

COMMUNICATING VOICE

AUTUMN/WINTER 2019
VOLUME 20, ISSUE 1



The journal of **the british voice association** – the UK's voice for voice

AUTUMN 2019

VOLUME 20, ISSUE 1

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COVER PHOTO



Jean Abitbol speaking at the Association's AGM Study Day, Hormones and Voice, in London on 7 July 2019.



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EDITORIAL

Very early in the year, I like to start noting aloud that "it'll soon be Christmas", which is a reliable and gratuitous way of eliciting a groan from whoever I'm speaking to. However, there comes a point when that starts to become true, and thus I find myself at the official beginning of Autumn wondering where on earth the last few months have gone.

Fortunately, there's an exciting 12 months to look forward to with BVA. The high point looks to be our Choice for Voice conference next September, held in the fantastic surroundings of Leeds College of Music. Choice for Voice was announced at the AGM in July; if you missed it, take a look at the website. Please note that the call for papers is out and entries close on November 8, so if you're thinking of submitting, remember that like Christmas, deadlines have a way of creeping up faster than we expect! The website will be updated regularly as conference speakers and sessions are confirmed, and booking will be open soon.

There's plenty to look forward to in the meantime; as we go to print, I've just returned from the launch event of our 2019/20 programme, Finding Your Inner Jazz: Voice, Style and Pedagogy. As someone who loves listening to jazz, but sadly really can't sing it for toffee, I found it an inspiring day and for the first time now feel as though I have some idea of where to start with approaching both singing and teaching it. We'll report in full on the day in the next issue.

Even further outside of my vocal experience is rock music and I'm amazed by the ability of rock singers, as well as contemporary voice artists in other genres, to use extreme vocal techniques for powerful and sustainable musical effect. I can't wait to learn something about how it's done at our next study day on 'Extreme Voices', November 23-24, London; hope to see some of you there!

Looking back, we've enjoyed two study days that were of relevance to a broad spectrum of the population and that can impact particularly on those who rely especially on their voice. 'Breathe Easy' (May) focused on asthma and the voice, and introduced delegates to two well-regarded methods of breath management technique; see page 5 for a review of the day. The AGM study day (July) tackled the subject of hormones, the significance of which and professional approach to made for a fantastic spread of presentation topics. Reviews of the events are on pages 5-9.

As ever, I'd be delighted to hear from readers – send your feedback (good and bad), letters and ideas for future issues to BVA@gmcelearney.com. Also, if you're interested in contributing articles, reviewing books and/or events, please get in touch. Have a great few months and I'll see you in early 2020.

Don't forget, our postal address has changed to:
British Voice Association, PO Box 10778, Nottingham NG5 0LB.



Geraldine McElearney

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

Reports from:

- Finding Your Inner Jazz
- Extreme Voices

Send letters, corrections and suggestions for future articles to: BVA@gmcelearney.com



THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER

It is both an honour and a privilege to accept the position of President of The British Voice Association. As ever, our mission remains to bring together all disciplines working in the field of voice, to disseminate knowledge and best practice, and to help foster interdisciplinary relationships and research. However, as we move into a new and increasingly digital era, we face fresh challenges in continuing to be the 'Voice for Voice' within the UK.

Thankfully, I am not facing these challenges alone. Aside from having one of the most supportive, knowledgeable and generous memberships (that's you!), the BVA also benefits from an extremely dedicated team of staff, directors and volunteers, some of whom I would like to take the opportunity to thank in my president's letter. Firstly, to outgoing President, John Rubin, whose steady and experienced hands have guided the BVA to a number of great successes over the past year. Of particular note is the BVA's acquisition of the *Folia Phoneatrica et Logopaedica* journal which has helped to fill the void left behind since the BVA took the difficult but financially necessary decision to stop distributing our former journal *Logopedics Phoneatrics Vocology* (LPV) in 2015. The 'Hormones and Voice' day that John hosted in July of this year also proved to be a compelling, insightful and well attended event.

Whilst on the topic of events, I would also like to thank our Education Working Party, led by Rebecca Moseley-Morgan. Our events are the life-blood of our organisation, both intellectually and financially, and I am proud to have such a resourceful and committed team working behind the scenes to create a programme of stimulating multi-disciplinary events. Not to be missed in 2019/20 is our 'Extreme Voices' Weekend, featuring a masterclass with Cathrine Sadolin (November 23–24, 2019), our 'Tension and Release' study day at the Royal Northern College of Music (February 22, 2020) and our event exploring issues surrounding voice use and mental health (in May 2020).

Concurrently, our Communications Working Party, led by Kim Chandler, continues to do a sterling job of keeping our membership up to date on what is happening within our organisation. In particular I would like to thank Kim for all of her hard work in raising the BVA's profile on Facebook, which has seen us engaging with more people than ever before online. In addition to this, our quarterly newsletter, edited by Gerry McElearney continues to be a compelling publication, filled with useful articles and reviews. Over the next year, I will be working closely with the Communications team to diversify the ways in which the BVA reaches out to its members. Central to this will be expanding the BVA's voice to other social media platforms such as Instagram and LinkedIn, as well reviewing our approaches to email.

Parallel to all of this, our treasurer, Richard Edgar-Wilson, continues to be the steady and diligent hand that our finances



Outgoing BVA President John Rubin (right) welcomes his successor, Craig Antony Lees, at the recent AGM

require. Thanks to his guidance, the BVA remains in a healthy financial position, despite the challenging economic climate. I am also very pleased to report that all of our events from last year were profitable. Over the next year, I will be drawing upon Richard's expertise and guidance to assist the Council with the delivery of several major projects.

My final thanks go to the BVA's administrator, without whom none of this would be possible. For so many of you, Jackie (Ellis) is the warm, friendly face that welcomes you at the registration desk for our events. However, I am sure that it will come as no surprise that her job involves so much more; from dealing with membership enquiries and handling our correspondence to reviewing budgets, contracts and crafting our event packs. The BVA could simply not function without her knowledge, dedication and assistance.

Now to the year ahead. The next 12 months will see the BVA face a number of important changes. Some of these will help us grow, whilst others will see us waving a difficult but necessary goodbye to treasured institutions. Following the first ballot in ten years, I am pleased to welcome a number of new directors to the BVA council. Firstly, laryngologist Yakubu Karagama will be lending his knowledge and expertise to help us host more exciting and innovative educational events. Similarly, Manchester-based speech therapist Paul McKenna will be working alongside Tori Burnay (SLT) and Nimesh Patel (ENT) to help host our ever-popular Voice Clinics Forum in November 2020.

In exciting news, Paul will now also be sitting as the BVA's representative on the board of the British Laryngological Association (BLA); an important step in achieving more synergy and collaboration between these two related organisations. Also new to Council, ENT specialist Nikos Spantideas will be lending his energies to the communications review mentioned earlier, whilst award-winning spoken voice teacher, Jane Oakshott, will be helping the BVA to shine a light on issues surrounding public

speaking and voice in the workplace. I look forward to working closely with them all, alongside our returning directors, to help drive the BVA forward into the future.

Nevertheless, there are some challenges. After 130 years as a renowned specialist hospital, the Royal National Throat, Nose and Ear Hospital on Gray's Inn Road will be closing its doors in 2020. As many of you will be aware, the RNTNE has been a home to the BVA for the past ten years and leaving it behind has already necessitated many changes, including moving our registered address and acquiring a PO Box for our mail correspondence. We have also had to seek a new venue for our monthly council and executive meetings.

Continuing on the theme of change, after many years of loyal service, the BVA's longstanding Company Secretary, Kristine Carroll-Porczynski, is to be slowly stepping down from her role over the coming months. For the past seventeen years Kristine's faultless energy, tenacity and attention to detail has been the backbone of our organisation, and I believe I speak for our entire membership when I say that she will be sorely missed. Plans are currently underway within council to manage the process of finding Kristine's replacement. However, if you are reading this and feel that you may have the skill set, temperament and requisite time to take on such a role then we would love to hear from you.

Finally, I could not close this letter without talking about 'Choice for Voice'. Since joining the BVA council in 2014 one thing has been abundantly clear to me: our membership wants to see more of our events hosted outside of London. So, with the ten year anniversary of the BVA's last 'Choice for Voice' conference upon us, 2020 feels like the perfect time for us to seize the day.

'Choice For Voice' will take place between 4th–6th September 2020 at leading European conservatoire Leeds College

of Music. The theme of the conference is to be 'Crossing Boundaries in Voice' with an emphasis on multi-disciplinary approaches to vocal health, performance and research. In particular, we are keen to focus on research and practice that acknowledges the holistic nature of voice use, as well as those that draw upon other fields of practice in order to inform and enhance their own. Key areas for discussion include: physical and mental wellbeing for voice users, voice and the workplace, and crossing genre boundaries in pedagogy and performance. The call for papers, workshops and posters is out now and more information is available from the BVA website.

As many have commented before me, the strength of the BVA lies in its members. It was BVA members who taught me how to hone and improve my voice. It was a BVA member that inspired me to explore a career in teaching. It was BVA members that sat in the front row at my first conference presentation to support me. It is the BVA that has nurtured me from the very start. To this end, I ask you, as our membership, never to underestimate the power of a personal recommendation, whether it be to a friend, colleague, student or client. Be sure to spread the word of our fabulous organisation and our remarkable events as avidly and frequently as you can. You never know what journey it may start for someone or where that might lead. Here's to you BVA, and to another great year!

Collegially,
Craig Antony Lees

*"If you talk about it, it's a dream,
if you envision it, it's possible,
but if you schedule it, it's real."*

(Anthony Robbins – 'Get The Edge')

Saturday 23rd and Sunday 24th November 2019

VENUE
David Game College
31 Jewry Street
London EC3N 2ET

EXTREME VOICES

DAY 1: Saturday 23rd November 2019
1.00pm – 5.15pm

New research from Complete Vocal Institute led by **Mathias Aaen** and a **Masterclass with Cathrine Sadolin**, founder of Complete Vocal Institute, Copenhagen, Denmark

DAY 2: Sunday 24th November 2019
9.00am – 5.15pm

What we typically see in the Voice Clinic when things go wrong and different management options
Tony Aymat (ENT Surgeon) and **Tori Burnay** (Voice Specialist SLT)

Finding Ease in vocal extremes on stage and screen
Masterclass with Voice and Acting Coach and Director **Barbara Houseman**

Visit our website to find out more and book your place at 'Extreme Voices'...

Mal Canto: Overtone vs Overuse
Masterclass with internationally-renowned Vocal Coach **Melissa Cross**

Getting Tour Ready: Approaches to building stamina and vocal fitness and coping with the rigours of touring
Kim Chandler (Vocal Coach & Session Singer)

Interview with Rasmus Andersen
Kim Chandler talks to lead singer of British heavy metal band **Diamond Head**

Plus opportunities for lively discussion throughout the day...

RATES	SAT only	SUN only	SAT & SUN
Earlybird rate (until 25/10/19)			
BVA MEMBERS	£50	£90	£130
NON-MEMBERS	£65	£120	£175
STUDENTS (FT)*	£40	£50	£75
Standard rate (after 25/10/19)			
BVA MEMBERS	£65	£110	£160
NON-MEMBERS	£80	£140	£210
STUDENTS (FT)*	£50	£60	£90

*Student rate (FT) available to those in full-time education

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CHOICE FOR VOICE

2020

Leeds

CROSSING BOUNDARIES IN VOICE

4-6 SEPTEMBER 2020

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a BRITISH VOICE ASSOCIATION event

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ANNUAL CONFERENCE

3-4 SEPTEMBER 2020

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BOTH EVENTS TAKE PLACE AT: LEEDS COLLEGE OF MUSIC

LEEDS COLLEGE OF MUSIC

BREATHE EASY

BVA Study Day, Birmingham

Reviewed by: Geraldine McElearney

As a middle-aged, asthmatic female singer who had “learn some Accent Method” at the top of her professional to-do list, ‘Breathe Easy’ promised a day of lectures, demonstration and workshops exceptionally suited to my interests. As is typically the case with BVA study days, there is more to the subject that can possibly be covered in the course of a few hours, but a great cross-section of issues and session types was on offer.

First on the agenda, Dr Bryan Sheinman is a chest physician at North Middlesex Hospital dealing with a range of respiratory diseases. His self-declared lack of voice expertise was no barrier to a highly informative and enjoyably discursive presentation on asthma: its possible causes – genetic and environmental – aggravating factors, and treatment. Its potential to adversely affect the voice in a number of ways quickly became apparent. Some of these are broadly as one might expect, although key details were new to me; the inherent inflammation of the airways is particularly problematic in expiration for example, so clearly a concern for the serious voice-user. More surprising was its effect on the action of the abdominal wall, which I understand is also impaired but didn’t hear enough detail to understand fully.

Of course, the effective treatment of asthma is important for overall physical health, but asthma medicine can be



Dr Bryan Sheinman

problematic for the voice; I am not the only patient to have suffered almost total voice loss through the use of steroid inhalers. As with many drugs, there are several options worth exploring to find the best solution for minimising side-effects and several of us in the audience shared our experiences of what we’ve found helpful. Dr Sheinman emphasised the significance of inhaler technique and hygiene in maximising the benefits and reducing the extent of side-effects.

Rebecca Moseley-Morgan has been carrying out doctoral research investigating respiratory function in the mature voice. Her detailed study over time of a significant sample of singing students records a really striking capacity for the improvement of breath management in singers of quite advanced years; the oldest case study presented on the day was well into her eighties. Rebecca presented her obviously meticulous research with terrific clarity, distilling a large study of several years into a succinct and relevant talk. Her passion for her subject was unmistakable and should give great encouragement to those of us still singing, and teaching students of retirement age and beyond.

I was very excited about hearing the wonderful mezzo, Catherine Wyn-Rogers share her experience of professional



Sarah Wright-Owens (right) with delegate Heather Phoenix



Catherine Wyn-Rogers



Rebecca Moseley-Morgan

life as a singer with asthma, quite a serious case of it, it turns out. It was a terrific bonus to have Catherine begin her presentation with a performance of Handel's *Ombra mai fu* – most unexpected and absolutely gorgeous (ably accompanied by Rebecca Moseley-Morgan at the piano). Her account of managing the condition over the years since childhood diagnosis brought to life the principles set out by Dr Sheinman; broadly, accept and respect your asthma, give it the treatment it needs every day (properly!), and it will bother you less than if you try to fight it or neglect it. It's inspiring to hear of people who have perhaps not been blessed with the optimal physical setup for singing, still able to perform with such beauty, artistry and technique.

After lunch, we had opportunities to experience two practical breathing methods: Accent Method, which is very familiar to many BVA members, and Fitzmaurice Voicework, which is probably less so (readers may remember Sarah Wright-Owens' article on this subject in *CV* Autumn/Winter 2018, vol 119, 2). Sara Harris led the Accent Method sessions, offering a useful taster of the BVA's three-day course she delivers with Dinah Harris. It was clear that quite a number of the delegates were new to AM, so this was a great introduction. One particularly useful thing I learned was about how to sit on a chair in the best way to be properly supported



Jedd Owen-Ellis Clark and Cathryn Robson

for effective breathing and the session would have been worthwhile for that on its own! The Fitzmaurice session was equally involving, although I should disclose that I didn't fully participate. It was quite lengthy and delivered with great care, so hopefully gave delegates a really good introduction.

Mention should be made of the wonderful venue. For a start, it was great to have the day out of London. The event took place in the splendid Midlands Institute in central Birmingham, the sort of building that epitomises the proud civic history of Britain's industrial cities, past and present. The portraits of long-gone Aldermen and memorials to war heroes made an excellent change to our usual surroundings and I for one would be pleased to see future events here. All in all, the day gave an excellent series of snapshots of this most fundamental subject.

PS: Sarah Wright-Owens shared with us a brilliant insight of the sadly-deceased singer, asthmatic and BVA member, Howard Milner, who wrote "...there is no such thing as 'holding a note', only an endless letting it go. Talk about breath freedom rather than breath control." What a wonderful, liberating piece of advice!



Fitzmaurice Voicework workshop



The Accent Method session led by Sara Harris

HORMONES AND THE VOICE

BVA Study Day

Reviewed by: Heidi de Quincey
and Phillip Brown

Heidi de Quincey writes:

Rushing to a study day on a Sunday is often unpredictable. A very delayed train caused me to miss the AGM of this BVA day which I regret. Unfortunately, I also missed some of John Rubin's introductory presentation, 'Setting the Scene', on the changing effects of hormones on the voice. However, as so often happens in our varied and collaborative group, my seat neighbour shared her notes and slide photos with me, for which many thanks.

John clearly outlined the anatomical changes of the larynx, and respiratory system, through childhood, puberty and over the ageing process; also the useful methods of keeping the voice fitter (back to the gym, Heidi!). One can't help but marvel at the balance of hormone production, what was later called the 'cyclical dance' of its transport, and the effects on target cells and organs. Also, to be reminded of the inevitable female hormonal variability during the regular cycle of increased and decreased levels. Nowadays, thank goodness, we are acknowledging more the changes – not always subtle – in energy levels, voice and pitch ability that women may experience regularly.



Pierre-Marc Bouloux

Attending such a study day highlights the male-female differences we must acknowledge and accept in our advice and treatment with our clients and patients. For example, one distinction is that oestrogen supports the female voice well into the fourth decade whereas male laryngeal changes can start in the third. We may be a voice focused association, but the vital issues of contraception; pre-menstrual syndrome; menopause, gender change are political and societal issues for many of us.

Pierre-Marc Bouloux, fresh from what sounded like a good party, covered endocrine issues including sex hormones, as well as growth hormones and the steroids used by those seeking an enhanced body. He mentioned the coarsening effects these can have on voice, along with those which may be induced in the gym.

Michael Savvas gave us great detail on the gynaecological issues affecting voice. Premenstrual Vocal Syndrome,



Michael Savvas



Juliana Bernardes



Jean Abitbol

peri- and menopausal hormonal level losses and their supplementation via oral or transdermal HRT, and the essential testosterone role in female mood and energy were all covered. His appraisal of the breast cancer risks was essential and one would try to ensure any woman needing treatment would have her individual needs well assessed.

Both John Rubin, and in the afternoon, Nutritional Therapist Juliana Bernardes, mentioned the alternative dietary sources for hormonal boosting and regulation. I like the idea that beer was mentioned by John as one of the alternative bio-identicals, but as Juliana said, we should have at least four alcohol-free days a week for good liver health to process and eliminate 'spent' hormones!

The Gunner Rugheimer Lecture by Jean Abitbol was a highly personal focus on the voice as a "ship on the sea... in the wind of hormones ... leaving its scars more on the female than the male". The role of the thyroid gland, described as a "bellows on a fire", and the best choice of HRT being dependent on whether a woman has a more Rubens or Modigliani body shape, gives some idea of his colourful lecture. Remember, those fat cells turn androgens into oestrogens! Very practically, he mentioned our performing voice user's lifestyle involving exertion late at night as not healthy, disrupting balanced hormonal release.

It can be frustratingly difficult for delegates to obtain a comprehensive view of some lectures when the slides are dense but quickly passed. The accompanying slides, released after the lecture have been most useful in giving much anatomical and hormonal structure to this lecture. I shall refer to these particularly in their detail on the hormonal balances in both the male and female voices, and with reference to trans voices.

Heidi de Quincey is a Specialist SLT based in Winchester

Phillip Brown writes:

The forum encompassed experts from different fields exploring the topic of 'Hormones and the voice'. The cadre of experts were from ENT surgery, Endocrinology, Gynaecology and Nutritional/Naturopathy. As an ENT surgeon with special interests in laryngology, these topics proved pivotal for my practice since the vast majority of my voice patients are females.

The substratum for this topic was commenced by Mr Rubin who gave an excellent presentation on effects of hormonal changes on the voice at all stages of development and the associated gender differences. A key point highlighted was the effects of the menstrual cycle on the female voice. I learnt of Premenstrual Voice Syndrome, 'grace days' [the practice in some European opera houses of adjusting the work schedules of female singers to allow rest at critical points within their menstrual cycle] and the role of oral contraceptives. Knowledge of this area is especially important in my practice for managing the cases of professional female singers presenting with these associated issues.

The subject was expanded by Dr Jean Abitbol, the iconic expert in the field, who gave an excellent dissertation on changes in the female voice observed during premenopausal, menopausal and post-menopausal phases. His explanations were evidenced by the many basic science studies which highlighted the anatomical changes and physiological effects, and the clinical studies corroborate these findings. Different treatment and management strategies were also explored



Questions and attention from the audience

with extensive evidenced-based discussions of Hormone Replacement therapy (HRT), as well as the role of smoking, nutrition and other lifestyle behaviours. This proved helpful for me as a clinician in managing these patients and underlined the point that a multifaceted approach must be undertaken to achieve an excellent outcome.

Dr Michael Savvas continued the discussion in his presentation on gynaecological issues and the voice. It centered on the use of HRT by menopausal and post-menopausal women, both its role and the controversies surrounding it. This was a first-rate lecture, of great relevance to clinicians who face this issue in the the context of the patient group that accounts for the majority of people presenting with voice difficulties.

Dr Pierre-Marc Bouloux gave an excellent in-depth overview on endocrine issues and the voice. This presentation was augmented with the use of clinical cases and videos. As a clinician this proved vital enabling me to not only recognise these patients but also refer them for early expertise management. He highlighted the significant point that voice changes may be the initial presentation of several difficult to diagnose endocrine disorders.

Ms Juliana Bernardes, who I had the pleasure to meet personally, gave an outstanding and eloquent presentation of nutrition and the voice through the eyes of traditional and naturopathic medicine. She highlighted the different ways nutritional substances can result in hormonal changes in the body and subsequently the voice. I found this intriguing and will use this information in practice to approach the management of my voice patients in a holistic way.

The human voice involves complex diverse processes and can be affected by multiple factors, hence the range



Emma Winscom

of challenges that may arise in managing the pathological voice patient. This forum highlighted one such component: hormones and their effects. It demonstrated the multifaceted and holistic approaches required and the variety of factors that must be taken into account when managing these patients. It also emphasises the point, based on the diverse professional interests of attendees, the voice patient needs a multidisciplinary approach to achieve the best possible outcome.

Phillip Brown is a Senior Fellow, ENT Surgery, University Hospital Southampton

The Gunnar Rugheimer Lecture 2019

THE FEMALE VOICE & THE EFFECT OF HORMONES

Presented by
Dr Jean Abitbol

Reviewed by: Emma Winscom

I am delighted to be reporting on Dr Abitbol's lecture at the BVA's 'Hormones and Voice' study day. As a singing teacher and vocal coach with thousands of female alumnae students, the exploration of hormonal effects upon female vocalisation, especially for singers, has always run through the core of my practice, having worked with vocalists at every stage from pre-puberty to menopause and beyond. Also, from my own personal point of view, being a singer with a large vocal range, a comfortable lower range and some need to manage hormonal flux, vocally, I was particularly looking forward to this lecture and indeed the whole day. The Gunnar Rugheimer Lecture always offers a special message of both inspiration and fact, and Dr Abitbol's presentation was no exception.

In particular, I was hoping that the lecture might explore:

1. the fluctuations of range, power and harmonic quality created during a singer's menstrual cycle;

2. strategies for addressing professional demands against a hormonally altered voice;
3. the connection between the singer as an instrument and as a person;
4. the relationship between the identity of a singer's sound and the feeling that gives both them and their audience;
5. the primal links between adult voices and their power to attract;

and I was pleased that all these topics were mentioned, in one form or another.

Our opening attention was drawn to Callas, one of my heroines, whose sublime exposition of emotion through song and ravishing uniqueness of tone flowed from her like water. The world will always identify her and her sound, which I think is the main point to being a singer. Dr Abitbol explained how hormones refine and complete the identity of a singer. In citing Callas, this was the perfect reference to singing identity. As a template for young singers, even if she is not your number one voice, the lessons to learn from her individuality are clearly apparent.

He then led us through a detailed journey of hormonal change, particularly with reference to estrogen, progesterone and androgen and their effects throughout the various stages of the female singer's life. High on his list was the psychological aspect. He also reported the fascinating correlation that has been found between the results of smear tests on both the larynx and the cervix. We were given reasons why surgery during menses was not good and were reminded of the perils of nicotine. He explored the discomfort of laryngeal and abdominal swelling accompanying certain times of the month, which can have a marked effect on vocalised sounds, including a loss of high pitch and power. This can therefore be particularly troublesome for singers, actors, teachers and other professional voice users. Hydration is always important but particularly so at these times. He also covered extensively the effects of the various different types of contraceptive pill.

The fascinating journey then moved to pregnancy and we were given the remarkable information that hearing is apparent in the foetus at three months. We were also told that the position of the baby has implications for the carrying mother, especially if she is a singer, as a baby that is positioned higher makes singing more difficult. Many women experience a lowering of pitch, after (and sometimes during) pregnancy and, whilst pregnant, some are reported to say "I can't sing" or even "this is my best voice ever!". Moving to later in life, Dr Abitbol then led us through the myriad implications for the voice through the menopause and its various hormonal changes. Finally and very fascinatingly, he touched on the transmitter signals of seduction which the voice can employ, discussing pheromones and libido. In fact, the whole area of pheromones, libido, signals, flags and attraction warrant much examination. Perhaps there is still space for the seemingly unexplained to be formalised anatomically, although I rather think that the mysteries of human attraction will always stay mysterious!

Although this lecture was centred on the female voice, the men were not left out entirely. The biological features of the voice in both men and women were highlighted and how they affect the difference of delivery of sound.

The movement of the larynx, definition of head and chest registers and the subtlety or otherwise of passaggio transitions were detailed for us, along with making us aware of men's greater lung capacity and more developed cardiovascular system. Other interesting examples of gender issues were also raised, including the commonly misconceived notion that a castrato developed a woman's voice. In fact, if the castration occurred before puberty, it led to a perpetuation of the child's voice, higher than a high, adult female voice.

Those who have read Dr Abitbol's notes will know that certain voice and gender-related issues are worth further exploration, for example the mid-register inhabited by both female and male singers, usually in pop genres, where, from listening, the gender of the singer is not always clear. When male and female singers with beautiful tone of wide appeal can be mistaken in gender, it intrigues me, as a singing teacher, how much this could interfere with our warming to that sound. Of course, sexual chemistry and appeal can always be used and enhanced between singer and audience but sometimes, a voice which straddles the area of a low female or a high male transcends this and becomes a thing of universal appeal, a call out for the listener's response, whoever that listener may be. Perhaps this is an example of a primal need to communicate that is beyond the call to reproduce?

Dr Abitbol's knowledge, expertise, experience and energy gave this lecture a beautiful blend of science and hope. I left the talk with many sparks ignited, many questions answered, a thousand new questions, but mostly a joy in absorbing the strategies and problem-solving of Dr Abitbol's passionate approach to his work. The emotional and the anatomical sat hand in hand, or at least side by side, for a while, and it gave me great heart.

Emma Winscom BA Hons, LTCL, FMusEdTCL, FISM is a singer and singing teacher, a former Chair of the Education Working Party and a long-standing member of the BVA, with a teaching specialism in female voice.

THE EVOLVING SINGING VOICE: CHANGES ACROSS THE LIFESPAN

Karen Brunssen
Plural Publishing 2018
331 pages ISBN 978-1-63550-043-1

Reviewed by: Gillyanne Kayes

A book on pedagogy that addresses singing across the lifespan is much needed. Despite changes in government attitudes towards the place of music in education, singing is growing in popularity, not waning. There is an

increased interest not only in one-to-one lessons but also in ensemble, choral and community choral group singing. The rise of reality shows that include children as vocal performers has meant that more children are seeking vocal lessons, often with high expectations. People in the developed world are living longer and want to continue singing longer. Teachers, trainers and choral leaders need to understand their singers in the context of lifespan changes.

The book is well-organised with contributions from clinicians as well as information gathered from singing teachers working in the field. The first thing I appreciated when opening the book was the organisation of functional elements of voice under the four

BOOK REVIEW

The Evolving Singing Voice

Changes Across the Lifespan

KAREN BRUNSSSEN



headings of Respiration, Vibration, Resonance, Expectations. Vibration is a newish buzz word that allows a more intuitive understanding of the elements of phonation in singing, including register mechanisms. I did wonder though why Articulation had not been given a similar status, since it is often such a key factor in vocal troubleshooting and – after all – most songs have words. The book would have benefitted from some specific guidance for teachers on this important topic, even if only as an overview.

I admit that I headed next to the final section of the book, 'Training Tools Across the Lifespan'. How information is 'translated' into practical vocal exercises is the mainstay of successful pedagogy in my opinion, and I was eager to see the suggested exercises. The concepts of the '5-day Mini Challenge' and '6-Week Rule' are useful reminders that learning a new skill takes time and repetition and any new teacher will find it worthwhile scanning the whole of this section for ideas.

Following the Introduction, the book is organised into seven sections:

- New-born, Infant, Child
- Adolescent Years
- Young Adult
- Adult
- The Senescent Singer
- Medical Assessment Across the Lifespan
- Training Tools Across the Lifespan

Within these sections, information is organised such that there is an introduction to what is known about physiological changes, then the sub-headings of the vocal elements already mentioned, followed by *Expectations* and *From the Teachers* (reports and case histories from teachers in the field). I liked this aspect of the book very much because again, it takes the reader from the theoretical to the practical. There is a slight discrepancy in that in the Young Adults section, the reports are headed "from the students" (which I liked) but in the Adult section there is neither a report from the students or the teachers. I felt this was an omission.

Thinking of the number of children learning singing either in choirs, one-to-one or in weekend stage schools I was surprised to see that Child did not receive its own section. I understand the delineation chosen in terms of

physiological development, but I would have preferred to have seen this first section divided into two, perhaps along the lines of Jenevora Williams' *Teaching Singing to Children and Young Adults*. That said, Williams' chapter on children deals with ages 6-12 whereas in this book, adolescence includes age 10. In this book there is also a useful sub-heading under 'History' on pp 81: Expectations by Age. Although age itself is not a reliable marker of the stages of voice change (and the narrative makes this clear) I think many teachers will appreciate this information.

For me the standout sections of the book are The Adolescent Years and Young Adult. There is a wealth of practical information here that will be useful to any teacher working with these age-groups. The Adolescent Years, co-written by Chadley Ballantyne, includes excellent, reader-friendly information on the acoustics of resonance and source-filter interaction – a topic that can frighten many singing teachers. Ballantyne makes it simple, understandable and relevant. There is also a sub-heading on orthodontics and a useful sample 'Vocal Evaluation' checklist.

The Young Adult section includes a self-evaluation checklist for students and recommendations for choir singing, Musical Theatre and CCM styles. I especially liked 'Tying it all together with language and speech motor control'. While I may not agree with all the advice given under Musical Theatre and CCM styles ("the soft palate is still lifted" definitely has a question mark over it for me), there is an acknowledgement in this chapter that teachers will need to elicit different timbres, voice use and forms of expression, when working with students of different genres.

I very much liked the unpacking of SOVT – how and why it works – and the variations from semi-occluded to fully occluded transitory postures. I'd recommend this section to any singing teacher who is experimenting with SOVT, getting results but perhaps not understanding why. Within this section, I felt that the tongue work ('Tongue Out Phonation') was rather sparse, and there is no sub-heading in the index for tongue root tension. Since tension in the tongue root often acts as a 'pseudo-support' mechanism in singing, frequently emanating from habitual speech patterns, it would have been good to see it addressed directly.

Do I have any caveats about the book? A few, yes. The written examples of musical exercises all appear to be based on scales and arpeggios that are used in classical music. This did seem a shame given that the majority of working singing teachers will be teaching MT and CCM styles. Why not include some exercises based on pentatonic and natural minor scales for example? Similarly in the summary of 'child' voice there is a very old-fashioned viewpoint expressed, which it's suggested is "ageless wisdom" (pp 52) "The aim is not more power, but beauty and purity... if the tone is clear, beautiful and well-poised and under the singer's control, then the training is along safe lines...". I can hear the teachers of Musical Theatre and CCM singing beating their breasts in frustration as I write.

Thus, I discern a bias towards classical aesthetic in some sections of the book and in further editions – which this text warrants – I would recommend that this is addressed.

Overall, there is a lot of useful information in the book. It's clear that the main contributors are highly knowledgeable, and the many excellent references to voice science are well-explained. Relevant aspects of vocal physiology and function are set out in an accessible manner and the information from clinical practice that a singing teacher or voice educator might need is also good. References are also given at the end of each chapter which readers will find useful for further research. With the caveats in mind I would recommend this book for serious singing teacher to have on their shelves as a reference and resource and for the book to be on the reading list of generalist vocal pedagogy courses.

Dr Gillyanne Kayes is a writer, researcher, teacher and singing voice expert.

To advise us of changes to your contact details such as a new email address, etc., you will need to contact the BVA office. You can do this by sending an email to administrator@britishvoiceassociation.org.uk or by telephoning 0300 123 2773

BVA NEWS NEW COUNCIL MEMBERS

Jane Oakshott MBE



Jane Oakshott is a highly-regarded Voice Coach in the field of spoken voice. Since 1992, she has worked with the three Universities in Leeds, as well as in private practice, helping a wide range of occupational voice users including keen executives, stressed teachers, nervous presenters and focused actors.

Jane came to voice coaching through performance, script writing and directing. As a research student in Leeds, she set up and directed the first modern performance of a medieval mystery cycle, using the lost staging method of pageant wagons in procession through the streets. This remarkable project involved many departments across the University as well as other Yorkshire colleges and local drama groups. The participation of such a broad population drawn from across the University – and the wider city – taught Jane how to help a diverse range of people gain confidence, presence and a voice they could trust. The production also led to her first full-time job, setting up a Drama Department and running the theatre at the University of Otago in Dunedin, New Zealand.

On marriage to musicologist Richard Rastall, Jane returned to Leeds and through the '80s and '90s continued productions of mystery plays. Street theatre is especially vocally challenging, and many of the performers found Jane's coaching life-changing, and in turn, made her realise that voice coaching was where she wanted to work. As soon as her youngest child started school, she made a beeline for the LAMDA teaching qualification and in 1998, set up her voice consultancy, The Oakshott Principle.

In 2003, Jane established words-and-music company, 'Trio Literati' and in 2005, alongside Speech and Language Therapist Jo Donnelly, set up the Leeds Voice Day workshops; both projects are ongoing. She also enjoys giving talks on theatre, illustrated with (in her words) daft anecdotes, poetry and hats!

Jane says: "Voice is universal, words are human; to work with both is a privilege and a joy. I love the way words all taste different in the mouth, and how you can make them count – how they make pictures in 3D and colour when you really commit to them and the sounds that make them up. For me, voice coaching works best on organic gardening principles: encourage what's flourishing, avoid digging, weed gently, and feed in the fertilising magic of technique."

In 2008, Jane was awarded an MBE in recognition of her pioneering work in the revival of mystery plays.

Yakubu Karagama



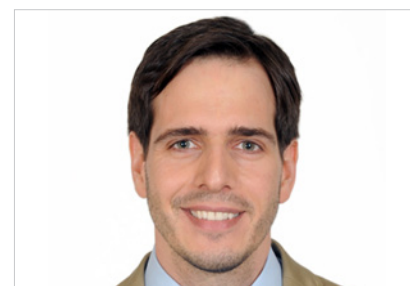
Mr Yakubu Karagama is one of the world's leading experts in the diagnosis and management of voice disorders, specialising in professional voice. He completed his surgical training with the North East Deanery in Newcastle upon Tyne in 2007, gaining his primary qualification in the management of General Ear, Nose & Throat disorders, including nasal problems. Yakubu is also a keen researcher, obtaining an MSc in Advanced Voice Research at the Newcastle University in 2005. He has a special interest in promoting research and innovation in the field, introducing leading-edge treatments of voice disorders.

In addition to his work in the UK, Yakubu has completed travelling fellowships to the University of California, Davis, training on swallowing disorder under Professor Peter Belafsky, and in Kyoto under Professor Emeritus Isshiki where he learnt advanced procedures in voice disorder management. He receives regular international invitations to appear as a keynote speaker, and now runs the laryngology centre at Guy's and St Thomas' Hospital NHS Foundation Trust London, offering high-quality treatment to his patients in the areas of voice, airway and swallowing disorders.

Yakubu is the founder and Course Director of the International Manchester Phonosurgery course, International

Laser and Laryngeal Airway course and International Dysphagia and Transnasal Oesophagoscopy course on the investigation and management of swallow disorder. He has presented his research and won prizes at national and international conferences, including the North of England Otolaryngological Society, the Royal Society of Medicine and the British Association Conference of Otolaryngologists. Yakubu has authored and co-authored over 30 publications, is an Honorary Senior Lecturer at both the University of Manchester and Edge Hill University, and Honorary Fellow at the Royal Northern College of Music. He also sits on the Council of the British Laryngological Association, of which he was both a founder member and its first Secretary.

Nikos Spantideas



Nikos Spantideas started his career as a speech therapist, and from the outset, was drawn to the field of voice and voice pathology. In 2005, his interest led him to London to study for an MSc in voice pathology. Returning to Greece, he worked for ten years as a speech and language therapist, specialising in voice, completing his medical degree at the same time. During this period, Nikos was active in spreading the message of vocal health awareness both to the public, and to voice professional groups, as well as training speech and language therapists in Greece in voice and its disorders.

Nikos has followed the British Voice Association since his early professional years. He has now moved to London for ENT training which gives him "a perfect opportunity" to become much more closely involved in the the BVA and "to contribute to its fascinating aims."

Having served as elected vice president of the Association of Scientists of Speech and Language Therapists of Greece for six years and head of the Special Interest Group for Voice since 2014, Nikos is looking forward to using his experience to support the development of the BVA and promotion of its work.