this is wrong". I hate the word wrong. I: Yeah, so it's um, again so, sorry, this is just so fascinating to me, because obviously this is not my world, obviously, I relate as a singer, to a lot of this in different ways, but um, so you mentioned there about like, what would be really helpful is just having the space to just kind of like, talk things through, about how you're feeling, having you know, your hard work recognised	to feel unworthy as they are developing The result is important, but the process of achieving that result should be more nurturing and supportive Feelings of MPA were less prominent when there was less pressure to achieve a certain sound Lack of creative process and lack of preparation can lead to feelings of MPA Committing to training and the process of learning is enough to achieve high performance standards - intense pressure is not necessary Confidence and a healthy mindset are key to delivering a good performance Less pressured environment in the professional world, allowing for less overwhelm and more focus on developing the performance

Feeling like you have something to prove A more relaxed environment and adequate preparation minimises MPA	and valued, and not just constantly put down. In terms of then kind of like, that benchmark that you were talking about, and the workload, do you feel that that is still necessary for the field that you're in, but you just then need that support to supplement it, or do you think there could be a shift with that kind of expectation of you guys as well? Just out of curiosity. CS: Pffft… I think the- I think the expectation still needs to be there, um, but what I think, what I think the emphasis should be on is the process rather than the result, because if you get the process right, the result will come, that's what was so, so lovely about this last experience that I had because everyone was, everyone- no, no one cared about a particular sound on the day, or how you sung, it's how- it's the justice you did to the character, and how you- and how prepared you were musically for it, so, I think if you, if one has enough attention to detail, then the rest will come,	A conservatoire is a more high pressure environment compared to a professional production Once you become professional, the expectation is that you are good enough - you have earned your role - therefore the pressure is less intense Freedom to choose jobs based on personal preferences, whereas in college, you are pressured to perform to their set standards Made to feel unworthy in a conservatoire due to lack of experience - made to feel "not good enough" Completing training and getting professional work means there's already an expectation that you are capable - so there is less intense

Negative experience within the conservatoire Extensive training in the classical industry Vocally demanding industry requires intense training Financial stressors in the UK classical industry	um it just, it just honestly depends on how you feel on the day um, and how- just how confident you feel to be honest, and I, as I said, most of the guys were marking for the whole studio process, just so they can get the blocking right, just so they can get their characters right, and then they can add the vocals on top. I: Yeah, I know this was sort of like, your first real kind of, professional experience, but um, you, assuming that you've maybe talked to others about their experiences in different operas, do you feel like that - the experience that you've had - was quite unique to that show, or that particular company, or do you think actually when you get into the industry, it is a bit like that and a bit more, kind of like you said before, there's a bit more space and a bit more room for… CS: Yeah, based on my, yeah, based on my limited experience I think the industry is more like that. I think it's much more like that, because you just get on with the work. I: You're professional at that point CS: Yeah, they expect you to do it, and you know, and you expect yourself to do it, and people just get on with it.	pressure Supportive and relaxed environment creates a better experience for the performer Excitement to leave training suggests that there have been times it has not been enjoyable Intense training period

	You know, and plus, you're being paid, there's- there's obviously and incentive there, whereas- whereas at college, you have to do it, you know- this has been given to you, you haven't earned it, that's the- I think that's the big thing. You've earned your- your place in the show through auditioning. So I think, I think the value is already there, you just need to- you just need to do the work, and when you find fun, when you find fun in that, um, because you've been prepared, um, because you've taken on notes, you can play and find fun, and I, I absolutely remember having some hilarious moments, even on the stage, and our director's watching and she's pissing herself. So, yeah, it… yeah, I think the stars really aligned though with this last one, 'cause we had such great people on everything. I: Amazing, amazing, ah, [CS] this has been so insightful and helpful, so thank you so much. What's like, next for you, how are you feeling next then about, um, kind of like next steps in finding like, the next or, or like, 'cause you need to clarify for me where- you're still in training, aren't you? CS: This is my last term	Job insecurity, but feeling positive Further training is usual after conservatoire - highlights how demanding the industry is Financial instability in the UK in the classical scene - pressure to move to Europe
Different pressures between training and professional career - finances, job instability Feeling out of one's comfort zone vocally can increase feelings of MPA Self esteem contributes to MPA Pressure to meet conservatoire expectations Lack of artistic freedom can hinder performance		

Extreme technical demands within the field of opera, Lack of consideration for performers needs within the conservatoire Feeling out of one's comfort zone vocally can increase feelings of MPA Extreme technical demands within the field of opera, Expectations to meet vocal demands increasing MPA Fear of failure negatively impacting vocal technique Feeling not good enough when expectations of vocal delivery are too high Lack of support	I: This is your last term? How are you sort of feeling then about like, coming to the end of that and what's kind of next? CS: Oh I can't fucking wait! I can't wait to get out of this fucking place! Um, it's because I've been here for so long as well, but at the same time, um… I: How long have you been there? CS: Um, I've - eight years. Eight years training, it's a long time. I: Yeah, it is. CS: Um, but what just, in terms of the work, obviously I had [stutters] I got this gig in September, which has been wonderful, um, so yeah, had this, I'm doing a festival in [a location in the UK] until August, no, 'til the end of July, um, I ha- I did have an, I did have an availability check from [a famous opera house] for [an opera] double bill, for chorus, and I did a working session, and we'll see what comes of that, that's from August to, that could be from August to end of October, and they've asked my availability from September to January but they need to hear me on - they've asked me to come in and sing on the main stage as well, so there's a lot of- it's all a bit up in the air. It could work out, and I could be, I could be employed until, until next year, um, the usual thing you do after conservatoire is you go on what's called a "Young Artists" programme, where it's a programme- it's like a, a um [clicks fingers] a residency at an opera house for people who are just starting their professional careers, and they get mentorship, mentoring, coaching, um, covers, performance opportunities at that house. And the big - the industry is huge in Europe, and it's dying here, so there's a lot of pressure to go over, I: Were you looking at going over to Italy or something for this, or Germany? CS: Well, Germany. Germany's where the work is. I: Got you, got you. And so how - with all of that kind of up in the air and in the pipe line, how are you feeling? Are you excited, are you nervous? CS: Oh, I'm, I'm a bit of both. I'm excited because I can finally work on the things that I want to work on, and think I sound good in, um, and literally from one, from one positive experience, you know, I was doing one of [stutters] the most, um, one of the best houses in the world, um, everything has just been sort of, going up, you know, a bit more successful, because I have much more of a sense of who I am as an artist and what I can do, instead of, I've got to do *this* at the conservatoire. You just go for it, and the voice follows.	Excited and nervous for entering the professional industry full time - more freedom, but a different set of pressures - finances, instability, being independent Being a professional allows you to pursue jobs that show you off in the best light - the conservatoire forces you to perform out of your comfort zone, increasing MPA Feeling uncomfortable within a role can increase feelings of anxiety Highlights the importance of good technique Important to sing repertoire that suits voice type for stamina and performance quality Highlights extreme technical demands within the field of opera, especially when repertoire is not designed for your voice type Conservatoire is more interested in being celebrated than focusing on the needs and best interests of their singers Expectations to sing material that was too technically demanding - being set up for failure

	I: Yeah, absolutely. [CS] thank you so much, for giving up your time to talk to me, it's been so amazing, CS: My pleasure, my pleasure I: I feel like I had one, erm, one question came into my head as you were just talking there, this is going to be the last one, CS: Yeah, go for it, yeah that's fine. I've got time! I: You know when you mentioned earlier about how you, so, going back to the start of the interview, I wanted to pick this back up, but then we moved on. You mentioned about being given repertoire throughout that didn't suit you, can you tell me a little bit about what, what you mean by that? CS: Um, so what I mean is, um, so the way the voice- so the way the human voice is in the opera world, there are these sub-categorisations. So of course, you've got soprano, mezzo, alto, tenor, baritone, bass baritone, bass, but there are sub-categories within those voices, and that's, and in Germany, it's known as the Fach system, and so there are, so um, in the repertory, there are certain roles which suit a particular Fach, suit a particular voice, and for vocal, for vocal longevity, and also just for the right kind of sound. Um, one needs to find a role which is best suited for their particular voice, so with me, I suit more Mozart, or Handel, and potentially, potentially some Bel Canto stuff, once I sort the rest of my technique out.	Fear of failure negatively impacting vocal technique, leading to tension that prevented optimal performance Highlights the need to feel confident and comfortable with the repertoire to minimise MPA and optimise performance Made to feel not good enough based on repertoire that is too challenging Feels unsupported due to conservatoire not considering his strengths *"Sort the rest of my technique out" - implies that CS feels their technique is still inadequate*
Self criticisms about technique		

	I would not sing Vagner, because that's, it's, I mean, I like my middle voice, I feel comfortable in the middle, but you have to sing over eighty piece orchestras, for three hours, and that takes- that's, that takes an animal to sing, like, I'm not that kind of singer. So there- so, just with that in mind, not that I was given Vagner,	CS feels that the demands of opera singing are challenging Industry Pressures to sing over orchestras with infallible technique
Vocally demanding repertoire		
Lack of support	but I feel the department here is more "come look at what shows we're doing" instead of "come look at what our singers can do".	Suggests the conservatoire are more concerned with their reputation than they are with the best interests of their singers
	So, I was given, I mean, to be fair I could probably sing this, this rep- show now, but at the time, obviously, I couldn't, and it was a load of high flying high notes, which I had to hold on for about twelve seconds and it-	Difficulties in achieving certain sounds
Vocally demanding repertoire		
MPA affecting performance	knowing myself and how psychologically and my psyche- my psyche, I would close up because obviously, I would have been stopped all that time, so literally, I'd be like "huh!" [mimics throat tightening] and you know, nothing would come out, um, so yeah, whereas this, this Handel we're doing now, I'm just doing runs everywhere and it's, it's great, like, and it's easy!	Symptoms of MPA detrimental to vocal technique
	So yeah, it just depends on how your voice is built up and if there are particular roles which suit you, and the- and that hasn't been the case for me. I've been given all the top-D shit, which I don't have yet. I: Interesting- and that's almost down to the opera house choosing a show that makes them- no, not the opera house,	CS has been given repertoire that doesn't show their strengths Suggests CS may be frustrated with the repertoire provided, potentially exacerbating MPA
Vocally demanding repertoire		

Lack of support	sorry, [the conservatoire] choosing a show to suit, you know, a certain- to sort of, um to highlight certain things, but not necessarily the strength of their singers they have? CS: Which is insane, which makes no sense! I mean [stutters] the show we're doing now is the first standard piece we've done in about four years at this place, and no- on a CV - it's not really much about performance anxiety now- but on a CD [shakes head] - a CV- no one is going to be like "oh you did [a certain opera], can you do [another certain opera] tomorrow?" 'cause, 'cause that's how we're getting money. I: Yeah, yeah, yeah CS: We digress! I: Thank you so much [CS].	Conservatoire prioritising their reputation of the best interests of their students

Appendix 4.3: Initial Analysis - Contemporary Commercial Music Singer

KEY:
Plain text - Descriptive Notes
Italic text - Linguistic Notes
Underlined text - Conceptual Notes

Emergent themes	Transcript	Initial Notes
Singers often train or perform in multiple disciplines Singing virtually live on social media Career expanded across	I: For my sample declaration, am I alright to ask you how old you currently are, and what age you started performing? CCMS: So, I'm about to turn 47, um, so I haven't been singing, so I trained originally as an actress, um, acting, musical theatre that kind of, you know, dance, all that. But I then went into um, just you know, pure drama and I trained at [a famous drama school in the USA] and did a lot of method acting, all that kind of stuff. Then I came back here and had my, my eldest son, so I, I went and did a degree in drama at [a university in the UK] and then, um, and then I started teaching drama, so my singing career really only took off during lockdown. Um, so yeah, even though I had been sort of, singing and doing things like that in a musical theatre kind of context, but nothing massive, big or professional, um, and I'd sung all my life, professionally it only really started in 2020, when we started doing the lives. I: Yes! CCMS: Um, yeah! And I had a real passion for wartime 'cause my dad was a much older dad, he was a World War II veteran, and I kind of grew up with listening to- he was a crooner himself, so he would sing a lot of the rat-pack songs, and all that kind of stuff, so, I kind of grew up listening to that style, so I started with the sort of,	Initial background in acting - route into the performing arts Started career later in life Experience in the world of musical theatre Started singing in a virtual capacity online Influenced by music she listened to growing up

multiple genres Imposter syndrome affecting MPA Lack of self belief A live audience contribute to MPA Audience feedback contributes to MPA Virtual performance makes audience feedback easier Fear of judgement MPA is experienced differently	wartime stuff, and then branched out a bit more to um, other eras that I'm doing now. I: Ah, amazing, okay, so you started from a musical theatre background, and then, just kind of through your singing through that, obviously knew that you had a, a voice and a talent for that and then sort of, lockdown, that's when you got into it. Okay, so brill, kind of similar to me actually, I sort of started in musical theatre and then moved into more contemporary a bit later, so that's really cool. Um, so, um, obviously the study's sort of revolving around music performance anxiety, would you mind telling me a bit about um, kind of, your experience of music performance anxiety and how you've - how it's presented itself for you? CCMS: So I, I've had real problems sort of, all my life in everything with imposter syndrome, you know, knowing that, being told "oh, you know, you've got such a talent in this, or you're so good in that, but never actually believing it really myself, and then during the- it was, it was really a really interesting and unique situation in lockdown, because although I was performing, I was on my own performing, not to an audience that I could see, but to an audience that was kind of online, so you're getting that feedback online, and even though I was nervous doing that, it was absolutely nothing compared to when I had to then move it into the real world when we came out of lockdown, and I was now performing to audiences. I think, you know, it's a very similar thing when you're acting to when you're singing, but I feel, I feel like the nerves when you're	Imposter syndrome stemming from an early age in multiple areas *All my life - suggests this has been an ongoing impact on her* Performing virtually made it feel like the audience weren't really there MPA was highly exacerbated in front of a real audience - suggests that the audience are a factor in MPA - fear of judgement? Able to control nerves more effectively in an acting scenario -

when performing in different disciplines	about to go on stage and you're acting um, uh, you can kind of almost use as energy,	possibly because she has had the training in this discipline?
Physical symptoms of MPA affecting vocal performance - lump in throat	you can talk through it, and it's more worrying about forgetting your lines, whereas when you're singing, all of the anx-anxiety, kind of comes up into your, your throat-	Anxiety when singing is much more physical and affects her more severely - this may affect her vocal technique?
Fear of making mistakes MPA triggering feelings of panic	well, it does for me anyway, and then I'm like "oh [stutters], is my voice going to go, am I going to hit that note, am I, um, am I going to forget all my words?	MPA triggers panic, exacerbating the situation. Worry over what's going to come out, lyrics - feeling out of control
Using technology as a safety net to minimise risks of mistakes	Am I - oh, you know, I don't have anything to have my iPad there with the words on to sort of fall back on, what if I-"	iPad used as a security blanket - without it, she's out of her comfort zone
Anticipation increasing MPA Overthinking Fear of the audience	all those kind of, doubts and those worries creep in just as you're about to sort of, step on stage. So for me, um, yeah, I think the singing was petrifying for me, coming out of lockdown and then having to sing in front of audiences.	Pre-show panic, overthinking everything that could go wrong Mention of the audience here suggests that this was a trigger of MPA *Petrifying - suggests the severity of MPA*
	I: Yeah, that- completely, and I definitely relate about, you know, kind of, feeling it in the throat and you know, that feeling you said of it kind of rising up, um. Talk to me a little bit more if you don't mind about what that actually feels like, if you can describe it? Like…	
Physical reaction to the thought	CCMS: I can actually feel it now, you know when you talk about something and it kind of, is that kind of memory of, um, muscle	Even thinking about it triggers physical symptoms - highlights the

of anxiety	memory, you- you feel sort of almost strang- almost like it's strangling you from the inside,	severity - suggests trauma?
Physical symptoms of MPA affecting vocal performance - tightness in the throat	you know, you've got tight- tightness sort of, coming up into your vocal cords and into your throat, and yeah, it's that real kind of- [swallows] and then you try to swallow to kind of, get it to go down, and yeah, it- it's not nice [laughs].	Physical symptoms affecting the voice Feeling strangled - suggests suffocation, panic *Swallow - suggests it was out of her control* *Laugh - making light of an unpleasant situation*
	I: No completely, completely, especially where I think as well, being a singer, you have so much awareness of what this feels like, even on a good day, you know? If this feels great [gestures to throat] you feel great, don't you? Like, you feel untouchable when you're having a good voice day, you can-	
	CCMS: Yeah	
	I: Whereas the minute something isn't quite right, you feel it straight away, don't you?	
Fear of repercussions for cancelling a gig	CCMS: Yeah, so an example of um, so I was performing at um, a few weekends ago, it was the first um… oh, what was it called… um, there's a new vintage festival basically on the scene, kind of replacing [another vintage festival], um, and I was invited to you know, be one of the singers, so I went down but I, I had, I knew I had a cold, I knew my voice was going, I was umming and ahhing,	Pressure to sing despite having a cold - could be down to self employed issues, or fear of letting anyone down or damaging reputation *Suggests she knew that she should consider cancelling as cold was bad*

	I was like “I can’t cancel this gig",	Whatever the reason, the fear of repercussions was worth the risk of not singing at top form
Health anxiety - fears of vocal health affecting performance Anticipation increasing MPA Important performances are more triggering	um, so um, you know, just the, the anxiety kind of getting to the gig, and then I was able to get through my first set, and I think this is a good - thing is one of the things to actually mention about that kind of anxiety, um, I’m always anxious, probably if it’s a really big gig, a few days before, leading up to the gig, but um, as soon as I get on stage, I then smash it and I don’t even know what I was worried about. So, it was - it’s all for nothing really,	Illness and having to perform with a cold contributed to feelings of MPA The anticipation of the gig is always worse than the gig itself The bigger the gig, the more anxiety is drawn out Feeling that MPA is never necessary - suggests feeling silly?
Health anxiety - fears of vocal health affecting performance Feeling shame when health affects vocal ability Fear of judgement Physical symptoms of MPA affecting vocal performance - tightness in the throat MPA can be a vicious cycle	but this particular gig, a couple of weeks ago, um, I had some serious problems with my voice, and I, and I got through the first set, but then the second set, my voice was pretty much gone, and I had to struggle through, and then the embarrassment when you’re on stage and you’re thinking “I can’t hit this note" and you feel that flush of, you know, of embarrassment, when you go red and you know, then your throat tightens up again, so you’re not doing yourself any favours in that way either,	Pressure to perform despite health issues affecting voice Worried about judgement of others, trying desperately to carry on - fear of looking bad Ashamed of vocal delivery impacted by health, triggering physical symptoms of MPA that hinder vocal technique *“Not doing yourself an favours” suggests a vicious cycle of anxiety over vocal delivery, then causing vocal technique to suffer*
Mental challenges of working when experiencing ill health Navigating voice problems	so yeah, that was, that was tough, and I had to rest it for a whole week ‘cause I had another… so I sing with a band as well, which we can also talk about, the difference between singing on your own, and singing with a band behind you, but I’ll let you go onto that when you… I: Well, I’m so glad that you actually brought that up because it’s definitely something that I would love to ask you about, kind of how you experience performance anxiety differently in those situations. I’ve read quite a lot of literature on this topic and yeah, um a few studies have highlighted that a lot of singers, um, attribute performance anxiety down to being like, the lead or the solo performer, so you know, obviously being a solo performer, leading a band, you can sort of understand that both have kind of, a pressure about them, but what, what’s kind of the difference for you?	A difficult experience for her Required to rest voice in preparation for another gig - often a tough situation for singers
Comparison of self to other musicians Imposter syndrome Feeling not good enough Sourcing work through social media	CCMS: I would say [clears throat] I massively respect everyone in my band so much, they are incredible musicians, and this again goes back to that whole imposter syndrome, so, I was asked to join the band of the back- off the back of the lives that I was doing on Facebook, um, so this was in 2020, and then um, you know, the, the makeup on the band has shifted a little bit over the last few years, um, but	Working with esteemed musicians that you can look up to can trigger feelings of imposter syndrome, linked to MPA Was approached by the band off the back of online singing - shows how contemporary singers can get work Comparing her experience to others, feeling not good enough due to lack

Pressure to perform to the same standard as others Imposter syndrome Fear of mistakes Feeling unworthy Effects of venues on experience of MPA Audience reaction can trigger feelings of MPA Pressure of being a lead vocalist Feeling shame over mistakes Imposter syndrome may improve with experience	I really struggled with them being really accomplished musicians in their own rights and playing for years and years and years, and me being this new girl who's never sung with a band before, and letting- what if I let them down? If I don't- what if I stumble over my words, what if I come in in the wrong key, what if I - you know, all of those kind of worries, and you know, those things do still happen to me on stage, like, I don't know- they probably don't happen to you, but… I: Oh, they do! They absolutely do! CCMS: We had a gig, we had a gig a couple of months ago, um, at [a venue in the UK] and I, and I - it's one of my favourite venues to play, it's a lovely, intimate venue, everyone- it's one of those venues where people come to listen to the music, rather than like, get up and drink and dance and talk, so, so then you know they're listening to every note, and I came in because, it was, it was a song where I had, I had to come in and lead, and um, I came, I came in on the wrong, in the wrong key, and there was nothing I could do until the next like, verse- and I was literally wanting to die on stage. But, had that happened four years ago, or three years, even two years ago, I would have been crippled and probably wouldn't have been able to carry on with the set, but I think over time you realise that those things just happen, you laugh it off, and, and you move	of experience Pressure to perform the the same standard as the rest of the band Fear that the band will judge her for making mistakes, feeling like mistakes make you not good enough Feels like she still makes mistakes, even as experience grows Different types of venues - in an intimate music venue, it feels like you are being listened to closely - fear of mistakes Pressure of leading with the vocals combined with the fear of making mistakes actually lead to a mistake Feeling a huge sense of embarrassment for making a mistake In early days of career, mistakes would have caused crippling anxiety Imposter syndrome slowly improving

Using technology as a safety net to minimise risks of mistakes Gaining trust in one's own ability through experience Audience connection can mitigate performance anxiety Pressures of performing as a solo act Feeling exposed Feeling vulnerable as a solo performer	on the next, to the next song. So I'm definitely more relaxed now than I was at the beginning with the band, but I do still worry about stuff, I mean, I used to have my iPad there and read off- read lyrics off the iPad, and now I don't, I don't do that and I can concentrate on my performance, and I find that actually the anxiety is less now that I can actually talk to the audience, perform, have that kind of patter, laugh at myself if I get something wrong or, you know, give ba- give the rest of the band solos, and now, it's sort of more natural, the anxiety is less. I: Yeah! Oh my god, there's so much that you've brought up there that I would love to talk to you about. I'm just going to write something down so that I don\'t forget, because I just want to go back to as well then, how does that then, so when you're performing as a soloist then, I can, I mean I, 'cause obviously as a singer myself in a similar genre, I can totally relate to a lot of what you're saying, big time, and I know kind of, how it feels for me, but I would love to hear sort of, in your perspective, then, what's the difference for you as a soloist and how does that feel compared to singing with the band? CCMS: Yeah, I think, I think when you're singing to a backing track, and it's just you up on stage, there's absolutely nowhere to hide, there's no support behind you, there's no um, you know, it's just you, you're a one man show, you're standing out, you know, you've got to be the,	with experience To help with anxiety in the early days, an ipad was used as a comfort blanket Audience connection can mitigate performance anxiety (when it feels like the audience is on your side) Tricks for leading the band confidently Performing without a band as a soloist leaves you more exposed to mistakes All eyes on the solo performer - increases vulnerability

Responsibilities of being a solo performer	you're the only one who's kind of um, there talking to the audience, and it's kind of the same	You're solely responsible for ensuring audience connection as a solo performer
Pressures as a lead performer Support from band members can mitigate MPA	with the band in that you're the front person, so you know, you are the one doing most of the talking, but when you've got other human beings and their energy behind you, you know, you - that support that you feel is um… it's just so much, it just makes you feel so much better, and	Pressures as the lead performer in a band are different than as a solo performer Band members support can improve feelings of MPA
Awareness and acceptance from band members Pressures of performing as a solo act	they know me, they know about my anxiety, they know how like, down on myself I always am, so they're always like "come on, you're amazing, you're, you know", they kind of, jeer you up, whereas,	Trusted band members can provide reassurance and support if they're aware of MPA
	when you're on your own, you haven't really got that, you've got to just turn up and go you know, "here I am, larger than life" and you know, "love me and what I do" [laughs]. Um,	Pressure to appear confident as a solo performer, even if you're not
Support from band members can mitigate MPA	I much prefer singing with the band than solo, much prefer it, yeah. I: Right, so do you- CCMS: 'Cause of the energy, 'cause of the energy. I: Yeah! Do you get more nervous then on the solo gigs with the backing tracks, almost for like, because you say, there's nowhere to hide, sort of thing, or do you find that like… or does it just depend?	Values of the support of the band members in situations of MPA Group support provides a sense of energy that you can feed off of when you're struggling
The experience of MPA varies gig to gig	CCMS: I think it depends on the gig.	Every gig is different

Lack of preparation triggers MPA The importance of focus before a gig Internal pressures based on perceived career milestones Internal pressure to do well The need to remove technological aids to appear professional Preparation is key Lack of preparation triggers MPA A confidence knock carries forward to future performances	It also really massively depends on how well I've prepared. If I have not prepared well for a gig, and I've not sung for a while, and then I'm, you know, I'll tend to listen to my play- my playlist in the car on the way to the gig, just to get it all - do you do that too? [laughs] I: All the time! CCMS: Just to get it all in, "right okay, what are we doing today, what-" you know, "oh I forgot, I actually forgot that that bridge was there" you know, um, so um, I'll do that, but if I've not, if it, for example, we played mainstage [at a UK festival] last year - biggest gig of my life, I've always been a punter at [this festival], [this festival] is like, my dream and, you know, yeah, so, that was like "oh my god, we're actually opening the mainstage, this is crazy". So, um, and I was like "right, I have to be off my iPad for this, I cannot, there can't be an iPad there where I'm reading lyrics, like, you know, I've got to-" so I did a lot of preparation, and I felt incredible, like, smashed it, you know, everything- everything went well, nothing- there were no mistakes, um, but then I think sometimes you can get complacent, 'cause I've done that, and then I've not gigged again with the band for another month, and then, and then things are just all over the place and you're just like "hang on a minute, how has this gone so wrong?" and then that knocks your confidence again, so the next gig, it's like "oh" [grimaces], you know? I: Yeah,	Lack of preparation can trigger symptoms of MPA Refreshing material en route to a gig to mitigate MPA - suggests that lack of rehearsal can cause anxiety Getting in the zone before a gig can help to mitigate MPA - running through material, checking structures etc. A career milestone, a lot of pressure put on oneself due to a personal connection with the festival iPad acts as a comfort blanket, safety net to prevent forgetting lyrics Preparation is key for feeling confident ahead of an important gig Inadequate preparation can lead to mistakes, causing feelings of self doubt, One bad gig can trigger MPA for the next gig

MPA is an ongoing battle Each gig comes with unique pressures Every gig is different Internal pressures based on perceived career milestones Internal pressure to do well Lack of preparation triggers MPA The experience of MPA varies gig to gig	CCMS: I never feel comfortable, I never feel like I've got it cracked or sorted, ever I: Yeah, well the thing is, there's always something, isn't there? Like you, like you said, whether you're, if you're doing it on your own, there's a whole set of pressure, if you're doing it with the band, there's a whole set of pressure, and then like you said as well, depending on the gig, there's different pressures, right? CCMS: Yeah. So, in answer to your question, I'm not sure it has so much to do with whether it's solo or whether it's with a band, I think it probably has more to do with what the gig is, how, you know, how connected and important you feel that is to you and your story and your journey - as much as it shouldn't be, 'cause every gig should be like, you should, I always give my all in a gig, but you know as well as I do that there are some gigs that are more- that are closer to your heart, and um, and that's- so I think it probably has more to do with that, and then the lack of preparation or you know, the over- the preparation that you've done. I: Absolutely, yeah, I mean I remember seeing your [festival headline performance] on social media and being like "oh my god" and like, looking and thinking "that would be a bucket list gig for me" as well, so I'm so glad that you said it went well, but yeah, like, you know, I do understand, yeah, kind of having that bucket list of gigs that you want to achieve and then kind of, the pressure of	MPA is an ongoing battle that can be exacerbating by new scenarios each time MPA depends on the pressures surrounding that specific gig - it is not caused specifically by being the lead or solo performer The pressure of a "big gig" may be self inflicted due to own personal feelings surrounding the event Personal pressures that can exacerbate MPA - fear of letting yourself down? The personal pressures of the gig plus the preparation can massively impact MPA

	getting there, it- yeah, it makes complete sense what you're saying. And then, just linking back to something that you said earlier then, that I've written down that I wanted to ask you about. So, you mentioned that you got sort of, started singing virtually, first of all, and then, it was kind of when you moved into the live scene that, that this kind of performance anxiety started really to kick in. What relationship does the audience play then in your experience of performance anxiety, if any?	
Audience reaction can trigger feelings of MPA	CCMS: I think they're hugely important, um, but as you know, as a live performer, whether you're acting, whether you're singing, whether you're - your audience is key, and	The audience is an integral part of the performer experience no matter your discipline - the audience response can make or break you
Post event rumination triggered by audience response	you can have a night where you get- you give absolutely everything you have, and you get nothing back, and you feel like "oh god, that was so, that was hard work" or "that was flat", and other nights, you can have an audience that's you know,	A poor audience response can cause post event rumination
Audience connection can mitigate performance anxiety Fear of judgement	you can have an audience that's like, talking back to you or like, participating in things or singing along or dance - and they get up and dance and that kind of gets you going, so	Audience interaction and response can instil confidence in you as a singer
Effects of venues on experience of MPA	audience are hugely important, and um, I, I will say venues are massively important as well, because… the year before that, we opened a different venue at [the same UK festival] we opened [a venue within the festival] and it was, that was our first debut at [the festival] and it was a… you know, it's inside, it's a tent, and everything and there's a dance floor, and it was a much more intimate venue than a mainstage venue, and it actually, actually after the mainstage gig, I felt like, I sort of felt like I had preferred the year before, even though, you know, mainstage has that	Audience and venue are big influences on the performer's experience of MPA The way a venue can be set up can make it harder to connect with the audience - making it more hard work for the performer to feel their energy.
Audience connection can mitigate performance anxiety	massive accolade, it's really, really hard to feel that feedback from an audience when you're on a mainstage and they're down, you know, they're so far away. So I think like, venue plays a massive role in it as well. I: Completely get that, yeah, I completely get that. CCMS: You've played some really big gigs I: Yeah, completely and I definitely find that also like, yeah, feeding off the audience is a huge part of then how you feel the gig goes. CCMS: Mmmm I: What like… how would you describe like, the audience from hell for you, like that?	Audience energy instils confidence that the gig is going well
Audience reaction can trigger feelings of MPA	CCMS: [smiling] Just like, non-responsive, or just talking amongst themselves and not really being engaged in the performance, no one dancing, um… I've	Lack of attention and response from the audience can cause overthinking and anxiety
Fear of judgement	never had boos or heckles but [laughs] but I can imagine that would be pretty horrendous! Um and like, people just…	Fear of being judged by the audience
Pressures of being a niche performer	I think sometimes, especially in the genre that we sing in with the vintage stuff, sometimes people don't get it, or it's the wrong fit for that venue, and sometimes that can cause anxiety as well, because	Genre specific anxieties - wrong fit for a crowd, pressures to win over audiences
Effects of venues on experience of MPA	if you're… if, if, if the audience are there and they're expecting something, and they're not getting what they want, they can be like	A pressure to win over fans in venues that are not necessarily catered to

Pressures to win over an audience	"oh" [disappointed tone], you know, dismissive and "oh, that wasn't a good night" like,	your genre or style - when this doesn't happen, a negative audience response (or lack of) can trigger MPA
Audience reaction can trigger feelings of MPA Audience reaction can knock confidence	you know, and so that plays a massive - you want - all performers have really fragile egos. All performers, I don't think there's one performer in any, in any aspect of the performance industry that doesn't just want people to love them and appreciate what they do, and think they're the best thing that they've ever seen, and if that's not happening, you can almost feel yourself deflating on stage, I have, anyway. I: Yeah! Well, that was literally going to be my next question, when you get an audience like that, how does it actually make you feel? Like, what's going through your head, in your personal experience? 'Cause like, I totally agree, we all feel that, but it would be really interesting like, you know, in your experience, what does that actually feel like for you?	Performers just want positive affirmations that they are good enough Losing confidence in scenarios where you don't feel good enough for the audience
Feeling uncomfortable Feeling ashamed A perception that singers should be confident Fear of failure Embarrassment due to perceived negative audience	CCMS: Physically, I think physically it genuinely feels like you want to, like you're shrinking, like, you, you, you know, instead of doing the opposite, which is probably what you should do- grow, and get bigger and you know, change it up a bit, but for me, I tend to go like "oh no, oh no, oh no" and like, sort of shrink in and physically deflate. Sort of like, try and make myself smaller, so that all the mistakes aren't being seen or, you know, and things like that.	Lack of audience affirmations causes her to feel small, like she wants to hide away, uncomfortable feeling A perception that singers should always be confident Shying away from mistakes - fear of failure, fear of judgement

response	I: Yeah, that makes complete sense. Um, that actually leads on to, something else that I wanted to talk to you about really nicely. So, other than kind of, a negative audience experience, are there any other situations that really sort of, exacerbate the feeling of performance anxiety? I know you mentioned briefly about, if you feel underprepared, and then yeah, like I say, the audience - was there any other kind of scenarios that really trigger the feelings of anxiety, before a gig or during a gig?	
Performing can exacerbate insecurities surrounding body image	CCMS: I'm trying to think… well, this is a really difficult one, because, um, I also massively struggle with my weight and my appearance, and my weight yo-yo's constantly, it has my whole life, and I'm never happy when I'm bigger, and I'm big at the moment, for me, I'm big at the moment. I; You look amazing! I always think you look so stunning, everytime I see you on social media, I always think you look so glamorous! CCMS: Thank you! [information redacted at the request of the participant]	Pre-existing negative self body image is exacerbated on stage
Comparison to others Expectations based on age or experience	CCMS: And, and, you know, 'cause I'm an older, woman, you know, in, in sort of, this kind of industry and genre, I think, um, I should, I, I also feel the pressure of "I should have my shit together a bit more", really. You know, I should know this stuff, I should, you know, and all of you girls are, are young and like, vibrant and you know all this, you	Comparing oneself to others. Worries that at a certain age, one should have certain accolades, abilities or experience. Comparison to others in the industry, making her feel inadequate

Comparison to others Imposter syndrome affecting MPA Feeling inadequate Comparison to others triggering MPA Feelings of self doubt Negative self talk	know, you know what you're doing. I think sometimes that actually comes into it as well, when you, we don't - we haven't touched on this yet, but comparing yourself to others, and then not feeling good enough 'cause others are so amazing, that one hundred percent plays into the anxiety- the stage anxiety as well- it does for me, anyway. Um, and that, that, that you know, those little voice- that imposter syndrome and those little voices in your head, "you're not good enough, why are you doing that? Look at them, they're incredible, they're, you know, they're this, they're that, what makes you think that you can do this?" I: Yeah, no yeah, absolutely, it's, it's a real struggle isn't… oh god, there's so much good stuff that I really want to talk about, if you don't mind- CCMS: I went totally off topic, what were we talking about? I: No, you didn't! It's fine! You were mentioning about body image initially, I think.	Feeling inadequate compared to other performers triggers MPA and feelings of self doubt Imposter syndrome - feelings of self doubt, negative self talk - contributes to feelings of MPA
Performing can exacerbate insecurities surrounding body image Internal insecurities leading to MPA A lack of control on social media posts	CCMS: Oh yeah, so, yeah so, so that for me at the moment is a big thing, and I'm looking at my wardrobe and I'm like "none of my clothes fit me properly, what am I going to like, go on stage in now?" Like, you know, how can I- I used to, I used to do things like control all of my photos when I was singing but, in, you know, that I would post on my private social media, and then realising that I had no control now over pictures that people take of me and post on social media, and so, like,	Lack of confidence based on appearance - negative body image Social media is a big part of the industry - a lack of control over photos that are shared from public performances triggers a lack of confidence

Internal pressures to meet perceived beauty standards MPA can be a vicious cycle Performing can exacerbate insecurities leading to poor mental well-being	the pressure for me that I put on myself, nobody else is putting it on me, but that I put on myself to "oh god, now I've got to lose the weight again, I've got myself to this, this point, and it's almost like self harm, like a self sabotage, because I know I'm not happy at this weight, and yet I do it to myself every time. And that's like, with mental health, like as far as - 'cause anxiety does lead into that whole mental health thing, um - you know, keeping yourself in that perpetual cycle of, of, of abuse, of you know, keeping yourself in position where you know you're going to be unhappy, and then you're putting yourself in a place where your unhappiness, or what you're unhappy with is on show for everyone to see, is, is actually really messed up. I: Yeha, like psychologically, it's so much to deal with, especially then with all of the other pressures of performing as well, I mean, um, is that kind of - and again, please don't feel like you've got to talk about anything, if I ask anything that's like, too personal, you don't have to answer anything - CCMS: I'm a complete open book [smiles] I: Ah bless you, just so - is that kind of where it stems from for you? Be- is it the feeling of being on show, that this kind of like, anxiety around body image comes from, or is it rooted in something else, is it rooted more in like, kind of, I don't know, kind of like, comparison, do you know? Where does that particularly come from for you in the context of performance?	Not a pressure from the industry, but a pressure from oneself to "fit in" with a certain perceived beauty standard Negative sense of body image affecting mental health significantly Why do performers put themselves on a stage where their insecurities are on show for all to see? Vicious cycle that can contribute to poor self esteem and mental health

Trait anxiety contributing to MPA Performing can exacerbate insecurities surrounding body image Negative body image affecting confidence surrounding performance Internal pressure to meet perceived beauty standards	CCMS: In the context of performance… I can't really, I can't really separate it from the context of performance and who I am as a person because, um, I, um, that's really difficult, but for me, like body image has always been a, always been a thing since I hit puberty, so you know, my mum put me on my first diet when I was twelve years old - it's always been like a, you know, a thing. Um, and I think now that I'm performing regularly and it's, it's become more of an issue that I want to tackle and get rid of like, once and for all, because it's more - it's not so much that I'm worried that other people are- what other people are going to be thinking about me now, it's more that I don't feel confident within myself, and if I'm not confident in how I look when I step on stage, I'm not going to be as confident in how I perform when I'm on stage, how I interact with the audience, and therefore my performance isn't going to be a good, so, yeah, so I think that's where the performance aspect comes in. I: Yeah, that makes complete sense, yeah, that feeling of when you feel comfortable, when you feel your best, like what we were saying earlier, like how you're feeling, you can tell in your voice straight away, can't you? Like, if you're having a bad day mentally, physically, like if you, you know, you can feel it in your voice straight away, can't you? Like, yeah, if you feel good, you sing better, if you don't feel good, no matter what context it's in, it does affect you, like, I completely relate. That answered that question brilliantly, so thank you. Um, so, in terms of then like, kind of, the industry of, kind of, being a working contemporary singer, is there anything that you think needs to change in the industry that would help you	Putting insecurities out into the world on a stage contributes to low self confidence in a performance context Negative body image affecting confidence surrounding performance Negative body image causing her to shy away and want to hide more?

	potentially with these, kind of, feelings of performance anxiety? Like, I know that's quite a big question, but…	
CCM singers perform in a variety of contexts Supportive circles exist within the music industry Cross-discipline experience highlighting differences in the experience of MPA Anxiety inducing experience of MT Comparison to others - body imagine Comparison to others - vocal ability Anxiety inducing experience of MT	CCMS: It really, it is, and it's going to be really difficult for me to answer, because I - a lot of my gigs are you know, quite small venues, um, people who are coming to see us because they like what we do, or private parties or weddings, or you know, that kind of thing. So, when you say the industry, I think it's really difficult. I find the industry - the particular scene that I'm in - I find really supportive, but I know that the industry as a whole is not like that. Like, for example, when you were talking to your musical theatre um, performer, one-hundred percent I can imagine what she or he was saying about - or they, them - were saying about, about the industry, you know, their industry. Um, you know, I've had a bit of an insight into that and it wouldn't be - it would be an industry that would absolutely cripple me, because you know, about the back - there's a lot of talking around- behind people's backs and openly being bitchy to people and you know, that, the really unhealthy competition that there is, not just in, in, you know, how, the quality of your voice but how you look, your weight, your, you know, all of those kinds of things, and so maybe there's a re- that's one of the reasons that I'm not in that field, because I love singing musical theatre, but I just don't think I could cope with that environment.	A wide variety of different kinds of gigs and performances making it hard to form any consistent strategies for preventing MPA Supportive circles exist within the music industry, Previous training in the MT industry has given an insight into the pressures specific to that field From personal experience, CCMS feels that the MT industry is too difficult Negative, unsupportive environment within the MT community Feeling the need to compete and compare oneself to others based on image, appearance and talent in MT Negative experience of the MT industry has put her off pursuing a musical theatre career, would be too

	I: It's really interesting that you say that, especially as I'm kind of looking at that comparison between kind of singing between those two fields, yeah, from sort of, like, your musical theatre days to now, what are sort of the main differences in your experience of performing in the two scenes, if that makes sense?	anxiety inducing
Cross-discipline experience highlighting differences in the experience of MPA Individuality is more accepted in CCM Comparison to others Fear of judgement Support from fans of your music can reduce feelings of MPA Supportive circles exist within the music industry Anxiety inducing experience of MT Fear of judgement	CCMS: Oh, they're so, they're so completely different, aren't they? So, obviously when you're performing in musical theatre, it's a much more commercial thing, musical theatre, to kind of the niche stuff that I do now, and so there's a lot, there's a lot more comparison made "Oh, well she wasn't as good as so and so that I saw doing that role in bla, bla, bla", you know? Whereas when you're, when you're singing you know, with a band, or you're doing the contemporary stuff, or the vintage stuff even, it's um… everybody who's there wants to be there for the music and they love the songs and they love the era and they love the clothes and they love the fashion - so it's a whole kind of look, so they're generally already behind you. They're not there to tear you down, so generally, I feel like the musical theatre industry- unless you are like, the best of the best, they will pick you to pieces.	A different experience of CCM and MT Certain expectations in musical theatre based on the performances of others in the field, compared to CCM in which individuality is more accepted Comparison to others in the field In CCM, fans of your music will back you and support you, making it feel like a more supportive environment than MT Fans of certain genres in CCM are generally supportive - she has had an experience in MT that is more judgemental

	I: Right. It's so interesting, like, yeah and I, again, I completely understand what you're saying, um… Just 'cause you've brought it up again, it would be amazing to talk a little bit more about the thing about comparison as well. CCMS: Yeah I: So did you say you sort of found that worse in the musical theatre industry compared to the contemporary industry, or is it just different?	
Internal insecurities contributing to MPA Performing can exacerbate internal insecurities Anxiety inducing experience of MT Fear of judgement	CCMS: I think it's just different, I think… look, the comparison thing is just a me thing, in this industry that I'm singing in now, I am my… I am the demon in that, not, you know, me and my, myself and my mental health issues are the demon in that. With the, with the musical theatre industry, it's very much I think outside influences then fuelling those demons. Does that make sense? I: Yeah, completely, yeah. Like, I suppose if you're… CCMS: There's a lot more judgement I feel in that, kind of… and it's very, very high pressured. I: Yeah. How do you kind of find, um… what was I going to say? You just said something that sparked a great question in my head, and now I've lost it… I mean, you know when you mentioned earlier about…	Personal struggles with comparison that stem from a place of insecurity Mental health issues stemming from own insecurities - not necessarily caused by the CCM industry, but sometimes can be exacerbated by it Her experience of the MT industry is that external factors can exacerbate MT - suggests it could be the feeling of judgement from others, high expectations etc

	CCMS: Take a minute to think! You can take a minute, I: I've got so much that I want to sort of ask you about, 'cause everything you're saying, I completely relate to, you know? Um, but yeah, cause I'm the same as you, kind of coming from a musical theatre background, and then going into the contemporary world, it does feel very different doesn't it? And I almost think, I used to find that, with musical theatre, there was so much to think about all the time, you know? Whether it was lines, dances, costume changes, um, and also like, the pressure to sound a certain way, as well. CCMS: Yeah I: Like, i never had the big "belty" kind of voice, you know, that you kind of get in musical theatre, I sort of felt like I couldn't really hit these big high notes the same way as the broadway singers, you know? And so then I wasn't really kind of - I was sort of always made to feel, you won't get jobs or auditions if you don't have that certain voice CCMS: Yeah I: As sort of, someone moving from musical theatre into more jazz, contemporary, how do you find kind of, the vocal demands side of it, I guess? Cause for me, what I love about singing jazz is that I get to play around a little bit more, and if I'm having a bad voice day, I can kind of use it to my advantage a little bit, like…	

Anxiety inducing experience of MT	CCMS: Yeah! Whereas with musical theatre, there's nowhere to hide. You can't play with that stuff.	Pressure in MT to maintain a consistently high standard vocal, even on an off day
	Yeah, definitely, and I think um, you know, obviously	
Feeling frustration when health affects vocal ability	I'm struggling with my voice at the moment, which is really frustrating but um, there are, there are different-	Issues with vocal health contributing to feelings of frustration, potentially triggering MPA
Vocal demands of CCM singing	there are also different genres that are more demanding, so, um, when I'm singing with the band, for example, and we're doing those big, like, rhythm and blues numbers, it is really like, power- they are really powerful, and they are really,	CCM singers often have to perform in a variety of genres - some more demanding than others
Lack of formal training contributing to MPA	they are really demanding on the voice, and I um, I haven't got the best technique, because I've never actually been properly trained, and so	No formal CCM training, meaning some genres feel difficult
Lack of technique contributing to vocal health issues	that's probably another, you know, reason why I'm losing my voice when I am getting ill and pushing it when I'm singing and it's not coming back as quickly, um, and then you've got the wartime stuff, which is very sort of, twee, and you know, I love the - I love the variety of the contemporary stuff, because you know, one minute I can be singing Vera Lynn, and then the next minute, I'm bashing out "Proud Mary" or you know, I'm doing, you know, and you can really show your range, um, whereas musical theatre is very specific. And you can show your range, as in, if you have a really great vocal range, you know, you can show that within the musical theatre industry, but that's kind of it.	Poor technique contributing to vocal health issues, exacerbating MPA
CCM singers are expected to perform in a variety of contexts		As a contemporary singer, you have to be adaptable and many CCM singers perform across multiple genres

Health anxiety - fears of vocal health affecting performance Feelings of self doubt Confidence in vocal ability Preparation is key Positive image of self can mitigate MPA	I: Yeah, do you sort of find then, just kind of going back to what you've just said a little bit, but then tying in what you've also said about musical theatre, just going to like, the vocally demanding stuff, do you look forward to the gigs where you can really show off the voice and get stuck in - CCMS: Yeah [smiling] I: - Or do they make you more nervous? Or, is it a bit of both? CCMS: I think it's a bit of both. One of my favourite songs to sing is the PMJ version of um, "Sweet Child of Mine", and um, that end note, you know, if you're not having a good vocal day [laughing], the thought of "Argh, am I going to hit it? Am I not going to hit it?", you know, that's sometimes actually - if I'm feeling good within myself, that's um… it's almost the anxiety's not there, it's almost like a challenge, and I think sometimes there's a really fine line between anxiety and enjoying the challenge of something, and like you said, you know, when you're feeling good, when you feel like you look good, when you're prepared, when you're voice- you're having a good voice day, and all those pieces fit, and you've had several gigs maybe in the last month or so and you are well rehearsed, the anxiety's way less and the en- the enjoyment and the anticipation and the excitement is way more. I: Yeah, no yeah, absolutely it's - I couldn't agree with you more. Um, this has literally been so brilliant [CCMS], thank you so much for giving up your time. CCMS: Aw!	Vocal health issues or a bad voice day contributing to MPA surrounding the quality of the performance Perception of vocal demands shifts when MPA is at bad Confidence, preparedness, healthy voice, well rehearsed, all contributes to the reduction of MPA

Alcohol to reduce MPA Mindfulness and meditation A fine line between adrenaline and MPA	I: I'm just trying to make sure if there's anything CCMS: Did you get everything you need? 'Cause I don't have to go, so I: Oh bless you! Well, there actually is one more question that I wanted to ask you, if that's alright. Um, what strategies have you, kind of, found, help with performance anxiety? Is there anything that you find makes you feel better, either in the lead up to a gig or during a gig? Any strategies that you use? CCMS: Um, I would say [laughs] I don't know if I can say this or not… having a drink! [laughs] I: Yeah, no absolutely! CCMS: Sometimes! [laughs] Sometimes having a, having a little drink before you go on stage calms the nerves, um and um, no, just kind of… I tell you what I'd like to do more of, is that kind of mindfulness and meditation to get into that kind of zone before a gig, and there's a really fine line between using your nerves for, like I said before, for- to enhance your performance because the adrenaline's rushing and	*Hesitancy - suggests that there is a stigma around admitting you have a drink to calm nerves* Using alcohol to calm anxiety Benefits of mindfulness and meditation to help calm MPA In some instances, nerves can benefit your performance, if they can be harnessed as adrenaline When you're too overwhelmed with

Overthinking leading to self sabotage	being calm enough so that you're not- your brain isn't running away with itself and you're not actually sabotaging without needing to, so maybe some	MPA, it can be detrimental
Mindfulness and meditation	mindfulness and meditation, maybe a bit of breathing,	Strategies for mitigating MPA
The importance of a supportive environment	talking to my band if, you know, it- sometimes we'll, we'll do our soundcheck and then we'll go off and we'll have a drink and we'll have some dinner and we'll just chat, and	A supportive and relaxing environment leading up to a gig helps to calm nerves
Distractions from MPA	we won't talk about music and we'll just, you know, sometimes taking your mind off of it,	Focusing on the gig too much can trigger panic/MPA
Mindset and mental health contribute to MPA	I think it really just depends where my mindset is on that particular day and I'm very all over the place and very up and down with my moods anyway [laughs] and so it could be just, yeah, I think it just depends on…	Your general mental well-being can massively affect how you feel in the lead up to a gig
Strategies to mitigate MPA vary with each gig	Sometimes I need a bit of a hug, sometimes I need to just be silly, I think it's just- I don't think there's any… like I don't have a set routine, I know like, loads of people will have that kind of, like if you go to a Pink gig or whatever, you know that they're out the back, and they're doing their circle and they're doing their vocal warm ups and they've got their sort of, um, routine, but I don't really have a set routine. Maybe I need to get one!	CCMS doesn't have a set routine to mitigate MPA before a gig
Consistent strategy for MPA may be beneficial	I: But it's kind of hard, like you were saying, sometimes like, you do such a variety of different gigs, it's kind of hard… and you're not necessarily with the same team all the time,	Potential strategy for mitigating MPA

	CCMS: No, I: You're not in the same venue all the time, and so, trying to have a set routine, I suppose, is really difficult and so, you bounce from one place to the next and yeah, so it's not easy to kind of manage that sort of thing. Do you find like, any kind of um, differences between like a public performance versus a private performance, you know, like the difference where, you're kind of there…	
Feeling exposed leads to perceived vulnerability	CCMS: Yeah I: Do you get what I'm saying? CCMS: I think when you're in a- when it's a private performance, sometimes, you're there just to be in the background, so they just want that kind of, background music, I much prefer public performances to private performances, and I think you're way more exposed at a private performance than you are like, at a public performance.	Private performances can trigger more feelings of MPA
Experiences of MPA are not black and white	Hmm… do I think that? Yeah, I think I do think that, because… I: Why?	*Hesitancy - suggests it's not a black and white answer*
Audience response contributing to feelings of MPA	CCMS: The energy's very different from the audience, like, going back to that audience thing, when it's a, if it's a really intimate family party- so I've got a 100th birthday party that I'm doing that I was just on a call with before we, I had a call with you, and um, yeah, they were going through set lists and things like that, it's like a, it's	Once again, the audience plays a big part in the feelings of MPA - in a private function, it's often less about the "music", not everyone is there to see you

Pressures of a solo performer Feeling exposed leads to perceived vulnerability Audience response contributing to feelings of MPA Audience feedback contributes to MPA Virtual performance makes audience feedback easier Internal pressure to sing at a certain standard	at a farm and it's a big family affair, and it's only me, so I know there's going to be like, yeah, anxiety around that. I get way- I think I get way more… you can't get as much feedback from an audience at a private party or private function as you do when you're at a gig. I: Yeah, I totally get that. And, one last thing if you don't mind, I remember what I wanted to ask you about before. What did you find… going back to how you kind of, started performing virtually, talk to me a little bit about your experience of that, and do you still do that, and how does that feel, compared to like, the live environment, you know? CCMS: Do you know what, [smiles] I haven't gone live virtually in ages, like, years, and um, I was thinking, funnily enough I was thinking about this today, I think, this morning. Um, and how, what a really unique experience it was, and um, I tell you what was really nice, was at my last gig, where I lost my voice, there were people there that had watched religiously every week online um, during lockdown and they came up and they were like, it's "You got us through such a difficult time, and you don't know, you know, the impact that you had, and we just wanted to come and watch you today and thank you in person, so, I think the difference is, you don't realise who's watching you, for a start, because you can see how many people are like, on, but not everyone's interacting with you, like, sending you comments and things like that. Um, and so you can almost pretend like they're not even there. So, sometimes the lives aren't as big, unless you're doing a new song and you're like [grimaces] "Oh god, that didn't sound great",	Less interested in the music, meaning sometimes the response is not as dynamic - makes it harder to feed off of audience energy *Smile - suggests that singing virtually makes CCMS happy* Performing virtually means you don't have the energy of the audience to put you off, you can block them out and it's easier to pretend no one is watching - suggests that the pressure of an audience contributes to feelings of MPA If a vocal delivery did not go as well, this can cause anxiety and feelings of

Testing new material can be anxiety inducing A live audience contribute to MPA Audience feedback contributes to MPA	but it's definitely, definitely like, way less nerve wracking performing online than it is in person, 'cause you haven't got that live feedback. You can see the whites of their eyes going "Oh god" [rolls eyes] [laughs]. I: Yeah god, absolutely! Thank you so much for giving up your time.	being uncomfortable Performing virtually less nerve wracking than in person, due to a lack of audience feedback

Appendix 5: Developing Emergent Themes

Appendix 5.1: Emergent Themes Table - Musical Theatre Singer

Impact on Self Concept	Psychological Challenges Relating to MPA	Physical challenges relating to MPA	Industry Specific Impact	Outside Perceptions of MPA	Potential Strategies for mitigating MPA
Symptoms of anxiety treated like bad behaviour	Lack of personal awareness of own anxiety	Lack of sleep	MPA was first experienced at drama school	Not being taken seriously as a result of anxiety	Medication having a positive impact
Referring to anxiety as bad behaviour	Lack of personal awareness of own anxiety	Lack of sleep	Sacrifice to attend drama school	Anxiety not being taken seriously by peers and mentors	Increased awareness leads to increased support
Made to feel like a problem due to anxiety	A need to escape overwhelming anxiety - unable to cope	Anxiety negatively impacting performance	Lack of self care due to intense workload	Negative stereotypes around MPA	Need for support from a trained professional
Referring to anxiety as bad behaviour	A need to escape overwhelming anxiety - unable to cope	Anxiety negatively impacting performance	Lack of self care due to intense workload - exacerbating anxiety	An expectation to not be anxious	Promoting inclusivity and diversity and using it in a positive way
Referring to anxiety as bad behaviour		Anxiety negatively impacting performance	Overwhelming pressures linked to attending drama	MPA is medically misunderstood	Avoiding Isolation and unwanted
		MPA negatively affecting general wellbeing			

Referring to anxiety as a problem	Feeling guilty for behaviour caused by anxiety	Anxiety affecting general wellbeing (exhaustion)	school - time, finances, travel	MPA is medically misunderstood	attention
Feeling abnormal and isolated	Feeling ashamed of anxiety	Anxiety affecting general wellbeing- mentally and physically	Overwhelming pressures linked to attending drama	MPA is medically misunderstood	Mindfulness techniques for calming anxiety
Referring to anxiety as bad behaviour	Feeling out of control	Physical symptoms of MPA	school - time, finances, travel	MPA is viewed as unprofessional	The importance of group support
Referring to anxiety as a problem	Feelings of anxiety closely linked to stress	Physical symptoms debilitating performance	A lack of awareness and support within the institution	MPA is viewed as unprofessional	Awareness and acceptance
Negative view of self - post event rumination	Feeling numb		Intense workload and very high, sometimes unrealistic, expectations	Being judged by others for having MPA - laziness	Consideration of feelings
Negative view of self - post event rumination	Feeling numb			Being judged by others for having MPA - stupid	A supportive environment in the theatre
Negative view of self - post event rumination	Feeling lost		Intense workload and very high, sometimes unrealistic, expectations	MPA seen as unprofessional	Awareness and acceptance
	Feeling trapped				
	Feeling punished for experiencing MPA				

Made to feel like a problem due to MPA Defence Mechanisms Anxiety interfering with progress Anxiety interfering with progress	Feeling hopeless Inability to cope Embarrassment, shame Feeling punished for experiencing MPA Easier to fail than to try and not succeed - fear of humiliation Easier to fail than to try and not succeed Fear of failure Feeling hopeless		A lack of awareness and support within the institution Overwhelming pressures linked to attending drama school - time, finances, travel A lack of awareness and training within the institution Challenges to balance treatment around training Needing to justify choices relating to mental health care - lack of	MPA seen as unprofessional MPA is seen as unprofessional Judgement of others due to MPA Lack of awareness of how MPA may be experienced - “something is wrong with you” Lack of awareness of how MPA may be experienced - “it’s just nerves” Being judged as “underprepared” due to MPA	

	Overthinking and over analysing personal performance Feeling trapped, hopeless Feeling isolated Trauma linked to drama school Trauma stemming from drama school Feeling isolated Feeling out of control Fear of judgement Feeling trapped		understanding/support Lack of self care due to intense workload - exacerbating anxiety Intense workload and very high, sometimes unrealistic, expectations Lack of additional needs support Intense workload and very high, sometimes unrealistic, expectations Lack of trained staff within institutions	Stereotypes within the industry surrounding MPA	

	Feeling drained Anxiety affecting general wellbeing- mentally and physically Coming to terms with anxiety Masking MPA due to fear of judgement Severe ongoing symptoms of anxiety Defence mechanism to cope with anxiety - brain fog		Lack of awareness and support from the institution Inappropriate support Lack of awareness and support within the institution Industry pressures that exacerbate anxiety Industry pressures that exacerbate anxiety Lack of support within the industry Intense workload and very high, sometimes		

	Opposite of avoidant behaviour Opposite of avoidant behaviour Lack of personal awareness of own anxiety Defence mechanism to cope with anxiety - "it's such a blur" State anxiety Defence mechanism - easier to fail the to try Intense workload leading to lack of self		unrealistic, expectations Lack of understanding/support within the industry Lack of understanding/support within the industry A lack of awareness, support and understanding within the industry Needing to justify choices relating to mental health care - lack of understanding/support		

	care - no mental break Judgement of others due to MPA		Needing to justify choices relating to mental health care - lack of understanding/support Industry pressures exacerbating MPA Industry pressures exacerbating MPA Industry pressures exacerbating MPA		

Appendix 5.2: Emergent Themes Table - Classical Singer

Impact on image of self	Psychological challenges relating to MPA	Impact of MPA on (development of a) Performance	Industry Specific Impact	Potential Strategies for Mitigating MPA	Environmental factors
Natural gift in music from a young age Differences in equality among students based on performance Value placed on technical ability High expectations of oneself contributing to MPA Rejection contributing to negative self esteem Coming to terms with failure affecting self esteem High personal standards contributing to low self esteem No voice to express creativity - feeling undervalued Self esteem contributes to MPA Feeling not good enough when expectations of vocal delivery are too high	Progression from "normal" nerves to severe MPA during formal training Feeling not good enough Feeling like a disappointment Fear of failure Feeling self conscious Feeling out of comfort zone Fear of judgement Fear of failure MPA contributing to poor overall mental health Unable to cope with pressures and expectations Feeling like a failure Pressure stemming from vocal demands Fear of failure Fear of judgement	Mental health negatively impacting performance Psychological pressure is a detriment to vocal performance Psychological pressure is a detriment to vocal performance MPA affecting emotional connection to performance Unable to be creatively expressive due to seeking perfectionism in technique Psychological barriers interfering with progress Adapting performance style to please others Unable to be creatively expressive due to seeking perfectionism in technique Fear of judgement	Expectations to achieve a certain sound contributing to MPA Highly vocally demanding repertoire Highly vocally demanding repertoire Intense, high pressure training environment Industry demands contributing to MPA - auditions Industry demands contributing to MPA - finances relying on high standard performance Industry expectations surrounding standard of performance Elitism and traditions in the classical world Industry expectations surrounding standard of performance Pressure to meet expectations exacerbating MPA	The importance of a supportive environment Positive reinforcement mitigating MPA Positive mindset contributes to a successful performance Breathing and mindset exercises to treat MPA Focusing on positives of performance Thorough preparation minimises MPA Importance of a healthy mindset More support needed in the industry for those struggling with MPA Creative freedom in a professional setting helps to mitigate anxiety A more relaxed environment and adequate preparation	Seeking perfectionism in technique is a learned behaviour Heavy workload and intense vocal demands in the training environment Controlling teaching style contributing to anxiety Controlling teaching style contributing to anxiety Lack of positive reinforcement contributes to MPA Expectations to achieve a certain sound contributing to MPA Lack of positive reinforcement from teachers Lack of positive reinforcement from teachers Performance continually analysed in a training setting, contributing to fear of

	Feeling inferior Fear of judgement Feel unworthy based upon vocal ability Perfectionistic tendencies contributing to anxiety Psychological implications of seeking perfectionism Fear of judgement due to MPA Feeling unworthy despite the accolade	freedom can hinder performance Fear of failure negatively impacting vocal technique No voice to express creativity - affecting musical progress High pressure environment can be detrimental to performance Expectations to meet vocal demands increasing MPA	professional is seen to be “earned” Extensive training in the classical industry Financial stressors in the UK classical industry Different pressures between training and professional career - finances, job instability Extreme technical demands within the field of opera Extreme technical demands within the field of opera,	achieved in a more supportive environment	Lack of consideration for performers needs within the conservatoire Lack of support A lack of support across the MT and classical conservatoires
	of receiving a place in a conservatoire Feeling like you have something to prove Perfectionistic tendencies Comparison to others Insecurities in vocal ability leading to overthinking Feeling shame for worrying about the opinion of others Exhaustion due to vocal demands Feeling out of one's				

	comfort zone vocally can increase feelings of MPA Seeking perfectionism in technique is a learned behaviour Feeling unable to be creatively expressive due to seeking perfectionism in technique Pressure to perform in front of industry experts				

Appendix 5.3: Emergent Themes Table- Contemporary Commercial Music Singer

Impact on image of self	Psychological challenges relating to MPA	Physical challenges relating to MPA	Industry Specific Impact	Potential Strategies for mitigating MPA	Scenarios that mitigate feelings of MPA
Comparison of self to other musicians Pressure to perform to the same standard as others Important performances are more triggering Internal pressures based on perceived career milestones A perception that singers should be confident Performing can exacerbate insecurities surrounding body image Comparison to others Expectations based on age or experience Comparison to others Negative self talk Performing can exacerbate insecurities surrounding body image	Imposter syndrome affecting MPA Lack of self belief Fear of judgement Fear of making mistakes MPA triggering feelings of panic Anticipation increasing MPA Overthinking Fear of the audience Health anxiety - fears of vocal health affecting performance Anticipation increasing MPA Feeling shame when health affects vocal ability Fear of judgement Mental challenges of working when experiencing ill health Imposter syndrome	Physical symptoms of MPA affecting vocal performance - lump in throat Physical reaction to the thought of anxiety Physical symptoms of MPA affecting vocal performance - tightness in the throat Physical symptoms of MPA affecting vocal performance - tightness in the throat Navigating voice problems Lack of formal training contributing to MPA Lack of technique contributing to vocal health issues	Singers often train or perform in multiple disciplines Singing virtually live on social media Career expanded across multiple genres MPA is experienced differently when performing in different disciplines Fear of repercussions for cancelling a gig Sourcing work through social media Effects of venues on experience of MPA Pressures of performing as a solo act Responsibilities of being a solo performer Pressures as a lead performer Pressures of performing as a solo act	Using technology as a safety net to minimise risks of mistakes Imposter syndrome may improve with experience Using technology as a safety net to minimise risks of mistakes Gaining trust in one's own ability through experience Lack of preparation triggers MPA Lack of preparation triggers MPA Preparation is key Alcohol to reduce MPA Mindfulness and meditation Mindfulness and meditation Distractions from MPA Strategies to mitigate MPA vary with each	Supportive circles exist within the music industry Support from fans of your music can reduce feelings of MPA Supportive circles exist within the music industry Confidence in vocal ability Positive image of self can mitigate MPA The importance of a supportive environment Support from band members can mitigate MPA Awareness and acceptance from band members Support from band members can mitigate MPA The importance of a supportive environment Virtual performance

Internal insecurities leading to MPA Internal pressures to meet perceived beauty standards Performing can exacerbate insecurities leading to poor mental well-being Performing can exacerbate insecurities surrounding body image Negative body image affecting confidence surrounding performance	Feeling not good enough Imposter syndrome Fear of mistakes Feeling unworthy Feeling shame over mistakes Feeling exposed A confidence knock carries forward to future performances MPA is an ongoing battle Post event rumination triggered		The experience of MPA varies gig to gig Each gig comes with unique pressures Every gig is different Effects of venues on experience of MPA Pressures of being a niche performer Effects of venues on experience of MPA A lack of control on social media posts CCM singers perform in a variety of	gig Consistent strategy for MPA may be beneficial Preparation is key Lack of preparation triggers MPA	makes audience feedback easier Virtual performance makes audience feedback easier Audience connection can mitigate performance anxiety The importance of focus before a gig Audience connection can mitigate performance anxiety Audience connection can mitigate performance anxiety Individuality is more
Internal pressure to meet perceived beauty standards Comparison to others - body imagine Comparison to others - vocal ability Comparison to others Internal insecurities contributing to MPA Performing can exacerbate internal insecurities Internal pressure to sing at a certain standard	by audience response Fear of judgement Fear of judgement Feeling uncomfortable Feeling ashamed Fear of failure Embarrassment due to perceived negative audience response Imposter syndrome affecting MPA Feeling inadequate		contexts Cross-discipline experience highlighting differences in the experience of MPA Cross-discipline experience highlighting differences in the experience of MPA Vocal demands of CCM singing CCM singers are expected to perform in a variety of contexts Pressure of being a		accepted in CCM

Comparison to others triggering MPA	Feelings of self doubt MPA can be a vicious cycle Trait anxiety contributing to MPA Fear of judgement Fear of judgement Feelings of self doubt Overthinking leading to self sabotage Mindset and mental health contribute to MPA Health anxiety - fears of vocal health		lead vocalist Anxiety inducing experience of MT Anxiety inducing experience of MT Anxiety inducing experience of MT Anxiety inducing experience of MT Pressures of a solo performer A live audience contribute to MPA Audience feedback contributes to MPA		
	affecting performance Feeling frustration when health affects vocal ability Health anxiety - fears of vocal health affecting performance Audience reaction can knock confidence MPA can be a vicious cycle Internal pressure to do well A fine line between		Audience reaction can trigger feelings of MPA Audience reaction can trigger feelings of MPA The need to remove technological aids to appear professional Audience reaction can trigger feelings of MPA Audience reaction can trigger feelings of MPA Pressures to win over an audience		

	adrenaline and MPA Feeling exposed leads to perceived vulnerability Feeling exposed leads to perceived vulnerability		Audience reaction can trigger feelings of MPA Audience response contributing to feelings of MPA Audience response contributing to feelings of MPA Audience feedback contributes to MPA Testing new material can be anxiety inducing A live audience contribute to MPA Audience feedback		
			contributes to MPA The experience of MPA varies gig to gig Experiences of MPA are not black and white Feeling vulnerable as a solo performer		

Appendix 6: First Round of Analysis of Superordinate Themes

Table" First Round Analysis of Superordinate Themes

	Impact on concept of self	Frequency
MT	**1) Made to feel like a problem** *"Random staff members in the hallway like, on a daily basis like, "Oh my god, [MTS] is here again, another panic attack"*	9
	2) Negative view of self *"I hate rehearsals, I dread rehearsals… 'cause I feel like I'm not grasping it… and the whole time through rehearsal I'm [shakes head] pants, I'm awful"*	5
	3) Feeling like they're not reaching their potential due to MPA *"It was happening at a lot of auditions, and I wasn't getting anywhere, and I was getting frustrated with myself [shakes head]. I kind of was like "Maybe I'm not meant to do this'"*	2
CS	**1) Low self esteem** *"It just wasn't going well vocally at all, and I was getting so frustrated and so flustered"*	8
	2) Made to feel undervalued *"You feel like your opinion is not valued at all, and so that completely- that again, that stunts your creative process"*	4
	3) High personal standards *"I myself obsess over high notes… my top notes weren't coming out as well as I'd like them to have done… so I remember being in the notes session like… depressed"*	2
CCM	**1) Comparison to others**	10

	"I really struggled with them being really accomplished musicians in their own rights and playing for years and years and years, and me being this new girl who's never sung with a band before"	7
	2) Insecurities exacerbated by performing *"I'm looking at my wardrobe and I'm like "none of my clothes fit me properly, what am I going to like, go on stage in now?"*	4
	3) Internal pressure to meet perceived standards *"The pressure for me that I put on myself, nobody else is putting it on me, but that I put on myself to "oh god, now I've got to lose the weight again"*	

Psychological challenges relating to MPA		Frequency
MT	**1) Negative emotions** *"I was obviously flight, I was not fighting it at all because I was just embarrassed"*	25
	2) Fears *"Why have I done this to myself, I hate doing this, I hate constantly feeling like this…I'd be like "I don't want anyone to see me be like this""*	6
	3) Coming to terms with MPA *"It's always going to be there, I've got to accept it"*	5
	4) Unhealthy coping strategies *"I would run down the corridor, would sit in the corridor, and um, I'd have a panic attack, well, like an anxiety attack"*	8
CS	**1) Negative emotions** *"I remember doing some online projects and I felt like whatever I was doing was still not good enough, at all"*	17
	2) Feelings specific to pressure *"We have to produce sound which is going to go over an orchestra, and that's - there's a lot of pressure on that"*	9
	3) Fears	8

	"I was basically afraid to make any kind sound just in case it was [signals inverted commas] wrong" **4) Seeking perfectionism** *"Trying to search for perfectionism and what you think you should sound like is a horrible rabbit hole to go down"*	5
CCM	**1) Negative emotions** *"I came in on the wrong, in the wrong key, and there was nothing I could do until the next like, verse- and I was literally wanting to die on stage"* **2) Imposter Syndrome** *"That imposter syndrome and those little voices in your head, "you're not good enough, why are you doing that?"* **3) Fears** *"You feel that flush of, you know, of embarrassment, when you go red and… then your throat tightens up again"* **4) Health anxiety** *"Had some serious problems with my voice…and I got through the first set, but then the second set, my voice was pretty much gone, and I had to struggle through, and then the embarrassment when you're on stage and you're thinking "I can't hit this note""* **5) Cycles of MPA** ***"**I never feel comfortable, I never feel like I've got it cracked or sorted, ever"*	17 4 14 6 7

Industry-specific impact		Frequency
MT	**1) Pressures of drama school** *"I had no time to like, do anything about it… I was commuting on a daily basis… and I was working evenings and weekends, 'cause I was paying for myself to go to drama school… but that probably wasn't making it any better"* **2) Intense workload**	5 9

	"We had to learn it in a week or two weeks or whatever, the fact that I was like, having to try and learn all this material… I was struggling so hard to learn the material" **3) Lack of awareness or support in the field** *"I don't think I was supported, at all. And to be honest, they didn't know how to support me"* **4) Industry pressures** *"We had so much dialogue to learn… we literally didn't go off stage the whole time, and we were constantly changing outfits, it was like, a lot"*	15 5
CS	**1) Vocally demanding repertoire** *"You have to sing over eighty piece orchestras, for three hours, and that takes- that's, that takes an animal to sing, like, I'm not that kind of singer"* **2) Professional responsibilities** *"If you do have a bad day, well one, you have to accept it and two, you have to figure out how you're going to do that better the next time"* **3) High pressured industry** *"It would trigger me by making me feel I would have to fit into this person's box and standards by doing these particular things in a- well, in a particular opera"*	4 3 15
CCM	**1) Pressures of an inconsistent gigging environment** *"I'm not sure it has so much to do with whether it's solo or whether it's with a band, I think it probably has more to do with what the gig is"* **2) Roles of the CCM singer** *"I much prefer singing with the band than solo, much prefer it, yeah"* **3) Being a singer online**	22 8 3

	I used to do things like control all of my photos when I was singing but… then realising that I had no control now over pictures that people take of me and post on social media" **4) Impact of the audience** *"Non-responsive, or just talking amongst themselves and not really being engaged in the performance, no one dancing… I think sometimes, especially in the genre that we sing in… people don't get it… and sometimes that can cause anxiety"*	13

Potential strategies for mitigating MPA		Frequency
MT	**1) Methods, tools and techniques** *"I got put on beta blockers, and then in my third year, they were like "We can see there's a massive difference"* **2) Awareness of MPA** *"They're accepting of so many different types of people from all different backgrounds, there is no kind of, prejudice against anything… I feel like it's such a more accepting industry now, and I think that when I trained, I don't think it was"* **3) Supportive environment** *"It's more about us all being aware of how we're feeling, and if we're working as a team, as a collective, it's kind of going right, we're going to all support each other, we're here, we're working together"*	2 3 6
CS	**1) Methods, tools and techniques** *"Deep psychological breathing, um, listing off three things that went well each time you do a particular run or a performance… things that you would like to work on if, if need be"* **2) Awareness of MPA** *"There has to be a safe space to talk about how we're feeling I think, and be honest with how, and just be honest with what's going"* **3) Supportive environment**	7 1 8

	"They really took me under their wing and um, we just worked through the piece…and we [smiles] just had fun doing it, and that completely changed… feeling much more confident and happier in singing, because of actually just getting some feedback and getting people to actually listen to how I felt"	
CCM	**1) Methods, tools and techniques** *"I'll tend to listen to my play- my playlist in the car on the way to the gig"* *"Sometimes having a, having a little drink before you go on stage calms the nerves"* **2) Impact of gaining more experience on MPA** *"I think, over time, you realise that those things just happen, you laugh it off, and, and you move on the next, to the next song"*	13 2
Additional related theme - CCM only Scenarios that mitigate MPA		**Frequency**
CCM	**1) Supportive Environment** *"When you've got other human beings and their energy behind you… that support that you feel… it just makes you feel so much better"* **2) Audience** *"You can have an audience that's like, talking back to you or like, participating in things or singing along or dance - and they get up and dance and that kind of gets you going"* **3) Being in a healthy mindset** *"When you're feeling good, when you feel like you look good, when you're prepared… you're having a good voice day, and all those pieces fit… the anxiety's way less"*	8 6 3

Physical challenges relating to MPA		**Frequency**
MT	**1) Lack of self care** *"I was so sleep deprived, that it was probably making it a lot worse"* **2) Physical symptoms of MPA impacting performance**	2 5

	"It gets too much, and you just freeze, and nothing is coming out of your mouth, that's happened to me before in auditions… there is nothing you can do" **3) Impact of MPA on general well-being** *"I was physically and mentally drained"*	3
CCM	**1) Physical symptoms of MPA impacting performance** *"It's strangling you from the inside… you've got tight- tightness sort of, coming up into your vocal cords and into your throat… then you try to swallow to kind of, get it to go down"* **2) Vocal technique issues** *"They are really demanding on the voice, and I um, I haven't got the best technique, because I've never actually been properly trained"*	4 3
Additional related theme - CS only Impact of MPA on (the development of) a performance		**Frequency**
CS	**1) MPA affects vocal delivery** *"The more you think about what could happen, the more you're going to tense up, the more you're going to go into fight or flight mode, and then you're just going to be like "huh!' [acts out seizing up]"* **2) MPA affects creative performance** *"That can invite feelings of "what are they thinking… am I good enough, or am I singing well enough for these people?" And then as soon as you do that, you're out of character, you're out of the music, you're out of your interpretation"*	9 9

Outside Perceptions of MPA		**Frequency**
MT	**1) Stigma/negative Stereotypes** *"If I explained it to anyone, they kind of just thought I was…lazy"* **2) MPA is medically misunderstood** *"I definitely don't have social anxiety [laughing]", I was like "What the frig is this?"'* **3) Misconceptions of MPA**	10 3 6

	"Afterwards they were just like [eyes widening] her behaviour…" It's like they gave me the opportunity to go "You need to, kind of, show us what you got""	

Environmental Factors contributing to MPA		Frequency
CS	**1) Influence of teachers within the conservatoire on MPA** *"She was one of those teachers who would stop you all the time if you didn't do it exactly…as she said, with no malice, just stop, this, stop, this, stop, this, and…you sort of get afraid to make sounds"* **2) Expectations within the conservatoire** *"We're never encouraged to mark in studio rehearsals, we have to sing, we felt like we had to sing flat out from 10am, all day, and you're- you're knackered!"* **3) Lack of awareness/support within the conservatoire** *"All of us actually feel like we're not good enough, and…that's a lot- it's an exclusive course as well, there are twelve people in each year, all of us have a degree of… are we good enough?"*	8 4 4

Appendix 7: Master Table of Themes

Master Table of Themes

MPA Impacting Self Concept			
MTS	**Subtheme**	**Quotes**	**Frequency**
	Low self esteem as a result of teaching style	*"Random staff members in the hallway like, on a daily basis like, "Oh my god, [MTS] is here again, another panic attack"* *"I would just be like… "I'm so sorry guys" and they'd just be laughing like "Oh! She's off again!""* *"I was just embarrassed"* *"There was no well-being support"* *"At drama school, there was no support system"* *"I was having this continuous behaviour"* *"I don't think I was supported, at all. And to be honest, they didn't know how to support me"* *"I felt like I had to constantly justify my behaviour"* *"I was being like, told off as if I was a child, like a naughty child"* *"I'm basically not even getting put up for, like, in my first year I was like the lead"* *"I never felt like I had enough time to learn the stuff so I kind of was just doing this like, guessing game thing"*	13

		“Oh my gosh, you’ve got an issue, get out… you’re, um, interrupting our training” *“People are paying to be here, why are you interrupting us [MTS]? Why are you being a, a problem?”*	
	Negative self evaluation	*“I hate rehearsals, I dread rehearsals… ‘cause I feel like I’m not grasping it… and the whole time through rehearsal I’m [shakes head] pants, I’m awful”* *“I can’t go on like this, like, there’s something majorly wrong”* *“This is not normal behaviour”* *“It was just so stupid like, being literally like, found by random people”* *“I’m like, either like amazing or shockingly, you know, bad”* *“I don’t know what’s wrong with me”* *“I’m wasting my money and time being here, and if I’m not going to utilise this”* *“Why have I done this to myself, I hate doing this, I hate constantly feeling like this”* *“I don’t want anyone to see me be like this”* *““I actually can’t do this. Like, I just can’t. I ‘m so exhausted by this”*	13

		“I was like, really struggling compared to others” *“I’m a mess. I’m all over the shop”* *“it’s just getting progressively worse and worse and worse… nothing I can do about it”*	
	Low self esteem as a result of teaching style	*“I had just switched teacher…she was taking me down a road…where I felt like I needed to produce big sounds all the time,”* *“Anything less than that was not good enough or disappointing”* *“She was one of those teachers who would stop you all the time if you didn’t do it exactly… as she said”* *“That feeling of “you’re a student and you don’t know, you know nothing’.* *“With the way the department’s run, we feel like we can’t do that… that stunts any particular growth”* *“All of us actually feel like we’re not good enough”* *“Not just “this is wrong, this is wrong, this is wrong”. I hate the word wrong”* *“Whereas at college, you have to do it…this has been given to you, you haven’t earned it”* *“Oh I can’t fucking wait! I can’t wait to get out of this fucking place!”*	10

		“I feel the department here is more “come look at what shows we’re doing” instead of “come look at what our singers can do”	
CS	Perfectionism	*“It just wasn’t going well vocally at all, and I was getting so frustrated and so flustered”* *“‘The more you think about what could happen, the more you’re going to tense up… and then you’re just going to be like “huh!’ [acts out seizing up]”* *““I myself obsess over high notes”* *“Trying to search for perfectionism and what you think you should sound like is a horrible rabbit hole to go down”* *“You’re focusing on the sound all the time”* *“It’s mostly a benchmark I’ve set myself”* *“I love listening to all the great singers… tried to emulate a sound closer to them”* *“Obviously what I would go straight to is vocals and technique”*	8
	Negative self-evaluation	*“You feel like your opinion is not valued at all, and so that completely- that again, that stunts your creative process”* *“My top notes weren’t coming out as well as I’d like them to have done”*	8

		“I just wasn’t in the read head space nor vocal space to, to do them to be honest” *“That really, really got to me”* *“I remember completely flunking an audition”* *“I remember vocally it wasn’t, it wasn’t my best night and I was like ‘fuck, I, I can’t believe that he got to me’”* *“One of the studio rehearsals I did get quite anxious about, if things weren’t going particularly well”* *“I’m not that kind of singer”*	
CCMS	Internal Pressures	*“As soon as I get on stage, I then smash it and I don’t even know what I was worried about… it’s all for nothing really”* *“What if I stumble over my words, what if I come in in the wrong key, what if I - you know, all of those kind of worries”* *“I think sometimes you can get complacent… I’ve done that… and then things are just all over the place and you’re just like… “how has this gone so wrong?”””* *“I always give my all in a gig, but you know as well as I do that there are some gigs that are more- that are closer to your heart”* *“If that’s not happening, you can almost feel yourself deflating on stage”*	13

		“I should know this stuff” *“All of you girls are, are young and like, vibrant and you know all this, you know, you know what you’re doing”* *“Comparing yourself to others, and then not feeling good enough ‘cause others are so amazing, that one hundred percent plays into the anxiety”* *“That imposter syndrome and those little voices in your head, “you’re not good enough, why are you doing that?”* *“The pressure for me that I put on myself, nobody else is putting it on me, but that I put on myself to “oh god, now I’ve got to lose the weight again”* *“You know, keeping yourself in that perpetual cycle of, of, of abuse”* *“It’s not so much that I’m worried… what other people are going to be thinking about me now, it’s more that I don’t feel confident within myself”* *“If I’m not confident in how I look when I step on stage, I’m not going to be as confident in how I perform when I’m on stage”*	

	Negative self-evaluation	*“I’ve had real problems sort of, all my life in everything with imposter syndrome”* *“You’ve got such a talent in this, or you’re so good in that, but never actually believing it really myself”* *“I was literally wanting to die on stage”* *“That knocks your confidence again, so the next gig, it’s like “oh” [grimaces], you know?”* *“I never feel comfortable, I never feel like I’ve got it cracked or sorted, ever”* *“I think physically it genuinely feels like you want to, like you’re shrinking”* *“I tend to go like “oh no, oh no, oh no” and like, sort of shrink in and physically deflate”* *“I also massively struggle with my weight and my appearance”* *“I’m never happy when I’m bigger, and I’m big at the moment, for me”* *“I’m looking at my wardrobe and I’m like “none of my clothes fit me properly, what am I going to like, go on stage in now?”* *“It’s almost like self harm, like a self sabotage, because I know I’m not happy at this weight, and yet I do it to myself every time”* *“Like body image has always been a, always been a thing since I hit puberty”*	12

Fear of Social Evaluation			
MTS	**Subtheme**	**Quotes**	**Frequency**
	Fear of failure	*"[I] kind of became the laughing stock of the year… "Here's the clown coming out again"... I, as a defence mechanism… would literally try and make a song and dance out of it… I'm going to fail before you can watch me fail"* *"It wasn't normal behaviour, and I was like… I can't carry on my training like this, I'm getting nothing out of it"* *"There's a pressure for everyone to get it right"* *"I would literally just go on stage and I'd be like "Right! I'm having an anxiety attack right now and I actually don't even know my first word""* *"Any time we'd get towards a performance… I would literally be like… I need to get out of this"* *"I don't know how I'm going to get out of this, like, I can't be here, I can't do this"* *"Basically take the mick out of - "Oh god, oh look, I'm a mess, oh!" you know like, be a bit silly, they'd sort of laugh at me"*	7

	Negative social evaluation	*“Half way through a song I would literally just need to, like… literally need to get out the room”* *“I was just trying to get out of the room, and they were like… what are you doing?”.* *“I remember I got out the room, everyone’s like… “What’s going on?”. I would… sit in the corridor… I’d have a panic attack, well, like an anxiety attack”* *“My teachers would constantly be like… there’s definitely something… not quite right”* *“I was definitely, 100% having full on anxiety attacks twice a day… everyday”* *“They’d be… questioning constantly why I was there. Like, “you shouldn’t be here”... in front of everyone, like “you shouldn’t be here, why are you here, you can’t afford to be here, you like, clearly can’t cope with it here. Why are you here?””* *“I’d be put in a room with my head of year, and I, we’d have to sit opposite each other and [they’d] be like “Why are you like this? Why are you being-””* *“You’re being put in front of a panel, or casting people, or agents… I had to kind of be like, okay with the fact that, that was what was going to happen, which was really hard”* *“I’d get really high marks and they’d be like, “but you literally didn’t know it yesterday! Like, what is going on?””*	21

		""Oh she's a bit clumsy, she's a bit ditsy", and it's not so much… they're not focusing on anything else" *"It gets too much, and you just freeze, and nothing is coming out of your mouth, that's happened to me before in auditions"* *""Carry on! It's no big deal", whereas,* *I didn't feel like I could do that, and therefore I couldn't work through it"* *"I was very conscious of, having um, this performance anxiety, that I was like, can people tell?"* *"You can see it in my voice, you can see it in my face, but I don't know what other people were seeing"*	
	Post event rumination	*"To get jobs from it was, for me, just bizarre… It was happening at a lot of auditions, and I wasn't getting anywhere, and I was getting frustrated… Maybe I'm not meant to do this".* *"A lot of my training was such a blur, because I literally was just trying to exist through it"* *"I can't even remember what happened… because I'm so anxious, it's such a blur"* *"it would feel like, 5 minutes had gone past, but obviously, 5 seconds had gone"* *"When I was getting auditions… I felt like it was a car crash every time"*	9

		“If I was them in that moment, it looks like I don’t know what - it looks like I’m underprepared” *“If I actually genuinely am having… an anxiety attack when I’m performing, I have no recollection of what’s going on”* *“I don’t know what I did, if that makes sense. I literally just got through it”* *“I left on such a sour note because that was always what I’d dreaded was going to happen, and it actually did happen”*	
	Perceived industry stigma	*“Anxiety and everything else that comes with it, it… it wasn’t a thing then. Like, it genuinely wasn’t a thing. So, everyone was like “oh, you’ve just got nerves””* *“Like “Come on… don’t do what you usually do, like, get back into it”* *“Get on with it. You put yourself in that position, get on with it”* *“If I explained it to anyone, they kind of just thought I was… lazy”* *“I continuously was listed as like, a lazy person, who just would leave everything to the last minute and procrastinate”* *““I’m really sorry, I have performance anxiety, and like, I”... they’re like, “well, you just shouldn’t be doing this job then”*	9

		“I just think with this industry, you don’t get much chances” *“He was like “No, it’ll be fine, we’ll come back tomorrow, we’ll have one more day of rehearsal”* *““But, instead of actually trying to understand, they were just like “We don’t want you here!””*	
CS	Negative social evaluation	*“On the opera course here… there are clear favourites… I felt like I wasn’t valued at all”.* *“We have to produce sound which is going to go over an orchestra… there’s a lot of pressure on that”* *“The legendary great singers… people would be…wanting it to be a sort of, similar standard”* *“You get people who are incredibly precious about these things”* *“You can do many things wrong and I really, really hate that”* ***“I** remember being in the notes session like… depressed”* *“I would have to perform these things in front of people, in front of reviewers, and to be given barely any feedback… it basically made me feel “what the hell are these people thinking?”*	22

		“I felt like whatever I was doing was still not good enough, at all” *“I wasn’t valued as much as others”* *““Can I sing this to an acceptable standard?”* *“I’m such a people pleaser myself, the “will people enjoy it?”* *“I still get anxious about auditions”* *“I would feel like I would have to perform to a certain standard just to get into any books or just to be considered for anything”* *“With panels, it looks like they show absolutely zero interest whatsoever so, you kind of feel like you’re performing to a brick wall”* *““What are they thinking…am I good enough, or am I singing well enough for these people?”* *“It would trigger me by making me feel I would have to fit into this person’s box and standards by doing these particular things in a- well, in a particular opera”* *“Your opinion is not valued at all, and so that completely- that again, that stunts your creative process”* *“People can put pressure on you”* *“My [senior teacher] actually came to watch the show… and I was like “fuck!”*	

		"He told me that he was coming to see the show, and I, and I remember that night, I felt like it was the- my worst night, 'cause I just, was just thinking about him in the audience" *"How DARE you say that when you've been showing favouritism for this whole course!"* *"So that's a little bit of pressure, 'cause obvious- I know they know what they're on about"*	
	Perceived industry stigma	*"My girlfriend's in musical theatre, so, with her experience of… drama school, she never really got the time and care that she deserved… to an extent, same here"* *"There is freedom of expression, but within very, um, specific boundaries, depending on the genre"* *"You could do certain things in one genre, subgenre, that you couldn't do in another"* *"It's rubbish, you get people like that and it's horrendous"* *" I think the expectation still needs to be there, um, but… I think the emphasis should be on is the process rather than the result"*	5
	Fear of failure	*"You sort of get afraid to make sounds"* *"I was basically afraid to make any kind sound just in case it was…wrong"* *"You're afraid to go for any kind of ideas"*	8

		"I've found myself using those lessons to try sort myself out mentally in order to sing the things which I don't really quite know how to sing yet" *"I was so… invested in trying to make the music stuff happy, make the directors happy, make the audience happy"* *"As someone who never really "failed" that much beforehand…, it was a lot"* *"As someone who was a pretty big fish in a small pond beforehand, it's learning how to take rejection, which is another thing"* *"I would close up because obviously, I would have been stopped all that time, so literally, I'd be like "huh!" [mimics throat tightening]"*	
CCMS	Perceived industry stigma	*"Musical theatre…I've had a bit of an insight into that… it would be an industry that would absolutely cripple me"* *"Musical theatre, to kind of the niche stuff that I do now… there's a lot more comparison made"* *"Feel like the musical theatre industry- unless you are like, the best of the best, they will pick you to pieces"* *"There's a lot more judgement I feel in that, kind of… and it's very, very high pressured"*	4

	Negative Social Evaluation	*"When you're singing, all of the anx-anxiety, kind of comes up into your, your throat"* *"Is my voice going to go, am I going to hit that note, am I, um, am I going to forget all my words?"* *"All those kind of, doubts and those worries creep in just as you're about to sort of, step on stage"* *"I think the singing was petrifying for me, coming out of lockdown and then having to sing in front of audiences"* *"You feel sort of almost strang- almost like it's strangling you from the inside"* *"Just the, the anxiety kind of getting to the gig, and then I was able to get through my first set"* *"I'm always anxious, probably if it's a really big gig, a few days before, leading up to the gig"* *"The embarrassment when you're on stage and you're thinking "I can't hit this note"* *"You feel that flush of…embarrassment, when you go red and…then your throat tightens up again, so you're not doing yourself any favours in that way either"* *""What if I let them down?"* *"Just like, non-responsive, or just talking amongst themselves and not really being engaged in the performance, no one dancing,"* *"I've never had boos or heckles… but I can imagine that would be pretty horrendous!*	21

		“Especially in the genre that we sing in with the vintage stuff, sometimes people don’t get it” *“if the audience are there and they’re expecting something, and they’re not getting what they want, they can be like…”oh, that wasn’t a good night””* *“I don’t think there’s one performer in any, in any aspect of the performance industry that doesn’t just want people to love them and appreciate what they do”* *“Try and make myself smaller, so that all the mistakes aren’t being seen”* *“I used to do things like control all of my photos when I was singing…then realising that I had no control now over pictures that people take of me and post on social media”* *“Keeping yourself in position where you know you’re going to be unhappy, and then you’re putting yourself in a place where…what you’re unhappy with is on show for everyone to see… is actually really messed up”* *“There’s a lot of talking around- behind people’s backs and openly being bitchy to people”* *“If you’re not having a good vocal day [laughing], the thought of “Argh, am I going to hit it?”* *“Unless you’re doing a new song and you’re like [grimaces] “Oh god, that didn’t sound great”* *“You can see the whites of their eyes going “Oh god””*	

	Social Comparison	***"****I really struggled with them being really accomplished musicians in their own rights and playing for years and years and years, and me being this new girl who's never sung with a band before"* *"I massively respect everyone in my band so much, they are incredible musicians, and this again goes back to that whole imposter syndrome"* *"'I'm an older, woman…in sort of, this kind of industry and genre…I also feel the pressure of "I should have my shit together a bit more""* *"Look at them, they're incredible, they're, you know, they're this, they're that, what makes you think that you can do this?""* *"Really unhealthy competition"* *"The comparison thing is just a me thing… I am the demon in that…myself and my mental health issues are the demon in that"*	

Potential strategies for mitigating MPA			
MTS	**Subtheme**	**Quotes**	**Frequency**
	Medication	*"I got put on beta blockers, and then in my third year, they were like "We can see there's a massive difference"*	3

		“That’s why I take beta-blockers, because it’s not affecting my mind, it’s affecting my body and it’s calming it down” *“If I hadn’t taken one… I’d shake, I’d sweat profusely, my face would go so red”*	
	Psychological treatment	*“I actually got put in a socially- social anxiety group”* *““I definitely don’t have social anxiety…”, I was like “What the frig is this?””* *“We had a group therapy class”* *“ I did a blinking test… and they put me in this group!”*	4
	Methods, tools and techniques	*“I’ve tried like, going to the gym, yoga”* *“ I do a lot of meditation now”* *“ I have to put my mental health first”* *“I had specifically requested for the script earlier than everyone else”* *“We were doing a lot of mindfulness and meditation… a lot of breath work… it was really grounding”*	5
	Supportive environment	*“They’re accepting of so many different types of people from all different backgrounds, there is no kind of, prejudice against anything… I feel like it’s such a more accepting industry now, and I think that when I trained, I don’t think it was”*	11

		“It’s more about us all being aware of how we’re feeling, and if we’re working as a team, as a collective, it’s kind of going right, we’re going to all support each other, we’re here, we’re working together” *“For a teacher, if they’re not experienced with… any form of mental health… what are you going to do?”* *“You’re trying to keep the class going, and you’re trying to obviously not kind of, put a spotlight on it in a negative”* “*You’re trying kind of, bring everyone together with me in that moment. And they were supportive”* *“The longer we knew each other, the longer we trained together, obviously it was a lot better”* *“You should have a support system who are qualified, who understand, and who can normalise this”* *“It’s just understanding, having some support, but trained people”* *“I think actually we should be celebrating these things”* *“It’s more about us all being aware of how we’re feeling… if we’re working as a team… we’re going to all support each other”* *“Being aware of how people are feeling”*	

CS	Methods, tools and techniques	*"Deep psychological breathing, um, listing off three things that went well each time you do a particular run or a performance… things that you would like to work on if, if need be"* *"It's amazing what…a break can do"* *"I've been seeing a therapist…she's given me quite a few techniques… deep psychological breathing… listing off three things that went well each time you do a particular run or a performance"* *"Instead of just focusing on how you sound, think of the um, much more about what you're singing about, and emotionally, how that involves your singing"* *"And this [still pointing to heart] I, I cannot tell you how much this can do for the voice, instead of going down that technique rabbit hole"* *"Just by having a good time… it really helps"* *"They actually have a team of psy- of psychologists on that program, so there is therapy"*	7
	Supportive Environment	*"I remember speaking to my current teacher… [I was] feeling much more confident and happier in singing, because of actually just getting some feedback and getting people to actually listen to how I felt"* *"They really took me under their wing and um, we just worked through the piece…and we [smiles] just had fun doing it, and that completely changed… feeling much more confident and happier in singing, because of actually just getting some feedback and getting people to actually listen to how I felt"*	13

		“There has to be a safe space to talk about how we’re feeling I think, and be honest with how, and just be honest with what’s going” *“Feeling much more confident and happier in singing, because of actually just getting some feedback and getting people to actually listen to how I felt”* *“Working through it without any pressure”* *“Finally got some approval”* *“You don’t feel like you’re under a microscope all the time”* *“You feel like you have the room to make these mistakes”* *“This was my [famous opera house] debut and I wasn’t - I, I felt better doing that than any show I’ve done at [a UK conservatoire], and I think that really says something”* *“I think there should be space to just talk about how we’re feeling”* *“There has to be a safe space to talk about how we’re feeling”* *“I think just some positive encouragement would be lovely”* *“No one cared about a particular sound on the day, or how you sung”*	

CCMS	Methods, tools and techniques	*"I do still worry about stuff, I mean, I used to have my iPad there and read off- read lyrics off the iPad, and now I don't"* *"It also really massively depends on how well I've prepared"* *"I'll tend to listen to my play- my playlist in the car on the way to the gig"* *"I did a lot of preparation, and I felt incredible, like, smashed it"* *"Then the lack of preparation or you know, the over-the preparation that you've done"* *"If I'm feeling good within myself, that's um… it's almost the anxiety's not there, it's almost like a challenge"* *"When you're prepared… you've had several gigs maybe in the last month or so and you are well rehearsed, the anxiety's way less"* *"Sometimes having a, having a little drink before you go on stage calms the nerves"* *"Sometimes I need a bit of a hug, sometimes I need to just be silly… like I don't have a set routine"*	9
	Exploring new treatments	*"What I'd like to do more of, is that kind of mindfulness and meditation to get into that kind of zone before a gig"*	3

		“So maybe some mindfulness and meditation, maybe a bit of breathing” *“I don’t really have a set routine. Maybe I need to get one!”*	
	Supportive Environment	*“I think, over time, you realise that those things just happen, you laugh it off, and, and you move on the next, to the next song”* *“When you’ve got other human beings and their energy behind you… that support that you feel is um… it just makes you feel so much better”* *“They know about my anxiety, they know how like, down on myself I always am, so they’re always like “come on, you’re amazing”* *“I find the industry - the particular scene that I’m in - I find really supportive, but I know that the industry as a whole is not like that.”* *“When you’re singing you know…the vintage stuff… everybody who’s there wants to be there for the music and they love the songs… so they’re generally already behind you. They’re not there to tear you down,”* *“Talking to my band if, you know, it- sometimes we’ll, we’ll do our soundcheck and then we’ll go off… we won’t talk about music and we’ll just, you know, sometimes taking your mind off of it”*	6

Industry Specific Challenges			
MTS	**Subtheme**	**Quotes**	**Frequency**
	Intense workload	*“I had no time to like, do anything about it… I was commuting on a daily basis… and I was working evenings and weekends, ‘cause I was paying for myself to go to drama school… but that probably wasn’t making it any better”* *“We had to learn it in a week or two weeks or whatever, the fact that I was like, having to try and learn all this material… I was struggling so hard to learn the material”* *“Every single night I probably wasn’t sleeping”* *“The most stressful four years of my life”* *“It was so stressful… obviously I was very, very stressed”* *“I was so sleep deprived, that it was probably making it a lot worse”* *“There was so much stuff you had to learn, like continuously, I mean like, it was ridiculous.”* *“We had so much dialogue to learn”* *“Every single day you were learning a new thing”* *“ I was struggling so hard to learn the material”* *“You can do cognitive behavioural therapy”...I was like “I can’t though”, I was like “I have no time””*	16

		"I was trying to learn all the material" *"Every single sort of like, assessment thing we'd have… you'd have to learn loads of stuff and then perform it"* *"I never had a day off, for like, three years basically"* *"I was physically and mentally drained"* *"There was so much dialogue to learn, they'd given it to us a day before the rehearsals started"*	
	Industry pressures	*"We literally didn't go off stage the whole time, and we were constantly changing outfits, it was like, a lot"* *"We were putting on, I don't know, a show, and we had to learn it in a week or two weeks or whatever"* *"I had to get like, a career development loan, to like, help me, cause I couldn't keep up the payments"* *"I'm paying for my own training"* *"They try and put you into situations that are very similar to professional situations"* *"I'm in a professional job… I can't just be like "yeah, today I'm not going to do it""* *"I wasn't in like, high-end professional jobs where there was like an understudy or whatever"*	10

		“I would never want to make excuses for myself... ‘cause you can’t” *“He like, asked “What’s going on?”. I was like… “I can’t do this”. He was like “[MTS], it’s two days before the dress rehearsal””* *“It was like, a week and a half of rehearsals, it was all a bit of a mess anyway”* *“ I understand like, loads of jobs you don’t get stuff, you get it really like, you know, short notice”*	
CS	Vocally demanding repertoire	*“The rep I was getting was a lot bigger than I had previously sung and it was incredibly challenging”* *“I’ve been given the wrong repertoire again um, for this whole year”* *“I was doing these two italian works… I was finding it a little bit difficult”* *“We felt like we had to sing flat out from 10am, all day, and you’re- you’re knackered!”* *“Eight years training, it’s a long time”* *“I suit more Mozart, or Handel… potentially some Bel Canto stuff, once I sort the rest of my technique out.”* *“I’ve been given all the top-D shit, which I don’t have yet”*	7

	Environment	*“You have to sing over eighty piece orchestras, for three hours, and that takes- that’s, that takes an animal to sing, like, I’m not that kind of singer”* *““There’s a lot of politics as well in conservatoires”* *“It’s a necessary evil in this world whether you’re a classical musician or contemporary or a musical theatre performer”* *“Course there is pressure, this is very high professional standard work”* *“It was a load of high flying high notes, which I had to hold on for about twelve seconds”*	5
CCMS	Roles of the CCM singer	*“I’m not sure it has so much to do with whether it’s solo or whether it’s with a band, I think it probably has more to do with what the gig is”* *“I’d sung all my life, professionally it only really started in 2020, when we started doing the lives”* ***“T**he difference between singing on your own, and singing with a band behind you”* *“I had to come in and lead, and um, I came, I came in on the wrong, in the wrong key, and there was nothing I could do”* ***“**I think when you’re singing to a backing track, and it’s just you up on stage, there’s absolutely nowhere to hide”*	9

		"It's just you, you're a one man show, you're standing out" *"With the band in that you're the front person, so you know, you are the one doing most of the talking"* *"When you're on your own, you haven't really got that, you've got to just turn up and go you know, "here I am, larger than life" and you know, "love me and what I do"* *"I much prefer singing with the band than solo, much prefer it"* *"I love the variety of the contemporary stuff, because you know, one minute I can be singing Vera Lynn, and then the next minute, I'm bashing out "Proud Mary" or you know"*	
	Environment	*"It was really a really interesting and unique situation in lockdown, because although I was performing, I was on my own performing, not to an audience that I could see, but to an audience that was kind of online"* *"Even though I was nervous doing that, it was absolutely nothing compared to when I had to then move it into the real world"* *"It's one of those venues where people come to listen to the music, rather than like, get up and drink and dance and talk…they're listening to every note"* *"We played mainstage [at a UK festival]... biggest gig of my life, I've always been a punter at [this festival], [this festival] is like, my dream"*	19

		“I’m not sure it has so much to do with whether it’s solo or whether it’s with a band, I think it probably has more to do with what the gig is” *“As a live performer…your audience is key”* *“You can have a night where… you give absolutely everything you have, and you get nothing back, and you feel like “oh god, that was so, that was hard work””* *“You can have an audience that’s like, talking back to you… participating in things or singing along… and they get up and dance and that kind of gets you going”* *“Audience are hugely important… venues are massively important”* *“It was a much more intimate venue than a mainstage venue, and… actually after the mainstage gig, I felt like, I sort of felt like I had preferred the year before,”* *“It’s really, really hard to feel that feedback from an audience when you’re on a mainstage”* *“So I think like, venue plays a massive role in it as well”* *“It’s the wrong fit for that venue, and sometimes that can cause anxiety”* *“A lot of my gigs are you know, quite small venues, um, people who are coming to see us because they like what we do”*	

		“I much prefer public performances to private performances… I think you’re way more exposed at a private performance than… at a public performance” *“The energy’s very different from the audience, like, going back to that audience thing, when it’s a, if it’s a really intimate family party”* *“You can’t get as much feedback from an audience at a private party or private function as you do when you’re at a gig”* *“You don’t realise who’s watching you… not everyone’s interacting with you… and so you can almost pretend like they’re not even there”* *“It’s definitely… way less nerve wracking performing online than it is in person, ‘cause you haven’t got that live feedback”*	
	Vocal Demands	***“****I knew I had a cold, I knew my voice was going… I was umming and ahhing… I was like “I can’t cancel this gig”* *“I had some serious problems with my voice, and I, and I got through the first set, but then the second set, my voice was pretty much gone”* *“I had to rest it for a whole week ‘cause I had another… so I sing with a band as well”* *“I’m struggling with my voice at the moment, which is really frustrating”*	6

		“There are also different genres that are more demanding…those big, like, rhythm and blues numbers… they are really powerful” *“They are really demanding on the voice, and I um, I haven’t got the best technique, because I’ve never actually been properly trained”*	

Appendix 8 - Ethics Form and Approval

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL

In order for research to result in benefit and minimise risk of harm, it must be conducted ethically. A researcher may not be covered by the University's insurance if ethical approval has not been obtained prior to commencement.

The University follows the OECD Frascati manual definition of **research activity**: "creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of man, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications". As such this covers activities undertaken by members of staff, postgraduate research students, and both taught postgraduate and undergraduate students working on dissertations/projects.

The individual undertaking the research activity is known as the "principal researcher".

Ethical approval is not required for routine audits, performance reviews, quality assurance studies, testing within normal educational requirements, and literary or artistic criticism.

Please read the notes for guidance before completing ALL sections of the form.

This form must be completed and approved prior to undertaking any research activity. Please see Checklist for details of process for different categories of application.

Delete the Guidance Notes at the end of the form BEFORE submitting your application

SECTION A: About You (Principal Researcher)

1	Full Name:		Sarah Martin			
2	Tick all boxes which apply:		Member of staff:	☐	Honorary research fellow:	☐
3	Undergraduate Student	☐	Taught Postgraduate Student	☒	Postgraduate Research Student	☐

4	Institute/Academic Discipline/Centre:	Institute of Management and Health
5	Campus:	Carmarthen
6	E-mail address:	sarahmartin269@gmail.com
7	Contact Telephone Number:	07950837542
	For students:	
8	Student Number:	2244162
9	Programme of Study:	MA in Professional Practice (Voice Pedagogy)
10	Director of Studies/Supervisor:	Julie Crossman/ Debbie Winter

SECTION B: Approval for Research Activity

1	Has the research activity received approval in principle? (please check the Guidance Notes as to the appropriate approval process for different levels of research by different categories of individual)		**YES**	☒	**NO**	☐
					Date	
2	If Yes, please indicate source of approval (and date where known): ***Approval in principle must be obtained from the relevant source prior to seeking ethical approval***	Research Degrees Committee		☐		
3		Institute Research Committee		☐		
4		Other (write in) WAPPAR Ethics Board Representative		☒		

SECTION C: Internal and External Ethical Guidance Materials

	Please list the core ethical guidance documents that have been referred to during the completion of this form (including any discipline-specific codes of research ethics, and also any specific ethical guidance relating to the proposed methodology). Please tick to confirm that your research proposal adheres to these codes and guidelines.	
1	**UWTSD Research Ethics & Integrity Code of Practice**	☒
2	**UWTSD Research Data Management Policy**	☒
3		☐

SECTION D: External Collaborative Research Activity

1	Does the research activity involve collaborators outside of the University?		**YES**	☐	**NO**	☒
2	If Yes, please provide the name of the external organisation and name and contact details for the main contact person and confirmation this person has consented to their personal data being shared.as part of this collaboration.					
3	Institution					
4	Contact person name					
5	Contact person e-mail address					
6	Has this individual consented to sharing their details on this form?		**YES**	☐	**NO**	☒
7	Are you in receipt of a KESS scholarship?		**YES**	☐	**NO**	☒
8	Is your research externally funded		**YES**	☐	**NO**	☒
9	Are you specifically employed to undertake this research in either a paid or voluntary capacity?	Voluntary	**YES**	☐	**NO**	☒
10		Employed	**YES**	☐	**NO**	☒
11	Is the research being undertaken within an existing UWTSD Athrofa Professional Learning Partnership (APLP)	If YES then the permission question below does not need to be answered.	**YES**	☐	**NO**	☒

12	Permission to undertake the research has been provided by the partner organisation	(If YES attach copy) If NO the application cannot continue	**YES**	☐	**NO**	☒

Where research activity is carried out in collaboration with an external organisation

13	Does this organisation have its own ethics approval system?	**YES**	☐	**NO**	☒
14	If Yes, please attach a copy of any final approval (or interim approval) from the organisation N/A				

SECTION E: Details of Research Activity

1	Indicative title:	The experience of music performance anxiety in vocalists across multiple genres: Musical Theatre, Classical, and Contemporary Commercial Music		
2	Proposed start date:	18/03/2024	Proposed end date:	01/07/2024
3	**Introduction to the Research (maximum 300 words)** **Ensure that you write for a <u>Non-Specialist Audience</u> when outlining your response to the three points below:** ● *Purpose of Research Activity* ● *Proposed Research Question* ● *Aims of Research Activity* ● *Objectives of Research Activity* Demonstrate, briefly, how **<u>Existing Research</u>** has informed the proposed activity and explain ● *What the research activity will add to the body of knowledge* ● *How it addresses an area of importance.*			
4	**Purpose of Research Activity** The purpose of this research is to gain a comparative understanding into the scenarios in which music performance anxiety (MPA) may present itself for singers performing regularly within the fields of Musical Theatre, Classical Music, and Contemporary Commercial Music. There have been several studies that explore how singers within each genre experience MPA, but research that compares the experiences across these three fields is scarce. This qualitative study aims to explore this gap to provide a small but in-depth insight into how different singers may be affected differently based on their field of work. (this box should expand as you type)			
5	**Research Question** How is music performance anxiety experienced differently amongst vocalists that perform regularly within the fields of Musical Theatre, Classical Music, and Contemporary Commercial Music? (this box should expand as you type)			
6	**Aims of Research Activity** This research aims to provide voice pedagogues with an insight into how MPA may present itself within singers across three genres through a comparative analysis of qualitative data. This understanding could			

	enable voice pedagogues that work with a broad range of singers with varying specialisms to better support their clients when symptoms of MPA are present and allow them to make the most appropriate referrals for treatment where necessary. As studies have shown that performance anxiety rates amongst vocalists are high, this avenue of study aims to bring a greater awareness of the potentially differentiated struggles of singers from these three different fields of work. (this box should expand as you type)
7	**Objectives of Research Activity** This study will incorporate a qualitative methodology with the objective of producing rich data to be analysed and compared across three genres. Participants in this study will be over 18 and recognise themselves to be professional or aspiring professional singers currently in professional training. This will ensure that the samples from each discipline are made up of singers that perform regularly in environments of a professional nature in which performance anxiety may be prevalent. (this box should expand as you type)
8	**Proposed methods (maximum 600 words)** Provide a brief summary of all the methods that **may** be used in the research activity, making it clear what specific techniques may be used. If methods other than those listed in this section are deemed appropriate later, additional ethical approval for those methods will be needed.
9	This study will use a range of qualitative methods to collect data. A ball-park figure of aims for participant numbers has been identified with the intention of collecting as broad of a sample as possible within the time restraints of this short study. The intended methods are as follows: 1) Literature review – A thorough literature review will be conducted to determine pre-existing knowledge and any potential limitations or boundaries that my chosen topic may present. It may also inform other methods by identifying gaps in current knowledge that may form the basis of topics or themes to be explored. 2) Open-ended questionnaires – Self designed, open-ended questionnaires will be used to gather data rich responses from which key themes will be identified. The questionnaire will be designed based upon the Kenny Music Performance Anxiety Inventory (K-MPAI) to measure symptoms of music performance anxiety in participants with self-reported experiences of music performance anxiety. The questionnaire will be aimed at a sample size ranging between 5 and 10 singers from each of the three disciplines (15-30 participants total). These will be distributed to participants online once informed consent has been received. The questionnaire will be strictly anonymous and all personal information will be redacted before data is included in the study or shared with my project supervisor. It will not be shared with anyone else. 3) Semi-structured Interviews – Interviews will be conducted with a smaller sample of participants, aiming between 2 and 5 per discipline (6 to 15 total). Semi-structured interviews will be used to explore themes presented from the questionnaires in more detail and to encourage new themes to occur naturally in conversation that may not have been captured in the questionnaires. These interviews will be video/audio recorded for transcription purposes. Interviews will be recorded with the participants knowledge and consent. 4) Focus Groups – One focus group will be conducted with a sample of between 2 and 5 participants per discipline (6 to 15 total). Focus groups have been chosen as they allow for new topics and themes to unfold in a natural and free-flowing manner, making them a rich source of data with many possibilities. The focus group will be video/audio recorded for transcription purposes.

	(this box should expand as you type)

10	**Location of research activity** Identify all locations where research activity will take place.
11	1) Open ended questionnaires – These will take place online using survey software such as Google Forms or Survey Monkey. 2) Semi-structured interviews – These interviews will ideally take place in person. Venues for consideration include rehearsal spaces, such as Dance Attic Studios (London, UK), as these allow for privacy in a quiet space when a rehearsal space is booked. The exact venue/location will be decided with input each participant, to allow for their maximum comfortability and convenience. Before research is conducted in a public space, written permission will be obtained from the venue. Where in-person interviews are not possible, or permission from a venue cannot be obtained, participants will be invited to be interviewed via a video-call software, such as Zoom. 3) Focus groups – Any focus groups held as part of this research process will ideally take place in person in a public location agreed by all participants. Conducting focus groups in person may allow conversation to flow more naturally without the limitations of technology that could potentially interfere. Before research is conducted in a public space, written permission will be obtained from the venue. If securing or obtaining permission from a public location is not possible, focus groups will be conducted via a video-call software, such as Zoom. (this box should expand as you type)
12	**Research activity outside of the UK** If research activity will take place overseas, you are responsible for ensuring that local ethical considerations are complied with and that the relevant permissions are sought. Specify any local guidelines (e.g. from local professional associations/learned societies/universities) that exist and whether these involve any ethical stipulations beyond those usual in the UK (provide details of any licenses or permissions required). Also specify whether there are any specific ethical issues raised by the local context in which the research activity is taking place, for example, particular cultural and/or legal sensitivities or vulnerabilities of participants.
13	N/A *(this box should expand as you type)*

14	Use of documentation not in the public domain: Are any documents **NOT** publicly available?	**NO**	☒
		YES	☐
15	If Yes, please provide details here of how you will gain access to specific documentation that is not in the public domain and that this is in accordance with prevailing data protection law of the country in question and England and Wales. N/A *(this box should expand as you type)*		

SECTION F: Scope of Research Activity

1	**Will the research activity include:**	**YES**	**NO**
2	Use of a questionnaire or similar research instrument?	☒	☐
3	Use of interviews?	☒	☐
4	Use of diaries?	☐	☒
5	Participant observation with their knowledge?	☐	☒
6	Participant observation without their knowledge?	☐	☒
7	Use of video or audio recording?	☒	☐
8	Access to personal or confidential information without the participants' specific consent?	☐	☒
9	Administration of any questions, test stimuli, presentation that may be experienced as physically, mentally or emotionally harmful / offensive?	☐	☒
10	Performance of any acts which may cause embarrassment or affect self-esteem?	☐	☒
11	Investigation of participants involved in illegal activities?	☐	☒
12	Use of procedures that involve deception?	☐	☒
13	Administration of any substance, agent or placebo?	☐	☒
14	Working with live vertebrate animals?	☐	☒
15	Other primary data collection methods, please explain in this box For example, 'focus groups'. Please indicate the type of data collection method(s) in this box and tick the accompany box.	☒	☐
16	Details of any other primary data collection method: I will be using focus groups as an additional primary data collection method. (this box should expand as you type)		

If NO to every question, then the research activity is (ethically) low risk and **may** be exempt from **some** of the following sections (please refer to Guidance Notes).

If YES to any question, then no research activity should be undertaken until full ethical approval has been obtained.

SECTION G: Intended Participants

1	**Who are the intended participants:**	**YES**	**NO**
2	Students or staff at the University?	☐	☒
3	Adults (over the age of 18 and competent to give consent)?	☒	☐
4	Vulnerable adults?	☐	☒
5	Children and Young People under the age of 18? (Consent from Parent, Carer or Guardian will be required)	☐	☒
6	Prisoners?	☐	☒

7	Young offenders?	☐	☒
8	Those who could be considered to have a particularly dependent relationship with the investigator or a gatekeeper?	☐	☒
9	People engaged in illegal activities?	☐	☒
10	Others (please identify specifically any group who may be unable to give consent) please indicate here and tick the appropriate box.		
11	Other – please indicate here: N/A (this box should expand as you type)	☐	☒

12	**Participant numbers and source** Provide an estimate of the expected number of participants. How will you identify participants and how will they be recruited?	
13	How many participants are expected?	This study will aim to involve between 15 and 30 participants in total, with as close equal numbers of participants as possible across the three fields of Musical Theatre, Classical Music and Contemporary Commercial Music. This is to try and mitigate the data being uneven, however, the limitation that it may not be possible to have an equal split of participants in each field will be acknowledged. These participants will be identified primarily through social media, however, participants may also be contacted via text message, email or phone call where there are mutual contacts between myself and the participants. All participants will be receive an online questionnaire. Between 6 and 15 participants will then be invited to partake in interviews, and a sample of 6-15 participants will be invited to take part in a focus group. *(this box should expand as you type)*
14	Who will the participants be?	The participants will be adults aged 18 and above who are professional vocalists within their field. The term “professional vocalist” is this study will be defined as anyone who has received payment as a vocalist, who considers their work as a singer to be a significant portion of their career. However, non-professionals who are currently undertaking professional/formal training in a drama or music college will also be included. The limitations of the subjective nature of the definition of “professional vocalist” will be acknowledged. *(this box should expand as you type)*
15	How will you identify the participants?	Participants will be identified through social media and online, or by my own familiarity of their professional work/training. Websites or social media channels for professional groups,

		such as choirs, may be used to identify larger samples. Please see BoxG13 for some additional information regarding contacting participants. *(this box should expand as you type)*

16	**Information for participants:**	**YES**	**NO**	**N/A**
17	Will you describe the main research procedures to participants in advance, so that they are informed about what to expect?	☒	☐	☐
18	Will you tell participants that their participation is voluntary?	☒	☐	☐
19	Will you obtain written consent for participation?	☒	☐	☐
20	Will you explain to participants that refusal to participate in the research will not affect their treatment or education (if relevant)?	☒	☐	☐
21	If the research is observational, will you ask participants for their consent to being observed?	☒	☐	☐
22	Will you tell participants that they may withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason?	☒	☐	☐
23	With questionnaires, will you give participants the option of omitting questions they do not want to answer?	☒	☐	☐
24	Will you tell participants that their data will be treated with full confidentiality and that, if published, it will not be identifiable as theirs?	☒	☐	☐
25	Will you debrief participants at the end of their participation, in a way appropriate to the type of research undertaken?	☒	☐	☐
26	If NO to any of above questions, please give an explanation			
27	N/A *(this box should expand as you type)*			

28	**Information for participants:**	**YES**	**NO**	**N/A**
29	Will participants be paid?	☐	☒	☐
30	Is specialist electrical or other equipment to be used with participants?	☒	☐	☐
31	Are there any financial or other interests to the investigator or University arising from this study?	☐	☒	☐
32	Will the research activity involve deliberately misleading participants in any way, or the partial or full concealment of the specific study aims?	☐	☒	☐
33	If YES to any question, please provide full details			
34	I will use video/audio recording software on my own personal laptop and smart phone to capture audio recordings of interviews and focus groups for transcription purposes. If video call software such as Zoom is utilised, this will be recorded within the program itself and stored on my own personal laptop or smart phone. Recordings will take place with participant knowledge and consent. *(this box should expand as you type)*			

SECTION H: Anticipated Risks

1	Outline any anticipated risks that may adversely affect any of the participants, the researchers and/or the University, and the steps that will be taken to address them. If you have completed a full risk assessment (for example as required by a laboratory, or external research collaborator) you may append that to this form.

2	Full risk assessment completed and appended?	Yes	☐
		No	☒
3	**Risks to participants** For example: emotional distress, financial disclosure, physical harm, transfer of personal data, sensitive organisational information		
4	Risk to Participant: Discussing symptoms performance anxiety creates the risk of emotional distress amongst participants. As interviews and focus groups are being recorded, there is also a risk of personal data being disclosed. *(this box should expand as you type)*	*How will you mitigate the Risk to Participant* Participants will be entitled to withdraw from the study any time and this will be made explicit within their consent form. Interviews and focus groups will include regular breaks and contact details of mental health support services will be provided. All names or personal details will be replaced with anonymous code words, and all data will be stored on my own personal computer, that is password protected and only accessible to me.	
5	If research activity may include sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting topics (e.g. sexual activity, drug use) or issues likely to disclose information requiring further action (e.g. criminal activity), give details of the procedures to deal with these issues, including any support/advice (e.g. helpline numbers) to be offered to participants. Note that where applicable, consent procedures should make it clear that if something potentially or actually illegal is discovered in the course of a project, it may need to be disclosed to the proper authorities		
	As this study involves collecting data surrounding anxiety and poor mental health, contact details for mental health support services will be provided. *(this box should expand as you type)*		
6	**Risks to investigator** For example: personal safety, physical harm, emotional distress, risk of accusation of harm/impropriety, conflict of interest		
	Risk to Investigator: The discussion and analysis of data involving the discussion of performance anxiety and poor mental health may be emotionally distressing. Meeting participants for interviews or focus groups involves risks including physical harm. *(this box should expand as you type)*	*How will you mitigate the Risk to Investigator:* I will seek the support of mental health services should this research topic begin to feel too heavy. The risk of physical harm will be mitigated as any in-person research activities will be conducted in a public space, from which prior permission will be granted.	
7	**University/institutional risks** For example: adverse publicity, financial loss, data protection		
	Risk to University: There is a risk of data protection to the university as personal data will be collected.	*How will you mitigate the Risk to University:* All personal details of participants will be replaced with anonymous code. Data will be stored securely on my own personal	

	(this box should expand as you type)	computer that is password protected and only accessible to me. All data will be destroyed once the research is complete. *(this box should expand as you type)*

8	**Disclosure and Barring Service**			
9	If the research activity involves children or vulnerable adults, a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate must be obtained before any contact with such participants.	**YES**	**NO**	**N/A**
10	Does your research require you to hold a current DBS Certificate?	☐	☒	☐

SECTION I: Feedback, Consent and Confidentiality

1	**Feedback** What de-briefing and feedback will be provided to participants, how will this be done and when?
	An email address will be provided for participants to contact should they wish to receive the final person. This will be made explicit to them at the time of consent. *(this box should expand as you type)*
2	**Informed consent** Describe the arrangements to inform potential participants, before providing consent, of what is involved in participating. Describe the arrangements for participants to provide full consent before data collection begins. If gaining consent in this way is inappropriate, explain how consent will be obtained and recorded in accordance with prevailing data protection legislation.
	Formal consent will be sent electronically to all participants. Prior to the online questionnaire, there will be questions that act as a consent form, and by clicking “NEXT”, participants will consent to their involvement in the study. For interviews and focus groups, participants will also be sent an online consent form. Participants will only receive the location/details, or online meeting link, for the interview/focus group once consent has been received. *(this box should expand as you type)*
3	**Confidentiality / Anonymity** Set out how anonymity of participants and confidentiality will be ensured in any outputs. If anonymity is not being offered, explain why this is the case.
	In the consent form, participants will receive full disclosure of how their data is being stored and the measures that will be put in place to ensure they remain anonymous. Personal data will be replaced with anonymous code words that will not be traceable back to the participant by way of organisation or specific professional credits. The key to the code will be stored in a password protected folder within my personal computer that only I will have access to. *(this box should expand as you type)*

SECTION J: Data Protection and Storage

In completing this section refer to the University’s Research Data Management Policy and the extensive resources on the University’s Research Data Management web pages (http://uwtsd.ac.uk/library/research-data-management/).

1	Does the research activity involve personal data (as defined by the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 “GDPR” and the Data Protection Act 2018 “DPA”)?	**YES**	**NO**

	"Personal data" *means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person ('data subject'). An identifiable natural person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person.*	☒	☐
2	If YES, provide a description of the data and explain why this data needs to be collected:		
	Personal data will include the names and email addressed of participants collected via consent forms. Interviews and focus groups will also be audio/video recorded and transcribed, and these may also include personal data. *(this box should expand as you type)*		
3	Does it involve special category data (as defined by the GDPR)?	**YES**	**NO**
	"Special category data" *means sensitive personal data consisting of information as to the data subjects' –* *(a) racial or ethnic origin,* *(b) political opinions,* *(c) religious beliefs or other beliefs of a similar nature,* *(d) membership of a trade union (within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992),* *(e) physical or mental health or condition,* *(f) sexual life,* *(g) genetics,* *(h) biometric data (as used for ID purposes),*	☐	☒
4	If YES, provide a description of the special category data and explain why this data needs to be collected:		
	N/A *(this box should expand as you type)*		

5	Will the research activity involve storing personal data and/or special category data on one of the following:	**YES**	**NO**
6	Manual files (i.e. in paper form)?	☐	☒
7	University computers?	☐	☒
8	Private company computers?	☐	☒
9	Home or other personal computers?	☒	☐
10	Laptop computers/ CDs/ Portable disk-drives/ memory sticks?	☒	☐
11	"Cloud" storage or websites?	☒	☐
12	Other – specify:	☐	☒
13	For all stored data, explain the measures in place to ensure the security of the data collected, data confidentiality, including details of password protection, encryption, anonymisation and pseudonymisation:		
	All data will be kept within my own personal laptop computer that is password protected. Audio/visual recordings and transcriptions will be kept on my own personal laptop, or if file sizes become too large to be stored directly within the laptop, they will be stored on my		

	personal hard drive/USB, which will also be password protected. Any video or audio recording that has been captured on my own personal smart phone will also be stored in a password protected folder within the device and transferred over to my laptop/hard drive as soon as possible. Once recordings have been transferred, they will be immediately deleted from my smart phone. All participants will be given a unique identifier to ensure confidentiality and this list will be kept securely in the password protected folder. Participants will also be given the chance to view transcriptions of interviews and/or focus groups to ensure accuracy of reporting. *(this box should expand as you type)*		
14	**All Data Storage**		
15	Will the research activity involve any of the following activities:	**YES**	**NO**
16	Electronic transfer of data in any form?	☒	☐
17	Sharing of data with others at the University?	☐	☒
18	Sharing of data with other organisations?	☐	☒
19	Export of data outside the European Union or importing of data from outside the UK?	☐	☒
20	Use of personal addresses, postcodes, faxes, emails or telephone numbers?	☒	☐
21	Publication of data that might allow identification of individuals?	☐	☒
22	Use of data management system?	☐	☒
23	Data archiving?	☐	☒
24	If YES to any question, please provide full details, explaining how this will be conducted in accordance with the GDPR and DPA (and/or any international equivalent):		
	All data will be encrypted and kept in password protected cloud storage on my own personal laptop which will not be shared. Any USB sticks used to store or transfer data will be password protected. All data transfers will be encrypted and password protected. All participants will be given a unique identifier to ensure confidentiality and this list will be kept securely in the password protected folder. The data will be stored until the completion of the project and then deleted. In accordance with the DPA2018, participants will have the right to ask to see what data is held relating to them, and this data will be deleted immediately if the participant requests this, in which case the data will not be used in the project. *(this box should expand as you type)*		
25	List all who will have access to the data generated by the research activity:		
	Myself, as the principal researcher and my tutor/supervisor for this project. *(this box should expand as you type)*		
26	List who will have control of, and act as custodian(s) for, data generated by the research activity:		
	Only myself as the principal researcher.		

	(this box should expand as you type)		
27	Give details of data storage arrangements, including security measures in place to protect the data, where data will be stored, how long for, and in what form. Will data be archived – if so how and if not why not.		
	All data will be encrypted and kept in password protected cloud storage on my personal MAC Air laptop which will not be shared. Any USB sticks used to store or transfer data will be password protected, and will be reformatted at the end of the project in order to destroy the data. The data will be stored until the completion of the project and then deleted. *(this box should expand as you type)*		
28	Please indicate if your data will be stored in the UWTSD Research Data Repository (see https://researchdata.uwtsd.ac.uk/). If so please explain. (*Most relevant to academic staff)*		
	N/A *(this box should expand as you type)*		
29	Confirm that you have read the UWTSD guidance on data management (see https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/library/research-data-management/)	**YES** **NO**	☒ ☐
30	Confirm that you are aware that you need to keep all data until after your research has completed or the end of your funding	**YES** **NO**	☒ ☐

SECTION K: Declaration

31	The information which I have provided is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge. I have attempted to identify any risks and issues related to the research activity and acknowledge my obligations and the rights of the participants**.** In submitting this application I hereby confirm that I undertake to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice which is published on the website: https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/research/research-ethics/		
	Signature of applicant:		**Date:** **10/02/2024**

For STUDENT Submissions:

32	Director of Studies/Supervisor:		**Date:**
33	Signature:		

For STAFF Submissions:

34	Academic Director/ Assistant Dean:		**Date:**
35	Signature:		

Checklist: Please complete the checklist below to ensure that you have completed the form according to the guidelines and attached any required documentation:

☒	I have read the guidance notes supplied before completing the form.
☒	I have completed **ALL RELEVANT** sections of the form in full.
☒	I confirm that the research activity has received approval in principle
☐	I have attached a copy of final/interim approval from external organisation (**where appropriate**)
☐	I have attached a full risk assessment (and have NOT completed Section H of this form) (where appropriate) *ONLY TICK IF YOU HAVE **ATTACHED A FULL RISK ASSESSMENT***
☒	I understand that it is my responsibility to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice.
☒	I understand that before commencing data collection all documents aimed at respondents (including information sheets, consent forms, questionnaires, interview schedules etc.) must be confirmed by the DoS/Supervisor, module tutor or Academic Director.
☒	I have deleted the guidance notes before submitting the PG2 for consideration

RESEARCH STUDENTS AND STAFF ONLY
All communications relating to this application during its processing must be in writing and emailed to pgresearch@uwtsd.ac.uk , with the title 'Ethical Approval' followed by your name.

You will be informed of the outcome of your claim by email; therefore it is important that you check your University and personal email accounts regularly**.**
STUDENTS ON UNDERGRADUATE OR TAUGHT MASTERS PROGRAMMES should submit this form (and receive the outcome) via systems explained to you by the supervisor/module leader.

This form is available electronically from the Academic Office web pages:
https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/academic-office/appendices-and-forms/

Application Process

All staff research projects and all research students must submit the Ethical Approval Form to the **University Research Ethics Committee** via the Academic Office (pgresearch@uwtsd.ac.uk). Staff research directly in relation to personal study for taught undergraduate or Masters programmes should be submitted via the Institute procedures explained below.

Taught masters and taught undergraduate research Ethical Approval Forms are considered **within Institutes.** Institutes will provide details of the specific processes for this. Where the Ethical issues within any single ethical application are of particular concern the Institute will refer these to the University Research Ethics Committee. Any student activity that involves the collection of primary data needs to undergo Ethical approval, this includes assignment work as well as dissertations.

Appendix 8.1 - Permission Letter to Sarah Martin Vocal Coach

Sarah Martin
3 Foxhills Road
Ottershaw
Chertsey
Surrey
KT16 0NQ
sarahmartinvocals@gmail.com
11th Feb 2024

Dear Sarah Martin,

RE: The experience of music performance anxiety in vocalists across multiple genres: Musical Theatre, Classical, and Contemporary Commercial Music.

I confirm that I approve of the research proposed into 'music performance anxiety in vocalists across multiple genres' to be carried out by Sarah Martin, of Sarah Martin Vocal Coach, during working hours of the company between 18th of March 2024 and 1st of July 2024.

Kind Regards,



Sarah Martin

Appendix 9 - Consent Form

Please note: This form was sent to participants via Google Forms and was completed electronically. The contents of the appendix form have been copied and pasted into this document for formatting purposes.

Participant Consent Form: How is music performance anxiety experienced differently amongst vocalists that perform regularly within the fields of Musical Theatre, Classical Singing, and Contemporary Commercial Music?

Sarah Martin (Primary Researcher): sarahmartinvocals@gmail.com
Melissa Toy (Research Supervisor) mel@voicestudycentre.com

Study Overview

This study seeks to investigate how music performance anxiety (MPA) may be experienced differently by singers that perform regularly within the fields of Musical Theatre, Classical Singing, and Contemporary Commercial Music.

For the purposes of this study, the following terms are defined as such:

Classical Singing: Refers to the technically demanding style of singing that is associated with Opera, also known as "Operatic" singing (Bruder and Larrouy-Maestri, 2023)

Contemporary Commercial Music (CCM): Refers to genres of music that are considered “non-classical”, including jazz, pop, rock, folk and blues (Henshaw and Collyer, 2022).

Musical Theatre: The fusion of music and drama in which singing is used to act out a story. Singing styles in this genre range from "Legit", similar to that of classical singing, through to more contemporary styles (Edwards and Hoch, 2018).

Music Performance Anxiety (MPA): A “natural, emotional, and physiological response to the stress of public performance” (Gómez-López and Sánchez Cabrero, 2023).

Study Information

This study is supervised by the Voice Study Centre Ltd and The University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UWTSD). This study has been granted ethical approval by UWTSD in line with the UWTSD Research Ethics & Integrity Code of Practice. Please review the following information carefully prior to signing this consent form:

- Participation in this study will comprise of a semi-structured interview with open-ended questioning.
- The nature of questioning relates to your personal experiences of Music Performance Anxiety.
- Interviews will take place in-person or online via Zoom at the discretion of the participant and will last approximately 45-60 minutes.
- Once data collected from interviews has been analysed, participants will receive a copy of the findings.
- Participants will be asked to verify the transcription and be offered a chance to add further input to the study, or have data that does not accurately reflect their experiences of MPA removed.
- Participation in this study will be strictly anonymous, with all personal data redacted at the point of transcription. All names will be changed, and any details of your interview that may reveal your identity will be disguised for the purpose of confidentiality.
- All in-person interviews will be conducted in an agreed public space, arranged at the convenience of the participant.
- In-person interviews will be audio recorded for transcription purposes.
- Online interviews conducted via Zoom will be video recorded for transcription purposes.
- All recordings will be stored on the primary researcher's personal laptop in a password-protected folder.
- Recordings will be accessible only to the primary researcher.
- All recordings will be destroyed on August 12th, 2024, at the close of this research project.
- If you have any questions relating to the study, you can contact sarahmartinvocals@gmail.com

Participant Criteria

To take part in this study, you must meet the following criteria:

- You must be 18 or over.
- You must be based in the UK.

Either:
You are a professional singer that receives income for performing within the fields of Musical Theatre, Classical Music, or Contemporary Commercial Music.

Or:
You are a student, currently undertaking professional training in either Musical Theatre, Classical Music or Contemporary Commercial Music (at Undergraduate Degree level or similar).

Risks of Participation

Due to the sensitive nature of the topic, participants reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time. The following resources are provided to you for mental health support, should you wish to receive it following participation in this study:

Music Minds Matter
Telephone: 0808 802 8008
Website: https://explore.musicmindsmatter.org.uk/

Mind
Telephone: 0208 215 2243
Website: https://www.mind.org.uk/about-us/contact-us/

NHS Mental Health Services
In an emergency, dial 999
If you require urgent help that is not an emergency, call 111
Website: https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/mental-health-services/

Consent to take part in research:

- I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time.
- I understand that I can refuse to answer any question involved during the research process without any consequences of any kind.
- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- I understand that participation involves the discussion and exploration of my experiences of Music Performance Anxiety as part of a semi-structured interview.
- I understand that I will receive a copy of the findings of this study and be given the chance to add additional input or remove data that I am not happy with.
- I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.
- I agree to my interview being audio-recorded and/or video-recorded.
- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
- I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous.
- This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of my interview which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.
- I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in the final research paper to be submitted to the Voice Study Centre.
- I understand that if I inform the researcher that myself or someone else is at risk of harm, they may have to report this to the relevant authorities - they will discuss this with me first but may be required to report with or without my permission.
- I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained in a password-protected folder on the primary researcher's personal laptop until 12th of August 2024.
- I understand that a transcript of my interview in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained until 12th of August 2026.
- I understand that under freedom of information legalisation, I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.
- I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

You will receive a copy of this consent form via email upon completion, for your records and for you to refer back to.

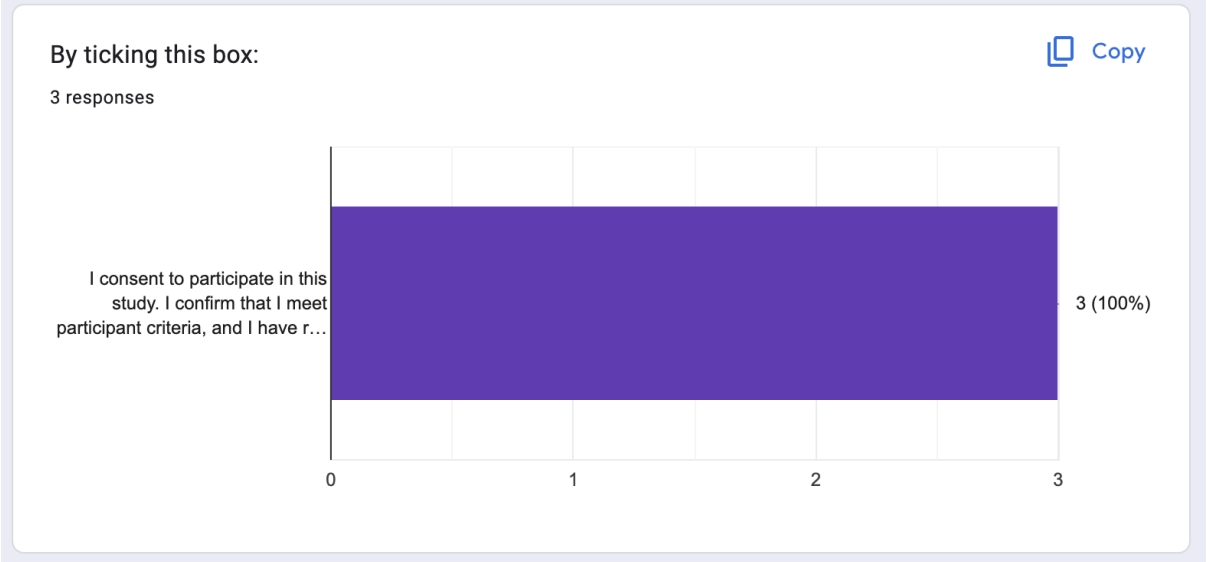
Email*
Valid email address

By ticking this box:
I consent to participate in this study. I confirm that I meet participant criteria, and I have read and understood all of the information above.

Please provide your full name*
Please confirm the email address that you are happy to be contacted on

Appendix 9.1: Proof of Obtained Consent

Screenshot from Google Forms



Appendix 10: Interview Transcripts

Appendix 10.1 - Musical Theatre Singer Interview Transcript

I: How old are you?

MTS: I am 32

I: Amazing, and what age did you start performing?

MTS: Um, so I guess professionally, after I graduated, so I was 22. Um, Oh my god - ten years ago - wow. Um, Yeah so, went to drama school, do you want me to go through it?

I: Yeah, yeah, go for it

MTS: Um, it genuinely, it genuinely started when I was at drama school. So I did a foundation year at [a drama school] in [the UK], um, and it was basically an afternoon, well, like an evening class. So, it was like, three days a week, it was whilst I was working, so I kind of didn't know whether I wanted to go down the drama school route or not. I couldn't afford it at the time, so I was like, look, I'll dip my toe in, see how I get on, and it was a small, really supportive group, um, but I just started [sigh]... it became an ongoing joke, which [sigh], it sounds silly, cause maybe that's how I brush it off now, but I'd be having like, say, a singing… we'd have like a, um… acting through song class and we'd be singing at the piano, and half way through a song I would literally just need to, like, literally need to get out the room, and so I… I don't know why, it was like - I obviously was going through fight or flight, but at the time I did have no clue of that, like I'd never had any form of anxiety before, and um, I literally was like pet- like I was just trying to get out of the room, and they were like "[MTS], what are you doing?". I literally ran down the corrid- I remember I got out the room, everyone's like [short laugh] "What's going on?". Would run down the corridor, would sit in the corridor, and um, I'd have a panic attack, well, like an anxiety attack, and I didn't know what it was, I just thought, you know… and to be honest, back then, because anxiety, performance anxiety, music anxiety, all, all the, well, anxiety and everything else that comes with it, it… it wasn't a thing then. Like, it genuinely wasn't a thing. So, everyone was like "oh, you've just got nerves, like, don't worry, like, you can harness it in other ways, bla bla bla… but I mean, this would happen like, [pffft], continuously, um, and I didn't know what was going on, I didn't understand it, I, I [stutters]... I would just be like [laughs] "I'm so sorry guys" and they'd just be laughing like "Oh! She's off again!' [laughs] like… yeah, it was like, I kind of was like, I didn't know what was going on and I needed- I was obviously flight, I was not fighting it at all because I was just embarrassed [rolls eyes] um, and so, I didn't know what it was, I had no clue, um, and then I decided to go to drama school there, and and um, I remember my singing teacher…

I: I am so sorry to interrupt. So you started off part time, and that's where the experiences of anxiety started to kick in, but then you sort of, decided that you would, that you would go full time and… was it a full time course there?

MTS: Yeah so it was a um, a three year professional diploma in Musical Theatre,

I: Yep, okay, got you

MTS: Um, so I decided to do that, um, I mean but this was going on [shakes head, pause] the whole time, so like I, I knew it was present, but I didn't have any clue how to rein it in, harness it, like, you know, I, I didn't understand what was going on, um, and my teachers would constantly be like ["MTS], there's definitely something [laughing] not quite right"... um, but I didn't know, I didn't know, like, no one knew was it was! And, and I had no time to like, do anything about it, because I was literally like - I didn't live in [the town of the drama school], I was commuting on a daily basis to [the town of the drama school], and I was working evenings and weekends, 'cause I was paying for myself to go to drama school, so [stutters], I just didn't have, but that probably wasn't making it any better, because I was having to get to [the town of the drama school] for 8[am], which meant I had to leave where I live for like, I want to say like, half 5?

I: Oh my god!

MTS: And then, yeah, and then because I was working, then I wasn't getting to sleep 'til probably like, 1? So every single night I probably wasn't sleeping - I was maybe getting like, 4… 4 or 5 hours? So [laughing] maybe the sleep deprivation did not help. It probably made it a lot worse, um.

I: But I suppose if you, you know, 'cause like, I trained in [the town of the drama school] as well and I, obviously I moved 300 miles across the country, but I know what the trains in [the town of the drama school] are like

MTS: Yeah [eyes widening]

I: And um, I guess you didn't really have much choice really, did you? If, you know, [the town of the drama school] is an expensive place to live

MTS: Mmmm

I: So I understand why you choose to commute. I work in [the town of the drama school] now and a lot of the students choose to commute [MTS laughs] you know, because of how expensive it is to live there, so I suppose, if you were working to pay for the fees as well, what choice did you have?

MTS: Mmmm

I: That must have been hard!

MTS: Yeah, I mean it was like [eyes widening, pause], the most stressful four years of my life, well , three, three years of my life. Um, [pause] I think to be honest there was just so- it was so stressful, it was… obviously I was very, very stressed [laughing] anyway, and it was coming out in this anxiety, which I didn't know was anxiety, but also then I was so sleep deprived, that it was probably making it a lot worse. And at that point, I mean, I was literally [shaking head, pause] just powering through it, but the [shakes head] without fail - and this

sounds so bad, and obviously, back then ‘cause there was no, I mean, I went to a drama school that was new, that you know, hadn’t got funding yet, it was private, like, there was no well-being support. I mean, that wasn’t even a thing then if I’m going to be honest, like let’s [laughs].. At drama school, there was no support system. Um, I was definitely, 100% having full on anxiety attacks twice a day, [pause] everyday.

I: Twice a day, oh my gosh. Did it kind of come out for you in, if you can remember, was it ever in a particular class or was it when you had to perform on your own, or was it literally random, like, can you remember when it used to kind of present itself?

MTS: I think the times it used to present itself was, yeah, when I was performing on my own, but obviously like, you’ll know, there was *so* much stuff you had to learn, like *continuously,* I mean like, it was ridiculous. Like you, every single day you were learning a new thing, and um if, I don’t know, by chance we were doing something like [stutters], we were putting on, I don’t know, a show, and we had to learn it in a *week* or two weeks or whatever, the fact that I was like, having to try and learn all this material, that… I was struggling so hard to learn the material, um, that that probably wasn’t helping and then, kind of, [slight pause] it would come out, [grimaces] but then it would also come out in like a defence mechanism to like protect me, ‘cause it was like a “I really don’t know what’s going on! [laughing]” [stutters], but to the point though where it was just so much brain fog, like, it was, I think a lot of my training was such a blur, because I literally was just trying to exist through it, like, which is not the best way to do it, but everyone has their own way of being able to go through drama school.

I: Of course! It sounds like you, you know, just had so much on your plate between the commute, the job, the drama school, all the material that you were learning, it’s understandable - I can totally understand [MTS laughs] how you would have to put some sort of blinkers up to get through that, you know?

MTS: Mmmm

I: Wow, so yeah, you just mentioned - just to make sure that I understand, so it kind of came out worse when you either were kind of put on the spot… you know, actually, maybe that’s something that would be interesting to know. When you sort of felt like you were having to learn all this stuff, and then you mentioned that it would sort of come out sometimes when you would perform by yourself, did you sort of maybe feel, was there like a pressure on you to get it right, or something like that?

MTS: Yeah

I: What was it about that that was like, particularly exacerbating?

MTS: Um, I mean like, obviously there’s a pressure for everyone to get it right, but I think because I was having this continuous behaviour, and because no one knew what it was, I kind of - this sounds *so* bad- but I kind of became the laughing stock of the year, because everyone was like “here’s the clown coming out again” because I, I as a defence mechanism knew it was happening, but would literally try and make a song and dance out of it. I would literally try and make it like, kind of like “oh, I’m going to fail before you can watch me fail, and you know I am going to fail, and then failure for me is like, quite a comfort. Like, I am

quite comfortable in failing, which probably is a good [laughing], it's kind of like a good thing if you're going obviously into this industry, [stops laughing] but it's also a bad thing as well, and I think that therefore, I don't think I was supported, at all. And to be honest, they didn't know how to support me, but also as well like, a lot of time if we, like [pause] if I was up on my own, they'd be like, questioning, *constantly* why I was there. Like, "you shouldn't be here" like, in front of everyone, like "you shouldn't be here, why are you here, you can't afford to be here, you like, clearly can't cope with it here. Why are you here?" And I'm like, 'well I'm here, and I'm already like, like [laughing] in deep, like, like half way through I had to get like, a career development loan, to like, help me, cause I couldn't keep up the payments, so I was like "No, no, no, no, I'm fully in it, [laughs] like, I can't… whether I like it or not"... like, I felt like I had to constantly justify my behaviour, um… but like, [shakes head] there was nothing that anyone could do, do you know what I mean? Like, obviously for a teacher, if they're not experienced with people with any form of mental health, um, illness, at all… you know, what are you going to do? You're trying to keep the class going, and you're trying to obviously not kind of, put a spotlight on it in a negative… I don't know how to explain it.

I: Yeah,

MTS: I don't know how to explain, it's like, you're trying kind of, bring everyone together with me in that moment. And they were supportive, like "Come on [MTS], like keep, like, don't do what you usually do, like, get back into it" and you know, the longer we knew each other, the longer we trained together, obviously it was a lot better, but the problem was is that, obviously they knew this was an underlying issue, they knew I needed to do something about it, but there was nothing I could do about it. And I just used to end up being put, I don't know why this happened, but like, maybe once a week, twice a week, I'd be put in a room with my head of year, and I, we'd have to sit opposite each other and [they'd] be like "Why are you like this? Why are you being-", like as if I was being like, told off as if I was a child, like a naughty child or a naughty kid.

I: Yeah, so, kind of like there was an expectation that you shouldn't be struggling?

MTS: Yeah! Like "Why are you? Get on with it. You put yourself in that position, get on with it"

I: And they were supportive maybe, it sounds like they were supportive in the sense that they didn't just neglect you, but at the same time kind of not actually giving you the solution it sounds like?

MTS: Yeah

I: And just saying like "come on, you deal with it", without giving you the tools how? Is that kind of how it felt?

MTS: Yeah,

I: Gosh, what about, when it kind of came to like, um, when you left drama school, and went sort of freelance, performing, you know, professionally, how did it present itself at that point, or did it get better, or?

MTS: Well actually, so in my, so, at the beginning of, no, end of the second year, I basically took it upon myself to just go to the Principal and was like “Look, like, you know this is an ongoing issue, like, I can’t go on like this, like, there’s something majorly wrong, like, this is not normal behaviour, no one can understand it, no one’s ever witnessed this kind of behaviour, like, it was just so stupid like, being literally like, found by random people, like random staff members in the hallway like, on a daily basis like, “Oh my god, [MTS] is here again, another panic attack”, you know like, it wasn’t normal behaviour and I was like “I can’t carry on [shakes head]... like, I can’t carry on my training like this, I’m getting nothing out of it.. I’m basically not even getting put up for, like, in my first year I was like the lead, and then afterwards they were just like [eyes widening] her behaviour…” It’s like they gave me the opportunity to go “You need to, kind of, show us what you got” - totally fine, and it all went perfectly fine, perfectly well, but then second year just, it clearly just, it’s up and down, I’m like, either like amazing or shockingly, you know, bad. Um, and so basically I said to them, like, “I need to sort this out. I don’t know what’s wrong with me, and I need, I need to genuinely sort this out”. So I went to the doctor and they were like “Look, do you want to take anti-depressants?” and I was like “No, I’m not depressed, I know I’m not depressed”. They were like “You can do cognitive behavioural therapy, you can do a course for three months, do this”. I was like “I can’t though”, I was like “I have no time”. They were like “Look, you’ve got to make the time”, and so there was a class in [a town in the UK] - I think I did it like, once a week on a Thursday or something - and I said to, I said to the principal “Look, I’m paying for my own training, I’m willing to sacrifice that chunk, whatever the class is, and I’ll make it up in whatever way, is there- could you let me leave, I think it was like, two hours early on a Thursday, and they were like “Yeah, we need you to, we just need you to help yourself” sort of thing. Um, so I did that, and I really, *really*, really applied myself and I could understand- well, I actually got put in a socially- social anxiety group, which was not what I had [eyes widening], so everyone wouldn’t, couldn’t speak, like, no one would speak to each other. Like, everyone was mute, and I was the only one talking [laughing] and saying anything, because I was like, “I need to work out what the hell this is!” Like, I need to genuinely… this needs to, like [stutters], something needs to come from this. This needs to help me, cause I’m wasting my money and time being here, and if I’m not going to utilise this, then I might as well just…” Do you know what I mean? So I did that, then I got put on beta blockers, and then in my third year, they were like “We can see there’s a massive difference. You can - you notice your triggers, you can notice when, [pause] what’s going to start the process before even the trigger, if that makes sense. You can acknowledge when it’s happening when you’re performing, you can sort of-” I could sort of control it, but not, but I could. But I had sort of a bit more of an understanding. I still didn’t know it was…

I: Performance Anxiety?

MTS: No! I had no clue, I was like “I definitely don’t have social anxiety [laughing]”, I was like “What the frig is this?” [laughing].

I: It’s so weird you say that because it is um- as part of my research, I’m learning that is how it is classified

MTS: It is, yeah

I: Like, it's classified as a social anxiety, so it's really interesting to hear that in the treatment, you didn't feel like it was, sort of, centred around your needs, because it was labelled that way, have I got that right?

MTS: Well yeah, because they had nothing for that specific type of anxiety, because anxiety was still new, and then the guy - who's actually a really famous therapist now, a [discloses his nationality] guy, he's um, he's got loads of podcasts and books, and stuff like that - but anyway, he was doing - he was my therapist, and literally - well, we had a group therapy class- after the first class he was like "what are you doing here?" He was like "you literally could lead this whole class". He was like "you're so interested in it, you're the only person that's actually absorbing this information, why are you here?" I was like, "I don't know! I did a blinking test, [laughing] and they put me in this group! And I was like [shrugs] okay!" So…

I: So, off the back of the CBT, you mentioned how you suddenly could start to notice your triggers

MTS: Yeah

I: Do you mind sort of explaining what you realised was potentially was the trigger?

MTS: So trigger was definitely lack of sleep. So, if I had lack of sleep, that would make me get a lot of heart palpitations quite easily. So that was before I was even going to perform in any way. Um, I have like a real trigger with time, and I think that's because I might actually be dyslexic, which I need to get tested for, because when I was trying to learn all the material, I was like, *really* struggling compared to others, like I don't have issues with spelling, or anything like that, but I just, I think I'm dyslexic in my memory because my sister has that, and so, so that makes total - I mean, I need to sort that out - but that would make total sense now if that is a thing. Um, so I had a trig - my trigger was constantly with time. And so when I, I never felt like I had enough time to learn the stuff so I kind of was just doing this like, guessing game thing and basically, what would happen with every single sort of like, assessment thing we'd have - obviously, you'd have to learn loads of stuff and then perform it in whatever context, you know, all the rehearsals- I *hate* rehearsals, I *dread* rehearsals - that's probably another one of my like, 'cause for me I'd be like [rolls eyes] "Oh my god", 'cause I feel like I'm not grasping it, understanding it, um, and the whole time through rehearsal I'm [shakes head] pants, I'm awful, I'm just… I'm a mess. I'm all over the shop, and then somehow, as soon as we'd get to the performance, like, I don't know how, what would happen, it's like I'd go into - I can't even remember what happened, if that makes sense sometimes, because I'm *so* anxious, it's such a blur, and like, sometimes they'd be like, like my friends would be like "you'll literally just pull it out, out of the hat. Like, I don't know how you do it" And I'd get really high marks and they'd be like, "but you literally didn't know it yesterday! Like, what is going on? Like, I'm like "I don't know! I'm obviously going into fight now". So, so, I don't… yeah. I don't know! But I mean, I mean there's other triggers, and stuff like that, but I mean, I think my major one was time, because obviously, it was affecting me like [shakes head] every single day. I never had a day off, for like, three years basically. Well, kind of. Well, unless we had a holiday or whatever. So yeah… yeah.

I: So once you kind of then left the kind of, super intense training situation, did you find that any of these sort of triggers occurred ever again? Or did it get better once you got out of that

particular environment, like how did it kind of, did you struggle with this kind of performance anxiety as you went into work?

MTS: Oh yeah. Like, the whole time.

I: Right

MTS: Like, it's never not been there.

I: Was it any different for you when it was like, a professional scenario versus a training scenario?

MTS: [Shakes head] Mmm-mmm. I think because when you're training, I don't know if you feel the same, but they try and put you into situations that are very similar to professional situations. So, on a day-to-day basis, obviously it's less pressure, but when you're being put in front of a panel, or casting people, or agents or like, I don't know, like, you're performing at theatres or whatever, it's kind of [shakes head and shudders], well, it is the same thing. So, um, no, and the problem is is that I at least acknowledged and knew that I had it, and what would start it, but the problem was is that sometimes I could control it and sometimes I couldn't. And I had to kind of be like, okay with the fact that, that was what was going to happen, which was really hard, because I would feel like, I'd be like, on stage, I remembered being in like, pantos, and I would literally just go on stage and I'd be like "Right! I'm having an anxiety attack right now and I actually don't even know my first word". And it literally would be like, it would feel like… it would feel like, 5 minutes had gone past, but obviously, 5 seconds had gone past, and then somehow, it would come out of my mouth and I would just have to get on with it. Um, but no, I think it's just something I've always suffered with, and I've tried so much, like I've tried like, going to the gym, yoga, um, I do a lot of meditation now, which I think hopefully keeps, I mean, I don't really get that much anxiety in life, unless I'm really stressed or tired, it dips in now and again, but not really, it's very performance based, so…

I: Yeah, so it's not like you're a super anxious person,

MTS: No!

I: It's just something about the performance situation, like you say, the time pressure in particular, but also kind of like the work schedule and you know, the amount of work on your shoulders, like, that's the thing about the industry that is really tough.

MTS: Yeah!

I: Yeah, and so, how would you kind of, feel, like at the end of a performance, or in the lead up to - like, I know you said like, in the lead up to a performance you just kind of had to accept that this was going to happen. How did that feel? 'Cause that must have been a lot on your plate! And then post-show as well. How did you sort of feel afterwards? Were you just exhausted, or…?

MTS: Yeah, like I was physically and mentally drained. But any time we'd get towards a performance, of any kind, I would literally be like, I actually, I, I need to get out of this. I don't know how I'm going to get out of this, like, I can't be here, I can't do this, why have I done this to myself, I hate doing this, I hate constantly feeling like this, I don't want anyone to see- like I would revert back to how I was at drama school, I'd be like "I don't want anyone to see me be like this", I was like "I'm in a professional job, like I can't, you can't, you have to take it seriously, I can't just be like "yeah, today I'm not going to do it" like, I wasn't in a job a lot of the time, um, where like, I wasn't in like, high-end professional jobs where there was like an understudy or whatever, and like, no one under- like, no one I knew, [shakes head] not really anyone I knew had anything similar to me. If I explained it to anyone, they kind of just thought I was [pause] lazy, so I continuously was listed as like, a lazy person, who just would leave everything to the last minute and procrastinate, and it's like "No! I was doing the work [laughing] the whole time!'

I: Like, you were the opposite!

MTS: [laughing] yeah!

I: And so obviously, with kind of like the struggles of kind, you know, knowing that the time pressure of having to learn a show or learn new material was there, and you would have deadlines to meet and you know, you would struggle with learning the material, was there anything that you like, obviously you know, other than like, the therapy and the medication, I know you've mentioned that, but sort of, in the moment, sort of, day-to-day, do you remember kind of what strategies you would try and put in place to like, get around that problem? Like, did you do anything like, were you just kind of like a blagger, did you used to just stand at the back, was there anything that you used to do on a day-to-day basis just to try and make it seem like you had it all together even if you didn't?

MTS: Um, I'd try and just get on with it, I've never been a blagger, I wish I could [rolls eyes and smiles] um, never been a blagger, but I would make a joke out of it, because that was my default, like I constantly thought, well, if I make a joke out - well, not make a joke about it literally, but if I basically take the mick out of - "Oh god, oh look, I'm a mess, oh!" you know like, be a bit silly, they'd sort of laugh at me and be like "oh she's a bit clumsy, she's a bit ditsy", and it's not so much… they're not focusing on anything else. Like, they know you're going to be nervous, they know that's like, natural, the thing that's hard is obviously when you… it gets too much, and you just freeze, and nothing is coming out of your mouth, that's happened to me before in auditions, and I've been like, there is nothing you can do [laughing]. You can just go again, but you can't just stand there and make excuses, like, "I'm really sorry, I have performance anxiety, and like, I"... cause they're like, "well, you just shouldn't be doing this job then, you should be in this in- if it's that bad, you…" do you know what I mean? It's a, kind of like a… and so I would never want to make excuses for myself [pause]... 'cause you can't. But like, I don't know, it's like a catch 22 situation, it's like...

I: Completely, and you know, I know from studying this topic, that it's absolutely, so common, for performers from all backgrounds, you know, this is why I'm researching it, and you know, from experiencing it myself as well, um, so it is crazy to think that you experienced an attitude from people in the industry of like "well you shouldn't be doing this job" when probably 90% of the performers that came into the room had it in some way, even if they

could maybe manage it differently, you know, but, like you say, nerves are part and parcel of the job anyway, but I'm sure not everyone just got "a little bit nervous", you know? I'm sure there are so many people that experience it in different ways, but the fact that you experienced this kind of attitude back of "well you shouldn't be here"... it's really sad.

MTS: It is sad, it is sad, because you'd think that people would be more understanding, nowadays than ever, be a bit more, kind of, supportive, positive… I don't know, I just think [sighs], but I just think with this industry, you don't get much chances, and when you do get the chances, you have to grab it by the horns and the problem is is that you don't have time for whatever's going on, and so [shakes head], it's like, there's nothing you can do. Genuinely, nothing you can do. All I could do was try my best, but the problem was, this was happening like, I mean, I wasn't getting many auditions, and when I was getting auditions for like, good jobs, I was like… it was just… I felt like it was a car crash every time. It clearly wasn't, like, at all, in a lot of cases, but from my perspective of how I could see what - if I was them in that moment, it looks like I don't know what - it looks like I'm underprepared.

I: Mmm. So you would, so you've had situations where you've gone into auditions, let's say, and felt like it's been terrible because you've had this anxiety, but then you've managed to book the job, so from your perspective you've kind of been like "How on earth did I..?"

MTS: Yeah, I'm like "How on *earth?*" like, "what?! How did they not see it, how did they, how? I mean, I can't… because it's like, if I actually genuinely am having like, an anxiety attack when I'm performing, I have no recollection of what's going on. Like, everything is so foggy and blurry and, and I'm like, literally just, I mean, glimpses come back, but I don't know what I did, if that makes sense. I literally just got through it. So, to get jobs from it was, for me, just bizarre, and because I kept having the comfort in the failure, like, I was like "why, how am I doing good?" I wasn't like… I was doing okay, but it got to the point though then when like, it was just happening like, for a long period of time, it was happening at a lot of auditions, and I wasn't then getting anywhere, and I was getting frustrated with myself [shakes head]. I kind of was like "Maybe I'm not meant to do this', and then I got a job in a kids, like a fringe kids play, at the - you know [a theatre in the UK], there's like a small theatre on the side and they have loads of like, fringe, like, yeah. I was in a three hander, and we had *so* much dialogue to learn, like [pfft], we literally didn't go off stage the whole time, and we were constantly changing outfits, it was like, a lot, um… and um, I was rehearsing for that and it was like, two days before the dress rehearsal and I was like, I was actually in [the town of the drama school] I was actually in um… is it [names a theatre in the town of the drama school], and um, I literally did what I used to do, I don't know what… I think it was 'cause I was in [the town of the drama school]. I don't know why, I had the link to [the town of the drama school], and I ran out the room.

I: Wow

MTS: And I then had a full on anxiety attack in the loo, and I ended up speaking to the guy, who was actually um, sort of, directing, and he like, asked "What's going on?". I was like "I… [stutters], I can't do this". He was like "[MTS], it's two days before the dress rehearsal", I was like, "I actually can't do this. Like, I just can't. I 'm so exhausted by this, I don't know what is happening, I'm having some form of a trigger here, and like, I can't move through this trigger like, I can't move through it". Like, it was blocking me, I just couldn't, but I just… "I can't do

this". And he was like "No, it'll be fine, we'll come back tomorrow, we'll have one more day of rehearsal, you're doing really well, bla bla bla bla". Got on the train, and I was like, made up in mind like "No, I'm not going back". And that's it, completely quit.

I: Wow. What ended up happening with the show, or the play, if you don't mind me asking?

MTS: Um, I emailed him, and I just said like, I've never done this before, I've never quit a job, like, a performance job, like I would never do that to anyone, um, I but I, I can't. I have to put my mental health first, and I just can't, and I'm really sorry, and I know, obviously, I don't know how, the shows going to still go ahead, but in my head I was like, I'm not getting paid a lot for this job, it's a fringe job, it was really disorganised anyway, they had barely any cost- they hadn't sorted out the costumes, we didn't know what we were wearing, there was so much dialogue to learn, they'd given it to us a day before the rehearsals started, and literally it was like, a week and a half of rehearsals, it was all a bit of a mess anyway, um, they were doing it all on the cheap, and I was just like… didn't feel heard at all.

I: Right

MTS: And I had specifically requested for the script earlier than everyone else, cause I said "Just to let you know…" well I, I couldn't say for what it was, but I said you know, "I am a slow learner, please can I have it before - I would rather have it before so I can get to grips with it on my own, so then I wasn't walking in with this like, anxiety already" and he was like "yeah, yeah", and every single day he was like "Oh, I'll send it you, I'll send it to you", and like, it obviously it wasn't finished, and it was like [shrugs].

I: So you were kind of like, they didn't even admit that to you, like, they almost like, fobbed you off I suppose and let you think "yeah you can have it early", but actually, they didn't sort of follow through?

MTS: Yeah! This was going on for like, two weeks, and like, I understand like, loads of jobs you don't get stuff, you get it really like, you know, short notice, I'm not saying that I should have been given special treatment compared to other people, but I was just like [sighs], I don't know, it just put… I left on such a sour note because that was always what I'd dreaded was going to happen, and it actually did happen.

I: Yeah

MTS: But I kind of knew it was going to happen before the shows, and I was like, I'm not willing to put myself… like, I'm not going to crash, like I am really not going to crash on stage, I'm just not going to do it. And I'm not going to do it to them, like, I knew at that time, I wasn't in control anymore and I just had to fess up. But the problem is he didn't know! He went to [the town of the drama school], he was [at another drama school in the same town], yet he did not understand it. He had no one that he could relate to, and I just felt like I was getting deja-vu again, and I was like "oh here we go again". I was taught by all people that went to [the other drama school in the same town], well, a lot of people that went to [the other drama school in the same town], he was from [the other drama school in the same town], all of it just sort of like, I don't know, it sounds really bizarre but like, came together and felt like I was back in that same room again, and I was like 'I can't, I just can't'.

I: That makes complete sense, that makes complete sense. So this leads me on quite nicely to sort of like the last few things that I would love to talk to you about. Obviously the musical theatre industry… what do you think needs to change in the musical theatre industry that would like… so let's say, if you could have gone back and the industry could have done more to help you, what would that have been?

MTS: Well, I think now, when you train now, it's a whole different [shakes head] story. Nowadays, from my perspective- I don't know if you feel the same - but I feel like they have such big support systems, you know, they're accepting of so many different types of people from all different backgrounds, there is no kind of, prejudice against anything, whether that be your race, whether that be your weight, whether that be, I don't know, your mental health, whatever it might be, I feel like it's such a more accepting industry now, and I think that when I trained, I don't think it was, and I've heard of a lot of other horrible situations that have happened to a lot of people in other drama schools and that's really sad and unfortunate, but I just think then, it wasn't important [stutters], no one realised that that is such a key part of your training. You should have a support system who are qualified, who understand, and who can normalise this, like, it's not about "Oh my gosh, you've got an issue, get out, because you're causing… you're, um, interrupting our training. People are paying to be here, why are you interrupting us [MTS]? Why are you being a, a problem? Like, instead of dealing with the problem… there wasn't a problem! But, instead of actually trying to understand, they were just like "We don't want you here!" [stutters], like, so many times I got asked to leave, and I was like "No, I'm not leaving, I've paid like everyone else. I understand most people, their parents pay for them to be here, but no, I'm going to be treated exactly the same, you're not get- you're not pushing me out the door". Yeah, that… I just… and I think they're going in the right direction, so I can't really say… there's somethings per se, but I just genuinely think, it's just understanding, having some support, but trained people, because of course your teacher, who's had no… I mean, they might have had their own mental health issues, that… you can't related, a), you shouldn't relate, b), because it's not professional, and c_ you shouldn't… I don't know, [pause] you shouldn't be avoiding it.

I: Yeah. Do you feel then if you'd have had more support, um, you know, genuine support in the days of your training, do you feel that the way it's panned out inyou professional work would have been different?

MTS: [Pause] I don't know if I'm honest, because I think it will always be something that I'll always have, and always have to, um, know that it's there. It's always going to be there, I've got to accept it, it might come out, it might not come out, I have to kind of work with it, rather than kind of, work against it, and I think that what was happening was that I was continually working against it, which obviously makes it a lot worse. It's not necessarily being like "Oh, maybe if I'd have had the support system, then it wouldn't- I don't know, then it would have gone away, I think it was there obviously for a reason, and it probably didn't help. I mean, there's so many different mental health… um, I wouldn't call them problems, but you know what I mean, like [stutters] if you have ADHD and you're a performer, it's phenomenal, you could just keep performing for days, do you know what I mean? I think actually we should be celebrating these things and harnessing them in the right way, so it can like - do you know what I mean? So it can like, help people. Um, and I think [shrugs shoulders] they just weren't

equipped. I wasn't equipped, no one knew [laughs], no one understood, I don't blame anyone, like, it just is what it is!

I: Of course, yeah. Do you think in either… so um, obviously starting in a training capacity, having that support system, like you say, would have help a lot, at least for you to at least feel understood and not like a problem,

MTS: Yeah

I: Do you think, kind of, nowadays, in a professional context, that the way things are done could be different in a way that would maybe even like, let's say if you were to book a musical theatre job tomorrow, do you think that there's anything that, kind of, within a professional company, could be done to kind of, support people going through a similar thing?

MTS: Um, [pause] it's a hard one isn't it. Because you can't- you don't really like, want to single people out, in that sense you're kind of then bringing light to it, and that person might feel like it's a negative thing. It's like, they're pointing you out. I think it's more like… what I've noticed, and I don't know if you had the same experience, but when we were at drama school, in a lot of our voice lessons, you know, we were doing a lot of mindfulness and meditation without us even realising, and you know, a lot of breath work, like, it wasn't like, anything that was far fetched, but it was really grounding, and I think, you know, stuff like that, they could bring into their warm up so that it sort of grounds you, it sort of like, you know, detaches you from whatever you're feeling, in that moment or that day or that week or whatever, and just sort of, kind, of, centres you, grounds you, and then you can just start from there and if it kind of, creeps in, just for them to know that you have that, and just be like "It's fine", like, kind of in itself is amazing [laughs]. That would be so helpful in so many ways, because I [stutters], as someone who has it, I wouldn't feel judged, I wouldn't feel like I was an issue and I wouldn't even feel bad if it happened, I'd just be like, "oh, yep, happened again, right, go again!" like, "Carry on! It's no big deal", whereas, I didn't feel like I could do that, and therefore I couldn't work through it, I was kind of like, [shrugs] "Okay, well that's, you know like, that's it".

I: Yeah, so if like a professional musical theatre touring company, production company, even if there was just a little bit of awareness, do you mean?

MTS! Mmmm

I: Like, so it was kind of, not, not brought to light in a really obvious way

MTS: No

I: But, just kind of like, intertwined in the production company ethos, and intertwined you know, like you say, into things like warm ups and rehearsals for everybody

MTS: Mmmm

I: Then it would benefit those that suffer in a way that doesn't single them out

MTS: Mmmm

I: Is that kind of what… have I understood what you mean correctly?

MTS: Yeah! Yeah, 100%. I think it's like, obviously everyone feels different things and some people are really confident and some people aren't, but we don't know that, like, there's people that are really confident - well, from the outside - and 100% have probably gone through what I've been through but you would never know, and I think actually, it's more about us all being aware of how we're feeling, and if we're working as a team, as a collective, it's kind of going right, we're going to all support each other, we're here, we're working together, and if you're working for a long time in a contract, you're going to have bad days! But you need that, you know, you need that cast member to be like if some - I dunno, when you're on stage and something goes wrong, you forget a line, they just cover you, you know, all that like, you've got the camaraderie anyway from training, you just have it instilled in you, but it's more like a… it's not just that, it's like, being aware of how people are feeling. And obviously, people are normally going to be tired or moody or, I don't know, like, that's just normal, but I think it's everyone being in touch of how they're feeling, um, and just kind of, accepting it.

I: Yeah, no that's amazing, thank you so much [MTS]. Actually, I've got one last bonus question that I'm just really intrigued, um, if you don't mind. So, did you ever find other than - 'cause I know you've sort of mentioned that sometimes you used to freeze, um, on stage

MTS: Mmmm-hmm

I: And feel, you know, like things would become a blur… did you ever experience your anxiety literally affecting your performance? Did you ever have it affect the way you would sing or the way you would perform?

MTS? Mmmm-hmm

I: How did that present itself?

MTS: So, for me, it's more physical than mental, so for me… so say for instance, ummm, like for me, that's why I take beta-blockers, because it's not affecting my mind, it's affecting my body and it's calming it down. If say, for instance, I hadn't taken one - sorry, my camera keeps going off - if I hadn't taken one, or say, for instance, I don't know, I was performing in the evening and I'd taken one in the morning, [nodding] I would… I'd shake, I'd sweat profusely, my face would go *so* red, like *so*- and that was always one of things I was very conscious of, having um, this performance anxiety, that I was like, can people tell? Because my face is going so flus, it's kind of a bit like - I mean if, obviously you've got makeup on, like, stage make-up, like, they probably can't tell, but when you're hot, you're thinking like, "Is it melting off, like, can they see it, what's going on?" Ummm, it could affect my singing, umm in [sigh], I wouldn't, like, cut out or go off key or… I don't know how to explain it, like as if I was shaky but in my voice. So like, it could be confused with vibrato, so maybe if I'd had too much vibrato, like, vib than say that was, was meant for, I don't know, that song or whatever, or ummm… you could tell, basically. You could definitely tell. I mean, I'd try and mask it, but

you could probably tell like, maybe once or twice in that song, ummm... But yeah, like, from my perspective, it would totally [stutters] like, physical, like, you can see it in my voice, you can see it in my face, but I don't know what other people were seeing, so it might just be like, all in my head, if that makes sense? But that is part of anxiety, you're just overthinking what's going on.

I: Of course, yeah and did, um, when it used of, kind of, come out physically, so, if you felt that your voice was shaking or your face was flushing, would that make- would that change how the anxiety felt, like, did it make it worse if you felt like everybody knew or?

MTS: Yeah

I: Yeah, it made it worse?

MTS: [Nods]

I: Okay

MTS: I would be going through the motions, so it would just start it, and then I'm full on going through, like [stutters] it just… it's just getting progressively worse and worse and worse… nothing I can do about it, got to carry on, and then as soon as I'd finish the performance in whatever capacity, I would literally- I would be flat out, like I could fall asleep there, because I'd obviously had an anxiety attack on stage, and yeah, but [shrugs]... yeah! [laughs]

I: Thank you so much.

Appendix 10.2: Classical Singer - Interview Transcript

I: First of all, if you don't mind, could you just clarify how old you are currently, and like, what age did you sort of start performing classical music?

CS: Alright, so um, I'm 27 now, eurgh [laughs] and i started singing classical music I would say at around 16, 17 years old with singing exams.

I: Right, amazing. Oh, so is that how you got into it, like, through the grade exams?

CS: Yeah I did the grade exams, I did, yeah, from [family members] I did musical theatre, um, and when I did singing exams with them, I had, of course I had to sing, I think I had to do a Bellini song, some italian songs, and um, dad said to me, this suits you, you should have a go and of course, they studied at Guildhall, they did opera, they had the opera singing, so,

[information redacted at the request of the participant]

I: So you got into it sort of, started off in musical theatre but then kind of went into the classical grade exams, and then sort of found a talent for it, amazing! Okay, so do you remember, sort of when you first experienced any sort of performance anxiety

CS: Um, well, of course like any other performer, I got nervous for performances, that's just, that's just the done deal, um, but I think, I think when I really felt nervous- extremely nervous to perform was actually in my post-grad, um, so this was, I was, oh god, how old was I in 2020, um, I was about 22, 23? Um, and we had just, um, so I had just switched teacher, um, cos, um, I was, my, my original teacher was, was actually doing [an Opera], in [a foreign country] and so I need a teacher whilst um, I was still studying. So I went with this, this lady, um, and at the beginning it was great, um, but, she was taking me down a road and myself psychologically was going down a road where I felt like I needed to produce big sounds all the time, and anything less than that was not good enough or disappointing or um, basically yeah, um and I remember um, and she was one of those teachers who would stop you all the time if you didn't do it exactly um, as she said, with no malice, just stop, this, stop, this, stop, this, and you, you sort of get afraid to make sounds. Um, and then the, the pandemic came in, and um, obviously life sort of stopped, and we all, I remember doing some online projects and I felt like whatever I was doing was still not good enough, at all. Um, and the rep I was getting was a lot bigger than I had previously sung and it was incredibly challenging, and it- I just wasn't in the read head space nor vocal space to, to do them to be honest. I did what I could, but that, trying to search for perfectionism and what you think you should sound like is a horrible rabbit hole to go down.

I: Absolutely, yeah, I can imagine. So, your- so when your teacher used to stop you, you said that there was no like, malice in it, so does that kind of mean that, that she was never, sort of, horrible to you about it?

CS: No

I: But she would stop you, you know, sort of, frequently?

CS: It would be constant. So that, basically, when you're [stutters] yeah, I was basically afraid to make any kind sound just in case it was [signals inverted commas] wrong, um, so to speak, um, and that doesn't lead to any experimentation in your own practise, and that, to me, that translates into your work, you're afraid to go for any kind of ideas, even dramatically sometimes, cause you're focusing on the sound *all* the time, and it really stunts the process and your creative process, um, and I've even felt it, I've even felt it here on the opera course at [a UK conservatoire]. There's [looks out the window to make sure no one can hear] I mean, thankfully they're, I'm in this booth where um, it's completely soundproof so

I: Don't feel like you've got to talk about anything you're not comfortable to talk about

CS: No! I'm totally comfortable with it, um [smiling] there's a lot of politics as well in conservatoires, I'm sure you probably may have got back at uni,

I: Yeah, I mean, this is kind of what I'm really interested in, cause there absolutely was, but I'm sure, well, I'm not sure how different it would be, you know, this is kind of what I'm really interested in finding out, is, is kind of the differences, so what was your experience - what's your experience been of that?

CS: Well, my experience here, on the opera course here, is that there are clear favourites, um, and I felt like I wasn't valued at all. Well, at all's a bit strong, I wasn't valued as much as others, um, and I've been given the wrong repertoire *again* um, for this whole year and um, I've found myself using my singing lessons to try and- my current singing lessons with my current teacher, who's done wonders, who's fantastic - um, I've found myself using those lessons to try sort myself out mentally in order to sing the things which I don't really quite know how to sing yet, um, and I would have to perform these things in front of people, in front of reviewers, and to be given barely any feedback, good or bad, doesn't really [stutters] it basically made me feel "what the hell are these people thinking? How can I, what can I do, how am I doing?" and it manifested - I definitely remember this year, the academic year, so, Autumn 2023, um, I was given…

[Zoom crashes]

I: I'm sorry, could you just repeat that?

CS: I was doing these two italian works um, but I was predominantly in one of them, but I didn't come on until the end to sing essentially the whole act in this big love duet. Um, and, um, I remember especially, I was finding it a little bit difficult, and then, especially when we got to the end of the stud- end of the studio time and into the tech, it just wasn't going well vocally at all, and I was getting so frustrated and so flustered, and there was no help whatsoever from anyone. And the way I felt was that it's. It's the, sort of the age old thing- can I sing this to an acceptable standard? Um, with um, can I sing this to an acceptable standard and to be fair, I'm such a people pleaser myself, the "will people enjoy it?" instead of "what can I do which makes me enjoy this particular role [shakes head] and how can I be creative and do the role as much justice as I can and I completely [stutters] forgot about that because I was so [makes fists] invested in trying to make the music stuff happy, make the

directors happy, make the audience happy, um, and yeah, I had, I had a complete breakdown actually.

I: Oh {CS], well, I'm not surprised - that's a lot of pressure on your shoulders, a lot!

CS: Yeah

I: So, with all that pressure then, you know, kind of worries about, worries about it being an "acceptable" sound, worries about people's perceptions of you, and then kind of like yeah, the lack of focus on just like, yourself and your experience, how did that then come out in the performance? Did you find, was there any affect on your performance or was it more like, how you felt in the moment that was affected, or was it kind of post the performance that you sort of like, had to sort of work through that? Basically yeah, like, how did all that pressure like, present itself?

CS: Well, um, so, we finished, I, I remember finishing the last orchestra dress rehearsal, um and I myself obsess over high notes, I myself obsess over high notes, so my, my top notes weren't coming out as well as I'd like them to have done and as well as I'd done them before, so I remember being in the notes session like [nods] depressed. So, I remember speaking to my current teacher and um, she invited me up to her place in [a town in the UK] um, to um, just to have the weekend there, 'cause she's partners with my [family member], so I've been up there quite often, um, just to sing and drink, and it's been lovely, so they really took me under their wing and um, we just worked through the piece, the hard bits, and we [smiles] just had fun doing it, and that completely changed… like, it was, it was the weekend before the first night, like, two days before the first night, um, and then I remember the warm up, going back to feeling very confident- feeling much more confident and happier in singing, because of actually just getting some feedback and getting people to actually listen to how I felt, and I remember going to the warm up where we would rehearse the duet, and it was the best I'd ever sung it, and everyone just went "how– you've turned this around completely". Um, so it's amazing what, what one) a break can do, and two) just talking, working through it without any pressure, just seeing how the voice feels, instead of thinking "I need to able to sing this by this time". Theres a feel- there needs - and I, I'm still discovering this, there needs to be a feeling of just letting it go and seeing what happens, 'cause the more, the more you think about what could happen, the more you're going to tense up, the more you're going to go into fight or flight mode, and then you're just going to be like "huh!' [acts out seizing up]. And, we don't have microphones, so we have to produce sound which is going to go over an orchestra, and that's - there's a lot of pressure on that.

I: It's extremely vocally demanding as well, and you know, if you're experiencing all of this pressure that is then meaning that all of that sound can't actually physiologically come out, that must be a really tough thing to get over.

CS: Yeah

I: Yeah okay, amazing. So, what kind of then- so you've kind of mentioned about um, where you've been in classes um, or you've been in 1-2-1s and you've been stopped an awful lot, and you've mentioned about, sort of, being given repertoire that was sort of, out of your comfort zone, being expected to perform it with not enough time to prep, and you know, an

awful lot of pressure, What are the situations that you find yourself in that really like, exacerbate performance anxiety for you? Is it like a, audition scenario, is it in the singing lessons, when it's you 1-2-1, is it when there's an audience watching? Like what are the situations that you find it comes out the worst, or if not the worst, what's like the situation that just exacerbates the experience?

CS: I think, I think, well, I've gotten a lot better now but I still get anxious about auditions, because it's such a strange situation to be in, 'cause it's like a forced performance where you're performing to get a job, um, which obviously is not… it's a necessary evil in this world whether you're a classical musician or contemporary or a musical theatre performer. Um, I would - I remember used to finding them incredibly pressurising 'cause I would feel like I would have to perform to a certain standard just to get into any books or just to be considered for anything, um, and also with panels, it looks like they show absolutely zero interest whatsoever so, you kind of feel like you're performing to a brick wall - a sentient brick wall. Um, and that's, that can invite feelings of "what are they thinking, um, am I, am I, well, am I good enough, or am I singing well enough for these people?" And then as soon as you do that, you're out of character, you're out of the music, you're out of your interpretation. And um, that really, really got to me, especially after the pandemic when the world was starting to kick back into gear. I think for me, there were these feelings of um, "what's changed, um, this is weird to perform in front of people again, um and yeah, I remember completely flunking an audition once after um, after the pandemic and thinking 'I've never done that before, at all" and to actually - as someone who never really "failed" that much beforehand, or, or didn't get into - didn't not get anywhere, it was a lot, and that's another part of performance anxiety, you can, as someone who was a pretty big fish in a small pond beforehand, it's learning how to take rejection, which is another thing.

I: Yeah, and transitioning like you say from, you know, just going from grade exams and probably getting really great marks and you know, maybe being, you know, the best singer in the school or the best singer in the choir, then all of a sudden, you know, you move up the ranks and like you say, you're a small fish in a big pond

CS: Yeah

I: And it's hard to get your head around, isn't it? Um, you mentioned something really interesting, and obviously with my kind of, contemporary background, I'd love to just to pick your brains about that a little bit more.

CS: Yeah

I: But when you've sort of mentioned- you've mentioned a couple of times about a performance having to be "up to standard". What is like, the - what is the benchmark, or the standard that you keep on referring to, and how do they, sort of highlight the- yeah, what is that benchmark that you feel you, feel like you have to aim for and where does the benchmark come from? Is it, like, is the benchmark the same for everybody in the classical world, or is this a benchmark that you've set yourself? I would love to hear more about that

CS: It's mostly a benchmark I've set myself because um, back when I was down spiralling, I listened to - [stutters] I mean, I love listening to all the great singers and everything, but I

tried - in hindsight, I tried to emulate a sound closer to them which was not, obviously not my natural voice. Um, but at the same time, I also thought that this- since these were the legendary great singers, this would be - people would be thinking about, well, wanting it to be a sort of, similar standard or something to do with that, that's what I would be thinking. Um, that's not necessarily true, but that's obvs- that's certainly what I was thinking. But also, with the classical world, obviously there's freedom of expression within um, within, but, there is freedom of expression, but within very, um, specific boundaries, depending on the genre and the style of classical music. Um, so you could do certain things in one genre, subgenre, that you couldn't do in another, and you get people who are incredibly precious about these things, who don't really have any lives outside of classical music, to be honest. Mostly by well-meaning - well-meaning, academically inclined people, who have made it into conducting, um or, I say directing to an extent, um, but that's a different story. Um, but you can do many things wrong and I really, really hate that. Because it can, it can, it can just limit your creativity for one, and make you- and again, it would trigger me by making me feel I would have to fit into this person's box and standards by doing these particular things in a- well, in a particular opera. I mean, that's very exciting of you is it, I mean, you're singing like a twentieth century singer, I'm like, "Okay, thank you…" [grimaces].

I: Well, I was just going to ask then, do you find with your classical singing like, do you, is that something that you kind of, crave, is a bit more creative expression, or do you sort of feel like it's more, um, you wish there was more creative expression so that there's less pressure? Like, what's your thoughts on that?

CS: Um, I, wish that, [stutters] I think it's also, it's also a behaviour which has been ingrained in me, because I've been here for so long. You know, that feeling of "you're a student and you don't know, you know nothing'. Um, there's so much merit and integrity for just like, presenting *something*. And here, certainly with the way the department's run, we feel like we can't do that. And that just, that stunts any particular growth. And I think with, I think musically… um, what do I think musically? I think it's, it's all the same thing when you have people who are really precious - you feel like your opinion is not valued at all, and so that completely- that again, that stunts your creative process by offering ideas you know, "bastare", basically. Yeah, um, does that answer your question?

I: Yeah, thank you so much, amazing. Okay, so, my next question, what- do you have any strategies that you use to try and deal with or manage performance anxiety? Now that you've kind of had a bit of experience of that feeling, is there anything that you do that you find is helpful? Or do you try anything?

CS: Yeah, I, so I, I've been seeing a therapist who works with [others in the industry], um, and she's given me quite a few techniques, a lot of you know, deep psychological breathing, um, listing off three things that went well each time you do a particular run or a performance. Um, things that you would like to work on if, if need be.

I: Oh okay, that's interesting!

CS: Um, well I, [stutters] it just depends on… it depends, obviously what I would go straight to is vocals and technique. So what I, what I would, what I would, I can see myself doing a lot more now, especially having, especially working at [a famous opera location] and all that

experience and everything like that, it was such an eye opening experience, um, just about how, right, okay, so vocals aside, let's, let's think about these things in terms of, in terms of my interpretation, stage stuff, and how that could inform your singing instead of your, instead of just focusing on how you sound, think of the um, much more about what you're singing about, and emotionally, how that involves your singing, because obviously, so much of what we do, our voice is connected to our heart. Um, well, as well as this [gestures to the mind] obviously, scientifically this [still pointing to mind] but emotionally here [gestures to the heart]. And this [still pointing to heart] I, I cannot tell you how much this can do for the voice, instead of going down that technique rabbit hole, just by, just by having a good time [shakes head], it really helps. I try and think "just enjoy yourself", and sometimes if it goes wrong, hey, it goes wrong, but [shakes head] you know what you need to do next time because you're in a better headspace, so you can think technically at that point.

I: Yes, yeah, 'cause it's not overwhelmed with the thought of just the pressure and the thoughts of what other people think.

CS: Yeah, exactly, the people can, yeah, people can put pressure on you, um my [senior teacher] actually came to watch the show at [a famous opera house] and I [stutters], 'cause, he told me the day before and I was like "fuck!" [closes eyes] 'cause I, I can't stand him, okay? [smiling] There's like a whole thing like, he denied, he denied me another job there, to be in an opera where I only sang a hundred bars, and it, yeah, yeah, that's another story. I'm sure [a mutual acquaintance] would be delighted to tell you everything if you talk to her about it! He told me that he was coming to see the show, and I, and I remember that night, I felt like it was the- my worst night, 'cause I just, was just thinking about him in the audience [shakes head] instead of what the hell was actually going on! And I remember vocally it wasn't, it wasn't my best night and I was like 'fuck, I, I can't believe that he got to me'. And I let, and I let that happen myself.

21:51.

I: Bless you, yeah, I mean I'm sure it was absolutely incredible

CS: Yeah, oh it was great! yeah yeah yeah! Oh I got a lovely email afterwards and I was like [mimicking typing] "oh, okay, thank you, prick!"

I: Oh so, he actually gave you some approval afterwards?

CS: Yes, well, it's interesting because, oh, yeah, finally got some approval, and also my- so my designer knows him as well and um, eurgh, oh jesus, she kept- so at the pub on the last night- I, I, I won't go on too long, but she came up to me and just said "Well done" and everything, bla bla, and then she saw this guy and um, she said, she said, she said, that he and my usual director said "We didn't want to um, we didn't want- we didn't want it to seem like, too favouritist, but we were really proud of him". I went "fuck off!" I was like "how DARE you say that when you've been showing favouritism for this whole course!" It's rubbish, you get people like that and it's horrendous.

I: Yeah, that's crazy

CS: It is crazy!

I: This kind of leads me really nicely to the next thing I'd like to talk about, 'cause obviously, you've been in training for so long

CS: Yeah

I: And you've then sort of had this first real professional experience at [a famous opera house] and you mentioned that you did sort of experience some feelings of performance anxiety on that professional run, with you know, your [senior teacher] coming along. Did you, sort of, have um, a different experience of this performance anxiety in a professional setting compared to the training setting? Or was there - was it better, was it worse, or was it different or, you know…

CS: Um

I: I'm just kind of intrigued to see if coming out of, going into a different environment, like a professional environment, made you feel differently?

CS: I think, well, I, I remember the- some of the studio rehearsals I did get quite anxious about, if things weren't going particularly well, um, and I would go back into college mode a little bit, but the thing is, when, when you're, when you're outside of that college bubble, you're, well, you're sort of on your own. Um [stutters] but the good thing is that the spotlight - you don't feel like you're under a microscope all the time, so if you do have a bad day, well one, you have to accept it and two, you have to figure out how you're going to do that better the next time and it's not, not that there's- not that there's no pressure, course there is pressure, this is very high professional standard work, but at the same time you have, you feel like you have the room to make these mistakes, you feel like you have the room to um, to, to work things out. Most, most of the other guys were marking for nearly for the whole studio process, and I found that incredible. Beause [stutters] we're never encouraged not - we're never encouraged to mark in studio rehearsals, we have to sing, we felt like we had to sing flat out from 10am, all day, and you're- you're knackered! And when you can't do the things you want to do it [stutters, point to the mind] it messes you up.

I: That's fascinating, yeah 'cause, you would, from the outside, you would think "oh, the gig would be the place where you feel the spotlight's on you, and the pressure, but what you're saying makes complete sense though about it being the other way round, given the environment you were in,

CS: But also, most of your prep is done in that rehearsal time, so if you've done well with that, then the performances, [stutters] in the performances, you should feel fine. I mean I was, for my, um, for the general rehearsal, people were invited to come, and that was my, that was my, that was basically my debut, and I didn't- I didn't feel that nervous [shakes head] and it was- it, it went very well. The premiere, there premiere was still good, obviously [family were] there so that's a little bit of pressure, 'cause obvious- I know they know what they're on about, and bla, bla, bla, bla. But I didn't- I was not quaking, this was my [famous opera house] debut and I wasn't - I, I felt better doing that than any show I've done at [a UK conservatoire], and I think that really says something.

I: Wow, that really does, yeah

CS: [inaudbible]

I: Yeah, that's really interesting. Really, really interesting. Um, what do you think then, in terms of like, the classical industry, what do you think needs to change?

CS: Mmm-hmm

I: And like, what do you think could have been different about the industry, and the way that it actually works that might have helped your experience?

CS: Well, I don't know if I can answer that, I don't think- I don't know if I can answer that properly because, I, I have obviously I've had industry experience, but I'm not an industry professional yet. Um, but from my- from, I, I was… I remember doing some work before I started the opera course, I was in a chorus up in [a location in the UK] which I'm actually doing again next, um, I think what needs to change, and, I, to an extent, people are doing this, on, at [a famous opera company] on [a program they are running], which I was paid to sing for, they actually have a team of psy- of psychologists on that program, so there is therapy, but if, what I think needs to happen, certainly based on this, in conservatoire, but to an extent in the profession, I think there should be space to just talk about how we're feeling and how and there has- yeah, there has to be a safe space to talk about how we're feeling I think, and be honest with how, and just be honest with what's going on. Um, I think I can't, I don't know, I can't really say because I haven't experienced it as much as I really should…

I: But no, I mean, I guess, like, obviously a massive part of your industry is the conservatoire, isn't it? It's the training, like, you're in professional training you know, that's required of you guys for, you know, like, when you compare your training to like a musical theatre, drama school kind of diploma or a contemporary music degree, like, your training process is a lot more extensive, like the formal training process, you know?

CS: The formal training process, yes I would say, but the, I, I would compare it to, well, with my girlfriend's in musical theatre, so, with her experience of conservatoire, well, drama school, she'd be in from eight, eight 'til eight, and they, again, college politics, bla, bla, bla, bla, um, but she never really got the time and care that she deserved, and [stutters], to an extent, same here. All of us actually feel like we're not good enough, and that's, that's a lot- it's an exclusive course as well, there are twelve people in each year, all of us have a degree of [shakes head] are we good enough? Um, and value, I think, in the pro- in the industry, there should be an emphasis on value to those who need it, there are people who are arrogant and primadonnas and bla, bla, bla - leave them be, but I think just some positive encouragement would be lovely [laughs], to be honest.

I: Absolutely, yeah! Yeah that makes total sense

29:14

CS: Not just "this is wrong, this is wrong, this is wrong". I hate the word wrong.

I: Yeah, so it's um, again so, sorry, this is just so fascinating to me, because obviously this is not my world, obviously, I relate as a singer, to a lot of this in different ways, but um, so you mentioned there about like, what would be really helpful is just having the space to just kind of like, talk things through, about how you're feeling, having you know, your hard work recognised and valued, and not just constantly put down. In terms of then kind of like, that benchmark that you were talking about, and the workload, do you feel that that is still necessary for the field that you're in, but you just then need that support to supplement it, or do you think there could be a shift with that kind of expectation of you guys as well? Just out of curiosity.

CS: Pffft… I think the- I think the expectation still needs to be there, um, but what I think, what I think the emphasis should be on is the process rather than the result, because if you get the process right, the result will come, that's what was so, so lovely about this last experience that I had because everyone was, everyone- no, no one cared about a particular sound on the day, or how you sung, it's how- it's the justice you did to the character, and how you- and how prepared you were musically for it, so, I think if you, if one has enough attention to detail, then the rest will come, um it just, it just honestly depends on how you feel on the day um, and how- just how confident you feel to be honest, and I, as I said, most of the guys were marking for the whole studio process, just so they can get the blocking right, just so they can get their characters right, and then they can add the vocals on top.

I: Yeah, I know this was sort of like, your first real kind of, professional experience, but um, you, assuming that you've maybe talked to others about their experiences in different operas, do you feel like that - the experience that you've had - was quite unique to that show, or that particular company, or do you think actually when you get into the industry, it is a bit like that and a bit more, kind of like you said before, there's a bit more space and a bit more room for…

CS: Yeah, based on my, yeah, based on my limited experience I think the industry is more like that. I think it's much more like that, because you just get on with the work.

I: You're professional at that point

CS: Yeah, they expect you to do it, and you know, and you expect yourself to do it, and people just get on with it. You know, and plus, you're being paid, there's- there's obviously and incentive there, whereas- whereas at college, you have to do it, you know- this has been given to you, you haven't earned it, that's the- I think that's the big thing. You've earned your- your place in the show through auditioning. So I think, I think the value is already there, you just need to- you just need to do the work, and when you find fun, when you find fun in that, um, because you've been prepared, um, because you've taken on notes, you can play and find fun, and I, I absolutely remember having some hilarious moments, even on the stage, and our director's watching and she's pissing herself. So, yeah, it… yeah, I think the stars really aligned though with this last one, 'cause we had such great people on everything.

I: Amazing, amazing, ah, [CS] this has been so insightful and helpful, so thank you so much. What's like, next for you, how are you feeling next then about, um, kind of like next steps in

finding like, the next or, or like, ‘cause you need to clarify for me where- you’re still in training, aren’t you?

CS: This is my last term

I: This is your last term? How are you sort of feeling then about like, coming to the end of that and what’s kind of next?

CS: Oh I can’t fucking wait! I can’t wait to get out of this fucking place! Um, it’s because I’ve been here for so long as well, but at the same time, um…

I: How long have you been there?

CS: Um, I’ve - eight years. Eight years training, it’s a long time.

I: Yeah, it is.

CS: Um, but what just, in terms of the work, obviously I had [stutters] I got this gig in September, which has been wonderful, um, so yeah, had this, I’m doing a festival in [a location in the UK] until August, no, ‘til the end of July, um, I ha- I did have an, I did have an availability check from [a famous opera house] for [an opera] double bill, for chorus, and I did a working session, and we’ll see what comes of that, that’s from August to, that could be from August to end of October, and they’ve asked my availability from September to January but they need to hear me on - they’ve asked me to come in and sing on the main stage as well, so there’s a lot of- it’s all a bit up in the air. It could work out, and I could be, I could be employed until, until next year, um, the usual thing you do after conservatoire is you go on what’s called a “Young Artists” programme, where it’s a programme- it’s like a, a um [clicks fingers] a residency at an opera house for people who are just starting their professional careers, and they get mentorship, mentoring, coaching, um, covers, performance opportunities at that house. And the big - the industry is huge in Europe, and it’s dying here, so there’s a lot of pressure to go over,

I: Were you looking at going over to Italy or something for this, or Germany?

CS: Well, Germany. Germany’s where the work is.

I: Got you, got you. And so how - with all of that kind of up in the air and in the pipe line, how are you feeling? Are you excited, are you nervous?

CS: Oh, I’m, I’m a bit of both. I’m excited because I can finally work on the things that I want to work on, and think I sound good in, um, and literally from one, from one positive experience, you know, I was doing one of [stutters] the most, um, one of the best houses in the world, um, everything has just been sort of, going up, you know, a bit more successful, because I have much more of a sense of who I am as an artist and what I can do, instead of, I’ve got to do *this* at the conservatoire. You just go for it, and the voice follows.

I: Yeah, absolutely. [CS] thank you so much, for giving up your time to talk to me, it’s been so amazing,

CS: My pleasure, my pleasure

I: I feel like I had one, erm, one question came into my head as you were just talking there, this is going to be the last one,

CS: Yeah, go for it, yeah that's fine. I've got time!

I: You know when you mentioned earlier about how you, so, going back to the start of the interview, I wanted to pick this back up, but then we moved on. You mentioned about being given repertoire throughout that didn't suit you, can you tell me a little bit about what, what you mean by that?

CS: Um, so what I mean is, um, so the way the voice- so the way the human voice is in the opera world, there are these sub-categorisations. So of course, you've got soprano, mezzo, alto, tenor, baritone, bass baritone, bass, but there are sub-categories within those voices, and that's, and in Germany, it's known as the Fach system, and so there are, so um, in the repertory, there are certain roles which suit a particular Fach, suit a particular voice, and for vocal, for vocal longevity, and also just for the right kind of sound. Um, one needs to find a role which is best suited for their particular voice, so with me, I suit more Mozart, or Handel, and potentially, potentially some Bel Canto stuff, once I sort the rest of my technique out. I would not sing Vagner, because that's, it's, I mean, I like my middle voice, I feel comfortable in the middle, but you have to sing over eighty piece orchestras, for three hours, and that takes- that's, that takes an animal to sing, like, I'm not that kind of singer. So there- so, just with that in mind, not that I was given Vagner, but I feel the department here is more "come look at what shows we're doing" instead of "come look at what our singers can do". So, I was given, I mean, to be fair I could probably sing this, this rep- show now, but at the time, obviously, I couldn't, and it was a load of high flying high notes, which I had to hold on for about twelve seconds and it- knowing myself and how psychologically and my psyche- my psyche, I would close up because obviously, I would have been stopped all that time, so literally, I'd be like "huh!" [mimics throat tightening] and you know, nothing would come out, um, so yeah, whereas this, this Handel we're doing now, I'm just doing runs everywhere and it's, it's great, like, and it's easy! So yeah, it just depends on how your voice is built up and if there are particular roles which suit you, and the- and that hasn't been the case for me. I've been given all the top-D shit, which I don't have yet.

I: Interesting- and that's almost down to the opera house choosing a show that makes them- no, not the opera house, sorry, [the conservatoire] choosing a show to suit, you know, a certain- to sort of, um to highlight certain things, but not necessarily the strength of their singers they have?

CS: Which is insane, which makes no sense! I mean [stutters] the show we're doing now is the first standard piece we've done in about four years at this place, and no- on a CV - it's not really much about performance anxiety now- but on a CD [shakes head] - a CV- no one is going to be like "oh you did [a certain opera], can you do [another certain opera] tomorrow?" 'cause, 'cause that's how we're getting money.

I: Yeah, yeah, yeah

CS: We digress!

I: Thank you so much [CS].

Appendix 10.3: Contemporary Commercial Music Singer - Interview Transcript

I: For my sample declaration, am I alright to ask you how old you currently are, and what age you started performing?

CCMS: So, I'm about to turn 47, um, so I haven't been singing, so I trained originally as an actress, um, acting, musical theatre that kind of, you know, dance, all that. But I then went into um, just you know, pure drama and I trained at [a famous drama school in the USA] and did a lot of method acting, all that kind of stuff. Then I came back here and had my, my eldest son, so I, I went and did a degree in drama at [a university in the UK] and then, um, and then I started teaching drama, so my singing career really only took off during lockdown. Um, so yeah, even though I had been sort of, singing and doing things like that in a musical theatre kind of context, but nothing massive, big or professional, um, and I'd sung all my life, professionally it only really started in 2020, when we started doing the lives.

I: Yes!

CCMS: Um, yeah! And I had a real passion for wartime 'cause my dad was a much older dad, he was a World War II veteran, and I kind of grew up with listening to- he was a crooner himself, so he would sing a lot of the rat-pack songs, and all that kind of stuff, so, I kind of grew up listening to that style, so I started with the sort of, wartime stuff, and then branched out a bit more to um, other eras that I'm doing now.

I: Ah, amazing, okay, so you started from a musical theatre background, and then, just kind of through your singing through that, obviously knew that you had a, a voice and a talent for that and then sort of, lockdown, that's when you got into it. Okay, so brill, kind of similar to me actually, I sort of started in musical theatre and then moved into more contemporary a bit later, so that's really cool. Um, so, um, obviously the study's sort of revolving around music performance anxiety, would you mind telling me a bit about um, kind of, your experience of music performance anxiety and how you've - how it's presented itself for you?

CCMS: So I, I've had real problems sort of, all my life in everything with imposter syndrome, you know, knowing that, being told "oh, you know, you've got such a talent in this, or you're so good in that, but never actually believing it really myself, and then during the- it was, it was really a really interesting and unique situation in lockdown, because although I was performing, I was on my own performing, not to an audience that I could see, but to an audience that was kind of online, so you're getting that feedback online, and even though I was nervous doing that, it was absolutely nothing compared to when I had to then move it into the real world when we came out of lockdown, and I was now performing to audiences. I think, you know, it's a very similar thing when you're acting to when you're singing, but I feel, I feel like the nerves when you're about to go on stage and you're acting um, uh, you can kind of almost use as energy, you can talk through it, and it's more worrying about forgetting your lines, whereas when you're singing, all of the anx-anxiety, kind of comes up into your, your throat- well, it does for me anyway, and then I'm like "oh [stutters], is my voice going to go, am I going to hit that note, am I, um, am I going to forget all my words? Am I - oh, you know, I don't have anything to have my iPad there with the words on to sort of fall back on, what if I-" all those kind of, doubts and those worries creep in just as you're about to sort of,

step on stage. So for me, um, yeah, I think the singing was petrifying for me, coming out of lockdown and then having to sing in front of audiences.

I: Yeah, that- completely, and I definitely relate about, you know, kind of, feeling it in the throat and you know, that feeling you said of it kind of rising up, um. Talk to me a little bit more if you don't mind about what that actually feels like, if you can describe it? Like…

CCMS: I can actually feel it now, you know when you talk about something and it kind of, is that kind of memory of, um, muscle memory, you- you feel sort of almost strang- almost like it's strangling you from the inside, you know, you've got tight- tightness sort of, coming up into your vocal cords and into your throat, and yeah, it's that real kind of- [swallows] and then you try to swallow to kind of, get it to go down, and yeah, it- it's not nice [laughs].

I: No completely, completely, especially where I think as well, being a singer, you have so much awareness of what this feels like, even on a good day, you know? If this feels great [gestures to throat] you feel great, don't you? Like, you feel untouchable when you're having a good voice day, you can-

CCMS: Yeah

I: Whereas the minute something isn't quite right, you feel it straight away, don't you?

CCMS: Yeah, so an example of um, so I was performing at um, a few weekends ago, it was the first um… oh, what was it called… um, there's a new vintage festival basically on the scene, kind of replacing [another vintage festival], um, and I was invited to you know, be one of the singers, so I went down but I, I had, I knew I had a cold, I knew my voice was going, I was umming and ahhing, I was like "I can't cancel this gig", um, so um, you know, just the, the anxiety kind of getting to the gig, and then I was able to get through my first set, and I think this is a good - thing is one of the things to actually mention about that kind of anxiety, um, I'm always anxious, probably if it's a really big gig, a few days before, leading up to the gig, but um, as soon as I get on stage, I then smash it and I don't even know what I was worried about. So, it was - it's all for nothing really, but this particular gig, a couple of weeks ago, um, I had some serious problems with my voice, and I, and I got through the first set, but then the second set, my voice was pretty much gone, and I had to struggle through, and then the embarrassment when you're on stage and you're thinking "I can't hit this note" and you feel that flush of, you know, of embarrassment, when you go red and you know, then your throat tightens up again, so you're not doing yourself any favours in that way either, so yeah, that was, that was tough, and I had to rest it for a whole week 'cause I had another… so I sing with a band as well, which we can also talk about, the difference between singing on your own, and singing with a band behind you, but I'll let you go onto that when you…

I: Well, I'm so glad that you actually brought that up because it's definitely something that I would love to ask you about, kind of how you experience performance anxiety differently in those situations. I've read quite a lot of literature on this topic and yeah, um a few studies have highlighted that a lot of singers, um, attribute performance anxiety down to being like, the lead or the solo performer, so you know, obviously being a solo performer, leading a band, you can sort of understand that both have kind of, a pressure about them, but what, what's kind of the difference for you?

CCMS: I would say [clears throat] I massively respect everyone in my band so much, they are incredible musicians, and this again goes back to that whole imposter syndrome, so, I was asked to join the band of the back- off the back of the lives that I was doing on Facebook, um, so this was in 2020, and then um, you know, the, the makeup on the band has shifted a little bit over the last few years, um, but I really struggled with them being really accomplished musicians in their own rights and playing for years and years and years, and me being this new girl who's never sung with a band before, and letting- what if I let them down? If I don't- what if I stumble over my words, what if I come in in the wrong key, what if I - you know, all of those kind of worries, and you know, those things do still happen to me on stage, like, I don't know- they probably don't happen to you, but…

I: Oh, they do! They absolutely do!

CCMS: We had a gig, we had a gig a couple of months ago, um, at [a venue in the UK] and I, and I - it's one of my favourite venues to play, it's a lovely, intimate venue, everyone- it's one of those venues where people come to listen to the music, rather than like, get up and drink and dance and talk, so, so then you know they're listening to every note, and I came in because, it was, it was a song where I had, I had to come in and lead, and um, I came, I came in on the wrong, in the wrong key, and there was nothing I could do until the next like, verse- and I was literally wanting to die on stage. But, had that happened four years ago, or three years, even two years ago, I would have been crippled and probably wouldn't have been able to carry on with the set, but I think over time you realise that those things just happen, you laugh it off, and, and you move on the next, to the next song. So I'm definitely more relaxed now than I was at the beginning with the band, but I do still worry about stuff, I mean, I used to have my iPad there and read off- read lyrics off the iPad, and now I don't, I don't do that and I can concentrate on my performance, and I find that actually the anxiety is less now that I can actually talk to the audience, perform, have that kind of patter, laugh at myself if I get something wrong or, you know, give ba- give the rest of the band solos, and now, it's sort of more natural, the anxiety is less.

I: Yeah! Oh my god, there's so much that you've brought up there that I would love to talk to you about. I'm just going to write something down so that I don\'t forget, because I just want to go back to as well then, how does that then, so when you're performing as a soloist then, I can, I mean I, 'cause obviously as a singer myself in a similar genre, I can totally relate to a lot of what you're saying, big time, and I know kind of, how it feels for me, but I would love to hear sort of, in your perspective, then, what's the difference for you as a soloist and how does that feel compared to singing with the band?

CCMS: Yeah, I think, I think when you're singing to a backing track, and it's just you up on stage, there's absolutely nowhere to hide, there's no support behind you, there's no um, you know, it's just you, you're a one man show, you're standing out, you know, you've got to be the, you're the only one who's kind of um, there talking to the audience, and it's kind of the same with the band in that you're the front person, so you know, you are the one doing most of the talking, but when you've got other human beings and their energy behind you, you know, you - that support that you feel is um… it's just so much, it just makes you feel so much better, and they know me, they know about my anxiety, they know how like, down on myself I always am, so they're always like "come on, you're amazing, you're, you know",

they kind of, jeer you up, whereas, when you're on your own, you haven't really got that, you've got to just turn up and go you know, "here I am, larger than life" and you know, "love me and what I do" [laughs]. Um, I much prefer singing with the band than solo, much prefer it, yeah.

I: Right, so do you-

CCMS: 'Cause of the energy, 'cause of the energy.

I: Yeah! Do you get more nervous then on the solo gigs with the backing tracks, almost for like, because you say, there's nowhere to hide, sort of thing, or do you find that like… or does it just depend?

CCMS: I think it depends on the gig. It also really massively depends on how well I've prepared. If I have not prepared well for a gig, and I've not sung for a while, and then I'm, you know, I'll tend to listen to my play- my playlist in the car on the way to the gig, just to get it all - do you do that too? [laughs]

I: All the time!

CCMS: Just to get it all in, "right okay, what are we doing today, what-" you know, "oh I forgot, I actually forgot that that bridge was there" you know, um, so um, I'll do that, but if I've not, if it, for example, we played mainstage [at a UK festival] last year - biggest gig of my life, I've always been a punter at [this festival], [this festival] is like, my dream and, you know, yeah, so, that was like "oh my god, we're actually opening the mainstage, this is crazy". So, um, and I was like "right, I have to be off my iPad for this, I cannot, there can't be an iPad there where I'm reading lyrics, like, you know, I've got to-" so I did a lot of preparation, and I felt incredible, like, smashed it, you know, everything- everything went well, nothing- there were no mistakes, um, but then I think sometimes you can get complacent, 'cause I've done that, and then I've not gigged again with the band for another month, and then, and then things are just all over the place and you're just like "hang on a minute, how has this gone so wrong?" and then that knocks your confidence again, so the next gig, it's like "oh" [grimaces], you know?

I: Yeah,

CCMS: I never feel comfortable, I never feel like I've got it cracked or sorted, ever

I: Yeah, well the thing is, there's always something, isn't there? Like you, like you said, whether you're, if you're doing it on your own, there's a whole set of pressure, if you're doing it with the band, there's a whole set of pressure, and then like you said as well, depending on the gig, there's different pressures, right?

CCMS: Yeah. So, in answer to your question, I'm not sure it has so much to do with whether it's solo or whether it's with a band, I think it probably has more to do with what the gig is, how, you know, how connected and important you feel that is to you and your story and your journey - as much as it shouldn't be, 'cause every gig should be like, you should, I always give my all in a gig, but you know as well as I do that there are some gigs that are more- that

are closer to your heart, and um, and that's- so I thnk it probably has more to do with that, and then the lack of preparation or you know, the over- the preparation that you've done.

I: Absolutely, yeah, I mean I remember seeing your [festival headline performance] on social media and being like "oh my god" and like, looking and thinking "that would be a bucket list gig for me" as well, so I'm so glad that you said it went well, but yeah, like, you know, I do understand, yeah, kind of having that bucket list of gigs that you want to achieve and then kind of, the pressure of getting there, it- yeah, it makes complete sense what you're saying. And then, just linking back to something that you said earlier then, that I've written down that I wanted to ask you about. So, you mentioned that you got sort of, started singing virtually, first of all, and then, it was kind of when you moved into the live scene that, that this kind of performance anxiety started really to kick in. What relationship does the audience play then in your experience of performance anxiety, if any?

CCMS: I think they're hugely important, um, but as you know, as a live performer, whether you're acting, whether you're singing, whether you're - your audience is key, and you can have a night where you get- you give absolutely everything you have, and you get nothing back, and you feel like "oh god, that was so, that was hard work" or "that was flat", and other nights, you can have an audience that's you know, you can have an audience that's like, talking back to you or like, participating in things or singing along or dance - and they get up and dance and that kind of gets you going, so audience are hugely important, and um, I, I will say venues are massively important as well, because… the year before that, we opened a different venue at [the same UK festival] we opened [a venue within the festival] and it was, that was our first debut at [the festival] and it was a… you know, it's inside, it's a tent, and everything and there's a dance floor, and it was a much more intimate venue than a mainstage venue, and it actually, actually after the mainstage gig, I felt like, I sort of felt like I had preferred the year before, even though, you know, mainstage has that massive accolade, it's really, really hard to feel that feedback from an audience when you're on a mainstage and they're down, you know, they're so far away. So I think like, venue plays a massive role in it as well.

I: Completely get that, yeah, I completely get that.

CCMS: You've played some really big gigs

I: Yeah, completely and I definitely find that also like, yeah, feeding off the audience is a huge part of then how you feel the gig goes.

CCMS: Mmmm

I: What like… how would you describe like, the audience from hell for you, like that?

CCMS: [smiling] Just like, non-resposnive, or just talking amongst themselves and not really being engaged in the performance, no one dancing, um… I've never had boos or heckles but [laughs] but I can imagine that would be pretty horrendous! Um and like, people just… I thnk sometimes, especially in the genre that we sing in with the vintage stuff, sometimes people don't get it, or it's the wrong fit for that venue, and sometimes that can cause anxiety as well, because if you're… if, if, if the audience are there and they're expecting something,

and they're not getting what they want, they can be like "oh" [disappointed tone], you know, dismissive and "oh, that wasn't a good night" like, you know, and so that plays a massive - you want - all performers have really fragile egos. All performers, I don't think there's one performer in any, in any aspect of the performance industry that doesn't just want people to love them and appreciate what they do, and think they're the best thing that they've ever seen, and if that's not happening, you can almost feel yourself deflating on stage, I have, anyway.

I: Yeah! Well, that was literally going to be my next question, when you get an audience like that, how does it actually make you feel? Like, what's going through your head, in your personal experience? 'Cause like, I totally agree, we all feel that, but it would be really interesting like, you know, in your experience, what does that actually feel like for you?

CCMS: Physically, I think physically it genuinely feels like you want to, like you're shirnking, like, you, you, you know, instead of doing the opposite, which is probably what you should do- grow, and get bigger and you know, change it up a bit, but for me, I tend to go like "oh no, oh no, oh no" and like, sort of shrink in and physically deflate. Sort of like, try and make myself smaller, so that all the mistakes aren't being seen or, you know, and things like that.

I: Yeah, that makes complete sense. Um, that actually leads on to, something else that I wanted to talk to you about really nicely. So, other than kind of, a negative audience experience, are there any other situations that really sort of, exacerbate the feeling of performance anxiety? I know you mentioned briefly about, if you feel underprepared, and then yeah, like I say, the audience - was there any other kind of scenarios that really trigger the feelings of anxiety, before a gig or during a gig?

CCMS: I'm trying to think… well, this is a really difficult one, because, um, I also massively struggle with my weight and my appearance, and my weight yo-yo's constantly, it has my whole life, and I'm never happy when I'm bigger, and I'm big at the moment, for me, I'm big at the moment.

I; You look amazing! I always think you look so stunning, everytime I see you on social media, I always think you look so glamorous!

CCMS: Thank you!

[information redacted due to irrelevance to topic]

CCMS: And, and, you know, 'cause I'm an older, woman, you know, in, in sort of, this kind of industry and genre, I think, um, I should, I, I also feel the pressure of "I should have my shit together a bit more", really. You know, I should know this stuff, I should, you know, and all of you girls are, are young and like, vibrant and you know all this, you know, you know what you're doing. I think sometimes that actually comes into it as well, when you, we don't - we haven't touched on this yet, but comparing yourself to others, and then not feeling good enough 'cause others are so amazing, that one hundred percent plays into the anxiety- the stage anxiety as well- it does for me, anyway. Um, and that, that, that you know, those little voice- that imposter syndrome and those little voices in your head, "you're not good enough,

why are you doing that? Look at them, they're incredible, they're, you know, they're this, they're that, what makes you think that you can do this?"

I: Yeah, no yeah, absolutely, it's, it's a real struggle isn't… oh god, there's so much good stuff that I really want to talk about, if you don't mind-

CCMS: I went totally off topic, what were we talking about?

I: No, you didn't! It's fine! You were mentioning about body image initially, I think.

CCMS: Oh yeah, so, yeah so, so that for me at the moment is a big thing, and I'm looking at my wardrobe and I'm like "none of my clothes fit me properly, what am I going to like, go on stage in now?" Like, you know, how can I- I used to, I used to do things like control all of my photos when I was singing but, in, you know, that I would post on my private social media, and then realising that I had no control now over pictures that people take of me and post on social media, and so, like, the pressure for me that I put on myself, nobody else is putting it on me, but that I put on myself to "oh god, now I've got to lose the weight again, I've got myself to this, this point, and it's almost like self harm, like a self sabotage, because I know I'm not happy at this weight, and yet I do it to myself every time. And that's like, with mental health, like as far as - 'cause anxiety does lead into that whole mental health thing, um - you know, keeping yourself in that perpetual cycle of, of, of abuse, of you know, keeping yourself in position where you know you're going to be unhappy, and then you're putting yourself in a place where your unhappiness, or what you're unhappy with is on show for everyone to see, is, is actually really messed up.

I: Yeha, like psychologically, it's so much to deal with, especially then with all of the other pressures of performing as well, I mean, um, is that kind of - and again, please don't feel like you've got to talk about anything, if I ask anything that's like, too personal, you don't have to answer anything -

CCMS: I'm a complete open book [smiles]

I: Ah bless you, just so - is that kind of where it stems from for you? Be- is it the feeling of being on show, that this kind of like, anxiety around body image comes from, or is it rooted in something else, is it rooted more in like, kind of, I don't know, kind of like, comparison, do you know? Where does that particularly come from for you in the context of performance?

CCMS: In the context of performance… I can't really, I can't really separate it from the context of performance and who I am as a person because, um, I, um, that's really difficult, but for me, like body image has always been a, always been a thing since I hit puberty, so you know, my mum put me on my first diet when I was twelve years old - it's always been like a, you know, a thing. Um, and I think now that I'm performing regularly and it's, it's become more of an issue that I want to tackle and get rid of like, once and for all, because it's more - it's not so much that I'm worried that other people are- what other people are going to be thinking about me now, it's more that I don't feel confident within myself, and if I'm not confident in how I look when I step on stage, I'm not going to be as confident in how I perform when I'm on stage, how I interact with the audience, and therefore my performance isn't going to be a good, so, yeah, so I think that's where the performance aspect comes in.

I: Yeah, that makes complete sense, yeah, that feeling of when you feel comfortable, when you feel your best, like what we were saying earlier, like how you're feeling, you can tell in your voice straight away, can't you? Like, if you're having a bad day mentally, physically, like if you, you know, you can feel it in your voice straight away, can't you? Like, yeah, if you feel good, you sing better, if you don't feel good, no matter what context it's in, it does affect you, like, I completely relate. That answered that question brilliantly, so thank you. Um, so, in terms of then like, kind of, the industry of, kind of, being a working contemporary singer, is there anything that you think needs to change in the industry that would help you potentially with these, kind of, feelings of performance anxiety? Like, I know that's quite a big question, but…

CCMS: It really, it is, and it's going to be really difficult for me to answer, because I - a lot of my gigs are you know, quite small venues, um, people who are coming to see us because they like what we do, or private parties or weddings, or you know, that kind of thing. So, when you say the industry, I think it's really difficult. I find the industry - the particular scene that I'm in - I find really supportive, but I know that the industry as a whole is not like that. Like, for example, when you were talking to your musical theatre um, performer, one-hundred percent I can imagine what she or he was saying about - or they, them - were saying about, about the industry, you know, their industry. Um, you know, I've had a bit of an insight into that and it wouldn't be - it would be an industry that would absolutely cripple me, because you know, about the back - there's a lot of talking around- behind people's backs and openly being bitchy to people and you know, that, the really unhealthy competition that there is, not just in, in, you know, how, the quality of your voice but how you look, your weight, your, you know, all of those kinds of things, and so maybe there's a re- that's one of the reasons that I'm not in that field, because I love singing musical theatre, but I just don't think I could cope with that environment.

I: It's really interesting that you say that, especially as I'm kind of looking at that comparison between kind of singing between those two fields, yeah, from sort of, like, your musical theatre days to now, what are sort of the main differences in your experience of performing in the two scenes, if that makes sense?

CCMS: Oh, they're so, they're so completely different, aren't they? So, obviously when you're performing in musical theatre, it's a much more commercial thing, musical theatre, to kind of the niche stuff that I do now, and so there's a lot, there's a lot more comparison made "Oh, well she wasn't as good as so and so that I saw doing that role in bla, bla, bla", you know? Whereas when you're, when you're singing you know, with a band, or you're doing the contemporary stuff, or the vintage stuff even, it's um… everybody who's there wants to be there for the music and they love the songs and they love the era and they love the clothes and they love the fashion - so it's a whole kind of look, so they're generally already behind you. They're not there to tear you down, so generally, I feel like the musical theatre industry- unless you are like, the best of the best, they will pick you to pieces.

I: Right. It's so interesting, like, yeah and I, again, I completely understand what you're saying, um… Just 'cause you've brought it up again, it would be amazing to talk a little bit more about the thing about comparison as well.

CCMS: Yeah

I: So did you say you sort of found that worse in the musical theatre industry compared to the contemporary industry, or is it just different?

CCMS: I think it's just different, I think… look, the comparison thing is just a me thing, in this industry that I'm singing in now, I am my… I am the demon in that, not, you know, me and my, myself and my mental health issues are the demon in that. With the, with the musical theatre industry, it's very much I think outside influences then fuelling those demons. Does that make sense?

I: Yeah, completely, yeah. Like, I suppose if you're…

CCMS: There's a lot more judgement I feel in that, kind of… and it's very, very high pressured.

I: Yeah. How do you kind of find, um… what was I going to say? You just said something that sparked a great question in my head, and now I've lost it… I mean, you know when you mentioned earlier about…

CCMS: Take a minute to think! You can take a minute,

I: I've got so much that I want to sort of ask you about, 'cause everything you're saying, I completely relate to, you know? Um, but yeah, cause I'm the same as you, kind of coming from a musical theatre background, and then going into the contemporary world, it does feel very different doesn't it? And I almost think, I used to find that, with musical theatre, there was so much to think about all the time, you know? Whether it was lines, dances, costume changes, um, and also like, the pressure to sound a certain way, as well.

CCMS: Yeah

I: Like, i never had the big "belty" kind of voice, you know, that you kind of get in musical theatre, I sort of felt like I couldn't really hit these big high notes the same way as the broadway singers, you know? And so then I wasn't really kind of - I was sort of always made to feel, you won't get jobs or auditions if you don't have that certain voice

CCMS: Yeah

I: As sort of, someone moving from musical theatre into more jazz, contemporary, how do you find kind of, the vocal demands side of it, I guess? Cause for me, what I love about singing jazz is that I get to play around a little bit more, and if I'm having a bad voice day, I can kind of use it to my advantage a little bit, like…

CCMS: Yeah! Whereas with musical theatre, there's nowhere to hide. You can't play with that stuff. Yeah, definitely, and I think um, you know, obviously I'm struggling with my voice at the moment, which is really frustrating but um, there are, there are different- there are also different genres that are more demanding, so, um, when I'm singing with the band, for example, and we're doing those big, like, rhythm and blues numbers, it is really like, power- they are really powerful, and they are really, they are really demanding on the voice, and I

um, I haven't got the best technique, because I've never actually been properly trained, and so that's probably another, you know, reason why I'm losing my voice when I am getting ill and pushing it when I'm singing and it's not coming back as quickly, um, and then you've got the wartime stuff, which is very sort of, twee, and you know, I love the - I love the variety of the contemporary stuff, because you know, one minute I can be singing Vera Lynn, and then the next minute, I'm bashing out "Proud Mary" or you know, I'm doing, you know, and you can really show your range, um, whereas musical theatre is very specific. And you can show your range, as in, if you have a really great vocal range, you know, you can show that within the musical theatre industry, but that's kind of it.

I: Yeah, do you sort of find then, just kind of going back to what you've just said a little bit, but then tying in what you've also said about musical theatre, just going to like, the vocally demanding stuff, do you look forward to the gigs where you can really show off the voice and get stuck in -

CCMS: Yeah [smiling]

I: - Or do they make you more nervous? Or, is it a bit of both?

CCMS: I think it's a bit of both. One of my favourite songs to sing is the PMJ version of um, "Sweet Child of Mine", and um, that end note, you know, if you're not having a good vocal day [laughing], the thought of "Argh, am I going to hit it? Am I not going to hit it?", you know, that's sometimes actually - if I'm feeling good within myself, that's um… it's almost the anxiety's not there, it's almost like a challenge, and I think sometimes there's a really fine line between anxiety and enjoying the challenge of something, and like you said, you know, when you're feeling good, when you feel like you look good, when you're prepared, when you're voice- you're having a good voice day, and all those pieces fit, and you've had several gigs maybe in the last month or so and you are well rehearsed, the anxiety's way less and the en- the enjoyment and the anticipation and the excitement is way more.

I: Yeah, no yeah, absolutely it's - I couldn't agree with you more. Um, this has literally been so brilliant [CCMS], thank you so much for giving up your time.

CCMS: Aw!

I: I'm just trying to make sure if there's anything

CCMS: Did you get everything you need? 'Cause I don't have to go, so

I: Oh bless you! Well, there actually is one more question that I wanted to ask you, if that's alright. Um, what strategies have you, kind of, found, help with performance anxiety? Is there anything that you find makes you feel better, either in the lead up to a gig or during a gig? Any strategies that you use?

CCMS: Um, I would say [laughs] I don't know if I can say this or not… having a drink! [laughs]

I: Yeah, no absolutely!

CCMS: Sometimes! [laughs] Sometimes having a, having a little drink before you go on stage calms the nerves, um and um, no, just kind of… I tell you what I'd like to do more of, is that kind of mindfulness and meditation to get into that kind of zone before a gig, and there's a really fine line between using your nerves for, like I said before, for- to enhance your performance because the adrenaline's rushing and being calm enough so that you're not- your brain isn't running away with itself and you're not actually sabotaging without needing to, so maybe some mindfulness and meditation, maybe a bit of breathing, talking to my band if, you know, it- sometimes we'll, we'll do our soundcheck and then we'll go off and we'll have a drink and we'll have some dinner and we'll just chat, and we won't talk about music and we'll just, you know, sometimes taking your mind off of it, I think it really just depends where my mindset is on that particular day and I'm very all over the place and very up and down with my moods anyway [laughs] and so it could be just, yeah, I think it just depends on… sometimes I need a bit of a hug, sometimes I need to just be silly, I think it just- I dont think there's any… like I don't have a set routine, I know like, loads of people will have that kind of, like if you go to a Pink gig or whatever, you know that they're out the back, and they're doing their circle and they're doing their vocal warm ups and they've got their sort of, um, routine, but I don't really have a set routine. Maybe I need to get one!

I: But it's kind of hard, like you were saying, sometimes like, you do such a variety of different gigs, it's kind of hard… and you're not necessarily with the same team all the time,

CCMS: No,

I: You're not in the same venue all the time, and so, trying to have a set routine, I suppose, is really difficult and so, you bounce from one place to the next and yeah, so it's not easy to kind of manage that sort of thing. Do you find like, any kind of um, differences between like a public performance versus a private performance, you know, like the difference where, you're kind of there…

CCMS: Yeah

I: Do you get what I'm saying?

CCMS: I think when you're in a- when it's a private performance, sometimes, you're there just to be in the background, so they just want that kind of, background music, I much prefer public performances to private performances, and I think you're way more exposed at a private performance than you are like, at a public performance. Hmm… do I think that? Yeah, I think I do think that, because…

I: Why?

CCMS: The energy's very different from the audience, like, going back to that audience thing, when it's a, if it's a really intimate family party- so I've got a 100th birthday party that I'm doing that I was just on a call with before we, I had a call with you, and um, yeah, they were going through set lists and things like that, it's like a, it's at a farm and it's a big family affair, and it's only me, so I know there's going to be like, yeah, anxiety around that. I get

way- I think I get way more… you can't get as much feedback from an audience at a private party or private function as you do when you're at a gig.

I: Yeah, I totally get that. And, one last thing if you don't mind, I remember what I wanted to ask you about before. What did you find… going back to how you kind of, started performing virtually, talk to me a little bit about your experience of that, and do you still do that, and how does that feel, compared to like, the live environment, you know?

CCMS: Do you know what, [smiles] I haven't gone live virtually in ages, like, years, and um, I was thinking, funnily enough I was thinking about this today, I think, this morning. Um, and how, what a really unique experience it was, and um, I tell you what was really nice, was at my last gig, where I lost my voice, there were people there that had watched religiously every week online um, during lockdown and they came up and they were like, it's "You got us through such a difficult time, and you don't know, you know, the impact that you had, and we just wanted to come and watch you today and thank you in person, so, I think the difference is, you don't realise who's watching you, for a start, because you can see how many people are like, on, but not everyone's interacting with you, like, sending you comments and things like that. Um, and so you can almost pretend like they're not even there. So, sometimes the lives aren't as big, unless you're doing a new song and you're like [grimaces] "Oh god, that didn't sound great", but it's definitely, definitely like, way less nerve wracking performing online than it is in person, 'cause you haven't got that live feedback. You can see the whites of their eyes going "Oh god" [rolls eyes] [laughs].

I: Yeah god, absolutely! Thank you so much for giving up your time.

Appendix 8: Transcript Analysis - MT Singer Interview