

Singing and Imagination

A Human Approach to a Great Musical Tradition

This book is written in the belief that the essential basic principles underlying good singing are in themselves rather few, and very simple, but that their application is amazingly varied in light of the individual's needs. It is not intended as a manual of voice production, and does not concern itself with medical matters, nor directly with anatomy, physiology, and acoustics. While not belittling the value of appropriate scientific investigation, Hemsley believes that modern methods of training have gone too far in the direction of the materialistic approach; that singing in all its aspects and at all times should be guided by the imagination, the feelings, and the intuition; that we have become so pre-occupied by voice per se and the vocal function since the advent of vocal science, that we too easily forget that singing is not voice, but modification of voice - 'not only a language through which we understand the emotions of others, but also a means of exciting our sympathy with such emotions.' (H. Spencer). This book can be seen as an attempt to redress the balance. Quote from reader's report by Professor David Galliver: "Here is a comprehensive and well-ordered philosophy of the art of singing; one which integrates both technical and interpretative aspects. While the technical principles of the classical tradition of singing as expounded by the late Lucie Manén lie at its basis, what is put forward here is very much an extension and development, illumined by Thomas Hemsley's long and exceptionally wide experience as a professional singer and teacher, as well as by a wealth of historical evidence. The second part of the book applies these principles, emphasising the fundamental role played by artistic imagination and understanding. The picture which emerges is essentially comprehensive, and offers a holistic approach to the art of singing. "The book is addressed to those 'with a gift for singing who would like to understand better how to approach putting that gift to use'. It will appeal to a wide range of singers, professional and others, and will challenge those pedagogues who rely heavily on the so-called 'scientific' approach at the expense of fundamental human and artistic considerations. Hemsley's own scientific qualifications give additional authority to his hard-hitting arguments. The book is engagingly written, with many personal examples and anecdotes; it certainly makes good reading."

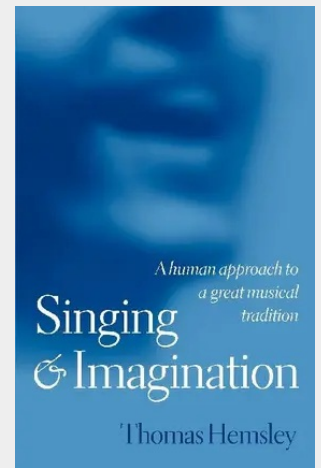
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