

Basic Vocal Characteristics of Stylistic Variation in CCM (Naismith, 2022)

POP

- Vocal effects used include breathy onsets, sobbing, fry
- Use of melismatic runs
- Registration changes from chest to head
- Minimal vibrato
- Speech quality using conversational phrasing



ROCK

- Powerful vocal style delivered with high intensity
- Wide range of dynamics from whispering to pitched shouting as emotional intensity increases
- Percussive consonants
- Minimal use of clean tone
- Vocal effects used such as growl, vocal fry, vocal grit, screams, glottal onsets and distortion
- Little or no vibrato



JAZZ

- Vocal effects used include breathy onsets, sobbing, fry
- Use of melismatic runs
- Registration changes from chest to head
- Minimal vibrato
- Speech quality using conversational phrasing



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GOSPEL

- Derived from Black Gospel church
- Vocal power required with emotional intensity
- Wide dynamic range with evenness of tone throughout
- Some use of melodic embellishment requiring vocal agility
- Evenness of vibrato throughout the whole range



R&B

- Roots associated with Soul and Funk
- More recent pop R&B often fuses with Hip Hop and Rap
- Characterized by a relatively light vocal delivery
- Heavy use of embellishment
- Melismatic runs are heavily featured
- Fast vibrato



FOLK

- Light vocal delivery to acoustic accompaniment
- Lyrics and the story-telling elements of the song are vital
- Singing in regional accents is embraced



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COUNTRY

- Features twang in vocal style
- Use of a strong 'Southern' accent
- Associated with great storytelling using a speech quality vocal production
- Pronounced 'r'
- Vocal effects include stylistic flips, yodels and cries
- Some melodic embellishment



INDIE

- Pop/Rock fusion vocally
- Characterized by a rawness and edginess in the vocal delivery
- Minimal use of vibrato
- An element of quirkiness in the vocals is embraced



Naismith, M.L. (2022). Singing contemporary commercial music styles: A pedagogical framework. Oxford, United Kingdom: Compton Publishing.