

In the Balance:

Weighing Up Contrasting Vocal Strategies for Teaching Classical and Music Theatre Singing

Pat Wilson and Jean Callaghan

INDUSTRY EXPECTATIONS

Classical	Music Theatre
'Good' tone (= balanced resonance, high and low; low larynx; consistent vibrato)	Tone more speech-like (neutral-to-high larynx; straighter tone, vibrato as effect; more emphasis on higher resonances)
Even resonance throughout the range (deal with registers)	Even resonance throughout the range (deal with register, including different styles - one man's vocal fault is another man's stylistic device)
Clear articulation, but not at the expense of tone	Clear articulation – word clarity more important than 'beautiful tone'
Acting through music and words	Acting through music, words, body language
Musically appropriate (historically informed) style	Genre-appropriate style (rock, pop, jazz, legit., traditional music theatre, R&B, rap, etc.)
Accent – 'high' form of language	Accent – 'everyday' language, appropriate to the character
Vocal efficiency	Vocal efficiency
Stamina	Stamina

Opera Auditions:	Music Theatre Auditions:
2 Contrasting arias within Fach in several languages (standards English, Italian, French and German) – but take more	2 contrasting songs – up-tempo + ballad; belt + legit. – but take more
Often not auditioning for a specific opera, so material needs to be appropriate to Fach and personality rather than a specific work. Appearance, weight of voice, and range appropriate to Fach.	Mostly auditioning for specific show, so choose relevant repertoire (in terms of genre/style), with one song by composer of the show. Demonstrate range to suit role.
Arias in original keys, with good piano score reflecting the original orchestration	Original key and arrangement if possible (check accuracy of piano/ vocal scores)
Cut lengthy piano-only sections; repeats in da capo arias (and other forms that use repeats) should show appropriate ornamentation	Cut lengthy piano-only sections; cut repetitions unless showing something different. Be prepared for 16 bars only.
Auditions may be in rehearsal space or on stage. Carrying power of the voice important, as usually no sound reinforcement (no miking)	Auditions less likely to be on stage and assumption that the show will be miked, even though auditions not miked
Acting through music and words	Acting through music, words, and body language
Personality (openness and confidence)	Personality (openness, confidence, directability)
Good interaction with accompanist	Good interaction with accompanist

In the Balance:

Period/Style	Some examples of Composers
17th century beginnings in Italy: courtly entertainment; drama, with solo declamation and choral interludes	Monteverdi: <i>L'incoronazione di Poppea</i> Caccini: <i>Euridice</i>
Baroque and 18th century before comic opera: high moral story and complicated structure; elaborate stage machinery; maximum number of arts combined; historical subjects	Cavalli: <i>La calisto</i> Purcell: <i>Dido and Aeneas</i> Rameau: <i>Hippolyte et Aricie</i> Handel: <i>Giulio Cesare; Alcina</i>
Classical: singers and composers have more influence; <i>opera seria</i> has historical subjects and moral themes; beginnings of <i>opera buffa</i> and greater range of musical forms and subjects	Gluck: <i>Orfeo ed Euridice</i> Mozart opera seria: <i>Idomeneo</i> ; Mozart opera buffa: <i>Le nozze di Figaro</i>
Early 19th century German	Beethoven; <i>Fidelio</i> Weber: <i>Der Freischütz</i>
Early 19th century Italian – ‘bel canto’	Rossini: <i>Il barbiere de Siviglia</i> Donizetti: <i>Lucia di Lammermoor</i> Bellini: <i>La sonnambula</i>
Verdi – high romantic	<i>Macbeth; Rigoletto; Il trovatore; La traviata; Boccanegra; Don Carlos; Aida; Otello; Fal</i>
Wagner - High Romantic, then <i>Gesamtkunstwerk</i>	Romantic: <i>Der fliegende Holländer; Tristan u</i> <i>Gesamtkunstwerk: Der Ring des Nibelungen (</i>
19th-20th Century French Variety of forms and subjects	Berlioz: <i>Les troyens</i> Gounod: <i>Faust</i> Offenbach: <i>Les contes d'Hoffman</i> Saint-Saëns: <i>Samson et Dalila</i> Bizet: <i>Carmen</i> Massenet: <i>Manon</i> ; Debussy: <i>Pelléas et Mélisande</i>
Romantic Czech and Russian Nationalism	Smetana: <i>The Bartered Bride</i> Borodin: <i>Prince Igor</i> Mussorgsky: <i>Boris Godunov</i> Tchaikovsky: <i>Eugene Onegin</i> Rimsky-Korsakov: <i>The Golden Cockerel</i>
Romantic Italian - ‘verismo’	Puccini: <i>La Bohème; Tosca</i> Leoncavallo: <i>Pagliacci</i> Mascagni: <i>Cavalleria rusticana</i>
Romantic German	Humperdinck: <i>Hänsel und Gretel</i>

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What does opera sound like?

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Period/Style	Some examples of Composers
20th Century Variety of forms and musical styles – neoclassical; high romantic; 12-tone; ‘folk’	Strauss: <i>Salome</i> ; <i>Der Rosenkavalier</i> ; Janaček: Stravinsky: <i>The Rake’s Progress</i> Berg: <i>Wozzeck</i> ; <i>Lulu</i> Prokofiev: <i>War and Peace</i> Weill: <i>Die Dreigroschenoper</i> Shostakovich: <i>Katerina Izmailova</i> Henze: <i>The Bassarids</i> Gershwin: <i>Porgy and Bess</i> Menotti: <i>The Consul</i> Tippett: <i>The Midsummer Marriage</i> Britten: <i>Peter Grimes</i> John Adams: <i>Nixon in China</i>
Contemporary – anything goes	Dean: <i>Bliss</i>

What does music theatre sound like? Anything...

Music Genre	Some examples of Music Theatre Shows [Whole shows <i>or</i> some numbers only in the style listed]
Cabaret	Cabaret (1966)
Church music	<i>Some numbers in</i> The Sound of Music (1959)
Classical music	<i>One number in</i> Barnum (1980); <i>one number in</i> The Mystery of Edwin Drood (1985)
Contemporary Music Theatre	The Last Five Years (2002); Marie Christine (1999); Parade (1998); Scarlet Pimpernel (1997); See What I Wanna See (2005); Songs For a New World (1996)
Country & Western	Annie Get Your Gun (1946); Best Little Whorehouse in Texas (1978); Big River (1985); Calamity Jane (1953); Cowgirls (1996); Paint Your Wagon (1951); Pump Boys and Dinettes (1981); Seven Brides for Seven Brothers (1954)
Folk music / World music	Fiddler on the Roof (1965); Jamaica (1957); The Lion King (1997); Milk and Honey (1961); Once on This Island (1990); Zorba (1968)
Folk/Pop	Godspell (1971)
Gospel, Soul, R 'n' B	Dreamgirls (1981); Five Guys Named Moe (1992); Mama, I Want to Sing (1995); Purlie (1970); The Wiz (1975)
Jazz	Ain't Misbehavin' (1978); Chicago (1975); City of Angels (1989); Little Shop of Horrors (1982)
Music Hall	The Mystery of Edwin Drood (1985)
Opera	Phantom (1991); Phantom of the Opera (1986); Porgy and Bess (1935)
Pop	Aïda (2000); Beauty and the Beast (1994); The Boy from Oz (1998); Chess (1986); Grease (1972); Hairspray (2002); Jekyll and Hyde (1990); Jersey Boys (2005); The Lion King (1997); The Little Mermaid (2008); Mamma Mia! (1999); Saturday Night Fever (1998); They're Playing Our Song (1979)
Rap	Bring in da' noise, bring in da' funk (1996)
Rock'n'roll	Blood Brothers (1991); Footloose (1998); Hair (1968); Hedwig and the Angry Inch (1998); Jesus Christ Superstar (1971); Miss Saigon (1989); Rent (1996); Rock of Ages (2009); Spring Awakening (2006); Tommy (1993); We Will Rock You (2002)
Traditional Music Theatre	Brigadoon (1947); Camelot (1960); Crazy For You (1992); Guys and Dolls (1950); 42 nd Street (1980); Me and My Girl (1937); Oklahoma (1943); The Producers (2001); South Pacific (1949)
'Twenties jazz / Charleston	The Boyfriend (1954); Chicago (1975); Steel Pier (1997); Thoroughly Modern Millie (2000)
Vaudeville / Burlesque	Gypsy (1959); Sugar Babies (1979)



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