

Chapter 1 : Singing in the Etheric Tone : Hilda Deighton :

Singing and the Etheric Tone introduces a practical, joyful approach to singing that draws its strength and inspiration from Gracia Ricardo's work with Rudolf Steiner. Chapter 1 deals with the tone, the onset of the tone, the humming approach, and the relations between vowels, consonants, words, and phrases.

Fortunately, some well known academics have researched and written up this question e. Having said this, like much research it remains hidden away behind the doors of academia and struggles to find its way into classroom practice. Laryngeal dimensions increase slowly and steadily in size and firmness throughout childhood. Likewise, the vocal folds increase their total length by about 6. Consequently, only by age 10 are the vocal ligament and mucosal tissues considerably developed. In the same vein, the vocal tract " which extends from the true vocal folds to the exterior surfaces of the lips " is also very short in early childhood. Until the age of 2 years the tongue lies entirely in the oral cavity, and then its base begins the gradual descent into the pharynx, so that by the age of 4, the posterior one third of the tongue is located in the pharynx. Only by age 5 is the basic adult configuration of the vocal tract present, but of course this does not mean it has reached its full size. Only by age 9 will the curved contour of the vocal tract be comparable with that of an adult, but even then it still remains shorter and smaller. Sound waves that are emitted from the vocal folds pass through a series of linked containers or resonators and each contains its own timbre and sound quality. In fact each different sized resonator has different frequencies and amplifies particular overtones that are emitted from the vocal folds. In short, it is easy to assume that children sing in the same range as most non-specialist adult singers. Of course, when young children do not have good models to imitate you will hear how their pitch range is similar to that of an adult, namely, it is often found to be lower. In this connection it is important to recognise how the type of voice use " or timbre " needed to match the inner qualities of pentatonic music is just as significant as the pitches and rhythms of pentatonic music. What you will hear are some of the following: So what does all this mean for the practicing teacher? Firstly, we need to be aware that the teacher tends to inwardly hear and recognise only the timbre of their own particular voice type. Thus we need to teach ourselves to hear other textures and colours of the voice outside the parameters determined by our own experiences. Secondly, we typically provide child-sized equipment for children and adjust tasks to their physical capabilities. Surely, therefore, this should also apply to singing? Moreover, such physical voicing represents the polar opposite to the open, labile, floating quality of pentatonic music in the mood of the fifth. In addition, the teacher needs to be able to model the following vocal qualities: Lots of breath movement, good line and a strong sense of phrasing Open throatedness Legato articulation Clear resonant vowels Good use of the self namely, a well balanced use of the body so that unnecessary movements " e. This means that just as a cat or a dog responds to frequency bands that we do not hear, so a child in their early years hears overtones more clearly than we do as adults. Higher frequencies and overtones also play a big part in helping children focus the muscles of their middle ear. But what we find today is that the mechanisms involved in this focussing must be intact or it is difficult for children to match the pitch they are hearing with appropriate movements of the vocal folds. Thus Tomatis expressed great concern about the growing influence of electronic bass guitars " to this the author would also add the use of walkmans and ipods, etc. In addition, the tendency for adults to sing using pharyngeal resonance also leads to a tonal spectrum lacking in higher harmonics. This phenomenon is often the result of the damage done by the media they are using to listen to music. It is also important to become aware of how SMILING when singing can influence hearing acuity because of the way the risorius muscle reaches out from underneath the lips on its way to the ears and actually stimulates the hearing process because of the stretch it receives in smiling. This crucial insight comes from the work of Alfred Tomatis. What we hear from the children voices is almost an echo of our own voice as if we were calling into a cave and hearing the echo come back. Indeed, I have frequently found that when children imitate poor adult models you can often set up vocal habits that can block their voices for the rest of their lives. How does this happen? Via the mediation of the eustachian tubes the larynx speaks to the ear and the ear speaks to the larynx. Whilst in one way you can say that the ear and the larynx are two individual organs, they

also work very closely together. Thus it is important to look upon them as a unity. Because the ear and the larynx are not each enclosed within themselves like the eye, what enters through the ear influences the larynx and visa versa. Summing this up, Dr. Eugene Kolisko " who worked with Mrs. This is also one of the reasons young children can learn languages so much quicker in their early years. In other words, what the child hears is inwardly accompanied sympathetically by their larynx. In short, the other person sings in me which brings with it a sense of the social and moral responsibility we bear in this realm. With these thoughts in mind, it is now possible to explore the crucial importance of the vocal model the teacher provides for children to imitate. This can be hard for adults to understand because we hear in a completely opposite way, namely we focus on the pitch, not the timbre. In short, the pitch the teacher is offering can be obscured by many obstacles. The pharynx is the resonator that rises up from the level of the vocal folds to behind the eyes and is divided in vocal anatomy into the laryngeal pharynx, the oro pharynx and the nasal pharynx. Thus poor tone quality on the part of the person teaching a melody often causes pitch inaccuracy. Consequently, the best advice I can offer for the male teacher " is to sing with light, forward, bright resonance, etc. Children also need to sense their teacher is working on their own voice and how this is part of their self-development. In my experience, teachers working on their own voices find how it can be a source of regeneration and health in their lives. Today, you can see how children are taught singing according to the idea that letting them just sing naturally is the right methodology. Of course, babies do sing correctly, so correctly, in fact, that adults should learn from them. The answer to this is by providing the child with a wonderful culture of singing to imitate. But this means we must be a wonderful example to them with regard to singing in the first place. What constitutes unhealthy voice use in the pre-school environment? Above all the teacher needs to guard against the following unhealthy elements in singing: The use of pharyngeal resonance High shallow breathing Noisy intakes of breath which irritate the vocal folds, draw children away from the listening space, and cause shallow breathing Tongue retraction Vowels produced without the aid of the tongue and the lips N. Many teachers erroneously think vowels are created in the laryngeal throat region. Inflexible, monochrome dynamics Lack of breath flow through the phrase leading to syllabic note-by-note singing. If you hear vocal problems or sounds that you do not understand why or how they are occurring, then I suggest trying to make that sound yourself as an imitative process, because this will often suggest the solution to you. It can sound either very forced or very dull and cloudy. In particular, the qualities of AWE and WONDER are lacking in the world in which we live, although Waldorf Kindergartens, of course, work hard to make sure children can encounter these qualities in their early years. So it is exactly awe and wonder that the children need to experience in music and their singing. However, during the early years of the child by this I mean up to approximately the age of nine , it is important that we do not draw their attention strongly to their physical body in singing via exercises that are designed to work on specific elements of vocal anatomy. Nor should abstract technical exercises divorced from the context of a song be countenanced. Singing and the Etheric Body Mrs. To go into this is beyond the scope of this article. In addition, one needs to work with a Werbeck trained singing teacher on the appropriate exercises which need both regular practise and feedback. In this connection, Dr. A kind of pressing together, a blockage occurs: At this point it is important for me to say that I recognise that all singing should not be about the spirit nature of the human being. Of course, we should also have feeling-full singing, as well as embodied voices, allied to joy and fun. But I am making a plea for a deeper spiritual understanding of singing, as this is so absent in singing pedagogy. Thus we can speak about learning to sing with a voice that matches the qualities of pentatonic music in the mood of the fifth. In short, pentatonic music is not just about pitches and rhythms, it is about the voice quality. On the other hand, too early a use of the more inward intervals e. Centre for the Development of Music. He has lectured in universities, been head of music in a London comprehensive school, taught in Steiner Schools and given the plenary lecture at the renowned Oxford Conference in Education. For more information about Michael Deason-Barrow and Tonalis, click here. Tonalis offers courses from their home in Stroud, Gloucestershire, UK and around the world. Centre for the Development of Music Tonalis expresses a new concept of wholeness in music and offers you an opportunity to experience a unique and uplifting approach to music. Tonalis " which means to tone or to tune " was founded in on the conviction that a new vision of musicing is needed today for people searching for a deeper understanding and

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Chapter 3 : Hilda Deighton (Author of Singing and the Etheric Tone)

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