

USE OF THE FLOW BALL IN SINGING AND SPEECH VOICE TRAINING.

Lecture and workshop by Lieve Jansen (B)

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In breathing and phonation exercises with the flow-ball, a light plastic ball is kept floating evenly and as long as possible in a basket on a holder at a fixed level by the expiratory air stream. Several effects have been reported: a constant phase of expiration, a focused and steady breath, control and stability of the expiratory airflow, sustained and controlled breathing, increased lung volume but above all a free, stronger, and more brilliant voice. However, the precise mechanisms and effects were not well understood.

In September 2014 in cooperation with the University of Leuven department Logopedic and Audiologic Sciences Labo Exp ORL, a research study was started with 13 singers: amateurs, pre-professional students and young professionals.

We examined the effect of the Flow Ball on some measurable parameters of the singing voice, namely maximal phonation time (MPT), closing of the vocal folds (using electroglottography (EGG), video kymography (VKG)) and vocal range (using phonetography).

The procedure was performed four times, of which the last time served as a control measurement. Before and after exercises with the flow ball, various parameters were recorded: videokymography (VKG), electroglottography (EGG), maximum phonation time (MPT), voice range profile (VRP) measurement. In the EGG the Closed Quotient (CQ) was determined. The intensity and frequency range (IR and FR) were derived from the VRP.

Results: The CQ was shorter after the exercises in most cases. No changes of the frequency range were observed after the flow ball exercises. The maximum phonation time and intensity range were increased in most cases.

The increase of the intensity range after the exercises is remarkable. This is in line with the findings of an increase of MPT in many cases and reports of improvement in breathing.

Workshop for Singers and Speech therapists: In this workshop, participants (using their own Flow Ball) learn how to use the Flow Ball and what exercises can be practiced.

Lieve Jansen divided her career between singing and teaching. As a voice teacher (1985-2015) at Luca Arts Leuven, in Masterclasses all over Europe and as a researcher (affiliated to KU Leuven), she was involved in different research projects both artistically and scientifically. In the artistic field she led a three-year research project "In Tränen unendlicher Lust" on the updating of interpretation and presentation of the Romantic German Song to the 21st century. Concerning scientific research, always related to teaching singers, she gave presentations on working with a spectrogram, Passavant's wall (about resonance) and others. She presented research results and a workshop in 3 previous editions of Pevoc.

She is president of Evta-Be, the Belgian association of the European Umbrella association EVTA (European Voice Teachers Association) and board member of EVTA.