

DLA Doctoral dissertation thesises

Ágnes Lakatos, Mrs Dr Csuhaj Barna Tibor

Study on the characteristics of vocal jazz voice techniques and
intonation from the Afro-American folk music to the present
day

Ferenc Liszt University of Music

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I. Antecedents of Research

Throughout thirty years of my pedagogy career several questions have come up concerning the voice technique of jazz singing, principally its difference from the voice technique of classical singing.

I haven't found an overall study or piece of work in Hungarian vocal pedagogy or in foreign literature in which all the characteristic features of jazz singing are analyzed.

That's why I decided to analyze the most decisive characteristics alongside the evolution of jazz. This way the causes of differences between jazz and classical voice techniques could be revealed, focusing on how vocal jazz has become distinct from other vocal genres.

II. Sources

In my research I have mainly worked from English language sources. Besides the articles, the studies, the literature, the biographies, I have found a lot of doctoral dissertations, too, via the internet. I could make use of plenty of useful information this way. Searching on Youtube made it possible for me to reach numerous recordings, all of which proved to be great help during the analysis.

It is essential to highlight the Hungarian scientific literature, pieces of work, studies, books of János Gonda, András Pernye, László Országh, László Dr. Budai, Tamàs Hacki, Miklós György Kerényi, György Vukán és János Pap all of which have meant a great help during my doctoral writing.

III. Method

I have examined the characteristics of vocal jazz, that is the features of English language, intonation, diffraction, belting, vibrato and vocal range. I have analyzed these topics in distinct chapters, in order of time, which seemed to be the best way to follow. With this method I could truly get to the core of the topics and understand how certain characteristics of voice production evolved and changed side by side with the evolution of jazz.

In my dissertation I introduce my work of transcriptions, analysis of sheet music samples, comparing charts, as well as sound acoustical measuring.

IV. Results

The goal of my doctoral essay is to demonstrate how vocal jazz voice technique has evolved from the Afro-American's utterance to the present day, that is to the contemporary vocal performers' almost eclectic voice technique, and in what sense it differs from the classical voice technique.

By the chosen research methods the characteristics of vocal jazz voice techniques and their evolutionary circumstances could be clarified successfully. Similarly, I managed to track the morphosis of its features in line with jazz history.

With the help of research results that are based on the study of characteristic features the difference is obvious between the classical and the jazz voice techniques.

V. The documentation of activities related to the subject of dissertation

My professional activity related to my doctoral dissertation mainly is my thirty years of pedagogical work as a jazz vocal coach.

Besides the individual classes I give lessons to a jazz choir and I give vocal jazz improvisation classes to student instrumentalists. In connection with the voice technique of jazz singing and improvisation I have held several lectures and workshops in Hungary and abroad, among which the most significant ones are the following:

2014: International Symposium on Singing in Music Education, 2015: World Voice Day, Budapest Liszt Ferenc Zeneművészeti Egyetem, 2011, 2013: Franz Liszt Music Hochschule Weimar, 2016: Antonio Scontrino Conservatorio Trapani, 2018: Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre, 2018: Conservatorio di Musica Francesco Venezze, 2019: NTNU, Norvégia, Trondheim.

Besides my pedagogical work I am a working jazz singer. I perform mainly at jazz festivals, jazz clubs, I have recorded many albums with my jazz bands, among which the most important ones are the following:

2000: Lakatos Ágnes és triója: Covered by Frost, 2003: East Side Jazz Company: Bora, 2005: Fata Morgana, 2008: Voice and Bass I., 2013: Voice and Bass II. Into the Groove.