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MUSIC 3850 - INTRODUCTION TO VOCAL PEDAGOGY

A REVIEW OF THE BASICS:

Appoggio Technique
Registration Events
Respiratory Function
Diction Pitfalls – Italian, French, German

APPOGGIO TECHNIQUE

Appoggio technique is important in the respiratory function and breath management of singing. Appoggio technique is characterized by the following:

- **Good posture, or good axial alignment.** This means that the head, neck, and torso are in line with the pelvic and hip regions.

- **Inhalation.** Inhalation is silent with some outward movement of the epigastric-umbilical area (between the sternum and navel.) However, there is little movement in the hypogastric (pubic) area between the navel and pelvis. Singers should try to avoid lower abdominal pushing in or out because the costal area tends to move inwards and thus reduces lung volume. Be sure to avoid "relaxation" into a collapsed trunk because you will lose all coordination of support.

apogio → maintaining posture or gesture of inhalation

- **Exhalation.** During exhalation the inner and outer abdominal muscular wall remains near the expanded relaxed posture felt on inhalation. During "normal" exhalation when you are not singing, the elastic recoil of the lungs tends to pull the diaphragm and the abdominal viscera upwards, however this is not the case in singing.
(guts) ↳ we want good apogio

- **An extra note: Synergy in the breath mechanism is a result of good axial alignment! Axial alignment includes the head, neck, and torso.**

Synergy → coorination of small & large muscle groups into one functioning unit

A practical description of appoggio is as follows:

1. The sternum is moderately high and remains in this position ALWAYS.
2. The shoulders are relaxed but the sternum never slumps.
3. The rib position is dictated by the sternum since they are attached and in part determine diaphragmatic position.

- **An extra note: If the sternum slumps, the ribs collapse and then the diaphragm ascends.**

Note: One of the first things to discuss with a new student is posture.

Note: Do posture & breathe for next lesson

Pedagogy Questions and Answers

⟷ i.e. vowels are too lateral l. to right.

Q. In appoggio where is lateral distension experienced?
A. At the 10th rib and the crest of the ilium (a.k.a. the hipbone.)

Q. What kind of feeling occurs in the pectoral region in inspiration?
A. Little or none.
If there is it is shallow breathing

Q. What should happen posturally on renewal of breath?
A. Nothing.

Q. When a singer feels extreme muscle resistance to inhalation, either in the pectoral or abdominal regions, what is the cause? Is it a "full" or "deep" breath?
A. It is unnecessary muscle antagonism/assisting the breath. It is unwanted tension.

Q. In breath management exercises involving phonation, what 3 specific breath management concepts must be recognized and controlled?
A.
1. The rate and ease of each inhalation.
2. The variable rate of breath emission. - breath pacing → singing with reserve
3. Quiet breath renewal.

onset is as important as the release.

Q. What is the purpose of breath-pacing exercises and of onset exercises?
A. They coordinate fast respiration and phonation responses. They also help in "pre-phonatory tuning."

Q. Why do you think that the most frequent expression in vocal pedagogy seems to be "more support?"
A. People do not understand appoggio.

How to start → onset & pacing exercises

Q. Should any initial sensation of grabbing or holding the breath be associated with singing?
A. No, never. Singers must always watch the pectoral and abdominal regions for unnecessary muscle resistance on inhalation.

faster crisper release

Release is the new quality.

make sure there is vowel definition

think light not heavy.

Q. Should the lungs ever feel crowded?
A. No. The lungs should feel satisfied and singers should only replenish what was used.

stop breathe flow.

- breathe between each set

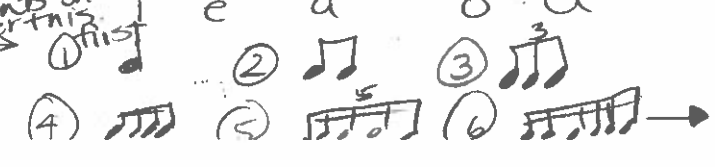
Overcrowded lungs cause too much air expulsion.

4 things to master before sustained singing (sostenuto) is

Gesture of inspiration breathe

1. Onset
2. Brief phrase
3. Skillful release
4. Agility

students should master this first



Q. What is the hallmark of appoggio?
A. Silent inhalation.

Q. Do breath holding exercises increase lung capacity?
A. No. Natural vital lung capacity cannot be increased.

Q. What are two kinesthetic sensations often confused with "support"?
A. Tension and increased muscle resistance.

Q. What is muscular synergism?
A. It is the balance that singers seek in the use of all muscles used in the act of singing. It is the fine coordination of all these muscles which allow singers to find balance between being overenergized or underenergized in their singing.

easier to take away than add

Q. What happens to the diaphragm during **inspiration**?
A. It moves downwards while the ribs move outwards.

Q. What happens to the diaphragm during **exhalation**?
A. It moves upwards and the ribs move inwards.

Q. What is the release of tone also known as?
A. The new breath!

Q. Although desirable, the low breath at first seems less complete. What must the singer do to allow his or herself to achieve this more efficient breath sensation?
A. The singer must let go of the high breath!

Registration Events of Female Voices

Soprano *passaggi* and Register Zones

G3 - Eb4	Chest Voice Open chest voice
Bb3 - C5	Lower Middle Voice
C#5 - F#5	Upper Middle Voice change in voice between lower & upper
G5 - C6(C#6)	Upper Voice
D6 - A6	Flageolet

Mezzo Soprano *passaggi* and Register Zones

E3 (F3) - E4 (F4)	Chest Voice
C4 - Bb4 (B4)	Lower Middle
Bb - E5(F5)	Upper Middle
F5 (F#5)-Bb5 (B5)	Upper Voice
C6 (B6) and above	Flageolet

Contralto *passaggi* and Register Zones — very rare voice type

D3 - G4 (Ab4)	Chest Voice
F4 - A4	Lower Middle
Bb4 - D5	Upper Middle
Eb5 - Ab5	Upper Voice
A5 and above	Flageolet (seldom developed)

See pp. 134 and 135 in Richard Miller, The Structure of Singing: System and Art in Vocal Technique. Schirmer: New York, 1986

Approximate Register Events in Male Voices

Category of Voice	*primo passaggio*	*secondo passagio*
Tenorino (Andrew Snyder) Blaine (character tenor)	F4	Bb4
Tenore leggiero	E4, (Eb4)	A4, (Ab4)
Tenore lirico – sizable instr.	D4	G4
Tenore spinto Pavarotti	D4, (C#4)	G4, (F#4)
Tenore robusto (tenore drammatico) Wagner, Strauss, Ben Hepner Baby Tenor – Jeffrey – works on lyric baritone repertoire.	C4, (C34)	F4, (F#4)
Baritono lirico	B3	E4
Baritono drammatico	Bb3	Eb4
Basso cantante Peter Mondgner (Baby) →	A3	D4
Basso profondo	Ab3, (G3)	Db4, (C4)

See pg. 117 in Richard Miller, The Structure of Singing:System and Art in Vocal Technique. Schirmer: New York, 1986.

Common for young males to sound like a bari tenor.

Registration Events in the Male Voice
Information

Primo Passaggio (1st registration transition)

1. Termination of speech range. - out of speech termination range
   - Speech range encompasses more than 1 easily negotiated octave.
   - Untrained singers have few problems singing the pitches lying within this range.
   - Adolescent male/untrained male singers involuntarily raise chin/larynx at termination point of speech range.
   - This point is called the primo passaggio.
   - Sympathetic vibration (chest rumble) tends to lessen or stop.
   - Beyond termination of speech range untrained singers often resort to laryngeal elevation to produce pitches beyond this pivotal point.

Secondo Passaggio (2nd registration transition)

1. The untrained voice either breaks off or resorts to sudden falsetto.
2. Exists at about the interval of a fourth above the 1st passaggio point. The 1st passaggio point being where the elevated larynx was felt. primo primo

Zona di Passaggio (Zona Intermedia or the Passage Zone)

1. Often used in the "calling" voice.
2. **DO NOT** CARRY THE UNMODIFIED "CALL" OF THE SPEAKING VOICE INTO THE SINGING VOICE.

Q. These terms apply to both the female and male voice. Can you define the following?

Primo Passaggio:	First passage zone
Zona di Passaggio:	Passage zone (a.k.a. intermediate zone)
Secondo Passaggio:	Second passage area

Q. Does the male speaking voice encompass more or less than an octave of easy negotiation?

A. More than an octave.

Q. Which of the following describe falsetto and which head voice?

"Robust" = head
"Effeminate" = falsetto
"Fully Resonant "= head
"Has crescendo and descrescendo" = head
"Unsupported" = falsetto
"Supported" = head

Q. Do untrained singers have problems singing the speech range pitches?
A. No, very few problems arise in the speech range.

Q.When the male singer progresses beyond the first passaggio into the zona di passaggio using the "call voice", what two things happen to the sound?
A. They either go into FALSETTO or the VOICE BREAKS OFF.

Q. Should piano dynamics be supported by less quantity of breath than forte?
A. No! Both dynamic levels require equal quantity of breath.

Q. Is continuous use of falsetto healthy?
A. No, with incomplete closure of the vocal folds (which is how falsetto is produced) comes a greater risk of nodules forming.

Q. What part of the male (and female) voice is the key to the evenly registered scale?
A. The zona di passaggio or middle voice.

Q. At the end of the speech range what do adolescent male singers do that you can both hear and see?
A. They usually raise the chin and subsequently the larynx, the chest rumble stops, and they get the "call voice."

↳screaming

Q. Pedagogically is there often confusion between the terms "falsetto" and "head voice?"
A. Yes, they are often wrongly deemed the same thing – THEY ARE COMPLETELY DIFFERENT! To clarify: falsetto should not be called head voice because vocal fold approximation is less complete in the falsetto production. Falsetto is less skillful singing.

voce completa → complete voice

A person w/o this will have one part of their voice (i.e. sparkly high reg.) more built than others (i.e. middle reg.)

Registration Events in the Female Voice
Study Questions

Q. Does the upper register of the female voice correspond functionally to the male falsetto?
A. Not at all.

Q. What is a good pedagogical tool to help the breathy soprano find a chest mixture in the low range? ↳ 14–18 yr female
A. Have them imitate the male speaking voice.

Q. Why do singers who tend to avoid a given register in speech need to develop that unused register for singing?
A. Because the coloratura will be seriously handicapped when unable to sing some form of chest just as the contralto and mezzo must have some head voice ability.

9th/10th Males → P4th

Q. Is the middle register more extensive in the female voice and if so why?
A. Yes, due to the laryngeal structural difference and the predominance of chest tone in male voices.

Q. Where in the range of the lyric soprano should chest voice cease?
A. Eb4 for reasons of vocal health.

Q. Where is the pivotal point in the female register in relation to the "hole" in many sopranos?
A. Around C5.

Q. Where are the register events of the female singer?

	1st Passaggio	2nd Passaaggio	Flageolet
A. Soprano	Eb4	F#5	D6
Mezzo	F4	E5	B5/C6
Contralto	G4	D5	A5

Q. What are the 3 types of speech habits female voices fall into?
A. 1. Almost exclusive head voice with nearly no chest voice
2. Chest and head, with mostly head
3. Chest chiefly used

Introduction to the Respiratory Function of the Voice and the Skeletal System

Head Airways and Larynx

1. Pharynx (a.k.a the throat)
2. Pharynx further divided into the NASOPHARYNX, OROPHARYNX, AND LARYNGOPHARYNX.

See the diagram pg. 76 of Ware's book

Sub-Laryngeal System

1. Trachea (a.k.a. windpipe)
2. Bronchi (a.k.a. the 2 branches to the lungs)

Respiratory Musculature and Musculature Important in Breath Management

1. The Diaphragm. It is the 2nd largest muscle in the body!
2. Intercostal Muscles.
3. Rectus Abdominis.
4. Transverse Abdominis
5. Internal Oblique
6. External Oblique

- Quiet breathing, inspiration requires only the involuntary contraction of the diaphragm, and expiration is an entirely passive process. (See Ware p.80)
- Intercostal muscles aid in inhalation and exhalation and help crate a constant SUBGLOTTAL air pressure.
- Again, quiet breathing is passive.
- In maintaining a high chest position we can provide opposition to the elastic recoil process. (See Ware p. 81)
- The sensation of rib cage expansion is ultimately the sensation known as the APPOGGIO TECHNIQUE.

Misconceptions and the Truth about the Diaphragm

1. Diaphragmatic action cannot be consciously controlled, except indirectly as when willing to hold a breath or utter a vocal sound. (Ware p.82)

3. It is pedagogically unsound to exhort a student to "support with the diaphragm" or "sing from the diaphragm." (Ware p.82) Remember physiologically where the diaphragm is located and it only makes sense not to "sing from the diaphragm."

4. It is physically impossible to actually place the hands on the diaphragm as some teachers have been known to suggest."

Summary of Respiratory Action

For a complete summary see Ware p. 82. Here he describes the 4 PHASES OF THE BREATH CYCLE:

1. Inspiration.
2. Suspension.
3. Expiration.
4. Recovery.

See Ware p. 84 for a more detailed description of each of the above activities.

Methods of Breathing

See Ware p.85 for a detailed description of the following 4 METHODS OF BREATHING:

1. High torso breathing.
2. Middle torso breathing.
3. Low torso breathing.
4. Middle and low torso breathing.

(Ware, Clifton. Basics of Vocal Pedagogy: The Foundation and Process of Singing.)

If you are told that "your Italian does not sound very Italian", consult the following check-list of errors frequently made by American singers. One or more of your faults is probably listed.

1 *Are you pronouncing* [t] *and* [d] *on the teeth?* Use of alveolar instead of dental [t] and [d] is the most conspicuous error made by English-speaking (and German-speaking) singers in Italian. There are famous non-Italian singers who seem to have mastered all the other problems of the language, whose Italian still "does not sound very Italian" just because of this fault.

2 *Are you sliding in and out of vowels?* Italian vowels have the same sound from beginning to end. Form a vowel simultaneously with the consonant preceding it. That will eliminate the sliding in. Do not anticipate formation of an oncoming consonant. That will avoid a sliding out. If there is a diphthong in an Italian word ([ɑ:i], [ɑ:u], etc.), do not anticipate formation of the second vowel.

3 *Are you distinguishing between double and single consonants where written?* Non-Italians can make hilarious mistakes in meaning. The word-rhythm produced by the play of double and single consonants will enhance and complement the musical rhythm. Sometimes it will form a counterpoint to it. All this is very "Italian" and is an extremely important element of the flavor of the language.

4 *Are you using* [I] *and* [U] *instead of* [i] *and* [u] *when these sounds occur before consonants?* Are you allowing a final unstressed **a** (as in **sala**) to sound as [ə] or [ʌ]? These three vowel errors are often made by American singers. The vowels [I], [U], [ə] and [ʌ] do not exist in Italian.

5 ***Are your*** [e] ***and*** [o] ***too high and round?*** Are they high and round enough? Sometimes American singers carry the high sounds of German and French into Italian. Remember that the Italian closed [e] and [o] are more relaxed than their French or German counterparts.

On the other hand, [e] and [o] should not be so low that they are indistinguishable from [ɛ] and [ɔ]. Even Italian singers are sometimes guilty of this error. Faulty reasoning lies behind the excuse that "opening the vowel makes a more beautiful tone". If that were true, why not sing everything on **ah** and have done with it? A beautiful tone can be achieved on [e] and [o] (Italians have been doing it for centuries) if you learn how to do it. And in so doing, you have preserved in your diction the grace and elegance so characteristic of well pronounced Italian.

6 ***Is your delivery relaxed and smooth?*** Above all, Italian pronunciation must have these qualities. The language is basically ***legato***. The vowels must flow one into another. There are no stops between words. Accurate and relaxed Italian pronunciation can only help to improve singing.

Here is a check list of errors commonly made in French by American singers. If you are told that "your French does not sound very French", consider each of these points. Your error may lie in one or more of these areas.

1 *Are you singing a true legato?* A perfect legato may be the most difficult thing for Americans to achieve in French. In English we are accustomed to a stop-and-go articulation which does not exist in French. This articulation of ours is sometimes so subtle, and we are so accustomed to it, that we do not realize how non-legato it is. For example, in listening to someone speak, we would have no difficulty in differentiating between **mend raw** and **men draw**; there is a subtle halt in the flow between the words. In French this halt does not take place.

This linking together of words is but one aspect of the French legato. The basis of it lies, of course, in the length of the vowels. Consonants must be delayed in their articulation as long as possible. Keep the vowel sound alive and pure. The listener should never be aware of an oncoming consonant. Articulation of consonants must be brief, neat and clear. French, like Italian, goes from vowel to vowel. But French is even smoother, for it does not have the prolonged double consonant sounds of Italian.

No matter how accurate your pronunciation may be, it will not "sound French" if it is not super-smooth.

2 *Do your vowels keep the same quality from beginning to end?* In English we slide in and out of vowels, and each time we open our mouths to speak, we are practicing this bad habit. Form the vowels simultaneously with the consonants preceding them. That will eliminate a glide-in. Do not move lips, tongue or jaw while sustaining a vowel. That will eliminate a glide-off.

3 *Are your high vowels high enough and your round vowels round enough?* Special attention should be given to [e], [o], [y], [ø] and [œ].

4 *Do you sound an* **m** *or* **n** *in nasal vowels?* This is a particularly bad habit of American singers. It is most apt to occur in words like **sombre** or **onde** where a **b** or **d** follows the nasal. Often singers who are sounding the **m** or **n** do not realize that they are doing so.

5 *Are the nasal vowels too nasal?* Nasality should not be forced. Do not "sing in the nose". Remember that a nasal vowel is a normal oral vowel which has had some nasal resonance added to it. Do you have enough nasality in the nasal vowels? Don't be afraid of the nasal resonance. With a little practice good nasal vowels can be achieved without pinching the tone as long as their basis is a good [ɑ], [ɛ], [o] or [œ].

6 *Are you using the bright French* [a]*?* The tendency for young singers is to sing **ah** too darkly in all languages. Remember that in French, most **ah**'s are even brighter than they would be in English, Italian or German. The bright sound of [a] is highly characteristic of French.

7 *Are you accurate in the French neutral vowel* [ə]*?* Many Americans substitute the vowel [ʌ] (as in the English **up**). This vowel does not exist in French.

8 *Do you produce the consonant sounds* [ʃ] *and* [ʒ] *with a rich quality*, or do they sound shallow?

9 *Is it clear?* If French is not clear it will not "sound French" no matter how accurately you may think you are pronouncing. Clarity is not to be achieved by spitting out words, but by an untroubled legato line created by smoothly flowing clear vowels and gracefully articulated consonants.

If you are told that "your German does not sound very German", go over the following check-list of common errors made by American singers.

1 *Are the high vowels high enough? Are the round vowels round enough?* The answer is often no to both questions.

2 *Do you slide into vowels?* Formation of the vowel simultaneously with the consonant preceding it will correct the fault.

3 *Do you maintain the same vowel quality throughout the length of the vowel sound?* Use a mirror to help you check. Lips, tongue and jaw should not move while a vowel is being sustained. If they do, the vowel quality will change, and you will have an unwanted diphthong. Anticipation of a following consonant is usually the reason for a change in vowel quality or even vowel identity.

4 *Are you articulating all consonants?* Americans are always trying to simplify pronunciation by omitting and/or imploding consonants, especially when they occur in clusters. We do it all the time in English. If it is done in German, an important element of the flavor of the language is lost. In **Du bist die Ruh'**, the **t** of **bist** must be clearly articulated just before the **d** of **die**.

5 *Are you correct in your use of* [x] *and* [ç] *for German* **ch***?* Is your [ç] too far back and therefore weak in projection? Is your [ç] too similar in sound to [ʃ]? (Does it sound "ishy"?) Review exercises 75 and 76 in Part 1, relating to [ç], [ʃ] and [x].

6 *Do you elide into words or roots beginning with a vowel?* This is **verboten.**