



Teaching Vocal Versatility

But “Belting” Is Bad For Me, Isn’t It?

The Powell Method is a simple method of singing which offers three masterfully crafted techniques that allow singers to be able to sing many genres of music with ease.

by Katti Powell

The Belt Voice

WHAT BELTING ISN'T: Belting is not singing in the classical, or legitimate, chest voice. In fact, it is not singing in the chest voice at all. Proper belting is not bad, unhealthy, or damaging to the voice. Belting is not singing that hurts if done too long. Belting is not singing in the mix voice. Belting is not a voice achieved by stretching, mixing, bridging, passing through, transitioning, or switching from one vocal register into another. Belting is not something that only certain singers are able to do.

OKAY...SO WHAT IS BELTING? Belting is a contemporary vocal technique used by singers to achieve an edgy, strong, and powerful sound and it is best suited for pop, rock, country, R&B, and some musical theatre. The belt voice is very commonly mistaken with the chest voice. Let's straighten that out right now—they are NOT the same. The chest voice is only meant to go up to a certain point. Pushing it beyond that point can result in serious damage. Belting has a similar sound to the chest voice but it is completely healthy to sing high with belt and it sounds much better too. Belting uses the voice in a totally different way and the belt voice resonates in a completely different place than the classical, or legitimate, voice does. And best of all, ANYONE can belt.

MORE ON BELTING

If a belter that has had some legit training is compared to a belter with no prior legit training, the one with legit training is always going to sound much better. Once a singer has learned some basic legit technique and has begun to master it, it is safe to move on to belting.

Belting has a very different sound than legit and singers who try to sing contemporary music in a legit voice or classical music in a belt voice usually sound very strange. It's not at all to say that singers are not capable of using both techniques; just that they have to be willing to adapt to the techniques of each style rather than attempting the style with the wrong technique.

The belt voice isn't broken up into registers like the legit voice is. There actually aren't any breaks in the belt voice at all. But while the belt range is fairly large, there does come a point where a belter just can't reach the notes anymore. This is where another contemporary technique comes in handy.

Belting correctly is not only a healthy and cool way to sing contemporary music, but it is also something that frequently sets singers apart. Correct belters are viewed as singers who can do amazing things with the voice that other people think they can't.

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