Physical Touch in the Voice Studio: A Closer Look

Maria Maxfield

Maria Maxfield

Physical touch as a teaching methodology for voice teachers is a subject that must be confronted. The issue is a timely one considering recent social movements that are shedding light on systems of power that lead to abusive practices within society. Furthermore, there is a lack of information and consensus in recently published vocal pedagogy and music education literature regarding the effectiveness of physical touch as a teaching modality. Some voice teachers feel physical touch is necessary for quickly correcting a technical problem, while others feel that physical touch is the only way to demonstrate certain technical concepts. Currently, voice pedagogy literature that advocates for the use of physical touch in a private voice lesson is predominately supported anecdotally rather than by research, and significantly lacks the perspective of the student. The field of motor learning research can be useful in informing voice pedagogy in specific areas of intersection. Additionally, when considering other factors (such as trauma and power dynamics in the voice studio), other equally viable teaching options must be considered. Given the current state of the field of voice pedagogy, it is of the opinion of the author that physical touch as a pedagogical technique in a voice lesson should be abandoned.

There are many perspectives on the use of physical touch (also called *instructional touch, physical guidance,* or *physical manipulation*) in the private voice studio, as well as why voice teachers may utilize it. However, the topic of physical touch as a pedagogical tool is underrepresented in both voice pedagogy and music education research and literature, and when it is addressed, often demonstrates the sensitivity of the subject and highlights the need for research on its efficacy.[1] Music education professors Melissa Bremmer and Luc Nijs note the dilemma on the current state of research on physical touch and bodily based engagement for voice pedagogy and music education.

> Instrumental and vocal teachers often employ their body in teaching to facilitate sensorimotor engagement with the voice or an instrument. Yet, teacher's bodily engagement in instrumental and vocal education is scarcely addressed in music educational research studies. In our view, this scarcity is related to the lack of a framework about the role of the music teacher's body in instrumental and vocal education . . . research studies are only just starting to investigate whether or not a bodily-based pedagogy is more effective for teaching certain musical concepts and skills in comparison to language.[2]

While general music education literature regarding physical touch is helpful, the voice as an instrument deserves special attention considering it remains housed within the body. Evidence-based research and qualitative studies on the use of physical touch for voice pedagogy needs further research, most especially from the perspective of the student.[3] Furthermore, some of the

Journal of Singing, November/December 2023
Volume 80, No. 2, pp. 201–208
https://doi.org/10.53830/LECU5371

most recent and prominent voice pedagogy textbooks do not engage with the subject, even when it would be necessary and pertinent to their argument. This large gap in voice pedagogy literature concerning physical touch, contrasted with its prevalence—not to mention whether it is effective or not—is striking, considering many singers have personal experience with receiving physical touch in a voice lesson. To better understand how physical touch in the voice studio may impact learning, it is helpful to draw from motor learning literature and other movement based literature in which physical guidance has undergone more research, for example, in athletic training and physical therapy.[4] This subject is timely considering current social movements surrounding unwanted and abusive physical touch coming to the forefront of the public eye as well as recently published articles addressing physical touch in the voice studio.[5] This article will explore current pedagogical perspectives on the positive effectiveness of physical touch and its application in the voice studio, the ways in which physical touch may be harmful or unnecessary, and alternative methods to physical touch when teaching a voice lesson.

POSITIVE CONSEQUENCES OF PEDAGOGICAL PHYSICAL TOUCH

Physical touch, instructional touch, or physical guidance within music education is defined by Bremmer and Nijs as

> . . . teaching strategies of literally manipulating the learner's body, used to direct their attention to a new movement, a different posture, unnecessary tension in the body, or to achieve certain intended sound qualities . . . In general, teachers' touch goes through their hands, and it might be continuous (e.g., lasting for a few seconds) or discrete.[6]

Considering that voice teachers have had the experience of being a voice student before becoming teachers themselves, and given the lack of evidence-based literature on the efficacy of touch within voice pedagogy, it seems plausible to surmise that the use of physical touch as a teaching tool is due to a scaffolding model in which one teaches how one was taught. In their case study and article on touch as it relates to singers and actors, voice coach Holly Thuma and Alexander Technique instructor Kathryn Miranda refer to this scaffolding model directly: "Most voice teachers know that touch is effective in teaching. How do we know? As teachers, we see and hear its results in our students, and many have personally experienced tremendous benefit from the touch of a skillful teacher."[7]

Voice teachers may also feel it is difficult to teach certain physiological concepts without the use of physical touch.[8] Instrumentalists have a tangible instrument that they can see and interact with physically, but singers are tasked with the difficult skill of feeling and intuiting their instrument in their own bodies. For this reason, voice teachers may believe that physical touch is useful to quickly guide a student's attention to specific areas of the body that need correction. Bremmer and Nijs describe that this kind of physical touch is implemented in order to:

> provide learners with a "felt-difference" which they can use to adjust their motor-actions, thereby potentially changing their future performances of singing or playing. When learners are taken through specific motions through touch, they attend to relevant information, adjust their movements, and, in this way start to develop effective, new musical actions.[9]

As noted by Thuma and Miranda, voice instructors perceive physical touch as one of the best options for correcting problematic physical behaviors in a timely manner and observed that "there are myriad and varied ways of releasing habitual and unnecessary tension. In our experience, the strategic, timely placement of an attentive hand can bring immediate and often dramatic results."[10] Musical theater professor Brian Kremer and acting director and professor Kim Shively advocate for physical touch in the voice studio for similar reasons.[11] They refer to several benefits to using physical touch in an instructional way: making quick adjustments that target a specific area, identifying problems physically that may be missed through solely visual or audible assessment, and "fast tracking" the understanding of the student.[12]

Another example of the positive benefits of physical touch is seen in the Alexander Technique.[13] Physical touch is a main modality used in the Alexander Technique, which is a movement technique popular with performers, singers, and instrumentalists. The Alexander Technique brings awareness to the body of the learner

through the utilization of physical touch by drawing attention to points of unnecessary negative tension and stress in the body.[14] F. M. Alexander (1869–1955), the founder of the Alexander Technique, observed that the awareness of incorrect alignment and negative tension in his body was placing limitations on his vocal range, breath, and resonance.[15] These are similar reasons as to why voice teachers employ physical touch, either to gauge how much negative tension is being used, or to help relieve negative tension by drawing attention to it.[16] As it relates to this article, it should be noted that Alexander made these physical self-discoveries on his own, before he developed his famous technique that he brought to others. This demonstrates the body's ability to self-correct and improve negative postures without the use of physical manipulation by another person.

NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES OF PEDAGOGICAL PHYSICAL TOUCH

While some voice teachers feel that physical touch may speed up the improvement or self-discovery from the learner, motor learning literature has shown that a quick correction using physical guidance, while serving the teacher, may inhibit learning in the student.[17] Motor learning research scientists Yamaguchi et. al, found that correction with physical guidance limited immediate error, but did not contribute well to learning overall, because the learner was guided to correct before they could first learn themselves what was causing the mistake.[18] This finding is noteworthy because one of the main arguments for physical touch as a learning tool is its ease as a technique for immediately correcting problems. If the goal of the teacher is to aid the student in learning, the evidence shows that this practice actually may inhibit learning.[19] Similarly, this touches on the concept of "desirable difficulties" promoted by cognitive psychologist Robert A. Bjork, which is the idea that the difficulty of working through a task actually promotes learning.[20] Author and voice teacher Lynn Helding connects this to learning in music education.

> In effect, teachers are in charge of creating an obstacle course of desirable difficulties because obstacles must form the foundation of any viable teaching method—that is, if the goal is deep learning that adheres over time and not simply improved short-term performance. The latter is the downside of positive performance shifts; positive does not always mean good. In fact, it can even be claimed that withholding desirable difficulties can actually damage learning.[21]

Essentially, we now know that a quick correction using physical guidance to see positive results in the short term may damage learning in the long term.[22]

Culture and Religion

Cultural, religious, and social differences regarding physical touch are wide-ranging and complex, and the expectations surrounding the use of touch varies widely.[23] Those from areas of the world where frequent physical touch is commonplace (like kissing the cheeks when greeting and saying goodbye), would be shocking to individuals from cultural areas of the world that do not physically touch when greeting. Cultural touch can also impact people when considering their individual family dynamics; one person might expect touch as a way of connecting, while another did not practice this kind of touching. For those from orthodox or conservative religions, physical touch between genders may be extremely limited and not something done publicly. Neuro-diverse learners or differently abled individuals may also have very specific and individual needs regarding physical touch in their learning environment. As physical touch translates to an academic setting, it is vital to consider these variables. When a private voice lesson is happening, behind closed doors and between two people, the expectations around physical touch will be vastly different and impossible to predict on a case-by-case basis.

The #MeToo Movement

The rise of the #MeToo movement in 2017 has played a significant role in opening the space for a national conversation on the prevalence of unwanted touch and inappropriate sexual misconduct and harassment. The #MeToo movement is a social justice movement that used social media as a platform for women to tell their personal stories about both non-consensual touch as well as sexual abuse and harassment. Laurie Hillstrom offers statistical data to validate the movement.

> Research confirmed the anecdotal evidence offered by the #MeToo social media campaign. A 2018 survey by the

> nonprofit organization Stop Street Harassment found that 81 percent of women in the United States had experienced some form of sexual harassment, ranging from whistles and catcalls to leering, stalking, groping, and sexual assault. More than half of women reported being touched in a sexual manner without their permission, while 27 percent reported being victims of sexual assault. Two-thirds of women experienced sexual harassment in public spaces, and 38 percent experienced it in the workplace. Only 10 percent of women reported the harassment to an authority figure, while less than 1 percent confronted the perpetrator. Instead, most women responded to sexual harassment by making changes in their own lives and daily routines, such as quitting a job, stopping an activity, switching schools, or moving to a new residence.[24]

These are significant statistics, therefore the issue of unwanted or inappropriate touch is not one to be taken lightly. Furthermore, when people do stand up for themselves, their reactions should not be pushed aside or treated as overreactions. In the literature review on the use of physical touch in music education by Abigail McHugh-Grifa, music educators ranged on opinions over the usefulness of touch, but at the very least what was clear was a consistency in changing policy out of a fear of retribution or legal action from miscommunicated touch in the learning environment.[25] Thuma and Miranda's interview of associate professor and head of acting at the University of Tennessee, Jed Diamond, sheds further insight on the subject.

> Jed Diamond . . . believes that institutions are in a period of intense change regarding hands-on work with students, and some overreacting to complaints is probably occurring. However, he feels that this is inevitable and in fact, necessary and positive, given the history of underreacting to all complaints for so very long.[26]

Similarly, an interview with educator Tom Pacio at Vassar College highlights this issue further.

> As a man, he (Tom Pacio) is very aware of the risk of misunderstanding and the risk of crossing lines that haven't been fully articulated. Consequently, he uses touch sparingly in his classes. He believes this is a positive and necessary change and, "it's certainly better than back in the day, when they could walk by and grab you in any way, and any time they felt like it."[27]

Comments and reactions like these are familiar to voice teachers who have worked to understand their own studio policies surrounding the use of physical touch in the wake of these events.

While taking into account the fear of miscommunication and the possibility of litigation in the voice studio, this should not be the main motivator for eliminating touch from a voice lesson. A final cohort that must be considered regarding physical touch in the voice studio are those individuals who have experienced trauma.

Trauma: Prevalence and Effects

Trauma affects individuals in many different ways, impacting victims of sexual assault and harassment, those who experienced neglect or abuse as children, LGBTQ individuals, victims of combat or war zones, or those involved in high-risk careers, like first responders. The Adverse Childhood Experiences study (ACEs) conducted by Kaiser Permanente in the 1990s with over 17,000 participants, was the first major study to show how pervasive and prevalent trauma is in our society.[28] It resulted in numerous papers from the findings, and it was found that the higher number of ACEs resulted in higher instances and risk factors for health problems as adults. Of the adult participants in Kaiser's study, seventy percent reported at least one traumatic experience before the age of eighteen with almost fifty percent reporting one to three traumatic events.[29] The understanding of trauma from the ACE's study paved the way for further research into studying trauma in the entire population. Subsequently, we now understand that individuals from marginalized groups who experience discrimination (like the LGBTQ community, the BIPOC community, women, and those living in poverty) are at risk for higher instances of trauma.[30] It cannot be overstated: the prevalence of trauma in the general population is significant, with at least half of all adults within the United States having experienced at least one type of major trauma. As psychologists and authors Briere and Scott explain, were psychological trauma to be integrated into these numbers, they would likely be even higher than this, statistically.[31]

It is well documented that trauma manifests itself physiologically in the body.[32] Voice students with trauma in their background may be dealing with the physiological manifestations of that trauma, and subsequently the physiological manifestations of that trauma as it affects their vocal mechanism.[33] This may also impede their

ability to give consent to be physically touched if it is asked for in a voice lesson. Voice and trauma researcher Meghan Durham notes how the physiological manifestations of trauma, like numbing or freezing, are likely to be present in a voice student who has experienced trauma.[34] Utilizing physical touch with a student who is experiencing the effects of trauma may contribute to re-traumatization and impact their growth and vocal goals negatively. Considering the prevalence and impact of trauma alone, it would be advisable, at the very least, to reconsider touch all together.

PHYSICAL TOUCH AND POWER DYNAMICS

As noted above, increasing litigation and the global conversation surrounding #MeToo has created a common practice of asking students for their permission before touching them.[35] Given the rise of the #MeToo movement and the potential for harm that can come from miscommunicated touch or problematic touch, it is now possible to find university programs and private voice teachers who are making specific statements on the use of physical touch and acknowledging the necessity for consent when doing so.[36] Northwestern University is an example of a university music program that has issued a public statement addressing the asking of consent between instructor and student.

> If the pedagogical need for physical contact arises, the teacher will first ask permission to touch the student. The teacher will explain beforehand exactly what will be done and why. That way the student can understand the actions being proposed and have the opportunity to grant permission.[37]

The implementation of consent based practices in the voice studio demonstrates an acknowledgment that miscommunication and unintentional harm may be possible despite the good intentions or policies of the teacher. Considering this, it is important to observe what it means, at the most basic level, for a voice teacher to even ask a student for permission to touch them.

No matter how consent is asked for, asking for consent does not eliminate the power dynamics between an authority figure and their student, in a private space, and usually behind closed doors.[38] Durham points out that the nature of studio teaching is based on a master/apprentice binary, demonstrating that the very methodology of touch between these two people is rooted in the overt power that the teacher has over their student.[39] In this master/apprentice binary, a student cannot communicate true consent to the person who is in a position of power over them.

Thuma and Miranda also note that the repeated asking of permission, even if well meaning, may hinder the student teacher relationship. At the very least, this may create an annoyance from the student or damage trust, and at worst contribute to anxiety and defensiveness, potentially activating a trauma response within the student.[40] Voice teachers should have access to other pedagogical solutions in place of physical touch. Just because a teacher feels that touch is helpful does not mean that it is actually helpful to the student. This is especially true in an occupation in which voice teachers are not certified or trained to use their hands in working with the body, as would obviously be the case in a physical therapy or other bodily based practice that requires certification.

EMBODIED LEARNING WITHOUT PHYSICAL TOUCH

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, voice lessons had to be conducted virtually, and many teachers found themselves tasked with figuring out how to teach bodily awareness to their students without the familiar practice of physical touch.[41] A study on virtual clarinet lessons during the COVID-19 pandemic directly confronted this dilemma, and the findings yielded positive results; students in the study were able to learn technical elements of clarinet playing that incorporated embodied learning, despite students and instructors being separated.[42] The study used a combination of "verbal, visual, and bodily modalities" to help students gain bodily awareness, technique, and creativity in improvisation and expression.[43] Teachers used verbal descriptions, videos, visual images, as well as demonstrations using their own bodies to guide students' hands for placement on their own bodies.[44] While this example is from remote clarinet lessons, it inspires non-touch methodologies when communicating voice pedagogy. It invites the teacher to move beyond fear or familiarity regarding the use of physical touch, to pondering if there are better and more successful ways to engage with students than physical touch.

Durham offers an in-depth guide for how to direct students to have better proprioception, interoception and exteroception without the use of physical touch to do so.[45]

> One way to practice conscious "embodiment" is through developing awareness of *exteroception,* what is happening outside my body (e.g., I feel my feet on the ground, I see the wall, etc.), *proprioception,* where is my body in space (e.g., without looking, I sense my hand moving to touch my nose), and *interoception,* how do I feel internally (e.g., I feel hungry/tired/vibration/breath/other internal sensations). Voice work is highly internally focused. Teachers frequently ask: "How does this feel? What are your sensations?" Cultivating interoception is a critical component for sound building.[46] *[Italics added]*

Helping students to learn from their own bodies is an essential skill for teachers to acquire. Whether a voice teacher feels physical touch is important in the voice studio or not, surely all can agree that cultivating a deeper physical awareness in students helps them to assess themselves better when they are on their own during practice and performance. Voice teacher Kari Ragan does not discuss the issue of physical touch between teacher and student; rather, she teaches students to find better bodily awareness by offering kinesthetic singing tools in both voice lessons and practice, like large exercise balls, small yoga balls, exercise bands, or even a wall.[47] These tools offer ways for singers to access awareness of their bodies without the use of touch by the teacher.

CONCLUSION

Physical touch is an extremely helpful and necessary practice in many situations; nevertheless, physical touch in a private voice lesson, behind closed doors and with limited supportive research on its effectiveness, is a practice that should be abandoned. Teachers who support physical touch in the voice studio likely feel it is a necessary and helpful tool for quickly correcting negative tension by drawing the student's attention to a behavior or problem in their technique. However, research from motor learning shows that these practices impede long term learning. Further research on physical touch in the voice studio is needed, and specifically, studies that center the student's perspective and experience. Additionally, vital to this discussion is understanding the power dynamics inherent between the teacher and the student, in a private lesson behind closed doors. These power dynamics are present despite the good intentions, policies, or communications from the teacher; therefore, consent from a student in a private voice lesson is not possible when they are placed in this unequal position. While avoiding the risk of unintentional harm and potential litigation is a valid reason for reconsidering physical touch in the voice studio, even more important is understanding the prevalence of trauma in our society, the rates at which the population experiences trauma and how that trauma may be impacting the vocal mechanism. Considering all of these variables, it is the considered opinion of this author that voice teachers should abandon the use of physical touch altogether, given the risks that come from incorporating physical touch, the lack of evidence-based research that supports it, and considering the equally viable pedagogical tools that are available.

NOTES

1. See: Melissa Bremmer and Luc Nijs, "The Role of the Body in Instrumental and Vocal Music Pedagogy: A Dynamical Systems Theory Perspective on the Music Teacher's Bodily Engagement in Teaching and Learning," *Frontiers in Education* 5 (2020), https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2020.00079; Abigail McHugh-Grifa, "The use of physical touch to facilitate learning in music education, *Visions of Research in Music Education*, 18, no. 1 (2011): 6. Retrieved from http://www-usr.rider.edu/~vrme/v18n1/visions/McHughGrifa; Zorzal, Ricieri, and Oswaldo Lorenzo, "Teacher–Student Physical Contact as an Approach for Teaching Guitar in the Master Class Context," *Psychology of Music* 47, no. 1 (2017): 69–82. https://doi.org/10.1177/0305735617737154; Schiavio, Andrea, and Luc Nijs. "Implementation of a Remote Instrumental Music Course Focused on Creativity, Interaction, and Bodily Movement. Preliminary Insights and Thematic Analysis." *Frontiers in Psychology* 13 (2022). https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.899381; Lynn Helding, *The Musician's Mind: Teaching, Learning, and Performance in the Age of Brain Science*. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2020), 168; and Scott McCoy, *Your Voice: An Inside View*, 3rd Edition. (Inside View Press, 2019), 135–136.
2. Bremmer and Nijs, "The Role of the Body in Instrumental and Vocal Music Pedagogy." *Frontiers in Education* 5 (2020). https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2020.00079, 1,9.
3. McHugh-Grifa, "The use of physical touch to facilitate learning in music education."

4. Helding, *The Musician's Mind,* 168.
5. Kremer, Brian, and Kim Shively. "Conversations about Instructional Touch in the Voice Studio." *Journal of Singing* 79, no. 4 (2023): 469–75. https://doi.org/10.53830/drwk4901.
6. Bremmer, 6.
7. Thuma, Holly, and Kathryn Miranda. "Hands on/Hands off: Pedagogical Touch in the #Metoo Era." *Voice and Speech Review* 14, no. 2 (2019): 213–26. https://doi.org/10.1080/23268263.2020.1695396, 213.
8. McHugh-Grifa, 3.
9. Bremmer, 5.
10. Ibid., 217.
11. Kremer, 469.
12. Kremer, 470.
13. Thuma, 217.
14. McHugh-Grifa, 11.
15. Thuma, 217.
16. Bremmer, 6.
17. Yamaguchi, Kazuto, Kazunori Akizuki, Ryohei Yamamoto, Jun Yabuki, and Yukari Ohashi. "How Does Physical Guidance Affect Motor Learning and Learner's Workload?" *Journal of Physical Therapy Science* 32, no. 10 (2020): 621–25. https://doi.org/10.1589/jpts.32.621.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid., 625.
20. Helding, 138.
21. Ibid., 138.
22. Ibid., 138.
23. Bremmer, 5., Thuma, 219.
24. Hillstrom, Laurie Collier. "Overview of the #MeToo Movement." Essay. In *The #MeToo Movement*, 1–149. ABC-CLIO, (2019), 2.
25. McHugh-Grifa, 2–4.
26. Thuma, 221.
27. Thuma, 220; Note: It is essential within our current political climate to highlight the familiarity of this quote to that of former President Donald Trump's remarks from the leaked "Access Hollywood" tape from 2016; see "Trump: You can do anything. . . . Grab 'em by the [genitals]. You can do anything"; Bullock, Penn, ed. "Transcript: Donald Trump's Taped Comments about Women." *New York Times*, October 8, 2016. https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/08/us/donald-trump-tape-transcript.html.
28. National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Division of Violence Prevention. "Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES)." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, April 2, 2021. https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces/index.html; Felitti, Vincent J., Anda, Robert F., Nordenberg, Dale, Williamson, David F., Spitz, Allison M., Edwards, Valerie, Koss, Mary P., & Marks, James S. "The Relationship of Adult Health Status to Childhood Abuse and Household Dysfunction." *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* 14, Issue 4 (1998): 245–258.
29. National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Division of Violence Prevention,"Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES)."
30. Briere, John, and Catherine Scott, *Principles of Trauma Therapy: A Guide to Symptoms, Evaluation, and Treatment. DSM-5 Update*. Sage, 2014, ch 2.
31. Ibid., 10.
32. Monti, Elisa, "Trauma in Voice" in *Psychology of Voice Disorders*. Rosen, Deborah Caputo, Johnathan B. Sataloff, and Robert Thayer Sataloff (San Diego: Plural Publishing, 2021), 228.
33. Ibid., 234.
34. Durham, Megan. "Singing in Co-Harmony: An Introduction to Trauma Informed Voice Care." *Journal of Singing* 79, no. 3 (2023): 369–78. https://doi.org/10.53830/srly6068, 374.
35. Thuma, 214; McHugh-Grifa, 3; Durham, 373.
36. Pace, Chelsea. "Theatrical Intimacy and Instructional Touch Policy." UMBC, August 26, 2019. https://theatre.umbc.edu/current-students/theatrical-intimacy-and-instructional-touch-policy/; "Theatrical Intimacy Policy." Theatrical Intimacy Policy | Department of Theatrical Arts for Stage & Screen | Utah Valley University. Accessed April 30, 2023. https://www.uvu.edu/theatre/students/intimacy-policy.html; "Department of Dance." Department of Dance | College of Liberal Arts & Sciences | The University of Iowa. Accessed April 30, 2023. https://dance.uiowa.edu/; Penner, Sara Bickweat. "Theatrical Intimacy and Instructional Touch Policy," 2019. https://www.sas.rochester.edu/theatre/assets/downloads/admin-resources/theatrical-intimacy-and-instructional-touch-policy.f22.pdf.
37. "Statement Concerning Faculty/Student Music Activities Protocol." Northwestern Bienen School of Music. Accessed April 29, 2023. https://www.music.northwestern.edu/resources/students/undergraduate/music-activities-protocol.
38. Helding, 168.
39. Durham, 374.
40. Thuma, 214.
41. Schiavio, Andrea, and Luc Nijs, "Implementation of a Remote Instrumental Music Course Focused on Creativity,

Interaction, and Bodily Movement. Preliminary Insights and Thematic Analysis." 1.

42. Ibid., 4.
43. Ibid., 5
44. Ibid.
45. Proprioception is awareness of the body's movement. Interoception is awareness of how the body feels on the inside. Exteroception is awareness of the environment surrounding the body.
46. Durham, 376.
47. Kari Ragan. *A Systematic Approach to Voice: The Art of Studio Application* (San Diego: Plural Publishing, 2020), 28–29, 62.

Soprano and Voice Instructor **Maria Stacey Maxfield** recently completed her Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of Southern California with an emphasis in Vocology, Vocal Arts and Opera Directing. Her academic work focuses on trauma and the voice and implementing a trauma informed voice pedagogy in the studio. As a professional soprano, Maxfield has performed as a supplemental ensemble member with The Metropolitan Opera since 2018 and was most recently seen in the Met's new production of Wagner's *Lohengrin*. Maxfield is passionate about new works and recently premiered a leading role in The American Opera Project's *Letters You Will Not Get* by Kirsten Volness, a new opera about the stories of women during World War I. Professional operatic highlights include Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* with Opera Colorado, Monica in *The Medium* with Opera Memphis, and Frasquita in *Carmen* with Opera Omaha. She was a participant of the Santa Fe Opera, Ravinia Music Festival and Opera Theatre of St. Louis young artist programs. Maxfield maintains a sought-after private voice studio both in New York City and virtually. She has completed her certification as a CONSENT-FORWARD ARTIST with the Intimacy Directors and Coordinators organization.