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Longevity of Vocal Careers

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The art of being a 'singing teacher' is a special talent and an extraordinary gift, with which few people are blessed. The gifted few should be prevailed upon to communicate the floundering art of bel canto to our present generation of future artists.

Stop making a mystery of singing. The science of singing consists simply of palate *up*, tongue *down*, larynx as low as is comfortably possible, and phonating vowels as close as possible to the point where the sound originates. Then after inhaling abdominally, one allows the sound to float in one continuous stream on the breath with no interferences from the consonants.

Vocalises for both male and female voices *must* consist, to a greater degree, of florid, coloratura exercises in order to keep the vocal chords agile, elastic, and youthful.

Sopranos and altos must be certain to learn to sing in chest voice because it is the foundation of the female voice. In German-speaking countries, where the chest register is not generally favored, many sopranos have weak, unsupported low tones and pure, almost whistle-like head tones. In Italy, where the chest voice is favored, the sopranos have rich, resonant low notes, audible throughout the theater, and round, ringing high notes.

The vocal mechanism in an ordinary voice usually has a range of at least two octaves, and all a voice teacher does is to show how to sing them with ease.

¹ Paper presented at the meeting of Collegium Medicorum Theatri in Catania, Italy, March 5–8, 1972.

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We must make singers aware that some adrenalin is desirable in order to give a good performance, but excessive adrenalin (caused by fear or insecurity) will cause all muscles to tense. And any tension in the upper part of the body will slowly transmit itself to the singing mechanism in addition to causing shallow breathing and dry salivary glands.

One must be taught to always sing the same and never listen for feedback in an auditorium, because if the hall has poor acoustics the singer will begin to force and strain in trying to be heard.

Insist that any singer sing only the right repertoire for his voice.

Many Maestri direttori are continually asking for larger-sized orchestras and most of them are under the mistaken impression that dark, covered sounds carry better with this size of orchestra. They must be made aware of the fact that it is *older* singers who have dark, covered voices and older singers don't seem to care how much they force their voices to be heard over such an

orchestra. They may not have much to lose by this abuse of their instrument, but the younger singer *does*.

Artists should limit their singing performances to the number per week that they can sing comfortably.

The menopause in women, as the climacteric in men, need make very little difference in their vocal quality, since hormone shots or pills can keep the body on an even keel.