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Holistic influence on contemporary jazz vocal improvisation with
reference to the works of Gloria Cooper and Kitty Margolis

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A [minor] dissertation submitted in [*partial*] fulfillment of the requirements for the
award of the degree of Master of Music

Faculty of the Humanities

University of Cape Town

2011

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation deals with the way in which holistic factors influence jazz vocalists and educators today. Through the analysis of aspects such as experience, vocal expression, improvisatory techniques and teaching approach of two jazz vocalists from different social, educational and musical backgrounds in the United States of America, the hope is to achieve a greater understanding of and confirm the factors which play important roles in the vocalist's improvement of effective, authentic jazz improvisation. The focus is on the effect which experience, mentors and musical training have on the two vocalists' approach to teaching and performing jazz styles. This study also investigates the possibility that emotional, educational and physiological factors holistically influence the contemporary jazz vocalist's experience of using the body as a medium of expression via production of sound from the vocal chords.

Much research has been done on the vocal health and physiological aspects of being a singer. The interest of this research is to discover factors which may have been overlooked in the past, and which holistically influence vocal sound and improvisation. The development of new musical concepts, vocal sounds and ways of improvisation, presents a continuing challenge to jazz vocalists. The researcher has noted that it would be useful to study, expand and implement existing techniques, teaching methods and approaches to vocal improvisation of the two chosen subjects Dr. Gloria Cooper and Ms. Kitty Margolis.

Technology and modern lifestyle create new challenges, but also new possibilities. The researcher has thus concluded that the study of the two subjects of the study, Dr. Gloria Cooper and Ms. Kitty Margolis, appear to fit the above-mentioned research question. Through research of the established and accomplished jazz vocalists Ms. Kitty Margolis from the West Coast and Dr. Cooper from the East Coast of the United States of America and discovery of the mentors and musicians who influenced them, the researcher hopes to arrive at an understanding of what shaped them into the focused and successful professionals they are today. These results are achieved through the analysis of factors that include musical influences, approach to improvisation and technique, recordings, approach to vocal technique, and their experience as performers and educators.

Personal experience has been gained through private lessons and interviews with Ms. Margolis in San Francisco during the months of July 2008 and August 2010, and with Dr. Cooper in New York City in July 2008, 2009 and 2010. The interviews were conducted and transcribed utilizing a set list of nine specifically created questions, as a method to deepen research and gain a closer holistic view. These lessons and interviews have been recorded and transcribed using a digital recording device. They have been utilized to present conclusive information in the form of transcriptions of extracts from their improvised scat solos, which is accompanied by an audio CD and interviews, forming a comparative study. Research and writing has been conducted through interviews, private vocal lessons and the investigating of audio CD's, websites, books, databases, magazines and journals. Conclusions are drawn from the interviews and meetings. Conclusions are also drawn from the personal experience gained by the researcher, displayed in the personal teaching experience section of chapter 8 in my master class with private students, conducted at the University of Cape Town. The master class transcription and analysis is utilized to determine which important factors holistically influence the outcome of the refining of jazz vocal performance, improvisation, and education in South Africa.

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1. Introduction

There is a strong possibility that certain factors influencing vocal sound and improvisation holistically have been overlooked during the past sixty years of vocal jazz history. In order to determine what those factors are and which of those are pertinent to this research question, it is necessary to know what is meant by the word 'holistic.' *The Oxford Dictionary* definition of the word is 'involvement of the mind, body, social factors.' *The New Oxford American Dictionary* definition is 'characterized by comprehension of the parts of something as intimately interconnected and explicable only by reference to the whole.'

Appelman states that the science and the art of singing are wholly compatible, for science supplies the vocal art with the stable semantic implement of phonetics and its use must be perfected through a well-ordered educational process. (Appelman, 1967 p.3)

Holistic factors which are explored in this research, proving beneficial and having a broad influence on the contemporary jazz vocalist, are physiology, psychology, musical influences and musical experience. These holistic factors are dealt with in the context of the modern jazz vocalist, but more specifically, the vocal improviser. The aim is to prove that a holistic approach is favoured by and ultimately beneficial to the vocal student, performer and teacher. The researcher draws on existing research and materials and personal experience of being mentored by the chosen subjects of study of US jazz vocalists/musicians/educators Kitty Margolis and vocalist/pianist Dr. Gloria Cooper. It is through private interviews, private lessons, meetings and analytical listening of material, with the focus being on the aforementioned subjects, that the researcher wanted to conduct a successful study of the influence of the holistic factors. The factors are introduced broadly and then dealt with as important examples which influence jazz vocal performance, improvisation and the teaching methods of improvisation today.

It is vital to be aware of the basic meanings and brief history of the terms of factors that possibly holistically influence the contemporary jazz vocalist and educator. These factors are explained in the following chapters, starting with topics such as physiology, followed by psychology and other more specific aspects of singing. Thereafter, the basic common concepts of vocal improvisation are introduced. These concepts are highlighted by important stories and insight relayed in the interviews conducted with subjects Kitty Margolis and Dr. Gloria Cooper.

2. Physiology as a factor in singing

According to Sataloff, almost all of the body systems affect the singing voice, and anatomic interactions must be considered holistically. The larynx is composed of four anatomic units: the skeletal unit, intrinsic and extrinsic muscles, and mucosa (Sataloff, 2006. p. 29).

The laryngeal skeleton's cartilages are connected by soft attachments that allow changes in their relative angles and distances, thereby allowing changes in the shape and tension of the tissues extended between them. These cartilages are connected to the intrinsic muscle. The vibratory margin of the vocal folds is much more complicated than just mucosa overlying muscle. The mucosa is responsible for mucous secretions and vocal fold lubrication, and the mucosa of the normal adult male has been described as being around 1.1mm thick. The superficial layer is roughly 0.3mm, the vocal ligament 0.8mm and the epithelium¹ around 50 microns² in thickness.

The intrinsic muscles are responsible for the recovery and tension of the vocal folds. These muscles, especially the left laryngeal nerve are easily injured, especially during chest surgery due to it coursing around the curved portion between the ascending and descending portions of the aorta.

The extrinsic laryngeal muscular system is responsible for maintaining the larynx's position in the neck. The extrinsic muscles are crucial in maintaining a stable laryngeal skeleton which allows effective movement of the sensitive intrinsic musculature.

It is vital for the voice teacher to have information and basic knowledge of the components of the voice in order to understand how they affect phonation. The larynx receives the greatest attention due its sensitivity, it being the expressive component of the voice.

¹ The epithelium is: 'the cellular covering of internal and external body surfaces, including the lining of vessels and small cavities. It consists of cells joined by small amounts of cementing substances and is classified according to the number of layers and the shape of the cells.' (Saunders, 2007)

² A micron is a unit of length equal to one millionth of a meter, used in many technological and scientific fields. (Oxford Dictionaries, 2010)

2.1. The role of breath in vocalisation

It is stated in the Hatha Yoga Pradipika that when the breath wanders the mind also is unsteady. But when the breath is calmed the mind too will be still. Therefore, one should learn to control the breath. (Svatmarama *tr.* Ackers 1958, 2002)

There is a strong connection between good breath technique and vocal health. The deep Yogic 'Pranayama'³, a concept commonly used in Hatha Yoga practice, is found to be extremely useful to vocalists, both for their own warming up and practice sessions and when teaching students to utilize their maximum breath capacity. Breath control or management has been found to be one of the most common vocal problems for young vocal students or vocalists who have been abusing their vocal folds by continuously performing under challenging circumstances. They are often being pushed into forcing their vocal sound and therefore developing incorrect technique using the laryngeal area as opposed to good diaphragmatic support, breath technique and posture.

Vennard states that the laryngeal muscle has paid the price for countless hours of singing at high intensity levels in order to be heard over an orchestra, under poor working conditions due to lighting, costumes, excessive heat, low humidity, multiple allergens and with the exhausting emotional drain of extended opera performances. After years of varying degrees of hyper function, the vocal folds have become hypo functional (Vennard 1949, p. 197).

It has been thought, since the early 20th century, that proper breath management will ensure a correct tone production. The concept of diaphragmatic breathing was formally introduced by Dr. Louis Mandl in 1855 (Reid 1983, p. 47).

Anne Peckham, Associate Professor of Voice at Berklee College of Music, states that the most effective breathing method for singers is rib breathing combined with relaxation of the low abdominal muscles during inhalation. Relaxed abdominal muscles allow you to take a full breath and minimize throat and neck tension during exhalation (Peckham 2000, p. 67).

³ *Pranayama* literally means the "science of breathing" or "control of life force." It is the yogic practice of breathing correctly and deeply. 'Hatha Yoga has concentrated mainly on two paths, breathing and posture. Yogis believe breathing to be the most important metabolic function; we breathe roughly 23,000 times per day and use about 4,500 gallons of air, and breathing increases during exercise. Thus, breathing is extremely important to health and *prana*, or life-force, is found most abundantly in the air and in the breath. If we are breathing incorrectly, we are hampering our potential for optimal health. ' (Svatmarama, 1958)

3. Psychology as a factor in singing

3.1. Effect of emotion on vocal delivery and expression

It is well known that the human voice is one of the most emotive instruments. As far back as the 3rd century BC, Aristotle expanded on the scientific workings of the voice and commented on the close relationship between the voice and the soul, recognizing its importance in emotional expression.

According to Bunch, a person's voice is an integral part of his or her self-perception, and it is therefore wise to consider the whole person rather than isolate the production of sound from personality.

A number of researchers have proposed that basic emotions are triggered by innate emotional programs that function to initiate and organize emotional reactions and emotional expressions. Juslin (1997, p. 386) states that, according to Clynes' (1977) theory, each basic emotion has a specific expressive form regardless of the output modality; a gesture, a tone of voice or a musical phrase. Juslin (1997, p. 389) also proposes that there is no significant difference between musically trained and untrained listeners when deciphering accuracy for expressions of basic emotions in music performance. (Juslin 1997, p. 386-389)

Sundberg states about the speaking voice, that emotional state has an effect on the way in which the voice is used. He adds that phoniaticians make the general observation that stress influences a speaker's voice use, potentially causing voice problems. (Sundberg 1987, p. 146)

According to Sataloff, fine motor control, sub served by the frontal regions of the brain, is used for intonation, pitch and volume when generating a melody. He states that emotional responses to the musical experience involve limbic⁴ regions of the brain, and also that the brain's response pattern will change depending on the type of music and musical background of the individual (Sataloff, 2006 p. 25).

This was confirmed in a study at McGill University's Montreal Neurological Institute in Canada. They created and used a melody, which was made to sound consonant or dissonant by varying the harmonic structure of its accompanying chords. PET scans were obtained while subjects with amateur musical training listened to six versions of this stimulus. Some of

⁴ 'A group of subcortical structures (as the hypothalamus, the hippocampus, and the amygdala) of the brain that are concerned especially with emotion and motivation.' (*Merriam-Webster, 2011*)

the results were that the researchers noted changes in paralimbic and neocortical areas. These areas were associated with both increasing dissonance and increasing consonance. Distinct structures were, however, activated by dissonance versus consonance.

The findings suggest that music may recruit neural mechanisms similar to those previously associated with pleasant or unpleasant emotional states, but different to other emotions such as fear (Blood et al. 1999, p. 382).

The social significance of the jazz vocalist during a performance has possibly been overlooked in the past twenty years. The vocalist's role has arguably undergone a metamorphosis. The voice as an instrument has always had immense power as a medium for emotional and creative expression due to the fact that vocalists tell a story through the lyrics. Vocalists dig deep to find inner expression or call upon untapped emotion in order to vocalize effectively while interpreting or performing their own compositions

Vocalists from Billy Holiday and Shirley Horn in the 1940's and 1950's, to folk inspired song writer Joni Mitchell in the 1960's and 1970's, not only knew how to use this aspect or the gift of lyrics as poetry in their performance, but were aware of its ability to use it to reach or change a whole generation of women and men politically and socially. An important example is the powerful effect of Billy Holiday's version of the tune 'Strange Fruit' on a nation as a cry for civil rights. Billy Holiday has been said to have claimed that she wrote the tune.

Actually the history of the song started when a left-wing political activist, composer, and school teacher, Abel Meeropol (using the nom de plume Lewis Allan), saw a photo of a lynching, an image which "haunted him for days". Meeropol wrote a poem, "Bitter Fruit," which first saw light in a teachers' union publication in early 1937. He then composed the melody, it was performed, and he introduced it to Billie Holiday, who in 1939 was appearing at Cafe Society, a Greenwich Village nightclub that was politically left wing and celebrated the unconventional (Daniels 2003, p. 1).

In this way, Holiday used the power of her singing voice in a jazz setting, contributing to the awareness of the civil rights movement in America. Vocalists such as Nina Simone's and Billie Holiday's vocal technique is often fondly overlooked and overshadowed by their ability to convey a message or tell a story with genuine emotion. Their contemporary Ella

Fitzgerald, who is renowned for her accuracy of pitch, vocal agility and flawless technique, has a very different, rather more gentle and light-hearted emotional effect on the listener.

3.2. Emotion and breathing

There is a strong link between breath control or management and emotional expression during vocal performance. In terms of the vocalist and the effects on performance for the vocalist personally, this can be complicated by the respiratory process.

A basic human characteristic is to erect defences against anxiety by restricting respiration. Consequently, natural inspiration, which is perfectly automatic when expiratory tension has been released, is impaired (Reid 1983, p. 44).

As stated by Reid that since inhibition of respiration is the psychological mechanism for suppressing anxiety, the vocalist experiences difficulty in energizing his or her voice effectively, as well as relating to the emotional content of the music. It often happens during a student's performance that the vocal tone becomes thin, wobbly and slightly sharp in pitch. This is probably due to nervousness linked to the respiratory process being hindered. Therefore, a Yogic Pranayama breathing session prior to the performance, not only gives the student performer a sense of calm and focus, but energizes and centres the entire body and voice. This type of breath work session is not always possible due to time constraints, pressure from concert organizers, the late arrivals of musicians for sound-checks, a lack of space and many other negative factors that hinder students' ability to vocalize at their highest potential.

Stress is another factor that negatively affects and plays an important role in the vocalist's performance. According to Sell, stress may result in vocal problems, sleeplessness, depression and anxiety or panic attacks. There may be personal or family stress, financial or employment difficulties and/or physical illness. She also states that emotional stress may create excess muscle tension that may eventually encourage voice disorders.

This is where education in the form of formal vocal training becomes important and teachers need to take those factors into account when teaching jazz vocal students. The teacher can play an important role in preparing students for this challenging factor which needs to be

overcome (Sell 2005, p. 86, 87). Cognitive, social, behavioural and affective psychologies cannot be applied in isolation from each other in musical education (Sell 2005, p. 64, 65). Sell states that the voice is inextricably interwoven with the personality, and all students require training that is as skilful as it is compassionate.

3.3. Emotion and vibrato

The traditional definition of vibrato is the one by Seashore.

A good vibrato is a pulsation of pitch, usually accompanied by synchronous pulsations of loudness and timbre, of such extent and rate as to give a pleasing flexibility, tenderness and richness to tone (Seashore 1938, p. 197).

According to research by the Seashore Group, vibrato was present in 95 percent of all artistically sung tones. Some singing styles, especially within the choral field, have denounced the use of vibrato in any form, advocating the straight tone as being necessary for beauty of vocal tone.

In vocal jazz, the use of vibrato has undergone many changes and appears to be a trademark of the sound or tone of the individual vocalist, from the 1940's to the present. The presence or lack of vibrato depends greatly on the particular jazz vocal style in which it is found. Contemporary modern jazz vocalists use vibrato sparingly today, as a tool to enrich, embellish or create intensity in the lyric, and use it mostly at the end of a phrase or note. According to John Potter, there are probably two evolutionary paths that jazz singing can take. One is a sentimental one, a continuous return to the legitimising songbook of old. The other is the path of reinvention (Potter 2000, p. 60).

According to Sataloff, the regularity of each vibrato event compared to previous and subsequent vibrato events, is greater in trained than untrained vocalists (Sataloff 2006, p. 57)

Vocal vibrato could be a vital stylistic element of contemporary jazz singing which determines whether the delivery of the vocalist is either authentic with a purity and respect for traditional instrumental jazz phrasing and tone, or overused for the hiding of a lack of good technique, or with dramatic effect, favoured in musicals or cabaret styles.

4. 1. Jazz improvisation

The definition of the verb 'improvise' in the *New Oxford American Dictionary* is: 'To create and perform (music, drama, or verse) spontaneously or without preparation' (New Oxford American 2009). Improvisation is found in many areas of music. It is constantly changing and possibly too intangible to be analysed. It is a common belief that musical improvisation is purely spontaneous and is specific to jazz, requiring a certain amount of inspiration for the performance to be effective. It is also a common misconception that improvisation is something without preparation, application or method. This is found to be untrue when attempting to improvise over certain jazz standards or even original repertoire without preparation. Any student of jazz improvisation will agree that effective and comfortable improvised solos are mainly achieved through planning musical phrases over certain chord progressions. Creative use of the melody being studied for performance, and arrangement of the characteristic rhythmic phrases which occur in the tune, are other elements which can be rehearsed up to a point.

Imagination is however, vital to improvisation, and this mental activity is largely ignored in contemporary academic performance practice. This is possibly partly due to a common notion that imagination is the complete opposite of discipline, when discipline does in fact play a great part in improvisation. 'There is a difference between improvisation and chance' (Solomon 1992, p. 76).

The two most well-known or established methods of jazz vocal improvisation in the West are commonly known as Scat singing and Vocalese.

4.2. Scat singing

It is a well-known belief that Scat was born and popularized accidentally or rather, by a twist of fate when, during Louis Armstrong's second recording session with his Hot Five on 26 February 1926 in Chicago, his sheet music fell from his music stand to the ground. Not knowing the lyrics to the song, he invented a gibberish melody, using syllables such as 'Skeep! Skipe! Skoop! Brip Ber Breep Bar la bah!' (Atkins 1926, p. 618).

As cited by Atkins, Armstrong was convinced that the recording people would throw it out, but to his surprise they decided to leave it in the recording. According to Edwards there were many other earlier practitioners of scat singing, although Armstrong's session is credited as the origin (Edwards 2002, p. 619).

Will Friedwald points to other scat singers who may have been over-looked, such as vaudeville singer Gene Green in his 1917 recording of 'From Here to Shanghai,' and Cliff 'Ukulele Ike' Edwards, who apparently scatted on a December 1923 record of 'Old Fashioned Love' (Friedwald 1990, p. 28).

According to Bailey, it was recalled by H. Panassie of Armstrong's early trumpet playing, that his imagination seemed limitless and that he would improvise on one theme for up to 30 minutes, according to a recent account of Armstrong's early playing (Bailey 1992, p. 50).

Bradford's definition of scat in the *Oxford Music Online* is: 'A technique of jazz singing in which onomatopoeic or nonsense syllables are sung to improvised melodies'. Edwards rightly challenges the definition by questioning whether scat does in fact 'mobilize fragments of language without regard to meaning' (Edwards 2002 p. 622). In Ella Fitzgerald's recording of the tune 'How High the Moon' by Morgan Lewis in Berlin 1960, Friedwald analyzes and discovers that she quotes the melodies of more than a dozen other tunes.

Female vocalists, especially Ella Fitzgerald, were influenced by Armstrong and continued to popularize and refine this improvisatory style of scat singing. Singers such as Billie Holiday and Betty Carter have sustained and enlivened this jazz tradition inspired by Armstrong. It was during the short-lived jazz Bebop era of the 1940's and 1950's, that these singers, inspired by the individuality and instrumental approach of Armstrong, established scat as a rich vocal style of improvisation. William Bauer states that scat singing offers an excellent source of acoustical information about the relationship between vocal and instrumental improvisation in jazz.

Absent the extra-referential power of the word, scat singing shares with instrumental music, the non-verbal character of so-called absolute music. Situated in the boundary waters between song and instrumental music and often borrowing elements from both realms, scat singing opens a window onto jazz performance practice in general and onto jazz phrasing and articulation in particular (Bauer 2007 B, p. 138).

Today, there appears to be two main camps of jazz vocalists, those who scat or improvise and those who do not, but instead make use of the melodic line of the tune to embellish and play with phrasing, rather than imitate popular jazz instruments such as the trumpet and various saxophones. Examples of contemporary jazz vocalists who are defined by the latter are Jane Monheit's rendition of the tune 'Taking a Chance on Love' by Vernon Duke and lyricist John Latouche. Monheit cleverly uses the melody in the repeat by inverting melody lines, accentuating certain notes and changing the tempo of the phrases to improvise and display vocal technique and a clear theoretical understanding of the tune. Ella Fitzgerald utilizes both the afore-mentioned methods of vocal improvisation. An example of this is in her rendition of the famous jazz standard 'How High the Moon' by Morgan Lewis. In the famous recording of Fitzgerald forgetting the lyrics, she improvises the melody early on in the tune, continues to create her own made-up lyrics and launches into many choruses of scatting over the chord changes.

4.3. Vocalese

Jacobs, in *A New Dictionary of Music* (1958, p. 416) defines vocalise as being: 'a wordless composition for solo voice, whether for training purposes or concert performance.' In a jazz context, the word vocalese describes a type of singing in which new words are created and sung to existing transcribed instrumental improvisations. *The Oxford English Dictionary Online* definition of vocalese is: 'A style of singing in which singers put words to jazz tunes, esp. to solos previously improvised by jazz musicians' (Oxford 2011).

According to Friedwald, the idea of verbally matching every note of a saxophone solo with lyrics did not begin with Eddie Jeffersen or King Pleasure. Vaudevillians Bea Palmer and Marion Harris each recorded lyricized versions of Bix Beiderbecke's solo 'Singing the Blues' (Friedwald 1990, p. 223).

Bebop was a predominantly African-American jazz style that emerged in the 1940's in the United States of America. According to the great trumpet player Dizzy Gillespie, it was 'a form of musical rebellion against the rigidities of the old order. The bopper wanted to impress the world with a new stamp, the uniquely modern design of a new generation coming of age' (Martin 2010, p. 3).

Jazz had evolved from the improvisational style of swing focusing on the melody to this more complex and technically challenging form of music. Bebop was played predominantly by instrumentalists such as Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie, who began improvising, based on chord changes rather than melodic shape, and this radically changed the sound of jazz. This new improvisatory skill required a solid understanding of harmonic structures (Martin 2010, p. 5).

According to Martin, Dizzy Gillespie was one of the first bebop Big Band leaders from 1946-1950. He managed to bring this new style to a wider audience. His colleague, Charlie Parker, the revolutionary saxophone player, similarly understood and mastered bebop. He changed the way that the saxophone was played and approached, paving the way for a new generation of saxophone players (Martin, 2010, p. 3, 4).

Parker was influenced by the piano player Art Tatum, whom he allegedly heard for the first time in a restaurant in Ohio. Tatum evidently influenced and inspired Parker's technique greatly. Another musician lived in the same street as Tatum and recognized Tatum's influence on Parker's playing. This musician was none other than jazz vocalist Jon Hendricks. Singers began learning to sing bebop tunes and solos from recordings and would add their own lyrics.

This technique is now referred to as vocalese. As scat singing became more popular during the bebop era, this new form of jazz singing emerged. 'The new style required the ability to make the human voice into an instrument with lyrics. Each note of an instrumental solo not only had to be learned by the singer, but also put into rhyming poetry' (Martin, 2010, p. 9).

As stated by Friedwald (1990, p. 223), the father of this vocal art form was Eddie Jefferson. His work is evident in his 1953 recording of the tune 'Moody's Mood for Love' based on the late saxophone player James Moody's jazz standard, 'I'm in the Mood for Love.' This vocalese would influence many jazz singers, including Jon Hendricks.

Jon Hendricks, an Ohio born vocalist first started singing in the African Methodist Episcopal Church where his father was the minister. His most important influences are said to have been pianist Art Tatum and Charlie Parker. During the 1950's, Hendricks went to New York City where he worked as a session vocalist and lyricist. Jazz composers such as Benny Golson would come to him for lyrics. In 1953, Hendricks met Dave Lambert, a Bop vocalist

who performed as a backing vocalist for *King Pleasure*. Hendricks had been an admirer of Lambert for years. Hendricks identified with Lambert's work, shared a common interest and obsession with vocal group work. Hendricks contacted him and proposed a partnership. It was with the addition of London vocalist and child star Annie Ross that the group *Lambert Hendricks and Ross* was formed (Friedwald 1990, p. 241).

In the next chapter following the introduction of important concepts of vocal jazz improvisation, the process of study with my chosen subjects leading up to the final interviews conducted in the USA is introduced, and described. The concepts introduced in the previous chapter will reappear and be explored through examples, stories and experiences shared by the subjects of this research.

5. The researcher's study in the United States of America

It was in 2008, 2009 and 2010 through private vocal lessons, meetings and continuous mentorship with USA teachers Dr. Gloria Cooper and Ms. Kitty Margolis in New York City and San Francisco respectively, that I was able to experience their teaching styles, learn about who influences them, and their musical education. Most importantly, I was able to deepen my knowledge of their approach to teaching improvisation and their improvisation during performance: Cooper in live performance and recordings and Margolis purely through recordings. I was also able to experience first-hand their stories and thoughts on vocal physiology, psychology, their musical influences and musical experience, through private interviews. Many vocal jazz concepts and questions, such as approaches to jazz vocal phrasing, interpretation, tone production and improvisation, were spoken about and dealt with generally. Personal musical issues specific to my own vocal requirements were also considered and dealt with. These mentors/teachers had wholeheartedly agreed to assist in my development and preparation of repertoire for my Masters Degree recitals at the University of Cape Town, held twice per year over the period 2008, 2009 and 2010, during our intensive private lessons and meetings.

The annual tuition and study of jazz vocalists/musicians/educators/composers/arrangers and improvisers Cooper and Margolis over this three year period, allowed time for reflection and

the research of these American female musicians and educators. The focus was on holistic factors which influenced and continue to influence their own performance styles, education, approach to teaching, and performance of traditional vocal jazz and improvisation. After the first set of meetings with my mentors, eight key questions inspired by our conversations were created. These questions were relevant and vital to the research question with regard to performance and education. These eight key questions were utilized during the interviews with the subjects Cooper and Margolis, forming a comparative study. As I moved deeper in to my research, these became nine key questions. A final question developed out of my interest in the subjects' choice and use of instruments in the recording studio.

It is important to introduce the subjects of study with the focus on their professional backgrounds and achievements. The following biographical information about Dr. Cooper was given to me by herself as a reference at one of our meetings at Long Island University and the biographical information about Ms. Margolis, was obtained through study of other interviews conducted by researchers on academic databases, as well as from websites.

5.1. Dr. Gloria Cooper

5.1.1. Cooper's education

Cooper began piano studies at age five and soon studied voice. She received her bachelor's degree on vocal music education and later her master's degree in vocal music education from the University of Missouri in 1977. In 1992, she earned her doctorate in music and education from the Columbia University's Teacher's College.

It was in 1970 that she began teaching music at a high school in Missouri, and upon later moving to California, taught voice and conducted the chamber and jazz choirs at Chabot Junior College in Hayward, California. After moving to New York City, Cooper taught at the Lee Strasberg Theatre Institute and supervised student music teachers at Columbia University's Teacher's College, where she was also completing a doctorate. Cooper currently is on the full time faculty at Long Island University-Brooklyn Campus, where she is an Associate Professor in Music, teaching private voice, voice class, piano class, music fundamentals, and jazz keyboard harmony. She directs the LIU Vocal Jazz Ensemble and the LIU Chorus.

5.1.2. Cooper's performance experience

Cooper performed and became established in San Francisco in the 1970's and 1980's as a pianist and vocalist. During that time she had a long standing regular gig at the Hyatt Hotel on Union Square, freelanced with trumpeter Eddie Henderson and drummer Donald Bailey. Cooper was also in the house band at the Jazz Workshop, where she performed with saxophonists Eddie Harris, Red Holloway, David 'Fathead' Newman and vocalist Jimmy Witherspoon and others. In New York she worked as a solo singer/pianist at the Marriott Marquis and Helmsley Palace Hotels, appearing in prestigious jazz clubs in Manhattan such as Birdland and Blue Note, as well as at a club called Trumpets in Montclair in New Jersey. She accompanied vocalist Gloria Lynne at the Chicago Jazz Festival.

5.1.3. Cooper's recordings

Cooper has released two albums *Day By Day* in 2000 featuring trumpet player Eddie Henderson, and her most recent album *Dedicated To You*, recorded in 2005. *Dedicated To You* features Don Sickler on trumpet and flugelhorn. Lucy Galliher from *Jazz Now* writes '*Day by Day* has character in the expressions of a cool jazz singer who accompanies herself. Cooper can play with a band and be a leader. In an area of music performance (the singer/pianist) where the truly talented are few and far between, Gloria Cooper is a standout' (Galliher 2005).

Jack Bowers from *All About Jazz* writes on *Day By Day*: 'At the keyboard she displays excellent technique, a masterful touch, flawless time and a comprehensive post-bop vocabulary that embodies sources from Gene Harris and McCoy Tyner to Bill Evans, Chick Corea and Cyrus Chestnut' (Bowers 2005).

Of Cooper's latest album *Dedicated To You*, Cindy McLeod writes in a review of the album for *Jazzreview.com*: 'Cooper's voice is clear, her articulation precise and she has a penchant for long, lean lines that gracefully bind the arrangements together. Like the entire sound of the CD, Cooper creates space with her vocal delivery, creating a fluid and gentle mood' (McLeod 2005).

5.1.4. Cooper's publications

Gloria Cooper has published a number of important books in the last ten years. She has been working closely with her colleague, trumpet player Don Sickler under the name of 'Second Floor Music', together publishing the book *Jazz Phrasing: A Workshop for the Jazz Vocalist* and *Sing Jazz!*, also published by 'Second Floor Music'. *Decoding the Leadsheet* can be found in *Classical Singer* 2002 and *Once more with Feeling* in *Journal of Singing* Vol. 60, 2003.

5.2. Kitty Margolis

During my research from 2008 – 2010 I gradually got to know Ms. Margolis' history and gained insight in to her musical life, background, and inspiration. While the main purpose of our meetings was for intensive practical lessons at her apartment in the Bay Area of San Francisco, I would, during our conversations obtain important information for my research. The following information was gathered from the recording and transcription of our meetings and conversations, as well as her suggestions to utilize her official website (Kitty Margolis Media Press Kit).

5.2.1. Margolis' education

Margolis is a fourth generation Californian with deep roots in the state, and in the city of San Francisco. Her great-grandfather was a gold rush pioneer, her grandmother survived the earthquake in 1906 and her grandfather was the president of the Market Street Railway. In San Francisco's bohemian North Beach neighbourhood, home of the Beat Generation, Kitty soaked up the classic jazz recordings which filled the bins of the neighbourhood used record store where she worked part-time, and regularly sat in with Joe Louis Walker's blues band at San Francisco's oldest and funkier club, The Saloon, and at the jam sessions Bobby McFerrin hosted around the corner at a little bar called Cadell Place. As a young woman she would listen to the underground radio stations like KSAN FM, a station which was broadcast to the San Francisco Bay area from the 1960's. In the North Beach area, she lived nearby a

club called Keystone Korner run by impresario and producer Todd Barkan. She usually sat in the booth with Milton, the soundman. Rahsaan was the club's figurehead and through its doors passed all the jazz greats from Dexter Gordon, Art Blakey, McCoy Tyner, Cedar Walton, Freddie Hubbard, Flora and Airta, Horace Silver, Betty Carter, Elvin Jones, Joe Henderson and Red Garland. Her exposure to the jazz greats at an early age gave her the unique opportunity to become steeped in the tradition.

Being on the dean's merit list standing at Harvard University by day, Kitty moved back to the San Francisco Bay Area. She had decided she wanted to be a jazz singer and learn recording studio arts at San Francisco State University. There she studied with saxophonists John Handy and Hal Stein. The two musicians initially somewhat grudgingly let her in to what otherwise were 'instrumentalists-only' improvisation courses, but quickly recognized her talent. They soon were inviting her to join them on gigs. Margolis is also deeply committed to jazz education, never taking for granted her good luck in learning the jazz tradition the old fashioned way, straight from the masters. She is currently on the faculty of the Jazz School at Berkeley, California, and gives workshops, master classes and private lessons. She has taught at high schools and colleges worldwide. Her arrangements and scat solos have been studied, transcribed, and recorded by numerous college jazz vocal ensembles. In 2001 she accepted an ongoing appointment by the International Association of Jazz Education (I.A.J.E.) to chair the I.A.J.E. Jazz Vocal Resource Team until the organization's end in 2008. She also co-moderated a panel 'Exploring the Recording Artist/Record Producer Relationship: A Dialogue about Creative Synergy' at the newly formed JEN (Jazz Education Network) Conference in New Orleans in January 2011.

5.2.2. Margolis' performance experience

Margolis, the young music fan became a musician when she got her first guitar around twelve years of age. She soon taught herself to play folk, country-rock and blues, emulating her heroes Joni Mitchell and Bonnie Raitt. She created bands with her friends during high school, among them her first singing partner, actress Polly Draper, later of 'Thirtysomething' fame. Her formative years also found Margolis voraciously absorbing sounds from around the world from the field recordings she collected of indigenous music from Appalachia to Africa.

At the same time Margolis, aged twelve, would see a wide variety of bands and artists such as Miles Davis, The Grateful Dead, Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix, John McLaughlin, Taj Mahal, Charles Lloyd, Frank Zappa and BB King at the Fillmore and Winterland, local music venues.

These global influences would come into play in Margolis' future recordings. As jazz Renaissance man Ben Sidran put it in the liner notes to her fourth CD *Left Coast Life*: 'Margolis' approach is 21st century, connecting all the musical idioms of her ear into one mother tongue' (Sidran, 2001).

At age twenty, being a student at Harvard University while performing professionally with a Western Swing band around the Boston Area, Margolis decided to move back to the Bay Area of San Francisco. During her first jam session at Keystone, Margolis sang Charlie Parker's solo on 'Billie's Bounce' for her idol Eddie Jefferson, who gave her his approval. Soon afterwards, Kitty started her first professional jazz band with Eddie Henderson, Pee Wee Ellis, and Joyce Cooling.

Margolis started 'Mad-Kat Records', an independent label with friend, colleague, recording artist, educator, colleague, jazz vocalist Madeline Eastman in 1988 after she suffered a serious back injury. It was during that period awaiting surgery, that she vowed to herself she would record within that year. Margolis won the BMMIE Award for 'Outstanding Jazz Vocalist' in 1997. She has received the 'Certificate Recognizing Exceptional Creativity' from the BMMIE Awards three times. In 1999 she was nominated for the Soul Train 'Lady of Soul' Award. Margolis was rewarded the attention of the late jazz great, famous jazz vibraphone and pianist Lionel Hampton.

Her records and concert performances have brought her international status and performances on such prestigious stages as The Kennedy Centre for the Performing Arts, Holland's North Sea Jazz Festival, The Sydney International Festival of the Arts, the Monterey Jazz Festival, London's Royal Festival Hall, Gstaads Yehudi Menuhin Festival, the Telluride Jazz Festival, the Tel Aviv Opera House, the Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival, Hamburg's Schleswig-Holstein Festival, the San Francisco Jazz Festival, Seattle's Earshot World Jazz Festival and The

Boston Pops. She has also sung at many of the world's top jazz clubs in Tokyo, New York and Paris.

Over the years Margolis has performed and recorded with many of the greatest names in jazz and blues, including Joe Henderson, Lionel Hampton, Elvin Jones, Roy Hargrove, Charles Brown, Hank Jones, Herb Ellis, John Handy, Joe Louis Walker, Red Holloway, David 'Fathead' Newman, Pee Wee Ellis, and Eddie Henderson. She has also performed and/or recorded with such diverse artists as rap group The Coup and Phil Lesh of the 'Grateful Dead'. Her lyrics on 'Ancient Footprints' from her album *Evolution* have been sung by jazz artist Dianne Reeves, and her song 'It's You' from the album *Left Coast life* has become an underground remix hit in Tokyo and London. (Kitty Margolis Media Kit)

5.2.3. Margolis' recordings

Margolis' albums include *Kitty Margolis Live at the Jazz Workshop* in San Francisco in 1989, *Evolution* featuring saxophonist Joe Henderson released in 1994, *Left Coast Life* released in 2001, *Heart & Soul: Live in San Francisco* released in 2004 and *Straight Up with a Twist*. Her firm roots in the jazz tradition are particularly apparent in her performance on the album *Heart & Soul*. New York critic and author of several books on jazz singing, Will Friedwald, writes in the liner notes to *Heart and Soul: Live in San Francisco*.

When I listen to Kitty Margolis sing, I can't help thinking about how solidly she fits into the great tradition perfected over the last 50 years of improvising, modern jazz vocalists, the tradition of such colossi as Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughan, Mel Torme, Mark Murphy, Anita O'Day and, most appropriately, the late Betty Carter. For generation after generation these amazing artists have found creative and challenging ways to expand the purview of the jazz singer's art, and Ms. Margolis is the direct heir to their legacy (Kitty Margolis Media Kit).

Since its release, *Heart & Soul: Live in San Francisco* was named one of the 'Top 10 Jazz CDs' of 2004 by *New York's Newsday*, the 'No. 1 Jazz Vocal CD' of 2005 in the *International Association for Jazz Education Journal*⁵. *Left Coast Life* was nominated for the

⁵ The IAJE filed for bankruptcy in 2008, leading to its cancellation. (*nytimes.com*, 2008)

2003 California Music Award for 'Best Jazz Album' as well as being named the 'No. 1 Vocal Jazz CD' of 2001 by the *International Association for Jazz Education Journal*. She also won *Best Jazz Album* for *Evolution*, which *The San Francisco Examiner* apparently called 'the best jazz-vocal disc in years.'

All of these albums were released on 'Mad-Kat Records'. Margolis stated in a live interview that she did not even consider approaching a major record company and there was no time to waste (Kitty Margolis Media Kit).

6. A comparative study: Interviews

Subjects Gloria Cooper and Kitty Margolis were interviewed during my study visits to Long Island University where Cooper is the Head of the Department of Vocal Studies in New York, and with Margolis during private lessons/meetings which took place in her North Beach home in San Francisco. These interviews were conducted and recorded using nine pre-meditated questions composed by the researcher Lisa Bauer (LB) for subjects Gloria Cooper and Kitty Margolis (GC and KM), annually from 2008 to 2010.

6.1.1 Dr. Gloria Cooper

Lisa Bauer: How old were you when you first studied jazz and was it at an academic institution?

Gloria Cooper: *I started classical piano at 5 years, private classical voice lessons at age twelve and alto saxophone. I have a classical background. Growing up in a small town, I listened to the radio – Big Band swing from Missouri and Charlie Parker from Kansas City. I know I wanted to study it and went to college as a music major, sang in ensembles, choirs and groups. At 19, I played at a piano bar, it was a standards gig and I learned a lot.*

LB: What and who were your influences growing up as a musician? I know that it is Doris Day, Errol Garner, Red Garland. Are there others?

GC: *Ella Fitzgerald, Carmen McRae, Ernestine Anderson, Hank Jones and Tommy Flannigan and Byron, brother of Leister Bowey, a sax player. I was in a band with Mike Metheny on trumpet (Pat's older brother). I went to the University of Missouri, Columbia, and studied the piano in Kansas City. We used to play a game called 'Drop the Needle' which was to try and guess the song. I didn't study jazz, but moved to San Francisco and learned from the bandstand. I had to be one of the guys, always had a hotel gig. I went to the Chitlin. Chitlins were a code name for black clubs. Education happened on the job and I learned from the older musicians. I later did a Masters in education, taught at junior college and moved to New York City, I liked teaching at college level. I had gigs 5 or 6 nights per week in Harlem. I was intellectual but came from a street background.*

LB: What was your defining musical moment?

GC: *While playing the Hammond B-3 at the Showman's Lounge in Harlem one evening, three great organists came in – Jack McDuff ('The Preacher') and 'Big' John Patton - all sitting at the bar and giving me encouragement. Jack McDuff called me over while the band was on break, and wrote down the drawbar settings he uses - on cocktail napkins - then went over to the organ and set the drawbars for me - according to what he had written. I kept those settings on the cocktail napkins for years. There were numerous defining musical moments while playing in the house band at the Jazz Workshop in San Francisco. While living in San Francisco, I played piano (on the same Yamaha grand piano played by Monk in previous years) and sang in the house band at the Jazz Workshop - which was a famous landmark jazz club that had been re-opened. During my time in the house band, I accompanied numerous well-known instrumentalists and vocalists' including Eddie Harris, David 'Fathead' Newman, Eddie Henderson, Herbie Lewis, Oscar Brown Jr, Jimmy Witherspoon, and others.*

LB: Do you subconsciously imitate at instrument when you scat? Which one?

GC: *I think conceptually and mostly play keyboard solos.*

LB: Did you transcribe and sing instrumental solos while training and developing? What is your favourite instrument to transcribe?

GC: *Aural transcription (listening). I recommend Dexter Gordon and John Coltrane for solos.*

LB: What is the average level of students that you teach? Is it always in the form of private lessons?

GC: *I like to teach beginner's students using classical technique, classical songs and arias before a standard. Vowel shaping and breathing is a focus with the students.*

LB: What are your thoughts on vocal vibrato and its connection to the emotion of a song?

GC: *It's a personal challenge – vibrato in the voice, without being intrusive in jazz. I find that vibrato is natural and organic. It is like your fingerprint.*

LB: Did you consciously choose to have either trumpet on the album recordings and if so, why? Do you perhaps feel that your vocal tone suits those instruments better than others or that you relate better to certain horns?

GC: *Regarding the choice of horns (trumpet, saxophone) on recordings. On the album 'Day By Day' I wanted a smaller group - and have always enjoyed working in a group with a horn player, and in this case, it was Eddie Henderson - whom I have known for many years. Since the arrangements were not written in a strict 'horn' format - I liked Eddie's improvisational and energetic approach, as well as the sound of his instrument using a 'harmon' mute. I felt it added the dimension, edge, depth, and energy I was looking for.*

On the album 'Dedicated To You', this was a different concept based on a sextet format - with definitive arrangements for all but two songs ('Come Rain Or Come Shine' and 'Dedicated To You'). I always liked the classic "front-line" tenor sax/trumpet format and since I also play piano, I have always enjoyed being in the band as well as singing, so on this album, I was a part of the ensemble both instrumentally and vocally. The use of the trumpet

(open horn and muted) and the flugelhorn provided different colours and hues, as did the tenor sax and soprano sax writings. I liked the addition of the guitar - as it also provided a different texture, although the guitar and piano often need to work together regarding chord voicings, and Freddie Bryant provided that additional chordal and yet melodic instrument I was looking for. Don Sickler and I worked closely together as he developed and we discussed concepts for the arrangements - and on the song "Something Unusual" (for the recording) he actually over-dubbed three flugelhorn parts as background. There is a different arrangement I use for live performances.

LB: How would you describe your approach to improvising on the tune 'Garden in the Sand' on your album *Dedicated to You*? Do you remember being influenced by your environment during that particular performance? Are you generally aware of your audience or environment when taking solos and would you say that one improvises differently in a live setting compared to a studio recording?

GC: *On 'Garden in the Sand', I had studied the chord changes and harmonic movement and had listened to Hank Mobley's recording of this song – originally titled 'Bossa de Luxe'. I felt a strong groove "feel" as well as the Latin influence. I was somewhat influenced by my environment – in Rudy van Gelder's studio; however, I really just let myself go with the song and accompaniment. Perhaps a tendency is to improvise differently in the studio with the realization that this is going to have some permanence when recorded. Although I do not think I necessarily improvise differently in a live setting compared to a studio recording other than understanding the time limitation for a recording versus more unlimited time in a live setting. It is pleasant to have positive audience feedback while improvising; however, this is not my primary focus. The centre of my attention is the music and endeavouring to make good musical choices during the performance. My view is to attempt consistency as well as to try to be editorial without being rigid. I tend to lean towards the editorial concept of "less is more" as long as the notes are good choices as well as the rhythmic "feel" is present and appropriate for the song. Again, listening is an important aspect of the individual's improvisational skills too – in terms of having reference points. Thinking conceptually is a strong component in how I improvise as well as attempting to be "in the moment."*



Lisa Bauer and Dr. Gloria Cooper at LIU, Brooklyn, NYC 2010.

Photograph: Maxim Starcke

6.1.2. Kitty Margolis

Lisa Bauer: How old were you when you first studied jazz and was it at an academic institution?

Kitty Margolis: Jazz was played in my family home, so I didn't study it, but I certainly heard a lot of it. It wasn't played by live musicians, it was played on LP's in the house and my parents would trade chances with us at dinner time. We would play them 'Jefferson Airplane' and they would play Count Basie, we would play Joni Mitchell and they would play Frank Sinatra or Charlie Parker. This was in the years when San Francisco was the epicentre of the music revolution, we were listening to anything we wanted from that era including the Beatles, who weren't here, but were a big part of the scene. That was my first exposure to jazz. I started playing in bands as young as twelve and none of it had anything to do with jazz. I was primarily hired as a guitarist playing bluegrass, country, blues, Americana. I performed for my school, I performed all around my school and I was known as, 'oh there's Kitty and her guitar'. I ran for president of my school and I sang my election speech! It was an all-girls school that I went to for six years, which was great for being a musician, because there were no boys to compete with. I'm not sure I would have turned into a musician if all the alfa-males had grabbed all the chairs and all the instruments. It wasn't a boarding school, so I jammed with boy musicians after school, but I was the primary musician in my school that wasn't a classical musician. I had never really wanted to study music. I was self-taught, taught myself to play all the guitar tunings that Joni Mitchell played, because she tunes her guitar strangely due to polio. She couldn't play the chords she wanted to in her left hand, so she tuned it differently. I taught myself some pretty complex music just by ear and by looking at tablature in books. I got into Harvard and I honestly was just going there because I got in and it was very far from my parents, which was a good thing. Also, everyone said you should go to the East Coast if you're from the West Coast and so I went. The first thing I did when I got there was answer a WANT add in the free paper, The Boston Phoenix. It said 'Singer/guitarist wanted with Western Swing band'. I knew what that was, because in the Bay Area it's a cross between Western music from the 1940's and jazz like Bob Wells and the Texas Playboys. When I was in High school, there were two important bands, Commander Cody and the Lost Planet Airmen and Asleep at the Wheel. Both were Western Swing bands

or like Hippie Swing bands. They all dressed up as funky psychedelic cowboys in the late 1970's. That was my bridge into jazz. I was playing in those bands during my two years at Harvard, working in clubs on weekends and keeping my grades up. I then decided to take a year off. During that year off I really discovered jazz and moved back and my mum helped me find my own apartment in the North Beach area in San Francisco. I was doing too much and had an identity crisis at that point in terms of what I wanted to be doing with my life. I really had a split life because the guys I was playing with in a band were older and tried to get me to go on the road. Harvard was a very high pressured school and I said: 'look I've just gotta sit on a mountain top in North Beach'. So, I got a job at a used record store on upper Grant Avenue called 'Recycled Records', where I learned about record labels, how to buy them, how to sell them, what they meant. I made a lot of mistakes and learned a lot. I got to take records home and that's when I got in to jazz because there were some great jazz clubs in the area in those days, including Keystone Corner where all the headliners played. Keystone Corner is where I met Eddie Jeffersen and sang for him the first time and heard McCoy, Freddie Hubbard, and Stan Getz was my neighbour. This place was just crawling with great jazz. The New York cats would come to San Francisco for a week. There were few who lived here except Bobby Hutcherson and Stan Getz. I was allowed in that club as much and as late as I wanted to be. I was allowed to be in the dressing room after hours, which you can imagine how insane that was. I got to hang around and wasn't shocked by their behaviour, which one could easily be. Anyway, so that was kind of graduate school for me. After that year off I transferred to San Francisco State University where they had a world class recording arts and sciences program and on the side, some great jazz musicians like John Handy and Hal Stein, teaching jazz courses like improvisation and ear training, so that's when I first formally studied that. By that time I was starting to lead a band of my own. My teacher Hal Stein was a sax player and I was the only singer. He said singers can't go in this class: 'why are you even applying for it?' I said: 'Well where does it say that singers can't come in here, Sir! He said: 'You can't be treated any special way, and I said: 'I don't recall wanting to be treated any special way.' Anyway, he ended up handing me his very prized Saturday night gig near Keystone Corner. I started to lead a band there. People thought I was a good swinging musician, had allies and was a natural band leader, picked good songs and bands, gave people a lot of space. It was like I was a horn player and it wasn't a 'lounge' gig. I met Mark Murphy a few years later and he was a mentor/friend/supporter. He'd come

to our gigs, we'd go to his and he would let us sit in with him. He was just amazing. It was a direct transmission being around him.

LB: What and who were your influences growing up as a musician?

KM: When I was growing up The Grateful Dead was happening around here. Actually one of my cousins is Bob Weir who is in the Dead. I know him a little bit now. That was psychedelic rock and improvisational even though I didn't know that when I was going to all those concerts, but that was a sort of a paradigm. Acoustic music like Joni Mitchell and Bonnie Rait and Joan Baez were the female role models for guitar for me. Those were the women mentors. We would go to the Fillmore with my brother when I was 11 and watch Jimi Hendrix and Janis Joplin. I saw Miles, BB King and Canned Heat. I remember that Miles was kind of crazy sounding, as he was doing the 'Bitch's Brew' thing at the time. I was more into melodic acoustic music and Blues. My parents introduced me to Ella, Sarah Vaughn – good classic stuff. I didn't really like jazz initially and didn't spend any time listening to it. There was no jazz education in school when we were kids. I was an alto in the chorus learning the middle part, which was more interesting.

LB: What was your defining musical moment?

KM: My first impression of a jazz club was when my uncle took me to the Village Vanguard at 18 years and as we went down the stairs I saw a wonderful older gentleman in dark glasses, a wild hat and three saxophones in his mouth making the most amazing, otherworldly sounds. It was Rahsaan Roland Kirk, of course. He later became the godfather musician of Keystone Corner. 'Bright Moments' is the slogan that the club owner used and also the name of a song that Rahsaan wrote. I sang there much later in 1983. #FN (Eddie j – keystone).

LB: Do you subconsciously imitate an instrument when you scat? Which one?

KM: *Absolutely not, to me that is a myth. My scatting is not pre-planned. I am an instrument. I don't need to imitate any other instrument. The voice is the first instrument. They're imitating me as far as I'm concerned, but what we have in common with certain instruments such as all wind instruments is that we all use air and we can't sing chords. That doesn't discount paying a lot of attention to percussive aspects of music because you want to be as percussive as possible in your scatting, and in your singing rhythm attack and release (energetic attack and release). Tone and story-telling is important, which I didn't get in the beginning. Actually, teaching has really helped me understand that, because it's like seeing them and whether they are telling the story or not, and how to help bring the story out of them that helps me tell my own story.*

LB: Did you transcribe and sing instrumental solos while training and developing? What is your favourite instrument to transcribe and name your favourite transcriptions?

KM: *I would memorize solos. I have tons of solos memorized but never wrote them down. In fact Eddie Jeffersen was the bridge into that to me. He made it easier by putting lyrics to them, but I am not much of a vocalese singer. I don't enjoy learning it or singing it that much. There was a stage where I did. I think it's a good thing to do. Some of my favourites are Eddie Jeffersen's version of Coleman Hawkins solo on 'Body and Soul.' Everybody learned 'Twisted' which was my first one. I did it before I knew it was jazz because Joni Mitchell did it.*

LB: What is the average level of students that you teach? Is it always in the form of private lessons?

KM: *When I travel I do workshops and then sometimes they will arrange individual mini clinics depending on how long I stay. When I'm here (San Francisco) I do one workshop a year at the jazz school. I like to limit my teaching because I really give a lot when I don't do it too much. I really need to do this for myself and for you guys. I was so lucky to know the masters that I knew and to learn straight from a lot of them. Also, to live in a city that had a*

lot of live jazz. My teachers were not teachers in classrooms mostly, and I learned on the street. It's important for those of us who did learn like that to teach it. It's kind of a spiritual calling. There's a lot of teachers out there teaching and handing out degrees and diplomas who have never performed. There is an element of therapy in teaching and there is a very spiritual element to it, and each student presents their own case. Each student is a complex constellation of elements and anything that's going on in your singing is going on with you as a person. So, where are you blocked and where are you open!

LB: What are your thoughts on vocal vibrato and its connection to the emotion of a song?

KM: Vibrato's a tricky thing. A spoonful weighs a ton to me. It's a very powerful tool, but I particularly prefer a straight tone in a singer. I'm more of a Miles Davis fan and I always think of him in terms of vibrato. I have a vibrato that I use often at the end of a long note. I don't use it much. I enjoy it when other people use it. In my teaching, people come in here with way too much vibrato and it gets in my way. They need to learn to control it. You've got to have a lot of air column to not have an out of control vibrato. In fact I hear Turrell Stefford saying that 'most singers do not use enough air', and they don't.

LB: Did you consciously choose to have saxophone on most of your album recordings and if so, why? Do you perhaps feel that your vocal tone suits those instruments better than others or that you relate better to certain horns?

KM: I do tend to think my vocal timbre blends especially well with tenor & soprano (not alto) sax. But I choose soloists based on their musicality more than their instrument. I chose Joe Henderson because he was one of the most important jazz masters of his generation and recording with him was one of the highlights of my career. When I make CDs I am looking for certain textures on different songs. The muted trumpet was exactly what I wanted on Roy's tracks. I prefer muted trumpet to an open bell in general. That said, Eddie Henderson was in my band back in the early 1980's and he was so incredibly musical he could have been playing a kazoo for all I cared. Just after that I had Pee Wee Ellis on sax. (If you don't know who he is, look him up.) Right now I am not using horns at all. I'm more interested in guitarists. I go through phases. It's all about the sound I want to hear.

LB: How would you describe your approach to improvising on the tune 'I Concentrate On You' by Cole Porter on your live debut album *Kitty Margolis Live at the Jazz Workshop*? Do you remember being influenced by the audience during that particular performance? Are you generally aware of your audience or environment when taking solos, and would you say that one improvises differently in a live setting compared to a studio recording?

KM: *The audience always influences me. They are part of the music. We are not playing into a vacuum. There is nothing like the circle of energy between the band and the audience on a good night. And audiences in different countries and even in different regions of this country can be drastically different. In Japan they may be very circumspect during the performance and at the end of the whole concert they explode. In parts of Midwestern USA, where the roots of the people are Scandinavian, sometimes the audiences can be outwardly contained but at the end of the show, at the CD table, they will be highly effusive on an individual basis. In contrast in the south, like in Macon, Georgia, you might get that whole 'call and response' interaction going throughout the show as if it were a Baptist church. I am an artist who interacts quite a lot with the audience so for me, being comfortable with the audience is often a question of reading the culture. That night at the Workshop I was in my own neighbourhood and there was a mix of fans, friends, tourists plus a few heroes like Buddy Montgomery. I think I was pretty comfortable and happy.*

I am aware of the audience to differing degrees, depending on the level of improvisation that I am engaged in. The deeper I go, the less I am aware of them. Often during the scat section of an intense tune or an emotional ballad I am not really aware of anything but the music and the moment. It is all about the Sound and the interaction with the band at that point. I am not 'thinking', and I am certainly not 'performing'. There is a purity to that feeling, a perfect union with the music gods. Being in the studio, you do not have the outward performance factor, so it is a bit more of an 'inner' experience. The singer is not hearing the band acoustically in the room, since she/he is usually in an isolation booth. In the studio it is vital to get the perfect headphone mix. Having that allows for an intimacy and a subtlety that one can't always achieve on the live stage with a sometimes iffy sound system. In the studio there is always that opportunity to take the solo over again. But I try to go for first takes whenever I can because that is often the best take, even if subsequent takes can be more 'perfect'.



Lisa Bauer and Kitty Margolis at the Grammy Soundtable Seminar in Berkley, San Francisco, 2010.

Photograph: Maxim Starcke

6.2. A comparative analysis of interviews with Cooper and Margolis

Question 1: Cooper started classical piano at five years, private classical voice lessons at age twelve and alto saxophone. Margolis was not a classical musician and did not ever really want to study music. She was self-taught, teaching herself to play all the guitar tunings that Joni Mitchell played until Margolis started to lead a band of her own as a singer. Her teacher Hal Stein was a sax player and she was the only singer. He said that his class at San Francisco University was 'not for singers' and she couldn't be treated any special way.

Question 2: Cooper's influences growing up were Ella Fitzgerald, Carmen McRae, Ernestine Anderson, Hank Jones and Tommy Flannigan and Byron, brother of Leister Bowey, a sax player. Growing up in a small town, she listened to the radio – Big Band swing from Missouri and Charlie Parker from Kansas City. Margolis was influenced by bands like The Grateful Dead, Joni Mitchell and Bonnie Rait and Joan Baez were her female role models for guitar. She was introduced to jazz vocalists Ella Fitzgerald and Sarah Vaughn by her parents.

Question 3: In Harlem, while playing the Hammond B-3 at the Showman's Lounge one evening, three great organists came in – Jack McDuff ('The Preacher') and 'Big' John Patton, who gave her encouragement. Jack McDuff called her over and wrote down the drawbar settings he used on cocktail napkins then set the drawbars on her organ. Later, when living in San Francisco, Cooper was playing piano on the same Yamaha grand piano played by Monk in previous years and sang in the house band at the Jazz Workshop. During that time, she accompanied many well-known instrumentalists and vocalists such as Eddie Harris, David "Fathead" Newman, Eddie Henderson, Herbie Lewis, Oscar Brown Jr, and Jimmy Witherspoon. Margolis' first impression of a jazz club was when her uncle took her to the Village Vanguard at eighteen years, where she saw and heard an eccentric musician. It was the saxophone player Rahsaan Roland Kirk who, according to Margolis, became the godfather of a jazz club in San Francisco called Keystone Corner, where she would later sing an Eddie Jeffers transcription for Jeffers himself.

Question 4: Cooper thinks conceptually and mostly plays keyboard solos, whereas Margolis does not imitate other instruments or pre-meditate her scat solos.

Question 5: Cooper believes in aural transcription (listening) and recommends Dexter Gordon and John Coltrane for solos. Margolis used to transcribe some horn solos and particularly likes Eddie Jeffersen's version of Coleman Hawkins solo on 'Body and Soul'. Neither Cooper nor Margolis perform or record vocalese.

Question 6: Cooper likes to teach beginner's students classical technique before a jazz standard and focuses on vowel shaping and breathing. Internationally, Margolis does workshops and locally in the United States of America, does one workshop at the jazz school in San Francisco and takes on one small group of individual students privately. She believes that there is an element of therapy in teaching and there is a very spiritual element to it.

Question 7: About vibrato in the voice, Cooper feels that it can be intrusive in jazz singing. Margolis also thinks that vibrato is a very powerful tool, but she particularly prefers a straight tone in a singer.

Question 8: Both Cooper and Margolis chose to record with trumpet player Eddie Hendersen. Cooper works and recorded with trumpet player Eddie Henderson, whom she has known for many years and because she likes his improvisational and energetic approach. Eddie Henderson was in Margolis' band in the early 1980's and she worked and recorded with him because she found him to be very musical. They both prefer the sound of his instrument using a 'Harmon' mute.

Question 9: Cooper had studied the chord changes and harmonic movement and listened to Mobley's recording. She was somewhat influenced by her environment while recording the album 'Dedicated to You' at Rudy Van Gelder's studio in New Jersey, but does not think she improvises differently in a live setting compared to a studio recording.

At the live performance/recording of *Live at the Jazz Workshop*, Margolis remembers feeling comfortable and happy. The audience was made up of fans, friends, tourists and jazz pianist/vibraphonist/educator Buddy Montgomery, who was also the famous jazz guitarist Wes Montgomery's younger brother.

Though Cooper finds it pleasant to have positive audience feedback, this is not her primary focus. She rather wants to make good musical choices during performance. Thinking conceptually is an important element in her improvisation, as well as trying to be spontaneous. Margolis, however, states that the audience always influences her and are part of the music. She sees herself as an artist that interacts quite a lot with her audience, but is aware of her audience to varying degrees, depending on the level of improvisation in which she is engaged.

Margolis' thoughts on studio recording are that it is vital for the vocalist to have a perfect headphone mix⁶, which allows for intimacy and subtlety not always achievable on a live stage. She also states that in the studio, there is the opportunity to re-take a solo, which is obviously not possible in live performance.

⁶ Headphones are an important aspect for a vocalist in studio recording. Vocalist Barbara Streisand, for example gets a specialized headphone mix that enables her to vocalize into the microphone. She would say 'I don't hear a presence on my voice. 'It's like I'm floating in space', meaning that the headphone mix of her voice had too much reverberation, and she was probably not able to stay on pitch or sing correctly. (Howe, 2003)

6.3. Interview conclusion

Jazz vocalists' musical influences are integral when it comes to musical development and understanding various jazz styles, be it swing, fusion, free-improvised music and contemporary jazz. Both Margolis and Cooper expressed the profound influence of their mentors on their musical development and career paths.

Margolis refers to Joni Mitchell, Bonnie Rait and Joan Baez as having been her female role models as a guitarist/musician growing up. Those were her mentors, and jazz musicianship only came to her much later. Today she considers jazz artist and educator Mark Murphy to be one of her close friends and mentors. The saxophone player Hal Stein was Margolis' first jazz and improvisation teacher. He made a point of considering her the same as he would an instrumentalist when she took his improvisation class.

Cooper was influenced by Big Band swing music from Missouri and Charlie Parker from Kansas City, which she heard on the radio when growing up. She was particularly influenced by female jazz vocalists such as Ella Fitzgerald, Carmen McRae and pianists Hank Jones and Tommy Flannigan. Cooper's first instrument which she studied was the alto saxophone since the age of twelve. Both Margolis and Cooper appear to have the saxophone as their earliest jazz influence, strengthening their authenticity when approaching improvisation as vocalists.

Cooper speaks of her regular gigs playing piano at age nineteen. 'I played at a piano bar, it was a standards gig and I learned a lot.' Margolis speaks of her student years at Harvard, working in a Western Swing Band. 'I was playing in those bands during my two years at Harvard, working in clubs on weekends and keeping my grades up. I then decided to take a year off. During that year off I really discovered jazz.'

When referring to musical experience as being a factor which holistically influences the jazz vocalist/improviser today and taking Cooper and Margolis as examples, the differences are apparent in their answers and individualistic approaches to improvisation.

I would like to conclude my comparative analysis of mentors Cooper and Margolis with some quotes and album reviews by others. These quotes and reviews will allow the reader to learn from other writers' objective perspectives of their work.

6.4. Quotes and reviews:

Kitty Margolis

'The fourth release from this Bay Area chanteuse makes you feel good about jazz singing again. Her liquid voice and limber phrasing are bewitching from start to finish, leading the listener through an astounding array of standards, offbeat covers, and originals. Throughout, Margolis never once sounds dated or blandly impressionistic -- liabilities to which her peers often succumb' (Friedman, 2010. p.68).

According to Friedman, what makes Margolis such a distinctly modern vocalist is not her unorthodox song choices on the album *Left Coast Life* (Pink Floyd's 'Money', for example), or occasional post-modern hipster posturing ('You Just Might Get It'), but her attitude: a nervy, knowing verve that captures the spirit of the present without drowning out the past.

It is said by Scott Yanow (1989) of her debut album *Kitty Margolis Live at the Jazz Workshop* that 'she is an expert scatter and a constant improviser. Margolis is in excellent early form on a set of high-quality standards with the highpoints including "I Concentrate on You", "All Blues" and "All The things You Are".'

Dr. Gloria Cooper

'Jazz vocalist/pianist, Gloria Cooper, adds a veteran's voice to the mainstream jazz idiom with her second release, *Dedicated To You*. Cooper's voice is clear, her articulation precise. And she has a penchant for long, lean lines that gracefully bind the arrangements together. Like the entire sound of the CD, Cooper creates space with her vocal delivery, creating a fluid and gentle mood' (McLeod, Jazzreview.com).

According to Scott Yanow's (1989) review of the album *Dedicated To You*, including the Hank Mobley composition 'Bossa De Luxe', now known as 'Garden In The Sand', it appears that what makes this recording contemporary is that it only includes two standards, showing that some new original tunes were written by jazz musicians in recent times. He recommends that singers interested in working with more contemporary material should especially explore this album.

7. A comparative analysis of transcribed solo extracts of Cooper and Margolis: Introduction

To understand some of the improvisatory techniques and factors which influence Cooper and Margolis' recordings, it I thought it to be of value to transcribe the recordings of some of their improvised scat passages.

According to Nattiez⁷, music is both product and process. A musical analysis should not only examine the trace (or product), but also consider the process that led to its creation. Since jazz is substantially improvised in performance, the poetic process and the performance occur at the same time in the same person – in other words, the musician composes and performs simultaneously without the intermediate step of writing the improvisation down (Hodson 2007, p. 15).

Two short passages have been chosen for analysis, one extract of improvisation from Cooper's album *Dedicated to You* (Origin Records 2005) and the other from Margolis debut album *Kitty Margolis Live at the Jazz Workshop* (Madkat Records, 1989). The challenge of the selection process was to find a musical passage where Cooper has recorded a scat solo, as she mostly takes piano solos or doubles with piano and voice. Another challenge was to find two musical extracts from two recordings of tunes with a similar rhythmic feel and interesting chord changes within the jazz tradition.

Cooper's eight bar extract from 'Garden in the Sand' was an obvious choice, as it appears to be the only solo section that includes a scat and the sixteen-bar extract from 'I Concentrate on You' by Margolis was selected with guidance from my supervisor. 'Garden in the Sand' was recorded in a studio in 2005 released by Origin Records and 'I Concentrate on You' is a live recording that took place in 1989, released by *MAD-KAT Records*.

⁷ Nattiez, Jean-Jacques. 1990. *Music and Discourse: Toward a Semiology of Music*, trans. Carolyn Abbate, New York: Princeton, p. 118

7.1. A comparative analysis of recordings by Cooper and Margolis

7.1.1 Ex 1. Cooper's recording of Hank Mobley and Bebe Herring's 'Garden in the Sand'

Vocal improvisation – an eight bar-extract from Cooper's arrangement and improvised scat and piano unison solo on the B section of Mobley and Herring's Garden in the Sand as it appears on the album 'Dedicated To You':

Figure 1: 'Garden in the Sand' by Hank Mobley/Bebe Herring

Solo transcription by L. Bauer

EX. 1. EXTRACT OF SCAT/PIANO SOLO BY GLORIA COOPER ON GARDEN IN THE SAND

**HANK MOBLEY/BEBE HERRING
TRANSCRIBED BY L. BAUER**

The musical notation shows an eight-bar extract of a scat/piano solo. It is written in 4/4 time and consists of two staves. The first staff contains three measures with the following chords: Dm7(b9), C#7, and Cm7. The second staff contains two measures with the following chords: A7 and D7. The melody is written in treble clef and features various rhythmic values and accidentals, including a flattened 5th note in the first measure of the first staff.

1A. Repeated rhythmic motive

1B. Relationship between melody and chord structure: Cooper utilizes and demonstrates the use of the flattened 5th note in her improvised scat melody, a chord tension that appears in the Dmin7 chord held over beat 1 and 2 of bar 1. Cooper uses repetition of that chord tension to demonstrate a clear understanding of the harmonic structure and thereby sets the tone or style for the rest of the improvisation.

7.1.2. Ex 2. Margolis' recording of Cole Porter's 'I Concentrate on You'

Vocal improvisation – a sixteen-bar extract from an improvised scat solo on the 2nd A section of Porter's 'I Concentrate on You', as it appears on the album *Kitty Margolis Live at the Jazz Workshop*:

Figure 2: I Concentrate on You' by Cole Porter

Solo transcription by L. Bauer

I CONCENTRATE ON YOU

COLE PORTER/KITTY MARGOLIS SOLO
TRANSCRIBED BY LISA BAUER

2A. Repeated rhythmic motive

2B. Relationship between melody and chord structure: Margolis utilizes and demonstrates the use of the sharpened 5th note in the melody, a chord tension that appears in the E7 chord held over beat 1 and 2 of bar 14. Margolis uses the sharpened 5th tone in the same way that it appears in the melody of the tune, but changes the rhythmic structure by doubling the notes to create a more energetic version.

2C. Bar 14, a blues scale is used against the altered dominant suggesting a minor resolution, but resolving to major. Bar 15-16, F# blues scale (on 6th of chord) against relative major.

7.2. A comparative analysis of solo extracts of Cooper and Margolis

Improvisation's responsiveness to its environment puts the performance in a position to be directly influenced by the audience. Therefore, the effect of the audience's approval or disapproval is immediate and, because its effect is on the creator at the time of making the music, its influence is not only on the performance but also on the forming and choice of the stuff used (Bailey 1992, p. 44).

The two recordings selected for analysis are rather different, one having been performed and recorded live at a concert at The Jazz Workshop in San Francisco in 1989 and in contrast, the other being a studio recording that took place in New Jersey, New York in 2005. These tracks were recorded under very different circumstances sixteen years apart so it is therefore not appropriate to form a completely scientific comparative study. I therefore rather focus on conceptual approaches of the two improvised scat solos.

Both extracts are taken from jazz standards performed and recorded with a Latin feel. 'Latin feel' is a generic term applied to jazz standards which have an even eighth-note rhythm and reflect any characteristics of Latin American music such bossa nova, samba and other sub-styles. Bossa Nova and Samba are rhythmic musical patterns from Brazil. Samba is an important part of the culture, being a functional music for dancing, mainly at the Carnivals in Rio de Janeiro. Bossa Nova is one of Samba's variations favoured by the middle classes, the father and main composer being Antonio Carlos Jobim. These two rhythmic styles are now included as an important part of the international jazz realm (McGowan 1998).

Example 1 is an extract from a Hank Mobley composition, originally titled 'Bossa Deluxe', intended to be performed with a bossa feel. Cooper's version adheres to the composer's intended feel and is recorded this way. In example 2, Margolis has made a creative musical decision to perform and record this Cole Porter tune with a 2/4 cut-time Samba feel. 'I Concentrate on You' was traditionally performed by famous vocalists such as Frank Sinatra as a bossa nova.

In both extracts, Cooper and Margolis make use of repeated rhythmic motives. The repeated rhythmic motif in 'Garden in the Sand' appears in bars 5 to 6 (see example 1a) and also in 'I Concentrate on You' from bars 9 to 11 (see example 2a). In example 1, a short repeated syncopated 3 note motive is utilized, creating a sense of the rhythm folding in on itself, adding to the sway of the bossa by moving across the bar line with a tied note.

Similarly in example 2, a longer repeated rhythmic syncopated three note motif is utilized, emphasizing the strong downbeat of the samba.

Based on the answers of the final question, and as mentioned in the Interviews Conclusion of the previous chapter, it is apparent that subjects Cooper and Margolis have individual ideas and approaches when it comes to their own improvisation in these particular solo extracts, as well as in general. This is also evident when analyzing their solo extracts in the previous chapter.

Cooper refers to herself as a more conceptual improviser. She says when speaking about her approach to improvisation in general: 'My view is to attempt consistency as well as to try to be editorial without being rigid. I tend to lean towards the editorial concept of "less is more" as long as the notes are good choices as well as the rhythmic feel is present and appropriate for the song.' When speaking of her approach to improvisation generally, Margolis states that: 'Often during the scat section of an intense tune or an emotional ballad I am not really aware of anything but the music and the moment. It is all about the sound and the interaction with the band at that point. I am not thinking, and I am certainly not "performing".'

8. Musical influences and experience: Personal teaching experience

8.1. Approaches to teaching jazz vocal improvisation

A main goal of teaching in this and any age should be to do no harm. Every aspect of vocal technique must be in agreement with what is known about healthy vocal function. Any teacher assuming responsibility for a student's artistic and vocal health is obliged to educate him- or herself in the wisdom of a wide community of experts (Sataloff 2006, p. 201).

Sataloff (2006, p. 201) also states that simply knowing how the voice functions does not produce a great singing teacher, but that a fine teacher combines mechanistic information with the psychological and the artistic.

According to an analytical study of vocal improvisation and creative thinking of university students, conducted in the USA and Australia, extensive voice lessons in jazz styles, improvisation, lessons and practice, and live and recorded jazz listening are a potent blend of experiences to assist in developing effective jazz and free vocal improvisation skill (Ward-Steinman 2008, p.5-17).

I completed three years of jazz improvisation study in voice at the University of Cape Town from 2002 to 2004. During that time of study, I was also employed as a part-time music teacher at a Girls High School in Cape Town, South Africa and found myself being in a position where the teaching of jazz improvisation was required. Music Improvisation as a subject, being part of the music syllabus had only recently been implemented into the Western Cape schools syllabus when I, the researcher, was required to teach it to high school subject music students. I was required to sculpt, mould and simplify the course using previously acquired skills and information, along with an elementary new text book written by South African authors, guiding mainly classically trained students through the first steps to understand basic concepts of improvisation and composition. I found the use of the five note pentatonic scale, the seven note blues scale and twelve bar blues form to be the most effective tools for composition and improvisation, aiding the classically trained students from various backgrounds and levels to explore the limitations and possibilities of their instruments.

It can be concluded through observation over the last ten years of teaching and experience working with ensembles made up of Grade 9 to 12 level students, that the students who were recommended to use essential original recordings of the great jazz improvisers such as Charlie Parker, Miles Davis, Chet Baker, Ella Fitzgerald, John Coltrane and many others as listening tools or guides alongside with practising of the above-mentioned scales, had the most satisfactory results. These young students of improvisation would often be inspired and gain confidence in a test and performance situation after having listened to or been exposed to the traditional jazz recordings. The students who had not done the recommended jazz listening, but merely practised the technical act of learning the scales on their instruments, displayed a less rich understanding of the phrasing and rhythmic aspects of improvisation.

As mentioned and featured in chapter 8 under Personal Teaching Experience, master classes and workshops were conducted with a small group of younger and more mature adult vocal students at the University of Cape Town in June 2011. I utilize a workshop tool named 'Improvisation Circles', a method initially broadly introduced by vocalist Natasha Roth, who was my first jazz vocal teacher at the University of Cape Town in 2002 and 2003 during my undergraduate study. She would use basic jazz forms such as twelve-bar blues along with a pianist to facilitate groups of young jazz vocal students of different year levels to practise and develop their improvisation skills. During the lessons and preparation with my students for the master class, I was also able to apply my new knowledge and inspiration gained during my study with my teachers/mentors Cooper and Margolis. My own confidence as a vocalist and educator had been enhanced during this period and is evident in my facilitation of the group improvisation tool referred to as Improvisation Circles in the following chapters. My personal teaching experience is first described and defined, followed by the introduction of this useful improvisation tool and the application thereof.

8.2. Master Class with 'Improvisation Circle' conducted by Lisa Bauer – 1 June 2011

I currently teach, and have been teaching since 2005, small groups of private jazz vocal students of different ages, musical levels and backgrounds, at the University of Cape Town. As an educator and mentor with a holistic teaching approach, it is essential that, through personal experience, I allow myself the opportunity to sculpt vocal exercises for the individual, applying yogic breathing techniques and offering guidance with regard to stylistic phrasing and approaches to each individual student. Due to the nature of private lessons, often being more temporary, the aim and challenge are to give the students an awareness of holistic factors which influence their singing, by providing them with the learning tools for self-sustaining vocal study.

One of my private teaching methods is to arrange a performance for my students, in the form of a Master Class at the end of each semester or three-month period. Regardless of their stage of work with me, each student prepares two jazz standards, contrasting in style, tempo and feel. Accompanied by myself on piano, they were being prepared weekly to perform at the Master Class scheduled for the 1st June 2011. Elements such as stylistic approach, phrasing, rhythm, diction and tone as well as holistic factors such as performance style, posture, breath and relaxation techniques were introduced and developed on a regular basis. The students were expected to take responsibility to practise in their own time as well as rehearsing and being guided during their weekly 45 minute lessons.

In order to have effective study and analysis of the outcome of this Master Class performance, it is important to briefly introduce the participants. For the purpose of this chapter, I shall name the participants students X, Y and Z.

The student participants for this particular master class conducted on the 1st June 2011 were two female students and one male student, ranging in ages from 19 to 45. They are all from different cultural and musical backgrounds, with varying levels of technique, performance experience and general music knowledge. The two female students X and Y had been studying with me for the longest period, X since February 2011 and Y since April 2011. Student Z was the most recent and had been studying with me since May 2011.

8.2.1. Student X:

Student X started training with an established jazz vocal teacher in Cape Town, South Africa, from the age of 13. She performed at her grade 7 farewell and at various other school concerts, having spent a few years attending Constantia Waldorf School in Cape Town. When she was 15 years she had a small music project or band with which she performed with, called Esotrix. Student X currently writes and performs her own music informally, showing aspirations of being a lyricist and poet. Her other interests lie with nature and improvised dance. Student X matriculated in 2008 and currently studies jazz vocals privately under my tuition at the University of Cape Town.

8.2.2. Student Y:

Student Y has experience singing in her school choir since grade 1 level. During high school, while attending a Greek high school in Johannesburg, she was the singer in a Greek band performing traditional and more popular Greek music.

She took part in eisteddfods, singing every year until age 16. At age 12 she received the national diploma for performing 'All That Jazz'. At age 15 she received a diploma and medal for best performance and in the second round, received 89% for the song 'My Number One' at the National Eisteddfod.

Student Y matriculated in 2009 and describes herself as being self-taught, singing by ear, having never been formally trained. In 2011, she was in the process of completing studies in Finance and Economics while studying jazz vocals privately under my tuition at the University of Cape Town.

8.2.3. Student Z:

Student Z studied piano as a child until Grade 3 level, with practical training and theory through the Trinity College of Music. He always secretly loved to sing but believed he did not have any talent or the voice for it. As a child he was also introduced to gymnastics in order to gain a concept of line and spacial awareness. Dance soon became his life, thereby forcing his musical passion into the background.

It has been fifteen years since he has performed as a classical ballet dancer. During the last five years of his performing career, he ventured into many other styles of performance including cabaret, musical theatre, extravaganza work, modelling, pantomime, drag and performance art theatre. He sees this experience as having been the best years of his life. Producers, directors and choreographers wanted to include the use of his voice on stage, forcing him into a need for re-invention. The arts councils for which he had worked for many years started to collapse and many artists were forced to make a living elsewhere.

Student Z currently has a full time job in the aviation industry and is married, with two children. He is the vocalist of a jazz quartet called *Jazz Forte* which performs regularly at various venues in Cape Town. He studies with three vocal teachers: one in classical music, the other in contemporary/pop styles and with me as his current jazz vocal teacher at the University of Cape Town.

8.2.4. Lisa Bauer's Master Class: 1 June 2011

On the day of the Master Class, each student performed in the presence of each other along with two audience members, who were family members, of student X. Max Starcke, a Masters Composition student and saxophonist, was in charge of the sound production and recording using a standard digital recording device Roland Edirol Dictaphone (R09). Each student performed two prepared tunes chosen from the standard jazz repertoire, spread out over the evening. Time was allowed for reflection in the form of specific questions about their performances immediately after each song. I asked them each to analyse their own performances as best they could, by answering a short set of questions. They were asked a similar set of questions by me after each song was performed regarding their personal holistic experience of the performances. They were also asked to mention factors which they felt may have stood in the way of performing the music at their highest potential.

The following questions were posed to students X, Y and Z:

1. *Did your breathing change during the performance and were you aware of shallow breathing causing any tension in the neck or shoulders?*
2. *Do you feel that your use of vibrato changed during the performance compared to how we planned and prepared the use of tone in the lessons?*
3. *Did you feel connected to the lyrics of your tunes and their meaning?*

Transcription of answers:

1. Student Z: *I am not a good breather to start off with. Under stressful circumstances I even get more tight and so I think I need to actually think about it a lot more.*
Student Y: *I don't really think when I sing. I felt a lot less relaxed than in classes because of the mic.* Student X: *I am shaking!*
2. Student Y: *Yes, I think I use more vibrato.* Student X: *Yes, I used way more than usual.*
3. Student Z: *I think that there were interruptions with my mind, cause there's times when I think about the words and what I want to say with the words and there's other*

times when that gets interrupted by all the other messages that get mixed up in there where there's a break in transmission, so I think maybe if I was more comfortable with the technique and didn't have to think about it so much, I could focus on what it is that I am trying to say. Student X: In the beginning and maybe a little bit at the end.

It is evident from the direct feedback of the three students that the three main factors that prevent them from feeling comfortable during jazz vocal performance are breath control, a lack of focus, and stress. Student Y displayed the most successful control of these three elements, with the least vibrato and nervousness.

Following the solo performances and feedback session, the three students were then invited to conclude by participating in two guided 'Improvisation Circles'.

8.3. Improvisation Circles

8.3.1. Teacher's instructions: Introduction

I started by giving the students a method of preparation for the Improvisation Circles and said: 'This is a chance for you to explore your voices a little bit. Think away from the music that we have worked on so much. I want you to start internalizing and hearing your own sound, so if could you just close your eyes for me and try to cut out all the sounds, the light and everything around you. Take a nice big deep breath in to the tummy (all inhale through nostrils and exhale through the mouth). We are all just going to get to know each other's voices a little bit, by starting off with a drone together on an 'ah' sound like we do in class.'

8.3.2. Practical application: Improvisation Circle I:

Guided by me, the three vocal students are asked to exhale on an 'ah' sound, randomly chosen by me on the pitch A. After each breath, they are asked to keep cycling the inhalation and exhalation of the breath while droning on the A on an 'ah' sound.

I introduced the concept of the actual improvisation exercise by saying: 'We are going to keep cycling this drone and I want each one of you just to have a few seconds to play. You're going to improvise – any sound that you like, any rhythm that you want. I'll start by showing you roughly what you can do.'

The group is requested to inhale deeply using Pranayamic breath to prepare for the next cycle of drones, creating a 'bed' of sound to improvise over. They are asked to be aware of blending vocally with each other if possible. I demonstrate an example of what can be done over the A pitch drone by chanting a simple melody containing some folk inspired lilt using mainly the harmonic minor scale while the students maintain a clean, strong, smooth 'ah' sound. On the group's second inhalation and drone, the group simultaneously started to improvise their own intervals and melodies on my second line of improvisation.

8.3.3. Practical application: Improvisation Circle II:

I introduced the concept of the second Improvisation Circle exercise by saying: 'This time I am going to give you a specific vocal riff that I am going to sing and I want you to try and give me either long lines, or rhythmic lines. You can even talk, you can breathe, you can use your fingers – anything that you feel you want to add, there is no right and wrong with this, okay?'

The students are once again asked to inhale deeply, while imitating the vocal riff that I introduced. This new vocal riff is a fast-paced rhythmic melody in $\frac{3}{4}$ or Waltz time.

8.3.4. Analysis of Improvisation Circle I:

[Refer to track three on accompanying CD]

Some of the challenges which arise when analysing an improvised jazz performance, is that there is no sheet music on which to base it on. In order to successfully analyse improvised music, it is essential to transcribe the recording. In the case of the two Improvisation Circles conducted with a small group of students, even though the session was recorded, it is not possible to distinguish precisely which vocalist is singing which parts. Certain voices were naturally louder and due to the limitations of the recording device capturing the room sound instead of having individual microphones, it is more realistic to consider the group as a whole.

My Improvisation Circles represent a simplified version of improvisation analysis as opposed to the consideration or analysis of individual improvisation over a jazz standard. The focus is on the interaction of the performers. It is about the relationship between what the vocalist hears and how this influences his or her improvisation as a student of jazz.

Both Student Y and Z initially produce a repetition of my vocal phrase by following its contours exactly. Student X remains grounded on her A tone drone and chooses new syllables such as 'ahs' and 'ehs' creating a primal, natural sound and atmosphere.

With each deep preparatory breath, the voices become more varied and adventurous, and the students start to instinctively create a SATB set of harmony and counterpoint with each individual melody interweaving in and out of each other. The vocalists are using their ears and musical experience to blend as a completely unrehearsed ensemble.

There were a total of approximately twelve inhalations and drones on an A tone. On the sixth drone, I introduce traditional scat syllables in order to steer the group toward jazz improvisation. None of the students appear to have the freedom or confidence at this level to add to my scat syllables, but rather stay with humming and droning on 'ah' sounds instead.

8.3.5. Analysis of Improvisation Circle II:

[Refer to track four on the accompanying CD]

The second Improvisation Circle was 40 seconds longer than Improvisation Circle I.

After only four cycles of my vocal riff introduction, Students X and Z enter at exactly beat 1 of the next cycle. Student Y again copies my vocal line/riff and its melodic contours, creating a doubling/unison effect, an octave lower than my vocal line.

Student X starts by creating and singing a confident new melody, composed instantaneously in a higher soprano register and rhythmically contrasting to my initial vocal line/riff. She repeats the melody then allows a lower intensity response to her first melodic question creating a type of 'trading of fours'⁸ and continues improvising on 'eeh', 'aah' and 'daa' syllables. Student X takes musical risks and is willing to explore her instrument by making mistakes if need be.

Student Y provides tasteful, yet far softer improvisatory vocal lines to the other students as if to sing along. Her contributions are non-committal but she displays more careful consideration and thought behind her improvisation. She appears to be content in her own vocal space. She rarely takes risks.

Student Z later approaches his improvisation by responding to the strong underlying rhythmic waltz groove by adding long classical chorale style melodic lines over it. He appears to slip into his vocal place that is comfortable and familiar. Student Z displays the most sensitivity to the ensemble and understands his vocal role in the group.

A surprising unplanned factor arises during the second Improvisation Circle. Student X's younger sister, a little girl of around 8 years, starts to sing and participates in the circle from her position in the audience section of the room, uninvited. One notices the confident young voice joining in and adding some valuable musical improvisation and texture to the ensemble.

⁸ 'Trading of fours' is slang used in jazz to describe an improvised section during a jazz performance, where each musician is allowed four bars of improvisation per solo. This type of improvisation is performed over the standard form of the music, with band members alternating solos in four bar phrases.

8.3.6. Outcome and conclusion of Master Class Improvisation Circles

When considering the general outcome of the Improvisation Circle of the Master Class which took place on the 1st June 2011, it is important to draw a basic comparison between the two Improvisation Circles sessions in order to establish a conclusion, in support of the research question.

This particular Improvisation Circle was made up of a smaller group of vocal students who were not receiving a holistic jazz education due to the fact that they were private students not enrolled in the full music degree which include subjects such as theory, form, ensemble, and history.

It should be noted that the first Improvisation Circle was introductory. It can be considered as a warm-up session, and was shorter in length than Improvisation Circle II. In the first one, the students were given no rhythmic limitations or pulse, and the focus was primarily on tone production and breath control. In Improvisation Circle II however they were given a fixed rhythmic vocal motif implying a waltz in a $\frac{3}{4}$ time signature. The vocal line/riff that was introduced contained more melodic information than that of Improvisation Circle I and ended up being 40 seconds longer.

The basic common outcome for both sessions is that each student's personality, physiology and musical experience emerged and became apparent in their approach to improvisation in a group/ensemble setting. Their musical contribution when asked to listen, internalize and react spontaneously to a vocal sound or phrase idea, appears to come from their most recent musical experience and reflects their personalities. The personality to which I refer to is the superficial projection and aspects of the students themselves that they have chosen to reveal and share with myself and the group. Also, as expected, it became apparent which there was a growth in confidence from each student, with an immediate display of improvement in understanding team work, in the second piece/session.

Each student has a distinct tone which came through more strongly in the second improvisation session. Considering the differences in the students' ages and backgrounds, it is clear that the two youngest students are in an experimental phase, both being students at the university in different fields which are not music-related. Student X has been exposed to

Indian Classical music and Student Y to Greek traditional music, and they are in early stages of jazz vocal development. Student Z, coming from a performing arts background and having completed a degree in Dance at the University of Cape Town, displays more maturity, control and less of a desire to be heard above the other voices.

With regard to experience, Student X had previous vocal training seven years prior to her continued study with me in 2011. She had been exposed to recordings of key traditional jazz artists and is somewhat accustomed to the great vocalists who also scat. Student Y, however, is self-taught and relies purely on her talent and experience in competitions and eisteddfods, performing in a cabaret style. She had limited exposure to traditional jazz artists and their repertoire. Student Z has the most experience. He currently trains in three different vocal disciplines and has the most performance experience, mostly in musicals and cabaret styles. He is, however, aware of many of the great jazz vocalists in history and currently performs with jazz musicians who improvise instrumentally.

The holistic factor dealt with in this research which could be considered to be the most vital aspect of being a jazz vocalist and improviser today, is musical experience. From personal experience it has been learned that one can prepare, rehearse, be mentored and trained extensively, but without performance experience, one cannot fully grasp or internalize concepts or apply the technique and work, also in a live situation.

The three students (X, Y and Z) who participated in my Master Class in June 2011, have displayed and confirmed their musical growth from the holistic performance experience gained in our lessons and at my master class. Today student X is no longer continuing our lessons, as she has moved back to Johannesburg. On notification of her departure, she said: 'Thank you for your lovely lessons and pearls of wisdom'. Student Y, a Capetonian is currently continuing her lessons with me, but with energy and passion that appears to be divided at this stage. She has decided to make our lessons her focus this year in order to develop her vocal technique, improvisation, understanding of jazz styles, and music in general. On confirmation of continuation of our lessons, she said 'I am adamant that I should stay in Cape Town, look after myself and give singing a lot of energy!'

Student Y is continuing lessons with me and is working towards my next Master Class scheduled for November 2011.

9. Conclusion

Jazz music is not practised in isolation. All artists 'feed' off each other, and are undoubtedly influenced by the interaction with others in the ongoing development of their own expression through the medium.

Improvisation, whether vocal or instrumental, is a concept which is evolving constantly. For most students of jazz, it requires a great deal of stamina, dedication, experience and study, as well as good health. Vocalists have different approaches to improvising, depending on their musical experience, influences and personalities. It is virtually impossible to have an effective singing voice fit for improvisation and creativity, unless the whole person is taken into consideration. Students choosing to specialize in vocal jazz styles, sign up for a challenge which includes the consideration of the whole person. Holistic aspects, from physiological processes involved in supporting vocal sound, to psychological aspects of personality, have an effect on the mood of the performer, whether it is a lack of inspiration or a height of emotions. These factors have an effect on the outcome of the performance and it is the responsibility of the teacher to create awareness as well as assist with the implementation of these factors. It should be common knowledge that these factors are mostly uncontrollable without a strong foundation of technique and experience. Effective holistic teaching of improvisation comes in the form of mentorship which is a long term process and does not end in the classroom.

On the other hand, it is arguably the unpredictability of these factors that produce a true jazz experience which contains elements of raw, spontaneous expression of creativity in the musician. The teacher/student/performer who favours a holistic approach to the study of jazz styles and improvisation will ensure longevity of their vocal instrument and the authentic continuation of this musical tradition.

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Photograph I: Lisa Bauer and Dr. Gloria Cooper at LIU, Brooklyn, NYC 2010. p. 31

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CD Tracks:

1. Solo extract of Gloria Cooper's 'Garden in the Sand' by Hank Mobley, lyrics by Bebe Herring from the album *Dedicated To You*. [00:25]
2. Solo extract of Kitty Margolis' 'I Concentrate on You' by Cole Porter from the album *Kitty Margolis Live at the Jazz Workshop*. [00:21]
3. Improvisation Circle I - 1 June 2011 [4:49]
4. Improvisation Circle II – 1 June 2011 [3:52]