

# VOICEPrints

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## Featured Event:

### ACCESSING *The Inner Divo/Div*

April 19, 2009 Sunday, 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM

Understanding the psychology of performance can aid a voice teacher in taking a student to the next level. NLP Practitioner and Certified NGH Hypnotist Sarah Carson and NLP Master Practitioner and Trainer, Certified NGH Hypnotist and Certified Clean Language Facilitator Shawn Carson will outline cutting edge techniques of peak performance psychology in the singing arena drawn from the disciplines of Humanistic Neuro-Linguistic Psychology, NLP, EFT Hypnosis and Clean Language.

**Teachers' College**, Columbia University, Room 435 Horace Mann, 120<sup>th</sup> Street, between Broadway and Amsterdam Avenue, NYC.

Photo ID required. Free to members, \$25 non-members, \$15 students with valid ID.



**Sarah Carson** studies classical voice and opera and has used many NLP techniques to overcome performance anxiety and to enhance the vibrancy of performance. She is an Early Years Educator with 18 years experience teaching kindergarten 1st and 2nd grade students in the USA and the UK. She has a Masters Degree in Drama-in-Education and believes in using hands-on experience and in using the creative medium to teach. Sarah is an NLP Certified Master Practitioner and Trainer, Certified Hypnotist, Certified Hypno-fertility specialist and holds an MA in Education.

*"NLP and hypnosis have helped me personally to overcome my own performance anxiety, deal with inner critics and move towards performing with passion and intensity. I am eager to share my knowledge and skills with you to help you unlock your full artistic potential and reach your peak performance in life."*



**Shawn Carson** is a director of the International Center for Positive Change and Hypnosis. Shawn has 20 years of experience working in multinational professional services organizations, including board of director level, managing and coaching teams of professionals, and selling and delivering complex projects to clients. Shawn is an NLP Certified Master Practitioner and Trainer, Certified Hypnotist and Certified Clean Language Facilitator.

*"I am dedicated to my client's success. I love to help people reach and surpass their goals, put limiting beliefs and experiences behind them and maximize their potential. Studying NLP and hypnosis is helping me to create the life I want to live and I want to share that experience with others."*

## NYSTA *Distinguished Voice Professionals*

The following is a list of teachers of singing who have taken the complete five-course curriculum of the NYSTA Professional Development Program and passed all examinations. Each has earned NYSTA's *Distinguished Voice Professional Certificate*.

- Catherine Aks**
- Larry Alexander**
- Adrienne Angel**
- Tanya Apelbaum**
- Maria Argyros**
- Alan Bowers**
- Enzo Citarelli**
- Jan Douglas**
- Jack Eppler**
- Carol Flamm**
- Ena Freeman**
- Robin Lynne Frye**
- Candace Goetz**
- Hilda Harris**
- Grace Hart**
- Kathryn Hoffman**
- Patricia Kadvan**
- Joan Lader**
- Peter Ludwig**
- Natasha Lutov**
- Josephine Mongiardo**
- Foteini Moschidi**
- Lily Nehman**
- Janet Pranschke**
- Bethany Reeves**
- Michelle Rosen**
- David Sabella-Mills**
- Jane Seaman**
- Patricia Sheridan**
- Charlotte Surkin**
- Debra Vanderlinde**

## MESSAGE FROM THE *President*



### ***Bel Canto vs. Can Belto: Can't We All Just Get Along?***

Ever since I became a member of NYSTA I have been incredibly impressed by the air of cooperation and collegial equanimity for which our members strive, and indeed achieve. In a profession where differences of opinion (not to mention musical tastes) can far outweigh a consensus, NYSTA has always made room for the discussion and comparison of all types of vocal pedagogies (and teachers) without prejudice. At the same time we continue "Educating the Voice Teacher of Tomorrow" in an effort to dispel "The Mystery School of Singing" (see *NYSTA link #1, below*) and shed light on the pedagogical truths that can be found in the sciences of anatomy, acoustics, and our other core curriculum courses that we offer. And, our Constitution and Code of Ethics upholds a standard of professional behavior and respect toward one another, and our students, second only to the Hippocratic Oath.

Therefore, it always surprises me when I am confronted by a teacher, or pedagogy, that does not seem to allow for the variance of opinion, or musical taste, that we know to be apparent within our profession.

I was reminded of this in a recent conversation I had with a fellow teacher (however, not a NYSTA member) who was quite adamant about the virtues of a purely *bel canto* technique, and its application

to all styles of singing, including Musical Theater and Contemporary Commercial Music. Personally, I LOVE these discussions. Having completed the NYSTA PDP Core Curriculum (several times over) I feel I can speak with some assurance, and even authority, when confronted with a more empirical voice pedagogy, so I held my own. But, what struck me most about this conversation was this teacher's insistence that their position and pedagogy was the only possible one to have.

Now, of course, in my early years of training and performance in Baroque music as a counter-tenor, *bel canto* technique was certainly the mainstay, and a standard to be upheld at all costs. But now, in my present work with contemporary commercial music singers, including musical theater, I find myself dealing less and less with the principles of *bel canto* and more and more with the rigors and requirements of a life on the stage, and the professional marketability (and health and safety) of my students' voices. And, in my humble opinion, a beautiful *bel canto* voice that cannot get hired in the singer's chosen professional market serves neither the professional goals of the singer nor the teacher.

So, yes, these days I find myself aiming for

something other than purely *bel canto* sounds. Does that mean I no longer see the virtues of them? Of course not. For me it's apples and oranges, with an occasional clementine thrown in just to keep me on my game. But, when my own voice needs a tune up, where do I go first? Right back to the original *bel canto* exercises given to me by my own beloved teacher and mentor (and NYSTA Member), Marie Traficante. (Thank you, Marie!)

I mention this only as a means of starting a conversation on the NYSTA Forum Board (see *NYSTA link #2, below*). I would appreciate your feed-back on this very divisive issue. And, I would love to know your thoughts on the use of an otherwise classical (*bel canto*) technique, when training singers in a contemporary commercial format.

I am confident that there will be many different opinions expressed. And, I am equally confident that our membership (and visitors to the site who must also agree to our Code of Ethics) will continue to "make room for the discussion and comparison of all types of vocal pedagogies (and teachers) without prejudice" as stated above. Or, at the very least, politely agree to disagree, when necessary.

I look forward to your comments on the NYSTA Forum (see *NYSTA link #2, below*), and thank you in advance for your openness and courage to participate in the discussion.

C U There. 😊

Sincerely,

*David Sabella-Mills*

President, NYSTA  
president@nyst.org

LINK #1: [http://www.nyst.org/fileCabinet/Mystery\\_School\\_of\\_Singing.pdf](http://www.nyst.org/fileCabinet/Mystery_School_of_Singing.pdf)

LINK #2: <http://www.nyst.org/forumboard.html>

## NYSTACalendar Spring 2009

### **ACCESSING***The Inner Divo/Diva*

**April 19, 2009** Sunday, 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM

Understanding the psychology of performance can aid a voice teacher in taking a student to the next level. NLP Practitioner and Certified NGH Hypnotist Sarah Carson and NLP Master Practitioner and Trainer, Certified NGH Hypnotist and Certified Clean Language Facilitator Shawn Carson will outline cutting edge techniques of peak performance psychology in the singing arena drawn from the disciplines of Humanistic Neuro-Linguistic Psychology, NLP, EFT Hypnosis and Clean Language.

**Teachers' College**, Columbia University, Room 435 Horace Mann, 120<sup>th</sup> Street, between Broadway and Amsterdam Avenue, NYC.

Photo ID required. Free to members, \$25 non-members, \$15 students with valid ID.

### **OREN LATHROP BROWN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM \*** **COMPARATIVE***Pedagogy Weekend 2009*

**June 13-14, 2009** Instructors TBA

During this course, six master teachers will present teaching demonstrations after case histories of students have been discussed. Concrete links will be made between various teaching strategies and the scientific and medical information covered in other courses of the PDP program.

**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 [www.nyst.org](http://www.nyst.org). Half-price for repeaters, and \$60 per individual teaching session. One graduate credit per course is available from Westminster Choir College for an additional \$150. A form is available at the class. 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](mailto:pdp@nyst.org) or [www.nyst.org](http://www.nyst.org).



*Sarah Carson and Shawn Carson*

## NYSTANew Members



**Tracy Bourne's** Australian and world premieres of contemporary music have won her wide acclaim. She has worked for Chamber Made Opera, Next Wave Festival, Libra Ensemble, Melbourne International Festival, the ABC and others. In 2000, she undertook a five-week mentorship program with leading contemporary classical singer/teachers in Europe and America funded by the Australia Council Music Fund, The Ian Potter Cultural Trust and the University of Ballarat. In 2007, she travelled to the United States to complete certification (Levels I-III) in *Somatic Voicework™—The LoVetri Method*, at Shenandoah University.

Tracy has completed a BM degree (vocal) from Queensland Conservatorium, Dip. Dramatic (acting) from VCA Drama School and an MM degree (performance) from Melbourne University. She is currently a part-time PhD candidate at Sydney Conservatorium of Music researching vocal qualities in musical theatre voice.

She has been a Lecturer in Singing at the Arts Academy, University of Ballarat since 2000, working with students in the BA musical theatre program. She is delighted to be an international member of NYSTA and can be contacted at [t.bourne@ballarat.edu.au](mailto:t.bourne@ballarat.edu.au).



**Jennifer Cece** is a singer, accompanist, and a certified yoga and Pilates instructor. She has been teaching classical and contemporary styles privately for fourteen years.

Jennifer has developed a "Yoga for Performers" workshop which she currently presents in the New York metropolitan area that explores the scientific validation of yogic breathwork, meditation, and postures for improved focus and overall fitness. She attended the University of Richmond with a vocal scholarship, and received her MM in classical Vocal Performance at New Jersey City University. She earned certification in *Somatic Voicework™—The LoVetri Method* at Shenandoah University, where she studied with its acclaimed founder, Jeannette LoVetri.

First place winner in a NATS 2000 competition, Jennifer enjoys performing chamber music, opera, musical theatre and vaudeville. She has premiered the work of many new composers. Favorite performances include Mostly Mozart at Lincoln Center, Mabel in *The Pirates of Penzance*, Vivaldi festivals with Baroque Orchestra of New Jersey, and Gesualdo at the Dramatists Guild, New York City.

Please visit her website at <http://www.JenniferVocals.com>.



**Maria Guida**, speech teacher, Broadway actor, and jazz singer, offers individual and group coaching in two separate disciplines: (1) *Acting for Singers* and (2) *Foreign Accent Reduction for Foreign-born Singers and Actors*. For over fifteen years, Maria has conducted training programs for professional singers and actors and for young performers at HB Studio and New York University. She has New York State teaching certification. Maria's CD, "Soul Eyes" received excellent notices and is available on CD *Baby* and on her website: <http://www.mariaguida.com>.

Maria has sung and/or recorded with many instrumentalists respected in the jazz community. As an actor, she has worked on Broadway and television and has been a principal spokesperson on national television commercials. Her expertise with accents earned Maria her first of two roles on Broadway, and she has worked on stage with many well-known artists, including Kevin Kline and James Earl Jones.

Maria may be contacted for a free consultation at 212-567-4653.



Soprano **Sarah Adams Hoover**, DMA, performer, teacher and writer, has degrees from Yale University and the Peabody Institute. Recently elected to the board of NATS-NYC, she is also a member of the Voice Foundation and Andover Educators. Trained at the Johns Hopkins Center for Laryngeal and Voice Disorders and with Margaret Baroody, SVS, she has also pursued additional studies in yoga and Alexander Technique, and holds certifications in Pilates and Body Mapping. She has presented workshops on vocal health and body awareness throughout the United States. Upcoming workshops include programs at Concordia Conservatory, Washington Opera Summer Institute, and Shenandoah Conservatory, as well as "Body Mapping: Practical Applications in the Singing Studio" for the Voice Foundation's 38<sup>th</sup> Annual Symposium in Philadelphia.

Dr. Hoover is also a music journalist; her reviews and articles have been published in the *Washington Post* and *Baltimore Sun*. She also writes program notes for organizations including Strathmore Hall and the Baltimore Chamber Orchestra. She may be reached at [sahsing@verizon.net](mailto:sahsing@verizon.net).

## FREE VOCAL HEALTH SCREENING FOR SINGERS: *A World Voice Day Celebration*

by NYSTA Member Michael J. Pitman, MD

**WORLD VOICE DAY.** What a wonderful concept. A day to increase public awareness of the human voice and the need for vocal preventive care and treatment. World Voice Day was established in Brazil in 1999 as the Brazilian National Voice Day. It was a mixed initiative of physicians, speech-language pathologists and singing teachers. The Day spread internationally and in 2002 was recognized by the American Academy of Otolaryngology and renamed World Voice Day. Though strides have been made, the word has not spread beyond those who already realize the importance of the voice and this day wallows in relative obscurity.

As vocal professionals it is our job to spread the word, whether we are speech-language pathologists, singers, singing teachers or physicians. This is a day to be celebrated and publicized so the world can gain an appreciation for the importance of the voice. To many, the voice comes easily and is such a part of their lives that they take it for granted until it is impaired. Whether it is the soprano or rock singer, politician or grandmother, we are all at risk for voice disorders. With advances in technology, our voice demands have increased. What was previously time to rest our voice, such as a car ride or solitary stroll, is now seen as an excellent time to multitask and make calls on our cell phones. The number of jobs requiring verbal communication versus manual work has been increasing. As a result, the incidence of voice problems has risen dramatically over the years. More than 7.5 million people have some form of a voice disorder that impacts their ability to communicate. Because the voice has become such an integral part of our worldly interactions, when difficulty with the voice strikes it can be economically, socially and psychologically devastating.

When this difficulty occurs, many people will be able to seek medical help so they can be nursed back to health. The field of Laryngology has progressed dramatically over the last twenty years. Our understanding of vocal production, our diagnostic modalities and treatment armamentarium have become more extensive and sophisticated, allowing excellent recovery for most maladies. Unfortunately, in our present age not everyone has health insurance. 44 million people are uninsured in America. As the economy suffers the decision to pay the daily bills or spend money on medical care is one with which many people struggle.

Many professional singers experience times of economic instability. As artists, they are now having as much, if not more, difficulty than others. Despite their level of success and reputation and in many cases years of work, if singers do not currently have health insurance through a union, professional guild or a record label, they are often left without health insurance. Many of these artists cannot afford to pay privately for health insurance,

yet they do not qualify for government assistance. As a result they are without insurance and hence neglect their general medical care and vocal medical care. Preventive care is not practiced and dysphonia is often ignored until their vocal instrument is so severely damaged that they can no longer perform.

At the Voice and Swallowing Institute at The New York Eye and Ear Infirmary, part of our mission is to provide "specialized and professional care to the professional singer." Wrapping this mission with the modern difficulties of health care and the hope to spread the word of World Voice Day we held our first World Voice Day Free Vocal Health Screening on April 12, 2008. The second of what we intend to be annual screenings will take place on April 4, 2009.

Last year's vocal health screening was sponsored by MusiCares, the philanthropy wing of The Recording Academy and we are partnering with them again. The function was also supported by The New York Singers Collective, KayPentax and Starky. With everyone's help we reached out to singers in need and had almost 300 singers who wished to be screened. This confirmed the very real need that exists.

Five videostroboscopy stations and a laryngeal function testing station were set up at The New York Eye and Ear Infirmary. Our five voice therapists and laryngeal physiologist manned each station. After the completion of an extensive questionnaire the singers had their laryngeal function/efficiency tested, were interviewed by the voice therapist and then underwent a laryngo-videostroboscopy. After the tests and questionnaires were completed and the information processed, I and in many cases our singing voice specialist were able to examine the singer, review the results of the testing and then present the singer with a diagnosis and treatment plan. At the end of their visit each singer left with a Singer's Resource Packet that contained photos of their larynx, results of their laryngeal function testing, the medical results of the screening, a MusiCares



**Dr. Michael J. Pitman**

information packet should they need financial assistance with future care and tips on vocal care for the professional voice user. With this support of equipment and personnel 71 professional singers had a free comprehensive vocal health screening in one day.

The results of this screening were staggering. Some singers had come for a preventive screening. 13 people had normal larynges and 16 had mild laryngitis due to poor vocal hygiene. The 42 other singers had significant pathology. While some singers had multiple pathologies, the primary diagnoses of the patients are seen in table 1. These are significant disorders with significant impact on vocal production. In some cases the findings were career-threatening, while in other cases the singer's career had already ended due to the malady. These findings attest to the need for vocal care that many vocal professionals are not receiving due to limited access to health care.

The singers were uniformly grateful for receiving a diagnostic evaluation that many knew was long past due. Patients who needed further care and qualified for MusiCares support were given grants to pay for the care and other financial support that was needed.

The experience of this event reinforced our belief in the need for this initiative and highlighted the barriers to proper care that singers are experiencing. As a result, we pledged to make this screening an annual event to aid singers in need as well as promote the cause of World Voice Day.

**Table 1. Primary Diagnoses of Singers**

Mild Laryngitis	16	Rhinitis	2
Nodules	15	Acute Hemorrhage	1
Normal Larynx	13	Remote Hemorrhage	1
Reflux (LPR)	7	Tracheal Stenosis	1
Atrophy	5	Paresis	1
Polyp	4	Sulcus Vocalis	1
Muscle Tension Dysphonia	3	Scar	1

Last year World Voice Day was celebrated throughout the country and around the world. To name a few examples: Emory Voice Center coordinated a symposium to raise money for voice research, Drexel University sponsored a children's program with a nationally renowned story teller and The Philippine Society of Otolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery sponsored a concert.

World Voice Day presents a unique opportunity for, speech-language pathologists, singers, singing teachers and physicians to work towards a common goal. As vocal professionals, we each have a unique relationship with the voice that gives it a special place in our lives. World Voice Day is a chance for us to give back to something that has enriched our personal worlds and a chance to show others how important the human voice is to us all.

However you decide to celebrate World Voice Day, please join us and many others around the globe in spreading the word about the complexity and beauty of the human voice, its central role in all our lives and the need for vocal preventive care and treatment.

#### Michael J. Pitman, MD

*Dr. Pitman is a recognized expert in voice restoration, conservation and care of the professional voice. He is a graduate Albert Einstein College of Medicine, where he is a member of the Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Society. He completed his otolaryngology residency at The New York Eye and Ear Infirmary. Dr. Pitman was a fellow in Laryngology and Care of the Professional Voice at Vanderbilt University Medical Center, where he trained in laryngeal framework surgery and phonosurgery. He is the Director of the Division of Laryngology and the Voice and Swallowing Institute at The New York Eye and Ear Infirmary. Dr. Pitman has authored numerous articles for peer reviewed journals as well as book chapters, and he has presented nationally in the field of laryngology.*

If you or a singer you know is interested in the learning more about The New York Eye and Ear Infirmary and MusiCares 2009 Free Vocal Health Screening you can obtain more information at [voiceandswallowinginstitute.com](http://voiceandswallowinginstitute.com) or [grammy.com/MusiCares](http://grammy.com/MusiCares).

For general information on World Voice Day, go to [entnet.org/AboutUs/worldVoiceDay.cfm](http://entnet.org/AboutUs/worldVoiceDay.cfm).

## BOOK REVIEW

by NYSTA Treasurer and Board Member Brian Gill, DMA

Donald Gray Miller, *Resonance in Singing—Voice Building through Acoustic Feedback* (New Jersey: Inside View Press, 2008). \$70.00

Hang on to your formants (or at least tune them)! It is a thrilling ride! *Resonance in Singing—Voice Building through Acoustic Feedback* by Donald Gray Miller is a wonderful guide to the world of formant tuning/resonance strategies. The premise behind the book is that voice teachers/singers can use acoustic feedback as well as signals from an Electroglottograph (a device that measures connectivity at the vocal fold level) to aid in the developmental training of the voice. With a



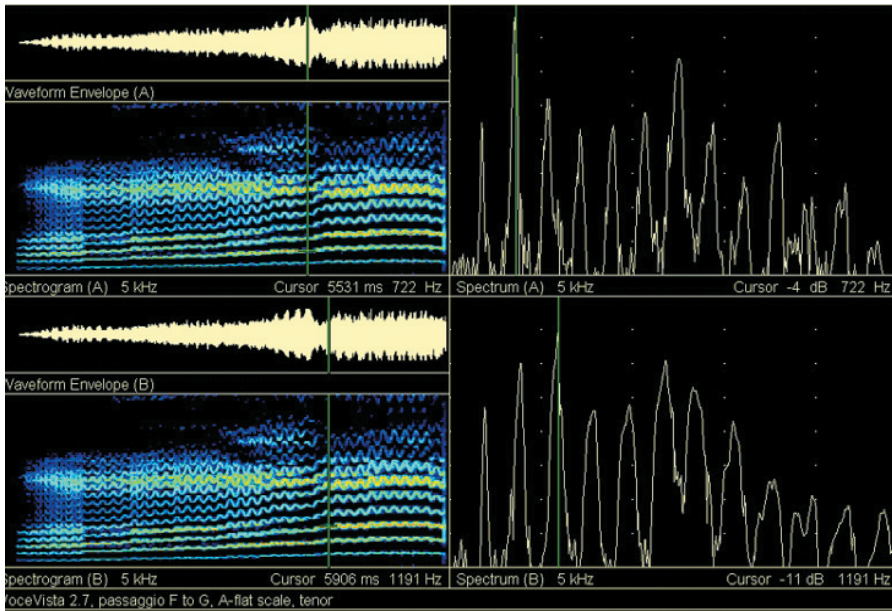
program like VoceVista-Pro, a hardware/software program developed by Dr. Miller (included with the book), one can see how effectively the vocal tract, or filter, is resonating the information (harmonics) generated by the vibration of the vocal folds, or source.

The book begins with an Introduction by Dr. Scott McCoy. He very aptly points out that "Science will never replace art in singing and teaching. But it can—and does—inform the art, enabling singers to perform with optimal beauty and vocal efficiency through a technique that is grounded in fact, rather than wishful thinking." He continues by saying, "[Don Miller's] work will help us all become better singers and teachers, while moving voice pedagogy toward full integration with scientific reality."

In the Forward, Dr. Miller discusses how language is insufficient when it comes to describing sung sound. He says the goal of the book is "to illuminate some of the important phenomena that are now, thanks to generally available technology, open to objective description, and to bring these phenomena within the reach of a commonly shared language." This is a very ambitious goal, but, with this book, Dr. Miller advances us well down the path of discovering this common language.

*Resonance in Singing* is only 130 pages long, including the Index in the back of the book, but it is filled from cover to cover with invaluable information regarding the singing voice. Due to the scientific nature of the information, some may find it taxing to read straight from beginning to end; therefore, Dr. Miller invites the readers to start wherever they wish, i.e., they may begin by exploring Voce-Vista-Pro, or by flipping through the chapters to start with the one that piques their interest most. I believe the information in this book, thanks to the glossary of terms and the highly intelligible commentary along the way, is accessible to most anyone. But, it wouldn't hurt to brush up on some fundamentals of voice science, particularly in the area of acoustics, before tackling this book.

All of the chapters are well-organized and provide a wealth of knowledge to the reader. While scanning through the book at first, Chapter One, "Pavarotti: King of Second Formant Tuning," jumped right out at me (after all, I am a tenor!). It pays tribute to one of the greatest singers of all time, the late, beloved Italian tenor, Luciano Pavarotti. Proclaimed "King of the high C's," there is something otherworldly about Pavarotti's singing. Dr. Miller discusses in great detail one noteworthy aspect of Pavarotti's voice: his consistent employment of a resonance strategy in the higher register of his voice that involves tuning the second formant of whatever vowel he is singing to either the third or fourth harmonic. This resonance strategy is usually present in his voice beginning around F4 or



#### VoceVista-Pro: tenor passaggio

F#4. While it is only one aspect of the “magic” produced by Pavarotti, its importance should not be overlooked. The split screen in the figure on Page 6 shows the two different spectra representative of this transition. The top of the screen shows how the second harmonic is being resonated by the first formant on the pitch F4; the bottom of the screen shows how the third harmonic is being resonated by the second formant once the singer reaches the pitch G4. For those worried whether they will be able to understand how to use VoceVista-Pro, Chapter 2, “The Signals of VoceVista,” discusses the many elements of the hardware/software program, including: the spectrogram, the power spectrum, the electroglottograph waveform, the audio waveform, the waveform envelope, the closed quotient (CQ), and the criterion level (CL).

Dr. Miller provides a clear discussion of harmonics and spectra and, in Chapter Three, includes an example of the harmonic series for the note G2; this example is well-chosen as it provides us with approximate frequencies for “reference notes” throughout most of the singing range of both the male and female voice. He goes on to discuss formants and vowel space, outlining the principles of vowel modification, including the rationale for why vowels need to be modified. Generally speaking, vowels need to be adjusted, or tuned, so that the formants (usually one of the two “vowel formants”) become more acoustically sensitive to the harmonics produced at the vocal fold level. A good example illustrating the necessity of formant tuning is seen when considering the compatibility of closed vowels and the pitches in the high range of the female voice. Since we know that while in head voice, in the upper range, a woman tracks the fundamental frequency with the first formant, we must conclude that it would be impossible to sing an [i] with its usual articulation. The [i] has

a first formant frequency in the vicinity of 300 to 400 Hz. For notes in the upper range of the female voice, the fundamental frequency is around 700 Hz and higher, which is well above that of the first formant of [i], rendering it acoustically incompatible. The only way to ensure proper resonance and ease of production, considering this acoustical mismatch, is to modify the vowel. A sensible modification might be to open the front of the mouth which will have the effect of raising the frequency of the first formant by narrowing the space in the pharynx. If that space is not altered and too much of the “pure vowel” is maintained, the acoustical mismatch will most likely result in: the pitch being flat, irregular vibrato or no vibrato, increased effort, strident tone, and in extreme cases, the cessation of phonation.

Finding one’s formant frequencies, Dr. Miller points out, can be achieved fairly simply by employing vocal fry, “a bubbling of air through closed vocal folds at a rate slow enough that the individual impulses are heard as separate ticks.” (There are informative definitions throughout the book!) While forming a vowel as if you were singing it, begin to employ the vocal fry. Using VoceVista-Pro, you will see a power spectrum that shows at least the first two formants, which will show up as peaks in the spectrum. One key to successfully employing this method is to make sure that the vocal tract posture is maintained as accurately as possible. The success can be verified by comparing the spectra of the sung vowel sound and the vocal fry “imitation.” With VoceVista-Pro one can overlay the two spectra to see exactly how the formants boost the signal of the harmonics that are located near them. If the peaks line up properly, we know the vocal tract posture was maintained. With practice this gets increasingly easier to do. Once you know your vowel formant frequencies you possess the numbers that will help you decide how

to modify your vowels.

Dr. Miller discusses many resonance strategies throughout the book, while addressing topics such as: registers in male and female voices, the male upper extension, and the female middle voice. Accompanying the book is a CD-ROM, which includes an invaluable multimedia player for all of the examples in the text. I found this element to be quite helpful as all of the examples are well-executed and clear. In addition, the CD-ROM provides the reader with the VoceVista-Pro Primer, which is a tutorial that acts as a supplement to the help file included with the program.

**Resonance in Singing** provides an example of how science can meet the voice studio in an exciting and highly applicable fashion. The ability to use VoceVista-Pro as a tool to enhance one’s teaching is now possible for all, thanks to this insightful, well-organized, multimedia presentation by Dr. Miller. I would encourage all readers to do their own investigation into all of the resonance strategies found in this book before drawing conclusions. Within these pages, one finds a foundation for intelligent, fact-based conversation regarding the sung sound. I consider this book to be a necessary and welcome addition to the libraries of anyone interested in having a deeper understanding of how the singing voice functions.

**Dr. Brian Gill** is Clinical Assistant Professor of Voice at New York University, where he teaches applied voice, diction and vocal pedagogy. Before coming to NYU, he served on the voice faculties of Pace University and Eastern Kentucky University. While working as a graduate assistant at the University of Kentucky, he taught applied voice, diction and assisted with the vocal pedagogy program. He is currently Treasurer of NYSTA and serves on the NYSTA Board of Directors. His full biography may be read in the September-October 2008 issue of *VOICEPrints*.



Brian Gill, DMA

## EVENT REPORT: NYSTA's 2008 Holiday Party & Master Class

by NYSTA Past President Dora Ohrenstein

Every year, NYSTA throws a Holiday Party for its members and in recent years, the chosen spot has been a very pleasant and classy cabaret space at the Westbank Cafe. To satisfy our members' thirst for knowledge, the party is coupled with a teaching event, and this year it was a master class with Catherine Malfitano.

Ms. Malfitano's illustrious career on the opera stage is founded on her skills as one of the finest singing actresses of her generation. The class allowed her to share her insights with young singers, and revealed the understanding the soprano has of the relationship between the technical side of singing and a deep connection to the text of an aria.

Four singers worked with Ms. Malfitano, and it was one of the best crop I've seen yet at a NYSTA event. In Menotti's "Steal me Sweet Thief," soprano Andrea Covais, began with a good connection with the work, giving a convincing rendition. Yet with Malfitano's technique of text analysis, consisting of unpacking the meaning of every word to the character uttering them, the long opening section became far more nuanced. It was found that the word "steal" appears eighteen times in the aria—why? How many layers of meaning can the word hold? The age of the character was discussed—was her vision of love that of a mature woman, or the fantasy of an inexperienced eighteen-year-old? Much in the singer's performance was enhanced by this approach, including vocal production and sound quality.

Next came Liu's aria—"Signor, ascolta"—from Puccini's *Turandot*, sung by soprano Julianna Dempsey. Malfitano began her coaching by discussing the advantages of going to a place opposite what is indicated in the text: rather than expressing sadness, she suggested, in this aria think instead "I can talk to him—this is my chance." With this attitude, Liu's phrases took on a new radiance, facially, vocally, and emotionally. Ms. Malfitano offered another piece of wisdom: in our age, we speak bluntly; there is little beauty in how we communicate. But Liu expresses herself poetically and it is this poetic level toward which the singer strives. Ms. Malfitano made another point: precede every sung line with the facial expression appropriate to it—anticipate with your thought what you are about to sing. Malfitano's emphasis on positive expression, even where the text is sad or grim, produced amazing vocal results that remained true to the meaning of the aria.

Tenor Kenneth Harmon next sang Edgardo's aria from Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*. Ms. Malfitano began with some technical comments, and it was clear she wanted to delve further into vocal production for this singer, particularly his lack of physical engagement. She found a marvelous way to do so: "Don't lift your eyes away from the audience," she said. "This is a way of escaping into a comfort zone that fails to connect with listeners. Instead, sing the piece like you were a Baptist

preacher in front of a bunch of sinners. Look directly at individuals." Then, as the young man sang, she threw words and attitudes at him: "angry, confident, disdain, lusty," etc. The transformation was tremendous—a completely different timbre, size and communicative power was revealed.

Last was the aria "Must the Winter Come so Soon," from Samuel Barber's *Vanessa*, sung by mezzo-soprano Adrienne Alexander. Although this was again a melancholy piece, Malfitano sought the hope within the despair. She spoke about the deer that is pictured in the text, and whether the character was identifying with it. "What about the woods? What do the woods represent?" The singer found a great deal more mystery, subtlety and depth in the piece as the delving and exploration continued.

Along the way several themes emerged in Malfitano's remarks, one being the advantage of working on contemporary pieces. She explained how her work with living composers such as William Bolcom, Carlisle Floyd, Conrad Susa, and Thomas Pasatieri has given her a better understanding of how to interpret the music of the past. She discussed the undogmatic flexibility of these composers, and their support of the performer's interpretive role. We mustn't think of these older works as inflexible relics, but make them our own. Yet, when learning older music, the singer must learn the piece as written before taking liberties.

In response to audience questions, Malfitano



**Catherine Malfitano**

explained that though she aims to nurture singers who are committed actors, the recent emphasis in opera houses on acting at the cost of fine singing was not to her taste. All young singers must study music from the older periods, and not skip any, going back to Monteverdi and proceeding through all the periods to our own. *Bel canto* is the backbone of our art, she believes.

All the singers were open to Ms. Malfitano's guidance, responding with enthusiasm and openness. Of course, Malfitano created a kind, supportive relationship which encouraged this. She and the singers were very well supported by pianist John Lidal. We thank all the participants in this lovely class for affirming our *raison d'être* as singing teachers: to foster the art of songful communication by delving deep into our common humanity.



From left to right: President **David Sabella-Mills**; his daughter **Iraina Sabella-Mills** (with doll Penelope); Past President **Mara Waldman**; Archivist **Sally Morgan**; Registrar **Lisa Hogan** (in back); Secretary **Rebecca Sharpe**; **Catherine Malfitano** (her pianist in back); Events Coordinator **Paula Liscio**; PDP Director **Janet Pranschke**; Vice President **Josephine Mongiardo**; and Past President and article author **Dora Ohrenstein** (also above, lower right).

# VOICEPrints

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NYSTA, c/o Dr. Matthew Hoch  
Editor-in-Chief, VOICEPrints  
Shorter College 315 Shorter Avenue  
Rome, GA 30161-4267

[www.NYST.org](http://www.NYST.org)



## MESSAGE FROM THE *Editor*



Each issue, in my "From the Editor" column, I usually end by reminding our readership of the following: "VOICEPrints is YOUR publication..." While we often feature articles from voice professionals outside of our organization, many of these articles are generated from our remarkable roster of members, whether they are from New York City or in some other part of the world. (Note Australian NYSTA Member Joan Melton's excellent article, "Ab Prints and the Triple Threat," from January-February of this volume.)

The three features in this issue were written by three of our members who can be thought of as representatives of NYSTA's past, present, and future. I would like to sincerely thank NYSTA Past President Dora Ohrenstein for her informative review of the recent Catherine Malfitano master class (p. 7).

NYSTA Treasurer Dr. Brian Gill—an officer on the current NYSTA Board of Directors—shares his vast knowledge of voice science in

his review of Donald Miller's new book, *Resonance in Singing* (pp. 5-6).

Finally, otolaryngologist Dr. Michael J. Pitman, who joined NYSTA only months ago, has already made a contribution about the upcoming April 4th event related to World Voice Day (pp. 4-5).

So, whether you've been active in NYSTA for decades, are just joining, or are simply interested in becoming more involved, please do remember that, as always, VOICEPrints is YOUR publication, so please send all questions, comments, and ideas for future articles to me at [voiceprints@nyst.org](mailto:voiceprints@nyst.org).

Sincerely,

*Dr. Matthew Hoch*

Editor-in-Chief, VOICEPrints  
[voiceprints@nyst.org](mailto:voiceprints@nyst.org)

## NYSTANews

NYSTA member **Sally Morgan's** Vocal Power Tools will send you 52 weeks of essential practice tips for signing up for her mailing list:

<http://www.VocalPowerTools.com>.

Thanks! Breathe,

*Sally*

Sally Morgan

[info@VocalPowerTools.com](mailto:info@VocalPowerTools.com)

[www.VocalPowerTools.com](http://www.VocalPowerTools.com)

[www.SuperheroSelfEsteem.com](http://www.SuperheroSelfEsteem.com)

PHONE: 917.210.1443

<http://www.youtube.com/sallymmorgan>

