

THE BRITISH VOICE ASSOCIATION

COMMUNICATING VOICE

 BVA

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THE EMERGENCE OF SINGER IDENTITY IN CHILDHOOD

BY GRAHAM WELCH

The origins of singing identity begin early in life (*cf* Welch, 2005). Initially, young children's earliest vocal products relate to their effective state (such as discomfort or distress, or eustress – the latter characterised by euphonic cooing, e.g., Papousek [H], 1996). Subsequently, the interfacing of infant neuropsychobiological design and sonic experiences within the maternal culture shapes the infant's pre-linguistic vocalisations to create a form of parent-child/self-other communication that draws on the prosodic features of the mother tongue (such as pitch contours and basis harmonic intervals, 3rds, 4ths, 5ths, octaves, as well as loudness, timbre and rhythm) (e.g., Papousek, [M], 1996; Malloch, 1999 – see Welch, 2005 for an overview). This form of 'infant-directed speech' is complemented by 'infant-directed singing', in which mothers sing to their infant more expressively, more slowly, and at a higher pitch level than when singing informally on their own (Trainor et al, 1997; Trehub et al, 1997).

Communication is also reciprocal, in the sense of parents encouraging and responding to the infant's vocal products, whilst reinforcing and expanding these (Kirkpatrick, 1962; Tafuri, 2008; Trehub & Trainor, 1998). Knight (2010:267) argues that such "musical conversation is singing as life [original emphasis], not merely singing in life." Trehub and Gudmundsdottir (2015) report that mothers are 'singing mentors' by revealing the ways that they intuitively use melodious talk and a limited repertoire of favourite songs to bring comfort and joy to their children. Over time, the maternal 'singing mentor' focus is reported to change from predominantly attention capture and emotional regulation towards more active singing games, including rudimentary vocal duets. This maternal singer identity should be regarded as crucial in the infant's socio-musical development.

Where encouraged, young children are likely to build a repertoire of known songs or fragments and to use elements of these in their own creative vocal play. For the vast majority of young children, unless they are stopped in some way from expressing themselves through their recognisably sung products, their emerging singing identity is positive, as evidenced within their imaginative play or in their growing awareness of the song repertoire of childhood.

As children get older and enter the school system, the focus tends to be more on the formal learning of songs in the classroom, whilst they will continue to experience informal learning of other song repertoire outside, such as in the home and related contexts. These experiences are either virtual (as mediated by media), or direct through contact with another human, such as their peers, which may also be linked to shared listening to recorded or broadcast vocal music. The outcome is not just a sense of child singer identity that is shaped by these two contexts of musical experiences (school/non-school), but of possible tension between the two. The contradiction in singer identity between singing in school and singing at home was reinforced by detailed analyses of data from a large-scale study related to the *Sing Up* project. Responses from 8,124 participants aged seven plus to ten plus revealed that younger children were more positive about singing than older children. This is somewhat paradoxical, in that as children grew older and become more competent at singing (as measured comparatively for each individual in a separate strand of the *Sing Up* programme evaluation, e.g., Welch et al, 2010), they tended to become more negative about singing in school. However, children in those schools that had participated in the *Sing Up* programme and, by inference and researcher observation, had experienced a greater nurturing emphasis on the collective development of singing skills, were significantly more positive about singing in school than their non-*Sing Up* experienced peers.

EDITORIAL

We have been advised that much of the text used in the Autumn 2014 Newsletter report on the "Vibrato Day" was taken from work produced by Rebecca Moseley-Morgan during her academic studies, including previously unpublished material. She has asked that we note that she asserts her authorship of that material.

Lynne Wayman, *Editor*
lynnewayman.voicecentre@virgin.net

This edition's cover photo:
Oliver Tompsett by John Baines



The onset of puberty brings about changes in the underlying anatomical and physiological structures of the voice and, in turn, these impact on singing behaviours for both females and males. Boyhood singing behaviour and consequently singer identity is particularly disrupted by the onset of puberty. For some, this creates a sense of loss as they enter their teens, and the products of their singing (and spoken) voice become unstable (Ashley & Mecke, 2013; Freer, 2015). By comparison, for girls, whilst puberty also brings about physical changes that can impact on singing identity (Gackle, 2014), these are more subtle, such as related to increased breathiness and short-term discomfort in the upper singing range. Consequently, because these changes are relatively minor, it may be that girls may be unaware of such differences in their voices unless they have a regular performance schedule and are sensitised to small, perceived changes in their singing ability.

For some children in primary (elementary) school settings, there is an added challenge, as reported earlier, of inappropriate and adverse comments from teachers that can dissuade children from singing activities. Such comments significantly hinder their singing development and thus create a negative singer identity where previously the identity was more positive. In part, such experience may derive from a tendency for primary (elementary) teachers to feel less confident about leading music in their classes, often because they are reported to believe that they lack appropriate music subject knowledge and have limited faith in their own musicality (Hennessy, 2000; McCulloch, 2006; Mills, 1989; Stunell, 2007).

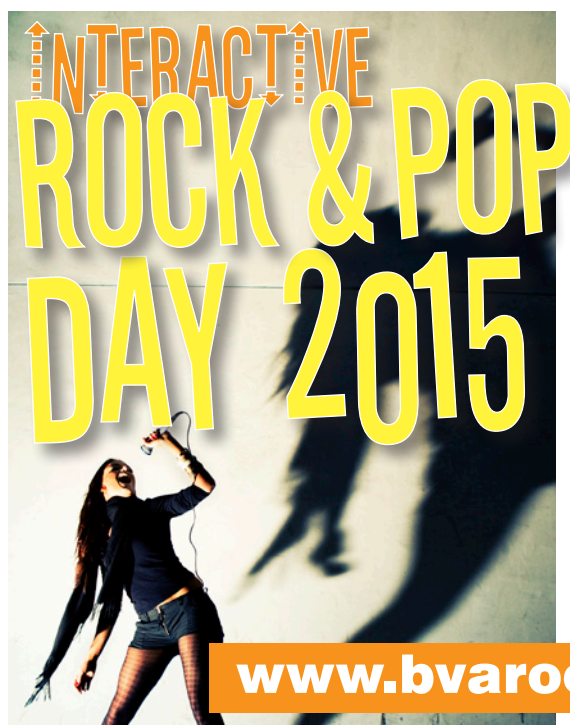
In summary, child and adolescent singer identity has many different interrelated facets. These arise from an underlying interfacing of (a) the nature of the vocal instrument itself—its physical structure, and its psychological management, which change and develop over time as part of a normal maturational process, interfaced with experience, and in which singing behaviour can have a close relationship with the other prime vocal function, namely that of speech (Patel, 2008; Thurman & Welch, 2000). In addition, (b) a range of personal, musical and socio-cultural contexts shape vocal behaviour, including singing.



Graham Welch receives his certificate from Katharine Lewis, outgoing President, after giving Gunnar Rugheimer Lecture.

Different cultures and social groups (including families) place distinctive values on the act of singing, and these values are reflected in the levels of singing competency demonstrated by children and adolescents.

This text is extracted and adapted from Welch, G.F. (in press). 'Singer identities and educational environments' In: R.A.R. McDonald, D.M.Hargreaves, & D. Miell (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Musical Identities*. New York: OUP. Full details of the references being cited are available on request, as is the full text, from g.welch@ioe.ac.uk



SEPT 13TH 2015

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CHORAL SINGING

BY DAVID M HOWARD

*York Centre for Singing Science
Department of Electronics, University of York
Conductor: York Cantores and Consonance*

Choral singing involves the use of the vocal instrument – above and beyond the requirements for individual speech – in a corporate activity that is hugely rewarding for singers and audience alike.

It is a very uplifting, thrilling, experience to be part of a choral team singing at one of those magical moments when everything musically just comes together. Time seems to stand still as the corporate sound envelops everyone performing and listening – conductor, choral singers and most especially the audience.

However, such moments do not happen often. To achieve them when we are singing in a choir, we need to have several things properly in place.

Control of the anatomy of (healthy) voice production

They include appropriate control of the power source (breath control), not only in terms of the flow of air from the lungs, but also in keeping the neck long while the neck and shoulder regions remain relaxed. We also need control of the sound source for sung sounds. This involves very fine muscular control of the vibrating vocal folds in terms of their fundamental frequency, acoustic loudness and sound quality, which is itself informed by what our ears tell us about the sound being made. The sound modifiers (the parts of the vocal tract that are moved to form the different sounds of language) need to be appropriately altered to produce the required pronunciation of the lyrics and to blend with other singers in the same part and with any other parts singing the same word at the same time. Again, this relies on what our ears are telling us about the sound being made.

Listening to our own sound

When singing together, what we hear of our own singing merges with the sounds from other singers. If we cannot easily monitor our sound against the background of others singing, then intonation and blend can suffer. To prevent this, we must be able to hear our own voices in enough acoustic detail to pick out key acoustic features in our own sung output. At the same time, we must be able to hear the choir around us as a reference for tuning and intonation, timbral 'colour' and overall blend. For individual singers to monitor their own output sound readily, it is important to consider several things about choral layout and the acoustics of the space in which the choir is singing.



Photo: by Paul Meyer Photography (www.photostudio.co.uk)

David Howard

Acoustics of a performance space and choral layout

Awareness of the variation in acoustics between the different venues in which a choir rehearses and performs is critical to improving the choir's overall output. The acoustic variation depends on the size and shape of the space, the material on the surfaces of the space (walls, floor and ceiling) and the furniture within the space.

But not only these aspects affect the overall sound. Any audible background noise, e.g. traffic, aircraft, air conditioning, heating, lift motors, mobile ringtones, kitchens, or catering outlets, has a direct impact on the director's, audience's and singers' perception of the choir's sound. How a choral director places the performers within the performance space affects the overall sound heard by everyone in the space, as well as the ease with which individual singers can hear themselves and each other. The spaces between singers, i.e. the distances between individuals from front to back, left to right and up and down, affects the overall sound and how well singers hear each other.

“A little knowledge, open ears and the preparedness to do things differently can produce great improvement ... and elevate choral singing to a very special experience” says David Howard.

Setting up a choir

It is an essential part of the choral director's role to become more aware of these and other issues when setting up the choir for rehearsal and performance. It is often forgotten that the choir's set up in the performance space will be different to the set up in the rehearsal space – unless the choir is in the privileged position of these being the same location.

His/her own ears are the main tool available to a director when assessing the set up. Starting the choir off with a well-known piece of music, and then walking around the space where the audience will sit, will provide the director with much of the acoustic information needed. In addition, I have personally found that mixing up the singers so that they are not next to other singers in their part can often produce an enormous improvement in the overall sound in terms of better intonation, blend, the difference between soft and loud, and the overall experience for each and every singer.

Warm up and cool down exercises

For singers to work at their best and to maintain their voices in tiptop healthy condition, vocal warm ups and vocal cool downs must be included in rehearsal and before a performance. In the past, as a choral singer myself, I have been typically in choirs that did not use vocal warm up exercises while vocal cool down exercises did not exist!

In one choir where I was a tenor, the director did not consider warm ups were necessary on the basis that hymns in harmony were always the first item to be sung. I began to realise that I found singing choir vocally very straining whenever the opening hymns had tenor lines sitting in the range between about middle C and the E or F above, i.e. across a transition point. As the director could not be persuaded to change his practice technique, eventually I moved to another choir.

Final thoughts

Choral singing can indeed achieve powerful magical moments, which are indeed so uplifting to be part of, but several things must be properly in place for this to happen. A little knowledge, open ears and the preparedness to do things a little differently can produce great improvement in the acoustic output of a choir. The result will enhance the listening of the audience and elevate choir singing to a very special experience.

For further details, please see: Howard, D.M. (2015). Choral singing and healthy voice production. Tunbridge Wells: Willow Leaf Publishing (www.willowleafmedia.com).

DMH, York, June 2015

A review of David Howard's book: *Choral Singing and Healthy Voice Production* follows on page 6

Photo by kind permission of Jorgen Nijman



The Vale of York Voices at practice

CHORAL SINGING AND HEALTHY VOICE PRODUCTION

Author: Prof David M Howard

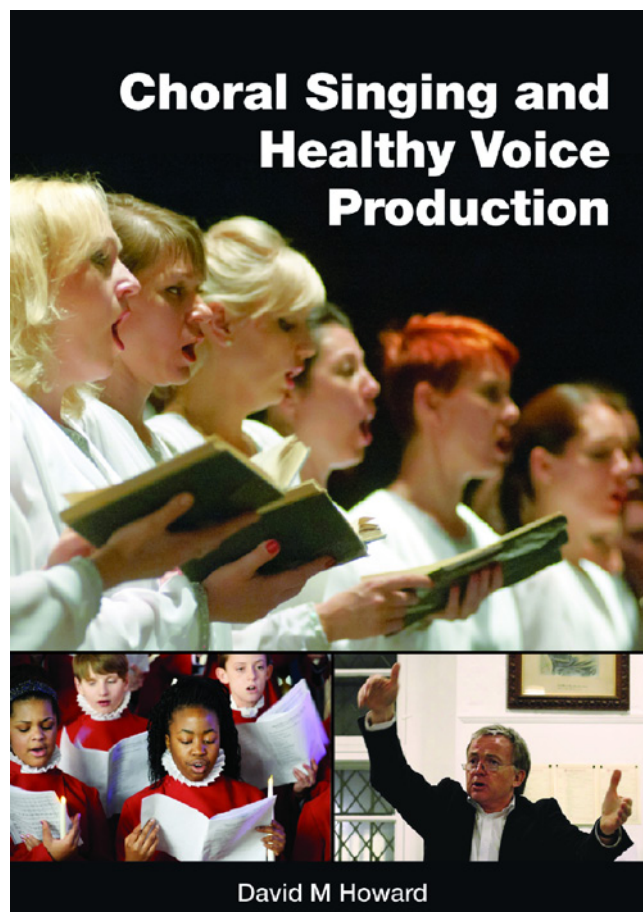
Book review by Stuart Barr

Until David Howard's book, the standard source on how voice science and performance practice combine in the choral world was *Choral Pedagogy* by Brenda Smith and the venerable Robert Sataloff: a book whose slightly patronising tone often frustrated this reader. *Choral Singing and Healthy Voice Production* is altogether a much better approach to the subject. Howard has a unique mix of qualities: infectious energy for his subject and is an Engineering Professor of Music Technology and an amateur choral director.

Aimed at choral directors, this book seeks to empower its reader through solid technical grounding in areas where knowledge is often lacking: how the voice works and how to maintain healthy voice production. Where he goes beyond Smith & Sataloff's book is by showing how science (often using his own research) can provide the tools to explain why pitch drift occurs, and how to blend voices better. Anyone who attempts David's exercise to show how a choir can go a semitone flat in just twelve chords whilst singing perfectly "in tune" will be simultaneously amazed and horrified!

Leonard Bernstein may have been one of the most significant composers and conductors of the 20th Century, but for a master class in communicating the joys and detail of classical music to children and uninformed adults, I urge the reader to watch videos of Bernstein children's concerts (freely available on YouTube). Howard also has this gift of communication: the ability to lucidly explain complex technical details to non-scientists. The user-friendliness of the book is further helped by being laden with diagrams, photos and tables of practical exercises.

There are a few weaknesses in the book. The most important error is that not only is the book designed purely for classical choirs, but that it doesn't mention this fact: it just assumes that choirs = classical. In today's rapidly evolving choral world, this is both disappointing and a missed opportunity. A chapter on idiomatic sound technique (getting choirs to adapt their sound to the music) would be an exciting addition (an unpublished area). Also, his chapter on how the voice works assumes the



adoption of lower-larynx voice production (through the "yawn"). This would be a mistake in other genres. Howard also uses imagery (in his posture-correcting "Frankfurter Sausage" and "Bolero Jacket" exercises) and a methodology for "experiencing diaphragmatic breathing" which he assumes will be universally repeatable from his instructions, but which this reader found ambiguous.

Notwithstanding my quibbles, this is an excellent book that should form part of the basic pedagogy for every aspiring and established choral conductor. May Howard's irresistible energy, immense knowledge and practical experience have great impact upon the choral world.

Tunbridge Wells, UK 2015: Willow Leaf Publishing
www.willowleafmedia.com
 ISBN: 978-0-9926216-1-2

VOICE CLINICS FORUM 2015

Friday, 23rd October, The Governor's Hall, St Thomas's Hospital, Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1 7EH

Topics in planning include:

FOR THOSE IN TRAINING:

- Preparing to run a voice clinic: current training trends in Laryngology for ENT surgeons
- Preparing to be the Voice Clinic Speech and Language Therapist – what education and training do we need?
- Developing a programme for singing teachers to work in the Voice Clinic

FOR CURRENT VOICE CLINIC STAFF:

- Ensuring voice clinic survival in the modern NHS
- The role of voice clinics in the NHS – a GP/commissioner's view
- Round table panel discussion
- Voice analysis software reviewed: application in voice clinic and daily practice
- Technology in the voice clinic: what is really useful?

CLINICAL SESSION: "One easy, one not so easy!" – a multidisciplinary case discussion panel

Please note, topics may be subject to change. Visit the BVA website for preliminary programme details (when available).

BVA EVENT REPORT

ROCK THE STAGE

Sunday 19th April, Royal Academy of Music

by Ronni Bailey

Photos: John Baines

A great start to the day with complementary coffees and biscuits as BVA members and non-members exchanged pleasantries. I find this time important in the day, being amongst like-minded professionals, catching up and exchanging opinions on current topics in our work.

The atmosphere was eager and positive as we sat down for specialist speakers Gillyanne Kayes and Jeremy Fisher. I agreed with their discussion on 'Style'. There are so many sub genres

in 'rock' and 'rock musicals' that require very different physical, dramatic & vocal singing styles. As a singer in rock bands for several years, it came as no surprise to me when they pointed out the key characteristics of singing 'rock' which uses chest/modal voice where the vocal fold vibrations are heavier. Singing with high lung pressure and the use of idioms such as tone onsets and offsets, belting and chest mixes being used as you sing higher in range, were all discussed. A musical issue was raised that the score in pop/rock is almost never sung in exactly the same way. I have come across this so many times and Jeremy gave a timely prepared example using a Beverly Knight score. Moving on and considering the signature features of this style in gigging rock and musical theatre rock, I was in agreement with Gillyanne and Jeremy's observations that you share a rock gig directly with the audience. They described it as being about the feel, the groove and the atmosphere of the gig, whereas, in musical theatre (MT) you do not play to the audience; you must know your character and back-story, play the scene and move the action on in some way. Using examples from rock singers, they pointed out some other signature features of this style including:- singing short phrases; hitting the phrase and then dropping off the note; singing with straight tone and only occasional vibrato; and the ability to be flexible in order to allow the changes in vocal set-up.

Next up was Elliot Ware, Musical Director (MD), whose work includes 'Rock of Ages' and 'We Will Rock You'. He talked about an MD's requirements for actors wanting to cross over from MT into the Rock/Pop musical genre and gave his opinion about the technical and stylistic requirements he would expect during auditions. "We need drama but not melodrama and we need

West End star Oliver Tompsett interviewed by Kim Chandler



sentiment but not sentimentality.” Elliot made several notable points through his presentation, which included vibrato being a choice and to be used appropriately, not filling every gap with “riffing” and energy is not created by speed. I particularly liked his demonstration in the live auditions of how to transform a classic MT sound to a more typical rock sound by following some of these simple stylistic and technical alterations. His advice included a suggestion that singers could “dirty up the performance” explaining the importance of the start and end of a note using “bite offs” give more power.

Kim Chandler (Contemporary Singing Specialist) and Dane Chalfin (Vocal and Performance Coach) continued the live audition theme by explaining the coaching used to create an authentic rock/pop sound. Working with the male and female singers they demonstrated and discussed some differences between singing MT and Rock. In Rock consonants are more front-focused though tone can be more breathy for effect. Belting requires more vocal fold mass and the use of distortion adds another quality, the delivery is rhythmic and performance is about showmanship and attitude. Kim talked about connecting with the audience, using the space and performing as if sharing private thoughts with a friend. Distortion, Dane warns, is like salt and pepper on your plate and you don’t want too much! Kim also suggested the use of creak onset/offsets as an alternative to distortion especially for a younger singer. Dane demonstrated differences in belting styles explaining that different types of belt work better on different vowel sounds; the Winge vs. the Yell.

Oliver Tompsett (who recently played role of Drew in the London cast of *Rock of Ages*) talked about his time performing 8 shows a week back-to-back and the vocal demands and strain it put him through. He advised us to be cautious with regard to your vocal health; trust in yourself and how you feel; take a rest when you need to. He talked about the highs and lows of auditions and how qualities that mean a rejection for one show may be the same

An attentive and appreciative audience



Gillyanne Kayes and Jeremy Fisher

qualities that get you your next role. He advised psyching yourself up before you the audition. For a rock audition, he suggested using showmanship and being free of inhibitions. Don’t overwork or tire your voice out before the audition he advises, be smart, build up your stamina and know your stuff. Hit it fresh!

Finally, Tori Burnay (Principal Speech and Language Therapist at Guys and St Thomas Foundation Hospitals), who works with a large number of singers and performers with vocal problems gave her specialist opinion on the importance of ‘getting back





The panel (left-to-right) Dane Chalfin, Oliver Tompsett, Tori Burnay, Gillyanne Kayes, Jeremy Fisher and Kim Chandler

to neutral'. She talked about the muscular effort, high larynx and tongue, high subglottic pressure and high torso and neck support involved in singing rock. She explained the importance of "warming down" allowing the voice to recover more quickly and prevent further phonotrauma. Research shows that Resonant Voice Therapy (humming) was the most efficient way of warming down over normal spontaneous speech or total voice rest. A good vocal warm down, she described, can include 'n', 'ng', 'm' 'vv' 'zz' sirens or lip trills and gentle glottal pops. She also pointed

out the importance of winding down with body stretching. In between two shows, she advised tongue root exercises, neck and shoulder stretching and gentle humming. She emphasised the importance of vocal care and the benefits of inhaling steam.

This was another successful BVA day that demonstrated the stylistic and technical differences between Musical Theatre and Authentic Rock. Having a beautiful singing voice with good vocal technique is not sufficient for this genre: one style and set of techniques certainly does not suit all!

Coaching sessions with (left) Dane Chalfin and (right) Elliott Ware



THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

'The Pleasure and the Pain' is the title of a book by Debra Alcock Tyler, who is CEO of the Directory of Social Change, an organization which runs excellent courses on all aspects of charity management. The pleasure of being President? Working with the wonderful people on Council and being able to give something back to this Association. The pain? Well, no – unless you call hard work and commitment painful. I certainly do not, and I know that Dane Chalfin, who is about to take over as President, will fully endorse these sentiments.

The Council, so ably assisted by our Administrator, Jackie Ellis, and Company Secretary, Kristine Carroll-Porczynski, will now, sadly, say goodbye to Tom Harris, who has served the BVA so well for so many years, and to Amanda Carr, who is unable to continue because of work commitments. It was reported last year that Council had agreed to electronic presence at meetings. This move has proved popular, and so guidelines have now been put in place for the conduct of such meetings.

Our Treasurer, John Rubin, will be reporting on the financial situation and I would like to say thank you to John for his calm and wise management. I will leave the numbers to him, but I take this opportunity to remind those of you who are on-line shoppers, to please sign up to Give as You Live, and nominate the BVA. Every little helps! And talking of every little helping, remember to buy a raffle ticket - all proceeds go to the BVA, and one of you will win a book!

Council is acutely aware that moves to replace LPV as a membership benefit have taken some time. It has been important to get this right, and a great deal of work and discussion has taken place. I am pleased to say that the first part of a members-only section of the website is due to be announced in the near future, and this will, in fact, be part of a re-design of the whole website.

The Education Working Party, under the chairmanship of Emma Winscom, does a wonderful job in organizing such a varied and successful series of conferences. The Vibrato day, Voice Clinics Forum (for which many thanks also to Nimesh Patel), Collaborative Working, and Rock the Stage –

I have attended all these and can vouch for their excellence. My thanks especially for the help in organising today's programme. Most of my teaching work is with young voices, which is why it has been my choice of topic, and I am also honoured that Professor Graham Welch has kindly agreed to give the Gunnar Rugheimer lecture today.

The Education Working Party, together with David Siddall, our webmaster and designer, produce beautiful flyers for all these events. I would urge you all, to please spread the word by displaying these flyers on department notice boards. And my final thanks, education-wise, are to Sara Harris, for yet another wonderful leaflet for World Voice Day. I would like to add that requests for events outside London are considered carefully, and have been taken forward on occasions. Unfortunately, the attendance at these events is always lower than for the ones held in London.

Dane Chalfin and Kim Chandler continue to do wonders with Facebook and Twitter. Numbers of friends and followers are not just increasing, but the social media is bringing in delegates at conferences. Booking for conferences via Eventbrite has been trialled at a couple of recent events, and changes and improvements have been discussed regarding online payment for courses and membership fees.

Katherine Lewis' report given at the AGM and 'Management of the Young Voice' Study Day on July 5th 2015



NEW COUNCIL MEMBERS

Dane Chalfin (President)

Dane Chalfin is a contemporary vocal coach and voice rehabilitation specialist, whose clients range from charting artists to West End and touring shows. He is Principal Lecturer at Leeds College of Music. His special interest areas include high-intensity singing, endoscopic interpretation of laryngopharyngeal gestures in singing, psychogenic voice disorders and neurology. He has presented his work on contemporary vocal pedagogy and rehabilitation at international conferences and teacher/therapist training events around the UK. He has written chapters for TC-Helicon's *Ultimate Guide to Singing*, and has upcoming contributions to *The Cambridge Guide for Singer-Songwriters* and *The Voice Clinic Handbook*.

Ruth Epstein

Ruth Epstein, PhD, MRCSLT is Head of Speech and Language Therapy Services and Consultant Speech and Language Therapist (ENT) at the Royal National Throat Nose and Ear Hospital, London. She holds various honorary fellowships and senior lecturer positions at UCL and other academic institutions in the United Kingdom, as well as creating and running a successful MSc course in Voice Pathology since 2003 at University College London. Dr Epstein is a past President of the British Voice Association and an elected member of CoMeT (Collegium Medicorum Theatri), the international association of laryngologists, voice scientists and speech pathologists.

Craig Lees

Craig Lees is a vocalist, composer, arranger and choral director working in contemporary voice pedagogy. Currently lecturing in Popular Voice at Leeds College of Music, Craig also holds the post of 'Musician in Residence' for the West Yorkshire Playhouse's program for Young People. He is a regular contributor to Voice Council Magazine and was recently awarded the 'Sing for Pleasure Young Conductors Scholarship'. Craig will be presenting his work on contemporary vocal pedagogy at national and international conferences later this year.

NEW DIRECTOR

On 5th July 2015 the Council co-opted Mr. Nick Gibbins as a director of the BVA. (See also 'World Voice Day 2015', next page top right – more details will follow in the next Newsletter)

WORLD VOICE DAY 2015



World Voice Day took place again on 16th April 2015. The BVA's contribution this year was a leaflet entitled "When it isn't just Physical". The leaflet was designed to support patients suffering from conversion dysphonia brought on by emotional distress. I am glad to report that it has been very well received by the membership and voice clinics.

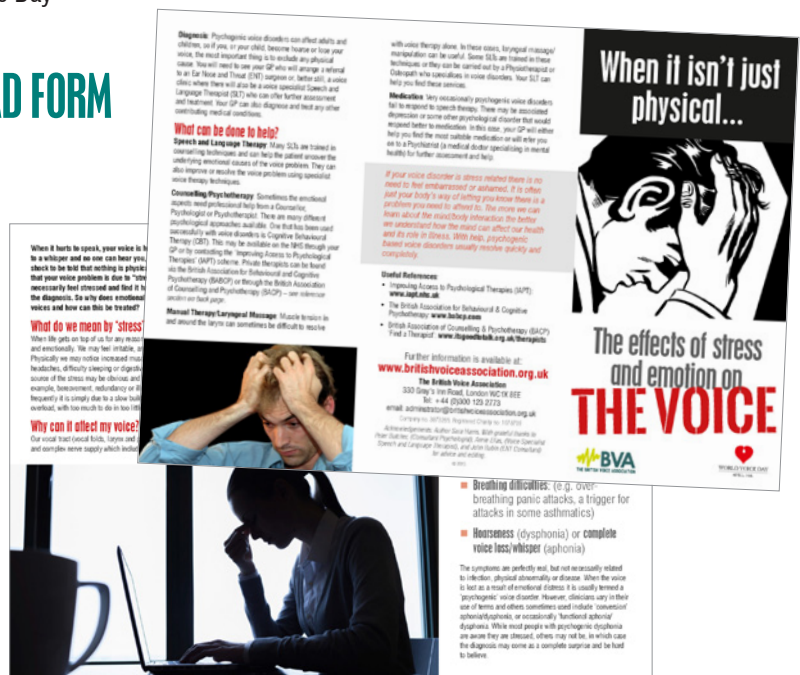
As usual, the BVA sent out World Voice Day posters and information aimed at encouraging members to spread the word and celebrate healthy voices. The first completed feedback reports of member events and activities are beginning to come in and will be available to inspire others on the World Voice Day section of the website.

NOW AVAILABLE IN PRINT OR DOWNLOAD FORM

WHEN IT ISN'T JUST PHYSICAL... THE EFFECTS OF STRESS & EMOTION ON THE VOICE

BVA WORLD VOICE DAY 2015 VOICE INFORMATION LEAFLET

Printed copies available from
administrator@britishvoiceassociation.org.uk
 or download from
[www.britishvoiceassociation.org.uk/
 downloadable-resources.htm](http://www.britishvoiceassociation.org.uk/downloadable-resources.htm)



Mr Nicholas Gibbins, Consultant Laryngologist, working in the Voice Disorders Unit at Lewisham Hospital, organised an event to celebrate World Voice Day in order to support the British Voice Association and Help Musician's UK. The event was a big success and raised a substantial and very welcome amount of approximately £1,000 for the BVA. We at the BVA are extremely grateful and would like to extend our thanks to Mr Gibbins and all the wonderful presenters and performers who helped raise this generous contribution to our funds. Below is a short report of the event that Mr Gibbins has kindly sent.



THE ART AND SCIENCE OF VOICE

Held at the Stone House, Lewisham on 16th April 2015

The first ever World Voice Day Celebration combining both artistic expression and scientific facts was held in South London on 16th April, entitled 'The Art and Science of Voice'. Organised by Mr Nicholas Gibbins, a laryngologist based in Lewisham, South London, who started the evening by explaining the evolution of the larynx, the elemental and fundamental nature of singing to the human condition and showed videos of the healthy singer's larynx and those with common voice pathologies (nodules, cysts and polyps). These were of great interest to the artistic members of the audience, many of whom had never seen the larynx before and who were fascinated by the movements of the vocal folds and their part in the process of producing a voice.

He talked about how singing is now used as therapy for some medical conditions and introduced Nicola Wydenbach and Eleanor Meynell. Both women are professional sopranos and both use their musical talents as therapy for medical patients. Ms Wydenbach uses singing as therapy for patients with Parkinsonism, has run workshops and courses regarding the use of singing as therapy, and is currently looking for funding in conjunction with the Sidney de Haan Research Centre to roll out more singing programmes for Parkinson's across the country.

Ms Meynell works with the dementia charity Lost Chord that takes music into care homes for those suffering with dementia. She talked movingly of the reaction one can get from patients when they hear songs from their youth and how patients often open up, even if briefly, when music stirs distant memories.

This was followed by a wonderful concert from these two ladies along with Mr Lawrence Wallington (bass) and expertly accompanied by Ms Andrea Kmecova on the piano, with a programme that was beautiful, moving and funny with repertoire as varied as Britten, Puccini, Mozart, Irving Berlin, Flanders and Swann, and rounded off with a rendition of the Toreador Song from Carmen that the audience were still humming as the evening ended.

A fantastic evening to celebrate World Voice Day that encouraged artists to learn more about their larynx, reminded scientists what the larynx can achieve and showed everyone how the worlds of the Arts and Science can help each other.

TO LOOK FORWARD TO...

The Education Working Party meets regularly to devise programmes of events for the BVA and the coming year promises to be as packed and varied as the last.

The ever popular biennial 'Rock and Pop' day will fall in September, hosted by Kim Chandler and BVA President-Elect Dane Chalfin. This year, the day will incorporate examining specific issues such as ear protection and monitoring, and the use of live performance technology. Additional presenters include Tom and Sara Harris, Craig Lees and John Rubin. The event will again be held at the George IVth Pub in Chiswick.

September also sees the next wonderful round of Accent Method training. The course is co-ordinated by Sara Harris and runs over three days, the first two in September and a follow-up day in January 2016. Places on this course are always in demand and this one shows signs of being nearly full already.

Swiftly after this, in October, the Voice Clinics Forum will again be held at St. Thomas' Hospital. This will be a packed programme, offering sessions which will appeal to SLTs, ENTs, singing teachers and voice coaches, whether in training or current voice clinic staff.

Early on 2016, we have two fascinating linked half-day sessions, the first in January and the second in February. The umbrella title is 'The Voice in Distress', and the sessions will reference to the topic in diverse and complementary ways. We are thrilled that Lynne Wayman will be one of the invited presenters, together with Christina Shewell, Anne Hurren and Anne Holmes. We are excited to explore Saturday and Sunday half-days in this linked venture and both courses should strike resonances with so many who work with voice-users who have had to 'recover' or re-establish voice use in a variety of contexts.

April 16th always marks World Voice Day and the BVA continues to produce wonderful leaflets for this, along with recording members' reported activities on the day.

Another event will be scheduled for late spring and 2016 will again be a year for the Van Lawrence Award, details of which will be released separately.

All in all, something for everyone in all areas of voice management. Perhaps dip your toes into something outside your usual area too - and please continue to let us know what topics you would enjoy seeing covered on the BVA courses.

I hope to formulate an article describing the planning of an event, from the point of view of the Education Working Party, for a later Newsletter. It is a many-sided, interesting and somewhat circuitous process but thanks to the amazing efforts of everyone in the EdWp, a diverse BVA programme continues, and long may it be so. Enjoy - and we look forward to seeing you there!

Emma Winscom
Chair, Education Working Party

diary dates

INTERACTIVE ROCK & POP DAY 2015

Sunday, 13th September 2015

10:00 – 17:00,

George IV, Chiswick, London

Training topics include alternative vocal onsets, technique through interpretation, the truth about nodules, ear protection and monitoring, rock and pop in a choral setting and using live performance technology. Participants will also be in for some fantastic performances and exclusive discounts from our exhibitors!

This event always sells out fast so book your tickets today!

Registration closes 06/09/15

Ticket available online – see the BVA website or search 'rock and pop day eventbrite'

VOICE CLINICS FORUM 2015

Friday, 23rd October 2015

The Governor's Hall,
St Thomas's Hospital,
Westminster Bridge Road,
London SE1 7EH

Programme currently under development for those in training and for current Voice Clinic staff plus session:

See page 6 for provisional programme summary. More details will be published on the BVA website when available.

See www.britishvoiceassociation.org.uk for more information and application forms (when available)



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