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THE 21ST CENTURY VOCAL PEDAGOGUE: A MEDIATOR AND TRANSLATOR FOR THE VOCAL STUDIO AND ITS INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLEAGUES

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ABSTRACT

The 21st Century Vocal Pedagogue: A Mediator and Translator for the Vocal Studio and Its Interdisciplinary Colleagues

The field of vocal pedagogy continues to search for a definitive method of discovering techniques for longevity, efficiency, aesthetic beauty, and maximum output in the human voice. Researchers of related disciplines such as otolaryngologists, speech-language pathologists, vocologists (one who studies the science of the voice), and singing specialists, have focused on scientific and clinical research, resources, and knowledge for the continuous search for these goals.

An important function of the vocal pedagogue is to contribute to the vocal instruction discipline in addition to its related fields, aspiring toward a more heterogeneous collaboration as well as functioning as a mediator between medicinal and clinical specialties and the artistry of the vocal instructor. Literature written recently by physicians specializing in treatment and rehabilitation of the voice are heavily laden with medical terminology often difficult for pedagogues to understand (with the exception of a growing populace who has made it their professional goal to remain connected to the medical and clinical community). Consequently, terminology can be misunderstood or misused by the voice instructor which leads to vague phrases and descriptions which may be wrongfully interpreted by students receiving voice instruction. It is the responsibility of the vocal pedagogue to accurately translate and define complex clinical terms for correct use in the imagery-based voice studio.

The majority of this presentation will only be an exploratory investigation into *vocology*, de-mystifying phrases common in the voice studio, and providing valuable resources for the 21st century vocal pedagogue. It will serve as a contribution to

pedagogical research by providing additional cohesion between the fields of voice science and vocal instruction.

QUESTIONS PROPOSED

1. How is the medical and clinical community (in terms of the professional voice) collaborating with vocal pedagogy to form an interdisciplinary coalition?
2. Will the vocal pedagogue benefit from the introduction of a common vocabulary currently present in the medicinal aspect and study of the voice? What are common phrases used by voice instructors, how are they sometimes misinterpreted, and what do they *really* mean?

Robert Thayer Sataloff, a leader in the field of unifying those who assist and participate in the research and study of the voice, states in his book, *Treatment of Voice Disorders*, “It is the responsibility of the singing teacher in a scientific age to interpret and expand vocal traditions through the means of current analysis so that the viable aspects of tradition can be communicated in a systematic way. There is no such thing as a unique vocal method or a unique teacher of singing. It is not necessary for each student and each teacher to rediscover the art of singing alone.”¹ This presentation will investigate the above questions as well as contribute to the wealth of purposeful and quality information that currently exists.

The demands on the vocal pedagogue are greater than that of previous generations of pedagogues despite our technological advancements. Validity of study and research will demarcate the pedagogues of science and the pedagogues of personal experience. The future pedagogue will require medical, clinical, and artistic training to stay abreast of

¹ Sataloff, Robert Thayer. *Treatment of Voice Disorders*. San Diego: Plural Publishing, Inc. (2005).

new methods of vocal habilitation, allowing future singers the ability to perform at their optimum health and realization.