

Singing: The First Art

By Dan H. Marek

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Singing: The First Art By Dan H. Marek

The Italian singing technique Bel Canto instructs, "He who knows how to breathe and how to pronounce, knows how to sing." *Singing: The First Art* incorporates the techniques of Bel Canto along with those of masters like Berton Coffin and Manuel Garcia to promote and facilitate vocal excellence. Many concepts are described, from correct posture and alignment to improving and maintaining proper breathing, from good pronunciation and diction to producing an even, pure tone, and from vocal ranges to singing within and smoothly shifting between vocal registers. Mannes Vocal Faculty member Dan H. Marek effectively breaks down these complicated concepts with clear exercises, helping the vocal student to achieve freedom and complete control over his or her instrument.

A primary section on the history of singing stresses the importance of understanding vocal history while inspiring and motivating the student through the experiences of opera stars such as Enrico Caruso, Maria Callas, and Jussi Björling. The second section explains vocal techniques, including the use and proper pronunciation of the IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet), and provides 64 specific exercises with clearly defined goals designed to overcome faults and to develop vocal virtuosity. Complete instructions for transposing the exercises for both male and female voices are included, as well as drawings of the exercises, musical examples from vocal literature, excellent anatomical illustrations by Frank Netter, MD, and copious photographs of opera stars. *Singing: The First Art* is an invaluable text for students, professionals, singers, conductors, composers, and vocal medical professionals, or anyone interested in understanding and appreciating the vocal art.

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Editorial Review

Review
The first part of this textbook for vocal students is devoted to tracing the historical background of the art of singing from ancient times to the present. Subsequent chapters teach practical vocal techniques, beginning with the Bel Canto method of breathing. Marek (voice, Mannes College of Music) has also provided approximately 60 vocal exercises for developing vocal virtuosity. The volume is illustrated with b&w anatomical drawings and photographs of opera stars.... (*Reference and Research Book News, May 2007*)

Singing: The First Art is both a history and a manual....Pedagogues who have not read Coffin's texts will find this an accurate and accessible overview; teachers who are familiar with the work will find it a balanced and practical interpretation of the method. (*Journal of Singing, November 2008*)

provides useful references....well written and well supported by illustrations and musical examples....[Marek] has done singers, and those who are interested in singing, a great service by drawing together some of the major sources of literature on vocal history and vocal technique. (*Music Education Research*)

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About the Author
Dan H. Marek is a distinguished international singer, teacher, and writer who has appeared as a principal tenor at the Metropolitan Opera, New York City Opera, and the Salzburg Opera. He is a teacher of voice at Mannes College of Music in New York City.

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