



Debra Greschner

Rubin, Adam D. *The Vocal Pitstop: Keeping Your Voice on Track*. Oxford: Compton Publishing Ltd., 2014. Paper, xvi, 76 pp., \$22.50. ISBN 978-1-909082-13-7 www.comptonpublishing.co.uk

Adam Rubin draws the title for this *vade mecum* from the world of Formula 1 racing. When drivers of the finely tuned cars of the Gran Prix circuit detect any problem with their vehicles, they make a pitstop. Rubin advises singers and other professional voice users to develop a similar knowledge of how their instrument works, how to care for it, and when to seek assistance from others. Rubin is a laryngologist and singer with professional credits. In this slim volume, consisting of only seven brief sections, he offers valuable counsel on the care of the voice. The purpose of the book is to offer information to those who use the voice either as a career or as an avocation.

That the book is intended as a practical handbook is evident from the first chapter, entitled “How do I know if something is wrong with my voice?” The author recognizes that voice users

Journal of Singing, January/February 2017
Volume 73, No. 3, pp. 345–348
Copyright © 2017
National Association of Teachers of Singing

are concerned with practical matters, and accordingly, he begins the book with this critical issue. The subsequent chapter, “Should I stop working?,” poses important questions that the performer must consider, including weighing if the performance will exacerbate the vocal problem. If the voice user determines that the show must go on (to borrow a Broadway term), Rubin offers advice in voice care and performance modification.

He underlines that hoarseness is not necessarily laryngitis; a raspy voice can indicate myriad other conditions. While laryngitis is a common cause for voice alteration, other pathologies, such as lesions, hemorrhages, or vocal fold tears, may be present. Moreover, any change in voice quality is a cause for concern, and should not be ignored. Rubin explains the role of voice care professionals such as laryngologists and speech-language pathologists, when they should be consulted, and what tools they use to evaluate the voice.

The penultimate chapter of the volume is devoted to vocal health; the directives are brief but thorough. Rubin covers the critical issues of hydration, diet, exercise, and overall health. He also emphasizes the importance of treating allergies, avoiding coughing or throat clearing, and recognizing the effect of medications on the voice. The final chapter contains vocal exercises for warm up, cool down, and, as Rubin states it, everything in between. The section begins with an explanation of posture, relaxation, and breathing, augmented by diagrams. The author recommends semioccluded vocal tract exercises for warm ups and cool downs, as well as for voice recovery. He describes several ways of performing these exercises, including lip trills, tongue trills, humming, and employing

various sizes of straws. There are also vocalises that improve resonance and articulation, that incorporate nasal exercises, tongue relaxation methods, and tactics to avoid the hard glottal attack.

Three appendixes round out the volume. The first is a brief overview of the anatomy and physiology of the larynx. The second is a list of twenty-five tips for a healthy voice. The third appendix is unique to this book; Rubin has created a flow chart to help voice users decide a course of action if they develop hoarseness. This invaluable algorithm is condensed onto a single page, with four brief accompanying notes on the verso. Rubin’s final note is one that every voice user should memorize: “normal” means “normal,” not “acceptable.” If there is some change in the quality of the voice that lasts several weeks, it is advisable to seek the counsel of a voice professional.

The Vocal Pitstop has several meritorious features: it presents critical vocal health information in a clear, succinct manner; it is reasonably priced; and it speaks to all professional voice users. This book is recommended reading for singers of all genres of music.

Howe, Martha. *Broadening the Circle: The Formative Years and the Future of The Voice Foundation*. Oxford: Compton Publishing Ltd., 2015. Paper, viii, 147 pp., \$29.95. ISBN 978-1-909082-50-2 www.comptonpublishing.co.uk

The art of singing and the science of voice research have been inextricably linked since Manuel Garcia invented the laryngoscope. The marriage of singing and science, however, has not always been harmonious; the respective disciplines often view the other

with wariness or even disdain. Since that revelatory day in 1854, medical instruments have improved, and singing teachers have drawn upon scientific research for pedagogic purposes, such as William Vennard in *Singing: The Mechanism and the Technic* (New York: Carl Fischer, Inc., 1967). But it was an otolaryngologist, Wilbur James Gould, who created a forum for interdisciplinary research and discussion about the voice. In 1971, Gould organized the inaugural “Care of the Professional Voice” Symposium and invited laryngologists, voice scientists, singers, voice teachers, and representatives from other voice professions to discuss problems and research. These annual symposia developed into The Voice Foundation. In *Broadening the Circle*, author Martha Howe traces the evolution, mission, and direction of The Voice Foundation.

The account is largely based upon interviews with twenty-four members of The Voice Foundation who helped to create and develop the organization. Throughout the volume, the importance of W. James Gould in the creation of the Foundation is emphasized. Gould’s fascination with the voice guided and permeated his career. He trained and taught in the field of otolaryngology, and listed a large number of celebrities among his patients, including four American presidents, singers of all genres of music, and television anchors. Gould was a strong proponent of cooperation among his colleagues, and he would often meet with other laryngologists, such as Van Lawrence, Friedrich Brodnitz, and Hans von Leden to compare research and discuss cases. In 1969, as chronicled by Howe, the Collegium Medicorum Theatri and the Save a Voice Foundation were established. Both were intended to create networks that would advance voice science and research, the former

for laryngologists, and the latter for the myriad other professionals associated with care of the professional voice. Two years later, the groups merged into The Voice Foundation. The interviewees cite the pivotal and passionate role played by Gould, who is described as “enthusiastic about bringing people together, getting people trained, and getting people interested in voice, and he was so excited about interdisciplinary care.”

Voice teachers and singers, especially those who are longtime readers of *Journal of Singing*, will recognize many of the names referenced. Van Lawrence, who was mentioned above, wrote a regular column on the care of the voice that was legendary among National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) members, while Frederich Brodnitz authored *Keep Your Voice Healthy: A Guide to the Intelligent Use and Care of the Speaking and Singing Voice* (New York: Harper, 1953), an early and influential volume on voice care for the lay person. The list of individuals who shared their experiences and recollections includes singers Cynthia Hoffman and Harolyn Blackwell, laryngologists Robert Sataloff and Michael Benninger, voice scientists Johan Sundberg and Ingo Titze, and speech language pathologists John Haskell and Linda Carroll, to name only a few. In addition to responding to questions posed by Howe, each of the selected twenty-four Voice Foundation members provides a brief biography; these sketches are interspersed throughout the volume.

The history of The Voice Foundation mirrors the advances in voice science. Thirty years ago, Howe points out, there were only three doctors’ offices in the United States with videostroboscopes, and medical textbooks did not have chapters on laryngology.

The growth of equipment and research has been exponential over the past three decades. The volume summarizes these advances in voice science in the words of the voice professionals who witnessed, or in some cases, propelled the changes. The Voice Foundation also fostered the growth of organizations devoted to voice. In a chapter entitled “Ripple Effect,” Howe identifies associations and institutions whose inception is linked to the influence of the Foundation, including the National Center for Voice and Speech (originally the Denver Center for Performing Arts), the Canadian Voice Care Foundation, and the British Voice Association. Otolaryngologist C. Richard Stasney, a member of the Foundation who was a colleague of Van Lawrence, founded the Center for Performing Arts Medicine at Methodist Hospital in Houston. Gould, in conjunction with Titze, had an important role in convincing the National Institutes of Health to conduct specific research in voice related topics.

The interviews are not presented as individual components; instead, Howe excerpts relevant passages and organizes the material into themed chapters. Some of the sections deal with specific areas of research, such as fiber-optics and measuring the sound spectra. Other chapters focus upon the history of the Foundation, such as the decision to move the annual Symposium from New York to Philadelphia. There are also discussions of specific aspects of voice production, such as breath and registration. The latter topic was particularly contentious. Titze states that when he began attending the Symposium in 1978, the sessions produced arguments about registers. Sundberg agrees: “People get quite furious about register terminology.” But

it is apparent from all of the interviews that the emotion exhibited in the discussions did not deter the dialogue; the first time he attended a Symposium, Sataloff was struck by collegial nature of the interdisciplinary meetings. On some issues, such as breath, the consensus seems to be that there is no consensus. Many areas merit further exploration; when Howe asked about the “to-do” list for the Foundation, answers ranged from more sensitive acoustic measurements to sharing research even when experiments did not yield the expected results. When asked to evaluate the organization in retrospect, many laud the increased level of knowledge among voice professionals. Sataloff’s backward glance has an air of wistfulness as he wonders whether the scientific community will regret not retaining original analog signals that contain different information than the digital signals that are compressed and manipulated.

Howe capably negotiates the pitfalls of writing a book based on interviews by providing apropos segues between the primary source material. The list of the main twenty-four interviewees is presented at the beginning of the book and, as mentioned above, their biographies appear throughout the book. Occasionally, Howe includes quotations from persons who are not on that list; it would be helpful for the reader if she had offered information about those speakers. There are several occasions when Howe cites the *Journal of Singing* as the NATS *Journal*, and one instance when she refers to the Symposium transcriptions as appearing in the *Journal of Singing* rather than the *Journal of Voice*. Overall, however, the research is admirable, and Howe displays an impressive ability to knit the strands of an oral history into a seamless story.

The title of the volume refers to the constantly widening scope of voice research. It is indisputable that The Voice Foundation has profoundly affected voice science and research, and has made enormous contributions to voice care protocols. *Broadening the Circle* offers insight into the creation and influence of the organization.

Sataloff, Robert T., Mary J. Hawkshaw, Jaime Eaglin Moore, and Amy L. Rutt. *50 Ways to Abuse Your Voice: A Singer’s Guide to a Short Career*. Oxford: Compton Publishing Ltd., 2014. Paper, xi, 98 pp., \$22.50. ISBN 978-1-909082-11-3 www.comptonpublishing.co.uk

In the September/October 1985 issue of *The NATS Journal* (the predecessor of *Journal of Singing*), Robert Sataloff was introduced as continuing contributor on matters of vocal health and care. The announcement was marked with the publication of his article “Ten Good Ways to Abuse Your Voice: A Singer’s Guide to a Short Career, Part I.” One year later, Sataloff penned “Ten More Good Ways to Abuse Your Voice: A Singer’s Guide to a Short Career, Part II.” These essays form the nucleus of the volume *50 Ways to Abuse Your Voice*. Sataloff, who is a laryngologist and singer, is familiar to *Journal of Singing* readers as Associate Editor of the column “Care of the Professional Voice.” His coauthors are three voice care professionals, also frequently encountered in the pages of this periodical: Mary Hawkshaw, a registered nurse who is on faculty in Otolaryngology at Drexel University; Jaime Eaglin Moore, otolaryngologist, laryngologist, and faculty member at Virginia Commonwealth University; and Amy Rutt, who holds the Doctor

of Osteopathic Medicine and serves on the faculty of Drexel University.

The tenets that were proffered in Sataloff’s published articles are presented in a different order, but are reproduced with only a few revisions. The additional thirty maxims cover a wide range of behavioral choices, from ignoring dental health to playing a wind instrument. The fifty chapters are brief: most encompass only two pages, and nearly a third are comprised of a single page. The brevity does not diminish the usefulness of the advice; the authors offer helpful information in a concise and forthright manner.

An overview of the added directives clearly underlines the evolution of voice health into a holistic concern. For instance, the authors recommend that singers tell all of their physicians, from allergists to gynecologists, that



Unique, Personalized College and Career Counseling for students who are interested in pursuing Performing Arts studies:

- Music (Classical, Jazz, Pop, Musical Theatre)
- Performance
- Performing Arts Education, Therapies, Technologies
- Performing Arts Industry Studies
- Dance
- Drama
- Film/TV
- Related studies and careers
- Double/Dual majors
- Graduate Programs
- Study Abroad
- International Studies

COPA Inc.
College Options in the Performing Arts
Personalized College Advising

COPA, Inc.: College Options in the Performing Arts
Amy Goldin, B.S., M.S., Principal Consultant
www.performingartsoptions.com
516-674-6116
COPA, Inc. offers Distance Counseling services, across the globe!

they are professional voice users, and emphasize the importance of treating all underlying health issues, including mental health. Additionally, two added chapters counsel singers on how to select a qualified singing voice specialist and speech-language pathologist. When Sataloff penned the first articles in the mid 1980s, singers were less likely to seek advice from voice care professionals beyond that of a laryngologist. Another instance of the changing landscape of voice pedagogy is found in third way to abuse your voice: “Don’t study singing.” In 1985, Sataloff chided singing teachers for their reluctance to teach students who sing popular music. Although the authors did not revise this instruction, the situation has surely changed, as evidenced by proliferation of books, workshops, and the number of NATS members devoted to voice pedagogy for commercial music.

50 Ways to Abuse Your Voice is a rarity in voice related books because it is appropriate for singers of all levels of experience and expertise, and all styles. Additionally, it is a valuable resource that is reasonably priced. This volume should be required reading for all singers.

Montgomery, Cheri. *Phonetic Transcription for Lyric Diction*.

Nashville, TN: S.T.M. Publishers, 2016. Paper, 259 pp., \$49.50. ISBN 978-0-9975578-1-7 www.stmpublishers.com

Cheri Montgomery has become the guru of lyric diction for singers. She has written a veritable library of resources; her most recent endeavor is a two-part series that has phonetic transcription as its focus. The first textbook, *Phonetic Readings for Lyric Diction* (Nashville: S.T.M. Publishers, 2015; reviewed in *Journal of Singing* 72, no. 2 [November/December 2015]: 248–249) is an enunciation and transcription workbook that draws upon words commonly found in the art song repertoire in English, Italian, German, French, and Latin. This volume, which completes the series intended for use in a two-semester sequence of study, is a graded method of phonetic transcription. Words are drawn from those commonly occurring in song repertoire in Italian, German, French, and Latin.

The text is broadly divided into four sections comprised of twenty-eight units. Italian and German are covered in seven units each, and Latin consists

of three units. The remaining eleven chapters are devoted to French. Each language is introduced with a discussion of relevant terms; for instance, the overview of French includes definitions for *langue courant* (the vernacular) and vocalic harmonization (the alteration of a vowel sound to blend with a consecutive syllable or word). The author identifies the dictionaries and diction texts used in formulating the rules, and summarizes the characteristic of each language. Montgomery methodically presents the sounds for each language with a summary of rules for transcription, guidance in the applying the rules, and transcriptions of examples drawn from the literature. Corresponding exercises are included for each sound; in the instructor’s text, the answer keys are amassed at the end of the book.

The practical nature of this text is outstanding. The author elucidates both the basic principles and finer points of diction, from the difference between the *ich* Laut and *ach* Laut in German to the nuances of the schwa in French. Even a cursory glance through the transcription exercises verify that the examples are drawn from the literature; those familiar with song literature will recognize the lines “Vor Liebe und Liebesweh” and “Le spectre de la rose.” Montgomery provides detailed explanations as well as exercises for practice. The book, like the others written by this author, is designed for use in conjunction with standard diction manuals. The volume is eminently useful, and instructors who teach lyric diction courses should explore both this text and its companion book.

Are your students rigid & emotionless?

Acting for Singers

Oxford University Press
Available on Amazon.com

