

SOUNDBREAKING #3

The Human Instrument

(This episode considers the gamut of tricks and techniques that can enhance and alter the human voice while exploring the ineffable emotional quality that makes a vocal track truly great. From divas to crooners to screamers, the great ones tell all their secrets.)

Projecting E_____

- Singing is a collaboration between M_____ and M_____.
- The voice is the P_____ of musical instruments.
- We worship it with singing C_____.
- We fret about how to capture it, yet we love to mess with it (Peter Frampton -*Do U Feel* w/vocoder)
- With all the changes in recording technology, the voice is still the S_____ of the S_____ (Al Green).
- Don Was---great singers seem to “L_____ O_____” of the speakers at you. You can have all the technique in the world, but unless you leap out, it won’t work.

A_____ (Skyfall) – She has a rare gift combining melody and human emotion. She is a O_____ in a generation voice taps into the emotional H_____ of yourself and rips it out.

- Singers have to strike a balance between technical excellence and complete emotional F_____.
- The two are at odds with each other.

A_____ Story (Rolling in the Deep)

- This song is very emotional to her and her A_____ and attitude came through in her delivery.
- A cold garden shed-like studio, she stomped on a wooden step for a rhythm track (multi-tracked).

B_____ R_____ (Releasing records since 1971. Most success is in the 90’s, 10 Grammy awards)

- Calls Adele “A once in a lifetime talent, there’s no predicting when greatness will appear.”
- You have to be present, dig deep and be emotionally naked when singing/recording.
- BR went back to check out early blues singers.

B_____ S_____

- A powerful voice – the beginning of the tradition followed by: Dinah Washington, Ruth Brown, Aretha Franklin. They were the Beyonce’s of their day!

Roger Watters

- Her H_____ leaps out at you.

Eric Clapton

- It wasn’t fancy or tricky, nothing but pure E_____.

“The Blues C_____” (Caruso was a great Italian opera singer who made 247 recordings from 1902-1920)

- She was one of the first artists to record with the new electrical mic around 1925. Before that, you yelled into a horn megaphone.
- The microphone changes everything; it allows nuance and subtlety.

B_____ C_____ becomes a huge selling C_____. They heard this soft voice and it ignited passion for certain singers....Crosby, Sinatra, etc. **S_____** sings to the microphone, he moves in or out to create intimacy. He played the mic better than anyone did. Crosby was the first but S_____ took it to the next level. Sinatra was the best at making you feel his emotion.

A _____ W _____ (1983-2011)

---Every so often an artist comes along who is beyond D _____ or description. What style is it? British S _____, Black or White S _____? She encompasses all of that...

Mark R _____ – Producer of AW, Adele, Lady Gaga, Miley Cyrus and Bruno Mars.

---Elements= her songwriting with the Dap Kings (her band), 60's sounds with modern day production.

---SONG R _____ utilizes Motown handclaps and "throwback" techniques.

---She's so U _____ she created her O _____ style.

---Check out the tragic film, *AMY*, on Netflix, she started out as a young jazz singer in London.

N _____ Y _____

---Many can sing or have a sound, but there is a character so unique to some singer's voices. Just like Tom Petty, Bob Dylan, Etta James or Tom Waits.

---It's not about being good, but being U _____.

---How distinct is it? The goal is to sound like no one but Y _____.

---Each singer has a C _____ to do their own thing.

A _____ F _____ (1942-2018)

---Grew up in Detroit singing in her dad's church where he was a minister.

---Footage from Muscle Shoals, signed to Atlantic records in 1966.

---The song *Respect* is performed live.

---Her nickname is "The Queen of Soul." She has 18 Grammys, sales of 75 million and 20 #1 R&B singles.

---While some artists thought they could do better, she really could.

Dee Dee Bridgewater

---How innate is a talent? You can learn to copy or mimic your idols, but how soulful is it?

R _____ C _____

---Roger Waters---"I was blown away by RC and it was so moving and beautiful." If I could ever write a song that would move someone a tenth of what he did, I'd look no further."

---He was an amazing S _____ T _____. His voice has to resonate with you, you almost forget that he's singing. Singer Ben Harper "my voice has no place on singing shows. I don't have that voice, but it serves my purpose."

Roger Daltry

---No singer likes their own voice except Rod Stewart....the rest try to D _____ it. (*Question: Have you ever heard yourself either singing or speaking through a recording or video? It is indeed a weird experience and takes some getting used to.*)

Suzanne V _____, "Luca"

---Its very hard to sing with H _____ on, they mess with your pitch. You have to sing a certain way for a microphone "working the mic". Many producers/engineers splice verses/takes together. "It's a rare singer that can do a perfect take all the way through."

Aimee Mann

---When you say "I can d _____ I _____ B _____, you're on a slippery slope to perfectionism and 3 days to get a snare sound.

Connie Stevens--Singing L_____ onstage is much different from singing in the studio. The studio recording is forever and should be near perfect but live is only for one night (unless it's recorded).

Lady Gaga

On stage, the audience gives you excitement and a S_____ of inspiration. In the studio, there's N_____.

Tom Petty

---Its like theatre versus a M_____. In the studio, everything is under the M_____.

Why is today's music different from that recorded pre-1995?

Great recordings were not about T_____, but about P_____.

---The M_____ studio was small, 15' x 17'. The instruments catered to the vocal line and that's impossible to do while recording one track at a time (A band live in studio vs. one instrument at a time). Motown was about capturing a vision or vibe, not a P_____.

Smokey Robinson, M_____

---Now recordings are made with a group in different cities at different times, but when great musicians play L_____ in the studio, its magic! It's like doing a C_____ in the studio.

John L_____ – song “Quiet Storm”

---Everything today is fragmented, spliced together over 10 T_____.

Jimmy I_____ producer of *Stop Draggin' My Heart Around* by Tom Petty and Stevie Nicks

---All things bow to the V_____ and I don't understand why people write to T_____. All my hits were made by singing live vocals. “I want to hear the excitement of the V_____.”

Imogene Heap

---Using a loop machine, she records a bunch of vocal lines and drum beats, then she improvises over it. She can mix the tracks any way she wants or chop them up to make new songs.

Vocal Effects

---There is a fascination with disguising the voice since the 1950's.

---Roger Krautman & Zapp – using the Vocoder (A T_____ that goes down your throat) which is same thing as today's A_____ T_____, which is pitch correction S_____. A S_____ P_____ episode teaches the world how to use A_____ in the studio, lol.

Linda Perry

---Could you imagine if we A_____ Patti Smith, Carole King or Janis Joplin?

C_____

---Her song, B_____ was first pop song to blatantly use it. Was sort of a joke, but she loved it. It became a template for future vocal tracks.

---The next generation loved the R_____ other worldly sound.

K_____ – overdoses on it. His album, *808 and H_____* was so different from what he previously did.

---If technology gives you “Y _____ sound”, some people will pioneer the sound and others will follow and make it passé and dated.

---Annie Lennox--I don't care what they do. If it works then it's fine. Take advantage of T _____. What makes a song sound its best is all that matters; if that means using A _____, then so be it.

Bonnie Raitt

---I like the F _____ N _____ and imperfections, as did music history up to the late 90's.

Nile Rodgers

---I can fix pitch and timing but I can't add in E _____.

Ben Harper

---If you want to use it, then use it. If you want to sing without it, start singing S _____!

Christina A – a fabulous talent

---Linda Perry – her problem is her P _____. She tries to perfect the vocal = troubled W _____.

---“Let's get another option”

---Song “B _____”

---Sang it in one take and didn't overthink it. She wanted to redo it to the point of arguing, but LP wouldn't give in.

---“There is no perfection; It's about feeling the B _____ in the cracks and holes and imperfections.”

---“Allowing people to be vulnerable and insecure and not always feeling like they're getting everything right.....because that's what the B _____ of life is—not really getting it right. It's about getting it right with who Y _____ are right now.”

Ben Harper

---Music can be reduced to a mathematical equation, but S _____ isn't an equation. There is a great soulful place for T _____ in music, but there's time when you go outside the circle.

---Every generation has feared that technology will create a “same-ness” amongst artists. This goes back to the 20's and 30's and here we are _____ years later and we can safely say there has been a great deal of diversity and U _____.

---The ones we remember are the ones who did it D _____ and were innovative enough.

---We don't judge a V _____ on an intellectual level, what we respond to is H _____ performances and when we feel they are carrying some truth we make a deeper investment.

---We know when it's authentic: James Brown or Chic.

Freddy Mercury – Bohemian Rhapsody