

Singing through Change:
Classical Vocal Pedagogy for Testosterone HRT

Abstract

Trans voices are unique and often overlooked in Western classical vocal pedagogy as they can be difficult to teach and may not follow a traditional journey of vocal development. Although there is a wide and wonderful array of trans voices in music, this article guides music professionals through methods to approach, teach, and choose repertoire for a young adult voice developing through testosterone hormone replacement therapy. Testosterone hormone therapy is used to induce the physical body changes caused by male hormones during puberty in order to better promote gender identity and body congruence. Specifically regarding the voice, testosterone therapy will produce the same physical phenotypes as male puberty over a shortened window of time, including: increased vocal fold thickness, cartilage growth, cartilage tilt (the Adam's apple), and early cartilage ossification. These physical changes will result in a variety of phonation changes, including: general deepening of the voice over time, consistent hoarseness, weakness, cracking, a decrease in range or two separate ranges with missing pitches between, and even difficulty matching pitch. These changes are unique to testosterone hormone therapy and deserve a place in literature to be explored, developed, and understood, allowing us to expand Western pedagogy to a more diverse world of classical voice.

Introduction

Classical vocal pedagogy is built on the 300 year old structure of the Western Canon, and caters almost exclusively to white, heterosexual, cisgender, and male voice types and teaching styles. Because of the stagnancy of traditionalism, the realm of classical music is often slow to evolve. Regarding vocal pedagogy, this lack of evolution can be seen in major gaps in literature for “nontraditional” voices, such as the nearly 1.6 million people above the age of 13 who identify as transgender in the United States (Flores, 2022). Although trans people are by no means new, and ambiguous gender roles run rampant in the history of classical voice, there is almost no literature regarding trans voices.

At a time where Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT), puberty-blockers, and gender-affirming surgeries are becoming more commonplace and accessible, the lack of research on voices developing through these journeys is unacceptable, particularly in regards to the testosterone-treated voice. Voices undergoing testosterone HRT experience unique phonation changes, which must be embraced and explored in order to better be understood.

All voices deserve the opportunity to be heartily enjoyed and healthily developed, and most music education begins at an early age. Trans voices are singing in the local church choir, the high school musical, and along with the car radio, and one in five of those voices are between the age of 13-17 (Flores, 2022). Therefore, this research has been structured through the perspective of a high school choir director, in order to maintain accessibility and relevance, and is guided by this research question; if a student whose voice is developing through testosterone approached a teacher about how to sing with their new voice or what song they should sing for an all-state audition, how would they get started?

These research goals developed to answer that question. First, an informed background in the physical and phonation changes brought about by testosterone hormone replacement therapy would be necessary before teaching begins. Additionally, an accessible and understandable guide to approach the development of this voice type, including vocalizes, would be both beneficial and practical to structure potential exercises or lessons. Repertoire specific to the development of the voice type, as well as the skills to analyze other repertoire for its potential appropriateness, would not only give the student a place to start but to continue exploring their developing voice. To fill in gaps or further education, additional LGBTQ+ singing resources for teachers or students should be available.

Overview of Voice Type

Anatomical Overview

Testosterone hormone therapy modifies the hormone balance in the body to induce the physical body changes caused by male hormones during puberty, promoting gender identity and body congruence. During this hormone therapy, the patient receives the hormone testosterone which generates secondary sex characteristics and suppresses menstrual cycles by decreasing the production of estrogen. Gender-affirming hormone therapy can be done alone or may accompany gender-affirming surgeries.

The trajectory of hormone replacement therapy will vary by person, based on their goals and health. Some people may choose to start at a higher dose, while others may choose to begin at a low dose or continue to take the hormones over an extended period of time. HRT is not a one-size-fits-all journey, and development will be different, although some of the physical changes can be attributed to a general timeline.

Typically, a low dose is prescribed first before the dosage increases over a period of months, and can be taken as an injection, gel, patches, or pills. Within the first two to six months, HRT can stop menstruation. Facial and body hair can grow and body fat can begin to redistribute within the first three to six months, with a maximum of development after five years. Often, the fat will redistribute in the face, masculinizing the features and highlighting bone structure, although people in their late teens and early twenties may have subtle changes to actual bone structure (Deutsch, 2019). Muscle mass can increase within six to twelve months, with a maximum of development after five years. Voice deepening, due to a number of factors including vocal fold enlargement, occurs within the first three to twelve months, developing over a maximum of three to five years. Not everyone will experience a drop in voice or speaking pitch exclusively due to testosterone, and hoarseness and voice breaks are common throughout development (Mayo Clinic Staff, 2021).

Further regarding the vocal development, testosterone therapy will produce the same physical phenotypes as male puberty in an abbreviated window of time. Vocal folds will increase in thickness, but they will be restricted in length by the general size of the larynx (typically smaller in transmen than cismen). Cartilage will grow and tilt resulting in the Adam's apple, although prominence of the Adam's apple will vary from person to person. Testosterone will also cause early cartilage ossification which limits further laryngeal growth.

Development of Vocal Production

These physical changes will result in a variety of phonation changes. General deepening of the voice is common due to the increase in fold thickness, although development is often slow and may not always drop the pitch very low right away. Consistent hoarseness, weakness, cracking, a decrease in range or development of two separate ranges with missing pitches between, and even

difficulty matching pitch can be frequent while folds thicken, cartilage grows and ossifies, and the body adjusts to laryngeal changes. Although many of these changes may soften and stabilize over time, they can often be unpredictable and cause much turmoil to the singer, which will in turn affect the voice (Inselman, 2018).

Note on Binders:

Students who are undergoing hormone therapy, a gender transition, or gender fluidity may wear a binder. Binders are chest compression garments. Binders are notoriously uncomfortable and often have adverse effects on breathing and posture. It is important for you to find LGBTQ+ resources within your community, as if your student opts to bind their chest, it is best that they do it in a safe manner which will not cause them physical harm. Many LGBTQ+ organizations have resources for or access to free or cheaper binders, and although a purchased binder may still cause physical issues, it is much less harmful than the use of an Ace bandage, tape, or other materials. Binders are already quite tight, and using tighter materials will cause more harm. General adverse effects of binders can include: scarring, mobility issues, postural issues, fluid buildup in the lungs, respiratory problems, bruised and/or broken ribs, chafing, bleeding, redness, and more (Inselman, 2018). Binders often cause coughing, and in fact people are encouraged to cough after removing a binder in order to loosen muscles, release tension, and move fluid in the upper body caused by musculoskeletal tightness. In order to address the potential physical effects of binding on phonation, voice teachers are encouraged to increase time spent on and/or change their approaches to breathing exercises, stretching and movement, and potential shifts in alignment (laying on the floor/child's pose/hands and knees) if possible.

The following are examples of physical movement and breathing exercises to address and alleviate the adverse effects of binding:

Alignment Difficulty

In order to relieve pressure or tension build-up, it may help to use gravity to your advantage when addressing posture; having your student lay on the floor (variations include support under the head, legs raised on a bench or parallel to the wall), hold a relaxing stretch or yoga pose (child's pose, forward fold), or sing on their hands and knees with an aligned head and neck may help slowly release and relax muscles in the midsection and neck.

Stretching and Movement

In conjunction with the above alignment information, stretching and movement may help provide muscle relief. Yoga poses which provide a stretch to the shoulders, ribs, hips, and neck such as child's pose, thread the needle, and upper body and midsection twists may help the student better access breathing mechanisms. Movement and stretching focused warm ups, like arm circles, twists, and squats, may also help engage the midbody and breathing, but it is important to be gentle and slow, taking into consideration any possible harmful effects of

binders. Additionally, the use of self-massage and self-massage equipment (lacrosse ball, foam roller), could prove beneficial for tension in specific muscle areas.

Breathing Exercises

Because accessing breathing mechanisms may be difficult or painful due to chest compression garments, it is best to begin opening up the ribcage as slowly as possible using semi-occluded vocal tract (SOVT) and other gentle exercises. For example, the use of a straw to encourage low breathing can be incrementally controlled by both the student and the size of the straw. Using humming as well as affricate (“sh” or “dz”) and voiced consonants (“v,” “m,” or “ng”) can also help students analyze breath and phonation stamina and manage physical sensations within the restriction of a binder or other compression garment.

It is important not to push a student using a chest compression garment because of the potential harmful and permanent physical effects; as a voice professional, your primary role is to encourage progress in alignment and breathing patiently and safely.

Teaching the Transitioning Voice

Goal Setting

The first lesson or meeting is the first opportunity to discuss your approaches to learning together, as well as provide a moment to ask for the singer's name (which may be different from their legal name) and pronouns. It may help to introduce your teaching philosophy at this point, prior to diving into technical goal setting.

The first step to goal setting, vocally and holistically, is to understand what the student is looking to accomplish; while some students may truly be interested in the full extent classical voice, some may be attempting to develop lower range, maintain a previous standard, understand the falsetto, or simply explore and enjoy their new voice. They may be interested in operatic roles, adjusting to choral singing in a different voice part, or singing along to the car radio. They may have experience working with voice professionals before, during, and after their transition and progression of therapy. Check in. The context of singer history will inform your practice. Ask your student questions similar to the following;

- What are you looking to accomplish by working with me, or what goals do you have for our practice together?
- What intended sound or sounds are you trying to produce from these lessons?
- What music are you interested in singing and exploring?

As the voice teacher, you must also set goals. An example of possible goals is listed below.

- *Support*
 - This is a new journey for both of you as the voice develops. You are in it together, and you are a resource for an LGBTQ+ student and thus should familiarize yourself with other available resources for similar students from your community.
- *Consideration*
 - This is a difficult process, and emotions and understanding are affected by hormone replacement therapy (HRT). Take a step back and find a new approach when faced with mental and emotional blocks.
- *Comfort*
 - You want your student to get comfortable with themselves, their identities, preferences, body, and voice during this process. Provide a soft place to land throughout, and address any issues in the most holistic and kindest way possible.
- *Flexibility*
 - HRT will cause sudden and unexpected changes, causing a voice to sound different every day or even to change within a lesson. Bounce back and have a variety of ways to approach exercises and phonation.
- Education

- Educate yourself to the best of your ability. It is not your student's job to explain their identities to you, it is your job to accept them and learn about it on your own. Engage with community resources and trainings in order to better familiarize yourself with processes and terms.

Evaluation

To gain a general understanding of the singer's phonation, it could prove useful to perform a vocal evaluation. This evaluation can inform the teacher of various aspects of the voice with which to begin lessons, including observations of breath support, voice quality, range, volume, onsets, vibrato, and etc. This will also help the teacher analyze any potential obstacles or pathologies within the voice. Often, the transmasculine singer may push for lower pitches unhealthily, and create a muscle tension dysphonia (MTD) which could be reported as discomfort in low range production (Kozan, 2019, p. 287). Additionally, it is possible that transitioning singers may be uncomfortable accessing their high range, and may not want to explore it in evaluation, which should be taken into consideration. Because the transformation of the larynx under testosterone treatment is a variable process, this evaluation should be fluid, based on the daily circumstances and comfort of the student.

The following exercises target specific aspects of vocalization for evaluation:

- Uniformity and clarity of voice quality, pitch stability, volume, and vibrato:
 - Prolonged vowels voiced on any pitch, can be repeated on various pitches, at various levels of volume, and to be "straight tone" or "with vibrato"
- Breath support:
 - Using SOVT breathing exercises (use of a straw, voiced consonants, or hum), observations of body movement
- Glottal Efficiency/Onsets:
 - Comparing production between voiced and voiceless consonants, observing onsets on vowels produced
- Range:
 - Ascending or descending glissandi (slides across pitches) from various parts of the range (from low to mid, mid to high, low to high, and vice versa) noting where there is any change in quality

During the evaluation, it is important to remind the singer to sing softly, breathe whenever necessary, and to stop if there is discomfort. It is also useful to note that changes in vocal production happen daily not only due to transition but because of fatigue, hydration, illness, and other factors, and that whatever is accessible today is noteworthy and worthwhile

Warming Up and Cooling Down

Warming up before and cooling down after singing are important for creating and maintaining a high standard of vocal care. It is important to start warm-ups with an understanding of the singer's speaking voice prior to singing; if there are discrepancies in speech, these may translate to singing, and therefore speech should be addressed first. Simple exercises for speech rehabilitation can segue into singing work (Kozan, 2019, p. 301). Additionally, the same vocalizes used to warm-up can be applied to a cool-down, which can occur after singing but can also be encouraged after prolonged or loud periods of talking as well, to flush lactic acid and release heat from muscles around the larynx (Kozan, 2019, p. 301) and aid in recovery.

Repertoire Selection

The recommended repertoire section is organized by language (German, Italian, French, and English, with a subsection of musical theater selections) and is listed in increasing order of difficulty, including three analyzed examples in each level of difficulty and a list of further examples. The levels of difficulty are ranked by the following chart*:

| | |
|-----------|--|
| Beginning | Best suited for a student beginning their vocal journey with less experience with solo classical music |
| Medium | Best suited for a student with some experience singing classical repertoire, and/or with appropriate musical abilities |
| Advanced | Best suited for a student with good experience singing classical repertoire, and/or with appropriate musical abilities and/or serious desire and commitment to voice |

*It is important to note that the level of difficulty is not reflective of vocal ability or stage of HRT of the student, but rather the level of training the student has received. It is up to the discretion of the instructor and student to decide what is best suited for the individual voice (“ability” is subjective), and as such the analysis of pieces provides the scaffolding necessary to constructively inform that decision.

The pieces selected for analysis serve to display a method of examining the appropriateness of each piece; the table considers the style and genre, textual content, range, transposability, descriptive annotations, and possible challenges present, helping the teacher to deduce whether the piece is a good fit for a particular student at the time.

German Recommended Repertoire

Beginning: “Wiegenlied (Lullaby),” Brahms

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Style / Genre | Romantic / Art Song |
| Textual Content | Androgynous, religious |
| Range | Eb4-Eb5 |
| Transposability | Easy |
| Annotations | Jumps no larger than an octave, simple and followable melody, triadic, predictable, simple accompaniment |
| Challenges | Octave jumps, may sit in the passaggio (need for key adjustment) |

Medium: “Ich Liebe Dich,” Beethoven (*Zärtliche Liebe*)

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Style / Genre | Classical / Art Song |
| Textual Content | Androgynous, prayer/religious |
| Range | D4-F5 |
| Transposability | Easy |
| Annotations | Middle tessitura, textually heavy, lullaby-like quality, simple and contextually helpful accompaniment |
| Challenges | Movement up and down range could be limiting, leap (under an octave), diction |

Advanced: “Hokus pokus, Hexen,” Humperdinck (Hansel und Gretel)

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Style / Genre | Post-Romantic / Aria |
| Textual Content | Whimsical, malicious, androgynous (mezzo/contralto “Witch” role) |
| Range | Bb4-Gb5 |
| Transposability | Difficult |
| Annotations | Short aria, middle tessitura but many opportunities just below the staff, rare upper extension, unusual, chromatic, difficult |
| Challenges | Very chromatic and difficult, octave jumps and slides, many funky leaps, emphasis on D4 throughout |

Further Examples

1. Beginning - “Liebst du um Schönheit,” Clara Schumann
2. Beginning - “An die musik” Schubert
3. Medium - “Abendempfindung” Mozart
4. Medium - “Schilflied,” Felix Mendelssohn
5. Advanced - “Chacun a son gout,” Strauss (*Die Fledermaus*) - role: Count Orlofsky
6. Advanced - “Wie du warst!” Strauss (*Der Rosenkavalier*) - role: Octavian

Italian Recommended Repertoire

Beginning: “Sebben Crudele,” Caldara (*24 Italian Art Songs and Arias*)

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Style / Genre | Baroque / Aria, Art Song |
| Textual Content | Androgynous |
| Range | D4-E5 |
| Transposability | Easy (multiple voice type versions) |
| Annotations | Doubled in accompaniment, limited movement throughout range, tessitura consistent in middle of this range |
| Challenges | Sustained notes, establishing register stability, connection to support |

Medium: “Gia il sole del gange,” Scarlatti (*24 Italian*)

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Style / Genre | Baroque / Aria, Art Song |
| Textual Content | Androgynous, religious |
| Range | Eb4-F5 |
| Transposability | Easy (multiple voice type versions) |
| Annotations | Quicker and more upbeat movement, consistent voice part doubling in accompaniment, repetitive text |
| Challenges | Emphasis on upper and lower parts of range, navigating passaggio |

Advanced: “Lascia Ch'io Pianga,” Handel (Rinaldo)

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Style / Genre | Baroque, Da Capo Aria |
| Textual Content | Androgynous (countertenor role) |
| Range | A4-G5 |
| Transposability | Easy |
| Annotations | Good starting aria to explore da capo, melody doubled in accompaniment, melodic line is easy to follow |
| Challenges | High tessitura/range (increased likelihood for necessary transposition), movement through ornamentation |

Further Examples

1. Beginning - “Sogno,” Tosti
2. Beginning - “Per la gloria d’adorarvi,” Bononcini (*Griselda - 24 Italian*)
3. Medium - “O del mio amato ben,” Donaudy
4. Medium/Advanced - “Voi che sapete,” Mozart (*Le nozze de Figaro*) - role: Cherubino
5. Advanced - “Per pieta, bell’idol mio,” Bellini
6. Advanced - “V'adoro, Pupille,” Handel (*Giulio Cesare*) - role: Giulio Cesare
7. Advanced - “Tu che accendi questo core,” Rossini (*Tancredi*) - role: Tancredi

French Recommended Repertoire

Beginning: “Le Dromadaire,” Poulenc (*Le Bestiaire*)

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Style / Genre | Art Song, Song Cycle |
| Textual Content | Androgynous |
| Range | D4-C5 |
| Transposability | Difficult for accompaniment |
| Annotations | Inconsistently doubled in accompaniment, accompaniment is quite busy and unsupportive of the singer, small range, simple rhythms (for singer), short piece |
| Challenges | Accompaniment is unhelpful for singer, low tessitura, narrow range may not be helpful for a student who has a distinct break or missing pitches between upper and lower ranges |

Medium: “Mai,” Hahn

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Style / Genre | Art Song |
| Textual Content | Androgynous, romantic |
| Range | Bb3-F5 |
| Transposability | Difficult, but there is a higher key available |
| Annotations | Quicker and more upbeat movement, voice part doubled in accompaniment, middle tessitura, a lot of non-repetitive text |
| Challenges | Movement is often up a scale (difficult if there are missing pitches or gaps), some intervals larger than a third, dynamics (quiet in upper register), long phrases, large range |

Advanced: “Le papillon et la fleur,” Fauré

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Style / Genre | Art Song |
| Textual Content | Androgynous |
| Range | B3-F5 |
| Transposability | Medium (multiple keys available) |
| Annotations | Accompaniment is not doubled, distinct break between higher register and lower register, a lot of text, rhythmically quick |
| Challenges | Large interval jumps, dynamics, diction, separating between registers |

Further Examples

1. Beginning - Any of the pieces from Poulenc’s *Le Bestiaire* song cycle
2. Beginning - “Mandoline,” Fauré
3. Medium - “A Chloris,” Hahn
4. Medium - “Chanson Triste,” Duparc
5. Advanced - “Green” or “Spleen,” Debussy (*Ariettes oubliées*)
6. Advanced - “Champs paternels,” Mehul (*Joseph en Egypte*), role: Joseph

English Recommended Repertoire

Beginning: “Sweet Nightingale,” Barring-Gould

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Style / Genre | Folk Song |
| Textual Content | Androgynous |
| Range | D4-E5 |
| Transposability | Easy (multiple voice type versions) |
| Annotations | Doubled in accompaniment, limited movement throughout range, tessitura consistent in middle of this range |
| Challenges | Sustained notes, establishing register stability, connection to support |

Medium: “All Through the Night,” Philip Kern (Jay Althouse, *Folk Songs for Solo Singers Vol. 1, Medium Low*)

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Style / Genre | Folk song / Traditional |
| Textual Content | Androgynous, religious, lullaby |
| Range | C4-D5 |
| Transposability | Easy (multiple voice type versions) |
| Annotations | Low middle tessitura, not consistently doubled throughout, phrases that move through the higher part of the range often descend and do not stay high |
| Challenges | Dynamics and rhythms, leaps (5th or smaller), long and slow phrases |

Advanced: “Wayward Sisters,” Purcell (Dido and Aeneas)

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Style / Genre | English opera, Aria |
| Textual Content | Androgynous (sung by the Sorceress) |
| Range | C4-F5 |
| Transposability | Medium |
| Annotations | Role traditionally performed by multiple genders of singers, great start into Baroque opera (block chords and ground bass as accompaniment), short excerpt |
| Challenges | Some big interval jumps, ornamentation/performance practice, understanding rhythm (notes can be very repetitive) |

Further Examples

1. Beginning - “Danny Boy,” Julia Knowles (Jay Althouse, *Folk Songs for Solo Singers, Vol. 1*)
2. Beginning - “Amazing Grace,” Jay Althouse (Jay Althouse, *Folk Songs for Solo Singers, Vol. 1*)
3. Medium - “Come Ready and See Me,” Richard Hundley
4. Medium - “Silent Noon,” Ralph Vaughan Williams
5. Advanced - “Flower of this purple dye,” Britten (*A Midsummer Night’s Dream*) - role: Oberon
6. Advanced - “All that gold,” Menotti (*Amahl and the Night Visitors*) - role: Mother

Musical Theater Recommended Repertoire

Beginning: “What do you do with a BA in English?” Robert Lopez and Jeff Marx (Avenue Q)

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Style / Genre | Musical Theater |
| Textual Content | Androgynous |
| Range | Bb3-D5 |
| Transposability | Medium |
| Annotations | Short, simple, easy to follow, semi-doubled vocal line, contemporary, sits in speech register |
| Challenges | Quirky melodically, relatively mid register, low Bb could be hard as well |

Medium: “Grand Knowing You,” Bock (She Loves Me)

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Style / Genre | Musical Theater |
| Textual Content | Androgynous, traditionally male role |
| Range | D4-E5, falsetto to A5 |
| Transposability | Hard |
| Annotations | Two registers, very similar in style to jazz, lots of personality and dynamic contrast |
| Challenges | Use of speech register, difficulty with two registers (especially falsetto separation) may be present, maybe some issues with the “your wife” line/context |

Advanced: “Finishing the Hat,” Sondheim (*Sunday in the Park with George*)

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Style / Genre | Musical theater |
| Textual Content | Briefly heterosexual, male role |
| Range | Bb-Ab |
| Transposability | Difficult |
| Annotations | Two separate ranges, accompaniment is not helpful for the singer |
| Challenges | Navigating through/between the two separate ranges constantly, contextually difficult |

Further Examples

1. “But not for me” - Gershwin (*Girl Crazy*)
2. “Shipooopi” - Wilson (*Music Man*)
3. “I’m Not That Smart” - Sheinkin (*25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*)

Resources

The following are a list of resources intended to provide further information for teachers and students of voice alike in the realm of LGBTQ+ singing.

Websites

“Blurring the Binary”: <https://blurringthebinary.com/>

“Blurring the Binary” is a website for teachers of transgender students in a music classroom. It provides not only the basics (the collection of steps and articles in the “Trans 101” covers everything from first steps to terms and student experiences) but also accessible resources for practical situations, such as choir uniforms, rooming during trips, approaching parents and admin, and more. Their own resources collection recommends a few trans composers as well, such as Mari Esabel Valverde, Michael Bussewitz-Quarm, and Penrose Marcos Allphin.

“The Trans Voice Initiative”: <https://www.transvoiceinitiative.com/>

“The Trans Voice Initiative” is a non-profit collection of gender diverse speech language pathologists committed to high quality training to the Gender Affirming Voice by promoting trans leadership. SLPs are invaluable to the topic of voice change, and being able to speak to experts who themselves are in the community helps not only in validating gender diverse people but also in making them feel seen.

“The Voice Lab”: <https://thevoicelabinc.com/>

“The Voice Lab,” co-founded by Liz Jackson Hearn and Alexandra Platos Sulack in 2014, provides a safe space for students of all backgrounds to take lessons and “love your voice” as well as offer classes on gender-affirming speech following Hearn’s book *One Weird Trick*. Additionally, The Voice Lab offers an eight week professional development course to music educators about Gender-Affirming Speech and Singing, including topics like voice perception, equitable juries and evaluations, and masterclasses.

Literature

Marginalized Voices in Music Education edited by Brent C. Talbot

A collection of fifteen essays, this book examines marginalization and privilege in music education through the unique stories of American music teachers. Involving many diverse perspectives and conversations, these educators critique assumptions, reflect, and offer solutions to help us all listen to the voices often left missing in music.

Liz Jackson Hearn, author of *One Weird Trick: A User's Guide to Transgender Voices* and co-author of *The Singing Teacher's Guide to Transgender Voices*

Co-founder and owner of the Voice Lab, an LGBTQ+ focused and run resource for music and speech lessons, classes, and communities, Liz Jackson Hearn is at the forefront of transgender singing. *The Singing Teacher's Guide to Transgender Voices* is the first book published which provides information on vocal training for trans students intended for educators.

New Music Shelf's *Anthology of New Music: Trans and Non-Binary Singers, Vol. 1*

Curated by Aiden K. Feltkamp, the collection published in 2021 contains 21 works for solo voice and piano written by trans and nonbinary composers of the 21st century and span a vast range of compositional styles and genres for singers of all levels. New Music Shelf also publishes *The Lost Songs of the AIDS Quilt Songbook*, curated by John Seesholtz, as a contemporary continuation of *The AIDS Quilt Songbook* curated by William Parker and published in 1993.

Operas

As One by Laura Kaminsky, Mark Campbell, and Kimberly Reed

As One, premiering at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in 2014, is a chamber opera for two voices following the transition of main character Hannah. It is the first opera to center on a transgender coming of age narrative and as such has taken a huge step onto the operatic stage in terms of demanding the representation of diversity and LGBTQ+ inclusivity in classical music. *As One* has paved the way for more transgender operas and roles such as *Good Country* (2019) and *Stonewall* (2019).

Trans Choirs and Choruses

Although many trans singers sing in various choruses, LGBTQ+ specific or otherwise, there are several trans choirs across the world, each with inspiring stories and resources for trans singers and music educators. The San Francisco Transcendence Gospel Choir, formed in 2001, was the first trans choir created, and is the subject of the 2004 documentary *Believers*. In 2004, the second transgender chorus in the US, the Trans Voices Chorus, was formed in St. Paul, MN, and in 2009 a transgender chorus was created in Kathmandu, Nepal. However, both American choirs were inactive by 2014; when the Butterfly Music Transgender Chorus was founded in Boston, MA in that year, it spurred the revival and creation of several transgender choruses in major cities across the nation. LGBTQ+ and transgender choirs give many people the opportunity to create music in their community, and give other choirs the foundation to create inclusivity and embrace the diversity of their singers.

Trans Singers and Composers

There are many trans classical singers, including Lucia Lucas, Lucas Bouk, Holden Madagame, Ella Taylor, and CN Lester, who have been able to break ground in the realm of opera by representing the community in world-renowned companies and stages, premiering new transgender characters, and workshopping transgender operas. Transgender composers include Angela Moorley, the first openly transgender person to be nominated for an Academy Award, and choral composers Michael Bussewitz-Quarm, winner of the American Prize in Choral Composition in 2021, and Mari Esabel Valverde. For more information on transgender composers, database resources like “The Institute for Composer Diversity” (<https://www.composerdiversity.com/>), which has databases for composers, art songs, choral repertoire, and more, can be filtered to search for LGBTQ and transgender composers and pieces.

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