The Multi-Genre Female Singer: Practitioner Insights

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ABSTRACT: This article presents a selection of findings from a study that investigated the professional female singer's performance of multiple genres of voice. The term multi-genre-singing (MGS) refers to singers who have experience in several genres that may or may not include classical. Presented are insights from a qualitative investigation via interviews with eighteen female practitioners of MGS regarding their background and practical methods, as well as approaches and techniques of vocal performance. The specific technical areas in relation to MGS discussed in this article are postural alignment, rhythm and movement, breath management, articulation and registration. Practitioner perspectives have been sought specifically to address the gap in the field of research of singing practice more commonly dominated by studies that investigate perspectives of pedagogues. While many of the interview participants are also teachers, a focus for the research was to elicit the lived experiences of working as a multi-genre singer. The findings reveal MGS practitioners often possess not only a comprehensive understanding of the definitions and qualities of individual genres but the interrelated parameters and complexities of approaches and attitudes involved in singing multiple genres.

KEYWORDS: vocal performance, technical singing processes, interviews, crossover

INTRODUCTION

There is a dearth of literature documenting, in detail, the nuances of the art of singing multiple genres from the practitioner's perspective. Particularly over the last decade, pedagogues have acknowledged the need for perspectives from singers working in the industry, but studies of methods for singing multiple genres tend to focus on instruction rather than observations from singers with active performance careers.

Bartlett (as cited in Harrison, 2010) articulated the challenge regarding whether singers can successfully manage a career performing in a range of styles considering the vast knowledge required for the practice, which includes an understanding of vocal anatomy and physiology, performance, and teaching practice. She proposed that there is an absence of a model that is "recognised, addressed and managed through a training system that is engaging and genre relevant" (p. 227).

Bartlett later contended that "research with Contemporary Commercial Music (CCM) singers rather than about them might further accelerate this development by bringing to focus the real world demands of CCM music styles, gig environments, and vocal health issues faced by this significant and talented group of performers" (2014, p. 34). Similarly, Gill and Herbst argue that voice pedagogy would benefit from investigating "high level performers who have maintained healthy production for a long period of time, different styles and the specific changes made in the vocal mechanism". Despite a common language in the field of voice also being cited as needed in voice pedagogy, "taught vocal technique needs to be adjusted and optimised for each individual" (2015, p. 168).

Significant challenges inherent in multi-genre singing practice and teaching are illuminated in Harrison and O'Bryan (2014). For example, knowledge of an evolving range of stylistic features and subsequent flexibility of technique are expected of practitioners. Rigorous demands are therefore placed on voice teachers to acquire new knowledge to accommodate students with a desire to learn more than one style and prepare them for a variety of performances and roles. Noting that "the role of the singing teacher has at once expanded and contracted", O'Bryan (2014) supports Callaghan, Emmons and Popeil's claim that traditional master-apprentice teaching modes have become fragmented due to the proliferation of genres and styles and subsequent demands on teachers concerning time efficiency, ability to work with many voice types and wide repertoire (p. 33).

Vocal pedagogy methods were reviewed in the researcher's thesis (Carson, 2023) including literature that compares vocal genres and cross-training methods for singers who perform classical and CCM genres. Many of these methods contribute to a body of knowledge of genre differences that have informed the practitioner methods discussed in this paper. These will be referenced where relevant; however, the focus of this article lies in the reporting of the lived experiences of the interview participants rather than the application of existing methods to their practice.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND QUESTIONS

Findings presented in this article are derived from the researcher's PhD study (Carson, 2023). The methodology of the doctoral study enabled a focus on the qualitative, experiential and reflective elements of multi-genre female singers' work and experience. The approaches taken sought to understand the processes employed by practitioners as shaped by their professional experiences, creative practice, musical techniques and skills. There was also a need to understand these techniques in the context of the multi-genre singer's lived experiences, including their background and culture.

Given that the style of investigation included a combination of practical, technical, creative and experiential data acquisition, the underpinning research philosophy combines pragmatism and constructivism. This combination of data collection and analysis is congruent with Creswell's definition of pragmatism that includes freedom of choice where researchers "choose the methods, techniques, and procedures of research that best meet their needs and purposes" (2014, p. 11).

An assessment of existing literature in the field as well as objective responses from interviews were juxtaposed with openness to creative, explorative and subjective outcomes. Semi-structured and open-ended questions from the interview participants allowed interpretive and subjective responses, thus adhering to Crotty's constructivist assumption that humans make sense of their world based on historical, cultural and social perspectives. This allows for an interpretation also "shaped by the researcher's own experiences and background" (Creswell, in Crotty, 1998, p. 9).

A sample of professional female singers was sourced through artist agencies, music organisations, singing schools, universities, private studios, referrals and industry contacts. Singers of varying age (between approximately 30 and 65), genre-experience, training and career-length were approached using purposive sampling. The COVID-19 pandemic necessitated some use of convenience sampling defined by Brown (2010) as different from purposive sampling as it involves selection based on ready availability of the interview participants.

Specific criteria for participation were that participants be female and have worked professionally in at least two contrasting genres, preferably more. Strategic recruitment of participants who practice professionally in the variety of genres for investigation in the study was important to ensure sufficient information on the genres was gathered.

Participants resided in Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States at the time of the interviews. All except one have formal training in their principal genre and all except two are singing teachers. Formal training was not a criterion for participation in the study. As in Bartlett's survey of CCM singers (2014), an insider perspective of participants' work and life experiences was prioritised. The interviews varied between approximately 30–90 minutes and were conducted between 2015 and 2021. Questions regarding the singers' background influences, training, attitudes, and approach to performing multiple genres in a number of technical areas elicited objective, factual and definitive answers. Responses to interview questions also included data regarding the lived experiences of singing in multiple genres such as cultural and social contexts. Personal experience and processes unique to interview participants were therefore targeted, including: the singer's employed techniques, perception of her own voice, specifically in terms of qualities, strengths and weaknesses, and sensory or instinctual approaches to singing multiple genres.

Content analysis via text search and word frequency tools in NVivo software was used to target responses to technical areas of investigation in the interview questions such as postural alignment. These responses were then collated to show most common or disparate approaches to the technique being examined. While the study did not employ a full thematic analysis as defined by Clarke and Braun (2013), some important or interesting patterns in the data that addressed the research or said something more in-depth about an issue emerged.

Visualisation of the data was then created after further review and organisation of the content and themes. Finer details from the interviews were

categorised and logically structured in tables, some of which are included in this article.

The project was approved by the University of Newcastle Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) prior to commencement of data collection (Approval No. H-2015-0340).

Overarching research questions for the study relevant to the findings presented in this article are:

- What existing pedagogy models and practitioner methods contribute or not to multi-genre singing practice knowledge?
- What other factors (such as social and cultural) inform the ability to sing in multiple genres?
- What specific technical and creative processes are applied by multi-genre singing practitioners to diverse repertoire?

The following findings are a summary of insights practitioners gave in response to a selection of questions in the interview protocol on their MGS practice.

FINDINGS

Practiced genres

Table 1 below is a summary of the data elicited from an initial question requesting which genres the participants currently perform.

Table 1: Genres practiced by the interview participants

Participant	Genres	Sub-genres
P1	Classical, Music Theatre, Jazz	Opera
P2	Classical, Music Theatre	Opera, Contemporary Opera, Art Song, Cabaret
P3	Jazz, Classical, Folk, Rock, Pop, Music Theatre	Opera, Oratorio, Choral
P4	Classical, Jazz, Music Theatre	None given
P5	Classical, Pop	Contemporary Opera, Contemporary Art
P6	Jazz, Pop, Music Theatre, CCM	None given
P7	Country, Pop, Folk, R&B, Music Theatre	Western swing, Singer/Songwriter, Contemporary Country
P8	Jazz, Pop, Music Theatre	None given
P9	Jazz, Pop, Rock, Folk	None given
P10	Country, Blues, Folk	Alternate Country, Bluegrass
P11	Classical, Jazz, Music Theatre	Opera, Oratorio, Art Song
P12	Classical, Pop, Folk	Cabaret
P13	Jazz, Pop/Rock, Classical, Music Theatre	Choral
P14	Classical, Jazz	Choral
P15	Classical, Pop/Rock, Music Theatre, Jazz	None given
P16	Classical, International, Gospel, Choral	None given
P17	Pop, Classical	None given
P18	Jazz, Music Theatre	None given

The level of detail varied between participants when asked what genres they currently perform. Less than half (n=8) listed the main genres only. The rest (n=10) specified sub-genres as listed above.

The following sections provide further context for the participants' choice of practiced genres.

Education and training

Details of teachers with whom participants have studied singing were categorised by gender, voice type and genres. Participants learned from between one and six teachers of varying gender and genre specialisation. Ten of the eighteen participants studied music at post graduate level. Seven participants mentioned completing AMEB singing exams and two specified completion of an LMusA diploma.

Nearly all participants (n=16) indicated they had lessons from teachers specialising in classical repertoire at some stage in their careers, regardless of their most practised genres. Reasons included the fact that often only classical teachers were available; participants chose the pedagogy course or teacher to learn specific classical repertoire; or the school, conservatorium, college, or university they attended provided predominantly classical repertoire training.

Participants supplied information regarding accredited voice courses they had undertaken. Eight participants completed Estill Voice Training (Estill, 1997a & 1997b), two studied Somatic Voicework™ The Lovetri Method (LoVetri, 2018) and one had lessons in Sadolin's Complete Vocal Technique (2010). Italian school Bel Canto (Stark, 1999) and Seth Riggs' Speech Level Singing (Riggs, 1998) methods were also mentioned as having been either incorporated into singing lessons or explored on a self-directed basis by four and two participants respectively. Other disciplines indicated by the participants as studied in conjunction with voice or music training included somatic methods such as The Feldenkrais Method (Nelson & Blades, 2005) and the Alexander Technique (Alexander, 1985) voice science, speech pathology, languages, drama, dance, calisthenics and vocology. Several participants chose to do post graduate studies in performance (n=5), education (n=3) and voice pedagogy (n=3).

Other types of voice study cited as beneficial were learning repertoire in a mixture of genres in private lessons and choirs. Lemon-McMahon (2019) investigated the benefits of these and other community music settings in her study on vocal identity and the singing voice. The study found that singing with family and community improved engagement, development and normalisation of singing.

All participants have had some form of group singing, whether it be in the family environment or in choirs or vocal ensembles at an amateur or professional level. Several participants learnt the piano or other instruments from an early age (n=11). Two participants did not have formal private studio singing lessons (n=2). The data suggest that educational experiences other than formal training contribute to the practice of performing in multiple genres. It is evident from the responses that participant choice of styles has been influenced by other social and cultural considerations, such as industry and employment.

Social and cultural factors

All the interview participants stated that either listening to or playing a variety of music in the home as well as attending musical events during their childhood was a huge influence on their pursuit, not only of singing, but of singing a few styles.

These experiences are considered here as informing and sometimes hindering the ability to sing multiple genres. Participants suggested that listening from an early age helped develop their ability not only to sing (P6, P8, P14) but to absorb genre differences (P1, P15), gain understanding of techniques (P11), musicianship (P7 and P17) and allow freedom of choice and expression (P5, P10, P14 and P18). Two participants indicated that singers who learn from listening to (or imitating) a limited range of genres may be hindered in technical scope (P2) or expression (P9). A study (Creech et al., 2008) investigating exposure to multiple genres for music students transitioning to professional careers reported mixed opinions from the study's participants. The findings revealed participants who wanted to specialise resented time away from their instruments; however, "…those who were versatile musicians fared well, creating varied portfolio careers. Furthermore, musicians from all genres concurred with the notion that an ideal musician is musically broad-minded and able to engage with music from multi-genres" (p. 329).

P5 cited that people can "become very caught up in the integrity of technique that prevents genuine cross-genre singing approaches". Experiencing more genres through listening (P7), letting multiple styles inform you (P2), challenging yourself by practicing different styles (P8) and taking the time to learn and be authentic in genres (P16) are strategies cited by participants as beneficial in the progress to becoming a successful singer of multiple genres.

Six participants commented on the variety within their parents' record collection. Country music was mentioned by two non-Country singer participants as either the only genre they recalled having access to (P5) or as a genre that was not

played at all (P3). Otherwise, a wide variety of CCM genres (typically jazz, pop, music theatre, Country) and classical (opera, Art Song, lieder) were quoted as often played.

Attitudes

Desire, willingness, open mindedness, flexibility, adaptability and lack of fear are terms cited by participants as useful attributes to negotiate across genres and associated techniques. All participants conceded that the "desire to do it" is an essential attribute for all multi-genre singers. Some teacher participants (n=3) explained that students are often reluctant to diversify as they prefer their existing sound. P3 explained that her responsibility as a teacher is to let students discover how they want to sing by providing tools that they can "run with". P6 described versatile singing as requiring a love of music and young singers should "experience everything" and then "make a decision after". She explained we should not force young singers because "if you're primally engaged to a sound, you're going to be much more successful at making it healthy". Participants discussed the reluctance for singers to diversify as related to wanting to be exceptionally good at what they do. In other words, to specialise:

> I feel like, as a singer, I'm possibly less credible as a historical repertory singer now than I was when I was devoting my full attention to that practice. Embracing different genres means that you lose your specialisations. That's both a strength and a weakness. (P5)

In contrast, P13 posed a "non-purist" attitude as beneficial:

> It really introduced me to what I had. I think part of all of this was discovering that there was a lot of sound that existed that I didn't realise was there. I think I could have sung jazz forever and always sounded the same. Because of the cross genres, especially going as far as classical music and some of the music theatre stuff, has really, really changed the way that I sing in a very, very dramatic way.

Openness to singing multiple genres was also cited as not being "rulebound" (P5). Making a genre your own (P9), "freedom to mix it up" and "not being a snob" (P7) were also expressions used when relaying attitudes to crossing genres. Play (n=13) and exploration (n=7) and imagination (P8) were also terms used to describe processes in cross-genre practice.

Individuality

Responses to the question "is multi-genre singing equally possible for all singers?" highlighted personal limitations that can sometimes be prohibitive to successful crossover singing. These were pertaining primarily to health and physiology, attitude to training and extent of "natural" ability.

Examples of physiological challenges include fragility of the voice, lack of stamina or bodily strength and subsequent inability to belt or sing high energy styles. "Natural gifts" that may include physical, cognitive, or musical attitudes or abilities are mentioned as having an impact on crossover singing ability. Gender issues such as menopause or hormonal imbalance were also mentioned as affecting the ability to sing across styles. The change in characteristics of singing styles such as range throughout musical history was also mentioned, particularly regarding music theatre (see 2.6.7).

The acknowledgment of personal strengths regarding a singer's most practiced genre or technique has been described as one's "homebase" (Roll, 2019, p. 159). One participant suggested that feeling limited through the lack of exploration of styles other than their homebase style can be shifted with dedication and training. Again, classical music was described as the most difficult to revisit or sing successfully when not practiced regularly (n=4) and "having the instrument" to do it was quoted as essential by P6.

TECHNICAL AREAS OF INQUIRY

After preliminary background and contextual questions were answered, participants then responded to questions regarding vocal production. The doctoral study (Author, 2023) this article is based on examined areas in addition to the following discussed in this article:

- Postural alignment
- Rhythmic embodiment and movement
- Breath management
- Registration
- Articulation

Two main categories to clarify the complex data sets for each vocal production parameter are summarised in a table at the start of each section.

These are:

1. Inherent requirements/considerations: this list comprises common terminology or phrases that describe interview participant expectations or understanding of a genre including learned or industry-imposed tropes.
2. Technical approach: these comprise a summary of methods or processes employed and prioritised by the participants to authentically produce the vocal sound for the parameter and genre.

Issues raised by participants regarding the crossing over or negotiation from one style to another are also provided in the tables.

Postural alignment

An overall summary of terms used to describe postural alignment as well as key considerations derived from participants' approach to postural alignment in their practiced genres is summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: Summary of interview participant responses regarding postural alignment

Genre/ Style	Inherent Requirements/ Considerations	Technical Approach
Classical	Stamina for long phrases Strength Projection/ unamplified	Plumb line Head aligned Pulled up through the spine Strong neck Aligned jaw-tongue relationship Loose shoulders Ribs up Feet shoulder width apart Engagement of core Connection with pelvic floor
Jazz	More upper body gesturing Often sitting	Looser head, neck, knees and shoulders Ribs up
Rock	Chest belt Loose articulation	Lifted chin and head Support "from the feet up" Leaning forward

Genre/ Style	Inherent Requirements/ Considerations	Technical Approach
Music Theatre	Variety of styles Ability to dance Character-driven Changing energy	According to character Style within style
Pop	Enjoyment priority Entertainment focused Amplified Shorter phrases Looser articulation	Loose Moveable Flexible Less set-up
Blues	Emotion/story-driven No rules if it's safe	According to mood
Cross-over	According to performance scenario Consideration of purpose, tempo Priority for technique	Correct or efficient alignment for any scenario or technical demand Adjustments made in conjunction with other specifics of technical approach

Terminology

More than half (n=9) of the participants described their approach to postural alignment as essentially the same across all their practiced styles, some with minor variations or "tweaks" (P12) in "awareness" (P10 and P15) "fluidity" and "responsiveness" (P11). Terms used to describe classical postural alignment included "formal" (P2), having a "rigidity" and "stillness" about it, "less flexible", "poised" (P3), "supported" and "correct" (P5), requiring most "awareness" (P15) and "anchored in the upper range" (P1). P16 described classical postural alignment as having "freedom", "lightness", and "more space in it".

Postural alignment for jazz was described as "authentic" and "more refined" than CCM styles (P8) and "looser" (P1) and "less fastidious" than

classical (P4). Compared to classical, posture in CCM styles was described again as "looser" (P1), "freer" (P7), "adaptable" (P5), and having "less set up" (P15). Cabaret was described as more "relaxed" and "released" (P2). P1 gave an overall view of postural approach to music theatre as "changing in energy".

Theatrical roles and styles

Participants (n=9) suggested that the actions requested by directors, including the degree and scope of movement around sets, as well as the degree of priority given to quality vocal production, greatly affect postural alignment choices. Participants stated that these choices were related to the role demands, variety of sub-genres and emphasis on character realisation within the genre.

Similarly, participants stressed that the approach to postural alignment is often dictated by the priority given to vocal quality over character embodiment (n=7). This was the case particularly for classical styles. Another participant presented the opinion that Operatic postural alignment is often taught as "stilted but shouldn't be" (P16). P5 explained the controlled environment in which to sing opera is not always possible and that postural alignment must not be compromised as a result.

She also described the contrast between types of opera, stating that for contemporary opera, she throws postural alignment "out the window". P6 asserted all styles and roles require the same approach to postural alignment, which essentially involves freedom and safety. She further iterated that alignment is crucial for the breadth of demands of repertoire such as Mozart's *Queen of the Night* aria, where there is freedom required to belt to F5 in music theatre or to avoid vocal damage on rock heavy belting.

CCM styles

Less detail was provided regarding postural alignment approach for CCM styles such as pop. These styles were regarded by some participants as less technically demanding and often involve amplification and more physical movement. Changeable energy levels, importance of text, and extension of belt register were deemed as factors affecting postural approach.

Participants (n = 3) mentioned lifting the head or chin to belt. Looser overall feeling in the body was linked by most participants to CCM styles. P3 placed rock and pop in the same category: "You can see artists can do anything they like really, but still manage to bark out a really good

tune "cause the phrases are shorter so it doesn't need quite so much set up" (P15).

Somatic (body and mind) considerations

Comments in reference to somatic considerations included kinaesthetic awareness, suitability or comfort within a style and individual strengths and weaknesses (mental and physical). Several references were made to awareness in the body of energy levels (n=6) and space. P1 suggested there are challenges in finding the right balance between the energy in the voice and the body. In classical voice, the energy was related to the engagement of core and breath flow. This was not reported as at the same level in jazz and in music theatre. She took the view that: "the energy changes much more quickly all the time". She also stated that the energy levels in the tongue change, particularly for jazz and pop. P16 stressed the importance of sensing the world around you, and in particular listening, to setting up posture effectively.

Different levels of the trio of balance, energy and responsiveness were cited as important for Participant 11 in adequately setting the body up for some styles. This participant made the distinction between the body as a medium for conveying a beautiful poem in an Art Song and the conscious self:

> It's not about you, it's about the song and its meaning. Then that posture and that energy goes into giving you a quiet dignity and the ability in yourself to feel that you are a channel. If it goes into stiffness, your voice is going to reflect that. (P11)

One participant explained that if a singer is correctly "in the genre" (P16), then the posture will follow. Another explained that a singer "drops into the right muscle memory and just goes" for any style if they have a grasp on the style and character (P6).

Individual factors such as a singer's natural affinity with one style or another were cited as greatly influential to the approach to postural alignment. CCM styles, particularly pop, Cabaret and jazz were described as more relaxed and fun and therefore "looser" in approach. P8 explained pop style for her is a lot more fluid and feels "authentic" as she moves a lot and has a "great time". Likewise, the participants talked about their "homebase" style (that in which they perform most often or are most comfortable) and how this affected their approach to other styles:

> I know when I'm experiencing classical music, I'm experiencing it as somebody who is a jazz musician. So, I think that since that's where I'm

home, my movement reflects that all the time. (P13)

P6 asserted her preference for the Alexander Technique, which allows a singer to find balance in "your body, your spinal shape, the curve in your neck, the roundness of your shoulders" and to always "move into the sound, always be in a place of action".

Embodiment of rhythm and movement

The table below is a summary of interview responses regarding rhythm and movement. The type of movement, response to rhythmic accompaniment, and the prioritisation and perception of these parameters varied according to style.

Table 3: Summary of interview participant observations on rhythmic embodiment and movement

Genre/ Style	Inherent Requirements/ Considerations	Technical approach
Classical	Notation is strictly observed Structured/choreo-graphed/directed Less range of movement Priority for integrity of postural alignment Ensuring conductor is in sight lines	Precise articulation of text/language Counted rather than felt in body
CCM	Defined by accompaniment	Less important to hear lyric definition Emphasis according to musical rather than lyrical patterns
Jazz/ Swing	Often rhythmic accompaniment Cues taken from and made by both singer and accompanists	Rhythm dictates the overall vocal approach Vocal role changes between solo and rhythmic
		Flexible around the beat Felt in body (internal) rather than counted
Pop	Most often on the beat	Shown in body and consistent
Cross-over	According to rhythm in text/language, individual and accompaniment	Observing internal rhythm, role of text and accompaniment for the genre or style

Classical

Participants that commented on approach to rhythm and movement in classical music (n=4) stated there is less compromise in the interpretation and delivery of rhythms (as notated) and movement is often more structured or choreographed, with overall less range. Classical music notation is historically more strictly adhered to than in CCM styles (P11). Similarly, regarding classical recitals, P2 explained that the melody, prosody and language of a particular piece affects how she moves. The requirement to maintain eye contact on the conductor creates a whole different "vocabulary of movement" according to P12.

CCM

Participants affirmed that CCM styles were very much defined by rhythm, including the type of accompaniment (for example, with or without drums) and the relationship with accompanists. The role of the voice within a style also affected how rhythm was approached. Most of the participants cited jazz and pop when discussing these issues. Taking cues from other musicians as well as moving the beat around is specific to jazz (P9). Locking in musically in pop and understanding when the singing is a solo part or part of the rhythm of the band is also jazz style specific according to P7.

Individual and internal rhythm was also mentioned as very relevant to show individuality and interpretation within a style:

The rhythms that I hear inside my head as I'm singing, or the spaces, or the time that I can chop up those syllables and make them different from each other—it's not quite so boring. (P9)

Crossover

P1 explained that rhythm is in everything including our natural body rhythms such as the length and pulsing of our vocal folds. She confirmed she didn't explore enough in her classical training because she "used to think in a very rigid way that rhythm was quavers and crotchets and minims and it had to cut off properly". Other participants described how crossover practice has shaped their approach to rhythm. P17 said being playful, bending the rhythm, taking more time and not putting her classical singing on a pedestal were benefits of her experience of pop singing.

Breath management

The degree of importance or emphasis placed on breath management techniques for genres varied. All participants agreed specific techniques need to be learned, and some participants (n=4) were adamant that efficient breathing is the foundation of good singing technique. Other participants highlighted that some methods place too much focus on breathing (n=2).

Having a "relationship" (P16), "experimenting" (P3) and using "artistic licence" with breathing were terms used to describe the process of singing across styles. Breath management for specific styles was explained as requiring variety in flow, volume, depth, and width of breath (P6).

Table 4: Summary of interview participant observations on breath management

Genre/Style	Inherent Requirements/ Considerations	Technical approach
Classical	Traditional long phrases Deeper/low breathing	Priority of stamina and sustain Controlled release
Choral	Where and how to breathe are more specific	Strategic
CCM (including Rock, Pop)	More vocal fold closure/subglottal pressure inherent in	Easier due to shorter phrase length
	many of these styles	Enhanced by microphone/amplification Frequent "topping up"
Blues	Heavier overall sound Common use of belt	Deeper, more breath and muscle power required
Pop	Breathing technique not as important or demanding	No rules, interpretive, less skill needed
Folk	High use of falsetto, lighter	Still need to breathe well
Crossover	Adaptable and tailored Device for expression for any genre Works with register (vocal fold closure)	Experimentation Artistic licence for styles Use of variety in flow, volume, depth and width

Structured or specific techniques for breath management in genres

P6 stated that breath management needs to be adaptable and tailored to style after the pillars of good singing are established, such as efficient airflow to avoid using too much muscle and tension. P13 explained that her personal choice is to breathe the same way across all styles but that register and vocal fold closure requirements for the genre will dictate her employment of breathing techniques:

> I think it's pretty much the same. It's easier to sing long phrases, for example, in jazz or in pop or rock because your vocal folds are closing more. If I'm in a head dominant sound, breath management is more difficult … because it just is … without as much contact. From a breathing point of view, I think it's all the same. (P13)

Although the mechanics of breathing are the same, specific breath management differences such as varied sub-glottal pressure in classical and

Contemporary were noted by P18. P6 pointed out that contemporary styles do not usually require low, wide breaths that classical or long phrases in "legit" music theatre may require. She uses the term "topping up" as associated with short, speech quality phrases in contemporary styles.

Breath management challenges

Four participants mentioned that either they or their students had experienced the tendency to "over breathe", particularly when singing classical styles. They also commented on their methods of overcoming this tendency. P1, who had been instructed to breathe "naturally" in college described herself as a "tummy holder". She found singing a variety of styles and associated qualities such as speech and twang helped remedy her tendency to over breathe.

P16 explained the misinformation she had been given about breathing from a variety of teachers during her career and how the value of the spontaneous breath in Indian classical music has shaped her breathing approach:

> I start with spontaneous breath, notice the breath where it is, that's in both classical and contemporary ... just notice where it is. Is it bumpy or smooth? Do you hold it? Where is it? What do you feel is moving? Because the more mental awareness we have about the breath, the more relationship we have with the body and breath.

Another explained that being instructed to hold the ribs out as in *appoggio* caused major issues for her and she overcame this challenge by learning the motion and the connection of the voice to the breath. P12, who experienced the issue of trying too hard to breathe during classical singing lessons, concluded over time that breathing well to sing is subconscious: "If there's air available, your body will breathe it in."

Articulation

Comments on articulation primarily concerned length and treatment of vowels and consonants in relation to singing specific genres. The level of importance of diction was also discussed.

Table 5: Summary of interview participant observations on articulation

Genre/ Style	Inherent Requirements/ Considerations	Technical approach
Classical	Priority for vowel length	Tailored to repertoire, beauty of sound and tempo/language Consonant enhancement in live performance
CCM (including Pop)	Less emphasis on diction/clarity	Softer consonants Distorted vowels
Jazz/Swing	Scatting/rhythmic	Varied use of vowel/consonant length Tailored to range, tempo
Music Theatre	Accent authenticity	Decisions according to text
Crossover	Often according to tempo Flexibility within tradition/rules of genres	Allowing experimentation and tailored to purpose, importance of intelligibility

Classical versus CCM

Articulation for CCM styles was described by participants as involving variable ratios of balance between vowel and consonant length, in contrast to the approach in classical styles. P1 posed that while a singer should be free to vary their articulation according to language and text, there are traditionally more rules for classical styles and less for rhythm-based styles such as jazz that may employ lengthened, or distorted voiced consonants (m, n, ng). Regarding rhythmically up-tempo styles such as jazz swing, fast German Lieder or music theatre, P1 also said: "You're probably looking at similarities with consonant use through everything". Decisions can also be made according to the range of a song:

The German school would argue that consonants are really important. The Italian school argues, in classical, that the vowels are the most important. Then, you've got the in-between, because if you sing in French, then there are certain consonants that are significant. Whereas, in music theatre and jazz, it's dependent absolutely on where you are in your tessitura. Singing on ING on a top G doesn't work. (P1)

CCM styles and music theatre were described as requiring softer consonants (P7 and P9) and acknowledgement of the role of accents. Breath was cited as important to "bring" the consonants in jazz (P8). Less overall importance was placed on articulating "well" in pop and folk. All participants concurred that articulation for music theatre is driven by requirements for the character and the narrative. P9 explained that all her performances involve using a microphone and that her only consideration for articulation is making sure certain letters such as P, T and S don't distort. Other than that, the text and storytelling are paramount. In terms of diction, P13 discussed the benefit of having a lesson in classical diction with a female teacher that informed her ability for other styles that involved word painting and "brought the whole song to life in a pretty profound way".

Individuality in crossover

The freedom to play or experiment with articulation was deemed more acceptable in recent years in the classical music domain. P12 explained that, although the importance of articulation doesn't change, altering the volume and length of the articulation can make different repertoire (such as *Wolf* German Lied and Operetta) "come alive", and can "stamp an individuality on your sound". P17 mentioned she plays with unexpected articulations for vintage pop/classical crossover by making things "crunchy" or letting a "little creak" come in.

P5 explained that treatment of articulation in live performance scenarios for classical music requires heightened emphasis on consonants, thus breaking the classical training rule of elongating vowels, which often makes text harder to understand. She asserted that consonants should be prioritised as that's where intelligibility lies.

Registration

Participant responses provided information regarding preferred terminology for registration such as chest and head voice or modes. Answers also revealed techniques and employed pedagogy models that inform or assist challenges with registration within one genre as well as crossing genres.

Table 6: Summary of interview participant observations on registration

Genre/ Style	Inherent Requirements/Considerations	Technical approach
Classical	Smooth, even, consistent, blended	No conscious sensation of changing registers Siren exercises Steady airflow Minimal articulator tension
CCM	Varying methods One register with fine changes Chest, head, mix combinations Modes	Nuanced changes or recipes in vowels/resonance, breath, vocal fold mass
Music Theatre	Complexities in use of registration due to number of genres	Versatility/adaptation to repertoire, tessitura, role, character, gender
Jazz/ Swing	Adaptable via key	Broader use of registration for expanding repertoire
Pop/ Blues/ R&B	Chest voice in higher range Speech level	Prevalence of speech and belt quality and associated registration
Cross-over	More variety in CCM styles overall Often fixed methods for Classical styles	Varied approach according to, e.g., individual strengths, tastes, interpretation, teaching models

Registration in classical styles

Participants (n=4) saw blending or evening out of registers as desirable for classical styles such as opera. P11 explained that there should be little sensation of different registers if the singer is trained efficiently in these styles. P18 cited siren exercises as effective to smooth the transitions and ensure even and open tone in low and high ranges. P3 advised that understanding how vowels and consonants change in different registers is useful. A steady flow of air to allow the larynx to move freely through pitch range (P11) and ensuring there is no tongue tension in upper range (P8) were other recommendations to assist smooth registration.

CCM and interrelated parameters

P13 and P6 described CCM styles as employing one main register with fine, nuanced changes in vowels (resonance), breath and vocal fold mass or different "recipes". P13, a Somatic Voicework teacher who uses terminology of chest, head, and mix combinations to describe registers, viewed chest dominant mix as the most versatile for most CCM styles and pure head or head mix to provide substance to upper range in jazz.

P17 explained her identification with registers as modes, according to Sadolin's Complete Vocal Technique (2010) method:

> "Neutral" is just an unimpeded easy sound, basically, and that can go with the full range. Overdrive has that D limitation acoustically, apparently. After that it becomes "Edge", if you're keeping with the same setup. The twang thing, there's so much to do with twang. "Curbing" is that hold. I can sing any note in Curbing now. As you come down, you lose that hold. It just disappears. I do not think in register anymore, I think in mode.

Many comments illuminated the complex relationship between registers, resonance and pitch range. P6 argued that resonant sensations singers feel at certain pitches are not necessarily to do with register: "It's to do with a lot of other things but it's not really to do with pitch. It's just that we associate it with pitch or where we're pitching." She also pointed out that the range of complex terminology used to describe registers is unnecessarily confusing (Fabro, 2019; Herbst, 2020). Other participants mentioned the sensations they feel in their higher range as requiring a different attack (P7), or in the forehead or "mask" (P9).

Music theatre

P1 contended that the registration required is directly related to the drama text and character driven nature of the styles within the music theatre genre, but also to gender:

> I think female voices have always had to try to experiment to keep up with what males do quite naturally. The whole speech quality thing where we have an octave of it or we have a third out of two thirds for speech quality, whereas men have two-thirds before they start changing. I think there's a big gender thing that's going on there as well. Ethel Merman was absolutely trying to sound like a man on stage. There's no doubt about it.

Individual challenges

Challenges mentioned by participants pertaining to registration when moving between genres included:

- Losing access to, returning to and reworking previous approaches to register (P5)
- Making a decision on where to 'anchor' a register in live performance (P5)
- How to adapt to range differences associated with genre registers, for example, jazz being generally lower than pop (P8)
- Negotiating a desired 'flip' in live performance registration typically negotiated in recording scenarios (P11)

CONCLUSION

According to the participants, listening, imitation and immersion in social and cultural musical contexts contribute significantly to multi-genre singing ability. Open, experimental, flexible and playful attitudes are also deemed important for the ability to sing across genres.

With regard to postural alignment, there is a consensus that a high level of rigour is required for singing classical styles, the purpose or imposed requirements of a role or director impact postural alignment choices, descriptors vary principally between technical and sensorial, and the approach to postural alignment is significantly affected by character portrayal and enjoyment level.

In terms of rhythm, embodiment, and movement, classical styles afford less compromise and the approach to rhythm is affected by musical era and the adherence to written forms or freeform. The approach to rhythm is driven by the relationship with the style of accompaniment, the

scenario, stage or choreography. Rhythmic treatment of text involves varying degrees of individual interpretation and observation of genre tropes.

The importance of or degree of focus on breathing techniques vary as does whether breathing can effectively be learned or is autonomic. Individual physiological challenges are acknowledged regarding the approach to breathing.

Considerations for articulation include the relationship between vowel and consonant length, the importance and level of discipline when considering diction, and how articulation is affected by language, accent, rhythm in text and accompaniment.

Opinions vary concerning whether registers should be blended or not (including within CCM styles), terminology and parameters related to registration vary significantly (e.g., air flow, resonance, volume), and musical era, gender, industry trends and individual physiology can impact register use.

Lived experiences, tacit knowledge and opinions of the interview participants have contributed to a list of key considerations and attributes for multi-genre singing including synergies and disparities in techniques, approaches and attitudes. Derived from the researcher's broader doctoral study, these findings contribute to the much-needed perspectives of experienced, working singers to validate detailed processes for MGS.

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BIOGRAPHY

Susan Carson is the Newcastle Conservatorium Coordinator and Associate Lecturer at the University of Newcastle. Carson teaches singing, coaches contemporary ensembles and coordinates contemporary music and industry courses. She has recently been awarded her PhD, which investigated the processes involved in singing multiple genres. Sue performed as a professional freelance musician for 35 years in genres including opera, musical theatre, pop, country, folk, bluegrass, blues, rock, soul, funk and jazz. Sue is also a multi-instrumentalist and has worked extensively as a session fiddle player and vocalist. She has played and sung with Australia's elite country stars and maintains an active performance, research and teaching portfolio.