



MTO 29.3 Examples: Murphy, Buffy Sainte-Marie's Self-Expressive Voice

(Note: audio, video, and other interactive examples are only available online)

<https://mtosmt.org/issues/mto.23.29.3/mto.23.29.3.murphy.html>

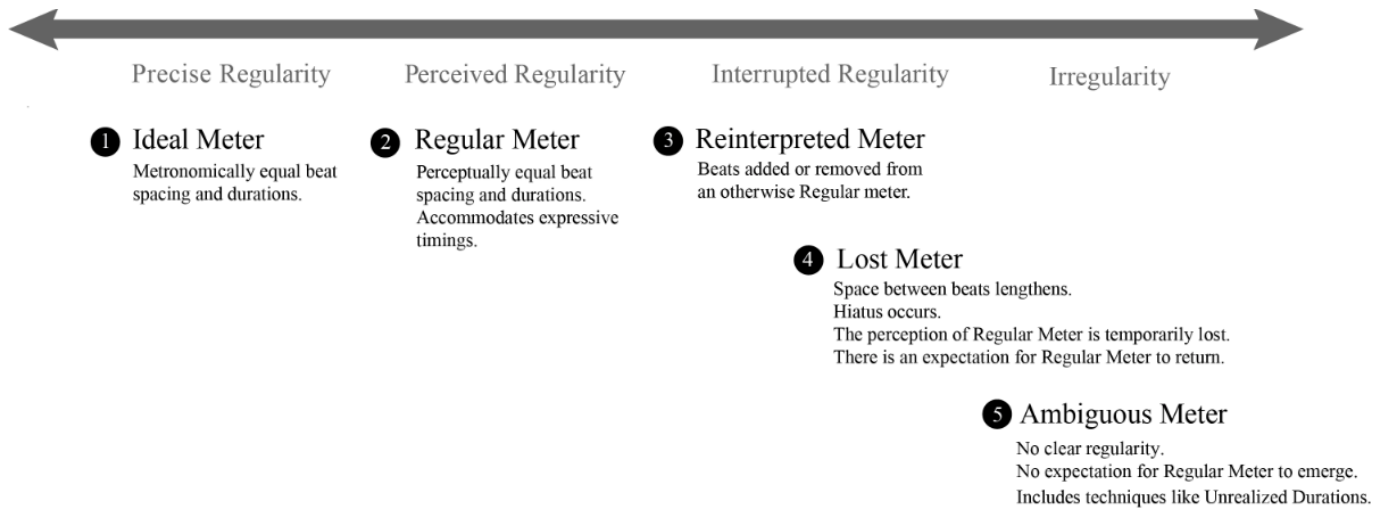
Example 1. "My Country 'Tis of Thy People You're Dying" lyrics from *Little Wheel Spin and Spin* (1966)

Verse 1	Verse 2	Verse 3	Verse 4	Verse 5
Now that your big eyes are finally opened, Now that you're wondering, "How must they feel?" Meaning them that you've chased across America's movie screens; Now that you're wondering, "How can it be real?" That the ones you've called colorful, noble, and proud In your school propaganda, They starve in their splendor. You've asked for my comment, I simply will render: My country 'tis of thy people you're dying.	Now that the longhouses "breed superstition" You force us to send our toddlers away To your schools where they're taught to despise their traditions Forbid them their languages; Then further say that American history really began When Columbus set sail out of Europe and stress That the nation of leeches that's conquered this land Are the biggest, and bravest, and boldest, and best. And yet where in your history books is the tale Of the genocide basic to this country's birth? Of the preachers who lied? How the Bill of Rights failed? How a nation of patriots returned to their earth? And where will it tell of the Liberty Bell As it rang with a thud over Kinross mud? And of brave Uncle Sam in Alaska this year? My country 'tis of thy people you're dying.	Hear how the bargain was made for the West, With her shivering children in zero degrees, "Blankets for your land" – so the treaties attest. Oh well, blankets for land is a bargain indeed. And the blankets were those Uncle Sam had collected From smallpox diseased dying soldiers that day. And the tribes were wiped out And the history books censured A hundred years of your statesmen Have felt it's better this way Yet a few of the conquered have somehow survived Their blood runs the redder Though genes have been pale. From the Grand Canyon's caverns To Craven's sad hills The wounded, the losers, the robbed sing their tale. From Los Angeles County to upstate New York, The white nation fattens while others grow lean. Oh the tricked and evicted they know what I mean: My country 'tis of thy people you're dying.	The past it just crumbled; the future just threatens Our life blood shut up in your chemical tanks, And now here you come, bill of sale in your hand And surprise in your eyes, that we're lacking in thanks For the blessings of civilization you've brought us The lessons you've taught us; The ruin you've wrought us; Oh see what our trust in America's bought us. My country 'tis of thy people you're dying.	Now that the pride of the sires receives charity, Now that we're harmless and safe behind laws, Now that my life's to be known as your heritage, Now that even the graves have been robbed, Now that our own chosen way is a novelty, Hands on our hearts We salute your victory: Cackle on your blue white and scarlet hypocrisy Plying the blindness; that you've never seen That the eagles of war whose wings lent you glory, They were never no more than carrion crows: Pushed some wrens from their nest; Stole their eggs; changed their story. The mockingbird sings it; It's all that she knows. "Oh what can I do?" say a powerless few, With a lump in your throat and a tear in your eye: Can't you see that their poverty's profiting you? My country 'tis of thy people you're dying.

Example 2. Summary of Murphy (2023), four main features of self-expression in singer-songwriter music

Self-Presentation	- Visual components (clothing, hair, makeup, etc.) - Body language, demeanor, banter between songs - Interview persona (reasons for appearances) - Positionality (race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation)
Personal or Political Lyrics	- Messages about politics and/or civil rights - Personal insights that are (or seem) autobiographical - Songs acting as vehicles for personal, political, or introspective truths (Not unique to singer-songwriter music, but common in the 1960s and 1970s)
Techniques of Vocal Production	- Timbre, vibrato, register, range, contour, etc. - General singing style; ability/propensity to change style within and between performances
Flexible Meter	- Type of metric structure that is either ambiguous (unpredictable) or shifts between passages of metric regularity and metric ambiguity - Often seem like in-the-moment responses to lyrical content

Example 3. Murphy (2023), five types of flexible meter



Example 4. Sainte-Marie, "My Country" (*Little Wheel Spin and Spin*, 1966), Verse 1 lines 1–2 (0:00–0:12)

1 2 3 4

1110 1140 1270 3460

Now that your big eyes have fi - nal - ly o - pened, (Now)

B G#7 F# B

5 1 2 3 4

1300 800 1240 1890

Now that you're won - der - ing "how must they feel?" Mean - ing (them)

C#m A# C#m A#

Example 5. Sainte-Marie, "My Country" (*Little Wheel Spin and Spin*, 1966), Verse 1 (0:00–0:55)

Now that your big eyes have fi - nal-ly o-pened, (Now)

Now that you're won-der-ing "how must they feel?" Mean-ing (them)

them that you've chased 'cross A - mer-i - ca's mov-ie screens. (Now)

Now that you're won-der-ing, "how can it be real?" That the (ones)

ones you've called col-or - ful, no - ble and proud In your (school)

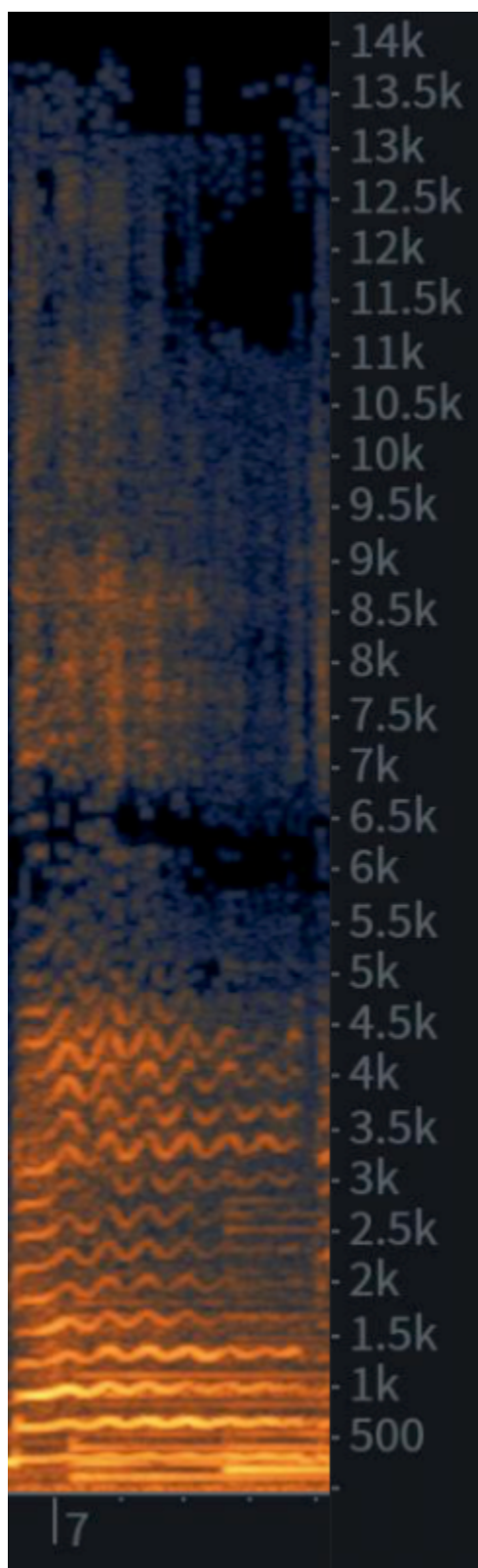
school prop - a - gan - da, they starve in their splen - dor! You've

asked for my com-ment. I sim - ply will ren - der: (My)

My coun - try, 'tis of thy peo - ple you're dy - ing.

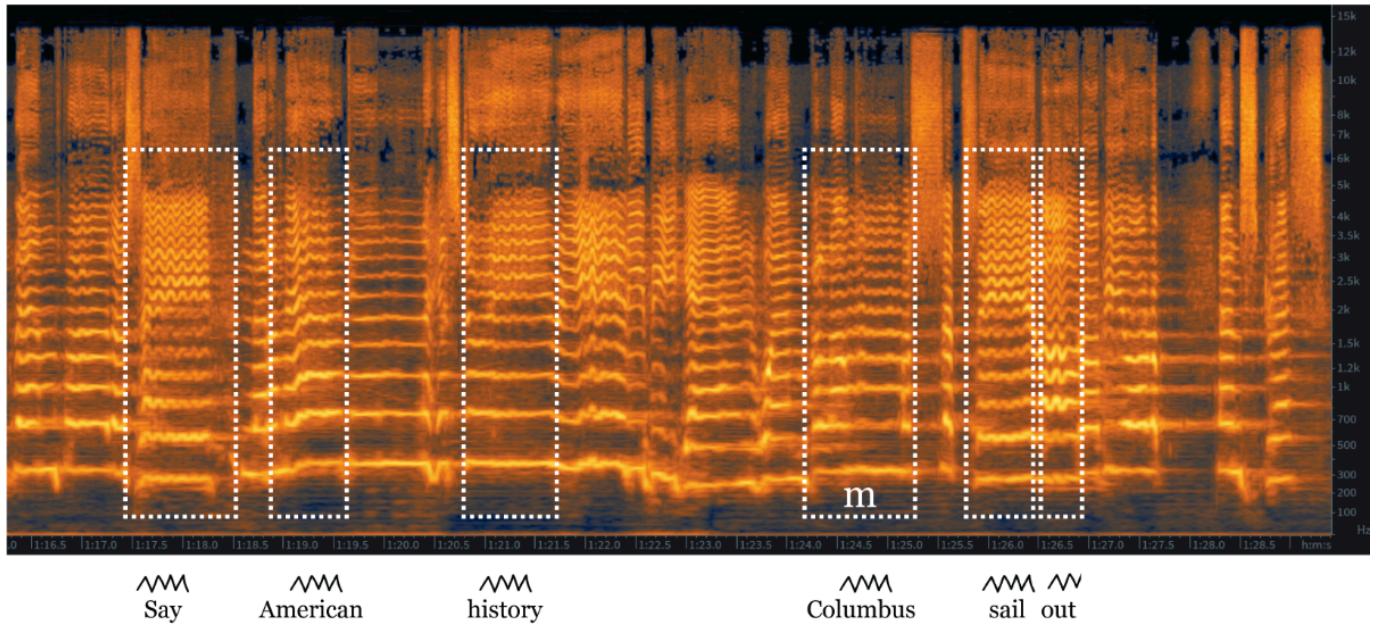
Chords: B, G#7, F#7, B, C#m, A#7, B/C#, B/D#, F#7, B, E, B, A#7, F#7, B

Example 6. Sainte-Marie, “My Country” (*Little Wheel Spin and Spin*, 1966), consistent vibrato on the word “say” (1:17)



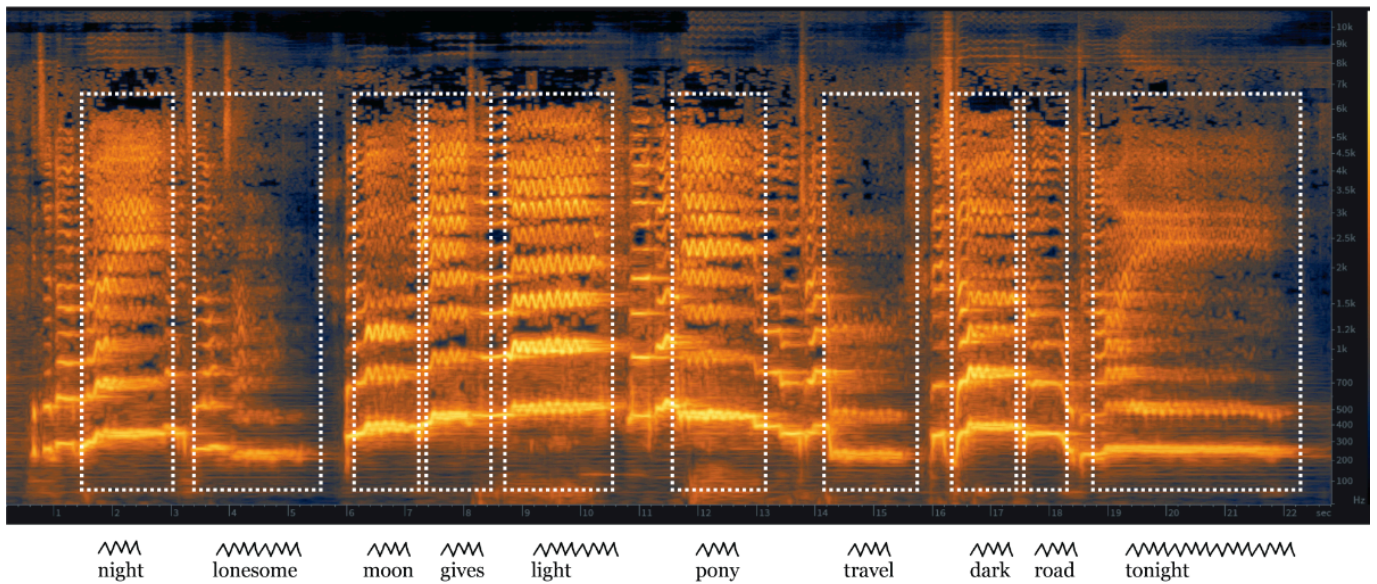
Example 7. Sainte-Marie, “My Country” (*Little Wheel Spin and Spin*, 1966), consistent vibrato in Verse 2 (1:16–1:29)

Then further say that American history really began
When Columbus set sail out of Europe and stress



Example 8. Baez, “I’m a Rambler, I’m a Gambler” (0:40–1:03)

It’s a dark night and it’s lonesome My pony won’t travel
The moon gives no light This dark road tonight



Example 9. Vibrato Types in “My Country”



Consistent vibrato



Emerging vibrato



Dissolving vibrato

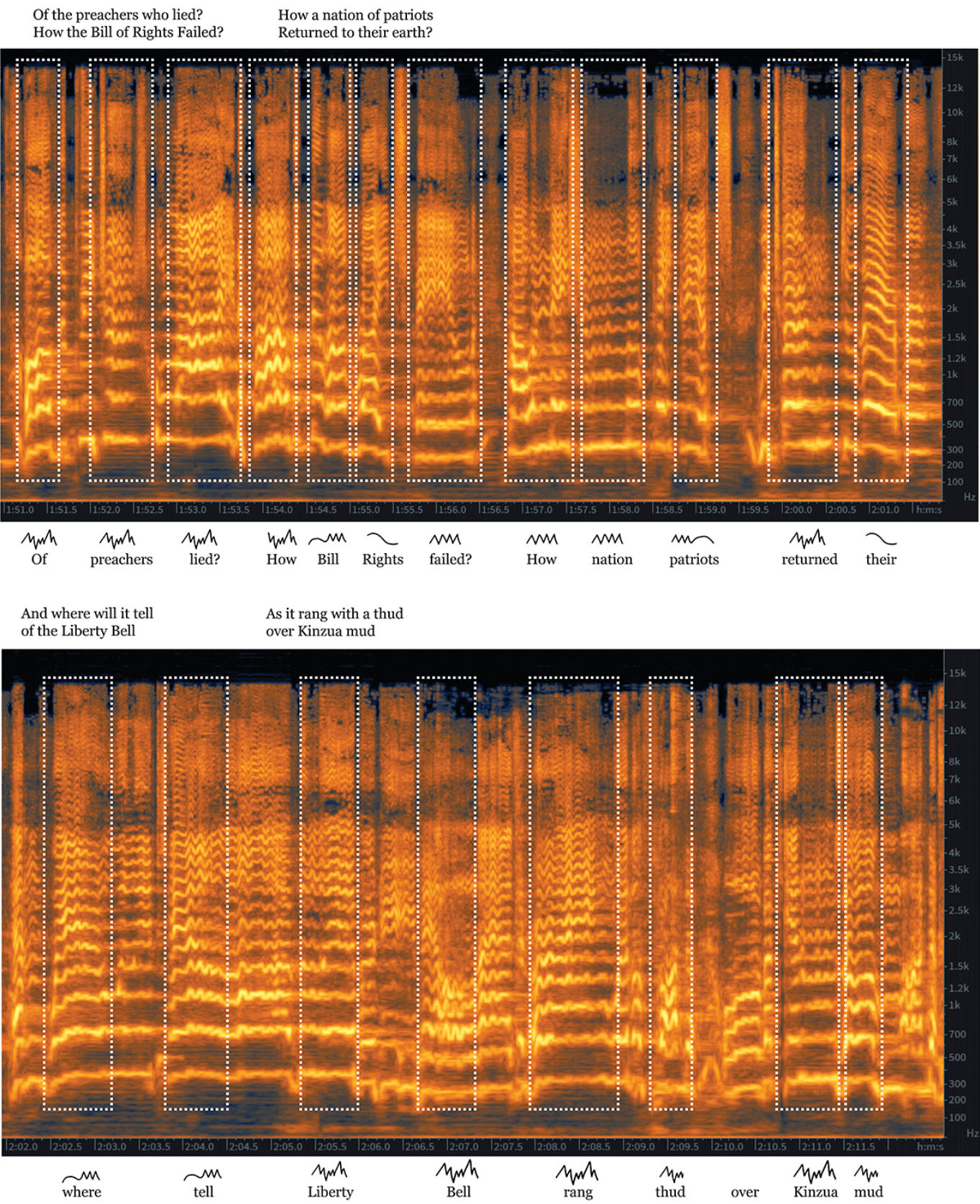


Slide



Animated vibrato

Example 10. Sainte-Marie, “My Country” (*Little Wheel Spin and Spin*, 1966), vocal style in Verse 2 (1:51–2:12)



Example 11. Sainte-Marie, “My Country” (*Little Wheel Spin and Spin*, 1966), beginning of Verse 5
(4:53–5:22)

Now that the pride of the sires re-ceives cha-ri - ty (Now)

Now that we're harm-less and safe be-hind laws. (Now)

Now that my life's to be known as your her - i - tage. (Now)

Now that e - ven the graves have been robbed. (Now)

Example 12. Sainte-Marie, “My Country” (*Rainbow Quest*, 1966), Verse 1 (17:42–18:37)

1114 1520 1350 3850

Now that your big eyes have fi - na - ly op - ened, (Now)

Now that your big eyes have fi - na - ly op - ened, (Now)

C# C#/G# A#7 A#7/E G# C#/G# C#

5 1240 1850 960 2760

Now that you're won-der-ing "how must they feel?" mean-ing (Them)

D# B# B#/D# D# B# G#/D#

9 850 820 940 3390

them that you've chased 'cross A-mer-i-ca's mov-ie screens. (Now)

C# C#/G# A#7 A#7/E G# C# C#/G#

13 1114 2570 720 2270

Now that you're won-der-ing "how can it be real," That the (ones)

D# B# D# B# G#/D#

17 1350 1050 1110 3460

ones you've called col - or - ful, nob - le and proud in your

C# A#7 G# C#

21 1420 2640 1110 2770

school prop-a-gan - da, they starve in their splen - dor! You've

D# B# D# B# G#/D#

25 910 1140 930 2750

asked for my com-ment. I sim-ply will ren - der.

C# A#7 G# C#

29 1660 1560 1710

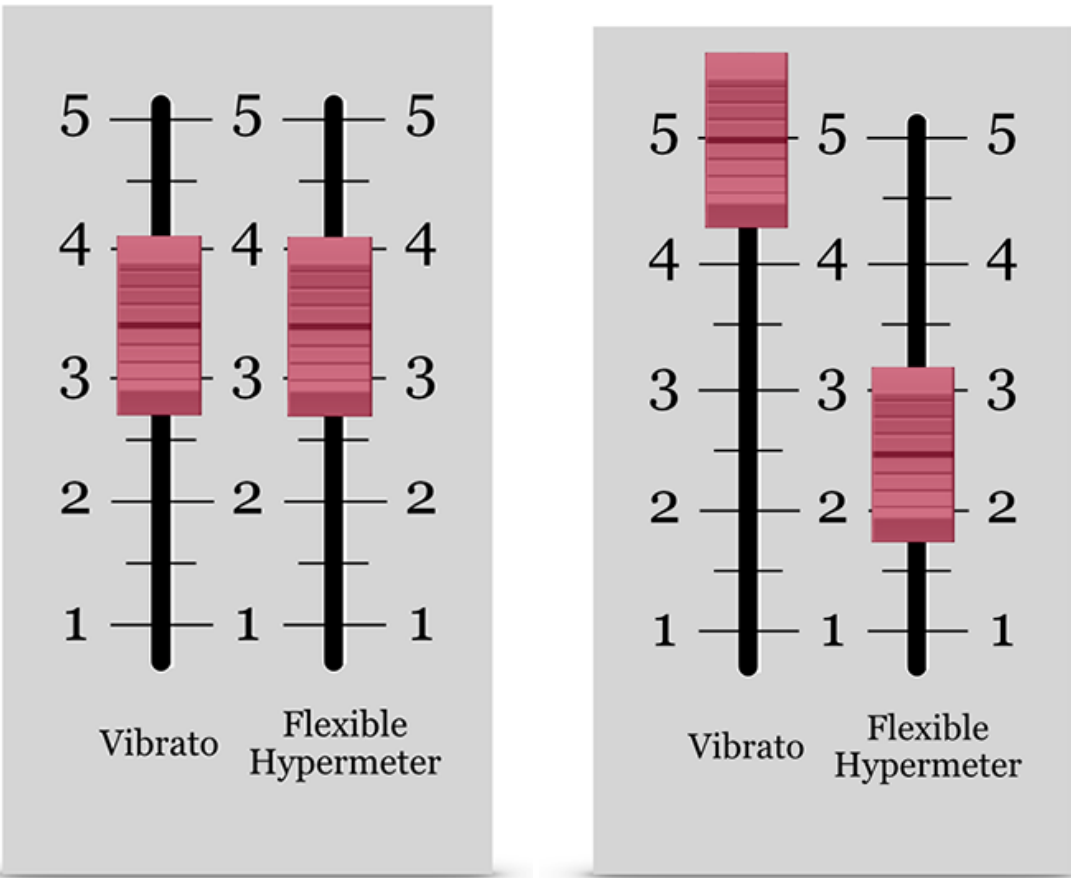
My coun - try, 'tis of thy... peo - ple you're dy - ing...

C# G# C# F#/C# C# B#/F# G#/B C#

Example 13. Sainte-Marie, “My Country” (*Rainbow Quest*, 1966), Verse 2 (19:19–20:05)

And yet where in your history books is the tale
Of the genocide basic to this country's birth
Of the preachers who lied?
How the Bill of Rights failed?
How a nation of patriots returned to their earth?
And where will it tell of the Liberty Bell
As it rang with a thud over Kinzua mud?
And of brave Uncle Sam in Alaska this year?
My country 'tis of thy people you're dying.

Example 14. Sainte-Marie, “My Country” (*Rainbow Quest*, 1966), mixing board interpretation of vibrato and flexible hypermeter (a) Verse 1 (b) Verse 2



Example 15. “My Country ‘Tis of Thy People You’re Dying” lyrics from *Medicine Songs* (2017)

Verse 1	Verse 2	Verse 3	Verse 4	Verse 5
Now that your big eyes are finally opened. Now that you're wondering, "How must they feel?" Meaning them that you've chased across Canada's movie screens; Now that you're wondering, "How can it be real?" That the ones you've called colorful, noble, and proud In your school propaganda, They starve in their splendor. You've asked for our comment, I simply will render: My country 'tis of thy people you're dying.	Now that the longhouses "breed superstition" You force us to send our children away To your schools where they're taught to despise their traditions Forbid them their languages; Then further say that Canada's history really began When explorers set sail out of Europe and stress That the nation of leeches that's conquered these lands Are the biggest, and bravest, and boldest, and best. And yet where in your history books is the tale Of the genocide basic to this country's birth? Of the preachers who lied? And the people who died. How a nation of patriots returned to their earth? And where does it tell of the starvation hell As the children were herded And raped and converted And how do we comfort the missing and murdered? My country 'tis of thy people you're dying.	A few of the conquered have somehow survived Their blood runs the redder Though genes have been pale. From Arctic Inuvik to Niagara Falls The wounded, the losers, the robbed sing their tale. And from Vancouver Island to the Labrador Sea The white nation fattens while others grew lean. Oh the tricked and evicted they know what I mean: My country 'tis of thy people you're dying.	The past it just crumbled; the future just threatens Our life blood shut up in your papers and books, And now here you come, bill of sale in your hand And surprise in your eyes, that we're lacking in thanks For the blessings of civilization you brought us The lessons you've taught us: The ruin you've wrought us; Oh see what our trust in O Canada got us. My country 'tis of thy people you're dying.	Now that the pride of the sires needs charity. Now that we're harmless and safe behind laws, Now that my life's to be known as your heritage. Now that even the graves have been robbed. Now that our own chosen way is a novelty. Hands on our hearts We salute you your victory: Choke on your true white and scarlet hypocrisy Pining the biliousness, oh why can't you see? How the eagles of war whose wings lent you glory, Are never no more than buzzards and crows: Pushed some worse from their nest: Stole their eggs; changed their story. The mockingbird sings it: It's all that she knows. "Oh what can I do?" say the privileged few. With a lump in your throat and a tear in your eye: Can't you see that their poverty's profiting you? My country 'tis of thy people you're dying.

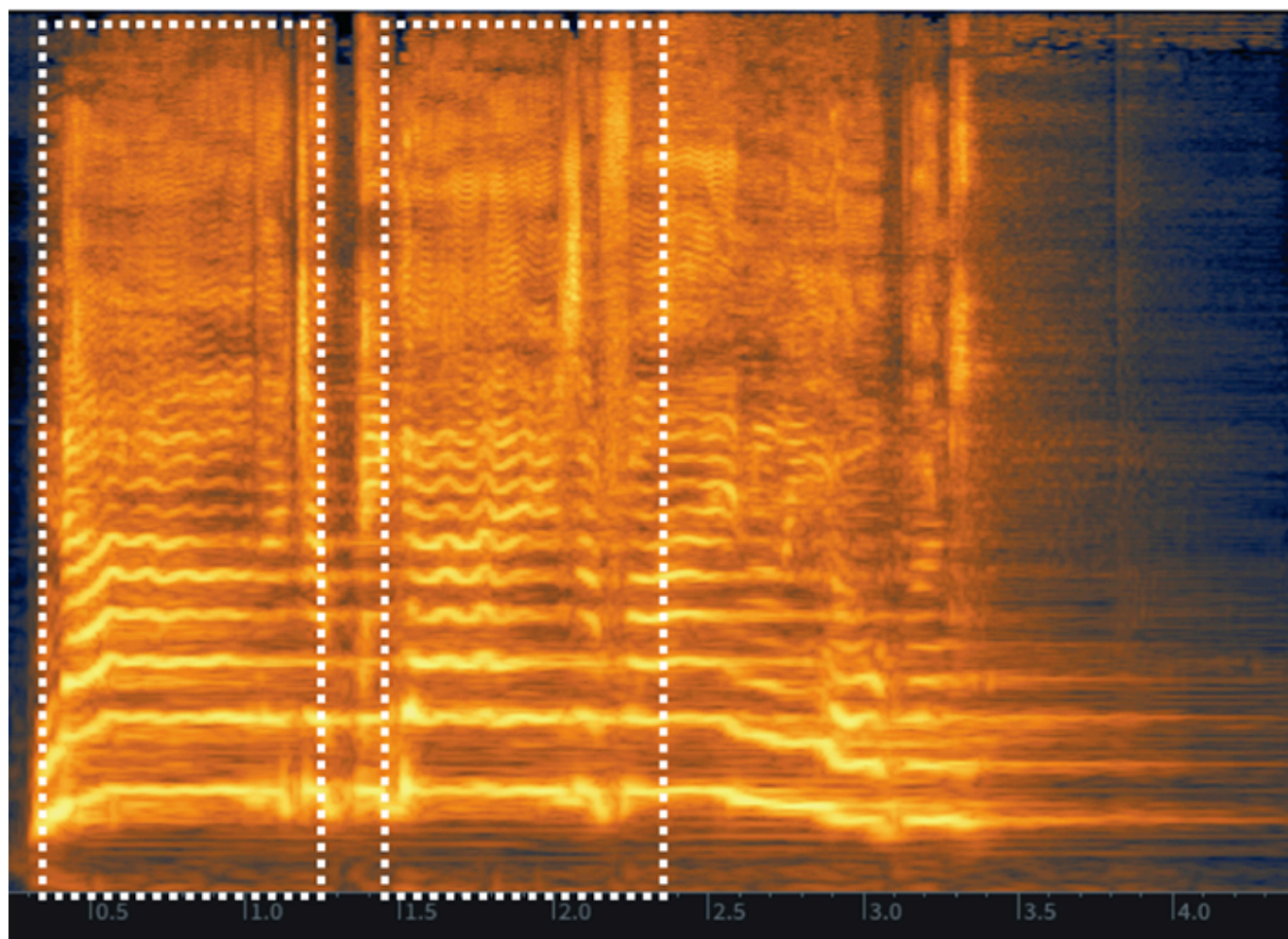
Example 16. Sainte-Marie, "My Country" (*Medicine Songs*, 2017), Verse 1 (0:00–0:38)

The musical score is presented in a system of two staves: a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment line (bass clef). The key signature is D major (two sharps) and the time signature is 3/4. The score is divided into measures, with measure numbers 1, 5, 9, 13, 17, 21, 25, and 29 marked at the beginning of each system. Above the vocal line, measure numbers are indicated for each measure. The lyrics are written below the vocal line, and the piano accompaniment line features chords and rhythmic notation. The score ends with a double bar line at measure 38.

Measure 1: Now that your big eyes have fi - na - ly o - pened, (Now)
 Measure 5: Now that you're won - der - ing "how must they feel?" Mean - ing (them)
 Measure 9: them that you've chased a - cross Can - a - da's mov - ie screens. (Now)
 Measure 13: Now that you're won - der - ing "how can it be real," That the
 Measure 17: ones you've called col - or - ful, nob - le and proud in your
 Measure 21: school prop - a - gan - da, they starve in their splen - dor! You
 Measure 25: asked for our com - ment. I sim - ply will ren - der: (My)
 Measure 29: My coun - try, 'tis of thy peo - ple you're dy - ing.

Example 17. Sainte-Marie, "My Country" (*Medicine Songs*, 2017), line 1 (0:00–0:04)

Now that your big eyes are finally opened.



Now

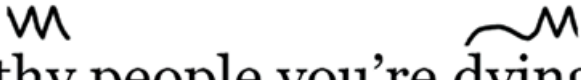
eyes

Example 18. Sainte-Marie, “My Country” (*Medicine Songs*, 2017), end of Verse 2 (1:54–2:13)


And where does it tell of the starvation hell

As the children were herded

And raped and converted

And how do we comfort the missing and murdered?

My country ‘tis of thy people you’re dying

Example 19. Sainte-Marie, “My Country” (*Medicine Songs*, 2017), breathy quality in Verse 2 (1:33–1:42)


And yet where in your history books is the tale

Of the genocide basic to this country’s birth