ENCOMPASSING THE

vocal spectrum

ANATS CONFERENCE 2022

anats
Australian National Association
of Teachers of Singing Limited

29 SEPTEMBER TO 2 OCTOBER
IN-PERSON (ADELAIDE) AND ONLINE

For all singing teachers, singers, voice practitioners and researchers

Over 40 presentations, workshops,
panel discussions and masterclasses

Online and in-person options,
all sessions recorded for later viewing

Registration starts from $145

Featuring international presenters
Ingo Titze, Trineice Robinson-Martin
and **Shannon Coates** and national
presenters **Tyran Parke,
Irene Bartlett, Stuart Maunder,
Carl Crossin and Deborah Cheetham**

Together today for tomorrow!

anats.org.au/national-conference

Examining "good singing" in the age of *The Voice*:
Implications for voice pedagogy and practice

Melissa Forbes[1], Amanda E. Krause[2], & Xanthe Lowe-Brown[3]

[1]University of Southern Queensland, [2]James Cook University, [3]University of Melbourne

Presenter contact details: melissa.forbes@usq.edu.au

Abstract

The rise to prominence of reality TV singing shows over the past two decades has perpetuated a certain style of singing as the "winning formula". This formula requires contestants to perform contemporary commercial music using loud, high-pitched, energized singing (usually high belt or chest-mix). What do members of the public make of this style of singing? To test a hypothesis that reality TV singing may be deemed as "good singing" by the public, this study considered how people (N = 52) described and evaluated three stylistically different versions of a melody as sung by amateurs and professional vocalists. We exposed participants to three versions of "Happy Birthday": 1) amateurs singing "as they would normally sing"; 2) professionals performing a "plain" version; 3) the same professionals singing a version in the style of *The Voice* reality TV show. Quantitative and qualitative results indicate that both professional versions were considered "better singing" than the amateur singing. While respondents focused on the technical deficiencies for amateurs, descriptions of the professionals concerned style. Contrary to our hypothesis that the popularity of reality TV singing shows would influence public perceptions of good singing, participants' preferences for "good singing" were split between the two professional versions, with people focused on sophistication and creativity (the "professional voice" version) or vocal quality (the "professional plain" version). While participants were more likely to sing along with the "amateur" version, respondents' preferred version largely matched their chosen exemplar of "good singing". When considering studio teaching, these findings have implications for student vocal development and learning: students' preferences for and aspirations towards "good singing" may not align with the functional capabilities of their voices. Additional Implications will be considered, with discussion invited on the utility of evaluative statements such as "good" and "bad" in relation to singing performance benchmarks.

Author biographies

Dr Melissa Forbes is Senior Lecturer (Contemporary Singing) at the University of Southern Queensland. Melissa is a singer and CCM singing voice pedagogue who researches experiences of singing across a broad range of contexts, from elite, professional singers to community groups.

Dr Amanda Krause is a Lecturer (Psychology) in the College of Healthcare Sciences at James Cook University interested in the social and applied psychology of music. Amanda's research examines how our music experiences influence well-being.

Xanthe Lowe-Brown is an honours student in musicology at The University of Melbourne. Xanthe's research interests in music psychology concern how we can use music to enhance our health and well-being.