

Mar/Apr 2019

# CLASSICAL SINGER®

*Sonya  
Yoncheva:  
An Artist  
Who Dares*

**Establishing Your  
Competition Rep**

**Waking Up to  
Warming Up**

**Gearing Up for  
Your Next  
Competition**



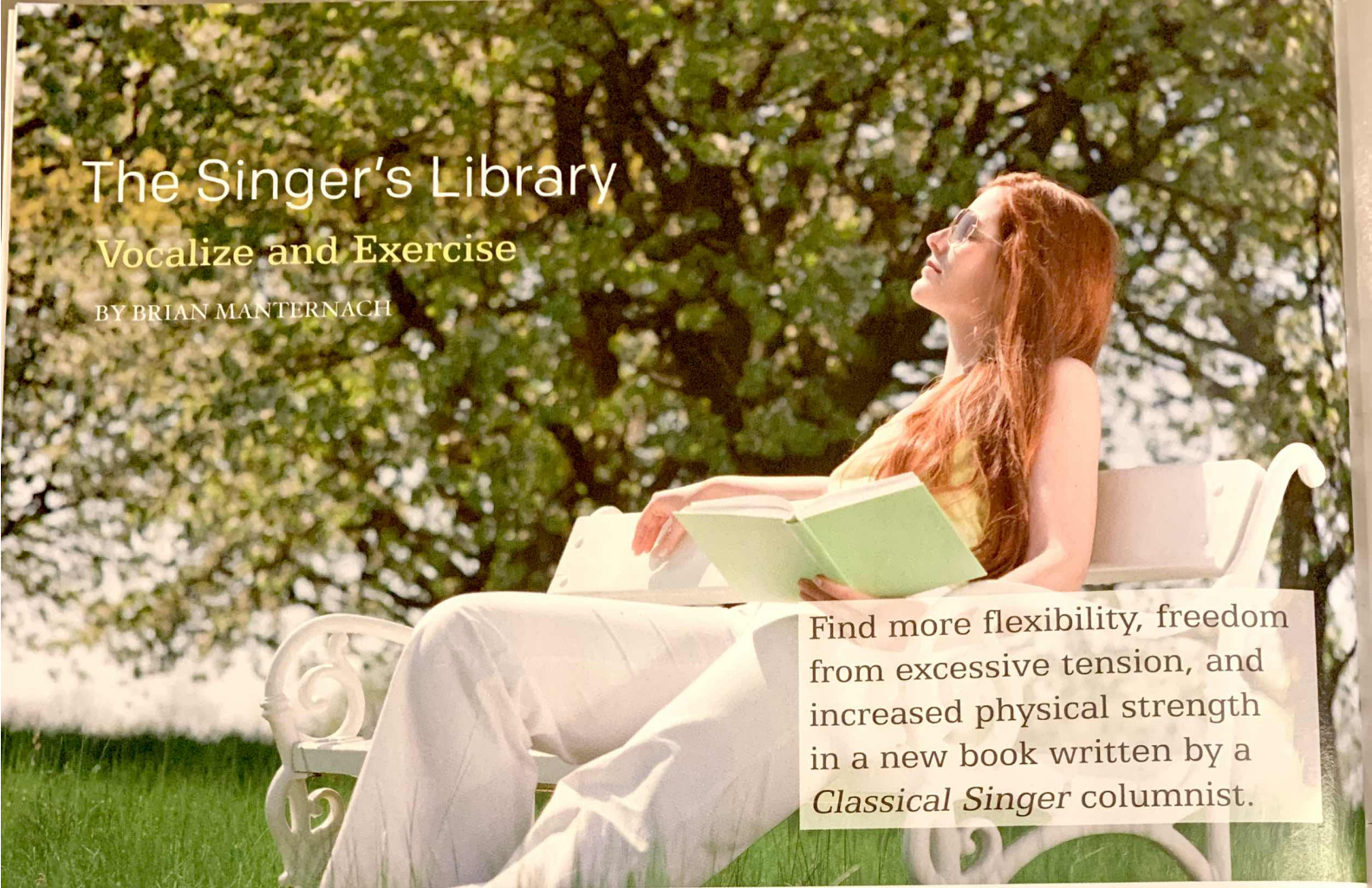
U.S.A. \$6.50 • Can \$8.70



# The Singer's Library

## Vocalize and Exercise

BY BRIAN MANTERNACH



Find more flexibility, freedom from excessive tension, and increased physical strength in a new book written by a *Classical Singer* columnist.



Brian Manternach

**C**ompetitive athletes are not only found on the rosters of professional sports teams.

In a previous *Singer's Library* column on a book titled *The Vocal Athlete* (December 2016), coauthor Wendy D. LeBorgne called singers "high-level athletes" who perform "super-

human activities."

Claudia Friedlander has emerged as one of the latest authors to pick up this pedagogical ball and run with it. In her new book, *Complete Vocal Fitness: A Singer's Guide to Physical Training, Anatomy, and Biomechanics*, she identifies sport-specific training exercises designed especially for singers. She discusses her approach in the following Q&A.

**In the book, you write about how you initially didn't believe you were born to be either a singer or an athlete. It wasn't until later that you realized both of these skills could be developed beyond the perceived limitations of "natural" abilities. What led to this discovery and how did**

**it change your approach to singing and exercising?**

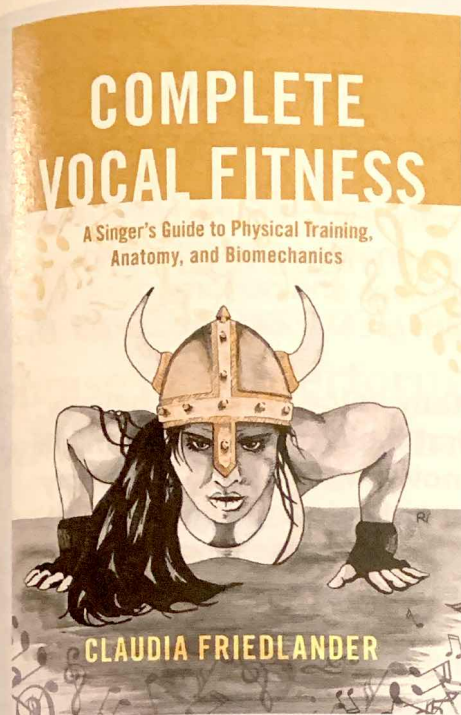
Bioenergetic therapy is psychological as well as physical. The course of bodywork I pursued in my mid-20s not only released chronic tensions that had impeded my ability to breathe and sing well—it also helped me find the courage to pursue things I had been told I wasn't good at, including fitness. Growing up, I think lots of kids are discouraged from doing things that do not seem to come naturally to them. But with passion and tenacity, we can all improve at the things we find fulfilling, regardless of how our natural aptitude is perceived.



Claudia Friedlander

**You also write that, although many singers embrace practices like the Alexander Technique to encourage efficient movement and to release unnecessary tension, there is a hesitancy to engage in bodywork that has "the potential to create structural changes in the singer's instrument." Where do you suppose that hesitation comes from?**





## Book Review

Claudia Friedlander's stated aim for *Complete Vocal Fitness* is to help singers achieve an effortless flow of expressive impulses through a vocal technique that is unimpeded by tensions and imbalances. She believes this can be accomplished by applying tenets of sport-specific training to address alignment, stamina, and stabilization. As a certified personal trainer who also holds a doctorate in vocal performance and pedagogy, Friedlander may be uniquely qualified to make these claims.

She also advocates understanding "instrument design and function" in order to investigate how one's own voice use can be improved. She makes the logical argument that if clarinetists understand how their instruments work in order to know whether problems are the result of faulty technique or of a faulty instrument, then singers would benefit from a similar approach.

*Complete Vocal Fitness* offers chapters on anatomy and physiology that are thorough yet easily digestible. The anatomical drawings included in these chapters, which are both accurate and artistic, are some of the most useful images found in any voice text.

Connections between exercise physiology and vocal technique continue to reveal that a healthy body can more easily support a healthy voice. Volumes of vocal method books exist that are filled with exercises designed to build voices. By providing physical exercises that

can strengthen the body in a way that supports functionally efficient singing, Friedlander has provided an important tool for singers looking to achieve peak performance. —Brian Manternach

**IBA** INTERNATIONAL  
BAROQUE ACADEMY  
at musiktheater bavaria

**EMPOWERING  
THE NEXT  
GENERATION OF  
EARLY MUSIC  
SPECIALISTS...**

The International Baroque Academy provides singers and instrumentalists with mentorship from some of today's leading scholars and artists in the field of historically informed performance practice. This intensive program culminates in performances of a wide range of 17th- and 18th-century music. Master Classes, Lessons, and Coachings offer in-depth study in:

Voice | Harpsichord | Baroque Dance | Acting and Historical Gesture

**2019  
COA Summer Arts and Education  
Institute Festival**

*Carmen* Fully Staged with Orchestra  
*Hello Out There* by William Saroyan & Jack Beeson

**Concerts**  
 **Competition**  
 **Masterclasses**

**July 19 - August 11, 2019**  
Audition Submissions now Welcome

**Youth Opera Camp July 14 - 21, 2019**

**For Information Contact:**  
**Edna Garabedian, 559-225-6737**  
**CEO Artistic General Director**  
**edna.garabedian@comcast.net**



Great singing has always been shrouded in mystique, and I believe that many things will forever remain mysterious about it! Singers are understandably hesitant to engage in behaviors that might structurally change their voices—they don't want to inadvertently mar an essential feature that contributes to the unique beauty of their sound.

However, we continually effect structural changes in our own bodies just as a consequence of the way we move and the things we eat from day to day. We may as well take charge of the changes we undergo in order to ensure they will be beneficial for our singing. The techniques that sports scientists have created to help athletes optimize their alignment, stamina, and stability can also help us to effect

positive structural changes in our instruments.

**What kinds of structural changes could occur in the exercises you recommend?**

We all develop muscular imbalances that impact our alignment and the way our bodies function. These imbalances may be so minor that an average person might not be affected by them. Elite athletes, however, must resolve their muscular imbalances, build stamina, and develop strength and flexibility in the areas that will be most advantageous for their chosen sport.

Where singers are concerned, resolving muscular imbalances can improve alignment in a way that makes it possible to access our full range, optimize

resonance, and deepen breathing. Developing targeted strength and flexibility can improve breath management and expand our stage movement options. Increasing our stamina can enable us to sustain long phrases and perform dynamics with greater ease and skill.

**Many voice teachers believe that if singers have too much knowledge of vocal anatomy and physiology it can inhibit free and expressive singing. But you describe that the deep understanding of biomechanics and motor learning that you acquired in the gym became integral to your pedagogical approach in the voice studio. Do singers have to attain this same level of understanding in order to reap the benefits you**



*"Sing in Italy"*  
**CANTA  
IN  
ITALIA**

JUNE 3RD – JUNE 29TH, 2019  
*Lucca, Italy*

Immerse yourself in Italian culture  
during this voice and opera study abroad

**FACULTY INCLUDE**

Alan Held, Master Clinician  
Claudia Catania, Voice  
Pina Mozzani, Voice

Scholarships available. Apply now:  
[wichita.edu/cantainitalia](http://wichita.edu/cantainitalia)



**WICHITA STATE  
UNIVERSITY**  
COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS  
Fine Arts Institute



"Developing targeted strength and flexibility can improve breath management and expand our stage movement options. Increasing our stamina can enable us to sustain long phrases and perform dynamics with greater ease and skill."

**describe in the book, or is it enough just to do the exercises?**


A fundamental understanding of vocal anatomy and biomechanics can help voice teachers identify the causes of their students' technical challenges and create means to improve their coordination. Not all singers need a deep understanding of anatomy, though. Some may find it useful to conceptualize and visualize the mechanics of technique while others have a learning style that makes it easier for them navigate by feel, sound, and instinct.

However, anatomical information is not the enemy of expression! A singer who is predisposed to overthinking things in a way that inhibits their expressivity should work on resolving that tendency for its own sake. Otherwise, anything might take them out of the moment, whether it's the particulars of physiology or diction or just evaluating their own sound.

Most will end up being exposed to anatomy and physiology in a required pedagogy class anyway. My hope is that my book will help them to learn this material in a way that is practically applicable to their work in the studio rather than purely conceptual.

*Brian Manternach is on the voice faculty of the University of Utah's Department of Theatre. In addition to his contributions to Classical Singer, he is an associate editor of the Journal of Singing. An active singer, he holds a doctor of music degree from the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music. Visit [www.brianmanternach.com](http://www.brianmanternach.com) for more information or contact him at [bmantern@gmail.com](mailto:bmantern@gmail.com).*

CS MUSIC



# American Institute of Musical Studies

July 1 - August 11, 2019  
Celebrating 49 Years in Graz, Austria

## 2019 MASTERCLASS ARTISTS



Linda Watson



Bo Skovhus



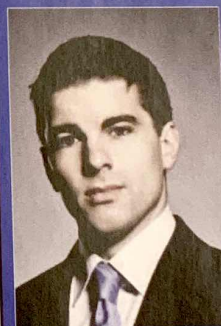
Barbara Bonney



Ulrich Eisenlohr



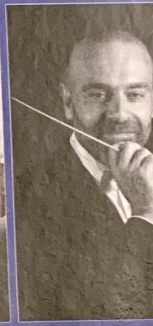
Gabriele Lechner



Gary Matthewman



Ewa Izykowska



Marzio Cazzulani

## Major Scholarship Awards Still Available

*To be considered for these merit-based scholarships, a live or video audition is required. Singers from all countries (18 and older) are welcome to audition.*

View audition info at [www.aimsgraz.com/auditions](http://www.aimsgraz.com/auditions)

Sarah Halley, General Director

## You CAN afford to attend AIMS