

Voice Coach Decries Phenomenon of Over-singing, Points to Popular Talent Shows

The American music scene seems to be experiencing a phenomenon of painfully loud and meaningless over-singing which could be due in part to hit talent shows like *American Idol*, according to Renee Grant-Williams, one of the nation's leading voice experts and coach to some of the music industry's biggest stars.

Grant-Williams points to this week's painful duet by two former *Idol* contestants as an example, "By shamelessly over-singing, Demi Lovato and Joe Jonas managed to destroy what might otherwise have been a perfectly decent song. Their performance was over-loud, over-ornamented, mutually over-competitive and ultimately banal."

"The lyrics to *Make a Wave* written by Scott Krippayne and Jeffrey D. Peabody are very positive and send a very powerful message," says Grant Williams. "However, these two singers obscured the words so badly by over-singing, that I had to look up the lyrics to see what they were actually saying. The very essence of a song is to touch the listener by conveying a message of some kind. That's difficult to do when no one can get a grip on the melody or understand what's being said."

Grant-Williams feels these non-verbal squiggles should be there for one reason only—to emphasize the powerful emotion of the song. "When a singer ornaments, it should be because, at that moment, the singer's emotions are running so high that words will not suffice; the singer is only capable of a visceral response too powerful to put into mere words," she says.

Grant-Williams also says singers she encounters are increasingly belting out songs to the point where words don't matter. "We seem to be caught up in an epidemic of loud," says Grant-Williams. "Singing should be more subtle than just slinging a lot of voice around. If you sing with a thundering voice, you sacrifice the honesty, intimacy, and integrity of music. Yet, this style is presented to millions of TV viewers as desirable."

"You just don't hear the level of ear-splitting over-singing in Australia and other places like you do here in America," says Grant-Williams, who recently returned from a sold-out teaching-tour of Australia. Observations she made during tours in Europe and South America confirm that this phenomenon is especially prevalent in the United States. "I'm convinced it's due in part to the tremendous influence in the U. S. of talent shows where over-singing is rewarded."

"I still think America has the best singers on the planet," says Grant-Williams. "They just need to bring down the volume and focus on the words and the emotions. I'm determined to do what I can to curb these phenomenon before they get out of hand."

Grant-Williams has a few simple suggestions to help singers get back to the basics of good singing:

1. A song is a one-way conversation, a singer must be very intimate with the words.
2. Singing should be like speaking with the audience, there's no need to yell.
3. Use consonants and silence to indicate the most important words of the song.
4. Use inflection sparingly as you would use spices, too much will ruin the song.

Grant-Williams coaches aspiring performers as well as celebrities including Keith Urban, Kenny Chesney, Miley Cyrus, Faith Hill, the Dixie Chicks, Tim McGraw, Christina Aguilera, Linda Ronstadt, Randy Travis, and Huey Lewis. She has been quoted by Cosmopolitan, the Associated Press, Business Week, UPI, Southern Living, the Chicago Tribune, the Boston Globe, and the San Francisco Chronicle. She has appeared on many broadcast outlets including ABC, CBS, NBC, Fox, Bravo, USA, MTV, GAC, BBC, PBS, and NPR. Grant-Williams is a former instructor at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music as well as the former director of the Division of Vocal Music at the University of California, Berkeley.

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For more information or to schedule an interview with Renee Grant-Williams, call 615-244-3280 or visit www.myvoicecoach.com/media.html