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CROSSING IN STYLE:

AN EXPLORATION OF THE VOCAL AND PRESENTATIONAL ELEMENTS TO
BE CONSIDERED WHEN CLASSICAL SINGERS CROSS OVER INTO THE JAZZ
GENRE

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2008

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of NZSM 596

ABSTRACT

Classical singers of all levels have experimented with genre crossover to jazz for many years. Many continue to do so today and the position held by genre crossover singers in the future will most likely be substantial – influencing the worlds of both music education and performance, and impacting culture and society in general.

Classical to jazz genre crossover singers can be more successful in their endeavors if they devote time and energy to educating themselves about mechanical (physical mechanics of the voice) and stylistic performance (presentational facets) aspects of jazz singing. While there are currently many resources pertaining to classical singing mechanics, there are not many that address jazz singing mechanics. Additionally, there are many resources that discuss jazz style (or stylistic performance aspects), but few that discuss classical style. These gaps in information prove detrimental to the singer attempting classical to jazz genre crossover.

The aim of this project is to explore these gaps and offer foundational knowledge necessary for classically-trained singers attempting genre crossover into jazz, consulting mainly vocal production books and classical and jazz practitioners. The mechanical aspects of singing explored are: breathing; register and registration; resonance and acoustics; timbre. The stylistic performance aspects of singing explored include: improvisation; non-verbal communication.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The following contributors are classical and jazz vocal practitioners who were chosen as interviewees for this project because of their experience in performing and teaching. Each of them was contacted by phone and/or email and all interviews were conducted primarily through email. Each has given permission to be referenced and/or quoted in this thesis.

I would like to thank them all for contributing enthusiastically to this project with their individual perspectives, experiences, and guidance. All have been distinctively and vitally invaluable and this study would not be what it is without them.

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