

# Versatility for Employability: Current Music Theatre Training, Research, and Practice

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# Why CCM?

- 40% of the highest paying jobs in music theatre (Broadway and Equity National Tours) required pop/rock singing (Green et al., 2014).



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# Methods

- Interviewed 25 expert CCM teachers.
- Questions were open-ended.
- Responses organized by topic and examined.
- Published in: *Training Contemporary Commercial Singers* (Compton).

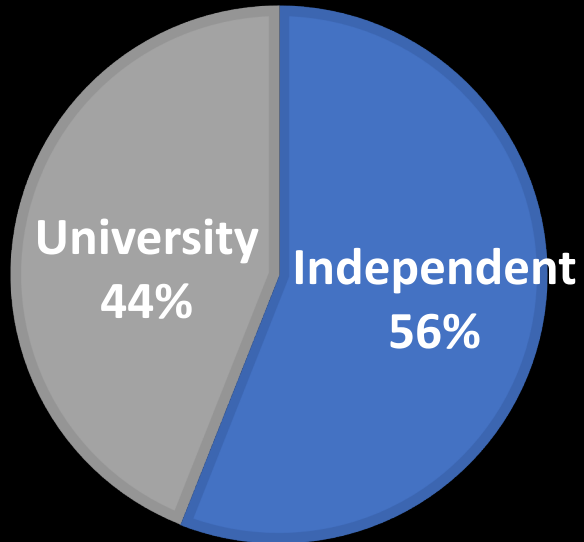
# Objective

- Examine how CCM singing teachers are balancing pedagogical ideals with evolving industry demands.

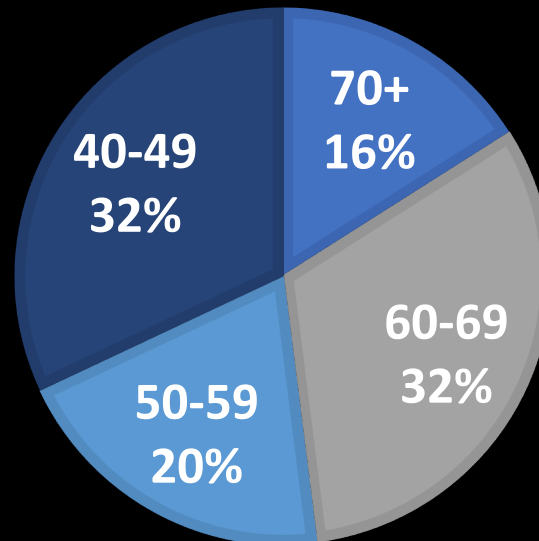


# Demographics

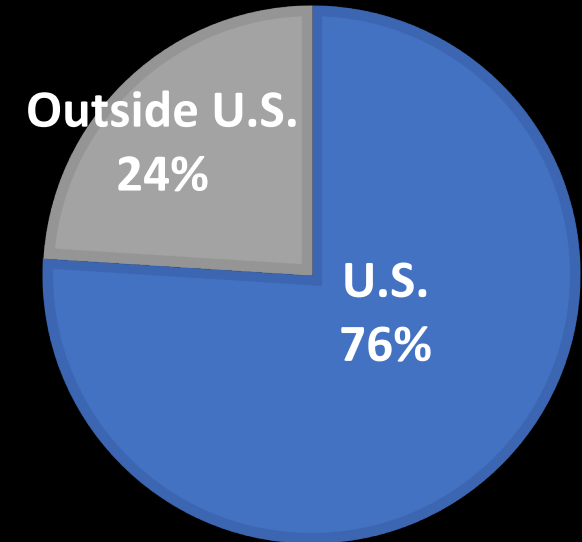
## STUDIO TYPE



## AGE



## COUNTRY OF PRACTICE



# Results: Rise of Pedagogy

- 50% pedagogues have chosen to focus exclusively on teaching, rather than pursue a simultaneous performance career.
  - “Extended and repeated absences...are at odds with the regular, systematic training needed by students in the studio and classroom” (AATS, 2014).
- Student-centered pedagogical models.
- Lots of demand for CCM teachers.



# Results: Flexibility

- Methodological exclusivity may be fading in favor of a pluralistic approach.
- 60% do not teach a singular method.
- 40% eschew the idea of teaching a singular method.
  - “Every single methodology, no matter how complex, is still a simplification of the truth. Teaching should be entirely client-focused, not requiring the teacher and client to fall into line behind the dictates of a method” (Chandler, quoted in Benson, 2020).
  - Methodolatry: Blind faith in and devotion to a fixed method, regardless of ever-changing particulars and past negative results (Regelski, 2002).
- CCM pedagogy must be open to constant renewal and revision in response to developments in voice science.

# Results: Style vs. Function

- Separate style and function, taste and technique, aesthetic and skill.
  - “We must separate taste and technique. Many times, techniques are presented as a preferred aesthetic, which I think is a mistake” (Sadolin, quoted in Benson, 2020).
- 42% of pedagogues identify a unique/distinctive sound as a marker of excellence in CCM singing.
- Service-centered philosophy.
- Good technique: Consistently healthy and easy singing, and the ability to make all the sounds required to authentically serve the desired style of music.





# Results: Collaborative Pedagogical Models

- Collaborative pedagogical models are emerging.
- Referring a student to an expert is prevalent in both university and independent studio settings.
  - “I believe that if you are in doubt, you must refer out” (Edwards, quoted in Benson, 2020).
  - Speech-language pathologist, bodywork expert, improvisation coach, or style specialist .
  - 13% recommend training in anything the student wants or needs.
- Follows student-centered and service-centered pedagogical philosophy.



# Results: Geographical Considerations

- Popular music discourses
  - Within the U.S.: Concerned with legitimacy and quality.
  - Outside the U.S.: Concerned with utility and efficacy (Mantie, 2013).
- Many CCM styles were born in the USA and now comprise a multi-billion dollar industry.
- Differences enrich the field.
- Consensus does not give rise to legitimacy.



# Conclusions: Strategies = Core Values

- How CCM pedagogues balance pedagogical ideals with evolving industry demands:
  - Student-centered pedagogy.
  - Flexible and pluralistic practices.
  - Responding to voice science.
  - Separation of taste and technique.
  - Service-centered philosophy.
  - Referring out.
  - Focusing on utility and efficacy as the field advances worldwide.

# References

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# TRAINING CONTEMPORARY COMMERCIAL SINGERS



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