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Male Belting: An Exploration of Technique and Style  
from 1967 to Present

by

Bruce A. Earnest Jr.

A Dissertation  
Submitted to the Graduate School,  
the College of Arts and Letters  
and the School of Music  
at The University of Southern Mississippi  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Doctor of Musical Arts

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## ABSTRACT

Male belting is found in many different stylistic forms of musical theatre repertoire. Its evolution began in the late 1960s with the emergence of the rock musical phenomenon and the early musicals of Andrew Lloyd Webber. Belting is a musical theatre singing technique that achieves specific vocal tone qualities derived from speech-like tones. These tone qualities can resonate through a performance space without the use of amplification.<sup>1</sup> Belting technique has also evolved to support the singing of musical theatre repertoire that requires an extended male vocal *tessitura* and honest communication of text. The advance of belting as a legitimate vocal technique has been a continuous journey of discovery in the studio and performance realms. As of this writing, there is no published academic text on the subject of male belting.

Male belting is thyroarytenoid dominant vocal production (TDP); in other words, it is chest register-dominant singing carried above the *passaggio*/break with speech-like production. When belting, the vocal tract assumes a shape that resembles normal speech, resulting in a brighter sound quality due to a lower soft palette.<sup>2</sup>

The first part of the document will offer a brief history of shows and people that were critical to the origin and development of musical theatre styles. The second part of the document will focus on sound expectations, emerging musical theatre vocal styles and pedagogical advances in musical theatre technique from the late 1960s through

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<sup>1</sup> Racheal Lebon, *The Versatile Vocalist: Singing Authentically in Contrasting Styles and Idioms* (Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 2006), 43-44.

<sup>2</sup> Karen Hall, *So You Want To Sing Musical Theatre: A Guide For Professionals* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2014), 65-69.

contemporary musical theatre repertoire. Specifically, it will discuss how musical theatre repertoire influenced the development of vocal technique and vocal styles of the male belt voice.

In addition to published sources, this paper will include information from interviews and masterclasses with international colleagues who have proven critical to the understanding and evolution of male belting during the last thirty years. Musical examples will illustrate important musical pieces, vocal exercises, and information as appropriate.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge my USM committee members and the many people who have been involved in the development of this document.

## DEDICATION

I am grateful for Scott Wright for his unending friendship and encouragement throughout this process. Thank you to my colleagues at the University of Mobile who have supported my efforts without question. Specifically, I would like to gratefully acknowledge Dr. Roger Breland, Dr. Alan Miller, Dr. Audrey Eubanks, Dr. Christopher McCaghren and Dr. Timothy Smith.

Thank you, Dr. Maryann Kyle, for your wisdom and guidance and for the opportunity to work with you on this degree and this document. This has truly been a life-changing experience.

To my wife and children I say thank you for giving up our time together and believing in me. *A mi madre in cielo, ti amo sempre.*

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## CHAPTER I - ORIGINS

For the last fifteen years, organizations such as the National Association of Teachers of Singing and The Voice Foundation have also begun to support ideas of vocal instruction dedicated to teaching musical theatre singing techniques. These ideas have often been controversial because little is written about the origins and use of belting as an academic area of research. Colleagues interested in belting were frequently ostracized by musical academia and professional organizations because of archaic and often misinformed ideas of what represented healthy musical theatre belt technique.

A global love of musical theatre in the United Kingdom, Europe, and Asia has also heavily influenced the demand for classically trained voice teachers who can teach musical theatre belt technique. In the early 1980s, most of the people exploring the belting question were private voice teachers who had professional experience in the musical theatre industry, and their explorations typically had limited connections with academia.

The disparity between existing musical theatre vocal training and the needs of the industry was astounding. According to Ralf Schaedler:

“While there was definitely a cadre of teachers in New York who taught a form of belting, most were all over the map with vocal styles and production. There was no way to qualify the information that was being presented to students and young artists. In some cases, the technique and style choices worked and sometimes the singer-actor ended up with major vocal problems”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ralf Schaedler, masterclass, July 18, 2017, Hamburg, Germany.

The resurgence of Neo-classical musical theatre, the premiere of *The Phantom of the Opera* in 1986, globalization, and advancements in technology all ushered in a market for American musical theatre in Europe, which in turn, enabled the development of the European musical. With the German premiere of *Cats* and subsequent premieres of *Starlight Express*, *Miss Saigon*, and *Les Miserables* in 1987, it was clear that Europe's love of musical theatre would remain. German, Austrian, and Swiss production companies built new theatres, and opera houses added musical theatre productions to their previously limited classical repertoire. European singer-actors, artistic directors, and teachers of singing were faced with the same need to explore and understand musical theatre belting that their American counterparts had encountered fifteen years earlier.

The origin and evolution of male belting has been a developing process that spans the last eighty years. By 1969, the paradigm in American musical theatre had shifted to focus on the communication of character through text and the use of a non-traditional vocal style. Extended *tessitura* and the use of sound technology were utilized to convey emotional and dramatic realism. The rock musical genre, as well as the shift to pop-inspired vocal styles for musicals, accelerated the need for an understanding of belting and the male voice. These vocal styles and musical theatre techniques evolved quickly in order to keep pace with the rapid developments in compositional expression, dramatic subject matter, sound technology, and relevant cultural trends.

Innovations in male belting techniques continue to develop along with *tessitura* expectations and musical theatre styles. Healthy approaches to increasingly difficult repertoire encourage a continued conversation among those who seek to mature as

pedagogues of belting, as well as among the student-artists who endeavor to prepare for careers in the global musical theatre industry.

According to Robert Edwin, Associate Editor for the National Association for Teachers of Singing, not only is belting a legitimate discussion topic but the production of male and female belting should be approached separately.<sup>4</sup> Edwin asserts that, all male singers, with the exception of classical countertenors, phonate with a dominant (TDP) vocal fold source. "Therefore in order to belt, men are not required to change vocal registers. Using bright, speech-like sounds, a non-continuous vibrato, and more text driven approach to the repertoire puts a male singer of the right track to develop his voice."<sup>5</sup>

Edwin's experiences as a singer of many styles of music and his relationships with researchers such as Lovetri, Sataloff, and McCoy embolden Edwin to make strong statements about a subject that for too long, has been under-researched and misunderstood. Edwin is describing technique that this author believes will produce limited male belting options. His assertion that the male belter does not need to change register does not allow for male mixed belt options that are necessary in different vocal styles and timbre expressions.

While Edwin's 2007 article is encouraging, a simple web search for the term "male belting" will produce a myriad of websites that offer technical advice, repertoire, and general guidance for or against male belting. Online information is confusing,

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<sup>4</sup> Robert Edwin, "Belting is Legit", *Journal of Singing*, vol. 64 no. 2 (November/December 2007): 213-215.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

subjective and is often presented with little substantiation of fact. Despite this, there were several discussions on style as an important element in male belting. A website discussion on Musical Theatre Resources.com from 2009 notes that the word "belt" was, originally a musical theatre slang term.<sup>6</sup> The author, Kevin Michael Jones goes on to say that while he does not think men belt, he believes that the term belting originated as a style definition not as a technique.

The term belt originated in the early 1920s and was used to define female chest-dominant singing that was emerging in early musical comedy. Though chest singing existed in earlier French and German Cabaret styles, belting as the term is defined today, is considered an American technical style. The evolution of belting style and technique developed with the creation of new repertoire, evolving audience preferences and sound enforcement technology.

Because the term belt was initially used to define a female singing style, it is important to exam some of the elements and performers that personified use of the term. Early female belters such as Ethel Merman, Joyce Bryant, Judy Garland and Ernestine Anderson produced sounds that were predominantly TDP. This was due to the lack of sound reinforcement and the vocal style necessary to sing the repertoire of the time.<sup>7</sup> Ms. Merman and her contemporaries needed send their voices to carry over large orchestra pits. During this period, artistry was less important to actually being heard. The term

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<sup>6</sup> Musical Theatre Resources.com, blog, Kevin Michael Jones, 2015.

<sup>7</sup> Christianne Knauer Roll, "Female musical theatre belting in the 21st century: A study of the pedagogy of the vocal practice and performance", (Ed.D. diss., Teachers College, Columbia University, 2014), 35-37, accessed June 15, 2017, <http://questdiss.org>.



"chesting" would be a more accurate description of Merman's vocal technique as the chest voice TDP was pushed to the limits of her register break.

Elements of male belting existed even earlier than the 1920s. In 1837, French tenor Gilbert-Louis Duprez sang the role of Arnold in Rossini's *Guillaume Tell*.<sup>8</sup> During Arnold's Act IV aria he made history by singing the high Cs in full chest voice (TDP) not in head voice (CDP) as Rossini had intended. The performance encouraged other singers to explore this approach.

Henry F. Chorley wrote of Duprez's use of extended chest and even traveled to Italy to learn about how it was done. Tenor Enrico Tamberlik's pursuit of dominant chest singing substantially influenced Verdi's development of opera and his heroic tenor characters.<sup>9</sup> By 1851, Tamberlik and Duprez had significantly influenced the tenor tone quality and necessary technique needed to achieve the newly expected sound.<sup>10</sup> The *Verismo* opera of Verdi and Puccini flourished, in part, due to the chest dominant sounds of tenors that played the heroic lead roles. Dominant is the key word here. Dominant TDP production still contains overtones of CDP that "mix" into the sound and affect vocal productions and timber.

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<sup>8</sup> Richard Taruskin, *Music in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 145-159.

<sup>9</sup> News, Royal opera house

<sup>10</sup> Stark, 58-60.

## Style and Technique Before 1967

In 1927 *Showboat* opened at the Ziegfeld Theatre in New York City. *Showboat* is considered by most scholars to be the beginning of the modern American Musical Theatre genre. "Both Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein II had felt, for some time, that Broadway musical comedy was suffering from too much sameness and tameness."<sup>11</sup> Based on Edna Ferber's novel about life on the Mississippi, Kern and Hammerstein felt that her work would be the perfect story to change the direction of the American musical. *Showboat* succeeded as a paradigm changing work because the songs, text, book, design and orchestration all furthered character and plot development.

*Showboat* carried the concept of plot/music fusion to a new level. Each of its musical numbers flows naturally out of the preceding dialogue and action. Not only do they convey and drive the tale, they provide the audience with insight into the character's lives and thoughts."<sup>12</sup>

Six songs from the show became instant hits at the time. The emotional content, characterization, and melodic structure of the songs were unlike anything audiences had heard. While *Showboat* is considered by scholars to be the seminal birth of modern American Musical Theatre, the piece offered a variety of vocal and musical styles that had not been seen together on the American stage. Unlike Kern's other musical projects, which were sung predominantly by opera singers, *Showboat* contained songs for different

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<sup>11</sup> Stanley Green, *Broadway Musicals: Show by Show*, 5th edition (Milwaukee: Hal Leonard, 1996).

<sup>12</sup> Peter Riddle, *The American Musical: History and Development* (Niagara Falls: Mosaic Press, 2003), page 60-62.

kinds of singers. Gospel, African Work Songs, Southern Folk and musical comedy were all well represented. The characters were clearly reflected by their musical themes and the delivery of specific vocal styles. Cast members were required to sing using chest and head voice. Depending on the role, speech-like TDP styles were combined with classical or CDP dominant (in this case classical) vocal styles.<sup>13</sup>

Vocal registers and styles were used to reflect musical characterization. These elements combined with vernacular use of language, dance forms and orchestration established a synergy that was used to create a form of musical theatre that redirected the show output of composers and lyricists after 1927. In example number one, "Can't Help Loving That Man" sung by Julie Lavern, we see examples of pronounced chest voice (TDP) and head register (CDP) used within the same page of music:

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<sup>13</sup> Riddle, *Ibid.*

gin. Fish got to swim and  
Tell me he's la-zy,

birds got to fly, I got to love one  
tell me he's slow, Tell me I'm cra-zy

man till I die, Can't help lov-in' dat man of  
may-be I know.

Chord diagrams: Fm7, Bb7, Ebmaj7, Eb9, Ab6, Db7, Gm7, Gb6, Fm7b5, B9, Bb9.

**Musical Example 1 (Can't Help Loving That Man, from *Showboat*)**

Julie's character is required to use both vocal registers interchangeably. The text and the energy of the music reflect the paradox of who she is. Half black and half white, she exists in two worlds.<sup>14</sup> Because of this, Kern chose to write a melody that encompassed a large tessitura and required contrasting vocal style choices. More than just chest voice or head voice, "Can't Help Loving That Man" required the use of differing vocal styles that emerged from a varied ethnic musical lineage and use of vernacular text.

<sup>14</sup> Green, 45-47.

## Bel Canto Means Can Belto

According to vocal pedagogue James Stark, the ideal vocal quality for the classically trained singer is called *chiaroscuro*.<sup>15</sup> The term refers to the bright quality and dark or round quality that comprises the timber of each tone that is sung.

"The term was used as early as 1774 in Giambattista Mancini's *Pensieri e riflessioni pratiche sopra il canto figurato*. *Chiaroscuro* was still the tonal ideal for Giovanni Battista Lamperti, one of the most famous teachers of the late nineteenth century. The light and dark tone quality should always be present."<sup>16</sup>

Richard Miller writes that an extensive terminology exists, in several languages, for the description of variations of vocal timbre found within the several national schools.

"One such term is *chiaroscuro*, which literally means the bright/dark tone, and which designates that basic timbre of the singing voice in which the laryngeal source and the resonating system appear to interact in such a way as to present a spectrum of harmonics perceived by the conditional listener as that balanced vocal quality that is desired."<sup>17</sup>

The concept of *chiaroscuro* is a term that has been limited to training voices in a classical style. It is considered a critical tone quality in Bel Canto or the "Old Italian School" as Lamperti referred to it.<sup>18</sup> Lamperti, claimed in 1847, that range could be increased by a mastery of vowels and a perfection of *chiaroscuro*. His writings also suggest that brighter vowels would enable faster or "whiter" air speed and darker vowels

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<sup>15</sup> James Stark, 33.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Richard Miller, *English, French, German and Italian Techniques of Singing: A Study In National Tonal Preferences and How They Relate to Functional Efficiency* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1977), 78-79.

<sup>18</sup> Giovanni Lamperti, *Vocal Wisdom: Maxims of Giovanni Battista Lamperti* (London: Taplinger Publishing, 1957), 43-46.

encourage a slower more "colored" air speed.<sup>19</sup> This supports the effect that vowels and airspeed have on the timber of male voices.

Lamperti's pedagogical ideas on timber accurately support the air speed requirements necessary for both TDP and CDP register use. Some authors were even more specific in their writings on vocal pedagogy. Zacconi, writing much earlier in 1592, offered a detailed account of different types of voice quality. According to Stark, Zacconi differentiated between voices that were "dull" and those that were "biting".<sup>20</sup> Zacconi related these qualities to vocal registers, not just to vocal tone quality or timber. Zacconi's understanding of register negotiation was also ascribed to by Caccini, and later, by Manuel Garcia.<sup>21</sup>

These technical topics are not limited to classical singing. There is a clear connection between timber, air speed, registration and style in male belting. In fact, when combined with the use of vocal style and vocal energy the relationship between these specific elements of Bel Canto represent the pedagogical crux of modern male belting.

"Contemporary Belting technique is based on Bel Canto." In 2002, Dr. Mary Saunders opened her workshop with this bold statement. Dr. Saunders was presenting a masterclass at Folkwang University of the Arts in Essen, Germany.<sup>22</sup> A distinguished

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<sup>19</sup> Lamperti, *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> Stark, 67-79.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

former member of the Penn State voice faculty, her work and that of Raymond Sage were considered vital to the mainstream acceptance of belting by the classically trained academic community. Saunders went on to explain breathing, registration, vowel purity and the use of text in the production of belting technique. "Garcia also affirms the premise that Belting and the singing of contemporary music can be accomplished by following Bel Canto technique."<sup>23</sup>

Neil Semer had been the vocal coach for the original New York production of *Ms. Saigon*. His technique was radical and unlike anything that I had learned in my early training. It was Bel Canto based and was effective. According to Semer, everything was about the proper regulation of *chiaroscuro* and releasing the breath.<sup>24</sup> Like Manuel Garcia, Semer supported a somewhat muscular release during exhalation.

Mr. Semer was one of the first teachers of belting and he taught without fear or concern about what those in academia thought. As early as 1990, Semer was conducting NATS workshops in Miami and Central Florida. Mr. Semer was interested in combining traditional training with emerging ideas and offered technique that worked across styles and was especially valuable for men.<sup>25</sup> Semer was one of the first voice teachers to teach voice in a manner that enabled a singer to master different vocal styles without

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<sup>22</sup> Mary Saunders-Barton Masterclass, Folkwang University of the Arts, Essen, Germany, 2002.

<sup>23</sup> Scott McCoy, *Your Voice: An Inside View*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Delaware, OH: Inside View Press, 2012).

<sup>24</sup> Meribeth Bunch, and Cynthia Vaughn, *The Singing Book* (NY: Norton, 2004).

compromising vocal technique. His legacy can be seen with the varied successes his students have achieved internationally in musical theatre, opera and contemporary music. His pedagogy encourages the free expression of text and style.

Saunders, Semer and other pedagogues began to connect the pedagogical musings of Lamperti, Garcia, Zacconi and others with a contemporary approach to singing musical theatre and other styles of commercial music. Their collective approach supports male belting (including various levels of male belt mixing), and multiple musical theatre vocal styles and timbers.

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<sup>25</sup> Richard Miller, *Solutions For Singers: Tools For Performers And Teachers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 67-69.



### Merman's *chiaro*

It is rumored that George Gershwin instructed Ethel Merman to never take a voice lesson after her opening in the musical *Girl Crazy* in 1930. "The show opened on October 14 and the audience went wild and demanded ten encores."<sup>26</sup> Contrary to public record, Merman did take lessons in the late 1970s. She began have vocal challenges in 1979. Her over-darkening (use of *oscuro*) in the lower part of her TDP and mid-range laryngeal tension contributed to undiagnosed nodules on the vocal folds. By 1980 she was suffering from a herniated lesion on her right vocal fold. The cause of her vocal pathologies can be attributed to lack of technique, grueling performance calendar, and singing over an orchestra without sound amplification for more than thirty years. Considering her age, and that she had cancelled less than ten times during her fifty-year career, Merman was a true phenomenon.

Merman was not a belter by today's definition but there is much that can be gained from examining her vocal career. After 1930, Merman's fame meant that most of her music was specifically written for her.<sup>27</sup> Her ability as a musical theatre star was primarily based on how she used her voice not necessarily the instrument itself. Her vocal range was limited and chest was her main register option. Merman had the luxury of singing roles that featured her vocal strengths and did not reveal her vocal weaknesses.

Unlike Julie Lavern's repertoire, there was a similar style that Merman used throughout her career.<sup>28</sup> Merman had two objectives while on stage: sing loud and sing

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<sup>26</sup> Riddle, 78.

<sup>27</sup> Green, 89.

louder. Merman's tone production was an overly forward sound that had modified nasal vowels. Many pedagogues refer to this sound as "twang" or "twang mode." At the same time, watching her on video, one can observe her over-extending the mandible as she ascends to the middle part of her range. This approach creates a false *oscuro* particularly in the [i] and [o] vowels.<sup>29</sup>

In her case, over-darkening yields an unnaturally modified vowel that causes a dull ring during resonation. Listening to a recording of "There's No Business Like Show Business", it is possible to hear her switch back and forth to over darkening and over brightening.<sup>30</sup> When over brightening, the sound seems stuck and the airspeed, slower than it should be, leads to a clearly audible high larynx presentation. Ms. Merman sang how she had to without regard to whether it was healthy or not.<sup>31</sup>

Merman's manipulation of vowels, and other bad habits did not impede her career in any way. In fact, one could argue that she sang in her own vocal style. Because of her place in history, "Merman" was a musical theatre vocal style that would, for most performers, not yield a viable career option today. It was Merman's natural vocal talent and not her vocal technique that carried her success as a Broadway star. Regardless, it is important to acknowledge her use of text, extraordinarily clear diction and the beginnings

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<sup>28</sup> Kia, Romeo. *Sonne, Mond und Stimme: Atemtypen in der Stimmfaltung* (Essen: J. Kamphausen Verlag, 2002).

<sup>29</sup> McCoy, 90.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, 76.

<sup>31</sup> Dr. Bill Adams, Florida Theatre Conference Masterclass, November 19, 2017, Gainesville, FL.

of a female belt sound that would be further developed Bernadette Peters, Patti Lupone and Linda Eder for further style and technical development.

## Vocal Styles of *Oklahoma!*

Ms. Merman is one of many Broadway stars that sang with little or no technical training in the early years of musical theatre. Most musical comedy stars came from the Vaudeville tradition. According to Stanley Green, "These people were showmen and women." They entertained and gave little thought to how they sang."<sup>32</sup> Earlier in the century George M. Cohan, (who is considered by some to be an early male belter but would be classified as baritenor today), W.C. Fields, Bob Hope, Fred Astaire, Will Rogers and others crossed into Broadway from Vaudeville.<sup>33</sup>

After *Showboat*, Kern and Hammerstein ceased their involvement in American Operetta allowing composers such as Sigmund Romberg and Rudolf Friml to dominate the genre. Romberg and Friml's composition evolved into American opera while Kern's *Showboat* and Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Oklahoma!* paved the way for the development of the American musical and the male belter.

In 1943, Vaudeville entertainer Lee Dixon premiered as Will Parker in Rodgers and Hammerstein's new musical *Oklahoma!* Richard Rodgers had insisted on not hiring stars or casting the show with artists that were primarily singers. Director Rouben Mammoulian was skeptical due to Oscar Hammerstein's succession of recent Broadway flops. The duo believed that casting strong actors who could sing and dance was the key to *Oklahoma's* success.

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<sup>32</sup> Eric Grode, *The Book of Broadway: The Definitive Plays and Musicals* (New York: Voyager Press, 2017).

<sup>33</sup> Kevin Michael Jones, *Ibid.*

The book for *Oklahoma!* was based on Linn Riggs' novel "How Green Grow the Lilacs". Riggs was one of the first published Native American playwrights and his story was not the kind of material that would have previously been used as the basis of a Broadway musical.<sup>34</sup> Rodgers and Hammerstein had discovered a story with great depth and conflict and desired artists that could convey character with their voice. The piece has a ballet sequence that moves the plot forward to a dark place within the mind of antagonist Judd Frye. Dialog and musical numbers were entertaining but also had a story that required more than a beautiful vocal instrument for certain characters.

Lee Dixon was a dancer who was known for his ability as a tapper. His voice was light and would be classified today as a baritenor. His vocal style was reminiscent of George M. Cohan.<sup>35</sup> There was a speech-like quality to his sound and a brighter resonance that was the product of vowels that were somewhat spread in the mask. Dixon was not belting but he was using a vocal style that had a high amount of head voice (CDP) mixed into his tone. Mr. Dixon was also over emphasizing the "*chiaro*" of *chiaroscuro*. Further analysis of his sound also reveals an under-supported tone with a faster airspeed and a somewhat unpleasant or dull metallic timber.<sup>36</sup>

Alfred Drake was cast as Curley opposite to Mr. Dixon's Will. Drake was a trained singer with a warm, colorful baritone voice and extensive high notes. Elliot

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<sup>34</sup> Green, 119.

<sup>35</sup> Grode, 67-80.

<sup>36</sup> Mathilde Marchesi, *Bel Canto: A Theoretical and Practical Vocal Method* (Boston: Dover, 1970).

Norton, who reviewed the opening night performance of the *Oklahoma!*, wrote:

"In that scene and song (referring to "O What a Beautiful Morning"), American musical comedy took a new turn away from stilted nonsense towards something like truth and beauty. And Alfred Drake, because he got all that into his manner, his bearing and his exuberant natural singing voice, became in effect the herald of a new era."<sup>37</sup>

Mr. Drake was born in New York City and studied at Brooklyn College under the name Alfred Capurro.<sup>38</sup> His first solo experiences occurred at his church in Brooklyn while attending with his mother. Alfred sang repertoire that ranged from sacred songs to Gilbert and Sullivan and got his first break as an ensemble member of the cast of *Babes In Arms* in 1937. His voice was rich and not overly covered. Mr. Drake's upper register sounds easy and up until the 1970s, his vibrato was even with an energized airspeed that promotes a youthful sound. His vocal coloring and understanding of text was very strong. Drake understood what he was singing and used the energy of the text to communicate emotion and character. Drake would be considered a legit or classical musical theatre style singer. The then vocal style of *Oklahoma!* was well suited for Drake's instrument. Subsequent performances of *Oklahoma!* in the 1980s and in 2002 have been cast with voices that are considered less classical in style and timber.

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<sup>37</sup> Elliot Norton review of the premiere of *Oklahoma!*, *New York Times*, April 14, 1943, accessed July 23, 2017, <http://www.nytimes.com/hist./archive/8934>.

<sup>38</sup> Grode, 90-100.

## The Baritenor Influence on Male Belting

John Raitt was born in Santa Anna, California in 1917. After graduating from the University of the Redlands with studies in voice, he was hoping for a career on the opera stage. According to conductor Romano Romani, the timber and size of Raitt's voice was "that of a tenor without high notes."<sup>39</sup> After some consideration, John decided upon a career in musical theatre. His voice is classified as a lyric baritone or as a Broadway baritone on several recordings but he would be considered a baritenor today. Raitt like Drake, understood how to communicate a song, though some would argue that Drake was a far stronger stage actor.

While Raitt and Drake are also not considered belters by our understanding of the term today, they both represented a sound that we identify as legit or classical musical theatre vocal style. Both men possessed a clear top with *squillo*, a warm mid-range and a timber of great beauty and color. Their voices were not normally over darkened nor did they over brighten in the upper part of the register.

Additionally, one observes little vertical spreading of the *embouchure* or over-extension of the mandible in the extreme upper or lower parts of the voice. Both men seem to also have constant vibrato and an adequate air speed with stable (floating) laryngeal positions. There is an audible release in their tone that demonstrates healthy vowel formants and a controlled exhale.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Martin Weil, "Broadway Mainstay John Raitt Dies at 88", *Washington Post*, February 1, 2005, accessed July 30, 2017.

<sup>40</sup> Lovetri, Jeannette. "Comparisons of Pharynx, Source, Formant, and Pressure Characteristics in Operatic and Musical Theatre Singing." *Journal of Voice* 7, no. 4 (Summer 1993): 301-310.

The term baritenor is used to describe a voice that is a unique hybrid of the baritone and tenor. In his doctoral dissertation, William Alex Martin writes, "to be absolutely clear, the use of the label baritenor in this document is in no way unique to the author; it has existed in the language of voice teachers for many years."<sup>41</sup> Martin is correct and his paper is a rewarding exploration of something that can be called the "black sheep" of the male Fach system. One can acknowledge that the baritenor is generally an excepted voice in musical theatre but what of classical repertoire? He writes:

"Some teachers foist a heavy, dark production upon the voice in an attempt to suit the baritone category, and some become champions of *voce aperta* in the upper register that can be detrimental to the development of a healthy ringing tenor voice."<sup>42</sup>

The "open voice" approach will not help a male belter ascend into the extreme upper range and encourages register singing that is disconnected. Open voice singing will cause vowel formants to distort necessitating a horizontal muscularity in the facio muscles. A raised larynx and physical tension contribute to an unhealthy singing experience. The vocal production derived from extended *voce aperta* is also problematic because it increases the break and differentiation in timber throughout the *passagio*.<sup>43</sup> Martin's writing on the baritenor supports modern male belting technique.

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<sup>41</sup> William Alex Martin, "The Highs and Lows of the Baritenor Voice: Exploring the Other Male Hybrid" (DMA diss., University of Alabama, 2010), 15-17, accessed September 5, 2017, <http://ir.ua.edu>.

<sup>42</sup> Martin, *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> Richard Miller, *Training Tenor Voices* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1993).



The baritenor voice has long been an unofficial category in in operetta. In German, the term *Zwischenfach* refers to a male singer that possesses a brighter timber with an upper range that usually extends to B4. The quality of tones after F have a higher amount of CDP and brighter vowels leading to a more *chiaro* timber. There is far more *squillo* in the sound coming from a baritenor voice and yet it possesses a more metallic tenor quality without continued access to high notes.<sup>44</sup>

The character of Eisenstein in the operetta *Die Fledermaus* by Johan Strauss, is considered a *Zwischenfach* role. Eisenstein has a sustained high tessitura, and requires a singer-actor with easily assessable Gs. Emmerich Kalman's *Csardasfuerstin* also contains a role that is notated as written for a tenor/baritone. Franz Lehar also wrote the role of Danilo in *Die Lustige Witwe* for a baritenor or *Zwischenherr* as notated.<sup>45</sup>

The connection of the European baritenor to American musical theatre belting is a logical one. Much of Jerome Kern's early career was spent translating operetta from German to English for American audiences. European imports were critical to early musical theatre productions in the United States. In fact, it was Kern's desire for character and realistic plot development that empowered him to create a new style of musical theatre with his masterpiece *Showboat*.<sup>46</sup> Kern had an understanding of the baritenor voice and the kind of characterization that the range and vocal timber could

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Franz Lehar, *The Merry Widow*, libretto by Victor Leon (Vienna: Doblinger, 1965).

<sup>46</sup> John Bush Jones, *Our Musicals, Ourselves: A Social History of the American Musical* (London: Brandeis University Press, 2003).

dramatically reflect.

A brief analysis of Kalman's character Enrico from *Csardasfuerstin*, Strauss's Eisenstein from *Die Fledermaus* and Lehar's Danilo (*Die Lustige Witwe*) reveal roles that are more mature men who come from aristocracy but are *bodenstaendig* (grounded) in their interaction with others. They represent the *commedia del arte* Arlecchino who is a "stock" character that works towards the overthrow of the oppressive characters in the plot.<sup>47</sup> Their voices and the baritenor timber that they produce are a personification of a *Jederman* or every man. Brighter timber and speech-like qualities as well as extended tessitura are all evident in baritenor repertoire. They are elegant but approachable and unlike their tenor colleagues, they are romantic but pragmatic in their approaches to relationships and conflict.<sup>48</sup> Example two is an excerpt from "Danilo's Auftrittslied" from Lehar's *Die Lustige Witwe*. In this example we see a demonstration of the extended tessitura for the baritenor lead Danilo:

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<sup>47</sup> A. M. Nagler, *A Sourcebook in Theatrical History* (London: Dover, 2013).

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

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na - men, Lo - lo, Do - ct, Jun - jou. Clo - ct, Mar - got, Frau - frau, sil - des - sen mich ver -

ges - sen, das teu' - re Va - ter - land! Dann wird cham - pa - gni - stierl, auch hau - tig ein -

nierl, und geh's aus Kö - sen, Küs - sen mit al - len die - sen Süs - sen, Lo - lo, Do - ct, Jun -

jou. Clo - ct, Mar - got, Frau - frau, dann kann ich leicht ver - ges - sen, das

teu' - re Va - ter - land.

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**Musical Example 2 (Danilo's Auftrittslied, from *Die Lustige Witwe*)**

The personal qualities of characters, the timber, vocal style, and the approachable vocal range of the baritenor is clearly demonstrated in *Oklahoma!* and the musicals that followed into the 1950s. A similar vocal timber, style, and range can be seen in compositions of Lerner and Loewe. Rodgers' and Hammerstein's "If I Loved You" from *Carousel* contains Gs that should not be covered or modified by the singer-actor. The

last phrase, "How I Loved You", is a powerful declaration of love that must be honest in tone and communication. The vocal line requires the performer to produce a tone with a more *chiaro* timber and a predominately TDP driven sound while producing a pure vowel formant.<sup>49</sup>

The image displays a musical score for the song "If I Loved You" from the musical *Carousel*. It consists of three systems of music, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is D minor (three flats). The first system includes the lyrics "off you would go in the mist of day, nev - er" and features chord markings D $\flat$ /F, D $\flat$ aug, and E $\flat$ m/G $\flat$ . The second system includes the lyrics "nev - er to know" and features chord markings D $\flat$ dim, To Coda  $\oplus$ , D $\flat$ /A $\flat$ , Fm, D $\flat$ /A $\flat$ , and Fm. The third system includes the lyrics "how I loved you," and features chord markings G $\flat$ 6, D $\flat$ /F, E $\flat$ m7, and N.C. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a more melodic line in the left hand.

**Musical Example 3 (If I Loved You, from *Carousel*)**

Irving Berlin, Cole Porter, and George Gershwin also had male characters that were written for a baritenor-like voice. The difference with many of these roles is that

<sup>49</sup> Miller, *Training Tenor Voices*, 76-79.

the songs have been altered to fit different vocal types. Each of these composers wrote music that was heavily influenced by jazz. This repertoire is considered to be part of the American Songbook.<sup>50</sup> Porter, Gershwin, and Berlin also used their songs for multiple shows, changed keys, and added or deleted numbers based on their preferences.

Cole Porter's *Kiss Me Kate* is an exception, as it is not considered part of the American Songbook. *Kiss Me Kate* premiered in 1948 and was Cole Porter's effort to produce a work with similar strength to that of *Oklahoma!* It is the first show that Porter had written that is considered a book musical.<sup>51</sup> Alfred Drake originated the role of Petruchio/Fred Graham with beauty and finesse.

In 1999, Brian Stokes-Mitchell appeared in the second Broadway revival of *Kiss Me Kate*. Mitchell, who also played Raul in *Phantom of the Opera* (a role that is often cast with singer-actors that can also play the low tenor role of the Phantom), has a strong high range capable of tones of luxurious timbre well beyond G4.

The connection between the baritenor and the male belter is a technical, style, timber, tessitura and dramatic one. Similar vocal ranges, styles and characters are seen in lead male rolls throughout the 1940s, 1950s, and early 1960s. Post 1960s musical theatre male belt roles began to require higher vocal tessitura, various and often combined vocal styles, complex characterization and the use of regular sound enforcement.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Riddle, 34.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Corrine Naden, "The Golden Age of American Musical Theatre." *Journal of Singing* 68, no. 2 (November 2011): 228.

## CHAPTER II – THE LATE 1960s

The late 1960s were a time of great change for music of all kinds. The British invasion of the Beatles, the Rock and Roll of Elvis Presley and the harmonies of the Everly Brothers were overcome by new groups from the United States and the UK. The Psychedelic rock of the Doors and Cream, together with Folk-rock and Blues-rock dominated the radio airwaves. The war in Vietnam, the Cold War, Civil Rights and racism, Second Feminism and a Soviet presence in Berlin, were all inspiration for music in the late 1960s. It was a time of demonstration and change in the culture of the American landscape.<sup>53</sup>

There was a great loss of innocence during the late 1960s according to Kenneth Walsh. "By the end of the decade, however, Americans had lost much of their innocence and optimism. Many turned violent in their desire to fight the system."<sup>54</sup> Many bands existed as a way of protesting the times. "Flower Power" and "Sex, Drugs and Rock and Roll" influenced the artistic output of musicians, actors, visual artists and writers. By 1969 the UK had already entered into the same economic decline that the Americans would face by 1972.

Musical theatre was also influenced by the socio-economic changes of this period. The mid 1960s birthed a group of musicals that were smaller and more intimate than those of the 1950s. In addition to diminished discretionary incomes, audiences had other

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<sup>53</sup> Edward J. Reilly, *The 1960s: Americas Popular Culture Through History* (New York: Greenwood Press, 2013).

<sup>54</sup> Kenneth Walsh, *US News and World Report*, February 19, 2010.

recreational options.<sup>55</sup> The struggle between the established Broadway elite and the mission of newer composers led to the production of musicals such as *Hair* and *Your Own Thing*. Musical Theatre became the mirror of society that drama had long been. Radio disk jockeys replaced show-tunes with psychedelic rock for a younger listening audience. Voices such as those of Jim Morrison from the Doors and Eric Clapton, lead singer of Cream, dominated the airwaves. The rock tenor sound replaced the rich baritone or baritenor voice prevalent only a decade earlier.

Author Christopher Hill states, "The screaming singer was a symbol of the struggling youth culture."<sup>56</sup> The rock tenor is a voice classification that itself is a paradox. The male singers of this time, with very few exceptions, did not have vocal training. The term rock tenor refers to a voice that sang high but relied on natural ability, not technique. Alice Cooper, Mick Jagger, Pete Townshend, Robert Plant, John Waters, Jim Morrison and John Fogerty all had voices of distinctive styles and tone qualities. The unifying factor for each of them is that they recorded songs that were almost out of reach of their available vocal range. In their recordings, we hear a bright but nasal tone that also has a noticeable speech-like quality. Waters, Morrison and Plant were also capable of producing warm and colorful lower notes with a lush timber expressed in a somewhat "crooning" style.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Richard Kislán, *The Musical: A Look at the American Musical Theater* (New York: Applause, 1980), 45.

<sup>56</sup> Christopher Hill, *Into The Mystic: The Visionary and Ecstatic Roots of 1960s Rock and Roll* (London: Park Street Press, 2017), 43-47.

<sup>57</sup> Matt Morgan, workshop, Gainesville, FL, November 16, 2017

### CHAPTER III – THE 1970s AND THE ROCK TENOR

The stage version of *Jesus Christ Superstar* opened in 1971. Even though it was conceived as a theatre work, it appeared as a record in 1970 before being presented onstage. Initially, Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice could not find a producer willing to take a chance on so daring a creative project.<sup>58</sup> Within four months, *Superstar* became a gold record and the future of the show was unlimited regarding its influences on musical theatre. A self-titled rock opera, it was a through-composed fantasy of the last seven days of Christ. The piece is campy, flamboyant and unlike anything that had ever been produced.<sup>59</sup> It appealed to audiences of all ages and because of its enormous success on the radio, had a cult following of young people.

The "Rock Musical" had been conceived in 1958 with the musical *Expresso Bongo* but it became a fixture on Broadway by 1971. According to Scott Miller:

"A rock musical could be *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *The Rocky Horror Show* or *Grease*. None of which sounded anything like the others; yet they all shared a disdain for authority and a taste for rebellion to which only the language of rock and roll could give full voice."

*Jesus Christ Superstar* was certainly a show about rebellion but with the central plot based on the last days of Christ, it was also a show that offered contrasting subject matter to an angry culture. Tim Rice is quoted as saying that they were not offering a Biblical story but one of thought provoking truth. To Rice, the deity of Jesus had been removed and instead, the man of God or "man for all men" was the focus.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Miller, 89-91.

<sup>59</sup> Green, Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Jones, 98-101.



Rice and Lloyd Webber were not the first to set a musical to the synoptic gospels of Christ, *Godspell* conceived by John Michael Tebelak with music by Stephen Schwartz, was intended to be a religious experience that would be "available to the masses."<sup>61</sup> *Godspell* was written in a modern cantata format much like Lloyd Webber's *Joseph and The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. Schwartz used a variety of musical styles including folk, Vaudeville, Gospel and contemporary rock. Each of the characters reflects a segment of the culture. The musical numbers were accompanied by a rhythm section with some of the actors also playing instruments on stage. *Godspell* is still widely performed today and has undergone several revivals.

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid, 114-117.

## Vocal Styles and Timber in the 1970s

The similarities between *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Joseph* and *Godspell* do not end with religious subject matter. The rock tenor voice represents the heroic, and in this case, main characters in each of these pieces. Judas, in *Jesus Christ Superstar*, also a tenor, represents the antithesis of Christ. With Judas we hear him screaming louder against the goodness and selflessness of the one he betrays. This is a clear departure from the vocal casting of musicals prior to 1967.

Opera composers have traditionally cast tenors in heroic characters since the early 1800s. Wagner, Verdi, and Puccini preferred the timber of the tenor voice. Today, a significant portion of modern tenor repertoire originated from these three composers.<sup>62</sup> As one investigates the repertoire and styles of these composers, it is also evident that they preferred weightier voices strong low notes and a darker timber throughout the middle voice.

"Notwithstanding the musical atmosphere of his youth, Wagner moved away from the prevailing worship of agility and followed the path pioneered by Gluck which put the accent on dramatic truth."<sup>63</sup>

Both Verdi and Wagner longed for truthful communication of their works. Of the two, Wagner could be considered almost surreal in his heroic characters.<sup>64</sup> His tenor roles include; Parsifal, Lohengrin, Tannhäuser and Rienzi. Each of these men is

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<sup>62</sup> Donald J. Grout, *A Short History of Opera* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963).

<sup>63</sup> Neil Howlett, *Vocal style in Wagner from Golden Age To Present-Lower Male Voices* (New York: Heineman, 2013).

<sup>64</sup> Ernest Newman, *The Wagner Operas* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 40-48.

searching for redemption in their own way. They are also tormented in their heroics. They embody a post-modern approach to the heroic ideal. Imperfect and suffering, their text and voices must reflect this. In a way, Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk* is reflected in *Jesus Christ Superstar*.<sup>65</sup> The Son of God under extreme and overwhelming circumstances remains true to his purpose. Lloyd Webber's *Jesus Christ Superstar* like Wagner's *Tannhäuser* was thru composed, had blended orchestration styles, and employed many new theatrical design elements.

*Tannhäuser* and *Jesus* both cry out against the injustices of man as they work to overcome temptation, and make change. These ideals are no different than those of the late 1960s and early 1970s. The specific issues may have differed but the tenor, whether rock or operatic, was the preferred voice to convey the screams of humanity. The qualities of the voice reflect the qualities of man and his struggles.<sup>66</sup>

In an interview in 1981 Ted Neeley, who played *Jesus* in the movie adaptation of *Jesus Christ Superstar* claimed that he considered himself a baritone. Neely's vocal range is extensive with easy flexibility up to G above high C.<sup>67</sup> Murray Head was asked by Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice to play Judas Iscariot on the original concept album of *Jesus Christ Superstar*. Both Head and Neely have voices of warmer timber with great colors that also have extensive upper ranges. Watching Mr. Neely, one notices

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<sup>65</sup> Richard Wagner, *Gesamtkunstwerk* (Berlin, Shock Verlag, 1849, zwei Aufsätze).

<sup>66</sup> Wesley Balk, *The Complete Singer-Actor* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1974), 68-72.

<sup>67</sup> Scott Miller, *Strike Up The Band: A New History of Musical Theatre* (Portsmouth: NH, Heinemann, 1964), 89-91.

that he over darkened some tones in the mid-range. This timbre quality is accomplished by modifying vowels and over extending the mandible while pushing the lips outward. There is nasality in both of their voices but it seems to be a vocal style choice not a technical one.

Both men "scream" well and have an innate understanding of the vocal style necessary to sing the repertoire. There seems to be little thought given to inspiration and expirations. Neely also sang with an airy quality in the passagio.<sup>68</sup> While this may not have originally been a style choice but a personal choice, Neely's voice, timber, and the style that he used, has become the norm for the character representations of Jesus and Judas.

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<sup>68</sup> Joan Melton, *Singing In Musical Theatre: The Training Of Singers And Actors* (New York: Skyhorse Press, 2002).

## Pedagogical Advances in the 1970s

It was not until the late 1970s that vocal technique for the new and emerging musical repertoire began to emerge. Most of the people discussing the belting question were private voice teachers who had professional experience in the musical theatre industry. The disparity between existing musical theatre vocal training and the needs of the industry were astounding. “While there was definitely a cadre of teachers in New York who taught a form of Belting, we were all over the map.”<sup>69</sup> Several negative consequences of misinformed teaching emerged as Belting training began to develop. There are two that emerged in the 1970s.

The first major topic of misinformation was the teaching of overly spread vowels, particularly the [a] and [e] vowels.<sup>70</sup> The effort to prevent vowels from falling back due to language, forced many artists to over activate nasality in place of vowel purity. The inner smile of Lamperti became the “creepy phantom face”.<sup>71</sup> The “spread” as it was called, was the answer to all of the problems associated with ascending into the *passagio* to access high notes. Private teachers in New York and Los Angeles used the spread to force their students through musical theatre repertoire. This approach is wrong for a number of reasons including, vowel distortion, facio-pharyngeal tension, a profoundly

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<sup>69</sup> Dr. Bill Adams, masterclass, Gainesville, FL, November 15, 2017.

<sup>70</sup> Blades Zeller, 56-58.

<sup>71</sup> Lamperti, 32.

raised larynx, distorted *chiaroscuro*, and a comical facial presentation to name a few.<sup>72</sup>

According to Matt Morgan:

"We have come so far with male belting. In the beginning, I was merely trying to help students sing without pain. There was a reason that many well-known voice teachers were against their students singing musical theatre. There were some people that were leading the way for change but there was little information available. Singing nasal was everyone's answer to belting."<sup>73</sup>

In the book, *Great Singers On Great Singing*, Luciano Pavarotti called the singing voice "controlled screaming". His claim to success as a singer was his ability to declare truth through the voice.<sup>74</sup> Voice teacher Neil Semer has long believed in the words of Pavarotti. In the late 1970s, he began experimenting with the male belt voice. He has several exercises that imitate screaming including one that he calls the "silent scream". The "silent scream" is a release of energy that activates muscle memory in the larynx and breathing mechanism. The secondary effect of the silent scream is to encourage the false folds to retract. Several exercises critical to the male belt voice emerged in the late 1970s. They are a sustained glissando starting on C3 and slowly sliding up to C5 singing each semitone as you ascend. The vowel of [a] is used with the consonant m or s in first position. The timbre is almost over brightened (*Chiaro al di sopra*).

Lessac Kinesthetic Training also offers a similar exercise that is termed the

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<sup>72</sup> Lois Alba. *Vocal Rescue: Rediscover the Beauty, Power and Freedom in Your Singing* (Norwich, NY: William Andrew Publishing, 2005).

<sup>73</sup> Matt Morgan, interview, November 6, 2017, Gainesville, FL.

<sup>74</sup> Jerome Hines, *Great Singers On Great Singing* (New York: Limelight, 1982).

Lessac Call.<sup>75</sup> By 1978, Arthur Lessac believed that a sensory approach to the voice was necessary. Instead of mimicking or listening for sounds, the singer is encouraged to feel pitches and release them, while phonating, in a natural way. The call exercise is a great way to find the speech-like qualities of the voice. When done directly, some of Lessac's methods can help with singing specifically when working register exploration.

Understanding of the registers and speech-like use of the chest voice were as important as an extended high range during the 1970s.

Seth Riggs, founder of Speech Level Singing, also emerged during the mid-1970s. His clients included Michael Jackson, Madonna (1980s) and Stevie Wonder. He placed particular focus on using speech-like exercises that had some similarity to Lessac. Riggs had several musical theatre clients such as Ben Vereen, who also played Judas in the Broadway premiere of *Jesus Christ Superstar*. Seth's approach worked well with rock singers but there is some contention about his ability to illicit different vocal timbres.

There is also a limited amount of pedagogical research that supports SLS. Breathing is generalized and non-specific and there is an unintended brightness to the timbre that does not work with all styles. A very positive aspect of Mr. Riggs's work is his integration of the microphone in voice teaching. His students were able to explore their voices with microphones during lessons. Though this was not necessary for classical students, this addition to the teaching studio enabled his technique to be tested before the vocalist walk on the stage. Riggs used the new sound technology of the 1970s to help him teach a vocal style that was dependent on sound amplification for its success.

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<sup>75</sup> Arthur Lessac, *The Use and Training of the Human Voice: A Bio-Dynamic Approach to Vocal Life*, 3rd edition (McGraw Hill: Mayfield, NY, 1994), 23-26.

## Sound Technology Advances in the 1970s

Advances in sound amplification heavily influenced the vocal style of the Rock-tenor during the 1970s. In 1876, the acoustic microphone was invented by Emile Berliner and Thomas Edison. Microphones placed at the front of the stage have been used on Broadway since the mid-1950s.<sup>76</sup> This method of amplifying cast members on stage was severely limited and is called a "general wash".

According to legend Elaine Stritch, "...it is not just about the projection of sound. It is also about reaching an audience."<sup>77</sup> Stritch is suggesting that technology can be used to communicate with an audience in a more intimate way. Advances in soundboards and the preference of mixing with effects or sound embellishments also developed in the 1970s. Author Mark Hogan writes:

"But in many ways, it was the 1970s marked the dawn of the modern era in music technology, applying and refining the developments of earlier decades while also laying the foundations of the techniques and styles that would follow. If it exists today, there's a good chance it could be considered '70s retro."<sup>78</sup>

Keyboards, twenty-four channel recording devices, and portable synthesizers were also major advancements during the 1970s. The stage performer began to wear personal microphones that allowed them to convey a more intimate moment as they communicated spoken or sung dialogue.<sup>79</sup> Even though *Jesus Christ Superstar* was

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<sup>76</sup> New York Times, Lawrence O'Toole, "Theatre: Musical Theatre is Discovering a New Voice", March 10, 1995, accessed February 19, 2017, nytimes.com.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Mark Hogan, *Pitchfork Magazine*, August 25, 2016, accessed October 5, 2017, www.pitchfork.com.

<sup>79</sup> Hogan, 45.



developed as a live rock opera, certain scenes and moments needed to remain tender in their interaction with the audience. Vocal energy, derived from the reaction of text in the spoken and sung voice could be used to communicate strength and defiance or despair and personal intimacy.<sup>80</sup>

In addition to intimacy or strength in communication, sound advancements allowed creative teams add sound effects to specific voices on the stage. The effects were, (and still are today), mixed according to qualities of the individual voice. Elements of registration, support, airspeed, vowel color (chiaroscuro), and overall timber influence the types of sound effects that are used in "miking" a voice. Additional factors would include: characterization for special effects, musical style, orchestration, accompaniment, and creative team preferences.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Bruce Earnest and Lani Harris, *A Beginning Actor's Companion* (Iowa: Kendall Hunt, 2012), 23.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

## Closing Thoughts on the 1970s

In the case of *Jesus Christ Superstar*, Lloyd Webber altered the known paradigm of musical theatre forever. Vocal style, timber, range, communication of text, subject matter, orchestration, sound technology, amplification, and pure spectacle emerged in ways that had not yet been known. Lloyd Webber's unlikely vision led to success as a composer but also influenced the way performers sang and were heard by audiences.

Role requirements for *Jesus Christ Superstar* and many other shows of the 1970s also required a vocal stamina that was largely unknown at the time. Performance contracts often required yellow contract cast members to play eight times per week. This often included two shows on Sunday or Monday as the Actors Equity "swing system" had not yet been fully developed.

The vocal demands of *Jesus Christ Superstar* and other musicals during the 1970s were grueling. Though some progress in teaching musical theatre was seen in the 1970s, significant advances in vocal pedagogy relation specifically to male belting would not be seen until the 1980s. It is said that innovation comes from need. Healthy approaches to an increasingly difficult repertoire lists for both men and women encouraged a continued conversation between those seeking to mature as pedagogues of new and emerging shows on Broadway, in the UK, and Europe.

## CHAPTER IV – THE 1980s

The 1980s saw the beginning of internationalism that would lead to the globalism of the 2000s. Economic expansion brought discretionary income back into the homes of the United States.<sup>82</sup> Advances in technology, the AIDS epidemic, and the end of communism's hold on global power were all major factors of influence in the development of musical theatre.

With the German premiere of *Cats* in 1985 and subsequent premiers of *Starlight Express*, *Miss Saigon* and *Les Miserables* in 1987, European love of musical theatre became an integral part of the entertainment industry. Production companies such as Stella and Bosch Entertainment built new theatres specifically designed for the premier of new musical theatre productions. American musical theatre performers were offered contracts and teachers of acting, dance, and belting were recruited to train new generations of young German performers. Conservatories in Berlin, Munich and Leipzig established musical theatre degree programs and hired American faculty members to fill professorships.

Musical theatre had gone global but while American Belting teachers found places to practice their craft, renowned teachers of voice remained silent on the subject and standards of training went unchecked. Trademarked vocal techniques such as Seth Riggs, Jo Estill and Jeannette Lovetri quickly exported their ideas into the European vocal market. In most cases, belting training was arbitrary with new technical theories emerging daily.

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<sup>82</sup> David Sirota, *Back to Our Future: How the 1980s Explain the World We Live in Now* (New York: Ballentine, 2011). 67-69.

## 1980s European Musical Theatre: *Les Miserables*

The 1980s were well represented in the repertoire that emerged in this time. Neoclassicism was born with Lloyd Webber's musical *Phantom of the Opera* and Alain Boublil and Claude Michel Schonberg's *Les Miserables*. Pop Global Musical Theatre emerged with Bjorn Ulveus and Benny Anderson's *Chess*, and Stephen Sondheim produced the musical fable *Into The Woods*. Musical theatre in the 1980s enjoyed varying styles and significant creative paradigm shifts. This period also encouraged the development of different vocal styles for men and women.<sup>83</sup>

*Les Miserables* premiered in 1980 as a French language concept album (like *Jesus Christ Superstar*). Claude Michel-Schonberg composed the music and Alain Boublil and Herbert Kretzmer wrote the lyrics. Based on the novel written by Victor Hugo, *Les Miserables* was a through-composed, neoclassical show that, once again, changed the musical theatre creative paradigm. *Les Miserables*, produced by Cameron Mackintosh, was organically political in its message and offered a grand tale of resistance in Paris during the French Revolution. The characters are well developed and there is a clear delineation of those who do what is right and those who embrace power and corruption.<sup>84</sup>

Cameron Mackintosh hired poet James Fenton to do an English translation and adaptation. Though Fenton was eventually released from the project, his prologue remained in the production for the purpose of exposition. Kretzmer was then hired and

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<sup>83</sup> Margaret Vermette, *The Musical World of Boublil and Schonberg: The Creators of Les Miserables, Miss Saigon, Martin Guerre and The Pirate Queen* (New York: Applause, 2007). 38-48.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

added several new songs. While giving an interview in 1985, Mackintosh said, "We saw *Les Miz* as musical theatre with performers at the height their powers combined with actors from the Royal Shakespeare Company at the height of their powers."<sup>85</sup> First reviews of the show in London were not favorable. Andrew Lloyd Webber also made it clear that he did not like the show. Despite this, *Les Miserables* has been sold out ever since.

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<sup>85</sup> Scott Miller, *Strike Up The Band: A New History of Musical Theatre* (Portsmouth: NH Heineman, 2007), 78-80.

## Vocal Styles and Timber in the 1980s

A spectacle of sights and sounds, *Les Miserables* and its message of redemption was a hit. It is considered the longest running musical in the history of musical theatre.

New York Times critic Charles Isherwood wrote:

"Much like those televised competitions — “American Idol” and “The Voice” being the national brand leaders — “Les Misérables” presents audiences with a stage full of singers who, one by one, have a chance to step into the spotlight (in this case a very smoke-suffused one) and astonish us with the mighty heft and range of their voices. The through-sung score, by Claude-Michel Schönberg and Alain Boublil (the English lyrics are by Herbert Kretzmer), boasts a passel of throat-searing numbers that build to rousing climaxes. Theatergoers at the reviewed performance cheered as if they were indeed at a sing-off featuring fresh-faced young performers singing pop favorites with all the dazzling flourishes they could muster."<sup>86</sup>

*Les Miserables*, though considered musical theatre, has many elements in its structure that are considered operatic. Reminiscent of French Grand Opera, the piece is through-composed, contains a large ensemble cast, and has a historically based plot written by a legendary author. The major departure from this formula is the vocal style in which the songs were composed. The songs in *Les Miserables* are written to represent distinct vocal and dramatic role characterization. Nuances in rhythm, range, text, and orchestration identify character social class, education and purpose.

Characterization is further expressed in the vocal styles and timber of the principle cast members. According to Ralf Schaedler, "*Les Miserables* was difficult to cast as we had trouble finding artists that had the technical ability to sing what the

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<sup>86</sup> Charles Isherwood, New York Times, March 19, 2016, accessed November 1, 2017, [www.nytimes.com/art./theatre//345](http://www.nytimes.com/art./theatre//345).

composers had written. The style needed was new and few could do it."<sup>87</sup> "On My Own" and "I Dreamed A Dream" quickly became standard audition repertoire for women. Schaedler adds, "Nine out of ten auditions involved a woman offering something from *Les Miserables*. Unfortunately, eight out of ten girls could not sing them."<sup>88</sup> "Bring Him Home" and "Empty Chairs and Empty Tables" provoked similar results for males. The vocal style of the show has been called opera-pop, and classical-pop by different people.<sup>89</sup> Regardless of the label, there is a hybrid vocal style that was established because of the repertoire of the show.

In her article, "Popular Song and Musical Theatre: The Multiplicity of Belting," Lisa Popeil asserts that the singer will find many timbers of belt in musical theatre and that different timbres of belt convey different emotional context and characterization.<sup>90</sup> I agree with her writing but believe that there is a baseline of technical and style elements that must exist for the success of the male belt voice.

*Les Miserables* was an important incubator for the establishment of the baseline concept. The 1970s had birthed the Rock-tenor but the musical theatre of the 1980s brought us the male belter. Billy Joel, Elton John, Phil Collins, and Sting all sang in a clear male pop belt that dominated the airwaves. These vocalists and the music they

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<sup>87</sup> Wendy LeBorgne, *The Vocal Athlete* (London: Plural Publishing, 2014).

<sup>88</sup> Ralf Schaedler, interview, Hamburg, Germany, July 6, 2015.

<sup>89</sup> Lebon, 23.

<sup>90</sup> Lisa Popeil, "Substyles of Belting: Phonatory and Resonatory Characteristics", *Journal of Voice*, The Voice Foundation, vol. 26 (2012): 44-50.

represented, affected the vocal styles and creation of musical theatre.

The role of Jean Valjean is often played by a baritenor or tenor (belter) that has sung both classical music and musical theatre but fully understands diverse vocal styles. In the song "Bring Him Home" we see a melody line that extends well into the tenor range but also requires warm lower (or baritone) notes.

The extended range is symbolic of Jean Valjean's pleading with God to return his son to him. What makes this piece different is the composer's use of head voice (CDP) as a vocal style choice. This represents the vulnerability and desperation of Jean Valjean. The break between registers is seamlessly negotiated with an intentional dominance of CDP in the mix.

The image displays a musical score for the song "Bring Him Home" from the musical *Les Misérables*. The score is written in G major and 4/4 time, with a tempo marking of "Slow (♩ = 64)". It consists of three systems of music, each featuring a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part is marked "p (l.H.)" and "L.H.". The lyrics are: "God on high, hear my prayer. young, He's a - fraid. (Verse 2 see block lyric) In my need. You have al - ways been there. Let him." The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

**Musical Example 4 (Bring Him Home, from *Les Misérables*)**



The use of CDP in measure one of "Bring Him Home" is not pure head voice but a mixed male belt with more CDP (as much as eighty percent) than would be heard in the role of Marius singing *Empty Chairs at Empty Tables*. The vocal style requires *mixte de voix* that has vibrant chest color.<sup>91</sup> The mix here needs to be flexible, crescendo dynamically, and grow in chest dominant production timbre as the text and musical material require. There is also a speech-like quality that is needed at certain points in the song. We see similar style elements and technical needs in the musicals *Chess* ("Pity The Child") and *Ms. Saigon* ("Why God, Why").

The idea of speech-like singing is not new to musical theatre or to vocal music, in general. There are examples of speech-like vocal styles in music of each historical period. Early opera recitative was devised to express emotion and passion known as the Doctrine of the Affections.<sup>92</sup> Singspiel, Opera Comique, Austro-German operetta, Gilbert and Sullivan, and early American musical theatre had recitative, spoken dialogue and pieces that required a speech-like tone quality.<sup>93</sup>

*Sprechstimme* was first heard in Engelbert Humperdinck's melodrama *Königskinder* but is usually seen as a dominant element of the Second Viennese School. Alban Berg and Arnold Schoenberg used *Sprechstimme* in many of their works. The style is used to convey an emotional and uncomfortable atmosphere within the body of

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<sup>91</sup> Richard Miller, 89-95.

<sup>92</sup> Richard Taruskin, *Music in the Late Twentieth Century: The Oxford History of Western Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

<sup>93</sup> McCoy, 123-125

the composition. One could argue that *Sprechstimme* is an organic vocal effect and not a vocal style or pedagogical element.

The musicals of the 1980s also introduced performers to notated organic vocal effects that contributed to the vocal styles that developed. *Les Miserables*, *Chess* and *Miss Saigon* all contain songs that have been performed with plosive glottal attacks, intentional breathiness, and other effects.

"There is an undeniable way that *Les Miserables* needs to be sung. One needs to understand that technique allows us to sing style. You cannot add air to the tone or stroke the glottis without the proper support structure."<sup>94</sup>

Organic vocal effects have been heard in vocal music beginning in the 1700s with early Baroque Opera. The types of vocal effects have varied and in the 1970s, many would be considered detrimental to the vocal folds.<sup>95</sup> The psychedelic rock of the 1970s included screaming and growling and by the 1980s, heavy metal began to emerge.<sup>96</sup> The vocal style of *Les Miserables* called for the use of plosive attacks and adding additional air to the middle range. "Intentional breathiness" is evident in all of the male songs in *Les Miserables*. Intentional breathiness can be done safely especially with the advances of microphone technology that appeared in the 1980s. Example number five shows the vocal folds while using intentional breathiness. The top picture demonstrates the folds during an F4 with an intentional breathiness presentation. Here we notice that the folds

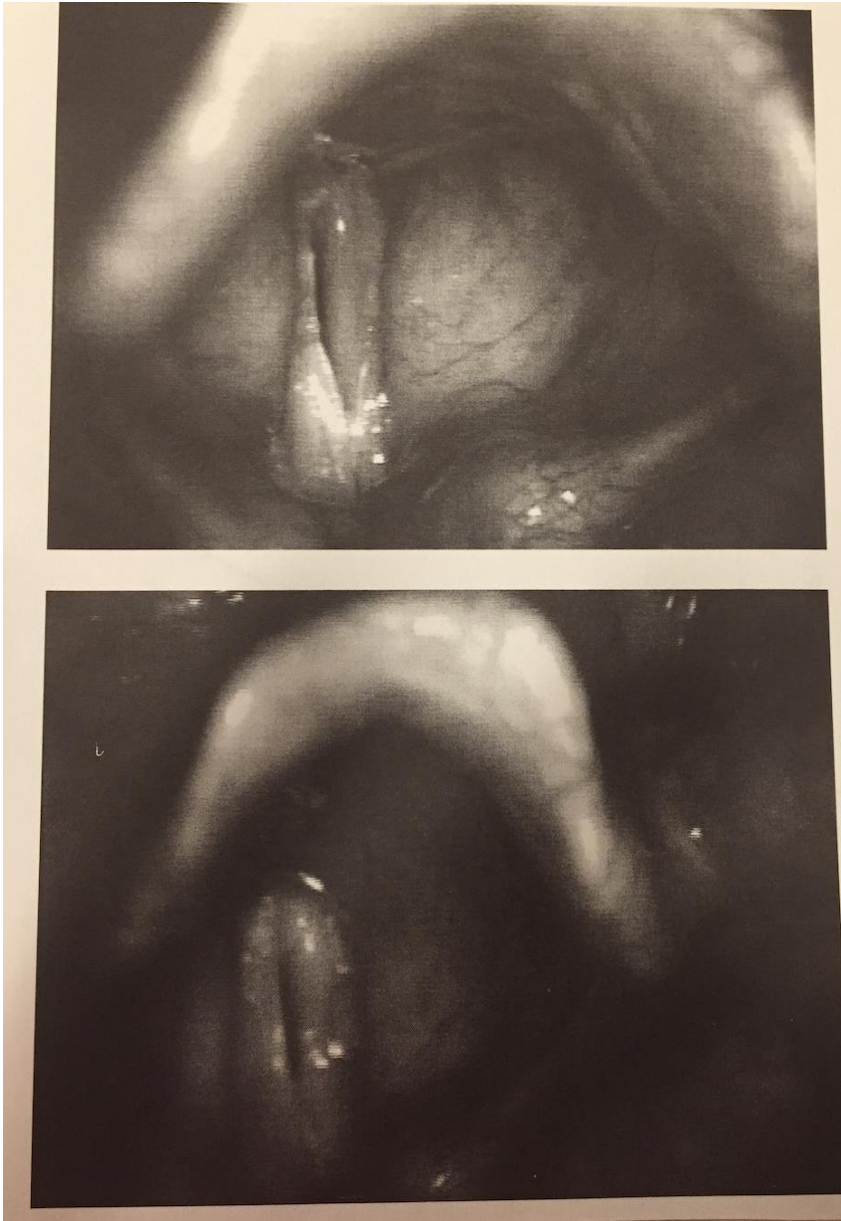
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<sup>94</sup> Johan Sundberg, "Respiratory and Acoustical Differences Between Belt and Neutral Style of Singing", *Journal of Singing*, vol. 29 (2015): 418-425.

<sup>95</sup> Mattias Echternach, "Vocal Tract Shapes in Different Singing Functions Used in Musical Theater Singing—A Pilot Study." *Journal of Voice* 28, no. 5 (2014): 155-69.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

are not fully approximating. The bottom picture shows the same presentation while phonating on the pitch of C3.



*Figure 1 (Human vocal folds during phonation on C3)*

## Pedagogical Advances in the 1980s

### *The Baseline*

*Les Miserables*, *Chess* and *Phantom of The Opera* forced teachers and performers to re-evaluate several key technical and style elements in singing repertoire. These two elements, which I will be referred to as The Baseline, began to develop in the mid-1980s and continue to be necessary for healthy male belting today.<sup>97</sup>

#### *Element 1, “Horizontal, not spread”*

The term *squillo* means that there is a more concentrated focus to the placement and breath support. *Squillo* replaced vowel spreading and the manipulation of the fascia muscles lessened and gave way to a concentrated use of the “singer’s formant”. This desired “ping” or “core” to the voice is a natural outcome of pure and unmodified vowels.<sup>98</sup> Vowel formants are unaffected and the production of sound has *chiaro* qualities without nasality and over exaggerated muscular tension. This occurs by narrowing the aryepiglottal fold just above the larynx. The amplification of these harmonics creates naturally occurring higher formants that can project through and orchestra, support pianissimo singing, simulate controlled screaming in the upper *tessitura* and actually increase a singer’s range while belting.<sup>99</sup>

The space may feel smaller in the front but the glottis and rear spaces feel open

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<sup>97</sup> Björkner, Eva. “Musical Theater and Opera Singing-Why So Different? A Study of Subglottal Pressure, Voice Source, and Formant Frequency Characteristics.” *Journal of Voice* 22, no. 5(September 2011): 533-540. 2011.

<sup>98</sup> Lovetri, 302.

<sup>99</sup> Starke, 54-60.

and unconstrained. In this presentation the larynx is not raised although it does pivot out 1 or 2 centimeters.<sup>100</sup> Loose lips and firm glottal closure creates a sound source which is rich in high frequency components and sound production. The space here feels more horizontal but is not spread. Lamperti refers to this space and the feeling associated with it as the second mouth.<sup>101</sup>

*Element 2, “Released, but resisted”*

In order to support the extreme high ranges of musical theatre repertoire in *Les Miserables* a released but managed expiration is necessary. The concept of *appoggio* is the complex balance of muscles that are all working together during expiration. The Italian word for lean, Lamperti referred to it as the “vocal struggle”.<sup>102</sup> We will refer to this as “controlled exhalation”. During exhalation the body is naturally trying to expel carbon dioxide from the lungs and consequently the bloodstream.<sup>103</sup>

A “controlled exhale” utilizes a resistance of the naturally ascending diaphragm to support range demands and register changes while belting. While the diaphragm itself is not directly involved with this approach, the internal and external obliques, the rectus abdominus and the transverse abdominus all work together and against each other to

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<sup>100</sup> Björkner, 539.

<sup>101</sup> Lamperti, 48-51.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> William Vennard, *Singing: The Mechanism And The Technique*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Boston: Carl Fischer, 1967).

control the amount of expiring air and therefore the airspeed.<sup>104</sup> There is also a "lean" in the xiphoid process that is present in the controlled exhale.

The German School breath concept taught by many teachers, created a costive belt sound that relied on over-exhalation. This prevented the intrinsic closing of the focal folds. Proponents of this technique also favored posterior constriction and the outcome of this often lead to a tight and tinny vocal timber, reduced range and constricted vocal style options.<sup>105</sup> Bel Canto and its pedagogical elements are more muscular in their realization. This concept is particularly true for male belters. This should not be viewed as negative thing. Conversely, the entire body support structure that is engaged by using elements of the Italian School is critical to successful male belting.

Though these approaches have long been associated with classical singers in the Italian School of singing, they are critically effective for the healthy and powerful male and female musical theatre belter.<sup>106</sup> Because of this, there is a strong connection with the emergence of technique that supported the hybrid vocal style heard in *Les Miserables*. The vocal range of the *Les Miserables* cast is varied but does push the vocal limits of each Fach.

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid, 56-58.

<sup>105</sup> McKinney, 89-109.

<sup>106</sup> Jenkins, Colleen. "*Belting is Beautiful: Welcoming the Musical Theater Singer Into the Classical Voice Studio.*" UMI Dissertations Publishing, 2014.

## Sound Technology Advances in the 1980s

MIDI or Musical Instrument Digital Interface provided a system for various types of technology to communicate with each other. In the mid-1980s, MIDI technology became widely available for use outside the professional recording studio. The benefits of interfacing synthesizers, drum machines, and effects machines expanded creative options for composers of musical theatre. The fusion of technology and traditional musical instruments was first seen in *Jesus Christ Superstar* but was limited due to cost and complexity. These advances are seen in several shows during the 1980s. *Chess*, *Miss Saigon* and *Les Miserables* all have orchestration that requires the use of MIDI driven sequencers that contain pre-recorded tracks and sound effects.<sup>107</sup>

Advances in personal microphone technology also shaped the development of musical theatre productions during the 1980s. Wireless body microphones existed as early as 1969. Nady Systems developed a product in 1976 that contained the same range dynamic equivalency to those using traditional electric chords.<sup>108</sup> In 1984, multiple radio wave options became available at a lower cost. This advance made it possible for the audience to hear breath, vocal style, timber, text, organic vocal effects, manufactured vocal sound effects, and nuances clearer than ever before. Vocal microphones were integrated with sound enhancers and effects machines due to MIDI technology. Characters like those in *Les Miserables* were now able to whisper to the audience, use mixed vocal styles, explore organic vocal effects, and sing in pure CDP if required.

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<sup>107</sup> Lebon, 25-18.

<sup>108</sup> Karen Hall, *So You Want To Sing Musical Theatre: A Guide For Professionals* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2014).

## Closing Thoughts on the 1980s

In her DVD, "Teaching Men to Sing Musical Theatre," Mary Saunders Barton writes:

"Our main responsibility as voice teachers is the healthy function of the voice, whatever the style. Young professionals today should not feel threatened by extreme use of the voice provided they understand what they are doing physically. Access to a fully integrated and balanced speaking voice is critical to singing musical theatre. Speech pathologists warn of the three l's, "too long, too low, too loud." This is an issue of balance. Like any muscle, the vocal muscle needs to be exercised completely."<sup>109</sup>

The shows of 1980s generated the need for concrete advances in teaching musical theatre singing. Male belting emerged as a distinct vocal category with a burgeoning pedagogical structure. Methods of intimately communicating with the audience from the stage were present due to technological advances that had not existed in the 1970s.

One can also observe that though globalism had been good for the development of the musical theatre form, American musical theatre had been eclipsed by British and European repertoire and style contributions. Musicals during this period were longer and more rigorous than they had been a decade earlier. Content, character development, and the sheer desire to wow audiences, influenced the demands required of male and female belters. By 1989, the average high note for a male singer had risen from E4 to G4. This change, if not significant enough, was also accompanied by an augmented number of vocal style demands, often within one song.

The creators of musical theatre in the 1980s are responsible for productions that

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<sup>109</sup> Mary Saunders-Barton, *Teaching Men to Sing Musical Theatre*, DVD-ROM (Penn Publishing, 2007).



set an entirely new paradigm for the genre. Belting technique, vocal styles, organic vocal effect, and sound amplification technology introduced audiences to experiences they would always long for.

## CHAPTER V – THE 1990s

The 1990s was a decade devoid of the threat of communism but full of global change and conflict. The unification of Germany, the breakup of Yugoslavia, the Gulf War and the formation of the European Union, changed geographical regions that both unified and divided people. The World Wide Web was invented and major advances in technology brought prosperous economic years and stability in the United States. The 1990s were also a decade of movement toward fiscal conservatism and social liberalism in the United States and other world powers. Climate change, environmental protection, and treatment for the AIDS virus emerged as topics of great focus and research.

The performing arts enjoyed years of growth, and the film industry produced some of the highest grossing films of all time. The manifestation of post-modern thought was at an apex in theatre. The development of musical theatre continued to move towards a reflective voice of culture. Disney Theatricals produced *Beauty and The Beast*, *Lion King* and *Hunchback of Notre Dame* with spectacle and acclaim. *Songs For A New World*, *Assassins*, *Jekyll and Hyde*, *Children of Eden*, *The Secret Garden*, *A New Brain*, *Sunset Boulevard*, *Miss Saigon*, and *Titanic* were musical theatre successes critical to the evolution of male belting. *Rent*, *The Life*, *Blood Brothers*, and *Aspects of Love* also made major contributions to the genre while challenging audiences to contemplate major cultural issues.

Plot subject matter was varied and creative teams represented artists from other musical and creative genres. Jason Robert Brown emerged as a new force in musical theatre during this time. Brown was born in Ossining, New York and grew up in Manhattan. He worked closely with William Finn on *A New Brain* and was introduced to

Daisy Prince. The two collaborated on *Songs For A New World*, which was widely acclaimed as a masterpiece of creativity by critic Frank Rich.<sup>110</sup> Brown's theatrical lyrics are edgy and his music is chromatic pop. His works are thought provoking and successful because of his ability to fuse these two elements.

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<sup>110</sup> Frank Rich, New York Times Theatre Review, *New York Times*, December, 17, 1995

## Vocal Styles and Timber in the 1990s

Brown's work marks the beginning of the songwriter movement and his compositions were vital to the development of male belting because of the vocal style requirements that he placed on his singers. Brown has been called the "Mozart of Musical Theatre" due to his tessitura, rhythmic, and textural demands.<sup>111</sup> There is an aria quality to his works. The songs are long and require the singer-actors to possess a strong understanding of technique and various vocal styles.

In masterclasses, Jason Robert Brown is demanding and meticulous. His writing is specific, and singers must sing only what is written with the dynamics indicated. In his song, "Old Red Hills of Home" from *Parade* written in 1997, Brown has set his own lyrics to a powerful melody that is challenging and rewarding for the performer. Musical example six shows the use of male belting with an expected dynamic and register crescendo in the final measures.

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<sup>111</sup> Masterclass with Jason Robert Brown, Hamburg, Germany, May 29, 2013

**Musical Example 5 (Old Red Hills of Home, from *Parade*)**

A register crescendo refers to the act of adding head or chest voice to the belt mix in order to punctuate text or a musical idea. Unlike a dynamic crescendo, a register crescendo allows the singer-actor to use CDP or TDP as vocal style and timber choice.<sup>112</sup> Brown was not the first person to do this but he was the most prolific in his approach at the beginning of his career as a composer.<sup>113</sup> We also see this in "It's Hard To Speak My

<sup>112</sup> Kenneth Bozeman. *Practical Vocal Acoustics: Pedagogical Applications For Teachers and Singers* (Madison, WI: Pendragon Press, 2013).

<sup>113</sup> Ibid, Jason Robert Brown.

Heart" example six, also from *Parade*.

The image shows a musical score for the song "It's Hard To Speak My Heart" from the musical *Parade*. The score is written for voice and piano. It consists of three systems of music. The first system shows the vocal line with the lyrics "I nev-er touched that child. God! —" and the piano accompaniment with the instruction "build...". The second system shows the vocal line with the lyrics "I nev-er raised my hand!" and the piano accompaniment with the instruction "ff". The third system shows the vocal line with the lyrics "I stand be-fore you now, in - cred-i-bly a - fraid." and the piano accompaniment with the instruction "colla voce" and "p a tempo". The score is in the key of D major and 4/4 time.

#### Musical Example 6 (It's Hard To Speak My Heart, from *Parade*)

In example six we see the use of register crescendo paired with dynamic crescendo. Mr. Brown has this occur on a textual climax that is exceptionally planned and when executed, generates a deeply passionate moment for the audience. The timbre of the voice is able to reflect the character's musical scene objectives with intense vocal energy because of Brown's prowess. This vocal style is a key development for the male belter and has evolved to greater importance today.

Brown's music pushed the limits of the male belter for other reasons as well. "King of the Word" from *Songs For A New World*, set for an operatic pop male belter, includes patter, extreme range and text with great depth.

In this song, the performer must use caution and avoid over singing the verses. "The middle voice in this song must not be weighty and though it is spoken, must have fair amount of CDP," says Dr. Steve Chicurel.<sup>114</sup> There is also a return to straight tone (no vibrato) to vibrato in this song and in many other of his pieces. He writes multiple key changes, notated improvisational figures, and accompaniment parts that are perhaps, more challenging than Sondheim. In fact his work has been compared to those of legend Stephen Sondheim.

Some of his pieces have a gospel vocal style such as those from the *Last Five Years*. "Coming Together" from his album *Someone Else's Story* has a lush somewhat religious quality to it. The piece is written for an ensemble and contains vast measures of gospel-like improvisation. Brown composed the song in the days following 9/11. The text is desperately beautiful and calls on all people to "come together" for the good of mankind. Like most of his creative works, there is a post-modern approach to his characters. They represent tolerance and the anti-hero. There is no judgment and the audience is left to make their own assumptions on character choices and plot development.

Jason Robert Brown's musicals were not necessarily commercial successes. They were innovative, challenging and are still widely performed by musical theatre artists because of their emotional depth, message and vocal fireworks. As a songwriter, he has released several groups of songs that were not written for shows.

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<sup>114</sup> Dr. Steven Chicurel, masterclass, Orlando, Florida, October, 2016

## Pedagogical Advances in the 1990s

Jonathan Larson's *Rent* premiered in 1996. His production that explores the culture of those living with the HIV virus is a seminal work for those whose lives were shattered by AIDS. Loosely based on *La Boheme*, *Rent* is an emotional journey of relationships and love. The casting challenges with *Rent* were widely known in New York at the time. The producers cast young and often untrained pop singers. They were interested in look and believability. Cast members suffered from vocal pathologies that included; nodes, constant swelling, and laryngitis. Several cast members such as Adam Pascal would go on to develop influential careers in musical theatre, but not before having multiple surgeries on his vocal folds.

Though *Rent* was particularly difficult to sing well and in a healthy manner, it was not the only musical that challenged professional musical theatre artists to embrace better and more advanced technique. Jason Robert Brown, Murray Yeston and Steven Sondheim all jumped on the higher is better bandwagon. Male belting repertoire exploded in this decade. In the 1980s, you might have one or two musicals per year that had songs that were examples of extreme male belting. During the 1990s nine out of ten musicals had male characters that belted the entire show. Male belting became the norm not the exception, and the desired timbre necessitated blended male registers of equal color and weight. Professional musical theatre artists and students studying for careers in musical theatre searched with some success for pedagogues that could equip them for success.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Eric Salzman. "Notes on the Origins of New Music Theatre." *Theatre*, (Summer 2000): 9-15.



Several vocal exercises helpful for blending the male registers evolved at this time. One of these exercises is used to stimulate the turbinates and open space in the mask. Turbinates are nautilus shaped structures that contain hair-like ridges on the walls of the inside of the nose.<sup>116</sup> They protect the nasal passages and warm air as it flows through the nose. The ridges of the turbinates vibrate during inhalation and exhalation. When done properly, the exercise causation will release a rapid air speed and regulate the flow of air during exhalation. This allows for the maintenance of a floating larynx as the male singer ascends into the *passagio* and can assist the male singer in unifying the voice throughout the registers.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Ingo Titze, Nonlinear source-tract interaction in singing.” *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America* 125, (2009): 121-145.

<sup>117</sup> Bozeman, 121-126.

### *The Sleepy Tongue*

A topic of pedagogical contention that was falsely incorporated into early belting was the unnatural flattening of the tongue. Teachers, mostly from operatic backgrounds believed that this would disengage the mandible and therefore remove any resistance to pulling the chest voice up through the *passagio*.<sup>118</sup> This approach was seen mostly during the early 1990s and was used regardless of the vowel. This approach was called the “Sleepy Tongue” and was erroneous for many important reasons.

The tongue is designed to move in many positions for articulation. Vowel formants are responsible for vowel definition and are dependent on correct tongue placement and the position of the lips.<sup>119</sup> Further investigation of the natural movement of the tongue also indicates that muscle memory of the learned spoken language will automatically engage during phonation.<sup>120</sup> Belting vocal styles require the tongue to move as organically necessary.

The concept of unnaturally flattening the tongue in belting disappeared by the mid-2000s. There are teachers of the German School and those from Eastern Europe and Scandinavia that continue to propagate this phenomenon, but they are not usually associated with male belting technique. Since vowels are made without an interruption of

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<sup>118</sup> Lovetri, Jeannette. “Comparisons of Pharynx, Source, Formant, and Pressure Characteristics in Operatic and Musical Theatre Singing.” *Journal of Voice* 7, no. 4 (Summer 1993): 301-310.

<sup>119</sup> Vennard, 56-61.

<sup>120</sup> Ingo Titze, *Ibid.*

the vocal track, the tongue should not be inhibited from its naturally occurring positions during phonation. In fact, the [ I ] vowel is much easier to sing in the upper range when the tongue is in its naturally occurring raised position. For belting, the rear sides of the tongue should also touch the upper rear molars.<sup>121</sup>

Attention is also paid to the front mid and rear positions of vowels when teaching belting. This is critical for style and character choices. In many cases, singer-actors have manipulated their tongues for so long that it is necessary to re-learn the correct positions. Pedagogues need to be cautious when correcting vowels or working with vocalists that have manipulation tongue positions as increased sub-glottal tension, distorted facial presentation and blurred diction can occur.<sup>122</sup>

The musical theatre repertoire of the 1990s made it nearly impossible to sing without clear articulation and diction. Distorted facial presentation is the antithesis of honest communication. Advances in video and sound technology made it impossible to hide anything from audiences.

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<sup>121</sup> McCoy, 89-90.

<sup>122</sup> Stark, 40-48.

## Sound Technology Advances in the 1990s

Pitch intonation issues existed on almost all recordings prior to electronic pitch fixing or auto tuning. During this period, auto tuning was used in live and recorded performance like never before. Sound designers had even developed a way to completely reshape the tone, timbre, and presence of the of the performers voice.<sup>123</sup> Directors could specifically dictate character vocal timbre for each song.

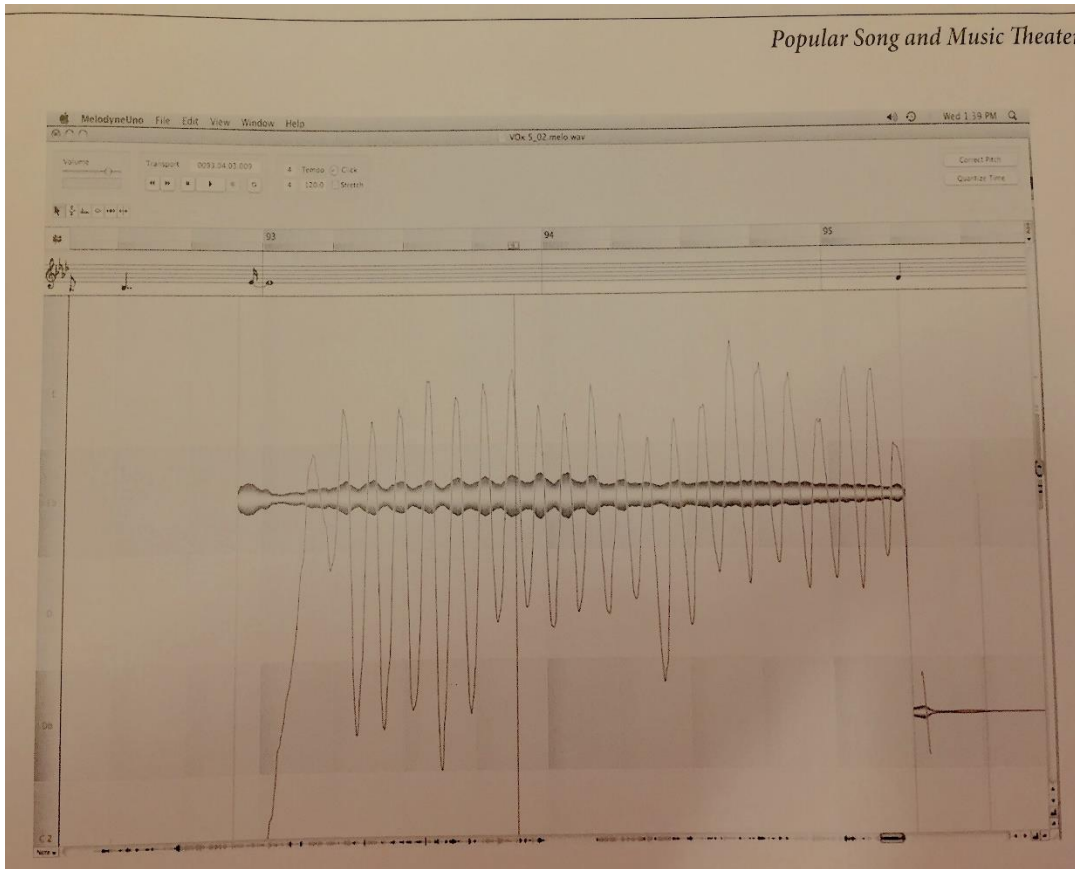
More than just sound effects, frequency modulators could transform a voice electronically. These advances focused on the modification of the pitch center and added high or low frequency effects specially developed for the voice. This approach could increase or decrease vibrato speed and could extend vocal range when needed though many creative musical theatre artists were skeptical of fully altering the human voice.

In example nine we see an illustration of the pitch variations present during the use of vibrato. The middle section is the pitch and the roller coaster-like lines represent pitch variations. The slower the vibrato, the wider the variations in the performers pitch.<sup>124</sup> Frequency modulators, and a better understanding of belting technique substantially improved live and recorded artist performances and empowered composers, directors and producers to take greater creative risk in their work.

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<sup>123</sup> Paul Presto Jr. "Pitch Tolerance", *Journal of Singing*, vol. 73, no. 5, (May/June 2017): 539-543.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.



*Figure 2 (Pitch variations during phonation)*

The personal body microphone also evolved during this decade. Shure became the leader in wireless technology and patented the forehead mounted miniature L series. By 1996, this microphone was the most sensitive microphone that had ever been developed. Personal "in ear" monitoring technology was also developed for wide use in 1997. An automatic mixer was also introduced by Sennheiser and Shure in the mid-1990s. This product automatically activates only those microphones being addressed, thus minimizing poor audio overtones caused by open channel microphones. These three elements made it possible for singer-actors to communicate more intimately than ever possible.

## Closing Thoughts on the 1990s

Private voice teachers in the United States and Europe made great strides in their abilities to teach belting in the 1990s. Jo Estill, Jeanette Lovetri and other teachers firmly trademarked their systems for teaching male belting during the mid-1990s. Much of their progress was met with criticism from academia. In some cases, the backlash was merited. Exclusive singing systems did not work for everyone. Each student brings a different set of challenges to the studio. Systematic vocal training can often fail to empathize with a singer. The belief that teachers need to "meet the student where they are" began to be more accepted by vocal teachers.

Pedagogues were searching for solutions and many tangible advances were made. In an article published in the NATS journal in 1999, Lisa Popeil described her research with the use of a video-fluoroscopy.<sup>125</sup> In her discovery, she provides scientific support that Jo Estill's posture that the larynx raises during belting is inaccurate on certain pitches. Advances in science now made it possible to safely explore the anatomy of the vocal mechanism during phonation.

Pioneers Neal Semer, Rachael Lebon, Mary Saunders-Barton, and others continued to refine their approaches and performers enjoyed healthier careers singing and communicating more complicated musical material. Beginning in 2000 regular articles on belting appeared in the NATS Journal of Singing. This substantiated belting because it was now discussed in a scholarly journal. The aesthetic bias of teachers unfamiliar

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<sup>125</sup> Lisa Popeil, "Comparing Belt and Classical Techniques Using MRI and Video Fluoroscopy" vol. 56, no. 2 (November/December 1999): 27-29.

with teaching belt began to lessen and people began to have honest conversations about a topic that had long been taboo in the university setting.<sup>126</sup>

Shenandoah Conservatory, Penn State University and the University of Miami hired faculty members that could teach cross pedagogically. Teachers from the United States and Canada relocated to Germany, Holland, and Austria to teach in the exploding European musical theatre industry.

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<sup>126</sup> Saunders, Mary. "Bel Canto--Can Belto: Teaching Women to Sing Musical Theatre." *Journal of Singing* 68, no. 3 (Jan-Feb 2011): 373-376.

## CHAPTER VI – POST-2000s

The new millennium began with musical comedy, musicals based on films and an update of the *Aida* story. *The Producers*, *42nd Street*, and *Full Monty* all exceeded box office expectations. Elton John's hit musical *Aida* ran for 1981 performances. *Urinetown* opened just ten days after the terror attack on the World Trade Center. *Urinetown* was conceived to be a satire musical that poked fun at musical theatre al la Brecht. Jukebox musicals were also born during this time. Jukebox musicals are new musicals built around existing pop songs. Some of these productions were staged in a review format and some were based on intricate plots.<sup>127</sup> *Dance of the Vampires*, based on Roman Polanski's film, premiered on Broadway in 2002 after years of success in Germany under the title *Tanz Der Vampir*.

The style and subject matter of musicals after 1999 varied immensely. *Avenue Q* was a low budget romp about the stories of thirty-somethings in the boroughs of New York told by puppets. *Wicked*, written by veteran Stephen Schwartz, was a musical based on the novel the Wizard of Oz. There has also been a continued interest in songwriters that write theatre songs outside of musicals. Composer Scott Alan's CD, *Dreaming Wide Awake* was released in 2004 and contained theater songs in a pop style. Corey Trahan states, "Alan's songs are contemporary versions of the Art Song. They are complete stories and often work best when performed with specific other songs."<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> John Kendrick, *Musical Theatre: A History*, (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2010).

<sup>128</sup> Dr. Corey Trahan, interview, Hamburg, Germany, July 12, 2017.



## Vocal Styles and Timber Post-2000

Jukebox musicals, musicals based on films, on novels, surrealistic musicals, and epic musicals all appeared after 2000. For male belters, there were opportunities in every show but in most cases, the vocal style differed vastly from project to project. The 1990s saw the maturation of the male belter and by the time the 2000s rolled around, the male singer-actor was required to sing in three different vocal styles. Each of these styles require solid technical prowess, honest communication, and specific timber. This was the outcome of such a varied compositional and creative palette during the late 1990s and 2000s.

### *Musical Theatre Vocal Styles*

#### *Neoclassical*

Originally termed legit, Neoclassical musical theatre works are firmly rooted in the traditional or classical voice training pedagogy. The vocal timbre of this style is similar to those of Alfred Drake, John Raitt and Julie Andrews. Much of the repertoire of this style is similar to *Oklahoma!*, *Carousel*, and *My Fair Lady*.

Contemporary Neoclassical shows include; *The Light In The Piazza*, *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder*. Distinguishing qualities of this style include balanced *chiaroscuro*, floating larynx, vertical round timbre, and traditional vocal ranges for men and women. There are numbers for the baritenor in this vocal style but these Neoclassical works do not normally include male belting. Brian Stokes Mitchell and James Barbour are both male Neoclassical vocal style singer-actors. Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Phantom of The Opera* opened in 1988 and is considered the beginning of

musical theatre Neo-Classicism.<sup>129</sup> Unlike many Lloyd Webber's other shows, *Phantom* has a primarily classical approach to its construction.

### *Pop/Rock*

This vocal style is heavily influenced by commercial styles such as pop, rock, R&B, hip-hop and country. Kevin Michael Jones notes; "It is an empathetic, reactive, and emotion-based genre of singing that embraces vocal distortions like growls, vocal fry, breathy tone, screams, glottal stops, and vowel manipulation." This style originated in the 1970s and evolved as new musical theatre repertoire was written in the 1980s and 1990s. This style, as previously noted, relies heavily on electric sound amplification. The male belter enjoys extensive repertoire in this vocal style from shows such as *Next to Normal*, *Spring Awakening*, *Aida*, *Jersey Boys*, and *Rocky*. The evolution of this vocal style enabled male belting to become a pedagogically mainstream aspect of voice instruction.

### *Contemporary/Post-Modern*

This style synergizes elements of Neoclassical, Pop/Rock and other vocal styles and is considered the most common musical theatre vocal style today. It is speech-like and often includes brighter timbre and straight tone to vibrato style elements.<sup>130</sup> Contemporary Musical theatre vocal style also includes repertoire that features variations

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<sup>129</sup> Kendrick, 121-128.

<sup>130</sup> Berton Coffin, *Sounds of Singing: Principles and Applications Vocal Technique* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1987), 34-36.

of mixed belt singing, pure head voice (CDP), improvisation, and spoken word.<sup>131</sup>

Shows in this repertoire include *Wicked*, *Thoroughly Modern Milly*, *Parade*, *Waitress*, *Avenue Q*, and *Evan Hanson*. This contemporary vocal style is even more driven by text than in earlier works. Considered musical surrealism, lyrics are often verbose and reflect every day experiences. They may also include patter singing and elements of improvisation.

### *Creating Vocal Energy*

In the mid-1980s, Wesley Balk published a set of books while on the faculty of the University of Minnesota. *The Complete Singer Actor* and *Performance Power* were highly successful books because they explored the synergy between dramatic text, vocal style, and vocal timbre outcome during performance situations.<sup>132</sup> Balk was a movement and acting professor who built a successful career as an opera stage director. Balk's Stanislavski based approach to acting for the singer actor was met with resistance and in some cases rejected. Method acting, as it was called was often too muscular and caused extensive vocal tension that compromised range and tone quality.

Despite this, his proven process of creating dramatic energy in the voice was a breakthrough for the musical theatre performer. Supporters of Balk and his ideas were early proponents of the Musical Theatre Acting movement. Balk's work encouraged a

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<sup>131</sup> Donahue, Erin, Brehm, Susan. "Reported Vocal Habits of First-Year Undergraduate Musical Theater Majors in a Pre-professional Training Program: A 10-Year Retrospective Study." *Journal of Voice* 28, no. 3 (May 2010): 316-323.

<sup>132</sup> Balk, 29-39.

dialogue between open-minded acting teachers and voice teachers looking for something that would solidify a belting technique. From the beginning it was evident that a synergy between the two was possible. “Breathing in the Moment” assigned an active emotional response to inhalation.<sup>133</sup> The increased dialogue between acting and voice teachers also spread to dance and movement specialists.

The key to creating energy is based on the performers ability to experience a reaction (usually emotional) based on the text that they are speaking/singing. Instead of pushing the voice to sound angry and excited (vocal mugging), singer-actors are encouraged to react to text. This reaction causes an emotional response that is heard in the singing voice and is powerfully communicated to the audience.

Vocal timber and style are vastly affected by creating energy as the voice is altered with each reaction. For belters, creating energy can augment range, flexibility and the projection of the voice and when done properly, becomes a vital part of the singers vocal technique. Communication of the repertoire is enhanced because creative elements and belting technique are not in conflict with each other.

Singer-actors can refine their ability to create energy by working with attitude cards. Attitude cards are constructed by writing twenty or more active attitudes or emotions on 2X4 flash cards. While learning the song, a learning partner holds up different cards every sixteen measures or so. Each time a new attitude card is presented, the artist must honestly communicate the new attitude with their voice through a dramatic reaction. The

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<sup>133</sup> Balk, *Ibid.*

exercise works best when the attitudes are as dissimilar as possible because the student is forced to react quickly and in the moment.<sup>134</sup>

"Economy of Movement" is the physical energy reaction to the dramatic reaction of text. This, in turn, eases the performers unfocused or nervous movement during performance. The outcome of this concept frees the voice, encourages good vocal technique and a natural presentation for the performer. An honest physical reaction frees the singer actor from extraneous gestures and nervous movements while performing.

As with all things, not everyone has embraced these advancements. Teachers on both sides of the aisle continue to debate the issue but proof is seen in the institutions/teachers producing career ready artists. In early 2008, Rocco Dal Vera and Joe Deer, both on the faculty of the University of Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music, published the first fully integrated musical theatre-acting book.<sup>135</sup>

While the book contains little vocal technique, it does encourage the actor to sing and the singer to act. Dal Vera's work encouraged the addition of musical theatre acting classes into undergraduate musical theatre programs. Musical theatre belting technique was no longer just a vocal area of research and application but rather, one element in a synergistic approach to performing musical theatre.

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

<sup>135</sup> Joe Deer and Rocco Dal Vera Deer, *Acting in Musical Theatre: A Comprehensive Course* (NY: Routledge Press, 2008).

## Pedagogical Advances in the Post-2000 Era

Another topic of misinformation in the mid-2000s was the German School choice of over-extending the mandible. It was believed that this would increase sound production, range and expression. The converse is true and the consequences of this action are significant. There are two major muscles involved in what is considered dropping the jaw. The first is the *platysma*.<sup>136</sup> This is a thin muscle connected to the side of the face. Its primary function is to assist in smiling. The second muscle is the *lateral pterygoid*. The *lateral pterygoid* has a more significant role and is a more massive muscle that is connected to the *ramus* deep inside the head. Manipulation either of these muscles produces a raised laryngeal structure, facial tension, neck tension, comic facial expressions and rear tongue constriction.<sup>137</sup>

The sound distortions that occur when extending the mandible are even more profound. Vowel formants are affected and therefore affect vowel purity. Pitch and intonation are compromised and range is decreased. This last outcome is noticeable during phonation but the other consequences worsen and evolve over a period of time. This overall effect causes long-term “isms” or bad habits that are very difficult to correct. While it is acknowledged that the mandible will drop slightly, over extending was dangerous and ineffective for belting pedagogy.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Vennard, 89-91.

<sup>137</sup> McKinney, 23-36.

<sup>138</sup> Richard Miller, *English, French, German and Italian Techniques of Singing: A Study In National Tonal Preferences and How They Relate to Functional Efficiency* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1977), 68-78.

Over extending the mandible is still taught in operatic circles as a means to range extension and inorganic vowel modification.<sup>139</sup> As mentioned earlier, distorting or over extending the jaw causes a list of major problems for the vocalist. What was known as “Biting the Watermelon” is rarely taught today by vocal pedagogues. Instead of an over extended mandible, another presentation of the mandible is preferred.<sup>140</sup>

Creating a more horizontal space in the interior rear glottis similar to a gag reflex while lowering the jaw to a mid-point extension, will create the necessary opening for the most extensive range of the musical theatre vocalist. This creates the feeling of a soft rectangle that should not be visible on the face. The labia should remain loose but not rounded. This presentation will also accentuate the naturally occurring movement of the tongue and will not diminish formant or vowel purity and provide necessary ring frequency freedom.<sup>141</sup>

Caution is necessary so that the teacher does not inadvertently cause the vocalist to spread the sound. “The Spread” will have the opposite desired effect. Also, hyper pivoting the head upwards will lift the larynx and pull breath support away from the *appoggio* basis.

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<sup>139</sup> Echternach, 78-89.

<sup>140</sup> McCoy, 105.

<sup>141</sup> Melton, 56-58

## CHAPTER VII – CLOSING AND THE AMERICAN SCHOOL

It is said that innovation comes from need. The advance of belting as legitimate vocal technique has been a journey of discovery. The technique is still evolving and as of this writing, there are no scholarly texts on belting.<sup>142</sup> Like the writings of Garcia, Lamperti and Dal Rocco and Marchesi, it should be written. While the history and development of belting is less finite than classical singing technique, most advances were made by American teachers. Reflecting on this, it is ironic that American teachers were the most aggressively opposed to teaching belting on any level. Estill, Speech level Singing, and Lovetri are no longer feared by voice pedagogues, and acting teachers, for the most part, acknowledge the need for specialized acting training in musical theatre.

In general, American voice teachers incorporate the German, Italian, French and English Schools into their pedagogy. American vocal technique, like the American melting pot, contains the best of many different influences. Academic musical theatre programs continue to grow with young men and women seeking training for careers in the industry. Easy to communicate with, eager and flexible, American performers in opera and musical theatre are still hired for European theatre and opera houses.

The evolution of male belting pedagogy continues to develop. Healthy approaches to an increasingly difficult repertoire list for both men and women encourage a continued conversation between those who seek to mature as pedagogues of belting. Most pedagogues believe we will continue to see new vocal styles emerge in musical

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<sup>142</sup> Berton Coffin, *Historical Vocal Pedagogy Classics* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2002).



theatre in the years to come. Technology and a changing culture will profoundly influence what is being created in musical theatre. Advances in technique must continue to develop to meet the needs of the singer-actors on the stage. Our students deserve to be taught in an environment where knowledge and new information can work together for ongoing relevance in the musical theatre field.

“I know the world is filled with troubles and many injustices. But reality is as beautiful as it is ugly. I think it is just as important to sing about beautiful mornings as it is to talk about slums. I just couldn’t write anything without hope in it.”

- Oscar Hammerstein II

## APPENDIX A – Glossary of Terms

### Belting

Belting is a musical theatre singing technique that achieves a specific vocal quality derived from speech-like tones with a dominant thyro-arytenoid production. This quality can resonate through a performance space without the use of amplification

### Male Belt

Male belting is thyro-arytenoid dominant vocal production (TDP); in other words, it is chest register-dominant singing carried above the *passaggio*/break with speech-like production. When belting, the vocal tract assumes a shape that resembles normal speech, resulting in a brighter sound quality due to a lower soft palette.

### TDP

Thyro-arytenoid dominant production or chest register dominant vocal production.

### CDP

Crico-thyroid dominant production or head register dominant vocal production.

### Mix

The combination of CDP and TDP registers for the purpose of belting. Traditionally, Mix refers for a CDP heavy belt although the percentages of CDP and TDP can be regulated and adjusted depending on vocal style.

### Chesting

Term used in this dissertation to describe the TDP vocal style and production of early female musical theatre singers such as Ethel Merman. This term is suggested as a more accurate description of the sound produced by early singers previously referred to as belters.

### Creating Energy

Theory of creating vocal timber through the reaction to text utilizing extreme active emotional attitudes, movement and focus, based on the writings of H. Wesley Balk.

### Intentional Breathiness

Term used to describe the act of flooding the vocal folds with air to prevent full closure. Style choice was used widely in the 1970s for the Rock Musical but was combined with darker vowels and more vertical glottal space in the mid-1980s with *Les Miserables*.

### Attitude Cards

Cards used as an exercise for creating energy. Active attitudes (emotions) are written on index cards and used to stimulate varying vocal timbers and energy responses.

### Baritenor

The term baritenor is used to describe a voice that is a unique hybrid of the baritone and tenor. The vocal line requires the singer to produce a tone with a more *chiaro* timber and

a predominately TDP driven sound while producing a pure vowel formant, CDP as a causation for multiple vocal styles and timbers.

### Register Crescendo

A register crescendo refers to the planned increase of TDP of CDP within a phrase of music for the purposes of changing vocal timber, vocal styles and/or characterization.

This technique, when combined with dynamic changes is a highly expressive tool for musical theatre from the 1990s to today.

## APPENDIX B - Biographies

### Bruce Earnest

Mr. Earnest is Assistant Vice President and Director of Musical Theatre at University of Mobile in Mobile, Alabama. Bruce has appeared in over 70 operatic and musical theatre roles in Europe and the United States and has appeared with the Munich State Theatre, State Theatre Passau, Opera Roanoke, The Berkshire Opera, Dayton Opera, Orlando Opera, Worcester Light Opera, Florida Grand Opera, The Vienna Folks Opera, Virginia Opera, Williamstown Theatre Festival, Black Hills Playhouse, Berkshire Theatre Festival, The USD Playhouse, The Vineyard Playhouse, Walt Disney World, Saint Cecilia Ensemble, The Springfield Symphony, the Hamburg Musical Orchestra and the Orlando Philharmonic and off-Broadway. He has produced, directed or music directed more than 90 shows including; Side by Side by Sondheim, Big River, Little Shop of Horrors, Lend Me A Tenor, My Way, Tin Types, Into The Woods, The Fantasticks, Baby, Oklahoma, Secret Garden, Camelot, The Saint of Bleeker Street and The Impresario to name a few.

He has conducted masterclasses and workshops on Belting, casting, international careers in musical theatre, and musical theatre acting in the United States and throughout Europe. Bruce and has current or past students working in major productions in the UK, Europe, on Broadway and in national tours in the United States. He is the founder and former Program Director of Music Theatre at the University of Central Florida, Director of Musical Theatre at the University of South Dakota, Interim Associate Professor of Voice at Folkwang Hochschule in Essen, Associate Professor of Music Theatre at the Bavarian Theatre Academy/Hochschule in Munich, and served as Voice and Artistic Consultant for Stage Entertainment. Mr. Earnest consults regularly with international casting director Ralf Schaedler, is Executive Director of the Ever Blue Festival, and serves as President of Mobile Opera.

### Dr. Maryann Kyle

In demand as one of the finest vocal coaches of belt, legit and classical vocal technique, Maryann Kyle has dedicated her professional life to guiding singers in their pursuit not only of exceptional singing, but also captivating performance. Kyle has extensive experience teaching, coaching, and performing opera, recitals, concerts and Broadway shows. Kyle is currently the vocal coach for Twist, a new musical by composers Tena Clark and Gary Prim, and directed by Debbie Allen, which opened in Atlanta in 2010 at the Alliance Theatre, and opened at the Pasadena Playhouse in 2011. Kyle is the creator of Maryann Kyle's COMMAND PERFORMANCE WORKSHOP, which focuses on the integration of the voice into the total actor.

Maryann Kyle is an active performer of opera, concert, and recital repertoire, and has shared the concert stage with some of world's greatest artists, having sung the role of

Micaela in Carmen opposite internationally known mezzo-soprano Denyce Graves; performing as a guest soloist with The Miami Festival opposite famed bass-baritone William Warfield; and singing the soprano solos in Mendelssohn's Elijah opposite baritone Timothy Noble and mezzo-soprano Marietta Simpson. Kyle has appeared as a soloist on the pop music stage with famed artists Patti Labelle, Patti Austin, Dionne Warwick, Ann Nesby and Vesta Williams. Kyle's Sondheim Cabaret will premiere in NYC at the Laurie Beechman Theatre/West Bank Café in October, 2011.

Specializing in belt and legit style Broadway technique, Kyle has had a tremendous success in training singers in the best and healthiest use of their voice, and in integrating the function of singing with their character and physical acting process. She maintains studios in Los Angeles, New York and Atlanta. Her students include famed New York dancer Jared Grimes, Emily Hindrichs (English National Opera, Oper Frankfurt, Tanglewood, Seattle Opera), Olivia Diane Joseph (off-Broadway production of The Wiz, Suzi Bass Award Winner), Alaman Diadhiou (title role in Twist, America's Child Tap Dance Prodigy, Oman...O Man!, Jerry Lewis telethon), Pop/R&B singer, Matthew Johnson (Twist) and Aijia Lise, (headliner at the Viper Room in Hollywood and the House of Blues on Sunset Strip, Twist).

Kyle's coaching talents are not restricted to Broadway musicals. Her students are successful in the classical realm as well, many of whom have performed leading roles with New Orleans Opera, Seattle Opera, Oper Frankfurt, and English National Opera. Her students have garnered numerous awards including top placements at state and regional Metropolitan Opera National Council auditions. Her students have earned apprenticeships with Seattle Opera, Lake George Opera Festival, Aspen Festival, Tanglewood Music Festival, Ohio Light Opera, Brevard and Operafestival di Roma; many continue to pursue their studies in major conservatories and schools including Indiana University, San Francisco Conservatory, Boston Conservatory, Manhattan School of Music, Cincinnati Conservatory, Oklahoma City University and New England Conservatory of Music. Kyle's main opera roles include Mimi and Musetta in Puccini's La Boheme Countess and Susannah in Mozart's Le Nozze di Figaro, Fiordiligi in Mozart's Cosi fan Tutte, Violetta in La Traviata, Pamina in Die Zauberflote, Lady Billows in Albert Herring, Micaela in Carmen, the title role in Floyd's Susannah, and the Evil Queen in the world-premiere of Snow White.

#### Dr. Corey Trahan

With over 70 roles in his repertoire, Corey Trahan is an active performer, educator and stage director in opera, oratorio, music theatre, operetta and recital venues. Known for his comic timing, versatile voice, and onstage charisma, he is being seen and heard internationally in repertoire ranging from operatic classics to modern musical theatre. Corey began the 2016-2017 season by performing John Utterson in Jekyll and Hyde with the Academy of Children's Theatre, music directing N.S.U.'s production of Hooray for Hollywood, presenting two lectures at the first ever Southern Musical Theatre Conference in Mississippi and was a teaching intern at the International Performing Arts

Institute in Germany. This fall, Corey music directed N.S.U.'s production of Young Frankenstein, performed two concert tours (The Best of Broadway and Home for the Holidays) with Lisa Phifer (soprano) and Richard Seiler (pianist) and was Artistic Director for N.S.U.'s 2016 Christmas Gala. Upcoming projects include performing Franklin D. Roosevelt in Annie with the Academy of Children's Theatre, music directing N.S.U.'s production of Next to Normal, performing Hooray for Hollywood with Maryann Kyle (soprano) as part of Mississippi Opera's Duling Hall Cabaret Series and performing Mordred in Camelot at the 2017 Natchez Festival of Music. In March 2017, Corey will present "Voice Training for Musical Theatre" at S.E.T.C.'s 2017 National Conference in Lexington, Kentucky and present lectures at the 2017 Pedagogy of Style Conference at the University of Southern Mississippi. In the summer of 2017, Corey will join the voice faculty of the International Performing Arts Institute in Germany and Thailand.

Corey has performed with numerous orchestras including the Bangkok Symphony Orchestra, Akron Symphony, Lake Charles Symphony, Shreveport Symphony, Brazos Symphony, Monroe Symphony, at the Jefferson Performing Arts Society in New Orleans and Houston Masterworks. Corey has performed annual recital tours since 2002 funded by the National Endowment for the Arts' Challenge America Grant and the Northeast Louisiana Arts Council where Corey serves as Visiting Artist and member of the organization's resident touring ensembles. In addition to performing, Corey has experience teaching on the collegiate level. He completed a two-year assignment as the Biedenharn Endowed Chair in Music at the University of Louisiana where he was Director of Opera Workshop, taught private voice, vocal pedagogy and the history of opera. Corey was also Chair of Music Theatre at Mahidol University in Bangkok, Thailand for two years. Currently, Corey is an Assistant Professor of Theatre/

Director of Music Theatre at Northwestern State University in Natchitoches, Louisiana and recently joined the voice faculty of the International Performing Arts Institute (Thailand & Germany). Corey's academic degrees include the Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of North Texas, the Master of Music degree from the University of Houston and the Bachelor of Music degree from Louisiana State University. He has been an apprentice with Lake George Opera, Central City Opera, Des Moines Metro Opera, Amarillo Opera, Shreveport Opera and the Seagle Music Colony. Corey is a current member of the American Guild of Music Artists, Actor's Equity Association and President of the Louisiana Chapter of the National Association of Teachers of Singing.

### Matt Morgan

Having the distinction of making debuts at three of the four theaters at New York's Lincoln Center, Matt Morgan has established himself as a tenor to watch. His New York debut came as Don Gomez in Weber's Die drei Pintos with Leon Botstein and the American Symphony Orchestra. The very same season, his New York City Opera debut occurred in the world premiere of Charles Wuorinen's Haroun and the Sea of Stories.

Following these successes, Mr. Morgan debuted with the National Chorale at Avery Fisher Hall as the tenor soloist in Handel's Messiah.

Upcoming engagements include a return to the **Florentine Opera** to create the role of Charles Drouet in the world premiere and commercial recording of Sister Carrie by the grammy award winning Robert Aldridge and Herschel Garfein. Highlights for the 2015-2016 season include a return to the **Florentine Opera** for his first Goro in *Madama Butterfly*, a return to the **University of Florida Opera Theatre** for Rodolfo in La Boheme, Rodolfo in La Boheme for his debut with the **Ocala Symphony**, the tenor soloist in Carmina Burana with **Dance Alive USA**, a concert of La Boheme and La Traviata Highlights with **First Coast Opera**. The 2014-2015 season saw his company and role debut with the **Florentine Opera** as Eddie Fislinger in Elmer Gantry, Handel's Messiah with the **Boise Philharmonic**, and a return to the **Allegheny Valley Concert Association** for concerts of Italian and Musical Theatre favorites.

In the 2013-2014 season, Mr. Morgan appeared with the Dayton Performing Arts Alliance singing the West Side Story Suite and selections from Candide, performed Britten's Les Illuminations with the Sarasota Ballet and the Sir Frederick Ashton Festival, returned to the Jacksonville Symphony for Le nozze di Figaro, and created the role of Marco Polo in Stella Sung's The Red Silk Thread. Upcoming performances include his company and role debut with the Florentine Opera as Eddie Fislinger in Elmer Gantry and a return to the Allegheny Valley Concert Association to headline a concert of Italian and Musical Theatre favorites.

In addition to Mr. Morgan's busy performing schedule he continues to expand his role as an educator and vocal director. He currently holds the title of visiting assistant professor of musical theatre voice at the University of Florida, vocal director for Players by the Sea, and Vice President of North Florida NATS. Additionally he has served as the head of musical theatre at Douglas Anderson School of the Arts and on the voice faculty of Jacksonville University. He has served as the vocal director for countless musicals as well as lead clinician for musical theatre programs and intensives across the country.

Mr. Morgan performed at New York City Opera for three consecutive seasons to great audience and critical acclaim in a variety of repertoire ranging from Rameau's Platee to works of the 20th century such as The Mines of Sulphur and The Little Prince. In their new production of The Pirates of Penzance, he was hailed as an "endearing and loveable" Frederick "with the right hero looks and a wonderful tenor voice". Among his many appearances at Lincoln Center, his other New York successes include his portrayal of Britten's anti-hero in Gotham Chamber Opera's wildly successful production of Albert Herring.

His busy concert schedule has taken Mr. Morgan to sing with some of the country's leading symphony orchestras and concert organizations including the Pittsburgh



Symphony Orchestra, the American Symphony Orchestra, the National Chorale, and the Bard Music Festival. Mr. Morgan tours North America regularly, most recently playing to crowds of tens of thousands at the two largest Italian festivals in North America- (Milwaukee Festa Italiana and the Upper Ohio Valley Italian Festival). As a recording artist, his DVD's and CD's are distributed internationally. He is an alumnus of the Pittsburgh Opera Center, National Opera Company, and Louisiana State University.

### Neil Semer

Neil Semer teaches voice and gives workshops internationally. His main voice studio is in New York where he works with high level performers in classical, musical theatre and contemporary styles of music. He teaches also in Toronto, London, Paris, Copenhagen and throughout Germany. In July-August 2016 he will lead the 20th annual Neil Semer Summer Vocal Institutes in Coesfeld and Aub, Germany.

His teaching combines principles of Bel Canto, scientific understanding of vocal function and most importantly, emotional connection to music. Focus is on coordination of the heart, mind and body.

His students sing leading roles in the most important opera houses around the world and star in Broadway productions. In July 2004, he was the keynote speaker and master teacher for the Australian National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) Convention in Sydney.

Masterclasses given around the world include the 5th International Congress of Voice Teachers in Helsinki, the first three Annual International Classical Singer Conventions, the Royal Academy of Music and the Association of English Singers and Speakers in London, Danish Actors Association, two National Conventions of the National Association of German Singing Teachers (Hamburg and Wurzburg), the Leipzig, Hannover and Wurzburg Hochschulen, Swiss Voice Teachers Association in Zurich, Australian NATS Chapters in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane, the Melba Trust, the Queensland and Newcastle Conservatoriums, two Canadian Voice Care Foundation Symposia in Toronto and Banff, NATS National Convention in Seattle, NATS Winter and Summer Workshops in Miami, Princeton, Minneapolis and New York, NATS New England, Mid-Atlantic and Central Regional Conferences, NATS Chapters in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Boston, Wisconsin, Orlando, Salt Lake City, Michigan and Miami, and innumerable universities.

Faculties have included the Canadian Opera Company, American Institute of Musical Studies (AIMS) in Austria, New England and Boston Conservatories, New York University, and Barnard College.

### Dr. Mary Saunders-Barton

Since the mid-1990s, Mary is frequently invited to present her workshop *Bel Canto Can Belto* for singers and teachers of singing in the U.S. and abroad. She has presented workshops and master classes for the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS), the National Opera Association (NOA), the Voice Foundation Symposium and for musical theatre programs at many colleges and universities. Mary was the keynote musical theatre speaker at the 2013, and 2016 International Congress of Voice Teachers in Brisbane, Australia. Recently, she was a master teacher for the 2017 NATS Intern Program at the University of Toronto in Toronto, Ontario. She is Professor Emeritus of Musical Theatre Voice at Penn State University and considered a seminal pioneer in the male belting movement.

### Dr. Steve Chicurel-Stein

Doctoral research in the music of George Gershwin enabled him, in a scholarly setting, to bridge the gap between the disciplines of music and theatre. His career as a pianist and accompanist in a concert setting has led to performances in numerous locations in the United States and Europe. He has accompanied well-known performers like Klea Blackhurst in her award-winning one-woman revue, "Everything the Traffic Will Allow: The Songs and Sass of Ethel Merman" and Tony Award winner Alice Ripley in concert.

Musical theatre has been his primary passion, and to that end, Dr. Steve has been a part of nearly 100 theatrical productions as musical director, conductor, pianist, and vocal arranger. He has worked for companies that have taken him to perform in 12 countries on 4 continents. In the U.S.A. he has worked for regional theatres that include Flat Rock Playhouse, Bucks County Playhouse, and Hampton Playhouse. He has been a part of a number of successful world- and regional- premiere productions, among them "Pageant" (Michael Rice et al) and "Gilligan's Island: The Musical (Sherwood & Lloyd Schwartz and Laurence Juber). Certificates of esteem and distinguished service from national and international organizations and governments attest to his contributions to musical theatre.

Dr. Chicurel-Stein is proud to be a vanguard licensee and Certified Master Teacher and Course Instructor of Estill Voice Training Systems; he brings the Estill Model not only to the UCF musical theatre curriculum, but to professional voice users worldwide. He continues to lead energetic workshops in the U.K., Australia, the Caribbean and Europe. He presented a landmark paper, "Three-Tier Voice Training for Musical Theatre: A Non-Traditional Approach," at the First World Voice Congress in Oporto, Portugal, and was also the first transatlantic faculty to teach at the Oxenfoord International Summer Music School in St. Andrews, Scotland. In 2005 and again in 2007, he was a keynote speaker for the Association of Teachers of Singing (AOTOS) while on a lecture tour of Sydney, Melbourne, and Adelaide, Australia. He was a visiting artist/teacher in residence at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music in 2009. He co-presented the paper "A Design for Collaborative Voice Assessment, Rehabilitation, and Training" at the 6th Pan-European Voice Conference, The Royal Academy of Music, in London, England. In 2011

and 2013 Dr. Chicure-Stein presented workshops in Artistry in Musical Theatre at EÒLIA - Escola Superior d'Art Dramàtic in Barcelona, Spain. As well, the UCF Department of Theatre was highlighted in his paper, Teaching Levels I and II in a University 15-week Semester Setting, at the Estill International World Voice Symposium V in Rome, Italy and again in a paper presented at Harvard University for the EVI World Symposium VI. Dr. Chicurel-Stein's most recent (2016) performance and master class experiences found him in Indonesia, where, together with Dr. Jeremy Hunt (UCF Dept. of Music), he presented recitals of Western and new Indonesian music as well as led master classes for university and conservatory music students.

Dr. Chicurel-Stein is the co-author of *Geography of the Voice: "Anatomy of an Adam's Apple"* as well as *Score: Music Theory for Musical Theatre* (Scarecrow Press). He has Bachelors, Masters, and Doctor of Musical Arts degrees in piano performance from Mars Hill College, The Peabody Conservatory of Music/Johns Hopkins University, and the University of Kentucky respectively.

#### Dr. Bill Adams

Bill J. Adams, D.M.A., is an associate professor who coordinates the performing and visual arts programs in the Department of Performing and Visual Arts at Nova Southeastern University's College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences. Dr. Adams is a principal investigator for *Music Counts: A Specialized Treatment Program for Children with Autism*, which is a collaborative research project sponsored by the President's Faculty Research and Development Grant at Nova Southeastern University. Dr. Adams has presented healthy belting workshops at the Southeastern Theatre Conferences, the Florida Theatre Conferences, and the Florida State Thespian Conferences. Another area of interest is performance formats for art song recitals, and most recently, he presented *MTV Meets Franz Schubert – Liminal Observation of Multidisciplinary Performance* at the College Music Society International Conference in Helsinki, Finland.

Specializing in character work, he premiered the role of Ariel in *The Rape of the Lock* and sang Vašek in *The Bartered Bride*, Monostatos in *Die Zauberflöte*, and Goro in *Madama Butterfly* while living in New York. Regional credits include Ciccio in *Most Happy Fella* with William Michals and Jessica Hershberg at Palm Beach Dramaworks, Loutzenheiser the mad trapper in *Cannibal: the Musical* with the Promethean Theatre, Mike in William Bolcom's *A View from the Bridge* with Opera Theatre of Pittsburg, the Mayor in *Albert Herring* with Orlando Opera Company, and Zangara in Stephen Sondheim's *Assassins* with Orlando Civic Theatre.

## Ralf Schaedler

Ralf Schaedler is Executive Casting Director for Stage Entertainment Europe. With an international career as a performer, he is responsible for casting European productions for Stage Entertainment including *Sister Act*, *Wicked*, *Tarzan*, *The Buddy Holly Story*, *Lion King*, *Rocky*, and *Aladdin*, in a dozen European cities. Mr. Schaedler is member of the IPAI Advisory Board and works with IPAI Artists on career development, casting and musical theatre acting. He is a frequent collaborator with Sir Elton John, Sir Cameron McIntosh and Phil Collins.

## Jason Robert Brown

JASON ROBERT BROWN has been hailed as “one of Broadway’s smartest and most sophisticated songwriters since Stephen Sondheim” (Philadelphia Inquirer), and his “extraordinary, jubilant theater music” (Chicago Tribune) has been heard all over the world, whether in one of the hundreds of productions of his musicals every year or in his own incendiary live performances. The New York Times refers to Jason as “a leading member of a new generation of composers who embody high hopes for the American musical.” “**The Bridges of Madison County**,” a musical adapted with Marsha Norman from the bestselling novel, is currently running on Broadway, directed by Bartlett Sher and starring Kelli O’Hara and Steven Pasquale. “**Honeymoon In Vegas**,” based on Andrew Bergman’s film, opens on Broadway later this year following a triumphant production at Paper Mill Playhouse last fall. A film version of his epochal Off-Broadway musical “**The Last Five Years**” will be released later this year, starring Anna Kendrick and Jeremy Jordan and directed by Richard LaGravenese. His major musicals as composer and lyricist include: “**13**”, written with Robert Horn and Dan Elish, which began its life in Los Angeles in 2007 and opened on Broadway in 2008 (and was subsequently directed by the composer for its West End premiere in 2012); “**The Last Five Years**”, which was cited as one of Time Magazine’s 10 Best of 2001 and won Drama Desk Awards for Best Music and Best Lyrics (and was subsequently directed by the composer in its record-breaking Off-Broadway run at Second Stage Theatre in 2013); “**Parade**,” written with Alfred Uhry and directed by Harold Prince, which premiered at Lincoln Center Theatre in 1998, and subsequently won both the Drama Desk and New York Drama Critics’ Circle Awards for Best New Musical, as well as garnering Jason the Tony Award for Original Score; and “**Songs for a New World**,” a theatrical song cycle directed by Daisy Prince, which played Off-Broadway in 1995, and has since been seen in hundreds of productions around the world. “Parade” was also the subject of a major revival directed by Rob Ashford, first at London’s Donmar Warehouse and then at the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles. His orchestral adaptation of E.B. White’s novel “**The Trumpet of the Swan**” premiered at the Kennedy Center with John Lithgow and the National Symphony Orchestra, and the CD was released on PS Classics. Future projects include a new chamber musical created with Daisy Prince and Jonathan Marc Sherman called “**The Connector**”, an untitled new piece created with Claudia Shear and Casey Nicholaw, and a new solo album for release in 2015. Jason is

the winner of the 2002 Kleban Award for Outstanding Lyrics and the 1996 Gilman & Gonzalez-Falla Foundation Award for Musical Theatre. Jason's songs, including the cabaret standard "Stars and the Moon," have been performed and recorded by Audra McDonald, Billy Porter, Betty Buckley, Karen Akers, Renée Fleming, Philip Quast, Jon Hendricks and many others, and his song "Someone To Fall Back On" was featured in the Walden Media film, "Bandslam." He has also contributed music to the hit Nickelodeon television series, "The Wonder Pets." His scores are published by Hal Leonard. Jason currently teaches musical theater performance and composition at the USC School of Dramatic Arts.

For the new musical "**Prince of Broadway**," a celebration of the career of Harold Prince, Jason will be serving as the musical supervisor and arranger. Other recent New York credits as conductor and arranger include "Urban Cowboy the Musical" on Broadway; Oliver Goldstick's play, "Dinah Was," directed by David Petrarca, at the Gramercy Theatre and on national tour; and William Finn's "A New Brain," directed by Graciela Daniele, at Lincoln Center Theater. Jason was the musical director of the pop vocal group, The Tonics, with whom he performed at the 1992 tribute to Stephen Sondheim at Carnegie Hall (recorded by RCA Victor); he was the conductor and orchestrator of Yoko Ono's musical, "New York Rock," at the WPA Theatre (on Capitol Records); and he orchestrated Andrew Lippa's "John and Jen," Off-Broadway at Lamb's Theatre (Varese Sarabande). In 1994, Jason was the conductor and arranger of Michael John LaChiusa's "The Petrified Prince," directed by Harold Prince, at the Public Theatre. Additionally, Jason served as the orchestrator and arranger of Charles Strouse and Lee Adams's score for a proposed musical of "Star Wars." Jason also took over as musical director for the Off-Broadway hit "When Pigs Fly." Jason has conducted and created arrangements and orchestrations for Liza Minnelli, John Pizzarelli, Tovah Feldshuh, and Laurie Beechman, among many others.

Jason studied composition at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, N.Y., with Samuel Adler, Christopher Rouse, and Joseph Schwantner. He lives with his wife, composer Georgia Stitt, and their daughters in New York City. Jason is a proud member of the Dramatists Guild and the American Federation of Musicians Local 802 & 47. Visit him on the web at [www.jasonrobertbrown.com](http://www.jasonrobertbrown.com).

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