

Introduction to World Music Vocal Approaches

Objective: Introduce students to a variety of music from world cultures with a focus on vocal approaches different from the western model.

Purpose: The introduction of different vocal techniques is part of a larger objective of exposure to, appreciation of, and respect for a variety of cultural points of view. Students will identify their own creativity within the context of these different vocal approaches.

Materials:

- Mac laptop with speakers
- Internet connection (not mandatory)
- Slide projector
- Powerpoint software
- Human voice
- Sound recording (integrated into Powerpoint presentation)

Anticipatory Set:

Play an extend clip of a Tuvan Throat (from Tibet) singer as the students enter the room. Ask them to identify what is going on, what kind of music is the performer making, where is he from, and for what purpose. Also, how many pitches are being sung by what number of singers?

Procedure:

1. Reveal a video (through Powerpoint) of Tuvan singing (from Smithsonian/Folkways recording entitled *TUVA: Voices from the Center of Asia*). Discussion of context, geography (show a map of Tibet), historical perspective, and musical/cultural relevance.
2. Specific attention to the vocal technique applied, it's procedure, and difficulties in production.
3. Demonstration by the instructor and participation of students. If need be replay clip of Tuvan singer.
4. Repeat the above procedure similarly with appropriate accompanied sound clips, Powerpoint visual aids, and physical demonstrations for:
 - **Balkan singing:** from Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia, and Turkey
 - **Hebraic singing:** Ashkenazi, Klezmer, Yiddish, and Sephardic
 - Sacred **Sufi singing** of Syria
 - Classical **Indian singing**
 - Miscellaneous **extended vocal techniques** of contemporary artists.

Check for student understanding:

1. Understanding will occur if students attempt to approximate the sounds made in these cultures, i.e. if they “try them on.”
2. Ask students to contrast and compare these approaches to their experience with western singing styles.
3. Ask students to relay their own experience of attempting these approaches and what their experience reveals to them.

Extensions:

Future exploration of other vocal techniques and styles from cultures not covered here. Could make further cultural inferences on music from their own world. Also application to compositional projects, etc.