

**Contemporary Vocal Pedagogy
and the Singer-Songwriter:
Towards a Toolkit of Physical Approaches
to Performance Training**

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Abstract

'The body and music are intrinsically bound together, especially within the live performance context.'

(Davidson, 2017, p. 223)

The 'singer-songwriter' is unique as the only category of singer to create and perform their own music, the broader sense of this term including solo performers and those who sing as part of a band. Since the rise of the popular music degree in the 1990s, questions of what and how we should teach the popular musician have been present. This practitioner research asks how we might address the training needs of the singer-songwriter and what those needs might be. Although the roles of the singer-songwriter are 'performance-centred' (Moir & Medbøe, 2015, p.147), higher popular music education does traditionally focus on performance skills (Pipe, 2018). As a vocal teacher, I am involved in a constant process of developing my practice in order to best serve the needs of the singer in front of me. This research highlights and responds to a lack of performance pedagogy within popular singing discourse. It explores the performance roles of the singer-songwriter as popular artist and how relevant skills might be developed in training. Through the practical exploration of the movement techniques of Rudolf Laban and Michael Chekhov, this research looks to other performance disciplines in search of physical approaches to the development of performance skills in the singer-songwriter and suggests tools that teachers and singers might apply. Themes emerging from this practical research include the interrelationship between the physical, the vocal, and the emotional and the ways in which it is possible to embody performance. Drawing on primary, practical research and secondary knowledge sources from a range of fields, the centrality of the body to the communication of meaning and how this might impact singer-songwriter performance pedagogy is explored.

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author.
This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other,
University. All sources are acknowledged as References.

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 The Background

I am a singing teacher working with undergraduate vocalists on a music (songwriting and performance) degree course. The institution at which I teach is a HE-level provider of performing arts and creative courses with a practical focus. I work with singer-songwriters in a one-to-one tutorial setting across the three years of the degree course. All the students I currently teach aim to work professionally as singer-songwriters/artist-songwriters and span a range of contemporary styles including pop, rock, soul and country. They perform in a range of contexts including solo and as part of a band. An hour-long weekly vocal tutorial is provided for students in each year of the degree course, alongside a range of group classes focusing on other areas of the curriculum, including songwriting/music creation, music production, musicianship skills and business skills. When working with first and second year students my role as vocal tutor has various aspects within the overarching areas of vocal technique and performance technique. I do not teach songwriting. My initial aim is to ensure that vocal use is safe and healthy. Any significant vocal habits in the individual singer with the potential to negatively impact vocal health would be tackled as a priority. If I observe there to be an existing vocal health issue I advise the singer to immediately seek a referral to a voice clinic in order to be checked by a medical professional. I consider knowledge of vocal health and rehabilitation to be an important part of my practice and have completed a number of courses led by speech therapists and rehabilitation coaches. This knowledge allows me to more easily recognize vocal issues so that I am able to direct individual singers to the relevant professional and also informs the way I approach singing technique within my teaching practice.

My goal over the three years of training is for students to develop a healthy and efficient vocal technique, which can be integrated with their own individual vocal style. Having a recognizable or unique vocal sound is particularly important to many singer-songwriters (Reinhert, 2019) and this can be developed and supported through healthy vocal practices. Alongside my focus on functional singing training there are many other elements of my practice within the vocal tutorial, dependent on individual need. This includes exploration of the stylistic features and requirements of different genres of popular singing such as various onsets and offsets of sound, vocal embellishments such as riffs, improvisation and different vocal set ups. I also integrate the study of scales and modes within this work on style and improvisation.

The other major aspect of my work within the vocal studio is the development of performance skills. Depending on individual need this can involve building performance confidence, applying performance anxiety strategies and the exploration of performance from various perspectives such as storytelling, communication of emotion and physical and vocal expression. For singer-songwriters microphone technique also features within training. I view this as separate from the fundamentals of vocal technique, as a microphone amplifies and may add effects to the voice but it is the vocal mechanism that produces the sound. The use of amplification is an established part of popular singing however, and good microphone technique can greatly enhance a vocal performance. Many singer-songwriters also perform whilst playing an instrument and this is an additional aspect of performance training. Whilst work in the vocal studio may initially focus on the fundamentals and vocal and performance technique, by the final year of training the work centres on the realization of the singer-songwriter's individual vision as popular artist.

Bringing these aspects of the singer-songwriter together requires a holistic approach to training. I aim to facilitate an awareness and understanding of the ways in which lifestyle choices can impact the voice and the performer. I consider physical and mental well-being to link directly to vocal health and this is a major reason for the centrality of physical approaches to my practice. My vocal tutorials begin with a sequence of exercises targeting areas such as tension release, physical awareness, energy flow, positive alignment and breath connection. I encourage singers to build on this work outside of the studio by providing tension release sequences and encouraging physical practices such as yoga.

The physical aspects of my practice are also influenced by my own training background as an actor, in which I was introduced to movement-based practices such as those of Laban and Chekhov, whose work is explored within this research. This background is important in terms of my positionality as researcher. Acting training assumes the body to be vital as an expressive tool within performance and I believe this to be true of all forms of performance, including singer-songwriter performance. This does not mean that I expect a singer to necessarily use the body in the same way as an actor. There are many forms of performing art and many styles of performance within the overarching category of popular music. The performance requirements of the singer-songwriter will depend on factors including style of music, artist persona and gig type and setting, ranging from intimate acoustic gigs to festival and arena gigs. However, having experienced varied performance types as both

performer and audience member, I have observed that emotion and energy can be communicated to the audience through the body, even when the body is still. Artist-songwriter Yungblud has expressed that, for them, live performance is about the connection to the audience, which they describe as a wire (Barrow, 2022). Yungblud's energetic performance style, influenced by artists such as Lady Gaga and Marilyn Manson (Johnston, 2019) is highly physical and the role of the body is therefore clear. I would argue, however, that the physical presence and energy of a performer is always a central part of connecting with an audience. The type of energy will depend on the artist and style but even in electronic dance music where performance is likely to be limited, the producer or DJ connects with the audience and influences their experience through their physicality and energy. The question of how we might develop this kind of communication between artist and audience is at the root of this research project. In the search for tools I looked to my own cross-disciplinary performance training. Having personally experienced the effects of the techniques of Laban and Chekhov in creating physical and emotional connection, I began this research project from a position of expectation that they might be effectively modified for use with singer-songwriters.

Alongside this enthusiasm of practice this research also responds to the limited discourse around performance pedagogy for the singer-songwriter, particularly the physical aspects of training. This may be linked to the perception that because the singer-songwriter is telling a story that is likely to be personal to them they do not require the performance techniques and tools utilized by the classical singer and musical theatre performer (Edwards, 2018). Certainly the performance context of the singer-songwriter differs from other singers and this is one of the reasons for my specific focus on this category of singer. Musical Theatre is typically included within contemporary styles of singing in the pedagogical literature. As a practitioner working with both popular and Musical Theatre singers, I am very aware of the different training needs of these categories of singer. Although Musical Theatre encompasses some popular styles of singing, it also encompasses a large catalogue of work that shares greater similarities with classical styles of singing. Perhaps more significant is the difference in performance medium. The style of performance on a musical theatre stage is typically very different from that of a popular singing gig. Musicals are theatrical productions in which the singers are usually actors playing a character within a story. Although some popular artistes may tour shows which could be described as 'theatrical' in style, this is not necessarily typical of the singer-songwriter

gig, which can be naturalistic by comparison, depending on the artist and venue. Popular singers are likely to use a handheld microphone, whereas the microphone is usually worn by a musical theatre singer. This means that there is less need for microphone technique within Musical Theatre training. It is common for singer-songwriters to also play an instrument in performance and this is less associated with musical theatre singers. However, there are many different forms and styles of Musical Theatre and some productions do use handheld microphones, for example, 'Six', 'Spring Awakening' and numerous 'Juke Box' musicals. Actor-musicians also feature in some musicals, such as 'Once', 'Return to the Forbidden Planet' and 'Amelie'. Although there may be some cross-over in the skills needed by musical theatre singers and popular singers, I would argue that the broader differences in performance style warrant different and specific approaches to training. Musical Theatre performers are generally playing a role and must bring the words and story of the librettist and lyricist to life. The singer-songwriter performs their own words and music and are more likely to move away from a theatrical style of performance, which might be perceived as diminishing their authenticity (Chalfin, 2017). The singer-songwriter is, however, required to create, communicate and evoke an emotion or response (Hughes, 2014). This research aims to explore the specific performance needs of the singer-songwriter and possible methods for addressing these needs.

Research into this specific group of singers is also important in light of the rise of degree level training specific to the songwriter. A search on the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service in the UK (UCAS) website using the word 'songwriter' returns details of 18 undergraduate courses in the UK from 11 providers with the word 'songwriting' in the title for 2023 entry (UCAS). A search for 'contemporary music' at undergraduate level brings up 113 courses from 14 providers and it is likely that some of these courses also offer songwriting training. There may be many singer-songwriters who have not trained as performers and do not consider that they need such training. With training now increasingly being offered specific to singer-songwriters, however, it is vital for practitioners, such as myself, to continue to develop tools and methods geared towards this specific group. Whilst the performance style and context of the singer-songwriter may differ from other singers, training methods should address the development of the skills required to 'share and create music with the desired expressive output'. (Reinhert, 2019, p.131).

1.2 Terminology

Within the context of this research the term 'pedagogy' refers to the methods or practice of teaching. Within my specific teaching context and in this dissertation, the singer-songwriter or artist-songwriter is defined as a singer who writes and performs their own music. This includes the more traditional solo singer-songwriter and also the broader sense of the singer performing their own music as part of a band. The term 'contemporary' refers to non-classical styles of singing such as pop, rock, R & B, soul, gospel, hip-hop, jazz and country. The terms 'popular' and 'CCM' (Contemporary Commercial Music) will be used interchangeably with the term 'contemporary' and with the same meaning to reflect the terminology used within the discourse. All of these terms have associated issues. 'Contemporary' is a term also used to describe classical music, which is a possible source of confusion. 'Popular' has various meanings and could relate to culture or appeal. The term 'Contemporary Commercial Music', which emerged to replace the term 'non-classical', is often used within the literature but the use of the word 'commercial' has been questioned due to its potentially negative connotations. Although often included within the umbrella of CCM singing, I view Musical Theatre as an entirely different performance medium with its own specific training needs. Musical Theatre is therefore not included as a CCM style for the purposes of this research, which focuses specifically on the development of my practice with singer-songwriters. Within the context of this dissertation 'Performance skills' are defined as any skills associated with the communication of music within live and recorded performance settings. 'Performance technique' refers to ways of approaching performance that can be taught or replicated. 'Physical approaches' is used within this research to describe any form of exercise, technique or practice that involves active engagement of the body or some form of bodily movement. Individual exercises are also described as 'physical tools', which can form part of a 'toolkit' for use in the development of performance skills.

1.3 Aims and Objectives

As practitioner research, the main aim of the project was the development of my own practice and related knowledge. The question underpinning the research was: how can physical approaches be used to develop performance skills in the singer-songwriter? Through the exploration of practice associated with other performance disciplines, specifically the physical approaches of Rudolf Laban and Michael Chekhov chosen due to my own prior training in their techniques as an actor, the aim

was to move towards the development of specific tools for use with singer-songwriters within a HE context. The objectives relating to this aim were:

- To explore the current state of contemporary vocal pedagogy through engagement with a range of discourse
- To explore the specific training needs of the singer-songwriter through engagement with a range of discourse
- To explore the physical approaches of Rudolf Laban and Michael Chekhov with singer-songwriters within a practical setting
- To reflect upon the potential uses of these approaches within singer-songwriter performance training
- To examine discourse from a range of related fields as part of a wider reflective process in order to develop knowledge and understanding relating to my teaching practice

1.4 Methodology

In the initial stages of the project information was gathered via survey of singers and teachers regarding the content of HE level training for contemporary singers. This aided in focusing the research and establishing context and justification for the specific area chosen for exploration within the practical research study. The core of the research involved a series of practical studio sessions. The sessions were exploratory and collaborative in nature and qualitative feedback from participants was key. Engagement with a range of secondary knowledge sources informed my reflective process, which drew on frameworks such as Gibbs' reflective cycle (Gibbs, 1988) and Brookfield's critical lenses (Brookfield, 2017). Within this reflective process I aimed to understand why and how physical approaches might be effective within performance training, drawing on resonances between my area of teaching and other related areas of theory and research.

1.5 Value

The process was of value in the development of my own practice and knowledge and therefore it was also of benefit to my students. The participants were able to begin to develop physical tools for use in their own practice as performers. It is hoped that the suggested tools will also provide a useful starting point for other practitioners and singers in the development of their own physical approaches. My findings will also

highlight the need for further discourse and research specific to singer-songwriter performance training.

1.6 Limitations

Due to Covid restrictions at the time of the practical research, the number of participants was limited. The sessions took place in a one-to-one online setting, rather than the intended face-to-face group setting, which would have allowed for a greater number and more representative range of participants.

1.7 Structure

The literature review begins with a focus on vocal pedagogy and aims to establish the current context of contemporary singer training. It then moves to discourse relating specifically to the singer-songwriter and the wider context of popular music education. A practice review has also been included due to the cross-disciplinary nature of the research. This focuses on the work of Laban and Chekhov, whose physical approaches are explored within the practical research. Chapter four discusses the research design and methodology of the initial survey as 'Study one' and the practical research as 'Study two'. Chapter five discusses the Study one findings. Chapter six gives an account of Study two, detailing the practical research process and data with a focus on the voice of the participants. My own reflections draw on the experiences of the participants and my own observations in order to identify emerging themes and resonances with other areas of practice and research. A toolkit of exercises, which might be explored by singers and teachers is suggested. Conclusions are drawn regarding the impact of the research on my own practice and how this research might be taken further alongside reflections on future pathways within the wider field of singer-songwriter training.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This chapter reviews discourse relating to the wider field of vocal pedagogy and also literature specific to the popular singer and singer-songwriter. The main aim is to place this practitioner-research project within the current international context of popular singing pedagogy and singer-songwriter training. The term 'popular' is used interchangeably within the literature with other terms including contemporary, CCM (Contemporary Commercial Music) and pop/rock.

2.1 Vocal Pedagogy – Towards a Definition

'Of all the musical instruments, the voice is the most holistic.'

(Hoch, 2020, p.16)

Hoch advocates an holistic approach to vocal pedagogy and argues that, with the aim of singing authentically, the singer's whole being must be considered (Hoch, 2020). Classical pedagogues such as Sell also promote an approach that does not simply focus on vocal training (Sell, 2017), suggesting that the term 'vocal pedagogy' may be simplistic in that voice building is not the only aspect of a singer's training. In order to give a more rounded definition of 'vocal pedagogy', it is necessary to explore current thinking on the broad areas comprising singer training across all styles of singing.

The topic of vocal pedagogy and the roles of the vocal teacher is discussed by Gill and Herbst in their *Logopedics Phoniatrics Vocology* article, *Voice Pedagogy—what do we need?* (Gill & Herbst, 2016). In it, they summarise the discussion of the final keynote panel of the 10th Pan-European Voice Conference (PEVOC). PEVOC is a series of highly regarded, biannual European conferences established in 1995 as an interdisciplinary voice forum through which to exchange findings and research. The panel consisted of five prominent scientists and voice pedagogues from the UK, USA, Germany and Austria. This included LoVetri, who is perhaps the most well-known CCM pedagogue and whose work spans both musical theatre and popular styles of singing. They proposed the three main areas of vocal pedagogy to be rehabilitation, coaching and voice building. 'Voice building' was described as primarily comprising the 'functional and physiological aspects of singing' and 'Coaching' as mostly concerned with performance skills (Gill & Herbst, 2016, p. 169). Rehabilitation and retraining of the singing voice were discussed within the contexts of vocal damage or injury and voice disorder. Gill and Herbst report that these were seen as three distinct areas of vocal pedagogy.

Organisations such as the British Voice Association (BVA) also support a similar three-part model to that discussed at PEVOC. The BVA describes its role as providing education and advice on vocal technique, performance and vocal health (British Voice Association).

Vocal health is a closely related area to vocal rehabilitation but is a better fit within the singing teacher's role. Vocal rehabilitation is arguably outside of the remit of the singing teacher and falls within the roles of professionals such as the Speech and Language Therapist or Rehabilitation Coach.

2.2 The Emergence of Popular Singing Training

This three-part model is not genre-specific and this particular PEVOC panel included classical and contemporary singing pedagogues Chapman and LoVetri. The inclusion of LoVetri suggests a recognition of non-classical vocal pedagogy. The growth of popular singing training and the emergence of courses at Higher Education level in the UK, the United States and Australia is evidenced within the literature. Schindler highlights the growth of music courses within popular styles, particularly from the mid-1990s onwards (Schindler, 2014) and Bartlett identifies a rapid growth in demand for singing training across contemporary styles due, in part, to the influence of social media and reality TV (Bartlett, 2020). Chandler also discusses popular singing within its context as the newest of singing styles to be introduced to music institutions and considers genre-specific pedagogy to be in its early days (Chandler, 2014).

Following this emergence of popular music courses and the increased demand for contemporary singing training, how have institutions dealt with staffing and teacher training within a relatively new area? LoVetri and Weekly's research is able to shed some light on this. In their 2003 Contemporary Commercial Music survey and 2009 follow-up, the question of 'Who's Teaching What in Nonclassical Music?' is addressed (LoVetri & Weekly, 2003, p. 207). Responses were gathered via survey from singing teachers throughout the United States and several other countries. The first survey had 139 respondents and the follow-up survey had 145 respondents. Although there is a focus on Musical Theatre, which is included as a contemporary style, it is significant that the 2003 survey found that: 'Of those teaching this style of CCM, 96% were also teaching classical' (LoVetri & Weekly, 2003, p. 211). LoVetri and Weekly also reported that a number of teachers were conflicted about the disciplines of classical and CCM in various ways. They suggest that this is because of a lack of

agreement amongst experts on basic vocal functions for CCM.

LoVetri and Weekly's research suggests, then, that as the demand for different styles of singing training grew, teachers of classical singing began to teach contemporary styles. This had implications for the effectiveness of teaching as classical teachers may have lacked specific knowledge and experience of contemporary singing and methods of teaching relating to classical singing may therefore have been employed. The traditional mentor-student model of voice instruction, for example, was brought from the classical tradition into other genres. Edwards and Meyer assert that, due to the influence of this model, most singing teachers teach in the manner in which they themselves were taught and that this approach may prevent teachers from adapting to best serve singers' needs (Edwards & Meyer, 2014). This has significant implications for the quality and suitability of training offered to contemporary singers at this time. Classical teachers using the same techniques that their own teachers had used were unlikely to adequately address the needs of popular singing students. The classical sound, and therefore vocal set up, is different from that of the popular singer. Classical singers also do not generally use amplification and the classical technique is designed in order that the voice can carry over an orchestra. This is not appropriate for most popular vocalists who use microphones and do not want to sound like a classical singer. Of course 'stylistic pluralism' is possible and many singing teachers now teach across classical and non-classical genres (Fahey, 2021). However, I would suggest that, at this time, there was a bias towards classical pedagogy, which was seen as 'proper' or 'good' technique. The bias towards classical approaches within the wider field of music education has been highlighted within the popular music discourse (Marrington, 2016; Bennett, 2017).

2.3 A Genre in its own Right?

The bias towards classical pedagogy is perhaps understandable at a time when there was limited consensus regarding the parameters of contemporary voice. In fact, during the late nineties and early 2000s, contemporary singing pedagogy, arguably, did not exist. It was not until 2008 that The American Academy of Teachers of Singing published a position paper, *In Support of Contemporary Commercial Music (Nonclassical) Voice Pedagogy* (Addison et al., 2008). The decision to publish this paper suggests that, even as this time, there was opposition within the field of voice to the idea that popular singing was a distinct area worthy of a specific pedagogy.

The term CCM (Contemporary Commercial Music) was coined by pedagogue LoVetri in 2000 to replace the term 'non-classical' (Winter). LoVetri has since continued her campaign for greater recognition of contemporary pedagogy and the term CCM is now used widely. The 2008 AATS paper did acknowledge the requirement for a systematic and specific approach for CCM voice training and Bartlett and Naismith assert that today 'there is wide acceptance that the sound production inherent in contemporary commercial music (CCM) singing styles differs greatly from accepted, classical vocal practice', including vocal quality/tone and style-related elements (Bartlett & Naismith, 2020, p. 273).

2.4 Teacher Training

If contemporary singing is now accepted as a distinct genre in its own right, has this resulted in the development of a CCM-specific vocal pedagogy? At the time of LoVetri and Weekly's 2003 research they report that it had recently become possible in the US to acquire an undergraduate or postgraduate qualification in vocal performance and in vocal pedagogy (LoVetri & Weekly, 2003) However, these courses were 'primarily aimed at classical vocal music' (LoVetri & Weekly, 2003, p. 208). Their research suggested that this situation was changing as schools of music and conservatories were beginning to add commercial music departments. However, there were no schools offering contemporary commercial vocal pedagogy courses at this time. LoVetri and Weekly's follow-up research in 2009 found no significant changes.

LoVetri and Weekly's research suggests that in 2009 there was very little HE level training available to contemporary singers and teachers. Moving forward to De Silva's survey in 2016, it was found that, at this time, there were three schools in the US offering advanced degrees in CCM Vocal Pedagogy. De Silva surveyed 62 singing teachers as a follow-up to the surveys of 2003 and 2009. The questions were drawn largely from LoVetri and Weekly's 2009 survey with some rewording to place greater focus on CCM vocal pedagogy. De Silva's research found an increase in pedagogical training in CCM at the graduate level. He also reported an increased number of contemporary singing teachers with both graduate-level training and performance experience. This increase was small, however, and the majority of training had been undertaken via private tuition or independent study. Reinhert asserts that, at the time of writing in 2019, only one programme in the United States offered a graduate degree in contemporary vocal pedagogy and that most vocal programmes in higher education

have been rooted in classical pedagogy since its emergence in the nineteenth century (Reinhert, 2019). Reinhert also states that there are 'few avenues in the United States for developing popular music pedagogies for voice or more broadly' (Reinhert, 2019, p. 135). This suggests that a bias towards classical pedagogy still exists in relation to both vocal training and wider field of music education. Benson states that there are only two university programmes in the US with graduate degrees in non-classical voice pedagogy, of which one centres on popular singing and one on musical theatre (Benson, 2020). Although the growth in demand for CCM training resulted in many universities adding courses in popular music and contemporary voice it would seem that, 'many of these same educational institutions have been slow to develop complementary training programs for singing voice teachers' (Bartlett, 2020, p. 3). There is a situation, then, where demand for specialist CCM teachers has increased but postgraduate training for non-classical teachers has not increased sufficiently to meet this demand and there is currently a lack of effective pedagogy programmes for CCM teachers (Bartlett, 2020).

2.5 The Development of Contemporary Vocal Pedagogy — Where are we now?

Following their 2003 survey, LoVetri and Weekly drew conclusions as to what was now needed in order to provide sufficient training to contemporary vocal teachers. This included consistent vocal production information, increased knowledge of voice science and voice medicine and more research into efficacy and safety of methodology. So are we now at a stage where there is consistency of CCM-specific information based on reliable research?

Bartlett's 2020 *Voice and Speech Review* article tackles the subject of CCM teacher training. She states that 'much has been written concerning the differences in voice production parameters for singers of classical and contemporary commercial music (CCM)' (Bartlett, 2020, p. 185). She sets out the differences between classical and contemporary styles in areas including larynx setting, abdominal release, width of pharynx, phrasing, register use, language use and vibrato. Similarly, in her chapter on teaching popular music styles in *Singing Teaching in the 21st Century*, Chandler includes a table of fundamental differences between classical and contemporary singing. She details some similar areas to Bartlett and also additional issues such as onset, diction, rhythm and amplification (Chandler, 2014). So, does this type of classification constitute the 'availability of clearly organized and consistent vocal production information for CCM' that LoVetri and Weekly deemed necessary in 2003

for the development of an effective pedagogy (LoVetri & Weekly, 2003, p. 215)?

There are several recent books profiling prominent contemporary pedagogues. Benson's *Training Contemporary Commercial Singers*, (2020) has 26 contributing authors, identified as exemplary CCM pedagogues via an anonymous survey conducted in 2017. The pedagogues included are practising in countries throughout the world, including Australia, the UK, the US, Spain and Denmark. A number of established teaching methodologies are represented within this group, including Estill Voice Training, Somatic Voicework, Speech Level Singing and Complete Vocal Technique, alongside independent pedagogical approaches. Each chapter contains interviews with the pedagogues on a particular topic relating to the training of contemporary singers. Much of the discussion centres around vocal technique. What becomes clear is that there is no consensus amongst these pedagogues in terms of what CCM technique consists of and how it should be taught. Many differing views are expressed within this text on areas such as registration, vocal set up and the terminology and science surrounding aspects of contemporary voice production. The pedagogues have their own views and methods for teaching various aspects of technique. The chapter on 'Belt', for example, arguably one of the most researched areas within contemporary voice, reveals a range of opinions surrounding how belt is produced and how it should be taught. This variety of approach to teaching contemporary singing could be viewed as positive. However, what also becomes clear is that 'there is not enough research on contemporary singers' (Chalfin, cited in Benson 2020, p. 124). This is a view expressed within the book by Dane Chalfin, whose clinical research into the laryngopharyngeal gestures of primal sounds and contemporary singing has been ongoing since 2006. It is also a view expressed by others within this text and other literature reviewed.

2.6 Holistic Approaches: Training the Body

A review of Benson's book suggests that, in terms of the consistent vocal production information, knowledge of voice science and research into efficacy and safety of contemporary techniques that LoVetri and Weekly called for in 2003, we are not there yet. If, then, the 26 contributors to Benson's text differ in their views on the science and technique behind contemporary voice styles, are there any aspects of vocal pedagogy where a general consensus can be found? Benson reports that every pedagogue addresses alignment or posture in some way. Chandler advocates a body-stretch routine. Other contributors suggest practices including Yoga, The

Alexander Technique, The Feldenkrais method and Body Mapping. There are several reasons discussed within the text as to why physical training is beneficial to the singer. One aim of such work is tension release and Benson found in interviewing her contributors that there was 'a large amount of consensus regarding the importance of releasing unnecessary tension' (Benson, 2020, p. 90). Chalfin, for example asserts that 'addressing tension is foundational to everything' (Chalfin in Benson, 2020, p. 97). The most commonly encountered negative tensions cited in Benson's book are: jaw, neck/throat, tongue, full body, breath and emotional/stress. Failure to address such tension could have vocal health implications. According to Saunders-Barton, physical tensions interrupt the flow of communication and therefore pose a risk to vocal health (Saunders-Barton, cited in Benson, 2020).

It is widely accepted in the literature reviewed that a tension-free body is beneficial to all styles of singing and this is therefore a good example of an element of pedagogy that is relevant across singing genres. Another linked reason for incorporating physical approaches within the contemporary singer's training is in order to develop a balanced alignment. According to prominent singing pedagogue Dayme, 'resolution of problems of alignment and posture can evoke startling improvement in voice production' (Dayme, 2005, p. 5). Other leading voice pedagogues, such as Janice Chapman, also acknowledge and detail the foundational relationship between posture and sound (Chapman & Morris, 2021). Work within the areas of alignment and tension is interrelated as postural habits can lead to tension and excess tension can affect alignment. The seminal works of Dayme and Chapman are centred around the classical voice. However, alignment is another area of voice training which is relevant across genres. In *Vocal Health for The Contemporary Commercial Singer*, LeBorgne advises singers to 'train like an athlete for vocal longevity' (LeBorgne, 2018, p. 63). She argues that alignment is an essential building block within basic pedagogical training. The acceptance of this view is reflected in pedagogical texts such as *Teaching Singing in the 21st Century* (Harrison & O'Bryan, 2014) in which the importance of physical work is emphasized through the inclusion of chapters discussing Body Mapping and Feldenkrais. There is also some discussion around the merits of the Alexander Technique and Yoga. This type of movement practice has become an established part of training across performance disciplines. Alexander technique, for example, has long been included within actor-training and the benefits to musicians are also well-established. The preliminary findings of Bartlett's doctoral research also support physical work as

an important element of CCM pedagogy, with all nine pedagogues interviewed addressing alignment within their current practice (Bartlett & Naismith, 2020).

How, then, does this aspect on singer training fit into the three-part approach to vocal pedagogy advocated at PEVOC? Certainly, this type of physical training is relevant to voice building, with both classical and contemporary discourse supporting the impact of alignment on vocal production. A clear relationship has also been established between alignment and vocal health. Alignment issues and tensions may impact negatively on the efficiency and safety of vocal production. Such physical habits can lead to vocal health issues requiring medical treatment. Balancing alignment and tension release also forms a core part of the work done by professionals such as speech therapists in the rehabilitation of the voice (Harris & Howard, 2017). Physical approaches to training therefore fit easily within both the voice building and vocal health and rehabilitation areas of vocal pedagogy. Less obvious however, and largely absent from the discourse, is the link between physical approaches and the third area of vocal pedagogy: performance technique.

2.7 Physical Tools

Whilst CCM pedagogues agree on the importance of addressing tension and alignment within singer training, there is no consensus as to the best method of doing so. In her chapter on Body Mapping in *Teaching Singing in the 21st Century*, Buchanan discusses how teachers of singing are often aware of the postural problems or challenges affecting individuals and may use a 'quick fix' approach in order to correct what is observed in the moment in the hope of establishing something more functional (Buchanan, 2014). The necessity of such an approach is one that many teachers, including myself, will recognise. Vocal lessons within educational settings are typically 30 or 60 minutes over a limited number of weeks, in which a range of voice and performance related skills must be developed. There may simply not be enough time to address the physical aspects of vocal training fully, rendering a 'quick-fix' approach necessary. In interview with her contributors, Benson found that the most important aspects of training beyond the voice studio include bodywork modality, physical fitness and self-care/mental health (Benson, 2020). This suggests this type of physical development could take place outside of the singing studio via cross-training within movement disciplines. This could provide a more consistent and effective alternative to the 'quick-fix'. This also raises interesting questions relating to

curriculum content at HE level and what classes might be included in addition to vocal lessons.

2.8 Performance Pedagogy

Within the CCM literature there is a great deal of discussion of different aspects of vocal technique. This includes some discussion of physical training in relation to voice building and vocal health and rehabilitation. However, there is a third area of vocal pedagogy: performance training. There is very little discussion of the development of performance skills specific to contemporary singers. Although the vocal aspects of performance play a key role, expressive performance skills in the singer include the ability to connect with and communicate emotion and story to an audience. Many of the pedagogues in Benson's 2020 book make little or no mention of techniques for developing connection to material and communication on stage. However, microphone technique is acknowledged as being an important aspect of training and techniques for developing improvisation skills are discussed by some pedagogues. The contributors to Hoch's 2018 text, *So You Want to Sing CCM: A Guide for Performers*, also make little mention of techniques that might be used in order to develop skills such as storytelling and expressive performance. This may be due, in part, to perceptions of contemporary singing and the ways in which it differs from other singing categories. Edwards argues that commercial singers are 'often telling a personal story', as opposed to Musical Theatre performers who will need to call on acting tools and techniques in order to personalise what they are conveying (Edwards, 2018, p. 28). This discounts the majority of gigging singers who are performing cover material and therefore need to communicate words and music written by others. It also does not take into account the need to develop the performance skills of singer-songwriters, who do not necessarily have the innate ability to fully and effectively communicate a story to an audience, even when the material is personal to them.

In reviewing the CCM literature, the lack of discourse around performance pedagogy is clear, particularly by comparison with the much larger discussion of contemporary singing technique. There is a consensus, however, regarding the importance of expressive skills in the contemporary singer. The contributors to Benson's book, for example, agree that the ability to be expressive is vital to the contemporary singer (Benson, 2020). Much of what is discussed regarding the development of these expressive performance skills relates to exploring and breaking

down the lyrics and subtext, however. Riggs's advice on this, for example, is to 'focus on what the words of the song actually mean' (Riggs, cited in Benson, 2020, p. 181). Certainly the singer must understand what they are singing about and lyric analysis is a basic and essential starting point for a singer of any genre. Knowing what the words mean, however, does not necessarily allow the singer to fully connect with the material emotionally or to express meaning and emotion to an audience. There is little mention by Benson's pedagogues of performance techniques or tools for the development of expressive performance. Similarly, although Hoch's 2018 book is titled as a guide for CCM performers, the contributors focus, in the main, on vocal technique and there is limited discussion of methods for developing other aspects of performance skill. Discourse relating specifically to the singer-songwriter and the development of performance skills is notably sparse. However, Chalfin's chapter in *The Singer-songwriter Handbook* does focus on the importance of communicating with the audience and ways of approaching this (Chalfin, 2017).

Chalfin acknowledges the centrality of emotion to singer-songwriter performance, which is ultimately an expression of the human condition. He sees the potentially very personal nature of material as an issue for singer-songwriters, which can lead to an introverted performance. He also acknowledges a feeling from many singer-songwriters that if they are too outwardly emotive or 'showy' that this will diminish their authenticity. Chalfin argues that singer-songwriters must consider the audience within their live performance, which is a shared experience. Chalfin acknowledges that there is very little literature on stagecraft for singer-songwriters and offers models and exercises from his own work with singers. Chalfin suggests a series of exercises for detailed interpretation and understanding of a song. These exercises are similar to those used within Stanislavski's acting technique, including the use of an objective (Stanislavski, 1988). Chalfin's ideas on level of address (for example, the singer might be addressing themselves or the world) can also be seen as a modification of Stanislavski's circles of attention (Stanislavski, 1988). Chalfin moves on to discuss physicalizing this interpretation in order that it might translate visually to an audience. He suggests asking the singer to imagine how they would stand or gesture in real life within the context or world of the song, in the same way that an actor might try to recreate the world of a play. However, this does not address the issue of how we might develop this type of physical expression within singer-songwriter training. Interpreting the underlying emotion of a song and directing a singer to gesture as appropriate to that emotion assumes that the singer already has the necessary level

of physical connection and expressive skill. Whilst Chalfin draws attention to the vital role of physical expression within singer-songwriter performance, questions around how we can develop physical awareness and connection within CCM singer-songwriter training also warrant attention. This topic forms the core of my research interest. It is not sufficient to place emphasis on the importance of expressive performance; we must develop creative tools for the development of these performance skills in the singer-songwriter.

The wider field of Popular Music Education is a 'burgeoning' area of research (Smith et al., 2017, p. 5). Questions of what and how we should teach popular musicians are still highly relevant to today's HE context. Much positive work is being done in the exploration of popular music practice and there seems to be a consensus within the discourse regarding the importance of performance skills for the popular musician. Simos, for example, views performance skill as central to the overall artistic role of the singer-songwriter (Simos, 2017). Pipe highlights the importance of visual communication in popular music performance (Pipe, 2019). She also argues that popular music is by its nature performer-centered and is concerned with image, which places greater emphasis on the visual elements of performance, yet few popular musicians receive training in this area (Pipe, 2019; Pipe, 2018).

2.9 The 'Authentic' Popular Artist

In order to understand the specific training needs of the singer-songwriter it is necessary to consider the discourse around perceptions of the popular artist. The lack of literature relating to performance pedagogy for singer-songwriters may be linked to the belief that singer-songwriters do not need to develop performance skills to the same degree as other singers because they are singing about their own experiences and telling their own stories (Edwards, 2018). It may also be linked to the concept of 'authenticity,' which has become synonymous with the singer-songwriter. The discourse around this gives interesting insights into the ways in which the singer-songwriter may be perceived as different from other CCM singers. In *The Cambridge Companion to the Singer-Songwriter*, Till charts the rise of the singer-songwriter in the 1950s and 1960s and how this led to the performance of original material becoming firmly established within popular music (Till, 2016). He goes on to discuss the way in which singer-songwriters began to focus on their own emotions and an 'authenticity of experience' within their work, describing authenticity as a defining characteristic of the singer-songwriter genre (Till, 2016, p. 292). The debate around

authenticity uncovers an opposition between the authentic and the commercial. Moore traces the roots of this debate back to comparisons of the authenticity of the English folk music revival, as opposed to the commercialism of music hall at the start of the last century (Moore, 2002). Till observes that singer-songwriters are considered to be more authentic than acts who do not write their own material, who are considered to be more commercial (Till, 2016). The identifying feature of the genre then: the performance of self-written, original material, affords the singer-songwriter a degree of authenticity in itself. Interestingly, Till also describes the more commercial approach of the non-singer-songwriter as 'professionalised' (Till, 2016, p. 295). This suggests that singer-songwriters are not professionalised or do not require the same level of professional training.

Unfortunately, it seems a view has developed that professional training will somehow lead to a lesser degree of authenticity in an artist. The research of Hughes gives interesting insight into the views of singers and industry professionals on artistry in popular culture music and the interplay between the concepts of artistry, identity and authenticity (Hughes, 2014). Hughes identified individual expression as the most prominent theme within the perspectives on artistry and formal training was not necessarily viewed as beneficial to this (Hughes, 2014). Generally, the ability to read music was not viewed as important to the contemporary artist, with views expressed by some that 'formal training can sometimes get in the way of emotional expression' (Quoted in Hughes, 2014). I would suggest that negative views of formal training may be linked to the high value placed on artist identity and the belief that training is in some way detrimental to this individuality. The concept of music as reflective of identity is well-established with the fields of popular music and musicology. The individual identity of an artist may be forged from any combination of factors including, musical style or tradition, culture, background, identification as part of a particular community and political belief. These different aspects of the individual popular artist are also reflected in the discourse of authenticity. Musicologists such as Middleton, for example, discuss authenticity as related to cultural expression (Middleton, 1990). Bohlman places emphasis on the authenticity of musical style or a particular practice (Bohlman, 1988). Similarly, Taylor argues that artists can acquire authenticity through refusal to sell out to commercial interests, including in terms of musical sound or style (Taylor, 1997). Although the discourse includes a range of aspects of authenticity, it is clear that honest expression is central to all forms of authenticity.

Rubidge views authenticity as something that is ascribed to a performance

(Rubidge, 1996). This highlights the importance of the audience within the shared experience of singer-songwriter performance. Grossberg discusses the authentic rock singer as having the ability to share private and common feelings and experiences with their audience (Grossberg, 2014). Authenticity has also been equated to self-expression (Gracyk, 1996). This includes expression of the individual self but there is also a communal aspect that involves the sharing of universal stories and emotions. The rock discourse relates authenticity to the unmediated expression of emotional content (Moore, 2002). There is a need for the audience to perceive the singer as experiencing real emotion in order that authenticity is ascribed to the performance (Till, 2016). In my view, emotion is the central element that connects all forms of performing art and all performers with their audience.

The expression of emotion within music and its ability to induce an emotional response has been cited as the prime reason for listening to music (Juslin & Laukka, 2004). Many singer-songwriters have discussed the way in which they explore their emotions within their music (Till, 2016). Till uses Adele as a case study for exploring the way in which emotional connection in performance is perceived and felt by an audience as authentic (Till, 2016). Till argues that, in evoking her own feelings, Adele is able to bring about an unconscious emotional response in the listener and highlights the importance of emotion within both songwriting and singer-songwriter performance. This suggests the ability to evoke and communicate feeling is central to the role of the singer-songwriter.

2.10 Singer-Songwriter Training

Within the context of vocal pedagogy, it may be that the importance placed on individual identity and authenticity is what distinguishes the singer-songwriter from other types of CCM singer. How then, does this focus impact the overall training needs of the singer-songwriter and how are these needs currently being addressed at HE level? Although I do not teach songwriting and this research centres around vocal pedagogy, the wider discourse on popular music education, including songwriting pedagogy, was of interest in order to establish the context of singer-songwriter training and how other aspects of the curriculum might relate to and inform my own practice and research questions.

Although there may be a substantial body of literature on songwriting (Marrington, 2016), it has also been argued that there is no established and suitable framework for songwriting within popular music education (Henson & Zagorski-Thomas, 2019).

There are, however, themes that can be identified within the literature. Isherwood's 2014 survey was commissioned by the Higher Education Academy in order to investigate the teaching and assessment of songwriting in Higher Education. The findings were based on 28 responses from individuals teaching at 22 institutions on over 40 programmes. Isherwood found little consensus amongst those surveyed as to what a song is and how songwriting might differ from composition (Isherwood, 2014). The principle approaches adopted by these programmes were songwriting as a creative art (57%) and songwriting as a commercial product (21.5%). Within songwriting modules 100% of respondents stated that song forms/structure and creativity/idea generation are taught. Also included by the majority of programmes were lyric writing (96%), melody writing (92%), communicating specific emotions (83%), and analysis/pastiche (83%). Criteria and factors used by institutions in the assessment of songs included: creativity (100%), relationship to genre/style (95%), originality (86%) and the communication of specific emotions (64%). The most common methods of presentation of songs for assessment were public performance (76%) and recording (75%).

Similar themes emerge within the pedagogical discourse to those highlighted by Isherwood's research. Creative engagement with music is, for example, considered to be central to popular music education (Moir & Hails, 2019). However, there does not appear to be a consensus as to the definition of creativity or how it should be taught and assessed. Isherwood highlights the divide in approach to the song as creative art versus commercial product and this is also reflected within the discourse. Moore and others have argued for a shift towards the song as track in order to differentiate the recorded song or product (Moore 2010). Related to the song as track is the importance of technology within the creative process of the singer-songwriter, which is also highlighted within the literature. Theoretical frameworks such as 'authentic learning' (Wiggins, 2007) and 'informal learning' (Green, 2008) suggest that learning should relate to practices within the industry and this means that arguably songwriting programmes should train students in the skills needed to record and produce their own music. This is particularly important in light of the potential role of technology within the songwriting process and its influence on the recorded form of a song (McIntyre, 2001; Bennett, 2017).

Isherwood's survey (2014) and the wider literature suggests that, whilst the study of song form, structure and style is a vital part the songwriting curriculum, originality is also an important part of song assessment. The way in which the music is

communicated is also important and the development of a 'unique, expressive and individual persona' (Henson & Zagorski-Thomas, 2019) is desirable. In terms of vocal pedagogy, the value places on the original and unique may differentiate the singer-songwriter from other types of CCM singer. This aspect of the popular artist may be difficult to define and therefore is not necessarily easy to address pedagogically (Hughes, 2014). This intangibility may go some way to explaining the gap in pedagogical literature relating to aspects of performance such as stage presence and persona.

The expression of emotion and narrative is also a theme within the literature, which can be related to both songwriting and performance. Popular music may be largely viewed as a recorded medium, despite the roots of the contemporary singer-songwriter in performative oral traditions (Till, 2016) but the music industry is evolving and in the age of streaming live performance is now more profitable than record sales (Michaels, 2009). Most singer-songwriters require the necessary skills to communicate their music effectively in both recorded and live performance. This dual performance is another characteristic which may separate the singer-songwriter from other types of CCM singer.

2.11 Future Pathways

This review of literature began with an overview of the wider field of vocal pedagogy, which highlights a need for further research specific to the popular singer and also different types and styles of singer within this category, including research centering on performance pedagogy. This review also raises interesting questions regarding the areas included within vocal pedagogy and the roles and responsibilities of the singing teacher. One such question is whether singing rehabilitation falls under the remit of the singing teacher. Certainly, vocal health education is viewed by pedagogues as part of the role of the singing teacher and this may be seen as preventative of issues that can result in the need for rehabilitation. Rehabilitation does not seem to be a widely accepted, or expected, part of the contemporary singing teacher's role, however, and the PEVOC panel do state that the three areas of pedagogy need not necessarily be the responsibility of one single practitioner. It is significant though, that in his chapter on the future of singing pedagogy in *Teaching Singing in the 21st Century*, McCoy highlights a trend involving a new area of study which integrates voice therapy with singing and performance coaching (McCoy, 2014). Practitioners within this area are referred to as Vocologists or Singing Health Specialists. This

suggests that it may be possible for all three areas of responsibility to be covered by one practitioner and that this may become more common in the future.

We have seen that contemporary voice pedagogy is in its very early days; relative to other categories of singing and for those teaching within a HE environment there is comparatively little to draw upon in terms of research and pedagogical discourse specific to singer-songwriter training. There is also a lack of graduate teacher training in contemporary vocal pedagogy, despite the rise in degree level programs. There is, of course, much effective and innovative work being done by individual teachers and teams working in higher education and other environments but the literature suggests that the training background of CCM practitioners is eclectic and that private training has been sought out by individuals in the absence of any cohesive training and in light of the lack of postgraduate CCM pedagogy programmes.

Much of the pedagogical literature, as I have discussed, focusses on singing technique and performance technique is largely omitted. We have also seen, however, that the ability to communicate with an audience via live and recorded performance is central to the role of the singer-songwriter. This research project will therefore focus on ways of developing performance skills in the singer-songwriter. This also responds to a wider need for further discourse around performance coaching, an area of research that is in its infancy, not just within contemporary voice pedagogy, but also within the wider field of voice. There is little peer-reviewed research in this area and the literature suggests that teachers use their own varied backgrounds and experience to develop this area of their practice. Voice Workshop, a UK-based organisation specialising in training for singing teachers, have recently introduced an MA in Performance Coaching, which is described as unique and the first of its kind (Winter, 2021).

Whilst the literature focusses, in the main, on singing technique, rather than performance technique, it is clear that performance skills are considered vital to all groups of contemporary singer. In the chapter entitled Excellence in Training the Contemporary Commercial Singer, Benson identifies a consensus amongst the 26 contributors that great vocals alone are not sufficient (Benson, 2020). Emotion, stage presence and communication are also viewed as essential to effective performance. Effective communication of emotion may be particularly important for the singer-songwriter in ensuring an 'authenticity of experience' (Till, 2016, p. 292), for the audience. Perceptions of popular artistry also require the singer-songwriter to embody

individual identity in performance and a strong stage presence forms part of this. In discussion of the importance of stage presence, Howard asserts that 'a top performer knows how to LET IT SHINE' (Howard, cited in Benson, 2020, p. 182, emphasis original). However, we cannot and should not assume that the singer-songwriter has an innate ability to express themselves effectively on stage and, certainly, existing capabilities can be further developed. The way in which the singer-songwriter expresses themselves in performance forms part of their artist identity and this includes vocal expression but also a range of other aspects of performance such as physicality and stage persona.

It is clear then, that performance and the skills associated with it are a central part of the singer-songwriter role. Although the singer-songwriter may not require formal acting technique, they do require the tools to be able to physically, vocally and emotionally connect with the material and to communicate this to an audience. Within HE level programmes singer-songwriters are also typically assessed on performance skills. Teachers therefore need a toolkit of approaches to facilitate the development of performance skills in their students. Looking at the meaning, context and subtext of the lyric, as discussed by pedagogues within the literature, may be a valid and useful activity as a starting point in preparation for performance. However, this technique is not sufficient as a means of developing the full expressive potential of the singer. This sort of activity will not develop, for example, the stage presence that Howard talks of (Howard, cited in Benson, 2020), or the level of expression required to achieve a professional standard of performance. Whereas musical theatre performers and cover and session singers may need to focus on versatility, the singer-songwriter needs to develop an individual sound and style of performance, which includes stage presence and persona and may also involve playing an instrument. Pipe asserts that there is a need for a set of learning tools to help educators within popular music settings in the teaching of this type of expressivity in performance (Pipe, 2018) and this research moves towards the development of such tools, specific to the performance context of the singer-songwriter.

The literature suggests that songwriting is assessed in Higher Education through both recorded and live performance and that the creative processes of songwriting may be intertwined with the expression of music through performance. The ability to convey emotion is central to perceptions of authentic performance and often forms part of songwriting assessment. This research will therefore explore possible tools for the development of emotional connection and communication.

Also specific to the singer-songwriter as popular artist is the concept of individual identity. Physical tools will also be explored in relation to the skills needed to express this identity in performance, including physicality, confidence, energy and presence. The question of whether such tools might be used in the development of this identity, as well as embody it on stage, is also of interest. The specific tools chosen are drawn from my prior training as an actor and this research will therefore explore cross-disciplinary approaches to singer-songwriter training. These approaches will include the techniques of Laban and Chekhov, whose practices will be reviewed in the next chapter. These practitioners have been chosen due to my prior experience of their work and their focus on physical approaches. Although their work forms an established part of many acting and dance programmes and physical approaches to performance training are not new, this approach to singer-songwriter training is not typical. This exploration responds to the gap in performance pedagogy and the need for tools specific to the singer-songwriter training context.

Chapter Three: Practice Review

My review of literature established that there is a lack of discourse relating to performance skills for the contemporary singer. With the aim of identifying and developing tools for use in singer-songwriter performance training, this research takes an interdisciplinary approach and explores practice associated with other areas of the performing arts. Nelson's method for Practice as Research (PaR) acknowledges the necessity of drawing on a range of knowledge from different fields and includes the location of praxis within a lineage by way of a practice review (Nelson, 2013). This practice review will focus on the work of two practitioners: movement theorist Rudolf Laban and theatre technician Michael Chekhov. This research project centred on the use of physical approaches with singer-songwriters and these two practitioners were chosen due to physical nature of their work and also owing to my own existing knowledge and experience of their practice. This practice review places my research within the context of Laban and Chekhov praxis.

3.1 Rudolf Laban

Rudolf Laban (1879-1958) was a dance practitioner and movement researcher born in Slovakia. He has been described as the 'founding father' of expressionist dance (Dörr, 2003, p. 1), and a 'master of movement' (Ewan & Sagovsky, 2018, p. 2). He leaves a legacy of research focussed on movement as a form of artistic expression. However, Laban's research and theories changed and developed over his career and he saw movement as a vital expressive tool, not just for performers, but also for people in other walks of life. He believed that all bodies have expressive capabilities and that through engaging in expressive movement it is possible to perceive more of life (Ewan & Sagovsky, 2018). In this way he argued that movement was an important source of self-knowledge and healing. Later in his career, Laban broadened his research to include the role of movement in industry. He also initiated research within the spheres of education, healthcare and psychotherapy.

Laban produced a large body of written work including: *The World of Dance* (1920), *Children's Gymnastics and Dance* (1926), *Gymnastics and Dance* (1926), *Choreography* (1926), *A Life for Dance* (1935), *Effort* (1947) and *Modern Educational Dance* (1948). He also founded the journal *Dance-Writing* in 1928. *The Mastery of Movement*, however, written in 1950, perhaps gives the most detailed and developed overview of Laban's movement theory and practice and has been the main source for this practice review, alongside literature from other writers and researchers of Laban.

Laban's research was divided into the study of movement form and that of movement quality. Movement form can be seen as the outward manifestation of movement whilst movement quality is related to the inner motivations governing how a movement is executed. Laban described the latter category as a study of Effort (Laban, 1947). Ewan and Sagovsky focus on this aspect of Laban's work in their 2018 text, *Laban's Efforts in Action: A Movement Handbook for Actors*. In this handbook they explain that this focus on Effort is useful for actors because it is the effort quality with which we move that rules our physical expression. Laban's concept of Effort is a way of describing or categorizing the quality of movement during physical action. Laban analysed movement in terms of the Motion Factors of space, weight and time, which he identified as part of a movement continuum. Weight occurs on a continuum between heavy and light effort. Movement can be direct or flexible in terms of its relationship to space and it can be sudden or sustained in relation to time. In Laban's system all movement can be broken down into a combination of these elements. Laban's motion factors combine in various ways in order to produce eight Efforts of Action Drive - types of effort that are expressed when we are motivated to act (Laban, 1950). Laban's Effort Actions are: pressing, flicking, punching (sometimes called thrusting), floating, slashing, gliding, wringing and dabbing. These effort actions can be broken down as follows:

Table 1: Laban's Effort Actions

Action	Space	Weight	Time
Pressing	Direct	Strong	sustained
Flicking	flexible/indirect	Light	sudden
Punching	Direct	Strong	sudden
Floating	flexible/indirect	Light	sustained
Slashing	flexible/indirect	Strong	sudden
Gliding	Direct	Light	sustained
Wringing	flexible/indirect	Strong	sustained
Dabbing	Direct	Light	sudden

(adapted from Gutekunst & Gillett, 2014, p. 254)

Laban encouraged performers to study the Efforts in life, for example through the observation of animals. In *The Mastery of Movement*, Laban advises performers to extend their palate of expressive choices through both observation and practice

(Laban, 1950).

Within his analysis of movement, Laban also wrote about the concepts of Body, Space and Shape, alongside that of Effort, in order to create a system of movement analysis and notation. The body of knowledge created by Laban and subsequent generations of practitioners is known as Laban Movement Analysis or LMA (Groff, 1995). Within the theoretical framework of LMA there is a recognition that movement is a psycho-physical process: an outward expression of inner intent (Groff, 1995). The focus is on the description of movement, however, in relation to the categories of body, effort, space and shape. The body element of the system identifies locomotor and axial actions such as twisting, turning, falling and balancing (Groff, 1995). The Bartenieff Fundamentals are also included within the body category. This is a set of concepts and exercises, developed by Irmgard Bartenieff, who trained and collaborated with Laban. These exercises provide practitioners with the tools to develop movement skills through specific motor training based on anatomical and kinesiological principles.

Space is the category relating to movement elements such as direction, pathway and proximity. Laban considered there to be a personal kinesphere that travels with us through space. Laban also related three-dimensional space to shape, using the structure of geometric forms in order to define directional structure within space. LMA also refers to shape as a separate category and this relates to the shape of the body within the space. LMA provides a framework of concepts and terminology that allows movement to be categorised and defined, whilst also allowing for the psycho-physical and individual nature of movement. This framework has been utilised within a range of other fields including psychology, sociology and anthropology (Groff, 1995).

3.2 Lineage and Development

Laban's movement research spanned a range of fields and he worked within a community of collaborators. Laban's collaborators, students and their second generation students have expanded and developed this work further. Practitioners such as Bartenieff have continued Laban's work within the field of physical therapy and rehabilitation. Bartenieff trained with Laban, later becoming a physical therapist.

The Bartenieff Fundamentals combine Laban's movement analysis with physiotherapeutic principles to form a set of practical exercises (Bartenieff, 1980). This work, sometimes referred to as Laban/Bartenieff movement practice, is used in

order to develop body-level fundamentals such as core support, breath support and dynamic alignment. Meredith-Jones also furthered Laban's work in this area and has been described as a pioneer in the field of movement rehabilitation (New York Times, 1996). Kestenberberg furthered Laban's work within clinical settings and is known for the Kestenberberg Movement Profile (KMP). This is a well-established system used within psychoanalysis and gives a method of assessing individuals through the observation and analysis of movement (Kestenberberg & Loman, 2018). Kestenberberg argues that movement not only reveals the emotions and feelings of an individual but can also give insights into their past (Kestenberberg & Loman, 2018). Ullmann and North are amongst those who have focussed on the use of Laban's work within Education. Lisa Ullmann developed modern educational dance, campaigning for its place within school curriculums (Laban & Ullmann, 1968). Marion North was an apprentice of Rudolph Laban and later played a key role in the development of dance training in the UK, including the founding of the Council for Dance Education and Training (Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance). Practitioners such as Forsythe and Jooss have continued the work of Laban within the realm of choreography. Kurt Jooss is widely regarded as the founder of Tanztheater, which was further developed by his students, including Pina Bausch (Sanchez-Colberg, 2012). William Forsythe is a ground-breaking choreography who has used the influence of Laban's practice to develop his own style and body of work (Whitney, 2021). Littlewood and Newlove, amongst others, have worked with Laban's techniques within the context of theatre practice. Jean Newlove was Laban's assistant for a period of time and later became movement teacher for Joan Littlewood's Theatre Workshop (Newlove). Newlove published a number of books, including *Laban for Actors and Dancers* (1993) and *Laban for All* (2003). Joan Littlewood was one of the most influential theatre practitioners of 20th Century and has been described as the mother of modern theatre (Dickens). Littlewood's use of movement classes, based on the work on Laban, has no doubt influenced the inclusion of Laban's techniques within actor training, which is now widespread in the UK and elsewhere (Ewan & Sagovsky, 2018). 'The Opera Singer's Acting Toolkit' (Constantine, 2019), is an example of recent literature which includes Laban's techniques as part of a performer's toolkit. There is also some literature which focusses on Laban as an approach to voice, for example *Actor Training the Laban Way: An Integrated Approach to Voice, Speech, and Movement* (Adrian, 2008).

It is clear that today Laban's work is being employed and furthered within a wide-

range of settings around the world. It is also clear that this extensive use is not limited to creative environments. Laban's revolutionary ideas bridge the gap between the performing arts and science (Laban/Bartenieff Institute). The Laban/Bartenieff Institute of Movement Studies organises and supports research that utilises Laban Movement Analysis and Bartenieff Fundamentals. They advocate the use of Laban Movement Analysis as a framework for observing the change and evolution of human behaviour and view it as a valuable research tool within diverse fields including the social sciences, neuroscience, healthcare, education, forensics and technology design (Laban/Bartenieff Institute).

Dance Movement Psychotherapy (DMP) is an example of a field that utilises Laban's practice, merging the creative and the scientific. Bernstein's research claims that Dance Movement Therapy can stimulate emotional transformation (Bernstein, 1995). The Meta-analysis of Koch et al. on the therapeutic uses of dance also supports the effects of movement on emotional and psychological state (Koch et al., 2014). Some of the established movement therapy methods work around the psychophysical concept that experiences occur concurrently on physical and psychological levels and the body and psyche impact each other (Tsachor & Shafir 2017). Laban was an early proponent for the use of movement in therapeutic settings and his theories and frameworks are often used within clinical environments today.

Tsachor and Shafir have applied LMA within their research into emotion regulation and emotional resilience. In their 2017 *Frontiers in Human Neuro Science* article, Tsachor and Shafir discuss the field of emotion. They state that the idea that particular postures and movements are associated with certain emotions is well- established and that the concept of expressing emotions through body language dates back to Aristotle. They also argue that movement has long been recognised as an agent of change for emotional state. They go on to discuss research within the field of emotion suggesting that the connection between movement and emotion is bidirectional. Changing posture or movement can therefore affect the emotional state. They relate this back to concepts originating from Darwin (1882) and James (1884), which assume that bodily responses to stimuli are necessary for emotional experience (Tsachor & Shafir, 2017).

More recently, research has concluded that sensory feedback from postural and facial movements has a significant effect on emotional experience. Laird, for example, conducted two experiments with a total of 77 participants, which demonstrated that manipulation of expressive behaviour produced changes in subjective experience of

emotion (Laird, 1974). Izard's work advocates a multisystem model of emotion activation (Izard, 1993). Izard and others proposed that experimenter-manipulated emotion expression can generate emotion experiences. Izard states that 30 published studies suggest that expressive behaviour can generate positive or negative emotion experiences and that it may be possible to activate a specific emotion experience corresponding to the manipulated expression (Izard, 1993). Tsachor and Shafir chart the further development of this theory, including its reformulation in neurophysiological terms by Damasio (Tsachor & Shafir, 2017). Damasio asserted that emotions are induced through interoceptive and proprioceptive feedback from the body, supporting the effect of movement on feeling state (Damasio et al., 2000). Further research has provided evidence in support of this hypothesis with the establishment of plausible neurocircuits (Critchley and Harrison, 2013).

The link between emotion and the physical body is well-established then and supported by research across neuroscientific fields. Studies such as Shaffir et al.'s 2013 and 2015 research have shown the effect of specific movements on emotion. The 2013 study tested the effects of movements that are associated with certain emotions on affective state. Movement was found to enhance the corresponding emotional state in the executor. In subsequent research, Shaffir et al. used Laban Movement Analysis in order to identify movement components which can elicit specific emotions (Shaffir et al., 2016). The 2016 study was aimed at the regulation of emotion through movement. The study involved 80 subjects from around the world and used Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) in order to identify the emotions evoked through the execution of specific movements. The study found sets of Laban movement components that stimulated feelings of anger, fear, sadness or happiness. For example, fear was evoked through retreating or enclosing. Anger was elicited via strong, direct movements. Happiness was induced through jumping, spreading and rising. Sadness was elicited through sinking movements (Shaffir et al., 2016). Practitioners such as Newham have also developed a Laban-based approach to therapeutic voice work in which physical actions are used to access emotion in the voice (Newham, 1998).

Although the neuroscientific research is now able to support Laban's theories, his legacy may be described as an embodied knowledge, which can provide an experiential and empowered learning experience. My interest in Laban lies within its potential to educate holistically and to transform on many levels. The possible benefits

of Laban's techniques for singer-songwriters include the development of movement and performance skills but also the opportunity to explore the human experience, connecting more deeply with themselves, with their songs and with others.

3.3 Michael Chekhov

Michael Chekhov (1891-1955) was a Russian actor and theatre practitioner who trained with Konstantin Stanislavski. Chekhov is known for his psychophysical approach to actor-training in which imagination and inner and outer gesture are central and his techniques are widely used within actor training today (Michael Chekhov Acting Studio). Michael Chekhov's text *To the Actor: On the Technique of Acting*, was published in 1953. This was a workbook of exercises presenting and exploring the techniques that Chekhov taught. This was republished in 1991 under the title *On the Technique of Acting*. This later version has been used as reference material for this practice review, alongside literature by other Chekhov practitioners and researchers.

It is clear from a review of *On the Technique of Acting*, that physical exercises form the core of Chekhov's acting technique. The book contains exercises aimed at developing the actor's ability to access feelings, which Chekhov approached through physical action. Through the execution of physical actions with a particular quality, Chekhov aimed to stimulate sensation on both physical and psychological levels.

This focus on the quality of movement could be compared to Laban's effort actions, which also addressed the quality of physical action. Chekhov's practice is also synonymous with the use of the imagination. His work requires the use of imagination within the development of a character and Chekhov's physical exercises also require the engagement of the imagination. It is this use of imagination that turns the physical into the psychophysical.

There are a number of other central themes within Chekhov's work. Chekhov believed that the creation of atmosphere within a performance was vital as a means of connecting the actor with the audience. Many of his exercises explore sensitivity to atmospheres. Chekhov encouraged actors to practice creating different atmospheres through the use of imagination. His exercises also aim to develop a high level of concentration. This is in order that the actor can fully engage with their imagination in the creation of a character and also to ensure the level of attention and engagement required within performance. Freeing creativity and creative impulse was also a key aim within Chekhov's practice.

The relationship between the physical and the psychological is further explored through Chekhov's archetypal gesture. *On the Technique of Acting* details whole-body gestures, which involve expanding to take as much space as possible and contracting in order to take as little space as possible. These gestures were aimed at awakening the muscles and energising the body. Chekhov encourages the use of the imagination within these physical exercises. For example, once the physical limits are reached the imagination can be used to explore expanding or contracting further. Chekhov also places importance on finding a sense of physical ease. He describes other archetypal gestures including beating, throwing, lifting and thrusting (Chekhov, 1991). Chamberlain suggests that Chekhov's archetypal gestures are analogous to Laban's effort actions (Chamberlain, 2003). However, my experience, having trained within both techniques, is that they are different in emphasis and execution. Within his archetypal gesture Chekhov placed emphasis on the engagement of the whole body in a strong and direct way. Laban's effort actions span a range of qualities along a continuum including light and indirect movement as well as strong and direct movement. Laban's effort actions may also be described as free movement. That is, within the boundaries of each effort quality (for example float or wring) there is an element of free and creative movement. Chekhov's archetypal gesture is more prescriptive and involves a specific end goal or shape. These gestures should be clear and bold and lighter qualities do not feature. Chekhov instructs the actor to continue the movement within their imagination after it has reached its physical limit and with the aim of waking the psycho-physical being of the actor.

Impulse is central to Chekhov's physical techniques and his exercises are also aimed at developing the body's sensitivity to the psychological impulses. One of Chekhov's physical exercises imagines the centre of the body to be in different places and that all impulses and energy flow from this centre. Through this work Chekhov wanted the actor to find the impulse which precedes action.

On the Technique of Acting contains another group of psychophysical exercises based around the elements: 'Moulding' (earth), 'Flying' (air), 'Flowing' (water) and 'Radiating' (fire). Chekhov's moulding exercise involves sculpting or moulding the space through broad movements, imagining that the air resists this movement. Chekhov placed emphasis within this exercise on the importance of form, and parallels may be drawn between this work and Laban's ideas on space and shape. My own interpretation of moulding is that it is similar to Laban's effort actions: wringing and pressing, which are strong and sustained in quality (wringing being indirect, whilst

pressing is direct). Within the flying exercise Chekhov instructs us to imagine that the body is lifting from the ground and that movements expand outwards and upwards. Chekhov describes a sense of lightness and ease resulting from this movement, which has some similarities to Laban's effort 'floating'. Floating could also be likened to Chekhov's flowing exercise, which involves continuous flowing movement.

Within the radiating exercise Chekhov instructs the actor to imagine rays of energy emanating from the body. Chekhov's work draws attention to the fact that we possess an energy body or a radiant energy field that is interwoven with the physical body (Chamberlain, 2003). Yogic traditions incorporate this concept of the energy body. Chekhov had an enthusiasm for the techniques of Indian Yoga and conducted experiments with 'Prana', which is the Sanskrit word used to describe energy (Chekhov, 1991). 'Radiating' features strongly within Chekhov's practice and though radiating exercises he expects the actor to develop the ability to radiate out emotions, feelings and will-impulses whilst on stage (Chekhov, 1991).

Chekhov's work encompasses many concepts and techniques that are typically studied by actors within training spanning a number of years. The concept of psychological gesture is particularly worthy of discussion and has been described as Chekhov's 'single most original contribution to twentieth century actor training' (Chamberlain, 2003, p. 73). Psychological gesture featured strongly in my own acting training and I consider it to be a physical representation of the essence of a character. A psychological gesture is similar to an archetypal gesture in that it is a clear and strong whole-body gesture but Chekhov wanted this gesture to represent the main desire of the character, their inner being and psychology. This technique again involves the use of outward gesture as a means of connecting to the inner state. The centrality of this concept to Chekhov's work is the reason that he is known as a psychophysical practitioner.

Much of the literature on Michael Chekhov is, not surprisingly, focussed on the use of his techniques within the discipline of acting, for example, *The Michael Chekhov Handbook: for the Actor* (Petit, 2009) and *Michael Chekhov's Acting Technique: A Practitioner's Guide* (Rushe, 2019). However, *Michael Chekhov Technique in the Twenty-first Century: New Pathways*, addresses this narrow focus and suggests a wider use within other areas of performer training (Cornford & Fleming, 2020). Applied performance and therapeutic uses are also suggested. Oram's chapter on Chekhov's techniques for voice and singing provides some suggestions of exercises that might be used to facilitate expressive voice in

performance (Oram, 2020). These relate to spoken voice, however, rather than sung voice, as Oram is a spoken voice practitioner working in the training of actors. Oram examines the archival evidence and suggests that there was a lack of integration between vocal pedagogy and Chekhov's techniques at the time Chekhov was teaching. He advocates an interdisciplinary approach for ongoing development (Oram, 2020).

Gutekunst and Gillett's work utilises such an interdisciplinary approach. They integrate the psychophysical concepts of Stanislavski and Chekhov within spoken voice pedagogy. Their text *Voice into Acting*, (2014) is a manual for actors and voice teachers, which explores the integration of mind, body and voice. The text explores ways in which Chekhov's physical techniques might be used within voice training for actors in order to develop vital skills, such as ease and focus, which open the performer creatively. Gutekunst and Gillett advocate the use of Chekhov's archetypal gesture and radiating, moulding, flying and flowing exercises. Psychological gesture also features within their suggested techniques. They explain that Chekhov's techniques arouse truthful feeling by first creating the sensation of it through physical action (Gutekunst & Gillett, 2014). Chekhov's archetypal gestures are explored in some detail, not just in relation to creating the sensation of feeling, but also as a means of developing effective vocal production. Within this technical aspect of Gutekunst and Gillett's pedagogy they seek to develop a balanced alignment in which breath, muscles and spine can work together in harmony. Through the use of Chekhov's physical exercises, they argue that both the technical and the creative aspects of the acting voice may be fostered. Laban's effort actions are also discussed as 'complementary techniques' which can be used in a similar way to those of Chekhov (Gutekunst & Gillett, 2014, p255). This type of focus on the work of Chekhov within vocal pedagogy is unusual. The integration of acting technique within voice training is not new, however, with voice pedagogues such as Linklater advocating a psychophysical approach to training in which acting work and voice work are inseparable (Linklater, 2006). The particular focus of Gutekunst and Gillett on the work of Chekhov is what makes their approach distinctive and paves the way for future practice and research.

3.4 Reflections

'In every physical action, unless it is purely mechanical, there is concealed some inner action, some feeling.'

Konstantin Stanislavski, 2013, p. 193

Seminal theatre practitioner Konstantin Stanislavski instinctively understood that the body could provide a direct link to the emotions. His pupil Michael Chekhov took this concept to a new level through acting techniques based around physical action. Neuroscientific research within the fields of emotion and psychotherapy is now able to support the embodied knowledge within the systems of practitioners such as Chekhov and Laban.

In the review of the practice of Rudolf Laban and Michael Chekhov it is possible to find similarities and parallels. The motivation behind Chekhov's movement work was the development of performance skills for actors. Laban also trained performers, exploring movement as a form of expression within the world of dance. Both practitioners placed emphasis on the quality of movement as the link between the physical and the psychological and the key to accessing sensation or emotion.

Laban is known for his system of movement categorisation and notation. Chekhov categorised movement qualities within his exercises, for example flowing and moulding. However, Chekhov's research was rooted within an acting technique advocating movement-based work, rather than within movement itself. Unlike Chekhov, Laban's research of movement moved into a range of different fields, aside from performance training.

Laban's diverse motivations and areas of interest have resulted in a wide-reaching legacy spanning a diverse range of fields. Chekhov's legacy may be considered to be limited outside of actor-training. However, Michael Chekhov Technique in the Twenty-first Century: New Pathways (Cornford & Fleming, 2020), opens up a discussion around the integration of Chekhov's techniques within other performance disciplines and suggests possible uses within other environments, including therapeutic settings.

Laban's practice is already well-established within clinical settings. He believed that movement was of benefit to all as a form of expression, a therapeutic activity and as a means of better understanding the human condition. Chekhov's work focuses on the technique of acting and therefore may be viewed as less profound. However, there was a clear spiritual element to Chekhov's work and through his practice he sought to

find the true physical and psychological essence of a character. In this way his work was also very much about understanding the human condition.

Within the context of performance training today the physical approaches advanced by Laban and Chekhov are still highly relevant and widely used. Although the term 'physical' is used throughout this dissertation, the work of such practitioners has demonstrated that movement, by its very nature, is embodied. The term 'psychophysical' is used within performance training to describe the interrelationship between the inner and outer state. Similarly, the term 'embodied' suggests the body and mind as one. The increasing reference to embodied practice within the arts is reflective of the rejection of mind-body dualism, or the belief that the mind and body can be separated. Scholars within the field of performance, such as Spatz, argue that embodied technique is a vital area for ongoing exploration rooted within a rich history of practice (Spatz, 2015). Embodiment is also an established area of research within the field of musicology, incorporating aspects of music and music performance including gesture, emotion, interpretation and cognition. Laws, for example, argues for a 'determined focus on embodiment' within her practice-led research (Laws, 2015, p. 131). The approaches explored within this project are, then, well-established.

However, this research reframes the psychophysical or embodied approach within the context of the contemporary singer-songwriter. This approach to singer-songwriter training is not typical and I hypothesise that there is a great deal of scope for the development of genre-specific practice. This research project was designed to take exploratory steps towards the development of this practice and the overall research design and methodology will be discussed in the chapter that follows.

Chapter Four: Research Design and Methodology

4.1 Research Approach

This research project was concerned with the specific context of my teaching practice and the main component, which will be referred to as Study two, involved practical research in the teaching studio. The project can therefore be described as practitioner research. Research within education, a 'social science', is concerned with 'conceptions of social reality' (Cohen et al., 2017, p. 5) and it is important to consider the assumptions that underpin these conceptions. This includes epistemological assumptions around knowledge and its different forms (Cohen et al., 2017). Within my context as teacher and practitioner-researcher I view knowledge as individual and subjective. I consider knowledge to be changeable and to take many different forms. The positivist view assumes knowledge to be objective and tangible and requires a 'disinterested' or detached approach more in line with a 'scientific method' (Thomas, 2009, p. 74). My adoption of a more subjectivist epistemological view may therefore be considered 'post-positivist' (Cohen et al., 2017, p. 5). This viewpoint is well-aligned with the interpretivist paradigm, which influenced my research design. An interpretivist approach is suited to practitioner-research in encouraging the researcher as participant. It accepts that there are many forms of knowledge and that knowledge can be socially constructed (Thomas, 2009). Within the interpretivist paradigm the researcher uses their own understandings and interests to aid in the interpretation of the views and behaviour of others (Thomas, 2009). This means that the researcher cannot claim to be objective and an awareness in the researcher of their own positionality and how this might affect their interpretations is particularly important. Interpretivist research does not claim generalisability but provides possibilities for the development of personal practice within a specific context through interaction with other participants and the interpretation of these interactions (Thomas, 2009). The design of interpretivist research is flexible and methods such as participant observation and unstructured interview are employed with a focus on feelings, perceptions, ideas and actions, which can be analysed by the researcher in order to identify any emergent patterns (Thomas, 2009). Lukenchuk and Kolich describe the interpretivist paradigm as constructivist (Lukenchuk & Kolich, 2013) and Cohen et al. also acknowledge constructivism as one of the traditions within interpretivist research (Cohen et al., 2017). The constructivist view of knowledge is aligned with the focus of the practical research, which centred on the subjective experience of the participants,

including myself, in the exploration of how we as performers construct and communicate meaning.

Study One

During the research design stage of the project I wanted to gain an overview of HE-level training for contemporary singers within an international context, including typical content of this training. My method for gaining this information was a survey aimed at teachers and singers. This preliminary research will be referred to as Study One.

4.2 The Survey Strategy

The survey can be used as a strategy to gather information regarding the thoughts of individuals on a particular topic (Robson, 1996) and was chosen as a way of collecting information from individuals with experience of popular singer-training at HE level. This strategy was also chosen due to its capacity to gather data based on 'real-world' observations (Kelley et al., 2003), whilst ensuring anonymity for the participant. Other strategies, such as interviewing individual teachers and singers, do not provide this anonymity, although interviews could potentially provide a far greater depth of qualitative response. Other methods of gathering information regarding the HE popular singing curriculum were also considered. Heads of courses at a number of institutions were contacted via email to gauge willingness to provide curriculum information. In each case I either received no response or the invitation was declined. Given the focus of the research project, anonymity was particularly important in order that participants could be assured that data could not be linked to a particular institution, which was another reason for choosing the survey strategy. Ethical issues were a major consideration in the choice of strategy. The invitation to participate in the survey via online link was made through social media in order to ensure full anonymity and also to safeguard against any form of coercion. The invitation detailed the use of the survey data as part of this research project and all possible future uses and gave the guarantee of anonymity. This information allowed respondents to give informed consent to take part in the research.

There are, however, advantages and disadvantages associated with this research strategy. Bias is inevitably an issue with this method of data collection and respondents may answer in a particular way for a wide range of reasons. Robson asserts that there is likely to be a 'social desirability response bias', and that individuals may respond in a particular way in order to show themselves in a good

light (Robson, 1996, p. 128). Similarly, Thomas acknowledges 'prestige bias', which may result in respondents answering in a way that they view as positive or believe to be the 'right answer' (Thomas, 2009, p. 174). However, one of the positive aspects of the survey strategy is that the anonymity it allows may encourage openness and honesty in the respondent (Robson, 1996). Given the high possibility of bias, the decision was made to survey both teachers and singers in order to potentially gain a more balanced overview than might be achieved from the survey of either group alone. However, this was a very small scale survey with a total of 41 respondents. This means that findings can only be discussed in relation to the respondents and their training or teaching context and cannot be generalized. A greater number of teacher responses than singer responses were also received, further limiting the wider relevance of the singer responses, which numbered 13.

4.3 Survey Design

LoVetri and Weekly's 2003 and 2009 research is now well-known within the field of CCM pedagogy. LoVetri and Weekly collected data via survey, covering some similar ground to my own research. It was therefore useful to review their survey design as part of own design process. LoVetri and Weekly's 2003 research, *Contemporary Commercial Music (CCM) Survey: Who's Teaching What in Nonclassical Music?*, was based on a four-part questionnaire with 21 questions (LoVetri & Weekly, 2003). This survey of singing teachers was designed to investigate their training, education, experience and methods of teaching CCM. The questions were mostly multi-part and open ended and the four sections comprised performing experience, teaching experience, knowledge of voice and medicine and musical theatre. At the end of the questionnaire there was a section for general comments (LoVetri & Weekly, 2003). The questionnaire was distributed to teachers via events organised by The National Association of Singing Teachers (US) and The British Voice Association. Questionnaires were also circulated at various other events with a total of 139 responses. The 2009 follow-up survey was similar in content and construction to the 2003 survey with a few minor modifications. The 2009 questionnaire was distributed to students at Shenandoah University's CCM Vocal Pedagogy Institute prior to the start of course instruction. There were 145 respondents. The recruitment of respondents from a single institution may have resulted in a limited sample in terms of diversity and representation of the wider community of CCM singing teachers.

LoVetri and Weekly's research project differed from mine in a number of ways.

This included my focus on popular styles, as opposed to Musical Theatre. In the 2003 and 2009 research LoVetri and Weekly defined CCM as any kind of music that was not classical, including Musical Theatre. There was a particular focus on Musical Theatre within their research, following a rise in interest in training within this area at the time. The second half of the questionnaires was directed specifically at those teaching musical theatre. My research did not include Musical Theatre and was designed to investigate popular singing training specific to those outside of the classical and Musical Theatre categories.

I decided not to use the same survey design as LoVetri and Weekly. Although there was some overlap in subject area, my main focus was different. The overall aim of my surveys was to gain insight into the content of HE-level training for popular singers. Similarly, LoVetri and Weekly asked what CCM teachers were teaching. However, the main focus of their surveys was rooted in issues arising within the context of that particular time. This was a time when there was a growth in CCM courses but few CCM-trained teachers and LoVetri and Weekly wanted to find out who was taking on the new role of CCM singing teacher. Their surveys related mainly to Musical Theatre teaching. The aim was to establish who was teaching this style of singing at the time and what training and experience they may or may not have specific to the style. My surveys focussed on popular singing styles as a distinct category, purposefully excluding musical theatre, and served as an initial starting point for my overall research design, rather than the main focus of the research, as was the case with LoVetri and Weekly's surveys. As a result of these differences, much of the content of LoVetri and Weekly's surveys was not relevant.

My surveys had a smaller number of questions, which reflected the specificity of focus and more limited aims as part of a wider research project. They contained five questions, as opposed to 21. Similarly to LoVetri and Weekly however, I did include a section for further comments in order to collect qualitative as well as quantitative data. Individual opinions and experiences of popular singing training were of particular interest, alongside any themes or patterns that might emerge. Another major difference was my design of a separate survey for singers. This was in order to gain insight into popular singing training from the perspective of both students and teachers.

A potential issue with the survey strategy is that once administered the validity of the response relies on the clarity of the questions and any misunderstandings on the part of the respondent may limit reliability of findings (Robson, 1996). It was therefore

important to develop a questionnaire that was clear in focus, structure and wording. The design was that of a 'simple survey', meaning that the same data was collected from a group of respondents over a short period of time (Robson, 1996, p. 130). The first stage of design of a simple survey is identifying the main aim or purpose and further research questions (Robson, 1996). The overall aim of the survey was to gain an insight into the content of popular singer training at HE level. The population targeted was therefore those with experience of this training as teachers and singing students and two separate surveys were designed. The design took into account advice from research scholars, such as Cohen et al. (2017) to keep a survey simple and short to encourage completion by respondents. The survey design also adhered to advice on survey structure to begin with a simple question and leave open ended questions with comment boxes until the end (Thomas, 2009). Question one in both surveys was a multiple choice screening question to check that respondents had taught or trained at HE level. Teachers were asked whether they taught at degree or postgraduate level or both and singers were asked to state how long ago they completed their HE level training. Question two of the singer survey and question three of the teacher survey asked which specific classes were/are offered to singers at their respective institutions. The following choices were given within a multi-answer question: vocal technique, performance skills, vocal rehabilitation, movement skills, acting through song, other (please specify). Vocal technique, performance skills and vocal rehabilitation were areas established within my literature review as forming vocal pedagogy. Movement skills were also included in order to test my hypothesis that specific training in this area is not common within CCM training. I was also interested in the level of acting through song content as my research would potentially draw on other performing arts disciplines, including acting. The 'other' option meant that respondents were not limited to these areas and were able to list other areas or curriculum content. The teachers were also asked in question two to state which areas they currently teach, with the same multiple choice options, including the 'other' option with text box. This was in order to find out the typical areas of the singing teacher's practice within the vocal studio, as opposed to question three, which aimed to find out the specific classes that CCM singers receive as part of the curriculum. These early questions were designed to address the main survey focus: curriculum content for popular singers at HE level. Other aims of the surveys were to gain insight into the experience and opinions of singers of this training, particularly in relation to the vocal and performance elements of the curriculum. Question three and question four of the

singer-survey asked participants to rate the development of their vocal and performance skills respectively during training. As these questions measured attitude it was necessary to develop a form of summated rating scale. This form of rating is often referred to as a 'Likert scale' (Likert, 1932). It is common for Likert scales to give five possible expressions of degree of agreement with a given statement: strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree (Robson, 1996). In order that the respondents fully engaged with the questions and range of responses I designed a scale with four expressions relevant and more meaningful to the question: not at all, a little, a moderate amount, a great deal. The use of four, rather than five options prevented respondents from choosing the middle option, which can be a tendency for some (Thomas, 2009).

One of the aims of the surveys was to gain insights into the singer experience of training. The singer-survey therefore concluded with a comment box question: Are there any comments you would like to make about your answers or the training you received? (e.g. What did you particularly like about your course? What areas would you have liked more training in? What could have been improved?) This question was open ended in order to encourage in-depth response but comment area suggestions were made based on my particular research interests. Further to my literature review, which provided an overview of the current state of CCM vocal pedagogy, I was also interested in the opinions and perspectives of CCM singing teachers on future pathways for teacher training. The final question of the teacher survey was a comment box question designed to gather qualitative data on this subject: Are there any particular areas in which you would like to see more training for CCM singing teachers? The lack of opportunity for further comment by the teachers was a limitation, however. A further comments box would have allowed for expansion. Other areas of the survey could also have been augmented in order to provide greater specificity of data. The invitation to participate specified that respondents should be CCM singers who had trained at HE level, excluding musical theatre. However, it would have been useful to gather further information from participants regarding the orientation and main focus of their HE course. Some respondents did not receive vocal tuition, for example, due to a greater focus on musicianship and theory. This highlights the complexity of the popular music education context and the wide range of institutions and course types now offered.

The design of the surveys allowed for the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data. Attention was given to the need to be clear and concise and to avoid

framing questions as positive or negative. In order to gain feedback on the clarity of questions and ease of completion, the surveys were trialed on two singers and two singing teachers. However, the lack of a larger pilot was a limitation and should be applied to any future research involving surveys.

The platform used for the surveys was Qualtrics, which allows for the secure and anonymous collection of data. It was also chosen for its range of features, including mobile optimization, translation into different languages and compliance with web content accessibility guidelines, allowing those with disabilities to participate. Qualtrics provides a predicted completion time, encouraging survey completion. The surveys were distributed via social media in order to ensure anonymity. Invitations to participate were posted on Facebook groups for professional singing teachers and CCM singers. The use of social media was aimed at the participation of international respondents representing a range of HE institutions.

As the surveys produced both qualitative and quantitative data, varied methods of data analysis were required. Qualtrics provides software that presents quantitative data in the form of percentages. It also presents data reports in visual forms such as pie chart and bar chart. The use of visual representations of data is an established method of exploring a data set (Robson 1996). Graphical displays were used as a data analysis tool in order to count frequency. In the analysis process I was looking to interpret any clear patterns within the responses and how these might be relevant to my research questions. In the exploration of the qualitative data each individual perspective and comment was of interest due to each respondent's experience within the specific context under research. Through tabulation of the responses to an individual question the comments were also compared for any themes that might emerge. Using the 'constant comparative method' which is a basic tool of the interpretative researcher (Thomas, 2009, p. 198), phrases and words were compared in order to identify and map out any themes and how these might interrelate. Both individual comments and themes were then considered in relation to the research questions. Within an interpretative approach this type of analysis can be seen as the construction of meaning involving the participants and researcher (Thomas, 2009).

Study Two

The practical research forming the core of this research project will be referred to as Study two.

4.4 Aims and Questions

Study two explored the development of performance skills in the singer-songwriter as through the use of physical approaches. This particular focus on physical techniques was rooted in an enthusiasm of practice and also my hypothesis that through physical practices it may be possible to address aspects of singer-songwriter performance, such as communication of story, expression and emotional connection. The relationship between physicality and emotion was an area of particular interest and I aimed to gain a deeper understanding of the effects of movement on emotion and related knowledge. As there is little literature on performance technique for contemporary singers and singer-songwriters, I looked to other performance disciplines for approaches. I chose two main practitioners to focus on within my practical research. Michael Chekhov's techniques are associated with actor training and Rudolf Laban's techniques are associated with dancer training. Both practitioners are known for their physical approaches, as discussed in chapter three. These practitioners were also selected due to my previous experience of their work in my own actor training. The main aim of engaging with their work within this research was to explore how creative cross-disciplinary approaches might be used within singer-songwriter training and in doing so to deepen my own practice and knowledge, working towards the development of a toolkit for use in the vocal studio.

4.5 Practitioner-Research

Within this research project I took on the role of practitioner-researcher. In the development of my research methodology I therefore engaged with literature on practice-based research, including Action Research and Practice as Research.

Action research is often used within educational settings. Stephen Corey, a key figure in its development within education, defined it as research undertaken by practitioners with the aim of improving their practices (Corey, 1953). More recently, action research has been described as self-reflective inquiry conducted by practitioners for the purpose of critically examining and understanding their practices (Carr & Kemmis, 1986). Action research can also be referred to as 'practitioner research' (Denscombe, 2014, p. 177), and it is often associated with small-scale

projects. Action research has traditionally been seen as a facilitator of change, but this change is often on the level of professional self-development (Denscombe, 2014). Action research does not require a particular method or form of data collection but is associated with Lewin's action research cycle (1946). Within this cycle a problem is identified and an action plan is implemented. Results are then observed and the plan is changed as necessary. The cycle can then begin again. Action research is also associated with the qualitative paradigm (Dosemagen & Schwalbach, 2019). Interviews and discussion are viewed as a suitable way of gaining an in-depth understanding of personal experience and feeling and how these are endowed with meaning (Bradbury et al., 2019).

Practice as Research (PaR) has a number of similar elements to action research but has been more specifically developed for the arts and is well-suited to the conservatoire environment in which I teach. PaR is a well-established approach to using creative methods of enquiry within Universities in the UK, Australia, Scandinavia, South Africa and elsewhere and this has been the case for over a decade (Kershaw, 2009). PaR is recognised as a valid form of research by the REF and their 2014 panel report on performing arts stated that 'UK universities and conservatoires maintain a position of international leadership in the development of PaR' (REF, 2014, p. 100). Proponents such as Haseman (2006) view practice-based research as a specific and separate form of research to those traditionally established. Haseman asserts that practice-led research is intrinsically experiential and that research projects often do not commence with a sense of a problem but rather an enthusiasm. He explains that practice-led researchers construct experiential starting points and commence practising to see what emerges (Haseman, 2006). This explorative approach somewhat distinguishes PaR from action research, which traditionally is a response to a problem or issue. Practice-based research has been described using various terms, including creative practice as research, research through practice, studio practice and practice-led research (Haseman, 2006), and the discourse proposes various research designs and methodologies.

Nelson uses the term Practice as Research (PaR) and offers a framework suited to a HE performing arts setting (Nelson, 2013). He defines PaR as a project in which practice is a key method of inquiry and where a practice is submitted as substantial evidence of a research inquiry. He recognizes that performing arts practices may pose difficulties in terms of traditional ideas of measurable knowledge and encourages a multi-mode research enquiry. Nelson's model divides into three areas of knowledge:

'Know-how,' 'Know-what', and 'Know- that' (Nelson, 2013, p. 37). In Nelson's model 'Know-how' covers tacit or embodied knowledge. 'Know-what' is knowledge produced through a process of reflective analysis and 'know-that' is knowledge obtained from outside areas or fields.

Nelson's areas of knowledge provided a useful scaffold for my research process. Other reflective frameworks complement this idea of drawing on different knowledge sources. Brookfield's framework, for example, encourages practitioners to reflect upon their practice through different perspectives, including their own experience, that of the student and theory/research (Brookfield, 2017). My practical studio research explorations produced embodied knowledge or 'know how' forming part of a wider reflective process, which integrated my own experience and insider knowledge and secondary research from outside areas of knowledge. In this way Nelson's PaR model encourages critical thought and theory to emerge through the interaction of arts practices and theoretical discourses (Oram, 2015).

4.6 Methodology

Within the process of devising my methodology I reviewed research methods in related areas to my own such as yoga for well-being, Michael Chekhov technique for actors and embodiment in music performance. A strong focus on qualitative data emerged within these research methodologies, often alongside practical exploration. Within research focussing on physical approaches, such as Yoga and Laban practice, the feedback of participants is often the main or sole method of data collection. This supports the validity of the bodily or feeling experience of the individual as a form of data or knowledge. Although the epistemological character of movement-based systems may be viewed as a challenge to the production of valid research, it has been argued that, in the development of human knowledge, practice leads to intellectual understanding, which is only developed after we process an experience (Pears, 1972). Pears categorises this 'know-how' as a form of knowledge (Pears, 1972, p. 5). Polanyi argues that this form of human or tacit knowledge, which cannot be easily expressed through language or mathematics, is crucial to scientific knowledge (Polanyi, 2009). Other similar terms include 'bodily knowledge', which is used within the dance world to describe movement-related knowledge (Hämäläinen, 2007) and 'Embodied knowledge', which conveys the importance of the body as a starting point for forming different types of meaning (Rebay-Salisbury, 2013). The concept of embodied knowledge validates our feeling experience as a form of data. Although

there may be methodological questions as to how research can produce knowledge through subjective feelings, researchers such as Bondi have discussed the ways in which the embodied affective response of the researcher can also be part of the knowledge forming process, alongside that of the participant (Bondi, 2014). This is relevant to my own practical research, in which the observations of the Study two participants, including myself as practitioner-researcher formed research data within a qualitative approach. Much of this qualitative data was rooted within some form of embodied knowledge.

In other methodologies reviewed, such as King and Waddington-Jones' research on Performer's Perspectives on 'Feel' in Music (2018) and the research of Hughes on Contemporary Vocal Artistry (2014), the main methods are interview, placing emphasis on the viewpoints and experiences of the participant as a source of data. This was also the emphasis within my own methodology. The experience and knowledge of the researcher is also important in interpreting this data and this could therefore be described as interpretivist in approach. This corresponds with my view of knowledge as changeable and individual and meaning as created through the interaction of different perspectives. This subjective approach has limitations from the positivist viewpoint, which supports a more scientific methodology and a detachment from the researcher. This type of methodology may incorporate an experimental approach to validating theory, quantitative methods, hypothesis testing and generalization (Cohen et al., 2017). However, the positivist approach may be better suited to the world of natural science than social science due to the complexities of human nature and the intangibility of the types of knowledge surrounding it (Cohen et al., 2017). Brookfield argues that a practitioner's awareness of how students are experiencing learning is the most important pedagogic knowledge available to them and also the core of learner-centred teaching (Brookfield, 2017, p. 62) and this is reflected in my chosen methodology.

There is a clear overlap between PaR and action research and my overall qualitative approach to reflective practitioner-research sits within a PaR mould but also draws upon action research.

4.7 Studio Research

The studio research consisted of ten discrete practical sessions exploring the use of physical approaches with singer-songwriters. This included the techniques of Rudolf Laban and Michael Chekhov, which are detailed in chapter 3. The sessions were

specific to this research project and unconnected to any other teaching in order to avoid any conflict of interests or split focus. Covid restrictions at the time necessitated the practical sessions taking place online via Zoom. Due to the constraints of online teaching the decision was taken to work one-to-one with individual participants, rather than groups. Two singer-songwriters participated in five practical sessions, lasting approximately one hour each, over a period of five weeks. 'Homework' included the further exploration of the techniques during the week following each session.

Participants were recruited in accordance with The University of York Code of Practice and Principles for Good Ethical Governance. Approval for the research proposal was gained from The Arts and Humanities Ethics Committee of the University of York. Prospective participants had the opportunity to discuss the project with me in addition to the written information provided. Written informed consent was obtained and it was made clear that participants had the option to withdraw from the project at any time. Current students were not invited to participate, in order to avoid any conflict of interests. Singer-songwriters that I had worked with over the previous three years were invited, however. Prior knowledge of the participants and the existence of a positive relationship at the outset was a useful starting point for the sessions. This knowledge also meant that I was able to select participants with varying backgrounds and skillsets. From five prospective participants two were chosen. Factors affecting this choice were potential levels of reliability and commitment, based on prior knowledge of the interested individuals and discussions with them regarding the project. The two participants chosen were also of different nationalities and ethnic backgrounds, as well as differing in terms of movement background. One participant had dance experience and a predilection towards movement. The other participant did not have an established skillset or significant experience within any form of movement work. Both participants were contemporary singer-songwriters and the songs explored within sessions were all original and of their own composition.

The sessions aimed to develop relevant and usable tools for the use of the individual participants and within my own teaching practice. The input of the participants was vital to the research and it was made clear to them that reflections and observations should be as honest as possible. Each session explored a different physical approach through a number of linked exercises. My approach to each session plan was flexible and it was expected that the direction of exploration would

change or adapt in response to participant feedback and my own observations. In relation to learning theory this could be viewed as a social constructivist approach which is 'a collaborative form of learning based on interaction, discussion and knowledge sharing' (Akpan et al., 2020, p. 49). Due to the necessity of a one-to-one setting this collaboration occurred between practitioner and participant, rather than between participants.

Practice-based research is intrinsically experiential (Haseman, 2006), and increasingly emphasis is placed on the importance of experience as a source of reflection within action research (Bradbury et al., 2019). Kolb's theory of experiential learning has been highly influential in the development of learner-centred pedagogy and reflective practice is particular well-established within performing arts training (Kolb, 1984). Theorists advocating experiential learning have further developed and adapted Kolb's experiential cycle. In order to learn from an experience, action and thinking must be linked through reflection on emerging thoughts and feeling (Gibbs, 1988) and this can be facilitated through a cycle of experiencing and reflection, followed by further active exploration and further reflection (Kolb, 1984). This cyclical cycle of reflection took place multiple times within each practical session with opportunities for observation and reflection woven throughout. Drawing on the work of Gibbs (1988) each exercise or group of exercises was followed by discussion aimed at gaining an insight into the participant's thoughts and feelings on their experience. Questioning was also used in order to elicit further reflection as necessary. Open questions such as 'how was that?', 'how did that feel?' and 'any observations on that exercise?' were used in order to allow in-depth response and to avoid leading or framing. Drawing on Schön's key text on reflective thinking and practice (Cohen et al., 2017), this 'Reflection-in-Action' was central to the practical sessions (Schön, 2017, p. 12). Schön's reflective model differentiates this type of reflection, which is happening in the moment from reflection on action, which occurs after the event (Schön, 2017).

This participant feedback formed part of a learner-centred reflective process in which an exercise could be further explored, modified or developed in response to participant input. Participants were encouraged to continue this exploration within the week-long period between each session and to feedback on their experience via discussion. Participants were also asked to provide written feedback via questionnaire at the end of the process (see Appendix 1). The questions were open ended to allow participants to give detailed feedback and to avoid framing as positive or negative. Six months after the end of the practical research period participants were again

asked for written feedback on what aspects of the work were still in use or still particularly resonated with them. Throughout each practical session I also made written notes on my observations and the reflections of participants. Sessions were recorded with participant permission and I was able to review these recordings in order to transcribe qualitative feedback and to make further observations and reflections on the work. Zoom was chosen due to its audio quality and this worked well for the most part during sessions. There were some issues with recordings however: one session failed to fully record and there were sound issues with the recording of one other session. In these cases, I relied on notes made during and immediately after the sessions.

Each session began with a yoga-based warm-up in order to ensure the health and safety of participants within the subsequent physical exercises. The use of yoga as a warm up also provided an opportunity to explore this particular physical approach and its potential place within my practice with singer-songwriters. Feedback and reflection from participants regarding this yoga practice was therefore encouraged. The first session explored on the use of 'free movement' as a rehearsal tool. This involved a series of exercises in which the participants moved their bodies in an energized and non-naturalistic way whilst singing and observed any effects. The second session explored Laban's effort actions, which can be thought of as movement qualities (e.g. floating, gliding, slashing) and how these might relate to performance. The third session explored the use of 'whole-body gesture': a physical shape in which the whole body is engaged in an energized way. The fourth session explored the physical techniques of Michael Chekhov, including archetypal gesture, radiating and psychological gesture, which are discussed in detail in chapter three. Archetypal gesture and psychological gesture are forms of whole-body gesture. Radiating is a technique that harnesses the imagination in order to radiate physical energy. The fifth session was planned as an opportunity to further explore practice from the previous sessions and to consider how the techniques might be used by the participants moving forward.

4.8 The Reflective Process

As previously discussed, 'Reflection-in-Action' (Schön, 2017, p. 12) was central to the practical sessions and also formed part of the overall reflective process. Brookfield defines critically reflective teaching as a 'process of identifying and checking the accuracy and validity of our teaching assumptions' (Brookfield, 2017, p. 3). Brookfield

identifies 'critical lenses' through which we can perceive our practice in different ways, including our own experiences, the eyes of the student/participant and theory and research, which come together to challenge our assumptions about our practice. Alongside the 'Reflection-in-Action within each practical session, I also engaged with secondary sources of knowledge as part of a wider reflective process. My reflective process considered the qualitative data from participants alongside my own observations and also drew upon a range of discourse from related areas. This included discourse specific to movement approaches and methods, for example Chekhov technique, Laban practice, Yoga practices and Alexander technique. I reviewed pedagogical literature across the performance disciplines of acting, dance, singing and spoken voice. I also engaged with the discourse of sports psychology, as an elite performance field. This secondary research facilitated the exploration of resonances with other disciplines.

As part of the reflective research process I also engaged with a range of discourse from outside areas of knowledge. My movement research intersected with the fields exploring emotion. This led me to engage with emotion-related discourse spanning a wide range of fields including neuroscience, musicology, clinical psychology, clinical therapy, movement therapy and colour therapy. This enabled me to draw comparisons and connections between my own area of practice and theory from other fields, which are discussed in my reflections on Study two in chapter 5.

Theorists such as Gibbs (1988) include the drawing of conclusions and action-planning as part of the reflective process. The studio research was aimed at developing tools for the future use and participants were encouraged to consider which particular tools they might continue to explore within their own practice moving forward and how they might be utilized. This and my own reflections on how particular tools might be used within my future practice can be viewed as a form of action-planning.

4.9 Data

The practical element of research produced primary qualitative data. This data took the form of written observations from myself as practitioner and researcher, verbal feedback from participants, and written feedback from participants via questionnaire. This data and video footage of the practical sessions was reviewed as part of the reflective process.

Secondary sources of data also formed a core part of the process through

engagement with a wide range of performing arts related discourse and discourse from a variety of outside areas of knowledge.

4.10 Issues and Limitations

My research was small-scale in terms of number of participants. Due to Covid restrictions at the time, sessions took place online via Zoom. The necessity to carry out this research online may be viewed as limiting. However, in the 'real world' this is how learning experiences were being conducted at the time. Due to the nature of online learning, sessions took place on an individual rather than group basis, as originally planned. Group sessions would have incorporated a higher number of participants, which arguably could have resulted in greater reliability of findings. A group setting would have also enabled peer feedback and collaboration between participants. However, the one-to-one setting allowed me to work in a much greater level of depth with individual participants and it also allowed for a greater volume of feedback from each individual participant. This was also more reflective of the Higher Education context in which vocal and instrumental teaching tends to be one-on-one.

Practitioner research focusses on a specific context, meaning that findings cannot be generalized. This is usually true of both PaR and action research within education (Dosemagen & Schwalbach, 2019). However, this does not mean that individual experience and self-development is not important and valid. Within the qualitative paradigm of practitioner-research knowledge is not fixed but rather is changing and relative to individual people and setting (Dosemagen & Schwalbach, 2019). Practice-led research, such as the research of Laws on embodiment in performance, is concerned with 'subjective experience' (Laws, 2015, p. 133). My research was also concerned with subjective constructions and experiential forms of knowledge and in this sense the qualitative data cannot be considered objective. The direct involvement of the practitioner within this type of research also means that detachment from the process is not possible. In order to mitigate bias, a high level of reflexivity is necessary within practitioner-research (Somekh, 2006). Reflexivity involves 'an awareness of the researcher's role in the practice of research' (Symon & Cassell, 2012, p. 72). Within the reflective process the practitioner should identify and challenge their own assumptions and beliefs (Dosemagen & Schwalbach, 2019).

Engagement with a range of sources of knowledge and research, alongside the practical element of research, aided this process of attempting to recognise and

challenge my own forms of bias. My own bias was also mitigated through the collaborative approach. The participants were viewed as co-researchers and their voice was key to the reflective process. The practical sessions were designed to be relevant and engaging for the participants and the development of their practice was equally important to that of my own. Placing the participants at the heart of the process was also related to ethical considerations.

4.11 Research Integrity and Ethics

Ethical considerations are particularly important within real world research (Robson, 1993) and this project was guided by The University of York Code of Practice and Principles for Good Ethical Governance and The University of York Code of Practice on Research Integrity (University of York). Approval for this research project was gained from The Arts and Humanities Ethics Committee of the University of York. These codes of practice provide a framework for research activity, identifying and addressing possible ethical considerations. The key principle underpinning the ethical framework is that of the avoidance of harm. Particular considerations for my research project included the welfare and interests of human participants and that of myself as practitioner-researcher. The health and safety and well-being of participants was a priority in the planning of all activities. I am an experienced and qualified teacher with a current, enhanced DBS check. Practical sessions took place online and were video recorded. This safeguarded the participants and myself as practitioner within the one-to-one setting. Physical safety during movement exercises was paramount. The planning process took this into account and each session included a suitable physical warm-up. Participants were asked to give written confirmation that there were no known health reasons why they should not participate in physical exercises. Participants were also made aware that they could opt out of any exercise for any reason.

It was important within these practical sessions to create a positive environment in which participants felt safe to explore and create. Bradbury et al. (2019) place particular importance on the creation of genuine relationships within educational research settings in order that collaboration can successfully take place and this fits very well with my own teaching practice and ethos. Individuals invited to participate had formerly trained with me. This decision was made in order to mitigate any possible issues with working online, as having some prior knowledge of participants made it easier and safer to work in this way. Having worked with participants previously also

meant that positive relationships had already been formed. Participation was entirely voluntary, avoiding any form of coercion, and participants were informed that they could end their involvement in the project at any time. Those interested in participating were provided with an information sheet detailing the purpose and aims of the research project (see Appendix 2). They were made aware of all possible future data and research uses. It was made clear that all data would be anonymised, barring video footage, which would be reviewed by myself but would not be used as evidence in itself. Potential participants were made aware that any incidental findings relating to their own welfare or third parties may need to be reported as appropriate to the situation and this was incorporated into the consent form. Interested parties were given the opportunity to discuss the project with me and ask further questions before giving informed written consent to participate (see Appendix 3).

Data treatment and storage was also an ethical consideration. Data was anonymised and stored securely, in accordance with General Data Protection Legislation. Sessions were video recorded for my own analysis and this could not be anonymised. This was made clear to participants and formed part of the written consent form. Confidentiality of information was respected.

Research ethics and research integrity are closely related and in order to ensure a high level of integrity appropriate ethical procedures must be adhered to. Research integrity relates to values including honesty, rigour, transparency and open communication, care and respect and accountability (Wright et al., 2022). A key aspect of research integrity is the appropriate use of referencing in order to respect and acknowledge the work of others and care was taken to comply with this.

The principles of research integrity were also considered within the design of the project. Within practitioner-research rigour comes from the way in which the different strands of theory, thought and practice come together (Oram, 2015). My methodology included practical exploration and also engagement with theory. Engagement with discourse from a range of fields allowed me to develop critical thought and a greater capacity for reflexivity within the reflective process.

Using more than one form of evidence can be referred to as triangulation (Thomas, 2009) and this can be achieved in social research through the use of different sources (Robson, 1993) with the aim of increasing the validity and credibility of the research. Qualitative data came from participants and also myself as practitioner and observer. Within the reflective process this was considered alongside secondary sources of knowledge.

4.12 Summary

My research incorporated mixed methods. The initial survey of teachers and singers combined quantitative and qualitative questions. The core of the research involved a reflective process based on primary practical research and secondary sources of knowledge. This allowed the consideration of a range of discourse from a variety of sources and perspectives. My research methodology draws on action research and Practice as Research strategies, which relate to the development of individual practice within a specific context. The flexibility of these approaches suited my research context well. Using a mix of primary practical research and secondary research within the reflective analysis process not only helped to ensure rigour but also the development and enrichment of my own practice and knowledge through the interplay of different strands of experience, thought and theory.

Although Nelson's PaR framework is more specifically suited to a performing arts setting, action research discourse is evolving to place greater emphasis on experiential learning and experience as the basis of reflection, which in turn creates space for new concepts and active experimentation (Bradbury et al., 2019). My practical explorations were experiential and collaborative in nature. A cycle of constant reflection from participants and myself as practitioner formed the qualitative approach to data, allowing in-depth inquiry. A learner-centred approach is fundamental to my teaching ethos and the participants were vital to the project as stakeholders with real voices.

Chapter Five: Study One

As discussed in the previous chapter, the preliminary research (Study one) employed the survey strategy with the aim of gathering an overview of the typical course content of CCM training at HE level. Using separate but similar surveys for teachers and singers, Study one also aimed to gather information on the perspectives and opinions of these two groups regarding this training. Data was used in order to aid in the planning and reflective process of Study two: the practical explorations. This chapter will discuss and reflect upon the survey data. This data can also be found in Appendix 4.

5.1 The Teacher Survey

Responses to the singing teacher survey totaled 28. The questions were as follows:

Teacher Survey Questions

- 1) I teach CCM singers:
 - On a degree course or equivalent
 - At postgraduate level

- 2) I currently teach:
 - Vocal technique
 - Performance skills
 - Vocal rehabilitation
 - Movement skills
 - Acting through song
 - Other (please specify)

- 3) At the HE institution(s) I have taught at, CCM singers receive specific classes in the following:
 - Vocal technique
 - Performance skills
 - Acting through song
 - Movement skills
 - Vocal rehabilitation
 - Other (please specify)

4) Comment box question:

Are there any particular areas in which you would like to see more training for CCM singing teachers?

Data

- 1) 100% of respondents (28) teach CCM singers at HE level. 27 teach at undergraduate level and six teach at postgraduate level.
- 2) 96% of respondents (27) currently teach vocal technique, 86% (24) currently teach performance skills, 43% (12) currently teach acting through song, 29% (8) currently teach vocal rehabilitation, 18% (5) currently teach movement skills. In the 'other' category five respondents stated that they also currently teach vocal health, one listed musicianship and one listed folk music styles.
- 3) 93% of respondents (26) stated that CCM singers in the institutions in which they teach or have taught are provided with specific classes in vocal technique. 75% (21) stated performance skills, 46% (13) stated acting through song. 32% (9) stated movement skills, 14% (4) stated vocal rehabilitation. In the 'other' category individuals also listed: band skills, production, vocal arrangement, a cappella singing/choir, personal and professional development, performance anxiety and anatomy, pedagogic issues, vocal anatomy and vocal health, Feldenkrais, writing and devising, musicianship, improvisation and repertoire planning, music theory.
- 4) Respondents listed a range of areas in which they would like to see more training for CCM singing teachers. Three respondents answered performance anxiety/psychology, three answered vocal health, two answered performance training/coaching, two answered session singing skills, one answered Alexander Technique. One respondent wanted to see further training in relation to working in a HE environment. One respondent wanted further training in relation to the challenges of singing whilst playing an instrument. One respondent wanted further training in relation to voice functions, in order to establish that 'all voices can sing CCM music'. One respondent wanted the availability of a wider range of further training in relation to CCM, rather than Musical Theatre.

One respondent wanted further training in classical technique as a foundation for vocal health. One respondent wanted further training in all of the categories listed in the survey questions.

Discussion

96% of respondents stated that they currently teach vocal technique and 93% stated that specific classes in vocal technique formed part of the HE training at the institutions in which they teach or have taught. This suggests that specific vocal technique classes form part of the vast majority of the HE courses that these particular teachers are involved in. Performance skills also form a significant part of these courses according to the responses, with 86% of teachers currently teaching performance skills and specific classes being provided at 75% of these institutions. Performance skills training is not as commonly included within these particular HE courses as vocal skills training. 43% of respondents stated that they currently teach acting through song, with 46% of these institutions providing specific classes in this area. This suggests that acting through song is relevant to contemporary singer training but is not considered essential by all teachers and institutions. The responses suggest that movement skills are much less widely included within CCM singer-training, with 18% of respondents stating that they currently teach movement skills and 32% stating that specific classes are included within training. 29% of respondents stated that they teach vocal rehabilitation, with 14% stating that specific classes are received by students. 18% of respondents stated in the 'other' category that they also teach vocal health as part of their practice. This is an example of how CCM pedagogy has moved on in the last 20 years. LoVetri and Weekly found that their respondents were generally familiar with vocal science and medicine but needed more training in healthy voice production (LoVetri & Weekly, 2003). In 2003 and 2009 'vocal rehabilitation' did not feature within their questions or findings. My data suggests that vocal rehabilitation forms part of the practice of around a third of the CCM teachers who responded to the survey. This would seem to support my conclusions in the literature review that vocal rehabilitation is an emerging part of the singing teacher's role.

A range of suggestions were made as to the areas in which CCM teachers might benefit from the availability of further training. These included the related areas of performance skills, performance psychology and performance anxiety, which can all be categorised as part of the performance coaching aspect of vocal pedagogy. Vocal

health was also listed by three respondents. Several comments highlight the issues still faced in terms of availability and understanding of CCM- specific training. One respondent, for example, drew attention to the need for further training in the voice functions of CCM styles. Another comment, stating that there should be more training in classical technique as a foundation for vocal health, highlights misinformation within the field. As my literature review established, CCM singing is accepted as a distinct category with genre-specific approaches to healthy and sustainable vocal technique. This comment also suggests that a bias towards classical pedagogy may still exist.

5.2 The Singer Survey

Responses to the singer survey totaled 13. The questions were as follows:

Singer Survey Questions

- 1) I completed my training at degree/postgraduate level within the last
 - 2 years
 - 5 years
 - 8 years
 - 10 years or more

- 2) Whilst training I received specific classes in the following:
 - Vocal technique
 - Performance skills
 - Vocal rehabilitation
 - Movement skills
 - Acting through song
 - Other (please specify)

- 3) How much do you feel your Vocal Skills developed during your training?
 - Not at all
 - A little
 - A moderate amount
 - A great deal

- 4) How much do you feel your Performance Skills developed during your training?
 - Not at all

- A little
- A moderate amount
- A great deal

5) Comment box question:

Are there any comments you would like to make about your answers or the training you received? (e.g. What did you particularly like about your course? What areas would you have liked more training in? What could have been improved?)

Data

- 1) All respondents (13) had completed training at degree or postgraduate level. Nine respondents had completed their training within the last two years, one within the last five years, one within the last eight years and two within the last ten years or more.
- 2) During training 92% of respondents (12) were provided with specific classes in vocal technique, 75% in performance skills (9), 8% in vocal rehabilitation (1), 8% in movement skills (1) and 8% in acting through song (1). In the 'other' category two respondents listed repertoire, two listed music theory, one listed songwriting, one listed production, one listed research, one listed personal professional development.
- 3) 8% of respondents (1) stated that their vocal skills had not developed at all during training, 8% (1) stated a little, 46% (6) stated a moderate amount, 38% (5) stated a great deal.
- 4) 15% of respondents (2) stated that their performance skills had not developed at all during training, 31% (4) stated a little, 23% (3) stated a moderate amount, 31% (4) stated a great deal.
- 5) In the further comments box three respondents discussed a lack of focus on vocal development within their training. One respondent commented that they would have liked more support in the link between course and career, especially in network building. Two respondents would have liked further training or focus

on performance skills. One respondent would have liked more movement training outside of vocal lessons. One respondent commented would have liked more vocal rehabilitation training. One respondent commented that, having experienced vocal issues themselves, all teachers at HE level should have extensive training in vocal issues and rehabilitation, due to how common these issues are in singers.

Discussion

92% of respondents received specific classes in vocal technique during their training, whilst 75% stated that they received specific classes in performance skills. This suggests that at the institutions that the respondents are linked to, vocal skills are a core part of CCM training and that performance skills also form a significant part of training, although specific performance classes are less common than vocal lessons. Two respondents commented that they would have liked more performance-specific training. Responses to questions three and four also potentially reflect a greater focus on vocal, rather than performance technique, with 85% of respondents stating that vocal skills had developed a moderate amount or a great deal during training, compared with 54% of respondents who stated that performance skills had developed a moderate amount or a great deal. Classes in movement skills, rehabilitation and acting through song would seem to be much less commonly included in the timetable within the courses attended by these particular respondents with only one respondent stating that each of these were specifically included within their training.

Three respondents discussed that there was a lack of focus on vocal training within their courses. One of these respondents stated that at BA level one-to-one sessions were not offered and the training on their Popular Music Degree lent itself to musicianship, rather than vocal training. This same respondent did receive one-to-one vocal sessions on their MA course, however, and felt that this made a significant difference to their vocal development and should be offered more widely. Another respondent felt that their course was not focused on improving their voice. The third respondent discussed that their course was aimed more at performance than voice training overall. The lack of vocal training experienced by these individuals could be a result of the particular orientation or specialisms offered within their courses.

Further Discussion

The very specific focus of Study one as preliminary research and the intentionally short and simple survey design was limiting in terms of the data collected. The questions could have been expanded and added to in order to provide greater depth of qualitative response and more meaningful data. It would have been useful, for example, to ask respondents to specify the course title or main orientation of the HE training in question. The respondents were also limited in number, preventing generalization. This survey could be developed further for future research, with a more specific focus on the performance aspect of training and the methods used within the HE setting. This would have a qualitative focus to allow for greater depth of response and follow up interviews with individual teachers could potentially allow for further expansion.

Although this was a very small scale sample, the results were somewhat useful in providing an insight into HE training for CCM singers. The data related to the experiences of respondents specific to their particular institution however, and therefore cannot be generalized. Responses were provided by 41 individuals who are current CCM singing teachers or CCM singing graduates at Higher Education level. Due to participants being invited via international Facebook groups, answers are assumed to provide a cross section from different countries and institutions. Some patterns emerged within the data but individual comments and opinions were of particular interest in light of the small number of participants, which rendered quantitative data less significant.

The responses suggest that vocal technique forms a core part of the HE level training experienced by respondents, with 92% of students and 93% of teachers stating that training included specific classes in this area. The majority of teachers and singers stated that performance skills also form a specific part of this training. This supports my assertion that performance training is essential for popular singers.

However, the data suggests that performance skills classes are less likely to feature than vocal classes and this is reflected within the lower percentage of singers who stated that their performance skills had improved a great deal or moderate amount, as compared to vocal skills. The survey responses of both teachers and singers suggest that movement skills are not widely taught or specifically included within the HE level training that they have experience of.

In my literature review I noted a trend towards the inclusion of rehabilitation within the role of the singing teacher. My survey data would seem to support a growth in this

area with 14% of teachers stating that specific classes are offered in vocal rehabilitation and 29% stating that they currently include rehabilitation within their teaching practice. Several singers stated that there is a need for further inclusion of vocal rehabilitation within CCM singer and teacher training.

The teacher responses suggest that there are a range of areas in which wider availability of further training for popular singing teachers could be valuable. One teacher commented that training should be widely available relating to CCM rather than Musical Theatre, supporting my own view of Musical Theatre as a separate category and the need for more specific research into popular singing training. Several teachers highlighted that further training is needed relating to performance skills and a number also suggested performance anxiety/psychology as an area for further teacher training. Both performance skills and performance psychology can be categorised as part of performance pedagogy. Study two, which will be discussed in the next chapter, focusses specifically on performance-related aspects of singer-songwriter training. I agree that the availability of teacher training in relation to performance pedagogy would be beneficial and the practical explorations comprising Study two were designed to further my own knowledge and practice in this area.

Chapter Six: Study Two

6.1 Introduction

The studio research sessions on which Study two centred were designed to move towards the development of appropriate tools for use in singer-songwriter performance training. This chapter will report on the practical research process with a focus on the words and experience of the participants, alongside my own observations of the work. There is also a reflections section in which I discuss the emerging themes from the practical sessions and the implications of these themes within the context of related areas of research. The aim of this reflective process was to allow me to explore and develop my own teaching practice and related knowledge. The development of participant practice was equally important and their voice is central to the discussion in this chapter. Text in quotation marks represents their actual words. Ellipses have been used to show that some speech has been omitted from the passage quoted.

My own reflections on the practical work take into consideration the feedback from participants and my own observations during sessions. Written notes were made throughout each session and I was also able to review the video recordings of the majority of sessions in order to make further observations. In accordance with Nelson's Practice as Research framework (Nelson, 2013), the reflections in this chapter draw upon a range of knowledge sources. This includes embodied knowledge, which relates particularly to this type of physical, experiential practice. Tanaka describes embodied knowledge as that which we experience through our own body. He argues that this knowledge is not simply rooted in motor skills but encompasses a broad range of psychological experiences (Tanaka, 2011). Through this embodied knowledge, participants were able to reflect upon their experience of the physical approaches and I, as practitioner and observer, was able to see the results of the work.

6.2 Exploratory Sessions

The practical sessions were led in accordance with my own teaching ethos. Michael Chekhov advocated a warm, supportive and joyful atmosphere within the studio (Chamberlain, 2003). I also strive to create a positive environment in which learners feel safe to explore and discover. My aim was for the participants to enjoy the sessions, to feel able to give input freely and to fully collaborate in the work. Each

session comprised a number of linked exercises based on a particular type of physical approach or the work of a particular practitioner. The choice of exercises is reflective of my own experience of a range of movement practices both within my acting training and within my continued practice and professional development. The identities of the participants will remain anonymous but from this point they will be referred to as Ava and Geir.

Within the practical studio the relationship between practitioner and learner plays a vital role. Having prior experience of working with both participants during their degree training was invaluable. Within action research discourse emphasis has been placed on the importance of relational conditions (Bradbury et al, 2019). In their everyday practice, teachers strive to build genuine relationships with individuals, which allows positive learning experiences to take place. These relational conditions also give rise to collaboration within a research context (Bradbury et al, 2019). A high level of knowledge of participants was particularly desirable given the focus of the research and the necessity of working online. In working with the physical and emotional aspects of performance it is important to be aware of the feelings that particular physical shapes or movements might invoke in the individual. The emergence of trauma-informed voice practices is also relevant within this context.

6.3 The Participants

Ava

Prior to participating in the research Ava had recently completed a music degree in performance and songwriting. At the time of the research she was working towards the release of several original tracks and was seeking performance opportunities. Ava's past gigs included both acoustic gigs and gigs with a full band in a range of venue types and sizes. Ava sometimes accompanies herself on piano but this is rare and she prefers to be accompanied by other musicians in live performance. Ava describes her music as introspective, soul-infused pop/rock. Ava's songs discuss her own experiences and are characterised by a sense of emotional honesty and strength. At the start of the practical research process Ava was a confident physical performer who considered herself to be a dancer and regularly engaged in physical practices such as yoga. In discussion of existing movement experience she reflected:

I think that I do have a propensity towards movement onstage so that has been successful and when you're moving onstage there's a high

chance that that's to an upbeat song. So I would like to work on being grounded vocally or more grounded vocally whilst also being able to maintain movement and faster pace of song.

My own reflection at the start of the process was that Ava would benefit from exploring the emotional content of her songs and the physical expression of this in performance, which is somewhat different from the type of movement to upbeat music that Ava describes. From my perspective the vocal aspect of Ava's performance was a particular area for continued development as this lacked technical consistency in areas including pitching and clarity of tone. In terms of personality traits, I perceived Ava to be outgoing, self-assured and open to new experience. Ava identifies as bi-racial, black-British.

Geir

Geir completed a music degree in performance and songwriting a year previous to participating in this research project. At the time of the research Geir had already released several original tracks via streaming services, including Spotify. He was planning to release other tracks accompanied by launch performances in the near future. Geir's past performances included more intimate gigs accompanied by a pianist and also gigs backed by a full band. Geir does not accompany himself in performance. Geir describes his pop ballads as 'melancholic' and 'personal' and aims to express 'vulnerability' and 'authenticity' through his music. His songs focus on love and relationships. From my perspective, at the start of the studio research process Geir's vocal skills were technically strong and there was particular scope for further development of performance confidence and physical awareness. Geir did not have a great deal of experience within movement-related areas but had some limited experience of physical approaches to performance from working with me during his third year of training on his degree course. In discussion during the first session on areas for development and past feedback, Geir gave the following reflections:

I feel like I've gotten the feedback that it looks like I'm thinking a lot about what I'm singing but not in the way of being emotive in the song but more like I'm overthinking it. I find myself then in my body language becomes a bit stiff and not quite as emotive as the lyrics should be.

He also observed: 'I tend to close my eyes quite a lot when I'm singing. People want

me to connect with them more and look at the audience'. Geir went on to reflect further that his upper body and arms particularly became 'stiff' in performance and that he had received feedback during the course of his degree training that his performance lacked physical expression, particularly in the top half of his body. Gesture in performance was also assessed by tutors as limited and repetitive. In terms of personality traits, I perceived Geir to be cautious, reserved and sensitive. Geir identifies as a white-Norwegian.

A complex interaction of factors forms individual identity, which may be multicultural and multiracial and involves the intersection of social factors and ethnicity (Clammer, 2015). In working with physical approaches to expressive performance it is important to consider the field of research relating to physical communication and identity.

Davidson categorises movement as 'individual' in terms of personal style and 'culturally-determined' in that some movement is learnt through imitation of the behaviour of others (Davidson, 2001, p. 250). Cultural differences in gesture and other forms of bodily communication are accepted, although some forms of non-verbal communication may be considered universal or innate (Argyle, 1988). Noland's research suggests that, whilst movement embodies culture, it can also provide a means of physical release from cultural and social constraints (Noland, 2009). My studio research was experimental in the sense that I wanted to encourage the participants to move away from the habitual and to experience new ways of being in the body in order to ultimately find greater connection and freedom of expression within performance. Frith's argument that identity is mobile and is created within the experience of performance is particularly pertinent (Frith, 1996).

6.4 The Warm-Up

Beginning each session with a warm-up was essential in ensuring that the participants were physically ready to engage safely in the movement-based exercises. The warm-up sequence was planned within the constraints of a typical one-to-one vocal session in which physical studio space may be limited. The warm-up was therefore planned as a standing sequence and did not include floor exercises. The use of yoga within the warm up also allowed exploration of this particular physical approach within the singer-songwriter context. My review of CCM pedagogical literature revealed a consensus regarding the need to address physical habits. The reasons given for this centre on the link between alignment and vocal

production. Alignment issues and tension have been shown to have a negative effect on vocal production and could pose vocal health risks to some individuals (Dayme, 2005; Chapman & Morris, 2021; Barton, cited in Benson, 2020). However, although I strongly agree that balanced alignment is an essential pedagogical building block (LeBorgne, 2018), I would argue that its link with healthy vocal production is not the only reason for including physical work within the vocal lesson. My review of CCM literature revealed a lack of reference to the use of physical techniques in the development of other skills such as physical connection and freedom of movement. There is also little reference made to the use of physical approaches in relation to the development of performance skills such as openness and energy on stage. Physical approaches to the development of performance skills are underemphasised within CCM pedagogy and this is an issue addressed within this research.

Yoga was chosen as the basis for the warm-up for numerous reasons. Other forms of stretch sequence could provide a suitable warm-up. However, the flowing nature of Yoga practice allows the exploration of free movement in connection with the breath, whilst also targeting elements such as alignment and tension release. Yoga is regarded as a mind-body or holistic approach (Woodyard, 2011), and this fits well with the other techniques chosen for exploration within the practical sessions, which can also be described as mind-body approaches. Pedagogues such as Gutekunst and Gillett advocate the use of yoga within spoken voice practice in the development of a balanced alignment and a free, open body (Gutekunst & Gillett, 2014). They stress that a balanced alignment is essential in order to find the free flow of energy that will allow creative communication between the body and brain. This flow of energy is central to yogic practices, which encourage an opening of energy pathways (Judith, 2017). Yoga has also been shown in many studies to have a positive effect on health and wellbeing. The potential of yoga practice within singer-songwriter training is wide-ranging then, and its inclusion within the exploratory sessions provided an opportunity to further explore this potential within my own teaching practice.

Although the use of yoga within the practical warm-up sequences allowed only a limited exploration of the approach and there are clearly many aspects, styles and traditions of yoga, there were some themes that emerged within the participant feedback. Following the warm-up sessions both participants observed feeling more 'open' in the body. They also described themselves as being more 'engaged' in the body following the warm-up. Ava gave feedback that she felt a greater 'flow of energy'

and Geir observed a level of tension release through engagement with yoga. Interestingly, within the context of the main focus of this research, there were also some links made between the physical practice and emotion. Ava observed that there was 'a lot of emotion attached' to the technique of shaking, which involves quick bouncing movements that cause the body to release and vibrate. Yoga teaches that emotion and stress is stored within the body, forming energy blockages and that through yoga practices these blockages can be released (Judith, 2017). Through the simple act of movement, it is possible to release tension in the body and this may be accompanied by a letting go of emotion and anxieties, hence the link to emotion made by Ava. Tension release and increase in energy flow are just some of the reasons for the positive effects of yoga practice on health and wellbeing, which are now well-documented (Diamond, 2012). Concepts such as 'energy flow' may be considered to be tacit or embodied forms of knowledge. However, a relatively simple physical exercise such as shaking, which causes the body to vibrate, also has physiological effects on the body that are evidenced in scientific forms of knowledge. Research related to the effect of vibration on the body has explained its positive effects in relation to increased blood and lymphatic flow (Stewart et al., 2005). Within the field of neurological therapy, whole-body vibration has also been found to cause physiological responses at neurological, musculoskeletal, endocrinological and vascular levels (Bernardo-Filho et al., 2021).

The importance of the physical warm up within the singing studio has already been established within my literature review. Prominent spoken voice practitioners such as Linklater, Berry and Rodenburg have included elements of yoga practice within their pedagogical text books (Linklater, 2006; Berry, 1991; Rodenburg, 2015).

In spoken voice pedagogy there is also some integration of physical practices and performance technique, as can be seen in the work of Gutekunst and Gillet (2014). However, the link between movement practices such as yoga and the development of performance technique is not emphasised within the sung voice literature. Rather, focus is solely placed on the benefits of physical practices in relation to vocal production. This research explores the links between physical approaches and other aspects of performance.

Within my wider teaching practice, I regularly use elements of yoga with contemporary singers within a HE setting. This has been a source of frustration, however. Although I postulate that yoga can bring a range of benefits to the singer relating to vocal and performance skills and health and wellbeing, the time constraints

of the vocal lesson limit what can be achieved. A consistent training and practice within an approach such as yoga is needed in order for the singer to fully benefit. The inclusion within the curriculum of a discrete yoga or movement lesson would address this issue and underpin performance and vocal work within the vocal studio.

6.5 The Practical Sessions

6.5.1 SESSION ONE: Free Movement

The first session focused on the use of free or spontaneous movement as a rehearsal tool. This involved moving the body in an energised and non-naturalistic way whilst singing. An original song was sung as a baseline with which to compare subsequent explorations (recording 1b from 15.31). Initially Geir found it challenging to access this exercise and was clearly self-conscious. After a short engagement with the exercise he stopped and gave feedback: 'I'm sorry, it feels so weird - can I do it again?' There was then a process of encouragement and suggestion of various types of movement from me and Geir was able to gradually engage with the exercise. Following completion of the exercise he commented that 'It felt better as I just literally tried to focus on moving my body and not thinking about how it looked that much'. Geir's response to this work challenged my view of free movement as a simple exercise. Within a performance context we associate movement with the visual aesthetic and it may therefore be difficult to 'just move' without thinking about how the movement looks or is perceived by others. Creating spontaneous movement also potentially requires a level of physical awareness, confidence and even skill. In order to support Geir in finding a greater sense of freedom of movement I modified the exercise and asked him to walk around the room whilst singing. Geir gave feedback that 'that felt more relaxing because I was moving my entire body. I was more relaxed doing that - it felt more natural'. During the initial free-movement exercise I observed a lack of freedom, particularly in the top half of Geir's body and a sense of closing across the shoulders and chest. Through the simple movement of walking around the room I perceived more openness both in the body and in the vocal production. Geir also perceived that the vocal production had improved. In order to move Geir further towards free movement I asked him to repeat the walking exercise adding arm movements. Geir observed 'the minute I add my hands and my arms that's when I start overthinking it'. For singers who perform behind a microphone hand and arm gesture is a particularly important form of communication. Finding these gestures can become a source of stress to the singer, resulting in restricted or

repetitive movement. I modified the exercise again in order to give Geir additional support, encouraging him to alternate between open and closed arm gestures, whilst remaining on the spot. The result was closer to what I had assumed the original free-movement exercise would look like. Geir clearly needed a process of exploring and experiencing movement in the body in order to reach that stage. When asked how the exercise felt Geir responded: 'When I thought about making it small and making it big I thought about the lyric'. This was a positive development in the sense that Geir was beginning to connect movement with meaning. The work of both Chekhov and Laban is based around the concept that our movement has subtext. Behind each physical action there is a desire or drive. In this way the external physical shape is always linked to the internal. The body of research on the role of the body within music performance also identifies movement as expressing intention and meaning. Davidson, for example, sees the body as vital to communicating performance, (Davidson, 2001) and Laws views gesture as an embodied phenomenon due to its conveyance of meaning (Laws, 2015). Studies also suggest that the bodily movements of musicians play an important role in expressing performance (Shinosako & Ohgushi, 1996; Dahl & Friberg 2004; 2007).

Following further exploration of free movement over the period of a week, Geir gave feedback that he had 'definitely noticed the impact of movement on the voice but it still feels unnatural'. When questioned about what he meant by 'unnatural' Geir explained 'My type of music is very I'm very used to standing still so it's a pattern that I need to come out of'. When asked about the specific impact of the movement on the voice Geir explained that it had been most useful in relation to vocal dynamics: 'the movement helped that to naturally come out'.

Following engagement with the free movement exercise Ava gave feedback that she had enjoyed the exercise and did not 'overthink' the vocals. I observed that her movement was restrained and so I asked for this exercise to be repeated with more 'exaggerated' movements. Following this repetition Ava observed an effect of 'release' and a 'more energised vocal'. I also observed greater engagement in the body and far more variety of vocal quality as compared with the baseline performance in which Ava sang the song as she usually would. At the end of the studio research process Ava reflected that as 'spontaneous' movement this exercise is useful to her is 'being present' and accessing the present moment.

This exploration of free movement also has resonances with the field of 'feel' within musicological discourse, which can be considered in terms of 'relationships with the body, emotions, music interpretation, and gestures' (King & Waddington-

Jones, 2018, p. 241). Through moving freely, the singer can explore the physical and affective feelings produced in the body and how these relate to the song. Within this exercise the singer 'feels' the music and lyric. According to Laws, research within the field of expressive performance studies has tended to neglect the feelings produced in the performer through bodily movement and how this might inform subsequent performances (Laws, 2015). Through the use of physical approaches in rehearsal, it is possible to explore the affective feelings produced by movement and the ways in which this might inform expressive use of the body in a performance context.

6.5.2 SESSION TWO: Laban's Effort Actions

The second practical session focused on Laban's Efforts of Action Drive (Laban, 1947). These are also referred to within the literature reviewed and in this dissertation as Effort Actions, Effort qualities or Efforts. This aspect of Laban's work was chosen as a core part of his research and a cross-disciplinary technique, often forming part of dancer and actor training. The Effort Actions are a way of categorising movement types or qualities. Laban broke movement down into the Motion Factors of Space, Weight and Time (Laban, 1947), as discussed in chapter 3. He identified movement types as direct or flexible (space), strong or light (weight) and sustained or sudden (time). These motion factors combine in different ways to produce Laban's eight effort qualities: pressing, flicking, punching, floating, slashing, gliding, wringing and dabbing. According to Laban's system punching is a direct, strong and sudden movement quality, whereas floating is flexible, light and sustained.

This studio session aimed to explore how Laban's effort actions might be developed as a tool for singer-songwriters. The participants first explored Laban's effort qualities through movement. The effects of individual effort actions on the performance of a song were then explored, following a baseline performance of the chosen song (recording 2a from 8.34; recording 2b from 11.54). In engaging with floating, Ava observed:

Vocally it feels like my voice is more like on the tip of my tongue ready to go more. Less effort to use. It feels like coming to it in a lighter way and it's nice to feel the body expand kind of like the voice was going with the body. You can really feel that connection.

In relation to floating Geir observed: 'I do absolutely notice again like the dynamic of

my voice is more soft. I feel like there's less tension...the notes were easier to reach'. Ava and Geir perceived similar vocal effects when engaging in this movement quality, including a reduction in both vocal effort and tension. This suggests that floating can produce a sensation of physical and vocal ease.

Ava and Geir were able to make further individual observations in the exploration of the other effort actions. Ava experienced pressing in a very different vocal way to floating and described a feeling of 'chopping off some of the frequency' or 'less bandwidth'. She also described this as a different vocal 'texture' from that of floating. So vocally and physically floating may be associated with a lightening and expansion, whilst pressing might be experienced as a narrowing sensation. Individuals may find some effort actions more easy to access than others. Geir, for example, did not find it easy to find a sense of weight in the body and heavy qualities, such as press, were therefore more difficult to engage in. Following an initial exploration of pressing Geir observed: 'I feel quite tense in my body so doing that felt tensor'. I encouraged Geir to further explore weight in the body through walking and imagining the body to be very heavy. Geir observed 'that felt really different. I felt the heaviness in my body'. I then asked Geir to again sing a section of his song whilst alternating between light and heavy movement qualities. There was not a significant visual difference between the qualities from my perspective and Geir reflected 'I think it's going to be a good homework thing to do'. Engagement with the effort actions may not always have an instantaneous effect and some individuals may need a process of movement-based exploration before they are able to access this work. Further practice and modification may be needed. In Geir's case this involved breaking down the efforts further into motion factors, such as weight.

Following exploration of wringing, which is sometimes likened to the action of a cloth being wrung out, Ava gave the feedback: 'I liked the wring. I felt like it was synonymous with the song'. I observed that Ava was able to immediately connect to this effort action, resulting in a strong physical and vocal expression of the quality. I also perceived a more grounded and dynamic physicality and vocal quality, which I described to Ava as having more 'edge'. I asked Ava to apply wring and then float to the same section of her song. Having identified this song section as an emotional peak I had expected a strong quality such as wring to produce appropriate effects. However, float produced a physical openness and vocal quality that was different but also very effective. In this way particular effort actions enabled Ava to instantly access a particular physical and vocal state. Geir also observed the different effects of

particular effort actions on his vocal production. In applying a wring action Geir observed: 'the tone of my voice was more contained but still controlled'. He described the vocal effects of gliding as giving different 'textures'. Dab tended to have an energising effect on the vocal, which was observed by both singers.

Geir explored the effort actions in his own practice over the period of a week. He sectioned off a song and applied different effort actions to each section. He chose wring and float for the verse because the lyrics were 'soft' and 'tender' and he chose glide for the chorus as it's more 'direct'. Geir applied slash, flick and dab to the bridge. Through using the effort actions in this way Geir reflected 'I feel like I notice a difference in vocal ability and authenticity in the way I'm performing it'. I asked Geir to explain this difference in vocal ability and he reflected further:

I noticed that I was able to connect more with my performance and I feel like it's not just about sounding right because I did notice that it helped me sing better as well. Authenticity is very important to me as an artist with the kind of songs I perform.

Geir explained what authenticity means to him: 'I write songs that are sad and I think no-one would believe me if I stood there smiling. You want to be able to experience the pain with me as I'm performing it'. As discussed in my review of literature, there is an extensive debate around authenticity and the singer-songwriter. Here Geir expresses a similar view to my own in identifying the shared experience of real emotion between singer and audience as the core meaning of authentic singer-songwriter performance.

6.5.3 SESSION THREE: Whole-body Gesture

The third session focused on whole-body gesture. My definition of this is engaging the whole body in an energised way to create a gesture or shape. This is a rehearsal tool and is different from the type of gesture that might be used to communicate within speech or performance, which we tend to associate with the hands and arms. This session centred around the use of this tool in the exploration of emotion. It also acted as a building block towards the subsequent session, which would look at Chekhov's techniques, including archetypal gesture and psychological gesture, which are forms of whole-body gesture.

In the first exercise participants were asked to find whole-body gestures or shapes

to represent the following states: sad/alone, confident/making a stand, blocking/refusing, overjoyed/celebrating (recording 3a from 4.48; recording 3b from 11.04). Ava was able to produce an immediate response to each of these cues that was recognisable to me as relating to the particular emotion or state. Ava reflected following this exercise that 'there was a self-conscious element' but that she 'really tried to embody the emotion'. The idea of embodying emotion describes the core of the exercise very succinctly. Ava also described that she 'wanted to get the body and mind together', which is a valid interpretation of embodiment. She observed that through this exercise 'you are reflecting on self'.

The session aimed to use whole-body gesture as a way of exploring emotion and Ava therefore picked an original song to work with that she felt was particularly emotive:

The song is about having to contort yourself to fit into a situation and then recognising that's not really how you want to do it anymore...and it's about reclaiming your own space.

We then discussed the song in sections and explored how the feel or emotion in each section would be represented as a whole-body shape. Ava described the beginning section of the song as 'contemplative', which she physicalized as an inward movement. Ava then instinctively moved to another physical shape so I encouraged her to continue with this physicalization of the song. Although this became more dance-like than I had originally intended the exercise to be, I perceived Ava to be very emotionally connected with the song through this practice and she gave feedback that 'it felt more grounded and focused'. She also reflected that 'the feeling, the emotions, the state, they actually change quite a lot throughout that song they're not really static'. Ava also observed: 'I felt I was more immersed and present in the song'. I also perceived a level of vocal and emotional connection during this exercise that I had not observed in Ava before, including in my previous work with her during degree training. In order to explore the bridge between this rehearsal exercise and physical expression in performance, I asked Ava to retain the feel of the movements but to physicalize as appropriate to her style or genre. Following this exploration, we discussed that identifying and physicalizing the emotional essence of each section of a song would be a useful exercise for Ava to continue to apply within her own practice in order to connect with the journey of the song and also to explore

how that might translate into the physical expression of emotion in performance.

Geir described the song that he chose to explore as a 'sad' song but 'rooted in anger in some ways'. He further explained:

I've written it so it sounds like a break-up song but actually I've written it to myself. I'm blaming someone else but I'm also to blame. One of the lyrics is "I'm passed the breaking point" so I've had the breaking point and I'm ready to change.

I then questioned Geir to elicit further detail about the emotional journey of the song and the 'feel' in each section. Geir described the first verse as being about 'feeling vulnerable'. This then moved to a feeling of 'I'm done' and 'wanting the break free'. He discussed the chorus as having a feeling of being torn between different emotions. Geir described the second verse as 'feeling betrayal', which he saw as a combination of being sad and angry. Geir used the word 'heartbreak' as fitting with the lyric 'your promises are made of glass' in the bridge, which was also appropriate at this emotional peak of the song. Geir needed support in finding physical representations of some of these emotions, which was given in the form of discussion and suggestion of types of movement. In exploring these sections physically Geir found new responses to the song. He was surprised, for example, that the softer dynamic that he spontaneously produced in one particular section was effective: 'I've never done it like that before that's interesting'. Although Geir initially found it challenging to create whole-body gestures, he was able to identify the benefits of working in this way: 'It feels like it's pushing my comfort zone, which is why I like it'. He also reflected:

It's kind of cool that I can break up a song that much and think about the specific emotion. I think I have a tendency to be like that's a sad song or that's a happy song but sadness has layers doesn't it, it's not just sadness.

Geir explored this emotional journey of the song again by taking the essence of the whole-body gestures but expressing them in a way more appropriate to his performance context. I observed that Geir moved back into his particular gestural habits during this exercise. Following further exploration of the work over the week

that followed Geir gave feedback that he found it interesting and that 'it's still some ways before I can maybe incorporate it one hundred percent but I feel like it was an awareness exercise'.

6.5.4 SESSION FOUR: Chekhov Practice

The fourth session focused on the practice of Michael Chekhov and aimed to explore some of the techniques and concepts that form a core part of his work: Archetypal Gesture, Psychological Gesture and Radiating. Initially we explored five of Chekhov's archetypal gestures, chosen on the basis of my own experience of these particular gestures within my training as an actor: growing bigger, closing down, reaching out, throwing and beating (recording 4a from 6.26; recording 4b from 6.01). I directed the participants, through verbal instruction and modelling, to physicalize these whole-body gestures. Growing bigger involves an expansion and waking up of the muscles of the body. Closing down involves growing smaller and using the minimum of space. Reaching out involves lunging with arms forward to take up as much space as possible. Throwing involves an overhead throwing action. Beating involves an expansive gesture with arms out followed by firmly slapping one hand down on the other. The direction was given to breathe in the intention of the gesture (for example to grow bigger or to close down) and then to move on the outbreath. I also introduced the idea of energising and engaging of the whole-body within these gestures. Following the physicalization of the archetypal gestures Ava observed: 'It is so energetic'. She also described the movements as 'really different' and 'unusual'. She reflected 'it feels like the breath is activated with the movement'. Following this initial exploration, Ava applied archetypal gestures to a song section, alternately growing bigger and closing down. She then applied reaching out to the same section, alternating legs. Ava particularly responded to reaching out as feeling 'powerful' and I also perceived a sense of physical and vocal power. We then explored alternating between reaching out and stillness and then breathing in the intention to reach out but without actively physicalizing. Ava felt that this helped to 'focus the voice'. I observed a strong sense of energy and engagement in the voice and body throughout each of these exercises. As Ava responded well to free movement exercises, I suggested that she should explore her own physical interpretations of the archetypal gestures. Ava physicalized different types of throw, for example. During this work I observed that there was a greater sense of efficiency and consistency within the vocal pitch and tone. Ava gave feedback that application of archetypal gesture would be a useful way

to break up songs describing it as 'a really efficient way for me to approach songs'.

I then introduced the idea of psychological gesture as a way of expressing the core or essence of a song. Ava expressed that her song was about 'reaching for something' and so picked a gesture that physicalized this sense of reaching. She then engaged in this gesture before singing the opening verse of the song. Ava reflected on the exercise:

It felt really good...sometimes it takes me a while to get into the song but I think that movement cements this is the start of the song and this is my intention. I think it really works.

We then explored imagining the psychological gesture before performing the song. Ava gave feedback 'I felt like that was more settled'. I perceived a heightened sense of Ava being present in the moment of performance. We then explored Chekhov's concept of radiating. I asked Ava to imagine sending out rays of light or energy from every part of the body. Following application of this technique at the start of the song Ava gave feedback that this exercise was the 'best in terms of accessibility' as a way of being more 'present'. I perceived a sense of energetic engagement but also a sense of calm in Ava's performance this time. This led us to reflect on the potential of radiating different types of energy or different qualities.

In the initial explorations of the archetypal gestures with Geir we modified some of the movements to suit his physical needs. Geir gave feedback that the archetypal gestures were 'very different' and observed 'I feel my arms are more open...I feel my muscles are more relaxed'. Geir then engaged in the gesture of growing bigger whilst singing a section of a song observing: 'I feel like it was way way easier to mix. I feel like I had more connection to all of my core muscles'. I also observed a more connected and dynamic vocal performance. Geir reflected on this: 'I feel like that was the upper chest, just being more connected with this area'. We then explored growing bigger and then coming back to stillness but trying to carry the initial energy created by the gesture through the song. Geir observed the energy drop and so we explored alternating between growing bigger and stillness, coming back to the gesture each time the energy level dropped. Geir gave feedback that this was a useful exercise in terms of awareness of the level of physical energy. We then explored how the idea of archetypal gesture could be modified within a performance context through the use of stylistically appropriate gestures that suggested taking

space or growing bigger, without engagement of the whole body. Geir found it challenging to find different gestures and so we explored having the intention of expanding or growing bigger without necessarily actively physicalizing. Clearly further engagement with this work was needed but we discussed that these exercises could potentially be very useful to Geir in moving towards greater physical engagement and variety of gesture in performance.

In exploring psychological gesture as an embodiment of the essence of the song, it was evident that Geir was becoming more familiar and confident in this type of physical approach. The shape he chose was an interesting representation of heart and mind, with one hand in front of the chest and one in front of the face. Again I observed an energising effect on Geir's voice and body when actively engaging in the shape and also when engaging in the shape directly before singing. Geir also explored Chekhov's technique of radiating energy. Geir felt able to connect with this energy and reflected that it was a different kind of energy to the previous exercises. The energy was more 'tender' and Geir felt that this was representative of the type of emotion that he is drawn towards. We further explored this idea of radiating different kinds of energy or emotion such as 'warm' and 'forceful'.

Following further exploration during the following week Ava reflected that radiating could potentially be the most useful of the exercises for her moving forward and that in performance she would use it to radiate her own energy and to connect with the energy of the song. Ava had also explored the idea of radiating different colours, which she particularly responded to. In the final session we also reflected upon the potential of combining practices. The practice of radiating an effort action such as floating or slashing, for example, could be an effective way of bringing the work from the rehearsal room onto the stage. This type of exercise could be easily explored in rehearsal with a set up closer to a typical live performance, for example using a handheld microphone or playing an instrument. We explored mapping a song out according to effort action and radiating out these qualities (recording 5a from 28.17). We then took this a step further by also allowing expression and gesture to come into the body freely alongside this radiation. I perceived this to produce some of the most interesting and connected vocals that I have heard in Ava. Within her own explorations of Chekhov's techniques, Ava found that that physicalizing an archetypal gesture followed by stillness was a good way of experiencing the effects outside of the active posture. Chekhov also suggested that his physical exercises should be interspersed with moments of stillness in which the effects and sensations created by

the movement can be experienced within the body (Chekhov, 1991). Ava also found archetypal gesture to be particularly useful in relation to 'blocking the song out in terms of the emotional journey' which she considered to enhance the storytelling.

At the end of the process Geir also gave some insights into the potential of Chekhov's techniques within his own practice. Archetypal gesture had particular possibilities in relation to the vocal dynamics of a song. Using the 'growing bigger' gesture, for example, had proven useful to Geir in accessing a more dynamic vocal set up. Geir also felt the radiating exercise was particularly useful as he 'vibed with the energy much quicker'. He explained:

Usually when I sing it takes me a few minutes to get into the right mindset but I feel like that actually got me in the mindset straight off. I felt more concentrated.

He also reflected 'It felt like there was an audience there even though there was no audience'. This is interesting if we consider stage presence in terms of a shared energy between audience and performer. Geir would use this tool 'before going out on stage to get into the right state of mind'.

Six months after the completion of the practical sessions I requested some further reflective feedback from the two participants. I specifically asked them whether they were still using any of the techniques in their own practice and whether anything still particularly resonated with them from the exploratory work. Both participants were still using elements of the work within their respective rehearsal processes in order to develop performance, including whole-body gesture and Laban's effort actions. Ava gave feedback that the impact of imagination was something that still particularly resonated with her from our sessions. Geir gave feedback that the importance of connecting to emotion in the delivery of a song continued to resonate with him.

6.6 Reflections

The practical studio explorations provided valuable insights into the potential of these physical tools within the context of singer-songwriter performance training. The final session provided an opportunity to further explore the techniques introduced within previous sessions and for the participants to reflect upon how these approaches might be integrated into their existing practice or modified to suit their needs (recording 5a; recording 5b). This opened up possibilities for using these physical tools in a range of

ways, including in combination with each other. There is great scope for modification and amalgamation of these techniques and there is no limit to the ways in which these tools could be used creatively by practitioners working with singer-songwriters.

'Physicalization' could be used as an umbrella term for the techniques explored within the studio sessions. To 'physicalize' is to express in physical terms or to give shape or form to. The techniques differed however, in that some involved free movement whilst some involved set movements or shapes. I define 'free movement' within this context as movement which is not choreographed or set but is created spontaneously. The first studio session involved this type of movement and the Laban work also involved free movement but within a particular effort quality. Ava responded positively to the organic approach of free movement and found it to be an effective way of accessing the present moment. Geir initially found it difficult to access this type of approach, which challenged my assumption that free movement would be a simple exercise to explore at the start of the process. Within free movement exercises participants are required not only to use their bodies in a variety of ways but also to create or improvise this movement in the moment. Individuals with some movement or dance experience, such as Ava, may find this immediately accessible but for others a process of exposure to movement work, through breaking down exercises into more basic components, may be required in order to reach the stage where it is possible to fully engage in free movement. This type of physical approach is not typical of contemporary singer-training and this unfamiliarity, alongside perceptions of the genre, could also act as a block to the work with some singers, who might need a high level of encouragement, creative exploration or modification of the exercises.

The specificity of context within practitioner research and the highly individual nature of experience of physical practice mean that it is not possible to generalise. However, in considering participant reflections and written evaluations, alongside my own observations, a number of themes can be identified. The participants expressed that they enjoyed the sessions and the process overall. This is fundamental to my own teaching ethos. In order to explore creative techniques effectively participants must feel safe to do so and a welcoming and positive environment is essential.

Neuroimaging and neurochemical research suggests that when learning experiences are enjoyed there is a beneficial effect on the quality of learning (Pawlak et al., 2003). On the contrary, emotions such as boredom and stress can impact negatively on the learning process (Christianson, 1992). Making learning relevant has

also been shown to have a positive impact (Willis, 2007). The practical sessions were planned with a strong sense of collaboration and the aim of developing relevant and practical tools for the future use of participants. Written feedback from participants stated that sessions had been 'interesting', 'fun', 'engaging' and 'useful'. These views of the physical approaches as useful and enjoyable also came through as themes within the verbal feedback.

Another theme that can be identified within the qualitative feedback is the relationship between the physical and the vocal. Throughout the process it was clear that physicalizing had a significant effect on vocal production, which could be perceived by the participants and by myself as observer. Physicalizing often resulted in a greater sense of vocal ease or efficiency. The vocal quality of both participants was also repeatedly perceived to change as a result of engagement in different movement dynamics or qualities. Geir identified archetypal gesture as an effective tool in the development of vocal dynamics, as the physical gestures had a direct vocal effect. He also observed that it was easier to reach the higher notes when engaging in archetypal gesture and suggested this could be particularly useful in working in vocal set ups such as belt. This opens up a range of possibilities relating to archetypal gesture or whole-body gesture as a vocal tool. Belt is an energised vocal set up requiring a relatively high level of physical engagement. Some teachers and methods, including The Estill Voice Model, use the term anchoring to describe the physical support needed in such set ups (Steinhauer, 2017). I prefer to talk in terms of active or energised alignment as the word anchoring may have connotations of holding or tensing. Chekhov's archetypal gesture, which aims to wake up and engage the muscles of the whole body, is potentially useful in developing awareness of this active alignment and also of effort levels.

The concept of 'effort levels' is used within Estill Voice Training to encourage the development of an awareness of the amount of effort involved in different forms of voice production (Klimek et al., 2005, p. 9). The aim is to ensure that the least amount of effort is used in order to produce the desired vocal sound. An understanding of the difference between desirable physical engagement and excess effort is not easy to facilitate and requires a level of kinaesthetic awareness.

Contemporary singer-songwriters need to experience somatic approaches within training in order to develop this bodily awareness and knowledge. The term 'somatic' was coined by Hanna (1993) and is rooted in the Greek word soma, which relates to the living, dynamic body. Hanna describes somatics as the study of the body 'from

the first-person viewpoint of his own proprioceptive senses' (Hanna, 1993, p. 341). This approach has increasingly been used as a tool within the dance world (Enghauser, 2007). Within a dance context, somatics has been described as a holistic approach involving experiential learning, inclusive of physical awareness, awareness of feelings and cognitive reflection (Eddy, 2002). Methodologies such as Feldenkrais, the Alexander Technique and Body-Mind Centring can also be described as somatic due to a first person experiential approach and focus on awareness of sensation (Enghauser, 2007). This somatic approach is also employed within clinical settings. Somatic psychology advocates a mind-body-spirit approach and somatic therapies centre on the importance of experiencing at all levels, including physical sensation (Hartley, 2004). This work can also be integrated into contemporary singer-songwriter training and the physical approaches explored within my research can all be described as somatic. Through a somatic approach focusing on the experience of the individual, bodily knowledge can be developed and translated into greater vocal efficiency, and greater physical embodiment of performance. The link between physical habits and vocal production, as discussed in the literature review, is well documented (Chapman & Morris, 2019, Dame, 2005) and is considered an important aspect of vocal pedagogy. Development of bodily or embodied knowledge requires practice and a consistent training for the singer-songwriter within a somatic approach, such as Feldenkrais or embodied yoga, would underpin and support the use of physical tools in the development of performance skills and also in relation to vocal efficiency.

The physical approaches of Laban and Chekhov explored within the studio sessions could form part of a somatic training for the singer-songwriter if used in a consistent way. Positive effects noted during the studio sessions included tension release and awareness of energy levels. Increased levels of physical connection and a greater sense of presence was also observed. The approaches could also be used in the development of physical expression, including gesture. Gesture has been defined as physical actions predominantly using the hands and arms and with specific communicative function (Liao & Davidson, 2016). This type of gesture is an important means of expression for the singer-songwriter, particularly for those who tend to perform behind a microphone. A later stage of the work explored within the practical sessions would be the addition of amplification in order to apply this to use with a microphone, which has physical implications. Existing study of singer gesture suggests that it is a useful tool in itself (Brunkan et al., 2021). The use of movement

training within choral singing has become more widespread (Liao & Davidson, 2016). This is not only in order to improve communication within performance settings but has also been shown to enhance vocal technique. A number of studies have shown that vocal faults tend to occur when the body is not sufficiently engaged (Liao & Davidson, 2016). Studies also suggest that using the body more actively, for example using active two handed gestures, rather than one handed stationary gestures, produces a more resonant sound in singers (Lee, 2019). This area of singing research supports the observations made within my exploratory sessions that physical engagement has a positive effect on vocal production. It also supports my hypothesis that a greater focus on movement work would be beneficial within singer-songwriter training. In my experience of observing and assessing performers, an effective use of gesture feels organic and has a sense of the performer connecting with the song and audience within that moment. Singer-songwriters who accompany themselves, for example on piano or guitar, may not be able to use the type of communicative gesture associated with the hands and arms. There is however, a body of research centring on physical expression in the musician, which highlights the importance of the musician communicating through the body as a whole. As singing teachers we cannot necessarily 'teach' gesture but through exposure to physical approaches, such as those of Laban and Chekhov, this sort of physical connection and a greater expressive range can be developed.

Emotion is another major theme within this research. Having identified the communication of emotion as fundamental to songwriting and 'authentic' singer-songwriter performance, I chose to explore the focus of physical tools as a potential way of exploring emotional content of the song and developing emotional connection and communication. The work of Laban and Chekhov explores physical action and the meaning or intent behind it. As discussed within the practice review, there is a body of research that supports the ability of movement to create sensation or feeling and it has been established that outward movement has an effect on the inward state (Laird, 1974). Studies have also shown that simply through the act of observing different qualities of movement or gesture in others our feeling state can be altered (Bastiaansen et al., 2009). This mirroring effect is one of the reasons why physical expression is such an important tool in the arousal of an emotional response within an audience and why physical training is essential to the performer, including the singer-songwriter.

The physical explorations of emotion in the studio sessions involved detailed

analysis by the singer-songwriter of the emotional content of their songs. The participants found that this was a useful exercise in itself. Although emotion is intangible and can be difficult to define, singer-songwriters, as performers, must consider the content of their material and what they intend to convey to their audience. During this process of analysis Geir reflected: 'I'm so far detached from this from when I wrote it that having to think about it is almost a bit difficult now'. This disproves the argument that in writing from their own experience singer-songwriters are able to easily connect with the emotion behind their songs. Analysis of the emotional journey of a song is also useful in renewing this connection to material that has been performed many times.

Through physical exploration the participants found that they were able to further connect with the emotional journey of a song. In the analysis of her song Ava reflected that it was about 'contorting yourself' into a situation and 'reclaiming space'. This is a good example of the way in which we use physical language to describe emotional states, demonstrating that our experience of the physical and the emotional are intertwined. Ewan and Sagovsky discuss this in their text on Laban's Effort Actions and observe that much of our everyday language has a strong basis in physicality. We experience the world as physical beings and the sensation of embodied experience is captured by the use of metaphor (Ewan & Sagovsky, 2018). The participants gave feedback that Laban's effort actions were particularly useful in connecting with the emotion and feel of a song. Geir reflected that there was a 'direct connection' between the effort qualities and emotion. Ava reflected that physicalization brings a greater sense of being 'present' and 'immersed' in the song. In connecting with the emotional content of a song through these physical approaches, the physical expression of emotion within performance may also be developed.

Although Ava and Geir had different responses to elements of the work, there are overarching themes in their experience across the physical approaches. Physical, emotional and vocal responses to the physical tools have been identified and these responses are interconnected and difficult to separate. The physical tools were perceived to benefit vocal production. Vocal set ups, such as belt, require a particularly active alignment (Steinhauer, 2017), and it is therefore not surprising that in accessing a more active alignment and a greater flow of energy there is a resulting sense of ease within dynamic vocal set ups. There was also a correlation between motion factors and vocal quality. Dab, for example is direct and sudden and so tended

to have an energising effect on the vocal dynamic. Float is flexible and sustained and tended to create a light quality and sense of ease within the vocal. Although there is also a great deal of scope for difference in individual response to specific types of physicalization, the ability of the physical to effect the vocal is not in question. These vocal effects are also a result of the relationship between movement and emotion.

The facility of the human voice to communicate emotion is well-documented (Loui et al., 2013). This area of research can be traced back to Darwin's Phylogenic Theory of Emotional Affect (Darwin, 1882). Darwin's *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, has been described as the first pioneering study of emotion (Ekman, 2009). Darwin argued for the existence of universal human emotions, which played a significant, adaptive role within evolution. He considered vocalisation to be an emotional gesture. Subsequently there has been much discussion around the close relationship between vocal expression and singing. Helmholtz, for example, considered singing to have evolved from the vocal expression of emotion (Helmholtz, 1954). Emotion has also been shown to have physiological effects on the voice.

Scherer has completed a number of studies into the effects of emotion on the voice and has found significant differences between specific emotions (Scherer et al., 2015). In a study of the vocal effects of emotions including sadness, tenderness, pride, joy and anger, acoustic analysis showed robust vocal signatures for specific emotion types (Scherer et al., 2017).

Certainly, emotion cues are widely used within singing training. Oren Brown's concept of primal sound has been built on by classical pedagogue Janice Chapman. Primal sound is involuntary sound that stems from emotion (Brown, 1996). Primal sounds such as the sigh, yell, whimper and whinge can be recreated within the singing studio in order to aid in the development of healthy technique. Chapman describes primal sound as part of a response system involving body and mind, emanating from human need and has championed its place within vocal pedagogy (Chapman & Morris, 2021). Dane Chalfin has been involved in extensive research into the use of primal sounds within the training and rehabilitation of CCM singers. His research has found that each primal sound elicits a particular physiological response or vocal gesture (Chalfin, 2006). The effects of these primal sounds on the vocal mechanism illustrates the ability of emotion to change the vocal sound or quality. The vocal effects of physicalizing are not simply due, then, to an increase in physical engagement but also to the ability of movement to create emotion states. In creating a particular feeling or emotion, movement may also bring about the

physiological effects on the voice corresponding to that particular emotion. This results in acoustic changes and a perceived change to the quality of the sound. The work of Chalfin and Chapman also demonstrates the use of primal sound to elicit postural and respiratory support responses (Chapman & Morris, 2021). The ability of movement qualities to evoke feeling means that physicalizing may also tap into these primal responses that can produce specific vocal gestures and ultimately a stronger and more healthy physical and vocal connection.

Another theme within the practical explorations was the synergy between the body and mind and, more specifically, the impact of the imagination. The power of thought on the body is utilised by many mind-body practices, including The Alexander Technique, in which thoughts act as guides to action without force (Cranz, 2000). An Alexander practitioner would direct a client to send widening or lengthening thoughts to a particular part of the body, rather than to actively lengthen or widen the body, for example. Yoga Nidra, which encourages relaxation through guided imagery (Parker et al., 2013), is another practice which uses thought in order to bring about changes in the body. The influence of thought on the body is a key concept within other fields, including sports psychology. Jacobson's psychoneuromuscular theory (1930) argues that when an individual imagines performing a task the same neural pathways are activated as when physically performing that task. Subsequent studies have supported the assertion that imagining a movement involves similar neural activity to the actual execution of that movement (Munzert et al., 2009). There has been a significant amount of research into the use of visualisation or imagery as a strategy for athletes. Mental imagery can be described as a multisensory experience created or recreated within the mind (Munroe-Chandler & Guerrero, 2017). Imagery is widely used within sports psychology practice as a performance enhancement tool. It has been shown to improve motor tasks (Slimani et al., 2016) and endurance (McCormick et al., 2015). Imagery has also been used within this field in order to improve self-confidence (Weinberg, 2008), self-efficacy (Beauchamp et al., 2002) and motivation (Martin & Hall, 1995). In addition to this, imagery has been shown to be an effective strategy in the management of competitive anxiety (Vadoa et al., 1997).

Imagery is also a tool commonly used to enhance the performance of musicians (Gregg et al., 2008). Although there is comparatively little research into the use of imagery within this context the research findings do mirror sport and motor skill research outcomes (Wright et al., 2014). The use of imagery has been shown to

benefit the musician in various aspects of practice and performance (Bernardi et al., 2013). It has also been suggested that the use of imagery can increase performance confidence and may be of benefit in managing negative emotions (Connolly & Williamon, 2004). The research of Gregg et al. into the use of imagery by classical musicians supports these suggestions (Gregg et al., 2008). A survey of 159 classical music students found that musicians use imagery to improve concentration, improve confidence, to overcome mental and physical fatigue and to cope with difficult situations (Gregg et al., 2008). Certainly, there is a cross-over of performance techniques within the sports world and the performance arts. Imagery has been shown to be a cognitive process fundamental to motor learning and performance and it is of interest to a range of research fields, including cognitive psychology (Cumming & Williams, 2012).

The use of imagery has a great deal of potential then, within singer-songwriter training as a practice and performance enhancement technique and also as a strategy targeting areas such as confidence and fatigue. CCM-specific research into these potential uses is needed however, particularly as imagery may be regarded as a classical singing technique by many. Voice pedagogues such as Miller have written about the use of imagery within classical singing teaching (Miller, 1996), and it has become associated with this style of singing. Unfortunately, it has also become associated with teachers who do not have a solid knowledge of the voice and use imagery as an approach in place of functional training (Edwards, 2014). This is unfortunate in that it detracts from the many positive uses of imagery, which can of course be used in combination with a functional approach. The Alexander Technique is concerned with functionality, particularly the relationship between the head, neck and spine (Cacciatore et al., 2020), and yet guided imagery is commonly used within Alexander work. In the same way, using an image of floating with a singer can bring about instant vocal and physical release and this type of technique can be integrated within functional vocal training rooted in voice science. Within our own practical explorations Ava observed that imagining certain movements had particular effects on her vocal production. Using a thought or image of 'reaching out', for example, was perceived as focusing the voice. For the singer-songwriter imagery has potential as a tool for addressing vocal needs and also other aspects of performance, such as the development of stage confidence and presence.

In the absence of pedagogical discourse specific to the singer-songwriter and performance training it is necessary to consider resonances with other areas in the

development of appropriate teaching tools. The physical tools of Laban and Chekhov, usually associated with the disciplines of dance and acting respectively, also centre on the mind-body relationship. Engaging with Laban's effort actions involves engaging the imagination in order to embody states such as floating or pressing. However, it is the practice of Chekhov that is particularly associated with the imagination. Prior to this research project I had favoured Laban's techniques over Chekhov's practice in my work with singers. This was rooted in a degree of personal preference or perhaps bias towards Laban's practice. I also believed Chekhov's exercises to be more complex and less accessible than those of Laban. As I expected, the participants did respond to Laban's efforts in a range of ways but they also found a great deal of scope within the techniques of Chekhov. The participants gave feedback that Chekhov's archetypal gesture is particularly physically demanding. The gestures are strong in quality due to Chekhov's aim of waking up the muscles through the engagement of the whole body. This exclusively strong quality limits archetypal gesture as a tool for exploring the emotional journey of a song. Laban's effort actions encompass a wider range of movement qualities and so offer a more extensive set of tools. However, our explorations suggest archetypal gesture to have potential in the development of physical skills, including physical connection and energetic presence in the body. There are also other tools provided within Chekhov's practice, such as his movement qualities relating to the elements, that could prove more useful in the exploration of emotion than archetypal gesture. The tool that proved most accessible and immediate, however, was Chekhov's concept of radiating. This exercise harnesses the imagination in order to radiate energy out from the body. Contrary to my previous assumptions about the use of Chekhov's techniques with contemporary singers, radiating proved to be a simple and accessible concept with an immediate physical effect. Both participants expressed that they had particularly responded to the radiating exercise and would continue to use it within their future practice. We explored the idea of radiating different types of energy and emotion and Ava contributed the idea of radiating colour.

Researchers within the fields of colour psychology and colour therapy have proposed a strong link between emotion and colour. Colour psychology explores associations with specific colours and the effects of colour on feelings and behaviours (O'Connor, 2011). Some writers include biology-based responses within these effects. Kopacz (2003) suggests that biological responses to colour can be a

valuable health care tool. This type of use of colour may be referred to as colour therapy and there is a body of literature on the healing properties of colour from authors including McLeod (2012, 2016), and Wills (2013). Although it has been argued that colour research is lacking in empirical evidence (O'Connor, 2011), the visualisation of colour is likely to prove a useful sensory tool for many singers and could be used in combination with other performance techniques. There is a large body of acting technique that is rooted within the senses, for example Strasberg's work on sense memory (Strasberg, 1987). The wider use of sensory techniques could also be a productive area of exploration with singer-songwriters and might also prove useful within the songwriting process.

The use of imagination within the training of actors, Musical Theatre singers and classical singers is common as these performers play characters and imaginative approaches are key to many acting techniques, including those of Stanislavski and Chekhov. However, the imagination is not simply a tool to be used in the creation of character, it also has broad potential for use with singers who perform their own material. Radiating engages the imagination in order to create an energy or state within the singer and also potentially enables them to send this out to an audience. Although singer-songwriters may not be required to portray a character, they do require the skills to communicate experience, emotion and intention to others. It has been argued that it is easy for singer-songwriters to connect with their material as it often centres on their own experiences (Edwards, 2018). However, even if an individual is emotionally connected to their material, it does not necessarily follow that they will be able to effectively communicate their story or performance intention to an audience. Within my practice I frequently observe that the emotional connection of the singer-songwriter is internalised. Chalfin also observes this tendency in singer-songwriter performance towards introversion (Chalfin, 2017). This results in a closing of the body and often the eyes, creating a sense of shutting the audience out. Radiating is a useful way of working towards greater openness and outward expression within performance. The concept of radiating is also particularly interesting in relation to the question of how we develop stage presence in the singer-songwriter. Mala Powers, a pupil of Michael Chekhov, explains radiating in terms of this presence. The amount of presence or 'charisma' an actor has on stage corresponds to the degree of radiation she or he is able to achieve (Powers, 1991, p. xli). I was able to observe a marked increase in presence in both my participants, even within a brief exploration of radiating. Through imagining or visualising an energy or quality it is

possible to elicit similar responses in the body to active physicalisation, which is supported by research within sports science and sports psychology. This means that imagining or visualising can produce similar physical and vocal responses to active physicalization, which affords it great potential as a performance tool for the singer-songwriter, which might be used in rehearsal or before a performance. This is a tool that could also be applied during live or recorded performance and is compatible with the use of microphones and self-accompaniment on an instrument.

On reflection on the process as a whole it is clear that the practical research sessions were just the beginning of explorations and the generation of ideas around physical approaches and these particular tools. Participants were very limited in number, due to the necessity of online sessions cannot therefore be considered representative of the wider community of singer-songwriters. The participants wanted to take part in the research and were therefore already open to new ways of working, which may not be the case with every singer-songwriter. There was also scope for using further methods of reflection. Participants were asked to explore the tools in the week following each session and to feedback on experiences and observations. This feedback could have taken place in the form of a reflective written or recorded log and video footage of the work could have provided further insights. Opportunities for participants to review the footage from sessions could also have led to further reflections on the work.

6.7 Towards a Toolkit

Below are some suggested tools for exploration by singer-songwriters, drawn from the practical research. Potential aims of the tools include development of physical awareness and connection to the body. These tools can be used as part of a training process that allows the singer-songwriter to experience a range of movement dynamics and qualities, thus developing bodily confidence and knowledge and ultimately greater presence and expression in performance. The tools offer creative ways to explore and develop gesture as a form of communication in performance. They also aim to develop a greater awareness of the role of emotion within singer-songwriter performance and offer ways to connect with the emotional content of a song. This type of physical approach can be used creatively to suit individual context.

Table 2: Toolkit of Physical Approaches

Physical Tools
<p>Free movement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Walk around the room as you sing ii. Explore walking in different ways as you sing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fast/slow • Heavy/light • Direct/indirect iii. As you sing move the body in any way that you feel <p>Laban's Effort actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Explore different ways of moving <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • heavy/light • direct/flexible • sustained/sudden ii. Move in different effort qualities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press • Flick • Punch • Float • Slash • Glide • Wring • Dab iii. Move in different effort qualities whilst singing iv. Map out the song choosing an effort for each section. Physicalise these as you sing the song v. Explore using different types of hand/arm gestures as you sing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • heavy/light • direct/flexible

- sustained/sudden

vi. Explore using different qualities of hand/arm gesture as you sing using the effort actions:

- Press
- Flick
- Punch
- Float
- Slash
- Glide
- Wring
- Dab

Chekhov's Archetypal Gesture

i. Physicalize archetypal gestures, engaging and waking up the whole body:

- Growing Bigger
- Closing Down
- Reaching Out
- Throwing
- Beating

ii. Physicalize the gestures whilst singing

iii. Map out a song choosing a different archetypal gesture for each section. Physicalize these as you sing the song.

iv. Map out a song using your own whole-body gestures. Physicalize these as you sing the song.

Chekhov's Psychological Gesture

i. Find a whole-body gesture that embodies the essence of the song.

ii. Physicalize this gesture as you sing the song, alternating between engaging in the gesture and stillness.

- iii. Physicalize the psychological gesture at the start of the song and then move to stillness.
- iv. Imagine the psychological gesture before you sing the song or as you sing the song.

Chekhov's Radiating Exercise

- i. Visualise yourself radiating energy or light from every part of your body.
- ii. Imagine you are radiating this energy whilst singing.
- iii. Explore radiating different types of energy, qualities, emotions or colours.

Chapter Seven: Conclusions

This practitioner research project focused on my own professional development within the context of contemporary singer-songwriter training, specifically the potential of physical tools in the facilitation of effective performance. The literature reveals a consensus as to the centrality of performance to the creative roles of the singer-songwriter. Songwriting is assessed through recorded and live performance (Isherwood, 2014) and performance is also a compositional approach, which can be employed in place of the classical notation-based approach (Henson & Zagorski-Thomas, 2019). Despite this, training at HE level has not tended to focus on the development of performance skills in the popular musician. This research has highlighted the gap in discourse relating to performance training for the contemporary singer-songwriter and has explored the ways in which this may be connected to perceptions of authenticity and artist identity, specific to the genre. In spite of and in response to commonly voiced beliefs that 'formal training can sometimes get in the way of emotional expression' (Hughes, 2014, p. 292), this research has explored the way in which bodily movement relates to emotion and the communication of meaning and how physical tools may be used to develop these aspects of performance.

This research has explored movement as carrying intention through the physical practices of Chekhov and Laban. Engagement with expressive performance research has also suggested that the body is key to the communication of music performance (Davidson, 2001). My belief that the body is not just central to the production of meaning in performance but that physical approaches should also form a core part of performance training is also supported by advances in neuroscientific research. The work of Damasio, for example, essentially shows that our neural processes, our thoughts, actions and emotions are rooted in our bodily experience of the world (Damasio, 2006). I would assert that, far from getting in the way of emotional expression, a performance training with a focus on the physical not only develops the body of the performer as an expressive tool but also enables connection to performance material on a far deeper level. A level that, perhaps is not accessible through any other means. For the singer-songwriter, performance is not only expressing story and emotion, it also requires the embodiment of artist identity on stage and, for some, physical approaches might be key to the exploration and realization of this identity.

7.1 What Now?

The practical explorations were valuable in providing real insights into the subjective experience of physical approaches to training. I began the process with an expectation that movement-based approaches would elicit a range of responses in the singer-songwriter and the studio explorations confirmed this. However, the overall reflective process has developed my own thinking in relation to performance training in a range of ways and has produced many possibilities for avenues of further exploration within my own teaching practice. I have also developed my understanding of what distinguishes the singer-songwriter from other types of contemporary singer and how aspects of the songwriting and wider curriculum might inform my own practice.

Through the reflective research process, the importance of emotion as the core of authentic performance came to the forefront for me. Within my wider teaching practice connection to emotion is the fundamental reason for the use of physical approaches with performers. It may be possible to develop this connection through other methods, such as discussing the meaning of the lyric. However, no other method has the same power as movement to elicit a primal response so strong that it can bring about emotional and therefore physiological change. Dane Chalfin's work on primal voice has identified specific emotion-related sounds (sigh, whinge, whine and yell) with efficient vocal gestures that can be used in developing healthy vocal technique and in the rehabilitation of the singing voice (Chalfin, 2006). The Estill Model also uses emotion-based terminology and instruction in order to access particular vocal set ups and this is a model used both by voice teachers and within voice therapy and rehabilitation by Speech and Language Therapists (Bos-Clark & Carding, 2018). The interrelationship between the vocal, the physical and the emotional provides endless possibilities for the integration of physical techniques within vocal and performance training. For the singer-songwriter physical techniques provide a possible approach to the development of an individual and recognizable sound and the vocal skills necessary in order to 'share and create music with the desired expressive output' (Reinhert, 2019, p. 131). I hypothesise that the use of Laban's effort actions in conjunction with the established primal sounds could provide a more holistic way of connecting with emotion and this integration has exciting potential for use in the development of healthy vocal technique with the contemporary vocalist. For example, physicalizing or imagining a floating quality in conjunction with vocalizing the sigh could produce the desired vocal gesture whilst also eliciting tension

release and ease in the body. In Ava's feedback she made an association between the wringing quality of movement and the vocal 'cry' or whine, which could be another effective combination. When working with 'yell' or belt I often direct singers to make big gestures in the body and it would be interesting to explore the effects of specific effort actions on this vocal set up. This is certainly an area that I intend to explore and develop further within my own practice with singer-songwriters. This type of physical approach could also be a useful tool in finding safe ways to produce the more extreme vocal effects used within some contemporary styles, such as metal.

Through the process of this research I have also developed my understanding of performance 'presence' within the singer-songwriter context. Although presence is central to constructions of popular music artistry (Hughes, 2014), what performance elements combine to form a strong presence and how this might be developed is not clear. My practical research suggests that, through the act of physicalizing, it is possible to experience a sense of being present and connected in the moment of performing a song and this is an important aspect of what we perceive as presence in the performer. Physical tools also provide a way of developing connection to the body and an awareness of energy levels, which I understand to be central to stage presence. With an increased level of bodily awareness and connection comes greater confidence and with this comes the ability to embody a sense of identity on stage, which translates into stage presence. The link between the physical aspects of my practice and the development of stage skills is now more clear to me and I am more explicit about this in my lesson objectives and discussions with singers, which makes this work more relevant for them. Physical exercises benefit vocal production but also ultimately work towards building confidence, presence and expression on stage. The engagement of the imagination was also found to be an accessible and immediate way of experiencing a strong sense of being present and energized in the body. Although imagination may be classed as a mental aspect of music experience (Laws, 2015), within the psychophysical techniques of Chekhov and others, harnessing the imagination provides a way of engaging the whole being. Chekhov's concept of radiating is a tool which is now an established part of my practice and which I intend to investigate and develop further in relation to presence and the singer-songwriter. Through the research process I have also developed more clarity within my practice regarding 'intention', which I define as what the singer wants to communicate or evoke in the audience through a song. The tools I use to explore this concept with singers include radiating and psychological gesture.

Through the practical explorations I have begun to develop tools which can now be applied and further explored within my teaching practice. To take this research further these tools would need to be applied over a longer period and within a group context with a greater number of participants. This group context would allow for collaboration and creative practice between participants and also peer feedback. The focus could also be narrowed in order to explore a smaller number of tools in greater depth. A group context would allow a more representative range of individuals in terms of factors such as gender and background and a greater variety of musical styles and contexts. Working over an extended period would allow individuals to progress and build on techniques in order to apply them within performance preparation. This would enable a greater focus on the live performance setting, including considerations such as size of venue and type of gig, the use of a microphone and perhaps instrumental technique. Within this extended work I am particularly interested to explore how physical approaches might be used in relation to artist identity and stage persona.

7.2 The Wider Context

The wider context of my research is HE level training for the popular singer-songwriter. My literature review revealed that popular singing is now largely accepted as a distinct category with specific training needs. However, although this may be indicative of progressive thinking within the field of vocal pedagogy, we are clearly now at a stage where further distinction between categories of CCM-singer is needed. LoVetri originated the term 'CCM' as an alternative to 'non-classical' (LoVetri, 2003). However, if all singers of non-classical styles are merged within one single category we surely have no greater sense of specificity. There may be a growing acceptance that Musical Theatre is different from other popular styles and that distinct pedagogies are required but many researchers continue to group these categories together with little reference to what makes them different (Edwards, 2018). In order to further contemporary vocal pedagogy we now need greater focus on specific styles within the wider CCM category. My definition of the singer-songwriter encompasses a range of musical styles such as hip-hop, rock, country and jazz, each of which has specific training needs.

Versatility may be a focus of training for Musical theatre singers and popular singers, such as session and covers singers. For the songwriter as artist the emphasis is on the individual, even idiosyncratic. Although the singer-songwriter may not need

to adapt to different styles and genres this does not mean that vocal and performance techniques should be de-emphasized within their training. Rather, it should be adapted to address their needs. Although there may be questions around how we align the desired originality and individuality of the artist-songwriter with the technical aspects of training, HE providers must equip students with the skills required to enter a competitive and shifting music industry, in which live performance is now more profitable than selling records. The reality is that many singers will have vocal issues at some point in their careers. If a singer-songwriter has a heavy vocal load, due to touring or a busy recording schedule, the ability to use the voice in a healthy and sustainable way is essential in order to prevent such issues. The importance of technique is highlighted by the employment of vocal coaches by many high profile artist-songwriters including Coldplay, Florence Welch and Muse (Hammond, 2022). Vocal coaches are also employed to look after artistes whilst on tour. This type of industry vocal coaching supports the necessity for a holistic approach in the training of singer-songwriters, ensuring that artists are 'match fit' (Hammond, 2022).

The promotion of 'the healthy performer' is also highly important within the HE setting. In order to prepare the singer-songwriter for the demands of the industry, an holistic approach to training must consider a range of aspects of the performer, including physical and mental health. There is reportedly a growing mental health crisis in the UK (The Health Foundation) and a global mental health crisis compounded by the Covid-19 pandemic (Project Hope). Studies suggest that mental health issues are particularly prevalent within the student population. A survey conducted by the Office of National Statistics in 2020, for example, suggested that students are significantly more anxious than the general population of the UK (Office for National Statistics). For performing arts students and performers the mental and physical demands of their chosen profession may have additional health implications. The Centre for Performance Science recognises these implications and their research has shown that the demands faced by performers in their training and work can manifest in occupational stress and performance anxiety. They identify this issue as being detrimental to wellbeing and also as forming a block to effective performance (Centre for Performance Science).

The relationship between movement and health is well established. Practitioners such as Laban have long recognised the mental and physical benefits of movement. The mind-body connection developed through movement practices is invaluable in supporting health and wellbeing, fostering resilience and managing

stress levels (Goodill, 2005). The inclusion of specific movement classes within the HE curriculum would go a long way towards better equipping the singer-songwriter for the rigours of the industry. The establishment of physical training for contemporary singers would also encourage a change in attitudes towards the genre and a move away from the 'rock 'n roll' image towards the more professionalised approach of 'the healthy performer'. This type of training would also underpin the development of vocal and performance technique.

7.3 Final Thoughts

Within this research project I chose to explore elements of the work of Laban and Chekhov. There are numerous other movement practices that could potentially be used in similar ways. However, what these practitioners have in common is a specific focus on sensation. Movement creates feeling and a sense of being present in our own body and in a particular moment. Alongside the many benefits of physical practice comes a greater sense of self. By connecting with our own sense of who we are, we are better equipped to communicate our own stories with others in whatever artistic form we choose. Singer-songwriters are unique as the only category of singer performing their own music, rooted in their own stories and experiences. For them, the exploration and understanding of self may be even more important than for other types of performer and movement practices may hold many possibilities for the development and embodiment of artist identity.

As more and more HE institutions offer training for singer-songwriters we must continue to actively develop specific pedagogical strategies. In my teaching experience, singer-songwriters do not present themselves at the start of training with a fully formed musical identity and professional performance skills and nor should we expect them to. We need to continue to develop creative approaches that enable students to explore their own sense of self and what makes them distinct. Singer-songwriters also need the opportunity to develop the necessary skills to express their own unique view of the world within live performance. Alongside the introduction of specific movement classes, development of the wider performance pedagogy for singer-songwriters is needed.

Music performance is ultimately a sharing of human experience and an expression of self. In the absence an established performance pedagogy for singer-songwriters we must be open to exploring techniques from other disciplines. For me, the physical practice of Rudolf Laban and Michael Chekhov is compelling and

continues to hold exciting potential for use with singer-songwriters. In the experience of movement, it is possible to encapsulate something of the human condition and this is also what we endeavour to create within the shared experience of live and recorded music.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Evaluation of Studio Sessions Questionnaire/Completed Questionnaires

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1tzZg3KybWPWuN70h-IQzSO0SGBLqSMdl/view?usp=share_link

Appendix 2: Info Sheet

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Appendix 3: Consent Form

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1jLCC5I3oSeDNk9ei9qv4OFywX2fjr7wS/view?usp=share_link

Appendix 4: Survey Data

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1qTGx9IRTH4OQ9Q5SZqH6f1ezL0iYJPKL?usp=share_link

Appendix 5: Link to Video Recordings

Link removed as public access is not available.

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