

Influencers of Vienna

Reconstructing a bel canto scene

Is it possible to re-imagine how late 18th-century singers sounded?

Immerse yourself in *bel canto* era Vienna as you explore its central influencers, and how their centuries old creative practices have been brought to life by new research.

Inspired by evidence such as historical annotated performance scores, wax recordings and a phonograph, researchers employ practice-led methods of recording emulation (imitation) embodiment and extrapolation to 're-discover' and perform this 'beautiful singing' for today's audiences.



Anna Fraser, *Soprano*

Doctor of Musical Arts Candidate, Research Assistant

ARC Discovery Project

The Shock of the Old: Rediscovering the Sounds of Bel Canto 1700-1900

Dress by Charles Davis

(Design & Costume, *Biographica*, Sydney Chamber Opera)

Bel canto

Bel canto means beautiful singing and commonly describes the admired vocal practices (originating in Italy) that were prevalent in Europe during the period 1700–1900.

“A highly complex way of singing ... in which the specific interaction of breathing, vocal fold oscillation and embouchure spaces gave rise to central vocal qualities such as register balance, suppleness of tone, sound intensity, a controlled vibrato or the play with timbres known as chiaroscuro. They form the basis for the use of means of shaping such as legato, portamento, crescendo and decrescendo, messa di voce and mezza voce, various forms of fluency and trills, and even the appropriate use of tempo rubato.”

James Stark (1999), ‘Bel Canto: A History of Vocal Pedagogy’

How can singers today effectively tap into "pre-modern" *bel canto* with technical assurance and stylistic conviction?

The Influencers of Vienna

Throughout this exhibition you will encounter some key figures:

Marianna Martines (1744–1812), singer, composer and keyboardist, a central mover and shaker in Vienna in the mid-late 18th century

Manuel Garcia II (1805–1906), inventor of the laryngoscope, this 19th-century pedagogue was the first to provide a scientific approach to sound production

Adelina Patti (1843–1919), one of the most famous sopranos and early recording artists in the world at the turn of the 20th Century

Clive Brown (b.1947), specialist researcher, author and practitioner of historically-informed performance of Classical and Romantic music



Maurice Strakosch

1825–1887 ; Gross-Seelowitz, Moravia

The Ten Commandments of Music for the Perfection of the Voice

1896

Book, posthumously compiled & edited by
M. Le Roy, published by 'The Magazine of
Music', London

Courtesy of Prof. Neal Peres Da Costa

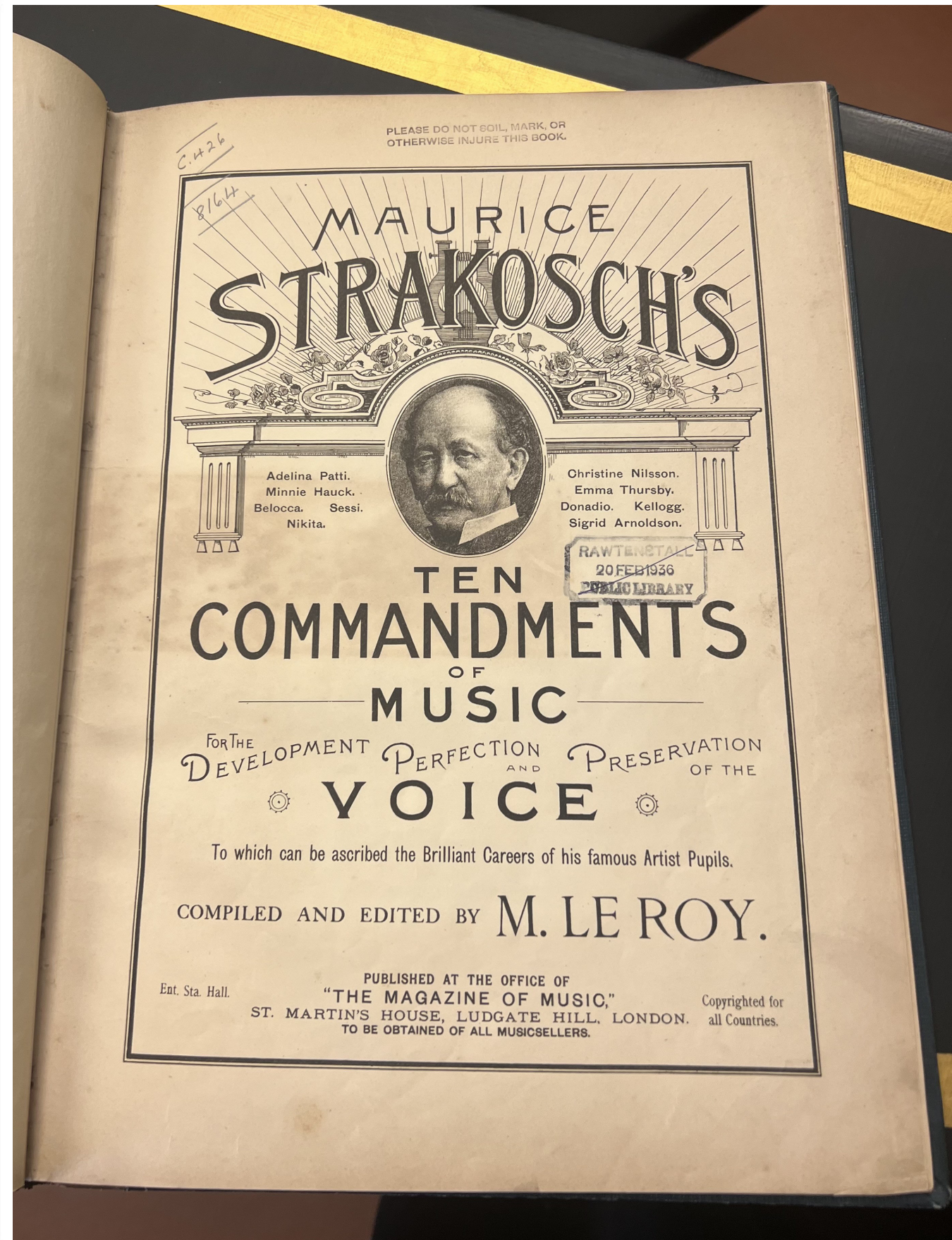
Strakosch was Adelina Patti's brother-in-law and managed her concerts.

This page features a signed handwritten note from Patti underneath her photograph:

*“Wishing you sincerely courage and
patience, the two qualities
indispensable to arrive at success*

Yours very sincerely

Adelina Patti”





**Adelina Patti (1843-1919) Italian opera diva, 1882,
London Stereoscopic & Photographic Co.
A photograph from *The Theatre, A Monthly Review*, Volume V,
January to June, 1882, edited by Clement Scott, Charles Dickens &
Evans, London, 1882 (above)**



**Johanna Maria Lind (1847), known as the Swedish Nightingale:
a sensation throughout Europe and the United States (right)**

Recording emulation

Recording emulation is a practice-led method of imitating recordings.

The emulation process uses performance body skills to imitate the musical practices of past (bel canto) singers as closely as possible, in order to learn them.

Early sound recordings of late-bel canto singers (trained in the second half of the 19th century) reveal bel canto practices used in abundance before the rise of modern style in the early 20th century. These musicians' expressive traits were part of a continuum of practice going back several centuries.

The emulation exercise helps modern singers to embody a pre-modern aesthetic, which underpins the re-imagining of earlier styles. Vocalists undertake close (repeated) listening (bar by bar analysis) and make detailed annotations in scores of the practices. Part of the annotative process is determining timbres and elements of musical expressivity such as: portamento, legato, messa di voce, rhythm and tempo alterations (including agogic accents), ornamentation, improvisational aspects, dynamics, accents, timbral qualities, registers, laryngeal and pharyngeal positions and shapes, enunciation and vowel modification, and oscillation of tone.

A crucial part of the process is evaluating one's own recording like one does the original recording. Honing the emulation over a period of time and making multiple recordings allows the singer to get as close as possible to the vocal styles heard on the recordings.

Thomas Edison

1847–1931, Ohio, USA

Phonograph, Edison Model A100 Diamond Disc Player

c.1920

The Gramophone & Typewriter Co, LTD
1898; Founded in London, UK

'The Last rose of summer'

c.1905–12 (Recorded in 1905)

Gramophone record: 03062, Matrix 546f

Adelina Patti (1843–1919), soprano

Landon Roland (1873–1938), piano

Courtesy of Prof. Neal Peres Da Costa

My research focuses on the varied notated and un-notated bel canto effects heard on early recordings.



‘The shock of the old: Rediscovering the Sounds of Bel Canto 1700–190’ aims at recovering knowledge of bel canto practices through practical experiments.

Watch a step-by step guide to the emulation and embodiment of Patti's 1905 recording of 'The Last rose of summer'.



**Adelina Patti, soprano; Landon Ronald, piano
78rpm 30 cm: Gramophone "Patti" 03062
Matrix nr.: 553f
Recorded: December 1905**

Embodiment

What do we learn from early recordings and how can we apply this information?

“The concept of embodiment ... refers concurrently to the breadth of lived experience as one engages with his/her body in the world, and to the shaping of these experiences by cultural forces.”

Niva Piran (2017), ‘Journeys of Embodiment at the Intersection of Body and Culture: The Developmental Theory of Embodiment’

Embodiment of the physical sensations of the emulation stage requires a formulated language to describe the sensations of the expressive effects in play, assimilating another singer’s approach to sound production. This establishes a richer palette of vocal approaches and defines more diverse performance outcomes for the modern vocal artisan.

This process has greatly enriched my own expressivity and has established a plethora of sonic opportunities.



Listen to emulations and reimagined works, recorded onto wax disc at the University of Surrey (UK) in December 2024 utilising embodied expressive effects.

MANUEL GARCIA—A HUNDRED YEARS OLD TO-DAY.

Manuel Garcia, who celebrates his centenary to-day and will be presented with his portrait painted by Mr. Sargent, will be remembered by posterity as the first man who ever saw his own vocal chords, and thus invented the laryngoscope. His is a remarkable family, and in the small space at disposal may be summarised thus—

His *father*, Manuel del Popolo Vicente (born at Seville, January 22, 1775), was well known as a composer, singer (tenor), actor, and conductor. Rossini wrote the part of Almaviva in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* for him in 1816. In 1823-5 he sang in Paris and London. He then went to New York, producing eleven operas. He died in Paris, June 21, 1832.

His *mother*, Jacquina Briones, was the leading Spanish actress of her time. She died in Brussels.



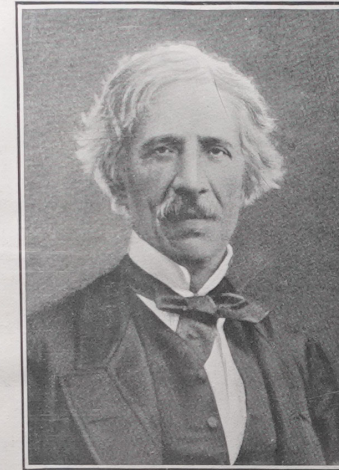
Manuel Garcia's Father

Born at Seville, January 22, 1775. He was a composer, singer, actor, and conductor.



Manuel Garcia's Mother

Jacquina Briones was the leading actress of her time. She died aged eighty-three.



Manuel Garcia at the age of Sixty

He was born at Madrid, March 17, 1805.



Manuel Garcia's Sister (Madame Viardot)

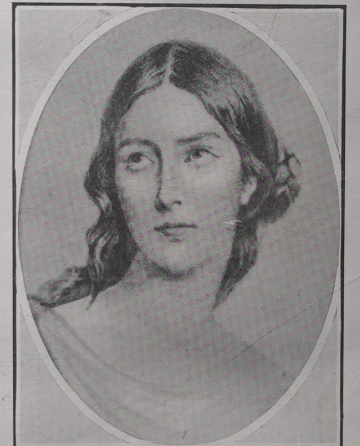
She was a famous operatic singer and still flourishes as a teacher of singing.

His *sister*, Maria Felicia (born March 24, 1808, died September 13, 1836), made her *début* on the stage as a child of five. She first appeared in London as Rosina in *Il Barbiere* on June 7, 1825. In 1826 she married Malibran, an elderly and wealthy Frenchman. The marriage was a failure and she returned to the operatic stage. After a triumphant career, in which De Musset wrote verses about her, she died at the early age of twenty-eight.

His *sister*, Michele Ferdinande Pauline (born July 18, 1821), was also a famous singer and still teaches her art in Paris. In 1840 she married M. Viardot.

His *son*, Gustave Garcia, is the well-known professor at the Guildhall. He made his operatic *début* at La Scala in an opera by Donizetti and in London in *Faust* (with Sims Reeves). He has written a very successful book called *The Actor's Art*.

His *grandson*, Albert Garcia, is a young baritone. He was educated at the Royal College of Music by his father and by his grandaunt in Paris.



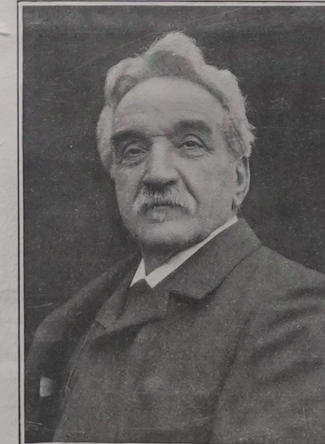
Manuel Garcia's Sister (Madame Malibran)

"Grove" describes her as "one of the most distinguished singers the world has ever seen."



Manuel Garcia's Grandson

Mr. Albert Garcia, baritone.



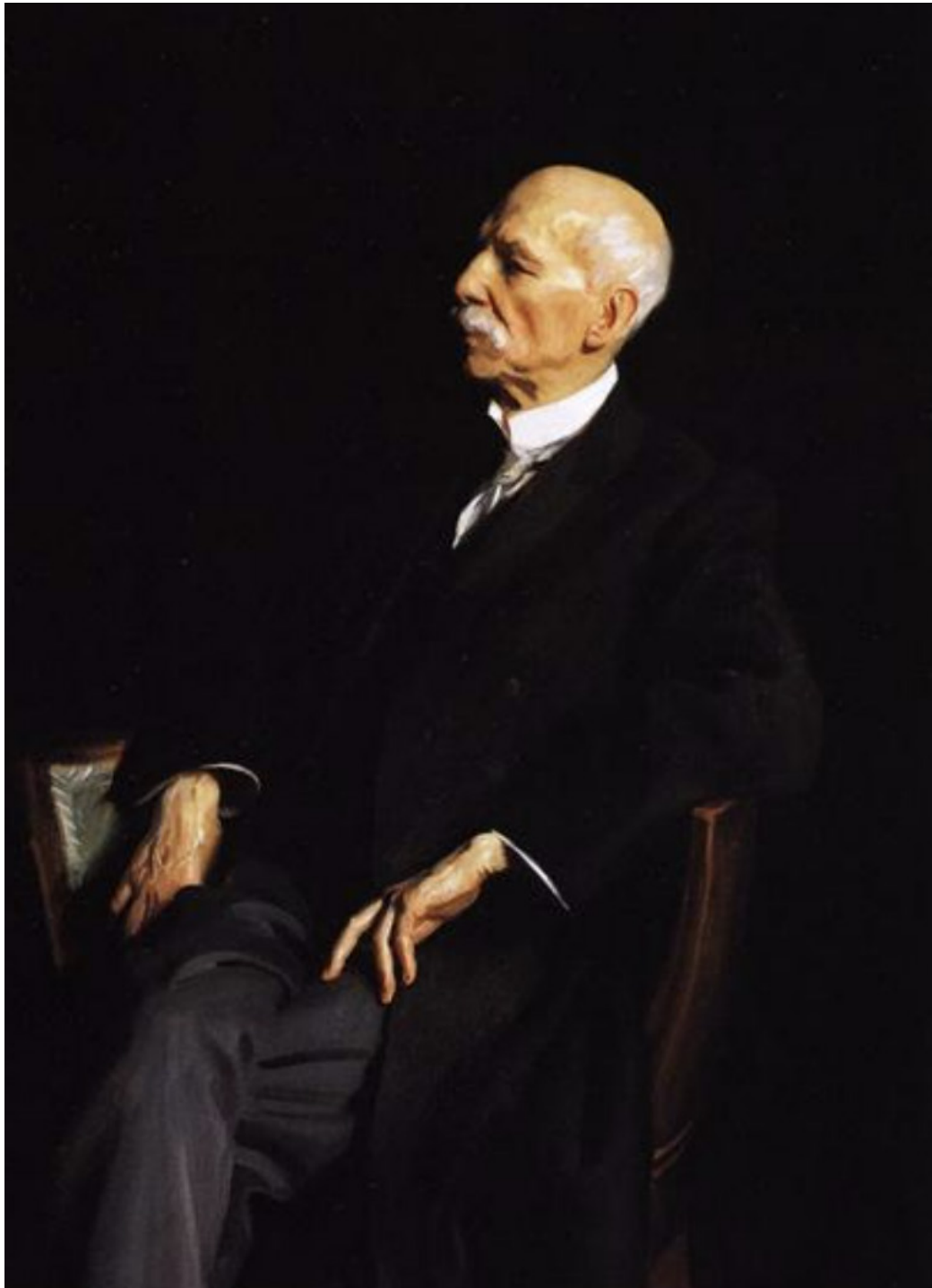
Manuel Garcia's Son

Mr. Gustave Garcia, teacher of singing at the Guildhall.



Madame Gustave Garcia

Who sang at Covent Garden as Lina Martorelli.



García, aged 100 (1905)
John Singer Sargent (1856–1925)

The Sphere, An Illustrated Newspaper for the Home

1900–64, published by London Illustrated Newspapers

Manual García – A Hundred Years Old Today

March 18, 1905 p.276, the ‘family tree’

Courtesy of Prof. Neal Peres Da Costa

García was part of an extraordinary lineage of artistic practitioners to inform his pedagogical publications, including his mother and father (who were singers and actors) and opera singer sisters, Viardot and Malibran.

García's annotations of arias by Morlacchi, Cimarosa, Crescentini and Rossini (from García's 1847, 'École de García') provide detailed instructions and his own expectations for the implementation of timbre and other expressive effects that are extremely helpful in sonifying these arias in historically appropriate ways.

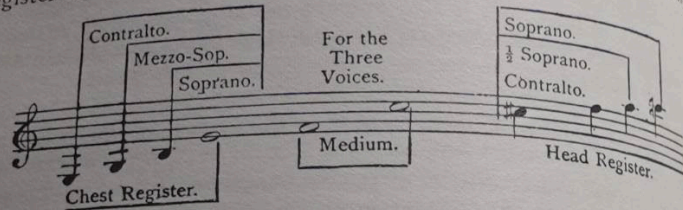


Extrapolative experimentation relies on individual and intuitive artistic responses.

Listen to a realised annotated example of 'Morir ciel qual concerto' from Teobaldo ed Isolina (1834) by Francesco Morlacchi (1784–1841)

The comparison of the medium and the head registers will give the following results: The medium does not possess the same power of penetration as the head register. The difference shows itself at once from the point of penetration. In robust organs the two registers blend with ease; in weak or unhealthy organs the union is often troublesome. The first two or three notes are inclined to be in the medium register. This is one of the difficulties in the contralto voice. Here is a table showing the registers are distributed:—

Table of Female Voices.



MALE VOICES.

Classification of Male Voices.

Q. How are male voices classified?

A. In men's voices, as in women's, the three registers co-exist, but the chest predominates, the other two being but a remnant of the boy's voice. In consideration of the character, and especially the extent, of men's voices, they have been classified as follows:—

- The BASS is the lowest voice;
The BARITONE is the middle voice; and
The TENOR is the highest voice.

These voices, beginning with the bass at the bottom of the ladder, are each placed a third above the one preceding it, and they vary in extent from a twelfth to a fifteenth. In the bass this register is distinguished by breadth and power.

may descend to [musical staff] and even lower; and it may rise to [musical staff]

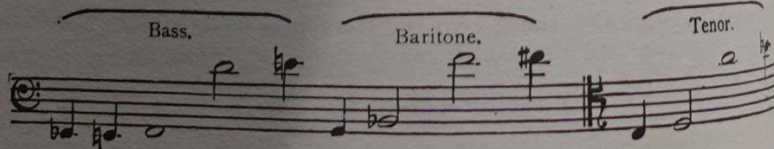
The baritone has less volume, but more ease and ring in the high notes.

it extends from [musical staff] to [musical staff] The tenor includes [musical staff]

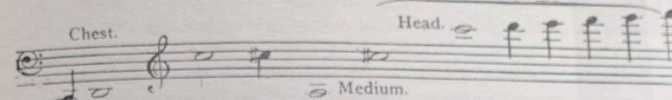
and has a greater facility than the other two in using the falsetto and head registers. The falsetto in men's voices, when good, is to be used, has the same extent as in women's.

Table of Male Voices.

Here is a table of male voices:—



And here is a table of the combined extent of the human voices:—



This 5th is very rare, and when not spontaneous must never be attempted.

Q. Why do you give several notes to indicate the limits of the registers?

A. Because the limits are not invariable and depend on the state of the vocal cords.

Q. Can a teacher change at will the pitch of a voice and turn a contralto or mezzo-soprano into a soprano, or raise the pitch of a baritone to that of a tenor?

A. The experiment has been tried, and, when the subject has been young and vigorous, a short success has seemed to justify the attempt, but, if not stopped in time, the final result has been the inevitable ruin of the voice.

TIMBRE.

Q. What is meant by Timbre?

A. Every sound of the voice may assume an infinite variety of shades apart from intensity. Each of these is a timbre.

Q. What produces the variety of timbres?

A. They are due, first, to permanent causes that affect the voice of each individual, such as the constitution, age, health or disease of the vocal apparatus; secondly, to the action of the glottis; third, to the changes of form in the tube which the sounds traverse.

Q. Can you explain these changes?

A. The path of the sound, being formed of elastic and movable parts, varies its dimensions and forms in endless ways, and every modification—even the slightest—has a corresponding and definite influence on the voice.

Q. How is a student to select from among these intricacies of timbre?

A. The timbres may be divided into two classes—the clear, or open, and the dark, or closed. 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. The arch rises when we are in the act of yawning, and falls when we are in the act of swallowing.

Varieties of Timbre.

Open and closed Timbres.

OPEN—TIMBRE CLAIR.

CLOSED—TIMBRE SOMBRE.

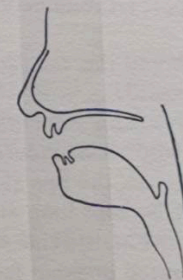
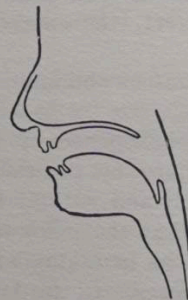


FIG. 12.

FIG. 13.

Vertical section from the front to the back of the head, showing depression of the soft palate and a high position of the larynx.

Diagram of the same parts, showing the soft palate raised and the larynx depressed.

Manuel Rodríguez García

1805–1906, Madria, Spain

Hints on singing

1894 (reprinted 1970)

Book (introduction by Byron Cantrell),

Summit Publishing Co, USA

p.11, Timbre Fig.12 & Fig.13

Courtesy of Prof. Neal Peres Da Costa

“The study of the physiology of the voice has been greatly facilitated by the use of the laryngoscope. This instrument, by laying bare the interior of the larynx, shows how ... the ringing and veiled qualities are communicated to the voice. These qualities ... are distinct from the characteristics of the voice called timbres, which are exterior to the vibratory organ and are originated in the pharynx by quite another mechanism.”

Preface, ‘Hints on Singing’



García pinpoints a gap in understanding of how to describe physically, articulate instructively and define tonally timbral vocal practices.

Watch a video explaining García’s laryngeal positions and registral colours and how timbres can be practically achieved.

Gioachino Rossini

1792–1868, Pesaro, Italy

Una voce poco fa

Cavatina from 'Barbier di Siviglia'

1816

A hand annotated section of the score from the volume 'Emma Joseph née Chapman, volume of songs and music no. 5, ca.1810-1845'. MUS/SS/19

*Courtesy of Caroline Simpson Library,
Museums of History NSW*

The score includes extensive annotated melismatic runs throughout, likely added by Chapman's singing teacher Domenico Crivelli (1793–1856) who was principal professor of singing at the Royal Academy of Music, London following its foundation in 1823.

This is evidence of the types of individualistic bravura singing that singers were expected to deliver at that time. The first public Sydney performance of this aria was in 1836.



Anna Fraser at Vaucluse House in May 2024 prior to a concert with Neal Peres Da Costa, hosted by the Museums of History NSW.

The program was entitled 'The Syrens of Sydney' and included musical rarities from the collections of MH NSW including Rossini's aria.

Emma Chapman 17

Una Voce poco fa
CAVATINA,
as sung by Madame Fodor,
in the Opera of
IL BARBIER DI SIVIGLIA,
by
Signor G. Rossini.

Price 3^d

London Printed by the Royal Harmonic Institution, (Lower Salon, Argyll Rooms)

PIANO
FORTE

284

HUME & SON
284, North Street
LIVERPOOL

Domenico Corri

1746–1825, Rome, Italy

**The Singers Preceptor or
Corri's Treatise on Vocal Music**

1811

Book, comprised of two volumes,
published by Chappell & Co,
London Bound facsimile

Courtesy of Prof. Neal Peres Da Costa

*“The Promethean fire of eloquent
expression, as the soul to the body
intuitively guides and directs the whole,
while the latter, the mere agent of its
will, when thus inspired, conveys with
grace and truth every sentiment and
every passion.”*

Corri (1811),
'The Singers Preceptor'

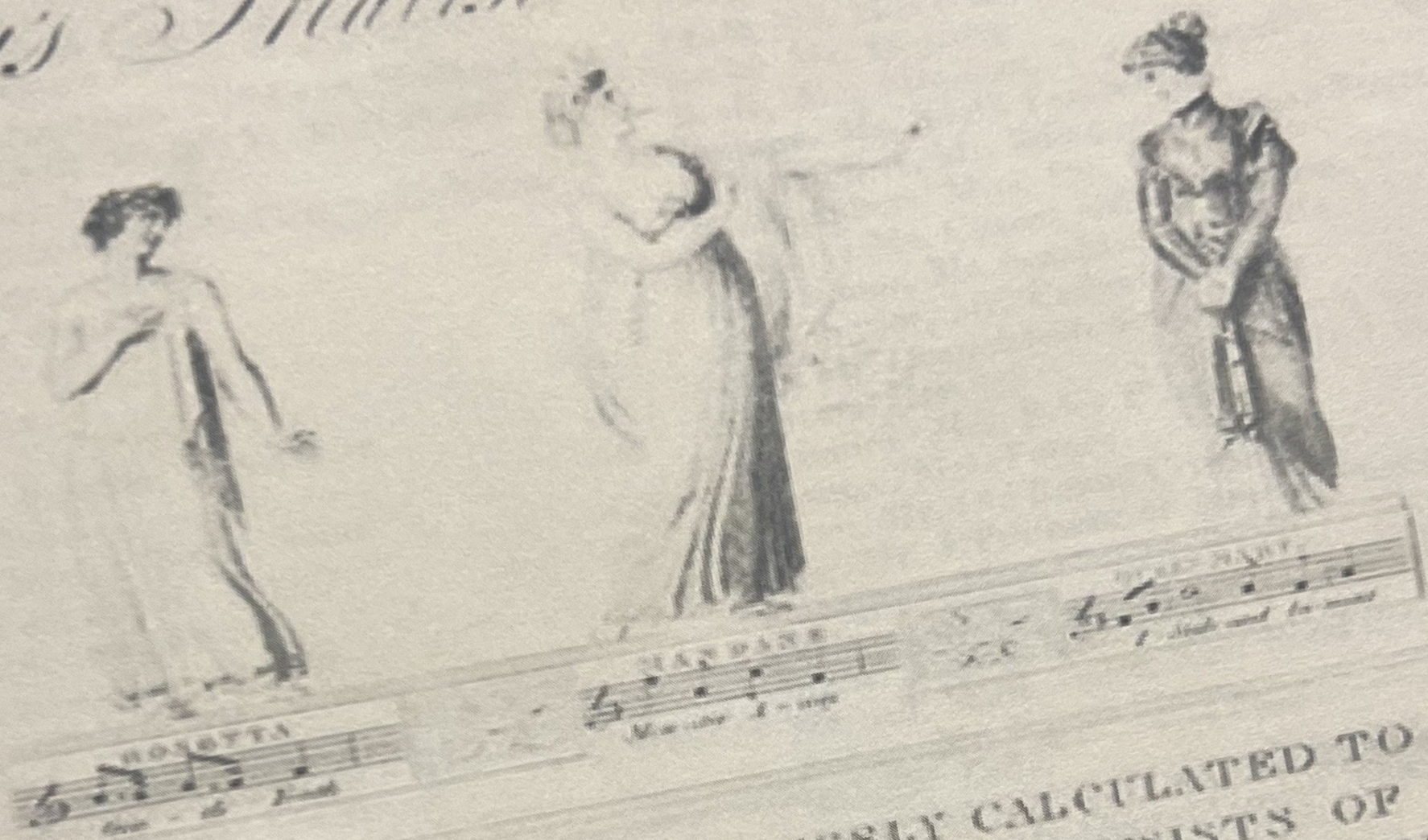


Prof. Clive Brown
(Emeritus Professor of
Music, University of Leeds)
perusing his original Corri
editions at his home,
outside of Vienna,
December 2024.

*To experience
extrapolated examples of
Corri's annotated songs
and arias, visit:*
[www.belcantorediscovered.
org/creative-research/](http://www.belcantorediscovered.org/creative-research/)

THE SINGERS PRECEPTOR,

Carr's Treatise on Vocal Music.



THIS TREATISE IS EXPRESSLY CALCULATED TO
TEACH THE Art of Singing AND CONSISTS OF
ESTABLISHING PROPER RULES. THE RESULT OF
FIFTY YEARS EXPERIENCE ACCOMMODATED TO
THE CAPACITY OF EVERY STUDENT WHETHER
AMATEUR OR PROFESSOR. THEATRICAL OR CHORAL
TO ASSIST THOSE WHO SING BY EAR ONLY.
NEEDED AS TO ENABLE THE PUPIL
EXERCISE OF THESE
OF A

Moritz Ludwig von Schwind
1804–1871, Vienna, Austria

Schubertiade

1868

Digital print of original drawing

Courtesy of Prof. Neal Peres Da Costa



“In 1868, the Austrian painter, draughtsman and print maker Moritz Ludwig von Schwind (1804–1871) — a close acquaintance of Franz Schubert’s (1804–1871) — drew the well-known picture of the composer at the piano accompanying arguably his favourite singer, the Austrian baritone Johann Michael Vogl (1768–1840) in the informal setting of a Schubertiade.

The picture is set in the drawing room of Schubert’s lifelong friend Joseph von Spaun (1788–1865). The audience includes Joseph von Spaun, Franz Lachner, Moritz von Schwind, Wilhelm August Rieder, Leopold Kupelwieser, Eduard von Bauernfeld, Franz von Schober, Franz Grillparzer, and on the wall a picture of the Comtesse Caroline Esterházy.”

Prof. Neal Peres Da Costa, Sydney Conservatorium of Music Associate Dean
(Research), Chief Investigator for ARC Discovery Project *The shock of the
old: Rediscovering the sounds of bel canto 1700–1900*

Johann Anton André

1775–1842, Offenbach, Germany

Lieder und Gesänger mit Begleitung des Piano-forte

1817-22

Four volume collection and title page for two individual lieder scores:

No.s 22 and 23 No.6 (Heft 1)

Courtesy of Prof. Neal Peres Da Costa

The little-known German publisher and composer Johann Anton André provides us with an incredibly vital source of performing practice evidence about song performance in the early 19th century. André's collection of lieder (songs) encompasses 48 works in total, published in four volumes with 12 works in each volume (Vol. 1: Op. 38 (1817); Vol. 2: Op. 39 (1817-18?); Vol. 3: Op. 40 (1818); Vol. 4: Op. 62 (1822)).

The collection is an instructive edition that provides an extraordinary level of detail of the types of expressive practices that singers and pianists were required to employ. André also provided explanatory remarks for the various signs and symbols he used in the collection. Of particular interest is André's obvious regard for declamatory principles of tempo modification. Such a level of interpretative detail was considered only a starting point in building an appropriately stylish interpretation.

William Collins

1789–1853, Glasgow, Scotland

Vienna

c.1878

Original lithograph

Courtesy of Prof. Neal Peres Da Costa



Pietro Antonio Lorenzoni

1721–1782 ; Cles in Tyrol, Austria

**Portrait of Marianna Martines
at the keyboard**

Mid-late 18th century

Digital image of original, oil on canvas



Lorenzoni is believed to have painted several portraits of Mozart and his family between the 1740s and 1780s.

Evidence suggests Martines sang at occasions in Vienna accompanied by the young virtuoso when Mozart came to town.

Arnold Dolmetsch

1858–1940, Le Mans, France

Dolmetsch Clavichord

c.1920

Metal stringed and timber keyboard instrument

Courtesy of Prof. Neal Peres Da Costa

Dolmetsch could be considered to be the grandfather of the early music revival in the early 20th century. He built copies of almost every kind of instrument dating from the 15th–18th centuries, fueling the resurgence of interest in early music.

The clavichord can achieve great dynamic variation by the player's touch alone; its tone is silvery and soft, and it can produce vibrato (*bebung*).

Marianna Martines

1744–1812, Vienna, Austria

La Tempesta

1778

Handwritten score: a chamber cantata

Digital image of the title page

Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Musiksammlung

Martines, perhaps, benefited from the importance, influence and expertise of the eminent 18th-century pedagogue, Nicola Porpora (1686–1768), who could offer her as a singing teacher.

The compositional style and evident bravura in Martines' cantatas point to her having an impressive technique: the score showing a predilection for coloratura passages, leaps over wide intervals and trills indicating that she herself must have been an excellent singer.

Arnold Dolmetsch
1858–1940, Le Mans, France

Dolmetsch Clavichord

c.1920
Metal stringed and timber keyboard
instrument

Courtesy of Prof. Neal Peres Da Costa

Dolmetsch could be considered to be the grandfather of the early music revival in the early 20th century. He built copies of almost every kind of instrument dating from the 15th–18th centuries, fueling the resurgence of interest in early music.

The clavichord can achieve great dynamic variation by the players touch alone; its tone is silvery and soft, and it can produce vibrato (*bebung*).



Marianna Martines
1744–1812, Vienna, Austria

La Tempesta

1778
Handwritten score: a chamber cantata

Digital image of the title page
Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek,
Musiksammlung

Martines, perhaps, benefited from the importance, influence and expertise the eminent 18th-century pedagogue, Nicola Porpora (1686–1768), could offer her as a singing teacher.

The compositional style and evident bravura in Martines' cantatas point to her having an impressive technique: the score showing a predilection for coloratura passages, leaps over wide intervals and trills indicating that she herself must have been an excellent singer.

ARNOLD DOLMETSCH

Anton von Maron

1733–1808, Vienna, Austria

Portrait of Marianna Martines

c.1773

Digital image of original, oil on canvas

Wien Museum, Vienna



Who was Marianna Martines?

Marianna Martines (1744–1812) became a central mover and shaker in Vienna in the mid-late 18th Century. Taken under the wing of Pietro Metastasio (1698–1782), the famous imperial poet who became a mentor and supervisor of her education, Martines successfully carved out a life for herself as a single woman with an impressive career (yet never formally being employed at court), in composing, performing and teaching at her home.

Martines possessed a gift for melody: in her apartment, on the grounds of the Viennese court, filled with flourishing music making, she regularly hosted weekly Akademien events attended by performers and composers including Joseph Haydn (1732–1809) and W.A. Mozart (1756–1791). Marianna became a much-esteemed individual in Vienna and was credited with over two hundred works, with an international reputation as a composer, keyboardist and highly successful vocal artist.