

**THE COMMON VOCAL PROBLEMS IN WESTERN CLASSICAL
VOCAL PERFORMANCE ENCOUNTERED BY THAI STUDENTS
OF MAHIDOL UNIVERSITY AT THE PRE-COLLEGE AND
UNDERGRADUATE LEVEL**

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**A GRADUATE RECITAL DOCUMENT SUBMITTED IN
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTERS OF ARTS (MUSIC)
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
MAHIDOL UNIVERSITY
2013**


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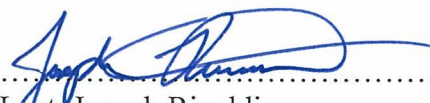
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The achievement of “The common vocal problems in western classical vocal performance encountered by Thai students of Mahidol University at the pre-college and undergraduate level.” would not have been completely success without my private studio teacher Colleen Ann Jennings who have been person who guide me the way how to sing classical performance and encouraged me to study at Mahidol University. Thank you for doctor Suraporn Konthong who was the first Thai vocal pedagogy teacher to me I have learn so much from him although he always be general and willing to help with vocal problems to all Thai singer. Thank you Ajarn Joseph Warren Rinaldi and Ajarn Raymond who have taught me vocal pedagogy you are such a great teacher every time I spend in your class it such a precious time. Thank you Ajarn Joseph Warren Rinaldi again for edited my paper and Ajarn Correy trahan who been Co-Advissor.

I would like to give my sincere thanks all friend and students in Mahidol University who always supported me for a recital concert, I always got plenty of loves and cares.

Furthermore I have to thank Wawa Nichapa to nicely form and organize my thesis pages.

After all, I would like to give my whole-hearted thank you my family especially Kom Wongsawat for a big support.

Kumarika Subhakarn

THE COMMON VOCAL PROBLEMS IN WESTERN CLASSICAL VOCAL PERFORMANCE ENCOUNTERED BY THAI STUDENTS OF MAHIDOL UNIVERSITY AT THE PRE-COLLEGE AND UNDERGRADUATE LEVEL

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this thematic paper is to examine the common vocal problems in western classical vocal performance encountered by Thai students of Mahidol University at the pre-college and undergraduate levels. This thematic paper adds to the research of western classical vocal performance in the pursuit of a master degree and does so through interviewing and studying related documents. The researcher has collected resources for the purposes of this study.

This study focused on pedagogical problems that arise in singing. The researcher provided beneficial exercises to help resolve these problems. Five academic books relating to the topics of pedagogy were studied: The Structure of Singing: System and Art in Vocal Technique by Richard Miller; The Naked Voice: A Wholistic Approach to Singing by W. Stephen Smith with Michael Chapman; The Science of Vocal Pedagogy: Theory and Application by D. Ralph Appelman; International Phonetic Alphabet for Singers: A manual for English and Foreign Language Diction by John wall; and Overtones of Bel Canto by Berton Coffin.

The results indicate that Thai students of Mahidol University at the pre-college and undergraduate levels show several main pedagogical problems: tongue muscle and jaw tension; incomplete inhalation/insufficient breathing; differentiation of the consonants and vowels in diction; and register issues of the male middle & low voice and female middle & high voice (high larynx position).

KEY WORDS: COMMON VOCAL PROBLEMS / WESTERN CLASSICAL VOCAL PERFORMANCE / ENCOUNTERED BY THAI STUDENTS

ปัญหาที่พบบ่อยในการร้องเพลงคลาสสิกสำหรับนักศึกษาไทยระดับชั้นอุดมศึกษา และเตรียมอุดม
ดนตรี มหาวิทยาลัยมหิดล

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บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยฉบับนี้ มีวัตถุประสงค์ในการศึกษาปัญหาที่พบบ่อยในการร้องเพลงคลาสสิก
สำหรับนักศึกษาไทยระดับชั้นอุดมศึกษา และเตรียมอุดมดนตรี มหาวิทยาลัยมหิดล ผู้วิจัยได้ศึกษา
โดยการ สัมภาษณ์ นอกจากนี้ยังได้รวบรวมข้อมูลจากเอกสารที่เกี่ยวข้อง แล้วนำข้อมูลที่ได้มา
วิเคราะห์ เสนอเป็นแนวทางการแก้ไข

งานวิจัยฉบับนี้มุ่งเน้นไปที่หลักวิชาที่เรียกว่า Vocal pedagogy ผู้วิจัยได้ เตรียมเสนอ
แนวทางที่เป็นประโยชน์ เพื่อแก้ไขปัญหาที่พบบ่อยในการร้องเพลงคลาสสิกสำหรับนักศึกษาไทย
ระดับชั้นอุดมศึกษา และเตรียมอุดมดนตรี มหาวิทยาลัยมหิดล โดยคัดเลือกตำราวิชาการทั้ง 5 เล่ม
คือ The Structure of Singing: System and Art in Vocal Technique by Richard Miller; The Naked
Voice: A Wholistic Approach to Singing by W. Stephen Smith with Micheal Chapman; The
Science of Vocal Pedagogy: Theory and Application by D. Ralph Appelman; International
Phonetic Alphabet for Singers: A manual for English and Foreign Language Diction by John wall;
and Overtones of Bel Canto by Berton Coffin.

ผลการวิจัยพบว่าปัญหาที่พบบ่อยในการร้องเพลงคลาสสิกสำหรับนักศึกษาไทย
ระดับชั้นอุดมศึกษา และเตรียมอุดมดนตรี มหาวิทยาลัยมหิดล แสดงให้เห็นชัดเจนใน 4 ประการ คือ
การเกร็งกล้ามเนื้อบริเวณคอก และ คาง; หายใจไม่เพียงพอ และไม่สมบูรณ์; ปัญหาการออกเสียง
ภาษา พยัญชนะ และ สระ; การปัญหาเปลี่ยนช่วงเสียง รวมถึงตำแหน่งของกล่องเสียง

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Benefits of this paper

I have always asked the question, “Can a person sing equally well in different vocal styles?” It has always been my opinion that singing in different vocal styles is similar to speaking different languages. Because language is an aspect of culture, to sing well in many styles would necessitate awareness and understanding of other cultures. It is important to know which aspects of language and culture are most helpful to students of these languages. Music students (in particular western classical vocal music) who are to learn songs in different languages should also study the musical and historical contexts in which these songs were written. These would hopefully guide the students in giving a more authentic, stylistic performance of these works.

I am a Thai student who has studied vocal performance for six years. My training has included jazz as well as classical performance. I also have a degree in music education. I have researched in the topic area, “The Development of Vocal Exercises for Singing in the Undergraduate Level.” From this research, my findings suggest: 1. that each student has his own set of problems in producing their ideal tone; 2. that some of these problems are common to most, if not all students. These seemingly universal problems include: 1. singing correct vowels particular to a language; 2. jaw tension which resulted mostly in the difficulty of singing higher pitches. This early research encouraged me to learn more about vocal technique in order to find solutions to the aforementioned problems.

In my experience as a student of voice in Thailand, the approach to teaching voice is a primarily practical one. The classic Italian singing exercise books by Concone, Panofka, and Marchesi are the most common books used in the teaching of voice. These are universally recognized as classic pedagogical tools, and therefore there are certain merits that come from the use of these books. In my experience, these

books help me develop breath control, intonation, agility and physical stamina. However, these materials also fail to address some of my previous vocal issues including throat tension, problems in vocal quality, and legato singing. As an adjunct vocal professor who also has great interest in graduate level vocal pedagogy, I realize the importance of a theoretical understanding of the voice.

The goal of this research is: 1. To identify the common problems of Thai students in the study of western classical singing; 2. To gather information from different vocal pedagogical books and related materials as well as from highly trained and professional voice teachers with regard to addressing these problems; 3. To assimilate the information and present findings in a manner that would be easily accessible, understandable, and usable by both voice teachers and students.

1.2 Thai study

Western classical music education began in Thailand in 2488 (1945) at the Dramatic Arts College. The program was under the Arts Education Division of the Fine Arts Department that is funded by the government. Western classical music, as a course, then spread to other government universities such as Chulalongkorn University, Kasetsart University, Payap University, Burapha University, Silpakorn University, Mahidol University, Rajaphat University, Rajmongkon University, Srinakarin VirojPrasanmit University, Khonkaen University, and Mahasarakam University. Later on it was included in the curriculum of such private universities as Rangsit University and Assumption University. At present, there are 16 colleges of music throughout all of Thailand.

The leading institution of western classical music education in Thailand is the College of Music, Mahidol University¹. Its voice department has the distinction of being a formal center of excellence in vocal training, having only foreign full time faculty. Mahidol University's vocal department was established in 1995, first offering study at the undergraduate level and then later in the pre-college program and master degree level. The average age of students in the pre-college program in Thailand is 15

¹ Charoensook, Sugree, *about the college*, College of music Mahidol University, www.music.mahidol.ac.th/th/about/welcome.php, Viewed 20 September 2012

years old. The audition requirements for admittance to the College of Music are three classical pieces and two concone exercises. Undergraduate students usually begin their studies at 18 years old and their audition requirements are four classical pieces and two concone exercises. Master degree students vary in age and their audition requirements are eight classical pieces and one panofka exercise.

The specific required subjects for students in classical vocal performance are as follows:

Table 1.1 the specific required subjects for students in classical vocal performance

Degree Requirements	Precollege	Undergraduate
Major Performance	6 Semesters	8 Semesters
Ensemble	6 Semesters	8 Semesters
Choir	6 Semesters	6 Semesters
Opera	—	2 Semesters
Vocal Diction	One Semester, general	English, Italian, French
Vocal Literature	—	2 Semesters
Vocal Pedagogy	—	1 Semester
Recital	20 Minutes	Junior – 30 Minutes Senior – 45 Minutes

Subjects for students in classical vocal performance in Mahidol University, These requirements are in addition to weekly performance class attendance. The minimum degree repertoire requirements are as follows:

Table 1.2 the minimum degree repertoire requirements

	Pre-College Minimum	Undergraduate Minimum
English	5	8
Italian	5	8
German	1	8
French	1	8
Other	4	12
Total	16	44

Currently there are 18 students studying at the Pre-college level and 20 students studying in Classical vocal performance major.

Songs in foreign languages are often a requirement for a student's audition or jury examination repertoire. They are useful in the development of a student's technique and understanding of musical style.

All teachers of singing must have certain tools that assist them in training voices. When I began singing, the only tools I had were very basic exercises that helped me improve overall musical style and technique, but this was done without much in depth explanation about the kinesthetic feeling required for technique; instead it focused only for musical idioms. It took more than several years to cultivate my knowledge of body sensation in order to perceive what comprised a good quality of sound. The more I sing, the more I realize that it is crucial to base singing principles on scientific methods of sound production.

For this reason, I continue to find the most effective tools for studying voice, and consequently these also help me prepare to be a better teacher. After nearly five years of teaching western voice to Thai students, I have found many vocal concerns that need to be addressed.

1.3 Current Research on Vocal Pedagogy

(Lorraine Manfold, May 2008), *Applying breath and body management techniques to improve the sound of singer* article, offers some research on the current study of voice. Physical and artistic training are regarded as incidentals for those who view the notion of physical and artistic training as being two sides of the same coin, "I believe their musicality is enhanced, for one cannot sing with one's mental capacities alone. In order to improve their quality of sound, singers must be aware of the best ways to breath, must have knowledge about their inner muscles, use their kinesthetic sense and deploy the necessary muscles to contribute to musical expression".² Through her research, Manfold found that when a singer learns to combine all of these

² Lorraine Manfold, May 2008: *Applying breath and body management techniques to improve the sound of singer*

aspects, the singer's expressive qualities will also greatly increase. And with the increase of expression, the quality of sound will increase.

Another author, (Marie Anderson, June 2009) article, *When Singing Becomes Knowing Developing Self- Knowledge through Vocal Pedagogy*, "I discovered that the use of spiritual practice combined with traditional vocal technique deepened the experience of the lessons and enhanced every aspect of my traditional vocal pedagogy. Research that involved the researcher and the process of research so intimately allowed a pedagogy to emerge that is responsive, deliberately nonlinear, in which curriculum is shaped dialogically by both student and teacher in an intimate evolving relationship."³

The current research does present that Vocal pedagogy certainly helps eliminate the vocal problems.

1.4 Exclusion of Thai specific topics in Western Vocal Pedagogy Books

Although many researchers continue to solve problems surrounding vocal pedagogy and singing problems, there is currently no research written specifically regarding the problems experienced by Thai students. Elements of culture, language, modes of practice, and overall performance styles have not been specifically addressed to the Thai audience. Therefore, it is with great ambition that I aim to create this work, focusing on the Thai student and teachers of Thai students who approach the western style of singing.

³ Marie Anderson, June 2009: *When singing becomes knowing developing self-knowledge through vocalpedagogy*

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 A Brief Introduction to the History of Vocal Pedagogy

Singing classical music has been established in western culture for hundreds of years. This style of singing includes different types of vocal music: Gregorian chant, oratorio, madrigal, aria antiche, opera and operetta arias, chanson, and lieder. The general principles of technique focus on the beauty of tone, comprising an open throat and/or lower larynx position to combine speech -like projection in the tone with a dark, warm, and rounded sound. Proper control of the breath flow is essential as is a well-supported tone that has developed vibrato. The singer also needs to have the ability to differentiate between the different vowels sounds when singing high notes by adjusting the vocal tract to resonate at different frequencies.

(Lorraine Manifold, 2008) “Vocal pedagogy, by necessity, is both aesthetic and scientific; to teach the art of singing basing one’s pedagogy approaches on aesthetic alone would produce a limited singer who might not be able to accomplish the more difficult aspects of singing.”⁴(Dr. Ralph Appelman, 1967) “Its scientific entity is drilled from the pure sciences of mathematics, acoustics, linguistics, and anatomy”

From my viewpoint, vocal pedagogy can have a whole body approach and this method can be used to train singers or other professional voice users to gain the most amount of success with their own voices. The subject’s nature includes various topics including a study of the physiology of sound production, classification of vocal sound, vocal health and vocal disorders.

Vocal pedagogy ideas stemmed from the Roman Catholic Church in the 13th century. Two monks, Johannes de Garlandia and Jerome of Moravia were the first

⁴ Lorraine Manifold, May 2008: *Applying breath and body management techniques to improve the sound of singer*

to develop the concept of registers⁵. In the 15th century, the study of singing moved outside of the church. By the 17th century, the idea of a new method of singing was established: Bel Canto. This subject existed during the Classical and Romantic periods, impacting the development of opera. By the 19th century, opera roles began to be classified by particular voice type. Around the same time, the method of pedagogy truly began with the invention of the laryngoscope. Scientists expanding their ideas related to the field of vocal pedagogy in order to help create stronger, more efficient singers. Eventually, this vocal pedagogy has worked its way into college of music singing programs as a field of academic study.

From my experience, the study of vocal pedagogy is capable of solving many problems in singing. Pedagogy has become a required course in many university singing programs. Principles of this subject focus on the anatomy of singing and the acoustics of tone production through vocal production. Phonation and articulation mainly focus on western languages that center on the International Phonetic Alphabet. The ideas involved in vocal pedagogy are helpful when addressing problems with breathing methods and techniques associated the different genres of music. Also, vocal pedagogy helps to create an awareness of body tension. Knowing how to produce sound with proper airflow, vocal weight, timber and range is additionally very important. Analysis of vocal qualities also helps a singer detect a healthy or damaged voice. One of the most important aspects of communicating through song well is to be able to pronounce the language correctly. Adapting to certain Western languages is challenging for some, especially those people who are not native speakers of any Western Language.

2.2 The books

**The Structure of Singing: System and Art in Vocal Technique by
Richard Miller**

⁵[www.wikipedia.org/vocal pedagogy](http://www.wikipedia.org/vocal%20pedagogy)

Richard Miller presents a functional view of the vocal instrument and of artistic expression. In the author's own words, "knowing how the singing instrument works, and knowing how to get it to work consistently, is the sum of technical knowledge. That is why a systematic approach to vocal technique is the most successful route to artistic singing.⁶He adds, "No singer should be in doubt as to what is going to happen technically in public performance unless illness interferes."⁷ According to Miller, singers should be as with the physical production of sound as the aesthetic qualities of the vocal sound itself. Miller's concepts in achieving technical freedom in singing are presented by chapter as described below.

Contents

1. *The Coordinated Vocal Onset and Release: Establishing Dynamic Muscle Equilibrium through Onset and Release*
2. *The supported Singing Voice: Breath Management in Singing*
3. *Agility in Singing: Flexible Application of Breath Power*
4. *The Resonant Voice: Supraglottic Considerations in Singing*
5. *The Well-Balanced Vowel: Vowel Differentiation in Singing*
6. *Resonance Balancing through Nasal Consonants: The Influences of Nasal Continuants on Resonator Adjustment*
7. *Resonance Balancing through Non-nasal Consonants: The Influence of Non-nasal Consonants on Resonator Adjustment*
8. *Sustaining the Voice: Sostenuuto*
9. *Unifying the Register of Male Voices*
10. *Unifying the Register of Female Voices*
11. *Vowel Modification in Singing: aggiustamento*
12. *Range Extension and Stabilization in Singing*
13. *Messa di voce and Dynamic Control*
14. *Vibrancy in Singing: Vibrato and Vocal Timbre*

⁶⁻⁷ Miller, Richard, *The structure of singing: system and art in vocal technique*. New York: Schirmer Books, (1986)

15. Coordinating Technique and Communication

16. Pedagogical Attitudes: The Aesthetics of Vocal Timbre

17. Healthy Singing

The Naked Voice: A Wholistic Approach to Singing by W. Stephen Smith with Micheal Chipman

Stephen Smith has a unique approach to singing. His book includes a philosophy of singing and technique, which essentially relates vocal development to the linguistic and cultural context of the individual. “My goal is to help them clear away the entanglements, hang-ups, insecurities, habits, and fears that keep their voices from singing true and free.”⁸

This book serves every level of singer, from church choir enthusiast to the world famous diva. It is divided into three parts.

Part I (Basic Instincts) presents the philosophy of singing, environmental contaminants of speech, and basic idea of breath flow.

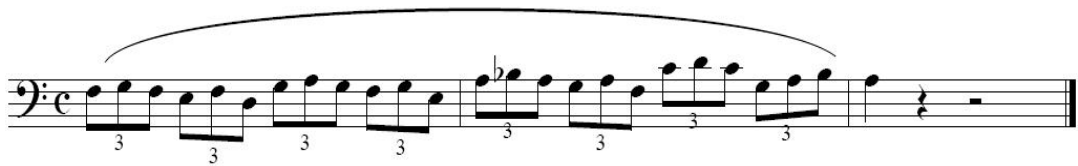
Part II (The Inventions) discusses the principal ideas of good speaking and singing tones. Free airflow is the most important aspect of singing and this is addressed in six exercises that he calls “Inventions”. This part also includes a method of vowel definition with altered tongue positions. A significant exercise series is introduced: 1. Simply Speaking Simply 2. Free Flowing air 3. A Balancing Act 4. Spontaneous Combustion 5. The Wobble 6. Getting high

Part III (Where the Rubber Meets the Road) illustrates how these technical exercises may be applied to the vocal repertoire. Below is an example.

Step One: Divide into Pulses

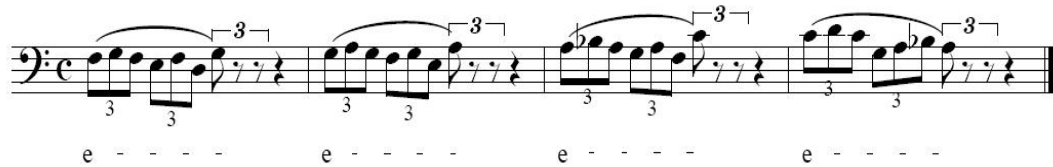
The first step in learning a *fioratura* passage is to divide it into pulses. The pulses in the passage often coincide with the beats. For example, let’s look at this *fioratura* passage from Handel’s *Messiah*:

⁸W. Stephen Smith, with Michael Chipman, *the Naked Voice: A Wholistic Approach to Singing*, Oxford University Press, (2007)



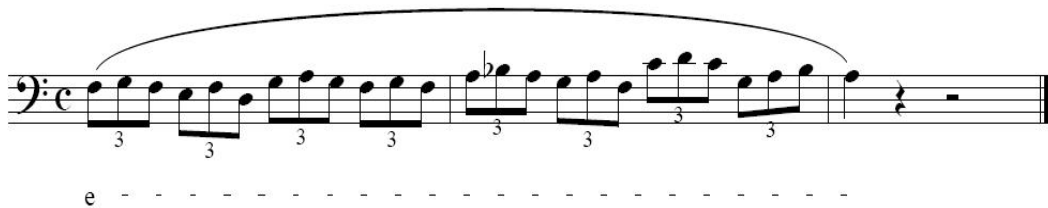
Step Four: Combine Two Pulses at a Time

Now, we combine two pulses plus the first note of the next pulse at a slower tempo, like so:

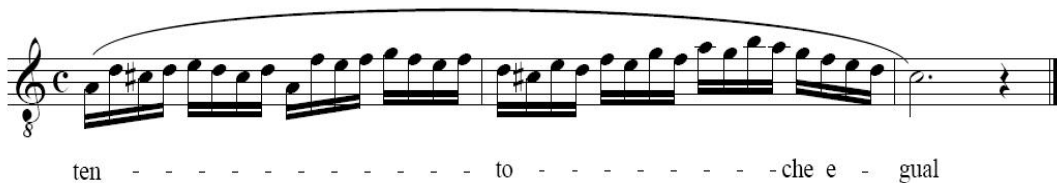


Step Five: Combine All Pulses

In the final step, we sing all of the notes of every pulse. Once we can do so with freedom and clarity, we gradually increase the speed to performance tempo.



This five-step process is also demonstrated with the following passage from Rossini’s *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*.



The Science of Vocal Pedagogy: Theory and Application by D. Ralph Appelman

Appelman states that the four main objectives of his book are: “First, to intentionally and directly train the singer’s aural awareness of his utterance of the word in song; Second, to describe the scientific theories of vocal pedagogy in a simplified and direct manner; Third, is to suggest a phonetic system of teaching voice based upon the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA); Fourth, to offer an acoustic

model of phonemic utterance that may be accepted as a standard of imitation.”⁹ From these four objectives, it can be seen that the book is meant to train the singing teacher and also the singer who desire to perform professionally. Appelman aims to help these people understand the physiology of singing and the methods for teaching such processes of phonation, respiration (breathing), resonance, and articulation.

This book divided into two parts.

Part I Theory

Vocal pedagogy and Voice teaching

Respiration

Phonation: The larynx as a biological-biosocial organ

Laws that govern the vocal sound

Sound as sensation

Part II Application

Phonetics: The linguistic element of interpretation

Stress: The emotional element of interpretation

Styles and Dialects: The social element of interpretation

Vowel Migration: The intellectual element of interpretation.

Kinesiologic analysis of speech sounds in singing

International Phonetic Alphabet for Singers: A manual for English and Foreigner Language Diction by Joan Wall

Joan Wall presents the symbols that represent both the consonant and vowel sounds that make up most of the language sounds in the world. This is particularly helpful to the learner so that they can more fully understand how to pronounce and form each phoneme in order to correctly produce the words in their desired singing language. Since IPA is applied to many languages, it is beneficial to singers so they learn to communicate well in their singing by understanding the nuances embodied in different languages. The author states “Perceive vowel enunciation, along with good breath management, form the primary foundation for the

⁹Appelman, D. Ralph, *the Science of Vocal Pedagogy: Theory and Application*. Indiana University Press (1986)

control of good tonal production and enables a singer to sing with sonority, beauty, flexibility and expressiveness. And, of course, distinct articulation enhances communication of lyrics and artistic shaping of musical phrases.”¹⁰

Each chapter presents the physical characteristics of individual language sounds, exercises and IPA transcriptions

The image shows two musical staves. The first staff is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time, showing a sequence of notes with IPA transcriptions: [i], [I], [eI], [ɛ], and [æ]. The second staff is in B-flat major (two flats) and 4/4 time, showing a sequence of notes with corresponding words: back, sag, plan; fact, can, bland; lag, man, ham.

Overtones of Bel Canto by Berton Coffin

In hopes of achieving a more authentic approach to Bel Canto singing, Coffin created a new method in the 1990’s, a time when voice science gained popularity in the vocal studio. He believes that both register events and vowel colors on certain notes of the scale were at the center of voice classification. His book presents the study of harmonics to show resonance tracking with the Chromatic Vowels chart. “Chromatic Vowels chart is to set forth in acoustic phonetics, register and musical notation, many exercises with will collect and make the voice stronger and more musical according to the precepts of Bel Canto.”¹¹ Coffin’s book is divided into three chapters: I. the Intelligibility of Language in Singing; chapters: II. The Female Voices; chapters: III. The Male Voices, This method was formed during four years of research in addition to twenty-five years of teaching experience.

Example of Vowels Chart, *Page 27*

¹⁰Joan Wall, *International Phonetic Alphabet for Singers: A manual for English and Foreigner Language Diction*, Caldwell Publisher Company (1989)

¹¹Coffin, Berton. *Coffin’s Overtones of bel canto: Phonetic Basis of Artistic Singing*. Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, (1980)

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

3.1 An Analysis of the problems

This study sought to create a reference that would serve as a pedagogical method to help solve the common vocal problems and challenges that western classical vocal performance presented to the Thai students of Mahidol University at the pre-college and undergraduate levels. In the initial phase of this project, the researcher gathered subjects and arranged to interview participants that were suitable to the study. For the purposes of gaining hands-on knowledge about working with Thai students, four expert teachers from Mahidol University were interviewed: Dr. Joseph Warren Rinaldi, Dr. Corey Trahan, Mr. Raymond Diaz, M.D., and Miss Mariangela Chatzistamatiou. Each of these full-time faculty members in the voice department was directly involved with the results of this paper.

1. Dr. Joseph Rinaldi

Dr. Rinaldi completed his Doctor of Musical Arts degree at the University of North Texas under the tutelage of Dr. Jeffrey Snider. While at North Texas, he performed the roles of Mercutio in Romeo et Juliette, Schaunard in La Boheme, Frank in Die Fledermaus, and Principal Comedian in The Bartered Bride. Dr. Joseph holds a Master of Music degree in Performance from the University of North Texas and a Bachelor of Music Education degree with Performance Honors from Syracuse University¹².

2. Dr. Corey Trahan

Dr. Trahan's academic degrees, included the Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of North Texas, the Master of Music degree from the

¹²Dr. Joseph Rinaldi, *Faculty Profile*,
<http://www.music.mahidol.ac.th/en/faculty/instructor.php> (Viewed 20 March 2013)

University of Houston and the Bachelor of Music degree from Louisiana State University. He has been an apprentice with Lake George Opera, Central City Opera, Des Moines Metro Opera, Amarillo Opera, Shreveport Opera and the Seagle Music Colony. Dr. Trahan is a current member of the American Guild of Music Artists, Actor's Equity Association and National Association of Teachers of Singing.¹³

3. Mr. Raymond Diaz, M.D.

Mr. Diaz obtained his Master of Music degree in Voice Performance from the Peabody Conservatory of Music in Baltimore where he studied with Stanley Cornett. He obtained his Bachelor of Music degree in Voice from the University of the Philippines (UP) from which he holds degrees in Biology and Medicine as well. His voice teachers in the Philippines include Aileen Espinosa-Cura, Ramon Acoymo, and Evelyn Mandac; in addition, he has worked with Antonia Lavanne and Stephen Smith in New York City¹⁴.

4. Miss Mariangela Chatzistamatiou

Miss Chatzistamatiou was born and raised in Greece where she received the fundamentals in vocal training. In 2011 she received the Master's in Music in Voice Performance at Bowling Green State University in Ohio (USA). She also holds degrees from the Università per Stranieri di Perugia (Italy) and the Université Paris Sorbonne (France). Early on she traveled throughout Europe and the Balkans participating in ethnic and folk music festivals, as member of various traditional music groups and orchestras¹⁵.

The material used to collect data was a questionnaire that inquired about the common vocal problems in western classical vocal performance encountered by Thai students of Mahidol University. The purpose of the questionnaire was to collect

¹³ Dr. Corey Trahan, *Faculty Profile*,
<http://www.music.mahidol.ac.th/en/faculty/instructor.php> (Viewed 20 March 2013)

¹⁴ Mr. Raymond Diaz, M.D. , *Faculty Profile*,
<http://www.music.mahidol.ac.th/en/faculty/instructor.php> (Viewed 20 March 2013)

¹⁵ Miss Mariangela Chatzistamatiou, *Faculty Profile*,
<http://www.music.mahidol.ac.th/en/faculty/instructor.php> (Viewed 20 March 2013)

information from these teachers that would help identify the perceived problems of Thai students as well as provide suggestions on how to correct these issues

3.2 Interview Questions

1. What are some of the main pedagogical problems that you face when teaching vocal students in Thailand?

The purpose of this question is to gain information that deals explicitly with Thai students because prior research has not included a book specifically dedicated to the teaching of Thai students. Hopeful answers might discuss the ideas of the differences in native language, the idioms of sound production, and the differences in physical production of sound.

Example answer

I find that many of the singing problems that I have encountered in Thailand stem from two main issues. The first is derived from the nature of the Thai language, which uses much of the back tongue muscle. In many traditions of Western singing, teachers try to eliminate tongue tension as it apprehends the implementation of full freedom of the tone. By the sheer nature of growing up in a language that demands use of the tongue in such a way, it is of no wonder why so many singers encounter problems with tongue and jaw tension. Though this problem is pervasive among my students, it is certainly manageable with corrective exercises and techniques.

One of the other problems that I find among my students centers on the physical size of many students. Classical singing teachers often talk of “deep” and “full” breathing tactics, and where most students are able to manage these techniques, some students are physically too small to manage complete inhalation. In my lessons we work on body awareness as well as stretching and movement exercises in order to help the singer fully expand.

Dr. Joseph Rinaldi

2. How do you approach the resolution of these issues as a teacher?

The multicultural background of the four interviewed teachers is helpful to this study because it offers a wider difference of opinion relating to how one goes about teaching Thai students. The panel includes a teacher from Greece, one from the Philippines, and two from America. Additionally, in order to increase my knowledge of learning a teaching method from senior teachers, I found supporting text from Daneil Rose (2004), “Role model education can be seen as effective because it bridges the gap between the ideal and reality. Education becomes experimental, as students learn little about their teacher’s lives, and how they embody the values they are trying to pass on and explore.”¹⁶

Example answer

When it comes to singing technique-related issues, I approach them with various exercises depending on each particular issue. Posture and body weakness issues on the other hand cannot be exclusively solved by me. I regularly talk to my students about the importance of proper posture and healthy body engagement. I show my students anatomy and proper breathing videos and charts from pedagogy books to help them understand in a visual way. I also encourage them to attend a holistic exercise class like yoga, tai chi, palates etc. I am a fan of methods that focus on engaging and exercising the mind, the body and the soul.

Mariangela Chatzistamatiou

3. Do you think Thai language inherently creates problems for healthy vocal production in the Western Classical traditional music?

Language can be conceptualized as the combination of phonemes and vowels set to a certain pitch. It is my belief that in every language the differences in vowel sounds and consonants become intrinsic to the automatic type of motor skill dealing with muscle memory. When a singer uses a language different than their native tongue, they must notice the variables associated with vowel definition and pitching. If the singer is bound by their intrinsic muscle memory, there may certainly be vocal problems, such as muscle. Daniel Pape and Christine Mooshammer (2005)

¹⁶ Daneil Rose, *the potential of Role-model education, 2004*, The Encyclopedia of informal Education. Retrieved from www.inflod.org/biblio/role_model_education.htm

discussed this information in their article about Is Intrinsic pitch language-dependent? Evidences from a cross-linguistic vowel pitch experiment (with additional screening of the listeners dl for music and speech), saying, “Examining the differences in intrinsic pitch cross linguistically comparing German and Italian, it can be seen that intrinsic pitch is not at all present in the Romance language as tested with our setup. Additionally, taking into account the results in Pape et al. 2005([2]) there is further evidence that intrinsic pitch is also not used in Catalan, although the cue F0 is used similar to Germanic languages for stress.”¹⁷ The aforementioned research, though, does not discuss Thai languages and so this interview question aims to discover the differences between Thai vowel sounds and western vowel sounds, especially English.

Example answer

To my Western ears, the Thai language is produced in the front of the mouth. Often the sounds are nasal and lack resonance. The culture seems to frown upon extroverted speaking, favoring softer dynamics. For singing, these are problems. The Thai student has to overcome the notion to speak quietly and learn how to project their voices with resonance and breathe management; including the entire mouth, throat and neck when producing sung tone is often foreign to the Thai singers.

To reduce nasality, I have the Thai singers do exercises beginning with [b], and [p], both of which discourage nasal production. I also encourage them to maintain a high soft palate which in turn reduces the amount of sound that exits through the nasal cavity.

Dr. Corey Trahan

4. Are there certain exercises or vocalizes that are effective in reducing these pedagogical problems?

In order to teach technique, a teacher uses various exercises in hopes of correcting inherent vocal concerns and problems. Through these exercises, a singer will properly build vocal strength and endurance, similar to an athlete who trains at the gym. Singing is as much a sport as any other and the singer must train their body to

¹⁷ Daniel Pape, Christine Mooshammer (2005) Is Intrinsic Pitch language dependent? “Evidences from across linguistic vowel pitch experiment (with additional screening of the listener dl for music and speech)

perform under various circumstances. A singer must be able to have the endurance to survive the length of pieces of music, specifically songs and arias. Victor Fields states, “Since songs are the most prevalent vehicles for vocal-musical expression, technical training has its main purpose to prepare the student for singing songs.”¹⁸

Example answer

I like to work with the five cardinal vowels [i – e – a – o – u]. Various exercises on scales or triads can be employed to help free the tongue and release the jaw. I like to work usually with the scale degrees 1-5 (do, re, mi, fa, sol, fa, mi, re, do) in quick patterns on single vowels. For example, singing all AH or OH on a five note scale in eight or sixteenth notes.

Dr. Joseph Rinaldi

5. In your experience with Thai students, what concepts of singing are most difficult for them to understand?

This question addresses the main issues that Thai student have when dealing with essentially foreign concepts. The results of this question aim to prepare future teachers of Thai students so that they might be better prepared before entering the studio.

Example answer

Certain diction items are quite difficult to grasp. For example, the difference between the closed [e] and open [ɛ] and [i] and [I] are often problematic. In many Thai female students, the concept of head voice is also quite difficult to grasp.

Dr. Joseph Rinaldi

6. Which pedagogy books do you most often reference when looking for, or explaining, pedagogical problems to your students? Could you please list your “top three” pedagogy books in order of preference?

Vocal pedagogy books are a predominant tool in providing information for teachers who want to find academic basis for the effective principles of singing. These

¹⁸ Victor fields, training the Singing Voice: *An Analysis of the Working Concept Contained in Recent Contributions to Vocal Pedagogy* (New York: King’s Crown Press, 1974), 53

pedagogical ideals are derived from many field studies that are grounded in scientific procedure.

Vocal pedagogy books may include such varied topics as anatomy and physiology, acoustics, aerodynamic principles of voice, diction, vocal health, vocal technique, singing style, and voice classification. Some books tend to focus on several specific topics in very great detail, while others choose to include more topics, providing more abridged information. By asking senior teachers of their preferred pedagogy books, the study will benefit in gaining the useful and practical vocal pedagogy books to serve as guideline for teaching.

Example answer

The Science of Vocal Pedagogy (D. Ralph Appelman)

International Phonetic Alphabet for singer (John Wall)

Mr. Raymond Diaz, M.D.

7. In reference to the German Fach system of vocal classification, which Fach do you find most common among Thai voice students?

The German Fach system is a method for classifying the voice of operatic singer according to its range, weight, color, tessitura, transition points, speech levels, age and experiences. The system identifies a certain assignment of repertoire for the purposes of achieving success in vocal training. This question aims to gain understanding about the singers in Thailand. It hopes to assist in the planning structures so that suitable voice types are identified and matched to an appropriate teacher. It can also be beneficial in higher education systems that produce voice workshops and productions. This will aid the future of the opera as a legitimate art form in Thailand.

Example answer

Light-lyric soprano for female

Light tenor, some Baritone for Male

Mr. Raymond Diaz, M.D.

8. Do you think this classification is a result of the physical stature of many Thai vocal students?

Example answer

Yes, I think that Thais are very slender people, and I feel that this contributes to the idea that most males and females are sopranos and tenors.

Mr. Raymond Diaz, M.D.

9. Do you find it challenging to assign repertoire from the Western tradition to Thai students exhibiting pedagogical problems? How do you go about assigning repertoire?

Selecting appropriate repertoire for a student is one of the most challenging aspects of being a teacher. Teachers must choose carefully, considering the various aspects of voice type, gender and age. Choosing correct repertoire will result in the proper development of the voice. Choosing unfit repertoire can lead to vocal problems, a limitation in vocal abilities, and an overall lack of musicality. One can measure our ability based on the discoveries made during vocalization. In Clifton Ware's opinion, "Repertoire should be challenging enough to motivate student effort without causing constant frustration and feeling of inadequacy."¹⁹

Example answer

Teaching music theatre voice presents equal diction challenges as pedagogical. Many of the contemporary music theatre composers use slang or innuendo which must be understood by the Thai singer to deliver a believable performance. Modern music theatre styles of singing favor pop and rock singing which sometimes contradict classical singing. I encourage them to use classical breathing and vocal postures to produce sounds appropriate for each musical's style. I do require that each singer study at least one classical song or aria. The music theatre repertoire spans legit, contemporary, up-tempos, ballads, pop and jazz. In addition, they have the added challenge of moving/dancing to many of these songs which can test the stability any singer's vocal technique. I must take into account each 1) vocal 2) dramatic 3) physical ability when choosing repertoire.

Dr. Corey Trahan

10. Are there any other thoughts or concerns regarding vocal pedagogy that you might offer as advice to Thai students reading this manual?

Example answer

¹⁹ Clifton ware, *Basic of Vocal pedagogy* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 1998), 229

I think the Thai students just have to remember that being in this business is a demanding career choice, so they have to be ready to sacrifice a lot of time and decide to commit themselves as good as they possibly can be. I would suggest for Thai students to not look at just singing in Thailand. I would highly encourage them to look internationally at the present standard of singing professionally. Hopefully they will be more inspired. The language is so important in this career and just to be able to mimic other languages is very important. The awareness of diction should be addressed immediately if they are serious about this.

Mr. Raymond Diaz, M.D.

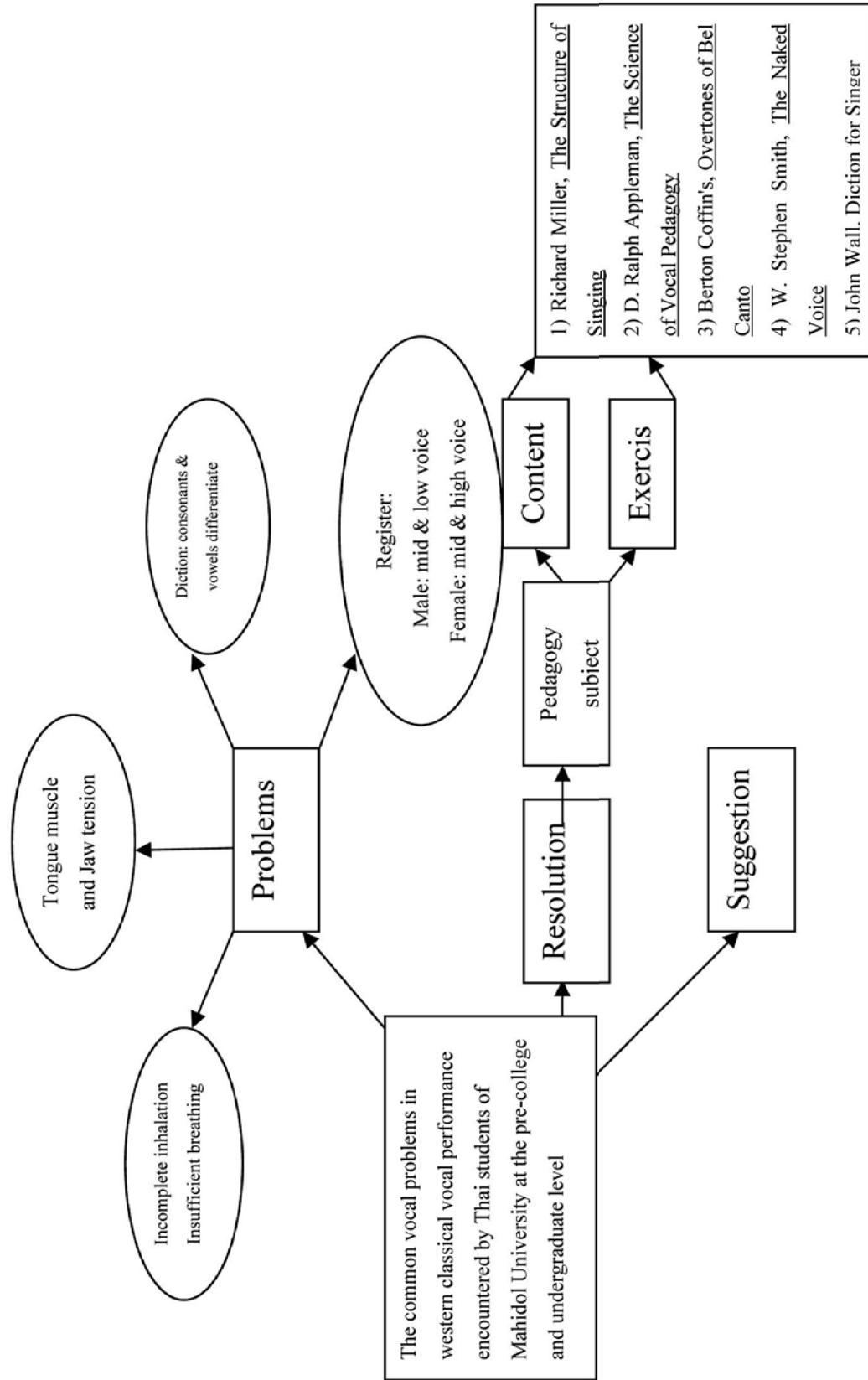
CHAPTER IV

RESULT

4.1 Resolution

This chapter presents all of the suggested results and resolutions in subjects relating to pedagogical methods, which have a high practical application for teaching voice to Thai students. These results discuss the common vocal problems in western classical vocal performance encountered by Thai students of Mahidol University at the pre-college and undergraduate levels. This was executed through a questionnaire administered to four full time voice faculty members of Mahidol University that are teaching western classical singing performance to Thai students. Five academic books relating to the topics of pedagogy were studied: The Structure of Singing: System and Art in Vocal Technique by Richard Miller; The Naked Voice: A Wholistic Approach to Singing by W. Stephen Smith with Micheal Chipman; The Science of Vocal Pedagogy: Theory and Application by D. Ralph Appleman; International Phonetic Alphabet for Singers: A manual for English and Foreign Language Diction by John wall; and Overtones of Bel Canto by Berton Coffin. The four perceived main concerns of Thai singers in western classical music that were evident from interviews are: tongue muscle and jaw tension; incomplete inhalation/insufficient breathing; differentiation of the consonants and vowels in diction; and register issues of the male middle & low voice and female middle & high voice (high larynx position). This chapter aims to provide a concise resolution to these problems.

Table 4.1 Conceptual of Framework



4.1.1 Tongue muscle and Jaw tension

Throughout the course of my study, it became evident that Thai students suffer from increased tongue tension. Several of those interviewed commented that this is due in part because of the nature of the Thai language. For example, Dr. Rinaldi suggests that, “Singing is similar to using vernacular speech. Also, elements of vernacular speech entangle the muscles around the voice, so eventually we must refine the movement of our articulators beyond vernacular speech to achieve complete freedom.” To address the issue of tongue tension, W. Stephen Smith’s method was quite helpful. In his pedagogy book, he relies heavily on the clarity of the speaking voice.

Through various exercises of refining every vowel, he is able to achieve musculature that is free from entanglement in each of his singers. For example, in the normal production of an [i] vowel, a singer will push his tongue forward, flattening the inside of the mouth and going more laterally than is optimal for the sound production required for a beautiful tone in singing. As an alternative to this, Smith suggests that the arch of the tongue move more towards the back of the mouth, so that it touches the back molars. This position will help the tongue entangle the musculature much less. The [i] vowel is similar to the [e] vowel, but it is a bit more relaxed at the base of the tongue. Smith suggests that this is achieved by lowering the arch and allowing the base of the tongue to move slightly back. For the [a] vowel, there is no specific tongue or lip position, but the base of the tongue should stay relaxed. He believes this is an ideal vowel that will achieve balance because the vocal cords will vibrate most freely with this vowel position. We can also find the rounded lip vowels by dropping the jaw where we naturally say [a] and simply moving the lips around for [o] and [u].

Smith suggests that all singers must practice saying [i], [e], [o] and [u] with no movement of the jaw in order to define the vowels only with the tongue, lips, and soft palate. By using this exercise consistently, it will help Thai students to relax their tongues and to achieve the feeling of western pure vowels. Smith takes the exercise further by placing importance on combining a consonant with the pure vowel. He uses the consonant [n] with the five vowels in order to achieve balance and clarity. As described, the singer would practice saying [ni]-[ne]-[na]-[no]-[nu] without adding unnecessary pressure. This can help Thai students to overcome their over pronunciation

and muscular effort when producing pure tones. Because the Thai vowel sounds are different from western vowel sounds in many aspects, rigorous practice must be taken to resolve the issue. Also, because native Thai speakers have spoken this way for so many years, they naturally refer to tightened muscles when producing foreign sounds. Smith suggests that, “the way we use our articulators as a result of our language, becomes part of our muscle memory. We hold our first language as a certain sound that will become our base habit of pronunciation.”²⁰ Thai students should practice this exercise as a routine to free their tongues and to help create a more consistent vocal sound production.

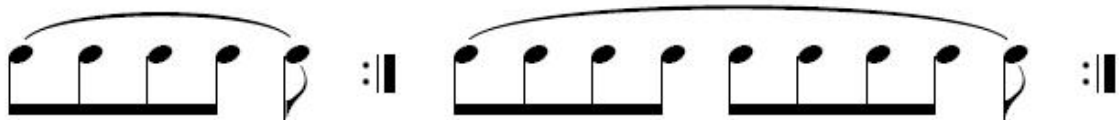
4.1.2 Incomplete Inhalation/ Insufficient Breath

Another intrinsic problem for Thai students is the failure to take a full and complete breath to gain maximum breath support. This lack of support and air flow creates problems for all singers. To address the issue of insufficient breathing/ incomplete inhalation, W. Stephen Smith’s method was quite helpful. In his pedagogy book, he addresses a technique for breathing that centers on the principles of proper expansion of the body. Thai students must understand more about the physical production of sound, which has not been commonly taught before. Customarily, Thai teachers and singers use imagery when conceptualizing the style of breathing so most Thai students do not have physical awareness of their body. To achieve this, exercises must be done in order to open the eyes of recognition. Dr. Rinaldi suggests that, “In my lessons we work on body awareness as well as stretching and movement exercises in order to help the singer fully expand some students are physically too small to manage complete inhalation.” Dr. Rinaldi, who has studied the W. Stephen Smith method, offered the following support from Smith’s book, “it is important to think about expansion of the abdomen not the chest, this way also expand the lungs like sleeping baby breath. Expand the lower abdominal because diaphragm is aligned with

²⁰ W. Stephen Smith, with Michael Chipman, *The Naked Voice: A Wholistic Approach to Singing*, Oxford University Press, (2007)

the bottom of the ribcage will result the higher in the front and lower in the back. The proper alignment-the chin is not thrust forward or tucked into the neck; the spine feels stretched but relaxes, chest is pulled up, shoulder and arm dangle down the side. Lastly is managing their breath in a way that eases.²¹ This concept is very helpful to Thai students in that it will allow them to think about a new way of capturing a full, expanded breath.

I believe proper posture and a healthy body engagement will be the first idea to help Thai students from having insufficient breathing/ incomplete inhalation. Students need to work diligently on building strength and expansion in their bodies. As Dr. Trahan provided, “Most of the Thai students lack energy when they sing. Singing is athletic and should include the entire body. Many times their timid or relaxed nature carries over when singing, resulting in boring and limp performances.” To address this issue, D. Ralph Appelman’s method was quite helpful because of his discussion on breath and the body. This exercise will help to increase strength in students who do not use enough abdominal muscular support during phonation in singing. The exercise requires five and nine pulsated sounds on one pitch level sung on the neutral vowel [ʌ] as in *up*. (Pulse drill)



Appelman provides that, “When the drill is introduced, it must be sung quietly with no attempt on the part of the singer. Such sounds create a tension at the larynx. The muscles of the throat and neck should be completely relaxed.”²² The

²¹ W. Stephen Smith, with Michael Chipman, *The Naked Voice: A Wholistic Approach to Singing*, Oxford University Press, (2007)

²² Appelman, D. Ralph, *the Science of Vocal Pedagogy: Theory and Application*. Indiana University Press (1986)

pulsating nature of this exercise will help Thai students better understand the idea of abdominal support. More strength building exercises have been included in the appendix of this document.

Many teachers have different ideas of the proper technique of breath support. The ideas of breath support directly deal with varied philosophies of healthy vocal production. Some teaching techniques agree with the idea of expanding the chest and abdominal evenly. There are also methods with require a standing position where the abdomen is pushed outwards. In this position, the singer tries to push their belly outwards from the center of the body throughout the entire exhalation. Advocates of this technique believe that it will allow for the management of breath during a phrase to last longer. Still, others believe that tucking the abdomen inwards is necessary because it creates the firm pressure that singers might need to feel grounded in order to sing the full extent of their range. Both situations offer benefits for different singers, but they both derive from abdominal and body awareness. Although particular attention has recently been given to this method in Thailand, the idea of breathing from the core of the body dates back to the great Italian masters of singing.

A concept that requires less muscular attention on the exhalation is derived from W. Stephen Smith's method. His approach is to, "Release all of the air, all the time. This means not, "controlling" that release of air. Singers are typically trained to gain breath control. [I] dislike the concept of controlling the breath because the vocal folds actually regulate (control) the airflow. Therefore, we don't need to control the breath. Proper exhalation gives us the feeling of being out of control."²³ Although this concept requires on an element of losing control, it still requires a great amount of body awareness. Furthermore, it requires a complete inhalation in order for this method of losing control to be accomplished fully.

²³ W. Stephen Smith, with Michael Chipman, *The Naked Voice: A Wholistic Approach to Singing*, Oxford University Press, (2007)

These methods will all help to contribute to better singing in Thai students. Due to the overall lack in muscular engagement, any of the above techniques would promote more body awareness, and this will help them to solve the issues of incomplete breath and inhalation. I find that by demonstrating and teaching in the areas of anatomy through pedagogy books, Thai students will be able to more properly engage their abdominal muscles in a way that will support their phonation properly while still striving to have a freedom in their air flow.

4.1.3 Differentiation of Diction and Vowels

The third issue that was addressed is the problem concerning diction and how to distinguish the differences between each vowel sound. This is further complicated by learning how to differentiate between Thai vowel sounds and English vowel sounds. The specific problem related to Thai students centers on two issues: consonant sound error, and vowel sound error. After conducting the interviews with Mahidol teachers, it was determined that the follow are examples of the most prominent cases of consonant sound errors:

- The symbol [v] it is pronounce as a [w], [r] and [l] that is a general miss articulation.

- The letters "th" are often pronounced [d]
- Voiced and Unvoiced consonants are often confused

The interviews also discussed the following cases pertaining to vowel sound errors:

- Problems with the vowel [i] as in Tree or Me
- Vowel confusion with the vowel [ɛ] and the diphthong [eɪ] a word such as in the word head [hɛd]

- Confusion between vowel [ɔ] and [ou]

In addition to these general problems, Dr. Trahan provides that, “the Thai language is produced in the front of the mouth. Often the sounds are nasal and lack resonance. The culture seems to frown upon extroverted speaking, favoring softer dynamics. For singing, these are problems.” Singers often refer to the symbols used to

represent each sound of a word. These symbols allow a singer to know exactly how the word should be created. One of the reasons that this can become problematic is that the Thai students have limited knowledge of the IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet) symbols as well as sounds common to both languages. Therefore, I have provided a summary of the International Phonetic Alphabet below. Supplemental information on IPA may be found in the appendix of this document.

Table 4.2 International Phonetic Alphabet Consonants

	IPA Symbol	Sound
Stop plosives	[p] [b] [t] [d] [k] [g]	p b t d k g
Nasals	[m] [n] [ŋ]	
Fricatives	[f] [v] [θ] [ð] [s] [z] [ʃ] [ʒ] [h]	
Lateral	[l]	
Glides	[r] [j] [hw] [w]	
Combination consonants	[tʃ] [dʒ]	

After reviewing the information of International Phonetic Alphabet, it became evident that it would be necessary to compare the Thai consonants with English consonants in order to help Thai students become more aware of the

similarities in the two languages. In order to alleviate some of the confusion in understanding IPA, I have drawn comparisons in the table below.

Table 4.3 International Phonetic Alphabet and Thai Alphabet Consonants²⁴

	Bilabial		Labio dental	Alveolar		Post-alveolar	Palatal	Velar		Glottal
<u>Nasal</u>		[m]			[n]				[ŋ]	
		ม			ณ, น				ง	
<u>Stop or Plosive</u>	[p] ป	[p ^h] พ, พ ,ป	[b] บ	[t] ต	[t ^h] ท, ท ,ต, ถ, ท, ธ	[d] ด		[k] ก ก, ข ค, ก, ข น	[k ^k] ข, ข ค, ก, ข	[ʔ] อ
<u>Fricative</u>			[f] ฟ, ฟ	[s] ซ, ส ,ซ, ส						[h] ฮ, ฮ
<u>Combination</u>						[tʃ] จ จ	[tʃ ^h] ฉ, ฉ ,ฉ			
<u>Liquid or Trill</u>					[r] ร ร					
<u>Glide or Approximant</u>	[w] ว						[j] ย, ย			
<u>Lateral approximant</u>					[l] ล, ล ฬ					

²⁴ Suraporn Konthong, M.D.

One of the problems with Thai students and Western vowels is that there are tendencies for students to sing with a nasal production. It is therefore the responsibility of the teacher, and subsequently the teacher, to find exercises that will help to eliminate the nasality in this production. Dr. Trahan provides that he often has, “Thai singers do exercises beginning with [b], and [p], both of which discourage nasal production. I also encourage them to maintain a high soft palate which in turn reduces the amount of sound that exits through the nasal cavity.” Such exercises promote healthy vocal production as well as strive towards the clear sound that is desired in western classical singing. Similarly to the above consonant chart, I have created a vowel comparison chart, using Thai symbols, to help students better understand the similarities and differences between Thai and English vowels.

Table 4.4 International Phonetic Alphabet and Thai Vowels²⁵

	<u>Front</u>		<u>Back</u>			
	unrounded		unrounded		rounded	
	short	long	short	long	short	long
<u>Close</u>	/i/	/I/	/Y/	/ə/	/u/	/u/
	ิ	ี	ย	เ	ุ	ู
<u>Closes-mid</u>	/ε/	/e/	/ɜ/	/ɜ/	/o/	/o/
	เ-ะ	เ-	เ-อ-ะ	เ-อ	โ-ะ	โ-
<u>Open-mid</u>	/æ/	/æ/			/ɔ/	/ɔ/
	แ-ะ	แ-			โ-ะ	-อ
<u>Open</u>			/a/	/a/		
			-ะ, -ะ	-า		

If a teacher were to implement these ideas, they could make a Thai student more aware of the sounds used for speech through use of IPA. Through this

²⁵ Kumarika Subhakarn and Raymond Diaz, Edited from Suraporn Konthong, M.D.

awareness, they will be able to differentiate the phonemes and different sounds and symbols. A third, more challenging, feat to overcome is the idea of building physical ability to create each of the different sounds and to distinguish physically these differences.

One of the most influential sources for building strength with different vowel and consonant sounds was Joan Wall's International Phonetic Alphabet for Singers: A manual for English and Foreign Language Diction. Below are some of the most helpful exercises that a teacher could use. They are the most suited for Thai students in terms mastering different combinations of consonants and vowels so that the Thai student will be able to develop each phoneme properly. This will help, clear phonation and give more clarity to the singer's enunciation.

Consonants and Vowels combining in each placement: Forward → Back

The exercise consists of five staves of music in 4/4 time. Each staff contains a sequence of notes with corresponding phonetic symbols and example words below them.

Staff 1: Forward vowels. Notes: [i], [I], [eI], [ε], [æ].

Staff 2: Back vowels. Notes: [u], [ʊ], [ou], [ɔ], [ɑ].
 Words: back, sag, plan, fact, can, bland, lag, man, ham.

Staff 3: Forward vowels. Notes: [e], [ɛ], [æ].
 Words: seen, bean, Ed, sinned, bane, add, send, bend, pest, sand, banned, past.

Staff 4: Back vowels. Notes: [u], [ʊ], [ou], [ɔ], [ɑ].
 Words: boot, loot, two, book, look, took, boat, loan, tore, bought, law, taught, box, lot, top.

Staff 5: Forward vowels. Notes: [ʌ], [a], [ɜ], [ʊ], [ɔ], [ɑ].

duck crumb spun
glove crux buck
gull stud one
us rug from

lock luck lock
fond fund fond
lot love lot
book buck book
stood stud stood

burn hurl urn
[bɜ:rn] [hɜ:rl] [ɜ:rn]
purse learn turn
[pɜ:rs] [lɜ:rn] [tɜ:rn]
word worm her
[wɜ:rd] [wɜ:rn] [hɜ:rn]

cer - tain hurt - ful irk - some
Bert - ram earn - est cour - age

vow
[ya - - - - u]
house
[ha - - - - ʊs]

joust out pout
brown shout town
clowns brow vow

flow - ers shout - ed down - - - town
round - ed loung - es pound - - - ed

toy
[tɔ: - - - - ɪ]
boil
[bɔ: - - - - ɪl]

brawl call broil coil tall fall toil foil

The image shows a musical score for a vowel exercise in 4/4 time. It consists of seven staves of music, each with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The notes are quarter notes, and the lyrics are written below the notes. Each staff is followed by a phonetic transcription of the vowel sounds.

Staff 1:
 boyd join hoyle coin oil moist boil joint
 use
 [ju - - - - z]
 beauty
 [bju - - - - tɪ]

Staff 2:
 you cute view mute hew huge

Staff 3:
 high
 [ha - - - - I]
 pie
 [pa - - - - I]

Staff 4:
 lots lights
 ha hi
 rot right

Staff 5:
 tired fly mind buy line lie

Staff 6:
 kite light climb fine
 my why wine flight
 prize slide twice size

Registers and Range Switching

To address the issue of Registers and Range Switching for Thai students, the concepts suggested by the following sources were particularly helpful: The Structure of Singing: System and Art in Vocal Technique by Richard Miller and Overtones of Bel Canto by Berton Coffin. Once a student has mastered the techniques in freeing the jaw and tongue from tension and they are able to distinguish the different phonemes properly, they can advance their technique by learning the proper way to modify. A singer who can manage their registers seamlessly will have more evenness throughout their entire range. Dr. Trahan will often exercise his students in a way that helps students work in each register and with modified vowels. He offers, “I have them modify pure vowels to more neutral vowels in the upper range, encouraging them to feel height inside the mouth, throat and neck and I have them create sounds using entirely chest voice, entirely head voice and then finding a ratio between the two registers to balance their sound.”

To describe the process of modification, D. Ralph Appelman was very helpful. He provides the method of vowel modification, is also helpful to some students in adjusting the vocal tract resonance. The modification is accomplished through psychological directives which suggest vowel coloring, i.e., a lighter or a darker sound for a particular vowel and it can be easily substituted for its basic vowel in syntax. When modified a vowel will simultaneously change the shape of the vocal tract which altering the resonance. Vowel modification can allow for additional tone colors and expression. (Karyn O’Connor, 2011) “Vowel modification can also help in developing the full range of the head register”²⁶. Other supporting ideas for solving these problems in vowel modification are explained by (Berton Coffin, 1980). In his experience he found that “when the degree of openness of the mouth is allowed to adjust to resonated sung pitches, the voice was clearer and the vibrato was able to spin more”²⁷. I believe that the vowel

²⁶ Karyn O’Connor, Vowels Formants And Modifications <http://www.singwise.com/cgi-bin/main.pl?section=articles&doc=VowelsFormantsAndModifications&page=3>, (Viewed 20 March 2013)

²⁷ Coffin, Berton. *Coffin’s Overtones of bel canto: Phonetic Basis of Artistic Singing*. Metuchen

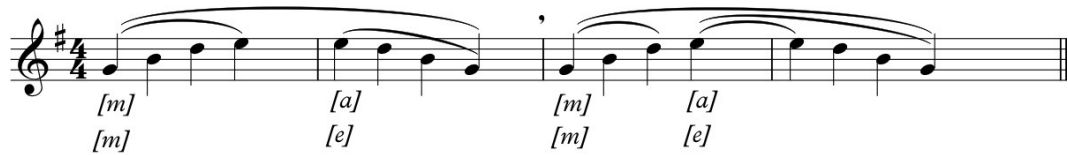
modification method will help Thai students easily approach their high notes because the ability to control the resonance tract can help a singer find the position to sing which has the least amount of tension. Students will also be able to draw upon their newly found support in order to sing these high notes because a higher degree of breath flow is needed to sing high notes where the cords are tighter and longer, requiring faster puffs of air. The method of vowel modification might be very difficult for Thai students because it requires even greater knowledge of the IPA. In order to modify a vowel, one must know all of the symbols for the pure vowels first.

Here is an example of a vowel modification exercise to help laryngeal production of sound in a neutral vowel. Richard Miller states that, “Expressed phonetically by [ʌ], and in the *schwa* vowel, [ə]. The *schwa* will present the neutral sound when singing foreign language. The vowel [a] is a midway in the vowel series it possible approaching from either front or back vowels can be even more a appropriately as a central modifying vowel than the *schwa*, which sometimes becomes lost in indeterminate timbre.”²⁸ Richard Miller also provides that, “In vocalizing an arpeggio on the vowel [i] into the upper regions of the voice, some modification toward neutralization must take place as a means of balancing out additional upper partials of high pitch and front vowel. The vowel [i] must therefore modify toward the vowel [I] for opening the mouth wider “²⁹

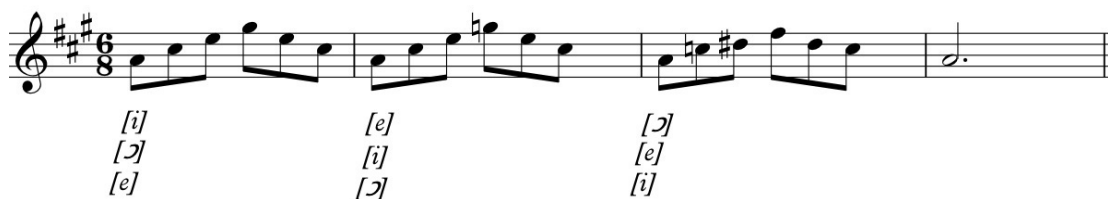
²⁸ Miller, Richard, *The structure of singing: system and art in vocal technique*. New York: Schirmer Books. (1986)

²⁹ Miller, Richard, *The structure of singing: system and art in vocal technique*. New York: Schirmer Books, (1986)

Example exercise that helps achieve an evenly registered scale in the lower and middle voices



Example exercise that helps achieved an evenly registered scale in upper and middle voices.



Additional examples of exercises that can help with this may be found in the book.

Many of the students at Mahidol University are unaware of laryngeal positioning and vowel placement. From his interview, Dr. Trahan mentioned, “Many of the males I teach do not understand how to approach their middle and especially upper ranges with respect to laryngeal position. I do exercises on the vowels [o] and [u] that begin in the lower range and extend into the upper range. These two vowels seem to keep the laryngeal posture comfortably low and aids in keeping the neck and throat relaxed”

Some authors also believed that vowel modification can be used as the main subject of discourse in classical vocal training style, for example Berton Coffin’s Overtone of Bel Canto. His method is primarily based on the principles of vowel modification. Still some other authors do not believe that vowel modification is necessary as a main method of training, for example W. Stephen Smith. In any case, the technique of vowel modification may have benefits that help to extend the vocal range and add additional vocal colors to achieve the optimal sound for a singer’s perceived voice. However, this technique must not be approached until a singer has full understanding of their own physicality. As Coffin states, “The study of rounding the vowels needs to be done slowly and carefully, *paying strict attention* to the slow

and gradual rounding of the vowel forms. The mouth shape should be rounded toward an oval. Darkening of the vowel should only be done by increasing the acoustical space, not by pulling down the soft palate or the back of the tongue. These incorrect and unhealthy techniques cut out the upper overtones, and lead to inconsistency and frustration for the singer.”³⁰

Here is example from Coffin’s technique on vowel modification:

Neutral Front Degree of Openness Back Umlaut	Color on Chart	Front Umlaut Degree of Openness Back	Neutral Quality of Sound	Neutral Umlaut Degree of Openness Back Front
18	Red	18	spread	18
17		17		17
16		16		16
v/a 15 v/a	Gold	a/a 15 v/v	open clear	v/a 15 v/a
^æ 14 v/a		æ/a 14 v/^		^/a 14 v/æ
^æ 13 v/a		æ/a 13 v/^		^/a 13 v/æ
^æ 12 v/a		æ/a 12 v/^		^/a 12 v/æ
^E 11 v/oe	Green	E/oe 11 v/^	moderately open	^/oe 11 v/E
(^)/E 10 v/oe		E/oe 10 v/^		(^)/oe 10 v/E
(^)/E 9 v/oe		E/oe 9 v/^		(^)/oe 9 v/E
(^)/E 8 v/oe		E/oe 8 v/^		(^)/oe 8 v/E
v/e 7 o/ø		e/ø 7 o/v		v/ø 7 o/e
v/e 6 o/ø	e/ø 6 o/v	v/ø 6 o/e		
v/e 5 o/ø	e/ø 5 o/v	v/ø 5 o/e		
v/I 4 u/Y	Blue	I/Y 4 u/v	closed	v/Y 4 u/I
ə/I 3 u/Y		I/Y 3 u/ə		ə/Y 3 u/I
ə/i 2 u/y		i/y 2 u/ə		ə/y 2 u/i
ə/i 1 u/y	i/y 1 u/ə	ə/y 1 u/i		

Yodel back and forth on the same degree of opening on the Chart below--continually changing tessitura.

	red K					red C					red M					red X					red V										
Degree of Openness	12	13	14	15	12	13	14	15	12	13	14	15	12	13	14	15	12	13	14	15	12	13	14	15							
Note Numbers	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40					

Place the arrow on the correct note for your voice classification.

³⁰ Coffin, Berton. Coffin’s Overtones of bel canto: Phonetic Basis of Artistic Singing. Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, (1980)

Although this technique is quite established, some singers are not firm believers in this method of vowel migration/ modification because such vocal “positioning” could be achieved by adjusting the laryngeal position. Sometimes, if a singer begins this technique before properly understanding their own core sound, the singer may experience significant difficulty. This theory may not work for everyone; it is relevant to this study because it offers an alternative option for those Thai singers who might not fully be able to grasp other concepts presented in this methodology. This tool should be reserved for those students who are at an intermediate or advanced level of singing.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

5.1 Conclusion

This research identified the common problems of Thai students in the study of western classical singing. By gathering information from different vocal pedagogical books and related materials as well as from highly trained and professional voice teachers, a useful and easily accessible document for addressing these problems was created for both students and teachers.

This research showed that four main areas of concern exist: tongue muscle and jaw tension; incomplete inhalation/insufficient breathing; differentiation of the consonants and vowels in diction; and register issues of the male middle & low voice and female middle & high voice (high larynx position). The goal was to help improve the learning process by fixing the specific problems with pedagogical methods from five major researchers: Richard Miller, W. Stephen Smith, D. Ralph Appelman, Joan Wall, and Berton Coffin.

5.2 Suggestions for Future Research

This research sought to address the common vocal problems in western classical vocal performance encountered by Thai students of Mahidol University at the pre-college and undergraduate level. It would be helpful to extend the research into other universities, where the survey might provide different viewpoints or topics, expanding the current knowledge base. Similarly, the research can expand to other countries that are not based in western languages. If the study expands to these countries, the principles of physicality and language matching would more precisely identify the cause of these singing problems and help students to achieve the ideal tone for western classical music. By identifying these problems, teachers and students will

be able to make better decisions to enhance the learning progress and achieve optimal student progress.

It is the hope of the researcher that this study will prove to be beneficial to many Thai students and teachers of Thai students so that it may lead to the creation of a Thai vocal pedagogy book in the Thai language. As western classical music continues to grow in Thailand, I am confident that academic writing on singing will also grow, and I hope that this document acts as an impetus to encourage new researchers in the area of vocal pedagogy.

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APPENDIX

Joseph Rinaldi Answers Sheet**1. What are some of the main pedagogical problems that you face when teaching vocal students in Thailand?**

I find that many of the singing problems that I have encountered in Thailand stem from two main issues. The first is derived from the nature of the Thai language, which uses much of the back tongue muscle. In many traditions of Western singing, teachers try to eliminate tongue tension as it apprehends the implementation of full freedom of the tone. By the sheer nature of growing up in a language that demands use of the tongue in such a way, it is of no wonder why so many singers encounter problems with tongue and jaw tension. Though this problem is pervasive among my students, it is certainly manageable with corrective exercises and techniques.

One of the other problems that I find among my students centers on the physical size of many students. Classical singing teachers often talk of “deep” and “full” breathing tactics, and where most students are able to manage these techniques, some students are physically too small to manage complete inhalation. In my lessons we work on body awareness as well as stretching and movement exercises in order to help the singer fully expand.

2. How do you approach the resolution of these issues as a teacher?

To address the tongue tension issue, I almost always have the students apply a bit of pressure with their thumb into the base of their tongue. This is to help the student realize how tight some of their tongues are. Other practical methods of addressing the tongue tension deal with jaw position during vowel formation. Students often manipulate the placement of their jaws when forming a vowel, and I try to establish as free and loose a jaw as possible.

3. Do you think that the Thai language inherently creates problems for healthy vocal production in the Western Classical tradition of music?

I do think that the Thai language is problematic because of the over use of the tongue and sometimes apparent lack of pure vowels. Also, due to the tonal nature of the language, there is greater chance that when producing pure tones, the Thai singer may have an affected sound.

4. Are there certain exercises or vocalizes that are effective in reducing these pedagogical problems?

I like to work with the five cardinal vowels [i – e – a – o – u]. Various exercises on scales or triads can be employed to help free the tongue and release the jaw. I like to work usually with the scale degrees 1-5 (do, re, mi, fa, sol, fa, mi, re, do) in quick patterns on single vowels. For example, singing all AH or OH on a five note scale in eight or sixteenth notes.

5. In your experience with Thai students, what concepts of singing are most difficult for them to understand?

Certain diction items are quite difficult to grasp. For example the difference n closed e and E and i and I are often problematic. In many Thai female students, the concept of head voice is also quite difficult to grasp.

6. Which pedagogy books do you most often reference when looking for, or explaining, pedagogical problems to your students? Could you please list your “top three” pedagogy books in order of preference?

Scott McCoy, Your Voice: An Inside View

Richard Miller, The Structure of Singing

D. Ralph Appelman, The Science of Vocal Pedagogy

7. In reference to the German fach system of vocal classification, which fach do you find most common among Thai voice students?

For female singers, most often I hear the soubrette voice.

For male singers I most often hear very light tenor voices,

8. Do you think this classification is a result of the physical stature of many Thai vocal students?

Yes, I believe that due to the nature of the Thai body, these are the most prevalent voice types.

9. Do you find it challenging to assign repertoire from the Western tradition to Thai students exhibiting pedagogical problems? How do you go about assigning repertoire?

I find that in the beginning stages of learning, the problems are similar among all students, Western or Thai. When I go about assigning repertoire, it becomes an individually specific problem. I have to look at issues of range, tessitura,

language proficiency, and musical aptitude in order to assess how I will determine appropriate pieces.

10. Are there any other thoughts or concerns regarding vocal pedagogy that you might offer as advice to Thai students reading this manual?

Continue working on the elements of breath and phonation. These two factors, when uninhibited and free of tension, will help all students in creating a free and clear tone. Also, Thai students should begin language study as soon as possible so that their tongues can properly become acquainted with the shapes and positions of foreign sounds.

Aj. Mariangela Answers Sheet

1. What are some of the main pedagogical problems than you face when you teaching students in Thailand?

Most of the problems that I face teaching Thai students are very similar to teaching students of any nationality and in any country. These are mainly technique-related problems such as weak bodies that lack any exposure to physical exercise. Other problems include tongue and jaw tension, collapsed shoulders and torso and also insufficient breathing.

Other pedagogical issues that I have and that are more typical -to my experience- of Thai students are lack of musical/aural skills. Most often in Thailand that elsewhere I come across students that cannot read music. Also the lack of diction skills is another major issue mainly found in Thailand than in other places I have worked at.

2. How do you approach the resolution of these issues as a teacher?

When it comes to singing technique-related issues, I approach them with various exercises depending on each particular issue. Posture and body weakness issues on the other hand cannot be exclusively solved by me. I regularly talk to my students about the importance of proper posture and healthy body engagement. I show my students anatomy and proper breathing videos and charts from pedagogy books to help them understand in a visual way. I also encourage them to attend a holistic exercise class like yoga, tai chi, Pilates etc. I am a fan of methods that focus on engaging and exercising the mind, the body and the soul.

3. Do you think the Thai language inherently creates problems for healthy vocal production in the Western Classical tradition of music?

I believe that the Thai language creates some problems that are related to vocal production. These mainly have to do with the fact that the language is quite consonant-based with little emphasis on bright/clear vowels. It also uses only little resonance and that is the main struggle Thai voice students have to deal with. Classical-Western type singing is based on using resonant phonation making use of the skull bones and nasal cavities. It is also based on the concept of pure vowels and since the Thai language is not based on the above concepts the students have to make a real effort to adjust.

4. Are there certain exercises or vocalizes that are effective in reducing these pedagogical problems?

There is a big variety of ways/exercises to help the student understand and increase resonance. Exercises that involve raised tongue and nasal cavity awareness are my favorite.

In helping the students understand the concept of pure vowels and legato, I often have them sustain one single note ensuring regular air-flow and avoiding any kind of vowel modification. I also prefer very slow and controlled vocalizes that involve maximum three notes making sure that the above principles apply as well as ensuring that any tongue engagement is avoided.

5. In your experience with Thai students, what concepts of singing are most difficult to understand?

Phrasing legato and the strong connection between music and emotions.

6. Which pedagogy books do you most often reference when looking for or explaining, pedagogical problems to your students? Could you please list your "top three" pedagogy books in order of preference?

1. Basics of Vocal Pedagogy (Clifton Ware.) This is my favorite reference book. It contains exercises, charts and chapter on every important aspect of singing; diction, technique, vocal and body health and more.

2. The Naked Voice (W. Stephen Smith) truly a nice book, reality oriented, practical and comprehensible.

3. The Science of Vocal Pedagogy (D. Ralph Appelman) it is good but very academic. Some interesting points, but I don't use it that much.

7. In reference to the German fach system of vocal classification, which fach do you find most common among Thai voice students.

I have been in Thailand only less than a year but the categories I have come across the most are:

- Soubrette
- Lyric Coloratura and lyric soprano.
- Lyric mezzo-soprano.
- Light tenor
- Lyric baritone

8. Do you think this classification is a result of physical stature of many Thai vocal students?

I am sure it has to do with the physical stature of most students, but I mainly believe that it has to do with the climate and the general cultural characteristics/personality traits of Thai people and also with the language itself.

9. Do you find it challenging to assign repertoire from the Western tradition to Thai students exhibiting pedagogical problems. How do you go about assigning repertoire?

It is difficult mainly considering the lack of exposure to any foreign language and the lack of understanding of the style. My issues assigning repertoire don't have to do with the technique itself, but mainly with language and style related topics.

Dr. Corey Trahan Answers Sheet

1. What are some of the main pedagogical problems that you face when teaching vocal students in Thailand?

2. How do you approach the resolution of these issues as a teacher?

3. Do you think Thai language inherently creates problems for healthy vocal production in the Western Classical traditional music?

4. In your experience with Thai students, what concepts of singing are most difficult for them to understand?

Male Singers: Middle and Low Voice Resonance.

Resolution: I have the male students do onset exercises from A2 to A3. They start and stop the sound with quick breaths in between each onset. I also have them chant vowels in this range and have them notice the similarity between singing and speaking. Many of the males open their mouths too much in this range so I encourage them to find a mouth posture similar to speaking. All of these have yielded positive results.

High Laryngeal Position in Upper Middle and High Range

Resolution: Many of the males I teach do not understand how to approach their middle and especially upper ranges with respect to laryngeal position. I do exercises on the vowels [o] and [u] that begin in the lower range and extend into the upper range. These two vowels seem to keep the laryngeal posture comfortably low and aids in keeping the neck and throat relaxed. I encourage them to use the lips to shape the correct vowel which helps to lengthen the vocal tract. I have them do a series of messa di voce exercises that help to stabilize the desired laryngeal posture for singing.

Female Singers: Head Voice.

Many of the females I teach have extremely weak and breathy head voices. I believe strengthening the chest voice in females will in turn aid in strengthening the head voice. I have the female singers sing descending patterns on [u] vowels in the middle range, extending how low they are able to take the head voice. I also have them modify pure vowels to more neutral vowels in the upper range, encouraging them to feel height inside the mouth, throat and neck.

Transition between Head Voice and Chest Voice: The primo passaggio in the female voice is the biggest challenge I face in teaching. Especially with music theatre singers who are accustomed to taking their chest voice pitches that are not appropriate for classical singing. I have them create sounds using entirely chest voice, entirely head voice and then finding a ratio between the two registers to balance their sound (the balance depends on the repertoire they are performing). Generally, I teach two registers for women because the mention of "middle" or "mixed" voice has created confusion for the Thai female students I teach.

All Singers:

Vowel Differentiation: The Thai students have limited knowledge of the IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet) symbols as well as sound common to each language. There are common diction errors many of the Thai singers make, especially when singing English. Example: [v] usually is pronounced [w], the closed [e] sound is unfamiliar and the letters "th" are often pronounced [d]. I teach vowel modification for all voices. Often I suggest words that are familiar to them that rhyme with whatever sound I am asking them make. I encourage them to concentrate on creating pure vowels unless the range they are singing in requires modification. Explaining voiced and unvoiced consonants has been helpful, too.

Language Barrier: Because I speak very little Thai, explaining some pedagogical concepts of singing can be difficult. I refrain from using too much imagery and instead emphasize anatomical and physiological processes. Occasionally I will use the internet search engines to show a visual example of things I am addressing. For the most part, the Thai students have adequate English skills for us to work together.

3. To my Western ears, the Thai language is produced in the front of the mouth. Often the sounds are nasal and lack resonance. The culture seems to frown upon extroverted speaking, favoring softer dynamics. For singing, these are problems. The Thai student has to overcome the notion to speak quietly and learn how to project their voices with resonance and breathe management including the entire mouth, throat and neck when producing sung tone is often foreign to the Thai singer.

To reduce nasality, I have the Thai singers do exercises beginning with [b], and [p], both of which discourage nasal production. I also encourage them to maintain a high soft palate which in turn reduces the amount of sound that exits through the nasal cavity.

5. In your experience with Thai students, what concepts of singing are most difficult for them to understand?

Most of the Thai students lack energy when they sing. Singing is athletic and should include the entire body. Many times their timid or relaxed nature carries over when singing resulting in boring and limp performances. Breathing and managing their breath in a way that eases singing is a struggle too. The level of artistry can be neglected; the Thai students tend to repeat basic diction and technical errors despite

being corrected. It sends the message they either do not care about the level of artistry or are incapable of achieving that level of performing. Lacking consistency is the third issue I observe. The Thai students' technique is not stable enough to give consistently good performance. For most, it is hit or miss. Perhaps increased practicing and self-discipline could remedy this problem.

6. Which pedagogy books do you most often reference when looking for, or explaining, pedagogical problems to your students? Could you please list your “top three” pedagogy books in order of preference?

1. Richard Miller's books on training each voice type
2. Berton Coffin's “Overtones of Bel Canto”
3. James Mckinney's “The Diagnosis and Correction of Vocal Faults”

7. In reference to the German fach system of vocal classification, which fach do you find most common among Thai voice students?

Female Fach:

Light Lyric Sopranos for classical Thai singers

"belters" for music theater Thai singers

Male Fach:

"Baritone" for both styles of singing

8. Do you think this classification is a result of the physical stature of many Thai vocal students?

There are exceptions but in general, I do agree that one's stature is crucial in identifying fach. You must look appropriate for the repertoire you pursue. Otherwise, a career is out of the question. I think the Thai singers tend to be classified as sopranos and baritones because these are the most common voice types for each gender. Hopefully the current and next generation of teachers will have the teaching knowledge to discover true tenors and mezzo-sopranos to broaden the Thai's fach options.

9. Do you find it challenging to assign repertoire from the Western tradition to Thai students exhibiting pedagogical problems? How do you go about assigning repertoire?

Teaching music theatre voice presents equal diction challenges as pedagogical. Many of contemporary music theatre composers use slang or innuendo

which must be understood by the Thai singer to deliver a believable performance. Modern music theatre styles of singing favor pop and rock singing, which sometimes contradicts classical singing. I encourage them to use classical breathing and vocal postures to produce sounds appropriate for each musical's style. I do require that each singer study at least one classical song or aria. The music theatre repertoire spans legit, contemporary, up-tempo, ballads, pop and jazz. In addition, they have the added challenge of moving/dancing to many of these songs which can test the stability any singer's vocal technique. I must take into account each vocal, dramatic and physical ability when choosing repertoire.

10. Are there any other thoughts or concerns regarding vocal pedagogy that you might offer as advice to Thai students reading this manual?

Thai students, especially at Mahidol, rarely exercise. The voice and body are our instruments; it's our responsibility to maintain a healthy body and physique to house our instrument. Singers should take acting and movement classes. Having a good voice is not enough to have a career. Singers should be required and want to take vocal pedagogy courses. Vocal pedagogy introduces singers to concepts about their voice and singing that many voice teachers neglect to discuss in lessons. This subject is not optional, it is a necessity.

Raymond Diaz Answers Sheet

1. What are some of the main pedagogical problems that you face when teaching vocal students in Thailand?

“Respiration is a general problem for any beginning students and I would say. My answer No.1 would be really just diction. Everything else is a general problem that you would encounter with students of any nationality. Again to the main specific problem with regards to Thai students I think it would be essentially diction and primary is just because it's affected an instrument by the Thai language.”

2. How do you approach the resolution of these issues as a teacher?

Resolving the issue would involve several things 1.) I have to make a student aware of the sound involve of the speech sound which should mean I have to introduce a certain elements of the international phonetics alphabets (IPA). At least they should be aware of different phonemes in different symbols and different sounds

that's one aspect. 2.) The other aspects to resolving would be, to help them develop the physicality ability to actually produce the sounds

3. Do you think Thai language inherently creates problems for healthy vocal production in the Western Classical traditional music?

No, I don't think that the Thai language has any bearing on the vocal production. The student that I have seen in Mahidol University for the most part I think everybody sounds pretty okay. I think the education of course it is good but I think the student respond to pedagogy of the west it is okay. It is the same to my own country, Philippines as well as student from the US. I don't think language in itself affect the vocal production but as I said I think the language does has an effect on diction and the main challenge of Thai student for example I found that a lot of Thai students have problems the vowel [i] as in Tree or Me. I feel like at least from my student that the awareness of the tongue in terms of the production of that particular phoneme is not really be aware of when I try to guild them in a sense with the use of the tongue in the production of the forward vowels [i]. A lot of Thai students mix up the vowel [ɛ] with the diphthong [eɪ] a word such as head [hɛd] would often be pronounces such as [hɛɪd]. Other vowel that I find consistently challenge is the vowel [ɔ] and [oʊ]. With regards the consonant there is confusion with the consonant [v] because I think in Thailand it does not exist, symbol [v] it is pronounce as a [w], [r] and [l] that is a general miss articulation.

4. Are there certain exercises or vocalizes that are effective in reducing these pedagogical problems?

The student needs to do a lot of physical exercises to guild the articulation, so I think just constant repeating of the sound and cognitive awareness of how they produce the sound is important practicing in front of the mirror while articulating the sound and repeating the process this is important to reducing the issue.

5. In your experience with Thai students, what concepts of singing are most difficult for them to understand?

In my experience, what I find No.1 has to do a lot of English proficiency, definitely the more English proficient those Thai students, the more that we understand each other. In specifically, the concept of stress or accent in pronunciation

to be the most understood even the students who are more proficient in English. So I find the Thai student has a difficulty understanding the accent or stressing the syllable with regard to pronunciation.

6. Which pedagogy books do you most often reference when looking for, or explaining, pedagogical problems to your students? Could you please list your “top three” pedagogy books in order of preference?

The Science of Vocal Pedagogy (D. Ralph Appelman)

International Phonetic Alphabet for singer (John Wall)

7. In reference to the German Fach system of vocal classification, which Fach do you find most common among Thai voice students?

Female - Light – lyric soprano more dominant voices

Male - Light – lyric tenor

8. Do you think this classification is a result of the physical stature of many Thai vocal students?

Yes, I think that Thais are very slender people, and I feel that this contributes to the idea that most males and females are sopranos and tenors.

9. Do you find it challenging to assign repertoire from the Western tradition to Thai students exhibiting pedagogical problems? How do you go about assigning repertoire?

The specific with Thai student will bear articulators nature. In terms of pedagogical problems such as support, the quality of tone these are problems that will be find in any music school. I would say that assigning repertoire I consider the following 1.) What the comfortable tessitura of the student is. 2.) If I feel student ready for the repertoire pieces that is agility then I will assign that kind of repertoire. 3.) If feel like I would like to work with technique so I will give the repertoire that is not so musically difficult so we can concentrate technique.

10. Are there any other thoughts or concerns regarding vocal pedagogy that you might offer as advice to Thai students reading this manual?

I think the Thai students just have to remember that being in this business is a demanding career choice, so they have to be ready to sacrifice a lot of time and decide to commit themselves as good as they possibly can be. I would suggest for Thai students to not look at just singing in Thailand. I would highly encourage them to look

internationally at the present standard of singing professionally. Hopefully they will be more inspired. The language is so important in this career and just to be able to mimic other languages is very important. The awareness of diction should be addressed immediately if they are serious about this.



งานทะเบียนและประมวลผล
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เรื่อง ขอลงความอนุเคราะห์ข้อมูลเพื่อทำวิจัย

เรียน รองคณบดีฝ่ายบริการการศึกษา

ด้วย นางสาวกุมากริ ศุภการ รหัสประจำตัว ๕๓๓๗๐๒๔ MSMS/M นักศึกษาหลักสูตร
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ปัจจุบันกำลังทำรายงานการแสดงผลงานหัวข้อเรื่อง "THE COMMON PROBLEMS FACED BY THAI
STUDENT WITH REGARD TO WESTERN CLASSICAL VOCAL PERFORMANCE, MAHIDOL
UNIVERSITY" โดยมี Dr. Joseph W. Rinaldi เป็นอาจารย์ที่ปรึกษาหลัก

ในการนี้ หลักสูตรฯ จึงเรียนมาเพื่อขอความอนุเคราะห์ข้อมูลจำนวนนักเรียนระดับเตรียม
อุดมดนตรีและนักศึกษา - ระดับปริญญาตรี เครื่องมือเอกขับร้องสากล พร้อมทั้งโครงสร้างหลักสูตรเตรียม
อุดมดนตรีและหลักสูตรดุริยางคศาสตรบัณฑิต ของนักเรียน นักศึกษา เครื่องมือเอกขับร้องสากล
เพื่อประกอบการทำวิจัย

จึงเรียนมาเพื่อโปรดพิจารณาให้ความอนุเคราะห์ด้วย จะขอบพระคุณยิ่ง

(รองศาสตราจารย์ ดร. ณรงค์ชัย พิทักษ์)

ประธานกรรมการบริหารหลักสูตรศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต

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