

“Well, for God’s sake, don’t peep!”—Exploring the Pedagogic Legacy of Barbara Doscher

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INTRODUCTION

BARBARA DOSCHER IS PERHAPS BEST KNOWN to *Journal of Singing* readers for her widely read book, *The Functional Unity of the Singing Voice*, published by Scarecrow Press in 1988 and revised and expanded in 1994, or for her repertoire book, *From Studio to Stage: Repertoire for the Voice*, which was edited by the author and published by Scarecrow Press in 2002. She also gained recognition as one of the initial Master Teachers at the 1991 and 1992 NATS Intern Programs. This article is both an evaluation of her pedagogic legacy and a remembrance of her personality and teaching style.

I met Barbara Doscher in January of 1988. I was considering attending the University of Colorado for graduate school because I loved the mountains and because Boulder looked like a fine place to live. At that time, I knew nothing of Barbara’s reputation and even less about the quality of the College of Music. A close high school friend and I decided to visit Boulder that January for a week of distance running on Boulder’s famous paths, exploring the area, visiting the campus, drinking far too much beer, and skiing at a nearby resort. I recall watching Barbara teach a lesson to an undergraduate soprano, and being struck by how different her teaching was from any that I had ever witnessed before. After the lesson, I followed Barbara out onto a back porch of the Imig Music Building to talk while she smoked a cigarette. We had a good humored conversation about graduate study, singing, and skiing.

At that time, I had little way of knowing that she would come to play such a key role in my life. I would have never guessed that thirty years later I would be compiling an article on her teaching and her influence on a generation of American teachers and singers. However,



Barbara Doscher, center, flanked by Catherine and John Nix, April 1996.

Journal of Singing, January/February 2020
Volume 76, No. 3, pp. 255–264
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National Association of Teachers of Singing

Barbara was one to make an impression on people. Another of her former students, Elizabeth Croy, currently Professor of Voice at Montana State University, described the effect Barbara had on her.

Barbara literally changed my life by changing my approach to singing. When she started working with me, I didn't have to ask others if it sounded better, or if it was right; I knew it was right because it felt right. She didn't try to change my sound; instead, she let me discover my own sound. This was very important because it raised my self-esteem greatly. She always showed respect for my musical ideas and provided me with the technical tools I needed to give myself complete musical freedom. Her insight into life and the joy of singing was what made her technical expertise so effective . . . From Barbara I also learned that each singer needs an individual approach. I remember sitting in on lessons in her studio and being puzzled student after student because each singer was so unique sounding. She would inevitably work on concepts that would have never occurred to me to work on. Yet now I feel I am understanding more and more pedagogically through my students and my own singing. I have respect for each singer's uniqueness. I know that I am here to present ideas that may help them, not convert them into my own concept of what a singer should be or not be.¹

Several years went by after that January day. I married, moved to Colorado in April 1992, and began graduate studies at CU. Barbara's studio became a Mecca not only for me, but also for many voice students at The University of Colorado at Boulder. Her sizeable collection of vocal scores became a second library from which we "checked out" music. And, whether a person studied voice with Barbara or not, he or she was welcome to observe Barbara teach at any time. Mark Calkins, Associate Professor of Voice at Berea (KY) College, and a tenor with many professional credits, studied with Barbara from 1983 until her death. Just a few months before she passed away, he wrote a wonderful description of her studio.

Dr. Doscher's studio is a direct reflection of her. When you approach her studio door, there is a sign which reads: "Please do not knock, just come in." Just before you open the door, you stop and listen to the incredible sounds that emanate from her room. You search your memory for the face that goes with the voice, and generally you are surprised and pleased at the improvement in that voice. When you open the door,

you are immediately greeted by eyes that flash "Shhh . . . this lesson is precious." (These are not Barbara's eyes). You find a chair if there is one, or most likely you wedge yourself between other knowledge seekers sitting on the floor. The onlookers are then treated to a teaching style which encourages, refines, nurtures and makes clear the intricacies and vagaries of the study of voice. Dr. Doscher's studio walls are covered with mementos from her grateful students. There are comic photos and illustrations which satirize some of Barbara's catch phrases. In general, the good humor and joy with which she executes her profession are readily visible around you.²

Barbara had an intellectual curiosity that was absolutely infectious to me. I soon became one of the knowledge seekers who caught this curiosity and joined the teaching profession. I was awarded a graduate assistantship and began to teach class voice and a limited number of undergraduate students. Throughout this process, Barbara took great pains to mentor me in every way possible. Because of the open studio policy that she instituted in the voice area at CU, I was able to observe her teaching and that of the other voice faculty, as Mark Calkins described above. She also allowed me into her teaching seminar without the prerequisite class, in part due to a high score I made on a placement test, and in part because she knew it would be her last time to teach the class before retiring from the full time faculty. She also observed my teaching on many occasions, first in her teaching seminar, and later during her lunch hour. She loaned or gave to me books on voice pedagogy and vocal repertoire, and loaned recordings of great singers to me. (This was pre-YouTube!) She recommended me for the 1994 NATS Intern Program for Young Voice Teachers, where I had the good fortune to work under the guidance of the late Thomas Houser and Barbara Honn. She taught me how to free my own voice, and as I did so, she began to show confidence in my abilities by referring students to me. Finally, she mentored me through our many, many conversations on life, music, teaching, great singing, and most of all, people.

More than twenty years after Barbara's passing, I was asked to speak about her teaching legacy at the 2017 NATS Summer Workshop. As I prepared my presentation, I began to reflect on what made her teaching so effective. What follows is a distillation of my findings and an analysis of her teaching.

TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF DOSCHER’S TEACHING: THE CONCEPT OF BALANCE

Barbara Doscher sought an optimal balance between transglottal air flow and subglottal air pressure. As she said in an interview,

I base what I do on what Gauffin and Sundberg call “flow-phonation,” which is the optimum ratio of airflow to air pressure (subglottal pressure), for a given frequency and dynamic level. I don’t want people to leak a lot of air, but on the other hand, I’d rather have leaky air than not enough air. If you have not enough air, either you’re holding back air or you have a fluctuating air stream.³

While she lacked hard evidence from air flow or electroglottograph measurements, I believe Doscher was successful in finding that balance, so that her students sang with a vocal fold contact phase that was both singer specific and pitch, vowel, and dynamic level specific, with a high Maximum Flow Declination Rate (a rapid shut-off to the airflow at vocal fold closure), and a high rate of air flow in the open phase. Thus, when a singer sang with a greater air pressure, he or she was encouraged to match that increase with a high rate of flow. This approach seems most logical in light of Titze’s writing about glottal source power with respect to adduction.⁴ Doscher also took time in pedagogy courses and in observed lessons to teach students how to hear this type of vocal production, and provided vocalizing ideas for how to achieve it with singers. These ideas included using bounced or staccato patterns to promote good intrinsic muscle coordination without undue breath pressure, using unvoiced consonants or an /h/ onset in vocalises to avoid hard onsets, and using semi-occluded vocal tract (SOVT) exercises, particularly the lip trill and raspberry, if the singer was perceptually pressing.⁵ This is not to say she did not advocate a forthright approach to singing; her oft used phrase, “For God’s sake, don’t peep!” was to remind students that undersinging was equally as defeating a strategy as oversinging and pushing.

Barbara Doscher was skilled at the practical application (with flexibility for each singer) of Berton Coffin’s work. She definitely did not try to “tune” each note of a song or aria. Both in the studio and in her classes, she taught a system of vowel modification that was singer, pitch, vowel, duration, and dynamic level specific.⁶ She

also impressed on her student singers, and on those whose teaching she was mentoring, how important it was to learn how to listen to subtle changes in vowels. She said in a lecture on vowel modification at the 1992 NATS Intern Program, “We have to learn how to listen vertically, and not just to the fundamental,”⁷ a statement that remains in line with current pedagogic thought (see, for example, the recent dissertation of Ian Howell, which urges a melding of psychoacoustics with vocal pedagogy).⁸ At the same time, she cautioned against the idea of micromanaging each aspect of singing, including vowel modification, warning that striking a balance between detailed work and the “big picture” was most beneficial: “It’s very easy to over-think as a singer, to the point where you become more like an automaton than having any spontaneity.”⁹

Doscher frequently used semi-occluded vocal tract postures such as the lip trill, the raspberry, and the “standing wave” as pilots or lead-ins to vocalises or into phrases from repertoire. These were employed for a variety of reasons, including freeing up the tongue, jaw, lips, and pharynx; increasing the breath energy level; and throwing caution to the wind and abandoning inhibitions about a particular passage.¹⁰ These SOVTs were employed with Doscher’s droll humor in lessons; after a student produced a raspberry with a large spray of saliva, Doscher would respond, “Yes, there’s a high spit factor whenever you do a raspberry.”¹¹ Differing levels of intensity on the raspberry were labeled “moped” (loose face and lips, high flow, low pressure), “dirt bike” (high flow, increased resistance and breath pressure), and “Harley-Davidson” (high flow, high breath pressure; reserved for *forte* singing in the *passaggio*).¹²

Doscher understood the close interrelationship between postural balance, respiratory activity, phonation, and resonance.¹³ However, in keeping with her tendency to teach through indirect means, she seldom spoke about what to *do* posturally; she was crystal clear in what *not* to do.¹⁴ As she said in an interview, “I don’t teach posture *per se*; as a matter of fact, I think that in many ways posture is more connected with phonation than it is with breathing. If you don’t have the correct balance of the head on the shoulders, it’s very difficult to get phonation that isn’t muscular.”¹⁵ In the studio, she had several creative whole-body means for achieving such a balance. She encouraged flowing movements

and easy dancing while singing, often taking students by the hand and leading them in a waltz or swaying motions; she encouraged her students to take Alexander Technique lessons and Feldenkrais sessions; she would have singers sit down on the floor or on a pair of chairs with their legs straight out in front of them; and she would have students sing in lessons while standing on a balance board.¹⁶ About this last point, she stated,

I use what is commonly seen in a lot of the fitness facilities—a kinesthetic awareness board. It's about eighteen inches square, and it has a runner about an inch and a half wide that goes across the middle of the bottom of the square of wood. There are various more advanced settings; I've had some students who have skateboarded, and so forth. Generally, they are the better breathers. Now when someone who is used to using a lot of abdominal pressure (at least using the abdominal muscles more than I think is necessary) gets on this kind of board, often they feel as if they are levitating—it's so unusual for them to be free of all that extra pressure. I talk about breath energy, but I don't use the word "support."¹⁷

In line with her emphasis on the balance between air flow and air pressure in the respiratory/phonatory domain and on postural balance, Doscher also stressed the need for balanced functioning of the extrinsic musculature to optimally position the larynx for functional freedom and acoustic benefit. In males, this meant activating the laryngeal depressors (sternohyoid, omohyoid, and sternothyroid) to maintain a comfortably low and stable larynx while also releasing tension in any overactive elevators.¹⁸ Some of her methods for achieving this are recounted in this author's recent article, "The Hole in the Sky."¹⁹ In females, it meant flexibility of function, so that at the upper extremes, the larynx could rise slightly in order to allow resonance frequencies to rise.²⁰

Doscher's first priority in working with a student was to establish what she described as a "fluid" sound in the middle voice. "I agree with Bill Vennard that the first thing you need to teach is some kind of flowing sound."²¹ To this end, she typically began lessons with several descending vocalises on simple scale or arpeggiated patterns.²²

I think blending of registers is best handled with descending vocalises, particularly for young singers

(voices under thirty years of age). As I said, if you can find a way for the middle voice to operate in a functionally efficient way, then the other areas of the scale are going to be much easier to deal with.²³

Her use of descending exercises was thus very similar to the approach Oren Brown employed in his teaching, blending a lighter production downward before employing any ascending exercises.²⁴

Finally, although Doscher was known for her skill as pedagogue, technical perfection was not her aim in teaching—musical expression was. She balanced the need for a stable technique with the purpose of having such a technique. Joseph Wiggett, now Professor of Voice at California State-Stanislaus, aptly described this.

One thing that she didn't express verbally enough, but certainly believed, is that while she was entirely rooted in the science of vocal pedagogy and how it must inform our teaching, she, at her very core, believed that the science was first and foremost, always in SERVICE to the Art and not an end unto itself. This can be easily lost for those who did not know her personally and whose only exposure to her teachings is through her text . . .²⁵

The importance of expression was also on her mind in her interview with Blades, when asked about qualities she looked for in new students: "I'm interested in people who, no matter what their technical level, have the desire to communicate something about the human condition, even if it's pretty crude and just the beginning of being creative."²⁶

DOSCHER'S TEACHING STYLE

Barbara Doscher was in many respects a "hands-off" teacher. "The main thing in teaching singing is knowing what not to do."²⁷ She believed that one should "work with what the student can do, not what the student can't do yet."²⁸ And, she felt this method of instruction was essential: "I believe in a positive approach to teaching . . . build upon the strengths and sneak up on the weaknesses."²⁹ She spent a great deal of time and thought to devising exercises and repertoire that would give a student the best chance for success, then would let students work out problems on their own as much as possible without micromanaging them or providing too much feedback. If she needed to be more direct,

she certainly would be, but she preferred to create the right environment for self-discovery, and to offer reinforcing comments and genuine praise when it was due. Lessons generally started with a simple vocalise, which she would patiently use, with only a "do you want to do that one again?" or "mm-hm" as her responses, for several minutes. At the end of that activity, she would simply say, "Do you have any questions about how that is going?"³⁰ This kind of approach accords well with current thinking on delaying Knowledge of Results or Knowledge of Performance, and avoiding guidance/cueing.³¹ She extended this philosophy to how she supervised graduate teaching assistants, remarking that "at some point you need to leave them alone and let them find their own way."³² Doscher was not dogmatic that teaching assistants or students in her teaching seminar use her exercises exclusively, nor did she insist that students who did use them needed to employ them exactly as she did. She was adamant, however, (a) that student teachers knew the purpose of each exercise they chose for a student, (b) that exercises were sequenced in a logical fashion, and (c) that student teachers used a teaching style that met a student at his or her skill level (avoiding a too difficult exercise or song).

Along with the "hands off" approach, Doscher was very adept at helping intellectually oriented students ("overthinkers") to be more carefree in their singing, and at helping visceral/emotionally driven students to be more thoughtful about what they were doing technically. In short, she once again tried to help her students find some sort of balance or equilibrium. Two examples, one personal, may help readers understand this distinction. I was in Doscher's studio alone, waiting for her to return from the water fountain. I picked up her vocalise notebook, which was on top of the piano. Berton Coffin's vowel chart was tucked in the back. I opened the chart out and began to look at it. Doscher returned to the room. "Oh, you're looking at Bert's chart. Can I have that?" Gently taking the chart from my hands and closing it up, she smiled and said, "You're the last person who needs to be looking at that. You think too much as it is." The second example is recounted by Doscher in Blades's interview.

I have a thirty-three year old student who has been doing some concerts with Pavarotti. She called me two

or three years ago and said, "I'm having some intonation difficulties around B₄, C₅, C[#]₅." I asked, "Are these difficulties on front vowels or back vowels?" There was a long, long pause. "Now why didn't I think of that!" she said. "They're on back vowels. I'm too open, aren't I?" If that wouldn't have worked, she at least has some idea of where to go with it.³³

As someone who often taught in an indirect manner, Barbara Doscher took an unhurried approach with her students. Perhaps this grew out of her understanding that muscular habits seldom change overnight; she wrote, "When one is trying to cultivate physical habits from which a reliable, stable method of vocal technique will arise, it is better to 'speak' to the muscles, not the brain."³⁴ Perhaps it also was an expression of her desire to create the right environment for a student to discover his or her own voice, rather than imposing an external model (recall the Elizabeth Croy comment at the beginning of this article). As a result, she was very methodic; she would select a few carefully thought out vocalises and use them for months, sometimes years, to slowly and carefully address technical issues without causing other problems.³⁵ There were no quick fixes or pat answers: "You have to understand that quality always comes before quantity when you're vocalizing or doing voice building."³⁶ As to starting out with a new student, she said, "I give two or three simple vocalises, even if it appears to be an advanced student (certainly with a beginning student or a younger student). It's also important to spend part of the time getting to know one another—not the life history, but trying to find out what kind of personality one is dealing with before leaping into technical matters."³⁷

Barbara Doscher displayed a balance of warmth, compassion, humor, generosity, openmindedness, and steely firmness in her personal interactions with her students and with her colleagues. In contrast to her sometimes indirect manner of teaching, in her day to day life she did not suffer fools well, and was not afraid to speak her mind very bluntly if she felt that was what was demanded by the situation. She could be a formidable opponent to those with whom she disagreed, whether the topic was voice pedagogy or politics. One example of her personally direct manner was her lack of interest in having a vocology oriented doctoral degree at the University of Colorado. After rejecting a proposal from Ingo Titze on

this topic,³⁸ she made sure to say in her interview with Blades, “I wouldn’t think of having a voice science PhD at the University of Colorado because I think being a vocal pedagogue and being a voice scientist are two different things.”³⁹

Barbara Doscher chose repertoire for her students very conservatively. She sought to find music that was below the singer’s frustration level, so that expression, not technical survival, would be the focus of the singer’s attention.

A teacher can make or break a singer with the kind of literature assigned. Take your time and always keep in mind the vocal color, the tessitura, current technical problems, musical strengths, and (with beginning students) the personality of the student . . . Even with an advanced singer, assign literature below the technical level of frustration for performance or audition and save more challenging work for studio training.⁴⁰

In her interview with Blades, she remarked, “Many of them [referring to singers] try to spread themselves too thin or attempt to sing roles that are too heavy too soon. One of my favorite sayings is, ‘rather a month too late than a day too soon’.”⁴¹

Barbara Doscher refused to include exercises in her book, *The Functional Unity of the Singing Voice*. I recall a conversation we had in a lesson soon after the second edition of the book came out in 1994, in which her response was unequivocal: “People would say, ‘that’s Doscher’s method.’ You can’t go teaching voice from a cook-book.”⁴² It was her fear that people would use any exercises she included without the care, thought, concentrated listening, and flexibility that were essential to the way she taught.

It may surprise readers to learn that Doscher taught class voice for seventeen years. Far from feeling it was a waste of her time, she remarked that she felt that was where she learned how to teach.⁴³ And although Berton Coffin was the primary mentor for her teaching, Doscher continually spoke of the influence others had made in her life, especially her husband John Doscher (an elementary school teacher), Coffin’s colleague Louis Cunningham, Gerhard Husch and Aksel Schiøtz, who had visiting faculty positions at Colorado during her formative years, and William Vennard.

CONCLUSION

Barbara Doscher’s teaching in the studio, in the classroom, and in how she lived her life left an indelible mark on her students. For those of us who worked with her during the final six years of her life, she was an inspiration in how to continue learning and working despite looming health difficulties. She continued to read the *Journal of Singing* and the *Journal of Voice* to remain up to date on current research; she continued to visit the University of Colorado Music Library to research Schubert songs; she continued to purchase and catalog new art songs; and she continued to teach her best, even when chemotherapy appointments sapped much of her usual energy.

I would like to close this article with some reflections from three of Doscher’s students that speak of the impact she had on their lives.

One of the many challenges to being a truly talented and successful teacher of singing is the ultra-varied balancing act, per student, of being pedagogue, parent, mentor, disciplinarian, supporter, motivator, and psychoanalyst to some of the most stubborn and self-centered personality types in the world. Singers are nothing less than athletes who face individual exposure, ultra-nakedness, and judgment every time they open their mouths. When facing down vocal hurdles, the truly gifted teachers find themselves entering into the foundations of who each student really is. [This is] a heavy burden, and one Barbara is particularly adept at.⁴⁴

All who have studied with her have learned to listen with heightened sensitivity to voices and to what the music has to say to their hearts and minds; and to sing with greater freedom, ease, and beauty.⁴⁵

She has touched and changed so many lives it’s hard to count them all, but I thank God every day she came into mine.⁴⁶

APPENDIX

Biography and Annotated Bibliography of Books, Articles, Videos, Recordings

Biography

Barbara Doscher was born September 20, 1922. She received a B.A. in French and History from Grinnell College in Iowa in 1944, worked a variety of jobs, includ-

ing as a legal secretary, then returned to school at the University of Colorado-Boulder in the early 1960s. At Colorado, she received a B.M. in Voice Performance in 1965, an M.M. in Voice Performance in 1967, and a D.M.A. in Voice Performance and Pedagogy in 1971, with Berton Coffin as her major professor. She was a part time instructor at Colorado from 1971–1978, a full time instructor during 1978–1979, then became a tenure track Assistant Professor in 1979. She was promoted to Associate Professor in 1982 and full Professor in 1989. She was chair of the Vocal Area at Colorado from 1987–1993. She ended her teaching career at Colorado as Professor *emerita*. Her students won many major competitions, including the Pavarotti Competition (two winners), the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions (two winners), and the Mozart Concours International de Chant. Students also were selected for opera apprenticeships with the Chicago Lyric, Santa Fe, Houston Grand, Central City, Cincinnati, Tulsa, and Des Moines Operas, and four of her students were chosen for the NATS Intern Program. She was chosen to be a Master Teacher at the first two NATS Intern Programs in 1991 and 1992. Barbara Doscher and her husband John had one adopted son, Stephen, who predeceased them. She passed away from cancer on June 26, 1996.

Books by Barbara Doscher

Doscher, Barbara. *The Functional Unity of the Singing Voice*, 2nd edition. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow, 1994. This is the second, substantially expanded and improved version of her classic book (1988). Since its publication, some of the voice acoustics information has become out of date (particularly regarding second formant tuning in the high range of classical production in males); however, the practical information about vowel shading and first formant tracking for females is still very valuable reading. Her opinions on belting modified during the period between the first and second editions, as can be seen in the text. In the phonation section, Titze’s work on the role of vocal tract inertance in sustaining vocal fold oscillation was not included (though she possessed his *Principles of Voice Production* in her personal library). Additionally, the text does not discuss the use of semi-occluded vocal tract postures in voice training, although Doscher was an advocate of their use in the studio. The book includes an extensive bibliography.

Doscher, Barbara. *From Studio to Stage: Repertoire for the Voice*. Edited and annotated by John Nix. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow, 2002. Transcribed from Doscher’s handwritten repertoire cards, entries are divided by broad category (English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, and Russian art song; folk songs and spirituals in English; music theater; opera arias; oratorio, cantata, and mass selections; recital groups; voice with orchestra) and arranged alphabetically by title within each category. Each entry includes composer, poet/librettist, keys available, ranges for each key, tessitura, difficulty level, suggested voice types, comments, text summary, and notes regarding genre, language, and editions available. Five indexes facilitate searching.

Articles by Barbara Doscher

Doscher, Barbara. “The Beginning Voice Class.” *The NATS Bulletin* 32, no. 1 (September/October 1975): 31–33, 45. Barbara Doscher taught class voice from 1966–1983. In personal conversations, she remarked that leading class voice taught her how to teach. This work, her first published article, touches on many topics. Doscher stresses the importance of the spirit of the class—that it is less a “knowing” class and more of a “doing” class. Teachers should orient class time to providing experiences rather than lectures. The teacher should foster “a relaxed, uninhibited class atmosphere” (31). Body warm up activities should precede vocal warm ups. The article provides a wealth of corrective techniques for breathing issues, jaw and tongue tension, and neck tension. She discusses doing listening training as well, developing a discriminating ear in each student as to differences in timbre, airflow, vowels, and vibrato. Of the teacher, Doscher recommends he or she be “uninhibited, enthusiastic, and excited about singing” (45). The article is highly recommended for any new teacher of class voice.

Doscher, Barbara, and Julie Fortney. “A Mile High! 1980 National Convention.” *The NATS Bulletin* 37, no. 1 (September/October 1980): 26–30. Doscher pens an account of the many activities that took place at the national meeting in Denver in 1980.

Doscher, Barbara. “Point Counterpoint.” *The NATS Bulletin* 37, no. 3 (January/February 1981): 8–15. Doscher writes in response to a statement, “Smiling

produces the most favorable position of the mouth for singing." She quotes Garcia, Lamperti, Lilli Lehmann, Alderson, and Vennard to point out the wide variety of opinions on the topic. The core of her response is, "Each singer must find the mouth position that is most efficient for best vocalization. That position will vary in accordance with the sex of the singer, the area of the range in which he/she is singing, the dynamic level, the intensity desired, the vowel to be sung, the preferred color, and even the stylistic period of the music he/she is singing" (13).

Doscher, Barbara. "Heads Up!" *Choral Journal* 24, no. 10 (June 1984): 5–8. Doscher lists the implied meaning of the title: "Be alert, be ready, be flexible, be buoyant, be confident." Relating this to choral singing, she notes that one often sees "heads down" in choral singers—a head tipped forward posture—which can lead to a tucked chin, eyes looking down at the music (instead of the conductor!), and a collapsed chest. She links this to the functional freedom good singing requires. Head position is key to optimal respiratory balance (*appoggio*) and stable laryngeal positioning. These ideas were developed further in Chapter 4 of *Functional Unity*, 69–84.

Doscher, Barbara. "Translate and Communicate." *American Music Teacher* 34, no. 2 (November/December 1984): 24–26. In a brief essay advocating for singing operas in English, Doscher argues that the pros of performing in the vernacular of the country—communication with the audience, the performer understanding the subtleties of what is being sung—outweigh the cons.

Doscher, Barbara. "Who's Afraid of the Big, Bad, Wolf?" *The NATS Journal* 41, no. 1 (September/October 1984): 38–41. An examination of the pros and cons of competitions. Doscher asks whether performance in a competitive atmosphere is conducive to developing young musicians. Teachers must weigh the benefits of their students participating in competitions that may further a musician's career against the costs (are competitions good for the musician?). She quotes a number of legendary performers. Doscher notes, "The performer whose primary attributes are sheer technical skill and an unflappable memory has a decided advantage" (39).

Doscher, Barbara. "Breathing: The Motor of the Singing Voice." *Choral Journal* 27, no. 8 (March 1987): 17–22. This primer on respiratory anatomy and physiology is very similar to Chapter 1 of *Functional Unity* (1–29).

Doscher, Barbara. "Exploring the Whys of Intonation Problems." *Choral Journal* 32, no. 4 (November 1991): 25–30. Also published in *The Journal of Research in Singing and Applied Vocal Pedagogy* 15, no. 2 (June 1992): 27–38. The article begins with a discussion of some common causes and remedies for flat intonation: the temperature of the hall/room, how the singers are holding the music, not knowing the music, and fatigue. She then provides several solutions/admonitions, which can be summed up as, "alter those conditions which may foster an unhealthy vocal climate" (26). The article continues with a description of the role maturation plays in intonation. Doscher reminds directors that vocal change continues into the late 20s, and that with voices that are changing in size or tessitura "the lower passaggio seems most vulnerable to fluctuating intonation, either flattening or sharpening, depending upon the vowels affected" (26). Technical changes can also impact intonation; patience and emphasizing air flow often are the best remedies. She advises directors to choose repertoire carefully, as the tessitura of higher voice parts in choral music can be very challenging. Postural balance, carefully choosing one's words in rehearsals, the benefits of an optimal balance between air flow and subglottal pressure, and the dangers of too much "support" are all discussed. The article concludes with an examination of the effects of tongue, palate, and jaw tension on intonation. Selected corrective techniques for each type of tension are provided.

Doscher, Barbara. "Teaching Singing." *Quarterly Journal of Music Teaching and Learning* 3, no. 2 (Summer 1992): 61–66. Available online at: <http://www-usr.rider.edu/~vrme/v16n1/volume3/visions/summer9.pdf>. This essential article for understanding her teaching philosophy is highly recommended.

Doscher, Barbara (1995). "He Wrote for Specific Voices." *Journal of Singing* 52, no. 1 (September/October 1995): 33–36. This article, her last, and adapted from one of her doctoral dissertation projects, concerns

Handel and his life as a very practical impresario, composer, and conductor. For those used to her pedagogic writings, this article is interesting, as it is written from a historical angle rather than a strictly technical perspective. It provides detailed accounts of how Handel tailored music to best fit his singers.

Interviews with Barbara Doscher

Blades, Elizabeth. *A Spectrum of Voices: Prominent American Voice Teachers Discuss the Teaching of Singing*, 2nd edition. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2018. Doscher was one of 25 teachers interviewed for this book.

Web materials

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K6WeEEilzVc>
Video of Doscher teaching a portion of a graduate pedagogy class, recorded in 1984.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BQ3cEC5Q88I&t=21s>

Audio recording of a lecture (plus Q & A) on vowel modification given by Barbara Doscher at the 1994 NATS Intern Program, recorded June 22, 1994 in Boulder, Colorado. Recording courtesy of Dr. Robert Best.

<https://youtu.be/g-ARY33z5vE>

Audio recording of a lecture on vowel modification at the 1992 NATS Intern Program (July 25–August 5). Similar to the 1994 lecture, but delivered with more humor and more deliberate pacing. No Q & A period after the lecture. Recording courtesy of John Doscher.

Acknowledgement

Portions of the Introduction section of this article were adapted from Barbara Doscher, edited and annotated by John Nix, *From Studio to Stage: Repertoire for the Voice* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow, 2002; used with permission). Readers are encouraged to donate to the NATS Foundation Barbara Doscher Fund, which supports the NATS Intern Program; contact Dr. Brian Horne, Foundation President, or go to <https://www.nats.org/cgi/page.cgi/donation.html>.

NOTES

1. Elizabeth Croy, personal email with the author (February 9, 1998).

2. Mark Calkins, letter to the University of Colorado Women’s Club (February 29, 1996).
3. Elizabeth Blades, *A Spectrum of Voices: Prominent American Voice Teachers Discuss the Teaching of Singing*, 2nd edition (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2018), 28–29.
4. Ingo Titze, *Principles of Voice Production* (Iowa City, IA: National Center for Voice and Speech, 2000), 251–252. See Figure 9.5 in the text for further evidence.
5. Personal lesson observations of Doscher by the author (January 1993–April 1996).
6. Barbara Doscher, “Point Counterpoint,” *The NATS Bulletin* 37, no. 3 (January/February 1981): 13; Barbara Doscher, *Functional Unity of the Singing Voice*, 2nd edition (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1994), 159–160; Blades, 42, 76; John Nix, “Vowel Modification Revisited,” *Journal of Singing* 61, no. 2 (November/December 2004): 173.
7. Barbara Doscher, “Vowel Modification: Methodology or Scientific Fact?” (Presentation at the NATS Intern Program, July 25–August 5, 1992, Denton, TX). Audio recording available at: <https://youtu.be/g-ARY33z5vE> (accessed May 24, 2018).
8. Ian Howell, “Paring the Spectral Envelope: Toward a General Theory of Vocal Tone Color” (DMA Thesis, The New England Conservatory of Music, 2016), 27–57.
9. Blades, 76.
10. Barbara Doscher, “Flow Phonation and Breath Control” (Presentation at the Rocky Mountain Chapter of The College Music Society, March 18, 1994, Boulder, CO); John Nix, “Closing Your Mouth to Open Your Sound,” *Journal of Singing* 73, no. 1 (September/October 2016): 36–37.
11. Personal lesson observations.
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14. Personal lesson observations.
15. Blades, 10.
16. Personal lesson observations; Barbara Doscher, “Flow Phonation and Breath Control.”
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19. John Nix, “The Hole in the Sky,” *Journal of Singing* 74, no. 3 (January/February 2018): 273–278.
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24. Oren Brown, "Inflection Therapy for Functional Disorders of Phonation," *Journal of Singing* 61, no. 1 (September/October 2004): 27–33; personal lesson and master class observations of Oren Brown by the author (July 2000, July 2001).
25. Joseph Wiggett, Facebook message with the author (January 22, 2017).
26. Blades, 103.
27. Barbara Doscher, "Vowel Modification: Methodology or Scientific Fact?"
28. Barbara Doscher, "Teaching Singing," *Quarterly Journal of Music Teaching and Learning* 3, no. 2 (Summer 1992): 63.
29. Barbara Doscher, "Corrective Techniques" (graduate vocal pedagogy class, Boulder, CO, 1984); video recording available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K6WeEEilzVc> (accessed May 24, 2018).
30. Personal lesson observations.
31. Edwin Maas, Donald A. Robin, Shannon N. Austermann Hula, Skott E. Freedman, Gabriele Wulf, Kirrie J. Ballard, and Richard A. Schmidt, "Principles of Motor Learning in Treatment of Motor Speech Disorders," *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology* 17, no. 3 (August 2008): 282; Christine Bergan, "Motor Learning Principles and Voice Pedagogy: Theory and Practice," *Journal of Singing* 66, no. 4 (March/April 2010): 458–466; Ingo Titze and Katherine Verdolini Abbott, *Vocology: The Science and Practice of Voice Habilitation* (Salt Lake City: National Center for Voice and Speech, 2012), 232–233.
32. Personal lesson observations.
33. Blades, 221.
34. Barbara Doscher, "Teaching Singing," 63–64.
35. Personal lesson observations.
36. Blades, 57.
37. Ibid., 111.
38. Personal conversations with Barbara Doscher and Ingo Titze (undated).
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42. Personal lesson observations.
43. Ibid.
44. Donald Kaasch, letter to the University of Colorado Women's Club (February 27, 1996).
45. Christina Lynn-Craig, letter to the University of Colorado Women's Club (March 3, 1996).

46. Cynthia Lawrence, letter to the University of Colorado Women's Club (March 1, 1996).

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