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AN ANALYSIS OF TWENTY-FIVE VOCAL
METHODS OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

THESIS

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INTRODUCTION

The following study is designed to define the existing differences of opinion regarding the solution of vocal problems. Some twenty-five vocal methods have been examined with reference to the principles set forth on what are generally considered the most important vocal problems, viz., Breathing, Registers, Resonance, Tone, and Interpretation.

In undertaking this comparison, I have been motivated by a realization that such vocal methods exist in great numbers and that, from one to another, the viewpoints advanced often express a totally different set of principles. The same extremes of opinion, herein shown to exist among the writers of vocal methods, are quite naturally prevalent among the voice instructors who teach these systems. It is important to keep this in mind, for the vocal method is not often used without the interpretive guidance of an instructor. The value of such methods if used exclusively in formulating techniques and solving vocal problems is questionable for many reasons. There is certainly no guarantee that good voice production will result if all the prescribed conditions are met. The attempt to explain in words, exclusive of demonstration or correction, the various adjustments involved in the production of good vocal tone is

almost sure to lead to misinterpretation on the part of many readers, for these adjustments are subtle, and the all-important element of individual diagnosis is lacking. But it is through the vocal method that we gain a knowledge of what occurs in the private studio and the voice class, for most of the methods are compiled by successful teachers with a wide following of students and other teachers. Of concern to the person interested in the present state of vocal pedagogy is the fact that very little effort has been made to reduce these various systems to some common denominator; to form a set of working principles, no matter how small, which would be agreeable to the great body of vocal teachers who either perpetuate the older methods or have evolved their own. In accounting for the reasons why the vocal art is surrounded by so much mystery it has often been observed that singing is largely an individual technical adjustment; that given two fine teachers, one may be good for a certain student, while another will be of no service to him whatsoever. Perhaps herein lies a justification for the existence of so many methods. Each certainly does bear a distinctive mark and many are actually nothing more than personalized accounts of individual reactions and adjustments expanded into general principles. If the student could be sure that all methods were in basic agreement on at

least the fundamentals of correct condition and tone¹, then, still admitting a wide variation in teaching ability, he could freely choose the method or teacher dictated by propinquity or resources. He would at least have the assurance that he would not be led to vocal ruin. Unfortunately there is no evidence supporting the existence of such a common meeting ground.

The approach used has been to state first the problem and then to quote the various opinions held. Direct quotes are used as often as possible in order to avoid the possibility of misinterpretation or improper emphasis. The reader must bear in mind that the treatment of each problem is not merely an accumulation of isolated, contradictory statements. These statements are representative of "schools" of thinking, and except where otherwise mentioned, either view is supported by various other methods. No attempt will be made to tabulate the results or to express a majority opinion except where such opinion is definitely known to be extant. Such a tabulation would have no validity unless it were the result of a completely exhaustive survey of all existing vocal methods.

The following summary of divergent opinion is designed

¹See Chapter V, p.

to demonstrate the need for a greater standardization of
and more complete agreement on tone, condition, terminology,
method of approach, etc.

CHAPTER I

PHYSIOLOGY

In compiling a vocal method, an author usually employs an approach which calls to its support the elements of vocal physiology and its attendant reliance upon scientific findings, or he will favor a description of the sensations, psychological and physical, involved in singing. Often the author will declare emphatically for or against the importance of the student's understanding of scientific method and vocal anatomy. Such conflicting views on basic approach, existing before those of a more technical nature, characterize the state of vocal pedagogy as it exists today. In stating the case for the study of physiology Emil-Behnke says:

An understanding of the wonderful and delicate mechanism of voice and of articulation will prevent trouble. There has been much prejudice against 'scientific' training. But science simply means knowledge, systematic and formulated knowledge. Every art has its underlying science It is constantly urged that explanations of vocal physiology will of necessity make singers conscious of the parts they are using. This is not the case. If the vocal mechanism as a whole be carefully explained at the outset of training and exercises then given for each part of it separately, correct working follows when in due course they are co-ordinated, and precisely because they are functioning correctly there is no awareness of them It is the singer who knows nothing of the wonderful mechanism that he is using who is miserably conscious of wrong use, and in nine cases out of ten he attributes the trouble

to something quite other than the true cause.¹

In what is an essentially scientific approach to the problems of voice production, we find further support of this concept.

Many books have been written on vocal technic which, within their limitations, are in a few cases interesting. On the whole, however, they fail in that they are based on a viewpoint which is conspicuously narrow and because of inherited errors which these writers are not in a position to discover.

Because most vocal teachers are not scientists, and in fact are as a class likely to shy from scientific data, some simple facts which anyone can easily master loom in magnitude to the proportions of great mysteries

The trained voice may properly be considered as a musical instrument, the constitution of which is known to physiologists and the action of which is subject to the laws of the physics of sound. Any statements which disregard these known facts and laws are worthless or worse than worthless.²

Westerman, in advocating scientific investigation, indicates many of the devices in use today as well as the various fields explored by the vocal physiologist.

The voice teaching profession is at the beginning of its final development, the era of examined data. It has passed the infancy of imitation, the youth of empirical findings, and is now starting on the maturity of scientific investigation through the use of the phonograph, amplifier, cathode ray oscillograph, high speed camera, X-ray, harmonic analyser, galvanometer, kymograph, stroboscope, auto-laryngoscope, and all the other aids to the voice scientist which electrical and engineering research have developed.

¹Kate Emil-Behnke, The Technique of Singing, pp. 17-18.

²H. H. Sheldon, quoted in Preface to Douglas Stanley's The Science of Voice, p. II.

Emergent Voice represents the accumulation of the present knowledge of voice teaching by careful correlation of the known facts in the fields of anatomy, physiology, neurology, psychology, embryology, endocrinology, physics, sound engineering, phonetics, biolinguistics, speech, speech reading, and singing.³

It is not difficult to find support for these arguments but the above quotations will suffice to state the case for the scientific approach.

An examination of the opposite view shows an equally impressive mass of supporting evidence. The "evils of vocal physiology" are described by Alma Powell in Advanced School of Vocal Art:

The foolish tendency to dissect vocal action, is productive of much evil. I spent years in trying to hold down the back of my tongue, and more years in studying diaphragmatic and abdominal breathing. Both resulted in serious inflammation of the abused organs. Will the mastication of your food be more thoroughly accomplished by a knowledge of the position of the muscles when the teeth close upon the food? I wasted much time, and sang in a worse manner afterward. The quality of the thought gives the degree of refinement in rendition.⁴

P. Mario Marafioti, personal physician to Enrico Caruso throughout the latter's singing career, does not admit the value of vocal anatomy study as it concerns the student of voice. He advocates only passing mention of elementary anatomy to the student.

³Kenneth N. Westerman, Emergent Voice, p. vii.

⁴Alma Webster Powell, Advanced School of Vocal Art, p. 7.

But a thorough anatomical study of the different organs of the vocal apparatus is not really necessary for the comprehension of the principles of voice culture. Such information may be necessary for teachers, but it is as unnecessary for the student to know the different muscles and cartilages of the larynx as it is for the dancer to have a detailed anatomical knowledge of the muscles of the legs. Too much emphasis has been placed upon the necessity of the study of anatomy for pupils.⁵

The attitude of the famous American teacher Herbert Witherspoon with regard to vocal science seems less positive than those stated above, but the fact that Witherspoon almost never resorts to anatomical discussion in his singing method would imply a lack of sympathy with this approach.

The first class [books which are or attempt to be purely scientific] has given us to a large extent the "local effort" school; the school which teaches to stress certain acts with definitely separated organs such as the palate, tongue, larynx, fauces, lips, diaphragm, abdominal muscles, back muscles, facial muscles, the feet, legs, buttocks, and in fact every part of our unsuspecting anatomies

.
I have little patience with many of the antiquated ideas often brought forward as truths long established, many of which are of doubtful origin, nor with much of the so-called "science" of voice masquerading under a cloak of verbosity⁶

So much for vocal physiology. It is interesting to note in passing that, in the various methods examined, these divergent viewpoints showed no marked tendency toward resolution. The methods quoted cover a wide span of years on both sides of the controversy.

⁵P. Mario Marafioti, Caruso's Method of Voice Production, p. 58.

⁶Herbert Witherspoon, Singing, pp. 2-3.

CHAPTER II

THE BREATH

Importance of the Breath

How important is the breath in singing? As in the other phases of vocal technique, opinion runs the scale. Emil-Behnke gives the breath the place of primary importance in the singing act.

If any one part of the vocal mechanism can be said to be more important than another it is that of Breathing. It is the motive-power of voice, and it is to tone what bowing is to violin playing. Singing should not be commenced till the correct way to breathe is understood, and the requisite exercises have been practised to bring the breath under control.¹

Klein is prompted to an even stronger statement of the importance of the breath.

Although scientific Breathing stands both at the base and the apex of the whole vocal structure, it is, nevertheless, the thing most neglected and most misunderstood in the average modern practice of this art. Correct instruction in respiration is, I think, the feature which chiefly differentiates the good teacher from the bad, the efficient master from the charlatan who misleads, cheats, and defrauds the innocent and unwary pupil.²

Taking the view that the importance of the breath is greatly overemphasized, Stanley advocates the use of any

¹Emil-Behnke, op. cit., p. 23.

²Herman Klein, The Bel Canto, p. 20.

means in ridding singers of the "breath conscious" attitude.

In most books dealing with the subject of vocal technic the question of breathing is given the place of first importance. In this work mention of the breath appears only after . . . [other questions] . . . have been discussed. . . .

.
Thus the average, undeveloped vital capacity is more than sufficient for any conceivable requirement under really good technical conditions. . . .

.
Indeed the first and greatest task for the teacher, . . . is the engendering of the idea that the pupil must forget all about breath during the act of phonation. . . .

.
The fundamental law of breathing is that the pupil must be taught to inspire properly and then forget all about the breath.³

Marafioti takes a similar attitude toward breathing.

Breath is an indispensable factor in voice production, but it is not the essential power which develops the voice as it is taught to-day. On the contrary, the function of singing develops the breathing apparatus and its power, just as any physiological function develops the organ from which it takes origin. Therefore, singing develops breathing, not breathing, singing.⁴

Natural vs. Unnatural Breathing

Two contradictory statements will be necessary to define a further disparity of opinion on breathing techniques. As previously stated, these quotations are not of

³Stanley, op. cit., pp. 91 ff.

⁴Marafioti, op. cit., p. 86.

an isolated nature and could, with little effort, be supplemented on either side. They are, rather, representations of the polarity of thought on matters of vocal technique.

Regarding natural breathing, Witherspoon says:

There has been more arrant nonsense written about the breathing of the singer than upon anything else except local action and resonance.

The breathing of the singer is purely natural, should never be forced, and does not differ from the breathing used by every normal, healthy human being for any unusual physical activity.⁵

The objection in this case, is sharply worded by Florence Lamont Hinman:

"Breathe naturally" is a stupid slogan for singers, for there is as much difference between the weight of the singing tone and that of ordinary speech as between lifting a chair and lifting a pencil.⁶

The Methods of Inhalation

How should the singer breathe--through the nose, the mouth, or both? Here the opinion is split all three ways and of the authors examined at least two could be quoted in support of any particular one of these methods of inhalation.

For the cause of nose inhalation, Frantz Proschowsky says:

Nature teaches us to breathe through the nose, so do not depart from that rule. I realize the great difficulty of overcoming the error of mouth-breathing, which is almost impossible where the singer has become

⁵Witherspoon, op. cit., p. 55.

⁶Florence L. Hinman, Slogans for Singers, p. 4.

accustomed to it; but determination in exercises can overcome this.⁷

In complete disagreement is Marchesi.

In speaking, he [man] breathes through the mouth, and when exerting himself in any way, he finds breathing through the nose impossible. The same thing happens in singing, and to a much greater extent. There the lungs must be filled to their utmost capacity, quickly and noiselessly, and never could a deep, quick, and noiseless breath be taken through the nose, for the velocity of breathing in song is too great.⁸

Witherspoon negotiates the middle course and sums up the case for a combination of nose and mouth breathing.

As the singer employs both diaphragmatic and rib breathing, he inhales through both nose and mouth.

.....
 If we inhale through the nose alone, the vocal organs, especially the palate, fauces, etc., must take certain positions in order to admit the passage of air. Again, if we inhale entirely through the mouth, the same organs must assume certain positions for the same purpose, the passage of air. Therefore, if we take breath through both nose and mouth together, the same organs must take certain positions different from either of the above. This means that the correct breathing of the singer gives a certain "vocal position" of the voice organs, which is exactly what happens.⁹

Methods of Breathing

An examination of various breathing methods makes apparent the need for a consistent terminology among singers and

⁷Frantz Proschowsky, The Way to Sing, p. 46.

⁸Blanche Marchesi, The Singer's Catechism and Creed, p. 4.

⁹Witherspoon, op. cit., pp. 58-59

teachers of voice. After careful consideration, it can be seen that what appear on the surface to be flat contradictions, really amount to differences in terminology rather than principle; what appears as utter confusion may actually represent the point of greatest agreement among the vocal pedagogues. Of those who would mention a "system" of breathing at all, four terms are referred to. They are: (1) Clavicular Breathing, (2) Costal or Rib Breathing, (3) Diaphragmatic Breathing and (4) Abdominal Breathing. It is in the definitions of these terms that the basic disagreements arise. The first two offer no problem in definition. Clavicular Breathing is the process of breathing in the upper part of the chest, and is accomplished by hunching the shoulders, raising the chest abnormally high, and contracting the neck muscles. Costal Breathing is described as rib breathing and is accomplished by forcing the lower ribs apart during inspiration and holding them in this position during expiration. These definitions would be acceptable to all and neither were endorsed singly or in combination with the other as an exclusive method for breathing. Diaphragmatic Breathing is capable of several interpretations. The importance of the diaphragm muscle is recognized in varying degree in all the methods examined which chose to deal even superficially with the physiology of the breath, but for some the term Diaphragmatic Breathing

means only the action of the diaphragm muscle, for others it incorporates some of the elements of Costal Breathing, and for others it employs the muscles of the abdomen. Emil-Behnke says that Diaphragmatic Breathing is the true system of breathing and is accomplished by the controlled distension and contraction of the diaphragm muscle. This act will cause the lower ribs to expand and fall as the diaphragm works. This will, of course, deny any action to the Intercostal muscles in holding the ribs apart.

The idea that the Intercostal muscles take any active part in inspiration, or in the control of expiration, is totally erroneous. . . . Certainly the ribs can be moved outwards by the employment of force, with or without inspiration taking place; but a dispassionate examination of the gentle moving upwards and outwards in natural breathing shows that it is a totally different matter. This takes place spontaneously and without effort, quite involuntarily;¹⁰

Speaking for a combined Diaphragmatic and Costal action, Westerman states an opposite view and, at the same time, makes Diaphragmatic and Abdominal Breathing synonymous.

Intercostal (rib) and Diaphragmatic (abdominal) breathing should never be treated as separate types. Their overlapping and blending of muscular actions make them inseparable. . . . Diaphragm contraction and rib expansion combined give the lungs their greatest controlled capacity.¹¹

Abdominal Breathing also seems to have a variety of interpretations:

¹⁰Emil-Behnke, op. cit., pp. 28-29.

¹¹Westerman, op. cit., p. 14.

In this [Abdominal Breathing] the lower ribs remain practically inactive, and the diaphragm in its descent pushes the soft parts under it forward, causing a 'bulge' below the belt. This should under no circumstances take place.¹²

In sanctioning what he calls Abdominal breathing Klein offers the following definition:

One seldom hears talk of abdominal breathing. It is this filling of the lowest part of the lungs . . . which not only flattens . . . the hidden diaphragm, but prepares for its contraction. . . .¹³

Declaring himself for "Deep Breathing", Ruff manages to work three different concepts into his system.

When the rib-breathing has the support of the abdominal muscle, so that it can regulate the action of the diaphragm both in front and at the sides, we can reach the lowest cells of the lungs. . .

.
As abdominal breathing is commonly believed to be only that action, which is brought about by the bulging out of the abdominal muscle in front, leaving the sides to take care of themselves, we wish to make a distinction between it and deep breathing, showing that it is not till we have the two combined, and under distinct control, that we have all the resources of breath under our command.¹⁴

We observe from the above that the problem of breathing is at least localized at the base of the lungs, and one gets the impression from a careful perusal of these various methods that in many instances, what appear to be

¹²Emil-Behnke, op. cit., p. 28.

¹³Klein, op. cit., p. 21.

¹⁴Albert Ruff, Vocal Fundamentals, p. 81.

contradictory statements are really nothing more than the use of different terms to explain the same physical processes.

Controlled and Uncontrolled Expiration

On the importance of controlling expiration,

Westerman says:

Good posture is the foundation of controlled respiration, and controlled respiration is the foundation upon which the whole voice emergence depends.

Singing is an act of controlled expiration.¹⁵

On the same subject Stanley writes:

Probably the greatest and most injurious fallacy propounded by many vocal teachers is the idea that the breath should be voluntarily controlled during the act of phonation. By "breath-control" is meant the control, by means of the expiratory muscles, of the expiration of the breath during the act of phonation. The vocal student is told that he must control the rate of expiration of the breath all the time he is singing. This curious notion is developed to such a degree that the pupil is actually given exercises for "controlling the breath."¹⁶

"Breath Control" Exercises

Many voice teachers are firm believers in breathing exercises practised separately from the singing act. Of the methods studied, opinion was about equally divided concerning the advisability of such exercises.

¹⁵Westerman, op. cit., pp. 13-14.

¹⁶Stanley, op. cit., p. 91.

Singing should not be commenced till the correct way to breathe is understood, and the requisite exercises have been practised to bring the breath under control.

. . . The value of this to the singer will be readily appreciated, for muscles which are employed for use which goes beyond ordinary function must be subjected to special training.¹⁷

Witherspoon thinks differently:

I would also strongly advise against "breathing exercises" practised separately from the singing act. Because of the laws already given, because we are dealing with coordinate acts, because of the laws governing the intensity of the breath effort and the relation of the breath action to vocal position, breathing should be practised only with the singing act.¹⁸

One cannot help but be impressed by the dogmatic manner in which the above views are expressed. Might not such a question as the importance to the singer of studying respiration conceivably be capable of many different answers ranging from one extreme to the other? There is a danger in assuming that all voices are to be dealt with from the same point of departure and that all will require the same treatment. Yet one would never learn from a perusal of the average vocal method that anything but a strict application of the principles set forth should be attempted. Surely the competent voice teacher would not tamper with that rare, talented singer whose vocal breathing habits are in complete adjustment, who "breathes naturally," any more than he would

¹⁷Emil-Behnke, op. cit., p. 23.

¹⁸Witherspoon, op. cit., p. 63.

casually advise that singer to "breathe naturally" whose great obstacle to correct vocal adjustment is the lack of a more complete knowledge of the part played by the breath in singing. And so with other aspects of breathing and with vocal problems in general one might argue for a general tempering of those principles, the application of which might well be left to a "common sense" interpretation.

CHAPTER III

RESONANCE

An intriguing aspect of voice production is that of resonance. The subject is a favorite one with voice teachers and, as might be expected from the above comparisons, vastly different ideas as to what constitutes resonance in singing have been advanced. What transforms the vibrations of the comparatively small vocal bands into large, resonant tone? In a sense, it is an academic question and even the physiologist, who feels that he has correctly defined the resonators, can put the information to little practical use aside from recommending minor adjustments of mouth or soft palate. Nevertheless, all methods, physiological or psychological admit the desirability of and "endorse" resonance directly or by implication, and most of them attempt to explain it.

In a predominantly scientific study, Stanley and Maxfield list the resonators as follows:

- a. Adjustable cavities:--
 1. The mouth.
 2. The laryngeal pharynx--the top of the throat.
 3. The oral pharynx--the cavity behind the mouth.
 4. The nasal pharynx--the cavity behind the soft palate.

- b. Non-adjustable cavities:--
1. The post-nasal cavities--the cavities of the nose.
 2. The trachea and bronchi--the air passages below the larynx.
 3. The sinuses of the head.¹

Evetts and Worthington discount most of these categories and make the claim that neither chest, sinuses, nose, skull, bones, nor trunk figure as resonators.

The cavity through which the voice passes between the larynx and the lips is therefore known as the resonator of the voice. And although this cavity consists anatomically of several parts, namely, the pharynx and the mouth, and a branch, the nasopharynx, extending up behind the nose, we may regard it as a single resonator of special shape, as will shortly be described. It has been frequently stated that the chest acts also as a resonator of the voice. This is not the case, . . . The nasal sinuses have also been described as resonators. Their openings, however, are much too small to allow of their acting in this way. The unimportance of the nose, . . . in resonation, is shown by lightly occluding the nostrils with the fingers during phonation. . . Neither, as has been suggested, do the bones of the skull or the trunk act as resonators . . .²

Marafioti considers the whole body a resonator for the voice:

We say body cavities, because we venture to assert that the human body, in all its cavities, acts as a big resonator for the voice.

Although a chest and masque resonance, originating from the chest, the antrum and frontal sinuses, are generally admitted, up to the present time no mention has been made of the body resonance. Nevertheless if, according to the laws of acoustics, the vibrations

¹Douglas Stanley and J. P. Maxfield, The Voice, pp. 74-76.

²Edgar Evetts and Robert Worthington, The Mechanics of Singing, pp. 35-37.

travel in every direction, provided they are not intercepted by any obstacle, there is no reason why the sounding waves should stop at the aforementioned cavities of the chest and masque instead of spreading all over the body, getting the resonance of all its other cavities--the head, bones, abdomen, and joints combined.³

It seems safe to assume that in the matter of Resonance, at least, the scientist should have the final word. Vocal resonance is an acoustical phenomenon presumably embodying certain definable properties, and we may yet look to the laboratory for the answers as to what parts of the body act as resonators and to what extent, and which parts merely conduct sound and which amplify. It is possible that scientifically proved answers to these questions would have a direct bearing on pedagogical procedures.

³Marafioti, op. cit., p. 102.

CHAPTER IV

REGISTERS

It has long been the practise among certain voice teachers to "divide" the voice into different sections called registers and to base much of their method on the development and blending of these registers, one into the other. Those who claim that such registers do exist, define them as a series of tones produced when the muscles involved in voice production bear a certain fixed relationship to each other. It is not uncommon to find vocal methods which "table" these registers and advocate strict compliance to the limits prescribed. For example, Marchesi claims that the voice falls into three registers and that for women, the third register starts on F# on the top line of the staff. Men's voices are classified in a similar manner and specific notes are given for the leaving of one register and the entering of another; Marchesi will not admit of anything more than one half-tone deviation from this rule.¹

But the existence of three registers is by no means universally accepted; some teachers admit of an even greater

¹Marchesi, op. cit., 15-21.

number and others accept only one or two. Emil-Behnke sides in with Marchesi in support of three registers:

The existence of these three registers is now very generally recognized--though there is by no means unanimity of opinion as to where one begins and the other ends. . .²

Stanley accepts only two:

There are two groups of muscles (the arytenoid-- . . . and the cricothyroid-- . . . groups) which act as tensors of the vocal cords. . . . The preponderance of effect of one group over the other determines a register. There are consequently two, and only two, registers in the human voice.³

Marafioti holds that these breaks in the voice are nothing more than artificial adjustments of the larynx. No such adjustments, he says, should have to take place:

There are no registers in the singing voice, when it is correctly produced. According to natural laws the voice is made up of only one register, which constitutes its entire range.⁴

Aside from a passing mention, Powell will have nothing to do with the notion:

I purposely avoid setting limits to voices. It is a mistake to tell a soprano that the medium begins upon "E" or "F", and that head tones begin at a certain note. Sound, and sound alone, is the test. For this reason the subject of registers is better left alone.⁵

²Emil-Behnke, op. cit., p. 106.

³Stanley, The Science, p. 59.

⁴Marafioti, op. cit., p. 136.

⁵Powell, op. cit., p. 7.

CHAPTER V

TONE

Falsetto Tone

Most singers have heard that the old Italian voice teachers relied almost exclusively upon falsetto tones in developing the voices of their male students. Today the falsetto as a pedagogical and singing device is not often used and is, in fact, looked down upon by most authorities on voice. Of the methods examined, all but two condemned the use of falsetto tones in singing and in voice training. Voice physiologist Stanley expresses the most concern over the abandonment of the falsetto.

Why the importance of the falsetto has been so completely lost sight of by most vocal teachers is a mystery, since it is perfectly apparent that every great singer uses a developed and properly resonated falsetto, which is actually an integral part of his voice.

.....

Great men singers are born with so complete a co-ordination. . . [that] some of them would be most indignant if they were told that they were using falsetto. . . . When [these] great singers commit themselves to paper they do indeed become quite delightfully childish on this subject. But what does a great singer know of the physics of sound or of physiology? It is not to be expected of him.¹

The opinion of the majority is summed up by Proschowsky:

¹Stanley, The Science, pp. 68-70.

There is yet another method for the producing of tones,--the so-called falsetto or open-glottis method in which the chords do not meet, thereby causing the emitted tone to resemble that of a flute and eventually that of a ventriloquist. Such a production will never develop volume nor possess artistic value.²

The "Way" vs. the "Tone"

A certain school of singing advocates that the approach to good singing be made by first concentrating on the correct way of production. The hypothesis is that singing is a complex art involving subtle adjustments of many physical and psychological factors. If these adjustments are properly made, if the way of singing is correct, then a correct tone will naturally follow. Most prominent exponent of this method is Edmund Myer who states:

Most systems neglect the instrument, the individual, and think of tone or voice only. . . . The study of the way, the way of doing, is at first a thousand times more important than the study of the tone. When the way is right the tone always comes right.³

Marafioti agrees with the above statements, and, in speaking of the singer who relies too heavily on his own conception of good tone, says:

On the other hand, the fact that they have never been accustomed to a normal production of tones makes them unaware of the difference between their voice production and the correct one.

Therefore, they can never see their own defects, just as the ragtime player, while he bangs heavily on

²Proschowsky, op. cit., p. 30.

³Edmund J. Myer, The Vocal Instructor, p. 3.

the piano, cannot see the difference between his playing and the delicate touch of a refined interpreter of Chopin.⁴

But the majority of methods approach singing from the standpoint of the sound of the tone to the singer. Of tone

Witherspoon says:

The singer must not only hear his own voice, but he must continually learn to hear it better, and be able to judge of what he is doing more and more keenly through practice and public experience. Whether he hears his voice exactly as others hear it is not the question. The fact that he hears it at all gives him a basis for comparison for all of his effects, and therefore becomes the guiding factor in his art.⁵

and Ffrangcon-Davies agrees:

They who study the technique of singing will accept those bodily conditions as correct which produce the tones they most admire. . . .

.
Tone is an index to character; the thoughtful singer will therefore set about putting up a high standard for himself; and will seek such methods as will enable him to realise that standard.⁶

Speech Tone and Singing Tone

The oft-quoted axiom "Sing as you would speak," generates considerable difference among the voice authorities. In its acceptance of this principle, one group holds that the two processes of song and speech are so

⁴Marafioti, op. cit., p. 92.

⁵Witherspoon, op. cit., p. 33.

⁶David Ffrangcon-Davies, The Singing of the Future, pp. 105-106.

similar that the well-trained speaker will need no singing directions. Song, they claim, is simply an extenuation of speech and they refer to singing as "sustained speech."

Speaking and singing are similar functions,
produced by the same physiological mechanism; there-
fore they are the same vocal phenomenon. . . .

.
Vocal principles and rules referring to one must
logically apply to the other. . . .

.
Therefore a singing voice molded on the speaking
voice gains the advantage of taking over all its
attributes, characteristics, and qualities.⁷

Unable to accept the implications of such a principle, an
opposing group agrees with Marchesi:

The fact is that every human being can speak without
ever thinking about the process of speech, because it
is a natural function, like any other, man remains
ignorant of the secret that makes all such functions
possible.

It is only when one tries to sing that one
realizes that there are different ways of doing so
--right and wrong ways, painful and painless ways,
attended by pleasant and unpleasant results and
too often by disastrous consequences. Then one
begins to investigate.⁸

The Vibrato

The vibrato consists of a periodic swelling and
a softening of the tone accompanied by a slight rise
and fall of the pitch. This pitch change, however,

⁷Marafioti, op. cit., pp. 115, 112.

⁸Marchesi, op. cit., p. x.

is so small as to be practically imperceptible to the ear except, possibly, at very high intensity when the vibrato is extremely broad.⁹

That the vibrato, which is universally accepted today, was at one time condemned will undoubtedly be a surprise to some readers. When I say "universally" accepted, I speak of solo singing, for in choral singing there exists even today a school of singing (St. Olaf Choir, et al) which holds that absolute "purity" of tone, free from vibrato, is the most effective method of choral singing. It is claimed by authorities on early singing that the vibrato was developed at the Paris Opera somewhere around 1850 as a concession to the more dramatic style of music being composed at the time. Even some of the late nineteenth century composers such as Meyerbeer, Auber, and Gounod are said to have expressed their distaste for the vibrato. The subject is mentioned here in a somewhat facetious vein for nearly all agree that as regards solo singing there can be "no real life or feeling in a voice which lacks vibrato."¹⁰ But in investigating various vocal methods, one by Klein, published in 1923, still advocates an absolutely steady tone for all singers, especially if they would sing the music of Mozart and the older masters.

⁹Stanley, The Science, p. 145.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 175.

In the old Italian school of singing nothing used to be more admired and cultivated than an absolutely steady tone. To-day even in Italy a strong vibrato or a quivering tremolo is generally preferred. Consequently the modern Milanese 'maestro' encourages it.

Whether a trembling tone can ever furnish a satisfactory medium for the singing of Mozart is another question. We have evidence, both internal and external, that the voices for which Mozart wrote did not suffer from this particular drawback.¹¹

In recent years there has been much scientific investigation to determine the nature of the vocal vibrato, with a view to its proper cultivation. All methods examined, physiological or psychological, except Klein, admit the necessity of the vibrato to good singing, but differ as to the means of instilling the impulse in those voices where it is lacking. Westerman claims that the singer should not attempt to build the vibrato by direct means.

A student should not try to build a vibrato into his voice. He should sing with such poise; such easy, flexible muscle actions; such a nicety of balance in muscular controls, that a normal vibrato emerges. Then don't pay any attention to it. Interpret your song. Your vibrato will take care of itself. It is your nerve pulse energy for easy singing. You cannot stand with a good posture and sing clearly and beautifully without it, for it runs your voice.¹²

Stanley approves of training the vibrato into the voice but only after the student achieves a certain degree of technical proficiency:

¹¹Klein, op. cit., p. 25.

¹²Westerman, op. cit., p. 7.

When the muscular system of the vocal organs has been developed to the necessary degree, it is, in practically every case, an easy matter for the pupil to conceive the idea of the periodically applied impulse and, in many cases, the vibrato will appear spontaneously. In brief, then, the vibrato must not be taught until the pupil has learned to hold his throat firm.

Various devices may be used by the teacher in developing the vibrato when it is lacking.¹³

Tone Development

How should the singer practise so as to insure the greatest development of vocal tone? Nearly all vocal methods incorporate a system of exercises designed to develop proper tone. Some advocate positively the ascending scale, some a descending scale, and others, both. Methods of practise is no small point to these authors, who feel that proper results cannot be secured with their method unless the principles expounded in the body of the text are scrupulously followed in the exercises. Powell speaks for those advocating the ascending scale in practise:

It will be noticed that the plan for the sustaining development is based upon the "lifting" of the tones, each exercise ending with sustained but ascending tones.

I raise the voice from the natural speaking position to the higher registers, instead of allowing the falling from a higher to a lower position.

. . . the dramatic ability should be developed by the acquired ability to lift tones upon sustained breath with different degrees of force.

There is rarely any difficulty in carrying the

¹³Stanley, The Science, p. 148.

voice from high to low tones.¹⁴

Evetts and Worthington can see only harm in such a procedure:

The reason the ascending scale is of little use, and even harmful, in training the voice is that the progressively increasing tension leads, . . . to distortion of the resonator As has been explained . . . this is the cause of certain 'breaks' in the voice which have been termed registers . . . If, on the other hand, a descending scale be started with correct resonance, the 'break' does not occur . . .¹⁵

Westerman does not limit his exercises to either exclusively, claiming that both are necessary to proper development:

The author wishes the student to notice that for every ascending exercise there is a descending exercise. This is absolutely essential, for the muscular effort in the movements of the ascending larynx and soft palate in ascending exercises, needs the relaxation of a descending exercise to uniformly develop the complete range.¹⁶

¹⁴Powell, op. cit., p. 13.

¹⁵Evetts and Worthington, op. cit., pp. 102-103.

¹⁶Westerman, op. cit., p. 82.

CHAPTER VI

THE APPROACH

In Chapter I it was intimated that a great number of different approaches have been followed in dealing with vocal problems. Those methods which do not adopt the scientific approach really ought not be compared to it; they are "laws unto themselves." Of those methods which do not describe vocal actions from the physiological aspect but resort to other means to make their point, the term "sensation" or "psychological" method is often applied. These are not altogether accurate terms for the so-called "sensation" methods often incorporate many of the same pedagogical principles laid down by the physiologists. But the treatment of vocal problems in a predominantly psychological approach is primarily concerned with adjustments or the manner of preparing the student for the production of good tone by incorporating what the author considers to be the proper combination of physical and psychological factors. The reader will readily see the importance of considering such methods in their entirety if a full appreciation is to be had.

It would be in keeping with the purposes of this study to examine at this point a representative number of different

solutions to the same problem. For this purpose let us consider the problem of attack of tone, inasmuch as this important problem has not been dealt with before. Three methods will be analysed, the basically different handlings of which do not necessarily contradict each other.

The Emil-Behnke Method

First let us take the description of attack as explained in this predominantly physiological approach. In order to gain a complete understanding of attack Emil-Behnke would have us study the physical structure of the vocal cords or vocal "ligaments" as she prefers to call them. These vocal ligaments are really two wedge-shaped bands housed within a bony "cage" called the Larynx or "Adam's Apple." (In the singing act this Larynx must be unfixed and free so as to ascend and descend in adjusting itself to varying pitch levels.) The wedge-shaped vocal ligaments are apart in silence and as we breathe the air passes between them on its way in and out of the windpipe and lungs. When we breathe deeply the vocal bands are more widely separated, and in producing a tone these vocal ligaments come together or "approximate," and only a narrow slit is between them for the passage of air. The breath strikes the vocal bands on its way up from the lungs and sets them into vibration, thus causing a tone to be formed. Pitch variations are caused by varying the degree of approximation of the vocal ligaments,

increasing or decreasing the intensity of air pressure, and changing the position of the Larynx. "The essential point to grasp is that the breath must reach the vocal ligaments at the exact moment at which they approximate; and, further, that they are passive agents, the active, controlling factor being the diaphragm."¹ A good attack, says Emil-Behnke, calls for the precise co-ordination of these three factors: 1) the approximation of the vocal ligaments; 2) the start of the breath through the ligaments; and 3) the vibration of the ligaments. The author makes the observation that, since the diaphragm or actuator is a large, powerful muscle and the vocal ligaments comparatively tiny, the necessary proper co-ordination is not always an easy thing to accomplish. What happens when this co-ordination is not accomplished properly? In one case we get a "breathy" tone, for the air will escape between the ligaments before the tone commences. In order to correct this fault the singer is apt to go to the other extreme and, squeezing the vocal bands together, he then makes the breath wrench the bands apart causing what is known as a "click" or "shock of the glottis." This latter fault is often the cause of laryngitis, nodules, hoarseness and even loss of voice. Again the author sums up: "For correct, clear, incisive commencement of tone they [the vocal

¹Emil-Behnke, op. cit., p. 46.

bands⁷ must approximate at the exact moment at which the breath reaches them and sets them into vibration."²

The Myer System

The reader will recall from the discussion of "Tone" in Chapter V that Myer believes correct tone results from the fulfillment of certain "extra-physiological" conditions.

Correct tone is the result of certain conditions--conditions that are in nature, conditions demanded by nature. These conditions are the result only of correct form and adjustment. Form and adjustment to be right must be automatic, and never the result of direct or local effort or influence.³

These conditions resulting from correct form and adjustment are:

1. Free, flexible, vitalized bodily position and action. (Energy instead of effort.)
2. Natural or automatic adjustment of all the parts, especially the organ of sound--the larynx.
3. Automatic form and inflation of all the resonance cavities, the great reinforcing power.
4. Approximation of the breath bands, the false vocal chords, the great natural controlling force.
5. Equal pressure and resistance of the two great physical forces, motor power and control.
6. Automatic articulation.
7. Physical, mental, and emotional energy or vitality combined; the body, mind, and soul in action.⁴

I quote this background of what might be termed somewhat irrelevant material because such a method as Myer's defies isolation at any one point; preservation of context is

²Ibid., p. 47.

³Myer, op. cit., p. v.

⁴Ibid.

necessary to clarity. To achieve the conditions mentioned above, Myer relies first on a study of the singer's position and action. Certain regimes are prescribed for the singer before he attempts to sing a tone. These physical exercises are aimed at adjusting the motor power and controlling force of the breath. All the emphasis is placed on movement, the object of which is "to develop co-ordination of the two physical forces, equal pressure and resistance, life, energy, vitality, freedom, automatic breathing and automatic breath control."⁵

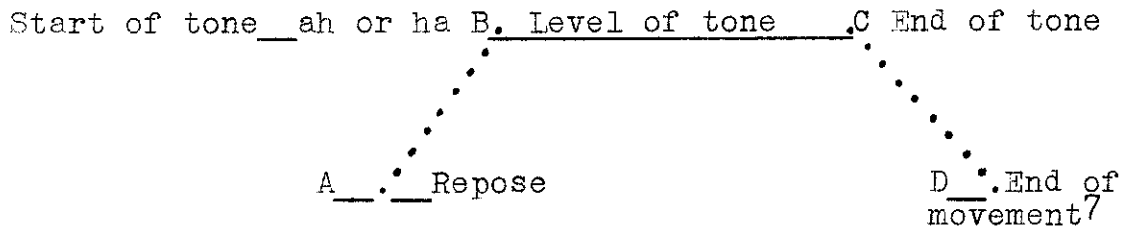
In considering the attack of a tone, Myer employs a psychological device and tells the student to place and keep himself on a level with the tone he is singing.

Put yourself and keep yourself, by the use of the movements, on a level with the tone. The tendency of the great majority, even among the so-called 'trained,' is to be constantly below the level of the tone, below the demands of the tone, Nature's demands physically, mentally and emotionally.⁶

To achieve the tone level, the singer must lift at the hips, expand the body and then release all above the chest; these three thoughts are to be combined in one free, flexible movement and all occur at the same instant. To clarify his concept of attack, Myer uses the following diagram:

⁵Ibid., p. viii.

⁶Ibid.



Preparatory to the attack, the singer stands in an easy, natural position as indicated in an accompanying diagram. By lift and expansion, he moves up the dotted line from the position of repose at A. When he feels that he has reached the level of the tone to be sung (B) he sings the vowel AH or HA. He does not sing while moving up the dotted line but does not hesitate to sing the moment the tone level is reached. The correct movement up the dotted line allows for a natural head position and proper abdominal and diaphragm support. When the tone stops, the singer, always careful to maintain the proper stance, moves down the dotted line to D. It is this adherence to the prescribed movements that constitutes good attack for Myer.

In moving from A to B (which requires but an instant) let all preparation for the tone occur simultaneously and rhythmically with the movement. . . . When the movement is right, you will have aroused energy, vitality, automatic form and adjustment, and many of the true conditions of tone.⁸

The Dunkley Method

Dunkley builds his system of voice production around the

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid., p. ix.

idea of pitch-control. The foundation of all good singing, he says, is based on Nature's laws, the most important of which is correct pitch-control. Inasmuch as pitch discrimination is a mental process, Dunkley claims that voice discipline should be based entirely on mental concepts, i.e. the correct thinking of musical pitch.

According to the scope of this musical thinking is the voice and its control. A limited range of pitch-thought means a voice of limited scope and limited quality of expression.⁹

Interposed between the normal desire to produce good tones and the resultant, is an activating agent which Dunkley terms the S.C.M. (Subconscious Mind). As this S.C.M. is the controlling factor in voice production, its proper training is of the utmost importance. Physiological knowledge is of no value.

This activating agent being a subconscious faculty, with all its activities subconscious, attempt at conscious operation of the mechanism of the voice is the cause of failure of all so-called physiological systems of training. These physiological methods cause physical contraction, which is a serious interference with subconscious operation.¹⁰

In concerning himself with the reasons for poor tone and attack, Dunkley lays the blame to an inhibiting concern with voluntary action. All of the muscles involved in the singing act will be properly and involuntarily controlled by correct

⁹Ferdinand Dunkley, The Bouyant Voice, p. iii.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 7.

application of the elements of pitch-control through the S.C.M. Proper attack is nothing more than proper pitch-thought.

An analogy may be drawn between electricity and voice. General strength may be likened to voltage. A definite voltage over the wires is necessary for electrical service; motors, lights, etc., intended for 220 voltage will not function at 110. Definite power for the voice must be established by definite pitch-thought. How much of the voltage shall be drawn upon by the light-bulbs, etc., depends upon their wattage capacity. A 40 watt bulb will not consume as much electric energy as a 60 watt bulb, and it will not be as bright; but if the amperage is reduced by insufficient voltage on the wires, the 60 watt light may be no better than one of lower wattage. A constant "voltage" of general energy, measured in terms of pitch-thought "amperage", must be maintained; then the tones of the scale, each having its own "wattage" capacity, draw their energy from the general supply.¹¹

Each pitch has its corresponding level of thought. If, for example, we wish to make a good attack on E, fourth space on the staff, we need only to summon through the S.C.M., our corresponding E-strength. It is not possible to sing higher or lower than the strength summoned. By applying the necessary strength and correctly controlling the pitch, we achieve not only good attack, but proper resonance, relaxation, breath control, etc.

Thus we see that correct attack can involve three different, and not necessarily contradictory approaches for three different authors.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 19-20.

CHAPTER VII

INTERPRETATION

At this point let us consider two opposing views on the interpretation of vocal music. One places the importance on the text of the song, the other on the music. By far the great majority of methods advise interpreting a song from a consideration of the words first, and even those who claim that the words are of secondary importance would agree with the fundamentals of text interpretation as offered by Henry Hawn in Diction for Singers and Composers. Hawn recommends that a text be first studied through proper reading. Reading, he says, is an art, and a difficult one requiring special study and patient application. It is not uncommon to hear even professional readers misinterpret lines. In portraying an emotion in speech or in song, the emotion must first of all be properly conceived. It is impossible to correctly read, sing, or set to music an emotion which is not properly conceived, and the emotion must be right not only in kind but in degree. It is difficult to compile any rules for arriving at the proper conception of a text. These are matters for study, good taste, and common sense. Hawn recommends two kinds of text-reading,

grammatical and emotional. The two might be likened to the science and the art of elocution. The laws of grammatical reading are, of course, exact and mathematical. They are derived from the functions of the words in the sentence and they never vary. Let us suppose that a singer attempts to interpret a line grammatically. As mentioned above, before attempting to speak the line, he must first arrive at the proper conception. The proper conception is stressed, for the writer believes there can be but one interpretation, that which the author intended. This proper conception is arrived at by scanning the words and grouping them into their proper relationships with each other. It is often necessary to reread the line several times with frequent changes in word groupings and relationships before he arrives at the proper meaning. These considerations of subject, predicate, modifiers, etc., are, says the author, the basis of the art of reading.

Having arrived at the proper emotion to be expressed, the singer is now ready to speak the line. If the line is to be delivered properly, five elements will come into play:

1. Enunciation: involving the actual mechanics of word making and requiring the articulate utterance of both vowel and consonant.
2. Pronunciation: the speaking of words with proper sound and accent.

3. Pause: As essential an element in speech as the rest is in music, the pause allows the proper grouping of words in relation to their grammatical significance.
4. Emphasis: The importance of the parts of speech are underlined through emphasis.
5. Inflection: the rise and fall of the voice which gives the sentence its meaning, distinguishes question from demand, etc.

These five elements are essential in proper proportion to the correct grammatical reading of the text. Their proper application insures the correct projection of the author's meaning. Voice quality, volume, etc. have no bearing whatsoever on grammatical reading. The elements of Enunciation and Pronunciation are wholly the singer's concern as interpreter; the elements of Pause, Emphasis, and Inflection, when carried over from speech into song, become the tools of the composer's art.

Grammatical interpretation will insure the correct sense of a thought but here its function ceases. We must resort to other elements, says Hawn, if we are to go beyond mere meaning and arrive at the manner of expressing an idea, i.e. the kind or intensity of the emotion being conveyed. The most careful grammatical analysis will not catch the fire of a line; we must rely on emotional reading for this. The elements of emotional reading are:

1. Pitch: Scientifically defined as rate of vibration.

2. Time: In reading, this element might be more simply described as rhythm accent. The agreement of rhythm accent with word accent results in the foot divisions we know as trochee, iambus, anapest, etc. In music, these poetic figures may all be classified into what musicians call simple and compound time. Besides this idea of grouping patterns into simple and compound times, there is the further element in Time which corresponds to the Metronome Marking or rate of delivery.
3. Volume: The degree of loudness or softness of a passage.
4. Quality: That timbre or property of a tone which may distinguish it from another tone having the same pitch and loudness.
5. Stress: This element is best defined as the amount of pressure or the mode of attacking and delivering the various parts of a syllable. It does not mean volume. In speaking, we may use strong or smooth stress.

When speech is carried over into song the same is true of the emotional elements as was true of the grammatical elements, certain ones are in the domain of the composer's art. As interpreters, there is little the singer can do with Pitch and Time. He may, of course, transpose a piece of music to better suit his voice, or he may adopt an entirely different tempo than that indicated by the composer, but in many cases these two factors are dictated by technical and aesthetic considerations and are best not tampered with. Regarding Volume in song, the author goes back to the fundamental laws of speech. As modification of volume is a most essential element in spoken discourse, so it should be in song. If a word, clause, phrase, or sentence expressing

some exact emotion requires increase or decrease in volume, then in attempting to convey this same emotion in music we must use the same methods of manipulation.

We turn to Douglas Stanley's Your Voice for a statement of the viewpoint which holds that the music is of primary importance and not the words. The burden of responsibility for the correct projection of the text, according to Stanley, rests with the composer.

Actually, when a competent composer writes for the voice, the words and music are in such intimate harmony that a really proper interpretation of the music helps the singer immeasurably in conveying the inner meaning of the words. . . . Thus, an artistic rendition of the musical import of the composition serves to bring out the inner meaning of the words in the highest possible degree.¹

Stanley places voice on the same plane as performance on any other instrument.

Performers in fields of music other than singing use no words to convey their meaning, yet they are able to impress the import of the music upon the audience. They treat the music as a language in itself.²

Under ordinary circumstances, words will complement music but in those instances where the singer is forced to choose between breaking the musical phrase or breaking the verbal phrase, Stanley advises:

There are no circumstances under which a musical figure may be broken. Anyone who suggests any such break,

¹Douglas Stanley, Your Voice, pp. 248-249.

²Ibid., p. 248.

whatever his apparent standing may be, is merely a bad musician who does not understand the fundamental principles of musicianship. . . . When it is impossible for the singer to cover an entire musical phrase in one breath, he may breathe at the end of a musical figure, but he must not breathe anywhere else.³

³Ibid., p. 249.

CONCLUSION

The inevitable question is raised: Why do such contradictory opinions exist regarding voice production and what can be done to resolve these differences? It has been suggested by some that this great mass of diversified opinion has been caused by the intrusion of unsuccessful composers, conductors, and pianists in the field of vocal pedagogy. These people, it is said, have recognized the profitable possibilities in voice tutorage and have entered the field confident that here they can hide behind the cloak of mysticism. Undoubtedly this infiltration has contributed to the existing confusion, but for the most part, one gets the impression that most of the writers of vocal methods have at one time been singers of some standing, are genuinely sincere in the theories they advance, and that these theories have been carefully thought out. The existence of so many personalized approaches is probably attributable to the fact that the voice is a completely hidden instrument. For this reason its workings defy exact analysis and the "how" and "why" of voice has become a veritable "no-man's land" where contradictory opinions vie for recognition. Any hope for a completely acceptable solution of these differences in the immediate future is entirely unjustified. Even

Even the physiologist admits that the most minute description of the physical processes involved in the singing act leaves much of the problem unanswered. One cannot even conclude that the answers lie somewhere between the purely physiological and the purely psychological approaches for it cannot be denied that some of our greatest singers have known nothing of physiology. Conversely, it is also conceivable that an outline of physiological processes might be just the necessary lead for one who has long struggled with trying to sing "naturally" or by "sensation." The vocal instructor who teaches by "sensation" need not fear that he will be supplanted by the physiologist with his instruments and charts, for individual diagnosis must always play a large part in voice instruction. What needs to be defined is the extent to which the "sensation" method should go in stating its case. To attempt to describe the feeling one gets out of singing is comparable to the old philosophical attempts to describe pain. Undoubtedly if given ample time, and opportunity to supplement with demonstrations, a teacher will be able to instill a highly personalized concept of singing in an impressionable student. It is when the teacher sets these ideas to paper that he is most apt to heap more confusion on an already chaotic scene.

Those who are genuinely concerned with the state of vocal pedagogy today, feel that some attempt should

certainly be made to arrive at a common meeting ground in the solution of vocal problems. In Chapter V we learned of the controversy between exponents of "the way" and those of "the tone." We can be sure that the ideal vocal system, acceptable to all, would incorporate the best in these two concepts for it is safe to presume, without venturing an opinion as to which should come first, that the two are co-existent in the proper proportions in the well-produced voice. In the present state of affairs, it is conceivable that some voice teachers would not approve of the production of Caruso or Leonard Warren, but generally speaking, it is encouraging that little real difference of opinion exists as to what good singing is, and it is in this agreement that the existing disparities are to be attacked and resolved, if at all. Actually, in an ideal clinic of all voice instructors, agreement on what constitutes good tone would be preceded only by complete concurrence on matters of Terminology, and simultaneous with this agreement on good tone, would be a definition of "The Way," the co-existing conditions attendant upon this tone. Not until these two factors had been agreed upon would the manner of "acquirement" be considered. I feel that in our ideal and imaginary clinic, agreement would not be long in coming on these two major portions of the problem for it is really mainly in the "manipulation" of materials that the real dissention exists. If we assume

complete agreement on tone and condition then great progress has been made. Voice teachers would have a common goal perhaps in the form of a selected number of recordings of various types of voices correctly produced. Naturally, no attempt would be made to make over or merge the "personality" of the individual voice with that of the model. Correct production is the aim, not conformity in a restricted sense.

I doubt if the question of "how" to get desired results will ever be settled. Perhaps it should never be settled, for as Ruff says,

The muscles (voice) of no two persons can be set in precisely the same manner, as the inward construction of throat and resonant chambers differ in each person as much as the facial characteristics differ."¹

If the aim of vocal pedagogy is to equip the student with not only the "how" of vocal technique, but the "why" and "what" as well, if it is to do more than blindly lead the student to a goal, then the present trend toward class voice study can be highly recommended. The really conscientious and resourceful voice teacher will surely realize the futility of a routine approach to all students. In the class, he demonstrates personally with others, or with recordings, the desired goal. As the ideal voice teacher, through association and experience, possesses discrimination

¹Ruff, op. cit., p. 8.

in tone, so he also guides and instills a good concept of tone in his students. Participants in class voice instruction often have the advantage of seeing their own faults dealt with in other students and problems, normal and abnormal, which he otherwise would not have known existed will come up for diagnosis. Techniques and procedures of solution will be noted and invaluable pedagogical experiences will accrue. The added advantage of overcoming stage-fright through frequent performance before an informal audience, goes without saying. The class voice instructor will be acquainted with various approaches not inconsistent with his theories, and will have reached a stage of tolerance which admits of some measure of good in most all methods. He will not hesitate to recommend this or the other regime, no matter if taken from what he considers a most ridiculous context, if it will be of value to the student in getting good results.

Perhaps these suggestions will seem an oversimplification of a complicated problem but the informed reader will recognize the need in the voice teaching profession for a greater unity of purpose through a reasonable degree of standardization of aims, terminology, procedures, etc. From all sides we hear of the degeneration of the great art of singing. We are constantly reminded of the "Golden Age;" Caruso, Ruffo, Melba, and Farrar are held up as examples of

the great singing of another era when artistic perfection born of patient application rather than callowness born of commercialism, was the prime motivation in singing.

Regardless of whether or not these charges are true, the responsibility for matching these great voices in our own generation rests with the voice teacher. Experience, tolerance, and singleness of purpose as well as musician-ship will be needed if the challenge is to be met.

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