The Understanding of Contemporary Vocal Pedagogy and the Teaching Methods of Internationally Acclaimed Vocal Coaches

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Abstract. As a result of the growing interest in Contemporary Commercial Music (CCM) singing, and increasing interest in TV shows such as 'The Voice, 'X-Factor' and 'American Idol', many singers are realising the importance of developing a strong vocal technique.
Lack of scientific understanding and poor kinaesthetic awareness in the past, has meant that singing pedagogies have relied on the use of imagery and on the sensations of singers and teachers (Morris, 2012, Chapman, 2006). In the 21st century, however, scientific understanding and knowledge about the voice, as well as a great tradition of imagery and sensation based pedagogies, has led to a great deal of disagreement about the best method to approach the teaching of singing. Vocal music is a broad field and incorporates many genres. Voice qualities vary greatly between these styles and are very different from classical singing (Bjorkner, 2008, p. 533), which has been the predominant style of tuition until relatively recently. The difference in voice quality between classical and CCM styles has raised issues about the nature of appropriate teaching for CCM. Some have argued that different techniques are needed for learning to sing CCM and that classical tuition is not appropriate. The research reported in this project aims to develop further understanding of pedagogy as it applies to CCM by interviewing ten internationally acclaimed vocal coaches as well as finding out what approach they would have to addressing the vocal issues of two singing students shown to them on video.
Epistemologically, this research adopted a phenomenological approach and used semi-structured interviews. The research generated many specific lessons for vocal pedagogy. It has shown: teachers must base their teaching on an in depth understanding of how the vocal mechanism works rather than just teaching how they were taught. They must tailor their teaching to the individual needs of students, as well as stay up to date with the latest developments in vocal pedagogy; that there are differences between teaching singing in the classical and CCM styles; that learning about specific styles requires specific training. Teachers should also have professional performance experience; always support and encourage students; and help their students to understand how to connect with a song and perform with emotional awareness.
Education is ultimately concerned with the improvement of practice. My aim is that this study contributes to the development and re-

evaluation of the teaching and learning of CCM singing in Ireland and provides a strong and comprehensive vocal methodology.

Keywords: Contemporary Commercial Singing; Vocal Education; Singing; Popular Music

The Training of Vocal Teachers

To learn how to sing rock, jazz, country or any style of music, one needs to have listened to and exposed oneself to that music to know how the artists sound when they sing in that style. Chandler (2014, p. 48) argues that research into different genres of CCM unfolds more 'sub genres, cross genres, derivative genres and "sibling" genres'. To teach these styles, teachers need to at least be aware of the fundamental differences and have made these sounds themselves, know how they feel, know how to prepare the throat to make these sounds and know how they are produced physiologically. As LoVetri argues 'you can't teach what you do not do and you can't do what you do not understand. But, in singing, people do it (or try to) every day' (LoVetri, 2014). If classical teachers have had extensive exposure to the artistic and interpretative elements of CCM and are very familiar with a particular style, they may be competent CCM vocal teachers. However, it is generally the case that 'the stylistic requirements for popular music are beyond their own background as teachers' (Riggs 2008, p.81). As LoVetri puts it 'there is no such thing as good generic training for anything. General study produces general results' (LoVetri, 2014). CCM singing has different stylistic requirements to classical singing and because CCM is a relatively new area, tutors may not have been exposed sufficiently to the style or have a background in CCM as either performers or teachers (Edwin, 2005, Riggs, 2008, p. 81). There are differences in learning to sing classical and CCM. Underpinning these are some common issues relating to teaching including those concerned with breathing, singing from the diaphragm, larynx position, yawning, vocal cord closure, subglottic pressure and airflow.

The difference in voice qualities between classical and CCM styles has raised issues about the nature of appropriate teaching for CCM. Edwin (2002) suggested that in the past, differences in vocal quality in CCM may have been viewed as aesthetically inferior by some classical commentators (Edwin, 2002), and differences in technique may have been considered to be vocally damaging (Spivey, 2008). Therefore, teachers who say 'singing is singing, if you have a solid classical technique you can sing anything' (Edwin, 1998, p. 81) could be causing vocal damage if they insist on using classical vocal technique for CCM singing (Edwin, 1998; Edwin, 2005).

Teachers without appropriate experience may be unable to help a student master a rock song, for example, through providing traditional vocal instruction – breath support and resonance (or placement) (LoVetri, 2014). Riggs (2008) supports this:

> Often a teacher will avoid his lack of ability in this area by saying that the student should learn the "right way" first, and then sing the songs they want later, implying that any singing that isn't opera or lieder is a prostitution of the vocal art. Their usual methodology - badgering students about diction, breathing, tone colour, posture etc - which may barely be tolerated in the "classical idiom", does not apply at all to popular styles

such as country, rock, jazz, blues and gospel (Riggs, 2008, p. 82).

While traditional training has been shown to benefit classical virtuosos, musical theatre performers, jazz and other singers, 'new techniques are needed to physically support the broader sound vocabulary used in contemporary musical styles' (Deva, n.d, para 7).

Although more and more teachers have CCM vocal training, the pedagogy for teaching CCM is still in its early days. The probability for uninformed or generic teaching is high. Chandler (2014, p. 36) supports this view when she states 'the specifics are distinctive and non-generic, requiring specialised knowledge, training and competence on behalf of those teaching it'.

For further discussion see Chandler, K. (2014) Teaching Popular Music Styles, in Harrison, S & O' Bryan, J. (eds) *Teaching Singing in the 21stCentury.*

The Role of the Contemporary Singer

The role of a CCM singer has developed in response to the specific style of music, which s/he is required to sing and involves telling a story through song, engaging an audience and evoking their feelings. 'When we sing, a lot of the believability that naturally comes with speech is lost…. the challenge for a singer is to bridge the gap between the believable realm of speaking and the more artificial world of the song' (Love, 1999, p. 155). Love argues that Frank Sinatra was the master of the art of making singing believable: 'with every note, you feel the emotion. When he hurts, you hurt. When he's happy, you can't help but smile…. that's the goal, whether you're a rocker or a folk singer-songwriter' (Love, 1999, p. 155). For Love, the goal is to sing as if you were speaking. Gerald Seminatores' (2010) paper 'Teaching poetry through song: A modest proposal', outlines how to speak, analyse and paraphrase song lyrics where he advocates that singers practice speaking the text before they sing it in a performance. Seminatores' aim is 'to teach students not only how to sing notes and phrases, but also to *speak* words and ideas in songs as if they were the student's own' (Seminatore 2010, p. 515). Understanding the meaning of a song and developing an emotional connection with the lyrics being sung is very important. Conveying that meaning to an audience is an important skill for every CCM singer to develop. Wormhoudt (2001) suggests that audiences love when an artist connects with a song and expresses emotions. 'It is this shared communication which engages us on a number of different levels that is the foundation of an interpretive artist's skill' (p. 72).

The need to make an emotional connection with the audience can influence vocal tone, and quality. Historically, vocal teaching has supported the development of emotional awareness and generally achieved good results (Morris, 2012, p. 2). However, because of a lack of scientific understanding, singing pedagogies have relied on the use of imagery and on the sensations felt by singers and teachers (Morris, 2012, Chapman, 2006). Some authors have argued that the imagery used in teaching singing is based on myths that have been passed down from generation to generation (Chapman, 2006; Michael, 2010). Chapman argues that if imagery is applied skilfully, and if it is consistent

with science it can be useful, but it can be confusing if it is a substitute for informed teaching. She also suggests that it can be destructive when teachers use images such as 'breathe into your buttocks', 'push your belly wall down and out while singing', or 'fill every crevice of your body with air', as these may not always be successful. She argues that an image such as 'imagine you are walking across a bridge made of cling film in very high heels', could be interpreted as singing high notes in a light and effortless way, but could also produce the opposite effect to that desired by creating fear and constriction in the vocal tract (Chapman, 2006, p. 255). Also, imagery that works positively for one individual may be unsuccessful or have a negative impact on someone else. Riggs (2008, p. 78) argues, that teaching that provides definite cause and effect relationships helps the student to understand how the voice works and how certain sounds are produced, and exercises that produce the desired result are much more beneficial than descriptions of somebody else's personal experience.

Thurman (2004) suggested that in the 21st century, 'the profession of singing teaching is currently in a decades-long historic transition from pre-scientific vocal pedagogy to science based voice education. During this transition, mixtures of pre-scientific and science- based concepts, terminologies, and practices are inevitable' (Thurman, 2004, p. 28). Scientific understanding, knowledge about how the voice works and new findings that are counterintuitive have challenged common teaching methods (Roth & Abbott, 2014). This, paired with a long tradition of the use of imagery and sensation based pedagogies has led to much disagreement about the best way to approach the teaching of singing. Some teachers adopt a scientific perspective, while some believe that using imagery and felt sensation is the best approach, and others adopt a combination of the two (Morris, 2012, p. 3). While good teachers have produced great singers adopting a traditional approach, there is 'a need for an approach to CCM that is distinct from classical vocal pedagogy in order to better serve the needs of these singers' (LeBorgne & Rosenberg, 2014).

Research Questions

The specific research sub-questions addressed were:
— To what extent is the teaching of internationally acclaimed vocal tutors of CCM affected by their own experiences of being taught?
— To what extent, do internationally acclaimed vocal coaches have similar approaches to the teaching of CCM?
— What are the perceived differences between classical and CCM technique?
— To what extent, do internationally acclaimed vocal coaches tailor teaching methods for each individual student?
— What opportunities are there for the professional development of vocal tutors of CCM and to what extent do they take advantage of these?

The overarching research question was:
How can vocal education practices be improved through the exploration of contemporary vocal pedagogy and the teaching methods of Internationally acclaimed vocal coaches?

Methodological Perspective

Epistemologically, I adopted a qualitative approach to the research. As qualitative researchers tend to be phenomenological in their orientation, this was my philosophical stance (Bowmann, 1998). Finding meaning is the objective of phenomenology and it is grounded in early-20th-century continental philosophy, that of Heidegger (1962) and Husserl (1913) in particular. The start and end point of phenomenological research is lived experience (Bresler and Stake, 1991). 'The aim is to construct a clear experiential memory and to help people create a more sophisticated account of things' (Bresler & Stake, 1991, p. 76).

Phenomenology attempts to investigate what was experienced and how it was experienced and tries to understand what it is like from the point of view of the participants. Phenomenological methods are particularly useful for bringing experiences and perceptions of participants from their own perspectives to the fore, exploring how they affect approaches to teaching and learning and therefore challenge assumptions and traditional wisdom. Adding an interpretive aspect to phenomenological research allows it to be used as the basis for practical application and enables it to inform, support or challenge policy and action.

Methods/Design
Phenomenological Interviews/Interview Structure

Phenomenological interviews are used to generate data, which is derived from examining the lived experiences of participants. Such interviews can be used to generate thorough and in-depth accounts of human experiences. In devising such interviews it is important to pose questions that generate comprehensive information regarding these experiences as well as the participant's responses to the phenomenon of investigation. Adams and van Manen, suggest that the 'direct description of a particular situation or event as it is lived through without offering causal explanations or interpretive generalisations' is the focus of phenomenological interviews (2008, p. 618). They distinguish between two corresponding types of interview - the 'phenomenological interview', which compiles and explores accounts of lived experience, and the 'hermeneutic interview' which seeks to examine the 'interpretive meaning aspects of lived experience material' (2008, p. 618). Many researchers use phenomenological interviews to accrue comprehensive accounts of lived experience but may adopt various types of analysis which are not informed by the diverse strands of phenomenological theory, for example narrative analysis or constant comparative analysis. In some studies the term 'phenomenological' is used as a synonym for 'qualitative'.

Research Design

I decided that the most appropriate method for addressing the research questions was to undertake semi-structured interviews with experts in the field. As part of the interviews I decided to introduce two short video recordings to stimulate participants' thinking about their teaching. One was of a sixteen- year

old male student, the other a thirteen-year old female student. Each performed a verse and the chorus of a song. These pupils were chosen as they had particular vocal and stylistic issues that needed improvement. These videos were used to prompt discussion and stimulate interviewee's responses (Roth, 2009). I invited each tutor to treat the recordings as if they were in a master class situation whereby they commented on the performances and explained how they would set out to help the students improve their vocal skills and knowledge. The aim of the video recordings was to witness how the experts addressed vocal problems, identified common exercises and techniques that they used and how they changed their methodology depending on the needs of a student and also provided a basis for reflection on practice and continuing professional development (Jewitt, 2012).

Issues relating to generalisability, reliability and validity and ethical issues were also addressed.

The Development of the Interview Schedule

The interview questions were based on my reading of the existing literature, my own experiences as a performing musician and teacher, and a desire to add to the existing body of CCM vocal knowledge, and share the results with CCM singers and teachers alike. I wanted to learn if leading vocal educators had shared common experiences, and whether or not these experiences influenced their teaching methods. The vocal education literature is sometimes contradictory and teachers hold many different beliefs and attitudes and adopt a variety of different practices. The questions asked came about as a result of my own personal experiences of vocal lessons and a quest to understand and develop a solid vocal methodology for CCM as well as to attempt to fill gaps in the literature.

Sample

I chose ten participants to take part in this research, as this was deemed sufficient to obtain in depth knowledge of their life experiences as musicians and teachers and to discuss their teaching methodologies. The intention was to involve participants with different backgrounds, some who were vocal coaches on TV shows such as 'American Idol', 'X-Factor', and 'The Voice', celebrity vocal coaches, authors, artists, vocal education researchers, and teachers.

The Thematic Analysis

After analysing the data, three overarching themes emerged. These themes were Teaching, Learning, Style and Technique. Each of these themes has a range of sub-themes.

Figure 6.1 synthesises the findings from the interviews and the videos and refers to the number of times each theme was mentioned by participants.

Figure 1.1 Findings from the interviews and the videos

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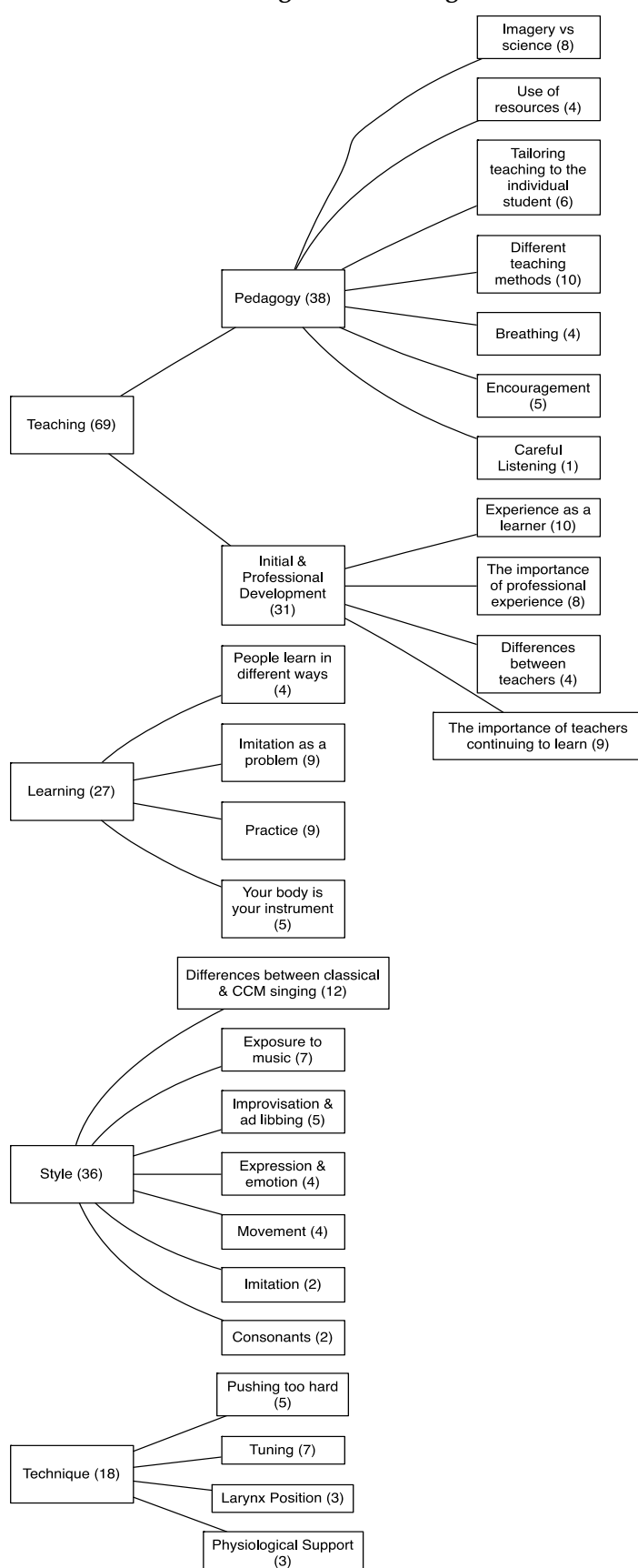
Key findings

All of the expert teachers agreed that it was important to tailor teaching to the individual needs of the student. The participants believed that people learn in different ways and that the type of teaching approach that might work for one student may not suit another.

There was much disagreement between the interviewees about how to teach breathing in relation to singing CCM.

Six of the participants suggested that imitation was one the biggest problems that CCM singers faced as some of the sounds they hear on recordings are impossible to create with the human voice and also because copying discouraged them to develop their own voice.

The participants believed that the differences between classical and CCM singing included vowel shapes, style, flexibility, larynx position, vocal technique and vocal qualities.

The expert teachers did not agree as to whether it was appropriate to use imagery in teaching or whether explanations should be based on scientific evidence.

All of the participants had classical training. Their experiences had affected their teaching practices. Despite this there was disagreement about the extent to which classical training was useful for singing CCM.

There was almost unanimous agreement that to teach CCM, teachers needed to have experience as performers.

There were differences in the extent to which the participants were familiar with the different methods and approaches to teaching singing such as The Estill Method, Speech Level Singing, Accent method and so on.

All but one participant agreed that it was important for teachers to continue their education.

Most participants indicated how important it was to listen to and be exposed to as much music as possible.

Focus in practice was felt to be important by some participants. Its' subjective nature was stressed by others.

Five participants emphasised the importance of being physically fit as a singer.

Three participants reported using resources as a teaching aid.

Findings in Relation to the Research Questions

The following sections relate the findings to the research questions and the existing literature.

The specific research sub-questions to be addressed were:
— To what extent is the teaching of internationally acclaimed vocal tutors of CCM affected by their own experiences of being taught?
— To what extent, do internationally acclaimed vocal coaches have similar approaches to the teaching of CCM?
— What are the perceived differences between classical and CCM technique?
— To what extent, do internationally acclaimed vocal coaches tailor teaching methods for each individual student?

— What opportunities are there for the professional development of vocal tutors of CCM and to what extent do they take advantage of these?

To what extent is the teaching of internationally acclaimed vocal tutors of CCM affected by their own experiences of being taught?

All of the participants discussed their experiences of singing lessons. Issues relating to style, experience as a learner and developing an interest in vocal pedagogy as well as imagery vs science emerged as reflecting the tutors own experiences of being taught.

Overall, the findings from the research suggested that the teaching of vocal tutors of CCM is affected by their own experiences of being taught. This was sometimes as a result of them rejecting the approaches of their own teachers and attempting to develop more effective ways of teaching the singing of CCM rather than in the traditional empirical model of 'teach how you were taught' as discussed in the literature review.

Despite this, and consistent with the literature, there continued to be controversy about issues relating to breathing, the use of imagery and whether classical training had anything to offer. In relation to breathing, the responses from the participants confirmed the different views held amongst vocal teachers. While it is unquestionable that breathing is important for singing, there are questions about how it should be taught and described, with some seeing breathing and singing as a relaxed process and others viewing it as something to be controlled and practiced. Kempfer (2014) argued that the differences in breath use between classical singing and CCM are not sufficiently covered in the current literature. This needs to be addressed.

The use of imagery in teaching also led to conflicting responses from the participants, reflecting the literature, where some authors have argued that the imagery used in teaching is based on myths that have been passed down from generation to generation (Chapman, 2006, Michael, 2010), while others argue that if imagery is applied skilfully and is consistent with science it can be useful.

Overall, there appeared to be three groups. The first group had positive associations with teaching from a classical perspective as they felt they could amend their classical knowledge to suit CCM. The second group had complemented their classical training with extensive industry experience. The third group rejected classical teaching outright and felt that it was not fit for purpose. The literature set out above revealed increasing evidence that having expertise in singing the classical repertoire did not transfer to CCM. Chandler (2014) and Brown (1996, p. 136) argue that 'popular and classical singers live in different worlds'.

To conclude, it would seem that traditional classical pedagogies did not prepare any of the interviewees entirely for performing or teaching CCM. All of the interviewees reported rejection, innovation, or major industry experience as a vital addition to their understanding. This is consistent with Thurman (2004), who suggested that the profession of singing teaching is currently in a decades-long historic transition. As a result of this it is inevitable that there are mixtures of pre-scientific and science-based concepts and understanding (Helding, 2015, p. 353). It is clear that there is still considerable disagreement and different points of view both in the literature and in practice.

Are there common underlying approaches to vocal teaching of CCM?

Overall, there was some commonality in the approaches to vocal teaching of CCM. These tended to be based on very broad principles. The importance of listening to a wide range of music and performers was stressed. Growing up listening to, being exposed to and performing in a broad range of music and genres, will inevitably provide a learner with a wide variety of musical experiences, skills and knowledge. The more skills and musical character, the greater chance the individual has of having a sustainable musical career.

Learning musical style through listening is implicated here. Being immersed in music emerged as the best way to learn a particular style. Some participants felt that imitating was not a useful approach and while it might be useful to imitate performers as an exercise, this was problematic as a key strategy as:

— each individual has a different physiological structure to their voice;
— it is important to develop an individual style;
— singers need to connect emotionally with a song;
— recordings often enhanced or manipulated sounds which made accurate copying impossible;
— overuse of imitation can limit creativity and the development of a personal style.

It was argued that students need to be aware that copying can be a very useful exercise, as great singers are extremely accomplished and have various voice qualities and sounds that can and should be replicated and experimented with. This can lead to a greater understanding of how certain voice qualities are produced. If students copy a range of great singers and recording artists, they will acquire a wide set of skills and musical vocabulary. This will provide them with a huge range of vocal colours that can be used to create their own individual style. Kempfer (2014) supports this suggesting that it is important to understand your own voice and how the voice works in general rather than trying to create someone else's sound and that singers should create their own sound with similar colours (Kempfer, 2014, p. 34).

There was strong belief from those who discussed the importance of expression and emotion that when a singer really had an emotional connection with a song, the audience would feel that connection. Expression and emotion are vital tools for singers to develop. Connecting with an audience requires communication skills and for the singer to feel a relationship with the song. Understanding the meaning of a song is important but can be difficult for younger singers to express, as their life experiences are limited. To overcome this, CCM teachers should be equipped with interesting emotion evoking exercises to help young singers to develop the ability to emotionally engage with the repertoire. The importance of expression and emotion has been stressed by many authors (Bathori, 1957; Love, 1999; Wormhoudt, 2001; Seminatore, 2010). Participants also believed that it was important that performers were in good physical shape. If dance routines are required or lengthy performances or rehearsals are expected, being fit and healthy will benefit a singer.

Depending on the background, professional experience and professional development of vocal tutors, the participants had varying degrees of knowledge about how the voice works. As in the literature, there were different approaches and beliefs about breathing and larynx position. With on-going research and growing interest in CCM the underlying mechanisms will be identified and some of the disagreements will be resolved. Teachers will then become more aware of the technical and stylistic requirements of CCM singers via master classes, workshops, books, blogs and general discussion with colleagues who may have attended professional development courses. Change takes time.

What are the differences between classical and CCM technique?

Some of the differences between classical and CCM technique reported by the participants included vowel shapes, style, larynx position, vocal technique and voice qualities, movement, breathing, improvising, ad libbing and expression and emotion. The participants clearly indicated that classical singing requires a very different skill set to CCM. As CCM is closer to the way we speak, maintaining an 'ah' position for example, for an entire song is inappropriate. Speech reflects what we are feeling and changes depending on what we are saying, this is the same as when we sing. The emotion and story of a song should be reflected in the singing voice and the inherent voice qualities and intensity level associated with it. The conceptualisation of voice quality is less fixated in CCM than in classical music. In classical music singers voices are categorised and repertoire matched to their voice and learned as part of building up a personal repertoire. CCM singers select songs to learn for a range of reasons. They are sometimes expected to mimic the sounds of recording artists and be familiar with songs currently in the charts. They could be in a tribute act, a soul band, a gospel group, or a pop band or other group and knowing the relevant repertoire and understanding stylistic differences is important. Singers may select songs because they believe that they suit their voice, they have an emotional connection with the song, they like it, it is a challenge, it is fun and enjoyable to sing, or their favourite singer sang it. The songs usually tell stories that people can relate to.

CCM singers are required to move with the music and sometimes dance or 'groove' with the music. This of course depends on the style of the music and the type of performance setting or gig. As the literature revealed classical singers may only be required to move or dance when singing an operatic role.

As previously noted, there is a necessity for breathing in relation to CCM to be addressed in research and the literature. The findings from the research reflected those in the literature showing widely different views about the role of breathing for singing and how it should be taught. In particular, further research on breathing techniques when belting are needed.

A basic understanding of improvisation would be very useful for all singers of CCM as outlined by Chandler (2014) and LoVetri (2011). They discuss how gospel, soul and R&B singers frequently use very heavily ornamented melismatic lines for expression. CCM singers are expected to improvise riffs and ad lib and jazz singers are expected to engage an audience and hold a musical conversation with other instrumentalists through improvisation. Learning how

to improvise and ad lib also greatly aids the process of creating an individual style.

In general, CCM and classical singing require very different training.

To what extent are teaching methods tailored for each individual student?

The participants agreed that it was very important to tailor teaching to each individual student. They argue that as every student tended to present different problems it was the role of the teacher to diagnose what areas needed work. This means that teachers require a great deal of knowledge about the voice and the types of strategies that could be adopted to address students' problems. Approaching every lesson in the same way was seen as unproductive because of the variability in individual voices, personalities and aspirations. Teachers should establish what students want to achieve and support them in achieving their aims. For example, some students may simply like to sing, while others will want a career in singing and performing and some might like to become teachers. Teaching methods should be tailored accordingly and teachers need to develop a range of approaches and adopt them flexibly.

What opportunities are there for the professional development of vocal tutors of CCM and to what extent do they take advantage of these?

The research showed that, overall the participants agreed that it was important to continue their professional development. The nature of what they felt to be useful varied. While some indicated that it was important to know about specific methods, such methods were not universally adopted. No one educational approach to teaching CCM in singing was seen to be dominant.

The findings suggested that having performing experience was extremely important in teaching individuals to sing CCM, although there were examples of excellent teachers who were not performers. However, this seemed to be the exception. As teachers need to be able to prepare students for performing, and educate them as to how to use their voices efficiently so that they are prepared for a career in singing, having experience of performing is important. The participants felt that lack of personal performing experience might limit the extent to which the teacher could do this. Teachers should also be able to demonstrate. This requires them to have vocal fitness. Professional CCM singers can be required to perform anywhere from three to six hours, which would require them to be vocally fit and healthy.

Implications for Practice

This research generated some very specific lessons for vocal pedagogy, which can now be added to the existing body of knowledge to help improve existing practices. It has shown that:

— there are differences between teaching singing in the classical and CCM styles;

— learning about specific styles requires specific training;

— where possible teachers should have professional performing experience;

— teachers should impress upon students that imitating the sound of their favourite singer can be unproductive and they should develop their own distinctive sound;

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— teachers should encourage and support students;

— teachers need to help their students to become emotionally aware and to communicate emotionally with the audience;

— teachers should encourage students to be physically and vocally fit and to care for their voice;

— teachers need to base their teaching on an in depth understanding of the physiology of breathing and singing rather than just teaching how they were taught;

— teachers need to tailor their teaching to the needs of individual students and have a range of available strategies to meet the individual needs of students;

teachers should be aware that they may not have the skills to provide solutions to all of their students' challenges and that there may be times when they need to seek advice from other teachers or refer students to others.

— teachers need to be aware of the latest developments in vocal pedagogy and attend courses and master classes to prevent their teaching practices becoming out dated;

Conclusion

Historically, teaching methods have been passed down from generation to generation and the emphasis has been on being able to sing classical music. However, having expertise in singing the classical repertoire does not automatically transfer to CCM. Learning about specific styles requires specific training. Students need to find a teacher who has knowledge of the required style and how to teach it.

It is clear that many different approaches and attitudes towards singing are commonplace. As the singing profession has transitioned from a pre-scientific understanding of vocal education to a science based vocal education a mixture of different terminologies, concepts and practices are inevitable. As western classical vocal training has been the usual method of instruction the majority of teachers have experience in this approach only. In this age of multi

media, internet and globalisation, all styles of music have become widely known and easily available. Providing education in one style ie. Western classical singing is not sufficient. As the research shows clear differences between classical and CCM style it seems unlikely that a traditional classical pedagogy will provide singers with the understanding and skill set required for CCM performance styles.

In addition to the use of registers, vocal qualities and articulation, the abdominal support needed for CCM is different from that of classical singing and will also change depending on the CCM style being sung. The relevance of traditional classical technique(s) in view of these clear differences becomes very questionable. Bartlett (2014, p.32) states that 'some authors continue to plainly and strenuously challenge the view that traditional classical training is sufficient for singing success in any style or genre'.

Hence, there is an urgent need for teachers to re train and keep themselves up to date with advances in voice science and also to develop stylistic awareness. There are influences from so many cultures that vocal training needs creativity. The more experience teachers have with different styles of singing and different vocal methods or approaches, the more they will have to offer students.

There are now many opportunities for teachers to explore and develop their skill set and knowledge base. Online scientific journals cover a vast array of topics including classical singing, pop/rock, music theatre, vocal distortion, acoustics physiology and so on. Organizations such as The New York Singing Teachers' Association (NYSTA) offer online courses that are available to teachers from all over the globe (Meyer & Edwards, 2014 p.442). Other organizations have a strong web presence and provide journals, webinars, master classes, and conferences where researchers, teachers and medical professionals can share their knowledge to improve the standard of vocal training. These include the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS), the Voice Foundation, the American Academy of Teachers of Singing (AATS), The National Centre for Voice and Speech (NCVS), International Congress of Voice Teachers (ICVT), Physiology and Acoustics of Singing (PAS), Pan-European Voice Conferences (PEVOC), American Speech Language Hearing Association (AHSA) and Voice and Speech Trainers Association (VASTA).
Moving forward, a new and more comprehensive vocal pedagogy is called for, and as demonstrated by this research, for the training of CCM.

Benefit for my Institution and my own Teaching

The aim of this research was to raise the awareness of CCM vocal education in Ireland and to explore how its quality might be improved. As Principal and Vocal Tutor at a CCM School, the experience and knowledge that I have gained was of huge benefit to the students in this institution. The research has provided me with in depth insights into the practices and teaching methods of expert vocal tutors, which have inevitably improved my practice, which will in turn be handed down to my students. The expertise that I have gained from this research project through the interaction with the expert vocal tutors and the engagement with the literature has been invaluable. It has increased my awareness, knowledge and skill set primarily as a teacher, but also as a

researcher. It has raised my own standards as a vocal coach and I am confident that the standard of teaching I am providing and will continue to provide will be well informed, passionate, up to date and most importantly, cater to the needs of every student. I have studied privately with many of the participants, which has opened up new avenues and approaches to my teaching, helped me to create new and inspiring exercises and ways to engage students. The acquaintance made with the participants has already let to a webinar series whereby these tutors can give online master classes to my students. This has created invaluable opportunities for vocal education in Cork as students can now have guidance from these world experts as well as their regular weekly lessons.

Studying the vocal education literature, reading journals and blogs and following various Facebook accounts has become much more than research but a true passion, which I am confident will always continue.

It is important that the needs of aspiring CCM singers are met and high standards of teaching are developed and maintained. Education is ultimately concerned with the improvement of practice. Music educators are always searching for successful teaching approaches from which to learn and on which to model. My aim is that this study may contribute to the development and re-evaluation of the teaching and learning of contemporary singing in Ireland and provide a strong and comprehensive vocal methodology.

This research could possibly and potentially diversify vocal teaching methodologies and practices and contribute theoretically and empirically to improving educational policy and practice for future professional development.

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