

Perspectives of Professional Vocal Jazz Singers and Jazz Educators: Implications for
High School Vocal Jazz Pedagogy

Michelle N.G. English

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BY

Michelle N.G. English

**A Thesis/Practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of The University
of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree
of**

MASTER OF EDUCATION

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Abstract

My personal experience as a university and high school vocal jazz teacher and as a vocal jazz singer led me to a notion that there was a dissonance between the way in which professional singers learned to sing jazz and the way in which educators teach high school vocal jazz. The purpose of this study was to ascertain the methods by which professional vocal jazz singers learned their art and the successful methodology that was employed by high school vocal jazz teachers. There was a prospect, I felt, of a methodological process that would be more accessible to teachers and learners if a study was carried out on the way in which professional singers learned to perform jazz.

The review of literature is discussed according to themes pertaining to teaching and learning vocal jazz. These included a fundamental requirement for jazz education, the level of jazz educator knowledge, listening and performing as learning tools, current methodological resources available, practice in improvisation, language acquisition parallels, and a connection with playing an instrument.

The research methodology employed in this study involved collecting data from three sources: professional vocal jazz singers, high school vocal jazz teachers, and mainstream vocal jazz educational resources. Interviews were conducted with ten vocal jazz singers and ten high school vocal jazz teachers. Observations of jazz pedagogy practice were completed in the classrooms of the same high school vocal jazz teachers interviewed. A content analysis of vocal jazz methodological resources was also conducted.

Data were analyzed via a qualitative approach (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). Observational and transcribed interview data were reviewed and coded according to major themes that arose on a repeated basis (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003).

The findings of the study showed several themes to be predominant in the teaching and learning of vocal jazz. Listening, modeling, emphasis on style, practice, transcription, technique and theory, and benefits of playing an instrument were all prevalent issues for learning how to sing vocal jazz. Recommendations for practice in high school vocal jazz classrooms and further research are given.

Chapter I: Introduction

Rationale

Jazz has been defined as a style of music which developed in the Southern United States in the early twentieth century as a result of an amalgamation of West African rhythms, European harmony and American gospel singing (Kennedy, 1980). A significant factor of jazz involves the element of improvisation, which is a “performance according to the inventive whim of the moment, i.e. without a written or printed score, and not from memory” (Kennedy, 1980, p. 315). Since the 1970’s, jazz education has been included in school curricula and providing this educational experience for our students benefits them in multiple ways. It offers an extensive study in complex rhythms and improvisation, and it presents a practical arena for the fundamental skills and techniques that are required for traditional theory and harmony courses (Dobbins, 1988). It also generates a scenario in which an individual can grow and prosper in two facets: as a solo musician and improviser, and as an ensemble member developing his/her group performing skills. Therefore it is critical that we continue to offer our students the opportunity to experience the genre of jazz so that they may become stronger musicians and mature music appreciators.

My personal experience of being a university and high school vocal jazz educator, vocal jazz performer, and graduate of a Bachelor of Fine Arts program in jazz performance, coupled with informal discussions with other jazz educators has led me to a specific inquiry surrounding vocal jazz education. The manner in which professional vocal jazz singers learned their art, compared with the way in which high school vocal jazz teachers are teaching this skill appear to vary. Traditionally, senior high school vocal

jazz programs have relied on a variety of methods such as teacher modeling of stylistic elements, note learning, and following steps in instructional resources in order to have the students acquire the skills necessary to perform jazz. There are possibilities, perhaps, for vocal jazz methodology, that reflect more closely the approach followed by professional musicians which could render the learning of vocal jazz more accessible and less cumbersome for high school students.

The area of vocal jazz pedagogy presents a set of challenges, which are relatively new to music education. Although vocal jazz and improvisation are not new or innovative concepts in the music world, the pedagogical process of these two elements in public schools is a relatively novel project. Teachers have been relying on word of mouth, professional development workshops, and instructional resources or journal articles (e.g. Fredrickson, 1994; Madura, 1997; Reese, 2001) as crutches for the task of teaching their students the skill of performing vocal jazz.

Guidance for vocal jazz music educators is limited in the profession. Witmer (1988) suggests that there is a void in the area of pedagogical material for jazz, as he believes, "...that much of the available published material for the teaching and learning of jazz is problematic in a number of ways" (p. 24). Hores (1977) concurs when he states, "Since aural skills are not emphasized in most improvisation methods and texts, it was the desire of the researcher to design an experiment which would demonstrate the value of such skills in the art of improvisation" (p. 134). Williams (1988) adds that jazz educators should be employing "great works of the past" (p. 1) in order to teach this art to future performers, yet most, he feels, do not do this.

A closer look at the literature reveals that there is a dire need for instructional material in vocal jazz, and perhaps a bridge between the areas of classroom methodology and professional learning is a potential solution. Bowman (1988) concludes that “investigation of the way accomplished jazz musicians teach and have themselves learned, may help provide more of the substance needed to inform empirical studies of pedagogy” (p. 61). Kuzmich (1989) identifies a significant need for large group, jazz instructional materials, and Cooper (1992) concurs that the majority of teaching materials for jazz in high schools have been geared for instrumental groups as opposed to the vocal arena. Furthermore, Madura (1997) concludes, “The skills of improvisation and inventiveness are not usually taught or encouraged in most high school or college vocal ensembles” (p. 26). She attributes this void to the lack of skill and knowledge of teachers in this area. And finally, in a study by Aitken and Aebersold, cited by Madura (1996), three problem areas were identified with the issue of teaching vocal jazz improvisation, which they felt needed to be addressed by jazz educators. These included: singers’ ability to hear the changes and incorporate appropriate scales and chords in their scat; singers’ study of well-known vocal jazz performers, including their music and style; and singers’ use of appropriate scat syllables for the style intended (p. 253).

The lack of educational studies in the area of vocal jazz pedagogy further justifies the need for this study. After conducting an ERIC search, ebscohost Academic Elite search, and dissertation abstract search, all employing the key terms of “music”, “jazz” “vocal”, “choral”, “education”, “improvisation”, “scat”, “audiation”, “listening”, and “creativity”, it was derived that, with the exception of Cooper (1992), and Greenagel (1994), there are no additional theses or dissertations on the topic of vocal jazz.

Purpose of the Study

Personal experience as a high school and university vocal jazz music educator, as well as a professional vocal jazz singer, have made me inquisitive about what appears to be a dissonance between the manner in which students are being taught the art of vocal jazz and the methods by which professional vocal jazz singers learned their skill. This curiosity prompted me to design a study to determine the manner in which professional vocal jazz performers learned their skill, as well as the successful methodology of high school vocal jazz music educators for further informing vocal jazz pedagogy.

My three specific research questions, therefore, were:

1. How do professional vocal jazz singers learn their skills?,
2. How do vocal jazz educators approach their teaching of the art form? and
3. What teaching approaches are advocated in mainstream vocal jazz instructional resources?

I will attempt to answer these questions by interviewing professional jazz singers about the way they learned to sing vocal jazz, interviewing and observing vocal jazz teachers to determine their successful methodology, and analyzing current vocal jazz instructional resources.

Definitions

The terms employed in this study are defined and presented in alphabetical order.

Audiation. "Audiation is learning through one's ears...Audiation is analogous to visualizing and then drawing a picture...one audiates when he retains what he heard perhaps minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, or years ago. What is audiated is rarely, if ever, forgotten" (Gordon, 1988, p. 9).

Creativity. “Having the power to create; inventive; productive” (Avis, Drysdale, Gregg, & Scargill, 1974, p. 272).

Improvisation. “Improvisation is generally over a steady pulse, often uses chord progressions, but not always, and it is always an individual expression. It is spontaneous but each note should seem inevitable and right, and there should always be a sense of surprise” (Collier, 1975, p. 8).

Informant. “A good informant...has the knowledge and experience the researcher requires, has the ability to reflect, is articulate, has the time to be interviewed, and is willing to participate in the study” (Morse, as cited in Palys, 1997, p.137).

Jazz. “Jazz requires individual interpretation of melody and spontaneous melodic invention by an individual. Jazz is a performer’s art. The way it’s played is more important than the work itself” (Kuzmich, 1989, p. 42).

Jazz singing. “A jazz singer has the ability to swing, the ability to phrase spontaneously, the ability to change the rhythmic patterns of a song and improvise and change a song and not be disturbed by the musicians behind doing something unexpected” (Crowther & Pinfold, 1997, p. 114).

Professional vocal jazz singer. Within the realm of this study, a professional vocal jazz singer is one who has performed vocal jazz, solo or in ensemble, in a public place in exchange for a professional fee within the last five years.

Scat singing. “Vocal improvisation using nonsense syllables such as doo, dah, diddly, etc.” (Zegree, 2002, p.88).

Vocal jazz. Doug Anderson (1993) defines vocal jazz as being an art which “draws much of its style from the jazz band” (p. 10). He adds that the literature of a vocal

jazz group is “quite demanding in harmonic and rhythmic finesse, vocal inflections, and vocal improvisation” (p. 10).

Vocal jazz music educator. A vocal jazz music educator, for the purpose of this study, is one who teaches vocal jazz in a high school context and one whose expertise is recognized by members of the Association of Music Administrators of Manitoba.

Delimitations

There is an abundant amount of literature available on the biographical nature of professional vocal jazz singers, however it is more than one researcher could possibly review. Therefore, the biographical literature that was reviewed for this study entails the documents which were judged as being the most pertinent to this study. In addition, the documents that were employed were delimited by the time frame in which they were written, including those from 1974 to 2003.

There are also a number of professional vocal jazz singers as well as high school teachers who would be eligible and willing to participate in this study. In order to maintain a manageable study, however, there were only ten selected from the group of professional singers and ten selected from the vocal jazz teachers.

In order to ascertain the knowledge that has previously been generated in this area, an extensive review of current literature is required. My objective is to uncover all of the available literature that relates to vocal jazz education, jazz education, improvisation, listening, choral education and creativity. By doing so, I will have obtained a secure foundation on which I can base my research study.

Chapter II: Review of Literature

Within the body of literature available on teaching and learning vocal jazz, there are a number of notable issues with regards to methodology. Primarily, it is evident in the literature that there is a fundamental need for jazz education, hence a call for the appropriate tools with which a teacher can convey this skill. In addition, there are substantial contrasting thoughts on the breadth of background knowledge of jazz that a teacher requires before teaching the art to a class of students. Other themes, as revealed in the literature, include: the role of listening in learning vocal jazz, the importance of practice in developing the skills of improvisation, the parallel between language acquisition and the learning of vocal jazz, and the connection between learning vocal jazz and prior knowledge of playing an instrument.

Rationale for Vocal Jazz Education

There is evidence of many benefits for students who are fortunate enough to receive an education in vocal jazz. Azzara (1999) states that improvisation is a valuable musical skill for *all* music students and his rationale for teaching improvisation in class includes the concepts of students being challenged to develop higher-order thinking skills, students gaining the pathway to express themselves in a manner other than speech or written text, students attaining a higher level of reading skills, a consistent link between improvisation and each of the National Standards, and the development of fundamental musicianship and aural skills. Spaeth (1995) argues that improvisation attends to the three fundamental music processes of performing, creating, and responding to music, and is therefore an element which should be implemented into all music

classrooms. It is suggested that improvisation at the lower grade levels could involve something as simple as rhythmic variation.

The nature and value of jazz education are revealed by several experts in the field. Fredrickson (1994) states that levels of creativity in individual students can be significantly raised in a classroom that fosters improvisation. Gordon (1988) advocates "...to improvise, compose, and notate music for others to perform are equally desirable forms of music appreciation" (p. 27). Green (2001) agrees by stating, "Copying recordings and playing covers are not only related to the development of performance skills, but also form fundamental building-blocks in compositional skills" (p. 75). Dobbins (1988) advocates for jazz education by stating that it offers a vehicle for all of the techniques and skills studied in a traditional music course, yet it carries on the tradition of improvisation, which was started by the classical musicians and is not played in that genre today. In addition, he points to the social learning possible through participation in a jazz ensemble. In terms of aural abilities, Berliner (1994) claims that the jazz tradition elevates one's aural knowledge due to its "associated powers of apprehension and recall" (p. 93). Finally, the concept of self-motivation is brought forward by Abeles, Hoffer and Klotman (1994) when they note: "A second value of creativity is the motivation it provides. One's own personal efforts are especially meaningful" (p. 177). Also, they raise the issue of learning music in a more thorough manner through creativity: "People who are creating must think intently about sounds and their organization in a way that they never do when studying what someone else has done" (p. 178).

The National Standards for Music Education (Consortium of National Arts Education Associations, 1994) articulate specific requirements for the various grade levels of music education with regards to improvisation. In grades kindergarten to four, the standards state that: students will improvise “answers” in the same style to given rhythmic and melodic phrases; students will improvise simple rhythmic and melodic ostinato accompaniments; and students will improvise simple rhythmic variations and simple melodic embellishments on familiar melodies. In grades five to eight, the standards state that: students will improvise simple harmonic accompaniments; students will improvise melodic embellishments and simple rhythmic and melodic variations on given pentatonic melodies and melodies in major keys; and students will improvise short melodies, unaccompanied and over given rhythmic accompaniments, each in a consistent style, meter, and tonality. In grades nine to twelve, the standards state that: students will improvise stylistically appropriate harmonizing parts; students will improvise rhythmic and melodic variations on given pentatonic melodies and melodies in major and minor keys; and students will improvise original melodies over given chord progressions, each in a consistent style, meter, and tonality.

Background Knowledge Required by Jazz Teachers

The literature reveals conflicting research on whether or not a teacher must have a prior knowledge and understanding of the concepts of jazz, or in fact an ability to perform jazz, before being capable of teaching it to students. Some research discloses a strong requirement for teachers to have a sound jazz background in order to effectively teach it to students, however opposing literature research suggests the possibility of teachers learning the style simultaneously with their students. Henry (1993), for example,

claims, "You can teach improvisation to your students at the same time you are learning to improvise" (p. 33), and Fredrickson (1982) and Reese (2001) concur by stating that teachers who don't know how to improvise can still learn it and develop it in their students at the same time. Azzara (1999) believes that teachers should incorporate jazz into their teaching, and can do so with a limited or without background in the area. In contrast, Clark Terry, a renowned jazz artist, educator, and founder of the Clark Terry International Institute of Jazz Studies, writes, "I think it's very difficult to be involved with the true essence of jazz when you teach unless you've experienced it to some degree" (cited in Ellis, 1999, pp. 36-37). Crowther and Pinfold (1997) remind us that: "You can be a technical wizard and not make any music" (p. 44). The implication is that someone can teach the skills of jazz and improvisation via technique from a manual or instructional resource, having not yet experienced the emotive and stylistic elements in performing this form of art, but will not end up emulating the true voice of jazz.

The Role of Listening in Learning Vocal Jazz

Contrasting views surface in the literature regarding the validity of listening as a prime requirement for the learning of jazz, with the majority in favor of listening as an essential tool for this purpose. Dobbins (1988), Madura (1996), and Williams (1988) suggest that many accomplished jazz musicians of the past relied heavily on listening as a crucial element in their learning of improvisation. Several professional jazz musicians support this learning principle, such as Connee Boswell, Ethel Walters and Mildred Bailey, all of the 1930's era, who began by listening to and assimilating stylistic elements of the jazz performed by Louis Armstrong (Crowther & Pinfold, 1997). Connee Boswell also listened to a great deal of spirituals and blues as a child and incorporated that

knowledge into her jazz singing, just as Helen Merrill heard her mother's black spiritual singing growing up, which provided a firm ground upon which her later jazz singing was based (Crowther & Pinfold, 1997).

Clark Terry, cited in Ellis (1999), also advocates listening in the process of learning jazz: "I tell them [the students] to use their most valuable possession – their ears – and how they [the old-timers] figured out ways of getting to play the music without having any training...because often they [the students] have not been introduced to their ear" (p.37). Interestingly, Rodney Jones, an accomplished jazz guitarist, refers to jazz as a music that is "caught not taught", as he listened to masters such as George Benson and Wes Montgomery to gain the style and groove of the music (Graybow, 2001, p. 42). Wynton Marsalis, renowned professional jazz musician, also advocates listening and immediate response as the sole form of methodology for jazz (Nolan, 1995). He refers to the obvious extensive listening that his brother, Branford must have done as a child when he provides the anecdote: "Watch out for my young brother. He's only three, but when I call home from the road, he can already sing some of Miles' solos over the phone"(Berliner, 1994, p. 95)! Miles Davis, by his own admission, left the formal educational institution of Juilliard because he was learning more by listening to Charlie Parker (Collier, 1975). In addition, Chet Baker also learned to play by listening to the radio or records, and on the bandstand he learned by pretending to play while listening closely to the other trumpeters (Gavin, 2002). Jazz singer Billie Holiday's music education followed what Daubney (2002) called "the basic principles of jazz's aural tradition: listen, learn, adapt, apply" (p. 21).

The research literature also points to the benefits of listening as an avenue to learning jazz. Madura (1997) suggests that each day a segment of time should be devoted to listening in class, and that the listening should be subsequently discussed. "If they don't listen to jazz, they will neither understand the concept of an authentic jazz solo nor learn how to swing" (p. 27).

Bash (1984) studied the effects of three instructional methods on learning improvisation; technical, aural perceptive, and historical analytical. The technical method involved learning and practicing scales and chords. Aural perceptive encompassed listening, improvisation, and rote learning, while the historical analytic method involved studying the Smithsonian Collection of Jazz Classics. The results of his study revealed that non-technical treatments were recommended for improvisational instruction, hence listening and studying the masters of the past were the two most effective methods.

Azzara (1999) puts forth the notion that in order to begin improvising, one must start with the following activities: listening to accomplished musicians' improvisations, learning the improvisations by ear, learning jazz repertoire by ear, and relying on one's ear as opposed to notation to render the style of jazz. In an earlier article, Azzara and colleagues (1998) share the idea that learning jazz repertoire and harmonic progressions are fundamental in the process of learning the art of improvising. These acts enable the learner to hear the chord changes, which will enable him/her to generate his/her own melodies.

Kuzmich (1989), Day (1995,) and Green (2001) agree that articulation, style, and rhythm cannot be reduced to notation. Instead, one needs to interpret recordings and develop a style via listening. Garcia (2002) interviewed Bob Lark, Chair of The Jazz

Studies Program at DePaul University in Chicago, and found that Lark's advice to high school students who were attempting to learn jazz was to listen regularly to a variety of jazz artists and to then practice emulating their particular styles. The suggestion of listening to as many jazz artists as possible is also provided by Fredrickson (1994), however, Darrow (1990) distinguishes between listening and hearing, clarifying that listening is a skill which students must practice and develop, especially in terms of analytical attention. Furthermore, Hinz (1995) is convinced that students will be able to improvise if they have a good ear and have some prior technical ability. He notes that jazz has a history of being an aural, as opposed to written tradition, and that by listening, students can learn the music and the style.

Hallam (1995b) studied professional musicians' ways of learning and interpreting music, and offered advice by Sloboda who conducted a study on the cognitive psychology of music. Sloboda proposes two activities in which musicians should engage in order to enable them strong performers. One involves the area of technical practice, and the other surrounds gaining a vast knowledge base of music by listening to, analyzing, and discussing a wide range of music. Hallam, therefore, draws the conclusion that listening is critical in the process.

Still focusing on listening, Berliner (1994) quips, "I tell people, 'I was a high school dropout, but I graduated from Art Blakey College, the Miles Davis Conservatory of Music and Charlie Parker University'" (p. 36). He adds, "Beyond the pleasure that they derive from listening, students also treat recordings as formal education tools... In part, recordings enable young musicians to apprentice unilaterally with artists they never actually meet" (p. 58). Cited in the same article, Howard Levy supports Berliner by

stating, "The best way to learn is to take tunes off records, because you're utilizing your ear" (p. 93). Berliner adds that one rationale for requiring such dependence on a jazz musician's ear is due to a lag that occurs between jazz songs being introduced, and their printed form becoming available.

Green (2001) studied professional popular musicians and the manner in which they learned their skill. She draws an analogy of children modeling adults' behavior to students learning music through modeling. Her conclusion is, "By far the overriding learning practice for the beginner popular musician, as is already well known, is to copy recordings by ear" (p. 60). A more privileged role of obtaining the music through listening is presented by Dobbins (1988) who states, "Nothing of real importance can be given to the student except technical guidance and constructive criticism"(p. 33). He includes in his philosophy that it is the jazz musician's responsibility to create an on-going development of aural skills. In the same vein, Kratus (1991), drawing on the work of Edward E. Gordon, affirms that in order for superior improvisation to take place, audiation of the sounds must primarily occur in the performer's mind. This can only be obtained through listening to jazz.

The Importance of Practice in Improvisation

In addition to listening, much of the literature focuses on the factor of practice as a critical ingredient in learning the skill of improvisation. Wynton Marsalis characterizes his father as a superlative musician and jazz educator and describes his style of teaching in an interview with Nolan (1995): "He'd let you play, not just teach you. There's only so much you can do based on technical training. His teaching was based on *doing*" (p. 42). Marsalis, himself, has been described as one practicing like a fanatic, working intensely

at school and at home all night (Berliner, 1994). One could interpret practice as a key factor contributing to his excellent ability as a jazz improviser.

Hallam (1995a) and Elliott, cited in Bowman (1988), also assert that one must practice the skill rather than talk about it. Hallam (1995b) extends this philosophy by relating the role of practicing to creating a desired sound: "All practice is geared to performance and performance is essentially about sound. If one does not like the sound someone makes then you will not wish to listen anymore. Everything should be geared towards that..." (p. 14). In his review of the doctoral research available on jazz improvisational methodology, Bowman (1988) refers to a study by McDaniel who concludes that " 'people learn what they do', since it appears that jazz improvisers listened to jazz and attended performances of jazz..." (p. 52).

Parallels to Language Acquisition

There is a recurring connection in the literature between learning a style of music and language acquisition. In both instances the primary involvement is input via the ear, which lends itself to some similarities in the process of learning. Azzara and colleagues (1998) explain, "...as a child, you are surrounded by the sound of your native language. You babble for a period of time and eventually begin to say the same words and phrases that you hear spoken by your parents and siblings. [You] begin to make statements and ask questions that are your own. You are improvising" (p. 4). He continues by describing the technique in his manual entitled *Creativity in Improvisation* as being similar to language acquisition. He states that the first step is to listen to jazz, then sing and play melodies and bass lines by ear, resulting in hearing the chord changes, hence being capable of creating one's own melodies. He stresses that one must not memorize tunes,

since we do not memorize portions of speech as a child. Darrow (1990) and Berliner (1994) concur that music should be learned by hearing and imitating, just as language is developed in a child. Finally, Zegree (2002) states that learning to improvise is very analogous to learning a foreign language, in that one can study a foreign language in school, and over time be capable of speaking and writing in that language. However, that person would most likely still speak with an accent. "If you wanted to master the language (French), you would go to France and spend an extended period of time there, immersed in the language, the slang, the vernacular and even the accent could then become second nature for you. The same immersion applies to vocal and instrumental improvisation" (p.53).

Connection with Instrumental Knowledge

Much of the literature also reveals a link between the musical abilities of a vocal jazz musician and his/her knowledge of an additional instrument. Considering professional musicians, there are several examples of this particular connection. Carmen McRae, as described by Crowther and Pinfold (1997), is an illustration of this phenomenon. Her prowess as a jazz improviser is considered to be greatly due to her knowledge of chord structure and the ear training which she gained from playing the piano. Carr, Fairweather, and Priestly (1987) also state that Carmen McRae obtained a harmonic ear from playing the piano, which enabled her to include bebop notes in her melodic lines of vocal improvisation. Sarah Vaughan was also an accomplished pianist. Giddins (1998) describes the effect of that skill, which seemed to penetrate her singing style: "A talent for exploring the altered chords that ultimately informed the liberties she took singing" (p. 300).

Other literature that has encompassed the area of vocal jazz also outlines a relationship between the expertise of a vocal jazz singer and the ability to play another instrument. For example, Madura 's (1996) study states that Berndt claims a definite link between the best vocal jazz improvisers and their capability on an additional instrument.

There is a logical explanation for a relation in the area of singing jazz and playing another instrument, in that jazz singing, improvisation in particular, is an art that is meant to emulate instrumental jazz. If a jazz singer is able to accurately copy the style of an instrument while improvising, he/she is regarded as being a very accomplished jazz musician. Daubney (2002) describes Billie Holiday's singing as replicating an instrument: "By singing as an instrumentalist would play, Holiday excelled beyond the expectations of her genre, the band vocalist, to meet the challenge of the jazz musician" (p. 20). Therefore, if an individual has a firm grasp on the harmonic and melodic elements of playing jazz on an instrument, he/she would logically have an upper hand on performing the same skill vocally.

Through obtaining this research literature, I have been exposed to the variety of themes that are emergent in the area of high school vocal jazz pedagogy. The themes encompassing jazz educator background, the importance of listening, performing and practicing, coupled with the methodological resources and the connection with language acquisition and instrument playing are all contributing factors to answering my research questions: how do professional vocal jazz singers learn their skills, how do vocal jazz educators approach their teaching of the art form, and what teaching approaches are advocated in mainstream vocal jazz instructional resources? It is clear that this information is necessary for guiding the research methods that I choose for this project.

Chapter III: Research Methods

In this chapter I identify the informants, sources of data, procedures, and tools that were implemented in this study. First, I will introduce the reader to the subjects and their criteria for selection, followed by the three sources of data that I employed for the study. Then I will provide a detailed account of the procedure and tools used to gather the perspectives of professional vocal jazz singers and educators for the purpose of informing high school vocal jazz pedagogy. Finally, I will pay some attention to how typical empirical standards applied to this study and acknowledge the limitations of using this methodology.

Informants

I employed two sets of informants for my study. As Fine states, cited in Taylor and Bogdan (1998), "...informants are the researcher's sponsor in the setting and primary sources of information" (p. 54). All of the informants were selected via purposive sampling as Palys explains, "People or locations are intentionally sought because they meet some criteria for inclusion in the study" (1997, p. 137). The first group involved professional vocal jazz singers. These participants were chosen based on the fact that they have performed vocal jazz in a public venue, on a hired basis, within the past five years, either in a solo or group configuration. The singers represented female and male genders and were not restricted to performers in Manitoba. The second group consisted of vocal jazz music educators at the high school level. These teachers were chosen as informants due to their reputations of having strong vocal jazz programs, as identified by members of the Association of Music Administrators of Manitoba.

Sources of Data

There were four sources of data used in this study: interviews with professional vocal jazz singers (Appendix A), interviews with high school classroom teachers (Appendix B), field notes of classroom observations in vocal jazz classrooms (Appendix C) and instructional resources in vocal jazz. These multiple data sources generated ample information to render common themes in the area of vocal jazz methodology and to allow for confirming findings through the process of triangulation.

Data Collection

I chose interviewing as one method of collecting data, because it provides an in-depth view of a situation through its intense focus on an individual. As well, “Interviewing is well suited for studies in which researchers have a relatively clear sense of their interests and the kinds of questions they wish to pursue” (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998, p. 91). In this case, a solid direction was set in terms of goals and questions, thus interviewing was an appropriate research tool. The interview process, as described by Bogdan and Biklen (2003), allows the interviewer to gather descriptive data in the participant’s own words, resulting in the researcher gaining insight on the viewpoints presented by the informants. It also allows the interviewer to gather data based on “verbal accounts of how people act and what they feel” (Taylor & Bogdan, 1988, p. 88) which applies directly to the topic of determining informants’ perspectives on the topic of learning vocal jazz.

I chose participant observation as a second method of collecting data in order to gain a clear understanding of the methods that teachers use to teach vocal jazz. By

observing teachers in their own environment, I was provided with a glimpse of their daily rehearsals and methods they employ for teaching (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994).

Procedure

Gathering the ideas of professional jazz singers as well as vocal jazz music educators required a qualitative research approach since the aim was to connect with the social interactions of the informants. Interpretation of the informants' reality was a relevant factor, therefore requiring a qualitative research method for this study (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992).

The process began with identifying the informants, and then inviting the informants to participate in my study. I then proceeded to gain informed consent. As noted by Glesne and Peshkin (1992), informed consent provides the participants with an awareness that their participation is voluntary, that the research poses no threat to their well-being, and that they may withdraw their participation at any time with no repercussions.

I began by selecting ten professional vocal jazz singers whom I knew, based on my own professional experience in the area of vocal jazz, have had experience singing in a public venue in the last five years, on a hired basis, in a solo or group configuration. First I contacted the individuals by telephone to ask if they would be willing to participate in my research study. Upon verbal agreement, we determined a date that would be suitable, and I faxed or mailed them a copy of the consent form (Appendix D), asking for them to return it if they chose to sign. I then sent them a copy of their signed consent forms for their records.

I then interviewed the ten professional vocal jazz singers, for the purpose of talking with them about the way they learned their art, including the element of improvisation. They were asked open-ended questions (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003) that related to their music background as a child, formal training in both theoretical and performance areas, use of written resources, reflections on how they obtained the skill of performing vocal jazz, and any influence of playing an additional instrument (Appendix A). This framework of questions stemmed from a search for the factors that contributed to each of the informant's current abilities to perform vocal jazz. By delving into their early childhood influences and listening habits, and by examining their levels of formal training, I obtained information that clarified the manner in which they learned this art.

In order to identify the ten high school vocal jazz teachers, I first obtained a list of the Music Administrators of Manitoba from my university faculty advisor. I faxed each of the administrators a Letter of Nomination (Appendix F) requesting their input into which teachers in their school divisions had strong vocal jazz programs, and could be potential informants for my study. After receiving the necessary feedback from the music administrators, I proceeded to contact the nominated high school vocal jazz teachers via telephone. I asked them if they would be available for observations and interviews for the purposes of my thesis. If they agreed, I determined with the teachers a date that was suitable for the interviews and the observations. I then faxed or mailed them a copy of the consent form (Appendix E) and asked that they return it to me if they chose to sign. After receiving the teachers' signed consent forms, I faxed consent forms to their principals (Appendix G) and superintendents of their school divisions (Appendix H) requesting permission to observe one of the teacher's vocal jazz classes. I requested that they return

the signed consent forms to me via fax. Upon receipt of the principals' and superintendents' consent forms, I faxed a copy of the Parent Information Letter (Appendix I) to each principal for his/her information. I then mailed ample copies of the Parent Information Letter to each teacher, asking them to send the letters home with their vocal jazz students prior to my visitation. Subsequently, I sent a copy of each signed consent form to the teachers, principals, and superintendents for their records.

Subsequently, I interviewed the ten high school vocal jazz music educators. These interviews concentrated on the area of methodology in vocal jazz, primarily the successes and downfalls that the informants have experienced in teaching vocal jazz. The vocal jazz music educators were asked open-ended questions (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998) regarding vocal jazz methodology, the amount of time devoted to listening to jazz in class, individual student time devoted to listening to jazz, improvisation practice time in class, and the potential influence of students' ability to play an additional instrument (Appendix B). These questions were developed based on themes that became evident through the literature review on this topic of study. The literature review revealed the element of listening as holding a great deal of importance in the learning of jazz, as well as the notion of practice. There was also a need for answers from music educators in the areas of successful pedagogy in vocal jazz in order to fully carry through my study.

Each interview lasted for approximately one hour, as "The in-depth interview usually takes an hour or longer and is usually guided by an interview schedule that lists key questions to be asked, or topics to be covered, in the interview" (Bouma, 1996, p. 178). The interviews were also tape-recorded for transcription purposes. "By using a tape recording you can go back over the event and make sure you have it right" (Bouma,

1996, p. 62). The informants were given the opportunity to suggest the location at which they would prefer to meet in order to ensure their level of comfort during the interview. The interviews were conducted in the following manner. The date and start time were recorded. Then the informant was greeted and the purpose of the interview was outlined. Subsequently, the informant's agreement for audio-recording was confirmed, the cassette was turned on, and the entire interview was recorded. Each question was posed and discussed in sequence with notes taken as a back up. The individuals were thanked and the end time and duration of the interview was recorded.

I continually checked with the informants that I had determined the proper interpretations of their responses to the various questions. This was done by paraphrasing their responses and by asking them if my paraphrasing was an accurate interpretation of their meaning. As Bogdan and Biklen (2003) recommend, "If at first you do not understand what the respondent is getting at, ask for clarification" (p. 97). I transcribed the interviews immediately after they occurred (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003), and I also included observer comments (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). I maintained these transcriptions in a secure setting until my thesis was complete. At that time, the transcriptions were shredded and the tapes were erased.

The observations of ten one-hour vocal jazz music classes were conducted to unveil successful teaching strategies. The music educators were asked for a regular class time that would be least troublesome, in order to minimize any disturbance to the regular routine of his/her class. Taylor and Bogdan (1998) suggest that the researcher become as unobtrusive as possible so that ideally the participants forget that the researcher is even present. In addition, I ensured that the time agreed upon was a regular class rehearsal,

excluding a class such as a final rehearsal before a performance, thus observing a standard lesson being taught.

I employed an observation guide (Appendix C) while observing the various music educators, which added to the data from which I derived themes. This tool was based on the suggestions provided by Bogdan and Biklen (2003), Maykut and Morehouse (1994), Bouma (1996), and Glesne and Peshkin (1992). I began by entering the classroom and noting the physical appearance of the room and subsequently sat somewhere in the rear of the class in order to keep my intrusion to a minimum. Then I took detailed field notes focusing on: teachers' dominant teaching strategies, amount of practice time devoted to improvisation, teachers' comments on improvisation, listening time devoted to jazz, methods employed by teachers when faced with particular challenges, and instructional materials used by teachers.

The field notes began with a physical diagram of the room (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994) and continued with a thorough listing of the teachers' comments regarding his/her methods of teaching, each of which were listed chronologically with the time in hours and minutes assigned. "As much as possible, the researcher tries to capture people's exact words in field notes. This is particularly important because the qualitative researcher is specifically trying to understand and describe what is going on in the terms used by the people in the setting she or he is studying" (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p. 76). The teachers' dominant tendencies were also recorded in terms of their teaching methods. Bogdan and Biklen (2003) suggest that the researcher should observe and record particular aspects of people's behaviors that may set them apart from others, including the way in which they act or certain mannerisms. These behaviors will have an

impact on the way they choose to teach various skills therefore they are important to note. The elements of class time devoted to improvisation and listening were also recorded. This checklist (Bouma, 1996) noted the number of occurrences and the start and end time of each occurrence, as well as a rating of the level to which the listening was related to the lesson. The instructional materials employed by the teacher were recorded, as well as the methods they used when faced with particular challenges in their teaching.

All of the field notes taken were both descriptive and analytic in their nature (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Every effort was made to capture the reality of the observations as accurately as possible. In addition, reflective and analytical comments were made after the observations (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992).

Subsequently, I conducted a content analysis of the methodological resources that are most commonly used by vocal jazz teachers. This information was compared with the data collected by the professional jazz singers and vocal jazz teachers. LeCompte and colleagues (1992) state that comparisons can be made within a representative set, which in this study were the most frequently used methodological resources, as revealed from the interviews and observations. This comparison aided me in determining whether or not my hunch, that there is an incongruency between methodology employed by professional jazz singers and vocal jazz teachers, is legitimate.

Data Analysis

Interview and observational data were analyzed qualitatively using methods suggested by Bogdan and Biklen (2003) and Maykut and Morehouse (1994). By conducting interviews with ten professional jazz singers, ten vocal jazz music educators

and observing ten vocal jazz music educators, I obtained data that became repetitive in nature, resulting in a firm grasp of certain themes

The interviews were transcribed, analyzed, and coded using methods of constant comparison. This method allowed me to have a “clear path for engaging in analysis of substantial amounts of data” (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p. 127). The analysis began by a coding of the data, which refined my interpretation of the data collected. This coding entailed listing the major themes and sub themes that arose from the transcribed data on a repeated basis, and assigning codes to each of the elements of data that fit the themes (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). An example of how data were coded appears in Table 1. Some of the themes were very specific, while others were vague, however I listed them all in order to account for all of the pertinent data. Also, data which contrasted the emerging themes, were coded so that information that differed from the apparent themes could also be accommodated (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). The data were then sorted into the various coded categories which resulted in augmenting and clarifying the themes and sub themes. I then refined the thematic framework by comparing all of the data under each theme, identifying those of more and lesser importance.

The field notes were also analyzed using the constant comparison method (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994) and specific coding was utilized regarding the behavior and speech patterns of the teachers. Activity codes (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003) were employed for the teachers’ comments, dominant tendencies, and listening and improvisation segments. Strategy codes (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003) were used for the methods that the teachers employed when faced with teaching challenges.

Table 1

Example of Thematic Coding: Processes in Learning to Perform Vocal Jazz

Singer	Listening	Schooling	Transcribing	Teacher Influence
Cindy		x		
Hannah	x	x		
Amy	x			
Jonah		x		x
Tannis	x			
Janie	x			
Randy			x	x
Tony	x			
Mandy	x	x	x	
Sandy			x	

Content analysis was the analytical method I selected for the instructional resources (Bouma, 1996). I analyzed a sampling of current instructional resources which, based on my teaching background, I considered to be commonly used in the area of vocal jazz pedagogy. After reviewing these texts, I used a checklist to calculate the frequency and range of topics that occurred in them (Bouma, 1996). This process allowed me to determine the percentage of documents that covered each topic and which specific topics were dominant in current instructional resources. I then devised a summary sheet, displayed in Table 19, which encapsulated all of the data (Bouma, 1996).

Empirical Standards

Several empirical standards applied to this qualitative study such as generalizability, reliability, validity, and trustworthiness. According to Schwandt (2001) a generalization is a “broad encompassing statement or proposition made by drawing an inference from an observation of the particular” (p.105). In this study the frequency of themes that kept surfacing revealed the theoretical principles of practice in teaching and learning vocal jazz. This kind of generalizability is often referred to as transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This means that readers make inferences about these theoretical principles regarding their own teaching situations.

The element of reliability was present as a result of the strong coding scheme employed with the data and the triangulation of data that occurred. “The more agreement there is in coding observations on content analysis, the more reliable the instrument is” (Bouma, 1996, p. 84).

Validity or trustworthiness is an issue that was considered throughout my research design and my data collection. Triangulation, or the use of multiple data sources of evidence, was addressed by collecting data in four ways (singer interviews, teacher interviews, teacher observations and content analysis of methodological resources) (Glesne, 1999). Trustworthiness was addressed through my continual checking of proper interpretations of responses from the informants. Bogdan and Biklen (2003) concur: “Many sources of data were better in a study than a single source because multiple sources lead to a fuller understanding of the phenomena you were studying” (p. 107).

Limitations of the Methodology

There were three limitations of the methodology. Due to factors of time and distance, face-to-face interviews were only conducted with informants who lived within Manitoba. Communication with informants living outside Manitoba was limited to telephone interviews and/or e-mail exchanges. Second, there was access to a limited number of doctoral, master level, or related research resources in the area of vocal jazz pedagogy that might inform the methodology. Third, data were analyzed by a single researcher, therefore, no inter-judge reliability could be applied.

Upon completion of gathering the data, I was able to identify the results of the information I gleaned from the vocal jazz singers, interviews, and methodological resources. The following chapter details the findings obtained as a result of the research process.

Chapter IV: Results

This chapter will present the results of the data that were collected and analyzed during this study. Findings are structured and presented around the three data sources: professional vocal jazz singers (interviews), vocal jazz educators (interviews and classroom observations), and documentary data.

Interviews with Professional Vocal Jazz Singers

The comments of vocal jazz singers are presented by interview question. The thematic categories which emerged as a consequence of the content analysis of the transcribed interviews are summarized in Tables 3-12. For each interview question, the related themes are discussed in hierarchical order determined by the relative emphasis placed on each theme by singers, as well as illustrated with excerpted comments.

How did you learn to sing vocal jazz? With regards to the process in which the singers learned to sing vocal jazz, the primary themes discussed are displayed in Table 2. The majority (6) of the singers stated that listening was a fundamental means through which they learned to sing jazz. Four accredited their formal education as being a major influence, while three found that transcribing solos was useful. Only two of the ten singers stated that a teacher had a particular influence on their learning process.

The predominating factor of listening is illustrated by Tara when she explained, “I think the reason I sort of learned the basics of it was because I was listening to a lot of stuff, and, so that kind of brought about, you know, a more intellectual side of jazz for me. Whereas other kids in my class were just playing the music on the page, and they didn’t really understand – not that I understood a lot of it either. But I had a better understanding of it than they did, I think, because I was listening a lot” (personal

communication, March 28, 2001). Mandy also attributed listening as the primary factor of her jazz learning. She attested a great deal of her stylistic elements to listening to specific performers such as Ella Fitzgerald, Bobby McFerrin, Al Jarreau, and Louis Armstrong. She believed that these performers' abilities to emulate instruments were vital in getting that sound in her ears.

Table 2

Processes in Learning to Perform Vocal Jazz

<u>Emergent Themes</u>	<u>Number Who Agreed</u>	
Listening	6	(60%)
Formal Education	4	(40%)
Transcribing Solos	3	(30%)
Influential Teacher	2	(20%)

Almost half (4) of the singers commented that without their schooling, they would not have been exposed to the jazz form, hence, would not have learned the art of singing jazz. For example, Hannah's schooling marked the beginning of her vocal jazz learning, as she was, "...first exposed to vocal jazz in high school with the vocal jazz choir. I didn't know anything about vocal jazz until that experience" (personal communication, October 14, 2003). Mandy also accredited her learning to perform vocal jazz to her post-secondary schooling where she learned to sing in combos. This was beneficial especially with regards to learning the role of a singer in a band: "We all had to learn to count in our band and to learn the role that everyone's playing in our band...and

knowing whose job is it to keep time? Is it the bass player's job, or is it the drummer's job?" (personal communication, March 14, 2001).

The notion of transcribing other well-respected improvisational solos was one that surfaced three times amongst the singers. This exercise was considered a useful tool for helping some of the singers learn to sing jazz, as explained by Sandy, "I guess just to imitate solos and hear different things that people can do. You know, and be able to play it after. 'Cause sometimes you hear it once, and it's hard to repeat it exactly the way they did it. But to be able to notate it and then be able to do it yourself, yah...it's pretty neat" (personal communication, March 11, 2001).

Finally, two singers mentioned an influential teacher that was a crucial part of their learning process. For Jonah, high school music was the springboard for learning how to perform vocal jazz. He wanted to expand his music experiences from rock to other genres and his high school music teacher was the impetus for that. Jonah's teacher exposed him to jazz music and encouraged his development in that area. Likewise, Randy's teacher was the leader of a church band of which he was a member. "Having time to play with a piano player, who just happened to be an employee of the church, who knew something about jazz, and encouraged ear training, playing by ear, and improvisation...I think that made really kind of a significant impact" (personal communication, March 22, 2001).

What types of music did you listen to, predominantly, when you were growing up?

The early listening experiences of the singers interviewed are summarized in Table 3. All ten singers responded that their first listening experiences as children were that of commercial pop music. A large portion (8) noted that the music their parents or siblings

listened to as they grew up influenced their own listening as well. Four singers said that they began listening to either instrumental or vocal jazz music once they began participating in high school music programs, and three individuals stated that they listened to jazz more frequently in university when they were formally studying jazz. Three of the singers remarked that their listening to jazz music increased the more they were required to perform it as a style of music.

Clearly, all of the singers' early listening experiences involved some sort of pop or rock music, whether it was on the radio or through recordings they had purchased. For example, Cindy's childhood listening experiences began with reggae, especially Bob Marley, as she was born in Jamaica. She also listened a great deal to R&B, hip-hop, disco, pop, funk and soul. Jonah also linked his rock listening to peer groups at school: "When you go through school, you want to be in a certain group, so you listen to different kinds of music. When I started junior high, it was more like the kind of heavy metal rock stuff, and then as soon as high school came around, I just started listening to all sorts of stuff" (personal communication, April 14, 2001).

Table 3

Early Listening Experiences

<u>Emergent Themes</u>	<u>Number Who Agreed</u>	
Commercial Pop Recordings	10	(100%)
Recordings Played in Home	8	(80%)
Jazz Recordings Studied in High School Programs	4	(40%)
Jazz Recordings Studied in University Music Programs	3	(30%)
Jazz Recordings Studied for Performance	3	(30%)

Many of the singers traced their early listening experiences back to the homes in which they were reared. Often their parents or siblings had an impact on the music that was being played in the home, which sometimes involved them practicing a certain type of music, or simply listening to various recordings. Retro music was the primary source of listening for Hannah, as her older brother was always playing that genre of music in the home. Therefore, The Beatles, The Doors, and Pink Floyd were the groups that she heard most as a child. Tannis' father was a music teacher, and therefore she was always hearing the music to which he was listening. This was comprised of jazz, wind ensembles, and jazz-influenced rock groups. Her mother was also a jazz lover, and as a result, many records of Ella Fitzgerald were played in the home. Randy's family was a large influence on his listening as well, as they were all heavily involved in music. His father was a choir director for approximately twenty years, and his brothers all played the piano and sang. Therefore, whether someone was practicing the piano, singing, or playing music for the sole purpose of listening, there was some sort of music being played in the home at all times.

For some singers, their listening changed in high school as a result of the music programs in which they were enrolled. Once in high school, Tannis took up playing saxophone in the jazz band, and consequently she began listening to a lot of instrumental jazz. "I don't think I would have probably listened to as much if I hadn't been playing it" (personal communication, March 28, 2001). Mandy also began listening to jazz more frequently in high school, when she joined a vocal jazz group and started listening to groups such as The Manhattan Transfer and The Glen Miller Orchestra.

Cindy, Mandy and Sandy, who all studied music at the university level, noted that their jazz listening augmented as a result of the performance courses in which they were members. Cindy, for example, stated that while she was in university, she constantly surrounded herself with jazz. "If I wasn't going out to listen to live jazz, then I was buying all sorts of CD's by the female jazz greats. Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughan, Dinah Washington, Billie Holiday, Nancy Wilson, and the list goes on" (personal communication, October 20, 2003).

Finally, three of the singers recollected that their jazz music listening increased when they began to work in the field of jazz performance. They realized that the more they were required to perform the style, the more listening they were interested in doing. Amy, Tony and Janie all noticed that their concentration on listening to both instrumental and vocal jazz became more elevated as they started to perform more.

What listening experiences most influenced the way in which you learned to sing vocal jazz? All the singers acknowledged that listening had some degree of impact on their current abilities as jazz singers. As indicated in Table 4, most singers (8) identified jazz listening as the major contributing factor to their performance ability, while only two indicated that listening to an alternate type of music influenced their current singing style.

Jazz listening had a strong influence on most of the singers' current ability to perform vocal jazz. For example, Amy found that Billie Holiday and Ella Fitzgerald were her two primary influences for the way in which she currently sings jazz. The style of Billie Holiday, one which she described as "relaxed and unassuming" (personal communication, November 17, 2003), taught her that jazz singing does not have to be forced or totally emotional in order to provide the effect that the singer is aiming for.

Ella's display of scatting, which she suggested was a demonstration of her theoretical knowledge of the chord structure, encouraged Amy to develop a more concrete understanding of the framework of jazz so that she, too, may have a basis on which to create impressive scats. As well, the control in Ella's voice was one which Amy continues to respect and emulate. Randy also reflected, "I would say that listening has influenced my skill as a vocal jazz person more than any other means of learning" (personal communication, March 22, 2001).

Table 4

Influence of Listening on Performance Ability

<u>Emergent Themes</u>	<u>Number Who Agreed</u>	
Listening to Jazz	8	(80%)
Listening to Other Musical Styles	2	(20%)

Two of the singers, however, found elements in the pop listening that affected the way in which they now sing jazz. Cindy, for example, considered R&B as the main influence on her current jazz singing. The reason behind this lies in her appreciation of "beautiful and interesting melodies as opposed to just a heavy emphasis on the beat or rhythm of the song" (personal communication, October 20, 2003). As well, R&B provided her with a foundation for scatting, as it is heavily laden with riffing and vocal gymnastics. She also attributed her ability to shape words and bend notes over certain chords, the stylistic elements of jazz, to her listening of R&B.

What type of formal training have you had in the area of jazz performance or theory? The three themes that emerged from conversations around formal training are presented in Table 5. Eight acknowledged receiving formal theory courses in either jazz

or classical music fields. An equal number felt they received a great deal of their vocal jazz training from a source other than formal courses. Five singers interviewed had formal training in jazz performance.

Table 5

Vocal Jazz Formal Training

<u>Emergent Themes</u>	<u>Number Who Agreed</u>	
Music Theory Courses	8	(80%)
Jazz Performance Courses	8	(80%)
Alternative Training	5	(50%)

The theoretical training that most singers obtained was either classical or jazz related. These experiences were university-based, and required for the music programs in which they were enrolled. Interestingly, a large majority of those interviewed attributed the bulk of their jazz learning to factors outside of formal education. For instance, Hannah, who pursued both performance and theoretical university courses accredited most of her learning to being a member of the college's elite vocal jazz group, an extra-curricular endeavor. Similarly, Tannis attributed the majority of her jazz learning to listening to and emulating mentor singers. Mandy also stated that she largely learned to sing vocal jazz by listening to respected jazz artists and practicing. Amy, who did not take any formal training, commented, "I was asked to learn "Blue Moon" for a big band leader I was working with, so I learned it. Thus began my jazz education" (personal communication, November 17, 2003).

Half of the singers interviewed took performance courses in university settings with a specific focus on jazz performance. In Cindy's case, she spent four years at a university in Toronto where she pursued performance courses that required a yearly audition. In these courses, she would be the lead singer of a jazz combo, and the combo members ranged from first year to fourth year students. This was a requirement in order for her to graduate with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Jazz Performance. Mandy studied pop voice for several years, and took jazz performance courses at a college which specialized in jazz music. Similarly, the requirements of Hannah's Bachelor of Music degree demanded a certain number of jazz performance courses wherein she studied vocal jazz.

How has the theoretical training been useful to your performance of vocal jazz?

Singers' responses to this question were not expected. My initial hunch was that the singers would not have found a use for theory training in their singing. Surprisingly, six of the eight singers that had taken theory courses deemed them as useful to their jazz singing. Each of the singers commented that having this knowledge creates a more solid structure over which a singer can solo.

Some of the singers were able to denote an exact connection between the theoretical knowledge that they had acquired and their current singing abilities. Hannah, for example, stated that her theoretical training has been quite useful from a transcribing aspect. "I can confidently transcribe music and that opens up a realm of possibilities performing-wise, since I don't have to rely on finding a chart. Jazz theory has also helped me 'get inside' chords and has given me a shortcut to making good musical choices. With the knowledge that I've gained, I've been able to apply it to practicing and that's opened up my ears to many more musical possibilities than I would have otherwise imagined"

(personal communication, October 14, 2003). Tony concurred that the most useful factor of his theoretical training is the comprehension of harmonic changes that can be applied to singing. This is his foundation for creating solos and for understanding a song's harmonic expectations. Without having a full appreciation of the inner workings of jazz chords and what the various progressions entail, he feels it would be an impossible task to create a well-respected improvisational solo. Janie, although she did not find her own minimal theory courses useful, indicated, "the best musicians have a fundamental knowledge of theory" (personal communication October 7, 2003). She stated that the reason for this is that they have a more profound comprehension of the music over which they are singing, which allows them to take bigger risks and provide a more confident product.

Two of the singers did not find that their knowledge of music theory had a place in their performance of vocal jazz. Cindy found her university jazz theory course to be very challenging, and although she employs some of the harmonic aspects in her song writing, she did not feel that it has impacted her vocal performance. Janie's theory training accompanied her piano lessons and did not have an impact on the way she currently sings jazz.

What aspects of your performance training have helped you learn most the art of vocal jazz? Most of the five singers who had obtained formal performance training were able to find a link between some factor in their training and the way in which it helped them become a better jazz singer. Table 6 shows, however, the reasons were varied. Two singers stated that it was beneficial in that it taught them how to prepare for and realize a performance, while another two singers found it helped them in a technical manner.

Being surrounded by other more experienced musicians in the school aided two singers.

The element of practicing the art form, which is inherent in jazz courses, was an additional factor that two singers found as valuable. Only one singer felt her performance training was not valuable.

Table 6

Value of Formal Performance Training

<u>Emergent Themes</u>	<u>Number Who Agreed</u>	
Preparing and Realizing Performance	2	(20%)
Augmented Performance Techniques	2	(20%)
Opportunities to Work with Experienced Performers	2	(20%)
Inherent Need to Practice	2	(20%)
Not Valuable	1	(10%)

Mandy and Hannah valued their performances courses, as they were taught how to prepare for and carry through with all of the necessary requirements for a performance. "Putting on my own recitals at school really prepared me [for becoming a professional singer] because it gave me a taste of what it's like to play my own gig: getting players, rehearsing, arranging good charts, practicing, and finally performing in front of an audience" (personal communication, October 14, 2003).

Randy and Cindy, on the other hand, emphasized the technical aspect of singing that was strongly developed through their performance courses. "I think proper playing technique and proper singing technique, is proper technique, no matter what you apply it to, whether it be vocal jazz or instrumental jazz, or classical, or whatever. So I think just

in terms of making sure that all the mechanics work, both instrumentally and vocally – I think there's a real connection there between vocal jazz and classical [training]" (personal communication, March 22, 2001).

Sandy attested that some of her learning came from listening to other students in the class attempting solos, and learning from their ideas. This would not have been possible had she not been taking a university performance course. Similarly, Cindy, while in her university ensembles, learned from the other musicians in her groups who were more experienced and proficient. Although this isn't learning from the course content, *per se*, she would not have been afforded this learning experience had she not been taking that performance course.

The element of practice was important to two singers, which was a requirement in order to succeed in university performance courses. Tony noted that through performance courses students are encouraged, and even required to, perform on their instrument or with their voice. This process results in a more accomplished musician, with the understanding that there are goals set for the practicing. He stated that as long as a singer maintains a goal of what he/she wants to sound like and continues to learn through doing, improvements will be made. The performance courses that Tony took provided him with this opportunity. The element of practice was also the focus of Sandy's response, as she agreed that the improvisational course she took provided her with a safe haven in which she could attempt some newer, more experimental things. The classroom, being a non-judgmental place, provided that setting. She was able to improve her own soloing while in that course, simply by practicing the various methods she had been taught.

Talk about what, if any, method books you have used to learn about vocal jazz, and more specifically how and why these have been useful to you. As I had anticipated, eight of the ten indicated they had never used any methods books. Two of the singers had employed manual sets, but only to use the accompaniment CD's or tapes over which they could practice their singing.

Hannah, Amy, Jonah, Randy, Tony, and Sandy never used method books for any aspect of learning to sing vocal jazz. Cindy's response was that the only "methods" she learned were from listening to jazz singers, while Janie was passionate in her answer, "Honey, I don't even know what a method book is" (personal communication, October 7, 2003). Along the same view, Jonah laughed, "I wouldn't even know what they looked like!" (personal communication, April 4, 2001). Sandy and Randy stated that they had looked at a few, but had never found them useful.

Tannis employed the Jamie Aebersold CD and manual, and found that singing over the changes of two chords was very helpful when she was first learning how to improvise. The manual, itself, however, provided no help in her learning to play or sing jazz. Mandy also found a useful set of tapes that had a manual attached: *Improvisational Techniques* by Patty Koker. However, it was the again the tapes that she used, not the manual. "She [the narrator] employs some warm-up techniques and she shows you what vowel sounds are most effective when you're scatting. Like, if you're going to sing a longer note, make it an open vowel sound like aaahhh or ohh, but don't be doin' 'doooooooooo' for four bars, you know? Like, nobody wants to hear it!" (personal communication, March 14, 2003).

How did you learn to scat sing? The five themes that arose when each professional jazz singer traced the steps they took when learning to scat appear in Table 7. The majority (8) of the singers said that they did most of their learning by listening to great jazz musicians, either vocal or instrumental. An equal number said that practicing their skills was also an integral factor in them learning to sing vocal jazz. Three individuals acknowledged that their high school jazz programs helped them develop some of the skills required to improvise, while three singers also attributed part of that process to learning how to discard their inhibitions around improvising. Two singers also noted that transcribing or memorizing respected artists' solos helped them a great deal in learning to improvise.

The exercise of listening was predominant in the data revealed by the professional singers when discussing how they learned to improvise. Mandy specifically advocated listening to jazz instrumentalists. "If you're gonna learn to scat, listen to instrumentalists. Listen to Charlie Parker. Listen to some horn players. You know, listen to Chet Baker, or someone who plays simple – Ben Webster or Coleman Hawkins" (personal communication, March 14, 2001). Sandy also found that when she began listening more to jazz selections that were recommended by her high school teacher, she developed an increased idea bank for her own solos. Tony also stressed the component of listening to jazz vocalists or instrumentalist. He was able to obtain many ideas from Miles Davis, in particular.

Table 7

Steps in Learning to Scat Sing

<u>Emergent Themes</u>	<u>Number Who Agreed</u>	
Listening to Jazz Masters	8	(80%)
Practice	8	(80%)
Participation in High School Jazz Programs	3	(30%)
Overcoming Inhibitions	3	(30%)
Transcribing/Memorizing Masters' Solos	2	(20%)

Practicing was another theme that was emphasized among the vocal jazz singers on the topic of scat singing. Eight singers insisted that without practice, one could never improve as an improviser. Tony expanded this concept by stating that a person can listen as much as he/she wants, but until he/ she starts to try some of the things that were heard, there will be no performance development occurring. Mandy talked about the importance of practicing and the notion of repetition in order to improve. She suggested that imitating the instruments that she heard on recordings helped her develop her improvising ability. Hannah noticed that through practice and repetition of cliché jazz patterns she was able to build a foundation of riffs and a collection of notes that she could use over certain changes. These became engrained in her head and were easily called upon when needed in a solo.

For some singers, the programs they were exposed to in high school were integral elements in the process of learning to sing jazz. Sandy's first experience with scatting was in a grade ten vocal jazz class when she didn't know what syllables to use, but was

able to pick out a few notes that would fit over the changes. The first step she took was taking home a solo that was assigned to her, working one out on the piano at home and memorizing it. However, she admitted that this wasn't really improvising, and since she sang it the same way each time in class, her teacher encouraged her to change it a bit each time, if she could. It was at this point that she started experimenting with melodies a bit more. Jonah found the ear training exercises in his grade eleven vocal jazz group useful. The teacher would show the students what a root, third, fifth and flat seventh would sound like, and then he would tell them what note to sing. Then they would attempt individual scat solos using only those notes. They would also try solos on one note, just varying the rhythm or attack of the note. After some time all of these elements would be combined and more notes would be added to create interesting scat solos.

A few singers discussed the subject of inhibition in learning to scat. All three felt strongly that a singer can not feel embarrassed or self-conscious when he/she is attempting to improvise during the early stages. Cindy offered, "Scatting is something you can't be shy about. You just have to jump in and do it. It's all about listening to the bass line and the chords and just choosing interesting notes and rhythms that sound the sweetest against those chords" (personal communication, October 20, 2003). When Tannis first entered her university ensemble, where there were singers whom she deemed as being more proficient at scatting, she was overcome by fear and stopped scatting all together, until one day the teacher simply stated that they would be warming up with scat solos by everybody. "He would not take 'no' for an answer. He just made me solo. So I did, and it was terrible, and it was really scary, and I wanted to crawl into a hole, but it was a start. And then I just kind of got used to the fact that it was just something you did

in that class. And every time it got better, and now I don't feel uncomfortable about it at all" (personal communication, March 28, 2001).

Finally, Hannah and Amy noted that by transcribing well-respected vocal or instrumental jazz solos, they were able to improve their own scatting abilities. Hannah, in particular, felt that this helped her understand better what other jazz artists had done over certain chord changes, hence providing her with new ideas for her own solos.

What have been the most influential factors in your learning to sing jazz? Table 8 shows that five key factors were identified by singers as most influential in learning to scat. Interestingly, 100% of singers (10) included listening in their responses to this question. Three of the singers interviewed stated that imitating well-respected jazz musicians was just as important as listening, while two others noted that practicing was an important factor. Two singers mentioned that there was a teacher who influenced their scat singing and two others felt that their own inner motivation was central to learning the art of singing vocal jazz.

Table 8

Most Influential Factors in Learning to Scat

<u>Emergent Themes</u>	<u>Number Who Agreed</u>	
Listening	10	(100%)
Imitating Jazz Masters	3	(30%)
Practicing Scat	2	(20%)
Influential Teacher	2	(20%)
Internal Motivation	2	(20%)

Listening to recordings or live jazz music, whether instrumental or vocal, was paramount in the interview comments surrounding this issue. Cindy accredited all of her jazz learning to listening. She listened to many female jazz vocalists and considered them as her best teachers. Tannis was emphatic on this topic, "If I hadn't listened, then I wouldn't have any sort of background to do it. And listening to lots of stuff, not just listening to vocal stuff, but listening to instrumental stuff as well. There's so much knowledge to be learned there, not only about singing and soloing, but also about history and style" (personal communication, March 28, 2001). Janie also stated that using her ears has been the largest factor in her learning to sing jazz. Her family music background that was a constant aural input as a child, coupled with listening to respected jazz artists has added to that sound that she can now emulate. Being surrounded by music her whole life, both in listening and performing capacities, has enabled her to obtain the jazz style of which she has heard so much. Finally, listening was a critical factor which enabled Randy to learn the art of vocal jazz. "If we are expected to be artists, and someone asks us to paint a cow on a canvas, and you say, 'Great. I'll go ahead and paint a cow.' But as soon as we got the paintbrush and got up to the canvas and we had never seen a cow before, I mean, where would you start? You just wouldn't have any opportunity. You just wouldn't have a fair chance. So, I think it's really important that we understand and that we have an image in our mind before we start creating. And I don't see any difference between the artist, in terms of visual experience, and vocal jazz" (personal communication, March 22, 2001).

Some singers added that, while the listening was extremely important, the next step of imitation was of equal value. Amy, for example, attributed most of her learning to

mimicking what she heard. She developed her own style from imitating and then straying from that rendition somewhat to make her own creation.

Practice was also an influential factor in other singers' opinions. Tannis and Sandy both recommended practicing the sounds a singer was listening to. As Tannis remarked, "Go out there and do it. I think that's what helps the most is to just do it as much as you can" (personal communication, March 28, 2001).

Tannis also recalled the influence of a teacher that had a strong impact on her learning, specifically, the acceptance of her first jazz solos by her teacher. Also the steps through which the teacher allowed them to develop as singers was advantageous for her. At first the students just played as much as they could. After doing that for some time, the teacher would then make one suggestion at a time, such as trying certain types of notes or using more range. This, she felt, was very useful to her progress as a jazz musician. Jonah had a teacher that showed faith in him, which encouraged his pursuit of this genre. "He understood what level I was at, and he wanted to develop it, you know? I think that was the most important. He showed genuine interest. He showed that he had a passion for this kind of music and I think seeing that, my interest developed too" (personal communication, April 4, 2001).

Finally, Hannah's and Randy's reflections indicated that a great deal of their motivation to learn vocal jazz singing came from a determination within themselves. Hannah's inner drive to create and be spontaneous was a large influential factor for Hannah. "I can remember back when I used to play classical piano I would always add my own little interpretation to what was written on the page. That desire to express my own personality in music has always been with me" (personal communication, October

14, 2003). Randy's inner motivation, he felt, was instilled by his parents. As a child, they always encouraged him to pursue musical endeavors, however they would not dote on him or force the music on him in any manner. Therefore, from the time he was young, if he was to be at a rehearsal or a practice, it was his responsibility to make his way there by bus. It was also his own task to do the required practicing in order to ensure a positive performance experience. As a result, Randy felt that his parents did him a favor by instilling in him a real inner motivation to become a successful musician.

Do you play another instrument? How has that skill influenced your ability as a vocal jazz singer? Most (9) interviewed reported to play an additional instrument, and agreed that this ability has helped their singing of jazz. The reasons they identified are presented in Table 9. It is interesting to note that even the non-instrumentalist commented that the instrument players she knew were able to scat better than many of her singer friends in school, because they were able to simply emulate the sound of their instruments.

In terms of general musicianship, four of the instrument-playing singers found that playing an instrument augmented their skills as a singer. Tannis reflected on the differences between playing an instrument and singing. "When you're playing an instrument, you have to think fast to transfer the rhythm, the notes, the fingering and everything down to your instrument. When you're sight singing, you're just used to thinking it fast [from the experience of playing an instrument], so it just comes. Whereas, if you haven't had that training [on an instrument], you may not have the tools to read it as fast" (personal communication, March 28, 2001). Therefore, she felt that the training she received on the saxophone increased her reading ability as a singer. Janie observed

that as she became a stronger piano player, her singing also improved. She attributed this to the general increase in musicianship that accompanied the higher level of piano playing. She also plays percussion which has influenced her skill as a singer. Through learning the rhythmic intricacies of songs, she gained an appreciation for an additional facet of the music. This allowed her to attempt more rhythmic riffs and segments within her singing.

Table 9

Influence of Playing an Instrument on Ability to Sing Vocal Jazz

<u>Emergent Themes</u>	<u>Number Who Agreed</u>	
Improved General Musicianship	4	(40%)
Ability to Accompany Own Practice	2	(20%)
Stronger Knowledge of Harmonic Structures	2	(20%)
Use of Instrument as a Visual Reference	2	(20%)
Use of Instrument as a Figuring Tool for Vocal Lines	2	(20%)

Two singers found the ability to accompany themselves on the piano as an asset to their singing. Hannah's ability to play the piano has also proved valuable to her in many ways. "Being able to accompany yourself as a singer is so beneficial. It helps me internalize the form of music I'm singing and it also feeds the ear new possibilities while in the practice stage instead of waiting until there's a band behind me to let loose. I can work out some ideas beforehand and really be confident in a performance situation. I would recommend that every singer learn to accompany themselves on another instrument" (personal communication, October 14, 2003). Although Cindy has an

elementary knowledge of how to play the piano, this ability has enabled her, too, to play basic chord changes over which she could practice scatting.

Having the harmonic knowledge that complements playing an instrument has helped two of the singers in their vocal abilities. Tony's piano knowledge has provided a solid harmonic structure on which he can build improvisational solos. By playing the tunes on the piano, and actually feeling the chords under his fingers, he is able to have a secure foundation on which he can create solo lines when he is singing. Similarly, Amy plays the piano, and stated that having that knowledge has helped her a great deal as a singer. It has given her the understanding of harmony and song structure.

Using the instrument as a visual reference was another idea discussed by two of the singers. Jonah realized that when he sings, he pictures what he is singing on the bass, since it provides that reference point and sense of security in knowing exactly what notes will come out. Therefore, playing the bass has provided him with an anchor from which he can confidently sing jazz. Similarly, Sandy's primary instrument was the flute. Therefore, she noticed that when she was learning improvisation at university, she found it easier to learn the skill on her flute. "Instead of just using my ear, I wanted to really know what I was doing" (personal communication, March 11, 2001). She was then able to transfer that visual knowledge of improvising on her flute to her voice.

Two singers found that they have been able to employ their instrument as a tool for figuring out vocal lines or harmonies in a much more expedient and effective manner than just singing. Cindy has often worked out melodies on the piano first, and then finding the sound she likes, would see how it translated into her voice. Therefore it has provided her with an additional tool with which she can attempt new vocal ideas. In the

same manner, if Amy is learning a new song that requires harmonies or has a complex melodic passage, she initially figures it out on the piano, which takes half the time it would have if she had attempted it mentally. “To me it’s like having a calculator to do math with rather than doing it in one’s head” (personal communication, November 17, 2003).

Mandy, although she does not play another instrument, holds an appreciation for the benefits that having that skill could merit. “I don’t really play an instrument, so it’s really hard for me to hear things unless they’re actually played. I remember going around school asking the other instrumentalists to sing for me what their instrument sounded like, and they’d always do these great scat solos. They were totally imitating their own instruments! Sometimes as a vocalist, I’m not always taking as many risks as I could” (personal communication, March 14, 2001). She added an anecdote that summarized her feelings about the advantages of playing an instrument. She described herself driving one day and listening to a singer from New York Voices take an impressively fast scat solo. The scat was so fast that she couldn’t even really perceive what the notes were. “Of course the guy plays saxophone too, so he’s got a bit of an edge. You know, there’s my other route – don’t solo at all – you just hire a good saxophone player and let him do the work!” (personal communication, March 14, 2001).

Interviews With Vocal Jazz Teachers

The data collected from the vocal jazz teacher interviews are presented in nine sub-sections by interview question. The themes that arose from this data are presented in Tables 10-15. For each interview question, the themes are discussed in a hierarchical

fashion, from greater to lesser importance as expressed by teachers. Interview comments are inserted to illuminate the findings.

Reflect on the methods and techniques you use when teaching vocal jazz. What has worked best? The teaching methods discussed by teacher respondents are displayed in Table 10. The highest proportion of teachers (7) responded that modeling was a very helpful method when teaching vocal jazz elements. Half of the interviewees (5) also said that by providing the students with listening examples the jazz sound was being heard and embedded in the students' ears. This, they believe, is a required step for emulating the sound. Three teachers found it useful to concentrate on the stylistic elements of singing jazz, and three more found success in emphasizing mechanics. Only two teachers focused on the harmonic forms of the songs instead of teaching horizontal lines. And finally, two educators noted that their students were more willing to improvise when a non-judgmental atmosphere was created in the classroom.

Modeling was the prevalent theme when the teachers were discussing their most successful pedagogical methods for vocal jazz. For instance, Tara employs a great deal of modeling in her vocal jazz class. She feels that it is very useful for teaching most of the concepts that vocal jazz entails. Whether it be style, tone, inflections or improvisation, Tara models the preferred sound with her own voice, or from a recording of a respected vocalist. Gwen utilizes her stronger singers in the group to demonstrate or model the style for the students. She finds this effective because the students see their peers' abilities as more attainable than those of professional singers who are heard on CD's. Don agreed when he stated, "Just listen to Ella. I'm a huge proponent of modeling. You want to learn

how to do it? Listen to them. Those were my teachers, as far as I'm concerned" (personal communication, October 21, 2003).

Table 10

Successful Vocal Jazz Teaching Methods

<u>Emergent Themes</u>	<u>Number Who Agreed</u>	
Teacher Modeling	7	(70%)
Providing Listening Examples	5	(50%)
Focus on Stylistic Elements	3	(30%)
Establishing Proper Mechanics of Jazz Singing	3	(30%)
Focus on Harmonic Structure vs. Melody	2	(20%)
Creation of Non-Judgmental Learning Atmosphere	2	(20%)

Listening surfaced as a useful teaching tool for many of the instructors as well. Heidi has her students listening a great deal. She finds that starting each class with a listening component works well, as it helps them focus. She has her students listen to jazz bands, vocal jazz, and solo jazz selections, and then discuss what kinds of things can be heard in the arrangements. Gwen also likes to have her students do a lot of listening to other vocal jazz groups such as The Real Group or Manhattan Transfer. By doing so, she feels the students have a sound in their ears which becomes a goal for them to emulate.

An emphasis on stylistic elements was brought forth by three teachers, in that they believed students need to have a full appreciation of the jazz style before they can be expected to emulate it. For example, when Roland is teaching the stylistic concept of swing, he finds that if he asks them to 'swing hard', the idea is more clearly directed, as

opposed to just 'swinging'. This thought is even presented in a mathematical way: "The first part is 66.6666% of the beat and the second part is 33.3333%, as opposed to 50% and 50%. Swinging hard is more like when it becomes 65 and 35" (personal communication, October 30, 2003). Laura's techniques include focusing on the tone quality of vocal jazz, since it entails a much brighter tone than what most of the students are used to. As well, she ensures that her students are exposed to a variety of jazz styles and she does this by providing listening examples.

The mechanics of singing was also stressed by some teachers as being a helpful pedagogical tool. Roland begins the year with establishing some jazz building blocks which he finds are useful to him for the rest of the year. For example, he does not introduce the microphones until proper vocal technique has been established off mic. In addition, Gwen emphasizes proper vocal production with her students. If this isn't established first, she believes that the style and tonal elements of jazz are going to be more of a struggle to obtain.

Sandra and Sally find that by focusing on the harmonic element of jazz, students are more likely to have success at singing jazz. Slowing down and fine tuning chords help create the intonation of chords for Sandra. As well, this process ensures that the root of the chord is heard somewhat stronger, and supplies a reference point at each chord for the singers. Similarly, if Sally's students are having a difficult time with a particular line, she isolates a note to demonstrate its placement in the chord. This allows the students to hear the harmonic texture as a whole, as opposed to trying to find one single note in a horizontal line.

Finally, creating a non-judgmental atmosphere in the classrooms has been very beneficial for Sam and Heidi when teaching vocal jazz. Sam has noticed that making the students feel comfortable about soloing is a large accomplishment. Trading fours with them has helped Sam in this area (where he sings four bars of solo and the student sings four bars in reply), as well as offering a lot of praise after an attempted solo. For soloing, Heidi has had the most success with the call-and-response technique. The benefit of this method is two-fold. It allows the students to hear the teacher model first, and it breaks down inhibitions because the student is not alone when singing.

What have you tried in the past that seemed to work least well? The themes appearing in Table 11 surfaced from the conversation on the methodology that teachers found least helpful in their experience of teaching vocal jazz.

Table 11

Least Effective Vocal Jazz Teaching Methods

<u>Emergent Themes</u>	<u>Number Who Agreed</u>	
Use of Developmentally Inappropriate Repertoire	3	(30%)
Lack of Preparation for Scat Singing	2	(20%)
Over-Analysis of Charts	1	(10%)
Lack of Preparation/Planning for Class	1	(10%)
Use of Ineffective Method Books	1	(10%)
Use of Poor Quality Repertoire	1	(10%)

By distributing repertoire that was beyond the students' grasp, four teachers found that their students became less enchanted with the notion of studying vocal jazz. The goal

had been set too high, and the students knew they would not be capable of attaining it. Sam stressed that the repertoire needs to be very accessible for the students, especially when they are just beginning. This helps them be successful early on, which results in a confidence builder as well. After some of the basic principles are established and they are enjoying the genre, then he introduces more difficult material. Gary also had his students attempting to sing in three parts when this wasn't a realistic goal for them. He had set his standard above what the students were capable of and found that they quickly became disengaged.

Two teachers attempted a scat lesson with their students prior to having the students well enough prepared. Laura and Sally both found this as an ineffective strategy, as their students were too timid to attempt the undertaking. This was the way that Laura herself was taught, and it seemed to work well, however her students did not respond positively to this approach. She realized that they need to be better equipped before they are ready to endeavor scatting. Sally also perceives that when teaching improvisation, "The sink or swim approach with no introduction works least well" (personal communication, October 7, 2003).

Four remaining teachers raised varying notions of methodology that they found unsuccessful in the past. Don experienced difficulty with the concept of analyzing vocal charts with his students. The in-depth analyzing of charts, he believes, results in tearing the song apart, whereby the real heart of the song is lost, along with any musicality that might have been there. The song then becomes institutionalized in a manner that is detrimental to the soul of the piece. Sandra finds the least amount of success with going into a class unprepared, as well as employing ineffective method books. Gwen, who has

been teaching vocal jazz for many, many years, could not think of a response to this question, despite the repeated prodding. Heidi found the most difficulty when attempting to teach vocal jazz charts that she deems as “Cheesy” (personal communication, October 23, 2003). She stated that the level of dedication made by the teacher and students had no bearing if they were trying to learn a chart that was simply of no quality.

What is your opinion on method books for teaching any element of vocal jazz? All of the teachers’ responses surrounding this issue were similar. Not surprisingly, the majority of teachers (8) indicated that method books were of no use to them in teaching vocal jazz. One teacher used the accompaniment recordings of a manual, over which her students could practice improvising, and another teacher had had some success with a manual that was strictly used for warm-ups.

Don’s reply was brief. “I’ve been teaching for 23 years and I’ve never touched one” (personal communication, October 21, 2003). Similarly, Laura responded, “I’ve never used them. I don’t plan on purchasing any. I’d much rather work on good repertoire and have a product to share afterwards” (personal communication, October 20, 2003). Sandra asked if I could recommend any, as the resources she had tried were very ineffective.

Sally was not aware of any method books for vocal jazz, however stated that she found the Aebersold play-along books and recordings to be useful. Her use was limited to the accompaniment tracks over which her students could practice improvisation. She did not find any use for the manual. Tara has not employed any method books either, although she has found the Kirby Shaw Vocal Jazz Warm-Up book quite useful.

How much time in a class, on average, do you devote to analytical listening of vocal jazz? Analytically listening to jazz referred to listening that was discussed after, or listening that was preceded with directives, or listening that was discussed while a CD or recording was being played. When describing the amount of listening to jazz that they did with their classes, teachers could be divided into two groups; those who had their students listen during every class, and those who had their students listen, but not during every class. Most teachers (6) made sure that jazz listening was a part of every class, while a lesser number (4) had their students listening, but at more sporadic intervals. It is important to note that all ten teachers had listening to jazz as an element of their vocal jazz course.

When Don is introducing a new song, he plays a recording of it a few times at the beginning of the class so that students can learn it by ear. The students are expected to pick out harmonies, learn the lyrics, and hear the form of the song through this repetitive listening exercise. Laura plays at least one song a rehearsal and they spend approximately two to five minutes discussing a certain aspect that they are concentrating on that day. She also plays examples of charts they are working on in order to give them an idea of the style and tone that they are aiming for. Tara has her students spend approximately five minutes per class on listening, although it is not always specifically vocal jazz that she plays for them. "I think students can get a lot of good stylistic and improvisational ideas from instrumentalists as well" (personal communication, October 21, 2003).

Four teachers have their students listening, but not on a regular basis, often due to time and scheduling constraints. The time that Roland spends doing analytical listening with his students, for example, depends on what their immediate schedule is. "If we have

time to listen, it can be from five to fifteen minutes. If we need to have our songs ready for a concert, then I may not do any” (personal communication, October 30, 2003). Sam does not have the students do listening every class, however there are classes where he’ll begin the class with a recording in order to prepare them for a piece on which they will work that day.

How much time would you estimate students spend listening to jazz outside of class time? Listening outside of class time could include vocal jazz, instrumental jazz, or solo jazz voice. Teachers’ predictions of this kind of student listening time appear in Table 12. The large majority of teachers (8) estimated that their students did less than 60 minutes a week of jazz listening outside of the school. Three teachers attributed most of their students’ outside listening to completing assignments. Only two teachers anticipated that their students did more than 60 minutes a week.

Many of the teachers predicted that their students were not listening to jazz more than 60 minutes a week. For example, Sam believes that his students do not listen to jazz outside of school. He senses that perhaps his very keen students may listen to it a little bit at best. Sandra loans out her CD’s for the students to take home, so she knows that those particular students are probably listening to jazz on their own time. She feels that a listening journal could be a way in which their individual listening time could be monitored and increased. Laura, although she believes that her senior vocal jazz group listens to jazz outside of school more than 60 minutes a week, is quite certain that her junior vocal jazz students do not.

Table 12

Estimated Time Students Listen to Music Per Week Outside of School

<u>Emergent Themes</u>	<u>Number Who Agreed</u>	
Small Amount of Time (>60 minutes)	8	(80%)
Variable Amounts of Time Required to Complete Listening Assignments	3	(30%)
Large Amount of Time (<60 minutes)	2	(20%)

Three teachers, Laura, Sally, and Tara, felt that some of their students' time spent listening was a direct result of the assignments they were handing out. Laura has a listening assignment that she gives her students, whereby they are required to listen to one jazz CD of their choice, and Sally has listening assignments and concert attending assignments that enable the students to do jazz listening on their own time. Tara also has her students do listening assignments to promote the idea of listening more. In contrast, Gwen was confident in stating that most of her students listen to a large amount of jazz on their own time. She guessed that each student probably listens to approximately 30 minutes a day of jazz or about 200 minutes each week.

How much time in a class, on average, do the students practice their own jazz improvisation? It was surprising to find that most teachers interviewed (6) did not have their students practice jazz improvisation every class. The remaining four said that they have their students do some form of improvising every class. Improvisation was an element also considered in the observations. Since the observations encompassed only one class, it was not necessarily a true depiction of an average class. This is the reason it was addressed during the interviews as well.

Most teachers had the students practicing improvisation if the song on which they were focusing required that element. With respect to students' practice of improvisation, Roland stated, "Not very much. In a given year we may only have one or two songs with improvisation in it" (personal communication, October 30, 2003). He usually devotes one or two classes solely to scatting for these specific songs. Similarly, Sandra's response was, "We do not improvise every class. We usually spend about 15 minutes on improvisation every second class or so" (personal communication, October 30, 2003).

Four of the teachers had improvisation as a routine event in each vocal jazz class. For instance, Laura likes to begin each class with a bit of scatting. Usually ten minutes or so are devoted to a scatting exercise in order to help the students become more comfortable in this area. Tara also has her students practicing improvisation every class. Everyone gets a turn and may take as many choruses as they wish. "Some are not ready to do more than one chorus yet, while others take two or three" (personal communication, October 21, 2003). For her, the process takes roughly 10 to 15 minutes each class.

What strategies do you use for helping high school students shed their inhibitions around scatting for the first time? The issue of student inhibition with respect to scatting at the high school level was prominent in the professional jazz singer interviews. Therefore, teachers were asked about the strategies they find useful in helping students overcome their fears of scatting. Seven themes surface from the data analyzed which appear in Table 13.

Most teachers (6) found that employing the call-and-response method of scatting was less intimidating for the students. Sally begins with a call and response method, whereby the teacher begins versus the whole group. Then it becomes teacher versus an

individual, and finally an individual versus the group. Laura has her students practice call-and-response over a blues pattern. Then she has students attempt different approaches such as the riff method, or experimenting with the shape of the solo. Once that is comfortable for them, she moves to rhythm changes, while still using the call-and-response method. Heidi, similar to many of the other teachers, employs the call-and-response method, as it allows the students to simply mimic the teacher at first if that is all they feel comfortable doing.

Table 13

Strategies for Diminishing Students' Inhibitions Around Scatting

<u>Emergent Themes</u>	<u>Number Who Agreed</u>	
Call-and-Response Method	6	(60%)
Modeling Scats	5	(50%)
Creating a Safe Learning Environment	3	(30%)
Listening and Emulating	3	(30%)
Start Simple	3	(30%)
Practice and Private Rehearsal	2	(20%)
Conversation Exercises	1	(10%)

Half of the teachers interviewed found that through modeling simple scats or even scats with errors, the students feel more welcome to try the skill themselves. Roland first demonstrates a scat for his students where he tries to “make a fool of [him]self first so they know it is okay to loosen up” (personal communication, October 30, 2003). In

contrast, Gary chooses to model examples with confidence, so that his students do not feel as awkward or silly when it is their turn to use the fairly foreign non-sense syllables.

Three teachers mentioned the notion that having an accepting classroom helps the students feel more comfortable, in that they are secure in knowing they will not be ridiculed for any risks that they take. For example, prior to any scatting, Roland talks with the group about being respectful to each other and creating a classroom that is a safe place to sing. Sally also stresses the importance of a non-threatening environment, and she creates this by explaining that since the solo is entirely made up, the students can't really make a mistake.

An equal number stated that the more listening their students did, the more willing they were to try the task on their own. Don helps the students by continuing to bring in further recordings that they can emulate. This constant repetition, he has found, has made them feel more comfortable with the issue of improvising. Similarly, Gary stated, "If I can immerse them in examples, soon they will want to try their own" (personal communication, October 22, 2003). Specifically, he has them listen to Ella Fitzgerald a lot. "When they hear Ella go off, they know that that is exactly what it's supposed to sound like" (personal communication, October 22, 2003).

As well, by starting simple, three more teachers remarked that students do not feel overwhelmed with an unattainable task. Sally encourages them to start off using only a very few notes and to use a lot of silence, while Tara keeps her own modeling very simple to demonstrate that their solos don't have to be complex. Then they begin doing a very short solo of one or two bars. From there they move into trading fours, and finally full choruses.

Laura and Sandra both employ the technique of practice in order to help their students dispose of their inhibitions around scatting. They noticed that the more frequently students are given the opportunity to practice the skill, the more willing they are to attempt it. "For some, scatting is really hard. They feel very intimidated to do this in front of their classmates and me. I send a copy of Jamie Aebersold's CD home so they can practice on their own. This seems to help", noted Laura (personal communication, October 20, 2003). Sandra has realized that the more time the students spend on improvisation, the more comfortable they feel about doing it. "Through repetition, it becomes easier and less scary" (personal communication, October 30, 2003).

Gwen's innovative concept for this challenge was to create a conversation exercise with her students whereby one student sings a sentence (with words) and the next student adds to it. This allows them to start the creative process and also encompasses the spontaneity that is required for scatting. The students enjoy it and consider it more of a game than an exercise in learning to improvise.

What are the challenges you face in teaching vocal jazz and how have you had success in overcoming them? The thematic categories related to challenges that teachers face in the vocal jazz classroom and remedial methodology appear in Table 14.

Three educators commented on the difficulty of acquiring quality vocal jazz charts for ensembles. Don, in particular, has difficulty using stock charts, as he finds them too straight. Further, following a written arrangement on a piece of paper contradicts the way in which he was taught music, which involved having a musician sitting beside him as a young boy, showing him how it should be done. Finding and purchasing quality jazz repertoire that is not too pricey has been a challenge for Laura.

She purchases as much as she can from UNC, since it has a solid reputation for authenticity, however the cost is high. Sandra has found that the majority of vocal jazz charts have male parts that are written too high for high school boys.

Table 14

Teaching Challenges and Pedagogical Solutions

<u>Emergent Themes</u>	<u>Number Who Agreed</u>	
A. Teaching Challenges		
A.1 Accessing Quality Charts	3	(30%)
A.2 Class Scheduling	2	(20%)
B. Pedagogical Solutions		
B.1 Providing Listening Examples	4	(40%)
B.2 Requiring Membership in Concert Choir	2	(20%)
B.3 External Feedback	2	(20%)
B.4 Comfortable Learning Climate	2	(20%)
B.5 Teacher as Learner	1	(10%)

Two teachers noted the challenge of limited time or conflict in scheduling within the school day. Scheduling is a challenge for Laura, as two of the vocal jazz classes are run at the same time (two teachers), therefore the students can not possibly be in both experiences. Not having ample class time is the largest problem facing Sally. She currently meets with her students before the school day begins, and she feels that if the class was scheduled in a regular period, there would be more time for her to achieve her goals.

Other teachers found varying obstacles such as getting their students to like the jazz idiom, being inexperienced themselves in the area of improvisation, getting students to change their style from concert choir singing, having students project properly, and obtaining proper intonation within the ensemble. All of these challenges will be addressed in the following discussion on teaching solutions.

The teachers named four specific solutions that appeared to help them through the previous challenges. Ensuring that students listen to further examples was the primary answer. When his students are not producing the sound he wants, Don explained, "If they don't get it, I bring in an example (listening). I also sing everything they do. They hear it that way" (personal communication, October 21, 2003). As previously mentioned, Tara's biggest issue is to have her students change their style of singing from concert choir to vocal jazz. "They have to completely change their ideas of diction, tone, color and style. "It is often hard getting them not to pronounce every consonant as they would in concert choir" (personal communication, October 21, 2003). She has found that the most effective way to overcome this is to continue to provide respected vocal jazz listening models. Similarly, Gary's main difficulty lies within having the students change their style of singing from pop to jazz. His solution for this is to have them continue to listen to more and more examples of quality jazz music.

Musicianship qualities such as sight singing and aural skills are all honed in concert choir. Two teachers require their students to have membership in concert choir if they would like a spot in the vocal jazz group. Sandra has noticed that singers who have a stronger sense of general musicianship can overcome the challenging harmonies in some of the jazz charts. She ensures this by never allowing a student to join vocal jazz unless

he/she is already in concert or chamber choir. Sally's major challenge was with scheduling before class, and not having enough time to work on the elements she feels warrant extra time. In order to alleviate this issue, she is currently experimenting with student-led sectionals (without the teacher being present) and she is always encouraging her students to practice more often and more efficiently. "Independent practice is always a challenge for those who don't read well, or who don't play the piano. I'm trying to overcome this with a strong component of sight singing and aural skills in my choir course, which must be taken concurrently with vocal jazz" (personal communication, October 7, 2003).

Gwen and Roland seek outside feedback from clinicians and workshops when their students are having stylistic difficulties. By doing so, a fresh perspective is provided, and innovative ideas are shared. Roland also places a great deal of importance on the atmosphere that he creates in his classroom in order to overcome certain challenges. "For high school students, acceptance is more important to them than swinging hard. I find that with these groups it is a great place to teach conflict management skills and just how to be a positive contributor to a group. A group that is close and feels good about themselves will sound better than one in turmoil" (personal communication, October 30, 2003). He also finds that talking to students out of class creates a trusting relationship. "Before they will take chances in class they need to trust you and have a relationship with you, knowing that you care more about them as a person than you do about how the group sounds" (personal communication, October 30, 2003). Laura also sets a tone in her class that invites students to feel comfortable. Since her main struggle is with students' inhibitions around scatting, she feels that this is one solution

that seems to work well. "One thing I'm really trying to work on is having a positive and comfortable working environment. If the kids feel comfortable in class, they can trust me enough to scat in front of me" (personal communication, October 20, 2003).

Finally, Sam's challenge of feeling that he does not have enough expertise in the area of improvising has been remedied by him learning along with the students. This very problem has led to a benefit in the group, because they have a very strong team attitude amongst them. They know that he is learning alongside them and therefore they are willing to take risks and put forth suggestions just as he is.

Do any of your students play another instrument? How do you feel this influences their ability as a vocal jazz singer? The four themes that surfaced when analyzing the data from the teachers' responses around these questions are presented below in Table 15. Interestingly, all of the teachers that had instrument-playing students found this to be an asset on some level.

Seven educators noticed that their students who played another instrument (who were all members of the school's jazz band) had a more solid grasp of the jazz style that vocal jazz requires. For instance, Gwen has many students who play the piano and some others who play other instruments. This, she feels, really helps the students in their overall musicianship and their reading ability. Since Roland's approach to scatting involves a great deal of comparison to instruments, he also feels that any singer who can play an instrument is at an advantage. In addition, if the students are in a jazz band, Sally believes that they have a stronger sense of what jazz is, especially in terms of style, and their ability to swing.

Table 15

Benefits of Instrument Playing on Students' Abilities as Vocal Jazz Singers

<u>Emergent Themes</u>	<u>Number Who Agreed</u>	
Facilitates Understanding of Style	7	(70%)
Elevates Reading Skills	4	(40%)
Increases Knowledge of Harmony and Theory	3	(30%)
Simulation of Instrumental Sounds with the Voice	2	(20%)

Four teachers indicated that their students who played an additional instrument were stronger readers than those students who did not play another instrument. Heidi specifically mentioned a confidence in note reading, as well as the rate at which students can sight read when they are instrument players. A few other teachers (3) remarked that their instrument-playing students had more theoretical and harmonic knowledge, which rendered them better improvisers. In Laura's program, about half of her students play an instrument in the school band and jazz band. Those students, Laura said, have a "Huge advantage in improvising because they have a strong background in jazz theory. They understand why a solo is so interesting and appreciate the greats much more" (personal communication, October 20, 2003). However, there are negative side effects of this that Laura has noted as well. There is a time management issue because those particular students who are in so many ensembles, are often the students who are the least prepared. Consequently, this has a direct negative impact on their singing.

Two educators also noted that when they were giving directions to instrument-playing students, they had the supplementary tool of comparing their vocal direction to

how it would sound on the students' instrument. For example, each one of Sam's students plays another instrument, and he is able to make references to their instruments when giving instructions. He will ask a student, for instance, to make his voice sound like a slide on the guitar in order to produce a vocal slide. Sam deems that having the knowledge of an additional instrument also gives the students a feel for the instrumental style that they are trying to emulate in vocal jazz.

Observations of Vocal Jazz Teachers

Data collected from observations of vocal jazz teachers are displayed according to the foci guiding the sessions. These foci concerned the physical description of the room, teachers' dominant teaching tendencies, teachers' comments regarding improvisation, lesson segments devoted to listening, methods used by the teachers to overcome challenges, and methodology resources employed by the teachers during the lessons. The thematic gathering around these elements are offered in Tables 16-18. Each of these areas is described, and is accompanied by anecdotal and teacher comments.

Physical description of room. Observations of ten classrooms revealed that most contained a stereo (8) and employed informal seating arrangements (7). Three classrooms had more structured seating arrangements and an equal number had blackboards with theory written on them and upcoming concert dates or student doodling. Few classrooms (3) housed a computer.

Teachers' dominant behaviors. The dominant teaching tendencies of the teachers observed are presented in Table 16. Just over half (6) employed modeling as one of their prime means of teaching different aspects of vocal jazz to their classes. Sally, for example, modeled with her own voice whenever there was as a stylistic, tonal or pitch

problem. When students were having difficulty with the pitch of their line, Heidi would also model it for them, often accompanying herself on the piano. Similarly, a transition between two sections of a song was giving the bass section some trouble, so Heidi modeled the seam for them four times before having them attempt it. She modeled stylistic elements as well, such as scoops, slides, straight tone, and accents. Roland also employed modeling a great deal. Once the repertoire portion of his rehearsal had begun, there was a section that was not swinging enough, so Roland modeled the style that he required with “Doo GAH doo GAH doo GAH...” (Observation #9, October 30, 2003).

Table 16

Teachers' Dominant Behaviors

<u>Emergent Themes</u>	<u>Number Who Agreed</u>	
Modeling	6	(60%)
Words of Encouragement	4	(40%)
Praise	3	(30%)
Verbal Directions	2	(20%)
Facial Expressions	2	(20%)
Imagery	1	(10%)

Encouraging words were also used principally by four teachers. To encourage the students, for instance, Heidi made comments such as, “Keep it light, basses!”, “Keep working on it!”, “Try it!”, “You can do it in one breath. You can do it!”, and “I already heard some staggering going on. That was good!” (Observation #7, October 23, 2003). Encouragement was also rampant in Gary’s teaching. For example, when the students

attempted a new chart that they were learning that day, they sang through it once and ended laughing. Gary's comment to them was, "Not bad for first time through, though" (Observation #5, October 22, 2003). When the group was coming toward a particularly high part of the song, Gary urged them on with, "Bring it on, bring it on!" (Observation #5, October 22, 2003). In addition, when students were running out of breath at the end of a line, he encouraged them by stating, "Hold onto it!" (Observation #5, October 22, 2003).

Praising students was a technique used predominantly by three instructors. After working on a vowel sound that he was trying to extrapolate from the students, they attained his desired sound, and Gary commented, with a big smile, "Nice vowel there" (Observation #5, October 22, 2003). As well, his face showed praise when the students reached a high note that was a challenge, as he looked up at the group with a big smile while nodding his head. The praise that Sandra provided included statements such as "Super listening there", "You guys should be very proud of yourselves. That's not an easy chart," and smiling at people who were attempting solos (Observation #8, October 30, 2003).

Two teachers used verbal directions most frequently in their teaching of vocal jazz. For example, when a repeated line that the singers were doing had no energy, Gwen stated, "Think that you're going somewhere" (Observation #6, October 22, 2003). Many of Laura's directives were also spoken. She would put into words the desired effect for which she was searching. An equal number, Tara and Laura, used facial expressions quite frequently, in order to obtain a certain stylistic element from the group. For example, if Laura wanted a louder dynamic, she would create an angry face, while sweeping her

hands toward her. If she wanted a lighter tone, she would raise her eyebrows and smile, or if she was needing more energy, she would create a more frantic expression on her face.

Finally, the concept of imagery was used by Sandra. For example, when her students were practicing a section in “Georgia” that was intended to build, she stated, “Hear the drums” (Observation #8, October 30, 2003). In another area, she encouraged them with, “Crescendo there – it’ll sound so juicy!” (Observation #8, October 30, 2003). Also, when there was one student doing a solo, and the rest of the group was not providing enough support with their background vocals, she suggested, “Give her some more vibes there” (Observation #8, October 30, 2003). At a point where the chord wasn’t quite tight enough sounding, she stated, “Crunch it up”, and for some help with style, she offered, “Feel the long, swooshy skirts” (Observation #8, October 30, 2003). Finally, when students were having difficulty with their breath control, she said, “Use your whole body. Squeeze your butt. Get through that phrase” (Observation #8, October 30, 2003).

Observations of improvisation. Six classes observed included segments on scatting. The improvisation that occurred in four of these classes was solo scat sections, while the remaining two classes spent time on call-and-response exercises. The teachers’ talk during these portions of the class involved both suggestions for improvement and praise (See Table 17). It is important to note that four classes observed did not include any instructional segments on improvisation.

Table 17

Improvisational Content and Teacher Talk Observed in Lessons

<u>Emergent Themes</u>	<u>Frequency of Observations</u>
A. Improvisation Content	
A.1 Solo Scat Singing	4
A.2 Call-and-Response Exercises	2
A.3 No Improvisational Segments	4
B. Teacher Talk	
B.1 Constructive Suggestions	6
B.2 Student Praise	4

The suggestions that were made regarding improvisation varied, depending on the teacher. For example, in Sandra's class during the song, "In the Mood", there were two improvisational solos. While the students were soloing, Sandra did not make any comments, however after the one student soloed, she suggested, "See if you can do some of those Billie Holiday slides" (referring to the listening example at the beginning of the class)(Observation #8, October 30, 2003). After the second student soloed, she recommended to the group that when we are attempting a scat solo, "We have to find a couple of notes that belong to the chord and then deviate from there" (Observation #8, October 30, 2003). Sam explained to his students that when doing a scat solo, one has to be careful not to set up a pattern and end up doing the same thing over and over again. He made suggestions for alternatives to this, such as taking the melody and ornamenting it, or taking a fragment and experimenting with it. He added that they should try to emulate

an instrument, and that dynamics can be done with the mics. Finally, he offered the advice that using space is very effective. “You don’t want to be singing all the time” (Observation #10, November 19, 2003). Laura led a call-and-response exercise wherein she did the calling and the whole class responded as a group. Before starting, she stated, “You can do whatever you want. If you’re scared, just sing exactly what I sing, or you can make up your own thing” (Observation #3, October 21, 2003). She then explained three different elements that could be worked on during a solo, which included call-and-response, riffs, and the shape of a solo.

Four teachers used words of praise for students attempting to improvise. Gwen had a scenario where the students were trading fours with each other. Gwen’s comments during this time included, “Answer her” when it was the next student’s turn, and “Keep going – that’s right” and “Not bad!” (Observation #6, October 22, 2003). Similarly, after one student tried improvising for the first time, Sam exuded, “That was great! You know what? You should be doing this all the time!” (Observation #10, November 19, 2003).

Teacher talk on listening. Six teachers observed included a listening segment in their lesson, while the rest did not. Teacher talk during listening segments was either directed toward a particular stylistic element (5) or was on the subject of improvisation (2).

Regarding comments on style, Laura made several at the beginning of the class, while some vocal jazz music was playing. At one point she called out, “Listen to this scat!” A little further on in the tune, she said, “Listen to how bright they are” (Observation #3, October 21, 2003). Later on in the class, she played another example for the students to listen to. “Listen to the shout chorus,” she stated (Observation #3, October

21, 2003). When a scat solo came on, she asked, “She’s imitating something – what is it?” (Observation #3, October 21, 2003). Then she added, “Listen to the tone and the syllables she’s using” (Observation #3, October 21, 2003). Correspondingly, while Sandra’s class was beginning, she played Billie Holiday for the students to hear. While they were listening, she commented, “Listen to how she does the ice-cream scoop (a down-up slide)” and “Oh – listen to this part! Listen!” (Observation #8, October 30, 2003).

Tara and Laura also made comments regarding improvisation that they heard in the listening examples. For example, during the listening example that Tara provided, there was a sax solo, and she noticed that some students were getting chatty. At that point she said, “Just because it’s not a vocalist doesn’t mean you can’t listen and get some ideas” (Observation #2, October 21, 2003). After the sax solo she pointed out that the solo wasn’t complicated, as it was comprised of octave leaps and a lot of silence. She also noted that although it wasn’t complex, it still sounded great.

Solutions to teaching challenges. When teachers were faced with various challenges during their classes, various themes emerged from the observations that describe the ways in which they dealt with these hurdles. The frequencies of each theme observed are displayed in Table 18.

Almost all of the teachers (9) employed modeling as a technique for overcoming obstacles in the classroom. Roland modeled predominantly with this voice. For example, when the class began, he was doing a descending warm up with his students, which was falling flat in pitch, so he modeled the flat pitch in the descending line for them. Next, the girls had a high-pitched warm-up, to which he modeled the vowel shape he was looking

for. During a subsequent warm-up, he modeled the increased volume that he was needing on the word “me.” On the word “I” in a different warm-up, he modeled singing it, and then asked them, “Tell me what your tongue is doing?” (Observation #9, October 30, 2003). In the same manner, when the tenors were having trouble finding their pitch, Sam modeled it for them. He also suggested, “Put a little crescendo on the note,” and proceeded to model the effect he described (Observation #10, November 19, 2003). Further, he stated, referring to three lines in the song, “ ‘When will I’ was good, ‘How will I’ was good, then...” and he modeled the third line the way that they had sung it with a sliding pitch problem (Observation #10, November 19, 2003).

Providing general directions for students was another method that several teachers employed when they were faced with a dilemma in their class. For instance, Laura suggested, “Don’t think about it – just sing it” (Observation #3, October 21, 2003) when her students were having intonation difficulties. During a section where there were pitch problems, at first she simply stated, “Fix that for me” (Observation #3, October 21, 2003). Then when the students concentrated and improved their pitch, she noted, “See how focused you need to be” (Observation #3, October 21, 2003). Sandra also had some advice when her tenors were being challenged with a particularly low set of notes. She suggested, “When you get to the extent of your range, the tendency is to look down and concentrate. But that’s when you really need to look up and open things up” (Observation #8, October 30, 2003).

Many teachers also used physical prompts in order to help their students overcome some stumbling blocks. Before one of the songs even began, Gwen attempted to ward off intonation difficulties by reminding them, “Eyes, faces, smiles,” and “More

smile” was instructed when the same difficulty occurred later on (Observation #6, October 22, 2003). While she said this, she put her hands on her cheeks and rose up on her toes. In Sandra’s class, there was a point in a song when the tempo was getting lost and she simply started patting beats two and four on her leg to help them re-establish the tempo. As well, she would demonstrate the desired effect that she was searching for by modeling with her voice or motioning with her arms. When there was a breath accent missing, she sang the line with the accent present. When they were to sing a slide that wasn’t quite long enough, she asked them to do it again, and she used her arms in a large falling motion to bring out the length of note she was needing. As well, “I don’t want an attack and release there, I just want a ...sound,” while she raised her arms in a large circle (Observation #8, October 30, 2003).

Theoretical directions were employed by some teachers in order to resolve a certain issue. For pitch problems, Sandra often referred to pitch names or interval names. “It’s a minor third, girls, up to the Coda” and “You guys stay on the B flat” (Observation #8, October 30, 2003). Sam explained to his tenors, “Everything you do is chromatic. As you’re singing descending semitones, you need to think of it as going up, otherwise the pitch will fall” (Observation #10, November 19, 2003).

Sandra, Roland and Sam all provided imagery for their students when a particular sound requirement was not being met. In a song that Roland’s students were working on, he wasn’t happy with the style at one point so he created an image for them: “Can you be more....detective there?” (Observation #9, October 30, 2003). He then painted a visual picture from TV of a good cop/bad cop scenario, and told them that they were to be the bad cops. As well, he made comments such as, “Your whole body needs to be into it”, “I

want far more soul in this rhythm”, “I want to get the sense that you guys like this song”, “Be cheesy here” and “Can you be more dramatic?” (Observation #9, October 30, 2003).

For a chromatic section that was ascending which was posing intonation problems for Sam’s group, he created a visual reference for the singers: “It’s like tightening it with a screw driver. It’s a quarter turn on a screw driver,” while he motioned with his hand what a quarter turn on a screwdriver would look like (Observation #10, November 19, 2003).

Table 18

Solutions to Teaching Challenges

<u>Emergent Themes</u>	<u>Frequency of Observations</u>	
Modeling	9	(90%)
Providing General Verbal Directions	8	(80%)
Giving Directions Via Physical Gestures	6	(60%)
Providing Directions Using Theoretical Terms	3	(30%)
Providing Examples of Imagery	3	(30%)
Praising Efforts for Tasks Performed Well	3	(30%)
Moving a Section/Individual Close to the Piano/Teacher	3	(30%)
Suggesting the Students Listen to More Examples	2	(20%)
Counting in the Song Stylistically Appropriate	2	(20%)
Suggesting the Students Listen to the Piano	2	(20%)
Having the Students Speak a Rhythmically Difficult Passage	2	(20%)
Suggesting Individual Student Practice	2	(20%)

Three teachers also used praise a great deal in their classes, in order to conquer certain challenges. Sally, for example, used phrases such as “Amazing”, “Ten times better”, and “Good work, guys” (Observation #1, October 7, 2003). Her facial expressions embodied primarily smiles as she gave directives or praise. There was an instance of improvisation that occurred in Sam’s class, which involved some scat soloing. He had one student try a scat solo, and praised him immediately following: “Good work” (Observation #10, November 19, 2003). He would also hold notes longer when the entire group was having trouble tuning a particular chord, and he would compliment them when they solved intonation difficulties: “Good tuning!” (Observation #10, November 19, 2003).

Moving a student or a section was another method employed by three teachers. For instance, when Sandra’s bass section was feeling unsure about their pitches, she had the whole section move to stand beside her at the piano while the rest of the ensemble continued to sing. She kept playing the accompaniment on the piano, but was singing the bass part right in their ears. In the same manner, Sam asked one student to come and sit right beside him so that he could sing his/her part right into his/her ear while the rest of the group was singing due to pitch difficulties.

Two teachers recommended further listening for their students. When Don experienced intonation problems, he said, “Listen to the chord”, while he was playing it on the piano, and “Listen one more time” (Observation #4, October 21, 2003). Two additional comments made surrounding listening involved a student singing while Don was playing the part he/she was to learn, and he suggested, “Listen – don’t sing. You’re trying to do two things at once. Most singers sing too much as opposed to using their

ears. They forget that listening is half the battle” (Observation #4, October 21, 2003).

Likewise, for intonation problems, one of Sam’s comments was, “Tenors, listen, please.

Listen, listen, listen ever so carefully” (Observation #10, November 19, 2003).

Two teachers circumvented some stylistic difficulties by counting in the songs in the same style in which they were to be sung. Roland counted the group in using breath accents in a swing tune, in order to create the style before the song even began. Laura also employed this technique on each song she was beginning. Sally and Gary had their students listening more carefully to the piano during times of pitch insecurity. They both stressed to their students the importance of listening to their pitches before they open their mouths to sing. Sally and Roland led rhythm-speaking sessions for rhythmically difficult portions of songs. They slowed down the tempo, and proceeded to have their groups speak out the rhythms accurately before increasing the tempo. Once the goal tempo was obtained, they had the students attempt to sing the passage. And finally, Roland and Sam also recommended that students do some individual practice on some of the repertoire. With regards to pitch difficulties, Sam made the suggestion to the bass section, “Sit down at the piano and figure that out” (Observation #10, November 19, 2003).

Contents of Jazz Method Resources

The themes that emerged from a content analysis of mainstream vocal jazz method books appear in Table 19. Six of seven books analyzed stressed the factor of practicing in order to learn to sing vocal jazz. Four of seven had sections on both listening and learning the proper vocal technique first. Three books conveyed the topic of

jazz theory as an essential learning tool. Learning the jazz style and the fundamentals of the roots of jazz were two topics discussed in only two books reviewed.

Fredrickson's (1982) book on scat singing recommends listening to specific elements of scat on a cassette tape provided, such as words, rhythms, harmonies and phrases. After listening, Fredrickson recommends that the learner imitate the examples, and then experiment with original melodies of his/her own.

Zegree (2002) begins by identifying what vocal jazz is and explaining the roots of the tradition. He then delves into explaining the style and has an accompanying CD that provides listening examples of the various stylistic devices that he describes. Subsequently, he presents ideas on how to run an effective vocal jazz rehearsal, including director preparation and hints such as talking less and having the students singing more. Sections on teaching jazz theory and creating a rhythm section are offered, followed by a chapter on teaching jazz solo singing, wherein Zegree recommends ensuring first that the students are singing technically correct.

When discussing how students can learn the element of jazz phrasing, Zegree (2002) notes, "One of the best ways to learn this technique is to listen analytically to singers who use back phrasing effectively. I believe that listening to great artists is by far the best method to achieve familiarity and sophistication in solo singing. Frank Sinatra, Tony Bennett, Ella Fitzgerald, and Sarah Vaughan are four singers with highly accessible styles, who have mastered singing behind the beat" (p. 47).

In the subsequent chapter on improvising, the first three exercises that he recommends are listening to well respected jazz vocal and instrumental improvisations, transcribing recorded solos, and learning to perfectly mimic one or two melodic lines

from one of the transcriptions with pitch accuracy and jazz articulations in all 12 tonal centers.

Table 19

Frequencies and Percentages of Topics Represented in Jazz Methodological Resources

Topic	Frequency	
Practice	6	(86%)
Listening	4	(57%)
Technique	4	(57%)
Theory	3	(43%)
Roots of Jazz	2	(29%)
Style	2	(29%)
Work Ethic	1	(14%)
Rehearsal Tips	1	(14%)
Transcribing	1	(14%)
Logistical Elements	1	(14%)
Vocal Production	1	(14%)

N=7. Resources Analyzed: Zegree (2002), Cohen (2001), Henry (1993), Cooper (1992), Riposo (1989), Baker (1988), Fredrickson (1982).

Additional chapters of Zegree's book include advice on running effective sound systems, staging and movement in vocal jazz ensembles and listening. "The best way to assimilate the jazz vocabulary is through serious listening" (Zegree, 2002, p. 67). He stresses that the listening be regular, active and critical, not a mere background sound

while we do other activities. He recommends having the students listen to one recording several times, each time with a different focus, such as the form, style, rhythm section, improvisation and the arrangement of the song.

Cooper (1992), in contrast, provides a multidimensional approach for teaching jazz singing. His dissertation includes sections on an overview of jazz, introduction to jazz theory, vocal production, and study of jazz styles. The specific element of listening, however, is not stressed as being essential in this process.

Cohen (2001) identifies reasons for proficiency in jazz musicians, which include: extensive practice, a solid technical foundation, a strong work ethic, and the ability to copy the great jazz artists of the past. The emphasis in his method is on technical strength prior to listening and emulating jazz music.

An alternate approach is offered by Riposo (1989) who lists three steps to learning jazz improvisation: understanding the brain's four hemispheres and their roles in learning to perform jazz, having a firm grasp of jazz theory, and practicing performance units in the various jazz modes. The units he provides are linked to the four hemispheres of the brain and their particular responsibility in learning jazz.

Along the same line, Baker's (1988) methodology stresses the technical factor in learning jazz, emphasizing the practice of technique in order to develop the ear and to gain proficiency in the feel of the jazz style. He suggests practicing techniques of singing chords, inversions, scales, and intervals in order to develop the aural aspect of jazz.

Henry (1993) presents a method which allows for a less formal approach: "In learning to improvise...one must take a balanced approach that includes technical study

along with jamming” (p. 33). Although it appears that he does not include listening in his philosophy, he later states, “The best resource is the actual sounds themselves” (p. 37).

There is evidence in the listening and instructional research, therefore, that there are two schools of thought regarding the importance of listening when learning the art of performing jazz. Many professional musicians attest to learning their skill via listening, and a great deal of educational literature supports this notion. On the other hand, there is an abundance of instructional literature that suggests one can and should learn this art in a more technical and theoretical manner.

Through triangulation of multiple data sources, it is clear that eight major themes have materialized from the findings of this study and are shown in Table 20. Listening, modeling, a focus on style, the element of practice, and an emphasis on theory were all relevant concepts brought forth from the singers, the teachers, and the instructional resources. Both singers and teachers also stressed the benefits of playing an additional instrument when one is learning to sing vocal jazz. Transcribing was a theme that surfaced through conversation with singers and teachers, as well as within instructional resources. And surprisingly, the technical facet of learning to sing jazz was underscored by jazz singers and the authors of vocal jazz method books.

Table 20

Triangulation of Major Themes in Data

Data Source	Listen	Model	Style	Practice	Theory
Singer Interviews	x	x	x	x	x
Teacher Interviews	x	x	x	x	x
Teacher Observations	x	x	x	x	x
Content Analysis	x	x	x	x	x

Data Source	Instrument Knowledge	Transcribe	Technique
Singer Interviews	x	x	x
Teacher Interviews	x	x	
Teacher Observations	x		
Content Analysis		x	x

Chapter V: Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

Summary

My personal experience as a vocal jazz teacher and singer led me to a hunch that there was a dissonance between the way in which professional jazz singers learned their art form and the way in which vocal jazz educators teach students to sing vocal jazz. The purpose of this study was to determine the methods by which professional vocal jazz singers learned to sing vocal jazz and the successful methodology that was employed by vocal jazz teachers. This was to be resolved by collecting data on how vocal jazz singers learned the art of singing jazz, how vocal jazz teachers approach teaching vocal jazz, and what techniques are suggested as being useful in mainstream vocal jazz instructional resources.

The review of literature revealed several themes in the area of vocal jazz pedagogy. First, there was evidence of an underlying need for jazz education in schools. Also, the level of jazz background that an educator requires in order to teach jazz was a recurring idea. In addition, there was literature that pertained to professional jazz musicians and research in the areas of listening and performing as learning tools for vocal jazz. Related documents also pointed to instructional resources that were recommended, as well as the importance of practice in improvisation. Finally, the parallel between language acquisition and the learning of vocal jazz, and the connection between learning vocal jazz and prior knowledge of playing an instrument were additional themes that were unveiled.

The research methodology employed in this study involved collecting data from three sources: professional vocal jazz singers, vocal jazz teachers, and mainstream vocal

jazz educational resources. The vocal jazz singers were selected as informants based on their current performing status, meaning they had performed vocal jazz in a public venue, on a hired basis, within the past five years, either in a solo or group configuration.

Members of the Association of Music Administrators of Manitoba recommended the second group of informants, high school teachers with strong vocal jazz programs.

The data were derived from interviews with ten vocal jazz singers, interviews with ten high school vocal jazz teachers, ten observations of high school vocal jazz teachers, and an analysis of vocal jazz methodological resources. The research was done in a qualitative manner (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992) and involved gaining informed consent from the teachers and the vocal jazz educators (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992).

The interviews were approximately one hour in length each, audio-recorded, and then transcribed with the understanding that this data would be destroyed upon the completion of the thesis. Interviews with professional vocal jazz singers were comprised of questions regarding the following issues: singers' listening backgrounds, formal training in jazz theory or performance, employment of methodological resources for learning to sing jazz, steps taken to learn the art form, and whether or not there was an influence on their singing from playing an additional instrument.

Interviews with vocal jazz teachers included questions surrounding their vocal jazz pedagogical strategies. These included comments on what they found as successful vocal jazz pedagogy, listening time provided in the class, estimates of how much jazz listening their students did outside of the school, time spent on improvisation, and whether or not playing an additional instrument had any impact on how their students sing jazz.

Observations of vocal jazz teachers involved taking field notes while sitting in unobtrusive places in ten classrooms. I started by noting the physical appearance of the room and then observed the following elements of the teacher's pedagogy: dominant teaching strategies, amount of practice time devoted to improvisation, teacher talk on improvisation, time devoted to analytical and non-analytical listening of jazz, methods employed when faced with a particular challenge, and instructional materials being used.

A content analysis of current methodological resources revealed emphasis on several aspects of teaching vocal jazz. Practicing was predominant as a requirement for learning the art form. Listening and obtaining proper vocal technique were also stressed, as well as a fundamental knowledge of theory. Having an understanding of the roots of jazz and its style were other less emphasized topics in the method books reviewed.

The collected data were analyzed via a qualitative approach (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). Interview data were transcribed, analyzed, and coded using methods of constant comparison (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). This coding resulted in determining major themes that arose from the data on a repeated basis. The field notes were also analyzed using the constant comparison method (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994), and specific coding was employed with regards to the behavior and speech patterns of the teachers. Activity codes (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003) were utilized for teachers' dominant tendencies, teachers' comments and listening and improvisation segments. Strategy codes (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003) were used for analyzing the methods that teachers employed when faced with instructional challenges.

The results of the data were then presented by source: interviews with professional vocal jazz singers, interviews with vocal jazz teachers, classroom observations of vocal jazz teachers, and contents of methodological resources.

Conclusions

In comparing the data gleaned from interviews with professional singers, interviews with vocal jazz teachers, observations of vocal jazz teachers, and vocal jazz methodological resources, several conclusions can be drawn. These surround the issues of listening, modeling, style focus, practice, theory, benefits of playing an instrument, transcribing, and a technical focus. The topic of method books is also a theme on which some conclusions may be derived from this study.

The element of jazz listening is overriding for vocal jazz pedagogy. This was raised by the professional jazz singers as a factor that helped them not only learn to sing jazz but to improvise as well. Also, although all of the singers listened to pop music when they were young, it was the jazz listening that had the greatest impact on how they currently sing jazz. Interestingly, although many of the singers began listening to jazz before they had any theoretical training and were not able to listen at a higher critical level, the notion of immersing one's ears in the sounds must be of some benefit to the learner. Perhaps this is part of the same process by which we learn a new language (Darrow, 1990; Berliner, 1994; Zegree, 2002).

It was stated that for many of the singers, listening to jazz was the most influential factor in their learning process, whether it was instrumental or vocal jazz. Listening to instrumental jazz can be of equal if not greater value to the learner, I believe, as when we are singing vocal jazz, our fundamental goal is to emulate an instrument. "Scat singing

developed in the 1930's and 40's when singers used their voices to imitate lines and phrases played by jazz instrumentalists" (Zegree, 2002, p. 52). Therefore, it is very beneficial to listen to the instruments we are trying to replicate. Additional professional jazz musicians such as Clark Terry (Ellis, 1999), Rodney Jones (Graybow, 2001), Wynton Marsalis (Nolan, 1995), Miles Davis (Collier, 1975), Chet Baker (Gavin, 2002), and Billie Holiday (Daubney, 2002) also attested that listening is the key to learning to perform jazz.

The teachers also paid tribute to jazz listening, in that they labeled it as a source of successful methodology when they're face with a challenge, and many of them provide listening examples every class, which are related to the lesson. Interestingly, however, this contradicts Williams (1988) who stated that teachers do not tend to use the respected musicians' works as a tool for teaching the art of jazz. The importance of listening is echoed in much of the research literature which points to jazz listening as a fundamental building block in learning the jazz art form (Dobbins, 1988; Madura, 1996; Bash, 1984; Berliner, 1994; Azzara, 1999; Day, 1995; Fredrickson, 1994; Green, 2001). In addition, Fredrickson's (1982) methodological resource stresses listening as a major component in learning to sing jazz, as does Zegree's (2002).

Without listening to the sounds of jazz, how is a learner to know what the expectations are? This listening may begin, as in the case of the professional jazz singers, as simply sounds that are entering the ears, however, with more theoretical education on which one can draw, the listening can become more analytical in nature. The style and solo choices of the music is what the listener can emulate, and the listening, therefore becomes a source of modeling for the students.

Modeling was another facet of learning to sing jazz that continued to surface across data sources and within the literature. Many of the teachers found this as a useful source of methodology when they were faced with particular challenges, and for some instructors, modeling was their dominant teaching behavior. Two of the teachers, who felt that they were still learning to improvise with the students, found that by modeling improvisational attempts, with some mistakes included, the students felt more at ease with attempting the solos themselves. Similarly, Green (2001) compared children emulating their parent's behavior to students learning music, and suggested that the most efficient manner of teaching our students is to model and have them copy.

It is very logical that this modeling would prove to be so successful in learning to sing vocal jazz, as it really is another form of listening. The students are simply listening to a different source, and are receiving the desired sound into their ears that they can then emulate. Through this modeling, they can capture the accurate style of jazz.

A focus on jazz style was a recurring idea. Some teachers found that by concentrating on style first, the rest of the vocal jazz elements would fall into place more easily. Teachers also agreed that students who play instruments have a stronger understanding of the style of jazz, which they deemed as a large asset in learning the art. As well, many teachers made comments to their students regarding the style of the piece they were listening to, and would employ imagery and modeling to create the style they were aiming for with their singers.

In many cases the professional singers appreciated the formal performance training as it helped them comprehend and develop the appropriate jazz style. This sense of style was stressed in Zegree's (2002) methodological resource, as he felt that obtaining

elements such as back phrasing were important and needed to be learned through listening. The content analysis of methods books revealed some attention on learning the jazz style, as two of the seven resources had sections pertaining to that aspect.

The ingredient of style in jazz is key to learning the nature of the music. This is a major component that differentiates one music genre from another. One could have the lyrics memorized to several jazz standards and be able to sing the songs exactly on pitch, but without the style, it would not be jazz.

The concepts of practice and imitating were also recurrent in all of the data and research literature. Teachers found these processes to be useful means by which students could become less inhibited in their improvising. Teachers also suggested to students that they practice on their own time to secure some sections of music. Some of the singers valued their performance training, as it obliged them to do the practicing that was required in order to become better performers. In addition, many singers attributed their improvisational learning to practicing and imitating the sounds they had heard on recordings.

The content analysis of methods documents also revealed a large focus on the element of practice. For example, Fredrickson (1982) and Zegree (2002) both recommended practice as a necessary step to take in learning to perform jazz. Zegree (2002) also noted that by perfectly imitating one or two lines of a transcribed solo, a student is able to begin learning many of the intricacies of the jazz language. Likewise, the research literature stressed the value of practice when learning to perform jazz. Henry (1993), Hallam (1995a, 1995b), and Elliot as cited in Bowman (1988) all agree that without practice, a student is not able to implement any previous learning in the area of

jazz. Cohen (2001) found that two primary causes behind a jazz musician's expertise are their ability to emulate other respected musicians and the amount of practicing they do.

Since performing jazz is a combined physical, mental, and aural skill, it is reasonable to assume that it is an action needing to be practiced before any level of proficiency can be obtained. Similar to a child learning to ride a bicycle, a parent can talk to the child about the balance required, the foot placement on the pedals and how to steer the handlebars. The child can also watch other children riding their bicycles as a reference. However, that child will not have any ability to ride the bicycle until he/she has tried the action and practiced it many times. Not until then will any confidence and facility with the task be attained.

The theoretical component is one which was rampant in the data gathered and considered as well. For example, the majority of the professional singers found their theory training, be it classical or jazz, as a useful element in their jazz performance learning process. Along the same vein, teachers were able to convey verbal directions using theoretical terms in their classrooms. They also note that students who play instruments have more of a theoretical background which allows them to be stronger vocal improvisers. Perhaps this is why methodological resources such as those by Cooper (1992), Zegree (2002) and Riposo (1989) all contain chapters on jazz theory that students should learn as part of their jazz performance training.

Having a theoretical foundation on which one can improvise can only be an enhancement to one's overall performance. The chords and chord changes of jazz are very complex by nature. Hence, soloing over those chords properly is an extensive challenge. An individual can emulate the stylistic intricacies of jazz and sing

mechanically correct, however, without the comprehension of the theoretical facet of jazz, the improvisational aspect will be immature. If a jazz singer understands the harmonic intricacies of the song, he/she is able to construct a more complex and diversified solo than someone who is simply attempting to find some notes that fit along the way. As a result, it appears that theoretical knowledge, be it classical or jazz theory is a beneficial asset to have as a jazz singer.

Another important theme involves the connection between vocal jazz abilities and playing an additional instrument. For many of the professional singers interviewed, there were peripheral advantages to playing another instrument. These included the possibility of accompanying themselves for practice purposes, having a firmer knowledge of the harmonic structures of jazz, using it as a creative tool for vocal lines, having a visual reference when they were soloing vocally, and possessing a broader general musicianship. As mentioned before, many teachers observed that students who play instruments had stronger reading skills, a better comprehension of the jazz style, and a more elevated theoretical background, rendering them more sophisticated improvisers. Two professional singers from the past, Carmen McRae (Crowther & Pinfold, 1997; Carr, Fairweather and Priestly, 1987) and Sarah Vaughan (Giddens, 1998) have been revered for their ability to sing with evident harmonic knowledge, just as a jazz instrumentalist would play. These two singers, indeed, were piano players as well. This notion is also supported in the literature by Berndt (cited in Madura, 1996), who also made an acclamation that the most proficient vocal jazz improvisers were those who had an ability to play another instrument.

Based on my experience as a classical and jazz piano player, when a person plays an instrument, there are several secondary types of knowledge that are gained. First, there is a connection made between reading notes on a page or thinking of notes in one's mind, and realizing them immediately on the instrument. There is also a mechanical action of the fingers, which is learned from playing an instrument. If the instrument has a harmonic element, such as the piano or guitar, an understanding of harmonic structure is obtained. Otherwise, melodic or rhythmic essentials are learned. Forms of songs are also discovered when playing an instrument. There is also an aural ability that is honed from playing an instrument. Finally, there is an appreciation for the work ethic that is required for learning to play an instrument. All of these factors combine to make a stronger musician. Therefore, if an instrument-playing student is aspiring to sing jazz, there are many advantages that he/she will have over another student with no additional experience on an instrument. Their ability to read music will be higher, and the transition between reading the music and making music will already be established in his/her brain. Also, the student will be able to visualize the notes that he/she wants to sing, as they would be played on his/her instrument. This is a tool which Jonah uses (personal communication, April 4, 2001) as do I, which creates a concrete foundation on which a solo can be shaped. There will already be a harmonic understanding from which the students can build more complex solos, and their aural skills will already be heightened from their experiences on the instrument. It is clear, therefore, that having the knowledge of another instrument is extremely beneficial for a person learning to sing vocal jazz.

Transcribing was another theme that became evident throughout the various forms of data. Some professional jazz singers recalled that by transcribing other respected jazz

solos, they were able to have a more thorough understanding of the harmonic changes and the solo choices that were made by the performers, which enhanced their own soloing later. One teacher also found transcribing as a useful method by which students could alleviate some of the tension around their own attempts at improvising. Via studying other people's solos, the students became better equipped with the tools necessary for creating their own solos, and were therefore more confident in endeavoring improvisational solos of their own. Zegree (2002) also agreed that students can learn the vocal jazz style and improvisational techniques by transcribing esteemed solos and flawlessly emulating one or two lines of them.

It is sensible to presume that by studying models of excellent work, one would render a more clear understanding of the inner workings of a solo. Through the process of actually writing out a solo, which requires meticulous, repetitive listening to each single line, a person is likely to gain a thorough comprehension of the melodic choices made over the given harmonic structures.

Finally, vocal technique was an issue that resonated through a variety of data sources. Some professional singers gained technical knowledge from their formal performance training experiences, and found that as a useful entity in their jazz education. Baker (1988) stated that an individual needs to practice technique a great deal before he/she is able to obtain any level of expertise in the jazz style. Also, Henry (1993) suggested that the study of technique combined with jamming were the methods by which a person should learn to perform jazz. Furthermore, four of the seven methodological books that were analyzed contained sections on developing technique in

vocal jazz singing. Zegree (2002), in particular, proposed that a student should not even attempt to improvise before he/she is able to sing technically correct.

Although proper technique is an essential part of performing jazz, I believe that it should not override or proceed the stylistic and theoretical aspects of learning the genre. In my own experience with teaching high school vocal jazz classes, I have noted an additional factor that has not been yet considered. The students, in order to be engaged, need to be enjoying their experience in class. This will not occur if their first introduction and several classes of vocal jazz are comprised of practicing proper vocal technique. Therefore, I feel strongly that, as Gary (Observation #5, 22 October, 2003) is doing in his class, teachers need to first help their students be keen on the genre and expose them to singing the repertoire. Then, through more challenging repertoire, theoretical knowledge and extensive listening, the technique, the style and the improvising unfold.

The issue of methodological resources has raised some interesting arguments in this study. My initial notion that teachers were employing some instructional resources in their classes was not confirmed by the data. The only form of usage that both of these groups noted were, in some cases, the accompaniment tracks that escorted the manuals.

It is evident that although the teachers I interviewed and observed do not use methodological resources, there are topics in these manuals that are congruent with the methods by which they teach. For example, the listening and practicing elements of learning to sing vocal jazz are plentiful in the data from the teachers' interviews and observations. As well, the concept of having jazz theory knowledge was recommended strongly by the professional jazz singers, which is a topic that recurs in these methodological books. However, the concept of using a manual from which to teach a

class also completely contradicts the other data which points to listening and emulating or practicing, as revealed by the professional jazz singers and Zegree (2002).

Witmer (1988) and Kuzmich (1989) inferred that there was a deficiency in vocal jazz teaching materials. However, the question needs to be raised, "Is there any requirement for a vocal jazz methodological resource, if all of the research points to listening and imitating as the means by which students should learn this art?"

Again, the reality of the vocal jazz classroom is that students need to become engaged in this style of singing. This active learning cannot take place if the lessons are all based on following suggestions and chapters of textbooks. There is, indeed, a place for methodological resources, in that they can provide excellent references for teachers who are new to teaching the genre of jazz, providing that the teachers are also immersing themselves in a great deal of jazz listening. However, it seems clear that methodological resources were not helpful to the vocal jazz teachers in this study.

My initial notion that prompted this study, therefore, was both accurate and invalid, based on the data from this study. The variance between the methods by which professional vocal jazz singers learned to sing and the pedagogy that is being taught in high schools is not as wide as I previously assumed. The primary elements of listening, practicing, modeling and focusing on jazz style were emphasized by the singers, and were present in the classrooms. However, the degree to which these were used in each area is where the incongruity lied. Whereas the singers stressed that these factors, coupled with the theoretical knowledge and transcription exercises were the main determining factors, for the teachers, these were present, but were not the sole, emphasized pedagogical methods. The largest discrepancy between the singers and the

teachers was found in the theoretical data. Clearly the singers found this more of an asset than what the teachers were advocating in their classrooms.

Recommendations

As a result of this study, there are several recommendations that can be made in two areas: recommendations for high school vocal jazz class rooms and recommendations for further study.

High school vocal jazz classrooms. Perhaps a manner in which teachers could help students begin to be keen on the genre of vocal jazz is by starting with charts that are similar to pop sounding music. Since this is the music to which all of the singers in this study listened as children, conceivably a melding of the two genres could be a start, following with a gradual movement into the jazz genre.

The element of listening, as stated in previous paragraphs, is essential in the learning process of vocal jazz. However, given that only six of the ten teachers stated that they have the students listen to jazz every class, I recommend that all teachers instill a listening segment into each of their vocal jazz classes. Jazz is an aural tradition. This is the model we should be following. This could only become a reality for some, I understand, if hindering factors such as scheduling and class time are remedied to allow for such a portion of time.

Student listening could also be increased if all teachers assigned listening work to be done on their own time. As Sandra (Observation #8, October 30, 2003) suggested, perhaps a listening log would encourage students to do this listening as well.

Another recommendation that is connected with a predominant theme is placing more emphasis on the element of improvisation. Since the triangulation data revealed a

necessity for practice, the students should be permitted more time in class to practicing the sounds they have heard on the recordings. If this exercise was combined equally with listening, the learning process, I believe, would be more effective.

I also recommend that a theoretical component be added to high school vocal jazz classes. Since there are many students who do not play another instrument which provides them with that knowledge, it would be very valuable to have a theoretical facet of the vocal jazz classes which would avail all of our singers with that information. Again, I realize that this is an impossibility for many teachers with the current constraints of class time.

Similarly, if all of our vocal jazz students could receive some fundamental instrument training, such as piano basics, their singing and general musicianship would become greatly amplified. Therefore, I recommend that high school vocal jazz classes offer an instrumental component for those students not already studying an instrument in band or via private lessons. This course would be taught as a means of developing those aural, mechanical, harmonic and general musicianship skills that instrument players possess. As a result, the educators would be teaching musicians, as opposed to aspiring singers and the students would be far more firmly grounded in their musical endeavors.

Finally, the notion of creating a classroom environment that is non-judgmental and accepting, I believe, is crucial in the learning process of improvisation. High school students, similar to junior high students, have a higher degree of self-consciousness than adults do. In addition, the voice is a more personal means of sharing music than an instrument is. These two factors combined with the demand of creating a melody on the spot, result in a very intimidating situation for the students. If teachers are able to

establish an environment in which the students feel that mistakes are not only allowed but on some level expected, and if each of the students' attempts at improvising are cherished as respected efforts, our students will be much more willing to take the risks that are required for this type of singing.

Further study. There are five areas in which this study could be extended. The connection between the ability to play an additional instrument and a singer's capabilities is one subject that could be delved into further. Also, the issue of private lessons versus classroom study of vocal jazz is a factor that requires additional study. The relationship between learning a language and learning a musical genre also has possibilities for further research, as well as a study of Manitoba vocal jazz teachers' class time and scheduling.

Although this study included some discussion regarding the benefits of students' ability to play an additional instrument when they are learning to sing jazz, this topic requires more study to fully comprehend its ramifications. For example, the mechanical and visualization benefits that help a singer are evident, however it would be interesting to uncover exactly what the brain processes are in these reactions.

Also, this study has been centered on high school vocal jazz classes. However, there is a whole other issue that surrounds private vocal jazz lessons. A comparison dealing with the pros and cons of each of these methods of teaching vocal jazz would be very enlightening.

The literature review of this research paper touched on the relationship between language acquisition and learning a genre of music. This topic has a depth to it that could provide the means of another entire study.

The extent to which singers and educators valued theoretical training was a surprising outcome of this study, and created a query regarding professional vocal jazz singers in history who are revered, yet seemingly did not receive formal education in theory. It would be interesting to delve into their paths of learning to decipher how they learned their improvisational expertise without having a theoretical foundation.

Finally, an examination of Manitoba vocal jazz teachers' class time and scheduling could provide a springboard from which teachers could promote the notion that more class time is required for these courses. Many of the recommendations that I made in previous paragraphs were achievable only if more class time was available. Therefore, the evidence that this class time is required needs to be provided.

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Appendix A

Interview Guide – Professional Vocal Jazz Singers

1. How did you learn to sing vocal jazz?
2. What types of music did you listen to, predominantly, when you were growing up? Did your listening preferences change over time? If so, how and why?
3. What listening experiences most influenced the way in which you learned to sing vocal jazz?
4. What type of formal training have you had in the area of jazz performance or theory?
 - a. (If the informant had formal training in the area of theory) How has the theoretical training been useful to your performance of vocal jazz?
 - b. (If the informant had formal training in performance) What aspects of your performance training have helped you learn most the art of vocal jazz?
5. Talk about what, if any, method books you have used to learn about vocal jazz, and more specifically how and why these have been useful to you.
6. How did you learn to scat sing?
7. What have been the most influential factors in your learning to sing jazz?
8. Do you play another instrument? How has that skill influenced your ability as a vocal jazz singer?

Appendix B

Interview Guide – Classroom Teachers

1. Reflect on the methods and techniques you use when teaching vocal jazz. What has worked best?
2. What have you tried in the past that seemed to work least well?
3. What is your opinion on method books for teaching any element of vocal jazz?
4. How much time in a class, on average, do you devote to analytical listening of vocal jazz?
5. How much time would you estimate students spend listening to jazz outside of class time?
6. How much time in a class, on average, do the students practice their own jazz improvisation?
7. What strategies do you use for helping high school students shed their inhibitions around scatting for the first time?
8. What are the challenges you face in teaching vocal jazz and how have you had success in overcoming them?
9. Do any of your students play another instrument? How do you feel this influences their ability as a vocal jazz singer?

Appendix C

Observation Guide

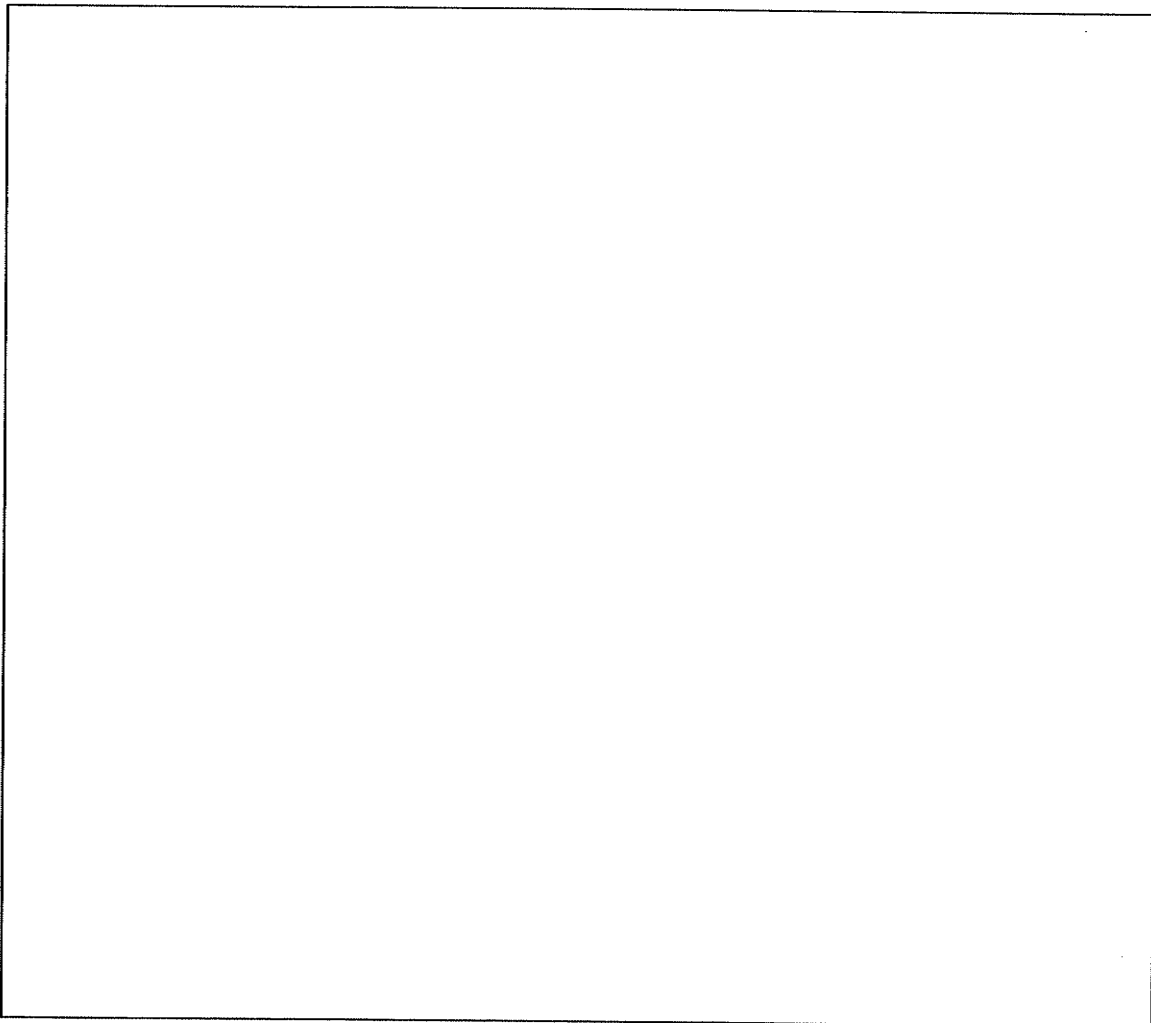
Observation #: _____ Teacher's Pseudonym: _____

Start Time: _____ End Time: _____

Duration: _____ minutes Date: _____

School's Pseudonym: _____

- Physical description of room (diagram):



- Teacher's Comments: Improvisation

Time

- What dominant tendencies does the teacher exhibit?

Time

- Lesson Segments Devoted to:

of occurrences Time Start – End Total Min.

Analytical Listening:

Non-Analytical Listening:

Improvisation:

- To what extent is the listening related to the lesson?

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____

1- almost always 2-usually 3-sometimes 4-rarely 5-almost never

- List of instructional resources employed:

	<u>Title</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Publisher</u>	<u>Date</u>
1.	_____	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____

Teachers' methods when/if faced with a challenge:

Observation: _____

Interpretation: _____

Observation: _____

Interpretation: _____

Observation: _____

Interpretation: _____

Appendix D

Consent Form – Jazz Singers

Dear (Research Participant),

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

My name is Michelle English and I am a graduate student in the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba. I am currently working on my Masters thesis pertaining to the area of vocal jazz. The title of my research project is: Perspectives of Professional Vocal Jazz Singers and Jazz Educators: Implications for High School Vocal Jazz Pedagogy. Because you are an experienced professional jazz singer, I am inviting you to participate in my project.

Participation in the study will involve one and perhaps two interviews, of approximately one hour in length each, during the period of September, 2003 to December, 2003. I will be asking you questions about the way you learned the art of singing vocal jazz. Your responses will be used as a source of data for analysis. Each interview will be tape recorded, transcribed, and erased. Data will be kept on file until my thesis is complete and then destroyed. Once my thesis is concluded, I will provide a summary of my research findings to all the participants involved in this project. I will also protect your privacy by using pseudonyms in all of the data I collect.

No deception will be employed in the interview, and you may choose to withdraw your participation at any time, in which case, all of the data collected to that point will be destroyed.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researcher or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and/or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at

This research has been approved by The Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the

above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at _____ A copy of this
consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

I, _____,
_____ consent, or _____ do not consent to participate in an interview of approximately
one hour. I understand that I might be quoted in the study, but a pseudonym will be used
to protect my identity.

Please e-mail a summary report of the study to: _____

Participant's Signature

Date

Print your name here.

Researcher's Signature

Date

Appendix E

Consent Form – Jazz Educators

Dear (Research Participant),

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

My name is Michelle English and I am a graduate student in the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba. I am currently working on my Masters thesis pertaining to the area of vocal jazz. The title of my research project is: Perspectives of Professional Vocal Jazz Singers and Jazz Educators: Implications for High School Vocal Jazz Pedagogy. Because you are an experienced jazz educator, I am inviting you to participate in my study.

Participation in the study will involve two things during the period of September, 2003 to December, 2003. First, you will be interviewed for approximately one hour. Each interview will be recorded, transcribed, and erased. I will ask you questions regarding the techniques that you find most successful in teaching vocal jazz. Second, I will be asking your permission to observe and take notes as you teach one of your vocal jazz classes. Specifically, I will be looking for listening time devoted to jazz, pedagogical resources employed, improvisation methodology employed, approaches used to deal with challenges in improvisation, and the amount of practical time devoted to improvisation in the class.

Your interview comments and my observational notes will both be used as sources of data for analysis. All data will be gathered, stored by me and treated confidentially. Data will be stored up until the time my thesis is complete (approximately one year), and then destroyed. Quotations may be drawn from your interview comments or references made to your teaching techniques in my thesis, but pseudonyms will be used to protect your identity. Once my thesis is concluded, I will provide a summary of my research findings to all the participants involved in this project.

No deception will be employed in the observations, and you may choose to withdraw your participation at any time, in which case, all of the data collected to that point will be destroyed.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researcher or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw

from the study at any time, and/or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at

This research has been approved by The Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at _____ A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

I, _____
_____ consent, or _____ do not consent to participate in an interview of approximately one hour. I understand that I might be quoted in the study, but a pseudonym will be used to protect my identity.

I, _____
_____ consent, or _____ do not consent to have one of my vocal jazz classes observed. I understand that references to my teaching techniques might be made in the study, but a pseudonym will be used to protect my identity.

Please e-mail a summary report of the study to: _____

Participant's Signature

Date

Print your name here.

Researcher's Signature

Date

Appendix F

Letter of Nomination – Music Administrators

Dear (Music Administrator),

My name is Michelle English and I am a graduate student in the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba. I am currently working on my Masters thesis pertaining to the area of vocal jazz. The title of my research project is: Perspectives of Professional Vocal Jazz Singers and Jazz Educators: Implications for High School Vocal Jazz Pedagogy. Because you are in a position of leadership in Music Education, I am requesting your help in nominating high school vocal jazz educators who would be relevant participants in my study.

The area of vocal jazz presents a set of challenges which are relatively new to music education. Since the inception of vocal jazz programs into high school vocal courses, there has been a critical need for methodology from which teachers can convey the skills necessary for this genre. Although vocal jazz and improvisation are not new or innovative concepts in the music world, the pedagogical process of these two elements in public schools is a relatively novel project. Teachers have been relying on word of mouth, professional development workshops, and methodology books or journal articles as crutches for the task of teaching their students the skill of performing vocal jazz.

Personal experience as a high school and university vocal jazz music educator, as well as a professional vocal jazz singer, have made me inquisitive about what appears to be a dissonance between the manner in which students are being taught the art of vocal jazz, and the methods by which professional vocal jazz singers learned their skill. This curiosity prompted me to design a study to determine the manner in which professional vocal jazz performers learned their skill, as well as the successful methodology of high school and university vocal jazz music educators for further informing vocal jazz pedagogy.

My research will involve interviewing professional jazz singers as well as interviewing and observing high school and university vocal jazz teachers who have respected vocal jazz programs. The teachers will be asked to participate in at least one, but more likely two interviews about one hour in length regarding the techniques that they find most successful in teaching vocal jazz. These interviews will be tape-recorded. They will also be asked permission to have one of their vocal jazz classes observed by me. Specifically, I will be looking for listening time devoted to jazz, pedagogical resources employed, improvisation methodology employed, approaches used to deal with challenges in improvisation, and the amount of practical time devoted to improvisation in the class.

I would greatly appreciate any nominations that you may have of high school vocal jazz teachers whom you know to be respected in the area of vocal jazz pedagogy due to their strong vocal jazz programs. Please forward the names and schools at which the individuals teach to me at

For my Thesis Advisor, Dr. Francine Morin, Professor, University of Manitoba,

Thank you for your help,

Michelle English

Appendix G

Consent Form - Principals

Dear (Principal),

My name is Michelle English and I am a graduate student in the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba. I am currently working on my Masters thesis pertaining to the area of vocal jazz. The title of my research project is: Perspectives of Professional Vocal Jazz Singers and Jazz Educators: Implications for High School Vocal Jazz Pedagogy. I am requesting your permission to observe a vocal jazz class in your school on (date), to which (name of teacher) has already consented.

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

My research will involve interviewing professional jazz singers as well as interviewing and observing high school and university vocal jazz teachers who have respected vocal jazz programs. The vocal jazz teacher from your school has been nominated by a member of the Association of Music Administrators of Manitoba for participation in the study. I will be inviting this teacher to participate in one, possibly two interviews for approximately one hour, and to be observed for one class period. During the classroom observations, I will be noting the pedagogical techniques employed by the teacher. Specifically I will be observing the amount of listening time devoted to jazz, the pedagogical resources employed, the improvisation methodology employed, the approaches used to deal with challenges in improvisation, and the amount of practical time devoted to improvisation in the class. During the observations I will be seated in the rear of the class, in order to be the least obtrusive, and I will take field notes on the methodology employed by the teacher.

I am also requesting consent from the school division's Superintendent. Upon receipt of all of the required consent, I will be sending home an informational letter to the parents/guardians of the students in the class in order to make them aware of my plans to observe their teacher in a vocal jazz class. I will forward you a copy of this letter for your approval.

No deception will be employed in the observations, and there will be no risk to the teacher or the students. The observations will not be video or audio tape-recorded and the students will not be posed any questions. The sole focus of my data collection is on the methodology of the teacher.

My observational notes will be used as sources of data for analysis. All data will be gathered, stored by me and treated confidentially. Data will be stored up until the time my thesis is complete (approximately one year), and then destroyed. Quotations may be drawn from the teacher's comments or references made to the teaching techniques in my thesis, but pseudonyms will be used to protect the teacher's identity. Once my thesis is concluded, I will provide a summary of my research findings to all the participants involved in this project.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding the teacher's participation in the research project. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researcher or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at _____ or my Thesis Advisor, Dr. Francine Morin, Professor, University of Manitoba,

This research has been approved by The Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at _____. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

I, _____
_____ consent, or _____ do not consent to inviting the vocal jazz teacher in my school to participate in one or two interviews of about one hour, and to observing one vocal jazz class.

Please e-mail a summary report of the study to: _____

Principal's Signature Date _____

Print your name here.

Researcher's Signature Date _____

Appendix H

Consent Form - Superintendents

Dear (Superintendent),

My name is Michelle English and I am a graduate student in the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba. I am currently working on my Masters thesis pertaining to the area of vocal jazz. The title of my research project is: Perspectives of Professional Vocal Jazz Singers and Jazz Educators: Implications for High School Vocal Jazz Pedagogy. I am requesting your permission to observe a vocal jazz class on (date), at (name of school), to which (name of teacher) has already consented.

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

My research will involve interviewing professional Jazz singers as well as interviewing and observing high school and university vocal jazz teachers who have respected vocal jazz programs. One or more vocal jazz teachers from your school division have been nominated by a member of the Association of Music Educators of Manitoba for participation in the study. I will be inviting these teachers to participate in one or two interviews of approximately one hour and to be observed for one class period. During the classroom observations, I will be noting the pedagogical techniques employed by the teacher. Specifically I will be observing the amount of listening time devoted to jazz, the pedagogical resources employed, the improvisation methodology employed, the approaches used to deal with challenges in improvisation, and the amount of practical time devoted to improvisation in the class. During the observations I will be seated in the rear of the class, in order to be the least obtrusive, and I will take field notes on the methodology employed by the teacher.

I am also requesting consent from the school's Principal. Upon receipt of all required consents, I will be sending home an informational letter to the parents/guardians of the students in the class in order to make them aware of my plans to observe their teacher in a vocal jazz class. I will forward a copy of that letter to the Principal for approval.

No deception will be employed in the observations, and there will be no risk to the teacher or the students. The observations will not be video or audio tape-recorded and the students will not be posed any questions. The sole focus of my data collection is on the methodology of the teacher.

My observational notes will be used as sources of data for analysis. All data will be gathered, stored by me and treated confidentially. Data will be stored up until the time

my thesis is complete (approximately one year), and then destroyed. Quotations may be drawn from the teacher's comments or references made to the teaching techniques in my thesis, but pseudonyms will be used to protect the teacher's identity. Once my thesis is concluded, I will provide a summary of my research findings to all the participants involved in this project.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding the teacher's participation in the research project. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researcher or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at _____ or my Thesis Advisor, Dr. Francine Morin, Professor, University of Manitoba,

This research has been approved by The Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at _____. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

I, _____
_____ consent, or _____ do not consent to inviting nominated vocal jazz teachers in my school division to participate in one or two interviews of about one hour, and to observing one of their vocal jazz classes.

Please e-mail a summary report of the study to: _____

Superintendent's Signature

Date

Print your name here.

Researcher's Signature

Date

Appendix I

Parent Information Letter

Dear Parents/Guardians,

My name is Michelle English and I am a graduate student in the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba. I am currently working on my Masters thesis pertaining to the area of vocal jazz. The title of my research project is: Perspectives of Professional Vocal Jazz Singers and Jazz Educators: Implications for High School Vocal Jazz Pedagogy.

I have received permission from (name of school's Principal) and Superintendent (name) to observe your son's/daughter's vocal jazz teacher on (date) in order to collect data for my research study. The purpose of my observation is to document the methodological techniques that your son/daughter's vocal jazz teacher employs in the classroom, specifically with respect to time devoted to jazz listening and techniques used to convey improvisational learning.

The students will not be video or audio tape recorded, nor will I be collecting any data from them. My focus in this study is solely on the teacher's methodology.

If you have any further questions or concerns regarding my research plans, please feel free to contact me at _____ or _____ or my Thesis Advisor, Dr. Francine Morin, Professor, University of Manitoba,

_____. This research has also been approved by The Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact the Human Ethics Secretariat at _____

Thank you for your support and understanding,

Michelle English