

THE SINGER'S LIBRARY

BY BRIAN MANTERNACH

Compton Publishing: A Decade Dedicated to the Voice

Four books from Compton Publishing delve into vocal pedagogy, vocal health for educators, singing for those with Parkinson's disease, and the larynx. With ten years of publishing for academic and professional books and media, Compton Publishing releases an array of publications for voice professionals.

In 2011, Compton Publishing was formed as an independent publisher of academic and professional books and media. Based in the United Kingdom, its focus is on communication sciences and disorders as well as a variety of related fields, including otolaryngology, head and neck surgery, voice, and singing. Besides the wide range of subjects Compton books cover, the publishers specifically aim to promote content and highlight authors they believe have international appeal.

Two Compton books have already been featured in this column: *A User's Manual for the Aging Voice* by Martha Howe (in the May/June 2020 issue of *Classical Singer*) and *Training Contemporary Commercial Singers* by Elizabeth Ann Benson (March/April 2021 issue). In honor of its first 10 years of publishing, this month's column highlights four additional, recently available Compton Publishing titles.

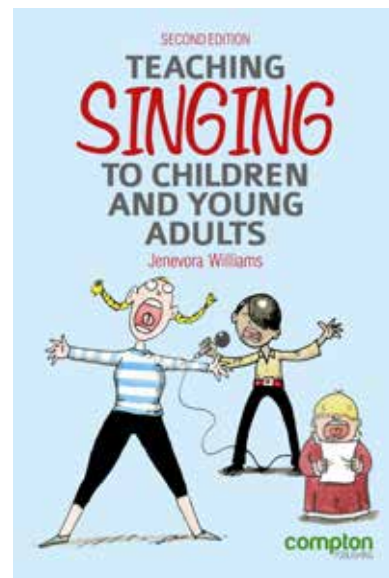
Teaching Singing to Children and Young Adults, Second Edition by Jenevora Williams

Voice pedagogy has long emphasized that singing can and should be enjoyed at every age and at every stage of development along the way. The reality, however, is that singers must keep numerous considerations in mind as their voices pass through these many stages.

In *Teaching Singing to Children and Young Adults*, author Jenevora Williams focuses on the three early stages of vocal

development: children (from the age of 1 year to the onset of puberty), adolescents (from the onset of puberty to the age of about 18), and young adults (from age 18 to the mid-20s). The first chapters of the book provide introductory information and outline how the voice changes in these early developmental stages. Chapter 5, "How the Voice Works," serves as a mini, 40-page pedagogy text in and of itself, providing explanations of physical function (the larynx, the vocal folds, the vocal tract, etc.) as well as exercises related to each area covered (breathing, registration, vibrato, onset, etc.). Later chapters address vocal health, how to structure lessons and practice sessions, and strategies for children who have different physical or educational needs.

The book's Prelude, "Questioning the Assumptions," is particularly noteworthy for the way Williams





presents and refutes many of the prevalent—but misleading—perceptions that can confuse vocal instruction. It also outlines the “three-legged stool of teacher creativity” (intuition, imagination, and information), which could be seen as a further breakdown of the “Voice Teacher Experience and Expertise” component of Kari Ragan’s three-fold Evidence-Based Voice Pedagogy model.

Like the singers the book is designed to help, Williams acknowledges that “we are all on a journey of education and development.” With the revised and expanded second edition of *Teaching Singing to Children and Young Adults*, readers benefit from the author’s own journey and development, shared in pages full of invaluable wisdom, insight, and practical strategies.

***Singing for People with Parkinson’s* by Nicola Wydenbach and Trish Vella-Burrows in association with Grenville Hancox**

Singer and arts educator Nicola Wydenbach and registered nurse and community music practitioner Trish Vella-Burrows bring varied backgrounds and experiences to the book *Singing for People with Parkinson’s*. They point out that as people today are living longer than those in previous generations, they are experiencing a range of age-related chronic health conditions. Parkinson’s disease, in particular, affects more than 10 million people worldwide.

It is increasingly common to see the arts employed in healthcare settings. Given the many recognized benefits that singing can bring about, the authors introduce the Sing to Beat Parkinson’s framework as the core of their

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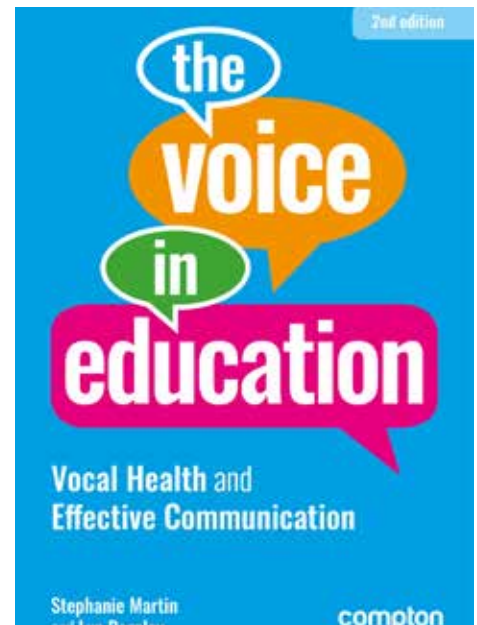
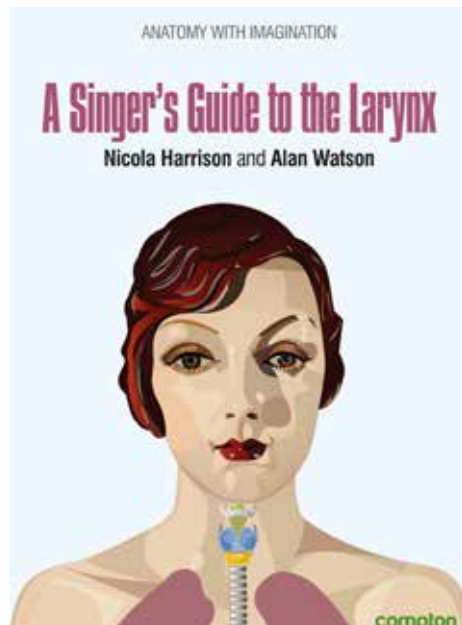
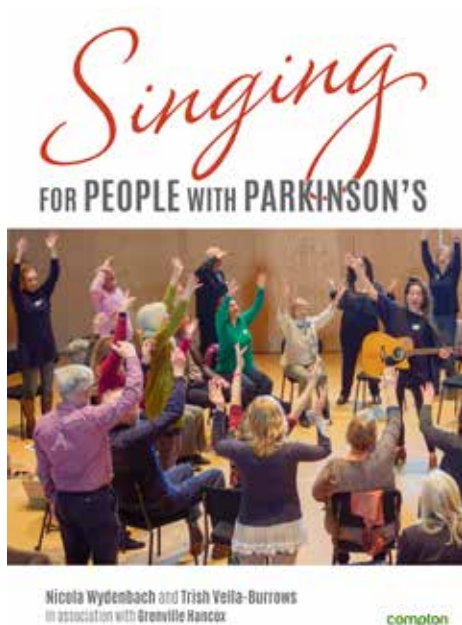


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book. The exercises they offer are designed to “inspire and inform” practitioners when structuring singing sessions for people directly affected by Parkinson’s as well as their families, friends, and caregivers.

The short volume of 86 pages presents preliminary information on Parkinson’s disease, including its symptoms, treatments, and how it impacts vocal production. It then describes physical and vocal exercises intended to help each singer with Parkinson’s maintain or improve function in the areas of the body that are responsible for respiration, phonation, resonance, and articulation.

For each exercise, the authors offer a “What to do” description, followed by a “What’s the point?” explanation, and finishing with “Top tip” advice for best practice and implementation. Despite the focus on vocal health and functionality, the authors emphasize the additional desired outcomes relating to broader physical, mental, social, and cognitive elements that are part of the holistic effect of singing.

Of course, since singing teachers are not health professionals, they should be mindful of their scope of practice when considering working with people with voice disorders or chronic health conditions. But, when working with the appropriate health professionals, *Singing for People with Parkinson’s* can provide background, information, and tools to help voice teachers become a valuable part of a team that leads sessions for people who are experiencing this specific disease.

***A Singer’s Guide to the Larynx* by Nicola Harrison and Alan Watson**

If a picture is worth a thousand words, the colorful, all-angle, original renderings in *A Singer’s Guide to the Larynx* may be the most valuable material found in the 122-page book.

In the Introduction, authors Nicola Harrison and Alan Watson refer to the publication as a “workbook” that has been designed to give singers, students, and teachers of

singing the ability to better visualize the internal workings of the larynx. Covering the cartilages, membranes, and muscles (intrinsic and extrinsic) of the larynx, as well as the vocal folds, the images are accompanied by “concise and scientifically accurate” text descriptions.

Alongside the diagrams of the various laryngeal mechanisms are black-and-white outlines of the same structures that readers are encouraged to color in themselves. The authors graciously allow teachers to freely photocopy these outlines, as well as the end-of-chapter quizzes, for classroom use with no requirement to seek additional copyright permission.

The book limits its focus to the larynx itself—its pictures and descriptions do not extend to other vocal anatomy like the respiratory system or the resonators. The authors, however, reveal that they hope to address these elements in future volumes of the “Anatomy with Imagination” series.

Harrison and Watson are quick to point out where their descriptions are incomplete, either out of an effort to keep things simple or due to a lack of universal agreement in the voice community. For instance, their explanation of vocal fold oscillation is based on an aerodynamic and myoelastic model that, they admit, does not account for the inertive reactance that occurs due to pressure changes above the vocal folds. Similarly, they acknowledge the disagreement about whether the action of the cricothyroid muscles

tilt the cricoid cartilage upward and backward or if they tilt the thyroid cartilage downward and forward.

Considering that most singers are first seriously exposed to vocal anatomy and physiology in a college-level pedagogy course, Harrison and Watson have taken the intimidation out of the subject matter in this entirely accessible volume. It is appropriate for curious singers at all levels of study.



Brian Manternach

The Voice in Education: Vocal Health and Effective Communication by Stephanie Martin and Lyn Darnley

The Introduction to *The Voice in Education* presents some startling statistics. According to a 2017 study by Katherine Verdolini and Lorraine Ramig, teachers represent 4% of the workforce in the United States, yet they make up nearly 20% of the patient load in voice clinics.

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It was posited that, in the year of the study, approximately 40% of teachers experienced voice problems, yet only 15% sought treatment. Another study (by coauthor Stephanie Martin) found that a cohort of new teachers had high vocal demands, often using their voices for more than 60% of every teaching session. After two years, 79% of these teachers had some degree of measurable voice alteration when compared to their first year of teaching.

This was the motivation behind Stephanie Martin and Lyn Darnley's book. Since teaching is a performance profession, as they state, an efficient and effective voice is essential. Therefore, with *The Voice in Education*, the authors aim to first offer reliable information on voice physiology, voice care, and vocal issues. Then they take into account the emotional, environmental, and psychosocial factors that may affect a teacher's voice. Lastly, they offer exercises, strategies, and solutions to help educators rediscover and reclaim the voices they may have lost, whether through illness, trauma, misuse, or circumstance.

Martin and Darnley point out that simply performing vocal exercises in isolation, without context, risks failing to address the many potential vocal issues teachers face. Their chapters, therefore, serve to educate the educators, looking beyond mere vocal function and exercises to examine

vocal care in classroom settings, verbal and nonverbal communication, and occupational stress that may affect the voice.

The authors emphasize that *The Voice in Education* is not designed to replace one-on-one guidance from qualified voice professionals. Rather, they hope that the information they provide will equip teachers with additional tools to enhance their vocal skills and give them a framework for maintaining healthy voices throughout their careers.

For more information on Compton Publishing, visit comptonpublishing.co.uk.

Brian Manternach, DM, is an assistant professor in the University of Utah Department of Theatre and a research associate at the National Center for Voice and Speech. He is an associate editor of the Journal of Singing and his research, reviews, articles, and essays have appeared in numerous voice-related publications. More info at brianmanternach.com, drbrianmanternach.blogspot.com, and bmantern@gmail.com

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