

VOICE*Prints*

BULLETIN OF THE NEW YORK SINGING TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

MARCH-APRIL 2005



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March 2005 Featured Event:

OUTFOXING *The Fach System*

Thursday, March 10, 2005

8:00 PM

All you ever wanted to know about Fach, but were afraid to ask: a discussion of Fach from historical, developmental, pedagogical and practical points of view.

Milbank Chapel, Columbia Teachers' College
120th Street between Broadway and Amsterdam Avenue

NYSTA Members: Free Non-Members: \$25.00
Students with valid ID: \$10.00

Call 917-544-5309 or register online at www.nysta.org.

OREN LATHROP BROWN

Professional Development Program

Presented by the NYSTA, Inc., in cooperation with CEO&I

An outstanding series of courses designed for all those interested in singing. A variety of voice professionals may benefit from the program, including singers, voice teachers, coaches, choral directors, and speech pathologists. Courses are taught by leading experts and designed especially for practicing professionals. Each course has an exam, and those successful in completing all five courses will be awarded NYSTA's Distinguished Voice Professional Certificate of Completion.

For more information, contact Janet Pranschke at JanPranschke@aol.com or Dr. Jeanne Goffi -Fynn at jcg21@columbia.edu or call 212 678-3450.

Available for \$300 per course (CEUs) or \$200 per course (no CEUs).

Upcoming courses in the 2005 curriculum include:

SINGER'S REPERTOIRE FROM A DEVELOPMENTAL PERSPECTIVE

April 2, 2005 10:00 AM-5:30 PM

April 3, 2005 1:00 PM-7:30 PM

Instructors: Judith Nicosia, Dr. Chris Arneson, Robert Marks, and Jeannette LoVetri.

Selecting appropriate repertoire for students can be a major challenge for teachers. This course specifies criteria for musical, technical, interpretive, and stylistic demands which teachers can use to analyze a particular work's appropriateness for students at various levels of development. Specific songs and arias will be studied.

COMPARATIVE VOICE PEDAGOGY

May 20, 2005 6:00 PM

May 21, 2005 9:00 AM-8:00 PM

Instructors: TBA

An exciting opportunity to watch master teachers demonstrate their expertise. These are not typical master classes, but real-life, hands-on studio teaching. Marvin Keenze leads a Comparative Pedagogy session, where the teachers' styles, language, concepts and exercises are examined and compared. Many NYSTA members attend this class every year, taking away useful new studio strategies and greater awareness of their own teaching style.

MESSAGE *from the President*

WHEREFORE *Fach*?

In the teaching of singing we are called upon to help our students choose appropriate music. Ideally, this music is chosen based on their capabilities at the present moment. The individual's level of skill, the color and weight of the voice and the temperament of the student are all factors in these decisions. If we think about these qualities we arrive at individual pieces which serve the student as a learning experience as well as an addition to his repertoire. Should we at this point consider if we are helping to determine the *Fach* of the student? Should we even be entertaining this aspect of operatic classification? Does this pre-occupation take our attention away from the development of the individual? In thinking about this complicated subject, I keep returning to the feeling that such categorization has a narrowing influence on the art of singing and on the art of teaching. Even the definition of the word "*Fach*" (compartment) has a claustrophobic effect.

The list of *Fachs* is in itself dizzying. In *The Singer's Edition* anthology, Richard Boldrey and Robert Caldwell have the most extensive: twenty-seven different voice categories! There is a website called *Tenorland* which gives lists of the roles which are expected of a singer in any given *Fach*. This website, maintained by *Heldentenor* Graham Sanders, provides this information as a general guide to singers hoping to navigate the German opera scene. It is instructive to pay attention to the tone of



the advice given to singers considering this career option. In his list of "important things to remember about the *Fach* system," I am most intrigued by numbers four and five. Four reads: "When auditioning, don't present arias from more than one *Fach*. By doing so, you run the danger of appearing to the house or agent that you don't know your own voice." Number Five: "However, you can have more than one *Fach*." If you can have more than one *Fach*, why not present them? In Mr. Graham's lists of roles assigned to each *Fach*, the role of Nanetta appears under *Soubrette*; it also appears under *Lyrischer Koloratursopran*. Cherubino appears under *Lyrischer Sopran* and *Lyrischer Mezzosopran* and Carmen under both *Dramatischer Mezzosopran* and *Charaktersopran*. Apparently, it's fine for the system to cross-*Fach* a role, but not for singers to cross *Fachs*! This system may make directors' lives easier, but it certainly does not do so for singers.

In general, we live in times when singers are chosen for certain qualities which directors and opera managers expect them to retain throughout their careers. The expectation that a young singer may, for example, develop from a soubrette into a lyric and even into a dramatic soprano, seems to have disappeared from the landscape. In recent times, one singer who managed to escape this cubby-hole effect is Mirella Freni. She grew up vocally in full public view, maturing from Susanna in *Figaro* to Leonora in *Forza*, before our eyes and ears. In my hypothetical world, I can

imagine a young singer who could start life as Barbarina, grow into Susanna, mature into the Countess and retire singing Marcellina. Is this not a reasonable way to look at a singer's life and development?

It may appear to be helpful, even more professional, for young singers to focus on one vocal category. After all, they want to work. and if specialization is the name of the game, well so be it. On the other hand, if discovery and growth are more important to long term success, why not follow that path?

Josephine Mongiardo

FROM THE *Editor*

The work of Dr. Alfred Tomatis (1920-2001) is featured in this issue of *VOICEPrints*. It is of particular concern to NYSTA members: we make our living with our ears. His work re-educating singers (your editor among them) is best described as revelatory. And his observation that sound stimulation impacts the listener should surprise no one. Remember that student whose tone made your throat hurt? Tomatis' investigations into the "why" of the matter are intriguing, to say the least. Science has not caught up with the more subtle observations of this great man, even though he posited and proved over 30 years ago that the voice only contains those frequencies which our ears can analyze, a statement with profound implications. Because of this, his work has sometimes been seen as cloaked in mystery, a matter that may change with the English translation/adaptation of *The Ear and the Voice*.

Certainly more research is needed in this area. Science has been looking down the "rabbit's hole" with its cameras and scopes for so long now that it is all too easy to forget that our ears have a major role to play. Perhaps it is time we stopped taking them for granted; our lives as teachers depend on it.

Daniel Shigo
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Daniel Shigo

NYSIA

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NYSTACalendar



OUTFOXING *The Fach System*

March 10, 2005 8:00 PM

Milbank Chapel, Columbia Teachers' College, 120th Street (*between Broadway and Amsterdam*)

"All you ever wanted to know about *Fach*, but were afraid to ask"

Free event for Members; \$25.00 for non members; Students with valid ID: \$10.00

Discussion of *Fach* from Historical, Developmental, Pedagogical and *Practical* points of view.

CONTEMPORARY COMPOSERS *Concert*

May 1, 2005 5:00 PM

Milbank Chapel, Columbia Teachers' College, 120th Street (*between Broadway and Amsterdam*) Free to All

"*A Slice of Life*" continues...

Auditions were held on Jan. 24 and 25 for NYSTA's 2005 Composers' Concert entitled "A Slice of Life." The response to the ad in Classical Singer Magazine was overwhelming, creating the need for a second day of auditions, and after 45 singers and 18 alternates were signed up, all further requests had to be turned down. Ten singers were selected by a panel of auditors who generously donated time, expertise, good humor (and apartments); they were Josephine Mongiardo, Nancy Adams, Lori McCann, Dora Ohrenstein and Maria Fattore. Vlad Iftinca, who will be our pianist for the concert, was ill for the auditions but sent a wonderful substitute in Wilson Southerland. The singers selected were Tami Petty, Shanna Lesniak, Melissa Collom, Rita Litchfield, Steven Ebel, Mi Yong Park, Nicole Pantos, Jacquie Penfold, Dennis Blackwell and Kyle Bradford. Ellen Rievman will direct.

The concert will be held Sunday, May 1, 2005, 5 PM, at Milbank Chapel, Teachers' College, Columbia University. The format is a party, the songs are classical and musical theatre, and an improvised script will knit the songs together as a story. It should be provocative and interesting, so please mark the date on your calendar. Milbank is a beautiful venue with a unique atmosphere, wonderful acoustics and a great piano. The David Adams song competition concert was held there last year, and the space was a pleasure to experience. A reception will follow the performance; admission is free to all.

PDP PEDAGOGY *Weekend*

May 20, 2005 6:00 PM-10:00 PM and **May 21, 2005** 9:00 AM- 8:00 PM

Columbia Teachers' College

\$200; \$300 with Continuing Education Units.

An exciting opportunity to watch six Master Teachers demonstrate their expertise. These are not typical master classes, but real life, hands-on studio teaching. Marvin Keenze leads a Comparative Pedagogy session, where the teachers' styles, language, concepts and exercises are examined and compared.

Many NYSTA members attend this class every year, leaving with useful new studio strategies and greater awareness of their own teaching. Six teachers of various styles and techniques will demonstrate during the weekend, including Dr. Scott McCoy (*classical*), Janet Pranschke (*classical*), Dr. Linda Carroll (*injured voices*), Lisa Popeil (*musical theater*), and Ron Shetler (*musical theater*).

The course will also offer a review of anatomy and physiology by Dr. Scott McCoy.

UNDERSTANDING VOICE: *Vocal Disorders & Applied Treatment*

March 19 and 20, 2005

8:00AM-4:00PM

Westchester Marriott, Tarrytown NY

\$350 (includes registration, handouts, breakfast, coffee breaks, lunch) Registration: 914-345-2400

Speakers: Craig H. Zalvan, M.D.; Lynda Marvin, PH.D., CCC-SLP; Phil Schneider, PH.D., CCC-SLP; Shirley Tennyson, M.S., CCC-SLP; Robert Volin, PH.D., CCC-SLP

Professional and personal success in our society is often judged by the quality of our voice. We are often challenged with conditions that affect our vocal quality. When injury and vocal changes occur, people turn to physicians and speech pathologists for therapy. This conference will focus on the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of voice disorders.

The two-day course will focus on the interdisciplinary relationship between the laryngologist, speech-language pathologist and singing teacher.

Our area's leading experts in voice disorders, Dr. Craig H. Zalvan, MD, Laryngologist; Shirley Tennyson, SLP; Robert Volin, SLP; Phil Schneider, SLP; and Lynda Marvin, SLP, will be presenting.

Topics will include care of the Professional Voice with treatment and prevention of benign mucosal diseases, paralytic voice disorders, pediatric voice disorders, neurological vocal disorders, laryngopharyngeal reflux disease, tracheotomy and voice, among others. Each voice disorder will be discussed from a medical diagnostic and therapeutic point of view. Therapeutic techniques for each disorder will be demonstrated by our speech pathologists and practiced by course attendees.

THE SINGER *As Aural Processor*

By Clifton Ware

Though singers conscientiously give considerable attention to voice improvement and care, their sense of hearing is often taken for granted. Good hearing is essential for matching pitches, monitoring vocal quality, and providing feedback in making appropriate adjustments during singing. Typically, the crucial role of the ear in singing becomes apparent only when singers experience illness or adverse conditions that affect hearing. This general oversight becomes evident when perusing the many books on singing, most of which reveal little information about the ear's essential role in singing. But increasing numbers of singers, voice scientists, and teachers of singing are beginning to explore the ear's vital role in singing, as well as its influence in the broader areas of learning and behavior.

The Effects of Noise Pollution on Hearing and Singing

One explanation for the growing awareness of hearing can be traced to the ever-increasing amounts of noise pollution observed over the last 150 years, beginning with the Industrial Revolution and continuing through the Technological Evolution. Prior to the development of large machinery, the human environment was relatively noise-free. But, beginning the early nineteenth century, concentrated urban societies gradually came under attack by a deafening din of city noises, particularly in developing countries, with the U.S and Europe at the forefront.

It is a sad reality that listening to and performing loud music can have a deleterious effect on hearing. Long-term exposure to loud music has been shown to cause hearing loss among rock singers, orchestral musicians, and listeners. Of particular concern are youths who install earth-shattering sound systems in their cars, then cruise around blasting the delicate nerves and senses of everyone within earshot.

The effects of noise on hearing are determined by such factors as level, frequency, composition, duration, distribution of exposure, and length of long-term exposure. In terms of loudness, or decibels, the general rule is that a sound pressure level of 120 dB is uncomfortably loud for most people, and that exposure to levels in excess of 85-90 dB for sustained periods can result in permanent hearing loss. Hearing loss in the 3000-6000 Hertz (Hz) range frequently goes unnoticed, because these frequencies occur mostly above the normal speaking and singing range. But

when hearing loss affects the 2000-4000 range, some speech and singing sound may not be discernable. Diminished capacity in this latter range is usually associated with the aging process, although hearing loss is probably aggravated by recurring, pervasive noise pollution. In worst cases, the lower frequency ranges associated with speech and singing are affected, and communication skills are greatly diminished.

Hearing, Listening and Singing

There are two principal ways singers hear their own voices; first, through the external ears (auricles); and second, through bone conduction, from skull bone to the inner ear's bony mass. In addition, singers are generally tuned into kinesthetic sensations caused by sound vibrations experienced primarily in the facial bones, but also including other areas in the head, neck, and upper torso. In fact, some research supports the idea that speech and singing rely heavily on the hearing mechanism—in conjunction with the entire body—for effective auditory feedback, interpretation, and communication.

In the 1950's, Dr. Alfred A. Tomatis, a renowned French ear, nose, and throat (ENT) specialist, made the profound discovery that the ear-brain connection controls voice production and language, and that the ear (listening process) actually determines the harmonics produced in a tone. He also claimed that voice quality is primarily controlled by the right (leading) ear, because it is generally more adapted to controlling the singing voice, instrument playing, speech production, and tuning. Throughout his ongoing clinical observations and experiments, Tomatis discovered that hearing also plays a significant role in other major areas of human development, including communication skills, facility with spoken language, and basic learning skills. Further support for Tomatis' claims was initiated by the rigorous research of the highly regarded French scientist, Raoul Husson.

Paul Madaule, and ardent advocate of the *Tomatis Method* and director of The Listening Centre in Toronto, Canada, makes a sharp distinction between *hearing*, which may be defined as the passive reception of sound, and *listening*, which he considers an active process involving selection of essential and desirable sounds while screening out unessential and unwanted sounds. Moreover, listening involves both the perception of external sounds and the sound of one's own voice. Language acquisition begins with children hearing environmental sounds, then mimicking and modeling selective sounds as needed. Madaule claims that the same process occurs in singing, which he believes to be the best



Clifton Ware

type of listening training because it develops auditory control through reinforcement and fine-tuning.

Self-listening and audio-vocal control begin at the same point as vocal-fold sound production. Tomatis stressed that audio-vocal control consists of two parts. The first involves the transmission of vocal-fold vibrations to the body's bone structure and to the inner ear by bone conduction. This ear-voice feedback alerts the brain that a tone needs proper shaping by the vocal tract, and bone conducted audio-voice control supplies the singer with the unique kinesthetic sensation of his or her voice. The second part of audio-vocal control involves sound traveling through the vocal tract and exiting the mouth, where the ear receives the sound through air conduction. The time lapse between bone and air conduction allows singers a split second to adjust numerous body parts—bones, muscles, and ligaments—by means of positioning, shaping, and tensing. Fine-tuned adjustments of speech articulators produce various vocal inflections that lead to enhanced expression. Of course, a deficiency in any area of the audio-vocal feedback loop will negatively affect vocal production and tone quality.

Tomatis also emphasized that the inner ear's two systems are contrasting yet mutually supportive systems that work together harmoniously. The *cochlear system* deals with sound perception, which included melody and lyrics, while the *vestibular system* deals with physical balance, which involves such areas as posture, rhythm, and movement. Traditionally, singers have tended to concentrate more on developing and improving aural qualities, but more attention is now being focused on the equally important vestibular system, the so-called "ear of the body," which contributes to the sense of being "grounded" or "centered."

In training people to become better listeners, the Tomatis Method uses sound stimulation to exercise the ear. An audio

device called the Electronic Ear was developed by Tomatis to create an ear-voice feedback loop. In addition to using recorded instrumental and vocal music, the device directs attention to the singer's voice, which is recorded by microphone, processed through the Electronic Ear, and then transmitted through head phones into the singer's ear for self-listening. Self-corrective exercises are then used to strengthen audio-vocal control, including work on posture and humming, which stimulates vibrations in the torso and head through bone conduction. The goal is to help the singer experience listening as a kinesthetic, tactile step in effective voice production.

The pervasive confusion concerning tone deafness – the inability to sing on pitch—is directly addressed by the Tomatis Method's emphasis on improving hearing. One notable expert, W. Dixon Ward, a former Professor of Communication Disorders at the University of Minnesota, was quoted as saying: "One is not born tone deaf but becomes tone deaf—based on psychological processes associated with early learning...in a sense we are all born with perfect pitch and it is trained out of us." The Tomatis Method recognizes this unfortunate loss, and seeks to reestablish hearing skills as a way to improve vocalism.

This article is excerpted from The Singer's Life (2005) with the kind permission of the author and Birth Grove Publishing. Dr. Ware is Professor of Vocal Pedagogy and Pedagogy Chair of the Schuessler Vocal Arts Center at the University of Minnesota. He is the author of two other works: Adventures in Singing and Basics of Vocal Pedagogy.

OPERA Review

On January 25th, The Queen's Chamber Band presented the first New York performance of a one-act opera by C. W. Gluck, *La corona* (1765). The work was presented in concert with a chamber ensemble led by Early Music specialist Rudolph Palmer and a stellar cast of four female soloists.

The opera itself has a delicious history. Gluck was a favorite at the Viennese court and had already written a number of works for the Hapsburg family. The prodigious Empress Maria Theresa produced twelve children, each of whom studied music. Her four eldest daughters were accomplished singers. In 1765, Gluck and venerable Italian dramatist Pietro Metastasio (who supplied most of the composers of the 18th century with *libretti*) were commissioned to produce a work celebrating the marriage of one of the Hapsburg sons. *Il Parnaso confuso* contained florid arias for his four sisters, and was a big success. On the spot, Maria Theresa re-engaged Gluck to prepare another opera for her husband's birthday that fall.

The result was the comic one-act *La corona*, again featuring the four trebles and a chamber band of strings, oboes, bassoons, horns and continuo. Tragically, the Emperor died a week before the performance and the work was not heard in Gluck's lifetime. It was evident from the overly intricate vocal writing and lengthy secco recitatives heard on January 25, that the composer would have reworked his score for actual performance. How, one wonders, could adolescent sopranos have managed this music? (though no-one at court



C.W. Gluck

Rudolph Palmer

would have dared criticize them!)

Metastasio's plot involves three Greek princesses' plan to participate in a wild boar hunt (too silly for elaboration) and a handsome prince's attempts to dissuade them.

The opera-in-concert at Merkin Hall was a resounding success. The florid arias of each singer received vociferous reception. Soprano Julianne Baird as the warrior maid Atalanta faced the most elaborate material and managed it brilliantly. Contralto Patrice Djerejian as her younger sidekick Asteria was at once musical and touching. Mary Ellen Callahan dispatched her beautiful soprano aria with youthful aplomb. Gluck's tongue-in-cheek assignment of the single male role to a coloratura soprano provided soprano Danielle Munsell Howard with a feast of high B's, C's and, in her opening air, a sparkling E natural.

Harpichordist Elaine Comparone presided handsomely over her Queen's Chamber Band, but the biggest kudos of the evening go to conductor Rudolph Palmer who knows how to fashion these otherwise lightweight music occasions into something both stimulating and elegant.

John Ostendorf

NYSTA'S Centennary

Dear Fellow Members of NYSTA,

The year 2006 marks the one hundredth anniversary of the founding of NYSTA. The devotion to the ideal of beautiful and artful singing, the promotion of the American language as a vehicle for that art form and the creation and maintenance of professional standards for singing teachers have been at the core of NYSTA's mission since its inception.

Over the years we have continued to recognize great singing artists, as we have raised the standards of our own profession. Now we also recognize those teachers who have taken the time to hone their craft through our Professional Development Program.

During our centennial year we are planning a major Gala for the spring and an Anniversary Concert featuring American Music for the fall of 2006. We expect to honor both teachers

and singers from the classical and musical theater arenas at the Gala and we hope to commission a new work or works for the fall concert. These events will also honor all of our members, like you, who have made our Association what it is. We hope that you will be delighted with our festivities which will feature noted celebrities from the world of opera and theater, rising young artists, and community leaders.

As you well know, these events are extremely costly to produce, but we are counting on your support to help us make our plans a reality. We would like to ask you to make a donation towards the success of our celebrations. You may recall that NYSTA is now a 501(c)3 and, as such, your contributions are tax deductible. If you like, you may make a donation in honor or your own teacher, coach, or other special individual, and both your name and that of your honoree will be listed in our

Commemorative program. Multiple donations honoring multiple individuals are most welcome. For those of you who may wish to make a substantial donation, to underwrite the entire Gala or the Concert, or a significant portion thereof, it will be possible to have a Teaching Fellowship of our Professional Development Program at Columbia University designated in your honor. Further information is available on this special opportunity. If you are interested, please contact one of our Officers or Board members. We hope that you will consider making a generous gift to this extraordinary anniversary year. After all, we only turn one hundred once!

Sincerely,

Jeannette LoVetri

Chair, Centennary Committee

Josephine Mangiarlo

President

THE WORK OF *Dr. Alfred A. Tomatis*

By Roberta Prada

The ear lies at the heart of human experience. Dr. Alfred A. Tomatis relates that the fetal ear responds to sound and uses the energy it receives from the sound wave to shape the developing nervous system and brain. The way we think and perceive could not be more intimately connected with the ear. We singers live through our ears, and for us it is gratifying to learn that singing is such an important source of well-being.

I came upon Dr. Tomatis by chance in a book of essays. I instantly decided to try the listening, and I got more than I expected. I discovered I was really an alto, I found a higher placement, and my sound has become richer and more complex. Francis Keeping, my friend and teacher, concurs and has seen important changes in others who have done this work with us.

Tomatis is one of the earliest pioneers in the field now known as psychoacoustics. *L'Oreille et la Voix* is a classic—first published in 1987—and the most recent reference it contains dates from 1984. It summarizes what was known at the time in this field and combines what Tomatis himself believed to be true. By adapting it with his kind permission, we can bring his passionate reverence for the ear and voice and his brilliant insights into the nature of listening and singing to the English-speaking world. His beliefs and theories are timeless and, if anything, are now garnering more support than previously. Every day more findings in the field of developmental neurology confirm that the ear is as important in learning as the eye—perhaps more so.

Since the 1980s, research related to the development, anatomy, physiology, and pathophysiology of the ear and the vestibulo-cochlear system has provided new information and raised more questions. We have added some updates as notes, and included a current bibliography.

Just around the time when Hi-Fi was the latest advance in sound reproduction and

Sigmund Freud was the man of the hour, Tomatis' work led him to explain how the ear relates to the brain in singing, music making, and by extension to the creative process. His work as house doctor at the Paris Opera and resident ear, nose and throat doctor (ENT) at the aeronautics lab in Saclay, where the Concorde engine was being developed, put him in contact with two seemingly divergent groups of people whose voice problems were identical. He discovered that auditory fatigue was the common thread. In the case of the workers at the jet lab, the company was anxious to get to the bottom of these complaints. They were leading to costly early retirement caused by job-related hearing impairment, believed to be permanent.

With the opera singers, the auditory fatigue was created by poor vocal technique, for one thing. Fortunately, when the auditory system is not physically damaged, function can be restored or even improved. Tomatis devised an entrainment consisting of listening to specially prepared music, fed through a device he invented called the Electronic Ear. His technique exercises the ear's hammer/stirrup muscles that, according to the Tomatis analysis, influence the tone of every other flexor/extensor pair in the body.

Basically, he reawakened the muscles of the ear by constantly shifting the input to the ear, so that every few seconds the ears have to readjust to the direction and quality of the sound. If you have ever watched a cat's ears as it listens, you will know how deeply embedded this shifting must be in the nervous system. According to Tomatis, the effect of the alteration in muscle tone is generalized throughout the body, shifting posture and harmonizing the involuntary nervous system as well as muscular activity.

After experimenting with various composers, Tomatis concluded that Mozart's music was uniquely suited to his purpose. He chose passages from certain symphonies and violin concertos, rich in high harmonics, at a tempo of 120, free from heavy emotional content that leads to distracting internal dialogue. This training is intensely energizing and he at times uses Gregorian chant to induce calm breathing and lower the heart rate. By reinforcing the highs and adding a strong experience of bone conduction, he recreates the experience that every artist with a great technique gives himself when he performs. He mentions the rich harmonic shower found in the singing of both Caruso and Chaliapin, whose recordings he studied. What characterizes great singing, apart from its beauty, is the brilliance that the Italians call *squillo*.

One of Tomatis' most important observations was that excellence in performance



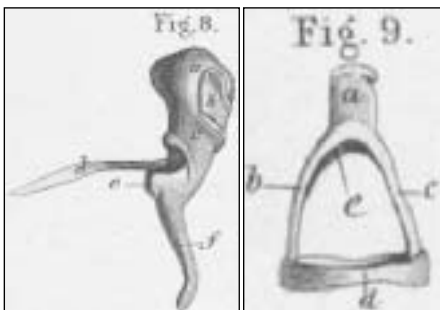
Roberta Prada

depends upon training the right ear to take control. It silences internal chatter, which is generated in the left ear. *Bravura* technique cannot coexist with running commentary. Neuropsychiatrist Richard Restak, in *Mozart's Brain and the Fighter Pilot* and in *The New Brain* agrees. The repercussions of this training are enormous. Tomatis' first group of singers, actors, and musicians found that they were learning and memorizing more easily, feeling energized, and sleeping better. Some asked if he would try the technique with their children to see if it would improve their school work. It worked so well that he began to pursue this serendipitous discovery, creating applications addressing auditory processing, ADD, stress reduction, hearing loss (whether psychological or physical), loss of speech through head injury or stroke and help with autism, to name a few.

This is the twenty-first century, and the science of electronics has advanced exponentially since the techniques so brilliantly pioneered by Dr. Tomatis in the 1950s. Audiophiles may prefer spectacular high end analog, but digital technology and advances in the new field of psychoacoustics have allowed us to progress beyond the first electronic ears. Dr. Tomatis would be delighted at the innovations that are furthering his work. The complexity and expense of administering listening sessions has until recently prevented their popularization, but that is changing even as I write.

We owe an enormous debt to the pioneering work of Dr. Tomatis. This book is for you, and with it I hope to deepen your pleasure in what is already yours, the gift of song.

From The Ear and the Voice, (p. ix), courtesy of Roberta Prada and Scarecrow Press





Dr. Alfred A. Tomatis

THE TOMATIS *Listening Posture*

- 1 Maintain a straight spine. Close your eyes.
- 2 Point the crown (vertex) of your head towards the ceiling.
- 3 Concentrate on your forehead at the hair-line.
- 4 Expand your forehead while making a tight bun in back.
- 5 Expand under the eyes, tightening towards the bun. The muscles under face will feel like thin strips of plastic. The skin will smooth out.
- 6 The upper lip will then widen over the lower lip.
- 7 A half-smile will appear when your ears are pulled back and up into the bun. The face will take on a calm appearance. Careful! Don't pull back the laughing (Risorius) muscle. This inhibits listening.
- 8 Let the neck (Platysma) expand.
- 9 Now listen for the high frequencies in your environment.
- 10 Open your eyes. Move your head around without losing the "pull." You are now ready to sing.

"To anyone who gives a moment's thought to the character of the combined ear-voice mechanism, it must appear self-evident that the singer's training must be as much aural as vocal. One has only to listen to singing anywhere to form the conclusion that the singers either cannot hear what they are doing or they are singularly perverse. Notes attacked below pitch, perpetual portamentos, wobble,

lack of legato, distorted vowels, monotony of tone colour—these are the stock-in-trade of contemporary singers—the product of an age enlightened by modern science, including the science of vocal physiology. What these people want is not a laryngoscope but an ear trumpet."

Percy Judd, Vocal Technique, 1951, p. 31 D.S.

VOICE*Talk*

By Roberta Prada

To all who love artistry and great singing:
Gérard Depardieu and Tomatis:

Depardieu moved to Paris a penniless dropout. After finding he loved to act, he auditioned for Jean Laurent Cochet, one of the premier acting teachers in France. Gérard was obviously talented, yet Cochet noticed that his speech at age eighteen lacked fluidity and his vocabulary was limited. Without help he would never develop his talent fully. Cochet sent him to Dr. Alfred Tomatis, to whom he had for many years sent students with problems, for evaluation. Tomatis was a controversial figure whose theories were considered unconventional. However, people in the arts and especially at the Paris Opera, considered him a genius. Tomatis discovered that Depardieu suffered from hyperacusis—meaning that everything sounded garbled and painfully loud. His right ear was not in good shape and consequently his speech was seriously affected. Tomatis put him on his sound-training regime, listening to filtered Mozart and some Gregorian Chant, while sleeping or drawing and painting, but never reading or writing or doing anything that led to complex *thinking activities*. Later, Depardieu read the texts he was studying, with the result that he easily memorized them and got rid of the fright that had suffused this kind of work. After the training, Cochet saw a complete transformation in his pupil. "*Gérard had found passion and desire...Mastering the craft of acting is as demanding, as complex, as subtle, as learning music or any other art form. Acting is almost an exact science, and Gérard was now determined to master all of it.*"

Jules La Forgue, his friend and acting partner in their first year, when Depardieu had no memory: "*But in less than a year he developed a prodigious memory. And he started nourishing himself with everything he could get hold of...He seemed able to integrate whatever he learned into his very being. Inside of a year he became someone completely different and yet completely the same. He*

acquired the language he did not have, all the while keeping the freshness he had had in the first place."

Depardieu himself: "*Jean-Laurent Cochet opened for me the craft of acting, and Alfred Tomatis opened me up to language. Before Tomatis, I could not complete any of my sentences. It was he who helped me give continuity to my thoughts, and it was he who gave me the power to synthesize and understand what I was thinking.*"

From *Depardieu*, Paul Chutkow, 1994, Knopf

Note: A recent study done with a grant from the EEC compared foreign language study in college under the Tomatis listening protocols, with two control groups, one presented with the same language course (Italian, German, Spanish and Belgian) and no listening, and the second listening to unfiltered classical music as they studied. Everyone was tested before and after the course.

The Tomatis group, which heard the specially filtered Mozart, arrived at the next grade level 50% faster. The chief difference between Tomatis language training and the usual listening training is that in the Tomatis foreign language training, the characteristic frequency band of the language being trained was used. Depardieu was trained with the French language band.

www.vocalimages.com



Gérard Depardieu

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STUDIO*News and...*

David Sabella-Mills' students are currently performing in Broadway houses and national tours: **Matthew Risch** in *CHICAGO*; **John Tartaglia** in *Avenue Q*; **Terra MacLeod** (Velma Kelly) in *CHICAGO*; **Alexis Carra** in *Sweet Charity*; **Bianca Marroquin** (Roxie Hart) National Tour of *CHICAGO*; **Joe Abraham**, National Tour of *Hairspray*; and **Mandy Evans**, European Tour of *The Who's Tommy!*

The Associated Music Teachers League, a venerable non-profit organization founded in 1926, will be holding its long standing Scholarship Awards Auditions, adjudicated by non-members, on Sunday, March 13, 2005 at Columbia University. There are cash prizes available for two voice categories: singers ages 16-18 and ages 19-21.

More information regarding award categories, prizes, and repertoire requirements, and the Winners Concert is available on the website www.AMTL.org or by e-mailing NYSTA Board Member **Martha Movasseghi**: Mmovasseghi@aol.com.

GET TO KNOW NYSTA *Members:*

Gerald M. Ginsburg studied piano with Rudolph Ganz, Jack Radunsky, Dora Zaslavsky, and composition with Roy Harris and Ludmila Ulehla. He degrees from Oberlin and the Manhattan School of Music. He is a member of ASCAP, The American Music Center, and NYSTA. He is also a Publisher member (THEATER LIEDER) of ASCAP. Concerts of his songs have been presented at Carnegie Recital Hall (his 1974 debut), Alice Tully Hall, Bargemusic, Kean College, St. Bartholomew's Church, Alice Parker poet/composer symposiums, and The Kennedy Center. The writing style that has naturally emerged for him is what he calls "Theater Lieder," a blending of lyrical musical theater elements with classical art song structure.



Gerald M. Ginsburg

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**Saturday,
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8:00 P.M.

Tickets at the door: \$10