

PRESENTER: Dr. Elizabeth Thompson

SESSION TITLE: Emotional Trauma and the Singing Voice

SESSION TYPE: Lecture

SESSION DESCRIPTION

Modern voice teachers and pedagogues have learned to recognize certain signs of pathological vocal traumas in the voice studio. Less attention, however, has been given to the ways in which emotional trauma can manifest in the body - and thereby in the singing voice. Many voice teachers are unaware of the physical actualizations and tensions specifically resulting from emotional trauma in a singer's life, and indeed, they may feel ill-equipped to address such manifestations.

This presentation will describe key, functional aspects of the singing instrument which are closely tied to the body's sympathetic nervous system. This will provide a basis for exploring why certain areas of the body and specific technical components are most likely to be impacted by emotional trauma. I will present useful vocabulary and technical exercises for working through some of these vocalisms. This presentation represents foundational aspects of a series of ongoing studies and projects by the author related to the pedagogy of engaging with emotional trauma and the singing voice.

PRESENTER BIO

Elizabeth Thompson made her debut to Bloomington-Normal audiences as the mezzo-soprano soloist in Beethoven's 9th Symphony with the Illinois Symphony Orchestra (2018). An art song enthusiast, Thompson performs recital and chamber works on a regular basis. Operatic highlights include leading roles in *Carmen*, *Florencia en El Amazonas*, *Maria Stuarda*, *Die Zauberflöte*, and *The Consul*. Thompson earned a Doctorate of Musical Arts degree from the University of Illinois in 2015 and has received awards through the Orpheus National Vocal Competition and the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. A student-centric teacher, she emphasizes skills which provide a technical foundation to support thoughtful dramatic communication and longevity of the vocal instrument. At the 2020 Central Region NATS conference, her lecture *VoceVista: A Pedagogue's Tool from the Pandemic Toolbox* was a featured presentation. Thompson teaches Applied Voice and Vocal Pedagogy at Illinois State University and serves as the Voice Area Coordinator.