

BMPF7013 Independent Study Module

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**A PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH TO REPERTOIRE
SELECTION FOR SINGERS OF CONTEMPORARY
COMMERCIAL MUSIC (CCM)**

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PART ONE: PORTFOLIO

INTRODUCTION & RATIONALE

I have worked as a voice teacher in a private studio setting and as an itinerant teacher in New Zealand schools for nearly 20 years, specialising in teaching contemporary music styles. My student population currently consists primarily of female students, aged 11-18, who take singing lessons for interest and enjoyment, and may or may not engage in voice performance assessments within the school curriculum. Most are beginners when they enter my teaching studio and many take lessons with me for a period of some years.

A continual challenge that I encounter in my studio practice is finding repertoire that is developmentally appropriate, relevant and satisfying for each individual student and that progresses them through musical, technical and stylistic competencies. Repertoire selection is an important component of singing voice pedagogy and can contribute to either a student's experience of success and satisfaction or to a detrimental effect on their progress (Nix, 2002).

Formalised pedagogy for singing in Contemporary Commercial Music (CCM) styles is a new and evolving field. Although there is a long performance tradition of non-classical singing, the recognition and advancement of pedagogical practice to serve contemporary singers is still in relative infancy (Hoch, 2019). Because of this, there are many areas of practice within CCM pedagogy that are led by the teacher's own experience and intuition and lack a rigorous or evidence-based approach (Naismith & Bartlett, 2020). Repertoire selection is one such area.

My observation has been that within traditional voice pedagogy (and in pedagogy for other musical instruments) it is common practice to be aware of repertoire selection as a developmental tool. Beginner singing students will often be given folk songs or other songs with a simple melodic and rhythmic structure and limited technical

demands. There is an established practice within traditional voice pedagogy of considering the parameters of the song and how they relate to the singer's abilities and limitations (Nix, 2002).

It is my experience that this element of traditional voice pedagogy is largely overlooked within contemporary voice teaching practice. Through numerous interactions with other voice teachers, I have observed that teachers often assign repertoire through a lens of limited domain knowledge, poor understanding of the technical or stylistic demands of the song, or by trial and error (Grace, 2023).

Within my own teaching practice, I take a mindful and strategic approach to repertoire selection but lack a systematic process and clear developmental framework. I recognise that there is room for improvement in this aspect of my practice and intend to use this project as an opportunity to explore relevant literature to further my own understanding of the multiple factors that can influence the appropriateness of repertoire. Central to this exploration will be how these concepts sit within the context of singing contemporary styles and contemporary voice pedagogy. It is my hope that by examining this topic in a rigorous way, I will be able to not only improve my own teaching practice but will also be able to impact the wider field of voice teaching by advocating for an advancement of the way that this topic is approached (McCormack, 2011). It is my strong belief that singers and teachers of contemporary styles deserve the continued development of robust pedagogy that serves them specifically and that is rooted in contemporary performance practice (Naismith & Bartlett, 2020).

A preliminary search of the literature has identified that no existing literature reviews have been published on the topic of repertoire selection, which helps to establish the justification for this review (Green et al., 2006).

PLANNED PROGRAM OF STUDY

The aims of this project are:

- To develop a thorough understanding of repertoire selection best practices as they exist in traditional voice pedagogy.
- To synthesise a framework for assessing the appropriateness of repertoire in contemporary styles.
- To be able to apply this learning to my teaching practice to aid the developmental progression of my students.

The learning outcomes of this project are:

- To determine how to assess repertoire appropriateness for developing singers in contemporary music styles.
- To carry out a rigorous, well-structured narrative literature review.
- To successfully apply a rigorous methodology for reviewing grey literature.

This study will focus on two primary research questions:

1. What is the current best practice for selecting repertoire for developing singers?
 - a) What specific criteria should be considered?
2. What additional or different parameters should be considered when selecting developmental repertoire for singers of contemporary music styles?

Literature Review Methodology

This study will take the form of a narrative literature review. Given that I am a solo researcher and have a time period of less than four months to complete the project, a narrative review is appropriate (Toronto & Remington, 2020). Narrative reviews are well-suited to areas of practice that are under-researched and can open up new theories or insights to advance the field (Sukhera, 2022a). They may also “provoke thought and controversy” (Green et al., 2006, p103), by challenging the status quo. Preliminary searching suggests that empirical studies on the topic of repertoire selection are not common, and that the literature review will extend to pedagogical writings and commentary. This renders other literature review types unsuitable.

Narrative reviews are often considered to be non-systematic and to lack rigour as a study design (Toronto & Remington, 2020; Sukhera, 2022a). In particular, the gathering of literature sources can be subjective and incomplete, and can lack explicit inclusion/exclusion criteria, which undermines the validity of the author’s conclusions and can result in author bias (Green et al., 2006). However, Xiao & Watson (2019) propose that the quality, replicability, reliability and validity of any type of literature review, including a narrative review, can be enhanced by conducting the review systematically. Sukhera (2022b) suggests that being deliberate and transparent throughout the review process and giving clear justifications for the choices made can address the potential weaknesses of a narrative review.

In sourcing literature to be reviewed in this study I will use the library database of UWTSD, and the search engine Google Scholar. Using two online search tools will improve the breadth and depth of the search and create a more complete set of published material (Green et al., 2006; Xiao & Watson, 2019).

Search terms will derive directly from the research questions (Snyder, 2019; Xiao & Watson, 2019). To source literature relating to repertoire selection practices, I will search for the terms “vocal repertoire selection”, “voice repertoire selection”, “vocal repertoire pedagogy”, “voice repertoire pedagogy”, “contemporary voice repertoire”,

“CCM voice repertoire” and “singing repertoire selection”. This selection of search terms includes synonyms, abbreviations and related terms to extend the search results (Xiao & Watson, 2019). CCM is an abbreviation of Contemporary Commercial Music, an umbrella term coined by voice pedagogue Jeanette LoVetri (LoVetri, 2008) to describe non-classical singing styles. The term and its abbreviation have been widely adopted in academic and pedagogic writings.

After first collecting literature based on the relevance of the title to the research questions, the selection of literature to be included in the review will happen in stages. Inclusion and exclusion criteria will be applied to screen the texts (Snyder, 2019; Xiao & Watson, 2019) before relevance will be further assessed by reading abstracts (when available). Inclusion and exclusion criteria will be guided by the research questions and will be justified by logical and valid motives that provide reasoning and transparency to the process (Snyder, 2019; Sukhera, 2022a).

The final selection will include publications from January 2000 to August 2024. As I am hoping to develop an understanding of current best practices for repertoire selection, more historic literature is less likely to be relevant.

Where scientific evidence is incomplete or does not sufficiently address a problem, other sources of literature may be included (Sharma *et al.*, 2015). As one of the purposes of a narrative review is to provide an overview of the selected topic, it is reasonable to look to a broader range of literature than can be found in peer reviewed publications. Authoritative texts and unpublished primary research may be highly relevant and warranted to include (Green *et al.*, 2006). Due to the lack of empirical studies on the topic indicated by preliminary searching, this review will include studies, articles and pedagogical writings from relevant peer-reviewed journals, including *Journal of Singing* and *Music Educators Journal*. It will also extend to include book chapters and unpublished Masters and Doctoral dissertations and theses that demonstrate a high level of relevance to the topic. These document types sit within the first tier of Kepes’ taxonomy of grey literature, a framework for

assessing the credibility of non-peer-reviewed literature (Kepes *et al.*, 2012). While inclusion in the first tier of Kepes' taxonomy indicates significant credibility, non-peer-reviewed literature will also be assessed through the "SART" system proposed by Sharma et al (2015) which critically appraises colloquial evidence through the filters of Source, Accuracy, Relevance and Timeliness (Appendix 1). Within the field of voice pedagogy, evidence-based practice may be informed not only by scientific research, but also through voice teacher expertise and experience (Ragan, 2018). The inclusion of grey literature in this study reflects a need to look beyond scientific research to capture practice-based expertise.

It is expected that the search process will be iterative and may require multiple cycles of searching, analysis and interpretation (Sukhera, 2022a). Backward chaining will be employed to identify relevant work cited in selected literature, and forward searching will be carried out using Google Scholar to find articles that have since cited key papers in the review (Xiao & Watson, 2019).

The completed literature selection process is detailed in Table 1.

Table 1. Literature Selection Process

Identification	Records identified through searching (n=87)	
Screening	Records after duplicates removed (n=79) Records screened (n=79)	Records excluded with reasons: • Undated/published before 2000 (n=6) • Publication not peer reviewed (n=6) • Full text not available (n=18) • Choir, ensemble or classroom settings – not relevant (n=14)
Relevance	Records assessed for relevance (n=35) • White literature (n=18) • Grey literature (n=17)	
<i>White Literature</i>	Highly relevant: (n=2) Relevant: (n=4) Somewhat relevant: (n=3) Indirectly relevant: (n=1) Not relevant: (n=8)	Records excluded with reasons: • Indirectly relevant and Not relevant (n=9)
<i>Grey Literature</i>	Highly relevant: (n=1) Relevant: (n=8) Somewhat relevant: (n=1) Indirectly relevant: (n=3) Not relevant: (n=4)	Records excluded with reasons: • Somewhat relevant, Indirectly relevant and Not relevant (n=8) • Honors level Thesis (n=2)
Inclusion	Records included (n=16)	Additional records identified through forward and backward chaining (n=3)
Total number of records included (n=19)		

Preliminary Literature Review

Nix (2002, p217) asserts that “few singers are able to overcome difficulties caused by repertoire that is not suited for their voices”. Inappropriate repertoire can slow a singer’s development or even undermine technical progress being made in vocal exercises. Nix (2002) proposes four broad categories to consider which contribute to a systematic approach for selecting repertoire that best fits the needs of individual students. The first category, *Physical Limitations*, incorporates the student’s age, how long they’ve been studying, and any technical problems or imbalances they are experiencing. The second, *Voice Classification*, considers the pitch location of register transitions, and the tessitura, timbre and range of the voice. *Expressive and Emotional Factors* form the third category, encompassing the emotional maturity, personality, and preferences of the student. The fourth category is *Musicianship Skills*, which covers musical elements such as melody, harmony, rhythm, dynamics and articulation. These categories should be considered in relation to the type of student (beginner, intermediate, advanced or professional) (Nix, 2002). This article points to an established, systematic approach to repertoire selection and has stimulated my interest in how these concepts might be applied in a CCM context.

CCM Voice Pedagogy – Key contributors

Following on from previous research on the topic of CCM voice pedagogy (Fitzgerald, 2021, 2022), I have identified the following authors as experts in the field who have made significant contributions to the understanding of different aspects of CCM, including technical, stylistic, artistic and pedagogic requirements. The perspectives outlined here will inform the lens through which repertoire selection practices for CCM singers will be considered.

Matthew Hoch – Advancement of CCM pedagogy:

Hoch (2018, 2019) has done much to contextualise CCM pedagogy within the wider sphere of voice pedagogy. A historic tradition that reaches back to the 18th century, formal vocal pedagogy operated solely within the purview of Western classical music

until well into the 20th century (Hoch, 2019). Despite popular singing styles dominating the commercial market for much of the 20th century, there was no precedent for teaching these styles until at least the 1970s or 80s. With formal higher education still predominantly the domain of Western classical music, CCM pedagogy evolved largely through the pioneering work of independent teachers who created their own methods to address the needs of a growing population of singers who wanted or needed to be making sounds outside of the norms of classical singing (Hoch, 2018). There is still much work to do to secure CCM as a legitimate branch of voice pedagogy and music education, worthy of its own pedagogical practices (Hoch, 2019).

Jeannette LoVetri – Vocal function for CCM:

LoVetri (2002) has been a major influence in defining and advocating for CCM vocal pedagogy, drawing particular attention to differences in vocal production. CCM largely requires vocal function and behaviours different from those associated with classical singing, including but not limited to more extensive use of chest register (LoVetri, 2013; LoVetri, 2003). Appropriate methods are needed to train the vocal instrument towards sounds that are stylistically relevant and appropriate in CCM styles (LoVetri, 2009). By understanding vocal function, it is possible to assess vocal production based on what the voice is doing when making various types of sound separate from stylistic or aesthetic measures (LoVetri, 2009). This approach is especially pertinent in CCM as there is wide variance in desired tonal outcomes between and even within CCM genres.

Marisa Lee Naismith & Dr Irene Bartlett – Lack of systematic pedagogy for CCM:

Naismith & Bartlett (2020) note that in the field of CCM singing and singing teaching, the lack of a clear and comprehensive pedagogy that encompasses style-specific technique and vocal health needs poses a significant challenge. It is incumbent upon teachers to be self-resourceful, inquiring and adaptive as traditional sources provide little support (Naismith & Bartlett, 2020). The lack of systematic pedagogy in CCM

has led to a perception that learning situations are “less intentional, less goal-oriented, and generally less formal than classical singing” (Naismith & Bartlett, 2020, p273).

Kim Chandler – Teaching popular music styles:

Chandler (2014) addresses the main requirements for teaching popular singers in three parts: *Technique*, *Musicianship* and *Interpretation*. Within each category, pedagogical concepts are introduced and explained, often referencing real-world examples. Fundamental differences between classical and popular singing include differences in posture, breathing, onsets, larynx position, sung tone/register, diction, sung accent, rhythm, vibrato, melody, vocal harmony, range, agility, musicianship, improvisation, vocal ‘effects’, performance practice, amplification and vocal health (Chandler, 2014).

Jeremy Fisher, Gillyanne Kayes & Lisa Popeil – Differences between genres:

Fisher, Kayes & Popeil (2019) review the cultural expectations of different sung genres and acknowledge that assessing quality in a given style is closely aligned to cultural aesthetics. An assessment of voice use in different sung genres, with an emphasis on comparing Western lyric singing traditions to CCM styles, highlights differences across parameters such as range/voice classification, registration, voice quality, and breath management/support. A catalogue of vocal effects and idioms that feature in different genres calls attention to stylistic differences in onsets/note arrivals, offsets/note releases, phrasing choices, vibrato and clarity of enunciation.

Kat Reinhert – Educational practices for CCM:

Reinhert (2019, 2022) has investigated programs in Higher Popular Music Education (HPME), and in particular teaching popular music singers in these settings. Popular music singers cover a diverse range of musical and educational perspectives, including singer-songwriters and ‘chameleons’ - highly skilled and adaptable vocalists who can perform in a variety of genres and settings (Reinhert, 2019).

Teaching strategies for these singers should be equally flexible and adaptable and should be aimed at helping students become “individual, creative, and autonomous artists and musicians” (Reinhert, 2019, p129). Popular music has historically been grounded in informal learning practices, which are usually self-directed and self-motivated (Reinhert, 2022). These practices are often embedded in the creative process of popular music singers and singer-songwriters. A pedagogic approach that values informal learning practices and is student-centred can engender student autonomy and support lifelong musical growth (Reinhert, 2022).

Matthew Edwards – Audio technology:

Edwards (2014) calls attention to the integral role of audio technology in both the performance and recording practices of CCM. As CCM styles are predominantly performed with amplification, audio processing is inextricably linked to the final output of vocal sound. Understanding the features and limitations of different microphones and sound systems, and the role of effects such as equalisation, compression, reverb and autotune provides important context for how CCM styles are performed and how listeners perceive the recorded or amplified voice.

Conclusion

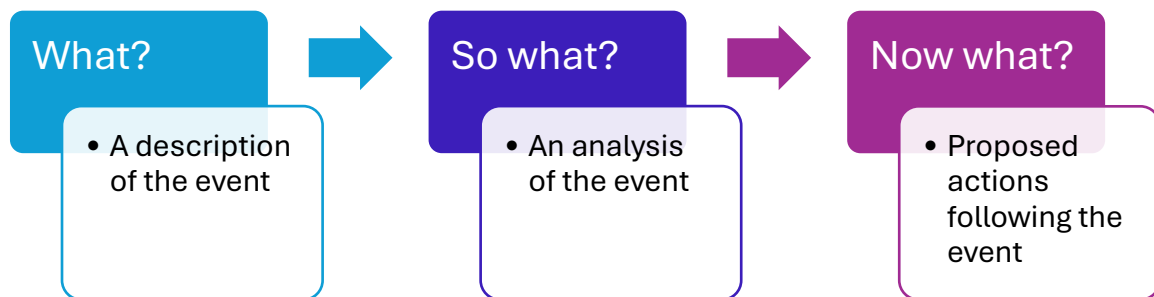
Advocacy for a tailored, specific approach to training singers of CCM styles is a common theme among the writings of these authors, delineating practices found predominantly within CCM and recognising and acknowledging the need for appropriate and relevant pedagogical strategies. With differences in musical and idiomatic features, cultural and historical context, vocal production and function, educational practices, and technological influences, it is evident that CCM singing warrants a dedicated and tailored pedagogy that considers parameters beyond or other to traditional models.

Timescale

	Weeks				Weeks				Weeks				Weeks				Weeks			
	1-4				5-8				9-12				13-16				17-20			
Meet with tutor and discuss topic																				
Refine topic idea and research questions																				
Read and watch material on Module structure and requirements, and research methodology																				
Initial database search to gauge type and amount of literature available																				
Non-study time – away overseas																				
Study methodology and Critical Reflection theories																				
Write up Rationale, Aims & Learning Outcomes, Planned Program of Study and Timescale																				
Begin to gather literature																				
Write up Preliminary Literature Review for Part 1																				
Continue to gather, read and organise literature																				
Apply inclusion/exclusion criteria																				
Review and refine Methodology, search parameters etc																				
Draft main themes for Literature Review																				
Write up Literature Review Part 2																				
Write up Critical Reflection																				
Draft Submission Oct 17th																				

CRITICAL REFLECTION

To undertake a critical reflection of my learning process and experience I will use Driscoll's "What" model (Driscoll, 1994; Driscoll and Teh, 2001), which contains three components of reflection:



McCarthy (2013) suggests the complementary use of three lenses of reflection (mirror, microscope, and binoculars) to achieve deeper and more meaningful reflective processes. The 'mirror' is used to identify personal strengths and weaknesses, the 'microscope' to analyse specific areas of learning, and the 'binoculars' to consider how learning can be transferred to future practices and different learning environments (McCarthy, 2013). This model will be incorporated into my reflection to introduce new perspectives and provide another layer to my analysis.

Understanding assignment parameters

What? The initial stages of this module were occupied by gaining an understanding of the parameters and requirements of the assignment. It took me a lot of time to work through the guidance material and lecture content and to develop a clear concept of what to do and how to do it.

So what? My desire to thoroughly understand the parameters of the assignment created an almost immediate conflict with an internal sense of pressure to move on and get started on the work itself. Having experienced stress over my time management on past assignments and knowing that I would be unable to study for

weeks 5 and 6 while I was overseas, I was anxious to forge ahead. During this phase, I had to reassure myself that taking the time to clearly understand the objectives would lay the foundation for the rest of my assignment. Using the 'mirror' (McCarthy, 2013), I have identified both strengths and weaknesses that influenced my experience. Feelings of insecurity and uncertainty clouded my thinking during this time, but ultimately, I was able to work methodically to build my understanding and reach a point where I was able to move forward with confidence.

Now what? Having reached the end of this project, I can see that taking time through this initial phase was justified. Through the 'microscope lens' (McCarthy, 2013) I have recognised that investing the time and effort at this stage of the project helped me to devise a clear plan, which guided the entire research process. Preparation is recognised as an element of personal effectiveness for researchers, and one which can be developed through the learning process (Bell & Waters, 2018). It has been helpful to reflect and acknowledge the value of this preparatory work and I will take this learning with me into future projects to be more intentionally patient with, and appreciative of this part of the process.

Literature review methodology

What? One of my learning objectives for this project was to design and carry out a systematic process for the literature review. Acting on critical reflection and feedback from a previous module, I wanted to take a rigorous approach to my study design, including inclusion/exclusion criteria and justification. Using constructive feedback as a learning opportunity rather than a reason for self-doubt (Abdelaal, 2020) provided motivation.

So what? I invested a lot of time in reading literature and compiling information about literature review methodology. Articles by Xiao & Watson (2019), Toronto & Remington (2020), and Sukhera (2022a, 2022b) were particularly influential in helping to guide the study design process. Although I've been through this process before on previous modules, I have noticed that each time, I'm able to progress my understanding and feel slightly more confident with methodological standards and practices. The notion of having clear, methodical steps to follow appeals strongly to me and contributes to a sense of being in control which I find reassuring. At the

same time, I was mindful that adhering strictly to a predetermined methodology can be inflexible and limiting and I needed to stay open and adaptable enough to ensure a balance between rigour and relevance (Winter, 2023). Reflecting on this through the 'microscope' lens (McCarthy, 2013), a specific area of learning was the design of inclusion/exclusion criteria which were subsequently piloted and refined (Snyder, 2019) and tracked using a spreadsheet. The use of these criteria successfully provided clearly defined parameters for the literature review and helped me to clarify and justify my decisions (Sukhera, 2022a). In identifying something that surprised me about myself (McCarthy, 2013), I recognised that the tendency to feel comfort in knowing I am doing the 'right thing' is a personality trait that carries over into my broader attitude towards my professional practice and studies. I am motivated by a need to know and feel a sense of security in teaching from an informed position that I can evidence or justify. This has provided some insight into an element of my character that influences my paradigm as a practitioner-researcher (Scott, 2024).

Now what? My experience in designing and carrying out the literature review in this project has given me some confidence in my ability to execute a systematic approach. In particular, the use of clear inclusion/exclusion criteria and processes was a significant step forward in organising information and bringing increased rigour to the study. Using the 'binoculars' lens (McCarthy, 2013), I anticipate this will provide another building block toward the improvement of my research skills and give me experience to draw from in future projects.

Limitations in the literature

What? There are significant holes in the literature in relation to CCM repertoire selection and CCM pedagogy for developing singers.

So what? It is an ongoing challenge as a practitioner-scholar in an emerging field to be able to support and justify thoughts and ideas without an existing body of literature. The literature review is seen as central in "bridging the gap between practical relevance and academic rigor" (Winter, 2023, p. 2), but throughout my project I encountered difficulties in reconciling the two. With 20 years professional experience as a CCM voice teacher, I have practical understanding and insider knowledge, but without supporting literature this can be difficult to translate into an

academic setting (Gitlin *et al.*, 2006). It was frustrating at times to feel that the literature was a limitation in discovering what I set out to.

Now what? Despite the challenges it creates, it is motivating to recognise that the work I'm doing is contributing something new to the academic landscape. If there is an opportunity to publish in the future, it would be gratifying to know that I would be growing the body of literature available to CCM researchers.

PART TWO: WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT

INTRODUCTION

Repertoire selection is an important aspect of vocal pedagogy and carries strong implications for the success or difficulties students may experience (Nix, 2002; Christensen, 2024). Repertoire that is unsuitable for a student's technical ability, musical ability or emotional maturity level may not only hamper their development and undermine technical progress but has the potential to cause vocal harm (Nix, 2002; Clements, 2005; Grace, 2023) and negatively influence a student's psychological and emotional response to the music and their singing (Clements, 2005; Christensen, 2024). Choosing repertoire that facilitates success and progress, while providing an appropriate level of challenge can be a difficult task for voice teachers (Nix, 2002; Sonbert, 2017).

Because traditional vocal pedagogy has been oriented primarily to singing in the traditions of Western classical music (Hoch, 2019), repertoire selection considerations and practices have largely been developed within that paradigm. Contemporary commercial music (CCM) singing has evolved outside of formal education and pedagogy, driven instead by social and cultural movements and the commercial music industry (LoVetri, 2008). While voice pedagogy has evolved in recent times to encompass a wider range of musical styles, CCM still lags in pedagogical practices and resources, including for repertoire selection (Grace, 2023; Koopmans, 2023).

The following literature review will 1) examine current repertoire selection criteria and best practices in voice pedagogy, 2) look at additional or different parameters that exist in CCM, and 3) consider whether traditional repertoire selection models and criteria are applicable to CCM pedagogy and if not, how they might be adapted or amended to be made fit for purpose in a CCM context. Particular attention will be given to pedagogy for developing singers. The term 'developing' can apply to a

broad age range and refers to beginner and intermediate level singers who are building their musical skills and developing their vocal capabilities (Sonbert, 2017).

PART ONE: Repertoire Selection Criteria, Practices and Considerations

Without a systematic approach to repertoire assessment and selection, teachers may resort to choosing repertoire that they themselves have sung or studied, or to a trial-and-error approach (Bronner, 2003; Grace, 2023; Christensen, 2024).

Considering instead how repertoire can be systematically selected to best fit the needs of each student provides a guiding principle by which pedagogical objectives can be aligned with a student's individual vocal and musical abilities (Nix, 2002; Clements, 2005; Stephenson, 2013).

Criteria

The literature introduces a wide range of criteria to consider when selecting repertoire. These criteria can be differentiated into two broad categories. 1) assessing aspects of student ability and 2) evaluating the music itself.

Student assessment

To make appropriate repertoire selections that are well suited to a student and their voice, it is first necessary to make a thorough assessment of the individual student – their vocal and musical abilities and limitations, their age and stage of physiological development, and their personal attributes and interests (Nix, 2002; Clements, 2005; Sonbert, 2017; Grace, 2023). “Teachers must be invested in knowing the individual singer, and knowing where the singer is along the continuum of their vocal development” (Sonbert, 2017, p31).

In evaluating a student’s vocal abilities, common criteria to be considered include range and tessitura (Nix, 2002; Dixon, 2006), register transitions (Nix, 2002; Grønborg, 2019), timbre (Nix, 2002; Clements, 2005; Stephenson, 2013), breathing

(Dixon, 2006; Stephenson, 2013; Grønberg, 2019), and individual technical problems (Nix, 2002; Dixon, 2006; Grace, 2023). These criteria are largely treated superficially in the literature, without detail of how they are assessed. While some of the criteria are reasonably objective, others involve a higher level of subjectivity. Therefore, the way teachers determine the vocal abilities of their students is likely to vary significantly and confound consistent application of repertoire selection practices.

Criteria that address musicianship skills centre on a student's ability to navigate the musical elements of a song (Nix, 2002). In assessing a student's musicianship skills, teachers should consider whether they have a secure sense of pitch and an ability to follow a melody (Nix, 2002; Grønberg, 2019), can keep to a beat and sing the intended rhythms (Nix, 2002; Stephenson, 2013; Grønberg, 2019), have an awareness of harmonic movement and structure (Nix, 2002; Grønberg, 2019), require a clear and simple accompaniment or are capable of a higher level of musical independence (Clements, 2005; Grønberg, 2019; Grace, 2023). Generally, developing singers will be less skilled in these areas, although some may have excellent musical instincts or other musical experience that contribute to a higher level of ability (Nix, 2002).

An awareness of physiological development of the voice is an essential factor in assessing a student's abilities and is particularly pertinent when working with developing singers. Grønberg (2019), Dixon (2006), and Grace (2023) focus their research on repertoire selection for adolescent voice and indicate numerous additional considerations including pitch insecurity, reduced range, tonal inconsistency, lack of register coordination, breathiness, and lack of dynamic control or ability. These presentations are attributable to the physical growth and changes in coordination and motor control typical of this developmental stage (Dixon, 2006). Nix (2002) draws a comparison between typical 18-year-old and 40-year-old males, noting that the increased laryngeal stability that comes with physical maturation would enable the adult singer to negotiate more demanding repertoire. Having knowledge of physiological development gives a teacher context for vocal difficulties

or limitations they might encounter and enables them to set realistic expectations of what a student can and should sing (Grace, 2023).

Criteria relating to a student's personal attributes and interests include emotional maturity (Nix, 2002; Clements, 2005; Dixon, 2006), personality and temperament (Nix, 2002; Clements, 2005; Stephenson, 2013), their musical preferences (Nix, 2002; Dixon, 2006; Grace, 2023) and performance goals (Grønborg, 2019; Grace, 2023). Considering these factors can engender a greater level of emotional connection to selected repertoire by the student and may lead to them being more invested in their learning and performance outcomes (Nix, 2002; Dixon, 2006; Grønborg, 2019; Grace, 2023).

Musical assessment

To select appropriate repertoire, teachers must be able to evaluate the vocal and musical demands inherent in a particular piece of music (Nix, 2002; Clements, 2005). By asking “what does this song require of the singer” teachers are better placed to judge the suitability of the song to a student. Criteria to consider include range and tessitura (Apfelstadt, 2000; Nix, 2002; Clements, 2005; Dixon, 2006; Stephenson, 2013; Grønborg, 2019; Grace, 2023), registration (Nix, 2002; Grønborg, 2019; Grace, 2023), melodic and rhythmic difficulty (Nix, 2002; Clements, 2005; Dixon, 2006; Stephenson, 2013; Grønborg, 2019; Grace, 2023), phrase length and breathing demands (Clements, 2005; Grønborg, 2019; Grace, 2023), harmony (Nix, 2002; Clements, 2005; Grønborg, 2019), tonality (Clements, 2005), dynamics (Nix, 2002; Clements, 2005; Dixon, 2006; Stephenson, 2013; Grønborg, 2019; Grace, 2023), articulation (Nix, 2002; Dixon, 2006; Stephenson, 2013; Grønborg, 2019), style (Grønborg, 2019; Grace, 2023), tempo (Sonbert, 2017), song length (Nix, 2002; Sonbert, 2017), accompaniment (Clements, 2005; Grønborg, 2019; Grace, 2023) and knowledge of the composer (Stephenson, 2013).

While these elements are often only given cursory assessment, each of these criteria warrant extensive and nuanced understanding. An example provided by Nix (2002),

suggests that when considering range, it is important to look beyond simply naming the lowest and highest pitches and to instead assess how those notes are approached and utilised e.g. whether they appear as part of a stepwise melody or as a wider intervallic leap, are staccato or sustained, are isolated or part of a larger cluster of notes in that pitch range, and what vowels the notes are set to. Considering these variables provides deeper analysis of the difficulty level of a song and its appropriateness for the singer. Melodic difficulty can be assessed by looking at a number of factors, including whether the melody is diatonic or includes chromaticism, moves by step or has wider intervallic movement, has melismatic passages requiring agility and flexibility or sustained notes requiring strength and stability, is well supported by the accompaniment or demands melodic independence, or includes long phrases or limited opportunities to breathe (Clements, 2005; Dixon, 2006; Stephenson, 2013).

An additional factor to consider, unique to singers, is the use of language and text. Criteria that can influence repertoire selection include the appropriateness of the text for the emotional maturity level of the singer (Apfelstadt, 2000; Nix, 2002; Grønborg, 2019; Grace, 2023), text interpretation and characterisation (Stephenson, 2013), text setting and the placement of vowels and consonants within the melody (Apfelstadt, 2000; Nix, 2002; Grønborg, 2019), and diction and pronunciation (Clements, 2005; Stephenson, 2013; Grønborg, 2019). In traditional voice pedagogy, while beginning with English is recommended for native English speakers, the introduction of Italian, French, German, Latin and Spanish is necessary when singing music from the Western classical canon (Stephenson, 2013).

The literature from which these results derive primarily consists of Masters and Doctorate level research studies, all of which utilised a methodology (surveys and/or interviews) that canvassed the attitudes and practices of voice teachers. While this type of research captures important insights into current practices, it does not determine whether those practices are the most effective or successful. There is also the possibility that responses might, through the influence of social desirability bias, indicate ideals and intentions rather than actual practice (van de Mortel, 2008).

Rubrics

One way to further systematise the application of criteria is the use of rubrics, which aim to make the process of repertoire evaluation more objective and reduce personal bias (Christensen, 2024). Rubrics are designed to systematically determine a song's difficulty level by assessing elements of a song according to pre-defined criteria, which are allocated a score to indicate a difficulty level (Sonbert, 2017; Christensen, 2024). Using criteria-specific rating scales provides specific, often quantitative parameters by which to evaluate difficulty (Christensen, 2024).

Sonbert (2017) adapted an existing repertoire evaluation rubric (Arneson and Athey-Janka, 2014) to create a framework designed for developing singers, which was then applied to create an anthology of African-American Art Song. The rubric contained eleven elements rated on a five-point scale, with a sum of 55 indicating the highest level of difficulty. Beginner (11-26 points), intermediate (27-41 points) and advanced (42-55 points) categorisations were thereby established. Criteria for the lowest grade on the five-point scale were at an elementary level e.g. range of a fifth or less, simple rhythms, under a minute in length, melodic line of steps or triadic intervals in short phrases and doubled in the accompaniment, and limited text in the singer's native language. This clearly indicates that the rubric was designed for the specific population of developing singers, starting at the most rudimentary level.

Christensen (2024) carried out two comparative studies using a selection of six different rubrics to determine a) whether the various rubrics produced a consistent determination of difficulty when applied to the same song, and b) which of the rubrics yielded the least variance when applied by multiple users. The results indicated that different rubrics and different users produce a range of outcomes, suggesting that there is an unavoidable level of subjectivity and variance inherent in the application of rubrics. While five-point scales were found to produce more consistent results than simpler three-point scales, the added complexity of using a more detailed rubric may prove more time consuming and less appealing to users. Christensen (2024)

suggests that rubrics that are designed for a single composer or genre are more likely to be able to be applied consistently and effectively, as the criteria can be tailored more specifically. Assessing non-existing criteria was found to skew the result by lowering the difficulty score (Christensen, 2024). Despite their limitations, rubrics have been found to be an effective tool in analysing repertoire and can empower teachers to select repertoire more confidently and effectively (Christensen, 2024).

Other practices and considerations

The following section outlines other practices and considerations addressed in the literature that speak to the 'how' and 'why' of repertoire selection, including the role of repertoire, student-led repertoire selection and the traditional canon.

The Role of Repertoire

Conflicting philosophical positions are presented in the literature concerning whether repertoire should comfortably accommodate a student's current abilities or be selected to deliberately challenge areas of technical weakness or development. Nix (2002) supports being aware of the technical issues a student is facing and avoiding repertoire that exposes the difficulties, particularly when preparing performance repertoire whereas, in a survey of five collegiate level voice teachers, Stephensen (2013) found that all participants agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "I select music to strengthen student's weaknesses". The purpose that repertoire serves is likely to vary depending on a teacher's wider pedagogic approach. Therefore, while some teachers may work separately on vocal function and then apply those skills into repertoire, other teachers may not address technique in a stand-alone fashion and would consequently be more inclined to use repertoire as a technique-building tool.

Student-led Repertoire Selection

Although repertoire selection is widely viewed as being a key role of the voice teacher, there is growing acknowledgement that involving students in the repertoire selection process, or allowing students to choose their own repertoire, can engender student autonomy and self-efficacy (Dixon, 2006; Sherwood, 2019). Advantages of this approach might include higher levels of emotional connection and engagement in performance, improved motivation to practice, and greater expression as artists (Dixon, 2006; Sherwood, 2019). Student participation in the repertoire selection process may be reserved for more advanced students (Stephenson, 2013) or may be guided by teachers in a way that students understand how to select repertoire that is appropriate for their voice and development (Sherwood, 2019).

The Traditional Canon

Traditional pedagogy largely centres around a fixed canon of music derived primarily from Western classical music (Sonbert, 2017). Composers such as Schubert, Schumann, Fauré, Mozart and Debussy are identified as having high pedagogical value for university-level singers, and “embody certain characteristics that help singers grow in their path to achieving artistry” (Stephenson, 2024, p55). For beginner and developing singers, a range of anthologies and graduated repertoire books exist that provide hundreds of songs that move progressively from short songs with easier rhythms, simpler melodies, and limited ranges to songs that require more vocal flexibility and control (Bronner, 2003; Clements, 2005). Folk songs are seen as ideal for beginner singers due to their simple, repetitive and memorable nature (Dixon, 2006). Art songs are considered an excellent training ground for developing singers, cultivating vocal health and supporting technical growth (Sonbert, 2017). The fixed, historic nature of this repertoire, and the homogeneity of desired tonal outcomes within Western classical music have contributed to the development of widely accepted and adopted repertoire selection practices from within this canon as well as supporting resources.

PART TWO: Contemporary Commercial Music Context and Considerations

The following section aims to identify and address some of the points of difference between CCM and Western Classical singing and consider how they might influence repertoire selection practices.

Variability and Diversity

Contemporary commercial music is largely driven by the music industry and by independent artists who record and release their own music. Standards of how the music should sound and what vocal characteristics it requires are established by successful professional artists and their audiences (LoVetri, 2008) and are constantly changing with new music being created daily (Fisher, Kayes and Popeil, 2019). CCM encompasses a wide range of styles and exhibits a high degree of sonic diversity, with no homogeneous definition of what makes “a good singer” (Callaghan, Emmons & Popeil, 2018). Furthermore, an artist’s individuality, originality and marketability are sometimes more highly prized than their technical vocal or musical abilities (Koopmans, 2023). Contrary to Western classical singing, there is no clear schema that defines the vocal production parameters, desired tonal outcomes, or required skills of a CCM singer (Naismith & Bartlett, 2020). This means that there is no notion of a fixed canon and no single tonal outcome to aspire to, creating a very different paradigm to Western classical singing.

However, a pedagogical context, particularly for developing singers, brings with it different parameters and imperatives to its commercial counterpart. Developing singers of all types require an intentional approach to vocal and musical development, one that is supported by appropriate repertoire selection. The inherent eclecticism of CCM and those who sing it means that there is no single set of repertoire that will serve all students (Reinhert, 2022) and compels teachers to take a more versatile, personalised approach. Selecting repertoire on an individual basis to suit developmental objectives therefore requires teachers to be familiar with an extensive range of repertoire in a multitude of CCM styles (Chandler, 2014), as well as being able to assess new repertoire as it arises (Grace, 2023).

Registration

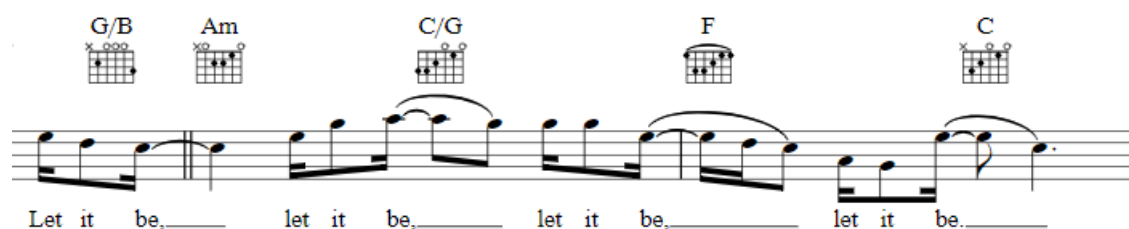
One of the most important and significant differences between the vocal production used in Western classical singing and that used in CCM is in the approach to registration (Fisher, Kayes & Popeil, 2019; Naismith & Bartlett, 2020). Register blending and unification is a feature of Western classical singing, resulting in tonal consistency throughout a singer's range (Fisher, Kayes & Popeil, 2019). With the primary transition between chest register (M1) and head register (M2) occurring in the region of D4 to G4 in both male and female voices, range dictates that female voices make predominant use of head register and males sing predominantly in chest register (Fisher, Kayes & Popeil, 2019). CCM typically utilises a more variable approach, with chest register or mix often extending well beyond the primary transition to generate a more speech-based vocal production, and audible register changes deliberately used for expressive purposes (Chandler, 2014; Fisher, Kayes & Popeil, 2019; Naismith & Bartlett, 2020). While extended use of chest register/mix is seen as a defining element of CCM singing, it is often technically challenging and may not be naturally available to developing singers. For adolescent singers in particular, the growth of laryngeal ligaments, cartilages and muscles during puberty can make register coordination and transition less stable (Grønborg, 2019). The varied use of registration in CCM effectively creates multiple range and tessitura considerations for a single singer (Grønborg, 2019). While pitches above the primary register transition may be comfortable in head register, those same pitches may not be accessible in chest register/mix. Therefore, registration should be a key consideration when evaluating the vocal demands of CCM repertoire.

Language

Unlike in Western classical singing, CCM lyrics are based in vernacular speech, primarily in English (Fisher, Kayes & Popeil, 2019; Sonnenburg, 2021). This creates a fundamental point of difference in pedagogical approach, as the emphasis placed on foreign language diction and development in classical training is irrelevant to CCM. Articulation and pronunciation in CCM are expected to be predominantly speech-like, with a range of onsets and offsets, and phrases that are delivered in a

conversational way, as opposed to the long, legato lines often encountered in Western classical singing (Chandler, 2014; Fisher, Kayes & Popeil, 2019). Rhythmic drive and percussive energy are supplied by emphasising consonants at the beginning of lyrically or rhythmically significant words, while ending consonants are generally de-emphasised (Chandler, 2014). The prosody of CCM lyrics has a strong influence on the rhythmic setting of a melody, introducing syncopation as a central musical element of many CCM styles (Chandler, 2014). Even relatively simple CCM songs often utilise syncopation that may look rhythmically complicated in notation, but which falls naturally into vernacular speech patterns. The popular song 'Let it Be' by Lennon and McCartney offers an example of this as demonstrated in Figure 2.

Fig. 2. Let it Be (Lennon/McCartney) Copyright © 1970 Sony/ATV Music Publishing LLC.



CCM lyrics are often deliberately designed to be provocative, whether it be the rebellious, aggressive attitude of some rock music, the highly sexual or romantic subject matter of some R&B and pop, or the depressive low self-esteem messaging found in some singer-songwriter styles (Dixon, 2006; Fisher, Kayes & Popeil, 2019). Given that a significant portion of the population of developing singers are under the age of 18, it is necessary to consider the appropriateness of adult-themed content in a pedagogical setting, including reference to sexual/romantic relationships, crude language, reference to alcohol or drug use, and descriptions of violence, self-harm and death (McKenry, 2011). Some authors suggest that suitability of content has less to do with moral or ethical issues and more to do with the young singer's inability to connect to and portray the lyric with a sense of believability and lived experience (Edwin, 2012; Ragan, 2016). McKenry (2011) examined the lyric content of material included in contemporary singing exam syllabi in relation to a 2008 inquiry by the Australian Senate into the sexualisation of children in the contemporary media environment and concluded that a duty of care exists to protect young people from

sexualised content, including song lyrics and associated visual content such as music videos.

Learning style

Historically, CCM has grown from informal learning environments where music learning is self-directed and self-motivated (Reinhert, 2022). Practices such as listening, imitation and group learning are seen to be integral to learning popular music styles and are linked closely to creative processes (Green, 2002). The aural tradition of learning CCM is at odds with traditional vocal pedagogy, which emphasises music notation and score reading (Koopmans, 2023). Grace (2023) found that score analysis was common practice for voice teachers when selecting repertoire, particularly to determine appropriateness of lyrics, range, tessitura and melodic movement. However, notated CCM songs are often transcribed inaccurately, fail to represent tonal and stylistic nuance, and are seen to restrict the singer's interpretation (Chandler, 2014; Fisher, Kayes & Popeil, 2019; Koopmans, 2023).

While listening and immersion can help singers absorb details and stylistic elements (Koopmans, 2023), imitation is not without its pitfalls. Expectations can be established by listening to professional artists that are unrealistic or unsustainable for the vocal capabilities of developing singers (Dixon, 2006; Bartlett, 2020), particularly for young students looking to imitate adult voices (Grønborg, 2019). The ubiquitous use of audio technology and engineering in CCM can contribute to a distorted impression of the vocal production originally used by the recording artist (Sonnenburg, 2021), meaning that the sound the listener perceives was not organically made and may be impossible to reproduce without amplification and effects.

In CCM pedagogy there is necessary push-and-pull between formal and informal learning practices that enables students to be taught skills while retaining a sense of ownership over their own voice and creative direction (Hess, 2020). When considering the difficulty or appropriateness of repertoire, a combined approach of

listening to a recording and looking at a score is likely to yield the most accurate assessment.

CCM Conventions

While in Western classical music the singer's role is to faithfully recreate the composer's intention with accuracy and specificity, CCM is rooted in conventions of improvisation, creativity and interpretation (Callaghan, Emmons & Popeil, 2018). Transposing to suit the singer's range or tessitura, altering the melody, changing the tempo or feel, and utilising different tonal qualities are all common practice within CCM and allow a more flexible, adaptable approach to repertoire (Fisher, Kayes & Popeil, 2019; Grønborg, 2019; Koopmans, 2023). However, successfully and convincingly reinterpreting a song can require a high level of musical skill and may be beyond the abilities of developing singers.

PART THREE: Repertoire Selection Criteria and Practices for CCM

Many of the repertoire selection criteria and practices discussed in the literature are universal concepts that are as appropriate for CCM as they are for Western classical music. However, although there are commonalities in the criteria to be considered, there are often differences in the ways in which those criteria might be interpreted and applied to be fit for purpose in a CCM setting.

To consider the discrepancies, Table 2 is an examination of Sonbert's (2017) 'Repertoire Evaluation Rubric for the Developing Singer' (Appendix 2) when viewed through a CCM lens. The five stages of Sonbert's rubric are indicated by S1-S5.

Table 2.

	Sonbert (2017)	Additional or different considerations for CCM
Range & Tessitura	• Gradually increasing pitch range, from a 5th (S1) or less to more than an octave and a half (S4). • Increasing difficulty (S1-S5) in sustaining tessitura.	• Range and tessitura must be considered in relation to registration and vocal quality (Grønberg, 2019).
Rhythm & Meter	• Progressing from simple, regular rhythms (S1), to dotted rhythms (S2) and triplets (S3). • Easy repeated patterns (S1) progress to few repeated patterns (S5). • Syncopation introduced at S4 and advanced syncopation at S5.	• Progressing through basic rhythmic values and patterns is not applicable to CCM due to the prevalence of syncopation (Chandler, 2014). • Aural learning enables singers to ‘hear how it goes’ without reading a score (Koopmans, 2023).
Tempi	• No tempi changes and no fast/slow extremes (S1), to varied tempi often with fast/slow extremes (S5).	
Duration & Form	• Under a minute (S1) to over 4 minutes (S5). • Forms progressing from simple with very little	• CCM songs are generally 3-4 minutes in length (Chen, 2024).

	ornamentation (S1) to complex with extensive ornamentation (S5).	Partial songs could be utilised to align with earlier stages of the rubric.
Melodic Line	Simple diatonic melodies with steps or skips of a 3rd or 5th (S1) to varied and extreme melodies with wider intervallic leaps and extensive chromaticism (S4-5).	
Accompaniment Support	Doubling of vocal line and supportive harmony (S1) to no doubling of vocal line and fast harmonic changes or no tonal centre (S4-5).	- Doubling of vocal line is not common in CCM. - Singing with a recording could provide melody doubling to align with earlier stages of the rubric.
Phrase Length	6 seconds or less (S1) to over 10 seconds (S5).	
Melismatic Phrasing	No melismas (S1) to very heavy use of melismas (S5).	
Diction & Articulation	Limited text at moderate tempo (S1) to a lot of text at varying tempi, including extremes (S5).	Consideration of consonant clusters is less relevant due to the vernacular diction and variable

	No challenging consonant clusters (S1) to very challenging (S5).	articulation of CCM (Chandler, 2014).
Text Interpretation & Characterisation	- Native language (S1-3), foreign language (S4-5). - Easy characterisation and age-appropriate story (S1) to more dramatically demanding text (S3), to text that is very dramatically demanding and outside life experience (S5).	- Foreign language development not relevant (Edwards, 2018). - Language and subject content should be appropriate for the singer's age and emotional maturity level (Dixon, 2006; McKenry, 2011).
Lyrical Flow	Mostly voiced consonants (S1) to extreme use of consonant clusters and unvoiced consonants (S5).	- Sustaining a legato line not generally required (Chandler, 2014; Fisher, Kayes and Popeil, 2019). - Consonants used for rhythmic and percussive articulation (Chandler, 2014).

Analysis of this table suggests that assessing CCM repertoire using a model designed for use in a classical context is likely to lead to an inaccurate evaluation of the song's difficulty level and overlook important stylistic differences. The additional or different considerations for CCM illustrated in this evaluation provide a basis for the synthesis of a comprehensive means of assessing CCM repertoire in order to facilitate pedagogically appropriate repertoire selection. Within my own practice, this table will provide a useful framework for systematically evaluating repertoire and its suitability for developing singers.

Practical Limitations

The guiding principle of tailoring repertoire to student abilities and pedagogical goals is a commonsense approach, but one that may prove difficult to fully adhere to in practice. The more elements one considers in the selection process, the more challenging it becomes to find repertoire that fulfils requirements. In practice, there are likely to be primary criteria and secondary criteria - or 'must-haves' and 'nice-to-haves'. In my own practice working primarily with adolescent females, range and tessitura (in relation to registration) are likely to be defining criteria that determine what is practicable (Dixon, 2006; Grønborg, 2019). So too, the appropriateness of lyrics and subject content for the singer's age and emotional maturity level should be a primary consideration (Grønborg, 2019; Grace, 2023).

CONCLUSION

The principles which make repertoire selection an important aspect of traditional voice pedagogy are equally important in CCM pedagogy. Inappropriate repertoire selection can have serious consequences for the development, vocal health and general experience of singing students. A systematic approach to repertoire selection involves ascertaining a) the abilities and limitations of the student and b) the musical and vocal demands of a particular song. This enables repertoire to be selected that best fits the student's needs and fulfils pedagogical goals. Criteria may be systematically organised in the form of rubrics to reduce subjectivity in repertoire evaluation and to provide a clear framework for determining difficulty, although the creation and use of these systems can be complicated and time consuming.

While the repertoire selection criteria identified in the literature are generally relevant to CCM, the way in which those criteria are applied must be altered to accommodate the stylistic and conventional differences of the genre. Assessing CCM repertoire by the same standards one would use for Western classical repertoire would produce inaccurate evaluations and overlook critical differences between the genres.

This project met its aim to identify and examine criteria by which to assess repertoire in CCM and critically examine the parameters of CCM that set it apart from traditional voice pedagogy practices. Further work is required to translate this theoretical understanding into practice. Next steps might involve analysing a collection of repertoire with the criteria this research has identified and organising it into developmental levels. Experimentation would be required to determine whether a rubric could be created to specifically address CCM repertoire. Participant research could be utilised to evaluate the effectiveness of such a rubric or categorisation system.

This research has equipped me with a strong theoretical understanding of repertoire selection criteria and practices, both in traditional voice pedagogy and relating to CCM. As I begin to implement these principles into my professional practice, I anticipate feeling more confident in my repertoire choices and more clearly focused on how repertoire selection can serve pedagogical objectives.

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Appendix 1: “SART” System for Critically Appraising Colloquial Evidence (Sharma et al., 2015)

Area of critical appraisal		Detailed questions
S	Source	Is the source of the CE credible? - by whom it was written/ spoken and its purpose - determine to what extent one could trust the author(s) - are there certain conflicts of interests to be noted - did it appear to be objective or were there any potential biases present - who was the sponsor/ funder of the source - if the information only presented one point of view
A	Accuracy	Is the information accurate? - consider how plausible are the claims, in terms of whether they could be verified by other sources or testimonies - if they contain any footnotes or state any references that can be checked and how reliable are the sources cited - are the aims available and information presented clearly - are the methods used for collecting that information transparent and clearly presented - are there any inconsistencies present in the content - does it highlight any areas of uncertainty
R	Relevance	Is the evidence with respect to the scope of the guidance, relevant? - consider how applicable the information really is to the question at hand - is all the information present or it seems to be incomplete with respect to your question (is it discussing only part of the equation) - is the setting and context clearly defined and how well does it fit with the research question
T	Timeliness	How timely is the information? - how current is the information - are any dates associated with the information (the last date when the website was updated if an electronic source or recent or old experiences if testimonies etc) - how regularly is the information updated - Is there any more recent research or information available

Appendix 2: Repertoire Evaluation Rubric for the Developing Singer (Sonbert, 2017)

REPERTOIRE EVALUATION RUBRIC FOR THE DEVELOPING SINGER

Beginner Level: 12-26; Intermediate Level: 27-41; Advanced Level: 42-55

THE FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENTS

RANKING	1	2	3	4	5
Range & Tessitura	A range of fifth or less; middle voice (tessitura a fifth or less – easy for the singer to sustain)	A range of one octave or less; middle voice (tessitura a fifth, but no more than an octave and moderately comfortable for the singer to sustain)	A range of an octave and half or less; (tessitura no more than an octave – moderately challenging for the singer to sustain)	A range of more than octave and a half; (tessitura that is in a moderately challenging area for the singer – challenging to sustain)	Extremes in range often presented; (tessitura is extreme and stays in a challenging area or the singer – difficult to sustain)
Rhythm & Meter	Whole notes, half notes, quarter notes, eighth notes with easy repeated rhythm patterns; Simple, no meter changes	Basic and dotted rhythms with easy repeated patterns; Simple with one meter change	Triplets with varied repeated rhythm patterns; Simple or complex with one meter change; syncopation	Syncopation with many notes per bar, less repeated rhythm patterns; Complex with one or two meter changes; moderate syncopation	Syncopation with hemiola with many notes per bar, few repeated patterns; Complex with numerous meter changes; advanced syncopation
Tempi	No change in tempo and no extremes (fast or slow)	One tempo change; moderately fast or slow tempi	Two tempi changes; very fast or slow tempi	Varied tempi throughout with more extremes in fast and slow	Often very fast or very slow, numerous extremes with many notes per bar, varied tempi throughout
Duration & Form	Song is very short (under a minute); AB, through-composed, and ABA with very little ornamentation	Song is moderate in length (under 2 minutes); AB, through-composed, strophic and repeated section, ABA with a little ornamentation needed	Song is moderate in length (under 3 minutes); AB, through-composed, strophic, with repeated sections that are longer in length; ABA with moderate ornamentation needed	Song is longer in length (under 4 minutes); AB, through-composed; ABA with moderate amount of ornamentation needed	Song is long in length (over 4 minutes); AB, through-composed; ABA with extensive use of ornamentation needed

REPERTOIRE EVALUATION RUBRIC FOR THE DEVELOPING SINGER

Beginner Level: 12-26; Intermediate Level: 27-41; Advanced Level: 42-55

THE MUSICAL ELEMENTS

RANKING	1	2	3	4	5
Melodic Line	Steps or skips of a third or a fifth; mostly descending, stepwise lines, simple and diatonic	Steps, skips, and leaps that are often no greater than a fifth; descending lines with occasional ascending leaps or skips; small amounts of chromaticism supported by the accompaniment	Steps, skips, and leaps that are often no greater than an octave; descending and ascending lines with occasional leaps or skips; small amounts of chromaticism sometimes supported by the accompaniment	Large leaps, steps, skips, and leaps that are often greater than an octave; mostly ascending lines with leaps or skips; difficult intervals; larger amounts of unsupported chromaticism	Non-diatonic intervallic leaps, varied and extreme; numerous leaps and skips; extensive use of unsupported chromaticism
Accompaniment Support	Vocal line is doubled in the accompaniment, harmony is very supportive of the melodic line	Harmony is supportive of the melodic line, but does not always double the vocal line	Accompaniment rarely doubles the vocal line, and more harmonic changes	Accompaniment rarely doubles the vocal line, fast harmonic changes or lack of tonal centre	Accompaniment that never doubles the vocal line, fast harmonic changes
Phrase Length	Short phrases, phrases lasting 6 seconds or less	Moderate phrasing, phrases lasting 7 seconds or less	Long phrasing, phrases lasting 8 seconds or less	Longer phrasing, phrases lasting more than 9 seconds or less	Longer phrasing, phrases lasting more than 10 seconds
Melismatic Phrasing	No melismas	Limited use of melismas or grace notes and turns	Moderate use of melismas with patterns	Moderate to heavy use of melismas with patterns	Very heavy use of melismas without patterns and/or intervallic challenges

REPERTOIRE EVALUATION RUBRIC FOR THE DEVELOPING SINGER

Beginner Level: 12-26; Intermediate Level: 27-41; Advanced Level: 42-55

THE TEXTUAL ELEMENTS

RANKING	1	2	3	4	5
Diction & Articulation	No challenging consonant clusters for the singer; Very limited text at a moderate tempo	Limited challenging consonant clusters for the singer; Text at a moderate tempo	Challenging consonant clusters for the singer; Text at slower or faster tempi	Challenging consonant clusters and difficult consonants on challenging pitches for the singer; A lot of text at a very slow or very fast tempo	Very challenging consonant clusters and difficult consonants on challenging pitches for the singer; Text at varying levels of tempi
Text Interpretation & Characterization	An original language text or a suitable translation; Characterization often assisted through musical indications; age-appropriate story	An original language text or a suitable translation; Characterization is not assisted through musical indications; age-appropriate story	An original language song; Characterization is often not assisted through musical indication; Text is more demanding in dramatic capacity and outside life experience (some repetition)	An original language song with a moderate emphasis on exploring a foreign language; Characterization is rarely assisted through musical indications; Text is more demanding in dramatic capacity and outside life experience (little repetition)	An original language song with an extensive emphasis on exploring a foreign language; Characterization is not assisted through musical indications; Text is very demanding in dramatic capacity and outside life experience (no repetition)
Lyrical Flow	A majority of voiced consonants used to help with legato line	A mixture of voiced/unvoiced consonants	Consonant clusters and heavier incorporation of unvoiced consonants	Numerous consonant clusters and very heavy incorporation of unvoiced consonants	Extreme use of consonant clusters and very heavy incorporation of unvoiced consonants