

**AN EXPLORATION OF LISTENING APPROACHES AND APPLIED
LISTENING PRACTICES IN VOICE TEACHING**

**BMPF7010 Work Based Learning Project
University of Wales Trinity St David**

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PROJECT PROPOSAL

Context and justification

Singing teaching is a complex process combining aspects of both art and science (Kiesgen, 2005a). A central role of the voice teacher is to listen to and observe a student singer and determine what feedback or corrective action is required (Nix, 2002). This process can be highly subjective and is influenced by each teacher's pedagogical approach, which in turn is shaped by such factors as their artistic and pedagogical experiences, knowledge, beliefs and aesthetic preferences (Rollings Bigler *et al.*, 2021). Voice teacher and pedagogue John Nix suggests that the effectiveness of a teacher's methods is proportional to that teacher's ability to accurately identify vocal behaviours by listening and observing, and to subsequently select relevant and appropriate habilitative strategies (2002).

Increasingly, voice science is providing explanations and tools by which to understand and assess vocal function and singing behaviours. For instance, terms such as fact-based, function-based, evidence-based and science-informed vocal pedagogy have emerged, proposing new frameworks for application in the field of voice teaching (Ragan, 2018). Voice teachers now have not only the opportunity but the responsibility to develop a clear understanding of vocal mechanics and voice science principles as they relate to the practice of voice teaching (American Academy of Teachers of Singing, 2014). The practice of listening critically to a singer and relating perceived vocal behaviours to science-informed or evidence-based understanding can be termed functional listening or expert listening (Gill and Herbst, 2016). The role of listening in applied practice has not yet been fully explored in the literature and may play a key role in bridging theory and practice.

In New Zealand, as in many other countries internationally, singing teaching is an unregulated industry with no formalised training or qualification pathway. Although professional development opportunities exist, engagement is at the discretion of individual teachers and may be limited by numerous access barriers including cost, time and location (Eroglu and Donmus Kaya, 2017). These factors are likely to result in wide variance in teachers' awareness and understanding of advancements in the field of voice teaching and consequently in their teaching practices. There is scant literature exploring applied voice teaching practices, and none relating to functional listening, which leaves us with a gap in

our understanding of what singing teachers are doing in practice and how it relates to the latest best practice models.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the pedagogical process of singing teachers in New Zealand, focussing on what they discern by listening to and observing student singers, and how that relates to the pedagogical strategies they would utilise. This exploration may illuminate a variety of ways in which singing teachers assess student singers by listening and observing and provide insights into different pedagogical approaches.

The study will encompass, by way of a literature review, an examination of pedagogical frameworks including evidence-based practice and science-informed voice pedagogy. In analysing the data collected from this research, it will be considered whether, and in what ways, current teaching practices in New Zealand align with, or deviate from these models. As the notion of evidence-based or science-informed voice pedagogy is a relatively recent development in the field of voice teaching (American Academy of Teachers of Singing, 2014), this research will add to our understanding of how these theories are currently relating to practice in New Zealand.

The New Zealand Association of Teachers of Singing (NEWZATS) is a professional body with approximately 120 subscribed members that provides professional development opportunities for New Zealand singing teachers. Although NEWZATS members make up a reasonably small proportion of the overall number of singing teachers in New Zealand, they are an identifiable population among an otherwise disparate and unquantified workforce. As a member and former co-Vice President of NEWZATS, I am connected to the organisation and am able to approach the membership for research purposes.

The intended impact

Through this project, I hope to learn about other teacher's approaches and be exposed to new and different ways of listening to, observing and assessing student singers. I hope to bring attention to the practice of functional listening and the role it plays in assessing vocal behaviours, while deepening my own knowledge of principles in voice science that relate to how we perceive vocal function through listening and observing. By reviewing current literature relating to evidence-based and science-informed voice pedagogy, I hope to

improve my understanding of these models and reflect on how they relate both to my own teaching practice and to the practice of other voice teachers in New Zealand. This investigation will shed light on the current practices of voice teachers in New Zealand and will identify areas for future development and improvement. I expect this research to both provide me the opportunity to reflect on my own teaching practices and my position within an evidence-based conceptual concept, and to contribute to a wider discussion within the professional field of voice teaching.

Expected learning outcomes

- Identify and consider the listening practices of singing teachers in New Zealand when assessing student singers.
- Reflect on how those listening practices inform and influence subsequent action and pedagogical decision-making.
- Assess whether and how singing teachers in New Zealand are employing models of evidence-based practice or science-informed voice pedagogy in relation to their listening practices and associated pedagogical strategies.

The outlined intention

This project will proceed from a pragmatic paradigm, emphasising a ‘what works’ approach above any particular ontological or epistemological position (Weaver, 2018). Triangulation will be achieved by way of a literature review, a questionnaire, and semi-structured interviews.

A questionnaire will be created and distributed online to members of NEWZATS. Embedded in the questionnaire will be video recordings of two student singers, which participants will be asked to observe before answering the questionnaire. The subjects of these videos will not be respondent participants in the study. The questionnaire will include predominantly open-ended questions, with some use of closed questions (e.g. tick box, rating scale). Questions will refer briefly to participants’ pedagogical and performance background but will focus primarily on what participants hear and observe in the video recordings and the meaning they draw from those observations.

Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with a small number ($n < 6$) of participants as follow-up to the questionnaire. Interviews will address what action or pedagogical strategies the participant would utilise and how that relates to what they have observed in the video recordings. Interviews will be held via video call and will be recorded and transcribed. The resulting data will be analysed using Thematic Analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2021; Naeem *et al.*, 2023).

Intended Timeline

	J	J	F	F	M	M	A	A	M	M	J	J	J	J	A	A	S
Write and Submit Ethics Application	■																
Write Project Proposal		■															
Write Literature Review Receive Ethics approval			■	■	■												
					■	■	■	■									
Create questionnaire						■	■										
Distribute questionnaire							■	■									
Close questionnaire								■									
Conduct Semi-Structured Interviews									■								
Conduct Thematic Analysis on Interview transcriptions										■	■						

	J	J	F	F	M	M	A	A	M	M	J	J	J	J	A	A	S
Write Findings, Conclusion and Introduction																	
Prepare Presentation																	
Submit Draft Aug 6th																	
Review Draft																	
Final Submission Aug 22nd																	
Presentation Sept 1st																	

Ethics and insider research

Informed written consent from the student singers will be established before videos are made and distributed. No identifying information of the student singers will be shared during the study or in the final report, but there is some risk that student singers will be known by participants. Participants will be fully informed of the research purpose and procedures and will be required to provide consent before gaining access to the questionnaire. Participants may submit their responses anonymously and would only be identified by the researcher if they opt to provide their contact details for the purpose of participating in a follow-up interview. Although the identity of interview participants will be known to the researcher, all identifying information will be anonymised in the final report.

As a member of NEWZATS I am positioned strongly as an insider researcher (Saidin and Yaacob, 2016). It will be imperative to approach this research with high ethical standards, sensitivity and professionalism to protect participants from an adverse experience, and to uphold my professional reputation. While insider researchers may have more understanding of the area being researched and an ability to both recruit participants and interact naturally

with them, this greater familiarity can result in a loss of objectivity and can create discomfort in an interview setting (Breen, 2007; Saidin and Yaacob, 2016).

An Exploration of Listening Approaches and Applied Listening Practices in Voice Teaching

INTRODUCTION

As a voice teacher with over 20 years' experience and extensive training, I have come to believe that the way we listen to singers and what we are able to discern through listening is central to the teaching process. My pedagogical perspective has been greatly influenced by my teacher and mentor Jeanie LoVetri, founder of Somatic Voicework™ - The LoVetri Method (White, 2017). As a Somatic Voicework™ teacher I have learned to prioritise 'functional listening' which has involved developing my ability to discern by listening what the voice is doing mechanistically (White, 2017). This has fuelled my interest in the role of listening in voice pedagogy and in how other teachers approach this integral element of teaching practice.

This study was designed to shed light on voice teachers' approaches to listening and their applied listening practices, and to explore the teaching strategies they would employ based on what they heard. The objective was to identify the ways in which voice teachers listen to singers and the meaning they make from what they hear. To my knowledge, there has been no published research to date on this practical aspect of voice teaching. A further consideration of the study was whether listening practices and resultant teaching strategies aligned with a fact-based understanding of vocal function or an evidence-based pedagogical approach. This was not done with the aim of making an evaluative judgment of individual teachers' abilities or to measure them against an external standard, but rather to explore the current state of applied practice. While the expectation of a science-informed, fact-based approach to voice teaching is becoming more established (American Academy of Teachers of Singing, 2014), there has been no research investigating how these concepts relate to applied listening practices. This study aimed to bridge that gap between theory and practice, using a questionnaire and follow-up interviews to engage directly with a study population of voice teachers in my home country of New Zealand.

In carrying out this study I aimed to foster a greater understanding of listening practices and the integral role they play in the teaching process. Through the literature review process, I hoped to identify current theories of best practice relating to applied listening and familiarise myself with any research that contributed to these theories. By actively researching the

listening practices of other voice teachers, I hoped that this study would generate a profile of current listening practices to enable this area of practice to be better defined and understood. This could then be considered against theories of best practice to give an indication of whether the profession is keeping up with new and evolving standards. This study was an opportunity to reflect on the current state of play in the voice teaching profession and to identify any gaps, limitations, and need for action that might exist in relation to listening practices.

The aims and objectives of this study were to:

- Outline best practice for listening in voice teaching informed by the current body of literature and associated research.
- Explain what fact-based and evidence-based voice pedagogies are and how they relate to listening practices.
- Identify and consider the listening approaches and applied listening practices of singing teachers in New Zealand when assessing student singers.
- Determine how those listening practices inform and influence subsequent action and pedagogical decision-making.
- Assess whether and how singing teachers in New Zealand are employing models of evidence-based or fact-based voice pedagogy in relation to their listening practices and associated pedagogical strategies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The following narrative literature review (Sukhera, 2022) considers the role of listening in voice teaching and how science-informed and fact-based approaches to understanding vocal production can provide an opportunity to better comprehend what we hear. Ragan's (2018) framework of Evidence-Based Voice Pedagogy is examined and considered as a potential model by which to evaluate listening practices and subsequent teaching strategies.

Listening Practices in Voice Teaching

Within the field of voice teaching, the act of evaluating singers by listening to their vocal output is a cornerstone element of teaching practice (Mitchell, 2014). The literature refers to listening practices in voice teaching variously as 'critical listening' (Nix, 2002), 'expert listening' (Gill and Herbst, 2016), 'investigative listening' (Moniz, 2024), and 'functional listening' (Howell, 2025). Other authors describe the process of 'diagnosis' in the voice studio as identifying areas of improvement and noting inefficiencies in voice production (Kiesgen, 2005; Rollings Bigler et al., 2021; Santelli, 2023) through the application of the primary diagnostic tools that voice teachers possess – "well informed and developed eyes and ears" (Rollings Bigler et al., 2021, p20). The various terminology relating to listening practices in voice teaching indicates a lack of cohesion in the literature on this topic, with no universal way to refer to the process of listening as an evaluative tool, and no clearly defined protocol or in-depth explanation of how listening practices are ideally implemented in applied voice practice. Instead, there are numerous mentions and general assertions that the ability to identify vocal behaviours through listening and observing, and to relate those observations to appropriate and targeted solutions for the student is a key competency of expert teaching (Nix, 2002; Miller, 2017; Santelli, 2023; Moniz, 2024). This study explores how current applied practice relates to this pedagogical ideal, by questioning and considering what teachers are identifying through their listening process, and what teaching strategies they would employ in response to what they hear.

What a voice teacher hears, and how they assess and organise that information within their existing knowledge base is central to their teaching process (Moniz, 2024). Listeners make assessments of vocal output by interpreting what they hear through filters such as past experiences, expectations, and listening aims, each of which may shape their perception and influence what they pay attention to (Henrich *et al.*, 2008). Voice teachers enter the

profession through a variety of pathways and bring with them differing levels of training, experience and competence (Rollings Bigler *et al.*, 2021). While knowledge of the voice and pedagogical practice can be acquired through a range of courses of study, there are no required licenses or certifications to teach singing, and no universal systematic approach by which singing teachers are trained (Kiesgen, 2005b; Rollings Bigler *et al.*, 2021). Therefore, this creates a professional landscape in which there is significant variance in voice teachers' knowledge base and experience and suggests that there is also likely to be significant variance in voice teachers' listening practices. Whether the differing levels of training and experience, and the lack of standardisation in voice teacher training are evident in how teachers listen to and assess student singers is a consideration of this study.

Listening as a Diagnostic Process

The ability of a voice teacher to identify vocal behaviours and determine appropriate interventions has been likened to a doctor's ability to diagnose illness and prescribe treatment (Santelli, 2023). While both processes require critical reasoning skills in highly specialised contexts there is a stark difference between the systematic training received by medical students and the limited opportunities for voice teachers to learn and develop specific models for identifying and diagnosing vocal behaviours (Santelli, 2023). The literature indicates that even within existing teacher training programs and voice pedagogy curricula, priority is often given to foundational and theoretical information, and practical application, particularly of how to assess or diagnose vocal behaviours, may be overlooked (Nix, 2002; Moniz, 2024; Perna, Gonzales Redman and Glasner, 2024). This points to a gap between pedagogical best practice and the structures that are in place to inform and train voice teachers, which has significant implications for the quality and consistency of professional standards.

Listening and Science-Informed Pedagogy

A subjective assessment of vocal output, based solely on a teacher's aesthetic preference and perception, may offer a limited view of the singing process (Gill and Herbst, 2016). While a voice teacher's listening skills are expected to address aspects of musicality, including rhythm, intonation, stylistic issues, and expressivity (Gill and Herbst, 2016), the literature strongly indicates that expertise also demands the ability to comprehend voice production in relation to scientific principles from the fields of voice physiology, anatomy, acoustics and psychoacoustics (Gill and Herbst, 2016; Miller, 2017; Rollings Bigler *et al.*, 2021). These

domains of voice science, among others, have contributed greatly to modern-day understanding of vocal function and form the foundation of what is known as science-informed, or fact-based vocal pedagogy (Hoch, 2019; Rollings Bigler *et al.*, 2021). There is widespread support in the literature for viewing voice pedagogy as sitting at “the crossroads of science and practice” (Gill & Herbst, 2016, p168), with proponents arguing that greater understanding of how the voice works enables more effective, appropriate and efficient interventions to be employed (Nix, 2002; Kiesgen, 2005b; American Academy of Teachers of Singing, 2014; Miller, 2017; Herbst, 2020). While the influence of voice science on voice pedagogy is not new – the laryngoscope was invented by Manuel Garcia II in 1854 and publications from 1967 were pivotal to understanding vocal function (Hoch, 2019) – the mainstreaming of fact-based vocal pedagogy is not yet fully established and efforts are ongoing to engage voice teachers’ curiosity in, and learning of, science-informed approaches (Kayes and Bartlett, 2024). The aforementioned absence of regulation or required training for voice teachers raises challenges for factual and science-based information to be disseminated to, or accessed by voice teachers, and for the standardisation of best practice within the profession (Rollings Bigler *et al.*, 2021). Considering the long history of developments in voice science, it is notable that it was not until 2014 that the American Academy of Teachers of Singing, founded in 1922, published a statement “In Support of Fact-Based Voice Pedagogy and Terminology”, in which they state that “knowledge of what is actually happening in the singing system, how it is functioning to produce the desired results, empowers teachers to direct their students to work consistently towards healthy, efficient, stylistically correct, and artistic performances” (2014, p10), indicating that the expectation of the profession to employ fact-based pedagogy is relatively new and still in need of advocacy. By exploring current applied listening practices, this study looks at whether teachers are relating to fact-based pedagogy in their listening assessments and subsequent teaching strategies.

Perceived tensions between the voice science and singing voice communities are thought to exist, driven by difficulties in reconciling scientific findings with a historical practice which emphasises perception and artistry (Kayes and Bartlett, 2024). This is perhaps underscored by different philosophical positions, with voice scientists often seeking to define and objectively measure aspects of voice production, and voice teachers and singers focusing on artistic application (Kayes and Bartlett, 2024). The literature points to an either/or paradigm of considering fact-based voice pedagogy pitted against subjective approaches (Gill and Herbst, 2016; Nix, 2019; Herbst, 2020), but in reality, a continuum is likely to exist where

voice teachers are more or less fact-based in their teaching practices. Given the scope of voice science and research it is impractical, if not impossible, for a voice teacher to achieve a complete understanding of the ever-expanding body of knowledge and they can only incorporate what they have managed to assimilate (Hoch, 2019; Rollings Bigler *et al.*, 2021).

Evidence-Based Voice Pedagogy

In 2018, voice teacher and pedagogue Dr Kari Ragan published an Evidence-Based Voice Pedagogy (EBVP) framework (Fig. 1), built off existing models of Evidence-Based Medicine, and Evidence-Based Practice (Ragan, 2018). This framework intentionally expands the definition of ‘evidence’ in the field of voice teaching beyond voice science and research, to include voice teacher expertise and experience, and student goals and perspectives, with equal weight (Ragan, 2018; Bozeman and Ragan, 2021; Holding and Ragan, 2022). It’s stated aim to “honor traditions while simultaneously leading to the integration of fact-based principles of voice production” (Ragan, 2018, p157) indicates an inclusive approach that may address identified tensions between voice science and singing voice communities and serve to bridge the perceived gap between science and practice (Rollings Bigler *et al.*, 2021).

Figure 1: Evidence-Based Voice Pedagogy (Ragan, 2018)



The three components of the EBVP framework interact synergistically and are viewed without hierarchy (Ragan, 2018). The ‘Voice Research’ component encompasses a broad range of research fields within voice sciences and arts & humanities that relate to voice and singing voice production, including biomedical science, acoustics, exercise science, cognitive science, practice-based research, historical voice pedagogy, psychology,

musicianship, acting and more (Ragan and Maxfield, 2021). 'Voice Teacher Expertise and Experience' is derived from the culmination of a teacher's own vocal training and pedagogic journey, their performance experience, and their experience of teaching through doing (Bozeman and Ragan, 2021). The authors claim that the development of pedagogical strategies by intuitive, trial-and-error processes that are tested and refined through practical application in the voice studio over time and across a student population can provide an invaluable type of evidence (Bozeman and Ragan, 2021). Although these methods don't conform with a formal scientific method, the EBVP model makes room for teaching strategies that have evolved in this way, or that have been passed down through a traditional master-apprentice model that cannot be or have not yet been fully researched in a scientific capacity (Bozeman and Ragan, 2021). The EBVP model accepts that these methods, developed through teacher expertise and experience, can be employed successfully as heuristic solutions in the voice studio and should not necessarily be dismissed because of lack of scientific rigour (Bozeman and Ragan, 2021). The third component, 'Student Goals and Perspectives' promotes a holistic, humanistic pedagogy that acknowledges the interests, needs, values and choices of individual students (Ragan, 2018; Holding and Ragan, 2022). Drawing primarily from principles of cognitive science, it advocates a student-centred, non-authoritarian, and empathetic approach that recruits and optimises what is known about how students learn (Holding and Ragan, 2022).

While the EBVP framework provides a strong theoretical model formulated from an insider perspective that marries voice science and research with the practical and historical realities of voice teaching, there are some potential challenges posed by its application. Firstly, the intentional expansion of what constitutes evidence in voice training to include teacher expertise and experience appears contradictory to science-informed and fact-based positions and may open the door to a perpetuation of ineffective practices under the guise of experiential expertise. The counteraction to this difficulty is offered in the insistence that all three components of the framework must act in balance, meaning that teacher expertise and experience should be matched by an understanding of voice research and accommodation of student perspectives (Ragan, 2018). However, misinterpretation or selective understanding of the model could result in an overemphasis of one or another category. Secondly, the vast scope of what can be deemed as evidence within this framework may be too diffuse and far-reaching to clearly define and apply to practice in a meaningful way. Even within the category of 'voice research', the body of research is wide-ranging and immense and does not present a unified, standardised version of voice pedagogy. EBVP is not one

thing – it is an umbrella under which a huge range of pedagogical practice might shelter. Since publication of the EBVP framework in 2018 there have been no studies published on its application to applied practice. It is therefore undetermined whether the model is practically relevant or useful as a way to structure or assess voice teaching practice. This study considers how current practices of listening and selecting teaching strategies relate to the EBVP framework.

Auditory Perception and Evaluation

A segment of the academic literature addressing listening practices in voice teaching pertains to auditory perception and evaluation – “how listeners process sensory information from a singer to conceptualise, recognise and verbalise the sound they hear” (Mitchell, 2014, p187). Studies on auditory perception have focused primarily on identifying and describing voice quality and understanding what perceptually constitutes ‘good vocal production’ in the context of ideals in classical/opera singing (Wapnick and Ekholm, 1997; Mitchell and Kenny, 2004; Oates *et al.*, 2006; Garnier *et al.*, 2007; Henrich *et al.*, 2008). Consensus on criteria by which to evaluate vocal quality, and terminology by which a range of voice specialists might refer to it have been sought (Wapnick and Ekholm, 1997; Oates *et al.*, 2006; Henrich *et al.*, 2008) and correlations to objective acoustic measures investigated (Ekholm, Papagiannis and Chagnon, 1998; Kenny *et al.*, 2007). Auditory evaluations of vocal quality have largely been divorced from the underlying mechanisms by which the sound is produced, and from the teaching methods that should be used to achieve the desired sound (Wapnick and Ekholm, 1997). This suggests limitations in pedagogical application and aligns more with aesthetic approaches than a functional perspective.

One of the clear limitations of this body of research on auditory perception is that it is consistently based on the ideals and stylistic parameters of Western classical music. In current day studios, where there is more stylistic pluralism (Fisher, Kayes and Popeil, 2019) these criteria and language are unlikely to serve broader student populations or those specifically focused on Contemporary Commercial Music (CCM) singing. In popular music styles, non-standardised and variable tonal production is the norm, and many qualities identified in the literature as ‘undesirable’, such as twangy, nasal, yelled and lacking intensity or focus (Wapnick and Ekholm, 1997) are commonly employed for musical effect (Fisher, Kayes and Popeil, 2019).

Howell (2025) points to a lack of integration between what science has come to explain about biomechanical and acoustic aspects of voice production through objective identification and measurement and our perception of the sonic output. This suggests a potential gap between theory and practice, where a theoretical understanding of voice production is not being effectively translated to listening practices. Howell (2025) is at the cutting edge of considering how the perceived sound relates to vocal function, “tying what is known to how we experience sound” (Howell, 2025, p3).

This literature review considered the role of listening as a core competency in voice teaching, identifying a significant gap in the literature relating to applied practice. Concepts of fact-based voice pedagogy and Ragan’s (2018) Evidence-Based Voice Pedagogy framework were explored and will be further considered throughout this study as a means to assess listening practices.

METHODS

Research Paradigm

This study was situated within a pragmatic research paradigm oriented toward real-world practice (Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006). Pragmatism offers a philosophical framework that considers objectivity, subjectivity, and a mixture of the two forming different layers of our experiential world (Feilzer, 2010). A pragmatic paradigm is therefore well suited to voice pedagogues and researchers who consider the intersection between objective understanding of vocal mechanics and the subjective attitudes and experiences of voice teachers and singers (Scott, 2024). With a focus on problem-solving, the research question can be held at the centre of pragmatic inquiry, employing methods that are most likely to provide insight without being beholden to the strictures of a purely positivist or constructivist approach (Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006; Winter, 2021).

This project was a practice-led enquiry, driven by professional curiosity and a motivation to engender new knowledge and understanding relating to the practice of voice teaching

(Costley, 2006; Winter, 2021; Scott, 2024). Practitioner research can leverage the researcher's own experiential knowledge, and that of their colleagues, providing an insider's understanding of the research topic and how it is situated (Costley, 2006). In addition to enhancing current practice more widely, practitioner-research can advance the practitioner's own self-knowledge and self-development to promote further pedagogical understanding and application (Costley, 2006; Scott, 2024).

Methodology

This study used an embedded mixed methods design (Almeida, 2018; Creswell and Plano Clark, 2017). While primarily framed as a qualitative study, quantitative approaches played a supplementary role when gathering and examining data, providing context and additional insights (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2017). The qualitative elements of the study design aimed to capture and understand diverse perspectives within the sample population of voice teachers (Patton, 2015). Accepting that there are multiple interpretations of single events formed the basis of this inquiry, which focussed on the perceptions of participants in response to a common experience (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). Utilising both quantitative and qualitative inquiry and analysis enabled a comprehensive and integrated exploration of the research topic (Feilzer, 2010; Creswell, 2014).

Methods

A questionnaire was used as the primary method of gathering data. Questionnaires are suited to acquiring real-world data reflecting participants' views, can collect both quantitative and qualitative data, and are an efficient means of reaching a large number of potential participants (Denscombe, 2003). Importantly for this project, questionnaires can capture a moment in time and can reveal the current state of affairs within the area of research (Denscombe, 2003). Open-ended questions were used to elicit authentic and rich personal responses about participants' listening practices (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). Open-ended questions were well-suited to the exploratory nature of the enquiry and were best able to address the complexity of the topic while avoiding limitations and researcher bias that closed-ended or tick-box questions may have introduced (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). Much deliberation was given to using direct and clear language that avoided jargon to reduce ambiguity and increase accessibility for participants (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007; Bell and Waters, 2018). Consideration was also given to the willingness and ability of the research population to participate (Denscombe, 2003). It was

acknowledged that the questions may be confronting and that respondents may feel intimidated or judged by the researcher, although it was not the intention of the study to assess the standard of their teaching. To counteract this potential impact and to encourage more candid responses, it was determined that responses must remain anonymous unless explicit permission was given by the participant. Attempts were made to reduce the response burden on participants (Denscombe, 2003) by limiting the number of video samples (and their corresponding questions) to two. It was also determined that embedding the video samples within the questionnaire would increase flow and avoid the response barrier of having to follow outside links.

Semi-structured interviews were chosen as a research tool for the second phase of this study to further explore “what people say they do, what they say they believe, and what opinions they say they have” (Denscombe, 2003, p184). Interviews were especially suitable because the research focused on participants’ perceptions and the meanings they constructed from an event (Berg, 2001). Acknowledging that interviews can be time consuming to conduct and analyse and that the process requires a considerable commitment from participants, a small sample of questionnaire participants were interviewed with a focus on depth and detail (Patton, 2015; Bell and Waters, 2018). Due to the small sample size findings may not be generalisable, but rich data from interviews can nevertheless provide a depth of highly relevant understanding relating to complex issues (Patton, 2015). Interviews were semi-structured, offering the opportunity to extend the dialogue beyond predetermined questions and to probe for further detail (Berg, 2001; Denscombe, 2003; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). Even with the intention of genuine communication, meanings that are clear to either the interviewer or the interviewee may be opaque to the other (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). Therefore, the ability to rephrase or ask follow-up questions can provide increased clarity and lead to better understanding (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007; Bell and Waters, 2018).

The sample population was determined through purposive sampling, deliberately targeting those with knowledge, expertise and experience relating to the area of study (Denscombe, 2003; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). Members of the New Zealand Association of Teachers of Singing (NEWZATS) provided a clearly defined and accessible sample of voice teachers well-suited to the purposes of this project. A purposive sample does not represent the wider population, but its innate selectivity purposefully reflects the intended focus of the investigation (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007; Patton, 2015). The priority was to gain in-

depth information from knowledgeable people, rather than to make generalisations from a representative sample (Patton, 2015).

In the analysis of questionnaire responses, a process of thematic analysis was employed to identify and interpret patterns in the data, building from an inductive coding approach to the development and refinement of themes (Braun and Clarke, 2021; Naeem *et al.*, 2023).

Descriptive coding was utilised in initial open coding to summarise the primary topics in each response (Saldana, 2016). These codes were then grouped together to generate categories. *In vivo* coding was implemented and quotations extracted directly from participant responses (Naeem *et al.*, 2023). This enabled the analysis to honour participants' voices and be grounded in their individual perspectives (Saldana, 2016). *In vivo* coding also provided insight into discursive elements of the data, providing accurate representation of a range of voice teacher parlance. Coding of interview transcripts did not follow a strict sequence of initial coding leading to the generation of themes. Instead, the themes themselves were quite apparent and able to be identified early in the analysis process, effectively short-circuiting some of the steps of conventional thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2021). This led to a more abductive coding approach of moving back and forth between the data and theory in an iterative manner (Timmermans and Tavory, 2012). This cyclical aspect of the coding process allowed further filtering and highlighting of salient elements within the data as meaning was developed (Saldana, 2016). Because the themes emerged very closely to participant statements, *in vivo* coding was again used to develop and clarify themes.

Ethics and Insider Research

As both a voice teacher and a member of NEWZATS, I belong to the group being studied and am therefore considered an insider researcher (Breen, 2007). While there are advantages to being an insider researcher, such as having insight into and understanding of the issue being studied and being able to relate well to participants (Bonner and Tolhurst, 2002; Costley, Elliot and Gibbs, 2010), being situated within the research domain also raises several ethical considerations. One criticism of insider research is that there may be a lack of objectivity and impartiality on the part of the researcher which may influence the design and implementation of the study, as well as the interpretation of findings (Breen, 2007; Costley, Elliot and Gibbs, 2010; Saidin and Yaacob, 2016). Bias can occur in many ways, and is a particular danger for individual researchers, especially those who have strong views about the research topic (Bell and Waters, 2018). Deliberate efforts were made throughout this

study to remain conscious of bias, to critically examine assumptions, and to approach the investigation with humility and open-mindedness (Bonner and Tolhurst, 2002; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007; Meyer and Goss, 2024). I was guided by Patton (2015), who advocates adopting a position of 'empathic neutrality' as an interviewer, prioritising openness, sensitivity, respect, awareness and responsiveness, while seeking a genuine understanding of the interviewees' responses from a neutral, non-judgmental perspective.

Both the questionnaire and the interview phases of this research created some level of intrusion and burden on respondents, particularly in relation to the time taken to participate (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). Consideration was given to the potential power dynamic between myself as a recent co-Vice President of NEWZATS, and the fellow members to whom I appealed to participate in the study (Costley, Elliot and Gibbs, 2010). To counteract any perceived pressure, it was made clear that participation was voluntary and that responses to the questionnaire would remain anonymous by default. Informed and ongoing consent was ensured at every stage of the research process.

Protocol

The first phase of the research project revolved around the formulation and distribution of a questionnaire (Appendix 9). The questionnaire, which could be completed anonymously, included an initial section of closed-ended demographic questions related to how long the participants had taught voice, what styles they primarily sung and taught, and the type of student they primarily taught. The main body of the questionnaire involved participants watching and listening to video samples of two singers, each performing a short excerpt of a song of their choice, one in a pop/rock style and the other musical theatre. Both singers were recruited through international teaching colleagues who approached their students on my behalf. This was a deliberate choice to create a layer of remove between myself and the subjects, and to mitigate the risk of the singers being identifiable by participants. Both singers were informed of the purpose of the study and their role in it (Appendix 3) and gave their informed consent (Appendix 4) before providing the video samples. The contrasting styles were deliberately selected to illuminate any potential differences in listening practices relating to stylistic or genre-based factors. Participants responded to open-ended questions about their listening approach and priorities, what they noticed when listening, and what assessment that led them to make. Additional questions addressed participants' opinions on the importance of listening in singing teaching, the importance of being able to identify vocal

function through listening and their confidence in being able to do so. These questions were presented through a 7-point scale, with the aim of offering a reasonable level of sensitivity for responses as well as a neutral middle point (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). Participants were also asked whether they had received any training or studied a particular pedagogical model that influenced the way they listened to and assessed vocal function, and if so, what that training was. Finally, participants were asked if they were willing to take part in follow-up interviews, with the understanding that their questionnaire responses would therefore not remain anonymous to me but would be anonymised in the presentation of my findings. All participants were required to provide informed consent before completing the questionnaire (Appendix 6). The questionnaire was piloted to gain feedback, to check clarity of instructions and to determine how long it took to complete (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007; Bell and Waters, 2018) before being distributed as a google form by email to the full membership of NEWZATS (approximately 120 people), along with information outlining the purpose and process of the study and a plea for their participation (Appendix 5). The questionnaire remained open for a period of 16 days, with a reminder and renewed call for participation emailed after 10 days and again two days before closing in a bid to boost the response rate (Denscombe, 2003).

The second phase of data collection occurred through semi-structured interviews. Five participants were selected as a stratified sample of questionnaire participants, representing different levels of teaching experience and style/genre (Lemm, 2010). Information about the interview process was provided to each participant (Appendix 7) and separate consent gained prior to participation (Appendix 8). Interview participants re-watched the video samples included in the questionnaire and subsequently answered questions relating to what they would choose to work on with each singer, what particular strategy they would employ, what they would expect that strategy to achieve and what the origin or basis of that strategy was. In addition, participants were asked their opinion on the importance weighting of the three elements of Ragan's (2018) EBVP framework – teacher expertise & experience, student goals & perspectives, and voice science & research. Lastly, participants were asked about any ongoing engagement with voice science & research. Audiovisual recordings were made of the interviews which were conducted via Google Meet, and AI transcription platform Otter.ai was utilised to transcribe the interviews in real time. The justification for this was two-fold; it allowed me, as the interviewer, to stay engaged and attentive without the distraction of taking notes, and it provided an accurate record of proceedings for the purpose of coding and analysis (Denscombe, 2003; Bell and Waters, 2018).

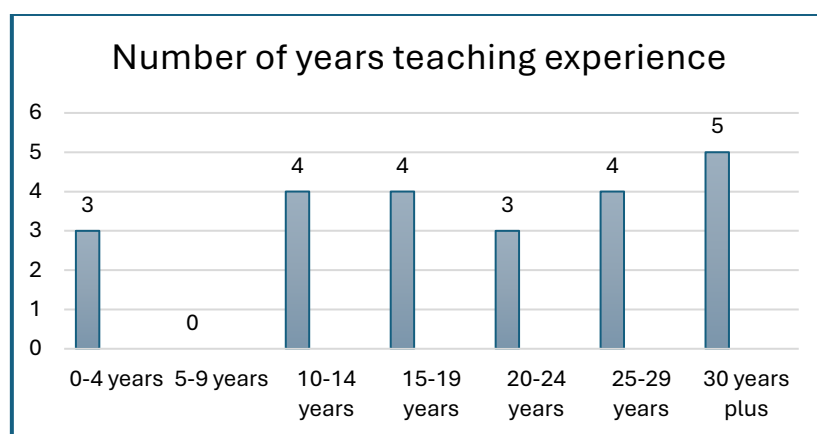
FINDINGS

QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

Teacher perspectives and background

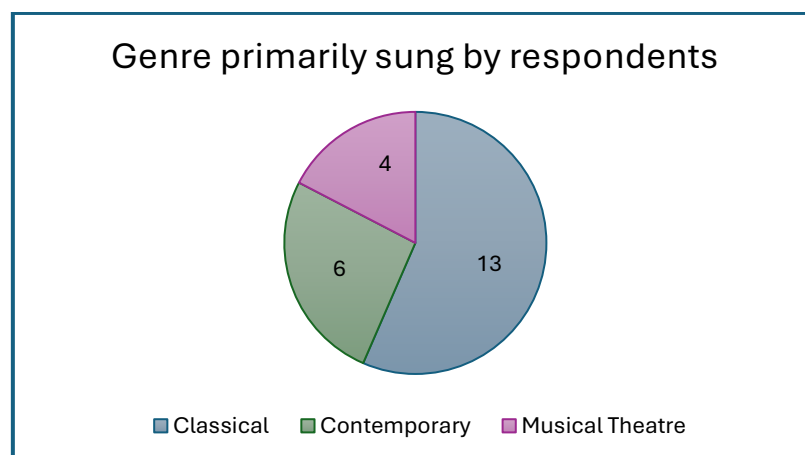
The 23 respondents to the questionnaire had teaching experience ranging from 1 year to 55 years, with the majority (20 of 23) having at least 10 years teaching experience (Fig. 2).

Figure 2: Number of years teaching experience



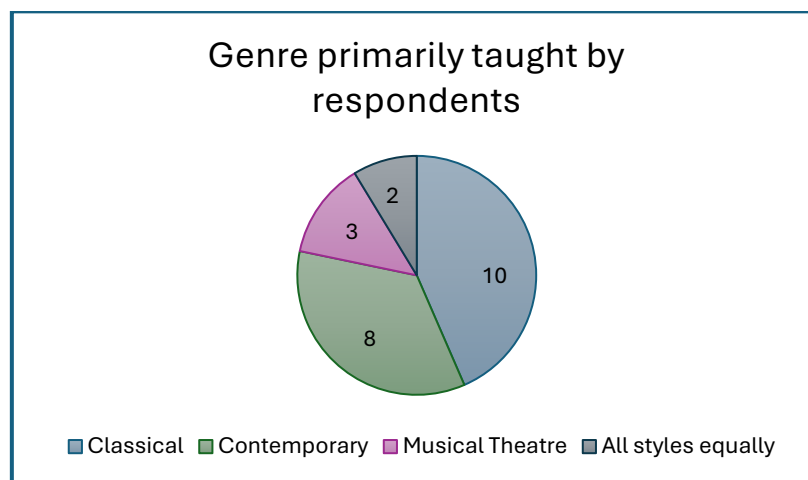
Over half the respondents (13 of 23) were primarily classical singers, while 26% (6 of 23) sung primarily contemporary styles and 17% (4 of 23) sung primarily musical theatre (Fig. 3).

Figure 3: Genre primarily sung by respondents



The distribution of genres in which respondents primarily taught was slightly different, with just under half (10 of 23) teaching primarily classical, while 35% (8 of 23) taught primarily contemporary, 13% (3 of 23) taught primarily musical theatre and 9% (2 of 23) taught an equal mix of genres (Fig. 4).

Figure 4: Genre primarily taught by respondents

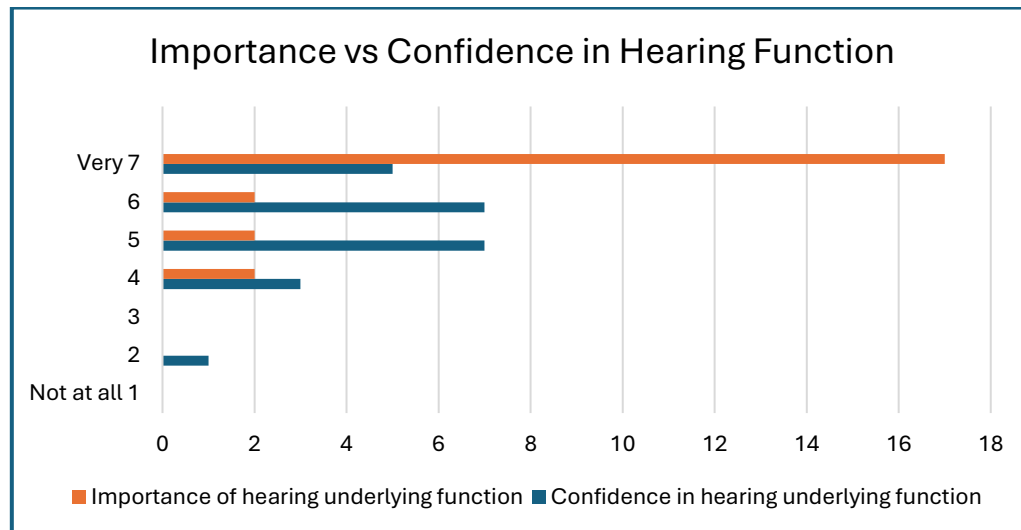


The data set was fairly well balanced in terms of the representation of genres primarily sung and taught by respondents but was weighted toward teachers with significant experience. This may reflect the demographics within the wider NEWZATS membership, or it might indicate a greater willingness or confidence in teachers with more experience to offer an opinion. More than half the responses came from teachers with 20+ years' experience. Due to the more recent evolution of Contemporary Commercial Music (CCM) voice pedagogy, these teachers are more likely to have undergone their own voice training at a time when classical teaching models were largely ubiquitous (Fisher, Kayes and Popeil, 2019; Hoch, 2019). This background may influence teachers' pedagogical approaches and therefore impact the data.

Respondents unanimously believed listening to be very important in singing teaching. While a majority (17 of 23) believed it is very important to be able to identify the underlying vocal function of the sounds they hear, respondents were overall less confident in their ability to do so (Fig. 5). Although confidence levels were still relatively high, the difference between

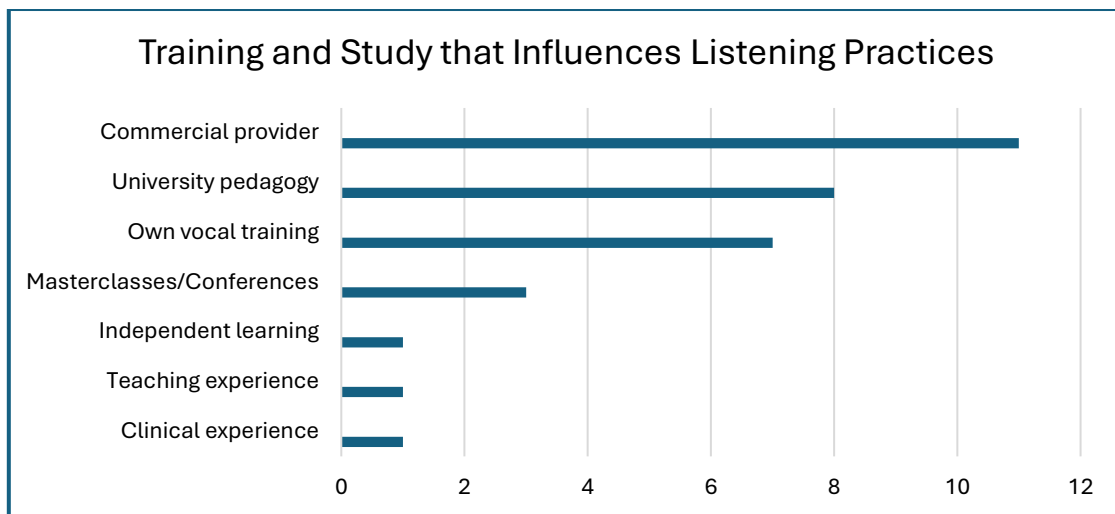
perceived importance and confidence may point to a need for continued support and training opportunities for voice teachers in this area.

Figure 5: Identifying underlying vocal function: Importance vs Confidence



A majority (20 of 23) had received training or undergone study that influenced their listening practices. The most common modes of training (15 of 20) were through independent commercial providers (including Estill Voice Training®, Somatic Voicework™ The LoVetri Method, Complete Vocal Technique, The Voice Lab NZ, and Alexander Technique) and pedagogical study at a university level. Participants' own vocal training (particularly *Bel Canto*) was also reported to be a common influence on listening practices, with others reporting masterclasses and conferences, independent learning, teaching experience and clinical experience as influencing the way they listen to and assess vocal function (Fig. 6).

Figure 6: Voice Pedagogy Training & Study



There was no clear correlation between the number of years of teaching experience and the level of confidence in identifying underlying vocal function, except for one respondent who has taught for one year and reported a low level of confidence. Every other level of confidence (4-7) included a wide range of teaching experience. Most respondents who reported lower levels of confidence (4 or below) had not received training or studied a pedagogical model that informed their listening practices. However, other respondents who had not received training or undergone study that informed their listening practices reported being confident in their ability to identify underlying vocal function, implying a one-way correlation, where low confidence is a predictor of a lack of training, but where a lack of training does not necessarily predict low confidence. It should be noted that perception-based self-assessment of confidence levels can be an inaccurate measure of competence (Gabbard and Romanelli, 2021). Lower levels of experience and competence have been linked to overestimation of ability, while more experienced people who have been exposed to gaps in their knowledge tend to underestimate their performance before ultimately gaining 'earned confidence' (Kruger and Dunning, 1999; Rahmani, 2020). Despite these limitations, confidence measures provided some insight into teacher perceptions within the scope of this study.

The quantitative data collected for this research project gave insight into the study population and their background, experience and attitudes. This understanding provided a context for the following qualitative exploration to take place.

QUALITATIVE RESULTS:

Listening Approach: What voice teachers listen for

The following section addresses the study's objective of identifying participants' approaches to listening. Seven primary themes were generated from analysis of questionnaire responses to describe what participants prioritise to assess singers: Musicianship, Expression and Communication; Tonal Quality; Efficiency & Ease; Assessment; Vocal Production & Coordination; Body & Breathing; and Open- or Student-led approaches. These themes are presented here first as a graphic representation (Fig. 7) and then in more detail in order of the frequency they occurred. *In vivo* quotations taken directly from participant responses (including their designated participant number in brackets) illustrate examples from within each theme.

Figure 7: Approaches to Listening



Primary Themes

1. *Musicianship, Expression and Communication:* Main concerns in this category included communication/storytelling, musicality, pitch, diction, and genre/style.

“Whether they convey their message effectively” (20)

“Expression of text” (12)

“Ability to deliver a phrase of music not just notes” (8)

“Whether I can understand what they sing” (22)

“Stylistic appropriateness – does the way they are singing suit the genre they are singing?” (18)

2. *Tonal Quality:* This included references to perceptions of tonal outcomes, including sound quality, consistency and quality of tone, resonance and placement.

“Overall sound” (2)

“Quality of tone” (22)

“Voice placement” (15)

3. *Efficiency and Ease:* This category consisted of factors of safety, freedom and ease, as well as their oppositional concepts of tension and strain, as they relate to efficiency of vocal production.

“Safe singing practice” (5)

“Unnecessary tension” (1)

“Ease of delivery” (8)

“Signs of strain” (22)

4. *Assessment:* Some respondents described general ways in which they would assess a singer, including technique, development level, range, problems and areas for improvement.

“Whether there is a technique” (11)

“How developed the singer might be” (2)

“Where the student struggles most” (4)

“Problematic habits e.g. swooping, breathiness, tremolo” (8)

5. Vocal Production and Coordination: Incorporated here are mechanistic and functional aspects of voice production and coordination of specific areas of the vocal apparatus, including the soft palate position, tongue/jaw, onsets/offsets, vowels (vocal tract configuration) and registration. One respondent indicated a more holistic function-based assessment of voice production.

“Obvious changes in register that is not intentional” (18)

“Position of the velum/soft palate” (1)

“Quality of vowels” (13)

“The sound is the product, but what you are really listening for is what the sound tells you about the body and voice production” (7)

6. Body and Breathing: This category encapsulates references to breathing, support and misalignment of the body, with responses referring primarily to breath use during the phonatory phase of singing.

“Quality of the breath” (1)

“Evidence of breath control” (20)

“Supported breathing” (6)

“Excessive use of air” (23)

“Signs of jaw tension, neck tension, or misalignment” (13)

7. Open or Student-Led: Some respondents indicated a more open approach to listening and emphasised an intuitive and empathetic attitude without pre-defined expectations, while others reported being guided more by student goals than by any particular listening parameters.

“All of me becomes like a sounding, listening, seeing, and feeling board, open to stimuli from the singer” (11)

“I do this by sensing” (14)

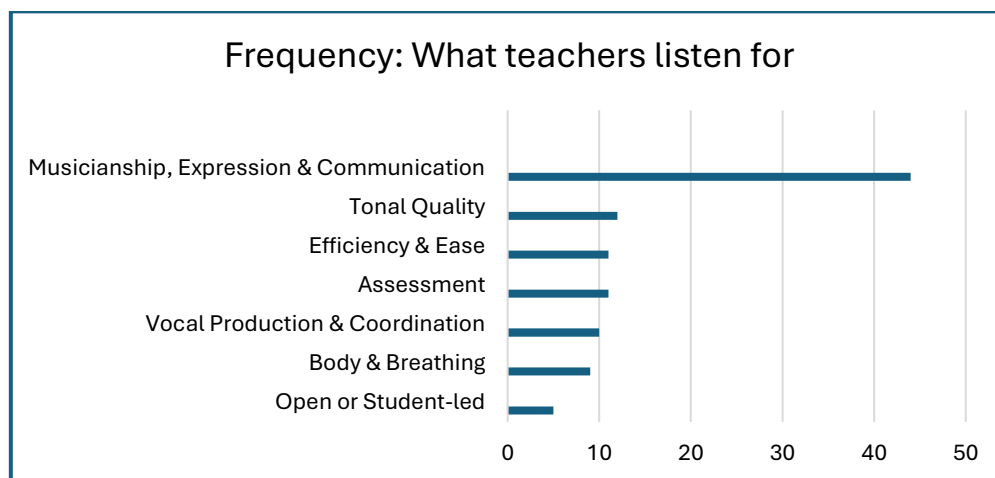
“I usually ask the client what they would like to focus on” (19)

Further Considerations

While the categorisation process was clear for much of this data, there were some instances that required more arbitrary decisions. An example was ‘vowel quality’, which could justifiably have been categorised variously under ‘tonal quality’, ‘diction/articulation’ (under the broader category of ‘musicianship, expression and communication’), or ‘vocal production & coordination’. In this way, there was an acknowledged element of researcher influence inherent in the analysis process where the researcher’s own understanding and analytical lens were imposed on the data (Saldana, 2016).

A quantitative analysis of the data revealed that aspects of ‘musicianship, expression & communication’ were overwhelmingly the most common in participants’ approach to listening, with 44 separate mentions of them occurring, as opposed to a maximum 12 in any other category (Fig. 8).

Figure 8: What teachers listen for (frequency)



This indicates that teachers are prioritising or emphasising musical and expressive elements such as pitch, storytelling and style over functional aspects of voice production in their approaches to listening despite results showing that participants largely believed the ability to identify underlying vocal function was very important and they were generally confident to do so.

Applied Listening Practices: What voice teachers heard

The following section speaks to the study's objective of identifying and considering participants' applied listening practices. Responses to this part of the questionnaire were largely consistent with the themes in the previous section that identified 'what voice teachers listen for'. Within these primary themes, some new categories arose, and others were expanded, offering a deeper insight into teachers' applied listening practices. In addition, four secondary themes were identified: Subjective Assessment; Action as Assessment; Negative Framing; and Stylistic Factors, which will be explored fully in the latter part of this section.

Primary Themes

Following is an outline of each of the identified primary themes of applied listening practices, illustrated by a selection of *in vivo* quotations from participant responses. Some of the implications of these results will be explored and, in line with the final objective of this study, particular consideration will be given to whether responses indicate an evidence- or fact-based approach to listening.

1. *Musicianship, Expression & Communication*: The category of 'communication/storytelling' expanded to include acting, facial expression, character, authenticity, interpretation, expression, performance and emotion.

"Great characterisation" (20)

"Excellent use of face" (15)

"Authentic, engaged singer" (3)

"There wasn't much feeling conveyed" (22)

'Diction' extended to the ability to understand the words, and the effect of syllabic emphasis, while 'musicality' incorporated phrasing and dynamics.

"Difficult to understand words" (9)

"Clear diction" (6)

"Not keen on the vocal emphasis" (8)

"It's a very note to note delivery rather than singing through the phrase" (8)

'Pitch' featured strongly in the assessment of one singer in particular, with a focus on pitch inaccuracy. Stylistic appropriateness and genre requirements were also mentioned.

"Some intonation issues" (10)

"The singer sounded pitchy" (23)

"Sounds appropriate to the style/genre" (18)

"Suitable sound for style" (3)

Responses relating to communication and storytelling were largely impressionistic and subjective, aligning more with artistic and aesthetic approaches than a fact-based position. In relation to diction, musicality, pitch and style/genre, responses primarily reflected assessments of the tonal outcome and did not relate directly to underlying vocal behaviours.

2. Tonal Quality: This category incorporated descriptions of the tone or sound as well as the presence or absence of resonance, twang, nasality and breathiness.

"Nice warm tone" (17)

"There was an ok sound" (6)

"They 'fell off' the sound" (11)

"Very little resonance" (17)

"Strong masky resonance" (1)

"Resonant and 'complex' in terms of colour" (7)

"Has a good deal of twang" (13)

"Some nasality creeping in" (11)

The tone or sound was predominantly described in qualitative terms, often reflecting subjective impressions. While concepts of resonance, twang and nasality may have a scientific basis, they are terms that could equally be used as tonal descriptors without consideration of the underlying vocal production. In descriptions of tonal quality, there was a high level of non-specificity e.g. "they fell off the sound", "strong masky resonance", "complex in terms of colour", that made it difficult to determine the respondents' intended meaning from an objective standpoint.

3. Efficiency & Ease: Concepts of efficiency and ease were presented through three different lenses. Predominantly, teachers referred to aspects that effected the auditory outcome, including constriction, strain, tension, squeezing and pushing.

“The high note is really tight” (8)

“Sounded a bit pushed” (22)

Other responses related more to vocal efficiency, with mentions of vocal fatigue, discomfort and health.

“Singing like this for a while might get tiring” (7)

“The voice sounds healthy” (8)

Thirdly, teachers reflected on their own sense of whether the sound felt free, effortless and easy to produce.

“It doesn’t sound effortless and easy” (16)

“Didn’t feel free” (11)

The way a teacher articulates in their own mind what they hear, may in turn influence how they communicate these concepts to a singer. While essentially addressing the same phenomenon, it is worth considering the connotations of “the high note is really pushed” versus “singing like this for a while might get tiring” and how those different statements might be received by a singer. This idea will be explored further when considering ‘Negative framing’.

Here again, responses emphasised the resultant sound rather than referring to underlying vocal behaviours in a specific way.

4: Assessment: Responses in this category primarily referred to ‘technique’, and whether or not it was in evidence.

“There’s no evidence of a technique” (11)

“I can hear good basic technique for the style” (17)

‘Technique’ is a broad and non-specific concept often grounded in Western Classical voice pedagogy (Chapman, 2006) that may hold different meaning for different people. Because it is not descriptive of any distinct vocal behaviour it is not possible to establish how these responses might relate to a fact-based perspective.

5. Vocal Production & Coordination: Vocal production was described in terms of vocal fold function and registration, as well as more generally in relation to speech quality and conversational aspects. One respondent referred to laryngeal position, while others mentioned the tongue and jaw, specifically regarding tension in those areas. Phonatory onset, and in particular plosives were observed, as was the occurrence of vibrato.

In relation to registration, there was notable variability in both the terminology that was used, as well as the observed modes of vocal production. The below examples all related to the same singer.

“Their voice is in a light position” (1)

“Singing with their natural ‘chesty’ sound” (11)

“Has a nice mix in the tone” (14)

“Very ‘speechy’” (7)

“Lower note needs more speech quality” (16)

These statements largely contradicted one another and revealed that there was little universality in the way registration-related behaviours were identified. Different listeners heard different things and labelled those things according to their own lexicon. While registration is ostensibly a science-based concept (Herbst, 2020, 2021), the range of responses suggests a lack of consistency in its understanding and application to listening.

Vowels were also an area that got significant attention, but like ‘efficiency and ease’ teachers referred to vowel behaviour in different ways. Some interpreted vowels as an indicator of vocal tract shaping and areas of tension.

“The vowels tell you quite a lot about vocal tract length and here suggest pharyngeal tension” (7)

“The vowels are a bit thin and lead me to believe there is a bit of tongue and jaw tension” (13)

Some utilised qualitative labels to describe vowel sounds.

“Vowels very bright” (15)

“The [i] vowel is very forwardy” (11)

Others considered vowels through a lens of even, undistorted vowels being the ideal.

“Vowel shaping stuck out to me as a bit unpolished” (6)

“Needs work to even out their vowels” (20)

The different perspectives demonstrated here reveal that teachers make different meaning from what they hear, depending on their pedagogical lens and perhaps within the limits of their functional understanding. Here we have a mechanistic approach where the teacher is considering what is happening physically in the vocal tract, a qualitative approach where the teacher is describing the tonal outcome, and a stylistic approach where the teacher is referring to genre-defined conventions.

6. Body & Breathing: Breathing was referred to variously in terms of support, connection between the body, breath and phonation, the position of the breath within the body (low/high), breath control and evenness, air flow, air release and air pressure.

“A bit more support from the diaphragm would create better flow and sustainability”
(1)

“Needs more body connection for better breath flow” (10)

“No easy depth of breath” (11)

“Air pressure isn’t always optimal” (14)

The range of subcategories related to breathing indicated the multi-dimensional nature of the topic. Responses suggested that there may be conflation between different functional elements of the respiratory system in relation to singing, or a reliance on a generalised approach.

Aspects relating to the body included posture and alignment, particularly head position and neck tension, and engagement of the body, specifically the torso.

7. Open or Student-led: Although participants did not interact with the singers, there was evidence from one participant of a student-led approach. This was demonstrated by consideration that the singer may have made intentional choices relating to style and vowel formation and implied a willingness to accommodate them.

“Some of the vowels are a bit distorted, but this could be a choice” (18)

“Could be a stylistic choice” (18)

Secondary Themes

Following is a discussion of the four secondary themes that emerged through analysis of questionnaire responses - 'Subjective Impressions', 'Action as Assessment', 'Negative Framing', and 'Stylistic Factors'. In line with the study's objective, these themes contribute to the identification and consideration of applied listening practices.

Subjective Impressions:

Throughout the responses to the questionnaire, subjective impressions were widespread. These rested on the personal tastes and feelings of the respondents and fell primarily into two categories – description-based impressions and opinion-based impressions.

Description-based impressions utilised qualitative adjectives to denote different properties of what the respondent observed.

“Lovely sound” (11)

“Beautiful tone” (14)

“Colourful, unique sound” (13)

“Nice expressions” (21)

Opinion-based impressions expressed a belief or judgement determined by the respondent.

“It looks as if this singer will go far” (11)

“I’d pay to watch them perform any day” (20)

“Visually appealing” (15)

“Their performance certainly didn’t move me at all” (22)

One of the challenges posed by subjective impressions is that contradictions can and often do occur. What is appealing to one might be anathema to another and while listeners may be able to rationalise their position with more objectively identifiable markers, it is ultimately a matter of taste (Shapin, 2012). Several instances of contradiction were evident in this data set. The following paired examples each refer to a common singer.

“Great characterisation” (20) vs “I felt like they missed the whole character” (22)

“There was an ok sound” (6) vs “Colourful, unique sound” (13)

“I’d pay to watch them perform any day” (20) vs “Their performance certainly didn’t move me at all” (22)

“I hear joy in their voice” (1) vs “I felt like there wasn’t much feeling conveyed” (22)

These examples demonstrate that what was heard and the assessments that were made as a result may have been heavily influenced by personal preferences and perception.

Another challenge is that subjective impressions can lack specificity and context. If a tone is referred to as “nice”, “beautiful” or “lovely”, what makes it so? Would a “beautiful tone” be considered beautiful across genres, or is it only considered beautiful within the stylistic parameters in which it sits? If something is “enjoyable to listen to” does that mean it makes us feel happy, or something else? Without specificity, we are left to make our own meaning through interpretation, potentially resulting in confusion or misunderstanding.

Action as Assessment:

In the context of being asked to describe what they noticed when they listened to and observed the video excerpts of singers and what assessment that led them to make about their singing, a significant number of respondents answered with actions they would take as the teacher, or things the singer should do.

“I’d get them singing the tune, without the words, on a variety of vowel sounds to ascertain which sounds feel easiest to produce to even out their production across the song’s range.” (20)

“Work on depth of sound including breath/mix and authenticity.” (2)

“I’d ask them to consider the intent of the words of each phrase and ask them what emotion they are wanting to convey.” (20)

“It would be great to focus on onset and constriction to allow more tonal freedom to express the emotional content.” (19)

It is unclear from these responses whether the respondents undertook a process of identifying underlying vocal behaviours before determining an intervention. Although one could intimate from these comments a sense of what the respondents noticed when listening, the absence of any clear explanation of what they perceived of the actual sound

and the way it was made suggested that these teachers may not have approached the task by that route. By supplanting assessment with action, it is possible that the teacher moved straight to “what do I do”, missing the opportunity to systematically evaluate the singer in front of them and putting themselves at the heart of the process in a teacher-centred fashion (Sherwood, 2023). Framing assessment as action also emphasises what is not present, rather than what is. This relates to the next identified theme, ‘Negative framing’.

Negative framing:

Within the body of questionnaire responses, there was a notable current of negative framing. Framing is a concept from psychology that refers to what is emphasised or amplified in the way we draw meaning from something. A common example is whether something is viewed as a “problem” implying something is undesirable, or a “challenge”, which offers an opportunity to succeed (Chesebro and Martin, 2010). While many examples of negative framing within the data set may appear benign, they point to a wider and perhaps insidious issue to do with how singers are assessed.

There was a high occurrence of referring to some desirable element that was perceived to be missing.

“Lack of articulation” (17)

“Lack of forward placement” (23)

“Lack of postural support” (5)

“High note isn’t connected” (8)

“No evidence of a technique” (11)

“No buoyancy” (11)

“Dynamics were not balanced” (21)

Other instances used the prefix “un” to imply a more desirable opposite.

“Unpolished” (6)

“Unusual” (5)

“Unimaginative” (22)

More broadly negative comments were also present in the data.

“Didn’t get the words or anything they were singing about” (12)

“One-dimensional” (8)

“Breath support all but missing” (17)

These negatively framed statements infer that the respondents held existing expectations and tacit beliefs about what constitutes good, or correct singing, which they may have used to measure the singers against. This approach may lead to a deficit model of assessment which focuses on what singers cannot do and often leads to a teacher-led ‘fix-it’ approach (Zakaria *et al.*, 2016). Negative framing has been shown to result in lower educational outcomes, negatively influence self-efficacy beliefs and adversely affect adaptive achievement emotions that support effective learning and performance (Santana-Monagas *et al.*, 2024).

It is possible that while respondents expressed themselves using negative framing in their questionnaire responses, they may communicate these concepts differently in a teaching setting. However, these results provided insight into a way of thinking that reflects the filters through which teachers are listening to and assessing singers (Henrich *et al.*, 2008).

Stylistic Factors:

There were notable differences in what respondents reported hearing and observing between the two video samples.

Overall, assessment of the Musical Theatre singer was more positive, with multiple comments responding to a “nice”, “beautiful” and “lovely” tone. These responses, already identified as subjective impressions that reflect personal tastes, may also indicate a stylistic preference. Positive references to resonance, vibrato and support – all foundational tenets of classical singing pedagogy – reinforce this association between stylistic factors and desirable singing behaviours.

“Loved the longer notes that bloomed into vibrato” (16)

“Good resonance” (17)

“Resonant and ‘complex’” (7)

“Amazing diaphragmatic support” (1)

While these may be accurate assessments within the context of the video example to which they related, stylistic preferences may result in biases when applied to other genres (Fisher, Kayes and Popeil, 2019). Results revealed that negative framing was much more prevalent in relation to the pop/rock singer, and assessments were generally less positive. While this

may be attributed to the singer's development level there was also evidence that stylistic parameters were overlooked and that respondents may have imposed a classical voice pedagogy lens on their assessment of this singer (Cox, 2020).

"No evidence of a technique" (11)

"Lack of forward placement" (23)

"Very little resonance" (17)

"Needs work to even out their vowels" (20)

"No buoyancy" (11)

"Can't make out all the words" (8)

"Tone is breathy and unsupported" (17)

These comments are indicative of a hegemonic approach largely rooted in Western classical singing ideals and lack relevance in a pop/rock context, where amplification renders resonance and placement less important, diction is treated more flexibly, and breathiness is a legitimate tonal option (Fisher, Kayes and Popeil, 2019). This highlights the importance of considering how stylistic preferences and knowledge of stylistic parameters influence listening practices. It is interesting to note that Western classical voice pedagogy has been tied to normative racial perspectives and may carry potential racist and classist implications (Edwards, 2023; Fetokaki, 2023). However, further exploration of this avenue is beyond the scope of this study.

Interview Results

The semi-structured interviews directly addressed the study's objective of determining how listening practices inform and influence subsequent teaching actions. The following section outlines the main teaching strategies and actions that were reported, along with consideration of how those strategies related to listening practices. It also explores respondents' perspectives on Ragan's EBVP framework (2018), their engagement with voice science and research, the role of teacher expertise and experience and, in line with the study's final objective, an assessment of how reported pedagogical practices related to the EBVP model.

Teaching strategies and action

There were significant commonalities in teaching strategies and rationale across the range of interview participants. '*Alignment and Breathing*', and '*Character and Authenticity*' emerged as prominent themes throughout and are described in the following section, with the inclusion of *in vivo* quotations from participant responses (including their designated participant number in brackets).

Alignment and Breathing:

In considering teaching approaches for both singers, alignment and breathing were a predominant focus.

"I would first work on their alignment because I saw quite a bit of 'downward pull'" (4)

"I was going for the breath" (2)

"I would have a look at their breath work and posture" (5)

"I always like to look at alignment first" (4)

Addressing breathing and alignment was consistently linked to hearing a lack of ease in vocal production and observing tension or misalignment in the singer's body but also appeared to be considered a foundational element that should be addressed with priority. Responses indicated different levels of consideration of the sound itself and of the internal structures and systems that influence vocal production in their rationale for addressing alignment and breathing.

"I would be looking for the slipstream to try and help them find a bit more ease" (1)

"You can hear that lack of ease, especially in the higher portion of the range...that would mean the larynx is not free to function as it needs to" (4)

"I heard quite a heavy sound...quite heavy and pushed, rather than relaxed and with a bit of freedom" (2)

"just looks very tense. There's a lot of tension throughout their body" (5)

"I think (alignment) just impacts everything else" (4)

Respondents referred to a range of teaching strategies to address alignment and breathing that indicated both similarities and differences in instructional approaches. For one singer, getting them away from the piano was a common strategy, with the intention of simplifying the task and providing greater opportunity for the singer to build bodily awareness, an approach that aligns with motor learning principles (LeBorgne and Rosenberg, 2014).

“I would get them to sing without all the extrinsic things that are happening because of their position at the piano” (5)

“I would first take them away from the keyboard just so they could build some bodily awareness without adding in that extra element” (4)

“I think first we’d take away the keys...with them just singing so they can feel it in their body” (1)

Strategies differed in their level of specificity and in how clearly they related to anatomical and physiological concepts, demonstrating variable levels of adherence to fact-based principles. One participant drew upon a metaphor-based approach to encourage more support from the body.

“likening it to the struts in a guitar. You’ve got struts in your body that support you so that you’re stabilised. So I would encourage them to use their struts” (1)

One strategy, although cited as a task to address the position of the breath in the body, was more directly associated with phonatory behaviour, with semi-occluded vocalising primarily effecting vocal fold function and source filter interaction (Titze, 2006).

“I would start them with some lip trill sort of idea, maybe semi-occluded stuff, just to get the breath into the right place” (2)

Another participant offered a specific and accurate account of bodily alignment (Malde, Allen and Zeller, 2013).

“just talking through what alignment means...that line through the tragus, shoulder, hip, knees and then that bone at the side of the foot” (4)

Character and Authenticity:

Character and authenticity were the primary areas of focus in relation to the musical theatre singer but not mentioned at all for the pop/rock singer. Given that character and storytelling

are of paramount importance in musical theatre (LoVetri, Saunders-Barton and Means Weekly, 2014), this emphasis aligns with established stylistic parameters.

“It’s a little bit overacted...find a bit more authenticity of their storytelling” (5)

“in terms of the authenticity...it was a bit forced in terms of what they were presenting” (2)

“I would love to work with them on performance so we a get a bit more of ‘them’ coming through...it’s almost too careful so it’s losing a little bit of the authentic sparkle” (1)

Different strategies were suggested to address authenticity, including visualisation relating to the singer’s own experience, cultivating vulnerability, and using a speech-based monologue approach to help the singer develop more awareness of the meaning and context of the lyrics. Another respondent suggested that focusing on sound production in a neutral setting, removed from interpretation of the lyrics, would provide the singer the opportunity to get out of performing mode and connect more deeply with their own sound and body. Strategies for improving authenticity were often grounded in the teacher’s own experience as a performer.

It was generally observed that this singer was developmentally more advanced and was singing at a high level in terms of their vocal production. As a result, respondents steered more toward clarifying the singer’s choices and expanding their options rather than corrective intervention.

“To me they have a pretty, very desirable classic musical theatre sound...I would just experiment with different repertoire and build on their access to different colours” (4)

“I’d be asking them a lot ‘was that your intention?’” (3)

“I think it’s actually a really great voice” (5)

The missing piece: identifying underlying vocal behaviours

Acknowledging that these responses were based on video samples of under a minute long rather than real teaching settings, strategies for working with both singers tended toward

topics that could be considered ‘low-hanging fruit’ pedagogically-speaking. Breathing mechanics and alignment, unlike many other aspects of vocal function can be directly observed. It has been suggested that being something that we can physically see and experience may explain the attention given to respiratory musculature and action in voice pedagogy (Moss Erickson, 2022), while discerning the inner workings of the vocal instrument through listening may pose a bigger challenge. Likewise, working on character and authenticity sidesteps aspects of vocal production and the need to comprehend vocal behaviours and their resultant sounds in relation to scientific domains (Gill and Herbst, 2016). In assessing both singers and determining teaching strategies, respondents leaned more on impressions and observations than an analysis of what they discerned about vocal production through functional or critical listening practices. This does not establish whether respondents could or would employ strategies grounded more in underlying vocal behaviours at another time but indicates that it was not the primary lens through which they approached these examples.

The EBVP Framework: Participant Perspectives

As theoretical concepts, the domains of ‘voice science & research’, ‘student goals & perspectives’, and ‘teacher experience & expertise’ proposed in Ragan’s (2018) EBVP framework were deemed by most respondents to be equally important.

“I feel like those three things are really evenly in together. You can’t get a positive outcome with just one of them.” (1)

“I think they’re all equally (important), cause I mean you have to start with the student, but you only know to do that if you have experience and expertise, and you can only help them in a healthy way if you understand voice science and research.” (3)

Other respondents emphasised the importance of ‘student goals and perspectives’ as the central focus, with the other categories facilitating and enabling student progress.

“student perspective and goals sort of at the centre, but the other two are in my backpack.” (2)

“the most important thing is student perspectives and their goals...their outcomes is what I care most about, and I would hope that my teacher experience expertise and

the voice science stuff that I've done enables me to connect with them and help them...so they can achieve their goals." (5)

It was noted that the application of the EBVP domains may vary depending on generational and genre/style factors. There was a perception that older generations of classical teachers hold a level of resistance towards voice science and rely more on traditional pedagogical attitudes and practices. Voice science was seen to be more aligned with CCM, in part because they have both evolved and become a bigger part of pedagogical discourse in recent times, but also because voice science has provided a means of understanding different types of vocal production than that used in western classical singing.

"when teaching western classical styles primarily, a lot more weight is put on teacher experience and expertise, maybe significantly more than student perspectives and goals...the whole master teacher thing I think is still very much alive." (4)

"there's still a little bit of the idea in the western classical world that (voice science and research) threatens the *Bel canto* model." (4)

"voice science, like with moving into other styles, that's been probably more important recently". (2)

Engagement with Voice Science and Research

The majority of interview participants engaged with voice science and research indirectly through various sources, including commercial voice pedagogy models, internet searching, Instagram, connections to others in the voice teaching community, membership of NEWZATS and its associated professional development offerings, and attendance at voice-focused conferences. This kind of interaction with voice science and research might more accurately be considered under 'expertise and experience', which encompasses a teacher's own vocal and pedagogical training (Bozeman and Ragan, 2021). The implications of voice teacher training and its role as the interface between voice science and pedagogy will be explored in more detail at a later stage. One participant reported being actively engaged in 'voice science-adjacent' academic research but observed that the sphere of research they encounter is specific to their area of study and is not generalisable to teaching practice. The main barriers to engaging with voice science and research were identified as time, teaching load, and a lack of local offerings.

Teacher Expertise and Experience

It was clear from the interview responses that, as indicated in Ragan's (2018) EBVP model, experiences from their own vocal learning and pedagogical training strongly shaped respondents' perspectives. The perceived value of those learning experiences significantly influenced their belief system and teaching practice, with training that was perceived to be high-quality, effective, and fact-based being highly valued by respondents. Respondents held both positive and negative associations with their learning experiences, with negative associations and outcomes often providing motivation for learning, growth and change.

"I would ask the why, and it was 'don't ask why, just do as I say'. So I didn't get the whys and the mechanics around how things worked...and it led to vocal injury...which led to a lot of grief and trauma but also led me on a big journey to figure out the why." (1)

"Having studied western classical before I had those tools of Alexander Technique, body mapping, my own posture and alignment was not optimal...there are a lot of very static images that give you the idea of rigidity, and I found that not helpful." (4)

More positive associations with their training led respondents to preserve and perpetuate teaching practices.

"I did six months of accent breathing with my Masters and it was quite revolutionary for me." (5)

"I've been fortunate to have a teacher who explained it well and I can go back to reference that still to this day." (2)

Relating Pedagogical Practice to EBVP

While the three components of the EBVP framework were generally considered equally important in theory, this was not consistently reflected in interview responses, with 'teacher expertise and experience' instead emerging as the dominant influence on teacher practices. It is interesting to consider that participants primarily engaged with voice science and research through learning modalities that would more accurately be encompassed within 'teacher expertise and experience', which further skewed pedagogical practice in that direction. Although all three elements of EBVP were present and identifiable within reported

practices, they were not equally weighted in the way the model stipulates, indicating that within these interview results, teaching practices did not fully align with the EBVP framework (Ragan, 2018).

DISCUSSION

Identifying underlying vocal behaviours

Throughout the study, listening practices were not found to consistently reflect the theoretical ideals identified in the literature review that championed the identification of vocal behaviours (Nix, 2002; Gill and Herbst, 2016; Miller, 2017; Rollings Bigler *et al.*, 2021; Santelli, 2023; Moniz, 2024). Responses revealed that artistic factors predominated in listening approaches, with aspects of ‘musicianship, communication and expression’ being highly prioritised. Many factors that contributed to listening practices, such as ‘tonal quality’, ‘assessment’ and ‘ease and efficiency’ were largely based in generalised concepts and qualitative assessment not attributable to specific aspects of vocal production. The high occurrence of subjective assessment present was also contradictory to the idea of the identification of vocal behaviours, which is rooted in an objective view of what is happening in the voice at a functional level, as understood through scientific principles (American Academy of Teachers of Singing, 2014; Gill and Herbst, 2016). Responses generally focused on the observed outcomes of the sound without referring to the underlying vocal behaviours. This emphasis on the ‘what’ over the ‘why’ can lead to a trial-and-error approach of addressing the symptoms without accurately identifying the source of the behaviour (Nix, 2002). When underlying vocal behaviours were referred to by respondents, there was a high level of inconsistency in what was identified and how it was described. An expected outcome of an objective approach to identifying vocal behaviours by listening might be consistency, at least within categories. Within a category such as ‘register’, the variability of responses meant that not everyone’s conclusions could be correct from an objective standpoint. Given that both the importance of being able to hear underlying vocal function and confidence levels in doing so were reported to be very high and high respectively, there is an apparent discrepancy between teachers’ beliefs and actual listening practices.

Individual Teacher Perspectives

There was an overriding lack of agreement or consistency in responses, both between and within the categories that contributed to listening practices. What was most apparent was the profusion of individual teacher perspectives and the absence of a homogenous, systematic approach to listening.

Factors that might have been expected to create commonality, such as training, experience and style did not. There was no clear association between the amount of training or experience a teacher had and their listening practices, the results instead revealing a high degree of randomness between these factors. The stylistic background or speciality of the teacher appeared to influence listening practices for some but not all, with no consistently identifiable difference between classical and contemporary teachers. Some classical teachers were more cognizant of stylistic parameters in CCM than others, and some CCM teachers referred to concepts more strongly aligned with Western classical practices.

Individual perspectives are shaped by a person's body of knowledge, which in turn is shaped by what they have experienced, what they have been taught, and what they have come to believe is factual (Acemoglu and Ozdaglar, 2010). To better understand the individual perspectives of voice teachers, we must consider the pathways by which they develop these perspectives and their beliefs about singing, vocal production and pedagogical practice.

Voice Teacher Training

As established in the literature review, there is no required qualification to become a voice teacher (Rollings Bigler et al., 2021). Some enter the profession solely on the basis of their own singing experience and whatever vocal training they have received, without undertaking any particular voice pedagogy training. Others engage in pedagogical training through various levels of university coursework or through commercial models, including certificate programs in various methodologies (Bigler, 2020). Educational models of voice pedagogy, both commercial and institutional, hold authority over learners and may become the basis of what voice teachers believe to be factually correct. In an ideal world voice pedagogy training platforms can act as a delivery system by which pedagogical best practice, along with voice science and research, can be distilled and presented in a way that is both accurate and applicable to voice teaching. However, because there is no universal systematic approach

and voice pedagogy models are not standardised or regulated there is significant variance in what is taught, and what that leads teachers to believe (Rollings, 2020; Bozeman and Ragan, 2021). Within this study population, a high number of participants reported undertaking pedagogy training through university or commercial providers, but the profusion of independent teacher perspectives suggested that there was little consistency in what was learned or how what was learned translated to listening practices.

While there is a growing expectation that voice teachers understand vocal production through a scientific lens (Gill and Herbst, 2016; Rollings Bigler *et al.*, 2021), the majority of voice teachers do not interface directly with voice science and research. Across questionnaire and interview responses, only two teachers reported actively engaging with scientific or academic literature within the scope of their own practice as researchers. Instead, pedagogical training was the primary gateway through which voice teachers encountered science-based content. There is the potential through unregulated educational models for science-based principles to be misconstrued, poorly represented, diluted or overlooked, resulting in inconsistency in learning outcomes and possible faulty understandings being developed. Commercial motivations further complicate this issue, with individuals and organisations marketing themselves as the holders of knowledge and commodifying their perceived expertise.

Teachers are a product of their experience, with the calibre of their scientific understanding largely reliant on the quality of the educational offerings they both have access to and choose to engage with. It is left to the learner, as the consumer of this information, to discern its validity and value and to cultivate their understanding (Bozeman and Ragan, 2021), but developing criticality can be challenging and teachers may be inclined to accept what they are presented with. Trusting that what they've been taught is the 'right way' provides a sense of solid pedagogical ground and may explain participants' high levels of reported confidence in being able to identify underlying vocal function.

These systemic factors concerning how voice pedagogy training is both provided to and accessed by voice teachers offer some explanations for the range of individual teacher perspectives observed in relation to listening practices.

Listening Practices in Relation to Fact-based Pedagogy

Using a model of fact-based pedagogy to assess listening practices posed considerable challenges. Firstly, fact-based pedagogy is a conceptual model that is descriptive rather than prescriptive. There is no list of facts that can be referred to that fact-based pedagogy can be definitively measured against. This made it difficult to substantiate what could and could not be deemed fact-based. Without an external ultimate authority this task risked introducing an unacceptable level of researcher bias into the analysis process.

Secondly, there is a gap between a fact-based understanding of vocal production and how that translates to what is heard (Howell, 2025). In other words, having an understanding of how the voice works is not the same thing as being able to accurately identify vocal behaviours through listening. This may provide some explanation of inconsistencies across responses within a single category such as register-based vocal production. Responses that demonstrated an awareness of register function may have indicated a science-informed or fact-based perspective, but the sound was interpreted in varying and contradictory ways indicating that theoretical knowledge did not reliably translate to listening practices.

Additionally, listening practices may not be articulated in a way that directly reflects a fact-based perspective, but that does not definitively establish whether the teacher holds an underlying foundation of fact-based pedagogy. This study did not specifically ask participants for an explanation of perceived vocal function in a way that would test their factual understanding but instead intentionally aimed to capture a representation of all types of listening practices. Responses therefore did not necessarily demonstrate the extent of a respondent's theoretical knowledge or factual understanding.

To further complicate the issue, while a 'fact' implies an undeniable truth or fixed absolute, distinguishing between facts, opinions and beliefs is a complex endeavour that is the subject of ongoing philosophical debate (Hutchins and Kelley, 2023). Within science, facts might be contested and alternative theories presented, introducing contradiction or dispute into our models of understanding. In recent years the concept of 'alternative facts' has become more prominent, relating to "a willingness to persevere with a particular belief either in complete ignorance of, or with total disregard for, reality" (Strong, 2017, p137). In the context of this study, the high confidence levels reported relating to the ability to identify underlying vocal function indicated that respondents largely believed themselves to possess a factual basis of

understanding. However, as examined in the previous section on ‘voice teacher training’, beliefs of what is factual may vary in both content and quality and by extension the concept of fact-based pedagogy may hold different meanings for different people.

The EBVP model

The scope of EBVP is even broader, grounded in the concept of ‘what works’ (Ragan, 2018). In considering whether listening practices and subsequent teaching strategies aligned with the EBVP framework, the intentional openness of the EBVP framework, including aspects of “creativity, instinct, observation, and exploration” (Bozeman & Ragan, 2021, p390) meant that it was difficult to find grounds to exclude or discount anything as potentially evidence-based, particularly aspects grounded in ‘teacher expertise & experience’. The component of ‘voice science and research’, loosely equated to a ‘fact-based’ approach, presented the same difficulties described above. In addition, ‘voice science and research’ largely became intertwined with ‘teacher expertise & experience’, making it difficult to differentiate between the two. Because the study did not offer the opportunity for interaction between teacher and student it was not possible to evaluate how ‘student goals & perspectives’ might have been addressed, although interview respondents expressed that this component of the EBVP model was highly valued. Ultimately, as considered in this study’s literature review, while the EBVP framework provides an aspirational theoretical model it was found to have limited application in identifying and defining listening practices due to its diffuse nature.

CONCLUSION

Listening practices play a central role in voice teaching (Gill and Herbst, 2016), but an absence of research on the topic has left us with little understanding of how listening practices are employed in applied practice. This study provided insight into how teachers listen and what they determine through the process of listening. The results from this research enabled the identification of the primary elements that constitute current listening practices: musicianship, expression & communication; tonal quality; efficiency & ease; assessment; vocal production & coordination; body & breathing; and open or student-led approaches. They also highlighted attitudes and tendencies within listening practices that shape the way voice teachers interpret what they hear. and the meaning they ascribe to their

observations. These include subjective assessment, action as assessment, negative framing and stylistic factors, all of which featured prominently in listening practices.

In general, an objective approach to identifying functional vocal behaviours was not evident in teachers' listening practices. This despite a very high level of importance, and a high level of confidence, being attributed by participants to the ability to identify underlying vocal function. Given that the literature advocates a science-informed approach to listening as a model of best practice (Nix, 2002; Gill and Herbst, 2016; Rollings Bigler *et al.*, 2021; Moniz, 2024), the results from this study indicated that there is a gap between pedagogical ideals and applied practice.

The results from this study revealed a wide range of individual perspectives that resulted in a lack of consistency and cohesion in listening practices. This reflected the absence of a systematic diagnostic process or established process by which voice teachers listen (Santelli, 2023). The multitude of individual perspectives may result at least in part from systemic issues relating to the diverse and unregulated nature of voice teacher training and the predominant influence of 'teacher expertise and experience' on teaching practices (Ragan, 2018; Rollings Bigler *et al.*, 2021).

Limitations of the study

Despite best efforts to recruit participants from within the NEWZATS membership the sample size was relatively small ($n=23$), which limited the generalisability of this study. However, the data that was collected nonetheless held a high level of relevance to the research topic. The video samples included in the questionnaire were of short duration and average audio quality meaning they were not necessarily equivalent to a live, 'in the room' listening experience. This may have put limitations on how participants were able to engage with the performances and what they were able to discern by listening.

Results from the semi-structured interviews in this study revealed little about the identification of underlying vocal behaviours as participants primarily chose to address more superficial elements of the vocal performances. A study design that specifically and deliberately addresses how voice teachers identify underlying vocal production by listening may more successfully provide insight into this aspect of listening practices.

While one of the objectives of this study was to consider how listening practices and ensuing teaching strategies related to concepts of fact-based and evidence-based vocal pedagogy, it was found that the undefined nature of these paradigms, a lack of evidence connecting vocal production to sonic outcomes, and conflation of facts, opinions and beliefs made it difficult to apply these models in a meaningful way. It was found that these frameworks operate more as aspirational descriptors of best practice than as prescriptive models.

Future Recommendations

More research and sharing of expertise is needed to define the practice of functional listening and to improve understanding of its application. While best practice models tout the ability to aurally identify functional vocal behaviours, there is little in the literature to describe how this is achieved or what it looks like in practice. In addition, there is a need for more research linking objective assessment and measurement of vocal function to auditory perception, leading to a better understanding not just of what is happening biomechanically, but how that relates to sonic outcomes.

This study has opened the door to a highly complex and largely undefined aspect of voice teaching practice. For the field of voice teaching to progress towards listening practices that align more consistently with best practice, there is a continued need for advocacy for the inclusion of fact-based vocal pedagogy in teaching practices and for the delivery of rigorous, high-quality educational models for voice pedagogy. Particular and purposeful integration of theoretical knowledge with applied listening practices is a crucial step in equipping voice teachers with the ability to diagnose functional vocal behaviours and to link that diagnosis to targeted teaching actions.

Reflection and Final Conclusions

Throughout this study I found myself grappling with concepts of objectivity and subjectivity in voice pedagogy. While I began with an assumption that 'fact-based' pedagogy provided a black and white, objective lens through which to assess practice this project took me on a journey of discovering that there are still many areas of grey to contend with. There are parallels here with the pragmatic paradigm within which this study is situated, where any sense of true objectivity is tempered by the messiness of human experience (Weaver, 2018). The inherent complexities of working with voices may prove an insurmountable obstacle to establishing truly fact-based voice pedagogy, but efforts to progress towards the theory of best practice presented in the literature review may mitigate some of the more problematic areas of subjectivity and non-specificity presented in these findings.

I feel I have been moderately successful in meeting my aims and objectives for this study but have encountered some challenges that have limited my ability to achieve them fully.

- I have gained a thorough understanding of best practice for listening in voice teaching as far as the literature allowed but found that there were limitations to the current body of literature and associated research on the topic.
- I am able to explain what fact-based and evidence-based voice pedagogies are and how they relate to listening practices but have come to view these models as being much greyer than first imagined.
- I identified and considered the listening approaches and applied listening practices of singing teachers in New Zealand when assessing student singers and have provided a comprehensive profile of current listening practices.
- Teaching actions and pedagogical decision-making were found to be informed by listening practices in a somewhat superficial manner and did not reflect a structured process by which the identification of underlying vocal behaviours led to targeted solutions.
- While I found that models of evidence-based and fact-based voice pedagogy were not wholly applicable as a means to assess listening practices and associated pedagogical strategies it was interesting to consider their implications and limitations. Establishing that listening practices did not consistently feature the identification of underlying vocal behaviours revealed a gap between current listening practices and notions of best practice.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Approved Ethics Form

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL

RESEARCH STUDENTS

This form is to be completed by the student within **SIX** months for full-time students and **TWELVE** months for part time students, after the commencement of the research degree or following progression to Part Two of your course.

Once complete, submit this form via the **MyTSD Doctoral College Portal** at (<https://mytsd.uwtsd.ac.uk>).

This document is also available in Welsh.

RESEARCH STAFF ONLY

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

STUDENTS ON UNDERGRADUATE OR TAUGHT MASTERS PROGRAMMES should submit this form (and receive the outcome) via systems explained to you by the supervisor/module leader.

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

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

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

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

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

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

SECTION A: About You (Principal Researcher)

1	Full Name:	Joanna Fitzgerald			
2	Tick all boxes that apply:	Member of staff:	☐	Honorary research fellow:	☐
	Undergraduate Student	☐	Taught Postgraduate Student	☐	Postgraduate Research Student
					☒

3	Institute/Academic Discipline/Centre:	Institute of Management and Health
4	Campus:	Carmarthen
5	E-mail address:	jlfitzgerald02@gmail.com
6	Contact Telephone Number:	+6421 681 600
For students:		
7	Student Number:	2029971
8	Programme of Study:	MA Professional Practice (Voice Pedagogy)
9	Director of Studies/Supervisor:	Louise Emanuel/Julie Crossman/Debbie Winter

SECTION B: Approval for Research Activity

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

SECTION C: Internal and External Ethical Guidance Materials

Please list the core ethical guidance documents that have been referred to during the completion of this form (including any discipline-specific codes of research ethics, location-specific codes of research ethics, and also any specific ethical guidance relating to the proposed methodology). Please tick to confirm that your research proposal adheres to these codes and guidelines. You may add rows to this table if needed.		
1	<u>UWTSD Research Ethics & Integrity Code of Practice</u>	☒
2	UWTSD Research Data Management Policy	☒
3	Royal Society Te Aparangi Code of Professional Standards and Ethics in Science, Technology and the Humanities	☒

SECTION D: External Collaborative Research Activity

If there are external collaborators then you should gain consent from the contact persons to share their personal data with the university. If there are no external collaborators then leave this section blank and continue to section E.

1	Institution					
2	Contact person name					
3	Contact person e-mail address					
4	Is your research externally funded?	YES	☐	NO	☐	
5	Are you in receipt of a KESS scholarship?	YES	☐	NO	☐	
6	Are you specifically employed to undertake this research in either a paid or voluntary capacity?	Voluntary	YES	☐	NO	☐
7		Employed	YES	☐	NO	☐
8	Is the research being undertaken within an existing UWTSD Athrofa Professional Learning Partnership (APLP)?	If YES then the permission question below does not need to be answered.	YES	☐	NO	☐
9	Has permission to undertake the research has been provided by the partner organisation?	(If YES attach copy) If NO the application cannot continue	YES	☐	NO	☐

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

10	Does this organisation have its own ethics approval system?	YES	☐	NO	☐
	If Yes, please attach a copy of any final approval (or interim approval) from the organisation (this may be a copy of an email if appropriate).				

SECTION E: Details of Research Activity

1	Indicative title:	An Investigation into how listening and observing influence pedagogical strategies and decision-making in the voice studio		
2	Proposed start date:	6 th January 2025	Proposed end date:	22 nd August 2025
	Introduction to the Research (maximum 300 words per section) Ensure that you write for a <u>Non-Specialist Audience</u> when outlining your response to the points below: <i>Purpose of Research Activity</i> <i>Proposed Research Question</i> <i>Aims of Research Activity</i> <i>Objectives of Research Activity</i> Demonstrate, briefly, how <u>Existing Research</u> has informed the proposed activity and explain <i>What the research activity will add to the body of knowledge</i> <i>How it addresses an area of importance.</i>			
3	Purpose of Research Activity			

	The purpose of this study is to explore the pedagogical process of singing teachers in New Zealand, based on what they discern by listening to and observing student singers. The research will encompass an examination of pedagogical frameworks, including evidence-based practice and science-informed voice pedagogy and consider whether, and in what ways, current teaching practices align with, or deviate from these models. The notion of evidence-based or science-informed voice pedagogy is a relatively recent development in the field of voice teaching and this research will add to our understanding of how these theories are currently relating to practice in New Zealand. (this box should expand as you type)
4	Research Question • What listening and observation skills do singing teachers employ to assess singing students? • Are pedagogical strategies and actions determined by what singing teachers hear and observe? If so, how? • Are singing teaching practices in New Zealand aligned with an evidence-based practice model? (this box should expand as you type)
5	Aims of Research Activity • To explore the pedagogical approaches and processes of singing teachers in New Zealand. • To define and consider the role of listening and observing in pedagogical decision-making. • To assess whether and how singing teachers in New Zealand are employing models of evidence-based practice or science-informed voice pedagogy. (this box should expand as you type)
6	Objectives of Research Activity • To review current literature on evidence-based and science-informed voice pedagogy. • To identify what singing teachers are listening for, observing and hearing in student singers. • To examine the pedagogical strategies of singing teachers based on what they hear and observe in student singers. (this box should expand as you type)
7	Proposed methods (maximum 600 words) Provide a brief summary of all the methods that may be used in the research activity, making it clear what specific techniques may be used. If methods other than those listed in this section are deemed appropriate later, additional ethical approval for those methods will be needed. You do not need to justify the methods here, but should instead describe how you intend to collect the data necessary for you to complete your project.

	Triangulation for this study will be achieved by way of a literature review, a questionnaire, and semi-structured interviews. <u>Observation</u> This research project will involve making video recordings of several student singers, which will be embedded within a questionnaire for participants to observe. Informed written consent will be established before videos are made and distributed. The subjects of these videos will not be respondent participants in the study. No identifying information of the student singers will be shared during the study or in the final report. <u>Questionnaire</u> Data will be collected by way of a questionnaire which will be created and distributed online to members of the New Zealand Association of Teachers of Singing. The questionnaire will include predominantly closed questions (e.g. tick box, Likert scale), with some use of short-form open questions. Participants may submit their responses anonymously. Respondents to the questionnaire who are willing to participate in a follow-up semi-structured interview will nominate to provide their contact details. <u>Semi-structured Interviews</u> Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with a small number (<6) of participants. Interviews will be held via video call and will be recorded and transcribed. The resulting data will be analysed using Thematic Analysis. All participants will be anonymised in the final report. (this box should expand as you type)
	Location of research activity Identify all locations where research activity will take place.
8	This study will be conducted in New Zealand, using online communications. (this box should expand as you type)
	Research activity outside of the UK If research activity will take place overseas, you are responsible for ensuring that local ethical considerations are complied with and that the relevant permissions are sought. Specify any local guidelines (e.g. from local professional associations/learned societies/universities) that exist and whether these involve any ethical stipulations beyond those usual in the UK (provide details of any licenses or permissions required). Also specify whether there are any specific ethical issues raised by the local context in which the research activity is taking place, for example, particular cultural and/or legal sensitivities or vulnerabilities of participants. If you live in the country where you will do the research then please state this.
9	Royal Society Te Aparangi Code of Professional Standards and Ethics in Science, Technology and the Humanities: The code gives effect to the Treaty of Waitangi through a foundation of bi-cultural ethical principles from which the standards of the Code have been developed (this box should expand as you type)
10	NO ☒

	Use of documentation not in the public domain: Are any documents NOT publicly available?	YES	☐
11	If Yes, please provide details here of how you will gain access to specific documentation that is not in the public domain and that this is in accordance with the current data protection law of the country in question and that of England and Wales. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		

	Does your research relate to one or more of the seven aims of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015?	YES	NO
12	A prosperous Wales	☐	☒
13	A resilient Wales	☐	☒
14	A healthier Wales	☐	☒
15	A more equal Wales	☐	☒
16	A Wales of cohesive communities	☐	☒
17	A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	☐	☒
18	A globally responsible Wales	☐	☒
19	If YES to any of the above, please give details:		
	<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		

SECTION F: Scope of Research Activity

	Will the research activity include:	YES	NO
1	Use of a questionnaire or similar research instrument?	☒	☐
2	Use of interviews?	☒	☐
3	Use of focus groups?	☐	☒
4	Use of participant diaries?	☐	☒
5	Use of video or audio recording?	☒	☐
6	Use of computer-generated log files?	☒	☐
7	Participant observation with their knowledge?	☒	☐
8	Participant observation without their knowledge?	☐	☒
9	Access to personal or confidential information without the participants' specific consent?	☐	☒
10	Administration of any questions, test stimuli, presentation that may be experienced as physically, mentally or emotionally harmful / offensive?	☐	☒
11	Performance of any acts which may cause embarrassment or affect self-esteem?	☐	☒

12	Investigation of participants involved in illegal activities?	☐	☒
13	Use of procedures that involve deception?	☐	☒
14	Administration of any substance, agent or placebo?	☐	☒
15	Working with live vertebrate animals?	☐	☒
16	Procedures that may have a negative impact on the environment?	☐	☒
17	Other primary data collection methods. Please indicate the type of data collection method(s) below.	☐	☒
	Details of any other primary data collection method: (this box should expand as you type)		

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

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

SECTION G: Intended Participants

If there are no participants then do not complete this section, but go directly to section H.

	Who are the intended participants:	YES	NO
1	Students or staff at the University?	☐	☒
2	Adults (over the age of 18 and competent to give consent)?	☒	☐
3	Vulnerable adults?	☐	☒
4	Children and Young People under the age of 18? (Consent from Parent, Carer or Guardian will be required)	☐	☒
5	Prisoners?	☐	☒
6	Young offenders?	☐	☒
7	Those who could be considered to have a particularly dependent relationship with the investigator or a gatekeeper?	☐	☒
8	People engaged in illegal activities?	☐	☒
9	Others. Please indicate the participants below, and specifically any group who may be unable to give consent.	☐	☒
	Details of any other participant groups: (this box should expand as you type)		

	Participant numbers and source Provide an estimate of the expected number of participants. How will you identify participants and how will they be recruited?
--	---

10	How many participants are expected?	20-30 <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
11	Who will the participants be?	Adult student singers will be the subject of video recordings observed by respondent participants. The student singers themselves will not be respondent participants. Respondent participants will be professional singing teachers in New Zealand who are members of the New Zealand Association of Teachers of Singing. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
12	How will you identify the participants?	New Zealand Association of Teachers of Singing membership. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>

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

	Information for participants:	YES	NO	N/A
24	Will participants be paid?	☐	☒	☐
25	Is specialist electrical or other equipment to be used with participants?	☒	☐	☐

26	Are there any financial or other interests to the investigator or University arising from this study?	☒	☒	☐
27	Will the research activity involve deliberately misleading participants in any way, or the partial or full concealment of the specific study aims?	☐	☒	☐
28	If YES to any question, please provide full details			
	Audiovisual recording equipment will be used to make recordings of student singers to be observed by participants. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>			

SECTION H: Anticipated Risks

	Outline any anticipated risks that may adversely affect any of the participants, the researchers and/or the University, and the steps that will be taken to address them. If you have completed a full risk assessment (for example as required by a laboratory, or external research collaborator) you may append that to this form.		
1	Full risk assessment completed and appended?	Yes No	☐ ☒
2	Risks to participants For example: sector-specific health & safety, emotional distress, financial disclosure, physical harm, transfer of personal data, sensitive organisational information		
	Risk to participants: There is the potential for emotional distress or embarrassment if participants are uncomfortable answering questions regarding their teaching process. Participants may be identified by their responses. Risk that student singers in videos for observation may be identified. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	<i>How you will mitigate the risk to participants:</i> Participants will be given the option to not answer or withdraw from the study. Responses to the questionnaire can be submitted anonymously. Reporting of research findings, including interview transcription, will be anonymised. Names and other identifying details will not be given. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	
3	If research activity may include sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting topics (e.g. sexual activity, drug use) or issues likely to disclose information requiring further action (e.g. criminal activity), give details of the procedures to deal with these issues, including any support/advice (e.g. helpline numbers) to be offered to participants. Note that where applicable, consent procedures should make it clear that if something potentially or actually illegal is discovered in the course of a project, it may need to be disclosed to the proper authorities		
	N/A		

	<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
4	Risks to the investigator For example: personal health & safety, physical harm, emotional distress, risk of accusation of harm/impropriety, conflict of interest		
	Risk to the investigator: As an insider researcher I am known to the community from which participants will be drawn and there is therefore some risk to my professional reputation. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	How you will mitigate the risk to the investigator: The study will be conducted under strict ethical guidelines, with particular attention given to issues of insider research. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	
5	University/institutional risks For example: adverse publicity, financial loss, data protection		
	Risk to the University: Breach of data protection. Risk of bringing the University into disrepute. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	How you will mitigate the risk to the University: All data will be stored securely under password protection. All data will be destroyed at the end of the project. It will be made clear to participants that I am operating as an independent researcher, and I will be abiding by ethical guidelines. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	
6	Environmental risks For example: accidental spillage of pollutants, damage to local ecosystems		
	Risk to the environment: N/A <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	How you will mitigate the risk to environment: <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	

	Disclosure and Barring Service			
	If the research activity involves children or vulnerable adults, a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate must be obtained before any contact with such participants.	YES	NO	N/A
7	Does your research require you to hold a current DBS Certificate?	☐	☒	☐
8	If YES, please give the certificate number. If the certificate number is not available please write "Pending"; in this case any ethical approval will be subject to providing the appropriate certificate number.			

SECTION I: Feedback, Consent and Confidentiality

1	Feedback What de-briefing and feedback will be provided to participants, how will this be done and when?
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	I will provide my contact details to participants and a copy of my final report will be made available on request. (this box should expand as you type)
2	Informed consent Describe the arrangements to inform potential participants, before providing consent, of what is involved in participating. Describe the arrangements for participants to provide full consent before data collection begins. If gaining consent in this way is inappropriate, explain how consent will be obtained and recorded in accordance with prevailing data protection legislation.
	Participants will receive a preliminary email or cover letter explaining what information I am seeking and its purpose. I will provide an indication of the time required to complete the questionnaire. All participants will be required to either sign a formal consent form or check a consent box online. (this box should expand as you type)
3	Confidentiality / Anonymity Set out how anonymity of participants and confidentiality will be ensured in any outputs. If anonymity is not being offered, explain why this is the case.
	I will allocate a code to each participant and store the key securely on my password protected computer, which only I access. I will not name any participants or disclose information that could lead to them being identified. (this box should expand as you type)

SECTION J: Data Protection and Storage

	Does the research activity involve personal data (as defined by the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 “GDPR” and the Data Protection Act 2018 “DPA”)?	YES	NO
1	“Personal data” means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person (‘data subject’). An identifiable natural person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person. Any video or audio recordings of participants is considered to be personal data.	X	☐
	If YES, provide a description of the data and explain why this data needs to be collected:		
2	Personal data to be collected includes signed consent forms from student singers, contact details and consent forms from interview participants, and audio/visual recordings and transcriptions of interviews. (this box should expand as you type)		
	Does it involve special category data (as defined by the GDPR)?	YES	NO
3	“Special category data” means sensitive personal data consisting of information as to the data subjects’ – (a) racial or ethnic origin, (b) political opinions,	☐	X

18	Publication of data that might allow identification of individuals?	☐	☒
19	Use of data management system?	☐	☒
20	Data archiving?	☐	☒
21	If YES to any question, please provide full details, explaining how this will be conducted in accordance with the GDPR and Data Protection Act (2018) (and any international equivalents, where appropriate): All data will be kept in password protected cloud storage or on my password protected laptop. Any USB sticks used to store or transfer data will be password protected. All participants will be given a unique identifier to ensure confidentiality, and this list will be kept securely in the password protected folder. The data will be stored until the completion of the project and then deleted. In accordance with the DPA2018, participants will have the right to ask to see what data is held relating to them, and this data will be deleted immediately if the participant requests this, in which case the data will not be used in the project. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
22	List all who will have access to the data generated by the research activity: Only myself, the principal researcher <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
23	List who will have control of, and act as custodian(s) for, data generated by the research activity: Only myself, the principal researcher <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
24	Give details of data storage arrangements, including security measures in place to protect the data, where data will be stored, how long for, and in what form. Will data be archived – if so how and if not why not. All data will be encrypted and kept in password protected cloud storage or on my password protected laptop computer. Any USB sticks used to store or transfer data will be password protected and will be reformatted at the end of the project in order to destroy the data. The data will be stored until the completion of the project and then deleted. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
25	Please indicate if your data will be stored in the UWTSD Research Data Repository (see https://researchdata.uwt.ac.uk/). If so please explain. <i>(Most relevant to academic staff)</i> No <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
26	Confirm that you have read the UWTSD guidance on data management (see https://www.uwt.ac.uk/library/research-data-management/)	YES	☒

27	Confirm that you are aware that you need to keep all data until after your research has completed or the end of your funding	YES	☒
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SECTION K: Declaration

The information which I have provided is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge. I have attempted to identify any risks and issues related to the research activity and acknowledge my obligations and the rights of the participants. In submitting this application I hereby confirm that I undertake to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice which is published on the website: https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/research/research-ethics/			
1	Signature of applicant:	Joanna Fitzgerald	Date: 12 Jan 2025

For STUDENT Submissions:

2	Director of Studies/Supervisor:	Laura James	Date: 26.3.25
3	Signature:	Laura James	

For STAFF Submissions:

4	Academic Director/ Assistant Dean:	Date:
5	Signature:	

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

☒	I have read the guidance notes supplied before completing the form.
☒	I have completed ALL RELEVANT sections of the form in full.
☒	I confirm that the research activity has received approval in principle
☒	I have attached a copy of final/interim approval from external organisation (where appropriate)
☐	I have attached a full risk assessment (where appropriate) ONLY TICK IF YOU HAVE ATTACHED A FULL RISK ASSESSMENT
☒	I understand that it is my responsibility to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice.
☒	I understand that before commencing data collection all documents aimed at respondents (including information sheets, consent forms, questionnaires, interview schedules etc.) must be confirmed by the DoS/Supervisor, module tutor or Academic Director.

RESEARCH STUDENTS ONLY

Once complete, submit this form via the **MyTSD Doctoral College Portal** at (<https://mytsd.uwtsd.ac.uk>).

RESEARCH STAFF ONLY

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

STUDENTS ON UNDERGRADUATE OR TAUGHT MASTERS PROGRAMMES should submit this form (and receive the outcome) via systems explained to you by the supervisor/module leader.

Appendix 2: Employer's Permission

Jo Fitzgerald

Independent Voice Teacher

12nd February 2025

Dear UWTSD,

I confirm that in a self-employed capacity I give permission for Jo Fitzgerald to carry out the proposed research into 'Approaches to Listening and Applied Listening Practices in Voice Teaching' between January and September 2025.

Kind regards,

Jo Fitzgerald

Appendix 3: Information for Singers

INFORMATION FOR SINGERS

This research project forms the final unit of an MA Professional Practice (Voice Pedagogy) that I am undertaking remotely with the University of Wales Trinity St David and Voice Study Centre UK. The project has been approved by the UWTSD Research Ethics Committee. The study addresses the listening practices of voice teachers - what they listen for, what they hear, and what conclusions or meaning they make from what they hear.

What is involved:

Your role in the study will be to provide a 20-30 second video recording of yourself singing a song excerpt. Participants* will watch and listen to this video clip before answering a questionnaire relating to their listening practices. The clip will be accompanied by a brief description of your age, gender, and singing experience.

*Study participants will be members of the New Zealand Association of Teachers of Singing (NEWZATS). The questionnaire will be distributed to all members of NEWZATS (approx 120 people) via email. Participation in the study will be optional, and responses will be anonymous.

Follow-up interviews will be conducted with a small number of participants, whose questionnaire responses will be de-anonymised. Interviews will explore what teaching action participants would employ and whether/how those actions relate to what they heard.

Appendix 4: Singer Consent Forms

CONSENT (Singer #1)

- I, _____ voluntarily agree to provide a video recording of my singing for this research study.
- I understand that the video I provide will be distributed as part of a questionnaire to members of the New Zealand Association of Teachers of Singing and utilised in follow-up interviews.
- I understand that a description of my age, gender and singing experience will accompany the video.
- I understand that my name and other identifying information apart from that listed above will at no point be included in the study or shared with participants.
- I understand that the video I provide may be used in future publications or presentations relating to this research.
- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.

Signed: _____

Date: 17/04/25

RESEARCHER: Jo Fitzgerald jlfitzgerald02@gmail.com

CONSENT (Singer #2)

- I, _____ voluntarily agree to provide a video recording of my singing for this research study.
- I understand that the video I provide will be distributed as part of a questionnaire to members of the New Zealand Association of Teachers of Singing and utilised in follow-up interviews.
- I understand that a description of my age, gender and singing experience will accompany the video.
- I understand that my name and other identifying information apart from that listed above will at no point be included in the study or shared with participants.
- I understand that the video I provide may be used in future publications or presentations relating to this research.
- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.

Signed: _____

Date: 18/04/25

RESEARCHER: Jo Fitzgerald jlfitzgerald02@gmail.com

Appendix 5: Participant Information - Questionnaire

Listening is an element of voice teaching practice which can contribute to our evaluation of the singer in front of us. This study will explore the approaches voice teachers take to listening and what they determine through the act of listening. The purpose of this research is to develop an understanding of how listening is utilised in applied practice. Consideration will be given to models of evidence-based and fact-based voice pedagogy and how current practices align with these frameworks.

This research forms the final unit of an MA Professional Practice (Voice Pedagogy) that I am undertaking remotely with University of Wales Trinity St David and Voice Study Centre UK. The study has been approved by the UWTSD Research Ethics Committee.

Your participation in this research study is very much welcome and appreciated. It will provide valuable insight and contribute to an increased understanding of voice teaching practice in New Zealand. The invitation to participate in this research is being extended to all members of NEWZATS. Participation is voluntary. You can refuse or discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits.

What is involved?

- Participants will complete an anonymous online questionnaire.
- In completing the questionnaire, participants will be required to watch and listen to two short video recordings of student singers. Participants will answer open-ended questions relating to their listening practices. This is not a test and there are no 'right answers'. This study is a genuine exploration of the many different and subjective ways voice teachers may listen. The questionnaire also includes a small number of closed-ended questions on demographics, and opinions relating to listening.
- Estimated time to complete the questionnaire is 10-20 minutes.

In Addition:

- Participants will be asked if they are willing to be interviewed as a follow-up to the questionnaire. If you agree to be interviewed, you will be asked to provide contact details, and your responses will no longer be anonymous. Interviews will take place once the questionnaire has closed and will require a separate consent process. Interviews will address what teaching actions or strategies you would employ in the cases of the two video samples.

If you have any questions about the study, please feel free to contact me. I am extremely grateful to those who choose to participate.

Appendix 6: Participant Consent - Questionnaire

Your informed consent is required before continuing. Please read the following:

- i) I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- ii) I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.
- iii) I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- iv) I understand that participation involves completion of an anonymous online questionnaire.
- v) I understand that I may opt to be available for participation in a follow up interview, which will require forgoing anonymity of responses.
- vi) I understand that separate consent will be required for interview participation.
- vii) I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.
- viii) I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
- ix) I agree not to share or use the embedded video links outside of this study.
- x) I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous and any identifying information will be disguised.
- xi) I understand that disguised extracts from my responses may be quoted in the written report and presentation and possibly in future published papers or at conferences.
- xii) I understand that if I inform the researcher that myself or someone else is at risk of harm they may have to report this to the relevant authorities.
- xiii) I understand that data from this study will be retained under password protection for two years until May 2027.
- xiv) I understand that I can request a copy of the completed study and any reports or publications that arise from it.
- xv) I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

I give my consent to participate in this study (must be selected to continue)

Appendix 7: Participant Information – Interview

Listening is an element of voice teaching practice which can contribute to our evaluation of the singer in front of us. This study will explore the approaches voice teachers take to listening and what they determine through the act of listening. In addition, the study will look at the strategies voice teachers might employ in response to what they hear. The purpose of this research is to develop an understanding of how listening is utilised in applied practice to evaluate students and shape pedagogical action. Consideration will be given to models of evidence-based and fact-based voice pedagogy and how current practices align with these frameworks.

This research forms the final unit of an MA Professional Practice (Voice Pedagogy) that I am undertaking remotely with University of Wales Trinity St David and Voice Study Centre UK. The study has been approved by the UWTSD Research Ethics Committee.

Your participation in this research study is very much welcome and appreciated. It will provide valuable insight and contribute to an increased understanding of voice teaching practice in New Zealand. The invitation to participate in this research is being extended to all members of NEWZATS. Participation is voluntary. You can refuse or discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits.

What is involved?

- Following the completion of an online questionnaire you have been invited to participate in an interview with the researcher.
- The interview will take place online via Google Meet and will be recorded and transcribed.
- During the interview, we will explore the teaching strategies you might employ in relation to the two videos included in the questionnaire. Please be assured that this is not a test and there are no 'right answers'.
- Estimated time to complete the interview is 20 minutes.

If you have any questions about the study, please feel free to contact me. I am extremely grateful to you for offering to participate in the interview process.

Appendix 8: Participant Consent – Interview

Your informed consent is required before being interviewed as part of this study on 'Listening Practices in the Voice Studio'. Please read the following and feel free to contact me with any questions.

- i) I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- ii) I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.
- iii) I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- iv) I understand that participation involves being interviewed by the researcher via video call, and that the interview will be recorded and transcribed.
- v) I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.
- vi) I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
- vii) I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous and any identifying information will be disguised.
- viii) I understand that disguised extracts from my responses may be quoted in the written report and presentation and possibly in future published papers or at conferences.
- ix) I understand that if I inform the researcher that myself or someone else is at risk of harm they may have to report this to the relevant authorities.
- x) I understand that data from this study will be retained under password protection for two years until May 2027.
- xi) I understand that I can request a copy of the completed study and any reports or publications that arise from it.
- xii) I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

I give my consent to participate (required)

Appendix 9: Listening Practices Questionnaire

PRELIMINARY QUESTIONS:

1. For how long have you taught singing?

2. What genre do you **primarily** sing?
 - Classical
 - Contemporary
 - Jazz
 - Musical Theatre
 - Other:

3. What genre do you **primarily** teach?
 - Classical
 - Contemporary
 - Jazz
 - Musical Theatre
 - Other:

4. What student population do you **primarily** teach?
 - Beginner/Intermediate
 - Pre-professional/University
 - Advanced Amateur
 - Professional

LISTENING QUESTIONS:

Following are video samples of two different singers, each singing a different song excerpt. Once you have watched and listened to each video you will be asked to describe what you heard, as if you are a voice teacher encountering these singers as your students.

5. Before listening to these examples, is there anything in particular you will listen for in order to assess the singers? Please elaborate on your approach to listening and any particular priorities you may have.

Singer #1

6. Please describe what you noticed when listening to this singer and what (if any) assessment that led you to make about their singing in this excerpt.

Singer #2

7. Please describe what you noticed when listening to this singer and what (if any) assessment that led you to make about their singing in this excerpt.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS:

8. How important do you think listening is in singing teaching?

Not at all important				Neutral			Very
Important							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

9. How important do you think it is to be able to identify the underlying vocal function of the sounds you are hearing?

Not at all important				Neutral			Very
Important							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

10. How confident are you in identifying the underlying vocal function of the sounds you are hearing?

Not at all confident				Neutral			Very
Confident							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

11. Is there training you've received or a pedagogical model you have studied that influences the way you listen to and assess vocal function?

- Yes
- No

12. If YES, please describe briefly

Appendix 10: Questionnaire Responses

CO - Contemporary

CL - Classical

MT - Musical Theatre

B/I - Beginner/Intermediate

AA - Advanced Amateur

P/U - Pre-professional/University

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Since 2021	CO	CO	B/I	I would listen for resonance and position of the velum/soft palette, the quality of the breath, articulation, glottal taps, for unnecessary tension and for support coming from the torso	I hear joy in his voice. It sounds like he's having fun. His voice is in a light position for the high notes at first which helps him reach them in a relaxed way without strain. A few strong plosives-type words moments where he released air hard and fast which results in loss of vocal stability and the end of the passage. Quite conversational. A bit more support from his diaphragm would create better flow and	Amazing diaphragmatic support. Vocally fit enabling her to keep it all conversational and in character. Strong masky resonance that is found in musical theatre offers a lightness to the vocal folds. She's still being quite careful in places which is generating a little tension that is holding her back from reaching a really free position in both her body and voice. This is more a sense from listening rather than watching.	7	7	5	Yes	I have trained with The Voice Lab NZ over the years in vocal mechanics, anatomy, breathwork and with some voice pathology modalities. I am currently doing some training in the Alexander Technique with The Ageless Singer, with a focus on the menopausal voice. Much of my teaching is based

					sustainability in this mechanism.						on undoing old paradigms on what you're "not allowed to do" in singing rather than what you are capable of achieving. This generally entails letting go of tension students (and me too) don't realise they're holding. This survey is great food for thought. Thank you 🙏
25 years	CL	CL	AA	Listening to overall sound, consistency, evaluating what works, what doesn't, how developed that singer might be.	I would start with working on support, connection to breath	Work on depth of sound incl breath/mix and authenticity	7	7	7	Yes	Pedagogy lessons at Konservatorium, learning about how the voice works
40 years	CL	CL	B/I	voice quality and development; assessing a way forward to help	An authentic engaged singer, suitable sound for style; accompanying	Variety of vocal quality fitting lyrics of song adding to the message & character being delivered. whole body	7	7	4	Yes	Private vocal lessons with great teachers; masterclasses; listening to videos

				student develop their voice	himself in relaxed manner in whole body possibly tightness in jaw area; sound especially in higher area	connection with character. Great diction.					of a variety of singers; listening to singers in concert
10 years	CO	CO	B/I	I look at areas where the student struggles most and choose an aspect of that to work on first so they can feel and hear improvement quickly and then they start to relax. I'm listening for tone/timbre, vowel sounds, tension, articulation, story telling/phrasing of sentences and who they are.	in the upper range there seems to be constriction/strain/tension and pitch issues. I would ask if they had done any vocal warmups before singing this. There may be tongue tension. They also seem to be expelling all their breath on each phrase which looks tiring and meant the last word died off. I would try changing some of the vowels shape to see if that also made things easier .	There were lots of different voice sounds in this excerpt that, for me, led to inconsistency in the character. So would check that she knows about warm and bright vowels and warm up the start but still keep the speech effect. Help the fifth jump feel more comfortable. Work on a bit more control over the soft section at the start. Relax the jaw on the long ee vowels. see if she can do sol of pinesol less opera vowels and more the bright American tone of the rest of the song	7	7	4	Yes	I did level 1 and 2 of Jeannie Lovetri Somatic voicework and often revise the concepts when she offers a group of workshops online
25 years	CO	CO	AA	Adequate technique (safe singing practice), clarity of tone, diction, delivery and expression -	Unusual attack, distorting the pitch and tone. Lack of postural support, compromising pitch and resonance.	Singer is meeting genre requirements with delivery, nuances of performance are evident, has some technical training and is carrying the song fairly well	7	7	7	Yes	Classically trained, following that, have studied cvt

1 year	MT	MT	B/I	Especially teaching kids I prioritise making sure they aren't injuring themselves and storytelling, from there I prioritise diction and supported breathing, then soft palette.	I noticed there was an okay sound, but some of the vowel shaping stuck out to me as a bit unpolished, and some more intentional altering of the vowel sounds could help with clarity in the words and a more supported sound. As the notes got higher a more closed throat became apparent and the higher notes feeling less supported. Overall a reasonable full sound but some tweaks could do a lot.	strong mix sound, clear diction, some nice storytelling choices	7	4	2	No	
11 Years	CL	CL	B/I	The main thing is listening to the body, which is a little ooOoOoo. But hearing physiology, not acoustics is the idea. Of course, the sound is the product, but what you really listen for is what the sound tells you about the body and the	Just based on listening: very 'speechy'. Potentially 'high larynx' type laryngeal posture. The vowel positions tell you quite a bit about the vocal tract length, and here suggest pharyngeal tension. Singing like this for a while might get tiring.	The voice is quite dynamic, with seemingly good command of intensity as well as the purposeful use of vibrato, as is common in this genre. Speechy in terms of movement of the voice, but still resonant and 'complex' in terms of colour.	7	6	7	Yes	I have studied vocal function at a tertiary level in both speech and singing contexts with normal and disordered voices and continue to engage in active research. I bring this into my studio.

				voice production. With my students the majority of work is on 'technical' or 'functional' voice production, with musicality coming second, or used as a vehicle for learning new skills.							
10 years	CL	CL	B/I	Ease of delivery; connection to breath and support; onsets and releases of phrases; ability to deliver a phrase of music not just notes; ability to impart the story or emotion of the piece; ability to vary delivery for effect; accuracy of pitch; any problematic habits e.g. swooping, breathiness, tremolo; genre-	The high note at the start of the phrase is really tight and isn't connected- i'd be looking to make that easier or seeing whether he needs to drop down a semitone in key. It's a very note to note delivery rather than singing through the phrase. It's also fairly one dimensional in terms of delivery and I can't make out all the words so i'd look at working with them on delivery.	The voice sounds healthy and is enjoyable to listen to. A lot of my fixes would be window dressing. The word 'tract' is not coming across clearly. In the phrase 'Somewhere that's green', 'that's can occasionally sound a bit like 'thuts' and its popping out of the line so i'd be trying to match up that vowel with the rest of the phrase.	7	6	5	No	

				appropriate use of vocal techniques.		Generally I can understand all the words which is great. Not keen on the vocal emphasis on 'and' at 'he rakes and trims the grass'. Even if its a long note (I can't remember without seeing the music) she needs to aim for rakes, trims. Similarly, i'd watch the endings of words when the last letter is a d. Some words in American English you can get away with but 'weed' hee sounds like 'wee' and Reed' like 'Ree'					
15 years	CO	CO	P/U	vocal style, technique	diction difficult to hear in places, some emphasis on syllables was very strong and made it difficult to understand words	very polished performance and she seemed to have a strong grasp on vocal technique and how to get what she wanted out of her voice	7	7	5	Yes	Bmus vocal performance with lots of technique classes, Estill voice training and several other short courses
29 years	CL	CL	B/I	I don't have a specific set of parameters. I listen first and then make an assessment.	Some intonation issues, constriction, possibly false fold constriction, needs more body connection for greater breath flow	The song really suits her, her diction is good and she interprets the words well. . Very twangy but it suits the song. A bit pressed on a couple of the held notes at the end of a phrase and on others a noticeable release of vibrato.	7	7	6	Yes	I did a post graduate course on vocal pedagogy through Massey University and stages one and two of Estil

											training as well as attending conferences over the years focusing on various genres.
37 years	CL	CL	AA	I don't listen 'for' anything in particular to start with. All of me becomes like a sounding, listening, seeing and feeling board, open to stimuli coming from the singer. As a consultation progresses I might focus on range, tuning, vocal quality, ease of sound, whether there is a technique, but at the start I am completely open.	I noticed that the singer was singing with a more contemporary sound. I did wonder if he had also had some 'classical' singing experience. It was a nice quality sound but it didn't feel 'free'. He is singing with his natural 'chesty' sound and there's no evidence of a technique. No 'buoyancy' in the sound, no sense of easy depth of breath. All a bit tight. His head and neck position was balanced, and he had a range of about an octave. He 'fell off' the sound on his lowest note. Diction not always clear. It sounded as if the highest note was the highest he could go. Some nasality creeping in	I noticed that this singer has a lovely, bright, free, clear contemporary sound. It sounds as if she would navigate high pop and music theatre belting easily. She incorporates an easy high head voice sound when required. She is very expressive. She knew how to 'speak' some phrases and shape the text. The [i] vowel on the word 'green' is very 'forwardy' and straight for effect and then eases into some vibrato. It looks as if this singer will go far because of the fluidity and ease of her voice and the depth of expression.	7	7	6	Yes	I have a B.Mus. in Singing Performance and a PGDipMusTch, the latter which involved pedagogical study. Also I have completed Estill Levels 1 & 2 twice.

					towards the end of the song.					
45 years	CL	CL	AA	expression of text intonation clarity of diction body language in delivery	Really didn't get the words or anything that he was singing about.	Great delivery with animation and expression. She sang as if she really believed in the text and wanted to share it.	7	7	7	Yes NEWZATS conferences with International pedagogical experts. Years of experience in teaching vocal technique. But I am always learning something from every new pupil. No two voices are the same!

10 years	CL	CL	P/U	Ease in different ranges, quality of vowels (which can reveal tongue or jaw tension), and I will also try to see (if there's a visual element) whether they are showing signs of jaw tension, neck tension, or misalignment.	They have a colourful, unique sound, but it could use more twang in order to find ease in the upper range. The vowels are a bit thin, leading me to believe that he has a bit of tongue and jaw tension. His torso doesn't seem very active, which leads me to believe that he could use a better understanding of connection between voice and breath, within reason for these contemporary genres.	She has a good deal of twang and seems free and expressive with her voice. She seems to have a good understanding of connection between breath and phonation. She has a free jaw, but maybe some tongue tension.	7	7	5	Yes	Berton Coffin Vowel Acoustics, Barbara Doscher Functional Unity of the Singing Voice, Ingo Titze's work, Vennard's work, Richard Miller's work
about 20 years	CL	CL	AA	I do this by sensing, I don't bring words to the front of my mind before listening unless the student has told me something they are having difficulty with.	The video is small! I couldn't make it full screen. The singer has a nice mix in the tone and good fold closure. There is jaw and neck tension and a lack of engagement of the lower body, probably due to the ergonomics of playing the keyboard, which means the flow of air is restricted.	Beautiful tone, expression and good tuning. I had to listen several times to identify issues. The M1 register is not always confident. The body is not fully aligned so the air pressure isn't always optimal. This leads to squeezing on the long notes, quiet dynamic is too quiet and it sounds like there is neck tension.	7	4	4	Yes	I'm not sure what do you mean by "vocal function" so found it hard to answer these questions.
55years	CL	CL	AA	Posture, voice placement, vowel clarity and tracking,	Head posture too far forward, breathing too high, lyrics unclear, jaw seemed tight.	Excellent use of face. Good breathing. Diction clear, vowels very bright. Use of	7	7	6	Yes	Bel canto

				consonant delivery, breathing.		vibrato towards the end of long notes. Visually appealing.					
30 years	CL	ALL*	B/I	I'll be listening for vocal tone that is appropriate to the genre, tuning and I'll be interested in musical/vocal decisions that enhance the delivery of the text and music	The tone and delivery is appropriate for the genre but the start of the phrase is not vocally prepared in technique so it doesn't sound effortless and easy, which affects the delivery. Lower note needed more speech quality.	Beautiful tone and loved the longer notes that bloomed into vibrato. Lovely facial engagement and clear delivery of text, however I think the "loves to mow and weed" was pushed through the sound so it wasn't a secure tone or pitch. I feel that this delivery of the song was a little bit over enthusiastic for Audrey's character, and a simpler delivery of the text (including some more speech quality in places) would make this performance more sincere.	7	5	5	Yes	Estill, pedagogy classes at Grad school in Boston.
15 years, on and off	CL	ALL**	B/I	Freedom of tone production, musicality, communication.	His onset is really rough and disturbing his ability to pitch. It gets more pronounced through the excerpt - there's an increasing glottal crunch at the beginning of phrases. Tone is speech level and that's making it hard for him to hold pitch at the beginning of phrases too.	I can hear good basic technique for the style, although I'm not knowledgeable about musical theatre. There is good support and resonance, and some good breath control and management of sustained notes and vibrato. I wonder if there's some unevenness though. Here and there the	7	7	5	Yes	I have studied Estill but also have many years of learning Bel Canto based technique as a singer

					Breath support is all but missing - tone is breathy and unsupported. Very little resonance, and a lack of articulation, probably as a result of the lack of pressurised breath flow. Jaw is probably tense and tongue high, exacerbating these issues.	pitch drops out and I suspect that's to do with lack of sustained support. Or it might be about confidence - almost as though she commits then backs off. Or she might be making musical choices that lead to some unmusical phrasing... Nice, warm tone and performance/communication.					
20 years	MT	CO	B/I	Ease of production- Can I hear the words clearly? Are there obvious changes in register that is not intentional, Stylistic appropriateness- Does the way they are singing suit the genre they are singing?	His production is quite choppy which could be a stylistic choice. Some of the vowels are a bit distorted but this could also be a choice. He sounds appropriate to the style/genre that he is singing in.	Her singing is easily produced. No distorted vowels. Her vowels are bright and suit MT style/genre.	7	7	5	Yes	Somatic Voicework The LoVetri Method

18 years	MT	MT	AA	Because I primarily work with advanced amateurs and professional recording artists, I usually ask the client what they would like me to focus on. However, I would primarily listen and watch for efficiency and ease of production. If it was an advanced amateur, I might listen for genre-specific qualities.	The harsh onset and constriction on higher notes may make this sound difficult to sustain. Those elements also resulted in little variance in tone, although it was only a short passage. I noticed his head jutting in line with the onset, which may lead to discomfort. Overall, I thought the vocal fold function sounded stable, and it would be great focus on onset and constriction to allow more tonal freedom to express the emotional content of the pop/rock genres.	I noticed the bright resonance that is appropriate for the genre and also allows this singer to hit higher notes with efficiency and, I assume, comfort. She manages to blend some acting choices into her vocal without one distracting from the other. It is possible she may, herself, want to work on more straight tone at the end of notes, but I found it stylistically appropriate for this type of ballad. I	7	5	6	Yes	Contemporary Vocal Pedagogy, University of Virginia, USA / TOSCA pedagogy certification / 4 years working with ENTs/SLPs in clinic
3 years	CL	CO	B/I	Pitch, clarity of words and phrases, use of voice, evidence of breath control, awareness of vocal options within the various parts of their range, whether they convey their message	Good basic pitch. Needs work to even out his breath production and vowels (lip trills or similar). I'd get him singing the tune, without the words, on a variety of vowel sounds to ascertain which sounds feel easiest to produce to even out his production across the song's range. He's using twang or 'the ugly ah' to	Great characterisation! Lovely speaking quality in appropriate parts of her phrases. Good production choices, some chest, a fantastic mix with good support blending into headier top notes. Great control/messa di voce applied well. I'd pay to watch her perform any day.	7	7	6	Yes	15 years bel canto training with a well qualified well trained teacher who has performed opera in Europe. LTCL.

				effectively and perform well. I listen for facility of manipulation between vocal techniques and a variety of appropriate choices across the song.	good effect in his higher notes, but maybe more relaxation in his tongue would feel less strained for him. I'd get him to listen to the recording, assess his vowel sound choices and try and make sure his choices are consistent. I'd ask him to consider the intend of the words of each phrase and ask him what emotional he is wanting to convey.						
18 years	CO	CO	B/I	I will listen to accuracy of pitch (can they sing in tune, dynamics and accuracy of genre, phrasing etc..)	Pitch was a bit inaccurate, breathiness and dynamics were not balanced	Matches the song well, noce expressions using face and hands. Nice tone	7	7	6	Yes	Somatic Voice work with Jeanie LoVetri
22 years	MT	MT	B/I	I will listen for signs of strain in their voices. Whether I am moved by each performance. Evenness/quality of tone. Diction - whether I can	I don't know this song. I felt like there wasn't much feeling conveyed in the performance. Some of it sounded a bit 'pitchy' to me. The unimaginative accompaniment detracted from the voice. Sail on, sail on at the end sounded a bit pushed.	I know this song very well. This singer had a good control of her voice but I felt like she missed the whole character of Audrey. There was no 'light and shade'. Her performance certainly didn't move me at all.	7	7	6	No	

				understand what they sing.							
25 years	CO	CO	P/U	Pitch, placement of sound, excessive use of air and articulation.	This singer sounded pitchy and there was alot of air at the onset of the sound. There was also some nasality that may have been a result of a lack of forward placement.	Overall excellent. Great connection between the balance of CT and TA with a clear clean belt that was bright and forward. Lovely flip onto the upper notes that sounded effortless	7	7	7	Yes	Taught masters in vocal pedagogy. We filmed and assessed countless lessons that were reviewed by our peers and teacher.

*All genres equally

** A mixture of styles, but based on Bel Canto technique applied to everything

Appendix 11: Questionnaire Coding Summaries

Listening Approaches: What voice teachers listen for			
DESCRIPTIVE CODES	FREQ.	IN VIVO CODES	THEMES
Resonance	1		Tonal Quality
Sound quality	4	“Overall sound” “Voice quality”	
Consistency	2		
Tone	3	“Quality of tone”	
Placement	2	“Voice placement” “Placement of sound”	
	12		
Soft palate	2		Vocal Production & Coordination
Tongue & jaw tension	1		

Vocal production	1	"The sound is the product, but what you are really listening for is what the sound tells you about the body and the voice production"	
Onset/Offsets	2		
Vowels	3	"Quality of vowels"	
Registration	1	"Obvious changes in register that is not intentional"	
	10		
Breath	6	"Quality of the breath" "Supported breathing" "Connection to breath and support" "Evidence of breath control" "Excessive use of air"	Body & Breathing
Support	1	"Support coming from the torso"	
Body	2	"Signs of jaw tension, neck tension, or misalignment"	
	9		
Safety	2	"Safe singing practice"	Efficiency & Ease

		"Making sure they aren't injuring themselves"	
Tension	2	"Unnecessary tension"	
Ease	5	"Ease of delivery" "Ease in different ranges" "Ease of production"	
Freedom	1	"Freedom of tone production"	
Strain	1	"Signs of strain"	
	11		
Technique	3	"Adequate technique" "Whether there is a technique"	Assessment
Development level	2	"How developed that singer might be"	
Range	2		
What next	3	"Where the student struggles most" "Assessing a way forward to help student develop their voice"	
Problems	1	"Problematic habits eg swooping, breathiness, tremolo"	

	11		
Story telling	2		Musicianship, Expression & Communication
Expression	3		
Communication	4	“Ability to impart the story or emotion of the piece” “Musical/vocal decisions that enhance the delivery of the text and music” “Whether they convey their message effectively”	
Performance	2		
Emotional response	1	“Whether I am moved by each performance”	
Musicality	4	“Ability to deliver a phrase of music not just notes”	
Dynamics	1		
Phrasing	2		
Pitch	7		
Articulation	4		

Diction	6	"Whether I can understand what they sing"	
Variability	2	"Ability to vary delivery for effect" "Awareness of vocal options with the various parts of their range"	
Genre/Style	6	"Vocal tone that is appropriate to the genre" "Stylistic appropriateness - does the way they are singing suit the genre they are singing?"	
	44		
Open	3	"I don't have a specific set of parameters" "All of me becomes like a sounding, listening, seeing, and feeling board, open to stimuli from the singer" "I do this by sensing"	Open or Student-led
Student-led	2	"Student has told me something they are having difficulty with" "I usually ask the client what they would like me to focus on"	
	5		

Applied Listening Practices: Primary Themes		
CODE	Singer #1	Singer #2
VOCAL PRODUCTION & COORDINATION		
Voice production	His voice is in a light position. Good fold closure. Vocal fold function sounded stable. Singing with his natural 'chesty' sound. Has a nice mix in the tone.	Strong masky resonance offers a lightness to the vocal folds. Incorporates an easy high head voice sound when required. Good production choices, some chest, a fantastic mix with good support blending into headier top notes. M1 register not always confident Balance of CT and TA with a clear clean belt
Speechy	Very 'speechy' Lower note needed more speech quality. Tone is speech level.	Speechy in terms of movement of the voice (but still resonant and 'complex') She knew how to 'speak' some phrases. Lovely speaking quality in appropriate parts of her phrases.
Conversational	Quite conversational.	Vocally fit enabling her to keep it all conversational and in character.
Laryngeal position	Potentially 'high larynx'	
Vibrato		Loved the longer notes that bloomed into vibrato.

		Management of sustained notes and vibrato. Purposeful use of vibrato. Use of vibrato towards the end of long notes. A noticeable release of vibrato. Straight for effect and then eases into some vibrato.
Onset	Unusual attack Onset is really rough and disturbing his ability to pitch. An increasing glottal crunch at the beginning of phrases. Harsh onset (may make this sound difficult to sustain) There was a lot of air at the onset of the sound.	
Plosives	Strong plosives where he released air hard and fast	
Vowels	I would try changing some of the vowel shapes to see if that made things easier. Vowel shaping stuck out to me as a bit unpolished and some intentional altering of the vowel sounds could help with clarity in	Check that she knows about warm and bright vowels and warm up the start. (that's) is popping out of the line so I'd be trying to match up that vowel with the rest of the phrase.

	the words and a more supported sound. The vowels tell you quite a lot about the vocal tract length and here suggest pharyngeal tension. The vowels are a bit thin leading me to believe that he has a bit of tongue and jaw tension. Some of the vowels are a bit distorted but this could be a choice. (Needs work to) even out vowels.	The [i] vowel is very forwardy Vowels very bright. No distorted vowels Vowels are bright and suit MT
Tongue		Maybe some tongue tension
Jaw	There is jaw and neck tension. Jaw seemed tight. Jaw is probably tense and tongue high.	Relax the jaw on the long ee vowels. She has a free jaw
Control		Work on a bit more control over the soft section. Good command of intensity. Great control/messa di voce applied well.
Insecurity		
Instability	Loss of vocal stability at the end of the passage.	

Unevenness		I wonder if there's some unevenness though
TONAL QUALITY		
Tone	Unusual attack distorting the tone. Tone is appropriate for genre. Tone is breathy and unsupported. Little variance in tone.	Beautiful tone. Beautiful tone. Nice, warm tone.
Sound	There was an ok sound. A reasonable full sound. Nice quality sound. No 'buoyancy' in the sound. He 'fell off' the sound on his lowest note. They have a colourful, unique sound.	Work on depth of sound. Different voice sounds that led to inconsistency in the character. Strong mix sound. Lovely, bright, free, clear contemporary sound.
Vocal quality		Variety of vocal quality fitting lyrics of song adding to the message and character.
Resonance	Lack of postural support compromising resonance. Very little resonance.	Strong masky resonance Resonant and 'complex' in terms of colour.

		Good resonance. Bright resonance that is appropriate for the genre
Twang	He's using twang or 'the ugly ah' to good effect in his higher notes.	Very twangy but it suits the song. Has a good deal of twang.
Breathiness	Tone is breathy. Breathiness.	
Nasality	Some nasality creeping in. Some nasality that may have been a result of a lack of forward placement.	
ASSESSMENT		
Technique	There's no evidence of a technique. Phrase is not vocally prepared in technique.	Has some technical training. Seemed to have a strong grasp on vocal technique. I can hear good basic technique for the style.
Range	Had a range of about an octave. Sounded as if the highest note was the highest he could go.	
BODY & BREATHING		

Support	A bit more support from his diaphragm would create better flow and sustainability. Higher notes feeling less supported. Breath support is all but missing. Tone is breathy and unsupported.	Amazing diaphragmatic support. Good support Here and there the pitch drops out and I suspect that's to do with lack of sustained support.
Breath	Connection to breath. Needs more body connection for greater breath flow. No easy depth of breath. Could use a better understanding of connection between voice and breath (*body). Breathing too high. Lack of pressurised breath flow. Needs work to even out breath production	Seems to have a good understanding of connection between breath and phonation. Good breathing.
Air release	Released the air hard and fast. Expelling all their breath on each phrase.	
Air flow	Air flow is restricted (*body).	
Air pressure		Air pressure isn't always optimal (see 'Body')

Breath control		Good breath control
Posture	Lack of postural support.	
Alignment	Head and neck position was balanced.	Body is not fully aligned (so the air pressure isn't always optimal)
Body	Lack of engagement of the lower body, probably due to the ergonomics of playing the keyboard, which means the airflow is restricted.	
Head	Head posture too far forward. Head jutting	
Torso	Torso doesn't seem very active which leads me to believe that he could use a better understanding of connection between voice and breath..	
Neck		It sounds like there is neck tension.
EFFICIENCY & EASE		
Constriction	In the upper range there seems to be constriction/strain/tension. As the notes got higher a more closed throat became apparent. Constriction, possibly false fold constriction. Constriction on higher notes (may make this sound difficult to sustain)	

Strain	More relaxation in his tongue would feel less strained for him.	
Tension/Tightness	Tightness in jaw area and sound. The high note is really tight . All a bit tight. There is jaw and neck tension.	She's being quite careful in places which is generating a little tension.
Squeezing		Squeezing on the long notes
Pushed	Sounded a bit pushed.	A bit pressed on a couple of the held notes Pushed through the sound so it wasn't a secure tone or pitch.
Tiring	Looks tiring. Singing like this for a while might get tiring.	
Discomfort	May lead to discomfort	
Freedom	Didn't feel 'free'.	Seems free
Relaxed	Helps him reach them in a relaxed way, without strain	
Efficiency	Difficult to sustain.	(Bright resonance) allows the singer to hit higher notes with efficiency and, I assume, comfort.
Healthy		Vocally fit. The voice sounds healthy.

Ease	Could use more twang in order to find ease in the upper range. It doesn't sound effortless and easy.	Her singing is easily produced.
Undistorted		
MUSICIANSHIP, EXPRESSION & COMMUNICATION		
Pitch	Pitch issues. Unusual attack distorting the pitch. Lack of postural support compromising pitch. Some intonation issues. Onset is really rough and disturbing his ability to pitch. Tone is speech level and that's making it hard for him to hold pitch. Good basic pitch. Pitch was a bit inaccurate. Some of it sounded a bit pitchy to me. The singer sounded pitchy.	Good tuning.
Phrasing	It's a very note to note delivery rather than singing through the phrase.	

	His production is quite choppy.	
Dynamics	Dynamics not balanced.	
Style	Suitable sound for style. Singer was singing with a more contemporary sound. Could be a stylistic choice.	
Genre	Sounds appropriate to the style/genre.	Found in MT. Meeting genre requirements
Words	I can't make out all the words. Really didn't get the words or anything he was singing about.	Generally I can understand all the words which is great. Clear delivery of text.
Articulation	Lack of articulation.	
Diction	Diction difficult to hear in places. Diction not always clear. Lyrics unclear.	Great diction. Clear diction. I'd watch the endings of words when the last letter is a 'd'. Diction is good. Diction clear.
Emphasis	Some emphasis on syllables was very strong and made it difficult to understand words.	Not keen on the vocal emphasis

Emotion	I feel like there wasn't much feeling conveyed in the performance.	
Interpretation		Interprets the words well.
Authenticity	Authentic, engaged singer.	
Character		Variety of vocal quality fitting lyrics of song adding to the message and character. Whole body connection with character. Different voice sounds that led to inconsistency in the character. Delivery of the song was a little bit over enthusiastic for the character and a simpler delivery of the text would make this performance more sincere. Great characterisation.
Storytelling		Some nice storytelling choices.
Acting		She manages to blend some acting choices into her vocal without one distracting from the other.
Performance		Nuances of performance are evident.
Facial expression		Excellent use of face. Lovely facial engagement.
Expression		She is very expressive. Great delivery with animation and expression. She sang as if she

		really believed in the text and wanted to share it. Free and expressive with her voice. Beautiful expression
Communication		Nice performance/communication
Confidence		
OPEN OR STUDENT-LED		
Choice	Could be a stylistic choice	

Applied Listening Practices: Secondary Themes	
THEME	<i>In vivo</i> Codes
Subjective	Nice storytelling choices Enjoyable to listen to Lovely sound Beautiful tone Nice, (warm) tone Nice expressions Great characterisation Overall excellent There was an ok sound Nice quality Colourful, unique sound Very polished performance The song really suits her Great delivery It looks as if this singer will go far

	I'd pay to watch her perform any day I felt like she missed the whole character Her performance certainly didn't move me at all Visually appealing I hear joy in his voice It sounds like he's having fun I felt there wasn't much feeling conveyed
Action	I'd get him singing the tune, without the words, on a variety of vowel sounds to ascertain which sounds feel easiest to produce to even out his production across the song's range I'd get him to listen to the recording, assess his vowel choices and try and make sure his choices are consistent I'd ask him to consider the intent of the words of each phrase and ask him what emotion he's wanting to convey It would be great to focus on onset and constriction to all more tonal freedom to express the emotional content It could use more twang in order to find ease in upper range He could use a better understanding of connection between voice and breath I'd be looking to make that easier or seeing whether he needs to drop down a semitone in key I'd look at working with them on delivery

	Some tweaks could do a lot I would try changing some of the vowel shapes to see if that also made things easier I would start with working on support, connection to breath
Negative	Unusual attack, distorting the pitch and tone Lack of postural support Unpolished High note...is really tight and isn't connected One dimensional Can't make out all the words No evidence of a technique No buoyancy No sense of easy depth of breath Didn't get the words or anything he was singing about Head posture too far forward, breathing too high Not vocally prepared in technique Breath support all but missing Very little resonance

	Lack of articulation Harsh onset Dynamics were not balanced Unimaginative accompaniment Lack of forward placement
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Appendix 12: Interview Transcripts

INTERVIEW #1

Okay, so if you're ready, we will jump straight into the video.

Okay, did you manage to see and hear that?

Yep, that was great.

Okay, cool. So if I stop sharing that...all right? And did you want to see your questionnaire response, or are you okay? Happy to go on? Great.

So the first thing that I'd like to ask is, just based on what you heard in the recording, what you saw in the recording, what would you choose to work on with him?

I would, I really love, it seems like he's a singer songwriter, and he's really passionate about it. I can really pick up on his busy kind of joy for what he's doing. And he's got kind of a, he's got quite a cool vintage sound. Reminds me of the kind of sound of a voice, maybe out of America, or one of those old Chicago one of those bands. So I would want to lean into that. I would be looking for the slipstream to try and help him find a bit more ease as he hits on the keys he's creating plosives with his voice like *demonstrates*, and we could get a bit more freedom there, so he had a bit more flow in his voice and would have more sustainability and be less inclined to get fatigued if he did the whole concert.

Okay, great. So is there a specific strategy or a task that you would give him to address that?

If he's going to continue to play the key while he's using his vocal instrument, I would have a look at his breath work and posture so that he's really creating a muscle memory around the first part of his breath, where the first part of his breath goes, so he sets himself up for success, so um, so he doesn't fall into a thoracic breathing pattern, because he's concentrating on two things. But he could, he could get a little bit more air in, and then potentially, he's got a lovely resonance in his voice, so maybe leaning a bit more into his resonators, so lifting his soft palate, lifting his velum a bit more, and using just really nice airflow control so that he can, he can do the same storytelling and have the same expression and patterns, but not be hitting hard on passages within, or words within the song.

Sure. So is there something specific that you would ask him to do to achieve that?

I think first we'd take away the keys, and we'd just work with the voice and work on um, on some vocal techniques, and potentially playing with his song, with him just singing so he can feel it in his body, so that he's got kind of a good, like the pressure that's coming out is nice and consistent, but he's feeling it in his core. So he's using, what I say to my students, the struts, like, likening it to the struts in a guitar, you've got struts in your body that support you,

so, so that you're stabilized. And so I would encourage him to use his struts and have like, a nice, clean air flow, and work on building a muscle memory, so it feels really normal for him to do that, and then add movement, so that he's adding movement while he's singing, and then, and then add the piano back in, and potentially sit at the piano and sing the song in his head and feel it, but practice using that muscle memory while he's sitting at the piano just playing the song as well.

So we're saying for him to get more engagement in his body. Is that the idea?

No, I think it's more so that he has better control of airflow, so that he can articulate vocal positions and maintain them with consistency and clarity but with ease. So he's not adding tension. He's adding support rather than adding tension. So when he's trying to hit a certain note *demonstrates*, he's adding tension to get there, because he's not set up with the breath quite as well as he could be.

So you'd be looking at making some adjustments in the body to get changes to the airflow?

Correct.

Yeah, okay, great. These are tricky questions, right? And it's just really sort of challenging the thought process behind what you would do and why you would do it, and then how you would expect that to have an impact on the singer. So the other aspect of that is, can you think about, in your knowledge base, where has this information come from for you? Is it something that you have experienced yourself? Is it something that you've learned in a more formal setting? Is it something that you learned, you know, from, from your teacher as you were learning? Can you pin down where your thinking came from this?

Yeah, very much so. I think a big part of my learning has come from my mistakes, and it's come very much from what I didn't get taught. So I feel like I was very much coming from a paradigm where I would ask the why, and it was, "Don't ask why, just do as I say". And so I didn't get the whys and the mechanics around how things worked and why I should do it. It was just because I told you to, and it was and so I never actually understood how everything worked and it led to vocal injury. And there were other components for that as well. It was as a woman having a C section and being like having the fascia cut right through and had quite a traumatic cesarean for a child that had to come out very carefully. And that fascia, especially in the whole reproductive system, is directly connected to the all the fascia in the voice, and that whole core like it's directly connected. And so I had a lot of vocal injury and vocal loss, which led to a lot of grief and trauma, but also led me on a big journey to figure out the why. And you don't know what you don't know until you know it. And so I have taken a very holistic approach, and I've done a lot of training in vocal mechanics and study, but very much, my teaching practice is based on the organic human being. And it's like, why, why are you, what happened? What's happening for you in your body, and what are you feeling? For example, I had a student in his sixties who was in a very squeezed and tight mechanism, and he thought he was tone deaf because he couldn't get anywhere, and he clearly wasn't, because he could hear the difference between high and low. And it turns out that when he was three, his father had died, and it had really shocked him. And when he was four, he fell in a swimming pool, and he couldn't swim, so he went into a really extreme

thoracic breathing pattern, and he stayed that way, and he didn't know any different, because he was just a tiny little boy when it happened. And so when we stopped for a moment, because I didn't want him to feel like he was failing, because it's not like your guitar. You can't take it to the shop and swap it for another one. You're a human being. And so we stopped, and it was like, what's happening for you? Because we ascertained there were, there were, health issues like asthma or bronchitis and whatever. And when he told me that it was like... 'of course', you know, and he was, his whole body was stuck in a muscle memory of this very thoracically tight, fight or flight position that had protected him when he was a little boy, but he didn't need it anymore. And sometimes we don't even know we're doing that. You don't know what you don't know until you know it. And so I look at that guy singing the singer songwriter, and the first thing I see is his effervescence and the love for what he's doing. You know, that's really fair and joyful. And then with the visual picture that I've gained through the mechanics of the voice, because I'm a visual learner, and it helps me to be able to see in my mind's eye what I'm hearing, I can, I can sense that there's these pushing bits, these plosive bits, because mechanically, other parts aren't supporting a clean air flow. So it's a bit of everything going on there. You've got, you've kind of got to come at it organically and also understand that you're dealing with a person, and not something you can take back to the shop and swap.

That's a wonderful response, thank you. So if you're happy to move on, we'll go and have a look at that second video, and then we'll work through the same sort of process with that. Okay, great.

Okay, so thinking about this in a similar way, is there something in that that stands out to you as the first thing you would want to work with her on?

So something I would want to work with her on is, I love, I love how disciplined she is. She's really got amazing vocal control, and she's using her whole body as the instrument. I think the thing I would love to work with her on is performance, so we get a bit more of her coming through, even though it's musical theater and she is playing a character, it's, it's almost too careful, and so it's losing a little bit of the authentic sparkle that would and and I could say, well, you know, she's a character and so she's trying to be someone else, but I almost don't even get who that somebody else is, because she's been quite careful. So it would be neat to have a practice in a little bit of letting go. So there's a bit more of authentic sound to her voice, even though it's so mechanically correct, and she's doing all the right things and really strong, vocally fit, has a great resonance, all of that stuff, Yeah, it's very careful.

Okay, so is there something in particular that you would ask her to do, or a task you would give her to bring that out?

Perhaps maybe adding visualization while she's, while she's doing that, which I think she might be doing already as a character. But I think a lot of those ideas, it seems, are what she's been trained to visualize while she's doing it. And I mean, this is just a guess from a tiny piece of a video, to get some strengthening around what her character is that makes her stand out as a performer, because that's what we're there for, is to entertain, right? And to and to feel joy when we perform, perhaps some visualization with her own story of something that she can relate to while she's while she's sharing that and a bit of letting go in

places where, where she's holding on tight to keep it really controlled, it's about being vulnerable, a little bit more vulnerable.

So when you talk about letting go, that's more of an emotional letting go, or a physical letting go or a bit of both?

I think it becomes both, because as she emotionally lets go she can physically let go. This is something I'm training in a little bit at the moment, and also just exploring myself. But it's around that being vulnerable, because obviously you want to be so careful that you get it right, so you can tell the story well, but it's about, probably about trusting yourself and trusting the mechanism with mechanisms within your body. So I think she's already very vocally fit, and she's got really good air pressure and resonance and all of those things. So it's very much about the storytelling and her trusting herself so potentially, for that, it would be a visualization of something that's her own experience while she's singing.

Yeah, and again, thinking about where this teaching idea came from, for you, is that something that you've learned somewhere as a strategy? Is it something that you've developed in your own singing?

I think it's something that's helped me because I'm a singer-songwriter. And so when I want to say to my students, what is it that your audience wants? You know, what are the key things that they want? And you know, we've established that a key thing that they want, is they want to believe you. And so if I want to, I want to be if I'm listening to someone, or I'm paying to go to a concert or I'm going to a show, I want to be invested in the story. I want to believe you. Otherwise you're just singing, and it's the same with a storyteller. It's the same with any art. I want to be invested. I want to believe you. And so I think it's come from my own experience of sharing stories as a singer-songwriter. It's like I want my audience to believe me. So what does it take to bring them there? And it's honesty and vulnerability.

Great answer. Thank you. So is there anything else you wanted to add about either of those two singers, or anything about how you would go about teaching them, or do you feel like we've covered things?

I think we've covered things, I think it's been a really interesting topic of conversation, just the listening. No one's really ever asked me before, except when I've been training with my own vocal coaches, and it's like, what do you hear? But, but the real focus on listening and what it is that we're listening for has been beautiful. I've really enjoyed that. So thank you for the opportunity.

I've got one more kind of segment that I want to work through with you. There's this image that I'd like to share with you. I'll just cue it up.

Can you see that there? Oh, you're on your phone, so it's teeny, tiny.

It's okay, no I've got it.

So these are three different concepts that have come up during my research, and I'm interested in when you look at these three concepts, so that's teacher experience and expertise, student perspectives and goals and Voice Science and Research. Is there any one of these that you feel is more or less important than the others?

No, I feel like those are three things that are really evenly in together. You can't, you can't get a positive outcome with just one of them, because they'll all be in deficit.

So out of those three, can you tell me how, in your own teaching, how it might show up as all three of those things coming together?

I've got a boy called [REDACTED]. Can I use a student example?

Sure.

Yeah. And so I got an email from his mum, and it was the kind of email that made me feel alarmed straight away, because she called him tone deaf in the email and said he was going to get kicked out of kapa haka because he was too loud. And straight away, it was like the messaging around and to this child was that he was fundamentally flawed and in deficit with his voice. And I thought it's a big call to say that he's tone deaf because that's a medical condition. You know, she should be really careful saying that. And so it turns out that I'm studying te reo Māori this year, and I spoke to his kapa haka teacher, and she said, [REDACTED] is so loud that he throws the rest of the class off, and she started talking about [REDACTED] and it turns out I met [REDACTED] on school camp, and he's a really chatty boy, and he's really scattered in his mind, and he's a handful for his teachers, but he's really bright, and what I think he wants is just to feel heard and to have some intelligent conversation, but he's kind of stuck in this awkward age bracket where he's nerdy and his voice is breaking and he's a know it all, but he's also a bit shut down, and, you know, all these things, he's got confidence stuff, and maybe ADHD. And I said, Yeah, I can see [REDACTED], but we're not going to, we're not going to label anything. I said to his mum, and you know, I had a conversation with her and I said, Let's just let [REDACTED] be [REDACTED], and let's figure out what's going on. And so [REDACTED] came in, and he started, he was very scattered straight away. And I said to him, [REDACTED], I'm just going to say something to you right here off the bat. You're not at school, and I'm not your teacher. This is your time, and this is for you, and I know you love to sing, so be here or don't be here, make a choice now. And he was like, Ah, okay, I think I want to be here. And I'm like, sweet, okay, let's get down to work. And the first thing I did was I showed [REDACTED] how his voice works, and then I unders, we did some stuff on breath work. And it turns out [REDACTED] is a really thoracic breather. He's been quite bullied, and he's a bit stressed. He also has a little insert in his tummy where he puts in his insulin, so he's had diabetes since forever and and he's just got quite a bit of stuff, and I think he doesn't feel seen, and so [REDACTED] thinks that shouting really loud... his voice is really unstable because he's going through puberty and it's breaking, but he also doesn't feel like he's seen or heard. But he's smart and he's a show pony, so he wants us to be seen, so he's loud in kapa haka. So I talked to him about what it means to blend and when his loud voice is really a valuable thing for kapa haka and for his team. And then we started talking about the breath and getting his breath work going, and

understanding vocal positions. And we've only had three sessions, but he came out to me and said the other day, you know, everyone said to me, [REDACTED], Do this, do that. And he said, but nobody tells me why, and nobody tells me how. And it was like, okay, so this is, this is the big piece of the teacher experience and expertise. It's all good and well for me to tell him, but first I need to know what his perspective and goal is. His perspective is that he wants to be seen and heard, but his goal is to be a valuable part of a kapa haka group, so I can use voice science and research to support him to get there. But again, it needs to switch back to my experience, my expertise on how to understand [REDACTED] and understand his goals and bring him back home so he can be the best version of himself, but feel empowered to do that because he's an organic instrument, and he can't go back to the shop and be swapped. You get what you get, and you don't get upset, but you smarten up, you use what you got. And so I think that's a great example of how those three things I wouldn't know how to teach [REDACTED] if I didn't have the voice science, and he wouldn't understand. He'd just feel like I was telling him what to do, but I wasn't giving him the how or the why if I didn't have the voice science, but I still have to be human with him, and I have to lean into my own experiences and my own expertise sometimes, and feel what that child needs, or that person needs, so that we can reach their goal. Because he's not you and he's not me and he's not somebody else, he's [REDACTED].

That's a really wonderfully insightful answer. Thank you. So just one more question about the voice science and research side of things. I know that in your questionnaire response, you said that you've done some study in the past around vocal mechanics and that sort of thing. Is there anything that you do on an ongoing basis to stay up with for science and research?

Yes, heaps. Now that I've got the ball rolling with it? And just on a note about that, as I said, I'm a visual learner. I used to think I was a bit thick, because I had a lot of things that if I missed a piece of something around maths or science or music, I felt like teachers were talking at me, and it would go over my head, and then I just felt dumb. But there wasn't a visual aspect that went with it. But when they showed me what it looked like, I was like, 'Oh, I'm not thick, I get it'. And so I got some teachers in voice who added visual aspects as they taught and it just all sunk in. And then I could feel it more in my body. And so I'm doing as much of that kind of learning as possible. I'm working with, I don't know if you know the ageless singer in America. I actually sent them your survey and encouraged them to do it as well, because they work with the Alexander Technique. And there's a big focus on the menopausal voice, which I'm really passionate about. It's, um, two women who met at an Alexander Technique Conference, which the Alexander Technique is about releasing tension from the body, and then they adapted it to for singers and created their own teaching modality with a really strong focus on the Alexander Technique. And it's beautiful, because it's very much about what you can do, not what you can't do, but what you can do, or what you could do if you apply these tools. And it's really empowering,

And you're studying that remotely, are you? You said that's in America?

Yeah, they're in America. So I do that every Wednesday online. I do catch up with my... both of my vocal coaches are part of the voice lab New Zealand voice lab, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. So they came to my house in February for one weekend in a weekend intensive where I did quite intensive training with them, just to, you know, just to add more to my toolbox, so I had more that I could share. And then I check in with them. But I live rurally, so I

have to kind of go somewhere to work with people. So it was really exciting to talk to people like you.

INTERVIEW #2

All right. Well, thank you very much for being here this morning and for giving up a little bit of your Saturday morning for me. Very much appreciated. So we'll try and keep things pretty to the point but have plenty of time for you to share your thoughts. So the aim today is to talk a little bit about the teaching strategies you would use with the singers that you saw in the videos in the questionnaire, and go into a little bit of detail about that. So I emailed through your questionnaire responses. Have you got those there? Would you like me to share them on the screen? Or are you good?

No, I actually printed them off because I could not remember what I did.

Thank you so I will share each video in turn, and then we'll work through a few questions about them. So if you're ready, we'll just jump into the first video. We'll view that again so that you've got it fresh in your mind.

Yeah, sounds good.

All right, did that come through?

Okay, it's quite rough, but it's fine. It was quite rough, but it's fine. I think it should be all right, okay, depending on your questions.

All right, well, we can always go back and have another listen, if that's helpful. Yeah, so, um, so looking back at your questionnaire response, sorry, let me just have a look at this. So you said that you would start with working on his support and his connection to his breath.

Can I ask a question. You're talking about vocal Hang on, vocal function. So that's that's not vocal cord functions, but that's the whole package you're talking about? I assume?

Well, really, what I'm interested in is just how people are listening and what they're hearing and how they're processing that information. So it doesn't necessarily need to be functional, although, if that's what you're listening for or hearing, then you know...

Okay, yep, so that's what I assumed so therefore I was going for the breath, because I heard a lot of 'demonstrates' of this sort of idea, especially in the higher range. So I think that would be my first go to because I think also he would probably respond to that quite well, because he could quite quickly see some results.

So can you go into a little more detail about what you heard in the sound that indicated that for you?

I heard quite a heavy sound I've tried to describe without so not the visual, but just the sound, quite heavy and pushed, rather than relaxed and with a bit of freedom and vibrato on, especially the higher areas.

Yeah, and that's what connected that for you into the breathing?

That's right.

So is there, is there a specific teaching strategy or task that you would use with him specifically to work on that?

Yeah, I would, I would just start him to some lip trill sort of idea, maybe semi occluded stuff, just to get the breath into the right place, and the breath flowing in the first, first place, and I would also attack it from the other side, so I would tell him to relax so so that would actually allow for his breath to start working, rather than be here (demonstrates lifted chin and tense, lifted position) to just relax his body so he can access that better. So sort of a two way street.

Yeah, right. And so is there something, could you link that to something specific that you would expect that to achieve for him?

Yes, I would tell him that his higher would get easier for him. I would assume that he's not that experienced in singing so, so that would sort of be an angle that he then can feel the effects of what he's trying to do as quickly as possible. So so he then has something to go by for for the next steps we will be going to take.

Yeah. So using lip drills and semi occluded to get him to feel the air flow a little more?

Yeah, yeah. So I would extract, so he can think about actually what I'm trying to do, and then try to apply it in the song as well, of course.

And you mentioned some body connection stuff as well. Is there anything in particular you would do with him in that direction?

Well, I would, I would tell, I would probably, by then check his jaw, probably, and his head, his head will be quite high in order to get the sound out. So that's what I mean. So, so get it, get him thinking from the other angle as well. So relax your chin, relax whatever. So so he can, if this is blocked (demonstrating high chin and forward head position), then the breath can't breathe like can't work freely. So I would take that from that side as well, because often I find that that's easier for people to relate to when they don't have enough or not a lot of experience. Does that make sense?

Yeah, absolutely, yeah. And so this is maybe a tricky question. We'll see how we go. Do you, if you think about where this strategy has come from in your teaching knowledge, can you think about the basis of these exercises, where you've come across them, where you've learned them, we've picked them up, we've developed them?

Yeah, of course, by now that's been quite a path, like 25 years, but I feel I've been trained in Switzerland. So we do a teaching degree first, and then go into a performance post grad. So that the idea behind this to have something to fall back on if your career doesn't work, basically, so you have, or, you know, you have, a foundation to earn some money while you develop your your career, you know, something down those lines. So I've been reflecting quite a bit, and I feel like I've learned a lot of the basics during that time, because I've been I've been fortunate to have a teacher who explained it well. And I can go back to reference to that still to this day. So knowing how the whole, I call it the machine, how everything works, you know, in a general sense. In terms of breathing, I've done some extra courses on the side, on a private basis, because I just wanted to know more about it, and then, yeah, just picked it up through experience teaching or figuring out a pathway for my teaching. I'm very well aware that someone else might do it differently, but I have quite a clear pathway when people start to where I want to, you know, the first steps I'm taking so that that sort of developed over over time. Yeah, that's where I picked it up. But I always, I feel, I always felt, I'm I feel physically. I don't know if that's the same for other people, but I do feel physically what's happening in their bodies when I always had that. So that's that. I don't know if you know what I'm talking about.

That's a really interesting point, yeah.

Yeah, so I always, even when I started teaching, that's, that's my go to, I work from there, and I often notice that I repeat what they're doing, and then I can feel, oh, yeah, it's the tongue. And then I tell them, It's your tongue. You know, that happens often in the lessons.

So thinking back to your the pedagogy training that you did at the Conservatorium, do you feel like that was particularly geared towards classical singing as a style?

Yeah, that was plainly, I mean, it was late 80s, early 90s. I'm still that generation. You can't belto if you bel canto, so that's that's been a really exciting and and good journey over the last, say, 15 years, with also being here, maybe forced to do more musical theater, you know, going to that, because that's what the students want to do, that's what the audiences want to hear. So I just wanted to know a bit more about it and and I'm still, yeah, feel like that's... I'm not there yet, but yeah,

Have you found ways to be learning about that?

Yes, I've done a lot of research online. And I, I started to watch Jeanie Lovetri online just to get some some ideas on how I want to approach it and fit it into that pathway. And I've, I've done for a long time, I've, I've done a parallel road. So I would teach them classical and then

introduce the other side and and teach it alongside, and and now I'm, I'm thinking a lot about, how can I combine it right from the get go, so they can get so it's more bridged than it was when I started to do that. So that's where I'm at now.

Yes, so still evolving. It's exciting, isn't it?

Oh, yeah, always, definitely, yeah. But definitely, like, the base is absolutely classical yeah.

Mm (nodding). So if you're ready. Should we go and watch the other video and then work through the same sort of sequence with that? Okay. Here we go

Okay, all right, so working through the same sorts of questions, in your questionnaire response, I think you talked about authenticity and yes, sorry, I'm just having a look at the response here. So 'work on depth of sound, including breath and mix and authenticity'. So can you go into that in a little more detail for me?

Yeah, so a little bit in terms of breath, a little bit the same story as with the first guy, like just trying to get her a little bit more into her body. And the mix, I noticed that she and she wasn't consistent from the bottom up, so she went into quite a heady sort of (demonstrates sound) in order to get there. So I would, I would assume that she knows quite a bit, if she came she would know a little bit about what she's trying to do. So where I would work from there, from what, that's what I often try to do, like, where are you at? What do you want to achieve? Or, you know, so we can work from where they're at. And then work on the mix, so that's, that's a bit more smooth, so she's able to carry it up a bit better. in terms of the authenticity, yeah, I just felt it was not quite... it was a bit forced in terms of what she was presenting. She was a lot in her head or something that she's been listening to, or whatever, and it gets in the way of her singing as well, ultimately. So I would probably go to that point pretty quickly and make her sing from I don't know, her body a bit more than with her what she thinks she's supposed to do.

So is there a specific task that you use with her? Can you think of a specific strategy, if you had her in the studio, what would you be asking her?

I never thought about this. Hang on.

It's tricky.

Yeah, yeah, it is. I will probably strip it back and not think about interpretation. Get that out of the way and say, Okay, now we'll just think about how you're singing it in terms of sound and not loud, just in a sort of stay in a in one gear, not gear is not a good word. In one setting, not loud, not soft, so we don't go anywhere near just strip her back to that and and again, we could sing the song on lip trills, so she can feel the the pattern of and then she can feel what she's what she's doing, something like that maybe? See how she responds to that

Is that in relation more to the evening out of the mix? Is that what you're thinking of?

No that's to get her out of the performing mode. I feel like it gets in her way. If she wants to improve her singing, I feel she needs to start to think about her own singing rather than portraying someone something that she thinks she has to do. Just to get her into her own body. Does that make sense?

Mmhmm.

So it's sort of two birds with one stone, really, yeah,

Yeah. And so in terms of getting the mix to be more consistent, is there a strategy that you would use there?

I would, yeah, again, like lip trills are great, but quite likely use an e vowel and do some glides. for a start, just glide up and down and just not too heavy, not too light, just just gliding.

And is there something behind that specific choice of exercise that you would expect to have a particular ...

Yeah, with the E being like the, sorry, with the E being the middle road for mix, like that works, usually quite well. It gets them to, you know, it works the muscles the right way for a start. So I normally use octaves if they can't quite do that, maybe a fifth, but I think she could do octaves and then starting from the bottom, and then also I might, for the lower areas, start it from the top, and work it down so they can just think about having the same sound. What do I need to do to achieve the same sound? So meaning singing up, I need to open my mouth a bit more, that sort of stuff, and just stick with that.

Yeah, great. And again, just thinking about the basis of this, these strategies, or the origin of these strategies, would you say that that also comes from your background, your pedagogy training at Conservatorium, or is there some other time that you've picked this up?

Yeah, well, because of the style, because of this style, the whole mix idea probably came a bit more into foreground with doing more musical theater, but vocal cord functions relating to vowels, you know, and where does the vowel sit? How it works in your head, which resonances, all that stuff that definitely goes back to my, what I learned at Conservatorium, But just applying it in a different way now. So, yeah, yeah,

It's interesting to see how those things can carry over.

Yeah, that's right, yeah.

So just one more kind of topic for us to talk about. And I've got another document I'd like to share on my screen here, if it cooperates.

So these are three concepts that I've come across during my research on this topic. So can you see that clearly we've got teacher experience and expertise, student perspectives and goals and voice, science and research. And just looking at these three concepts is there an element that you think is more or less important than any of the others?

(Takes time) I was just thinking, not, not really. I'm trying to have the, this student perspective and the goals sort of at the center, but the other two are in my backpack, so I think they're all sort of equally important.

And do you feel that they show up equally in your teaching as well?

Mmm, as I said, Voice Science and oh, well, in a way, yeah, they do.

Can you give me an example of what that looks like?

Yeah, Voice Science, like with like, moving into the other styles. That's been probably more important recently, I found it quite exciting, where it went from where I did my studies to where we are today in terms of Voice Science. So I'm just riveted by it and trying to really find out and use it in the studio as well. Just not necessarily explaining to the students what I'm doing, but just having it in the back of my mind. Yeah.

So, you've already talked about some of the things that you're doing to explore these things. Can you give me a little more detail about the research that you've been doing, or what sort of sources you've been looking at for that?

Yeah, I'm just, yeah. I'll just Google a lot if I have a question. I just, I just had a student start, and she hadn't, she's probably 25/30. She might be a good example of what I've been doing recently. She came and she could not find a note if your life depended on it. So we've been thinking about, how can we make her sing the right pitch in the first place? And then so you go, you Google, and you see what other teachers are doing, and talk to other people. I have students that are leading choirs, so we think about strategies, and then at some point, I really wanted to know what's going on in the brain in order to sing the right pitch. You know, what part of your brain is involved in that. So that's what we've been doing the last couple of weeks, figuring out what, what sort of is, where can we make a link in the brain for her, you know, to get to the point faster maybe. Yeah, so that's definitely something and, and then yeah, as I said, Jeanie Lovetri, I think she was, she was really good because she does the crossover. She knows both sides really well. So just watching her for some ideas of exercises and things and how, you know, pathways, yeah. So sort of that

Great. Well, that's been really wonderful. Thank you for your responses. You've been really generous with your thoughts. I hope you've enjoyed the process.

INTERVIEW #3

All right, could you see and hear that okay?

Yep, that's all good.

Great. So jumping into the first question, it's really just based on what you heard in the recording. What would you choose to work on with this student?

Probably relaxation, and I'd probably take all the brightness out to start with, and work with that sort of, (demonstrates) sighing, hooting, just, just sliding through that range and then seeing if those higher notes came out easier on that darker, more relaxed sound.

Okay, so can you talk a little more about why you would go in that direction?

Because to me, it looks quite tight. It looks like a lot of tension. So, so that nice sighing breathing would kind of relax all of, all of everything, hopefully, and just, yeah, open everything up a little bit. Hopefully it would relax that jaw, open up the back of the throat, and just, just get back to what is your natural voice? What do you sound like with no effect, without trying hard, without trying to be whoever the artist is of that song, just find out what's their voice like normal.

Okay, cool. So is there a particular task that you would give him?

So I'm going to assume that they've done no warm up or anything. So, so probably lip trill, sireny kind of (demonstrates) kind of thing, and then into the (demonstrates hooty descending free slide) and then maybe into the depending on how that went, whether it needed more in the slidey range, or whether I felt that was going well, then maybe (demonstrates light "yoohoo") in that higher kind of range to see how, to see what his high notes actually were, to see if that is the song too high for him.

Okay, great. So, I mean, you've kind of answered this already a little bit, but maybe we can go a bit further. Is this specific to something you heard in the recording, or would it be a more general approach to relaxation?

I would probably use it a lot with a lot of people as a basic start to any lesson and a warm up, particularly if that's what I heard. First up was quite a lot of tension, quite a lot of struggle,

Yeah, so a bit of both. It's sort of specific to the tension and constriction that you're hearing, but also something you would employ pretty generally with a lot of people?

Yeah. Because, I mean, most people come in from a busy life, and you just need to get them grounded in the new space and go, oh yeah, that's right. I'm here to sing. My body can just click into this now. What's an easy way of doing it? And that's that repetitive kind of lip trill, sireny kind of owl hoot tends to get them in the zone real quick.

Nice. So would you expect a specific outcome from that exercise?

Yeah, I hope that I would get a more open, more relaxed sound, even if it wasn't those bright, poppy vowels and something where the singer felt super comfortable just with the sound of their voice and in this in the space. So just separate from the song, without even thinking about the song, just going Oh yeah, that's right. I feel confident in my body. I feel confident in my voice. Oh, I can sing high notes, yay me.

Yeah. Okay, great. So if you think about the type of strategy you've talked about using. Can you identify what the basis of that strategy might be, or where you've come across it, or how you've developed it in your teaching?

Yeah, I think that, like from a choir background, they did a lot of lip trills, but I didn't really understand the purpose until I did the Somatic, listening to Jeanie and the Somatic Voicework stuff. You know, the introductions. I've listened to a lot of her introductions, and then did level one and two and stuff. But I've just subscribed to that latest series, but I haven't had a chance to watch it yet, but just Yeah, to see the immediate results that she gets, just by taking away all the peripheral stuff and going straight back to, how does it feel in your body? What can you hear? What can you hear and what can you feel? Are my questions all the time.

Okay, great. So if that kind of, do you feel that that covers enough about that first singer? Is there anything else you'd like to add?

I'm just looking at my notes. When I listened to it, I must have listened to it a few times which is good, so I went, Oh, there might be tongue tension. And so that I'd be looking at, you know, the massage under here (demonstrating position under chin), or singing with your tongue out, or singing in a mirror and seeing what his tongue was actually doing. If, if that was, if none of that other stuff had really worked, I'd be going, Okay, well, where is the tension then? So, yeah. So then my next place to go, if it wasn't obvious, in the body, then where in the, where is it so, yeah, I'd probably go for the tongue next.

So is that related to a general sense of hearing tension, or were you hearing tongue tension specifically? Was there something in the sound that was telling you that that might be something to look at?

I can't recall right now, but the fact that I wrote it down means that maybe I did feel that he was pulling his tongue back when he was reaching for those high notes. Yeah, but I'm not remembering that in the moment. Now. I'm remembering that based on what I wrote earlier, if that's helpful or unhelpful I'm not sure.

Yeah, sure. That's great. All right, so should we jump straight into the other video and go through the same sort of process with the second singer?

Yeah, go for it,

Okay. Here we go.

Yeah, I found this one harder, because it's not my level of expertise. Mine is baby beginners and so, yeah, so it was nice, like, obviously the start for me was really speechy, and I guess I'd be asking her a lot "was that your intention? Did you mean it to sound like that?" Because for me, it was a contrast, did you, because I don't know the song and I don't know the context and all that kind of thing, I'd be asking a lot of questions of her. Like, how much of it was intentional, and how much was it I'm not quite in the song yet. That's why I made it quite so speechy and quite so bright, you know, and maybe not as relaxed as the rest of the song. I'd probably ask her to sing in a mirror too and look at how open your mouth was. I'd be wondering if, on those longer notes, if she wanted to open her mouth a little bit more, she might get a bit more resonance and a slightly different vowel sound that might make it easier for her.

Yeah, so did you hear something in that sound that you would like to make easier?

Yeah, yeah, I once again, felt like she knew it really well, and she was singing it, probably without listening to herself. If that makes sense? So, yeah, I'd be saying, did you know that your long notes sounded like this? What about if we tried them like this, you know, with a more open mouth, because, beautiful crescendos on some of them and stuff like that. Really lovely. Yeah. I still think there was some tension there too.

So, can you say a little more specifically what you heard that you would want to address in that way, and the difference that you would like it to make, or expect it to make?

Cool. So that very start bit for me, was probably too speechy. So I'd talk about her like sighing out the sentences a little bit more, unless that's what it's supposed to sound like, the yeah and the big, long notes, just if she opened her mouth, I think it would have a more relaxed tone. Yeah. How much of that bright American vowel sounds did she want, and did she want it in the whole song? Because, to me, it wasn't consistent.

So, she is actually American. So it's a native accent,

Yeah, so it's her, but interesting that it's not consistent, you know? So there's a warmer, more operatic sound toward the end of the song? I don't know if that's a character development thing or if, that would be my preference. I liked the warmer, rounder, more open, relaxed ending that she got to, but is that personal preference? rather than what that's supposed to sound like. I feel unqualified to judge her.

Okay, well, that's, you know, that's a self awareness thing, isn't it? We recognize our own limitations.

Yeah and that's why I said I'd be asking a lot of questions, you know, if you, have you copied somebody, is this your voice, you know? And, and maybe we'd sing it just on a vowel, sing the whole thing with no words, and just sing it on a on a nice, warm, open vowel, and just see if she felt any more ease in that.

Okay, so is there a particular vowel that you would choose to do that?

I would probably go straight to the other end and go ooh, and then maybe go Oh, and then maybe go ah on the third time through, but a warmer ah rather than a brighter ah, and just ask her which one felt easier, and what was, what did she feel her mouth shape was inside and out when she made each of those. And yeah, if it made it easier, so that she could identify that and then transfer it into the song and the words.

So what would you expect that to achieve? To work through that vowel sequence,

I hope that she would hear a difference in the different vowel sounds that she made, and she would feel an obvious ease in one of those vowel shapes, and then you could use that shape to shape all the vowels. Does that make sense? You use, yeah, the width and the length of the mouth and the position of the tongue, and then put your words around that a little bit more, unless you were trying to do a specific, you know, more twang on a certain sound, or a brightness on a certain sound, because the word meant it needed that, or if she needed to achieve that, to do the leaps, you know, then, then I'd look at modifying the vowel again, but yeah, finding, finding the one that works best for her first, and then singing the whole song on that one.

Okay, cool. And does that have, as a strategy does this come from the same sort of basis of understanding. Have you picked that up through Somatic Voicework, mostly? Or have there been other ways that you've worked with this concept before?

Um, I can't remember. Maybe. I feel like Jeanie uses vowels a lot to get the sound that she's looking for. So she'll look to bright vowels to create a stronger, brighter sound, or she'll use dark vowels to create a stronger, darker sound. I think I, yeah, I'm just always looking for what is the easiest in your natural voice, how can we use that to our advantage in this song?

Great. So are you happy with rounding that part of things out there, and I've got one other sort of topic to have a look at.

Yeah, if you felt like that answered the question, and you've got enough information, I'm all good.

Yeah, that's great, wonderful. So I'm just going to share something else on my screen. Hang on a second. Okay, so you can see that? Okay, all right, so these are three concepts that I've come across during my research that I just wanted to take a look at. So we've got teacher experience and expertise, student perspectives and goals and Voice Science and Research. And my question for you is, looking at these three concepts, is there an element that you think is more or less important than the others?

No I think they're all equally, cause I mean you have to start with the student, really, don't you, but you only know to do that if you've got experience and expertise, and you can only help them in a healthy way if you understand Voice Science and Research. Yeah, to me, they all intertwine and I can't, well, I guess for me, maybe I would elevate the students. I need the student to come away with a positive experience, I guess I would put that above making sure that I use my expertise or or anything.

And what's your motivation for that do you think?

Singing is hard, and it's really personal, and it's very brave for anyone to open their mouth and share their sound with anyone. It's harder than an instrument, by far. So I think it's just so personal, and people are so ready to be judgy. You know, some people just don't know, you know, most people don't know what they don't know. They just want to sing, so they you know, my job is to help them in whatever way possible and help them to feel good about themselves and what they can do and what they should be able to do by next week, kind of thing, if they go away and do it a little bit more.

Yeah. So that sounds like that's how that would play out in your teaching.

Absolutely, yeah.

So apart from that, you think all three are pretty equal in theory, and then in the application in your studio, you maybe prioritize that student experience a little bit. Is that right?

Yeah, yeah, I probably would, actually, because my experience and expertise circle is kind of small, and my vocal science and research is only what I've learned through Somatic because I'm a piano teacher who happens to teach singing you know? So, yeah. So it's been, it's been a real growth curve, and, yeah, just just safe and healthy singing, and the student being able to feel like they can open their mouth and be confident in their sound is, yeah. So it's really coaching,

Are you using any other sources outside of Somatic Voicework, or is that your go-to?

That would be it for me, that's my go to. Yeah,

Okay, great. I'm going to stop sharing that. And really that wraps up the questions so I can stop the recording.

INTERVIEW #4

Yes, we are recording. Okay, cool. So, basically, the interview today is to look at what teaching strategies you would use for the singers who you saw in the questionnaire. So we'll go through one by one, and I'll replay the videos for you so you can get a fresh look at them, and then we'll go straight into talking a little bit about what you would choose to do and why, and dig into that a little bit that .Okay, so hopefully my sharing works. Give me a second so

Okay, so if you want to re-watch that at any time, just let me know.

Cool will do.

But for now, I'll stop sharing that. There we go. And so the first question is really based on what you heard in the recording, what would you choose to work on with a student?

I would first work on their alignment, because I saw quite a bit of downward pull, as you would say in Alexander Technique, just his head was coming quite forward.

Just make sure that he's actually comfortable sitting at the instrument he is at while singing, if you really performs with a piano or a keyboard. That is, yeah. So I'd work on the alignment first, then I'd make sure, yeah,

I'm just going to jump in and ask is there a specific exercise or task that you would use to address that?

I would first take him away from the keyboard just so he could build some bodily awareness without adding in that extra element of being at the keyboard and just have him analyze standing up straight, how he feels most comfortable and just talking through what alignment means. You know that line through, as we learned at the newzats conference, the tragus, shoulder, hip, knees, and then that bone at the side of the foot, I think was the where the bottom point was just feeling that all of that is aligned.

Of course, he's not going to worry about loose knees while he's sitting, but I think it would be really useful for him to think about pelvic tilt, because I think that was also impacting what was going on with his neck there, but it was just a little bit. There was a little extra curvature in the back. I felt like

Do you think that was mostly a visual observation, or do you think that there were some aspects in the sound that would make that a priority for you as well?

I think if I didn't see him, I would still wonder what was going on with alignment. Because I think when you have a student, that's like (demonstrates forward head position), you can hear the ease part, that the lack of ease, especially in the higher portion of the range, so particularly when he was going to the top of the melody in that clip, that I mean, it didn't sound particularly easy functionally at the beginning, but it certainly sounded less and less easy as he ascended. And that would mean, if I was hearing without seeing, it would mean, okay, the larynx is not free to function as it needs to. There's something going on that's locking the larynx in a particular position and alignment would be part of that

Cool. Was there anything else that you heard that you would want to address?

After we sorted out alignment, I'd probably make sure that the breath is working functionally for him the best way it could. It sounded like it wasn't horrible, like he was still using air for production of sound, but it just felt like he wasn't aware of how the air functions in different parts of his range, or if he wanted to find different color choices. Because it seems like he would want a different color choice at the top of the range in that song, but didn't maybe know how to achieve it.

And I think maybe having more awareness about how the breath functions would help that. I'd probably start with something basic, like accent breathing, where he's laying on the ground, building that awareness and going from there, and then probably just watching different videos of how the breath functions when you're just breathing, and then some different videos and information on how the breath functions when you're phonating.

I find that sometimes with my students, all I need to say is, when you're singing higher, the breath needs to be moving faster, you know, but you don't have as much breath pressure. You literally can't fit as much air through because the tube is smaller, right?

So, yeah, just building on that and using accent method to assist with that.

So you mentioned the breath affecting the color choices at the top, am I paraphrasing that correctly? Correct me, if I'm wrong, So how would you maybe expect that breath work to then influence what you were hearing in that way?

Well, I think the alignment and breath work, that goes hand in hand, right? If his larynx is free to do whatever it needs to do, that's going to change the breath pressure inherently. So I guess it also depends, like, which one is more effective in making sure things are actually functioning, how they need to function, when the pitch is changing and there's that thyroid tilt and all that.

Can you say your question one more time?

Sorry, by working on alignment and breathing, is there a direct link between that and how you would expect that change to show up in the colors that were available in the top?

All right, so I suppose I'm working in alignment and breath. First, we would see what his body naturally wants to do in that part of the range, right, and just build comfortability in whatever registration comes out and feels the most natural and normal in a particular range. And then I would add some exercises that would give other color options, show that actually you can slightly, in a safe way, change the parameters of breath pressure and things like that to create different colors in the same range, right? So, like, if he, as a contemporary singer, is more prone to having more m1 through the highest portion of that song he was just singing, and he can replicate that in a healthy way with alignment and breath function that feels more comfortable. Then I might add some exercises that use m2 in that same range so that he could pick and choose depending on what the words were or what the style was that he was singing. He could switch from one to the other quite easily, and know how to do that and how the breath functions and those different registeral choices.

Perfect. Yeah, so I think you've already referred to this a little bit with accent method and Alexander technique. But is there any other basis for these exercises? So, from your from your learning, from your experience, where, where's your perspective come from on choosing these strategies?

Probably in building bodily awareness I use some of my background with body mapping, and the stuff that Barbara Conable has done, which we obviously know is also related to Alexander technique.

So in terms of alignment, like, that's where I'm coming from. I studied a bit of that.

I have a very basic understanding of Feldenkrais. I wouldn't say that. I use that heaps. However, I do like to use movement as part of, uh, like body awareness building and alignment building, because I find the staticness that sort of comes with Alexander Technique is not useful for everybody.

Maybe that's inspired by Feldenkrais, but I have so again, so a little background knowledge of that that I don't know if I could make that connection confidently.

Sure.

Yeah, I think that to me, those are the most obvious helpful tools. I think, having studied primarily western classical before, I had those tools of Alexander Technique, body mapping, my own posture and alignment, I would say, was not optimal, because I was getting a lot of that like your posture needs to be exactly this way, and it needs to be straight, and you need to be able to stand by wall like there are a lot of very static images that give you the idea of rigidity, and I found that not helpful. So yeah, that's that's where I'm coming from.

That's awesome. So is there anything else you wanted to say about that singer, or are you ready to move on to the next one?

Um, I don't think so. I think anything more advanced I would do with that singer would take a long time to build, because those first two things, alignment and breathing, take a long time to really, uh, get down. So that's probably all I would like to say.

Great. Okay, I'll go and share the other video. Then hopefully my tech works.

Here we go

So just jumping into the same sort of set of questions. So what would you choose to work on with her first?

I always like to look at alignment first, because I think it just impacts everything else. So I would look at that first, but she does, obviously have freedom to move, but I do notice that a lot of her expressing is forward. However, she has the ability to quite quickly come back. It sounded to me like her freest singing was when she was a little bit more settled back. And sometimes she would come forward, and it would sound not as easy. So I'd maybe just make her aware that I noticed she is doing that, and probably ask leading questions, like I noticed that you just did this when you sang that note. Did you find that easier or harder? Or why don't you try it the opposite way? So bodily awareness building and alignment. But I imagine with that particular student, it wouldn't take that long, because she already has freedom of movement, so I think that she already has some of those tools. She just isn't always aware when it's coming out of lack and how that's impacting her vocal function.

Maybe giving her information as to how that would be physically impacting her, the freedom of the larynx, the thyroid tilt, would be useful. So I would still start there.

To me, her breathing seems like it's going pretty well. I suppose I would just experiment overall with different repertoire and build on her access to different colors earlier than I would with the last student, and versatility in terms of character, which, to me, also comes with building different vocal colors.

Yeah, so I guess that's covering a little more ground right than we did with the first singer. So if we pick out something from that, and say in terms of developing different vocal colors, is there a particular way that you would think about that or go about that?

Well, it seems like she's got twang down and has an idea of, like how belting works as it ascends for her voice. And to me, she's got like a pretty, very desirable classical, classic musical theater sound, which is great. But as we know, musical theater is a whole range of different styles of music. Now, as someone who primarily teaches classical, I cannot purport to be an expert on all those sort of styles so like but if I were teaching more CCM and an expert in musical theater, I would probably use some tools that can help for singing more of a rock style context, like if she wanted to go audition for Jesus Christ super or something, or maybe in slightly more of a jazz style context.

Can you tell me a little more about what those tools might be?

Oh, that's what I'm saying, is I don't have those tools because I'm not you know, but I would, I would, if I had to do that for the student I didn't have those tools, I would go look up, okay, who's the expert with those tools at the moment, and learn from them. How can I feasibly bring this to my student in a way that's safe? Because I know I'm not yet an expert in those things, but we have to collaborate on those things together, right? So I would pick out those tools that I needed to help them find that genre versatility that is desired in the musical theater industry, right?

Great, yeah,

I would easily have some classical things for more legit singing She would have to do. That's easy enough. But for the rock stuff, for the jazz influence stuff, for the R and B influence stuff, whatever, like, I would have to seek out new information, whatever is most up to date at the time.

Cool, perfect.

So just one more sort of area to talk about. I'm just going to share my screen again. So these are sort of three concepts that I've come across through my research.

And so we've got teacher experience and expertise, student perspective & goals and voice, science & research. And my question is whether any one of these things seems more or less important than the others?

Um, I suppose if it were me, I would hopefully expect that voice science and research would be part of the teacher experience and expertise.

And then to me, I would say the teacher experience and expertise and the student perspectives and goals would be of equal importance.

I find, or have found that when I put too much importance on the teacher experience and expertise, the student progress isn't as fast because I'm not always relating it to their perspectives and goals. Sometimes I feel like even though I of course have more experience and expertise than the student. I often of course have to shape things around their perspectives and goals, and sometimes make it feel like they are the ones have just, who have discovered the thing. Do you know what I mean? So, yeah, I would say I would combine voice science and research with the teacher experience and expertise, and use that to inform the 50/50, of student perspectives and goals and teacher experience and expertise, right?

Yeah. Okay, so do you think that reflects more your perspective as a teacher or a general approach to thinking about how singing teachers might operate?

Um, I would say that it probably depends on the generation of the teacher and the style of teaching of the teacher. Because I would say it would certainly seem, traditionally the case that when teaching western classical styles, primarily, a lot more weight is put on teacher experience and expertise, maybe significantly more than student perspectives and goals.

And in a way, it's almost like you expect the student perspectives and goals to match the perspectives and goals you have for them, or to obviously be to pursue a career in opera or something like that, right? So yeah, the whole master teacher thing, I think, is still very much alive in the western classical sense, and that is reflected, to me, a lot more in older generations of western classical teachers, probably worldwide. I'm making a generalization here, but from my experience, that seems sort of true, that it's at least more than 50% compared to student perspectives and goals, right?

I would say Voice Science and Research, probably also generational and stylistic. Like, I think there's still a little bit of the idea in the western classical world that it somehow threatens the Bel canto model, or like whatever people have been doing for centuries. Though, I think that's come a long way in the last couple decades.

I would assume, and it seems to me, that voice science and research go hand in hand, maybe more often, with CCM teaching, because, like, they were almost developed in tandem around the same time period in similar places.

That's really interesting observations, great. So just in terms of the voice science and research for you, do you make active efforts to stay connected to that? And how do you go about that, if you do?

I would say, I certainly have the desire to stay active. Do I always have the time? Not as much as I'd like, but I do stay active by, well, I have to actively do research as part of my position, right? And I have observed that written research is valued by the university much more than performance research is so like in terms of what I continue to research, it's still very much Voice Science adjacent. I mean, it actively uses Voice Science, or at least alludes to it a lot, but it might be really particular for whatever the specific thing I'm talking about is, right? So, like the trans research I do is very kind of niche, and it certainly doesn't make me an expert in like, I'm not going out and finding the latest Voice Science on producing rock style vocals or even musical theater style vocals. It's purely vocal function and how that changes with hormones, right? So like, yeah, yeah. It's, I do a lot of Voice Science, up to dating, but it's, it's very specialized. It doesn't happen as often as I like, I do go to at least a conference a year that hopefully is specifically on singing, teaching, like the one we were just at. So whatever events as part of that conference I get to go to, of course, I'll try to take some tools home, and I take notes and things like that and use them in my teaching.

I also try to learn from other teachers, which doesn't necessarily make it research informed, because I don't always know the experience of the teachers. But say, for instance, my students come back from New Zealand opera school or a master class, and I'll ask them, like, what are three new warm ups you learned from that person? What was the purpose of

them? Why did you like them? And then we might use them for a couple lessons. And if I think they're useful as well, I will keep using them my I might use them with other students as well if I notice that maybe there's an exercise that accomplishes the same thing that I think is better than I'll just put that new exercise to the side and go back to the other one.

So yes I would say I still stay up to date but that looks different depending on the time of year.

That's awesome, thank you. That's so helpful and so informative.

INTERVIEW #5

All right, so this is basically about the teaching strategies that you might use for the students who you saw, the singers who you saw in the questionnaire, and just going into a little bit of what you would want to work on, and how you would do that and why.

And I've got the videos here so we can watch them again, so they're fresh in your mind

So, yeah, that's, that's basically the gist of it. So I can just go ahead and share that first video, and we'll have a look at that.

So the first question is, what would you choose to work on first with this singer?

Well, I suppose it depends if he, I would get him away from the piano first of all, and I would get him to actually sing without all of the extrinsic things that are happening because of his position at the piano. I feel like maybe some of his physicality and the tightness and the tense sound is to do with his playing the piano. However, is he a piano/singer? Is that, like, his job or something like, is that, you know, I get lots of singer guitarists, you know, that come in here, and the first thing I do is take the guitar away to sort of work on alignment and what's going on with their body because they get so used to being hunched over in a particular way of holding the guitar and then taking the instrument away, they feel very naked and very strange, obviously, without that.

For me, he just looks very tense. There's a lot of tension throughout his body, and I feel like it's making his, his air is not flowing properly. I think there's a few problems due to his positioning at the piano, and the, even the sort of groove of the piano, and all of that is affecting what's going up all through his body here (indicating arm/shoulder/neck). And that's affecting, obviously, his jaw, and he's pulling his jaw forward and doing all sorts of things. And I feel like he, it sounds like it's a little bit too high for him, but because he just sounds like he's not breath, he's, so basically, I'd get him away from the piano. We would sing it without him playing it. I might play the chords at the piano, or find a track, or whatever it is. I don't know whether it was a, I didn't even know what the song was, but I'm sure I could whip it out, and I would just see how his, what happens without him sitting at the piano, and then work out whether the things that I was hearing were because of the piano or just because of the voice. And what we need to work on, that would be the first thing I would do.

Yes. So then, so say you got him away from the piano and that stuff didn't disappear. What would you and what would your next step be?

So we'd probably work on evening out... I think we'd probably do a bit of work on breath and support. He looks to me like he's a fairly lean person, like a, I don't know, maybe, and is just he's doing what I would say, really muscling into that sound, like he's really using these sort of muscles (indicates neck/SCM muscles) to create a lot of the sounds that he's trying to get out. So probably work on, probably more forward placement, but I would go back to breath I'd get him on the floor, and we'd do a bit of stuff on breath support, and just work out where he if he even understands what breast support is. I mean, this is, this is all, is it a first lesson? Where are we? Where are we at all of these anomalies? But I would probably, yeah, go back to the basics, work on a bit of breath maybe then get him to do a little bit of accent

breathing. And for somebody like that that is a newish student, maybe using the fricatives from accent breathing in the song, you know, so actually singing the tune on a fricative that he likes for him to actually understand, where that breath supports meant to be coming from, so a Z or a V, and then maybe move into as using like a NA or a 'raise your Ya ya ya' that's traveled Around the world, that's traveled around the country with me, people talking about, 'raise your Ya ya ya'. Yeah. But I probably would maybe put Yeah, like some sort of 'Na na' placement, something, just to get an easier sound for him to feel where that sound should be coming from, maybe using a little bit more speech quality, getting those vowels a bit more forward and the consonants. But I would go back to basics with him, because it just, to me, sounds like a) it's a bit too high. And is that because of his position at the piano, and he's pushing and overcompensating and b), is he just not really aware of where that placement of sound should be coming from? He just looks like he's using more extrinsic muscles of support than, you know, twang and brightness of sound and those sorts of things.

Okay, so I think you've touched on this a little bit. But what would you then expect the result of that work to be in sound?

I would, I don't know. I think it's a lot to expect it to happen really quickly, because, I mean, he looks like he does this, a lot like this is a sort of a thing that he does. So I think to unlearn a lot of that stuff, there'd be a lot of muscle memory that's going into play. He might be a piano/singer, and that's going to be really hard to unravel a lot of this old muscle memory stuff. So all I would hope is that maybe it felt a little bit easier, that that would be the kind of feedback, you know, I'd be saying to him, how did that feel?

He looks like he's, you know, this is all very quick, isn't it? From looking at that video, I don't think I would expect a vast amount of change really, really quickly, because I feel like he would probably take a little bit of time to, you know, unless, unless he's just learned the piano for the song for the very first time, and he's way more comfortable standing there and singing. But I wouldn't expect that that would be something that would happen super quickly.

There'd be a little bit of unraveling to do that would take, I'd say, some time I think as I'm getting older and teaching more and I'm teaching a lot of that sort of age group of student is they don't practice.

And I've decided that I'm more of a physio or an osteopath, and I advise and try these things, and whether or not you take any of that on board, all it is about giving the tools, I would suggest getting on the floor in a semi supine position against the wall, doing all sorts of things to feel, you know, loosening up, getting to walk around the room doing all of these things just to feel less tension. Because the first thing that I can see in that video is he looks very tense and tight.

Okay, cool. Yeah, so you talked about the accent method. Can you think a little bit more about what basis this approach has, like, where, where those ideas have come from, in terms of the strategies that you would use?

Well, that's where that was, you know, this is I did six months of accent breathing with my masters, and it was quite revolutionary for me. However, I do think that we can get obsessed with breathing and breath support. I just think that as singing teachers, you can just spend your life talking to a student about breathing, and they end up just overthinking it. I mean, I have adult students like, 'I didn't breathe enough, I didn't do this'. And it's like, if you weren't breathing, you'd be passed out on the floor, right. Again, it's just giving them some kind of

ownership and understanding where that breath should be coming from. Yeah, but I mean, I do think that fixating and spending a lot of time on accent breathing, I know Feldenkrais, any of these things that we sort of fixate on can become problematic. So it would be again, just giving him some tools, some basic tools, like the fricatives, just a feeling. Did that feel easier lying on the floor singing that song? Did it not, was it better sitting? You know, is he a guy that's going to be better sitting on a stool feeling kind of more relaxed with his foot forward and his body aligned in that position, because he's used to being at the piano then standing up, you know. I, it would be more just for me. I would be listening, asking him questions about his background, and just giving him some tools to moving forward, you know. And I just know for me that understanding that lower abdominal support is better than using all of these upper bodies. And I feel like a lot of young guys that are lean and muscly, they do muscle in with this part of their body because they're trying to control the sound with their jaw and all of these sorts of things. So it would be more just a really basic foundation. I would certainly not fixate on it for like, you know, an hour every week and never get through a whole song. I think that's really frustrating, you know. So it's about adding, it's about a tool. You know, lots of tools and you know what? Maybe that's not going to work with him. Maybe something else is going to work with him. Maybe, you know, a straw is going to work better for him. Maybe blowing some bubbles in some water before the lesson to get rid of some tension is going to work better for him. But I, I, I kind of pick and choose who I'm going to sort of go there with. I mean, an older student like that, who's a piano player/singer, who's maybe used to sitting at the piano, getting him a bit more in his body would be a really good place to start. Yeah,

Perfect. Alright, so should we move on to the next video?

Alright, did you get it? Yep, cool. So, the same series of questions. So the first one is, what would you choose to work on with her?

I think it's actually a really great voice. I'd probably park my ego with someone like that a little bit. I don't see, I mean, there's a little bit too much vibrato maybe in some of the, some of the longer held notes. But was that a stylistic choice? We probably strip it back and talk about it a little bit more. It's a little isn't a little bit overacted. Yes, maybe someone like that, she sounds to me like she may have come from classical, like a you know, maybe, but I think the belts really nice when she goes into that actually surprised me when that video, when you sent me that video, I actually, I mean, someone like that, there's not a lot that I can see, that that needs. I don't need to sit there with a microscope and be amazing and like, oh my god, we're going to do all of this stuff. What I might do is get her to actually speak the text with the backing track, to just find a bit more authenticity of her storytelling. It feels a bit actory. 'I'm a musical theater performer now'. It's a little bit over the top, and I probably would try to get a more consistent straight tone on some of those low notes. I'm not a big vibrato fan. That's just because of who I am, but yeah, I would probably just work on a little bit more consistency of speech quality through there. And because I do love the way I was when I watched that, I was thinking, Oh, she's going to go really, you know, m2 on, like, some of those higher notes, and she doesn't. She's got a beautiful forward, twangy belt. I thought it was beautiful. So yeah, I mean, I would probably strip it more back, look at the speech quality and calm her down a little bit. Just pull it back a little bit. Yeah,

Okay. Could you tell me a little bit more specifically of what particular task or strategy you would use to work on the speech quality or straight tone stuff?

So I probably we, we would look at the text, and I'd actually probably get her to say it to me like a monolog for a start, to sort of find some realness, quite a powerful tool to do that with, I do that a lot, and not like in rhyme, you know, like, actually looking at what that's what she's actually because the thing about that show is, it's about domestic violence, you know, and this is, like, her whole sort of dream of things being so much better, so we really probably delve a little bit more into the character.

And probably, yeah, I actually worked on this with a student recently who probably came from a similar background, had actually played that role before, and then we just completely stripped it back, and we put the backing track on, and she actually said the text didn't sing it, actually just spoke the text, not particularly in time, either with the backing track. It's really hard to get people to do that, and I would just try and just get her see, trying to get people to stop using vibrato is really, really hard because it's such a habit. So I suppose just trying, I would just end up saying to her, don't hold the note, just stop and try and feel what that sounds like and hang on to that, because vibrato like that to me, sounds like a habit more than a color, you know. So unlearning vibrato is probably one of the hardest things, I think, for somebody. But yeah, lots of, we would just be talking, talking, talking, speech quality, a lot less sung, like really hard consonants and way less legato. Just strip all the legato out of it, and maybe more breaths even, just to sort of punctuate it, just to practice that sort of not feeling that you've got to sing through everything. But like I said, I actually thought vocally that is pretty good. Well, to me, it's pretty good. Yeah, yeah, cool. I've heard much worse.

Yeah. And so then the last question about that is, can you think of a specific basis that that strategy has come from, or is it from your experience, or from something that you've learned?

Well, it's obviously, it all comes from my own experience, because I've done heaps of musical theater myself and also, obviously, from my training, from my degree that I did my masters with Irene and Ron, and sort of learning those very different ideas of how we you know, How do we cross over? She was probably a good example of a crossover singer to me. So I suppose I don't have the experience of that other crossover element. I'm very open about that, like I don't have the classical training, but just from my understanding of, you know, the stylistic qualities of the two and how to marry the two together. And that's come from my masters, but my own personal experience, from musical theater and singing those songs myself. And I suppose, I guess coming back to a perceived sound of how that song can be done. See, I feel like if you listen to different versions of that song, in particular, it is a real caricature. So yeah, from my own personal experience, and obviously from the study that I have done.

Yeah, perfect. All right, there's one more element for us to look at. I'm going to just share my screen again.

All right, so these are just three elements that I've come across in my research. So teacher experience and expertise, student perspectives and goals and Voice Science and Research. So just looking at these three elements, is there any one that you would say is more or less important than the others?

I think this has changed for me over the years. I think the most important thing is student perspectives and their goals. I think that's really, really important part of what I do, because

their outcomes is what I care most about, and I hope that my teacher experience expertise and the Voice Science and stuff that I've done enables me to be able to connect with them and help them and they understand what I'm talking about, so they can achieve their goals.

Yeah, great. Can you think of how that would show up in a teaching example?

Yeah, I have a student that I've been working with for about 18 months, two years, no, maybe two years. She is neurodiverse, so she's got autism, ADHD, and a lot of pain as well, and she has worked absolute butt off with me, and it's been a really interesting journey teaching her because she had real trouble with pitch, and I would have to sing with her a lot to keep her on track. She takes a lot of notes in our lessons. She's very organized. She will write everything down that I say, you know, but over the time that we've gotten to know each other, she's been able to be more open with me about how she struggles with her, how her autism and her ADHD fights against itself, and so I'm really understanding what her student perspective is more and more all the time. We had a lesson yesterday, and she did two songs, I haven't seen her all break, and she sang with an authentic sound, she was beautifully in tune, and she just, it was so good to see her. Just go, wow, I found my authentic sound. But it's taken, that's taken a really long time, but it's been, it's been us really understanding each other and how each other works. And for someone like her, bombarding her with Voice Science, she kind of she loves that because she's super intelligent, but could she really apply that into what she was doing? No. It's taken a lot of understanding and conversation and nurturing and listening and me asking her how it feels, how does that work, and all of those sorts of things. So that is probably a good example, but it's taken two years.

Yeah, that's perfect. Let me just close out of that, and just the last question

is, do you make efforts to keep up with voice science and research. Was it something that you learned in your degree? Is it something that you keep up with as well? And if so, how do you do that?

I try to keep up with it. You know, I'm part of an amazing singing community, and we have a lot of professional development online and all sorts of things. But if I'm really honest, I don't think I keep up with it as much as I should, and it's something that I miss, because I just get buried under teaching and work and all of those sorts of things.

I do follow a lot of things on Instagram and all of those sorts of things, lots of different things. But if I'm really honest, I don't, I don't, and I should, you know, I should, I should read books, I should do all of these things. And it's funny, I've sort of barely done any of that, probably in the last nine years, and it's something that I'll go and watch things and listen to things, but have I actually actively gone and sought out new stuff. No,

Yeah, cool. That's amazing. I'm going to stop recording.