

# THE WORLD'S VOCAL ARTS



COMPILED AND EDITED BY HENRY COWELL/ETHNIC FOLKWAYS LIBRARY FE 4510

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DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

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## SIDE I

- Band 1. BEL CANTO STYLE  
Ricordo Straceni in Verdi's "Emilia"  
Le Vademio
- Band 2. GERMAN LIEDER STYLE  
"Ich bin ein Bauer aus Weiden"  
Hans Hotter
- Band 3. FRENCH POPULAR STYLE  
Duménil Sings "Tu Ne Sais Pas Aimé"  
(Lubert and Zéki)
- Band 4. JAZZ STYLE  
"I'm in the Mood for Love"  
(Frankie)
- Band 5. CROONING STYLE  
Bing Crosby, "Where the Blue of the Day"  
(Frankie)

## SIDE II

- Band 6. RUSSIAN O. RATIC STYLE  
Feeder, Ivanovich Chelipin in Beregin's  
"Prince Igor" (I Hate A Dreary Life)
- Band 7. RAC. STYLE  
"I'm in the Mood for Love"  
Hans Hotter
- Band 8. FRENCH POPULAR STYLE  
Duménil Sings "Tu Ne Sais Pas Aimé"  
(Lubert and Zéki)
- Band 9. NORTH AFRICAN TRADITIONAL STYLE  
"I'm in the Mood for Love"  
(Frankie)
- Band 10. KURDISH MID-EASTERN STYLE  
Shepherd Sings A Love Song

## SIDE III

- Band 11. KOREAN CLASSICAL STYLE  
"Right Music", Male Solo
- Band 12. JAZZ OPERATIC STYLE  
Female Solo
- Band 13. ALBANIAN MOSTEM STYLE  
"Agon", Female Solo
- Band 14. GREEK POPULAR STYLE  
"Agon", Female Solo
- Band 15. CHINESE OPERA STYLE  
Ma Lien Liang, Peking Opera

## SIDE IV

- Band 16. PAKISTANI CLASSICAL STYLE  
"Dance", Song by United Arab All Khan
- Band 17. SWISS YODEL  
Song Of The Stars
- Band 18. ETHIOPIAN STYLE  
"Queen Of The Night"
- Band 19. EARLY GERMAN OPERA STYLE  
Maria Ivoguen in Mozart's  
"Queen Of The Night"



# THE WORLD'S VOCAL ARTS

Introduction by Henry Cowell

Vocal art is not the same the world over. Vocal styles are affected by language and tradition, and by different ways of cultivation. The tastes and wishes of different peoples are widely divergent as to what sort of tone they prefer. The greatest separation is between the Orient and the Occident; Eastern peoples prefer open, uncovered, nasal tone, and Western peoples prefer covered tone of various sorts. All cultivated training, however, includes breath control and bodily support, as far as I am aware.

When a singer in the Western world takes a vocal lesson, the teacher will try to "place" the voice. This means the establishment of a tone quality according to the experience and taste of the teacher, and will be according to his background and tradition. In the case of a fine teacher, there will be also consideration of bringing out some of the native quality of the singer's voice; but if the voice is by nature too far removed from the teacher's tradition, he will just consider it a "bad" voice; and even in cases in which the teacher tries faithfully to bring out the native quality, he is often hardly aware of the extent to which he channels the production toward his own concept of tonal excellence. There are months and years of lessons during which the teacher will yell "good" or "bad" about the tones, and the "good" tones are spread throughout the vocal range. The teacher's value therefore lies in his being able to exercise fine judgment in tonal selection. He will try to give the student one reliable, fundamental type of tone, spread and balanced throughout the singer's entire range. This tone will usually contain a mixture of "head" and "chest" qualities, with a different blend owing to the background of the teacher and the range of the student's voice. The student may have developed for himself a consistent style, so that the teacher changes it very little; in this event the singer picks up his idea of style by ear through hearing others. In most cases, how-

ever, the teacher creates the style; and the final product -- voice, tone and style -- might have been surprisingly different if the teacher had been from a different background and tradition.

By and large, our Western vocal tradition came from Italy. "Bel canto", or beautiful singing, was perfected for the singing of Italian songs and opera, and a church style of singing of Gregorian chants was closely related. The Latin and Italian languages both have clear vowels, and so the vocal style is based on a clear, ringing tone, covered to produce a maximum of head resonance and brilliance. The vibrato is rapid, and of small range, so the effect is that of the steadiest of cultivated Western tones. The consonants are produced cleanly and quickly, so as to interrupt the flow of sound as little as possible, and the sound is continued through the consonants whenever physically possible. The sliding tones (portamenti) are reduced to a minimum; in legato, the pitch is sustained until the last moment, and the slide to the next tone is so rapid as to be almost undistinguishable. There are some exceptions in practice in opera, in which there may be a big scoop into a climactic tone, but this is not part of the theory of vocal style in bel canto.

The Italian style spread, and was taught increasingly all over the Western world. At first, the Italian language was always associated with this style of vocal music, but gradually, in the 17th and 18th centuries, attempts were made to apply it to other European tongues.

Little by little it became evident that there should be some changes in tone production and style to suit other languages and tastes. By the late 19th century there had arisen a French style in which there is a somewhat less covered tone than in bel canto, and more nasal sounds; a German style, in which a darker and richer quality is admired (much of it would be called "throaty" by Italian teachers); and a Russian style based on Slavic language considerations,



but as an art combining the French and German, having less to do with the original Italian base. In England there was much singing in the 16th and 17th centuries, but we have no way of knowing just what the cultivated singing style was like; later, England adopted Italian vocal training as a standard, and operas sung there in the 17th and 18th centuries were in Italian. The German style branches into a *lieder*-singing style, with controlled phrasing and sustained rich tone; and a dramatic opera style, in which vocal perfection is abandoned for the sake of fervent expression, and the voice competes with a large orchestra. In France there is also a song style and an operatic style, and in addition a popular music hall style which has become an ingredient in popular songs all over Europe, and in "torch" and "croon" styles in the United States.

Turning to the Eastern vocal styles, we find that they have in common a preference for open rather than covered tone, for nasal quality, obvious in the Near-East, and continuing in greater intensity as one approaches the Far-East. In case the listener has trouble in digesting and enjoying these styles, he should recall that singers do not sing the way they do because they can't sing in Western style; they do it because they like it, and because it is, in each case, a carefully taught tradition, often many centuries old. My own experience is that one comes to prize and like it greatly.

Outside of Europe there are five main vocal worlds, and their mixtures. The Near-Eastern includes Jewish music and the music of Arabic-speaking peoples (embracing some from North and East Africa.) The Middle-Eastern contains some Islamic influence from the Near-Eastern culture, but is mainly based on ancient Indian and Persian vocal art; Malayan style embraces Burma, Thailand, South-Eastern Asia and Indonesia; Far-Eastern style includes China, Korea and Japan. In addition, there is the culture of West, Central and South Africa. There the singing is only slightly nasal, with development of a rather straight-forward folk singing tone, and much emphasis on speech syllables and rhythm. It should not be confused with American Negro vocal style, which is different, as represented in "blues", etc.

It is impossible to describe tonal distinctions in words so that a deaf man could gain a clear picture of them. It is recommended, therefore, that to acquaint yourself with differences in Eastern styles, listening to the music several times is the best method. However, there are some elements which may be especially listened for. (1) Sliding tones, highly cultivated and perfected in all Eastern vocal cultures, each in

a very different manner. (2) Trills, shakes, mordants and other vocal ornaments, which also include a sort of artistic bleating, or moving the same tone forward and back, and glottal trills, in which the tone is interrupted in the middle of the trill. Some of these ornaments are based on microtones (those less than 1/2 step apart); some are slow, others fast.) (3) The influence of language and highly individual modes or scales. Italian church music is affected by ecclesiastical modes; Italian song and opera is affected by major and minor scales. Oriental style is affected by the many Oriental modes which differ from major and minor, and also from the early ecclesiastical modes of the Roman church. It should be noted that in their training, classic singers of the Far East learn seven different vocal styles; one for each of seven emotional situations, instead of one voice placement as in the West.

The present recording cannot, of course, pretend to be in the least complete. Folk styles are not represented unless they include some fine or popular art elements, and even so obvious a style as that of modern German opera had to be omitted. Some examples which are included are relatively pure in style, some represent mixtures.

- Band 1. Bel Canto style. Represented by a greatly-admired operatic tenor, with some interjections by a lower voice, accompanied by small orchestra. Rapid vibrato, covered, concentrated tone, with high notes forced into robust head tones. Lots of body support.

- Band 2. German *lieder* style. Baritone singing Hugo Wolf *lieder* with piano accompaniment. Tone dark and very covered, with medium-rapid vibrato; very carefully controlled phrases and legato between tones; smooth, unified production.

- Band 3. French popular style. Contralto with small popular band. Tone rather nasal, less covered than in most of Europe, gushing (nearly every tone begins softly and makes a fast crescendo) and sentimental. A music-hall style which has influenced all popular European singing in all languages, and is related to American torch and crooning styles.

- Band 4. Torch style. A mezzo-soprano sings with a constant wobbling vibrato. Tone somewhat diffuse, unfocussed but not scooped, although there are sometimes slides into the



next tone on the pitch of the old one, usually downwards. This style is a popularization which uses elements from German lieder and the French music-hall, but is still more related to old American sentimental songs such as "Jaunita" and "Silver Threads Among the Gold."

Band 5. Crooner style. A popular manner for singers with small voices which are expected to be amplified electrically. It is more open than most European styles, but there are gushes related to French music-hall style. Nearly all sustained tones have a wide vibrato. Many starting tones of a phrase are scooped up, some last ones are dropped down in a slide. Decorations of longer tones with a sliding mordant are common.

Band 6. Russian operatic style. Medium range man's voice, dramatic rather than smooth. Expressivity is felt to require outbursts of what Italians would call throaty tone. It is covered, concentrated, with very rapid vibrato in the best of European tradition. "u" and "e" sounds more apt to be dark colored, "r's" blurred, as is required in most European training.

Band 7. Blues style. A Negro style originating in America. A low baritone accompanies himself on the guitar. The tone is steady but easy, not forced into a concentrated focus. Open. There are many tiny slides ("smears" or "blues tones") which have become traditional. The style is not deliberately cultivated, but it is imitated and picked up by ear, and has grown into a very definite oral tradition.

Band 8. Jewish cantorial style. (Turco-Sephardic). The Jewish Oriental cantorial style is an old traditional one related to other Near-Eastern styles from a period before Islam. The tone is steady, not too nasal, more diffuse than European cantorial style. There are some deliberate wobbles and trills which change into steady tone again.

Band 9. North African primitive but traditional style, based largely on the African vocal culture, but with some trills and bleats with Arabic influence. The tone is steady, open, and rather pressed to form a concentrated sound. Typically African is the fairly fast, accented rhythm, which greatly affects the tone production. There is a nose flue accompaniment.

Band 10. Kurdish Mid-Eastern style. A shep-

herd sings a love-song in a vocal style deriving from the ancient Persian. Accompanying himself on the tar (a plucked stringed instrument) he sings steadily in both high and low register, an open somewhat nasal tone, with glottal yodelling trill decorations in 1/2 and whole steps, and a 1/2 step trill of more customary Mid-Eastern variety.

Band 11. Korean classical style (right music). A bass half-sings, half chants in old, solemn manner. Steady tone, except for some grace-notes in the form of mordants, and a slow, deliberate, wide-ranged vibrato which is an important part of this style. There is a going in and out on the same pitch, sometimes, which gives the impression of a trill. A high bowed instrument and percussion accompany.

Band 12. Thai operatic style. A young woman with a very steady open tone, no vibrato, very nasal, employs glottal yodelling trills in Malayan manner, with flute. There is an interlude of typical Thai instruments - oboes low and high, flute and renet (a sort of xylophone).

Band 13. Albanian Moslem style. Although Albania is in Europe, it is largely Moslem, and has preserved an older and purer Islamic vocal style than may easily be found elsewhere. Here is the Near-Eastern fundamental style, with steady, open tone, somewhat nasal. Decorations are few, although there are some bleated tones, and sometimes there is a steady slide without vibrato.

Band 14. Greek popular style. A seductive woman singer, accompanied by the kanoon (ancestor of the piano) and a clarinet-like instrument, sings in a manner known all over the Eastern Mediterranean district. The style is based largely on the regular Near-Eastern "Arabic" manner, but with some admixture of European influence. This is only slightly discernible to most Westerners, but is thought of as being partly Italian style in Greece. There are miscellaneous decorations in the way of trills and slides, but the style is a mixture of East and West. At first it may seem too casual to be called a vocal art; yet it is widely practiced and deliberately taught in Greece.

Band 15. Chinese opera-drama North Chinese classical style. A male falsetto, impersonating a woman. Clear, very nasal tone, with controlled slides which form, literally, a language. Each



sort of slide has a definite meaning, like a word, and this language is not only part of the vocal style to be studied by singers, but is known to cultivated opera-goers. The small orchestra accompaniment, with percussion, includes bowed instruments which imitate the nasal vocal quality.

Band 16. Pakistan. North Indian traditional classical singer, a low bass, accompanied by tambour (make sustained tone by plucked instrument), tuned tabla drums, and an echoing bowed string instrument (esraj). Tone opens very steadily; no vibrato, open and somewhat nasal but not exaggeratedly so. Little by little the tempo increases and the style becomes more decorated, with little slides, some slow and steady, but getting more rapid until there is a very fast curved slide, which with rapid vibrato and trills follow the raga (scale) up and down. It becomes highly rhythmic in the voice as well as in the drums.

Band 17. Swiss yodelling style. Baritone of rather low range and straightforward peasant voice yodels into a soprano falsetto by jumping musical intervals of 6ths, 7ths and octaves;

#### DISCOGRAPHY

Band 2. German Lieder. HMV E. G. 3498  
ORA 824. Robert H. Reid Collection

Band 3. French Popular. Columbia M32  
(WL 2795)A. Robert H. Reid Collection

Band 4. Torch. Brunswick 7391(LA274).  
Robert H. Reid Collection

Band 5. Crooning. Brunswick BL 58001.

Band 7. Blues. Recorded in Alabama by  
Harold Courlander.

Band 8. Cantorial. Jerusalem University  
Dept. of Anthropology. Recorded by  
Rafael Patai. DM 382 (1948). Folkways  
Records Collection.

Band 9. North African Traditional.  
Disque K-4616 (50-2085). Moses Asch  
Collection.

accompanied on the hockbrett.

Band 18. Ethiopian style. An old, highly cultivated manner in which the tone is choked, stopped at the throat. There is a rapid vibrato, suggesting some Occidental influence, but there are many Oriental decorations, single and double trills in 1/2, whole and one and 1/2 steps, sometimes resolving into a single tone again.

Band 19. Early German opera style. High coloratura sings the "Queen of the Night" aria from the first opera in German, Mozart's The Magic Flute. Mozart operas had previously been written only in Italian, and so The Magic Flute was a first step toward a German operatic style. The voice is clear and brilliant, steady and controlled, with clean-cut legato, and very rapid vibrato, pure rather than rich, preponderantly head tone.

PRODUCTION DIRECTOR, MOSES ASCH  
GENERAL EDITOR, HAROLD COURLANDER

Band 10. Kurdish Mid-Eastern. All-Russian State #2142. Henry Cowell Collection.

Band 13. Albanian Moslem. From the collection of the Balkan Record Shop NYC.

Band 14. Greek Popular. Victor 68608B.  
Henry Cowell Collection.

Band 16. Pakistani Classic. Recorded by  
Pakistan State Radio. Harold Courlander  
Collection.

Band 17. Swiss Yodel. Folkways Records  
FP 807. Side 2, cut 7. Recorded by  
Laura Boulton.

Band 18. Ethiopian. Harold Courlander  
Collection.