



The History and Technique of the Counter-Tenor: A Study of the Male High Voice Family (v. 1)

Peter Giles

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This text surveys the history, the present position and the possible future of the counter-tenor voice: it examines the male head-register from its early origins as the "falsetto" effect to its position today. Part One, History, covers many aspects of the counter-tenor voice: its development, the Classical period, Bach and the later classical period, the forgotten decades (about 1904 to about 1934) and the post-war renaissance. Part Two, Technique, covers, with the aid of technical diagrams, the vocal mechanism, registers and ranges, the "feigned voice" and early theorists, the falsetto family and pitches. The book adopts something of an alternative approach to a controversial, historical musical subject. Though it owes much to conventional, convergent method, the importance of divergence and intuitive thinking is stressed too. Standard musicology is complemented rather than complimented. Though championing and celebrating the counter-tenor voice range, the author is by no means uncritical of some aspects of it, as heard at present. This book should be valuable reading for all those interested in this small-voice family: an important survivor from male-voice training methods which were swept away in the 19th century.

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