

VOICEPrints

JOURNAL OF THE NEW YORK SINGING TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

January-February 2010



IN THIS Issue:

January-February FEATURED EVENT.....Page 1

PDP Event: Vocal Anatomy & Physiology..... Page 1

Message from President David Sabella-MillsPage 2

Message from Editor Matthew Hoch..... Page 2

FEATURE ARTICLE: *The Singer's Ten Steps to Wellness*
by Karen Wicklund, DM, MHS, CCC-SLP.....Page 3

FEATURE ARTICLE: *Remembering Larry Chelsi*
by Jack Eppler.....Pages 4-5

NYSTA Calendar 2010.....Page 5

FEATURE ARTICLE: *Musical Performance Anxiety: Strategies for Teachers* by Heather Winter Hunnicutt, DM.....Pages 6-7

NYSTA's New Member Dr. Mary Thorne.....Page 7

Dr. Karen Wicklund Book and Event Advertisement.....Page 8

Featured Event:

COMPOSING FOR Musical Theatre

March 1, 2010

Monday, 7:30 PM

TONY award-winning composer and lyricist Adam Guettel, creator of such works as *Light in the Piazza* and *Myths and Hymns* will discuss the demands of writing for today's musical theatre, storytelling, industry expectations, and the challenges to the actor/singer.

Guest: **Adam Guettel**

Columbia Teachers' College, Millbank Chapel
120th Street between Broadway and Amsterdam Avenue, NYC
Free to members, \$25.00 non-members, \$15.00 students



Adam Guettel

VOICEPrints

Matthew Hoch, DMA, Editor-in-Chief

Sarah Adams Hoover, DMA, Associate Editor

John Ostendorf, Designer

OREN LATHROP BROWN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

VOCAL ACOUSTICS & Resonance

January 26 - March 23

Tuesdays, 7:30 PM - 9:30 PM

Re-energize your pedagogy with this insightful course as Dr. Scott McCoy of Westminster Choir College makes this challenging topic easy to understand for all levels. The course covers the nature of sound, acoustics and resonance of the speaking and singing voice, practical applications of acoustics. Also included will be an introduction to computerized voice analysis (Mac or PC).

Instructor: **Dr. Scott McCoy**. Required text: *Your Voice: An Inside View* by Scott McCoy, DMA.



Scott McCoy is director of the Presser Music Center Voice Laboratory, Director of Graduate Studies, and Professor of Voice and Pedagogy at Westminster Choir College of Rider University. He is the author of numerous articles

related to singing that have appeared in professional journals in the United States and abroad, and a founding faculty member in NYSTA's PDP Program, teaching classes in voice anatomy, physiology, and acoustic analysis. McCoy maintains an active singing career, has performed more than two dozen leading operatic roles and over sixty concert and oratorio solo roles with professional music organizations in the US and abroad.

A long-time member and currently President of NATS, McCoy was elected to membership in the distinguished American Academy of Teachers of Singing in 2003. Prior to joining the Westminster faculty in 1997, he was chair of the voice division at the University of Iowa.

Teachers' College, Columbia University, 120th Street, between Broadway and Amsterdam Ave, NYC.

This course is also available on demand at: nyst.org/courses.

MESSAGE FROM THE *President*



STAYING AHEAD OF THE CURVE

Happy New Year! Welcome to 2010, the beginning of a new decade and a new era filled with endless possibilities, and steadfast recovery from what can certainly be described as a tumultuous 2009. I hope this holiday season (and the now finally-receding recession) has left you none the worse for wear. As many of us prepare for a new semester, there are many new things to bring to your attention.

First off, I'd like to welcome back to the Board of Directors Mr. Peter Ludwig, who has graciously stepped in to resume his former position and replace Dr. Brian Gill as NYSTA's Treasurer. Brian leaves his post under the most happy of circumstances. He and his wife are expecting their second child; the rigors of both family and academic life require his full attention. We wish him and his family all the best in 2010 and beyond. And a heartfelt, resonant welcome back to Peter as well.

As we enter a new year, and a new decade, NYSTA is working hard to initiate many new programs, upgrade our existing technologies, and offer several new membership perks. This is, of course, in addition to our recent advancements into the world of online /on-demand learning, our video archive of past events, the creation of our Facebook and YouTube pages, and our partnerships with both Atlantis Health Plan and Sheet Music Plus.

In this new era of internet accessibility, we are attracting a broader membership than ever before. Our recent applicants for membership hail from all parts of United States and Europe. And our PDP courses have attracted participants from as far away as New Zealand and Australia. Indeed, we have truly become an international organization.

While we continue to "think globally and act locally," we are currently investigating upgrades to our existing website, which just a few years ago was at the cutting edge of the then-offered technology. Over ten years ago—when NYSTA implemented our

first "Find a Teacher" listings—the overwhelming majority of voice teachers did not have their own websites, and this particular offering was extremely valuable as a teacher's first opportunity to have a presence on the world wide web.

How times have changed! Now many of you have your own websites and use them to disseminate information to your student population and the larger singing community abroad. I myself use both scheduling and payment features on my website. It has truly become an internet "secretary" for me and the online hub of my business.

Editing my own website is something that I take seriously and keep very current. Much to my personal horror, however, I realized that I have not been as diligent with my own NYSTA "Find a Teacher" listing. Somehow it always slips my mind until the information on my NYSTA listing is so out of date that I have no choice but to update it, and then it seems a bother. Does this sound familiar?

Adding more work to your already busy schedule was never the intended purpose of the "Find a Teacher" listing. With that in mind, and as your Website Administrator and President, I would like to offer you a simpler solution to upgrading your current "Find a Teacher" listing.

If you prefer, you can now opt to have your listing directly linked to your personal/professional website or any other social networking web page you may use for your studio (Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.). If you choose this option, visitors will be sent directly to the webpage you choose when they click on your link from the "Find a Teacher" listing page. And, if you don't have a private webpage, or choose not to use it for this purpose, you are welcome to keep your listing page exactly as it is now. The net effect of this change will be to centralize all of your edits and changes, and give you more control over your listing.

In the future we will be adding both geographical and genre filters to the "Find a Teacher" listing page, making it easier for students to search for you by location (including US and International locations) and preferences of style(s) taught. Additional upgrades will include self-editing features for your contact information and "Find a Teacher" listing (if you choose not to link to your own website), automated username and password return, and a fully functional online discussion "Forum Board" with e-mail notification when someone replies to a thread you have posted.

As your President, I firmly believe that although there may be differences of opinion in regards to pedagogy and artistic preferences, as a singing and teaching community we have more in common than not. All of these technological advancements will help to bridge the gap between our respective studios (not to mention the geographical distance) for our entire membership, whether one lives and teaches in New York City, other locations in the United States, or abroad.

I hope you share my enthusiasm for this next decade and what is to come for NYSTA. If you do, please help us spread the word by encouraging your colleagues to join our ranks. As I have often stated, "No matter where you live or what style you teach (Bach to Rock or beyond), NYSTA has something to offer you."

As always I look forward to hearing from you via email or phone, and I look forward to seeing you at our upcoming PDP courses and events.

Sincerely,
David Sabella-Mills
President, NYSTA

PS: If you would like to link your personal/professional website directly to your "Find a Teacher" listing, please email me at admin@nyst.org with that request. I will be working diligently to make all the necessary changes and edits over the next several weeks. Your patience while this work is being completed is greatly appreciated. Thank you.

MESSAGE FROM THE *Editor*



As we begin the New Year, we are deeply grateful to NYSTA member Jack Eppler for his heartfelt celebration of the life and career of the late Larry Chelsi. A former member of the NYSTA Board of Directors, Mr. Chelsi's legacy with NYSTA is long and significant. In addition to his impressive career as a pedagogue, he was also passionate advocate for broadening the mission of the association, helping to organize and steer the first ever NYSTA committee devoted to musical theatre styles. NYSTA is honored to offer this feature article in memory of Larry.

Two articles devoted to vocal health issues round out this issue. New NYSTA member Heather Hunnicutt, DM, offers an intelligent look at a profoundly important issue: performance anxiety. Dr. Hunnicutt's practical advice is important and useful to voice teachers of all levels and styles. Last, Karen Wicklund, DM, MHS, CCC-SLP, offers an excerpt from her new book, *Singing Voice Rehabilitation* (Cengage, 2010). Over the next year, Dr. Wicklund will be offering her own Singing Voice Specialist (SVS) certification courses in Chicago, Phoenix, and Kalamazoo.

On behalf of everyone at NYSTA, we wish for you all the best for 2010. As always, *VOICEPrints* is YOUR publication, so please send all questions, comments, and ideas for future articles to me at voiceprints@nyst.org.

Sincerely,
Dr. Matthew Hoch
Editor-in-Chief, *VOICEPrints*
voiceprints@nyst.org

THE SINGER'S TEN STEPS *To Wellness*

by Karen Wicklund, DM, MHS, CCC-SLP

[The following article is a modified excerpt from WICKLUND. *Singing Voice Rehabilitation*, 1E © 2010, Delmar Learning, a part of Cengage Learning, Inc. Reproduced by permission, www.cengage.com/permissions.

This article provides a step-by-step daily list that will remind the singer of vocal hygiene habits at different points throughout the day. While some of these steps, such as exercise, might occur later in the day, all of the steps should be done on a daily basis.]

The Singer's Ten Steps to Wellness

(Wicklund, 1996)

1. RISE Two to three hours before having to vocalize, after adequate rest.

RATIONALE: Rest gives the body time to recover from the stress of the previous day. "A fair amount of sleep is essential for good general health and for proper functioning and resilience of the vocal organs" (Brodnitz, 1988).

2. HYDRATE Try to drink at least two cups or more of water on rising, to start you on your daily goal of half your body weight in ounces of water. **RATIONALE:** Your body loses water overnight in respiration and perspiration, and needs replenishment immediately on rising (Batmanghelidj, 1997).

3. EXERCISE Move your body! Walking, running, elliptical—whatever form of aerobic movement you like, you need at least 20 minutes at least four times per week. If you are a weight trainer, take care not to strain your neck muscles while weight training. **RATIONALE:** Studies have shown (Smith & Zook, 1986) that without exercise, the cardio-vascular system declines 30 percent between ages 30 and 70 in its ability to deliver blood to the tissues. And other studies (Milic-Emili et al., 1962) have shown that exercise maintains the elasticity of the lungs, allowing them to retain their capacity for residual volume.

4. EAT something before warming up the voice. **RATIONALE:** The act of chewing and swallowing warms up the vocal mechanism. Though it is probably not a good idea to eat a large meal right before a performance, some singers feel better after eating a moderately sized meal a couple of hours before (Ware, 1998). Adequate nutrition throughout the day maintains blood sugar levels and provides energy for singing (Harvey & Miller, 1998).

5. WARM-UP the voice/vocalize daily. **RATIONALE:** "A pitcher knows not to throw a fastball before a number of warm-up throws...yet most singers will start belting high notes with hardly any exercise...avoid singing any high notes until your voice is thoroughly warmed up...start with exercises of limited range and then move to wider and ones as the voice becomes more responsive." (McKinney 1994, p.179).

6. STUDY singing. Engage in consistent study of the voice by seeing your teacher on a regular basis.

RATIONALE: "An alert singing teacher may detect deficits in support, breath control, pitch or speaking habits that may produce voice fatigue and aggravate laryngeal injury." (Sataloff, 1991, p. 249–250).

7. SUPPORT the speaking voice in the same way as the singing voice.

RATIONALE: The singer should learn to use a supported, properly placed tone in the proper range for that individual singer (Westerman-Gregg, 1995). Those speakers who manage vocal demands by increasing both breath support and laryngeal resistance experience less vocal fatigue than those who deal with the problem solely at the laryngeal level (Kostyk & Rochet, 1998). Also, a recent research study (Roy et al., 2002) found that a group of teachers with voice disorders who used an amplification system reported that the result was more "clarity of their speaking and singing voice..." In addition, a recent study (Federman & Ricketts, 2008) showed that in singers using microphone systems, risk of noise exposure was alleviated more by use of in-ear monitors than with floor monitors.

8. MONITOR stress levels hourly by taking deep breaths, stretching, and relaxing the body and vocal mechanism.

RATIONALE: Studies regarding prolonged periods of stress have shown a link between voice dysfunction and stress and/or anxiety symptoms (Tolkmitt & Scherer 1986; Long, 1988; Sapir, 1993; Goldman et al., 1996). More information about stress-management techniques follows, in the next section.

9. AVOID SMOKING/SECOND-HAND SMOKE or toxic/irritating chemicals in the atmosphere.

RATIONALE: Smoking causes edema of the vocal folds and generalized inflammation in the vocal tract (Sataloff, 1991). Cigarette smoking is also a primary causative factor in emphysema, bronchitis, and lung cancer, as well as other diseases (Estes, 2006). Singers should also avoid exposure to stage smoke and the chemicals in the air of print shops or hair salons.

10. AVOID EATING within two to three hours of going to bed.

RATIONALE: Laryngopharyngeal reflux disease (LPRD) can be exacerbated by a singer's prone position during sleep and also by lifestyle factors, because singers often eat late at night (Sataloff, 1991). Management can include acid-blocker medications, elevation of the head of the bed, and in extreme cases, surgery to tighten the lower and/or upper esophageal sphincters (LES and UES).

REFERENCES:

- Anticaglia, J., Hawkshaw, M. & Sataloff, R. 2004. The effects of smoking on voice performance. *Journal of Singing*, Nov/Dec.: 167-172.
- Batmanghelidj, F. 1997. *Your Body's Many Cries for Water*. Falls Church, VA: Global Health Solutions, Inc.
- Brodnitz, F. *Keep Your Voice Healthy*, 2nd Ed. 1988. Austin: ProEd.
- Estes, M. 2006. *Health assessment & Physical examination*, 3rd Edition. Clifton Park, NY: Thomson Delmar Learning.
- Federman, J. & Ricketts, T. 2008. Preferred and minimum acceptable listening levels for musicians while using floor and in-ear monitors. *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing*

Research. February, 51: 147-159.

Goldman, S., Hargrave, J., Hillman, R., Holmberg, E. & Gress, C. 1996. Stress, anxiety, somatic complaints, and voice use in women with vocal nodules. *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology* February, 5: 44-54.

Harvey, P. & Miller, S. 1998. "Nutrition and the Professional Voice User." In Sataloff 1998 *Vocal Health and Pedagogy*. San Diego: Singular Publishing.

Kostyk, B.E. & Rochet, A.P. 1998. Laryngeal airway resistance in teachers with vocal fatigue: A preliminary study. *Journal of Voice*, 12(3): 287-299.

Long, G. 1988. The relationship of voice stress, anxiety, and depression to life events and personal style variables. *Social Behavior and Personality*, 16(2): 133-145.

McKinney, J. 1994. *Diagnosis and Correction of Vocal Faults*. Nashville: Genovox Music Group.

Milic-Emili, G. et al. 1962. Mechanical work of breathing during exercise in trained and untrained subjects. *Journal of Applied Physiology* 17: 43-46.

Roy, N., Weinrich, B., Gray, S.D., Tanner, K., Toledo, S.W., Dove, H., et al. 2002. Voice amplification versus vocal hygiene instruction for teachers with voice disorders: A treatment outcomes study. *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research*, 45: 625-638.

Sapir, S. 1993. Vocal attrition in voice students: Survey findings. *Journal of Voice*, 7(1): 69-74.

Sataloff, R. 1991. *Professional Voice The Science and Art of Clinical Care*. New York: Raven Press.

Smith, E., & Zook, S. 1986. The aging process: Benefits of physical activity. *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation and Dance*, Jan.:32-34.

Tolkmitt, F. & Scherer, K. 1986. The effect of experimentally induced stress on vocal parameters. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception and Performance*. 12(3): 302-313.

Ware, C. 1998. *Basics of Vocal Pedagogy*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Westerman-Gregg, J. 1995. Speaking and singing with one voice. Proceedings of the NATS Winter Workshop, Las Vegas, Nevada

Wicklund, K. 1996. *Singer's health issues: The efficacy of a wellness model for singers*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois. 347 pages.



Karen Wicklund, DM, MHS CCC-SLP has collaborated as singing voice specialist (SVS) and/or SLP with the voice teams of Drs. Bastian, Sims, Akst, and Heman-Ackah as director of Chicago Center for Professional Voice and at Western Michigan University where she is

a voice professor and SLP. She recently authored *Singing Voice Rehabilitation: A Guide for the Voice Teacher and SLP* (2010, Delmar-Cengage Press) and is currently teaching her SVS certification training workshops in Chicago, Kalamazoo and in Arizona. A renowned singer's wellness specialist, her website www.singershealth.com provides health information and referrals for singers worldwide. Dr. Wicklund has also published articles in *Medical Problems of Performing Artists*, *Journal of Singing*, *ASHA Leader and American Organist*, and presented at the international conferences of NATS, PAS, ASHA, Occupational Voice Symposium in London, and Voice Foundation in Philadelphia. Dr. Wicklund has sung leading roles with the San Francisco, Santa Fe, Omaha, Lake George and other American opera companies.

REMEMBERING *Larry Chelsi*

by **Jack Eppler**, NYSTA member

"You have a beautiful voice." Pause. "Much prettier than mine. I don't really have a beautiful sound, you know." I thought: Is he serious or what? Fishing for a compliment, maybe?

That was how my voice lessons with Larry Chelsi began. Perhaps he flattered all his students this way. Who knows? But the assessment of his own sound, was, I think, sincere. And he had a point. The voice was not outstandingly mellow or brilliant or big. On the other hand, Chelsi (that's how he always referred to himself) was probably one of the finest singers I've ever been lucky enough to hear. That is why I wanted to study with him. I wanted to *sing* like that.

Chelsi's technical instructions wouldn't merit much credence in today's more clinical studio environment. He would lift a long glass tube that he kept on the lyre of his piano when he wanted to explain legato. An antique collapsing telescope illustrated the function of the *passaggio*. To encourage good articulation he conjured an image of a flock of birds sitting on a telegraph wire. He worked at length on vowel modification, but didn't seem particularly interested in the science of vocal acoustics. Learning with Chelsi came largely from listening and imitating.

Chelsi taught from a charming apartment at the lower end of Park Avenue, crowded with the memorabilia of a rich life. There were ornately carved pieces of antique teak Chinese furniture from his boyhood home in Portland, Oregon. There were framed clippings and posters from his many theatrical appearances covering the walls. There was a collection of hundreds of LPs. There was Mary Garden's shawl draped over his piano, and a photograph of her wearing it in a performance of *Carmen* at the Metropolitan Opera House.

At a lesson at Larry's apartment, stories about his career often filled the spaces between exercises. "Rest a minute," he would say after a vigorous set of exercises, and then he'd launch into a story. There was a story about an audition for Cole Porter at which the composer "chased me around the piano." (The role was in a musical about the Greek gods, and in order to demonstrate that he was physically right for the role, Larry had to dress in a costume that might have draped—just barely—a classical statue. That show was *Out of This World* from 1950, a less-successful Porter musical sandwiched in between *Kiss Me Kate* and *Can-Can*.) Since Porter's horse riding accident in 1937 had left him unable to do much chasing of any kind except with his eyes, it would appear that this story—and possibly others—were embellished a bit over the years.

Chelsi spent three years as a lieutenant with the United States Navy, and prior to that, in order to please his family, as a medical student at the University of Oregon. But by 1945 he had moved to New York to pursue his passion. He enrolled in musical studies at Columbia University, and at the same time became a student of the Italian opera star Giuseppe de Luca at the Juilliard School. His resume boasts a

long list of well-known coaches, conductors and voice teachers with whom he worked, among them Martial Singher, Pierre Bernac, Arturo Toscanini, Leonard Bernstein, Carl Munch, Wieland Wagner, and Hans Knappertsbusch. But the teacher about whom he spoke most fondly was the French-Canadian Eva Gauthier.

Madame Gauthier introduced Larry to her specialty—French music. She prepared him for a debut recital at Town Hall in New York City in November 1952. Under her tutelage, Chelsi developed what was to become a life-long affinity for the songs of French composers, particularly Reynaldo Hahn, Maurice Ravel, and Francis Poulenc. With Gauthier Larry prepared the role of Debussy's *Pelléas*—hoping to debut with it at the Metropolitan Opera. In these coachings, he was partnered by soprano Bidu Sayão singing *Mélisande*. Madame Gauthier also arranged for Chelsi to meet the first *Mélisande*, the legendary Mary Garden. Garden was enthusiastic about his voice and his proficiency in French, and urged him to pursue a career in France.

The career in France didn't materialize and neither did the Met debut—although to the end of his life he joked, half seriously, that he was still ready. Meanwhile, Chelsi kept busy. He was always catholic in his musical tastes, switching easily and willingly from classical to popular music. He went to Las Vegas to partner soprano Patrice Munsel. He toured as a soloist with both the Robert Shaw Chorale and Fred Waring's Pennsylvanians. He received a critical award for his portrayal of Wintergreen in an Off-Broadway revival of the Gershwin's *Of Thee I Sing*. And his musical theatre career peaked in 1954 when he played the lead on Broadway in *The Golden Apple*.

Like many a good singer who has evolved into a voice teacher, Larry had a career marked by early brilliance which didn't ultimately materialize into enough steady employment to sustain a livelihood. He had to turn to other work to support himself. One of his jobs was writing copy for the quiz section of the Texaco Metropolitan Opera broadcasts. Those were the days when Milton Cross was the "voice of Texaco" and when Edward Downes was the quizmaster. As glamorous as it was to be in close contact with the stars of the day, Larry found the job grueling and, uncharacteristically, he didn't have a lot of good to say about his boss, the show's producer Geraldine Souvaine. But Chelsi always spoke with delight about his work as an administrator for the Walter Reade organization. He took pride in the fact that he managed a big workload and was able to keep track of all the corporation's forty theatres in the New York City area. His office was above one of the theatres on 34th Street when Steven Spielberg's 1975 blockbuster *Jaws* was playing there. He loved to tell friends about hearing the screams of the audience from down below. Chelsi always seemed to find something fun about the most mundane work.

In the 1960s Chelsi joined a small opera com-



Larry Chelsi (1921-2009)

pany directed by a young soprano named Mira Spektor. The mission of the company was to bring opera to children. They toured throughout the five boroughs of New York City and the surrounding area, performing for thousands of young audiences in school auditoriums and gymnasiums. Chelsi's relationship with Spektor turned into a lifelong friendship. A busy composer, she sought out Chelsi to premiere many of her works. As an early advocate of feminism, Larry performed in her *Housewives' Cantata* in 1972. Later, he sat on the board of her Aviva Players, committed to performing the works of women composers.

From this period onward, Larry turned his attention more and more to teaching. After teaching in the music department at New York University, Chelsi joined NYSTA and served on the newly-established Musical Theatre Committee with Helen Trezlie, Robert Marks, Elizabeth Howell and Jeanette LoVetri, where his friendly disposition was often the calming presence that restored congeniality when discussions got heated. He brought Spektor on board as part of the composers' concert, which was an annual event with the association for many years. Many NYSTA members remember going to see Chelsi sing the lead role of the Frankenstein monster in Spektor's opera *Mary Shelley* at the Donnell Library in 1993. Chelsi was 72 and in splendid voice.

So far as I know, Chelsi's last full public performance was at age 79. The last time I heard him sing was around that time in a benefit for the community chorus that I direct. Larry performed with other NYSTA members Adrienne Angel, Hilda Harris, and Jeannette LoVetri, accompanied by Robert Marks. He sang the 1928 popular hit "Glad Rag Doll," the song he had sung for his radio debut as a young boy back in Portland, and "Lazy Afternoon" from *The Golden Apple*. Larry performed without a microphone in a large church auditorium. I remember being struck by the fact that I could hear every consonant in every syllable of every word. And I remember my friend Ron Raines, a wonderful singer, sitting next to me waiting for his



Larry Chelsi at work in the theatre

turn to go onstage. As Larry sang, Ron let out a long sigh and said between his teeth "That's the way it's supposed to be done!"

The last time I spoke with Chelsi was in his room at a hospice in Riverdale this past October. A few weeks earlier he had left his Park Avenue apartment for the last time. Friends and family had sorted through all his belongings and distributed them. He had let go of everything. His belly was full of the

cancer that would take him within a few days. We were having a conversation that day about singers and singing, and he was speaking with lucidity and passion. He paused and looked around him. "I'm so lucky," he said, with complete sincerity. Wherever that coming from, I thought, that's what I want!

Jack Eppler teaches voice at his private studio and for the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University. He has sung numerous Bach cantatas. He includes among his favorite oratorio roles the Brahms *Deutsches Requiem* and Haydn *Creation*.

In opera, his performances have included Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte*, the leads in *The Old Maid and the Thief* and *Trouble in Tahiti*, and Domenic Argento's *The Boor*. He sang with the New York City Opera chorus and with the New York Philharmonic and has toured Israel and Japan with Meredith Monk, and performed in the premieres of performance pieces by composer Tan Dun and choreographer Jerry Pearson.

Jack Eppler's innovative recital repertoire stretches from the 12th through the 20th centuries,



Jack Eppler

with an emphasis on contemporary American song. He has premiered the works of numerous composers, and is noted for his articulate and clear diction. He founded and directs the New York City Community Chorus at Holy Apostles, a non-audition, all-inclusive chorus in Chelsea.

NYSTACalendar 2010

OREN LATHROP BROWN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM *

VOCAL ACOUSTICS & Resonance

January 26 - March 23, 2010 Tuesdays, 7:30 PM – 9:30 PM

Re-energize your pedagogy with this insightful course as Dr. Scott McCoy of Westminster Choir College makes this challenging topic easy to understand for all levels. The course covers the nature of sound, acoustics and resonance of the speaking and singing voice, practical applications of acoustics. Also included will be an introduction to computerized voice analysis (Mac or PC).

Instructor: **Dr. Scott McCoy**. Required text: *Your Voice: An Inside View* by Scott McCoy, DMA.

Teachers' College, Columbia University, 120th Street, between Broadway and Amsterdam Avenue, NYC. *This course is also available on demand at nyst.org/courses.*

COMPOSING For Music Theatre

March 1, 2010 Monday, 7:30 PM

TONY award-winning composer and lyricist Adam Guettel, creator of such works as *Light in the Piazza* and *Myths and Hymns* will discuss the demands of writing for today's musical theatre, storytelling, industry expectations, and the challenges to the actor/singer.

Guest: **Adam Guettel** Free to members, \$25.00 non-members, \$15.00 students

Teachers' College, Millbank Chapel, Columbia University, 120th Street, between Broadway and Amsterdam Avenue, NYC.

DAVID ADAMS ART SONG Competition & Recital

\$1,000 first prize, \$500 second prize and \$300 third prize, plus a New York recital.

Applicants must be no younger than 23 years of age and may not have been reviewed in a major recital appearance in New York. They must submit a full recital program, 25% of which must be American song. No arias or popular songs are acceptable.

For additional information and an application please visit nyst.org

Auditions: **April 17 and April 18, 2010**, Saturday and Sunday, Times TBA

The Competition Auditions are not open to the public.

Winner's Recital: **April 26, 2010** Monday, 7:30 PM

Teachers' College, Columbia University, 120th Street, between Broadway and Amsterdam Avenue, NYC.

Free to members, \$25.00 non-members, \$15.00 students

OREN LATHROP BROWN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM *

COMPARATIVE Voice Pedagogy Weekend 2010

June 12 and 13, 2010 Saturday and Sunday, Times and Instructors TBA

During this enlightening course, the culmination of the PDP program and our 2009-10 season, six master teachers demonstrate concrete links between various teaching strategies and the scientific and medical information gained in the other core curriculum courses. Many participants repeat this stimulating and thought-provoking course each year. We look forward to seeing you on-site, online or on demand.

Teachers' College, Columbia University, 120th Street, between Broadway and Amsterdam Avenue, NYC.

*All PDP courses are \$220 and can be registered and paid for online at nyst.org. One graduate credit per course is available from Westminster Choir College for an additional \$150. A form may be obtained on the NYSTA website or by contacting Janet Pranschke, PDP Director. The courses take place at Columbia University, Teachers' College, 525 West 120th Street, between Broadway and Amsterdam Avenue, NYC. Check desk at entry for class location. For more information, contact Janet Pranschke at pdp@nyst.org or nyst.org.

MUSICAL PERFORMANCE ANXIETY: *Strategies for Teachers*

by Heather Winter Hunnicutt, DM

Happy New Year! This reset on the calendar is the perfect opportunity to reflect on what we have done well over the last twelve months, and what has continued to elude us, both on a personal and a professional level.

I didn't make it to the treadmill every morning before heading to the studio, but I am well on the way to getting one of my soprano student's vibrato under control. I am still trying every method I can come up with to get my young tenor connected to his breath, but at least I taught myself how to work a sewing machine in 2009! My list of both personal and professional goals for this year is certainly nothing short of impossible (yes, I can admit I am a type-A who works better under self-imposed pressure), but let me offer each of you a professional resolution for 2010: let this be the year you take a more active role in consciously helping your students overcome their performance anxiety.

Musical Performance Anxiety (MPA) is the accepted wordage in the medical literature, though the all-too-familiar phenomenon has many names including stage fright, nervousness, butterflies in the stomach, etc. Perhaps you still have anxiety yourself on a regular basis, or only under certain circumstances, or you have overcome that "inconvenience" at some point along your career path. But, with studies citing that as many as 90.6% of the general population get nervous when thrust into the spotlight¹ and additional research showing that musicians tend to have more anxiety than the general population², it is clear that the vast majority of our students are experiencing MPA whether we are aware of it or not.

Is this our problem? We all know that as a voice teacher, we play many more roles than simply vocal mechanic, due to the personal nature of our one-on-one interaction with students. How often have you found yourself playing a part more similar to life coach, cheerleader, or parent to a voice student than providing the answer to strictly vocal issues?

The singer's instrument is the entire body and therefore whatever is going on in the student's life is in his or her body, and in his or her voice. This also puts us in a position to be very effective in helping most students overcome performance anxiety: your student looks to you as a role model for all things vocal, including how to approach a performance with ease and confidence.

The first concept both you and your student must understand and accept is that nervousness is normal, and can be beneficial. It is a natural reaction to the body's "fight or flight" response: the body perceives danger through its five senses (in this case, the danger is the audience) and routes that information to the unconscious portion of the brain, which then sends signals to the sympathetic portion of the autonomic nervous system, telling the adrenal glands to release adrenaline into the bloodstream. Once that adrenaline reaches the alpha and beta receptors throughout the body, the singer finds himself or herself with sweaty palms,

accelerated heart rate, rapid shallow breathing, gastrointestinal discomfort, and a variety of other symptoms—all without any conscious control. This, however, is an adaptive and useful tool of your body! Its primary evolutionary purpose was to give the body an extra boost of speed and energy to run away from a predator (perhaps now a taxi rather than a tiger in our modern urban jungle), but in terms of performing, that extra energy can be streamlined into a more exciting and better performance.

While there are some tactics for combating performance anxiety that can be helpful in a "one size fits all" methodology, this is not always the best approach. Performance anxiety manifests itself in ways that are as different as the people experiencing it. In general, there are three degrees to which it can be experienced: mild, moderate and severe. These follow a natural bell-shaped curve with few experiencing mild, most with moderate symptoms, and a few with severe complications. Your students with mild performance anxiety need nothing—they are simply experiencing a natural reaction to the body's "fight or flight" response, and it is not substantial enough to cause them or you any concern. Those with severe performance anxiety are outside the realm of what we as voice teachers are qualified to handle—severe cases always need professional medical help. A severe case can be defined as a musician incapable of getting through even a small performance without significant interruption due to anxiety. For the majority of singers, those with moderate cases of MPA, we will continue.

Beyond the three degrees to which MPA is experienced, there are also three different classes of symptoms that arise: physiological, behavioral, and cognitive. Physiological symptoms are any symptoms that occur in the body without conscious control: trembling, sweating, hot or cold extremities, shortness of breath, nausea, dry mouth, flushing, excessive muscle tension, and others, depending on the particular singer. Behavioral manifestations are behaviors consciously chosen by the singer, but under the unconscious influence of anxiety. They include: avoiding practicing, canceling lessons and rehearsals, rescheduling performances, and other such avoidance methods that arise from fear of the impending performance. Cognitive symptoms are irrational and negative thought processes stemming from anxiety, including: catastrophizing about what could happen, disorientation, self-doubt, feelings of inadequacy, loss of motivation, memory slips, jumping to conclusions, emotional reasoning, overgeneralizations and disqualifying the positive.

When tailoring strategies for performance anxiety to a singer, it is important to recognize what is and is not happening to that student. My mezzo-soprano who keeps telling herself that she is "not good enough" will not be assisted by going to the doctor for beta blockers, because they are

for physical symptoms and her only symptom is cognitive. My baritone who suddenly gets a frantic heart and respiratory rate right before stepping onstage is not going to find a plan for structured and inflexible rehearsal schedules helpful because that focuses on behavioral issues when his only symptoms are physical.

Ask yourself (and perhaps your student): to what degree is he or she experiencing symptoms? If it is severe, suggest that your student meet with a medical professional to discuss the issue. If not, take an inventory of what happens to the student not just in the minutes or hours before a performance, but in the days and weeks preceding it.

I should point out that symptoms are not as cut-and-dry as I try to spell them out here. Most performers get a combination of physical, cognitive and/or behavioral manifestations and certainly there are times that a student is more nervous than usual because he or she is not well-prepared or overcoming an illness, for example. That being said, however, it's time to get specific about what you can do for your students.

I. Desensitization

This is one of the few one-size-fits-all approaches that works for most students. You must set up opportunities for your students to perform more and more, and gradually step up the pressure so they become desensitized slowly to the stressors of singing in front of a crowd. Going from zero to the Metropolitan Opera Council auditions is the wrong approach and a certain way to get less than optimal results from most singers. Start with small studio class performances, singing relatively simple repertoire for fellow students, then gradually increase the difficulty of the repertoire along with the size and expectations of the audience. Your students must come from a point where they have some confidence in performing in front of a group as a starting place. They need to succeed in smaller performances to have the confidence to take on larger venues. There are rare exceptions to this rule, and certainly as we perform more, the stakes for the performances get higher, making this a bumpy, but necessary, climb to the goal. Other general strategies may include encouraging students to eliminate generalized stress and anxiety from their environment and life, as well as increasing general healthfulness in terms of diet, exercise, hydration, etc.

II. For Physiological Symptoms

There are a number of pharmacological approaches that have been shown to deal with the physical symptoms of performance anxiety with good results. From beta blockers to tranquilizers, there is a different, correct medication and dosage for each performer. This, however, at any level (from moderate to severe) is a decision the student must make with a medical professional. What you can do is encourage your student to consider speaking with a doctor, and discourage the use of self-

medicating through drugs and alcohol or sharing prescriptions with other musicians.

Relaxation exercises are also an excellent method for taming physical symptoms. They counteract the adrenaline rush at the appropriate time. These exercises are best utilized when the singer has a relaxation routine and uses it regularly, including before a performance.

III. For Behavioral Symptoms

If you have a student engaging in avoidance behaviors, that student needs you to be the immovable brick wall. Make that student get back on the horse by not allowing him to cancel the lesson or by him giving very specific practice instructions. Impose a strict schedule on that student in the weeks preceding the performance. Be careful, however, because you walk a fine line: if you push too hard, that will be counterproductive.

IV. For Cognitive Symptoms

Cognitive symptoms can be the most challenging to deal with. Some students devalue themselves in all aspects of life, causing a negativity that invades all aspects of their life rather than a setback specific to performance anxiety. In those cases, a medical professional may be necessary for a holistic approach. Otherwise, it may simply be a process of retraining the negative thoughts. This can be done in a variety of ways. In one-on-one time with your student, when you hear "I will never get this right," bounce that phrase back to the student with a more appropriate thought: "You will get this right after you spend some more time isolating this measure in the practice room." Re-program "I am going to crack on the high note and my life will be over" with "even if you crack on the high note, one crack on your senior recital is not going to prevent you from graduating or having a career." Recognize when the student is catastrophizing and

have them re-word those thoughts into realistic possibilities. Another possible technique is through an educational equivalent of "flooding." To use this technique you would set up a scenario in studio class during which a student performs with a wide array of mishaps happening around the singer. Turn the lights off, ask the pianist to lose his place, have another student start coughing loudly in the background, etc. This is a method to desensitize the singer to possible misfortunes that may happen during an actual performance and derail the nervous student's focus from the task at hand. The student leaves the flooding experience with a sense of "That wasn't so bad. I handled that."

In general, with these students, you also must develop a relationship in which the student feels comfortable with you and understands that you are not going to lose all faith in him or her as a singer if he or she has a memory slip during a performance.

Musical performance anxiety is natural, normal and can provide that extra boost to give a truly energetic performance. Help your students harness that power in a productive manner by trying some of these simple, time-tested techniques. Your student will thank you.

Footnotes

¹ Wendy J. Cox and Justin Kenardy, "Performance Anxiety, Social Phobia, and Setting Effects in Instrumental Music Students," *Journal of Anxiety Disorders* 7 (1993): 55.

² Anthony Kemp, *The Musical Temperament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

Soprano **Heather Winter Hunnicutt**, DM, serves on the faculty of Georgetown College as Assistant Professor of Voice, Coordinator of Vocal Studies,



Heather Winter Hunnicutt

and Director of the Lyric Theatre Program. She teaches applied voice, vocal pedagogy, lyric diction, music education courses, and directs the opera workshop and full-scale operas. She received undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral degrees in voice from the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music. Her various research, speaking, and singing endeavors have taken her to cities such as Bangkok, Paris, Salzburg, Munich, Honolulu, Philadelphia, and Minneapolis. Professional memberships include the National Association of Teachers of Singing, College Music Society, National Association of Music Education, National Opera Association, and Mu Phi Epsilon. She recently completed the NATS Intern Program in the summer of 2009 at Shorter College in Rome, Georgia.

NYSTANew Member



Soprano **Mary Thorne**, from Washington State, teaches voice throughout New York City. Dr. Thorne is currently on the voice faculty at the Diller-Quaile School of Music and has taught voice at Hunter College, Larchmont Music Academy, and Belvoir Terrace Performing Arts Camp. Dr. Thorne's wide range of music teaching experience includes music and movement classes for babies, *Kindermusik* for youngsters, and voice and piano lessons for children, college students, and adults.

Dr. Mary Thorne received her Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the City University of New York Graduate Center and holds degrees from Mannes College of Music (M.M.) and Point Loma Nazarene University (B.A.) in San Diego. She has studied voice with Dr. Robert C. White and soprano Irene Gubrud.

Performing opera and concert repertoire throughout the United States and abroad, Dr. Thorne was hailed as "an engaging soloist,

bright and agile" for her recent performance in Haydn's *Missa Sanctae Caeciliae*.

She has won top awards from the Capital Region Opera Idol Competition, Civic Morning Musicals Competition, NATS San Diego Chapter Scholarship Competition, and the La Jolla Symphony and Chorus Young Artist Competition.

Dr. Mary Thorne's website is: www.healthyyoungvoice.com



VOICEPrints

JOURNAL OF THE NEW YORK SINGING TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

January-February 2010

NYSTA, c/o Dr. Matthew Hoch
Editor-in-Chief, VOICEPrints
Shorter College 315 Shorter Avenue
Rome, GA 30165-4267

www.NYST.org



Larry Chelsi
(1921-2010)

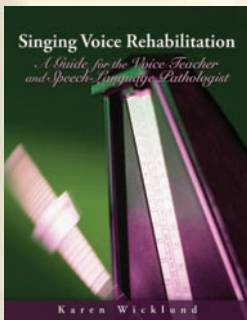
 DELMAR
CENGAGE Learning

NEW!

Singing Voice Rehabilitation – A Guide for the Voice Teacher and Speech-Language Pathologist

Karen Wicklund, Ph.D.

ISBN-13: 978-1-4354-3854-5 • ©2010



Unique Perspective!

- Author is both a voice teacher and a speech-language pathologist
- Includes disorder-specific therapeutic singing exercises
- Takes account of vocal outcome tracks for specific varieties of singers

Call 1.800.354.9706 • Visit www.cengage.com/delmar

Spring Training: Wicklund SVS Seminars

(Dr. Karen Wicklund, Singing Voice Specialist)

Training Classes: Level I (of III)

*Learn to rehabilitate
the Injured Singing Voice*

March 27-28 Sun City, AZ
May 14-15 Chicago, IL
May 21-22 Kalamazoo, MI

*For details: email wicklund@singershealth.com
or online at www.singershealth.com*