

Semper Fidelis.

SOME REMARKS ON THE VOICE

AND

ART OF SINGING

LECTURE DELIVERED AT THE

Illinois Music Teachers' Convention

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BY

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Mr. President:

Ladies and Gentlemen, my dear colleagues in the development and *supposed* progress of music:

It is a great pleasure for me to enjoy the privilege of communicating to you, in this convention, the result of my technical observations on the physiology and production of the human voice in my practical experience as a teacher in Paris, a professor at the Royal Academy of Music in London and, for some years now, in your dear America, where, at least in Chicago, it is so necessary to modify one's European notions as to the relations existing between masters, no, I beg your pardon, *teachers* and pupils—pupils who assume upon themselves the ability of discerning who is competent or not; who change their teachers as easily as they do a pair of gloves, and who, as a witty friend of mine in this assembly once said to me, "are in the habit of taking samples."

My first most pleasurable duty will be to express heartfelt thanks to the kind and always artistically devoted friend who has afforded me this opportunity, Mr. Emil Liebling.

In order to be as clear and concise as possible, I will divide this rapid study into three distinct parts. First, the voice, its physiology and production; second, the art of singing and the influence of modern music, modern orchestration, modern opera upon the *virtuosity* of singers; third, the desirability of a uniform standard pitch.

Proceeding methodically, the first part will comprise:

1. The vocal apparatus.
2. Respiration.
3. Sound.
4. Emission of the voice.
5. The Registers
6. Timbres (color of sound).
7. Study of exercises; modification of vowels according to pitch; equality of the scale resulting from the inequality of the vowels; blending of the chest and medium registers; study of the chromatic scale; the shake; the tremolo.

Before proceeding further, let me say that I do not presume to enumerate here all the physiological facts connected with the vocal organs, which are probably all familiar to you; nor do I pretend to give you this lecture as a result of *my* personal studies, investigations or experience *only*. Far from

THIS MATTER

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such a course; I will "render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's." I shall refer continually to the great works of my illustrious master and honored friend, Manuel Garcia, or to the remembrance of the long, instructive conversations we frequently had, during the seven years and a half I had the honor of being with him on the Staff of Professors and Board of Examiners at the Royal Academy of Music, London. About that period (1881 to 1888) he was suddenly stricken down by a most serious illness, which compelled him to relinquish his duties for over a year, and on October 2, 1883, the Principal of the R. A. M., Sir George Macfarren, upon the request of Señor Garcia, asked me at once to take charge of his class.

The grains of sand which I may possibly contribute to Garcia's monumental work will simply be the corroboration of *his* invaluable researches, *his* discoveries, *his* incontrovertible statements of physiological facts, the fundamental laws of phonation *he* has established, *his* undeniable authority as the teacher of so many great artists, brilliant stars who periodically illuminated the musical firmament during the last half century, beginning with his pupil, Jenny Lind, 1845 (this marvelous singer came to America in 1850), down to the present day. I must not omit the names of his pupils, the celebrated singers and teachers he has formed, his sisters, Malibran, Mme. Viardot Garcia and so many others I shall mention hereafter, including Mme. Marchesi.

To-day, thanks to Garcia and his invention of the laryngoscope, we are far ahead of simple *speculative theories*. Even as far back as April 12, 1841 (date of the report issued by a "special committee of the French Academy of Sciences" upon his "Mèmoire sur la Voix Humaine," submitted to that assembly in 1840), all debate on the physiology of the vocal organs was, so to speak, *closed*. The only field of inquiry left open was how to ascertain the best means of acquiring, through methodical study, absolute mastery over Nature's sublime instrument.

Everybody knows Garcia's "Art of Singing," a compendious method of instruction, published in Paris by Brandus et Cie, 1840 (two large volumes). Recently, in 1894 (urged partly, I may be permitted to say, by my incessant solicitations during the years I was at the Royal Academy), at the age of 90, Garcia has given the world his "Hints on Singing," the result, as he writes in his preface, "of his fifty years' additional experience since the publication of L'Art du Chant, and his invention of the laryngoscope." Didactically, therefore, this great master has proven himself without a rival.

In Sir George Grove's dictionary, Garcia's biographer says: "For his invention and application of the laryngoscope

the university of Königsburg granted him an honorary M. D. His 'Mèmoire sur la Voix Humaine' obtained for him the congratulations of the French Academy of Sciences. He is also a chevalier of the Swedish Order of Merit. A few years ago he exhibited his invention at a medical congress in London. A testimonial was presented to him under the auspices of Prof. Huxley and Dr. Critchett, the great oculist." Finally his pupil, Madam Antoinette Sterling, informed me, some months ago, that the honor of knighthood had just been conferred upon him by Her Majesty, Queen Victoria.

If I have dwelt so long upon this great master's history and works—thus informing you also whence I proceed—it is with the aim of encouraging you to follow me where I desire to lead you.

I. THE VOCAL APPARATUS.

I will now give you a most concise and clear description of the vocal instrument. I cannot do better than quote textually from "Hints on Singing:" "The *lungs* are at the base of the vocal instrument. Essential organs of the respiration, the lungs perform the function of an organ bellows, furnishing the air necessary for the sonorous waves. They are plac'd one on each side of the chest, the expansion of which makes room for their inflation, and the contraction of which compels them to expel part of the air admitted. Above comes the *larynx*, a sort of cartilaginous box; this box, in which every vocal sound is produced, is open at both ends, and communicates by its lower opening directly with the lungs through the *trachea*, an elastic tube; the higher opening communicates with the pharynx, and, when we swallow, is closed by a sort of cartilaginous leaf, called the *epiglottis*. The larynx is surmounted by the *pharynx*, a large cavity which forms the back of the mouth. It is limited behind by a proper muscular wall, in front by the pillars of the *fauces*. The pharynx communicates with the *nasal fossae*, two cavities situated above the roof of the mouth, and extending from the pharynx to the nostril. The *palate* is the roof of the mouth; the anterior two-thirds are bony, the other third, called the *soft palate*, is a movable curtain continued backwards from the hard palate. The pharynx, on account of the numerous shapes it can assume, confers the coloring of *timbres* on sounds produced in the larynx, and contributes to the formation of vowels."

II. RESPIRATION.

The two acts of inhaling and of exhaling constitute respiration. The art of correct breathing ought to be, from the very beginning, one of the most important objects of the

student who aspires to become a skillful singer. The act of respiration is under the control of the *midriff* or *diaphragm*, a large, thin muscle closing the case of the chest cavity and separating the *thorax* from the *abdomen*.

"In the first attempt to emit a sound the diaphragm flattens itself, the stomach slightly protrudes and the breath is introduced at will by the nose, by the mouth, or by both simultaneously. During this partial inspiration, which is called *abdominal*, the ribs do not move, nor are the lungs filled to their full capacity, to obtain which the *diaphragm must and does contract completely*. Then, and only then, are the ribs raised, while the stomach is drawn in. This inspiration, in which the lungs have their free action from side to side, from front to back, from top to bottom, is complete, and is called *thoracic* or *intercostal*. If by compression of any kind the *lower* ribs are prevented from expanding, the breathing becomes *sternal* or *clavicular*. Of these three modes of breathing the *thoracic* or *intercostal* is a correct one."

To improve respiration the best exercises recommended are:

"1. Draw a breath *slowly* through a very minute opening of the lips, then exhale freely.

"2. Breathe freely and *exhale slowly* through the same small opening.

"3. Breathe freely and retain the breath during ten seconds or more."

I should further propose the following suggestions: To perform above mentioned exercises lying on a flat surface, with the head and shoulders on the same level as the body, which should be perfectly relaxed, placing one hand gently on the pit of the stomach and the other on the upper part of the sternum. This position will help, first, in preventing any raising of the shoulders; second, in realizing the correct action of the diaphragm, and, third, in controlling *any motion* of the upper part of the chest, *which must remain perfectly immobile*. The flow of breath should be absolutely noiseless, the pressure of the diaphragm continuous, even and well managed.

I desire to abridge, as much as possible, all anatomical descriptions of the vocal organs and restrict myself to the explanation of their *action* only; however, a rapid study of the larynx, as the producer of all vocal sounds, is necessary for the comprehension of our theories.

Here again I quote Garcia:

"The interior of the larynx narrows toward the center to a mere chink or fissure called the *glottis*. This opening is bounded by two edges placed one on the right and the other on the left. These edges constitute the *lips* of the glottis.

Posteriorly they are formed by the internal surface of the arytenoid cartilages and in front by the vocal cords. The vocal cords are two deep folds of the mucous membrane. In each of them, immediately beneath the edge of the fold, lies a band of elastic tissue known as the inferior thyro-arytenoid ligament or *true cord*. At a little distance above these are placed two others called *false cords*, which are separated from the former by two cavities, the ventricles."

III. Vocal sound is the result of a more or less rapid succession of vibrations produced by the passage of air through the glottis.

"The two lips of the glottis, which are separated in the act of breathing, meet when preparing to produce a sound, and close the passage with the degree of energy demanded by the nature of the sound and the power with which it is to be emitted. Then, being pushed upwards by the air, they give way and allow a portion of air to escape, but immediately return to their original contact, and recommence the action. These intermittent emissions or explosions of air, when regular and rapid enough, form a sound."

Garcia calls the closing of the lips "*pinching of the glottis*." You can obtain the sensation of the glottic action by coughing imperceptibly. The lightness of movement is considerably facilitated if it be tried with the mouth shut. Once understood, it may be used with the mouth open on any vowel. The object of this is economy of breath and that, at the start, sounds should be free from the defect of slurring up to a note, or the noise of breathing.

IV. *Emission of the voice*—male or female Correct emission of the voice will be obtained by following these principles:

The position of the body should be straight, but unconstrained; the shoulders well back; the head erect; all the muscles of the face, throat and neck relaxed; the mouth should be opened by the natural fall of the jaw, avoiding any contraction of the muscles; on its ease of movement depends that of the organs beneath; the tongue kept limp, motionless, neither raised at the point nor swollen at the root; the soft palate must be raised, as in taking a full breath. (The sensation of raising the soft palate may be obtained by imitating the action of yawning.)

Referring again to the tongue, I would remark that it is the most sensitive, unruly, obstinate organ of the mouth; it will give way to no coercive measures; all kinds of mechanical or artificial devices have been tried to subdue it, all in vain. Coaxing is the only means whereby you may obtain satisfactory results. The best plan is to let it rest limp, as in the position

of silence or yawning. Always endeavor to feel your teeth softly with the tongue during the production of any vowel. That is the simplest way to correct any contraction.

It is a common error to suppose that a wide opening of the mouth facilitates the production of powerful or beautiful sounds; it may help the vocalist to scream, but that is not singing.

After being thus well prepared, draw in your breath slowly and attack the sound by a neat articulation or stroke of the glottis, first on either of the Italian vowels, a, e, as in *Alma*, *Scmpre*, or the English a in *fâther*, e in *whère*. At this elementary stage the notes must be kept full and equal in force.

V. and VI. Registers—Timbres.—There is very often *absolute confusion* in the meaning of these technical terms; it is therefore most important that the difference should be clearly explained.

"A register is a series of consecutive homogeneous sounds produced by one mechanism, differing essentially from any other series of sounds produced by another mechanism, whatever modifications of timbre and of strength they may offer."

Every voice is formed of three registers: the *chest*, *medium* or *false* and *head*. The normal range of the registers ought to be limited most carefully, not only according to the nature and character of each voice, but even of *each individual*. The full extent of the different registers is not available in practice.

In *female* voices, either Contraltos, Mezzo-sopranos, or Sopranos, the *chest* must never exceed the F (first space treble clef), "lest the result be the *ruin of the whole instrument* and the change from *medium* to *head* should take place between C and C sharp on the third space.

When nature has not united the chest and medium (which is unfortunately often the case), special exercises should be practiced in order to blend them completely; that is, by passing alternately and uninterruptedly from one register to the other on the notes D, D sharp, E and F.

Some unskillful masters avoid the difficulty by simply rejecting the chest registers altogether, thus depriving the singer of some of the finest dramatic effects and the happiest contrasts.

Male voices have been classified as Bass, Baritone and Tenor. These voices are each placed a third above the one preceding it; they vary in extent from a twelfth to a fifteenth, and, although in men's voices, as in women's, the three registers coexist, the chest predominates.

Classification of voices must be made according to quality—timbre and tessitura, *not* range.

A timbre is one of the infinite varieties of colors or shades which may be given to a single sound or to the entire range of the three vocal registers. To make the distinction still clearer, I will mention the modern clarinet, the instrument which most resembles the female voice. It has four registers (the chalumeau or grave, deep, the medium, the clarion or acute and the superacute). *In each of these*, the only variety of tone results from duration, intensity or volume of sound; the *color* is, so to speak, *fixed*. In the marvelous constitution of the human voice, timbre or quality, in the three registers, may be infinitely varied from the most sombre to the brightest.

A thorough knowledge of the mechanism by which timbres are produced is most essential to good production; it is also necessary to know the use of certain vowels in modifying and correcting defective quality of tone.

Practically the two principal classes of timbres may be divided into the *clear* or open and the *closed* or sombre "These two opposite qualities are obtained principally through the agency of the larynx and the soft palate. The movements of these two organs are always in a contrary direction. *The larynx rises when the soft palate falls, and when the larynx falls the soft palate rises. The high vault produces the dark timbres, the lower arch the clear ones.*"

In passing from clear to dark timbres, each of the first four Italian vowels undergoes a change, from clear to dark.

A approximates to O;

E approximates to Eu in French;

I approximates to U in French;

O approximates to U in Italian or Ū in German.

From dark to clear quality the operation must be inverted.

In scales, *equality*, or unity of tone color, is the result of the *inequality* of the vowel, or its modification, on every note of the scale.

The singer, by skillful gradation, must increase the roundness of the vowel in ascending and reverse the process in descending.

The Italian I being the most ringing vowel, the same pinching of the glottis which gives its brilliancy and brings the voice forward against the upper front teeth, may be employed to communicate brilliancy to the other vowels. Passing from a ringing to a dull vowel on the same note may also be recommended to improve the latter Ex.: Ia, Ie, Io.

In male voices it is most important to commence the daily studies employing the clear, open timbre; rising as far as C and D for the bass and baritone, and F and F sharp for the tenor voices. Unless the open quality is well established, the brilliancy of the upper notes in the closed qualities *will cer-*

tainly be jeopardized; they will always remain muffled. We repeat here that, in ascending the scale, the student must gradually increase the roundness of the vowel by lifting the soft palate, otherwise the higher notes would sound screechy.

"Rising of the scale is formed by the gradual tension, shortening and thinning of the glottis lips."

To facilitate the study of the *chromatic scale*, use the chord of the major 3d, the augmented 5th and octave C, E, G sharp, C, fix these intervals accurately in your ear and mind, then divide the scale in groups of four semitones and practice very slowly.

THE SHAKE.

The Shake is produced by a very swift oscillation of the larynx. Its movement is equal to degree 200=one-sixteenth note Metronome of Maelzel, whereas the greatest agility attainable in any other vocalization does not exceed 152=one-sixteenth M. M.

To obtain this peculiar oscillation it is best to practice first on a major 3d and, when the intonation and movement are perfect, continue to exercise on a minor 3d, a tone and finally a semitone.

To acquire smoothness and equality in vocalization, the use of the Metronome is greatly recommended.

When properly directed, the study of agility renders the organ flexible, even mellow, and strengthens and prepares it for the florid style as well as for the plain and declamatory.

The exercises, always begun slowly, must be well measured, and sung in strict time; the degree of rapidity should only be increased when the qualities of correct intonation, value, strength, legato and equality of timbre are well maintained.

THE TREMOLO.

This insufferable defect, when not caused by age, disease or excessive strain and fatigue of the local organs, arises from faulty breathing, successive or spasmodic jerks of the diaphragm and the oscillation of the larynx, or both.

With patience, determination and strict observance of the mode of breathing advocated at the beginning of this study, and by keeping the diaphragm and larynx free from agitation, you may overcome and correct this blemish, which impairs every style of singing.

The habit of singing or humming when walking or driving or ascending stairs is most injurious and conducive to the tremolo.

Transposition is an invaluable resource for sparing the voice and preserving its freshness and spontaneousness. Any

difficult passage requiring frequent repetition ought to be transposed for practice until thoroughly mastered.

Intensity of expression results more frequently from the articulation of the consonants than from volume of sound given to the vowels. When singing piano, the articulation must be more distinct or marked than when singing with full voice.

The supposition that there is any difficulty in the choice of a good vocal teacher is quite erroneous. Good paintings prove the painter's ability; good teaching is proven by the talent and number of pupils formed by a master. I, of course, allude to professional pupils, fitted either for the stage or the concert platform.

Having given a summary of the chief features which, in our opinion, establish the basis of sound vocal instruction, we wish to lay some stress on a particular subject: the *traditions* of ancient choral music which are so deeply rooted in the lands of their birth.

In Germany and England, where the oratorio, the Biblical drama and sacred cantata hold such an important place in musical life, faithful traditions of most of the renowned works of such masters as Bach, Handel, Mozart, Haydn, and in modern times, Beethoven, Spohr and Mendelssohn, have been religiously kept in all national musical schools and institutions; nay, they have so permeated the masses through the innumerable choral organizations, abounding even in the smallest centers, that the production of these works, as performed elsewhere, *is more than astounding to those who know*. It is sufficient to have heard such correct exponents of oratorio as Madame Albani, Madame Nordica, Messrs. Lloyd, Charles Santley and Ben Davies to be absolutely convinced that, although of late years some generous efforts have been made, we still have here a vast field for instruction. This is particularly the case with Handel, sung more or less, and played *as printed* in the English Vincent Novello Edition, or copies therefrom, without any regard for the imperfect notation prevalent in Handel's time, "the fictitious manner of writing the *appoggiatura*, which lasted for more than half a century after his death," and the erroneous way the accompaniments are usually executed, especially as regards the recitatives.

Therefore special classes for the study of oratorio, according to the established traditions universally accepted in Europe, ought to be opened here in every large center.

This brings me naturally to another subject affecting most seriously not only the voices of all singers, but even the faithful rendering of all classical works either operatic, orchestral or those of the Handelian period; that subject is the desirability of a uniform standard pitch being established

throughout the United States, as it is now accepted universally in Europe. I refer to the "French normal diapason," i. e., C 522, vibrations.

In order to save time, I have caused a speech of mine, delivered at St. James' Hall, London, June 20 1885, to be distributed here, as it contains the chief arguments in favor of this reform. I am happy to state that, although twelve years have elapsed, our efforts have *at last* been crowned with success. The diapason normal is now the standard pitch throughout Great Britain as it is in France, Italy, Belgium, Germany and the other European countries.

A word now on the influence of modern music, opera and orchestration upon the virtuosity of singers. To-day the art of singing is almost a thing of the past. Garcia writes: "Singing is becoming as much a lost art as the manufacture of Mandarin china or the varnish used by the old masters." Now, ladies and gentlemen, this fact is due to several causes:

First—The evolution from the lighter style of comedy or romantic operas to the modern mystical, mythological and ponderous blood and thunder lyric dramas, in which ruthless passions, battleax vengeance, rocks, earthquakes, black clouds, spears, cuirasses, damnation and extermination have superseded the charm of pure flowing melody, wit, ingenuity and happiness. Song is dead, declamation reigns supreme.

Second—Modern orchestration, which in its exuberance is heedless of the possibilities or the limitations of the human voice, and necessitates such physical strength and endurance on the part of the singers that it is hardly possible to satisfy the demands of modern composers.

Third—That young, fresh voices, instead of being cultivated for that florid or sentimental style which would be congenial to their nature, are forced into the field of declamatory music, where they can only find interment next to the thousands of their sisters in misery.

We have to enlist now, for the exigencies of the lyric drama, ladies worthy to be called the Pomeranian Grenadier prima donnas of the future. When one of these Teutonic Goddesses dies or faints on the stage it is necessary to advance a squad from the corps of Samsons (always engaged in well equipped operatic companies) for the purpose of removing the fallen heroines. This is grand, but not always graceful. How could you ask one of these ladies to sing Mozart's Zerlina? who would ask a Zerlina to sing the part of one of these *Great Goddesses*?

I nevertheless declare that I am a Wagnerite and would be, up to the hilt, were it not for the interminably long-drawn metaphysical recitatives which surely could be made less wearisome.

I translated the Tannhauser for its first representation in French at the Grand Opera, Paris. I therefore knew Wagner personally, knew him well. If we were permitted to rest in supreme joy with his Meistersänger, Lohengrin, Siegfried, Waldweben, Idyl, Siegfried's death and dead march, Tristan, Parcival, even with its prolixity, we would be happy indeed, but, since the advent of Wagner, we have alas! to reckon also, not with his colossal genius, but with his imitators *minus* his genius.

The fear of remaining stationary in their art seems so great with the younger school of composers, the desire to be in what they imagine "the swim" is so intense, that they inevitably get drowned in the flood of their own sounds. To be "up to date" in the expression of Juliet's ecstasy and passion at the sight of Romeo, the young genius of the future will find it only natural to make the sweet maiden shriek like a Valkyrie riding through the clouds.

Without the slightest provocation the chromatic grindings of the poor orchestra are resorted to with such vim that, at last, you think you had really better go at once to the nearest dentist and have the tooth extracted.

Is it progress to find such a great master as Tschaiikowsky perpetrate a work like his overture, 1812? With introduction of bells, cannons, schrapnel, La Marseillaise, the organ, hymns and maledictions?. It may be, nay *it is*, a most stirring dramatic tone picture; it is undoubtedly patriotic; but is it music?

And we go on progressing, and come to another extraordinary genius—I repeat the qualification genius—Richard Strauss, with his "Till Eulenspiegel." "An orchestra enlarged: four bassoons, four oboes, four flutes, English horn, four clarionets, contra-fagott, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tympani, etc., besides the full appointment of strings, the writing, from a technical point of view, so difficult that all the parts require special practice before being able to play the work." All this display of forces to illustrate his heros' merry pranks after the old freakish manner. A battery of Krupp cannons to kill a fly! Was it not our confrère, W. S. B. Matthews, who wrote justly: "At times the cacophony reaches a point where it seems as if we were listening to the preliminary overture of tuning and passage work, which everybody knows who has heard an orchestra tune up and warm its instruments. This, it will be remembered, was the tune the Shah of Persia liked best of all, and the only one, in fact, which he recognized as music."

And finally we come to "Thus spake Zarathustra," a tone poem, where, in the introduction, Strauss *proves* that he is a genius, but when he comes to the body and development of the work, we are reminded to such an extent of "Till Eulen-

spiegel's" pranks, the excruciating tinklings, squeaks, blasts, counterblasts and grunts of the orchestra become so formidable, that we are led to consider seriously whether there exists somewhere in Germany a philanthropical Kankakee for eccentric musicians.

* * *

Modern orchestration has led me astray for a moment. I will now conclude with a subject all important to vocal art:

X'S CASE.

A certain antagonism against what some interested parties are pleased to call "scientific teaching," or teaching by scientific methods, seems lately to have become much intensified.

Recently, under the heading "The Laryngoscope in Singing," a gentleman of Chicago has written seven pages against those who *learn*, or *teach*, the art of singing by scientific method, resulting from Garcia's researches and the application of his invention, the laryngoscope, to the physiology of the voice. The propounded arguments—a big word for such pettifoggy reasonings—embody about all the nonsense ever uttered upon the subject. I do not think I should give the gentleman the benefit of an advertisement (*even a bad one*). I shall therefore name him "X" for the sake of brevity. But what I shall do is to give him an exhaustive and, I trust, satisfactory answer. This plain answer may also serve to check somewhat the influence of those charming, cunning little foxes who proclaim the virtues of esthetic skirts, stylish sleeves and graceful Delsartian fads as omnipotent in the progress of young, credulous aspirants to fame.

To-day all honest and scrupulous professors teach upon exactly the same principles; their methods may vary slightly, but the fundamental laws of phonation have first been thoroughly mastered by them, and the whole system and practical part of their teachings are in accordance with these natural laws, which they cannot ignore. *All other teaching is pure charlatanism.* I feel I am discharging myself of a duty toward my master and the public in exposing such notions as might prove most dangerous to the career and purse of anyone hoping to become an artist.

Now it would be easy to dismiss our opponents by answering: Why discuss at all, when you profess to be the Apostles of Ignorance, to worship ignorance, and endeavor to drag the public into the belief that a good voice is about everything required to become a singer; that heart, impulse, natural feeling or dash are sufficient attributes to make an artist?

I prefer replying to every proposition set forth by X and shall do so, following the order adopted by him.

First proposition: "What benefit has the art of singing received from the modern scientific study of the throat? Has it been of any value at all? This is a question of the very greatest interest to every singer *and more especially to every teacher of singing.*"

In his preface to "Hints on Singing," Garcia makes this statement, which answers perfectly:

"The study of anatomy and physiology of the vocal organs is not *indispensable to the pupil*, but might *be most useful to the teacher*. It will enable him, when a defect is to be amended, to detect the organ which is at fault, and to suggest the proper correction. For the pupil it is enough that, localizing his sensations *through* his master's explanations, he should learn to distinguish the various parts of his instrument and the manner of using them." I will add that Garcia, who studied exhaustively the physiology of the vocal organs long before he invented the laryngoscope, in 1855 I believe, repeatedly said to me: "The L has taught me nothing new in anatomy; it has simply corroborated my previous investigations; but its use has afforded me the immense advantage of discovering 'how the glottis proceeds to produce sounds and registers and also the manner in which the ringing and veiled qualities are communicated to the voice; thus enabling me to direct the pupil more intelligently.'" Still further, in support of the argument, I will say that it is not sufficient to apprise the student of his defects; you must be competent to indicate exactly the means of correcting those defects. *That is scientific teaching.*

Second proposition: "Have the scientists succeeded by the aid of their technical knowledge of the throat in making great singers, or even a large number of good singers? Echo alone seems to answer!"

I do not think I can better answer X's curiosity than by giving him here a rapidly drawn *musico-genealogical* tree of the Garcia family. I include not only the descendants in direct line, but also some names, out of the hundreds of pupils, *musical offsprings* of this great school of singers and teachers, nurtured from the same source.

THE TREE.

I begin with *Manuel Garcia* (the elder, Sevilla, 1775; Paris, 1832).

One of the greatest tenors that ever existed; a profound student of the voice, a prolific composer of operas, and the author of the first school of singing bearing that name.

HIS CHILDREN.

Manuel Garcia, second (of our day) Malibran and Mme. Viardot Garcia.

THE PUPILS OF MANUEL GARCIA INCLUDE:

Jenny Lind; Bussine (of the Opera Comique), professor at the Conservatoire (teacher of the tenor Duc of the Grand Opera, Paris); Saint Yves Bac (professor at the Conservatoire, Paris); Jules Barbot (chosen by Gounod to create the part of Faust, professor at the Conservatoire, Paris); Charles Battaille (chosen by Meyerbeer to create the bass parts of *L'Etoile du Nord* and *Le Pardon de Ploermal*; professor at the Conservatoire); Herr Stockhausen, (the famous lied singer and the best singing master in Germany, the teacher of your George Henschel); Arnodli and Agnese, of the Italian Opera, Paris; Wartel (the teacher of Christine Nilsson and Trebelli); Roger (who created the part of Jean in Meyerbeer's *Prophet*); Charles Santley, the famous English baritone; Catherine Hayes, Miss Orridge, Miss Macentyre and Mme Marchesi, the teacher of Gerster, Emma Nevada, Mme. Stahl, Esther Palliser, Francis Saville, Sibyl Sanderson, Emma Eames, Emma Calve and Nellie Melba. Malibran and Viardot Garcia were both pupils of their brother. Mr. Duvivier was a classmate of Messrs. Jules Barbot, Bussine, Battaille and Stockhausen.

Cannot X perceive the ringing echo from all those voices, these excellent artists, who, for the last half century, have been singing a glorious hymn of praise to their progenitor, Manuel Garcia? These marvelous voices, these great singers, were all formed, cultured, educated on *scientific principles*.

Third proposition: It is not necessary for either teacher or singer to know anything about the throat from a scientific standpoint. Because, if we know anything about singing at all, we know that the most famous singers the world has ever seen have lived and died before the laryngoscope was invented. Has X heard those singers? How can he compare with the singers of to-day? Has X even heard Lablach, Ronconi, Duprez, Mario, Sontag, Alboni? I have heard them all. Lablach I used to visit when he lived Rue Taitbout, Paris. Ronconi (George) was an intimate friend of mine, and so was Alboni, whom I knew first in Berlin. Mme. Sontag, Comtess Rossi, was kind enough to accept and sing the first three songs I published in Germany.

Is it not really an insult to the memory of these aforementioned singers, and those of the past, to suppose that they never made any scientific investigations, never studied the voice physiologically? In our own days, what does X think of Jules Faure and Victor Maurel, both great artists, both having

written scientific works; Faure his "La Voix et le Chant;" V. Maurel his book "Un Problème d'Art;" works they sent to me and which I will willingly lend to X for the benefit of his education.

What do you say, Mr. X, about Jean de Reszke? Dr. Joal declares that he is as learned a theoretician as he is an able practitioner. What is your opinion about Edouard de Reszke, Plançon, Lasselle, Viilaret, Melba, Calve and all the others? Every one of them ignoramuses, eh?

You speak of the old Italian school. Are following works and methods not scientific? Bernacchi of Bologna (1775); L'Abbe Blanchet (1756); Principes Philosophiques du Chant; Mengozzi; Tosi (L'Art du Chant, (1723); San Giovanni; Charles Battaille (De L'Enseignement du Chant); Lablach?

Nevertheless X insists that "a normal healthy youth, with the desire to express himself by singing instead of speech, may, and frequently does, sing, that is, vocalize, beautifully without the benefit of any instruction whatsoever." Let the boy go to the top of the class at once!

"Great singers lived and died long before the laryngoscope was invented." Why certainly! Long before the telescope was invented people could see—a *comparatively short distance*. Long before the application of steam to mechanics, machines existed; navigation existed—*slow navigation*. Even before the printing press existed, men talked nonsense, but it was impossible to flood the world with paper sullied by such useless divagations.

X continues his remarkable revelations: "Singing, after all, is not *merely* a *physical art*." Nobody ever said that *merely* scientific knowledge was necessary to make an artist.

He says further: "We all know that many great singers have been quite unable to instruct others."

We know even of some bad singers in the same predicament.

But Mr. X, when you write, "There is something in good singing that may not be analyzed, weighed nor measured, that comes from the heart and speaks to the heart," we really must decline to follow you in these bold, dangerous psychological flights and distinctions between brain, heart, soul, etc., etc. Your proposition might puzzle even a Herbert Spencer, although he is reputed to be a rather vigorous thinker.

The voice is only a medium by which feelings, emotions, passions, sentiments may be expressed just as with any other instrument.

You do not play the piano, the violin or any instrument with your heart, nor do you learn how to use your voice with your heart. The brain dominates, controls the whole musical work, as well in the conception, the analysis, as in the execu-

tion of a piece; as well in the mastering of all technical difficulties, coloring of tone, etc., etc.; be it in the reading or in the rendering of a song, a concerto, or a symphony.

There is about as much sentiment in the study of vocalization as there is in the five finger exercises for the piano student, and I know what little boys and girls think about them.

The best virtuosi and best singers are like the best soldiers, those who remain cool under fire. That is *art*, not *impulse*. It must be a sad experience to see a soldier run away with his gun. What awe would be caused by the sight of a gun running away with its soldier!

Seriously, sir, our duty is simply to thoroughly equip our pupils; teach them how to master every technical difficulty; acquaint them with the works of the great masters; develop in them the love of the beautiful, the elevated, the intellectual and then, *but only then, if they are blessed with individuality, soul, fire and reverence for their art*, let them go. They will give that imprint to their work that no teacher could ever inculcate.

By all means let the life-blood of our hearts rush up to our brains, nourish them, invigorate them, help to inspire and inflame them with noble ambition, noble feelings, but do not let us forget that clever definition of genius, "A great capacity for hard work."

This case of Garcia versus X could be dismissed with the application of Nietzsche's Epoch-gram: "We are never understood, therefore our authority."

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In support of my arguments I will now read a few short extracts from the writings of Mesdames Adelina Patti, Marchesi, Nellie Melba, Lilli Lehmann and Nordica.

Opinion of Adelina Patti—Practice makes perfect.

In singing, as in everything else, practice makes perfect. Those who wish to be great singers must practice untiringly. Hard work is the principal factor of all artistic success. Genius and voice count for little without it. Young women with operatic aspirations come to my performances and, after they have heard me, exclaim: "How easily Mme. Patti sings! It is no trouble to be a great prima donna if the gift for it is born in one." Ah! they do not know the weary years I spent in study and practice of the most arduous character, and at an age, too, when other girls were thinking only of dolls and bonbons. I tell you there is no royal road to becoming a great singer.

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Mme. Marchesi says the best voices come from America, Australia and Austria.

"What do you think of the immediate future of the art of singing?" and "Is it dying, as some of the reactionaries say?" were two pertinent questions to which Mme. Marchesi made the following answer:

"It is dying in some places, certainly; in Italy, for example, where they no longer know how to sing. But I still have always an extraordinary number of beautiful voices passing through my school, so I cannot be pessimistic. Where do the best voices come from? Chiefly from Australia, America and Austria. Americans lack tradition. You are too young a people to have had your own composers and artists. You will have them as great, if not greater, than those which Europe has produced, but it takes time. Artists cannot be made in a hurry. That is another fault with my American pupils—they want to be operatic stars in two months, which is impossible. A voice must be developed gradually. Little by little it will expand and grow in strength and beauty. It is a simple law of nature.

"I try to impress upon my students the importance of taking plenty of time to study before attempting to appear in public, but they are always impatient; they will not wait, and many a good artist has thus been sacrificed to speed.

"Formerly my pupils always remained with me at least three years. Now I consider myself fortunate if I keep them two or even one year. *I myself studied four years with Garcia.*

"Americans are always in the greatest hurry, and it takes quite as long, if not longer, to train Americans in the poetry of music, for, unlike their foreign sisters, they seldom possess instinctive dramatic talent. They have clear, cool, intelligent heads, and are governed rather by intellect than by impulse. They are rarely emotional, and are apt to lack the magnetism found in the daughters of France, Italy and other Southern countries.

* * *

The Vocal Student.—By Madame Nelli Melba.

It is so unusual for a person having a beautiful voice to have a perfect, or even a good, natural method of voice production as well, that we may class such instances as remarkable and deal only with the average cases—those in which proper cultivation and training are necessary. The first aim of both must be to secure correct voice production, and later to train the properly produced voice to attain its fullest possibilities and powers. Few persons realize how much is added to the beauty of the natural voice by proper cultivation. Yet art adds almost as much as nature first provides, and though nature's gift may fade with passing years, the art may become only the more exquisite and remain a permanent possession.

Here the difficulty begins. The pupil must have competent teachers, and here arises the first obstacle in the way of the average student. Competent vocal instructors are as rare as incompetent ones are plentiful.

Do not select a person who teaches various branches of music and "singing." In ninety-nine such cases out of a hundred the preparation of such a person as a vocal teacher has consisted of a few lessons received from some other equally incompetent teacher. A good vocal teacher has made his profession a matter of slow acquiring. He has studied the physiology and hygiene of the vocal organs, has devoted much attention to the study of correct tone production, breathing, vocalization, and the many other departments connected with the technical side of his profession.

The next important point to be considered is practice. For the first few months never practice more than ten minutes at a time, and do this not oftener than three times a day. Of course, one can sing for a longer time than this when the voice is placed, but on this point be guided by your instructor's advice. Practice the head notes always *piano*; pay the greatest attention to equalizing the three registers, never forcing the chest notes lest you injure the medium register, which is naturally the weakest part of a woman's voice.

* * *

Lilli Lehmann has written a pamphlet in which she expresses certain ideas on musical subjects. She believes that the art of the singer is always the same, so far as technique is concerned; but the singer of to-day learns less than in years gone by. To sing the operatic music of Mozart, Bellini, Donizetti, and the early Verdi it was necessary for the singer, male or female, to have a generous compass, and to be accomplished in colorature. Wagner came and swept away ornaments, embellishments, florid passages of every description, and now, when each note has its syllable, the lazy and the ignorant think all they have to do to triumph in Wagnerian music is to enunciate distinctly. Thus we find Wagnerian singers who cannot execute a tune decently, and glory in their inability, fearing the reproach, not of ignorance, but of being a bravura singer. Mrs. Lehmann believes it is necessary for a soprano to sing Mozart well if she wishes to sing Wagner well. She refers to the severe demands made by Wagner on the voice, admits them, and reminds the reader that Wagner wrote with the thought of a concealed orchestra.

The majority of people, says Lilli, have false ideas concerning methods of singing. Some think the Italian, some the German, the better. "Each school, when it is good, is founded on one and the same basis." A very sensible remark; but how few German singers have any method at all.

Mrs. Lehmann believes that a good singer should be able to sing the music of Wagner and colorature passages; "she who cannot is not to my mind an artist. I except no one." She adds immediately: The only difference between ancient and modern education in song is this: Formerly the pupils studied action and song for six or eight years; now they are "finished" in a year.

* * *

Mme. Nordica has brought back with her some opinions made more decided through her recent experiences. The merits and demerits of the different schools have been too generously demonstrated by their various representatives to require any comment. Mme. Nordica, in a measure, gives her own views regarding them, and which, in connection with her statements, become pertinent. When questioned regarding the advisability of Americans going to Germany to study singing, she replied with great positiveness she would not advise Americans to go abroad at all to study singing, particularly not to Germany. Mme. Nordica asserts one has no chance to hear really good singers, those whose school is perfect, from hearing whom one may derive real benefit. Sig. Ancona expressed himself quite as strongly in respect to his Italian confrères, whom he stated during his engagements here last season sang the majority of them in a manner that would cause them to be allowed just twenty-four hours in which to pack their trunks and return were they to venture appearance in America. Foreign musical papers stated last year that the closing of a number of theaters in Italy was due as much to impossibility to secure efficient singers as to the hard times. Assuredly the best schooled foreign singers of late heard in America are those who acquired their equipment in France.

Many who want to be singers nowadays fail to appreciate the necessity of a thorough study of colorature—Particularly is this neglected when the natural voice is pleasant. The first thing should always be colorature—Mozart is especially good—the sustained singing, like the Wagner operas, coming later; for though, without the study of colorature, you may be able to sing, for instance, Wagner, you can't sing the Italian music afterward.