



# **THE HISTORY OF VOICE PEDAGOGY**

**MULTIDISCIPLINARY REFLECTIONS ON TRAINING**

Edited by  
Rockford Sansom



# The History of Voice Pedagogy

This ambitious publication draws from the knowledge and expertise of leading international figures in voice training in order to examine the history of the voice from an interdisciplinary perspective.

The book explores the historical arc of various voice training disciplines and highlights significant people and events within the field. It is written by voice specialists from a variety of backgrounds, including singing, actor training, public speaking, and voice science. These contributors explore how voice pedagogy came to be, how it has organized itself as a profession, how it has dealt with challenges, and how it can develop still.

Covering a variety of voice training disciplines, this book will be of interest to those studying voice and speech, as well as researchers from the fields of rhetoric, music, and performance.

This book was originally published as a special issue of the *Voice and Speech Review* journal.

**Rockford Sansom**, PhD, is a voice coach in theatre and a voice trainer in business and politics. He is the Editor of the *Voice and Speech Review* and an Assistant Professor of *Voice* at Louisiana State University.



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## Multidisciplinary Reflections on Training

*Edited by*  
**Rockford Sansom**

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## **Chapter 1**

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Lyn Darnley

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## **Chapter 2**

*A Historical View of the Pedagogy of Public Speaking*

Erika Bailey

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## **Chapter 3**

*Historical Landmarks in Singing Voice Pedagogy*

Matthew Hoch

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## **Chapter 4**

*Make the Door Open: Groundbreaking African American Teachers of Singing*

Carl Du Pont

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## **Chapter 5**

*A Historian's Journey with Sylvia Olden Lee and Camilla Williams, African American Opera Pioneers*

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Giovanna Carugno and Cristina Patturelli

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**Chapter 7**

*The History of the Voice and Speech Trainers Association (VASTA)*

Adrienne Moore

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**Chapter 8**

*The Rationale and History of Vocology*

Ingo R. Titze

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**Lyn Darnley**, PhD, performed in theatre, television, and radio before her career in teaching. She is the former Head of Voice, Text, and Artist Development at the Royal Shakespeare Company and the former Head of Voice at Rose Bruford College. In 2008 she was awarded the Conference of Drama Schools medal for Services to Actor Training. Since retiring, she has continued to work with actors, teachers, and university groups around the world.

**Matthew Hoch**, DMA, is an Associate Professor of Voice and Coordinator of Vocal Performance at Auburn University, USA. Hoch is the 2016 winner of the Van L. Lawrence Fellowship, awarded jointly by the Voice Foundation and National Association of Teachers of Singing. He actively performs art song, opera, chamber music, and in professional choral settings. He was recently appointed to the editorial board of the *Voice and Speech Review* and was a presenter at the 2017 Voice and Speech Trainers Association (VASTA) conference in Singapore.

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## INTRODUCTION

# The Emergence of a Profession: The History of Voice Pedagogy

Rockford Sansom

The history of voice pedagogy is the rise of professionalism within the field, a chronological yet complex march from its origins as a subject of study to a cohesive profession. Voice (or vocal) pedagogy encompasses many kinds of teaching and training, so the starting point for voice pedagogy varies considerably depending on the specialization. Both western singing and public speaking training have origins dating to the ancient Greeks, but voice and speech training for the actor arguably begins in the nineteenth century. All the subjects intersect at times and have varying levels of organization throughout the centuries, but formalized vocal pedagogy as both a field of study and as a profession is nevertheless a relatively modern concept.

In her seminal examination on the history of professionalism, Larson [1977] 2017 argues that professionalized occupations require rigorous and often codified training that includes knowledge about the history of the profession, the skills required, and a code of ethics. Larson maintains that the original western professions (medicine, law, and the priesthood) still serve as a make-shift template for contemporary concepts of professionalism even though the definition and scope of professional occupations have grown exponentially in the past half century. In that, Larson believes that professionalism not only requires skill-based training in a subject, but also a knowledge of the scope and history of the field.

The articles in this issue seek to rise to that challenge. The authors give both the historical arc of voice training disciplines and detailed historical accounts within them. These articles offer a chronological account of how voice pedagogy came to be, how it has organized itself as a profession, how it has grown and dealt with challenges, and how it can develop. The *Voice and Speech Review* is an interdisciplinary journal, so fittingly this issue explores voice pedagogy history with an interdisciplinary lens. In recruiting and evaluating articles, I sought authors from various voice specialties such as singing, actor training, public speaking, and voice science, and I sought authors with unique historical perspectives.

I have organized the articles as chronologically as possible. The first three articles offer historical overviews of three major disciplines within voice training: voice for the actor, singing, and public speaking. While voice trainers do not all fall neatly into three categories, the breadth of these three articles offer a wide perspective on different kinds of voice pedagogy and how they evolved. Lyn Darnley begins the issue with “Theatre-Voice Pedagogy within the Royal Shakespeare Company: A Historical Perspective.” As the former head of the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC), Darnley explores the voice pedagogy history of the institution and its impact on actor training. She argues that many of the key creators and voice trainers at the RSC were pivotal figures in developing the modern concept of voice training for actors in the United Kingdom and in

the United States. While the article centers on one prominent organization, in many ways it outlines essential concepts and chronicles the genesis of voice and speech training for theatre.

In “A Historical View of the Pedagogy of Public Speaking,” Erika Bailey gives a historical account of how public speaking has been taught. As Bailey explains, the term “public speaking” arose in the eighteenth century, but Bailey goes deeper and explores the rhetorical and oratory roots of the field starting with the ancient Greeks and traces the development of public speaking through the centuries. The article also discusses current trends and how contemporary public speaking can interact with civic engagement. Matthew Hoch’s “Historical Landmarks in Singing Voice Pedagogy” offers a similarly comprehensive view of singing pedagogy history. Arguably, more has been written on singing pedagogy than on any other kind of voice training specialty. Hoch accomplishes a Herculean task in synthesizing the wide body of western singing teaching literature that exists and creating a cohesive and practical narrative for the field. His article also explores the twentieth century rise of fact-based (or evidence-based) voice training, a consequential and notable trend throughout all of voice pedagogy.

The next three articles look at figures who deserve greater attention within voice pedagogy. Carl Du Pont in “Make the Door Open: Groundbreaking African American Teachers of Singing” reflects on significant African American teachers in the mid-twentieth century who broke color barriers in higher education voice departments. Recounting their struggles and triumphs, Du Pont asks that these figures take their place in the pantheon of influential singing teachers, and he discusses how their legacies influence training today. Elizabeth Nash continues this theme and looks at two eminent African American singing teachers in greater detail. In “A Historian’s Journey with Sylvia Olden Lee and Camilla Williams, African American Opera Pioneers,” Nash offers first-hand accounts of Lee and Williams’s professional lives and how their influence changed the field of opera and changed Nash.

Francesco Florimo is primarily remembered as one of the world’s greatest music librarians. But in “Singing Vocal Pedagogy in the Nineteenth Century Neapolitan School: The Work of Francesco Florimo,” Italian authors, Carugno and Patturelli, argue that Florimo’s significant legacy to singing training has unfortunately been lost to time. They offer historical evidence and accounts, and they examine his bestselling book on singing, which (as they argue) predates many modern ideas of singing and pedagogy.

The final two articles of the issue specifically examine professionalization in voice pedagogy. In “The History of the Voice and Speech Trainers Association (VASTA),” Adrienne Moore narrates the story of the organization. She explores its origins, growth, and major initiatives throughout the decades. VASTA is the sponsoring organization of this journal, and the *Voice and Speech Review* is delighted to publish a historical account of the organization. The final article comes from renowned speech scientist Ingo R. Titze, who is one of the founders of the field of vocology. In “The Rationale and History of Vocology,” Titze discusses the birth of vocology, its relationship to audiology, and vocology’s place within voice pedagogy and the voice profession.

The issue ends with an in memoriam to Cicely Berry, who passed away in the fall of 2018. Berry was the voice director of the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC), and she is unquestionably a founding figure within voice pedagogy for actor training. Written by Berry’s RSC colleague and friend, David Carey, this in memoriam highlights Berry’s life