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Edwards

Exploring Voices

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Blog

Disney Princess. When you read that, did a particular one come into your mind? Did you like them because of the color of their dress, the type of animal sidekick that was tagging along, or the story that they were involved in? What about your least favorite?. Sure, I was entranced by the beautiful dresses and the fun animation, but what caught my attention most was their voices, and the princess that I hated had the worst voice of all: Snow White. She was the very first princess and I know many people who consider her to be their favorite, but when I was little, I would scream anytime the movie came on. Not because of the scary witch or the creepy forest, but the second Snow White opened her mouth my ears would be crying for help. I never truly figured out what about her voice that I hated, partially because I never took the time to listen to it. And after forcing myself to listen to her repeatedly, I can still confidently say that I am not a fan, but now I know why. The voice actress sounds like she is straining to sound young and innocent, but it instead comes off as a creepy whisper, like a child in a horror movie. She also has a slight lisp, and, when combined with the wavery vibrato and the high-pitched breathiness, it makes the princess sound even more unsettling. Underneath all that, though, I think the real reason I hated her voice is that I hated my own. To give some context, I am an 18-year-old girl and I listened to a voicemail that I sent my mom 2 months ago, thinking that it had been from when I was in middle school. I have a high, young sounding voice and I think I heard a little bit

too much of myself in Snow White for comfort. I still won't be listening to her as a first choice, but now I hold a bit more understanding of her voice and I can appreciate it for what it is, even though it still makes me cringe.

News Article

With the coming of Disney+ and being able to rewatch our old favorites and relive our childhood nostalgia, one wants to be able to go back with an older and more experienced perspective and find if our childhood preferences were actually good and deserving of the time and attention we gave them. For me, that entailed rewatching all of my old favorite Disney Channel shows, which, I am happy to report, still entertain and amuse me, and the old Disney princess movies. Not the newer ones with the more realistic animation, though I enjoy those too, but the classics that were also around even when our parents were young. My favorites as a child definitely continue to be my favorites as an adult, and I was able to appreciate the ones that I did not watch as often. Except for one. Snow White. Her childlike look and demeanor still unsettle me, but her voice continues to be the main factor of my disdain for the princess who started it all.

Let me preface this by saying that I am a singer, so I sort of have an idea of what music I like and what vocal sounds I prefer. What I cannot believe is that I had more or less those same preferences when I was a kid, before I even started to learn about the technical aspects of music. People say that you tend to like what you do not have and that rings true for me in the vocal department. I am a first soprano, and for those who are unfamiliar, that is the highest vocal group in a choir. I love to listen to deeper voices, male or female, because I am unable to achieve that sort of sound without a lot of practice. That's why I admired Belle and Ariel. They had smooth,

clear voices that did not contain the shaky vibrato that most sopranos utilize when reaching the top of their range. I am aware that those voices are not necessarily low, but compared to the other Disney princesses, they are on the lower end.

Snow White, on the other hand, is everything that I don't particularly enjoy listening to but sounds similar to my own voice. Besides the breathy whispery quality that her voice contains, we have a pretty similar sound; bright and high pitched. I am glad that our voices differ in some ways because I would hate to hear myself more than I already do if we sounded identical. The shaky whispery part is the worst part of her voice. It sounds as if the character is trying to lure you into a false sense of security and innocence with something sinister underneath. That is why horror movies use children so often. I am not saying that Snow White is a horror movie by any means, but it uses the same tactic; innocent, young, pure thing makes you believe that you are safe before being put into scary situations. Even though I do not like her voice, I think that it was smart to make her sound that way. The character is in a sort of abusive parent situation and often times when people are in these positions they revert back to a more child-like state to cope and make the situation slightly more bearable. Snow White's voice has a lot of sound reasons for being the way that it is, but I think those reasons are what make her voice even harder to listen to.

Going back to the things you loved and hated when you were young is a really enlightening experience since you are better able to understand the reasoning behind it. It is also interesting to see how your tastes have changed or stayed the same because in a decade my tastes have more or less remained pretty similar. I would highly recommend it to find out more about who you were and are as this new decade arrives.