

COMMUNICATING VOICE

AUTUMN/WINTER 2021
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Louise Gibbs, BVA President 2021-2022.



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EDITORIAL

Hello and welcome to this issue of *Communicating Voice*. I hope all our members and readers have had a good summer and to those for whom September is the start of a new year, or even just feels like it is (which seems to me to include everyone who has ever been to school....), I hope your 'year' has started well!

For the BVA, September marked the culmination of around two years' preparation of our conference, Choice For Voice. This was a tremendous three days of practical, theoretical, discursive and immersive voice talk. I've looked back at the programme a number of times since and every time, am really struck by just how diverse in subject matter and session type it was. I do hope you enjoyed it and found lots to get stuck into, over the weekend itself and since, via catch-up. Thanks to money raised by the coast-to-coast walking exertions of former President Craig Lees, we were able to offer a number of bursary places to attend. I'm delighted that for Choice For Voice, the usual post-conference delegate reviews have been written by two of the bursary holders, Joanne Camilleri and Deborah Pullicino. Thank you to both.

A biennial conference highlight is the awarding of the Van Lawrence Prize, given in recognition of outstanding work in any aspect of voice science. This year's winner, Natalie Watson, took the prize for her and her team's pioneering work on aerosol transmission and the potential spread – or not – of Covid by singers and wind instrumentalists. She gives the very digested version of this celebrated research project on page 5. The other finalists, Helen Glindemann and Emily Sharp also recap the papers they submitted, demonstrating what a diverse and relevant range of subjects attracted the Van Lawrence judges this year.

And now, we move on. Part of the BVA's strategy for responding to Covid was to take the unusual step of asking Craig Lees to remain in the president's chair for a further year and see Choice For Voice through to its realisation. At the AGM in September, the handover to a new president finally took place and Craig now is enjoying a well-earned rest from BVA business. We warmly welcome President Louise Gibbs to her term of office; on page 3 she introduces her presidential year.

There have been other changes within the team as a number of directors step down from the Council and new members take their places. Richard Edgar-Wilson (Treasurer), Craig Lees and Paul John McKenna have traded places with Rehab Awad (who succeeds Richard), Rebecca Schwarz and Besfort Williams. All our new directors are well-known to the BVA, thanks to their years of excellent work as members of the Education Working Party delivering really great events. You can read more about each of them on page 13.

We have another exciting programme of events ahead. First of these is on Contemporary Commercial Singing, an online course happening over the last weekend of November. At the time of publication, you can still book a place. See page 15 for a preview.

Please don't forget, as well as your event and book/media reviews, I am always keen to know what members are up to and want to feature as much as I can of it here in *CV*. Do drop me a line if there is anything you would like to see covered or if you'd like to contribute something.

All the best for the rest of this year and the beginning of next.

Geraldine

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Geraldine McElearney

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

LOUISE GIBBS

"A trustworthy framework of vocal knowledge and intelligent pedagogy"

As a jazz vocalist (trained as pianist and composer), I took my untrained voice for granted. In the smoky clubs of my youth, my voice, guided by ear and imagination, worked hard and well enough. It wasn't until I was asked to teach singing (rather different from musicianship or improvisation) that I realised my practical instincts were in need of a trustworthy framework of vocal knowledge and intelligent pedagogy. It was extremely confusing to reconcile the conflicting literature and advice alone; "sing through your eyes" or "breathe from your stomach" didn't make any sense to me at all! So, some 30 years ago, it was a great relief to discover the fledgling organisation that is now the BVA, with pioneers like Tom Harris, Sara Harris, Janice Chapman, Jo Estill and Gillyanne Kayes. The recent and very successful Choice For Voice 2021 conference, with its rich array of contributions, stimulating keynote lectures and masterclasses, brought home to me how the BVA was and continues to be my university of voice.

Being on the BVA Council has given me the opportunity to return its many favours. I was able to mount the first ever BVA event on jazz voice. Then, with Sarah Wright-Owens, Rehab Awad and Richard Edgar-Wilson, we set up the pilot Professional Voice Network (to be rolled out fully in 2022). Covid, having turned our world upside down, forced us to run events online, culminating in Choice For Voice, all steered by our indefatigable past-president, Craig Lees. We adapted, and we learnt that in the absence of face-to-face contact, online events offered global reach and time travel. It has required dramatic technical upskilling from us all. And it now demands a new website! Which brings me to my intentions for the year as President.

"The BVA tends to attract open minded and generous individuals"

The most distinctive feature of the BVA is its **multidisciplinary** network of singing teachers, speech and language therapists, medical practitioners, physical practitioners and researchers. The BVA tends to attract open minded and generous individuals, artists, scientists, practitioners and researchers who, though they may claim the high ground for their particular specialism, acknowledge that the human voice is complex and in need of multiple approaches to take care of, train, and understand it. Multidisciplinary is challenging when professionals are rewarded for increased specialisation, and when it's easier to talk than to listen, easier to retreat than to reach out. But it is well known that the exchange of ideas and innovation happens at the margins.

"The most distinctive feature of the BVA is its multidisciplinary network"



Louise Gibbs

I shall be doing all I can to uphold this most distinctive BVA objective through the Professional Voice Network, the Voice Clinics Forum, public information initiatives, a new website, and a special multidisciplinary event planned for 2022 to bring the margins closer to the centre.

It is an honour to follow in the footsteps of my predecessor presidents. It is a privilege to hear your story as a BVA member and to keep you connected wherever you may be working. Keep in touch and get involved. We need you.

"The BVA continues to be my university of voice"



Congratulations to outgoing president, Craig Lees, for his dedication to the BVA cause! In August, Craig successfully completed the Coast to Coast walk. This famous Wainwright route is a 195 mile walk between St Bees in Cumbria and Robin Hood's Bay in North Yorkshire. He raised a fantastic £1,150, with proceeds going directly to fund a number of student bursaries to attend Choice For Voice. Thank you, Craig!

Delegate reports from CHOICE FOR VOICE 2021

3-5 September 2021, ONLINE

Joanne Camilleri

Since January 2019, when I started looking up literature and current research to prepare for my BSc dissertation ('The awareness of vocal hygiene among Maltese primary and secondary school teachers'), I became aware of the prestigious work of the BVA. Through, it I found a mine of information. Both as a student and since graduating as speech language pathologist, I've continued to follow its latest updates and events, whilst also encouraging other colleagues and clients to become familiar with the resources on the website. Thus, the opportunity to attend the 'Choice for Voice 2021' conference as a recently graduated speech language pathologist was one to treasure.

What intrigued me about this conference in the first place was the multidisciplinary approaches to performance, health and research. These approaches allowed attendees to expand their knowledge with both theoretical and practical aspects as well as keep updated with the current findings in research. I felt honoured to be able to learn all this from the world's top practitioners and researchers in health as well as performance. The workshops and masterclasses provided a great learning experience where we were not only given the opportunity to practise the techniques or strategies being covered, but also to meet other people from around the world who all have one thing in common: an interest in voice. They also contributed to this fruitful learning experience by sharing their views in relation to the country where they live, work or perform.

The three days were filled to the brim; however, the schedule was well spread out which allowed attendees to remain focused and not feel overwhelmed. Moreover, the fact that the recordings were available for two months allowed delegates to

watch again or catch up with any presentations that they missed. I am incredibly grateful to have had this opportunity as it has broadened my perspective, especially in terms of medical and performance aspects of voice, and understanding more about the latest practices/approaches being used. I particularly enjoyed the sessions with a medical focus such as Markus Hess's Keynote 'refined endoscopic diagnostics and non-sedated interventions in the office'. Overall the conference has deepened my interest in voice and I will continue to explore through the BVA's future conferences.

Joanne Camilleri, BSc Communication Therapy

Deborah Pullicino

Singing has always been my voice. I began studying singing and music theory from a young age, and am still furthering my studies in classical voice. I am also a teacher in a special education school where I work with children of different abilities. During my Master's course in Music Education, Wellbeing, and Performance at The University of Sheffield, I carried out qualitative research exploring the effect of singing and songs on the receptive and expressive communication skills of nonverbal or minimally verbal children with autism spectrum disorder. As a PhD student I am now researching the effect of singing sessions on the communication, speech and singing skills of nonverbal or minimally verbal children with autism spectrum disorder.

The online conference Choice for Voice was a wonderful experience for me. It was very well organised with clearly defined aims. The knowledge I gained from the event will certainly help me while working with students and parents; it will also be beneficial for my PhD studies. The conference lived up to my expectations because the speakers were extremely knowledgeable about their subjects and various areas of voice were covered. The two areas that interested me most were the singing voice during performances and the teaching of singing to children with different abilities.

Since my research area is singing in conjunction with students with disabilities, one of the workshops I attended was 'Kaoru's Songbook: The myriad aspects of training a singer who has both Down's Syndrome and English as his adopted language'

— an amazing 20-year story by Emma Winscom. During her workshop, Emma gave some practical tips which are essential in the teaching of students with different abilities. The delivery was excellent and she also allowed time for questions. Meeting professionals who face similar situations to those I face on a daily basis was truly fantastic. Kaoru, Emma Winscom's student, was also present during the workshop and his love for singing was very evident; I felt that singing helped him to express his emotions and to become more confident. It would be interesting if further BVA events could highlight the research area of singing and students with disabilities.

Deborah Pullicino, MA Music Psychology in Education, Performance and Wellbeing, BEd (Hons), DipMusLCM, AMusLCM



Joanne Camilleri



Deborah Pullicino

VAN LAWRENCE PRIZE 2021

Winner: Natalie Watson 'PERFORM'

In Spring 2020, in the midst of the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, the entertainment industry was additionally damaged by the news that several COVID-19 clusters had arisen in choirs, resulting in the act of singing being deemed dangerous. The media published alarming headlines such as, "A Choir decided to go ahead with rehearsal. Now dozens of members have COVID-19 and two are dead", "Coronavirus ravaged a choir. But isolation Helped Contain It", "Why Singers Might Be Covid-19 Super-Spreaders".

In their efforts to try and help contain the virus, governments worldwide imposed restrictions generating a vast impact on all strata of human society, including the restriction or suspension of singing and the playing of woodwind and brass instruments.



Natalie Watson

These decisions, whilst necessary, were fairly arbitrary as little information identifying the specific dangers associated with singing, quantifying transmission risk or mitigation strategies was available. Our challenge, as we saw it, was to improve our understanding of these factors so as to enable the safe restart of these practices that mean so much to so many.



ARTS

Important step on getting performances back on

Medical study that Govt commissioned & funded shows that singing is no more risky than talking

So we can get performers back on stage without extra social distancing - 3m becomes 1m with mitigations



bbc.co.uk

Singing 'no riskier than talking' for virus spread

It does not produce many more respiratory particles than speaking at similar volume, a study finds.

6:36 pm · 20 Aug 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

312 Retweets 115 Quote Tweets 782 Likes



LEFT: A mock set up of the experiments. RIGHT: Rt Hon Oliver Dowden CBE MP, Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, tweet about the PERFORM Study and the impact on government guidance. (Photo: Declan Costello)

Declan Costello (ENT Consultant, Laryngologist) and I (Natalie Watson, Laryngology Fellow) initiated a collaboration to try and help solve the problem. We held a number of meetings directly with stakeholders – choral leaders and choir masters around the UK – to help further understand the problem and refine our research question. We then created a taskforce of experts from across the country to help answer our question: 'is the aerosol produced during singing different to speaking at the same volume?'

Our task force became the 'PERFORM' working group (The Investigation of **P**articulate **R**espiratory Matter to **I**nForm Guidance for the Safe Distancing of **P**erf**O**rme**R**s in a COVID-19 **P**ande**M**ic). It comprised ENT surgeons, respiratory physicians, aerosol scientists, engineers, physiologists, computer dynamic modellers and statisticians. We used our wide network of contacts to engage policy makers, and gained sponsorship through Public Health England, with the PERFORM-1 pilot study funded by the Department for Digital Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).

The project moved at speed: from conception, obtaining ethics approval, recruiting participants and running the trials, the project took six weeks. This was remarkably fast; in normal times, such a clinical trial would take around three months just to initiate.

Having worked night and day on the set-up, we conducted the research in July using private orthopaedic operating theatre space and facilities we had been gifted at the Fortius Surgical Centre in London. Volunteers came from the Royal Opera House, English National Opera, Eleven Management and the BBC Singers, to name just a few. Equipment was loaned from Dyson, University of Manchester and the Health and Safety Executive.

The performers sang or played into a 3D printed funnel attached to their instruments that measured the number and size of respirable particles produced during differing vocal and playing activities. By September, we had processed

and analysed the enormous amounts of data collected, and published a pre-print and subsequently peer-reviewed paper¹.

The final paper considered 25 professional singers and concluded that there was good intra-participant consistency. The difference between singing and speaking at medium and high volumes (70-80dB compared with 90-100dB) was modest: singing produced 2-3 times more than speaking at the equivalent level of loudness. The most striking result was the profound effect of volume when looking at a wider dynamic range. Comparing the quietest (50-60dB) and the loudest volume range tested (90-100dB), there was a 20-30 fold effect on the number and mass concentration of the particles. Musical style and the singer's gender were shown to have no effect on the respirable particulate matter released during singing.

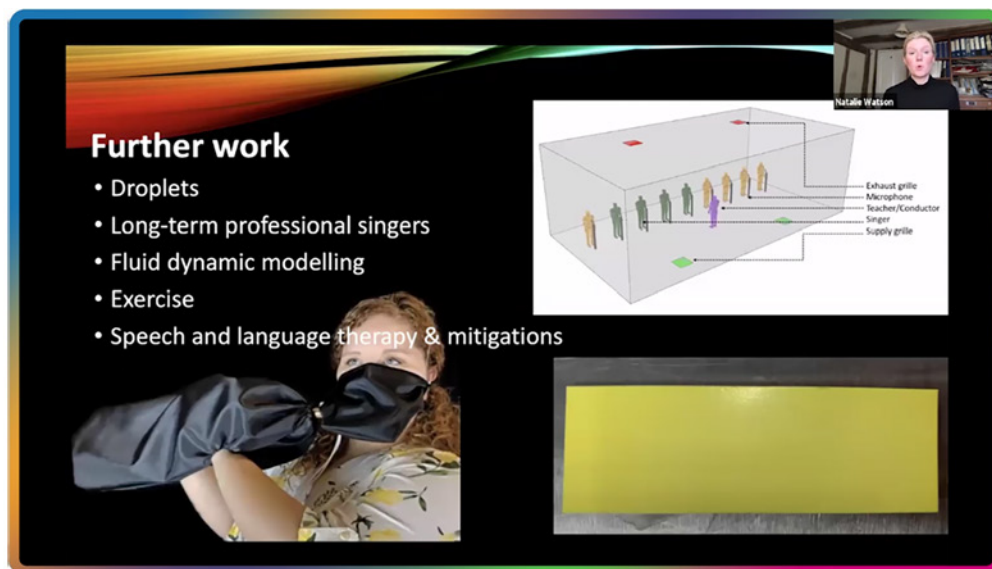
Once we had finished the pilot study, many questions remained so we applied for an EPSRC grant through UK Research and Innovation. We were funded to investigate the aerosol and droplet release from participants performing a wider range of activities, including during exercise, and speech and language therapy, using the same methodology as before.

The PERFORM-1 project work has also been extended, by inviting some of the professional singers back to assess whether individuals produce differing quantities of respirable material at different points in time. Further groups of woodwind and brass instruments are also being assessed to investigate those that had been singled out as being especially high risk, such as the clarinet. Following data collection, our collaborators will use computerised fluid dynamic modelling to create simulated scenarios based on the empirical information, to help inform guidance for both government and public on how to mitigate risk.

In September 2021 at the BVA's virtual Choice for Voice conference, the prestigious Van Lawrence Prize was awarded



Some of the PERFORM-1 Working Group. Left to right (Natalie Watson, Jonathan Reid, Florence Gregson, Christopher Orton, Bryan Bzdek, Declan Costello). (Photo: Declan Costello)



Natalie's Van Lawrence presentation

for the presentation on the comparison between children and adult aerosol produced during breathing, speaking and singing at. Conclusions were that:

- **Increasing loudness leads to a greater number, mass concentration and emission rates.**
- **The effects of increasing loudness eclipse the differences between singing and speaking.**
- **Aerosol number, mass concentration and mass emission rates during singing at 70 – 80 dB are no different in children and adults.**

The initial task was substantial but through collaboration and the generosity of people offering their time voluntarily, the team worked with a vast sense of comradery to deliver the project. We are hugely grateful to all those who have contributed to the research, volunteered their time, voice and

aerosols to help inform us more about basic physiology in a way that has not been performed previously. The results so far have been valuable in helping to formulate a scientific basis for government guidance and we are all excited to get back to enjoying our favourite pastimes alongside other people. Through this work we hope to have contributed to the return of 'normal' life, whilst keeping people as protected as possible in these challenging times.

Florence KA Gregson, Natalie A Watson, Christopher M Orton, Allen E Haddrell, Lauren P McCarthy, Thomas JR Finnie, Nick Gent, Gavin C Donaldson, Pallav L Shah, James D Calder, Bryan R Bzdek, Declan Costello and Jonathan P Reid (2021); 'Comparing aerosol concentrations and particle size distributions generated by singing, speaking and breathing'; Aerosol Science and Technology, 55:6, 681-691, doi:10.1080/02786826.2021.1883544

Five minutes with Natalie Watson

Van Lawrence Prize 2021 winner Natalie Watson, ENT surgeon, singer and lover of all things laryngological is in the CV hotseat. Growing up in South West London, Natalie was educated at St Paul's Girls' School and studied Medicine King's College London, where she also gained a BSc in Neuroscience and a Masters degree in Clinical Education.

How and when did you decide to become a doctor?

I was four when I decided I wanted to be a Doctor. I wanted "to help people" – corny, but true!

When did you decide the area in which to specialise and was there any particular reason for choosing it?

When I was 14 in a singing lesson, my singing teacher (who knew I wanted to be a doctor) said, "You should become the singing doctor" – and there was the spark of an idea that has driven me to this point in my career.

Is the way you're working now broadly what you envisaged/aspired to, or did you have different ideas?

I am now doing exactly what I dreamed of when I was a child, so I feel very lucky and privileged to have been able to achieve this goal. I certainly have had a lot of help from my family to get to this point – namely my parents, husband and two beautiful boys.

What do you most enjoy about laryngology, and what least?

I love every aspect of laryngology. When I see people who could hardly walk due to airway compromise, barely swallow or speak, return to work or normal living due to the care I have been able to provide, that is the best thanks I could ever get. I love looking at their smiling faces during the follow up reviews.

Have you ever had any voice difficulties or been on the receiving end of laryngology care yourself?

YES! I have what I would call a fragile voice. Whenever I was in a show at uni or for charity I could never hang out in the bar afterwards like many of my friends, I had to rest my voice between shows to ensure the maintenance of my voice. Whenever I get an upper respiratory chest infection it always affects my throat over any other part of ENT! I have received SLT and laryngeal massage and it is BRILLIANT!

Continues over the page...

VAN LAWRENCE PRIZE 2021

Crossing Borders: A Multi-genre Song Performance Journey

Helen Rae Glindemann

I was invited by the British Voice Association to contribute as a Van Lawrence Prize entrant, as part of proceedings in the 2021 Choice For Voice conference. I was incredibly honoured and excited to share a vignette of my journey as a multi-genre singer, teacher and artistic researcher.

Background

In order to meet the demands of the modern music industry, singers are expected to be able to perform across a wide range of singing styles (Bartlett, 2019; Rosenberg, 2016). Despite the growing acceptance of 'contemporary commercial music' (CCM) and its associated style-based pedagogies, there are limited training options for singers seeking to perform across more than one vocal genre. In researching current models of voice education, I found that globally, higher education institutions continue to favour a genre-segregated model, with classical training still firmly entrenched at the forefront. A preliminary review of international universities' performing arts programmes also found that only 12% of the institutions surveyed offered 'multi-genre' performance and pedagogy options at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels.



Helen Rae Glindemann

Towards a Multi-genre Voice Pedagogy

With the growing interest in the potential benefits of cross-training for singers, some exponents argue that an understanding of voice science is the key to successful singing in any genre (LeBorgne & Rosenberg, 2018). My doctoral studies have focused my thinking on the role of voice science and the potential for existing genre-based teaching practices to be synthesised to support singers on their journey through multi-genre performance. The implications for the vocal health of a singer training to develop the technical mastery and flexibility required to sing across multiple genres were also incorporated into the research design.

Research Design and Case Study

By adopting an interpretivist epistemology, I was able to gain an 'insider' perspective, as a single participant in an auto-ethnographic case study of genre-based teaching practices.

FIVE MINUTES WITH NATALIE WATSON *continued from p7*

What's been the toughest part of the last < two years? Have there been any upsides (success with sourdough, lockdown puppy etc...)?

Definitely not seeing family and friends has been the hardest, plus trying to juggle work and child care with very little provision in the early few months of the pandemic. I am married to a chest physician who was also very busy on the COVID wards so it was a struggle. However, spending more time with the children, being involved in the PERFORM aerosol project and seeing COVID patients improve after treatment has been lovely.

Tell us about the 'singing surgeon' part of your identity....

I have always LOVED singing and performing and started as Dorothy in the Wizard of Oz at school when I was seven. Since then, I was in ALL the musicals and plays and choirs at school and university, and even continued performing whilst a doctor in charity musical theatre reviews/cabarets in London. I was a professional church wedding/funeral singer once upon a time. Now I reserve

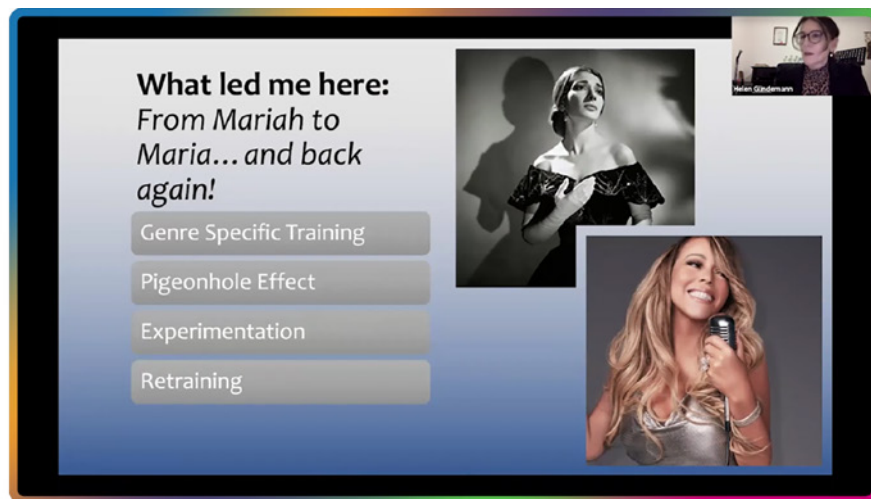
the singing mainly for home with my children and for the operating theatre!

How do you fit in the various strands of your life: the clinical work, research, the 'collegiate' work eg BLA and your fantastic podcast, etc?

It's important to be very organised and I still keep a handwritten 'things to do' list and diary. Again, I can't emphasise enough how important my support network is. My family are incredible!

Is there a typical day, or a typical week?

What I love about my job is that in fact there generally is no typical week. They say variety is the spice of life and that's certainly how my life is at the moment. Two children at school, their extracurricular activities, a husband working full time and writing up a PhD, parents who thankfully live locally to help out, a full time job with busy on-calls, recording of podcasts for the BLA, committee meetings, conferences, courses, research, audit and teaching certainly keep my on my toes!



Natalie's Van Lawrence presentation

The study, centred within a mixed methods research design followed my progress through 10 immersive lessons across three singing genres: musical theatre, classical and CCM. Data were collected via video-recorded, semi-structured interviews with three participant singing teachers and an Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT) specialist, video journaling of singing lessons and song performance at the beginning and end of each set of lessons. Instrumental and perceptual testing using the 'lingWAVES Voice Diagnostic Center' analysis and stroboscopic imagery also contributed to the collected data.

Preliminary Findings

A preliminary analysis of the data allowed me to gain an insight into the educational philosophies and teaching practices of three genre-specialist singing teachers working in the higher education sector. Comparative analyses of genre-based lessons revealed core focus elements for further evaluation. Coding of interviews highlighted some significant themes, including pedagogic approaches and common instructional language used by the teacher participants. Comparative analyses of lingWAVES data and stroboscopic imagery provided qualitative and quantitative data, offering potential for the development of a multi-genre voice pedagogy.

Lessons

In my preliminary analysis of the lessons, I found that there is clearly a language that translates across all three investigated genres. I was able to isolate eight teaching elements with STYLE as the unifying core focus. I envisage that any multi-

genre singer or teacher would need to gain an understanding of genre differences and expectations across these eight elements.

Interviews

Specialist Voice Teachers were asked 13 questions in a semi-structured interview format. A thematic analysis uncovered six themes relevant for teachers and singers wanting to develop a multi-genre skills set (see Figure 4 below, right).

Vocal Health

Comparative analysis of phonetographic parameters across the four LingWAVES sessions generated some interesting perceptual data, with no resultant vocal pathologies. A preliminary analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data provided some insight into the role of voice science in genre-based teaching, and the possible performance and health impacts of multi-genre song performance.

ENT sessions with Dr Elizabeth Hodge also indicated no significant vocal pathology or change throughout the case study, although a slight asynchrony and likely reflux scarring (right vocal fold) was noted in stroboscopic imagery and documented at commencement. A very slight change was noted following CCM lessons with a wider anterior glottic opening noted in the low range. When asked about vocal health risks for singers, Dr Hodge stated "I think the risk of vocal health problems is more associated with a lack of training rather than a specific style of singing."

Conclusion

Given the limitations of a single participant study (Le Roux, 2017), it is expected that final results could provide a foundation for further research involving larger sample groups, thereby informing a more diversified approach for developing the skills set of singers, and possible pedagogical approaches for their teachers.

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FLEXIBILITY
(instrument and approach)



AUTHENTICITY
(to self and style)



REPERTOIRE
(find your narrative)



DEVELOP YOUR TOOLBOX
(bowerbird approach)



FIND YOUR NEUTRAL
(larynx position)

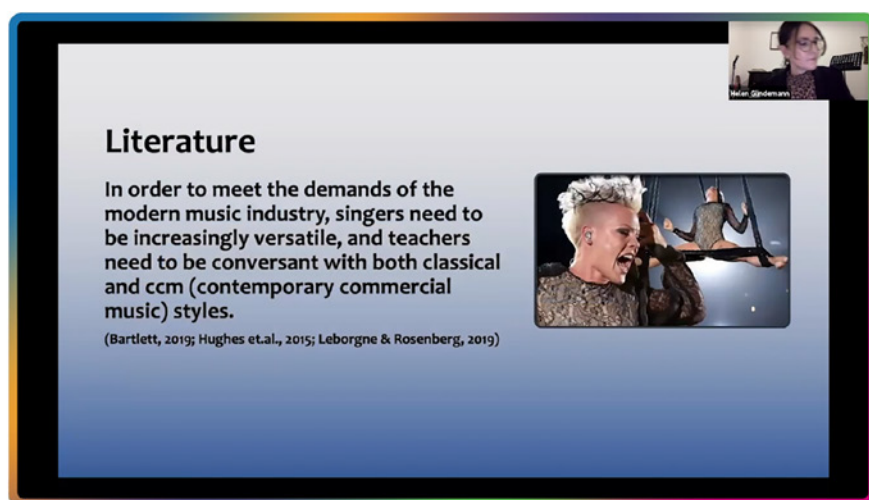


KNOW YOUR INSTRUMENT
(physiology)

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Your newsletter needs you!

This newsletter is written by members, for members. We are always interested in contributions from you: reviews of books, podcasts, BVA events – you name it. If you would like to propose a subject, are interested in being commissioned to write on a specific topic, or would like to tell us about a resource you love (the voice book you couldn't live without, the podcast you walk the dog to, etc), please get in touch.



We look forward to hearing from you!
BVA@gmcelearney.com

SAVE THE DATE

Friday 4th February 2022, Nottingham: Voice Clinics Forum, with a focus on Neural Laryngology. *Watch out for more details, coming soon.*

VAN LAWRENCE PRIZE 2021

The Association between Wellbeing and Voice Symptoms in School Teachers in England

Emily Sharp

Aim

To explore the association between wellbeing and voice symptoms of school teachers working in primary and secondary schools in England.

Introduction

Some occupations are especially vulnerable to voice disorders and school-teaching is, in this sense, a high-risk profession. Several studies have shown that negative psychological states such as anxiety, depression and common mental disorders, have been found to be associated with voice problems in teachers¹⁻⁷. However, the relationship between positive psychological states, eg wellbeing and voice problems, has not been established. Although these states are on the same continuum of psychological health, they are not necessarily inversely correlated. To highlight this, a study by Huppert and Whittington (2003)⁸ suggested some independence between negative and positive psychological states. They found many participants had low scores on both positive and negative wellbeing scales, and individuals in the top quartile of the positive wellbeing measure also reported psychological symptoms. This indicates that negative and positive psychological states need to be investigated separately.

Methods

A cross-sectional study was conducted between November 2017 and February 2018 using web-based self-administered questionnaires to collect data. A cross-sectional study is a type of observational study which measures data from a population at a particular point in time. All schools in England, including independent fee-paying schools and special schools, were invited to participate.

Voice symptoms were measured using The Voice Symptom Scale (VoiSS)⁹, a 30 item self-assessment questionnaire used in voice clinics. It asks about the frequency of physical symptoms such as sore throat and cough; vocal impairment, eg problems talking on the telephone and finding the effort of speaking tiring; emotional difficulties, eg embarrassment or feeling lonely because of a voice problem. It has possible scores ranging from 0 to 120, with higher scores indicating more voice symptoms. Wellbeing was measured using the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS)¹⁰. This is a 14 item questionnaire which asks a range of questions related to wellbeing such as 'I've been feeling optimistic about the future; I've been feeling useful'. It has scores ranging from 14 to 70 with higher scores indicating higher wellbeing.

To account for confounding variables, information was also obtained on each teacher's age, sex, gastroesophageal reflux,



Emily Sharp

asthma, smoking status, deprivation of the school, number of hours teaching a week, speaking over background noise in the classroom, speaking louder than normal, receiving voice training, class size and teaching subject. Analysis was conducted using a linear multilevel regression model.

Results

A total of 1,205 teachers from 608 schools participated. Participants were primarily female (80%), white (93%), with a mean age of 39. 52% of participants were primary teachers and 48% were secondary school teachers. The mean score on the WEMWBS scale was 43, lower than the national average of 50¹⁰. The mean score on the VoiSS was 23. Although there are no national figures to compare these scores with, research suggests that populations with dysphonia have average VoiSS scores of around 21¹¹, indicating that many of the participants in this study are likely to have voice problems.

A statistically significant relationship between voice symptoms and wellbeing was identified, demonstrating that as wellbeing increased, voice symptoms decreased. Age was found to be statistically significant; similarly, the presence of gastroesophageal reflux, which worsened as voice symptoms increased. Voice symptoms were significantly higher among females, those teaching in larger class sizes, those that always spoke over background noise in the classroom and talked louder than normal, and those that had a respiratory infection not confirmed by a doctor. *A table of these results is presented over the page.*

The number of hours spent teaching per week, the relative deprivation of the school, whether the teacher had received any voice training, the subject taught, and the presence of asthma were all found to be not associated with voice symptoms.

Statistically significant results

Variable	Coefficient (95% Confidence interval)	P value
Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale	-0.31 (-0.41, -0.20)	< 0.001
Age	0.10 (0.02, 0.18)	0.015
GerdQ questionnaire	1.29 (0.87, 1.70)	<0.001
Sex		
Female	Reference	
Male	-3.48 (-5.59, -1.37)	0.001
Speaking over background noise		
Always	Reference	
Most of the time	-0.79 (-4.74, 3.17)	0.697
Sometimes	-3.46 (-7.13, 0.22)	0.065
Never	-5.39 (-9.18, -1.61)	0.005
Talk louder than normal		
Always	Reference	
Most of time	-2.85 (-5.88, 0.19)	0.066
Sometimes	-8.23 (-11.26, -5.20)	<0.001
Never	-11.35 (-15.73, -6.98)	<0.001
Respiratory infection		
No	Reference	
Yes confirmed by doctor	-4.15 (-5.91, -2.39)	<0.001
Yes not confirmed by doctor	6.26 (3.76, 8.77)	<0.001
Class size		
29 and over	Reference	
Under 29	-2.21 (-3.99, -0.43)	0.015

Conclusions

The study identified a statistically significant association between voice symptoms and wellbeing in primary and secondary teachers working in England. However, due to the cross-sectional design of the study, it is not possible to

establish the direction of this relationship, although it is likely to be bidirectional¹². These findings indicate that including wellbeing strategies for the treatment and prevention of voice problems may be beneficial.

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NEW BVA DIRECTORS

Rehab Awad

Dr Rehab Awad has been Clinical lead for Speech and Language Therapy at University Hospital Lewisham since 2009. She leads voice services for both adults and children in the Speech and Language Therapy department and provides voice therapy input in the Multidisciplinary Voice Clinic at UHL, one of the leading voice disorders clinics in the UK. She is also a Visiting Associate Professor of Phoniatrics Sciences at Kasr Alaini Hospital, Cairo University.

Rehab first graduated from the Faculty of Medicine of Cairo University in 1996; the university also awarded her an MSc MSc (2000) and MD in Phoniatrics Sciences (2008). She studied voice disorders at UCL and was awarded a postgraduate diploma in 2005. Rehab has an interest in and a passion for research, and has authored several publications in the field of voice. She has been an active member and regular presenter for the BVA for several years and was recently co-opted as a council member.

Rebecca Schwarz

Rebecca has been teaching singing for over 15 years and running choirs for almost as long. In that time she's studied almost every approach out there but the thing that stuck with her most is her initial training through the BVA. In 2017 she joined the BVA's Education Working Party and since then, has led or been involved in teams that organised events about dancers, extreme voice, neurology and spoken voice.

Rebecca began as an actress and singer-songwriter and now combines the two in her one-woman musicals. She was mid-tour of her original musical about postnatal depression when Covid hit. Rebecca has a special interest in how mindset and emotional blocks can inhibit 'free' singing and expression.



Rehab Awad



Rebecca Schwarz

She has studied and qualified in various therapeutic approaches and is a member of 'Vocolgy in Practice'. Rebecca loves bringing people and activities together and making things happen.

Besfort Williams

Besfort is a singing teacher based in London. He trained at The Guildford School of Acting. An associate of renowned singing teacher Mark Meylan, he has clients working in television, theatre and recording industries. Besfort teaches on the Musical Theatre BA Hons course at Arts Educational and has previously taught at LAMDA and Urdang Academy. He has assisted as vocal coach on 'The Book of Mormon' (Tour) and most recently has acted as vocal consultant for the Royal Shakespeare Company's new production, 'The Magician's Elephant'. Singing engagements include working with Gary Barlow, Paloma Faith, Joss Stone, The Who, Nitin Sawhney, BAFTAs, The Royal Variety Performance and the BBC Proms.

Besfort completed Somatic Voicework™ Certification Levels One, Two and Three in 2018, and Sessions I, II & III from The New CCM Institute (Shenandoah University) in 2019. He already serves on the BVA's Education Working Party and is a Fellow of the Higher Education Authority.



Besfort Williams

THE TONGUE AS A GATEWAY TO RESONANCE, STYLE AND INTELLIGIBILITY

Angelika Nair
Plural Publishing, San Diego, CA, 2021
Paperback, 278 pages
ISBN: 9781635503630

Reviewed by
Dr Jenevora Williams

This is a book primarily for those teaching and performing classical repertoire. The information is useful as a further academic resource for all singers, but the practical focus is on the soundscape of the classical genre. The title of the book suggests that it addresses more than just tongue behaviour in singing; it does give a great deal more than this in terms of the relationship between tongue and jaw, and the acoustic outcomes from subtle changes in alignment and sensation. As Angelika Nair points out: "most singers and actors sing/recite with considerably improved vowels interspersed with ineffective consonants". Singing training tends to focus primarily on the sound of the vowels, so what happens when we pay more attention to the consonants?

Chapter two has a very detailed explanation and illustration of the anatomy and physiology of the whole of the tongue, jaw, pharynx, and the muscles of the head and neck. This knowledge is essential for us to understand these structures and to have a realistic internal mapping of

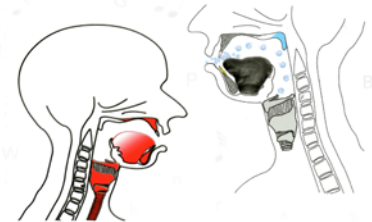
them in relation to our own voice use. One key concept is that of the tongue as a muscular hydrostat; it remains the same volume whatever shape it takes, and every movement of one part is a movement of the whole.

The chapter on tongue exercises has an extensive and varied range along with full explanations. Phonetics and resonance are also interwoven through the whole book. Some of the most useful images are the 3-D illustrations of tongue position for all the vowels. These are taken from ultrasound data and provide a unique insight into the shape of the back of the tongue; we are given step-by-step analysis of how every vowel is formed with the tongue. My favourite illustration is perhaps the overlay of tongue position onto the vowel formant chart to show vowel modification between A4 and A5.

The premise of the whole book is reliant on the singer using the 'low mandible manoeuvre' (LMM). This involves a forward and dropped position for the jaw to be maintained throughout vocalisation. Nair provides a convincing argument for this from an acoustic perspective, and one side of the story from a functional one. There are other schools of thought that would advocate the opposite, asking the singer to aim for a back and dropped position for the jaw, which does not necessarily result in as much space in the oral cavity, but can arguably cause fewer issues of pulling and misalignment in the vocal tract. I would suggest that both are right and that either stance relies on an advanced proprioceptive awareness from the singer as well as enough flexibility to break the rules where necessary. Personally, I am wary of any absolute rules when dealing with performers'

THE TONGUE as a Gateway to Voice, Resonance, Style, and Intelligibility

Angelika Nair



PLURAL PUBLISHING

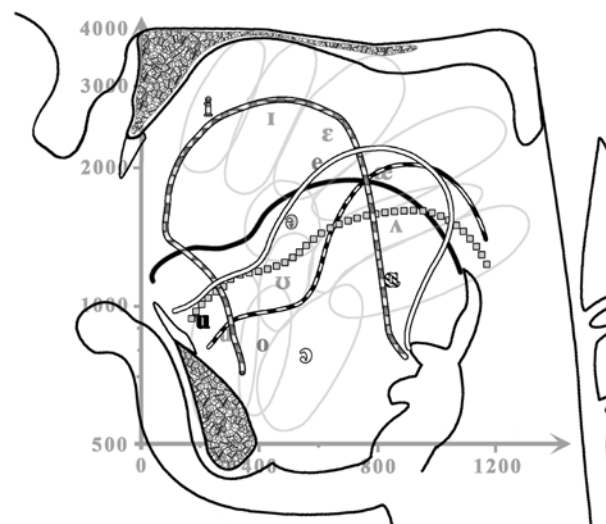
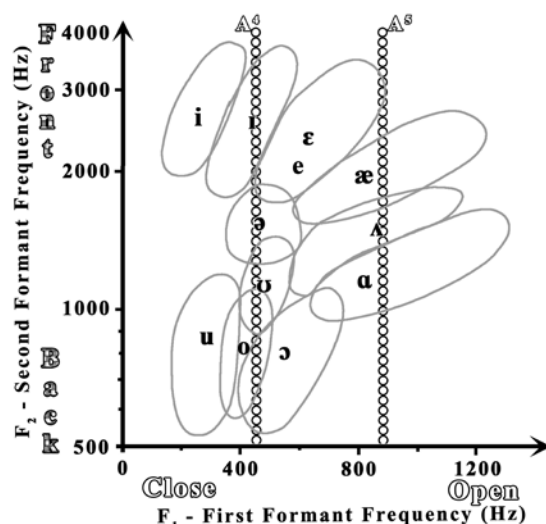
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individual functional efficiency. The book is based on a biomechanical model of singing without taking care of variation in structure, habitual use, plus idiosyncrasies such as dialect; quite apart from the links between tongue behaviour and the rest of the body-mind.

One additional point for the reader, attention is given to European language pronunciation; the author is Austrian and so has a native insight into these. There are extremely useful and detailed phonetic descriptions for 'English' vowels but just to note that these are for American English.

This book is an excellent addition to the bookshelf of any teacher of advanced classical singers. It is also a great resource for professional performers wishing to understand phonetics and acoustics in more detail.

Dr Jenevora Williams is a singing teacher, researcher, author and pedagogue based in Guildford.



From The Tongue as a Gateway to Voice, Resonance, Style, and Intelligibility (pp. 1-278) by Nair, A. Copyright © 2021 Plural Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved. Used with permission.

LOOKING AHEAD TO OUR NEXT EVENT

There is still just time to enrol for the upcoming course, *The Contemporary Commercial (CCM) Singer*. This online event, taking place between 3.00pm and 6.00pm on Saturday 27th and Sunday 28th November, will focus on vocal technique, performance and pedagogy for CCM vocal artists. This event is aimed at performers and teachers alike. An international line-up of renowned CCM vocal practitioners will share knowledge and practical advice, exploring a variety of stylistic techniques in rock, pop, soul and R&B. As well as an enhanced understanding of the challenges faced by gigging singers in

their performing careers, you'll gain a variety of CCM-specific teaching approaches and strategies to enhance healthy vocal performance.

All sessions will be recorded and available to paid-up delegates to watch for one month beyond the event.

Event fees

- Member – £35
- Non-member – £50
- Student – £25 (*student ID required*)

Presenters

Dr Trineice Robinson-Martin

EdD, EdM, MM (USA)

Princeton University Music Lecturer, Director of Jazz Vocal Collective Ensemble, Executive Director of African American Jazz Caucus, Inc.

Dr Robinson-Martin's session, 'Pedagogy of Soul: fostering music interpretation and individuality through the pedagogic lens of African American music', will look beyond the notes we sing. Soul expression in African American music is the passionate articulation of life's experiences and the reflection of emotional responses to that experience. Dr Trineice will guide participants in using improvisation tools to amplify their unique sound and story.

Dr Marisa Lee Naismith (Australia)

Singing teacher, voice researcher, music industry mentor, author of '*Singing Contemporary Commercial Music Styles: A Pedagogical Framework*', and podcast host of 'A Voice and Beyond'.

A pre-recorded interview where Dr Naismith and Jo Sear discuss the umbrella term 'CCM' and its relevance in the current contemporary music scene.

Jo Sear (UK)

Popular music voice teacher, live/session vocalist, voice researcher, choir director and director/ founder of 'Pop Up Vocal Training'. In 'The Gigging Singer', Jo will explore the challenges of regularly gigging in a function, pub, or club band. She offers advice on band 'depping', and practical vocal health tips to increase your gig stamina.

Meredith Colby (US)

Creator of Neuro-Vocal Method and author of '*Money Notes: How to Sing High, Loud, Healthy, and Forever*'.

Rehearsal and performance environments, along with cultural beliefs, shape the way that most singers of microphone styles relate to their voice. This presentation, 'The World of the Band Singer: What Voice Professionals Need to Know to Be Effective', offers teachers and singers an insight into the realities of the band singer's work-lifestyle, and how to help them effectively.

Chris Johnson (UK)

International vocal coach, co-founder of 'The Naked Vocalist' podcast, author and teacher trainer.

In 'Acoustic inertance – a different kind of 'support' for the voice', Chris will offer explanations about and practical applications of vocal acoustic science for the CCM singer and teacher. This session will help singers and students develop their singing technique and its application.

Bodo Maass (Germany)

Voce Vista Video Programmer, www.sygyt.com

Bodo will be demonstrating the practical application of Voce Vista Video as a visual aid in the studio to increase vocal awareness and effectiveness.

Visit www.britishvoiceassociation.org.uk for more information and to register

or contact administrator@britishvoiceassociation.org.uk or +44 (0)300 123 2773

* Proof of full-time student status will be required at the point of booking

A 2-day online event focusing on vocal technique, performance, and pedagogy for CCM vocal artists.



**Saturday 27th
and Sunday 28th
November 2021**

3-6pm GMT
Online both days
BVA@home

**Early Bird: (deadline:
Friday 29th October)**

Member – £30
Non-member – £45
Student – £20

Normal:
Member – £35
Non-member – £50
Students – £25

THE CONTEMPORARY COMMERCIAL MUSIC (CCM) SINGER

Singers, singing teachers and voice health professionals with an interest in the CCM performer's voice and work cannot miss this online BVA study weekend! Renowned international CCM vocal practitioners will share their knowledge and practical advice, exploring a variety of stylistic techniques in rock, pop, soul and R&B. As well as an enhanced understanding of the challenges that gigging singers face in their performing careers, you will gain a variety of CCM-specific teaching approaches and strategies to enhance healthy vocal performance. *All sessions will be recorded and available to paid-up delegates to watch for one month beyond the event.*

SPEAKERS

DR TRINEICE ROBINSON-MARTIN (Vocalist, Educator, Clinician) USA

MEREDITH COLBY (Neuro-Vocal Method) USA

CHRIS JOHNSON (Vocal Coach, Acoustics) UK

JO SEAR (Popular Music Voice Teacher and Performer) UK

DR MARISA LEE NAISMITH (Singing Teacher, Voice Researcher) Australia

BODO MAASS (Voice Researcher, VoceVista) Germany

For further information email administrator@britishvoiceassociation.org.uk or visit our website

www.britishvoiceassociation.org.uk