

Against the Wind: Singers Growing Old

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There is no template for growing old as a rock star. There's no pattern out there that you can follow. We were the first to come this way, flaunting our youth as we did so, and we've got no choice but to be pioneers going out the other end, when youth has ceased to be an option.¹

INTRODUCTION: GROWING OLD AS A SINGER

SINGERS GROW OLD. As they enter the twilight of their performance careers, most grapple with accommodating to changes in their voice and anxiety about continued ability to perform as they did at the peak of their careers. Changes with aging are more than simply those associated with moderating an extravagant and flamboyant lifestyle. It is no secret that the world of performing artists often includes smoking, drinking, and illicit drug use;² indeed, some singers view such a lifestyle as part of their identity as a performer. They may come to think that such an identity contributes to their success and resist changing their behavior for fear that it will negatively affect their reputation and performance. But they may also come to realize that such a lifestyle can affect the voice. They tread a fine line between maintaining an image while at the same time sustaining optimal vocal performance. As they grow older the effects of these aspects of lifestyle are supplemented by aging related changes over which they have limited control, such as reduced stamina, normative age associated vocal changes that include more limited range, vocal fatigue, and vocal quality,³ as well as difficulty accommodating to evolving performance expectations in the changing environment of the contemporary music industry.

Despite these challenges, most singers are driven by an imperative to ply their craft as long as possible; indeed, for some, death on stage is viewed as a fitting exit. This study is an exploration of the aging voice from the perspective of the lived experience of singers. Enhanced by the singers' own words, we consider complex relationships among the aging concerning the voice, continuing ability to perform, and the essence of singer identity. Our focus is on the contemporary commercial music (CCM) genres of pop, rock, folk, blues, jazz, country, soul, and music theater. As the nature and context of vocal performance in classical music is uniquely different in training and performance demands, it has been excluded from this discussion.

Using material from singer autobiographies and journals, we document ways in which singers recognize and accommodate to vocal and performance related changes associated with aging in the context of almost universal acceptance of a responsibility for not letting the audience down. Our findings are interpreted within the context of a music industry that has ever growing capability to remake singers through digital technologies and to reframe their modes and venues of performance. Implications for singers with respect to the potential for assistive clinical intervention are explored. Finally, based on our findings, we advocate for public education and acceptance of the challenges facing aging singers and suggest a need for deeper empathy with artists as they seek to negotiate the final stages of their careers in ways that maximize their legacy.

METHODS

A qualitative research design, focused on revealing values, meanings, and intentionalities underlying singer perceptions and behavior, was employed to address the objectives of the study. This approach is grounded in a distinctive philosophy of understanding human behavior from the perspective of lived experience and an associated array of methodologies designed to reveal essential dimensions of such experience.⁴ Specifically, our methodology involved critical content analysis of the autobiographic writings of performers with particular focus on comments pertaining to the aging of their voice and its impact on their performance. Priority was placed on material derived from autobiographies written independently rather than in collaboration with co-authors or ghostwriters, since we wanted to report, as much as possible, on the authentic unfiltered thoughts of the singers. While the focus was on personally written autobiographies, some methodologic triangulation was achieved by incorporating insights from published commentaries of inner circle colleagues and observers, often fellow performers.

A total of 73 autobiographies and memoirs were reviewed (see Appendix). Within 14 of these books, we found no reference to or commentary on the quality of the writer's singing voice or changes that had occurred or were anticipated in their performance as a result of aging. This finding was noted when the source was

entered into our data base. In cases where a potentially relevant passage was identified, it was copied verbatim into the data base.

Data analysis was inductive and iterative: it involved independently reading and rereading the identified passages in the data base by each of the authors. Weekly meetings between the authors, over a period of several months, facilitated coding based on the general principles of comparative analysis.⁵ The goal was to identify consistent themes in the data. We began with open coding. Each author reviewed all of the passages in the data base and identified specific sentences that seemed to pertain in some way to some aspect of the overall theme of the project, exploration of the performance related implications of the aging voice. A second phase of analysis conducted during face to face meetings, axial coding, involved grouping individual observations into a series of categories. Finally, the categories identified through axial coding were organized using a process of selective coding into a set of broad themes that told the story of the data in terms of a set of overarching constructs representing vocal artists' perceptions of the nature and implications of their aging voice with respect to vocal performance.

FINDINGS

As they move toward the end of a performance career, successful vocalists often write autobiographies and memoirs in which they document their stories. Such writings provide often poignant insight into the manner in which they reconcile voice changes with their performance as an aging singer. Some of these published accounts are little more than ghostwritten self-serving sensationalized public relations efforts oriented toward keeping the performer in the public eye, generating supplementary income, and nurturing and sustaining an adoring fan base. Other publications contain thoughtful, reflective, and deeply profound ruminations and insight. They present personal glimpses into the identity of the performer. Within this latter group of accounts, we discovered passages of writing that shared autobiographic insight into the lived world of the aging singer. These passages revealed singers acknowledging and confronting the aging of their voices and grappling

with fears and anxieties about their continuing ability to perform at the highest level.

Our findings on singers' perceptions of the nature and implications of their aging voices are presented within the rubric of four overarching themes: self-perception of voice, sensitivity to changes in vocal quality, the critical association of voice with identity, and accommodations to aging-related vocal changes. Each theme embraces a number of subthemes.

Self-perception of Voice

With few exceptions, singers are surprisingly modest about the quality of their voice. Kim Gordon wrote, "I've never thought of myself as a singer with a good voice, or even as a musician."⁶ As Bruce Springsteen phrased this:

About my voice. First of all, I don't have much of one. I have a bar-man's power, range and durability, but I don't have a lot of tonal beauty or finesse. Five sets a night, no problem. Three and a half full-on hours, can do. Need for warm-up, light to none. My voice gets the job done. But it's a journeyman's instrument and on its own, it's never going to take you to higher ground.⁷

Frank Sinatra was similarly self-effacing: "I discovered very early that my instrument wasn't my voice. It was the microphone."⁸ Billy Joel admitted that,

For starters, I've never thought that I had a good voice. I can be objective about it. I like it better now that it's thickened out more at the bottom end than when I was younger, but I don't compare it to those naturally compelling voices I came up listening to. I can sing in key; I can sing in pitch. I can growl it up or rock it up or soul it up, but my natural voice, to me, is sort of like a kid singing in church.⁹

Recognition of vocal limitations can lead to anxiety, especially when audience expectations are high. Alan Cumming wrote,

But I am not one of those singers. You know, the Broadwaaaaaaay beltors, the beautiful singers. And even worse, since I have been on Broadway and even won a Tony award for Best Actor in a Musical, I felt that more and more people expected me to be one of those singers. They expected me to have that sort of polished sound. And I just don't. I don't want to, mind you, but one of the troubles with becoming more and more well-known

(and in this case well known for something you don't feel very confident about) is that you feel there is more and more of a chance you will disappoint.¹⁰

Many singers consciously compensate for perceived vocal limitations by seeking to enhance other aspects of their performance. Bruce Springsteen was particularly eloquent in articulating this sentiment.

So I figured if I didn't have a voice, I was going to really need to learn to write, perform and use what voice I had to its fullest ability. I was going to have to learn all the tricks, singing from your chest, singing from your abdomen, singing from your throat, great phrasing, timing and dynamics. I noted a lot of singers had a very limited instrument but could sound convincing. I studied everyone I loved who sounded real to me, whose voices excited me and touched my heart, Soul, blues, Motown, rock, folk; I listened and I learned. I learned the most important thing was how believable you could sound. How deeply you could inhabit your song.¹¹

Later, he wrote: "My vocal imperfections made me work harder on my writing, my band leading, my performing and my singing. I learned to excel at those elements of my craft in a way I might otherwise never had if I had a more perfect instrument."¹²

Changes in Vocal Quality

While aging is a uniquely individual and personal experience, artists experiencing voice changes are typically forced to experience them in a very public fashion. Comparison of recordings of singers made at different points in their career, from youth to later years, clearly reveals these changes in vocal quality, often first noticed by artists in a truncation of their upper range. Phil Collins commented,

By this stage, I'd been dancing around the high notes for a while. This didn't happen so much on my solo tours since my music was written for me to sing . . . But even if Peter [Gabriel] had been singing them, they would have been high even for him at this point in both our lives.¹³

Ricky Skaggs wrote: "There was one track, 'Your Love,' on which I recorded several harmony parts, including a vocal so high Buck said, 'That's as high as a dog whistle!' I wish I could get my voice up there now!"¹⁴

For elite vocal athletes, even a few notes lost from the range can cause significant difficulties when performing songs from their albums, many written when they were younger and having little difficulty reaching higher notes. Billie Holiday, for example, experienced vocal decline in her later years.

In the last decade of her life, her voice beginning to coarsen and her range narrowing, she crossed over to Norma Granz's Clef and, later, Verve Records . . . Being marketed to a national audience was an enormous advantage to her, but it also meant that she would have to avoid current pop songs that were sometimes ill-suited to her, and she would not be able to depend on the near-blues songs that were still in favor in the black community . . . By 1958 her health worsened and her voice had changed so much that she relied on little more than a bare recitative in which only her phrasing, her timing, and a few of her vocal characteristics remained intact.¹⁵

Shift in the overall quality of vocal output is often noted as decreased loudness, pitch instability, decreased range, and changes in vocal fold vibratory parameters, alterations that may be due to physical changes to the vocal mechanism. Such changes can potentially be career ending for an artist if they become severe. At age 74, Jerry Lee Lewis was still performing while adjusting to the hands of time.

By the late 2000's [*sic*], he knew that his voice was changing, ever changing, but it still sounded like him, and his hands were still able to do many of the acrobatic moves of his youth. If it looked a little slower, well that was his intent. Even well-meaning people believed he was surely done by now; surely, he would soon succumb to all that hard living, or at least, growling in disgust, finally retire. Still, when he walked into a hotel room for an interview, reporters seemed surprised somehow that he had actually gotten old. They described his face as wattled, his voice as high and thin; they described a newfound humility when he performed onstage, and increased carefulness with music that now suddenly was not a guarantee.¹⁶

Johnny Cash was acutely aware of how changes in his voice might be perceived by his audience.

When I first appear, they might be thinking, "I didn't know he was getting that old," or "Wow, he sure gained weight," but by the second or third song they should be

coming around a little. "Well he doesn't move around as much as he used to. He's slowed down a lot, but he still sings fairly well. For an old guy anyway."¹⁷

Voice and Identity

Motivation for Singing

Most singers view their voice as far more than a tool for pursuing a vocation; it becomes the essence of their persona and an integral part of their identity. To sing is to be alive; there is really no alternative. As Rod Stewart expressed this, "After all, the performing—it's who I am. It feels like what I was put down here to do. If I go a month without a concert, I get all jittery and miss it."¹⁸ Tina Sinatra described how her aging father, as his age peer friends began to die around him, would say, "If I stop working, I know I'll be next." She writes, "Music was his life force, what was left of his identity. The audience was where he lived."¹⁹ Tony Bennett recounted how the jazz vocalist Joe Williams once told him, "It's not that you want to sing; it's that you have to sing."²⁰ He identified with this sentiment: "And that is true—I have to do it. I can't think of a nobler occupation than to try and to make people forget their problems for an hour and a half. You lift up their spirits and give them a feeling of hope. That's what a good psychiatrist does to help patients."²¹

This notion of singing not only for the self but because it somehow helps the audience, sometimes in profound ways, becomes a motivation that can reinforce a performer's inherent personal imperative to sing. It can be affirming and foster a sense of belonging and purpose. As Gregg Allman wrote,

What you can do is make them forget their problems for about three hours—and there's a shitload of problems out there, man . . . We flat-out make them happy. Stomping their feet, clapping their hands, dancing around and smiling, lighting up their cell phones and Bic lighters—that kind of happy. I just love to see that, because it makes me feel like I belong, and everybody needs to belong to something.²²

Joe Perry of Aerosmith expressed a comparable perspective in describing how an inherent imperative to sing is reinforced by audiences in a manner that is not only self-affirming but also—through the way in which it may uplift an audience—can become transcendent, a phenomenon beyond the individual performer.

... we kept working for the music, for the fans, for the money. We did it out of habit, we did it with ambivalence, but mainly we did it because our passion for the music drove us. Today that passion still makes us feel like eighteen-year-olds. But mostly seeing a fan wrap his or her arms around one of us and hearing words like “Your music got me through rehab . . . Your music kept me afloat . . . Your music saved my life.” That’s strong stuff. Steven’s antics, my arrogance, all the stuff that went on with the other guys—it all pales against the knowledge that long ago this band became something bigger than all of us.²³

For some aging singers, performing is so integrally intertwined with identity that it is difficult to give up; to stop singing is to lose identity. Bob Dylan said, “There’s a certain part of you that becomes addicted to a live audience . . . I wouldn’t keep doing it if I was tired of it.”²⁴ That aspect of motivation was also captured by Tina Sinatra in describing her father’s final years as a performer.

His antidepressants might not be working too well, but his public lifted his spirits each time he took his bows. Dad was fighting not to lose himself. The stage was his last bastion, the place where he was the most comfortable and in control. As his powers diminished, he held tight to the edge of the precipice.²⁵

Rod Stewart expressed a similar sentiment when confronted with the possibility of having to give up singing. “Yes, but no more singing, no more records, no more performing . . . How easy would it be to let all that go? And what would remain of me, in its absence? ‘Didn’t you used to be Rod Stewart?’”²⁶ Naomi Judd, describing giving up singing, poignantly wrote,

I felt as though the joy that the world had given me so much of through performing for the past year had evaporated before my eyes, leaving me a deflated woman without any sense of purpose. It’s said that when you lose Shangri-la, you turn old and gray. I had lost my identity.²⁷

Meeting Expectations: Not Wanting to Let People Down

Beyond self-perception, a clearly revealed component of singer identity is a desire to avoid letting down or disappointing their audience. As they grow older, singers become increasingly aware of expectations that

fans, producers, managers, audiences, and the music industry have of them. They become conscious that their music, although it remains an integral part of their personal identity, transcends their ownership; it doesn’t really belong to them anymore. As Phil Collins, in many ways echoing Joe Perry, has often been quoted as saying, “Beyond a certain point, the music isn’t mine anymore. It’s yours.”²⁸

Expectations increase with success, sometimes to the point where they seem unattainable. Phil Collins wrote about Elton John’s struggle to meet these expectations and his acceptance of this responsibility during a show when facing vocal problems.

In Australia, our routing overlaps with that of Elton John . . . Elton throws a moody because he thinks he’s lost his voice. It looks like he’s about to pull the gig, no matter how this might impact on the dozens of orchestral players and the tens of thousands of fans. He calls for his limo, is driven round the car park in a low-speed huff, but in the end, comes back and takes the stage.²⁹

B. B. King wrote of the visceral reaction he experiences and the lengths, often dangerous, he goes to in order to meet expectations. “If I feel I’m gonna miss a gig my blood starts boiling. It might be unavoidable; the bus broke down or the plane’s grounded or the highway’s covered with ice. But I’ll find a mechanic or charter a plane or brave the ice rather than disappoint a promoter and let down a crowd. That’s just me.”³⁰

Artists continue to struggle with these expectations as they age. In their later years, they have typically been working in the industry for decades, often since they were in their teens or early 20s. They have usually released numerous albums over the course of their career and many of their songs have become hits. Audiences are very familiar with these recordings and go to concerts expecting to hear the music they love just the way it sounds at home. This expectation can set up a difficult situation for the artist if they are no longer able to perform the songs as they did in their youth but know that the audience will be expecting to hear them sounding just like they do on the recordings. John Szwed noted how Billie Holiday struggled with this dilemma over her career: “It might not seem surprising that a singer would change her interpretations over the course of a twenty-six-year career, but the demands of aging fans

who expected her to sing the same songs in the same way are often abided by, though sometimes with disastrous results.”³¹ Describing her later work, he wrote: “She was imitating herself, the curse of the aging artist.”³²

Lifestyle and Identity: Alcohol, Smoking, Illicit Drugs

Many singers have spoken openly about their use, struggles with, and changes in lifestyle linked to smoking, drinking, and illicit drug use. Gregg Allman explained how alcohol addiction was affecting his voice and describes his realization that he needed to change.

My voice was suffering as well, but I managed to get through the taping . . . A little voice told me that enough was enough, and this time I listened. I gave in and told them I would go [to treatment]. I resigned myself to going at the end of the week, but until then, I just kept right on drinking, man—I drank constantly. I couldn’t not drink, you know? Sad, but true: I couldn’t not drink.³³

While some singers are aware of the ill effects of smoking, drinking, and illicit drugs, the myth endures that smoking can influence your voice in a positive way. Keith Richards reflected on this during a published interview.

Are you still smoking 100 cigarettes a day? —“No, I never have smoked that much. I tend to smoke a lot more when I’m working. It’s about a pack a day. It depends. Sometimes I go off them. But you know, Aretha Franklin and Dionne Warwick both smoke loads more and have wonderful voices, so maybe I should.”³⁴

Often, as they age, singers are no longer able to continue the destructive behaviors of their youth. Multiple factors force them to consider the cumulative effects of past choices and aging. In writing about Frank Sinatra, Taraborrelli explained,

Meanwhile, in his private life, Frank was also seeing significant changes. His hair, for instance, had become a source of irritation. He despised the toupees he felt forced to wear to cover his baldness. He had gotten a hair transplant; however, it didn’t “take.” Also, he was gaining weight and blamed rich Italian foods, but dieting was out of the question. And he was tired more often. He could no longer drink liquor all night long and then be able to fully function the next day, as he

had done for years. His voice was weakening; years of smoking Camel cigarettes had done some damage to it.³⁵

Rod Stewart openly acknowledged a history of drug use as an element of his persona and his initial denial of how it might affect his voice. “This was when I was introduced to serious cocaine—proper, extremely high-quality stuff . . . You were using it more like snuff, to pep the evening along . . . —and no sense for me, slightly deluding myself, that something so pure could possibly be damaging my voice.”³⁶ He reported lifestyle changes as he aged with increased focus on healthy behaviors.

Outside of football, I don’t worry about aging so much. I look around at people I’ve worked with down the years and I think, relatively speaking, that I’m not doing too badly . . . And I’m sensible in my habits: the right food, a glass of wine or two with dinner, but no more. And, of course, no drugs. Cocaine ended for me in the early 2000s, by which time I was hardly touching the stuff in any case . . . But even in those tiny quantities, I realized it was getting to my voice—drying out the membranes.³⁷

Some singers acknowledge how they self-medicated with alcohol and drugs to address performance anxiety. Some are able to overcome these addictions. Neil Young shared his struggles with song-writing after quitting and how his substance abuse allowed him to avoid facing himself.

Not that it matters much, but recently I stopped smoking and drinking. I am now the straightest I have ever been since I was eighteen. The big question for me at this point is whether I will be able to write songs this way. I haven’t yet, and that is a big part of my life. Of course, I am now sixty-five, so my writing may not be as easy-flowing as it once was, but on the other hand, I am writing this book. I’ll check in with you on that later. We’ll see how it goes . . . When I stopped smoking weed I threw in drinking too, because I had never stopped both simultaneously and I thought it might be nice to get to know myself again.³⁸

After quitting drugs and/or alcohol, some artists face a reframing of their identity as performers as they grapple with learning how to function as a sober artist. This can cause additional problems such as increased performance anxiety. They, like Neil Young, may also fear decreased artistic creativity. If self-abusive lifestyle behaviors have been a part of a coping mechanism

for dealing with performance stress, singers may find themselves simultaneously confronting learning how to perform again at the same time as they are dealing with aging related vocal changes.

Fear of Losing Voice

Fear of the possible consequences of positive lifestyle changes on identity as a performer is one component of a larger concern. Given the priority placed on singing, it is not surprising that, throughout their lifespan, singers report being acutely aware of a fear of losing their voice. As their careers begin to take off and demands on the voice increase, this fear can grow as the realization of how losing voice would have an immediate impact on many people. Carole King articulated this fear in describing a performance in 2005. “But these are minor problems compared to the sensation I feel in my throat, the one I get when I’m about to lose my voice. How can I give my audience what they’ve come for if I don’t have a voice?”³⁹ Phil Collins noted this earlier in his career, when the number of shows increased. “Now that I’m playing so many shows, solo and with Genesis, and increasingly in large venues, I live in fear of losing my voice . . .”⁴⁰ As singers become aware of how losing voice can bring immediate and potentially longer term plans to a halt, they often become sensitive to what they can control to reduce this risk, including vocal hygiene and vocal exercise. There is also increased understanding of factors that may be out of their immediate control, such as touring schedules and contract obligations.

Fears are accentuated when singers are confronted with surgeries that might affect their voice. Bruce Springsteen articulated this fear in describing surgery for cervical disc problems.

The surgery went like this; they knock you out; cut an incision in your throat; tie your vocal cords off to one side; get in there with a wrench, screwdriver and some titanium . . . Because all of this takes place around the vocal cords your voice is gone for a couple of nerve-racking months.⁴¹

Rod Stewart described similar anxiety associated with his surgery for cancer.

In order for the surgeon to get to the tumor, it had been necessary to cut through the muscles in my throat . . . Give it three months of rest, the doctor said, and I could

fully expect some kind of singing voice to return. Phew. Of course, it might not be the same voice . . . Ah. So, what if the voice I got back was a different voice? What if the voice I got back was the voice of—for example—a not very good singer? I didn’t want any old voice back. I wanted my voice back.⁴²

Reluctance to Quit

Some singers have a strong, almost obsessive, imperative to keep singing. Tony Bennett explains, “I have no desire whatsoever to retire; if I’m lucky, I just want to get better as I get older.”⁴³ Naomi Judd poignantly stated, “In contrast, my desire was to stay onstage, and my whole biological being seemed to be in turmoil because I had no alternative plan for when my career came to an abrupt end.”⁴⁴ Many singers share this reluctance to retire. Andy Williams wrote, “As long as I’m singing well, I see no reason to stop. When my time is up, I’m expecting to leave the stage for the last time in a wooden box.”⁴⁵

But the sentiment is not universal or unequivocal. It is tempered by realism. For example, Tony Bennett, acknowledged that changes in his voice might limit his ability to continue, but he was sanguine about it.

Some singers’ voices start to wobble when they get older. I once asked Sinatra what he’d do to beat wobbling, and he said he wasn’t sure, but that if it ever started to happen to his voice, he’d just quit . . . If my voice does start to falter at some point, I guess I’ll just become a painter.⁴⁶

Peter Criss wrote of his decision to retire and how important it was to him to be the person who decided it was time to quit.

I sat back in the plush seat and felt like a million dollars. At least I was leaving on top. I didn’t leave playing the Sandbox to forty inattentive people. I didn’t leave clinging to the stage while the audience was saying “Look how fat he got. And he’s wearing a wig. And they’re doing the same . . . songs for fifty years.”⁴⁷

Rod Stewart voiced a similar sentiment although he realizes that the lifestyle change would not be an easy one.

One day, in the midst of my misery, I stared out of the window and thought, “I know, if I can’t be a singer, I’ll be a landscape gardener.” But even as I was hatching this unlikely plan, part of me was sane enough to understand

the following: that if you've been a singer in a rock 'n' roll band, there is very little that you can do afterwards that is likely to match it for job satisfaction. Singer in a rock 'n' roll band is, in my opinion, quite simply the best job in the world. It could only be a comedown after that—even if I turned out to be a very good landscape gardener indeed.⁴⁸

Accommodations

Once singers have identified deviations from their typical vocal quality they respond in different ways. Often these accommodations are the result of recommendations passed down from friends, peers, or learned from medical intervention. Accommodations described in the autobiographies included emphasis on vocal hygiene, vocal habilitation, medical management, and performance adjustments.

Vocal Hygiene

Vocal hygiene refers to positive habits or behaviors that sustain and improve vocal health. This often becomes more important to singers as they start to experience vocal deterioration. Multiple vocal hygiene strategies may be employed. Johnny Cash wrote, “so as usual I have to guard my resources and energies: be careful I don't eat too much, make sure I get my afternoon nap, avoid turmoil and distraction, protect my time as fiercely as I have to. Then I'll be able to give the audience my best.”⁴⁹ Mick Fleetwood described a similar focus on maintaining vocal health. “We have no intention of running our ensemble into the ground the way we used to do; we've learned to look after ourselves . . . As for me, my job is pretty physical and I've learned my lesson. I need to stick to a healthy regime or none of this would be possible.”⁵⁰

Hydration. An important part of vocal hygiene is hydration. This has been well studied. The positive effect of systematic hydration is even more important for singers, as hotels, airplanes, and climate changes between venues can all contribute to increased laryngeal dryness. Tom Jones experienced this when he was performing in Las Vegas. “Get an ear, nose, and throat specialist to make a list of places not to sing, and I can guarantee you that Vegas will be number two on that list after the Moon. Your choice: air conditioning indoors, or parched desert air outside. Neither are working wonders for your vocal cords.”⁵¹

Steam inhalation is a component of vocal hygiene. This can be a way to help counterbalance laryngeal dryness that can occur from busy travel and tour schedules. Phil Collins spoke of the benefit of steam for his vocal health. “Sometimes at the suggestion of the best throat doctors rock'n'roll money can buy, I'll take myself off to the nearest steam room. Now that I'm playing so many shows, solo and with Genesis, and increasingly in large venues, I live in fear of losing my voice, and the steam helps.”⁵²

Rest. Sufficient rest is important for overall health, but often very hard to maintain due to the incredibly packed schedules of singers when they are on tour. Cher was reported to have difficulty maintaining her stamina during one of her tours.

A tour on this scale would have been hard on any artist, but Cher was by now fifty-three years old, and although she had no shortage of energy, the physical strain was beginning to take its toll. By the end of July, after a month and a half of performances, Cher was so exhausted that she had to postpone her shows . . . By early August, after a recuperating break, she was well enough again to resume the tour and reschedule the cancelled dates.⁵³

Johnny Cash became acutely aware of this need.

Now it's time for my nap. I'm working tonight, and if I'm not rested, it will be a mess. I'll feel bad, I won't sing well, and the people won't get their money's worth. Billy Graham taught me that: if you have an evening concert, he said, take yourself to bed in the afternoon and rest, even if you don't sleep. It was the most valuable advice I'd had in years, maybe ever.⁵⁴

Rest involves not only sustaining the physical stamina to maintain the grueling demands of a tour schedule but also providing respite for the vocal folds. As they grow older, many performers increasingly rest the voice during the day; they take vocal naps to preserve the vocal mechanism and minimize the risk of avoidable overuse. Carol King discusses how she lets others know she is resting her voice during her tours. “This is a lanyard with a hand-lettered laminated sign that says ‘Voice at Rest.’ It explains to others why I'm speaking only in hand signs and whispers, and at the same time reminds me

not to speak unnecessarily.”⁵⁵ She goes on to explain how this has the associated benefit of conserving her energy.

Avoiding Phonotraumatic Behaviors. While some performers embrace vocal rest, others, despite the advice of those surrounding them, consistently engage in vocally demanding behaviors that include yelling, screaming, vocal overuse, throat clearing, loud talking, and grunting. Such phonotraumatic behaviors can compromise the integrity of the vocal fold causing (at least) mild swelling of the folds or (at worst) a laryngeal pathology. Joe Perry wrote of encouraging Steven Tyler to use vocal rest when he was having vocal problems. “He used to say, ‘You can change guitar strings, Joe, but I can’t change vocal cords.’ ‘That’s true,’ I’d reply. ‘So why are you shouting and screaming on your off days? Why aren’t you resting your voice?’”⁵⁶ Rod Stewart also wrote of damage resulting from vocal overuse.

Going out on the road for at least six months of every year was my idea of a life well lived, but it was clearly beginning to take its toll on my vocal cords—sensitive enough little things in the first place. And if they rebelled, I genuinely was going to be [finished]. But what could I do? The band played so loudly. We kind of prided ourselves on it. The volume at which we played was a badge of honor . . . Night after night I was forcing my voice to compete with that volume, and by the end of the show I had very commonly blown my throat out. The next day, I would walk around feeling as though I had been gargling barbed wire. Then it would get to 6:00 P.M., two hours before the next show, and I would realize that I simply didn’t have a voice to sing with. The solution was not a particularly healthy one: I started taking steroids.⁵⁷

Avoiding Reflux and Allergy Triggers. A final component of vocal hygiene is the conscious avoidance of environments and situations likely to accentuate the effects of health conditions and allergies. A few singers described how they were vulnerable to laryngopharyngeal reflux (LPR), postnasal drainage, and allergies. They were aware of the risk that an episode might negatively contribute to vocal quality changes. Indeed, singers who suffer from LPR, postnasal drainage, or allergies are generally advised to become aware of the triggers that might provoke an episode and to avoid them because the long term consequences can be serious overall health and vocal problems. For example,

Mike Love wrote about making dietary changes, “In the late 1990s, I was all too often experiencing congestion, so I eliminated my beloved coffee ice cream and my Tillamook sharp cheddar cheese, which I’ve enjoyed all my life.”⁵⁸

Poor vocal hygiene including overuse and phonotraumatic behaviors are frequently noted to start in the early years of a singer’s career and continue, often worsening, as they grow older. Many singers seemed oblivious to the risk that a history of vocal abuse might compromise their vocal health and ability to perform as they grew older and might even lead to career ending vocal pathology. But we discovered that some singers had become increasingly aware of the importance of vocal hygiene as they had grown older. Several of these singers complemented their vocal hygiene behaviors with vocal habilitation.

Vocal Habilitation

Some singers enter later years with well established vocal exercise habits and an understanding of the benefits of exercise on the vocal mechanism. This may have been learned from voice teachers, coaches, or from other musicians. Tony Bennett wrote about how he works to keep his voice from “wobbling” with old age.

To avoid that, I work every day doing my scales, and I really concentrate on holding my notes without vibrato. A dear friend and accomplished musician, Abe Katz, who was the first trumpet for the New York Philharmonic, told me that he holds notes with no vibrato, as that’s the best way to keep focused so the notes remain strong and clear.⁵⁹

Mick Fleetwood shared changes in the vocal habits of the members of his band (Fleetwood Mac) as all members of the ensemble strove to take better care of their voices. “Stevie takes great care of her voice and for the first-time Chris is using Stevie’s voice coach to take care of hers, as well.”⁶⁰

In contrast, some singers report skipping vocal warm ups, cool downs, and vocal exercise. For some, this appears to be because the natural vocal talent that was the origin of their success has never required a focus on voice training and exercise. They simply continue to do what they have always done until they are unable to do it anymore. Only when faced with vocal issues, often as they

grow older, do they turn to voice exercises and a focus on habilitation. Rod Stewart wrote how he experienced voice loss after his surgery. He grew frustrated with the recommendations of his physician to “wait and see,” and, after six months in this state of limbo, sought out a vocal coach (the cantor at his local synagogue).

Nate came round and he showed me some vocal exercises: him at the piano, [I] sat beside him, feeling self-conscious and worried. It was like a daily workout for the voice—one that I still use today. He got me doing scales, runs, arpeggios. He forced me to make raspberry noises and humming sounds . . . He was exactly what I needed. Day after day, Nate came back, and day after day we did the same thing.⁶¹

Steroids

In an ideal world, singers with vocal injuries of any kind would be allowed the recommended time for full vocal rehabilitation. That could include total voice rest, modified voice rest, decreased performance demands, and/or limitations on voice use depending on the diagnosis. Unfortunately, in the world of elite vocal athletes, singers face immense internal and external pressures to perform regardless of long term implications for vocal and overall health. When problems arise, they may look for “quick fix” solutions to alleviate symptoms, and for some, the quick fix is steroids. Singers are often uninformed of long term consequences of steroid injections. In the world of the immediate, they may view steroids as a magic elixir because “the show must go on.” Phil Collins wrote of his steroid abuse and its long-term consequences.

Mercifully while I never suffered from nodules on any of the giant Genesis or solo tours in the eighties or nineties, I did have a doctor in every port. I very rarely canceled shows, because I knew when it was time to pull the emergency cord and go for the injection of prednisone, a corticosteroid . . . Your vocal cords are very small, like two tiny coins that rub together. If they become swollen, or abused, they won’t meet to enable you to sing a note. Then you’re in trouble. If you keep up the abuse, in their engorged state they eventually become nodules. But a quick steroid injection reduces the swelling and you’re right as rain. In the short-term anyway . . . So you’re given a shot of prednisone, injected into your bum. The steroid will get you through the show, but once you’re on it, you’re on it for ten days. It will also get you a lovely

cacophony of side effects: psychotic mood swings, water retention, moon face.⁶²

Rod Stewart described how his steroid use tragically resulted in significant health issues, “Very quickly my voice problems became a psychological condition as well as a physical one . . . I would start anticipating the problem even before it arose . . . And then I would take a steroid just in case.”⁶³ He goes on to talk about graduating from prednisone tablets to an injected steroid cocktail of antibiotics, steroids, and vitamin B. This led to temperament changes toward aggression and impatience, along with mood changes and weight gain. “I could hardly come out and explain what was happening. It would have been career suicide.”⁶⁴ When injections were no longer effective, he added cortisone tablets and suffered an internal GI bleed that effectively halted his tour. At this point, he was forced to face the fact that he could not continue the chronic steroid use. As a result, he began to address the underlying causes of his vocal malady.

Adjustment of Performance

A final strategy reported by singers to accommodate vocal change is to make adjustments in their singing during live performances. Joe Perry wrote, “As we musicians get older, we need to make adjustments.”⁶⁵ Multiple singers talk about such adjustments. With a touch of whimsical humor, Phil Collins observed, “The voice, however, is a different beast. You can’t put a sticking plaster on iffy vocal cords. So, you have to try to transcend via other means.”⁶⁶ Linda Ronstadt explained, “After I turned fifty, my voice began to change, as older voices will. I recrafted my singing style and looked for new ways to tell a story with the voice I had.”⁶⁷ Brian Wilson also discussed vocal changes in his performance as he grew older.

You’d think that by the time I got to sixty I would have learned everything about singing, but that turned out not to be true at all. I keep learning and lots of that is about unlearning. Back in the ‘60s, I was absolutely obsessed with my voice. I was really obsessed with how it sounded, especially the high parts. Now I don’t sing as high anymore and I use it simply as an instrument to communicate love and good vibes.⁶⁸

Such global changes are often accompanied by the use of specific techniques to keep performing. One way to adjust for decreased upper range is to lower the key of the songs, but this can come at a cost. Phil Collins explained this paradox. “You could lower the key in certain songs, but that risked losing the magic. ‘Mama,’ for example: take that down too low and it really has no magic at all.”⁶⁹ Another approach is to maintain the original key, but rewrite the area of concern. “Even ‘I Can’t Dance,’ a stupidly simple song, got tough. That opening high burst of the first chorus line—ouch! . . . But singing that every night, I’d find myself skipping around the note. Otherwise the game would have been up. Shot myself in the vocal cord with that one.”⁷⁰ One clever adjustment is to set the audience up for a potential miss so they are impressed if you nail it and less judgmental if you don’t. Billy Joel built this into his act when he was performing a song he wrote at age 34 when he was 66. “Both men seem rather proud of the set’s almost Houdini-like big dare, in which Joel warns the crowd that he may not be able to hit the high notes in ‘An Innocent Man.’ That he does it sitting down enhances the stunt, Cohen says: ‘Is he gonna make it? It’s not just a falsetto, it’s a powered falsetto.’”⁷¹ Finally, some singers adjust by passing the singing to the audience. Toni Braxton described using this strategy when she would forget what she was singing. “Here’s a trick that every performer knows: When you go brain dead, just ask the audience to sing along with you—fans often know the lyrics better than I do.”⁷² This strategy also works for covering notes that the performer can no longer reach. It works well because it involves the audience into the performance, paradoxically enriching the audience experience. As a last resort, when the other options no longer work, singers can completely avoid the particular song.

Pushing on Regardless

A final strategy is for singers to ignore changes occurring in the voice and to continue to sing, regardless of the actual or perceived consequences. Reflecting this “show must go on” mentality, Billy Idol wrote, “Being an artist is about putting your fears aside and going for it. This was my code in 1976, and in 1993, and it still is today.”⁷³

Beyond ego, the issue of responsibility is often a key element in a singer’s desire to continue performing

even when the voice may be failing. This responsibility, as we have noted, involves multiple constituencies. There is responsibility toward the audience and a desire not to disappoint; there is responsibility toward the ensemble, the large number of supporting personnel whose livelihood depends on the performance and who may have been with the performer for many years and have become key members of the entourage. Linda Ronstadt describes an occasion when she had to miss five performances, “the feeling is that the missing cast member has let down the entire production. I got back on the stage the minute I could squeak.”⁷⁴ For some singers this provokes genuine anxiety. Tina Sinatra captures the fear that her aging father experienced as his performance declined and he struggled to hold on.

After seeing one too many of these fiascos, I went to him and said, “Pop, you can stop now. You don’t have to stay out on the road. You can ease up and relax.” A stricken expression passed over Dad’s face and he said, “No, I can’t stop. I’ve got to earn more money, got to earn more money. I have to make sure that everyone’s taken care of.” He looked genuinely terrified.⁷⁵

Some singers are aware of the dangers of performance heroism but continue on regardless. Similar to many aging professional sports athletes who play on with injuries, they consider this to be an inherent cost of their vocation—something that comes with the territory. Singers often realize that they are likely doing themselves harm, but they try to push this to the back of their mind. Phil Collins writes,

Mainly though, I didn’t allow myself too much time to think of these problems. For three decades I pushed on, and on, and on. What’s worrying is that if I counted now all the times I’ve been pricked in the buttocks in the name of a good vocal performance, I’d have trouble sitting down. I’d have trouble getting back up again too: as I would one day find out, too much cortisone can make your bones brittle.⁷⁶

DISCUSSION

Singing and Performing in Life Course Context

For most performers, singing is a lifelong vocation. Their voices become an integral part of their identity at a very young age. The trajectory of voice changes over the life

span does not occur in a vacuum, but it takes place in a life course context in which environmental factors outside the individual play a major role. As their career develops, each singer's vocal trajectory is increasingly shaped by tour dates, an entourage of supportive personnel, and the accoutrements, obligations, and perils of fame. Indeed, each singer's life is framed against the backdrop of an ever changing industry in which singing may become larger than they are, an industry in which evolving technologies are transforming the format, mediums, and venues of performances. Our analysis reveals, in the words of singers themselves, how these forces can pose a threat to singer identity and how they cope with such challenges, especially toward the end of their career.

Making sense of the themes we have identified and placing them in broader context, it is essential to remember that our findings are drawn from the world of contemporary singers and can be applied only to this genre. The findings have both practical and moral implications. There are implications for singers: how they live their lives as they grow older and encounter voice changes, and how they utilize resources available to them to sustain and accommodate to an aging voice. There are also major implications for the evolving music industry within which each singer develops a career. Finally, there are broader implications for society, and, more specifically, for each of us as we idolize these singers, attend their performances, and share their journey as they grow older. Ultimately, in each of these domains, there are questions of responsibility.

Responsibility

The Responsibility of Singers

First, singers themselves have a responsibility to care for their voices and adjust wisely to aging associated changes in vocal abilities. This involves the education of singers to focus on *their own voice* and on what makes this voice exceptional and unique. A key element is the education of singers on their vocal mechanism and vocal health and on the potential support that can be provided by voice specialists. This should start early in their career, ideally with baseline voice evaluation. Here we transition to the responsibility of singing teachers, vocologists, vocal coaches, and voice clinicians.

The Responsibility of Teachers and Clinicians

All teachers and clinicians who routinely work with singers have a responsibility and obligation to these performers to provide instruction and coaching specialized to the singer's unique needs, education on vocal health, hygiene, and best practice recommendations, and habilitative and rehabilitative services. Most importantly, over all of this, there is the responsibility to *do no harm*.

Clinical intervention should include vocal health and hygiene recommendations and vocal rehabilitation exercises to strengthen, balance, and maintain each singer's vocal instrument. Such rehabilitation should always be individualized to the singer based on the unique demands of their style; exceptional voices require exceptional care. Not all ear, nose, and throat specialists (ENTs) and speech-language pathologists (SLPs) have the same skill sets and experience. Not all voice teachers, coaches, and vocologists who work with singers have the same training, experiences, and expertise. It is imperative that those providers and teachers working with professional singers have the appropriate training and experience level required of this population. The singing voice specialist, SLP, and laryngologist should work together as a team to provide optimal singer/patient care. This includes targeted education on what it takes for singers to create and maintain *their* sound as they go through the maintenance and rehabilitation process. At some point during the journey (which will depend on the particular needs of the singer), this team should include a vocal coach/teacher/vocologist to help facilitate the transition from a rehabilitative to a habilitative focus. The more knowledgeable singers are about the voice and what it takes to keep it in *their* ideal shape, the more they will be advantaged with respect to noticing potentially harmful changes. Regular access to comprehensive voice evaluations across their careers will, ideally, allow singers to seek out voice specialists at the first sign of aging voice changes. An early start on any needed vocal intervention or rehabilitation may reverse or delay negative consequences of vocal change. Appropriate clinical and studio support allows singers to maintain *their* voices throughout and especially during the twilight of their career.

Industry Responsibility

A third area of responsibility lies within the music industry. The landscape of this industry has changed

significantly over the life course of the current cohort of aging singers. Historically, singers have taken a “radio-silent” approach to vocal injuries. As Rod Stewart writes, acknowledgment of vocal issues can be seen as “career suicide.” Why would any singer want that? Industry changes including the change to a digital music platform with a focus on streaming services rather than album sales are increasingly forcing singers to tour, not only to promote their music, but also as a primary income source. Such increased demands can be detrimental to singers who are already at an increased risk of vocal injury compared to the normal population, due to the intensive vocal demands of the job. When vocal load is increased to accommodate the demands of the changing music scene, the risk of vocal fatigue and injury is further increased.

Audience Responsibility

Finally, there is the question of audience responsibility. There is a need for greater education of audiences and the listening public. Increased transparency from singers about their vocal injuries is only one component of this process. It should also include increasing public awareness of both normative and pathological changes associated with exceptional aging voices and promoting deeper society-wide understanding of what it takes to sustain such voices as singers age. Speech-language pathologists, singing voice specialists, and physicians who work with elite singers have a role to play in facilitating this process by raising awareness, empathy, understanding and acceptance of vocal changes associated with the aging of exceptional voices. If the music truly does belong to all of us, isn't it our obligation to help the singers stay as vocally healthy as possible so they can continue to share their talent?

CONCLUSION

Although singers often seem larger than life and invincible, they aren't superhuman. There is a need to change unrealistic audience expectations that hold them to the standards and expectations of their youth. Those who are still performing in later years are brave enough to continue, giving us the music, even if it is not at the same level as their younger years. They, too, are grappling with the passage of time and with their mortality. Rod Stewart says it best.

I am under no illusions. I know that one day it will come to an end. I know that eventually—and it may be sooner, rather than later—I will reach a stage where getting out there and performing is simply no longer possible. And I don't know how I'm going to feel about that. It's been there all my life. I've given so much to it, and it's given so much back to me. I worry about the hole it will leave.⁷⁷

Like most of his peers, he shares Bob Seger's recognition that, “Well, I'm older now and still running against the wind.”⁷⁸

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APPENDIX

AUTOBIOGRAPHIES/MEMOIRS (26)

Singer	Year	Title	Genre	Comments on Voice
Toni Braxton	2014	<i>Unbreak My Heart: A Memoir</i>	R&B/Soul	
Jimmy Buffett	1998	<i>A Pirate Looks at 50</i>	Easy Listening	Nothing
Carol Burnett	2010	<i>This Time Together: Laughter and Reflection</i>	Music Theater	Nothing
Judy Collins	2011	<i>Sweet Judy Blue Eyes</i>	Folk/Pop	Nothing
Phil Collins	2016	<i>Not Dead Yet</i>	Traditional Pop/Soft Rock	
Elvis Costello	2015	<i>Unfaithful Music and Disappearing Ink</i>	Punk Rock	Nothing
Alan Cumming	2014	<i>Not My Father's Son</i>	Music Theater	
Alan Cumming	2016	<i>You Got to Get Bigger Dreams: My Life In Stories and Pictures</i>	Music Theater	
Bob Dylan	2004	<i>Chronicles, Vol. 1</i>	Folk/Pop	
Kim Gordon		<i>Girl in a Band</i>	Alt. Rock	
Woodie Guthrie	1968	<i>Bound for Glory</i>	American Folk	
Billy Idol	2014	<i>Dancing with Myself</i>	Punk Rock	
Tom Jones	2015	<i>Over the Top and Back: The Autobiography</i>	Pop Rock	Nothing
Carole King	2012	<i>A Natural Women: A Memoir</i>	Pop/Soul	
Mike Love	2016	<i>Good Vibrations: My Life as a Beach Boy</i>	Rock/Pop	
Shirley MacLaine	2013	<i>What if</i>	Music Theater	Nothing
Willie Nelson	2012	<i>Roll Me Up and Smoke Me When I Die</i>	Country	
Dolly Parton	1994	<i>Dolly: My Life and Other Unfinished Business</i>	Country	
Linda Ronstadt	2013	<i>Simple Dreams: A Musical Memoir</i>	Pop/Country	
Carly Simon	2015	<i>Boys in the Trees: A Memoir</i>	Pop Rock	
Bruce Springsteen	2016	<i>Born to Run</i>	Rock	
Paul Stanley	2014	<i>Face the Music: A Life Exposed</i>	Hard Rock/Heavy Metal	
Rod Stewart	2012	<i>Rod: The Autobiography</i>	Rock/Pop	
Dick Van Dyke	2011	<i>My Lucky Life In and Out of Show Business: A Memoir</i>	Music Theater	
Dick Van Dyke	2015	<i>Keep Moving: And Other Tips and Truths About Aging</i>	Music Theater	Nothing
Andy Williams	2009	<i>Moon River and Me: A Memoir</i>	Easy Listening	
Neil Young	2012	<i>Waging Heavy Peace: A Hippie Dream</i>	Folk Rock/Country	

AUTOBIOGRAPHIES—WITH GHOSTWRITER (24)

Singer	(Ghostwriter)	Year	Title	Genre	Comments on Voice
Gregg Allman	w/ Alan Light	2012	<i>My Cross to Bear</i>	Blues/Southern Rock	
Tony Bennett	w/ Mitch Albom	2012	<i>Life is a Gift</i>	Pop/Easy Listening	
Tony Bennett	w/ Scott Simon	2106	<i>Just Getting Started</i>	Traditional Pop	Nothing
Chuck Berry	w/ Bruce Springsteen	1988	<i>The Autobiography</i>	Rock and Roll	
Johnny Cash	w/ Patrick Carr	1997	<i>Cash: The Autobiography</i>	Country	
Peter Criss	w/ Larry Sloman	2012	<i>Makeup to Breakup</i>	Hard Rock/ Heavy Metal	
Clive Davis	w/ Anthony DeCurtis	2012	<i>The Soundtrack of My Life</i>	Producer	Nothing
Mick Fleetwood	w/ Anthony Bozza	2014	<i>Now, Then, and Fleetwood Mac Plays On</i>	Pop Rock	
John Fogarty	w/ Jimmy McDonough	2015	<i>Fortunate Son: My Live, My Music</i>		
Waylon Jennings	w/ Lenny Kaye	1996	<i>Waylon</i>	Country Rock	
Shirley Jones	w/ Wendy Leigh	2013	<i>A Memoir</i>	Traditional Pop	Nothing
Naomi Judd	w/ Marcia Wilkie	2016	<i>River of Time</i>	Country	
B. B. King	w/ David Ritz	1996	<i>Blues All Around Me: The Autobiography of B. B. King</i>	Blues	
Bill Kreutzmann	w/ Benji Eisen	2015	<i>Deal: My Three Decades Drumming, Dreams, and Drugs with the Grateful Dead</i>	Rock	Nothing
Loretta Lynn	w/ George Vecsey	1976	<i>Coal Miner's Daughter</i>	Country	Nothing
Willie Nelson	w/ Edwin Shrake	1988	<i>Willie, An Autobiography</i>	Country	
Willie Nelson	w/ David Ritz	2015	<i>It's a Long Story: My Life</i>	Country	
Joe Perry	w/ David Ritz	2014	<i>Rocks: My Life In and Out of Aerosmith</i>	Hard Rock	
Debbie Reynolds	w/ Dorian Hannaway	2013	<i>Unsinkable: A Memoir</i>	Music Theater	
Keith Richards	w/ James Fox	2010	<i>Life</i>	Rock/Blues	
Tina Sinatra	w/ Jeff Coplon	2000	<i>My Father's Daughter: A Memoir</i>	Traditional Pop	
Ricky Skaggs	w/ Eddie Dean	2013	<i>Kentucky Traveler—My Life in Music</i>	Country/ Bluegrass	
Brian Wilson	w/ Ben Greenman	2016	<i>I am Brian Wilson: A Memoir</i>	Rock/Pop	
Frank Zappa	w/ Peter Occhiogrosso	1989	<i>The Real Frank Zappa Book</i>		

JoAnna E. Sloggy, MA, CCC-SLP, received a BA in Music studying voice and piano from Methodist University and a MA in Communication Sciences and Disorders from the University of Memphis. She completed her clinical fellowship focusing on voice and upper airway disorders at the University of Kentucky Voice & Swallow Clinic. JoAnna is currently the Singing Voice Specialist for the clinic, where she provides evaluations and treatment for Elite Vocal Athletes as well as general voice and upper airway disorders. She has extensive training and experience with voice in classical, music

theater, and CCM genres, as well as voice pedagogy. JoAnna has worked extensively as a music theater performer and continues to run a private studio focusing on training performers for careers in the arts. She has presented at numerous conferences, including research presentations and workshops on voice therapy techniques, focusing on Vocal Function Exercises. She is currently a Rehabilitation Sciences doctoral student (ABD) at the University of Kentucky under the mentorship of Dr. Joseph Stemple, CCC-SLP, ASHA-F, where her focus is the aging Elite Vocal Athlete.

BIOGRAPHIES (23)

Singer	Author	Year	Title	Genre	Comments on Voice
Johnny Cash	Robert Hillburn	2013	<i>Johnny Cash: The Life</i>	Country	
Cher	Daryl Easlea and Eddi Figel	2013	<i>Cher: All I Really Want to Do</i>	Pop/Disco	
Bob Dylan	Dennis McDougal	2014	<i>Dylan: The Biography</i>	Folk/Pop	
Duke Ellington	Terry Teachout	2013	<i>Duke: A Life of Duke Ellington</i>	Jazz	
Aretha Franklin	David Ritz	2015	<i>Respect</i>	R&B/Soul	
Elton John	David Buckley	2007	<i>Elton John: The Biography</i>	Pop Rock	
Billie Holiday	John Szwed	2015	<i>Billie Holiday: The Musician and the Myth</i>	Blues	
Mick Jagger	Philip Norman	2012	<i>Mick Jagger</i>	Pop/Rock/Blues	
Mick Jagger	Christopher Andersen	2012	<i>Mick: The Wild Life and Mad Genius of Jagger</i>	Pop/Rock/Blues	
Billy Joel	Fred Schruers	2014	<i>Billy Joel: The Definitive Biography</i>	Soft Rock/Pop	
Eartha Kitt	John Williams	2014	<i>America's Mistress: The Life and Times of Eartha Kitt</i>	Jazz	Nothing
Jerry Lee Lewis	Rick Bragg	2014	<i>Jerry Lee Lewis: His Own Story</i>	Rock and Roll	
Paul McCartney	Howard Sounes	2010	<i>Fab: An Intimate Life of Paul McCartney</i>	Pop Rock	
Paul McCartney	Phillip Norman	2016	<i>Paul McCartney—The Life</i>	Pop Rock	
Paul McCartney	Paul Du Noyer	2015	<i>Conversations with McCartney</i>	Pop Rock	
Tom Petty	Warren Zanes	2015	<i>Petty: The Biography</i>	Rock	
Elvis Presley	Ginger Alden	2014	<i>Elvis and Ginger</i>	Rock and Roll	
Keith Richards	Egan Sean	2013	<i>Keith Richards on Keith Richards—Conversations and Interviews</i>	Rock/Blues	
Paul Simon	Cornel Bonca	2015	<i>Paul Simon: An American Tune</i>	Folk/Rock/Pop	Nothing
Frank Sinatra	Kitty Kelley	1986	<i>His Way: An Unauthorized Biography</i>	Traditional Pop	
Frank Sinatra	David Lehman	2015	<i>Sinatra's Century: One Hundred Notes on the Man and His World</i>	Traditional Pop	
Frank Sinatra	J. Randy Taraborrelli	2015	<i>Sinatra: Behind the Legend</i>	Traditional Pop	
Barbara Streisand	Neal Gabler	2016	<i>Barbara Streisand: Redefining Beauty, Femininity and Power</i>	Music Theater/ Jazz	

Graham D. Rowles, PhD, an avid shower singer, is Professor of Gerontology (Emeritus) and was Founding Director of the Graduate Center for Gerontology at the University of Kentucky. An environmental gerontologist, his research focuses on the lived experience of older adults, including the accommodation of older performers to their aging. A central theme of this work is exploration, employing qualitative methodologies, of the changing relationship between older adults and their environments and implications of this relationship for health, wellbeing, and environmental design.

He has conducted in-depth ethnographic research with elderly populations in inner city, rural (Appalachian), and nursing facility environments. Recent research has focused on long-term care and the meaning of place in old age. His publications include *Prisoners of Space?*, seven co-edited books, and numerous articles and book chapters. A Fellow of the Gerontological Society of America and the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education, Dr. Rowles has served as President of the Southern Gerontological Society and the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education.