Brazilian Portuguese Diction in Classical Singing

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Diction for Singing

• Choreography of Movement to produce vocal sound
• Movement Articulators for the production of speech sound: vocal folds, buccinators, pharynx (pharyngeal constrictors), tongue, soft palate, lips, and jaw
• Consonants: voiced and unvoiced
• Nasal Consonants: m, n, and ng [m n ŋ]
• Vowels: pure and nasalized
• Phoneme: Smallest speech sound [t]
• Allophone: Variation of Phoneme t in toe vs. t in but
Why is diction important for singers and singing?

- Understandability/comprehension of text
- Clear diction strengthens the clarity of the voice and keeps the placement of the singing forward where the sound resonates best
- Allophones of phonemes help us differentiate sounds and meaning in languages and dialects of languages.
- Communication: meaning and artistry
- What is the intention? Artistic intention?
Lateral View of Vocal Tract

- Nasopharynx
- Oropharynx
- Tongue
- Epiglottis
- Laryngopharynx
- Vocal cord
- Larynx
- Trachea
- Esophagus
MRI Lateral View of the Vocal Tract
MRI of Singing:
Olha, que coisa mais linda,
Mais cheia de graça,
É ela, menina, que vem e que passa,
Num doce balanço, a caminho do mar.
Moça do corpo dourado,
Do sol de Ipanema,
O seu balançado
É mais que um poema
É a coisa mais linda
Que eu já vi passar
Ah, por que estou tão sozinho?
Ah, por que tudo é tão triste?
Ah, a beleza que existe
A beleza que não é só minha,
Que também passa sozinha.
Ah, se ela soubesse
Que quando ela passa,
O mundo sorrindo
Se enche de graça
E fica mais lindo
Por causa do amor

Look, such a sight, so beautiful,
So filled with grace,
It’s her, this girl who comes and who passes,
With a sweet swing, on her way to the sea.
Girl with body of gold
From the sun of Ipanema,
Her swing
Is more than a poem,
Is a sight more beautiful
Than I have ever seen pass by.
Ah, why am I so alone?
Why is there so much sadness?
This beauty that exists,
This beauty that is not only mine,
That also passes by alone.
Ah, if she but knew,
That when she passes by,
The world smiles,
Is filled with grace,
And becomes more beautiful,
Because of love.
Olha, que coisa mais **linda**, 
Mais cheia de graça, 
É ela, menina, que **vem** e que passa, 
Num doce balanço, a **caminho do mar**.

Moça do corpo dourado, 
Do **sol** de Ipanema,
Astrud Gilberto singing “Ipanema” in English
A little overview of Brazilian Composers

• Classical Period-Brazilian music influenced by Mozart and Haydn

• Romantic/20th Century periods:
  • Antonio Carlos Gomes (1836-1896)
    • Could be Donizetti or Bellini (Bel Canto style)
  • Francisco Mignone (1897-1986)
    • Sound clip later in presentation

• Nationalism: Movement to compose “authentic” Brazilian music in Europe
Bachianas Brasileiras No. 5:

Heitor Villa-lobos (1887-1959)
• Explored fusion of Brazilian folklore with “classical” and popular idioms.
• Bachianas Brasileiras
  • Series of 9 suites written for various instruments and voices from 1930-1945
  • Most famous of these: BB No. 5
    • Originally scored for soprano and celli
    • Later arranged for soprano and guitar
    • Later arranged for soprano and piano
Tarde!
Uma nuvem rosea, lenta e transparente,
sobre o espaco sonhadora e bela!

Surge no infinito a lua docemente
Enfeitando a tarde, qual meiga donzela
Que se apresta e alinda,
sonhadoramente,
E em anseios d'alma, para ficar bela
Grita ao ceo e a terra, toda a Natureza!

Cala a passarada aos seus tristes
queixumes E reflete o mar toda sua
riqueza...
Suave a luz da lua desperta agora,
A cruel saudade que ri e chora!

Evening!
A rosy cloud, slow and transparent,
over the dreaming and beautiful space!
The moon sweetly arises to the infinite
Decorating the evening, like a gentle
virgin Who rushes and makes herself
pretty, dreamingly,

And in eagerness of the soul, to become
beautiful, Shouts to the sky and the earth,
to all of Nature!
The birds say nothing to her complaints
And the sea reflects all of her beauty...

Softly the light of the moon wakes now,
The cruel longing that laughs and cries!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Portuguese</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quando uma flôr desabrocha, parece sentir amor...</td>
<td>When a flower blossoms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quisera ver o teu seio</td>
<td>It seems to feel love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>desabrochar como a flor.</td>
<td>I wish I could see your breasts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Se eu pudesse ser o sol, com que prazer te daria</td>
<td>Blossom like a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>todo o encanto da manhã, toda a luz do meio dia.</td>
<td>Flower.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If I could be the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>With so much pleasure I would give you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All the charm of the morning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All the light of the day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
todo o encanto da manhã,
[ˈto ðu ɛĩ̞ ˈkœn tu da mœ ˈjœĩ̞ ]

- Nasal vowels
- Lifted soft palate for upper register
- Humming
- Practice methodology for legato of syllables/phonemes
- Practice articulator choreography
| Quando a lua, tão formosa, tão serena, Banha de esplendor a praia, Com seus raios sobre o mar! | When the moon, so beautiful, so serene, Bathes the beach in splendor, With its rays over the sea! |
Conclusions

• Beautiful singing
• Compromise of phoneme variation (allophone) to make the most pleasant and most authentic pronunciation.
• Italian vs. Spanish vs. French vs. Portuguese (Brazilian)
  • Italian: Mia piccerella deh vieni allo mare
  • Spanish: Tomas anduvo con Ana
  • French: Filets de bonne mine d’un poisson bien frais et beau
  • Portuguese: Só no instante em que te beijo a boca jovem
• Importance of translation: not enough just copying sound, rather sound with meaning through inflection and feeling=
Best Recipe for Authentic Brazilian Portuguese Diction in Classical Singing