

Unit 2, Module 7

Registration:

Vocal Camouflage & Textures

Check in:

Defining a register for this class

A register is a range of frequencies or pitches in which the singer produces sound in a similar way and with similar acoustic qualities.

Certain differences between one register and another are measurable both objectively (physiology) and subjectively.¹

¹ I'm basing this on both my own experience as well as a paper called, "Addressing Vocal Register Discrepancies: An Alternative, Science-Based Theory of Register Phenomena." This paper was written by Thurman, Welch, Theimer, and Klitzke and presented to the National Center for Voice and Speech conference in 2004. It's really good science, and it's also a lot. Not gonna lie. It's for big nerds only.

Names used here:

- **Fry**, or pulse
- **M1**, TA dominant, or chest register
- **M2**, CT dominant, or head register
- **Falsetto** or flute register (treble voice F#6-B6, bass voice B5-F#6)
- **Whistle**

Function of Registration

- Goals in Western Classical:
 - Consistent vocal tone throughout the range
 - Emphasis in training is put on erasing all sonically discernible breaks in the voice.
 - Bass and low treble (tenor) voices are taught to blend the chest register higher than the natural break.
 - Treble voices are taught to blend the head register lower than the natural break.

- Goals in contemporary theatrical singing:
 - Ability to mix M1 high valued in all voice types
 - Emphasis in training is put on
 - high mix
 - expressive performance
 - honesty before beauty
- Goals in PM singing:
 - Aesthetics defined by genre + individual singer
 - Ability to mix M1 high often (but not always) valued in all voice types
 - Emphasis in training is put on
 - Artist-driven choices
 - Discovering or honing unique style
 - Authentic representation
 - Consistent ability to access desired stylistic techniques
 - Stamina

PM registration from the bottom up

Pulse register or vocal fry

- Not a thing in classical singing
- Legitimate version of vocal onset in PM and contemporary MT
- Great way to sound a little bit tortured
- Can be overdone

M1 or chest register

- The go-to for popular styles for all voice types
- Aesthetics of popular singing built around speech (this register)
- Comfortable range offers choices for how to color this register
- Plosives, growls, screamo sounds, and other vocally taxing sounds happen here. *Taxing* does not equal *damaging*.
- If vocal choices are sustainable for the singer, they're "healthy"

M2 or head register

- Typically used as a way to create color or a vocal event

NeuroVocal

a groundbreaking approach to singing

- Many pop singers of all voice types sing with an M2-dominant mix
- Can be airy, clean, flute-y, or mixed
- Register breaks are commonly used

Falsetto or flute register

- Used in a coordinated way for “money notes.”
- Used in an easier, light way for vocal textures and high notes.

Whistle or flute register

- Not often used
- Singers who use it become known for it
- Because of the inability to control any quality other than the pitch, this is a difficult skill to use artistically.

VIDEO: *Your notes*

How your PM singer uses registration

1. Uses a blended or mixed-register tone throughout the range.
(This applies only if it is the way the singer needs to express their singing.)
2. Exploits the registers (all four or at least three) to use textures and effects in singing.

PM singers combine emotional transparency with artistic choices that feel right to them.

- Light & breezy?
- Heavy & sad?
- Angry & edgy?
- Intimate & vulnerable?

Microphones matter

Coloring the tone

- Escaping air

- Overblowing the diaphragm
- Distance from the singers mouth
- Using distance to create dynamics

Developing a relationship

- Singer benefits from having an organic relationship with the microphone
- Brain can learn to predict the sonic effects

Vocal camouflage

Cartoon Mouse (the “hunn-ee” of M2)

- This exaggerated placement
 - Allows easy access to M1 range
 - Creates a more efficient vocal fold adduction (closure)
 - Introduces feel + sound that will make blending easier
 - Creates vocal camouflage before singer has access to comfortable mixed phonation
 - Good temporary fix for younger voices

How it works

- Use the exaggerated placement of the *Cartoon Mouse* exercise in M2
- Focus on the physical experience
- When singer is comfortable anticipating the feeling, they will allow the voice to “shift gears” while keeping the feeling of resonance in the face consistent
- This is psychologically easier for most singers
- Demonstrating singers using this is helpful
- Can be a bridge to high mix, or an end in itself

Workshop

Cartoon Mouse