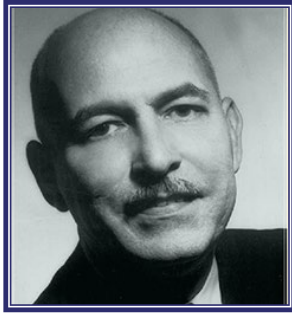


# NATIONAL ASSOCIATION *of* TEACHERS *of* SINGING



## WILLIAM VENNARD

### THE WILLIAM VENNARD FUND

PROVIDES FUNDING FOR THE NATS ARTIST AWARDS

"If ever one man embodied all that is best in our profession and in our organization, he was that man." – Karl Trump, NATS President, 1970 – 1972

William Vennard was a past president of NATS and a pioneer in science-informed voice teaching. Vennard was chair of the voice department at the University of Southern California from 1950 – 1971, during which time he forged connections between singers and voice scientists. Two important achievements were his authoritative text, *Singing, the Mechanism and the Technique*, first published in 1949 and his 1960 award-winning film *Voice Production: The Vibrating Larynx*, made at the University of Groningen, the Netherlands, in collaboration with Janwillen van den Berg, the Dutch speech scientist and medical physicist who played a major role in establishing the myoelastic-aerodynamic theory of voice production.

Vennard was not a trained scientist, but he devoted his career to researching the human voice and its use in singing. His growth from trained singer to teacher to scholar was led by a desire to understand the vocal mechanism from a scientific point of view. The *William Vennard Collection*, which consists of his personal lesson notes, books, and images taken by Vennard in preparation for his film was donated to the USC music library in 2018 by Thomas Cleveland, Director of Vocology at the Vanderbilt Voice Center and former Vennard student.

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia "Vennard was a famous American vocal pedagogist who devoted his life to researching the human voice and its use in singing. He was one of the driving forces behind a major shift within the field of vocal pedagogy during the middle of the 20th century. Along with a few other American singing teachers, such as Ralph Appelman at Indiana University, Vennard introduced contemporary scientific research in the areas of human anatomy and physiology into the study of singing. This shift in approach led to the rejection of many of the beliefs and practices held since the bel canto era, most particularly in the areas of vocal registration and vocal resonance. Vennard was renowned as an excellent teacher whose written works have influenced generations of singers, vocal pedagogues and voice scientists. He taught many successful singers including

acclaimed mezzo-soprano Marilyn Horne, who studied under him at the University of Southern California.

Vennard studied English at Taylor University in Upland, Indiana graduating with a bachelor's degree in 1930. He became interested in music and decided to pursue a career as an opera singer. He studied at Northwestern University earning a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance in 1941, followed by graduate studies at the American Conservatory of Music in Chicago, where he earned a master's degree in Vocal Performance in 1943. Vennard spent the next several years teaching part-time simultaneously at the Chicago Evangelistic Institute, DePaul University and the American Conservatory. In 1946 he became a member of the faculty of music at the University of Southern California, chairing its voice department from 1950 – 1971. In 1970 he was awarded an honorary doctorate from Pepperdine University in recognition of his outstanding contributions to singing and the science of singing.

As a singer, Vennard was active in opera, oratorio and solo song; as a teacher of singing, many of his students achieved worldwide success." In addition to serving NATS as President from 1964 – 1966, Vennard was chair of the Research Committee.

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