

The Individual Singing Voice in the Studio and Classroom:
An Inclusive eBook Design for Beginning Singers and Their Teachers

by

Kirsten A. Blair

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Graduate Supervisory Committee:

Stephanie Weiss, Chair
Amanda DeMaris
Kristina Knowles

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

Everyone deserves the chance to explore their voice as an expression of individuality and musical fulfillment. There are many considerations for modern voice teachers who desire to create accessible and inclusive paths to vocal study. Inspired by interactions with prospective and beginning voice students in both individual and group class settings, this document examines several of the interests and perceptions that have been most frequently expressed by singers in my studio and classrooms. The application of both student-centered and community-centered approaches within varied learning environments may better meet the needs of diverse groups of singers and welcome more amateur musicians and community music makers as prospective voice students. Confronting and addressing potentially discouraging perceptions may empower more singers to pursue vocal study. Such perceptions include feelings of unworthiness, exposure to standards of unattainable perfection promoted by the use of voice-altering technology, and lack of perceived talent. With these considerations in mind, this study aims to facilitate the creation of a concise basic resource that will benefit the self-guided singer as well as voice teachers who work in individual and classroom settings.

This document includes discussions on singing as an aspect of individual identity and community, various pedagogical models of singing instruction, and the impact of technology on the understanding of vocal function. A literature review examines the relevance and effectiveness of the resource material that is frequently used to guide beginning singers. Included are the survey results of “Individual Singer and Teacher Perspectives of Vocal Study,” which gathered perspectives on various topics, such as the

use of beginner resource texts, singers' feelings on talent and worthiness, the use of gender-inclusive techniques in the vocal studio, and the incorporation of somatic practices to vocal study. When provided with a variety of resources, voice teachers can be effective and nurturing guides on every singer's path to vocal discovery and artistic musical expression. The ultimate goal of this study is to incorporate relevant research on pedagogical techniques and philosophies and the survey results into the design of such a resource—an inclusive and accessible eBook.

DEDICATION

First and foremost, I would like to humbly dedicate this achievement to my family and friends, especially my husband—I would not be the person that I am today without your steadfast belief and encouragement. I would also like to dedicate this work to my community and teachers for showing me enduring support throughout my musical education. Finally, I dedicate this document to my voice students, without whom this project would not exist. Working with all of you has inspired a profound passion and motivation in my life. Thank you for trusting and sharing your voices with me.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Overview

Singing can be a rewarding and effective method of self-expression for everyone. Through a combination of the development of healthy techniques, teacher guidance, self-study, and practice, singers of all kinds can pursue an authentic and satisfying musical experience. Modern voice teachers must continue to address emergent concerns of current voice students and work together to develop supportive resource materials as an essential component of the evolution of effective pedagogical techniques.¹ Singers who feel welcomed into student-centered learning environments as amateurs and community music makers may be more likely to embark on such a journey of vocal self-discovery with the aid of a teacher.

By providing resources that are foundational for a variety of vocal styles, gender-inclusive, and offered at a low price-point, voice teachers may be able to engage more potential students in vocal study. There is a need to facilitate approaches to vocal study that support potential voice students who are lacking foundational musical experiences as they embark on the path to deepening their knowledge, skills, and musicianship to become a more musically literate singer. Furthermore, approaches to singing instruction that are accessible to those from lower socioeconomic classes and marginalized groups

¹ Scott D. Harrison and Jessica O’Bryan, “Prelude: Positioning Singing Pedagogy in the Twenty-First Century,” in *Teaching Singing in the 21st Century* ed. Scott Harrison and Jessica O’Bryan (New York: Springer, 2014), 1.

may discourage the concept of singing as an elitist activity and encourage more people to study singing.

Inspired by my interactions with prospective and beginning voice students, I seek to explore several of the interests and perceptions that have been most frequently expressed in my studio and classroom.² In addition to incorporating elements of a student-centered learning approach, I have observed favorable results by emphasizing a sense of community within the structure of group class learning environments. I have similarly observed positive results from the application of somatic practices (such as yoga and meditation) that I have introduced to my students as a certified yoga teacher, and several have expressed an interest in learning more about these practices within the context of singing. Among the concerns that students have mentioned were feelings of intimidation and deterrence from pursuing vocal study due to lacking a pre-existing foundation of musical skills.³ Students mentioned maintaining self-perceptions of unworthiness of vocal study or of sharing their singing with others or both (for example: due to imposter syndrome, not possessing talent or the “it factor,” or a combination of these).⁴ Some students asked for guidance in seeking cohesion between their experience of gender and sexuality, and their experience of vocal study. Finally, several students also

² The purpose of these classroom settings is to instruct singing for the individual (i.e., solo singing) in a group setting. See page 9 for a discussion of these pedagogical models in the context of vocal training.

³ Students anticipated musical skills, such as playing an instrument (e.g., piano), interpreting musical notation (e.g., rhythms or melodies), or sight-reading vocal music, to be foundational pre-requisites for vocal study.

⁴ Imposter syndrome (also known as the imposter phenomenon) is a self-perception or belief of failure or unbelonging. See page 56 for further explanation.

expressed an inability to identify the most appropriate educational resources for their specific singing goals, as well as an inability to afford these resources.

The aim of the following document is the design of a beginner's guide for singers as they strive to discover their individual voice as an authentic and accessible instrument of self-expression. In order to serve this purpose most effectively, this document provides discourse on potential teaching approaches and learning environments that singers may encounter in their vocal study, including a brief discussion of individual and group class settings. In an effort to address some of the needs of current voice students, this document includes a discussion of the results of a research study I conducted to gather the perspectives of singers and teachers of singing. The findings of this research inform the design and content of an eBook intended to provide an accessible resource for learning the basics of singing. This eBook may be used by self-guided singers or voice teachers in individual or community learning environments that would benefit from a concise, versatile, and flexible introductory resource.

Methodology

In order to have a comprehensive discussion of pedagogical resources and techniques, one must first have an idea of the contexts surrounding singing and vocal study. Therefore, I include a brief discussion of the evolution of singing as an individually expressive and cultural activity, the development of vocal instruction in private and group class settings, and a brief overview of technological advancements that have had a significant impact on the understanding of vocal function within the context of

singing. Following the introduction and background material, this document comprises four main parts: a literature review, a discussion of research and pedagogical techniques, a presentation of the results of two surveys, and the design of a digital eBook.

The literature review includes several prominent texts intended for beginning singers: *Adventures in Singing: A Process for Exploring, Discovering, and Developing Vocal Potential*, *The Singing Book*, *Cantabile Voice Class: A Manual about Singing in a Beautiful, Lyrical Style for Voice Classes and Choral Singers*, *Cantabile: A Manual about Beautiful Singing for Singers, Teachers of Singing and Choral Conductors*, and *The Contemporary Singer: Elements of Vocal Technique*. With this review, I provide an overview of these texts to analyze their effectiveness for the varied needs of singers and their teachers. These texts may be used by the independent singer or voice teacher and are often used as foundational resources for teaching singing for the individual in a group setting (i.e., an academic version of “Class Voice”). I provide an analysis that aids instructors in selecting a text most appropriate for their own use or the use of their students, assess factors of accessibility, and discover what may still be needed to effectively teach twenty-first century beginning singers.

The discussion of research and pedagogical techniques explores a variety of resources available for vocal instructors including, but not limited to: *The Vocal Athlete*, *Teaching Singing in the 21st Century*, *Handbook of Singing: A Guide to Vocal Development for the Beginning Student and the Teacher-in-Training*, *A Spectrum of Voices: Prominent American Voice Teachers Discuss the Teaching of Singing*, and various relevant articles and journals. In examining some of the materials that are

available to vocal instructors, I discover effective and relevant techniques which will be suitable for beginning singers of any gender, in any vocal style. Through the discussion of relevant strategies for personalization and inclusivity, this section of the document may aid teachers who are motivated to create an educational environment which will meet the diverse needs of more voice students.

Within this document, I acknowledge issues of the gendered experience within the vocal studio, including the presence of a binary-narrative, a structure embedded in some vocal traditions which may insufficiently serve some voice students, within prominent educational resources. Part of my discussion recognizes the experience of those living in a society in which they are inundated with unattainable standards promoted by the widely accepted use of voice-altering technology within the entertainment industry, potentially provoking a sense of inadequacy in their abilities as vocalists and the resulting pedagogical implications for voice teachers.⁵ This document provides a discussion of techniques, such as those used for contemporary commercial music (CCM) and concepts of functional voice training. I also include a discussion of the prevalence of incorporating somatic methods to modern pedagogical philosophies, as well as some of the potential benefits for singers and teachers.

The fifth chapter of this document discusses the process and results of information gathering through two surveys of voice teachers and singers: “Individual Singer Perspectives of Vocal Study” and “Individual Teacher Perspectives of Vocal Pedagogy.” These surveys were presented to both singers and their teachers to collect the anonymous

⁵ Diane Hughes, “Technological Pitch Correction: Controversy, Contexts, and Considerations,” *Journal of Singing* 71, no. 5 (2015): 589.

opinions and desires of the communities of beginning singers and those who work with them directly. In this chapter, I identify trends present in the data gathered by each survey, as well as trends that are revealed through a comparison of the results of both surveys and relate them to some of the earlier discussions in this document.

Finally, this document presents the design of a digital eBook to be used as a versatile, accessible, and inclusive starting resource for singers. As a motivated and passionate voice teacher, I resolve to explore current research on the topics raised in this document in the hopes of contributing to the surrounding scholarship through the creation of a new resource. My final aim is to amass my research on pedagogical techniques and philosophies and incorporate the survey results into the design of an inclusive and accessible eBook that may be used as a reference for beginning singers in individual or community learning environments.

CHAPTER 2

SINGING IN CONTEXT

Singing as Aspects of Identity and Community

Although there are many comprehensive discussions of its history, there is no definite way to establish a concise story of the origin of singing.⁶ Voice, beyond its role in music, is an integral part of the human experience and exists as an “embodied process” for self-identification.⁷ Human beings use their voices on a deeper level than verbal communication in an “ongoing process of reflection, exchanging narratives back and forth between our past and present selves, and between us and others.”⁸ Vocalization can be a meaningful and distinctive instrument for the expression of individuality that is recognizable to both ourselves and others.⁹ In “Singing as communication,” Graham Welch offers yet another description in favor of the socio-cultural significance of vocal expression:

Within the wide range of sounds that humans make with their voices, there are two constellations that commonly have the greatest socio-cultural significance. These are categorized as speech and singing, but there is potential (and actual) significant overlap between the two because both sets of behaviors are generated from the same anatomical and physiological structures and initiated/interpreted by dedicated neuropsychobiological networks whose development and function are shaped by cultural experience.¹⁰

⁶ John Potter and Neil Sorrell, *A History of Singing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 1.

⁷ Nick Couldry, *Why voice matters: culture and politics after neoliberalism* (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2010), 8.

⁸ Couldry, *Why voice matters*, 7.

⁹ Kay Norton, *Singing and Wellbeing: Ancient Wisdom, Modern Proof* (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2015), 11.

¹⁰ Graham F. Welch, “Singing as communication,” in *Musical Communication*, eds. Dorothy Miell, Raymond MacDonald, and David J. Hargreaves (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2005), 239.

Welch’s description illuminates valuable insight as to the depth of the fundamentals of vocal expression, whilst highlighting the influence of cultural experience. In other words, vocalization, including the act of singing, is part of how we express our thoughts and emotions, how we process the world around us, how we relate to others, and more. In addition to a singer’s identity of self, the information that is conveyed to others through the act of singing includes indications of “age, gender, culture, and social group.”¹¹ These realities undoubtedly contribute to the complexities of nurturing singing as a study.

Prior to the evidence of historical writings, one can envision singing as part of an oral tradition, communal or ritualistic in nature, and included in secular and sacred musical contexts.¹² Regardless of context, individuals and communities engage consistently and passionately in singing as an activity for pleasure and entertainment, to express emotion, and in spiritual enlightenment.¹³ In *The Accessibility of Music: Participation, Reception, and Contact*, Jochen Eisentraut depicts prehistoric community music making as being represented by “a scenario of idyllic total accessibility: human beings singing, playing and dancing to music that they have grown up with, which is part of their culture and sung in their language, where participation does not necessarily require specialist training or education.”¹⁴ Although we may try to relate singing as a primitive practice to the context of our modern lives, singing as we now know it has

¹¹ Welch, “Singing as communication,” 252.

¹² Potter and Sorrell, *A History of Singing*, 39.

¹³ Harrison and O’Bryan, “Prelude: Positioning Singing Pedagogy,” 1.

¹⁴ Jochen Eisentraut, *The Accessibility of Music: Participation, Reception and Contact* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 5.

drastically evolved, especially within the past few hundred years. As singing continues to evolve alongside culture and society, the practice of teaching singing must also.

Models of Pedagogical Practices for Individual and Group Vocal Training

The historical documentation of singing in European cultures depict singing for faith-based worship and a style of oral transmission based on an apprenticed learning tradition.¹⁵ Educational models that are similar to the practices used in modern vocal pedagogy are evidenced as early as the late fifteenth century, and were seemingly inspired in part by the continued evolution of singing as public performance art.¹⁶ By the nineteenth century, the master-apprentice learning and teaching model was well-established. Singers not only engaged in one-to-one style training with an expert teacher, they became apprentices immersed in their craft as a lifestyle for sometimes a decade of study or more.¹⁷ In this setting, the singer received all musical knowledge (including music theory, musicianship, history, performance practice, and more) as well as moral and physical guidance, from their teacher.¹⁸ Modern individual training has variable structure and ranges in regularity (eg., private lessons weekly, bi-monthly, or intermittently, schedule permitting), which prompts an emphasis on voice students practicing on their own.

¹⁵ Harrison and O’Bryan, “Prelude: Positioning Singing Pedagogy,” 1; James Stark, *Bel Canto: A History of Vocal Pedagogy* (University of Toronto Press Inc., 1999), xvii.

¹⁶ Potter and Sorrell, *A History of Singing*, 74-5; Harrison and O’Bryan, “Prelude: Positioning Singing Pedagogy,” 1.

¹⁷ Harrison and O’Bryan, “Prelude: Positioning Singing Pedagogy,” 2.

¹⁸ Harrison and O’Bryan, “Prelude: Positioning Singing Pedagogy,” 2.

The development of group class training models as additions to the one-to-one model is documented in European sixteenth and seventeenth century histories.¹⁹ In this setting, singers would observe the lessons of their peers in addition to receiving individual instruction from their teacher.²⁰ Singers and voice teachers may recognize characteristics of this learning environment through lived experiences of “Studio” or “Master Class.” Within the context of singing, the group class environment provides benefits and accelerated learning for both singers and teacher.²¹ For example, teachers may benefit from working with a wide variety of voices and students may benefit from peer-based learning in a community environment.²² Models of community-centered learning environments feature the development of each individual student’s expertise as well as encourage students to share their expertise collaboratively and cooperatively with each other as active members of the “classroom community.”²³ Voice teachers may cultivate a supportive, community-centered atmosphere for students to build confidence, explore their own artistic expression, and develop their appreciation for the artistry of others.²⁴

¹⁹ Harrison and O’Bryan, 2; Richard B. Rosewall, *Handbook of Singing: A Guide to Vocal Development for the Beginning Student and the Teacher-in-Training* (Evanston, Illinois: Summy-Birchard Company, 1961), xi.

²⁰ Harrison and O’Bryan, 2; Rosewall, *Handbook of Singing*, xi.

²¹ Rosewall, *Handbook of Singing*, xiii; Meribeth Dayne and Cynthia Vaughn, *The Singing Book*, 3rd ed. (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 2014), xi.

²² Rosewall, *Handbook of Singing*, xii-xiii.

²³ John Bransford, Nancy Vye and Helen Bateman, “Creating High-Quality Learning Environments: Guidelines from Research on How People Learn,” in *The Knowledge Economy and Postsecondary Education: Report of a Workshop* ed. Patricia Albjerg Graham and Nevzer G. Stacey (Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 2002), 170-73. A community-centered atmosphere for learning emphasizes such elements as the value of each individual within the group, that they are valued by the other group members, and an overall collaborative approach to the learning process amongst the group members.

²⁴ I have observed positive results by incorporating confidence and community-building strategies into the atmosphere of the vocal classroom. For example, establishing the expectation that all students are required to clap after every vocal performance sets the precedent that all performance efforts will receive

In many contemporary academic settings, Class Voice (singing for the individual, taught in a group setting) is offered through the music department. Colleges and universities may offer enrollment in this course to a variety of students, including but not limited to non-voice majors taking the course as an elective, instrumental majors as part of a music education degree, first-year voice majors prior to advancement to private instruction, and more.²⁵ Richard Rosewall writes the following about group singing instruction:

The voice class is certainly not advanced as a replacement for the private voice lesson, for that invaluable partnership of professional teacher and serious student shall continue to be the greatest producer of vocal artists. Nonetheless, for the beginning student, whether his leaning is to further voice study, choral activities, vocal teaching, or to non-musical pursuits, the voice class presents a more efficient and valuable training situation than any other technique²⁶

While other vocal pedagogues may agree with Rosewall that the most efficient instruction of singing takes place in the traditional one-to-one model, there is still immense value for the group learning environment, especially for the novice singer.²⁷ Rosewall also endorses class voice as a nurturing introductory experience of foundational singing techniques for the beginner.²⁸

encouragement from their peers. This emphasizes positivity and builds a sense of safety in the “performance arena” of the classroom.

²⁵ William Sauerland, “Voice Class: A Learner-Centered Approach,” *Journal of Singing* 74, no. 5 (2018), 527-28.

²⁶ Rosewall, *Handbook of Singing*, xiii.

²⁷ Harrison and O’Bryan, “Prelude: Positioning Singing Pedagogy in the Twenty-First Century,” 3.

²⁸ Rosewall, *Handbook of Singing*, xii.

Whether addressing the individual singer in a group or one-on-one environment, the teacher is challenged to adapt their pedagogical techniques for each individual, as each voice is distinct and unique in its physiological and acoustical characteristics.²⁹ In addition to physiological differences, each student will have a unique life and vocal history, and a variety of skills, interests, and goals for vocal study. This intersection of a unique acoustic instrument that is inextricably linked to one's self-expression further poses an extraordinary task for both student and teacher. Prominent American voice teachers demonstrate a verifiable awareness of the teacher's role in aiding student self-discovery through remarks on complexities, such as the unavoidably intimate relationship between voice and sense of self, the importance of self-awareness (both physically and mentally), and the necessity for the teacher to nurture a singer's positive self-image for successful performance.³⁰ However challenging the task may be, the instructor's efforts to personalize the learning experience for each individual singer is likely to be a valuable contribution to its efficacy.

The Impact of Technology on the Understanding of Vocal Function and Training

An historical account of vocal pedagogy notes that early written resource material specifically for vocal methods are known to contain "obscure" language and "lack[ing] in specific instructions on how to use the voice."³¹ Due to the emphasis placed on oral tradition in vocal pedagogy and the location of the instrument within the body, early

²⁹ Don Ihde, *Listening and Voice: A Phenomenology of Sound* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1976), 195.

³⁰ Elizabeth Blades-Zeller, *A Spectrum of Voices: Prominent American Voice Teachers Discuss the Teaching of Singing* (Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow Press Inc., 2002), 139-46.

³¹ Stark, *Bel Canto*, xviii.

writings about the voice often consisted of subjective, ambiguous descriptions and instructions.³² Stark's account describes a divide that emerged between "traditional" voice teachers and the scientific approach instigated by voice teacher Manuel Garcia II's 1855 invention of the laryngoscope.³³ Despite this initial disconnect, continuing technological advances in vocal science, have allowed for an even deeper analysis of the intricacies of the vocal mechanism.³⁴ Interdisciplinary research and perspectives have contributed to the potential for increased clarity of resource material due to a more comprehensive understanding of vocal function.³⁵

Many modern academic institutions offer advanced degrees in vocal pedagogy and specialized coursework, giving students and prospective teachers the opportunity to educate themselves on topics, such as: "anatomy, physiology, acoustics, learning theory, and voice disorders."³⁶ This study of vocal pedagogy can provide clarity of vocal function, as well as offer access to consistent terminology across disciplines.³⁷ Traditional methods of vocal study can be enhanced by these expanding topics for specialization,

³² Stark, *Bel Canto*, xvii-xxi.

³³ Stark, *Bel Canto*, xxi-xxii.

³⁴ For sources discussing advances in this area and their relevance for vocal pedagogy, see Scott McCoy, "Singing Pedagogy in the Twenty-First Century: A Look Toward the Future," in *Teaching Singing the 21st Century*, ed. Scott Harrison and Jessica O'Bryan (New York: Springer, 2014), 13; Donald Gray Miller, "Registers Defined Through Visual Feedback," in *Teaching Singing the 21st Century*, ed. Scott Harrison and Jessica O'Bryan (New York: Springer, 2014), 133; Heather Buchanan, "Body Mapping: Enhancing Voice Performance Through Somatic Pedagogy," in *Teaching Singing in the 21st Century*, ed. Scott Harrison and Jessica O'Bryan (New York: Springer, 2014), 147; Scott McCoy, *Your Voice: An Inside View, 2nd ed* (Delaware, Ohio: Scott McCoy and Inside View Press, 2012), 53, 57, 59, 68. These technologies include voice analysis and bio feedback (such as spectrum analysis, electroglottography, power spectrum analysis, and more), neuroscience, and emerging vocology specializations (e.g., "Singing Health Specialists").

³⁵ American Academy of Teachers of Singing, "In Support of Contemporary Commercial Music (Nonclassical) Voice Pedagogy," *Journal of Singing* 65, no. 1 (2008), 8.

³⁶ McCoy, "Singing Pedagogy," 14.

³⁷ American Academy of Teachers of Singing, "In Support of Fact-Based Voice Pedagogy and Terminology," *Journal of Singing* 71, no.1 (2014), 10.

providing unprecedented support as singers and teachers strive towards achieving the greatest potential for authentic and effective musical self-expression for each individual.

Vocal pedagogy has grown to include voice teachers who specialize in a plethora of musical styles, including classical/lyrical, opera, Contemporary Commercial Music (CCM), musical theatre, gospel, jazz, worship, and other extended vocal techniques.³⁸ Through analysis of the vocal mechanism, characteristics of vocal function can now be compared and explored across a variety of musical styles.³⁹ In 2008, the American Academy of Teachers of Singing made the following statement to address these developments:

The voice science community continues to investigate differences among the various styles of singing, including: 1) physiological aspects of registration related to muscle function and configuration of the glottis; 2) breath and airflow management, including typical subglottal pressure required to sustain phonation; and 3) variations in the acoustic spectrum that are related to gender and style⁴⁰

This acknowledgment of an intention to utilize scientific research to allow for an expansion in techniques pairs well with the changing needs of voice students and the necessity for modern voice teachers to accommodate “a range of musical cultures, styles, and techniques, beyond the tradition of canonic European approach to singing pedagogy.”⁴¹

³⁸ Harrison and O’Bryan, “Prelude: Positioning Singing Pedagogy,” 7.

³⁹ American Academy of Teachers of Singing, “In Support of Contemporary Commercial Music (Nonclassical) Voice Pedagogy,” 8.

⁴⁰ American Academy of Teachers of Singing, “In Support of Contemporary Commercial Music (Nonclassical) Voice Pedagogy,” 10.

⁴¹ Harrison and O’Bryan, “Prelude: Positioning Singing Pedagogy,” 3.

In addition to providing insight to vocal function, technological advancements of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries continually expand learning environments for singers into the online/virtual realm, further compelling the adaptation of their teachers. The availability of online/virtual learning environments, either live or pre-recorded, have increased in prevalence in the twenty-first century.⁴² Even with the imperative “[radical] change to meet the demands of the students,” the one-to-one master-apprentice learning model remains the most efficient learning environment for a student of singing.⁴³ This statement reaffirms that despite newly available resources, such as a generic, pre-recorded voice lesson on YouTube, twenty-first century voice teachers providing individualized instruction in private and group settings are still one of the most (if not the most) valuable resources for a student of singing. Technological advancements have become a significant tool for refining our understanding of vocal function and will continue to aid in the development of new and adaptive pedagogical techniques.

⁴² Harrison and O’Bryan, “Prelude: Positioning Singing Pedagogy,” 3.

⁴³ Harrison and O’Bryan, “Prelude: Positioning Singing Pedagogy,” 3.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

As nearly every human being and culture in the world engages in singing, there are endless approaches and philosophies towards learning and teaching it.⁴⁴ This document is not intended as a comprehensive discussion of all possible methodologies but focuses specifically on selected texts that may be purchased by an independent singer or voice teacher and used in a variety of entry level academic settings, including the “Class Voice” setting. Amidst the abundance of available resource texts, I will examine the following titles: *Adventures in Singing: A Process for Exploring, Discovering and Developing Vocal Potential, 4th Ed.* (2008) by Clifton Ware, *The Singing Book, 3rd. Ed.* (2014) by Meribeth Dayme and Cynthia Vaughn, two titles by Katharin Rundus; *Cantabile: A Manual about Beautiful Singing for Singers, Teachers of Singing, and Choral Conductors, 2nd Ed.* (2016) and *Cantabile Voice Class: A Manual about Beautiful, Lyrical Singing for Voice Classes and Choral Singers* (2015), and *The Contemporary Singer: Elements of Vocal Technique* (2010) by Anne Peckham. I provide an additional limited review of an anticipated text: *Class Voice: Fundamental Skills for Lifelong Singing* (2023) by Brenda Smith and Ronald Burrichter. My process of selecting texts to review began with several texts that I became familiar with as a beginning instructor of individual lessons and Class Voice. To expand the review, I then identified

⁴⁴ Harrison and O’Bryan, “Prelude: Positioning Singing Pedagogy,” 1; Norton, *Singing and Wellbeing*, xi.

required texts mentioned often in Class Voice syllabi available online and had conversations with multiple voice instructors, including my teaching assistantship supervisor and committee member, Dr. Amanda DeMaris.

This chapter will provide a brief overview, with an intention to highlight aspects of each selected text, such as identification of the authors' intended audience, the vocal style that is being instructed, and the level of prior musical training for the student to access the content within. In my examination, I consider the texts' inclusivity of somatic/whole body practices, how the author addresses students who may experience a sense of the imposter phenomenon, and whether they reinforce a binary-narrative. Finally, I provide a commentary on any accompanying resource material, the accessibility of these materials, and recommendations for which singers and voice teachers may find these texts most useful.

A glance at the table of contents allows for the identification of consistent foundational concepts throughout the selected texts. Outlined in various levels of detail are the following topics: preparation for singing (physical and mental), singing healthfully, selecting and learning repertoire, practice habits, and performance. Additional essential elements include discussions of the vocal mechanism and function, including information on topics, such as vocal registration, articulation, resonance, focus or placement of the tone, and diction (vowels and consonants). In addition to explanatory overviews of foundational concepts, all of the texts support Harrison and O'Bryan's observation of the strategic use of imaginative language and vocal imitation as being

characteristics of twenty-first century vocal pedagogy.⁴⁵ Finally, these texts all contain a variety of practical, kinesthetic exercises to be completed in tandem with the reading material and introductory reference material for further study as appendices (such as quick guides to the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), keeping a practice journal, and definitions of vocabulary/terminology specific to vocal pedagogy).

Although their presentation of the material varies, the authors concede that singing healthfully consists of a combination of the following elements: breath management, clear and healthy tone, achieving ideal physical posture or alignment of the instrument, and maintaining vocal health. The authors' collective treatment of vocal health includes recommendations about sleep, hydration, physical fitness, and may even extend to dietary recommendations, use of medications, and lifestyle choices. As the instrument of singing is contained within the student's body, there is an additional level of care and responsibility that may not be present in other types of study. The connection between musician and instrument which often prompts vocal pedagogues to liken the singer to an athlete and encourage a similar mindset is also present.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Harrison and O'Bryan, "Prelude: Positioning Singing Pedagogy," 3.

⁴⁶ Dayme and Vaughn, *The Singing Book*, xiv; Katharin Rundus, *Cantabile Voice Class: A Manual about Beautiful, Lyrical Singing for Voice Classes and Choral Singers* (Pavane Publishing, 2015), 37; Katharin Rundus, *Cantabile: A Manual about Beautiful Singing for Singers, Teachers of Singing, and Choral Conductors*, 2nd ed. (Pavane Publishing, 2016), 2; Clifton Ware, *Adventures in Singing: A Process for Exploring, Discovering and Developing Vocal Potential*, 4th ed. (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 2008), 31; Anne Peckham, *The Contemporary Singer: Elements of Vocal Technique*, 2nd ed. (Boston: MA: Berklee Press, 2010), 14.

Adventures in Singing: A Process for Exploring, Discovering, and Developing Vocal Potential, 4th ed. (2008) by Clifton Ware

Clifton Ware presents *Adventures in Singing*... as a “a comprehensive instructional package,” providing the instructor and singer with a supportive web resource and two compact discs with recorded accompaniments in addition to the text book and included song anthology.⁴⁷ At the time of this text’s publication, Ware, a Professor of Vocal Pedagogy, had published several additional vocal pedagogy articles and texts, and had substantial experience teaching Class Voice, as well as undergraduate and graduate voice majors.⁴⁸ Ware acknowledges the influence of the European vocal tradition for classical singers on the development of curricula for vocal study, and has designed this text in accordance with this tradition.⁴⁹

In an outline of this text’s assets, Ware describes a compilation of a variety of techniques including “(1) methodical voice-building techniques, beginning with the speaking voice and progressing to more challenging singing tasks; (2) foundational preparations, including mind-body health and an overview of how the voice works; and (3) self-assessment questions at the end of most chapters to help students think critically about the material discussed.”⁵⁰ The goal of this text is to be a guide for beginning singers to discover their “authentic voices” through the use of “efficient voice production” and “expressive singing skills.”⁵¹

⁴⁷ Ware, *Adventures in Singing*, vi.

⁴⁸ Ware, *Adventures in Singing*, ix.

⁴⁹ Ware, *Adventures in Singing*, 306.

⁵⁰ Ware, *Adventures in Singing*, vi.

⁵¹ Ware, *Adventures in Singing*, vi.

In the first chapter, “Preparing for the Journey,” Ware describes singers in the group class environment as having “...widely ranging expertise and experience, from individuals who have practically no formal musical training to those who have varying degrees of musical or vocal training” and reassures students who may “lack...training.”⁵² Ware describes online resources for instructors making use of this text, including the availability of external “Group Voice Instruction guidelines,” and permits the instructor to tailor the use of the content to suit the needs of their students.⁵³

Throughout the text, Ware encourages singers along their journeys with expansive definitions of relevant concepts and terms, descriptive hands-on exercises, and opportunities for self-assessment, with the majority of the text consisting of an anthology of vocal sheet music. Another significant intention of the author is a holistic approach to learning, in the hopes of positively influencing the student’s general mindset and attitude beyond the vocal studio.⁵⁴ Ware directly introduces this goal and concept of vocal study to the student as a “comprehensive self-improvement program” and a unique journey towards the expression of an authentic voice.⁵⁵

Much of Ware’s commentary emphasizes the uniqueness of each singer’s experience and instrument, implying that specific recommendations associated with individual health and wellness should be equally personalized. Therefore, Ware makes several general suggestions regarding a singer’s health and lifestyle choices to direct attention to topics that may specifically impact vocal health. In “Chapter 3: Expanding

⁵² Ware, *Adventures in Singing*, 3.

⁵³ Ware, *Adventures in Singing*, vi.

⁵⁴ Ware, *Adventures in Singing*, vi-vii.

⁵⁵ Ware, *Adventures in Singing*, 1.

the Mind,” Ware emphasizes such benefits as understanding one’s self-image and perceptions, the role of learning modes, and a process vs product-focus in vocal study.⁵⁶ Chapter subtitles, such as “The Roots of Your Vocal Self-Image,” “Personal Voice Perceptions,” and “The Vocal Athlete” represent the author’s attention to mind-body connection from a physiological, as well as psychological and emotional perspectives.⁵⁷

Although Ware does not directly address the concept of the imposter phenomenon, Ware does prompt students to explore their vocal “roots” and self-image.⁵⁸ As mental exercises, students are encouraged to harness the power of imagination by envisioning themselves as “successful singers,” to practice improvisatory voice/movement exercises to be “free...from negative thoughts,” and supplies multiple written exercises in a “Voice and Self-Assessment” at the end of the chapter.⁵⁹ Ware devotes the fourth chapter to the production and maintenance of the physical energy needed for singing. Ware recommends the use of practices, such as meditation, Tai Chi, yoga, the Alexander Technique, Feldenkrais Method, and Pilates for further exploration in the development of a balanced physical and mental state of being for singing.⁶⁰ Overall, Ware’s aim seems to be to provoke readers’ consideration for a vast number of variables whilst on their individual journey of vocal study.

Ware seems to consider a song anthology to be a significant resource for beginning singers and their teachers, as it comprises a majority of the book. Ware’s

⁵⁶ Ware, *Adventures in Singing*, 20-30.

⁵⁷ Ware, *Adventures in Singing*, iii.

⁵⁸ Ware, *Adventures in Singing*, 20-1.

⁵⁹ Ware, *Adventures in Singing*, 20, 27-9.

⁶⁰ Ware, *Adventures in Singing*, 31-42.

anthology contains substantial program notes in addition to the scores for more than sixty songs in varying styles, keys, and levels of difficulty.⁶¹ Hoping to promote accessibility, Ware includes “typical standard song repertoire,” vocal melodies that will be suitable for “the majority of mid-range singers” and enough variety to “provide options for all students.”⁶² In the selection of song texts, the author states that the songs are “suitable for either female or male singers,” and encourages the singer to use word substitution in cases when the singer does not match the gender indication (male or female) of the song in order to adjust for “broader gender reference.”⁶³

Ware identifies the accompanying pair of compact discs, containing recorded accompaniments, as aids for students without “strong musical skills.”⁶⁴ The melodic vocal line is included in the pre-recorded song accompaniment for the singer’s benefit during the learning process, and additional text recitation tracks are included for any of the songs to be sung not in the English language.⁶⁵ Furthermore, Ware offers two appendices which are supportive of the song anthology, including general song style information, descriptions for each song, and a pronunciation guide using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) and translations as resources for the songs not written in the English language.⁶⁶

⁶¹ At the time of the publication of the first edition of this text (1995), vocal sheet music was not widely accessible via the internet. Ware provided access to the scores by including them with the text, an asset at the time, as web retail resources such as Musicnotes (1998) and Sheet Music Plus (1997) did not exist. Ware’s second and third editions of this text were published in 1998 and 2004.

⁶² Ware, *Adventures in Singing*, 306.

⁶³ Ware, *Adventures in Singing*, 306.

⁶⁴ Ware, *Adventures in Singing*, vi.

⁶⁵ Ware, *Adventures in Singing*, vi-vii.

⁶⁶ Ware, *Adventures in Singing*, 306-336.

Ware introduces music fundamentals to the student in *Adventures in Singing...* in the eleventh chapter titled: “Learning a Song.”⁶⁷ Ware outlines “practical musicianship” into categories of rhythm, pitch, harmony, form, and a final category that includes dynamics, phrasing, and articulation.⁶⁸ Reviewer Richard Sjoerdsma criticizes that the section of text that attempts to tackle basic music theory fundamentals is overwhelming and overdue.⁶⁹ Despite numerous mentions that the text is suitable for beginners in the Preface, the introductory paragraph of Ware’s second to last chapter asserts that ideal students will have a foundation of musical training and knowledge prior to taking on vocal study.⁷⁰ Although singers who are studying this text within the classroom setting will have the advantage of instructor guidance, singers who do not meet Ware’s ideal may have to delve deeply into this text to maximize their use of this content.

Sjoerdsma accurately predicts a positive reception of the original edition of this text to other vocal practitioners, especially praising the systematic organization and clarity of the conventional vocal wisdom presented within.⁷¹ That both teachers and singers have found this text useful is clearly evidenced by its publication through to its fourth edition. Unfortunately, although used copies of this text are available for purchase, accessibility and usage are likely to decline due to it being out of print at the time of writing this document. Students who are in search of a traditional resource that includes a significant song anthology with accompanying program notes may seek to acquire a used

⁶⁷ Ware, *Adventures in Singing*, 104.

⁶⁸ Ware, *Adventures in Singing*, 104.

⁶⁹ Richard Sjoerdsma, “Bookshelf: Clifton Ware— ‘Adventures in Singing: A Process for Exploring, Discovering, and Developing Vocal Potential’,” *Journal of Singing* 54, no. 1 (1997), 65.

⁷⁰ Ware, *Adventures*, vi, 104.

⁷¹ Sjoerdsma, “Bookshelf: Clifton Ware” 65.

copy of this text. However, students who purchase a used text that does not include the compact discs may have trouble locating audio files of the song accompaniments, as only selected additional tracks are available on the *Adventures in Singing...* web page. Singers with piano skills or access to a pianist or both may enjoy Ware's adventure.

The Singing Book, 3rd ed. (2014) by Meribeth Dayme and Cynthia Vaughn

The third edition of *The Singing Book* declares its purpose as: "...for anyone who wants to learn how to sing. Whether or not you have previous experience, whether you do your best singing on the stage or in the shower, this book offers joyful, straightforward, and satisfying introduction to the art of singing."⁷² Intended for individual and group instruction, and choral settings, the goal of this text is to provide singers and their teachers with foundational tools to explore "all singing styles, classical and contemporary."⁷³ Dayme and Vaughn's leading philosophy of "Sing now, talk later" accommodates singers with varied levels of curiosity by presenting their content in three sections.⁷⁴ Along with narrative descriptions, examples, and figures, this text is accompanied by a substantial song anthology, a disc with recorded song accompaniments, and various resource appendices for both student and teacher.

In the introduction of the text, the authors reaffirm their intention to serve beginning singers desiring to sing in any vocal style and illustrate three principles for "a balanced approach to singing: 1) Humans being are meant to sing; 2) Think positively;

⁷² Dayme and Vaughn, *The Singing Book*, back cover.

⁷³ Dayme and Vaughn, *The Singing Book*, x-xiii.

⁷⁴ Dayme and Vaughn, *The Singing Book*, x.

and 3) Technique serves the message.”⁷⁵ On the path to develop basic healthy technique, the student is encouraged to prioritize creativity and play, while using the familiar experience of language and speech as a way to transition into experiencing singing as a natural, everyday activity. Although Dayme and Vaughn do not directly address students who may feel a sense of unworthiness for vocal study, the authors alert students to the detrimental effects of negative self-talk, excessive self-criticism and judgement, and even potentially limiting false preconceived notions, such as the idea that “...only highly trained singers perform in public.”⁷⁶

Dayme and Vaughn advocate for the three-part design of the text by stating that “some students may not want to know more than the information in Part One at first” and wait to present more detailed content in Part Three of the text, providing the option for both student and teacher to progress at a pace and depth of their choice.⁷⁷ For the purposes of this review, I will first consider “Part One: The First Steps to Singing Easily” and “Part Three: How the Voice Works,” following with a discussion of “Part Two: Improvisations and Songs.” Dayme and Vaughn’s commitment to accessibility is evidenced by the simplicity of the first section of the text. Brief chapters provide the student with a condensed presentation of the topics of “healthy singing,” “preparing to sing,” “selecting music to sing,” “learning music efficiently,” “practice habits,” and “performing.”⁷⁸ The material is presented by alternating short, concise descriptions of concepts with self-directed “Find out for yourself” exercises for the singer.

⁷⁵ Dayme and Vaughn, *The Singing Book*, 1-4.

⁷⁶ Dayme and Vaughn, *The Singing Book*, 2.

⁷⁷ Dayme and Vaughn, *The Singing Book*, xi.

⁷⁸ Dayme and Vaughn, *The Singing Book*, 7-24.

In addition to instructional exercises that lead the student in demonstrating desirable vocal technique, the text provides students with directed opportunities to experiment with inefficient methods of vocal production as a varied experience of sensation. The authors' intention with these exercises is to give singers an opportunity to investigate and identify the effectiveness of these techniques for themselves and to encourage the prioritization of vocal exploration over perfection.⁷⁹ Dayme and Vaughn refer students to somatic practices, such as meditation, Alexander Technique, Feldenkrais Method, Tai Chi, Qigong, Pilates, and dance to enhance their vocal study throughout the text.⁸⁰ The second chapter presents a “warm-up” routine that engages singers in physical warm-ups exercises that are extracted from a specific movement-based learning program called Brain Gym.⁸¹ The vocal exercises within this section of the text may be accomplished entirely through “free” vocalizing, and singers desiring pitch-notated exercises are referred to “Appendix C.”⁸²

True to the authors' opening declaration, the third part of the text provides detailed information, and complex diagrams and figures to illustrate vocal anatomy and function. After being introduced to foundational concepts of singing, students may explore independently, or be led by their teacher to a more comprehensive understanding of vocal function through these chapters. For example, the concept of breath that was introduced in Chapter One may be thoroughly examined in Chapter Eight, which illustrates the complete process of breath in the body within the context of singing from

⁷⁹ Dayme and Vaughn, *The Singing Book*, xiii.

⁸⁰ Dayme and Vaughn, *The Singing Book*, 261, 263, 301, 336-37.

⁸¹ Dayme and Vaughn, *The Singing Book*, 14-5.

⁸² Dayme and Vaughn, *The Singing Book*, 15, 317-20.

“inhalation” to “balancing breath and music.”⁸³ Chapter Nine, “Making Sound,” consists of detailed information about anatomical structure of the larynx and the musculature that is involved in the vocal process. Even in the more detailed information, Dayme and Vaughn seem to predominantly address singers from a gender-neutral perspective with the exception of only a few anecdotal examples. Dayme and Vaughn briefly describe variances in vocal quality and in various vocal styles (classical vs nonclassical), and do not instruct the student in any method for voice classification.⁸⁴ Breathiness or consistency of tone throughout the vocal range, the use of vibrato, or the presence of a “speech-like” quality are indicated to be characteristics of vocal style.⁸⁵

The middle portion of the text (“Part Two”) consists of a significant song anthology, with detailed descriptions of each musical style and song.⁸⁶ In alignment with the approach to physical and vocal warmups, the first component to this anthology is a section devoted to exploring the “creative” and “spontaneous” nature of vocal improvisation.⁸⁷ Students are encouraged to practice their improvisation skills with exercises, such as rhythmic improvisation in a group, free vocalization with the provided accompaniment tracks, and listening to inspirational recordings of vocal jazz singers.⁸⁸ The authors provide variety within the anthology by including Nicaraguan, Korean, and

⁸³ Dayme and Vaughn, *The Singing Book*, 265, 269.

⁸⁴ Dayme and Vaughn, *The Singing Book*, 275-8.

⁸⁵ Dayme and Vaughn, *The Singing Book*, 277-9.

⁸⁶ Dayme and Vaughn, *The Singing Book*, 27-258. The first and second editions of this text were published in 2004 and 2008, respectively. Although some internet retail resources were active at that time, Dayme and Vaughn may have had similar motivations that I previously suggested regarding Ware’s use of a song anthology—providing access to vocal scores by including them with the text.

⁸⁷ Dayme and Vaughn, *The Singing Book*, 27.

⁸⁸ Dayme and Vaughn, *The Singing Book*, 27-8.

Japanese folk songs; and songs from television, film, and music theatre.⁸⁹ In the beginning of this edition, the authors clarify their intention to demonstrate continued growth as a response to feedback from (presumably) the users of previous editions and as an adaptation to advancements in technology.⁹⁰ Their discussion of the updates to the text consist of added resources for instructors of Class Voice, updated recommendations for additional learning resources, and include substantial additions to the song repertoire component of the text.⁹¹ Pre-recorded tracks to accompany the songs in the anthology have been expanded to include separate tracks for the vocal line and accompaniment, and a third track combining the two as additional learning tools.

Although Dayme and Vaughn declare that “Learning to read music is necessary for any performer,” they also invite singers to learn the melody to their song of choice with the aid of the recorded tracks.⁹² Despite this assertion and the significant section of vocal sheet music contained within the text, Dayme and Vaughn wait to offer the beginning singer any guidance for interpreting the scores until the Appendix E titled “Making Sense of a Music Manuscript.”⁹³ Dayme and Vaughn acknowledge the challenge presented by the “language of music” used in vocal sheet music and state that it can appear as foreign as “hieroglyphics.”⁹⁴ The potential implication is that the student lacking in strong musical skills is meant to rely heavily, if not solely, on the recorded accompaniment tracks to learn the songs from the anthology by ear. However, to meet the

⁸⁹ Dayme and Vaughn, *The Singing Book*, xiv.

⁹⁰ Dayme and Vaughn, *The Singing Book*, ix.

⁹¹ Dayme and Vaughn, *The Singing Book*, ix-x.

⁹² Dayme and Vaughn, *The Singing Book*, 19, 310.

⁹³ Dayme and Vaughn, *The Singing Book*, 325.

⁹⁴ Dayme and Vaughn, *The Singing Book*, 325.

authors' standard and to attain the maximum value from this text, the unaided student should have an accessible path to the basic understanding of the concepts of musical notation. Therefore, it may be beneficial to address this topic or suggest resources for students to pursue this topic on their own earlier in the text. The overall effectiveness of this text is evidenced similarly to Ware's by its publication through to a 3rd edition. *The Singing Book* is available for purchase online in new or used condition. Students who desire the aid of the compact discs may opt to purchase the text new, as the accompaniment tracks are not available separately at this time.

Cantabile: A Manual about Beautiful Singing for Singers, Teachers of Singing, and Choral Conductors, 2nd ed. (2016) by Katharin Rundus

Cantabile: A Manual about Beautiful Singing for Singers, Teachers of Singing and Choral Conductors, 2nd ed. is an extensive resource for singers and their teachers.⁹⁵ Although it is not overtly stated, the information within this text is presented from a "traditional" perspective and is geared towards achieving a lyrical, *bel canto*, vocal aesthetic for solo and choral singers.⁹⁶ To simplify the complexities of vocal study, Rundus presents singers with a four-pillared system throughout the text with the aspirational goals of "Freedom," "Beauty," "Health," and "Strength." Rundus asserts that it is through focusing on these attributes that singers can achieve "beautiful and skillful singing."⁹⁷ Rundus enlivens her readers' experience of the material by including a

⁹⁵ The first edition of this text was released in 2009.

⁹⁶ Rundus, *Cantabile: A Manual*, 94-5, 132.

⁹⁷ Rundus, *Cantabile: A Manual*, vi.

combination of visual elements, including realistic images, standard drawn figures, and graphic icons that denote specific categories (“The Science,” “Exercises,” “Imagination,” “Choral Conductor,” and “Summary”). These are elements that may appeal to students who are visual learners.

Another graphic component to this text is Rundus’ “Spiral of Singing”: nine foundational principles, presented in the form of a spiral leading to “beautiful singing” in the center.⁹⁸ This concept is a visual representation of the topics that singers will continue to return to at varying levels of proficiency throughout the duration of their vocal study.⁹⁹ The principles, which correspond to the first nine chapters of the text, include: “Release of Tension and Positioning the Instrument,” “Opening the Vocal Tract,” “Breathing for Singing,” “Onsets and Releases,” “Resonance,” “Registers of the Voice,” “Focus of the Tone,” “Articulation,” and “Musical Expression.” Although the principles correspond numerically to the chapters of the book, Rundus clarifies that they can be visited in any order during the vocal learning process.¹⁰⁰

Another feature of the 2016 manual is the organization of each chapter topic into the following sections: “Background and Scientific Approach,” “Exercises to Encourage...,” “Some Common Images...,” “Especially for the Choral Conductor,” and an end of chapter “Summary.” Featuring written descriptions, kinesthetic exercises, and descriptive imagery, each chapter topic is presented to the student from a variety of perspectives. Rundus addresses the instructor directly within the text of “Especially for

⁹⁸ Rundus, *Cantabile: A Manual*, viii.

⁹⁹ Rundus, *Cantabile: A Manual*, viii.

¹⁰⁰ Rundus, *Cantabile: A Manual*, viii.

the Choral Conductor” by including resources for further explanation and specific instructor-led exercises to supplement the content of each chapter.

After a very brief introduction, Rundus begins the process of learning to sing from body and instrument position.¹⁰¹ The first chapter, “Release of Tension and Positioning of the Instrument,” depicts various muscle groups within the body, clarifies whether they should be relaxed/released or tensed when singing, and provides various exercises.¹⁰² To guide singers to a stabilized body position or “noble posture” for singing, Rundus references the work of vocal pedagogue Richard Miller, and recommends the use of somatic practices, such as the Alexander Technique and Feldenkrais Method.¹⁰³ Rundus’ second chapter “Opening the Vocal Tract” contains discussion and detailed illustrations of the vocal tract, including exercises for which components of the vocal tract may be “directly controlled” by the singer.¹⁰⁴ To facilitate students’ understanding of these concepts, Rundus provides a variety of palpative exercises, ‘free’ vocal exercises, and vocal exercises with notated pitches. Throughout the text, Rundus also includes parenthetical instructions intended for specific voice types (soprano, alto, tenor, bass) with some of the notated vocal exercises.¹⁰⁵

Rundus’ fifth chapter expounds on the topic of “Resonance,” detailing the interaction of a singers’ resonators (mouth and vocal tract) and language (vowel, formants). Rundus describes the effect that resonators may have on vocal tone and the

¹⁰¹ Rundus, *Cantabile: A Manual*, 2-58.

¹⁰² Rundus, *Cantabile: A Manual*, 2-8.

¹⁰³ Rundus, *Cantabile: A Manual*, 3, 10, 53.

¹⁰⁴ Rundus, *Cantabile: A Manual*, 14-31.

¹⁰⁵ Rundus, *Cantabile: A Manual*, 21, 44.

qualities of resonance which are advantageous for “‘classical’ singing.”¹⁰⁶ The sixth chapter, “Registers of the Voice,” contains a detailed illustration of the vocal mechanism, particularly the anatomy involved and the coordination of breath and muscular function throughout a singers’ vocal range as they relate to traditional theories of registration in lyrical singing.¹⁰⁷ Rundus’ exercises for “Unified Registers for Singing” are divided into three sections that align with traditional binary and classical vocal classification: “Women,” “Tenors,” and “Baritones and Basses.”¹⁰⁸

Rundus waits to expressly address mental, emotional, and psychological aspects of vocal study until the tenth (“Vocal Health”) and eleventh (“Vocal Performance”) chapters. The eleventh chapter contains Rundus’ perspective on the application of the knowledge gained through research of cognition and behavioral science, specifically motor learning and motor skills acquisition, to singing and teaching singing.¹⁰⁹ A key topic of Rundus’ discussion is “Deliberate Practice,” a method that may provide effective strategies for students to use in independent practice.¹¹⁰ Rundus also engages readers in a discussion of research that attempts to determine the significance of talent as it pertains to vocal study. Rundus presents tools to singers for acquiring and maintaining a “Growth Mindset” and “Guidelines for Deliberate Practice,” and includes an additional section aimed towards advising the teachers who guide them.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁶ Rundus, *Cantabile: A Manual*, 72-91.

¹⁰⁷ Rundus, *Cantabile: A Manual*, 94-9.

¹⁰⁸ Rundus, *Cantabile: A Manual*, 99-107.

¹⁰⁹ Rundus, *Cantabile: A Manual*, 168.

¹¹⁰ Rundus, *Cantabile: A Manual*, 169.

¹¹¹ Rundus, *Cantabile: A Manual*, 170-77.

Students and teachers of singing who are interested in learning in detail about aspects of “traditional,” lyrical singing with a considerable added component of vocal science may find this text to be helpful. This text is available for purchase new from the publisher, and new or used online. *Cantabile: A Manual...* is the foundational text for a series of resources produced by Katharin Rundus, including the following text to be reviewed.

Cantabile Voice Class: A Manual about Singing in a Beautiful, Lyrical Style for Voice Classes and Choral Singers (2015) by Katharin Rundus

Cantabile Voice Class: A Manual about Singing in a Beautiful, Lyrical Style for Voice Classes and Choral Singers is Rundus’ condensed resource guide designed specifically for Class Voice. Rundus states the purpose of *Cantabile Voice Class...* as a “guide for serious learners” and “committed singers,”¹¹² and makes a clear distinction between the two texts by directing “teachers, conductors, and advanced learners” who desire a more complete resource to her larger text.¹¹³ Rundus asserts that the “ultimate goal of every singer is to be technically secure enough to put aside concerns about how the voice works, and to sing emotionally and expressively.”¹¹⁴ It is clear from the title that Rundus is intending this resource to be used by singers and teachers who are working within the lyrical vocal style.

¹¹² Rundus, *Cantabile Voice Class*, 3.

¹¹³ Rundus, *Cantabile Voice Class*, 3.

¹¹⁴ Rundus, *Cantabile Voice Class*, 3.

Cantabile Voice Class... mimics the visual learning style of *Cantabile: A Manual*... by presenting many of the same concepts with graphic elements. In addition to images and figures, Rundus utilizes the following graphic icons to draw attention to particular concepts: “Anchor: Important and fundamental ideas about singing”; “Gardener: Exercises and strategies to help you cultivate your singing”; “Heart: Emotional and psychological aspects of singing”; and “Diver: A summation of each chapter’s ideas.”¹¹⁵ Rundus depicts the twelve “Anchors” in place of traditional chapters.¹¹⁶ The “Anchors” consist of the nine principles of singing that are represented in Rundus’ “Spiral of Singing” with the addition of a few more topics. This similarity in foundational content provides a sense of continuity between the two texts. To provide a reference for readers interested in further study, Rundus uses an additional graphic source icon (“Cantabile”) throughout the text to indicate where specific concepts that are covered more comprehensively are located in the larger manual.¹¹⁷

The “Anchor” topics include “Releasing Tension from Your Instrument,” “Aligning Your Instrument,” “Opening the Vocal Tract,” “Breathing for Singing,” “Starting and Stopping the Tone,” “Resonance in Singing,” “Vocal Registers,” “Voice Classification,” “Articulation and Diction,” “Musical Expression: Telling the Story,” “Attentive and Deliberate Practice,” and “Vocal Health.” The information for each idea is organized similarly and begins with an introductory explanation, followed by physical or vocal exercises to explore the idea, and is summed in a bulleted list titled “Things to

¹¹⁵ Rundus, *Cantabile Voice Class*, 4.

¹¹⁶ Rundus, *Cantabile Voice Class*, 3.

¹¹⁷ Rundus, *Cantabile Voice Class*, 3-4.

Think About and Remember From...” Rundus uses a combination of “free” and notated vocal exercises and provides an abbreviated IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet) guide for exercises that use vowels or consonants or both.¹¹⁸

Two significant differences between the texts are the author’s attention to “Voice Classifications” (Anchor #8) and “Attentive and Deliberate Practice” (Anchor #11). Following a brief discussion of vocal registration, Rundus’ eighth anchor provides an explanation of traditional “classical” voice classification and a notated chart for reference.¹¹⁹ Rundus advises singers to consider vocal range, weight, timbre, agility, and register events when determining their voice type. Choral directors and singers may find this section particularly helpful, as it clearly explains the structure of the choral ensemble. Rundus also states: “It is important to note that all singers, cisgender, non-binary, or transitioning, should train in the vocal range that is comfortable for them, and not be too concerned about labels.”¹²⁰ Finally, Rundus encourages singers to seek “repertoire that they can sing freely and beautifully, rather than be limited to a voice classification...”¹²¹ Rundus’ eleventh Anchor emphasizes the method of “Deliberate Practice” that is mentioned in the manual, and impresses the importance of focused practice to build muscle memory and improve overall singing performance.¹²²

Singers and teachers who desire an introductory text to lyrical singing may appreciate the brevity of the explanations of foundational concepts in this guide. In

¹¹⁸ Rundus, *Cantabile Voice Class*, 45.

¹¹⁹ Rundus, *Cantabile Voice Class*, 29-30.

¹²⁰ Rundus, *Cantabile Voice Class*, 29.

¹²¹ Rundus, *Cantabile Voice Class*, 30.

¹²² Rundus, *Cantabile Voice Class*, 37-8.

addition to the two texts reviewed in this document, the *Cantabile* series, which includes *Cantabile Voice Class Plus*, *CHORAL Cantabile*, and *Cantabile Virtual Vocalise Collection Cantabile Voice Class PLUS*, is available as a virtual supplemental resource to this text, and includes supportive audio and video resources, and selected standard repertoire songs with recorded accompaniment.¹²³ *CHORAL Cantabile* is a text designed specifically for choral conductors and *Cantabile Virtual Vocalise Collection* is a collection of notated vocal exercises with recorded audio tracks.

A Contemporary Perspective: *The Contemporary Singer: Elements of Vocal Technique*, 2nd ed. (2010) by Anne Peckham

The Contemporary Singer: Elements of Vocal Technique, 2nd ed. is specifically aimed towards singers of popular vocal styles, such as pop, rock, gospel, country music, and musical theater, and is intended for singers of all levels, vocal ranges, and voice types.¹²⁴ Anne Peckham, an instructor at the Berklee College of Music, designed and released the first edition of this text in 2000 after developing a course for contemporary vocalists of a similar title: “Elements of Vocal Technique.”¹²⁵ This text is packaged with an audio companion, and may be used by an unguided singer, as well as in group or classroom settings.¹²⁶

¹²³ “Cantabile Voice Class Online Plus,” *Pavane Publishing*, 2022, <http://www.pavanepublishing.com/Site/190/>.

¹²⁴ Peckham, *The Contemporary Singer*, back cover, ix, 4.

¹²⁵ Peckham, *The Contemporary Singer*, ix.

¹²⁶ Peckham, *The Contemporary Singer*, ix-x.

As part of the introductory message of the text, Peckham refutes the popular “myth” that contemporary vocalists do not need training, and that receiving training could negatively impact these vocalists.¹²⁷ Amongst the variety of available pedagogical methods and techniques, Peckham impresses the importance of finding one that is “relevant” and “practical” for the individual singer.¹²⁸ Peckham notes benefits for study, such as improved vocal stamina and career longevity, and a higher quality and more expressive natural vocal sound.¹²⁹ The final message to the beginning singer is to not be “...intimidated by technical details when you are learning to sing. Information about your body and voice will help you become a smart singer, knowing how to make the most of your natural instrument.”¹³⁰

This text is divided into two larger sections: “Part One: Knowing Your Instrument” and “Part Two: Mastering the Skills.” The intention of the first part of the text is to equip singers with vocabulary and foundational knowledge necessary to pursue a comprehensive understanding of singing.¹³¹ The vocal process is outlined in four foundational concepts including “Breath (generator),” “Sound Production (vibrator),” “Resonance (tone enhancer),” and “Words (articulators).” Through a combination of anecdotal narrative examples, directed exercises, and simplified figures, Peckham expounds on topics of breath management (Chapter 2), laryngeal anatomy (Chapter 3), and resonance (Chapter 4). Peckham’s mention of posture is brief and focuses the singer

¹²⁷ Peckham, *The Contemporary Singer*, 3-4.

¹²⁸ Peckham, *The Contemporary Singer*, 4.

¹²⁹ Peckham, *The Contemporary Singer*, 4.

¹³⁰ Peckham, *The Contemporary Singer*, 5.

¹³¹ Peckham, *The Contemporary Singer*, 3.

on the maximization of breath intake and capacity, with emphasis on a “comfortably high chest.”¹³²

Vocal exercises that pair with audio tracks begin to appear within the third chapter.¹³³ The audio examples, which are accessed and available for download on the internet using a code, contain “demonstration tracks” that accompany notated exercises within the text. The fourth chapter returns to the topic of resonance within the context of “Enhancing Tone Quality,” and includes exploratory exercises through the use of imagery.¹³⁴ Peckham includes descriptions of stylistic vocal techniques that students may be familiar with, such as “yodeling” and “belting,” to relate the concept of vocal registration.¹³⁵ In addition to an explanation of the action of musculature action within the vocal mechanism, the text includes examples of typical register transition points for men and women.¹³⁶ Peckham approaches effective diction for singing in contemporary styles with an emphasis on an “awareness of the balance between clarity and the subtleties of spoken pronunciation.”¹³⁷ The discussion includes a comparison of “formal and informal” stylizations, tips for singing into a microphone, and refers singers to the “Appendix C: Diction Guide”¹³⁸ Peckham’s “Diction Guide” utilizes “Basic English,” correlating vowels in English to several languages (Italian, German, French, Japanese).¹³⁹

¹³² Peckham, *The Contemporary Singer*, 11.

¹³³ Peckham, *The Contemporary Singer*, 27.

¹³⁴ Peckham, *The Contemporary Singer*, 33-5.

¹³⁵ Peckham, *The Contemporary Singer*, 37-44.

¹³⁶ Peckham, *The Contemporary Singer*, 37-44.

¹³⁷ Peckham, *The Contemporary Singer*, 46.

¹³⁸ Peckham, *The Contemporary Singer*, 141-43.

¹³⁹ Peckham, *The Contemporary Singer*, 141-43.

The second portion of the text presents recommendations for practice and skills acquisition, performance, and more specific information about vocal style. Peckham’s “steps to learning a new song” references multiple styles of music (e.g., jazz standards compared to classical) and performance practices that influence the way a singer learns them (e.g., key transposition vs performing in the original key).¹⁴⁰ Peckham provides guidance for using vocal sheet music, lead sheets, and suggests listening to recordings of other singers to analyze their interpretation of a particular song.¹⁴¹ In “Chapter 9: Beyond the Basics,” Peckham provides details about the use of “vibrato,” “sustaining power,” “agility and flexibility,” “intonation,” and “dynamics.”¹⁴² Peckham’s description of “Voice Classification” illustrates “six basic voice types” (“soprano, mezzo-soprano, alto, tenor, baritone, and bass”) on the keys of a piano chart, in addition to approximate vocal ranges notated on a musical staff.¹⁴³ Peckham expounds with gendered examples of typical choral divisions, and classical classifications of contralto and countertenor.¹⁴⁴ Peckham includes the typical “belter’s range” as an addition to the chart, while also clarifying that it is a function of female registration and not its own category of classification.¹⁴⁵

The final portion of the text includes commentary on topics, such as cultivating successful performances practices, guidelines for auditions, and “Performance Anxiety.” Suggestions for microphone technique include the use of a microphone to prevent over-

¹⁴⁰ Peckham, *The Contemporary Singer*, 72.

¹⁴¹ Peckham, *The Contemporary Singer*, 73-4.

¹⁴² Peckham, *The Contemporary Singer*, 101-05.

¹⁴³ Peckham, *The Contemporary Singer*, 107-09.

¹⁴⁴ Peckham, *The Contemporary Singer*, 107.

¹⁴⁵ Peckham, *The Contemporary Singer*, 107.

singing when performing with an amplified band or in a noisy environment, recommendations for equipment type and set up, and stage performance practices.¹⁴⁶ To further protect against vocal fatigue and hoarseness, the text includes multiple audio examples to demonstrate the techniques described for “marking.”¹⁴⁷ Peckham suggests additional performance practices according to vocal style and performance venue, as well as for singers who self-accompany.¹⁴⁸ Peckham pointedly addresses “classically-trained” vocalists in pursuit of a more stylized “pop sound” with tips for incorporating less formal diction and more straight tone singing, a lightened (yet still balanced) tone quality, and trading volume for a microphone.¹⁴⁹

Rather than a song anthology, Peckham includes vocal sheet music for three “Practice Songs” in varying styles (“a pop ballad, a medium-swing jazz tune, and a medium- to up-tempo Motown song”), and an appendix of notated vocal “Workouts.”¹⁵⁰ Although song accompaniments are not included in the audio resource, Peckham provides the scores for each song in two keys (low and high), instructions for the appropriate key for men and women based on vocal range, and a brief contextual commentary.¹⁵¹ The audio resource does include a demonstration and brief warm-up segment for the student to sing along with each workout exercise. Singers are offered a “Beginning Warm-Up for All Voices,” and “Level 1” and “Advanced” workouts for both “High” and “Low” voices.

¹⁴⁶ Peckham, *The Contemporary Singer*, 90, 114-19.

¹⁴⁷ Peckham, *The Contemporary Singer*, 93-9.

¹⁴⁸ Peckham, *The Contemporary Singer*, 111-13.

¹⁴⁹ Peckham, *The Contemporary Singer*, 113-14.

¹⁵⁰ Peckham, *The Contemporary Singer*, 127-71.

¹⁵¹ Peckham, *The Contemporary Singer*, 127-40.

The Contemporary Singer: Elements of Vocal Technique is available for purchase new and used as a softcover and is also available as an eBook from the publisher. In addition to this text, Peckham has published *Vocal Workouts for the Contemporary Singer* (2005) as a companion text. For those interested in further study, *Vocal Workouts...* promises its content to be “grounded in traditional vocal technique and updated for singers of rock, R&B, hip-hop, and other contemporary styles...”¹⁵² Singers and teachers seeking a comprehensive text for the study of popular music styles may find Peckham’s offering to be the most useful.

A Glimpse Ahead: *Class Voice: Fundamental Skills for Lifelong Singing* (2023) by Brenda Smith and Ronald Burrichter

This text has yet to be released at the time of writing this document, so the following information is derived from a sample of the text available from the publisher in an effort to give a sense of emergent resources which are relevant to this discussion. Intended for students and teachers in the group classroom setting, Brenda Smith (D.M.A.), Ronald Burrichter (M.M.), and additional contributors including Robert Thayer Sataloff (M.D., D.M.A.), offer *Class Voice: Fundamental Skills for Lifelong Singing* (2023).¹⁵³ The authors demonstrate similar ambitions and aspirations to their predecessors by inviting readers beyond the context of *Class Voice*, stating a hope to meet the needs of a vast array of voice users including, college singers who are non-

¹⁵² Anne Peckham, *Vocal Workouts for the Contemporary Singer* (Boston, MA: Berklee Press, 2006), back cover.

¹⁵³ Brenda Smith, Ronald Burrichter, and Robert Thayer Sataloff, *Class Voice: Fundamental Skills for Lifelong Singing* (San Diego, CA: Plural Publishing, 2023), xi.

majors, music education majors, potential teachers, adult learners, and more.¹⁵⁴ Sataloff asserts that “Singing activities include people of all ages, races, genders, and creeds,” and declares this text an “accessible resource to help beginners” and “amateur singers who sing for the love of singing.”¹⁵⁵

The authors commence with an extensive section titled “How to Use This Book,” consisting of instructions for both students and teachers who may be using this book as a reference.¹⁵⁶ The authors do their best to thoroughly prepare students by answering a plethora of potential queries and concerns relevant to vocal study. Additionally, the authors overtly address the lack of an anthology within the text by encouraging the student not to limit their repertoire in any way and to seek their instructor’s guidance in planning and acquiring music to study.¹⁵⁷ This advice, and other statements throughout this section, reinforce the purpose of this text for a guided classroom and imply that it is not necessarily intended for the self-guided beginning singer. Smith and Burrichter advise the student to expect consistent growth and change over the course of their life and illustrate the experience of an added depth to vocal expression (both song and speech) through vocal study.¹⁵⁸

Also included in this address to the student, but perhaps intended for every reader, is a clear and concise illustration of the expectations for taking on vocal study in general, with special consideration for the group class learning environment. Smith and Burrichter

¹⁵⁴ Smith, Burrichter, and Sataloff, *Class Voice*, xiii.

¹⁵⁵ Smith, Burrichter, and Sataloff, *Class Voice*, xi.

¹⁵⁶ Smith, Burrichter, and Sataloff, *Class Voice*, xiii.

¹⁵⁷ Smith, Burrichter, and Sataloff, *Class Voice*, xiii.

¹⁵⁸ Smith, Burrichter, and Sataloff, *Class Voice*, xiii.

describe potential students to the instructors: “Expect the class to attract students with a wide range of abilities, interests, and ambition. There will be students with extensive singing experience and musical expertise as well as novice singers who present with a deficit of skills.”¹⁵⁹ Smith and Burrichter give a variety of examples of potential students’ perspective, interests, and skill set. Echoing the preface of *Adventures in Singing...*, the authors indicate that the text can be adapted to meet their specific circumstances by utilizing outside resources or skipping certain chapters altogether.

Referencing the Table of Contents depicts six substantial sections following the introduction including “Skills for Learning to Sing,” “Anatomy and Physiology of the Voice,” “Skills for Learning to Sing Music,” “Skills for Learning to Sing Text,” “Singing Solo,” “Singing With Others,” “Skills for Mastering Repertoire,” “Vocal Skills and Repertoire,” “The Singing Life,” “The Science of Healthy Singing,” and “Conclusion: The Benefits of Skillful Lifelong Singing.”¹⁶⁰ Subchapter headlines promise coverage of various topics, such as “Warm-Ups and Cool Downs”; “Musicianship Skills (Singing and Rhythm, Basics of the Printed Page, Understanding Aural Skills, and more)”; “International Phonetic Alphabet”; “Sounds in Italian, German, and French”; “The Singing Art in the Western World”; topics specifically for choral singing (“Two-Part Singing, Choral Breathing, Score Marking,” and more); topics on a variety of repertoire styles including folk, Western art music styles, opera, music theater, and spirituals; “Suggested Vocal Repertoire and Lessons Plans for Class Voice Study.”

¹⁵⁹ Smith, Burrichter, and Sataloff, *Class Voice*, xiii.

¹⁶⁰ Smith, Burrichter, and Sataloff, *Class Voice*, v-x.

The final chapters contain information specific for the “Adolescent Singing Voice”; separate sections with advice specified for “women” and “men”; “Vocal Aging”; and multiple topics of gender-diversity (i.e., “Working With the Gender Diverse Population,” “Transition and Hormones,” “The Transgender or Gender Diverse Singer”). Closing topics include health and wellness related subjects, such as “Laryngeal Pathology,” and twenty-first century pedagogy.¹⁶¹ With more than two hundred pages and a wide variety of traditional and contemporary topics, *Class Voice: Fundamental Skills for Lifelong Singing* yet another perspective for singers and their teachers to explore study. At the time of writing this document, this text is available new for pre-order from the publisher.

Analysis and Summary

After reading these resources, it is clear that creating a comprehensive text and presenting it in a digestible way for every individual is ambitious given the complexity of the topic. Considering the wealth of resource material that is available for use, it may be challenging for singers or teachers of diverse groups of singers or both to find the best materials suited for their needs. It is also evident that there are many enthusiastic pedagogues, such as those mentioned in this review, who hope to meet the needs of the widest possible range of singers. In *Music Education Research*, reviewer Lin Marsh similarly observes that the authors of *The Singing Book* have made their best effort to appeal to any genre of teachers and singers.¹⁶² However, lack of clarity and specificity

¹⁶¹ Smith, Burrichter, and Sataloff, *Class Voice*, v-x.

¹⁶² Lin Marsh, “The Singing Book,” *Music Education Research* 12, no. 1 (March 1, 2010): 127.

may be significantly impacting the effectiveness of these texts for singers and their teachers. To echo Peckham's sentiment, singers and teachers of singing will benefit most through the careful selection of a foundational resource (or resources) that suits their specific goals and interests.

There are many factors that may be considered when selecting a text, whether in a guided or unguided setting. Singers and their teachers may consider the following factors when selecting an educational text: pre-existing musical skill level, desired vocal style(s) for study, alignment of the text with each individual singer's goals, intensity/extensivity of study, and budget for resource materials. For example, private or group class curricula that are interested in multiple styles of singing may prefer *The Singing Book*, and those specifically interested in learning CCM vocal styles may choose the Peckham. Those seeking a brief, introductory text may prefer Rundus' *Cantabile Voice Class...* or the Dayme and Vaughn for the "Part One" section of the text, while those interested in more comprehensive study may choose *Cantabile: A Manual...* The correspondence between Rundus' two texts affords the learner an additional opportunity to begin with the smaller text and subsequently choose to purchase the larger text for more detailed information and explanations. This is potentially a successful strategy for inviting the beginning singer with minimal previous knowledge and allowing them room to grow.

When considering the texts reviewed in this document, teachers and singers may refer to the *Quick Reference Comparison Guide* (table 1). The left side of the table depicts the primary pedagogical approach to vocal style used in the text, whether the text includes a song anthology, and if there is an accompanying audio/CD component. The

fourth column indicates the level of detail of the material presented on a numerical scale, with the range [1-5] indicating “nuts and bolts” through highly detailed explanations. Dayme and Vaughn’s *The Singing Book* has two indications: a level [1] in detail for “Part One” and a level [4] in detail for “Part Three.” *The Singing Book* is also indicated to have a degree of flexibility (+) in the primary pedagogical approach to vocal style, as this intention was expressed by the authors. The right side of the table depicts a breakdown of different available versions of the texts, including new and used conditions, and if there is a digital or eBook option available. It should be noted that the prices included in this table are current as of writing this document and will fluctuate. It should also be noted that the Smith and Burrichter text is included in this table for the comparison of price only.

Table 1

Quick Reference Comparison Guide

	QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE				PRICE POINT COMPARISON		
	Primary Pedagogical Approach to Vocal Style	Anthology	Audio/CD	Level of Detail	\$ New	\$ Used	eBook
<i>Adventures in Singing...</i> , 4 th ed. C. Ware	Traditional/lyrical	X	X	4	\$115.85*	\$78.37*	-
<i>The Singing Book</i> , 3 rd ed. M. Dayme & C. Vaughn	Traditional/lyrical +	X	X	1 – 4	\$107.50	\$82.99*	-
<i>Cantabile Voice Class...</i> K. Rundus	Traditional/lyrical	-	-	1	\$19.99	\$17.99*	\$19.99* (Kindle)
<i>Cantabile: A Manual...</i> , 2 nd ed. K. Rundus	Traditional/lyrical	-	-	5	\$59.95	\$56.83*	\$53.99* (Kindle)
<i>The Contemporary Singer...</i> , 2 nd ed. A. Peckham	CCM	-	X	3	\$27.99	\$10.35*	\$21.99 (Digital Book) \$23.35* (Kindle)
<i>Class Voice: Fundamental...</i> B. Smith & R. Burrichter	-	-	-	-	\$79.95 (pre-order)	-	-

Source: Table by author; data from www.amazon.com, pluralpublishing.com, wnnorton.com/books, and halleonard.com/products; [*] denotes pricing from www.amazon.com; Accessed March 2022.

The most appropriate resource text (or texts) for group singing classes offered by institutions may be chosen by the instructor with consideration for additional determining factors to fall in alignment with that institution's goals. Music Departments may offer, or even require, Class Voice as coursework for students enrolled in a music degree. Music Departments that offer Class Voice as a campus-wide elective course or experience high levels of community member enrollment may entertain students that are outside of the music department or are non-degree seeking. As many of the authors have reaffirmed, there is expected to be a wide range of students enrolling in such a course regardless of their degree status. Each student will present a unique instrument, operate at various levels of skills and experience, and have individual goals and preferences— all considerations which shall remain relevant for the vocal instructor. After determining which pedagogical method(s) align with the singers' individual goals, a text may be chosen based on the desired vocal style for study, the level of intensity of the concepts presented within, and the investment that the singers are able to make (both financially and time).

A necessary distinction that may significantly aid singers and teachers navigating the path to vocal study is clarifying the standard for entry level studies. Many of the materials available for beginners, when presented in either a group or one-on-one setting, are tailored for students who engage with music from a classical music perspective and already possess, or intend to acquire, fundamental music theory and piano skills. Ware's depiction of the ideal beginner (recall: "...one should have basic musical training before undertaking voice study...") provokes an important question: What is the definition of a

“beginning singer”?¹⁶³ Merriam-Webster’s simplistic definition of “beginner” is: “one that begins something, especially: an inexperienced person.”¹⁶⁴ Ware’s definition of an ideal beginning singer implies a base level of basic music fundamentals, for example: an ability to read and interpret musical notation and basic piano skills. The implication is that the ideal beginning singer would not necessarily be a beginning musician.

When framed appropriately by an instructor, classical vocal techniques may benefit and deepen the study of singers at any level and for those who wish to train across vocal styles. However, the expectation that students possess or intend to acquire the fundamental knowledge and experience to meet that prerequisite is limiting prospective students who have not had the privilege of adding these fundamentals to their skillset. There is a need for resource material that provides varied access paths to vocal study. When welcoming a prospective student, it is important that prerequisite skills are clearly defined, and that foundational skills are differentiated from skills that deepen one’s musical experience.

Demonstrating a willingness to meet prospective students where they are in their life and musical history has a greater potential to inspire more voice students by providing an opportunity to experience the benefits of vocal study in an accessible way. Smith and Burrichter’s statement in their text’s introduction is reminiscent of Dayme and Vaughn’s approach:

¹⁶³ Clifton Ware, *Adventures in Singing*, 104.

¹⁶⁴ Merriam-Webster.com, s.v. “beginner,” accessed March 3, 2022, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/beginner>.

Some...learners might not have the desire to study the nuts and bolts of music, preferring instead to spend class time learning and singing songs with others. Others may be curious to know more about negotiating the musical score. Though learning music by rote or imitation works, it is known that solid musicianship skills instill confidence in singers and help preserve their vocal health. It is assumed that Class Voice may be the only course of its type that your students experience.¹⁶⁵

Their depiction reiterates the vast array of possible circumstances for potential singers making use of this text and is hopefully reflective of the concept of anticipating and validating the experience of each student in an authentic way. For some students, enrolling in a “singing class” may be their first instructional experience with music. Furthermore, a singer’s proficiency in music fundamentals is not necessarily reflective of their vocal skill level.

Many of the texts are lacking in clarity regarding vocal style, which may result in confusion for potential students. The often-unvoiced prerequisite for certain specific foundational musical skills and experience may be partly due to an affiliation with traditional classical vocal training in comparison to other vocal styles which do not share the same musical history. When provided with a clear outline of the vocal tradition that is being presented, beginning singers may be afforded with an opportunity to set themselves up better for success. In addition to vocal style preferences, beginning students may better determine whether they have the resources and time required to devote to acquiring the additional fundamental skills necessary to get the most value out of the text.

¹⁶⁵ Smith, Burrichter, and Sataloff, *Class Voice*, xvi.

The inclusion of a substantial song anthology component may be a significant determining factor for selecting a text. Should students wish to have a variety of vocal sheet music to support their study, Ware and Dayme and Vaughn's texts provide extensive and varied song anthologies that may be useful for students at various stages of learning. Ware's 1997 reviewer declares the addition of the song anthology an enhancement to the texts value.¹⁶⁶ Although purchasing individual scores is generally more accessible in the twenty-first century, students may still find value in the guidance offered by the authors in terms of song selection.

In contrast to the approaches of both *Adventures in Singing...* and *The Singing Book*, Rundus makes a conscientious effort to make the purchase of *Cantabile Voice Class...* more economical for students by removing an inserted anthology and designing her text to utilize songs for study which are readily available within the public domain or purchased individually on the internet.¹⁶⁷ Reviewer Debra Greschner further emphasizes the element of accessibility of Rundus' *Cantabile Voice Class...* by noting it as a useful and affordable tool that can be made available by choral directors for "...singers with little or no voice training."¹⁶⁸ Greschner also posits that despite the initial surprise of offering a short text for such a complex topic, the student will ultimately be aided by the "common sense, student-centered approach."¹⁶⁹ Rundus' other texts of the *Cantabile...* series and Peckham's text are evidence of the viability of informational resources without song anthologies. In addition to improving connection and engagement with students in

¹⁶⁶ Sjoerdsma, "Bookshelf," 65.

¹⁶⁷ Rundus, *Cantabile Voice Class*, 2.

¹⁶⁸ Debra Greschner, "Cantabile: Voice Class," *Journal of Singing* 72, no. 5 (2016), 656.

¹⁶⁹ Greschner, "Cantabile: Voice Class," 656.

the learning environment, the deletion of an anthology may allow for a more accessible price point in the form of an abridged edition of the text—for example, should Dayme and Vaughn wish to extract “Part One” and offer it as a handbook. Singers who are restricted financially may also find a used edition of Peckham’s text to have accessible price point (as shown in table 1).

Singers desiring to take on vocal study with limited to no experience, interest in, or available resources to learn the language of musical notation may choose to work with a text that does not contain an anthology. In an article in the *Journal of Singing* that explores scholarship surrounding group vocal instruction in academia, William Sauerland presents the deficiencies of many instructional texts, including: the lack of an inclusive and cross-cultural learning environment, too much on a focus of classical repertoire, and a general inadequacy in meeting the “multidimensional complexity of a voice class.”¹⁷⁰ Motivated vocal practitioners who desire to increase their reach with potential students may also invite the participation and engagement of beginning singers by “collaboratively exploring elements of efficient voice production through a wide range of musical styles.”¹⁷¹ By taking a collaborative approach, vocal instructors can more effectively engage with the interests of their students. Texts designed with flexible repertoire selection, such as those offered by Rundus and Peckham may compliment this collaborative approach best.

¹⁷⁰ Sauerland, “Voice Class: A Learner-Centered Approach” in *Journal of Singing* 74, no. 5 (June 2018): 528-29.

¹⁷¹ Sauerland, “Voice Class”, 529.

As there is valuable information presented in a variety of ways in these texts, they undoubtedly have a place in vocal education. While the texts analyzed in this document only represent a portion of the materials available for learning and teaching voice, there is not a concise resource in this review that is specifically designed to meet the needs of beginning singers without prior musical experience that allows for total vocal style versatility, repertoire flexibility, and is offered at a low price point. Group class teachers who desire to personalize and empower the individual experience of a diverse population of students may benefit from such a resource.

In sum, as authors continue to develop educational resources for beginning singers, one of the most beneficial tactics may be to overtly indicate the vocal tradition that is being emulated within each text to the potential user. Resources which are suitable for all beginners may address the foundational topics which are known to be beneficial for vocal production in multiple singing styles and provide supplemental resource recommendations for the student's continuing development and specific interests. However, as pedagogical research reveals the realities of vocal function in varying singing styles, foundational concepts are more able to be distilled and concepts specific to style can be more clearly defined.

Amongst the numerous extensively detailed textbook resources available for beginning singers, there is a need for resource material that bridges the gap for the prospective singers that have no foundational musical knowledge and would hope to eventually deepen their musical study in an environment, such as Class Voice. Such resource material may also aid voice teachers who desire to provide basic, foundational,

and inclusive material to their diverse populations of students. More affordable resources that center the experience of a prospective singer without pre-existing musical skills or knowledge will help to recognize the experience of a group of amateur potential students and provide numerous paths of accessibility to vocal study. As Class Voice is often seen as a gateway for beginning musicians in an academic setting, it is advantageous for both singers and their teachers that the introduction to vocal study provided by their instructors is welcoming, motivational, and engaging. Students met with acceptance and encouragement may be more empowered to persevere through the challenges of continued vocal study and dedicate the time to develop and acquire additional musicianship skills.

CHAPTER 4

CREATING AN ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE PATH TO VOCAL STUDY

Introduction

Voice teachers, whether instructing singers in a private or group setting, are likely to encounter a diverse range of individuals who are interested in pursuing vocal study. It should be noted that while this document acknowledges and discusses some factors of accessibility to vocal study, it does not comprehensively address this complex topic. Future similar, and necessary, discussions should consider the experiences of potential voice students who are members of the many minority and marginalized groups that have not been included in this discussion (e.g., racial and cultural minorities, those who identify as neurodivergent, are physically impaired, hearing and sight impaired, and more). The issues highlighted in this document are directly related to my own student interactions as a voice teacher.

For each student to have the most beneficial educational experience, frequent and consistent adaptations should be made to accommodate individual students' learning needs, abilities, and limitations.¹⁷² Students will present with a varied history of musical and cultural experiences, and teachers may need to adapt their strategies to meet various levels of musical expertise. An adaptive teaching approach may include but is not limited to modifications of the environment, instructional style, or resource material.¹⁷³ For voice

¹⁷² Alice-Ann Darrow and Mary Adamek, "Instructional Strategies for the Inclusive Music Classroom," *General Music Today* 31, no. 3 (April 2018): 63.

¹⁷³ Darrow and Adamek, "Instructional Strategies," 63.

teachers working in a group setting, this may mean offering accommodations in repertoire recommendations or requirements. Voice teachers may also need to design assignments and evaluations that facilitate the success of students with varied skills and rates of progress. Additional considerations in the accessibility of music making for singers may be related to financial resources, access to instructors or equipment, and opportunities to participate in collaborative organizations, such as an ensemble.¹⁷⁴

In contradiction to Eisentraut's earlier description of music's roots being in community, there is a perception that pursuing musical studies is an "elitist activity" that potentially plagues singers, and consequently, their teachers.¹⁷⁵ Eisentraut further asserts that "[community music] exist[s] with the express purpose of giving amateurs, often completely unskilled and untutored musically, the opportunity to participate in music making."¹⁷⁶ Voice teachers may increase accessibility to vocal study and promote it as an activity for all members of the community by overtly seeking and encouraging amateur vocalists. In addition to producing high quality musical entertainment for others, there are a variety of potential reasons for singers to pursue vocal study, including but not limited to: skill mastery, participation or membership within a particular social group, and creative self-expression.¹⁷⁷ Voice teachers are in an advantageous position to further establish singing as a rewarding activity for all members of the community by validating their desire for study regardless of their motivations or goals.

¹⁷⁴ Eisentraut, *The Accessibility of Music*, 45.

¹⁷⁵ Janice Chapman, *Singing and Teaching Singing: A Holistic Approach to Classical Voice* (San Diego, California: Plural Publishing, 2012): 2.

¹⁷⁶ Eisentraut, *The Accessibility of Music*, 5.

¹⁷⁷ Eisentraut, *The Accessibility of Music*, 45.

When teaching within their communities, voice teachers may encounter students in adult and later stages of life who are motivated to explore potential health benefits of music therapy in addition to the pleasure and enjoyment that may be experienced through singing. Ongoing research that is being conducted to explore the relationship between the human brain and music has revealed “therapeutic promise for adults suffering from depression, anxiety, or chronic pain” as well as “...promising applications of music therapy for the treatment of disorders, such as stroke, Parkinson’s disease, and dementia.”¹⁷⁸ It is possible that the development and implications of this ongoing research will bring still more varied voices into the vocal studio and classrooms. Some of these singers may possess limited fundamental musical skills and knowledge and may need supportive educational resources for singing that are informative without being overwhelming.

Perceptions of Unattainable Perfection

Research to investigate the development of expertise recognizes that a prevalent explanation for exceptional performance achievement is perceived to be a result of human talent.¹⁷⁹ Although the precise origin of this concept is indeterminate, it is historically evidenced that extraordinary abilities were thought to be a benefit of “divine intervention.”¹⁸⁰ Researchers assert in “Expert Performance: Its Structure and

¹⁷⁸ Thomas Cheever, Anna Taylor, Robert Finkelstein, et al, “NIH/Kennedy Center Workshop on Music and the Brain: Finding Harmony,” *Neuron* 97, no. 6 (March 21, 2018): 1216.

¹⁷⁹ K. Anders Ericsson and Neil Charness, “Expert Performance: Its Structure and Acquisition,” *The American Psychologist* 49, no. 8 (1994): 725.

¹⁸⁰ Ericsson and Charness, “Expert Performance,” 726.

Acquisition” that despite the prevailing belief that “talent” is considered a prerequisite for outstanding achievement in music, it is rather attributed to a combination of factors, including an individuals’ potential and opportunity for exploration and discovery.¹⁸¹ Research studies conducted to investigate specific personality traits in high-achieving individuals suggest that passion and perseverance are as essential as “talent” to exemplary performance.¹⁸² Furthermore, “deliberate practice” (as is so expressly advocated for in Rundus’ work) was found to be particularly relevant for the development and mastery of perceptual-motor behaviors required for performance arts.¹⁸³

The “Imposter Phenomenon” (also known as “imposter syndrome”) is a perceived belief of failure or “believing that [one] does not belong.”¹⁸⁴ Shanna Slank discusses the “characteristic set of beliefs, feelings, and behaviors” that lead to a higher incidence of the imposter phenomenon in individuals. Slank posits that a self-imposed belief about the amount of talent one possesses may be closely linked to how worthy one feels of experiencing success.¹⁸⁵ These beliefs are formed by both internal and external influences including but not limited to one’s self-assessment of the amount of effort one must put into succeeding at a given task, the perceptions expressed to us by others, and by comparing ourselves to our perception of others’ successes.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸¹ Ericsson and Charness, “Expert Performance,” 727-28.

¹⁸² Angela Duckworth et al., “Grit: Perserverance and Passion for Long-Term Goals,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 92, no. 6 (2007): 1100.

¹⁸³ Ericsson and Charness, “Expert Performance”, 741; Rundus, *Cantabile Voice Class*, 37-8.

¹⁸⁴ Shanna Slank, “Rethinking the Imposter Phenomenon,” *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 22 (2019): 205.

¹⁸⁵ Slank, “Rethinking the Imposter Phenomenon,” 216.

¹⁸⁶ Slank, “Rethinking the Imposter Phenomenon,” 212-16.

Within the context of the vocal study, students may be particularly susceptible to this phenomenon due to the frequency of receiving feedback from their teacher or peer-group. When the student is particularly challenged by their teacher in a lesson or studio setting, they may feel that the amount of effort they must exert to rise to that challenge indicates a lack of belonging in that space to others. Singers who observe their peers succeeding in an area of vocal study that they find challenging may feel a similar sense of inadequacy.

Many of us have witnessed the familiar evening television talent competition or star discovery scene in which a singer gets on stage in front of thousands of people, pours their heart into a decent (and what is sure to have been nerve-wracking) performance, only to be crushed by the sound of a buzzer or flashes of a massive red “X.” The judging panel then has the regrettable duty to inform the unsuspecting contestant that they unfortunately don’t have “what it takes” – they don’t have “it.” This is just an example of a scenario depicted by many television shows around the world that are attempting to maximize “entertainment value at the expense of the contestant,” which in this case, represents a singer.¹⁸⁷ Voice teachers must consider that exposure to this idea is an external factor that may be negatively influencing potential and current singers’ perception of what defines singing to be worthy of pursuing or sharing with others or both.

¹⁸⁷ Stijn L. Reijnders, Gerard Rooijackers, and Liesbet van Zoonen, “Community Spirit and Competition in *Idols*,” *European Journal of Communication* 22, no. 3 (September 2007): 279. doi: 10.1177/0267323107079673.

In an anecdotal discussion, Jeanette Myers describes experiences over a decade of work as a vocal instructor that inspired her to design a course titled “Singing For People Who Have Been Asked Not To.”¹⁸⁸ Myers recounts reports from prospective singers describing deep vocal insecurity and hesitance to attempt singing due to negative past experiences of embarrassment and social ostracization— even maintaining a perception of being born “musically deficient.”¹⁸⁹ Their expressed motivations to seek instruction included sentiments, such as wanting to sing well enough to sing “Happy Birthday” to a loved one, or well enough not to arouse offended looks from others in church.¹⁹⁰ The instructor states that “participating in a class in contrast to private instruction offers a number of advantages for students,” citing a sense of comfort and camaraderie.¹⁹¹ In this example, the vocal instructor considered the past experiences of her students in order to facilitate an accessible path to vocal expression and enjoyment, and actively endeavored to transform preexisting negative self-perceptions that limit prospective students.

“Contemporary Vocal Artistry in Popular Culture Musics: Perceptions, Observations, and Lived Experiences” details an investigation to explore potential limitations to contemporary vocal artistry and the influence of technological components.¹⁹² The research findings confirm conjecture on the influence of technology on contemporary vocal artistry, including pedagogical implications for the modern voice

¹⁸⁸ Jeanette S. Myers, “Teaching Adult Beginning Singing,” *Journal of Singing* 69, no. 1 (2012): 31.

¹⁸⁹ Myers, “Teaching Adult Beginning Singing,” 31-2.

¹⁹⁰ Myers, “Teaching Adult Beginning Singing,” 32.

¹⁹¹ Myers, “Teaching Adult Beginning Singing,” 32.

¹⁹² Diane Hughes, “Contemporary Vocal Artistry in Popular Culture Musics: Perceptions, Observations and Lived Experiences,” in *Teaching Singing in the 21st Century*, ed. Scott Harrison and Jessica O’Bryan (New York: Springer, 2014), 287.

teacher in regards to their treatment of the “application of pitch altering technologies.”¹⁹³ Investigator Hughes places the responsibility of transparency and appropriate preparation of students on the vocal instructor, suggesting that attention be paid to “issues of pitch correction in recorded and live performance contexts” and for the potential management of “compromising situations and industry expectations.”¹⁹⁴

An article in *TIME Magazine* openly apprises the reader of a recorded voice altering software technology called Auto-Tune, its prevalent use on vocal recordings in popular music, and the subsequent shift in expectations for the listener.¹⁹⁵ The author highlights the resulting deception of perfection, which has become so widely utilized that it is considered ubiquitous in the context of the recording studio.¹⁹⁶ In addition to the “Auto-Tune-ing” of the recorded voice one might hear on the radio or television, audio engineering technology now enables a real-time hybridized version of combined live and pre-recorded performance with the use of microphones, in-ear monitors, and a mixing board.¹⁹⁷ Reminiscent of the common, and quite misleading, perception of “talent,” vocal music is now represented by vocal capabilities outside the realm of even the highest-level natural human achievement in multiple contexts.

To connect Slank’s narrative and Hughes’ research to a prospective voice student, we may imagine the following example: A person who enjoys music with no prior vocal training or experience is listening to their favorite musical artist on Spotify. They try to

¹⁹³ Hughes, “Technological Pitch Correction,” 591.

¹⁹⁴ Hughes, “Technological Pitch Correction,” 591-92.

¹⁹⁵ Josh Tyrangiel, “Singer’s Little Helper,” *TIME Magazine* 173, no. 6 (February 16, 2009): 49-51.

¹⁹⁶ Tyrangiel, “Singer’s Little Helper,” 49-51.

¹⁹⁷ Wendy D. LeBorgne and Marci Daniels Rosenberg, *The Vocal Athlete*, 2nd ed. (San Diego, California: Plural Publishing Inc., 2021), 1053-54.

sing along with the track (despite being unaware of post-production technologies that may be used on the recording) and struggle to match the singer's vocals. They consider that they are putting a lot of effort into trying to "sing well," but decide that they do not meet the standards of this vocalist by their own evaluation. The result may be that they begin to believe that they lack "talent," have "failed" at being a singer, and/or is not worthy of sharing their voice with others. It is true that some students may progress faster than others due to innate abilities related to biological anatomy or nurturing musical experiences which prepare them in advance for vocal study. However, it is also true that voice teachers can employ intentional and encouraging feedback to positively influence a student's self-perception. While singers may begin to form a belief system about their worthiness as a vocal student at any point in their lives, teachers may connect with these students by creating a welcoming opportunity for vocal study.

Evidence-Based Practices and Functional Pedagogy Across Vocal Styles

Twenty-first century vocal pedagogy resources, such as those mentioned below, are beginning to address the characteristics of the varying vocal styles available to the modern singer. Traditional vocal pedagogy, which relied heavily on the teacher's perceptual aural discretion, can now be supplemented and improved by multidisciplinary research conducted to measure aspects of vocal production. The analysis of these measurable aspects of vocal production (such as "aerodynamic, acoustic, and phonatory measurements of vocal output") allow for an evaluation of the efficacy of traditional

foundational vocal techniques and provide vocal pedagogues with valuable insight for the continued development of twenty-first century pedagogical techniques.¹⁹⁸

Wendy D. LeBorgne (PhD., CCC-SLP) and Marci Daniels Rosenberg (B.M., M.S., CCC-SLP) amass vocal and scientific research in a comprehensive evidence-based resource on modern vocal techniques for singers and their teachers in *The Vocal Athlete*. Through discourse, LeBorgne and Rosenberg extract the elements of vocal production and execution of various vocal styles, including classical, musical theater, and contemporary commercial music (CCM) singing in an extensive comparative discussion. The authors' assessment reveals differences in perceived desirable vocal aesthetics (both in quality of sound and in production) between "Western Classical/Western Lyrical," and musical theater and CCM singing style.¹⁹⁹ Components of singing, such as the shape of the vocal tract, width of the pharynx, and position of the larynx are varied across these singing styles in order to produce the respective desired vocal qualities.²⁰⁰

Another methodology that may be applied to multiple vocal styles is the functional perspective offered by Jeanette LoVetri. LoVetri's pedagogical philosophy centers on the development of strategies that are aimed to "...[bring] out the individuality of each voice, and [enhance] the uniqueness of vocal expression in any and all style[s] of

¹⁹⁸ LeBorgne and Rosenberg, *The Vocal Athlete*, 775. While some of the more intricate methods of voice analysis are more common in a research laboratory setting, voice teachers interested in exploring these ideas may choose to purchase software programs (such as VoceVista, Speech Analyzer, or Spectrogram). It is important to note that the context for such analyses are, for example, the discernment of vocal characteristics and diagnosis of vocal issues and are not meant to displace non-measurable (ineffable) components of singing.

¹⁹⁹ LeBorgne and Rosenberg, *The Vocal Athlete*, 346-94, 355-56. LeBorgne and Rosenberg observe "Western Classical Singing" and "Western Lyrical Singing" as terms used to describe a classical vocal aesthetic.

²⁰⁰ LeBorgne and Rosenberg, *The Vocal Athlete*, 374.

music, as determined by the singer's interests."²⁰¹ Put concisely, LoVetri's functionally objective approach views the voice as a versatile instrument for musical expression.

Voice teachers who employ LoVetri's approach are aware of the characteristic differences and similarities of vocal styles and encourage their students to be adaptable. Within the context of working with gospel singers, Trineice Robinson-Martin endorses the LoVetri Method as a "building block for vocal development" and advises vocal instructors of the potential for the crossover of aesthetic values across vocal styles.²⁰²

Robinson-Martin's standard of a "trained singer," regardless of vocal style, is "a singer that has full and free command of [their] instrument yet has the ability to comfortably and effectively execute the sound and stylistic parameters established by the community the genre represents."²⁰³ This depiction of an ideal singer is adaptive to vocal style and musical genre, and facilitates training a singer to be able to enjoy a variety of musical experiences due to an intimate understanding of their instrument. The pedagogical implications of this approach to training are that voice teachers who are motivated to guide their students in a variety of singing styles must have a comprehensive understanding of the action of the vocal mechanism as it differs in each style, as well as maintain an understanding of the aesthetic characteristics of each style. This approach is conducive to the development of an environment that is inclusive of an individual

²⁰¹ Jeanette LoVetri, "The Necessity of Using Functional Training in the Independent Studio," *Journal of Singing* 70, no. 1 (2013): 80-1.

²⁰² Trineice Robinson-Martin, "Take My Hand: Teaching the Gospel Singer in the Applied Vocal Studio," in *Teaching Singing in the 21st Century*, ed. Scott Harrison and Jessica O'Bryan (New York: Spring, 2014), 338.

²⁰³ Robinson-Martin, "Take My Hand," 338.

singer's varied interests and may especially be successful when applied within a group setting of diverse individual singers.

Acknowledging Issues of the Gendered Experience in Vocal Studios

Vocal instructors in particular may desire to facilitate an environment in which their students can cultivate a positive self-image and an overall feeling of wellness whilst taking on the challenge of expanding their vocal techniques.²⁰⁴ As an individual's sense of self is impacted by a variety of factors, including: generation, socio-economic status, ethnicity, gender, and more, vocal instructors are compelled to consider the individual circumstances of each student in the design of a plan to discover that student's truest vocal expression.²⁰⁵

In "Gender Identity and Music," Nicola Dibben illustrates the role of music in the formation and perpetuation of gender identity, as well as the indications and implications of gender perceived as a result of one's musical practices, beliefs, and preferences.²⁰⁶ Despite the potential for these perceptions to have a neutral or negative impact on a singer's exploration of their vocal identity, music may also provide a unique opportunity to have an exploratory experience of gender identity.²⁰⁷ By facilitating a gender-inclusive approach to vocal exploration, vocal instructors can employ language and techniques that welcome singers to a safe, inclusive, and productive environment for self-discovery, regardless of their students' gender self-identification.

²⁰⁴ Welch, "Singing as communication," 251.

²⁰⁵ Nicola Dibben, "Gender Identity and Music," in Raymond A.R. MacDonald, David J. Hargreaves, and Dorothy Miell, eds., *Musical Identities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 130.

²⁰⁶ Dibben, "Gender Identity and Music," 130.

²⁰⁷ Dibben, "Gender Identity and Music," 130.

Through emerging verbiage, it is apparent that modern vocal pedagogues are beginning to acknowledge the importance of considering those individual singers who may not self-identify within the gender-normative structure. In an article in *Voiceprints*, Loraine Sims (D.M.A.) identifies conventional voice labeling as “inherently binary” and advocates for the development of useful and effective terminology to discuss voice from a non-binary perspective.²⁰⁸ While also attending to the needs of individuals who do not self-identify with binary structure, the development of non-binary terminology may be useful to singers who have not found a traditional voice classification to be important for their individual vocal expression. Sims proposes considering transgender singers in two groups: those who choose to use their voices “regardless of transition” and those who “choose to use their voices in a new way,” and encourages voice teachers to establish “singing range and repertoire” in alignment with each singer’s goals.²⁰⁹ Sims’ suggestions may be applied in combination with LoVetri’s philosophy through placing focus on the biological function of a singer’s instrument without attachment to societal gender-normative ideals. In this atmosphere, students will be given more opportunities to focus on the aesthetic characteristics of the music they wish to explore and the development of their identity as a singer with less restrictions.

Acknowledging the presence of a binary-narrative structure within instructive texts is a significant step towards creating a more inclusive environment for vocal study. Resource materials for teachers and singers, such as *The Singing Teacher’s Guide to*

²⁰⁸ Loraine Sims, “What the FACH? Voice Dysphoria and the Trans or Non-Binary Singer,” *Voiceprints* 15, no. 5 (2018): 92.

²⁰⁹ Sims, “What the FACH,” 93.

Transgender Voices and *The Voice Book for Trans and Non-Binary People: A Practical Guide to Creating and Sustaining Authentic Voice and Communication* discuss the design of comfortable, respectful, and affirming learning spaces for singers while providing a necessary in-depth study of vocal function for their teachers.²¹⁰

Voice classification is a tool frequently used by vocal instructors to categorize a singer's voice and to recommend music for study. Voice teachers may find voice classifications useful for their own reference, for example: when adapting techniques to help a student navigate a particular vocal challenge. Some singers may find voice classification to be useful for specific pursuits, such as singing in choral ensembles, building the classical repertoire on their resume, or preparing for operatic roles. While some students may find value in attaching this label to their identity as a singer, some students may feel artistic freedom through the absence of a label. Teachers may choose to present voice classification to students as a tool for exploring a vocal style or tradition, rather than a necessity, for their enjoyment of vocal study. Voice teachers who desire to avoid the traditional use of gender binary systems may focus on other factors when categorizing an individual voice in the development of classification systems, including but not limited to: vocal weight, timbre, and the location of vocal *passaggi* within the singer's vocal range.²¹¹ In their pursuit of creating an enjoyable singing experience for every person, voice teachers must advocate for the natural evolution of pedagogical

²¹⁰ Matthew Mills and Gillie Stoneham, *The Voice Book for Trans and Non-Binary People: A Practical Guide to Creating and Sustaining Authentic Voice and Communication* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2017), 18; Liz Jackson Hearn and Brian Kremer, *The Singing Teacher's Guide to Transgender Voices* (San Diego, California: Plural Publishing Inc., 2018), xvi.

²¹¹ Jackson Hearn and Kremer, *The Singing Teacher's Guide to Transgender Voices*, 43.

techniques by supporting gender-diversity and inclusion, especially when challenging established pedagogical and performance traditions.²¹²

Incorporating Somatic Practices into Vocal Study

The field of somatics centers on the study of the self and is often explored through practices and methodologies designed to strengthen perceptual and kinesthetic awareness. As this document has briefly discussed, singing and teaching singing to others consists of much more than an understanding of the physicality of the vocal mechanism. In addition to strengthening a student's sense of self and enriching one's vocal study by engaging in general fitness and performance movement activities, such as dance, many voice teachers also recommend their students to explore specific somatic practices including but not limited to: Alexander Technique, meditation, or Feldenkrais.²¹³ Physical, spiritual, and mental practices, such as Yoga address many considerations for singers, to include: "posture and alignment; strength, flexibility, and coordination; breathing technique; unbalanced resonance; lack of mental focus; performance anxiety; lack of connection to meaning and emotion; and chronic physical or mental tension."²¹⁴ A singer's practice of Yoga may also promote increased pelvic floor awareness, better coordination of breath together with movement, and opportunities for patient practice of perseverance through physical and mental challenge.

²¹² Jackson Hearn and Kremer, *The Singing Teacher's Guide to Transgender Voices*, 49.

²¹³ Blades-Zeller, *A Spectrum of Voices*, 157-65.

²¹⁴ Judith Carman, "Yoga and Singing: Natural Partners," *Journal of Singing* 60, no. 5 (May 2004): 433.

As a qualitative research project, investigator Elizabeth Blades-Zeller gathered and presented the vocal teaching philosophies of several highly regarded vocal teachers in the United States, including their thoughts on activities they recommend their students do in addition to vocal study. Throughout the teachers' independent commentary, nearly all mentioned the vital importance of engaging in movement training that promotes strength, coordination, and overall body-awareness for singers.²¹⁵ As is similarly mentioned in Rundus', Ware's, and Dayme and Vaughn's texts, the voice teachers made specific and frequent note of the incorporation of the Alexander Technique to vocal study.²¹⁶ Promoting postural awareness and effective alignment for each individual's body is a great benefit to vocal production and performance for singers at any level of expertise. In a 2006 article, Dayme illustrates the singers' use of both Eastern and Western practices deemed the "timeless arts" (Yoga, Qi gong, Tai Chi, the Alexander Technique, and Feldenkrais Method), as important methods to assist in creating an "efficient physical and mental balance and functioning."²¹⁷ Dayme inclines teachers of voice to expand their view beyond the scope of the classical vocal tradition, and to seek the support of science, research, and therapists as the vocal profession continues to grow.²¹⁸

The results of a study conducted to investigate the influence of somatic methods on an individuals' understanding of embodiment in singing in a choral setting implicated

²¹⁵ Blades-Zeller, *A Spectrum of Voices*, 157-65.

²¹⁶ Blades-Zeller, *A Spectrum of Voices*, 157-65; Rundus, *Cantabile: A Manual*, 3; Ware, *Adventures in Singing*, 32; Dayme and Vaughn, *The Singing Book*, 261.

²¹⁷ Meribeth Dayme, "An Argument for Whole Body and Holistic Approaches to Research in Singing," *Journal of Singing* 63, no. 1 (2006): 62.

²¹⁸ Dayme, "An Argument for Whole Body and Holistic Approaches," 63.

a positive connection between somatic exploration and self-awareness through use of the Feldenkrais Method. For this study, the researcher lead singing students in Awareness Through Movement (ATM) lessons for approximately “30–60 minutes per week.”²¹⁹ After several months, the researcher made the following observation within the context of the study: “Somatic exploration as a part of instruction allowed for the development of singing that was more fully integrated and functionally efficient.”²²⁰ Participants in this study reported an increase in self-awareness, mind-body connection, and an “emerging understanding of themselves as embodied beings” with a “greater ability to express themselves more fully while singing.”²²¹ Although further studies are necessary for a comprehensive understanding of this research’s implications in other settings of musical study (for example: the private studio or Class Voice), future similar investigations of the impact of this, and other somatic practices, may lead to confirmation of these practices as verifiable enrichments to vocal pedagogy.

As each student presents with unique physical characteristics and experience with mind-body awareness, teachers may choose to incorporate one or more of these practices as enhancements to their student’s vocal and artistic development. Practices that encourage the coordination of breath with movement, such as Hatha-Vinyasa Yoga, may potentially nurture a singer’s ability to coordinate breath within the vocal process.²²²

²¹⁹ Stephen A. Paparo, “Embodying singing in the choral classroom: A somatic approach to teaching and learning,” *International Journal of Music Education* 34, no. 4 (2016): 491.

²²⁰ Paparo, “Embodying singing,” 497.

²²¹ Paparo, “Embodying singing,” 494.

²²² Hatha-Vinyasa Yoga is an example of a style of yoga that may incorporate practices which focus on deepening the breath and linking breath to movement. The style of yoga that I have training in, Tantric Hatha Yoga, may similarly focus on coordinating cycles of breath with powerful postures.

Group class instructors may choose to introduce the basic concepts of practices they are familiar with into their lesson plans, or invite guest specialists to work with their students. If voice teachers suspect that their students may benefit from a practice that falls outside of their scope of knowledge, they may describe the potential benefits of a particular practice to a student and recommend that they explore these practices independently of the studio or classroom.

The Importance of Resource Material

The importance for a student to possess independent knowledge and resources of the vocal process is expressed in Travis Sherwood's article, "Inspiring Autonomous Artists: A Framework for Independent Singing."²²³ Sherwood describes the use of student-centered pedagogy as a successful way to individualize vocal instruction as voice teachers seek to become guides on a singer's path to vocal self-discovery.²²⁴ The author posits that the traditional teaching approach of master-apprentice may potentially limit a vocal student's willingness to freely explore their own sense of "vulnerability, honesty, and individuality" in favor of adopting their instructor's perspectives.²²⁵ To modify this traditional relationship between student and teacher, Sherwood's suggestions include providing the student with resources which clearly illustrate the vocal process, inviting

²²³ Travis Sherwood, "Inspiring Autonomous Artists: A Framework for Independent Singing," *Journal of Singing* 75, no. 5 (2019): 527-33.

²²⁴ Sherwood, "Inspiring Autonomous Artists," 531.

²²⁵ Sherwood, "Inspiring Autonomous Artists," 532.

inquisitive dialogue between teacher and student, and allowing the student to engage in the selection of repertoire.²²⁶

By equipping students with resources that illustrate the vocal process clearly, such as simple “frameworks,” textbooks, handbooks, or guides, voice teachers provide an opportunity to refer to and build upon this material independently.²²⁷ Inviting verbal processing may encourage students to develop a thoughtful curiosity for exploring the vocal process on their own. In addition to fostering confidence and independence in their students’ artistry through the addition of any of these techniques, voice teachers can continue to guide their students to an authentic individual expression of vocal excellence.

Summary

Given community music's substantial role in culture and society, it is probable that many of those who are seeking vocal instruction will fall into the amateur category Eisentraut describes as unskilled and untutored. This probability directly conflicts with the prerequisite for the ideal beginning singer described as having a foundation of fundamental music skills. In order to reach the widest beginning audience, as was expressly stated by authors, such as Ware, Dayme and Vaughn, Peckham, Smith and Burrichter, and others, there is a need to create a resource which acts as an access path for the amateur singer who is in lack of prior musical skill. The true ideal singer at any level, but especially as a beginner, has a desire to be musically creative, is willing to make mistakes with an attitude of resilience, and is ready to enter vocal study with a positive

²²⁶ Sherwood, “Inspiring Autonomous Artists,” 528-32.

²²⁷ Sherwood, “Inspiring Autonomous Artists,” 529.

and courageous mindset. All singers deserve an opportunity to feel empowered and supported in their quest for authentic self-expression.

Vocal instructors must consider the possibility that the novice prospective vocalists they wish to welcome into their studios are likely to maintain the perception that they require “talent,” and must transparently encourage practice and perseverance as more necessary values to begin and progress in vocal studies. They should be prepared to openly discuss the role of technology in the popular vocal music that their students have likely been repeatedly exposed to and prepare to guide students away from an experience of comparing themselves to what is truly manufactured “perfection.” In cases of a total lack of a foundation in musical skill, rather than treating such skills as a prerequisite, vocal instructors should adeptly introduce the benefits of exploring topics, such as musical notation and basic music fundamentals as tools for eventually deepening a singer's experience of music. By facilitating a gender-inclusive environment, vocal instructors may create space for more individuals to explore and develop their identities as musical artists. Vocal instructors can nurture an exploratory experience of stylistic vocal expressions for singers who wish to embrace versatility through adaptive pedagogical approaches.

CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH STUDY: “INDIVIDUAL SINGER AND TEACHER PERSPECTIVES IN VOCAL PEDAGOGY”

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to examine the individual perspectives of singers and their teachers with the ultimate goal of developing and improving pedagogical techniques by gaining a deeper understanding of their experiences. This study included two separate surveys that were intended to anonymously gather the perspectives from two populations: singers and teachers of singing. In this chapter I will be analyzing the survey responses that are reflective of these two populations, centering around some of the issues that have been raised in this document. This discussion hopes to address these issues to some degree by incorporating the perspectives of singers and their teachers that were evident in the survey responses (See Appendix II for a copy of each survey).

Description of the Research Process

The participants invited to take part in this research were adult singers or voice teachers or both located in the United States. Participants could be at any level of skill or expertise, as long as they had some experience with singing (either formal or informal). Potential participants were recruited via email and social media and encouraged to share with their contacts and friends. The surveys were shared in Facebook groups including but not limited to “The New Forum for Professional Voice Teachers,” “Empowered

Singers Group,” “The NEW New Forum for Classical Singers Group,” “Teachers of Trans/GNC Singers,” and circulated via email within multiple University Music Department email lists. A recruitment message was also posted on the “National Association of Teachers of Singing Research Surveys” webpage. The recruitment messages contained the links to both surveys, so interested participants could access the survey of their choice directly. The landing page of the survey links directed participants to an informed consent and confirmation of age.

In “Individual Teacher Perspectives of Vocal Pedagogy,” I gathered information from voice teachers to determine the characteristics of their student/client population. Within the survey I inquired about their level of satisfaction with current resource material and their most commonly used pedagogical techniques. Lastly, I inquired into their willingness and confidence in their ability to adapt their pedagogical techniques in order to serve each individual in a manner that accommodates a range of factors including, but not limited to vocal style, repertoire interests, and gender-identification.

In “Individual Singer Perspectives of Vocal Study,” participants were asked to reflect on some of their impressions of vocal study as a beginning singer. Within the survey I inquired after singers’ perspectives on their use of and the accessibility of resource materials recommended or required by their teachers. Participants were also asked to reflect on their interests and goals regarding vocal style, repertoire, and music theory/piano skills acquisition, and how strongly they identify with traditional gender normative roles within the context of musical expression. I also gathered information about their interest in somatic practices and their perspective on the incorporation of

these techniques to their vocal study. Finally, I asked participants to reflect on whether they have felt a sense of unworthiness of pursuing vocal study or sharing their voice with others.

The surveys collected slightly more than 100 responses total from unidentified participants. Some questions within the surveys allowed respondents to “Check all that apply,” with the inclusion of an “Other” box for specificity. The remaining questions included utilization of a Likert Scale (i.e., Always, Usually, Sometimes, Rarely, Never), numeric scales, and long text answer boxes to capture a general sense of the participants’ attitudes towards the question. The views expressed in these particular surveys are limited by the fact that they were distributed amongst small communities of singers and teachers, which may influence the types of responses that were received. It is worth noting that these two populations of respondents may be, but are not necessarily, linked in a direct relationship. This study was limited to participants with access to email, or social networks and media, through devices that were connected to the internet. This study was reviewed and approved by the institutional review board.

Participants

“Individual Singer Perspectives of Vocal Study” received a total of 58 responses. In the survey for singers, participants were asked to reflect upon their own experiences as a beginning singer. The singer participants represented a wide range of experience in terms of level of expertise and length of study, with most participants indicating experience with singing for 5-25 years, and 15% of singers having been singing for more

than 25 years. As the singer participants were not required to have any formal vocal study to take the survey, this number may represent varying perceptions of study experience (i.e., “I’ve been singing all of my life” vs “2 years of voice lessons”). All categoric levels of expertise were represented (“Novice,” “Intermediate,” “Advanced,” and “Professional”), with the bulk of singer participants indicating that they consider their level of experience to fall into the “Advanced” category and most of the remaining participants falling between “Intermediate-Professional.” Although some of the questions asked singer participants to reflect on their perspective as beginners, their responses may be affected by recall bias.

“Individual Teacher Perspectives of Vocal Pedagogy” received a total of 54 responses. Participants in this survey were asked to reflect on their training and teaching experiences as a beginning and active teacher. They were asked about their teaching philosophies, preferred pedagogical techniques, use of educational resources, and specific characteristics of their student and client population. The survey of voice teachers first sought to gain information about the style of vocal training participants received as singers themselves. The results showed that a majority (98.2%) of these voice teachers received Western Classical training as singers. Slightly less than half (46.3%) of these respondents noted receiving training in Musical Theatre, and smaller percentages noted receiving training in other vocal styles including Jazz and CCM vocal styles (16.7%). Seven of these respondents (13%) noted training in Gospel and/or Worship (including Christian Contemporary), and a single respondent indicated receiving training as Classical vocal techniques applied to Musical Theatre singing.

The teacher participants demonstrated a substantially wide range of certifications and academic degrees in music as well as other disciplines. More than half of the teacher participants indicated possession of a Bachelor of Music in Voice Performance (55.6%). 24 participants indicated possession of a Master of Music degree in Voice Performance and 11 indicated possession of a Doctoral of Musical Arts degree in Voice. Respondents mentioned various other bachelor's degrees, including Bachelor of Fine Arts in Musical Theatre; Bachelor in Songwriting with a concentration in Voice; Acting; Education; Speech and Language Pathology; and Music History.

Graduate studies included master's degrees in fields, such as Speech Language Pathology, Vocal Pedagogy, Collaborative Piano, Piano Performance, Education, and Criminal Law and Justice. Doctoral and PhD degrees included specializations in Voice (11), Choral Conducting, Education, and Sociology. 11 Respondents reported earning a Vocal Pedagogy Certificate, eight have a Bachelor of Music Education, and nine have a Teaching Certificate (K-12). Multiple teacher participants indicated having international training and certifications, including traditional European apprenticeship-style pedagogy training and professional qualifications from colleges and conservatories in the UK. Participants vastly varied in teaching experience with 33.3% having 10-25 years, 27.8% having 5-10 years, 20.4% having more than 25 years, and the remaining (16.6%) teacher respondents having 0-5 years of experience.

Results and Discussion

Trends in Vocal and Stylistic Training and Repertoire Selection

Voice teachers reported employing a variety of stylistic techniques in their teaching including CCM (53.7%) Musical Theatre (79.6%) Western Classical (Solo and/or choral) (92.6%), Jazz (38.9%), Gospel/Worship (11.1%), and Neuro-Vocal Method for Popular Styles (1.9%). When asked about the range of students they work with, teachers reported working with a wide range of singers. The results of this question demonstrated that most, but not all of the teacher participants in this group interacted with avocational singers, with the next most common types of singers in their studios consisting of students grades 9-12 (high school), grades 6-8 (middle school), undergraduate students (both degree and non-degree-seeking, and music majors and minors), emerging/young professional performer/artists, music educators continuing study, and graduate level music students.

When asked which vocal styles are requested by students to be taught to them, a majority of the teachers indicated student requests for stylistic vocal training in Musical Theatre (94.4%) Western Classical (Solo and/or Choral) (92.6%), CCM (70.4%), Jazz (50%), and Gospel and/or Worship (20.4%). Specific mentions were two indications of students requesting to work on original music (singer-songwriter), and requests to work specifically on operatic vocal styles. More than half of teacher participants indicated that all or most of their students sing Western Classical repertoire. Almost all (90.8%) of the teacher participants indicated that most (55.6%) or all (35.2%) of their students have

repertoire interests outside of the Western Classical repertoire. When asked about the vocal styles they were interested in learning from a teacher, singer participants illustrated varied interests: 79.3% of participants selected Western Classical (Solo and/or Choral), with 58.6% indicating interest in Musical Theatre, 46.5% indicating interest in CCM, 36.2% of singers selecting Jazz, and 17.2% selecting Gospel and/or Worship.

This data suggests that a majority of teacher participants received Western Classical vocal training and are using those techniques in their vocal studio. It also illustrates a potential implication that teachers are not extensively trained themselves or using pedagogical techniques that are aligned with students’ repertoire interests and requests. *Comparison of Teacher Training and Singer Interest Regarding Vocal Style* (table 2) depicts a side-by-side comparison of the percentage data gathered regarding the training that teachers received, the techniques they use, and the requests that they receive from students, with a depiction in the final column of the styles of singing that the singer participants indicated they are interested in learning.

Table 2

Comparison of Teacher Training and Singer Interest Regarding Vocal Style

	Training Teachers Received	Techniques Teachers Use	Vocal Style Requests Teachers Receive	Styles Singers Are Interested in Learning
CCM	16.7%	53.7%	70.4%	46.5%
Musical Theatre	46.3%	79.6%	94.4%	58.6%
Western Classical	98.2%	92.6%	92.6%	79.3%
Jazz	16.7%	38.9%	50%	36.2%
Gospel/Worship	13%	11.1%	20.4%	17.2%

Responses from teacher participants varied when asked how likely they would be to allow students to choose their own repertoire for study. 46.3% indicated that they

would be likely to allow this flexibility, and 24.1% indicated that they would be “Very Likely,” an equal 24.1% indicated ambiguously (“Neither likely nor unlikely”), and a final 5.6% indicated that they would be “Unlikely” to allow their students to choose their own repertoire for study. More than half of the teacher survey participants elected to add an explanatory comment on their answer to this question. Many described a collaborative approach to repertoire selection, and emphasized varied treatment based on the student’s age, level of experience, or both. Some remarked that increased flexibility in repertoire selection is awarded through a demonstration of an understanding of certain foundational concepts. Here are some of the comments that illustrate a collaborative process:

Participant: I always start with what a student wants, but if it’s not a good fit, I recommend an adjustment (different key, similar song in the same style)

Participant: For students of all ages I err away from “prescribing” or assigning repertoire. Repertoire is a collaborative process, with older students having more freedom in choice than younger students. With younger students, I will typically present a number of suitable options for the student to choose from.

Participant: I don’t mind the student selecting their own music. However, as the voice teacher, I am the one who is most knowledgeable on the needs of the instrument. There is a reason for everything that I do and I require my students to trust my expertise and not fight them. Now, once I am able to explain and prove my concepts to a willing participant, then and only then will I allow their opinion in selecting music, with the understanding of applying good and healthy technique for a better sound.

Several teachers indicated a methodical element to their approach, such as:

Participant: I tend to offer 3 or 4 pieces and the student chooses between them. I will also work on rep brought in by the student in addition to rep we've chosen together.

Participant: I go half and half. They pick one, I pick one.

Several teachers indicated external influences, such as institutional degree program repertoire requirements, for example:

Participant: I choose repertoire collaboratively with students. I give listening lists and let them choose the pieces that inspire them within parameters that match my goals for their development and the degree requirements. They are free to refuse all pieces on my list and send me an alternate list, and then we continue from there.

Teacher participants also noted repertoire selection as a motivational aspect of vocal study for the student, evoking a student-centered learning approach:

Participant: Students are more inspired and practice more when they get to pick their song.

Participant: It's helpful to a beginning singer especially if they have a connection to what they are singing, but I wouldn't work on it with them if not good for them.

Participant: The genres they choose to learn about and express are why they sought voice coaching. I feel my job is to help them express the music they love in a way that is satisfying to them. I guide people but never decide for them.

Even within this small sample size of teachers, the respondents demonstrated a variety of approaches to this aspect of vocal study. Overall, the teachers' commentary illustrated a desire to accommodate individual repertoire interests whilst also providing guidance in the development of fundamental singing skills. Further investigation into student and teacher perspective of vocal style and repertoire is needed to determine whether teachers feel that there is a disconnect between the training they received, the training they provide, the training that may be required at the institutions where they teach, and the training that is desired by their student populations. Do students feel that their demands for vocal training are being sufficiently met? Further investigation is also needed to determine the effect of academic musical institutions on these aspects of vocal style and training. Do teachers feel the need to maintain classical vocal traditions as an essential component of their students' vocal education? Do teachers think they need additional training in contemporary vocal styles? Are there trends present between the age and experience of the teacher and the type of training they received and use? How do other factors, such as institutional affiliation or geographical location affect such trends? Furthermore, what influence do academic musical institutions have on vocal style training?

The Use of Fundamental Resource Texts for Beginning Singers

One of the questions that this survey sought to explore was the perspectives of teachers and singers on the use of fundamental resources. Teacher participants indicated occurrences of working with beginning singers in their vocal studio as: 42.6% “Sometimes,” 25.9% “Usually,” 9.3% “Always,” with 20.4% indicating “Rarely,” and 1.9% “Never.” Overall, 77.8% of teachers indicated the presence of complete beginners in their vocal studio. Teacher participants indicated equal percentages (42.6%) of either “Rarely” or “Never” requiring these singers to purchase fundamental resource texts.

When asked about their level of satisfaction with the ability of resource texts intended for beginner level singers to meet their students' individual needs, a majority (53.7%) of teacher respondents indicated that they were “Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied,” with the next largest category (20.4%) of respondents indicating that they were “Dissatisfied.” Teacher participants were asked to indicate which texts they had either used or recommended to their students. Figure 1 illustrates their indications, with a majority of the teacher population indicating “None of the above” and Ware’s *Adventures in Singing...* being most selected by this teacher population.

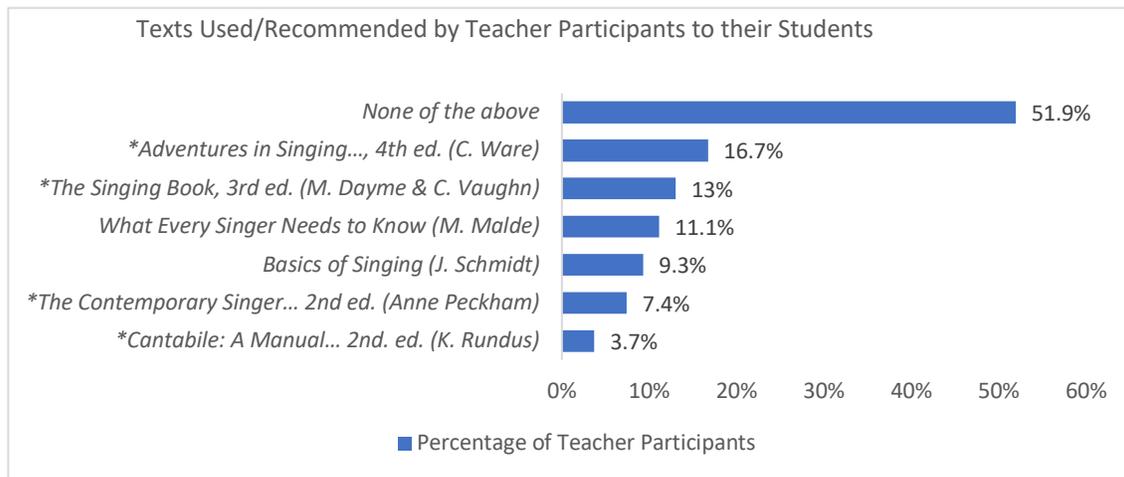


Figure 1. Illustration of the texts that were indicated as “used” or “recommended to their students” by teacher participants. Participants were given the option to list different texts than those provided in the “Other” box, and the following titles were mentioned by single participants: *Absolute Beginners Voice: The Complete Picture Guide for Beginning Vocalists* (A. Andrade), *Singing and Teaching Singing* (J. Chapman), *Money Notes: How to Sing High, Loud, Healthy, and Forever* (M. Colby), *Vocal Technique: A Guide for Conductors, Teachers, and Singers* (J. Davids and S. LaTour), *This is a Voice* (J. Fisher and G. Kayes), *Singing and the Actor* (G. Kayes), *A Systematic Approach to Voice: The Art of Studio Application* (K. Ragan), and *The Singing Voice: An Owner’s Manual* (P. Wilson). A single participant indicated that they “Prefer not to answer.” The [*] symbol indicates texts that were reviewed in this document.

The study of singers asked participants to indicate their attitude towards the affordability and accessibility of resource material (literature, handbooks, textbooks, etc.) specifically for beginning singers. 1.7% of the respondents indicated that they found such materials to be “Very Affordable,” and many respondents noted “Sometimes” being provided resource material by their teacher or not using any resource material at all. The study of singing has shown a rich oral tradition of passing information from teacher to student; however, there is a great incentive for voice students to have access to resource material that encourages their autonomy as independent musical artists. The survey

responses to these questions necessitate further investigation and exploration. Future investigations may explore whether larger populations of teachers are consistent in their usage of resource material (or lack thereof), as well as the factors that may impact or discourage their usage. Future research may also identify connections between learning environments (individual or group classes) and the usage of resource materials. Will clarification of vocal function across singing styles lead to resource material that is more specifically attuned to the needs of each individual student? And if so, will teachers and singers be more willing to invest in these resources, presuming they will have an increased potential for efficacy?

Singer Talent and Worthiness

Questions within the survey were designed to explore individual singers' sense of belonging in the vocal studio and sense of worthiness of sharing their voices with others. The singer participants were asked to describe the importance of being told that they have "it," the "it factor," or "what it takes" to be a singer, and to describe the forms of recognition that they seek most. Singer participants were also asked how likely they would be to describe themselves as a "singer" to others. A majority (70.7%) of singer participants indicated an attitude of likeliness that they would describe themselves as singers to others, with 20.7% of singers indicating that they would be unlikely to do so. The motivations for singers to label or not label themselves as such is unclear, however, this data suggests that there are a number of participants in this population that may choose not to claim this label.

Using a numerical scale, singer participants were asked to rank their feelings of worthiness for the following two questions:

- On a scale of 1-10, how worthy (meaning: good enough) do you believe you are of the opportunity to study singing?
- On a scale of 1-10, how worthy (meaning: good enough) do you believe your singing voice is of being shared with others?

Slightly less than half (44.8%) of respondents indicated a level 10 on the scale for the first question, which is not totally unexpected given the number of participants who indicated their level of expertise to be “Intermediate” or higher. However, the remaining respondents demonstrated various levels of unworthiness, with indications as low as a two on the scale. On the second survey question, only 32.8% of respondents indicated a 10 on the scale of worthiness of their voice being shared with others. The next largest category of singer participants indicated an eight, with some participants indicating as low as a two on the scale of feeling worthy. Figure 2 illustrates the participants’ responses of feelings of worthiness on a scale of 1-10 with range indications of “Not at all worthy” to “Totally Worthy.”

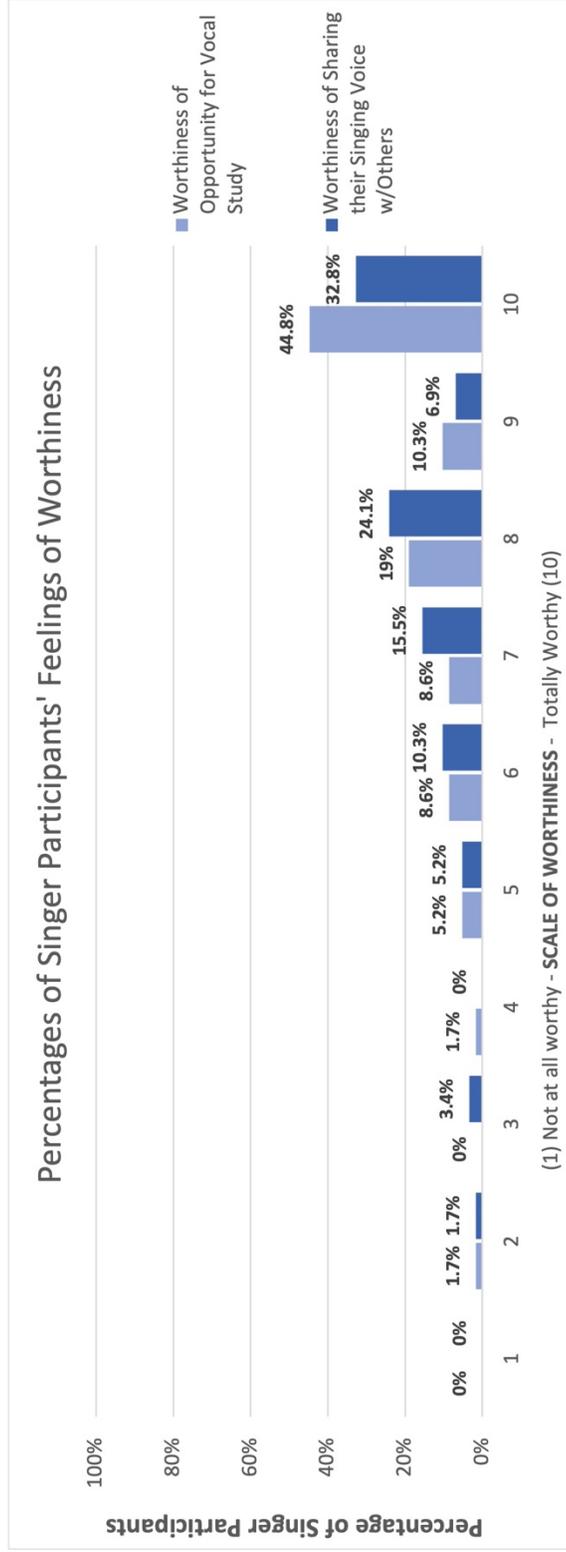


Figure 2. Depiction of the singer participants' feelings of worthiness for the opportunity to study singing and sharing their voices with others. Participants indicated their feelings of worthiness on a numerical scale [1-10] with range indications of “Not at all worthy” to “Totally worthy.”

Even within this small sample population, the data suggests that there are a number of singers not feeling “Totally worthy” of either activity. This may seem surprising, considering that a majority of the singer participants in this population had indicated that they had been singing for more than ten years (58.6%), and predominantly indicated their level of experience to be Intermediate, Advanced, or Professional (89.6%). This data may suggest that some of the singer participants maintain a perspective (either consciously or subconsciously) that duration of study and level of experience are not necessarily indicative of worthiness to pursue vocal study or share their voices with others or both.

When asked to describe the role of the “it” factor in their identity as a singer, participants had varied and thoughtful responses. Many described using the concept of the “it factor” or possessing talent as motivation to practice or to seek a viable career as a musician or both:

Participant: It used to be very important to me, when I first started singing. But after lessons, I realize that few people, if any, are born with an “it” factor, and that I just need to take time and work on my voice.

Participant: My motivation would decrease if I believed I had 0 existing potential.

Participant: I need to know that I’m not wasting my time and money. I know I’m decent but at this point I need to know if I’m good enough to potentially make a career of it.

Some of their responses implied that they had indeed been told they had “it,” while some had been told otherwise:

Participant: It lets me know that I’m not wasting my time pursuing a music career. It is encouraging

Participant: I had hoped to become a “singer” so I value the idea that I could be one, but my experience has not reinforced this premise. Correspondingly, I assumed if I had an ability it would have been reinforced so to avoid further discomfort I lowered my expectations so having “it” - which in my case was just the feeling that I made a desirable contribution - became less important.

Participant: I guess I’ve always known that I was a talented singer. Maybe I got told it a lot as a child but it’s always felt like an inner motivation to me.

And several participants described a process of overcoming an initial impression or setting boundaries with this concept:

Participant: I don’t need to be told fluff.

Participant: Vocal technique is a process of continuous growth and finesse. An “it factor” is esoteric at best, and is a fancy term for “lucky.”

Participant: Like many, my “journey” has been a long and complex one with many obstacles along the way. Ultimately, I had to find my own sense of myself as a singer as I realized whilst outside affirmation was nice, it was also really easy to be knocked by criticism/rejection

after auditions, etc. I had to find a way to make peace with accepting I am a singer whatever others may think about me.

When asked about the forms of recognition participants hope to receive as a singer, a majority of respondents indicated that they hoped to receive multiple forms of recognition for their singing. In addition to the seven suggested forms of recognition singers may receive, participants used the “Other” box to specifically enter that they desired recognition through publishing songs, making a positive social impact, receiving and creating opportunities to share and connect with others, teaching other singers, and lastly, through financial support. As shown on Figure 3, a majority of the singers in this participant population have a substantial appreciation for and hope to receive recognition for their singing.

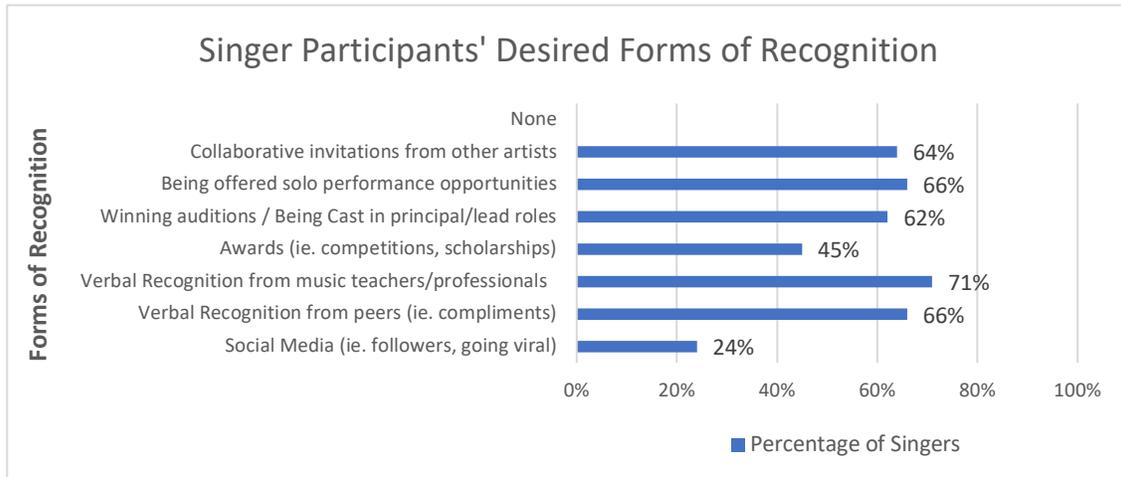


Figure 3. Depiction of forms of recognition that singer participants selected in the survey. Singer participants were able to indicate multiple forms of recognition through multi-selection. None of the singer participants indicated that they desired no forms of recognition for their singing.

The overall pedagogical implications of the survey results are illustrated best by this singer participant’s comment on the previous question regarding the “it factor”:

Participant: It’s important to have someone who believes in you, but not necessarily telling you, you have “it”

These results demonstrate that vocal teachers are poised to offer valuable and meaningful encouragement for prospective and current voice students. By intentionally and verbally expressing a belief in the potential for their students’ success as singers, teachers may have a positive impact on their student’s self-perception. Further research is needed to explore factors that may be impacting a singer’s mindset, such as the imposter phenomenon or a potential perception of vocal study as an “elitist activity.” Do these factors of mindset have an impact on a singer’s ability to improve their singing or on

overall performance? Voice teachers could also be experiencing a similar sensation in their role. Do voice teachers consider “talent” to be an element of teaching ability? Do teachers consider their perception of a particular student’s “talent” when instructing them? Furthermore, what do singers and teachers assert as the standard for being able to claim the titles of “singer” and “voice teacher”? What do they ascertain is the mark of success in the context of their respective roles? Finally, is the “it factor” a quantifiable quality? If so, can it be gained in the vocal studio or classroom?

Gender-inclusive Techniques in the Vocal Studio and Classroom

Some of the questions in these surveys explored potential strategies for creating inclusive environments for vocal study. In the singer survey, participants were asked to indicate how strongly they identify with traditional gender normative roles when participating or expressing themselves musically on a scale of “Not at all” to “A great deal.” The largest concentration (31%) of responses was an indication that participants identify “A moderate amount,” and overall, the results indicated that participants’ responses in this sample population were mixed. When asked how comfortable they felt about singing a song that is traditionally performed by someone of a different voice type, participants indicated that they felt generally (Usually 31%, Sometimes 31%, or Always 25.9%) comfortable doing so.

Teacher participants indicated favorably towards encouraging their students to explore repertoire that is traditionally sung by or designated for other voice types. A majority of teacher participants also indicated employing pedagogical techniques that

would be considered gender-fluid or gender-neutral. Overall, the results of the teacher participant survey indicated willingness to work with Transgender/GNC students, and confidence in their abilities to assign repertoire comfortably.

The data of the current study supports the development of (clearly) gender-inclusive pedagogical techniques. Voice teachers who are motivated to aid students in pursuit of the ever-elusive *authentic voice* can further facilitate freely creative and artistically expressive environments that validate each individual's experience. Further research is needed to gain a comprehensive understanding of whether singers are activity deterred from vocal study due to a lack of overt gender-inclusivity. Subsequent further investigation into the perspectives of teachers and singers may include asking their thoughts on other possibilities to promote inclusivity in the vocal studio and classroom. Would students and teachers find a non-binary classification system for singers to be useful? Are there other gendered experiences within the context of the vocal studio that can be expanded beyond the assumption of gender or sexuality or both?²²⁸

Somatic Practices as Tools for Singers and Teachers of Singing

Several survey questions sought to determine teachers' use of specific somatic practices, and singers' interest in overall wellness and the potential non-musical benefits that may result from vocal study. The singer participants displayed significant interest in the non-musical benefits of singing with more than half indicating topics, such as Breath Work (82.8%), Self-esteem (74.1%), Body Connection (70.7%), Physical Exercise

²²⁸ An example of this may be encouraged lyric substitution (i.e., specific instructions in the score for the singer to substitute pronouns in the poetic text based on their voice type).

(63.8%), and Spiritual Connection (51.7%). Singer participants also indicated significant overall interest in specific somatic practices, with 74.1% interested in Yoga, 55.3% interested in the Alexander Technique, and 22.4% interested in the Feldenkrais Method. Half of the singer respondents indicated that they would like to have Yoga or Alexander Technique or both incorporated into their vocal study.

A majority (77.7%) of the teacher participants indicated positively towards the inclusion of somatic/whole-body practices into their teaching, with 50% noting the use of Yoga, 33.3% noting the use of the Alexander Technique, and 9.3% noting the use of the Feldenkrais Method. 24.1% of teachers reported not incorporating somatic practices into their pedagogical practices. Four total teacher participants indicated maintaining certifications in Alexander Technique, Feldenkrais, and Yoga, with multiple participants mentioning having extensively studied under certified teachers. Nearly all of the remaining teacher participants reported not having a certification in any somatic practices.

The data gathered from these surveys illustrates an enduring relationship between vocal studies and somatic practices from the perspectives of both student and teacher populations. This data may suggest a viable opportunity for voice teachers who are interested in expanding their pedagogical techniques to pursue a more comprehensive study of the somatic practices that they are already using, especially for those respondents who mentioned concerns about possessing the necessary qualifications to effectively teach somatic methods to their students. Teachers may also find the pursuit of somatic practices that they haven't yet explored to be beneficial for their own singing or in better

aiding their students or both. For voice students, these results may provide motivation for the pursuit of a relationship with the somatic practices of their choice, as they are endorsed by a majority of teacher participants. The survey results from this singer population indicated a strong interest in Yoga. Both populations indicated Yoga as a practice they desire to or already use in their vocal study.

Further questions for the inclusion of somatic practices within the vocal studio may pursue specificity. Do teachers and singers find one somatic practice more useful than the others for the development of singing technique? Do teachers find the application of certain somatic practices to be more practically applied in the vocal studio or classroom? Furthermore, is a deep understanding and application of one particular method, or a combination of multiple techniques most effective? Some voice teachers or voice students may find hands-on postural adjustments or other physical guidance (such as those used incorporated into several of these somatic practices) to be enhancements of vocal study. Do voice students think that hands-on postural adjustments enhance their kinesthetic experience of their lessons? Should teachers who provide postural adjustments for their students seek certification in the methodology that they are practicing?

Concluding Comments

The purpose of this research was to explore ideas and discover trends among singer and voice teacher populations. The results of this study depict an overall willingness from voice teachers to adapt to be more inclusive and implicate several ways

that the evolution of pedagogical resources can aid in deepening the experience of singing for more members of the community. The study results also imply a significant relationship between practices that incorporate the study of self and vocal studies which may serve teachers and singers in their desire to develop musically artistic vocal identities. Furthermore, my findings emphasize the importance of the role of the teacher in the student's experience of vocal study, illustrating that providing an empowering and adaptive environment will likely make a positive impact on the lives of singers.

My ultimate goal was to create something that would be helpful and useful for others, and that goal feels closer now than ever before. I recognize that as people and society change, what they need will also. An effective way to discover what people need is simply to ask them. Therefore, I would love to continue my exploration of singer and teacher perspectives in survey format. The surveys received a strong response from all of the communities with whom I connected, implying that singers and voice teachers are quite happy to have their voices heard.

Many of the ideas and concepts mentioned in this document deserve deeper exploration. Twenty-first century pedagogical methodologies seem to be reflective of a distillation of concepts of vocal style and function with the aid of technology, which may assist voice teachers in better serving their students as individuals and as musicians. As a voice teacher, I am interested in further exploring the relationship between voice science and singing pedagogy. I am excited to see how such advancements can lead to more evidence-based pedagogical practices, especially across vocal styles, and to see and be part of the relevant research being conducted by my colleagues.

This research project was an ambitious and rewarding undertaking and has led me to discover that there is still so much more to learn. My immediate priority is to provide the support and space needed to encourage more people to explore their voices. With more of the proper tools accessible to both singer and teacher, voice teachers can guide more students in a dynamic, diverse, and rewarding experience of vocal study. In the near future, I hope to finalize the development and publication of the eBook resource outlined and excerpted in the following chapter. I have already secured an illustrator and photographer, Lindsay Saunders, and am excited to collaborate with her on the next steps. Some of the benefits of singing are the artistic freedom to tell a story, to create a character, imagine places that you have never been, and share exciting and beautiful moments of music in the process. Every member of the community is worthy and deserving of the chance to explore their voice as an expression of individuality and musical fulfillment.

CHAPTER 6

EBOOK DESIGN AND OUTLINE

Introduction

By examining texts of varying designs and reviewing the results of the surveys, I have had an opportunity to extract techniques which I believe will be relevant for many current singers. Rather than creating a comprehensive resource for every singer of various levels of study, this eBook will serve as a “stepping-stone” for singers to begin to build their foundational knowledge of basic concepts of the practice of singing. This gender-inclusive resource provides basic, simplified information on the function of the voice that can be used by even the most inexperienced musician. Addressed to the singer, this eBook may be used by self-guided singers, or by teachers who require a versatile resource to teach the foundational concepts of singing to diverse groups of individuals in community or classroom settings.

With this work, I hope to empower those who may be intimidated by vocal study due to a lack of pre-requisite musical skills to discover the enjoyment of singing. Therefore, it is overtly stated that no previous experience with music fundamentals or instruments is required to make full use of the information that is being offered. This stance validates the experiences of voice users who have not had the privilege of musical studies or opportunities for fundamental music skills-acquisition previously in their lives. After using this resource, singers may be inspired to continue their musical studies by

learning to play an instrument by ear, read music notation, collaborate with other musicians, and more.

This resource includes audio vocal exercises recorded for both high and low voices to which singers may sing along. These exercises incorporate techniques that I have gathered through my Literature Review, as well as vocal exercises from my own training and experience as a voice teacher. Singers are encouraged to participate in the vocal exercises that fit comfortably within their range, and to drop out or switch to the octave that feels comfortable for them when the exercise gets too low or too high. These vocal exercises are not designed to only encourage “aesthetically pleasing” sounds and are rather designed to warm up the voice and facilitate an exploration of various sensations that can be experienced in singing. The goal of these exercises is to introduce singers to various concepts of vocal styles that they can explore further (such as varied resonance and awareness of their articulators).

This eBook does not include a song anthology, which serves to keep the content concise and lower the price-point. The absence of an anthology also provides singers with the opportunity to select their own repertoire, facilitating an individual-centered learning approach. In light of the results of my research study, the kinesthetic aspect of vocal study in this guide is enriched with my knowledge of somatic practices. This guide features the use of meditation and Yoga practices as the most heavily represented somatic elements. Lastly, I include an appendix that suggests topics that singers may be interested in exploring as tools for deepening their experience of singing including but not limited to additional resources for developing specific vocal styles and musicianship skills,

learning to play another instrument, as well as introductory resources for other somatic practices to incorporate into their vocal study.

This eBook may be used by students who are interested in having a basic knowledge of concepts of singing, but do not have the time or financial resources to invest in a comprehensive text. This eBook may also be used by voice teachers who are working with individual singers one-to-one or in a group setting, such as Class Voice or directing community ensembles. Furthermore, voice teachers may encourage their students' artistic independence by recommending that they explore this eBook as a reference outside of the vocal studio. To limit production costs and provide a low, accessible price-point, this resource will be primarily available as an eBook. The visual elements of this eBook will consist of a combination of custom illustrations and photograph images.

Although voice teachers may not fully achieve the idyllic scene of total accessibility, we may strive to evoke the depiction of playful, singing participation that Eistentraut describes. I hope that this resource will act as a scaffold for more amateur singers to continue on to enjoy the abundance of valuable resource material that has been produced by the voice community thus far. Below is the outline and design of the eBook, with sample excerpts of the style of verbiage and exercises that will be used.

eBook Outline and Sample Excerpts

Welcome Introduction: Mission

- What is singing? Who should sing? Who is this book for?

This guide is designed for most beginning singers. To be the ideal voice student, especially as a beginner, you must have a desire to be musically expressive, a courageous and positive attitude, and be willing to make mistakes. You do not need any previous experience to begin exploring your voice through singing. The goal of this guide is to provide you with foundational knowledge of the voice so you can understand the basic level of function of your instrument and begin to build a “toolbox” of techniques to apply to your singing. You do not need to be able to play any other instruments or read music to use this guide. This eBook is accompanied by vocal exercises that are recorded separately for both high and low voices.

Singing involves a variety of sounds and sensations. This guide will introduce you to some of the different sensations of singing and help you relate them to your own experience. As you develop your connection to your own unique instrument, you must be willing to make all sorts of noises (“good” AND “bad”). If you have ever felt a sense of imposter phenomenon, you are not alone. Your individual interests and goals are valid, and you are worthy of exploring and sharing your voice, regardless of your previous experience and skill level. Each voice is different, so you must be willing to explore and discover YOUR instrument—and its capacity to sing.

This gender-inclusive guide is addressed to every human in search of a more effective and authentic vocal expression. Each body is different. The first steps to improving any vocal technique are deepening your awareness of your body and learning how to access (and maximize!) what your body can do naturally when you sing. This guide will introduce you to practices that can enhance your experience of music-making through singing and empower you to join your voice with other singers and musicians in your community!

Congratulations! You are officially a SINGER!

Part One

Information & Sensation: Mind-Body Connection

- *A Meditation on the Breath* for beginners – This 5-minute guided meditation will bring your attention to the breath and begin to facilitate an overall kinesthetic awareness. You may choose to use this meditation to observe and connect to the sensation of breath in the body, for relaxation, or to find a focused mindset prior to engaging in their singing practice. Meditation is something to practice, so try to observe yourself without judgement. When you are feeling comfortable with this five-minute meditation, you may like to explore the slightly longer meditation in the second part of this guide.

Basic Overview of the Vocal Process, outlined in steps

Singing is a complex task that involves the coordination of multiple physical and mental processes in your body at the same time. Your job as a singer is to explore the sensations in your body to build an awareness of different aspects of your experience of singing.

- 1 – Volition
 - *Activating Your Energetic Power Source for Singing:* The first step of the vocal process is the desire to create sound, and this inner energetic force is the power source for your singing. *You* are the greatest source of momentum for your singing. You must desire to use your voice to create art and believe in your abilities to do so!
- 2 – Inspiration
 - *Breathing for Singing:* The process of respiration is both autonomic and voluntary and includes a cycle of inhalations and exhalations (illustration). Every *body* is different and experiences the sensation of breath in the body differently.

You will want to experiment with making space in your body for air so that you can maximize your body's natural capacity for breath.

- Exercises for feeling the sensation of breath in your body.
 - Exercise Example 1: You may use these exercises to observe breath as it enters and exits your body. Try to follow the instructions, but do not be concerned if you don't feel the described sensation right away!

Place your hands over your heart and breathe sharply and deeply into your hands. You may feel the expansion in your upper chest, beneath your clavicle.

Place your hands in your armpits to make chicken wings. Allow your hands to relax slightly and gently grip the sides of your rib cage. Breathe sharply and deeply into your hands and feel your rib cage expand to make room for breath in your body.

Lie on your back on the floor. Close your eyes and allow yourself to find a relaxed and natural cycle of breath (30 seconds to 1 minute). Place your hands over your belly button, and feel your belly rise and fall as you breathe. You may choose to open your eyes or remain with eyes closed. After your next inhale, blow out your breath as though you were blowing out a

candle. Notice the sensation of your belly button traveling back to your spine as you send the breath out of your body.

- 3 – Phonation & Pitch

- *Your Vocal Folds:* How do you create sound for speaking or singing? You have two vocal folds, which are located within your larynx. After you take in air, you may then speak or sing by sending air up through your vocal tract and out of your mouth. Your vocal folds vibrate together to create sound in a process called phonation. When you change pitch, your vocal folds lengthen and become thinner, or relax and thicken (a pair of illustrations of vocal folds within the larynx viewed from above, depicting examples of “low pitch” and “high pitch” positions). Your *vocal range* is a way to describe the distance between the lowest pitch you can produce and the highest pitch you can produce. You will likely think of pitches as being “higher” or “lower,” but remember that your vocal folds are thickening and lengthening on the coronal plane (front to back).

A note on hydration: Overall hydration promotes your body’s natural process for lubricating the vocal folds, so it is important to drink a lot of fluids (such as water or tea) well before your singing practice. Keep in mind that staying hydrated while you sing is important too, but the fluids you drink do not directly contact your vocal folds...so creating lubrication for your vocal folds from within is essential for a smooth singing practice!

- Exercise for feeling the location of the vocal folds within the body
 - Exercise Example 2: Use this exercise to locate your vocal folds.

You can find your larynx by running your finger under your chin and down the front of your neck until you feel a bump of cartilage. If you press gently, you may feel the shape of a small letter “v.” With your finger on the top of this cartilage, say “Ahhhhh.” You should feel the vibration of your vocal folds through your skin. With your finger still gently pressed to the top of your larynx, you can swallow to feel the natural movement of your larynx.

Now, use your first and second finger to make a “peace sign” or a letter “V,” and swivel your wrist so that the palm of your hand is facing you. Fold your wrist down towards you at a 90-degree angle, so that the tips of your fingers are pointing to the back of the room. Bring your fingers to the side of your neck so that your fingers are in line with your larynx and parallel to the floor.

Your fingers now represent the location of your vocal folds in your body. If you open and close your fingers, you can imitate the action of the vocal folds as they come together to vibrate in phonation.

- Exercise for exploring vocal range.
 - Exercise Example 3: Use this exercise to imagine your vocal folds lengthening and stretching as you go up in pitch and shortening and relaxing as you go down. This is a free expression of sound and movement, and there is no “right” or

“wrong.” As you are exploring your vocal range, you may hear or feel changes in the sensation of the sound. You may also feel that one area of your voice is stronger. This is completely normal!

You may like to stand for this exercise. Begin in a standing position and point one of your fingers to the floor. For this exercise, you will use your finger to trace the shape of an arch from the floor to ceiling and back to the floor again. You should keep your arm straight and create the arch through the rotation of your shoulder—use a range of motion that feels comfortable for your body. Once you have figured out how you will trace the arch, choose a vowel (such as “e” or “ah” or “Ooo”) and use your voice to connect the lowest comfortable pitch of your voice with your highest comfortable pitch (this is often referred to as a “siren”). You can imagine imitating the sound of a long, drawn-out siren, or a slide whistle. Try to coordinate your voice and movement by linking the lowest comfortable pitch for your voice with your finger pointing to the floor and reaching the highest comfortable pitch as you trace the peak of the arch. This is a free vocalization and does not require any certain pitches. Imagine waking up from a long nap, and full extending both of your arms out and above your head—this is the same kind of stretch for your voice!

- 4 – Resonance & Articulation (illustration of a profile view of the neck up, including labeling of the larynx, vocal folds, vocal tract, resonators [nasal cavity, oral cavity, and vocal tract], and articulators [jaw, teeth, lips, tongue, soft and hard palate])
 - *eBook Quick Definitions:* These definitions will be provided at the beginning of this section, similar to table 3.

Table 3

eBook Quick Definitions (Sample)

<p><i>Resonance: the intensification and filtration of the vibrations produced by the vocal folds</i></p>	<p><i>Articulation: the formation of sounds used in the verbal expression of speech and language</i></p>
<p><i>Tone: a descriptor of clarity or aesthetic of a vocal sound. Tone may also describe variations in pitch used to convey meaning</i></p>	<p><i>Timbre: a descriptor of the quality or color of a vocal sound</i></p>

- *Quality and Clarity of the Sound:* You have learned that phonation is the act of the vocal folds vibrating together to create sound, but what happens after that? Imagine the path of your breath from your lungs, up through your vibrating vocal folds, and out into the room. The next step of the vocal process refers to how the sound is shaped into what we hear after it is created in your larynx. Your sound is amplified and shaped as it passes through your *resonators*, the spaces in your body that naturally amplify the vibrations made by your vocal folds through *resonance*. Examples of your resonators are your throat, mouth, and sinuses. The way that this space is shaped, both naturally as you were born and with adjustments that you can make, generates the quality and characteristics of your vocal sound. Characteristics of vocal quality are often described using

descriptions of the *tone* and *timbre*, for example: weight (heavy or light), light (dark or bright), and clarity (clear or breathy). We can think and talk about the way a particular voice sounds by using a combination of these descriptors (for example, a voice may sound light and breathy), and these descriptions come with a degree of subjectivity. You may already do this when trying to describe how someone else's voice (speaking or singing) sounds. You may also notice various vocal qualities when you listen to different styles of singing, and you may hear the same singer demonstrate different combinations of these qualities, depending on how and what they are singing. Within the context of singing, your *articulators* refer to the parts of your body that help you further shape the sounds you create, such as those necessary for language. Examples of your articulators are your teeth, lips, tongue, soft palate, and jaw. As you become more aware of each of these articulators, you will start to experience how they can be used as tools for expressive and efficient singing.

- Exercises for awareness of resonance and articulation
 - Exercise Example 4: Use this exercise to explore sensations of resonance and the use of your articulators.

For this exercise, you will be embracing your inner animal!

As you mimic the sounds of the following animals, take notice of the differences between them. You may think about where you feel sensations in your body or how you would describe the sounds to someone else.

First, mimic the hoot of an owl. Notice how you use your lips, jaw, tongue, and soft palate to form the sound. To find your soft palate, run your tongue across the roof of your mouth from front to back. You will feel your teeth, hard palate, and soft palate (where the roof of your mouth becomes soft and fleshy).

Next, mimic a cat's meow. Which articulators do you feel activating as you create this sound? Alternate between the two sounds, and transition from one call to the next in "slow motion." How would you compare the movement of your lips, jaw, and tongue from one sound to the other?

For example: During the "hoo", you may feel a "taller" space inside your mouth, and you may feel a much smaller, more squished space inside your mouth during the "meow." In doing this, you are changing one of the spaces in which your voice resonates. How does this change affect the character of the sound? Practice feeling the lift of your soft palate by initiating a yawn.

- *Stylistic Characteristics of Different Vocal Styles:* You may associate a style of singing with a particular musical genre, and you may already have preferences about which styles of music you prefer to listen to or sing! However, the genre and vocal style are not necessarily the same thing. For example, you may hear a vocalist singing in an operatic style with a heavy metal band, or you may hear a vocalist singing in a jazz vocal style over an electronic music track. Vocal styles

include but are not limited to classical/lyrical and/or operatic; musical theatre; hip-hop; pop; country; blues; rock; folk; and gospel and/or worship.

Contemporary Commercial Music (CCM) is a term for vocal styles that are considered nonclassical, and encompasses musical theatre, country, pop, jazz, rock, and blues.

There are often many clues in the singing and within the music that let you make a very good guess at which style it is, even if you have never heard the song before. Singers can manipulate their vocal quality by using their articulators and resonators, so you may be able to hear the same vocalist sing in multiple vocal styles. You may also notice that the characteristics of some vocal styles include whether the vocalist sings in a speech-like manner, and if their vocal timbre includes *vibrato* or straight-tone. You may already have an idea of what vibrato sounds like—but a general definition of this term is that it is used to describe the oscillation of a sustained pitch (this may sound like “trembling,” “fluttering,” or “wobbling” of a held note). Vibrato can be present in vocal and some instrumental musical tones. When singing, vibrato can occur naturally, or it can be manufactured. You may hear some singers choose to use both vibrato and straight-tone as expressive, artistic, and stylistic tools in their singing. With training and practice, you can explore healthy singing in multiple styles, too!

- Exercise Example 5: Use this exercise to analyze different vocalists emulating a variety of vocal styles.

Imagine imitating the sound of the following vocal styles and consider how you would describe the aesthetic characteristics of their singing. You may use YouTube to search for live performances of singers demonstrating these styles.

- An opera singer*
- A popular (pop) singer*
- A jazz singer*
- A folk singer*

In addition to the unique physiology that they were born with, what elements of their singing do you think could contribute to the style/genre that they are singing in? What differences do you notice in the quality, tone, or timbre of the voice of each singer? What musical elements do you observe are different?

“Take it with a grain of salt” – As you are listening to these and other recordings, keep in mind that they may not necessarily be representative of “raw,” natural singing (especially “professional” level entertainment and recordings on an album!). The singing the audience hears can be captured by a microphone and altered with software to make sure that every note is perfectly in tune—even if the performance is live! When recording albums, singers are often able to record the same song or phrase multiple times and pick the best “takes” to publish. Recordings may also not include the breath sounds of the singer.

That said, remember not to directly compare your singing, or hold yourself to a standard that is not necessarily achieved naturally.

Take this exercise a step farther by singing along with each of the singers to the best of your ability with the intention to mimic their sound. Do you notice any difference in sensation between your imitation of the opera and your imitation of the pop singer? Try to identify any changes in your mouth shape; do you open taller or wider? Do you feel vibrations in your nose, throat, or forehead?

- 5 – Auditory Feedback Monitoring

- *Listening to Yourself:* The final step of the vocal process is auditory feedback monitoring. In fact, your ears and brain are constantly working together to evaluate if what you do matches your intention. This process is automatic and is happening at an extremely fast speed.

When singing, this self-monitoring and analysis can be emphasized as you listen retroactively to your own singing in the moment. This is natural! However, if we do too much of this, we become very focused on how we “sounded” in the past. A mindset with this focus can come through in our singing as a sense of hesitancy. You can trust this support system that is already in place and focus instead on *what you are about to do*.

- Physical Warm-Ups

- *Connecting to Your Body*: Exploring and enjoying your singing practice includes far more than your vocal folds! You must engage your entire body in the experience of singing, from the soles of the feet to the top of your head.
 - Exercises for physical warm-up/body connection
 - Example Exercises 6: You may use a combination of these exercises to connect to your body prior to engaging in your singing practice, or anytime that you want to loosen up! You should begin in a standing position for maximum effect. You can follow the instructions precisely or create any similar movements that feel good for your body. You may learn that some exercises do not feel helpful or comfortable for you, and you should feel free to modify/skip as needed.

Neck Stretches/Rolls – Gently tip your chin to rest on your chest. Close your eyes and take three few breaths here. When you are ready, gently tip your right ear to your right shoulder and pause here for three breaths. Repeat tipping your left ear to your left shoulder. You may explore rolling your neck in clockwise, and counterclockwise circles.

Shoulder Rolls/Shimmy– Begin by lifting your shoulders up to your ears and rolling them back in a fluid, circular motion (up, back, down, forward, up, repeat), completing 10-20 cycles. Switch directions to rolling your shoulders forward. Next,

alternate rolling your shoulders forward (right, left, repeat) and alternate rolling your shoulders back (left, right, repeat).

Shoulder Squeeze – Lift and squeeze your shoulders up to your ears as hard as you can (hold the squeeze and count to three) and release the shoulders down with an audible sigh. Repeat with an even stronger squeeze!

*Forward Bend– Stand with your feet slightly wider than hip-width apart with your hands on your hip. Hinging at the waist, bend your knees as you drop your head towards the floor. **Bend your knees** as much as you need to in order to rest your belly on your thighs. Allow your hands to hang towards the floor, and your head and neck to hang freely with your gaze towards the back of the room. Take (at least) three relaxed breaths in this position. While still in this forward bend, you may step your feet even wider apart. Begin by bending the right knee and reaching for the right foot, then straighten the right leg as you switch to bending the left knee and reaching for the left foot. When you are ready you can return to the center and step your feet closer together again. When you are ready, **slowly** rise up to standing.*

Swimmers Stroke/Windmill Arms: Take care that you have enough space around you to fully extend your arms. Begin by

alternating your arms in sweeping strokes backwards (as if you were swimming the backstroke).

- Yoga Practice for Singers
 - *Beginning Yoga Practice for Singers:* This grounding mini practice sequence focuses on cultivating an expansive space for breath in the body and builds to empowering postures for embracing taking up space. Includes asana and savasana, and modifications for more advanced practitioners. (30 minutes) You may use this practice to connect to your body and breath before you practice, before a performance, or to start your day.
- Warm-up vocal exercises with pre-recorded audio (Audio L and Audio H)
 - *Warming-up, Exploring, and Exercising Your Voice:* To warm-up your voice, you will need a space where you feel comfortable vocalizing (for example: a private location, a room with a door, or on your way to work in the car), the audio tracks, and a form of hydration, such as water or tea. These pre-recorded vocal warm-up exercises will include a demonstration of the exercise, and you may sing along with it as many times as you need to get the hang of the pattern. Consider the volume of your voice on a numerical scale, with [0] being no sound whatsoever and [10] being as loud as possible. As you explore these exercises and become comfortable with the patterns, aim for a [4]-[6] on the volume scale! If you find that the exercise becomes too low or too high for you to sing comfortably you may drop out, continue with the exercise by switching to an area of your voice that feels comfortable (higher or lower), or end the exercise. As you continue working with your voice, you may discover that your vocal range expands (up or down). The same Basic Warm-up exercises are recorded for both

low (Audio L) and high (Audio H) voices. If you aren't sure, try singing/humming along with exercises from each to find which one will work best for you! Some of these exercises may be challenging and require effort, however, you should take a break or stop if you ever start to feel pain. Coughing, hoarseness, and pain in your throat are some of the ways that your body can communicate to you that something is not quite right. If this problem persists, you should consider seeking the advice of a vocal teacher or coach, or visiting an Ear, Nose, and Throat specialist (ENT).

- Basic Warm-up for beginning singers – Note: Each exercise has at least one “focus” for you to think about once you feel comfortable with the pattern. Your goal should be to do your **best**. Don't worry if it isn't perfect!
 - Access Sample Recorded Audio Tracks ([Audio H & Audio L](#))
 - Example Exercise 7: *Lip buzzes/Raspberries*

You may first do this exercise using only air and without any sound. You may also vocalize freely (as you did with the siren!) When you are ready to vocalize with the audio, you may like to hum along with the pattern first. Then, when you feel comfortable with the pattern, add the buzzing of your lips and follow the exercise as demonstrated in the model.

“Focus” - Your focus in this exercise should be to connect to the breath. Especially if this is a new technique for you, you may

find that your lips start and stop buzzing, that your nose itches/tickles, or that you are spitting everywhere—it's okay! The more you practice, the easier this will get.

Note: If you are having trouble getting your lips to “buzz,” try this: Place your hand over your belly button. Loosely purse your lips in a small “Ooo” shape as if you are about to blow out a candle. Keeping your cheeks relaxed/in (not like a blowfish), send a couple of short, sharp puffs of air through your lips. Notice if you feel any action/sensation in your body, especially behind your belly button. Begin to alternate the short, sharp puffs of air with lip buzzes by bringing your lips together and see if it helps! Do not “flex” your stomach muscles, but rather bring your awareness to a sensation of the source of your breath being located lower in your body.

- *Example Exercise 8: Three-note Ooo's*

You may like to listen and hum along with the pattern first. When you are comfortable with the pattern, sing along with the exercise as demonstrated in the model using an “Ooo” vowel!

“Focus” – Your focus in this exercise should be to create a “tall” space inside your mouth, and a rounded “Ooo” shape with your lips. To explore the shaping of your lips, you can think

about the mouth shape you create when you are drinking a milkshake or boba tea. Practice drawing air in through this space and try to bring your awareness to the soft and flexible part of the roof of your mouth towards the back (your soft palate!). Experiment with adjusting this space by imagining lifting and activating your soft palate. Take care that there is space between your teeth (especially between your back molars) and your jaw feels “released.” You can explore this space by creating the shape and making sure that your tongue can move freely between your top and bottom rows of teeth.

- **Example Exercise 9: “E” Slide**

You may like to listen and hum along with the pattern first. When you are comfortable with the pattern, follow along with the exercise as demonstrated in the model using an “E” vowel!

“Focus” – Your focus in this exercise is to think about creating a consistent stream of sound by sliding between each note. You can visualize each note as a dot, and that you are connecting the dots with a thick marker or paint stroke. Slide from one pitch to the next, feeling all of the space between them. Try to think about your vocal folds elongating as you move up and thickening as you move down on a horizontal plane (you may like to use your hands to mimic stretching a thick rubber band or piece of

fabric). Take care that the presence and volume of your vocal sound is consistent, and that all of the notes have equal emphasis.

Part Two

Contemplation & Exploration: Exercises to explore others' and your own singing:

- Listening to and making observations of others
 - *A Member of the Audience:* Listening and observing other singers is a great way to learn about the voice. In this case, you should approach these exercises with a positive mindset and not be overly critical or negative.
 - Exercise Example 10: Find a LIVE performance on YouTube of a singer that you admire and answer the following questions. You may watch the video more than once, but don't "overthink" it!

Imagine yourself sitting in the audience. What do you notice about the posture/stance/presentation of the singer? Which emotion(s) does the singer project? Do you notice the singer's breaths? If so, where did you notice expansion in their body? Was the singer standing, sitting, or moving around on stage? Did their movements on stage affect their breathing? The things that you notice as an audience member can help you to decide how you would like to present your own singing.

- Mirror work as a tool for self-observation
 - *Self-reflection:* As you may have noticed, there are a lot of moving pieces and parts involved in singing. It is a challenge to keep track of all of them at the same

time, especially in the moment when you are trying to focus on what you are about to do! A mirror is a very helpful tool that can help you to focus on a particular aspect of your singing (either technical or performance based). Although it may seem like a very simple concept, singing with the aid of the mirror can often be challenging to get used to. Practice using the mirror in the context of singing with the following exercises.

- Exercises for Mirror work

- Exercise Example 11: *Looking for clues in your reflection.*

- Becoming comfortable with self-observation. Find or place a mirror in a location that allows you to stand comfortably and view your face (or your entire body).

- Stand comfortably in front of the mirror. Remember the areas of the body where you may feel expansion in the body for breath.*

- For this exercise, you will observe breath in the body. To begin, gently grip the sides of your rib cage, and practice expanding the rib cage by breathing into your hands. Repeat this three times.*

- On the fourth time, try to expand your rib cage as you breathe with your arms relaxed at your sides. Observe your upper chest for movement, rib cage, and shoulders for movement. Take note of any other parts of the body that you observe moving.*

- Exercise Example 12: Combination Warm-up exercises + Mirror work. Find or place a mirror in a location that allows you to stand comfortably and view your face (or your entire body). For

this exercise, you will be playing the role of an observer, and you do not need to change anything that you are currently doing.

Later, you may try to focus on adjusting particular aspects of singing, using the mirror as a reference.

Stand comfortably in front of the mirror with the Warm-up Exercises audio nearby. Sing along with the audio of your choice (Audio L or Audio H) and observe yourself in the mirror as you do so. You do NOT need to intensely meet your own gaze. Try to focus on a particular aspect of your singing, such as your breaths between exercises or how open your mouth is when you are singing.

- Recording yourself as a tool for self-awareness
 - *Experiencing Your Own Singing:* Recording your own singing can often be uncomfortable or seem intimidating at first. However, it can be a great tool for self-awareness during any point of your study and can help you to mark your progress over time. You can also listen recordings of yourself to experience a more accurate representation of your singing, especially if you do not have a coach, teacher, or peer that you trust to give you feedback. By having an awareness of how your voice might sound to others, you can also more easily filter through the feedback that you might receive from your “audience.” Recall the final step of the vocal process where you are monitoring if the singing that you do matches your intentions— watching or listening to (or both!) your own

recordings are a great time to evaluate that! You may find that you become more comfortable listening to or watching your singing the more that you do it!

- Exercises using recording (audio, video, or both)
 - Exercise Example 13: Use this exercise at any point in your singing to practice recording your own singing.

Begin with whichever method feels more comfortable for you (either audio or video). You may choose to sing a couple of the vocal exercises or a chorus to song that you know. If you choose to sing a song, you may like to find a karaoke or accompaniment track on YouTube to sing along with! Whatever you choose, don't "overthink" it. After recording yourself, listen or watch the playback and write down two things that you did well.

- Common Questions & Practical Applications
 - *What should I sing? Learning and practicing.*

You should sing a variety of vocal music! You can explore various styles, work on technical aspects of a song that you already know well or learn a new song completely from scratch. Singing is a rewarding way to explore your identity as a musical artist and person. You may choose to use your singing practice to experience emotion, create a character and tell a story, to collaborate with other artists in your community, and more. You may also choose to explore your breath and body awareness through singing. This guide will give you strategies for choosing a song to sing, learning music by ear, and practicing with intention.

- *Where should I sing? Creating opportunities and collaborations.*

Singing is for everyone! You do not need to be discovered by a talent agency, record an album, or make singing your career to be worthy of vocal study or of sharing your voice with others. Do you sing? Then, you are a singer! You can sing in your car, in the shower, in a stairwell, or in a karaoke bar. Singing has always been an important part of music in community, so you may try joining a church or community choir or auditioning for a local theatre to meet other singers in your area. There are also numerous communities of singers and singing classes in the virtual realm!

- *Who can help me? The role of a voice teacher/vocal coach.*

A voice teacher or coach can aid you in improving your singing, equip you with tools for singing more expressively, and introduce you to new ideas. A teacher can encourage you and provide you with feedback, as well as help you to achieve your personal goals. For example, a voice teacher might be able to guide you in exploring techniques to sing in different vocal styles, or in developing your tools for vocal expression and variety (remember vibrato and straight-tone?). Everyone is different, so you may want to talk with multiple voice coaches or teachers to find someone who can help you to achieve your personal goals. A voice coach or teacher can also help you find or prepare for opportunities to create music with others. Your voice lesson may also be time set aside in your schedule that is just for you. Regardless of your current level of expertise, there is a voice teacher out there who can guide you in the on-going process of vocal study.

- Taking Your Meditation Practice to the Next Level:
 - *Meditation on the Breath* - This 10-minute guided meditation will bring your attention to the breath and nurture your growing overall kinesthetic awareness. You may choose to use this meditation to observe and connect to the sensation of breath in the body, for relaxation, or to find a focused mindset prior to engaging in your singing practice

Appendix

There are a plethora of topics and resources that you may find interesting and relevant to your vocal journey! This section provides recommendations and links for your reference.

- Explore some of the resources below at your leisure!
 - Vocal Styles (e.g., Music Theatre, Classical, Jazz)
 - Somatic Practices (e.g., Yoga, Alexander Technique, Feldenkrais Method)
 - Playing an instrument (e.g., Piano, Ukulele, Guitar)
 - Musicianship Skills (e.g., Reading musical notation, Melodic recall, Lead Sheets/Chords, Harmonizing)

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APPENDIX I

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY I.R.B. PROTOCOL APPROVAL

APPENDIX I

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY I.R.B. PROTOCOL APPROVAL



EXEMPTION GRANTED

[Kristina Knowles](#)

[MDT: Music](#)

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Kristina.Knowles@asu.edu

Dear [Kristina Knowles](#):

On 2/15/2022 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title:	Kirsten Blair DMA Project 2022- Individual Singer and Teacher Perspectives in Vocal Pedagogy
Investigator:	Kristina Knowles
IRB ID:	STUDY00015195
Funding:	None
Grant Title:	None
Grant ID:	None

Documents Reviewed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email Recruitment Script_Kirsten Blair DMA Project 2022 Individual Singer and Teacher Perspectives in Vocal Pedagogy, Category: Recruitment Materials; • Kirsten Blair DMA Project 2022 Individual Singer and Teacher Perspectives in Vocal Pedagogy_IRB Social Behavioral Protocol, Category: IRB Protocol; • NATS Webpage Recruitment Script_Kirsten Blair DMA Project 2022 Individual Singer and Teacher Perspectives in Vocal Pedagogy, Category: Recruitment Materials; • Short Consent_Kirsten Blair DMA Project 2022 Individual Singer Perspectives in Study, Category: Consent Form; • Short Consent_Kirsten Blair DMA Project 2022 Individual Teacher Perspectives in Vocal Pedagogy, Category: Consent Form; • Social Media Recruitment Script_Kirsten Blair DMA Project 2022 Individual Singer and Teacher Perspectives in Vocal Pedagogy, Category: Recruitment Materials; • Statements of Social Media Permissions Requests_Kirsten Blair DMA Project 2022 Individual Singer and Teacher Perspectives in Vocal Pedagogy, Category: Other; • Statements of Webpage Permission_Kirsten Blair DMA Project 2022_Individual Singer and Teacher Perspectives in Vocal Pedagogy, Category: Other; • Survey_Kirsten Blair DMA Project
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	<p>2022 Individual Singer Perspectives in Vocal Study, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey_Kirsten Blair DMA Project <p>2022 Individual Teacher Perspectives in Vocal Pedagogy, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions);</p>
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The IRB determined that the protocol is considered exempt pursuant to Federal Regulations 45CFR46 (2) Tests, surveys, interviews, or observation on 2/15/2022.

In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

If any changes are made to the study, the IRB must be notified at research.integrity@asu.edu to determine if additional reviews/approvals are required. Changes may include but not limited to revisions to data collection, survey and/or interview questions, and vulnerable populations, etc.

REMINDER - Effective January 12, 2022, in-person interactions with human subjects require adherence to all current policies for ASU faculty, staff, students and visitors. Up-to-date information regarding ASU's COVID-19 Management Strategy can be found here. IRB approval is related to the research activity involving human subjects, all other protocols related to COVID-19 management including face coverings, health checks, facility access, etc. are governed by current ASU policy.

Sincerely,

IRB Administrator

cc: Kirsten Blair
Stephanie Weiss
Kirsten Blair

APPENDIX II
COPIES OF THE SURVEYS

APPENDIX II

COPIES OF THE SURVEYS

“Individual Teacher Perspectives in Vocal Pedagogy”

Which styles of vocal training did you receive as a student? (Check all that apply)

- Contemporary Commercial Music (CCM) (country, pop, blues, and rock)
- Musical Theatre
- Gospel and/or Worship
- Western Classical (Solo and/or Choral)
- Jazz
- Prefer not to answer
- Other

Please specify ALL degrees and/or certifications you have: (Check ALL that apply or use the “Other” box to be more specific)

- Teaching Certificate (K-12)
- Vocal Pedagogy Certificate
- Bachelor of Music Performance (Voice)
- Bachelor of Music Education
- Master of Music Degree (Voice)
- Master of Music Education
- Artist Diploma
- Doctorate of Musical Arts (Voice)
- None of the above
- Prefer not to answer
- Other

How long have you been teaching voice?

- 0-1 years
- 1-3 years
- 3-5 years
- 5-10 years
- 10-25 years
- More than 25 years
- Prefer not to answer

Which of the following pedagogical techniques do you use in your teacher? (Check all that apply)

- Contemporary Commercial Music (CCM) (country, pop, blues, and rock)
- Musical Theatre
- Gospel and/or Worship
- Western Classical (Solo and/or Choral)
- Jazz
- Prefer not to answer
- Other

As a beginning teacher, how likely were/are you to refer to fundamental resource texts intended for vocal instructors?

- Always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never
- Prefer not to answer

As a beginning teacher, how likely were/are you to refer to pedagogical resource texts intended for singers?

- Very likely
- Likely
- Neither likely nor unlikely
- Unlikely
- Very unlikely
- Prefer not to answer

Considering their current activities and goals, what types of singers do you work with? (Check ALL that apply)

- Avocational
- Music Educator (non-degree) seeking further training
- Music Therapist (non-degree) seeking further training
- Undergraduate Degree-seeking (Music Performance)
- Undergraduate Degree-seeking (Music Education)
- Undergraduate Degree-seeking (Music Therapy)
- Undergraduate Non-Music Major
- Undergraduate Music Minor
- Graduate Degree-seeking (Music Performance)
- Graduate Degree-seeking (Music Education)
- Graduate Degree-seeking (Music Therapy)
- Emerging/Young Professional Performer/Artist (non-degree)
- Established Career Professionals (Music/Performance)
- Grades K-5 (Elementary)
- Grades 6-8 (Middle)
- Grades 9-12 (High school)
- Prefer not to answer
- Other

How often do you work with singers who are complete beginners?

- Always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never
- Prefer not to answer

Do you require your beginning students to purchase any fundamental resource texts?

- Always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never
- Prefer not to answer

Which of the following fundamental texts have you used/recommended your students to use? (Check all that apply)

- Adventures in Singing (Ware)
- The Singing Book (Dayme, Vaughn)
- Basics of Singing (Schmidt)
- The Contemporary Singer: Elements of Vocal Technique (Peckham)
- What Every Singer Needs to Know About the Body (Malde)
- Cantabile: A Manual About Beautiful Singing for Singers, Teachers of Singing and Choral Conductors (Rundus)
- None of the above
- Prefer not to answer
- Other

How satisfied are/were you with the ability of resource texts intended for beginner level singers to meet your students' individual needs?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied
- Prefer not to answer

How likely are you to incorporate somatic/whole-body techniques into your teaching?

- Very likely
- Likely
- Neither likely nor unlikely
- Unlikely
- Very unlikely
- Prefer not to answer

Which somatic methods do you incorporate into your teaching? (Check all that apply)

- Alexander Technique
- Yoga

Feldenkrais Method
None of the above
Prefer not to answer
Other

Which somatic method certifications do you have, if any, that you incorporate into your vocal teaching? (Check all that apply)

Alexander Technique
Yoga
Feldenkrais Method
None of the above
Prefer not to answer
Other

How crucial do you feel Western Classical music notation (sheet music) is to the vocal learning process?

Extremely important
Very important
Somewhat important
Not so important
Not at all important
Prefer not to answer

How likely are you to accept a student into your studio who does not read Western Classical music notation (sheet music)?

Very likely
Likely
Neither likely nor unlikely
Unlikely
Very unlikely
Prefer not to answer

Consider the list below. Which skills and/or subjects do you include in your vocal students' study? (Check all that apply)

Basic Piano Skills (Playing their melody)
Piano Skills to "Play and Sing" (lead sheets, self-accompaniment)
How to read Western Classical music notation (sheet music)
Basic Music Theory fundamentals
Ear Training/Aural skills (for example: sight-reading)
Another instrument (for example: guitar, ukulele)
History of singing
Music Appreciation
None of the above
Prefer not to answer
Other

How often do your students specifically request to be taught skills and/or subjects (such as those listed in the previous question) in addition to voice?

Always
Usually
Sometimes
Rarely
Never
Prefer not to answer

How likely are you to continue working with a student who has no interest in learning to read Western Classical music notation (sheet music)?

Very likely
Likely
Neither likely nor unlikely
Unlikely
Very unlikely
Prefer not to answer

How likely are you to encourage a student to learn a song strictly by ear?

Very likely
Likely
Neither likely nor unlikely
Unlikely
Very unlikely
Prefer not to answer

How likely are you to allow your students to choose their own repertoire for study?

- Very likely
- Likely
- Neither likely nor unlikely
- Unlikely
- Very unlikely
- Prefer not to answer

If you wish, please explain your answer to the above question.

Which vocal styles are your students interested in learning from you? (Check all that apply)

- Contemporary Commercial Music (CCM) (country, pop, blues, and rock)
- Musical Theatre
- Gospel and/or Worship
- Western Classical (Solo and/or Choral)
- Jazz
- Prefer not to answer
- Other

What percentage of your students sing Western Classical repertoire?

- All
- Most
- Some
- A few
- None
- Prefer not to answer

What percentage of your students have repertoire interests outside of the Western Classical repertoire?

- All
- Most
- Some
- A few
- None
- Prefer not to answer

In your opinion, how many of your pedagogical techniques used for beginners are gender fluid or gender neutral?

- All
- Most
- Some
- A few
- None
- I'm not sure
- Prefer not to answer

How often do you classify your student within the Fach system (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, or Bass) within the first few lessons?

- Always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never
- Prefer not to answer

How likely are you to encourage your student to explore repertoire designated for other Fachs/voice types?

- Very likely
- Likely
- Neither likely nor unlikely
- Unlikely
- Very unlikely
- N/A
- Prefer not to answer

How often do you advise your student to sing a song that is out of their range by adjusting the key?

- Always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never
- Prefer not to answer

How likely are you to recommend your student to sing a song that is traditionally sung by a different voice type?

- Very likely
- Likely
- Neither likely nor unlikely
- Unlikely
- Very unlikely
- Prefer not to answer

How likely are you to accept a student into your studio who self-identifies as Transgender/Gender-nonconforming (GNC)?

- Very likely
- Likely
- Neither likely nor unlikely
- Unlikely
- Very unlikely
- Prefer not to answer

How comfortable would you be with assigning repertoire to a student who self-identifies as Transgender/Gender-nonconforming (GNC)?

- Uncomfortable
- Slightly uncomfortable
- Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable
- Somewhat comfortable
- Confident
- Prefer not to answer

How likely are you to offer a need-based sliding scale fee option to students?

- Very likely
- Likely
- Neither likely nor unlikely
- Unlikely
- Very unlikely
- Prefer not to answer

“Individual Singer Perspectives in Vocal Study”

How long have you been singing?

- 0-1 years
- 1-3 years
- 3-5 years
- 5-10 years
- 10-25 years
- More than 25 years
- Prefer not to answer

When describing yourself to others, how likely are you to refer to yourself as a “singer”?

- Very likely
- Likely
- Neither likely nor unlikely
- Unlikely
- Very unlikely
- Prefer not to answer

As a singer, what do you consider to be your level of expertise?

- Novice
- Intermediate
- Advanced
- Professional
- Prefer not to answer

In your opinion, how easy was/is it to find a voice teacher?

- Very easy
- Easy
- Neither easy nor difficult
- Difficult
- Extremely difficult
- Prefer not to answer

How important is it for you to be told that you have “it”, the “it factor”, or “what it takes” as a singer?

- Extremely important
- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not so important
- Not at all important
- Prefer not to answer

If you wish, please explain your answer to the above question.

Which of the following forms of recognition do you hope for as a singer? (Check all that apply)

- Social media (ie. follows, going viral)
- Verbal recognition from peers (ie. compliments)
- Verbal recognition from music teachers/professionals
- Awards (ie. competitions, scholarships)
- Winning auditions / Being cast in principal/lead roles
- Being offered solo performance opportunities
- Invitations from other artists to collaborate
- None of the above
- Prefer not to answer

On a scale of 1-10, how worthy (meaning: good enough) do you believe you are of the opportunity to study singing?

- Not at all worthy 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Totally worthy

On a scale of 1-10, how worthy (meaning: good enough) do you believe your singing voice is of being shared with others?

- Not at all worthy 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Totally worthy

How accessible did you find resource materials specific to beginning singers (literature, handbooks, textbooks, etc) to be?

- I didn't use any
- Not accessible
- Somewhat accessible
- Easy to access
- Plentiful

Prefer not to answer

How affordable did you find resource material specifically for beginning singers (literature, handbooks, textbooks, etc) to be?

Not affordable
Somewhat affordable
Neither unaffordable nor affordable
Affordable
Very affordable
Prefer not to answer

How often did your instructor recommend printed or digital resource materials on the topics of singing for you to purchase?

Always
Usually
Sometimes
Rarely
Never
Prefer not to answer

How often did your instructor provide printed or digital resource materials on the topics of singing for you?

Always
Usually
Sometimes
Rarely
Never
Prefer not to answer

How satisfied were you that pedagogical resources (ie. literature, texts, digital) provided for you as a beginner are/were able to meet your needs?

Very satisfied
Satisfied
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
Dissatisfied
Very dissatisfied
I didn't use any
Prefer not to answer

Which vocal styles are you interested in learning from a voice teacher? (Check all that apply)

Contemporary Commercial Music (CCM) (country, pop, blues, and rock)
Musical Theatre
Gospel and/or Worship
Western Classical (Solo and/or Choral)
Jazz
Prefer not to answer
Other

How interested are you in performing as a paid singer?

Very interested
Interested
Neither interested nor disinterested
Disinterested
No interest whatsoever
Prefer not to answer

How necessary is vocal sheet music for the types of singing you like to do?

Extremely necessary
Very necessary
Somewhat necessary
Not so necessary
Not at all necessary
I'm not sure
Prefer not to answer

As a beginning singer, how confident are/were you with reading Western Classical music notation (sheet music)?

Extremely confident
Very confident
Somewhat confident
Not so confident

Not at all confident
I'm not sure what that is
Prefer not to answer

As a beginning singer, how confident are/were you with basic music theory fundamentals?

Extremely confident
Very confident
Somewhat confident
Not so confident
Not at all confident
I'm not sure what that is
Prefer not to answer

As a beginning singer, how confident are/were you with playing the piano?

Extremely confident
Very confident
Somewhat confident
Not so confident
Not at all confident
I'm not sure
Prefer not to answer

Which of the following would you like to learn from your voice teacher in addition to singing? (Check all that apply)

Basic Piano Skills (Playing your melody)
Piano Skills to "Play and Sing" (lead sheets, self-accompaniment)
How to read Western Classical music notation (sheet music)
Basic Music Theory fundamentals
Ear Training/Aural skills (for example: sight-reading)
Another instrument (for example: guitar, ukulele)
History of singing
Music Appreciation
None of the above
Prefer not to answer
Other

How likely are you to take voice lessons with a teacher who requires you to read Western Classical music notation (sheet music)?

Very likely
Likely
Neither likely nor unlikely
Unlikely
Very unlikely
Prefer not to answer

How many of your voice teachers have required you to read Western Classical music notation (sheet music)?

All
Most
Some
A few
None
Prefer not to answer

How reasonable would it be for you to take piano and voice lessons concurrently?

Very reasonable
Reasonable
Neither reasonable nor difficult
Difficult
Very difficult
Prefer not to answer

How interested are you in knowing your "Fach" or voice assignment (ie. Bass, Tenor, Alto, Soprano)?

Extremely interested
Very interested
Somewhat interested
Not so interested
Not at all interested
Prefer not to answer

How difficult is it for you to decide which songs to sing based on your voice type?

- Very easy
- Easy
- Neither easy nor difficult
- Difficult
- Very difficult
- It's not a deciding factor for me
- I don't know my voice type
- Prefer not to answer

When participating or expressing yourself musically, how strongly do you identify with traditional gender normative roles?

- A great deal
- A lot
- A moderate amount
- A little
- Not at all
- Prefer not to answer

How comfortable do you feel singing a song that is traditionally performed by someone of a different voice type?

- Always comfortable
- Usually comfortable
- Sometimes comfortable
- Rarely comfortable
- Never comfortable
- Prefer not to answer

Considering singing for fun, what are your preferred performance settings? (Check all that apply)

- Concert/Recital Hall
- Club/Bar Gig
- Karaoke
- Flash Mobs
- Community Events
- Church
- Community Events
- Church
- Community Choir
- Community Theatre
- Opera House
- Academic/Educational Settings (schools, university, conferences)
- Shower/Stairwell
- None of these
- Prefer not to answer
- Other

Considering singing for paid compensation, what are your preferred performance settings? (Check all that apply)

- Concert/Recital Hall
- Club/Bar Gig
- Karaoke
- Flash Mobs
- Community Events
- Church
- Community Events
- Church
- Community Choir
- Community Theatre
- Opera House
- Academic/Educational Settings (schools, university, conferences)
- Shower/Stairwell
- None of these
- Prefer not to answer
- Other

Which of the following somatic methods interest you?

- Alexander Technique
- Feldenkrais Method
- Yoga
- None of the above

Prefer not to answer
Other

If you answered yes to the above question, which would you like to be incorporated into your vocal study? (Check all that apply)

Alexander Technique
Feldenkrais Method
Yoga
None of the above
Prefer not to answer
Other

Which of the potential non-musical benefits of studying singing interest you? (Check all that apply)

Breath Work
Physical Exercise
Body Connection
Spiritual Connection
Self-esteem
Public speaking
None of these
Prefer not to answer
Other

APPENDIX III

CONSULT ATTACHED FILES

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Kirsten Blair, soprano, enjoys a vibrant musical lifestyle as a soloist, performer, private teacher, and classroom instructor. Kirsten appears frequently in solo and collaborative recital, having performed at Arizona State University, the Eastman School of Music in New York, San Francisco Conservatory, Loyola University in Louisiana, Athens, Greece, East London, White River and Nelspruit, South Africa, and in her home states of Maine and Alaska. She has shared the orchestral stage as a soloist, with ensembles such as the Fairbanks Symphony Orchestra, the Northern Lights String Orchestra, the Uplands Festival Orchestra in South Africa, the American Institute of Musical Studies: Graz Festival Orchestra, the Arizona State University Orchestra, and most recently, with the Phoenix Symphony Orchestra in Ballet Arizona's production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Kirsten has performed as a featured soloist with the Arizona Women's Collaborative, the UAF New Music Festival, the Vianden Festival in Luxembourg, and two consecutive sessions in Zimbabwe for Music Inspire Africa. She has played several principal roles with Opera Fairbanks, Anchorage Opera, University of Alaska Fairbanks Opera Workshop, and internationally with Théâtre Roger Barat in France and the Lowveld Chamber Music Association in South Africa. Selected roles include Lucy (Menotti's *The Telephone*), Frasquita (*Carmen*), and Roxy LaRue in the World Premiere of *The Color of Gold*. She completed her Graduate Teaching Assistantship at the University of Alaska Fairbanks under the artistry of Dr. Jaunelle Celaire and joined their faculty as an adjunct professor for private and class voice, ear-training, and music appreciation. After completing her 200hr yoga teacher training, Kirsten returned to campus in pursuit of a D.M.A. in Voice at Arizona State University as a student of Dr. Stephanie Weiss. While in Arizona, she completed a second Graduate Assistantship teaching private and class voice, served as the ASU Community Music School Voice Instructor, and was a recipient of the Graduate and Professional Student Association (GPSA) Teaching Excellence Award in 2020. A passionate teacher and coach, she maintains a virtual and in-person studio, and enjoys working with singers in group and workshop environments. Kirsten is presently residing in Fairbanks, Alaska with her family.