

[Abstract]

**THE USE OF THE TECHNIQUE IN BOTH CLASSICAL AND
FOLK SONG IN OCCIDENTAL SINGING.**

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It is known that singing is one of the most spontaneous ways of expression on human beings.

It is very difficult to determine where and when the techniques are systematic to improve voice production.

Even when singing remains as a popular way of expression without arriving to an artistic or developed art, the techniques may vary. In this paper, we are not concerned on the many ways in which peculiar and local traditional folk songs express themselves. We shall try to understand the variations of occidental techniques through the changes in musical styles until today.

In the most ancient societies there was little scientific knowledge on voice production so as to determine a scheme of it. The way to sing was transmitted traditionally, from generation to generation, through the imitation of the tunes and its peculiarities.

The first physiological studies on voice are done in Greece, as we know.

Greek culture is of great importance to the study of singing and musical education, as they gave such relevance to oratory and the usual teaching included studies on breathing, vocaliza-

tion, diction and clear articulation. (Pericles Period, 450 B.C.)

Romans took all this knowledge and techniques that have survived for centuries.

In this education there are no differences between diction and modulation. The "fonaskes" was the intonation teacher. It is assumed that the "fonaskes" used to obtain an extended and big voice but not too loud. The observation of hygienic vocal principles was of greatest importance, as well as to develop abdominal strength in order to obtain a better breathing control.

Some researchers consider that it may be possible that the aesthetic taste of the period admitted nasal qualities, desired by oriental singing. Other researchers do not agree and suppose, instead, that during the first Christian period singing was mild and natural.

The first Christian period (Cipriano, Bishop 250 A.C.) asked for "cultivated" voices, for church uses. The voice should be "equal viril and strong" especially big on middle range, but avoiding shouting, or any kind of unnatural emission contrary to the frequent register changes used in folk songs.

The latest period of Middle Ages develops

the "poliphonia", while the "monodia" was used at the earliest Middle Ages.

The poliphonia is the musical form that, for the first time in the history of occidental music, asks a new need to the human voice: to improve its extension in order to perform successfully the harmonic musical needs.

Also the Salmodia is created to sing prayers, for soloist or choirs, that differs from the melody used in secular singing. The use of "melism" appears, as the repetition of one vowel in different tones.

Religious and secular singing develops ballades, romances, with a more free use of the voice.

Vocal Technique

In 1000 A.C., the requirements for a voice was "sonos discretus" or "consonantia". In 1250, Jeronimo de Moravia gives the names of "vox pectoris", "vox gutturis" and "vox capitis", in an effort to classify the vocal qualities.

He confuses the place of voice production with the results of resonance. It is interesting to remark that the big confusion about names on singing was born in the 13th century in Italy.

The 15th century is rich in books about singing styles: religious and trovador singing, with the correct use of "coloratura" and all kind of vocal virtuosism. The "falsetto" is used and permitted on male voices for very high frequencies. During the 14th century appears the "madrigal" (one voice singing) that combines poetry and music (Venice, Rome and Naples). This evolution is coincident with the poliphonia

of Palestina and the first oratorio pieces.

The one voice singing is developed by the Spanish "vihuelists" as well as the Italian art and performed by males and females, (madrigals, ballads, songs). The new combination of music and poetry obliges a better diction, the understanding of words and the use of "legato" while singing.

Technique principles during the 14th century (Biasso, Rossetti) requires: gentle breathing, good control of air flow, moderate opening of mouth, good "legato" from one tone to the other and a soft attack.

Other teachers remark what was not desirable: nasalization, lack of legato in "coloratura", wrong articulation of vowels, "portamenti" against the style and suggest to avoid every effort during high tones, grimaces, as well as to keep a good body position and not to shout in order not to tire the voice. Conrad von Zabern (1474) and Biasso Rossetti (1529) proposes "chest voice" for lowr tones with a smooth and soft scending sonorities to "head voice".

Giovanni Maffei (1562), physician, explains the phonatory anatomy, classifies the voices and gives recommendations to improve singing: smoothing the "passage" of registers, "coloratura" exercises, idea of voice projection, the use of mirrors to observe oneself during singing.

The study of singing started at the early stages of childhood, in children choirs. The vocal mute of males became a big problem. To prevent the constant change of children during the 17th century, castration became usual. This use survived during the 17th and 18th centuries. The "castrati" won special places, not only in

church or religious music, but also in opera, where they sang female scores. Their voices seemed to have a very particular quality, not like women's, contratenor's or "falsettist's".

The real "Bel Canto" technique started with Caccini (1600). The idea of "appoggio" is referred to the diaphragm, the chest and head to resonance; the loudness of the voice developed from "piano" and not from the "forte".

The opera "buffa" of the 18th century asks for "coloratura", vocal virtuosism and easiness that is desirable in each singer. This style slowly rejects the "castrati" voices and demands more expressive and plain voices.

Also the first French operas emphasize words, and diction becomes a very important aspect. After Gluck and his reaction against virtuosism, comes Mozart, with his use of extended voices, coloratura and also expressive needs. (*Porgi amor*, *Dove Sono*, *Dove Andrai*).

The traditional school of singing reaches its climax with Manuel Garcia, 19th century. He introduced the idea that voice production and articulation are tied to the diaphragmatic "appoggio" and the equilibrium of registers.

At this stage we arrive to a polemical point: the discussion about differences in singing technique with the new national opera styles.

Eventhough Italian bel-canto asks for plain and strong sound, and French opera asks for a very clear diction besides good phonation, the real differences are more stylistic and based on language characteristics, rather than a different use of breathing or larynx.

German opera, with Wagner, requires big voices, strong volume to overlap the orchestral

sonorities, whereas virtuosism and coloratura are not needed.

We cannot agree with the nomination of "German School" of singing only to Wagner's needs. The lied, as well as the French song (Schubert, Schumann, Fauré, Duparc, Ravel) has the same technical demands, from all points of view.

We could agree that opera demands stronger voices than chamber music does. Big singers could sing either opera (Italian, German or French) or lieder according with their individual possibilities of volume, change of languages and sensibility.

In our opinion, there is only one singing technique, and its basis are:

- (a) breathing control, through the development of costo-diaphragmatic support;
- (b) Easiness of emission, use of the yawning sensation but not excessive tension of the pharyngeal wall;
- (c) Control of the "passage" points of modal register to "falsetto";
- (d) no tiredness sensations after singing;
- (e) volume control, according with the individual possibilities
- (f) clear diction for every language.

Nowadays, contemporary music has new demands for a singer. These demands have very little to do with traditional singing schools. Research in this area has just started, the voice has requirements as another instrument, added to the electronic ones.

Occidental popular song also requires a vocal technique similar to that of the classic singer. The use of the microphone and the

help of electronics allows small voices to become popular singers.

The total range is usually shorter than that of the classical need. A popular singer rarely has an extension wider than one and a half octave.

Some styles, as jazz for example, demand possibilities of bigger extension because of the improvisation (imitation of another instrument), the "scat", that is done in different ways of syllables to imitate several instruments. Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughan and others are great examples of this.

The use of "falsetto" is also a need on popular song, both for men and women. The "rock" style usually demands very high tones for male voices. The continuous shouting is the cause of frequent pathology. The right use of "falsetto" for tones over the real possibility of the singer could prevent damage.

The Argentine "tango" requires a viril quality of voice. Men should be taught to sing as the lyric singer, but taking care to keep a clear diction, and to change the key of songs when they exceed their vocal range. The use of "falsetto" in this style would be artificial for men. Women tango singers, through, should use the "falsetto" for several single tones, when their voices on modal registers do not reach the frequency demanded by the melody.

It should be clear that the use of "falsetto" on women has a different quality than the one required to a classical singer. It does not demand a big resonance. On the contrary, a "white" falsetto will not help to feel this kind of emission as an artificial one in a popular song.

Some advices should be done for other pop expressions, as folklore, musical and melodic styles.

SUMMARY

Our report refers to occidental vocal techniques from Greece until today.

It is remarkable that even with poor anatomy knowledge, there were advices on styles given from very early periods, for both church and secular singing. During the 18th century, the names of "vox pectoris", "vox gutturis" and "vox capitis" appear, nominations that somehow remain nowadays with great confusion about source of sound production and results of resonance. Vocal occidental styles developed different kinds of requirements from the singers, that had to adapt their vocal possibilities to them.

The same happened with "pop" song. Nowadays, all kinds of singers must have a conscious knowledge of its voice management to prevent vocal disturbances. We consider that the technique is the same, even when the singer has to sing Wagner, Debussy, Schönberg, Piazzola or Gershwin. The big changes occurred at resonance levels, and because these different use of the vocal resonators the effects are quite different. In summary, the big differences on classical the effects are quite different. In summary, the big differences on classical and pop song are done on the different use of the resonators and its effects on the vocal tract.

"Pop" singers, men and women, should be

taught to use both registers, "modal" and "falsetto", to be able to reach the complete range of their songs without any harm to their larynxes.

In our opinion, a good singing technique means that it could be adapted to every stylistic need. The same technique is adapted to the popular singer as well. The main difference lays on the use of resonators, pretty strong in the classic singer, weaken in the popular singer, on the volume and on the total extension of the voice. Breathing control, effortless emission and the use of "passage" at the right point should be taught to all singers, regardless of their style.

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