

Singing Contemporary Commercial Music Styles



Singing Contemporary Commercial Music Styles

A Pedagogical Framework

Marisa Lee Naismith

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This book is dedicated to the many vocalists, performers, educators, and other industry personnel involved in CCM music markets globally. May you continue to create, share, and make music with passion and value the quality of your work within this ever-evolving industry.

Acknowledgements

First and most significantly, I owe thanks to the nine esteemed pedagogues who made such a significant contribution to the research that inspired me to write this book. Your excellent commentary and insights have given a much-needed voice to the greater contemporary commercial music singing community. Since the interviewing process, many of you have become my dear friends. I cherish the times we have come together at international conferences to share a drink and a laugh and engaged in many informal discussions on the state of affairs in our teaching industry. Each of you continue to sharpen my skills and knowledge in the field.

I am deeply indebted to both members of my supervisory team, Dr Irene Bartlett and Dr Catherine Grant who have guided and encouraged me to the completion of this work. You inspired, motivated, and supported me through those moments when I felt vulnerable and thought this work was beyond my capabilities. I thank you both for sharing your expertise, insights, and good humour throughout my academic journey. I would like to acknowledge Dr Irene Bartlett, for planting the seed for me to carry out this study, for believing that I could do it, and for guiding me to its conclusion. You have so generously shared your experiences and knowledge in the field of CCM. Thank you to Catherine for always being so positive and supportive, and for igniting the flame of possibilities, especially when I most needed help.

My sincere gratitude also goes to Dr Jodie Taylor, who I believe is one of the most patient people I have ever met. Jodie gave me clarity at a time I was drowning in the very early stages of the research process and she helped me navigate through unfamiliar and uncharted waters. I would like to acknowledge Dr Elizabeth Blades, who I deeply respect, both personally and professionally. Betsy wrote *A Spectrum of Voices* which was one of my favourite books in the university library and I was drawn to this book constantly. I felt it gave me a voyeuristic perspective into the teaching studios of many of the greatest classical voice pedagogues from the twentieth century. It sparked my desire to write a book that would include the voices of CCM teachers that led to the idea of my research and ultimately this book. There are many others who have been

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mentors and guides during my professional performance and teaching career and throughout my time as an academic. Thank you all for everything you have taught me about the music teaching and research industry.

On a personal note, I must start by thanking my 99-year-old mum, Porsia, who is the most fiercely independent woman I know. You have taught me tenacity, courage, loyalty and commitment. My dad, Thomas, who is my guardian angel and will be looking down on me with great pride right now. Dad would always put on his best suit and drive me to all my gigs before I was old enough to drive myself. Even though he had to go to work early the following morning, he never once complained. I was always a star in his eyes. Thanks also to my older brother, Richard who introduced me to the music that I grew to love, and the music that has become my life's work.

Finally, and most importantly, I must give the greatest thanks to my husband, Andrew, and my beautiful daughters Jessie and Ashleigh. Thank you for your unconditional love and encouragement. I have tested your patience, and you have all had to make sacrifices at times when I have had to remain focused. I love you all very much. If I can pass on one legacy to my girls, it would be to follow your heart and your passion in life. Anything is achievable. If I can do it, anyone can!

Marisa Naismith, April 2021

Foreword by Irene Bartlett

In this book you are invited to experience the teaching approaches of nine noted pedagogues who have helped to forge a road in the otherwise under-researched field of CCM vocal performance. The author, Marisa Lee Naismith, is a highly successful singing teacher, performer and businesswoman - a wonderful role model for CCM teachers. This book reflects both Marisa's intellectual curiosity and passion for the field. It stands as a beacon of persistence in progressing the study of CCM singing styles and respect for all those who choose to sing and teach them. In drawing on her extensive experience and indefatigable enthusiasm for music and teaching, Marisa is able to present a clear and unbiased view of the progress of existing CCM pedagogy while offering a model for growth and development into the future. Having observed Marisa's academic journey across many years I give her a standing ovation for this book - the latest of her lifelong achievements.

Irene Bartlett, DMA

Associate Professor, Acting Head Pedagogy, Coordinator Contemporary Voice and Voice Pedagogy and Head Jazz Voice Studies, Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University
September 2020

Foreword by Elizabeth Blades

It was a Friday morning in early November 2017. Shenandoah University Professor, David Meyer was driving his Australian guests, Irene Bartlett and Marisa Naismith, to campus. The two ladies would be meeting with students, presenting lectures and masterclasses over the following weekend.

The conversation flowed as they travelled and, at one point, Marisa described her doctoral dissertation. She mentioned that *A Spectrum of Voices* by Elizabeth Blades had motivated her desire to conduct similar research in CCM (Contemporary Commercial Music). On hearing this, without comment, David reached for his phone and began texting. Marisa thought it a bit odd but said nothing.

Meanwhile, I was in my home 10 miles away, when I received David's text. "Hey, I have two vocal pedagogy teachers from Australia visiting and one of them is conducting doctoral dissertation research inspired by your book; she has no idea that you are on the faculty here. Any chance you can come to my pedagogy class this afternoon and meet her?" I replied that I would love to, but that my car was in the shop and I was without transportation. "No problem - I'll send someone to pick you up and then take you home." Wonderful!

And so, serendipitously, Marisa and I met. Our connection was instantaneous, as if we had known one and other for years. We sat together as Irene lead the class in a delightful interactive exploration of CCM styles. All joined in singing a gutsy, jazzy number, after which Marisa turned to me and exclaimed, "Wow, you don't sound like a classical singer!"

Yes, ultimately, I pursued advanced degrees in classical vocal performance, but I had grown up singing without any formal instruction. As a child of the 1950s and 60's, my 'repertoire' included Summer camp songs, church hymns, folk music (Peter, Paul and Mary, The Kingston Trio, etc.) and classic Broadway musicals (South Pacific, Oklahoma!, The Sound of Music, My Fair Lady). I joked that my first voice teachers were Joan Baez and Julie Andrews. Yes, Marisa and I share a similar history and, therefore, a magical, serendipitous link.

Marisa spent 46 years honing her skills and building an award-winning career. She draws on those near five decades to fill a gaping void: a much-needed,

FOREWORD BY ELIZABETH BLADES

cohesive, comprehensive teaching model for CCM pedagogy, rooted in rigorous qualitative research methodology. From a 'hybrid, fractured collection of anecdotal, non-specific methodologies', Marisa has meticulously crafted a lucid, accessible pedagogical framework for teaching Contemporary Commercial Music, one that serves person-to-person as well as online instruction.

In 1987, while perusing the shelves in the Sibley Library at Eastman School of Music, I came across Richard Miller's book, *English, French, German and Italian Techniques of Singing* (1977, The Scarecrow Press, Metuchen, NJ). Intrigued, I set about an investigation which culminated in my doctoral dissertation, *Vocal Pedagogy in the United States: Interviews with Exemplary Teachers of Applied Voice*. That study evolved into *A Spectrum of Voices: Prominent American Voice Teachers Discuss the Teaching of Singing* (2001 first edition, also published by Scarecrow Press), the book that Marisa found on the shelves of her university library. Serendipity? Perhaps, but certainly a meaningful lineage, now realized in *Singing Contemporary Commercial Music Styles: A Pedagogical Framework*.

Elizabeth Blades DMA, MMus

Foreword by Gillyanne Kayes

This is narrative for the current times: a time when many singing teachers on the coalface are teaching contemporary styles, often working with avocational singers who simply want to sing the songs they love to listen to. For more than 90% of the music-listening population this will mean popular music styles. Navigating that challenge for teachers - finding appropriate repertoire that will engage students and allow for vocal and musical development - is addressed in this book.

Together with research into current practice of teachers and needs of the industry, Dr Naismith sets out a clear framework that takes into account vocal development, musical style, learning modalities and - our most recent pedagogical challenge - moving between in-person and virtual studios.

Dr Naismith's conversations with teachers working in the field of CCM give us a unique insight into a variety of different pedagogical approaches that teachers have evolved to meet the needs of their students. Those of us working in this field are aware that its pedagogy is emergent: of all the teachers interviewed not one had trained specifically to teach CCM styles, simply because that training has only recently become available. Any training approach for this field will need in-built flexibility to adjust to the changing needs of the industry and for this reason Dr Naismith makes the distinction between 'framework' and 'model' - the former allowing us to look outwards - to view our practice in context and reflect on it, rather remaining wedded to one approach.

Read this book if you are teacher or would-be teacher of CCM styles either in your own studio, or within an educational institution.

Gillyanne Kayes, PhD

Preface

During my extensive career as an award-winning professional singer, industry colleagues referred to me as the “pop and rock chick”. I was extremely successful and had never considered the need for academic accreditation. Forty-six years later, I find myself still involved in this most seductive music industry as I transition into a variety of pedagogical and academic roles.

My love of pop and rock music began in the early 1960s when I listened to my older brother’s vinyl records of the latest hits. I would lock all the doors and windows in the living room of our family home and visualise myself performing to a crowd of thousands, singing at the top of my voice, totally immersed in the music. In this way, my singing and performance abilities developed through listening, observation, experimentation, and hours of practice.

The vocal style elements I employed to create an authentic contemporary commercial music (CCM) sound were developed by emulating numerous recording artists, usually my pop and rock music idols who were charting at the time. While all the other teenage girls were star struck by pop icons such as Donnie Osmond and David Essex, I was profoundly captivated and influenced by the music from rock legends such as David Bowie, Slade, Suzie Quatro and Tina Turner, who were amongst the major recording and touring artists of the 1970’s.

I was 14 years old when my singing and performance abilities received some fine tuning with the help of a local singing teacher, Viola Ritchie. She was the nearest teacher to my home, and I realise now that Viola was a pioneer in the 1970s because she was prepared to teach a non-classical technical approach to her students. She trained many singers who achieved great success and international acclaim as the leading national touring and recording artists of their time.

At the age of 15, whilst still attending school, I became commercially active in the field of CCM as a professional singer, performing an average of five nights per week. Strangely enough, it was during this time I was excluded from the school choir because I was told that my voice was far too loud and I did not have the vocal aesthetics that matched all the other singers. Ironically, despite this rejection by the school, I sustained a performance career for over 35 years

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singing in a variety of live venues, touring the east coast of Australia in bands, and appeared regularly on television and did some radio work also.

Why I wrote this book

With no plans to become a singing teacher, I was asked to begin teaching CCM styles at a local performing arts school. In 1988, the owner of the studio insisted on hiring me on the basis of my professional profile and reputation as an award-winning vocalist, not on my skills, knowledge and experience as a singing teacher. I had no idea about the physiology and science of voice production, but I knew how to create all the sounds safely and sustainably. Therefore, my teaching was based on intuition, and on the practical vocal knowledge I had developed from a broad range of experiences in performing CCM repertoire over many years.

My formal pedagogical education commenced in 2008 when I was accepted as a student into a university-based graduate program with a specialisation in vocal pedagogy. It was not entirely a comfortable experience and I was made to feel like an imposter because most of the cohort were classically trained singers, and there appeared to be a definite music bias in terms of 'high art, low art' in course content and group discussions. I received further ridicule from fellow students when I shared with them that I could 'belt' and had been 'belting' prior to and during my professional career. There seemed to be a deep-rooted stigma attached to the use of this voice quality and its direct relationship to the development of vocal health problems in singers. These revelations were unbelievable as I had an enduring and legitimate career sustaining a very comfortable living exclusively from the CCM industry.

In facing up to the challenges, I began to research the available literature on CCM pedagogy. In the publications I read, I noticed a lack of any cohesive pedagogical structures specific to CCM style and its associated characteristics (for example, belt for pop/rock or musical theatre). Unable to find much research which discussed effective technical training relevant to the specific style and vocal health needs of CCM singers, I became aware of a gap in the literature and a need for informed, empirical research of CCM singing-voice pedagogy. Not only did I discover that the literature appeared to be caught up in some kind of time warp, but there seemed to be a consistent lack of a specific teaching model for this particular group of singers and a lack of acknowledgement for what was happening in the CCM industry globally.

The reflective process of my own journey as a pedagogue in the field of CCM, along with a review of the literature, inspired me to formally investigate how other pedagogues approach the training of CCM singers and to develop a foundational pedagogical framework specifically addressing the needs of

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this group of singers based on the results of this study. The CCM industry has been my life's work and it has become my mission is to legitimise CCM from a pedagogical standpoint.

Overview of the book

The research process for this book has been grounded on a review of the literature in the field of vocal pedagogy and voice science. It has also been influenced and shaped by my own 46 years of extensive professional involvement as a commercially active CCM performer, teacher, student and academic and reflections of my own personal CCM pedagogical education, professional development, teaching practice, and diverse background experiences.

In response to the gap in the literature on CCM, I decided to undertake a doctoral program in order to investigate the training of this group of singers. This book reports on my research findings based on data collected from semi-structured interviews with eminent pedagogues in the field of CCM. In this study, I thematically explored the teaching approaches and perceptions of nine eminent CCM pedagogues in relation to core elements of technique which includes alignment, breath management, breath flow and support, resonance, articulation as well as focusing on elements relating to repertoire, style authenticity, performance and artistry, and vocal health. The collected data also describes and articulates the pedagogues' teaching practices, philosophies, influences, education and personal journeys as they entered the field of CCM. As a result of this rigorous exploration into CCM, I offer a foundational singing voice pedagogical framework that acknowledges the vast territory and aesthetic parameters of CCM music styles across global music markets.

In this book, I introduce the acronym for contemporary commercial music (CCM) and describe the vast landscape of styles that are encompassed by this descriptor. I track the rise in popularity of CCM and explore how the shift in global music markets has resulted in an increased demand for CCM singing tuition. Situated within this context, I explore the history and current state of voice teaching, including the transition to virtual learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic and identifies the lack of a pedagogical approach designed specifically for singers training in CCM styles. I discuss how singing teachers are being challenged to consider the relevance of traditional classical technique and associated voice training methods to the desired vocal production of singers of CCM styles. The final chapter brings to life a foundational framework for a style-relevant CCM vocal pedagogy that is reflective of the status quo of current music markets and is responsive to resultant student demands for CCM voice training. The book culminates with suggestions of how this framework could best be used to serve the voice teaching community to improve student

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learning outcomes and how these outcomes will in turn have a positive effect on performance, artistry and potential employment opportunities for students.

My positioning

This research process has been significantly and unavoidably influenced and shaped by my own personal and professional involvement as a commercially active CCM performer, teacher, student and academic. My experiences in the field of CCM have informed the way in which I engaged with the data. Therefore, I have scrutinised the degree to which this research is subjective. I sought integrity in my actions as a researcher at all times, and aimed to make my subjectivity clear throughout. During the data collection and analysis phases of the research I remained alert to my positioning in the field. In these phases, I tried to ensure that I did not misread, misjudge, or manipulate the words of the pedagogues according to what I believed was the truth. Qualitative research scholars comment that the expertise of the researcher may be considered a strength (see, for example, Olive, 2014). I believe my extensive background and training as a teacher of CCM styles is in many ways a strength in this study; however, I have been mindful to negotiate a balance between emic and etic perspectives.

An acknowledgment of classical traditions

The writing in the field of vocal pedagogy largely assumes a classical model in the teaching of all singers, irrespective of style. However, the approaches to teaching CCM need to be more closely related and relevant to style, particularly in recognising the necessary, style-driven differences in voice production between classical and CCM singers, such as breath flow demands and the acoustic configuration of the vocal tract. My positioning is not one of dismissal of the classical traditions completely. In fact, I wish to acknowledge the value and historical development of Western classical vocal pedagogy and its contribution to the development of existing CCM pedagogical practices. The knowledge, opinions, and beliefs shared in the literature often come from exemplary classically trained pedagogues who provide valuable commentary in the field of CCM, and who contribute to our understanding of how we can foster effective vocal training and vocal technique in our students. Some of the traditional pedagogical practices may be retained if deemed to be useful in the teaching of CCM singers, while others may be dismissed.

I would like to note that it is not my intention to thoroughly compare the existing classical pedagogical model in relation to the mostly anecdotal commentary around CCM training methodologies. To do so, is beyond the scope of this book. The information contained in this book, is intended to offer

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an alternative to the one-size-fits-all classical model available to teachers and students of CCM singing styles.

How this book may be used

This book is intended as a purposeful and applicable professional resource and a guide to assist and inform singing teachers across all genres who work in private studios, higher education institutions, and across changing learning contexts. It is also targeted for undergraduate and graduate students in vocal pedagogy courses, scholars, singing specialists, vocologists, and other professionals in the greater voice community. For this reason, I have attempted to make my language and writing as accessible as possible so this book can be used a resource for other singing voice personnel who do not have a formal qualification and work diligently in music programs, dance studios, performing arts schools, and in their own teaching studios.

The current music market requires singers to perform in a variety of styles. A key focus for this book is to improve learning outcomes for CCM singers by offering a systematic, evidence-based approach that targets what students need to learn to become proficient across CCM singing styles to meet industry demand. This tailored CCM pedagogical framework is recommended for teachers to assist them in developing effective pedagogical practices and to enhance teaching of CCM, whether it be in the form of face-to-face teaching or online. Teachers can become more competent in their selection and use of approaches and provide better training that will enhance the artistic and performance outcomes of future generations of CCM singers.

The pedagogical framework recognises also that every student is unique and presents with a distinct set of vocal issues, special interests, and needs. Therefore, its structure must be adaptable and responsive, and will manifest in different ways in online and in face-to-face contexts, allowing the CCM singer to develop creativity while supporting foundational technique for positive vocal health outcomes and sustainability. It acknowledges that not all students should be given the same set of exercises from, or in the same order as the teacher's workbook. It promotes a culture of value and respect for the individual student and understands that individual student requirements can vary from day to day, week to week. In this book I suggest how this framework may be used as a guide to help pinpoint a student's specific voice problem, and as a checklist for navigating teaching approaches to target these problems when they arise.

Through dialogue with noted international pedagogues, it is intended that this book will bring insight to achieving appropriate student outcomes for CCM singers while maintaining quality assurance in the field of CCM vocal

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pedagogy into the future. I make informed recommendations for teachers, students, and researchers about progressing the field of CCM singing-voice pedagogy. I aim to offer a pathway for collegiate work in pedagogy research in order to build the professional capacity of all teachers who train singers of CCM styles, thereby improving the learning experiences and outcomes for students.

Finally...

My journey to the point of writing this book has been an unusual one, so I will begin each chapter of this book by sharing my experiences of the many roads that have led to my profound desire to research the field of contemporary commercial music (CCM) singing-voice pedagogy and to write a book that will assist others working with CCM singers. I aspire for this book to make a substantial and authoritative contribution to the current state of affairs in the teaching of CCM singers.

Introduction-

Contemporary commercial music singing voice pedagogy: A market perspective

From the time I was a young girl with stars in my eyes, I have witnessed the rise of contemporary commercial musical forms become legitimate ways of artistic expression and its vocal characteristics acclaimed across global markets. However, what has happened is the dominance of these forms of commercial products and entertainment contexts have failed to be acknowledged from a pedagogical standpoint, especially in higher education institutions. I have experienced this firsthand in an academic setting where my life's work as a professional CCM artist was minimised by those who continued to perpetuate the western classical model of voice training as the only acceptable form of vocal tuition. Rather than accepting the accompanying audience decline of markets for the traditional forms of classical vocal music, it appeared that the evolution of CCM was being ignored from a pedagogical standpoint. This was the state of affairs in 2008 and thankfully for our community much has improved over the past 11 years. However, there is still such a long way to go!

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Pedagogy can be best described as the art and science of teaching. The problem that I seek to address in this book is the lack of a specific Contemporary Commercial Music (CCM) pedagogical framework that enhances teaching and performance outcomes for this group of singers and associated industry professionals. This problem has implications for those singers, teachers, and other industry personnel who are seeking CCM instruction because they are unable to access the correct training. Teaching, irrespective of the specific field, is complex and demanding; it requires highly specialised skills and knowledge in order to have a significant impact on student learning. Improving the learning outcomes of all students should be the key objective for education. Expert teachers must have a firm understanding of their respective disciplines, knowledge of effective strategies for working with their students and they engage students in activities that help them reflect on their own learning and understanding.

Pioneering vocal pedagogue Clifton Ware (1998) writes that teaching is the act of conveying a body of knowledge and skills in an orderly, meticulous, yet creative and flexible manner. Potter (1998) claims that one of the most notable advantages classical singing has over CCM singing is the systemised field of vocal pedagogy. Similarly, Wilson (2003) suggests that the teaching-learning situations in CCM have traditionally been perceived as less intentional, less goal-oriented, and generally less formal than in classical music. The following comment from the American Academy of Teachers of Singing (AATS, 2008) supports Wilson's view:

‘Unfortunately, techniques for singing genres such as folk, gospel, blues, jazz, pop, and rock, which fall under a new heading called ‘Contemporary Commercial Music’ (CCM), have been neither clearly defined nor seriously addressed in traditional voice pedagogy texts. While it is true that all singers must breathe, phonate, resonate, and articulate, they do not necessarily approach these technical elements in the same manner.’ (p.7)

As professional educators, voice teachers need to continuously update their skills and knowledge in response to a changing world, and to recognise, respect and acknowledge the individual needs and special interests of their students. The Department of Education and Training (DET, 2005) in Victoria, Australia, recommends seven principles for effective professional learning, one of which states that learning should be ‘evidence-based and data driven (not anecdotal) to guide improvement and to measure impact’ (p.15) (Figure 1.1).

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Figure 1.1: Effective Professional Learning Activity (Department of Education and Training, 2005, p.18, Appendix C). Reproduced with permission.

The problem facing the voice teaching community is that the teaching of CCM is a hybrid, fractured collection of anecdotal and non-specific methodologies. The recent literature on CCM singing voice pedagogy, mostly consists of an individual singing teacher's 'how to' approach to certain musical styles or offers teaching approaches to CCM which endorse a particular trademarked methodology. These approaches are often practical and unsubstantiated with science or research into the training across the broad range of music styles. In the absence of a basic pedagogical model for CCM, teachers who are engaged in the teaching of CCM singers are left to interpret a maze of often conflicting information. As the number of CCM students seeking training through private studios and educational institutions continues to increase, voice teachers, including classical voice specialists, are teaching this group of students without the necessary knowledge to implement a training approach which specifically reflects the standards and practices of the current music industry.

DEFINING CONTEMPORARY COMMERCIAL MUSIC (CCM)

The referencing of an ever-evolving group of CCM styles under one umbrella term has been challenging because these styles are aesthetically different. The descriptor *Contemporary Commercial Music* (CCM) emerged in the literature as a pedagogical discourse when the term was coined in 2000 by Jeanette LoVetri, a noted pedagogue and voice researcher (Woodruff, 2011). The acronym CCM was introduced specifically to replace and eliminate less explicit terms like *non-classical* or ‘music outside of Classical’ because LoVetri believed this music should take its rightful place, without apology, alongside the great classical music of the world (Woodruff, 2011). The descriptor *non-classical* was used widely in voice research, as well as in early vocal pedagogy publications, essentially describing what the music is not. *Non-classical* acknowledges a particular set of values which reflect a classically-oriented point of view. This terminology was used to describe any vocal performance that did not meet the accepted ideals of tone and vocal production expected in traditional Western classical singing style. According to Keskinen (2013), ‘In the singing world, ‘classical’ referred to trained singers as opposed to those without training’ (p.11).

Although CCM is the most commonly used descriptor in the field of vocal pedagogy, it remains a contested term by some authors and pedagogues who believe that it is not the most suitable descriptor for the range of styles which fall under the CCM umbrella. Other terms such as *popular* (2018a,b) have been used in the field of research to reference this group. The word *popular* originates from Latin *populāris*, which derives from the word *populous*, meaning *people*. This terminology has many historical and cultural associations. In describing *popular* in a cultural context, the *Meriam Webster Dictionary* defines it as ‘designed to appeal to or intended for the general masses of the people, sometimes in contrast to upper classes or the educated’.

Keskinen (2013) states:

Referring to the word ‘people’ it is a concept first used in the English law and politics in the 15th century. Later it has been connected with political movements and revolutionary thinking. During its first few centuries the term had a negative nuance and was mostly used by the elite class for ‘low’ or ‘vulgar.’ The rise of commodity culture in the late 18th century, thought, led to more positive implications as ‘popular’ came to mean well-liked by many people. (p.10)

Bowman (2004) describes popular music as ‘the music of the herd’, and comments that it is ‘created for passive consumption and is bereft of intellectual effort and reward’ (p.33). In contrast to popular music, classical music is described

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as an art form which, historically, was deeply associated with and exclusive to the educated and privileged upper class. According to musicologists, the term *classical* refers to the music of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there was an increase in popular music production generated by Tin Pan Alley, and a new mass audience emerged for this music. The American Academy of Teachers of Singing (2008) describes the introduction of this music: 'In New York, Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe brought klezmer to the new world. That, blended with the sounds of the British Music Hall and New Orleans jazz and blues, helped to create America's Tin Pan Alley' (p.8).

Due to technological advancements over the past century, music production has created a greater divide in consumption rates between the music described as popular and that described as classical. Holt (2007) comments that popular music 'is a powerful cultural and economical force in modern capitalist societies' (p.1). When defining the popularity of a particular music, a review of the consumption rate, the delivery mode, and the music's alignment with a selective group of people should be considered. In the twentieth century, *classical* music was no longer consumed by the mass audience and, according to this definition, would begin to mean *unpopular*. Johnson (2002) explains:

The term [classical] implies a claim to universality, suggesting that such music transcends the judgements of any particular time or place. But the same claim underlies classical music's lack of connection with the immediacy of everyday life, an aspect that ensures that it seems to be of little relevance for many people. (p.6)

Despite the surge in production, the shift in music consumption rate and its cultural perceptions, the term *popular* remains a questionable descriptor for this music due to its negative historical, political, and cultural connotations. Holt (2007) explains, 'Some forms of popular music accompany racism, sexism, and political disengagement, while others have had unparalleled power in struggles against these social problems and succeeded in overthrowing cultural hierarchies' (p.1).

Much of the American music in the United States has its roots in non-classical traditions and 'Afro-American' music; and it has been associated with the establishment of some CCM genres such as gospel, R&B, and rock. According to Zangger Borch (2005), this descriptor is used to refer to CCM styles in many Scandinavian countries. From a historical perspective, the African roots of these music styles have been associated with the cotton, sugarcane, and tobacco plantations of North America. From the mid-16th century, as European nations

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began colonization of the Americas, people had been transported from the African continent as slaves, a trade that grew to endemic proportions over the following two and a half centuries. These enslaved peoples preserved their musical traditions in North America through a ring ritual of drumming, singing, and dancing during slave gatherings, camp meetings, and jubilees. During the religious revival in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, they formed choirs at camp meetings to perform their own versions of hymns and worship music.

Spiritual music was a means of expressing the Black experience in America and was the most widely recognised Afro-American music genre at that time. There are clear connections in the traditions and practices associated with spiritual music and those surrounding Black sacred and gospel music. Robinson-Martin (2010) states that gospel music celebrates the 'contemporary Black religious experience, a musical expression of Black liberation of Black theology and a musical experience that is deeply rooted in Black life and culture' (p.336). Performances of this music incorporate characteristics of work songs, gospel music, blues, jazz, rhythm and blues and hip hop.

Although some of the common features in popular music culture are rooted in Afro-American traditions (for example, vocal improvisation which provides singers the opportunity to create spontaneous melody), the term *African American*, or *Afro-American*, strongly refers to the 'black experience' and has strong cultural implications. George (1987) states that African American music 'should be approached and studied within its own terms, within its own context as the music of any culture should be' (p.75). Although African American music is associated with the introduction of some CCM styles, based on its limitations in terms of inclusiveness, it is not an adequate descriptor for all the music styles that fall under the CCM umbrella.

In 2010, Diane Hughes introduced another acronym to characterise the various musical styles within this group. The term *popular culture musics* (PCM) was established purposefully to remove the commercial context within the term CCM. Hughes felt that not all the music within this broad group of diverse music styles had marketable characteristics, nor was some of the music intended for profitability as the term commercial would suggest. Hughes (2014) comments:

It is also timely to recognize that not all artists within PCM are commercially motivated and that, within any contemporary music genre, there exist sub groupings of musical styles bound by distinct modes of expression (Style 2012) or stylistic nuances. (p.289)

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Contemporary music is yet another term that has been used widely to describe this group of music styles. However, in the US, the descriptor *contemporary* most often refers to contemporary *classical* music of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Furthermore, in Europe, the term *contemporary* is non-specific and can refer to music that is either classical or not. Therefore, the use of *contemporary* in a music context can be problematic because it can refer to music of a specific time period - - the present time or modern times - - rather than encompassing the particular style characteristics of the music.

A review of the most current research into vocal pedagogy confirms that the acronym CCM is the most commonly used descriptor. It was conceived from a need to acknowledge all the various styles of Western popular music that had arisen during the twentieth century, such as pop, rock, jazz, musical theatre, soul, cabaret, country, folk, gospel, rhythm and blues, rap, and all the associated sub-styles of this group. Therefore, for the sake of consistency, the acronym CCM will be used throughout this book.

THE VAST CCM LANDSCAPE

When Jeanette LoVetri coined the term CCM, it was used to describe an extensive group of music styles which included pop, hip hop, gospel, jazz, rock, country, punk, musical theatre and heavy metal. However, due to technological advancements over the past twenty years, such as the introduction of the internet and its globally connected network system, the territory of music styles has expanded markedly, and many new styles and sub-styles have emerged. Silver et al (2016) explain:

Music scenes are no longer restricted to a specific physical locality. A band's social media profile can be viewed anywhere in the world, making it possible for musicians working anywhere to know about, influence, and remix each other's work, regardless of genre or sub-genre. Online music stores are essentially unlimited in size and their products can be categorized in infinite ways. (p.4)

The fusion of music styles is a result of the infiltration of Western popular music into Europe and Asia, and reciprocal cultural exchanges. For example, in 2017 the K-Pop boy band, BTS, became the first South Korean boy band to enter the Top 40 charts with the single 'MIC Drop'. The song also entered the all-genre Digital Songs chart at number 4 in its debut week, selling 45,000 copies and receiving air play on pop radio. In 2018, songs by multiple K-Pop acts achieved success on the Billboard Hot 100. The Korean girl group BLACKPINK scored their first two Billboard Hot 100 entries with 'Ddu-Du-Ddu-Du' in June and the Dua Lipa collaboration 'Kiss and Make Up' in

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November. Also, in November, the all-male K-Pop outfit EXO became the third Korean band to score a Top 40 album on the Billboard 200 with 'Don't Mess Up My Tempo', debuting at number 23 with sales of 23,000 equivalent units. Figure 1.2 demonstrates the resultant music hybridity: how some music communities overlap more than others (for example, pop/rock and homegrown American versus punk rock and rave), and how other styles such as rock and hip hop bind other styles together to form sub-styles.

The evolving musical landscape representative of CCM style produces musics that are aesthetically diverse. In meeting this diversity, CCM singers are called on to use their vocal instrument in a unique manner, incorporating all the requisite style elements, and to be proficient across an extensive range of styles. To understand the components that contribute to an authentic CCM vocal performance, voice teachers need to be proficient at recognising the basic aesthetic characteristics and specific elements associated with each style. Failure by a voice teacher to recognise and manage these differences will inhibit their ability to adequately serve the needs of their CCM singing students. This book lays the foundations for a pedagogical framework that could best encompass the broad spectrum of CCM styles.

THE SHIFT IN GLOBAL MUSIC MARKETS TO CCM

As a result of cultural exchanges, Western popular music has rapidly expanded to become the most dominant form of music, not just in the US and the UK, from which it predominantly originated, but across continents. Fundamentally, the evolution, accessibility, and diversification of CCM music styles over the last century have been a consequence of rapid changes in technology, a major shift in music consumption, and the globalisation of popular music culture. In an online article, Covington (2014) elaborates on the impact of this phenomenon in Japan: 'It's an order as tall as Tokyo's skyscrapers, but when it's filled, the results are fascinating and worth understanding, seeing as Japan is the world's second largest music market and idol pop is its industry's crown jewel' (para. 2). Singapore is another example of a country where local music markets have been strongly influenced by technological advancements. According to Fu (2015):

To some extent, people are easily influenced by the media and may regard Western music as authentic - this is technology determinism, which can actually control or drive the development of society's values and context. In conclusion, the multicultural society of Singapore has created a great platform on which musicians from all around the world can perform. The process of globalization and Americanization has

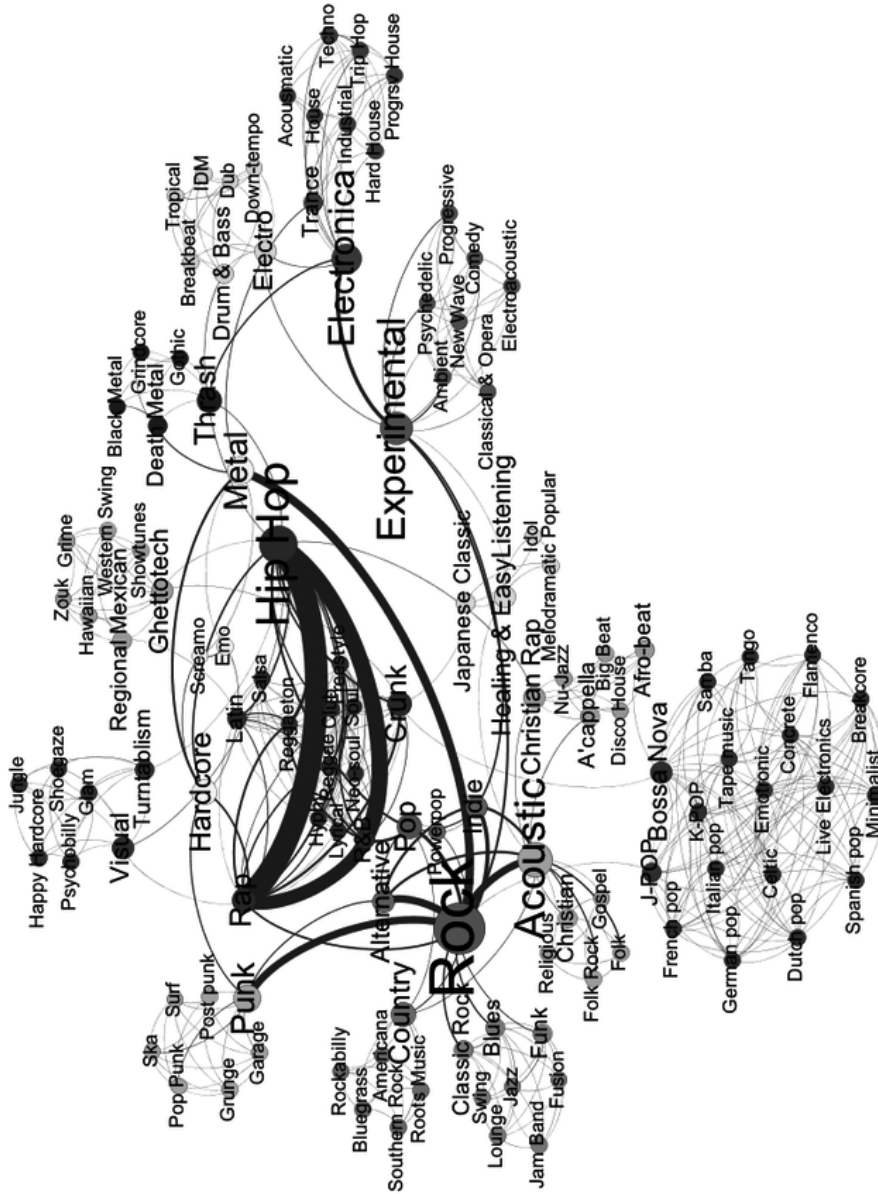


Figure 1.2: Discovering Musical Genre Communities. From Silver, Lee & Childress, 2016, Fig. 2. (Reproduced under creative commons license 4.0)

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affected the development of local musicians, not only by capturing the local market, but also by changing people's perspectives about Singaporean music. Singaporean people assess their localized music differently from how they assess Western music. (p.4)

A major aspect of this globalisation rests with technological advancements of the last century, including the introduction of devices such as portable computers, iPods and smartphones. In addition, the internet has created a shift in the way consumers access music. Early in the twentieth century, shellac 78s replaced wax cylinders and pianola rolls. In the 1950s, they were consigned to history by jukeboxes loaded with 7-inch singles which were themselves substituted by LPs and audiocassettes. In 1982 CD's were made available for purchase and on the 25th anniversary of its public release, it was estimated that 200 billion CDs had been sold worldwide. Due to the advent of services such as Apple Music and Spotify, music streaming has rapidly become the most popular method of accessing music over the past decade. Music track downloading and music sharing through social media platforms not only dominate the way in which music is being accessed, but also the way new music is being discovered. According to Hughes et al. (2016):

For most of the last century radio and television exposure were typically the key drivers of hit songs and while traditional media remains important, that discovery process is now vastly more fragmented. In some instances, stars can emerge from just one online channel (namely, Shawn Mendes via Vine or Troye Sivan through YouTube), with Facebook and other forms of social media typically playing pivotal roles in exposing all new music. (p.iv)

The Nielsen Company is the music industry's leading data information provider. It seeks to understand the attitudes and behaviours of music fans and provides an insight into how consumers engage with their favourite music artists. It publishes two annual reports summarising music consumption trends in the USA as well as a report on music trends with a genre breakdown. Its ongoing reports confirm that new technologies and the latest devices such as smartphones, laptops and tablets, allow listeners to engage with music anywhere and at any time.

In more recent times, apps such as TikTok, have accelerated the growth of a new wave of hits virally. TikTok has become a place where new and old music, past and present hits have been discovered or rediscovered, and due to the extreme popularity of the video-sharing app, some artists have seen

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their music sales escalate after setting the music to a dance trend, or just as a go-to music selection. TikTok is a Chinese video sharing social networking service owned by ByteDance, a Beijing-based company founded in 2012. TikTok was first launched in 2016, for the Chinese market and in 2017 it was launched for iOS and Android platforms in markets outside of China. From 2018, it was available in over 150 markets and in 75 languages. It was reported by Sensor Tower in December 2020, that the TikTok app has been downloaded globally 2.6 billion times.

The TikTok mobile app allows users to create a short video of themselves, often featuring music in the background, which can be sped up, slowed down or edited with a filter. To create a music video with the app, users can choose background music from a wide variety of music genres which include pop, rap, R&B, electro and DJ tracks which are remixed and reproduced with a filter. The user then records a 15-second video with speed adjustments before uploading it to share with others on TikTok or other social platforms. They can also film short lip-sync videos to popular songs. In the first quarter of 2020, TikTok had 315 million downloads, which was the best quarter achieved by any app. For many, TikTok was a welcome respite from the constant news headlines surrounding COVID-19. Of 2020's top twenty most streamed songs (audio plus video), ten went viral on TikTok. While some tracks' success can be directly attributed to the app, other tracks have used the app to maintain their popularity.

Statistics in the 2019 Year-End Report (Nielsen, 2020) show that music streaming also continued to grow significantly, with a new milestone being achieved. For the first time, on-demand streams through audio and video platforms surpassed one trillion over a twelve month period, with 1.15 trillion songs marking 2019 as a milestone year. The report also showed that CCM genres represented 99 per cent of total music consumption in the USA, with R&B/hip hop being the most consumed music genre for two consecutive years. The influence on music markets created by social and digital media indicates the universal public appeal of CCM, relegating the traditional forms of classical music to a comparatively small listening audience - just one per cent of music consumption (see Table 1.1).

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Genre	% of total consumption
R&B/hip-hop	27.7%
Rock	19.8%
Pop	14.0%
Country	7.4%
Latin	5.3%
Dance/electro	3.6%
Christian/gospel	2.3%
Holiday	1.4%
Children	1.2%
Jazz	1.1%
Classical	1%

Table 1.1: 2019 total volume of music consumption by genre. (Extrapolated from figures from Nielsen, 2020)

At the commencement of 2020, the music industry experienced a strong increase in sales globally as music consumption continued to grow. It was reported by 2020 Mid-Year Report (Nielsen, 2021) that during the first ten weeks of the year, total audio consumption increased by 15%, with audio streaming rising by 20% and vinyl sales experiencing an unprecedented growth of 45% as compared to the same period in 2019 in the United States.

In March 2020, music markets were disrupted severely as COVID-19 made its impact on the global economy and consumer behaviour and attitudes changed significantly due to the pandemic. Anxiety was heightened in the wake of the deadly virus and it was reported that 70% of consumers avoided crowded areas and 68% worried about catching the virus or passing it onto others. As the reality of working from home rules were enforced for many, some of the key music listening hours, such as during commutes to and from work, were impacted. Compulsory shut-downs in work places and heightened consumer anxiety caused a dramatic decline in physical music sales from mid-March to June as many music stores closed to foot traffic. Subscription services were the major beneficiaries of the pandemic once consumers began to adapt to stay at home requirements. Global audio steams recovered as people turned to music in the midst of the boredom and the anxiety. In a music research study conducted by Neilson (2021), it was reported that 73% of people said that they had come to rely on entertainment as a means of coping during the pandemic.

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Comparison of Music Sales	2019/2020
Total Audio Activity	+9.4%
On Demand Audio Streaming	+16.2%
Total Album Sales	-18%
Physical Album Sales	-20.3%
Digital Albums	-14.3%
Digital Song Sales	-23.3%

Table 1.2: 2019/2020 Comparison of Music Sales (Extrapolated from figures from Nielsen, 2021)

The figures from the Neilson Report (2021) also revealed that 87% of consumers turned to music that they usually listened to and 55% revisited music they hadn't listened to for some time. While most genres' streaming numbers fell, country music increased in weekly average streams from pre pandemic to post lockdown. Prior to the lockdown, country listeners were slow in adapting to using downloading platforms, and subscriptions services, but time in isolation forced county music listeners to make the shift, giving the country music genre a boost in sales. The other music genre that experienced an increase was children's music as working parents were trying to occupy children who were forced to be home from school. Figures in the 2020 Nielsen Music Mid - Year Report (Nielsen, 2021) confirm the ongoing sales, popularity and consumption of CCM styles. (Table 1.3).

Genre	Year to Date Through March 12	March 13 – July 2	Total 2020 Year to Date
Industry Total	+ 20.4%	+13.8%	+16.2%
R&B/hip-hop	+18.1%	+10.9%	+13.6%
Rock	+12.3%	+6.4%	+8.6%
Pop	+17.2%	+8.6%	+13.5%
Country	+22.8%	+20.3%	+21.2%

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Latin	+27.0%	+12.4%	+17.7%
Dance/electro	+4%	-5.3%	-3.1%
Christian/gospel	+11.7%	+8.2%	+9.6%
Holiday	+28.7%	+12.6%	+18.3%
Children	+58.4%	+56.8%	+57.4%
Jazz	+2.2%	+3.7%	+3.1%
Classical	-1.3%	+8.7%	+4.5%

Table 1.3: 2019/2020 Pre-/Post-COVID -19 Analysis: Percentage change in audio streams by genre compared to the same period in 2019 (Extrapolated from figures from Nielsen, 2021)

COVID -19 forced artists and music labels to make difficult decisions regarding their music release dates and touring plans. Many artists who had planned to bundle new albums with ticket sales to their live concerts had to delay release dates during the early months of the virus, as all live performances were suspended. However, 2020 marked a dawn for music livestream as artists discovered creative ways to engage with their audiences. Millions of people pledged support for their favourite artists and were entertained online watching virtual concerts. It was reported that 19% of the general population watched a live streamed performance, while 35% stated they were likely to do so. Although the live stream platform is new to many music fans, 28% stated they were happy to pay to watch a virtual performance.

As a result of the demand for CCM styles, researchers have reported that most singers, nationally and internationally, are employed in the CCM music industry. Hughes et al. (2016) expanded the discussion to include the status and activities of the music sector over the last decade:

The democratisation of music technologies and the digitisation of music practices have resulted in the development and fragmentation of related industries. No longer a label-centric industry, these new music industries facilitate increased opportunities for twenty-first century musicians to collaborate, to communicate and to interact with others interested in their music. (p.1)

The increase in consumption of CCM styles and how audiences interact with this music has created a growing demand for vocal instruction across a broad range of CCM styles in both private studio and university programs. While the overwhelming growth in CCM production over the past hundred years has

About the Author



Marisa Lee Naismith, PhD, has been commercially active in the field of CCM for over 45 years. Her career began as an award-winning vocalist 35 years ago, entertaining audiences in live venues, on television, radio and touring the east coast of Australia with a rock band. Over the years, Marisa has sustained employment in the CCM industry by transitioning her career to become a

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singing teacher, voice researcher and industry mentor. In 2019, Marisa was awarded a Doctor of Philosophy based on her investigation into the emerging field of Contemporary Commercial Music (CCM) singing voice pedagogy. As a result of her research, Marisa was able to identify a foundational framework for the training of singers across the broad range of CCM styles. Over the last five years, she has travelled nationally and internationally to present the preliminary findings of her research study at numerous voice conferences. Recently, Marisa was able to adapt her teaching framework to assist those who have transitioned to training singers via an online teaching platform.

Marisa is presently employed as a voice teacher in the Bachelor of Music (Popular Music) at Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University, Australia, and in private studio. In early 2021, she launched her brand new podcast series “A Voice and Beyond” which focuses on topics such as self-care, personal development and personal growth targeted at the singing voice community.

Proudly, many of Marisa’s students have attained great success nationally and internationally, while others have transitioned into teaching singing and run successful studios all over southeast Queensland. More information can be found at <https://drmarisaleenaismith.com/>