

Safe and Sound:

A Resource Guide for Music Theater Technique and Literature

by

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## ABSTRACT

Since its inception, the American Broadway industry has flourished and grown to include numerous vocal styles and techniques. The early twenty-first century has seen a rapid increase in demand for collegiate courses and instructors pertaining to music theater. It has therefore become necessary for voice instructors to be equally comfortable teaching both music theater and classical techniques such as bel canto. This document serves as a resource for instructors seeking more information on defining and teaching vocal styles in music theater including legit, mix, and belt. The first two chapters address the following three questions: 1) What is bel canto and how does the technique function? 2) What is music theater as a vocal style and how do colloquial terms such as legit, mix and belt function within music theater? 3) Are the technical ideas behind bel canto and music theater really that different? The third chapter offers a curriculum for a semester-long course (a hybrid between a song literature class and a performance-based seminar) called *Singing Music Theater Styles: From Hammerstein to Hamilton*. This course shows the rich development tracing techniques of bel canto through techniques used in contemporary music theater. This document concludes with an annotated bibliography of major sources useful to both the instructors wishing to teach this course and the performers looking to expand their knowledge of singing music theater.

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## INTRODUCTION

During the twentieth century, music theater<sup>1</sup> developed rapidly in America. With the innovations of composers like Jerome Kern, Oscar Hammerstein, Richard Rodgers, Cole Porter, and George Gershwin, American music theater gained popularity and recognition worldwide. The art form these composers created was hybrid, with roots in European operetta, the minstrel tradition, and vaudeville. As the music theater style developed, it also incorporated popular music styles such as jazz, rock, country and contemporary pop music. As music theater has become a mainstream art form, especially in collegiate America, it is increasingly necessary that vocal instructors adopt the pedagogy required for vocal performance techniques in this genre including “belt” and “mix.”

Several schools of thought exist with regard to teaching voice for music theater. One of these theories is that simultaneously singing classical and music theater styles is detrimental due to the differences in the use of the laryngeal musculature. This “only one voice” idea is primarily supported by “old school” instructors specializing in classical technique and implies that the voice should only be heavily utilized in one discipline. Scott McCoy, singer and pedagogue, emphasizes that teaching newer vocal techniques for music theater is so different from his specialization that he simply will not teach

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<sup>1</sup> The spelling of “music theater” is varied across the literature. It is my belief that “theater” with an “er” commonly refers to the physical building, while “theatre” with an “re” refers to the art form. However, after extensive research, for the purpose of this document I will use “theater” in deference to the American art form that is being discussed. I’ll also use “music” instead of “musical” because music theater is just like any other musical discipline, i.e, music history, music therapy, etc.

them.<sup>2</sup> Ron Browning, an adamant supporter of crossover voice, presents a more intense philosophy in his article, “Crossover Concerns and Techniques for the Classical Singer.”<sup>3</sup> He points out that singers who fear studying crossover voice argue that music theater, as it currently exists in the Broadway industry, is an improper technique overall and can do serious damage to the vocal instrument as a whole; this is known as the “burn out” theory. Browning notes that fears of damage from crossover singing are often assumptions made by singers who have been thoroughly trained in one discipline. While examples of unhealthy belt do exist in music theater, this generalization is not true. Other voice pedagogues, including pioneer of contemporary commercial music Jeannette LoVetri, have made strides in unifying different singing styles. Such a philosophy supports the idea that singing music theater functions similarly to classical technique but with a different use of resonance and airflow. In reading and contemplating texts by vocal coaches and pedagogues such as Barbara Doscher, I have come to think of this idea as the “unified voice” theory.<sup>4</sup> I argue that the “unified voice” theory is the most vital to cultivating a healthy and balanced vocal technique. If a vocalist has a healthy and low-tension sound across the registers, singing in different styles should be possible through an adjustment of resonance.

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<sup>2</sup> Scott McCoy, “Why I Don't Teach Belting,” *Journal of Singing* 70.2 (Nov 2013):182.

<sup>3</sup> Ron Browning, “Crossover Concerns and Techniques for the Classical Singer,” *Journal of Singing* 72.5 (May 2016): 611.

<sup>4</sup> Barbara Doscher, *The Functional Unity of the Singing Voice* (London: The Scarecrow Press, 1994), xii-xv.



How do the laryngeal positions differ between classical voice and music theater? Does one require the singer to use the air supply in a different manner? Having proper breath coordination and a relaxed laryngeal position are central to healthy voice production in general. Once the voice is grounded in healthy technique, the singer can create a variety of musical styles by adjusting resonance to create different tone colors. Through a thorough examination of two seemingly different techniques, bel canto and music theater, it is evident that both are unified in the goal of creating a foundation in healthy vocal technique and perhaps are not as different as they seem.

## CHAPTER 1: DEFINING BEL CANTO AND MUSIC THEATER STYLES

### Seeking a Definition for Bel Canto

The term bel canto is commonly used and widely acknowledged to describe a technique crucial to healthy singing.<sup>5</sup> Bel canto, however, has been continually evolving since its emergence, making it difficult for scholars to settle on a common definition. My research has proven that what is often alluded to as a specific vocal technique in the vocal studio, is far broader than any current technical or historical definition.

Throughout history, bel canto has been understood as a broad idea, a movement, and even series of virtuosic periods from which many vocal ideals stemmed. In *Bel Canto: A History of Vocal Pedagogy*, musicologist and tenor James Stark best captures the enigma of bel canto:

Bel canto is a term in search of a meaning, a label that is widely used but only vaguely understood. The English literal translation is “beautiful singing,” but the connotations range over many aspects of vocal history and pedagogy, including several “golden ages” of singing, a number of specific techniques of voice production, and a variety of stylistic vocal idioms. There is no consensus among music historians or voice teachers as to the precise application of the term.<sup>6</sup>

Stark goes on to discuss how the term bel canto is linked with the rise of virtuosic singing in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Unfortunately, definitions regarding the exact criteria of beautiful singing are difficult to find because vocal scholars of this era relied heavily on oral tradition as a means of passing on their wisdom.

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<sup>5</sup> Philip A. Duey, *Bel Canto in its Golden Age: A Study of its Teaching Concepts* (Worcestershire, U.K.: Read Books, 2013), 4.

<sup>6</sup> James Stark, *Bel Canto: A History of Vocal Pedagogy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 25.

In *Bel Canto in its Golden Age – A Study of its Teaching Concepts*, Phillip A. Duey examines manuscripts and treatises that indicate that the term *bel canto* “does not appear as such during the period with which it is most often associated, i.e., the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.”<sup>7</sup> Duey explores mere mentions of *bel canto* across the nineteenth century but finds that the term does not take on special meaning until the 1860s in Italy. Prior to the 1860s, Duey’s research shows mentions of *bel canto* but these brief statements do not refer to a style or movement. In reference to a brief quote from Andrea Costa, Duey states, “He does not use the words *bel canto* except in a general sense.”<sup>8</sup> Duey further points out that while *bel canto* began to appear more frequently in literature across Europe in the late nineteenth century, it wasn’t until after 1900 that both musical and general dictionaries began to feature definitions for *bel canto*. Duey’s research on *bel canto*’s meaning, prior to 1900, seems to point in two directions: scholars of the mid-nineteenth century and earlier commenting generally on the beauty of *bel canto* and scholars from the late-nineteenth century lamenting the gradual disappearance of *bel canto*.

Scholars seeking to elaborate on *bel canto* in the nineteenth century mostly bemoan the loss of an older school of thought and practice. As operatic styles from France and Germany gained popularity across Europe, scholars and practitioners began to quantify how the old Italian school depicted *bel canto* in terms of methodology. In 1893, Italian singing teacher and pedagogue, Giovanni Battista Lamperti wrote:

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<sup>7</sup> Duey, *Bel Canto in Its Golden Age*, 36.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, 20.

In these times, when the demands of the singing art are growing vague, let us return to a study of physiology and the older Italian method! These remarks are, of course, not a “method.” They simply explain the causes of the decadence of singing as I have observed them in an experience of many years.<sup>9</sup>

Lamperti learned the principles of singing from his father, who learned from his contemporaries, including Vincenzo Bellini, Gaetano Donizetti and Gioachino Rossini.<sup>10</sup> Lamperti is a valuable source for quantifying the methodology behind bel canto singing because his oral tradition is a direct line back to the “older Italian method.”

*Oxford Music Online*'s definition of bel canto concurs with Stark's regarding the evolving nature of this term and provides concrete characteristics of the style:

The term “bel canto” along with a number of similar constructions ... has been used without specific meaning and with widely varying subjective interpretations ... Generally understood, the term “bel canto” refers to the Italian vocal style of the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the qualities of which include perfect legato production throughout the range, the use of a light tone in the higher registers and agile and flexible delivery.<sup>11</sup>

This definition is an excellent starting point for identifying the characteristics of the bel canto style. Stark's initial definition begins with the emergence of bel canto in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, but *Oxford Music Online*'s, as of 2018, begins at the height of nostalgia for the bel canto movement. The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries saw a rise in the concept of “masters,” such as composers Bellini and Donizetti, and

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<sup>9</sup> Giovanni Lamperti Battista and William Earl Brown, *Vocal wisdom: maxims of Giovanni Battista Lamperti* (New York: Taplinger, 1957), 11.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, ii.

<sup>11</sup> Owen Jander and Ellen T. Harris, “Bel canto,” in *Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, 2018; online ed., 2001.

pedagogues such as Lamperti and later Manuel Garcia II. Due to the increase in printed publications, there is better documentation of the doctrines from this later era.

This period produced a larger number of treatises on the treatment of voice and beautiful singing; however, oftentimes the language can be vague, relying on imagery to portray what had not yet been qualified scientifically, leaving modern scholars to attempt to interpret how bel canto ideals translate into the vocal idioms of today. Often credited as the father of modern voice science, Manuel Garcia II invented the laryngoscope in 1855 after which pedagogues began to explain the vocal practices of bel canto in more scientific terms. Garcia's contributions to vocal pedagogy marked a transition from the "old school" of oral tradition into a new age of science.

Stark initially provides evidence that bel canto is difficult to define, but as his observations progress, he provides a new definition of bel canto.

Bel canto is a concept that takes into account two separate but related matters. First, it is a highly refined method of using the singing voice in which the glottal source, the vocal tract, and the respiratory system interact in such a way as to create the qualities of chiaroscuro, appoggio, register equalization, malleability of pitch and intensity, and a pleasing vibrato ... Second, bel canto refers to any style of music that employs this kind of singing in a tasteful and expressive way ... As musical epochs and styles changed, the elements of bel canto adapted to meet new musical demands, thereby ensuring the continuation of bel canto into our own time.<sup>12</sup>

Stark's latter definition adds to the list of qualities that *Oxford's* definition outlines. One key characteristic in both definitions is the concept of balanced production across the vocal registers. *Oxford* also emphasizes ease of vocal production that Stark supports with the idea of "malleability of pitch and intensity."

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<sup>12</sup> Stark, *Bel Canto: A History of Vocal Pedagogy*, 311.

Using the definitions above, the priorities of bel canto can be condensed to the following characteristics: creating a beautiful and pure sound, removing excess tension, unifying vocal registers and executing virtuosity with ease. Examining bel canto through the lens of these traits begins to clarify how it has remained at the forefront of vocal pedagogy for centuries. Not only are concepts like balancing registers and ease of production central to bel canto as a style, they are also key to healthy vocal production as a whole.

Perhaps the reason bel canto has continued to have such a constant presence in modern voice studios is that the masters of the bel canto era were the first to document their examinations of healthy vocal production. Using this early research, this document will further examine how the techniques of bel canto address the basics of vocal production in chapter 2.

### Defining Music Theater as a Vocal Style

Just as a definition for bel canto proved elusive, music theater as a vocal style is also difficult to define. The genre itself involves not a single style but rather a combination of different vocal styles. This section will define terms most commonly associated with music theater vocal production (legit, mix and belt) by elaborating on the mechanical functions for each technique and how they differ from one another.

Tracy Bourne, Maeva Garnier and Diana Kenny provide an excellent starting point for defining music theater in their article “Popular Song and Music Theater Voice: Production, Physiology and Pedagogy”:

Music Theater voice is a style within the broader field of Contemporary Commercial Music (CCM), previously described as “non-classical” music, and includes vocal qualities described in the professional industry as “belt” and “legit.”<sup>13</sup>

Contemporary commercial music (CCM) encompasses a wide variety of popular music vocal styles from hip-hop to rock to gospel. Music theater’s inclusion amongst CCM styles makes sense because the evolution of vocal styles in musical theater has always had a symbiotic relationship with popular music. Max Morath, an American ragtime pianist, composer and author, provides more clarity on the relationship between popular music and music theater in his book *The NPR Curious Listener’s Guide to Popular Standards*.

Neat lines of development are impossible to discern in the history of American musical theater ... After 1920 the melting pot of musical theater was ... informed by strong currents of ragtime, the blues and jazz from African-American composers and performers. Throughout the next four decades, musical theater would, even more than the revue, serve as the principal point of origin for Popular Standards.<sup>14</sup>

As Morath points out, not only is music theater influenced by popular music of the time, but often, the music produced under the broad term “music theater” would influence and become the popular standards of the era in which they were created. Just as the twentieth-century songs of Cole Porter and George and Ira Gershwin rose to the highest levels of popularity, new musicals of today, like *Hamilton*, have reached the top of billboard music charts.

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<sup>13</sup> Tracy Bourne, Maeve Garnier, and Diana Kenny, “Popular Song and Music Theater Voice: Production, Physiology and Pedagogy,” *Journal of Singing* 67, no. 4 (2011), 439.

<sup>14</sup> Max Morath, *The NPR Curious Listener’s Guide to Popular Standards* (New York: The Berkley Publishing Group, 2002): 18.

Morath reveals how many different stylistic influences can exist in one period of music theater. Music theater in the 1920s contains influences from styles such as ragtime and jazz; similarly, modern musicals are influenced by styles such as rock and hip-hop.

Just as modern opera performances still reflect the preferred techniques and styles of the time (from the florid coloratura passages in scores of composers like Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, to the dramatic sweeping lines in the music of Giacomo Puccini), music theater demands a vast array of vocal styles. The styles present in works of both music theater and opera can reflect not only the style of the era in which they were composed but also the styles relevant to the character or story of a piece. Vocalists in both opera and music theater must train to use the voice healthily in order to produce the stylistic characteristics of the music. In both music theater and bel canto vocalists are often required to move between drastically different vocal styles within the same piece. An example of this necessity is the cultivation of character voices.

The stand-alone contemporary music theater song, “The Girl in 14G” by Janine Tesori and Dick Scanlan, is an example of how quickly a vocalist must shift styles for the sake of character. The main character of this piece is imitating her neighbors, an opera singer and a jazz singer, so a vocalist performing this piece must shift quickly between styles, using the full range of her vocal mechanism.<sup>15</sup> Jeannette LoVetri expands on the idea that styles can shift quickly in music theater and comments on how the voice must function in order to do so.

Music theater requires singers to be as versatile as possible and often asks women

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<sup>15</sup> Julie E. Balog, “Popular Song and Music Theater: A Guide to Evaluating Music Theater Singing for the Classical Teacher,” *Journal of Singing* 61, no. 4 (March 2005), 401.



to sing in chest, mixed (chest with head), and a “legit” head within the same show and sometimes within the same song. In order to do this safely, without injury, it is absolutely necessary that women learn to feel specifically what “weight” means in their sound, and learn to make the sound have a spoken (modal) quality without extra pressure in the throat itself.<sup>16</sup>

LoVetri’s comments on the versatility of music theater also help to clarify the vocal terminology that must be defined in order to understand music theater as a style. She mentions “chest”, “mixed,” and “legit” which are seemingly straightforward but often defined in varying manners when colloquially discussed. While legit remains the popular term for music theater that has a more classical tessitura or sound, chest voice is referred to as the illusive concept of belt and a sound mixed of chest and head registers is referred to generically as mix. While LoVetri’s use of terms like “chest” and “chest with head” make a clearer statement on the register of the voice that is being used, more ambiguous terms like belt and mix appear far more frequently throughout literature pertaining to singing music theater.

A pioneer of CCM pedagogy, Robert Edwin condenses music theater vocal technique to a list of four styles: traditional legit, contemporary legit, traditional belt and contemporary belt.<sup>17</sup> Edwin’s categories consider how the demands of music theater have shifted with time from early, traditional music theater to contemporary music theater.

Legit style (short for legitimate style) in music theater refers to vocal production similar to bel canto singing. Edwin defines legit as follows,

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<sup>16</sup> Jeannette LoVetri, “Voice Pedagogy: Female Chest Voice,” *Journal of Singing* 60, no. 2 (November 2003), 163.

<sup>17</sup> Robert Edwin, “A Broader Broadway,” *Journal of Singing* 59, no. 5 (2003), 431.

Legit is Broadway shorthand for “legitimate,” which refers to singing in a classical-like style. Among other things, the vocal tone will have *chiaroscuro* fullness, the vowels and consonants will have clarity of sound that is more sung than spoken, and the vibrato will be active throughout the phrases. For women, legit implies head voice dominant singing; for men, legit means a more formal use of chest and head registers as befitting a classically trained singer.<sup>18</sup>

Edwin further declares that there is a difference between the legit voice for golden age repertoire and legit voice for modern repertoire. The legit repertoire from the pre-1960s era, which Edwin refers to as traditional legit, has a distinctly classical sound. Repertoire from this era is often performed by students studying classical voice who wish to begin an exploration of music theater. For students studying classical voice or bel canto style singing, traditional legit provides an accessible bridge between bel canto and music theater. Crossover voice allows instructors and students to explore the overlap between music theater and opera. Artists such as Kelli O’Hara, Rebecca Luker and Audra McDonald have made careers moving between Broadway and opera.

Contemporary composers such as Stephen Sondheim and Adam Guettel continued to write music for a more legit vocal style leading the way for what Edwin calls contemporary legit. Contemporary legit takes the classical sound from traditional legit and adds the more speech-like qualities, characteristic of modern music theater. To produce this sound, the soft palate is still lifted as in classical production, but the resonance is more forward like that of the speaking range. Contemporary legit is an accessible gateway between the traditional legit style and the speech-like, modern style of music theater.

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<sup>18</sup> Edwin, “A Broader Broadway,” 431.

Belt is most commonly associated with modern music styles, though this particular style of vocal production has been around for hundreds of years. Eastern cultures are thought to have originated belting but its emergence in Western music can be traced back to around 1830,<sup>19</sup> when French opera tenor, Gilbert Duprez produced a high C using what was described as chest voice. This sound isn't precisely belt but this style of chest-connected and full-throated sound is definitely similar. During the era preceding Duprez, tenors produced high notes with a much lighter sound. The raw and loud sound produced by Duprez was not well received by all, but it led to a highly successful career and opened the door for the development of belt as a vocal style.<sup>20</sup>

Manuel Garcia II cites Duprez's high C as an example of "clear timbre" in the chest register. Garcia discusses how clear timbre brings brilliance to the voice but warns that when this sound is employed too frequently it can result in a shrill sound. Garcia explains that vocalists should also employ a somber timbre to balance the sound of the clear timbre. Garcia's discussion of mixing resonances characterizes what would later be linked to the concept of "mix voice" in music theater.<sup>21</sup>

The techniques of belt and mix are often associated with one another when defined, but two issues stand at the forefront of defining these terms: 1) how different belt and mix actually are, and 2) whether belt technique is truly linked to the chest voice as it

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<sup>19</sup> Robert Edwin, "Popular Song and Music Theater: Belt is Legit," *Journal of Singing* 64, no. 2 (November 2007), 214.

<sup>20</sup> Ingo R. Titze, Brad H. Story, and Albert S. Worley, "Source-Vocal Tract Interaction in Female Operatic Singing and Theater Belting," *Journal of Singing* 67, no. 5 (2011), 562.

<sup>21</sup> James Richard Joiner, "The Vocal Principals of Garcia as Represented by his Pupils: Battaille, Marchesi, and Stockhausen" (Ph.D. Diss., Louisiana State University, 1979), 60.

is used away from CCM, in a classical setting. Most readings on the subject of belt and mix can be split into three schools of thought – those who believe that belt is linked to chest voice, those who believe that mix is the gateway to healthy belt, and those who believe that belt is a concept different from the traditional understandings of chest voice.

Jo Estill, an innovator of belt research, belongs to the first school of thought. She defines the qualities of belt technique as follows:

- 1) A very high energy level
- 2) A higher level of *vocalis* activity than for any other singing mode
- 3) Higher activity in the extrinsic muscles than for any other singing mode
- 4) Soft dynamic level not possible
- 5) No mixing or coloring with other singing modes<sup>22</sup>

Estill's final idea of not mixing the singing modes is characteristic of a "full" or "straight" belt. This sound is most often demonstrated by artists such as Ethel Merman. Belt from this period in the early to mid-twentieth century is what Edwin refers to earlier as traditional belt. Estill believes that involving the upper register or mixing, means that the vocal quality no longer qualifies as belt because by "mixing or coloring with other singing modes" the sound is no longer straight belt.

In her definition of belt, Lisa Popeil (voice coach and creator of the Voiceworks Method) states that the style is "speech-like or yell-like," which supports the concept that belt is the chest register being carried above its normal pitch threshold. Popeil goes on to discuss how this sound is produced through a higher laryngeal position or a "laryngeal

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<sup>22</sup> Doscher, *The Functional Unity of the Singing Voice*, 189.

lean,” which is not normally associated with the use of chest voice in classical music. While these two sources support the idea of chest voice as an essential element to belt production, they also seem to suggest that the chest voice in use is not the exact same chest register that is found in bel canto and the aforementioned clear sound of Duprez’s high C.

Edwin belongs to the second school of thought, believing that mix is essential to a healthy belt:

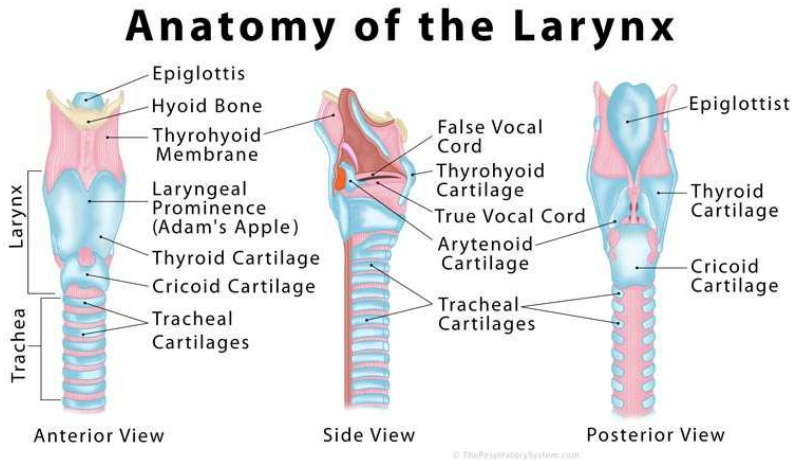
Although belters will have a much longer closed phase of the vibratory cycle than classical singers and will sing with thyroarytenoid-dominant vocal fold activity in a higher laryngeal position, they will still need to produce some form of mix for their belt to be vocally healthy, enduring and efficient.<sup>23</sup>

Edwin’s position on balancing the function between the thyroarytenoid and the cricothyroid muscles, for belting in a high tessitura or contemporary belt style is one of the healthiest portrayals of how belt and mix are produced (Figure 1).

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<sup>23</sup> Robert Edwin, “The Bach to Rock Connection: Belting 101,” *Journal of Singing* 55, no. 1 (1998), 54.

Figure 1. Anatomy of the Larynx<sup>24</sup>



The thyroarytenoid muscles run from the thyroid cartilage to arytenoid cartilage. The thyroarytenoid muscles draw the arytenoid cartilages forward while rotating them inward to shorten and adduct the vocal folds. As the name implies, the cricothyroid muscles connect to both the cricoid cartilage and the thyroid cartilage. The cricothyroid muscles elevate the cricoid while depressing part of the thyroid to lengthen the vocal folds. Edwin's explanation of how a belt sound is produced expresses a healthier technique while also using the term "mix" which evokes a balance between the cricothyroid (typically associated with high pitches or head voice) and the thyroarytenoid (typically associated with lower pitches and chest voice). The same muscle groups function to find balance in any form of vocal production but, because music theater production is frequently associated with a heavy production that can be damaging, balance is mentioned frequently when discussing music theater technique.

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<sup>24</sup> "Larynx: Voice Box," *The Respiratory System*, published November 28, 2016, accessed January 12, 2018, <http://www.therespiratorysystem.com/larynx/>.

Balancing the registers is a healthy vocal goal for any style but can be interpreted in different ways. LoVetri's writings on the function of the belt/mix technique further builds upon Edwin's more scientific explanation.

Some teachers believe belting is a chest register activity carried above the traditional "break" at E4 - F4. However, research has begun to strongly suggest that all singing is a combination and coordination of cricothyroid and thyroarytenoid activity. Using different and varied combinations of the cricothyroid and thyroarytenoid muscles in singing, combined with various laryngeal heights, vocal tract squeezing or stretching, subglottic pressure variations, and transglottal airflow all contribute to the singer's ability to make a wide variety of healthy vocal sounds.<sup>25</sup>

LoVetri acknowledges that belt has often been considered an extension of chest voice production but further explains that not only does the production style of belt differ from that of chest voice but in fact all singing is a type of mixed production. Ultimately, LoVetri and Edwin agree that a healthy belt involves coordination between the cricothyroid muscles and the thyroarytenoid muscles or in colloquial terms- mix.

Distinguishing between colloquial perceptions of terms like belt/mix and moving towards a common definition is easier when taking into account the modern voice science available to pedagogues like LoVetri. Modern voice science indicates that the sound associated with high belt in music theater is produced through a balance of both the thyroarytenoid and the cricothyroid- a mixed use of the mechanism. Both Edwin and LoVetri's writings on the subject support the conclusion that if the commonly used term "mix" implies the mixing of chest register and head register, then a high belt falls under the classification of mix, which indicates why the terms are often used interchangeably. On the other hand, what is perceived as straight belt in the lower register is a production

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<sup>25</sup> LoVetri, "Voice Pedagogy: Female Chest Voice," 162.

mostly dominated by the thyroarytenoid muscles similar to chest voice. What distinguishes this sound from that of a classical chest voice is resonance, which will be discussed further in the following section.



## CHAPTER 2: COMPARING BEL CANTO AND MUSIC THEATER STYLES

### Comparing the Basics

The bel canto tradition originated and flourished in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a time period dominated by oral tradition. Due to this fact, it can be difficult to find writings from the era in which bel canto developed. Phillip A. Duey's 1951 book *Bel Canto in its Golden Age- A Study of its Teaching Concepts* provides an excellent synthesis of ideas from scholars of the bel canto movement.<sup>26</sup> Duey's text analyzes the teachings of such masters as Giulio Caccini, Pier Francesco Tosi and Giovanni Battista Mancini in an attempt to portray the qualities prized in the bel canto style. Duey examines the development of bel canto through the opinions of masters on appearance, pose, breathing, ear training, resonators, voice registers, vocal organs, and vocal hygiene. Some of the treatises from this era still exist, like Tosi's *Opinioni de' cantori antichi e moderni o sieno osservazioni sopra il canto*, but they cover a myriad of topics so it is fortunate that Duey has synthesized the information that is prevalent to bel canto. In *Vocal Wisdom: Maxims of Giovanni Battista Lamperti*, William Earl Brown gathered the words of Lamperti into a reliable source of bel canto wisdom.<sup>27</sup> As mentioned earlier, Lamperti's knowledge represents a line back to the origins of bel canto and a useful example of how oral tradition served to pass on vocal wisdom. The above-mentioned sources are merely two of which have proven useful for the purposes of this document.

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<sup>26</sup> Duey, *Bel Canto in Its Golden Age*.

<sup>27</sup> Giovanni Lamperti Battista and William Earl Brown, *Vocal wisdom: maxims of Giovanni Battista Lamperti* (New York: Taplinger, 1957), 11.

In comparison to bel canto, music theater is a relatively new technique. Scholarly interest in the function of vocal technique within this discipline has flourished over the last several decades and most of the scholarly literature has appeared in academic journals and graduate theses. Out of thirty-eight journal article sources, twenty are from the *Journal of Singing*, the official publication of the National Association of Teachers of Singing or NATS. The *Journal of Singing* has proven to be an invaluable resource for tracing the development of music theater pedagogy because it is a source which allows the foremost vocal teachers and pedagogues to publish their ideas. There are many sources addressing the technique behind bel canto and while there are fewer scholarly sources concerning music theater technique, this journal provides a wealth of information.

Utilizing the literature referenced, I argue that while bel canto and music theater seem to employ completely different techniques, they are in fact unified in the goal of basic healthy vocal technique. The major differences between these divergent styles stem from how the registers of the voice are used and how the resonance is directed. To illustrate this idea, the theories of the bel canto masters must be examined alongside the perspectives of modern scholars.

### Posture

When teaching correct posture for singing, pedagogues of the bel canto era, all agree that singers should employ a standing position, known as the “noble posture,”<sup>28</sup> that is devoid of unnecessary tension in the face and neck. Pier Francesco Tosi (1653–1732)

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<sup>28</sup> Duey, *Bel Canto in Its Golden Age*, 160.

was an Italian *castrato*<sup>29</sup> who, in his treatise on singing *Opinioni de' cantori antichi e moderni o sieno osservazioni sopra il canto*, discusses the vocal styles of his time.<sup>30</sup> He comments that a singer should, “take care, whilst he sings, that he get a graceful posture ... rigorously correct all grimaces and tricks of the head, of the body and particularly of the mouth which ought to be composed in a manner (if the sense of the words permit it) rather inclined to smile, than too much gravity.”<sup>31</sup>

Tosi's teachings portray a vocal production focused on generating beautiful sound without any superfluous manipulations of the face and head. He goes on to suggest that students should practice in front of a mirror in order to minimize obvious tension. Tosi's ideas of minimizing tension are still present in the foundations taught by vocal instructors today.

Tosi's reference to “grimaces and tricks of the head” encompasses much of the tension manifested by voice students today. Modern teachers would categorize “grimaces and trick of the head,” as jaw, tongue and neck tension in addition to general posture and alignment concerns. Tosi's foundational principles for a balanced and graceful posture are timeless and inform not only bel canto singing technique but modern technique as well.

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<sup>29</sup> The term *castrato* refers to a male singer who was castrated prior to puberty in order to maintain a soprano or alto voice. Scholars from this era are often referring to castrati in their teachings as they were often to most beautiful and virtuosic singers of the bel canto era. Famous Italian castrati include Farinelli, Caffarelli and Senesino.

<sup>30</sup> Pier Francesco Tosi, *Opinioni de' cantori, e moderni o sieno osservazioni sopra il canto figurato*, trans. John Ernest Galliard (London: William Reeves, 1743).

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*, 12.

Composer and musical scholar Johann Adam Hiller agrees with Tosi in regard to correct singing posture. He cautions singers to be wary of excess motion in the body such as “swaying to and fro, shuffling with one’s feet, shaking one’s head, etc.” Hiller also encourages singers to sing in front of the mirror at times to safe guard against “such improprieties.”<sup>32</sup>

Hiller’s position supports the idea that superfluous movement can create tension or be an indication of tension in singers. While excess movement can be an artistic choice, some gestures can reflect tension in the voice. For example, a student reaching for a higher note might incline their head or stand on the tips of their toes. Hiller and Tosi would discourage this kind of nonessential movement in favor of a balanced body position that is more conducive to relaxed vocal production.

Modern teachings on posture are in alignment with those of bel canto especially in regard to eliminating tension and encouraging balance. Sheena Neely’s master’s thesis “STOP SCREAMING! A Practical Guide for Helping Classically-Trained Singers Achieve the ‘Belt’ Sound in a Healthy Manner,” provides an excellent introduction to the idea of working with the whole body as an instrument. The concept of “whole body singing” is becoming more common in articles and dissertations regarding vocal technique. The masters of the bel canto style strayed away from superfluous movements of the body, whereas students of modern pedagogy are encouraged to free up the body in hopes that it will also free up the tone.

I advocate whole body singing, which means that for the voice to be functioning with maximum efficiency, the body must be as well. Stretching and exercising the

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<sup>32</sup> Duey, *Bel Canto in Its Golden Age*, 165.

body are just as important as stretching and exercising the voice for a singer. These principals should apply to both classical and CCM styles of singing, but they are vitally important for a belter.<sup>33</sup>

The bel canto masters focused primarily on acquiring a regal and still posture to relax the vocal mechanism, but in maintaining this posture tension can be present.

Modern pedagogy is more focused on a balanced and centered posture. One way to center the body is to build from the floor, up, centering the weight through each of the weight bearing joints (ankles, knees, hips). When weight is centered above the weight bearing joints, as opposed to pushed off center (for example a student standing with one hip to the side), unnecessary tension is reduced. Imagery is frequently used; for example, the idea of a string being attached to the chest and pulling up from the back of the neck is used to encourage a tall posture similar to the “regal” description that bel canto masters used.<sup>34</sup>

Elevating the chest, as if a string is attached, can prevent a student from allowing the ribs to tilt in an unbalanced manner.

The primary difference between bel canto and modern posture is the vocabulary used to instruct students on obtaining a correct standing position. Terms, such as “regal,” can imply rigidity or stiffness whereas a term such as “balanced” implies a more relaxed

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<sup>33</sup> Sheena Neely, “STOP SCREAMING! A Practical Guide for Helping Classically-Trained Singers Achieve the ‘Belt’ Sound in a Healthy Manner” (M.M. Thesis, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, 2009), 58.

<sup>34</sup> Both the idea of the string imagery and this style of building posture are an example of how oral tradition has functioned in modern pedagogy. These examples represent how I teach posture to my personal voice students by passing on what others have taught me. The string metaphor has been taught to me by numerous choral instructors including Christopher Peterson of California State University Fullerton and Meredith Hawkins, the choral instructor at Rocklin High school 2004-2013. This manner of building posture was taught to me by Christina Kang during a seminar on pedagogy in 2014.

and fluid body posture. Many differences between these two schools of thought stem from the scientific advancements that have taken place since the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Masters of the bel canto era observed and theorized about the effects of tension in different parts of the body on the voice, whereas modern science has proven that the parts of the body are interdependent. Modern instructors develop their theories on posture with the knowledge that carrying tension in a part of the body far removed from the singing mechanism, such as the pelvis, can directly affect tone production. Finding the best way to guide each student individually can be challenging but the root concepts regarding posture are unified between bel canto and music theater techniques. Pedagogues of both bel canto and music theater agree that creating a balanced posture allows the singer to prepare for proper sound production and creates a vessel for good breath support.

Unfortunately, having perfect posture is not always possible outside the studio setting. Stark points out that performers are often directed to move or stand in positions that are less than ideal when performing.

I have also seen awkward postures that have not adversely affected good singing (for example, a famous soprano at the Metropolitan Opera, eight months pregnant and stuffed into a gunnysack, who sang Gilda's final scene from *Rigoletto* beautifully). While good posture and good breathing methods are certainly important, especially in a singer's early training, it is ultimately the way in which the breath is turned into a singing tone that is crucial.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Stark, *Bel Canto: A History of Vocal Pedagogy*, 162.

While balanced posture makes it easier to facilitate sound production, Stark makes an excellent point that performers are not always in control of what positions their bodies must be in but by being aware of how the body is imbalanced, singers can make a conscious effort to reduce tension and focus the motor of the voice: breath.

### Respiration

As with posture, theories on breathing are mostly unified across the styles. The masters of bel canto taught the concept of breath mostly through metaphors. Scientific discovery was certainly on the rise during this period but most of the teachers quoted in Duey's book only vaguely reference the anatomy of the breath. Many of the masters are concerned primarily with specifying how a vocalist should breathe within florid passages, as was the fashion of era, and mastering the *messa di voce*. *Messa di voce*, or placing of the voice, refers to singing a sustained pitch and executing a gradual *crescendo*, increase in volume, followed by a gradual *decrescendo*, decrease in volume. Garcia recognized that the *messa di voce* is the ultimate test of breath support, stating that *messa di voce* is not for an untrained voice as it "requires a singer to be expert in the control of the breath."<sup>36</sup> Breath management is crucial to mastering the *messa di voce* and therefore crucial to bel canto. Duey references Hiller in his commentary regarding breath:

According to Hiller a singer should have a command over varying degrees of loudness and softness of the voice and this may be obtained by singing first with a forte tone, then with a half-voice, then with soft tones. He observes that some people have weak voices because of weak lungs and this may be improved not only by exercise but also by encouragement. He adds that singing would be a very

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<sup>36</sup> Stark, *Bel Canto: A History of Vocal Pedagogy*, 177.

simple thing if there were but one tone to each breath and anyone who cannot sing more “should certainly be advised against occupying himself with singing.” And since every beginner always wastes more breath than necessary, “one of the main tasks of the singing master consists in accustoming his pupils to economize with their breath right from the outset.”<sup>37</sup>

Hiller focuses on building lung capacity so that a vocalist can better support the tone at various volumes. Modern pedagogues often encourage cardiovascular exercise to strengthen the lungs. Neely states that, “Stretching and exercising the body are just as important as stretching and exercising the voice for a singer.”<sup>38</sup> For a voice student, their body is their instrument, so body maintenance is essential to performing at a high level.

Tosi’s ideas on the breath are primarily concerned with where to breathe in a phrase; he also mentions that a singer should be taught to breathe without fatigue because inexperienced singers can make the mistake of gasping for air “as if they had ... asthma ... breath[ing] ... with difficulty, as if they were breathing their last [breath].”<sup>39</sup> Gasping for breath implies attaining air in a desperate manner that would create tension not only in the body but also in the vocal mechanism. His statement suggests that he would be supportive of the idea that vocalists should allow air to rush in as opposed to sucking in as much air as they can. Tosi is describing what science now recognizes as Boyle’s law. Boyle’s law explains what is perceived as a vacuum affect. As the diaphragm contracts

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<sup>37</sup> Duey, *Bel Canto in Its Golden Age*, 196.

<sup>38</sup> Neely, “STOP SCREAMING!,” 58.

<sup>39</sup> Duey, *Bel Canto in Its Golden Age*, 182.



and becomes more flate, it creates space in the thoracic cavity. As a result, the pressure in the lungs is decreased and air automatically rushes into the empty space.<sup>40</sup>

Gasping in general can have a negative impact on the vocal mechanism but in some situations, a quick breath can be a useful teaching technique. Gasping mostly refers to clavicular breathing but some teachers use a surprised breath to demonstrate to a student what a quick, low breath feels like in the body. This quick inhale allows air to rush in as opposed to drawing in air. Tosi's comments about first teaching relaxed breathing and not allowing new students to labor for air, thus creating tension, is crucial to building a healthy foundation for voice in any style.

In his text *Bel Canto: A History of Vocal Pedagogy*, Stark examines further the ideals of breath in the bel canto style, by defining *appoggio* (from the Italian verb *appoggiare* which means to lean or support), a term still often used in teaching today.

The bel canto concept of the breathing technique *appoggio* can be a successful tool for a contemporary approach to singing. Defined as a balance between the breathing muscles, as well as breath pressure and airflow, *appoggio* requires a relaxed low breath, as well as a contraction of the abdominals to provide adequate support for the airflow; this juxtaposition of relaxation and engagement is the most important component of *appoggio*.<sup>41</sup>

Balance in the breathing mechanism is central not only to the bel canto concept of *appoggio*, but also to modern singing styles. Tosi advocates for taking a “low relaxed breath” as described above. This type of breath is achieved by relaxing the lower

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<sup>40</sup> Glenn Research Center, “Boyle’s Law,” Last modified May 5, 2015, Accessed October 7, 2018, <https://www.grc.nasa.gov/WWW/K-12/airplane/boyle.html>.

<sup>41</sup> Stark, *Bel Canto*, 118–20.

abdominals, allowing the diaphragm to contract/flatten and the viscera to drop, which allows for a fuller breath. Stark's reference to the "contraction of the abdominals," broaches the much-discussed subject of support. The term "support" can be vague and confusing to a beginning student, so it is important to clarify what it means in terms of the breath. Just as a motor makes a car mobile, breath is the motor of the voice, supporting the sound.

Related to respiration is the concept of suspending the gesture of inhalation. Taking a low and relaxed breath allows air to fill and expand the thoracic, or chest, cavity without excess tension. Suspending the gesture of inhalation is focused not on stopping the flow of the air but on experiencing thoracic expansion, as if the lungs have just filled with air, and maintaining that feeling. Allowing the thoracic cavity to expand is key to a full breath. To facilitate this expansion, a singer must release the lower abdominals. When the lower abdominals are released it allows the viscera to sit lower and permits the diaphragm to flatten and allow air to rush in and fill the lungs. After the lungs are filled, a singer must reengage the lower abdominals in order support the sound and slow the rate of exhalation. Beginning singers often make the mistake of taking too high a breath or a clavicular breath. This type of high, unsettled breath is what Tosi was referring to as a "gasping breath." When a singer suspends the gesture of inhalation, maintaining the expansion of the rib cage as if inhaling air, and supports with the lower abdominals, the rate of exhalation is more controlled. Neely provides further insight into how relaxed abdominals correlate with thoracic breathing while also addressing how breath functions in belt singing.

The most effective method of breath management for singers seems to be diaphragmatic-abdominal breathing, which is a combination of thoracic breathing and abdominal breathing. The breath needs to be able to fill the lungs, and the diaphragm allowed to flatten out, or contract. For this to occur, the abdominal muscles must be relaxed. The rib cage should remain expanded as it is in thoracic breathing. The abdominal muscles are then contracted and used for support once you begin to expel the air. The exhalation needs to be controlled. This is the method taught by most classical instructors and it remains the best option for belt, as well. The only difference occurs when it comes to support and energy required.<sup>42</sup>

Breath functions much the same way in music theater singing as it does in bel canto. Vocalists in the Broadway vein of singing should still suspend the feeling of inhalation and utilize the air in a steady manner. Belting often requires a strong glottal adduction for more of the phrase than the bel canto style does.<sup>43</sup> Glottal adduction implies that the folds are tightly closed and vibrating while phonation is occurring for longer than in bel canto. Prolonged glottal adduction is what Neely refers to as a “different energy and support.” Shifting production does not call for a different breathing technique entirely, but rather a different style of breath management.

Suspending the gesture of inhalation is related to breath management but controlling how much air is needed for a certain style or piece is also breath management. In her dissertation “The Crossover Opera Singer: Bridging the Gap Between Opera and Musical Theatre,” Keyona Willis-Lynam clarifies how breath management can differ in different styles of vocal production:

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<sup>42</sup> Neely, “STOP SCREAMING!,” 62.

<sup>43</sup> Corinne Ness, “Teaching Music Theatre: An Integrative Dialectical Approach,” *Opera Journal* 47, no.1 (2014), 8.

In chest voice, the vocal folds are thicker and closed for a longer period of time, which requires less airflow to reduce pressure under the vocal folds. For a lighter mechanism such as head mix, more airflow is needed since the vocal folds will not be closed as long, creating more of a balance between the amount of time the vocal folds are open and closed. The ability to monitor airflow in a belt/mix will help to reduce pharyngeal tension and aid in the ability to transition between registers.<sup>44</sup>

Willis-Lynam further explains how breath is managed and directly affects how tense vocal production is. If a vocalist presses a high volume of air through the closed folds, this creates tension in the mechanism. Willis-Lynam comments that if the vocalist monitors the amount of air needed for a phrase or moment, then the amount of tension in the pharynx or throat, will be reduced. While the voice needs to be supported with the breath, taking in more air than is needed also creates tension and unnecessary subglottic pressure.

The basics of breath remain the same no matter which style is being performed but belting also requires varying levels of abdominal support to be produced healthily. Abdominal engagement is vital in any style of singing but, Willis-Lynam points out that if too much air is used in a belt production it will create unnecessary tension. Neely likens the amount of energy and body involvement necessary for belt to hailing a cab in a busy city street. If an individual expects to be heard over the bustle of the city yelling “taxi!,” it is going to take a lot more energy for the body as a whole than simply saying the word.<sup>45</sup> Arguably, the amount of vocal and breath energy necessary for shouting taxi

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<sup>44</sup> Keyona Willis-Lynam, “The Crossover Opera Singer: Bridging the Gap Between Opera and Musical Theatre” (DMA diss., The Ohio State University, 2015,) 59.

<sup>45</sup> Neely, “STOP SCREAMING!,” 63.

or belting is similar to that of singing complex operatic passages. The real differences begin with the analysis of registration.

### Registration

The issue of registration is often complex and while different styles utilize registers in different manners, the pedagogies behind varying styles remain focused on balance in the voice. Before video-fluoroscopy, MRI, video-laryngoscopy and EMG, pedagogues of the seventeenth century defined registers based on where they felt the sympathetic vibrations of the voice; terms such as chest voice and head voice originated from this era. Both bel canto and music theater scholars agree that creating a smooth tone across the registers should be a priority of studying voice. Stark recognizes how consistent the issue of registration has been since the bel canto era.

A homogenous singing voice with no breaks or obvious register transitions is a hallmark of successful bel canto singing. Beginning in the late sixteenth century, the Old Italian school recognized two vocal registers: *voce di petto* (chest voice) and *voce di testa* (head voice); the ideal voice blended the two registers, which is a standard that is upheld to this day.<sup>46</sup>

While the number of registers has been debated across the eras, chest voice and head voice remain standard terms in modern voice studies. In more scientific terms, a head voice-dominated sound is a cricothyroid, or CT, dominated sound while a chest

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<sup>46</sup> Stark, *Bel Canto*, 58-62.

voice-dominated sound is a thyroarytenoid, or TA, dominated sound.<sup>47</sup> The CT muscle is responsible for tilting the thyroid forward and allows the vocal folds to lengthen and produce higher pitches. Higher frequencies are produced when the folds are lengthened, using the edges of the folds in a delicate manner. Bel canto is often considered a CT-dominated style while music theater styles rely on more TA involvement.

How the registers are balanced across the voice varies in different singing styles. Scholars from the bel canto era were more focused on creating a tone that sounds unified to the ear and eliminating any evidence of a break between registers. In addition to his opinions on breath and posture, Tosi also addresses the issue of unifying the registers. As mentioned before, one of the tenets of the bel canto style is the smooth navigation through the registers of the voice. Tosi states the following:

A diligent master, knowing that a soprano, without the falsetto is constrained to sing within the narrow compass of a few notes, ought not only to endeavor to help him to it, but also to leave no means untried, so to unite the feigned and the natural voice, that they may not be distinguished; for if they do not perfectly unite, the voice will be of diverse registers, and must consequently lose its beauty ... Whoever would be curious to discover the feigned voice of one who has the art to disguise it, let him take notice, that the artist sound the vowel i, or e, with more strength and less fatigue than the vowel a, on the high notes.<sup>48</sup>

Tosi refers in the above passage to the connection of the chest and falsetto registers of an Italian castrato, but the same principles apply generally to bridging the *passaggio*, also referred to as a passage between registers. He provides commentary on

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<sup>47</sup> Tracy Bourne, Maeva Garnier, and Diana Kenny, "Popular Song and Music Theater Voice: Production, Physiology and Pedagogy," *Journal of Singing* 67, no. 4 (2011), 439.

<sup>48</sup> Tosi, *Opinioni de' cantori, e moderni*, 11.

the necessity of unifying registers and provides guidance on the type of vocalization that will aid in the process-vocalization on forward vowels. Maintaining a forward resonance on a forward vowel can allow the singer to vocalize between registers without creating additional tension in the mechanism or carrying too much weight from the chest voice up into the head voice. One useful technique, popularized by Ingo Titze, for facilitating this forward resonance is phonating through a straw. Making a light [u] sound through the straw, across the registers, brings the vocal tract into a semi-occluded position. In this setting, semi-occluded refers to the fact that the vocal tract is narrowed while producing the [u] vowel. Narrowing the vocal tract reduces the amount of pressure by providing some resistance for the airflow. Lightly vocalizing on forward vowels across the vocal registers also makes it fairly easy for both teacher and student to feel when tension is present or resonance goes awry.

The ideals of registration function similarly in the music theater styles. All of the music theater styles discussed above require balance between the registers to achieve beautiful tone but some require a different amount of balance between chest and voice. The legit style is noted for the fact that it functions similarly to bel canto. In legit repertoire, for example “The Beauty Is” from Guettel’s *The Light in the Piazza*, the vocalist is required to carry an even head voice tone quality from Cb4 to Gb5. While this is not a particularly large range of notes, it does extend fairly low for a soprano voice. Maintaining a tone quality in the lower chest register, similar to that of the higher notes requires the singer to practice maintaining a consistent resonance as Tosi mentioned in his writings.

As previously alluded to in the section defining the styles, pure belt and mix are styles that require different amounts of balance between the chest and head registers. Belt is considered a chest voice-dominated style but when a vocalist produces a belt sound through mix, a certain amount of head register is involved. The idea that belt is a technique produced exclusively by the chest register stems from the ideas of traditional belt, à la Ethel Merman. Initially the female belt was noted as extending up to C5. Carrying the chest register up to C5 is a full voiced sound, compared earlier to hailing a cab. With proper support utilizing the chest register in this manner is not harmful but can sound heavy. Bring mindful of carrying weight between the head and chest registers produces a more balanced sound as would be favored by scholars of the bel canto style. By balancing the amount of chest and head voice in the belt sound, the amount of stress on the vocal mechanism is reduced. Karen Sue Hall expands and elaborates on the idea of how mix functions to equalize registers in belt production:

In fact, most belt singing is really a mix of head and chest register, but should not be confused with the classical term *voix mixte*. In music theater singing, most belting is an extension of the spoken word, not the shouted word. Extending the spoken word in mix/belt singing translates into more use of head voice in mix production than in the full belt sound (singing that uses thyroarytenoid muscle or chest register exclusively), but not to the degree found in classical voice production.<sup>49</sup>

Hall provides a clear explanation of how the idea of speech-like resonance interacts with the concept of mix. In order to carry a speech-like resonance into a higher

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<sup>49</sup> Karen Sue Hall, “Music Theater Vocal Pedagogy and Styles: An Introductory Teaching Guide for Experienced Classical Singing Teachers” (DMA diss., Columbia University, 2014), 24–25.



tessitura, a music theater vocalist has to possess a balance of head and chest registers. Carrying speech resonance higher in the range requires a continued forward resonance similar to that described by Tosi. Generally transitioning between registers without adding weight or strain is aided by forward resonance. Both bel canto and music theater styles are unified in the goal of balancing the registers and smoothing the transitions.

It is important to note that achieving equilibrium between the registers is dependent not only on the style of the piece being performed but also on the individual voice. Willis-Lynam expands on how different voice types may struggle to find balance and also illuminates how vital balance is in music theater singing:

This falls under the guidelines of recognizing which registration is needed and more importantly, how to transition between registers. Acknowledging how to balance registration will be an aid to ensure vocal health and longevity of one's career, no matter the style of singing pursued. A singer with a naturally lighter voice may be more comfortable in a head mix and someone with a darker sound may be more at ease with a chest mix. The use of registration can also influence the timbre of the voice, which has an impact on what roles would be appropriate for the singer.<sup>50</sup>

The above quotation provides interesting insight into how individual managing weight in the registers of the voice can be. Depending on the natural timbre of a vocalist, how to approach mixing the registers varies drastically. Willis-Lynam points out that the balance of the registers affects the timbre of sound produced. Her observation reinforces the idea that styles of music theater like belt and legit require a different balance of registers, not only for the sake of vocal health but also for character. The importance of

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<sup>50</sup> Keyona Willis-Lynam, "The Crossover Opera Singer: Bridging the Gap Between Opera and Musical Theatre" (DMA diss., The Ohio State University, 2015), 58.

the relationship between voice quality and character in music theater is fairly unique. While the creation of “character voice” is present in opera, often it is not as exaggerated vocally. The fact that artists performing in music theater styles frequently must extremely alter their vocal production for the sake of character makes the issue of balance between the registers a much more common issue. Unifying the registers and smoothing the transitions of the voice is a daunting task for any vocalist. As evidenced by Tosi, Hall and Willis-Lynam, bel canto and music theater both require balance and smooth transitions in registers and both achieve this balance through forward directed resonance. In both styles, resonance plays a key part in creating balance in the voice.

### Resonance

Resonance is an issue central to all singing styles. Sound is powered by the air and produced by the vibrations of the vocal folds but how the tone is shaped depends on the resonators. The sound waves created by the vocal folds resonate through all structures in the head from the teeth to the hard palate to the cheekbones. How and where the resonance is directed in a given style is one of the clearest manners in which bel canto and music theater diverge.

As discussed in the registration section, the bel canto style is characterized by a beautiful tone across the registers, which creates the smooth tone needed to gracefully execute the florid passages favored in the virtuosic music of composers like Rossini and Donizetti. The sound favored in bel canto is generally produced through a low laryngeal position, an open and relaxed pharynx and a raised soft palate. Creating space in the vocal tract and mouth creates a balance between the bright sound of forward resonance and the dark sound of space in the back of the mouth, or *chiaroscuro*. The term

“chiaroscuro” is Italian meaning light-dark. Chiaroscuro refers to a balance between a bright forward tone that will carry and a lifted soft palate, which creates space in the tone. The chiaro (or light) part of this term is often linked to another Italian term: *squillo*. “Squillo” refers to the forward-pointed resonance that allows opera singers to carry over the orchestra. Bright, ping-y, pointed and focused are only a few words that are used to represent this quality in the modern studio. The oscuro (or dark) part of chiaroscuro refers to the space in the oropharynx. Focusing exclusively on creating space in the tone can create a swallowed or covered tone which, while round and pleasing to some ears, doesn’t carry far. By pairing the light and the dark, scholars of bel canto style sought balance in yet another way.

While Tosi has been a reliable source for the bel canto perspective on many other aspects of the voice, his collected remarks on resonance are brief. Italian castrato Giovanni Battista Mancini, on the other hand, provides a bit more insight on perspectives of the time. Duey quotes and clarifies the writings of Mancini in the following selection:

“Every singer should shape his mouth, just as he shapes it when he smiles, in such a manner that the upper teeth are perpendicularly and moderately separated from the lower ones.” By following this rule Mancini claims always to have gotten results; moreover, he adds that it conforms to the methods taught in the best schools. With this smiling position of the mouth he maintains that the vowels *a*, *e*, and *i* can be sung while very slight changes are necessary for *o* and *u* ... The voice cannot come out natural and spontaneous, if it finds the throat in a strained position, which impedes natural action. Therefore the student must take the trouble to accustom his chest to give the voice with naturalness and to use the throat smoothly and easily. If the union of these two parts (chest and throat) reaches the point of perfection, then the voice will be clear and agreeable.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Duey, *Bel Canto in Its Golden Age*, 250–51.

Mancini's ideals of resonance in bel canto singing are strikingly relevant to music theater styles. In his discussion of the smiling position of the mouth, Mancini addresses not only how much the mouth should be opened when singing but also the idea of forward resonance. Mancini points out that all vowels can be produced from the smiling mouth position with very few changes to the mechanism. A smile position suggests a mouth position that is relaxed and not too open while the teeth are slightly shown as if in a smile. The smile on the lips not only gives the singer a certain amount of palate lift but also provides a point of focus for forward resonance. Simply, forward placement in bel canto allows the voice to ring and carry over an orchestra; warmth is added to this tone by lifting the soft palate to create space in the mouth. This balance between space and forward resonance is captured with the above definition of *chiaroscuro*. Forward placement is also crucial to music theater styles but, because the soft palate is not as lifted, this forward sound is perceived as nasal. Mancini continues to describe the necessity for unity between the chest and the throat. His statement implies a connection between the forward/lifted resonance of *chiaroscuro* and the lower resonance that is linked to the chest register. Hiller also supports a similar idea stating, "Clear is the voice when it comes out through the open mouth, freely from the chest, without forcing and squeezing of the throat."<sup>52</sup> Hiller and Mancini both support forward resonance linked with an open and relaxed connection to the chest register. This idea, provided by two scholars of the bel canto style, is also central to a healthy belt production. It is interesting to note that one of the only significant differences in resonance strategies seems to be the amount of lift in the palate.

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<sup>52</sup> Duey, *Bel Canto in Its Golden Age*, 256–57.

Concepts of resonance in music theater have matured throughout the eras as different popular music trends have influenced the vocal styles. In the 1940s and 50s, the Broadway tessitura settled into a speech-like resonance to suit the trend towards an emphasis communicating on plot. Many composers believed that the lower pitch would make the text easier to understand. In the golden age era, the shift to speech-like resonance is most evident in the lower voices. As mentioned earlier, this era employed a type of traditional legit style, which mirrors the bel canto placement with a lifted soft palate and higher tessitura. With the emergence of textual expressivity above beauty of tone, the Broadway industry began to cultivate the vocal qualities present in today's music theater. The development of the rock musical in the 1960s further heightened the highly stylized quality of belt expected in female singers on Broadway. The rough quality of rock singing, coupled with the emotional plot being amplified to a shout-like level, raised the tessitura of Broadway belt from a range of A4-C5 to top notes of E5 or sometimes higher.<sup>53</sup> To the ear, this sound is incredibly different from the bel canto but physically, the differences are not as staggering.

As music theater styles have developed and shifted, the need for a forward resonance, like that described by Mancini and Hiller, has become even more necessary. In the article "Vocal Qualities in Music Theater Voice: Perceptions of Expert Pedagogues," Tracey Bourne and Dianna Kenny provide, among a great deal of other information, several educational tables summarizing the perceived qualities of music theater voice as explained by experts in the field. These expert descriptions capture

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<sup>53</sup> Bourne, "Popular Song and Music Theater Voice: Production, Physiology and Pedagogy," 437.

perfectly how the listener perceives the resonance strategies of belt. Their findings summarize the adjectives that professionals used to describe qualities including the weight, volume, color and space.<sup>54</sup> For weight, the terms used include heavy, thick, and chesty. These terms are representative of the perceived weight that comes with singing musical theater styles like belt. Because belt often involves mixing the registers, pitches in a higher tessitura sound more weighted than they would in a pure head voice production. Volume is characterized by descriptions like full sound, energizing, aggressive and high level of physical energy. Phrases like full sound and high level of physical energy capture how resonant and full a belt sound can be. When the sound is supported and resonant, the voice is observed as loud and forceful to the audience. The colors present in music theater styles are often varied but some of the descriptions provided are brassy, edgy, straight, natural-spin and chiaro-dominant. Each of these terms represent the forward, speech-like resonance that allows the sound to carry in a powerful manner. As for the space of the sound, the experts sampled use ideas like open, free, supported, connected and wide open to describe a belt production. Above are positive descriptions of how belt is perceived and should be produced. While most of the terms provided are positive, some like tight and splat-y have a more negative connotation. These negative perceptions are associated with a less than ideal belt production. As Hiller mentioned earlier, the voice should be produced without tension or squeezing in the throat and if this advice is followed, then these negative descriptions should never be an

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<sup>54</sup> Tracy Bourne and Dianna Kenny, “Vocal Qualities in Music Theater Voice: Perceptions of Expert Pedagogues,” *Journal of Voice* 30.1 (2016): 3.

issue. Overall the perceptions gathered by Bourne and Kenny provide some clear language on how belt is perceived when forward resonance is utilized.

As seen above, Bourne and Kenny detail most of the qualities for which music theater voice is known. Nasal, bright, ringy, twangy, forward, brassy, trumpet-like and warm are all terms associated with resonance. Four out of these eight terms are shared by the bel canto style and were addressed above. The other four terms can be explained through a closer examination of resonance in music theater.

Referencing the Italian resonance model of chiaro-oscuro (light-dark), healthy belt singing is very chiaro. It is the product of bright, speech-like, colloquial vowels and consonants, and stands in contrast to the fuller, “taller,” and more weighted formal vowels and consonants of classical singing. Because of the chiaro emphasis and the diminished oscuro, the belt sound is often described as “twangy,” “placed very forward,” or even nasal. Though some belters deliberately lower the soft palate to introduce nasality in their singing, nasality is not a prerequisite for belting.<sup>55</sup>

In the above quotation, Edwin provides an excellent foundation for the comparison of music theater and bel canto resonance. He aptly illustrates how belt departs slightly from the typical bel canto model. The TA muscle forms the body of the vocal folds and draws the arytenoid cartilages forward to the thyroid to shorten the vocal folds. This shortening of the vocal tract aids in the creation of the pointed nasal sound for which the belt is known. In addition to the shortened vocal tract, music theater belt is classified by a higher laryngeal position, a narrower pharyngeal space, and a high tongue position. These characteristics are not usually associated with a healthy production. A

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<sup>55</sup> Robert Edwin, “Popular Song and Music Theater: ‘Belt Yourself’,” *Journal of Singing* 60, no. 3 (January 2004), 285.

higher laryngeal position can be associated with tension in the mechanism, but it is also merely one way in which a vocalist can accomplish this shortening of the vocal tract.<sup>56</sup> In hearing the sound produced by a shortened vocal tract, it is easy to assume that the larynx is pushed high creating tension but the elevation of the larynx is not always synonymous with vocal damage. With training, the sound of a shortened vocal tract can be produced with a more relaxed and relatively lower laryngeal position. This struggle is where employing the bel canto ideals of balancing the registers and mix techniques come into play. Hiller and Mancini's ideals of chiaroscuro balanced with a relaxed throat and connection to the chest register would solve many of the tension issues associated with belt. Many of the negative stigmas associated with belt (pressed, forced, yelling, unhealthy) should only be associated with unhealthy belt and not belt generally. The same negative adjectives could as easily be used to describe an unhealthy bel canto production.

### Conclusions

After examining the function of posture, respiration, registration and resonance function in both bel canto and music theater styles, it is interesting to note the many similarities. Bel canto and music theater are nearly unified in the foundations of cultivating a healthy vocal technique. The basics of healthy posture and respiration remain nearly identical across the styles, only differing when it comes to managing the amount of air necessary for a particular sound. Neely agrees stating:

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<sup>56</sup> Ness, "Teaching Music Theatre," 8.



Posture and respiration remain the same regardless of which style or genre of music a vocalist is singing. Preparation for sound production is incredibly important in both classical and CCM singing. The differences in pedagogies begin at the sound production level.<sup>57</sup>

Registration and resonance are the foundations of sound production mentioned by Neely. In both styles, registration should focus on the reduction of tension and balance in the mechanism and registers. Masters of bel canto, like Tosi, and modern scholars, like Hall, agree that smooth transitions between the registers are a necessity for beautiful singing. In the case of registration, the main difference between bel canto and music theater is which register of the voice is more heavily used. Generally, in music theater, there is a larger emphasis on chest voice or TA production whereas in bel canto there is more of an emphasis on head voice or CT production. Similarly, bel canto and music theater share a focus on balanced resonance; light and dark, mask and chest. While there are certainly differences in sound quality, the basics of a healthy sound are unified for these seemingly different styles. Furthermore, upon drawing this conclusion, more professors of voice should heed the words of vocal coach Seth Riggs.

Teachers (classical academic) should stop putting themselves in ivory towers and acting as if there were nothing else but opera, nothing else but musical theatre, or nothing else but popular music! A voice teacher must try to impress upon his pupils, actually insist, that they sing in an uncluttered, easy manner throughout their entire range - *and be able to sing anything!* Students must be given repertoire in all areas of vocal music, traditional and popular.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Neely, "STOP SCREAMING!," 63.

<sup>58</sup> Seth Riggs, *Singing for the Stars: A Complete Program for Training Your Voice* (Van Nuys, CA: Alfred, 1998), 82.

A well-rounded study of the voice, as supported above by Riggs, produces students who are not only able to apply the basics of healthy voice to different styles but also more marketable in modern society. Maintaining a performing career in the arts is reliant on booking contracts and a more versatile artist is eligible for more of the available work than an artist who is only comfortable in one style or genre. Armed with the knowledge that bel canto and music theater are unified in the basics of producing healthy tone and that being a flexible artist can only benefit a student of voice, it stands to reason that more courses should be offered that examine similarities more than the differences in vocal styles. Examining how bel canto and popular music style intersect with music theater not only provides insight into which styles a singer must be fluent in to perform but also how the different pedagogic ideas behind these styles work together to inform the various eras of music theater. The following chapter presents a proposed course that would use the conclusions of this chapter to trace the development of music theater pedagogy.

## CHAPTER 3: CURRICULUM- AN OVERVIEW OF SINGING MUSIC THEATER STYLES: FROM HAMMERSTEIN TO HAMILTON

This chapter outlines a syllabus for a course entitled *Singing Music Theater Styles: From Hammerstein to Hamilton*. After examining technically how bel canto and music theater overlap, it is clear that these two styles share the same goal of beautiful singing. In this course, we seek to draw a clear line between the techniques of bel canto through early and contemporary music theater.

This course will function to explore song literature through its pedagogy and performance components. Its purpose is to examine how the vocal techniques of music theater have developed from operetta, or bel canto technique, to the present and evaluate how these techniques can be produced in a healthy manner. The goal is to provide a resource for instructors seeking to cultivate healthy music theater singing from a basis of healthy technique and for students interested in how modern techniques developed over time.

### Target Instructor

The target instructor for this course is a professor of voice. An instructor of this course does not need to specialize in music theater singing techniques, but it is recommended that the instructors have some background, delve into recent research in this area, and ideally study the annotated bibliography included in this document. This course is an accessible option for music programs and universities because it does not require any special training and addresses subject matter that is rapidly becoming more relevant to the voice students in the current Broadway market.

### Target Student

Target students for this course would be students studying voice at the collegiate level or those who have a foundation in healthy vocal technique. The course itself could be adjusted to be functional with students at various levels as long as a vocal foundation is already present. This course would also prove useful for students specializing in collaborative piano who hope to specialize in accompanying the voice. The amount of jobs for coaches/accompanists of music theater is constantly growing. In the event that this course is cross-listed for both graduate and undergraduate students, a second grading breakdown will be included with the additional requirements for a student of graduate level. Overall this course could prove interesting to students ranging from advanced students in pre-college programs to graduate level students with an interest in the repertoire and in fostering a healthy music theater technique. This course could also be restructured and offered as a seminar for educators who wish to expand their knowledge on music theater styles.

### Class Size

This course is designed for 10-12 students. A small class size allows for more involved discussion, performance and presentations. A class size of 10-12 allows for each student to present/perform at least once but cutting the enrollment in half would also be functional in allowing each student to perform at least twice. A variety of class sizes could be accommodated with some adjustments to the presentation schedule, but a smaller size makes for more inclusive discussions.

## Suggested Texts

- Browning, Ron. "Crossover Concerns and Techniques for the Classical Singer." *Journal of Singing* 72.5 (May 2016): 609-617. ProQuest document ID: 1789223030.
- Doscher, Barbara. *The Functional Unity of the Singing Voice*. London: The Scarecrow Press, 1994.
- Edwin, Robert. "Popular Song and Music Theater: Belt is Legit." *Journal of Singing* 64.2 (November 2007): 213-215. ProQuest document ID: 1402158.
- LoVetri, Jeannette. "Contemporary Commercial Music: More than One Way to Use the Vocal Tract." *Journal of Singing* 58.3 (January 2002): 249-252. ProQuest document ID: 1401992.
- McClellan, Josef William. "A Comparative Analysis of Speech Level Singing and Traditional Vocal Training in the United States." DMA diss., The University of Memphis, 2011. ProQuest Document ID: 923630594.
- Moriarty, Bridget Maureen. "Crossing Over. Examining the Challenges of a Classically Trained Female Performing Music Theater Repertoire." DMA diss., The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2015. Proquest Document ID: 3708153.
- Solomon, Alisa. "How 'Hamilton' is Revolutionizing the Broadway Musical." *The Nation*, August 27, 2015. <https://www.thenation.com/article/how-hamilton-is-revolutionizing-the-broadway-musical/>.
- Stark, James. *Bel Canto: A History of Vocal Pedagogy*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999.
- Stempel, Larry. *Showtime: A History of the Broadway Musical Theater*. W.W. Norton & Company: 2010.
- Titze, Ingo R., Brad H. Story, and Albert S. Worley. "Source-Vocal Tract Interaction in Female Operatic Singing and Theater Belting." *Journal of Singing* 67.5 (2011): 561-572. <http://web.a.ebscohost.com.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/>.
- Willis-Lynam, Keyona. "The Crossover Opera Singer: Bridging the Gap Between Opera and Musical Theatre." DMA diss., The Ohio State University, 2015. ProQuest Document ID: 10085455.

The most important source from this list is Stempel's *Showtime: A History of the Broadway Musical Theater*. Stempel's book provides context and transitions for each of the eras examined. From the end of the nineteenth century to the new millennium, this 2010 book documents how Broadway has interacted not only with its past but also with the popular music of the present to cultivate new styles. The rest of the texts listed above are merely those in the sample lesson plan of this document. During the process of researching the design and organization of this course, many more sources were examined and documented in the literature review.

### Syllabus

Below is a sample syllabus and topic outline for the course *Singing Music Theater Styles: From Hammerstein to Hamilton*.

# Singing Music Theater Styles

## From Hammerstein to Hamilton

Dr. Sara Bruton sbruton@asu.edu

Office Hours: M, W 9am-11am

### Course Objectives and Anticipated Learning Outcomes

- Gain understanding of how the vocal technique of music theater has developed through each era from operetta to contemporary.
- Apply critical thinking to listening examples and draw conclusions about the vocal technique employed.
- Exploration of new vocal techniques and how to incorporate this information into an individual performing or teaching arsenal.
- Draw personal conclusions about how the vocal technique of music theater compares to other vocal techniques being studied.

### Synopsis of Assignments

Prior to each week, students will complete readings on the topic to be discussed and also choose a listening example they feel epitomizes the vocal style of the era. The students will keep track of these listening examples, as well as their reasons for why each listening is a good representation of the vocal era, in a listening journal, which will be turned in at the end of the semester. Each week, a group of 2-3 students will provide a summary of the reading for that week. Every week will also feature a 15-minute group work segment where students take a listening example from the assignment list and together cultivate a vocal exercise that would help a student achieve that style of resonance. Depending on the number of students enrolled, each student will do 1-2 presentations over the course of the class. These presentations will elaborate on a musical of the era and include the performance of a song, which allows for the student to explore and portray the vocal principles of the era as discussed in class. Students at the graduate level will be required to complete a research paper or a project with embodied experiences in addition to the presentation. Finally, each student will be required to attend a live production of a musical over the course of the semester and complete a review of the vocal technique they observed.

#### Grading- Undergraduate

Presentations	30%
Listening Journal	25%
Review of Live Performance	15%
Attendance, Participation and Punctuality	20%
Other Assignments	10%

#### Grading- Graduate

Presentations	20%
Research Paper	20%
Listening Journal	15%
Review of Live Performance	15%
Attendance, Participation and Punctuality	20%
Other Assignments	10%

# Course Schedule

## Week 1

### Introduction of Materials

Sign up for presentation dates.

## Week 2

### Operetta

Major Works: *Pirates of Penzance*, *The Mikado*, *The Merry Widow*, *Naughty Marietta*, *Babes in Toyland*, *The Vagabond King* and *Maytime*.

Major Composers: Arthur Sullivan, Franz Lehar, Victor Herbert, Rudolf Friml, and Sigmund Romberg.

Read: Stempel 116-128, Franzone 24-30 and Doscher handout.

Bring: Listening example.

Listen: “Vilja Song” from *The Merry Widow* by Franz Lehar, Victor Léon and Leo Stein  
“I am the very model of a modern Major-General” and “Climbing over Rocky Mountain” from *Pirates of Penzance* by W.S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan  
“Ah! Sweet Mystery of Life” from *Naughty Marietta* by Victor Herbert and Rosa Johnson Young

## Week 3

### Pre-Golden Age

Major Works: *Little Johnny Jones*, *Showboat*, *Girl Crazy*, *Of Thee I Sing*, *Porgy and Bess*, *Babes in Arms*, and *Anything Goes*.

Major Composers: George M. Cohan, Irving Berlin, Jerome Kern, George Gershwin, Richard Rodgers, and Cole Porter.

Read: Stempel 137-159 and Browning article.

Bring: Listening example.

Listen: “Friendship” from *Anything Goes* by Cole Porter  
“I Got Rhythm” by George and Ira Gershwin  
“Give my Regards to Broadway” from *Little Johnny Jones* by George M. Cohan  
Presentation 1

## Week 4

### Golden Age 1943-1955

Major Works: *Oklahoma!*, *Carousel*, *South Pacific*, *The King and I*, *Annie Get Your Gun*, *Kiss Me Kate*, *Peter Pan*, *Wonderful Town* and *Guys and Dolls*.

Major Composers: Richard Rodgers, Irving Berlin, Cole Porter, Frederick Lowe, Leonard Bernstein and Frank Loesser.

Read: Stempel chapter 7 and Willis-Lyman 15-19.

Bring: Listening example.

Listen: “People will say we’re in Love” from *Oklahoma!* by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II  
“You Can’t Get a Man with a Gun” from *Annie Get Your Gun* by Irving Berlin  
“100 Easy Ways to Lose a Man” from *Wonderful Town* by Leonard Bernstein, Betty Camden and Adolph Green  
Presentation 2



## **Week 5**

### **Golden Age 1955-1963**

Major Works: *The Sound of Music, How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying, Cinderella, My Fair Lady, Camelot, Candide, West Side Story* and *Gypsy*.

Major Composers: Richard Rodgers, Frank Loesser, Frederick Lowe, Leonard Bernstein and Jule Styne.

Read: Stempel 300-312 and chapter 9.

Bring: Listening example.

Listen: “America” from *West Side Story* by Leonard Bernstein and Stephen Sondheim  
“I’ve Grown Accustomed to her Face” from *My Fair Lady* by Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Lowe

“Stepsister’s Lament” from *Cinderella* by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II

Presentation 3

## **Week 6**

### **1960s Departing from the Golden Age**

Major Works: *Bye Bye Birdie, A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum, She Loves Me, Hello, Dolly!, Cabaret, Hair* and *1776*.

Major Composers: Charles Strouse, Frank Loesser, Stephen Sondheim, Jerry Bock, Jerry Herman, John Kander, Galt MacDermot and Sherman Edwards.

Read: Stempel chapter 12 and LoVetri article.

Bring: Listening example.

Listen: “A Lot of Livin’ to Do” from *Bye Bye Birdie* by Charles Strouse and Lee Adams

“Penny in My Pocket” from *Hello, Dolly!* by Jerry Herman and Michael Stewart

“Hair” from *Hair* by Galt MacDermot and Gerome Ragni

Presentation 4

## **Week 7**

### **1970s**

Major Works: *Company, Follies, Godspell, Grease, Jesus Christ Superstar, Pippin, A Little Night Music, Evita* and *Sweeney Todd*.

Major Composers: Stephen Sondheim, Stephen Schwartz, Jim Jacobs and Andrew Lloyd Webber.

Read: Stempel’s chapter 13 and Moriarty 54-60.

Bring: Listening example.

Listen: “Gethsemane” from *Jesus Christ Superstar* by Andrew Lloyd Webber

“There Are Worse Things I Could Do” from *Grease* by Jim Jacobs and Warren Casey

“A Weekend in the Country” from *A Little Night Music* by Stephen Sondheim

Presentation 5

## **Week 8**

### **1980s**

Major Works: *Les Misérables, Little Shop of Horrors, La Cage aux Folles, Sunday in the Park with George, The Rink, Chess, The Phantom of the Opera* and *Into the Woods*.

Major Composers: Alan Menken, Claude-Michel Schönberg, Jerry Herman, Stephen Sondheim, John Kander, Benny Andersson/Björn Ulvaeus, and Andrew Lloyd Webber.

Read: Stempel 585-629.

Bring: Listening example.

Listen: “Nobody’s Side” from *Chess* by Benny Anderson and Björn Ulvaeus

“A Heart Full of Love” from *Les Misérables* by Claude-Michel Schönberg and Alain Boublil  
“Mushnik and Son” from *Little Shop of Horrors* by Alan Menken and Howard Ashman  
Presentation 6

## **Week 9**

### **1990s**

Major Works: *Once on This Island*, *Children of Eden*, *Kiss of the Spider Woman*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Passions*, *Songs for a New World*, *Rent*, *The Lion King*, *Titanic*, *Aida*, *A New Brain* and *Ragtime*.

Major Composers: Stephen Flaherty, Stephen Schwartz, John Kander, Alan Menken, Stephen Sondheim, Jason Robert Brown, Jonathan Larson, Elton John, Maury Yeston and William Finn.

Read: Stempel 629-642, 656-668.

Bring Listening example.

Listen: “Mama Will Provide” from *Once on this Island* by Lynn Athens and Stephen Flaherty

“Circle of Life” from *The Lion King* by Elton John and Time Rice

“Rent” from *Rent* by Jonathan Larson

Presentation 7

## **Week 10**

### **2000s**

Major Works: *Seussical*, *The Last Five Years*, *Mamma Mia!*, *Avenue Q*, *Wicked*, *The 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, *The Light in the Piazza*, *Spamalot*, *Legally Blonde*, *Billy Elliot*, *The Little Mermaid*, *Shrek*, *9 to 5* and *Next to Normal*.

Major Composers: Stephen Flaherty, Jason Robert Brown, Benny Andersson/Björn Ulvaeus, Robert Lopez/Jeff Marx, Stephen Schwartz, William Finn, Adam Guettel, John Du Prez/Eric Idle, Nell Benjamin/Laurence O’Keefe, Elton John, Alan Menken, Jeanine Tesori, Dolly Parton and Brian Yorkey.

Read: Stempel 668-685 and Edwin article.

Bring: Listening example

Listen: “Defying Gravity” from *Wicked* by Stephen Schwartz

“In the Heights” from *In the Heights* by Lin-Manuel Miranda

“Who I’d Be” from *Shrek* by Jeanine Tesori and David Lindsay-Abaire

Presentation 8

## **Week 11**

### **Contemporary 2010-2015**

Major Works: *The Scottsboro Boys*, *The Book of Mormon*, *Bring it On*, *Newsies*, *Kinky Boots*, *A Gentleman’s to Love and Murder*, *Heathers* and *The Bridges of Madison County*.

Major Composers: John Kander, Trey Parker/Matt Stone/Robert Lopez, Tom Kitt/Lin-Manuel Miranda, Alan Menken, Cyndi Lauper, Steven Lutvak, Laurence O’Keefe/Kevin Murphy and Jason Robert Brown.

Read: Moriarty 61-66 and Titze’s article.

Bring: Listening example.

Listen: “History of Wrong Guys” from *Kinky Boots* by Cyndi Lauper

“I’ve Decided to Marry You” from *A Gentleman’s Guide to Love and Murder* by Steven Lutvak

“It all Fades Away” from *The Bridges of Madison County* by Jason Robert Brown

Presentation 9

## **Week 12**

### **Contemporary 2015-Present**

Major Works: *Hamilton*, *School of Rock*, *Waitress*, *Dear Evan Hansen*, *Come From Away*, *Anastasia*, *The Bands Visit*, *Spongebob Squarepants* and *Mean Girls*.

Major Composers: Lin-Manuel Miranda, Andrew Lloyd Webber, Sara Bareilles, Benj Pasek/Justin Paul, Irene Sankoff/David Hein, Stephen Flaherty, David Yazbek and Jeff Richard/Nell Benjamin.

Read: Solomon's article and McClellan's article.

Bring: Listening example.

Listen: "Satisfied" from *Hamilton* by Lin-Manuel Miranda

"She Used to be Mine" from *Waitress* by Sara Bareilles

"World Burn" from *Mean Girls* by Jeff Richmond and Nell Benjamin

Presentation 10

## **Week 13**

### **Future**

Research current new works and bring three examples of works that you believe will contribute to the advancement of Broadway sound.

Turn in: Listening journal and review assignment.

## Sample Lesson Plan

### I. Intro Week

#### A. Introductions

- i. Instructor introduction, background and connection/interest in music theater.
- ii. Students' introductions, background, and connection/interest in music theater.

#### B. Discussion of materials.

- i. Discuss timeline of course.
- ii. Outline main units.
- iii. Discuss reading presentation and performance aspects of the course.
- iv. Discuss grading procedures and projects.
- v. Outline expectations for participation and attendance.

#### C. Plan for next week.

- i. Assign reading from Stempel 116-128, Stark 25-37, and Bruton Doscher handout. Assign groups to summarize each reading for the class.
- ii. Assign listening:
  - a) "Vilja Song" from *The Merry Widow* by Franz Lehar, Victor Léon and Leo Stein- Listen to the Joan Sutherland 1966 recording.
  - b) "I am the very model of a modern Major-General" and "Climbing over Rocky Mountain" from *Pirates of Penzance* by W.S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan- view the 1980 Delacorte Theater DVD recording for both songs if possible, compare to the D'Oyle Carte Opera Company recording.
  - c) "Ah! Sweet Mystery of Life" from *Naughty Marietta* by Victor Herbert and Rosa Johnson Young- listen to the Jeanette MacDonald and Nelson Eddy from 1935 film adaptation.
- iii. Pass around presentation/performance sign up.
- iv. Assign students to each bring a recording they feel represents the vocal sound of the era under discussion.
  - a) After completing the Stempel reading to give context for the era, students find a recording they feel optimizes the vocal

styles of the era. This listening component will continue for the subsequent weeks of the course.

D. Open discussion of foundations of bel canto/operetta technique for next week.

- i. Bel canto- creating a beautiful and pure tone, the elimination of tension in the mechanism and smooth transitions between the registers.

## II. Operetta

A. Discuss reading.

- i. What are some qualities that epitomize a healthy bel canto production?
  - a) Make a list—balancing the vocal registers, *chiaroscuro*, *appoggio*, ease of production, etc.
  - b) Define terms like *appoggio* and *chiaroscuro* as they arise.
- ii. Have vocal qualities from this week’s readings been represented in your vocal education so far? How?
  - a) What terms from bel canto, have come up in your studies of the voice? How do these terms translate into the goals of modern students of the voice. For example, in my undergraduate studies, my teacher always invoked terms like “*squillo*” and “*chiaroscuro*” in my search for register and resonance balance.

B. Listen to and discuss student listening examples.

C. Break into groups, select a listening example and create a vocal exercise that would help create that resonance style.

D. Discuss vocal style of the era.

- i. What are some hallmarks of operetta style? Would you say that these traits translate into music theater?
  - a) Light vocal sound, a focus on text, patter songs, etc.
  - b) Examples of operetta style in music theater you know?  
Examples like *Kiss Me Kate*, *Company*, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, *A Gentlemen’s Guide to Love and Murder*, etc.

- ii. Discuss resonance traits for operetta.
  - a) Lifted soft palate space of bel canto with a more forward speech-like resonance to bring text forward. A building block towards the traditional legit that Robert Edwin discusses.
  
- E. Open discussion of foundations of the pre-golden age sound.
  - i. Popular music styles that influence tin pan?
    - a) Jazz, ragtime and blues.
  
- F. Assign reading from Stempel 137-159 and Browning's, "Crossover Concerns and Techniques for the Classical Singer." Assign groups to summarize each reading for the class.
  
- G. Assign listening:
  - i. "Friendship" from *Anything Goes* by Cole Porter- listen to the 1999 Papermill Playhouse recording.
  - ii. "I Got Rhythm" by George and Ira Gershwin- listen to Ethel Merman.
  - iii. "Give my Regards to Broadway" from *Little Johnny Jones* by George M. Cohan- listen to the Frank Kernell 1905 recording and the James Cagney recording from *Yankee Doodle Dandy* (1942).

### III. Pre Golden Age

- A. Discuss reading.
  - i. How does the Browning reading clarify the pedagogic shift from operetta/bel canto to the emergence of music theater?
    - a) Discuss the list of fears of crossover training that Browning includes- example: That a student of classical voice studying styles other than classical will damage the vocal mechanism.
    - b) Examine Browning's quotation of McKinney comparing singing and speaking. They share the same mechanism.
    - c) Discuss Browning's ideas of "cry" resonance allowing a singer to access the nasal resonance that is favored frequently in CCM styles.
  
- B. Listen to student listening examples.

- C. Break into groups, select a listening example and create a vocal exercise that would help create that resonance style.
- D. Discuss vocal style of the era.
  - i. In this era, many genres of popular music blossomed. How can we observe their influence in the tin pan/vaudeville era?
    - a) Jazz, blues, etc. Affects on vocal style, harmonies.
  - ii. Relate the vocal style of tin pan back to operetta and bel canto. Similarities/Differences?
    - a) Popular styles like jazz gives tin pan a more colloquial feel, less highbrow. Speech-like melodic lines give a conversational aspect.
- E. First presentation of style and performance example.
- F. Begin discussion of foundations for golden age.
- G. Assign reading from Stempel chapter 7 and Willis-Lyman p 15-19. Assign groups to summarize each reading for the class.
- H. Assign listening:
  - i. “100 Easy Ways to Lose a Man” from *Wonderful Town* by Leonard Bernstein, Betty Camden and Adolph Green- listen to Kristin Chenoweth.
  - ii. “You Can’t Get a Man With a Gun” from *Annie Get Your Gun* by Irving Berlin- listen to Ethel Merman and also Bernadette Peters.
  - iii. “People will say we’re in Love” from *Oklahoma!* By Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II- listen to the 1999 London production.

#### IV. Golden Age 1943-1955

- A. Discuss reading.
  - i. Who are some of the composers mentioned in chapter 7 and how did they advance the Broadway sound?
    - a) Ideas like: Gershwin’s marriage of music to lyrics in song form, Porter’s idea of musical songs and popular music

becoming one, Rodgers and Hart and the golden age of popular song.

- ii. How is the vocal style of the golden age different from the bel canto era? Similar?

- a) Discuss previous weeks traits of bel canto and discuss the concept of traditional legit as explained by Robert Edwin. Legit differs from bel canto how? How is the resonance directed and how much palate lift is in the sound?

B. Listen to student listening examples.

C. Break into groups, select a listening example and create a vocal exercise that would help create that resonance style.

D. Discuss vocal style of the era.

- i. What are some of the sub styles within the golden age umbrella?

- a) Jazz, bel canto, traditional legit and early traditional belt, etc.

- ii. What are some of the vocal qualities popularized by Ethel Merman in this time?

- a) Straight belt, boisterous sound, full throated volume.

E. Presentation of style and performance example.

F. Start discussion development of golden age technique.

- i. The tin pan sound coexists with the emergence of traditional legit. Can you hear the influence of popular music styles on this music theater version of bel canto style? The speech-like resonance coupled with the lift of bel canto seems to suggest a relationship.

G. Assign reading from Stempel 300-312 and chapter 9. Assign groups to summarize each reading for the class.

H. Assign listening:

- i. “America” from *West Side Story* by Leonard Bernstein and Stephen Sondheim- listen to the original Broadway cast recording.



- ii. “I’ve Grown Accustomed to her Face” from *My Fair Lady* by Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Lowe- listen to the 1964 film version.
- iii. “Stepsister’s Lament” from *Cinderella* by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II- listen to the 2011 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue Theatre recording.

## V. Golden Age 1955-1963

### A. Discuss reading.

- i. How did later golden age shows push boundaries and lead to the development of music theater style?
  - a) Integration, a different treatment of the “chorus girl”, Broadway shows as a commercial enterprise, text driven composition.

### B. Listen to student listening examples.

### C. Break into groups, select a listening example and create a vocal exercise that would help create that resonance style.

### D. Discuss vocal styles of the era.

- i. Discuss speech level singing of Rex Harrison in *My Fair Lady*.
- ii. Do the vocal styles of later golden age musicals like *My Fair Lady* and *West Side Story* really belong in the category of golden age?
  - a) Definitely reminiscent of their time but transitional in their style. Simpler and more speech-like resonance than the sweeping melodies of the golden age.
- iii. Relate the vocal styles of the golden age back to the styles of previous units. Similarities/Differences?
  - a) Traditional legit to bel canto, traditional belt to classical chest voice?

### E. Two presentations of style and performance example.

### F. Start discussion of 1960s technique.

- i. *Hair*, the emergence of more modern belt and a higher belt tessitura.
- G. Assign reading from Stempel chapter 12 and LoVetri's "Contemporary Commercial Music: More than One Way to Use the Vocal Tract." Assign groups to summarize each reading for the class.
- H. Assign listening:
- i. "A Lot of Livin' to Do" from *Bye Bye Birdie* by Charles Strouse and Lee Adams- listen to the 1963 film version.
  - ii. "Penny in My Pocket" from *Hello, Dolly!* by Jerry Herman and Michael Stewart- watch David Hyde Pierce's 2017 performance at the Tony Awards.
  - iii. "Hair" from *Hair* by Galt MacDermot and Gerome Ragni- watch the 2009 Tony Award performance, compare to the original 1968 Broadway cast recording.

## VI. 1960s Departing from the Golden Age

### A. Discuss reading.

- i. Discuss LoVetri's writings on CCM.
  - a) Discuss how LoVetri compares how the voice functions in gospel and rock.
  - b) Discuss her conclusions on how the vocal mechanism must be flexible.
- ii. How did shows like *The Cradle Will Rock*, *The Three-Penny Opera*, and *Hair* each progress the Music Theater style?
  - a) *Cradle Will Rock*- elevation of the plot importance, Brechtian or epic theater, direct political commentary.
  - b) *The Three-Penny Opera*- the birth of the concept of off-Broadway, similar to *Cradle* in the "play-with-songs" idea, controversial musicals.
  - c) *Hair*- continued the legacy provided by *Cradle* and *Three-Penny* of musicals as a vehicle for political ideas, brought off-Broadway to Broadway, a turning point for popular music styles affecting the American musical instead of the opposite.

### B. Listen to student listening examples.

- C. Break into groups, select a listening example and create a vocal exercise that would help create that resonance style.
- D. Discuss vocal styles of the era.
  - i. Discuss the emergence of rock style in music theater.
    - a) Rock music as a vehicle for counter culture in musicals like *Hair*, higher tessitura of female belt and an increase in forward resonance coupled with a decrease in soft palate lift.
  - ii. What popular music has influenced this era?
    - a) Rock, pop, country, folk, psychedelic rock, blues, disco etc.
  - iii. Resonance of rock style with listening examples.
    - a) Listen to artists like Bob Dylan, Elvis Presley, The Beatles and Jimi Hendrix.
  - iv. Relate the vocal styles of the 1960s back to previous units. Similarities/Differences?
    - a) The 1960s saw a departure from the elevated soft palate of traditional legit, linked to the speech-like patten with forward resonance, more yell-like than previous styles.
- E. Presentation of style and performance example.
- F. Start discussion of 1970s technique.
  - a) The further development of the rock influence on musical theater sound, more literature written in the higher tessitura of contemporary belt, the development of a more contemporary legit style with composers like Sondheim and Lloyd Webber.
- G. Assign reading from Stempel chapter 13 and Moriarty pp. 54-60. Assign groups to summarize each reading for the class.
- H. Assign listening:
  - i. “Gethsemane” from *Jesus Christ Superstar* by Andrew Lloyd Webber- listen to the 1973 Ted Neeley recording, compare to the 2018 NBC live in concert recording of John Legend.

- ii. “There Are Worse Things I Could Do” from *Grease* by Jim Jacobs and Warren Casey- watch Stockard Channing’s performance in the 1978 film version.
- iii. “A Weekend in the Country” from *A Little Night Music* by Stephen Sondheim- listen to the 1992 Carnegie Hall recording.

## VII. 1970s

### A. Discuss reading.

- i. Discuss the emergence of the mega musical and Moriarty’s writings about it.
  - a) Marketing and publicity on a large scale, big budget for spectacle, large orchestrations, often sung through.
  - b) The more common use of electrified instruments and amplification.
- ii. Discuss how the emergence of the concept musical and a plot-focused book progressed the genre.
  - a) A variation of the epic theater ideals of shows like *Three-Penny* and *Hair*, focused not on the entertainment of the audience but on the communication of the central story, all aspects of production created to accent the story.

### B. Listen to student listening examples.

### C. Break into groups, select a listening example and create a vocal exercise that would help create that resonance style.

### D. Discuss vocal styles of the era.

- i. Composers like Sondheim and cross over voice.
  - a) Sondheim’s connection to Hammerstein and the composers of the golden age is apparent in his compositional style. Melodies and harmonies reference an older time but still move the genre forward with complex rhythmic structures, which evoke Sondheim’s studies with composers like Milton Babbitt.

- ii. Which traits of Sondheim and similar contemporaries hail back to operetta?
  - a) Sweeping melodic lines, patter, and departure from simple Broadway song forms.
- iii. Merging bel canto and speech-like resonance.
  - a) Forward resonance necessary for opera singers to carry over the orchestra or the chiaro part of chiaroscuro without the space of the scuro.
  - b) Both operatic singing and contemporary music theater styles require a high level of athleticism. Artists in both styles work to use their bodies in an optimal manner while avoiding injury. These similarities represent the necessity for both styles to have the same base in healthy vocal technique before resonance strategies divide them.
- iv. Relate the vocal styles of the 1970s back to previous units. Similarities/Differences?
  - a) The continued emergence of a more contemporary belt style, the beginning of a contemporary legit style with composers like Sondheim and Lloyd Webber.

E. Two Presentations of style and performance example.

F. Assign reading from Stempel 585-629. Assign groups to summarize each reading for the class.

G. Assign listening:

- i. “Nobody’s Side” from *Chess* by Benny Anderson and Björn Ulvaeus
- ii. “A Heart Full of Love” from *Les Misérables* by Claude-Michel Schönberg and Alain Boublil
- iii. “Mushnik and Son” from *Little Shop of Horrors* by Alan Menken and Howard Ashman

## VIII. 1980s

A. Discuss reading.

- i. Discuss Webber's advancement of the megamusical and popular music.
  - a) Rice and Webber, simply one duo from the British invasion of Broadway, created megamusicals that merged classical and pop styles for a wide variety of vocal styles, marrying popular music and spectacle to create musicals that were a vehicle for publicity and commercial success.
  - b) More conservative theatergoers and critics didn't approve of rock as a vessel for communicating on the stage. Webber's rock musicals aided in urban music as rock became more mainstream.
  - c) Webber's musicals started as LP albums of sung through content. Directors had to theatricalize these albums, taking them from popular music albums to spectacles worthy of the stage- i.e. the chandelier crashing over the audience each night in *Phantom of the Opera*.
  
- ii. The concept musicals' effect on the conception of a musical.
  - a) Set designers, lighting designers, costumer designers and choreographers all creating to support the director's ideas or concepts. The focus shifted from the importance of the writers to the importance of the designed experience as a whole. As a result, vocal style shifted more frequently from show to show or even song to song, to suit the concept.

B. Listen to student listening examples.

C. Break into groups, select a listening example and create a vocal exercise that would help create that resonance style.

D. Discuss vocal styles of the era.

- i. What popular music has influenced this era? What popular artists from this era epitomize these stylistic shifts?
  - a) Dance music, pop, and glam metal served to keep the tessitura of popular music fairly high (Michael Jackson and Prince) and also increase the popularity of electronic sounds, the use of synthesizers in popular music (see for instance Madonna).
  - b) A rise in popularity of urban music styles like rap, hip hop and R&B. R&B artists like Whitney Houston demonstrate contemporary belt with a high tessitura and a perceived

heaviness to the tone that suggests a strong connection to the chest register.

- ii. Relate the vocal styles of the 1980s back to previous units. Similarities/Differences?
  - a) The solidifying of contemporary belt style: the shift to higher belt tessitura, the perceived use of chest register connection much higher, and varying timbres from the rough sound of rock to the straight tone of pop.

E. Presentation of style and performance example.

F. Assign reading from Stempel 629-642 and 656-668. Assign groups to summarize each reading for the class.

G. Assign listening:

- i. “Mama Will Provide” from *Once on this Island* by Lynn Athens and Stephen Flaherty- listen to the 2017 revival cast recording.
- ii. “Circle of Life” from *The Lion King* by Elton John and Time Rice- listen to 1997 original Broadway cast.
- iii. “Rent” from *Rent* by Jonathan Larson- listen to the 1996 original Broadway cast recording and watch the 2005 film version.

## IX. 1990s

A. Discuss reading.

- i. Discuss the transition from the British invasion to the rise of Disney and other entertainment conglomerates.
  - a) The British invasion and rise of the megamusical began the commercialization of Broadway. Disney and other movie studios expanded on this commercialization and produced musicals based on films that had already achieved success.
  - b) Borrowing from pop culture for Broadway led to a rise in popularity of jukebox musicals.

B. Listen to student listening examples.

C. Break into groups, select a listening example and create a vocal exercise that would help create that resonance style.

D. Discuss vocal styles of the era.

- i. The continuing merge of rock and pop.
  - a) Pop rock as a style is rock with less emphasis on attitude and more emphasis on the songwriters and artists themselves.
  - b) Vocally, pop takes some of the rough edges off the timbre of rock but still maintains the high tessitura of belt in rock.
- ii. 1990s popular styles' impact on music theater.
  - a) Bubblegum pop, rock and country all infiltrated Broadway through megamusicals and jukebox musicals, providing widespread appeal to different audiences.
- iii. Relate vocal styles of 1990s back to previous units. Similarities/Differences?
  - a) Vocal styles remained fairly similar at their core. The wide variety of vocal styles on Broadway in this time period called for greater vocal flexibility than previous eras. Working consistently would require an artist to be comfortable in singing in multiple styles.

E. Presentation of style and performance example.

F. Assign reading from Stempel 668-685 and Edwin "Belt is Legit." Assign groups to summarize each reading for the class.

G. Assign listening:

- i. "Defying Gravity" from *Wicked* by Stephen Schwartz- watch the 2004 Tony Award performance.
- ii. "In the Heights" from *In the Heights* by Lin-Manuel Miranda- listen to the 2008 original Broadway cast recording.
- iii. "Who I'd Be" from *Shrek* by Jeanine Tesori and David Lindsay-Abaire- watch the original Broadway cast in the filmed released in 2013.

X. 2000s

A. Discuss reading.

- i. Discuss the effect of what Stempel refers to as "Sondheim's Children" on the genre.



- a) The market for producing musicals based on already proven material, like movies, is still dominant on Broadway, which makes it more difficult for fledgling show writers to find support for new material. Workshops and new works programs became more common in this period to support the cultivation of new musicals.
  - b) This era also saw a rise in stand-alone music theater pieces by composers like Ricky Ian Gordon and Jeanine Tesori.
- ii. Discuss Edwin's 2007 article. How does he depict the development of belt?
  - a) He discusses the differences between a CT dominant production and a TA dominant production.
  - b) Edwin examines the necessity of mixing modes of production during belt in order to reduce tension.
  - c) He discusses how belt can come easier to voice types, like altos, that use TA dominant production more commonly.
  - d) Edwin points out that the development of CCM into a vocally demanding art peaked the interest of researchers and pedagogues and has led to the development of more CCM driven pedagogy in academic and professional settings.

B. Listen to student listening examples.

C. Break into groups, select a listening example and create a vocal exercise that would help create that resonance style.

D. Discuss vocal styles of the era.

- i. Discuss the extension of the belt range in this era.
  - a) Musicals, like *Wicked* and *Next to Normal*, extended the female belt up to E5 and F5.
- ii. Relate the vocal styles of the 2000s back to previous units. Similarities/Differences?
  - a) With the extension of the belt range, the virtuosic nature of belt heralds back to the virtuosity of the bel canto era. The styles are different but in order to perform at such an advanced level, both styles require a solid foundation in technique.

- E. Presentation of style and performance example.
- F. Assign reading from Moriarty 61-66 and Titze's "Vocal Tract Interaction in Female Operatic Singing and Theater Belting." Assign groups to summarize each reading for the class.
- G. Assign listening:
  - i. "History of Wrong Guys" from *Kinky Boots* by Cyndi Lauper- listen to Annaleigh Ashford in the 2013 original Broadway cast recording.
  - ii. "I've Decided to Marry You" from *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder* by Steven Lutvak- watch the 2014 Tony Award performance.
  - iii. "It all Fades Away" from *The Bridges of Madison County* by Jason Robert Brown- listen to Steven Pasquale in the 2014 original Broadway cast recording.

## XI. Contemporary 2010-2015

- A. Discuss reading.
  - i. Discuss Titze's comparison of mouth shapes and resonators of contemporary belt singers versus operatic singers.
    - a) For belt, Titze observes that a wide open mouth, raised larynx and narrowed pharynx are all conducive to producing the forward resonance.
    - b) For high operatic pitches, a wide mouth shape is also favored but couple with a lower laryngeal position and a more open pharynx.
  - ii. Discuss Moriarty's observations on how modern belt functions in 21<sup>st</sup>-century music.
    - a) Moriarty observes that a wide variety of vocal styles are utilized in modern music theater. She points out that singers looking to flourish in the modern field have to be flexible but also aware of where their voice functions healthily.
- B. Listen to student listening examples.
- C. Break into groups, select a listening example and create a vocal exercise that would help create that resonance style.

D. Discuss vocal styles of the era.

- i. Discuss the link between the extension of the belt range in shows in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century and the rise in popularity of the concept of mix in music theater.
  - a) As the belt tessitura has climbed higher, the need for mixing modes of production (TA and CT) became more necessary to maintain a healthy production.
- ii. Discuss shows with reminiscent vocal styles- i.e. *A Gentlemen's Guide to Love and Murder*, *Kinky Boots* and *The Bridges of Madison County*. Differences and similarities to predecessors.
  - a) These examples of contemporary legit style in modern musicals have a high tessitura and call for a raised palate coupled with a forward resonance to provide a sound similar to bel canto but more speech-like in resonance like music theater.
  - b) Contemporary legit requires not only a wide range but also the strong middle voice that is necessary for modern music theater.

E. Presentation of style and performance example.

F. Assign reading Solomon's "How 'Hamilton' is revolutionizing the Broadway Musical" and McClellan's "A Comparative Analysis of Speech Level Singing and Traditional Vocal Training in the United States" 3-18. Assign groups to summarize each reading for the class.

G. Assign listening:

- i. "Satisfied" from *Hamilton* by Lin-Manuel Miranda- listen to Renee Elise Goldsberry on the 2015 original Broadway cast recording.
- ii. "She Used to be Mine" from *Waitress* by Sara Bareilles- watch the 2016 Tony Award performance.
- iii. "World Burn" from *Mean Girls* by Jeff Richmond and Nell Benjamin- listen to the 2018 original Broadway cast recording.

XII. Contemporary 2015-Present

A. Discuss reading.

- i. Discuss the article and how Rap style has been incorporated in classic Broadway style in *Hamilton*.
  - a) Rap has been incorporated seamlessly alongside older musical styles like the doo-wop song “What’d I Miss?” and Broadway style ballads like “Burn.”
  - b) *Hamilton* moves music theater forward while still constantly referencing its music theater legacy in song forms/styles and quotes.
- ii. Discuss McClellan’s examination of speech level singing and how it may or may not be useful/present in current music theater singing.
  - a) Speech level singing has a focus maintaining the position of larynx as if the performer were speaking or at a median position, modifying vowels and navigating the passagio.
  - b) A neutral position of the larynx supports the absence of tension in the mechanism but there are many other factors in a healthy production. Speech level singing intentionally avoids focusing on breath support past the point of defining its function in singing.
  - c) Speech level singing is similar to bel canto in its goal of unifying registers across the passagio and similar to music theater in its forward resonance.
  - d) Speech level singing, while containing techniques useful to music theater styles, does not seem to address all of the aspects necessary for a healthy production of all styles within music theater or CCM for that matter.

B. Listen to student listening examples.

C. Break into groups, select a listening example and create a vocal exercise that would help create that resonance style.

D. Discuss vocal styles of the era.

- i. Discuss speech level singing and hip-hop/rap.
  - a) The idea of a relaxed, speech-level position of the larynx is crucial for the healthy production of rap. In popular music, rap can present as yelling or shouting but in yelling for seven shows a week on Broadway isn’t really sustainable.

- b) While speech level singing may not be a vocal cure-all, it is a useful technique for teaching some popular music techniques, like rap, that are becoming more popular in music theater.
- ii. Relate the vocal styles of contemporary Broadway back to previous units. Similarities/Differences?
  - a) Similar to previous decades of Broadway, contemporary music theater continues to be influenced by popular music styles.
  - b) Traditional legit, traditional belt, contemporary legit and contemporary belt are all still present on Broadway. As new musicals explore and forge new paths they still herald back to their predecessors.

E. Presentation of style and performance example.

F. Research current new works in the off-Broadway music theater style and fringe areas. Bring three examples of works and be ready to discuss how these new works will influence music theater style as we move forward.

### XIII. Future

A. Discuss research.

B. Listen to student listening examples.

C. Discuss vocal styles of the era.

- i. Where will music theater go next?
- ii. What are some extended vocal styles that could be introduced?
- iii. Which aspects of current popular music may affect the development of music theater?

D. Turn in final assignment.

## FINAL THOUGHTS

In this document, I have examined bel canto and music theater side by side to answer some of the pressing musical questions that have plagued me since I began studying voice. Having grown up singing along with popular belt artists like Reba McEntire and Celine Dion, I initially knew very little about the different styles of vocal production as a young student of vocal performance. Studying voice through my teen years and singing in choirs, I discovered my head register. In my undergraduate studies, I was encouraged to avoid belting and focus more on a cricothyroid dominant production. My first pedagogy class opened my eyes to the science of the voice and filled me with questions about the difference of the pedagogy of vocal styles. At ASU, the vocal performance programs situate productions of music theater and opera in the same performance space by the same students and here I began to explore the answers to my questions.

Bel canto and music theater are unified in the goal of developing a healthy foundation of vocal technique. Examining the perspectives of bel canto and music theater scholars in the same documents forges a connection that is incredibly valuable to modern voice teachers. Understanding how the training we received in classical voice can begin to translate into different styles makes us not only better performers but better teachers.

Writing this document has taught me a great deal not only about who I am now but about the educator I want to be. My background of being told to stay away from belting made my writing at first defensive, but in the process of writing this paper I discovered that defending my ideas was not my main goal. It is my hope that this paper will serve as a resource for students and teachers alike who have questions about the

navigation of different vocal performance styles. I hope that my research will help create connections between seemingly different vocal styles such as bel canto and music theater, and create opportunities for future students of vocal performance.

## ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Dissertations

1. Bounous, Barry Urban. "The Belt Voice: Acoustical Measurements and Esthetic Correlates." DMA diss., University of Northern Colorado, 1997. ProQuest document ID: 9806115.

Bounous's study seeks to measure aesthetic qualities in belt voice through vibrancy, spectral makeup, vocal energy and vocal consistency. Using a Kay 5500 DSP Sona-Graph, he analyzed fifteen female singers singing the same phrase in the same key and had fifteen experts in vocal beauty do the same. Bounous concluded that consistency of voice is less important in belt voice than in classical but a smoother tone is still preferable. Overall, this dissertation's second chapter, "A Description of Belt," is the most useful.

2. DeSilva, Bryan E. "A Survey of the Current State of Contemporary Commercial Music (CCM) Vocal Pedagogy Training at the Graduate Level." DMA diss., Temple University, 2016. ProQuest document ID: 1794166799.

This document examines the percentage of recent graduate voice students that have received training in pedagogy pertaining to CCM. Through a three-part study, the author surveyed voice teachers who had been enrolled in or completed graduate-level voice programs since 2009. The study showed that pedagogic training in CCM has increased 26% since 2009 but DeSilva specifies "the majority of those who reported having received training did so through private instruction or independent study." (p iii) He also provides a list of programs that teach CCM (approximately 90) and CCM pedagogy (only three).

3. Fleming-DeBerger, Rachelle. "Guidelines and Criteria to Assess Singing and Music Training in Baccalaureate Music Theater Programs." DMA diss., University of Miami, 2011. ProQuest document ID: 919482675.

In this dissertation, Fleming-DeBerger establishes a set of criteria for evaluating the Music Theater training in baccalaureate degree programs. Primarily this document is useful for those looking to ascertain what makes a good Music Theater program. Fleming-DeBerger provides an excellent survey of scholarly literature.

4. Hall, Karen Sue. "Music Theater Vocal Pedagogy and Styles: An Introductory Teaching Guide for Experienced Classical Singing Teachers." DMA diss., Columbia University, 2006. ProQuest document ID: 3225148.

Hall conducted a study to develop an introductory guide for teaching MT Pedagogy styles. She conducted research on MT singing styles and the pedagogy



behind them, then compared them to classical pedagogy and compiled these results into a guide. The guide underwent a formative evaluation with corrections based on reviews by MT experts like Robert Edwin and Mary Saunders. For the summative evaluation the guide was given to three experienced classical teachers who reviewed it and found it, in fact, to be a useful tool. Hall offers a wealth of information, not only on the many styles of Music Theater, but on their pedagogy.

5. Jennings, Colleen Ann. "Belting is Beautiful: Welcoming the Musical Theater Singer into the Classical Voice Studio." DMA diss., The University of Iowa, 2014. ProQuest document ID: 3638386.

Colleen Jennings's document provides an excellent resource for an instructor of classical voice, who introduces students to Music Theater. The paper is divided into three main sections followed by a conclusion and several appendices. In the first section, Jennings provides historical context for the development. She examines the writings of pedagogies of MT in her literature review. Her review is a very useful resource for those seeking more information on MT Pedagogy. The final section is titled "Application in the Voice Studio." Here Jennings lays out the basic vocal techniques for MT voice, providing vocal exercises and techniques specific to different subtypes of repertoire.

6. LeBorgne, Wendy Lynn DeLeo. "Defining the Belt Voice: Perceptual Judgments and Objective Measures." Ph.D. diss., University of Cincinnati, 2001. ProQuest document ID: 304686725.

This study had casting directors evaluate the belt of twenty music theater majors. Each student performed two specified vocal exercises and six short excerpts from belting repertoire. The judges were asked to rate students on loudness, vibrato, ring, timbre, focus, nasality and registration breaks. The author took the scores and used the four highest and lowest averages to establish the elite and average student belters. The study found that teachers should work toward a more consistent vibrato and bright forward placement. The author calls for a more in-depth follow-up study to be conducted and for voice pedagogues to work toward defining some of the basic terminologies associated with belt.

7. Neely, Sheena. "STOP SCREAMING! A Practical Guide for Helping Classically-Trained Singers Achieve the 'Belt' Sound in a Healthy Manner." MM Thesis, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, 2009. ProQuest document ID: 304997764.

Neely presents a two-part document: a literature review of materials on belt and interviews of vocal professionals. The writer demonstrates the need for resources to aid classically trained teachers in learning vocabulary and techniques associated with CCM. A how-to guide is included with a video component. This resource is very well compiled for a master's level thesis and provides overviews on a wide variety of literature.

8. Noonan, Julia A.. "The Sound of Musicals' Women: *Tessitura* and the Construction of Gender in the American Musical." DMA diss., University of Kansas, 2007. ProQuest document ID: 3243477.

Noonan focuses primarily on gender construct but analyzes this through the lens of tessitura in women characters of musicals from 1943-1989. She provides interesting insights on the development of voice quality by breaking up the progression of the Broadway Musical into categories like "The Electronic Age" and "Postmodern." She concludes that the tessitura of leading female characters has shifted to lie lower but encompass a fairly wide range as not only Broadway but also the role of women in society has developed.

9. Roll, Christiane Knauer. "Female Musical Theater Belting in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: A Study of the Pedagogy of the Vocal Practice and Performance." Doc.Edu. diss., Columbia University, 2014. ProQuest document ID: 1545887820.

Roll addresses the needs of the modern female music theater singer and establishes appropriate teaching strategies. She conducted a study with four teachers, Veronica Bailey, Charles Lomberdi, Gregory Apicella and Kathy Frederick, observing and interviewing 18 students of each. She found that the four master teachers all possessed similar strategies for belt technique but provided slightly different ideas on how to develop the high belt necessary for modern musical theater. Roll summarizes the techniques and philosophies and draws conclusions of her own. "The traditional belt, up to D5, uses more chest voice and full, open vowels. The contemporary belt, higher than D5, is produced with more head voice and closed, narrow vowels."

#### Articles

10. Allen, Sheila M. "Voice Pedagogy: Female Chest Voice." *Journal of Singing* 60.2 (November 2003): 161-164. ProQuest document ID: 1402718.

Allen analyzes the importance of the female chest voice. She traces the development of the concept of female chest voice from the bel canto era and cites valued pedagogues of the style, such as Manuel Garcia II, stating the importance of the chest register. She examines the other vocal registers in order to ascertain the value of the chest voice. Allen concludes that the female chest voice is a treasure chest without which the voice would be devoid of color and lacking in strength.

11. Bestebreurtje, Martine E. and Harm K. Schutte. "Resonance strategies for the belting style: Results of a single female subject study." *Journal of Voice* 14.2 (June 2000): 194-204. ProQuest document ID: 1410389.

This study uses electroglottography to explore resonance strategies on G4 and Bb4 for a variety of vowels. Researchers examined not only belted vowels but also their equivalents in an unoptimized speech range. The study finds that a bright /a/ vowel is optimal for belting because it requires no adjustments. Research also demonstrated that singers achieve the bright, loud sound of belting by implementing resonance strategies that enhance higher harmonics. The higher harmonics are enhanced by “raising the first and/or second formant of the vocal tract.” To achieve that end, researchers state that the forward vowels are most affective.

12. Bourne, Tracy and Dianna Kenny. “Vocal Qualities in Music Theater Voice: Perceptions of Expert Pedagogues.” *Journal of Voice* 30.1 (2016): 128e1-12. DOI: 10.1016/j.jvoice.2015.03.008.

Bourne and Kenny interviewed twelve expert pedagogues to gather descriptions of music theater vocal qualities. These experts generally agreed that belt and legit had distinct sounds and differing physiological/technical requirements. Opinions varied among experts when it came to breathing techniques and defining mix. Belt is described as a heavily weighted TA-dominant sound and broken into different substyles. Most experts (10/12) agreed that vibrato is and should be present in belt sound. Seven of twelve stated that belt is always loud because once the volume is lowered the tone color shifts and becomes more mix-like. Interestingly when asked to name professional music theater artists proficient in belt and legit, experts only reached a strong consensus on four names: Kristin Chenoweth, Audra McDonald, Marin Mazzi and Liz Calloway.

13. Bourne, Tracy, Maeva Garnier, and Dianna Kenny. “Popular Song and Music Theater Voice: Production, Physiology and Pedagogy.” *Journal of Singing* 67.4 (2011): 437-444. ProQuest document ID: 863387593.

This article is an excerpt of the recently published book *Perspectives on Teaching Singing*. Authors define music theater voice by examining its development. There are sections on the need for pedagogy specific to music theater, vocal health in music theater and the science behind music theater voice. One of the last sections provides recommendations on areas of focus for those beginning to teach music theater. Authors of this chapter manage to address many issues surrounding music theater pedagogy in a thorough manner while maintaining the brevity that makes it easy to read.

14. Delp, Roy. “Now that the Belt Voice has Become Legitimate ...” *Journal of Singing* 57.5 (May 2001): 1-2. ProQuest document ID: 1402143.

Delp comments on the state of vocal studies in the modern university system pertaining to non-classical vocal styles. He poses the intriguing question of

“whether current performance styles should evolve from methods of teaching singing or whether methods of teaching singing should respond to current styles of performance.” Delp examines this question and others concerning the conservative approaches to teaching voice over the last century. He concludes that the goal of the new century should be the teaching of healthy voice in all styles.

15. Echternach, Matthias, Lisa Popeil, Bernhard Richter, Louisa Traser, and Sascha Wienhausen. “Vocal Tract Shapes in Different Singing Functions used in Musical Theater Singing-A Pilot Study.” *Journal of Voice* 28.5 (2014): 653. DOI:10.1016/j.jvoice.2014.01.011.

This study examines the vocal tract shapes of a single professional music theater female subject in different aspects of singing styles using MRI imaging technology. Different registers, belting and vibrato strategies were all examined. The results concluded that there are many articulatory shifts between belt and head voice production. Most interesting were the articulatory differences between modal (standard chest) register and belt. The authors point out that from these findings, it can be said that belt is not merely the modal register being carried above the *passaggio*.

16. Edwards, Darryl. “BELTING the Healthy Way!” *Canadian Music Educator* 44.2 (Winter, 2002): 34. ProQuest document ID: 1028574.

Edwards acknowledges that there are both healthy and unhealthy ways to belt and seeks to define how healthy belt can be cultivated. Edwards begins by explaining some qualities of healthy and unhealthy technique generally, before briefly touching on the technique behind belt. The article is brief but presents some simple and clear statements concerning belt.

17. Edwin, Robert. “Popular Song and Music Theater: A Broader Broadway.” *Journal of Singing* 59.5 (May 2003): 431-432. ProQuest document ID: 1402492.

In this article, Edwin examines the vocal styles of Broadway, as presented from January to May of 2003. After examining 21 musicals, he breaks the vocal styles into four categories; traditional legit, contemporary legit, traditional belt and contemporary belt. Edwin briefly examines how each vocal style functions in the 2003 Broadway singer and encourages instructors to find ways to adequately prepare their musical theater students to be able to sustain all styles generated by an expanding market.

18. Edwin, Robert. “Popular Song and Music Theater: Belt Yourself.” *Journal of Singing* 60.3 (January 2004): 285-288. ProQuest document ID: 1401424.

In this article, Edwin explores the look, feel and sound of belt. Edwin recommends that teachers looking into belt should start with informed listening to

artists like Ethel Merman, Sutton Foster, Joel Grey and Adam Pascal. He uses terms familiar to classical singers like *chiaro*-heavy to define the sound of belt. He provides some interesting insights on balancing the registers, suggesting that *chiaroscuro* is a helpful model in any style when it comes to balancing weight. Edwin also addresses the fact that novice beltors may note some perceived tightness in the vocal tract, compared to classical, as they try to extend the lower register but as long as the tightness does not become pain it should not cause concern. Edwin concludes by encouraging readers to question statements like “If you learn to sing classically, you can sing any style of music” and “Belting will ruin your voice and give you nodules.”

19. Edwin, Robert. “Popular Song and Music Theater: Belt is Legit.” *Journal of Singing* 64.2 (November 2007): 213-215. ProQuest document ID: 1402158.

Edwin begins to address the old-fashioned notion that legit singing is a “high brow” art form while belt is a “low brow” one. He points out that pedagogues such as Jeannette LoVetri and Scott McCoy are constantly shedding light on the importance of improving CCM pedagogy, given the modern Broadway industry. Like others before him, Edwin points out that belt has been present in Eastern cultures for thousands of years. In this article, he mentions some differences between male and female belt production. Edwin reiterates quite a few of his statements regarding balance in the voice, and a bright TA-dominant resonance.

20. Edwin, Robert. “Popular Song and Music Theater: Contemporary Music Theater: Louder Than Words.” *Journal of Singing* 61.3 (January 2005): 291-292. ProQuest document ID: 1401665.

Edwin examines how Broadway has adapted over the years to suit society’s musical tastes. He observes how not only main stage Broadway but also Off-Broadway and fringe festivals have worked to incorporate contemporary commercial music styles into shows. Edwin makes the observation that while Broadway has proven adaptable, the greater voice teaching community has not. As Broadway distances further from legit styles, classically-trained singers with little-to-no training in CCM styles may find it hard to find work. Edwin urges university programs to modernize their curriculum in regard to modern pedagogy.

21. Edwin, Robert. “Popular Song and Music Teacher: Cross Training for the Voice.” *Journal of Singing* 65.1 (September 2008): 73-76. ProQuest document ID: 1404043.

In this article, Edwin advocates for an approach focusing on whole body cross-disciplinary training. He points out that athletes are encouraged to cross train in other sports to exercise different muscle groups and suggests that voice should function similarly. He maintains that singers whose style is dominated by one muscle group should endeavor to exercise other muscle groups often, in order to maintain balance. Edwin transcribes a NATS workshop where participants

vocalized while being encouraged to disregard culture and gender and focus on the muscles and the science of singing in different styles. The success of this pedagogy experiment encouraged many participants to pursue cross training. Edwin closes with remarks against style, cultural and gender biases. “We, as teachers of singing, however, should not allow these biases to influence our pedagogy ... why not train the entire singing systems of both men and women to make a variety of sounds that create a healthy balance in the instrument. It’s all about vocal health, strength, flexibility, coordination and endurance, as well as artistic expression.”

22. Edwin, Robert. “Popular Song and Music Teacher: Pedagogic New Year’s Resolution: An Update.” *Journal of Singing* 73.3 (January 2017): 305-307. ProQuest document ID: 1882383799.

This article is one in a series of pedagogic resolutions by Edwin. He examined past published resolutions of 1996 and 2001 to cultivate this more updated version of 2017. Edwin provides some excellent ideas for the modern instructor to consider including such statements as: “I will compare my pedagogic language to that of modern voice scientists and researchers, and if necessary, change it to reflect current knowledge and practice,” “I will listen to music I hate,” and “I will try to listen to at least one song in every style of singing.” Edwin makes ten resolutions in this article and examines why each is necessary and how each will function in his life. This article offers many interesting insights on the necessities of teaching in a contemporary environment and how a teacher can stay current.

23. LoVetri, Jeannette. “Contemporary Commercial Music: More than One Way to Use the Vocal Tract.” *Journal of Singing* 58.3 (January 2002): 249-252. ProQuest document ID: 1401992.

LoVetri examines the vocal tract and comments that different training adjustments should be made for different vocal styles. She points out that instructors should be open to the fact that some vocal mechanisms are more flexible than others and some vocalists are simply more suited to one or two styles. LoVetri explains how the vocal tract functions in music theater and how the development of the Broadway voice has affected it. She discusses how the voice functions in the many popular music styles that have affect Broadway over the years, making clear how versatile singers of music theater must be. She concludes by urging instructors to be open to more than one type of vocal production and vocal behavior.

24. LoVetri, Jeannette. “Who’s minding the store?” *Journal of Singing* 59.4 (March 2003): 345-346. ProQuest document ID: 1401630.

LoVetri provides a strong criticism on the application of classical voice standards to music theater repertoire. She explains that many individuals who teach music

theater are undereducated with regard to this field. She points out that a student would not want to learn how to sing an aria from an instructor who has never performed one, so why should students learn to sing music theater from those who have little experience with the genre. Furthermore, she points out that many of the educators adjudicating major vocal competitions are giving uneducated feedback on music theater singing styles. LoVetri concludes by calling for the development of a uniform pedagogy for CCM, not only to provide structure to student learning in these styles but also to better inform adjudicators.

25. McCoy, Scott. "Why I Don't Teach Belting." *Journal of Singing* 70.2 (Nov, 2013): 181-182. ProQuest document ID: 1498089307.

In this brief article, McCoy discusses why he does not teach belting. He acknowledges that belt is not inherently damaging and that any style of singing can possibly cause harm to the voice. McCoy continues to honestly acknowledge that while some instructors are vocal chameleons, that his training and specialties came from another era. This article is unique because the author explains his shortcomings toward CCM styles as a member of the "old school" of thought while acknowledging and encouraging modern/incoming instructors to be prepared for how the world of voice has changed. This issue is at the heart of the development of vocal programs today and having a reputable source address the issue is invaluable.

25. Ness, Corinne. "Teaching Music Theater: An Integrative Dialectical Approach." *Opera Journal* 47.1 (2014): 3-32. ProQuest document ID: 1534495396.

Corinne Ness offers a thorough examination of belt. From definition, to basic technical factors, to the place of crossover voice in education, she provides an excellent guide for a teacher of classical technique looking to branch out. This 31-page examination of music theater voice is an invaluable source to researchers, not only for its prose but also for its bibliography.

26. Spivey, Norman. "Popular Song and Music Theater: Music Theater Singing ... Let's Talk: Part 2: Examining the Debate on Belting." *Journal of Singing* 64.5 (May 2008): 607-614. ProQuest document ID: 1403243.

Spivey observes that upon examining the literature on belt, scholars seem divided on whether belt functions as an individual style or is linked to chest voice. Of those interviewed, two camps emerged; one that believed belt to be a damaging style and one that believes belting to be a viable voice mode derived from "energized speech." Spivey provides quotes from each of the above-mentioned camps. He concludes that many nay-sayers based their comments on observations of bad belt technique while many supports appeared to be more researched on the topic. Spivey states that just as with other styles, good and bad, must be examined.

27. White, Andrew R. "Belting: As an Academic Discipline." *The American Music Teacher* 60.6 (June 2011): 22-24. ProQuest document ID: 884345371.

White addresses the idea that CCM voice is "natural" and less valued tone than the "cultivated" tone of operatic voice. He reacts to this notion by defending the fact that CCM and music theater voice require training and discipline, just like operatic voice. White examines the physical attributes of belt and suggests several exercises for pursuing the style. White also provides an interesting perspective on how cross training in both classical and music theater disciplines can aid in vocal growth.



## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Sara Bruton, soprano, graduated with a Bachelor of Music in voice performance from California State University Fullerton in 2013 and received her Master's degree in voice performance pedagogy from Arizona State University in 2015. She has performed extensively with ASU Music Theater and Opera and been nominated for two "AriZoni" awards. Roles include "Gino" from *A Day in Hollywood/A Night in the Ukraine*, "Sally" in *Reefer Madness*, "Trix" in *The Drowsy Chaperone*, "Paulette" in *Legally Blonde* and ensemble tracks in *Così fan tutte*, *L'elisir d'amore*, *Children of Eden* and *Rent*. In 2017, Bruton made her regional theater debut at Phoenix Theater as "Ali" in *Mamma Mia*. Favorite roles in California include "Florinda" in *Into the Woods*, "La Ciesca" in *Gianni Schicchi*, "Gertrude" in *Seussical* and "Jeffri" in *Godspell*. She has also performed in background choirs for Kristin Chenoweth, Andrea Bocelli, Juanes, John Williams, and Eric Whitacre at such venues as the Honda Center, the Hollywood Bowl, and the 2013 TED Conference. Bruton has been teaching voice privately since 2011 and enjoys teaching repertoire of all styles. Upon completion of her doctoral degree, Bruton seeks to continue her performance career and assume a position in academia where she can foster healthy music theater technique and pass on her love for music theater and CCM to her voice students.