

wichtige Aspekt der vielfach genutzten Möglichkeiten einer technischen Verfremdung der Stimme hinzu. Eine ›Rückkehr‹ zur natürlichen Stimme ist unter anderem bei einer Sängerin wie Björk zu beobachten, die in ihrem soeben erschienene Album *Medulla* völlig auf Instrumentalbegleitung verzichtet und stattdessen Stimmen verschiedenster Provenienz a cappella zusammenbringt. Diese allerdings werden durch geschicktes Sound-Design in ihrem Mark – *Medulla*¹⁹ – verändert.

Die Stimme, unser primäres Instrument, zeigt sich insgesamt als ausgesprochen wandelbar – oder vielleicht sogar als Leerstelle, die besetzt werden kann, wie es den ForscherInnen gerade gefällt? Es findet sich zumindest eine große Bandbreite zwischen der bei Clément nicht hörbaren Stimme des Soprans, dem Sirengesang einer Mary Ann Smart und beispielsweise den Ideen des Lacanianers Michel Poizat, der vom ›cri de l'ange‹ und der ›voix du diable‹ sowie der ›jouissance lyrique sacrée‹ in der Oper spricht. Es scheint, als könne sich die Stimme – als Medium der semantischen Vermittlung – selbst einer klaren – auch geschlechtlichen – Einordnung oftmals entziehen. Die Verknüpfung von »Stimme und Geschlechteridentität(en)« ist deshalb nicht so eindeutig, wie es zunächst scheinen mag.

Bruno Nettl (Urbana, IL)

Gender (and Other) Identities in Singing Style and Vocal Tone Color

Ethnomusicological Perspectives and Two Brief Illustrations

Background: The Study of Singing Style

The relationship of voice quality and singing style to culture has been of interest to ethnomusicologists for many decades, but the field has not developed a large body of literature. It is a subject that has always, as it were, been on the edges of the discourse, referred to in general descriptions of a society's or a region's musical style by early founders of the field such as Otto Abraham and Erich von Hornbostel. Indeed, Hornbostel, writing advice on methods of transcription with Abraham¹ in 1909, admonishes us to pay attention to ›Vortragsweise‹ and ›Klangfarbe‹, though he suggests no concrete technique at that point. It became a significant component in the description of a vocal musical style by major comparativists such as George Herzog² (e.g. 1928, but also in his later works), though essentially neglected by others, such as Mieczyslaw Kolinski. It was touched upon by scholars

¹⁹ *Medulla* = lat. das Mark von Mensch, Tier, Pflanze.

¹ Otto Abraham und Erich M. von Hornbostel, »Vorschläge für die Transkription exotischer Melodien«, in: *Sammelbände der internationalen Musikgesellschaft* 11 (1909–10), p. 1–25.

who wished to take a completely holistic approach to music, such as Charles Seeger (particularly in his article »Singing Style«³), in whose attempts to fashion an automatic melograph vocal quality played a role; and Curt Sachs, in his attempt to distinguish »patriarchal« and »matriarchal« musical societies with the use of interval and dance step size.⁴ Vocal tone color grew to be the major thrust of the work of a few scholars whose interest tended in the direction of the relationship of music to biology, particularly of Walter Graf (e. g. 1969).⁵ Eventually, those concerned with this area of study were faced with two major problem areas: the methodology of analyzing and describing singing style on a comparative basis,⁶ and the relationship of singing style to the character of the society that produces it – or to put it more simply, why a particular society chooses to sing in a certain way.

While my purpose is not to give an account of the history of this small branch of endeavor, I would like to refer to the authors of two classic works which are emblematic of the two directions. Franz Födermayr's book *Zur gesanglichen Stimmgebung in der aussereuropäischen Musik* (1971) concentrates on sonographic analysis (and, incidentally, provides a comprehensive survey of research up to that time), and goes on to suggest a relationship not so much between sound and culture type, but as a criterion of genre within a musical culture. By contrast, Alan Lomax's work,⁷ usually subsumed under the rubric »cantometrics«, addresses both problem areas. Eschewing mechanical help, he divided musical style into 37 »parameters«, of which about a dozen are aspects of singing style including »vocal width« (e. g. tension or its absence), ornamentation, nasality, rasp, tessitura, volume, vocal tremolo, emphasis on accented tones, etc., which were rated numerically to provide a profile unique to a performance and, statistically accumulated, to a body of music. The second problem area is attacked by applying to the world's cultures a typology based on social organization with emphasis on the concepts of hierarchy and equality of individuals, descent groups, genders, and age groups. The impact of these classic studies has not, however, been such as to stimulate much further progress in these two directions. Nevertheless, we can take Lomax's quotation as a point of departure: »a culture's favored song style reflects and reinforces the kind of behavior essential to its main subsistence effort and to its central and controlling social institutions.«⁸

The Masking Function of Singing

Lomax suggests that each society has a most important way of singing, and that this expresses important central aspects of that society's life – e. g., equality of the sexes, intolerance

2 For example, in George Herzog, »The Yuman Musical Style«, in: *Journal of American Folklore* 41 (1928), p. 183–231, here: p. 190–191.

3 Charles Seeger, »Singing Style«, in: *Western Folklore* 17 (1958), p. 3–11.

4 Curt Sachs, *The Rise of Music in the Ancient World, East and West*, New York 1943, p. 40 and p. 50.

5 Walter Graf, »Das biologische Moment im Konzept der vergleichenden Musikwissenschaft«, in: *SM* 11 (1968), p. 91–113; and »Musikalische Klangforschung«, in: *AMI* 44 (1972), p. 31–78.

6 Franz Födermayr, *Zur gesanglichen Stimmgebung in der aussereuropäischen Musik*, Wien 1971.

7 Alan Lomax e. a., *Folk Song Style and Culture*, Washington 1968; *Cantometrics*, Berkeley, CA 1976.

8 Lomax, *Folk Song Style and Culture*, p. 133.

ble treatment of laborers by the ruling class, general happiness or unhappiness, cooperation or individualism. He suggests that the role of music is unifying, expressing what is most important to all in a society in a stylistically homogeneous way; never mind that this analysis works best, if at all, in small homogeneous societies. But we also observe the opposite, that the role of music is not to express directly, but to provide a mask in many senses – providing possibly a countervail to speech. Masking (I am using the term in an extremely general way) begins with the concept of singing – one delivers speech, but in a medium that uses language in ways that may be the opposite of speaking. It is a concept relevant to much ritual, in which addressing deities must be done in ways that contrast with the everyday discourse, must be sung or chanted instead of spoken. This reminds us of the situation in certain belief systems in which words acquire supernatural power if they are sung (and, in vestige, truth if they are rhymed, as in the case of German and English proverbs). This also reminds us of the importance of music in expressing, in certain oppressed societies (such as the historical slave society in the USA), that which could not be expressed in speech. The relationship of genders – do men and women sound alike when they sing? do they wish to appear similar or different? are they, when using the voice, expressing various sorts of socio-cultural relationships? – intersects with the issue of masking.

When you turn on the radio and discover singing, you identify within five seconds the kind of music you are hearing – classical rock, Middle Eastern, Indian, African, without consideration of texture, intervals, rhythm, but largely from the way the voice is used. Even earlier, you know whether the singer is male or female. But if you misidentify, it is probably due to the masking function of much music. Knowing our cultural context, when we hear singing we quickly form an idea of what gender is involved, and more precisely, what kinds and what nuances of maleness or femaleness are entailed or represented.

There is no end of examples of masking that may be found in the presentational and ceremonial music throughout the world, as identities – gender and other – of all sorts are constructed through the use of the voice. We have everything from the exaggerated drama of Kabuki to the falsetto of Chinese opera genre. In the singing of the Navajo Yeibeichai (performed by men in falsetto), or in the so-called throat games of Inuit women (performed with a great variety of vocal sounds), the voice – and the identity of its owner – is purposely masked. The significance in the era of the *castrati*, from the Queen of the Night making unearthly sounds, or using Italian coloraturas to express cultural difference from the Germanic-Egyptian sounds of Sarastro, to the ›Hosenrollen‹ of Cherubino and Octavian, as well as the disguises of *Fidelio's* Leonore and *Dalibor's* Milada: all this is based on the use of different voices to represent certainties (heroic tenors, villainous baritones) and ambiguities (Hans Sachs the baritone, Beckmesser the tenor) of gender identity. The general question faced by ethnomusicologists is this, however: What does the use of different singing styles tell us about the relationship of different groups of people, and particularly of the sexes and of other gender-constructions in a society?

If gender identity is quickly recognized by a listener, our questions then have further concerns. What does it mean that in some societies, men's and women's singing styles are very similar, and in others, contrastive? What is being said when a particular kind of sound is used and expressed? And what is a singer – consciously or not, perhaps – trying to ex-

press? And how is his or her sound being interpreted by the audience? What does it have to do with issues of power relationships and hegemony?

To reconcile the views of singing style as homogeneous and diagnostic of the social fundamentals of a culture, and of music as a masking device specific to particular situations, let me refer to the distinction between ›presentational‹ and ›participatory‹ music posited by Turino⁹ (2000). The terms are self-explanatory; and I suggest that participatory music expresses the fundamentals, its sound the ›dominant song style‹ of Lomax, while presentational musics make use of the opportunity for occasion-specific variation and social/musical manipulation.

Excursion to Iran

To speak to this question, I take the liberty of saying a word about societies with which I have had some experience, in West Asia, and North America, simply as a way of suggesting areas for discussion and contemplation.

The classical music of Iran has undergone significant changes in the 20th century, changes that can be traced to a degree in changes in men's and women's singing styles. Women's singing in public has long been an issue of morals and aesthetics. In classical and urban popular musics, women who were musicians were usually singers, rarely instrumentalists. At the same time, older treatises as well as recent Islamist doctrine have been very ambivalent about the permissibility and appropriateness of the hearing of women's voices. The rules of the Taliban – not in Iran, to be sure, but in culturally related Afghanistan – inveighed against men who heard women singing. Even in Iran, statements suggesting that to hear a woman sing is like seeing her naked might be heard. There is the notion that in a woman's singing, something special is being expressed, something particular to the female identity, by her voice, and that this may cause a man's sexual desires to spin out of control.¹⁰

But what is the singing really like? Two contrastive examples come to mind. The most famous of Persian divas in my days in Iran, the late 1960s, was a middle-aged-looking woman with the stage name Delkash, a lady whose appearance might have represented to some people something like a quintessential mother-figure. In the traditional nightclubs in central Tehran, in the 1960s, places with questionable reputations frequented by men only, but venues of a lot of musical and artistic excellence and variety, had lots of singers who looked like Delkash and had her low, heavy, husky kind of voice. Another traditional style of singing, used by male singers but a major specialty of female musicians, is called *tabrir*, and consists of long, sobbing-like melismas in which the singer uses a hard, tense vocal color.

Let me contrast these examples with less traditional women's singing and with men's voices in the classical genres. The most popular male singers in the 1970s provided an outspoken contrast with the kind of voice used by the traditionalist Delkash, singing in a high tessitura and head voice. This contradicts Alan Lomax, who maintained that strong male social dominance and suppression of women would be reflected in raspy and harsh singing

9 Thomas Turino, *Nationalists, Cosmopolitans, and Popular Music in Zimbabwe*, Chicago 2000, p. 47–50.

10 For a discussion of the role of music in Islam in Iran, see: Jean During e. a., *The Art of Persian Music*, Washington 1991, p. 26–29.

by men, and a clearer, acoustically simpler singing by women. Here we may have the opposite, but the social distinctions between men and women are nevertheless reflected in the differences in singing style. Predictably, also, modernization of social and musical life in the 1970s produced singers whose singing includes elements common to Middle Eastern vocal technique, but whose voices sound much more like those of European singers.

Excursion to American Indian Music

The area in which ethnomusicologists have the longest record of dealing with singing and gender is that of Native American music. For many tribes the scholarly literature provides clear statements as to what songs are sung by men or women, or either group, separately or together. The differences and similarities between men's and women's singing styles as well as repertoires and forms of participation may be important indicators of gender relations in social life. By no means are all American Indian cultures, older and modern, similar in these respects. To mention a culture least touched by modernity, the people of Ishi,¹¹ the last-surviving Yahi Indian discovered in 1911: there were men's and women's songs; men could sing women's songs, but not the opposite, and I could discern no distinction in style nor, naturally, in Ishi's manner of singing them.

In some societies, men and women participated equally in musical performance. Let me mention two Native American societies. For one example among many possible ones, the songs of the Havasupai people,¹² a very small Native American tribe living in the Grand Canyon, show men's and women's vocal styles to be rather similar in general tone color and including such features as relative tessitura, ornamentation, nasality, and what sounds like vocal tension. On the other hand, in the singing of the Blackfoot and Arapaho of the Northern Plains, in which women are said (by both genders) to have had traditionally unequal roles in singing, there is more distinction in vocal style, even in the way men and women vocalize in the same song. There are significant gender differences in the pulsations on long tones, which are carried out with changes in amplitude by men and in pitch by women.

Let me go a bit further in contemplating cultures of the Northern Plains, with whom I have had some experience, the Blackfoot and Arapaho. What has happened to women's singing?

The earliest Blackfoot ethnographer, David Duvall,¹³ in describing his people's musical life, said that women do not sing very much and are not very good at it. In my conversations with Blackfoot men and women in the 1960s and 1970s, this attitude was still present, reflecting, I believe, important things about the way in which one function of music is to communicate with the human and supernatural outside, something better left to men, whose task would have been the protection of women.

There is also a patronizing attitude on the part of men towards women's singing, which is reflected in a widespread and eventually codified performance practice. In singing groups

11 Bruno Nettl, »The Songs of Ishi«, in: *MQ* 51 (1965), p. 460–477, here: p. 462.

12 Leanne Hinton, *Havasupai Songs, a Linguistic Perspective*, Tübingen 1984, p. 12–20.

13 Clark Wissler and D. C. Duvall, »Mythology of the Blackfoot Indians«, in: *Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History*, vol. 23, part 1, New York 1909.

in which both men and women participate, men lead the song, women join in at the octave, sing together with the men, but are allowed at the end to finish the song alone, sometimes to the approving applause of the male drummer. It is important also to note that the singing style of the women differed from that of the men. For example, the well-known rhythmic pulsations of the men's singing is paralleled by women in unaccented minor changes in pitch.

That women did not always sing in this subordinate style is suggested in an interesting observation by the anthropologist Oscar Lewis,¹⁴ who in his fieldwork in Blackfoot country in the 1930s came upon a category of women called ›manly-hearted‹. Daughters of powerful chiefs, they assumed certain social roles of men, exhibiting sexual and ritual independence, though presumably not homosexuality. One manly-hearted woman was described as singing the songs of one of the medicine rituals just as if she were a man, her singing sounding like that of a man. Unfortunately, I have only Lewis's verbal description. Here, however, a woman's approximation of a man's social role was evidently reflected in the adoption of musical repertory and singing style.

In the 1980s, the *powwow* culture, having become the centerpiece of North American Indian musical life and of Native American cultural identity, began to attract female singers. Singing groups, known as ›Drums‹, became an established part of the culture, and being a singer began to mean a great deal in the evaluation of Indianness. Thus, for example, the central *powwow* of the Blackfoot nation in the middle 1960s, an event known as North American Indian Days, had two singing groups, which alternated, each performing for a couple of hours to accompany dancing. In the late 1980s, as many as 25 Drums would appear. Increasingly, women began to sing as members of these groups. Whether this kind of participation was traditional was a point of debate, and Drums were criticized for including women. But most Drums were built around a nucleus of family members, with a couple of friends perhaps joining in, and the wives and daughters of the lead singers had entered. The important point to note: In these groups, however, women no longer maintain their own, subordinate singing style, but rather, they approximate the men's. Obviously, a statement of a change in gender identity – well, better said, a change in gender relations – is being made.

The establishment of singing groups – they are also called ›Drums‹ – consisting entirely of women followed quickly, in the 1990s, and we can note in them a singing style closely related to that of male singers. This clearly goes hand in hand with significant changes in gender relations in social life.

The preference for men's singing style in women's singing is also reflected in the popular music by Native American musicians, music directed to both Indian and other audiences, as indicated by the very popular group Ulali, three women whose repertory includes songs derived from the Plains *powwow* style, but whose singing style combines elements of the traditional Plains singing technique with vocal ideals of the world of American popular music.

There is not really much data to draw conclusions, but I would suggest that the gradual adoption of the Plains men's singing style by women accompanied the increasing economic and political independence of women in Native American cultures of the late 20th century.

14 Oscar Lewis, ›Manly-Hearted Women Among the North Piegan‹, in: *American Anthropologist* 43/2 (1941), p. 173–187.

And yet, to quote Christopher Scales (2004), who reports fieldwork from 2002, even now, »native men and women occupy very different social worlds. And women's roles in singing are a social reproduction of gender segregation in many other social domains within Native American communities«.¹⁵

Conclusion

To conclude this group of brief excursions, I am clearly not in a position to theorize broadly, but perhaps there are regularities. In all of the cultures I have mentioned, wide social differences in earlier times were reflected in substantial differences in musical roles, sometimes reflected in pronounced differences in singing styles. Modernization and Westernization in all of them have affected musical life, musical style, and, to some extent, differences in vocal styles and techniques. But beyond this, there are differences. In Iran, while the recent past is obscure to outsiders, it seems that female singers sing differently from men but approximate the vocal quality of certain European singers. By contrast, in the Carnatic music of South India, centered in Madras – now Chennai – women's increased participation in classical singing may have led to the approximation of male and female singing styles, if not of certain other musical practices. In the Native American *powwow* cultures of the northern Plains, women's participation in public singing has burgeoned, and in their use of the voice and in their other musical practices, they have increasingly tried to sound like men. In each case, the negotiation of gender identity and gender roles makes significant use of the singing voice.

Sabine Vogt (Berlin)

Mit Luftgitarre und Bananenmikrofon

Formen geschlechterrollentypischer Selbstsozialisation im Jugendalter

Die Stimme bestimmt und die Stimme bestimmt die Stimmung. Menschen mit Stimme finden Anklang. Das stimmt. Nicht zufällig kommt »Persönlichkeit« vom lateinischen *personare*. Das heißt durchtönen, durch den Klang. Der Schauspieler der Antike trug eine Maske. Sie hatte beim Mund eine freie Stelle, jene Stelle, durch die der Klang durchtönen kann. Viel später wurde Frank Sinatra »The Voice« genannt wegen seiner Stimme, deren charakteristische Klangfarbe unter die Haut geht. Menschen beeindruckt uns also dann mit ihrer Persönlichkeit, wenn ihr Inneres nach außen und zu uns durchtönt. Und weiter

¹⁵ Christopher Scales, *Powwow Music and Aboriginal Recording Industry in Canada: Media, Technology, and Native American Music in the Late Twentieth Century*, PhD Diss., University of Illinois 2004, p. 224.