

The Beauty of the Pause in Higher Music(al Theatre) Education

This presentation reports from a Ph.D. project in its final stages – *The Omnivorous Voice* – studying the pluralities of vocal aesthetics, vocal tastes, and vocal behaviors within contemporary musical theatre. The part reported on is an Action Research-inspired practitioner study taking place within a group of musical theatre students and their voice teacher, in a 2nd year, four-week research-integrated Bachelor course at Kristiania University College, where the students are released from other learning activities to explore current trends and present-day aspects of musical theatre with the goal of enabling them to see themselves as active parts in the profession's development and values. Thus, principles from Exploratory Practice were implemented, focusing on understanding more than problem-solving, and involving the students as practitioners in their own rights; in other words, the course was not only aiming for quality of output, but for quality of life, containing elements of happiness, well-being, and human flourishing.

Parts of this study is previously documented in the article *We are also music lovers: Testing vocal tastes in higher musical theater education*. In this presentation, however, the benefit of the *pause* – as such a course arguably offers – is explored. This is done by attending to the student's written reflection notes, and by implementing thoughts by sociologist Hennion on taste's reflexive sides, where *pausing*—even if only for a second—enables the act of attachment, hence bringing about the possibility to either reinforce existing values and practices or surpass history and tradition to create new ways of being moving forward.

Keywords: practitioner research; voice training; musical theatre; higher music education; Antoine Hennion

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