

AMERICAN ACADEMY
OF
TEACHERS OF SINGING



(Part I)

ADVICE TO STUDENTS

Reprint of Original Pronouncement



(Part II)

ADVICE TO STUDENTS

Advice for Aspirants to a Professional Career

1955

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(Part I)

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ADVICE TO STUDENTS

The American Academy of Teachers of Singing is often asked questions regarding the possibilities of a career either in opera or concert, the conditions of study, the amount of preparation needed, the cost in time and money, etc. In response, the Academy has prepared an "Avoid and Remember" list that we wish to bring to the attention of both teachers and students.

Nobody should undertake a professional career in singing unless the call to do so is imperative and irresistible. Many students come to New York without such a call, unprepared in one way or another, or in all ways, to meet the requirements and difficulties of its life. Much waste of time, money and health would be avoided if aspirants and their parents or backers would realize that the road to success is long and arduous, and only achieved by those of exceptional gifts and staying power.

The whole future of a singer may be ruined by incorrect teaching in the beginning; therefore choose your teacher with as much care as you would your doctor.

AVOID teachers who make extravagant promises and beguile by flattery.

AVOID teachers who advertise as "the greatest living authority."

AVOID teachers who claim the discovery of new and wonderful methods.

AVOID teachers who promise results in a short or specified time. Voice is a physical development in which muscles are trained to coordinate. This takes time and varies with each individual.

AVOID teachers who claim to teach the method of some well known artist with whom they have never studied, or possibly only for a short period.

AVOID teachers who offer a few tricks as a "cure-all" for vocal ills. They should be shunned as one shuns a quack or a patent-medicine.

AVOID "correspondence" teachers. Teaching requires personal contact, close observation and constant reiteration.

REMEMBER that a beautiful, natural voice is no more valuable to its possessor than a beautiful violin or piano; it is just as difficult to master one as the other.

REMEMBER that a thorough musical foundation, languages and general culture are indispensable.

REMEMBER that intelligence, diligence, vigorous health, and in addition to these, financial resources are necessary for the student.

REMEMBER that every singer should be prepared to study for at least four years. This does not exclude the possibility of earning money by your voice within this period.

REMEMBER that an operatic career is one of enormous difficulty, in which few achieve success.

All of the above recommendations are to assist not to discourage you.

(Part II)

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ADVICE TO STUDENTS

Aspirants to a Professional Career

The American Academy of Teachers of Singing, in addition to the general statements listed in Part I of this paper, also offers the following advice to students who are faced with a decision concerning their future.

During the second and third years of study, the question often arises as to whether the student possesses those qualities essential to success in the professional field. (The American Academy believes that a year's study should consist of 60 hours of private lessons covering a period of nine months.)

The following are some questions to which the student should find satisfactory answers.

In arriving at the decision, consultation with competent authorities in the field of singing is strongly advised.

1. Is the voice adequate or perhaps exceptional?
2. Is the desire to become a singer based on innate musical talent?
3. Is there robust health, and are there any physical defects that cannot be overcome by training?
4. Is there mental and emotional stability?
5. Is there sufficient evidence of ambition and drive necessary to become a professional singer?
6. Is there evidence of a power of concentration and of an ability to memorize?
7. Is the potential musicianship adequate to meet future professional standards?
8. Is there an expressive personality? Is the personal appearance sympathetic?
9. Is there evidence of an interpretative ability?
10. Is there the reliability and responsibility necessary for all the demands of professional life?

There is a natural capacity for growth and development in every human being. The student who desires to enter the professional field and eventually become a mature artist must constantly have this principle in mind and practice it in continuing fashion with the realization that if the process stops development ceases.

