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EXPRESSION AND EMOTION IN MUSIC: HOW EXPRESSION AND EMOTION
AFFECT THE AUDIENCE'S PERCEPTION OF A PERFORMANCE

by

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Abstract:

Expression and emotion in a musical performance affects how the music is perceived by the audience. A study of a song's composer and the background of the music aids in improving the expression and understanding of vocal music. A study of theatre brings an extra dynamic to a musical performance. Maria Callas, for example, was a pioneer in combining these many factors into her performances. Her application of music and drama in opera makes her an ideal example of a complete and dynamic vocalist. The expression and emotion she poured into each performance transformed how people saw opera and music in general. This concept of expression and emotion in music and how it may affect an audience's perception of a performance is furthered studied in depth through various surveys and an extensive study of Maria Callas and what she has to say about her art and what others have observed from Callas's performances and work ethic.

Key Words:

Music, Song, Opera, Expression, Emotion, Perception, Audience, Theatre, Maria Callas

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“To play a wrong note is insignificant; to play without passion is unforgivable.”

-Ludwig van Beethoven

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Nothing is comparable to the feeling of being drawn into the world of music. The sudden and uncontrollable sense of emotions that flood over us when music touches and moves us on an indescribable level is a thrill like no other. The chills that follow such emotions are an experience that can never be predicted and transport the auditor to another world. All of these factors come with what the audience members are individually experiencing and perceiving as they continue to listen and watch a performance. Music has been said to affect everyone. People have their own personal experiences with music and they use music to express what they cannot express with words. The experience of music is said to be unexplainable and transcends the use of words. Music can leave people speechless and without an accurate way to express what they experienced. This is because music transcends language and it becomes a universal language that anyone can connect to. Music is found all across the world and anyone can have a perception or opinion of what the song expresses.

Music can be performed as close to notation as possible, but does that really mean it will affect an audience the way an emotionally propelled song will? Maria Callas, though no longer alive, is still beloved. People would travel across the world to hear her perform, even when the language was not of their own vernacular. What Callas portrayed was deeply in tune with the music and imbued with her personal emotions. The world was enthralled with the singer who performed in a way in which they

connected emotionally with her and felt invested in the story being told, rather than with a singer who performed the music accurately to notation and made no connection with the story.

The following literature review attempts to justify expression in a music performance and how to increase the experience of the audience by answering the following questions:

- Does the audience perceive emotions expressed by the performer?
- Does the audience perceive what the music is expressing when the performer understands the background of the music?
- Does a performer's understanding of theatre improve the audience's perception of the performance?
- How does a performer improve the perceived performance of the audience?
- What aspects of a music performance does the audience enjoy and look for?

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review will explore: (1) how emotions are perceived by the audience; (2) how to add an understanding of theatre and expression into a performance of music.

Emotion

Matthew Spackman, Martin Fujiki, Bonnie Brinton, Donna Nelson, and Jillean Allen (2005) defined emotion understanding as “the ability to discern and understand others’ emotion, using situational and expressive cues that have some degree of cultural consensus as to their emotional meaning” (Spackman 131). The ability to control emotion is connected to being able to understand, experience and express emotions. Researchers believe that the face is the primary source of where a person expresses their emotion. Music, like the face, is also an important function of how to express emotion. Identifying with emotions from music is believed to come about through learning through social experiences.

Matthew Poon and Michael Shutz (2015) helped conduct an experiment using various pieces composed by Bach and Chopin and assessed what different musical aspects cued emotions. The results showed that the register and location of a pitch directly correlated with emotions, such as a higher note causing happiness and a lower note: sadness. Rhythm and tempo also affected emotion, such as a slower rhythm or tempo causing sadness. Several other musical effects such as dynamics, tempo, melody and rhythmic variations caused different responses. The participants also agreed that minor keys often caused sadness and major keys often caused happiness. However, later in the experiment minor intervals were sung with facial expressions of happiness and

those observing perceived it as being happy. The same happened for the major intervals accompanied with sad facial expressions, which caused the perception of sadness. This proved that visual expressions overpowered the music heard. This shows that a performance can manipulate the perceived performance by the audience, which shows the importance of the vocalist and their knowledge of what they are singing about. Telling the story effectively through the song will come through to the audience more so than the music itself.

The interpretation of the music being performed should convey some knowledge of the author and the origins of the piece. Knowing these things allows for a deeper understanding and aids in the expression during a performance. When a song is being performed, the text needs to match the level of expressiveness found in the rest of the music, so that the overall performance of the piece makes sense. A single piece of music has the potential to express different emotions and thoughts depending on how those performing decide to portray it. Music mimics life through the different musical devices and emotional aspects used. Ion Oltețeanu (2010) points out that instruments are processed in the brain as being expressive voices. When emotions are expressed in a performance, the audience can gain a better understanding of what the music represents.

Clemens Wöllner (2012) helped conduct a survey about the perception of emotional expression from a performance by a string quartet. The piece performed was Vaughan Williams' first string quartet in G minor. Each member of the quartet identified before the performance what emotions they were going to attempt to express while playing and answered the same questions that would be presented to those taking the survey. In this article, expressiveness was defined as the emotions being communicated.

Wöllner says that expressiveness stands separately from the quality of the performance. After watching and listening to the performance, the participants took the same survey as the members of the quartet so that the results could be compared. The results of the participants of the survey and the participants of the string quartet were very close. In the study it was discovered that affective empathy, which is an automatic response and has to do with the perception of feelings, correlated with the similar results of the survey. This shows that there was an understanding of the music that was not solely affected by the aurally observed performance but also by the physical performance of the musicians.

Felicia Baltes, Julia Avram, Mircea Miclea and Andrei C. Miu (2011) conducted a survey that consisted of a recorded performance starring Maria Callas and Tito Gobbi in Giacomo Puccini's *Tosca*. There were three stages of the survey: (1) listening to the song, (2) reading about the show and what is occurring during the specified song followed by listening to the song again, (3) watching a performance of the scene. Most of the people who listened to the song were susceptible to chills, which were associated with music-induced emotions. The singers, orchestra, crescendos and other musical devices caused various emotional responses. Watching the performance caused the most reaction out of the participants. Not only did the live performance increase emotional arousal, feelings of wonder and transcendence were reported, resulting in an increase in the amount of reported chills.

Theatre and Expression

John Spackman (2012) suggests that music expresses emotions that are too specific to explain with words. Music contains many aspects that are *descriptive ineffable*, which is defined as expressive qualities that cannot be described. Spackman

believes that describing any form of art generalizes the emotions and ultimately does not help express the art correctly. The meaning of an object is individualized and the same goes for expressive qualities that words cannot capture. Susanne Langer says that human feelings and emotions connect more with musical forms than with actual language. Music reveals the nature of feelings, which language cannot fully express. Music is capable of being true to life in ways that language is incapable of.

Susanne Langer (*Chapter 3 1957*) was a philosopher of art and mind and was one of the first women ever to receive an academic career in philosophy. She was also the first woman to be recognized as an American philosopher publicly. She discusses creation in art. What she means by creation is using something that is already there but manipulating it to become something that never actually existed before. A picture on a canvas is an illusion of space, also referred to as a virtual space. This virtual space is a picture's primary illusion. Though everything that makes up the picture existed before, the picture itself never existed before and therefore it is a creation. When looking at a picture, the form of feeling can be seen, the feeling is not seen through it, but in the actual picture itself. When a picture contains no expression, it is dead. We see the appearance of everything around us such as shapes, colors and movement without being aware of the actual appearances. We see only what we have been taught and have learned to see as needful for our purposes. Tonal material creating a musical expression is the primary illusion of music. Another illusion created by music is the appearance of movement. There is a flow that can be found in music, such as when a melody moves or when a progression is a result of the succession of various tones. A "movement" is an entire section of a sonata. Sounds are a result of vibrations, which is a physical motion. Music

is also an auditory sense of time; it can even be referred to as felt time. Music is much more complex than clock-time. A rest in music is part of the music and adds to the effect of time. Because all of these various aspects of movement in music cannot be seen, it is all illusion. Every form of art has its own primary illusion, which helps set the various arts apart from each other. However, the various art forms can combine in many different kinds of ways. Artists take what is virtual and already there to create an expressive form as a result of their imagination.

Contrary to popular belief, Langer (*Chapter 8* 1957) disputes that art does not change from age to age. She states that theorists say that there are certain things associated and believed about art in different periods of time and that artists also assume things in their time period. Both of these opinions do not actually prove that art changes over time, but that there is a different perception used in each time period. Langer states that universally all art contains an apparent expression of human emotion, which is a consistent statement applicable to art at any time. The concept of art is to present ideas of feeling. However, the creation of that concept is extremely varied. The only restriction Langer states is that “all artistic ideas are ideas of something felt, or rather: of life as felt,” (Langer 113). The work of art as a whole expresses an emotional process. People are interested in the cultural emotion expressed and when one culture crosses its bounds to another culture, new possibilities of expression and emotion are unleashed. Langer proceeds to talk about the various devices of art forms. She makes emphasis on poetry and how poems play on words and contain multiple metaphors to create an end result. She talks about the art of music and says, “The construction of melodies in the framework of harmonically related tones is probably the most powerful principle of

musical creation that has ever been found,” (Langer 116). She states that some art is bad and that there needs to be artistic intent to contain an artistic result. Art results from a person’s desire to create something that expresses their idea of feeling. Motivation comes from a large array of different sources, but art results when art is created for art’s sake.

Michael Shurtleff (*Chapter 8* 1980), in his book *Audition: Everything an Actor Needs to Know to Get the Part*, talks mostly about theatre, but he also talks about music. He says that songs are short and therefore the performer needs to establish an emotional relationship quickly with what is given from the music and the lyrics to their own life experiences. In musicals, the sound is important, but the relationship established in the song is far more important. In musical theatre, the audience is more concerned about the emotional experience being portrayed than the quality of voice. The actors need to look beyond what is written and to add their own personalities to bring the character to life. Life needs to be observed and applied to the stage rather than making the frame of reference for performance based off of the stage. Life is more real and truthful than the stage. Changes found in the character need to be found by the character and accomplished in a way that the audience will be able to notice.

Shurtleff (*Chapter 2* 1980) has created 12 guideposts for a good audition. Though he created it mainly for an audition setting, they can be applied to any performance. His guideposts set a foundation for creating a scene and helping set up an interaction with someone. Humor, conflict, communication, discoveries, events and several other subjects are touched upon throughout the chapter. In a performance, we must live for our hopes and dreams and we have to fight for them just as we do in reality. Shurtleff states,

“If we lived for reality, we’d be dead, every last one of us. Only dreams keep us going” (Shurtleff 47).

Shurtleff (*Chapter 4* 1980) continues by dedicating a whole chapter on different helpful lessons for an actor. He explains that every story told begins with being in a state of innocence. We start from the beginning of the story and build up to the ending, which needs to apply to every performance each time it is done. Shurtleff emphasizes listening. Listening is very active and allows the actor to become the character in the moment and makes them stop thinking outside of the character. Physicality is important because it is an extension of an emotional reaction, making it more effective.

Edwin Wilson (2011) gives a list of basic requirements for an actor. The actor provides the connection between the audience and the stage performance. Acting requires the performer to play roles that they do not play in life; this stretches the performer’s skill and imagination. Acting requires consciousness, awareness and having most everything planned ahead, which are unlike real life. Wilson explains that the vocal requirements of actors have changed over time. Originally the language was that of poetry, rhythm, specific meters, and long phrases that all required specific training. This type of language is similar to that of music with its rhythm, poetry and phrases. Wilson brings up Konstantin Stanislavsky’s method of acting. His method explains how an actor can fully dive into their character and give a realistic performance. Stanislavsky emphasizes emotional recall, which is where an actor recalls how they felt in a past experience; this is useful because the memory can be applied to a life experience of the character. Asking questions about the character, being as specific as possible and staying relaxed are a few of the main tips given by Stanislavsky.

John Barton (2001) was a director at the Royal Shakespeare Company and has an in-depth knowledge of Shakespeare. The Elizabethans loved words and they played around with them. Vowels are important when speaking Shakespearean language and a lot of emphasis is given to diphthongs. Inflection is also very significant because it emphasizes something important and can either introduce a new thought or it can change the direction of a sentence. Barton believes that we need to love words first before we can love language. The words of Shakespeare make it so that a word sets up for the following word and thus the words build upon each other. Knowing this helps the actor and the audience follow what is going on. The characters need the language because that is how they themselves handle their situations. The nature of the character can be found through the language. “Language *is* the character” (Barton 71). The language is never an accident with Shakespeare and is the starting point for discovering the character. From there, the actor has the opportunity to make the words on the page their own as they tell their character’s story. All of this can be applied to communicating a song, even in another language, to the audience. Language is powerful and when it is studied and completely understood, the audience has the chance to understand what is being said through the performer’s performance.

Monologues and soliloquies can be compared to that of singing a song on stage. Shurtleff (*Chapter 5* 1980) explains that monologues are often spoken to someone else, while soliloquies are when the character is alone. He explains the steps of performing an effective monologue and soliloquy. Intention is important and supplies a motivation for the character. Language is important to the character’s life style. The actors need to enjoy what they say and how they say it.

John Barton (2001) talks about the balance between heightened language and naturalistic acting for Shakespearean actors. He states that if the actors and the director's work don't reach the audience, they fail. Listening is the most important thing for the audience to do. It is very easy for the audience not to listen, the average person can understand the general idea of what is being said, but they aren't listening to the words themselves. The text can lose people and then they stop listening. The actors must make the audience listen and to follow them through the story. Not only should the actor completely understand their character's thoughts, feelings and words, but they should also understand all of those things about the other characters. Barton states that intentionality is key to acting Shakespeare. Shakespeare's words help solve many of the problems found in the text. Barton also discusses how actors try to naturalize Shakespeare because as actors they try to make everything as realistic, which is common in the theatre and on film. That's where training comes in and Barton and several Shakespearean actors debate throughout the chapter how to combine the two ideas. Shakespearean actors state that once performing, the language seems natural and that the words do the work for them and they have to put less effort into it. Trusting the language is significantly important and aids the actor. A character isn't just the words they say; the character is also how they say the words. When an actor can stand on stage and bring a character to life, the audience will begin to respond and listen.

William Ball (1984) creates an elaborate scenario on how an actor becomes a character. Ball paints a picture of the process of creating a character that is sitting in a chair. The actor assesses the person sitting using several of their senses. The actor starts to ask questions about the character and looks to find what is the most interesting to

them. The background, life style, feelings, wants and expressions of the character start to come to life to the actor. Konstantin Stanislavsky's method is used in this process of discovering the character through studying and mentally developing the character before stepping into the character's shoes. Eventually the actor tries to find the main valuable tool for becoming the character, also known as the golden key. Once the golden key is discovered, the actor can approach the chair and slip into the mold of the character that they have created. The next step is to want what the character wants. The wants range from any verb to any noun. The character's behavior is shaped by what they want. The objectives and goals of the character result from what the wants of the character are. The main goal of the director is to draw the character out of the actor by helping the actor find more meaningful and character appropriate objectives to discover. No one desires to suffer, and part of the actor wants to avoid those deep and painful experiences of the character. Actors tend to put off addressing the experiences, which cause them pain, which results in indicating the emotions and experiences.

Susanne Langer (Chapter 1957) talks about how works of art are expressive and created for our perception through our imagination and senses. Art expresses human feeling. Feeling in this scenario means "everything that can be felt," (Langer 15). The subjective aspect of an experience is the direct feeling of the experience. These direct feelings are called emotions. "Music sounds as feelings feel," (Langer 26). . An artist expresses feelings that can be experienced by the various senses. Art is a form of metaphor; it presents what is unable to be described verbally. Most of what we directly feel cannot be described as a specific emotion. Metaphor is saying one thing while meaning the other. When we want to express a relationship and there is no verb or word

that accurately explains what we mean, we rely on using a metaphor. It does not exactly make a specific statement but it formulates a concept of what is trying to be expressed. Expressive form is defined as, “any perceptible or imaginable whole that exhibits relationships of parts, or points, or even qualities or aspects within the whole, so that it may be taken to represent some other whole whose elements have analogous relations,” (Langer 20). Langer adds that language allows us to think, express, describe, speculate, predict and reason. She talks about the habit of indicating. Indicating is when someone presents the emotion, pain or personal experience trying to be expressed. They give clues to how they are feeling rather than internalizing everything. Actors can easily fall into the category of indication and have to be aware of when they are starting to indicate. To avoid indicating the actor needs to make the character personal and delve deeply into the mind and emotions of the character they are playing.

In Michael Ketcham’s article (1981), he discusses a publication from England in the early 1700s called *The Spectator*. Ketcham uses the publication to help explain the interpretation and understanding of gestures. Looks and behaviors tell more than mere words. Knowing a person and the gestures that they use allows for a deeper understanding of the person. For an actor to give a convincing performance, the actor must have a deep understanding of their character emotionally so that it may transfer to the appropriate gestures and action.

CHAPTER 3: MARIA CALLAS

Maria Callas lived from 1923 to 1977 (Felder 337). She was a singer like no other. She performed at major opera houses such as the La Scala opera house in Milan, the Covent Garden opera house in London and the Metropolitan opera house in New York (Felder 339). She performed roles such as Norma in Bellini's *Norma*, Violetta in Giuseppe Verdi's *La Traviatta*, Tosca in Giacomo Puccini's *Tosca*, Lucia in Gaetano Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*, and Medea in Luigi Cherubini's *Medea* (Felder 339). She worked harder than many other singers back then and even today. She was always working to grow in her trade. Callas was set apart from everyone by her willpower, (Levine 130).

Before her career skyrocketed, Maria Callas piled up rejections from operas everywhere. Traditional singers were being sought after as opposed to the unconventional and new voice Callas could provide. Callas said that in 1947, when she was receiving only rejections:

“[Tullio] Serafin... called me to perform *Isolde*... I had just looked at the first act by curiosity and at the last minute he asked for an audition with me. And I wouldn't dare say I didn't know the opera, for I would have lost the audition... so I just bluffed. I said, 'Yes of course I know *Isolde*,' and I sight-read the second act. I don't know how. God must have helped me... and he turned around and said 'Excellent work, I must say you know the role well.' And then I confessed. 'Look, Maestro,' I said, 'I must say I bluffed' ... Well, he was surprised and he appreciated me even more then.” (Levine 40)

Serafin proceeded to ask her to sign up for *Tristan und Isolde* as well as *Turandot*. Callas expressed fear of her lack of knowledge concerning her new role as Isolde and he reassured her that she only needed to study for a month to gain all she needed to know. Callas proceeded to dive into the character Isolde as she learned everything she could for the next month (Levine 40-41).

Callas was devoted to her art form to the point that she began losing weight in 1952. She kept it secret that she was working on her weight. The main reason she decided to do this was because she had been receiving negative comments about her size and appearance in various roles (Levine 60). "...I was tired of playing a game like – for instance – playing a beautiful young woman, and I was a heavy, uncomfortable woman finding it difficult to move around..." (Levine 61). She wanted not only to perform the part theatrically and vocally but she also wanted to look the part. "...The face is too fat and I can't stand it, because I needed the chin for expression in certain very hard phrases, cruel phrases or tense phrases. And I felt – as the woman of theater that I was and am – that I needed these necklines and the chinlines to be very thin and very pronounced," (Levine 61-62). Performance was her heart and soul and she would do anything to improve her overall performance in whatever ways she could.

"She was not just a singer, but a complete artist. It's foolish to discuss her as a voice. She must be viewed totally – as a complex of music, drama, and movement. There is no one like her today. She was an aesthetic phenomenon," (Felder 337). Leonard Bernstein described Callas' stage presence as "pure electricity", (Felder 339). "Maria sought to do more than sing beautifully. 'When you interpret a role, you have to have a thousand colors to portray happiness, joy, sorrow, fear. How can you do this with

only a beautiful voice?” (Levine 40). Her voice combined strength and flexibility and consisted of many various tones and colors, which was ideal for expressing a vast range of emotions (Levine 112).

Callas referred to her voice as an animal, which she could not tame. One night she would sing a high D perfectly, while a couple of days later it would sound shrill or ragged. She would simply say: “The voice was answering tonight” or “the voice was not obeying tonight” (Levine 112). In Anthony Tommasini’s article (1997) he discusses several performances of Callas’ when she clearly was not in the best vocal condition, but her performance and deep understanding of the music awed everyone watching. Callas showed an ability to actively listen to the music. Add her listening ability to her ability to act with her voice and she created what Tommasini believes is “what opera should be” (19). Many have said after listening to Callas sing that it was difficult to listen to someone else sing the same song (Seletsky 2004). This can also be proven by the fact that her recordings outsell all other opera singers (Seletsky 2004). Maria Callas might not have had the best technique, but what she brought in a performance was for more important and awe-inspiring (Seletsky 2004). “It is a matter of loving my kind of voice or not. Some people say I have a beautiful voice. Some people say I have not. It is a matter of opinion. Some people say I have a unique voice, and some people say it’s just a whole big lie. That is also a matter of opinion. The only thing I can say is that people who don’t like me can just not come and hear me. Because I – when I don’t like something – I just don’t bother about it,” (Levine 112).

Maria Callas said: “It is not enough to have a beautiful voice. You must take that voice and break it up into a thousand pieces so that it can be made to serve the needs of

music, of expression. A composer has written the notes for you, but a singer must read music into them” (Ardoin 3). Callas never took anything in music for granted (Seletsky 2004). Callas compared reading music to reading books and having to read between the lines to understand what is being said. “We must add what the composer would have wanted, a thousand colors and expressions” (Ardoin 3). Callas could not emphasize enough to stay true to the composer. She said that one should study the composer when studying a certain song and that learning about the composer and the other works they have created aids in the knowledge of the song being learned (Ardoin 53). “Tradition does exist, ways of performing music that are passed on from one generation to another. Tradition is good or bad depending on who has had good taste and who has not; good taste is that which respects the spirit of the composer” (Ardoin 99). Robert Seletsky (2004) states that if the composers were alive to hear her perform their works, they would consider her interpretation everything they had hoped for from their hard work. Maria Callas also said that an instrumentalist has to go beyond the notes that are written to be a great musician and that singers have an even greater job because they have words added to the notes. “It [being a singer] is very serious and difficult work, and it is not done out of our bravura or by willpower alone, but out of love, a devotion to what you adore. That is the strongest reason for anything” (Ardoin 4).

“A performance is simply many reflexes [such as acting and singing] put together. But you only achieve this after you have done your homework well. When you reach the stage, there must be no surprises” (Ardoin 5). There are things that cannot be learned once on the stage. Once on the stage it becomes too late (Ardoin 4). “On stage, there will be many mistakes. Remember: a stage can make you, but it can also break you if you are

not careful, because there you tend to go for big effects, to overdo, to push. So it is essential when you go home to look immediately at the music and try to gather together your thoughts about a performance” (Ardoin 69-70). Callas warned that: “When you are happy with what you have done, there is no progress.” She would look back on a performance to seek out the bad things so that she could take them, fix and then improve them (Ardoin 10).

Maria Callas said that a person is never done studying the score and that there will always be something to learn from it (Ardoin 69). “Music is so enormous that unless you know what you are doing and why, it can envelop you in a state of perpetual anxiety and torture” (Ardoin 5). However, “How nice it is to master a problem and present it to the public with a maximum of ease” (Ardoin 4).

Maria Callas speaks upon all of the various categories of singers that we have now. She says that at one time one soprano would sing *Norma*, *Lucia*, *Sonnambula*, and *Puritani*. “It’s a matter of technique. Today, if a soprano does not have her high notes, she is a mezzo. But we all must have our high notes, our low notes. We must have everything” (Ardoin 89). She also warned that one should not think of singing as an easy career and that it is a lifelong effort of work and that it never truly stops (Ardoin 297).

When Maria Callas taught a master class at Juilliard she taught many valuable lessons that can be used to this day concerning each piece of music and the techniques that she uses to accomplish a beautiful performance. She said: “When you repeat, you must be careful to vary the music somewhat so that it remains interesting for the public. This is always done, naturally, with good taste and within the style of the composer” (Ardoin 10). Smoothness is key. Slurring lines is not correct and there needs to be a clear

beginning and end (Ardoin 67). “In between, your singing must create the illusion of one large breath when in actuality it will be made up of many little breaths. If you are capable of doing this, you will take the public into another world, another atmosphere, a different spirit and mind” (Ardoin 67).

“Incidentally, in this matter of breathing, I feel strongly that no one should breathe high in the chest. I am not a voice teacher, but I know this can choke you. You must breathe lower, entirely from your diaphragm. This is easily said and not easily done, of course, but it is the very basis of singing well. Good diction also places your voice where it should be. The clearer your diction, the purer your sound, the better the public will hear you and the better your interpretation” (Ardoin 94).

Callas left us with other various tips, such as that: no aria is the same. Therefore a singer must be dynamic and learn all they can to make the arias unique and respectful of the composer. Every word is important (Ardoin 264) and diction is also a key to a great performance (Ardoin 242). One should take the time to learn each note slowly to solidify the notes and rhythm (Ardoin 102). However Callas emphasized that “There must always be a reason for an embellishment, or don’t use one” (Ardoin 13). Many singers could learn from Maria Callas in many ways.

Callas also suggested “When you have learned the notes, you must then speak the words to yourself to find a natural rhythm.” Speaking the words helps the singer focus on communicating what is being sung. In a recitative it is very important because they are freer and learning how the words would be spoken can manipulate the recitative to sound more realistic which makes the piece of music take on a new life (Ardoin 8). “I

find the meaning for a personage in the music, not in the libretto, though I give enormous attention to words. Still, my dramatic truth comes from the music. As the years go by, a character will deepen if you are a person who likes to grow rather than stand still” (Ardoin 9).

“There must be an expression to everything you do, a justification. I learned that every embellishment must be put to the service of music, and that if you really care for the composer and not just for your own personal success, you will always find the meaning of a trill or a scale that will justify a feeling of happiness, anxiety, sadness” (Ardoin 5). “These so-called ‘tricks’ are not tricks at all but exercises like those an athlete does to build strength, endurance, and muscles” (Ardoin 5). Maria Callas was a master of control. She wasn’t just a good actress, but she was a master of the music itself. “Serafin once told me a marvelous thing. He said, ‘You want to find out how the opera should be acted? You only have to listen to the music and you’ll find everything there for you.’ I seized on that immediately. I felt I knew exactly what he meant, and that is perhaps my biggest secret! I act according to the music – to a pause, to a chord, to a crescendo,” (Levine 110). Other singers try to overcompensate their lack of knowledge of the music with acting. “Do not try to add exterior passion until you are confident with the aria’s internal demands” (Ardoin 39). Callas is saying that one must start by learning each and every note, rhythm and dynamic before beginning to perform and read between the lines of the piece of music (Ardoin 39).

Callas enhanced opera by uniting it with theatre. Schonberg once wrote that Callas saw opera as a form of both theatre and voice (Felder 340). He said she was the one who combined it all as one and she had a unique influence on opera (Felder 340).

Callas sought out roles that were not just demanding and intense vocally but also for roles that were dramatic as well (Levine 60). Her dynamics, unique subtlety, note lengths, stresses, rubato and shaping of phrases created the expressive music that she produced (Seletsky 2004). Her acting wasn't always to be seen, but always could be heard, and therefore, her recordings were just as riveting as her live performances (Seletsky 2004). Many people have tried to recreate her sense of expression, but most fail to mirror her brilliance (Seletsky 2004).

“In my opinion, opera is the most difficult of all the arts. To succeed, you must not only be a first-rate musician but a first-rate actor. It goes without saying that you must also be able to cope with your colleagues—first with the conductor, then with the other singers, with the stage director—for opera is a vast unit where everyone plays a vital role” (Ardoin 10). “Also, along with the notes of an aria and your facial expressions, you must carefully plan the situation. Who is this girl? What is she feeling? What is she all about?” (Ardoin 271). “Think of the expression of the words, of good diction, and of your own deep feelings” (Ardoin 297). “You must try to characterize the person you will play, decide what sort of individual she is, what her background is, what her attitudes must be. This you will get from the music, not from history” (Ardoin 92). In one of her Julliard master classes Maria Callas was talking about the role of Mimi in *La Boheme*: “Be very aware, too, of your face. Before you sing a note, you must give the emotion to the public on your face. Never practice, however, in front of a mirror. Mirrors are for dancers. Inside of you is the mirror you must use, a mental mirror. Never forget that a look—a frown, a smile—is an expression that must support the music. Use only the expression that is proper for what you are singing, for your face will tell the

public as much as the music” (Ardoin 271). Intentional and unintentional expressions are both important to be conscious of and the control of both needs to be learned. Callas emphasized this by saying: “Be particularly careful on nights when you are not at your best. Don’t frown if something goes wrong. This is something I had to fight. It is one of the many bad habits you can get into unless you are careful and think to change it” (Ardoin 271).

Tullio Serafin would say that the score gives the hints of when to use a gesture of when one should move on the stage. He said that the composer has placed such moments like that in the score (Ardoin 5). Serafin strongly believed that any form of gesture should be followed “with your mind and soul,” (Ardoin 6). Maria Callas expounds on her experiences with gestures while teaching in a Master Class at Juilliard:

“Watch your hands... don’t move them too much. In fact, the less you move them, the better. If you constantly point here or there, the public will not believe you when it counts. Remember, there must always be a reason when you use your hands. When I began my career, the old style prevailed—big, grand gestures like those in silent movies. I had to fight this; I knew they were wrong.

Everything today is more real, and the public expects realism from you on stage.

Why should opera be different?” (Ardoin 271).

Movements should originate from the mind and from the heart. Callas suggested that when two people are singing to each other that they should forget the rehearsals so that their reactions are fresh and new as if they are hearing everything for the first time. “I became able to do this to such an extent that if a colleague forgot his words, I couldn’t

give them to him. Theater has to be real; there must always be something new” (Ardoin 6).

Callas teaches that “We must never forget that we are interpreters, that we are there to serve the composer and to discharge a very delicate task... If you serve art well, everything will come automatically: you will be great, you will have money, there will be fame. But the work is hard, in the beginning, during, and afterwards” (Ardoin 11).

Callas makes it clear whenever she teaches that art comes from a lot of time and commitment, but it is very rewarding in the end for those who push through and grow. Callas started a movement of expression that was never seen before and people to this day look to her for guidance in music, opera and theatre.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

A survey was taken consisting of the use of one singer and one pianist. A Vocal Performance major performed the English song, *Sleep* by Ivor Gurney. The piano accompaniment was performed once and recorded without the vocals. The vocalist sang over the same accompaniment track two separate times. This allows for the piano to be unchanged and for the only variable to be the singer. For the first recording, the vocalist was asked to sing as accurate to the notation of the music as possible. This means that he focused on being precise to the notation of the music. He was also asked to sing without emotion. The second recording, the vocalist was asked to perform the piece with emotion as well as to tell the story and meaning of the song. Both recordings are audio tracks.

The survey was proposed to the Departmental Recital class at Southeastern University, which consists of all of the music majors on the campus. The purpose of limiting it solely to music majors was to focus in on what educated musicians had to say about the recordings. There was a sign up sheet for 16 students and following the end of the class they moved over to the music computer lab. The lab consists of 8 identical Macintosh computers containing one of the two recorded tracks. The students were split evenly between the two songs, resulting in 8 students to each recording. Each student was presented a consent form to read and sign, another consent form to keep for their own documentation and a survey sheet with 8 questions on it.

The purpose of the taking the survey was to assess how expression was perceived in a performance. The survey was created to discover how a listeners perceived the two songs and if one song was enjoyed more or preferred over the other. The survey was also used to discover if a song is understood more or less when expression is deliberately

added. The results of the survey have the potential to aid in further study of expression in music and how the audience perceives a performance. The survey may also influence how performers approach their practices and it may change how performances are done in the future.

After the survey was taken and the data assessed, it was presented in my Senior Recital. The information from the entire paper was shared and everything was tied into the whole performance. I attempted to apply all that I have learned through the process of this paper into the performance so that I could be an example of the information. This was therefore used as a teaching experience for those in the audience.

CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS OF DATA

Comparing Group A and Group B

	Group A: Strict to notation	Group B: Added expression
You are primarily a(n):	Instrumentalist: 75% Vocalist: 25%	Instrumentalist: 37.5% Vocalist: 62.5%
In general how do you think the character was feeling?	Happy: 0% Some Happiness: 25% No Emotion: 0% Some Sadness: 50% Sad: 25%	Happy: 0% Some Happiness: 0% No Emotion: 0% Some Sadness: 62.5% Sad: 37.5%
How did this song make you feel?	Happy: 12.5% Some Happiness: 0% No Emotion: 12.5% Some Sadness: 50% Sad: 25%	Happy: 0% Some Happiness: 0% No Emotion: 25% Some Sadness: 62.5% Sad: 12.5%
Did you understand what the song was about?	Yes: 25% No: 75%	Yes: 25% No: 75%
Based on what you listened to describe what you think the song was about:	Answers ranged from the thought that the singer is dreaming, yearning for something, wishing he were asleep, wanting to be distracted, suffering and the song being about death in general.	Answers ranged from the thought that the singer was conveying the sadness that the piano was, a person longing to be happy, the singer is longing for something, possibly about dreams, heartbreak, sleep being the only solace from sadness, and the singer asking for death to come.

Rate the level of the performance as a whole:	Very Skilled: 37.5% Well Done: 50% Average: 12.5% Amateur Performance: 0% Poorly Done: 0%	Very Skilled: 25% Well Done: 62.5% Average: 12.5% Amateur Performance: 0% Poorly Done: 0%
Did you enjoy this performance?	Very much: 50% Somewhat: 50% Undecided: 0% Not Really: 0% Not At All: 0%	Very Much: 62.5% Somewhat: 37.5% Undecided: 0% Not Really: 0% Not At All: 0%
Do you think expression is beneficial in a song?	Strongly Agree: 100% Agree: 0% Neutral: 0% Disagree: 0% Strongly Disagree: 0%	Strongly Agree: 100% Agree: 0% Neutral: 0% Disagree: 0% Strongly Disagree: 0%

Overall, the resulting data was not exactly what was expected. The skill level assessment showed that those listening to the song performed to notation contained greater skill than that of the song focusing on expression. However, those listening to the piece with expression enjoyed the performance more. Both surveys show that there was an equal number who did and did not understand the song. The explanations were both very similar with some minor variations. The song *Sleep* by Ivor Gurney is about Gurney's struggle with his present life and life, to him, seemed too much to bear. He wrote this song showing his longing to be asleep so that he could live inside his dreams rather than that of reality. A couple people in each group seemed to extract that meaning from the song, but not many from either survey. The emotion perceived in the song and the emotion felt by the auditor was spread out in the responses for the first group, while

the second group all leaned a little towards the sadness end. The emotion responses were the most unexpected results and could have been changed significantly if the participants had been able to listen to both recordings to compare and contrast.

Comparing Group A

	Instrumentalists of Group A	Vocalists of Group A
In general how do you think the character was feeling?	Happy: 0% Some Happiness: 16.67% No Emotion: 0% Some Sadness: 50% Sad: 33.34%	Happy: 0% Some Happiness: 50% No Emotion: 0% Some Sadness: 50% Sad: 0%
How did this song make you feel?	Happy: 16.67% Some Happiness: 0% No Emotion: 0% Some Sadness: 50% Sad: 33.34%	Happy: 0% Some Happiness: 0% No Emotion: 50% Some Sadness: 50% Sad: 0%
Did you understand what the song was about?	Yes: 16.67% No: 83.34%	Yes: 50% No: 50%
Based on what you listened to describe what you think the song was about:	Answers ranged from it being about joy even in suffering, sleep as a form of numbness and a distraction from everyday life, someone who is being stopped from being happy, and yearning.	Answers ranged from it being about death and having no understanding of the song.
Rate the level of the performance as a whole:	Very Skilled: 50% Well Done: 50% Average: 0%	Very Skilled: 0% Well Done: 50% Average: 50%

	Amateur Performance: 0% Poorly Done: 0%	Amateur Performance: 0% Poorly Done: 0%
Did you enjoy this performance?	Very much: 66.67% Somewhat: 33.34% Undecided: 0% Not Really: 0% Not At All: 0%	Very Much: 0% Somewhat: 100% Undecided: 0% Not Really: 0% Not At All: 0%
Do you think expression is beneficial in a song?	Strongly Agree: 100% Agree: 0% Neutral: 0% Disagree: 0% Strongly Disagree: 0%	Strongly Agree: 100% Agree: 0% Neutral: 0% Disagree: 0% Strongly Disagree: 0%

Data worth pointing out consists of the instrumentalists having an extreme range of different emotions having been felt. The instrumentalists said that the singer was very skilled while the vocalists said that the singer had a “well done” performance. The instrumentalists statistically showed that they enjoyed the performance more than that of the vocalists.

Comparing Group B

	Instrumentalists of Group B	Vocalists of Group B
In general how do you think the character was feeling?	Happy: 0% Some Happiness: 0% No Emotion: 0% Some Sadness: 33.34% Sad: 66.67%	Happy: 0% Some Happiness: 0% No Emotion: 0% Some Sadness: 80% Sad: 20%
How did this song make you feel?	Happy: 0% Some Happiness: 0%	Happy: 0% Some Happiness: 0%

	No Emotion: 33.34% Some Sadness: 33.34% Sad: 33.34%	No Emotion: 20% Some Sadness: 80% Sad: 0%
Did you understand what the song was about?	Yes: 33.34% No: 66.67%	Yes: 20% No: 80%
Based on what you listened to describe what you think the song was about:	Answers ranged from it being about longing for something or someone, nostalgia, someone who is sad and wants to be happy, and there was a confusion that the piano seemed to have a negative tone while the singer was said to not be conveying the same thing.	Answers ranged from it being about calling sleep/death to come, someone being sad and desiring joy and that they believe sleep would bring that, heartbreak, a goodbye, melancholy, and dreams. ⁷
Rate the level of the performance as a whole:	Very Skilled: 0% Well Done: 66.67% Average: 33.34% Amateur Performance: 0% Poorly Done: 0%	Very Skilled: 40% Well Done: 60% Average: 0% Amateur Performance: 0% Poorly Done: 0%
Did you enjoy this performance?	Very much: 33.34% Somewhat: 66.67% Undecided: 0% Not Really: 0% Not At All: 0%	Very Much: 80% Somewhat: 20% Undecided: 0% Not Really: 0% Not At All: 0%
Do you think expression is beneficial in a song?	Strongly Agree: 100% Agree: 0% Neutral: 0% Disagree: 0% Strongly Disagree: 0%	Strongly Agree: 100% Agree: 0% Neutral: 0% Disagree: 0% Strongly Disagree: 0%

The instrumentalists seemed to recognize more sadness in the character than the vocalists, which was a similar result to Group A. Both the instrumentalists and vocalists appeared to have similar emotional reactions to the song. Overall there was a similar amount of understanding of the song. The vocalists rated the skill of the singer higher than that of the instrumentalists, which was the opposite result of Group A. The vocalists showed that they enjoyed the performance more than that of the instrumentalists, which was also the opposite result of Group B.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

There are many possibilities to further this study to generate more detailed data. The test subjects could be selected from music majors who are complete strangers from the person giving the survey. Even more significant would be recording a vocalist that the survey participants didn't recognize. A graduated senior recorded *Sleep* and several of those participating in the survey openly stated that they recognized they knew who the singer was. This could have ultimately created a bias in the participant.

Using an online survey would have also presented a variety of results. The reason it wasn't chosen was to control the exact technology used for the survey so that they wouldn't have to be considered as a factor that could affect the results. However, by having an online survey it could be shared around the state or the country and thus bring in a potentially large amount of results. More people taking the survey can render a more detailed analysis of the surveys.

Using people who are not limited to being a music student in college could also bring different results to the survey. This is important because anyone can enjoy music or a live performance. Finding out others opinions from different points of view can render unique results for the survey. Different ages can also have an intriguing effect on the survey results. Comparing a child's response to an adult's response could be a potential factor. Also using, for example, and *Aria in Italian* could render a different result since the words may not be understood, which could be beneficial for data or have a negative effect. By using another language, the accompaniment and the singer could be assessed by the emotion they are expressing and that could be compared to what the song

was actually about. This would allow for an assessment of the performance quality and how an audience perceives a performance in another language.

One option that was considered for this survey was adding a third survey section. The second recording that incorporated expression was to be videotaped as well. The third section would sound the same as the second audio recording but it would assess if the visual performance enhanced or took away from the quality of the performance perceived by the audience. Another potential factor for the survey was having the participants listen to both songs so that they could compare and share their opinions on both pieces. By not doing this, a potential bias was being avoided. However, biases are a part of watching a performance and ultimately a person's opinion and judgment is what makes them want to see a performance again or never again.

Finally, a future survey could contain a larger variety of questions such as:

- Age?
- Major?
- Male or female?
- Year in college?
- What was the character saying in the song?
- What was the character feeling?
- [Visual] Did the gestures convey anything?
- [Visual] Did the facial expressions draw you in?
- Did the singer appear to understand what he/she was saying?
- Did you care about the character? Etc.

My hypothesis of emotion and expression affecting the audience's perception of a performance has proven to be true. Through this process it has been shown that much more research can be made to dive into the depths of what exactly about emotion and expression affects and audience. This research has shown that there is a long way to go towards studying how a performance can be grown and strengthen in the arts and there is a wide range of people to glean knowledge and wisdom from.

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