

原著論文

## ハーバート＝チェザリーの思想に基づく声の「美しさ」の概念

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## Concept of 'Beauty' in Singing Voice Based on Herbert-Caesari's Works

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to discuss the notion of beautiful voice in artistic or classical singing and the possibility of defining the beauty of tone. To this end, I analyse the thoughts of Edgar Herbert-Caesari, a 20<sup>th</sup> century British singing teacher and writer, based on five of his books. While most previous studies have mainly focussed on his singing pedagogy and techniques, this study contributes to the literature by examining his thoughts about 'beautiful' singing, which remain relatively unexplored. His thoughts revealed three main ideas. First, he thinks that it is possible to define the *Beauty* of tone because vocal organs do have a natural movement. Second, he insists that singers, singing teachers and even audiences must recognize beauty of tone to prevent the decline in singing standards. Third, he thinks that to recognize beautiful tone, it is necessary to understand the natural movement of vocal organs based on appropriate scientific knowledge. Despite disagreements on whether the standards of beautiful singing can indeed be defined, Herbert-Caesari's work continue to influence today's classical singing and singing education.

Key Words: *classical singing education, beauty of tone*

## 1. BACKGROUND

Many studies have approached the phenomenon

of artistic singing from a scientific perspective by focusing on aspects such as acoustics and physiology. For example, in their study, Watts, Barnes-Burroughs, and Blanton (2004, p. 82) clarified that by using scientific knowledge, 'a measure' can be developed 'as a means to objectively investigate voice quality differences'. Yoshida (1994), a Japanese scholar, also stated that we can define the quality of singing voice to a certain extent by studying it from acoustical viewpoints.

However, voice teachers and students must still address the practical issue of whether they can define what a beautiful voice is. As Matsuura (1990, p. 142) mentions, the beauty of a voice is 'related to the singer's musical ability, intelligence, and character'; however, the possibility of defining the characteristics of a beautiful voice has not been fully explored. For example, given that one's perception of beauty is subjective, is it impossible to ascertain the beauty of a voice? According to Husler and Rodd-Marring (2006, p.123), 'we shouldn't consider the beauty of tone as just a figment'; if this is true, then, does beautiful voice have a specific quality? Nagatomo (2009, p. 10) says, 'the definition of [a] beautiful voice is still important problem for many students and teachers in today's artistic singing' and 'analysing the thought of historical singers will be help when we think about the beauty of tone'. Therefore, this study aims to examine the concept of beautiful voice in artistic or classical singing and the possibility of defining the beauty of tone.

To this end, this study analyses the thought of Edgar Herbert-Caesari, a 20<sup>th</sup> century British singing teacher, who also wrote several books about artistic singing and singing pedagogy. While most studies have focused on the influence of his teaching techniques in the vocal training, or scientific aspects

of his teaching techniques, this study is more interested in his thoughts about the *Beauty* of singing voice.

## 2. PREVIOUS STUDIES ON HERBERT-CAESARI

To explore what a beautiful voice is in classical singing, I would like to focus on the works of a British singing teacher, Edgar Herbert-Caesari. Herbert-Caesari taught singing to many singers from the early- to mid-1900s and also wrote and published books about artistic singing and singing education from 1936 to 1969.

Several studies have written about Herbert-Caesari's works. For example, in his work *Bel Canto*, James Stark (1999, p. xxi), an American music scholar, characterized Herbert-Caesari as one of Britain's most famous singing teachers. Berton Coffin, (1980) an American classical singer and a professor at Colorado University, refers to Herbert-Caesari's technique of vowel pronunciation called *sound beam*, stating that the sound beam 'is involved with the upward and downward pulls' of 'the head position' (p. 179). Clifton Ware (1998, p. 252) cites Herbert-Caesari as an example of one among many teachers who published books about vocal pedagogy: 'In the second half of the century, there has been a virtual explosion of vocal publications by many pedagogues, including Kenneth Westerman, Edgar E Herbert-Caesari,....' Cornelius L. Reid, an American classical singing teacher refers to Herbert-Caesari's concept of Beauty stems from a type of vocal tone he advocated called the *pharyngeal voice*. He said that 'in advocating the technique which led to this type of tone production [pharyngeal voice], Herbert-Caesari discounted the need for breath 'support', believing that the pharyngeal voice 'by a willed nervous-mental energy would translate itself into muscular action.'" (Reid, 1983, p. 268)

Evidently, most previous studies on Herbert-Caesari have focused on the technical aspects of his singing techniques, rather than his thoughts. Although these technical aspects seem to be important for singers, in this paper, I am more interested in exploring his thoughts about the beauty of tone, because his thoughts have influenced his teaching techniques to a considerable extent. Analysing five of Herbert-Caesari's books, I explore

his perspectives on what a beautiful tone is and how the beauty of a singing voice can be recognized and defined.

## 3. METHOD

This study is primarily based on an in-depth literature review of five works by Herbert-Caesari: *The Voice of the Mind* (1951), *Tradition and Gigli* (1963), *The Alchemy of Voice* (1965), *The Science and Sensations of Vocal Tone* (2007a), and *Vocal Truth-Some of the Things I Teach* (2007b).

From these works, I will extract his statements regarding the concept of beautiful voice in classical singing. By reconstructing and reinterpreting these statements, this paper ends with some considerations that can be used to further think about the notion of a beautiful voice.

In his work, *The Voice of the Mind* (1951, p.38), Herbert-Caesari shared the following thoughts about the notion of beauty in singing voice.

## 4. HERBERT-CAESARI'S THOUGHTS ON "BEAUTY" IN ARTISTIC SINGING

Many hold the view that Beauty is a relative term, meaning that everyone is privileged to decide for himself what is beautiful. Well might one say that virtue is a relative term, or Truth, or the principle of mathematics? And because this unreasoned opinion is in general so carelessly accepted by the majority, culture of the arts is heading slowly and surely for a chaos of ugliness, retrogression to the first feeble attempts of primitive man.

Herbert-Caesari wrote this excerpt on Beauty in the context of artistic singing; hence, here he is discussing the beauty of artistic singing voice, rather than the philosophical meaning of beauty. For Herbert-Caesari, Beauty in artistic singing is 'trueness', because 'trueness' cannot be relative thing, he does not think that the beauty of a voice is relative. As discussed earlier, he thought of singing techniques as 'a natural mechanism' that is unaffected by personal or cultural differences. Of course, he does not deny the importance of experiencing or sensing what a beautiful voice is by oneself. However, he realizes that it is not possible to

while fully ascertain the beauty of a singing voice through experience alone. As science has helped improve the understanding of many phenomena, scientific knowledge could also help define this beauty to some extent. In addition, he warns against thinking of Beauty as a relative thing, to avoid confusion regarding the concept about beautiful voice, especially among voice teachers.

Herbert-Caesari explains his reservations about the treatment of Beauty as follows:

Beauty is said to be a matter of opinion. But is it? We rather believe that Beauty is of fixed quality a reality existing behind appearances, an unassailable citadel, a combination of pleasing qualities, a definite standard of grace and excellence. Beauty is fitness. When line is given its true function, there Beauty lies. (Herbert-Caesari, 1951, p. 38)

According to his thoughts, the beauty of a singing voice cannot be judged based on one's personal opinion. For him, the qualities associated with Beauty can be defined clearly. Thus, he believes that all beautiful voices have their *true function*, insisting that 'There is an ideal beauty in vocal tone which all cannot expect to attain, but which all could at least strive to attain' (Herbert-Caesari, 1951, p. 39). Therefore, he thinks that the beauty that singers seek in their singing voice does exist, although he does not seem to deny the personal quality of a singer's singing voice. On the contrary, he most likely believes that it is *not impossible* to define what a beautiful voice is.

The following excerpt is from *The Science and Sensation of Vocal Tone*, which he calls the 'parent work' of *The Voice of the Mind*:

In the case of ideal vocal tone, considering voice as a whole, beauty is not a matter of opinion. The ideal tone, indescribable in words, issues from and corresponds to a central circle, texture, design, and form, plus that intangible something which attracts, appeals, satisfies, and rouses. Beauty is a standard of grace and excellence. (Herbert-Caesari, 2007a, p. 4)

He strongly believes that there is a certain quality of vocal tone that can be defined as the Beauty of the voice. This quality is seen as a 'standard' to be

used to judge someone's singing quality. However, if Beauty cannot be defined as per one's personal judgment, and all beautiful voice has its 'true function', this function must be determined to find the ideal beauty in a person's voice. Then the question that arises is, what according to Herbert-Caesari is this true function? He explains true function as follows: 'Behind the features of correct vocal tone in the form perceived by the listener lie the mechanical phenomena lies Reality-the sum total of vocal mechanics, the long-sought goal of vocal aspiration' (Herbert-Caesari, 1951, p. 30).

The above excerpt indicates that Herbert-Caesari considers the correct movement of vocal organs as the necessary condition for a beautiful voice. He regards true sensations of the vocal tone as 'the exponents, the externalization of physiologic-acoustic laws' (Herbert-Caesari, 1951, p. 30). Thus, according to his statement, the appropriate movement of vocal organs is the base of the vocal mechanics that produces a truly beautiful voice quality. He explains: 'Seeing that every voice in the world, irrespective of nationality is moulded upon the same mechanism that functions in accordance with laws of a fixed and unalterable nature'

While he does recognize diversity in people's singing voice across nationalities or cultures, he also stresses that people's vocal organs have the same anatomical structure. Therefore, according to his statement, whether we can produce true beauty through one's voice depends on how our vocal organs move, and not on our race or nationality. That is, the more *natural* the movement of one's vocal organs, the more beautiful one's singing voice is. He describes what he means by a natural voice in this statement from *The Alchemy of Voice*: 'What is good natural tone? So far as it is possible to describe it in writing, it is, primarily; tone issuing from a naturally well-adjusted vocal mechanism-the vibrator and resonator units' (Herbert-Caesari, 1965, p. 92).

He expresses that a good and natural vocal tone comes from one's physiological system, especially the function between the vibrator and resonator. Therefore, Herbert-Caesari seems to think that psychological organs have a correct mechanism that makes them move when we sing artistically. In other words, it is possible to define the standard of a beautiful singing voice and that the true beauty of a

singing voice is produced when the vocal organs function appropriately. Notably, this does not imply that there is only one truth of a beautiful voice. Given that he does not deny the personality of singing voice, his main point seems to be that the beauty of tone is not merely the product of personal opinion or some kind of enigma.

This paper does not go into the details of his definition of resonator and vibrator in his work, but instead outlines his explanations on the system of movement in one's *natural voice*. In his work titled *Tradition and Gigli*, he notes: 'In completely natural voice the vocal codes will automatically shorten, thin down, and increase their tension to match exactly the pitch from note to note as the scale is ascended to the highest note of the particular voice' (Herbert-Caesari, 1963, p. 44).

Above, Herbert-Caesari describes the natural movement of the vocal cords, which are necessary for singing. Herbert-Caesari's concept of natural voice implies that while singing, organs such as vocal cords move spontaneously and unconsciously. Thus, he says that 'Nature was ever a wise teacher; and our particular subject is fascinating and full of marvel and beauty' (Herbert-Caesari, 1963, p. 44).

##### 5. BACKGROUND OF HERBERT-CAESARI'S CONCEPT OF BEAUTY

In section 4, I clarified that Herbert-Caesari thinks we can define the Beauty of vocal tone. However, what could have been his reason for stating this? Why was he insistent on emphasizing that the tonal beauty of singing voice can be defined clearly? Moreover, why did Beauty mean so much to him? This following statement provides a starting point to understand his motivations: 'Well may the student of singing, as he stands bewildered amidst the chaos of conflicting vocal systems, ask himself if there exists anywhere an ultimate goal to reach' (Herbert-Caesari, 1963, p. 29).

By mentioning 'the student of singing', it is clear that Herbert-Caesari was not interested in finding the "Beauty" of tone or the kind of it; his vocal pedagogy was concerned with the experiences of the singing students. If the ideal quality of the singing voice cannot be defined, students would find it impossible to determine where to go or how to

progress, and this lack of direction could cause a lot of confusion. Thus, Herbert-Caesari's insistence on the concept of Beauty was not only aimed at defining beautiful tone, but also at guiding students and help them improve their technique. By insisting that Beauty of singing voice is not a mere product of personal opinion, he intended to resolve students' question regarding what makes the right vocal quality. Acknowledging the bad influence of regarding beauty of tone as personal opinion in vocal education, he also notes that 'Students in the main today seemingly have little desire and less impulse to acquire vocal knowledge' because:

Occasionally, some artistic soul seeks it, [but] he is never sure that he will find it, for the teaching fraternity, speaking generally, is so poorly equipped, having so very little or no knowledge of true vocal technique, nor of the physiological and acoustical laws governing that technique (Herbert-Caesari, 1963, p. 137).

Clearly, he takes the responsibility of being a teacher very seriously. He thinks that if there are many personal opinions about the beauty of singing voice, students would be clueless about how to become good singers. Moreover, if teachers impose different notions of beauty on their students, they would not be able to gauge what a truly beautiful voice is. Even if students understand the qualities of a beautiful tone, they would still require rigorous training and practice to acquire the artistic singing techniques required to become a great singer. However, at the least, they must know the goal of their training. Herbert-Caesari strongly insists that ineffective vocal training could inhibit students' desire to understand the true nature of vocal tone. Additionally, Herbert-Caesari believes that in the absence of a specific standard of Beauty, what makes the students seriously confused is the fact that there are a lot of personal opinions about the ideal vocal quality. This confusion is compounded when teachers are 'quite unable to impart their knowledge to others' (Herbert-Caesari, 2007b, p. 73). Accordingly, he argues that the knowledge imparted on students must be consistent to help them gain clarity. However, what could happen if the students are confused? He explains as follows:

What is the cause of the present low standard of singing in every land, what the cause of the aural deterioration, and what the cause of the mechanical decline? One answer covers all: Vocal technique is made and considered, today more or less a personal thing... It is only fair to add that most of those teaching false methods were themselves taught that two and two make five, a thing they blindly accepted, knowing no better. (Herbert-Caesari, 1951, pp. 39-40)

Herbert-Caesari concisely points out the predictable result of students' confusion about the beauty of voice-the decline in the singers' singing level of singers and the audiences' inability to recognize a truly beautiful tone. The reason is also clear to him. The teachers who teach their students 'false methods' were once themselves students who were confused and did not understand the characteristics of a beautiful voice. Herbert-Caesari does not, however, say that all great singers can become great teachers in the future.

Nevertheless, he thinks that the students who are confused about the various personal opinions on the beauty of tone and do not have any exact knowledge about the correct vocal quality will not be able to become good teachers in their future. According to his statement, teachers must be responsible not only for their own students' vocal quality, but also for the knowledge of the many students who will become singers or teachers in the future. This ability depends on whether the teachers can tell their students exactly what kind of vocal quality singers should pursue, which could make them good teachers and curb the decline in singing standards. Therefore, as Herbert-Caesari argues, we should not regard beautiful tone as a product of personal opinions. Further, he notes:

A sense of true values is one of the highest of all endowments, because it enables individuals to reach right and rapid decisions when challenged by doubt or conflicting claims; it gives him the power to look beyond his own sphere of appearances, preventing that restriction of outlook which dwarf development and arrested progress. (Herbert-Caesari, 2007a, p. 11)

According to Herbert-Caesari's argument, students

must understand their goals with respect to vocal training, which he describes as *true values*. Rather than the effort exerted to become a good singer, paying attention to their end goal is more important. Herbert-Caesari insists that it is not until the student deciphers the true beauty of voice that the student's practice can become effective.

In the following excerpt, he notes that recognizing beautiful tone is not only important for students and teachers, but is also relevant to the listeners of classical singing: 'audiences applaud the loud sound, purporting to express feeling and passion but doing neither, no matter how had the quality and the production' (Herbert-Caesari, 1965, p. 89).

Because singers have lost the concept of beauty, Herbert-Caesari insists that the audiences have come to prefer bold voices and tone solely for their loudness, and have become indifferent to the true beauty of tone. He goes on to say, 'The public ear has, indeed, deteriorated' (Herbert-Caesari, 1965, p. 90). As a result, 'Most singers want to make as much noise as possible with a complete disregard of aesthetic, or any other, natural law' (Herbert-Caesari, 1965, p. 101).

In this section, I clarified that Herbert-Caesari believes that losing the concept of Beauty has caused the decline in present-day singing standards. Teachers, students, and audiences disregard the true beauty of tone, due to which he justifies the need to define the Beauty of singing voice. Following his argument, we see that deeply contemplating the truth of a beautiful tone is necessary for teachers, students, and audiences. The teachers must think about what the correct voice is, try to define it, and teach it to their students. Conversely, students must seek knowledge about the standard of beautiful voice and gear their learning toward achieving this quality. In addition, rather than appreciating big or bold voices, audiences must learn how to appreciate only the truly beautiful voice. These type of teachers, students, and audiences can be cultivated only when the standard of beautiful voice is shared by all those who are concerned with artistic singing. Thus, Herbert-Caesari's thoughts about artistic singing consistently emphasize on thinking of Beauty as a matter of personal opinion. By insisting that there is a need to fix a standard of beautiful tone, he criticizes today's declining standards of



singing, and wants to stop this decline and enable the development of artistic singing.

## 6. HOW CAN WE DISCOVER THE BEAUTY IN ARTISTIC SINGING?

In sections 3 and 4, I clarified that Herbert-Caesari insisted that the teachers should teach their students about true beauty of voice, which comes from the natural movement of vocal organs. Then, what should singers do to find the beauty of tone? Should singers know about the scientific workings of their vocal organs? Does Herbert-Caesari's concept of Beauty in singing voice necessitate acoustical or anatomical knowledge? Or is there no need to acquire such scientific knowledge? He discusses the problem of the right amount of knowledge in the following excerpt:

Consequently, the student should not be satisfied with a mere nodding acquaintance with the particular laws governing vocal mechanism but should strive to gain a scientific insight into their meaning and working, and so attain an intelligent grasp of the organic whole. Then, and then only will he be in a position to expound these laws to himself as well as to others, with benefit to himself his fellow students, and the art as a whole. (Herbert-Caesari, 1965, p. 32)

Herbert-Caesari insists that we must not only know the true movement of vocal organs but must also deal with it systematically using scientific knowledge. In other words, students should understand the true mechanism of vocal cord movement with certainty, based on science of physiological phenomenon. Moreover, grasping the true Beauty of vocal tone through a scientific approach would also help to ensure that the right knowledge about vocal mechanism is passed on when the students themselves become teachers. However, Herbert-Caesari also says, 'What the student requires is not a profound erudition in either physiology or acoustics but a practical working knowledge of such aspects of the particular laws as apply to his art' (Herbert-Caesari, 1965, p. 32).

As seen above, Herbert-Caesari stresses the

practical value of anatomical knowledge of our vocal cords and the acoustical quality of our vocal tone, rather than detailed theoretical knowledge. He insists on learning only those scientific aspects that would help in one's singing practice. In other words, Herbert-Caesari does not require students to acquire scientific knowledge to the same extent as required by doctors or physiologists. He also explains as follows: 'The student deprived of the assistance of elements furnished by a combination of science and empiricism cannot readily conceive a true picture of vocal mechanism with its detailed phenomena' (Herbert-Caesari, 1965, p. 29).

Notably, Herbert-Caesari considers scientific knowledge as an 'assistance' for understanding vocal mechanism and does not believe that having scientific knowledge is sufficient to get a complete picture of vocal mechanism. Instead, connecting and identifying knowledge with the practical experience of artistic singing is the only way in which singers can find true vocal mechanism and true Beauty of voice:

There are about sixty-five muscles embedded in the larynx. Not many people are aware of this. They all work together, but at times give separate attention to three outlying different actions. One batch of muscles, for instance, actuates the tension of the cords as the voice ascends to the higher regions, a second batch actuates the shortening of the cords....The third and final batch actuates the thinning in depth of the cords, thus gradually eliminating the mass of the cords. (Herbert-Caesari, 2007b, p. 54)

Herbert-Caesari does not think that it is necessary to the names of the muscles that exist in the larynx or all the movements of these muscles, but singers must at least know how a part of these muscles moves when they sing artistically. Singers must also know about the vocal cords and the muscles connected to these vocal cords to understand how a voice is made. Accordingly, Herbert-Caesari focuses on 'three outlying dent actions' and the movements that concern the act of singing as part of the knowledge that a singer should know.

However, one could still question whether we

should accept Herbert-Caesari's insistence-why should singers know these movements of organs? Based on his writing, we know that Herbert-Caesari considers these movements as natural movements that produce the true beauty of tone. However, even if singers understand the vocal movements or role of the vocal cord while they sing, it does not mean that they can control these movements themselves. In addition, it does not seem like non-singers (i.e., audiences) should find it necessary to acquire knowledge of these movements. Nevertheless, Herbert-Caesari states that 'the singers should always be conscious of and live with, the vibrating principle within the larynx, and with the tonal sensations accruing there from' (Herbert-Caesari, 1965, p. 83). He justifies the need to recognize the movement of vocal organs as follows:

A certain degree of conscious control of the vocal cords...is possible through the 'feel' and visualization of certain tonal sensations accruing from correct laryngeal adjustments appropriate to the variations in pitch and by adjustments we mean varying effective length, thickness and tension of the cords. (Herbert-Caesari, 1965, p. 87)

The main purpose of this study was not to clarify Herbert-Caesari's explanations on how singers can control the mechanism of their vocal organs, but at the least, I show that he thinks singers as capable of consciously controlling particular vocal organs such as vocal cords.

Therefore, for Herbert-Caesari, singers must know how vocal organs move so that they can learn to control them by using their own consciousness, thereby improving their performances. Learning how vocal cords move could also help them learn how to appropriately change their length, thickness, or tension while they sing to produce the right sound. Further he argues:

The knowledge of vocal mechanics such as we possess is derived from and built primarily upon natural elements. Correct sensations of vocal tone, interpreted in their proper light, will be found to reflect with extraordinary fidelity the mechanical adjustments obtaining within the vibrator and resonator systems. An accurate knowledge of the

working of both systems is indispensable. (Herbert-Caesari, 1965, p. 30)

Thus, for Herbert-Caesari, the movements of the vocal organs are the source of the voice quality, such that a certain beautiful voice quality is produced by certain movements of the organs. Therefore, his concept of Beauty is meant to help singers understand the correct and natural mechanism of voice-producing systems. As Herbert-Caesari insists, singers should acquire the minimum scientific knowledge to understand the true beauty of tone.

Herbert-Caesari also believes that there are no shortcuts to knowing the truth. Hence, he did not want singers to merely learn some methods that could be used to attain direct and immediate effects. For him, the only way to find the true Beauty of tone is to understand the natural physical phenomenon of singing, to know how the vocal organs move, and to contemplate what kind of sensations their tone produces when singers sing with a beautiful voice.

## 7. CONCLUSION

In this paper, I focused on the thoughts of Herbert-Caesari by analysing his key statements about the Beauty of tone from five of his works. According to his thought, three things were clarified. First, he thinks that the Beauty of tone is definable because vocal organs have an innate natural movement. Second, he insists that singers, singing teachers, and audiences must be able to recognize the Beauty of tone to prevent the decline in singing standards. Third, he thinks that to recognize beautiful tone, one must understand the natural movement of vocal organs based on the required scientific knowledge.

However, this study has still failed to discuss an important aspect, which could be covered in future research. What should singers do to produce a truly beautiful tone? According to Herbert-Caesari's argument, singers can produce a beautiful and 'natural' voice through their own conscious efforts, and therefore, singers should be aware of the beauty their tone can produce, the appropriate movements of vocal organs to attain the desired results.

Indeed, it will be impossible to resolve all the problems about artistic singing and vocal pedagogy by solely analysing the thoughts of singing teachers. Both scientific and practical studies are necessary to dig deeper into the issues that singers would confront in their singing practice. However, the problem of defining beautiful voice in classical singing still seems relevant today. Some scholars insist that it is impossible to define the standard of beautiful voice, while others claim otherwise. Herbert-Caesari's thoughts seem to have a great influence over today's classical singing and singing education.

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