



**LISTAHÁSKÓLI ÍSLANDS**  
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**Comparative Analyses of Educational Singing Methods**

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**Lokaritgerð til BA-prófs  
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# **Comparative Analyses of Educational Singing Methods**

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Lokaritgerð til BA-prófs í Rytísk söng- og hljóðfærakennslu

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## **Abstract**

This article offers a comparative analysis of singing education. The purpose is to bring an understanding of how singing is taught in both a physiological and psychological manner. In addition to that, there seem not to be many comparable articles in this subject.

The function of the voice is often considered as a complex field but during the last couple of decades, scientific research has brought much understanding of how the voice functions. From this research, teachers and singers have been given information and tools to develop and to teach. There are a lot of theories and myths about singing today and because everyone learns differently, it is important to look at the variety in the singing area such as the classical department and in the modern area. I have used the book „Singing and teaching singing: A Holistic Approach to Classical Voice“ written by professor Janice L. Chapman who is an international acclaimed singing teacher known as a pioneer in the field of multidisciplinary work in vocal science and health. Another source is the method „Complete Vocal Technique“. Instead of the book, I have used their digital application. Founder, Cathrine Sadolin, is among the leading researchers in the world as her research across all vocal styles combined with her own experience has inspired innovative thinking within the field. Last, I have also used the book „Freeing the Natural Voice“ written by Kristin Linklater, a world-renowned teacher of voice production who has pursued a highly successful academic and theatrical career in the United States and Europe for the past fifty years. These different sources will give us a broad perspective of how singing and teaching voice has changed over time up till today.

*Keywords: Terms, methods, vocal register, vocal mode, Complete Vocal Technique (CVT), breath support, mental work.*

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## Introduction

There is a different emphasis on singing compared with singing technique. Not only that but there exists multiple terms and definitions that are used in different contexts. There are many interesting areas about functions within the voice, but it is important to take the subjects that are most fundamental and defining. The areas include breath, support, vocal registers, physiological function and psychological work. In order to give a better understanding of how teaching has moved through the years, it is necessary to look at the history and how time and technology has shaped and changed the way we know and how we teach today.

In the past, amplifiers didn't exist and singers had to adapt to the acoustics in a way that the audience could hear the singer. In order to accomplish that, singers adopted certain sounds and techniques. One of the techniques developed was what the Western World began to call „classical singing“. This sound became the only „correct“ method. After the invention of amplifiers and microphones it was now possible to express the voice in various ways with different sound techniques. This took the „untaught“ sounds to the same level as the „taught“ sounds. Many of the new ways of singing proved to be just as strenuous and difficult as the taught method.<sup>1</sup> Singers that aspired to these new sounds had to learn for themselves how to produce them in a healthy way. The classical singing technique was not helpful as they lead to a classical sound which did not attract contemporary singers. A lack of method and instruction resulted in vocal damage to many singers because these new ways of singing were labelled as dangerous and unhealthy even though many classical singers were also struggling with vocal complications.<sup>2</sup>

One of the leading singing teachers in classical teaching, Janice L. Chapman,<sup>3</sup> states that until very recently the understanding of vocal instruction has been limited in the context of how the voice worked. Because of the limitations, the teaching was often misleading as the teacher demonstrated while the student copied to the best of his or her ability. This was the way Janice taught from the 1950s through the 1980s and initially it was the way she taught her own students in the 1970s. In other words, the teachers taught much from experience and what sounded right instead of meeting the needs of the student. The main issue with this system is that a singer had their own aural perception of their sound. The

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<sup>1</sup> Cathrine Sadolin, *Complete Vocal Technique* (Copenhagen: CVI Publications, 2020), App, 004.

<sup>2</sup> Cathrine Sadolin, *Complete Vocal Technique*, 004.

<sup>3</sup> Janice L Chapman, *Singing And Teaching Singing: A Holistic Approach to Classical Voice* (San Diego: Plural Publishing, 2017), 18-19.

conservatorium-type teaching model from the early days of classical instruction until the 19<sup>th</sup> century involved the student singer having daily instruction and not being permitted to practice alone <sup>4</sup> which meant that the power was in the hands of the teacher and not with the student. Chapman concludes that until recently, this teaching model has been maintained but during those times, it allowed for a building of trust between the teacher and the student to ensure a solid technique based on the structure of the vocal knowledge.

As for the educational method today, the singer is expected to take more responsibility for their own learning. The benefit of the current educational program is that the student has more space to explore their own voice but the downside to that is the student is not using the tools they have been taught in the right way. Janice believes because of that, students do not have time to develop an understanding and acceptance of their own aural mismatch.

It is clear that even though the classical way of singing was perceived as the only right way to sing, the classical system has also gone through changes; both educationally and methodically.<sup>5</sup> Through these changes there are many approaches and different terms that have surfaced which is described in the following chapter.

## Terms

Before going into the methods and singing techniques, it is important to look at the terminology and aspects of the anatomy to gain a better understanding of how the body produces different sounds and phonation. The term „register“ is often defined as a series of tones that are often perceived to be of similar vocal quality and usually produced in a similar physiological manner. The concept of vocal registers and methods has been under a subject of controversy.<sup>6</sup> Even today, authors and teachers have used different names and terms which has caused more confusion than clarity. Various authors argue that there are as many as seven to as few as one register. In addition to that, Morner, Fransesson & Fant<sup>7</sup> published a paper which included 107 different names to identify different registers. Current theories of register

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<sup>4</sup> Janice L Chapman, „Introduction“, i *Singing And Teaching Singing: A Holistic Approach to Classical Voice* (San Diego: Plural Publishing, 2017), 17.

<sup>5</sup> Janice L Chapman, „Introduction“, 17.

<sup>6</sup> Harry Hollien, „On Vocal Registers“, *Journal of Phonetics* 2, nr. 2 (1. marts 1974): 125–43, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0095-4470\(19\)31188-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0095-4470(19)31188-X).

<sup>7</sup> M Marner, N Fransson, og G Fant, „Voice register terminology and standard pitch“, *Quarterly Status and Progress Report*, nr. 4 (1964): 17–23.

control point to registration of a laryngeal event and the activity of the laryngeal muscles as well as vocal fold adduction and glottal shape.<sup>8</sup>

Register characterisation and terminology remain subjective through debate and incite disagreement among singers, vocal teachers, and voice scientists.<sup>9</sup> Going through all of these different terms and registers would be highly complex and it would not serve the purpose with this article. In order to simplify the subject, vocal registers and methods have been selected accordingly.

## Vocal Registers

What is a vocal register? Harry Hollien<sup>10</sup> describes vocal registers as range of consecutively phonated frequencies which is produced with nearly identical vocal quality and, as mentioned, it is perceived as a laryngeal event. Before it can be established, it must be operationally defined as perceptual, acoustical, physiological and aerodynamical. On the basis of his own research and others, Hollien divides the voice register into three major registers – the pulse, modal and loft register. He believes that by using three main registers it provides more clarity for the reader than using the old terms which had various definitions of phonation.

The pulse register evolves around the low frequencies of the phonation. In other words, the vocal production evolves around the low part of the voice. This term was selected because its vibration is pulse-like which produces low frequencies. The modal register includes the fundamental frequencies that are used in speaking and singing. The loft register is recognized as the falsetto and its frequencies are high. Hollien states that there may exist more than three vocal registers. One example was voice production with higher frequencies; a register referred as the „flute“ or the „whistle voice“. But this register is not perceived as a vocal register as it is not established as a part of the normal human larynx. Finally, Hollien concludes that even though that there is no overlap between the pulse and modal register, many individuals can phonate at frequencies that somehow sounds like it is in between the

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<sup>8</sup> Joseph F. Y. Hoh, „Chapter 2.1 - Laryngeal Muscles as Highly Specialized Organs in Airway Protection, Respiration and Phonation“, i *Handbook of Behavioral Neuroscience*, red. Stefan M. Brudzynski, bd. 19, Handbook of Mammalian Vocalization (Netherlands: Elsevier, 2010), 13–21, <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-374593-4.00002-4>.

<sup>9</sup> Karen Ann Kochis-Jennings, „Cricothyroid Muscle and Thyroarytenoid Muscle Dominance in Vocal Register Control: Preliminary Results“, *Journal of Voice* 28, nr. 5 (1. september 2014): 652.e21-652.e29, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvoice.2014.01.017>.

<sup>10</sup> Harry Hollien, „On Vocal Registers,“ 125-143.

two registers. These vocal productions seem to be a mixture of voice qualities which indicate a mix of pulse and modal phonation that are produced at the same time.

Another definition of vocal register used in current teaching is the term chest and head voice. Ronja Petersen<sup>11</sup> uses these two terms and she describes register as a range of notes in the voice which has the same tonal quality. She demonstrates this quality by sliding an octave up and down without breaking or disconnecting the voice. The chest voice, also called as the M1 register, is usually active when people speak, just like the modal register which is defined as a fuller tone. The chest voice was given its name because the singer can feel the vibrations coming from the chest. Petersen also explains that in the past, teachers thought singers were projecting and singing from the chest but in current and common knowledge, the sound is projected from the resonators in the skull and throat. She calls these sympathetic vibrations which is a trail of vibrations from the resonations that you can feel in your chest. Head voice is known as the M2 register but the tone is not as full as in the chest voice. In the head voice, vibration can be felt coming from the neck and other places around the head. In head voice, the tone is not as „strong“ but more „light“. In order to understand anatomy, Petersen<sup>12</sup> explains how the voice works differently between chest voice and head voice. When singing in chest voice the entirety of the vocal folds are vibrating together. When singing in head voice, only the edges or the ligaments of the vocal folds are moving. Petersen states that it is not possible to create a high and powerful pitch in chest voice as in head voice but that it is possible to navigate between these two registers without a disconnection.

When discussing head voice and chest voice, there is another register that has been defined as the „mix voice“. Taylor Wysong<sup>13</sup> discusses that by blending the chest and head voice, this new register is defined as a mix. Even though Petersen<sup>14</sup> is not using a third vocal register it is clear that the navigation she mentioned between the head and chest voice is where the „mix voice“ lies. Wysong underlines that everyone has their own natural register and it is all about how a singer wants to develop the balance between both registers. In this respect, the term „mix voice“ makes sense as it makes it easier to know and understand the coordination and the placement of the voice.

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<sup>11</sup> „Youtube,“ THENX, síðast uppfært 18. November, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zM2GDKDLr8s>.

<sup>12</sup> „Youtube.“

<sup>13</sup> „Youtube,“ Tyler Wysong, síðast uppfært 15. August, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dQ35m6p759Y>.

<sup>14</sup> „Youtube.“

Chapman<sup>15</sup> divides the registers into four categories: Vocal fry, modal register, head register, and falsetto. These registers are considered for males. The female register is divided into five registers: Vocal fry, modal (chest), middle register, head register and whistle register. She recognizes these as registers because it makes it easier for the singers to have technical strategies to transit between them. She adds two more register and one is defined as the whistle voice which was not considered as a register previously by Hollien.<sup>16</sup> Janice categorises it as a part of the female register and for children as well. This is interesting because even though one would usually hear women use a whistle register, male voices have achieved similar tones. Matt Ramsey<sup>17</sup> teaches this. Some say that the whistle register is an extension of the head voice but according to Ramsey, whistle register is created by the front or anterior part of the vocal folds that come together, creating a vibration. It is then unclear whether there is a different anatomical and physiological production between male and female voices. According to Chapman, the whistle register is under-researched and, in some sense, still is today. Ramsey somehow underlines this by stating that very few vocal teachers know what produces the whistle sound and therefore don't know how to teach it.

Another term is the falsetto, which has previously been categorized as part of the head register. According to Chapman, there is a large overlap between the head and falsetto: „When a falsettist has a fully developed vocal technique, choices of where and how the register is managed can be made for artistic and dramatic reasons rather than from a vocal limitation.“<sup>18</sup> For male singers, it is possible to transition into the falsetto voice to sing higher notes but Chapman adds that this should only be used for artistic purpose or depending on the composer's intention. This proves that the tone between the head register and falsetto is quite different which is why Chapman's division of the head register and falsetto makes sense as it makes it easier for the singer to coordinate.

Vocal fry functions differently between male and female. The male vocal fry can be used to obtain low pitches created by a „loose glottis.“ This is not possible to produce in the modal register which is the normal register for speaking. Chapman says that vocal fry is often used in deep bass choral singers but she doesn't recommend that solo singers use

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<sup>15</sup> Janice L Chapman, „Phonation and the Speaking Voice“, í *Singing And Teaching Singing: A Holistic Approach to Classical Voice* (San Diego: Plural Publishing, 2017), 74–77.

<sup>16</sup> Harry Hollien, „On Vocal Registers,“ 125-143.

<sup>17</sup> „Youtube,“ Matt Ramsey, síðast uppfært 13. November, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PTOPxYJ4Xnk>

<sup>18</sup> Janice L Chapman, „Phonation and the Speaking Voice,“ 74-77.

vocal fry because it has its limitations of dynamics, range, and colour.<sup>19</sup> For female voices, vocal fry is mostly used in contemporary compositions for effect but that is almost inaudible without an increase of volume through a sound system.

We have already compared modal and head register as Chapman uses these terms as they are similar to the definitions we already have talked about. But there is one register described as the middle voice which is the register that most female singers spend their time in. This register is not defined as a male register. One of the reasons for that is the natural range gap between male and female. It is clear that men and women go through changes of the voice throughout the teenage years usually resulting in a change in the range. This is very evident for males, but females also experience changes although they are not as obvious. The definition of range varies from teaching to teachings but in short, females produce higher pitches as men naturally occupy the lower range. The vibrations are a result of anatomical differences depending on where in the range they are operating. This is one reason why teachings have divided the range into male and female range.

As we have been observing and comparing terms, we can see the differences as well as similarities. In the context of vocal registers, the focus will shift to another method which takes more of a contemporary approach with its own definitions that are unfamiliar to the ones previously mentioned. Throughout the next chapter, vocal registers that have already been discussed will be used as a comparison to see where the methods are comparable.

## **Complete Vocal Technique**

Complete Vocal Institute (CVT) is the largest institute for semi-professional and professional singers in Europe.<sup>20</sup> The founder, Cathrine Sadolin, says her technique is based on experience from both worlds: classical as well as the popular sound. She used to listen to all kinds of music but that she was originally trained as a classical singer. Her curiosity together with the foundation of good breathing technique from the classical method allowed her to achieve different sounds without hurting her voice. She was passionate and thought if she could produce these different sounds, others could too. Singers began to seek her help as they wanted the foundation of the classical method without sounding classical. Sadolin states „It is

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<sup>19</sup> Janice L Chapman, „Phonation and the Speaking Voice,“ 74-77.

<sup>20</sup> „Complete Vocal Technique,“ Complete Vocal Institute, síðast uppfært 18. november 2020, <https://completevocal.institute/>.

therefore from both the techniques from the „classical“ school and the experience of these „popular“ singers that I base many of the new singing techniques on today.“<sup>21</sup>

Even though CVT is growing world-wide, its method is mostly known in Europe. CVT have created its own system and terms which are completely different from the definitions described earlier. Sadolin<sup>22</sup> says that it became necessary to redefine certain terms as well as leaving out others because they were too limiting or confusing in a practical way. From her experience the term „register“ has confused many singers because it’s been used in many different contexts. Some speak of pitch when they talk about register, some use sound colour or some volume. The voice registers in CVT are defined as „vocal modes“ and they are separated as four different registers, namely neutral, curbing, overdrive and edge. CVT points out that no matter the technique, music style or the sound colour, the instrument is still the same. Because of that, there must be an operational principle making these vocal modes fundamental.<sup>23</sup> Before going into the vocal modes, CVT states that the modes are produced in the vocal tract which Hollien<sup>24</sup> also mentions in his research and CVT underlines that it is possible to produce healthy modes if you always follow the three overall principles<sup>25</sup> which are support, necessary twang and the avoidance of protruding the jaw and tightening the lips. Lastly, CVT uses a term called „metallic sound“. In order to understand the concept of the four vocal modes, it is helpful to look at the amount of „metal“ in the tone and CVT points out that all singers have some variations of metal in their voices. Metal<sup>26</sup> is defined as a distinct tone; as a harder, raw or direct sound. As for the classical sound, it is hard to hear metal sound because the sound is „covered“ or disguised in the classical sound.

The first vocal mode is „neutral“. Neutral<sup>27</sup> has limited volume compared with other modes but it variates in the high notes. The method is to have a loose jaw and the character is soft. CVI describes neutral as a mode that is used in everyday life when people speak or sing quietly. It is also the only mode that is non-metallic, and it is often associated with the classical sound. CVT states that most singers in the Western world have no problems finding soft, non-metallic sounds, as they are an important part of the Western music culture and education. The reason for this is because singers were mistakenly warned that metallic

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<sup>21</sup> Cathrine Sadolin, *Complete Vocal Technique*, 004.

<sup>22</sup> Cathrine Sadolin, *Complete Vocal Technique* (Copenhagen: CVI Publications, 2020), App, 052.

<sup>23</sup> Cathrine Sadolin, *Complete Vocal Technique*, 052.

<sup>24</sup> Harry Hollien, „On Vocal Registers,“ 125-143.

<sup>25</sup> Cathrine Sadolin, *Complete Vocal Technique* (Copenhagen: CVI Publications, 2020), App, 010.

<sup>26</sup> Cathrine Sadolin, *Complete Vocal Technique* (Copenhagen: CVI Publications, 2020), App, 053.

<sup>27</sup> Cathrine Sadolin, *Complete Vocal Technique* (Copenhagen: CVI Publications, 2020), App, 056.

sounds were damaging for the voice. In relation to the vocal registers discussed earlier, neutral can be compared with the head voice. One of the reasons for this comparison is due to the volume and character of the sound as well as the fact that the sound is vibrating in the head. You can sing neutral with or without „air“. It is not possible to sing powerful with air and it can be very damaging to the voice. Neutral with air is often associated with the falsetto and with that conclusion we can see that neutral covers both the head voice and falsetto because of the limited volume.

„Curbing“ has more volume than neutral and the character of the sound is restrained. CVI explains that the method is achieved by creating a light „hold“. <sup>28</sup> Curbing has a medium volume from quiet to medium loud. Curbing is used in many styles within pop music like R&B etc. Curbing is also used every day and the sound is described as something similar to when someone is moaning or whining. This mode is preferred when a singer wants a „restrained“ sound as curbing stays in a medium volume most of the time. In classical music, curbing is used when singing in medium loud volume and CVT says that men can use curbing almost in all ranges except in the low part of the voice. <sup>29</sup> When comparing curbing with the earlier definitions, it seems best classified as the „mix voice“ as Taylor <sup>30</sup> described it with the coordination between the head and the chest register.

The character of „overdrive“ <sup>31</sup> is clear and shouting and the volume varies from medium to very loud. The method is achieved by creating a „bite“. Overdrive is the mode that has the most limit in terms of pitch. It's used by men and women when they are speaking or singing loudly. Overdrive would be most comparative to chest voice as the tone is rich and loud. This makes sense because overdrive has a limited range just like the chest voice. The definition of chest voice is found in the vibrations in the chest but it is worth mentioning that CVT rarely talks about vibrations; instead, the teaching is more focused on the type of phonation and the vocal placement.

„Edge“ <sup>32</sup> is the last vocal mode and like overdrive, the volume expands from medium to loud. The difference between edge and overdrive is that the character of edge is clear and sharp. The method to achieve this mode is to use „bite“ as in overdrive and to twang. CVI says edge is used in everyday life when people speak and sing from medium

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<sup>28</sup> Cathrine Sadolin, *Complete Vocal Technique* (Copenhagen: CVI Publications, 2020), App, 067.

<sup>29</sup> Cathrine Sadolin, *Complete Vocal Technique* (Copenhagen: CVI Publications, 2020), App, 070.

<sup>30</sup> „Youtube“

<sup>31</sup> Cathrine Sadolin, *Complete Vocal Technique* (Copenhagen: CVI Publications, 2020), App, 076.

<sup>32</sup> Cathrine Sadolin, *Complete Vocal Technique* (Copenhagen: CVI Publications, 2020), App, 085.

volume to loud. Loud edge is also achieved when people scream. Edge is therefore a register that is incomparable with other registers that has been mentioned.

By going through these vocal modes and previous registers it is evident that CVT defines the voice in a different way and that their system is unique. The emphasis is on the technique as CVT covers all the technical aspects of how the voice can produce all kinds of sounds. For instance, the chapter titled „Effects“<sup>33</sup> discusses how to practice and apply various vocal effects such a vibrato, distortion, growl etc. In the CVT app, there are various graphic pictures that contain an overview of how the method is structured and it is easy for the user to find specific material he/she is looking for. In other books, there are usually long and careful explanations that add more depth.

Up to this point, the focus has been on vocal registers. In the next chapter, we're going to talk about „breath support“. Vocal register and breath support are areas that most singers and teachers spend most of the time discussing in the voice studio. Many perceive the voice as connected to and part of the whole body, therefore it is essential that the body is active and functioning correctly as it is the engine of the air which the vocal folds need to produce sound.

## **Breath Support**

As far as improving the instrument, most vocal teaching places great emphasis on how to maintain vocal longevity and how to keep the instrument healthy. One of the foundations to that is „breathing“ and „support“ or „breath support“. Breath support is the engine of the instrument and without good breath support it is impossible to maintain a good voice production and eventually it can be very damaging for the voice. The essence of singing is the cooperation between breath support and vocal placement. If breath support is used in an efficient way, it produces longer notes, better tone production, larger vocal range, less strain, greater volume and correct pitch control. But what is breath support? In short, support can be thought of as the muscles that are used to control the air. In other words, support is to control the breath and to control the exhalation. This is achieved by keeping the ribs extended in combination with the engagement of three muscles groups: pulling in the abdomen by the navel, contracting the muscles of the upper back (which keeps the ribs extended at the back), and by activating the muscles in the loin.<sup>34</sup> As for the breathing, CVT states „During in an

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<sup>33</sup> Cathrine Sadolin, *Complete Vocal Technique* (Copenhagen: CVI Publications, 2020), App, 220.

<sup>34</sup> Cathrine Sadolin, *Complete Vocal Technique* (Copenhagen: CVI Publications, 2020), App, 017.

inhalation the diaphragm tightens and lowers as the lower ribs move outwards; a bulge emerges at the solar plexus, and the abdomen around the navel bulges slightly. During an exhalation the diaphragm relaxes, the ribs come back in, the bulge at the solar plexus disappears, and the abdomen around the navel flattens.<sup>35</sup> In other words, during singing as well as speaking, a person should always control the exhalation so that their air does not escape all at once. CVT also underlines that there are numerous ways of sensing your breathing because each individual has to discover and decide what works for him or her.<sup>36</sup>

In her 35 years long journey in the classical department, Chapman<sup>37</sup> states that breathing and support have been an area of vocal pedagogy that has always occupied the singing world even though there has always been a range of controversy and misconceptions as to how this has been taught. Psychological tools such as imagery have often worked for teachers, but the lack of physiological understanding has often led to confusion. This is evident when teachers are passing on tools that have helped them but are not necessarily helping the student. This brings us to why it is important that teaching is based on physiological function, not only on sensation which, from an educational aspect, is important to keep in mind. But how much should singers know about anatomy? It is clear that you do not have to know all of the anatomy in order to be a good singer as many great singers have little to no idea what is activated while they are singing.

Vocal teaching varies from teacher to teacher and some focus a lot on the body and posture position. In some classical teaching, having correct posture is critical for vocal efficiency „The larynx is suspended in the neck. It is capable of movement in all six planes (up and down, side to side, and forward and back) and has the necessary muscle attachments to do this.“<sup>38</sup> Considering the larynx contains the vocal folds, if the muscles around the larynx are unnecessarily tense it will have an effect on the vocal folds. The laryngeal muscles are all attached to other structures showing that incorrect alignment in various areas of the body could have a negative effect on the larynx itself. In contradiction to that, it's within Sadolin's understanding that singing obstacles are not caused by incorrect posture but that the problem lies within wrong technique. From her experience, working directly with a problem has proved to be more effective than spending hours correcting the posture.<sup>39</sup> In „Freeing the

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<sup>35</sup> Cathrine Sadolin, *Complete Vocal Technique* (Copenhagen: CVI Publications, 2020), App, 014.

<sup>36</sup> Cathrine Sadolin, *Complete Vocal Technique* (Copenhagen: CVI Publications, 2020), App, 011.

<sup>37</sup> Janice L Chapman, *Singing And Teaching Singing: A Holistic Approach to Classical Voice*, 18-19.

<sup>38</sup> Janice L Chapman, „Postural Alignment,“ i *Singing And Teaching Singing: A Holistic Approach to Classical Voice* (San Diego: Plural Publishing, 2017), 24.

<sup>39</sup> Cathrine Sadolin, *Complete Vocal Technique* (Copenhagen: CVI Publications, 2020), App, 013.

natural voice“ Kristin Linklater somehow confirms this by stating that any posture is acceptable in itself as long as it does not conflict with the law of nature „which is that skeletal structure should counteract the pull of gravity, leaving the muscles free for movement.“<sup>40</sup> This raises the subject of how the balance between relaxation and activation of muscles are taught. While Chapman and Linklater argue about the importance of support and emotional values of the body, Sadolin is more direct in her approach. From her experience, singers have damaged their voices using too little physical energy than using too much.<sup>41</sup>

After discussing the variations of breath support and the body there is another important element within singing teaching and that is the mental work.

## **Mental work**

An area that often goes unnoticed is the psychological aspect. In most teaching, the focus often seems to be on technique and repetitions. Chapman addresses that when a singer has established and developed the breathing and support system, it will eventually transfer into her or his performance by coming easy and naturally. The reason for this is because the muscles are connected to the emotional motor system allowing the muscles to work on autopilot.<sup>42</sup> It is therefore important not to minimize the value of psychology. Having worked close with Iris Warren, who moved the science of voice production in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century by adding psychological understanding to physiological knowledge, Linklater explains that the most common problem with actors straining their voices occurred when they expressed strong emotions. Warren did not directly deal with the voices but with the physical and mental tension that was caused by blocked emotions.<sup>43</sup> She altered the vocal exercises by shifting the control from external, physical muscles to internal, psychological impulses.<sup>44</sup> Warren’s goal was to free oneself through the voice and her constant emphasis was „I want to hear you, not your voice“<sup>45</sup> which means that the method goes beyond the sound; it focuses on the whole person. In „Singing and Teaching Singing“ Chapman uses a term called „holistic“. „Holistic“ is defined as „emphasizing the importance of the whole and the

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<sup>40</sup> Kristin Linklater, *Freeing the natural voice* (Hollywood: Drama Publishers, 2006), Kindle, 533.

<sup>41</sup> Cathrine Sadolin, *Complete Vocal Technique* (Copenhagen: CVI Publications, 2020), App, 022.

<sup>42</sup> Janice L Chapman, „Breathing and Support“, í *Singing And Teaching Singing: A Holistic Approach to Classical Voice* (California: Plural Publishing, 2017), 58.

<sup>43</sup> Kristin Linklater, *Freeing the natural voice* (Hollywood: Drama Publishers, 2006), Kindle, 124.

<sup>44</sup> Kristin Linklater, *Freeing the natural voice*, 124.

<sup>45</sup> Kristin Linklater, *Freeing the natural voice*, 124.

interdependence of its parts.<sup>46</sup> She uses this term considering the act of singing involves the whole person – body, mind, spirit, emotion, and voice. In addition to that, holistic singing is defined when the performer is able „to attain a state of unself-conscious focus.“<sup>47</sup> Holistic teaching is based on wisdom and experience.

If we define the body as the vessel of the voice, it is obvious that if emotions are affecting the body, it will eventually affect the singing. What is interesting is that CVT barely mentions anything about emotional aspects of body. It provides technical tools and methods in how to express emotions such as analysing lyrics, melodies and mood. In contradiction with what Warren stated about discovering your own voice, CVT discusses methods that are based on creating a character while you are singing. The character could be about someone you know but CVT recommends that you never use yourself as the character as it can be unhealthy for an individual to relive situations that has caused strong emotional distress over and over.<sup>48</sup>

In a more alternative approach, Linklater says that even though her book focuses on the vocal instrument, the overall aim is to create unlimited characterizations of the voice. Her reason for this is that she believes singers and especially actors, should not only be good singers but great communicators. She states that good communication can be hindered because of habits that restrict us to express freely: „Most habits have been formed unconsciously and by people other than oneself.“<sup>49</sup> Linklater believes that if you train yourself to pay attention to your habits of communication, you will find a state of self-awareness that actors develop as an essential part of their profession and by this approach, it will liberate the voice and develop a technique that allows for greater and more freeing expression. One example that is often used is infants. Infants scream and cry for hours without hurting their voices. This has something to do with how the muscles are used in a natural way. Linklater believes that as infants grow, the natural connection with the body diminishes as they occupy tensions created by the emotional response to the environment such as pressure, negativity and reactions to environmental influences. According to Linklater these factors limit the natural voice and as a result of that, our communication is distorted. In many ways, when working on breath support and vocal technique, it is important

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<sup>46</sup> „ahdictionary,“ American Heritage Publishing Company, síðast uppfært 3. Desember, 2020, <https://ahdictionary.com/word/search.html?q=holistic>.

<sup>47</sup> Janice L Chapman, „Pedagogical Philosophy“, í *Singing And Teaching Singing: A Holistic Approach to Classical Voice* (San Diego: Plural Publishing, 2017), 3.

<sup>48</sup> Cathrine Sadolin, *Complete Vocal Technique* (Copenhagen: CVI Publications, 2020), App, 295.

<sup>49</sup> Kristin Linklater, *Freeing the natural voice* (Hollywood: Drama Publishers, 2006), Kindle, 345.

to rediscover correct muscle function by releasing tension. This often requires muscles awareness and mental work.

## Discussion

By observing these different methods, we can conclude that there are similarities in vocal teaching. It is clear that the new terms of vocal register have not been created because others were wrong but simply because of different approaches and preferences. As we can see, the vocal registers do not expand more than three or four registers such as chest, head, mix and falsetto register as they seem to be the most common and understandable from an anatomical perspective. As for CVT, by creating their own definitions of register such as neutral, curbing, overdrive and edge, their approach is direct as they focus more on the technique and achieving a certain sound. CVT is not as philosophical as other teachings where teachings such as the Linklater's method and others are more „careful“ and academic.

Teachings about breathing and support have varied through time which has created misconceptions but by observing different theories, it seems evident that the understanding of anatomy is quite similar; both in the classical and the contemporary world. The development of technology and scientific knowledge has given singers and singing teachers tools and an understanding of physiological functions, but this does not diminish the psychological importance as it is evident that psychological methods seem to be just as fundamental in achieving the right results.

If everything was about technique, music would be less interesting. Technique is a conduit for musical expression through various tools and function, but it is not the ultimate goal. In the context of mental work and psychological methods it is clear that the emotional part of the singer is relative in the teachings and without emotions and interpretation, music would be predictable and less appealing. Chapman underlines this by saying „it is possible to build a vocal technique which can stand all pressure put upon it and yet still maintain the „singing from the heart“ potency desired by all artists and audience alike.“<sup>50</sup> It is therefore important that the approach and focus is on the whole person, not only the voice and that there has to be a consistent approach in the mental work.

After reading through many of these sources, it has confirmed my suspicion that the field of singing and singing teaching is complex. Compared to other instruments, singing

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<sup>50</sup> Janice L Chapman, „Artistry and Performance“, í *Singing And Teaching Singing: A Holistic Approach to Classical Voice* (San Diego: Plural Publishing, 2017), 139–40.

is quite subjective as people learn differently: through imagery, listening, sensation, psychology, and by physiological functions. As for Sadolin, Chapman and Linklater, their approaches are not that indifferent but the focus and emphasis on the field is different. CVT explores all aspects of vocal technique and sound. Chapman focuses on the classical aspect which has more focus on body and posture. Linklater emphasizes the emotional state of the body by addressing tension that originates from the human mind showing why it is important to be physically and psychological aware.

I am aware that I have only discussed and touched the surface on voice training from the sources utilized here. As for the future, it would be interesting to see more comparable researches and articles on this field; a field that continues to be explored. Music is a means of expression and because of that, I do not believe in finding one perfect method. Singers and teachers should use methods that works for them. However, I do believe teachers have the responsibility to educate themselves in such a way that allows each student to be successful.

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