



Singing in Style in Musical Theatre

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Vocal Expression/Styles

1. Tone - Head, mix, chest, belt
2. Vocal coloring - dark, bright
3. Vibrato – fast, delayed or straight tone
4. Alliterations/consonants for expression
5. Onomatopoeia
6. Text painting
7. Dynamics

Tongue Exercises

1. Touch nose/extend
2. 12 o'clock 3, 6, 9 12 o'clock
3. Curl tongue up (tip against bottom teeth)
4. Tongue moving around in a closed mouth
5. [t] [d]; [p] [b]; [k] [g]; [sh] [dz]; [s] [z] (no [zuh] buzz the z)
6. Say alphabet with tongue outside mouth
7. Guy-la – 5 note scale without moving jaw. Isolating the tongue.

Chest Register

- Vowels: [a], [a], [o], [E]
- a. Single note, two note slides, third slides or short scales
 - b. Lowest possible range with ease

Register Balance/Chest Mix: Chest/head/both

- Vowels: [a] [e] [i] [I] [o] [u] [ae] Y[ae] Y[o]
- a. 4, 5, 9 tone scales
 - b. Slides (whole note, 3rds, 5ths, octaves)
 - c. Major triads
 - d. Arpeggios

1. Straw phonation
2. Cork for jaw stabilization



Exercises for laryngeal flexibility and styles

1. Y[ae] 1 in Chest Register – 8 in Head Register (Yodel)
2. [ae] – Start in chest and stay on note, then change slowly to head.
3. Whoa – Pentatonic scale, C D E G A, in reverse A B ♭ A B ♭ G E D C w/ added ½ step.
4. Y[ae] – 3 2 1 (mi, re, do) good for “ tails” or developing the high belt or “scream”.
5. [ae] - 1-5 slide with tongue out of month, fine tune with 1-3 or 1-2 slides
6. Blues Scale - C - E♭ - F - G♭- G - B♭- C
7. [e],[a],[e],[a],[o] - Tongue out over straw. Done in 3rd's, 4th's, and 5th's.
8. Guy-la – 5 note scale without moving jaw. Isolating the tongue.

Vocal Stylisms

Vocal styles such as Blues, Country, Jazz, Pop, R&B, Rock, etc. call for expressive “vocal stylisms”. Here are some sounds found in these styles.

Breathy: initiated before or after tone. Blues, Country, Gospel, Jazz, Pop, R&B and character roles

Fry: (sometimes creaky; the arytenoid cartilages drawn together and causes the vocal folds to compress tightly onset or release – sounds like a rattling sound): Country, Gospel, Jazz, Pop, R&B and character roles

Fall-Offs: one note sliding down to no specific pitch

Fall- Ups: one note sliding up to no specific pitch. Country, Gospel, Jazz, Pop, R&B and character roles

Slides: steady slide upward or downward, End Slide-ups, Fry slide

Bending/added blue note: (a short slide from 1/2 note below). Used in Blues, Country, Gospel, Jazz, Pop, R&B and Torch songs

Flip onsets/Pop Appoggiatura: accented grace note from below (1/2 step); often quick. Used in Blues, Country, Gospel, Jazz, Pop, R&B

Cry (grace note from above-sounds like a whine): Used in Blues, Country, Gospel, Pop, R&B and torch songs for emotion

Add-on notes in Country: similar to a pop appoggiatura, uses the prior note as the accent to the next note (usually a third or more higher/lower)

Swinging the note: dotted eighth notes followed by sixteenth notes. Used in Blues, Country and Jazz styles

Yodel or Flip: intentional register shifts from chest to head for effect. Used in Bluegrass, Country, Pop

Growls: low, guttural sound. False folds and pharyngeal constriction. Used for character roles, Country, Pop, Rock, R&B, Gospel

Onsets: hard glottal, soft glottal click, breathy onset

Screams: higher pitch sound with extreme intensity. Used in Pop, Rock, R&B, Gospel



Shadow Vowel Release: (follows final vowel or consonant sound) “you-uh”. Used in character roles, R&B. Gospel

Shouts: Gospel, R&B, character roles

Retracting Tongue: Blues, Country, Bluegrass, Gospel, Pop, Rock, R&B, Cockney

Waves: < > < >

Tails: 3 & 5 note descending patterns with decrescendo. Used in Country, Pop, R&B, Gospel, Blues

Vibrato: Fast, Wide, Delayed

Delayed Vibrato: Adding a little vibrato towards the end of a long belt note.

Pop Improvisations

Licks: Brief improvisation – a distinctive few notes, short phrase in pop music or jazz, often improvised

Riffs or Wails: longer improvisational phrases

----- Most improvisations can be traced back to classical ornaments.

Improvising Rule of Thumb

- Establish original melody first
- Same words/change notes
- Vary the words
- Riffs, Licks, Scatting

Phrasing

Anticipations: coming in before the expected beat

Back phrasing: coming in after the expected beat

Syncopations: weak beat gets the accent

Swung 1/8 notes

Cool Down Exercises

1. Lip/Tongue Trills on 5 tone scale
2. Who-you 5,5,5,5,5,4,3,2,1
3. Straw phonation