

# VOICEPrints

JOURNAL OF THE NEW YORK SINGING TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

**NOVEMBER–DECEMBER 2015**

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## HOLIDAY EVENT & RECEPTION

"Beyond the BA—Now What? 101," with Ethan Paulini & Tony Howell  
Hosted by Lindsay Rider

**December 6, 2015** Sunday, 5:30–8:00 PM EST.

Penthouse 1, Shetler Studios, 244 West 54<sup>th</sup> Street #12, New York City

This year's annual holiday party will feature television, stage, and screen actor Ethan Paulini conversing with digital marketing director Tony Howell and the audience about the challenges of succeeding as a professional performer in today's complex entertainment market. NYSTA board member Lindsay Rider will moderate. This is a must-attend event for any aspiring performer or teacher of singing actors.



**Ethan Paulini** is an actor, director, writer, acting/career coach with extensive NY, national tour and regional theater credits as well as television, feature film, commercial and voice over work. Directing credits include *Passing Strange*, *The Full Monty*, *Working*, *Speech and Debate*, *Really Rosie*, and *The Music Man*. He has taught at such organizations as HJT, Arts Center of Coastal Carolina, Arkansas Rep, and OBU. As a private coach Paulini currently has a roster of over 75 clients ranging in age from 8 to 70. His private clients have booked major work including Broadway and recurring

television and feature film contracts. His show *Mama and Her Boys* has been performed over 500 times all over the East Coast, including an 18-month Off Broadway run. He also co-wrote the critically acclaimed shows *Gaylebrity* and *Sajous So Far*. He can be heard on Lisa Howard's debut album *Songs of Innocence and Experience*. Member of Actors Equity Association, SAG-AFTRA, and Society of Directors and Choreographers. [www.ethanpaulini.com](http://www.ethanpaulini.com).



After several years at Music Theatre International, **Tony Howell** founded Creative Social Media to help actors create their own opportunities, audiences, and sustainable success." In just two years, CSM has helped artists in more than eight countries and has been featured by Google, Actors' Equity Association, Broadway Dance Center, and more. Howell and his team are all about finding an online presence that works for you—not just your comfort zone, but creating 24/7/365 results.



NYSTA Board Member **Lindsay Rider** has been praised as a "stand out...show stopper" (*Broadway World*). This season she was seen at Joe's Pub, creating and producing a benefit concert for Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS; at 54 Below, Rockwood Music Hall, The Cutting Room, Toshi's Living Room, and with Encompass Opera. Last season she premiered her one-woman show *Uncharted* at the Triad Theatre in NYC. Other roles include Petra in *A Little Night Music* with Michigan Opera Theatre (debut); Valentina in John Musto's New York Premiere of *Later The Same Evening*; and Greta Fiorentino in *Street Scene*. Rider can be heard on the recent CD release of Michael Mott's *Where the Sky Ends* and *Where the Sky Ends Remix* Albums (Broadway Records); on Fox's Season 11 of "American Idol;" and as a soloist for the Philadelphia Phillies. She has served as Assistant Director for the Manhattan School of Music's Musical Theater Program, has taught at the Broadway Dance Center and maintains a private studio. Member of AGMA/AEA. [www.lindsayrider.com](http://www.lindsayrider.com)



## On Demand Learning

Study 24/7 at your convenience. Start any time and receive four full months of access.

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## VOCAL ACOUSTICS & RESONANCE



On Demand with Dr. Scott McCoy

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Using *Your Voice: An Inside View*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, as the accompanying text, this course is an exceptional resource, providing useful tools for both emerging and established voice professionals.

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For more information, contact NYSTA's Professional Development Program Director Felicity Graham at [pdpdirector@nyst.org](mailto:pdpdirector@nyst.org).

## MESSAGE FROM THE *President*



### There's More to a Career Than the Repertoire

Keeping up with the changing roles of a voice teacher is a never-ending task for us all. We offer technical help, stylistic assistance, diction correction, age-appropriate (and talent-appropriate) repertoire, translation advice, and vocal health tips. We mention great singers as examples to listen to, proffer historical perspectives on our art, and everything in between.

We are frequently mentors, models, acting coaches, (psychiatrists!), and confidants. As we gradually acquire more teaching experience, we may need to offer career guidance to our singers: which auditions should the student seriously attempt, what competitions to enter (if any), what graduate schools or summer festivals to apply to, what roles to stay away from and which to attempt, which photographer to go to for head shots, how to put together a resume or CV, and—most important—how to balance one's personal and professional life.

But the hardest task of all, and one I certainly feel least equipped or qualified to undertake, is helping a singer of any age “crack” the barriers that keep him or her from launching a professional career—no matter what type of music s/he loves to perform. There are things I need to know that I don't, and for which virtually no program or school prepares singers/singing actors/musicians: projecting an artistic persona, finding jobs or auditions, or creating an authentic “buzz” about one's career, usually via social media.

Full disclosure here: I don't do Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Tumblr, Buzznet, Laffango, Foursquare, Instagram, Flickr, Shutterfly, Snapfish, Vimeo, you name it. Don't look for me, I'm not there. Occasionally I will search for something on YouTube or look up a restaurant review on Yelp, and admittedly I Google, Bing, Yahoo, and Siri all the time, but that's my limit. I don't text (*I am proud of that, actually!*), and I don't have a personal website. By most measures, I am an old fuddy-duddy, a Luddite, hopelessly behind the times and out of touch—and oddly proud of that designation. I'd rather be in front of a piece of music than the computer screen. But I'll bet I'm not the only one in denial here...

Our students, certainly the younger ones, know most of these sites. They use them almost daily, if not on a professional basis, then certainly on a personal one. So just maybe we should pull our heads out of the sand and have a look around at this new world. If we can suggest a way for our students, no matter the age, to tap a professional opportunity via Facebook, to legitimately bump their career up a notch via LinkedIn, to market themselves to a larger audience on Tumblr, even find an audience that they didn't know existed for their art, don't we owe it to their careers to find out how to do so? If we don't know who or what to recommend, at least we should be able to refer students to those who have that expertise. But where would someone begin to find reputable

people with the best information and ideas?

With NYSTA! We are sponsoring our annual Holiday Event on December 6 at Shetler Studios. Our guests will be Ethan Paulini and Tony Howell, both well known to many in the NYC-based world and beyond. Full details and bios are available on our website. NYSTA Board member Lindsay Rider, a wonderful performer in her own right who was instrumental in organizing the event and who knows and suggested both guest speakers, will be there to facilitate the action. We believe this event (replete with beverage and food) has the potential to be a true career-changing event, an eye-opener for all concerned, and one that we hope teachers as well as their students will attend.

Ethan, Tony, Lindsay, and I met online in September to discuss the details of the December event. Intrigued by that discussion, I asked Ethan and Tony if I could interview them further. Both agreed, to my delight. Ethan was the subject of a long phone conversation and Tony answered a list of questions. What follows is a selection from the thoughts of both professionals.

#### Ethan Paulini

**JN:** Ethan, in your bio you describe yourself as an actor, director, writer acting/career coach. Which one of those words describes you best or constitutes the majority of what you do?



Ethan Paulini

**EP:** It's funny—that evolved. I guess up until a few years ago being an actor was my main focus, but now that the (career) coaching has taken off, I don't pursue acting opportunities in the same way as I do coaching and teaching.

Directing has been born out of that, so coaching/teaching and directing are the main focus. Coaching and teaching go hand in hand for me.

**JN:** Was there any particular event that caused your coaching to break off and become a larger part of your life?

**EP:** Coaching was born out of one particular person. I had a friend who, for a four-year stretch, had gone from Broadway show to Broadway show and never had the unemployment blues until the fifth Broadway show posted its closing notice. This was something she hadn't experienced. She came to me as a friend and said, “What do I do now?” I spent about an hour with her, and told her she had to do thus-and-such, get these materials up and running, reach out to these people, get her ducks in a row. At the end of the hour, she said, “You just coached me for an hour. I have to pay you.”

So I started a pilot program and it grew. My business acumen lends itself to the career coach-

ing, and as people would come to me looking for help with other things, [such as] finding audition material, finding monologues, coaching songs, coaching monologues, things took off.

I coached a talented young man who got a job on the national tour of *The Book of Mormon*. When he got out on that tour, people asked him, “You're 21 years old. How did you get this job?” He mentioned my name, resulting in a dozen different clients that are on the two different road companies of that show. It was a series of events.

And finally, I have a relationship with Arkansas Repertory Theatre—they have a training program called SMTI. Their students become understudies for the main stage and often move to New York, and they become clients. I have over 90 clients. I do 20 sessions a week and just getting a session is becoming competitive. I am grateful!

**JN:** Do you work mostly with actors or singers or both?

**EP:** I work mostly with musical theater performers; the vast majority are pursuing Broadway opportunities or have achieved Broadway opportunities and want to get out of the chorus or branch out into TV or film. Every one of them has some degree of singing ability—very few are straight actors. I do have straight singers looking to do backup on recordings, book themselves into music venues, things of that nature.

**JN:** What qualities go into a successful MT performer these days? What do they need to do or be?

**EP:** They need to be themselves; it sounds cliché but that's what people behind the table are looking for. There are too many talented artists in NYC that are capable of presenting the material, but what tips the scales is being able to show a bit of your vulnerable side. People forget this is a process-driven industry, not a product-driven industry. Those who are looking to give you opportunities are looking for you to be willing to go on the ride with them. People are afraid to show themselves [in auditions]; this isn't an exact science, there is no right or wrong. The more you bring to it of yourself, the more intriguing it can become.

**JN:** Is there anything that is omitted or neglected in the training of young MT performers?

**EP:** The business of show business. It's one thing to have skills, it's another to figure out how to make the most impact with those skills. Those with business savvy and maybe without the greatest talent end up taking opportunities away from those who have wonderful talent. I call my business You, Inc. As any kind of performing artist, you are selling yourself.

**JN:** Are there any common mistakes or assumptions that performers make?

**EP:** What I see a lot of is a sense of rushing through the audition. The people listening (to your audition) are not rooting for you to fail; they are hoping you make their job more interesting by

giving them an option. [Auditioners] often skip that really important “beat” at the beginning that makes it clear whom they’re talking to and what they’re talking about. At the end, they throw it away, say thank you, and rush out instead of letting their last emotion or impulse live in the room. They think they’re wasting the listener’s time and they aren’t. Take the time that is allotted and make the most of it. We want to see the contrast between the character you’re portraying and the person who walked into the room.

**JN:** Would you say you want to put a “frame” around your audition, so that you present the picture of you as the performer in that role clearly?

**EP:** Absolutely. You want an element of surprise; come in and be yourself but also show your character, full of what you bring to it (that’s special).

**JN:** Are there any mistakes that teachers of performers make? Things they neglect that they shouldn’t?

**EP:** They neglect the idea of letting the artist bring part of himself to the performance. Of course, technically we want to get what the composer intended, but also there is the opportunity for an idea to present itself that’s new. Great classical material can be interpreted and reinterpreted. It’s art—there isn’t a right or wrong. Allow the individual to shine and put his own stamp on it.

**JN:** What do you like to see in auditions?

**EP:** Someone having fun, enjoying what they’re doing, a sense of authenticity. You can smell desperation or a put-upon demeanor a mile away. It’s impossible to hide; you have to be yourself.

**JN:** What drives you nuts at auditions?

**EP:** I see people admonish or blame the accompanist on so many occasions. It happens multiple times in a day!

**JN:** What specifically should an MT performer do to be ready to enter the profession?

**EP:** Have all your resources firing. You have to have material that shows you off well and is well prepared in multiple styles and genres. [You have to have] monologues. Think about what you have up on the web already (nothing less than professional) and what image you are presenting to the world.

**JN:** When I know that my students are going to do a monologue, I will ask to hear it to see if I can help with their technique of breathing, are they rushing through phrases, are they inflecting, are they pausing where they could be, do they have a clear character in mind, are they speaking resonantly. Is that something that a voice teacher who feels capable of doing should do or should we just stay out of it?

**EP:** Text is music. There’s rhythm and breathing and pitch and character. It takes a village sometimes to put things together. If you have a relationship with people who are there to guide you, by all means take advantage of the help you can get.

**JN:** If someone wanted to emulate your career path, what should s/he be sure to learn? What would you recommend?

**EP:** My path was pretty unique. The most important thing is to be curious. Have a conversation with the lighting director, the designer, the director.

In most cases, people want to share their process. Just asking provided me with information so that I understood every aspect of theater and which aspects I could bring my skill set to or enhance.

**JN:** If you could change anything about your career or the musical theater world, what would it be and why?

**EP:** Nothing yet about my career—I feel like there’s more to happen there. In terms of the MT world, the embracing of new ideas. Musical theater has a pop influence now and that makes it hard for individual ideas to take hold. There’s room for everyone and all ideas should be included. Broadway shows are taking on a theme park quality and a more ambitious project has a hard time finding an audience. Like *The Visit* (nominated for a Tony Award and now on tour in China): I couldn’t get enough of it.

**JN:** What do you offer today’s performer in the musical theater *genre* that’s crucial to his or her development?

**EP:** I empower them to celebrate the smaller milestones on their way to the bigger milestones they will achieve. They need perspective; on the way to the big win, you need to celebrate the small goals.

### Tony Howell

**JN:** Tony, what activities should a voice teacher be urging his/her students to engage in to promote their beginning careers (assuming they have the requisite talent and determination)?

**TH:** I’d recommend singers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century keep an active (but strategic) online presence. With the tools available, I also think it’s smart for singers to create and release their own EPs! [electronic profiles].

Marketing (professional photos, video, audio, website, social media platforms, etc.) should really come before networking (growing fans and followers as well as connecting with VIPs). I always say “first build the house... then have the housewarming!” While it can take lots of time, money and energy, investing in digital marketing that showcases you 24/7 is a solid investment for burgeoning artists.

**JN:** Are there omissions in training for young artists that you commonly encounter? Courses or common sense or experiences that greatly impact their ability to function in the real world?

**TH:** Traditional training programs cover what’s most important: the craft. However, what’s often missing are the business/marketing/money/life skills needed to survive a lifetime in the arts. I think it’d be smart for training programs to help students prepare in these areas. It’s not only about the transition into the professional world, but how to weather fame, famine, and perceived moments of failure.

**JN:** How should a teacher go about advising a young artist to fill in those gaps? Can/should this “gap-filler” be supplied by the teacher? If not,

how does one choose a competent person to advise the singer?

**TH:** Students have different needs, and teachers have different areas of expertise. I think it’d be smart of your teachers to host a series of master classes or guest workshops. Not only does this help the students grow, but it will also help the teacher grow in a few ways! For example, these special workshops could be free live seminars or online webinars.

**JN:** Are there common mistakes you find young artists making that can be avoided?

**TH:** Young artists don’t realize that they’re always auditioning—from how they walk out their front door to how they conduct themselves in rehearsals, long runs, travel days, etc. Online, everything they post can also help or hurt them. I’m tired of seeing artists sabotage themselves with terrible DIY websites, no real video content, or damaging social media posts. These things matter. Share your best and truest self consistently.

**JN:** Should a teacher become involved with a young artist’s “extra-musical presence” (meaning social media) or should s/he steer clear?

**TH:** Social media is so personal and subjective. You run the risk of damaging a relationship if you offer unsolicited opinions. I’d encourage the teacher to share tips with the group—perhaps in the studio’s Facebook group or email newsletter—and put it on the student(s) to adapt the advice. Obviously, I’m happy to be the source for these weekly tips and advice! If the student relationship is special, you could certainly be direct. Just err on the side of caution.

**JN:** At what point is a teacher’s advice, no matter how well meant, detrimental to the young artist? And conversely, is there a way in which the teacher can be involved in a positive way that will not impinge on the young singer’s artistic integrity?

**TH:** I think every artist has been traumatized by something their parents or teachers have said along their path. We’re fragile creatures developing our voices and identity. I’ve always found the best way to learn is a combination of knowledge, experience, and following the leader(s). I’d focus on all three—giving your students the tools, opportunities and examples. I’d certainly encourage the teacher to lead by example (in all areas), but also be able to point out other role models and industry icons for the students to model.

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I want to thank Ethan and Tony for the generous contribution of their time and thoughts. I hope this article has inspired you to attend on December 6 and meet both men in person. Bring your studio along. Social media and the Internet are here to stay.

Incidentally, NYSTA is going to hash tag Twitter for the entire December 6 event. Now that I know what a hash tag is, maybe I’m not such a Luddite after all!

May your pharynx always be moist.

*Judith Nicoria*

President  
president@nysta.org



Tony Howell

MESSAGE FROM THE *Editor*

Dear Colleagues,

Happy Holidays to all of you from all of us at NYSTA! With the holidays coinciding with a robust array of performances of all kinds, November and December always seem to be two of the busiest months of the year.

One of NYSTA's favorite annual events is its Holiday Reception. This year, the special guests will be Ethan Paulini and Tony Howell, two accomplished professionals who will provide indispensable advice for young performers.

The years following graduation from a BFA or MM program can be frightening ones for singers in their twenties, and Ethan and Tony will draw upon their years of experience to help these individuals navigate the treacherous waters of the perfor-

mance world. The event will be held at Shetler studios and will be moderated by NYSTA board member Lindsay Rider. NYSTA President Judith Nicosia will also whet your whistle for this event via her engaging interview with Ethan and Tony, featured in this issue's President's Letter.

The November-December featured article is an introduction to Estill Voice Training by Dr. Kimberly Steinhauer, President of Estill Voice International. Although the work of Jo Estill (1921–2010) has had a significant impact on our profession, there have been few articles for the uninitiated that have clearly outlined her basic philosophies and ap-

proaches to singing. Dr. Steinhauer's article brings a clear and digestible introduction to Estill to the pages of *VOICEPrints* for the first time.

Finally, we hope that you will check out the many professional development opportunities that NYSTA is offering. Our Distinguished Voice Professional (DVP) list is ever-growing, and we encourage all of our members to take advantage of the five-course core curriculum, which is offered currently online in an easy-to-use "on demand" format.

As always, *VOICEPrints* is YOUR publication, so please send questions, comments, and suggestions for future articles to me at [voiceprints@nyst.org](mailto:voiceprints@nyst.org).

Sincerely,

*Matthew Hoch*

Editor-in-Chief, *VOICEPrints*

## NYSTACalendar 2015–2016

### HOLIDAY EVENT AND RECEPTION

"Beyond the BA—Now What? 101," with Ethan Paulini & Tony Howell

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### SIXTEEN-BAR CLINIC

**March 2016, TBA.**

*Ripley-Greer Studios, 520 Eighth Avenue, New York City*

Back by popular demand, twelve singers get to strut their stuff before a panel of industry experts who give candid and supportive advice often not offered in the audition setting. Distinguished panelists and a specific date for the clinic will be announced in a future issue of *VOICEPrints* and on the NYSTA website.

### CONCERT & BIRTHDAY TRIBUTE TO TOM CIPULLO

**April 17, 2016, Sunday, 2:00–4:00 PM EDT.** *Reception to follow.*

*Marc A. Scorca Hall, National Opera Center, 330 Seventh Avenue, New York City*

NYSTA is delighted to honor New York composer Tom Cipullo 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. Cipullo's works are performed regularly throughout the United States and with increasing frequency internationally. He has received multiple fellowships from Yaddo, the MacDowell Colony, and the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, and awards from the Liguria Study Center (Bogliasco, Italy), the Fundacion Valparaiso (Spain), the Oberpfaelzer Künstlerhaus (Bavaria), and ASCAP. *The New York Times* has called his music "intriguing and unconventional." Cipullo's acclaimed opera, *Glory Denied*, was premiered at Fort Worth Opera, recorded on Albany Records.



Tom Cipullo

### Professional Development Program Calendar 2015–2016

DATE—TIME	EVENT TYPE	TITLE—LOCATION
<b>2015</b>		
<b>November 11</b>	ON-DEMAND	Featured On-Demand Course: <b>Vocal Acoustics &amp; Resonance</b>
<b>2016</b>		
<b>January 13</b>	ON-DEMAND	Featured On-Demand Course: <b>Singers' Developmental Repertoire</b>
<b>January 31, 6 PM</b>	VIDEO CHAT	<i>Peaks that Pique Our Interest: Acoustical Differences between Music Genres</i> with Brian Gill, DMA, Certificate in Vocology—Online
<b>March 9</b>	ON-DEMAND	Featured On-Demand Course: <b>Vocal Health for Voice Professionals</b>
<b>April 3, 6 PM</b>	VIDEO CHAT	<i>Practical Guide for Working with Voice Disorders</i> with Kari Ragan, DMA—Online
<b>May 11</b>	ON-DEMAND	Featured On-Demand Course: <b>Comparative Pedagogy 2016</b>

### VOICEPrints

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## AN INTRODUCTION to *Estill Voice Training* by Kimberly Steinhauser, PhD, President of Estill Voice International



What is Estill Voice Training? At conferences, backstage, and on the street, I've often overheard that Estill: "is that Belting<sup>1</sup> thing;" "interferes with artistry because you have to manipulate your power, source, and filter;" "is for women only;" "is too hard for singers because you have to think about those muscles;" "was developed and researched by Jo Estill using her voice exclusively;" "teaches constriction;" "doesn't incorporate breathing;" and finally "Estill Voice Training is a magical cult."

I do secretly wish that great singing could be easily cast by our Estill wizards using a magic spell; but alas, I write this article to dispel the myths and clarify the principles of the revolutionary voice system founded by Jo Estill. A system based on research by Estill and the finest peer collaborators of her day, including Raymond Colton, Eiji Yanagisawa, Kiyoshi Honda, and Osamu Fujimura. A system developed by employing, or *wrangling*, the finest artists to step into her voice laboratories where she investigated many styles of singing to test her key hypotheses. A system utilized today by voice clinicians, performers, and pedagogues alike to help us speak and sing with controlled confidence and sensitive awareness. Jo Estill believed that everyone had a beautiful voice and her mission was to teach the world to sing. Estill Voice Training offers that world a new way to hear, feel, and see the voice that enhances historical and time-tested voice traditions. The purpose of this piece is to provide a scholarly framework of Estill Voice Training augmented by the words Jo Estill wrote in her manuscripts, books, and lectures.<sup>2</sup>

### Introduction

Voice motor control involves a complex relationship among anatomy, physiology, environment, and task that becomes more complicated when taken to the expert, athletic level—acting or singing. The number of voice qualities produced from the dynamic interactions among these systems is limitless, and inspires heated debate when voice professionals attempt to explain voice quality or singing. For example, *singing* can be anything from a Russian lament, an Anglican choir boy chant, an American country music ballad, to an African praise and worship song. If not careful, the aesthetic bias of the *definer* can greatly sway the forthcoming *definition*, and thus, the results of *scientific* research on voice quality.

Voice pedagogues have explained singing as a sustained vocalization powered by airflow via the respiratory system, converted to a sound source via oscillation of the two vocal folds, and filtered via resonant properties of the vocal tract. This simplistic representation works until the degrees of freedom (number of options) are factored in for each subsystem of voice. For example, the sound

generated by the vocal folds is dependent upon their length, tension, and mass. Usually, an increased mass of the vocal folds will increase the loudness of the voice quality. But there are several other options for increasing perceived loudness, including narrowing the aryepiglottic sphincter to add ring to the voice, or raising the velum to limit nasal resonance.

The Estill Voice Model has evolved over the past thirty years into a comprehensive system for evaluating, teaching, and producing voice qualities. The model was the first to address the daunting issue of degrees of freedom in voice motor control by isolating the *Craft* of voice production from the *Artistry* and *Performance Magic*. In the *Figures for Voice Control*<sup>3</sup> (specific training exercises to be discussed below in greater detail), thirteen anatomical structures were identified as integral to the production of voice quality. In other words, manipulating the options for each structure independently resulted in categorical changes in voice quality. In the early 1980s, Estill patterned the exercises for the *Compulsory Figures* after the training regimen of ice skaters, in which they moved their blades in various positions to create initial basic shapes that led to artistic masterpieces. With the *Figures for Voice Control*, the first level in the model, speakers and singers create specific sounds by moving each structure into one of two or three positions (degrees of freedom) for artistic vocal expression. In the next level, the *Figures* are combined to produce six basic voice qualities that Estill used as a framework for her research. This research for the Estill Voice Model began with multiple studies in which a single subject produced many repetitions of all vocalizations, as found in psychoacoustic paradigms. However, ensuing seminal publications documented these voice quality variations across many subjects and tasks.<sup>4</sup>

Jo Estill explained her process:

The voice quality of interest is the voice quality which remains after frequency changes, intensity changes, and vowel shifts are excluded. It is the voice quality that results from the manipulation of the larynx and the pharynx. It is the ambient quality of voice, the "ground" as we might say in music, that enveloping sound common to all vowels, and usually preset before any vowel is made. In water colors, it would be the basic wash of color, applied before any other detail or color is applied.

There are two possible methods for researching normal voice quality. One can record samples of voices around the world—by country, language, education, social class and emotional state—reduce them to types and then study those differences. This is a formidable task and would require years of time and an enormous amount of funding. Or one could

study a limited number of types, find the differences among them and begin to understand the world of differences in voicing.

In the early 1970s at Upstate Medical Center in Syracuse, we (Raymond Colton, David Brewer, and I) made the decision to study a limited number of voice qualities associated with different genres of music. The hypothesis was that in studying these few qualities so different from each other in sound, differences in physiology relative to differences in voice production would be found. Four qualities were chosen initially. These included Speech quality, also known as "modal" quality, and heard in the everyday speech of most newscasters and in the singing of popular songs; Sob quality, heard in the speech of those who mourn or in the classic singing of art songs or lullabies; Twang quality, in the speech of Texans or in country-western music; and Opera quality, heard in the stage speech of Shakespearean actors or in the "ringing" quality of singers on the operatic stage.<sup>5</sup>

Estill's initial research on four basic voice qualities informed her selection of structures manipulated in the Estill Voice Model today, and include true vocal folds, false vocal folds, aryepiglottic sphincter, velum, head & neck, torso, larynx, cricoid cartilage, thyroid cartilage, tongue, lips, and jaw. We do acknowledge that purely isolated movement of laryngeal structures is challenging; however, distinct and categorical perceptual changes are achieved when producing each option for each Figure as independently as possible.<sup>6</sup> In the Estill Voice Model, the production and teaching of each Figure is verified not only by auditory perceptual sound of the quality, but also by bodily kinesthetic perception of effort, visuo-perceptual acoustic feedback, and video-endoscopy (when available).

Estill showed that voice quality can be heard, felt, and seen. She applied principles of voice motor control and learning by developing Estill Voice Figures, exercises that train precise control of each structure, each option in isolation. The following operating principles highlight her method for modifying vocal behavior for speaking or singing performance.

### Estill Voice Training Operating Principles

1. Knowledge is power; understanding how the voice works is a good thing;
2. Voice production begins *before* the voice is heard; muscle effort makes it happen;
3. The breath must be allowed to respond to what it meets on the way out;
4. Voice training is optimized when separated into three disciplines: Craft, Artistry, and Performance Magic.

Jo Estill summarized it best:

Your voice production mechanism has parts like any other musical instrument, but it isn't only one instrument. It can be changed and shaped to perform like a number of different instruments—to sound like an oboe, a brilliant trumpet, an empty hollow flute—it's a whole orchestra in one package. Where can you buy an instrument like that so cheaply as this one that was given to you at birth?

So, what do you need to know to use this instrument? Easy.

1. You need to know the parts of the instrument you can control. There are three components and about thirteen structures you can learn to control independently.
2. You need to know the feeling that goes with moving each part into one of its two or three end positions. In a way, these parts could be compared to the keys on any other musical instrument. Every time you move one of them, you change the sound.
3. You need to know the changes in sound that occur when you move each of these parts into one of these two or three positions.

And you can learn all this by making all the noises you were told not to make when you were growing up—noises like talking, crying, whining, complaining, sobbing, and yelling.

Estill exploited these primal emotional sounds in her system to train singers. Although “vocal athlete” is a popular term today, it was used early in the 1980s when Estill was training voice via her model. Going to the voice gym daily for focused, deliberate practice of vocal exercises, or Figures, was and is common for those who study Estill Voice Training. The following summary of the Estill Voice Model highlights Level One: Figures for Voice Control. Although she often sang songs from *The Sound of Music*, Estill was more interested in “The Sound of Muscles.”

### The Estill Voice Model: Compulsory Figures for Voice Control

In the Estill Voice Model, the specific exercises designed to isolate voice quality variations according to anatomy and physiology are called Figures for Voice Control. Originally, the FVC were presented hierarchically according to their contributions to Power, Source, and Filter properties of voice motor control.<sup>7</sup> However, theories of Dynamical Systems<sup>8</sup> embrace voice motor control as more interactive and heterarchical than initially implied by the Source-Filter Theory. The FVC currently are organized by anatomical position of the thirteen structures and their relationship to the Support, Larynx, or Vocal Tract. Estill presents the options for each Figure categorically to maximally exploit the corresponding differences in voice quality. Of course, the changes attributed to the production of each Figure can be produced on a categorical or continuous scale. Finally, Estill intends that each option for each FVC be produced across the range for every pitch and every vowel.

### True Vocal Folds: Onset/Offset

The True Vocal Folds (TVF) can be controlled by

the delicate balance of intrinsic laryngeal muscles at the beginning and end of any tone.<sup>9</sup> The three TVF onset/offset options are GLOTTAL, ASPIRATE, and SMOOTH.

### False Vocal Folds

Highly controversial is Estill's inclusion of the False Vocal Folds (FVF) in the model. Estill, her colleagues, and other researchers observed independent control of the true and false vocal folds during various vocal functions.<sup>10</sup> The three options for FVF control are CONSTRICT, MID, and RETRACT.

### True Vocal Folds: Body-Cover

In the body-cover model of vocal fold vibration,<sup>11</sup> Hirano assigned a functional grouping to the complex morphology of the TVF layers that Estill integrated into this Figure. The complex relationship among TVF length, tension, and mass involved in producing pitch, quality, and intensity<sup>12</sup> was also incorporated into this Figure exploiting TVF. The four options for TVF: Body-Cover are THICK, THIN, STIFF, and SLACK.

### Thyroid Cartilage

The thyroid cartilage, as part of the larger laryngeal framework, is known to tilt forward with high pitches; yet, it can be tilted forward at any F0 (pitch) or be held constant within a vertical plane.<sup>13</sup> The two options for Thyroid Cartilage are VERTICAL and TILT, which can influence harmonics-to-noise ratio in the signal, thus influencing clarity of tone.

### Cricoid Cartilage

Another alternative for manipulating the cricothyroid space is via the Cricoid Cartilage Figure. TVF configurations will be affected by cricoid position because the arytenoids sit atop the cricoid lamina. The two options for Cricoid Cartilage are VERTICAL and TILT. Cricoid Tilt is observed often in video-endoscopy of the belt voice quality.<sup>14</sup>

### Larynx

The entire vocal tract can be lengthened or shortened using the Larynx Figure. The three options for Larynx are MID, LOW, and HIGH and influence treble/bass resonance.

### Velum

The velum (soft palate) functions like a door that opens or closes the entranceway from the oropharynx (mouth) to the nasopharynx (nose). This doorway is called the velopharyngeal port and its position greatly affects nasal and oral voice quality.<sup>15</sup> Three options for Velum are LOW, MID, and HIGH.

### Tongue

The manipulation of the tongue in the FVC concerns mainly the dorsum and can change the shape of the vocal tract, thus leading to changes in voice quality.<sup>16</sup> The three options for Tongue are HIGH, MID, and LOW. Estill distinguished between changing the tongue position for clear diction and modifying tongue position for voice quality.

### Aryepiglottic Sphincter

Manipulating the size of the epilaryngeal space above the true vocal folds via the Aryepiglottic Sphincter (AES) can greatly affect the warmth, brightness, and power in voice quality. The two



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options for AES are WIDE and NARROW. In the NARROW AES condition, the epilaryngeal space gets smaller leading to a loud, bright twang percept. The voice is amplified with piercing intensity because of an increase in energy between 2.8–4.3 kHz that corresponds with the resonant frequency of the external auditory meatus; as a result, fundamental frequencies below 1.0 kHz receive a boost of 15–20 dB in sound transmitted to the middle ear without an increase in vocal effort by the speaker and is implicated in *squillo*, speaker's ring, or singer's formant.<sup>17</sup>

### Jaw

Moving the lower jaw (mandible) in various positions can affect the color of the voice, level of extraneous facial and neck tension, and even the intelligibility of the speech. Options for the Jaw FVC are FORWARD, MID, BACK, and DROP.

### Lips

Lip position affects the length of the vocal tract and therefore affects the resonant tone of the speaker. The three options for Lips can vary continuously yet are presented in the Estill Voice Model categorically as PROTRUDE, MID, and SPREAD. Estill found that changes in lip and jaw position produce negligible changes in voice quality, but may be used in popular formant tuning techniques.

### Head and Neck

A tenet of the Estill Voice Model states that as the skeletal structures of the Head and Neck are anchored or braced, the smaller muscles that control the vocal mechanism work optimally to fine-tune adjustments within this stable external framework.<sup>18</sup> Outcomes of Head and Neck control are postural alignment and vocal stability. The primary muscles recruited for this Figure are in the nasopharynx (velum), the nape of the neck, and the sides of the neck (sternocleidomastoid). The two options for Head and Neck Anchoring are RELAX and ANCHOR.

### Torso

As in Head and Neck Control, the muscles recruited for Torso act as a postural anchor so that

the respiratory muscles work efficiently. Estill identified the *latissimus dorsi*, the *pectoralis major*, and the *quadratus lumborum* as possible Torso anchoring muscles. The two conditions for Torso anchoring are RELAX and ANCHOR. The experience noted by speakers during the Torso and Head/Neck ANCHOR is a feeling of breath support and energized, intense, and free vocalizations.

### Additional Elements of Compulsory Figures for Voice Control

**Effort.** One overarching element of FVC concerns the subjective effort employed in the control of each of the above anatomical structures. In the Estill Voice Model, effort level is identified in each of the structures and not limited to pulmonary force.<sup>19</sup> Using the concept of magnitude estimation and magnitude production developed by S. S. Stevens,<sup>20</sup> vocalists assign numbers to each task and sense effort in several forms. Effort extends from minimum to maximum and is associated with the amount of physical work sensed at each structure, not necessarily in the sound. Thus, a loud tone, as in Belting or Opera, can require great effort in various parts of the total instrument, yet remain at Most Comfortable Vocal Effort at the Larynx.

**Breath.** One glaring and provocative omission in the Figures for Voice Control is breathing exercises. Estill maintains that the breath will “free vary” depending upon the configuration of the larynx and resonators for a particular quality.<sup>21</sup> Support for this hypothesis is found in early research on pre-phonatory tuning of the larynx<sup>22</sup> that showed motor unit activity in the larynx preceded that of the respiratory muscles. Current Dynamical Systems theories<sup>23</sup> that promote organic re-organization of systems according to motor targets also provide a framework that embraces this tenet. Although a specific Figure for breath does not exist, monitoring and observing respiratory consequences of each FVC is encouraged throughout the model.

### Conclusion

The Estill Voice Model has evolved over the past 30 years into a comprehensive system for evaluating, teaching and producing voice qualities. In *Level One: Figures for Voice Control*, the tools for concise production of a myriad of voice qualities are provided and available to anyone who can make a sound. Through focused and deliberate practice of the Estill Voice Training Figures, vocalists of all genres and all ages experience confidence. This inspires artistic freedom to communicate via text or song, safely and effectively over sustained periods of time.

As Jo Estill said:

Singing is no more difficult than learning how to drive a car. Where you go with it—that is, what you choose to sing—is your decision. There is no single “best” voice quality. “Best” depends on what you like to hear. Some qualities require more work than others and they cannot be done without that physiological commitment. But even that “work” can be fun.

You choose what quality you use, what songs you sing, what speeches you make and how you make them. Let your spirit sing. Let it all hang out. Your voice is beautiful. Believe!<sup>24</sup>

### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Capitalization of terms as found in Estill method literature has been maintained throughout this article.

<sup>2</sup> Steinhauer, K., Klimek, M. and Estill, J. *The Estill Voice Model: Theory & Translation*. Estill Voice International. In press.

<sup>3</sup> Estill, J. “The control of voice quality.” *Transcripts of the 11<sup>th</sup> Symposium: Care of the Professional Voice*. V. Lawrence, ed. New York: The Voice Foundation (1982), 152–168.

<sup>4</sup> Colton, R.H. and Estill, J. “Elements of voice quality: perceptual, acoustic and physiological aspects.” *Speech and Language: Advances in Basic Research and Practice*. N. Lass, ed. New York: Academic Press (1981), 311–403; Yanagisawa, E., Estill, J., Kmucha, S.T., and Leder, S.B. “The contribution of aryepiglottic constriction to “ringing” voice quality—a video-laryngoscopic study.” *Journal of Voice* 3, 1989, 342–350; Yanagisawa, E., Kmucha, S.T. and Estill, J. “The role of the soft palate in laryngeal function and in selected voice qualities.” *Ann. Otolaryngology, Rhinology, and Laryngology* 99 (1990), 18–28; Yanagisawa, E., Kmucha, S.T. and Estill, J. “Endolaryngeal changes during high intensity phonation: video laryngoscopic observations.” *Journal of Voice* 3 (1990), 342–350; Yanagisawa, E., Mambrino, L., Estill, J. and Talkin, D. “Supraglottic contributions to pitch raising.” *Ann. Otolaryngology, Rhinology, and Laryngology* 100 (1991), 19–30; Yanagisawa, E., Citardi, M. & Estill, J. “Videoendoscopic analysis of laryngeal function during laughter.” *Ann. Otolaryngology, Rhinology, and Laryngology* 105(7), 1996, 545–549.

<sup>5</sup> Steinhauer, Klimek, & Estill. *The Estill Voice Model: Theory & Translation*, 15–17.

<sup>6</sup> Estill, J., Kobayashi, N., Honda, K., and Kakita, Y. “A study on respiratory & glottal controls in six western singing qualities: Airflow and intensity measurement in professional singing.” *Proceedings of the 1990 International Conference on Spoken Language Processing*. H. Fujisaki and S. Furui, eds. Kobe: Acoustical Society of Japan, 1990: 169–172.

<sup>7</sup> Fant, G. *Acoustic Theory of Speech Production*. The Hague: Mouton (1960).

<sup>8</sup> From a dynamical systems perspective, the human movement system is a highly intricate network of co-dependent sub-systems that are composed of a large number of interacting components. See Kelso, J.A.S. *Dynamic Patterns: The Self Organization of Brain and Behavior*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press (1995).

<sup>9</sup> Steinhauer, K., Grayhack, J., Smiley-Oyen, A. Shaiman, S. and McNeil, M. “The relationship among voice onset, voice quality, and fundamental frequency: a dynamical perspective.” *Journal of Voice* 18 (2004), 432–42.

<sup>10</sup> Yanagisawa, E., Estill, J., Kmucha, S.T., and Leder, S.B. “The contribution of aryepiglottic constriction to “ringing” voice quality—a videolaryngoscopic study.” *Journal of Voice* 3, 1989, 342–350; Yanagisawa, E., Mambrino, L., Estill, J. and Talkin, D. “Supraglottic contributions to pitch raising.” *Ann. Otolaryngology, Rhinology, and Laryngology* 100, 1991, 19–30; Nemetz, M.A., Pontes, P.A., Vieira, V.P., & Yazaki, R.K. (2005). Vestibular fold configuration during phonation in adults with and without dysphonia. *Brazilian Journal of Otorhinolaryngology*, 71(1):6–12.

<sup>11</sup> Hirano, M. “Morphological structure of the vocal cord as a vibrator and its variations.” *Folia Phon*, 26 (1974): 89–94.

<sup>12</sup> Hirano, M., Vennard, W. and Ohala, J. “Regulation of register, pitch and intensity of voice: an electro-myographic investigation of intrinsic laryngeal muscles.” *Folia Phoniatrica* 22 (1970), 1–20.

<sup>13</sup> Estill, J. “The control of pitch and quality, part II: An EMG study of infrahyoid muscles.” *Transcripts of the 11<sup>th</sup> Symposium: Care of the Professional Voice*. V. Lawrence, ed. New York: The Voice Foundation (1984): 152–168.

<sup>14</sup> Colton and Estill. “Elements of voice quality.”

<sup>15</sup> Yanagisawa, E., Mambrino, L., Estill, J. and Talkin, D. “The voluntary control of the soft palate.” Unpublished research video, (1991).

<sup>16</sup> Honda, K., Hirai, H., Estill, J. and Takahura, Y. “Contribution of vocal tract shape to voice quality: MRI data and articulatory modeling.” *Vocal Fold Physiology: Voice Quality Control*. O. Fujimura and M. Hirano, ed. San Diego: Singular Publishing (1995), 23–38.

<sup>17</sup> Yanagisawa, E., Estill, J., Kmucha, S.T., and Leder, S.B. “The contribution of aryepiglottic constriction to “ringing” voice quality—a videolaryngoscopic study.” *Journal of Voice* 3 (1989), 342–350.

<sup>18</sup> Estill, J. “Lateral x-rays of the anchoring posture in six voice qualities.” Unpublished data (1990).

<sup>19</sup> Steinhauer, Klimek, and Estill. *The Estill Voice Model*.

<sup>20</sup> Stevens, S. “Problems and methods of psycho-physics.” *Psych Bull* 54 (1940), 177–196.

<sup>21</sup> Steinhauer, K. Klimek, and Estill. *The Estill Voice Model*.

<sup>22</sup> Gould, W.J. and Okamura, H. “Interrelationships between voice and laryngeal mucosal reflexes.” *Ventilatory and Phonatory Control Systems*. B. Wyke, ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press (1974), 347–359.

<sup>23</sup> Wallace, S.A. “Dynamic pattern perspective of rhythmic movement: An introduction.” H.N. Zelaznik, ed. *Advances in Motor Learning and Control*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics (1996), 155–194.

<sup>24</sup> Steinhauer, Klimek, and Estill. *The Estill Voice Model*, 33.



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