

A close-up photograph of a woman's face, focusing on her eyes, nose, and lips. She has bright red lipstick on. A blue watch with a metal bracelet is visible on her wrist in the lower right corner. The text 'MATCHMAKER' is overlaid in red, and 'ILSE HUIZINGA' is overlaid in blue below it.

MATCHMAKER

ILSE HUIZINGA

You choose

PREFACE

A perfect match

The quickest and easiest way to get to sing jazz with confidence and ease is by matching your taste and talents to a style and repertoire. This guide is meant to help you do just that. In my view there are three major singing styles in vocal jazz.

Out-of-the-box

No artist likes to be put in a box and neither do any of the artists I've put in a box for you. They are known for their abilities as storytellers, instrumentalists or entertainers, but they are usually more than that. A little bit of everything is in every artist, in one way or another.

Don't feel like you have to make a choice between these categories, because you don't. They are here to help you define your voice, taste, talents and style.

Choosing a category (style) that best fits your talents will make things a lot easier.

But, as long as you are motivated and willing to make the effort, the sky is the limit. And you can take bits you like out of every category.

It's a thin line

These categories are quite defined. Reality isn't. Sarah Vaughan and Ella Fitzgerald did their fair share of entertaining but can also be considered instrumentalists. Frank Sinatra and Tony Bennett are entertainers that would probably consider themselves storytellers, which they are as well.

If you're completely new to vocal jazz, you'll find a lot of artist names in this guide you can check out. It's a great way to get an overview of the world of vocal jazz. Then, after listening you can always come back to this guide.

Now, let's start the process and introduce you to the three basic categories of jazz singers. Enjoy!



ENTERTAINER

Type

The smooth and/or powerful sound of your voice is your greatest talent and you aim to reach a large audience. You're an entertainer.

Examples

Frank Sinatra, Tony Bennett, Michael Bublé, Diana Krall, Astrud Gilberto.

Crucial skills

Sound and performance.

Repertoire

There are two options: the more popular jazz standards and Bossa Novas are sure to please, but popular songs from other genres that lend themselves to be performed in a 'jazzy' style are possibilities as well.

Singers with strong voices might want to go with the 'crooner' repertoire; just look at the albums of Frank Sinatra to find fitting songs. Singers with smooth and soothing voices may stick to ballads, slow swing and particularly Bossa Novas.



STORYTELLER

Type

Your main focus is on the lyrics and telling the story. You're an actor, perhaps even more than a singer. You're a storyteller.

Examples

Shirley Horn, Abbey Lincoln, Billie Holiday, Nina Simone, Peggy Lee.

Crucial skills

Diction and timing.

Repertoire

Any songs with 'story like' lyrics, or any song with lyrics that strongly resonate with you; as you are the one who has to deliver its lines. Ballads and slow swing or slow Bossa Novas are most suited since they provide more time to deliver the lyrics effectively.

There are some songs out there with interesting lyrics that are a little bit more up-tempo, but you'll have to look beyond the popular repertoire. The storyteller should definitely look at composer songbooks.

Verses, introductions to songs from musicals, provide additional lyrics and sometimes perspectives on songs; they are often very well suited to storytelling.



INSTRUMENTALIST

Type

You see your voice as your instrument. You like vocal acrobatics and improvisation above all else. You're an instrumentalist.

Examples

Bobby McFerrin, Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughan, Rachelle Farell, Betty Carter, Mark Murphy.

Crucial skills

Musical hearing and/or theory.

Repertoire

Bebop or other tunes with complex melodic lines set to words, or the opposite: songs with simple melodic lines, that allow you to make all kinds of ornaments and variations on them.

Any style will do, though for beginning improvisers the most simple songs with the least amount of chords are best suited: blues, or not too complex songs that mostly stay in one key like Mack the Knife, Summertime, But not for me, etc.

ASSIGNMENT

1. Define your talents and which style best suits these talents.
2. Define which style(s) your favorite singers belong to most. Different from your answer for question 1? Are you sure about your answer? If so, continue to the final question.
3. Define what skills(s) you lack that are necessary for the singer you want to become. These skills can also come from a style you didn't choose in question 1.

Now you should have a much better defined idea of what you'll have to do in order to become the singer you want to be. And can be; if you choose mostly according to your talents as well.

The choices you make

CONFIDENCE

I invest everything I have in trying to be the best jazz singer I can be. You may have the same ambition or it might be 'just' a hobby. As long as you're singing without a band or an audience you can basically do whatever you want and feel good.

Once you start singing jazz with a band and an audience - *which can be truly priceless experiences, even 'just' on jam sessions or at a party* - things start to change.

You'll struggle to focus on singing. There's so much to think and likely worry about. If you'd like these experiences to be priceless, you'll need to know what you're doing. It isn't rocket science.

It's all in the way you practice and prepare yourself.

That's why I've made an online course called 'Jazz Singers Academy'. In it I show you how to sing jazz and improvise with confidence and ease. Even with a band. Even in front of an audience.

If you like, check it out (hit the button below).

Thanks for reading this guide. Enjoy your vocal jazz journey. Hope to welcome you at Jazz Singers Academy.

With love,



Ilse Huizinga

JAZZ SINGERS ACADEMY