

HINTS ON SINGING

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9781760570040

Hints on Singing by Manuel Garcia

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MANUEL GARCIA

**HINTS ON
SINGING**



HINTS ON SINGING
BY MANUEL GARCIA

TRANSLATED FROM THE
FRENCH BY BEATA GARCIA



NEW & REVISED EDITION

Copyright, 1894,
By E. ASCHERBERG & CO.

Price 8/6 net

Ascherberg, Hopwood and Crew, Limited.
16 Marlimer St. London. W.

NEW YORK
E. SCHUBERTH & CO.

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

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This remarkable little work, first issued when Manuel Garcia was in his ninetieth year, has now been before the public for a period of seventeen years. It is perhaps the most concise and compact treatise on the Art of Singing yet given to the world, but in its original form (for which I was partly responsible) it has not proved entirely satisfactory, while the publishers have for some time been anxious to bring it out at a lower price.

Hence this "new and revised" edition, the preparation of which I have undertaken as a labour of love and endeavoured to carry out with due reverence for the wishes and intentions of the illustrious author. I have corrected a good many errors and supplied several omissions which constant use has brought to light. I have re-arranged some of the chapters, and here and there altered the grouping of the exercises so as to make them easier of comprehension. With the same object in view I have ventured to insert a number of explanatory notes and references, which I trust may be found useful both by teachers and students. Otherwise it is hardly necessary to add that no change has been made either in the text or the technical content of the book.

That its value was adequately appreciated during the life-time of its venerable author, there is some reason to doubt. True, it has become known in every part of the globe where singing is taught through the medium of the English tongue. Its terse, vigorous language and clearness of definition have been especially recognised in the United States, where the name of Manuel Garcia has been one to conjure with ever since the visits of his most famous pupil, Jenny Lind, some seventy years ago. But in this country it was only after he had attained his centenary (in 1905) that musical folk fully realized what a privilege it had been that the great teacher should have made London his home during the entire latter half of his extraordinarily long career.

It may be, therefore, that under these new conditions a much more extended sphere of usefulness and popularity will be opened up for what Manuel Garcia so modestly styled his "HINTS ON SINGING." As a matter of fact, the contents of this volume consists of a great deal more than mere "hints." Apart from being his last word on the subject, they embody all the profound knowledge, the penetrating observation, the rich experience, the logical deductions and conclusions of three-quarters of a century of active devotion to the study and practice of vocal science.

Let who may learn this "catechism," they cannot but feel that in doing so they come in some measure under the spell of Manuel Garcia's wonderful teaching power. They will certainly absorb from his *ipsissima verba* so much of his personal magnetism as can be derived through the medium of the printed page. And such influence is a legacy worth possessing, since it provides something more than a clue to that which he himself describes as very nearly, if not quite, a "lost art."

HERMANN KLEIN.

PREFACE.

SINCE the publication of "L'Art du Chant,"* the invention of the laryngoscope and fifty years of additional experience have naturally enabled me to acquire many fresh ideas, and also to clear up all my pre-existing doubts. The result of this I now offer to the public in as concise and clear a form as I have found possible.

The study of the physiology of the voice has been greatly facilitated by the use of the laryngoscope. This instrument, by laying bare the interior of the larynx, shows how the glottis proceeds to produce sounds and registers. It shows, also, the manner in which the ringing and veiled qualities are communicated to the voice. These qualities—produced by the glottis—are distinct from the characteristics of the voice called *timbres*, and are originated in the pharynx by quite another mechanism. All this should dispel many false ideas afloat on the question of voice production.

I introduce a few anatomical figures to facilitate my explanations. The study of the anatomy and physiology of the vocal organs is not indispensable to the pupil, but might be most useful to the teacher. It will enable him, when a defect is to be amended, to detect the organ which is at fault, and to suggest the proper correction.

* * * *Traité Complet de l'Art du Chant*, par Manuel Garcia. Paris: Brandus et Cie., 1840.

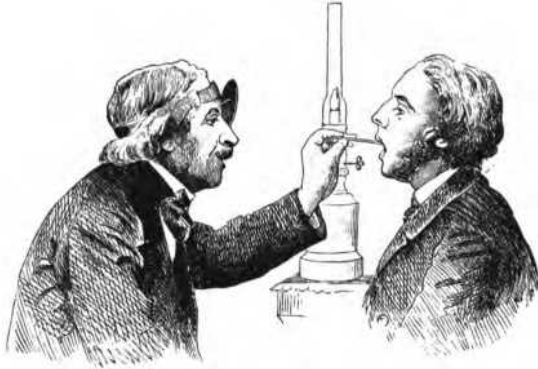
For the pupil it is enough that, localising his sensations through his master's explanations, he should learn to distinguish the various parts of his instrument and the manner of using them.

I have also added several exercises to give the pupil the opportunity of applying the precepts set forth. At the present day the acquirement of flexibility is not in great esteem, and were it not, perhaps, for the venerable Handel, declamatory music would reign alone. This is to be regretted, for not only must the art suffer, but also the young fresh voices, to which the brilliant florid style is the most congenial; the harder and more settled organs being best suited for declamation. It would not be difficult to trace the causes of the decline of the florid style. Let it suffice, however, to mention, as one of the most important, the disappearance of the race of great singers who, besides originating this art, carried it to its highest point of excellence. The impresario, influenced by the exigencies of the modern prima donna, has been constrained to offer less gifted and accomplished *virtuose* to the composer, who in turn has been compelled to simplify the *rôle* of the voice and to rely more and more upon orchestral effects. Thus, singing is becoming as much a lost art as the manufacture of Mandarin china or the varnish used by the old masters.

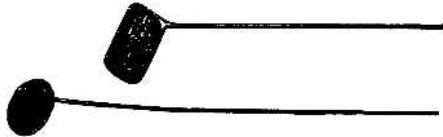
In adopting the form of question and answer, I have endeavoured to foresee the difficulties likely to occur to an earnest student. I subjoin a sketch of the laryngoscope to satisfy the curiosity of any student who may be interested in the subject. The laryngoscope consists of two mirrors. One of them, (very small,) is attached to the end of a long wire and placed against the uvula at the top of the pharynx, the reflecting surface turned downwards. It must be moderately heated that it may not be tarnished by the breath. The other mirror is employed to throw rays of light on the first. The form and disposition of the mirrors will be shown more clearly by the following illustrations than by any attempt at explanation* :—

*Observations on the Human Voice, by Manuel Garcia. Proceedings of the Royal Society of London, Vol. VII. Meeting of May 24th, 1855, p. 399 to 410.

PREFACE.



Laryngoscopic mirrors, half size :—



I wish to express my gratitude to DR. S. G. SHATTOCK for his great kindness in undertaking to make finished drawings from my rough sketches, and rectifying *con amore* any physiological or anatomical description that was not strictly technical. I have also to thank my old pupil, MR. HERMANN KLEIN, for his indefatigable patience and skill in preparing the MS. for the press and correcting the proofs.

MANUEL GARCIA.

CRICKLEWOOD,
LONDON, *October, 1894.*

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