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**An Investigation into the Relationship between Self-Esteem, Self-Worth, and Music
Performance Anxiety for Singers.**

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Glossary

Abbreviation	Definition
MPA	Music Performance Anxiety. “The experience of marked and persistent anxious apprehension related to musical performance. This may be manifest as cognitive, behavioural, somatic, or affective symptoms or a combination of any of these symptoms” (Kenny, 2010, p.433).
CSWS	The Contingencies of Self-Worth Scale is a 35-item scale that measures 7 sources of self-esteem amongst students: academics, appearance, approval from others, competition, family support, divine love, and virtue (Crocker, Luhtanen, et al., 2003).
RSWS	Rosenberg Self-Worth Scale is a scale that measures global self-esteem (Rosenberg et al., 1995).
Self-esteem	How you think and feel about yourself often based on your own experiences.
Self-worth	“How people arrive at the judgement that they are worthwhile” (Crocker and Park, 2003, p.3). A more global and inner sense of worth or self-esteem.
UWTSD	University of Wales, Trinity St. David.
DSM	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of mental disorders.
K-MPAI	Kenny Music Performance Anxiety Inventory (Kenny, 2023).
MPAI-A	Music Performance Anxiety Inventory for Adolescents (Chang-Arana, et al., 2018).
RGSE	Rosenberg General or Global Self-esteem Scale.
Trait anxiety	Anxiety that is part of someone’s personality type.
State Anxiety	Anxiety that occurs in response to stressful situations.
Barlow’s theory of anxiety	Proposes anxiety disorders result from the interaction of generalized biological vulnerability, generalized psychological vulnerability, and specific psychological vulnerability.
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation.

GANTT chart of proposed work plan

			15/01/2024	22/01/2024	29/01/2024	05/02/2024	12/02/2024	19/02/2024	26/02/2024	04/03/2024	11/03/2024	18/03/2024
			Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10
Task	Start	Finish										
PHASE1 PREPARATION												
Finalise title	15-Jan	05-Feb										
Write project proposal	15-Jan	05-Feb										
Recruit participants and gain permissions	15-Jan	26-Feb										
Read and digest UWTSD exemplars etc.	15-Jan	05-Feb										
Write survey and research how to circulate	15-Jan	26-Feb										
Write interview questions	15-Jan	26-Feb										
PHASE2 DATA COLLECTION												
Read and analyse articles for Lit Review	15-Jan	01-Jun										
Conduct survey	04-Mar	25-Mar										
Conduct semi-structured interviews	04-Mar	25-Mar										
PHASE3 DATA ANALYSIS												
Transcribe and code interviews	25-Mar	28-Apr										
Compute data from survey	25-Mar	28-Apr										
Map the literature	25-Mar	04-Jun										
PHASE4 WRITING UP												
Write up results	01-Jun	12-Aug										
Write literature review	01-Jun	12-Aug										
Draft deadline in	12-Aug	19-Aug										
Revise project post feedback & submit work	19-Aug	26-Aug										
Prepare and practice presentation	12-Aug	08-Sep										
Presentation and FINISH!	09-Sep	09-Sep										

			25/03/2024	01/04/2024	08/04/2024	15/04/2024	22/04/2024	28/04/2024	06/05/2024	13/05/2024	19/05/2024	27/05/2024
			Week 11	Week 12	Week 13	Week 14	Week 15	Week 16	Week 17	Week 18	Week 19	Week 20
Task	Start	Finish										
PHASE1 PREPARATION												
Finalise title	15-Jan	05-Feb										
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			04/06/2024	12/06/2024	20/06/2024	28/06/2024	06/07/2024	14/07/2024	22/07/2024	30/07/2024	07/08/2024
			Week 21	Week 22	Week 23	Week 24	Week 25	Week 26	Week 27	Week 28	Week 29
Task	Start	Finish									
PHASE1 PREPARATION											
Finalise title	15-Jan	05-Feb									
Write project proposal	15-Jan	05-Feb									
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Presentation and FINISH!	09-Sep	09-Sep									

			15/08/2024	23/08/2024	31/08/2024	08/09/2024
			Week 30	Week 31	Week 32	Week 33
Task	Start	Finish				
PHASE1 PREPARATION						
Finalise title	15-Jan	05-Feb				
Write project proposal	15-Jan	05-Feb				
Recruit participants and gain permissions	15-Jan	26-Feb				
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An Investigation into the Relationship between Self-Esteem, Self-Worth, and Music Performance Anxiety for Singers.

The Project Proposal

Project Title:

An Investigation into the Relationship between Self-Esteem, Self-Worth, and Music Performance Anxiety for Singers.

The context:

Music performance anxiety (MPA) is a “complex psychological disorder” (Kenny, 2023, p.3) that can affect both amateur and professional singers (Salmon 1990; Kenny et al. 2004; Kenny 2011; Juncos and De Pona 2018; Perkins et al. 2020; Butković et al. 2022). I have taught singing for thirty years and have witnessed talented students’ progress crippled by MPA. I was shocked by how endemic MPA was in my students in childhood and adolescence (Osborne and Kenny, 2005, 2008; Ryan, 2005; Kenny and Osborne, 2006; Osborne, et al., 2007b; Boucher and Ryan, 2011; Osborne, 2013; Braden, et al., 2015; Osborne, et al., 2015; Zarza-Alzugaray et al., 2018; Shea, 2023). Singers are also under-represented in the MPA literature (Henshaw and Collyer, 2022).

Self-worth is described as “how people arrive at the judgement that they are worthwhile” (Crocker and Park, 2003, p.293) whereas self-esteem is based upon having respect or a good opinion of oneself, but these terms are often used interchangeably (Oxford dictionary 1996; Crocker and Park, 2003). Research suggests correlations may exist between self-worth, self-esteem and MPA, and low self-esteem and MPA have been found to predict depression in musicians (Sinden, 1999; Kenny, 2011; Blair and Van Der Sluis, 2022; Juncos and de Pona, 2022; Sickert et al., 2022). Research examining self-esteem, self-worth and MPA is minimal and has only been undertaken examining global measurements of self-esteem and self-worth (Rosenberg et al. 1995). The proposed study will examine a specific form of self-esteem; contingent self-worth (CSW), and whether scoring highly in contingencies of self-worth may render a singer more vulnerable to MPA (Crocker and Wolfe, 2001; Crocker and Park, 2004). This may bring a new perspective to MPA research facilitating singers and teachers to enlist strategies to counteract CSW and in so doing, counteract MPA.

The Justification:

The prevalence and debilitating nature of MPA means singing teachers should be better equipped to help students who struggle with it (Patston, 2014; Blair and Van Der Sluis, 2022; Henshaw and Collyer, 2022). Low self-esteem has been found to be negatively correlated in the literature to MPA and correlated to maladaptive perfectionism, a significant predictor of MPA (Frost and Turcotte, 1995; Mor, et al., 1995; Ryan, 1998; Sinden, 1999; Kenny, et al., 2004; Chan, 2011a; Diaz, 2018; Dobos, et al., 2018; Curran and Hill, 2019; Butković, et al., 2022; Shea, 2023). I have observed that low self-esteem and MPA appear to present as comorbid in the singing studio.

The contingencies of self-worth theory (CSW) was expanded from James' (1890) identity theory which postulates that a global sense of self-esteem is both a trait inherent to the person, and a state which is affected by successes and failures that a person experiences and perceives, specifically in relation to a domain or domains that are important to them (Crocker and Wolfe 2001; Crocker et al., 2003; 2006). Crocker et al. (2003) theorises that five domains or contingencies with an outward focus: other's approval (OA), appearance (A), academic competence (AC), family support (FS) and competition (C) create a greater psychological vulnerability than two domains with an inward focus: virtue (V), and God's love (GL). CSW may help students and teachers distinguish which domains a student's self-worth is invested in. This study seeks to explore whether being highly contingent in outwardly focused domains renders a singer more vulnerable to MPA, and whether addressing contingent self-worth may be a novel means of counteracting MPA.

The Intended Impact:

- To investigate whether there is a relationship between MPA and five outward contingencies utilising the contingencies of self-worth scale (CSWS): (OA), (A), (AC), (FS) and (C) (Crocker and Park, 2003; Perkins et al., 2020). An additional domain, 'singing competence' (SC) shall be added to make the survey specific to singers. It is hoped this may stimulate further research.
- To investigate whether the adapted eight domain CSWS survey could be a useable tool for singers and singing teachers to identify whether their self-worth is contingent on (OA), (A), (AC), (FS), (C) and (SC) and whether this makes them at greater risk of MPA.
- To facilitate greater support for students struggling with MPA by raising awareness of the issue with colleagues and to petition for consolidated strategies to be implemented as part of singers' professional training in higher education (Henshaw and Collyer, 2022).

The Outlined Intention:

A **mixed-methods** approach will examine the nature of the relationship between CSW and MPA for singers at varying stages of their career. A critical realist paradigm balances a positivist propensity with a preference for qualitative data that values subjective human experience. This position acknowledges that knowledge is often fallible and imperfect, which I am acutely aware of as an inexperienced researcher (Brunson et al., 2023).

Secondly, this paradigm acknowledges that structural power may be causal, and this study may find that training institutions are diminishing student's self-worth and causing or exacerbating MPA for some (Elder-Vass, 2022; Gomez-Lopez and Sanchez-Cabrero, 2023). This may be ethically challenging for both me as the researcher and for training institutions, however acknowledging that knowledge is fallible recognises that these findings may be partial.

Critical realism values macro and micro analysis reflected by the mixed methods approach (O' Cathain, et. al., 2007). A quantitative study will seek a macro-overview examining a range of singers' experiences of MPA and self-worth/self-esteem using the KMPA-I and CSWS. Qualitative data will bring micro insight into the topic, examining the lived experience of three to four singers (O' Bryan, 2015; Perkins et al., 2020). Triangulation between a literature review, quantitative and qualitative findings and reflective practice will facilitate integration which may not be gained by an alternative pragmatist approach (Kidd, et al., 2011; Elder-Vass, 2022).

Three populations have been chosen for this study, and a purposeful or criterion sampling strategy implemented to find participants that fit the following criteria. This strategy will facilitate selecting the best cases for rich data where resources are limited (Palinkas et al., 2015).

1. Singers who are training on undergraduate and masters' programmes at various UK music colleges contacted through known networks.
2. Singers who perceive their careers have been impeded by MPA contacted through professional networks and groups.
3. Singers who perceive their careers have not been impeded by MPA contacted through professional networks and groups.

A **quantitative survey** comprised of the CSWS with the added 'singing competence' domain and KMPA-I will be conducted with a population of approximately 60 singers, aiming for approximately 20 in each category, although this may be difficult to control. The

CSWS and KMPA-I are well validated surveys which measure CSW and MPA respectively (Chang-Arana et al., 2018; Perinelli et al., 2022). A correlational analysis will examine if there is correlation between high scores for certain contingencies and high scores for MPA.

Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with three to four singers identified from the quantitative survey who varyingly identify as having struggled with MPA from the above populations to limit bias, to investigate their experience of self-worth, self-esteem, MPA and singing to provide rich and detailed perspectives (Unluer, 2012). The purpose of the interviews is to extract an account of their experience without undue influence whilst keeping the issues of MPA and domains of self-worth in mind (Mashuri et al., 2022). The interviews will take place at least two weeks after completing the survey to limit the survey's influence on the interview and to provide some comparable data (Oei and Zwart, 1986). The data will be coded with a combined inductive and deductive approach, inductively finding new codes and exploring codes derived from the literature review (Saldana, 2016). This approach combines the rigour of deductive methods with the openness to new themes from inductive methods which Proudfoot (2023) argues is beneficial for delving into complex, layered issues.

Limitations (see appendix 2):

A mixed methods approach will be taken to seek to minimise the limitations of a singularly quantitative or qualitative approach. For example, quantitative studies may not acknowledge bias, whereas a mixed methods approach benefits from both where qualitative design is inherently self-conscious and transparent about bias (Gray, 2009). A mixed methods approach faces the challenge of integrating diverse data types which will be mitigated by triangulation and emulating procedures in other studies (Jick, 1979; Halcomb, 2019). Surveys have limitations such as self-reporting, participant fatigue and confusion, sample size, and a differing population from the original participants (Eionala and Alveson, 2021). These limitations will be considered and mitigated by careful survey construction. The results of the survey will be caveated with the need for a much larger sample, and with consideration to re-writing the CSWS in future for a British secular-minded population (Evans, 2018b). Survey limitations will also be countered by the inclusion of qualitative comparable data (Oei and Zwart, 1986). As one researcher with limited time and experience, these findings do not claim to be exhaustive.

Ethics and Insider Research:

Ethical approval was confirmed by the UWTSD ethics board (appendix 3). The surveys have been rigorously tested to minimise risk where MPA is classified as a social anxiety disorder (Regier, et al., 2013; Chang-Arana, et al., 2018; Perinelli et al., 2022; Kenny, 2023). Anonymity and confidentiality will be assured through secure online systems which are password protected in line with GDPR, pseudonyms will be assumed, and no identifying information will be attached to any interviews (Allmark, et al., 2009; Perkins, et al., 2020). Jain et al. (2017) suggests that research into psychiatric issues needs additional care so informed consent will be gained through clear explanations of the research with consent forms signed by both parties. The researcher has no conflict of interest as there is no funding involved. It will be explained to participants that there is no therapeutic benefit to them in participating to avoid therapeutic misconception. Some participants may be vulnerable, so participants will be forewarned of the nature of the survey, directed to appropriate support if required, and able to contact me and my academic tutor via email if necessary (appendix 4).

Issues of insider research

Undertaking research related to work creates insider research issues, however in recognising these, benefits can be acknowledged, and negative effects minimised (Fleming, 2018). There is strength in the researcher understanding the topic area and having empathy and sympathy for singers with MPA and low self-worth. Whilst this can facilitate better access, common language, and greater understanding, it must be acknowledged that this can also lead to assumptions, issues of role duality, and unacknowledged bias. Unluer (2012) advises preventative measures against this:

- Use of a research journal to write thoughts and feelings, so that these are bracketed and withheld from participants (Rogers, 2018).
- Transparency with tutor to retain accountability.
- Awareness of personal bias and aim to collect data without prejudice.
- Share interview transcripts with participants to check for accuracy.

Additionally, talking through any issues that have negatively impacted me during the research process with a counsellor on a weekly basis to safeguard me the researcher (Williamson and Burns, 2014).

Personal Learning Outcomes.

- To be able to describe the relationship between CSW and MPA using a combination of data from published sources and my own original research.
- To share this knowledge about the impact of CSW upon MPA with other colleagues to facilitate more support for singing students in higher education (Jimenez, 2016; Carrasco, 2019).
- To help my students understand their vulnerabilities and seek support to find workable coping strategies earlier (Perkins et al., 2020).

An Investigation into the Relationship between Self-Esteem, Self-Worth, and Music Performance Anxiety for Singers.

Introduction

Self-esteem may be described as the level of confidence in an ability, and singing to someone else arguably requires a level of self-esteem (Abril, 2007). Over the last 30 years of teaching singing, I have perceived what appears to be a co-morbid relationship between low self-esteem, low self-worth and MPA with certain students. Whilst as a singer teacher I cannot be responsible for the psychological well-being of my students, I also cannot disregard this issue especially when it presents itself in the singing studio and appears to hinder singers' progress. Many students respond to encouragement and support, but there have been times when this has been insufficient, and I have felt ill-equipped to identify effective methods to help such students. This has elicited this research into the nature of the relationship between self-worth, self-esteem, and MPA for singers.

Most research into MPA and self-esteem and self-worth has been conducted with a range of musicians and not singers specifically (Ryan, 1998; Kirchner, 2003; Ryan and Andrews, 2009; Matei and Ginsborg, 2017; Castiglione et al., 2018; Otacioğlu, 2020; Perkins et al., 2020; Henshaw and Collyer, 2022; Sickert et al., 2022). The issue of self-worth and self-esteem may be more potent for singers for the following reasons. Singers will regularly testify to the unique challenges and vulnerabilities of their instrument being their very self, the inability to hide behind any physical instrument and the vital use of their body and faces in singing well (O' Bryan, 2015; Brown, 2021). This can lead to a scrutiny which feels very personal, exacerbating any evaluation anxiety and feelings of being under threat which are contributory to MPA (Abril, 2007; Castiglione et al., 2018; Dobos, et al., 2018).

The literature recognises that there is a correlational relationship between low self-esteem and MPA, commonly measured in quantitative studies utilising surveys (Ryan, 1998; Liston et al., 2003; Ryan and Andrews, 2009; Chan, 2011a; Biasutti and Concina, 2014; Otacioğlu, 2016; Castiglione et al., 2018; Sickert et al., 2022). There are a variety of scales which measure global self-esteem. Studies using such scales demonstrate a relationship, distinguishing levels of self-esteem as an aspect of overall psychological well-being, but they cannot differentiate behaviour and do little to expand our understanding of the exact nature of this relationship (Coopersmith, 1967; Johnson et al., 1983; Rosenberg et al., 1995). It is therefore unsurprising that Blair and Van Der Sluis (2022) highlight the need for more research. By contrast, Crocker argues that CSW can distinguish individual's motivations and fluctuating levels of confidence according to which contingencies they value, and success or failure in these contingencies is theorised to

determine an overall sense of self-worth (Crocker and Park, 2003, 2004; Crocker et al., 2003). For example, students who are contingent on academic achievement find their self-worth is boosted when they receive good exam results, but it suffers when they do not (Crocker, et al. 2003a; Crocker et al., 2003b; Park et al., 2007). Crocker distinguishes between seven contingencies of self-esteem which altogether comprise an overall sense of self-worth however it is worth noting that these contingencies are not exhaustive and have been formulated primarily for students. Despite these limitations, CSW might bring new insights into research of these issues.

Crocker (2006) identifies seven self-esteem contingencies in which individuals may seek to find and increase their sense of self-esteem and overall self-worth. She argues that five of these contingencies leave individuals at greater psychological risk and more prone to anxiety and depression because excelling in these areas requires validation from others, an external source. These outward contingencies are appearance (A), other's approval (OA), competition (C), family support (FS), academic competency (AC). Two contingencies are less psychologically risky because these rely on the individuals own internal sense of success. These inward contingencies are virtue (V) and God's love (GL).

The CSW theory led to the hypothesis that singers highly contingent on outward contingencies, and in a new and specific 'singing' competency designed for this study may be more susceptible to MPA. Consequently, a quantitative survey was designed combining the CSWS and KMPA-I to test for correlations between high scores in outward contingencies and high scores in MPA. As surveys can determine trends and correlations, they cannot render detail, so it was also important to listen to singers and hear their voices directly, necessitating a qualitative dimension to the study (Kirchner, 2003; Abril, 2007; O' Bryan, 2015; Frey, 2018; Brown, 2021).

To summarise, there are quantitative studies which have discovered correlations between low self-esteem and MPA and qualitative studies which have also highlighted a relationship between these issues (Ryan, 1998; Kirchner, 2003; Liston, et al., 2003; Ryan and Andrews, 2009; Chan, 2011a; Biasutti and Concina, 2014; Castiglione et al., 2018; Frey, 2018; Otacioğlu, 2020; Perkins et al., 2020). However, there is a lack of consolidated research specifically into these issues for singers. The aim of this study is to investigate whether CSW theory might contribute something novel to existing research into MPA by demonstrating whether there are any correlations between outward contingencies of self-esteem, self-worth and MPA, and to investigate the nature of these relationships qualitatively with a select and varied group of singers.

The Literature Review.

Music Performance Anxiety (MPA), Self-Esteem and Self-Worth.

MPA has been defined as “the experience of marked and persistent anxious apprehension related to musical performance” manifesting with “cognitive, behavioural, somatic, or affective symptoms or a combination of any of these symptoms” (Kenny, 2010, p.433). It is complex and may also be described as a form of anxiety which occurs when performing in a social setting when fearing evaluation and feeling subsequently under threat (Abril, 2007; Castiglione et al., 2018; Dobos et al., 2018). The American Psychiatric Association considers MPA to be a specific category within social anxiety, however, this classification has been challenged because MPA has demonstrated different characteristics to social anxiety (Huston, 2001; Kenny et al., 2004; Wiedermann et al., 2021; Kenny, 2023). Symptoms are multifaceted, can be broadly distinguished between physical and psychological symptoms and are unique to every individual. MPA can occur despite adequate preparation, ability, and training (Salmon, 1990; Liston et al., 2003). MPA may be facilitative where there are associated positive emotions however it can be debilitating and detrimentally interfere with the experience of performing, causing the performer to feel negatively about themselves (Kirchner, 2003; Matei and Ginsborg, 2017; Perkins et al., 2020; Henshaw and Collyer, 2022; Murphy, et al., 2024).

The literature interchangeably utilises the terms self-esteem and self-worth to describe the way someone feels about themselves. To differentiate, a sense of self-esteem may be constructed by the successes and failures a person experiences which is why musicians who often start performing from an early age may connect their self-esteem to their musical accomplishments (Ryan, 1998). It is global self-esteem that is measured in most studies utilising such scales as the Rosenberg and the Coopersmith self-esteem scales, and low self-esteem may play a part in the development of MPA (Coopersmith, 1967; Johnson et al., 1983; Rosenberg et al., 1995; Biasutti and Concina, 2014; Castiglione et al., 2018; Kenny, 2023). The research literature often examines self-esteem alongside self-efficacy, with some even arguing that self-esteem and self-efficacy are one and the same (Stanley and Murphy, 1997). Self-efficacy is defined as an individual's belief in themselves to succeed in their goals determined by performance accomplishments, therefore it is possible to see the pivotal role successes play in shaping both self-esteem and self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977). In contrast, self-worth may be described as a more inward sense of value attached to the self which is entirely subjective with no reference necessarily to an objective measure of ability, however it may be shaped by self-esteem (Bandura, 1977; Crocker and Park, 2003, 2004; Smith and Mackie, 2007).

Prevalence of MPA is alarmingly high, yet it is often surrounded by shame (Huston, 2001; Burin and Osorio, 2017; Coskun-Senturk and Cirakoglu, 2017). Rather than acknowledging MPA and seeking to find counterstrategies for those in training, it seems that MPA may often be exacerbated during musical education and professional training which can have devastating results on professional careers (Blair and Van Der Sluis, 2022; Gomez-Lopez and Sanchez-Cabrero, 2023). Training colleges should arguably not just prepare a singer vocally for a career, but also prepare their students psychologically, proactively seeking measures and teaching strategies that pre-empt and prevent escalating MPA, de-pathologizing it and “equipping students with a solid understanding of MPA as well as the skills to manage it” (Herman and Clark, 2023, p.23).

To summarise, MPA is a complex condition which has been well researched with a range of musicians, however singers are somewhat underrepresented (Henshaw and Collyer, 2022). MPA can cause musicians to feel badly about themselves which establishes a relationship between MPA and self-esteem (Kirchner, 2003; Matei and Ginsborg, 2017; Perkins et al., 2020; Henshaw and Collyer, 2022). We will now undertake a more detailed investigation into the literature linking MPA to low self-worth and self-esteem.

The literature has consistently found a negative correlation between global self-esteem and MPA showing that when self-esteem diminishes, MPA increases (Ryan, 1998; Sinden, 1999; Liston et al., 2003; Chan, 2011; Otacioğlu, 2020). Ryan, (1998) initially found this correlation when exploring MPA and self-esteem amongst 26 child piano students ($r = -0.44$). Sinden (1999) examined how self-esteem might contribute to MPA in 138 music students, finding low self-esteem to be both correlated and predictive of MPA however this appears to be contradicted by Liston et al., (2003) in a study comprised of only singers (118 students). Although they found a negative correlation between MPA and self-esteem ($r = -0.41$) they did not find that low self-esteem was a significant predictor of MPA. It is impossible to know whether these apparently conflicting results are related to differences between a population of musicians compared to just singers or are due to other factors such as age or methodologies. Chan (2011) found evidence of MPA being negatively correlated to self-esteem amongst a sample of 174 young people who were members of a youth orchestra in Hong Kong. Chan also found that both trait and state anxiety were negatively correlated with self-esteem, and that trait anxiety was more strongly correlated with low self-esteem. This would seem to highlight a greater vulnerability to low self-esteem in those with trait anxiety rather than state anxiety. In a study with 306 music students, Otacioğlu (2016) also found that there was a negative correlation between musical self-esteem and MPA when a self-esteem scale of music ability was used. Whether MPA is a form of social anxiety is debatable (Huston, 2001; Kenny, 2023), but if it is,

Murad and Murad (2020) found a significant negative correlation between social anxiety and self-esteem, as did Yan (2007), and Izgiç et al. (2004). Qualitative research also demonstrates a relationship between low self-esteem and MPA. Kirchner (2003) found that for the 6 advanced pianists she interviewed who struggled with MPA, how they felt their performance had been received had a negative impact on their self-esteem. Rather than finding an intrinsic sense of worth in their performance “their self-esteem seemed rooted in how well they performed and in their perception of how the audience viewed their performance” (Kirchner, 2003, p.80).

To summarise, the research consistently shows a negative correlation between low self-esteem and MPA for musicians and singers and that those with trait anxiety may have a greater vulnerability to low self-esteem than those with state anxiety, however it is conflicted in demonstrating that low self-esteem can predict MPA (Sinden, 1999; Liston, et al., 2003; Chan, 2011a).

The exact relationship between self-esteem, self-efficacy and MPA is yet to be clarified in the literature, however where they are deemed indistinguishable, research adds weight to the negative correlation between self-efficacy, self-esteem and MPA. Research by Liston et al. (2003) is the only research that appears to distinguish between self-efficacy and self-esteem, finding that the correlation between self-esteem and MPA was almost insignificant when the factors of catastrophizing and personal efficacy were removed from the standard multiple regression. This is a significant study as the sample was comprised of entirely singers. In contrast, the following research found an indistinguishable relationship between self-esteem and self-efficacy; A study with orchestral musicians found that core self-efficacy was negatively correlated with MPA, and that low self-esteem was an integral part of low self-efficacy (Kenny, et al., 2012). Similarly, Girgin’s (2017) study with 527 student music teachers in Turkey found that instrumental self-efficacy played a role in shaping their participants’ self-esteem and experience of MPA. Finally, Otacioğlu (2020) also found that self-efficacy and self-esteem were positively correlated for student musicians, including singers.

To summarise, most studies appear to show that self-efficacy and self-esteem are closely correlated and negatively correlated to MPA, adding further evidence for the negative correlation between these constructs and MPA, however further research is required to examine whether these results are consistent for singers (Sinden, 1999; Kenny, et al., 2012; Girgin, 2017; Otacioğlu, 2020).

With the correlation between low self-esteem and MPA well established, it would seem appropriate to investigate self-esteem and MPA from a different approach. Self-esteem scales

measure global self-esteem and research shows that low global self-esteem is not only correlated to MPA but also to depression and sadness indicating its close relationship with trait anxiety and overall psychological well-being (Baumeister et al., 2003; Ciarrochi et al., 2007; Knowles and Olatunji, 2021; Sickert et al., 2022; Kenny, 2023). Rosenberg (1995) creator of the Rosenberg Global Self-esteem Scale highlights that global self-esteem and specific self-esteem are different terms and are not interchangeable, with global self-esteem scales revealing more about overall psychological well-being and less about behaviour. If MPA can be both a state anxiety and a trait anxiety, then it would seem vital to explore a different measure of self-esteem that is not investigating overall psychological well-being but is more focused on behaviour and motivations (Kenny, 2023). The CSWS may provide an alternative scale of measurement of self-esteem, better elucidating associated behaviour and motivations.

MPA and Contingencies of Self-Worth.

Due to the early age that many musicians begin training, it is unsurprising that their sense of self-esteem becomes enmeshed or contingent upon how well they perform (Ryan, 1998). Seeking self-esteem in contingencies that an individual deems important is inherently risky because it “sacrifices autonomy” (Crocker and Park, 2004, p.399). Success may cause someone with high contingencies to feel secure and consequently worthy, whilst failure causes the opposite, challenging the very self and subsequently crippling motivation which may lead to procrastination and self-handicapping (Juncos and de Pona, 2022). A distinction is made between extrinsic ((A), (OA), (C), (AC), (FS)) and intrinsic ((V) (GL)) contingencies of self-worth and investment in extrinsic contingencies potentially endanger an individual’s sense of self-worth the most (Crocker and Wolfe, 2001; Crocker and Park, 2004). A partial cause of MPA is the “absence of an internal secure base” (Kenny, 2023, p.7) and the presence of an audience particularly containing experts, teachers, family, and peers are all contributory to MPA (LeBlanc et al., 1997; Perkins et al., 2020). Table 1 below provides a summary of the CSW.

Table 1 Summary of the contingencies of self-worth (CSW) (Additional contingency in italics)

Contingency	Measures how much someone finds their sense of self-worth in:
Appearance (A)	How someone feels about their physical appearance (outward)
Competition (C)	The need to outperform others (outward)
Academic competence (AC)	Success in academic spheres such as exams and qualifications (outward)
Other’s approval (OA)	Other people’s opinions of them (outward)
Family support (FS)	The context of what family and friends think (outward)
Virtue (V)	Meeting their inward moral code (inward)
God’s love (GL)	Adherence to religious principles (inward)
<i>Singing competence (SC)</i>	<i>Success in singing spheres (outward)</i>

To summarise, MPA literature demonstrates that a musician's self-worth is often connected with how well they perform (Ryan, 1998; Kenny et al., 2004; Chan, 2011a). Success in a singing performance career requires gaining regular approval from an audience (OA), winning roles (C), looking the part (A), and demonstrating consistent competency (SC). These CSW themes are important for successful singers but may be psychologically damaging for singers if their self-esteem and self-worth are significantly invested there. These most pertinent themes for singers will now be explored.

Extrinsic Contingencies.

Other's Approval (OA).

Research has shown that it is the presence of an audience that provides the context for MPA (LeBlanc et al., 1997; Abril, 2007; Chan, 2011; Otacioğlu, 2020; Perkins et al., 2020; Blair and Van Der Sluis, 2022). Those who have trait anxiety, those who are consistently anxious, may be more prone to state anxiety, a transitory response of anxiety and MPA (Fredrikson and Gunnarsson, 1992; Fancourt, et al., 2015; Aufegger and Wasley, 2018, Henshaw et al., 2022). In a qualitative study examining performance anxiety with 6 expert pianists, Kirchner found that the participants worried about what the audience was thinking of them and were fearful of being evaluated negatively. From the perspective of the participants, "the audience was not present simply to enjoy the performance but rather to serve as judges, critiquing their playing" (Kirchner, 2003, p.81). She observes that these sufferers of MPA were absorbed by the extrinsic value to the audience rather than any intrinsic value which they gave their own performance. Similarly, in a qualitative study of MPA with singers who were expert teachers, Cupido (2018) identified that participants' MPA worsened when singing in front of their peers and students, highlighting that these teachers were overly concerned about other's approval. In a phenomenological study Perkins et al. (2020) also highlight how intimidated three out of four of the professional musicians they studied felt when playing in front of other professional musicians, also demonstrating a strong need of approval from others. However, all these findings are challenged by Huston (2001) who found an opposing result when comparing MPA with social anxiety for 165 orchestral musicians. She found that overconcern with the opinions of others was negatively correlated with MPA, but not social anxiety, suggesting that these are different constructs. She suggests that children may be inoculated from MPA if they grow up in an environment where parents are highly concerned about the opinions of others, as concern about the opinion of others is normalised.

To summarise, musicians and singers can be overly concerned with the opinion of others which may contribute to MPA, specifically the audience or certain members of the audience they deem to be authoritative, however growing up in a family culture high in concern about the opinions of other may inoculate against MPA (Huston, 2001; Kirchner, 2003; Cupido, 2018; Perkins et al., 2020).

Competition (C).

Competitive sports anxiety is a type of social anxiety well documented in the sports literature associated with competition, which has many similarities to MPA. Like MPA, it can be both a trait and state anxiety, manifest with cognitive and somatic symptoms, be debilitating, be associated with how someone's performance is perceived by others, and be experienced as threatening (Passer, 1983; Guyon et al., 2020; Hasanah and Refanthira, 2020; Kang and Jang, 2021; Sanader et al., 2021; Gabrys, 2023). As a result, treatments for competitive sports anxiety are increasingly being recommended for preventing MPA (Herman and Clark, 2023; Mazzon, et al., 2023).

Classical singers routinely enter competitions throughout their careers, as well as competing against other singers for limited positions (Henshaw and Collyer, 2022). Kenny, et al., (2004) found that opera chorus singers had higher trait anxiety, potentially due to job insecurity and feeling that they were continually competing with other singers to retain their jobs. Yoshie et al. (2009) conducted a comprehensive battery of experiments on 18 expert pianists and showed that the competitive environment led to impaired performance quality reflected in the scores for both technical proficiency but even more so for artistry. The tempo of the performances significantly increased for 12 out of 18 of the participants, negatively impacting their performance, and certain muscles showed increased activity and accompanying joint stiffness which may partially account for poorer performances. In addition, sweat and heart rates significantly increased during competition. This study did not demonstrate whether these pianists had MPA, but it does show dramatically the physiological strain on musicians in a competitive environment. Common to all the pianists with MPA that Kirchner (2003) studied was an overarching fear of negative evaluation, a theme common to competitive anxiety observed in the sports literature (Passer, 1983).

To summarise, MPA has much in common with competitive sports anxiety and as such treatments for sports anxiety are being trialled on musicians to prevent MPA (Herman and Clark, 2023; Mazzon, et al., 2023). While MPA is widely explored in the literature, the impact of

competition on musicians and singers is less so, despite professionals regularly performing in competitive environments.

Appearance (A).

Singers face unique scrutiny related to their appearance. For example, their vocal technique, acting ability, and capacity to emote a song are often assessed by the way they use their bodies and faces (Miller, 1997; Chapman and Morris, 2023). Baumeister et al. (2003) highlight that global self-esteem and self-rated attractiveness were strongly correlated, suggesting that self-esteem may often be based upon appearance. Izgic et al. (2004) found in their large-scale study of over 1000 students that self-reported body image scores were significantly lower and more distorted for those with social anxiety than for those without. The relationship between appearance and self-esteem and self-worth is complex, and often more so for females. Objectification theory (Fredrickson and Roberts, 1997) postulates that in a sexualised culture, women unwittingly monitor themselves constantly from an outsider perspective. This self-objectifying can lead to preoccupation with appearance, a vulnerability to shame and anxiety, which is detrimental to a woman's mental health, her relationship with her body and its internal state and hinder peak cognitive functioning. Breines et al. (2002) found that self-objectification was negative for women, however for those who heavily invested their self-worth in their appearance, self-objectifying could be threatening or validating depending on how successful they felt they were in improving their appearance. Lowery et al. (2005) in their study of 267 female and 156 male students found evidence of low self-esteem being consistently linked to body image dissatisfaction for females. Two qualitative studies provide evidence of this for singers. Frey (2018) conducted a phenomenological study of 6 female opera singers and found that these women felt that their appearance was integral to whether they secured professional roles. She found that this was a complex relationship because of the necessity for the voice to match the body type, substantiated by O' Bryan (2015), who also found that certain roles remain outside a singer's grasp if the body type does not conform to expectations. Whilst this issue is prevalent for women, males are not immune from this pressure (Frey, 2018). Similarly, Brown (2021) focussed on five female classical singers and found evidence of a schism between how they viewed their body as women and as singers. All five women spoke of holding their stomachs in when singing "to maintain a certain appearance" (Brown, 2021, p.50), despite this being detrimental to their singing. 'Dana' described a panic attack just before going on stage because she had forgotten her Spanx (support underwear), and without it she was unable to perform. She also describes the feeling of every part of her appearance being judged and how contingent her confidence was on how she felt about her appearance. The presence of mirrors in practice rooms is a constant struggle for female singers especially those with high levels of

body-shape concern (Farrell, et. al., 2004). Brown links this to MPA, stating “a female singer’s fears about how her body will be judged by an audience may amplify, or even partially cause, stage fright” (Brown, 2021, p.183). In addition, MPA can trigger uncontrollable physiological responses that the performer will be acutely aware of whilst performing (Kirchner, 2003; Perkins et al., 2020). For example, sweating, blushing, and shaking are common symptoms of MPA as is difficulty breathing which can lead the performer to heightened self-consciousness of their appearance and cause embarrassment which escalates MPA (Kirchner, 2003).

To summarise, three in-depth qualitative studies provide evidence that contingent self-worth can be strongly invested in appearance particularly for female singers contributing to MPA (O’ Bryan, 2015; Frey, 2018; Brown, 2021), and that embarrassment about the physical symptoms of MPA can perpetuate it (Kirchner, 2003).

Academic Competency/ Singing Competency (AC/SC).

The level of competency a classical singer must achieve to even attempt an operatic career is highlighted by the time it takes to train, usually six or more years. During training, the singer will undertake regular assessments and exams to ensure competency. Kivimäki (1995) found that music students with MPA performed poorly during test conditions when compared to normal lessons demonstrating that MPA impeded competency. This is mirrored by research into academic competency. Guven (2015) demonstrated a close and significant relationship between test anxiety and MPA and that anxiety was detrimental to students’ performances. There is a psychological vulnerability of individuals who are highly contingent on academic success when they do not achieve academically (Crocker, et al., 2003; Crocker, et al., 2003; Park et al., 2007). Similarly, students who scored highly in academic contingency underperformed due to anxiety when they believed they were in test conditions that would reflect on their academic ability (Lawrence and Williams, 2013). Crocker argues that it is only in the domains where an individual is highly invested, that they will be psychologically threatened by the potential of failure.

To summarise, being highly invested in a contingency such as academic competency has been shown to be linked to psychological vulnerability and low self-esteem (Crocker et al., 2003a; Crocker, et al., 2003b; Park, et al., 2007). In addition, the anxiety triggered can impede performance. Singers regularly take exams and are evaluated for their singing competency. This would suggest that exploring the contingency of ‘singing competency’ for singers would be worthwhile given the relationship between test anxiety and MPA (Guven, 2015).

Despite the wealth of research into MPA there is a lack of proven means of providing practical support for music students seeking to be professionals which can be provided at this level even though students appear to struggle more with MPA than professionals (Biasutti and Concina, 2014; Blair and Van Der Sluis, 2022; Herman and Clark, 2023). The literature review revealed the potential for a new line of enquiry (Randolph, 2009) utilising the CSWS to examine MPA rather than a global measure of self-esteem, and to consider the relationship student and professional singers may have with various extrinsic contingencies that may render them psychologically vulnerable (Crocker et al., 2003a; Crocker, et al., 2003b; Park, et al., 2007).

Hypotheses.

It was hypothesised that:

1. Singers would have significant correlations between their scores on the Kenny Music Performance Anxiety-Inventory (KMPA-I) and the following contingencies on the CSWS as these contingencies are hypothesised to be intrinsic to professional singing: Singing competence, appearance, others approval, and competition. In comparison it was hypothesised that academic competence, family support, virtue and God's love would not correlate.
2. Singers who scored the highest in the outward domains of the CSW: singing competence, appearance, others approval, competition, academic competence, and family support would score higher on the KMPA-I.
3. Singers who scored more highly on inward domains would score lower on the KMPA-I, that is, singers who scored more highly in virtue and God's love would score less highly on the KMPA-I.
4. Students would have higher levels of MPA than non-students in line with current research (Dews and Williams, 1989; Huston, 2001; Osborne and Kenny, 2008; Biasutti and Concina, 2014; Otacioğlu, 2016)

Ethical considerations and Insider Research.

Ethical considerations are vital for any original psychological research to “ensure that participants are safe from harm and protected from unnecessary stress” (Cacciattolo, 2015, p. 55). Measures were taken to protect all the participants in the following areas; consent, confidentiality, therapeutic misconceptions, vulnerability, exploitation, conflict of interest and operational challenges (appendix 4) (Jain et al., 2017). Questionnaires were used which have been rigorously tested to minimise unnecessary risk to survey participants (Chang-Arana et al., 2018; Perinelli et al., 2022; Kenny, 2023). The subject of the research and study procedures were explained in writing to participants, with the necessity of separate clear consent forms being completed for both the survey and the interviews prior to data collection (appendix 7 and 11). All participant data was treated with utmost confidentiality, interviewees were given pseudonyms, and all digital records were password protected and only accessible by the researcher (Allmark et al., 2009; Perkins et al., 2020). I regularly engaged with my tutor to create transparency and check any operational challenges. All data will be destroyed in-line with GDPR after marking of the project is complete and it was clarified in writing and verbally to participants that there would be no therapeutic benefit to them in completing the survey or interview.

One of the most challenging aspects of this project was interviewing one participant who revealed severe mental health issues, depression, anxiety, and historic suicidal thoughts. This interview was extremely delicate, and I was careful in dealing with the participant very gently taking great care not to exploit, allowing them to voluntarily contribute information rather than pressing into any difficult subject matters (Kirkwood, 2012). Reflecting immediately after the interview, I had some safeguarding concerns. I did not believe that the participant was in any immediate danger, but the participant had disclosed historic suicidal thoughts which concerned me. I immediately contacted my tutor for support and advice, who also raised the issue with her manager and UWTSD. They advised me to immediately email the participant re-signposting them to the helplines suggested in the consent information. The interviewee quickly responded to my email thanking me for my concern and reassuring me that they were seeking professional help which I was very thankful for. Not only was I concerned for the participant but there were ethical concerns for me as the researcher as this issue caused me considerable anxiety at the time. It was helpful that I was able to process this sensitive issue and others that arose during research with both my academic tutor and a counsellor who I was meeting with weekly.

It was vital to ensure that I did not exert any undue influence over the interviews which meant that the interviews were structured with key questions in mind, although interviewees did have

the freedom to steer the conversations (Mashuri et al., 2022). I was aware that “the knower is embedded in the social scene of the interview, they are not independent of the respondents’ responses” (Olsen, 2004, p.7), and I found it ethically challenging at one point when an interviewee asked me directly what I thought about an issue. I was nervous of colouring the interview with my own opinions but also it would have been inhuman to not offer some personal perspectives here, plus I decided it was safe to offer an opinion as the interviewee had already expressed hers (appendix 16). To ensure that interview transcripts were accurate, I emailed copies to each of the participants to check that I had not misheard or inaccurately transcribed the interview and to ensure that I was accountable to them (Candela, 2019).

Whilst there are no financial conflicts of interest in the outcome of the research, I have recognised a bias in wanting to prove my hypotheses and the validity of my research. To minimise unacknowledged bias, one of the disadvantages of being an insider researcher, I bracketed my thoughts and feelings in a personal reflective journal and analytic memos (appendix 13) (Romain, 2015; Rogers, 2018). This process enabled me to confront my biases and be transparent about them. Having struggled with low self-worth myself, I recognise a tendency for me to overemphasise the connection and correlation between low self-worth and MPA and be less objective in investigating this relationship. Bracketing this has helped me to be aware of this as I have analysed the data. Other insider researcher issues such as role duality are irrelevant as I am not undertaking research within my workplace, and I acknowledge that I have never trained at a music conservatoire so have no personal experience of this (Holian and Coghlan, 2013; Fleming, 2018). Hopefully my experience of MPA and low self-worth contributed empathy, support, and sympathy to participants whilst I acknowledge that my experience is separate and distinct from that of my interviewees.

Methodology.

A critical realist paradigm was chosen for this study with a mixed methods approach. This approach marries an ontological and epistemological position which values both scientific endeavour which can measure the objective, whilst acknowledging the subjective nature of the social world (Mahoney, 2016). MPA has been conceptualized as a form of social anxiety, and may therefore be a social construct, usually only existing in a social context of performing to people (Nicholson, et. al., 2014). Critical realism is a paradigm that seeks to not just describe social reality but to understand it. It will often apply an underpinning theory to a new context to see if it can provide a new understanding of cause, therefore MPA will provide the new context to apply the CSW theory (Mahoney, 2016). Where mixed methods research may require a mixture of deductive and inductive approaches which can feel distinct and opposing, critical realism highlights this as a “flawed dichotomy” (Mahoney, 2016, p.1), illustrating that in the real world both quantitative and qualitative information are constantly analysed, both being of value and complementing each other. A critical realist position therefore allows for a pragmatic approach to analysis, choosing methods that will gain the most understanding.

A mixed methods approach explored the subject from both a macro and micro perspective (O’ Cathain, et. al., 2007). The quantitative survey yielded macro data, a broad overview from 65 participants, whilst the qualitative element of semi-structured interviews yielded detailed, personal, granular micro data from three carefully selected participants. These participants were selected according to differing degrees of self-identified MPA indicated in the survey. Triangulation homogenized three diverse data types: the literature, quantitative and qualitative data. The procedures for these data types shall now be outlined.

The Literature Review Procedure.

Keywords were chosen to explore various databases: PsychINFO, ProQuest, PsycARTICLES, Google Scholar, and MEDLINE. A Boolean search used the following terms: MPA, self-esteem, self-worth, singers, musicians, contingencies of self-worth. These search terms were then extended to include competition, appearance, and body image, all contingencies from the CSWS. Bibliographies were also searched for further relevant articles. Articles from the last five years were useful in summarising recent research, and gradually the same articles began to reappear. A PRISMA screening process identified the articles most relevant to the inclusion criteria which were MPA, self-esteem, and music ($n = 9$) and a summary table of these articles was compiled (appendix 8) (Blair and Van Der Sluis, 2022). All articles were summarised and assessed for relevance, strengths, weaknesses, bias, currency, and contextualisation within the

research field in numbered ANTICs (for an example, appendix 9). Articles were divided into primary and secondary relevancies according to how neatly they fitted the search criteria, the additional sources of secondary relevancy providing a wider context for the literature review ($n = 37$) (appendix 10). This approach enlisted some methodology from systematic literature reviews, however the literature review took the form of a narrative literature review, as the synthesis took a qualitative approach (Rother, 2007).

The Quantitative Procedure.

The quantitative element of the research followed statistical procedures that many studies in this subject had set precedent for utilising a bivariate model to analyse the relationship between variables (Liston, et. al., 2003, Chan, 2011, Otacioğlu, 2016, and Otacioğlu, 2020). The methodologies of qualitative papers which explore the subject using various inductive approaches such as narrative thematic analysis (O' Bryan, 2015), feminist methodological framework (Brown, 2021), and interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) were considered (Perkins et al., 2020), with IPA selected as the primary inductive means of analysing for its systematic and thorough approach. The few studies with mixed methods approaches, were poor in describing their qualitative methodologies (Ryan, 1998; Yan, 2007).

The study aims to assess MPA and CSW amongst singers and follows a descriptive correlational design conducted from March – April 2024 with 65 singers. The University of Wales, Trinity St. David gave ethical approval for the project in January 2024 (appendix 3). Social media and snowball sampling were used to recruit (Leighton et al., 2021). A survey was distributed amongst colleagues and undergraduate students known to the researcher during March and April 2024, which they then also circulated to colleagues. The survey was also posted on various online professional forums for singers and student singers utilising Facebook and WhatsApp groups. Participants were given a brief written explanation of the study methodology before participating, informing them that the study was investigating the relationship between MPA and self-worth, and they completed online informed consent forms (appendix 7).

Google Survey was utilised to collect data with a single questionnaire comprised of three sections: demographic data, a modified version of the contingencies of self-worth scale (CSWS) (appendix 5) and the Kenny Music Performance Anxiety Inventory (KMPA-I) (appendix 6). One survey with three sections was structurally chosen taking into consideration survey fatigue (Cleave, 2022). The entire survey was calculated to take approximately 15 minutes.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria.

A total of 68 singers completed the survey. The focus population was professional singers who were either studying to be professional, or who were earning some or all income from singing. Three singers identified themselves as keen amateurs or 'other' and were consequently excluded from the results. Of the remaining 65 participants, 7 were male, and 58 were female.

Measures.

The socio-demographic tool consisted of 9 items including level of singing education, level of general education, singer status (whether professional, semi-professional or amateur), singing style, perception of MPA affecting career, perception of self-worth, sex, age (18-25, or over 25), and whether they would like to be considered for interview.

The Kenny Music Performance Anxiety Inventory (K-MPAI).

The KMPA-I (appendix 6), based on Barlow's theory of anxiety has been used in over 400 studies with many populations of musicians and singers, making it useful for measuring performance anxiety due to its robustness and factorial structure (Barlow, 2000; Kenny, et al., 2004; Chang-Arana, et al., 2018; Dobos et al., 2018; Kenny, 2023). It has been utilised in diverse cultural contexts, having been translated into 22 languages (Kenny, 2023). It has 3 meta-factors: early relationship context, psychological vulnerability, and proximal performance concerns with 12 underlying factors. The KMPA-I is comprised of 40 questions scored on a Likert scale of 1-7, which measures levels of music performance anxiety, higher scores indicating greater anxiety. 1 = Strongly agree, 2 = disagree, 3 = somewhat disagree, 4 = neither agree nor disagree, 5 = somewhat agree, 6 = agree, 7 = strongly agree. The KMPA-I was used as the dependent variable.

The Contingencies of Self-Worth Scale (CSWS).

This is comprised of 35 questions scored on a Likert scale of 1-7, which explore seven contingencies for self-worth. These were scored with the same Likert scale as the KMPA-I (see above). There are 5 questions for every area of contingency. An eighth contingency was added, 'singing competence' with an additional 5 questions which were based upon the questions for academic competence. The questions for singing competency were added randomly to the questionnaire. The higher the scores, the more self-esteem is contingent on doing well in that area.

The CSWS distinguishes between contingencies that are reliant on others and external sources for validation and those with an inward focus (Crocker, et al., 2003). The outward contingencies are appearance (A), other's approval (OA), competition (C), family support (FS), academic competency (AC), and within this study the added contingency of singing competency (SC). The inward contingencies are virtue (V) and God's love (GL) (Crocker and Wolfe, 2001; Crocker and Park, 2003, 2004). Crocker et al. (2003) demonstrated that the seven subscales distinguished within the CSWS all capture unique dimensions of self-esteem beyond a global assessment. The tool's reliability and content validity were found to be 0.73 and 0.70 (Cronbach's alpha) by Sharma et al. (2024).

Different elements of the CSWS were used as independent variables: firstly, each of the contingencies was tested to see if there were any correlations between that particular contingency, appearance etc. and the KMPA-I. Secondly whether there were any correlations between CSWS contingencies grouped as inward (V and GL) and CSWS contingencies grouped as outward (A, OA, C, AC, FS SC), and thirdly whether there were correlations between the means of all the CSWS contingencies and the KMPA-I. Age, (under 25, and over 25), sex, student versus non-student, and style (classical versus non classical) were also tested as independent variables against the KMPA-I.

The Qualitative Procedure.

Participants for interview were selected from those in the quantitative survey willing to be interviewed. The aim was to select and interview four participants with varying self-identified amounts of MPA and self-worth, two of whom were students and two of whom were professionals, however it was not possible to secure a second student. A semi-structured interview was devised (appendix 12) to explore the participant's understanding and experience of MPA and whether they believed that low self-worth and self-esteem were linked to their experience of MPA. The interviews took about 30 minutes and were recorded on AI otter, a software package that simultaneously audio records and transcribes. The transcriptions were checked with the recordings immediately afterwards. Pseudonyms were assumed.

IPA was initially utilised alongside in vivo coding to analyse the semi-structured interviews as summarised in Perkins et al. (2020), (appendix 14A) to allow the text to generate themes and speak for itself. After this, a deductive approach was taken where evidence of contingencies of self-worth in the words of the participants was sought in the interviews. Finally, the themes from the IPA analysis and the deductive analysis of the interviews were compared with the 3

interviewees' survey data. This facilitated a micro approach to the survey results allowing the researcher to "look at the individuals in the data rather than just making 'universalistic statements' about the variables" (Olsen, 2004, p.5). Analytical memos bracketed personal thoughts and feelings to facilitate greater objectivity in analysing the interviews (Sutton and Justin, 2015; Rogers, 2018).

The interviews were conducted more than two weeks after they completed the survey to lessen the influence of the survey on the interview (Oei and Zwart, 1986). The interviews were transcribed and checked but not analysed until July while the quantitative element of the study and the literature review were focused on. In July the transcripts were sent to each participant to give them an opportunity to check for accuracy, a process known as member checking to ensure that the transcript accurately represented the participants experience (Frey, 2018). Only one participant, 'Lisa' responded indicating she was happy that the transcript was accurate.

Results.

Quantitative Results.

Demographic information for the participants is shown below in table 2. Most participants were over 25, female and professional rather than students. Whilst 50% sang only in a classical style, classical singing was the predominant style for most singers who also sang other styles.

Table 2
Demographic Information for participants

Demographic Criteria		Total	Percentage
Age			
	Under 25	10	15
	Over 25	55	85
Sex			
	Male	7	11
	Female	58	89
Singing style			
	Classical only	33	51
	Mixed	32	49
Experience			
	Professional	59	91
	Student	6	9

Note. Demographic information for participants (n=65) contributing to the CSWS and KMPA-I questionnaire is detailed within this figure

Two questions were asked of the participants (questions 6 and 7), whether they felt their careers had been hindered by MPA, and how they regarded their sense of self-worth. The results were colour coded with the traffic light labelling system in tables 3 and 4, with those who identified as having higher MPA and low self-worth colour coded red, those who identified as not having been hindered by MPA and who felt secure and stable in their self-worth coded green, and those who were unsure or possibly affected by MPA with fluctuating self-worth coded amber. These questions and colour coding were useful in determining which participants were asked to take part in the semi-structured interviews, as participants were selected from each colour category, red, amber, and green. Table 3 shows that 15 participants regarded that their singing careers had been significantly hindered by MPA, 28 felt that they had been a little, 8 thought they had possibly been, and 13 did not feel they had been hindered at all.

Table 3

Participants' responses to whether they felt their singing career had been hindered by MPA.

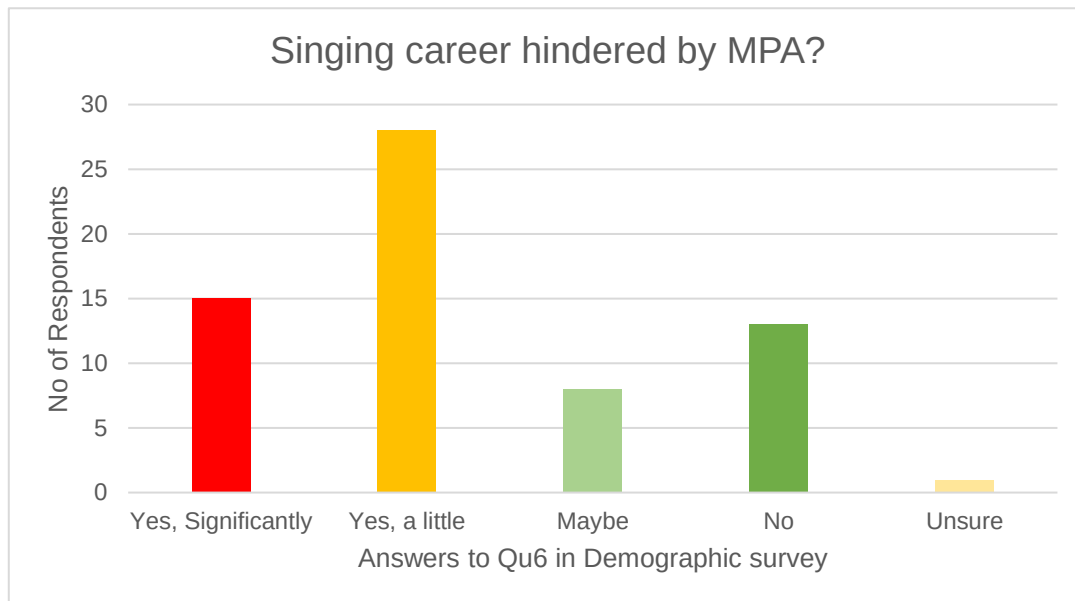
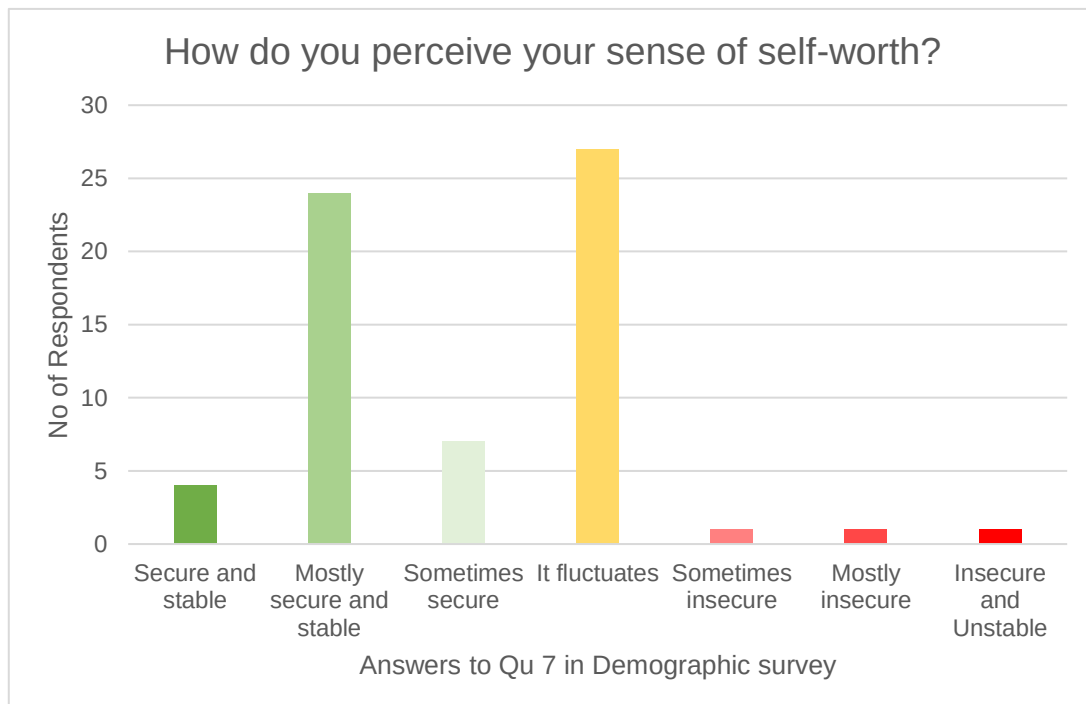


Table 4 shows how participants perceived their sense of self-worth with 27 participants identifying that it fluctuated, and 24 identifying their sense of self-worth as mostly secure and stable.

Table 4

Participants' responses to how they perceive their sense of self-worth.



The statistical package SPSS was used to analyse the data from the adapted CSWS, and the KMPA-I. Descriptive statistics assessed the standard and mean deviation, frequency, and Spearman correlation coefficient was used to measure the correlation between MPA and contingent self-worth. These results can be found in table 5 below.

Table 5
Descriptive Statistical Results

	Mean	Standard deviation	N
Total KMPA-I	156.92	33.84	65
Singing competency average	5.45	0.98	65
Appearance average	4.72	1.18	65
Other's approval average	4.66	1.25	65
Competition average	4.55	1.40	65
Academic competency average	4.78	0.72	65
Family support average	5.34	1.03	65
God's love average	3.13	1.84	65
Virtue average	5.43	0.77	65
Inward CSWS	4.28	1.06	65
Outward CSWS	4.92	0.78	65
Total CSWS	4.60	0.69	65

Correlations.

Pearson's correlations identified significant relationships between the total KMPA-I score and the following dimensions on the CSWS: competition ($r(63) = .472, p = <.001$), singing competency ($r(63) = .431, p = <.001$), other's approval ($r(63) = .309, p = .012$), and appearance ($r(63) = .275, p = .027$). All other dimensions were non-significant: Academic competency ($r(63) = .231, p = .064$), family support ($r(63) = .231, p = .064$), God's love ($r(63) = -.107, p = .394$), and virtue ($r(63) = -.005, p = .970$).

A bivariate regression analysis was conducted comparing the total KMPA-I score and the total outward dimensions (SC, OA, A, C, AC and FS) of the CSWS and Pearson's correlations identified significant relationships between the total outward dimensions: ($r(63) = .469, p = <.001$), whereas the total of inward dimensions (V and GL) were insignificant: ($r(63) = -.095, p = .453$).

Pearson's correlations were also calculated for relationships between the dimensions of two contingencies and the total KMPA-I score and a number of relationships were found to be significant: Singing competency and competition ($r(63) = .621, p < .001$), singing competency and appearance ($r(63) = .529, p < .001$), appearance and other's approval ($r(63) = .489, p < .001$), competition and other's approval ($r(63) = .489, p < .001$), singing competency and other's approval ($r(63) = .465, p < .001$), competition and academic competency ($r(63) = .440, p < .001$), family support and other's approval ($r(63) = .437, p < .001$), other's approval and academic competency ($r(63) = .425, p < .001$), and competition and appearance ($r(63) = .415, p < .001$). These are all combinations of outward contingencies.

Qualitative Results.

Three interviews took place with Lisa, a singing teacher and professional singer at the “twilight” of her career, Alice, an undergraduate singing student, and Jack a professional singer for the past 15 years. A summary of information about them can be found in table 6 below.

Table 6

Summary of information about participants

	Lisa	Alice	Jack
Age	25+years.	18-25 years.	25+years.
Professional Status	Professional singer and singing teacher.	Singing student at end of degree.	Professional singer for 15 years.
Self-Identification with MPA	Had MPA at one point in her career.	Identifies as possibly having MPA.	Severe and worsening MPA for 15-16 years.
Self-Identification with low Self-Worth	Describes her sense of self-worth as secure. MPA unrelated to self-belief.	Describes a fluctuating sense of self-worth.	Describes his self-worth and self-esteem as low.
MPA Symptoms	MPA triggered by events in her personal life. Describes the paralysing effects of MPA – panic attacks, “getting inside my head”.	Clearly describes physical symptoms of MPA but MPA does not impinge on her performance in that she can fully lose herself in her singing when she is performing.	MPA, anxiety and depression were triggered by events in personal life. Lack of belief entwined with his MPA.
Strategies used to combat MPA	“Self-talk”, “kindness” and mental rehearsal.	Utilises a strategy of self-talk. Finds support from friends and other singers.	No psychological strategy identified in interview.
Views on Singing Industry	“Unkind industry” – wants to prepare her students for it. Battle between being kind in college and the reality of an unkind industry.	N/A	Angry towards the industry and perceived unfairness. Thinks colleges should provide a better industrial pipeline.

Themes from the IPA analysis.

An inductive approach was taken initially to code the data utilising IPA summarised by Perkins et al. (2020) (appendix 14A). Firstly, paper transcripts were read, highlighted, and identified initial themes in the margins. Further reduction of data was achieved by establishing connections between preliminary themes and clustering them appropriately, giving descriptive titles to the overarching themes to capture the conceptual nature of the themes. This process can be seen in appendix 14 B, C, and D, and is summarised with the emerging themes and subthemes shown below in table 7.

Table 7 Emerging themes and subthemes from the interviews

List of Themes and Sub-Themes from IPA	Occurrence
MPA 1. Symptoms identified by participants: A) Emotional (Feelings) B) Physical C) Cognitive – self talk 2. Triggered by events in personal life. 3. Unconnected to early childhood performance experiences 4. Linked to self-esteem and self-worth	Alice, Lisa, Jack Alice, Lisa, Alice, Lisa, Jack Lisa, Jack Lisa, Jack Lisa's students, Jack
Factors identified by participants contributing to MPA: 1. Lack of psychological preparation in college 2. Singing teachers 3. Judgmental industry 4. Comparison with other singers 5. Isolation	Alice, Lisa, Jack Alice, Lisa Lisa, Jack Alice, Jack Alice, Lisa, Jack
Coping strategies to counter MPA employed by participants: 1. Self-talk 2. Normalizing it and discussing MPA 3. Training 4. Finding alternative forms of income	Alice, Lisa Alice, Lisa Lisa, Lisa, Jack
Participant's Self-Regard: Positive Negative	Alice, Lisa Jack

Each participant varyingly self-identified as having MPA, but each had a very different experience of it articulated in diverse ways. Lisa identified an isolated historic experience of MPA that hindered her career that was triggered by events in her personal life, however for her this was completely unconnected to her sense of self-worth and her belief in her ability to sing

well: “you know the value of what you can do and it’s intolerable that you can’t produce that...I knew I was a good singer, and I knew I had something to say and something to give but I was unable to do that for a while”. Jack self-identified as having severe MPA, also triggered by events in his personal life, but for him his MPA and sense of low self-worth are entwined “I feel they do feature in terms of MPA, because a lot of times self-esteem and self-worth can really...kind of make or break...” Alice thinks MPA may have hindered her singing career so far, and clearly articulates the physical symptoms of MPA before she performs, however she also describes being able to sing unencumbered by MPA, “once I’m in and I’m singing all I can do is respond to the music and react to what’s going to come next.” MPA experienced by each participant will now be explored through their own words under the IPA themes and sub themes.

1. Symptoms identified by Participants.

A) Emotional (Feelings):

Very strong and sometimes overwhelming negative feelings were embroiled with MPA for all participants. Lisa described how “it becomes all about you and how you’re feeling”. Alice describes a “modulating” feeling. Negative feelings were expressed such as “anxiety” (Alice), vulnerability and exposure (Lisa), and not having “good feelings about your form” (Jack). Lisa speaks of “finding the joy” as a remedy but she has witnessed this joy being “chipped away” through the process of undergraduate training for some of her students.

B) Physical:

Alice, despite being unsure about struggling with MPA described the most physical manifestations of it: “physical reaction...responses”, “nauseous...trembling...shaking...a nervous pee,” whereas Jack who struggles with self-identified severe MPA did not speak about physical symptoms at all. Lisa spoke specifically about physical issues that pertain to singers: shortness of breath “you can’t flow the breath”, “high heart rate...tremors...shaking extremities...”

C) Cognitive:

One distinctive was the inner dialogue that every participant engaged in. Lisa spoke about an ineffective inner dialogue whilst experiencing MPA “you get into the mindset whereby you’re saying to yourself, ‘just relax’, and that makes it worse...you get into your head...” She also advises her students to speak kindly to their “inner voice” or “inner demons” in rehearsal

settings, presumably a strategy she has found helpful. Alice describes lengthy inner dialogue with herself outside the performing situation. She has made conscious decisions about what she allows herself to think about and specifically keeps her thinking about her self-worth separated from her singing. For example, “my singing and my voice are not related to who I am too much. They’re kind of a separate entity and my singing doesn’t define who I am...how I think of myself”. She describes speaking to the anxiety “say ‘hi’ to anxiety and put it to one side”. This so far seems to be an effective strategy, because although she clearly experiences the physical symptoms of MPA, she has managed to avoid the negative self-talk whilst performing that Lisa describes. Once she is performing “I don’t have an inner voice in my head...once I’m in and I’m singing all I can do is respond to the music and be really present”. Jack in comparison describes no positive self-talk, and instead describes “lack of focus”, and “worries at the top of my mind”.

2. MPA triggered by Events in Personal Life.

Both Lisa and Jack identify events in their adult private life as triggering MPA. Lisa states, “things that were happening in my life that tipped me over the edge” and Jack identifies “a number of outside factors” including abuse and bereavement as triggering.

3. MPA Unconnected to Childhood Performance Experiences.

It is notable that both Lisa and Jack both deny that negative childhood performances contributed to their MPA: Lisa, “No, there was nothing in my childhood,” Jack, “no traumatic experiences...I didn’t have any real dramatic incidents until I was about 18, 19...”.

4. Participants linking MPA to Self-Esteem and Self-Worth:

Only Jack links his perception of low self-worth with his experience of MPA, although this is potentially linked with self-efficacy for him, as it impacts his self-belief to achieve his goals: “if you don’t have good feelings about your form, and if you don’t have a lot of self-worth like myself, you probably...don’t believe you can really reach something you’ve been working on”. Alice in contrast again describes her continual process of working to keep these two issues distinct from each other, “it’s something that I actively try and work on being separate”.

Factors identified by Participants which Contribute to Worsening MPA in Professional Careers.

1. Lack of Psychological Preparation in Training.

Although there is pastoral help available to the students she teaches, Lisa laments the current lack of specific help for student singers describing this as “parlous”. This is something she desires to change. Alice describes the inadequacy of a couple of modules on MPA, which are not “singer specific” and she states, “I don’t feel prepared by the training I’ve been given”. Jack raises a different issue when asked about psychological preparation in training: “I was not psychologically prepared for my degree not being worthwhile” and raises the lack of industrial pipeline from college into the profession for him. His idea of psychological support is providing practical support in transitioning from college into the profession.

2. Singing Teachers.

Lisa describes her training during the 90’s as abusive “you were meant to suck it up”, teachers took a tough approach that was meant to “strengthen you” for the industry. Alice, a current singing student twice describes older teachers as “dismissive”, and that there is shame attached to MPA, “and it’s not really spoken about.” She does describe one helpful comment made by a previous singing teacher, “I think one of my old singing teachers said, ‘say hi to anxiety’ and say, put it to one side and...acknowledge you’re here but that’s it”. As a teacher, Lisa dialogues with her students about their struggles with MPA, but she may be unusual, as Alice does not talk to any college teachers about it.

3. Judgmental Industry.

Lisa and Jack who both have experience of the classical singing industry describe it regularly in terms of negative judgement. This constant negative judgement can lead to “feeling a failure” (Lisa) taking its “toll on your mental health” (Jack). Lisa describes the dilemma of being kinder to students in a college environment ill equipping them for the real world. She describes the unkindness of conductors and directors failing to get the best out of singers “I don’t know how you are expected to sing well in those circumstances...you’d have to be superhuman not to be anxious in those circumstances”, as well as the cruelty of critics. Jack rails against the unfairness of the industry which is “very subjective...arbitrary.”

4. Comparison with other Singers.

Alice is proactive in not comparing herself to others. Three times she states that she does not allow herself to compare herself to others, stating “the only person to compare yourself to is yourself”. By comparison, Jack lengthily describes the injustice he feels at a Samoan tenor who taught himself on YouTube being embraced by the Metropolitan Opera which makes him feel his expensive training was worthless. Lisa hints that her experience of MPA was partially caused by a partner who was also a singer “punishing” her for her success.

5. Isolation.

All three singers describe attempting to deal with MPA by themselves. Lisa describes “sorting out your own life and head...that’s massive, of course it is...” Jack describes a mistrust in professionals and therapists, so he’s handled his MPA alone for 16 years, and does not describe any strategies that have helped him. Alice’s strategy of strong self-talk is described above, and she describes occasions when she has felt “so alone” in dealing with it. This has been countered by the occasional conversation she has had with other singers: “No, that’s normal and everyone does it. But you wouldn’t know because it’s not really spoken about much”. These conversations are clearly unusual and incidental rather than programmatic in college and encouraged. Alice highlights that this lack of dialogue with others cultivates a feeling of shame amongst singers. Lisa as a teacher seems to use distraction strategies with her students to help, but is cautious about naming it MPA, “calling it MPA...that’s potentially part of the issue” which also suggests there is shame around the subject.

Coping Strategies to counter MPA employed by Participants.

The strategies of self-talk, normalizing or re-naming MPA and discussing it have already been discussed above in depth. Lisa is the only participant who describes improving her singing technique to help her overcome her MPA, “shoring up my vocal technique so that the default moves I could rely on a little bit better when the chips are down”. Lisa and Jack both discuss the importance of finding alternative means of earning: Lisa, “I also think it’s good for them to have something to fall back on”, and Jack, “trying to find more pragmatic sources of income...”

Deductive analysis.

Having conducted the IPA inductive analysis, a deductive analysis of the interviews was done using the four most relevant outward themes from the adapted CSWS to see if evidence of these issues could be found.

Table 8

Quotations that can be grouped under themes from CSWS (appendix 15).

Theme	Lisa	Alice	Jack
Singing Competence	10	10	4
Competition	6	7	4
Other's approval	10	0	6
Appearance	2	2	0 or 3

This process demonstrates that there is evidence of the themes of singing competence, competition, other's approval, and appearance in the interviews, even if it is impossible to judge whether the participants self-worth is contingent in these areas. There is also some distinction between internal and external focus.

Singing Competence:

Lisa is confident in her singing competence even when she was unable to deliver performances due to MPA. Alice shows evidence of an internal locus of control. She has strategies to prepare herself for not being the best and coping with "bad singing days", but finds she is more self-critical when she sings well. In contrast, Jack describes a more external locus of control, his confidence in his singing competence having plummeted due to the industry not recognising or rewarding his skill set and training.

Competition:

Lisa describes the constant judgement that occurs in the industry, and the normality of competing against others for roles and not "even getting anything back" which Jack also highlights which he interprets as constant "rejection". Alice works hard not to compete against other singers in college although she admits this is difficult, requiring regular self-talk: "don't compare...the only person to compare yourself to is yourself."

Other's approval:

Lisa and Jack both regularly use the word “judgement” in relation to the classical music industry, stating the harsh reality of having to win the approval of industry insiders to secure jobs that are scarce. In contrast Alice makes no statements about seeking other's approval.

Appearance:

None of the participants show evidence of their self-worth being contingent on their appearance from anything said in the interviews, however there are indicators that this is a factor in the industry. Lisa in concern for her students entering a harsh and unkind industry, describes a cruel review of a young singer criticised for her appearance, “the larger of the two ugly sisters” before the critic described her singing. Alice describes the nausea she experiences as “not necessarily about my singing, but just more of the overall experience of presenting yourself”. Jack does not directly mention appearance however he does state, “career in opera is very judgy...arbitrary...in terms of what people are looking for.”

Having identified some evidence of the themes from CSW in the body of the interviews, this was then compared with data from the CSWS for each participant with percentage scores being shown for total inward CSW, total outward CSW, total CSW and total scores for KMPA-I shown below in table 9:

Table 9 Comparative results from CSWS for Lisa, Alice, and Jack



The results from the surveys cohere with many of the findings from the interviews. Although Alice was unsure about her career being affected by MPA, she outlined clear physical symptoms of MPA in the interview, which may have increased her percentage over 50% in the KMPA-I. Lisa's lower score in the KMPA-I may reflect the progress she has made with MPA since the chronic historic episode she describes. This is in line with the joy she is now experiencing towards the end of her singing career: "I've done a few concerts recently, and because there's no pressure on me...I've got nothing to prove...I've had the most joyful experiences. It's, it's almost like just in those last twilight of my singing career, I've found what I could have had". By contrast, Jack scores the highest scores on the KMPA-I, the total outward CSW as well as the total CSW. This seems consistent with Jack's perspective, that his low self-worth is connected to his MPA, "they do feature in terms of performance anxiety".

All three participants scored similarly in the 'inward' contingencies and all these scores were from the 'virtue' category as none of the participants scored anything in the category of 'God's love'. The emergence of CSW themes from the interviews cohered with the participant's surveys in other ways. For example, as noted above, Alice did not make any statements in her interview about seeking other's approval. This was confirmed by her CSWS results where she scored 11/25 in OA in comparison to SC which she scored 23/25 for. The breakdown of scores from the CSWS for each interviewee are further shown below in table 10.

Table 10 Breakdown of Scores for CSWS in order

Lisa	Score	Alice	Score	Jack	Score
Family support (FS)	30	Singing competency (SC)	23	Appearance (A)	34
Virtue (V)	29	Family support (FS)	19	Family support (FS)	33
Academic competency (AC)	25	Virtue (V)	19	Singing competency (SC)	29
Approval from others (AO)	22	Competition (C)	18	Virtue (V)	26
Singing competency (SC)	19	Appearance (A)	16	Competition (C)	26
Appearance (A)	17	Academic competency (AC)	11	Approval from others (AO)	23
Competition (C)	8	Approval from others (AO)	11	Academic competency (AC)	21
God's love (GL)	5	God's love (GL)	5	God's love (GL)	5

This shows that singing competency was only the highest contingency for Alice, although Jack's score for this was still high. Lisa's lower score in this is supported by her interview which demonstrated that she is secure in her singing competency. All three scored highly on the family support contingency despite this contingency being insignificant in the overall quantitative results. However, for Jack and Lisa this may explain why events in their personal lives were so devastating and contributory to their MPA. Jack's highest contingency was appearance, which was not highlighted explicitly in his interview.

Discussion.

The literature frequently cites a negative correlation between global self-worth and MPA yet fails to demonstrate the nature of this relationship (Ryan, 1998; Sinden, 1999; Chan, 2011; Otacıoğlu, 2016). In examining the macro-overall data from the quantitative results for the 65 survey participants it is possible to demonstrate that hypotheses 1-3 are supported, that there is a positive correlation between total outward contingencies and MPA, as well as individual outward contingencies (O' Cathain, et al., 2007). This indicates that where participants score highly in outward contingencies either as a whole or individually, scores of MPA as collected in the KMPA-I are also higher. 41.5% of participants (table 4) stated that their sense of self-worth fluctuates. The premise of CSW is that self-worth fluctuates in accordance with perceived success or failure in contingencies that someone is basing their self-worth upon and therefore this can "help to account for the emotional intensity and self-esteem instability in response to negative events" (Park, et. al., 2007, p.513). This study demonstrates that the CSWS may be able to elucidate these fluctuations: when singers place their self-worth upon either individual outward contingencies or the sum of outward contingencies, they show higher scores in the KMPA-I. Further quantitative research is necessary with a larger population to confirm that these correlations recur, but this study suggests that there is utility in exploring this relationship further.

Observations can also be made about the nature of the relationship between CSW and MPA for the three interviewees if a micro lens is focussed on their surveys with their interview data in mind (table 9), although these observations must be treated with caution as they have no statistical significance, but sit alongside the qualitative findings (Olsen, 2004; O' Cathain, et al., 2007). Jack demonstrates an equally high score of 79% in both CSWS and KMPA-I indicating a significant relationship between CSW and MPA for him. As well as severe MPA and CSW, he also describes struggling with depression (Crocker, et al., 2003; Sickert et al., 2022). Alice scores much lower with comparative scores in both KMPA-I and CSWS indicating that her MPA and CSW are lower. Lisa has the lowest score on KMPA-I but a comparatively higher score on the total CSWS, however this total outward CSWS score appears to be boosted by her inward CSWS score. This may support claims that scoring more highly overall in both inward and outer contingencies can provide a buffer of psychological protection as individuals can find self-worth in several contingencies instead of relying on success in one or two contingencies (Crocker, et al., 2003).

There was no evidence to support hypothesis 4 as there were no statistically significant findings for sex, age, student compared to non-student when these were entered as independent

variables. This study therefore does not support findings in other studies which have found higher levels of MPA in females compared to males and students compared to professionals (Dews and Williams, 1989; Huston, 2001; Osborne and Kenny, 2008; Biasutti and Concina, 2014; Otacıoğlu, 2016). These results may reflect the low number of male participants, small student sample size and the culture of one college from which most student participants were from.

The outward domains in order of significance were competition, singing competency, approval from others, and lastly appearance. Singers correlated more highly on the contingency of competition ($r(63) = .472, p = <.001$) above singing competence ($r(63) = .431, p = <.001$) which indicates that competition has a greater impact on their self-worth than singing competence. This could warrant more research into the effects of competition on singers, cross fertilising with the literature on competitive sports anxiety, both with regards to singing competitions, and competing for jobs and positions in a competitive and oversaturated industry (Kenny, et al., 2004; Henshaw and Collyer, 2022; Herman and Clark, 2023; Mazzon, et al., 2023). CSW has demonstrated that academically contingent individuals are psychologically threatened by failure in academics (Crocker, et al., 2003; Park, et al., 2007; Lawrence and Williams, 2013). Further research is required to demonstrate whether this holds true for singers high in C and SC, where the questions for SC in this study were based upon the questions for AC. Qualitative research from the literature review highlighted the next two contingencies, other's approval ($r(63) = .309, p = .012$) and appearance ($r(63) = .275, p = .027$) as being issues that singers struggle with (Huston, 2001; Kirchner, 2003; Cupido, 2018; Perkins et al., 2020). Jack scored the highest in the appearance contingency despite not speaking about appearance during his interview. This would indicate that appearance is not just an issue that affects female singers but males as well, which is under researched (O' Bryan, 2015; Frey, 2018; Brown, 2021). More research into singers' relationships with all these contingencies, C, SC, OA, A would seem instructive.

Further studies are required to better understand how insight into CSW can practically support those who are highly contingent and whether being highly contingent in outward domains does render a singer more vulnerable to MPA, however the CSWS may be a useful self-reflective tool for singers and teachers to alert them to vulnerabilities earlier which could facilitate better support and conversations with those who are seeking to prepare students for professional careers. Used in this way the CSWS could be a useful resource for higher education colleges and singing teachers (Biasutti et al. 2014; Blair and Van Der Sluis, 2022).

The qualitative aspect of the study explores the experience of self-worth and MPA for three participants and themes that emerge are consistent with other studies. Firstly, the study reveals

the complexity of MPA and its relationship to self-worth. For Jack who struggles with severe MPA, he clearly associates a low sense of self-worth with MPA. However, for Lisa this correlation did not exist at all. She reported maintaining a secure sense of self-worth and confidence in her singing ability even whilst in the throes of a severe historic episode of MPA. This coheres with the literature that shows that whilst global self-worth and self-esteem may be a factor in MPA for some, it is not for all individuals (Kenny, 2011). Secondly, high scores in both the KMPA-I and CSWS indicate more severe MPA and psychological distress which can be evidenced by Jack who not only struggled with MPA but anxiety and depression as well (Crocker, et al., 2003; Sickert et al., 2022; Kenny, 2023). Thirdly, the themes which emerged out of the interviewees' descriptions of their experience of MPA cohere with other studies on MPA which distinguish between feelings, physical symptoms, and cognitions (Kenny, 2011, 2023; Irie, et al., 2023). However, where studies have shown that MPA is often rooted in early negative childhood experiences of performing, no interviewees demonstrated experience of that (Ryan, 1998; Kenny, 2011).

Kenny (2023) highlights negative cognitions/ruminations focused on self and other's scrutiny, and this is helpful when considering the thinking patterns of the three participants. Alice consistently describes a disciplined thought life (self-talk) where she trains her cognitions to think in a certain way outside of the performance setting. She demonstrates evidence of consciously working at not comparing herself to others and separating her self-worth from her singing. That is, she works hard to prevent her self-worth being contingent upon her singing. Despite suffering from physical symptoms of MPA which she describes in depth, once she is performing, she is lost in the music and has no conscious thoughts, a state that has been described as 'flow' which has been found to be conducive to performing and helpful in alleviating MPA (Kirchner, et al., 2008). Lisa describes the unhelpful thoughts which gripped her during MPA attacks, which got her caught up with herself and paralysed her singing. She also describes utilising self-talk outside of performing as a strategy to help her students overcome MPA. In comparison, Jack describes defeatist self-talk such as "I don't know if I can really do it." This study indicates that engaging in positive inward dialogue seems significant in helping someone with MPA and this has been observed in the literature (Juncos and de Pona, 2022; Irie, et al., 2023).

This study has highlighted that the current structures of professional training may not be effectively preparing singers for the psychological demands of a classical singing career and may even be facilitating and exacerbating MPA in some students, with singing teachers ill-equipped to know how to support their students and potentially exacerbating it (Patston, 2014). A culture of shame and avoidance demonstrated in this study and confirmed by other studies is

unhealthy and higher education colleges could be seeking to psychologically prepare their students for the harsh realities of a brutal career and ensuring their singing teachers do not just ignore the issue leaving their students to struggle with it alone (Huston, 2001; Burin and Osorio, 2017; Coskun-Senturk and Cirakoglu, 2017). Singing teachers could help to normalise and de-pathologize MPA by speaking about it in lessons and taking simple steps such as encouraging students to diarise their experiences (Tang and Ryan, 2020; Herman and Clark, 2023). Other strategies that colleges could employ are Acceptance and Commitment Training (ACT) which has been demonstrated to help students with MPA and be useable by singing teachers, self-compassion which can counter the negative self-talk that can be so debilitating, and strategies from sports psychology (Neff and Vonk, 2009; Juncos et al., 2017; Williamon et al., 2020; Farley and Kelley, 2022; Herman and Clark, 2023; Mazzon, et al., 2023). With further research, it may be that the CSWS alongside the KMPA-I may also offer a means of helping students recognise where their self-worth is contingent and encourage them to seek to invest their self-worth in safer psychological places than external contingencies.

Limitations of the Study (see appendix 2).

The disparity of numbers of male and female participants was a limitation of this study as it was difficult to recruit equal numbers. It was also challenging to recruit equal numbers of students and non-students, as predicted in the proposal. Only 20% stated that MPA had not hindered their career, leaving 80% stating that MPA had impacted their career to a varying degree. The title of the survey may therefore have skewed the survey, and drawn participants who have struggled, and who have an interest in MPA. The results may also have been skewed by allowing both singing teachers and professional singers to complete the survey. Patston (2014) warns that singers who leave performing due to MPA often end up teaching singing with unresolved issues of MPA and may perpetuate MPA in their students.

There were several limitations with the adapted CSWS survey. Firstly, a new domain, singing competence was added to the CSWS and the validity of the measure was untested before the survey was utilised. To minimise this limitation, the wording for AC was adapted for SC, however future studies should properly test this domain. Secondly, the CSWS is a survey designed for an American population and the use of language about God more appropriate to an American than British population (Evans, 2018a, 2018b). This was anticipated and making significant changes to the CSWS was considered. This was rejected to minimise affecting the questionnaire's validity (Juniper, 2009; Sousa, et al., 2017). Removing the subscale of God's love was similarly considered, but this subscale alongside virtue were deemed significant as these give measures to compare internal and external contingencies (Crocker and Wolfe, 2001; Crocker and Park, 2003). Participants who were offended by these questions were potentially lost to the survey, however there were also many participants for whom this contingency was insignificant, for example Lisa, Alice and Jack who all scored low in this contingency. It would be worth future studies using the CSWS collecting information about religious affinity in the demographic data and considering more inclusive religious language. Despite this critique of the CSWS it is worth noting that Crocker et al. (2003) found the CSWS to be robust and applicable to a diverse range of populations and it has been widely used and adapted in over seven cultures (Perinelli et al., 2022).

It proved impossible to interview four strangers as not every participant was willing to be interviewed. Participants with varying degrees of MPA and self-worth were chosen using the traffic light coding system from the survey results. Jack was completely unknown to me; however, Lisa and Alice were somewhat known to me. Lisa is a singing teacher whose work I am aware of through her students who I know. Alice is an acquaintance through a mutual

contact. I reached out to two other students, but they did not respond. Zoom interviews proved to be problematic as there was some interference and feedback which was particularly distracting for Lisa, and there were some parts of Jack's interview which were inaudible due to this. However, these issues did not impinge consequentially as the bulk of the interviews were clear. Whilst the interviews rendered useful information, they were only half an hour long, and it would be useful in future studies to conduct more in-depth interviews, investigating the various contingencies specifically.

Recommendations.

It is recommended:

- That the adapted CSWS with the added SC and more inclusive language for GL is tested for validity.
- That a further quantitative study is done with a larger population of singers and a control group of non-singers for comparison to explore whether this positive correlation between the 'outward' contingencies and MPA repeats itself with a larger sample.
- That this survey is conducted with equal numbers of:
 1. Male and female singers.
 2. Professional singers compared to singing teachers to examine whether singing teachers are more prone to MPA than those with successful singing careers (Patston, 2014).
 3. Student singers and professional singers.
- That more qualitative research is done exploring the 'outward' contingencies of self-worth, in particular 'competition', 'other's approval' and 'appearance' and their relationship to MPA.
- That more research is done with singers investigating the contingency of 'appearance' with equal numbers of males and females, as males appear to be neglected in this research area (O' Bryan, 2015; Frey, 2018; Brown, 2021).
- That higher education colleges implement consolidated strategies to support their singing students, providing singer specific training, and that singing teachers are equipped to address the issues of MPA and contingent self-worth with their students (Blair and Van Der Sluis, 2022; Herman and Clark, 2023).

Conclusion.

This study would suggest that those with self-esteem invested in outwardly focused contingent domains appear to have a higher incidence of MPA possibly due to a resulting more vulnerable sense of contingent self-worth. There would be benefit in utilising the CSWS alongside the KMPA-I in further studies examining self-worth and MPA. If it can be confirmed that high scores on the CSWS positively correlate with MPA for singers, then this highlights areas of contingency that students can be alerted to and given strategies to work on. Even the process of becoming self-aware of contingencies that one may misplace their self-worth is a helpful process. For example, during this assignment, I have constantly revisited whether my own self-worth is contingent upon 'academic competence' and the results of this assignment. This has challenged me to direct my thinking less toward the final mark, but to consider as more important what I have learnt and how I have grown through this learning experience. This has been a helpful check and balance.

Completing the survey was straightforward, and a combined version of the adapted CSWS and KMPA-I survey could easily be utilised by singing teachers in higher education to highlight psychologically risky contingencies for young singers. This could promote discussion and develop useful strategies to potentially pre-empt escalating MPA.

This study has confirmed that despite the wealth of research into MPA, it continues to remain an ongoing issue for many singers who suffer alone, ashamed and in silence. Psychological preparation for a career in an extremely judgemental industry is still woefully inadequate in higher education colleges, and a culture-change of kindness and respect needs to permeate through the colleges and into the workplace. Lisa is well placed as a teacher with progressive and informed views to begin to change the culture in higher education towards MPA, and I would love to contribute to this by researching this subject further with a much larger sample.

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