ARTICLES

"That's How You Know He's Your Love": The Male Singing Voice and Disney's (Re)interpretation of the Male Romantic Lead

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In the 2007 Disney movie *Enchanted*, soon-to-be princess Giselle is expelled from the magical (and animated) kingdom of Andalasia and separated from her betrothed prince Edward who, just like her, is known to burst into song on romantic occasions, dazzling everyone with his operatic timbre. Giselle eventually finds herself lost in New York City, where she meets divorce lawyer Robert. She is puzzled by his matter-of-fact behavior towards his fiancée Nancy and asks him (in song, of course): "How does she know you love her?" She suggests that he should sing to her, to reassure her of his affection, but he quickly states: "I really don't sing." Naturally, in time, they fall in love and Robert starts to sing to Giselle, even if only with a quiet, breathy voice. *Enchanted* presents Edward as the classic Disney prince and Robert as his realistic counterpart, creating a clash of two different ways of expressing love: while Edward is happy to share his feelings by singing about them, Robert is bewildered by Giselle's suggestion that he address Nancy in song. This is unsurprising when considering that many boys and young men seem to view singing as a gender-inadequate activity—and associate it with femininity or homosexuality.[1]

Enchanted thus suggests a juxtaposition of the "Disney way" of expressing love, which is mostly done in song, and the "real world way," where such

1 For statistics and possible reasons see Scott D. Harrison, Graham F. Welch, and Adam Adler, "Men, Boys and Singing," in *Perspectives on Males and Singing*, ed. Scott D. Harrison, Graham F. Welch, and Adam Adler (Dordrecht: Springer, 2012), 3–12. This issue exists in many genres, as previous research has shown. For example, early 2000s R&B songs often pit female singing against male rapping. This reinscribes a longstanding "stereotyping of music as feminine, concerned with senses, and of language as masculine, a rational structure." Ian Biddle and Freya Jarman-Ivens, "Introduction: Oh Boy! Making Masculinity in Popular Music," in *Oh Boy! Masculinities and Popular Music*, ed. Freya Jarman-Ivens (New York: Routledge, 2007), 10.

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behavior conflicts with traditional gender roles. The term "Disney" refers here to the studio as a supra-agent, which, through its franchise, aesthetics, and marketing "set the standard for gendered representation in children's motion picture production."[2] This juxtaposition is also visible in the overall habitus of Edward and Robert, who stand for two different models of masculinity. Edward is a typical example of the "boy" as a cultural icon. According to Ian Biddle and Freya Jarman-Ivens, the "boy" is "man enough to be desired and desiring, and yet boy enough to be unthreatening."[3] His androgyny, however ("the hairlessness, his 'pretty' face"[4]) comes with the danger of disrupting the binaries of sex and gender, thus upsetting the structures of desire that are based on such binaries.[5] This is precisely what motivates Robert's more masculine habitus: by refusing to sing, Robert makes sure not to appear too feminine. In the same way, his outer appearance shows no sign of androgyny: he appears more mature, is not as clean-shaven and—as an amazed Giselle finds out—even has chest hair.

My evaluation of the soundtracks to sixty feature-length Disney animated movies (excluding PIXAR-productions and direct-to-DVD-sequels) reveals that the musical display of romantic masculinity is less coherent than the juxtaposition in *Enchanted* suggests. The results do not align with the "Disney way" of expressing love through song. Instead, genuine love duets are relatively rare. I have only detected five examples: "Once Upon a Dream" from *Sleeping Beauty*, "So This Is Love" from *Cinderella*, "A Whole New World" from *Aladdin*, "If I Never Knew You" from *Pocahontas* (featured only in the extended version), and "I See the Light" from *Tangled*.[6] Solo love songs sung by the male protagonist are even rarer—I found only three titles: "One Song" from *Snow White*, "Heaven's Light" from *The Hunchback of Notre Dame,* and "Lost in the Woods" from *Frozen II*.[7] In many iconic romantic scenes, a third party performs the song, for example the teapot in

2 Katia Perea, "Touching Queerness in Disney Films *Dumbo* and *Lilo & Stitch*," *Social Sciences* 7, no. 11 (2018): 225, 2.

3 Biddle and Jarman-Ivens, "Introduction," 6.

4 Biddle and Jarman-Ivens, 6.

5 Biddle and Jarman-Ivens, 6.

6 There are a few others, which for various reasons I do not consider genuine love duets: in "Love Is an Open Door" from *Frozen,* Hans only pretends to love Anna. The exchange between Simba and Nala in "Can You Feel the Love Tonight" and between Duchess and Thomas O' Malley in *The Aristocats'* "Everybody Wants to Be a Cat" are too short to be considered true love duets. The same applies to "Something There" from *Beauty and the Beast*.

7 "Hellfire" from *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* is in my opinion not a love song, as it only speaks of desire (and hatred) and not of love.

Beauty and the Beast, Sebastian the crab in *The Little Mermaid*, the Italian cook in *The Lady and the Tramp.* This frequent use of the observer love song can be understood as a storytelling mode—the cinematic adaptation of the "once upon a time" in a fairy tale. Ray's love song to Evangeline in *The Princess and the Frog* is a hybrid form: he sings about his own feelings and uses this song at the same time to comment on the emerging love between the leading couple Tiana and Naveen.

Despite *Enchanted* claiming otherwise, the combination of masculinity and the musical expression of romantic feelings seems thus to pose a challenge, even in the Disney universe. In this essay, I will conduct a comparative analysis of the love duets "A Whole New World" from *Aladdin* (1992) and "I See the Light" from *Tangled* (2010), as well as the solo love songs "Lost in the Woods" from *Frozen II* (2019) and "Heaven's Light" from *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1996). By choosing songs from the "Renaissance Era" as well as from the era of the "Deconstructed Diva"[8] it becomes possible to link the analyses to a historical timeline of vocal masculinities, in order to discuss if and how male singing contributed to and coincided with Disney's changing approach towards masculinity. To this date, this development has only been analyzed with regard to the princesses. Liske and Zelda Potgieter observe that "over the span of the 76 years of her existence we see Disney's princess transformed from one who is always virtuous and never evil, and who has no other desire or purpose but to be a wife and mother, to one who knows her own strengths and weaknesses, her good side and her bad, and who no longer needs a man in order to feel fulfilled."[9] Jennifer Fleeger observes a similar development and links it to changing vocal styles:

> The first wave of princesses, the eponymous hand-drawn characters in *Snow White* (1937), *Cinderella* (1950), and *Sleeping Beauty* (1959) sing operatically. The second and largest group, which begins thirty years later with the computer-aided color of *The Little Mermaid* and then goes on to *Beauty and the Beast* (1991), *Aladdin* (1992), *Pocahontas* (1995), *Mulan* (1998), and *The Princess and the Frog* (2009), performs as if they were on a Broadway stage. The final category is characterized by 3D computer animation and pop vocalizations. In that vein, *Tangled* (2010), its first entry, stars Mandy Moore.[10]

8 These categories follow Potgieter's analyses of the Singing Princess in Liske Potgieter and Zelda Potgieter, "Deconstructing Disney's Divas: A Critique of the Singing Princess as Filmic Trope," *Acta Academica* 48, no. 2 (2016): 49.

9 Potgieter and Potgieter, 55.

10 Jennifer Fleeger, *Mismatched Women: The Siren's Song Through the Machine* (New

Building on these findings, I will focus on three central questions: (1) whether various models of romantic masculinity are mirrored in specific stylistic musical or vocal devices; (2) how these connections relate to the longstanding tradition of voice categories (*Stimmfach*) in opera; and (3) in which ways the music, and especially the singing, comment on or even contradict the portrayed masculinity.

Of Boys, Beasts, and Postfeminist Heroes

Romantic love is a key topic in most Disney films. According to a 2003 study of twenty-six Disney films, falling in love is an almost inevitable and immediate consequence of a meeting between a man and a woman:[11] "In *The Fox and the Hound*, after Big Mama realized Vixey and Todd [*sic*] were about the same age, she got a big smile on her face and began to tell Vixey about how handsome Todd was. As soon as Vixey and Todd met, they fell in love."[12] The indispensability of this narrative becomes evident in sequels to films such as *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*: while Quasimodo's love for Esmeralda is unrequited in the first film, he successfully wins the heart of the girl Madellaine in the direct-to-video sequel *The Hunchback of Notre Dame II*. By giving in to this narrative, the sequel "both addresses and cheapens the previous movie's notes of melancholy."[13] According to Amy M. Davis, this concentration on romantic love is due to its low-risk potential. She argues that Disney shies away from being too experimental and progressive in its depictions of gender due to the risk of losing audiences and thus losing money.[14] In contrast, the "tried and true plotlines found

York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 108. For the third group, Fleeger also mentions *Frozen* (2013) and *Brave* (2012).

11 In 18 films, falling in love only takes minutes (*Dwarfs, Bambi, Cinderella, Lady, Sleeping, Dalmatians, Stone, Jungle, Aristocats, Robin, Fox, Mermaid, Beauty, Aladdin, Lion, Pocahontas, Hunchback, Hercules*). In *The Aristocats* and *The Lion King* it takes a little longer—about a day. Litsa R. Tanner et al., "Images of Couples and Families in Disney Feature-Length Animated Films," *The American Journal of Family Therapy* 31, no. 5 (2003): 364.

12 Tanner et al., "Images of Couples and Families in Disney Feature-Length Animated Films," 365.

13 Jesse Hassenger, "*The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and *Mulan* Are From Disney's Artistically Vital Years," *PopMatters*, March 14, 2013, https://www.popmatters.com/169163-the-hunchback-of-notre-damemulan-2495772610.html.

14 Amy M. Davis, *Handsome Heroes & Vile Villains*: *Men in Disney's Feature Animation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 251.

in traditional tales," mostly based on romance, have proven to appeal to a mass audience.[15] Of course, they pose the constant conflict of deciding how to navigate the space between the values transported in traditional folklore and contemporary ideas of relationships and gender.[16] For example, the aforementioned 2003 study found that many Disney movies feature relationships with unequal divisions of power.[17] In the same way, Laura Béres claims that there is a tendency to romanticize men's control over and abuse of women.[18]

While the portrayal of the feminine is well researched, to some extent (e.g., by Potgieter, Fleeger) even with regard to changing vocal aesthetics, the vocal aesthetics of its male counterpart have widely been left undiscussed. Despite a significant increase in gender-focused research, including studies analyzing the evolution and categorization of "Disney men," the singing voice and its role in the process of characterization remains undiscussed. Amy Davis's monograph *Handsome Heroes & Vile Villains: Men in Disney's Feature Animation* (2013), which twins with her earlier study on femininity *Good Girls & Wicked Witches: Women in Disney's Feature Animation* (2007),[19] identifies three broad depictions of Disney men: boys, heroes (both princes and non-aristocratic), and villains.[20] Many of the following studies have made Davis's categorization their starting point, such as Benjamin Hine et al.'s article, which examines representations of gender in prince and princess characters in Disney movies released between 2009 and 2016.[21] In an extensive statistical overview, they compare actions such as "fighting" and "crying" in order to shed light on the portrayal and evolution of gender-specific behavior. The category "shows emotion" is of particular interest in this paper, as it is a key aspect of the male romantic leads' singing. While no Disney prince has been caught crying so far,[22]

15 Davis, 251.

16 Davis, 251.

17 Tanner et al., "Images of Couples and Families," 365.

18 Laura Béres, "Beauty and the Beast: The Romanticization of Abuse in Popular Culture," *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 2, no. 2 (1999): 191–207.

19 Amy M. Davis, *Good Girls & Wicked Witches: Women in Disney's Feature Animation* (New Barnet: John Libbey Publishing, 2007).

20 Davis, *Handsome Heroes & Vile Villains*.

21 Benjamin Hine et al., "The Rise of the Androgynous Princess: Examining Representations of Gender in Prince and Princess Characters of Disney Movies Released 2009–2016," *Social Sciences* 7, no. 12 (2018): 245.

22 This makes the crying king in *Tangled*, whom his tearlessly grieving wife consoles, even more striking.

Hine detects that Disney princes show more emotions in films from 2000 on. His statistics reveal that "shows emotion" accounted for almost 25% of the princes' behavior between 2000 and 2010, which is striking given that stoicism is regarded as an important masculine characteristic.[23] He concludes that "the largely absent, passive princes of the 1930s and 1950s, and the muscular, brave heroes of the 1980s and 1990s appear to have been succeeded by a troop of sensitive, fearful, but dashing men in the 21st century, thus supporting the argument that the men of Disney are complicated, to say the least."[24]

Michael Macaluso, who also observed this shift in the princes' behavior, links it to the phenomenon of postfeminist masculinity.[25] He identifies a number of Disney men "who [experience] some type of crisis or vulnerability, usually in relation to [their] understanding or performance of masculinity connected to work, family, partner, expectation, etc."[26] To illustrate this finding, he offers two models of Disney masculinity: the first is based on the categories established by Davis, the second includes his newly formed category of postfeminist Disney men. This category encompasses amongst others the romantic male leads Flynn Rider, Kristoff, and Prince Naveen, who all struggle with finding their identity and place in a romantic relationship.

BOY		HERO/PRINCE	VILLAIN
Pinocchio Miguel			
	Aladdin Peter Pan John Smith Quasimodo	Prince Charming Prince Phillip Prince Eric Tarzan Hercules	Gaston Ratcliffe Judge Frollo Shan Yu Jafar Dr. Facilier

Table 1. Model of Disney Masculinity (Michael Macaluso)

23 Hine et al., 11.

24 Hine et al., 10.

25 Michael Macaluso, "Postfeminist Masculinity: The New Disney Norm?," *Social Sciences* 7, no. 11 (2018): 221.

26 Macaluso, 221.

<table>
<tr><th>BOY</th><th>HERO/PRINCE</th><th>POST-FEMINIST HERO</th><th>VILLAIN</th></tr>
<tr><td>Pinocchio
Miguel</td><td>Prince Charming
Prince Phillip
Prince Eric
Tarzan
Hercules</td><td>Mr. Incredible
Kristoff
Héctor
Prince Naveen
Flynn Rider</td><td>Gaston
Ratcliffe
Judge Frollo
Shan Yu
Jafar
Dr. Facilier</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Aladdin
Peter Pan
John Smith
Quasimodo</td><td colspan="2">Prince Hans</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2">Ralph
Kuzco
Maui</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">The Beast</td></tr>
</table>

Table 2. Revised Model of Disney Masculinity (Michael Macaluso)

The phenomenon of postfeminist masculinity has been widely discussed within Media Studies. Diane Negra and Yvonne Tasker understand postfeminist masculinity as a discourse that “celebrates women’s strength while lightly critiquing or gently ridiculing straight masculinity.”[27] Valerie Palmer-Mehta speaks of “mediocre masculinity.”[28] In contrast, Melissa Zimdar understands postfeminist masculinity as a new version of hegemonic masculinity that includes both the alpha male and the new male, who stands for a kinder and gentler masculinity.[29] This is closely linked to the concept of “hybrid masculinity”, which Tristan Bridges and C. J. Pascoe define as “the selective incorporation of elements of identity typically associated with various marginalized and subordinated masculinities and—at times—femininities into privileged men’s gender

27 Yvonne Tasker and Diane Negra, “Introduction: Feminist Politics and Postfeminist Culture,” in *Interrogating Postfeminism: Gender and the Politics of Popular Culture*, ed. Yvonne Tasker and Diane Negra (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007), 21.

28 Valerie Palmer-Mehta, “Men Behaving Badly: Mediocre Masculinity and *The Man Show*,” *Journal of Popular Culture* 42, no. 6 (2009): 1053–72.

29 Melissa Zimdars, “Having It Both Ways: *Two and a Half Men*, *Entourage*, and Televising Post-Feminist Masculinity,” *Feminist Media Studies* 18, no. 2 (2018): 278–93.

performances and identities."[30] With this, new tropes of masculinity in the media are introduced. For example, Negra and Diane identify a regular use of "gay male identities," especially in wedding films.[31] John Alberti understands the "bromance" as a "splintering of the idea(l) of a unified construction of masculinity itself."[32] With the example of animated films, Berit Åström demonstrates how the depiction of postfeminist fathers is strengthened at the expense of mothers, who "may be allowed, if they remain in the background, supporting their husbands. But it is best for everyone if they are removed, leaving father and son to create their own family."[33]

Hine offers two contrasting explanations for the emergence of hybrid and postfeminist masculinity. On the one hand, the showing of emotions characteristic of these types of masculinity could serve as a means to discourage feminine behavior, as these traits are often portrayed in a negative way—the fearful and tentative Naveen and the affectionate and sensitive Kristoff being prominent examples. However, it is also possible that filmmakers want to act as a "catalyst for a dissection and re-evaluation of masculinity,"[34] and, in doing so, to present their younger audience with alternative role models, offering "important models of feminine behavior for boys amongst a plethora of hyper-masculine messages present in child and adult media."[35]

From Cock-Rockers to Crooners: The Changing Voice of Masculinity

Previous non-Disney related research shows that many of these questions attached to masculine emotionality, and especially romantic masculinity,

30 Tristan Bridges and C. J. Pascoe, "Hybrid Masculinities: New Directions in the Sociology of Men and Masculinities," *Sociology Compass* 8, no. 3 (2014): 246.

31 Tasker and Negra, "Introduction," 21.

32 John Alberti, *Masculinity in the Contemporary Romantic Comedy: Gender as Genre* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 37.

33 Berit Åström, *The Absent Mother in the Cultural Imagination: Missing, Presumed Dead* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2017), 254.

34 Hine et al., "The Rise of the Androgynous Princess," 11. With this, Hine is especially referring to the research by Sarah Coyne et al., "Pretty as a Princess: Longitudinal Effects of Engagement with Disney Princesses on Gender Stereotypes, Body Esteem, and Prosocial Behavior in Children," *Child Development* 87, no. 6 (2016): 1909–25, and Davis, *Handsome Heroes & Vile Villains*.

35 Hine et al., "The Rise of the Androgynous Princess," 11.

are mirrored in discussions about male singing. Simon Frith and Angela McRobbie identify two main types of pop music which they label "cock rock" and "teenybop": Cock rock is "music making in which performance is an explicit, crude and often aggressive expression of male sexuality."[36] In contrast, teenybop, which is mostly consumed by girls, transforms "male sexuality… into a spiritual yearning carrying only hints of sexual interaction. What is needed is not so much someone to screw as a sensitive and sympathetic soulmate, someone to support and nourish the incompetent male adolescent as he grows up."[37] Closely related to this is the genre "Bubblegum Music," meaning pop music in a catchy and upbeat style. It was strongly marked by the teen idols of the 1970s, with figures like Shaun Cassidy and Donny Osmond,[38] developing into the boy band style of the 1990s, where harmonies, tenor voices, and outbursts of falsetto were frequently used to create a more juvenile male presence.[39]

This categorization of linking music styles in general and singing styles in particular to masculinity is of course far more complex, and there are overlaps and contradictions. For example, Ian Biddle and Freya Jarman-Ivens argue that in popular music, "vulnerability, multi-vocality, and falsetto are seen to be the stuff of 'anti-masculine' musics, situated in a dialogic relationship with the traditional 'cock-rock' canon and thereby exposing something of what we perceive to be 'masculinity' in musical expression."[40] In a similar way, Georgina Gregory observes that "boys are often reluctant to sing high notes when they approach their teen years."[41] However, there are at least two different varieties of voices belonging to the "cock-rock" genre, that do not exclude falsetto and vulnerability: the "power ballads" of the 1980s, with Robert Plant and Freddie Mercury's *heldentenor*, and the bluesier, huskier sound of singers like Paul Rodgers.[42] Another example for the complexity of this topic is the technique of crooning, the singing of "popular sentimental songs in a low, smooth voice, especially into

36 Simon Frith and Angela McRobbie, "Rock and Sexuality," in *On Record: Rock, Pop and the Written Word*, ed. Simon Frith and Andrew Goodwin (London: Routledge, 1990), 374.

37 Frith and McRobbie, "Rock and Sexuality," 375.

38 Kim Cooper and David Smay, eds., *Bubblegum Music is the Naked Truth* (Los Angeles: Feral House, 2001).

39 Georgina Gregory, *Boy Bands and the Performance of Pop Masculinity* (New York: Routledge, 2019), 95–96.

40 Biddle and Jarman-Ivens, "Introduction," 7–8.

41 Gregory, *Boy Bands*, 96.

42 Allison McCracken, *Real Men Don't Sing: Crooning in American Culture* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015), 318–19.

a closelyheld microphone."[43] According to Biddle und Jarman-Ivens, intimate and soft crooning performs "a gendered work very different from an imprecisely pitched, half-shouted voice that seems to come from a large space, such as is favored in various rock musics."[44] This style of singing has often been criticized for being too feminine; Allison McCracken links this to historical and contemporary tendencies of *effemiphobia*.[45] At the same time, it seems to be powerfully attractive to many women, as McCracken demonstrates with singers such as Justin Bieber, for example,[46] and *Glee*'s Darren Criss, who portrays a gay character and is "more than happy to be an erotic object for both sexes."[47] Thus, "the pop crooner has been operating both in the commercial mainstream and on the fringes of gender normativity for decades and has been culturally stigmatized because of both associations."[48]

Of course, these questions are not exclusive to popular singing styles of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, but have a longstanding tradition dating back to the operatic *Stimmfach*. The term *Stimmfach* emerged in nineteenth-century Germany when composers such as Carl Maria von Weber aimed to transfer the role categories of traditional drama to opera. While role categories had been present in opera since its beginnings (e.g., "prima soprano" and "buffo" in 17th Century opera), it was only in the nineteenth century that the description of voice types became more differentiated.[49] With the changing musical aesthetics and especially the growing orchestra, a need for heavier and more dramatic voices arose. This led to new categories such as the "tenore di forza" in contrast to the "tenore leggero."[50] In the twentieth century, the German conductor and musicologist Rudolf Kloiber made the first systematic approach to define voice types based on traditional role categories stemming from traditional drama. His *Handbuch der Oper* (1951) led to a normative understanding of the *Stimmfach*,

43 *Oxford English Dictionary*, OED Online, s.v. "croon, v.", accessed July 18, 2022, www.oed.com.

44 Biddle and Jarman-Ivens, 10.

45 McCracken, *Real Men Don't Sing*, 34.

46 McCracken, 319.

47 McCracken, 327.

48 McCracken, 327.

49 Thomas Seedorf, "Stimmfach / Stimmfächer," in *Lexikon der Gesangsstimme: Geschichte, wissenschaftliche Grundlagen, Gesangstechniken, Interpreten*, ed. Ann-Christine Mecke et al., 2nd revised edition, Instrumenten-Lexika (Laaber: Laaber, 2018), 587–88.

50 Seedorf, 588.

which is influential to this day.[51] In contrast to the overall term "voice type," *Stimmfach* refers specifically to the operatic tradition and its subcategories are much richer with semantic connotations. The *Fachsystem* also plays a vital part in musicals. There, new categories like "pop soprano" or "Broadway soprano"—and the attribution of voices to specific styles such as blues, gospel, and rock, or techniques such as belting—amend the traditional categories.[52] And, as will be demonstrated, it is also vital for voice casting in Disney films, especially the princes from the early era—i.e., Snow White's, Aurora's, and Cinderella's love interests, who are classical tenors and sing with a classical operatic technique.

As the aforementioned literature makes clear, the reception of the portrayal of masculinity in Disney films is just as ambiguous and complicated as the portrayal itself. Indeed, there seems to be a thin line between the exact amount of emotionality men tend to display: on the one hand, making men emotionally available; and on the other, overriding their masculinity. This balancing act is also crucial for the male protagonists of the love songs analyzed in this chapter: as my analyses will show, they each struggle with specific aspects of what is considered "masculine," especially when it comes to negotiating this masculinity within the context of a romantic relationship. With Aladdin from the 1992 movie of the same name, Eugene from *Tangled* (2010), and Kristoff from *Frozen* (2013, as well as its sequel *Frozen II* in 2019), we meet three characters who have a lot in common. All three stories feature couples with different social backgrounds, with the men being poor orphans and the women princesses. Moreover, all three men are more experienced in the ways of the world than their respective princesses and they introduce the female characters to "real life." Aladdin and Eugene sing a love duet with their princesses, making these duets a part of the very small number of genuine Disney love duets. Kristoff sings a solo love song, just like Quasimodo, the protagonist from *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1996). While Kristoff, Aladdin, and Eugene are the male romantic leads in love stories with happy endings, Quasimodo is less fortunate: the beautiful Romani girl Esmeralda only cares for him as a friend and falls instead for the dashing soldier Phoebus.

51 Seedorf, 587, 589. The reference is to Rudolf Kloiber, *Handbuch der Oper* (Regensburg: Gustav Bosse, 1951).

52 Seedorf, 589–90.

"A Whole New World"

In his revised model of Disney masculinity, Macaluso places Aladdin between the categories "boy" and "hero/prince" and this categorization is visible in the production process:[53] in the Oriental-Chinese fairy tale *Aladin,* which served as inspiration to the film, Aladdin is a young boy from China. While the studio decided to reset the tale in Arabia, they originally intended to keep Aladdin as a 13-year-old boy.[54] After looking at the original sketches, which made Aladdin look boyish (some filmmakers even noted a resemblance to Michael J. Fox), Walt Disney Studios' chairman Jeffrey Katzenberg began to worry that Aladdin might not seem masculine enough. Thus, he asked the animators to watch Tom Cruise movies as a reference point and redesign the character,[55] and it was ultimately decided that he needed to be older, more independent, and rougher—a "kind of Indiana Jones character."[56] Aladdin is thus a good example for the "boy" as a cultural icon: he is "man enough to be desired and desiring, and yet boy enough to be unthreatening."[57] This negotiation of masculinity is also mirrored in Aladdin's voice acting, which is done by two different actors: 17-year-old Scott Weinger (speaking voice) and 19-year-old Brad Kane (singing voice). There are contradictory information on this casting process. In interviews, Kane and Weinger make it sound as if Weinger had already been casted as speaking voice but had then experienced problems with the singing part.[58] Hischak however states that originally Kane was meant to do the speaking and singing voice, but at the last minute it was decided that Weinger should do the speaking, who succeeded in making Aladdin "young and appealing even as he was a bit of a playful ruffian."[59] In any case, Weinger's speak-

53 Macaluso, "Postfeminist Masculinity," 3.

54 Thomas S. Hischak, *Disney Voice Actors*: *A Biographical Dictionary* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2011), 220.

55 Steve Daly, "Disney's Got a Brand-New Baghdad," *Ew.com Entertainment Weekly*, De-cember 4, 1992, retrieved on December 1, 2022, https://web.archive.org/web/20121025122146/http://www.ew.com/ew/article/0,,312562_2,00.html.

56 Hischak, *Disney Voice Actors*, 220.

57 Biddle and Jarman-Ivens, "Introduction," 6.

58 "Brad Kane Recording Session - One Jump Ahead from Disney's Aladdin (Behind the Scenes)," Disney's Behind the Scene interview, uploaded on February 21, 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kuc6jyuzbRs; "A Disastrous Audition (Alan Menken & Scott Weinger Featurette)," Disney Music VEVO, uploaded on September 12, 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ALBpLac043M.

59 Hischak, *Disney Voice Actors*, 220.

ing voice sounds somewhat rougher than Kane's, which corresponds to the producers' wish to make Aladdin less boyish.

In the duet "A Whole New World" (music by Alan Menken, lyrics by Tim Rice), Aladdin, disguised as Prince Ali, invites Jasmine onto his magic carpet and starts to sing: "I can show you the world | shining, shimmering, splendid." Throughout the song, Aladdin underlines his ability to introduce Jasmine to a "new world," to "open [her] eyes" and to "take [her] wonder by wonder." She confirms this by singing lines such as "a dazzling place I never knew," and "now I'm in a whole new world with you." In terms of the lyrics, Aladdin thus asserts his masculinity by presenting himself as the more dominant, mature, and active party in the relationship. The music adds a different notion, however: Aladdin's boyish singing has the charm of an untrained voice. This becomes mostly noticeable in the lower register where his vocal cords do not always properly close and air leaks through, resulting in an altogether breathier voice with rather unbalanced registers (especially when singing "now when did you last let your heart decide?") In addition, his pitch is not always fully accurate. This vocal roughness represents vulnerability and youth—a girl of the same age would probably have more control of her voice. This becomes especially audible when Jasmine sings, voiced by 21-year-old Lea Salonga who moves elegantly through the registers and whose voice is equipped with a subtle and well-balanced vibrato. But there is more to the use of the lower register than just youth: when Kane's voice rises in pitch it becomes apparent that he is more at home in a slightly elevated tessitura, as the higher pitches are more resonant and colorful than the lower ones. His youthful voice and the higher register fit well into the dawning era of the boy bands of the 1990s, which the film just predates. Moreover, all singing characters listed by Macaluso as "hero/prince" (Prince Charming, Prince Philipp, Hercules) or between the categories "boy" and "hero/prince" (Aladdin, John Smith, Quasimodo) are tenors, which matches the tradition of romantic opera.[60] Aladdin, despite having an untrained voice, thus fits vocally into the Disney-prince tradition. He does, however, not yet trust in his inner prince and tries to conceal his insecurity by giving his voice a low, husky sexiness, in order to charm Jasmine. Especially in the beginning of the song, he acts like a lyrical tenor trying to play a "cavalier baritone"—a *Stimmfach*, that is used to portray a gallant gentleman irresistible to women. Prominent examples

60 Macaluso, "Postfeminist Masculinity," 3.

are Don Giovanni, who "has his way with every woman he sees"[61] or Eugen Onegin, who is responsible for Tatjana's romantic awakening. Cavalier baritones often have an easy tenor top, as does Aladdin, but also a recognizable baritone vocal color, which is what Aladdin tries to obtain. It is noteworthy that the voice actors in the German and French version of the film—Peter Fessler and Paolo Domingo—face similar challenges, due to the overall vocal range of Aladdin's part in this song. This reveals that the vocal negotiation of masculinity in *Aladdin* is not so much the result of an individual casting choice, but rather of a compositional decision by Alan Menken, whose choice of vocal range makes Aladdin's struggle with his romantic masculinity inevitable.

Halfway through the ballad, the balance of power shifts: when Jasmine sings "Now I'm in a whole new world with you," Aladdin repeats it, acknowledging for the first time that he is experiencing something new as well. Jasmine then takes the musical lead by starting the second verse, with Lea Salonga singing even the highest notes with confidence and clarity (e.g., "I'm like a shooting star"). Earlier in the song, the lovers had sung alternately, imitating and finishing each other's verses. But in the final lines, they start to sing simultaneously ("Let me share this whole new world with you"). As the song ends, Jasmine realizes that Aladdin is not a prince after all but the boy she met at the market earlier in the film. These developments shed light on the changing of Aladdin's masculinity in this romantic context: in the beginning, he presents himself as the more experienced and mature partner. At the same time, his uneasiness with the low register reveals the gap between self-understanding and actual abilities—he is still a boy, not yet a man, and most importantly not yet a prince. Yet, when Jasmine takes the lead, assuring him of her consent and accepting his boyishness and unrefined mannerisms, they start to act as equals, allowing Jasmine to eventually recognize Aladdin's true self. Aladdin's vocals here already imply the eventual happy ending, as his voice clearly has potential: his voice comes across as that of an untrained tenor, a "diamond in the rough," as the cave of wonders calls him at the beginning of the movie. Given that most Disney princes are tenors, his singing implies that it is indeed possible for him to win Jasmine's heart and to earn the status of a prince—which is precisely what happens next.

61 Paul Yeadon McGinnis, *The Opera Singer's Career Guide*: *Understanding the European Fach System* (London: Scarecrow Pres, 2010), 38.

"I See the Light"

While Aladdin represents the shift between boyhood and manhood, *Tangled*'s Eugene is considerably more masculine. The character design of Eugene came from a process called the "Hot Man Meeting," a one-time event held for *Tangled*. The producers set up a meeting with all the studio's female employees, and asked them what made a man good-looking regarding eye color, hair color and style, and body type—all in order to create Eugene's character design:

> All the ladies of the studio came into the "Hot Man Meeting," where we gathered pictures of their favorite handsome men [e.g., Johnny Depp, Hugh Jackman, Brad Pitt, David Beckham, and Gene Kelly]—we collected pictures from the Internet and from books and from women's wallets. They were very specific about what they liked and what they didn't like."[62]

Thus, to quote the producers, they "created the ultimate man."[63] It is noteworthy that several of these men are not only song- or dance-men, but tend to have a vulnerable quality; while Jackman and Kelly appear more mature in a physical way than Pitt, Beckham and Depp, they nevertheless strongly portray interiority and sensitivity.

Given the characters he was based on, it is therefore no surprise that Macaluso categorizes Eugene as a postfeminist hero, despite this physical hypermasculinity. The crisis, which defines the postfeminist hero, is here caused by his emerging love for Rapunzel, which puts in question his former self-understanding and goals. By this, he differs from Aladdin: Aladdin falls in love with Jasmine at first sight and bases all his actions on the aim of winning her. Eugene first agrees to accompany Rapunzel with the hope of winning back the tiara she took from him. It is only during their shared adventures that he falls in love with her. While the attraction between the two soon becomes clear, it is only in the duet "I See the Light" (music by Alan Menken, again; lyrics by Glenn Slater) that they realize and express their feelings for each other.

For the songs in *Tangled*, Alan Menken took inspiration from 1960s folk

62 Roth Cornet, "Zach Levi on Being a Disney Hunk in *Tangled*, A Singer, A Superhero & *Chuck*," *Screen Rant*, November 18, 2010, https://screenrant.com/disney-tangled-zach-levi-interview-chuck. The names of the men discussed in this meeting are listed on "Flynn Rider," Disney Wiki, *Fandom*, https://disney.fandom.com/wiki/Flynn_Rider.

63 Cornet, "Zach Levi on Being a Disney Hunk."

rock, especially Joni Mitchell's songs.[64] "I See the Light" is much simpler and more folk-like than "A Whole New World," and prominently features the sound of an acoustic guitar adding to the folk-like tone. The first two verses are sung in the characters' heads as an introspective comment on their respective situations. Rapunzel, voiced by 26-year-old Mandy Moore, is singing about the overwhelming feeling of at last seeing the floating lanterns which are lit each year in memory of the lost princess. It is only in the last line that she makes the connection between these feelings and her love for Eugene ("all at once everything is different | now that I see you"). But Eugene, voiced by 30-year-old Zachary Levi, makes this connection much quicker. Halfway through his first solo verse, he sings: "Now she's here, suddenly I know | If she's here it's crystal clear | I'm where I'm meant to go" and gently takes her hand. This action—taking her hand—makes Rapunzel realize that Eugene returns her affection. The beginning of the second chorus finds them finally singing together, and openly professing their love. While Mandy Moore's Broadway-like singing resembles Jasmine's style in "A Whole New World," Zachary Levi sings completely differently than Brad Kane; the song is vocally less demanding than "A Whole New World" and voice actor Zachary Levi is able to sing comfortably within his range. In contrast to Brad Kane's Aladdin, Levi's Eugene is more of a baritone, both in terms of the tessitura of the song as well as in terms of a warm, lush, and more "manly" color. Combined with the overall sexualization and cockiness of the character, this places him near the operatic category of "cavalier baritone". His voice is well-balanced with rich low notes (e.g., "shining in the star light") and an effortless middle register ("never truly seeing"). He sings with a rather straight-toned, breathy voice and is almost crooning ("all those years living in a blur," "all that time," "and it's warm and clear and bright"). With this, he takes on the typical qualities of the pop crooner, with his "alignment with the cultural feminine through his preference for romantic songs and commercial pop… his beauty and sensitivity, his emotional openness and transparency."[65] However, in some moments, a slight vibration of the voice shines through ("it's crystal clear," his last "see you"). This vocal ability reveals that the use of breathy moments is a conscious

64 Todd Martens, "Unwrapping the Music in *Tangled*: It All Begins with Joni Mitchell, Says Alan Menken," *Los Angeles Times*, November 24, 2010, https://latimesblogs.latimes.com/music_blog/2010/11/unwrapping-the-music-in-tangled-it-all-begins-with-joni-mitchell-says-alan-menken.html.

65 McCracken, *Real Men Don't Sing*, 327.

choice to create an impression of vulnerability and emotionality, unlike with Brad Kane's singing.

The way romance develops throughout the song is thus profoundly different from "A Whole New World": Aladdin takes action from the very beginning. He courts and eventually wins Jasmine by singing to her and inviting her to fly—and sing—with him. While Eugene eventually also takes action (by taking Rapunzel's hand), he never intended to court her and was actually caught by surprise by his feelings for her, making him much more passive and undetermined in his courtship. For the "boy" Aladdin, romantic enthusiasm seems fitting, and he makes no secret of his infatuation. For Eugene, in contrast, allowing himself to fall for Rapunzel demands courage. For the boy Aladdin, falling in love is a sign of growth and masculinity. For Eugene, it is a crisis of vulnerability. In both duets, however, the male lead's singing voice does somewhat contrast this confidence or, in Eugene's case, lack of confidence. Aladdin, although being confident and active, sings with a boyish voice and almost oversteps his vocal limits. Eugene's crooning voice sounds much deeper and more mature; it is not only reminiscent of the "cavalier baritone," but also corresponds to current popular aesthetics: in 2013, a British study found that women tend to find tender, deep, and breathy voices most attractive in men—all qualities that are inherent to "crooning." While the deep pitch suggests strength and a large body size, the breathiness could be a way of neutralizing the aggressiveness associated with these features.[66] Moreover, huskiness sometimes has a hormonal cause, and can be a cause of sexual desire. As Mary Talbot bluntly argues in her book *Language and Gender*, if a woman is aroused by a man's breathy voice, "this just means she is turned on by the fact that she turns *him* on."[67] Thus, the vocal timbre serves as a counterbalance to the character's overall coping with romance: the boyish timbre hinders the boy Aladdin from appearing too masculine, whereas postfeminist Eugene reasserts his masculinity through his mature and breathy voice. The same applies to Chayanne, who voices Eugene in the Latin Spanish version of the film.

However, in the Italian (Massimiliano Alto) and French (Emmanuel Dahl) version, this is less clear: while Alto's voice has breathy moments, his timbre is not as low as Levi's, and Dahl's singing sounds much more boyish

66 Yi Xu et al., "Human Vocal Attractiveness as Signaled by Body Size Projection," *Plos One* 8, no. 4 (2013): e62397.

67 Mary Talbot, *Language and Gender: An Introduction*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010), 32. Italics in original.

than Levi's. Thus, unlike with "A Whole New World," the negotiation of romantic masculinity is not so much integral to the composition, but rather to the respective singer's interpretation. While Levi's Eugene definitely does not sing like a traditional prince, he seems to have wonderful control of his vocal mechanism, contrasting his lack of emotional control whilst falling in love. Thus, despite his postfeminist insecurities, Eugene appears a more mature Aladdin, with the same rough background but a much better command of his voice and body.

"Lost in the Woods"

As the analyses of the two duets have shown, romantic masculinity oscillates between dominance and vulnerability. The expressed feelings are consensual in the duets and the man is rewarded for taking the risk to navigate between these poles. This is different when the man sings a solo love song, as I will show through the example of *Frozen*'s Kristoff (who, like Eugene, is a "postfeminist hero") and *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*'s Quasimodo (who, like Aladdin, is placed between "boy" and "hero/prince"). Similar to Aladdin and Eugene, Kristoff is an orphan, too, and stems from a different social background than his love interest, Princess Anna. And just like Aladdin and Eugene, he has more life experience than the princess, who seems much more innocent, almost childlike. In his outer appearance and overall behavior, he does however differ from Aladdin and Eugene—i.e., he is of the "loner" archetype, yet bashful and quirky at the same time. This becomes especially apparent in his friendship with the reindeer Sven, with whom he shares food, sings duets, and talks—all while ventriloquizing the reindeer, which, unlike many other Disney animal sidekicks, cannot talk. Kristoff's outer appearance—the bulkiness, the working-class vibe—responds to newly-arising masculine ideas such as the "lumbersexual." This traditional masculinity is however paired with an emotional sensitivity which Heike Steinhoff understands as a sign of postfeminist masculinity: "Like the Beast representing the New Man, Kristoff is also kind, gentle, and caring. Thus, Kristoff's portrayal aligns with contemporary hybrid ideals of heterosexual masculinity."[68]

68 Heike Steinhoff, "'Let It Go'? Re-Inventing the Disney Fairy Tale in *Frozen*," in *Heroes, Heroines, and Everything in Between: Challenging Gender and Sexuality Stereotypes in Children's Entertainment Media*, ed. CarrieLynn D. Reinhard and Christopher J. Olson (Lan-

The song "Lost in the Woods" (music and lyrics by Kristen Anderson-Lopez & Robert Lopez) appears in the sequel *Frozen II* and marks an emotional turning point in Kristoff's relationship with Princess Anna: when Anna, once again, seemingly puts her sister first and embarks on an adventurous quest with her, he starts to doubt her love and sings the power ballad "Lost in the Woods." With this, Kristoff is one of the very few male romantic leads in Disney films who sings a genuine solo love song, and the only one who sings about the fear of losing love, rather than pining over a secret affection. This is even more remarkable when one considers that the producers had had difficulties in picturing Kristoff as a singing character: in the first *Frozen* movie, Kristoff did not sing, apart from the short ditty "Reindeer(s) Are Better Than People." Instead, Princess Anna sang a love duet "Love Is an Open Door" with Prince Hans, who turned out to be the villain of the story. One reason for this lack of song was apparently Kristoff's gruff and solitary character, which did not make it very likely for him to break out in song. In an interview, voice actor Jonathan Groff stated: "I couldn't personally imagine how they were going to get a mountain man to sing. The first one, okay, he's got a lute, he's singing a ditty with his reindeer, I buy that. … But how are they going to get Kristoff to sing? I couldn't even imagine it."[69] Groff here touches on the problem of singing as a gender-inadequate way of expression, which had already kept Robert from singing in *Enchanted*. Besides the overall roughness of Kristoff's character, there is also a narrative reason for this lack of singing which has its roots in the first film. Kristoff is presented as a counterpart to the false prince Hans, who—unlike Kristoff—looks and sounds like a Disney Prince, especially in his duet "Love Is an Open Door" with Anna. Denying Kristoff a classical Disney song underlines the juxtaposition of these two characters, who are also rivals in love.

Yet, before shooting the first *Frozen* film, Groff had already established himself as a successful musical theater actor, starring for example in the TV musical series *Glee*. This led to many viewers being disappointed by Kristoff's lack of song—and demanded that he get a solo in the sequel.[70] To solve this dilemma, the composers Robert Lopez and Kristen Anderson-Lopez

ham: Lexington Books, 2017), 169. For Bridges and Pascoe's definition of "hybrid masculinities," see note 30.

69 Joanna Robinson, "*Frozen II*: The Story Behind Jonathan Groff's Surprising '80s Ballad," *Vanity Fair*, website, November 15, 2019, https://www.vanityfair.com/hollywood/2019/11/jonathan-groff-song-frozen-2-lost-in-the-woods-making-of.

70 See Robinson, "*Frozen II*."

drew inspiration from both karaoke and 1980s bands such as Journey and Queen: "There's nothing better than a man feeling his feelings in a real way at a karaoke bar," according to Anderson-Lopez herself.[71] Groff states that he has "seen a lot of drunk dudes singing Journey at karaoke. … And it's 'funny'?… There's also a level of necessity for expression. And Queen is a part of that. Queen was so theatrical and big and when you do something that's theatrical and big like that and it's sung by a man, it gives boys the opportunity to really be theatrical and express themselves."[72] Lopez's and Groff's statements imply that, in order to allow themselves to express their emotions, men need a catalyst, such as alcohol, or an explicitly dramatic or theatrical setting, allowing them to construct an ironic distance to their emotions. This is also visible in Kristoff's singing scene: in the beginning, it seems like he is only reprising the ditty from the first movie. He sings, unaccompanied, to Sven: "Reindeers are better than people | Sven, why is love so hard?" Suddenly, the light changes and Sven answers: "You feel what you feel | And those feelings are real | Come on, Kristoff, let down your guard." With a nod, Sven invites Kristoff onto an imaginary stage; a piano starts to play, distorted guitars join in, and Kristoff begins to sing "Lost in the Woods." Interestingly, it is only after his best friend has assured him that his emotions are valid (and after the changing light and talking reindeer make clear that this is a dream-sequence, an introspective musical moment and not a public display of emotion) that Kristoff starts singing the actual ballad ("Again, you're gone…"), thus letting out feelings he cannot express otherwise. The song is filled with visual and musical references to 1980s ballads: the solo piano, the background chorus, the singing into a pinecone, the hair flip, and the diva pose ("I probably could catch up with you tomorrow") are all reminiscent of mid-1980s MTV music videos. The extreme close-up on the face resembles videos by Journey, and the montage where Kristoff sings with a visually multiplied Sven ("Wondering if you still care") alludes to Queen's "Bohemian Rhapsody." All these features create an almost ironic distance to Kristoff's showing of emotions. Groff suspects that the "element of comedy might make the flood of Kristoff's emotions go down easier, especially with young boys."[73] This aligns with Konrad Paul Liessmann's idea that it is possible to take the pleasures of kitsch with a grain of salt—one can keep an ironic distance to the conveyed message and

71 Robinson.
72 Robinson.
73 Robinson.

at the same time indulge in the transported emotions.[74] Thus, the cheesy visual references and the music both ridicule and enable Kristoff's postfeminist showing of emotion.

While the music and the visual effects evoke comedy, the voice, however, does not, or at least not to the same degree: Groff, in fact, does not only voice Kristoff, but also Sven, as well as the complete reindeer background chorus and a multiplied version of himself, resulting in 18 different vocal tracks. For this, he uses a variety of vocal timbres and colors, all of which correspond to different types of masculinity. As Kristoff also dubs Sven—and the reindeer almost seems to serve as his alter ego—it is worthwhile to examine Sven's voice, too, in order to shed light on Kristoff's masculinity. In the opening bars that he sings to Sven, Groff uses a raw and breathy voice, combined with a heavy sigh, reminiscent of a recitativo. For Sven's answer, he employs a slightly comical puffed-up voice, which underlines the scene's surreal tone. When the actual song starts, Kristoff's voice changes once again into a typical Broadway sound, with a soft and tasteful belting and numerous affective voice breaks ("When did I become the one who's always chasing your heart?", "When you're not there"). The fact that he sings with a belt voice, rather than with a vibrato, matches his overall character: he is more of a down-to-earth nature boy, not a fairy tale-like prince charming.

Despite his roughness and the comic elements, the high level of training in Kristoff's tenor voice proves that he is the rightful hero of the love story. Just as with Aladdin, being a tenor makes Kristoff a worthy candidate for the male lead. The song repeatedly features rather high pitches that he hits with comfort and ease. His registers are well-balanced and his voice has the same color from top to bottom. He mixes in head voice ("forever!"), as is typical of a 1980's power ballad,[75] but never goes into full falsetto. It is likely that the use of this high range, combined with a belt voice, is meant to appeal to young girls—not too blatantly masculine, yet also definitely not feminine. In the choruses, Sven joins it, but not with the reindeer voice he used in his short reply to Kristoff. Instead, the reindeer chorus is dubbed with the Broadway-voice Kristoff uses throughout the ballad. Especially in the visual references to "Bohemian Rhapsody", the background chorus sings much higher, but still within a range which seems fitting and not exaggerated for a 1980s power ballad. This giving up of irony in the vocals,

74 Konrad Paul Liessmann, *Kitsch oder warum der schlechte Geschmack der eigentlich gute ist* (Wien: Brandstätter, 2002), 74.

75 McCracken, *Real Men Don't Sing*, 318–19.

combined with the strong emphasis on his professional tenor voice, assure a balance between the ridiculing and the acknowledging of Kristoff's heartache.

This balance does however not necessarily translate to other languages. In the German version, for instance, Leonhard Mahlich does not sing with a belt voice and uses considerably less head voice and voice breaks. This makes his singing somewhat more natural and less theatrical. Also, there is less struggling with showing emotions in the lyrics: unlike the English version, where Sven encourages Kristoff to show his feelings ("let down your guard"), German Sven says: "Sorg' dich nicht mehr" ("Do not worry any more"), thus omitting Kristoff's negotiating of masculinity and emotionality. While the references to the 1980s ballad and the connotations linked to this are thus still present in the music, Groff's interpretation as a Broadway singer is much more subversive.

"Heaven's Light"

Just as he does with Aladdin, Macaluso places Quasimodo between the categories "boy" and "hero/prince."[76] Quasimodo shows several character traits typical of the boy—innocence, youth, sweetness, and an enthusiastic infatuation for Esmeralda, with whom he falls in love at first sight. Moreover, as his love song "Heaven's Light" shows, he is "man enough to desire,"[77] although his love for Esmeralda is depicted as a gentle and romantic feeling, in contrast to the lust Frollo displays in the corresponding song "Hellfire." While Quasimodo is "man enough to desire," he is not portrayed as desirable himself: he has a large hump, a squashed face, a lump above his left eye, a receding chin, and a central incisor—all reasons why his master Frollo decided to keep him hidden in the cathedral where he leads a lonely life.

After having experienced Esmeralda's kindness, Quasimodo dares to hope that she returns his affection (a hope encouraged by his friends, the stone gargoyles) and sings the song "Heaven's Light" (music by Alan Menken, lyrics by Stephen Schwartz). It is a short song, much less dramatic than his opening song "Out There." Despite its shortness, it serves as an important dramatic device to underline Quasimodo's changing angle towards romantic masculinity. Lyricist Stephen Schwartz states: "We thought Quasimodo

76 Macaluso, "Postfeminist Masculinity," 3.
77 Biddle and Jarman-Ivens, "Introduction," 6.

needed a moment to express his delusion or hope that Esmeralda might actually think of him in a romantic way."[78] The song is reprised when Quasimodo realizes that Esmeralda prefers Phoebus. The producers considered placing a song there for the lovers, but ultimately decided that the focus should remain on Quasimodo, who once again realizes his exclusion from romantic love.[79] As the song also serves as a contrasting element to the following "Hellfire," it underlines once more Quasimodo's moral superiority to Frollo. Quasimodo looks down on the city and reflects on both his own loneliness as well as the lovers he sometimes observes below, who "had a kind of glow around them | it almost looked like heaven's light." Despite being already forty-three years old and thus twenty-three years older than his character, voice actor Tom Hulce sounds very bright, young, tender, and at ease in every register. For most of the tune he lets a lot of air leak through the folds and is much closer to a spoken voice than an operatic singing voice. This evokes an atmosphere of intimacy and honesty. The person whose voice we are hearing in this scene is apparently an honest, sensitive introvert and no pseudo-masculine show-off. When Quasimodo concludes that his own hideous face "was [never] meant for heaven's light," he even briefly touches on the falsetto register with a high F, evoking an angelic, very innocent feeling, and indicating a vulnerable and rather soft personality. The accompaniment is discrete, featuring a soft string ensemble, solo harp, recorders, and solo strings. But in the second part, when he mentions Esmeralda ("But suddenly an angel has smiled at me"), the string accompaniment suddenly swells, touching on common romantic Hollywood aesthetics. The melody rises and changes again into falsetto ("I swear it must be heaven's light"), followed by the bright and happy sound of the bells which sound much less tremendous and solemn than before. This falsetto is also audible in all other dubbings of the song, as it results from the composer's choice of range, making it an integral part of the song's aesthetics.

Falsetto holds a special place within the discourse of musical gender. It is much more associated with male singing than female singing. The castrati of the eighteenth century were considered desirable partners, and in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, in some styles such as gospel, such high voice can stand for a certain kind of masculine bravado, notably in

78 Carol de Giere, *Defying Gravity: The Creative Career of Stephen Schwartz from "Godspell" to "Wicked"* (Milwaukee: Applause Theatre Books, 2008), 245.

79 Paul R. Laird, *The Musical Theater of Stephen Schwartz: From "Godspell" to "Wicked" and Beyond* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 243.

the "power ballads" of the 1980s.[80] At the same time, falsetto is often understood as "anti-masculine."[81] Given this ambiguity, it is worth taking a closer look at its dramatic function. Quasimodo repeatedly remarks that, due to his appearance, he feels excluded from society in general and specifically from romance—and thus also from traditional discourses of masculinity. This exclusion also means that he is not familiar with the conventions of masculine behavior and, even if he were, they would not apply to him. Thus, unlike Kristoff, he does not need to distance himself ironically from his feelings and is free to sing with whatever voice he likes.

This is different when the song is reprised: when Esmeralda tends to the wounded Phoebus, Quasimodo witnesses them kissing and is utterly shocked and saddened. He starts to sing "Heaven's Light," but unlike the first time, only in his head. Here, sound design plays an important part in altering the meaning of the song: Quasimodo's voice is blurred and the overtones are reduced, thus making his voice sound less bright. With the beginning of the second part he stops singing and lets go of the card with the ace of hearts, which the gargoyles had given him as a symbol of Esmeralda's love for him. As the strings swell, he starts to cry. The concluding confident falsetto disappears along with his self-understanding as a romantically desirable man. Humiliated, he does not dare to express his feelings openly. However, unlike Kristoff, society does not force him to musically comply with contemporary conventions of masculinity and seek shelter in ironic theatricality: Quasimodo has always been at ease with his own emotionality, and this ultimately helps him overcome his heartache.

Conclusion

As my analyses have shown, the music is more than a mere mirror of the various categories of Disney masculinity: it is only in the music, and especially in the use of the male singing voice, that the contradictions inherent to these categories become apparent. This is especially true for characters who find themselves in transition between two categories, like Aladdin and Quasimodo who are placed between the categories "boy" and "hero/prince." In Aladdin's case, the transition between the stages of his character devel-

80 McCracken, *Real Men Don't Sing*, 318–19.
81 Biddle and Jarman-Ivens, "Introduction," 7–8

opment becomes audible in his vocals. He is a "diamond in the rough" with an untrained voice. At the same time, his tenor and hence prince-qualities are clearly audible, especially when he stops pretending to be more than he actually is by disguising himself vocally as a baritone in order to win Jasmine's heart. Quasimodo in contrast has never had the chance to approach Esmeralda in a romantic way or to approach anyone at all in song. He is unburdened by traditional gender expectations, and this is audible in his voice which remains pure, soft, boyish, and, due to the falsetto and the overall airiness, lacking body and being almost androgynous. This creates a strong contrast to Phoebus, whose muscles, beard, and low voice (he does not sing) correspond to contemporary concepts of masculinity. However, unlike with the "boy" as a "cultural icon," the androgyny of Quasimodo's voice does not threaten to disrupt the binaries of sex and gender, as he is presented as non-desirable, at least in the first film. Future research may further investigate to what extent these observations apply to the dubbed version of the films as produced by Disney Character Voices International. Especially since the 2000, voice actors are not only chosen for their resemblance to the English original, but also for their appeal to the local market. Also, as has been demonstrated with the reprise of "Heaven's Light", sound design and post production can add additional levels of meaning to the singing which are worth examining.

Besides the transition between various categories of masculinity, music is an important factor within the balancing act that is the display of emotions with male characters, especially when expressed through song. Eugene counters the vulnerability his character experiences by falling for Rapunzel with a deliberately manly and alluring voice. Despite his alleged weakness, his baritone voice proves that he is still desirable. Kristoff takes a different approach: he counters his vulnerability with irony, allowing the spectator to choose how deeply to engage with this pain. While the music creates a comic relief, his tenor voice hinders the musical irony from covering the emotional sincerity necessary to touch the audience and vice versa. By combining the double-edged concept of postfeminist masculinity, the music, and particularly the vocal timbre, it is possible to determine how the hybridity of the male characters' emotional displays is both allotted and received.

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Abstract

While romantic love is a central topic in most Disney films, love duets sung by the featured couple are relatively rare and solo songs sung by the male protagonist even rarer. The combination of masculinity and the musical expression of romantic feelings seems thus to pose a challenge. In order to understand the complexity of romantic masculinity in Disney movies it makes sense to consider an aspect that has so far been left unconsidered: the male singing voice. This article conducts a comparative analysis of the love duets "A Whole New World" from *Aladdin* (1992) and "I See the Light" from *Tangled* (2010), as well as the solo love songs "Lost in the Woods" from *Frozen II* (2019) and "Heaven's Light" from *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1996). It focuses on three central questions: (1) whether various models of romantic masculinity are mirrored in specific stylistic musical or vocal devices; (2) how these connections relate to the longstanding tradition of voice categories (*Stimmfach*) in opera; and (3) in which ways the music and especially the singing comment on or even contradict the portrayed masculinity. By discussing the male lead as a musical character, the article offers a new perspective on Disney's (re)interpretation of romantic masculinity.

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