

SPRING 2023

VOLUME 23, ISSUE 1

# COMMUNICATING VOICE



The journal of the  British Voice Association



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**Saturday – Sunday**  
3rd – 4th June 2023

Association of Teachers of Singing Summer conference

## Global Connections The Wisdom Amongst Us

Voces8 Centre, London EC3

a collaboration between AOTOS and its American counterpart, NATS

We join our colleagues in AOTOS for a unique two-day conference. The BVA has assisted in the organisation of this event and we're delighted to be welcomed as guests of AOTOS.

BVA members are entitled to book attendance at AOTOS-member rates.

To book, visit:  
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**Saturday**  
24th June 2023

## Voices At Work

St Bride Institute, London EC4

**Keynote speaker: Professor Dr Silke Paulmann, Department of Psychology, University of Essex**

*'How our voice affects others around us*

*– examples from teaching contexts and beyond.'*

New research on the subconscious effect of voice on emotions, reactions and behaviour, and how to use it to achieve better outcomes in any situation.

Also featuring:

**Abi Simpson,**  
**Speech & Language Therapist, Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust**

*'Vocal Care for Teachers: Tips from the Front Line'* – Voice damage and how to avoid it: from lesson planning to classroom layout to vocal use and when to get help.

**Lesley Hendy and Suzanne Parke,** co-creators of *'The 5 voices: a model for teaching voice skills to classroom teachers'* – Lecture and demonstration.

**Morwenna Rowe,**  
**Royal Central School of Speech and Drama**

*'The Moving Voice'* – A two hour movement and voice workshop on the physical embodiment of imagination in expressiveness, to inform, engage, inspire and motivate the listener/pupil/client/patient.

To book, visit:  
[britishvoiceassociation.org.uk/events.htm](http://britishvoiceassociation.org.uk/events.htm)



*Geraldine McElearney*

## A letter from the president

Hello! I hope you're having a lovely spring! This issue of the newsletter is slightly later than it should be and I'm sorry to have kept you waiting. It's been a busy start to the BVA's 2023!

One of the aspects of communicating with readers that I most enjoy is hearing about the really interesting work people are up to, either in their paid professional field, or as part of a programme of educational study. Some of it feeds directly into the work of the BVA. For example, over the course of her PhD, **Rebecca Moseley-Morgan**, the wonderful chair of our Education Working Party, has generously shared the findings of her research with the wider membership, both in this newsletter and at some of our events. Most recently, we had a day on the mature singing voice to which Rebecca's work was foundational. It was the second time we've gathered at the Bride Institute in the City of London (our previous regular venue no longer being available), and proved to be a really inspirational day. See **Kate Witney's** review on page 6. The other end of the age spectrum was the focus of our November study day as we looked at Working with Young Voices. It was another brilliant, instructive day; see **James Way's** review on page 4.

Rebecca's study has been based at the prestigious and very much bricks-and-mortar University College, London. Over the last few years, a number of BVA members have taken advantage of the innovative distance-learning online Vocal Pedagogy MA offered by the fantastic Voice Study Centre, founded and run by **Debbie Winter**. For some VSC graduates, it's the launch-pad into further academic work. On page 8, I talk to **Jo Sear**, who is continuing her research into the pedagogy of pop vocals at the prestigious Royal Northern College of Music. On page 10, **Emma Jane Sweeney**, another recent VSC student, talks about CPD and her experience of postgraduate study.

As we look towards summer, I'm excited about some of the collaborative opportunities the BVA has had. In June, several of our members are contributing to a special two-day conference, hosted by our friends at the Association of Teachers of Singing, in conjunction with their US counterparts, the National Association of Teachers of Singing. In recognition of our contribution to the event on June 3–4, AOTOS has invited BVA members to attend at AOTOS member rates. See page 2 for more on this.

In August, BVA members **Jane Oakshott** and **Melanie Mehta** are running a workshop for the summer conference of the Society of Teachers of Speech and Drama. This is such a welcome invitation as we try to develop the spoken voice side of the organisation and I hope will be the first of many such engagements. In February, I was fortunate to be the guest of the UK Choir Festival; a terrific organisation that brings together amateur choirs from around the country for training, development and a lot of fun. I enjoyed seeing former BVA president **Craig Lees** taking one of his signature choral workshops – brilliant, of course – and I hope the day marks for us the start of more attention to the recreational singer.

My year as president will conclude in early September. The date for the AGM is to be confirmed. Please keep your eye on the website where the date will be posted as soon as possible, and further details of the event will be in the summer newsletter. As always, your input to Communicating Voice, and to the BVA in general, is encouraged; please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Best wishes, Gerry

**Geraldine McElearney**  
**President 2022–23**



Anita Morrison

## Working with Young Performers

### in Choirs, Theatre and in Training

**Saturday 12th November, 2022**

St Bride Foundation, London EC4

### Reviewed by James Way

Our day was kicked off by **Liz Flint**, resident vocal coach on *Matilda the Musical*, in the West End. Liz's passion for working with young people was evident from the very start and we were immediately engaged in a group warm-up, *Matilda* style. One of the takeaway points from Liz's talk, which was replicated throughout the day, was that we don't need to dumb down talking about the voice to young people. This point was perhaps best made by seeing some of wonderful artwork the cast of *Matilda* had created whilst exploring the importance of avoiding harsh glottal attacks(!). The passion these children have for the how and why of the voice is clear and it was great advocacy for teaching young people the fundamentals of healthy voice use.

An insight into children performing in a professional capacity, but in a very different arena, was then given by **James Vivian**, Director of Music at St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle. The choristers here do not have to address the conflicts between upbeat choreography and singing, as the *Matilda* cast do, but they do have to deal with the time pressures of learning new music almost everyday, often singing at state occasions under the eyes of the world. We had already heard from Liz about the need to advocate for protected time to warm-up and work technically with the children on *Matilda*, and it was



Liz Flint



James Vivian

fantastic to hear that time was also being found for the choristers at St George's Windsor to work with their singing teacher **Anita Morrison**, both in choir rehearsals and in their one-to-one lessons. James also noted a new challenge in chorister recruitment due to the increasing numbers of applicant choristers who are unused to singing in a higher tessitura and accessing their 'head voice', perhaps due to the vocal ranges in the contemporary/pop songs many are used to listening and singing along to.

**Lizzie Nash** provided a wonderful clinical view of working with young people, through an overview of voice disorders and approaches to their management. Among a multitude of takeaway points was the importance of talking about voice change early on, before it starts, and the need to make sure children understand the why and what of the exercises they are asked to do; fun games or exercises often being a go-to tool of those working with young people, but their use being limited if the purpose of

them is not understood. I thought this tied in brilliantly with early points made about not dumbing down the way we talk about voice to young people.

Post-lunch we had a break from talking about young people and were able to see three talented young singers in action. Anita Morrison wasted no time in provoking us to think about the language we reach for when discussing good posture, accounting for everyone's different shape and size. Anita also endorsed experimenting and playing around with different ideas to see what works, and then



Lizzie Nash



Frith Trezevant

trusting the process once the sensation had been identified. This session was a fantastic reminder of the importance of sharing good practice amongst singing teachers.

**Frith Trezevant** rounded off the day with a detailed look at the choices singing teachers make when choosing repertoire for their pupils. In an age when pupils are exposed to so much music, this was incredibly thought provoking. Matching the identity of a pupil, their maturity of voice, age appropriate text and something that they can get excited about is no small task and Frith certainly challenged us to question some of the go-to repertoire choices for young people and inspired us all to refresh our approach to choosing repertoire.

**James Way** is a professional opera singer, coach and Head of Vocal Studies at Highgate School. He is currently studying for a PgCert in Performing Arts Medicine at UCL.





# Sing Stronger for Longer

Tips and Latest Research on Working with the Mature Voice

**Saturday 25th February, 2023**

St Bride Foundation, London EC4

Reviewed by Kate Witney

"So, are you still singing?" This started about ten years ago. I was flummoxed then and I am flummoxed now. Why on Earth would I have stopped singing? I'm 63, not 103. However, despite many high profile singers continuing to perform at a very high standard in older age (Tom Jones, Mariella Devia... never mind Hughes Cuenod making his New York Metropolitan Opera debut at the age of 84!) and videos of elderly opera singers wowing audiences turning up regularly on Facebook, singing is so often seen, by both the profession and the general public, as something only for the young and early middle-aged.

I have attended many BVA courses (The Infant Voice, The Adolescent Voice, The Young Performer, and so on) and they have all been hugely helpful in my teaching. This course, Sing Stronger for Longer, though, was just as much for me!



*Filipa Lã*



*Rebecca Moseley-Morgan*

The speakers were singing teacher and researcher **Rebecca Moseley-Morgan** (Chair of Education for the BVA), Professor **Stephen Clift** (Visiting Professor at the International Centre for Community Music, York St. John University and the School of Music, University of Leeds) and Doctor **Filipa Lã** (senior researcher and teacher at the National Distance Education University in Madrid). The day started with Rebecca outlining some of the threats to the older voice. Singing is, as we know, a very physical, indeed, athletic activity, and so it is no surprise that issues such as weakening of the respiratory muscles, decrease in lung volume and calcification of parts of the vocal tract can have an effect on the voice. Some of these, such as acid reflux, were all too familiar to me, but

this was an eye-opening overview of the threats to the older voice, accompanied by some excellent advice.

Clift opened his presentation with **William Byrd's** wonderful 'Reasons briefly set down...to persuade every man to learn to sing' to introduce his talk on the links between singing and health. This was an extremely interesting examination of peer-reviewed studies, which showed how important it is to approach recent research on the benefits of singing with some caution.

Lã's talk, in which she presented her recent research on the effects of the menopause on the voice, was entitled 'Menopause – Friend or Threat' and was absolutely fascinating.

After lunch Moseley-Morgan introduced us to four of her pupils, Sue, Diana, Mary and Jane, whose ages range from 66 to 84. They were so brave to subject themselves to being taught in front of a room full of singing teachers – thank you and congratulations to them all! This enthralling session was an excellent reinforcement of good practice in a warm and supportive atmosphere.

In the final session of the day, Lã introduced us to flow balls and how they can offer visual feedback in semi-

occluded vocal tract air flow exercises. Cue much hilarity as polystyrene balls rolled under neighbours' chairs! It was a very interesting and thought-provoking session. I shall continue to use a straw for these activities, I think, but it's always good to have another tool in the teaching toolbox.

My motivation for attending this course was very personal and it has given me valuable advice and left me full of optimism and hope. Given the demographic attending I think I was not alone in this. However, if the course is repeated I do urge you to attend, whatever your age, if you teach adults or direct an adult choir.

**Kate Witney** is a singer and singing teacher at *Lincolnshire Music Service*.



*Jo Sear*

## Soul Sister

Can a voice teacher with no personal experience of singing a particular genre of music, teach it effectively? A dyed-in-the-wool R&B vocalist, let's say, or guitarist singer-songwriter, coaching a student in lieder. Does that ever happen? How do the refined acoustics of a wood-panelled recital room compare with the stage of a noisy club or outdoor festival? Can you prepare a student to face one sort of venue when you've only ever sung in the other?

**Jo Sear** is on a mission to prove that pop vocals are a distinct specialism requiring specialist teaching skills.

Many teachers come to the profession from a classical or musical theatre background; they may have no experience singing or being taught to sing anything other than western lyric music. Regardless, many of them, by necessity or choice, will end up teaching singers who want to sing popular music.

**Jo Sear** isn't one of them. A singer and teacher of pop and rock, especially soul music, who has never been tempted to sing classically, she is a passionate advocate of specialist training for singers, arguing that teachers thinking of working in unfamiliar genres should not be wading in unprepared or basically ignorant. "I don't teach classical — I would never do that", and her experience

working with the fall-out of teachers who've tried to cross genres backs her view up. Working as a peripatetic gave Jo lots of exposure to singers who, with their classically-based training were coming to pop songs and "singing them in the wrong way... it sounded so uncomfortable". She believes passionately that this has to change.

When Jo talks about pop, she is being specific: pop ('PM') is its own genre, albeit containing many distinct sub-categories. For some years now, Jenni LoVetri's term CCM ('Contemporary Commercial Music') has been used as a shorthand for any music that is western in origin but not classical. However, there is growing recognition that, useful though it has been, CCM is now simply too broad a heading for the diversity of music it's meant to include. Jo's focus on pop concerns PM in a pure sense, and does not include the vast swathes of musical theatre, jazz, country etc, that are routinely folded into the CCM category.

Like many singers, Jo's interest in the science and pedagogy of voice began with her own experience of vocal difficulties. She grew up in a house full of music and credits her guitarist father with training her aural and critical skills. At 21, she joined her first band and though she hadn't set out on a career in music, six months of enforced silence due to nodules brought the realisation that her future had to be as a singer. Fast-forward through years of gigging, touring and teaching, Jo signed up to join the second cohort of the pioneering MA programme created by Debbie Winters' Voice Study Centre, which is where she became serious about repositioning the legitimacy of PM vocals within the wider voice science and teaching communities.

In addition to practical training, of which there is currently little, a necessary milestone in raising a new generation of truly style-informed teachers is the development of an academic base and literature. In general terms, the voice pedagogy landscape has been transformed over the latter years of the twentieth century and throughout the current one; a steady stream of book titles and journal articles evince a continuing evolution and refinement of singing teaching practice. However, not a great deal of it is focused on singing or teaching singers of pop music and dedicated training opportunities for would-be teachers are scarce.

At the same time, the availability of graded exams and opportunities to study PM at FE/HE-level mean there's an increasing need for PM-appropriate tuition, so the lack of



expertise amongst singing teachers for pop styles and/or dearth of pop singers with the interest or skills to teach is a problem. Even now, it seems remarkable that Jo's was the first VSC degree project with a specific PM focus.

Embarking on her MA studies brought home to Jo that, despite how long it's been around and how important the pop industry is in economic terms, singing in popular music styles simply doesn't attract the respect enjoyed by older genres. She believes passionately that this has to change: "once I started doing my research, I started to get really cross about it". That passion has led her to the RNCM, where she has just been accepted for a PhD that she hopes will help create a foundation to tackle the imbalance of supply and demand, as well as boost the credibility of PM singing within the profession.

Jo is feeling pretty buoyant about the next stage of her journey: her proposal, written without the support of academic college staff, was accepted unequivocally (she didn't realise that even at that stage of a research project, supervisory input is normal and instead, just got on with it herself). Having taken the lid off the subject with her MA — "I'm basically trying to finish what I started" — she will set about synthesising the work of the key writers already published with on-the-ground research. Why the RNCM? As well as its long-held reputation as a world-class conservatoire for classical musicians, for the last ten years it has been the only UK music college to offer a specialist PM undergraduate degree. The college is the perfect base for Jo's research: plenty of student singers and teachers, and access to the industry, all of whose input will be essential. Just as important, the RNCM is serious about developing the "portfolio, 3-D musician — composing, producing, performing... In order to make money that's what these [graduates] have to be able to do...". She is very clear that to pay the bills, an artist has to be adaptable, and that adaptability should be part of training. Her research "has to be with an organisation that's practical and wanting to make an on-the-ground difference, and RNCM is that."

The road to Manchester has presented a few hurdles and at the time of writing, she hasn't been able to secure funding for full-time study. However, she's cheered by the fact that the youngest of her two daughters will be joining the RNCM at the same time as an undergraduate drummer; naturally, Jo plans to tap her for access to student friends who might allow themselves to be recruited for field-work.

That the work will now be done over a five or six year period rather than within the full-time timeframe she initially planned for is less than ideal, and if the opportunity arises to convert to full-time study, Jo will grab it. At this stage there are three strands to her PhD:

- 1) interrogating existing research and pedagogy to support the design of a teaching curriculum;
- 2) reviewing past, current and preferred training options for PM vocals teachers;
- 3) investigating what the music industry requires of teachers.

On paper, this looks somewhat abstract and doesn't convey the sincerity of Jo's belief in the real-world need for change: "What are we doing to actually prepare singers in a realistic way for what is out there — how much are we keeping on top of it? [The industry] changes, it doesn't stay the same..... I don't want [my research] to just be in some dusty journal for years on end, I want to do something with it."

If Jo's current idea comes good, that 'something' would, ideally, be the inclusion of PM on the sort of course also on offer at RNCM: its innovative PGCE with Specialist Instrumental Teaching. She anticipates some pushback from both the classical community and current providers of CCM training, being both very grounded in what a singer needs to be able to do to launch and sustain a career — "I'm a realist; I think there should be some sort of halfway house between artistry and practicality" (a controversial stance, in some quarters) — and resistant to adherence to any one teaching method. She isn't worried about that; ultimately, she simply wants to educate, both singers and teachers, to be able to develop artistry and real-world skills, and for the vocal music she loves to get its cultural due. She laughs, "I think this is my life's work; I'll be banging this drum until I die, probably!"

[josearvocal.wordpress.com](http://josearvocal.wordpress.com)

[rncm.ac.uk](http://rncm.ac.uk)

[soulenforcementbureau.com](http://soulenforcementbureau.com)

[voicestudycentre.com](http://voicestudycentre.com)



*Emma Jane Sweeney*

# My experience of Work-Based Learning

by Emma Jane Sweeney

## What is the benefit of Continued Professional Development (CPD)?

It is widely recognised that teachers benefit from CPD, whether that is undertaking short training courses or committing to an accredited longer-term study within Higher Education. By keeping pedagogy up to date with new developments and best practices, teachers have reported that they experience a boost in confidence which subsequently improves student experience (Boatham, 2018). In addition to the validation of teaching and application of current pedagogy, it further encourages teachers to maintain reflective practice, which routinely highlights their training needs and ensures maintenance of professional standards of teaching.

## So why did I decide to study?

At the beginning of 2018, I was on maternity leave and whilst looking ahead to my return to teaching I felt out of touch with the current developments in voice research and best vocal pedagogy practices. Prior to having children, I had a career change from performing and broadcasting to teaching singing, therefore, to bring my vocal pedagogy up to date I enrolled in a number of CPD

courses including, 'Fundamentals of the Singing Voice' and 'Accent Method' ran by Linda Hutchison at City Lit in 2011. Both courses opened my eyes to new developments in voice research, pedagogy and introduced me to the BVA, which piqued my fascination with evolving research that uncovered the wonders and mysteries of the voice that had often amazed me.

Since 2011 I kept up to date as best I could with short CPD courses whilst working, but during my maternity leave, I realised that I wanted to deepen my knowledge and broaden my awareness of current vocal research, techniques and strategies that I could put into practice in my home studio and in peripatetic lessons with the county music service.

My initial search led me to post-graduate courses in voice. They were focused more on speech than singing and would require me to travel, which wasn't practical with a young family. However, in amongst the emails detailing upcoming CPD courses I spotted the MA Professional Practice (Vocal Pedagogy) with Voice Workshop and the University of Wales. As a work-based MA, it fitted in with my teaching and life logistics. Added to which, it was based near Colchester, which would be a short distance to travel for the occasional in-person lecture. During the three-year part-time course, I was able to witness and access evolving research, enabling me to test out and implement strategies in my teaching. As the study was well spaced out, it balanced with work commitments and life logistics. In addition to learning from leading practitioners, researchers and pedagogues, it was a wonderful opportunity to have a forum of peers to openly discuss and debate research, teaching practices and experiences with. Being a singing teacher can be a very isolating existence with the risk of falling into dated routines and practices. It was therefore a real privilege to be able to share experiences with like-minded individuals. It has improved my self-efficacy which in turn, benefits teaching practices and student experiences.

Probably the biggest take away from my time as a working student was engaging in reflective practice not only to improve my self-learning and development, but also to encourage a student's reflective learning experience placing their musical journey at the centre of their singing lessons.

*Emma Jane Sweeney MA is a singing tutor for Essex Music Service, a vocal coach and singer based in Chelmsford, Essex.*

# The Simple Science of Singing

**THE (NOT SO) SIMPLE SCIENCE OF SINGING**  
**Christopher Goldsack**

Lulu.com, 2022

186pps, paperback

ISBN 13: 978-1471640209

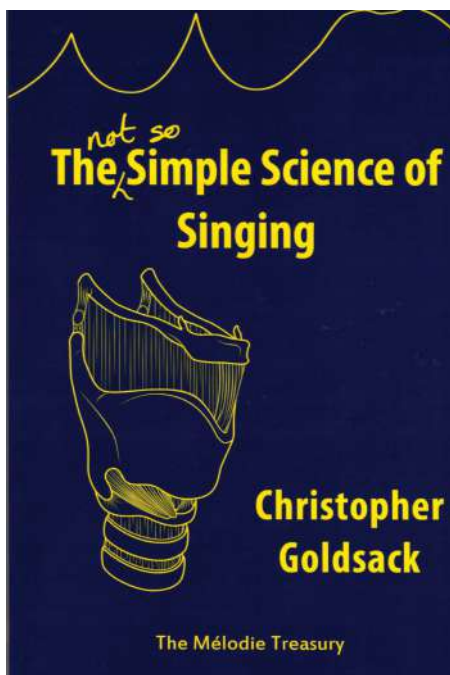
Reviewed by Jenna Brown

*'The Simple Science of Singing'* offers readers a clear and concise introduction to the fundamental principles of how we produce sound when we sing. Readers who may feel daunted by the prospect of engaging with physics will no doubt find themselves reassured and gently guided through the material. The layout of the book is easy to navigate and each chapter includes an introductory summary, which is helpful for understanding what is to be discussed and allows readers with more or less experience in the science of voice to decide whether this is useful material for them to read in depth or to skim as an aide-mémoire. These sections also enable the book to be a useful reference resource, however there was no index for returning to specific material, which was frustrating.

Set out in the manner of a science textbook, readers are taken through twelve chapters outlining the journey of phonation from power, through source and filter. Chapters on breathing, the larynx, resonance, vibrancy and control are prefaced with an easy-to-understand explanation of sounds and waves. This is not a dumbing down of the science, but rather attests the author's skill as a teacher, as complex concepts are simply demonstrated through a series of images, diagrams, models and non-vocal examples. The non-vocal examples, particularly those related to the physics of other instruments, helps to make advanced scientific principles more accessible and related to the practicalities of music-making. A particularly notable example can be found in the chapter on sound waves. The everyday examples of wave forms and the piano-based logarithmic scale are useful and clever ways of illustrating key points. Likewise, the chapters on words and resonance provide a wealth of useful tools for understanding how the structures of the vocal tract can influence artistic delivery of songs. The phonetic charts will be of particular use for new teachers wishing to gain an understanding of the harmonic properties of different vowel sounds and the impact of vowel modification on the sound produced and received by listeners.

The chapter on 'The Journey Through Life' offered some interesting insights into the science of laryngeal development, however much of this material was repeated at various points elsewhere. The section on ageing voice was disappointingly short and felt rather like an afterthought, in what had been until then a well-structured and flowing piece. It would be good to

see this developed, along with some thoughts on the implications of advances in understanding of neurological science and the voice. The chapter on 'Control' was filled with concise information on hearing and aural perception. This led to some interesting discussion on the use of feedback for teaching and learning. However, the science of perception could have been explored more deeply, especially when one considers the detail included in the earlier chapters on phonation and resonance. Although touched upon at various points throughout the book, I would have enjoyed exploring the impact of the brain on voice pedagogy and am keen to see how the author could bring his clear and concise explanations to this interesting and developing area of voice science.



Throughout the text, the author acknowledges the ongoing debate between voice science and vocal imagery. He is clear that there is a place for traditional, intuitive models, but argues that new developments in scientific understanding can both question and enhance traditional pedagogy. Respectful of the fact that at times a non-scientifically accurate image strategy can unlock something for certain students, he nevertheless remains an advocate for voice teachers (and their students where appropriate) having a strong grounding in the science of voice and this book aims to go some way to meeting those needs. The presentation of these discussions is highlighted through marginal edging of more subjective paragraphs and they offer readers an insight into the practical challenges posed by translating science into artistry. They also offer some interesting perspectives on how one might apply the science in voice

teaching. Although the author is clear that this is not intended as a book on how to teach singing, some of these discussions and the inclusion of a passaggio exercise as an appendix, do begin to present the material in that way. As a text aimed at simplifying the science of singing, it would have been useful to include more links to the practical value of scientific knowledge, perhaps with a few examples in each of section of how one can apply or accommodate this understanding in practice. Without more of these practical examples the passaggio exercise is a little incongruous.

Overall, this book offers a good introduction to the science of singing. Aside from a few proofreading oversights that can be corrected to avoid technical error in further reprints, the presentation is clear and attractive and the relaxed style of prose was enjoyable to read. Although the author does indicate some sections are aimed at those with more advanced understanding of physics, I would suggest that the book as a whole is most suited to those at the beginning of their pedagogical careers or those who would like a little more confidence in this area. I would recommend this book as a starting place for such readers as it will no doubt help them to prepare for engagement with more advanced sources.

**Jenna Brown** is a Voice Health Specialist and Singer, based in Bristol, UK.

# Help! I've Got a Voice Problem

## HELP! I'VE GOT A VOICE PROBLEM

Lydia Hart and Stephen R King,  
with Stewart Harris

New Voice Publishing, 2022

46pps, soft cover

ISBN 13: 978-1399933070

## Reviewed by Carrie Garrett

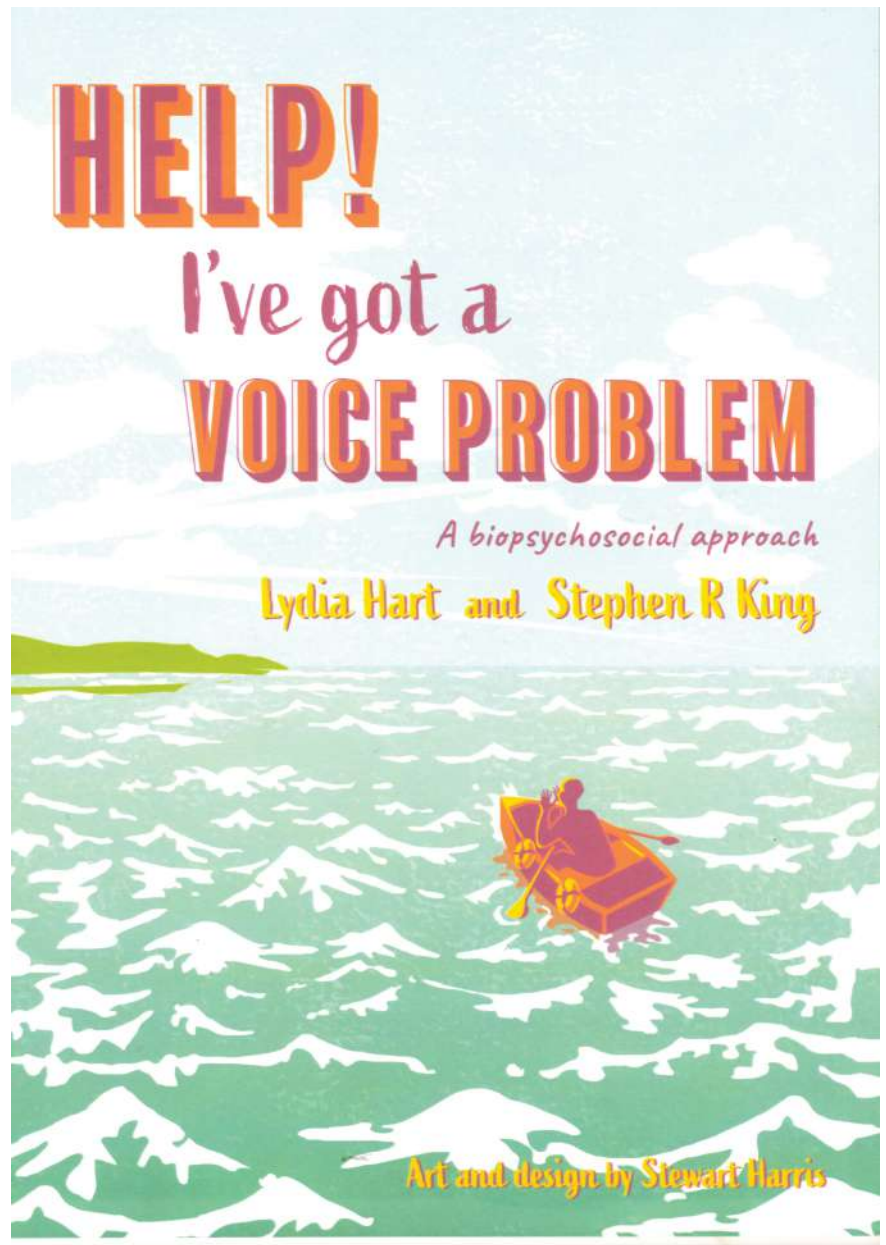
An enjoyable, informative, and hopeful read which is perfect for patients, clients, students, and anyone new to working in the field of voice.

Intrigued by the promotion I'd seen around this publication, I was pleased to be selected to review *'Help! I've got a Voice Problem'* on behalf of the British Voice Association. I found it to be a heartening read which may provide a vital additional means of support to people who are feeling lost and alone in their own experience of voice problems. The information it contains offers hope and guidance in an accessible and engaging format. Well worth a recommendation to any clients, patients or students wishing to understand why they may have vocal dysfunction and what recovery could look like.

The book enlightens readers to ways in which biological, psychological and sociological factors can play a part in the development of voice problems. The authors, Lydia and Stephen, both specialists in their field, have successfully transformed complex medical information into easy-to-understand practical ideas. Their key messages are wonderfully enhanced by Stewart Harris' colourful and engaging free-drawn artwork threading throughout the book. Every page contains carefully selected diagrams and illustrations, providing each page potential to be used as a stand-alone infographic wall-poster for voice studios, classrooms and clinics.

From the start there is a comforting sense of order and direction to the journey the authors describe for their readers as they progress through the book. The journey begins with recognition of there being a problem, with "something's not right with my voice." Next comes a section of what readers might do to find out more about their voice problem. They then provide an overview of the anatomy of the voice in the hope of supporting readers' understanding of the underlying causes of their voice problems. This leads on to a description of how our voices are part of a system, intricately interconnected and affected by external biopsychosocial factors. Forming the final part of the book is an insight into the pathway to recovery and what that might look like.

In addition to this, the authors describe who is involved in an ideal voice care pathway, some further explanation about categories of diagnoses (structural/ functional), and how every



person experiencing a voice problem is central to their own recovery – a 'partner' in their own health and wellness journey. Other important considerations which may affect recovery are also raised with the reader, including the importance of mindset, motivation and acceptance.

Practical tips have been provided to the reader through the inclusion of a section detailing basic vocal health advice. This is evidence-based, and can be trialled by anyone experiencing a voice problem whilst awaiting specialist assessment.

*Help! I've Got a Voice Problem* is a sound investment for people of all ages who have concerns about their voice, from singers and actors to teachers and public speakers. It's written for people who have been diagnosed with a voice disorder or have been experiencing voice problems and want to understand more about their experiences. As Lydia and Stephen state in their closing sentiments, this book hopes to provide, "some insight and empowerment to move forward in your journey."

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