

## MANDATORY TECHNICAL ELEMENTS IN THE METAMORPHOSIS OF THE SINGING VOICE

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**SUMMARY.** As an instrument, the human voice is unique and inimitable. Human voice reflects each individual's personality and literacy. The beauty or ugliness of a sound depends only on breathing. Trying to imitate human voice, people invented a variety of musical instruments. The attack and emission of the sound are essential while singing. Frequently occurring voice problems are veiled voice, *throatiness*, the loss of the lowest and highest tones, flat sound and excessive vibrato. The oral cavity plays a very important role for sound resonance. Vowels are to be output, consonants should be articulated for the pronunciation of the word and the balance between vowels and consonants should remain constant.

**Keywords:** voice *metamorphosis*, vocal instrument, *contemporary* vocal *aesthetics*, costo-diaphragmatic *breathing*, voice *resonance*, resonant cavities of the vocal instrument, resonator spaces, excessive vibrato, sub-glottis pressure, inaccurate intonation

VOICE is a divine gift, a connection of integrated psychosomatic elements, which makes of a man a highly organized superior being. Singing voice is the musical instrument that touches perfection. As an instrument, the human voice is unique and inimitable and so is its virtuosity. The arguments will be the annotated and connotated analysis of the examples that will lead us to issues of style, to the essence and all the valences of vocal interpretation and the proper use of voice instrument. In both everyday and artistic life, the human voice is subject to tremendous efforts, sometimes overcoming surprisingly difficult events. The human voice is the key element of inter-human communication, it distinguishes and orders the various lanes of civilization, the relationship set among humans, it reflects each individual's personality and literacy.

Conducting this research was an opportunity of starting to achieve new knowledge close to a areas of uncertainty. The research and partial responses are designed to maintain a dialogue between the vocal and other decision makers competing to achieve artistic act, a dialogue that neither the entire interpretive conceptual apparatus nor pedagogical work can ignore.

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Singing voice requires innate grace, great efforts, and conscious mastery of the voice as an instrument, its education and strengthening. The principles, which lay the foundation for educating it, are well-known, elaborated, exemplified in contexts related to vocal performances.

The analysis of technical interpretive processes recalls this study's framework, namely: the need for interdisciplinary relations from whose interaction the vocal singer can borrow and leverage, enriching both his "visual universe" and vocal performances.

Thus, the contemporary voice aesthetics gains a special status from the traditional one, leaving room for further inquiries into the depths of the matter.

It is often stated: "breathe well, sing well". In other words, the beauty or ugliness of a sound depends only on breathing. The constant support of the airflow throughout a musical phrase ensures the quality of the musical message, the safety and health of our vocal instrument. Trying to imitate human voice people invented a variety of musical instruments -but no instrument was able to get two chords, as frail as the vocal chords are, vibrate to such beautiful results in a stream of air!

Well-trained costal-diaphragmatic physiological breathing is the condition to get optimum results when dosed properly and used intelligently throughout the musical discourse.

By contrast, a short and tense breath, which does not use the appropriate muscles, will cause vocal strain and inexpressive phrases, sometimes yelled and inappropriate sounds. In contemporary singing, breath control, particularly of the expiration, governs unexpected individual or collective effects; an appropriate vocal technique and the constant training exercises of the muscles involved in this complex process of generating voice lead to high quality and longevity of the performance.

Regarding the attack and emission of a sound, we shall emphasize on some of the *aired attack* effects, which lead to the immediate vibrato's suppression by reducing larynx activity, a veiled voice, with no glow or penetration.

*Glottis attack*, because of sub-glottis excessive pressure, will lead to a harsh metallic voice, without any potential to improve. If the artistic situation requires such sounds then a judiciously graduated preparatory training of respiratory reflexes and well-balanced emission of voice are mandatory.

The expressionist repertoire from the late twentieth century has imposed the "Sprechgesang" emission where the voice is not properly imposed and an approximate pitch became acceptable as a way of expressing meaning, risky laryngeal effects were used for obsessive repetitive sounds.

Related to emission and the "attack of the sound", one should also mention the increasing or decreasing glissando, a wide range of undulations including those associated to periodic variation in rhythm, pitch or intensity, a discreet tremolo.

Short grace note *appoggiatura*, when occurring within large musical intervals, is a sound effect, a rapid tilting of the larynx.

An insufficiently trained vocal interpreter, chorister or soloist, faces enormous challenges and sets a hard to imagine risk by choosing a repertoire needing special technical effects

*Voice resonance*. The effects of eccentric modern writings for voice, which do not value the use of correct emission and physiological reflexes of the body, become a high risk. Resonant cavities of the vocal instrument are as follows: thorax, larynx, pharynx, and mouth, facial and frontal sinuses. The oral cavity plays an important role for sound resonance, each part and mechanism must be well known, controlled and wisely used. The correct position of the tongue, which always changes according to the consonant to be pronounced, is very important. Especially during difficult musical phrases, the ideal position for the tongue is to be relaxed flat forward, just behind the lower teeth. The singer must lift the soft palate in order to close off the nostrils for better widening the resonance area, and labials must sever from the dental arch, while the jaw is lowered.

Keeping the soft palate in low position creates the proper environment for the sound to suffer nasalization and the energy not to be externalized. In this case, both speaking and singing will be rough, negligent and impersonal.

It happens to the singers who use a throaty singing manner. The sound becomes imprecise because the tongue is curved and presses the hyoid bone, narrowing the mouth space.

Other voice imperfections are: veiled voice, *throatiness*, the loss of the lowest and highest tones, flat sound, and excessive vibrato. All these inabilities and bad habits while singing or speaking are subject to technical correction studies. Everything can be improved by persevering responsible study, doubled by the professional conduct of a music master.

An important voice flaw is also the inaccurate intonation of the intervals. Not to be mistaken for “Sprechgesang”, this sometimes is recessive with intention, a disorienting *declamation* in order to play the villain stature of the character.

The timbre and the intonation of a voice are genuine and fundamental qualitative factors for the vocal performing creation, sending a musical message also valid in oration, where inaccurate intonation becomes embarrassing. We witness a distortion of the original sound, mixed with a weak sub-glottis pressure, shallow breathing and uptight laryngeal muscles as an effect of the emotional status. These voice disorders tag themselves on to a poorly educated musical ear and a misled vocal compass.

The most important partners of vowel emission are consonants. A common error is mistaking the vowel building for the articulation of consonants, because they are articulated with a design to form words. Their contribution

to singing mastery and their weight while singing, as well as in current speech, equals the one of the vowels. In some schools, vocal training minimizes the role and the importance of consonants, so there are prominent consequences as the lack of fair pronunciation. The balance between them will permanently be maintained throughout the musical discourse. Why, starting 2-3 hundred years ago, did the Italian School (Giuseppe Concone 1801-1861, Nicola Vaccai 1780-1848) invent methods of studying without but also with lyrics? Note that all the singers trained in the Italian Singing School style have very good diction and pronunciation.

Vowel resonance is not disturbed in any way by the presence of consonants; on the contrary, they will render the text an imposing form, nobility and clarity, in either vocal group or soloist performance. The aims are the correct pronunciation that makes the words more beautiful, a very well supported airflow, a sustained sound, the proper use of the resonators. Adapting to a place could be a problem for the performer, who will maintain the technical principles already studied, without straining or toning down.

The previous analysis only touched some of the issues specific to voice physiology; the art of singing is not acquitted from contrasting aesthetic and stylistic conditions.

For serving the audience, the collaboration of everyone involved is mandatory in order to achieve the artistic beauty: the composer, the conductor, the singing master and not lastly, the performing musician.

While vocalist is to a certain extent autonomous from the musical language, it has evolved during the last seven centuries given the human tendency to reach beyond the limits.

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