

VOICEPrints

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SPRING 2015 EVENT

A Concert Tribute to Richard Pearson Thomas

April 19, 2015 Sunday, 2:00–4:00 PM EDT. Reception to follow
National Opera Center, 7th Seventh Ave between 28th & 29th Sts, NYC.

**Free to NYSTA members, their students and guests.
Donations welcome.**

NYSTA is delighted to honor composer and pianist Richard Pearson Thomas, a long-time collaborator with NYSTA, by presenting a full-length concert of his vocal works, chosen by the composer himself and assisted by singers from the New York Metropolitan area.

Composer and pianist **Richard Pearson Thomas** has had works performed by the Boston Pops, Covent Garden Festival, Houston Grand Opera, Chautauqua Opera, Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, Banff Centre, Portland Opera and Skylight Opera Theater. His songs have been sung in Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Kennedy Center, Merkin Concert Hall, Wigmore Hall, Joe's Pub, Le Poisson Rouge, and before the U.S. Congress by artists such as Audra McDonald, Sanford Sylvan, Lauren Flanagan, and Kurt Ollmann. He is a frequent collaborator with The Mirror Visions Ensemble which has performed his works in the United States and Europe and has concertized with singers worldwide.

Mr. Thomas' commissioned comic opera, *A Wake or a Wedding*, was premiered by the California State University at Fullerton Opera Theater and produced by Encompass New Opera Theatre in New York City. His opera *Parallel Lives* was produced Off-Off Broadway by the Riverside Opera Ensemble, as was his *Ladies in a Maze*, produced by Encompass

Music Theater. Original music for *In Thinking of America: Songs of the Civil War* has been heard in more than 150 U.S. cities. Richard Pearson Thomas is currently on faculty at Teachers College/ Columbia University. He has taught at Yale and the University of Central Florida. He is a graduate of the Eastman School of Music and the University of Southern California, and is a native of Montana.



VIDEO CHAT:

Mindful Voice: Singing with the Brain in Mind

with Lynn Holding, MM

March 29, 2015 6:00 PM EST *Live Online*



Lynn Holding, voice teacher, singer and published author on the cognitive connections between music and the mind, holds that our "means of current analysis" is the new science of mind. "Brain science" demands rejection of the simple accumulation of knowledge, in favor of a deeper comprehension of the cognitive substrates of knowledge's delivery system: teaching. Lynn Holding has proposed that a paradigm shift in emphasis is in order, a shift from how well teachers teach, to how well students learn.

TOPICS INCLUDE: ■ Right Brain/Left Brain: How Two Halves Make a Whole Singer; ■ Motor (Muscle) Learning; ■ Lost in Translation: The Effect of Verbal Coaching on Motor Learning; ■ The Critical Difference Between Performance & Learning; ■ Feedback: The Spark that Ignites Learning; ■ Carrots and Sticks: Motivation & Desire; ■ The Erosion of Attention in the Digital Age; ■ Allergic to Criticism: The Narcissism Epidemic and the Performing Arts; ■ The Talent Myth; and ■ *Desirable Difficulties* (Bjork).

Lynn Holding has sung throughout Italy, England, France, Germany, Spain, Australia, and Iceland. Her performances there were broadcast on Icelandic National Radio. She studied voice science with Ingo Titze, Katherine Verdolini and others at the Summer Vocology Institute of the National Center for Voice and Speech, and was recently nominated by Dr. Titze to chair the national steering committee to found PAVA, the Pan-American Vocology Association, a non-profit association dedicated to advancing the scientific study of voice for artistic and professional use. A published author on the cognitive connections between music and the mind, her column "Mindful Voice" appears regularly in the *Journal of Singing*, where she also serves as an associate editor. Her lecture series "Connecting Voice Science to Vocal Art" illuminates ongoing research in the new science of mind. She is a frequent presenter at NATS national conferences, and the International Physiology and Acoustics of Singing (PAS) Symposium, and is a sought-after masterclass teacher in both classical and non-classical singing technique. Honors include the Van Lawrence Fellowship, jointly awarded by the Voice Foundation and NATS. She is currently Associate Professor of Voice and Director of Performance Studies at Dickinson College in Carlisle, PA. www.lynnholding.com

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MESSAGE FROM THE *President*



Of Body Types, Bubbles, and Coffee Cups...

Shortly before I wrote this article, former NYSTA President Josephine Mongiardo and I finished listening to quite a number of singers over a period of three days in January. All were auditioning for the SongFest summer program at the Colburn School in Los Angeles, and the supply of talent interested in honing their recital and art songs skills was very impressive. You may remember that NYSTA had announced early last fall that we would be sponsoring two singers to attend SongFest. This idea was suggested by Josephine about a year ago, then brought to the NYSTA Board for discussion and unanimous acceptance.

In fact, we have been able in this first year to sponsor three different singers, in consultation with the SongFest artistic staff, by splitting one award. The winners' names will be announced in *VOICEPrints* once SongFest has their written acceptance. NYSTA has every reason to be very proud of these young singers and we hope to have video/audio excerpts of their singing at SongFest available to post on our website come next fall.

It was a treat to hear so many fine young artists, representing many different backgrounds and certainly many different teachers. I came away with the strong conviction that this summer opportunity is a wonderful place to nurture young performers, from beginning undergraduates to those already at the start of their careers, and one which devotes serious learning time to the particular portion of the classical repertoire that many, if not most of us, feel is in danger of withering away. Add to that a chance to converse with colleagues, and a list of repertoire to investigate for my own teaching, and it became, for me, a really fulfilling experience.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Josephine once again for suggesting that NYSTA support this program and for making time in her teaching schedule to hear these singers, and to thank Founding/Artistic Director Rosemary Hyler Ritter and Associate Directors Matthew Morris and Liza Stepanova for making it possible for us to attend the

auditions. If you have a chance to visit SongFest this coming summer, by all means do so. I think you will come away refreshed and renewed. www.songfest.us

During and after the auditions, Josephine and I had a chance to exchange information, something we rarely find time to do in the course of a normal semester's teaching. One of her observations, which I heartily endorse, was that every singer feels breath differently and that it's our job, as teachers, to help our students find the feelings that work most efficiently for them. She pointed me towards the terms "ectomorph," "mesomorph," and "endomorph," (and combinations of those terms), representing different body types that will sense coordination of the breathing muscles differently. Though I'd heard the terms, I had not realized they could apply to singers and I have been investigating ever since. Not only do I look differently at my students now, I teach differently because of our conversation.

When our talk turned to having students in a large class experience exhalation, Josephine mentioned blowing a steady stream of bubbles through a straw inserted in just a small cup of water; this goes back some years to Ingo Titze's 2002 article in the *Journal of Singing*, and much further than even that. It's an easy, non-expensive, fast, and immediately revelatory way for students to investigate their breath flow and can be done with any age student and any size group.

My small contribution to our continued discussion was a technique with a styrofoam cup that I saw Marci Rosenberg do at her session for the 2014 Voice Symposium in Philadelphia. It is used by speech pathologists, vocologists, and singing teachers alike to help demonstrate to the singer how to "control" (my term, not Marci's) air flow—but it teaches much, much more than that. Take a 10 oz. styrofoam coffee/tea cup, punch a hole the size of a normal pen or pencil in the bottom of the cup and discard the small piece of foam from the punchout. Have the student place the cup over the mouth (leave the nose free to breathe!) and sing into the cup. The

benefits are many: 1) the singer's sound is muted to his/her own ears so listening to one's self is completely futile; 2) the back-pressure from the sound waves the singer is generating relaxes the vocal folds, making for much less difficulty in the *passaggi* and in higher phrases; 3) the singer senses what resonance actually feels like, an area that's fairly hard to describe verbally to anyone and one topic we all spend a great deal of time on in lessons; 4) the singer will use very little breath to sing any one phrase, which increases efficiency and helps maintain vocal health; 5) taking away the cup midway in a phrase will result in a full sound with virtually no work within the vocal tract; and 6) it's a great way to practice when you're in a place where you can't make too much sound, like a hotel room or audition hall! As with the straw-in-water exercise, it's cheap, fast and very revealing to the singer. Will it work with everyone?—No! Nothing works with everyone—that's why we all keep learning.

With the many benefits technology brings, we all are more connected and have vastly more information available to us than any other previous generation. NYSTA, through *VOICEPrints*, online and live courses, online chats, and, principally, our extensive archive, has a wealth of material for its members to mine. Please visit our website, login and explore what's there. You are bound to come away with new material for your teaching and your own singing.

May your pharynx always be moist.

Judith Nicosia

Judith Nicosia, *President*
president@nyst.org



MESSAGE FROM THE *Editor*



Dear Colleagues,

Spring is already upon us. This is one of the busiest times of the year for singers and singing teachers; NYSTA's schedule is full as well. We hope that you will take advantage of our online event with Lynn Holding, our concert tribute to Richard Pearson Thomas, as well as our always-available on demand PDP offerings.

This issue of *VOICEPrints* features an article by Dr. Sharon Radionoff, as well as two book reviews: Karen Bauer's *The Essentials of Beautiful Singing: A Three-Step Kinesthetic Approach* (Scarecrow Press, 2013) by Ian Howell and Daniel James Shigo's *Hidden in*

Plain Sight: The Hermann Klein Phono-Vocal Method Based upon the Famous School of Manuel Garcia (VoiceTalk Publications, 2013) by Dr. Stephen F. Austin. Mr. Shigo, a long-time NYSTA member, is also my predecessor and the Founding Editor of *VOICEPrints* (2003–2008).

NYSTA is currently wrapping up its search to name the next Editor-in-Chief of *VOICEPrints*. Look for a forthcoming announcement in the May-June issue.

As always, NYSTA is YOUR publication, so please send questions, comments, and

suggestions for future articles to me at voiceprints@nyst.org.

Sincerely,

Matthew Hoch

Editor-in-Chief, *VOICEPrints*

VOICEPrints

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Matthew Hoch, DMA
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Lori McCann, DMA
Associate Editor

Josephine Mongiardo
Associate Editor

Daniel James Shigo
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Christopher Arneson



Judith Nicosia



Jeanette LoVetri



David Sabella-Mills



Professional Development Program Calendar 2015

DATE—TIME

EVENT TYPE

TITLE

2015

March 11	ON DEMAND	Featured On Demand Course: Singers' Developmental Repertoire
March 29, 6:00 PM	VIDEO CHAT	Mindful Voice: Singing with the Brain in Mind with Lynn Holding, MM—Online
May 13	ON DEMAND	Featured On Demand Course: Comparative Pedagogy 2015

The SVS & Contemporary Christian Music—Part 1: A Brief Overview

by Sharon L. Radionoff, PhD

This is the first of two articles that discuss the subject of Contemporary Christian Music or “CCM.” It presents a brief overview of general historical information related to CCM. The follow-up article (which will be published in a subsequent issue of *VOICEPrints*) will present practical “voice balancing” exercises from the SVS to aid in vocal health and longevity for the contemporary Christian singer.

In the late 1960s, a revolution was emerging in church music. Through Ralph Carmichael, noted composer and arranger for such artists as Ella Fitzgerald, Nat King Cole, Peggy Lee, and Rosemary Clooney, a new type of church music called “Contemporary Christian Music” was growing. It is noteworthy that while record labels such as Motown and Stax were specifically geared toward African Americans, Light Records and Lexicon Music publishing, founded by a Caucasian, became the label for an important early CCM pioneer, African American gospel artist Andre Crouch.¹

In the music industry for over the past 45-plus years, the acronym CCM has been used to refer to the genre of Contemporary Christian Music, which is a subset of commercial music. It may be useful to interject a comment at this point in regard to acronyms, specifically the use of “CCM.” Any acronym may be used for more than one purpose and can have different meanings. For instance, in the classical realm the acronym CCM most often refers to the University of Cincinnati’s College-Conservatory of Music! Popular or commercial music is currently often referred to as “CCM” (Contemporary Commercial Music). It is interesting to note that popular or commercial music programs have been in existence since the 1970s and were/are often referred to as “CM” (commercial music) programs.²

A survey study by the Sound Singing Institute elicited a total of 252 commercial music degree programs nationally² and 156 degree programs internationally.^{2,3} In this study, the nomenclature used for the degrees was examined. The first category of degree titles was defined by those that feature the term “commercial” in any position, of

Figure 1: Degree Title Categories

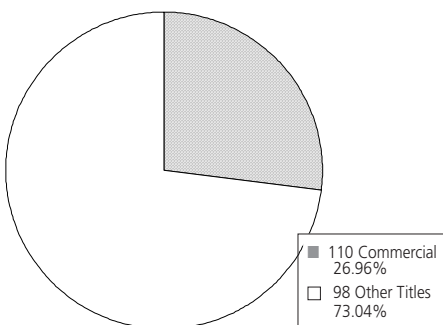
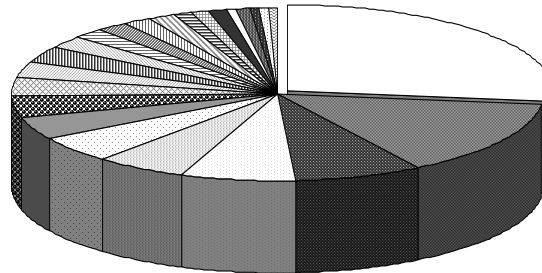


Figure 2: Degree Title Category/Divisions



which there were 110 (26.96%). The remainder of degree titles totaled 298 or 73.04% (see Figure 1). Furthermore, these remaining 298 titles elicited 23 separate categories based on common language such as “management,” “jazz,” or “composition.” There were seventeen titles that did not fit neatly into any of the separate categories based on common language. These were compiled into a miscellaneous category (see Figure 2).

The Contemporary Christian Music magazine *CCM*, first published in 1978 (and relaunched in 2009 as a quarterly, online publication), is devoted specifically to this genre of music.⁴ *CCM* also launched the social networking site “MyCCM” in 2006.⁵ Interestingly, while *CCM* magazine still uses this acronym, as of May 1, 2007 they redefined it to stand for “Christ Community Music” with the desire that the new definition be more inclusive of many genres of Christian worldview music.⁶ Indeed, CCM—a subset of “commercial music”—encompasses many styles and definitions.

Today in the world of church music there is much debate about the role of CCM in churches and who does and does not sing along in the service. That discussion, however—which has gotten a lot of visual time in social media such as Facebook—is for another time. Some consider anything other than “high church” music to be “contemporary,” while others consider only current music contemporary. CCM ranges from rock to pop, R&B, gospel, Motown, Latin, and beyond.

Communities representative of this eclectic mix range from house plant churches (Vineyard Fellowship) to arena-style “mega-churches” that seat approximately 16,000 each service (Lakewood). Two churches that have brought contemporary music to the forefront are the Brooklyn Tabernacle and Houston’s Lakewood Church (choir roster of approximately 650 members). Cindy Cruse Ratcliff, Lakewood’s Senior Worship Leader, defines their style of contemporary music as “diverse and eclectic.”⁷ She notes that the music often changes style within a song. A good example of a mixed style would be “Gloria” from

Commercial	26.96%
Technology	14.22%
Business	7.84%
Music Industry	6.86%
Production	5.64%
Performance	4.90%
Misc	4.17%
Popular Music	4.17%
Contemporary	3.19%
Engineer	3.19%
Entertainment	2.94%
Management	2.21%
Jazz	1.96%
Media	1.96%
Composition/Songwriting	1.72%
Music (stand alone)	1.72%
Electronic	1.23%
Music Practice	0.98%
Professional	0.98%
Merchandising	0.74%
Modern Music	0.74%
Studio Music	0.74%
Music Synthesis	0.49%
Musical Theater	0.49%

Lakewood’s CD *We Speak to Nations* (2002). This has a Latin *salsa* feel but also incorporates the traditional “Gloria” from the carol “Angels We Have Heard on High.”⁸



Lakewood Church, Houston TX, Main Sanctuary Platform.

The CCM artist is in a very demanding and often high-profile field. The level of expectation and output is high and a “gold medal status” is anticipated. There is also a high level of visibility, job expectation, and stress to go along with it. The CCM artist often wears multiple hats. These may include the roles of worship leader, singer/songwriter, and/or recording artist. The worship leader often leads praise and worship at multiple services onsite as well as at offsite events as diverse as Madison Square Garden or Hillsong Australia.

As a singer/songwriter, the worship leader may write for church or solo-related projects. Touring for personal ministry events may also occur. A sample "laundry list" schedule of a CCM worship leader from Tuesday through Sunday: meetings; song list creation; rehearsal with the band, worship team, and choir rehearsal; creating lyric sheets and CDs with GarageBand for singers to pick up; leading mid-week services (including sound checks); staff meetings; out-of-town events (including travel); leading Saturday evening services (including sound checks); leading Sunday morning services (including sound checks); "meet and greet" between services; and the Sirius "live stream" post-services. This does not even include songwriting or recording nor family responsibilities. And this wide range of activities necessitates keeping the vocal "systems balance" well aligned.

The act of singing can be compared to being on a teeter-totter or see-saw: one person sitting on the ground seat pushes with his legs and is propelled into the air, while the opposite seat that was in the air hits the ground. Keeping the teeter-totter parallel to the ground requires a "balancing act."⁹ The shifting of power action in the teeter-totter provides an analogy to singing. At different times one muscle or muscle group is more active than another and a "power shift" takes place. Sometimes the shift is gradual and sometimes abrupt. The complex systems for sound production that interact and must be balanced are respiration (power source), phonation (the vocal folds = raw sound source/pitch source), and resonance (the supraglottic vocal tract = the quality shaper). Questions to keep in mind regarding balancing the vocal system are: (1) where does the work occur?; (2) what does the work?; and (3) how much work has to happen?⁹

Another concept that warrants examination concerning vocal health is the understanding that each person is comprised of body, mind and spirit. One can put into practice all of the appropriate exercises but the psyche can either hinder or help forward progress. When someone sings, all aspects of the persona are entwined. Our singing voice is our body mind and spirit. We cannot separate the influences of these elements.¹⁰

Training and preparation for the CCM field is wide and varied. CCM specialists come from a variety of different backgrounds. Noted CCM pioneer Bill Gaither, for example, was an English major in college even though he was already an accomplished pianist busy within the field of CCM.¹¹ Typical routes may include the following: (1) industry "on the job training" (e.g. Bill Gaither¹¹; Anointed—Steve Crawford¹² and Da'dra Crawford Greathouse¹³); (2) life experience: growing up as part of a touring family (i.e. the Cruse Family—Cindy Cruse Ratcliff¹⁴); (3) a religious-affiliated university such as Belmont, Liberty, or Baylor (to mention only a few); (4) institutes such as Cruse Institute of the Arts¹⁵ (fully

accredited and founded by Joe and Becky Cruse in 2001, becoming an online training program in 2011) and CanZion Institute (founded by Marcos Witt¹⁶ in 1994 dedicated to the preparation of worship leaders and music ministers). These programs range greatly in terms of content and preparation.

Some programs include: history of music, ministerial training, ear training, warm-ups, choir ensemble participation, how to work with praise team parts, and software training (such as GarageBand). However, there is often no vocal pedagogy component, nor are there many courses that teach a general understanding of the vocal instrument or vocal health. Voice balancing is key for vocal health with this amount of voice loading and overall stress.

Our subsequent article, *The SVS and Contemporary Christian Music – Part II*, will outline voice balancing exercises beneficial for the Contemporary Christian Singer.

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[The complete Commercial Music study with Excel spread sheet is available at the Sound Singing Institute. email: drsharon@soundsinging.com or phone (713) 960-1648]



Sharon L. Radionoff, PhD, is *Singing Voice Specialist and Director of the Sound Singing Institute and Singing Voice Specialist/Voice Technologist voice care team member at the Texas Voice Center in Houston*. Dr. Radionoff is an active clinician, lecturer, researcher, and author. Her most recent project, entitled "Where Does My Voice Come From?" has been released in DVD format from a live, filmed vocal health presentation.

Book projects include: *The Vocal Instrument (Plural Publishing)* and *Faith and Voice (Inkwater books)*. Further articles by Dr. Radionoff can be found in *Texas Sings!*, *The Journal of the Association of Anglican Musicians*, and as chapters in several books. She serves on the editorial board of *The Journal of Voice* and is a member of *TVF, CMS, NAFME, TMEA, and NATS*.

Dr. Radionoff earned the BME from Eastern Michigan University, the MM from Southern Methodist University, and a PhD from Michigan State University. She also completed a Professional Fellowship at the American Institute for Voice and Ear Research Center in Philadelphia under Dr. Robert T. Sataloff. Dr. Radionoff may be contacted at the Sound Singing Institute by phone (713) 960-1648, fax (713) 521-1674, or e-mail: DrSharon@SoundSinging.com. Log on to the website www.SoundSinging.com for further information.

BOOK Review: Daniel James Shigo: *Hidden in Plain Sight: The Hermann Klein Phono-Vocal Method Based upon the Famous School of Manuel García*

by Stephen F. Austin, PhD

Daniel James Shigo unearths an all-but-forgotten gem in the history of vocal pedagogy in *Hidden in Plain Sight*. This modest book is a reproduction of a vocal method written in 1915 by music critic and voice teacher, Mr. Hermann Klein. Klein was a significant character in music criticism in the early part of the twentieth century. He was a prolific author, writing about music and singers in particular during the last part of the nineteenth century and the early decades of the twentieth. He was a former student of the great master Manuel García II, having studied with him as a young man in England when García moved there from France and lived in the Klein household. Shigo's introduction to *Hidden in Plain Sight* relates the curious story of Klein's failed efforts to use the new technology of acoustic recordings to present audio examples of the important exercises contained in the text.

This is much more than just a piece of singing archeology. Klein understood well the Italian system of training called *bel canto*. He wrote about it brilliantly in a little book called *The Bel Canto* in 1923 where he described the technique of those who first sang the vocal music of Mozart as it had

been passed down through the decades. Here Klein organizes his knowledge into a method of his own: one that reflects the same progressive method that was used throughout the nineteenth century to train the leading voices of the day. Klein des-

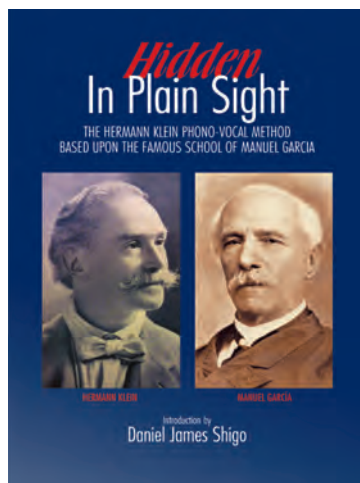


Daniel James Shigo

cribed the purpose of the book in his introductory chapter in this way:

"These explanatory instructions are not put forward as containing anything new, for in connection with this great art there is really nothing new to be said. But it may be that they are superior to many far more extensive and elaborate books on singing in that they are simple, concise, and, as I have already said, free from superfluous technicalities."

It is exactly this that makes the presentation of this method so important for today's reader. It takes the art of teaching back to foundational elements of voice training: no acoustic analysis, airflow studies, no closed quotients—only simple concepts and effective exercises that are tried and true, developed through decades of trial and error and proven over scores of years in studios all over the world. Would that our voice teaching profession would take heed and return to simple things



as presented in this little book: breath, onset, vowel, resonance, registers, enunciation, phrasing, and expression. Our art would benefit from looking to our past. Daniel James Shigo gives us a wonderful opportunity to do exactly that.

Stephen F. Austin is Professor of Voice at the University of North Texas, where he teaches applied voice and vocal pedagogy. Dr. Austin received the MM degree in vocal performance from UNT and continued his studies at the University of Iowa, where he earned the PhD in voice science from the Department of Communication Disorders under the direction of Dr. Ingo Titze. His unique training in performance and voice science has placed him at the forefront of interdisciplinary work in vocal pedagogy.



Dr. Austin is an active performer, published author, and a popular lecturer in vocal pedagogy and voice science. He has presented recitals, lectures, and master classes across this country and abroad. He is regularly featured on the faculty of the "Annual Symposium: Care of the Professional Voice" sponsored by the Voice Foundation, and has made presentations to the national conventions of ASHA, the Music Teachers National Association, and to NATS. He has offered lectures and master classes at national and international conferences and workshops including the Westminster Choir College Summer Workshop, the international meeting of the Physiology and Acoustics of Singing Conference, the NATS mid-winter workshops, and recently the Pan European Voice Conference held in London. He has also appeared as special guest for NYSTA. His articles have been published in *Australian Voice* and the *Journal of Singing*. His scientific research has focused on the articulatory behavior of classically trained singers and has been published in the *Journal of Voice*. He is a member of the editorial board of the *Journal of Singing* and serves on the Voice Science Advisory Committee of NATS. A successful teacher, he has students singing professionally in this country and in Europe.

BOOK Review: Karen Tillotson Bauer: *The Essentials of Beautiful Singing: A Three-Step Kinesthetic Approach*

by Ian Howell, MMus

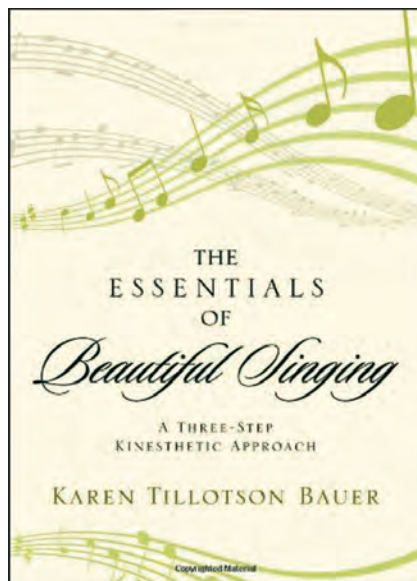
Karen Tillotson Bauer's *The Essentials of Beautiful Singing: A Three-Step Kinesthetic Approach* (Scarecrow Press, 2013) is a different kind of vocal pedagogy book. From the beginning she writes that this book is about *doing*—rather than abstractly thinking about or comprehensively understanding—singing. She holds to this from beginning to end, returns again and again to her three-step approach, and tucks every new concept and technical competency into a simple, easily applied, hierarchical system. Voice science, physiology, and acoustics are incorporated and pre-

sented in the manner in which Bauer comprehends them and finds them relevant to her approach. An expert in any one of these fields may take issue with the occasional suspect claim; however, Bauer's purposeful appropriations are "right," within her cohesive and apparently effective system of vocal training, avoid details of dubious practical use to the student, and keep the book (written in a conversational, yet taut style) to a quickly digestible 142 pages.

Neither a reference for targeting specific vocal issues, nor a historically grounded discussion of the



Karen Tillotson Bauer



bel canto tradition, *The Essentials of Beautiful Singing* flows much like a voice lesson. Bauer presents her fundamental concepts (open body, open throat, forward articulation—abbreviated as “OOF” throughout) in a methodical and progressive manner. Taken together, OOF presents a convincing snapshot of what the body should *feel like* while singing well. This will appeal to both students and teachers aware of fundamental technical issues but unsure where to start the corrections. Her focus on this kinesthetic approach permeates the text.

For Bauer, beautiful singing flows from the correct use of the body; she continually grounds her exercises in her OOF framework. Her approach is deeply functional, much in the spirit of Cornelius Reid (1911–2008). She prescribes that both men and women first strengthen the chest and head voices independently, without attempting to blend the registers. Later she integrates them through registration exercises that utilize both vowel closing and opening, and dynamic shading to elicit specific, balanced responses at predictable registration pitch points. Resonance is presented as arising from effortless action—with echoes of W. Stephen Smith—and both vowels and consonants are evaluated for their capacity to continually enrich the quality and carrying power of the voice.

For a book that never once uses the terms “vibrato,” “onset,” or “portamento,” and does not present the word “legato” until page 90, the exercises presented do a remarkably good job of tricking the body into producing a balanced, rich, connected, clear, and vibrant *bel canto* sound. This is perhaps the magic of Bauer’s approach: by eschewing the details of what one sings with (e.g. the diaphragm is the only breathing muscle mentioned by name), she has time to linger on how to feel one’s way through using the muscles involved correctly, with only the rare excursion into

metaphor and imagery. As mentioned above, this book reads like one long voice lesson, albeit with direct insight into the thought process of a clearly experienced, no-nonsense teacher. Specifics are left out until they are necessary and can be productively incorporated into the student’s process. Many readers will raise an eyebrow (I certainly raised a few) only to have their concern addressed in a timely manner a few paragraphs down, or in one of the numerous “traps” sidebars that lay out the dangers of a given exercise. By the end of this short book, breathing for singing, functional vocal training, registration, ideal timbre, articulation, the *messa di voce*, range building, *coloratura*, and *legato* in the context of musical expressivity are addressed through targeted exercises.

The manner in which Bauer presents *legato* is particularly welcome and addresses a fundamental issue I hear in almost all young singers: the inability to sing unstressed syllables “on the voice.” The process that gives rise to a successful execution of each exercise is described in detail and placed within the hierarchical OOF framework. Perhaps the best endorsement I can offer is that in a short time my own singing voice benefited from evaluating the exercises in the manner and order suggested.

This is not a book for thumbing through and dipping into exercises; one would not “dip” into a lesson and expect to build a usable technique. Though a short read, one must read from front to back and mindfully apply Bauer’s approach to benefit. Certain nonspecific, potentially confusing terms—“lift” of the body, for example—are defined early and used throughout. Bauer suggests that this book is appropriate for students at all levels of development, with or without the help of a teacher (though best used with a sympathetic teacher). I agree and disagree with this assessment. Without the guiding ear of a good teacher (or perhaps the voice of experience in the head of an advanced student), points of confusion will arise—perhaps most notably in the use of the terms “head voice” and “chest voice” to denote both vocal fold mass management above and below the primary register transition and the resonance and timbre qualities that we take from each to incorporate into the other as registration becomes more even. In a more coordinated voice though, simply doing the exercises (with the indicated vowels and dynamics) obviates the need to choose how to register the voice; perhaps unsurprisingly (given how well the rest of Bauer’s approach functions in practice) the correct registration just happens without the need to attach a specific label.

Whether this would work in a complete beginner’s voice or not, and whether a beginner would have the patience to work diligently through each chapter before moving on to the next, would directly affect the efficacy of Bauer’s method. Additionally, her description of jaw opening as pitch ascends could be taken to an unhealthy

extreme without guidance.

Within an academic setting one would not necessarily use this book as the sole text for the only vocal pedagogy class that a student might take. However, I believe that *The Essentials of Beautiful Singing* deserves a space on the shelf of any serious voice teacher in training if for no other reason than the promising ratio of brevity to effectiveness. By resisting the urge to be comprehensive, Bauer’s book accomplishes something that standard vocal pedagogy texts often do not: it allows the reader to step into the mind of a teacher who is not only interested in healthfully produced, repeatable results, but also the most simple version of the dependable process that gives rise to those results. In my experience, this—a process that allows them to sing well when they leave the studio—is what students most desire to take away from their voice lessons. If I could make one suggestion, I would like a separate workbook—or appendix—with only the exercises, devoid of descriptions and commentary. This would be helpful for the student who has internalized Bauer’s process and simply wants to work.

Praised by the New York Daily News for his “rich voice, capable of great dramatic force,” and San Francisco Classical Voice for the “heart at the core of his soulful sound,” Ian Howell sings with a warm and seamless tone rarely heard from countertenors. In 2006, Mr. Howell won First Prize at The American Bach Soloists International Solo Competition and Third Prize at the Oratorio Society of New York’s vocal competition. His debut solo CD, 1685 and the Art of Ian Howell with The American Bach Soloists was released in March 2009.



From 2000–2004, Mr. Howell performed and recorded with the Grammy award-winning ensemble Chanticleer. He regularly sings with the finest North American baroque orchestras, and is particularly sought out for his expertise in the music of Bach and Handel.

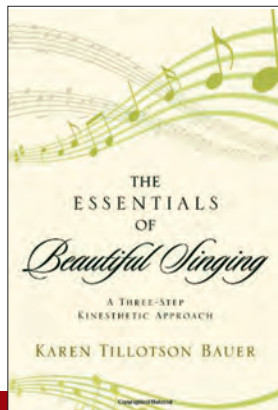
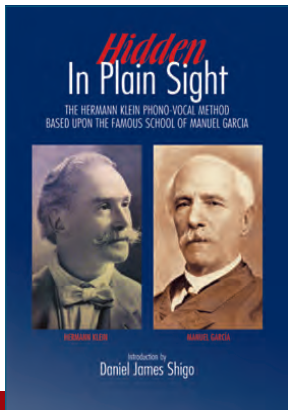
Mr. Howell has taught at Yale, Swarthmore, and Rutgers Camden, and was a 2013 NATS Teaching Intern. He is currently a member of the voice faculty at the New England Conservatory of Music where he serves as Vocal Pedagogy Director, and recently joined the BOD of the Boston chapter of NATS. He was the founding editor of TheCounterTenorVoice.com, an online journal covering career and technique issues for singers. Mr. Howell holds the MMus degree from Yale University and is a candidate for the DMA degree at the New England Conservatory. His research focuses on practical applications of psychoacoustic principles and timbre perception in the voice teaching studio.

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