Performance Presentation

Classical vs. Contemporary: A Comparative Analysis of Voice Qualities

Caitlin Pennington and Benjamin Rogers
Faculty Mentor: Terry Chasteen
Music

The modern music industry requires professional musicians to have the versatility to perform across many genres of music. For vocalists, these genres can be divided into two general categories: classical and contemporary. Classical singing uses an Italian technique known as bel canto, which translates as “beautiful singing;” this practice was first associated with Italian Baroque solo song and opera during the late sixteenth century and is now considered the principle technique for Western classical singing. Contemporary commercial music styles use newer techniques, such as mix and belt qualities, in a wide spectrum of genres, including musical theatre and popular music. This presentation compares and contrasts the physiological aspects of classical and contemporary voice qualities, including space, resonance, and support, through discussion and performance. Two vocalists and one collaborative pianist have prepared a repertoire of representative pieces to demonstrate the aforementioned vocal qualities.