

University of Denver

Digital Commons @ DU

Musicology and Ethnomusicology: Student
Scholarship

Musicology and Ethnomusicology

2021

Relationship Between Vocal Technique, Classification, and Appropriate Repertoire for the Tenor Voice

Joan Sebastian Marquez Unda

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.du.edu/musicology_student



Part of the [Musicology Commons](#)



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](#).

Relationship Between Vocal Technique, Classification, and Appropriate Repertoire for the Tenor Voice

Publication Statement

Copyright is held by the author. User is responsible for all copyright compliance.

Within the training and career of a lyrical singer, it is necessary to approach a question: Why is it important to know the vocal classification and the technique for the correct assignment of the repertoire? Although the answer forces us to delve a little deeper into the history of the classification of voices by sex, we will also focus on characteristics that section lyrical voices by their tessitura, timbre and intensity, with a special emphasis on the tenor voice.

1)

Bloch, Gregory W. "The Pathological Voice of Gilbert-Louis Duprez." *Cambridge Opera Journal* 19, no. 1 (2007): 11–31. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27607145>.

In 1837, Tenor Gilbert-Louis Duprez, apparently achieved something revolutionary with his voice: sing the "C from the chest". Different articles and books refer this story, but there are other facts and details that must be considered in this topic to have a better understanding of the physiology in charge of the tenor voice, its classification and correct approach of the voice register. Almost every author who talks about voice technique referring tenors mention Duprez and his success, for example: Doctor Vernon William Reed from Columbia University and the documental from BBC "What makes a great Tenor?".

Gregory W. Bloch dedicates his article to explain all the details behind his story and legend.

2)

Bozeman, Kenneth W. "On the Voice: Registration Strategies for Training the Male 'Passaggio.'" *The Choral Journal* 48, no. 12 (2008): 59–72.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/23557533>

The male "passaggio" is one of the most important technical parameters that a tenor must understand to reach an adequate control of his voice and range. The correct use of it allows to get a better orientation of the Fach system and its utility to keep a healthy singing career.

Kenneth Bozeman, as a professor of music and chair at the voice department at the Lawrence University Conservatory of Music in Appleton, Wisconsin, delivers a very well explained description of the acoustics and physiological matters around this indispensable but rare known topic, that is one of the principal causes of failing for a professional singer, whether as a soloist or as a chorist as well.

3)

Cotton, Sandra. "Voice Classification and Fach: Recent, Historical and Conflicting Systems of Voice Categorization." Order No. 3259674, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2007.

<https://du.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/voice-classification-fach-recent-historical/docview/304833358/se-2?accountid=14608>.

D.M.A. Sandra Cotton offers a historical perspective and a tessitura study of certain roles, presenting how to approach the Fach system. This paper covers in some way the lack of critical writings about this topic and may be used as a reference to understand in a better way the voice of a singer.

4)

_____. "Fach Vs. Voice Type: A Call for Critical Discussion." *Journal of Singing*, no. 2 (11, 2012): 153-166.

<https://du.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/fach-vs-voice-type-call-critical-discussion/docview/1221336929/se-2?accountid=14608>.

As part of the National Association of Teachers of Singing, Sandra Cotton conducts an analysis on the Fach system and its history. She emphasizes the direction of this system towards the correct connection between the vocal instrument, the classification of voices with the needs of each musical work. She, too, affirms that the relationship that has emerged between the classification of voices, the tastes of the audience and the trends of the market should be left aside. She considers the technical treatments with which to teach, selecting the repertoire based on the Fach system, previously described as a fundamental part of her article de ella. She analyzes The Kloiber Guide y The Boldrey Guide like important resources for understanding this system, among other important points.

5)

Kosowski, Richard. "A Survey of Voice Teachers' Perceptions of and the Characteristics used to Identify the 0RW1S34RfeSDcfkexd09rT2Leggiero Tenor1RW1S34RfeSDcfkexd09rT2 Voice." Order No. 3318764, University of Houston, 2008.

<https://du.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/survey-voice-teachers-perceptions-characteristics/docview/304604163/se-2?accountid=14608>.

Richard Kosowski is musical director and director of Mercer University Opera and in this doctoral thesis, he makes reference to the perceptions of voice teachers and the characteristics used to identify the tenor leggiero voice. He uses the classification of the tenor voice, ancient pedagogical references, musicological writings to come to identify the leggiero tenor, or tenore di grazia as it was previously known. Through a survey of 213 voice teachers and 25 opera professionals, their perception of this type of tenor is sought. Kosowski examines technical issues such as vocal timbre, vocal size, vocal weight, and

vocal passage; as well as the physical characteristics and the repertoire that the tenor leggero voice demands.

6)

McIver, William. "Training Tenor Voices by Richard Miller." *The American Music Teacher* 43, no. 4 (02, 1994): 61. <https://du.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/trade-journals/books-training-tenor-voices-richard-miller/docview/217461691/se-2?accountid=14608>.

Richard Miller was a professor of singing at the Oberlin College Conservatory of Music, a specialist in singing and its pedagogy, the author of eight books and hundreds of articles on singing topics. Questions about the difference of the tenor and other male categories stand out. He also separates the tenor types and gives recommendations on repertoire that should be addressed and avoided. He talks to us about breathing, musculature (with special emphasis on the elevated sternum, a typical characteristic of tenors), modification of vowels, laryngeal stability, modification of phrases. With all this, He seeks to obtain a balanced pedagogy when dealing with the tenor voice.

7)

Parr, Sean M. "Vocal Vulnerability: Tenors, 0RW1S34RfeSDcfkexd09rT2Voix Mixte1RW1S34RfeSDcfkexd09rT2 and Late Nineteenth-Century French Opera." *Cambridge Opera Journal* 30, no. 2-3 (11, 2018): 138-164. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0954586719000041>.

<https://du.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/vocal-vulnerability-tenors-i-voix-mixte-late/docview/2293756583/se-2?accountid=14608>.

Sean Parr is a tenor, Ph.D. Columbia University and current professor at Saint Anselm College (Manchester). He also taught at Dickinson College, Columbia University, and Florida State University. He has published studies in the *Cambridge Opera Journal* and has also written entries for *The Cambridge Verdi Encyclopedia* and book reviews for *Current Musicology* and *Music and Letters*. In his article he talks about tenors, vocal vulnerabilities and the use of the mixed voice in the 19th century in French opera. He makes a comparison about the full voice that began to use the tenor voice from the arrival of singers like Gilbert-Louis Duprez and the mixed voice that is still used in the French repertoire. The article focuses on the physical and practical practice of the *voix mixte*, applied when singing high and soft notes in the tenor voice. What commonly within the Italian opera could be classified as a light tenor.

8)

Potter, John. "The Prehistory Of The Voice." In *Tenor: History of a Voice*, 1–21. Yale University Press, 2009. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt5vkqks.5>.

John Potter is a tenor and academic who has stood out for his research in vocal sociology and vocal repertoire. Among his largest works we can find publications for Cambridge University Press and Yale University Press. In this section of the book *Tenor: History of a voice*, he places special emphasis on the prehistory of the tenor voice in the medieval period, Gregorian chant and polyphony. As well as in the documentary conducted by the BBC on What makes a great tenor? This chapter is about what is a tenor, the first tenors of some operas and others that preceded the recordings with the gramophone.

9)

_____. "The Romantic Tenor Hero." In *Tenor: History of a Voice*, 93–120. Yale University Press, 2009. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt5vkqks.10>.

In this chapter John Potter talks about the early twentieth century and the evolution that tenors had from the lyrical tenor that was well marked in Italy to the appearance of the Heldentenor in Germany. At this time the tenor was just marked as a romantic hero and what all this entailed until he was selected as pop stars, as well as the documentary led by the tenor Rolando Villazón produced by the BBC.

Here we can make a connection to Vernon William Reed's development in "The Development And Use Of The Tenor Voice 1600 To The Present." We also continue to section the tenor into other types of classifications as indicated by the Fach system examined by Sandra Cotton.

10)

Redburn, Aaron R. "An Exploration of Voice Classification Criteria: A Survey of Literature, Opera Architecture, and a Numerical Method of Aria Analysis." Order No. 28414539, The University of Memphis, 2021. <https://du.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/exploration-voice-classification-criteria-survey/docview/2544890276/se-2?accountid=14608>.

In this dissertation, D.M.A. Aaron Redburn studies the voice classification through the categorization used for centuries. Adds a new perspective exploring the unified systems proposed by Rudolf Kloiber and Richard Boldrey and expands the criteria of the actual methods.

11)

Reed, Vernon William. "The Development And Use Of The Tenor Voice 1600 To The Present." Order No. 8322238, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1983.

<https://du.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/development-use-tenor-voice-1600-present/docview/303142081/se-2?accountid=14608>.

To maintain a healthy voice must be an absolute priority for a singer. Adequate research shows the consequences of an incorrect use of the voice. Doctor of Education Vernon William Reed, confirms through his dissertation the need of a correct recognition, classification and sub-classification of the Tenor Voice and how it affects to the development of a healthy career, based on historic and physiologic studies.

12)

"What Makes a Great Tenor." YouTube video, 58:15. Posted by Julius Tattoo." July 10, 2021. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N6ahRWcSiA8>

Top singers, musicians and people reunited to give their views on the voice of a tenor, from their own artistic experiences, history, and musical achievements. This documental from BBC, hosted by Tenor Rolando Villazón tries to find the answer to the polemic question: "What makes a great Tenor?".