FROM YOUR BELLY FLOW SONG-FLOWERS:

MEXICA VOICINGS IN COLONIAL NEW SPAIN

(TOWARD A CULTURALLY-INFORMED

VOICE THEORY AND PRACTICE)

by

BETHANY MARIE BATTAFARANO

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Student: Bethany Marie Battafarano

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This thesis has been accepted and approved in partial fulfillment of the Master of Arts degree in the Department of Musicology by:

Ed Wolf	Chair
Lori Kruckenberg	Member
Drew Nobile	Member

And

Kate Mondloch	Interim Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

Original approval signatures are on file with the University of Oregon Graduate School.

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THESIS ABSTRACT

Bethany Marie Battafarano

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In colonial New Spain, Indigenous peoples sang, played, and composed in western European musical styles, and Spanish composers incorporated Indigenous instruments, rhythms, and languages into their compositions. However, modern vocalists in the United States often overlook or misrepresent Indigenous features in performances of New Spanish repertoire. Vocalists typically must make choices about vocal techniques alone and, largely for lack of resources, in uninformed ways. This thesis guides *bel canto*-trained vocalists through the development of a culturally-informed vocal performance of colonial New Spanish repertoire; specifically, it suggests grounds for better-informed vocal performance practices in Mexica traditions. First, I offer *bel canto*-trained vocalists context to recognize their voice-culture biases and to remain open to new voice-cultural ideas. Then I provide *bel canto*-trained vocalists with New Spanish musico-cultural and Mexica voice-culture contexts. Finally, I apply the prior content in a performance practice example of Gaspar Fernándes' "Tleycantimo choquilia."

CURRICULUM VITAE

NAME OF AUTHOR: Bethany Marie Battafarano

GRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE SCHOOLS ATTENDED:

University of Oregon, Eugene
Macalester College, Saint Paul, Minnesota

DEGREES AWARDED:

Master of Arts, Musicology, 2021, University of Oregon
Master of Music, Voice Performance, 2020, University of Oregon
Bachelor of Arts, Music, 2013, Macalester College

AREAS OF SPECIAL INTEREST:

Culturally Informed Performance
Historical Performance Practice
Voice Theory

GRANTS, AWARDS, AND HONORS:

Graduate Employee, Musicology Department, University of Oregon, Eugene, 2019-2020
Graduate Employee, Voice Department, University of Oregon, Eugene, 2018-2020

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> "To enter into questions regarding the voice is to enter into a complex of unequal power structures. Therefore, voice studies cannot simply ask about the meaning or technical production of the vocal sound, but must ask under which pressures, for whom, to what end, a given voice or vocal community was formed" (Eidsheim and Meizel 2019, xv).

Spanish occupation of modern-day-Mexico's central valley began in 1519. In the subsequent decades, Spanish composers in this region of what was then called New Spain routinely incorporated Indigenous cultural features (including language, cosmology, rhetoric, ritual, and music-dance) into their vocal works.[1] Indigenous peoples sang Spanish plainchant and polyphony, played Spanish instruments, and composed in western European styles; and Spanish composers incorporated Indigenous instruments, rhythms, and languages into their pieces. It was not a peaceful period, and European colonial systems did (and continue to do) great harm to Indigenous peoples in New Spain. At the same time, Indigenous peoples negotiated power, maintained many of their own traditions, and profoundly influenced cultural practices within the Spanish colonial system. Among the hundreds of cultural groups of colonial New Spain were the Mexica, the dominant ethnic group, who spoke Nahuatl.[2] Between 1570 and 1644, nearly 95,000 Mexica people (over 80% of the total population) in the Valley of Mexico died, largely due to Spanish colonization (Hidalgo 2017, 250). In spite of this genocide, Gary

[1] This list of Indigenous cultural features is approximate at best, as we lack the appropriate terminology to constitute all the elements of Indigenous culture that influenced early colonial compositional output. This subject will be further explored in the third chapter of my thesis.

[2] The terms Mexica, Aztec, and Nahua are often used interchangeably. Mexica was the precolonial and colonial term used by the Indigenous group itself, so I choose to use this term. However, Europeans historically have referred to them as the Aztec Empire, and modern-day Nahuatl-speaking groups are referred to as Nahuas. Quotes from scholars throughout my thesis may use the terms Aztec or Nahua; unless otherwise mentioned, they are interchangeable with my use of the term Mexica.

Tomlinson observes that "the surviving traces of Aztec song are more abundant than those from any other New World culture of the early contact period" (Tomlinson 2007, 11).

Despite the existence of Indigenous elements in the vocal music of colonial New Spain, modern performers in the United States often overlook or misrepresent such features in performance.[3] Excluding the handful of performing groups in the United States that have dedicated significant resources to this repertoire (such as San Antonio Vocal Arts Ensemble and, more recently, Border CrosSing), modern performances commonly erase Indigeneity by excluding or substituting important Indigenous instruments, and infantilize Indigeneity by oversimplifying the music or the performing standards. Performers in the United States often present colonial New Spanish music as one of two extremes: either as traditionally western European classical music, which erases Indigenous influence, or as rustic western European classical music with some basic percussion (typically using a 20th-century instrument from the Caribbean), which trivializes Indigenous influence.[4] Both presentation types overlook essential Indigenous musical, cultural, cosmological, and historical contexts. While typically unintentional, such presentations perpetuate a cultural stereotype of Indigenous peoples and their expressive cultures as "uncivilized," which amounts to a valuation of inferiority by the White West.

[3] The vast majority of such performances are well-intentioned, and I do not wish to dissuade performers from pursuing this work. It is simply important to examine the process and its impacts.

[4] A note on my use of terms: I avoid the terms "the West" and "Western." Where possible, I instead more explicitly use "western European" or "Spanish." In the cases where I reluctantly use the terms "the West" or "Western," I intend to group western Europe, the United States, and cosmopolitan cities around the world that have been heavily influenced by western Europe and the United States. I recognize that this may introduce problematic generalizations, and it is my hope that more explicit lexicon will emerge to replace these terms in the years to come.

While performers of both presentation types are typically well-intentioned, their misrepresentations of Indigeneity create lived consequences for the individuals who encounter the presentation, and they can contribute to broader social issues. An uninformed person takes the performance at face value and walks away with problematic misunderstandings that further the erasure and infantilization of Indigenous peoples in society. An informed person, perhaps an Indigenous person, may appreciate the attempt to include Indigenous elements but also sees that the performers do not value or respect Indigenous traditions enough to dedicate time or study to them (certainly not to the degree that they would for White western European classical traditions). When programmed alongside highly studied performances of western European classical works, the difference in the performers' demonstrated values are stark. Shruthi Rajasekar in "Diversifying Programming with Integrity" explains how this practice cements hierarchical and divisive rhetoric. "In Western concert music, there is a long history of composers using music to evoke the 'exotic' unknown, dividing humans into the categories of primitive 'them' and divinely-ordained 'us.'" Groups who do not perform Indigenous-influenced music at all are implicitly stating their values even more starkly. Such demonstrations of value (or lack thereof) are harmful socially as they play into systemic oppression, and they can be personally offensive and painful, particularly to Indigenous peoples.

Among the handful of performers in the United States who have dedicated themselves to culturally informed performances of music from colonial New Spain, the approach is

generally much improved (though not immune to the faults listed above). Specifically, performers in these contexts tend to inform themselves about Indigenous musical, cultural, cosmological, and historical contexts, and they critically consider and research the most respectful ways to present the material. When I sing Mexica-influenced music with Border CrosSing, for example, our director, Ahmed Anzaldúa, consults with specialists and diligently investigates everything from colonial-era Spanish and Nahuatl languages to historical context to Indigenous and Spanish instrumentation. Beyond his academic education, scholarship, and performing career, Anzaldúa's life experiences also inform the work, as he is from Mexico. From there, we make informed performance choices with the resources that we have available to us, and we communicate that process to our audiences.

However, even in a culturally informed performance context like Border CrosSing, I continue to encounter hosts of unknowns as a vocalist. Regarding vocal production, I generally choose from the following options:

> (A) sing according to my western European-derived *bel canto* training, which includes full vibrato among other elements,
>
> (B) sing according to my western European-derived historical performance practice experience, which includes straight tone among other elements,[5]
>
> (C) occasionally mimic what I deem a folk Mexican or Native American sound, which is unsurprisingly problematic in its uninformed creation of the Other,

[5] By pointing to "full vibrato" in *bel canto* and "straight tone" in historical performance practice, I intend not to distill the styles to one distinguishing element (in what would be a vastly oversimplified way) but to highlight a primary difference in vocal approach between the two styles that are utilized both conceptually and in practice.

(D) produce sound in a way that "feels right" to me, which is unavoidably rooted in my cultural and trained experiences and can contain elements of A, B, and C, or

(E) cobble together a combination of the above.

None of these techniques is ideal. Each is varied, contested, and often rooted in stereotyped racializations of the voice. None prioritizes or reflects Mexica culture; each approach either ignores Mexica culture or casts it as a stock, unexamined Other. Despite (or perhaps because of) its complexity, musicians rarely openly discuss the decision-making process around vocal production and cultural representation or its implications. Vocalists typically must make these choices alone and, largely for lack of resources, in uninformed ways.

Performance after performance, my lack of insight as a vocalist into culturally informed presentation of Indigenous-influenced musics, particularly as a White performer in the United States, began to plague me. While I valued and respected Indigenous practices, I also realized that my choices as a vocalist could contribute to the misrepresentation and erasure of Indigenous cultures. I felt that I could not *not* perform these musics, as it was important to recognize the diversity of practice during this period and to emphasize the presence of Indigenous musicians within the art form. However, it was difficult to know how to perform them respectfully. How could we vocalists address these problems? Was it possible? Would others agree that it was important?

Objectives

This thesis guides *bel canto*-trained vocalists through the development of a culturally-informed vocal performance of colonial New Spanish repertoire. Specifically, I suggest grounds for better-informed vocal performance practices of Mexica traditions within vocal repertoire from colonial New Spain. **In the first chapter,** I introduce the need for culturally-informed vocal performance of Mexica-influenced vocal music and lay the groundwork for the development of such a performance. **In the second chapter,** I define the *bel canto* voice ideology, confront its unmarked dominance, and point out the racialized harm it can cause. I support and contextualize these perspectives within scholarship by voice pedagogue Barbara Doscher, voice theorist Nina Sun Eidsheim, linguist anthropologist Nicholas Harkness, and musicologist Philip Tagg; and I apply law professor John Kang's scholarship on racialized White aesthetics to the *bel canto* ideology. Meanwhile, I provide *bel canto*-trained vocalists with tools to recognize their voice-culture biases, to understand the need for more conscientious vocal performance, and to remain open to new voice-cultural ideas.

In the third chapter, I pivot from theory to case study. I provide a synthesis of New Spanish musico-cultural background necessary for the performer to present a culturally-informed performance, emphasizing Mexica practices and Indigenous-Spanish hybridity and drawing from a wide range of New Spanish historians, including Kristin Dutcher Mann and David Carrasco. **In the fourth chapter,** I present an analysis of Mexica voice-act culture necessary for the culturally-informed vocal performance. To provide information about Mexica voice culture and vocal sounds, I newly analyze colonial and

modern Nahuatl language, draw from scholarship by musicologist Gary Tomlinson and writings by sixteenth-century grammarist Alonso de Molina, and consult with historian Stephanie Wood for further insight into original analyses and practical performance applications. **In the fifth chapter,** I apply the previous chapters' content to a vocal performance practice example of Gaspar Fernándes' "Tleycantimo choquilia." I examine musico-cultural information apparent in the scores, texts, languages, and music and offer concrete applications to diction, physicality, vocal sounds, rehearsal exercises, and staging, among others. **In the sixth chapter**, I reiterate the need for culturally-informed vocal performance and emphasize the exciting possibilities that it offers.

Throughout the thesis, I provide a number of novel analyses. In the second chapter, I create a theoretical model of the *bel canto* voice, newly apply voice theory (e.g. Eidsheim and Harkness) and White aesthetics (e.g. Kang) models to my *bel canto* voice model, and thereby uniquely demonstrate that the *bel canto* voice is both a culturally-specific and an unmarked dominant ideology. In the third and fourth chapters, I comprehensively illustrate New Spanish musico-cultural contexts and I critically analyze Nahuatl language for voice cultural information for the first time in existing performance scholarship. In the fifth chapter, I uniquely apply my prior analyses to a specific piece.

In addition, this thesis serves as a template for developing a culturally-informed vocal performance more generally, with each chapter acting as one step in the process. Put simply, it provides resources for performers to: 1. recognize the need for culturally-informed performance, 2. confront musico-cultural biases and prepare to be receptive to

different musico-cultural perspectives, 3-4. gather musico-cultural and instrument-specific background about the culture(s) featured in the performance, 5. apply the previous steps in performance practice.

More broadly, this thesis demonstrates the need for culturally-informed vocal performance from an ethical perspective, contributes tools to support diverse cultural representations in the face of the supremacy of White aesthetic ideologies, and challenges the traditional colonial narratives of voiceless Indigenous peoples by highlighting their agencies. It illustrates for performers an anti-colonial approach, following Wallach and Clinton's guidance to engage with emotional, embodied, and sensory experience; religion and spirituality; a sense of self-awareness; and a personal and human approach to research (Wallach and Clinton 2019). Fundamentally, it challenges culturally-informed practitioners to acknowledge that diverse cultural perspectives exist and matter; to confront and make visible unmarked dominant cultural traditions; and to seek out, learn from, and center diverse perspectives in practice.

Chapter II: What Is the Voice?

> "[I]deas about language, speech, and voice are not natural or universal, but historically and culturally specific constructions and… such ideas have important repercussions for social and subjective life because they determine how voices are heard and recognised" (Schäfers 2017).

Bel canto, which means "beautiful singing," refers to a nineteenth-century Italian school of singing whose methods continue to be practiced in western European classical singing contexts throughout the cosmopolitan world. Its earliest influences are disputed, ranging from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries, but it was defined and codified principally in two schools headed by Francesco Lamperti and Manuel García II in the nineteenth century (Celletti 1991). In the twentieth century, it was developed and adapted by pedagogues like William Vennard and Richard Miller, who contributed physiological and acoustical science to *bel canto*-derived traditions. Such *bel canto* beliefs and methods continue to be commonly taught, practiced, and developed in university voice programs across North America (Miller 2002). Today, Barbara Doscher's *The Functional Unity of the Singing Voice* (1994) serves as a *bel canto*-derived core pedagogical textbook across many universities in North America, and I will use it as a template to examine modern *bel canto* practice in this chapter.[6]

As explained in the first chapter, in order for *bel canto*-trained vocalists to pursue culturally-informed vocal performance, it is important to acknowledge *bel canto* as

[6] Doscher's *The Functional Unity of the Singing Voice* has been used as a main pedagogical text in university voice programs across North America, including in the New England Conservatory, the Royal Conservatory (Canada), Texas State University, University of Texas-San Antonio, University of Oregon, Gustavus Adolphus College, University of Nevada-Las Vegas, and University of Montana-Missoula, among many others. Doscher also served on the voice faculty at University of Colorado-Boulder.

the unmarked dominant tradition in Western classical singing (and arguably in Western singing broadly). *Bel canto* practitioners assume, consciously and subconsciously, that many elements of the *bel canto* voice aesthetic are implicit across humanity. In other words, *bel canto* schools of thought and practice purport beliefs, values, and methods about the voice and singing that are culturally-specific, but *bel canto* practitioners often think of these elements as universal; furthermore, *bel canto* practitioners may be unaware of these elements because of their deeply ingrained nature.

In order to be receptive to different voice cultural traditions, then, it is useful to examine and define the *bel canto* voice – to recognize its cultural specificity and to confront its false universal assumptions. What is this voice that we refer to so simply and singularly? How do we in *bel canto* contexts (and in western European-derived cultural contexts broadly) understand the voice? What are its properties? Are such properties universal or culturally-specific?[7] Most importantly, how do race and colonial histories inhabit our current perspectives on and methods of vocal practice and theory, and how might we begin to correct them?

Altogether, this chapter addresses the "why" and begins to address the "how" of culturally-informed vocal performance. I first examine the *bel canto* voice; I use Doscher's text as a modern *bel canto* template and augment it with scholarship by voice theorist Nina Sun Eidsheim, anthropologist Nicholas Harkness, and

[7] We might also ask whether such properties are species-specific, but I will not address that concept here.

musicologist Philip Tagg. I then point out the cultural specificity of the *bel canto* voice, contextualizing it within semiotics, and share the dangers of assuming and imposing it universally, applying law professor John Kang's model of White aesthetic supremacy. I conclude with recommendations to *bel canto*-trained vocalists and voice theorists on pursuing a conscientious, culturally-informed vocal approach.[8]

What is the *bel canto* voice?

Physiological, sonic, environmental, and social elements

Let us begin by posing the seemingly simple question, "What is the voice?" *Bel canto* practitioners (and most Westerners) will likely first point to vocal sound and/or name a physiological attribute such as the vocal folds (commonly known as vocal cords). For example, they might say, "Your voice is the sound you make with your vocal cords." When pressed to explain their answer, *bel canto* specialists may then name multiple physiological attributes (such as musculatures and resonating cavities) along with air and describe a process of controlled exhalation, vibration, and phonation, resulting in sound waves that move through and are modified by space.

By these explanations, we see that no single sonic or physiological attribute constitutes "the voice" in *bel canto*. Rather, according to *bel canto* practitioners themselves, the *bel canto* voice is less of a thing and more of a process that is intricately tied up in a wide range of sonic, physiological, and environmental elements. Doscher's text accordingly establishes that in *bel canto* (what Doscher

[8] For further reading, I recommend the recently-released *Oxford Handbook of Voice Studies* (2019).

refers to as classical singing), physiology and sound are inextricably linked. As Doscher explains, “form and expression are an inseparable unit” (Doscher 1994 xii). The title of Doscher’s text, *The Functional Unity of the Singing Voice,* points to the *bel canto* concept of voice: the singing voice is one thing (implicitly made up of many things) united by function. Doscher’s organization of contents further demonstrates this concept. Doscher centers her book around “the physiology of the singing mechanism and of vocal acoustics” (Doscher 1994, xiii), for which she covers a wide range of anatomy and physiology within the human body to acoustical spaces outside of the body. Similarly, voice theorist Nina Sun Eidsheim explains that the voice itself “is part of a continuous material field” (Eidsheim 2019, 10).

Beyond physiological, sonic, and environmental aspects of the voice, there is another: social. Perceivers – those who see the vocalist’s physiological manipulations, hear the vocalist’s vocal sounds, and then evaluate them – are an integral part of the voice itself. *Bel canto* practitioners are unlikely to recognize the extent of perceivers’ role in the voice, but Eidsheim and linguist anthropologist Nicholas Harkness have developed voice models that make sense of these complexities. Eidsheim describes the vocal moment as a thick event; it is defined not only by sound and materiality but also by “socially, culturally, and economically driven categories such as race, class, and gender” (Eidsheim 2019, 5). Harkness coins the term “phonosonic nexus,” referring to the voice as an “ongoing intersection between the phonic production, shaping, and organization of sound... and the sonic uptake and categorization of sound in the world” (Harkness 12).

Put simply, both Eidsheim and Harkness claim that vocal physiologies and sounds interact inextricably with social meanings, each both producing and being produced by the others. In fact, perceivers are so important to the voice that, from Eidsheim's and Harkness' perspectives, the voice does not exist *a priori*; only the listener does. Eidsheim describes that upon hearing a voice, the listener asks the acousmatic question: "Who is this?" This acousmatic question, Eidsheim explains, is unanswerable, but as the listener nevertheless attempts to answer it, the listener reveals who they themselves are, rather than who the vocalist is. Accordingly, Eidsheim claims that "voice's source is not the singer; it is the listener" (Eidsheim 2019, 9).

Musicologist Philip Tagg agrees that the voice combines physiology, sound, and environment while being rooted in social context,[9] and he helpfully catalogues three ways in which people typically describe the voice: poïetic, acoustic, and aesthetic. The poïetic category focuses on the physiology of vocal production, namely "on how particular parts of the human body are used to produce particular vocal sounds" (Tagg 2012, 352). The acoustic category focuses "on the physical properties of vocal sound," such as volume and timbre. The aesthetic category is "characterized by how sounds are perceived, interpreted, reacted to and used by those who hear them" (Tagg 2012, 353). The aesthetic category, Tagg asserts, is the most common source to

[9] "Musical meaning is never created by the sounds on their own. They always exist in a syntactic, semantic and socioculturally pragmatic context upon which their semiosis depends" (Tagg 2012, 346). Tagg points out that voice carries social signifiers for listeners; for example, manipulations of elements like pitch, timbre, and prosody denote mood or carry other implications for listeners.

describe voice. He further breaks down aesthetic descriptions into three types: sound descriptors, transmodal or synaesthetic metaphors, and persona descriptors. Tagg explains that of these three subsets, persona descriptors are the most common, and they generally fall into the categories of psychological, psychosomatic, and emotional descriptors; they "qualify or allude to the feelings, attitude, and morality, and to the state of mind or body of vocal persona" (Tagg 2012, 354-56).

The *bel canto* criteria: physiology, sound, and health

Among physiological, sonic, environmental, and social elements, within *bel canto*, there is a strong emphasis on physiological manipulations before all else. As Doscher explains, "in order to produce beautiful sounds from an instrument, all musicians must learn specific coordinated physical skills" (Doscher 1994, xii). In the simplest of terms, vocalists must learn to coordinate muscles for inhalation (including the external intercostals), for exhalation (including the internal intercostals and abdominals), for phonation (including the vocal folds and the crico-thyroid), and for the shaping of resonating cavities (including muscles around the pharynx and jaw, the tongue, the soft palate, and the lips) in order to produce *bel canto* or "beautiful singing" sounds. In the *bel canto* vocal moment, a vocalist's physiological manipulations produce sound waves, sound waves move through and are modified by space, and perceivers (seers and listeners, including the vocalist) perceive and evaluate the physiological manipulations and sound waves (heard as vocal sounds) according to *bel canto* criteria, which then influences the vocalist's choice of

physiological manipulations to produce vocal sounds, creating a feedback loop. (See Figure 1.)

Bel canto expectations and evaluative criteria fall into a combination of Tagg's poïetic, acoustic, and aesthetic categories. Most of the preferences are both physiological and sonic in nature, overlap with one another, and fall into more than one of Tagg's categories at the same time; note that because of their interconnectedness, the following descriptors could be recombined in a variety of ways. They include appoggio for efficient breath support,[10] legato and registrational blending, even and consistent vibrato for timbral richness and precise intonation, control of a wide range of dynamics, vowel clarity (typically Italianate) across tessituras, a lifted soft palate and resonance placement for a balance between "bright" and "dark" timbres (*chiaroscuro*) while allowing access to varied timbres (Doscher 1994, 22-23, xviii, 203-204, 213; Stark 1999; Vennard 194).

[10] Appoggio refers to muscular antagonism between inspiratory and expiratory muscles, in addition to glottal resistance and larynx lowering, to make breath use efficient. It necessitates controlled, even breath support and contributes to legato (Stark 1999).

Figure 1

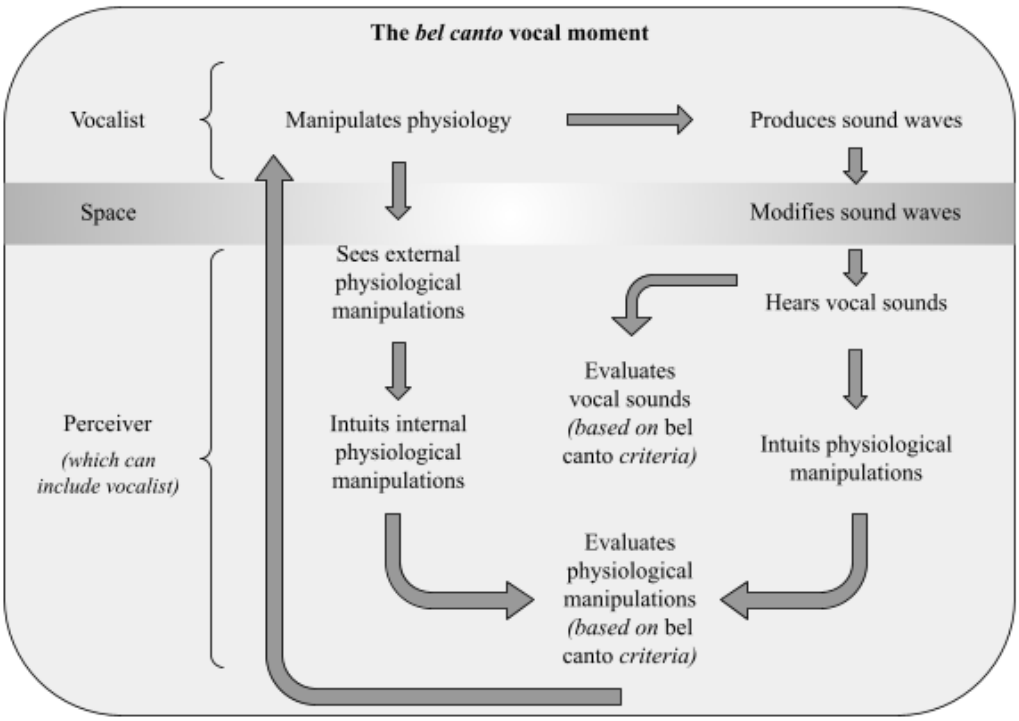


Figure 1. The *bel canto* vocal moment, consisting of a vocalist's physiological manipulations and production of sound waves, space's impact on the sound waves, and the perceiver's perceptions of, intuitions about, and evaluations of the vocalist's physiological manipulations and vocal sounds, leading to a feedback loop. (Figure created by Bethany Battafarano.)

As the foundation for all of these expectations, modern *bel canto* emphasizes the primary importance of healthy physiological manipulations; perfect, free, and efficient (obstruction- and tension-free) muscular coordination is necessary for healthy production (Doscher 1994, "Bel Canto: A healthy approach"). For example, *bel canto* posits that even and consistent vibrato is the result of "a freely functioning total instrument" (Doscher 1994, 198), "proper coordination and efficiency of function" (Doscher 1994, 203), and "the intricate functional interdependence of the total singing instrument" (Doscher 1994, 204) and is indicative of healthy functioning. Other indicators of physiological health in *bel canto* include the aurally

perceived descriptors of "clear," "clean," and "strong," as well as visible smoothness of the vocal folds (Harkness 2013, 98).

Physiological manipulations and sounds occurring outside of these specifications indicate incorrect and unhealthy technique. As with correct and healthy techniques listed above, incorrect and unhealthy techniques are typically identified through a combination of poïetic, acoustic, and aesthetic descriptors, including frequent transmodal and synaesthetic metaphors. For example, indicators of "vocal abuse and misuse" include aurally perceived descriptors of "hoarseness," "huskiness," and "breathiness" in vocal production, as well as visible physical nodules on the vocal folds (Doscher 1994, 214-217). Similarly, Johann Sundberg in the *Journal of Voice* expresses that the "throaty" voice's high larynx, narrowed pharynx, and firmer glottal adduction as harmful and capable of leading to tissue damage (Harkness 2013, 97). Doscher cautions voice teachers that "they have a preventive medical responsibility" (Doscher 1994, xiii) to their voice students, and she encourages voice teachers to send students to laryngologists, medical doctors who specialize in voice disorders (Doscher 1994, 215). Doscher repeatedly cites vocalists' need to condition the body as an athlete would (increasingly muscular speed, efficiency, and agility) for the purpose of producing a healthy technique and avoiding injury (Doscher 1994, xviii).

Cultural specificity of the *bel canto* voice

The voice is a cultural construct. Eidsheim puts this clearly in three fundamental claims: "Voice is not singular; it is collective… Voice is not innate; it is cultural…

Voice's source is not the singer; it is the listener" (Eidsheim 2019, 9). However, she also acknowledges that "[a]ttitudes around the voice as essential, innate, and unmediated are deeply engrained" (Eidsheim 2019, 17); people consider most elements of the voice to be inborn, while in fact, singing always consists of a set of learned and practiced behaviors in a cultural context (Eidsheim 2019, 34).

Bel canto physiological manipulations and vocal sounds are culturally specific. Doscher, along with most *bel canto* practitioners, will readily acknowledge this, in that it is clearly apparent that many voice cultures do not use *bel canto* physiological manipulations and vocal sounds. Within her text, Doscher periodically adds the caveat, "at least in classical singing" (i.e. Doscher 1994, 163), to indicate variations from *bel canto* standards across cultural voice traditions. It is common knowledge, for example, that vocalists in Western popular styles feature conspicuous breaks in registrations, utilize a lowered soft palate (in comparison to *bel canto*), use chest registration extensively, along with vocal effects like distortion, growl, rattle, and grunt, among many other differences. In non-Western styles, such as *p'ansori,* traditional Korean story-singing, registral breaks and emphasis on chest registration are similarly apparent (Harkness 2013, 93). Chan Park points out that in *p'ansori*, regarding both physiology and sound, "[w]hat is considered proper in bel canto is avoided" (Park 2003, 157).[11] In addition, while *bel canto* values aesthetic principles of freedom, efficiency, and ease, *p'ansori* centers a sense of perseverance and effort

[11] "*P'ansori* uses the increased pressure on the larynx resulting from not lowering it, and it is mostly the larynx that amplifies and resonates [instead of the Western pharynx], creating pharyngeal tension that characterizes the voices as hard-pressed and husky" (Park 2003, 157).

(Park 2013, 157). Regarding vibrato, some cultures, including *p'ansori*, not only do not use vibrato but may find it strange, laughable, unnatural, and ugly. Doscher similarly recognizes that "cultural preference is a determinant because children in some countries (Austria) sing with vibrato while those in other countries (England) do not" (Doscher 1994, 200).

Bel canto concepts of physical health and pathology, along with aesthetic descriptors related to physical health and pathology, are also culturally specific. Harkness points out the Western bias in concepts of harm and damage, with which western European classical traditions associate culturally-based aesthetic notions of beauty and function (Harkness 2013, 98). Vocal timbre and all its attendant descriptors are culturally specific. Eidsheim explains that timbral descriptors in particular are not "static and knowable," as is generally assumed, as timbre is a nebulous concept, comprising "everything except pitch and loudness" (Eidsheim 2019, 10).[12]

For example, breathiness, huskiness, and other aesthetic descriptors that *bel canto* associates with injury to vocal anatomy, and the non-*bel canto* physiological manipulations that produce them, do not necessarily indicate physical alterations to any aspect of human anatomy. When studying the "rough vocal effects" of "Distortion as vibrations of the ventricular folds, Growl as vibrations of the arytenoid cartilages against the epiglottis, Rattle as the vibration of the arytenoid cartilages against one another, and Grunt as the vibrations of the whole supraglottic structure"

[12] Eidsheim specifically comments that the concept of a "Black voice," as a timbral descriptor, is a social construct (Eidsheim 2019).

Mathias Aaen, et al, found that "vocal effects can be performed, identified, and recognized as particular vibratory patterns of supraglottic structures with no visible pathology in subjects performing the effects" (Aaen et al., 2018). Furthermore, vibrato is not an indicator of vocal health resulting from a "freely functioning total instrument" (Doscher 1994, 198); Doscher herself acknowledges that "there is comparatively little indisputable evidence about [vibrato's] physiological causes" (Doscher 1994, 202) and no research suggests that *bel canto* vibrato is healthier or more natural than non-vibrato or different-vibrato traditions.

In addition, physical alterations that *are* made to vocal anatomy may not indicate pathology in all cultures. In the case of aurally perceived descriptors of breathiness and huskiness that result from physical alterations to the vocal folds, such physical alterations may be considered desirable and non-pathological in certain cultural settings. For example, Harkness shares that a professor in a Korean hospital describes the vocal folds of *p'ansori* singers as rough and uneven (Harkness 2013, 98). Because of *p'ansori*'s aesthetic preference for a husky sound, rough and uneven vocal folds, which would be considered pathological in *bel canto* contexts (and the pathology of which *bel canto* practitioners would impose universally), are considered non-pathological and desirable in *p'ansori*.

An understanding of semiotics aids in recognizing the cultural specificity of vocal descriptors. Harkness, Eidsheim, and Tagg all situate the voice within semiotics, or the negotiation of meaning through signs in a social context. Semiotics establishes

that signs repeat into redundancy in social contexts; it sets out a series of negotiated signifiers within society. Those signs or signifiers are separated into three categories: icons, defined by resemblance and association; indices, defined by co-occurrence and experience; and symbols, which take the form of language (Turino 2008, Rice 2013). In order to use and understand the signs, an individual must be familiar with their associated meanings in specific social contexts. Language, understood in this way as a symbol, is always culturally-specific. Tagg's poïetic, acoustic, and aesthetic categories are, therefore, culturally-specific, and all *bel canto* voice descriptors are culturally-specific. In order to use and understand *bel canto* descriptors, an individual must be familiar with the descriptors' associated meanings in the *bel canto* context. Similarly, when *bel canto* practitioners use *bel canto* descriptors, they are specific to the *bel canto* social context and may not translate into other social contexts.

While it may seem that a descriptor like "strength," for example, acts as a universal vocal descriptor because of its physiological associations, this is not the case. For example, both *bel canto* and *p'ansori* value "strength" or *ki* in the voice (Park 2003). However, each tradition measures the concept of "strength" differently; it is perceived and labeled according to different signifiers. In *p'ansori,* "[t]he preference for the hard-pressed or attacked voice reveals an element of *p'ansori*'s aesthetics that prizes perseverance rather than ease" (Park 2003, 157). *Bel canto* listeners, however, evaluate (consciously or subconsciously) a distinct range of factors when describing a voice as "strong" or "weak" in a *bel canto* setting; determining factors can include combinations of intonation, perceived physiological manipulations, vibrato speed and

width, registrational blending, dynamic level, and timbre, among others. Each of the above factors is culturally-specific to western European classical-derived music or to *bel canto* practices specifically. In a cultural setting that engages differently (or not at all) with *bel canto*-specific concepts of intonation, musculatures, vibratos, vocal registrations, dynamics, and timbres, sounds described as "strong" or "weak" may include very different factors. More broadly, "strong" and "weak" vocal descriptors may not exist at all across different cultures.

In my experience, we *bel canto* practitioners struggle to acknowledge the cultural specificity of *bel canto* notions of physiological health and function and, as a result, of *bel canto* notions of what is physiologically normal and correct. For example, *bel canto* practitioners often claim that *bel canto* methods can be applied to any singing style, with *bel canto* providing the basis for a universally healthy vocal technique, reflecting the belief that *bel canto* methods are humanly universal in their physiological foundation. *Bel canto* practitioners will concede that non-*bel canto* physiological manipulations do occur in non-*bel canto* contexts, but they will also maintain that (m)any such manipulations are unhealthy and thus abnormal and incorrect on a universal scale. Perhaps the most common and illustrative comment that *bel canto* practitioners make to this effect while listening to non-*bel canto* traditions (having both said and heard it among *bel canto* practitioners more times than I can count) is, "They are wrecking their voice."

Dangers of applying *bel canto* assumptions universally

> "[T]he ideology of White aesthetics allows the dominant group, in this case, White people, to use certain assumed beliefs of aesthetic inferiority to justify their subordination of people of color… [T]he ideology of White aesthetics assumes that the politically dominant group, White people, are inherently superior to a weaker group, people of color. The ideology of White aesthetics holds that people of color, by virtue of their aesthetic inferiority to White people, deserve to remain subordinated" (Kang 1997, 287).

The interconnectedness of universally-cast health-and-pathology concepts with all physiological and sonic expectations in *bel canto* ties all elements of the *bel canto* voice to a notion of universally applicable "health." The universal application of *bel canto* concepts of vocal health and pathology then leads to the default categorization of non-*bel canto* voice traditions as pathological, and it does so in dangerously racializing ways. In this section, I utilize law professor John Kang's analysis of the process by which dominant White aesthetic ideologies subordinate all other aesthetic traditions. Below, I apply the *bel canto* aesthetic ideology to Kang's framework line-by-line.

"First, the ideology attaches a powerful normative component to aesthetics" (Kang 1997, 288). The *bel canto* aesthetic ideology thoroughly incorporates its concepts of physical health into indicators of what is normal and correct for any human voice. "Second, it involves a process of negative self-identification which results in racialization" (Kang 1997, 288). The White *bel canto* voice aesthetic thereby casts non-*bel canto* voice aesthetics, namely those of Indigenous people, Black people, and people of color, as unhealthy to the point of being pathological, dangerous, wrong, and abnormal. It creates a White *bel canto* and non-White non-*bel canto* dichotomy,

associating health and correctness with the first and pathology and incorrectness with the latter. Importantly, Kang points out, the accordingly-cast “non-White conglomerate” also accepts and furthers this dichotomy, reinforcing the supremacy of the “White conglomerate.”

“Third, the ideology speaks in an unmediated, aperspective voice that casts its subjective preferences as objectively legitimate” (Kang 1997, 288). *Bel canto* casts its culturally-specific aesthetic preferences in scientific terms of physiological health, conferring on them an air of objective universality. “Lastly, the ideology of White aesthetics deculturalizes the uniquely cultural expression of people of color. That is, White people use various institutional means… to remove or diminish the cultural aspects from the aesthetic expression of people of color… because White people can also express themselves in an "exotic" ethnic manner” (Kang 1997, 295). *Bel canto*-derived voice practices use justifications of vocal health to debase, dominate, exclude, and disenfranchize the “pathological” voice practices of Indigenous people, Black people, and people of color in institutional ways.

This is immediately evident across university voice programs in the United States today, where voice faculty frequently cite vocal pathology as reasons to not support ensembles or repertoire that feature traditions of Indigenous people, Black people, and people of color.[14] When such ensembles and repertoire do exist within voice programs, their attendant sounds are often reduced to broad ethnic and racial

[14] In addition to White non-*bel canto* traditions such as those found in historical performance practice.

descriptors (i.e. “an African sound” or “a Native sound”) and are typically accompanied by transmodal descriptors such as “raw,” “nasal,” “unrefined,” “ugly,” and “unhealthy,” all of which carry attendant *bel canto* understandings of pathology or, at the very least, the danger of creating pathology. For example, I have heard vocal directors indicate on numerous occasions directives like, “Sing these four bars with an African sound. It should sound raw. Don’t be afraid to sound ugly. But be careful not to injure yourself. Use good [read: *bel canto*] technique.”[15]

A similar scenario emerges from Harkness’ ethnographic work in South Korea, where it is inappropriate to sing in traditional Korean styles such as *p’ansori* in Christian church settings; the only appropriate singing in churches is of *songak*, Korean for *bel canto* (Harkness 2013, 92). Harkness observes that *songak* singing in Christian settings distances modern Koreans from their pre-Christian past. *Songak* pursues a “clean” sound, priding itself on the *bel canto* seamless registrations that blend chest, head, and falsetto registrations. It rejects the “rough,” “unhealthy,” “fuzzy,” and “shaky” *p’ansori* traditional styles of singing, which were more prominent in the pre-Christian past, and their elderly singers, who lived in the pre-Christian past. *Songak* singers perceive *p’ansori* singers as not only utilizing different vocal practices but as almost being different kinds of people with fundamentally different values, no longer Korean but foreign and unfamiliar (Harkness 2013, 92-93).

[15] I speak here from personal experience across three institutions of higher education and seven years as a professional *bel canto* vocalist performing in such contexts and hearing the multitude of related experiences from my *bel canto* colleagues.

Anthropologist Marlene Schäfers summarizes Harkness' findings by explaining that "[t]hese specific ways of using the vocal apparatus become mapped onto specific sound attributes (harsh, rough vs. clean) and bodily experiences (tense, painful vs. healthy, natural) with their attendant ideological connotations, such that strained vocal cords and a tense throat come to index a troubled, pre-Christian, Korean history" (Schäfers 2017). As Kang pointed out, members of both White and non-White communities forward White aesthetic ideologies in a process that can be linked to internalized colonization. In this example, we see how, even through a non-White community, the dominant White *bel canto* voice ideology, its transmodal descriptors, and its mode of negative self-identification operate on a variety of levels to indicate the unhealthiness, inferiority, and resounding wrongness of a subordinated racial group and its practices, to the point of debasing, dominating, excluding, and disenfranchizing them.

However, as is often the case with dominant traditions (as discussed in Chapter I), these practices are so internalized that they become invisible; even Harkness himself never explicitly mentions the *songak-p'ansori* implications for racism in South Korea in the core content of his book.[16] In the United States (and across the cosmopolitan Western world), *bel canto*-derived perspectives are far-reaching and, having been subsumed broadly into cultural practices and valuations, they are largely subconscious; they are held not only by *bel canto*-trained vocalists but by many in society at large. Eidsheim points out problematic racializations of voice in the United

[16] In his book, Harkness tangentially references two sources on race in Korea without mentioning them in the main body of the text.

States, observing that race is one of the first categorizations that listeners impose onto vocalists when answering the acousmatic question.[17] As a culture, she explains, the United States has problematically not confronted the racialization of vocal sound in the same way that we have the racialization of physical features. Specifically, Eidsheim offers that descriptions of timbre utilize color-derived, racialized language; as a result, addressing what she terms "a micropolitics of listening," Eidsheim argues that "both naming and resistance to naming vocal timbre are political" (Eidsheim 2019, 28).

The *bel canto* model reflects common colonizer-colonized dichotomies, as described by Kang. Its universal application leads to race-based valuations of the voice and the ultimate supremacy of a White colonial voice ideology characterized by its perceived correctness and healthfulness, as compared with Other/non-White vocal styles that are cast as incorrect and pathological by contrast. In these ways, *bel canto*-derived aesthetic ideologies have played and continue to play an active role in the supremacy of White western European systems and the racist debasing of Indigenous people, Black people, and people of color.

[17] Eidsheim specifically refers to the labeling of vocalists as White or Black in the United States.

A path forward:

culturally-informed vocal performance

Such moral implications for the act of singing can feel overwhelming, paralyzing, and even absurd, particularly if they have not occurred to us before. Isn't singing, after all, supposed to be fun, freeing, and fulfilling? The *bel canto* vocalist may at this point throw up their hands in exasperation; I know the feeling well. Should we just stop singing?

The answer, I believe, is to pursue culturally-informed vocal performance and to support it when and where it happens. In order to do so, *bel canto*-trained vocalists might begin with the information presented in this chapter. First, we would do well to recognize our *bel canto*-specific voice ideologies and to confront the ways in which we perpetuate racializations of the voice. In so doing, we critically consider our roles in the narrative of conquest and colonialism. Ethnomusicologist Maureen Mahon emphasizes the importance of engaging with the relationships between music and race. We cannot escape the fact that "ideas about race and ideas about music interact to construct concepts of authenticity in racial identity and musical practices" (Mahon 2019, 105). In that process (which is ongoing and lifelong), we acknowledge that there is not a *universally* most natural, healthy, beautiful, efficient, best way to produce and sound voicings, as each valuation springs from culturally-specific preference. This is how we begin to respect all diverse voice practices as valid in their own right.

Then, as I will describe in the following chapters, we may seek out the musical and vocal aesthetics particular to the cultural group whose music we are performing. At this point, *bel canto*-trained vocalists benefit from accepting that we might manipulate physiologies and produce sounds in ways that are not supported in *bel canto* contexts.[18] It is helpful that historical performance practitioners, experimental and contemporary classical musicians, and others have already begun to pave the way in this regard; they demonstrate to us that *bel canto*-trained vocalists can (and should in certain contexts) manipulate physiologies and produce sounds in ways that fall outside of the *bel canto* aesthetic ideology. This allows us to perform music in ways that respect the music's cultural origins and, from a musical perspective, to experience the music in the ways it was designed to be experienced.

Throughout this process, Eidsheim recommends a critical performance practice that features the concept of listening to listening. In other words, she calls us to listen to the perspectives of a voice culture's listeners, pointing out that it is the listeners' projections onto voice that makes the voice what it is; in order to understand any voice culture, therefore, we begin with its listeners. Similarly, Eidsheim calls for us to move away from the "figure of sound," in which the listener names the sound with their culturally-specific vocabulary. Instead, she recommends that we incorporate an

[18] Of course, *bel canto* vocalists will never be pressured to manipulate physiologies in ways that might permanently compromise their *bel canto* singing (such as by altering vocal fold texture). That said, before declining to perform said physiological manipulation, *bel canto* vocalists should critically examine whether it actually presents the possibility of anatomical change, or whether the fear of anatomical pathology is an unfounded assumption based on *bel canto* judgments of the non-*bel canto* tradition (as discussed in this chapter).

analytical mode in which we evaluate style and technique (learned vocal behaviors) rather than perceived essence (the false idea of an innate voice) (Eidsheim 2019).

Toward that end, as a specific tool in culturally-informed performance, *bel canto*-trained vocalists can use Harkness' concept of "qualic tuning," which aids in the process of reorienting our cultural concepts of the voice. By "*qualia,*" Harkness refers to individuals' sensory experiences; he describes *qualia* as, in other words, the empirical way to track "feeling" and the Peircian concept of "firstness."[19] "Qualic tuning," then, is the process by which a singer aligns ("tunes") their vocal qualia with socially ascribed values (Harkness 2013, 14-15). Vocal performers can apply the concept of qualic tuning by immersing themselves in the socially ascribed values of a voice culture and aligning sensory experiences accordingly. This can at first appear complex and abstract; I will demonstrate a clear application of this concept in Chapter V.

Finally, it is tempting to (and perhaps impossible not to) seek Western voice analogues cross-culturally, but vocalists and theorists alike benefit from acknowledging that voice analogues may not exist in all cultures. Even Eidsheim's and Harkness' models (as I believe they would readily acknowledge) may be culturally biased as sourced from the cosmopolitan West. Rather than imposing theoretical voice models upon cultures, then, it is important to approach each voice

[19] Importantly, Harkness distinguishes between *qualia* and quality, the latter of which is often multimodal and abstract (as in the words "rough" and "clean") and can contribute to the problems described in the previous section.

culture anew. The concepts of listening to listening and qualic tuning help us to take the first steps in this direction. If there are any human voicing universals to be found by which we could construct a ubiquitous voice model, we will only be able to identify them by first learning from diverse cultures. Furthermore, when an analogous concept of "voice" and "singing" does seem to exist, we may remember that definitions of "voice" and "singing" can vary across cultures. In Chapters IV and V, I will analyze such Mexica-specific concepts of voice and singing (termed "voice acts" or "utterances") and present ways in which *bel canto*-trained vocalists can engage with them.

Chapter III: Mexica Musico-cultural Context

The vast territory that would eventually make up the Viceroyalty of New Spain stretched from Costa Rica well into what is now the southern and southwestern United States, and within it dwelled hundreds of cultural groups. The Mexica, who spoke Nahuatl, were the dominant ethnic group, and musicologist Gary Tomlinson remarks that "the surviving traces of Aztec song are more abundant than those from any other New World culture of the early contact period" (Tomlinson 2007, 11).[20][21] Other groups included the Seri, the Laguneros/Irritilas, the Hopi, and the Othama.[22] As we pursue culturally-informed performance of Mexica-influenced musical sources, we can learn a great deal by observing the musical practices of the other groups within the Viceroyalty of New Spain, with whom the Mexica had extensive contact (and thus likely shared practices) through trade routes and conflicts for territorial expansion. In this chapter, I provide musico-cultural backgrounds for these groups, with the goal of informing performance practice for New Spanish repertoire.

Most New Spanish vocal repertoire that circulates in the United States comes from Spanish-controlled ecclesiastical contexts. However, few performers have the requisite contextual knowledge regarding Mexica and hybrid New Spanish cultures to

[20] As a reminder, the terms Mexica, Aztec, and Nahua are often used interchangeably. Mexica was the precolonial and colonial term used by the Indigenous group itself, so I choose to use this term. However, Europeans historically have referred to them as the Aztec Empire, and modern-day Nahuatl-speaking groups are referred to as Nahuas. Quotes from scholars throughout my thesis may use the terms Aztec or Nahua; unless otherwise mentioned, they are interchangeable with my use of the term Mexica.
[21] Tomlinson refers here to the surviving *written* traces of Aztec song, not including (to my knowledge) oral traditions.
[22] Further south, the Incan cultures of what would be claimed the Viceroyalty of Peru also featured highly developed forms of song, poetry, and instrumentation, and they provided highly regimented musical instruction to children as early as the fourteenth century (Stevenson 1960, 110-111). For the sake of space, however, I will not address Incan cultures in this thesis (with one exception).

appropriately inform performance of such music. Academic curricula, studio teaching, and concert programming still reflect an isolated focus on the nineteenth and twentieth century art song and *bel canto*-derived cultural traditions of western Europe (and increasingly of the United States). The lack of broadly culturally-informed education and performance systems mean that performers emerge unprepared to present performances from any cultures outside of western Europe and the United States.

In this chapter, I provide performers with Indigenous and hybrid New Spanish musico-cultural background, covering both hybrid New Spanish ecclesiastical contexts and specifically Indigenous contexts. Where *bel canto*-trained vocalists would take extensive coursework in western European languages, cultures, and histories, I provide a brief summation of languages, cultures, and histories in New Spain.[23] This single chapter about New Spanish practices does not compare to the years of education we receive in western European traditions, but my intention is to begin to provide the necessary background for a culturally-informed performance of music from New Spain, particularly one with Mexica influence.

Indigenous music practices of New Spain

It is clear that music was an integral part of Indigenous communities in New Spain. Prior to 1492 (known as 13-Tecpatl in the *tonalpohualli* Mexica calendar), there were already

[23] Master's programs (along with many conservatory and some bachelor's of music programs) in vocal performance in the United States typically require students to study Italian, French, and German languages for one year each, as well as one year of diction courses in English, Italian, French, and German. In addition, most programs require one year of western European art song coursework and one to two years of western European classical music history coursework, which involves extensive study of English, Italian, French, and German political, cultural, religious, and artistic histories.

highly-regarded traditions of "poetry, composition, instrument making, and performance" as well as theater and literature in the Americas (Robertson-DeCarbo 1992, 31-32). We have a wealth of information particularly about music among the Mexica people. "Unofficial, nonnotarial manuscripts… classified by scholars in the past as 'Classic Nahuatl' [include] songs, speeches, and annals… Manuscripts and imprints cover a wide variety of genres… [including] speeches, songs, and plays… The vast majority of native-language manuscripts and imprints are in Nahuatl" (Restall 2005, 14). Among the precolonial Mexica, artists occupied the highest of the three tiers of society, and singers could be hired in the Tenochtitlan marketplace (Carrasco 1998, 78). Across northern New Spain, music played active roles in the creation and sustenance of life, in healing and grieving, in communion with the supernatural world, in courtship and group cohesion, in power relations and war preparations, and in education (Mann 2010, 20).

The dozens of Indigenous communities occupying northern New Spain practiced varying degrees of sedentarism and nomadism, and at all levels of fixed and non-fixed lifestyles, there is evidence of musical instruments, singing, and dancing. Sedentary groups in villages more often had ritual specialists who utilized music, and the remainder of the groups generally at least had specialized musicians "for healing, war, or lament" (Mann 2010, 23). Before the arrival of the Europeans, one group, the Seri, which was largely nomadic, possessed a stringed instrument – a mouth bow (Mann 2010, 23).

Most Indigenous musics of New Spain occurred in communal, participatory forms (Mann 2010, 29). Songs often took lengthy call-and-response forms; an individual sang a verse

and a group responded with a refrain, often with as many as twenty or thirty repetitions. Rhythmic activity was featured prominently and percussion instruments, such as rattles and drums, were common. Lyrics could either be passed on through oral tradition (whether intelligible or not) or they could be newly created, and they could also occur as non-word vocables. By contrast, Mesoamerican lyrics were often "stylized poetry" (Mann 2010, 25, 35). Regarding content, Mexica sung poetry often praised their capitol Tenochtitlan (which the Spaniards replaced with Mexico City), and divine songs often featured the battle between the deities Huitzilopochtli and Coyolxauhqui (Carrasco 1998, 87).

Music and dance were intimately connected to cosmologies and spiritual practices of Indigenous peoples. In northern New Spain, "most groups believed that the origins of their songs were supernatural… Because songs were supernatural in origin, acts of performance gave singers access to the powerful spiritual world" (Mann 2010, 28). It was believed that "singing allowed shamans to access supernatural healing power" (Mann 2010, 33). In 1927, Ruth Benedict recorded an ancient creation story of the O'odham people of northern New Spain. In the story, the Earth Doctor makes the world grow larger and larger but is not satisfied with its size. It is only when he sings that the earth finally reaches its full size. Singing did not only help the earth to grow; it "stopped it from shaking, governed day and night, and also played a part in the destruction of the first edenic land" (Mann 2010, 19-20).

Roles and functions of music

Music functioned as an educational tool. Songs often served a historical education purpose as Indigenous communities handed down stories within songs through oral tradition (Mann 2010, 20). Many Mexica songs traced their lineage back to the Toltecs. They "chanted in the 15th and 16th centuries about the Toltec priest-king: 'Truly with him it began, truly from him it flowed out, from Quetzalcoatl—all art and knowledge'" (Carrasco 1998, 36). Among the Mexica, song and dance schools called *cuicacalli* operated in the late precolonial period (Kellogg 1997, 130). "The boys who were children of rulers were taught and raised at the Tlacatecco (a temple)... [Some] were taught song composition and oratory and the study known as 'the drum and the rattle (music)" (Restall 2005, 221).

Music played active roles in mourning rituals after a death. In northern New Spain, many Indigenous groups sang laments communally for the deceased. Mann cites Andrés Pérez de Ribas, a Jesuit missionary of the early 17th century, as saying that members of the Laguneros, both male and female, wrote their own laments at the graveside (Mann 2010, 25).

Music played a role at wartime in northern New Spain. It often involved prolonged "screaming and wailing" at rapid speeds and extreme pitch registers, and individuals were often under the influence of hallucinogens (Mann 2010, 32). "Bierhorst also sees the "flower and song" of the *netoltiliztli* as relating to "war and music." Flowers are linked to songs and to war. The war cry is also like a bird song or shriek" (Wood, "netoltiliztli"). Music also accompanied food-related celebrations (Mann 2010, 26).

Gendered roles in music

Women in northern New Spain were actively involved in ceremonial music (though the same was not true further south in Mesoamerica). Shamans could be either male or female, and they were often musicians. As mentioned above, both female and male Laguneros composed songs at burials. Men and women sang together in octaves. Different categories of songs were often reserved for particular genders. Laments were often uniquely women's songs, and in Nuevo Santander women performed the music that accompanied warriors' preparation for and return from war. At rituals for death in Seri communities, women were said to howl like cats (in the late-seventeenth-century words of Jesuit Adamo Gilg) as they sang unintelligibly. Men were primarily involved in music for shamanism and in making and playing instruments. Male flautists accompanied the singing of Hopi women while they ground corn (Mann 2010, 27-29).

In the Mexica *cuicacalli* schools (and elsewhere), women could be administrators, or *tlaiacanque*. Dominican chronicler Diego Durán described how the song houses were associated with the royal palace or major temples. The song houses judged couples in concubinage, and women convicted of it were no longer allowed to sing and dance. In addition, older Indigenous women called "women guards" brought younger women to the schools of dance (Kellogg 1997, 130).[24]

[24] Similar practices could be found elsewhere in the Americas. At the Incan temple of Copacabana (in what is now Bolivia), *mamaconas* were women dedicated to the sun. They had their own building where they made drinks and wove cloth for sacrifices. The sun and the moon were believed to be married. On Lake Titicaca, a man embodied the sun and a woman (the highest ranking *mamacona*) embodied the moon to represent their messages to one another, in what appears to have been a form of performative ritual speaking (Cobo 96).

Hybrid musical encounters among "mutually entangled" cultures

As an integral part of their campaign for conquest of the Americas, the Spaniards resolved to impose Catholicism upon Indigenous peoples. Foundational to their efforts at conversion were strategies to embed Indigenous cultural practices within the Catholic framework in an attempt to attract the Indigenous peoples to its practices. They ordered churches built on sacred Indigenous grounds and with sacred Indigenous materials, attempted to learn and communicate in Nahuatl, and utilized their traditions' analogous religious practices (namely Indigenous enactments of sacred narratives and Catholic religious plays). To a certain degree, according to Restall, the concept of adopting the deities of invaders was already familiar to the peoples of New Spain, as many had experienced it when colonized by other Indigenous groups previously (Restall 2005, 174).

However, translations from Spanish into Nahuatl often failed to fully communicate the accompanying religious and social concepts (Burkhart 2011), leading to a concept coined by historian James Lockhart as Double Mistaken Identity, in which both cultural groups assumed a mutual understanding that did not truly exist. In addition, Indigenous peoples at times also feigned Catholic practice while privately practicing their own cosmologies. Indigenous rulers participated at times in the Spanish Catholic church hierarchy strategically for political and cultural capital.

All of these practices resulted in what Andrien refers to as "mutually entangled" cultures. He argues that there was no spiritual "conquest" in the Americas, but rather an entangling of spiritual practices; that Catholicism was just as impacted by Indigenous religions as the opposite. Ultimately, "most people found a middle path, participating in forms of Christianity adapted to their language and culture while maintaining many of the values, attitudes, and devotional practices of previous generations" (Burkhart 2011, 5; Andrien 2001).

Likewise, the music of colonial New Spain was characterized largely by its cultural entanglement or hybridity. Precolonial Indigenous cultures, as we have seen, had highly developed art forms across a variety of contexts; when the Spanish arrived, there was already a great diversity of artistic practice. As the cultures clashed, fought for survival, and vied for power, a confluence of practices occurred, resulting not in the homogeneity of the dominant Spanish culture but in the expression of many Indigenous roots, both integrated into and independent of Spanish social structures (Robertson-DeCarbo 1992, 31-32).

Similarities in musical practices

Spaniards often reacted negatively to the forms, techniques, and contents of the musics of Indigenous peoples. Joseph Och, a Jesuit living in 18th-century Sonora, described singing traditions in northern New Spain in the following ways. "Their singing, always in monotone, is very disagreeable to the unaccustomed ear, especially because they repeat a thing 20 or 30 times… the words being taken up now by the youths, then by the maidens

in soprano, then by the old women, and finally by everybody, and being more bellowed than sung" (Mann 2010, 25).

However, music of the Indigenous peoples and of the Jesuit and Franciscan missionaries had many similarities. "For both, it was the primary conduit for accessing the supernatural. Unison group singing was the most common form of expression, and songs were predominantly responsive and repetitive. Music was also an important part of cultural identity" (Mann 2010, 41).[25] In addition, music was used across both Indigenous and Spanish Catholic traditions as a means of education. As described above, it functioned in a largely historical manner in the Indigenous communities, and in a largely religious manner in the Spanish Catholic communities.

Music as a tool for conquest through conversion

Music played active roles in the Spaniards' efforts for domination of the Americas. Before Hernán Cortés and his soldiers even set sail from Spain, Mass was chanted communally and there was a fanfare of trumpets and drums. "The ritual speech of the *requerimiento* and mass…" (Mann 2010, 70) was used intentionally in territorial expansion. Law required that the requerimiento be read three times, and Spaniards shot off their guns in tandem with their "ritual speech and song" (Mann 2010, 69-71). Despite the fact that most Catholic priests described Indigenous practices as evil, they utilized them for conversion purposes. In the 1520s, Franciscan priest Fray Pedro de Gante

[25] For unison repetitive singing, Mann cites chant and congregational responses to psalmody. Harmony and instrumentation were generally only added on feast days; they only became more common in the late Renaissance (45).

initiated the practice of redirecting Mexica traditions into Catholic song for the purposes of conversion.

At the Colegio Imperial de Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco, founded in 1536,[26] Franciscans taught Indigenous boys *trivium* (grammar, rhetoric, and logic) and *quadrivium* (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music). The boys learned to "read, write, and sing" in Nahuatl, Spanish, and Latin (Carrasco 1998, 19). Among the Franciscan teachers was Bernardino de Sahagún, who chronicled extensively about life in New Spain. Sahagún used the trilingual students at the Colegio Imperial to interview Mexica elders, who used their surviving pictorial books in their responses, to develop the 12 books of the Florentine Codex. In the codex, Sahagún explicitly recognized the musical skills of the Indigenous populations. "[The Tolteca] went about using the ground drum, the rattle stick. They were singers; they composed, originated, knew from memory, invented the wonderful songs which they composed" (Wood, "cuicatl").

Sahagún drew from the material in the Florentine Codex as he created the 1583 *Psalmodia Christiana.* It was the first book of vernacular song in the Americas, and it contained 333 short religious songs and 54 illustrations of Christ and various saints. The *Psalmodia Christiana* provides an excellent example of a hybrid work of both Mexica and Spanish elements. Written in Nahuatl, it was intended for the education of the Mexica through integration of their song and dance practices (Candelaria 2014, 619-622).

[26] The Spanish crown charged Juan de Zumárraga, the first bishop and later archbishop of New Spain, with founding the school.

In the *Psalmodia Christiana,* Sahagún frequently referenced flora and fauna, knowing that they were important for Mexica afterlife. He combined these traits with the fact that it was homiletic in style of Christian Europeans and was associated with plainchant and reciting tones. Importantly, parts of the *Psalmodia Christiana* suggested percussive cadences, and Sahagún "invoked the sacred drums – huehuetl and teponaztli" of the Mexica (Candelaria 2014, 667). All in all, Candelaria describes it as "a methodical, comprehensive, and ethnographically informed songbook in the native style that had been vetted and approved by the Catholic establishment as orthodox and useful" (Candelaria 2014, 645).

In 1558, Jesuits openly approved the use of music in missionary work, specifically in doctrinal education, at the Society of Jesus' first general congregation. Among both Jesuits and Franciscans, liturgical dramas served an important function in education. In Spain, *autos sacramentales*, allegorical religious plays, were commonFranciscans were also known for their *laudi spirituali*, which were based on secular folk songs and reworked to include religious content (Mann 2010, 47-63). Among the Aztecs, such performative mediums paired well with existing Nahuatl-language traditions of narrative performance and religious embodiment to develop a body of works that served as plays to educate the Indigenous people in Catholic doctrine (such as *The Nobleman and His Barren Wife*) (Kellogg 1997).

Music in New Spanish churches: male musicians

Music in the churches of Spain and its colonies was policed to varying degrees of success. As far as we know, women musicians did not perform in cathedrals. In the post-Tridentine era, the harp and guitar were considered pagan instruments and were discouraged from use in the church (Mann 2010, 52). Indigenous musics were also strongly discouraged from use in liturgical contexts. However, the reality was that many practices took place that were not in accordance with official rulings. Mann comments that "in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spain, costumes, stringed instruments, minstrels, and dancing even found their way into churches… blurring the boundaries of the sacred and profane" (Mann 47). Kopp provides a Peruvian example of church and Indigenous musicians' forbidden fraternization. "During the years 1580–82, Pedro Serrano, an instrumentalist forbidden by contract to perform outside the church without permission, was accused of playing with his native musicians on the streets of Cuzco at night, 'offering his services to anyone'" (Kopp 2012, 41).

Over time, official rulings allowed Indigenous and African[27] peoples to participate in professional music-making. In the 1573 *Ordenanzas,* King Felipe II decreed that "singers and high and low minstrels" could be used to encourage Indigenous people to move into central urban areas (Kopp 2012, 39). In 1618, another decree allowed tax exemption for two to three Indigenous musicians, known as *yanaconas* or "service natives" from towns of at least 100 people. They wore brightly colored uniforms and hats after the European secular and military traditions (Kopp 2012, 39-40). Indigenous and African peoples and

[27] African people who the Spaniards had enslaved made up substantial percentages of New Spanish communities. For example, in the seventeenth century, Spaniards enslaved and shipped to Puebla de los Ángeles 20,000 people, most of whom were kidnapped in West Central Africa (Sierra 2013).

their descendants – enslaved and free – sang in colonial Catholic churches, though the music directors were most often Spanish or mixed-race. In fact, in some cases, Spaniards enslaved African people and brought them to Spain specifically to provide them with musical education before they sent them to the American colonies to serve as enslaved musicians. The Jesuits themselves enslaved some of the African musicians who performed in New Spanish churches (Kopp 2012, 39-40).

It is important to note that prominent scholars (such as Robert Stevenson) have praised Indigenous people's willingness and adeptness in assimilating into Spanish cultural traditions, frequently citing claims that Indigenous peoples loved plainchant or that they happily adopted polyphonic singing in church contexts. However, Jesús Ramos-Kittrell points out the error in failing to problematize the expectation of Indigenous assimilation into Spanish-European culture in New Spain. Such claims of happy Indigenous assimilation into the dominant Western culture reflect traditional colonial discourse. They are based largely in Catholic ecclesiastical written records, where Indigenous musicians and their music were often excluded and actively derided; they reflect exoticist and nationalist influences; and they assert the supremacy of western European classical music (Ramos-Kittrell 2016, 16-17). Of fundamental importance, they are missing critical, culturally-informed examinations of written and ethnographic sources by and about Indigenous people, which could instead suggest that polite, deferential, and/or self-preservational rhetoric may have motivated such claims by an Indigenous person.

Music in New Spanish convents: female musicians

While women musicians may not have performed in cathedrals (as far as we know), they did perform actively in convents. Furthermore, women religious often performed the same repertoire that their male counterparts performed in New Spanish cathedrals, as well as repertoire composed specifically for the women religious, from plainchant to polyphony.

Despite the Spaniards' zeal for conversion of the Indigenous peoples, they largely excluded Indigenous peoples from the higher tiers of Catholic religious life for much of the colonial period. With only a few exceptions, convents in New Spain were reserved for "pure-blooded" Spanish women (the exceptions being made for noble Aztec women in the late sixteenth century in the convent of *Purísima Concepción*). It was not until 1724 with the founding of the Franciscan Corpus Christi convent in Mexico City that Indigenous women were permitted to enter any convent. Even then, Corpus Christi was reserved exclusively for noblewomen, so African and mixed-race women still could not enter (Favila 2019, 145-146). While the Spaniards banned Indigenous, African, and mixed-race women from convents, the Spanish women religious did perform the Indigenous- and African-influenced music being composed in New Spain.

In the mid-sixteenth century, the first Spanish convents began to appear in New Spain. Between 1568 and 1604, seven convents were established in Puebla in modern-day Mexico: Santa Catalina de Sena, La Purísima Concepción, San Jerónimo, Santa Teresa de Jesús, Santa Inés del Monte Policiano, Santa Clara, and La Santísima Trinidad. They quickly began to incorporate music programs into their specialized activities. La

Santísima Trinidad, a convent of Conceptionist Franciscan nuns, opened in 1593, and it was known to be an especially musical convent. At the turn of the century, a music chapel was installed in the convent for singers and instrumentalists. The nuns played instruments such as violins and double basses, and they not only sang in polyphony but also performed polychoral works. In certain cases, New Spanish composers, among them Antonio de Salazar, wrote works prescribed to be performed by specific convent musicians. Additional material performed by the nuns included works sent from the Iberian peninsula, such as traditional Latin liturgical music and villancicos for matins (Tello 2014, 243).

In a variety of New Spanish convents, novices were accepted on the basis of musical talent for use in masses (Lavrin 2008, 327). In rare cases, a convent would waive the dowry charged upon entrance through an applicant's demonstrated musical skills. Asunción Lavrin contends that "girls could make their way into the convent by learning how to play an instrument and serving as musicians for… *misas cantadas…* and religious services demanding music" (Lavrin 2008, 25). Lavrin notes that Ramón Pinilla, for example, cites that one nun and her sister were able to enter the convent as a result of their abilities on organ and bass (Lavrin 2008, 370). (Lavrin refers here to Miguel Ramón Pinilla's *Breve relación de la vida de la Madre Sor María Antonia… en el convento de la M. S. Clara de la ciudad de Querétaro*.)

Prohibitions and instances of dissidence from the seventeenth century can also help to inform our understanding of possible sixteenth century circumstances. In particular, they

suggest that nuns recruited and hired specialized musicians, played and sang polyphonic music, and performed secular dramatic works. The Franciscan Constitutions of 1639, for example, passively outlawed polyphony and specialized musicians in convents. The decree that "Franciscan nuns should use plain singing in their divine offices, without organ or counterpoint" explicitly banned polyphony and may have been designed to keep hired musicians out of the convents (Lavrin 2008, 160). Adherence to the constitutions, however, was less than complete. Records indicate that at La Concepción in Mexico City, one nun asked to play viola instead of oboe. In 1672, Mexico's Archbishop Fray Payo de Ribera noted that in the convents of La Concepción, Regina Coeli, and Jesús María, singers were paid a bonus for Easter services each year (Lavrin 2008, 327, 440). Another telling prohibition occurred through Pope Innocent XI's 1679 papal bull, which banned the waiving of dowries in convents on the basis of musical skills, indicating that convents previously did waive dowries in exchange for musical skills (Lavrin 2008, 160).

In addition, throughout the mid-seventeenth century, comedies were prohibited in the cloisters on various occasions in Mexico, orders which came down from as high as Phillip III through Archbishop Juan Pérez de la Cerna and Archbishop Fray Payo de Ribera. Lavrin takes the prohibition of comedies to mean that there were almost certainly non-religious performances taking place in the cloisters prior to that point (Lavrin 2008, 327). The comedies of Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz are believed to have been performed in private and non-religious venues, rather than in the convent, but there is no concrete evidence to this effect (Lavrin 2008, 327). Susan Midgen Socolow similarly claims that nuns in colonial Latin America had musical recitals at Christmas and that they "wrote,

directed, and performed sacred music, and played a variety of instruments, including the clavichord, harp, flageolet, and flute" for the entertainment of church and state authorities and for the socially elite (Socolow 2015, 102), but she does not provide evidence to that effect.

Such prohibitions and social disobedience in the seventeenth century suggest that convents in Mexico may well have featured both polyphonic singing and highly trained musicians during the sixteenth century. Even when nuns could not access trained musicians, it may well have been that nuns still sang in the style of fabordón, or improvised parallel thirds and fourths. Pietro Cerone referenced the practice in *El Melopeo* in 1613, suggesting that it was still used in Spain and its kingdoms through the end of the sixteenth century. It is helpful to know that even nuns formally untrained in music may have performed extemporized polyphony in this manner (Fiorentino 2015, 23-27).

Notes for singers on Nahuatl and Spanish

Language itself during the colonial period was a site of violence. "The European domestication of Mexican speech, song, and writing exemplifies a broadly dispersed discursive adjunct to the European conquest, colonization, enslavement, and even extermination of native Americans" (Tomlinson 2007, 18). Destruction of Indigenous notation and languages constituted (and continues to constitute) ongoing acts of violence. White performers singing Indigenous languages in particular do well to reflect on our roles and the messages we send through our attention (or inattention) to language.

As such, vocalists would do well to critically engage with Indigenous languages. In addition to an awareness of ethics, *bel canto*-trained singers might bear in mind that Indigenous languages may not only utilize different forms of syntax; they may reflect fundamentally different understandings of language and the world, as compared to the Germanic and Romance languages we know so well. "We must locate in the meeting of Nahuas and Spaniards the borderlines of different manners of linguistic registering of the world. When Nahuatl was written in Latin characters its ties to a whole view of reality were subtly undone" (Tomlinson 2007, 29).

As *bel canto*-trained singers approach Nahuatl, they may begin by preparing themselves as they would in any western European language. Because of the reasons listed above, however, each of these steps carries even greater ethical weight. Singers would do well to receive language coaching from a fluent (or very well-practiced) speaker, gain an awareness of the grammatical structure, choose a reputable source for translation, and familiarize themselves with the alphabets generally used to express them in writing. In addition, with the musics of colonial New Spain, as with any other pre-modern language, singers may also research historical pronunciations, as the languages will have changed over the course of several centuries. Most *bel canto*-trained vocalists will be familiar with the International Phonetic Alphabet, and so I will notate pronunciation using that orthography.

Most transliterations of Nahuatl, which originally used glyph and pictorial notations, use Franciscan hispanicized spelling. Tomlinson provides some notes on Nahuatl, including the fact that in the Franciscan spelling, *x* is pronounced as [ʃ] and *tl* does not constitute a syllable in and of itself. He offers that the word *xochicuicatl,* for example, is pronounced [ʃu-tʃi-kwi-katl] (Tomlinson 2007, 8). In addition, he stresses the complexity of the language and the need for thorough study. "Nahuatl is an agglutinating language, laden with prefixes, infixes, and suffixes, building up lengthy compound words and stringing them together to put across messages of syntactic or conceptual complexity… [It] does not have the semantic generality and neutrality we expect in Indo-European roots" (Tomlinson 2007, 29).

Singers will find excellent Nahuatl resources in Frances Karttunen's "Nahuatl for the Twenty-First Century." Karttunen provides twelve Nahuatl language resources published from 2001-2004. Among them, she highly recommends *Making Dictionaries: Preserving Indigenous Languages of the Americas,* which contains "An Interactive Dictionary and Text Corpus for Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Nahuatl'' by Una Canger (Karttunen 2005, 450).

At a more advanced level, singers might consider the impact that dialects would have had on language pronunciation in colonial New Spain, as both Spanish and Indigenous peoples sang in one another's languages as non-native speakers. Just as the modern *bel canto*-trained singer might utilize French, German, Italian, or Spanish dialects when singing in Latin, so too might we consider the possibilities of Nahuatl-influenced Spanish

and vice versa (not to mention the hundreds of additional languages spoken in these regions). Singers might consult Margarita Hidalgo's*The Diversification of Mexican Spanish* for detailed considerations covering multiple regions and historical periods.

Concluding notes

The clash of cultures in New Spain resulted in massive shifts in musical traditions. It appears that most Indigenous groups' musical practices were significantly influenced by western European traditions (Mann 2010, 22).[28] And while it is seldom discussed, music of the western Europeans was also fundamentally changed by encounters with Indigenous and African styles. "The rigid structures of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Spanish institutions have had to give way to the Indigenous psyche… Music has provided the accompaniment, the disguise, the text, and the amplitude of meanings in this dance of give-and-take" (Robertson-DeCarbo 1992, 24-25).

Accordingly, when programming repertoire from New Spain, mutually entangled cultural influences beg examination, which impacts both understanding and performance applications. Score-based analyses of musical details as well as research into the composer, the institution, and the region the music came from reveal pertinent information for performance related to the background provided in this chapter. In addition, Indigenous religious and spiritual contexts vocalists require respectful consideration; we recall that musics of Indigenous peoples were intricately woven into spiritual, religious, and other cultural practices. Certain percussion instruments, as

[28] This is apparently with the exception of the Hopi, among whom ethnography reveals musical practices did not change significantly with western European influence (Mann 22).

mentioned in this chapter, were considered sacred, and they and the music they are associated with call for a reverent approach.[29] It is also important to take particular car with Indigenous sacred traditions that have (often forcibly) been subsumed into the Christian narrative, which is the case as we perform musics from Christian missions and cathedrals in New Spain, and as we frequently stage those performances in Christian churches today.

In Chapter IV, I will consider voice-specific observations within Mexica musico-cultural context. Finally, I will apply this chapter's musico-cultural background (along with Chapter IV's voice considerations) to performance in Chapter V.

[29] Performers in the United States often unthinkingly treat (non-Western-classical) percussion traditions as frivolous, but Indigenous American percussion traditions demand skill, understanding, and respect to the same degree that any Western classical musical instrumentation does.

Chapter IV: Mexica Voice-Acts

Outside of Spanish-controlled ecclesiastical contexts, little attention has been paid to the music, let alone the voices, of Mexica culture (e.g. Ramos-Kittrell 2016, Tomlinson 2007). Because of the lack of scholarship and discussion around these issues, vocalists are unlikely to consider Mexica cultural influences upon repertoire from New Spain, let alone the possibility of distinct Mexica concepts of the voice. More broadly, the nearly complete exclusion of non-*bel canto* voice practices in US voice institutions implicitly (and sometimes explicitly) peddles the supremacy of White western European voice cultures over all Other voice cultures (as discussed in Chapter II). For these reasons, *bel canto*-trained vocalists may produce our voices in problematically racializing and/or culturally erasing ways when performing Mexica-influenced music (e.g. Eidsheim 2019, Tagg 2012, Malawey 2020).

As discussed in Chapter II, in order to present appropriately culturally-informed vocal performance, we must consider voice culture. In this chapter, I critically examine Mexica concepts of voice, and I begin to examine Mexica vocal sounds. To elucidate voice-cultural context, I draw from Gary Tomlinson's *The Singing of the New World*. To explore sonic material, I analyze linguistic clues, I investigate Nahuatl vocabulary relating to the voice, and I consider colonial Spaniards' descriptions of Mexica vocalisms (e.g. Molina 1571, Lockhart 2011, Tomlinson 2007, Mann 2010). Here, I apply Eidsheim's concept of listening to listening (discussed in Chapter II) by drawing from Mexica sources about Mexica voice culture. In addition to literary sources, I consulted with Nahuatl speaker and historical scholar Stephanie Wood to provide insight into

specific translations about which I had questions. [30] Ultimately, I aim to demonstrate that an investigation of sounds from the past is not only intellectually enlightening but yields information for technical application to vocal practice in the present and contributes to ethical cultural representation, as discussed in previous chapters.

Mexica concepts of voice

It comes as no surprise that scholars have imposed western European colonial constructs onto the categorization of Mexica voices. We know from discussion in Chapter II that western European-derived, unmarked dominant ideologies – the *bel* canto voice among them – hold powerful sway, despite (and perhaps because) of the fact that they go unnoticed. Similarly, Tomlinson describes scholars' tendency to write around Mexica voice-acts altogether because they assume singing and the voice to be implicitly understood under western European terms. But Tomlinson emphasizes that we cannot assume an implicit understanding of voice-acts among the Mexicas. "We have no reason to believe that singing was similarly invisible to the Nahuas, every reason to believe the opposite" (Tomlinson 2007, 64). Tomlinson creates the terms Mexica "utterances," "voice-acts," and "song-acts" to avoid imposing further colonial constructs on Mexica peoples.

Tomlinson points out that during the colonial period, Europeans imposed categories of poetry, speech, and song upon Mexica utterances. By the mid-20th century, scholars

[30] It was also my intention to inform this chapter through ethnographic fieldwork in collaboration with Nahua musicians in Oaxaca, where I would have utilized ethnographic analogy to examine what (if any) historic Mexica music practices may be analogous to modern Nahua music practices. However, my travel was impeded by the COVID-19 pandemic. I hope to incorporate Nahua perspectives into future research.

grouped the Mexica utterance largely into literature and namely into poetry and prose; they specified religious, dramatic, epic, and lyric poetry, and didactic, historical, and imaginative prose. A focus on metaphor played a large role in that process, as western European languages tend to be highly metaphorical. By examining Nahuatl texts in the *Cantares mexicanos*, however, Tomlinson argues that scholars should focus on metonymy[31] rather than metaphor. "Perceiving these contacts between things might be a matter of traversing the world linguistically in a different way than we customarily do, of linking signs with signs rather than separating them" (Tomlinson 2007, 27). In other words, metonymic (rather than metaphorical) readings may better suit other cultural-linguistic settings.

Most scholars read the material allusions to voice-acts as metaphors, but Tomlinson posits, through careful examination of Nahuatl grammar, that they exemplify an understanding of voice-acts linked literally to material things. In western European-derived cultures, voices often carry physiological and aesthetic associations, as discussed in Chapter II. In contrast, while the Mexica did sometimes include emotional aesthetic associations with voice-acts, the *Cantares mexicanos* most often linked voice-acts to material things in the environment. While the *bel canto* voice theoretically features a continuous material field (as discussed in Chapter II), Mexica voice-acts seem attached to materials in a different way.

[31] Metonymy, meaning "change of name," is the substitution of an associated word for an object or concept. For example, in the phrase, "we swear loyalty to the crown," "crown" is a metonym for royalty. In the phrase, "you have my heart," "heart" is a metonym for love. Metonymy is differentiated from metaphor in that metaphors make a comparison or describe an attribute.

For example, perhaps the most common characterization of the song-act in the *Cantares mexicanos* is of flowers in action. In fact, it seems more than a characterization; flower-acts seem almost inextricable from song-acts. Tomlinson argues that allusions to flowers and other material things are not metaphor; they are linked metonyms. "The producing of flowers through acts of singing and drumming was something other than an elegancy of poetic image, something tending more toward a perceived, palpable reality… Nahua song was florid in a manner distant from our sensibilities, in touch with the flowers one could see and smell all around" (Tomlinson 2007, 66). Tomlinson offers many excerpts from the *Cantares mexicanos* to support his point. "Flowers appear; they sprout, unfold, burst into bloom, yeehuaya! From your belly flow song-flowers; then you shake them out, you scatter them, you the singer! Ohuaya!" (Tomlinson 2007, 65). "[E]verywhere I give voice, yehuaya, there is a blooming-place of flowers, there is a welling up of song. Aya! There lives my heart" (quoted from *Cantares* in Tomlinson 2007, 65).

Here, Tomlinson points out important translation details. He translates *nontlatoa* (from *tlahtoa*) as "I give voice," when it would normally be translated as "I speak." He justifies this by pulling from Molina's alternate definition of *nontlatoa,* which refers to the chirping or singing of birds. By including bird sounds, Tomlinson argues that "the meaning of *tlahtoa* often seems to inch from speech toward song even for human voices" (Tomlinson 2007, 65). Tomlinson's translation of "I give voice" (rather than "I speak") is also helpful in that it avoids colonial distinctions between speech and singing and allows for a more expansive conception of voice-acts, which could be linked to a spectrum of voicings, even birds' voice-acts. It is true that birds could similarly sing and produce

flowers. “The jingle-bell-bird answers – goes along singing, flower-spreading” (quoted from *Cantares* in Tomlinson 2007, 69). This text is also interesting because both color and sound carried sacred power, particularly in jingling metals. Drumming also produced and was associated with flowers. “Strike well your flower-drum, singer! Yeehuaya! Let there be tree blossoms and cacao flowers; let them scatter and drizzle down here beside the drum” (quoted from *Cantares* in Tomlinson 2007, 66).

Verbs attached to song-flowers are materially active; they twist, drizzle, and get drunk. One verb is “song-spread” (*noncuicamanaco*), a compound word form. Specifically, Tomlinson’s reading (via Molina) suggests “spread” as the patting of a song like a corn tortilla or the laying of a song on an altar. Tomlinson notes that song also appears alongside “turquoises, jewelry, precious metals, metal bells, brightly colored bird feathers, butterflies, and even painted pictures” (Tomlinson 2007, 67). Song less frequently fully takes the form of these things, as it did flowers. “He quetzal-plume-looses them, he disperses, aya, the songs of the giver of life” (Tomlinson 2007, 68). “I am soaring about… I compose; I flower-sing. It is a song-butterfly” (Tomlinson 2007, 68).

In some instances, direct links emerge between emotions, materials, and what I would term “breath-acts” from a Western perspective. “In my hands lie my sighing-shield-flowers. I raise a sad song; I turquoise-necklace-offer up a good song” (quoted from *Cantares* in Tomlinson 2007, 68). Here, *elcicihuilizchimalxochitlon* is the compound word translated as sighing-shield-flowers. The word for sigh itself, *elcihcihuiliztli*, is complex. It is rooted in the word for liver (which was thought to produce “animating

substances" and negative passions) and connected to a word that Tomlinson likens to "panting" (though it is elsewhere literally defined as "hurry") (Wood). Tomlinson links it to another word, *ihiyotl,* which he defines as "a fundamental, airy, vital substance in Mexica psychophysiology, emanating from the liver" (Tomlinson 2007, 68), and which is defined as "breath, respiration; life; sustenance" in Stephanie Wood's *Nahuatl Dictionary.*

In some of the *Cantares mexicanos* examples above, Nahuatl text makes bodily references to the belly, heart, and liver. You will recall "from your belly flow song-flowers" and "there is a welling up of song... There lives my heart" (Tomlinson 2007, 65). In addition, Molina's 16th century records indicate that the Mexica may relate the voice to its physical production. For example, *tozquitl* meant "throat, voice, or the voice of the person who sings." *Tzatzatzia* refers to "the vocal cords, the place in the throat from which a loud voice comes." However, it may be that Spaniards spurred the creation of the words *tozquitl* and *tzatzatzia,* thereby imposing western European concepts of voicings on the Mexica language itself.

In Tomlinson's process, we encounter interesting challenges in the cultural understanding of voice-acts. While Tomlinson criticizes and tries to resist colonially-influenced categorization, doing so is almost impossible. Early in his book, he contends that singing ("and its musical offshoots"), speaking, and writing are "three fundamental modes of human cultural expression" (Tomlinson 2007, 5). But I question whether there would have been a clear delineation between singing and speaking in Mexica culture, which has

long been a topic of debate among ethnomusicologists. (See discussion of *nontlatoa* above.) Tomlinson does not identify what that delineation would have been, nor how he defines and differentiates singing and speaking. He does include musical offshoots of singing, which does allow the singing category to include a greater spectrum of voicings, but he may further complicate the concept with his invocation of "music," which has variable definitions cross-culturally. It seems likely to me that in some cultures, and possibly among the Mexica, there are voicings that are neither speaking nor singing nor other musical offshoots (sacred chanting, for example, across a variety of cultures).

Ultimately, "the things that mattered most in these realms of expression – flowers, gems, petals, feathers, painted pictographs, and uttered words alike – were interwoven in a weft of materiality so tight that each gained its signifying powers through its contact with the others" (Tomlinson 2007, 71).

Nahuatl vocabulary with sonic suggestions

In my examination of Nahuatl vocabulary thus far, I have grouped results into three categories: screaming, shrieking, and howling; speech, chant, and heightened vocalisms; and bird sounds. It is not my intention to present these categories of Mexica voicings as either exhaustive or definitive. Rather, the categories serve to group the (limited) literary research I have gathered on the subject. In addition, I intentionally group the categories by descriptors that would be recognizable (and often rejected) by *bel canto* practice, as I hope to draw *bel canto* practitioners' attention to them. In my analysis of Nahuatl

language and written colonial sources, I rely heavily on historian and Nahuatl language scholar Stephanie Wood's advice as well as her online *Nahuatl Dictionary.*

Screaming, shrieking, and howling

In *The Power of Song: Music and Dance in the Mission Communities of Northern New Spain, 1590-1810* (2010), Kristin Dutcher Mann notes that music played a role at wartime in northern New Spain. It often involved prolonged "screaming and wailing" at rapid speeds and extreme pitch registers, and individuals were often under the influence of hallucinogens (Mann 2010, 32). Similarly, under "netotiliztli" in Wood's online *Nahuatl Dictionary*, Bierhorst and Wood note that the "flower and song" of the Mexica *netotiliztli* likely relate to "war and music." It is well-known that flowers are linked both to songs and to war in Mexica culture; and the "war cry is also like a bird song or shriek." Sonically, then, we have links between wailing, war cries, birdsong, and human song.

Stephanie Wood explained to me that during wartime, the Mexica practiced rapid covering and uncovering of the mouth while yelling. Because this behavior is commonly associated with the Plains Indians, Wood suggested that the Plains Indians may have brought the practice to the Mexica through their enormous, well-documented trading network. This brings up the important perspective of characterizing vocalisms as learned, shared, and entrained behaviors that can travel (related to content discussed in Chapter II, namely Eidsheim's discussion of essence, entrainment, and style and technique). However, it is certainly possible that the Mexica developed this behavior separately from the Plains Indians, or perhaps the reverse,

Recalling Jesuits Adamo Gilg's and Joseph Och's observations about Indigenous practices in early colonial Sonora (discussed in Chapter III), we observe descriptions from a western European perspective of "howling" and "bellowing." I further discuss the implications of these descriptions in the conclusion to this chapter.

Speech, recitation, chant, intoning, and singing (and dancing?)

Several sources suggest a differentiation between recitation, chanting, and singing. An example emerges under the *"cuicatl"* (music, song, or singing) entry in Wood's *Nahuatl Dictionary*, which includes a 1551 account of Mexica and Spanish people playing secular music together. "Here begins a song called a plain song of Huexotzinco as it was recited by the lords of Huexotzinco. These songs are divided into three classes, the songs of the nobles or of the eagles, the flower songs, and the songs of destitution... This song was sung at the house of..." and it goes on.[32] Here, the translator, Brinton, translates one Nahuatl word as "recited" and another as "sung." Wood pointed out that the word Brinton translated as "recited" (*moquichitoya*) is based in the word *itoya,* which means "say," so the root of the word appears to be speech-oriented. Western concepts also root recitation in speech; could this be an overlap in cultural concepts?

Additional Nahuatl language indicates recitation and chanting. The *Nahuatl Dictionary* records *"nanquilia"* as "reciting responses in a ceremony." It cites *"tecpoyu tlatolli"* as an "announcement recited by a town crier." Wood explained to me that town crying was

[32] The reader might take note of these three categories of song identified by Mexica people themselves (in contrast to my *bel canto* influenced categorizations in the headings).

a Spanish tradition brought to the Mexica. Town criers could speak Nahuatl and Spanish, and they were sometimes Afro-Mexican.[33] Both entries suggest that the concept of recitation was likely unpitched, or at least not definitively pitched, also tracking with Western concepts. Was ceremonial recitation considered distinct from other forms of recitation, like that of town criers?

Again, my reading of the Codex Chimalpahin's *"cuicatl"* entry leads me to believe that the Mexica may have differentiated chant from singing. "And then and there he chanted his songs. There was singing. Also he danced." Here, the entry distinguishes not just between chanting and singing, but also between those two concepts and dancing. Was dance considered an integral part of singing, or was it recognized as a related but distinct activity? Wood pointed out to me that, in the entry, *oqueuh* seems to be the word that was translated by Schroeder as "chant." The root *ehua* means "to sing a song," and it is transitive, so it inherently takes out an action on something. Following the *ehua* thread, Wood translated *meuhqui,* a related world, as "intone" or "to be intoned," and *icuic,* another related word, as "his songs." It appears again, then, that chanting, intoning, and singing may have been conceptually related but distinct acts. However, it is important again to consider that the codex writer himself, Chimalpahin (who was a Mexica annalist born into the colonial period and lived from 1579-1660), and/or the translators of these terms could have been influenced by Spanish concepts of distinct chanting, intoning, and singing acts.

[33] Bilingual and/or mixed-race town criers were common throughout the early colonial Americas.

In addition, Carrasco mentions that the Mexica "chanted in the 15th and 16th centuries about the Toltec priest-king: 'Truly with him it began, truly from him it flowed out, from Quetzalcoatl—all art and knowledge'" (Carrasco 36). Carrasco's original source for the word he translates as "chant" is still unclear to me, but it suggests an organized practice of vocalizing, with text still intact, that deserves further attention. Vocabulary that indicated different types of vocal production also existed. *Tozcatlapaltilia,* for example, meant "to belt out one's voice, or to sing fast and high" (Wood).

Bird sounds

Songs of the eagles

Returning to the *"cuicatl"* entry, the "songs of the nobles or of the eagles" links both songs and nobles to eagles. This might suggest "eagle-like" sounds and/or affective noble qualities, though it is unclear how that may have influenced the sound. Wood pointed out that eagles were also a knighthood of warriors and were very important to the Mexica people. This recalls Tomlinson's comments on metonymy in Mexica culture and the earlier observation that the "war cry is also like a bird song or shriek." Could it be that warriors were not only *like* eagles, but actually *were* eagles (or vice versa) or produced eagles, making them appear in the sky? Or could they have vocally embodied eagle characteristics? If the warriors were eagles, then it could be that warrior songs were eagle songs, which is consistent with the bird shrieks used in battles.

Pipilcuicatl

Under *"cuicatl"* in the *Nahuatl dictionary*, the term *pipilcuicatl* (with its root in the word "cuicatl") is translated into Spanish by García as "the singing of the pilli," and Garibay interprets it as "the singing of children." The entry indicates that the *Cantares Mexicanos* did not mention this type of singing but that church singers apparently studied it. It could be that *pipilcuicatl* refers to children singing in church or elsewhere, as there were music schools for children, but García's entry under *"pipilcuicatl"* itself seems to indicate adult singers (see next paragraph). When I first encountered it, it struck me that *pipilcuicatl* might refer to adult women learning to sing like boy sopranos, which, as far as we know, was likely the desired vocal effect for sopranos in western Europe at the time. Instead, Wood suggested to me that *pipilcuicatl* could signify (a) noble Indigenous music, (b) music that imitated the sounds of turkeys, or (c) both.

Under "*pipilcuicatl*," García again describes *pipilcuicatl* as "the singing of the pilli," but in contrast to Garibay, he interprets it as "the singing of the nobles." (Under "pilli," Molina clarifies that the word can signify either nobles or children.) Wood explained to me that the singers described in this excerpt, called *cantores macehuales*, were Mexica commoners being fed by people who worked in the church. In this context, Wood ventured, *pipilcuicatl* could have indicated the teaching of noble Indigenous music to those commoner singers. I am unsure whether there was music specifically associated with noble Indigenous people, but this could have been the case. Thinking metonymically, it could also be that nobles and children are linked here in some way.

However, Wood also explained that the word *"pipil"* (as in *pipilcuicatl*) signifies a turkey sound. Turkeys were hugely culturally significant to the Mexica, and they remain so to Nahuas today. Turkeys were not only a primary food source; they were integrated into daily life. The Mexica carried (and Nahuas still carry) live turkeys in festivals. Today, Nahuas make paper mache turkeys to put on their heads, and turkey imitations commonly occur in dance. As mentioned in the case of the eagle songs above, Mexica people often integrated birdsong into their speech and music. In modern-day Oaxaca (and the Canary Islands), people use a whistle language; they can effectively communicate entirely through whistling.

By this reading, we return to Wood's original suggestion. Recall that *cuicatl* means music, song, or singing. An exact translation of *pipilcuicatl*, then, could read "turkey-song." Then, the source that indicates it as "the song of the nobles" could add another dimension and cast it as "the nobles' turkey-song." This brings us back to metonymic analyses, linking turkeys to nobles and/or children, and it provokes questions. Is this yet another way in which the Mexica linked song to important animate material? We recall that the Mexica did recognize birds as capable of singing. Were turkeys considered birds? Could their sounds also be called singing? Did the singers make turkey-like sounds, or is the invocation of the turkey only metonymic or affective?

Concluding Notes

For the modern *bel* canto-trained vocalist, concepts like metonymy and sonic descriptions like these can radically alter performance practice toward being more culturally-

informed. They provide technical ideas for singers to experiment with from conceptual, physiological-sonic, and staging perspectives. (See Chapter V for applications to a performance practice example.) In addition, they challenge us to confront our *bel canto* voice assumptions and even, perhaps, our theoretical models of the voice. Questions for ongoing reflection include: How might Tomlinson's focus on metonymy impact our theories of voice? Do the voice models proposed by Eidsheim, Harkness, and Tagg reflect these themes?

For direct application to performance practice, animal sounds are particularly helpful to modern-day singers in that they provide vocalists with living representations to model (as animals likely sounded the same 500 years ago as they do now). That said, it is unclear whether the Mexica actively produced sounds like these, or if the relationships were otherwise metonymic or affectual. If they did produce these sounds, these descriptions do not prescribe when and how to do so. Each culture reproduces animal sounds in different ways, which makes the process interpretive and highly subjective. In addition, even if given the exact sounds, reproducing them would be ethically tricky. For a White Western vocalist to produce "animalistic" sounds (without explanation) when singing the music of New Spain means to risk conflating – in the context of a White Western audience – the cultures of New Spain with animalistic tendencies. While such a comparison may not have been offensive within its original context, as the Mexica revered many animals, doing so in a Western context carries associations with inferiority of Indigenous peoples on a variety of levels. If performing with animal-inspired sounds, then, singers would do

well to explicitly contextualize the sounds for their audience to not trivialize Indigenous cultures.

In addition, comments like those of Gilg and Och, which referred to howling, unintelligibility, wailing, monotony, repetition, and bellowing, reveal a spectrum of Indigenous voicings and voice practices that Spaniards did not recognize from among western European accepted voicings. Gilg and Och also revealed Spanish aesthetic preferences, describing the Indigenous voicings with harsh judgment in terms that carry negative connotations. That said, Och's caveat that the "unaccustomed" ear might find Indigenous vocal sounds disagreeable at least allowed that an accustomed listener might find the sounds agreeable, pointing to the cultural specificity of vocal preferences. Vocalists today might ask themselves how they have described Indigenous singing practices from around the world, and this can importantly remind vocalists of the ways in which we still impose western European voicing concepts and vocal aesthetics onto all voicings. Recalling Chapter II's discussion, vocalists can reflect particularly on *bel canto* concepts of health that we might implicitly apply to Mexica voice-act descriptors. What *bel canto* judgments do we, without realizing, project onto terms like "howling" and "turkey-song"? How might we approach such sounds in curious, non-judgmental, respectful, and informed ways?

Chapter V:
Culturally-Informed Vocal Performance Application:
"Tleycantimo choquilia (mestizo e indio)"

For application of the concepts discussed throughout this thesis, let us consider Gaspar Fernándes' "Tleycantimo choquilia (mestizo e indio)." Fernándes, who was originally from Portugal, composed the five-voice villancico in 1611, at which time he was the maestro de capilla at the cathedral in Puebla de los Ángeles in New Spain.

Score variations in text and musical layout

and implications for culturally-informed practice

A common set of challenges that emerges when searching for the score for "Tleycantimo choquiliya" plays importantly into culturally-informed performance. The manuscript is difficult to access, and available transcriptions of the manuscript differ in content in ways that cannot be verified without access to the manuscript. In the case of "Tleycantimo choquiliya," the manuscript can only be accessed in person in the Oaxaca Cathedral. The most readily available score in the United States, found in digital formats online, is a transcription with no information about who transcribed it or what source they transcribed it from (see Appendix). The next most available score is the transcription made by Robert Stevenson from the original manuscript in the Oaxaca Cathedral, which exists in both his *Renaissance and Baroque Musical Sources in the Americas* and his *Latin American Colonial Music Anthology*. Interestingly, the two scores differ considerably in the text they provide.

Figure 2

Stevenson:	**Anonymous:**
Tleycantimo choquilia,	Tleycan timochoquilia,
mis prasedes, mi apission.	mis placeres, mi afición.
Alleloya.	Aleloya.
Dejalto el llando creçida,	Deja tú el llanto que crece,
Mizalto el mulo y el guey,	mira tú el mulo y el buey,
Jimoiol lali mi rey	ximoyollali mi rey,
tleinmiz tolinia mi bida.	¿tlein mitzolinia mi vida?
No se porque de neis pena,	No sé por qué tenéis pena,
tan linto cara de rosa,	tan lindo cara de rosa,
noe pihol lochin, niño hermosa,	Noepyollotzin, niño hermoso,
no chalchiuh asojena.	nochalchiuh, noazucena.
Jesos de mi goraçon,	Jesús de mi corazón,
no lloreis mi pantasia.	no lloréis, mi fantasía.

Figure 2. Text from Stevenson's score and the anonymous score. (Figure created by Bethany Battafarano.)

Text variations between scores[34]

The differences in text are particularly interesting because they can reveal multiple levels of cultural influence. First, we can consider that Nahuatl is a transliterated text. As a language taken from oral, glyph, and pictorial traditions and transliterated into the Roman alphabet diversely over centuries, Nahuatl spellings in the Roman alphabet differ considerably (as discussed in Chapter III). Some differences in Nahuatl spellings between Stevenson's score and the anonymous score could result from different transliterations of Nahuatl. That is most believable where possible pronunciations of the different transliterations seem very similar, such as in "tleycantimo choquilia" versus "tleycan

[34] In addition to the text discussed here, there appear to be three typographical errors in Stevenson's score. It is possible that Stevenson made them intentionally in faithfulness to typos in the original manuscript, but it seems unlikely, as I would imagine Stevenson would have explicitly stated that if so. The first reads "tleycantino" in mm. 7 of the tiple 1 line. The second reads "llorais" in mm. 38 of the alto line. In both cases, multiple repeats of the two words spell them correctly as written in the full text above. The third reads "hermosa" in mm. 33 of the tenor line, where it should (in grammatically correct Spanish) read "hermoso."

timochoquilia," "jimoiol lali" versus "ximoyollali," and "noe pihol lochin" versus "noepyollotzin." In fact, having two different spellings of the same words can sometimes help vocalists to better approximate pronunciation, particularly for unfamiliar linguistic sounds. In the case of "jimoiol lali" and "ximoyollali," for example, vocalists can approximate pronunciation of the first sound with tongue placement between [j] and [ʃ].

However, there are other spelling differences that cannot amount to Nahuatl transliteration discrepancies. If we were to assume that Stevenson's transcription is faithful to the original Gaspar Fernándes manuscript and that the anonymous transcription is not, there could be several explanations. To modern Spanish speakers, much of Stevenson's text appears strange, seeming either misspelled or possibly borrowed from French or Portuguese, while the anonymous transcription appears to be "correct" Spanish. Fernandes' Portuguese background could come into play here. While none of the text is in Portuguese, Portuguese could have influenced Fernandes' spellings of Spanish words.

In addition, historical language practices could play a role in the strange-looking Spanish, as historical Spanish spellings and pronunciations from around 1600 differed from modern Spanish, and Spanish in New Spain bore additional differences as it mixed with Indigenous languages (as discussed in Chapter III). Under this explanation, it could be that Stevenson faithfully copied Fernándes' Portuguese-influenced and Renaissance New Spanish Spanish, and the anonymous transcription modernized the text to better translate to modern Spanish-speaking audiences. If that is the case, which seems likely, the

anonymous transcription serves as an example of conscious updates to historical practices to better engage with living linguistic traditions (and the people who use them) today. Whichever text performers choose to use, they benefit from having this context in order to make informed choices for their performance context.

Musical layout variations between scores

Beyond the text, the two scores differ in musical layout. Transcribers may update a transcription's layout from the original manuscript for many reasons, such as to adapt to new score sizes or to organize the material in a way that the transcriber thinks makes it clearer from a visual, organizational, or textual standpoint. While reorganization of the layout can be helpful, it is useful to reflect on the ways that this can result from bias and even alter performance practice. Transcribers might, for example, update an old score to suit a modern cosmopolitan context. The anonymous transcription, instead of using Stevenson's (and presumably the manuscript's) Tiple 1, Tiple 2, Alto, Tenor, and Bajo, renames the voice parts to Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Baritone, and Bass. This goes further than simply translating words from Spanish to the typical cosmopolitan choral Latin-English. (In that case, the original Alto and Tenor would have then stayed the same.) Instead, the transcriber renames the Alto line Tenor and the Tenor line Baritone to suit the gendered voicings that we typically see in choral singing in the United States (and across Western cosmopolitan settings) today.

For those wondering whether women would have been excluded in favor of boy sopranos and countertenors on the Tiple lines, recall that women did sing polyphonically in New

Spain (as discussed in Chapter III). Whether they would have sung with men is unclear. Even if mixed singing were banned, however, musicians' propensity for breaking the rules in colonial New Spain suggests that mixed singing may still have happened. Vocalists today may weigh all possibilities, as such alterations could change the voice part singing each line, thus possibly altering timbres and techniques as voices are placed at altered tessituras.

Analysis for additional musico-cultural context and indications for culturally-informed vocal performance

Additional musico-cultural context

The first indications of cultural context we see in the score emerge in the title, "Tleycantimo choquilia (mestizo e indio)." (See the translation in Figure 2 below.) "Mestizo" was a Spanish term that referred to mixed-race people, sometimes to Spaniards, and generally to people who were lighter skinned; "mestizo" in this context likely refers to the Spanish language, the language spoken by "mestizo" people. "Indio" (today considered a racial slur in many contexts) was a Spanish term that referred to Indigenous people and generally to people who were darker skinned; in this context, it likely refers to the Nahuatl language. Thus, in the title, we see both Nahuatl and Spanish languages, a direct reference to the combined use of those languages, and related racial concepts, all of which reflects the multicultural setting in Puebla de los Ángeles in the early 1600s. Below, in the left-hand column, green marks Spanish text, blue marks Nahuatl text, and purple marks hybrid Nahuatl-Spanish text. In the English translation, bolded words represent possible Mexica cultural influences.

Figure 3

Tleycan timochoquilia (mestizo e indio)	**Why do you weep? (Spanish and Nahuatl)**
Tleycan timochoquilia,	Why do you weep?
mis placeres, mi afición.	My pleasures, my love.
Aleloya.	Hallelujah.
Deja tú el llanto que crece,	Stop the tears that are pooling,
mira tú el mulo y el buey,	look at the mule and the ox,
ximoyollali mi rey,	cheer up, my king,
¿tlein mitzolinia mi vida?	what ails you, my life?
No sé por qué tenéis pena,	I don't know why you are sad,
tan lindo cara de rosa,	so sweet, **face of a rose,**
Noepyollotzin, niño hermoso,	**my precious pearl**, beautiful boy,
nochalchiuh, noazucena.	**my jade, my lily.**
Jesús de mi corazón,	Jesus of my heart
no lloréis, mi fantasía.	don't cry, my fantasy.

Figure 3. Modern Spanish text from the anonymous score with translation by Bethany Battafarano. Green marks Spanish text, blue marks Nahuatl text, and purple marks hybrid Nahuatl-Spanish text. (Figure created by Bethany Battafarano.)

In addition, we see Mexica metonymic material connections with voice acts, mutually entangled spiritual and religious cultures, and rhythms possibly from Mexica and/or African practices. Metonymic material connections with voice acts in Mexica culture (as discussed in Chapter IV) come to mind upon seeing the textual references to flowers and precious minerals: rose, pearl, jade, and lily. They also point us to the mutually entangled spiritual and religious cultures (as discussed in Chapter III); in this villancico (characterized by its estribillo and coplas) composed for the Puebla de los Ángeles Catholic cathedral, Catholic religious signs like "hallelujah," Jesus, and the mule and ox from Jesus' stable birth exist alongside references to the precious Mexica items. This may have occurred intentionally, as a method to attract and convert Mexica people, or unintentionally, as an example of Lockhart's concept of Double Mistaken Identity, or perhaps somewhere in between. Finally, triplet-oriented rhythms could have been

influenced by Indigenous and/or African practices (as discussed in Chapter III); the piece features frequent hemiolas and an accented downbeat pattern (short accented-long unaccented) in the 3/4 meter.

Additional performance applications

Culturally-informed background regarding race, instrumentation, language, cosmology, and voice-acts impacts performance practice, including casting, preparation, voice production, staging, and program notes. First and foremost, performers may consider race, which could impact rostering and casting; representational casting can be particularly important for repertoire like "Tleycantimo choquilia" that draws from diverse (and, though in this case historic, still salient) cultural experiences and colonial racial hierarchies, and it is also a general need across all programming (as discussed in Chapter I). Similarly, performers might consider percussion instruments, such as rattles and drums, but should be sure to hire professional, culturally-informed percussionists; in this case, percussionists would create a part from what are likely Mexica and/or African-influenced rhythms, and it is important for performers to indicate knowledge of and respect for the traditions (as discussed in Chapter I).[35] In addition, as is common practice for western European languages, vocalists will know to study Nahuatl and Spanish languages for pronunciation and basic linguistic understanding, preferably directly with Nahuatl and Spanish diction coaches; colonial histories make language preparation especially important (as discussed in Chapter III).

[35] We do well to hire professional, informed percussionists for New Spanish music for the same reasons that we would hire professional, experienced musicians for all elements of western European classical repertoire – musical accuracy, integrity, and quality, and to demonstrate respect for cultural traditions.

Regarding vocal practice, “Tleycantimo choquilia” both significantly predates *bel canto* schools of voice and bears Mexica cultural influence. Therefore, vocal practice likely differed from *bel canto* practices (as discussed in Chapter II). To begin, *bel canto*-trained vocalists may consciously acknowledge their *bel canto* vocal preferences and prepare to experiment with new physiological positionings, vocal sounds, and aesthetic preferences. For example, vocalists might recognize a *bel canto* propensity to manipulate their vocal physiologies in ways that produce an even vibrato, a legato line, and a *chiaroscuro* timbre, and instead choose to modify physiological positionings to sing with an altered style of vibrato or no vibrato, in a detached manner or with altered breath support, and in new timbres.

In incorporating Mexica voice-act perspectives, vocalists can apply Harkness’ concept of qualic tuning (as discussed in Chapter II) by immersing themselves in the socially ascribed values of Mexica voice culture and aligning their vocal sensory experiences accordingly. To begin, vocalists can consider the physiological, sonic, and conceptual elements of Mexica voice-acts (discussed in Chapter IV) and arrange activities to sensorily explore them. To experience Mexica concepts like “from your belly flow song flowers” and descriptions of song-flowers as twisting, drizzling, and getting drunk, vocalists can sing while imagining their voices flowing out of their bellies, and they can scatter flowers as they do so, imagining their voices moving together with the flowers. Activities that allow individuals to explore holistic embodiment and mental imagery, and to both sound their voices and move their bodies freely and independently, aid in this

process. These kinds of activities can be applied to other descriptors of Mexica voice-acts from Chapter IV, as well.

In addition, the specific content provided in the text will aid vocalists. For example, vocalists might explore the voice-act material connections in “Tleycantimo choquilia” by arranging sensory activities with roses, pearls, jades, and lilies. The activities might center around a set of exploratory sensory questions. How do the materials look, feel, and smell? How do their textures, weights, and temperatures feel in the hand? How do the materials move and sound in space? How do they influence vocalists’ feelings, experiences, movements, and sounds? In addition, vocalists might find, observe, and interact with roses, pearls, jades, and lilies in nature or, if that is not possible, in videos and reading, while engaging the same kinds of sensory questions listed above.

In performance, to communicate material connection to roses, pearls, jades, and lilies, performers might project images of the materials, wear costumes that resemble or are covered in them, hold them in their hands, place them throughout the performance space and among audience members, or scatter them (from their hands or from above) while singing. (They would also, of course, incorporate the vocal sounds, movements, concepts, and other elements that they had explored in the exercises described throughout this section.)

Concluding comments

As emphasized in previous chapters, New Spanish repertoire requires a critical consideration of messaging related to race and ethnicity in performance, whether that be through performers' identities, vocal choices, costuming, or other elements. In practice, culturally-informed voicing concepts can change the way we physically produce sounds and the ways we visually and aurally perform and stage them, but the need for (and benefit to) the practice extends beyond sonic and technical impacts. It is important to respect and create space for Indigenous heritages, traditions, and people, and dedicating time and resources to Indigenous approaches helps to demonstrate that. In terms of representational casting, when combined with systems of oppression, acts of poor representation communicate systemic oppression in immediate, personal, lived ways for Indigenous people; in contrast, acts of positive representation can manifest safety, support, and equal belonging. For Indigenous communities who have long been denied access by White communities, representative rostering is also an important step for equity and accessibility. Similarly, vocalists would do well to carefully communicate respect for and to genuinely pursue understanding of voice-act material connections, particularly given their important significance to the Mexica, as it is possible to mistakenly communicate a sense of exoticism or mockery in this process. One way to communicate intention is to prepare information such as program notes and concert announcements in ways that provide the relevant cultural context, as well as explanations for process and performance choices, to audience members.

For those of us trained principally in western European classical traditions like *bel canto,* the process of preparing and presenting culturally-informed repertoire from New Spain in these ways can seem both strange and daunting. It requires more time, effort, and intention of us than most western European-derived classical repertoire does. Furthermore, it asks us to depart from our traditional methods of preparation and performance and to experiment with unfamiliar practices and ideas; not knowing what kind of final product will emerge and how it will be received can feel unsettling. However, it can also be exciting, freeing, inspiring, and groundbreaking. It can draw support from people craving new, diverse, more culturally-informed experiences. Like any new experience, it can shake us out of our comfort zones and reinvigorate the ways that we go about all of our music-making. It can teach and transform us on personal and artistic levels, individually and across our field. It is well worth our time and effort. Repertoire from colonial New Spain deserves our time and attention, and our performers and audiences deserve to encounter it.

Chapter VI: Conclusion

Chan Park, commenting on *p'ansori*'s adaptation across many cultural contexts, reminds us that "musical cultures are not monolithic in their definitions but emergent, evolving and influencing one another within the society at large" (Park 2003, 274). As I stated in the first chapter, for vocalists, the goal of this thesis is not to peddle a perfectly accurate regurgitation of a historical practice. Musics, voices, and their associated social meanings change over time and in new cultural settings. Rather, the goal of this cross-cultural voice practice is to provide us with possibilities – to confront and lessen the damage done by harmful colonial practices, to build more respectful and welcoming spaces for Indigenous aesthetics and artists today, and to approach our craft with renewed inspiration, excitement, and conviction.

As I have continued performing throughout my research process, it has been invigorating to see that culturally-informed vocal performance for a historical practice is not only important and exciting but possible and impactful. It carries tangible applications for performance, from physical technique to vocal sounds to staging. It moves us to reconsider what we have normalized, in thought and practice, about what human voices can do, say, or be. In the process, we experience music and the world from new human perspectives. We reconceive of what it means for something to be natural, healthy, or beautiful. We begin to rethink our understandings of our voices and, by extension, ourselves. The practice of sonically, bodily, and conceptually shaking off old habits and

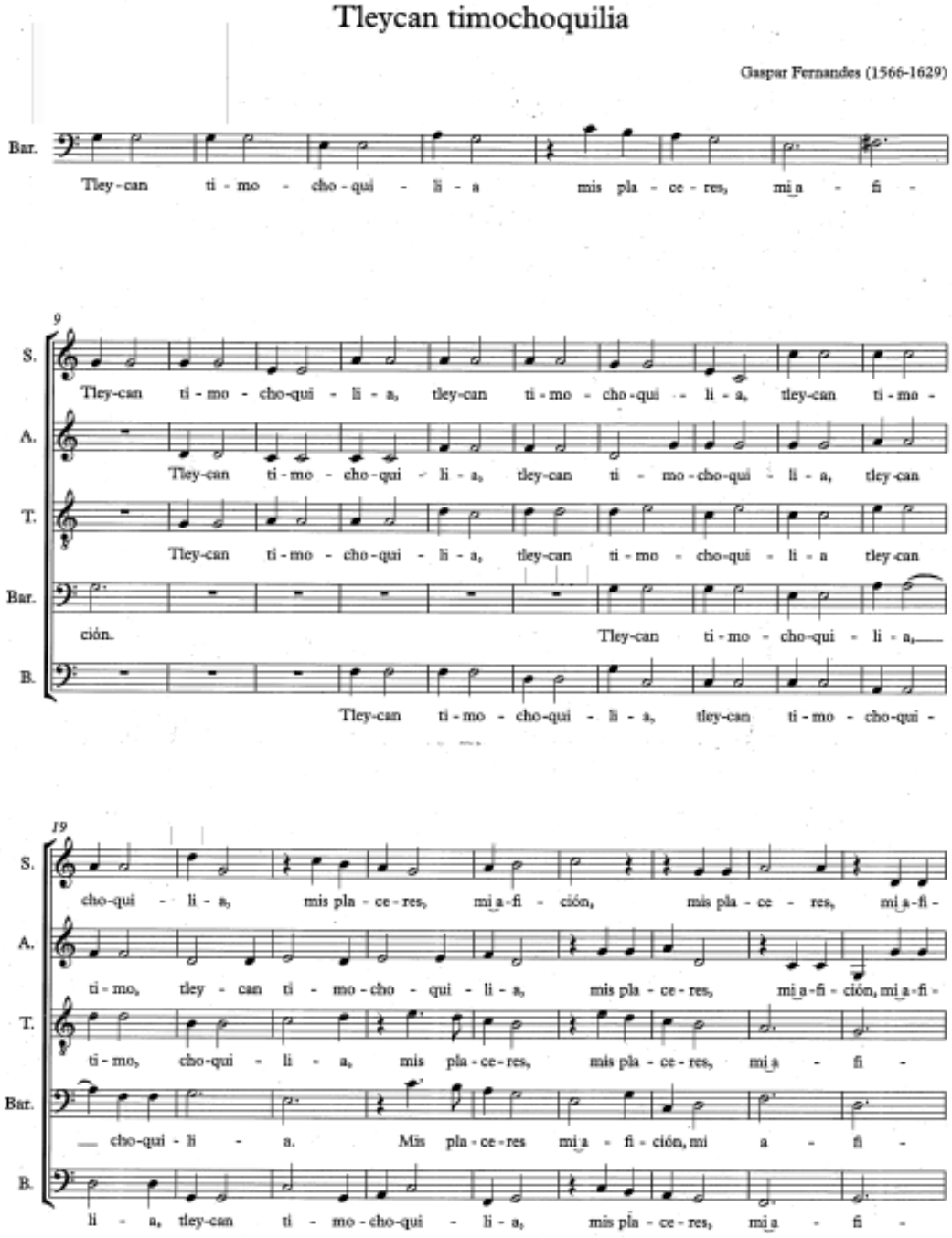
trying on new ones, of holistically attempting to embody another human experience, is transformative on not only a musical but a personal level.

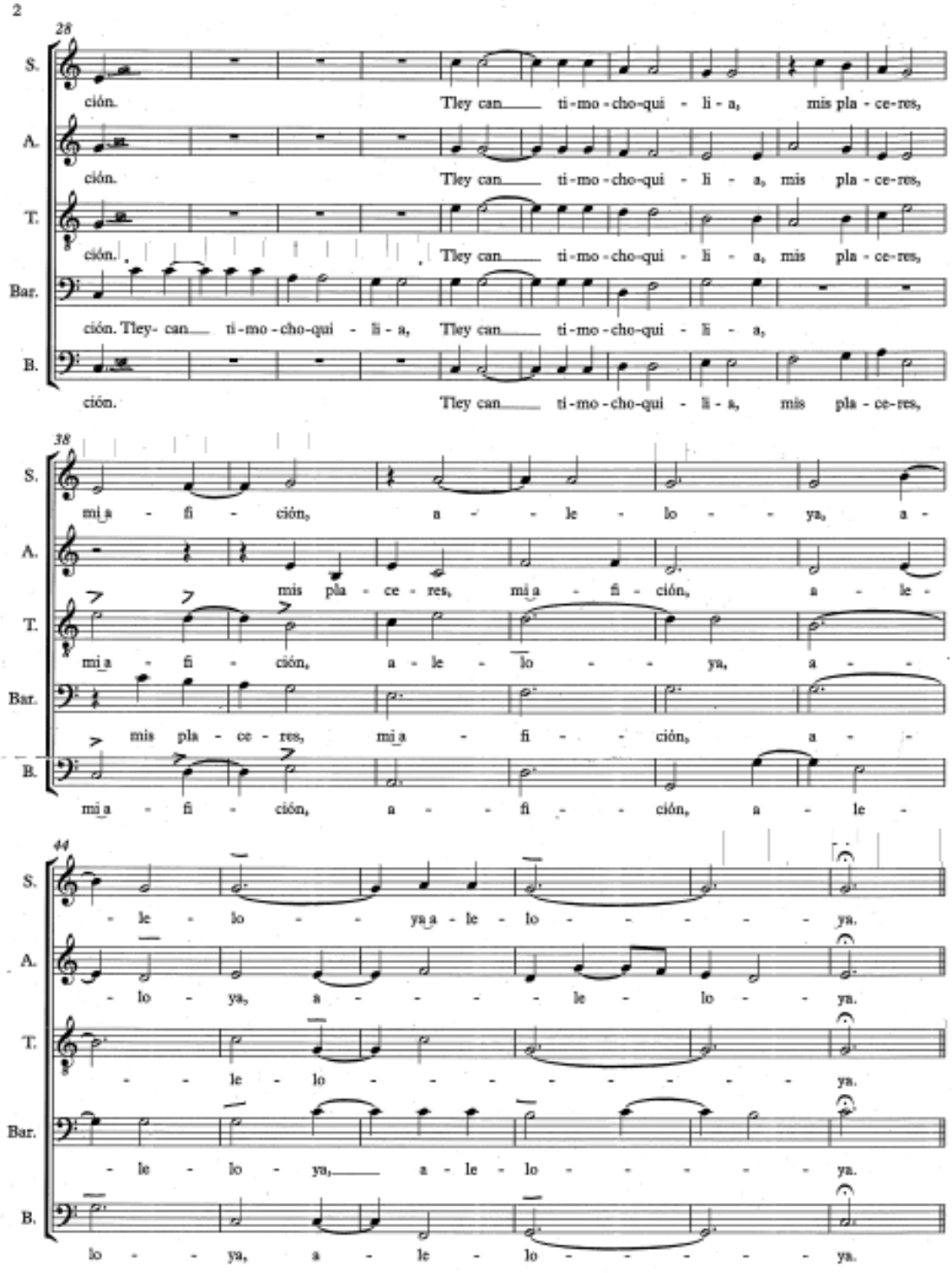
Moving forward, we *bel canto* vocalists are presented with exciting opportunities. We can reframe our approach. We can program more diversely, representatively, and inclusively. We can confront our own biases. We can center, listen to, learn from, and cede power to Indigenous people and their voices. We can continue to evaluate the relationships between race and the voice; for the music we program, we can research its cultural underpinnings, and we can question whether and how it is appropriate for us to produce voicings similarly to or differently from its traditions. Along the way, we can request permission and honor the privacy and sanctity of traditions when they do not belong to us.

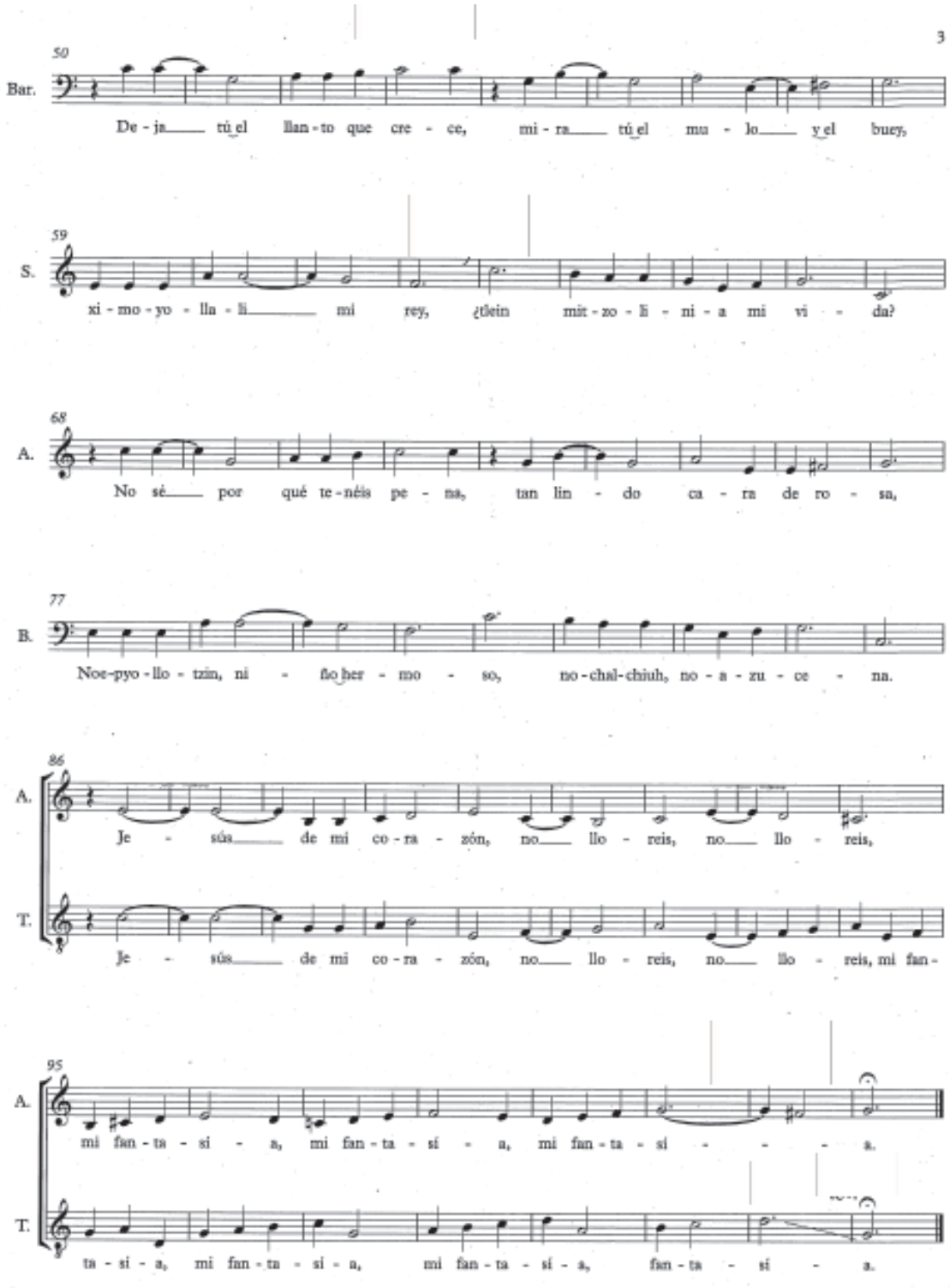
The following questions linger for me. For vocalists, when and how (if ever) is it appropriate or necessary to adopt the iconic vocalisms of another culture? For theorists, is our definition of the voice sufficient? Is it universal? How can we expand it to include additional cultural perspectives? For both vocalists and theorists, how can we honor the agency in the voices of colonized peoples? How can we combat their near-total erasure from western European-derived classical music? For my part, I will continue to ask these questions as I research, observe, program, and perform vocal repertoire from around the world. I hope that these questions, particularly at this crux in human history, engender cross-cultural dialogue toward inclusive, dynamic understandings of human voices.

APPENDIX

ANONYMOUS “TLEYCANTIMO CHOQUILIA” SCORE




28
S.
ción. Tley can ti-mo-cho-qui - li - a, mis pla - ce-res,
A.
ción. Tley can ti-mo-cho-qui - li - a, mis pla - ce-res,
T.
ción. Tley can ti-mo-cho-qui - li - a, mis pla - ce-res,
Bar.
ción. Tley- can ti-mo-cho-qui - li - a, Tley can ti-mo-cho-qui - li - a,
B.
ción. Tley can ti-mo-cho-qui - li - a, mis pla - ce-res,
38
S.
mi a - fi - ción, a - - le - lo - - ya, a -
A.
mis pla - ce - res, mi a - fi - ción, a - le -
T.
mi a - fi - ción, a - le - lo - - ya, a - -
Bar.
mis pla - ce - res, mi a - fi - - ción, a - -
B.
mi a - fi - ción, a - - fi - - ción, a - le -
44
S.
- le - lo - - ya a - le - lo - - - - - ya.
A.
- lo - ya, a - - - - le - lo - - ya.
T.
- - le - lo - - - - - - - - ya.
Bar.
- le - lo - ya, a - le - lo - - - - - ya.
B.
lo - - ya, a - le - lo - - - - - ya.


50
Bar.
De - ja tú el llan - to que cre - ce, mi - ra tú el mu - lo y el buey,
59
S.
xi - mo - yo - lla - li mi rey, ¿tlein mit - zo - li - ni - a mi vi - da?
68
A.
No sé por qué te - néis pe - na, tan lin - do ca - ra de ro - sa,
77
B.
Noe-pyo - llo - tzin, ni - fio her - mo - so, no - chal - chiuh, no - a - zu - ce - na.
86
A.
Je - súa de mi co - ra - zón, no llo - reis, no llo - reis,
T.
Je - súa de mi co - ra - zón, no llo - reis, no llo - reis, mi fan -
95
A.
mi fan - ta - si - a, mi fan - ta - sí - a, mi fan - ta - si - - - - a.
T.
ta - si - a, mi fan - ta - si - a, mi fan - ta - sí - a, fan - ta - si - a.

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