Singer Self-Classification Aptitude Tool: Development and Assessment
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Are these singers really that different?

Classical
Contemporary Commercial Music (CCM)

Comparisons in Technique

**Classical**
- CT dominant
- Vibrato
- Beauty of tone
- Low larynx
- Reverse megaphone
- No microphone

**CCM**
- TA dominant
- Little to no vibrato
- Speech-based
- High larynx
- Megaphone
- Microphone

Comparisons in Training

**Classical**
- College/conservatory
- Formal study
- Single singing focus

**CCM**
- Performance/theater
- Limited training
- Act, sing, dance
Comparisons in Performance*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classical</th>
<th>CCM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Fewer performances</td>
<td>- More and longer sets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- More recovery</td>
<td>- Less recovery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- No amplification</td>
<td>- Amplification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Singing focus</td>
<td>- “Triple threat”</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Quiet venues</td>
<td>- Noisy venues</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Do these differences drive medical treatment?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>- More skeptical of surgery</td>
<td>- Less skeptical (multiple surgeries)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Requires perfection</td>
<td>- Can return before 100% (most)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Return at 100%</td>
<td>- Need strategies for early return</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Support from teachers and/or coaches</td>
<td>- Support from voice team</td>
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It's Complicated

New assessment tool?

- Given the differences between classical and CCM singers, would the two groups present with dissimilar types and numbers of complaints on a prospective questionnaire?

- If so, would a new singing voice assessment tool with a narrow focus be valuable?
Methods

• A prospective open-ended questionnaire asking singers to list all of their past and present vocal complaints was administered to 296 singers.

• Singers were identified by:
  - STYLE: Classical and CCM - 48% and 45%
  - STYLE: Hybrid - 7%
  - GENDER: Female to Male - 2:1
  - YEARS of TRAINING: Less than 5 years – 62%
  - AGE: 15-20 years old – 53%

Methods (cont’d)

• Singers performed with local opera companies, universities, and were from multiple regions

• Professional and non-professionals included

• Respondents were not prescreened stroboscopically (We did not rule out or confirm pathology.)

• Data was compiled using excel

RESULTS: TOP 5 COMPLAINTS

• Tension: Throat / tongue / jaw / body tension
• Range: Loss of range / range reduction / register breaks
• Hoarseness: Hoarseness / raspiness / roughness / scratchiness
• Fatigue: Fatigue
• Breath: Breath control / breathiness

Combined Categories
Observations
Both classical and CCM singers reported relatively similar types and numbers of complaints.

Discussion
We cannot make reliable distinctions between classical and CCM singers by their self-reported complaints.

HOWEVER, based on the above literature review, clinical observations and large number/variety of complaints collected in this survey, an assessment tool for singers should be developed to:

- Determine the severity of complaints of singers
- Determine high-risk behaviors of singers
- Determine how a singer’s complaints affect performance

Future Directions: New Singing Tool (SSCAT)
- Distribute another survey to a group that is similar to our initial respondents to obtain further information including:
  - Severity ratings of the top symptoms using a 5 point Likert Scale
  - Questions regarding a singer’s:
    - amount of singing
    - style of singing
    - performance demands
    - level of training
    - support system

Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect of Inconsistency on Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 No effect</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect of Tension on Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 No effect</td>
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Thank you!

References


References (cont’d)


