

THE SOLOIST IN THE CHOIR: AUDITORY, PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON TIMBRE

S. J. Yarnall-Monks
University of Chichester
S.Yarnall@chi.ac.uk president@evta-online.eu

Abstract

This poster explores the skills required for blending a voice into a collective sound or, in contrast, standing out as a soloist with a distinct timbre. Timbre is a complex perceptual phenomenon, one we all recognise but find hard to articulate in words. Over the past 30 years singers, teachers and voice scientists have shared terminology of timbre with an increasing level of understanding and new technology has played a part in establishing clearer framework for discussion. The pilot study follows on from research into perceptions of timbre experienced by singers during performance, and explorations of identity in singers of all ages. Classical and Music Theatre performers were asked about their experiences singing as a soloist and as part of a chorus. Singers speak about 'holding back' in choral singing and enjoying the 'overtone' created in the blend of sound, while at the same time as soloists they feel more 'in control' and more aware of their 'own sound'. Different singers relate to the physical sensations of performance but it is principally aural perception taking place. Aspects of vocal identity are examined with cross-disciplinary links to voice science, psychology, audiology and pedagogy.

Bibliography

- McAdams, S. & Bigand, E. (Eds.) (1993) *Thinking in Sound: The Cognitive Psychology of Human Audition*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Miller, R. & Franco, J.C. (1991) Spectrographic analysis of the Singing Voice in *Journal of Voice* NATS September/October 1991
- Miller, R. (2000) Establishing or Altering a Tonal Concept in *Das APCS Bulletin Switzerland März 2000*
- Monks, S. J., (2001) *Study of the Relationship between Adolescent Vocal Development and Self-image*, unpublished MA thesis: University of Sheffield.
- Monks, S. J. (2003) 'Adolescent Singers and Perceptions of Vocal Identity', *British Journal Music Education*, 20(3): 243-256.
- Monks, S. J. (2007) *Perceptions of the Singing Voice* unpublished PhD thesis: University of Sheffield
- Sundberg, J. (1999) 'The Perception of Singing', in D. Deutsch (Ed.) *The Psychology of Music* (pp 171-214). San Diego: Academic Press.
- Titze, I. R. (2017) NATS *Journal of Voice* Jan/Feb 2017
- Yarnall-Monks S. J. (2017) *The 'real' me: practical application of research into the perception of vocal timbre*.

