

Reid: Frankly, I just recently became consciously aware of it as an issue when I read the Schiller Institute's Manual on Tuning and Registration. My concern was reinforced, because I had a pupil who sang the Kaiserin in Austria at the Salzburg Music Festival last summer. That goes from low G to C# and then a sustained D—all in the space of about five minutes of singing. Now George Solti was the conductor, and Solti took the orchestra up to 448 Hz. She said it was just too difficult to sing.

This happened to her just after I had

gotten the book from you. That made me aware of it. And I was doubly interested because she got friendly with one of the oboists in the orchestra, and said that the oboist, too, was complaining about having a terrible time getting through the performance. The oboist's embouchure, her lips, were so disturbed by having to put that excessive tension into the playing, that she said she simply could not both play a full rehearsal in the afternoon and then play the performance at night.

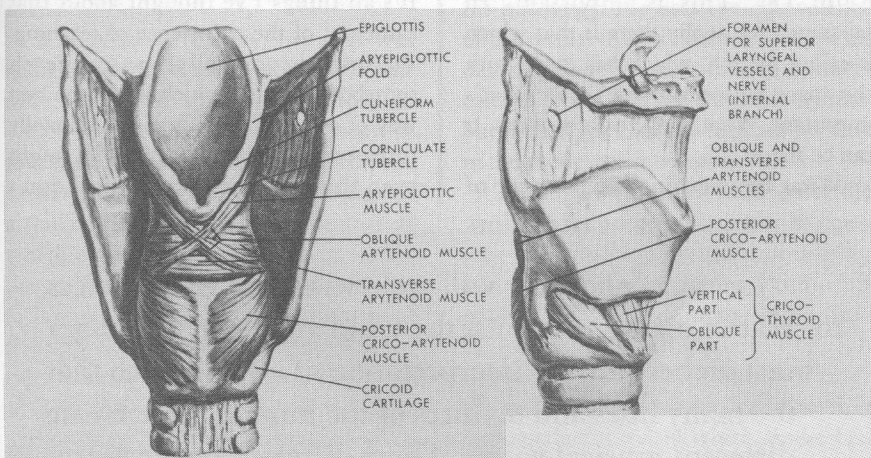
So that's what put it in my mind; I

they should be sung and played at the original pitch.

One of the things I relate to my pupils is the fact that when you sing a musical composition, be it a simple song, you orchestrate it with your voice. And you can only do that if you understand how to utilize the different registers.

If we vary the pitch from the original, the human singing registers will shift in different places from that which the composer had intended. We thus undermine this entire principle, according to which the composer has created the composition in the first place.

In great classical compositions, each musical line, each individual pitch has a specific emotional quality in the human voice, which is distinct from every other sung note. Each pitch has a specific emotional impact on the listener. The human voice when it sings a Bb has a textual quality, an emotional quality, which is distinct from that of a B. Thus, of course, if the composer writes something at a certain pitch, and we



‘Unlike today, the concept of vocal registers, registration, was the basic philosophy and understanding upon which the old Italian teachers built their entire system throughout the era of high bel canto. The idea is the same as in the organ: you change the register by pulling out the stop, pulling a lever which triggers a mechanical action. There is a physical mechanism in the instrument which produces a different tone quality.’

quite agree. If the texture that the composer had in his mind was the texture when the tuning pitch was thus and so—and then you raise the pitch four or eight hertz or more, you get to the point where the texture that he had in mind is destroyed, because the voice produces another texture at the higher pitch.

The works of a great composer cannot be transposed, and therefore

move the pitch around, either up—or down—we destroy the composer's intentions. And therefore as Verdi said, we cannot have a situation where the note which is called A in Paris, should become a Bb in Rome.

This is integral to the poetic singing of a text. One of the most important principles for the singing student to learn is that, just as a conductor will orchestrate the string voices distinctly, to create a dialogue as heard against the



Figure 11. Demonstrating the relative positions of the chest, falsetto and head voice in the tonal range, reported by most early writers as being applicable to all voice types, male and female. (From Garcia, Garcia's Schule, oder Die Kunst des Gesanges.)

Illustrations from "A Dictionary of Vocal Terminology."