THE VOCAL PEDAGOGY OF FREDERIC WOODMAN ROOT

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Frederic Woodman Root was a vocal pedagogue and writer of the late nineteenth century. He wrote over eighteen books on vocal pedagogy, and numerous articles on singing. Since his death, most of his works have fallen into obscurity. The purpose of this document was to codify the vocal pedagogy of Frederic Woodman Root, discussing his particularly thorough methodology, and to bring his methods back into the public eye. His method is broken down into the various components of basic musicianship, the General Principle, the Three Vowel Forms, registers, breathing, and agility. Examples from Root's exercises are included and discussed.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Frederic Woodman Root (1846-1916) was a great vocal pedagogue of the latter nineteenth century, whose works were substantive, carefully organized and, although not wholly original, bear his distinct mark. Root’s works have mostly disappeared from current usage, and very few copies of his books are found in libraries around the United States. It is my hope that readers will be encouraged to do more research regarding Frederic Root and his pedagogical method.

Because there are no biographies of Frederic Root beyond some short descriptions in older encyclopedias, a short summation of his life is in order. Root was born in Boston on June 13, 1846. His father, George Root, was a well-known song writer and pedagogue with ties to Lowell Mason. His mother, Mary Olive Root, was a semi-professional singer. Root’s studies in music began with his father, and continued with B.C. Blodgett, who had recently graduated from the Leipzig conservatory.

In 1863, the Root family moved to Chicago, where Frederic played solo organ and piano. He also worked with his father, sometimes touring with him and helping him by playing the piano and conducting. During one such convention tour, Root began to study with Carlo Bassini, who was located in New York. Root’s pedagogy was influenced strongly by his work with Bassini. In 1869, Frederic Root traveled and studied in Europe for several years, where he studied with Luigi Vannuccini, who was a noted voice teacher in Florence. It was during this time that Root took note of the teaching styles of different countries, and began to form opinions about the notion of a bel canto method.
Root came back to Chicago and settled down with his wife, Fanny, in Hyde Park. He became a member (and eventually president) of the Chicago Literary Club, and established himself as a writer of books and essays, being published in several journals. George Root had this to say about his son:

My oldest son, Frederic W. and family live, as do all the rest of us, in Hyde Park, near Chicago. If this young man is better equipped musically and otherwise than his father was at his age, there is more need now than there was then, of higher attainment. In these days of greater demand, one only reaches the position that he occupies as a musician, teacher and writer, by beginning in advance of the previous generation and then superadding to his inheritance, years of close study and hard work. It would be pleasant to give some account of his very successful and remunerative work, but that would hardly be proper here. I will, however, say that he teaches and writes ten months of the year, and then in the summer, when he is not at Normal, is the bold and hardy navigator of a catboat on the broad waters of Lake Michigan, where he stores up air and sunshine for his winter campaign.

He had several notable voice students, including Hope Glenn, Jessie Bartlett-Davis, Mae St. John, W.H. Clark, and John McWade. Root died on November 8, 1916 in Chicago.

Root wrote no fewer than eighteen books on vocal pedagogy. He also wrote several pieces intended for young singers. Although not widely known today, he was considered a prominent pedagogue in his time. The Encyclopedia Americana mentions him in its article on voice and voice culture, saying, “Frederic Root, D. A. Clippenger, and Edmund J. Myer have written clearly and well on vocal methods. As their works are the latest and they are men grown into the strong thought of the present activity, their writings have definiteness that was lacking in many earlier works.” James Stark mentions Root in his book, Bel Canto, A History of Vocal Pedagogy, once in an interview of Manuel Garcia II, and in quotes about the French and German

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1 Normal schools were institutions of learning to train teachers. The Normal Musical Institute was a summer music encampment held in North Reading, MA, beginning in 1856. Its teachers included George Root and Lowell Mason.
styles of singing. Frederic’s father, George Frederic Root, was a well-known pedagogue and colleague of Lowell Mason. The senior Root and Mason teamed together in several teaching endeavors, as is chronicled in George Root’s biography. Root’s writings earned critical acclaim from music teachers of his day. One such example, which is quoted here in its entirety, shows Root’s success was not limited to his hometown of Chicago.

“Brainless Teaching”

Mr. Carlyle Petersilea, of Boston, head of the music school which bears his name, and one of the first pianists and teachers of our country, writes to Mr. F. W. Root: “I have carefully read your ‘Plain Talk about Singing,’ and have given your work (School of Singing) a slight examination, enough, however, to show me that it is just the book I want to use in my school. I am tired and disgusted with the brainless mode of teaching generally employed both in vocal and instrumental music, and I have read your common-sense talk with a satisfaction I have not experienced for a long time. My object in writing you is, first, to tender my sincere admiration for your work.” He then speaks upon business matters, saying, “I intend to use the book under any circumstances.”

His attempts to create a thorough method were not unnoticed. An anonymous article in 1891 takes note of this, saying:

Mr. Root’s method of teaching voice is intended to be comprehensive, including and classifying many things rather than emphasizing some specialties. For instance, instead of maintaining that breathing for singing must be done in one way, he develops all the breathing actions and assigns to each the resources of expression or technique which belong to it; or, rather than teach that the voice should be drilled in clear timbre mainly with open and forward tone, or, on the contrary, in deep, covered, sombre tone, he holds that both are equally necessary in training, being complementary halves of voice-production. Instead of condemning this or that course in voice training as ruinous to voices, he is in the habit of assorting all reputable methods that come under his notice as good for certain states and conditions of pupils, and determining in his own mind their relative values and special uses. He has an omnivorous way of assimilating everything that is going.

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4 James A. Stark, Bel canto: a History of Vocal Pedagogy (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 51, 211.
6 Carlyle Petersilea was the founder of the New England Conservatory of Music.
7 “Brainless Teaching,” Church's Musical Visitor 12, no. 8 1883.
Other treatises on singing written around the time of Root’s work, despite their individual merits, do not form as complete a method. For example, Giovanni Battista Lamperti’s *The Technics of Bel Canto* gives much advice on technique, but makes no attempt to create a standard method that will generally be useful for all students. Lamperti gave a fair amount of detail in addressing the concerns and technique involved for the singer, but only gave minimal exercises for the student to sing. It is clearly up to the teacher to create exercises that would be appropriate for the topic. As an example, Lamperti wrote only one example of a vocalise for legato singing in *The Technics of Bel Canto*. It is seen below:

Example 1. Lamperti’s vocalise for legato singing.9

![Example of Lamperti's vocalise for legato singing](image)

This lack of breadth is not a failing of the Lamperti book, but rather a difference in opinion on the matter of teaching. While Root felt that a complete method was called for, Lamperti believed that students were too different for one system to work for everyone. In his introduction to *The Technics of Bel Canto*, Lamperti said the following, “No two persons are exactly alike, much less any two pupils. In vocal teaching, especially, it does great mischief to try to make one shoe fit every foot.”10

Bassini’s *Art of Singing* shows similarities to Root’s work in several ways. Root used a similar method to Bassini’s of marking his register exercises. Bassini labeled notes C, M or H, according to whether he wanted the singer to sing them in chest, medium, or head voice, as did

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Also similar is the notion that the student should, at first, sing softer when ascending into the middle voice. Bassini wrote an exercise using three vowels, but Bassini’s and Root’s motives do not seem to be the same. Root’s three vowels serve to demonstrate the way to finding the “tone focus,” the clear timbre, and the somber timbre, while Bassini recommends that his three vowels (a, e, and o) be performed with the same pharyngeal space. Root may have also gotten his opinion of the futility of working with singers who do not have a certain level of musicianship from Bassini. Bassini states, “A false ear is usually accompanied by very little taste for, or love of, music: and the study of singing by such a person (even if possessed of a good voice) would be a total loss of time.” Bassini’s work is, by and large, thorough and methodical. Although not all the pedagogical methods are identical, the goal of having a method that could train a singer is the same. There is little doubt that Root’s sense of thoroughness and methodical nature comes, in part, from his time with Bassini. Root did manage to have more exercises, more songs to practice, and a more thoughtful pedagogy in terms of synthesizing the vocal skills necessary to become a great singer.

Julius Stockhausen wrote a pedagogical book entitled *A Method of Singing*, which was published in 1884. He included the notion of what Root called the general principle, as he “endeavored to show how the lungs, larynx, and the articulating cavity work together, and how the technique in the art of singing depends on the proper treatment of these three parts of the vocal apparatus.” Stockhausen also suggested that there are only six kinds of vocalization. These are tenuto, legato, portamento, aspirato, staccato, and martellato. Stockhausen did not try to make a thorough method, saying, “It is not my intention to write a method of singing in the

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11 Root also used “Tk”, “Tn” and “S” (for Thick, Thin, and Small), but these were semantic differences, and not substantive ones.
12 “Tone focus” or “neutral timbre” is Root’s term describing the sensation of vibration in the masque.
ordinary sense of the words…what I have attempted…is to explain and sometimes illustrate by short examples, the simple laws of sound and their bearing upon the technique of singing.”¹⁵

Despite whatever fame Frederic Root had during his lifetime, his pedagogy is almost unknown today. Root’s pedagogical works deserve to be unearthed, given his status as a teacher and the extent of these works. Reintroducing the public to the pedagogy of Frederic Root, and making his extensive and systematic works more accessible to today’s voice teachers is an important process. Because there is so little knowledge of Root’s pedagogy today, this dissertation will seek to unify his vision and codify the information in his books into an organized form and sequence. One of Root’s goals in his writings was to encourage more teachers to follow a method, rather than haphazardly approach each student. He spent much of his adult life creating and publishing such works. The fact that his works have fallen into obscurity is unfortunate. The argument could be made that little progress has been made in making vocal pedagogy systematic, despite years of scientific research, and countless books on the subject. Frederic Root’s thoughts on how to make vocal pedagogy systematic could be helpful to today’s teachers of voice.

CHAPTER 2

BASIC MUSICIANSHIP

Root believed that there was no point in studying the voice (what was called “voice culture” at the time) unless the student had certain basic musicianship skills in place. The student should have a tonal vocabulary of common interval combinations, and be able to sight-sing and keep basic rhythms. Root suggested that there are seven skills and habits that good music readers develop:

1. The mental picture of key-representation—the position on the staff of key note, etc.
2. A mastery of certain intervals—principally the step and half-step.
3. A familiarity with melodic progression in scale and chord forms—the relative part of music reading.
4. Memory of pitch—the positive part of music reading.
5. Thinking in musical phrase.
6. Grouping tones as one groups the letters of the alphabet for words.
7. Rhythm and rhythmic forms.16

Root did not insist that his singers become excellent readers before they received any voice training. In fact, he suggested that students begin with two books, Methodical Sight Singing and Introductory Lessons in Voice Culture, and to add basic song studies in execution and style17 with Root’s Thirty-Two Short Song Studies as soon as is practical.18 He also says that different approaches are possible, but “…however acquired, a familiar knowledge of scales, rhythms and common musical phrase (the elements given in ‘Methodical Sight-Singing’) is the only basis upon which voice culture and execution can be made properly effective.”19

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17 On page 1 of Thirty-Two Short Song Studies, Root describes execution and style as “…fluency, attack, legato, shading, accent, agility, proportion, contrasts, enunciation, manner, etc.”
There was nothing particularly unique in Root’s approach to teaching music reading skills. He did strive to make the *Methodical Sight Singing* book one that could be used without a teacher’s supervision. For that purpose the student should have some basic understanding of clefs, relative value of rhythms and rests, and understanding of bars, double bars, and repeat signs. Root taught moveable “do” for the reading of pitch, and taught simplified conducting patterns to aid in keeping beat.

Root employed the use of a “memory tone” at the beginning of some of the exercises in *Exercises in Pitch and Rhythm*. The memory tone was simply a note that the student was to try to hold in his mind. It was often the tonic pitch, but not always. The student was asked to use the memory tone in various ways in their studies. One way of using the memory tone was to sing only the memory tone when it happens in the sight reading example, leaving the other notes to be heard only in your head. Another way of using the memory tones was to sing the exercise, not worrying about accuracy except for the memory tones. For advanced work, the student could sing all the notes except the memory tone, leaving every instance of the memory tone silent. They could also play the memory tone, read aloud a page from a book, and then try to sing the memory tone. In modern vocal education parlance, the memory tone assists the students with audiation.20

Root peppered his exercises in *Methodical Sight Singing* with phrases intended to encourage and remind the students of basic principles. Given the dry nature of learning to sight read, such encouragement is quite helpful. Examples of his comments are as follows:

- The principle thing is to practice a great deal.
- Always keep the key note in mind.
- Take a good breath before beginning to sing.

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20 “Audiation” is a term coined by Edwin Gordon to describe the process of thinking a pitch internally. More than just aural perception, audiation mentally ‘sounds’ the pitch inside the brain. More about audiation can be found at Edwin Gordan’s website, [http://www.giml.org/mlt_audiation.php](http://www.giml.org/mlt_audiation.php).
In what key is this lesson?
On which beat is the tone louder and on which softer?
The learner needs very little theory but a great deal of practice.\textsuperscript{21}

Root wrote similar comments throughout \textit{Root's New Course of Voice Culture and Singing for the Female Voice}, which are included in Appendix H. These comments also bear witness to a consistent theme of Root’s writings, and that was thoroughness and sequential thought. Root typically wrote more rather than less, in an effort to make sure he was understood fully. In the introduction to his \textit{Analytical Studies in Voice Culture}, Root said, “It has been a wide-spread custom among voice teachers, to try in the very first lesson, by means of imitation or by a single formula, to put together the many items which enter into vocal method. The effort is to an effect with no systematic reference to cause; and in such case some details are quite sure to be faulty and to prove troublesome in the later development. The analytical method which lets combination wait until each important point has been made clear and set right, is a likely road to satisfactory achievements.”\textsuperscript{22} In an area such as vocal pedagogy, where vague language can often cause confusion, this attention to detail and thoroughness is warranted.

Root took the students through the keys one at time, so as to immerse them in the sounds and feelings of each key before moving on. In this way, the visual aspect as well as the perceptual feel of each key becomes a part of the students’ tonal vocabulary. Each key covered in \textit{Methodical Sight Singing} gets at least 50 short phrases for practice. These phrases are simple, common interval combinations, and are intended to be learned thoroughly enough that the student could write them on the staff if they heard it. Some of the phrases are simple scalar passages, while others are skips within the tonic chord. The book \textit{Methodical Sight Singing} was written in three parts. The first part, “The Beginning,” takes the students through the keys of C,

\textsuperscript{21} Frederic W. Root, \textit{Methodical Sight Singing, Part I} (Philadelphia: Theodore Presser, 1903), 6, 8-10.
Part II, “Through the keys,” takes the students through all the keys, asking them to not only sing, but be able to write a “picture” of the key. This “picture” was actually writing the tonic chord in root position, and two inversions, writing the scalar notes from do to mi, do to sol, and do to do, ascending and descending. Each key is given thorough practice in learning common intervals, singing popular tunes, and the use of the memory tones. Root suggested the following regarding the practice of sight-singing in Part II of *Methodical Sight Singing*:

Practice each lesson in twelve different ways using the instrument only when thus indicated. Use *doh*, *ray*, [sic] etc. only where specified.

1. Play and sing the memory tones, —the tonic chord and whatever else may be indicated in a separate measure at the beginning of the lesson. Impress these upon the mind.
2. Go through the lesson, tapping with the hand and thinking every note, but only singing the memory tones as they occur.
3. Sing the lesson with the syllables (*doh, ray, mee*, etc.) (in the following repetitions, use *lah* or *loo* at each note.
4. Sing it again with *lah* or *loo* at each note.
5. Sing the memory tones and play the others. Play the notes in a detached manner so that voice and instrument shall not sound together.
6. Play the memory tones and sing the others. Always keep time.
7. Sing the first note in each measure and play the others.
8. Repeat the lesson (*lah* or *loo*) beating time with the hand and singing the first note in each measure loudly, the others softly.
9. Sing the first measure, think the second, silently; and so on with alternate measures. Beat time and give the silent notes their exact time. Also, in like manner, omit the first measure and sing the second.
10. Omit the second note in each measure thinking its pitch and giving it full time.

Beats.

11. In like manner go through the lesson beating time, thinking but not singing the memory tones three and five. Sing all the other notes. (in Nos. 15-18, instead of three and five, all the memory tones indicated at the beginning of each lesson are silent.
12. Write or point (on the fingers) the lesson from memory or upon hearing it played or sung.

Practice in these different ways is necessary to the formation of the habits named in the introduction.²³

Part III, “Progressive Musicianship,” which is unavailable at this time, presumably goes into greater detail of music theory and musicianship. Root also had his students sing chords as

arpeggios, ascending and descending, in their various inversions. A sample of this type of exercise is found in Appendix A.
CHAPTER 3

REGISTERS

Root used different terminology for the registers of men’s and women’s voices. In the man’s voice, Root spoke of two essential registers, chest and falsetto, with a third type of voice, mixed voice, which is produced, “…by a vibration of the vocal cords which is intermediate between what is required for the chest and the falsetto tones. A convenient name for this is ‘medium register.’” Root clarified his view on registers in an article he wrote for *The Voice*, where he said, “I will simply state by belief that there are but two registers in the voice, vis: the male register and the female register, the chest and the falsetto (or whatever it may be called), all other changes named with the term register being accounted for by the mischievous sympathy between larynx and throat.” This apparent discrepancy can be easily explained. Root’s belief in the two-register system did not keep him from recognizing that singers feel an additional shift. His nomenclature of three registers (chest, medium, and head for women, and chest, head, and falsetto for men) was for ease of discussion when dealing with students, and for lack of a better term. Root had an analogy to help students understand the changing of registers in which he compared the vocal folds to piano wire:

*Thick substance—a large piano wire, for instance—may be forced to vibrate rapidly and produce a pitch higher than is normal to it; but such a tone is hard, strident, and “dead”—without elastic resonance, and is a strain upon the instrument producing it. On the other hand, thin substance—a small string, for instance—may be loosened to vibrate slowly and produce a pitch lower than is normal to it; and then the result is tone which lacks body, character, and “carrying power.”*

For the woman’s voice, Root sometimes used the terms Thick, Thin, and Small. These correspond to the more familiar terms chest, medium, and head. He recommended that registers

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never be taken above their limits, as noted in example 2, but that they could be taken below their limits.

Example 2. Root's suggested ranges for women's registers.  

![Diagram showing the ranges of thick, thin, and small registers for women's voices.]

In order to ensure the student did not carry the chest voice higher than recommended, Root had the student sing much more quietly in the thin range. This allowed the student to get used to the feeling of the thin register on those more appropriate notes, and develop habits that did not violate the register scheme. Below is a basic exercise designed to help the student sing in the appropriate register between the thick and thin. This was very important to Root, as he saw carrying the thick register too high to be, “…one of the most worst faults of vocalization; it is prevalent among those who have sung alto without instruction and those who, without guidance, have sung much in childhood.”

Example 3. An example of Root's register transition exercises.

Sing the notes marked Tk in a roughly resonant voice, and the others lightly

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27 Frederick W. Root, *Root's New Course in Voice Culture and Singing for the Female Voice* (Cincinnati: John Church, 1891), 5.
28 Frederick W. Root, *Root's New Course in Voice Culture and Singing for the Female Voice* (Cincinnati: John Church, 1891), 5.
29 Frederick W. Root, *Root's New Course in Voice Culture and Singing for the Female Voice* (Cincinnati: John Church, 1891), 5.
Root felt that it was important to monitor the tongue muscle during these transitional moments, to make sure there was no unnecessary tension there. He had his students place their fingers under their chin to see if there was movement there during these exercises. If there was movement, they were to try again until there was none. Movement there would indicate that the larynx had shifted up, or had at least gotten pressure to move upward from the articulators, which would cause instability in the voice. This relates back to Root’s general principle, and the need for the larynx to maintain its independence from the articulators. Below is an example of an exercise designed to help the female voice access and bring down the small, or head, voice.

Example 4. Root's small register exercise.30

Use the Small register by singing as softly as possible. Make no conscious effort, but keep muscles as relaxed as possible, especially the one under the chin.

As the student gained confidence in accessing the head voice, she could add more strength to the tone without losing the head voice quality. Still starting those tones softly, Root would have them crescendo and decrescendo the high note of these exercises. In this way, the student was gradually adding power to the small register in a way that did not violate the registers. An example of this kind of exercise is found in Appendix B. Once a student discovered the appropriate feeling related to each register, they could more easily ensure they were in the right register for the note they were singing.

Root was in favor of utilizing the falsetto as a training tool for the male voice. For Root, “…the most important use of falsetto is in helping to take high tones without the extraneous

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30 Frederick W. Root, *Root's New Course in Voice Culture and Singing for the Female Voice* (Cincinnati: John Church, 1891), 5.
effort that gives them a pinched, strained, forced, throaty sound and is ruinous to the voice.”

The beginning exercises that focus on the male head voice in Root’s works insist that the singer go into falsetto, “…however odd or uncouth it may seem to a beginner.” In the exercise below, Root instructed the singer to move from a chest voice sound to a medium voice sound, and finally to a falsetto sound, as they sang an ascending arpeggio.

Example 5. Root's register transition exercise for men.

For singers who do not easily find their falsetto, Root said, “…there is a rigid constricted condition of the throat which must be removed by guidance and practice before the organs are flexible enough to make the change.” Once the falsetto tone was easily accessible, the student was instructed to take the falsetto register as low as they could without a sudden change in register. Root suggested this is more easily done at a softer dynamic level, and that with practice the student could swell those lower falsetto tones into a loud tone, with no break. The exercise below was intended for such work.

Example 6. Root's exercise for bringing falsetto lower.\textsuperscript{35}

Root said that it is possible to go from a high falsetto tone to a high chest tone without a break, but that it is a very difficult thing to do, and should not be expected until later in the vocal development of the student. Several other register exercises from Root’s \textit{Guide to the Male Voice} are included in Appendix C, along with an example of Bassini’s register exercises that show his influence on Root.

CHAPTER 4
THE GENERAL PRINCIPLE

Root began several of his works with an over-arching goal that was to be kept in mind during all aspects of singing. This “general principle” was to keep the lungs, larynx, and the articulators separate in function during singing. These three parts are the power, vibrator, and resonator of the vocal instrument, respectively. The lungs function to take in air, restrain it when first singing, and compress it out later in the phrase. The larynx creates tone, and adjusts pitch and power. The lips, tongue, and jaw work together to create vowels and consonants. Root considered this separation of powers to be one of the most fundamental aspects of voice culture, without which progress cannot be successfully made. In his Guide for the Male Voice, Root said, “This formula cannot be urged too strongly upon the student:

8. Easily controlled breath
9. Clear, steady tone
10. The free natural action of lips, jaw, and tongue.”

This concept separating these three areas is prominent at the beginning of F. W. Root’s School of Singing, Analytical Studies in Voice Culture, Guide for the Male Voice, Voice Culture and Singing for the Female Voice, 68 Exercises in the Synthetic Method, and receives treatment in Introductory Lessons in Voice Culture, Thirty-Two Short Song Studies, and The Polychrome Lessons in Voice Culture. The clearest statement on the general principle is found at the beginning of the 68 Exercises in the Synthetic Method. Below is an extended excerpt, included in its entirety because of its importance to Root’s pedagogy:

The controllable parts of the body, which cooperate in the act of vocalization, are three in number, the Larynx, the Lungs, and the Mouth.

Analysis of the action of each of these is generally of advantage in voice training. But the student of singing should begin with and hold continuously to certain fundamental ideas regarding the management of these three parts of the body, in order to

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gain and maintain, through all the various phases of the work, the General Principle of Vocalization, the constructive side of the work, which is:

The correct association or relationship of the several acts which operate simultaneously to form tone and manage the voice.

This is the Synthesis which is the constant aim of vocal method.

Following is a simple statement, free from technicalities, of the fundamental points to be mastered.

From the Larynx is required pure, clear tone, free from breathiness or inequalities; resonant tone, not necessarily loud. The tone which is often habitual in speaking is thick or husky or rough or nasal or full of careless mannerisms. This must be changed by practice for singing, to purity and smoothness of tone.

From the Lungs we demand the habit of deep inhalation and proper restraint of breath during tone production. This is an entire change from the habits of ordinary respiration which are to fill the lungs but partially, generally with the action of the upper part only, and to let the breath out without restraint.

In the efforts of untaught singers to produce high or loud tones not only is there no breath restraint by muscles controlling the lungs, but these are exerted to push the breath upon the throat, with the result that the vocal organs become braced and unnatural in their adjustments for tone.

The Mouth is to be kept flexible, free from the constraint, rigidity, or sympathetic action which the effort tone production is likely to put upon jaw, tongue and lips.

The usual effort of the untaught singer to explore his compass and to sing music intended for cultured voices, is sure to result in stiffness of jaw, or displacement of tongue or distortion of lips, and thus to prevent or impede the orderly development of an agreeable and expressive tone throughout the compass.\(^{37}\)

Root described his general principle in a simple manner to his students, allowing them to easily understand this complicated matter. He told them to take in a deep breath, hold that breath with the muscles of inhalation, and drop the jaw fully, keeping tongue, lips, and jaw as relaxed as possible.\(^{38}\) In order to make this happen, the student must continue the usage of the inspiratory muscles during phonation. Otherwise, the excessive force of air against the vocal folds will cause unwanted tensions in the jaw, tongue, and lips. Once a student can do this simple maneuver, they are in a much better position to keep the phonation process independent from the breath and articulators. This becomes more difficult at higher pitches, and singers must compensate to keep


the tensions at bay. Two exercises from the *68 Exercises in the Synthetic Method* that Root used to help in this area are below:

Example 7. Two of Root's exercises for applying the general principle at higher pitches.\(^{39}\)

![Musical notation]

Root instructed his students to place their finger under their chin, so they could feel if the tongue muscle was tightening as they work on this general principle. As they pursued this difficult process, they would check their face in the mirror, to make sure they were not grimacing, or making faces that looked in pain. Root went on to say that, “If the face is not perfectly at repose, if the forehead is wrinkled, the nostrils dilated, or the mouth drawn into a position not used in speaking, it is an unerring indication that there is distortion in the throat.”\(^ {40}\)

These exercises were only to be performed in ranges where the student could successfully perform them, “…awaiting nature’s own time for the result.”\(^ {41}\) Root referred back to this general principle throughout his works, considering it to be the most fundamental principle in the development of the voice.

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\(^{40}\) Frederick W. Root, *F. W. Root’s School of Singing* (Cincinnati: John Church & co, 1873), 4.

\(^{41}\) Frederick W. Root, *F. W. Root’s School of Singing* (Cincinnati: John Church & co, 1873), 3.
CHAPTER 5

THREE VOWEL FORMS

Root saw three specific vowel sounds as gateways to the three fundamental tones to which singers need access. The three vowel sounds are [i], [a], and [u], and the tones they represent are, respectively, “tone focus,” “radical tone,” and “sombre tone.”

Root used the [i] to help the student find their tone focus, which is a very bright, very forward tone that gives the student awareness of the feeling of buzz in the mask. He sometimes called this [i] “extreme e,” and insisted that it be made with the body of the tongue rolled forward, the tip of the tongue always resting against the front teeth, and the sides of the tongue against the upper back teeth. According to Root, tone focus allows singers to make register shifts without breaking, efficiently manage the breath, and sing rapid passages. He considered it to be “nine-tenths of the whole matter of tone formation.” One of Root’s exercises in tone focus has been included in its entirety, in Appendix D. This example, from his *Analytical Studies in Voice Culture*, combines humming and letters from the alphabet that have an [i] sound in them with the Sieber “da me ni po tu la be” syllables. His basic idea is that through developing the tone focus through the [i] sound, the student can learn to apply it to all their vowel sounds. Root says that once [i] is learned properly, “…other close vowels follow easily, and later the open vowels also are sung, as occasion requires, with the sensation of tone focus.”

The so-called “radical ah,” or clear timbre, was the second tone that Root drew attention to, and used as part of his method. Root went to great length to describe how he wanted his

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44 Karl Heinrich Graun actually invented the syllables “da ne ni po tu la be” as a replacement for the Guidonian syllables for the musical scale. His new system was known as Damenisation, but was not widely used as a sight-reading method. However, Sieber and many other teachers of singing used the syllables for vocalization.
students to perform this [a]. He said, “Radical ah is produced with normal, decided action of the larynx, the upper throat being held open and flexible. Dropping the jaw completely is an essential feature of this practice. Every ah in this lesson is to be sung (1) resonantly, (2) with the mouth open the width of two or three fingers, (3) the cheeks and lips relaxed, (4) and the tongue lying motionless in the bottom of the mouth.” Further describing it in his *Guide for the Male Voice*, Root says, “…the tone being made by the lungs and larynx, with no effort, and little, if any, sensation above the chest…The radical tone is open and free in character…A nasal tone is never radical. A throaty tone is never radical. If the jaw is tightened, the lips distorted, the tongue displaced, the nostrils dilated, or the brow wrinkled, the tone is not radical.” The radical ah opened up the mouth fully, which allowed the student to see their tongue quite easily. Root used this aspect of radical ah to reinforce his general principle. Being able to see the tongue assisted the student to maintain the separation of the function of the larynx and the mouth, jaw and lips. Below is a sample exercise that asks the student to maintain a relaxed, but unchanging “ah” position while the larynx makes changing pitches.

Example 8. Root's exercise on the radical ah.48

![Exercise 8](image)

Root also used the [a] to assist in finding the upper register of the voice. As they attempted this, the student was instructed to keep all facial distortions to a minimum, including the tongue. In this way, the larynx was more or less forced to make the changes for head voice without the

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interference of supraglottal muscles. A longer example of an exercise in this vein can be found in Appendix E. The radical tone was not just for [a]; Root said that, “All vowels, close as well as open, may have, and later must have, something of the sensation of radical tone in their production.” 49

The third fundamental tone quality, the sombre tone, which he sometimes referred to as covered tone, was represented by Root as [u]. For the purposes of the exercises, Root described the intended sound as slightly breathy and hooty. Root insisted that when working with the sombre tone at first, the sound should be very soft and without any sense of the “sounding board” that the tone focus gives. In the Introductory Lessons in Voice Culture, he said, “The sound of 'oo' here required is different from that ordinarily employed. It is made with lips closely rounded and the sound of 'oo' as in moon (not as in foot). The sensation is that the mouth is full of vibrations, making a sort of hooting sound. The cavity of the mouth and throat should feel as large as is consistent with flexibility. The tone is sombre or dark and has no reedy resonance. It suggests falsetto.” 50 He went on to say that the [u] should be made with the same amount of space given for an [a], but with strong lip rounding. This position can be very difficult for some students, as their lips will begin trembling, or their larynx move up. Root said they should continue practicing this deep, covered [u] until those conditions are cleared up. Root used the sombre tone to assist students in finding their head voice register, as in the exercise below. The sombre tone includes lip rounding.

Example 9. Root's exercise on the sombre timbre oo.\textsuperscript{51}

This lip rounding and trumpeting helps the singer “…unite the middle and the upper voice, by placing the first head notes properly.”\textsuperscript{52} Also, Root suggested that the sombre timbre is, “…valuable for enriching the quality of the voice, and in preparation for high notes.”\textsuperscript{53}

Root took these three main tones and put them in exercises together, having the student try to give each sound [i], [a], and [u] its distinct quality, while maintaining the “sounding board” feeling in the mask. He noted that many are confused about this notion, and try to either make all vowel sounds with the same position of the mouth, or make all vowel sounds similar to the one they find the most natural to form. He suggested the following exercise to eliminate this problem.

Example 10. Root's exercise combining the three vowel forms.\textsuperscript{54}

\textsuperscript{52} Frederic W. Root, \textit{The Polychrome Lessons in Voice Culture} (Cincinnati: Fillmore Brothers, 1896), 164.
\textsuperscript{54} Frederic W. Root, \textit{The Polychrome Lessons in Voice Culture} (Cincinnati: Fillmore Brothers, 1896), 155.
Root also used the combination of these sounds to explore the freedom of the larynx. Because he, like many pedagogues of his time, wanted multiple sound qualities available for singers, he advocated some tones to be sung with a higher larynx and others with a lower larynx. The clear timbre had a naturally higher larynx position and less breathy tone, and the sombre timbre had a naturally lower position and slightly breathier tone. To keep the larynx from becoming rigid and getting stuck in one of those positions, Root gave exercises to maintain freedom of the larynx in its vertical movement. These exercises had the student consciously move the larynx either up or down at the beginning of a tone. Here is a short list of devices Root used to acquaint the singer with their laryngeal movement:

1. Sing ah-ha-ha-ha-ha staccato, using a thin bright laughing tone, and observe the movement of the larynx.
2. Roll the consonant r and the larynx will show an upward tendency.
3. Pronounce “ebb, odd, egg,” giving an instant of pitch to each final consonant, and the larynx will have a downward impulse on each.55

The exercises involving upward movement were not always necessary, and only for the middle of the range, as Root said the upper notes are made more easily with a lowered larynx.56 The exercises involving downward movement assisted students as they approached head voice, and in getting the sombre tone. Here are two examples of this kind of exercise:

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Example 11. Two of Root's exercises for accessing clear and somber timbre at will. 

For the first note in each measure give the larynx an upward impulse, place the tone forward in the mouth and make it sound bright, and for the second give the larynx a downward impulse, place the tone back in the head with vibration in the thoracic cavity and make it sound dark. Alternate thus, making the two tones in each measure as different in each timbre as possible. The impulse must be simultaneous with the tone. It may be very slight at first. The qualities are Clear and Sombre.

\[\text{Use ah, a, and e, attacking with an inaudible h.}\]

This exercise is to be sung in three ways. 1. An upward impulse of the larynx for every note; 2. A downward impulse for every note, and 3. An upward impulse for each of the two lower notes and a downward impulse for each of the two higher notes.

\[\text{Use ah, e, a and o.}\]

Root encouraged teachers to work on the three vowels in the students’ speaking voices as well. He said, “To explore the clarity and freedom of vocal tone, the speaking voice, carefully used, is sometimes a help.” In an article about school teachers and voice culture, Root suggested that the best approach for the teachers who have little knowledge of the voice is to use the speaking voice, especially the three main vowels, [i], [a], and [u]. He said that students will never get as much practice from singing as they will from speaking, which they spend so much more time doing. His contention was that Americans do not pronounce well, that their consonants are lazy and their vowels impure, especially when compared to Italians. He said, “Our little Johns, Joes, and Marys pronounce the name of a much abused musical instrument pi-an-nuh; while the little Giovannis, Giuseppis, and Marias always say pee-ah-noh. Now if one will notice how relaxed and sluggish are the organs in the first, and how elastically energetic

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they are in the second example, he may realize what a difference there would be in voices after a few generations where one or the other methods of speech was employed.”

Root went on to assert that the biggest problem in American speech is the use of the “r” sound, which is altered by some Americans, and left out by others. The worst form of the “r” sound is the one that pulls the tongue back. To quote Root, “Now the aperture in the throat through which the tone must come is small enough at best. Any contraction of it makes the voice just that much more wiry and twangy.” His recommendation was that voice teachers in schools work on the students’ speech, and thereby their voice placement. He said that, “…the energizing which produces exact vowel sounds, especially e, ah, and oo, is safe, natural, fundamental, efficient, and best adapted for general use. Work upon this line does not immediately result in power in the voice, and it is never satisfactorily efficient until joined with some of the resources of breath and register. But it is, in the long run, the foremost consideration of voice culture, the determining factor of real progress, and in view of the complexity of voice placing, it is best handled by means of familiar elements of speech.” Root’s desire to start at the most basic levels, where the students are, was based in the lessons of Johann Pestalozzi. In The Song Era, Root said,

Teachers! Pestalozzi tells us that the instruction our pupils get from us is not measured by what we can give, but by what they can receive. This is a great truth! We may tell our pupils what we know, in a steady stream; they will only get what they work for. All the rest will go in one ear, and out at the other.

So, good teaching, with us, is making our pupils work, mentally and vocally, to advantage.\footnote{Frederic W. Root, \textit{The Song Era} (Cincinnati: John Church, 1874), 3.}
CHAPTER 6

BREATHING

Root advocated a type of inhalation that avoids clavicular breathing. In clavicular breathing, the shoulders and clavicle are raised during inhalation. It is almost universally decried by voice teachers, past and present. Root, in typical fashion, would cover all the different parts of the inhalation process separately, and then put them together. This was part of his analytic and synthetic process. Root instructed his students to begin the inhalation with abdominal movement outward, followed by costal movement outward on the sides, finishing with the upper chest moving up and out. All this was to be done without moving the shoulders up. He made sure that students began their early training filling their lungs fully, “…having the sensation of distention in the upper part of the chest, but without moving the shoulders, which should be well back and at repose.”64 This inhalation process is clearly laid out in the exercise from his *Analytical Studies in Voice Culture*, as seen in Appendix F.

Root compared the air causing vibration of the vocal folds to a bow causing vibration of the strings of a violin. He said, “…according to its management, important musical effects, sustaining, shading, accent, etc., are good or bad.”65 He clarified this in his *The Polychrome Lessons in Voice Culture*:

Prof. Observe now that I touch the hair of the bow very lightly to the string. Now as I draw the bow the full length what sort of a tone do you hear?
Bas. A singer would call that a breathy tone.
Prof. When the contact of the hair of the bow with the string of the instrument is light, is the tone pure or imperfect?
Bas. Im perfect.
Prof. And under those circumstances, by drawing the bow its entire length, do I get as much tone as I ought to for acceptable violin playing?
Bas. You do not.

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64 Frederic W. Root, *F. W. Root’s School of Singing* (Cincinnati: The John Church Co., 1873), 3.
Alt. Oh, Prof. Polychrome, you needn’t be so long in coming to the point. We see what you mean. You must press the hair of the bow more firmly upon the string to get a pure tone, and then you can get a great deal more tone with much less motion of the bow.

Prof. Then let me put my question again. How many things must my right hand do to get the tone most effectively from the instrument?

Alt. Two things; you must draw the bow and you must press it against the string.

Prof. That is right. I have spent time upon this illustration because I wished to make you understand clearly a point in vocalization that very few seem to know anything about. If I let the bow lie loosely upon the string I must move it rather fast to get any tone at all; if I press it upon the string I can get a better tone and yet move it very slowly. In the one case I get to the end of my bow very quickly, and in the other case I can be a long time in drawing the bow its full length. This is an excellent illustration of the two things involved in managing the breath. You will remember that at our last lesson I said that controlling diaphragm, ribs, etc., was only a part of breath management. That corresponds to drawing the bow. Also, that the correct management of larynx, etc., are involved. That corresponds to the pressing the bow to the string.  

This “pressing the bow to the string” is analogous to the vocal folds adducting enough to make resistance against the flowing air. Root was careful not to direct comment on this concept until his students had a firm grasp on his general principle. Trying to get complete closure sooner could cause the student to tighten muscles that should stay more relaxed and flexible. He did, however, approach it indirectly through work on the tone focus. All of the exercises that used the tone focus are dealt with the efficiency of the larynx, and its resistance to the airflow. Many of those exercises included instructions on how to increase the sound without increasing the breath flow. This forced the student to get better closure of the glottis. Below is an example of one of those exercises.

Example 12. Root's tone focus exercise.  

Strive to give the effect of a swell as marked, without concious breath pressure. The conscious effort must be in the head behind the nose. The crescendo is not so much a change in power as a change toward a sharper, firmer, sounding-board quality. In other words, for each swell, squeeze the tone without aid from the breath and without vitalizing the jaw.

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In the vernacular of today’s voice teachers, Root was a proponent of the “up and in” method of breathing. This refers to the expiratory part of the breathing process. In this method, the upper chest is maintained in an outward position during phonation, as if the full inhalation position had not changed. The abdominal muscles pull inward during phonation in the “up and in” technique, especially after a certain amount of air has been used during the phonation process. In order to help the student become aware of the parts of the body involved in this breathing method, Root had his students work on individual components of it. For example, in his *New Course in Voice Culture and Singing for the Female Voice*, Root gives the following exercises:

1. Cough lightly, at the same instant drawing in at the waist in front with muscular action. Hold the waist drawn inward for five seconds. Relax, and repeat several times. Keep the fingers pressed against the body in order to realize more fully its action.
2. Expel a little breath suddenly, as if to blow out a candle, drawing in at the waist as before. Hold five seconds. Resume the normal position.
3. Sing a tone (any pitch) to the syllable Ha, holding it about three seconds. Let the waist sink inward in front as before, but gradually. As the waist comes back to the normal position after the tone, take a very small amount of breath. Repeat many times.
4. Sing a pitch, giving it three staccato impulses in one breath, and cause the waist in front to give an inward throb at each impulse. Hold the waist drawn inward after the last impulse, as before. Relax, taking very little breath. Repeat. The staccato tones should be about one second apart and entirely detached. A staccato tone is the shortest possible instant of sound. Use syllables ha-ha-ha, not making the h distinct. In all these exercises the breathing action should be felt with the hands.
5. Place the back of the fingers against the ribs toward the back, to observe the action. Inhale slowly and fully, pressing the sides outward as far as they will go. It aids this action to allow the head to fall backward. Practice persistently. Employ these motions of the only in the beginning of this practice.
6. Repeat the last exercise with the hand placed at about the small of the back to observe the motion there. The motion is but very slight. In expelling breath cause the abdomen to contract somewhat, as the back sinks.

Note—Breathing with the upper chest should also be practiced; but it is for the complete exercise of the lungs, not for the purpose of singing.\(^68\)

Once the mechanics of the breathing process were solidly understood and practiced by the students, Root began to address some specific behaviors within that cycle that are important to singers. At the beginning of a phrase, there is a tendency for the air to rush out quickly, or for the muscles around the larynx to tighten up, or both. In order to combat these tendencies, Root instructed the student how to control the outflow of air by using the inspiratory muscles during expiration. In the exercise below, Root has the student take in a full breath, and instructs them to maintain that outward expansion during the first part of phonation. In this way, the student is restraining the airflow at the beginning of the phrase. A longer exercise in this vein is included in Appendix F.

Example 13. Root's exercise for the cycle of breath in singing.\textsuperscript{69}

By working the inspiratory muscles while phonating the beginning of a phrase, the student took away much of the air pressure that could cause the larynx to react and overly tighten. This way, the internal laryngeal muscles that need to contract can do so, without interference from other unnecessary muscles. Once the beginning of the phrase is over and the pressure in the lungs is less, there is then a need to compress the thorax, to keep the breath energy consistent. Even at this point in the breathing cycle, certain aspects of the inhalation are maintained. Specifically,

\textsuperscript{69} Frederick W. Root, \textit{Root's New Course in Voice Culture and Singing for the Female Voice} (Cincinnati: The John Church co, 1891), 13.
Root wanted the upper chest to remain expanded during the entire phrase. In some of the preliminary exercises, Root said the student should stop singing and take a breath when they see that their chest begins to sink inward. For example, in his *Introductory Lessons in Voice Culture*, Root gives this exercise:

> Count from 1 to 15 or 16 or farther, first holding the lung cavity distended, then relaxing the inspiratory muscles, then contracting. Stop the count when the chest begins to fall or the sides to press outward.70

A more extensive exercise that deals with this subject is found in Appendix G.

While Root was open about the realities of the necessity of the resistance of the breath flow by the larynx, he understood that sometimes students hold much unnecessary tension in the neck and supraglottal muscles. He stated it this way:

Sometimes, however, the student forgets to make certain that this restraint is entirely with the muscles about the lungs, and unconsciously tightens the throat. When the singer is faulty in this respect, certain tones of the voice and some of the vowels will be hard or shrill, or cramped, or forced. Therefore, in such cases, after the first period of practice with breath restraint, lightness and facility, especially with the head voice is obtained by changing the thought regarding the breath from restraint to freedom.71

Root compares this thought of freedom in the breath to “an Aeolian harp, a tone made by a sensitive response of vibratory strings to a current of air passing over them; and practice is effected by seeming to blow the edges of the vocal folds into vibration.”72 This type of practice is not for beginning singers, according to Root. Once the foundation of the vowel elements [i, a, u], correct breathing habits, and freedom of jaw, lips, and mouth is in place, then it could be helpful to use the notion of “blowing” the vocal folds into action. Root makes it clear that he is not advocating a breathy tone, as he says even in these exercises that there should be “the sense of

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clear, telling tone, which is not forced.”73 This use of terminology to help a student free themselves of unneeded tension is similar to the use of the term “flow phonation” in modern times. According to Richard Miller, “The main, and sometimes elusive, goal for a singer is to stay free while altering degrees of breath energy…Flow phonation, sometimes referred to as ‘free-flow phonation,’ refers to appropriate levels of airflow that match the requirements of the task at hand.”74

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CHAPTER 7

AGILITY

Root did not introduce agility until late in his training program. He considered it to be one of the most difficult aspects of singing, and a link to the bel canto past. For Root, the martellato articulation was the key to singing rapid passages clearly. Martellato means strongly marked, or hammered. Root described this articulation as a way “to accent tones as with an aspirate without breaking the legato—the perfect continuity of the passage.” Root helped make clear these instructions through markings on the score. The notes that were intended to be sung martellato are marked with accents, but each note of the exercise is connected with a slur marking.


These exercises were intended to be sung slowly at first, gradually adding speed as the student gained skill at singing the passages in the appropriate manner. Root said that the manner in which the student should begin the work on rapid passages is heavy and slow, and then later it should be light and quick. It might seem to some students that slow work on rapid music is a waste of time, but Root pointed out that there needs to be slow work first:

The proper use of them [flexibility exercises] is not to rush recklessly through, thinking only of rapidity, but it is to sing them with flexible muscles, exactness of intonation, a steady breath-pressure, and freedom from any thing like accent, and to increase the speed

only so fast as can be done carrying out these points. To be sure, if you never practiced fast enough to run the risk of making mistakes, you would never execute rapidly. It is proper to run this risk and make mistakes, especially in intonation (singing wrong pitches), but not right to become careless and not notice errors.78

A recurring theme in Root’s work on flexibility and rapidity is the idea that steady breath pressure is very important. Root asked the student to sing these rapid passages with a crescendo starting at the beginning of the phrase that continued to the end. Root said this crescendo was helpful because, “…it secures the kind of breath-pressure which is indispensible to good execution. Do this crescendo thoroughly, but make it so gradual that the increase will be uniform to the end of the phrase—the fault to be guarded against is the that of increasing the pressure too suddenly, so that after the first few notes no further cres. is possible.”79

Root mentions that trills, even though they are very difficult, should be within the reach of all students. A key principle in Root’s method of learning trills is keeping the throat and face relaxed during the trill. Rapidity should be left out for some time, and not rushed into. This allows the habits needed for trills time to develop and for the student to gain confidence in the flexibility of their voice. Root insists on the slow way, saying, “…it is so important to make firm habits of these principles that a long continuance of very slow practice is recommended, even for those whose voices are naturally flexible…without this slow work, many would find themselves deceived in regard to their abilities in this direction; even should a trill be acquired, it would probably be a sort of “nervous” action, not always at command and seldom in tune.”80 Where trills are considered, Root suggested the following method:

At first, practice the trill in three ways: 1. Slowly, with the words; 2. Faster, with the martellato touch on each upper note, using any vowel, and 3, as fast as possible, the larynx moving rapidly up and down with the notes. The back of the tongue generally

78 Root, Frederic. *F. W. Root’s School of Singing* (Cincinnati: The John Church Co., 1873), 59.
79 Root, Frederic. *F. W. Root’s School of Singing* (Cincinnati: The John Church Co., 1873), 45.
moves with the larynx. Practice with the word *little* helps to develop a rapid action of the larynx.\textsuperscript{81}

Example 15. Root's use of the word "little" in trill practice.\textsuperscript{82}


CHAPTER 8
CONCLUSION

Frederic Woodman Root took many of the principles of vocal pedagogy that were in usage in his day and earlier and synthesized them into a cohesive method. His resolve to create a thorough and complete method of teaching singing led him to write extensively on the subject. Root’s style of writing was easy to understand, and he went to great lengths to clarify his intentions. This is both rare and refreshing in an area such as voice teaching, where misunderstanding is so common. His exercises, unlike many from the same time period, gave the singers and teachers who used them insight into specific expectations of movements and tone qualities. Because of when he was born, Root was able to have one foot in the more scientific age, and the other in the golden age of bel canto. His thoroughness, attention to detail, and knowledge of how the voice works shows his awareness of the newer scientific approach to singing, but his exercises, style of music writing, and insistence that the student learn everything from the teacher (including musicianship skills) harkens back to earlier days.

Although Root’s writings are outdated in terms of language and musical style, today’s students and teachers could glean much from them. There are not many pedagogical books today that encompass what could be termed a full method, and Root’s writings can be seen as a model for future writings. Most universities have adopted a model of teaching that takes the voice teacher out of the musicianship process. Instead, the student takes aural skills, or ear training classes. Such programs are not always very successful. It could easily be argued that students would work harder on those skills if their voice teacher were the one insisting it be done well. There are also many voice teachers who focus on one or two areas of voice training, to the
detriment of other areas. For example, a teacher may spend much time on interpretation of music, but not on the breathing process. Teaching all the areas involved in developing the voice, as did Frederic Root, would be more appropriate. It is hoped that this research will encourage teachers of singing today look for ways to incorporate instruction for singing for all areas of the singing process.
APPENDIX A

KEY RELATIONSHIPS AND INTERVALS
KEY RELATIONSHIP AND INTERVALS.

One who cultivates the voice without educating the mind in those things which make up musicianship is receiving imperceptible training.

The following exercises should be practised with those in the vocal training department, beginning with the first lessons.

It is taken for granted that the pupil is familiar with the fundamentals of scales, keys, notes, accidents and intervals; also with enough knowledge of the piano or organ to play chords slowly with one hand.

This exercise is in the key of C Major and is composed of chords which have a natural harmonic relationship with each other.

The explanations which follow all refer to this series of chords.

In each chord may be found three intervals. In the first voice, for example, are two thirds and a fifth; in the second there is a third, a fourth and a sixth; and so on.

Upon such harmonies as these and many that one gives later, all music is built and is thoroughly mastering them the pupil loses the thrill, rest and subtlety of music.

Practice these harmonies in the four ways shown below. Let the instrument be used exactly as indicated. Never try to save the mind the trouble of thinking out a pitch. Think out every pitch in its relationship in some pitch that is remembered, the keynote for instance, or from the preceding chord that has just been studied. Learn to distinguish different pitches as they are found together in a chord. Cultivate the memory of pitch, so that, for instance, the keynote can be remembered even after much modulation.

Try to hear in the mind all the notes of a chord, as one sound is made. Remember that normal training is the object here.

Another way to which these exercises may be presented is advantage in having them sung by three or four voices as trio or quartet, the voices changing until each has sung every part.

The four-part exercise shows by double notes when two voices come together upon a single pitch. Always notice the key, major or minor, before singing as exercises. Syllable practice as taught by prevailing methods is an excellent help to music reading; but syllables are not to be used here. It will best aid in music reading a practice in writing music and chords from dictation or from memory.

1. Sing syllables (not exact voiced in syringo) here sounding, playing it on the instrument at the same time.

N.B.—The pupil must do her own playing, but must not fail in the temptation to help her by playing simple notes here and there where difficulty is found.

2. Sing chords in soprano form, descending, playing as before.

N.B.—Do not use syllables (not) as there is no use, in any of these exercises (for). Try to get the notes of the chords in several different orders: 1, 3, 5 and 6; 1, 3, 6 and 5; 1, 5 and 3; 6, 3, 1 and 5; 3, 5 and 1; 6, 5 and 1, etc., sounding as above.

3. Sing the highest of the three parts, playing the other two parts as accompaniment.

N.B.—Do not use hands on the instrument the part that is being sung.

4. Sing the middle part, playing the highest and lowest parts as accompaniment.

5. Sing the lowest part, playing the highest and middle parts.

N.B.—In the four-part exercises treat the additional part in the same manner. There are no chords which, though they have but three pitches, are expressed with four notes. The double notes show how the four parts proceed through each chord.

6. Sing in scale form, sounding the notes included in each of the three (or four) intervals in each chord, playing the chords as accompaniment.

N.B.—In order to impress each interval upon the mind, it may be well to sing neutral notes in between; otherwise too be treated in four-part exercises as though each were expressed with lost pair notes.
Learn to "Hear with the Eye and See with the Ear."

8. Take the key-note; then sing the chords in accupie-form according to the key of C, but do not play a chord until after it has been sung.

Example:

Example:

E.N.-Sing the double notes in one note.

9. Take the key-note; then sing the chords downward as in No. 2, playing each chord after it has been sung.

Example:

Example:

10. Take the key-note; then make a figure upon each tone of each chord, using the half-step below.

Example:

Example:

Example:

11. Put an appoggiatura before each note of each chord, using the half-step below.

Example:

Example:

Example:

12. Put an appoggiatura before each note of the dominant tone above.

Example:

Example:

Example:

13. Put an appoggiatura before each note, using the diatonic tones above.

Example:

Example:

Example:

14. Sing the first seven chord exercises in the minor mode, as if the signature of D, E, or A were above, No. 11 and B flat, with the following directions for practice with each: always sing parts of the minor mode, as it is in the harmonic minor scale.

Repetition for Practice.—The pupil may take the first two, two, or more of the exercises according to the first direction for practice given above and recite them for the first lesson. For the second lesson, additional exercises may be taken according to the first direction; or the same exercises may be taken according to the second direction, and so on until all of the fourteen exercises have been mastered in the fourteen ways. This may take from one to three years. The tenth, eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth directions for practice should not be followed until the pupil has made good progress with all the others. The first nine should be taken up early.

Chords may be marked in the second column when the fourteen exercises have been done in nine ways.

1. 

2. 

3. 

4. 

5. 

6. 

7. 

8. 

9. 

10. 

11. 

12. 

13. 

14. 

Barriers.—It is not enough to understand rhythm. Rhythm must be practiced in order that the rhythmic sense may become keen. Beat time is the best thing for this purpose. Include the following exercises in daily practice from the first, taking one, two or more each time. Receive one or more to the teacher each lesson until all are thoroughly mastered. Rhythm may be marked in the second column when the first twelve exercises and Nos. 14, 21, 26 and 29 are well done.

N.B.—Sing with the hand in exactly the motion described.
APPENDIX B

SMALL VOICE EXERCISE
Directions--Vocalize the following exercise with careful observance of these points:
1. Place the high tone securely upon the pitch before beginning the crescendo
2. Keep the sensation of tone as high in the head as it will go.
3. Open the mouth fully on the high notes by dropping the jaw loosely.
The pitch F may be omitted at first if too high. This exercise may also be used at lower pitches.
APPENDIX C

MALE REGISTER EXERCISES
Practice by half-steps to as high a key as can be taken easily.

Chest  Medium  Falsetto  Medium  Chest  \( f \) \( mf \) \( PPP \) \( mf \) \( f \)

\begin{align*}
\text{ah} & \quad \text{e} & \quad \text{oo} & \quad \text{e} & \quad \text{ah} & \quad \text{ah} & \quad \text{ah} & \quad \text{ah} & \quad \text{ah} & \quad \text{ah} \\
\text{ah} & \quad \text{ah} & \quad \text{ah} & \quad \text{ah} & \quad \text{ah} & \quad \text{ah} & \quad \text{ah} & \quad \text{ah} & \quad \text{ah} & \quad \text{ah} \\
\text{e} & \quad \text{e} & \quad \text{e} & \quad \text{e} & \quad \text{e} & \quad \text{e} & \quad \text{e} & \quad \text{e} & \quad \text{e} & \quad \text{e} \\
o & \quad o & \quad o & \quad o & \quad o & \quad o & \quad o & \quad o & \quad o & \quad o \\
\end{align*}

Practice slowly enough to observe all the marks and to make changes of register smoothly.

Chest  Medium  Falsetto  Medium  Chest  \( f \) \( mf \) \( PPP \) \( mf \) \( f \)

\begin{align*}
\text{ah} & \quad \text{e} & \quad \text{oo} & \quad \text{e} & \quad \text{ah} & \quad \text{ah} & \quad \text{ah} & \quad \text{ah} & \quad \text{ah} & \quad \text{ah} \\
\text{ah} & \quad \text{ah} & \quad \text{ah} & \quad \text{ah} & \quad \text{ah} & \quad \text{ah} & \quad \text{ah} & \quad \text{ah} & \quad \text{ah} & \quad \text{ah} \\
\text{e} & \quad \text{e} & \quad \text{e} & \quad \text{e} & \quad \text{e} & \quad \text{e} & \quad \text{e} & \quad \text{e} & \quad \text{e} & \quad \text{e} \\
o & \quad o & \quad o & \quad o & \quad o & \quad o & \quad o & \quad o & \quad o & \quad o \\
\end{align*}

Falsetto  Medium  Chest  Medium  Falsetto  \( PPP \) \( p \) \( f \) \( p \) \( PPP \)

\begin{align*}
\text{lah} & \quad \text{lah} & \quad \text{lah} & \quad \text{lah} & \quad \text{lah} & \quad \text{ah} \\
\text{kee} & \quad \text{kee} & \quad \text{kee} & \quad \text{kee} & \quad \text{kee} & \quad \text{e} \\
\text{no} & \quad \text{no} & \quad \text{no} & \quad \text{no} & \quad \text{no} & \quad \text{o} \\
\end{align*}

C  M  F  M  C  \( mf \) \( ppp \)

\begin{align*}
\text{Fah} & \quad \text{fah} & \quad \text{fah} & \quad \text{fah} & \quad \text{fah} & \quad \text{ah} \\
\text{May} & \quad \text{may} & \quad \text{may} & \quad \text{may} & \quad \text{may} & \quad \text{a} \\
\text{Nee} & \quad \text{nee} & \quad \text{nee} & \quad \text{nee} & \quad \text{nee} & \quad \text{e} \\
\text{Lo} & \quad \text{lo} & \quad \text{lo} & \quad \text{lo} & \quad \text{lo} & \quad \text{o} \\
\end{align*}

\( f \) \( mf \) \( p \) \( PPP \) \( PPP \) \( pp \) \( p \) \( mf \) \( PPP \) \( f \)

\begin{align*}
\text{ah} & \quad \text{ah} & \quad \text{ah} & \quad \text{ah} & \quad \text{ah} & \quad \text{ah} & \quad \text{ah} & \quad \text{ah} & \quad \text{ah} \\
\text{a} & \quad \text{a} & \quad \text{a} & \quad \text{a} & \quad \text{a} & \quad \text{a} & \quad \text{a} & \quad \text{a} & \quad \text{a} \\
\text{e} & \quad \text{e} & \quad \text{e} & \quad \text{e} & \quad \text{e} & \quad \text{e} & \quad \text{e} & \quad \text{e} & \quad \text{e} \\
o & \quad o & \quad o & \quad o & \quad o & \quad o & \quad o & \quad o & \quad o \\
\end{align*}

The union of the medium and head register does not require special study, as it is ordinarily effected without difficulty. However, sometimes the head tone is not distinct, and vacillates between these notes:

This imperfection can be easily remedied by aiming to produce upon the D the same quality of tone as that which naturally comes out on F.

It is better that the head tone should commence on than on

No. 18.

Moderato.

C C C C C M M M M

Piano.

m.s.

M H H H H H H H H

This image contains music notation from Carlo Bassini's 'Bassini's Art of Singing' (San Diego: Plural Publishing, 2008), p. 29.
ANALYTICAL STUDIES IN VOICE CULTURE.

NO. 5.
The tone focus. Resonance in the "masque." The middle register.

FREDERIC W. ROOT

The rippling
They sail a-

The stream sings its song;
In gay array the wavelets

way at break of day,
APPENDIX E

RADICAL AH EXERCISE
ANALYTICAL STUDIES IN VOICE CULTURE.

No. 6.

Loud or soft high tones. Small register. Mezza voce. Open mouth.

To be sung with no visible nor audible distortion. At each open vowel the jaw is to be fully dropped, the lips remaining relaxed.

Andante grazioso.

FREDERIC W. ROOT.

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Ah
The long procession moves through green glades
Ah

Ah
dever on with footsteps slow
Ah

Ah
Till lost to sight the pilgrims go
Ah

Ah!
Is the pilgrimage for weal or woe?
ah for weal or woe?

ni po tu la

ah ah ah
On ward on ward they wind a long
be da me ni po tu la be

ah ah ah
Far ther far ther the pil grim throung
da me ni po tu la be da
APPENDIX F

BREATHING CYCLE EXERCISE
No. 3.

Deep noiseless inhalation, through lips and nostrils, with abdominal, costal, and clavicular action. Giving out breath with 1. restraint, 2. relaxing and 3. compression, (sinking inward at abdomen sides and back.)

Andantino.

Copyright 1900 by Frederic W. Root.
da me ni po

The breeze of sum

Inhale (3 actions) Hold, Restrain

me ni po tu la be da
whispers to the world a-sleep

da me ni
of orbs that

Inhale (3) Hold, Restrain
APPENDIX G

RESTRAINT OF BREATH
INTRODUCTORY LESSONS IN VOICE CULTURE No. 5.
Breath management in properly sustaining a phrase to the end.
FREDERICK W. ROOT. Op. 32.

PREPARATORY EXERCISES.
1. Inhale fully, taking air both through the partially closed lips and the nostrils.
2. Gradually expel the breath completely with the sensation of sinking or narrowing the small of the back;
   (the sides and abdomen will be included.)
3. Hum "m" for three to five seconds, gradually raising outward the upper chest in front.


5. Moderate; ad lib.

Court from 1 to 16 or further, first holding the long cavity distended, then relaxing the inspiratory muscles, then contracting. Note above: Stop the court when the chest begins to fall or the sides to press outward. In lesson No. 9 hold the last note of each phrase as long as can be done without effort of the upper chest.
APPENDIX H

COMMENTS FROM ROOT'S *NEW COURSE*
1. Tone is Made and Shaped by Muscular Action; Train this Action Patiently
2. First exercises must be done with Mechanical Accuracy rather than Musical Effect.
3. Good Breath Management is worth all the Time and Effort that it Costs.
4. A small Amount of Breath will Suffice, if it is well Managed.
5. One Step Prepares for Another. Be Thorough.
6. A good Method of Singing is a Collection of good Habits.
7. Accurate Intonation is the Singer’s First Concern.
8. Seemingly Endless Repetition may be Required to form a Habit.
9. Compel Thought and Attention, but do not Force the Voice.
10. To the Ambitious Student the best Progress will seem Slow.
11. Years of Practice are Required to fully Form the Voice.
12. Cultivated Musical Thought and Perception and Indispensable to Good Singing
13. Do not Judge of Final Results from First Attempts.
14. Take Breath in such a Manner as not to Dry the Throat.
15. Martellato; at first Heavy and Slow; afterward Light and Rapid.
16. Quality Before Quantity of Voice.
17. Be sure to use the Small Register on Upper Notes.
19. The Singer’s Eye and Ear must be Trained as Fully as the Voice.
20. Learn to “Hear with the Eye and See with the Ear.”
22. Beat the Time of every New Piece used in the First and Second Grades.
23. Do not be Satisfied to Sing by Ear.
24. Singing is not an Art unless it shows Imagination and Fervor.
25. Always Assume an Active Attitude while Singing.
26. Do you Know the Key of every Piece you sing?
27. Take Deep Breaths and Manage them Economically.
28. Every Pitch Sung should be Read, not Guessed at.
29. Always practice with a definite Object in Mind.
30. Sing every Note Absolutely in Tune.
31. Good clear Timbre is a Strong Foundation for Good Method.
32. Do not Neglect Practice According to the Groups.
33. The Will to Do a Thing is the Main Factor in its Accomplishment.
34. A Singer should Pronounce the Language Better than Others.
35. The Face should express Sentiment, not Physical Effort.
36. Economize Breath, Especially at the First Note of a Phrase.
37. Are the High Tones Always in the Correct Register?
38. Is every Vowel Sound Pure and Musical?
39. Keep the Tip of the Tongue in Place for all Vowel Sounds.
40. Give Tones a Hearty Sound with Vibrations in the Chest.
41. Learn to make Soft Tones Intense and Expressive.
42. Assume the Mood of a Piece in order to Express it Properly.
43. Perfect Attack Contributes much to Refined Style in Singing.
44. Beware of Unintentional Sliding to or from Tones.
45. Be Especially Careful to make Final Consonants Distinct.
46. Avoid Meaningless Motions and all Mannerisms.
47. Give Constant Practice to the Bright Forward Tone.
48. Learn to Breathe Deeply, yet Quickly and Noiselessly.
49. Practice to Execute the Quick Passages Clearly.
50. Let the Throat do its work well, but let no Throat Effort be Heard.
51. Accuracy in Vowel Utterance Indicates General as well Vocal Culture.
52. A Simple, Earnest Utterance aids both Method and Expression.
53. Be careful not to make the First Note of a Phrase too Loud.
54. Do not allow the Voice to Shake; keep it Steady and Smoothly Resonant.
55. Good Singing is more Dependent upon Good Taste than upon Fine Voice.
56. The tone focus in the principle thing in Voice Culture.
57. Make words as Distinct in Singing as in Speaking.
58. Action at the Larynx should be Unconscious.
59. A Vivid Imagination will Color the Tone Effectively.
60. Let the Expression of Face and Manner Help the Expressiveness of Tone.
61. Exact Rhythm will help, not Hinder, a Good Style of Performance.
62. Work Constantly to Improve all Items of Technique.
63. Sustain each Phrase Steadily and Completely.
64. Shade Phrases with Elegance and Symmetry.
65. Make the Sound of the Voice accord with the Character of the Song.
66. Make the Note before a Breathing Place shorter than its Value, unless there is a rest.

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