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**Achieving vocal balance in the
singing studio: A study to
consider cross training
coaching strategies for Musical
Theatre students.**

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1) The portfolio

Introduction to rationale

This study seeks to assess vocal cross training needs for Musical Theatre (MT) students and considers suitable teaching methods to support the learning process. Greschner (2019) explains that vocal cross training “requires that students are alternating between styles and exploring the full range of their voices” (p.504), and I believe that this mode of instruction is a pertinent approach for MT performers who are expected to have versatile and flexible instruments (Wilson, 2021; Edwards & Hoch, 2018; Maxfield & Manternach, 2017; Kayes & Welch, 2016; Sansom, 2016; Green et al., 2014; Hall, 2007; Balog, 2005). Although research is sparse into the quality and consistency of cross training provision, Wilson (2021) suggests that suitable pedagogical pathways, that adhere to a variety of singing styles in which professional singers are expected to cross within an industry that is “highly varied and competitive” (p. 330), appear to be missing from the vocal training journey, and many students are not always being taught with a flexible approach to singing style and technique. Sansom (2019b) implies that this may be due to singing teachers using a method “in a manner and style similar to their influential voice teachers” (p.3). In the previous century many singing teachers had only received classical training themselves and therefore, were not confident in teaching others genres (Hoch, 2019). This is incomprehensible information because the classical genre was not the only style of singing being performed during the 1900s; popular styles of singing were prevalent throughout the century (Chandler, 2014). In spite of this, many performers did not have access to suitable guidance and unfortunately, as a result, some singers avoided vocal training for fear it may negatively impact their vocal style “with undesirable “classical” sounds or colors” (Hoch, p.55, 2019). Although, there was a void in singing pedagogy advancement to address the needs of popular vocalists, there was a positive shift in pedagogical approaches which occurred in the 1960s as a result of Appleman’s and Vennard’s treatises (Hoch, 2019). Hoch refers to this as “fact-based era pedagogy” with the “emphasis on vocal function—as opposed to imagery or other historical approaches” (p.51). Furthermore, he suggests that there are now singing teachers who use voice science work harmoniously beside more traditional teachers, and there are those who apply methods from both styles of pedagogy. Yet, despite this progress, research informs that there is still a gap almost half a century later within singing pedagogy that fails to lead

a pathway for singers wanting to train in nonclassical genres (Sear, 2023; Wilson, 2021; Hoch, 2019; Moore, 2017; Chandler, 2014). With regards to cross training, Spivey and Saunders-Barton state that there are very few published works or studies focused on vocal cross-training, but many focused on “acoustics, voice science or other studio training essentials” (2018a, cited in Wilson, 2021 p.335). Therefore, it appears that there has been great advancement in voice science, and it could be argued that this does help cross training needs by understanding how a specific vocal sound is created, yet this does not specifically address the need for teachers to apply this new knowledge to multiple genres within their studios. For that reason, I question if many tutors within the field of voice pedagogy currently have supportive cross training tools in order to ensure that students have broad vocal prospects should they decide to pursue a career as an MT performer?

The Musical Theatre industry arguably has the broadest range of singing styles and techniques expected within its genre from traditional MT to contemporary MT, and legit to pop/rock (Wilson, 2021; Sansom, 2016; Green et al., 2014; Hall, 2007; Balog, 2005; Edwin, 2003). Therefore, it is crucial that voice teachers “understand the stylistic differences in musical theatre singing and apply that to their teaching” (Moore, 2017, p.218). My experience as a singing teacher who specialises in teaching MT repertoire with students in higher education has made me aware that many students are still being taught from a classical perspective, despite the style of their chosen repertoire demanding other stylistic choices and technical demands. I argue that unless a vocalist is a classical performance specialist, singing lessons which use a classical bias are not suitable for today's professional vocalists working within the 21st century MT industry. As it has been established, for many years, the classical approach to pedagogy was the preferred method of teaching, yet even still, some singing teachers and institutions are continuing to only use a classical western singing pedagogy style, despite this resulting in students being vocally limited and unable to work in an industry that currently favours popular song and musical theatre (Moniz, 2021; Wilson, 2021; McQuade et al., 2018; Winnie, 2017; Chandler, 2014; Green et al., 2014). Therefore, it could be argued that the best way to prepare for the industry as any type of vocalist is to cross train in the studio. With this in mind, Wilson states that “the academic singing voice teaching profession is at a crossroad” (p.340, 2021); if teaching methods do not adhere to the requirement of singers needing to be “adept in a wide range of styles” (Greschner, 2019, p.503), we are offering an inefficient

course of action in order to prepare singers for the industry ahead of them. In agreement with Sansom (2019c), I believe that “we must keep a forward focus with pedagogy. We cannot let methods turn into museums of ideas” (p.129).

Relevance of study to current workplace position

During my twenty years of teaching experience, I have endeavoured to stay ahead of current MT industry demands in order to deliver a suitable training experience to my students, using the idea of cross training to deliver a variety of techniques in order to create versatile singers. Nonetheless, I have often found this a prodigious task given the vast array of styles used within the MT industry. Currently, an extensive amount of my work focuses on teaching young adults who are attending full time undergraduate MT training in higher education. After communicating with the MT students in training, and assessing their vocal performances, it has come to my attention that many of them have a stronger stylistic area in which they are comfortable singing, and many styles which need development; many are afraid to try out unfamiliar genres or do not have the necessary skills to approach the repertoire. A lot of these students had singing lessons as children, yet there seems to be a fundamental absence of previous cross training for students now under my tutelage. I empathise with these students and understand their frustration, as I was initially trained by a professional opera singer in the 1980s-1990s, which led me to approach MT repertoire incorrectly, and I struggled to initially break into the popular and musical theatre categories of the performing arts industry due to vocal limitations. My own training journey and teaching experience has led me to address this issue and create ideas that can be applied in the teaching studio in order to resolve the impact of applying classical bias to the styles of MT. I also identify with teachers who are doing their best to train singers using a method that was passed down to them through their own learning, which is an approach I used in my early days of teaching practice, nevertheless, it is important that teachers are aware of the current trends so they can adapt their practice and provide suitable training for their students (Sansom, 2019b). By asking teachers to explore and study the voice in a broader capacity, I argue that it is possible to break the cycle of only passing down the knowledge which they learned. The main four styles of MT that are covered in my student's training course are legit, traditional MT, pop/rock and contemporary MT. When faced with the abundant amount of vocal styles and techniques required as an MT vocalist, it can be difficult as a student to know which repertoire to focus

on. Past experience informs me that a lot of my students will choose songs they know and/or are confident singing, and will avoid working on styles they are unfamiliar with. As a teacher, I believe it is our duty to consider the current industry demands and ensure students are competent delivering a myriad of MT vocal styles in preparation for their future careers. Using ideas from a tested and popular coaching strategy and reflective practice (to be discussed in part two of this paper), I intend to suggest possible MT singing coaching methods to both support the MT student and the singing teacher.

Current challenges within my studio

- MT students with a inflexible vocal skill set.
- Students only receiving classical singing tuition prior to MT training.
- Vocal health issues: Students show improper technique when attempting MT styles, leading to issues such as voice strain, which could lead to further vocal health problems.
- The capacious amount of styles required in MT makes it difficult as a teacher to develop all technical demands expected to an accepted level.

Summary

My research has found that there is no clear teaching strategy for the topic of teaching cross training to MT singers, and it is also clear there is limited research available for cross training (Wilson, 2021). However, it is promising to see more research focusing on popular styles of singing such as CCM (Sears, 2023; Chandler, 2014), which is useful to consider when approaching the pop/rock and contemporary styles of MT. This study should prove useful to my professional practice in order to make my approach to teaching modern MT styles a more manageable undertaking.

Planned programme of study

Learning and developmental aims

- To revise the history of vocal pedagogy and consider which style of teaching is most suitable to MT vocalists.

- To analyse the progression of MT vocal demands.
- To note the current requirements of singers in the 21st century MT industry.
- To suggest cross training as a suitable method of learning for MT singers.
- To consider a teaching framework based on a proven coaching strategy.
- Discuss the potential impact of a MT cross training toolkit for MT singing teachers.
- Ensure methods considered are supportive to both the teacher and the student.
- To add methods which will ensure students learn self-reliance tools that will assist them in their future career.

Expected learning outcome

- To confirm that cross training is a suitable method of learning for MT singers.
- Create a suitable process for singers to become adept in the many vocal styles expected of an MT performer.
- To suggest that using a coaching model alongside an MT cross training checklist will support students in becoming ready for the industry.
- To find a method that will immediately support my future practice.
- To note that there will be gaps in the research and unanswered questions to consider for the future, due to the scope of this study.

Activities to be undertaken

- To reflect on my vocal education journey, noting what training was missing from my early training.
- To reflect on my teaching experience and consider why MT teaching is still a vast task to undertake.
- Connect with fellow MT singing teachers to discuss the topic and ensure this is not only a personal viewpoint.
- To read white literature covering styles of singing pedagogy, coaching models,

cross training methods, and current MT performance demands.

- To observe what stage musicals are currently being produced and consider stylistic demands.
- To see if there is any relevant data that comes directly from current MT performers (eg. interviews discussing industry demands) to support my study.

GANTT CHART

TASK	23.2.23	24.2.23	24.3.23	24.4.23	10.7.23	19.10.23	20.10.23	24.10.23	14.11.23
Consider topic choices									
Discuss topic ideas with main tutor									
Research cross training for singers									
Expand literature including articles and relevant reports									
Choose title question based on early findings									
Draft assignment									
Follow up tutorial									
Adapt title question to include practical application									
Find further literature to support practical application									
Interruption of Studies									
Tutorial with specialised MT tutor									
Finalise draft of new titled assignment									
Complete critical reflection									

Finalise and submit assignment									
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Contextualisation of the study

Using Coopers Taxonomy of Literature review (Randolph, 2009), I will use the five characteristics of “focus, goal, perspective, coverage, organization, and audience” (Randolph, 2009, p.2) to outline this segment of my planned programme of study.

Literature review

Focus:

In order to achieve my previously stated expected learning outcomes, this study will begin by discussing the current demands of MT performances and consider if teaching strategies support the reality of being a performer in the MT industry. Before considering coaching strategies, the responsibility of learning for both teacher and student will be examined in order to establish balance of practice between the tutor and learner. Finally, a proven coaching model will then be applied to practice and in addition reflective learning will also advised in order to ensure learning goals are met.

Goal:

As a tutor of MT vocal studies, the results of this study will be imperative to my future work. The goal of this study is to consider possible cross training strategies aimed at young adult MT singers attending one-to-one training under the tutelage of independent singing teachers. Further development of suitable teaching models will be considered in the conclusion of the study based on what the research supports.

Perspective:

It is important to acknowledge that this study is approached from a position of bias; the bias of a singing teacher whose teaching style has been influenced by their own classical vocal training which started in 1988. I have the benefit of twenty years of teaching and industry experience and over thirty years attending singing lessons. My background provides me with knowledge of being both the educator and the participant of singing studies.

Coverage:

In order to discover potential best practice for MT singing lessons, I will be using desk-based research exploring both primary and secondary studies to produce qualitative data which covers a variety of related topics; these include cross training, vocal pedagogy, musical theatre performance, and coaching methods. The majority of this research will be obtained from peer reviewed journals including education, psychology, performance, singing, and voice journals and I intend to use reference mining as a support to discover further related research. Other research will be presented from websites such as the London Musicals website, in order to present present-day musical theatre industry information; this ensures my research into current demands is relevant and up to date. It was also necessary to include a video from YouTube which presents MT star of the revived *musical* Oklahoma during an interview to discuss the modernised vocal qualities expected in this updated musical. It was important to include this in order to produce data directly from a current performer who can demonstrate the reality of the current demands of the industry. Many of the sources used to support my arguments throughout this study are dated within the last decade with support from articles published previous to this considered as important and still relevant to professional practice.

Although this paper will reference some of the expected voice qualities and techniques used by MT singers, this paper will not include the intricate stylistic rules of each genre due to the scope of this study. In order to gain a more thorough understanding of each technique, it would be ideal to create several independent studies focusing on the teaching of each MT style. However, appendix 1 provides further information about each MT vocal style in order to provide context for the study.

Organisation:

This study will be divided as follows:

- Current demands of MT
- Current teaching strategies of MT
- Cross training approaches for MT
- Responsibility in the studio – teacher and student.
- Coaching models & reflective learning
- Practical application in the studio

- Conclusion

Audience:

This study will be assessed by academic tutors who specialise in a variety of different topics connected to the voice, including an MT scholar (Randolph, 2009). Although, my primary audience is small, I hope that my keen interest in the emerging research of cross training and musical theatre vocals provides the opportunity to approach a secondary audience and be considered as a future collaborator to help develop a teaching programme specifically aimed at singing teachers who teach MT repertoire (Torraco, 2016); a workload that I believe is vast and sometimes overwhelming. A toolkit to support tutors in ensuring they have given students the wide array of techniques required in MT would be a welcomed addition to the vocal pedagogy courses that are currently available for independent tutors.

Critical reflection

In order to reflect in the experience of writing this independent study, I will use Driscoll's cycle of 'What', 'So What' and 'Now What' (Driscoll, 2007) built from Borton's reflective model (Borton, 1970):

What?

This study aimed to achieve vocal balance in the studio when teaching MT singers. The idea of vocal balance, was to ensure that singers receive an equal amount of training on all the techniques needed within the four main MT styles of singing and will be explained further in the introduction to the study. The use of the word 'balance' also applied to idea of responsibility of learning in the studio, considering if both teacher and student shared the responsibility of learning outcomes using the idea of reflective practice. The study has allowed me to consider ways to improve the way I approach cross training in my studio for MT singers using a coaching strategy (Grant, 2011) and collaborative learning (McCoy & Ragan, 2018; Finlay, 2008). Furthermore, although my teaching practice is successful, I believe teachers can always improve professional practice with research and reflection and I will always continue to “question basic assumptions of the pedagogy” as “we should “never be afraid to investigate ideas in the pedagogy that have long been held sacred”. (Sansom, 2019c, p.128/9).

So What?

The idea of researching cross training led to numerous issues when creating this independent study. Before deciding on the final title of this project, I spent a considerable amount of study time focusing on cross training for adolescent singers, including the benefits of vocal health and versatility using MT repertoire as a suitable method to address this. However, due to the topic being so vast, I was unable to create a practical solution to cover the diverse styles found within MT, additionally being careful not to neglect the important discussion of working with this age group. Each MT style has numerous techniques, and each of these techniques required an independent study of its own. For example, a focus on only pop/rock singing within MT calls for copious amounts of research and findings to be ascertained and used to create practical solutions for adolescent MT singers. Furthermore, this is the case for all four styles within MT that I focused on within this initial research. Not wanting to lose the amount of time I spent discovering my original findings, which I believe provided background, strong rationale and interesting viewpoints to cross training for MT, I used parts of my initial research to create my rationale for the new main body of study. To consider how to apply these findings in professional practice, I decided to focus on the use of coaching models and reflective practice which I believe creates an immediate starting point to use in my own practice. Although the topic chosen for this independent study caused much personal frustration during the process, due to not being able to cover all the requirements within MT in great detail, I was pleased that on completion I had developed an initial strategy which I believe could be the best way to approach the genre. If I could do anything differently, it would be to narrow down the focus of the study at the very beginning of the research process in order to achieve better time management.

Now What?

I will use my findings within this independent study to apply to my practice in the new academic term. I need to acknowledge that all my students have unique goals, however, I am confident the results of this study will help me navigate the learning process. I hope that future research will allow me to explore and develop further strategies to cover the many vocal requirements of MT as this study focuses mainly of the teaching process of cross training. As the topic of MT is so extensive, perhaps it would be useful to work

alongside other teachers/researchers who are focusing on different techniques within the genre. For instance, if I could gather tutors/researchers who have focused their studies on any of the requirements found in appendix 1, together, we could create an informative and instructional toolkit. This would take much time to achieve, therefore, initially I must consider immediate action I can take within my own practice in order to support my students which this study has provided.

I believe that the topic of cross training for Musical Theatre students is in its initial stages; albeit there are many teachers teaching in institutions who are addressing these needs (Maxfield and Manternach, 2017), and the proof that MT performers can manage this vocal load is evident live on stage in theatres internationally on a daily basis (Musicals on Tour, 2023). However, there are likely to be performers who are not trained to manage this skill with a heavy workload of eight shows a week and end up with vocal damage and out of work (Freeman, Green and Sargent, 2015). In addition there may be singers with huge amounts of potential who are not receiving suitable training in order to achieve their goals of working in MT due to their limited vocal ability.

Beyond this initial personal exploration into cross training for MT performers, I have further interest in the following MT topics which I believe need to be explored for my own practice:

- Vocal loading in the MT rehearsal studio.
- Management of singing with movement/dance.

I look forward to my continued research that I hope will contribute towards the demands of MT performers.

2) The Assignment

Achieving vocal balance in the singing studio: A study to consider cross training coaching strategies for Musical Theatre students.

Introduction

This study will consider cross training coaching strategies for Musical Theatre (MT) students in order to achieve vocal balance in the singing studio. For the purpose of this study, vocal balance refers to the modification of teaching practice in order to ensure MT singers obtain appropriate methods of vocal pedagogy, in pursuance of attaining expected vocal prerequisites expected as a performer in the MT industry. It will be proposed that cross training coaching strategies are a suitable method of learning for independent vocal tutors to practice during one-to-one tuition with MT singing students due to the current requirements of professional MT singers who are expected to perform an extensive array of musical styles (Wilson, 2021; Edwards & Hoch, 2018; Maxfield & Manternach, 2017; Kayes & Welch, 2016; Sansom, 2016; Green et.al, 2013; Hall, 2007; Balog, 2005), which will be explored in further detail in the following section of this paper.

Recent research suggests that there are students who are not being prepared for the current vocal demands of a professional MT career, and receive no definitive training for each of the varying musical styles; instead, approaching the contrasting vocal requirements of MT with similar singing techniques (McQuade et. al, 2018). Hall (2007) discusses pedagogy issues in relation to MT, finding that in 2003 a substantial amount of teachers revealed that there was no notable difference between their delivery of classical and MT tuition, and a majority of tutors at the time believed that it was only the repertoire that differentiated the two styles. Perhaps this can be accepted, as twenty years ago there was a large percentage of teachers who had come from a classical training background and were not confident teaching other genres, instead delivering a teaching approach similar to the lessons they had received in their own training (Sansom 2019a).

Nevertheless, Edwin confirms that “if a singer learns classical vocal technique it will serve classical-like singing. It will not...serve the contemporary commercial singer” (2002, cited in Wilson, 2021, p.332). Unfortunately, despite the genre of MT now being heavily influenced by contemporary music (Moniz, 2021; Wilson, 2021; McQuade et al., 2018; Winnie, 2017;

Freeman, Green, & Sargent, 2015; Chandler, 2014; Green et al., 2014), it is apparent that even within the past decade, the teaching of MT is often being approached from a classical bias, suggesting that some tutors believe the classical teaching method is possibly the “healthiest or most correct way to sing” (Moore, 2017, p. 218). This study will argue that the classical tradition of pedagogy is unsuitable for tutoring MT students, as it does not offer a well rounded training programme, as students will not learn the required vocal tools to create a successful MT career. Some tutors may believe that classical singing technique is beneficial when performing the MT style of legit, however, there are several differences between legit and operatic singing (Green et al., 2014) and a classical approach will not support singers in creating a sound suitable for the substantial amount of remaining repertoire within the MT genre. Consequently, if a teacher uses their own bias, such as a classical approach to MT songs, and is essentially “merely visiting a repertoire rather than inhabiting it” (Greschner, 2019, p.503), the outcome of training a versatile MT vocalist will not be achieved. This is not to suggest that all singing teachers are approaching the teaching of MT repertoire incorrectly, or do not wish to adapt their preferred style of teaching, as there has been an increase in singing teacher certification pathways over the last decade suggesting that singing teachers are looking for guidance and a suitable method to follow when conducting lessons (Sansom, 2019b, Sansom, 2019c). Yet, Winnie (2017) poses the important question “are we preparing students for what they will encounter in the workplace or are we replicating a curriculum designed toward creating musicians in a narrow and specific method?” (p. 56/7). Therefore, in order to avoid creating MT vocalists with limited skillsets, cross training in the studio must be considered for the MT singer in order to offer the performer versatility with promising career prospects (Wilson, 2021).

Cross Training for Musical Theatre singers

The four main categories of MT are Legit, Traditional MT, Pop/Rock, and Contemporary MT (Freeman, Green and Sargent, 2015) and further detailed explanation of each style can be found in appendix 1. At the present time, current female roles from productions currently showing in UK may vary from playing Elphaba in *Wicked* (WLPL, 2023), who is expected to deliver a high belt quality, to Christine in *Phantom of the Opera* (The Really Useful Group, 2023) whose legit quality vocals reflect the more operatic influence of MT, or Juliet from *& Juliet* (AKA, n.d.), requiring a sound influenced by the genre of early 21st

century pop. Male performers may be expected to perform rap as Alexander Hamilton in the hip-hop influenced musical *Hamilton* (Hamilton, 2023), or in jukebox musicals such as *Jersey Boys* (Jersey Boys, 2023) displaying Franki Valli's impressive upper vocal range, or as Jesus in rock opera *Jesus Christ Superstar* (Really Useful Group Ltd., 2023); each role performed by the production's leading cast members, portraying highly contrasting vocal demands. Furthermore, across the genre of MT, it is even common to hear a multitude of contrasting vocal sounds within one MT song (Balog, 2005). As a result, it is now unavoidable to showcase a variety of techniques and styles as an MT singer, and as Green et al. (2014) states when discussing the requirements for MT auditions, these vocal demands go “far beyond the parameters of classical or even traditional musical theatre training” (p. 324). The 2013 study by Green et al. analysed the audition requirements expected of MT performers between 2012 – 2013 reflecting the needs of the industry:

Unlike Traditional repertoire, which allows performers to specialize in either legit or belt, audition postings...asked performers to “sing effortlessly in many styles and vocal registers,” including requests for a “legit singer with strong contemporary musical theatre mix” or a “conversational belter with legit head voice effects” (p. 325).

Furthermore, the study found evidence that classical training is not an adequate method of learning for MT, as within the audition requirements (see appendix 2), non classical sounds were necessary in “three of the four categories (ie, Traditional musical theatre, Contemporary musical theatre, and Pop/Rock)” (p.327).

Additionally, an important benefit of cross training is the contribution to a performer's vocal health (Wilson, 2021; Winnie, 2017). Therefore, in order to create healthy and long lasting instruments, singing teachers should consider how their training contributes to healthy vocal function. Wilson (2021) confirms that “cross-training contends that for a singer to train their instrument in the healthiest and most flexible way possible, singers need to learn multiple approaches” (p. 330). For example, if a singer is not trained in certain techniques, they could be unintentionally harming their instrument when imitating and attempting this sound without guidance, as any type of singing can result in vocal damage if performed “recklessly or without healthy technique” (McCoy, 2013, p.181). With MT performers expected to work to a demanding schedule of up to eight shows a week (Freeman, Green

and Sargent, 2015), vocalists must have vocal health awareness in order to adhere to the demanding performance expectations.

In order to become adept in such contrasting styles and techniques within the MT genre, what should students focus on, and furthermore, how do teachers guide the learning process? In order to narrow down this substantial question, we will first look at whose responsibility it may be to manage the learning pathway, followed by the focus on what a cross training framework may include.

Potential teaching practices

Responsibility – The Versatile Teacher

It has been established that as MT has progressed, there are now even more requirements to sing convincingly in a variety of vocal qualities than ever before. Edwards and Hoch (2018) state that in recent times, MT shows now “require a unique skill set that merges elements of both CCM and music theater styles and technique” (p.187). Consequently, it is essential to consider the teaching strategies that could be used to better assist the preparation to acquire the skills required for the substantive requirements of the MT industry as it currently exists. Before successfully achieving vocal balance in the MT studio, gaining practical and technical knowledge across all four styles of MT, it could be suggested that it is the teachers duty to construct a plan of action to ensure all MT styles are perfected. In a similar way that within institutions, the onus is often on the establishment to equip students for the demands of the MT industry and for what casting agents will expect to see from their clients when they are invited to an end of training showcase (Maxfield and Manternach, 2017). However, some of these institutions have the benefit of two tutors to guide the student in their respective speciality (McQuade et al., 2018) as hiring tutors to teach the extensive styles of MT remains a challenge for many higher education faculties (Gerbi, 2016). Haddon (2011), discusses the impact of having more than one tutor per student, sharing both positive and negative reactions from teachers and students. One teacher from the survey suggested that a single teacher is unlikely to have “in-depth knowledge, training and understanding of every...style a student may wish to experience” (p.11), and therefore, believed that two teachers were better than one. More recently, McCoy (2016) who had previously published a paper entitled “*Why I*

Don't Teach Belting" (McCoy, 2013), in which the experienced professor of voice proclaims his reluctance to teach CCM due to being a classical singing tutor, states that although he has now adopted the teaching of more modern pedagogy styles, he still accepts that the students need more support that he can offer them, suggesting that additional tutors is helpful in his practice. However, in contrast, a negative teacher response from Haddon's paper included feeling "worried about consequences to his/her reputation" (2016, p.11) if a student sought tuition elsewhere. Yet, in today's industry, due to the variety of stylistic demands in MT, there is more expectation on MT vocal tutors to be well-rounded across a multitude of styles and offer cross training lessons (Wilson, 2021).

This present study raises the possibility for teachers to use cross training when working with MT singers for the benefit of the student and the teacher. Wilson (2021) affirms this idea when stating that those who can "sing and teach alternative styles" will "thrive in a highly varied and competitive market" (p. 330). Therefore, not only is it lucrative for singers to be adaptable, but it also a consideration for teachers; if singers are needing to be versatile, perhaps it would be easier to work with one tutor who has the knowledge of a range of genres and who understands how vocalists need to cross over styles in their work. We have established that versatility is a valuable benefit of cross training, and as Winnie (2017) confirms, students "should be encouraged to develop an understanding of how to healthfully change structures of the vocal mechanism to create a variety of qualities needed for diverse genres" (p. 57/58). Moving forward, how does an independent tutor navigate the delivery of this extensive task, and should the student take some of the responsibility?

Responsibility – The Musical Theatre singing student

Helping students become independent learners is an important goal for teachers (Jørgensen, 2000). Some students often depend greatly on their tutors (Carey, Harrison, Dwyer, 2017), yet by achieving self-efficacy, which Bandura describes as "people's judgement of their capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action to attain designated types of performances" (1986, cited in Nielsen, 2004, p.419), MT students could gain confidence and belief in their potential success within the MT industry through careful planning of their practice routine. This will be considered further in the practical application section of this paper. As a preface, Carey, Harrison & Dwyer (2017) discuss

reflective practice as a “pathway to autonomous learning” (p.99) in which results found that by adding student reflective practice within one-to-one tuition, students would have benefits for years to come in terms of achieving career goals. Once students are working in the MT industry, they will need to monitor their skills, look after their vocal health, and prepare for auditions for new musicals which may demand contrasting vocal techniques to the ones they may be executing in their current show contract (Wilson, 2021). Therefore, in terms of student responsibility in training, a degree of self-evaluation may be necessary for the student, alongside working with the tutor in a more “collaborative way” (p.107); this could support the navigation of achieving all the technical requirements found within the vast amount of musical theatre styles. This idea, which Finlay (2008) describes as “mutual collaboration” (p.7), whereby a student and mentor can solve issues together as “a participatory dialogical approach to reflective practice” (p.7) forms an initial idea of using a suitable coaching model for MT singing teachers to use as a guide to best practice when working with MT vocalists.

The consideration of coaching models for Musical Theatre singing students.

Robins (2017) suggests that a coaching model can provide structure between the “coach and client” (p.122), which this paper proposes could help the singing teacher and MT student identify responsibilities within the learning process. The use of coaching models are often helpful for the novice tutor (Robins, 2017; Grant, 2011) and there are many coaching models that can be drawn upon to assist tutors conducting a variety of training sessions (Palmer, 2007). Arguably, some coaches may suggest that due to their experience they are able to adapt their sessions to suit whatever situation is brought to them and perhaps they do not need to consider a coaching model. In order to consider this, the delineations table presented in Grant's 2011 paper (see appendix 5) indicates the varying degrees of experienced coaches from novice to expert. Although it may suggest that expert teachers do not need to rely on coaching models, it could be argued that due to the rapid turnover of new musicals being released in a variety of styles (Freeman, Green, Sargent, 2015), that even experienced teachers are often akin to a novice coach as they are continually faced with new demands of the “complicated, billion-dollar industry that commercial music theatre has become” (p. 491).

A number of adaptable coaching models could be drawn upon in order to provide structure

to the MT singing lesson including the popular coaching strategy GROW, and its connected approach REGROW (Grant, 2011). Coaching strategies are often created to focus on the goals of the client, and the GROW model (see appendix 3) would allow the student to take the lead in a similar way to singing lessons being student led and create a sense of self-efficacy (Nielson, 2004). In addition, it could also assist with the teacher's goals, in an attempt to support the learning process of cross training for MT. Therefore, both teachers and students could contribute to the progress and accomplishment of this comprehensive undertaking. "GROW is the acronym for GOAL, REALITY, OPTIONS, WILL (or WRAP-UP)" (Palmer, 2007, p.71), and by adapting the GROW model to suit an MT singing lesson, the four points could be used in connection to vocal coaching as follows:

GOAL: Consider the focus of the session. Which of the four styles of MT does the student want to work on determined by which piece has been brought to the session?

REALITY: Realistically, is the student ready to focus on this piece, or do any other technical abilities need to be addressed first (eg. registration control/belt/speech quality) in order to achieve the student's goal? Discuss this reality with the student and confirm the goal for the session.

OPTIONS: The tutor then uses their teaching expertise to guide the learning process within the session in order to achieve the decided lesson goal.

WRAP-UP: Identify the next steps in the learning process. This may be to continue to develop a technique, or to move on to a new song, depending on the needs and abilities of the student.

The connected expanded coaching approach, REGROW (Grant, 2011), adds an initial strategy to review and evaluate before the session begins, which could be used after the first meeting with the student. Grant states that this additional stage of the model, which can be supported with a self-regulation model (appendix 4) can "help maintain focus on the goals over the course of a coaching engagement" (p.125). Therefore, this stage would be presented in an MT singing lesson as follows:

RE: Review and evaluate the progress made since last session. Is the student ready to proceed to a new goal?

The GROW coaching model is arguably very suitable to a single session with a teacher and MT student, whereby a chosen style/technique of MT can be focused on. However, how does the '**RE**' stage of the adapted REGROW model ensure that long term, the student is achieving the goals of becoming a versatile MT vocalist, and how can a tutor ensure those goals are met when applying the strategy in the studio?

Practical application in the singing studio

Coaching models can suggest that training is a straight forward practice (Grant, 2011), however, teaching can present variable difficulties, and in agreement with Finlay (2008), “professional practice is complex, unpredictable and messy” (p.3). When applying this analogy to a student led MT singing lesson for example, personal experience informs that achievable outcomes are often hindered due to student bias. When the student presents their GOAL, for instance, they may wish to focus on more familiar MT styles and avoid repertoire that is unfamiliar and what they may consider as precarious, resulting in their repertoire folders being heavily unbalanced, perhaps showcasing more of the one MT style than another. This will prove problematic at audition times when choosing suitable repertoire and delivering a convincing vocal performance across all styles of MT (Green et al., 2014). This may be the result of some students having had mainly classical training previously and consequently, need to develop their contemporary MT vocal sounds, and others maybe be comfortable singing in the style of pop/rock, but show weaker skills when singing legit songs. Therefore, in order to ensure balance in the vocal studio, with the end goal being to become a versatile MT vocalist with strong career prospects, tutors should also accept responsibility for the content of training. However, Robins (2017) states that a coach should “not allow their own agenda to enter the space” (p.122), yet it is the “connection” between coach and client that is essential to the delivery of an excellent session. This concept is also supported by singing pedagogy specialists McCoy and Ragan (2018), stating that a “collaboration approach” (p.159) helps support students goals and perspectives. Thus, when focusing on the REALITY of the model, MT singing teachers must always keep their students goals at the forefront of their planning as they could also be susceptible to bias, unknowingly focusing too much on their own personal familiar

styles and techniques (Sansom, 2019b, Sansom, 2019c). This is not to critique any teacher, only to offer a consideration that aesthetic bias may dominate lessons if reflective practice is not adhered to (Finlay, 2008). Furthermore, at the time of writing, it could be argued that due to the MT industry showcasing works that are predominantly influenced by contemporary music (Freeman, Green, Sargent, 2015; London Musicals, n.d.), focusing on the pop/rock and contemporary genre of singing would be best equipped to support students in preparation for upcoming careers. Many musicals currently showing in the west end and on tour within the UK feature lots of jukebox musicals such as *Tina* (AKA, 2018), *Mamma Mia* (Premier, n.d.), *Moulin Rouge* (Global Creatures, 2023), and *& Juliet* (AKA, n.d.), requiring specific popular singing styles (Musicals on Tour, 2023; London Musicals, n.d.). In addition, the revived 1943 musical *Oklahoma* by Rodgers & Hammerstein (Young Vic, 2023) has been modernised from not only a dramatic viewpoint, but also in vocal style. Rebecca Naomi Jones debuted as the lead character, Laurey Williams, for the revival on Broadway in 2019, and discussed the vocal characteristics expected of her in an interview to promote the musical (www.youtube.com, 2019). When Jones auditioned for the role, she was asked to sing in any vocal style and any key. Jones chose to sing in her chosen contemporary vocal quality and consequently, the traditional legit vocal sounds produced in the original stage production and film adaptation were not heard in this modern revival. Moreover, even specialist opera companies are asking their singers to sing musical theatre works as they struggle to reach audiences (Wilson, 2021; Green et al., 2014). For these reasons, it could be argued that currently, this is even more of a basis for classical tutors to consider cross training methods in their studio. Chandler (2014) discusses the teaching of popular music styles, referencing the largely contrasting requirements between classical singing and CCM (see appendix 6) and this could help serve as a guide to classical singing teachers to consider the modern requirements for vocalists in the industry today.

For teachers unfamiliar with modern repertoire or stylistic requirements, they may be faced with a situation that becomes a “source of anxiety and frustration” (Grant, 2011, p.122). For example, a student may bring a piece to work to the session that the teacher has not come across. Dewey believed that reflection emerges due to “doubt, hesitation or perplexity” (1933, cited in Finlay, 2008, p.3) in relation to an experience. Therefore, the support of a coaching model could potentially “provide a format to follow of recognised stages to ensure agreed outcomes are met” (Robins, 2017, p.122), no matter what work is

brought to the session. Grant (2011) further explains how coaching models can “provide a framework...as a guide for the coach helping the coach and coachee to stay focused on relevant issues” (p.118). Nevertheless, should tutors not wish to employ a coaching model, it should be considered that teaching style does not only determine performance outcome (achieving ability to successfully deliver convincing vocal performance), moreover, focus should essentially be based on providing long term skills for the MT student too. By developing a connection and understanding with the student, a balance can be created by guiding the student to consider what additional training, as well as their immediate personal goals, will best assist their future career prospects. In order to accomplish this and “ensure agreed outcomes are met” (Robins, 2017, p.122), an additional MT student journal could be created alongside a coaching model in order to enhance objectivity, and eliminate subjectivity in the studio. Learning journals can encourage student reflection (Carey, Harrison & Dwyer, 2017), and within a journal, students could keep track of which MT styles and techniques have been studied in session, which could further be discussed with the tutor as part of the WRAP-UP or REVIEW & EVALUATE section of the GROW model. This will highlight any gaps in the students knowledge and delivery of technique and help the student avoid working too much on their preferred style of MT whilst avoiding other techniques that are required in the industry. The development of a checklist could also include a rating scale in order to track progress and ensure that both tutor and student can see where any gaps in the knowledge lie, avoiding any bias imparted by student or teacher (an outline of a suggested teacher checklist can be found in appendix 7). Boyle proposed that the use of a rating scale enhances objectivity by “establishing clear criteria against which the performance will be evaluated” (1992, cited in Stanley, Brooker & Gilbert, 2002, p.47). Criteria-specific assessment offers positive feedback and constructive criticism. Teachers and students can assess feedback together in order to make future training provision to best suit the individual student goals (Stanley, Brooker & Gilbert, 2002). This concept could create a balance between student and teacher responsibility in order to create reflective practice routine leading to autonomous learning.

To summarise the potential benefits of the coaching strategy ideas discussed, the comparison of transformative and transfer-style teaching could also be considered. When studying one-to-one tuition for voice and instrumental tutors at conservatoire level, Carey et al. (2013) states that the synergy between the teacher and student is as important as the outcome of the skills developed. The 2013 article presents two ways of conducting

one-to-one lessons:

- Transformative teaching, which assists the student in helping them use an “adaptive and flexible approach to learning” (p.364). This enables students to use this method of learning after their learning journey is completed. Bridgstock & Hearn state that this gives them the tools to adapt, “learn and re-learn skills for performance roles that may have not been invented yet” (2012, cited in Carey et al., 2013) within the working environment of the industry.
- Transfer-style teaching, whereby students merely mimic the tutor as they learn their craft, creates a lack of “ownership of their learning” (Carey et al., 2013, p.365).

Therefore, the methods suggested in this study for cross training would present many opportunity for transformative teaching for the benefit of the MT student.

Conclusion

This study concludes that vocal cross training is now necessary for MT singers, due to the amount a varying styles found within the MT genre in the 21st century; it has highlighted the importance of versatility as a singer in todays industry which should not be underestimated as MT artists are now expected to cover the widest range of styles ever expected of them (Hall, 2007; Green et al., 2013; Wilson, 2021; Balog, 2005). To support MT vocalists, teachers need to be prepared to offer well rounded training and increase their “in-depth knowledge of music theater history and style – to help their students succeed in the business” (Edwards and Hoch, 2018, p186). In Wilson's recent 2021 survey addressing cross training needs for the singer and singing teacher, it was encouraging to read that many singing pedagogues “agreed that cross-training could enable singers to be stronger” (p.338). Other promising responses included: “You cannot train in one area of your voice and expect the other areas to be strong” and “success is achieved when that voice is producing a healthy sound throughout every function asked of it, in whatever style” (p.338). Therefore, there is a sense that future research addressing cross training for MT performers would be welcomed in the vocal pedagogy field particularly for independent tutors who do not have the support of an education institution to guide the curriculum (Maxfield and Manternach, 2017). Carey et al. (2013) advocates this notion, stating that there is a “need to improve the practice of one-to-one pedagogy by developing exemplary models for...vocal teaching and the concomitant need to continually improve teaching and mentoring skills among teachers” (p.359).

In order to navigate the landscape of cross training for MT, a “problem-solving approach” (Palmer, 2007, p.75) which is often exercised within the wider scope of coaching could be adapted to suit singing students approaching MT repertoire. The combination of a simple coaching strategy alongside an student reflective practice proposed in this study may support both students and singing teachers who are struggling to cover the momentous task. With a subject of such immensity, it is impossible to present research that fully explores the teaching of each of the MT styles in depth. As a result, there are many aspects of practical application such as how to teach a particularly technique such as belt for example, that are outside the scope of this study. However, this study notes that many “teachers are confident in their ability to address foundations of technique” (Freeman, Green & Sargent, 2015, p. 491) which would occur during the OPTIONS category of the GROW model, whereby tutors draw upon their knowledge to teach the applicable technique/style. Instead, this study aims to offer an overview on an expansive topic offering considerations and a starting point for singing teachers to guide students wanting a career in MT.

Finally, it should be appreciated that the industry of MT is continually being updated and research being conducted can quickly become out of date (Freeman, Green & Sargent, 2015). At the time of writing, MT still requires an expectation of versatility, however, with contemporary shows beginning to dominate the industry, further discussions may suggest that MT singers should be taught by contemporary vocal tutors who specialise in popular styles of singing. However, that remains to be seen and for now, cross training with supportive coaching strategies must be viewed as a transformative way of achieving vocal balance in the MT singing studio.

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Appendix 1

Musical theatre styles – vocal requirements (a broad generalisation).

STYLE	LEGIT	TRADITIONAL MT	POP/ROCK	CONTEMPORARY MT
VOCAL TECHNIQUES OFTEN ASSOCIATED (BUT NOT LIMITED TO) THE MUSICAL THEATRE GENRE	• Dominant use of head voice (for female singers) • Smooth register transitions • Abundant use of vibrato • Extended phrases • Open, rounded vowels • Lifted velum • Clear tone • Opera quality • Cry/Sob • Smooth onsets/offsets	• Dominant use of chest voice • Minimal vibrato (often used at the end of a phrase) • Belt quality • Loud dynamics • Use of speech-based singing • Glottal onsets/offsets • Twang quality	• Dominant use of chest and mix voice • Abrupt vocal register changes • Use of vocal distortions including growl, scream, and vocal fry. • Riffs/runs • Clear and/or breathy tone • Glottal/Aspirate onsets/offsets • Falsetto quality • Belt quality	• Dominant use of chest and mix voice • High belt • Straight-tone • Speech quality • Ornamentation • Minimal vibrato (often used at the end of a phrase) • Glottal onsets/offsets • Twang quality • Belt quality

Legit

The MT style of Legit is influenced by a classical sound. Songs in this style can often be found in the golden age of musical theatre, often performed by the leading characters within the musical. Nowadays, legit songs can still be found within the most recent musicals, often known as contemporary legit, however, they have a tendency to have adapt contemporary sounds with less emphasis on the open rounded vowels.

Legit Song examples:

Female - “Climb Every Mountain” from *The Sound of Music* (Rodgers & Hammerstein, 2021).

Male - “On The Street Where You Live” from *My Fair Lady* (Tirnamae, 2016).

Traditional MT

Traditional MT is sometimes confused with Legit singing in my classroom, however this style uses much more speech based and belt quality singing.

Song examples:

Female - "Don't Rain On My Parade" from *Funny Girl* (Streisand, 2017).

Male - "Razzle Dazzle" from *Chicago* (TNetts97, 2012).

Pop/Rock

MT Pop/Rock can be found in jukebox musicals or musicals where the musical style is influenced by the commercial industry. Further exploration of Popular singing techniques can be found in appendix 3 by Kim Chandler.

Female – "And I am Telling You" from *Dreamgirls* (Hudson, 2016).

Male – "Your Eyes" from *Rent* (Tirnamae, 2015).

Contemporary MT

Contemporary MT is a broad style of singing covering a multitude of vocal techniques often mixing vocal qualities from the pop/rock and traditional era of MT.

Song examples:

Female – "The Wizard and I" from *Wicked* (Kikki5183, 2008).

Male – "I Believe" from *The Book of Mormon* (Broadcast Zero, 2017).

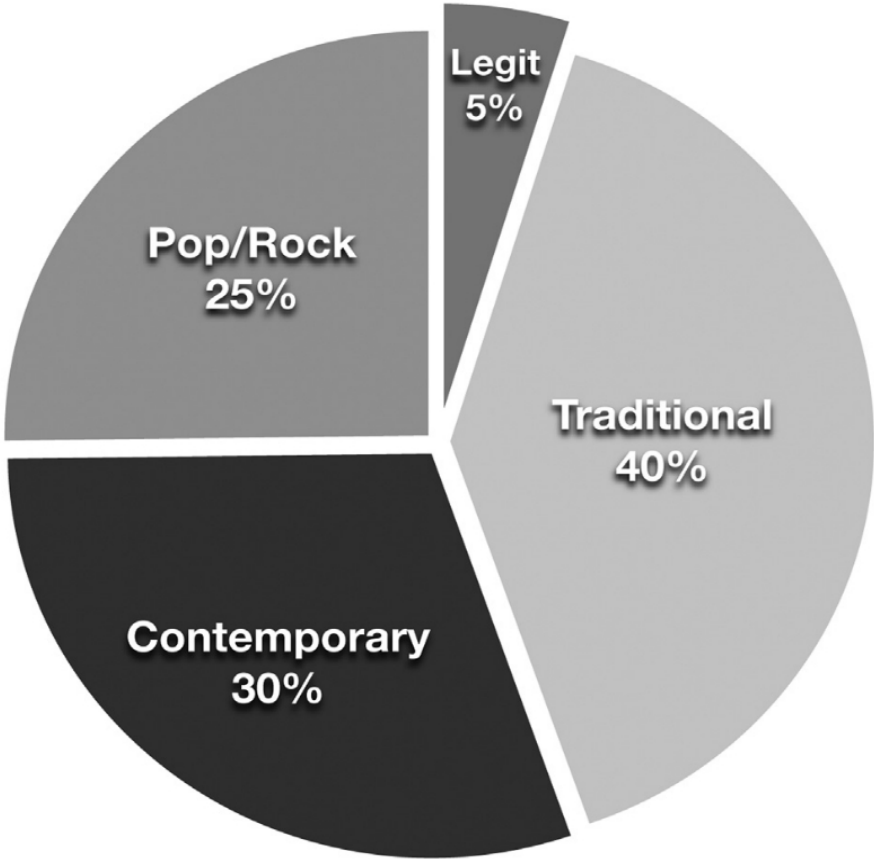


FIGURE 1. Total job postings by vocal genre.

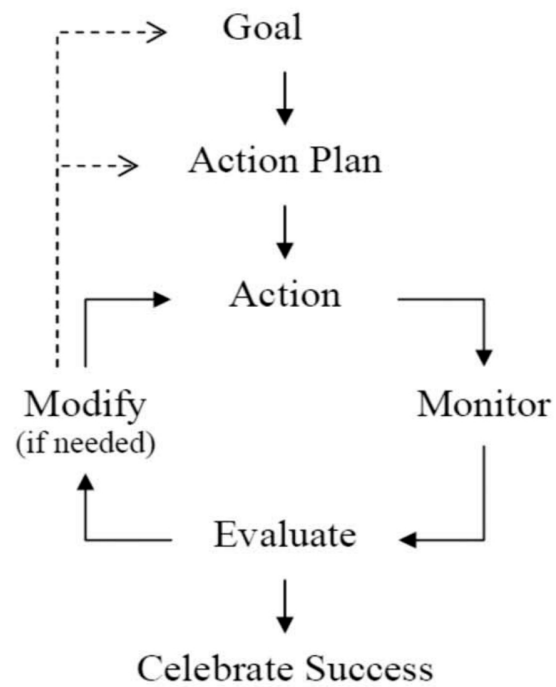
Appendix 3 – The GROW Model (Grant, 2011).

Table 1: The GROW Model.

<i>Acronym</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Example Questions</i>
G – Goal	Coachee is asked to clarify what they want to achieve from each session. Determines the focus of coaching.	What do you want to achieve this session? How would you like to feel afterwards? What would be the best use of this time?
R – Reality	Raise awareness of present realities. Examine how current situation is impacting coachee's goals.	How have things gone in the past week? How have you handled any problems? What worked? What didn't work?
O – Options	Identify and assess available options. Encourage solution-focused thinking and brainstorming.	What possible options do you have? What has worked for you in the past? What haven't you tried yet that might work?
W - Wrap-Up	Assists the coachee determine next steps. Develops an action plan and builds motivation.	What is the most important thing to do next? What might get in the way? Who might be able to support you? How will you feel when this is done?

Sources: Grant & Greene, 2004; Landsberg, 1997; Spence & Grant, 2007; Whitmore, 1992.

Figure 2: Generic model of self-regulation. Adapted from Grant (2003).



Appendix 5 – Novice to expert delineations as applied to the use of coaching session structures (Grant, 2011).

Table 2: Novice to expert delineations as applied to the use of coaching session structures.

<i>Level of Expertise</i>	<i>Characteristics</i>
Novices	Focus on immediate tasks. Need to follow clear rules and can't deal with complex coaching issues that arise in the coaching situation. Rigidly follows session model step-by-step.
Advanced beginners	Tends to use rules as guidelines rather than prescriptions, but still finds it hard to handle exceptions to 'normal' coaching practice issues. Relies on model, but not always rigidly. Reverts to basic rules when feels under pressure in a coaching session.
Competent performers	Are at the stage where they can begin to create their own conceptual models of what they do, and can handle more complex situations. More flexible in use of session models. Able to move from one model to another to suit different coaching issues that arise within one coaching session.
Proficient performers	Have experienced wide range of coaching situations, are able to see the big picture, and can interpret underlying principles and adjust their behaviours to suit relatively novel coaching situations. Very flexible use of models. Can develop own conceptually coherent and meaningful models to suit novel situations. Enjoys the challenge of coaching difficult issues.
Experts	Have significant face-to-face coaching experience. Their high level of experience allows them to identify and solve problems with little explicit analysis. Can extrapolate solutions from principles even in very complex or highly novel situations.

For further reading see: Peterson, D.B. (2011). Good to great coaching. In G. Hernandez-Broome & L. A. Boyce (Eds.), *Advancing executive coaching: Setting the course of successful leadership coaching* (pp.83–102). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Table 4.1 Fundamental differences between classical and contemporary singing

Issue	Classical	Contemporary
1. Posture	Static/dramatic action (opera)	Dynamic/movement to beat
2. Breathing	Long, legato phrases	Shorter phrases (conversational)
3. Onsets	Simultaneous, balanced, coordinated	Glottal, aspirate, ‘scoops’, ‘creak’, ‘cry’
4. Larynx position	Neutral/lowered	Neutral/raised
5. Sung tone	Pure, ‘trained’ tone	‘Naturalistic’ tone
	(Women) use of ‘head’ voice	‘Chest’ voice (for both genders)
	‘Sob’/‘Cry’ quality	‘Mix’ & ‘Belt’ quality
	‘Covered’ tone	Sometimes ‘twangy’ (or strident)
6. Diction	Italianate vowels	Americanised vowels
	All consonants pronounced	Initial consonants are emphasized, ending consonants de-emphasized
7. Sung Accent	English (R.P.) or various European accents	Generic, Americanised slang or vernacular
8. Rhythm	Unsyncopated (‘straight’), rubato	Syncopated, specific to ‘groove’
9. Vibrato	Heavy	Light
10. Pitch (scales used in vocal melodies)	Traditional diatonic scales used, Chromatic	Hexatonic scales such as the Blues, Pentatonic scales, Modes
11. Vocal harmony	Reading parts	Intuitive parts, i.e. ‘by ear’

Continued on page 35.

	SATB voicings, specific harmonic rules	Triadic, added-note chords
12. Range	Italian voice classifications	Generic male and female ranges
13. Agility	Diatonic/chromatic coloratura	Pentatonic/hexatonic melismas
14. Musicianship	Classical theory	Popular Music theory
15. Improvisation	Cadenzas, avant-garde music	‘Ad libs’, ‘riffs’, ‘runs’ are improvised
16. Paralinguistic Vocal ‘effects’	Only generally found in extended vocal techniques (avant-garde)	Vocal distortion, growls, grunts, moans, aspirate endings, etc can be used
17. Visual	Formal attire, costumes (opera)	Informal, smart casual dress
18. Performance Venue	Formal, early evening performances	Informal, late evening performances
19. Amplification	Technique designed for unamplified singing	Performances always amplified. Microphone technique important
20. Vocal Health Issues	Competing with live orchestral accompaniment. Loud, acoustic singing practice in small practice rooms	Loud, amplified singing in competition with loud, amplified instruments, bad monitoring, hearing damage, lifestyle issues

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Appendix 7 – Checklist ideas for student/teacher journals

MT SINGING CHECKLIST

The teacher checklist rating scale suggested is numbered 0-5 to ensure each technical vocal demand is covered and assessed. This could also be extended to cover all four MT styles (Legit, Traditional MT, Pop/Rock/Contemporary) serve the student so they can see where their strengths and weaknesses lie within each MT genre, ensuring the balance of their practice is focused on building all the levels up to 5 (distinguished level):

SCALE 0 – 5

0 = Unable to understand concept.

1 = Understands concept, unable to perform.

2 = Achieved delivery, unable to be consistent.

3 = Consistency achieved, high concentration needed.

4 = Able to perform to a convincing level.

5 = Able to perform at a distinguished level.

NAME OF STUDENT:

LEGIT:	1	2	3	4	5	Additional notes:
Extended phrases						
Vibrato						
Head voice						
Rounded vowels						
Clear tone						
Smooth register transition						
Legit Repertoire List						

Student ID: 1921123

Submission date: 21/11/23