

The Vocal Technique as an Instrument of Expression on Stage

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Abstract: *Voice training goes beyond the bravura aspect and involves artistic and emotional aspects, the vocal technique thus offering the possibility of accessing an adequate expression of feelings in operatic performances. The high quality standards in professional vocal singing require an enhancement of the vocal technique based on correct breathing, as well as a most expressive, nuanced and versatile interpretation, both on the opera stage and on the concert podium. The transformations brought about in the Italian lyric theatre in the Romantic era made it necessary to adapt the bel canto technique to the new expectations, according to which every technical element was to be treated as an expressive element too. A technically perfect musical approach to all the scenes composing an opera and also a major change of attitude favouring a vocal and dramatic interpretation enable the singers to specialize in the dramatic art and to become true actors, through whom the audience can passionately live the story of each character they embody on stage. The aim of all consummate artists is to perfect both their vocal and acting techniques, in order to reach the highest expressiveness made possible by the union of music and drama.*

Keywords: *voice; vocal timbre; vocal technique; breathing; belcanto; acting; expressiveness;*

Introduction:

General considerations about the importance of the vocal technique in singing

"La tecnica è al servizio del personaggio" (Magda Olivero)²

The human being has always been fascinated by the world of musical sounds, his desire always being to express himself and enjoy their beneficial effect on his whole existence. Music raises the emotional and affective level of our lives enormously, and is indeed the noblest of the arts, giving those who enjoy it the deepest emotional states and sensations. Performing art has constantly evolved. "Thus, since antiquity, the 'philosophy of beauty' has been affirmed as originating in the sum of emotional sensations. Undoubtedly, these ancient aesthetics (essentially non-philosophical) attribute to music, the most "ethereal" and immaterial of the arts, sentimental connotations, strictly linked to the human emotional plane, awakening and provoking in the psyche/spirit concrete but extremely varied feelings, without explaining or synthesizing theoretically, the philosophical, emotional or spiritual meanings and connotations established by music"³.

Performers who over the centuries have dedicated themselves to music, especially the vocal art, are true "angels of music" who sincerely offer the world their voice, the mirror of their

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² "Technique serves the character." (my translation, E.H.M.) – *Magda Olivero Interview (I)*, May 17, 2015. 10:14. Retrieved May 5, 2024, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=doT7kebbPeE&list=RDdoT7kebbPeE&start_radio=1&rv=doT7kebbPeE&t=15.

³ Elena Moșuc. 2023. *Tema nebuniei în opera italiană din prima jumătate a secolului al XIX-lea*. București: Editura Universității Naționale de Muzică, p.18 (in the text *supra* my translation, E.H.M.).

soul. The cleaner this mirror is, the truer their art is and the more sincerely it is perceived by listeners in the complexity and variety of their psycho-emotional experiences. Thus, in order to render as faithfully as possible the intentions/goals of the geniuses who created undeniably beautiful and valuable scores, multilateral research has been carried out into the various vocal aspects, constantly refining and improving them in line with new discoveries in all fields. Studies of the various aspects of vocal mechanisms, with all the problems associated with them, have been of great importance in the last two and a half centuries, with the extent of vocal manifestations acquiring a very special character.

My personal *motto* has always been that of Adriana, the versatile artist in Francesco Cilea's *Adriana Lecouvreur*: "Io son l'umile ancella del genio creator" ("I am the humble servant of the creative genius"). With a sincere and determined desire to be true and authentic in the art of singing, both in opera and on the concert stage, I have studied in depth technically and interpretively all the styles approached, increasingly increasing in complexity and harmonic enrichment, deepening the technique of *belcanto*, the basis of all styles.

As we know, vocal technique has always been pursued and required to be perfected, either in specialised institutions or privately, thus making it possible to pass on knowledge directly from soloists in full career or, as in my case, from those who have retired. Maestra Mildela D'Amico, with whom I had the great opportunity to perfect and deepen my authentic Italian vocal technique in Milan from the very beginning of my career through a very serious, continuous and persevering study, loved enormously to work in filigree every sound with her young disciples whom she guided with great competence and love on the path of sound vocal technique, the basis of a long-lasting career. Through such masters, the Italian singing tradition will live on through the ages!

My desire for professional perfection, stimulated by the atmosphere of the highest artistic quality at the Zürich Opera, where I was employed as a soloist simultaneously with my university studies, forced me to study seriously, vocal technique becoming an obsession for me. The great soloists of the world invited to "my theatre", who have truly written history in the world of international opera (Leo Nucci, Alfredo Kraus, Mirella Freni, Katia Ricciarelli, Neil Shicoff, Edita Gruberova, Ruggero Raimondi, Peter Schreier, etc.), became the best examples for me and motivated me to study seriously. I shared the stage with them; with an agile eye and an attentive ear I observed them both in their singing and in their stage play, in the creation of characters. The responsibility of singing on such a stage as the one in Zürich or the other great theatres of the world to which I have been invited, under the baton of the most important conductors of our time (Nello Santi, Nikolaus Harnoncourt, Gianandrea Noseda, Christoph von Dohnányi, Valery Gergiev, Evelino Pidò, Marcello Viotti, etc.) and my attitude towards the profession in which I have succeeded in practising it, forced me to study vocal technique in depth, always under the demanding supervision of my voice teacher, and to undergo impeccable musical training with accompanist-pianists followed by meetings with the world's great directors (Franco Zeffirelli, Liliana Cavani, Sven-Eric Bechtolf, Gilbert Deflo, Renata Scotto, David McVickar, Graham Vick, Davide Livermore, Roman Polanski, etc.), giving life to many romantic heroines.

The great soprano Magda Olivero, considered the ideal interpreter of Adriana, says in a video interview: "La tecnica è una cosa importantissima per un motivo, perche quando si sa cantare bene, non ci sono più problemi al momento in quale si entra sul palcoscenico; e si può vivere il personaggio. Ripetto sempre: la tecnica è al servizio del personaggio."⁴

⁴ "Technique is a very important thing for one reason: when you know how to sing well, there are no problems when you go on

1. Vocal technique

"Do not think singing is an easy career. It is a lifetime's work; [...] remember, we are servants to those better than us - the composers. They believed; we must believe." (Maria Callas)⁵

A dramatic artist always burning with the desire for perfection and blessed with a voice he is aware of, he will always be on the search for the best convincing solutions in his artistic discourse on stage. Perfectionism in our profession is a blessed "professional disease" that leads to the best deciphering of the characters we perform and which, in turn, through the prism of each of our personalities, come to life through intelligent, competent and profound vocal and emotional interpretation.

But far too many voices today are working far below their peak efficiency. In addition, the interpretive abilities of most opera singers are far from being fully realised, and very many of those who begin the study of singing with native voices of outstanding quality find themselves, years later, more or less back where they started, some of them even falling below the level of their own native vocal and interpretive qualities. The vast complexity of vocal and performing technique has led in recent decades to the splitting or separation of academic assignments into three distinct categories, which in fact coincide to some extent with the stages of assimilation of vocal and performing technique. Specific terms have thus emerged to classify the duties of teachers of vocal and performing technique:

- *the actual vocal technique teacher*, who will guide the student through all stages of vocal technique development;
- *the accompanist teacher* - also called *vocal-coach* in the literature - who will provide the student with all the information and theoretical musical knowledge;
- *the performing arts teacher* (acting, stage movement) who will develop in the student the ability to express and focus emotional states, sensations, perceptions through expressiveness.

These aspects – *vocal technique* and *interpretative technique* – are practically included in a complex term, representing the totality of theoretical and practical elements that we can call *musical technique*, which will transform the human voice into a *catalyst*, combining *singing* with *dramatic art* in a unitary, indivisible whole. Thus, *musical technique* will prepare the student (*disciple*) for the next stage of assimilation of theoretical and practical notions, transforming him into what is called in specialist terminology *the actor-singer*.

1.1. Breathing technique - the basis of vocal technique

"Uno studente che sappia respirare bene ha in mano il segreto e la chiave per diventare un artista."⁶ So, the future singer must learn to sing correctly and in the spirit of Italian vocal technique, starting from the first lesson with competent guidance on breathing. We know that there are several types of breathing (subclavicular, abdominal, diaphragmatic, costodiaphragmatic), but the correct, ample, complete and indicated for professional singers is

stage; and you can live the character. I always repeat: technique is in the service of the character." (my translation, E.H.M.) - *Magda Olivero Interview (1)*, quoted source, 09:59-10:18.

⁵ John Ardoin. 1987. *Callas at Julliard. The Master Classes*. London: Robson Books, p. 297.

⁶ "A student who knows how to breathe well holds the secret and the key to becoming an artist." (my translation, E.H.M.) - Gustavo Magrini. 1926. *Il Canto, arte e tecnica* (Milan: Ulrico Hoepli), *apud* Marin-Marius Truiculescu. 2011. *Cântul vocal profesionist*. Cluj-Napoca: Editura Renașterea, p. 43.

costodiaphragmatic breathing. Having personally experienced this type of breathing for years, I am convinced that it is the right way to sing both correctly and expressively.

"Why doesn't he [the singer] learn how to breathe? It's impossible to sing artistically without having full control over your breathing. Why don't singers sit and think and work intelligently? Then they would rather realize that any good artistic act is based on reserve, on restraint; without that, vocal technique is imperfect, and imperfect technique means imperfect art."⁷ – the great Italian tenor Enrico Caruso once said. If we listen carefully to the crowd of singers in the media, we can agree with him. The time given to study has become minimal, and the detail and filigree work in the musical act has been drastically reduced. The great soprano Renata Tebaldi has pointed out: "Everyone needs to develop a personal technique of breath management. All young people must understand that the most important thing in singing is breathing. It takes many months to understand how it works. That's how you end up with something that allows you to do whatever you want (in singing). It takes a lot of exercises in this, which I did standing, then sitting and on the floor"⁸.

Following the example of my teacher (who, in turn, was a disciple of the great maestra Mercedes Llopart, with whom tenor Alfredo Kraus and soprano Renata Scotto also studied), I recommend inspiration generally on the mouth, on the yawning sensation, in the normal range, ensuring the space of the throat open, free, with the larynx down, thus facilitating the passage of air through the mouth area, without the mouth area being involved much in the act of singing; it must remain relaxed. My teacher even insisted that the inhalation be consciously slightly audible, thus assuring her that I had positioned the sound correctly. The throat area is only a zone for the passage of the air column, all concentration must be given to the inhalation of air in the lowest area of the lungs, the retention of air through the contraction of the diaphragm, *appoggio* (support) and the placement of the sound (on that contraction) on as high a position as possible, *in maschera*, as the Italians say, i.e. *in the mask*, maximum importance being given to the resonance in the frontal area.

During my performances of *La Traviata* by G. Verdi at the Liceu Theatre in Barcelona in 2014, I had the honour of being personally invited by the great soprano Montserrat Caballé (Fig. 1) to attend her *masterclass*.



Fig. 1. Montserrat Caballé and the author in Barcelona, Liceu Theatre, 2014

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⁷ Salvatore Fucito, Barnet J. Beyer. 1922. *Caruso and the Art of Singing, Including Caruso's Vocal Exercises and His Practical Advice to Students and Teachers of Singing*. New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company Publishers, p. 122.

⁸ V. Paolo Limiti *Intervista Renata Tebaldi* (2002). July 13, 2023. Min. 24:50. Retrieved April 24, 2024, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f_DmEgfQUqI (in the text *supra* my translation, E.H.M.).

Like all great singers, Montserrat Caballé placed great emphasis on training her diaphragm and to this end practiced floor exercises with weights on it. I found them quite useful and recommend them to young students as well. A few more effective exercises, of the many I personally recommend for daily diaphragm training, would be:

1. Vocalizations on long sounds – on 5 vowels (a, e, i, o, u), for instance. These are vocalizations suggested by maestro Ion Buzea, a famous Romanian tenor, with whom I often practiced my vocal technique in Zürich.
2. Vocalizations (suggested by maestro Ion Buzea) with 5 vowels (a, e, i, o, u) on a sound, taking care, after the air retention, to simply "throw" out the sound already placed on the high position using the diaphragm.
3. Vocalizations on a third (such as: do-mi, mi-sol, sol-do, do-mi and descending, see Fig. 2; or do-mi-sol, see Fig. 3), the sounds being sung on the syllables *mi-ia* and *mi-i-a*, respectively, placed on the high position and pushed outwards with the diaphragm. These vocalizations were suggested to me by maestra Mildela D'Amico in her vocal technique courses in Milan.



Fig. 2. *One vocalization suggested by maestra Mildela D'Amico.*
 Transcription in MuseScore 4.1 by Elena Hebeisen-Moşuc



Fig. 3. *Another vocalization suggested by maestra Mildela D'Amico.*
 Transcription in MuseScore 4.1 by Elena Hebeisen-Moşuc

Here are a few vocalizations meant to develop full breathing and diaphragm training:

The vocalization in Fig. 4, created by me, is very good not only for developing breathing capacity and, of course, for focusing attention on the high singing position, but also for a beautiful, continuous *legato* and clean, smooth *staccato*. We first sing slow and legato thirds do-mi, re-fa, mi-sol, fa-re, then repeat the same sequence in fast tempo, after which we end the vocalization with *staccato* notes: do-re-mi-fa-sol-fa-mi-re-do.

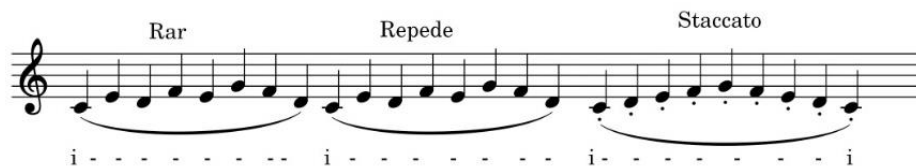


Fig. 4. *Vocalization suggested and transcribed in MuseScore 4.1 by Elena Hebeisen-Moşuc*

For wide breathing, dosage, timbral homogeneity, *appoggio*, *legato* and development of vocal ambitus I recommend the vocalize in Fig. 5 created also by me. Repeat the do-mi-sol-mi sequence three times, then immediately follow three times the sequence on the ascending and descending arpeggio do-mi-sol-do-sol-mi-do.



Fig. 5. Another vocalization suggested and transcribed in MuseScore 4.1 by Elena Hebeisen-Moşuc

Being quite long (but breathing in the middle on the high-pitched sound), with the vocalize in Fig. 6 (created by me for my personal study) which requires maximum attention to dosage, *legato* and direction, we can gain a lot in diaphragmatic flexibility and wide breathing. Start from middle C ascending in groups of three sounds to E 2 with a crown as follows: do-re-mi, re-mi-fa, mi-fa-sol, fa-sol-la, sol-la-si, la-si-do, si-do-re, do-re-mi, then descending back to middle C. The whole vocalize will be repeated ascending from semitone to semitone, going as high as possible.



Fig. 6. A more elaborate vocalization, suggested and transcribed in MuseScore 4.1 by Elena Hebeisen-Moşuc

Exercises would be countless, many singing teachers discover and create many and according to the student and his possibilities, and the development of muscles and diaphragmatic support, complemented by intercostal opening, excellent for supporting long phrases, is done over time, with patience and a lot of tenacity.

"The professional vocal singer must know with the utmost objectivity his or her qualities and limitations, even the obstacles he or she may have. That is why the knowledge and mastery of vocal technique, of voluntarily controlled breathing (cortical), especially the use of the diaphragmatic dome and the expiratory muscles after scientific exercises, the sending of dosed air to the vocal chords and to the resonance areas are extremely important things, besides a perfect or required disciplined, corrected hearing. Then comes the art, the honing, the perfecting of the singing, its expressiveness. That is why any attempt to elucidate these problems, especially through personal experience, is extremely welcome for the younger generation"⁹.

⁹ Nicolae Miu. 2011. „Un gând din partea unui meloman” (cuvânt înainte) [“A thought from a music lover” (foreword)], in Marin-Marius Truiculescu, *op. cit.*, p. 30 (in the text *supra* my translation, E.H.M.).

1.2. Voice output and sound control

"Breath control is the essential foundation for perfect vocals"¹⁰. Breathing is therefore the foundation on which sound vocal technique is established and is the basis for correct vocal delivery. With this in mind, we now turn to how sounds are produced.

Voice production requires the following factors:

- subglottic pressure – the force that opens the glottis;
- vocal cord elasticity – the force that closes the glottis through recoil
- mobility of the vocal cord lining

Voice pitch control. Pitch or frequency of phonation is controlled by two factors: subglottic pressure and laryngeal musculature.

Subglottic pressure. The main effect of increasing subglottic pressure is, of course, to increase the loudness of the vocal sound.

The laryngeal muscle is the main factor that regulates the pitch of the voice, determining the length, tension and mass of the vocal cords. When a lower frequency sound is emitted, the vocal cords are relaxed, thick and short. The higher the frequency of the phonation, the longer, tenser and thinner the vocal cords will be. When the vocal cords are tense, they may be thinner, reducing the vibratory mass slightly. "A sudden and marked reduction in vibratory mass, limited only to the free edge of the vocal cords occurs when the voice moves into the falsetto register"¹¹.

Voice loudness control. In a physiological sense, loudness is the acoustic sensation produced by the amplitude of vibrations. The greater the vibratory amplitude (sound pressure), the greater the sound intensity, and vice versa. Voice intensity or vibratory amplitude during phonation is regulated by three factors: glottal power, glottal efficiency and resonance (vocal tract transfer function).

Voice quality or timbre control. The primary sound (the source of the voice) contributes to the significant definition of vocal timbre along with the participation of the vocal tract as a resonator. The primary sound (generated by the vibration of the vocal cords) is in turn characterised by three dimensions: fundamental frequency or pitch, amplitude or intensity and spectrum or timbral characteristics.

The normal emission of vocal sound is directly influenced by variations in frequency, intensity and timbre, and is regulated by all the mechanisms that contribute to the formation of vocal sound.

Throughout the history of singing, attempts and attempts have been made to explain physical and resonance phenomena in the vocal registers through the sensations of singers. Low tones produce strong vibrations in the chest, medium tones cause sensations that go up to the hard palate and into the oro-pharyngeal cavities, and high tones create the sensation of vibrations in the head. For each of these groups of sounds there is a similar tonal timbre and a specific adaptation of the breathing mechanism.

For a correct vocal emission, it starts with the study of the 5 vowels a, e, i, o, u. Beniamino Gigli, the great tenor of the *golden age* of opera, said in an interview: "We sing in the same voice position all 5 vowels, without changing anything in the throat. If you have to study singing, more precisely Italian *belcanto*, you must learn to sing the five vowels in the

¹⁰ V. Richard Miller. 2000. *Training Soprano Voices*. Oxford University Press, p. 32.

¹¹ Constantin I. Bogdan. 2001. *Foniatrice clinică, VOCEA*. București: Editura Viața Medicală, p. 99 (in the text *supra* my translation, E.H.M.).

same voice position"¹². Homogeneous singing based on the *ugualianza timbrica* (timbral equality) necessary for correct and beautiful singing and insisted on by the Italian singing masters is based on maintaining the high position of emission and, above all, on constant laryngeal relaxation. Singing this way, the sound will be of a high quality, beautiful and with harmonics. Everything must be controlled every second through commands given by the brain.

Proper opening of the larynx and correct direction and dosing of the airflow from the lungs to the resonance centres (cavities) will result in correct speech delivery. All these things help that "a singer with a properly educated voice, without trauma, with muscles ready to bear the necessary effort, can sing for three to four hours, provided that this effort is made only every two or three days, while studying musical scores and exercises with the method of singing without sound can be done daily"¹³. The study and mental preparation (often practiced by me too) are supported and confirmed by the esteemed singing teacher of the National Academy of Belcanto Italiano in Ravenna, Astrea Amaduzzi. She advises young singers "to study for an hour, maximum two hours daily, on breath control and *appoggio*, but more study should be occupied by mental study for memorizing music and text. The vocalizations when done, should be light, flexible, without being pushed or shouted, be on *portamento dolce* of voice from low to high and back, caress the larynx which should not be solicited at all. The singing, in fact, is done controlled and with great science. Then, vocal warm-up before a performance should be a maximum of 15 minutes. And the great singers whose advice we should heed, Tetrizzini, Caruso, Gigli, Galli-Curci, Ponselle, confirm this"¹⁴. In fact, if the disciples understand a few basic things, singing will be, in theory, very simple.

To recapitulate, we can conclude that the correct breathing is the costodiaphragmatic one and it must be trained in order to sing long phrases, *leaning* well with the diaphragm on the air column, in a high voice position, with the throat free and the larynx free; the sounds must be dome-shaped, the emission with a sound flow directed towards the audience. Important: the jaw should be relaxed, free and never pointed forward. It does not participate in the production of the sound, but must be permanently relaxed! All vowels and consonants should be pronounced correctly for good articulation of the words, which is also extremely helpful in projecting the sounds as well as possible to the audience. Astrea Amaduzzi says: "Lyrical singing is a set song, the voice must be spread over a very wide space. Very often it has to pass over the orchestra and reach the loggia (the last seats in the upper rows of the theatre) [...] Strident sounds are resolved by giving space to the sound as all wind instruments do, their production is of a vertical order! [...] The sound must always be round, i.e. the sounds must be emitted not horizontally, but vertically; the round sound must be produced by the spherical shape of the mouth [...] I insist on the relaxation of the jaw, the mandible must simply fall, the consonants must be very well pronounced, the sounds always placed on the high position of the voice. As you go up the intonation. the larynx rises, but the relaxation in the throat remains. One should not exaggerate with mouth opening, especially in the lower and middle registers"¹⁵. And Marin-Marius

¹² V. Beniamino Gigli/belcanto/singing. April 6, 2023. Retrieved April 26, 2024, from <https://www.instagram.com/reel/C5ZWHmSSbz-/?igsh=ZHAwbTh1czdva3J0>, (in the text *supra* my translation, E.H.M.).

¹³ Elena Cernei. 1982. *Enigme ale vocii umane*. Bucharest: Litera Publishing House, p. 8 (in the text *supra* my translation, E.H.M.).

¹⁴ V. Astrea Amaduzzi. June 14, 2020. *Strategie di studio giornaliero e riscaldamento pre-performance pubblica*. Ravenna: National Academy of Italian Belcanto. Retrieved April 22, 2024, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rJJTLHfNd4> (in the text *supra* my translation, E.H.M.).

¹⁵ Astrea Amaduzzi, June 16, 2020. *Verticalità del suono e primo passaggio sopranile nel Belcanto* (Vaga luna). Ravenna: National Academy of Italian Belcanto. Retrieved April 22, 2024, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=76sUn_Cgj0 (in the text *supra* my translation, E.H.M.).

Truiculescu, the renowned baritone from Cluj-Napoca and prestigious teacher, concludes: "To achieve a beautiful vocal emission, you need a good voice setting, a correct breathing, a good intonation and a nuanced interpretation"¹⁶, thus committing ourselves totally to the transmission of the text put on the portative by the composer and librettist.

2.Performing art

The mastery of stage technique is a necessity in the development and affirmation of singers, the vast majority of 20th century directors come from drama theatres, requiring opera artists to make extensive investigations into the psychology of the characters they perform, as well as their own vocal creation, which defines their musical-dramatic career. The young actor's own stage manner of acting is acquired in the early years of his stage activity, and for the young actor it means discovering the technical methods of the psychological mechanism, in order to reproduce the proposed dramatic situation. The artist uses different roles to challenge his subconscious and to penetrate into himself, the revelation of the affective personality and living in another person represents a high level of artistic performance. For his self-discovery, the actor constructs various faces that help him to separate himself from the everyday. Today's audience expects to discover real, believable, true characters and their way of acting in extreme situations, under the vast influence of the media culture that has penetrated the artistic world of this century.

Acting on stage means acting in the spirit of the true character in dramatic circumstances, without letting the *actor-singer's* own impulses interfere and alter the character's thinking or decisions. *The singer-actor* approaches a stage performance that requires intense study and attempts at various vocal-scenic solutions, carefully following the profile of the role to be played. He must be constantly aware that his appearance on stage involves singing, acting and the possession of all the human senses as in real life. Through the singers, the audience feels, sees, touches and experiences the story of each character with the same intensity as those on stage.

The essence of an artist's image is the extent to which it conveys his unique and inner emotion to you. If the actor-singer finds in every stage movement or action his own inner justification, then the character will be believable, the life drawn from the flow of the action is authentic, ensuring perfect integration between vocal emission, acting and stage movement.

2.1. Expressiveness of the human voice in opera using vocal technique

"Singing is only a means, not an end in itself. Through it the singer communicates ideas and emotions of the soul", said Gustav Mahler. A composer's work is a work of notes, signs and indications, which can remain a mute thing if the performer does not transform those signs in the score into sounds, into melody, into a feeling of the soul. Without an interpreter the composer's creation remains lifeless. He becomes a true creator alongside the composer.

"The singer is not the one who has a voice and wants to sing, but the one who, apart from his voice, manages through work to become a real performer"¹⁷. The 20th-century opera theatre lives through the opera stage and the printing studio or the film set, the opera soloist thus addresses an increasingly large audience, transcending the boundaries of theatres. In addition to the promotion of the operatic performance through the media, the modernism of the lyric theatre

¹⁶ Marin-Marius Truiculescu. 2011. *Cântul vocal profesionist*. Cluj-Napoca: Editura Renașterea, p. 116 (in the text *supra* my translation, E.H.M.).

¹⁷ Nicolae Secăreanu. 1975. *Arta cântului*. Bucharest: Editura Muzicală, p. 18 (in the text *supra* my translation, E.H.M.).

involves, above all, the affirmation of social and psychological realism, the formation of a new type of singer-actor, capable of responding to complex physical, vocal and spiritual demands; the formation of a new scenic language, individual and intellectualised through the natural, natural combination of scenic truth with theatricality (conventionalism). The performances that a *singer-actor* is compelled to achieve in order to secure a privileged place in the world of modern opera force him to constantly train himself and form his own system of study. A first step is the preparation of the body, the external factors and the study from a technical - vocal - musical point of view. This first step leads to awareness and stimulation of scenic creativity, the inner study of each role and the assumption of all the psychological fluctuations of the character is the next process to be tackled.

In today's stagings, in addition to the optimal vocal interpretation of the role, great emphasis is placed on the most realistic interpretation of the character from a stage point of view. Directors require intense participation in the realisation of the character, often asking the soloist to sing in positions that are not very comfortable but expressive scenically. To meet all these demands, vocal technique with a solid foundation on breathing is mandatory. Personally, throughout my career I have worked with demanding directors, who put a lot of emphasis on the aesthetics of the performance, which was intended to be as natural as possible, but also striking. Good physical condition to optically colour the movements of my characters was vital, even if sometimes it was not quite optimal. And I'll give some examples.

In October 2006, the Staatsoper Berlin's production of *Maria Stuarda* in which I played the title role and my rival Queen Elisabeth I (Katarina Karnéus) was in the view of director Karten Wiegand my sister, was only musically well received by the public under the baton of maestro Alain Altinoglu. "Mosuc - is the belcanto diva par excellence" wrote the reviewers (in the *Financial Times*, October 22, 2006). The director has totally changed the subject of the opera, copying the film "What Ever Happend to Baby Jane ?" in which I, Maria Stuarda (I looked like Elisabeth Taylor) had to sing the whole opera on the floor or in a wheelchair, which was for me a real tour de force in every respect, passed with flying colours thanks to my very solid and controlled vocal technique and breathing.



Fig. 7. *Maria Stuarda*, *MARIA STUARDA*, Staatsoper Berlin, 2006, with Katarina Karnéus
© Staatsoper unter den Linden, Berlin

Opéra Bastille in Paris invited me in January 2015 to perform the sparkling role of Zerbinette in Richard Strauss' *Ariadne auf Naxos* in three performances. The direction was by Laurent Pelly and the conductor was Michael Schönwandt. In contrast to the sad and static Ariadne, Zerbinetta, full of life and solutions to everything, moved on stage like a leprechaun

and sang in all possible positions (on the stairs, on the sofa, in a tree or lying on her back as in the photo). The role is very difficult to sing even in normal position, even more so was it in the requested and demanding positions, having to use all my knowledge of vocal technique and especially extremely good breathing, taking care also of my physical condition.



Fig. 8. *Zerbietta, ARIADNE AUF NAXOS, Opéra Bastille Paris, 2015*
© Opéra Bastille Paris

Giacomo Puccini's *La Bohème*, in which I was invited to make my debut as Mimi at the Opernhaus Zürich in December 2007, alongside Jonas Kaufmann, also a debutant, in the role of Rodolfo, was a fairly traditional production, but with modern elements and beautifully realized. The direction was by Philippe Sireuil and the musical direction by Carlo Rizzi. It is well known that in the last act, Mimi lives her last moments of life and, lacking physical strength, she can only enjoy her reunion with Rodolfo by talking (respectfully singing) to him while lying in bed. For a convincing and expressive performance, this is the only possible position.



Fig. 9. *Mimi, LA BOHÈME, Opernhaus Zürich, with Jonas Kaufmann*
© Suzanne Schwiertz

Giuseppe Verdi's opera *Luisa Miller*, proposed as a new production after a 20-year hiatus at Milan's Teatro Scala in July 2012, was a huge success for the entire team, but also personally, not only musically under the direction of the great conductor in vogue today, Gianandrea Nosedà, but also thanks to film director Mario Martone who wanted a very *fresh* Luisa. The details were very important to his eye as a film director used to the videocamera, and many of

my proposals were accepted. The dynamics of the performance, involving the chorus and not just the soloists, added value to an opera that is often static, not at La Scala.



Fig. 10. Luisa, *LUISA MILLER*, Teatro alla Scala di Milano, with Marcello Alvarez and Vitalij Kowaljow
©Marco Brescia & Rudy Amisano

A very successful role thanks to Donizetti's music, but also to the famous madness scene, the prototype of madness scenes in *belcanto*, is the role of Lucia in *Lucia di Lammermoor*. In June 2016, when I was invited also by the Scala Theatre in Milan to be the protagonist of this musical monument, in the staging that was born at the Metropolitan Opera New York under the direction of Mrs. Mary Zimmermann, conductor Stefano Ranzani, I enjoyed a superb production in which my role was extremely well highlighted, requesting to the maximum and fortunately, all my artistic possibilities in the madness scene, long awaited and loved by the music-loving public. I had to act like a man who has lost his mind, with a lot of movement, controlling my breathing very well not only for the intense scenic journey, but also to master well the overwhelming emotions of the role performed on this stage, the Olympus of international opera.





Fig. 11, 12, 13. *Lucia*, *LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR*, Teatro Scala, Milan, 2016
© Marco Brescia & Rudy Amisano

Bonus *Lucia di Lammermoor* – The end of Lucia's mad scene at the Arena in Avenches, Switzerland, July 2010. No comments.



Fig. 14. *Lucia*, *LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR*, Opera Festival of Avenches, 2010
© Marc-André Guex

Like any bel canto role with a lot of drama in action, there was the fantastic role of Queen Anna Bolena in the *Anne Boleyn* by G. Donizetti debuted by me at the São Carlos Theatre in Lisbon in February 2017. Of course, the aesthetically pleasing and extremely engaging staging directed by Graham Vick and conducted by Maestro Giampaolo Bisanti was a huge success. I could give many examples of thrilling scenic images, but one of them quite representative would be the second, static scene in the first act, when both the King and I are singing on horses, one golden, the other silver. Singing in such a position (Fig. 15) where the body is not too centered requires little effort and concentration.



Fig. 15. *Anna Bolena, ANNA BOLENA, Teatro Nacional de São Carlos, Lisbon, 2017*
© *Teatro Nacional de São Carlos*

In Anna's last scene, I suggested to the director that I begin the aria "Al dolce guidami" on the ramp suspended above the orchestra, right at the end of the ramp and upside down (see Fig. 16), thus becoming an exemplary and impressive scene for Anna's moment of madness. Maximum expression and effect!



Fig. 16. *Anna Bolena, ANNA BOLENA, Teatro Nacional de São Carlos, Lisbon, 2017*
© *Teatro Nacional de São Carlos*

The character communicates first to himself (to the actor's ego) and then to the audience. The truthfulness of a character often involves giving up the character traits of the performer in order to receive those that come from the typology of the character being addressed; in this case the process of deepening comes from the character to the performer. In other cases, the match between the interpreter and the character to be created is almost equal; the interpreter will then add from his or her characterological manifestations to the character being created in order to deepen the character traits of the latter. The process of deepening here starts from the performer to the character, and for the audience, the confrontation between them leads to their confusion and merging, giving rise to artistic emotions. Renowned soprano Joan Sutherland, hugely admired for her impeccable vocal technique, speaking about emotions in a TV interview during a

masterclass, advises, "We need to dramatise the piece we are singing. We have to make the listeners feel the emotions; but we must not fall into the trap of emotions. Because otherwise we forget what we're supposed to do; we can fall into bad habits. We have to control the emotions, we have to project them in such a way that they become true, we have to understand them and project them through the sound produced"¹⁸.

The theatrical conventions are based on a permanence of the dream, of experiences outside the physical body in which the play between giving and receiving represents a spiritual exchange. Interference between the auditorium and the stage is important for the artist, the auditorium can stimulate him according to his previous reaction. The voice and the dramatic charge go beyond the auditorium; if the message that the artist sends to the auditorium is clear, alive, then the spectator can experience the "experiences" of those on stage, as a justification for his presence in the auditorium out of a desire to participate directly and become involved in the dramaturgical approach. Any experienced artist attaches great importance to this binary relationship that they establish between stage and audience. The relationship with the audience exists through the force of dedication and communication between artist and spectator. The differentiation between artists lies in their ability to communicate affect, the audience is the only one able to differentiate artists according to what they have received from an emotional point of view. Basically, the stage uses a permanent play and exchange of affections between actor, character and audience. In the genre of opera theatre, the manifestation and communication of affect starts from the libretto, through music, with the help of the human voice educated for this purpose.

The magic of the show lives on after the final applause for both creator and spectator. The aesthetic effect of the opera performance is to change social consciousness, the physical presence of the artist on stage mediates intangible human contact. Theatre is a sum of collective artistic relationships that call upon the talent, imagination and energy of many creators, from the first idea of the performance to the last echo of applause. Through direct, dynamic knowledge of a dramatic artistic experience, the spontaneous combination of transfiguration and technique is produced, as a liberation of the artist for ever-changing forms and ever-varying stage behaviour.

2.2. Expressiveness of the human voice on the concert podium with the help of vocal technique

Musical art and the message it conveys is a complex phenomenon that unfolds on three levels: *creation – interpretation – reception*. In order to survive, musical creation must have a performer who is on the same wavelength as the composer's ideas and conception, and the performer in turn must capture the audience's interest by decoding and further conveying the composer's message.

Starting from the certainty that music is the most abstract of the arts, implicitly the musical language will need, on its way to the receiver – the music lover in the concert hall - a "translator" who will mediate and facilitate the understanding of the musical text. This will be the role of the performer-musician to translate the composer's ideas and, with the help of judiciously and optimally chosen sound images, to convince the listener of the veracity of the creative message.

¹⁸ *Cardiff Singer of the World Masterclass*. 1995. HD Part 1: Joan Sutherland, I. Cotrubas & T. Krause. 13:18-13:46. Retrieved April 15, 2024, from <https://youtu.be/00T-toOkpV8?si=grgwNBofwAKA8JSD>.

In fact, the *performer-creative performer* route, especially put in antithesis, is huge. The concrete path is hard to define, but it nevertheless separates the professional instrumentalist with specialist training from the performer whose career will be spent exclusively on the concert stage. The path from composer to performer, sometimes separated by centuries, can only be retraced by the latter; the performer is the one who reaches the composer's creative period, framing it historically, understanding it stylistically, appreciating all the data necessary for a deeper knowledge of the composer. Only the great performer is able to penetrate the deep layers of music and bring out the profound meanings of the composer's thought. This process of immersion in the work of art is specific only to those who have overcome the technical and structural difficulties of the work, have solved to the highest degree the problems of dynamics and agogics in the text, and can further access the higher realms of musical transcendence.

For the performer, the unique interpretative act represents that *sensitive* moment when he meets the creator of the work of art. For a relatively short time, but extremely dense in the compression of feelings, the composer and his interpreter achieve that osmosis which releases uplifting feelings in the concert hall, where the beneficiary, in fact the one to whom both the creation and the interpretative work are addressed, is found. This closes the holy triangle, *creator – performer – audience*.

"Build the composition like you would build a monument, which has a foundation, a body and a roof that crowns it all. Take care to make the work vivid, clear, expressive, and compelling"¹⁹.

Through the university courses, students have the opportunity to enrich themselves musically not only through the complex study of opera, training as future *singer-actors*, but they can deepen their study by approaching the field of oratorio and lieder.

The world of the oratorio would be, let's say, closer to that of the opera by its specific architecture - the succession of recitatives, arias, duets, tercets, ensembles, but presented in a rather sober form by generally dealing with religious subjects, but without scenography, direction or costumes. The performance is exclusively musical, relying on the soloist's ability to give life to his music through talent, personality, attitude, mimicry, vocal technique, emotional participation without exaggeration, total involvement in the artistic moment enhanced by the orchestra and choir. The concentration is totally fixed on the musical part, the soloist or chorister must remain faithful to the composer's indications and actively participate in the act of interpretation requested by the conductor.

Much more difficult, but rewarding for a refined singer, are the introverted moments when the listener is offered programmes of lieder. The Lied is a state of grace in the experience of the word that we all have, it is the expression of the innate musicality in us, an undulation of the voice that is the result of an impulse of our state of mind. When this impulse is given by a mind that is more receptive to the word and its depth, the need to smear it takes on greater dimensions and then the song is born. Lied in German means song. Lied is one of the absolute values of song, it represents the essence, because in lied we understand the depth of the connection between sound and word. Through the lied we acquire a discipline of living the word, we filter the word on the music on the melodic line in interfering resonance with the harmonic aggregate of the piano. If an opera aria has a score for voice and orchestra and a piano reduction, the lied implies a duet, being originally written only for voice and piano. So the organicity between piano and voice is greater in the lied, which is a miniature, and the hardest thing in a

¹⁹ Fernanda Foni, Nicolae Missir, Mircea Voicana, Elena Zottoviceanu. 1964. *George Enescu*. Bucharest: Music Publishing House of the Union of Composers of the P.R.R. Bucharest (in the text *supra* my translation, E.H.M.).

miniature is the sequence of emotional contrasts, requiring the ability to turn on very short and highly expressive sections. There are extended areas in the opera that allow a certain kind of emotion to expand, but the lied being very short, everything is compressed, requiring maximum concentration. It raises the question of poetry beyond the text. Music is poetry, the meaning of music is poetry, i.e. lyricism, and it is the text, being written in its original form for voice and piano, that creates absolute organicity. The soloist, when performing the lied, is alone on stage, next to him is only the piano with which he creates a dialogue in which the roles are equal. He is completely uncovered in front of the audience and therefore has to use all his technical and interpretative knowledge in order to capture the audience's attention at those moments (much more difficult than in opera), and above all to captivate it by all the means of expression (facial expressions, expression of the eyes, an attractive face, body attitude).

Lieder can be sung at all ages, from the beginning of university studies to after the end of one's career, and becomes a measure of one's own development in speech. The Lied enriches us even if we only listen to it, it makes us understand the depth of the word, the logos. The psycho-aesthetic impact with emotion gives us the artist's soul-to-soul relationship on the soul level in different ways and at a distance of many years, interesting becomes the virtue of the student's courage of expression to come before the world and give something from the soul or later the experienced artist, the goal remaining the same – soul enrichment of both the listener and the performer.

3. Vocal technique in the service of expressiveness

The transformations brought about in the lyric theatre in the Romantic era also required the adaptation of bel canto technique to the new requirements. The foundations of the Italian vocal technique established during the 17th and 18th centuries are preserved, with the difference that every technical element becomes meaningful and must be treated as an expressive element. The education of the voice goes beyond the bravura aspect and will involve artistic and affective valences, vocal technique offering the possibility of access to the expression of the affective within the opera performance. The singers together with their singing mentors sought to discover new resources, vocal and expressive, by customising vocal technique in the sense of dramatic reality.

The term *belcanto* defines the art of beautiful singing, starting from a simple melodic line that will be intensely ornamented and cadenced. The concept of belcanto requires a perfect mastery of phrasing and balancing vocal delivery within the dramatic context of the meaning of the word. The basis of belcanto technique is provided by breathing, the dosing of the exhaled air column according to the melodic design; the preference for bright vowels and the homogenisation of the vowels are technical details that ensure the beauty and elegance of the phrasing.

Ornamentation refers to two musical aspects, the ornamentation of the melodic line by the composer through his notation in the score and as an art of improvisation, unnoted by the composer, left to the choice of the performer; the ornamentation of the romantic belcanto (use of appoggiaturas, ornamental variations in *da capo arias*, conclusive cadenzas, etc.) renounces the aspect of pure virtuosity, bringing more expressiveness to the exposition of dramatic ideas; at the same time, the manner of execution of the ornamentation will undergo major transformations. In Baroque, belcanto opera, ornamentation was performed in rapid tempi, against a harmonic background in constant modulatory movement; whereas in Romantic belcanto opera, the time

given to ornaments and cadenzas widens, as does the vocal ambit. The harmonic accompaniment is much less complex, giving the voice the opportunity to improvise around the main steps forming the melodic line in question. The structure of the arias is also changed; in the Baroque, the aria was frequently framed in *da capo* form, where the second section of the aria is agogically, dynamically, harmonically contrasting to the first section; and it ends with a reprise of the first section, in an ornamented version, to highlight the vocal-technical and expressive side of the performer and to emphasise the character of the character. Few ornamental variants are found in romantic scores; today ornaments are added according to models already existing in print, in specialised publishing publications (*Ricordi-Ricci, Variazioni-Cadenze-Tradizioni*), and according to the singer's or conductor's preferences. The Belcantist tradition of ornamentation is preserved today, with strict reference to: the addition of high-pitched sounds at the end of arias, duets, final ensembles and the enrichment of the second stanza of cabalets. And, of course, the vocal technique specific to bel canto will be found in all the styles that will follow, being their basis. There is only one technique, the same technique for different styles.

3.1. Elements of vocal technique in belcanto for expressive purposes

The musical-scenic interpretative act implies individual, detailed and complex study, which is aimed from a phenomenological point of view, first of all at the diachronic aspect, then at syncretism, with the aim of forming one's own aesthetics on the interpretative act, in the opera genre. To this end, it is necessary to draw up an individual study plan in accordance with the performer's vocal and stage experience. Knowing that belcanto is the basis of all styles, when it is well mastered, there will never be problems in any style.

It starts with a thorough study of the score, and the assimilation of the agogic plan and its subsequent correlation with the dynamics will finally determine the phrasing. Compliance with all the dynamic, agogic and expressive indications provides the prerequisites for a particularly correct interpretative approach, which ultimately leads to the phrasing. In the opera genre, the major stylistic aspect concerns the differentiation between aria and recitative and the assumption and resolution of all the technical impediments that intervene in the interpretative process.

The detailed analysis of the character reveals the gradation of interpretation and the establishment of fixed reference points starting from a minimum and reaching a maximum, in correspondence with the musical dynamics and agogics. In the construction of the character, account should be taken of the distinctive elements that determine the cardinal character traits (unity, expressiveness, originality, moral richness and character traits).

The meeting with the stage partners, the piano (pianist) and the fusion of the two artistic identities, the ensemble rehearsals, the meeting with the director and conductor of the performance, the rehearsals on stage with piano or orchestra and the dress rehearsal are fundamental stages in the preparation of the role and the performance.

The finished fruit of working with one's own musical and acting personality by overcoming vocal-technical impediments is revealed to the audience in the supreme moment of the performance. Perfection and research in every sense and on every level continues after the performance, following the permanent spiritual evolution of the creative personality.

3.2. Characteristics of the vocal technique in belcanto

Starting from the meaning of the term *belcanto*, the technical foundations of the belcantist style have been established, and the method of educating professional voices is based on the following principles:

- Sonorous-timbral purity obtained by studying the characteristic vowels of the Italian language and their homogenisation without the thresholds of the vowel exchange.
- Ease of vocal delivery and correct setting (*voice in maschera*), avoiding nasal or guttural delivery by mentally projecting sounds outside the body.
- The study of *legato*, which ensures distinction and elegance of emission and phrasing (*legato* can be obtained by studying the *glissando* between sounds).
- The study of breathing as the first basic element in the art of singing through costodiaphragmatic breathing exercises with the aim of increasing breathing capacity and dosing the exhaled air by training the trunk muscles.
- Supporting vocal delivery on the exhaled air column (*canto sul fiato*) and directing the spoken words on the breath, on the phrase, ensuring elegance and effectiveness of delivery.
- Vocal fluency (moving from one sound to another without thresholds or passing sounds out of tune with the rest of the sounds).
- Fine nuance and the possibility of expressing a wide dynamic range without body or laryngeal implications.
- Study of the *messa di voce* or *filatto* (a distinctly *belcantist* element).
- Study of *gates* (avoidance of wide gates, with a special caution that in the case of fast storms their introduction should be excluded).
- Wide vocal extension (study of extreme registers with caution).
- Avoiding unnecessary body tension by correct body positioning during the vocal act, with equal support on both lower limbs, the study is always done standing.
- The study of *staccato* as a first step in resolving *coloratura* passages.

However, the most obvious peculiarity of the belcanto period (it demands the voice from all points of view and is a good calling card for any singer; Callas said in a TV interview that "*whoever can sing belcanto, can sing anything*") is the appearance of the madness scene, which we can consider practically a permanent conflict between two universes – the real, palpable, earthly, material one and the (equally real) universe in the mind of the mad character (the main heroine). The artistic world of the Romantic period shows a particular interest in the phenomenon of dementia, which transfigures the human into a metaphor for the obscure, the bizarre, the extraordinary. Both 'female' and 'male' madness, whether temporary or permanent, fascinated the world of opera to a great extent, and the composers' creations became highly prized by music lovers and demanding music critics alike - a few examples: *Idomeneo* (Elettra), *I Puritani* (Elvira), *La Sonnambula* (Amina), *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Lucia), *Il Pirata* (Imogene), *Linda di Chamounix* (Linda), *Anna Bolena* (Anna), *Maria Stuarda* (Maria), *Robert Devereux* (Elizabeth I), *Lucrezia Borgia* (Lucrezia), *Nabucco* (Nabucco), *Macbeth* (Lady Macbeth), *I Lombardi* (Giselda), *Mefistofele* (Margherita), *Suor Angelica* (Suor Angelica), *Salome* (Salome).

In "building" and refining a voice, whatever its specificity, I consider it essential to study and go through precise steps to deepen a solid vocal technique.

The basis, the actual support of vocal technique is, as we have seen, correct breathing, followed, of course, by the study of the support of vocal emission (a phenomenon addressed by

many singers or doctors), therefore, the foundation on which an entire career is established. The technique of breathing on *appoggio* ("appoggiare" meaning "to lean on, to make contact with..."²⁰), or rather, of supporting the sound emitted, comes from the old Italian school of singing, and is basically a system, a "mechanism that combines and balances the muscles and organs of the trunk and throat, controlling their relationship with the supraglottal resonators, so that the effort exerted by the musculature is evenly distributed"²¹.

After mastering this first stage, vocal sound emission follows, initially performed through vocalizations to train, homogenize and accommodate the singer with the vocal registers, gradually moving on to studies, complex vocalizations, and finally to the performance of solo pieces (arias, lieder, and finally – opera roles).

The basic element in the study of the voice is vocal unity and homogeneity (*ugualianza timbrica* as the Italians say, i.e. timbral equality) achieved through vocalizations specific to each type of voice, and not least to each native character and potential. This unity will be achieved with an extremely important condition, the perfect *intonation* of the emitted sound, and the correct following of the melodic route proposed by the vocalization or study.

Initially, the vowel study will be carried out separately on each vowel, exploiting to the maximum the vowel that favours the type of voice being studied, and then combining several vowels. For the light lyric soprano voice, as for any type of voice, it is recommended to study the vowels starting from the middle register, gradually developing the ambit of the voice in question.

We also seek to develop both chest capacity (breathing) and agility through increasingly rapid vocalizations, but executed on a very high resonance, domeing the palatal veil with the transition to the high register.

The ideal vowel, or as close to the ideal as possible, is only achieved with correct utterance, often with vowels being built up by vowel support on the sound consonants. This also provides the permanent control of subglottal pressure necessary for a correct attack of the emitted sound.

Increasingly complex vocalizations follow, the most used and effective being those by J. Concone, adapted to the specificity of vocal typologies. With the 50 vocal studies in his collection, he has contributed enormously to the refinement and evolution of vocal technique over the years.

As I was saying, essential for the correct delivery of the voice is its unity, the initial stage of vocal study being carried out on small intervalic leaps, with vocalizations having a simple melodic structure, and, of course, difficulty that will progressively increase with vocal evolution.

Great attention should be paid to complex vocalizations that propose larger intervalic leaps for the purpose of voice flexibility and agility, and H. Panofka attached great importance to this, creating vocalizations designed to develop vocal virtuosity (ideal especially for lyrically light sopranos with passages of coloratura alternating with sustained vocal line).

The final stage of mastering vocal technique is the assimilation and full performance of a role, with all that it includes: arias, duets, ensembles, showing once again that a composer's work is not just a work of notes, signs and indications, which could remain a mute thing if the performer does not turn those signs into sounds, into melody, into a feeling of the soul.

²⁰ Richard Miller. 1986. *The Structure of Singing*. New York: Schirmer Books, p. 308.

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 23.

4. Conclusions

The study of the voice has always been a preoccupation of those who have researched it, seeking explanations in solving and elucidating the problems that sound production and vocal emission have raised, many of the solutions being largely intuitive. With the development of technology and science, many extensive and complex studies have been carried out, and the problems are still not fully clarified today. The last two and a half centuries abounded in vocal performances following the establishment of professional opera houses, and society's interest was heightened, so that expectations of both composers' creations and singers' and actors' performances were raised. The need for improvement in the rendering and performance of works has resulted in the need to solve problems of vocal technique, which were initially left to the performers. This led to the organised and planned study of vocal technique in special schools for singing, and it was realised that the basis of this technique is correct breathing, on which good and beautiful vocal emission depends. These are the conditions with the help of which the composer's intentions can be realised, and then the desired musical images and passages are filtered through the mind and heart. Singing is an art not for everyone, but for those with grace, dedication, work capacity, tenacity, perseverance in succeeding in this beautiful process of discovering the character and interpreting as nuanced as possible his score, becoming a co-creator by involving his own personality and ideas. Thus, all that is gained through the in-depth study of vocal technique makes it truly become a defining instrument of stage expressiveness, creating a character that moves the audience willing to step out of everyday life for three hours.

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