

# Perspectives on Teaching Singing

Australian Vocal Pedagogues Sing Their Stories

Edited by Dr Scott Harrison



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## Showtime! — Teaching Music Theatre and Cabaret Singing

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*Pat H. Wilson*

Singing teachers need to be familiar with current international criteria in order to prepare their students for the demands of professional music theatre and cabaret, because these fields have become worldwide industries, with broadly accepted standards, aesthetic requirements, audition protocols and employment conditions. Modern music theatre covers so broad a range of genres that it is now impossible to say that a singer has a “music theatre sound”. Appropriate singing pedagogy is no longer all about “legit” versus “belt” — much more needs to be taken into consideration. Music theatre performance requires acting, singing and dance skills of equally high order (frequently simultaneously); *appoggio* often becomes an issue. Repertoire for music theatre is largely sung in English. Music theatre shows have long runs and often tour. Music theatre is now performed with sound reinforcement. Curiously, auditions for music theatre are rarely done with sound reinforcement. Cabaret is an art form for self-starters; in cabaret, the artist becomes *auteur*. The cabaret performer must have a strong entrepreneurial streak and a clear vision of what they wish to say in their show. Chamber music aspects of cabaret put a strong focus on the individual. There’s no hiding in the back row of a one-man show. An advantage of cabaret is that it is so stripped-back that performers can frequently produce a show themselves, at minimal cost. The way teachers approach cabaret and music theatre genres should be informed by viewing a wide range of professional performances of music theatre and cabaret, both nationally and internationally. This gives singers and teachers alike benchmarks of excellence and inspiration to excel in these two rewarding music genres.

A faithful pedagogue (παιδαγωγέω), loyal to Greek tradition, will labour to lead each student entrusted to their care towards whatever learning experiences they think that student needs. A pedagogue is, after all, a leader. Thus, in music theatre and cabaret, the singing teacher needs a practical and up-to-date working knowledge of current industry requirements; how else may they confidently lead their students towards working either nationally or internationally in these very commercial genres?

Pamela Wurgler (1997), in her overview article on singing pedagogy, proposed that the educational tasks of the singing teacher fall into three main areas: the cognitive domain (factual knowledge), the psychomotor domain (skills development) and the affective domain (development of attitudes and values). This threefold framework forms a useful way of viewing the range of pedagogical tasks which fall to any singing teacher working in contemporary commercial music (CCM) (LoVetri, 2002), more specifically, the genres of music theatre and cabaret. The major portion of this chapter relates to the specifics of music theatre singing pedagogy; because of its distinctive demands on both performer and teacher, cabaret is considered in a separate section at the end of this chapter.

## **Cognitive Domain — Factual Knowledge**

### *Facts — How We Sing*

It is true of all singing teachers that one of their main tasks is to give their students factual information about the structure and function of the singing voice. This forms the basis for much of the instruction within the psychomotor (skills acquisition) domain. The basic facts of vocal anatomy, acoustics and effective phonation remain the same across genres. Additional facts needed by the students of music theatre repertoire include a clear and confident understanding of belt technique, ready access to male or female falsetto, identification of “pop-belt mix,” and knowing when to use these effects appropriately. Bartlett (1999) pointed out that contemporary style, found in much modern music theatre, “... often demands the use of glottal attack, soft onset, flattened vibrato and glottal fry. These stylistic elements should not be written off by the voice teacher as poor technique, but should be recognized and managed” (p. 47). A further vital fact relating to vocal technique is the requirement for singing in English. Lovely Italian vowels are no longer enough; in addition, both teacher and student must grapple with the barrage of English diphthongs and triphthongs. In energetically dismissing vowel modification in music theatre singing, Mary Saunders-Barton said, “Acting is everything. In musical theatre you have to act, sing, and dance, in that order of priority ... but the singing and dancing skills are at the service of the dramatic imperative” (Melton, 2007, p. 63). Intelligibility is paramount.



### *Facts — How We Audition*

Effective singing teachers need to be familiar with facts relating to the music theatre trade worldwide in order to prepare their students for work within an industry that has specific demands relating to auditioning, performing, recording and touring. Music theatre is an international multimillion-dollar business, with all the inflexibilities inherent within a global industry. Singing teachers need to prepare their auditioning students by explaining the protocols surrounding professional music theatre auditions. The objective of the first-round audition is simply to get a callback. The usual requirement for a first-round audition is two contrasting music theatre songs, often one up-tempo and one ballad. However, equally effective paired contrasts could be a rock song and a folk song, or a song that shows belt and belt-mix capability, and a song in legit quality. It all depends on the show for which the audition is being held. It is generally preferable that one of the songs is written by the composer of the show for which the student is auditioning. Australian panels generally frown on the performance of a song directly from the show for which auditions are being conducted. There are a number of up-to-date books dealing with the practicalities of professional music theatre auditions; Gillyanne Kayes' and Jeremy Fisher's *Successful Singing Auditions* (2002) is excellent, although slanted towards United Kingdom practice.

Practical details vary, but it is becoming a rarity for any auditionee to complete a whole song in their first-round audition. Current practice in New York music theatre auditions for performers at entry level of the industry is for 16 bars only to be performed. Teachers can prepare their students by helping them identify the most vocally and dramatically effective 16 bars in each of their audition songs, marking the scores appropriately, and giving the students opportunity to practice performing the truncated version. No matter how thoroughly a student has prepared, an unanticipated request in the audition room for "Just 16 bars, please" can be enough to tip the most confident auditionee off-balance.

There is a paradox relating to auditioning for music theatre: sound reinforcement is never used in audition, whereas no major professional music theatre show is performed without sound reinforcement — generally head-worn (i.e., a lavalier microphone on a wire) or headset microphones. A practical grasp of the questions raised by sound reinforcement in professional music theatre is more than useful for the pedagogue; informed consideration of this topic, such as that of Wendy LeBorgne, as reported by Melton (2007, p. 16), is invaluable.

### *Facts — How We Work*

Singing teachers need to be aware of the facts of the industry; in this way they can best prepare their students for a successful working life in the music

theatre industry. Teachers training students to audition should include, in that process, factual information about what those students are letting themselves in for, should they be successful.

However a company elects to order their working week, eight shows a week is an industry norm. Performers are athletes, from whom their director and producer demand high-energy, meticulously accurate, consistent and emotionally honest performances eight times a week. The harsh economic argument is, "If today's seats cost as much as yesterday's, then today's audience deserve as good a performance as yesterday's received".

Once the show is up and running, lucky young performers who have been awarded understudy roles will also have to attend understudy calls weekly in order to rehearse their role in case they are needed to go on for an injured or sick principal performer.

Unlike most operas and theatre, music theatre shows may run for many months at a time, frequently touring. This is the way producers attempt to recoup the very high costs of mounting this art form. Long runs and tours add their own particular stresses for the neophyte music theatre performer. The well-informed music theatre teacher will be able to give students practical tips for maintaining vocal health, emotional energy and freshness of interpretation throughout long runs and whilst touring.

### **Psychomotor Domain — Skills Development**

Singing is the end result of the orchestration of a number of neuromuscular tasks — breathing, phonation, articulation and resonance (Miller, 1996, p. 48). All of these tasks together form the physical foundation of the act of singing in any genre. It can be said, with some justification, that good pedagogic practice is much the same for all genres — a larynx is a larynx, and, barring pathologies, universal rules govern efficient phonation. The source-filter model holds true (Sundberg, 1987, p. 58). While acknowledging the essential truth of this viewpoint, three considerations modify it for singing teachers working in the field of music theatre — breath, belt and speech-into-song.

#### **Breath**

##### **Psychomotor Domain**

Much like religion, protocols surrounding the training of effective breath support and management for singing differ widely, are debated passionately by researchers and practitioners, and are described in many different, frequently confusing ways. Sometimes two techniques, held to be utterly different, and seemingly so from the language used to describe them, are effectively the same. Miller's discussion of the technique of *appoggio* is per-

herent here, "Appoggio cannot narrowly be defined as 'breath support', as is sometimes thought, because appoggio includes resonance factors as well as breath management" (Miller, 1996, p. 23). It is precisely this global, somatic approach to the support and management of breath that music theatre pedagogues need. As Jean Callaghan put it, "... the body is the voice ..." (cited in Melton, 2007, p. 149).

For at least the past 17 years, pedagogues have known that the subglottic pressure and airflow for CCM singers are different than for classical singers (Sundberg, Gramming, & LoVetri, 1993). Many music theatre triple-threat performers began their performance training with dance classes at an early age. They will have been taught the "pull-up," in which the abdominal and associated muscle groups are energetically recruited to reinforce the lumbar and sacral spine areas. Dancers will tell you that the purpose of the "pull-up" is to maintain the integrity of the spinal column, unload body joints, provide a basis for good alignment and help build the axis for pirouettes. It is plain that singing pedagogues need to be aware of the "pull-up," and its consequences. The singing teacher that advises a singer/dancer/actor to "Just release all those tight belly muscles" in order to facilitate breath support, is inviting disaster of one kind or another. Students who obey will sustain injuries, because their core strength has been compromised. Disobedient students will find the inflexibility of the abdominal musculature in the "pull-up" prohibits them from reliable access to sufficient breath, from the nuances of breath management that enables legato tone and smooth volume variations, and (worst of all) from free and intuitive access to truthful emotion in their acting and singing. This is one of the major pedagogic questions to be addressed in the teaching of "triple-threat" performers. Once the singing teacher understands the biomechanical imperatives associated with acting, singing and dancing simultaneously, they can realistically assist their students to sing with breath and muscle management tailored to the needs of each individual performer. Janice Chapman's practical approach to reconciling these questions includes use of Accent Method work (Chapman, 2008).

Research very pertinent to this is currently being set up in Queensland, using real-time ultrasound to give a clearer picture of muscle activation patterns in both the abdomen and chest walls of elite vocal performers across genres. This research pursues directions outlined in a pilot study undertaken in London by Joan Melton, in association with physiotherapists Ed Blake and Jane Grey (Melton, 2009). All music theatre performers and their singing teachers stand to benefit from the findings of this investigation.

### *Belt*

This is an area that has occasioned much attention in the past 20 years amongst singing pedagogy circles. Sometimes, more heat than light has been

generated by collegial discussions about belt quality at conferences worldwide. Leon Thurman, Graham Welch, Axel Theimer, Patricia Feit and Elizabeth Grefsheim have co-authored a balanced chapter titled "Singing various musical genres with stylistic authenticity: Vocal efficiency, vocal conditioning and voice qualities;" it is published in Thurman and Welch's foundational three-volume pedagogic work, *Bodymind and Voice* (Thurman & Welch, 2000). In this chapter, the authors observed that this style of singing is "a staple of musical theatre in Western civilization. But for thousands of years, children, adolescents and adults of nearly all the world's cultures have sung their folk and popular musics in a strong belted way" (Thurman & Welch, 2000, p. 520). The authors, while conceding that belt quality occasions strenuous laryngeal muscle use, as well as high collision and shearing forces on the vocal folds, assert that lifetime vocal health is possible when:

- voices are coordinated with physical and acoustic efficiency;
- the laryngeal muscles and vocal fold tissues are well conditioned; and
- singers know how to protect their voices (Thurman & Welch, 2000, p. 521)

These succinct guidelines point to those specific areas of singing pedagogy in which singing teachers working in the music theatre genre ought be best informed and most capable.

### *Speech-Into-Song*

Unless the musical is through-sung, that is, all text is sung, not spoken, the singer is faced with the task of transitioning smoothly and convincingly from spoken voice to sung voice and back again, whilst losing neither emotional intensity nor quality of tone. Examples of through-sung musicals include *Les Misérables* (Boublil/Schönberg), *The Phantom of the Opera* (Lloyd Webber), *Rent* (Larson), *Seussical* (Flaherty/Ahrens), *Tommy* (Townshend/McAnuff) and *Next To Normal* (Kitt/Yorkey). These musicals are exceptions in the canon; most musicals demand both speaking and singing, and today's direction styles and production values insist on emotionally honest and convincing musical drama. Pedagogues with spoken-voice training and experience are at an advantage here, because they can readily build a practical bridge between an actor's spoken-voice techniques and singing-voice techniques in order to integrate the end product — the triple-threat performance. Singing teachers who have worked with actors in tertiary training institutions are all too aware of the vocal discontinuities that can ensue from performers approaching their singing voice with a different set of technical tools from those they have learned to employ with their singing voice. In Melton and Tom's book, *One Voice*, they said "Maintaining the same basic technique for singing and speaking, and integrating that technique with requirements for dance and movement, is essential for the musical theatre



actor" (Melton & Tom, 2003, p. 136). Thurman and Welch stated, "We have one voice, not two ... Speaking and singing are two ways we coordinate our one voice to express ourselves. There is more similarity in the two coordinations than there are differences" (Thurman & Welch, 2000, p. xx).

### *Taking Contemporary Commercial Music Voices Seriously*

There has been a perceptible shift internationally in the literature of singing pedagogy towards more scientific research, more educational focus and more in-service practitioner training for singing teachers and their students working in contemporary commercial music, including music theatre and cabaret. Having reviewed the paucity of research literature directly relevant to music theatre practitioners seven years ago (Wilson, 2003), it is encouraging to see much more work placing the physical, emotional and intellectual demands of music theatre performers at centre stage. If there was a need for justifying greater scientific interest in music theatre performers, then the work of Koufman et al. (1996) provides incentive. Investigating laryngeal biomechanics by using transnasal fiberoptic laryngoscopy on a sample of 100 healthy, proficient singers drawn from a wide range of genres, Koufman et al. reported that levels of laryngeal muscle tension were lower in classical singers than in non-classical singers, with "the highest being seen in those singing jazz/pop (65%), musical theater (74%), bluegrass/country and western (86%) and rock/gospel (94%)". Australian researchers, Phyland, Oates and Greenwood (1999), in surveying professional singers in opera, musical theatre and contemporary (excluding rock) styles, reported that, "The MT [music theatre] singers performed the most hours a month (46.5 hours) ..." (p. 606). These researchers further noted "a trend toward a higher number of reported incidents of vocal edema in the MT singers than in the other groups" (Phyland et al., 1999, p. 609). These findings should encourage vocal pedagogues to do everything practical that they can to enhance the biomechanical processes involved in phonation for singers working in music theatre.

Music theatre pedagogues should be servicing the skills acquisition requirements of their student singers just as carefully and as thoroughly as classical voice pedagogues serve their students. It is heartening to see pedagogues such as Anne Peckham, who has devised vocalises specifically for developing appropriate tonal qualities and intervallic agility in contemporary singers. She observed, "As the music theater genre has expanded to include many ... different influences, it has become important for working singers to be capable of performing with appropriate style and embellishment in a variety of idioms" (Peckham, 2003, p. 216).

A regular contributor to the *Journal of Singing*, (official publication of the National Association of Teachers of Singing, United States) is Robert

Edwin, whose articles have consistently advocated the importance of CCM music and the necessity for pedagogues to take the challenges of these musics seriously. In a typical article, Edwin (2005) encouraged voice pedagogy to catch up with the times:

In spite of the theater world's obvious and overwhelming shift to pop, rock, and R & B-based music, the majority of college and university music theater voice departments continue to be heavily populated with current and former classical opera singers who know little if anything about nonclassical voice pedagogy and repertoire. Their mantra is, "If you can learn to sing classically, you can sing anything," which is equivalent to a tennis instructor saying "If you learn to play tennis, you can play any sport". (p. 292)

Practical repertoire resource articles, such as Alt and Greene (1996), help teachers find their way through the massive body of music theatre repertoire, enabling song choices that are not only appropriate to the singer, but also offering precise pedagogical challenges.

The existence of Jeanette LoVetri's Contemporary Commercial Music Vocal Pedagogy Institute at Shenandoah University (Virginia, United States), albeit as a regular summer program only, is an encouraging sign that thoughtful pedagogues are at last being enabled to address the specific vocal needs of CCM performers, including music theatre and cabaret singers.

### **Affective Domain — Development of Attitudes and Values**

Music theatre and cabaret vocal pedagogy is not frequently considered in the literature, yet is at the core of all successful performances. Helping students to forge their own benchmarks of excellence, their aesthetic sensibilities, and their individual outlook on the profession in general and their place within it, is a task for a passionate, industry-aware teacher. "Attitudes are caught, not taught. The exemplary teachers of singing have not forgotten the wonder of music and the joy of making music ... Teachers must inspire their students to see music as an art, worthy of value" (Wurgler, 1997, p. 7). Here, Wurgler reinforces the role of pedagogue as leader; what the teacher models is what the student will — consciously or unconsciously — emulate and imbibe.

With this in mind, teachers of music theatre should keep up-to-date with the industry and always work with attitudes that reflect international best practice, while understanding how to build benchmark standards of excellence in their students' aesthetic perceptions. The inspirational music theatre pedagogue will know what's playing on Broadway and the West End now, who's starring, who are the newest composers in the field and have an exemplary library of CDs and DVDs of recent musicals as well as from the

canon of music theatre. A passion for music theatre is best caught from a singing teacher who is passionate about music theatre.

The pedagogue who helps a student develop a work ethic that accords with the way music theatre is rehearsed, performed and toured, gives that student an invaluable life-long professional tool. As Wurgler (1997) suggested, these attitudes are “caught, not taught”; it’s what the teacher *does* that conveys these values.

### Cabaret — Its Distinctive Challenges

“Cabaret,” said Eric Bronner in his review article, “is the unique and titillating genre in which artistic experimentation and expression meet social commentary, political criticism, and popular culture” (Bronner, 2004, p. 453). It should be noted that, in some countries, “cabaret” is not a common term, although the genre persists; performances billed as “one-person shows,” usually performed in small theatres or intimate alternative venues, can be cabaret in all but name. The pedagogue who works across the range of music theatre repertoire need have no qualms in approaching work with a cabaret performer, much the same conditions apply. It is, however, in the generation of new work; conditions of employment and performance convention that the singing teacher may need some extra information. In cabaret, unlike CCM genres, performers are on their own. It is an art form best suited to the most creatively robust and emotionally stable performer. Here, the artist is auteur. The children’s folk tale of *The Little Red Hen* (Golden Press, 1992) is an apposite fable for all would-be cabaret performers.

Cabaret is the most accessible performance format for the entrepreneurial artist. Establishment costs are minimal, unlike music theatre. Mounting the most modest musical costs a great deal in both time and effort; traditionally, cabaret merely requires one artist (although sometimes there are just a few more), an accompanist, a venue and a program of theatrically coherent material. Many music theatre performers devise a one-person show for themselves, with the help of a director and musical director, so that they have the chance to work between engagements, not only raising a modest income, but also performing in a professional arena where their skills can be seen publicly by producers, directors, musical directors and agents. A well-crafted cabaret thus acts as an effective business card, maintains and hones performance skills between jobs, and keeps the unemployed triple-threat out of the call centre or the coffee shop.

To create an effective cabaret, it is necessary to have something specific to say — a viewpoint, an opinion or a theme. The origins of cabaret belong among the dissidents, experimental artists, political satirists and bohemians



of a culture. Good cabaret is always risky and sometimes even risqué. Theatrical content is what distinguishes a cabaret from a concert.

Peter J. Casey (2006) proposed five different subgenres of cabaret:

1. You Know Me Already, And Here's How I Got Up Here [This is for when you're famous, and tell a bit of your life story].
2. You Don't Know Me But Should, And Here's How I Got Up Here [This is for when you're not at all famous, but tell a bit of your life story].
3. An Evening of Songs by [insert Composer or Team].
4. An Evening of Songs About [Insert theme].
5. Original material [very rare]. (Casey, 2006, p. 1)

This practical template should be helpful for both cabaret performers and their singing teachers. It is at this stage of planning a cabaret that the singing teacher's function may unexpectedly morph into musical director, repetiteur and/or director. Students will often seek their teacher's advice, asking for suggestions for suitable themes and repertoire that fit the structure and theme, and showcase the performer's acting and singing to best advantage. Advice about confecting medleys of songs (a musical director's domain) or planning the sequence of songs (a directorial task) may also be sought. Few young cabaret performers can afford to pay a professional director and a musical director; in the first instance, it is to their trusted singing teacher that performers frequently turn for a range of practical professional advice.

Pedagogues should be aware of the importance of patter; that is, the spoken material between each sung item. Patter (sometimes also called "glue," in that it sticks the disparate songs together into a theatrically cohesive whole) must be scripted. No matter how casual and "ad lib" it appears in performance, every good cabaret artist's chat between songs is crafted to maintain the emotional momentum of the whole. Casey advised, "script it to within an inch of its life and then present it as if you just thought of it" (2006, p. 2).

Teachers assisting their students with the selection, development and presentation of cabaret material should understand the genre's performance conventions. In cabaret, there is no "fourth wall," that imaginary, transparent wall at the front of the stage through which an audience views a conventional stage performance. Some theatre and music theatre productions break this convention — often to good dramatic effect — but they are the exception. Cabaret allows a performer to notice, interact with and respond to his or her audience. The reverse is also true. This fact delights many performers; it terrifies others, who find safety in performing on a brilliantly-lit stage, with a big black orchestra pit between them and a darkened auditorium of audience members. Cabaret artists can see their audience seeing them. This

needs to be factored into not only the repertoire chosen, but also the way in which it is performed. The gung-ho mezzo-soprano who nightly bellows "Everything's coming up roses" (from Styne's *Gypsy*), accompanied by a 20-piece pit orchestra, in a 2500-seat auditorium, cannot successfully replicate her performance in a 100-seat cabaret venue, with some audience members an arm's length away from her.

The chamber-music format of cabaret is very revealing — it is one of the charms of the genre. It also displays an artist's ability to work in close collaboration with their accompanist. Good cabaret should work in the same way as a lieder recital. Both singer and accompanist collaborate with sensitivity in order to produce an artistically and theatrically satisfying end product. It should also be noted that piano is not the only likely accompaniment for a cabaret artist.

Deer and Dal Vera offered a slightly jaundiced view of performers creating and presenting their own cabaret shows: "Guaranteed to pay virtually nothing and to cost you a fair amount in self-promotion" (2008, p. 390). Nevertheless, they give a good summary of the place of cabaret in a music theatre performer's professional life and development: "Cabarets offer performers a chance to develop distinctive performing identities and establish direct audience rapport in ways that traditional theatre doesn't allow" (p. 390).

## Conclusion

Practitioners of vocal pedagogy for music theatre and cabaret styles need reliable, practical, industry-based, scientifically moderated information relevant to their work. If Sondheim is seen as important as Schubert, if Bach and Bacharach are alike respected, if the works of Brown (Jason Robert) and of Beethoven (Ludwig van) are taken equally seriously, then it is clear that the training of singing pedagogues in music theatre and cabaret styles should be far more than a few extra lectures from a CCM practitioner inserted into a 3-year course rooted in European art musics from Baroque to Contemporary.

Irene Bartlett surveyed "voice teachers who identified themselves as teaching contemporary music styles ... to determine their beliefs and practices in relation to classical voice techniques, specific contemporary voice techniques and unusual demands of contemporary styles" (Bartlett, 1999, p. 45). Her investigation results caused her to observe,

A major area of concern was a perceived shortfall in what voice teachers know about contemporary singing generally and about how to teach it specifically. Voice teachers and tertiary educators in the survey shared a perception that acquiring both types of knowledge may be problematic. (Bartlett, 1999, p. 45)

LoVetri and Weekly (2003) undertook a survey of CCM singing teachers, both American and international, in the period January–April 2002. The

researchers sought to define the teachers' training, education and experience, as well as examining the ways in which they taught CCM genres, especially music theatre. "Only 56 (45%) of the 124 respondents who teach MT had any training to teach music theater" (LoVetri & Weekly, 2003, p. 210).

Dedicated undergraduate and postgraduate courses designed to train singing teachers in the specifics of music theatre and cabaret are desperately necessary, both in Australia and overseas. While classical-voice singing teachers continue to offer young students such legit vocal quality songs as "I Could Have Danced All Night" (from *My Fair Lady*) or "Younger Than Springtime" (from *South Pacific*) as a nice change from the *Twenty-four Italian Songs and Arias* repertoire, without contextualising the music theatre repertoire or addressing its stylistic demands, music theatre repertoire will continue to be seen as a soft option for budding singers, blessedly free of Italian language problems, and not too hard on a developing voice. It is this approach that eviscerates the integrity of both the song and its art form. What sense a 17-year-old girl could hope to make of either text or subtext in "Memory" (from *Cats*) or "Send in the Clowns" (from *A Little Night Music*) is hard to discern. I have heard both of these songs sung by a 17-year-old girl. Respecting the genre and training pedagogues fit for 21st century music theatre and cabaret will reduce the incidence of debacles such as these.

In summary, 21st century pedagogues in the fields of music theatre and cabaret would benefit greatly from a more practical awareness of worldwide industry standards, dedicated training of music theatre and cabaret specialist teachers, and research that investigates realistic conditions for professional performers in these areas and assists both singers and their pedagogues to develop and maintain vocal, emotional and spiritual health. Harking back to Robert Edwin's (2005) amusing analogy about tennis, it makes sense to employ golf pros (not tennis coaches) to train elite-level golfers in their sport. It makes just as much good sense to use singing teachers trained in the specific pedagogic requirements of music theatre and cabaret, and supported by researchers investigating the voice science behind contemporary vocal styles, to train music theatre and cabaret performers.

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