Edited by Anthony F. Jahn, MD.

If you are a singer, singing teacher, actor, or other professional user of your voice, you must have this book! I am suspect of any book with a title that includes the word complete, but in this case, the description is spot on. Indeed, it would be appropriate to call this a comprehensive guide to complete health. Where else in the extant literature can you find pertinent—and expert—information on just about every concern faced by singers? It’s all here, presented in a clear, concise, non-judgmental manner. Overweight singers will find guidance in diet, exercise, and bariatric surgery (to fit into the “little black dress”). Other chapters provide insights into sleep, cosmetic surgery, general anesthesia, mental health, allergies, acupuncture, and hearing.

Of course, issues specific to the larynx and voice receive extensive attention. Jean Arbitbol provides a chapter on the vocal impact of hormones. Steven Zeitels discusses recent advances in laryngeal surgery. Anat Keidar and Nancy Kleeman Menges contribute an extraordinarily insightful and practical chapter on self-detection of voice injuries. Insights into cross-over styles, music theater (London and New York), and the unexpected perils of being on the stage are presented by experts in the field, topped off by a delightful essay by Marni Nixon on the secrets of a long career (talent and aptitude, opportunities, and hard work).

Continuity is provided by Anthony Jahn, who compiled and edited the the book and personally contributed nine chapters. His work ensures a consistent narrative voice that speaks directly to singers. The tone is engaging, and complex medical issues are presented in an easily accessible manner. This book will become required reading in all my advanced voice pedagogy courses. Bravi tutti, but especially, bravo—and thank you—Doctor Jahn.

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This book is a tour de force. Rachel Gates is a soprano, opera director, and singing health specialist. She works in a university musician’s wellness team. Dr Arick Forrest is a highly trained laryngologist with more than 20 years’ experience working with professional voice. Kerrie Obert is a clinical voice pathologist with a music degree who also works with the professional voice community. Their wealth of experience is enormous. This book shows their integrated talents. I suspect this book was written because the authors felt there was a significant gap in the literature for knowledge-hungry singers passionately interested in their instrument.

This book describes the type of health journey that many singers and other top echelon performers and athletes have. A normal one. Various health issues may arise as a matter of course. How should they be dealt with? Furthermore, the standard singer’s education does not necessarily prepare them for the full realities of a singer’s life or for the decades of changes that will occur in their bodies. It is beyond the remit of the vocal coach.

This book is thorough and logical, using common terminology (and science) which makes it very readable. The authors are, rightly, keen for the voice professional to take ownership of their own instrument. This tome goes a long way to providing the knowledge to do so. This will empower the individual to have an informed conversation with their teachers and voice healthcare professionals. Starting with Chapter 2: “Your Instrument” with anatomy and physiology is logical. The book goes on to cover health and standard medical conditions such as asthma, allergies, obesity, reflux, sleep apnoea, pregnancy and menses, to name but a few. The potential pitfalls for voice and the owner are carefully considered. The clarity of their point of view is expressed in chapters titled “The Singer as an Athlete,” “Vocally Hazardous Drugs,” and “Common Questions Answered.”

To my mind, the most relevant chapters discuss the interactions with laryngologists and voice pathologists for investigation and management of singers and their vocal issues. “What purpose does the ENT clinic serve and how will it serve you?” This is Why! How! and With Whom! Of paramount importance. There are many well-trained, well-meaning ENT specialists and voice pathologists. However, there
are not many who have super specialised in professional voice. These professionals work together in a voice team to provide the best possible outcome for their voice clients. These authors advocate a strong partnership in performance—the performer with their trusted and knowledgeable voice team. This is where the important discussions take place among the parties to determine the best course of action for the performer. Such discussions are greatly assisted by the performer being well informed. The description of clinic visits or the rare event of needing to go into the operating room for laryngeal surgery sound very clear, first hand, and personal. Written in great detail to demystify such potentially terrifying experiences.

The glossary and indexing are very helpful for quick navigation. There is also a very helpful link to voice videos.

I think this book covers the clinical breadth of voice extremely well. It adds greatly to the voice professional’s armamentarium to facilitate far greater knowledge and care for themselves and their valuable instrument.

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