

JOANN SOUTH OTTLEY (b. 1935):  
HER LIFE AND CONTRIBUTIONS AS A TEACHING ARTIST  
TO VOCAL MUSIC EDUCATION

by

Connie Devivic Nokes

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## DEDICATION

To my children, their spouses, and my grandchildren who love and accept me not just as mother or grandmother, but as myself. For David, who believed in me and encouraged me through the day-to-day reality of bringing this project to fruition. To my mother, who loves unconditionally in a world that has not always loved her back, and taught me to do the same. To my grandmothers, who embodied femininity and power without a hint of paradox and never allowed me to be less than who I am. To my siblings, who are some of the best people I know. To Bill, my “bridge over troubled water.” To JoAnn Ottley, who has courageously carried a torch into the darkness, lighting the way for me and many others. This is her story.

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the life and work of vocal performer, teaching artist, and music educator JoAnn South Ottley (b. 1935), and trace her development from the early formative years through a successful singing and teaching career. This study is divided into a prologue, eleven chapters, and an epilogue. The chapter titles are as follows: Genealogy, Early Childhood, Childhood to Marriage, The Balancing Act, Building Foundations, Concentric Circles in Voice and Life, Paradigm Shift, Dissemination of the New Paradigm, LifeSong, and A Woman Interrupted. Raised by loving parents who resided in small ranching communities in Eastern Utah, JoAnn was unaware of the musical culture which would shape her career. She and her husband, Jerold Ottley received Fulbright Scholarships to study music in Germany. Afterward, JoAnn sang for symphonies and opera houses across the United States and internationally.

Her teaching career began with private voice students, and eventually included teaching voice and related subjects as a music faculty member at the University of Utah and later Brigham Young University, Hawaii. JoAnn's humble beginnings gave her a unique perspective as a singer and voice teacher in higher education. She noted issues of social injustice in the education and career possibilities for singers and observed a lack of balance in the lives of many performers. JoAnn taught with the intention to share the transformative nature of singing with her students, while encouraging them to live life fully. She identified the injustice inherent in university vocal education programs caused by unrealistic program goals to find the "one in a thousand" who might be able to



succeed in the highly-competitive, specialized world of classical singing. She advocated for supporting and preparing “the other 999.”

As a woman of faith, JoAnn worked to balance her life through a spiritual lens. As an autodidact, she studied diverse subjects. JoAnn made connections between all aspects of life and the ideas discovered through her personal study of cutting-edge theories in neurology and physics. Excited by discoveries in New Physics concerning the vibrational context of the universe, she extrapolated that singing was vitally more important to singers and their audiences than the limiting, self-serving goals that vocal programs in higher education promoted. Rather than enjoying and sharing the transformational and unifying power of singing, many music students and professional singers lived in states of fear, competition, and failure.

JoAnn synthesized these disparate ideas and created possible solutions for the problems within the accepted paradigm for a singing career. JoAnn’s unique educational background in music made her less acculturated to the unhealthy practices she observed in the field. She became a voice for change.

The lack of social justice and the disillusionment observed in many music programs of higher education, eventually led her to leave university teaching and develop and disseminate a new paradigm for singers. This shift in paradigm integrated JoAnn’s various life experiences, strong spiritual beliefs, and personal study of New Physics. JoAnn and other like-minded singers in her community built an organization called “LifeSong” based on her new paradigm for singing. Though the organization eventually disbanded, many students and colleagues associated with JoAnn and LifeSong continue to utilize and share her new paradigm for singing.

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The grand piano serves as the focal point of the Ottley's condominium at Three Fountains East in Murray, Utah. From the front door, it precedes the furniture and occupies the greater part of the living space. Sitting at the piano, is JoAnn South Ottley. She is memorizing *Nola*,<sup>1</sup> a piece learned as a surprise for her father during her teenage years. JoAnn, at age 78, is mostly blind. She has the music open, but her glaucoma-induced condition makes the notes in front of her impossible to read, so she relies on memory. The tattered musical score is evidence of a life devoted to music.<sup>2</sup>

Though her introduction to music was at the keyboard, JoAnn built her performance and teaching career as a soprano. Her career, combined with her husband's, Jerold Ottley—former director of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir—took her across the globe and earned her unsought celebrity status in Salt Lake City, Utah.<sup>3</sup> “Our world has become so small,” she said of the isolation felt after retirement, compounded by shock of her sudden blindness and subsequent illness.<sup>4</sup> Despite her advancing years and loss of sight, JoAnn's presence remains gentle and commanding.

The life and career of JoAnn South Ottley (b. 1935) is examined in the following pages, demonstrating her prominent role and contributions to vocal performance education and the singing profession. This document traces the pathway from her early

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<sup>1</sup> *Nola*, by Felix Arndt, 1915. Originally written as a duet for four hands piano, later editions were simplified as a solo (see Figure 12.1).

<sup>2</sup> Observations of the author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 22, 2014.

<sup>3</sup> Jerold Ottley served as conductor of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir April, 1976 through October, 1999. Comprised of 360 volunteer singers, the Mormon Tabernacle Choir has a world-wide reputation for excellence and is serves as a musical emissary of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, (Also called Mormons or LDS Church.)

<sup>4</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 22, 2014.

formative years, influential voice teachers, collegiate studies, and Fulbright Scholarship, to her subsequent performing and teaching career. She served as the Mormon Tabernacle Choir's vocal coach, professor of voice at both the University of Utah (Salt Lake City) and Brigham Young University—Hawaii (Lanaie, Hawaii), published articles, and presented at conferences. She applied cutting-edge theories from physics to vocal instruction, which influenced her teaching and led to the creation of LifeSong for Singers.<sup>5</sup> JoAnn worked to maintain balance between her career and roles as wife and mother, while engaging in substantive service to her church. She guided professional and collegiate-level voice students to achieve a healthy balance of the many, and often conflicting roles in their lives, including personal and professional pursuits.

JoAnn promoted changes in vocal-education at the collegiate level; challenging the system's bias toward the small percentage of students who could pursue a professional singing career. She encouraged faculty to support and guide vocal music students who lacked the potential or drive for a performance career to pursue other vocational avenues within music or elsewhere; thus, identifying a larger scope for singing than the limited performance-oriented focus of most traditional programs. JoAnn observed the frequent, often unhealthy, identity association of singers to their voices and

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<sup>5</sup> The LifeSong organization, created by JoAnn Ottley, was formed to explore many facets of singing, create a new paradigm for teaching voice, and provide peer support for professional-level singers.. Through LifeSong, JoAnn encouraged exploration of other career possibilities for singers. Based on her work with LifeSong (aka Sing For Life), JoAnn created and presented Why Sing Workshops, which explored multiple facets of singing and the connection of singing to physics.

worked with professional singers, students, and voice teachers to achieve a more balanced sense of self and purpose.<sup>6</sup>

JoAnn's teaching career coincided with the introduction of vocal science to vocal education, and her pedagogy offered a bridge between traditional practice and scientific understanding. Her knowledge of vocal performance, the balance she actively achieved between career and personal life, work as a teacher of singing at the collegiate and professional levels, and application of scientific discoveries concerning the voice in higher education influenced her insights, perspectives, and contributions to the field. Additionally, she challenged the accepted priorities within vocal education and the singing profession by applying physics concepts to the act of singing, creating what she called a "new paradigm for singing." Her unique teaching approach and pedagogical methods promoted student-centered teaching, social justice in vocal music education, and a broader context for singers—all useful tools for music educators.

### Delimitations

Background information on vocal pedagogy techniques and scientific discoveries on vocal function are included only as directly related to JoAnn's work and philosophy. Similarly, information regarding the universities at which she studied and worked, as well as organizations to which she belonged (e.g., The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and the Mormon Tabernacle Choir)

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<sup>6</sup> JoAnn Ottley, "Why Singing?, No.1," *Classical Singer*, (March, 2004): 30-33; and JoAnn Ottley, "Why Singing?, No. 2," *Classical Singer*, (April, 2004).

are only included as directly related to her history. When first approached about this biography, JoAnn specified her one condition for acceptance was to be portrayed as “a woman of faith.”<sup>7</sup> Her self-identification as a woman of faith guided all decisions made throughout her career and remained at the core of her priorities and ability to balance competing demands; therefore, inclusion of her faith in this document provides context to her life.

### Methodology

This research was conducted through numerous personal interviews with JoAnn, as well as interviews with her close family members and former students and colleagues. In addition, written data include her personal journals, sketches for her personal history, letters, emails, photographs, newspaper and journal articles, and programs from concerts and presentations. Pertinent information from the LifeSong organization files and archived historical documents held by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints are also included.<sup>8</sup>

There exists a need for a biography of JoAnn Ottley, as a perusal of the literature reveals only brief biographical information. A compact disc of her collected recordings is available and offers the following career information:

Perhaps no singer in modern times has thrilled more Utah audiences than JoAnn Ottley. Trained on the Continent, she reached a career crossroads in

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<sup>7</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, February 2, 2014.

<sup>8</sup> JoAnn Ottley is an active member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, also called the Mormon Church or LDS Church.

Europe and decided to return home to the Mountain West to share her talent. Mrs. Ottley has assisted producer Robert Cundick in identifying and collecting favorite examples from the decades of her stunning career and has also cooperated with her friend, music professor Thomas Durham of BYU, to provide accurate background information and a marvelous wide-ranging interview. This career collection is a must for all Utah music aficionados. Part of Tantara's Heritage Series.<sup>9</sup>

The Bach Cantatas Website provides a sampling of JoAnn's performance venues and her work as vocal coach for the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, and brief personal information. Excerpts of this brief outline of her career follow:

The American soprano, JoAnn Ottley, began singing in junior high school, which led to a scholarship at the University of Utah. She was also trained on the Continent. JoAnn's rich and renowned soprano voice has been heard on the stage of Royal Albert Hall in London, she has performed as a soloist with the Tivoli Symphony Orchestra in Copenhagen Denmark, and made multiple appearances with the Utah Symphony Orchestra in Salt Lake City, and on tour. . . She has performed in the major concert halls of Europe, South America, Japan, Korea, New Zealand and Australia. She decided to return home to the Mountain West to share her talent . . . In 1982, she performed at the Carmel Bach Festival under Sandor Salgo. JoAnn Ottley is married to Jerold Don Ottley, who was the music director of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir from 1974 to 1999. The Ottleys have two grown children, Brent and Allison. JoAnn Ottley received the Utah-California Women Heritage Award on Saturday, Oct. 24, 1992 . . . The award is presented annually to an outstanding woman who has demonstrated a significant contribution to the community, the arts, friends, family or church.<sup>10</sup>

The Bach Cantata biography's inclusion of information pertaining to JoAnn's family life along with highlights of her multi-faceted career is a fitting

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<sup>9</sup> JoAnn Ottley, *JoAnn Ottley Retrospective*, Tantara IM 42998425, CD, 1999.

<sup>10</sup> Bach Cantatas Website, *JoAnn Ottley, Soprano*. <http://www.bach-cantatas.com/Bio/Ottley-JoAnn.htm>. (Accessed 6 April, 2014.)

representation of the balance she achieved between artistic and personal pursuits. She passionately worked to teach students, vocal music educators, and singing professionals to do the same.

Understanding JoAnn’s roots provides essential context to her accomplishments and the scope of her visionary ideas in vocal performance education. The woman sitting at the piano, began her journey at age 9, with the arrival of the family’s first piano—a gift from her maternal grandparents (see Figure 1.1). JoAnn described acquiring the piano as “one of those single, fundamental moments. Without that gift,” she said, “my life story would be utterly, utterly different than it is now.”<sup>11</sup>



Figure 1.1: Current picture of JoAnn Ottley’s first piano, gifted by her grandparents and now owned by her brother  
Courtesy of JoAnn Ottley

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<sup>11</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 22, 2014.

Learning to play piano was JoAnn's first step toward becoming a musician, a development that changed her life course. As a child, she recalled, no one in her world knew what it meant to be a professional musician. "I went into this world . . . the world of universities, the world of higher education, the world of performance . . . but, I don't think my parents even knew those things existed."<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 22, 2014.



## CHAPTER TWO: GENEALOGY

JoAnn South Ottley's ancestors were Mormon settlers who helped cultivate the harsh, cold, unyielding frontier of northeastern Utah. JoAnn's maternal ancestors came from the Northeast United States. Her Great-Great Grandmother Bryson walked across the plains as a child with the Mormon pioneer migration.<sup>1</sup> She later gave birth to JoAnn's Great Grandmother, Sadie Fairchild, who married into the Cook family. Sadie was the mother of JoAnn's grandmother, Eliza Tryphena Cook Eastman.<sup>2</sup>

### JoAnn's Maternal Grandparents

JoAnn's maternal grandmother Eliza Tryphena Cook, was born in Salt Lake City, Utah. Her family moved shortly after her birth to settle the Bear Lake area<sup>3</sup> at the request of their Mormon leaders.<sup>4</sup> Eliza, therefore, was raised in Laketown, Utah by strong, pioneer homesteaders. She grew up and married another Bear Lake resident, Marshall Eastman. Marshall was the quintessential small-town rancher. He built their ranch in the harsh climate and uncultivated

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<sup>1</sup> In 1845 the Mormons left Illinois under threat of mob violence and religious persecution. Led by Brigham Young, the first group of Mormon pioneers arrived in the valley known as the Salt Lake basin, where they settled and eventually built Salt Lake City. [http://www.pbs.org/mormons/peoplevents/e\\_migration.html](http://www.pbs.org/mormons/peoplevents/e_migration.html), accessed August 20, 2017.

<sup>2</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 8, 2014.

<sup>3</sup> Bear Lake is the third largest lake in the state of Utah, and the lake itself is divided almost evenly between Utah and Idaho. It is an agricultural area, known for raspberries, but has also become a tourist attraction. <http://www.americansouthwest.net/utah/bear-lake/index.html>, accessed, August 19, 2017.

<sup>4</sup> Once the Mormons settled in Salt Lake City, some LDS members were directed to move their families and settle outer regions of the area, further expanding and developing the territory.

Bear Lake region of Utah's early development. Eliza's adult life consisted of family, church, and the never-ending work of the family's ranch. Though reserved and inhibited, Eliza possessed a lively sense of humor. She rarely instigated a conversation at social gatherings, but always joined in the fun once it started. She loved poetry and often posted poems on the wall.

Unlike his gentle, loving wife, JoAnn's maternal grandfather Marshall Vincent Eastman (1881-1962) was curt and harsh in his dealings with family and community members. Short, stocky, and clean shaven, his most striking feature was the bright blue color of his eyes. In contrast, Eliza stood about six inches taller than her husband, and despite her rough homestead life and lack of sophistication, carried herself with a natural, graceful bearing. Her noble demeanor belied the harsh environment in which she grew up. Nothing of Eliza and Marshall Eastman's courtship is known, but their life as a married couple reveals people who cared for the community, and worked hard to maintain their ranch.<sup>5</sup>

The Eastman ranch was located approximately three miles up the canyon between the small towns of Woodruff and Bear Lake.<sup>6</sup> Temperatures in Woodruff have often been listed as the coldest in the nation, making the endeavor difficult and dangerous. Marshall built a large, log-constructed home on the land that still

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<sup>5</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 8, 2014.

<sup>6</sup> Rich County, located on the Utah side of the Bear Lake Region, includes the towns of Woodruff, Laketown, Garden City, and Randolph.

stands, and “the sturdy, plain home will probably be there for another 100 years!”<sup>7</sup> Everything the ranch produced was stored without the conveniences of refrigeration or electricity. Root vegetables were kept in straw. The ranch had a corral where cattle and deer were slaughtered. An important part of the ranch’s output was milk, and so a milk house was constructed to save the fresh milk each morning until collected by the dairy. Vegetables did not store well, and were only available in the summer. There was an ice house on the ranch, cooled by blocks of ice frozen during the winter.<sup>8</sup>

In addition to ranching, Marshall was active in the community. He served on the school board, and at age 46, was county commissioner. Marshall prospered. He and his brothers worked together to build the community. There was always an emergency in the lives of the homesteaders, and the Eastman brothers were often the first responders.

Everyone in the community lived within clearly divided gender roles. Wives followed their husbands’ directives, and Marshall was stern and demanding with Eliza. He was “built like a bowling ball,”<sup>9</sup> but despite Eliza’s height and elegant demeanor, Marshall was completely in charge. Eliza’s life was difficult in the cold and icy winters outside of Woodruff. Daily chores included ranch hands to feed, cows to milk, and a

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<sup>7</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 8, 2014.

<sup>8</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview with author, February 11, 2017.

<sup>9</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 8, 2014.

house to maintain without benefit of electricity or plumbing. She cooked on a coal stove in the cold of winter and the heat of summer.<sup>10</sup>

#### JoAnn's Mother

Eliza (Cook) Eastman gave birth to eight children, six boys and two girls. Following the first three children, Eliza miscarried two babies. JoAnn's mother, Melba Eastman, then arrived. As a parent, Marshall was stern, harsh and unyielding. His parenting strategy was to, "Not let them make any guff. Break their spirits like horses."<sup>11</sup> Melba's childhood was difficult because of her father's tight control.<sup>12</sup>

Melba faced physical hardships as well. One of her chores included fetching water from a stream far from the ranch house. It was the family's only water source, including Saturday night baths. Her daily trek for water was necessary regardless of weather or temperature. Winter temperatures often set national records at thirty or forty degrees below zero. Snow was so deep it would cover the tops of the fence posts. In these conditions, Melba milked cows each morning before dawn. On weekdays, the milking was followed by a three mile horseback ride to town, where she caught an unheated school bus to Randolph, another fifteen miles away. A kind lady in Woodruff kept a pan of warm water ready so Melba could thaw her hands before riding the bus to school.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 8, 2014.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

Melba had her mother's natural dignity and refinement, and was completely out of place in such formidable conditions. Her many chores on the ranch, combined with her father's constant criticisms stripped away her self-esteem. She lost her capacity to make decisions. Melba and her siblings bore emotional scars throughout their adult lives because of Marshall's tough approach.<sup>14</sup>

### Paternal Ancestry and Musical Roots

Information on JoAnn's paternal ancestry has been passed down orally, and traces the family back to the original inhabitants of the Isle of Man and the Vikings who conquered there. Later, JoAnn's great-great grandfather is said to have been a slave ship captain. After experiencing a few voyages in this capacity, he was repulsed by the practice and refused to continue in that trade.<sup>15</sup>

It is unclear when the family embraced Mormonism, but JoAnn's distant relatives from the British Isles included the Cannons and the Quayles who were among the more influential early Mormon settlers.<sup>16</sup> They lived in Nauvoo during the persecution that

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<sup>14</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 8, 2014.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints was originally led by Joseph Smith, who began the religion in New York. Joseph Smith is still revered by Mormons as a modern-day prophet through whom God restored the only true church. It is believed the mantle of authority was lost after the deaths of Jesus' apostles, then restored by God through Smith. Mormonism spread rapidly and the members met hostility wherever they settled, especially in Kirkland, Ohio and Nauvoo, Illinois.

eventually drove the Saints<sup>17</sup> westward.<sup>18</sup> One of these relatives, George Cannon from Liverpool, was a premiere architect in Nauvoo and created much of the filigree in the woodwork on the first Mormon temple. George Cannon was the father of the most notable member of JoAnn's paternal ancestors, the Mormon leader George Q. Cannon.<sup>19</sup>

JoAnn's great-great grandmother brought the first piano to Salt Lake City, Utah during the Mormon migration and JoAnn's great grandfather was also instrumental in establishing a musical culture in Salt Lake City. He helped build the famous Mormon Tabernacle Organ, which is still played in the Mormon Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City.<sup>20</sup>

#### JoAnn's Paternal Grandparents and Father

Like her maternal ancestors, JoAnn's paternal relatives helped settle the greater

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<sup>17</sup> Mormons sometimes refer to themselves as "saints," because the official name of the religion is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

<sup>18</sup> The early Mormons, who called themselves Latter Day Saints were ordered out of Missouri by the Governor in 1840, who threatened extermination if they stayed. They fled to Illinois, where they purchased a small town on swamp land near the Mississippi River, which they named Nauvoo, meaning "beautiful city." The Saints transformed the murky land into a beautiful city, and built their first temple there. It became one of the most prosperous cities in Illinois. Resistance to the Mormons continued in Illinois, and in 1846 most of the Mormons left Nauvoo and headed west, hoping for religious freedom. [www.history.lds.org](http://www.history.lds.org), accessed November 18, 2016.

<sup>19</sup> George Q Cannon, 1827-1901, was one of the first members of the LDS leadership known as the Quorum of the Twelve, or the Twelve Apostles. He also served as a member of the First Presidency under four different church presidents, also known as prophets.

<sup>20</sup> Music was an essential element of Mormon culture even in the early nomadic days of the Saints. Music remains fundamental to LDS church services, community and home life. The Tabernacle Organ is the oldest of several organs used to accompany the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. It is gilded and boasts 11,623 pipes. The Tabernacle has been used as a gathering place for church and musical events since its completion in 1875. [www.templesquare.com/explore/tabernacle/](http://www.templesquare.com/explore/tabernacle/), [www.mormontabernaclechoir.org](http://www.mormontabernaclechoir.org), both accessed November 18, 2016.

Bear Lake region. Some were instrumental in building the Tabernacle for that community. Her paternal grandmother, Mary Elizabeth Pickett South was a midwife in Rich County.<sup>21</sup> The South's had eight children—five girls and three boys. The youngest child was JoAnn's father, George Q. South, named for his famous uncle, the aforementioned George Q. Cannon. Life was difficult in the harsh, homesteading conditions. Severely diabetic, one of Mary's legs was removed at the knee. Her husband made a stool exactly the height of her stumped leg after the amputation. Mary did her housework and midwifery by propping her stump on that stool.

The family moved to the small mountain community of Logan, Utah, and George Q. was raised there.<sup>22</sup> Simple country folk, their activities centered on working together, and they often turned tasks into celebrations. Harvesting corn became one of those traditions. The corn was so plentiful, the family cooked it in a wash tub. George loved fresh picked corn throughout his life as it reminded him of celebrating the harvest with his family while growing up.

As the youngest, George was somewhat overlooked by his parents. His mother was very ill by the time he was born, and could not tend to him. Mary's second leg was scheduled for amputation when she died. None of the South children were close with their father, and in the absence of parental support, formed deep bonds with each other.

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<sup>21</sup> Rich County includes Randolph, Woodruff and Garden City, UT.

<sup>22</sup> Logan is the largest city in Cache County, UT. Cache County neighbors Rich County to the west, and includes the Uinta Wasatch Cache National Forest.

They gave each other nick-names. One brother was called “Dodge,” another “Slash,” and they called George “Mutt” or “George Q.”<sup>23</sup>

A lay musician, George could passably play any instrument he picked up. He played several instruments for country dancing, including the saw, and once made an instrument from a broom. Though it is not clear if he learned to play violin, he inherited one from his grandfather.<sup>24</sup>

George’s family had little money and all of his clothing was passed down by well-meaning relatives and friends. Many well-educated and financially-prosperous residents of Logan were unkind to those from the “backwoods.”<sup>25</sup> George was very intelligent, and keenly aware that others viewed him disparagingly because of his country roots, the handed-down clothing, and truncated education. This social alienation affected George’s self-esteem.

Despite his insecurities, George’s affable personality and sense of humor were hallmarks of his personality. Social by nature, he was happiest when spending time with his siblings. Two of his sisters married brothers and moved to Woodruff, Utah in Rich County. When George reached adulthood he moved to Woodruff and worked for one of his brothers-in-law, thus escaping the judgmental community of Logan. In Woodruff, George became an excellent cowboy and competed in rodeos. He could ride bare back,

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<sup>23</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 8, 2014.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.



pull himself up by the horse's mane, spin a lasso, and rope calves, the calves being frisky and difficult to subdue. George's skills as a cowboy qualified him to work as a ranch hand, and it was in this capacity that George went to work for JoAnn's maternal grandfather, Marshall Eastman.<sup>26</sup>

The social alienation in Logan helped George develop resilience, and he was not intimidated by Eastman's tough demeanor. George applied his keen intellect to adopt more effective ranch practices, despite his future father-in-law's narrow thinking, which often frustrated George's efforts. Marshall resisted innovations, saying, "We allus done it that way"<sup>27</sup>

#### East meets South—JoAnn's Parents

In such a small community, it was inevitable that George and Melba would meet. All the town's young people gathered together for dances and other social events. George's musical skills were always welcome at these gatherings. Main Street on a Saturday night in Woodruff brought wagons and horses, even in the 1930s, as few Woodruff residents owned cars. Melba was quiet and shy, but George was gregarious and fun loving, and she noticed his antics in short order. It must have been a Cinderella-like dream come true for Melba Eastman when she met George South and they fell in love. George adored Melba, and though a strong-willed man in his own way, he was thoughtful

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<sup>26</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 8, 2014.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. *Allus* was the way Eastman pronounced the word, *always*.

and kind. This was in stark contrast to the constant criticism she had received from her father.

Melba's mother, Eliza, enjoyed a great rapport with her future son-in-law. He drew out her quiet, keen sense of humor and they developed a wonderful relationship, full of good-natured teasing. The laughter George brought to the Eastman's was a welcome change from the strict, somber household atmosphere Marshall imposed on the family.<sup>28</sup>

George and Melba shared many interests. She was also a musician, and played the piano quite well. They both sang. George had a rich baritone voice and Melba was a light soprano. They sang together for church, parties, and weddings. In addition to music, they both enjoyed horses and often went riding together. Melba was an excellent equestrian, and George loved seeing her in the saddle.<sup>29</sup>

The couple married on August 9, 1934 and set up housekeeping in Woodruff. Both sides of the family laughed about an Eastman marrying a South, and teased George for marrying the boss's daughter. The young couple had little money, but were accustomed to a rugged life. George used his cowboy skills to secure odd jobs, and supported them from job to job with little stability. He was the couple's sole financial support, since it was not customary for women to work outside the home. One of George's brothers-in-law, living in Woodruff, helped by hiring George as a ranch hand. They were grateful to have the steady, though small, income. In early winter of the same

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<sup>28</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, December 29, 2015.

<sup>29</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 8, 2014.

year, Melba became pregnant. The couple eagerly awaited their first child's arrival.

George and Melba South were building a life of their own.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 27, 2016.

## CHAPTER THREE:

### Early Childhood (1935-1945)

On August 26, 1935, shortly after midnight and by the dim light of a coal oil lamp, JoAnn South was born on her aunt's kitchen table in Woodruff, Utah. Her father, George, held the lamp so the doctor could see in the dark kitchen, but just as his daughter made her entrance, the lamp began to sway. "Get that man out of here!" ordered the doctor, and a still dizzy George left the room as Melba gave birth to their baby girl. They named her JoAnn and did not include a middle name, reasoning that her maiden name would be a middle name once she married.<sup>1</sup>

#### Young Family Struggles

When JoAnn was six weeks old the family moved to Worland, Wyoming<sup>2</sup> to be near George's eldest brother, Jay. In Wyoming, George used his physical strength working in a sugar mill throwing large bags of sugar beets. Unlike the odd jobs he found in Woodruff, this steady work was important now that George had a family to support; unfortunately the pay was minimal. JoAnn was still a baby when the family moved yet again to Salt Lake City, in hopes that job opportunities would be better in the city.

Their first home was a small basement apartment on Street, infested with black

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<sup>1</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, SLC, UT, October 8, 2014.

<sup>2</sup> Worland, Wyoming is located within the Big Horn Basin, built along the Big Horn River in Northwestern Wyoming. Although it is the county seat of Washakie County, the last census lists only 5,487 residents. The town's remote location between the Big Horn Mountains to the west and the Wind River Mountains to the south has likely contributed to its continued small population. <http://www.cityofworland.org/>, accessed March 22, 2018.

widow spiders, which Melba feared and hated. Like many others during the Great Depression, the couple struggled to survive. Too proud to ask Melba's father for help, they found ways to make do with what they had, grateful for every odd job that came along during George's search for steady employment. When the insoles of George's shoes wore out, he crafted cardboard replacements. Melba stretched each precious scrap of meat and bunch of carrots or potatoes to provide enough to eat. "We live not on income, but on lack of expense," George quipped to Melba. Though their resources were limited, George and Melba enjoyed their marriage and adored their precocious little girl (see Figure 3.1).<sup>3</sup>



Figure 3.1: Three-year-old JoAnn  
Photograph courtesy of JoAnn Ottley

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<sup>3</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 8, 2014.

George found full-time employment as a mechanic for a service station on West Temple Street across from the southwest corner of Temple Square.<sup>4</sup> The location was prime. There were few automobile repair shops in downtown Salt Lake City; therefore, George serviced the cars of prominent people from the community, including those holding leadership positions in the LDS Church. George's affable personality endeared him to his customers, who, in turn, broadened his view of city life. George worked hard and became an excellent mechanic.

Through the contacts made at the service station, George was hired by the Bell Telephone Company to work on their automobiles. His refined skillset, combined with his keen intellect, led to promotions. Eventually, he managed the telephone company's entire fleet of cars, tracking each vehicle number, placement, and service history by memory.

George and Melba's second child, Larue, was born in 1939. LaRue (sometimes called Ruey) had some health issues at birth, but the doctors were unsure of the cause. JoAnn was too little to understand her parents' concern, but did notice small needle marks all over little Ruey's back where blood had been drawn and tested at the hospital.<sup>5</sup> After the initial scare, LaRue grew strong.

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<sup>44</sup> Built in 1853, Historic Mormon Temple Square comprises 10 acres and is situated at the heart of Salt Lake City. The four city streets surrounding it begin the city's grid system, which aligns subsequent streets in ascending numbers in each direction, with the Salt Lake Temple serving as the central point. West Temple is one of the initial streets. It borders the west side of Temple Square, and is also known as 100 West, or 1<sup>st</sup> West.

<sup>5</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, February 13, 2017.

### A Home of Their Own

George and Melba prospered enough that same year to buy their first house at 1035 Navajo Street. Four-year-old JoAnn was thrilled to be moving into a real home and too young to realize the house's humbleness (see Figure 3.2).



Figure 3.2: Four-year-old JoAnn  
Photograph courtesy of JoAnn Ottley

Navajo Street was on the west side of Salt Lake City and was populated by the working class; the houses and neighborhoods were a stark contrast to the more affluent east side of the city. The South family was thrilled to have a home and unconcerned about the neighborhood's lack of prestige. Navajo street had only nine houses when the South family purchased theirs, and had large and beautiful, untouched fields surrounding

it. George and Melba saved every penny to buy the small, unfinished place. The modest home was evidence of their thrift and hard work.

### Pre-School Years

JoAnn was oblivious to her parents' financial struggles, and they consciously kept her unaware by focusing on the excitement and new opportunities. She delighted in the wonder of a house all their own. The surrounding fields of wild flowers invited her exploration. JoAnn ran through the house, not noticing the unfinished walls still needing completion. She came back out the front door, and saw her mother on the sidewalk. Melba held JoAnn's baby sister LaRue in her arms and gazed happily at their house, while George proudly snapped a photograph. The memory of that moment would stay with JoAnn throughout her lifetime.<sup>6</sup>

1035 Navajo Street became a haven. George and Melba finished the Celotex walls with wallpaper and paint.<sup>7</sup> George built an addition to the house, eventually adding an extra bedroom and porch. JoAnn marveled while watching her father work on the house. She worshiped her good-natured, hard-working father and, in her eyes, he could do anything! They grew a big garden and raised chickens. The empty field behind the house became JoAnn's playground. When Ruey was a toddler, JoAnn began taking her along to wander the field and pick flowers. This became the sisters' favorite pastime. An

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<sup>6</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 8, 2014.

<sup>7</sup> Celotex is a fiberboard developed in the 1920s which preceded sheet rock. It had a muddy, brown color, a rough texture and contained asbestos.



abundance of buttercups and sego lilies grew there in spring and summer.<sup>8</sup> When covered in snow, it became an icy playground.<sup>9</sup>

The move to Navajo Street coincided with the beginning of World War II. Young JoAnn did not understand the concept of war, but the patriotic climate of the country impacted her small world. She was excited by seeing sailors, soldiers, and hearing patriotic bands. She did, however, understand rationing, which limited family access to items such as shoes and specific foods. Though goods were rationed, the South family's limited income could barely afford what was allowed. George and Melba economized and stretched every attainable resource to meet their growing family's needs, without the children sensing or experiencing deprivation.<sup>10</sup>

Going to the doctor cost money and was saved for emergencies to keep health care costs at a minimum. JoAnn had numerous ear infections, called "gathered ears." George smoked cigarettes, and when JoAnn's ears were in pain he would hold her close, inhale his cigarette, then blow smoke in his hand and tenderly hold it over her ears. JoAnn felt safe and comforted as he held her there, warming his hands and easing her pain as best he could. JoAnn adored her loving, strong father dearly, and felt completely nurtured by him.

JoAnn felt loved by her mother as well, but Melba was sickly. Even as a small

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<sup>8</sup> Sego Lilies are the Utah State flower and their bulbs were eaten by Mormon pioneers when they first settled the Salt Lake valley.

<sup>9</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 27, 2016

<sup>10</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 10, 2014.

child, JoAnn felt the need to take care of her. Her mother fainted periodically, which happened once when JoAnn was about age six. Melba knew she was about to faint and moved to the couch to break her fall. With a child's wisdom, JoAnn ran to get water, reasoning "when a person faints, you put water on their face." With the same childish perspective, she realized putting water on her mother's face would likely get the couch wet, so before splashing the water on Melba's face, JoAnn pulled her off the couch. Two-year-old LaRue thought JoAnn had hurt their mother and was very angry. JoAnn, however, found caring for her mother in crisis a great adventure, and the event became a highlight of her childhood memories. As a child, JoAnn already viewed challenges as problems to solve and enjoyed the process, even when difficult.

### Educational Beginnings

JoAnn began kindergarten in 1940 and loved it. Edison Elementary School served the neighborhood students in grades kindergarten through sixth. School work came easily to JoAnn. She excelled in all classes, and developed an insatiable love of learning.

Melba gave birth to John Allan South in 1944. Arriving almost a month past his due date, he exhibited more profound symptoms of the health problems LaRue experienced as a baby. Doctors diagnosed the probable cause as Rh factor, which does not affect the first child, but affects subsequent children with increasing severity. Melba was Rh-negative, so her blood was incompatible with that of the Rh-positive fetus. Her body treated the growing baby as a foreign object and created antibodies to fight the

perceived intruder. John Allan's delayed arrival allowed more time for the antibodies to develop. Nine-year-old JoAnn first saw her baby brother after a nurse shaved his head to allow blood transfusions through his temples. Fortunately, the transfusions were successful, and John Allan grew strong and healthy.<sup>11</sup>

### The Most Important Gift

That same year (1944), JoAnn's maternal grandparents gave George and Melba their piano.<sup>12</sup> Clutching a dollar in hand, JoAnn walked to her first piano lesson with Mrs. Lewis. A widow with a large family, Mrs. Lewis earned a living teaching piano lessons. She lived about one mile from the South house. To get to the Lewis house, JoAnn walked along the railroad tracks and then crossed Redwood Road, waving at the soldiers leaning against the windows and railings of the trains that rolled by. JoAnn was passionate about playing, and despite the cost of the lessons a financial sacrifice, her parents continued providing the opportunity. Getting JoAnn to practice was never a problem. After hearing her daughter at the piano for hours, Melba often called, "JoAnn, would you please come

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<sup>11</sup>Rh factor (Rhesus Factor) incompatibility occurs when a mother has Rh-negative blood and her fetus has Rh-positive blood. Rh factor is a protein on the blood. Those with the protein are considered Rh-positive, which is more common than those without the protein, Rh-negative. Rh-factor is inherited. There is now an effective treatment for this incompatibility during pregnancy, but at the time of Melba South's pregnancies there was none. Blood from the baby can cross into the mother's blood stream, especially in delivery. The mother's body reacts to the baby's blood as a foreign substance and creates antibodies. These antibodies are not well enough developed to affect first born babies, but build up with each subsequent pregnancy, often causing greater problems for those infants. Rh incompatibility can cause infant death, brain damage, mental retardation, and cerebral palsy, [www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/rh-incompatibility](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/rh-incompatibility), accessed, February 12, 2017.

<sup>12</sup> JoAnn Ottley, "Pianos," *List for Author*, unpublished, March 29, 2015.

away from the piano and do the dishes?” A few years later, LaRue began lessons. The sisters would walk together, each holding her own dollar (see Figure 3.3). LaRue liked playing piano, but did not share her sister’s zeal.<sup>13</sup>



Figure 3.3: JoAnn and LaRue South  
Photograph courtesy of JoAnn Ottley

In addition to piano lessons, JoAnn’s parents exposed her to music in other ways. George and Melba often sang together at home and for church services. Melba enjoyed playing piano and George played trumpet. “He could pick up any instrument and play it, even if he had never played it before.” The couple preferred “cowboy songs and the romantic, popular songs of the day.” They remained true to their small-town upbringings,

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<sup>13</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 27, 2015.

preferring country music above all else. This “unsophisticated, familiar style of music” filled the South household, and was JoAnn’s early exposure to music.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, February 15, 2016.

## **CHAPTER FOUR:**

### **BLOSSOMING—CHILDHOOD TO MARRIAGE (1945-1956)**

With the end of World War II, the field behind the South home filled with new houses to meet the housing demand of returning veterans. 1035 Navajo Street quickly became surrounded by the larger, new development. JoAnn missed the open, outdoor spaces and picking buttercups and sego lilies with her sister, LaRue.

#### Family Dynamics

Melba did not work outside of the home. JoAnn's brother, one-year-old John Allan, had some issues due to the Rh-factor incompatibility at birth, but was basically a healthy, happy toddler.<sup>1</sup> Ten-year-old JoAnn and six-year-old LaRue walked home from school each weekday afternoon to find their mother and brother waiting. JoAnn loved school and told her mother every detail of the day before she inevitably found herself at the piano. When her father, George, came home from managing the telephone company's fleet of vehicles, JoAnn met him at the door for hugs and kisses. Her father was full of

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<sup>1</sup> Rh factor (Rhesus Factor) incompatibility occurs when a mother has Rh-negative blood and her fetus has Rh-positive blood. Rh factor is a protein on the blood. Those with the protein are considered Rh-positive, which is more common than those without the protein, Rh-negative. Rh-factor is inherited. There is now an effective treatment for this incompatibility during pregnancy, but at the time of Melba South's pregnancies there was none. Blood from the baby can cross into the mother's blood stream, especially in delivery. The mother's body reacts to the baby's blood as a foreign substance and creates antibodies. These antibodies are not well enough developed to affect first born babies, but build up with each subsequent pregnancy, often causing greater problems for those infants. Rh incompatibility can cause infant death, brain damage mental retardation and cerebral palsy. [www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/rh-incompatibility](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/rh-incompatibility), accessed, February 12, 2017.

fun and the family flourished in the nurturing atmosphere. JoAnn had no understanding of their lower socioeconomic status or the opportunities they lacked. Inside the home at 1035 Navajo Street, she knew only love and support.

Much of their family time was spent working together doing chores. Like many housewives of the era, Melba “proved her worth” by keeping house.<sup>2</sup> Every Monday and Wednesday she would do laundry with a wringer washer on the screened-in front porch due to the house’s small size. The children would help by adding bluing to brighten the whites and hanging the wet clothes on the lines outside.

Melba made most of the family’s clothing. Occasionally, some “well-to-do cousins” sent hand-me-down clothing. For the Souths, it was “a treasure box.” If the clothes didn’t fit properly, Melba altered them on the treadle sewing machine (see Figure 4.1).<sup>3</sup>



Figure 4.1: JoAnn South dressed for church

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<sup>2</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, December 30, 2015.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

Photograph courtesy of JoAnn Ottley

### Developing Pianist

Young JoAnn's life centered on family, school, and music. Her parents continued to sing together at home and church, and her father played "any musical instrument he could get his hands on."<sup>4</sup> JoAnn spent hours at the piano, and practiced so much her mother often had to call her away to do chores or eat dinner. Playing the piano was JoAnn's first musical love. At age twelve, she began accompanying the children's songs for Primary at church each week. Playing as the children sang came easily to her.<sup>5</sup>

That same year she played her first piano solo in a recital. As a surprise for her father, she chose one of his favorite songs, *Nola*, which had been popular in the 1920s. JoAnn did not want him to know she was learning it, so day after day, she prepared the piece while her father was at work. The concert was held in the ward house.<sup>6</sup> It did not occur to JoAnn to be afraid; she only envisioned her father's smile as she played. How surprised he would be! She walked to the piano and turned to the gathering of students, families, and friends. "My name is JoAnn South," she said, in clear, bell tones, "and I will play *Nola*." She didn't look at her father as she sat on the bench. Her fingers found the beloved keys, and her heart poured the music into them. She thought of "nothing but the music, and the love she had for [her] daddy." The applause surprised her, drawing her

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<sup>4</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, December 30, 2015.

<sup>5</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, February 15, 2016.

<sup>6</sup> Ward house is the term used in the LDS Church for the church building where small, neighborhood congregations meet. The population of each congregation or "ward" is predetermined by church leadership and based on the home addresses of the members. This keeps ward numbers balanced and provides a community atmosphere.



from her reverie. She stood and looked at her father's beaming face. Her mother smiled with pride as she looked from JoAnn to George and back to JoAnn again.<sup>7</sup>

### Introduction to Classical Music

At age twelve, JoAnn also experienced her first exposure to classical music. George and Melba had no experience with the classical genre, and her piano lessons focused on church and popular music. JoAnn's sixth-grade teacher, Mrs. Thurman, played Hayden's *Surprise Symphony* for the class while telling a story to match the music.<sup>8</sup> JoAnn was entranced. She loved the melody, the harmonic intricacies, and delighted in Hayden's musical humor. After that, popular music "didn't really appeal" to her, though she listened to it when with friends.<sup>9</sup>

JoAnn explored Classical music on her own and was drawn to Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninoff. They "stirred [her] up emotionally." She did not know what to call the type of music she was hearing, but knew she liked it. JoAnn attended her first live symphony performance that year. The *Utah Symphony* Saturday children's concert, conducted by Maurice Abravanel, thrilled her. Afterward, she boldly asked Maestro Abravanel for his autograph and he kindly obliged.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, February 15, 2016.

<sup>8</sup> Composed in 1791, Joseph Hayden's *Symphony No. 4, 2<sup>nd</sup> Movement*, contains highly contrasting dynamics, creating musical jokes based on aural surprise.

<sup>9</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 27, 2016.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

## Junior High

Junior high school provided new opportunities. JoAnn attended Jordan Junior High School, situated along the Jordan River on 9<sup>th</sup> West and 10<sup>th</sup> South, not far from her home. Her elementary school years lit her “musical pilot light,” but her junior high years stoked the flame.<sup>11</sup> In seventh grade, the choir teacher, Marguerite Johnson, asked JoAnn to accompany the glee club on the piano. JoAnn loved accompanying, but discovered she enjoyed singing in the choir. She sang with the school choir and accompanied the glee club throughout junior high school.<sup>12</sup> JoAnn played basketball in the gym before classes began. And though she enjoyed playing and was physically adept, she “was too scared to throw caution to the wind,” and did not play on official teams. In music, however, she was unafraid.<sup>13</sup>

JoAnn, and her two best friends from the neighborhood, Carolyn Hall and Bonnie Terkelson attended church and school events together (see Figure 4.2) attended church and school events together. They were part of a larger circle of friends, which included boys, who “were just buddies.” It was a happy social time for JoAnn.

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<sup>11</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, February 19, 2017.

<sup>12</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 27, 2016.

<sup>13</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, December 30, 2015.



Figure 4.2: Jr. High Best Friends, JoAnn South, center, with Bonnie Terkelson (left), and Carolyn Hall (right) Photograph courtesy of JoAnn Ottley

During the winter, JoAnn and her friends played “Bathing Beauties in the Snow.”<sup>14</sup> (See figure 4.3) All the friends went sledding at East Canyon<sup>15</sup> and then gathered at one of their homes for chili afterward, rotating so the families shared the work and expense.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, December 30, 2015.

<sup>15</sup> East Canyon National Park and Reservoir is in the mountains northeast of nearby Salt Lake City. <https://utah.com/east-canyon-state-park>, accessed February 25, 2017.

<sup>16</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, December 30, 2015.



Figure 4.3: Bathing Beauties in the Snow, JoAnn South in front, Carolyn Hall seated behind. Photograph courtesy of JoAnn Ottley

Summers included church gatherings at the Great Salt Lake with the young people in her ward,<sup>17</sup> roasting hot dogs, and playing in the water. Accustomed to her family gatherings at sparkling Bear Lake, the Great Salt Lake seemed briny and unpleasant. Still, she went to be with her friends (see Figure 4.4). The same group of friends attended school activities and dances together. Eschewing any hint of romance, they preferred dances like the Bunny Hop where everybody danced together.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> The Great Salt Lake is the remnant of the large ice-age Lake Bonneville. It has no outlet, resulting in heavy salt levels making it unable to support much aquatic life. It is surrounded by wetlands and a vital estuary for the region. <https://utah.com/great-salt-lake-state-park>, accessed February 25, 2017.

<sup>18</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, February 11, 2017.



Figure 4.4: The Great Salt Lake  
Photograph courtesy of JoAnn Ottley

### Family Life

JoAnn enjoyed activities with her friends, but spent most time with her family. The Souths went on several extended vacations, and often enjoyed family outings and short trips, including sledding, visiting extended family, and frequent holidays to Bear Lake. At home, they worked side by side doing chores, ate dinner together most evenings, and loved teasing, laughing, and poking fun at each other.

George built an addition to the house which included another bedroom. JoAnn and LaRue shared the room, and slept together in a full-sized bed, covered with quilts made by grandmothers and aunts. Three wooden slats rested horizontally in the bed's frame, lending support to the mattress. Each night after retiring to bed, JoAnn and Ruey would whisper together. Once, they "got the giggles, and laughed so hard [they] broke

the bed down!”<sup>19</sup> The slats holding the mattress crashed to the floor, waking George, who ran to the room and found his daughters on the floor, laughing uncontrollably.

JoAnn’s mother gave birth to George Vernon, (June 5, 1948) when JoAnn was 13 years old. As the fourth child, the debilitating effects from the Rh Factor were extreme. Like John Allan, George arrived well past his due date, giving the antibodies more time to cause harm. He was born with extreme jaundice and instead of moving his arms and legs as most babies do, he lay limp, still, and seemingly lifeless. After three weeks in the hospital and no signs of improvement the doctors “sent him home to die.” Instead, the South family drew together and “loved him to life.” Every milestone occurred late and was difficult for George, but the family loved and supported him (see Figure 4.5). Eventually George could walk, but his movements were spastic. His teeth came in as little yellow stubs. He could not hear without the aid of a hearing device which hung around his neck. Despite his handicaps, George Vernon grew.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, December 30, 2015.

<sup>20</sup> R.H. complications increase with each child born to a mother with R.H. incompatibility because each pregnancy further develops antibodies.



Figure 4.5: Melba South with her children, JoAnn, LaRue, John Allan and George Vernon  
 Photograph courtesy of JoAnn Ottley

When JoAnn turned fourteen, she received her patriarchal blessing—an LDS practice providing individual divine guidance.<sup>21</sup> She was taught the blessing was not like having her fortune told, rather a, “divinely delivered exposure of the possibilities in her life, outlining her potential if she earned it.”<sup>22</sup> It was exciting for her to hear the special

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<sup>21</sup> These blessings are typically offered during the teenage years, and unlike other types of blessings within Mormon practice, the blessing must be given by a designated patriarch and is only given once. LDS patriarchs are ordained in every stake. Unlike other church callings, the patriarch is never released from the office unless he becomes unworthy. “Every worthy, baptized member is entitled to and should receive a patriarchal blessing, which provides inspired direction from the Lord. Patriarchal blessings include a declaration of a person’s lineage in the house of Israel and contain personal counsel from the Lord. As a person studies his or her patriarchal blessing and follows the counsel it contains, it will provide guidance, comfort, and protection.” [www.lds.org/topics/patriarchal-blessings/teachings/the-office-of-patriarch](http://www.lds.org/topics/patriarchal-blessings/teachings/the-office-of-patriarch), [www.lds.org/topics/patriarchal-blessings](http://www.lds.org/topics/patriarchal-blessings), accessed February 20, 2017.

<sup>22</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 23, 2018.

blessing and think of the years ahead. What would she accomplish? Who would she be? Who would she marry? What would her children be like? What trials lay ahead, and conversely, what joys? The blessing was transcribed and she received a typed copy shortly afterward. She kept her patriarchal blessing safely tucked away, read it often, and memorized key phrases.<sup>23</sup>

### First Voice Lessons

JoAnn sang many solos with her school choir and grew in confidence and ability. During a ninth-grade choir concert, a church member heard JoAnn sing a solo. The woman was a voice teacher and recognized JoAnn's gift. She approached George and Melba and "signed herself up" as JoAnn's teacher.<sup>24</sup> The family could not afford lessons, but George and Melba wanted to provide every possible opportunity for their beloved daughter and arranged to work in the woman's house as payment. Unbeknownst to them, this teacher had a reputation for ruining voices through faulty technique.

JoAnn was excited about the new voice lessons, though she had to stop studying piano, as her parents could not afford both. After a few weeks, she shared the news with her choir teacher, Mrs. Johnson. Marguerite Johnson was a talented private voice teacher as well as school music teacher and taught a few private singing students in her home. She had personally observed the vocal problems of students who studied with JoAnn's

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<sup>23</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, February 19, 2017.

<sup>24</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 27, 2016.



current private teacher. Aghast, Johnson contacted JoAnn's parents and warned, "You've got to get JoAnn out of there!"<sup>25</sup> She offered her services to the Souths at a fraction of the former teacher's fee. JoAnn started cleaning Johnson's house each week as partial payment, and her parents provided the balance. Johnson was careful with young voices and studying with her proved as crucial to JoAnn's musical development as the gift of her grandparents' piano.<sup>26</sup>

Johnson cared for JoAnn's developing voice, teaching JoAnn to sing with a light, high resonance, "like a flute." The lessons enhanced JoAnn's singing ability, and her voice quickly grew strong and free of tension.<sup>27</sup> She continued playing the piano, but soon, singing became JoAnn's primary instrument. JoAnn, however, did not consider music as a potential career. She did not realize her gift; she "liked to sing," and in the blue-collar, low socioeconomic class of her neighborhood, no one considered singing anything but a past time.<sup>28</sup>

Marguerite Johnson created a triple trio for nine of her most talented school choir members, which included JoAnn. The group performed for local events and even appeared on television. Television was new and enthralling, making the opportunity rare

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<sup>25</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 27, 2016.

<sup>26</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 22, 2014.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, December 21, 2016.

and exciting for the girls and their families. JoAnn and the other girls “thought [they were] really something.”<sup>29</sup>

Johnson held studio recitals and entered her students in local singing competitions. Performing came naturally to JoAnn and she enjoyed every event. Melba became a bit jealous of JoAnn’s close relationship with Mrs. Johnson, but continued to encourage the lessons. She loved to watch JoAnn perform and practice.<sup>30</sup>

### West High School

JoAnn began high school with excitement and confidence. West High School offered many new opportunities in music. Traditionally, the high school choir teacher directed a musical theatre production or an operetta each year. Once JoAnn joined the student body, the teacher added a traveling musical assembly and an original musical revue to further showcase her talent.

*The Wedding of the Painted Doll* was created just for JoAnn (see Figure 4.6). The show began with JoAnn as the painted doll, standing frozen on a platform at the front of the stage. The toys came to life at midnight. JoAnn’s painted doll character came to life and sang, “Love is Where You Find It,” a song from the MGM 1948 movie, *A Date with*

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<sup>29</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 27, 2014.

<sup>30</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, December 21, 2016.

*Judy*.<sup>31</sup> The piece demands agility and strength as it includes some of the highest notes available to a trained coloratura soprano.



Figure 4.6: Wedding of the Painted Doll  
Photograph courtesy of JoAnn Ottley

JoAnn “didn’t know it was hard!”<sup>32</sup> She did not realize her voice and stage acumen were special or that opportunities were being created because of her talent. She naïvely “figured that anybody who wanted to learn to sing could just go take lessons.”<sup>33</sup> Marguerite Johnson remained her private voice teacher throughout high school.

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<sup>31</sup> “Love is Where You Find It.” Music by Nacio Herb Brown; lyrics by Earl K. Brent. Copyright, 1945, 1948, (Renewed 1973, 1976) Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Inc. Sung in the 1948 MGM movie *A Date with Judy* by Jane Powell.

<sup>32</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 22, 2014.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

### Leaving Navajo Street

Though JoAnn was thriving, George and Melba were concerned about the lack of opportunities available for their children on the west side of Salt Lake City. For instance, their ward had only one boy and three girls in JoAnn's age group. At age 16, JoAnn was serving as ward organist, because no adult in the ward could play piano at her level. (see Figure 4.7)



Figure 4.7: Outside 1035 Navajo Street—JoAnn South and close friend, Carolyn Hall shortly before the Souths moved to Kensington Ave  
Photograph courtesy of JoAnn Ottley

LaRue, self-conscious and insecure, did not want to move, but the boys were growing and needed more available resources, particularly George Vernon with his speech, hearing, motor and learning disabilities (see Figure 4.8). George and Melba

“worshiped their children” and their neighborhood “by the railroad tracks seemed empty of possibility.”<sup>34</sup>



Figure 4.8: JoAnn and George Vernon South  
Photograph courtesy of JoAnn Ottley

In the summer of 1951, between JoAnn’s sophomore and junior year at West High School, her parents sold the Navajo Street home and moved the family to 1466 Kensington Avenue on Salt Lake City’s more affluent east side.

The South family’s move represented growth in their socioeconomic status. George’s work ethic and keen intelligence led him from a ranch hand to director of the telephone company’s automobile fleet. Melba’s ability to make a beloved home of the small unfinished house on Navajo Street, despite limited financial resources and rationing, allowed them to follow George’s adage to live on lack of expense. The hard

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<sup>34</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 22, 2014.

work, thrift, and teamwork of JoAnn’s parents made the family’s move to Kensington Avenue possible.

### Edgehill Ward

The move put the family in the Edgehill Ward, which became JoAnn’s “Valhalla.”<sup>35</sup> Instead of a handful of young people her age, JoAnn was surrounded by peers and she counted, “maybe 5 gorgeous hunks.”<sup>36</sup> JoAnn made many friends in the new ward, and participated in all social events, especially those focused on music. One such event was the annual road show—a competition of short original musical plays performed by participating wards from the stake. The road show rehearsals quickly gelled friendships between JoAnn and other Edgehill Ward teens.<sup>37</sup> The performance was a success. George and Melba left for home while JoAnn attended the cast party with her new friends. Her parents went to bed before JoAnn returned, but Melba “was a first-class worrier,” and got up to look through the window just as JoAnn arrived. The South’s owned a long, bullet shaped vacuum, and as Melba stepped back from the window she stumbled, landing astride the vacuum and turning it on in the process. The noise woke George, and “there was a sudden confluence of the whole family,” with Melba sitting on the vacuum in the middle of them. George dubbed his wife a modern-day witch, riding a

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<sup>35</sup> In Richard Wagner’s *Ring Cycle*, “Valhalla became home to the gods themselves.” Larry A. Brown, “Richard Wagner’s, The Ring of the Nibelung: An Introduction, notes and musical examples,” [larryavisbrown.homestead.com/files/Ring/Ring1\\_Rhinegold.htm](http://larryavisbrown.homestead.com/files/Ring/Ring1_Rhinegold.htm), accessed February 25, 2017.

<sup>36</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, January 30, 2017.

<sup>37</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, February 20, 2017.

vacuum instead of a broom (see Figure 4.9). They laughed together heartily for quite some time before going to bed. Although residing in a new house and neighborhood, the family dynamics of love and laughter remained.<sup>38</sup>



Figure 4.9: Modern Day Witch, Drawing by JoAnn South, surrounding photograph of her mother's, Melba South's face.

JoAnn loved the sports events, dances, and contests provided by Edgehill Ward. The events were often held at the nearby University of Utah, where there was enough space for youths to attend from other wards in the stake.<sup>39</sup>

The South family's change of address did not alter their lifestyle; they lived on modest means. JoAnn sewed all her clothing and altered her cousins' hand-me-downs, which continued to supplement her wardrobe throughout high school. The contrast between her new friends' wardrobes and her own was often great; if her friends "each

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<sup>38</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, December 30, 2015.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

had four poodle skirts, [JoAnn] had one,” but she had learned to conserve from her parents. Babysitting provided JoAnn with her own money, which she rarely spent, preferring to save.<sup>40</sup>

### High School Opportunities

JoAnn decided to remain at West High School even though she no longer resided in its boundaries. George took her to school each morning on his way to work. The commute gave them extra father/daughter time. She was rarely late because the few mornings she was not prompt, she had to run to the car with her shoes in hand as he backed out of the driveway, smiling wryly.<sup>41</sup>

Completing her high school education at West High School eased the transition for JoAnn; she didn't lose any important facets of her life as her circle widened. She was able to continue lessons with Marguerite and performed often. In addition to school performances, JoAnn sang for the Lion's Club, the Kiwanis' Club, various community events, and contests arranged by Marguerite. Opportunities for singing were also provided through church. It was a wonderful time for JoAnn who thrived in the demanding performance schedule.

JoAnn had sung arias in competitions, but her first experience with opera came during her junior year of high school. Internationally-known opera singer, Carlos

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<sup>40</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, December 30, 2015.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.



Alexander came to Salt Lake City to teach at the University of Utah in 1948 and began a small opera company in 1951.<sup>42</sup> The company featured local artists, and JoAnn gleaned her earliest understanding of the art form from watching and singing in those productions.<sup>43</sup>

While singing in the opera chorus, JoAnn met other young people who loved music, including a tall, handsome young man from East High School named Dick Dyer. Though attending different schools, they remained friends and saw each other at occasional music events. Since Junior High School, JoAnn's circle of close friends included boys and girls, but she did not know how to flirt or behave around boys with interests that surpassed friendship. Dick Dyer treated her differently than other friends, and his attention pleased her. He had a beautiful voice and she found it exciting to sing together. She looked forward to events he might attend, and whenever they were together he sought her out and made her feel special.<sup>44</sup>

JoAnn progressed rapidly under Marguerite's careful guidance. At age 17, after only two years of voice lessons, she won the Student Division of the National Federation of Musicians Contest with an advanced aria, the "Bell Song" from *Lakmé*.<sup>45</sup> Even singing

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<sup>42</sup> Carlos Alexander directed and sometimes conducted 20 operas over five seasons in Salt Lake City before he left to sing with the Vienna Staatsoper in 1955, [www.bayreuther-festspiele.de/fsdb\\_en/personen/8163/index.htm](http://www.bayreuther-festspiele.de/fsdb_en/personen/8163/index.htm), accessed February 20, 2017.

<sup>43</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, February 11, 2017. These local artists included soprano, Betty Jean Chipman, who, "was in her hay day, and sang most of the starring roles," along with Cohleen Bischoff and Marvin Sorenson.

<sup>44</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview with author, February 19, 2017.

<sup>45</sup> JoAnn Ottley, Vita 1993, unpublished, personal files, used with permission, 1993.

the high E in the piece seemed effortless to her.<sup>46</sup> Marguerite Johnson taught performance practice as well as technique, and insisted JoAnn perform without glasses as well as pose for publicity photographs without them (see Figure 4.10).



Figure 4.10: JoAnn South Publicity Photo  
Photograph Courtesy of JoAnn Ottley

Marguerite entered JoAnn in numerous vocal competitions. Although she often won, JoAnn did not view competitions as career related.<sup>47</sup> In her senior year of high school, she won the blue ribbon for the State Vocal Competition, joking that she was judged, “like the cows.”<sup>48</sup> JoAnn received her diploma from West High School in 1953 at

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<sup>46</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview with author, February 19, 2017.

<sup>47</sup> “The Bell Song” from Leo Delibes’ most famous opera, *Lakmé* is one of the most demanding arias for high soprano in the coloratura soprano operatic literature. More than eight minutes in length, it requires tremendous vocal agility and range. Joseph So. “Spotlight on Lakmé and the Bell Song,” *La Scena Musicale*, Volume 19, no. 1, [www.scena.org](http://www.scena.org), accessed December 1, 2016.

<sup>48</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, December 21, 2016.

the top of her class, (see Figures 4.11 and 4.12) but, instead of ending her education, JoAnn received unexpected opportunities to attend college.



Figure 4.11: JoAnn South's High School graduation  
Photographs courtesy of JoAnn Ottley



Figure 4.12: High School Graduate  
Photographs courtesy of JoAnn Ottley

## College Girl

Music enhanced JoAnn's high school experience, but her love of learning included all subjects. Learning came effortlessly, and she received high grades in classes without extensive study. Along with standard curriculum subjects, West High School offered business classes where students could develop typing and shorthand skills. JoAnn became an excellent typist and "a cracker-jack at shorthand," which she "loved thoroughly."<sup>49</sup>

As a girl from a blue-collar Mormon family in the 1950s, JoAnn was not expected to attend college. Her family's world view did not extend beyond a high school education, especially for girls.<sup>50</sup> She took the business classes at West High School as job market preparation. Although planning to use her business skills for work after high school, it was a short-term goal. Her life plan was "to be a wife and mother like the other girls."<sup>51</sup> This goal remained the same, despite an unexpected opportunity to attend college. She received two scholarship offers: a partial music scholarship to Brigham Young University (BYU) because of her winning performance in the State Fair vocal competition, and a full-tuition academic scholarship to the University of Utah because of her excellent grade point average. The South family could not afford college tuition, so JoAnn accepted the academic scholarship at the University of Utah, rather than BYU's

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<sup>49</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 22, 2014.

<sup>50</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, December 30, 2015.

<sup>51</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 22, 2014.

partial music scholarship. She became the first in her family, male or female, to attend a university.

JoAnn's freshman year at the University of Utah was hectic, and she found college classes more challenging than high school. High school studies had been easy for JoAnn, so she never learned to study. There was no academic counseling available in high school; therefore, she was clueless regarding what a university education entailed. She did not find the required courses interesting. Nevertheless, she worked diligently, carrying a heavy class load, cognizant of the "free ride," and wanting to make the most of her scholarship.<sup>52</sup>

#### A Little Romance

The demands of so many classes were difficult to manage, but despite the stressful academic load, nineteen-year-old JoAnn continued singing. She auditioned, and was selected, for the university's premiere choir, where she sang numerous solos. She found time for social pursuits with friends and began dating Dick Dyer, the boy she met in Carlos Alexander's opera company. Dick also attended the university, so they saw each other frequently. She had previously been on dates, but always with boys that were "pals." This was her first true romance.<sup>53</sup>

A transplant to Utah, Dick's background varied from JoAnn's Utah upbringing. His family moved to Salt Lake City because of his father's job with Standard Oil. Dick's

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<sup>52</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, December 23, 2016.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

family was Presbyterian, and his mother was not happy he was dating a Mormon.

JoAnn's parents did not seem to like Dick, but did not express concerns that she was dating a Presbyterian. Melba was devoted to the LDS faith, but George was not active in church.<sup>54</sup>

JoAnn took pride in her LDS heritage and pioneer ancestors, but did not yet have strong religious beliefs. The daily seminary classes attended in junior high and high school had "excited her about what [she] was part of, what was between the covers of scriptures, all the drama in the stories." Although viewing church participation as positive and satisfying, she "did not overanalyze the theology." Church membership represented heritage and family tradition.<sup>55</sup>

JoAnn enjoyed exploring romance through her dates with Dick. Though the Patriarchal Blessing received at age 14, "niggled at the back of her mind," warning her, "beware that only in a marriage in the house of the Lord will you find the sweetness and the joy you long for," she pushed aside her misgivings about dating a non-Mormon.<sup>56</sup> She continued dating Dick, and eventually accepted an engagement ring.<sup>57</sup> The engagement was short-lived. One of JoAnn's friends saw Dick with another girl and immediately reported the indiscretion to JoAnn. JoAnn angrily returned the ring. She cried for a few days, believing at age 19, she "was the most damaged, betrayed person in history," then

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<sup>54</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, February 19, 2016.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

decided she had merely been “in love with love.” Her feelings of anger and betrayal were soon replaced with relief.<sup>58</sup> Her parents had never openly expressed concerns regarding her relationship with Dick, but, JoAnn was sure they “were doing nip ups”<sup>59</sup> when they discovered the broken engagement.<sup>60</sup>

In 1953 Salt Lake City culture, young men and women were expected to marry shortly after high school. Mormon young men usually waited until after serving their missions, but then married quickly. JoAnn dated a bit following her broken engagement, including the pharmacist “around the corner,” but no relationship became serious. She was frustrated and felt she “didn’t know how to play the game.”<sup>61</sup>

### Working Girl

After the first year at the University of Utah, JoAnn decided to take time off from school to work. Though tuition was covered by the academic scholarship, her family did not have money to help with expenses. With no cultural expectation that she should graduate from college, leaving the university to work seemed reasonable. Using her notable secretarial skills, she secured employment with the university’s math department as secretary for renowned scientist, Harvey Fletcher.

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<sup>58</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, December 23, 2016.

<sup>59</sup> JoAnn used the term “nip ups” to describe the celebration she assumed her parents privately shared when she ended the relationship with Dick Dyer. JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, February 19, 2016.

<sup>60</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, February 19, 2016.

<sup>61</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, December 23, 2016.

JoAnn continued singing with the university choir which held rehearsals during her lunch hour each day. She enjoyed her job. Along with departmental administrative tasks, she typed the doctoral medical thesis for Fletcher's son. The thesis content did not make sense to her, but she was fascinated by the typewriter's extra row of mathematical symbol keys. When the math department's budget was reduced, JoAnn transferred to the meteorology department. Eventually, the contacts she made working at the University of Utah led to employment with one of Salt Lake City's major radio stations, KSL.<sup>62</sup>

KSL was one of the few, 500 Watt, clear channel stations nationally, making it a leader in the industry.<sup>63</sup> At KSL, JoAnn worked directly for the station's management as the junior of two secretaries. She and Enid, the other secretary, answered to Jay W. Wright, Paul Dixon, Eugene Halliday, and Ivor Sharp. JoAnn was specifically assigned to the station manager, Jay Wright, and typed most of his documents, adding the customary JWW: jas at the bottom.<sup>64</sup>

As Wright's personal secretary, JoAnn's duties were numerous and varied, including coordinating "the interchange of activities between BYU and KSL, and the interplay with [LDS] church headquarters."<sup>65</sup> KSL broadcasted all church programming,

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<sup>62</sup> KSL was Salt Lake City's first AM radio station, opening in 1922. It later branched into television and then FM radio. The Mormon Church owns stock in the company, and the station broadcasts BYU sporting events.

<sup>63</sup> Jerold Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 21, 2018. <https://www.ksl.com/?sid=20272204>, accessed March 25, 2018.

<sup>64</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview with author, January 30, 2017. JWW: jas represented Jay W. Wright as author of the document, and JoAnn South as secretary. It was a means of quality control. JoAnn always used JAS as her initials, not JS.

<sup>65</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, December 23, 2016.



including the weekly “Music and the Spoken Word” with the Tabernacle Choir. Jay W. Wright came to KSL from New York and made KSL a CBS station affiliate. As a result, JoAnn was often in contact with CBS representatives in New York via telephone, going through an operator due to no direct access long-distance availability.<sup>66</sup>

JoAnn interacted with all internal KSL Radio and television departments and outside affiliates, and was responsible for Wright’s correspondence, working with artists, and typing sales and financial reports. Once again, she worked on a specially designed keyboard, but instead of mathematical symbols this included a longer carriage to accommodate all numbers needed for the reports. In addition, JoAnn organized and implemented the station’s fund raising efforts, and helped with their women’s homemaking program. One of the artists she met through her work was a popular KSL radio personality, Rolfe Peterson, who invited JoAnn to sing a few times on his show.

### Performance Opportunities

The management at KSL supported JoAnn’s singing opportunities and granted her time performances. This flexibility allowed her to compete and win the National Federation of Music Teachers and sing with the newly-created Summer Festival during the 1955 season. Performances were held in the football stadium, and the program was run by newcomers to the Salt Lake music community, known by locals as The Big Three. “Doc. Lowell Lees, Maurice Abravanel, and Willem Christiansen all landed [in Salt

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<sup>66</sup> Direct-access long distance telephone service was first possible in 1951, but it was not available to the public until the late 1960s. Until then, long-distance telephone calls required operator assistance using a switchboard. Rochelle Sanchirico. “The History of Telephone Communication,” mHelpDesk.com. [www.mhelpdesk.com/history-of-telephone-communication/](http://www.mhelpdesk.com/history-of-telephone-communication/), accessed May 6, 2018.

Lake] about the same time, and they changed the city's musical culture."<sup>67</sup> Robert Cundick accompanied the opera festival rehearsals.<sup>68</sup> Relatively unknown at the time, JoAnn knew him as "Bob at the piano," and Abravanel referred to Cundick as "Bubby."<sup>69</sup> The Festival season included one serious opera (*Samson and Delilah*) and one Broadway show (*South Pacific*).<sup>70</sup> The summer of 1955 was a happy time for JoAnn. She was turning 20, worked at an interesting job, and met Joan Neff through the summer opera. They became good friends on and off stage.

#### The Blind Date that Almost Wasn't

Joan Neff was dating a young man named Wayne (who later became her husband) during the summer of 1955. They wanted to plan a group date with their friends, Lynn Hale and Jerold (Jerry) Ottley. Jerry had just returned from four years living in New Zealand. He had moved there in his junior year of high school when his father, Sidney James Ottley, became the New Zealand Mission President. This church calling included responsibilities for Jerry's mother, Alice Warren Ottley, as well.<sup>71</sup> Upon his high school

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<sup>67</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 12, 2014.

<sup>68</sup> Robert Cundick (1926-2016) later became the Tabernacle Organist, serving in that capacity from 1965 to 1991. "Historical Member Roster," Tabernacle Choir.org, [www.mormontabernaclechoir.org/about/roster.all.c.html](http://www.mormontabernaclechoir.org/about/roster.all.c.html), accessed March 25, 2018.

<sup>69</sup> "Bubby" was how Abravanel, with his thick accent, pronounced, "Bobby." Jerry and JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 21, 2018.

<sup>70</sup> *Samson and Delilah*, opera by Camille Saint-Saens premiered in 1877; *South Pacific*, A staple in American musical theatre repertoire by Rodgers and Hammerstein, premiered on Broadway in 1949.

<sup>71</sup> Mission presidents are called by the LDS first presidency. They serve with their wives, teaching and guiding the missionaries in their area, as well as providing or securing emotional and medical support when needed. Mission presidents bring their minor children with them. They receive a small stipend for

graduation, Jerry served a Mormon mission there, and thus remained for two years after his parents returned to Utah.<sup>72</sup>

Joan invited JoAnn as Jerry's blind date after the final performance of the Summer Festival. JoAnn firmly declined saying she "had been on one blind date and that was enough." Joan persisted, pacifying JoAnn's resistance by explaining they would be dancing to the Les Brown band<sup>73</sup> at Lagoon—a local amusement park that featured live music and dancing on the weekends.<sup>74</sup> JoAnn finally agreed and met Jerold Ottley on September 2, 1955.<sup>75</sup>

September 2<sup>nd</sup> was Jerry's father's birthday, but, Jerry left the family party early, arriving at the South's home on Kensington Avenue with Lynn Hale and his date in

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living expenses, but sacrifice other employment while serving. "Mission President," BYU.edu, [http://eom.byu.edu/index.php/Mission\\_Mission\\_President](http://eom.byu.edu/index.php/Mission_Mission_President), accessed January 1, 2017.

<sup>72</sup> Most young, unmarried, practicing Mormon men and, though fewer, many young Mormon women as well, between the ages of 18 and 25 serve an extended mission for the LDS church. The mission is voluntary. The church chooses the destination within and without of the United States. If learning a language is required, the church provides language training. Most missions are for proselyting purposes, but some are humanitarian. Mormon missionaries are only sent to countries that accept their presence and work. Outside contact with family and friends is limited during the mission so the missionary can focus on the work. "Missionary Program," Mormonnewsroom.org, <http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/topic/missionary-program>, accessed January 1, 2017.

<sup>73</sup> The Les Brown Band began in 1936 and was still a popular jazz dance band in the mid-1950s. Among others, Les Brown worked with the popular singer Doris Day and toured with Bob Hope, performing for the United States armed forces. His most famous song was "Sentimental Journey," first sung by Doris Day. Scott Yanow, "Les Brown," Allmusic.com. [www.allmusic.com/artist/les-brown-mn0000511773/biography](http://www.allmusic.com/artist/les-brown-mn0000511773/biography), accessed February 25, 2017.

<sup>74</sup> Tom Wharton, in an article for local Utah newspaper, *The Salt Lake Tribune*, documents Lagoon Theme Park in Farmington, Utah featured famous musicians and dancing at their "Patio Gardens" until 1973. This article was archived by *The Salt Lake Tribune*, then republished on SLTrib.com for research purposes July 2, 2015. Tom Wharton. "Whatever happened to Lagoon's Patio Gardens—where Hendrix, The Stones, The Who and other big acts got their groove on?" SLTrib.com. <http://archive.sltrib.com/article.php?id=2614094&itype=CMSID>, accessed March 25, 2018.

<sup>75</sup> JoAnn Ottley, "Historical Points."

Lynn's father's white Buick convertible. Lynn and Jerry were best-friends. Jerry came to JoAnn's front door, where they met. They walked out to the Buick together, and he opened the door for her. She "had never seen anything like that car! It was a mile long!" The four drove to Lagoon and joined Joan and Wayne. JoAnn and Jerry had a wonderful time that evening, dancing and laughing light-heartedly with the two other couples. The evening air was cool as they drove back after the date. The convertible top was down, and JoAnn was shivering. Putting an arm around her shoulders, Jerry said, "Well, this might not be ethical, but it will sure be warmer."<sup>76</sup>

#### Absolutely the One for Her

After the date, JoAnn's mother inquired about it. JoAnn replied it was a lovely evening, but she doubted she would see him again. Although he was "awfully nice, he was too short and would be going to BYU," which JoAnn saucily called, "the marriage factory."<sup>77</sup>

Despite her prediction, Jerry soon invited her on another date. Standing only two inches shorter than Jerry, JoAnn worried her height might make her less attractive; therefore, she practiced walking in flat shoes with her knees bent to appear shorter. Again, they had a wonderful time, but his classes were soon beginning for the school year. BYU, located in Provo, Utah, was 45 miles from Salt Lake City. As Jerry did not own a car, JoAnn assumed this would certainly be their last date.

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<sup>76</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 12, 2014.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

Jerry proved her wrong a second time by hitch-hiking from Provo to Salt Lake City to take her out. By the end of the third date, JoAnn “knew absolutely, he was the one for [her].”<sup>78</sup> This realization came as a spiritual experience. That night, Jerry kissed her for the first time. Afterward, JoAnn sensed an inner voice, “a deep spiritual voice, saying, ‘this is it.’”<sup>79</sup>

Jerry continued hitch-hiking to see her every weekend, and their relationship grew. They “always had a wonderful time with lots of laughter.”<sup>80</sup> JoAnn was still quite inexperienced with dating. She was not shy in most situations, but felt “socially immature and shy in dating circumstances.” Her parents had not given “any kind of instruction, it was not their world either.”<sup>81</sup> Dating Dick Dyer had not improved her confidence, but dating Jerry changed everything for JoAnn. She “found gold” when she met hi and fell truly in love.<sup>82</sup> She had never experienced that feeling before, but “knew absolutely” what she felt for him. She wrote a “funny little poem” about meeting Jerry, which began,

September 2<sup>nd</sup> was the day in 1955  
When I began to see the way to really come alive!

She thought “it was a horrible, horrible, silly poem,” but though feeling silly, she needed an outlet for the “childish and bubbly” feelings she was experiencing for the first time.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 12, 2014.

<sup>79</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, February 19, 2016.

<sup>80</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 12, 2014.

<sup>81</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, February 19, 2017.

<sup>82</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 12, 2014.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

Jerry felt it too. Shortly after the second date, he attended one of JoAnn's performances. She sang the Clara Edwards song, *Into the Night*,<sup>84</sup> and it "touched him deeply."<sup>85</sup> Seven months after their first date—on his birthday, April 2, 1956—Jerry arrived once again in Lynn Hale's Buick. JoAnn thought they were going out to celebrate Jerry's birthday. Lynn waited in the car, and Jerry went alone to the front door. When he entered JoAnn's family living room, he pulled a ring out of his pocket and said, "Here, see if this fits."<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Clara Edwards, "Into the Night," for Solo Voice, Schirmer, 1939. Amy Kimble, "Clara Edwards, Works," <http://www.evan-and-jami.com>, accessed May 6, 2018.

<sup>85</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 12, 2014.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

**CHAPTER FIVE:**

**BALANCING ACT—MARRIAGE,  
SINGING, FAMILY, AND MOTHERHOOD (1956-1965)**

JoAnn believed her relationship with Jerry would lead to marriage, but she was completely surprised when he proposed. Jerry later confessed he wished he had properly “gone down on one knee,” but despite his lack of kneeling, JoAnn was in a “pink bubble of happiness.”<sup>1</sup>

#### The Engagement

JoAnn remained giddy throughout the engagement, and the family shared her enthusiasm. The temple wedding was planned for June 22, 1956.<sup>2</sup> Jerry’s parents—Sidney James Ottley and Alice Warren Ottley—welcomed JoAnn as a future family member. JoAnn began planning the wedding and organizing the details for their life together. In her excitement, she was often distracted with her mind far from life’s mundane details. Her mother once opened the refrigerator and discovered that JoAnn had absent-mindedly left an iron inside.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Lynn Hale, Jerry’s best friend, drove him to JoAnn’s house that night. He waited in the car while Jerry went in to the house to propose marriage.

<sup>2</sup> Although not all Mormon couples are married in an LDS temple, Temple Weddings within the LDS Church are the only marriages considered as an eternal bond extending beyond death. Temple marriages require both the bride and groom to hold a current Temple Recommends. Weekly church attendance, paying a 10% tithe, following the “Word of Wisdom” (abstinence from drinking coffee, tea, alcoholic beverages, and tobacco usage), allegiance to church leadership and a declaration of belief in the divine origins of the church are required to obtain and maintain a temple recommend. Only church members holding temple recommends attend the temple wedding ceremony. A waiting room is provided for other invited family members and friends, who then join the wedding party after the ceremony.

<sup>3</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 12, 2014.

Due to her small town, country upbringing, Melba was unsure how to plan a wedding suitable for the Salt Lake City culture, but her friends were happy to provide guidance.<sup>4</sup> JoAnn’s parents paid for many wedding expenses, but knowing their limited income, JoAnn insisted on paying for some of the costs. The 1956 Salt Lake City culture contained mixed traditions for weddings—combining secular American practices of the time and the more idiosyncratic Mormon culture celebrations. JoAnn’s vision for her wedding included both.<sup>5</sup>

Upon securing a wedding date at the historic Salt Lake Temple,<sup>6</sup> an engagement announcement with a picture of the bride was published in the two local newspapers. Melba hosted an engagement luncheon at their home assisted by several of JoAnn’s girlfriends.<sup>7</sup>

JoAnn had been making her clothes since age twelve, but opted to hire her paternal Aunt Dolly, an excellent seamstress, to make the wedding dress. Melba made JoAnn’s blue and green chiffon “going away dress.” JoAnn marveled at the love and time

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<sup>4</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, December 23, 2016.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> The Salt Lake Temple is situated in the center of downtown Salt Lake City on historic Temple Square, surrounded by a Visitors Center, the Tabernacle, a small gothic Assembly Hall and gardens. Dedicated in 1893, three years before Utah achieved U.S. statehood, it was the fourth temple built by the LDS Church, and took forty years to complete, partly because the building face is made of quartz monzonite (like granite) quarried and hauled from Little Cottonwood Canyon 20 miles from the Temple. The interior is ornate, with many murals and various rooms specifically designed for temple ordinations, including sealing rooms used for marriages. <http://www.ldschurchtemples.com/saltlake/> accessed December 30, 2016.

<sup>7</sup> Salt Lake City has two major newspapers, *The Salt Lake Tribune* and *The Deseret News*. The former is considered more secular than the latter, which is loosely associated with the Mormon Church.



her mother invested in the dress, as she hemmed the fashionable large circle skirt with small, meticulous stitches.<sup>8</sup>

Although JoAnn's father liked Jerry and approved of the marriage, it was difficult for him to have his daughter leave. At the time of the engagement, George did not actively attend church and his LDS temple recommend had lapsed.<sup>9</sup> Wanting to attend the wedding ceremony, he began making the personal changes necessary to obtain a temple recommend before the wedding day.<sup>10</sup>

JoAnn was given three bridal showers, one for female family members, another for close female friends, and the third for ladies from church. Per custom, Jerry arrived at the end of each shower, and placed the bow from each gift as she opened it on her hair (see Figures 5.1 and 5.2).<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, December 23, 2016.

<sup>9</sup> The card given to Mormons which allows entrance into LDS temples is called a temple recommend, often shortened colloquially to "recommend." Temple recommends are initially issued after the member is interviewed by the ward bishop and the stake or mission president to determine worthiness. Temple recommends are renewed yearly. Requirements are the same as those for a Temple Marriage. Renewal interviews may be given by counselors in the bishopric and stake presidency. [www.lds.org/manual/endowed-from-on-high-temple-preparation-seminar-teachers-manual/lesson-2-we-must-be-worthy-to-enter-the-temple?lang=eng](http://www.lds.org/manual/endowed-from-on-high-temple-preparation-seminar-teachers-manual/lesson-2-we-must-be-worthy-to-enter-the-temple?lang=eng), accessed January 23, 2017.

<sup>10</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, December 23, 2016.

<sup>11</sup> JoAnn and Jerold Ottley, email to the author, December 31, 2016.



Figure 5.1: JoAnn wearing bows from shower gifts  
Photograph courtesy of JoAnn Ottley



Figure 5.2: Jerry kissing his bride on piano bench  
Photograph courtesy of JoAnn Ottley.

The bridal announcement photographs were taken by Jerry's best man, Lynn Hale, in his makeshift, home-basement photography studio. He had previously taken JoAnn's concert publicity photos.<sup>12</sup> Out of habit from performance poses, JoAnn did not wear glasses for most of the photographs. She was not pleased with many of the pictures, feeling she looked "sleepy" without glasses and "like a librarian" when wearing them.<sup>13</sup>

Thanks to Aunt Dolly's impeccable work, JoAnn's wedding dress was gorgeous and perfectly fit her slender frame and twenty-five-inch waist.<sup>14</sup> JoAnn accessorized with a single strand of costume pearls paired with rhinestone earrings, each bearing a single pearl(see Figure 5.3).



Figure 5.3: JoAnn South in bridal photo  
Photograph courtesy of JoAnn Ottley

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<sup>12</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, December 23, 2016.

<sup>13</sup> JoAnn and Jerold Ottley, email to the author, December 31, 2016.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

## Wedding Day

On the wedding day, JoAnn was “pretty rattled” after the three-month preparation whirlwind. She and her parents arrived early to the Salt Lake Temple only to discover JoAnn had forgotten her temple recommend. Unable to enter without it, George hurried home to retrieve it while she and her mother waited. JoAnn was too stressed to “feel lovely, or spiritual.” Fortunately, Kensington Avenue was not far from the temple; her father rushed back, the recommend in hand, and a comforting smile on his face.<sup>15</sup>

Jerold Don Ottley<sup>16</sup> and JoAnn South married the morning of June 22, 1956, kneeling at opposite sides of an altar in a temple sealing room. George, successfully receiving his temple recommend, attended the ceremony with Melba. They watched proudly as their beloved daughter wed “for time and all eternity”<sup>17</sup> and began the next chapter of life. Full-length mirrored walls frame both sides of altars in temple sealing rooms, so as Jerry and JoAnn made their vows, they each saw a seemingly never-ending reflection of themselves as a couple. JoAnn gazed at Jerold Ottley’s honest, handsome face and accepted him as her eternal companion.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview with author, February 19, 2017.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. Jerold (Jerry) Ottley was the youngest child in his family. Sidney threatened to name the baby “General Con,” since he was born during General Conference, which is a biannual meeting for all members of the LDS Church. In Mormon practice, a new baby is named and given a blessing by their father in front of the congregation. Though Sidney wasn’t usually a prankster, Alice was concerned he might actually name their son, “General Con.” Instead, Sidney chose, “Jerold Don,” because it had a similar pronunciation to General Con. The name remained a shared family joke.

<sup>17</sup> Eternal marriage is a fundamental concept in Mormon theology, and crucial to the spiritual progress of church members.

<sup>18</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview with author, February 19, 2017.

Jerry's parents hosted the customary wedding breakfast at The Doll House restaurant (see Figure 5.4).<sup>19</sup>

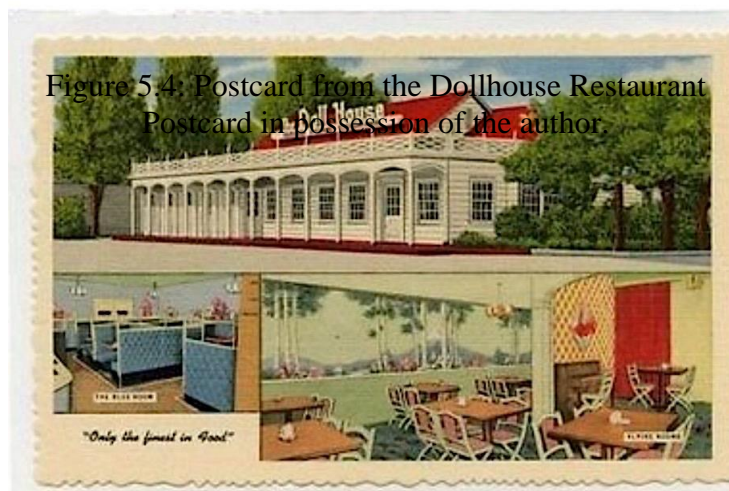


Figure 5.4: Postcard from the Dollhouse Restaurant  
Postcard in possession of author

The Wedding Breakfast is intended to include close family and friends unable to attend the temple wedding ceremony because they lacked “Temple Recommends.” Though traditionally called a Wedding Breakfast, the time of day and menu choices were more appropriate for a luncheon. Guests were served tossed salad, breaded veal cutlets, potatoes and gravy, green peas, non-alcoholic drinks, and dessert. During the luncheon, everyone laughed heartily when Jerry introduced JoAnn as, “My wife, JoAnn South,” forgetting to use her married name.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> The Doll House Restaurant menu and postcard, circa 1953. 1518 South Main Street, Salt Lake City, Utah.

<sup>20</sup> JoAnn and Jerold Ottley, email to author, December 31, 2016.

The wedding reception was held that evening in the Colonial Hills Stake Center.<sup>21</sup> JoAnn wore low-heeled white pumps, as flats were not considered formal. Whenever photographs were taken of the couple, she bent her knees slightly to appear shorter than Jerry, the full skirt of her gown masking the demi pliés (see Figure 5.5).<sup>22</sup>



Figure 5.5: The newly married Jerold and JoAnn Ottley  
Photograph courtesy of JoAnn Ottley

The sound of live organ music from the chapel accompanied the formal reception line in the church's adjacent large foyer (see Figure 5.6).<sup>23</sup> According to local tradition,

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<sup>21</sup> Jerold Ottley, email to the author, January 5, 2017.

<sup>22</sup>JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, December 23, 2016.

<sup>23</sup> Traditional Mormon receptions after a temple wedding are often held in the evening. Regardless of venue, typical Mormon wedding receptions include a formal receiving line and are treated as an open house with guests coming throughout the allotted time, usually with a gift. Guests wait in line to

they “were stuck in the line no matter what! No potty breaks – no nothin!”<sup>24</sup> Guest after guest passed through the receiving line, offering hugs and congratulations. So many people attended the reception that JoAnn was sure she “couldn’t erase [her] smile for a week.”<sup>25</sup>



Figure 5.6: Wedding reception line from left to right: George and Melba South, Stanley and Alice Ottley, Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, LaRue South, bridesmaids, and flower girls. Photograph courtesy of JoAnn Ottley

The line finally disbanded to allow the bride and groom to cut the cake. The cake, a wedding gift by JoAnn’s Aunt Mayme, was displayed in the cultural hall. They were able to view a few gifts before it was time to leave. The couple ran to the car as the small group of remaining guests showered them with rice.

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congratulate the newlyweds and both sides of the families. They then eat a dessert or snack and leave at various times throughout the evening.

<sup>24</sup> Jerold Ottley, email to the author, January 2, 2017.

<sup>25</sup> JoAnn and Jerold Ottley, email to the author, December 31, 2016.

## Honeymoon

Concerned their mischievous friends planned to separate them, JoAnn and Jerry devised an escape plan.<sup>26</sup> Jerry and JoAnn drove to JoAnn's parents' home in Jerry's father's car. They parked in front of the house as their friends pulled in behind them. Jerry used borrowed handcuffs and locked their wrists together, making them truly inseparable. The hand-cuffed couple exited the car, leaving the lights on and doors open so their friends would assume they were only staying a short while. The newlyweds hurried through the house, out the back door, and ran down the back alley to Jerry's brother's waiting car, already loaded for the honeymoon. The plan worked well and was their first small victory as a married couple.<sup>27</sup>

The wedding night was spent at The Majestic Rockies Motel, a modest local establishment south of Salt Lake City.<sup>28</sup> Jerry had remained in his tuxedo after the reception. "A stupid mistake," he realized as he checked into their room. Upon pulling out his wallet to pay for the room, "rice sprayed everywhere."<sup>29</sup> Embarrassed, he quickly paid and ducked down to retrieve their suitcases.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, December 23, 2016.

<sup>27</sup> Jerold Ottley, email to the author, January 2, 2017.

<sup>28</sup> At the time of this publication, The Majestic Rockies Motel is still in operation at 8901 South State Street in Sandy, Utah.

<sup>29</sup> Jerold Ottley, email to the author, January 2, 2017.

<sup>30</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, December 23, 2016. JoAnn attributed Jerry's acute embarrassment to the "innocence of the world at that point."



The next morning—Saturday, June 23—Jerry and JoAnn toured through several national parks in Utah and Arizona for their honeymoon. They had little money, so creatively planned a trip with limited costs. JoAnn had learned her father’s adage to “live not on income, but on lack of expense.”<sup>31</sup> They ate at few restaurants throughout the trip, taking most meals from well-packed coolers.<sup>32</sup>

Freeways had not yet been built in the area, so JoAnn and Jerry traveled on Highway 89, stopping often for popsicles since the car did not have air conditioning. They “sang lots of songs, [including] *Big Rock Candy Mountain* . . . shouted ‘whoopie’ lots . . . and cuddled the whole way,” with JoAnn snuggled next to Jerry on the long station wagon front seat.<sup>33</sup> On the trip home, they visited Zion National Park. When campgrounds were available, they slept in a makeshift bed in the back of the station wagon. The first morning in Bryce Canyon they sat quietly together in the campground, basking in the peace of the surroundings and love for each other as husband and wife, while they fed squirrels and watched the sunrise over the deep-red peaks. After Bryce Canyon they visited Jacobs Lake, followed by the Coral Pink Sand Dunes, and then a tour of the Grand Canyon.

While exploring the north face of the Grand Canyon, the couple stopped at Kaibab Forest to visit the steel-framed, fire-watch tower built in 1936.<sup>34</sup> The couple

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<sup>31</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 8, 2014.

<sup>32</sup> Jerold Ottley, email to author, January 2, 2017.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> From canyons to prairies, peaks to plateaus, the Kaibab national Forest, which is nestled on the Colorado Plateau, offers layers of opportunity for discovery. The Mogollon Rim forms the southern boundary while extending to the north almost to the Utah border. Meanwhile, the majestic Grand Canyon

laughed throughout the tour, because when signing the guest registry, Jerry signed his parents' names, Mr. and Mrs. Sidney J. Ottley “the only Mr. and Mrs. Ottley he'd ever known.”<sup>35</sup>

After touring Zion National Park, the couple stayed in a motel in Cedar City, Utah. They splurged on a take-out dinner which they ate at a drive-in move.<sup>36</sup> The last night of their honeymoon—Thursday, June 28, 1956—they stayed in Provo, Utah. Provo would be their home in a few short weeks when Jerry returned to BYU. No longer would Jerry need to hitchhike to Salt Lake City each weekend to be with JoAnn. Being JoAnn Ottley, Mrs. Jerold Ottley, filled her with joy. The following morning, the couple “drove home and back to reality.”<sup>37</sup>

### Beginning Life Together

Since school would not resume at BYU until September, the newlyweds temporarily rented an upstairs furnished apartment in an “old stately house” in the Sugarhouse area of Salt Lake City.<sup>38</sup> Jerry worked for his brother in the family paint store and JoAnn continued to work for KSL.

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National Park bisects the center of the forest. “Welcome to the Kaibab National Forest,” U.S. Forest Service: Caring for the Land and Serving People; United States Department of Agriculture. <https://www.fs.usda.gov/recmain/kaibab/recreation> accessed January 2, 2017.

<sup>35</sup> Jerold Ottley, email to author, January 2, 2017.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Sugar house, one of the oldest neighborhoods in Salt Lake City, was named after the sugar factory by Margaret McMeans Smoot, wife of the second mayor. Though the name is officially two words, locals usually refer to it as one word, Sugarhouse, even on business signage in the area. The neighborhood

JoAnn’s responsibility as liaison between KSL and BYU—along with the recommendation of her supervisor, Jay Wright—helped her secure a job as a secretary for the BYU President’s Office in Provo. Jerry held several jobs in Provo through the student work-study program.<sup>39</sup> The family of Louise Crandall, one of JoAnn’s bridesmaids, owned an old home by the BYU campus on 5<sup>th</sup> East in Provo. It had been converted into several furnished apartments. Jerry and JoAnn rented one on the ground floor and moved in just before BYU’s fall term. They left the Sugarhouse apartment spotless, vowing they would “leave everywhere they lived better than they found it.”<sup>40</sup> JoAnn’s father had a truck and both families helped the couple move their few possessions to Provo. An efficiency unit, the apartment had one open space that included a Murphy bed.<sup>41</sup> The Ottleys decorated it with purchases from the Mormon sponsored thrift store, Deseret Industries, playfully calling the finished product their “DI decorating scheme.”<sup>42</sup>

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is tree-lined with eclectic architecture. <http://www.onlineutah.com/sugarhousehistory.shtml>, accessed Feb. 2, 2017.

<sup>39</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview, February 11, 2017.

<sup>40</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, February 19, 2017.

<sup>41</sup> Conceived in 1884 and patented in 1900 by William L. Murphy, Murphy Beds folded into the wall, therefore opening cramped apartment living space. The beds’ popularity grew rapidly, and in 1920 the company’s headquarters moved from California to New York City. The beds became less common after WWII when many Americans left city life for the suburbs. <http://www.morespaceplace.com/history-of-the-murphy-bed/>.

<sup>42</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, December 23, 2016. Deseret Industries (known by Mormons and Utah residents as “the D.I.” was created in 1938 by the LDS Church to provide jobs and goods to needy Mormon families. Stewart Eccles headed the project and modeled it after California’s Goodwill stores. The name Deseret is associated with beehives within Mormon culture, symbolizing hard work and industry. Don L. Searle. “Deseret Industries at Fifty,” LDS.org, <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1988/07/deseret-industries-at-fifty?lang=eng>, accessed December 23, 2016.

The couple did not own a car and considered it an unnecessary, frivolous expense. One wedding present was a teapot, in which they stashed all spare change, “saving pennies until [they] had enough money to walk to town and go to a movie.”<sup>43</sup> Despite scrimping for movies and walking everywhere, Jerry and JoAnn purchased a \$50.00 upright piano.<sup>44</sup> Since age nine, JoAnn had always owned a piano and “just couldn’t live without one!” For her, a piano was more important than a car or furniture. She declared if she had to choose between a car or a piano she “would put wheels on the piano, so [she] could move place to place.”<sup>45</sup> Jerry understood the importance of JoAnn needing a piano and together they decided to splurge on that one, important item.<sup>46</sup>

JoAnn loved her new job in the BYU President’s Office as Clyde D. Sandgren’s legal secretary. President Sandgren—a successful New York City attorney before joining BYU as general counsel—provided legal counsel for the church school system, which included BYU, Ricks College, and the church-run seminaries and institutes of religion connected with public schools and secular universities.<sup>47</sup> He assisted in church building projects, such as the purchase of old barracks in Idaho for married student housing at BYU, and the financing of Cottonwood Mall in Salt Lake City. Assisting him in his diverse professional projects provided JoAnn many learning opportunities. She took

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<sup>43</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, December 23, 2016.

<sup>44</sup> JoAnn Ottley, “Pianos,” *Essays*, unpublished, March 29, 2014.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, December 23, 2016.

<sup>47</sup> In 2001, the name of church owned Rick’s College, located in Rexburg, Idaho, was changed to BYU-Idaho.

minutes during every meeting in short-hand, then typed and filed them for later retrieval. President Sandgren's personal business included writing wills for clients, which JoAnn typed and witnessed. JoAnn's excellent typing skills were crucial to her success in this endeavor, because wills were required to be error free.<sup>48</sup>

JoAnn adapted quickly to life as a young, married woman living and working in Provo. The days followed a busy, happy routine. In the morning, she and Jerry shared breakfast and walked to campus together. He set off for classes while she headed to work. At the end of the day, they met at the apartment for an economical dinner before Jerry began his homework. JoAnn often studied with him, learning all she could from his class notes and textbooks. Unable to attend school, she immersed herself in the topics of his classes, "gathering crumbs from underneath the table of his education."<sup>49</sup>

Their relationship was unusual for the time. "Women did not expect to do what the men did," but, Jerry and JoAnn supported each other equally. Despite stress, concerning lack of money and time, they "always worked to respect each other's [pursuits]."<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, January 30, 2017.

<sup>49</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 8, 2014.

<sup>50</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, January 30, 2017. In this interview, JoAnn said this equality and mutual respect were foundational aspects of her marriage, adding, "that's not gilding the lily. That's just the way it is."

## Provo Singing Opportunities

JoAnn's love of singing matched her insatiable love of learning. President Sandgren became "a fan" of JoAnn's singing. An amateur composer, he asked her to record some of his pieces.<sup>51</sup> Jerry sang with the BYU Acapella Choir, directed by Newell Weight. The choir rehearsed weekdays during JoAnn's lunch hour. Though not a matriculated student, she auditioned for the group, was accepted immediately, and given many solo opportunities with the choir.<sup>52</sup>

JoAnn's reputation as a fine singer spread. Crawford Gates, a doctoral student in BYU's School of Music, created a *Book of Mormon* symphony for the LDS Palmyra Pageant, an outdoor theatrical and musical production performed each summer in Palmyra, New York. The choral parts of the work were recorded by the BYU Acapella Choir. One of these required a sustained high D-sharp that only JoAnn and one other soprano could manage. She and the other soprano sang it alternately, each nudging the other to take over so they could take breaths without interrupting the musical line. After the recording, whenever Crawford Gates saw JoAnn on campus he would greet her with, "Hi there, High D-Sharp!"<sup>53</sup>

Their first year of marriage seemed an extended honeymoon. Weekends were spent walking to the occasional movie, attending church, and inviting their new friends, Joyce and Burton Winters, to Sunday dinners in the apartment. Burton was also a student

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<sup>51</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, January 30, 2017.

<sup>52</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 8, 2014.

<sup>53</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, January 30, 2017.

and, like the Ottleys, the Winters' had little money. One memorable Sunday the penny-saving menu included creamed Vienna sausage.

When the acapella choir was invited to sing at Disneyland (Anaheim, CA), JoAnn and Jerry packed their bags. Disneyland was only in its second year of business and proved a great adventure.<sup>54</sup> Students paid their expenses, but were housed by local LDS families, which reduced costs. When not singing, they were free to explore the "Magic Kingdom."<sup>55</sup>

During the tour JoAnn sang as soloist in the song, "Yonder." JoAnn loved both the lyrics and the music's "gypsy-feel." At each concert she stepped forward without fear. For her, singing was sharing. The lyrics included the words, "Yonder was the home of my childhood, yonder where the pine trees go." Her solo included, "page after page of haunting, yearning homesickness, sung in a high, light spin." She never tired of singing the piece. As she sang, it felt as if the music flowed through her, reached out to the hearts of those listening and returned to her, connecting her to those who were listening.<sup>56</sup>

### Military Call and Separation

At the end of Jerry's sophomore year, the couple's blissful routine was suddenly interrupted by an unwelcome letter. Jerry had been drafted by the U.S. Government and

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<sup>54</sup> Jennifer Rosenberg, "Disneyland Opens," *About Education Website*, <http://history1900s.about.com/od/1950s/qt/disneyland.htm>, accessed February 14, 2017.

<sup>55</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview with author, January 30, 2017.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

was to report to Fort Lewis, Washington for Basic Training. Shocked, they celebrated their first anniversary on tour with the Mu Phi Epsilon Fraternity Choir,<sup>57</sup> with the knowledge that Jerry would soon be miles away. One month later, in July of 1957, he left for Fort Lewis.<sup>58</sup>

JoAnn remained in Provo during the long, eight-week separation. Though the time seemed interminable, she refused to wallow in self-pity.<sup>59</sup> She continued her work as secretary for President Sandgren, sang with the choir, and accepted an opportunity to extremely hard of hearing which made for interesting, mirth-filled rehearsals. Social interaction with the cast eased JoAnn's loneliness for Jerry. JoAnn wrote him a letter every day, filled with news of family and friends, and signing, "All, Always, JoAnn."<sup>60</sup> This became her written expression of love for him. Each time she wrote those words, she committed herself and life to him.<sup>61</sup>

Knowing they would need to travel to Jerry's first assignment, JoAnn withdrew \$150.00 from their savings account just before his basic training finished. With her father's guidance, JoAnn bought their first car—a 1952 Chevrolet. Jerry's return "was

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<sup>57</sup> JoAnn and Jerry were members of the BYU chapter of the Mu Phi Epsilon Fraternity and sang in the Mu Phi Epsilon Fraternity Choir at BYU. Founded in 1903 by Professor Winthrop S. Sterling, Dean, and Elizabeth Mathias, faculty member, of the Metropolitan College of Music in Cincinnati, Ohio, Mu Phi Epsilon is a co-educational fraternity. Its mission is to recognize scholarship and musicianship, develop bonds of friendship among members and advance music in the community, nation and the world, with an emphasis on service through music. <http://www.muphiepsilon.org/>, accessed February 26, 2017.

<sup>58</sup> JoAnn and Jerold Ottley, telephone interview by author, February 19, 2017.

<sup>59</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview with author, February 11, 2017.

<sup>60</sup> JoAnn Ottley, unpublished papers. Used with permission.

<sup>61</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview with author, February 11, 2017.



absolutely glorious,” and JoAnn felt they had “big, shining spotlights” on them. They were inseparable, “remembering and touching and laughing and just being.” JoAnn felt a “literal oneness;” she was “whole again.”<sup>62</sup>

Jerry was accepted into the Army Band as a trombone player, and temporarily assigned to Fort Ord (Monterey County, CA) for band training. This time, JoAnn could accompany him. She was relieved his service would be with a musical instrument and not a weapon.<sup>63</sup> With no ability to move the piano, they sold it to Roy Samuelson, one of Jerry’s classmates who lived down the street, for \$50.00—breaking even. No students in their neighborhood owned a truck, so a group of them helped Samuelson roll the piano down the street to his apartment, laughing with every step.

### Military Wife

JoAnn and Jerry hitched a trailer to the back of the car and packed their few belongings. True to their decision upon vacating their first apartment, they scrubbed every corner and left the apartment “better than they found it.”<sup>64</sup> It was late September 1957, when Jerry and JoAnn drove from Provo to Fort Ord. They “were giddy to be together again,” laughing and talking mile after mile. Once at Fort Ord they moved into “a terrible place with a bed in the living room” for a few weeks—until they could find a

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<sup>62</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview with author, February 19, 2017.

<sup>63</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview with author, February 11, 2017.

<sup>64</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview with author, February 19, 2017.

place to call home during the five months of Jerry's military band training. It was a "tiny duplex called Lover's Point in Pacific Grove." There wasn't enough time for JoAnn to become known as a singer in the Fort Ord area, but she did sing in a small, community production of Handel's *Messiah* at Christmas. Only having sung the work "once or twice before," she relearned it sitting at their kitchen table without a piano.<sup>65</sup>

The following February, the Ottleys cleaned the little duplex to leave it "better than they found it," and left for Jerry's first assignment after band training. He was assigned to Fort Sill. The drive to Oklahoma took several days, and they were greeted by snowfall upon entering the fort. Compared to winters in Utah, the storm was negligible, and they "laughed [themselves] sick at the way the little snow befuddled traffic."<sup>66</sup>

They stayed in temporary housing until they found a furnished duplex outside the base "in marvelous shape." It was the nicest place they had lived since their marriage. It was owned by Mr. and Mrs. Lode, a young couple with two children and examples of "the finest Oklahoma kind of folk." The rental stood on the same property as the Lodes' home—a "big Midwest house." Another young Mormon couple rented the adjoining apartment on the Lode's property. They attended the Ottley's new church ward, and quickly helped Jerry and JoAnn feel at home.<sup>67</sup>

Being without a piano at Fort Ord was difficult for JoAnn; therefore, one of the Ottley's first purchases at Fort Sill was a used upright piano. She told Jerry that in case of

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<sup>65</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview with author, February 19, 2017.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

fire the one thing they would need to save was the piano. “Put wheels on it and a motor, that is all we would need,” she said, only partly joking.<sup>68</sup>

JoAnn found work as a roving secretary for Fort Sill’s Headquarters. She and Jerry made friends at work and through church. They felt there was “something special about a ward in the military.” One night, JoAnn and Jerry drove to the church on an errand and found a member of the ward in the closet arranging supplies. They chatted for a few minutes, and discovered he was a Lieutenant Colonel. It was “such a joy” to see someone of his station willing to do menial work as service.<sup>69</sup>

Being far from all that was familiar added a sense of adventure to all aspects of life, even mundane tasks. They bought a used clothes washer that required attaching a hose to the kitchen sink with each use. To their amusement, sometimes the washer would get stuck on the spin cycle and “start bouncing up and down” until “Jerry wrestled with it and got it to work.”<sup>70</sup>

One of the landlords’ children had a pet squirrel. The squirrel escaped and everyone helped find it. Jerry saw the run-away pet, but as he caught it, the rodent bit through Jerry’s thumbnail, causing him pain for days. When summer arrived, Jerry and JoAnn tasted watermelon better than any they had previously eaten. Watermelons grew large in Oklahoma. “The smallest one [they] could find covered [their] whole dining room table.” Not wanting to miss any of the fruit’s growing season, for a while, the only

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<sup>68</sup> JoAnn Ottley, “Pianos,” *Essays*, unpublished, March 29, 2014.

<sup>69</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, February 19, 2017.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

food in their refrigerator was watermelon, because there was not enough room for anything else.<sup>71</sup>

Not all their Oklahoma adventures were pleasant. JoAnn especially disliked the potential tornadoes and plethora of insects and spiders. Soon after moving to Fort Sill, a “severe storm warning with twisters,” was broadcast. Having never experienced such a thing, Jerry and JoAnn did not know what to do, so they “just went to bed.” JoAnn had a deep-seated fear of spiders, probably because of the black widows in the South’s first Salt Lake City apartment as a child. Oklahoma had both tarantulas and scorpions. Driving to Oklahoma City for their LDS Stake Conference they saw tarantulas crossing the road, “so big, [they] could see light under them.” As they drove, they would often run over the gigantic tarantulas, and “hear them pop.” JoAnn saw a “moth with a 4-inch body, and a scorpion coming out from under the bed.” Sometimes she felt her hand was “frozen in the form of a bug spray can.” Though detesting most of Oklahoma’s insects and arachnids, JoAnn loved the lightning bugs. They were new to her, and she watched for them each summer evening with anticipation.<sup>72</sup>

The couple had been trying, unsuccessfully, to start a family. JoAnn felt desperate for a baby, but month after disappointing month came and went without conception. At church, JoAnn watched the mothers with their children and ached for one of her own. She began “borrowing babies” by helping tend infants during Sunday services and weekly

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<sup>71</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, February 19, 2017.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

Relief Society meetings.<sup>73</sup> JoAnn feared she might never conceive, and the prospect caused her great emotional stress.

In July of their first Oklahoma summer, word came that JoAnn's 14-year-old brother, John Allan, had been in a "horrific boating accident" on Bear Lake during a family trip for the Utah July 24<sup>th</sup> holiday.<sup>74</sup> He survived, but was in a full body cast.<sup>75</sup> Jerry requested furlough so they could visit their families and help care for her brother, but could not garner leave until December. JoAnn and Jerry opted to make the visit a surprise, so did not alert their parents of the upcoming Christmas arrival.<sup>76</sup>

The Ottleys became more settled in Oklahoma than they had been in California; therefore, JoAnn received many singing invitations, including a variety show sponsored by the Army where she sang, "Wouldn't It Be Lovely," from *My Fair Lady*.<sup>77</sup> Just before they left for Salt Lake City in December, JoAnn sang the role of the mother, and Jerry played one of the kings in *Amahl and the Night Visitors*.<sup>78</sup> Shortly before Christmas,

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<sup>73</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview with author, February 11, 2017. The Relief Society is the women's service organization of the LDS Church begun by Joseph Smith, March 17, 1842. All adult women in the church are members of the Relief Society, which meets once a week. <https://www.lds.org/topics/relief-society?lang=eng&old=true>, accessed January 26, 2017.

<sup>74</sup> Utahns celebrate the 1847 arrival of the first Utah Mormon pioneers in the Salt Lake Valley each July 24<sup>th</sup>.

<sup>75</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, December 21, 2016.

<sup>76</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, February 19, 2016.

<sup>77</sup> Based on George Bernard Shaw's 1913 play, *Pygmalion*, the Lerner and Loewe musical *My Fair Lady* premiered on Broadway and won a Tony in 1957. The character of Eliza was originally played by Julie Andrews. "Wouldn't It Be Lovely," is Eliza's opening number in the show. [www.broadwaymusicalhome.com/shows/myfairlady.htm](http://www.broadwaymusicalhome.com/shows/myfairlady.htm), accessed February 26, 2017.

<sup>78</sup> *Amahl and the Night Visitors* is an opera by Gian Carlo Menotti composed for television and premiering in 1951. The story was inspired by Hieronymous Bosch's painting *The Adoration of the*

JoAnn and Jerry departed by train to Salt Lake City. The train was frigid, making the entire trip miserable.<sup>79</sup> They pulled into Salt Lake's Rio Grande train depot late at night, gratefully left the frozen train, and climbed into LaRue's waiting car.

JoAnn and Jerry had "colluded with [their] siblings" to surprise their parents with the visit.<sup>80</sup> LaRue drove them to the South residence on Kensington Avenue, where George and Melba were already asleep. They crept to the front porch and began singing Christmas carols. Melba recognized the voices and threw open the window, leaning out to see if it was true. "Oh! Oh! Oh! George, come and see!" she exclaimed, heading for the bedroom door. "Nah," George answered, "I will have to hear from here."<sup>81</sup> Melba ran out to greet JoAnn and Jerry on the porch in her nightgown. George finally realized the carolers' identities, and welcomed Jerry and JoAnn home.

The happy reunion was a stark contrast to the worry and sorrow they had experienced following John Allan's accident. JoAnn and Jerry visited with her brother as he lay grinning at them from inside his cast. Though facing a long, uncomfortable recovery, his attitude remained positive, and their arrival proved a welcome distraction. JoAnn and Jerry spent the night with her parents, then awoke early to surprise his parents.<sup>82</sup>

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*Magi*. The mother is the leading female role, and the magi are represented by three male roles. [www.usopera.com/operas/amahl.html](http://www.usopera.com/operas/amahl.html), accessed February 26, 2017.

<sup>79</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, February 19, 2016.

<sup>80</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, December 21, 2016.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, December 21, 2016.

Jerry's parents built a small house next to their family home when they retired, and sold the former to Jerry's sister, Lael. When JoAnn and Jerry arrived at his sister's door, Lael pretended to be a telephone operator and called Jerry's mother. Alice answered the telephone and heard Lael's clipped operator-voice say, "Collect call from Jerold and JoAnn Ottley. Will you accept the charges?" Just as she began to excitedly answer "yes," Jerry and JoAnn entered his parents' house and walked across the kitchen to where Alice stood, telephone in hand. Confused, she looked at her son and daughter-in-law, then back at the receiver in her hand, and without returning it to the cradle, dropped it in the drawer and gathered them in her arms. JoAnn and Jerry spent their second Christmas as a married couple surrounded by family.<sup>83</sup>

### Baby and New Beginnings

In 1959, Jerry was released from duty and able to return to BYU. They left Provo as newlyweds, but returned a solidly-coalesced married couple, with shared experiences and memories. They brought to Utah the finicky washing machine purchased in Oklahoma along with the spinet piano.<sup>84</sup> It was good to be back in Utah and close to family and friends. They rented an old apartment, which they furnished—as they had before—with purchases from Deseret Industries, along with items brought from Oklahoma.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, December 21, 2016.

<sup>84</sup> JoAnn Ottley, "Pianos," *Essays*, unpublished, March 29, 2014.

<sup>85</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, February 19, 2016.

They continued using the quirky washing machine that attached to the kitchen sink with a hose. One morning, JoAnn “fastened the hose to the faucet, put soap and clothing in, and started the cycle.” She was only wearing underclothing, so left the wash load running while she dressed in the bedroom. Before she could put more clothing on, the washer started making a “horrible noise.” She ran in and found it “jumping up and down and dancing all around the room. The hose had detached from the faucet and hot water sprayed around the kitchen. After a moment of confusion and disbelief, she “had the presence of mind to unplug the machine.” By then, she was covered in hot, soapy water, so she “laid down in the middle of the room, and laughed herself sick!”<sup>86</sup>

JoAnn returned to her former secretarial job at BYU and sang again with the BYU choir. Money was not as scarce because the G.I. Bill helped cover Jerry’s educational expenses. In 1960, they purchased their first home for \$11,000. Shortly after settling in the little house, JoAnn discovered she was pregnant. Her joy was commensurate to the “pink cloud” she felt when she and Jerry were engaged. She would finally have a baby of her own.<sup>87</sup>

JoAnn’s coworker in the BYU President’s office, Carol Martin, was also pregnant. Their metal desks faced each other, and the space seemed to become smaller as their bodies grew larger. They giggled every time their chairs or bellies collided.<sup>88</sup> JoAnn

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<sup>86</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, December 21, 2016.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, February 11, 2017.



worked during the pregnancy. She and Jerry saved all they could, knowing she would not be gainfully employed after the baby's birth. In addition to her secretarial position, JoAnn accepted her first voice students.<sup>89</sup>

On May 5, 1961, almost five years after their wedding, JoAnn gave birth to a beautiful baby boy. She and Jerry gazed at their son's cherubic face in wonder. They named him Brent, and were both instantly in love with him. It was a "new, beautiful world."<sup>90</sup> The next month, Jerry graduated with his Bachelor of Music degree. In August, the little family sold their home and moved to Salt Lake City for Jerry's position as the music teacher at Riverview Junior High School in the Murray School District,<sup>91</sup> where he directed several choirs and bands, taught general music, and "since [he] spoke German," an English course was added to his schedule.<sup>92</sup>

JoAnn stayed home with Brent. He was a happy, precocious child, and JoAnn thoroughly enjoyed her new role. No longer needing to "borrow babies" from young mothers in her ward, JoAnn was now part of that group, and relished the shared moments with her darling son. She occasionally sang at church and continued teaching voice lessons, but did not feel the need for extra musical pursuits that would take her away from her son.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> JoAnn Ottley, "Pianos," *Essays*, unpublished, March 29, 2014.

<sup>90</sup> JoAnn Ottley, "The Lengthening View: Historical Points," *The Lengthening View*. Unpublished, June 2006.

<sup>91</sup> Murray, Utah is an independently incorporated city south of Salt Lake City proper. <http://www.murray.utah.gov/>, accessed January 29, 2017.

<sup>92</sup> Jerold Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 21, 2018.

<sup>93</sup> JoAnn Ottley, "Pianos," *Essays*, unpublished, March 29, 2014.

After one year at Riverview Junior High School, Jerry began teaching at Evergreen Junior High School.<sup>94</sup> In 1963, he became the choral director for Bountiful High School, where he remained for three years.<sup>95</sup> The little family moved into an apartment on 45<sup>th</sup> South in Salt Lake City. They saved the proceeds from the sale of their Provo home in anticipation of the future costs of Jerry attending graduate school.<sup>96</sup>

The Ottleys needed a musical outlet, so decided to join the Tabernacle Choir together. The commitment included a weekly evening practice, a Sunday morning broadcast, and various performances. They rehearsed and performed in the Tabernacle, and JoAnn was entranced by the history surrounding her. It thrilled her to sing with the organ her great-grandfather helped build so many years earlier.

JoAnn was an equal partner in a faith-centered temple marriage with the man of her dreams. She realized when she met Jerry she had been “so open, she could have been swallowed up,” but he respected and valued her. Their union was spiritually based, and she was grateful.<sup>97</sup> She was a “mother in Zion,” a blessing she had feared she might never

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<sup>94</sup> Evergreen Jr. High is in the Granite School District, located in the East Millcreek neighborhood of Salt Lake City. [www.schools.graniteschools.org/evergreen](http://www.schools.graniteschools.org/evergreen), accessed January 29, 2017.

<sup>95</sup> Bountiful High School is in the Davis School District which includes the small city of Bountiful, 11 miles north of Salt Lake City.

<sup>96</sup> JoAnn Ottley, “Pianos,” *Essays*, unpublished, March 29, 2014.

<sup>97</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview with author, February 19, 2017.

enjoy.<sup>98</sup> The little girl who picked buttercups, lost herself in the music she played on her grandparents' piano, sang under Marguerite's careful tutelage, and accepted an academic scholarship at the University of Utah—because she couldn't afford to study music at BYU—was now singing in the illustrious Mormon Tabernacle Choir. It was the flagship choir of the religion she had come to love. This life was beyond anything she had imagined as a child, outside the realities of her humble beginnings as the adored eldest daughter of George and Melba South. Balancing faith, marriage, motherhood, and singing defined this moment and laid the foundation for her future.

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<sup>98</sup> Parenthood is considered a major spiritual responsibility in LDS theology. "Zion" is a synonym in LDS culture for the religion and its role in the world. "Mother in Zion" is a common reference to the role of women in the church. Concerning this role, Krista Ralston Oakes wrote, "She magnifies her talents and her stewardships and fills the measure of her creation by living to bring herself and others safely home to Heavenly Father. A mother in Zion can realize the unifying traits of motherhood, regardless of her reproductive status." Krista Ralston Oakes, "A Mother in Zion: A Unifying Calling," *Ensign*, <https://www.lds.org/ensign/2011/04/faith-and-infertility-expanded/krista-ralston-oakes?lang=eng>, accessed February 4, 2017.

CHAPTER SIX  
BUILDING FOUNDATIONS (1965-1975)

Jerry began a master's program in conducting at the University of Utah in 1965. His education was partly financed by the proceeds saved from the Provo home sale.<sup>1</sup> Jerry shifted from full- to part-time teaching at Bountiful High School, and added a part-time teaching position at Rowland Hall Saint Marks private school.<sup>2</sup> This shift created more flexibility than was possible as a full-time employee, while maintaining a smaller, but livable, income.<sup>3</sup> Propitiously, Jerry's parents, were called to serve a two-year LDS mission in London, and thus able to provide their home rent-free to the young Ottley family during Jerry's graduate school studies. Sidney and Alice owned a piano, so JoAnn and Jerry sold the spinet purchased in Salt Lake City, which added to their funds.<sup>4</sup>

#### JoAnn's Continuing Education

JoAnn's first priority was her role as mother. Brent was a toddler, so rather than seek outside employment, she taught voice lessons from home. Though not formally

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<sup>1</sup> JoAnn Ottley, "Historical Points."

<sup>2</sup> Rowland Hall St. Marks School is the first independent, private school in Salt Lake City, founded in 1880. Classes range from Pre2K through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. The school focuses on college preparation. <https://heritage.utah.gov/apps/history/findaids/C00084/c0084.htm> and [www.rowlandhall.org](http://www.rowlandhall.org), accessed January 29, 2017.

<sup>3</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, December 21, 2016.

<sup>4</sup> Many retired couples serve LDS missions together. They apply and, if accepted, receive a "Mission Call" in the mail telling them where the destination, as the location of the mission is decided by LDS leadership. Retired couples generally pay for their expenses while in the mission field.

enrolled in the university, she “made loaves from the crumbs” of Jerry’s education.<sup>5</sup> Jerry’s graduate classes provided JoAnn learning opportunities. She read his text books and they had in-depth discussions about his classes. JoAnn typed Jerry’s papers and aided in the research for his master’s thesis.<sup>6</sup>

As before, JoAnn sang her way into the center of Jerry’s university musical community. She considered taking voice lessons again but was not sure who would be the best choice for a private teacher. Impressed after observing a friend’s lesson at the vocal studio of Naomi and Lowell Farr, she selected to study with them.<sup>7</sup>

Before opening their Salt Lake City music studio, Naomi sang numerous roles in Germany and her husband, Lowell, coached singers with the New York *Metropolitan Opera*. JoAnn’s vocal ability and soprano, vocal-repertoire knowledge, “burst wide open” working with Naomi. JoAnn was introduced to a wide range of composers whose music demanded great technical skill, such as contemporary composer Ned Rorem,<sup>8</sup> and Baroque composer, Henry Purcell.<sup>9</sup> Her vocal range and agility grew through the demands required of these challenging pieces. Lowell accompanied the lessons, and also coached JoAnn privately. His guidance during coaching sessions led JoAnn to “a whole

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<sup>5</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, December 21, 2016.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, February 15, 2017.

<sup>8</sup> Ned Rorem (1923-): American composer and diarist. [www.nytimes.com/2013/10/27/arts/music/celebrating-ned-rorem-90th-birthday.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/27/arts/music/celebrating-ned-rorem-90th-birthday.html), accessed March 13, 2017.

<sup>9</sup> Henry Purcell (1659-1695): British composer. [www.britannica.com/biography/Henry-Purcell](http://www.britannica.com/biography/Henry-Purcell), accessed March 13, 2017.

new level of artistry.” She felt as if “her blinders were off.”<sup>10</sup> The Farr’s student recitals gave JoAnn opportunities to perform the new repertoire, further solidify technical growth, and embrace artistic expression. These performance abilities were recognized by others, and opportunities for “professional work exploded.” JoAnn competed in, and won, the local Metropolitan Opera Auditions (MET Auditions), and represented Utah in the Denver regional MET Auditions.<sup>11</sup>

Most of JoAnn’s practice and teaching time occurred while Brent was at school. When performing, JoAnn dressed elegantly, her short, reddish hair in waves and makeup carefully applied. Appearance was an expected aspect of her work as a singer. She and Jerry joked about the incongruence of her polished-performance persona compared with daily life as wife, mother, and voice teacher. Motherhood took precedence in JoAnn’s life, and she was able to accept numerous singing opportunities because family and friends provided assistance with Brent.<sup>12</sup>

Jerry’s parents, Sidney and Alice, returned home from their mission in 1968. This resulted in Jerry and JoAnn moving into a nearby apartment at 23<sup>rd</sup> East Atkin Avenue. Upon the move, Sidney and Alice gave the young Ottleys the family piano, purchased in 1917 to honor his oldest brother’s birth.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 10, 2014.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> JoAnn Ottley, “Pianos,” *Essays*, unpublished, March 29, 2014.

## Young Family Life

JoAnn and Jerry were actively involved in their church ward. Women's Relief Society meetings were held weekly, and JoAnn's spirituality deepened through experiences with other women in the ward. She enjoyed the sisterhood found there, and in the official, monthly visits she made and received through the LDS Visiting Teaching program.<sup>14</sup> She and Jerry prayed together with Brent in family prayer and always before meals. JoAnn's prayer life extended throughout the day with simple, often silent, invocations as she encountered small and large problems, experienced moments of gratitude, or sought comfort and aid for others in need. When greater inspiration or help was needed, she would dedicate a day to fasting and prayer.<sup>15</sup>

It was good to be near family again after the long separation during Jerry's army service. Jerry developed "close, loving relationships" with JoAnn's family. He and George teased often. JoAnn's "dad was a Marlboro man, a country guy." He was "tender, but he was all male, no fancy stuff."<sup>16</sup> One night, after visiting her family, the Ottley family readied to return home. George was repairing the refrigerator, and turned his head

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<sup>14</sup> The LDS Visiting Teaching program is part of the women's organization, The Relief Society. Each active female adult LDS church member is assigned a partner and together, as "visiting teachers," they visit the homes of few women in the ward once per month, sharing a church-wide message, checking on their well-being, and ending with a prayer. The women of the ward are organized so all LDS women within the ward boundaries receive this monthly fellowship, even those not active in church but willing to accept visits.

<sup>15</sup> LDS Members fast (abstain from all food and drink) to enhance their prayers for divine inspiration, guidance or help with specific problems or decisions. A period of fasting and prayer usually lasts one day, but can be repeated after breaking the fast. The first Sunday of every month is reserved for fasting and prayer, and the dollar amount saved on food by fasting is given to the LDS Church Welfare Services to assist members in need.

<sup>16</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, March 18, 2017.

toward them in goodbye, puckering his lips in a pretend kiss. Jerry quickly leaned down and kissed his father-in-law right on the mouth. Shocked, George jumped to his feet and shuddered the kiss off, drawing peals of laughter from everyone in the room.<sup>17</sup>

### Fulbright Scholarships

As Jerry's master's degree neared completion, the Farr's suggested he and JoAnn apply for Fulbright scholarships to study in Germany. Studying abroad had never occurred to JoAnn and Jerry, but, with the Farr's encouragement, they applied. The grueling application process, "went on for days and days." Audition recordings were required along with historical information. The Fulbright committee accepted Jerry, but not JoAnn. JoAnn was sure the rejection was based on her lack of formal education. She felt slightly relieved, as she was unsure what demands a Fulbright might entail.<sup>18</sup> Lowell and Naomi, however, "were furious" about the decision. Lowell, part of the Fulbright commission, intervened on JoAnn's behalf. JoAnn resubmitted her application, and this time received an acceptance letter for a "Fulbright At Large" scholarship.<sup>19</sup> Though placed in different Fulbright educational tracks, they were both provided an opportunity

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<sup>17</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, February 15, 2017.

<sup>18</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 10, 2014

<sup>19</sup> Fulbright applicants currently enrolled in a graduate or undergraduate program must apply for a Fulbright through their institution. Former students may apply through their alma mater if their university agrees. Non-student applicants are considered at-large and apply through their state residence, substituting collegiate work with professional experience.



to study at the *Staatliche Hochschule für Musik*<sup>20</sup> in Köln (Cologne).<sup>21</sup> Jerry would study conducting and JoAnn voice.<sup>22</sup>

Jerry and JoAnn knew nothing of living or studying abroad, but the Fulbright provided specifications for what, where, and with whom they would study; where they would live while studying German before beginning music classes; and the ship on which they would travel. For the first time in their marriage, JoAnn was relocating for her career as well as for Jerry's. The excited young couple, "got rid of every bottle and every pencil," and managed to pack their necessities into one suitcase each and two trunks. The piano from Jerry's parents was given to his niece.<sup>23</sup> They traveled from Utah to New York City. On July 31, 1968, JoAnn and Jerry each held one of Brent's hands, and boarded the *Hanseatic*, a small Hanciatic German cruise ship headed for Europe and the unknown. JoAnn's singing, performing, and scholarly approach to music had led her to an opportunity far beyond her imagination.<sup>24</sup> As they passed the Statue of Liberty, Jerry saluted.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> State Music Conservatory

<sup>21</sup> Köln or Cologne is the fourth largest city in Germany, with a vital inland port of the Rhine River where sea-bound ships can dock or depart. The interior was destroyed by bombing in WWII.

<sup>22</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, March 24, 2017.

<sup>23</sup> JoAnn Ottley, "Pianos," *Essays*, unpublished, March 29, 2014.

<sup>24</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 10, 2014.

<sup>25</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, February 19, 2017.

### Fulbright Language Training: Soest, Germany

The ship docked at Bremerhaven, the north shore German harbor by the city of Bremen. From there the Ottleys traveled to the medieval town of Soest, for the six-week, intensive-language training at the Goethe Institute. Their Fulbright scholarships included housing and meals during the language portion of the program. The organizers made slight accommodations in living arrangements for the Ottleys since they had a seven-year-old son.

The little family disembarked and set out to find their housing. The organizers had provided an address for the apartment, but no directions. In halting, broken German they asked passers-by, who pointed to the curving roads and told them to go straight. Though quite lost, JoAnn was charmed by the winding cobblestone streets, flowers blooming in window sills, and the ancient architecture.

They wandered along the road until they saw a little girl playing near a collection of buildings. They showed her the address and she indicated a building ahead, saying, “*Alles ist kaputt!*”<sup>26</sup> They understood the word “*kaputt*” and worried they were at the wrong place, but then realized she was pointing to a building under renovation. The ground floor was a *Bierstube*<sup>27</sup> and the Ottley’s were assigned one of five small apartments on the second floor. It was furnished with two twin beds and a small table.

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<sup>26</sup> “*Alles ist kaputt!*” translates in English to “Everything is gone!” or “Everything is broken!”

<sup>27</sup> *Bierstube* literally translates in English to “beer shop,” but is the German equivalent of a pub.

Jerry took one bed, JoAnn the other, and they made a make-shift bed for Brent on the floor between them.<sup>28</sup>

With so little to unpack, they quickly settled their belongings. The LDS *Gemeinde* (branch)<sup>29</sup> provided “instant family.” A *Kinderschule* (elementary school), conveniently located next to their housing, provided part-time day care for Brent with new church friends watching him afterward until JoAnn and Jerry finished daily classes.<sup>30</sup> Each morning they made their own breakfasts of cheese, yogurt, and orange juice. JoAnn enjoyed gathering around the little table for breakfast as a family.<sup>31</sup> The Fulbright amenities included a few pre-selected restaurants for dinner, so they did not cook an evening meal.

After breakfast, Jerry and JoAnn walked Brent to *Kinderschule*. Brent liked school and quickly made friends. JoAnn enjoyed her encounters with his classmates each morning. Speaking with the children and hearing them play provided a lighthearted approach to her language acquisition, and she “soaked up” all she could. Once Brent was situated, Jerry and JoAnn walked to the Goethe Institute and spent their day in class.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, March 18, 2017.

<sup>29</sup> LDS congregations in geographical locations with fewer church members function similar to wards, but are called branches (*Gemeinde* in German). They are led by a branch president, rather than a bishop.

<sup>30</sup> Housed in the neighboring elementary school, this *Kinderschule*, (child school) also provided child care.

<sup>31</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, March 18, 2017.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

The Fulbright intensive-German course was offered at various levels. Although lacking formal German language training, JoAnn’s experiences translating and singing German songs provided enough exposure to “fake [her] way” through the entrance exam. She was placed in the advanced class, along with Jerry, who had completed 25 hours of German during his university studies.<sup>33</sup> JoAnn felt she was at least a year behind everyone else throughout the course. She “cried a lot,” while studying each evening, and was grateful Jerry could provide tutoring when she struggled.<sup>34</sup> In addition to grammar study, JoAnn and Jerry practiced conversational skills at home and with the children at Brent’s *Kinderschule*. By the end of the six-week course, Jerry and JoAnn spoke functional German. With great anticipation, they left Soest for their ultimate Fulbright destination, the *Musikhochschule* (Music Conservatory) in Köln.<sup>35</sup>

### Settling in Köln

Fulbright students were required to secure their own housing in Köln. Before leaving the United States, the Ottleys contacted the LDS *Gemeinde*<sup>36</sup> in Köln for assistance finding housing. Church members were helpful and made the necessary arrangements, securing them a small flat for \$250.00 each month in Kalk.<sup>37</sup> JoAnn, Jerry,

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<sup>33</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 22, 2014.

<sup>34</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, March 24, 2017.

<sup>35</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, March 18, 2017.

<sup>36</sup> LDS Branch or congregation

<sup>37</sup> Kalk is an industrial, and residential urban section of Köln (Cologne) in Germany. <http://www.stadt-koeln.de/leben-in-koeln/stadtbezirke/kalk/kalk>, accessed March 30, 2018.

and Brent traveled by train from Soest to Köln. It was a “horrible day, dark, cold, and rainy, rainy, rainy,” the first of many such days they would experience there. The local Relief Society president, “a dear woman,” met them at the train station, and drove them to the apartment they would call home for the next year.<sup>38</sup>

The Ottleys hauled their suitcases and trunks into the rented flat, grateful for the Relief Society president’s kindness and the church fellowship found so far from home. It did not take long to unpack. The one-bedroom apartment came with a queen-sized bed covered with a *Federdecke*.<sup>39</sup> The bedroom had a few drawers for clothing. Brent’s bed was similar in size to a standard twin and folded into a cupboard, like a Murphy bed. Another cupboard in the small entry way became the “perfect spot for their dishes.” The bathroom had a bathtub and a toilet “that pinched” when they sat on it. A “gizmo on the [bathroom] wall” needed to be pushed each time water was needed in the tiny, 53” by 62” kitchen. Kitchen appliances included a “thigh-high refrigerator, without a freezer section, and a two-burner hot-plate.”<sup>40</sup>

After unpacking, Jerry suggested they venture out to find a toilet seat replacement. It was their first “foray out into the world of Cologne.”<sup>41</sup> Their first impressions were disappointing. Köln suffered massive bombing during World War II and was hastily rebuilt after the war with sturdy, gray, cost-effective structures bearing

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<sup>38</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, March 18, 2017.

<sup>39</sup> *Federdecke* is a feather-filled comforter.

<sup>40</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, March 18, 2017.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

little aesthetic appeal. Neighborhoods near the Rhine River, such as Kalk, were lined with *Reierhauser* (gray row houses) and surrounded by industrial buildings. Combined with the predominantly cold, rainy weather, the overall effect was dreary. JoAnn and Jerry had never seen so much gray and vowed they would never buy anything gray again.<sup>42</sup>

The Ottleys discovered five charming blocks in the center of the city with beautiful, historic buildings instead of post-war, gray cement. This was the only section of Köln not destroyed in World War II. They found a replacement toilet seat in a plaza shopping center; the shop dwarfed even the biggest department stores they had seen in the states. The outing became a joke between them. Whenever they were bored or unsure what to do, they laughingly suggested shopping for a toilet seat.<sup>43</sup> Installing the new toilet seat made the commode more comfortable and fulfilled their vow to leave every place they lived better than when they arrived.<sup>44</sup>

Jerry and JoAnn enrolled Brent in a German school in the *Zweite Klasse*,<sup>45</sup> which is equivalent to second grade in the United States. The teacher spoke British English providing Brent guidance in language acquisition without interruption of academic growth.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 10, 2014.

<sup>43</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, March 24, 2017.

<sup>44</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, February 19, 2017.

<sup>45</sup> “*Zweite Klasse*” translates directly in English to “Second Class”.

<sup>46</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, March 24, 2017.

JoAnn worked on her language acquisition by listening to conversations around her when she was out of the flat shopping or exploring Köln. She noticed housewives sharing bits of news and gossip and sidled up to them to listen and absorb the inflection of their conversations. JoAnn had participated in such social exchanges with her female friends in America, and noticed the prosody of English and German gossip differed greatly.<sup>47</sup> In English, the sentences were clipped and quick, with a bright, nasopharyngeal resonance.<sup>48</sup> The German conversations were punctuated with a darker oropharyngeal resonance.<sup>49</sup> Slow, deep, “Ah!” and “Oh!” replaced the shrill counterparts in similar American conversations. JoAnn began incorporating this subtle resonance shift in her own German speaking, and immediately sounded more authentic.<sup>50</sup>

Settled in the small flat, the kitchen cupboard full of food, Brent’s schooling arranged, church records transferred to the local *Gemeinde*, and the new toilet seat installed, it was time to begin their Fulbright sponsored studies at the *Musikhochschule*. After walking Brent to school, JoAnn and Jerry rode the economical streetcar to the conservatory, then parted to attend their separate courses. Unlike the language training in

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<sup>47</sup> Prosody is the musical flow of spoken language. Mothers in all cultures exaggerate the prosody of their native tongue when speaking to babies, which prepares the child for language development. This practice is called “baby-talk” in English. Prosody distinctly differs between languages and dialects. Some sounds or approaches to sounds are found in one language but not another. These are often difficult for second-language learners to hear, imitate, or produce.

<sup>48</sup> The nasopharynx includes the upper part of the pharynx, connecting with the nasal cavity above the soft palate. [www.google.com](http://www.google.com), accessed March 15, 2017

<sup>49</sup> The oropharynx includes the part of the pharynx that is below the soft palate and above the epiglottis and is continuous with the mouth. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/oropharynx>, accessed March 15, 2017.

<sup>50</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, March 24, 2017.

Soest, their classes did not occupy the entire day, so after school care for Brent was not needed.

#### Fulbright Studies: Josef Metternich

JoAnn's assigned voice teacher at the *Musikhochschule* was the celebrated German baritone, Josef Metternich.<sup>51</sup> He had recently returned to Germany, following an illustrious international career including La Scala, the Grand Opera in Paris, and three successful seasons singing leading roles at the New York City Metropolitan Opera House. Now living in München, he sang for the city's main opera house, along with the opera houses of Berlin and Hamburg. He was in great demand as a teacher and performer and taught a select few promising singers at the *Musikhochschule* in Köln. Their successes increased his reputation as a fine pedagogue.<sup>52</sup>

As a Fulbright Scholar At Large, JoAnn felt she lacked the standard educational background of Fulbright scholars. Though a confident singer, she did not perceive her innate abilities—nurtured in her early work with Marguerite and further developed with the Farr's—as “anything special” and assumed “anyone could sing if they took voice

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<sup>51</sup> Josef Metternich (1915-2005), [www.cantabile-subito.de/Baritones/Metternich](http://www.cantabile-subito.de/Baritones/Metternich), accessed March 17, 2017.

<sup>52</sup> Andrea Suhm-Binder, “Baritones: Metternich, Josef, Biographical Notes,” *Andrea's Cantabile – Subito: A site for collectors of Great Singers of the Past*. Josef Metternich (1915-2005), “A number of singers benefited and still benefit from [Metternich's] knowledge and experience (to name but a few Ruthild Engert, Mechthild Gessendorf, Cornelia Kallisch, Stella Kleindienst, Michael Volle and Eike Wilm Schulte.)” [www.cantabile-subito.de/Baritones/Metternich](http://www.cantabile-subito.de/Baritones/Metternich), accessed March 17, 2017.



lessons.”<sup>53</sup> She did not realize the eminent professor specifically requested her after hearing the Fulbright entrance recordings. He recognized her talent, even if she did not.<sup>54</sup>

JoAnn felt comfortable immediately with Professor Metternich. A “short, square man with dancing eyes,” he began the first lesson with vocalises,<sup>55</sup> then listened to JoAnn sing several arias from her repertoire list. His piano skills were limited, and he “plunked” the bass line, one note at a time, marking the beat and supporting the key signature. JoAnn knew the pieces well, and sang with technical skill and artistic nuance, despite the lack of accompaniment.<sup>56</sup>

Metternich expressed surprise that JoAnn’s resonance and breath management were balanced with her body alignment, creating a free, connected sound without the external tension he usually observed in new students, a tension which he had experienced during his own early singing career. As a young man, Metternich was the first German invited to sing at La Scala.”<sup>57</sup> Proud of the achievement, he was excited to work with La Scala’s house voice teacher, expecting to receive her accolades. Instead, she criticized his technique, saying, “You sing with power, but you don’t have it!” She taught him vocal power was not imposed, but rather emerged from a core balance of alignment and breath.

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<sup>53</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 10, 2014.

<sup>54</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, March 24, 2017.

<sup>55</sup> Vocalises are vocal exercises designed to warm up the voice, isolate specific vocal techniques and build strength and flexibility.

<sup>56</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, March 18, 2017.

<sup>57</sup> Metternich sang *The Flying Dutchman* at La Scala in 1951. *Andrea’s cantabile – subito: A site for collectors of Great Singers of the Past*. [www.cantabile-subito.de/Baritones/Metternich](http://www.cantabile-subito.de/Baritones/Metternich), accessed March 17, 2017.

Metternich credited the La Scala teacher for the resonance, strength, and longevity his voice subsequently developed. He was amazed that JoAnn's voice already exhibited this balanced connection.<sup>58</sup>

Though impressed with JoAnn's skillful, breath management and use of alignment, Professor Metternich observed the upper resonance in JoAnn's sound as more developed than the lower resonance. To illustrate, he cupped one hand over the other, representing resonance. The top hand represented her upper resonance, or nasopharyngeal space, while the bottom hand represented the deeper colors found in the oropharyngeal space. This tonal color imbalance was not surprising, as Marguerite's vocal philosophy encouraged a flute-like sound. Marguerite believed a clear head voice was the basis for healthy singing with all other vocal colors growing from that placement.<sup>59</sup> Consequently, JoAnn easily and consistently sang notes well above high C,<sup>60</sup> but lacked depth in

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<sup>58</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, March 18, 2017.

<sup>59</sup> There are no standard terms or approaches to vocal technique, but traditionally, head-voice refers to the vocal production of higher notes in a singer's range. It is created by the vocal folds stretching and thinning, so only the edges of the folds vibrate. Chest-voice is produced with fatter, more relaxed vocal folds, and yields the lowest notes in a singer's range. Middle-voice is a balance between the two positions and is considered optimal for the middle range of a singer's voice. When higher notes are produced with thicker vocal folds, the resultant timbre and sensation is forced. This forced approach is also called over-muscled production. If the pharyngeal space is obstructed by external laryngeal muscles, a raised laryngeal position, a depressed tongue root or jaw tension, the voice does not have the full resonance. A voice with open nasopharyngeal space but closed oropharyngeal space sounds thin, or piercing. Conversely, closed nasopharyngeal space with open oropharyngeal space sounds darkened and lacks clarity. A fully open pharyngeal space and the correct thickness and stretch of vocal folds produces a vibrant sound with a balance of bright and dark timbres, often described as *chiaroscuro*, or bright and shadow. This is the ideal vocal color sought by classically trained singers. Placement refers to the sensation of vibration experienced by the singer while singing. The sensation changes with breath flow, laryngeal position, or directed resonance sensation. Placement-based teaching is highly subjective as each singer's sensation is unique. When resonance is achieved only through placement, ignoring alignment and breath management, a sympathetic external tension often results. When achieved by managing breath and body alignment, the larynx remains low and with all resonance space available.

<sup>60</sup> High-C for a female is two octaves above middle C (C-6) on the piano.

resonance. Metternich assured JoAnn she could develop depth and gain full balance. He noted if her early voice training had focused on a heavier timbre, rather than light, it was unlikely JoAnn would have been able to achieve the vocal brightness found through Marguerite's head-voice approach.

Metternich guided JoAnn to understand her vocal technique, rather than rely on ability alone. He insisted she consistently sing with the alignment and breath balance he had observed and taught her to begin each sound with that balance, regardless of range or volume. If the melody ascended or the dynamic level increased, she tilted her pelvis slightly forward. Professor Metternich explained the small pelvic tilt allowed the larynx to “drop into the optimum position,”<sup>61</sup> keeping the freedom and richness represented by the bottom hand when hands are cupped together to demonstrate resonance. Naomi Farr had sung with the pelvic tilt technique, and JoAnn had experimented with it, but Metternich helped her understand the technique's foundational principles. He taught JoAnn to incorporate the small tilt consistently through a specific vocalise (see Figure 6.1). The exercise outlined an ascending triad, followed by a whole step. The tilt was employed during the smaller full-step interval at the highest point of the vocalise pattern, allowing the larynx to remain in its optimal position, aligned directly over the hips, thus preventing excess tension. The entire exercise was repeated by ascending half-steps, extending through JoAnn's upper range. She sang each note and phrase with balanced

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<sup>61</sup> Professor Metternich taught the pelvic tilt allowed the larynx to drop into its most efficient position, believing the pelvis' function and the larynx were linked. JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 26, 2014.

resonance and the true vocal power Metternich had learned from the La Scala vocal teacher.



Figure 6.1: Vocalise to Practice Pelvic Tilt

The pelvic tilt was one of many techniques Metternich taught JoAnn; another involved freeing excess tension caused by over-articulation. The many consonant clusters and mixed vowels in the German language impeded her resonance space.<sup>62</sup> Metternich guided her diction with the word *Schlechtsprechen* (sloppy speech).<sup>63</sup> He explained words are less understandable when over-enunciated. Using *Schlechtsprechen* frees the articulating muscles of the jaw and tongue, reduces external tension, and allows diction to form from vowels. JoAnn was surprised to discover her diction was clearer when she relaxed and used the *Schlechtsprechen* technique. As another inroad to successful German diction, Metternich taught JoAnn to sing German “as if it were Italian.”<sup>64</sup> When

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<sup>62</sup>The German language employs numerous diphthongs and triphthongs, which are vowels made by mixing one or more vowels to make one sound. For instance, in English the sound of the word *I* is created by combining [a] and [i] (symbols from International Phonetic Alphabet, IPA for the sounds “ah” and “ee”). German also utilizes many consonant clusters. An example of consonant clusters in English is found in the word “words,” which ends with the sound [rdz], represented with the IPA symbol.

<sup>63</sup> The direct translation of *Schlechtsprache* is bad speech.

<sup>64</sup> Italian has few consonant clusters or mixed vowels, so the diction is more naturally free. Singing German “as if it were Italian” encouraged release of the articulators and formation of the vowels at the root of the tongue and in the pharynx.

she released excess control of the diction during singing, the resonance space remained open, her legato improved, and the text became more comprehensible.<sup>65</sup>

The pelvic tilt and free diction added richness to JoAnn's resonance and allowed ease in singing various dynamic levels. Each day, JoAnn gently sang until body alignment and breath were balanced, she then focused on adding resonance space. Expanded resonance space increased breath management requirements, which she offset by the small pelvic tilt to align the body. Through this balance of alignment, breath, and resonance, JoAnn's vocal core remained through her entire range, regardless of dynamic levels. She could sing with unforced power. It felt like being "the eye of a tornado." Though producing the sound, JoAnn felt quiet and still in the center of it, almost as if she was doing nothing while her voice surrounded her. The sensation was thrilling.<sup>66</sup>

JoAnn flourished in Metternich's studio. Through his guidance, her understanding of full-balanced resonance increased. Before these voice lessons, she had sung with natural talent, by easily absorbing and utilizing the directions given in lessons by Marguerite and the Farr's. Now she sang with more understanding. This cognitive awareness laid the foundation for her healthy singing philosophy and advanced vocal technique. JoAnn developed a close relationship with Metternich. He became a "daddy" figure, looking out for her best interests while sharing his knowledge of voice. She trusted him, which increased her confidence during lessons and performances.

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<sup>65</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 10, 2014.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

JoAnn viewed technique as only one component of the act of singing; without personal expression, the most technically-perfect performance would be uninspiring. Even as a young girl, playing her grandparents' piano, JoAnn had felt a personal connection to music. Her mastery of advanced techniques, through studies with Metternich, allowed a more refined interpretation of vocal literature. She easily expressed the nuances found in the music and text. It was sometimes difficult in the stressful, competitive world of the *Musikhochschule* to maintain emotional and spiritual connections to the music. JoAnn recognized the danger of only gaining technical skills and did not lose sight of her fundamental love of singing.

#### Fulbright Studies: Performances

The musical community at the *Musikhochschule* quickly recognized JoAnn for her beautiful voice and professional performance technique. Fulbright students were not allowed to sing professionally during studies, lest they take work from the local professional singers. However, the *Musikhochschule* sponsored student concerts and events in the "old and tired" 200-seat recital hall. JoAnn was featured in the recital hall singing early songs by Berg.<sup>67</sup> JoAnn, and several students, also sang in a concert celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of German composer, Hans Pfitzner.<sup>68</sup> JoAnn, not

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<sup>67</sup> Tiffany Du Mouchelle, "Program Notes," DMA Recital. Berg's seven early songs were written between 1905 and 1908 but were not published until 1928. [www.britannica.com/topic/Frauenliebe-und-leben](http://www.britannica.com/topic/Frauenliebe-und-leben), accessed March 28, 2017.

<sup>68</sup> Composer Hans Pfitzner (1869-1949) affiliated himself with the Nazi regime, but was mistrusted by Hitler. He was found not-guilty in the de-Nazification trials following the war. He developed a cult-like group of followers, though he remained relatively unknown elsewhere. "Hans Pfitzner," Music

familiar with Pfitzner, was surprised to discover that amongst many in Germany he was considered as great as Richard Strauss.<sup>69</sup> Another opportunity for performance came through Rudolf Petzold—the Head of School at the *Musikhochschule*. Petzold wrote an original song to reflect WWII. It had never been performed, and he asked JoAnn to record it.<sup>70</sup>

In addition to concerts, the conservatory arranged for students to make recordings to showcase artistry and technical mastery. A student recording was then compared to a recording of the same music by a famous German singer. JoAnn was invited to participate in this process with the Berg songs, and according to Metternich, JoAnn's recording far surpassed the professional's.<sup>71</sup>

#### Fulbright Studies: Classes

JoAnn's vocal study with Metternich proved the centerpiece of her Fulbright studies, but she also took courses at the conservatory. Class sizes were small, with an average of five students per class. Overlap did not exist between the conducting and

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and the Holocaust. <http://holocaustmusic.ort.org/politics-and-propaganda/third-reich/pfitzner-hans/>, accessed May 6, 2018.

<sup>69</sup> Richard Strauss (1864-1949) is known for his songs, operas and symphonies during the German Romantic period, [www.britannica.com/biography/Richard-Strauss](http://www.britannica.com/biography/Richard-Strauss), accessed March 30, 2018.

<sup>70</sup> German composer, Rudolf Petzold (1908-1991), taught at the Cologne Hochschule für Musik from 1937-1938 and again from 1946 to 1970. "Rudolph Petzold (Composer) – Short Biography," *Bach Cantatas Website*, [www.bach-cantatas.com](http://www.bach-cantatas.com), accessed March 29, 2017.

<sup>71</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, March 24, 2017.

singing tracks at the *Musikhochschule*, so Jerry and JoAnn did not have classes together.<sup>72</sup>

*Liedbegleitung*<sup>73</sup> was a course for collaborative piano and voice students. JoAnn was paired with Margaret Collishaw, a pianist from Australia.<sup>74</sup> JoAnn and Margaret received feedback and coaching as a course component. Through collaboration, they prepared and performed Schumann's *Frauenliebe und Leben*.<sup>75</sup> The instructor, Herr Hecker had a lisp, which added difficulty in JoAnn's understanding of instructions in German. When she could not understand, she "nodded [her] head," wrote his words on her music with best efforts, then translated them later with a dictionary. She and Margaret collaborated easily and JoAnn improved in Hecker's class.<sup>76</sup>

In the *Rhythmik*<sup>77</sup> course taught by Frau Erdman, singers studied body movement for stage. There were four people in the class, including JoAnn. JoAnn guessed Erdman as in her 50's, but "moved like she was 15-years-old."<sup>78</sup> One day after class, JoAnn saw Frau Erdman walking to a streetcar and followed, just to watch her graceful gait.

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<sup>72</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, March 24, 2017.

<sup>73</sup> *Liedbegleitung* translates to "song accompaniment" in English. JoAnn Ottley, notes for author, unpublished, April 20, 2018.

<sup>74</sup> Collishaw later became a prominent pianist in her home country of Australia. JoAnn Ottley, notes for author, April 19, 2018.

<sup>75</sup> Robert Schumann wrote *Frauenliebe und Leben (A Woman's Life and Love)*, text by Adelberto Chamisso, song for voice and piano, 1840, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Frauenliebe-und-leben>, September 9, 2014, accessed March 28, 2017.

<sup>76</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, March 18, 2017.

<sup>77</sup> *Rhythmik* literally translates to "rhythm" in English.

<sup>78</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 10, 2014.



Erdmann taught that body movement reflected human pulse. Students explored the energy of movement by pushing air forward, then allowing the air to push them back. She showed the natural arch in all movement and compared it to a rainbow. The class learned to fall safely. Students adopted the opposite gender and moved as if with the larger muscles of men or the smaller muscles of women. Occasionally the class participated in closed-eye exercises. JoAnn had difficulty understanding the rapid, expressive German of Erdman without watching her speak, so kept her eyes slightly open in order to follow the instructions during those exercises.<sup>79</sup>

*Sprecheziehung*,<sup>80</sup> (Deep Diction) was taught by Frau Peter. Unlike the overwhelming German language training course in Soest, JoAnn's rich background singing in multiple languages was more than enough preparation. There were five students in the course and JoAnn performed well. She discovered layers of meaning in specific German words, the language's syntax, and the poetry's nuances.<sup>81</sup>

Her Italian language class at the *Musikhochschule* was taught by Frau Fingerhut. Most students were German, and the text was intended for native German speakers. JoAnn found humor in her circuitous route, translating from German to English and finally Italian.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, March 18, 2017.

<sup>80</sup> *Sprecheziehung* literally means to pull out speech. This deep diction class guided students to hear, feel, and speak the nuances inherent in German, and then apply those deeper approaches to singing.

<sup>81</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, March 24, 2017.

<sup>82</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, March 18, 2017.

Drama class proved the only disappointment within JoAnn's schedule. Although interpreting circumstances was interesting at first, most days seemed a repetitive waste of time. JoAnn seldom attended.<sup>83</sup>

Unlike JoAnn, Jerry's Fulbright experience was "paltry, stressful, and disappointing." His private conducting lessons were with "an old-school German, who did not like Americans."<sup>84</sup> The professor "had been offended by an American Ambassador who stood before the public with a hand in his pocket."<sup>85</sup> Jerry soaked in as much German and musical culture as possible, so the experience would not be wasted, but learned little from his coursework. He was surprised that the conductor training at the *Musikhochschule* was worn and old-fashioned compared to the leading-edge, innovative techniques to which he had been exposed during his master's degree studies. Knowing he possessed skills not yet taught at the *Musikhochschule* gave Jerry a sense of security in his abilities, but frustration during studies.<sup>86</sup>

Conversely, JoAnn's Fulbright studies increased her self-confidence as a scholar, singer, and pedagogue. She was independently growing. She consistently met and exceeded the rigorous, competitive demands of Professor Metternich and the *Musikhochschule Köln*. No longer merely relying on the "crumbs gathered from under the table" of Jerry's education, JoAnn added her burgeoning knowledge to the

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<sup>83</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, March 24, 2017.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Jerry and JoAnn Ottley, notes to author, unpublished, April 19, 2018.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

ingredients. They shared discoveries and “made loaves” together with equal contributions; JoAnn was a scholar in her own right.<sup>87</sup>

### Culture Shock

As JoAnn and Jerry adjusted to daily life in Germany, they did not spend all their time in Köln studying. While considering it an adventure, they experienced some culture shock, particularly when the comforts of home or items readily available in the United States were difficult or impossible to find.<sup>88</sup> JoAnn hated the *Federdecke* that covered their bed because it offered only one temperature. She felt too hot most nights while trying to sleep because she could not adjust the temperature by simply removing a blanket.<sup>89</sup>

Without a washing machine, JoAnn scrubbed their clothes in the bathtub and dried them on a small wooden rack. The sheets, however, required a trip to the laundromat. It was a time-consuming chore to pile the sheets into a rolling cart, walk to the laundromat, wash and dry them, and walk home. Consequently, she did not wash the sheets weekly as was her routine in the States.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, July 7, 2017.

<sup>88</sup> Culture shock (noun): a feeling of confusion, doubt or nervousness caused by being in a place (such as a foreign country) that is very different from what you are used to. “Culture shock – Definition for English-Language Learners,” *Learners Dictionary*, [www.learnersdictionary.com](http://www.learnersdictionary.com), accessed March 31, 2017.

<sup>89</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, March 18, 2017.

<sup>90</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, March 24, 2017.

Germany had many holidays based on Catholicism, which were foreign to the Ottleys. Without a telephone, they could not contact the school each morning. Several times they arrived at school only to find a sign on the door announcing it was closed due to a national holiday.<sup>91</sup>

JoAnn visited Brent's school when possible. She loved practicing German with the children and watching the similarities and differences in the play of the German children compared to American children. It delighted her to see them spontaneously sing folk songs at recess, with Brent joining in as if a native German. JoAnn worried, however, when she saw the proclivity to physical aggression by other boys in the class, and the acceptance of this behavior as culturally normal. Brent was "reticent to show muscle" but, feeling he needed to "develop a little spark," she decided not to interfere unless necessary. She hoped he would learn to "defend himself," which he did. She maintained close contact with his teacher during that time to guard his well-being. He developed a close friendship with a classmate his age named Eckhardt who lived close by. Eckhardt and his sister, Iris, often played at the Ottley's flat. Brent played with Eckhardt and JoAnn practiced German by visiting with Iris. Brent was "a little sponge" and learned the language quickly and more in-depth than his parents. He spoke fluent German by the end of the year.<sup>92</sup>

JoAnn needed to practice singing daily. They bought an electric keyboard for this purpose, but she was hesitant to practice at home due to their neighbors' close

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<sup>91</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, March 18, 2017.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

proximity.<sup>93</sup> The other tenants in the building were Turkish *Gastarbeiters*,<sup>94</sup> who spoke neither English nor German. Without the ability to communicate, it was impossible to arrange permission with them for her practice. As an alternative, she considered practicing on their small balcony, but it was near a small shop and she feared practicing would disturb the owner and patrons. At home, therefore, she worked on her music by studying scores at the table, audiating, humming, and singing softly. Her restricted practice approach had the unexpected benefit of further improving her musicianship skills.<sup>95</sup>

One of their Turkish neighbors had a small baby. JoAnn loved to listen as the child's mother sang a lullaby in a simple, undeveloped voice. The pure, untrained sound was a stark contrast to the sophisticated singing techniques taught at the conservatory. The lullaby included a small melodic turn. JoAnn sometimes sang the song to herself without any sophisticated techniques. Whenever the Turkish mother sang to her baby, JoAnn and Jerry propped their apartment door open to listen. JoAnn wondered why this lullaby profoundly moved her yet was sung by an untrained voice.<sup>96</sup> Was there truly a difference in value between her own mastery of operatic arias and this mother's simple gift of song?<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> JoAnn Ottley, "Pianos," *Essays*, unpublished, March 29, 2014.

<sup>94</sup> *Gastarbeiter* is an immigrant guest worker without German citizenship.

<sup>95</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, March 18, 2017.

<sup>96</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, March 24, 2018.

<sup>97</sup> JoAnn Ottley, "Why Singing?, No.1," *Classical Singer*, (March, 2004): 30-33.

The language barrier increased the Ottley's sense of alienation. Their Turkish neighbors spoke neither English nor German. Conversing daily at the conservatory, Brent's school, grocery shopping, and other errands proved exhausting. Because German verbs are often at the end of the sentence, JoAnn frequently, "thought [she] knew what a person was saying and then the meaning would change," Brent absorbed the language unquestioningly, and soon his parents were asking him to translate what they heard or help construct German sentences.<sup>98</sup>

Though unable to communicate with neighbors, the Ottley's made friends at church. These relationships eased the stress of culture shock but, as much as the Ottleys enjoyed attending the *Gemeinde*, "learning sacred vocabulary was a mighty chore." JoAnn often found it difficult to understand the messages of sermons or lessons, but still enjoyed attending church each Sunday.

JoAnn and Jerry befriended several LDS missionaries assigned to Köln, and often invited them for Sunday dinner in their little flat. They especially enjoyed associating with an enthusiastic Elder who was "short of stature, with blond hair and a pug nose."<sup>99</sup> The young man could not "carry a tune," but sang with great enthusiasm. On Sundays, Jerry and JoAnn "fought to sit by him" because it was a refreshing contrast to the rigor of the *Musikhochschule*. They felt he understood "what singing was about."<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, March 18, 2017.

<sup>99</sup> Male LDS missionaries are referred to as Elder.

<sup>100</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, March 18, 2017.

Entertaining in their small flat, although difficult, eased the sense of estrangement they often felt. Homesick Mormon missionaries from the United States often came for dinner, a chance to speak English, and relax among the familiarity of other Americans. Family and friends from the states took the opportunity to travel abroad and stayed with the Ottleys instead of paying for a hotel. Consequently, the couple had “more company than ever before.” Cooking in the tiny kitchen was a challenge, especially with guests. JoAnn could use only one pan at a time, then placed it on the floor next to her while she used another. The visitors found humor in the need to flip the switch in the bathroom every time they wanted hot water in the kitchen.<sup>101</sup>

Church friendships extended beyond a worship community. The *Gemeinde* sponsored parties and other social events. For example, during the Karnival season in Germany, children wore costumes for several weeks.<sup>102</sup> *Gemeinde* members would gather to celebrate the holiday and their children wore their Karnival costumes. Much to JoAnn’s surprise, American cowboys and Indians were the most popular costumes for the event. Germans were intrigued by the settling of America’s west and were astonished that JoAnn grew up among “real, honest to goodness cowboys,” and even had, “cowboy relatives,” who competed in the rodeo during the Woodruff, Utah Fourth of July celebrations.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, March 18, 2017.

<sup>102</sup> Karnival coincides with Mardi Gras, but the celebration lasts one full week before Lent begins.

<sup>103</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 10, 2016.

JoAnn and Jerry also befriended others from the conservatory. JoAnn's *Liedbegleitung* instructor, Herr Hecker, was promoted to full professor during the year and invited all students and faculty to a celebration party at his home. Knowing the Ottleys did not drink because of religious beliefs, Hecker kindly had *Apfelsaft* available.<sup>104</sup> Much to their surprise, each course of the meal was served with a different alcoholic beverage. "My, do the Germans know how to drink!" JoAnn wrote to her parents.<sup>105</sup>

Despite the reprieve found in social events or during relatives' visits, the grayness of Köln seemed unrelenting. Not only was the city gray, but the Ruhr Valley where it lay was largely industrial. Jerry and JoAnn laughed together when friends and family visited from the States and raved of Cologne's beauty, knowing they were raving about the only five streets untouched by the destruction of World War II. The Cologne Cathedral, the railroad station, and city art galleries were all located in that small, preserved area of central Köln. Most of the city lacked trees and flowers. Some signs of destruction remained, including a "bombed-out building" next to the Ottley's flat.

After the first month in the concrete, gray city, JoAnn and Jerry bought a Volkswagen. The street car was inexpensive, so they did not need a car for daily commutes, but the Volkswagen provided a means to escape Köln and see beauty. The

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<sup>104</sup> Apple Juice

<sup>105</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, March 18, 2017.



country outside of the “terrible city, was just unbelievably gorgeous,”<sup>106</sup> and these day trips eased the gray monotony of cement and almost constant cloud-covered sky.

Food proved yet another source of culture shock. Many foods enjoyed in the States were unavailable. For example, root beer was not sold in Germany. JoAnn and Jerry became “so hungry for it,” that friends from home sent them a small bottle of root beer extract. The Ottleys put the flavoring and water in a corked bottle to ferment, or they used dry ice to make bubbles. While not tasting exactly the same, it was close and helped ease their cravings.<sup>107</sup>

Jell-O was not available in Germany, and the Ottleys sorely missed this American treat.<sup>108</sup> They tried the German equivalent, *Wachelpudding*, but found “the flavors were ghastly.”<sup>109</sup> Sympathetic family members sent them boxes of Jell-O from the states.

Jerry’s two favorite treats were licorice and popcorn, in fact, JoAnn teased him that his “middle name was popcorn.” Licorice was available, but other than small, stale bags of pre-popped corn in the candy aisle, popcorn was not to be found. One day, in a health food store, Jerry spotted a bag of corn on the lower shelf and excitedly said, “Honey, that looks like popcorn!” The thin packages labeled *Maize* were only six or

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<sup>106</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, March 18, 2017.

<sup>107</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, March 24, 2017.

<sup>108</sup> Jell-O is the brand name for an American instant flavored gelatin.

<sup>109</sup> *Wachelpudding* translates directly as wiggle pudding.

seven inches tall, so they bought three. They heated up the oil, put a few kernels in the pan and “watched in suspense. It went pop and [they] rejoiced.”<sup>110</sup>

The Ottleys did not have a telephone in their flat, so correspondence with friends and family in the United States came through the postal service. International letters were least expensive when written on the thin, blue, lightweight paper purchased at the post office. The paper included the postage and folded into itself, requiring no envelope. This was how JoAnn received the news her brother John Allan had been in another serious accident. Exhausted from exams, John Allan fell asleep driving to his fiancée’s home in California and crashed into a guardrail. Badly hurt and wired together, he convalesced in a circulating bed.<sup>111</sup> Being so far away was difficult for JoAnn and Jerry. They sent letters of support and prayed for John Allan and her parents, but there was little else they could do with an ocean between them.<sup>112</sup>

### Life Changes

Despite the many cultural adjustments and missing their families and friends, the Ottleys adapted and relished the opportunities and sense of adventure that accompanied living and studying in Germany. The year passed quickly. Instructors approached JoAnn and Jerry, proposing they remain in Germany and pursue music careers. The voice

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<sup>110</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, March 24, 2017.

<sup>111</sup> A circulating bed varies pressure to prevent bed sores and other skin conditions caused by extended bed rest.

<sup>112</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, December 21, 2016.

faculty emphasized confidence in JoAnn's future professional success. The Ottleys knew if they stayed, it would be without the financial support of Fulbright scholarships. It was frightening to consider, but exciting to imagine European careers. She and Jerry weighed the positive and negative aspects of remaining in Germany and frequently talked late into the night. They mailed letters to the Farrs, Ardean Watts, and their families asking for advice. The Farrs and Ardean encouraged them to stay. Ardean's letter focused on JoAnn's career prospects, assuring her Jerry would also find opportunities, and stressed her success would be the "best service she could offer the church."<sup>113</sup> Their families advised the opposite, hoping they would return home.<sup>114</sup> "Finally, the couple dedicated days to fasting and prayer. While in church one Sunday, JoAnn and Jerry received separate spiritual confirmations, each reaching the same conclusion."<sup>115</sup> All confusion gone, they made their decision. Upon completing their Fulbright obligations, they were going home. "Their work would be there."<sup>116</sup>

Though steadfast in their decision to return to the states, saying goodbye to new friends and teachers made leaving bittersweet.

At the conclusion of every school year, the faculty of the *Hochschule* selected an outstanding singer to represent the vocal area in a broadcast concert with orchestra on West German radio. JoAnn was selected and sang to great acclaim from the audience, faculty, professional critics and especially professor Metternich."<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Ardean Watts, letter to JoAnn and Jerold Ottley, in the personal papers of JoAnn Ottley, used by permission, ca. 1969.

<sup>114</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 10, 2016.

<sup>115</sup> Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes for author, unpublished, April 19, 2018.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

It was especially difficult for JoAnn to bid Professor Metternich *auf wiedersehen*. The Ottley's Fulbright studies behind them, they prepared for the journey home.<sup>118</sup>

Physically exhausted from the fervor of the final concert, emotional farewells, and stress of arranging their return to the states, JoAnn had difficulty eating and often felt nauseated. Rest did not appear to help. Finally, it occurred to JoAnn that she might be pregnant. After five years of disappointment trying to conceive their first child, and eight more barren years after Brent's birth, she had not considered pregnancy a likelihood. Two weeks before departing for the United States, JoAnn's suspicions were confirmed. Thrilled, she told Jerry and Brent and the little family quietly cherished the secret together.<sup>119</sup> JoAnn's pregnancy further supported their decision to return home. Motherhood remained her greatest desire and highest calling. She was unwilling to sacrifice the time a European performance career would require after the baby arrived.<sup>120</sup>

The Ottleys packed their meager belongings and the few items collected while in Germany. In June of 1969, they boarded the S.S. Bremen with their now bilingual, 8-year-old son and headed for home and the next chapter of their life. Extreme weather made the voyage difficult for everyone on board. Extra rope bannisters were strung along the deck to help stabilize guests. JoAnn, already sick from pregnancy, was miserable as the nausea worsened with the rolling sea. She needed assistance from the small, unsteady

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<sup>118</sup> *Auf wiedersehen* means farewell in German.

<sup>119</sup> Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes to author, unpublished, April 19 2018.

<sup>120</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 10, 2016.

bed to the equally unsteady latrine. No position—sitting or standing—eased her suffering. Her limbs felt heavy and every body cell seemed to ache. Despite the nausea, she was hungry and asked the steward to bring a little food. He came back with a traditional German spread of soft-cooked eggs, dark bread, and spicy sausage.<sup>121</sup> Though miserable, she chuckled with Jerry at the irony of the food selection in her condition. JoAnn was so ill she had little sense of time. Nothing was real but unending spinning, surging nausea, blurred images of worried faces, the terrible taste in her mouth, the raw burning in her throat, and the sudden punctuation of rising vomit. She tried taking walks on the deck for air and sipped cola, but though Jerry held her as steady as possible, she could only manage a few minutes before returning to bed. The eight-day voyage was a living nightmare. In the brief moments of true awareness, JoAnn would have been grateful for the relief of death. She was a shell of herself when they arrived in New York and boarded the airplane to Utah.<sup>122</sup>

Eventually the world stopped turning, her legs steadied, and her head cleared. She continued to experience early-pregnancy symptoms but was able to eat small portions of food. She experienced intense thirst, but only allowed herself small sips, afraid the illness might overtake again if she drank too much or too fast. By the time their plane landed in Salt Lake City, she was well enough to greet her family with smiles and happy tears.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, June 6, 2017.

<sup>122</sup> Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes to author, unpublished, April 19 2018.

<sup>123</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, June 6, 2017.

### Oregon, Music Studies, and a Baby Girl

JoAnn had precious little time in Utah, but was able to regain her strength despite her pregnancy before they left for The University of Oregon where Jerry was enrolled as a doctoral student in music pedagogy and voice.<sup>124</sup> After a few weeks staying with her parents, the little family headed northwest to Eugene Oregon, pulling a heavily loaded rented trailer behind their car. Brent drew pictures and read books in the back seat, while Jerry drove west toward the Oregon coast. They moved into married student housing and began their next adventure.<sup>125</sup>

The Ottley's beautiful baby girl, Allison was born via an emergency caesarean on March 8, 1970 at the Sacred Heart Hospital in Eugene, Oregon. The Ottleys did not have medical insurance, and paid the subsequently large hospital bills a "little tiny bit at a time."<sup>126</sup> Jerry's assistantship paid for tuition, and he used his experiences growing up in a family retail paint business to secure a part-time job on the university paint crew. This meant he could only study at four o'clock each morning. In addition to the job, studying, classes, and family responsibilities, Jerry was called by their Oregon Willamette LDS Stake President to serve on the Stake High Council.<sup>127</sup> JoAnn shouldered the household responsibilities, so Jerry could fulfill his many obligations. Finances were too limited to buy a television set, so entertainment consisted of listening to their little German radio.

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<sup>124</sup> Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes to author, unpublished, April 19, 2018.

<sup>125</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, June 6, 2017.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes to author, unpublished, April 19 2018.

They discovered they could get the sound from a television station on their radio. By leaving their drapes partially open and looking through the neighbor's window at their television, they could "watch and hear" Perry Mason episodes.<sup>128</sup>

Several University of Oregon music faculty were specialists in early music and the school had a large early music instrument collection. JoAnn's reputation as an excellent musician and singer spread quickly and led to performance invitations.<sup>129</sup>

The eminent German conductor of the Oregon Bach Festival, Helmut Rilling, utilized JoAnn in several performances of his specialties, Bach cantatas and the *Mass in B Minor*. . . He admired her singing so much that he encouraged her to return to Germany, but to no avail.<sup>130</sup>

These experiences, and subsequent professional relationships with other early music specialists at the university, became "[her] own, individual, one-to-one classes, where she learned from conductors and coaches."<sup>131</sup>

JoAnn also learned from colleagues. Whenever she was the guest soprano soloist in a vocal quartet, she sought out information from the other three singers, asking, "Who did you work with? What did you learn?" Upon hearing someone sing something extraordinary, she would ask, "How did you learn to do that? You do that like nobody I've ever heard." She viewed these moments as "on the job training."<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Perry Mason was a crime and law television series, popular from 1957 to 1966, <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0050051/>, accessed March 30, 2018.

<sup>129</sup> Early Music in Western Music History includes Medieval, Renaissance, and often Baroque period musical periods.

<sup>130</sup> Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes to author, unpublished, April 19 2018. Helmut Rilling later invited JoAnn to sing in the Alaska Festival in Anchorage.

<sup>131</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, June 6, 2017.

<sup>132</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 10, 2014.

When asked to perform in an unfamiliar style or sing a new selection, she unabashedly accepted and “learned as [she] went.” Though no longer officially studying music as she had in Germany, JoAnn continued to expand her knowledge and skill. Once again, she made “loaves from the crumbs gleaned under [Jerry’s] table,” but did so with the experience learned from the Fulbright scholar program. Professor Metternich stressed the importance of knowing how to use techniques and why they were effective; thus, JoAnn no longer relied on her substantial talent and natural ability to imitate and incorporate techniques she observed. She wanted to understand them. With a professional maturity not possessed before Germany, JoAnn continued her education alongside Jerry.<sup>133</sup>

#### Unlettered University Instructor

Despite the tremendous time demands, Jerry was the first in his class to complete his classwork, comprehensive exams, and dissertation proposal. He advanced to candidacy in the spring of 1971 and accepted a faculty position for the following fall quarter with the University of Utah Music Department. The Ottleys joyfully left Oregon and headed home. In short order, they bought a house on Margie Street in Salt Lake City. and Jerry began what they expected to be a long career as a university professor.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 10, 2014.

<sup>134</sup> JoAnn Ottley “Historical Points,” *The Lengthening View*, unpublished, 2006.



Meanwhile, JoAnn was offered an adjunct position on the University of Utah voice faculty. Though not having the credentials of a traditional education with “all the letters after [her] name,” her Fulbright studies and impressive singing experience opened the door for her to teach applied voice at the university level. She had been teaching voice lessons since Brent was born, and considered it a “rich, delicious, joyful part of [her] life.” When she began voice lessons with Marguerite as a teenager, she assumed anyone could learn to sing well with lessons as the only requirement. Teaching students with a variety of aptitude and attitudes enlightening; JoAnn realized her vocal and performance abilities were rare. Her previous students were mostly “high school students and housewives,”<sup>135</sup> and JoAnn worried she might not possess the skills needed to teach advanced students. She soon discovered she had much to offer as a teacher regardless of student abilities.<sup>136</sup>

Not all university students were advanced singers, and their desire and dedication to the craft also varied. JoAnn looked for the same passion she felt as a child to gauge a student’s potential success within the rigorous, university, vocal-performance program. When a student told her “they were out singing to the flowers” or “were driving people at their work crazy ‘cuz they were always singing,” she recognized passion. Through her university teaching, JoAnn realized that although everyone could sing, not everyone could sing professionally. Regardless, most students in her university studio had a hunger

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<sup>135</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 10, 2014.

<sup>136</sup> JoAnn Ottley, “Singer and Family History,” *Autobiographical Notes*, unpublished. See Appendix D for her autobiographical notes.

to improve and express themselves through music. JoAnn's reputation spread as her university students notably progressed in technique and artistry. Her university studio filled to capacity with more requests than she could accept, and professional singers were also drawn to her private studio <sup>137</sup>

### Emerging Vocal Pedagogy

JoAnn's vocal pedagogy grew from the unique perspective of training with old-school techniques combined with observing the changes occurring with the emergence of vocal science. In 1967, William Vennard published his book, *Singing, The Mechanism and the Technique*.<sup>138</sup> Vennard examined traditional vocal training through a vocal science lens. JoAnn's introduction to vocal science occurred at a National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) conference where Vennard presented. The new knowledge gleaned from observing the actual function of the voice dispelled the long-held belief that the diaphragm was used for vocal support. This caused a rift among voice teachers, with some adhering to traditional ideas and others embracing the scientific evidence as the new truth. "They were ready to scratch each other's eyes out!" JoAnn told Jerry with a laugh. "One was clinging to the old way and the other was saying, 'Well, hey, get a clue!'"<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 27, 2014.

<sup>138</sup> William Vennard, *Singing: The Mechanism and the Voice*, Carl Fischer, New York, NY, 1967.

<sup>139</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 22, 2014.

JoAnn found herself straddling the divide—incorporating science in her teaching while continuing to rely on the more intuitive approaches she had been taught. She recognized value in understanding the voice’s physiology and the act of singing but observed deleterious effects on performance when singers relied solely on science. Their expressiveness and spontaneity were often thwarted, thus “destroying the music.” The profound effect experienced upon hearing the Turkish mother sing a lullaby to her baby in Germany and the contagious joy emanating through the voice of the Mormon missionary—who sang with enthusiasm but could not match pitch—belied the idea that singing was an exact science. With no knowledge of science or technique, the untrained voices of those individuals connected with her. JoAnn recognized personal expression combined with vocal science as more effective than singing from only scientific understanding. JoAnn’s lessons included scientific explanations when she felt the singer would benefit, but consistently drew on imagery, imagination, and the sensation of singing itself. She included metaphors from her life experiences, observations of other singers, and her own singing. She guided students to find solid technique and a personal connection to the text and music. JoAnn realized that though her career primarily focused on performance, her singing had become infused with the perspectives of a vocal pedagogue.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 22, 2014.

### Tabernacle Choir—Return and Revelation

Jerry finished his dissertation by the end of the school year. This was quite an accomplishment considering he taught full time. The family journeyed to Oregon and stayed for the summer while Jerry completed the final requirements and defended his dissertation. His niece traveled with them to entertain two-year-old Allison. Jerry's doctoral degree was conferred in late summer 1972. With his formal education behind them, the family returned to Utah and felt more settled in their home on Margie Avenue.

In 1973, two years after accepting the position at the University of Utah, JoAnn's career was thriving. She was receiving numerous invitations to sing. Her university studio was full and her private studio thriving. Despite the hectic schedule, JoAnn felt drawn to sing again with the Tabernacle Choir. Jerry was too busy to join in the endeavor; in addition to university obligations, he had been called to serve on the general church music committee. JoAnn wrestled with the decision, wondering if adding another commitment would cause too much strain on the family. As with every life decision, she and Jerry discussed it and sought divine guidance. Unlike other major decisions they had made, this time she did not experience clarity. She counseled with Jay Welch—a friend and the assistant choir conductor. He suggested the two choices might be too closely aligned for a clear answer, saying, “JoAnn, I have found sometimes it is not ninety-nine to one, sometimes decisions are forty-nine to fifty-one.” With that in mind, she decided to return to the organization. She enjoyed the camaraderie, the joy of singing with others, and the sense of service.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 22, 2014.

The world-renown Tabernacle Choir periodically went on large-scale tours. JoAnn returned to the choir in time to join them on a European tour and had a deeply spiritual experience. More than a premonition, she felt it a divine message. During one performance, Richard Condie, the choir director, was conducting. JoAnn was seven rows up, stage right with the sopranos, when Condie's hands disappeared and she saw her husband's hands in their place. It was startling, and lasted only a moment, but she recognized it as a spiritual manifestation.<sup>142</sup>

JoAnn felt certain Jerry would one day occupy that podium, and continued to have premonitions supporting that belief. She kept the spiritual experiences to herself for months, knowing Jerry would not be happy in the position.<sup>143</sup>

Several years earlier, while completing his master's degree in conducting, Jerry had been given the opportunity to serve as a backup to Condie while his associate was on a short leave of absence. The magnitude of the Tabernacle Choir's worldwide outreach convinced Jerry that it was not for him.<sup>144</sup>

One Sunday, while the couple was taking a walk, she shared the experience and what she believed it meant. Jerry's response to JoAnn's was quick and adamant. "JoAnn, I don't want that job. I don't want anything to do with it, and I never want you to talk about it again."<sup>145</sup> JoAnn respected Jerry's wishes, but believing one day he would be the director, she decided to observe the choir's culture and the group's organizational

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<sup>142</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 22, 2014.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes to author, unpublished, April 19 2018.

<sup>145</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 22, 2014.

aspects. During conversations, JoAnn “gradually fed him the information,” She felt the information was given to her purposefully, and her knowledge of the choir might help him prepare.<sup>146</sup>

### Opera for her Students

JoAnn’s performance experience included primarily recitals, oratorio, and symphonic concerts. She was well-known in the Salt Lake City musical community and a frequent soloist with Utah Symphony, Ballet West, and the Utah Oratorio Society. Before her marriage opera experiences included singing with the chorus for the summer Festival Opera at the University of Utah, and Carlos Alexander’s Utah Opera. Despite having limited operatic training, she successfully competed with operatic arias in high school and afterward. While living in Salt Lake City, during Jerry’s master’s degree studies, she won the local Metropolitan Opera Auditions, with Ardean Watts at the piano.<sup>147</sup> She flew to Denver in “her brother-in-law’s light airplane”<sup>148</sup> for the regional leg of the auditions. The rough flight “left her weak and in poor voice,” and she gave a “less than sterling performance.”<sup>149</sup> The judge considered JoAnn’s singing “too heavy,” and she agreed.<sup>150</sup> Ardean’s coaching encouraged her to alter her vocal production when singing opera, and

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<sup>146</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, June 20, 2016.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

<sup>148</sup> Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes to author, unpublished, April 19 2018.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, June 20, 2016.

the imbalance this created in her technique could not withstand the additional stress of external circumstances. At first, she was “not a very good sport” at winning second place,” but the experience taught her to trust her voice, regardless of the genre.<sup>151</sup>

During Jerry’s undergraduate work at Brigham Young University, JoAnn sang leading roles with the Utah Valley Opera Company. She sang a small role with BYU’s visiting artist during Jerry’s basic training and the primary role of the mother in a U.S. Army production of in *Amahl and the Night Visitors* at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. While Jerry studied at the University of Utah, JoAnn sang roles in Joann Strauss’ *Die Fledermaus*, Puccini’s *Gianni Schicchi*, and *La Boheme*, Mozart’s *Zauberflöte* and *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, and Verdi’s *Rigoletto* with the Utah Civic Opera, but none of the productions were at the professional level her students desired.<sup>152</sup>

As students asked for guidance in opera, JoAnn realized she had insufficient operatic knowledge or experience to offer. Because JoAnn felt ill-equipped to effectively mentor those wishing to pursue professional opera—especially as they progressed to a level where the goal was feasible—she consciously set out to fill her knowledge gap.<sup>153</sup> To this end, she accepted an invitation in 1974 from Utah State University’s Michael Ballam to sing the role of Rosalinda in *Die Fledermaus* in Logan, and Ardean Watts’

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<sup>151</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, June 20, 2016.

<sup>152</sup> Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes to author, unpublished, April 19 2018.

<sup>153</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, June 20, 2016.

invitation to sing the Queen of the Night in January 1975 with the University of Utah Opera Company.<sup>154</sup>

### World Blown Apart

By 1974, JoAnn, Jerry, and the children had settled into a somewhat predictable, though busy, routine. She and Jerry worked at the university—she part time and he a full-time professor. JoAnn practiced, taught private lessons at home, and managed the household. Allison stayed with a babysitter in the neighborhood while JoAnn taught at the university, but when working at home Allison was by her side. As children are known to mimic their parents, one day Allison and a playmate dressed up in JoAnn's jewelry and clothes, rang the doorbell and asked for voice lessons. JoAnn was usually home when Brent came home from school, and the family often ate together after Jerry arrived home from work. When JoAnn had singing engagements, rehearsals, or choir obligations, the family's routine adjusted with help from extended family members and friends.

In June of 1974, Richard Condie retired as director of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. The choir was elated that Jay Welch was called to take his place. Welch was a consummate conductor and the choir members were thrilled to have him in the lead position, even though he was not a singer. Jerry was called as Jay's assistant conductor, which replaced his responsibilities to the church music committee, and added the benefit of JoAnn and Jerry attending choir rehearsals together each Thursday evening.

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<sup>154</sup> Archives West: Orbis Cascade Alliance, Ardean W. Watts papers, 1961-1974: Overview of the Collection, Acc. 283, Box 1, University Archives and Records Management, University of Utah, J. Willard Marriott, Salt Lake City, UT, [www.archiveswest.orbiscascade.org](http://www.archiveswest.orbiscascade.org), accessed August 27, 2017.



Everything changed six months later in December during the height of the choir's holiday performance schedule. Jay Welch suddenly resigned as the choir's musical director. Although close friends, Jay gave Jerry no warning of the upcoming change. Jerry was "both heartbroken and dumbstruck."<sup>155</sup> In disbelief, Jerry told JoAnn of his new position. As assistant director, Jerry was thrust into the unwelcome position of acting director. He now had to manage all concert logistics and step on the podium to direct the more than 300 shocked, grief-stricken choir members. The Ottleys felt their world had fallen apart.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes to author, unpublished, April 19 2018.

<sup>156</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, June 20, 2016.

**CHAPTER SEVEN:**  
**CONCENTRIC CIRCLES IN VOICE AND LIFE (1975-1985)**

Despite JoAnn’s certainty that Jerry would one day be the director of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, the news of Jay Welch’s resignation was a complete shock. Jerry became Interim Director shortly before the choir’s 1974 Christmas concert.<sup>1</sup> All the immediate responsibilities of the official Music Director fell to Jerry, who had no preparation time for the job or numerous upcoming performances. JoAnn cried for days after the news. She was “concerned for her husband and broken-hearted about Jay.”<sup>2</sup>

Jerry’s first days with the Tabernacle Choir after Jay resigned on December 15 were far from calm. Jerry conducted the choir’s annual Christmas concert four days later with less than an hour of rehearsal time. JoAnn participated as a very concerned choir member.<sup>3</sup>

JoAnn successfully sang as soprano soloist in three *Messiah* performances that week. Her throat was raw from crying, her emotions in upheaval, and her mind was distracted so she relied completely on technique for those concerts. She “did what [she] had to do and sang well, but there was no heart in it.” After each performance, JoAnn felt she had “pulled a rabbit out of [her] hat.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT November 7, 2014.

<sup>2</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 22, 2014.

<sup>3</sup> Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes to author, April 19, 2018.

<sup>4</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 10, 2014.

## Sudden Fame

Jerry helped the choir through the transition despite tremendous self-doubt. The following April he was officially named Musical Director.<sup>5</sup> The full-time position necessitated Jerry's resignation from the University of Utah. The LDS Church considers the Tabernacle Choir Musical Director a divine calling given by revelation through inspired general authorities of the church. JoAnn's "consistent impression wats that God handed him a huge coat and said, 'Here, fill it.'"<sup>6</sup> JoAnn tried to keep their family steady through the daily challenges. "Anyone can count the seeds in an apple," she reassured Jerry, "but only God can count the apples in a seed."<sup>7</sup>

JoAnn also struggled to maintain her balance between performance, teaching, Tabernacle Choir, and family responsibilities. She was receiving numerous solo singing opportunities and her voice studio at the university was completely full. Singing with the Tabernacle Choir required every Thursday night and Sunday morning, plus additional time away from home for the many extra choir rehearsals and events. Jerry worked from early morning to late night, which limited his time with family. When home, he was utterly exhausted. JoAnn struggled to understand and alleviate the confusion felt by Jerry and their children concerning the changes in the family's lifestyle while managing her feelings.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> JoAnn Ottley, Tabernacle Choir tour notes for author, November 7, 2014.

<sup>6</sup> Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes to author, April 19, 2018.

<sup>7</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 22, 2014.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

The Ottley family had not realized Jerry's new position would "throw them into the limelight" and were ill-prepared for their sudden loss of anonymity. Jerry and JoAnn had fitness memberships at the Salt Lake Deseret Gym.<sup>9</sup> After taking a swim one day, they found other patrons waiting to catch a glimpse of them. One of the employees had spread word of their presence, saying, "Do you know who is here?" JoAnn and her children were often stopped at the store by admiring strangers, who congratulated JoAnn. Both children hated the attention, as did their parents.<sup>10</sup>

JoAnn and Jerry were stopped often by strangers, who asked well-meaning, but redundant, questions. They quickly realized the need to answer "the same ten questions a billion times." Wanting to put each questioner at ease, they worked on responses that seemed fresh. Wherever they went, people brought gifts. Often an aspiring composer would push an original score into Jerry's hands, hoping the choir might sing it.<sup>11</sup>

Their new community celebrity status included invitations to events unlike any the couple had previously experienced. One of the first events was a reception for the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.<sup>12</sup> The Ottleys arrived, looked at the unfamiliar faces,

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<sup>9</sup> The Deseret Gym was a low-cost family oriented fitness center in Salt Lake City begun in 1939. In 1997, it was torn down to make room for the LDS Conference Center. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LuyqK74n-hs>, accessed September 4, 2017.

<sup>10</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 22, 2014.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> From 1973-1976 was a period of reorganization for the Utah Supreme Court, resulting in the Utah Judicial Council, headed by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. Before the council formation, district courts varied in policies. The council was adopted in 1976 amid controversy. During this period, Chief Justices remained in the post for two years as an appeasement to opponents of the proposed changes. Though F. Henri Henriod accepted the post of Chief Justice from 1975-1976, D. Frank Wilkins was appointed by the Governor as Associate Chief Justice from 1976-1980. Wilkins was the more consistent leader through the transitional period, which ended in 1980 with a complete integration of the central

then looked at each other and winced. Jerry took JoAnn’s hand and guided her to a corner as far from the festivities as possible. The couple spent the evening talking together quietly alone in the crowd.<sup>13</sup>

### Abravanel’s Influence

In addition to the public attention drawn by Jerry’s new position, JoAnn’s singing career was reaching new heights. Ardean Watts had suggested JoAnn to Maurice Abravanel—conductor of the Utah Symphony—and she became his first choice for a soprano. Abravanel extended numerous invitations for her to sing with Utah Symphony. The musical selections varied, but often featured the works of Gustav Mahler, which were well suited to JoAnn’s rich, flexible voice and wide range.<sup>14</sup>

JoAnn’s work with Abravanel brought her to the attention of Leese and Christiansen, the other two members of Utah’s “Triumvirate.”<sup>15</sup> On Ardean Watt’s recommendation they hired JoAnn as the soprano soloist for Ballet West’s production of *Carmina Burana* in October 1975.<sup>16</sup> JoAnn loved the production’s “collaboration of three

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judicial system, which remains at the time of this writing. [www.utcourts.gov/knowcts/adm/docs/Judicial Council History-1973-1997.pdf](http://www.utcourts.gov/knowcts/adm/docs/Judicial_Council_History-1973-1997.pdf), accessed August 16, 2017.

<sup>13</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, August 12, 2016.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. Utah’s “triumvirate” consisted of Abravanel, conductor of The Utah Symphony, Doc Leese, theatre director, and Willam Christiansen who developed Salt Lake City’s professional ballet company, *Ballet West*. Their mission was to enhance the performing arts culture in Salt Lake City.

<sup>16</sup> JoAnn Ottley, Performance Log, unpublished, 2000. See Appendix A for a comprehensive list of JoAnn Ottley’s performances.

arts” and taking her bows “with a tiny dancer.”<sup>17</sup> This became her first of many performances working with Ballet West. *Carmina Burana* became a signature role and led to JoAnn receiving one of her favorite compliments. After singing the work, a male audience member came through the reception line and said, “My ‘bleep’ woman, you should be arrested!” His comment reassured JoAnn that she had expressed the composer’s intent and selection’s sensuality.<sup>18</sup>

JoAnn and Abravanel developed a close working relationship and she often drove the conductor home after rehearsals. She told him about the autograph he gave her as a child attending her first symphony, marveling that now he was conducting her with the orchestra. During one car ride, Abravanel told JoAnn about his days as associate conductor with Bruno Walter at the Paris Opera.<sup>19</sup>

His mentor was conducting Mahler, and could not achieve the precision he sought. Since Walter had been a student of Mahler, he was obsessing over having everything correct. Abravanel, in a brash moment of reality, told Walter “It’s precise enough for Mahler.”<sup>20</sup>

JoAnn and the maestro laughed heartily at this story, but JoAnn ruminated on the statement afterward. She concluded, although the notes and rhythms must be correct and the composer’s markings realized, the heart of the music was often lost in the search for perfection.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> JoAnn Ottley, “My Career,” Presentation for Music Circle gathering, October 25, 2004.

<sup>18</sup> See Appendix A for a comprehensive list of JoAnn Ottley’s performances.

<sup>19</sup> Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes for author, unpublished, April 19 2018.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 22, 2014.

JoAnn's technique was solid. She knew she could manage performances even during an emotional struggle, such as singing *Messiah* the year before, immediately after Jay Welch's resignation from his post with the Tabernacle Choir.<sup>22</sup> JoAnn believed singing could be a conduit for the divine and that singing as an expression of art was transformative. Such transformation did not come from a rigid search for perfection, but through a holistic approach that connected the act of singing with the music. To JoAnn, the simple lullaby sung by the Turkish mother in Germany was as important as an amateur choir member singing with other voices in the choir. The culmination of those voices, singing from a place of love, could be as moving as her own, well-trained voice ringing through Symphony Hall. She believed that searching for technical perfection circumvented authentic expression, without expression vocal training was useless. This became a primary goal in her performances and a message shared with students.<sup>23</sup>

#### Balancing Career and Family

JoAnn's solo opportunities flourished. In addition to *Carmina Burana*, in October of 1975 she was Abravanel's choice for Haydn's *Creation* work with the Utah Symphony. Her local concerts with the symphony and Ballet West brought her national attention, but, though she made arrangements to accommodate all Tabernacle Choir tours, she limited out-of-town solo concerts, choosing those she accepted very carefully.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes for author, April 19, 2018.

<sup>23</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 22, 2014.

<sup>24</sup> JoAnn Ottley, Performance Log, unpublished, 2000. See Appendix A for a comprehensive list of JoAnn Ottley's performances.

The first choir tour with Jerry as Musical Director was to Canada in 1975. JoAnn's experiences as a long-standing choir member proved invaluable as she provided Jerry insights concerning the cultural elements of the choir—elements of which he was largely unaware. The tour was successful and the choir began to unify as a group under his leadership.<sup>25</sup> By December 1975 the couple had begun to adjust to the massive lifestyle changes. Jerry prepared the choir for the annual Christmas concert while JoAnn participated as a choir member.<sup>26</sup>

JoAnn's days were a whirlwind of activity fluctuating between domestic and professional responsibilities. She made breakfast for the family and they ate together as they had in their small apartment in Köln, but now at a full-sized table as a family of four. Brent attended middle school and Allison was a precocious, talkative five-year-old. Following breakfast and the daily departure of Jerry and Brent, JoAnn cleaned the kitchen and spent time with her daughter before heading to the university. Now in her third year as an adjunct assistant professor, JoAnn's students were thriving. Many were preparing for recitals and contests, so her hours at the university required energy and focus. Afterward, she would retrieve Allison from the sitter and return home. After time with Allison, JoAnn rehearsed music for upcoming performances at the piano or kitchen table with her daughter playing nearby. Most days also included professional-level private students. Brent would arrive home from school, sling his books on the couch, and

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<sup>25</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, August 12, 2016.

<sup>26</sup> JoAnn Ottley, Performance Log, unpublished, 2000. See Appendix A for a comprehensive list of JoAnn Ottley's performances.



head for the refrigerator. He would chat with his mother if she was not working with a student.

Brent's philosophical views of life seemed beyond his years as he told his mother about the day. They constantly laughed together. Allison adored her big brother and joined conversations regardless of understanding. JoAnn then turned attention to dinner preparation, practicing as she made dinner. Brent would complete homework, which never proved difficult, before grabbing a book or flopping down in front of the TV, all adolescent arms and legs. Jerry was often delayed with work and on evenings he could not join the family for dinner JoAnn would cover a plate for him to eat upon his arrival. Thursday evenings consisted of the weekly Tabernacle Choir rehearsals. Jerry and JoAnn would kiss Allison, hug Brent, and head to the Tabernacle together.

When JoAnn had an evening singing engagement, Jerry tried to be home with the children. If they both had commitments, family members and friends would assist. Jerry and JoAnn attended as many of each other's performances as possible. They had an agreement that they would not provide criticisms about performances until the next day. Understanding the vulnerability required to sing or conduct powerful music, they saved feedback until each had time to process the performance.

As December 1975 came to an end, JoAnn was exhausted. Jerry had been conducting the Tabernacle Choir for one year, and although managing all aspects of her life successfully, JoAnn's supercharged schedule—combined with the emotional stress of family changes in response Jerry's position—had taken its toll. She struggled to decide

which aspects of her responsibilities could be relinquished. Even one day to catch her breath and spend uninterrupted time with her children would be beneficial.

As JoAnn considered her various roles in life, she realized, balance occurred when all parts aligned with the core, like singing. She drew concentric circles—like those she used with students to illustrate the importance of maintaining the core, or “Kindergarten,” in their voices during singing—and began labeling the core of her life’s concentric circles. She started with “Daughter of God,” and added “I will be going home to report.” The next circle was labeled “Wife. Nothing must interfere with our relationship.” The third circle she identified as “Mother.” She realized her children might be inconvenienced, but not harmed by her life’s demands. Nothing could interfere with their well-being. The fourth circle out was labeled “Singer” and the final circle “Teacher.” Her priorities, now illustrated on paper, reminded JoAnn she was a daughter of God, wife, mother, singer, and teacher, “in that order.”<sup>27</sup>

### Performance Choices

JoAnn’s performance schedule was demanding, but the placement of “singer” on the fourth ring of her concentric circles meant singing was vital to fulfilling her life’s purpose. She pondered her Patriarchal Blessing, which she had come to consider

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<sup>27</sup> JoAnn Ottley, Telephone interview by author, June 2, 2017.

“personal scripture” and “a guide for her life.” The words supported her sense that singing was a vital element of her calling. The blessing read,

Let your heart and soul go out in your musical activities. It will refine your soul. It will give you a knowledge of life and living that would otherwise not come to you.<sup>28</sup>

As a child, and even as a young woman, JoAnn had been unaware that professional classical singing existed. She had not pursued it. Yet, “singing kept chasing [her] up the tree.”<sup>29</sup> Her singing career development was astounding, especially given her humble upbringing. JoAnn knew she could sing more if she chose, but accepted only the most musically rewarding invitations—those with the potential to touch audiences and support her balance of personal concentric circles. She prayed earnestly and discussed each singing invitation with Jerry before accepting it. The singing engagements that required out-of-town travel were always limited to four or five days.

In January 1976, she sang the Brahms’ *Requiem* (see Appendix A) with the Boise Philharmonic.<sup>30</sup> It seemed to JoAnn, “the music was emanating directly to her from a divine source—through her head and then out to those in the audience. It was “thrilling!”<sup>31</sup> “Brahms must have had a conduit to heaven,” she marveled after the performance.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Patriarchal Blessing of JoAnn Ottley quoted by JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, August 12, 2016.

<sup>29</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, June 2, 2017.

<sup>30</sup> JoAnn Ottley, List of Performances, unpublished, compiled in 2002, see Appendix A.

<sup>31</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview with author, Salt Lake City, UT, August 12, 2016.

<sup>32</sup> Bonita Cross.

Though finding singing concerts as spiritually fulfilling, JoAnn often returned home after several days away feeling guilty, only to discover the family had “pulled together, risen to the occasion, and fared much better in my absence than expected.” JoAnn decided she could continue her singing career if remaining mindful of the “personal cost” accompanying each performance based on her core priorities.<sup>33</sup> The following month she sang Barber’s “Knoxville: Summer of 1915,” with Ballet West. Performing locally allowed JoAnn to balance her career more easily with the family’s needs.

JoAnn listed teaching after singing in her concentric circles, but, it was part of her life’s purpose and so JoAnn was mindful of her role as voice teacher within the goal of balancing life and career. Brent attended school while she taught at the university. Soon Allison would be in school, but for now she enjoyed playing with the neighbor while JoAnn was gone. JoAnn’s private students came to the house, so did not disrupt her children’s well-being. Though many private students were professional singers—needing more time and involvement than she could spare—JoAnn loved working with them. Teaching provided vital income to their family and service to others.<sup>34</sup>

#### Tabernacle Choir Vocal Coach

It occurred to JoAnn that her Tabernacle Choir membership was adversely affecting Brent and Allison more than any other pursuit. The children keenly felt the

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<sup>33</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, August 12, 2016.

<sup>34</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, June 2, 2017.

absence of their father, and singing in the choir meant both parents were gone some Tuesdays, each Thursday evening and half a day on Sunday.<sup>35</sup> As Jerry became more settled in his director role, and understood the group's social dynamics, he no longer needed JoAnn's daily insights in that regard. She had a strong, spiritual sense that a change was necessary with her choir involvement; she could not remain a Tabernacle Choir member and meet her children's needs.<sup>36</sup> She and Jerry discussed it at length. Though she loved singing with the group, the relief felt upon deciding to resign far outweighed any reticence.<sup>37</sup>

A few weeks later Jerry asked, "How would you like to be the vocal coach of the Choir?" Perplexed, JoAnn asked, "What's that?" Jerry's vision for the position included group and individual vocal instruction. The challenge intrigued JoAnn and she accepted with enthusiasm. This meant she could continue her association with the choir on Tuesday and Thursday evenings, and be at home and at church on Sunday with the children.<sup>38</sup> How refreshing it would be to teach singers with a common goal of service rather than the focus of opera.<sup>39</sup>

The choir members welcomed JoAnn's role change and respected her as a talented, trained singer and university vocal instructor. She had been a featured soloist

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<sup>35</sup> Bonita Cross.

<sup>36</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, August 12, 2016.

<sup>37</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, June 2, 2017.

<sup>38</sup> Bonita Cross.

<sup>39</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview with author, Salt Lake City, UT, August 12, 2016.

with the choir many times before and after Jerry was called to be the conductor. It was common knowledge the Ottleys had completed Fulbright studies in Germany. Her many solo performances with the symphony and ballet were receiving positive reviews, which added to her local celebrity status. She had developed friendships with many choir members, and always offered help and support without arrogance.<sup>40</sup>

JoAnn's work as the Tabernacle Choir Vocal Coach began with a three-week workshop focused on basic vocal techniques.<sup>41</sup> The workshop was attended by 50 choir members at a time. The course met once per week for 75 minutes. The result was a uniform understanding of terms Jerry used, which allowed him to shape the choir's interpretation and delivery of the music more efficiently during rehearsals.<sup>42</sup>

Supporting Jerry as the Tabernacle Choir Vocal Coach allowed JoAnn untethered realization of her commitment to personal balance. Though singing opportunities were more plentiful than ever, her work as a teacher grew in personal significance through her role of vocal coach. The added bonus was the ability to constantly support Jerry in his work as director.<sup>43</sup>

Jerry asked JoAnn and his associate conductor, Donald Ripplinger, to assist with choir auditions. Jerry felt he had made a few mistakes with audition decisions and wanted

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<sup>40</sup> Craig Jessop, quoted by Bonita Cross.

<sup>41</sup> Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes for author, April 19, 2018.

<sup>42</sup> Bonita Cross.

<sup>43</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, April 12, 2017.

“another set of ears.”<sup>44</sup> The three created a standard audition process for the choir.<sup>45</sup>

First, potential choir members submitted a recorded auditions that Jerry surveyed quickly to eliminate the obvious non-qualifiers. Then, Jerry and Don listened together, often referring special problems to JoAnn for her opinion. Individuals chosen for the next round of auditions were invited to a written and auditory music skills inventory to determine their ability to manipulate the fundamentals of music. Those who continued in the audition process sang an audition before Jerry, JoAnn and Don with JoAnn accompanying on the piano. All three [auditioners] participated in the final decision process. From the beginning of their service [choir membership] new choir members with vocal issues were assigned time with JoAnn during rehearsals for short lessons equally, easing the load of the many recordings received.<sup>46</sup>

JoAnn’s duties with the choir expanded to include coaching choir members’ solos, guiding warmups for performances, and offering vocal support during tours.<sup>47</sup> Jerry called JoAnn a “master vocal mechanic.”<sup>48</sup> Coaching the Tabernacle Choir singers became JoAnn’s primary teaching focus, providing questions for the research she craved as a “kitchen philosopher” and the satisfaction of solving problems. It required the consecrated service of her faith and connected her with others on a deep, spiritual level.

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<sup>44</sup> Jerold Ottley, quoted by Bonita Cross.

<sup>45</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview with author, Salt Lake City, UT, August 12, 2016.

<sup>46</sup> Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes for author, April 19, 2018.

<sup>47</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview with author, Salt Lake City, UT, August 12, 2016.

<sup>48</sup> Jerold Ottley, quoted by Bonita Cross.

JoAnn felt she was “an extension on the ends of [Jerry’s] fingers to reach a little farther into the work that had to be done.”<sup>49</sup> Jerry, however, insisted that

The Lord called me to be the Choir director so that HE could get JoAnn, because she brought an element to this work that they had never seen the likes of before in terms of a fine professional singer . . . who could work in the context of our busy, busy schedule to help keep people vocally healthy and keep them moving ahead and to help them overcome vocal problems . . .<sup>50</sup>

The choir’s overarching goal to build “the Kingdom” through music<sup>51</sup> freed JoAnn from the ambivalence she often felt when balancing career with the primary elements of her life.<sup>52</sup>

Jerry’s second Tabernacle Choir tour as Music Director was a Bicentennial Celebration in 1976 along the east coast of the United States.<sup>53</sup> JoAnn was there at Jerry’s side as vocal coach and soloist. She led the choir in warm ups before each performance, reducing the stress caused by fatigue while promoting vocal health. She watched Jerry direct the choir’s final Christmas concert that year from the audience, proud of her husband conducting the music filling the tabernacle, and feeling a connection with each singer on stage. She knew many of their stories and struggles, the power of singing in their lives, and her role in supporting them. She knew her coaching efforts had

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<sup>49</sup> Jerold Ottley, quoted by Bonita Cross.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> JoAnn Ottley, letter to Elder Boyd K Packer, dated October 29, 1980.

<sup>52</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, April 12, 2017.

<sup>53</sup> Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes to author, April 19, 2018.



contributed to the group's growth and success, Jerry's conducting role, and her effectiveness as a teacher.

### The Roberta Peters Challenge

In January of 1977, Abravanel featured JoAnn in the Utah Symphony's performance of Mahler's *Symphony No.4*, and again when they performed the work in Pasadena, California. She followed this with a performance of Stravinsky's *Nightingale*, "with a ballet dancer onstage and JoAnn in the orchestra pit. Because of the difficulty of the score, she learned it by whistling the high, disjunct phrases to save her voice."<sup>54</sup> After multiple performances, she was at home with her children, resting from the Stravinsky and the symphony's hectic tour, when the telephone rang. It was Ardean Watts. He told her Roberta Peters was scheduled to return as guest artist with the Utah Symphony to sing Berlioz's *Les nuits d'été*, along with other selections, but had become ill and her doctors advised her not to sing. Ardean asked JoAnn to substitute for Peters the following week. JoAnn had never sung the massive work. She told Ardean, "If you can find anyone else, have them do it." Ardean called her back the next day, after unsuccessfully "surveying the country,"<sup>55</sup> and said, "JoAnn, you're it." JoAnn could scarcely breathe after hanging up the telephone. "She dropped to her knees," praying fervently, knowing the task was too large to handle without divine intervention.<sup>56</sup> Brent came to her side and

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<sup>54</sup> Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes to author, April 19, 2018.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes to author, April 19, 2018.

asked if she was ok. “I don’t know if I can do this!” JoAnn gasped. “Yes, you can, Mom,” Brent replied, and she did.<sup>57</sup>

She lived with the score day and night and prayed continually. Watts eased some of the burden by altering the remainder of the program to include pieces JoAnn had previously performed rather than those chosen by Peters. JoAnn’s repertoire included Verdi’s arias “Caro nome” from *Rigoletto*, and “Sempre libera” from *La Traviata*. JoAnn was known to pull out her *Traviata* score just to say the lines and enjoy the “delicious language.”<sup>58</sup> The inclusion of familiar arias allowed her complete focus on the Berlioz.

At the concert, the air was electric with anticipation. The audience and the performers were all aware of the difficult circumstances of Ms. Peters’ late withdrawal. The concert went well and enthusiastically received. To JoAnn’s astonishment, the Berlioz was flawless. Accolades from the audience, the critics, the conductor, the orchestra and its administration recognized that she had accomplished a performance feat. She was the knight who had arrived on a white horse to save the day.<sup>59</sup>

Amidst the accolades, JoAnn felt immense gratitude. She felt it a miracle; her prayers had been answered and the impossible made possible.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> *Les nuits d’été* is Berlioz’s setting of six poems by Théophile Gautier, originally intended for and performed by several voice types in 1841. Written for voice and piano, Berlioz later orchestrated the work. Lush and romantic, each piece is complete in itself and the six songs vary greatly in style and accompaniment according to the poem’s content. The poetry is dense and Berlioz matched the flow of the French syntax with his phrasing. The set is difficult to sing and play as it stretches tonal boundaries, but the pieces are well-constructed making the aural effect accessible to most audiences. *Les nuits d’été* is one of the best known and most performed Berlioz composition.

<sup>58</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview with author, Salt Lake City, UT, August 12, 2016.

<sup>59</sup> Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes to author, unpublished, April 19, 2018.

<sup>60</sup> JoAnn Ottley, “My Career,” Presentation for Music Circle gathering, October 25, 2004.

## Unwelcome Judgement

JoAnn's frequent performances received rave reviews in the local papers. After the televised, bi-annual Mormon General Conference Saturday afternoon session in the Tabernacle, JoAnn was stopped by one of the church general authorities<sup>61</sup> who had become aware of her professional singing and subsequent acclaim. He shook his head slightly and asked, "Sister Ottley, do you support your husband?" JoAnn was incensed, but speechless. His inference was directed at her as a female, and she felt judged by a completely different standard than if she were male. She was certain he would never question Jerry's devotion as a husband because of his work with the Tabernacle Choir.<sup>62</sup> Later, as she and Jerry discussed the issue, she realized this man knew nothing of her work or values. He did not understand that she and Jerry worked as equals. They both knew the process of JoAnn consciously setting and balancing priorities through thoughtfully-sketched concentric circles that guided every teaching and performance decision.<sup>63</sup> These core beliefs were,

I am a daughter of God, and will be going home to report. I am a wife, and nothing can interfere with that relationship. I am a mother, and my children's well-being is paramount. I am divinely called to sing, and I am a teacher, in that order.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> A term for any of the senior leaders of the Church. The First Presidency, Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, General Authority Seventies and the Presiding Bishopric are all known as General Authorities. *Newsroom; The Official Resource for News Media, Opinion Leaders and the Public.* [www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/general-authority](http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/general-authority), accessed June 5, 2017.

<sup>62</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview with author, Salt Lake City, UT, August 12, 2016.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

The church leader's judgmental words had stung during the interaction, but later held no weight when she realized the elements of her life were balanced with her priorities. JoAnn limited her singing engagements, rejecting those which would likely compromise the balance of her concentric circles, such as lengthy out-of-town engagements and complex works not in her repertoire. She decided to trust herself and ignore those who did not understand.<sup>65</sup>

#### Expanding Services as Vocal Coach

JoAnn loved her work as vocal coach for the Tabernacle Choir. The basic workshops successfully coalesced the group's understanding of terms and vocal technique, freeing Jerry to focus rehearsals toward his musical goals for the ensemble and the repertoire. In 1978, at Jerry's request, she began offering other, more specialized workshops to address specific problems. For example, the bass' fast notes were too sluggish for the Handel chorus the choir was preparing, so JoAnn held a workshop for their section focused on agility. Because she had formerly sung with the choir, she understood the group's culture and psychology. Knowing the bass section's self-conscious, social dynamics, she purposefully created a light-hearted atmosphere so the men could relax and explore. She asked them to imitate the sound of cranking an old Ford engine, and encouraged silliness. Soon the room was filled with the sound of male voices imitating the slow, rhythmic pulse of an engine. Once their voices were "loose,"

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<sup>65</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview with author, Salt Lake City, UT, August 12, 2016.

she accelerated the tempo until the “old Fords” were revving at pace matching the sixteenth notes in the Handel piece. By the session’s end, the men sang the quick passages from the music with ease, even when adding the text.<sup>66</sup>

JoAnn offered workshops on other topics, depending on needs exhibited by the choir, such as breath management and high note production. Unsure how to correct the wobbly, slow vibrato manifest in many older women’s voices, she diligently researched the issue and studied every article on vibrato in her collections of the *NATS Journal* and *The Open Ear*.<sup>67</sup> Upon understanding the function, common problems, and approaches to correcting vibrato issues, she devised a workshop that yielded marked improvement in individual voices. The improvement enhanced the collective timbre of the choir’s female sections.<sup>68</sup>

Five, 20-minute voice lessons with JoAnn were added during each Thursday night choir rehearsal. New choir members who passed the audition but exhibited vocal problems were required to complete lessons, but most lesson times were scheduled when individual singers asked for help. An exception was when a choir member reported a problem perceived in another singer. Those situations required diplomacy to maintain the group’s morale, keep tempers at bay, and reduce embarrassment. For example, when one

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<sup>66</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview with author, Salt Lake City, UT, August 12, 2016.

<sup>67</sup> Pat Moffitt Cook, ed., *Open Ear Journal*, Open Ear. Inc, Bainbridge Island, 1990-2004. *Open Ear Journal* was a quarterly publication, which highlighted the work of several researchers in each journal. Pat Moffitt Cook, PhD, Director—Open Ear Center, [www.openearcer.com](http://www.openearcer.com), Santa Fe, New Mexico, email to author, October 30, 2017.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

man complained about a soprano who sat behind him, he said, “Honestly, JoAnn, her vibrato is so wide it parts my hair!” If JoAnn received only one complaint, she ignored it. If a second complaint was made, JoAnn paid attention. Following a third complaint she contacted the singer in question and scheduled a lesson for the next rehearsal. Her loving concern usually diffused fear or defensiveness, and often the singer was relieved to express vocal concerns.<sup>69</sup>

#### Overburdened and Overwhelmed

JoAnn’s Tabernacle Choir coaching was demanding, her singing engagements were increasing (see Appendix A), and her university studio requiring hours away from home. Allison, now age eight, “loved being included with choir members in a variety of activities, such as auditions, workshops, concerts and traveling,” but, JoAnn realized the need to spend more quality, “one-on-one” time with her daughter.<sup>70</sup> This required limiting her performance preparation to small time segments interspersed throughout the day and evening. She continued to perform with the Utah Symphony and Ballet West, touring with the latter in Arizona that March. She gave a recital for the Convocation Recital Series at Utah State University that spring and prepared two others, one in Los Angeles and the other, “with dear friends who were members of the faculty at Kansas State University,”<sup>71</sup> including pianist Robert Edwards. JoAnn had difficulty finding time

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<sup>69</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview with author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 22, 2014.

<sup>70</sup> Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes to author, unpublished, April 19, 2018.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

to plan the details of those recitals as she sang nine performances of *Carmina Burana* and *Symphony no. 8* by Mahler<sup>72</sup> with laryngitis, and some “nagging, recurring voice problems” caused by an allergy to strawberries.<sup>73</sup>

With the concert date set for June, she was not able to plan the recital with Edwards until April. JoAnn’s biggest concern about the Kansas State recital was being away from Allison. Jerry was traveling to Kansas with her for a choral festival, and JoAnn did not want to leave Allison alone during her summer vacation. She asked the organizers if she might bring her daughter, saying, “[she] is at a delightful age and loves adventure.” They agreed, which eased her mind considerably.<sup>74</sup>

In preparation for the recital, JoAnn wrote about the music, enclosing scores when she had a spare. When an extra score was not available she provided titles, composer names, and edition details. JoAnn’s choice for the opening piece was *Ridente la calma* by Mozart, and she specified the version with the extended introduction, revealing details about her own performance process.<sup>75</sup> “I’m terribly fussy about how I begin,” she wrote, “it sets me up for everything that follows, vocally, emotionally and every other way.” After giving specifics on each proposed piece, she ended the letter with, “I still don’t

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<sup>72</sup> JoAnn Ottley, JoAnn was the soprano soloist for several performances of *Carmina Burana* with Ballet West and *Symphony no. 8* by Mahler with the Utah Symphony in April 1978, “Performance Log,” unpublished, JoAnn Ottley’s personal papers, 2002 (see Appendix A).

<sup>73</sup> Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes to author, unpublished, April 19, 2018.

<sup>74</sup> JoAnn Ottley, letter to “Edwards People,” unpublished, personal papers of JoAnn Ottley, April 16, 1978.

<sup>75</sup> *Ridente la calma* for voice and piano has been attributed to Mozart, but new research indicates Josef Mysliveček was the composer. [http://www.lieder.net/lieder/get\\_text.html?TextId=967](http://www.lieder.net/lieder/get_text.html?TextId=967), accessed April 7, 2018.

know what to do for an encore, but I'll think of something. If you have any suggestions, fire!" Then added, "Please let us know if we can help more with the preparation. We're scared silly, you know. You've advertised this thing so widely it hurts. Oh well, let's live dangerously!!!"<sup>76</sup> Spring Quarter ended at the university, which allowed more quality time for music preparation.

That summer she recorded a new composition by Vladimir Ussachevsky with the Utah Symphony.<sup>77</sup> JoAnn was tired from months of being over-extended. Glade Peterson, of Utah Opera, called and offered her the leading role of Desdemona in their upcoming performance of Verdi's *Otello*. The role was vocally suited to JoAnn's rich, soprano timbre, but she had never performed it and recognized it a massive undertaking. She thought of her personal concentric circles, paying special attention to the third circle labeled, "Mother," and worried about Allison's needs. JoAnn did not make decisions lightly and considered the ramifications for some time before answering Peterson with a letter in which she decisively declined the role.

I am nearly forty-three years old. I am not seeking to embark on anything. I am now in full swing of my vocal career, and opera has, by choice, been on the narrow periphery of that career. I have done enough opera to know what it is, and to recognize that it is a whole different world, and extremely demanding one at that. When I do something, I want to do it to the fullest so far as I am capable, and I simply feel that opera is not where I should put my strengths. When I think of the weeks and weeks of learning and rehearsal which would be required for two performances of a work I will likely never do again, I simply cannot justify the cost. There is so much else to be done.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> JoAnn Ottley, letter to Glade Peterson, JoAnn Ottley's personal papers, dated July 27, 1978.

<sup>77</sup> Vladimir Ussachevsky, "Colloquy," *Music of Ussachevsky*, Utah Symphony, Maurice Abravanel, Conductor, Angel Records, 1978, accessed June 3, 2017.

<sup>78</sup> JoAnn Ottley, letter to Glade Peterson, JoAnn Ottley's personal papers, dated July 27, 1978.



JoAnn not only declined the role in question, but removed herself from consideration for future opera performances, directing Peterson's attention to the "many sopranos in the area eager for such a role." She thanked him "not only for the invitation but also for the new perspective I have gained by wrestling with the decision."<sup>79</sup>

### Difficult Choices Toward Balance

September 1978 arrived with Brent starting his senior year at Skyline High School and Allison starting third grade. JoAnn was beginning her seventh year as an adjunct vocal instructor at the university and preparing for her upcoming *Verdi Requiem* with the Spokane Symphony. The fast pace of Jerry's position with the choir proved unending. Although leading hectic lives, the experiences were beyond what either had imagined when first married. Fall passed quickly. JoAnn continued to practice in stolen moments within her non-stop schedule, creating quality family time, working with the choir, and juggling her students' university requirements and professional engagements.<sup>80</sup>

The stress increased in December, with her university students in final preparation for juries and recitals and many professional students preparing for holiday performances. The Tabernacle Choir's Annual Christmas Concert was upon them. JoAnn sang the *Sea Symphony* by Vaughan-Williams with Hungarian-American guest conductor, Peter

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<sup>79</sup> JoAnn Ottley, letter to Glade Peterson, JoAnn Ottley's personal papers, dated July 27, 1978.

<sup>80</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, November 26, 2014.

Erös,<sup>81</sup> returned as featured soloist with the Southern California Mormon Choir for their annual *Messiah* concert, and sang in several local *Messiah* concerts.

As the year came to an end, JoAnn felt her life was out of balance. She needed to lessen her load somehow to focus on the inner layers of her personal concentric circles.<sup>82</sup> She was invited to speak at the Utah State University Institute of Religion<sup>83</sup> on “The Perspective of LDS Women.”<sup>84</sup> As JoAnn shared her ideas of balance through concentric circles with the sisters<sup>85</sup> in attendance, she realized her own life needed to change if she was to achieve the balance of which she spoke.

Maurice Abravanel was “recuperating from heart problems,” and decided “it was time to retire.”<sup>86</sup> JoAnn was invited to sing the soprano role in Verdi’s Requiem at Maestro Abravanel’s final concert.<sup>87</sup> She accepted despite her busy schedule, and ongoing voice problems associated with allergies. Singing in Abravanel’s last concert

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<sup>81</sup> Peter Erös (1933-2014), Internationally renowned Hungarian-American conductor and professor at the University of Washington. [www.music.washington.edu/news/2014/09/22/passages-peter-eros-internationally-renowned-conductor-and-longtime-uw-professor](http://www.music.washington.edu/news/2014/09/22/passages-peter-eros-internationally-renowned-conductor-and-longtime-uw-professor), accessed June 3, 2017.

<sup>82</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, November 26, 2014.

<sup>83</sup> LDS Institutes of Religion are part of the Seminary and Institute programs of the LDS Church. The Institutes of Religion are located on or near campuses of higher education, providing educational, social and religious support to university students who are members of the church and any other interested students. <https://www.lds.org/si>.

<sup>84</sup> JoAnn Ottley, “Historical Points.”

<sup>85</sup> Women in the LDS Church refer to each other as sisters.

<sup>86</sup> Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes to author, unpublished, April 19, 2018.

<sup>87</sup> See Appendix A for a comprehensive list of JoAnn Ottley’s performances.

was “her own tribute to this man who had done so much for her.”<sup>88</sup> After the concert, she hugged, “Daddy Abravanel,” tears in her eyes, knowing his influence had shaped her singing career dramatically. It was difficult to imagine the vibrant musical life of Salt Lake City without him.<sup>89</sup>

The winter months of early 1979 merged into spring and the pressure continued to increase. Nine-year-old Allison was growing fast, and the school year would end with Brent’s high school graduation. It was a crucial time in his life. JoAnn knew she needed to lighten her load outside of the home to be available for her children.<sup>90</sup> It occurred to JoAnn and Jerry that hiring a business representative might significantly reduce stress by relieving her of the business details of a singing career. An acquaintance from the Tabernacle Choir, Iaian McKay, worked in that capacity. They hired him to represent JoAnn at 10% of her performance earnings. JoAnn retained full control over accepting or rejecting singing offers, but having McKay oversee the details, contracts, and correspondence proved an immense relief.<sup>91</sup> She answered business letters already in her possession, but included McKay’s contact information. In one such letter to Dr. Christian

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<sup>88</sup> Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes to author, unpublished, April 19, 2018.

<sup>89</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt lake City, UT, August 12, 2016. JoAnn continued to sing with Utah Symphony and Ballet West with the two subsequent conductors, Varujan Kojian and Joseph Silverstein.

<sup>90</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, November 26, 2014.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

Tiemeyer of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra she wrote, “I was being buried alive in business details and he is a great help with that aspect.”<sup>92</sup>

Hiring McKay reduced her stress, but did not alleviate it. She realized she needed to examine her priorities and let something else go. Her work with the choir was rewarding and allowed JoAnn to build singers, serve the church, and support Jerry. Solo performances provided opportunities to sing music which transformed her, and she received feedback from conductors, reviewers, and audience members that assured her the performances transformed others. Despite the value found in all aspects of her work, she needed to let something go. She fasted and prayed, sought counsel from church leaders, and consulted her Patriarchal Blessing. The blessing included, “Let your heart and soul go out in your musical activities. It will refine your soul. It will give you a knowledge of life and living that would otherwise not come to you.”<sup>93</sup> She felt certain she was “called directly by the Lord . . . to sing,”<sup>94</sup> and placed her performance circle closer to the core of her concentric circles than the one representing her role as teacher. Realizing her university work was impeding her ability to prepare performance repertoire, she therefore, decided to “retire from teaching.”<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> JoAnn Ottley, letter to Christian Tiemeyer, Dallas Symphony Orchestra, unpublished, in JoAnn Ottley’s personal papers, dated April 4, 1979.

<sup>93</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, November 26, 2014. In this interview, JoAnn quoted these phrases from her Patriarchal Blessing in this interview, explaining she read it often when facing a problem, and in the process memorized key phrases.

<sup>94</sup> JoAnn explained the importance of a Patriarchal Blessing: “We consider each of the Patriarchal Blessings as personal scripture, a guide for life.”

<sup>95</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview with author, Salt Lake City, UT, August 12, 2016.

In July, JoAnn alerted the music department chair, Ed Thompson, of her decision to resign. She spoke to some students privately, but sent a formal letter to all, in which she explained the decision and offered support during the transition. In the letter, JoAnn made clear her career focus was singing, not teaching. Because professional singing opportunities were coming faster than she “could keep up,” she needed “prime energy (not left-over energy) to prepare and deliver.” She added, “vocal experts advise putting teaching aside for now.”<sup>96</sup> JoAnn also explained her desire to devote more time to the choir vocal coach position and that she needed “more time for a very busy husband, two terrific children, and aging parents.”<sup>97</sup> She shared details concerning the spiritual nature of her decision.

The second half of the letter outlined the timeline for her final month, including the days she would be teaching.<sup>98</sup> She set the end of August as the final teaching date, and alerted all students she intended to retain one student—Kathleen Thompson. JoAnn explained,

We have, by mutual agreement, gone back to the drawing boards vocally, and have just achieved a good start in the rebuilding process. It would be most unprofessional and simply cruel for me to abandon her now. I wanted you to know the situation so there would be no question.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> JoAnn Ottley, Letter to students announcing her termination of teaching, unpublished, JoAnn Ottley’s personal papers, dated July 15, 1979.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid. JoAnn noted the dates she planned to teach were tentative, depending on the time demands of preparing for the upcoming Tabernacle Choir tour to Japan.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

JoAnn had developed close relationships with each student. Closing her private studio and leaving her university position were emotionally difficult for her and the students. She offered scheduled appointments outside of lesson times to discuss each student's options and indicated she would "occasionally teach on a consulting basis, for a higher fee." She ended the letter by expressing her affection. "I have loved being a part of your life's advancement and hope to remain a close friend always. Much love, JoAnn."<sup>100</sup> With teaching responsibilities suspended and McKay handling the business details, JoAnn was free to focus attention on her family, singing engagements, and the Tabernacle Choir.

That summer, the Tabernacle Choir toured Japan and Korea. Tabernacle Choir tours were an administrative feat. The more than three hundred singers flew on commercial airlines and rode chartered busses. International tours included details such as transfers, customs, and passports, with choir members often stressed and tired. Each choir member paid for personal expenses, but "the choir's administrative staff was responsible for travel, food and hostelry arrangements. Jerry and his staff were responsible for all arrangements."<sup>101</sup> Jerry and the music staff were responsible for successfully delivering scheduled performances with everyone present and voices healthy. JoAnn assisted Jerry as much as possible and shouldered most of the responsibility for keeping voices healthy. She led warmups before each concert and

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<sup>100</sup> JoAnn Ottley, Letter to students announcing her termination of teaching, unpublished, JoAnn Ottley's personal papers, dated July 15, 1979.

<sup>101</sup> Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes to author, unpublished, April 19, 2018.

provided trouble-shooting consultations when individual issues manifested. In addition to coaching duties, JoAnn sang the Chenoweth *Vocalise* in concert as a featured soloist.<sup>102</sup>

### Building the Kingdom

Part of the balance JoAnn sought was spiritual. She sang to serve and Jerry viewed his work as choir music director a divine calling. They discussed concerns that the sudden fame of his position or her success as a singer might change them or their motives. In the October session of the Bi-annual LDS General Conference, Elder Boyd K. Packer—a prominent general authority in the Mormon Church—gave an address which resonated with JoAnn and calmed her fears. After receiving the transcript of the general authority’s remarks in the monthly magazine, *The Ensign*, she wrote him a letter. She expressed “gratitude for his address,” which confirmed their own feelings of “fame being vapor, and the glory of the Lord eases the burden.” She signed it, “Your Sister in the Gospel, JoAnn Ottley.”<sup>103</sup> In his reply, Elder Packer wrote,

You said it perhaps better than I did, “that fame is a vapor – without substance.” I greatly admire both you and Jerry and the great service you render. You both have such power to bring inspiration. May the Lord continue to bless you as you use your precious gifts to the blessing of His church and kingdom.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> American Composer, Wilbur Chenoweth (1899-1980) published his song, “Vocalise” was published in 1961. Shortly after singing the piece as a solo with the Tabernacle Choir in 1979, JoAnn suggested programming it for an upcoming concert she was singing with Dallas Symphony in a letter to the conductor, Christian Tiemeyer. JoAnn Ottley, letter to Christian Tiemeyer, Dallas Symphony Orchestra, personal papers of JoAnn Ottley, dated April 4, 1979.

<sup>103</sup> JoAnn Ottley, letter to Boyd K. Packer, unpublished, JoAnn Ottley’s personal papers, October 1979.

<sup>104</sup> Boyd K. Packer, letter to JoAnn Ottley, unpublished, JoAnn Ottley’s personal papers, dated October 1979.

With the reassurance of his words, JoAnn confidently embraced her many singing opportunities and the positive reviews of her work.

In addition to her volunteer work as Tabernacle Choir Vocal Coach, JoAnn taught the Relief Society Mother Education classes as a church calling for their home ward.<sup>105</sup> She was troubled by the depression observed in many of the women she taught, which to her confirmed reports of widespread emotional distress in LDS women at the time.<sup>106</sup> JoAnn overheard women in the church halls between meetings sharing feelings of inadequacy, based on pressure to “be more and do more than was reasonable.”<sup>107</sup> JoAnn felt the Relief Society lessons contributed to the problem, because they “preached the ideal.”<sup>108</sup> For women already struggling to be perfect, it was often difficult to be there. As JoAnn pondered possible sources for the fear that disempowered her sisters in the Gospel. She determined they clung to outdated ideals because “rigidity keeps them safe.”<sup>109</sup> Fear had been passed down from women, “only a few generations past,” who faced the real

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<sup>105</sup> Active members of the LDS Church each hold a calling, or position of service, within their ward, stake, region, or in the case of general authorities, for the greater membership. Directing and singing in the Tabernacle Choir is considered a calling. Choir members do not usually have another church job. JoAnn requested be considered for a ward calling when she resigned from singing in the choir, even though she accepted the Vocal Coach responsibilities.

<sup>106</sup> In 1978, the deadline for passing the Equal Rights Amendment (E.R.A.) was extended until 1982 after a protest march on Washington DC by 100,000 supporters. Authors note: The LDS Church stood against the amendment on moral grounds. Discussions concerning the roles of LDS women within and outside Mormon circles were common during this time period. [www.equalrightsamendment.org/history.htm](http://www.equalrightsamendment.org/history.htm), [www.lds.org/ensign/1980/03/the-church-and-the-proposed-equal-rights-amendment-a-moral-issue?lang=eng](http://www.lds.org/ensign/1980/03/the-church-and-the-proposed-equal-rights-amendment-a-moral-issue?lang=eng), accessed June 6, 2017.

<sup>107</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview with author, Salt Lake City, UT, August 12, 2016.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.



dangers of “rape and pillage.”<sup>110</sup> More recently, her maternal grandfather had strictly ruled his family, including her grandmother, because it was socially normal at the time for a man to rule his household, including women and children. JoAnn’s alternative message of balance through personal priorities was incomprehensible to most women in the Relief Society class because their “lines were drawn so tightly, all out of fear.”<sup>111</sup>

JoAnn wrote of her concerns to Barbara Smith, the General President of the Relief Society.<sup>112</sup> Smith answered and thanked JoAnn for her concern and informed her of an impending change in the Relief Society teaching materials. The change would reduce intended content from sixty- to thirty-minute lessons to leave time for discussion. She suggested, “preparing and assigning a home study guide so lessons can focus on in-depth insights,” then counseled, “inspiration comes whether by words of the teacher, the class members or a divine source.” She expressed hope her suggestions would help, and acknowledged, “we are dealing with real problems.” She ended the letter with a scriptural citation from the Book of Mormon, reminding JoAnn of the promise in the verse,<sup>113</sup>

I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview with author, Salt Lake City, UT, August 12, 2016.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> The General President of the Relief Society serves all the women in the LDS church, guiding Stake Relief Society Presidents who guide Ward Relief Society Presidents.

<sup>113</sup> The *Book of Mormon* is considered a book of scripture in the LDS religion, along with the Old Testament, the New Testament, and The *Doctrine and Covenants*. The *Book of Mormon* and the *Doctrine and Covenants* came through Joseph Smith—the founder and first president of the religion.

<sup>114</sup> I Nephi is a book within *the Book of Mormon*, similar to the division of the New Testament into books attached to an author’s name (e.g., The Book of John).

The letter was signed, “Fondly, President Barbara Smith.”<sup>115</sup>

JoAnn wrote a second letter, discounting the tenor of her first letter as “. . . borne out of the frustrations of adjustment.” She thanked the president for her counsel and agreed she must “shift more of the burden to the sisters.” After acknowledging the efficacy of the scripture Barbara Smith quoted from Nephi, she wrote a self-reflective paragraph.

Reality demands . . . I occasionally inspect the difference between the accomplishment of the commandment in its ideal form and the nitty gritty hammering out of the methods whereby it may be accomplished. As I have delved for years now into the roots of some of the problems our sisters are having psychologically, I believe deeply that the biggest hang-up is that of reconciling the gap between the celestial ideal and the mortal possible.<sup>116</sup>

JoAnn mused she should take her own counsel and reconcile herself to what was achievable. She expressed “deep gratitude for [your] leadership in these difficult times,”<sup>117</sup> and ended by wishing Smith, “the Lord’s choicest blessings.”<sup>118</sup> before signing the typed letter by hand. Afterward, when teaching the Mother Education classes, she included carefully crafted distinctions between life’s ideals and women’s realities.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Barbara Smith, letter to JoAnn Ottley, unpublished, JoAnn Ottley’s personal papers, dated November 1979.

<sup>116</sup> JoAnn Ottley, letter to Barbara Smith, unpublished, JoAnn Ottley’s personal papers, dated November 1979.

<sup>117</sup> Author’s Note: The LDS Church stood against the Equal Rights Amendment on moral grounds. Discussions concerning the roles of LDS women within Mormon circles were common during this period, which might be the “difficult times” to which JoAnn alluded in her letter. JoAnn’s idea of balancing her life with concentric circles was pertinent to the political concerns of American society, not just those of LDS women..

<sup>118</sup> JoAnn Ottley, letter to Barbara Smith, unpublished, JoAnn Ottley’s personal papers, dated November 1979.

<sup>119</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, July 1, 2017.

Before Jerry became the Tabernacle Choir Music Director it is unlikely JoAnn would have felt comfortable writing to church leadership members with concerns. She had been raised by “simple, country people” and was a “naïve young woman”<sup>120</sup> with little knowledge of the world. JoAnn’s letters to Elder Packer and Barbara Smith are evidence of increased self-confidence. The Ottley’s work with the Tabernacle Choir widened her circle of influence and her community, which now included LDS church leaders. She was “building the kingdom” through her singing, and also by sharing her concerns and quest for personal balance with others.

#### Ongoing Solo Vocal Performance Career

JoAnn sang a few more roles with Utah Opera after turning down *Desdemona*, but they were roles she had previously sung and thus more manageable than *Otello* would have been. Sarah Ventura<sup>121</sup> directed and Varujan Kojian,<sup>122</sup> guest conductor of the Utah Symphony, conducted her performances of *La Traviata* in 1980. JoAnn struggled with the role of Violetta, whose life choices differed greatly from her own and represented a

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<sup>120</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, June 1, 2017.

<sup>121</sup> Sarah Ventura, international opera stage director, directed more than 60 diverse productions for opera companies throughout Europe, South America and the United States, including Utah Opera. JoAnn Ottley listed Sarah Ventura as one of the seven most influential people in her life in sketches written for a possible autobiography (see Appendix D).

<sup>122</sup> Varujan Kojian (1936-1993), an American conductor, was born in Lebanon and trained in Paris and Vienna. He was guest conductor with the Utah Symphony in 1980 and became the official conductor in 1981. He remained with Utah Symphony until 1984, then became conductor of the Santa Barbara Symphony, where he remained until his death. [www.nytimes.com/1993/03/10/obituaries/varujan-kojian-conductor-57.html](http://www.nytimes.com/1993/03/10/obituaries/varujan-kojian-conductor-57.html), accessed June 6, 2017.

much younger woman. Ventura served as teacher and director. She told JoAnn that someone without experience could never play Violetta. “JoAnn, if you want to be pure, do you just stand at the sideline and have no experience? No. Purity comes from walking across the hot coals. And they burn.”<sup>123</sup> JoAnn considered this distinction and realized purity was refinement, which allowed her to draw on personal experiences of pain to understand Violetta.<sup>124</sup> JoAnn, older with numerous life experiences, had more of that purifying fire than a younger singer.<sup>125</sup> The director’s insights helped JoAnn bring Violetta to life and made the role personal. *La Traviata* affected JoAnn’s emotions and she was “sad for [Violetta] for a month afterward.”<sup>126</sup>

The following year, Sarah Ventura directed JoAnn in the Utah Opera’s production of *Lucia di Lammermoor*, with Jonathan Dudley conducting.

Dudley was from New York City. When he learned that the role of Lucia was to be sung by the wife of the conductor of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, he imagined all kinds of political involvement. He attempted to get out of his contract. Assurance from Utah Opera management persuaded him to come. After the first piano rehearsal with JoAnn, he slammed the lid of the piano and exclaimed, “Gawd woman! You can sing!”<sup>127</sup>

Lucia’s character proved difficult to master; JoAnn learned to “look mad, by turning her head in one direction and her eyes in another.” She had less sympathy for the desperate acts of Lucia than for the plight of Violetta. Ventura’s insights into purity eased JoAnn’s

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<sup>123</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, January 12, 2017.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, February 19, 2017.

<sup>126</sup> JoAnn Ottley, “My Career,” Presentation for Music Circle gathering, unpublished, presentation Salt Lake City, UT, October 25, 2004.

<sup>127</sup> Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes to author, unpublished, April 19, 2018.

reticence to play both roles. Neither character shared JoAnn's beliefs or life's philosophies, but both represented aspects of being human.<sup>128</sup>

### Setting Personal and Professional Boundaries

Hiring a personal representative solved problems but also caused them. Similar to the church general authority who criticized JoAnn's performance choices, McKay began to share his opinions concerning JoAnn's career without understanding her perspectives of balancing performances with the other facets of life. He was concerned she would accept the praise she received and "lose her edge" unless she regularly worked with a coach on technique and musical decisions. He questioned her security as a performer. He also suggested increasing his responsibilities from "personal representative" to a "manager," an arrangement that would give him more control over the singing invitations she considered and accepted.<sup>129</sup>

JoAnn first defended her position and then created stronger boundaries with McKay. She explained that although a coach could be useful, it was unlikely she could find a "person and arrangement" to match her ability-level and schedule in Salt Lake City. She addressed his concern over her security as a performer in writing.

I am indeed about as secure a performer as any. Phillip Booth told me in Dallas that he had never heard such problem-free singing and praised me to the sky. I am

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<sup>128</sup> JoAnn Ottley, "My Career," Presentation for Music Circle gathering, unpublished, presentation Salt Lake City, UT, October 25, 2004.

<sup>129</sup> Iaian McKay, letter to JoAnn Ottley, unpublished, JoAnn Ottley's personal papers, dated January 1981.

secure, but the fact is that the most secure performer in the world is still balancing on one toe atop a house of cards. It's scary business.<sup>130</sup>

JoAnn suggested that McKay's perceptions might be ill-informed and illustrated her point with another metaphor. She suggested if three blind men were placed on different sides of an elephant and asked to describe the animal, they might all be correct, but none would clearly understand or explain the whole of the elephant.

To help McKay gain better understanding of "the whole" of her position, she wrote,

I have a history of turning a crumb into a loaf . . . picking crumbs from Jerry's education. By means of a good foundation, plenty of natural gift and the help of the Lord, I took those crumbs and developed them, one at a time. I learned to be thoroughly self-analytical and self-critical . . . I know you have been worried about my believing all the raves I've been getting. I know it can be dangerous, but you don't know all the rocky miles which prepared me for them. To me, compliments and criticisms – and even silences – are only clues, and I examine them carefully so as to extract what information I can from them . . . I tell you this only so you don't worry about unnecessary issues.<sup>131</sup>

Although JoAnn assured McKay she welcomed feedback and understood her self-perceptions might be inaccurate, she clearly identified herself as the final judge of the veracity of feedback received from any source. The conclusion of JoAnn's letter to McKay became more direct and emphasized not only the finality of the decision, but clarified it as her decision to make. She shed light on her inner strength and personal power in the face of the patriarchal attitudes of the culture and time, writing, "I have had

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<sup>130</sup> JoAnn Ottley, letter to Iaian McKay, JoAnn Ottley's personal papers, unpublished, dated January 1981.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

to become a very self-reliant person, and I feel management by [my] husband, Bishop, Prophet, and the Holy Ghost is about as much as I can handle.”<sup>132</sup>

Through this letter, JoAnn asserted independence and declared autonomy. McKay had “crossed a line” and JoAnn quickly outlined the boundary of the relationship. She finished the letter cordially. Returning to a viewpoint which represented both she and Jerry, she thanked McKay for his “immense force in helping us to bigger and better things.” After wishing him the “Lord’s richest blessings,” she closed with a polite, “Sincerely,” and hand-signed her name.<sup>133</sup>

#### Developing Philosophies as Pedagogue and Performer

JoAnn’s work with the choir was challenging and joyful. She flourished as Vocal Coach and “kitchen philosopher,” seeking answers to the various vocal issues choir members presented. Thursday evenings flew by as she taught the five private lessons, answered questions, listened to individual problems about singing and life, and worked side-by-side with Jerry.

In 1981, the choir was invited to sing for Ronald Reagan’s inauguration in Washington DC. An icy, cold day, the choir rode on a long float in the inaugural parade. Without an organ on the float, “a recording of the choir was played over a sophisticated sound system to which the choir added their live voices, enhancing the prerecorded

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<sup>132</sup> JoAnn Ottley, letter to Iaian McKay, JoAnn Ottley’s personal papers, unpublished, dated January 1981.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

version.”<sup>134</sup> played a recording of the choir and they sang along with it, their cold voices “rounded out” with the prerecorded version. This also ensured they could be heard along the parade route. JoAnn had never been so cold, but was thrilled to be there. That same year, while touring in Sao Paulo (Brazil), JoAnn sprained her ankle. The tour included a lot of walking with JoAnn “hobbling through it.”<sup>135</sup> Not wanting her injury to detract from the choir’s performances in Brazil, JoAnn, “practiced walking gracefully onto the stage the stage so she could fulfill her important role as soloist. Few suspected she was at all impaired.”<sup>136</sup>

*Messiah* performances remained plentiful, but after so many they required far less preparation. Most were local, but some included symphonies in other cities. She recorded *Messiah* with the Salt Lake Oratorio Society for PBS and participated in many *Messiah Sing-Ins*.<sup>137</sup> At one sing-in, she noticed a father and son singing together “with a *Messiah* score that looked a hundred years old.” Just as she felt in Germany when listening to the enthusiastic, off-key singing of the missionary and the beautiful lullaby of the mother who lived next door, it touched JoAnn to hear the passionate, mostly untrained voices fill the concert halls singing together.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes to author, unpublished, April 19, 2018.

<sup>135</sup> JoAnn Ottley, “Historical Points.”

<sup>136</sup> Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes to author, unpublished, April 19, 2018.

<sup>137</sup> For a list of dates, orchestras and societies with which JoAnn Ottley sang *Messiah*, see Appendix A.

<sup>138</sup> *Messiah Sing-Ins* are interactive concerts where audience members bring their scores and sing the chorus parts. There is often a choir on stage as well, and a featured quartet for the solo parts.



When people asked about her hobbies, JoAnn would laugh. “I don’t have time for hobbies, I’m a musician.” Pressed further, she admitted she loved to read. Brent shared this love of books and learning and they would sometimes read the same book, usually one he recommended. JoAnn enjoyed the long, deep discussions that explored the ideas, themes, and questions the book inspired. One book they both read was *Songmaster* by Orson Scott Card.<sup>139</sup> The book mesmerized JoAnn, and raised questions about the untapped value of song. She was so impressed, she wrote a letter to the author expressing her admiration.<sup>140</sup>

#### Discovering Educational Kinesiology

As Allison reached puberty, she experienced many of the emotional and physical discomforts associated with that stage of development. When traditional practices did not help, JoAnn’s maternal instincts led to research outside of standard western medicine. She began researching alternative forms of health care. JoAnn sought assistance from a local chiropractor with an energy-based practice, and discovered two forms of kinesiology: Educational Kinesiology and Touch for Health.<sup>141</sup> She became certified in

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<sup>139</sup> Orson Scott Card, *Songmaster*, New York, Dell Books, NY, 1980.

<sup>140</sup> Orson Scott Card, Letter to JoAnn, unpublished, JoAnn Ottley’s personal papers, dated January 19, 1982.

<sup>141</sup> Brain Gym® International [Educational Kinesiology] is committed to the principle that moving with intention leads to optimal learning. Through our outstanding instructors and movement-based programs, we empower all ages to reclaim the joy of living. Official Website for Educational Kinesiology, “Brain Gym International,” [www.braingym.org](http://www.braingym.org), accessed June 5, 2017. Touch for Health (TFH) is the most widely used system of kinesiology in the world. It is recognized and respected as the foundation training for other kinesiology systems as well as being a healing modality in its own right. Energy Medicine, Brain Gym, Energy Kinesiology, and Energy Psychology are all outgrowths of the Touch for Health body of knowledge. Official website for Touch for Health, [www.touchforhealth.us](http://www.touchforhealth.us), accessed June 5, 2017.

both and began using the exercises to help everyone in the family. She found Touch for Health alleviated some of Jerry's stress-related discomfort and Educational Kinesiology maximized clear thinking when schedules were tight or energy was depleted by pressures or illness.<sup>142</sup>

“There is nothing like a mother on a mission,” she often quipped to Jerry after hours of research. She discovered articles concerning cellular memory, suggesting every cell held vital information, like a “second brain.” Medical researchers discovered the hormone serotonin, responsible for general well-being, was produced more “in the gut” than the brain.<sup>143</sup> This supported the importance given to the Dantian, or middle of the body, in Chinese medicine.<sup>144</sup> JoAnn told Jerry, “We have to redo everything. We have to understand at a deeper level.” She expressed disdain at the tendency for people in Western culture to “stand up and salute the doctor without question.”<sup>145</sup>

#### Private Life in the Public Eye

Jerry was invited as a guest conductor for the Utah Symphony Orchestra in a subscription concert. “He suggested that since JoAnn had become a favorite with their audiences it might be appealing for them to appear together.”<sup>146</sup> His suggestion was

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<sup>142</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, August 12, 2016.

<sup>143</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 10, 2014.

<sup>144</sup> “The center of the body – the Dantian,” *Eclectic Energies*, [www.eclecticenergies.com/energy/dantian.php](http://www.eclecticenergies.com/energy/dantian.php), accessed June 8, 2017.

<sup>145</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 10, 2014.

<sup>146</sup> Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes to author, unpublished, April 19, 2018.

accepted and they performed the concerts in Ogden, Logan and Salt Lake City. JoAnn was thrilled to perform with her husband in both venues.

The Tabernacle Choir tour to Scandinavia proved a highlight for the busy Ottley family, as they were all able to go on the trip. JoAnn separated from the choir when they performed in Helsinki, Finland. Iaian McKay had arranged for her to appear as guest soloist in Copenhagen at the Tivoli Festival with the Tivoli Symphony Orchestra. The concert provided needed funds for Brent's study abroad. JoAnn rejoined her family and the choir afterward.<sup>147</sup>

Sadly, that same year, Jerry's father, Sidney, died.<sup>148</sup> Despite grief over his passing, Jerry continued directing the choir and JoAnn continued coaching them and singing solo engagements. She sang *Carmina Burana* in California, performed at the University of Missouri and premiered a new edition of Brahms' *Requiem* by Lara Hoggard<sup>149</sup> at Oklahoma State University. Locally she continued to be hired by the Utah Symphony, Utah Chorale and Ballet West.

The following year, in addition to her standard Utah concert engagements, JoAnn sang in Chicago (Illinois) with Music of the Baroque, and returned as guest soloist with the Cedar Rapids Symphony (Iowa) and the Boise Symphony (Idaho). She accepted the

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<sup>147</sup> Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes to author, unpublished, April 19, 2018.

<sup>148</sup> JoAnn Ottley, "Historical Points."

<sup>149</sup> Dr. Lara Hoggard (1915-2007), professor and conductor of choral music at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. was internationally known for his excellent choral groups and new editions of choral works. [www.unc.edu/news/archives/mar07/hoggard032907.html](http://www.unc.edu/news/archives/mar07/hoggard032907.html), accessed June 11, 2017.

role of Mimi in a Utah Opera production of *La Bohème* with Sara Ventura returning as stage director. This time, Dr. David Power, the young voice faculty member from the University of Utah who had been so enamored with JoAnn's *Lucia* performance in 1981, sang as Marcello.

Just as she had been criticized by outsiders for performing at the expense of her family,<sup>150</sup> others openly disparaged her career as less than it should be. In May 1982, Bill Goodfellow, a Deseret News critic, wrote an article which accused her of “resting on her laurels.” JoAnn responded with a letter. She respectfully outlined her recent career activities and offered explanation of conflicts with which she wrestled when making career decisions and balancing family life.<sup>151</sup> JoAnn constantly felt the need to defend herself for singing too much or too little. Jerry fully supported her decisions and he appreciated her support, efforts with their children, expertise gained through her personal research, work with the choir, and performances. He admired her strength, integrity, intellect, spirituality, and talent.<sup>152</sup> When experiencing physical or emotional distress, Jerry asked JoAnn for a Touch for Life balance to ease the discomfort. When his concentration was low or he wrestled with a problem, she would assist him with

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<sup>150</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview with author, Salt Lake City, UT, August 12, 2016.

<sup>151</sup> JoAnn Ottley, letter to Bill Goodfellow, critic for Deseret News, unpublished, JoAnn Ottley's personal papers, dated May 20, 1982.

<sup>152</sup> Jerold Ottley, letter to JoAnn on her 75<sup>th</sup> birthday, personal files of JoAnn Ottley, August 26, 2010.

Educational Kinesiology.<sup>153</sup> Jerry recognized the sacrifices she made for him and their family and understood the choices were made without regret or hesitation.<sup>154</sup>

1984 brought more tragedy. JoAnn's mother, Melba, was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease.<sup>155</sup> JoAnn's brothers struggled with health issues because of their inherited R.H Factor, and though George's issues were more debilitating, John Allan suffered lifelong effects from his two serious accidents. Neither could offer much help for their mother's increasing needs, and JoAnn's sister, LaRue, was unable to help. The burden of caring for their mother fell primarily on JoAnn's shoulders. Increasingly concerned about her mother, JoAnn further reduced performances.<sup>156</sup> Locally, she continued a rigorous performance schedule with the Utah Symphony, Ballet West and the Oratorio Society. She recorded an album for Sonos, *For I am Called by Thy Name* by Crawford Gates, Chair of the School of Music at BYU.<sup>157</sup> She gave one of the first recitals in the Assembly Hall at Temple Square.<sup>158</sup> Her many local performances received positive press and allowed her to stay close to home that year.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> JoAnn Ottley, letter to Iain McKay, unpublished, JoAnn Ottley's personal papers, dated July 19, 1988.

<sup>154</sup> Jerold Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, July 11, 2015.

<sup>155</sup> Alzheimer's disease is a progressive, degenerative disorder that attacks the brain's nerve cells, or neurons, resulting in loss of memory, thinking and language skills, and behavioral changes. <https://alzfdn.org/about-us/mission-history/>, accessed May 8, 2018.

<sup>156</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, August 12, 2016.

<sup>157</sup> "Crawford Gates, was an internationally renowned composer and conductor," Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes for author, unpublished, April 19, 2018.

<sup>158</sup> JoAnn Ottley, "Historical Points."

<sup>159</sup> See Performance Log in Appendix A for a list of JoAnn Ottley's performances.

## Sharing Wisdom

JoAnn received invitations to share her ideas about life balance with other LDS women, allowing her to spread her message of balance with a larger group of her “sisters.”<sup>160</sup> Though usually singing as part of the presentation, the focus was her spoken message rather than a performance. She was featured at several LDS women’s conferences, including Women’s Week at Ricks College, Southern Utah State College, and the 1985 BYU Women’s Conference.<sup>161</sup> Reminiscent of her 1979 address at the Utah State University Institute, she spoke of pertinent issues for many LDS women, including balancing busy lives with higher priorities. Two LDS publications included articles submitted by JoAnn.<sup>162</sup>

Though perceived as a role model by many, JoAnn felt her personal life was completely out of balance as she managed family and career while meeting the increasing needs of her mother. She actively utilized her model of concentric circles to restore her equilibrium. Her work with the Tabernacle Choir was joyful. The choir toured the Eastern United States and Canada again in 1984. The next trip was scheduled for Japan. Jerry began those preparations in earnest with JoAnn working alongside him. She was grateful for the music in their lives and felt the choir’s power when she listened to them or sang with them as a soloist. The choir sustained and comforted her, making it possible to cope with worry and grief. She knew from choir members’ individual stories that they

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<sup>160</sup> In the LDS Church, women are referred to as sisters.

<sup>161</sup> JoAnn Ottley, “Historical Points.”

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

were sustained by it too. Ed Thompson, now a choir member, had become a dear friend of the Ottleys.<sup>163</sup> “If everyone sang in a choir,” he once said, “there would be no more gangs.” The thought stunned JoAnn. When asked about it, Ed continued, “If everyone sang in a choir, there would be peace on earth.”<sup>164</sup> JoAnn pondered his comments long afterward. What was the underlying force JoAnn felt when she sang or heard others sing? Perhaps singing was not just performing, or even touching emotions in the audience. Perhaps singing was more important than she had ever imagined.<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> Edward Thompson was Chair of the Music Department, University of Utah and former doctoral voice student of JoAnn in 1972.

<sup>164</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 21, 2018.

<sup>165</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, February 17, 2015.

## CHAPTER EIGHT: PARADIGM SHIFT (1985-1995)

JoAnn's local reputation as a leader in the state's performing arts was evident in the many awards she received in 1985. Her example of creating and maintaining personal balance led to speaking opportunities for LDS and other special events across the state.

Her national reputation brought new, exciting opportunities. Researching vocal issues and correctional methods for the Tabernacle Choir singers and her private students enhanced JoAnn's teaching skill set. Despite the personal challenges she faced as her mother's health deteriorated, JoAnn continued to grow as artist and teacher.

### Awards, Opportunities, and Balancing Priorities

In January 1985, JoAnn received the Utah Performing Artist of the Year award from the Utah Association of Music Executives, In May, the Salt Lake Area Chamber of Commerce presented her with an Honors in the Arts certificate for outstanding contributions to the rich cultural heritage of the State of Utah.<sup>1</sup> The new conductor of the Utah Symphony, Joseph Silverstein<sup>2</sup> (whom JoAnn called, "Joey") featured her in several concerts.<sup>3</sup> JoAnn presented two lecture recitals, one at Southern Utah State College (SUSC), and the other at BYU's annual Women's Conference.<sup>4</sup> That same year, she

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<sup>1</sup> Ottley Archives, Church History Library, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, MS26421.

<sup>2</sup> "History," *Utah Symphony Website*, [www.utahsymphony.org/the-orchestra](http://www.utahsymphony.org/the-orchestra), accessed June 8, 2017.

<sup>3</sup> JoAnn Ottley, Performance Log, unpublished, 2004, personal papers of JoAnn Ottley, see Appendix A for a comprehensive list of performances.

<sup>4</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, July 1, 2017.



helped Lara Hoggard<sup>5</sup> with the translation for a new edition of Mendelsohn's *Elijah*, and then performed it in Spokane, Washington and Edmonton, Canada.

JoAnn traveled out of state and even out of country with the Tabernacle Choir; but, unwilling to add other commitments in the wake of her mother's illness and other family issues, she declined many solo performance, teaching, and speaking offers.<sup>6</sup> Offers included developing and leading a new voice-centered music degree program at Westminster College, filling a vacancy on the voice faculty at BYU, and hosting a public-affairs radio call-in show.<sup>7</sup> She relied on her concentric circle model to remain grounded in who she was and what was most important in each moment, adapting as needed to varying circumstances. JoAnn compared this flexible approach to cooking on a stovetop with pans on every burner. Sometimes "the pot" representing her parents' care was moved to the front burner and other elements of her life were by necessity, temporarily placed on the back burners. If Jerry or Allison had immediate needs, she again rotated the pots. During performances her career was on the front burner, then quickly moved to the back as she rushed to her parents' home after performances, often still wearing her performance gown. In this manner, JoAnn successfully negotiated family responsibilities

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<sup>5</sup> Dr. Lara Hoggard (1915-2007), professor and conductor of choral music at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. was internationally known for his excellent choral groups and new editions of choral works. [www.unc.edu/news/archives/mar07/hoggard032907.html](http://www.unc.edu/news/archives/mar07/hoggard032907.html), accessed June 11, 2017.

<sup>6</sup>JoAnn Ottley, "Journal Entry, March 26, 1985," *Journal Excerpts*, unpublished, personal papers of JoAnn Ottley.

<sup>7</sup> Established in 1875, Westminster College is a private, liberal arts college located in the Sugarhouse neighborhood of Salt Lake City, UT. [www.westminstercollege.edu/](http://www.westminstercollege.edu/), accessed June 15, 2017.

while coaching the Tabernacle Choir, teaching voice students, and maintaining a busy local performance schedule.<sup>8</sup>

### Anomie

JoAnn was often lonely. Her philosophies differed greatly from most of those in her community which created a sense of anomie. Jerry's Sundays were filled with choir work, so JoAnn attended church services at their ward without him. The ward's choir was ill-rehearsed and the inadequate music depressed her. She felt somewhat estranged from other ward members as many kept the couple at a respectful distance due to Jerry's position with the choir, her subsequent visibility as "wife of the Tabernacle Choir Director," and her reputation as a well-known professional singer.<sup>9</sup>

JoAnn continued to speak and write about achieving balance as LDS women, working to ease the despair felt by so many in the face of unrealistic expectations. Along with her concentric circle model and stovetop analogy, she used an analogy made by a friend, who compared balancing priorities to sitting in a bathtub filled with water and ping-pong balls. The requirement was to hold all the balls under the water at once, but, "no matter how one tried, an errant ball would suddenly pop up (Zing!) and land on the

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<sup>8</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, July 1, 2017.

<sup>9</sup> LDS women are often paired with their husband's work or accomplishments. For instance, if an LDS man goes to medical school, it is common for the couple to say, "we are in school," even if she is a stay-at-home mother or working in a different field. A man called to lead an LDS ward is referred to as "the bishop," and his wife as, "the bishop's wife." JoAnn's cultural identity among church members was often linked to Jerry's high-profile church calling as Tabernacle Choir Director, even by those who had no knowledge of her work with the choir.

floor.” Though many responded positively to her message, few understood the magnitude of JoAnn’s challenge to achieve personal balance.<sup>10</sup>

The Tabernacle Choir members became JoAnn’s prominent social community. Choir members bonded through their many rehearsals, performances, and tours. Her work with individual singers, as well as the entire group, led to more intimate interaction. Singing encouraged vulnerability and openness. Even among that group, however, finding others willing to discuss issues, ideas, and philosophy was rare. A few close friends understood and appreciated JoAnn’s need for deep thought and conversation. While waiting for a rehearsal to begin at Capitol Theatre, Clayne Robison-- fellow singer and chair of the BYU music department—arrived and sat next to JoAnn in the audience seats. Instead of small talk, he looked at her and said, “So, JoAnn, what are you thinking today?” The question delighted her, because it came from Robison’s understanding and acceptance of her true self.<sup>11</sup>

#### Shift in Concentric Priorities

The Tabernacle Choir tours in the summer of 1985 included performances at the Greek Theatre for the Olympic Gala in Los Angeles, California in July and again for a corporation convention in August. Between the two California concerts they sang for the National Governors’ Conference in Boise, Idaho. The highlight tour of the summer,

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<sup>10</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 22, 2014.

<sup>11</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, June 17, 2017.

however, was their return to Japan.<sup>12</sup> Concerts in Japan were scheduled from August 15—28, 1985 beginning in Oaka, Nagoya, Tokyo, and culminating with Japan’s third world fair at the Tsukuba Expo.<sup>13</sup>

For JoAnn and many choir members, the tour highlight was experiencing Japanese culture. Choir members were treated with “grace and loveliness”<sup>14</sup> and given gifts, cards, and refreshments wherever they performed. Jerry’s favorites were Asian pears. The children were beautiful, always neatly groomed, and the girls had evenly-cut, black bangs framing their faces. JoAnn thought they looked like “little walking dolls.”<sup>15</sup> The Japanese people seemed equally surprised by the appearance of the Americans. Much to Jerry’s surprise, several Japanese women reached out and appreciatively fondled his full head of white hair. A 5’ 10” tall, muscular woman in the choir was stopped by a much shorter Japanese woman in a shop, who reached up and grabbed the singer’s bicep and made “an appreciative vocal growl.”<sup>16</sup>

During the Japan trip JoAnn celebrated her fiftieth birthday. “No one has ever been so glad to turn fifty!” she declared. Her voice was as strong and vibrant as ever, but, turning fifty gave her a plausible reason to turn away opera roles and concerts.

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<sup>12</sup> Jerold Ottley, TAB History, JoAnn Ottley’s personal files, unpublished, date unknown.

<sup>13</sup> “1985 Tsukuba, Expo ’85, Tsukuba, Japan,” *ExpoMuseum.com*, The Tsukuba Expo is a science center in a planned city near Tokyo. Expo ’85 was the third world’s fair hosted by Japan and was held in the center. <http://www.expomuseum.com/1985/>, accessed June 8, 2017.

<sup>14</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, July 1, 2017.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

Regardless of Sarah Ventura's distinction between purity and innocence when directing JoAnn, JoAnn felt certain no one would want a 50-year-old woman singing the role of Lucia. The burden she often felt in searching for gracious ways to decline singing invitations when pressed with other priorities was now lifted. No longer would she need to field the approval or disapproval of others concerning those decisions.<sup>17</sup>

Flying home after the successful Japan tour, the choir, though tired, was a fulfilled and cohesive group.<sup>18</sup> Jerry's responsibilities during choir tours were especially difficult, and JoAnn had worked tirelessly beside him as vocal coach, and supportive wife. The choir members were often exhausted from travel, heat, and sightseeing. When leading vocal warm up exercises before concerts, JoAnn noticed the act of singing seemed to rejuvenate the group's overall energy, not just their voices. JoAnn pondered singing's positive effect for performers and audiences. She recalled how the Turkish mother's lullaby affected she and Jerry in Köln, and how they fought to sit by the young missionary at church who, though off-key, sang with unabashed enthusiasm. Perhaps singing was important regardless of technique, skill level, or genre. Perhaps it connected people spiritually to each other and to the divine. Perhaps Ed Thompson<sup>19</sup> was correct, if everyone sang in a choir, there would be peace on earth.

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<sup>17</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, July 1, 2017.

<sup>18</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, November 7, 2014.

<sup>19</sup> Edward Thompson was chair of the University of Utah's Music Department, a former doctoral voice student of JoAnn's, and sang with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir.

JoAnn's philosophy of singing expanded, beginning a new chapter in her musical career and shifting her priorities from performance to teaching. JoAnn had previously prioritized performance engagements above teaching, believing her visibility as a performer helped build the Kingdom, and fulfilled the direction given in her Patriarchal Blessing. The inherent value she now perceived in the act of singing shifted this perspective, and she restructured her priorities accordingly.<sup>20</sup>

#### New Approaches as Vocal Coach

JoAnn's newfound awareness of singing's value further inspired her efforts as Tabernacle Choir vocal coach. Choir members often shared concerns and heartbreaks with JoAnn within the individual lessons during rehearsal. She noticed a consistent correlation between difficulties in life and subsequent vocal issues. Conversely, just as she observed in Japan, the act of singing often reduced the singer's overall stress. Life successes seemed to promote healthy singing. Based on these observations, she wondered if some of the alternative methods she had learned to enhance her family's health care might also benefit singers.<sup>21</sup>

JoAnn imagined the possible value for singers through a "synthesis of Western, Eastern, and alternative ideas."<sup>22</sup> She began including exercises from Educational Kinesiology in her Tabernacle Choir coaching and noticed positive technical and artistic

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<sup>20</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, July 1, 2017.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 10, 2014.

results. Educational Kinesiology seemed to maximize reception of new ideas and techniques. Subsequently, singers released excess vocal tension and corrected vocal issues with more ease, success, and permanence. JoAnn was excited by the results. They confirmed, for her, that brain function was “at the core of everything.”<sup>23</sup> JoAnn realized she was healing as well as teaching. “When it comes right down to it,” she told Jerry, “we are all teachers or healers or both.”<sup>24</sup>

Some choir members mistrusted JoAnn’s alternative methods in coaching sessions and rehearsals. She responded to the resistance by incorporating brain-based learning exercises without mentioning sources or the potentially controversial theories. This compromise eased the choir members’ concerns, but renewed JoAnn’s sense of loneliness. She again felt outside the main body of her community, alienated by philosophical differences and her constantly inquiring mind.<sup>25</sup>

JoAnn perceived a direct correlation between vocal issues and incorrect section placement. In women, this was most prevalent between Soprano I and II and Alto I and II. In men, the most problematic distinction occurred between baritones and tenors. Placement of singers with very high voices and very low voices was easier, making error less likely. Drawing from a technique gleaned from Jerry’s doctoral studies, JoAnn tested each potential choir member’s vocal color-point during the audition process and determined the color-points of existing members during rehearsal coaching lessons. The

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<sup>23</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 10, 2014.

<sup>24</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, July 1, 2017.

<sup>25</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 10, 2014.

color-point was used to determine the most appropriate choir section for each singer.<sup>26</sup> The term “color point” seemed to induce less negative responses in singers than calling the natural shift a “vocal break.”<sup>27</sup> Placing each singer in the most appropriate section, strengthened the section and reduced the potential for individual vocal issues caused by singing consistently in the wrong *tessitura*.<sup>28</sup>

JoAnn’s synthesis of non-traditional teaching modalities such as Educational Kinesiology, with more mainstream approaches like *passaggio* identification, mirrored her philosophical approach to life. A “natural burrower,” she dug for answers wherever the questions led. She easily accepted knowledge gleaned from the studies of vocal scientists (e.g., Vennard) without dismissing the metaphorical and artistic elements of classical vocal training she believed vital to musicality. Combining traditional and non-traditional teaching theories equally provided balance. Equally congruent with JoAnn’s nature was the creativity used to adapt the information she found. JoAnn’s ability to adapt knowledge to fit circumstantial need is illustrated in her use of the term color point

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<sup>26</sup> See Appendix B JoAnn’s description of the process used to determine a singer’s color-point and subsequent section placement.

<sup>27</sup> The terms color point and vocal break refer to the pitches which distinguish a singer’s *passaggio*, or registral shift. The singing voice achieves pitch change through the thinning and stretching or thickening and relaxing of the vocal folds. Every voice has certain pitches where timbral changes are audible to a trained ear. Singers can learn to negotiate their *passaggi* through vocal technique for smoother transitions between registers. Though these vocal breaks or color points exist in all voices, exact pitches where the phenomenon occurs vary according to voice type and individual and are indicators of voice type, such as soprano, alto, baritone and bass in a choir. They further indicate variances within those voice types, such as the small difference between the highest vocal distinction of soprano I and the slightly lower range of soprano II.

<sup>28</sup> *Tessitura* refers to the vocal range used for most of a song or aria. High or low extensions in a piece are considered outliers and not part of the *tessitura*. Each voice classification has a corresponding comfortable range. If a majority of the song lies within that range, a singer is less likely to build up tension, which allows healthful singing for longer time periods.



rather than vocal break to determine the correct choir placement of each voice—a method formerly reserved for soloists. Although Educational Kinesiology was developed for children with learning disabilities and neurological issues, she perceived an extension of its purpose and applied it to singing. JoAnn found she could connect and apply most things in life to singing. A choir member asked JoAnn what she considered a good metaphor for music. She took several days to think about the question, then called the singer on the telephone to answer, “Music is the metaphor.”<sup>29</sup>

#### Return to Studio and University Teaching

Working with choir members was JoAnn’s primary teaching outlet, but a reduction in professional performances allowed her schedule to accommodate a few private students. She accepted some opportunities to teach as a guest artist, further realizing her definitive career focus from singer to teacher. These included a vocal workshop at Dixie State College (Saint George, Utah),<sup>30</sup> and serving on a panel at the 1986 BYU Women’s Conference discussing, “Women in Performance.”<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 10, 2014.

<sup>30</sup> Dixie State University, formerly Dixie State College and located in St. George, Utah, is named for the area in Southern Utah where Mormon pioneers unsuccessfully attempted to grow cotton crops in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Founded in 1911 as part of the LDS academy system for high school students, it closed it in 1933 with control transferred to the state, who combined the high school with a college. Both were housed in the building until 1963 when land was purchased for a separate two-year college, named Dixie State Junior College. In 1972 the name was changed again to Dixie State College. In 2000, four-year degrees were added. In 2013 the institution became Dixie State University and remains a vital part of the Utah’s educational system and the St. George community. [www.dixie.edu](http://www.dixie.edu), accessed, September 24, 2017.

<sup>31</sup> JoAnn Ottley, “Performance Log,” *Essays*, unpublished, Salt Lake City, UT, 2002.

JoAnn's role as choir vocal coach provided opportunities for she and Jerry to work closely together. Though not enjoying the constant public scrutiny, they learned to accept the accompanying responsibility of public relations and strived to acknowledge the many people they encountered. They were grateful to experience the choir's often challenging, sometimes profound, experiences as a team. The choir toured Vancouver, Canada and Seattle, Washington that summer. During an outdoor performance of *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*<sup>32</sup> Jerry heard the faint sound from the distant engines of a large approaching plane. Instinctively, he timed the *crescendo* of the song to coincide with the arrival of the Concord, soaring over the audience. JoAnn and the crowd were thrilled. The effect was "magnificent"!<sup>33</sup>

Ed Thompson, Music Department Chair at the University of Utah, continued singing with the Tabernacle Choir. Through the years, he and the Ottleys had become good friends. Keenly aware of her teaching skills and performance background, Thompson asked JoAnn to return to the vocal faculty. Although the department had several fine teachers, he felt no one possessed JoAnn's professional-performance experience level. The vocal faculty, including Dr. David Power and Betty Jeanne Chipman, were enthusiastic about the possibility of her rejoining their ranks. JoAnn remained unconvinced, burdened as she was with family obligations, teaching private students, and coaching the choir. Yet, the prospect of sharing her newfound philosophies

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<sup>32</sup> Isaac Watts, "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross", 1707.  
[www.library.timelesstruths.org/music/When I Survey the Wondrous Cross](http://www.library.timelesstruths.org/music/When_I_Survey_the_Wondrous_Cross), accessed June 9, 2017.

<sup>33</sup> JoAnn Ottley, handwritten notes for author, November 7, 2014.

of singing and alternative teaching approaches with eager college students appealed to her.

Thompson suggested options to make the faculty position more workable and appealing. In addition to negotiating salary and benefits, JoAnn could choose between teaching as a full-time voting associate professor or as a full-time adjunct assistant professor. An associate professor held additional responsibilities of faculty meetings and politics—of which she wanted none. Though she believed her “educational gap” meant she “had no business being called professor,” JoAnn felt “that was their decision.”<sup>34</sup> After much consideration, she accepted the offer and joined the voice faculty as a part-time adjunct instructor in the fall of 1986.<sup>35</sup>

### Synthesizing Vocal Methods

The basis of JoAnn’s vocal technique and pedagogy was the concept of vocal core. JoAnn often referred to vocal core, but found it was difficult to explain; therefore, she developed the following definition: vocal core expressed the acoustic principal of resonance optimal<sup>36</sup> achieved through optimum laryngeal position.

This delicate balance of resonance, breath, and laryngeal function was easily impaired at passaggi as the vocal folds adapted to the needs of higher or lower pitch

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<sup>34</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, July 1, 2017.

<sup>35</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, June 17, 2017.

<sup>36</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, November 7, 2014. JoAnn recalls learning about “optimal resonance” in an issue of *Open Ear*. Pat Moffitt Cook, ed., *Open Ear Journal*, Open Ear, Inc, Bainbridge Island, 1990-2004.

centers. The pelvic tilt JoAnn had learned from Professor Metternich encouraged a slight shift in laryngeal position, and thus maintained optimal resonance through registral transitions. JoAnn taught her students the technique to negotiate those “treacherous waters,” and maintain optimal resonance through the passaggi. She compared singing through a passaggio to shifting between gears on a car. When a singer successfully moved to the next gear in the voice by slightly adjusting the laryngeal position with a pelvic tilt, optimal resonance was maintained. If the weight distribution was imbalanced through that registral shift, the larynx position was compromised by the added tension, and optimal resonance lost. This loss of vocal core in the passaggio created excess tension which subsequently carried into other vocal registers. Though JoAnn discovered Metternich’s explanation of the technique was not scientifically correct,<sup>37</sup> she found the tilt itself effectively maintained optimal resonance when navigating the passaggi.<sup>38</sup>

JoAnn determined each student’s vocal *Fach* using the same color-point test she used with Tabernacle Choir singers.<sup>39</sup> Once color-point and *Fach* were identified, she assigned vocalises in the singer’s natural range to find the voice core. She listened for the singer’s optimal resonance, noting the specific note and vowel combination when it occurred., “Can you feel that?” she would ask, then admonish, “Remember how that

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<sup>37</sup> Professor Metternich taught the pelvis and larynx needed to be aligned, a concept which has not been confirmed by vocal science.

<sup>38</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, June 17, 2017. JoAnn described the purpose of the pelvic tilt as follows: “The tiny curtsy I learned with Metternich allows the larynx to drop just a little into the perfect position. The acoustics line up and we have perfect optimal resonance.”

<sup>39</sup> The German term, *Fach*, is a voice type classification system commonly used by classically trained singers.

feels!” She viewed those perfectly aligned notes as the “epicenter of the voice,” and would build from that place. “Different voices are built in different keys,” she explained. Working from an individual’s “epicenter,” optimal resonance could be achieved on all notes and vowels throughout the range. Beginning from a place of perfect acoustical balance, or vocal core, before expanding to other notes was crucial to this process. Developing the core throughout the voice proved vital to free, powerful, vocal production. It avoided the criticism Metternich had received when singing in London as a young man, “You sing with power, but you don’t have it.”<sup>40</sup> JoAnn did not allow her students to create a false, contrived sound. She insisted they discover and sing with authentic, core voices.<sup>41</sup>

Discovering vocal core was sometimes disconcerting to a singer because the new sensation needed application to all learned repertoire and vocal register. Though JoAnn’s student, Julie Reynolds was shocked by the discovery of her vocal core, she could immediately apply it to most of her repertoire.<sup>42</sup> However, another advanced student, Carolyn Talboys, discovered her vocal core one week before singing in the Metropolitan Opera Auditions (MET Auditions) and withdrew from the competition. Without the added muscle tension and compensatory skills of her prior singing technique, she felt unsure of the arias she had prepared. JoAnn reassured and encouraged Talboys as she

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<sup>40</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 10, 2014.

<sup>41</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, June 17, 2017.

<sup>42</sup> Julie Reynolds worked as a librarian for the university’s music department. She was a professional singer and possessed a master of music degree in vocal performance.

adapted the newfound technique to her repertoire. A year later, having learned to keep optimal resonance throughout her voice, Talboys' singing was better than ever.<sup>43</sup>

Color point testing was crucial to discovering vocal core in solo singers as the test identified specific registral shifts which could upset the balance of optimal laryngeal position. Determining a solo singer's *Fach* was less predictable for identifying the proper choir section; yet, the information was crucial for appropriate repertoire selection, vocal core development and vocal health promotion. This was the case for Reynolds.

Opinions of former teachers and adjudicators concerning Reynolds' voice type differed and she was thoroughly confused. Frustrated, Reynolds' turned to JoAnn, who puzzled over the dilemma. JoAnn listened for Reynolds' color-points, found the exact pitches where the timbral-color shift occurred, but was unable to determine a conclusive *fach*. Sometimes Reynolds' voice resonated more than others. When that happened, JoAnn encouraged her to evaluate and describe the accompanying physical sensations. When Reynolds' exhibited frustration during a lesson, JoAnn led her through Brain Gym exercises to reduce her stress and facilitate learning. After several weeks of exploratory lessons, JoAnn assigned Reynolds' several pieces within her current repertoire that were representative of general *Fach* distinctions, then gave her the following instructions:

Go home now and you tell me. Go home and sing for a couple of weeks and tell me who you are. You know. Nobody else knows. You come back and tell me.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, June 17, 2017.

<sup>44</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 10, 2014.

This constructivist teaching approach<sup>45</sup> made Reynolds' ultimately responsible for her vocal discovery. She returned a few weeks later and told JoAnn, "I am a French-Mezzo Soprano!" JoAnn had never heard of a French Mezzo, but learned it was a specialized, uncommon *Fach* describing mezzos with a light vocal quality. Armed with that knowledge, JoAnn and Reynolds' "dug into" repertoire which fit that classification.<sup>46</sup>

As a "lyric [soprano] with coloratura capabilities,"<sup>47</sup> JoAnn understood the issues of possessing a voice not easily defined by the *Fach* system. JoAnn taught her students *fach* distinctions were based on "the weight of the voice," and laughingly described herself as "a fat minnow, not a skinny whale." Maintaining vocal core allowed JoAnn to sing extensive repertoire by capitalizing on her voice's unique qualities, engaging more vocal weight for some music and the lighter vocal weight for others.

[Verdi's *Requiem*] required a "skinny whale" most of the time but a "fat minnow" for a pianissimo high B-flat at a crucial point near the end. Most whales can't hit that note quite right. It's always a bit of a trade-off.<sup>48</sup>

To this end, JoAnn encouraged Reynolds' to explore the parameters and strengths her voice possessed when applying the sensation of vocal core to her French-Mezzo repertoire. One day, standing by the piano during a lesson in JoAnn's front room,

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<sup>45</sup> The website *Learning Theories* explains constructivist learning theory as follows: Constructivism as a paradigm or worldview posits that learning is an active, constructive process. The learner is an information constructor. People actively construct or create their own subjective representations of objective reality. "Constructivism," *Learning Theories*, [www.learning-theories.com/constructivism.html](http://www.learning-theories.com/constructivism.html), accessed June 9, 2017.

<sup>46</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 10, 2014.

<sup>47</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by Thomas L. Durham, CD liner notes *JoAnn Ottley: Retrospective*, Tantara Records, Provo, UT, 1999.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

Reynolds’ “found her resonance.” The sound rang out, surprising Reynolds. She looked at JoAnn with wide eyes, then narrowed them mischievously and said in a mysterious voice, “Who is that masked woman?” The women laughed and celebrated. Reynolds’ had discovered her vocal core.<sup>49</sup>

### Inside JoAnn Ottley’s Vocal Studio

When JoAnn accepted the position as adjunct professor, she wondered if her capacity to teach would equal the needs of the advanced students Thompson intended to place in her studio. The successes of her students in competition that year reassured her. Julie Reynolds won first place in the Utah Metropolitan Opera Auditions, and second place in the regional Met Auditions, held in Denver. JoAnn’s university students all showed significant improvement in their end of quarter vocal juries.<sup>50</sup> The following year. Reynolds placed second in the local Met Auditions and was selected to participate in the AIMS summer program in Graz, Germany.<sup>51</sup> In 1988, JoAnn’s university student, Carol Nelson, placed first in the Utah Met Auditions.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 10, 2014.

<sup>50</sup> University vocal performance music majors sing a vocal jury at the end of each quarter or semester for a group of music professors and instructors, usually from the vocal area. The student provides a list of repertory learned during the term. Vocal juries often begin with a piece selected by the student from that list, followed by one or two chosen by the faculty jurors. The pieces are memorized and usually performed with a collaborative pianist. Faculty jurors give written feedback to the student. Passing the jury is often required to continue as a vocal performance major, and is considered the “final exam” for applied voice lessons.

<sup>51</sup> The American Institute of Musical Studies (AIMS) in Graz, Austria is an intensive, summer training for advanced and professional students. Entrance is by audition.

<sup>52</sup> JoAnn Ottley, Vita, unpublished, in the personal files of JoAnn Ottley, 1994.



JoAnn’s knowledge of brain-based learning influenced her teaching. She understood students learn best when both sides of the brain function in tandem and negative emotion or stress limits whole-brain learning. To this end, she consciously created a safe, positive learning environment. JoAnn was the epitome of professionalism; she dressed professionally, and her demeanor—though friendly and welcoming—was professional. Her serious approach to lessons “sprinkled with laughter,”<sup>53</sup> allowed students the safety to experiment until their voices manifested the desired outcome. JoAnn tailored each lesson to meet individual student needs within a consistent lesson sequence. The structured consistency added to the safety of the lesson environment. She began with vocalises, writing each in the student’s notebook along with brief instructions when needed (see Figure 8.1).

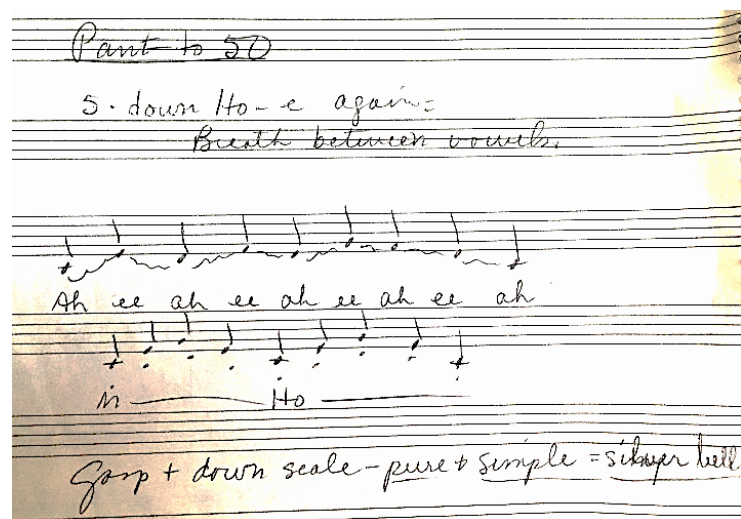


Figure 8.1: JoAnn Ottley, lesson notes for student, Tricia Swanson. Courtesy of Tricia Swanson

<sup>53</sup> Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes to author, unpublished, April 19, 2018.

The vocalises were intended to warm up students' voices while building vocal strength and isolating specific techniques.

After vocalises, the lesson sequence would shift to repertoire. JoAnn applied techniques from the vocalises to the literature. JoAnn's brain research taught her to focus on the whole song before dissecting the parts, thus utilizing the more creative, right side of the brain. Next, the analytical, left side of the brain was utilized to work small segments, correct errors and build technique.

JoAnn focused on the music and text separately. "What is the difference between vocal and instrumental music?" She asked new students. They usually hesitated, and JoAnn provided the simple answer: vocal music has lyrics. JoAnn would demonstrate, lifting one hand to represent the text's nuances, then the other hand to represent the music's nuances. Finally, she brought her hands together, linking the fingers as a visual representation of the nuances available when words and music join after separate exploration.<sup>54</sup>

Students first sang the melody on neutral syllables such as [di] or [po].<sup>55</sup> "If you can sing this on an [i] vowel and an [o] vowel, you can sing all the vowels in between," JoAnn declared, "Except for [a] which is a bear-cat."<sup>56</sup> While singing the melody with

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<sup>54</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 10, 2014.

<sup>55</sup> In the International Phonetic Alphabet (I.P.A.) [di] is the phonetic symbol for "dee" as in the English word "deed" without the final consonant and [po] is the phonetic symbol for "poh" as in the English word "poem" without the final syllable. JoAnn used these syllables to balance the student's vocal core on every note in the melody, shifting between the forward-resonance placement of the bright vowel in [di] with the back-resonance placement of the darker vowel in [po] since vowel color also affects optimal resonance.

<sup>56</sup> The term "Bear-cat" is a colloquialism JoAnn used to describe tasks which were difficult to achieve, such as singing the vowel [a] (symbol for "ah" in I.P.A. as in the English word "on" without the

neutral syllables, attention was given to musical interpretation. Interpretation included composer or editor marks, stylistic aspects, musical period and accompanying considerations of cultural expectations, compositional traits, and the melody's relationship with the accompaniment.<sup>57</sup>

The text was given equal attention. JoAnn encouraged students to use imagination. "Who are you?" she would ask, referring to the specific operatic role when singing an aria or ambiguous character portrayed through art song. "Where are you? When are you? What do you want?" She provided students a list of questions intended to guide exploration of poetic meaning and character development. Songs in another language required students to translate the text and then paraphrase.<sup>58</sup>

Only when students could maintain vocal technique throughout the melody on neutral syllables with musical interpretation and had explored the text's meaning and character's viewpoint, were the text and music combined. Interpretive aspects were explored through questions about the music, poetry, and interconnections of the two. JoAnn taught that artistry depended on personal connection to the text and music, with sufficient technique to effectively express those elements.

Mistakes were welcome. Never judging or shaming when students "missed the mark" during exercises or literature, JoAnn regarded those moments as clues toward growth. She taught her students to do likewise. Together, she and the student followed

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final consonant). This vowel often needed extra attention because the tongue can easily pull back too far and add tension and block resonance.

<sup>57</sup> See Appendix C for the handout JoAnn's students received to facilitate this process.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

those clues and solved problems. JoAnn's lack of recrimination facilitated discovery, which often came as a sudden shift, followed by cognitive awareness. JoAnn called this phenomenon the "ah-ha!" moment. Experience came before label, with sensory development providing context for musical understanding and vocal terminology.<sup>59</sup>

At the end of the lesson, the student sang the piece in entirety, focusing on expression rather than technique. Not all technical gains made during focused practice were manifest when singing the song. JoAnn encouraged students to sing with expression even if the technique was not yet incorporated. She explained that discoveries made while working on specific techniques during lessons, while not immediately retained, would eventually become involuntary and allow greater personal expression. Improvement and integration were not linear, but discoveries made during analysis would eventually become a cohesive whole. JoAnn warned that withholding singing's creative aspects until techniques were perfect often thwarted a singer's later efforts to be expressive. This formula of "macro, micro, macro" allowed for technical growth and enhanced artistry.<sup>60</sup>

JoAnn enhanced traditional pedagogical approaches with practices gleaned from Educational Kinesiology. She sometimes created an imaginary circle on the floor representing the brain's more logical left side. While correcting a troublesome vocal issue, such as releasing excess tension or utilizing breath management skills, the student stood in this "left brain circle." When it was time to sing the song at the end of the lesson, the singer moved into another imaginary circle on the right, representing the brain's more

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<sup>59</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 10, 2014.

<sup>60</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, June 2, 2017.

creative right-hemisphere function. In this circle, the singer was to leave the technical concerns addressed in the left-brain circle and sing the song's meaning, trusting the technique would eventually assimilate without undue focus.<sup>61</sup>

JoAnn's refined, flexible teaching style was a synthesis of her philosophical nature and the many elements gleaned from her performance career. Unlike Marguerite—her beloved first voice teacher, who taught everyone to sing from a high, perfectly-balanced flute sound, and believed if a singer started there, the voice could be built by applying that sound to the entire vocal range—JoAnn realized students required varied approaches. Marguerite's top-down approach worked beautifully for JoAnn as a young student, and many of her students responded well to the technique; however, JoAnn discovered some students needed to start in the middle of the voice rather than the top.<sup>62</sup>

JoAnn tailored her approaches to meet individual student needs within the lesson structure, but fundamental techniques remained consistent. Goals for each student included the following: build vocal technique from the vocal core, discover and develop untapped resonance; choose appropriate repertoire for the individual voice and ability; and utilize vocal techniques to realize creative, expressive interpretations of the repertoire. "All the information about singing technique would fit on one page," she told an advanced student who was struggling to find her vocal core. "But each singer must

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<sup>61</sup> Recollection of the author from her study with JoAnn Ottley at the University of Utah from 1991-1994.

<sup>62</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, June 17, 2017.

find the balance of those elements through experience, and that process could fill volumes.”<sup>63</sup>

Though the singer was the final interpreter, complete preparation of music also included aspects of the composer’s possible intent. JoAnn’s interpretation of Brahms illustrated this point. She felt Brahms had “a conduit to heaven” when he wrote his *Requiem*, and hoped to meet him in the afterlife someday, and ask him if she “even came close.”<sup>64</sup>

JoAnn’s university students ranged in ability and background. The advanced students who had been “trained off their core,” proved most challenging. Though she knew it was difficult to “take a step back,” JoAnn was adamant that these students begin again from vocal “kindergarten” before returning to arias. Singing with simple vocal production to find vocal core often proved difficult. Students wanted to add sound by innervating additional muscles to make the voice bigger and more operatic, even though the added muscular tension sacrificed potential growth. In response resistance, JoAnn drew concentric circles in the image of a target on paper, just as she had when determining her personal life priorities. The center circle represented the vocal core or “vocal kindergarten.” Marking one of the larger circles around the target, she would explain, “This represents the technique needed for a simple Italian song, or a song by Mozart.” Finally, she marked the farthest, outside circle and said kindly, but pointedly,

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<sup>63</sup> Recollection of the author from her study with JoAnn Ottley at the University of Utah from 1991-1994.

<sup>64</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, November 7, 2014.

“This is Wagner. If you train your muscles to only sing Wagner, you lose the beauty of your sound and you will no longer be able to sing a lullaby.” She then pointed again to the center circle for emphasis.

Every day you start at “vocal kindergarten.” If you do, you will be able to sing farther and farther out to these circles and retain the beautiful core of your sound. But, I will not let you leave my studio unable to sing a lullaby.<sup>65</sup>

Listening to the Turkish mother in Köln sing a simple lullaby to her baby with her untrained voice had affected JoAnn emotionally during her Fulbright studies. Years of observations illustrated that refined voices without a vocal core did not emotionally touch an audience, while those with vocal core could produce profound effects. JoAnn knew the value of building advanced techniques from a “balance point.”<sup>66</sup> Forcing technique through vocal tension was short term at best, and she intended to have students continue singing “when they were 60.” She illustrated the idea of vocal core or balance point with a picture of a dog, balancing on top of a ball on one toe, while juggling many objects. “This is singing,” she said of the picture, then pointed to the toe on the ball, “and this is the balance point of the voice.”<sup>67</sup>

JoAnn had students in her studio with little or no previous training. Some had sung at church or in school choirs but without private lessons. JoAnn used the same foundational principles with these students. She did not care whether a student was

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<sup>65</sup> Recollection of the author from her study with JoAnn Ottley at the University of Utah from 1991-1994.

<sup>66</sup> JoAnn sometimes referred to vocal core as a balance point.

<sup>67</sup> Recollection of the author from her study with JoAnn Ottley at the University of Utah from 1991-1994.

studying singing as a vocation or avocation, she loved to see their “eyes light up” when they experienced “ah-ha” moments, and often observed positive effects in other aspects of their lives. Students who at first seemed to “disappear into a corner” became more confident in interpersonal interactions.<sup>68</sup>

Denise Farrington entered JoAnn’s studio without formal voice training. An older, non-traditional student, Farrington had previously met JoAnn in a professional setting, but was intimidated being her voice student, and felt JoAnn was “way above her.”<sup>69</sup> She came to her first lesson, saw JoAnn smiling as she elegantly sat at the piano, and was afraid to sing. She knew she “only had a choir voice,”<sup>70</sup> and thought JoAnn might not want to be her teacher. JoAnn, unaware of Farrington’s fear, knew of the woman’s talent and reputation as a pianist and was confident she would make a fine music educator. JoAnn did not categorize students in importance based on their vocal proficiency or ability to sing operatic roles and win contests. She believed each voice had the capacity to move the singer and audience. She guided Farrington with the same care as students who were performance majors.

Time was appropriated before and during each lesson to build relationships. Personal connections with students fostered a sense of trust and provided a safe environment for the lesson, and supported JoAnn’s theory that singing could not be

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<sup>68</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author with JoAnn Ottley and Denise Farrington, Salt Lake City, UT, June 29, 2017.

<sup>69</sup> Denise Farrington, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, June 28, 2017.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.



separated from life experiences. JoAnn learned about her students' backgrounds, families, passions, sorrows, and difficulties. Students who thrived vocally tended to thrive in other aspects of life, and vice-a-versa. JoAnn's interest and concern for her students was sincere, and extended beyond her studio's walls.

### Teaching Additional Courses

In addition to applied voice lessons, JoAnn taught other courses (e.g., Singer's Diction). JoAnn's classroom teaching style was cooperative, using activities rather than lectures. She guided and facilitated student exploration. After each activity, JoAnn asked students to share thoughts about the experience and would incorporate all student responses.

Though experimental and participatory in approach, JoAnn provided clear feedback in classes. During a diction class lesson focused on pronouncing German vowels, the students were saying words containing the sound [e].<sup>71</sup> Students read a passage from Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, "Ewig hin der Liebe Glück,"<sup>72</sup> first as a group and then individually. JoAnn was kind and encouraging, but exacting. She corrected each

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<sup>71</sup> [e] is the IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet) symbol for the long "a" sound in the English word "cake." However, in German, it is more closed than in English, making it sound closer to the IPA symbol [i] as in the English word "feet".

<sup>72</sup> Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *The Magic Flute*, 1791, libretto by Emanuel Schikaneder., K. 620, second line of Pamina's aria, "Ach ich fühls".

student until the [e] was bright enough to match a true German pronunciation. The mood in the class remained light-hearted throughout the corrections.<sup>73</sup>

As in her private voice lessons, JoAnn used metaphors and stories in her classroom teaching. For example, many students first pronounced the [a] vowel<sup>74</sup> in the German word “nacht” with too forward a placement. JoAnn gave the example of listening to housewives when she lived in Germany. “In America when housewives gathered to gossip it would sound like, ‘Pick a little, talk a little, pick a little.’” JoAnn imitated the fast, whiny, and nasally sound of the housewives portrayed in Meredith Willson’s *The Music Man*.<sup>75</sup> “When we lived in Germany, however, the housewives would gather and say, ‘Ah! Oh!’” JoAnn’s vocal timbre darkened, and her words were slower. Through these activities, student pronunciation improved and class morale remained high.<sup>76</sup>

JoAnn taught Italian pronunciation rules to assist students in deciphering Italian text. She provided a version of the story *The Three Bears* written in English, but using Italian phonetic rules.<sup>77</sup> As students read it out loud, using Italian pronunciation rules to

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<sup>73</sup> Recollection of the author, student in JoAnn Ottley’s Diction Class at the University of Utah, 1992-93.

<sup>74</sup> [a] is the IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet) symbol for short “o” sound in the English word “hot”. However, in German, it has a darker, oropharyngeal sound than the brighter, more forward English pronunciation.

<sup>75</sup> Meredith Willson (1902-1984), “Pick a Little” from *The Music Man*, produced in 1954.

<sup>76</sup> Recollection of the author, student in JoAnn Ottley’s Diction Class at the University of Utah, 1992-93.

<sup>77</sup> See Appendix C for a copy of *Di Tri Berrese* student handout.

guide them, the story took shape and gained meaning. Students laughed as they applied Italian phonetic skills to unlock the passage.<sup>78</sup>

### Life Transitions and Family Influences

As their children grew, JoAnn's maternal responsibilities eased somewhat. Jerry's niece moved to Hawaii, and seventeen-year-old Allison spent six months living with her. Brent moved to Los Angeles to pursue a career in the recording music industry, so, Jerry and JoAnn had the house to themselves.<sup>79</sup>

The void left by lessening familial responsibilities soon filled with other pursuits. Her work with the Tabernacle Choir expanded. JoAnn continued providing choir members private sessions to address vocal issues and diverse problems. JoAnn also coached those selected as soloists in the choir, sometimes getting them ready for the cameras. She helped prepare a small contingency of 94 choir members who participated in a nationally televised U.S. Constitution commemorative program in 1987. That same year, the Tabernacle Choir performed in Dallas for the "We the People" concerts honoring the bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution. They also sang with guest conductor, Robert Shaw,<sup>80</sup> at the Teton Festival (Teton Village, Wyoming).<sup>81</sup> JoAnn was given

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<sup>78</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 22, 2014.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Robert Shaw (1916-1999) was considered the Patriarch of choral music in the United States, raising the standard nationwide and transforming the art form. [www.bach-cantatas.com/Bio/Shaw-Robert.htm](http://www.bach-cantatas.com/Bio/Shaw-Robert.htm), accessed June 10, 2017.

<sup>81</sup> Jerold Ottley, TAB Choir History, unpublished, personal papers of JoAnn Ottley.

many opportunities to sing solos with the choir, “a privilege that began long before Jerry became director.<sup>82</sup> A solo with the full Tabernacle Choir singing behind her remained among the most profound performing experiences of JoAnn’s career.<sup>83</sup>

Though the children were out of town, assisting her parents was time consuming and required JoAnn to maintain a sparse performance schedule. She only sang solos with the Tabernacle Choir, a recital at Temple Square with Mikael Eliassen accompanying, an all Bach program with the Salt Lake Chamber Ensemble, a *Messiah* Sing-in with the Utah Symphony, and *Carmina Burana* with Ballet West.<sup>84</sup>

Jerry’s mother, Alice Ottley, died in 1988, adding to the burden of sorrow JoAnn felt as she wrestled with her mother’s illness and father’s grief. Her work with the choir helped ease the strain. The Tabernacle Choir toured the Pacific Rim, New Zealand, and Australia from June 14—July 5, 1988. The tour included Laie and Honolulu in Hawaii; Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington, and Christchurch in New Zealand; Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth, and Sidney in Australia. The tour concluded with the choir representing the United States at the World Expo ’88 in Brisbane.<sup>85</sup> A trip highlight for JoAnn was visiting New Zealand, where she met many of the people Jerry knew when he lived there

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<sup>82</sup> Jerold JoAnn Ottley, notes to author, unpublished, April 19, 2018.

<sup>83</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, June 20, 2016.

<sup>84</sup> JoAnn Ottley, “Performance Log,” *Essays*, unpublished, Salt Lake City, UT, 2002.

<sup>85</sup> Jerold Ottley, TAB Choir History, unpublished, personal papers of JoAnn Ottley.

as a teenager and an LDS missionary. JoAnn could see the love the local church members still held for him.<sup>86</sup>

The concerts included duets featuring JoAnn and Heidi McKay, Iaian McKay's wife. Iaian was from New Zealand, and was the consul to New Zealand from Utah. Heidi had become a well-known singer when they first married and lived there.<sup>87</sup> Standing in front of the choir, hearing the power of their voices joining hers and Heidi's, thrilled JoAnn. The choir seemed "a sea of giants," and their service through music immeasurable. These "gifted, funny, dedicated people," she later mused, "would walk to the moon on ground glass if asked."<sup>88</sup>

The following year, JoAnn continued teaching at the university, coaching the choir, and keeping solo performances at a minimum. She sang Mahler's *Symphony No. 2* with the Utah Symphony and was a featured soloist at the Music Teachers National Association (MTNA) in March.<sup>89</sup> Helping her parents was increasingly exhausting.<sup>90</sup> Brent surprised his parents by moving back to Utah from Los Angeles with his musical partner, now fiancé, Joan Housel. They married in Salt Lake City on April 29, 1989 and lived with Jerry and JoAnn a brief time until they established themselves and moved into

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<sup>86</sup> JoAnn Ottley, quoted by Bonita Cross.

<sup>87</sup> JoAnn Ottley, Tabernacle Choir tour notes for author, unpublished, November 7, 2014.

<sup>88</sup> JoAnn Ottley, quoted by Bonita Cross.

<sup>89</sup> JoAnn Ottley, "Vita, 1993," unpublished, in the personal papers of JoAnn Ottley.

<sup>90</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, February 19, 2017.

a duplex. Allison was also home, so it was a full house again. That summer, JoAnn sang a concert of Mozart with the Utah Symphony.<sup>91</sup>

Though Brent and JoAnn had continued their “deep, recreational, conversations about ideas”<sup>92</sup> through letters and telephone calls while he lived in California, she was happy to have him near again. Brent, an avid reader, finished “about ten books to every one book” of JoAnn’s. Just as in *Songmaster*,<sup>93</sup> many ideas in the books Brent recommended influenced JoAnn’s perceptions of singing and increased her growing sense of its importance. Pondering ideas was JoAnn’s favorite pastime, and eased the emotional burden felt over her mother’s illness.<sup>94</sup>

Melba’s Alzheimer’s disease progressed drastically. JoAnn kept her solo singing close to home and limited local concerts to only four performances for the year so she could assist with her mother’s care, but did complete a summer tour to Israel with the choir. JoAnn found an adult day care center for her mother to provide her father a respite from the demands of being a caregiver. Melba, though, was miserable there without George, and they discontinued the service after only three days. JoAnn asked one nurse at the facility how the family would know if it was time to have others take over her

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<sup>91</sup> JoAnn Ottley, “Vita, 1993,” unpublished, in the personal papers of JoAnn Ottley.

<sup>92</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, July 1, 2017.

<sup>93</sup> Orson Scott Card, *Songmaster*, Dell Publishing, New York City, NY, 1980.

<sup>94</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, February 19, 2017.

mother's care. The nurse said her experience with long-term cases usually culminated with an event which made it clear the family could no longer provide sufficient care.<sup>95</sup>

Though George was depleted—and JoAnn could only help when not teaching, coaching, or performing—Melba seemed happiest at home. Jerry helped when possible. Sometimes, JoAnn found ways her mother could experience activities that used to bring her joy, like baking cookies. They would make them at JoAnn's house, with JoAnn guiding Melba's hand as she stirred the batter. Melba's face emanated joy the minute George walked through the door to pick her up and his face always lit up as well. Melba had loved leading the songs in Primary before she became ill, so, when George, Melba, JoAnn, and Jerry attended a family reunion picnic, JoAnn stood behind her mother and moved Melba's hand as she conducted the family singing Primary songs together. Melba beamed, as did George.<sup>96</sup> The deep love JoAnn had observed between her parents since a child never dimmed, even while enduring Melba's grave illness.<sup>97</sup>

### Something is Wrong Here

JoAnn assigned students repertoire based on vocal growth and university requirements. Upon reaching junior status at the university, students could opt for Opera Workshop instead of choir. The opera class met three afternoons per week and each quarter culminated with a concert of opera scenes. These scenes added repertoire

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<sup>95</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, July 1, 2017.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, March 30, 2018.

requirements for students which sometimes exceeded current abilities and slowed vocal progress. JoAnn worried that student vocal growth was being inhibited by singing music beyond current capabilities. To assist students, she would listen for notes in the assigned aria where the voice aligned, bring this to the student's attention, and then work to expand the sensation of balance point through these pieces.

JoAnn did not believe opera should be the goal of singing, viewing the genre as one small point in a rich landscape of musical possibilities. The university vocal program focused on opera, whether or not a student was a candidate for such a career path. Vocal music education majors received fewer applied lessons for their degrees, which impeded their progress.<sup>98</sup> JoAnn's music education student, Denise Farrington, was nearing completion of her degree. Farrington worried about the jury and recital requirements. Knowing the difficulty many instrumentalists often experienced during sing without the ability to "hide behind their instrument,"<sup>99</sup> JoAnn worked carefully with Farrington on performance practice as well as singing, and Farrington had passed every jury. Music Education majors were required to give one half a voice recital, but for a student such as Farrington, without prior singing experiences, the requirement was daunting. JoAnn aligned herself with Farrington's goals, chose appropriate repertoire, guided her vocal and performance techniques, eased her stress through Educational Kinesiology, and capitalized on her strength as a fine musician.<sup>100</sup> Farrington felt supported and

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<sup>98</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 8, 2014.

<sup>99</sup> Denise Farrington and JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, June 29, 2017.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid.



encouraged. She never felt JoAnn treated her as less than the students who were focused on singing careers. JoAnn was as proud of Farrington's vocal accomplishments as she was of her vocal performance majors who were singing opera and winning contests.<sup>101</sup>

JoAnn grew disenchanted with vocal competitions. Their focus as an avenue for a professional career troubled her. She was uncomfortable with singers only being successful at someone else's expense. In 1991, two of her students were recognized in competitions: Jennifer Hill won the Sylvia Lerner Wolman award at the Metropolitan Opera Utah Auditions, and took first place in the College Division of the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) Auditions. Tanja Dunaway took second place. The singers were excited about winning, but those who did not win felt they had failed. With many competing and few winning, the chance of failure was high. Many students, talented enough to pursue professional singing goals, lost their love of singing as the stress of perfection and ambition stripped away singing's inherent benefits.<sup>102</sup>

JoAnn was equally troubled by the university system bias to find the one student within 1000 students who possessed the ability to compete for a professional operatic career—a career where only one in 10,000 might succeed. Her student Julie Reynolds had the voice for an opera career, but not the petite body size required in the brutally competitive world of professional opera. It was so discouraging to Reynolds, that even after the joy of discovering her beautiful sound, winning high-level competitions, and

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<sup>101</sup> Denise Farrington, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, June 28, 2017.

<sup>102</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, June 2, 2017.

singing in Gratz, Austria, she stopped singing altogether. JoAnn was saddened by the limited choices given to singers who loved to sing, but had nowhere to share their gifts.<sup>103</sup>

### Implementing Changes

Hoping to offset the unrealistic career mindset propagated by the university system, JoAnn used a self-evaluation form created by Ardean Watts with her students. The evaluation asked students to rate their singing according to diverse criteria—from musicianship skills to vocal technique and desire. She told the students it was “multiplication by zero.” If one of the areas had a zero, she suggested they find another profession. A student could have the most supreme talent and training, but without a desire for the life of a professional opera singer, the profession would not offset the sacrifices required. JoAnn was a case in point. Although she had enjoyed a rich, illustrious singing career, she was now choosing to accept fewer opportunities. JoAnn relied on her system of concentric circles to remain spiritually aware of her own identity, thus, preventing “terrible errors” in her life’s work. Even a little desire to sing was enough to make the pursuit worthwhile for a student, but JoAnn knew from personal experience the choices were difficult and did not match the current university paradigm.

One of the LDS general authorities, Elder Boyd K. Packer,<sup>104</sup> spoke against the music profession in an address at BYU, warning musicians they risked giving their all to

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<sup>103</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, June 29, 2017.

<sup>104</sup> Like missionaries, LDS General Authorities are titled Elder, signifying their Priesthood rank and the great responsibility of being leaders of the church. Male members who do not hold such a position are titled Brother and women members are titled Sister. Those who preside over an organization are called

the wrong cause. Quoting the Catholic theologian Thomas Merton,<sup>105</sup> Packer said, “What of the musician who climbs the ladder to success one rung at a time, only to discover it is leaning against the wrong wall?” Many Mormon musicians were upset by the remarks. In the subsequent discussions JoAnn heard among LDS musicians concerning Elder Packer’s remarks, “there was not one conversation about alternatives.” JoAnn kept thinking, “Someone needs to build a different wall!”<sup>106</sup>

While she pondered professional and academic perplexities, JoAnn incorporated her developing understanding of singing’s intrinsic value within her teaching. She continued to work with all levels of students regardless of goals or abilities, realizing not everyone could sing professionally, but everyone’s singing held value.

JoAnn utilized her studio master classes as a forum to introduce and explore concepts that extended beyond the scope of weekly voice lessons.<sup>107</sup> These occasional master classes during the quarter brought her voice students together in a classroom in Gardner Hall.<sup>108</sup> One master class focused on subtext and communication. Everyone stood in a circle, including JoAnn. With no introductory explanation, JoAnn turned to the student on her right and spoke in animated gibberish. Then combining large gestures and

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President, whether their church service calling is as the president of a ward organization like Relief Society or the president of the entire church.

<sup>105</sup> Thomas Merton (1915-1968) is considered one of the most influential Catholic writers of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. [www.catholiccompany.com/getfed/thomas-merton-influential-catholic-writer/](http://www.catholiccompany.com/getfed/thomas-merton-influential-catholic-writer/). Accessed May 17, 2018.

<sup>106</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, June 17, 2017.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Gardner Hall is the music building at the University of Utah.

gibberish, she guided that student to share the message to the next student in the circle. This continued until the message traveled to each person in the circle and finally back to JoAnn. After the exercise, JoAnn led a discussion that allowed students to share their experiences during the exercise. She applied those ideas to singing subtext. “If the piece means something specific to you,” she concluded, “it will mean something to your audience, even when you sing in a language they don’t understand.” By developing clear subtext for a song, singers created context for audience members to experience shared, though varied emotional, connection to the piece.<sup>109</sup>

Two master classes were based on principles from Educational Kinesiology.<sup>110</sup> The pressure and stress felt by voice students striving for vocal perfection often created blocks to learning. According to Educational Kinesiology, each side of the brain controls specific aspects of cognition. In the first class, JoAnn explained the varied roles of the right and left sides of the brain. Both sides need to work together for optimal brain function, with the impulses of the brain crossing the meridian between them in the brain. Individuals are usually right- or left-brain dominant, much like being right- or left-handed. When a person experiences stress, the dominant side overrides the other. If one side overpowers the other, either analysis or emotion are sacrificed. Any form of external stress can trigger this internal stress response, making it difficult to gain insights, accept new knowledge, or find those “ah-ha” moments so crucial to voice development. When

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<sup>109</sup> Recollections by the author of JoAnn Ottley’s studio classes, University of Utah Music Department, Salt Lake City, UT, 1991-1994.

<sup>110</sup> Brain Gym International. <http://www.braingym.org/> accessed June 17, 2017.

this phenomenon is triggered by performance, it is difficult for the singer to combine technique and meaning while singing. Integrating both sides of the brain through physical movements intended to generate brain activity across the meridian enhances learning and performance.<sup>111</sup>

JoAnn's university students were more open to innovative ideas than the Tabernacle Choir members, so JoAnn could openly teach non-traditional concepts and include her sources. After guiding the students through various Educational Kinesiology exercises, providing time for note taking, and explaining the purpose and theories, she gave an assignment. Students were to do the Educational Kinesiology warm up exercises before every voice lesson and personal practice session to further the mind/body connection she believed crucial to wholeness in singing, bring their master class handout with them to lessons, arrive five minutes early and execute the exercises before their lesson began.<sup>112</sup> They could do this in the hallway before coming in, or they could come in the studio and do the exercises during the completion of the lesson before. JoAnn asked for feedback from students as they utilized the exercises. She wanted to know any perceived differences, improvements, negative responses, or "if nothing seemed to change at all."<sup>113</sup>

Throughout her singing career, JoAnn regarded "praise, criticisms or even silence as clues to guide [her] next steps toward improvement." JoAnn welcomed the same clues from her students. She was unafraid to present information outside of standard vocal

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<sup>111</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 22, 2014.

<sup>113</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, June 2, 2017

education and gather honest student feedback. The kitchen philosopher who “made loaves” from the “crumbs” she gathered from her husband’s education was accustomed to synthesizing disparate sources of information and thinking “outside of the box.” If her experiment with Educational Kinesiology did not have the positive effect she expected, she would abandon it and look elsewhere.

The feedback given by students after using Educational Kinesiology in their practices, lessons, and performances was overwhelmingly positive. The students found the addition of Educational Kinesiology effective for their vocal progress and reduced perceived stress concerning musical and technical difficulties. A side benefit was realized as students did the warm up exercises during other student’s lessons. A comradery developed among JoAnn’s university students that had not previously existed.

### A Perfect Storm

Daughter Allison married on June 1, 1991. Despite her busy schedule teaching at the University, coaching the Tabernacle Choir, performing, and caring for her parents, JoAnn made Allison’s wedding gown. Allison looked like an angel that day. Sewing her daughter’s wedding dress brought back memories of her own wedding, Melba’s tiny hand-stitches hemming the full skirt of JoAnn’s going away dress. Now, both children were married, and Melba, though fragile and ill, remained a force of love in JoAnn’s life.

The Tabernacle Choir toured Central and Eastern Europe that summer. The three-week tour included performances in ten cities spread through seven countries.<sup>114</sup> JoAnn’s

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<sup>114</sup> Jerold Ottley, “TAB Choir History,” Salt Lake City, UT, unpublished, date unknown.

work as vocal coach had continued unabated the year before, even as she tackled new teaching challenges and her mother's increasing needs. JoAnn was grieving and tired, but the trip, though busy and demanding, refreshed her. It was wonderful to work with Jerry and enjoy his company while surrounded by their choir community. JoAnn especially enjoyed the performances in historic venues. The choir sang in the *Musikverein* in Vienna, Smetana Hall in Prague, and the Berlin *Schauspielhaus*.<sup>115</sup> In Moscow they sang in the Bolshoi Opera House, and Leningrad's Philharmonia Hall. Moscow, in 1991, was bleak and affected JoAnn deeply. She saw people waiting in line, hoping for a chance to buy a mealy apple. One choir member gave an apple from her lunch to one of the people in the street, who accepted the gift with overwhelming gratitude. The country was in desperate times and their people were suffering. When the choir returned home after the tour, JoAnn went to the grocery store. She looked at the abundance of fruit and vegetables and began to cry, knowing the terrible need of the people she had seen in Moscow. She took her parents apples, and though her mother's health had declined further while JoAnn was in Europe, JoAnn was grateful she could meet her parents' needs in small ways, like bringing apples.<sup>116</sup>

Feeling "part blown glass and part Mack truck"<sup>117</sup> after the emotional highs and lows of the previous year, JoAnn returned to the University of Utah Fall 1991 Quarter.<sup>118</sup> Her student, Anne Riggio, won first place in the Utah division of the San Francisco

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<sup>115</sup>JoAnn Ottley, Tabernacle Choir Tour Notes for author, unpublished, November 7, 2014.

<sup>116</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, July 3, 2017.

<sup>117</sup> JoAnn Ottley, notes for life history, unpublished, date unknown. See Appendix D.

Opera Competition, receiving the Merola Scholarship, along with the Sullivan Grant. This guaranteed Riggio main stage opera roles with the Utah Opera. JoAnn's studio had achieved a reputation for producing contest winners, but after the previous year, she "had no passion for contests."<sup>119</sup>

It was during this quarter that the event predicted by the adult day care nurse transpired. Melba fell and severely hurt her arm. George and JoAnn realized they could no longer meet Melba's needs, and the family moved her to an assisted living facility. LaRue visited when she felt well enough, and JoAnn came as often as possible, but though Melba was no longer at home, "Melba and George continued their love affair."<sup>120</sup> George was there with his wife every day.

Melba and George were loving to the end. One day, JoAnn saw her mother reach over and wiggle George's toe as she often had throughout their life together. It was her show of affection. JoAnn's father smiled, and said to his wife, "OK, mom, I will give you 6 months and I want you to come and twiddle my toe." JoAnn knew he meant it. He fully intended to follow his wife in death as soon as possible after she was gone.<sup>121</sup>

In December, JoAnn and LaRue were together with Melba and George before JoAnn left for a performance. LaRue went home when JoAnn left for the concert; both women intended to return after the performance. After the concert, JoAnn stopped home to change clothes before returning to the care center. "She and LaRue left together to find

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<sup>119</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, July 1, 2017.

<sup>120</sup> Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes for author, unpublished, April 19, 2018.

<sup>121</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, June 2, 2017.



some food. When they returned, Jerry met them with the news that Melba had passed away.”<sup>122</sup> JoAnn went to her mother’s bedside immediately, still wearing her floor-length, white evening gown. Her ninety-year-old mother’s pain was over, but the family’s grief was intense.<sup>123</sup>

JoAnn and Jerry helped George and LaRue move into a mobile home together. LaRue was in constant pain with her back and neck, and it was too difficult for her to manage on her own. A few months after Melba died, George was diagnosed with prostate cancer. His doctor told him increasing his intake of fruits and vegetables was important. Always the comedian, he made light of the situation by quipping to JoAnn “I thought I’d better call you and see if I have enough time left to buy any green bananas?”<sup>124</sup> JoAnn became his caretaker, as she had her mother’s. George’s health “went steadily downhill,” but despite the cancer, the six-month deadline he had given his wife came and went without Melba coming to “twiddle his toe.” He was “mad as a wet hen” that she didn’t come to get him.<sup>125</sup>

### Finding the Question

The reviews her students gave after applying Brain Gym to their practice and lessons remained overwhelmingly positive, but it seemed to JoAnn she had only

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<sup>122</sup> Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes for author, unpublished, April 19, 2018.

<sup>123</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview with author, Salt Lake City, UT, June 3, 2017.

<sup>124</sup> Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes for author, unpublished, April 19, 2018.

<sup>125</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, June 2, 2017.

“scratched the surface.” JoAnn had long believed that “no experience in life is unrelated to singing,”<sup>126</sup> but now wondered if singing might be integral to life itself. Brent continued sharing books with her which they discussed at length.<sup>127</sup> Brent and Joan had moved to Oregon and he was studying Chinese Medicine as a doctoral student. JoAnn read one of his Chinese medical texts and became fascinated with the view of the body’s energy system. She read a biography about Alfred Wolfsohn,<sup>128</sup> who created a therapy to cure himself of shell shock after World War I<sup>129</sup> and then disseminated it to others. His Primal Scream Therapy combined vocalization with the psychology of Carl Jung.<sup>130</sup> JoAnn also read articles and listened to audio recordings about Voice Movement Therapy, developed by Paul Newham, never realizing he based his therapeutic practice on the work of Wolfsohn.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> JoAnn Ottley, presentation Music Circle, Salt Lake City “My Career”, unpublished, presented October 25, 2004.

<sup>127</sup> JoAnn Ottley, notes for the author, “Sources,” unpublished, October 14, 2014.

<sup>128</sup> Alfred Wolfsohn (1896-1962), combined vocalization with the psychology of Carl Jung, “A Brief History of Voice Movement Therapy,” *IAVMT: International Association of Voice Movement Therapy*, [www.iavmt.org/history.html](http://www.iavmt.org/history.html), accessed June 17, 2017.

<sup>129</sup> Shell Shock was the term used after WWI for extreme psychological illness after being in combat. The same condition was called Combat Stress Reaction (CSR), or Battle Fatigue in WWII. Regardless of name, the condition was considered a manifestation of cowardice or weakness in the sufferer. As a result of research focused on Vietnam War Veterans, Holocaust Survivors and sexual trauma victims, the diagnostic term Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) was adopted in 1980. PTSD is now recognized as long-term psychological damage resulting from trauma and not a personality weakness. [www.ptsd.va.gov/public/ptsd-overview/basics/history-of-ptsd-vets.asp](http://www.ptsd.va.gov/public/ptsd-overview/basics/history-of-ptsd-vets.asp), accessed June 17, 2017.

<sup>130</sup> Carl Jung, 1875-1961, developed Analytic Psychology which used archetypes and dreams to explore the inner self. [www.britannica.com/biography/Carl-Jung](http://www.britannica.com/biography/Carl-Jung), accessed June 17, 2017.

<sup>131</sup> Paul Newham (1962- ) developed Voice Movement Therapy based on the work of Alfred Wolfsohn, “A Brief History of Voice Movement Therapy,” *IAVMT: International Association of Voice Movement Therapy*, [www.iavmt.org/history.html](http://www.iavmt.org/history.html), accessed June 17, 2017.

JoAnn’s study led her to wonder about the potential for healing and creation from frequencies of the human voice.

She remembered a cartoon based on a verse from Genesis. The caption began, “And God said:” then a complicated mathematical formula was pictured, followed by, “And there was light!”<sup>132</sup>

The cartoon took new meaning and seemed to confirm her growing sense that singing was fundamentally connected to all life. One day, as she considered this possibility, she sketched a planet and star on a piece of paper, then jotted the words from Genesis next to it. “And God said let there be light, and there was light.”<sup>133</sup> Convinced of the inherent power in the human voice, JoAnn circled the word “said,” and wrote “frequencies” next to it.<sup>134</sup>

Knowing his mother sought more information and a deeper understanding of the human voice, Brent gave JoAnn a copy *Turning Point* by physicist Fritjof Capra book.<sup>135</sup> The book was densely written and without previous study in physics, it felt like “doing calculus before basic addition.” Though JoAnn made slow progress, she persevered, fascinated by the author’s observations of the physical world and the importance of vibration “in the scientific world of Einsteinian physics.”<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes for author, unpublished, April 19, 2018.

<sup>133</sup> Genesis 1:3, Old Testament, *Holy Bible*, King James Version.

<sup>134</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, June 2, 2017.

<sup>135</sup> Vienna born physicist Fritjof Capra has authored numerous books exploring the potential of physics to influence ecology. He asserts there are paradigm shifts occurring in science and society that change our understanding of reality and transform culture. “About,” *Fritjof Capra*, <http://www.fritjofcapra.net>, accessed June 17, 2017; and Fritjof Capra, *The Turning Point: Science, Society and the Rising Culture*, New York, NY, Simon & Schuster, 1982

<sup>136</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, July 1, 2017.

Capra's explanation of the New Physics changed her understanding of the world and ultimately of singing. She realized atoms were not the fundamental form of the material world, because atoms, like everything else, reduced finally to energy, which was vibration. "Waves and particles were not static," they were both vibratory and could change according to an observer's expectations. Everything in the perceived world was made of vibration. The world, perhaps the universe, was made of and held together by resonance.<sup>137</sup>

JoAnn had been experimenting with resonance during her entire performing career. She had been teaching resonance principles to students and choir members. She found her core of singing—that point of optimal resonance, the epicenter—and taught others to find theirs. Optimal resonance amplified the human voice without perceived effort.<sup>138</sup> To JoAnn, this phenomenon felt like being the eye of the storm, standing in a still, quiet space while her voice filled the space around her.<sup>139</sup> When her students felt their own optimal resonance the first time, the experience was shocking, and exhilarating, like, Julie Reynolds, eyes wide as she felt and heard her own magnified sound and asked, "Who is this masked woman?" Optimal resonance cannot be forced. It can be coaxed, explored, sought, and chased, but that magical alignment, the core of the voice, occurs of its own volition. The "ah-ha" moment.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 22, 2014.

<sup>138</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview with author, June 17, 2017.

<sup>139</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 22, 2014.

<sup>140</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 10, 2014.

Could it be optimal resonance vibrated with all of life? Was the physical and emotional response experienced by the audience an actual connection between the singer and the listener? When JoAnn sang in front of the Tabernacle Choir and felt surrounded by the power and devotion of their unified voices as they joined her own, was that a physical as well as emotional or spiritual reality? Was there no actual difference between physical, emotional, and spiritual experience? In the study of voice, JoAnn realized people were taught what to sing, how to sing, when to sing, where to sing, even who should sing, but no one was asking the most important question. Why sing?<sup>141</sup>

The Tabernacle Choir's trip to Israel provided a profoundly spiritual experience for JoAnn, confirming the ideas of physical and emotional connections. Standing next to their good friend, Truman Madsen, she watched Jerry conduct in front of the Garden Tomb. The choir sang,

Could 'ere such love and sorrow meet,  
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?  
Love so amazing, so divine,  
Commands my soul, my life, my all.<sup>142</sup>

Overcome with emotion, Madsen laid his head on JoAnn's shoulder and wept. Time seemed to cease and JoAnn was "swept away."<sup>143</sup> Watching Jerry conduct at the tomb was a moment she would cherish forever. "Nothing [would] ever touch that, nothing in a lifetime. Nothing!"<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, June 17, 2017.

<sup>142</sup> JoAnn Ottley, quoted by Bonita Cross.

<sup>143</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, February 19, 2017.

<sup>144</sup> JoAnn Ottley, quoted by Bonita Cross.

### Change in Direction

JoAnn accepted a promotion to Associate Professor at the University of Utah and was excited to implement her new understanding of singing with students. Early in September 1993, shortly before Autumn Quarter began, she was sitting in David Power's office for a faculty meeting. JoAnn said later of the meeting,

I was loving my job and my students. I didn't take advanced students until I finished my own singing career, I couldn't give them what they needed. I heard a plain voice, like someone sitting next to me, say, "You don't belong here." Like an inner dialogue, I answered, "What?" The message repeated. I spent the rest of that year trying to figure it out.<sup>145</sup>

The strong realization that she needed to move on was as clear as when she knew it was time to leave Germany, and as shocking as when she "received the spiritual manifestation that Jerry would one day conduct the Tabernacle Choir."<sup>146</sup> She kept questioning the inspiration, thinking, "What? Why? Everything is going great! I love my students. I love my colleagues. Why should I leave?" JoAnn decided to put the idea aside as she had no desire to resign.<sup>147</sup> Later, she confessed her thoughts during the meeting with Power, who said, "JoAnn, we will do everything it takes to keep you here including chaining you to the piano."<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, July 8, 2017.

<sup>146</sup> Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes to author, April 19, 2018.

<sup>147</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, July 8, 2017.

<sup>148</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, February 19, 2017. Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes to author, April 19, 2018.

JoAnn began to question the distinctions made between Art and High Art, wondering whether the refinement required for High Art made it better or just different.

What is fine art? Compared to what? I see art in a willow tree, in shower singing, hymn singing, a man singing while milking his cow. What is art? What is fine art? What is missing here? It is all art. We just need eyes to see and ears to hear, to recognize it without putting it down. The whole world is a topography, shifting like waves of a fun house.<sup>149</sup>

The culture of the university vocal area, and the culturally accepted parameters of a singing career, paled when compared to the deep meaning she perceived in music.

In *Turning Point*, Capra explored cultural paradigm shifts. JoAnn realized the current paradigm for singing limited the possibility for change. Despite implementing whole brain learning and fostering a sense of community with her students, winning a contest continued to prove the worth of one while disproving another. The Opera Workshop became a more integral part of the school's vocal major curriculum, further specializing the degree toward professional opera careers. This goal overshadowed the merits and needs of the other singers in the program. Students who were not in the small group capable of singing opera were in a constant state of anxiety as they tried to measure up to a model that which devalued their passion and talent. Students who had operatic career potential were in a constant state of anxiety as they wondered how they would manage upon graduating and beginning a singing career.<sup>150</sup>

JoAnn observed program graduates who viewed themselves as failures because singing could not provide a sufficient income. Two of JoAnn's students—Laurel James,

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<sup>149</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, June 1, 2017.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

who won the 1993 MET Auditions, and Jill Hawkes, who won 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the Westminster College Solo Competition—became frustrated with the futility of singing professionally while juggling familial responsibilities. Although consciously opting out of an operatic career, they were unable to find other manageable singing opportunities and found themselves teaching “housewives and high school students,” and giving an occasional recital for which they bore all expense. JoAnn imagined an army of singers just waiting.

That academic year, two married female students became so intoxicated by the potential of singing careers, they ignored all other aspects of their lives, to the point that both women’s husbands threatened divorce. JoAnn was deeply concerned about the negative behaviors these students developed as they became advanced singers. She told her family,

So many students are nearly going off the rails when they became itchy enough to want more, but by the time they are old enough to get really good, they are already married with children.<sup>151</sup>

It seemed to JoAnn the current paradigm for singing put “students in heat,” and impeded the greater purpose of singing.<sup>152</sup> She began to have concerns about the “inebriation of success” impairing the judgement of singers being trained under the current paradigm.

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<sup>151</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, June 1, 2017.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.



“So, Mom, are you passing out maps to a black hole?”<sup>153</sup> asked Brent as they discussed the problem. “Yes,” JoAnn admitted, “That is exactly how I feel.”<sup>154</sup>

Her greatest respite came from her personal study, though it often increased her philosophical concerns.<sup>155</sup> She continued reading *Turning Point*, “breaking up the difficult concepts with other books and articles less difficult to absorb.”<sup>156</sup> JoAnn considered other possible paradigms for singing careers and constantly thought “someone should build a better wall.” On an increasingly rare out-of-town solo singing engagement, as the plane circled the airport, JoAnn thought, “Is this the best way to do singing? What is the ideal way? If this wasn’t the best use of singing, what was?”<sup>157</sup> Many singers yearned to sing but nowhere to do so. Many individuals could benefit by hearing these singers, but had no access. “How can we get those who want to sing in front of those who want to hear?” she wondered.<sup>158</sup>

JoAnn surmised the world-wide faulty paradigm for singing exploited and minimized its inherent power.<sup>159</sup> She tried discussing her ideas with Power by sharing the evidence found in physics which linked singing to healing of singer and audience. He

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<sup>153</sup> Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes for author, unpublished, April 19, 2018.

<sup>154</sup> JoAnn Ottley, Handwritten notes for author, December 14, 2014.

<sup>155</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, June 2, 2017.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

<sup>157</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, July 3, 2017.

<sup>158</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, July 1, 2017.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

listened politely, then headed back to his studio for his next student, seemingly without much interest in what seemed revelatory to JoAnn.<sup>160</sup>

### Step Toward the Unknown

Her insights and concerns about the current state of vocal studies in higher education and the unhealthy demands and limits of an operatic career could not flourish in the university music curriculum's culture. As learned from reading *Turning Point*, a new paradigm created new culture. JoAnn's paradigm for singing had completely changed. She wanted the freedom to share that paradigm shift with others.<sup>161</sup>

Unsure of her direction toward sharing the paradigm shift, JoAnn attended the LDS Temple, while fasting and praying for inspiration and guidance. A few hours afterward, she "had an image of [herself] presenting workshops in many different environments."<sup>162</sup> She was not sure of the workshop details, but sensed they focused on the connections between New Physics and singing.<sup>163</sup>

Spring Quarter of 1994 was JoAnn's last quarter teaching at the University of Utah. She turned in her resignation mid-quarter, which was met with confusion by many. Her students working toward music degrees scrambled for acceptance by other voice professors in the department. Ed Thompson and several members of the faculty,

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<sup>160</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, June 12, 2017.

<sup>161</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, February 19, 2017.

<sup>162</sup> Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes for author, unpublished, April 19, 2018.

<sup>163</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, February 19, 2017.

including David Power did not want her to go. Those who firmly supported the current paradigm discounted her concerns, though all expressed respect for her results as a voice teacher, and her impressive singing career.<sup>164</sup>

During JoAnn's last month at the university, she was recognized with an alumni award from West High. In honor of her successful work as a university professor she was selected as the 1993-94 recipient of the Associated Students of the University of Utah (ASUU) Student Choice Award for Teaching Excellence (see Figure 8.2).

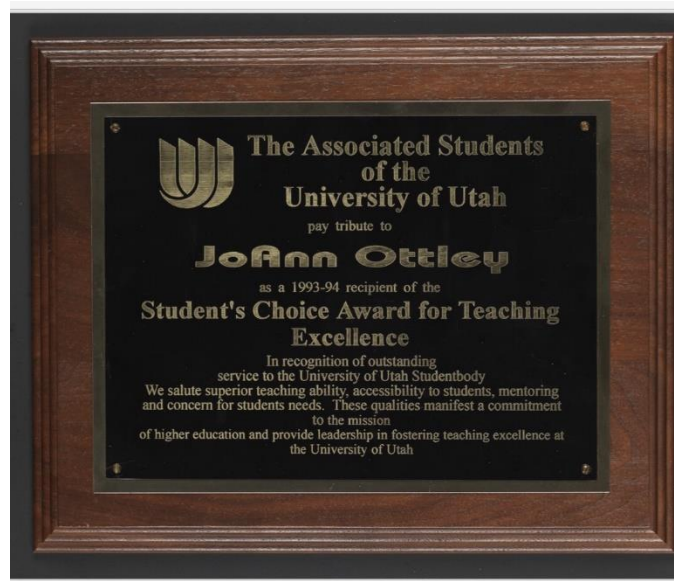


Figure 8.2: JoAnn Ottley, 1993-94 Student's Choice Award for Teaching Excellence, presented by The Associated Students of the University of Utah. Church History Library, [dcms.lds.org/delivery/dps\\_MS62421](https://dcms.lds.org/delivery/dps_MS62421). Used by permission

Regardless of her apparent success as a professor of voice, it was time to leave. It was time to answer her burning question—Why sing?

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<sup>164</sup> Recollections of author, student of JoAnn Ottley, 1991-1994.

## CHAPTER NINE

### Disseminating a New Paradigm (1994-1996)

Leaving the university without a clear plan for implementing her ideas required faith. JoAnn's anxiety was heightened by her colleagues' and students' shock and sadness at her upcoming departure. She constantly reassured students they would receive an excellent teacher as the search for her replacement began, but was acutely aware they would continue to be subjected to inadequacies within the current paradigm of vocal performance degree programs.

#### Developing a New Paradigm for Singing

Creating a new paradigm for singing meant defining and identifying aspects of the old. JoAnn was acutely aware of the inherent issues within the current view of professional singers as she completed her last quarter of university teaching. In a journal entry she wrote,

Higher education begins and ends by being given the presumption of, and training for, a professional career, which can set a student up for feelings of failure and disappointment when the career fails to materialize (as is the case in nearly every instance). NOTE: the odds of winning at Blackjack are 16% . . . much higher than for becoming a professional singer.<sup>1</sup>

JoAnn voiced the unspoken expectation she perceived in university music degree programs—few vocal performance majors would succeed in singing careers after

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<sup>1</sup> JoAnn Ottley, journal entry, unpublished, March 3, 1994

graduation, excluded by the implication of the old paradigm that “only geniuses need apply.”<sup>2</sup> This was in stark contrast to most other university disciplines, where students graduated with the needed skills for future employment. Music vocal performance majors graduated with few employment opportunities in their field, and most “felt like failures as soon as they received their diplomas.”<sup>3</sup>

JoAnn’s formal resignation added emotional upheaval to an already heavy spring-quarter load. Students completing their last semester before graduation always needed more guidance for required recitals than what weekly scheduled lessons could provide. As usual, JoAnn scheduled extra time for each student, celebrated their successes, and congratulated them on the accomplishment of graduating. She worried about the scarcity of viable employment options and singing opportunities available upon their departure from the university.<sup>4</sup>

JoAnn envisioned an organization of singers, which she called, “LifeSong,” working from the tenets of a new paradigm to create more opportunities for “those who needed to sing” to sing for “those who needed the singing.”<sup>5</sup> She doggedly continued her study of Capra’s *Turning Point* as she considered options for LifeSong.<sup>6</sup> Capra’s ground-

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<sup>2</sup> JoAnn Ottley, “Paradigms, Old and New,” personal papers of JoAnn Ottley, unpublished, 1994.

<sup>3</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, June 28, 2017.

<sup>4</sup> JoAnn Ottley, “LifeSong – Address List,” personal files of JoAnn Ottley, unpublished, February 18, 1994.

<sup>5</sup> JoAnn Ottley, “Paradigms, Old and New.”

<sup>6</sup> Fritjof Capra, *The Turning Point*.

breaking theories had led JoAnn to the concepts of New Physics<sup>7</sup> and its organizational and societal implications.<sup>8</sup> Applying New Physics to singing opened a realm of possibility where all the pieces JoAnn had discovered and collected within her broad study could coalesce. The current paradigm for vocal performance majors and professional opera singers—what to sing, where to sing, and when to sing—did not address what she believed as the most important question—“why sing?” JoAnn was certain the answer to that question would shape the new paradigm. She read voraciously in her search to “build a better wall” for singers.<sup>9</sup>

JoAnn’s self-directed study toward a new paradigm and the answer to her “why sing?” question ranged from fictional, metaphorical explorations of singing’s power found in Orson Scott Card’s *Songmaster*, to the non-fictional, *Soprano on her Head*, by Eloise Ristad.<sup>10</sup> Ristad challenged music conservatories’ widespread practices as

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<sup>7</sup> The New Physics, based on Einsteinian principles, posits all matter can be both a particle or a wave and changes form according to researcher expectations. Therefore, vibration is the most fundamental building block of creation and connects everything. The Oxford Dictionary defines New Physics as a branch of physics based on radically new principles or assumptions which require previous theories to be re-evaluated; novel and innovative physical theories or discoveries; specifically, the science of physics as it developed during the 20th cent. on the basis of theories transcending the concepts of classical Newtonian physics (as wave–particle duality, quantum mechanics, and relativity), [https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/new\\_physics](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/new_physics), accessed October 31, 2017.

<sup>8</sup> See Appendix E—JoAnn Ottley’s bibliography of sources used in her study of New Physics and creation of a new paradigm for singing.

<sup>9</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, June 17, 2017. JoAnn responded to a conference address by LDS general authority, Elder Boyd K. Packer where he spoke of climbing a ladder only to discover it was leaning against the wrong wall. She recognized this phenomenon occurring often for singers operating in the culture sustained by the old paradigm for singing, and thought to herself, “Somebody needs to build a new wall.”

<sup>10</sup> Eloise Ristad, *Soprano on her Head; Right Side Up Reflections on Life and Other Performances*, Real People Press, Moab, Utah, 1981.

damaging to music students' emotional well-being by breeding neurosis and stage-fright. Ristad offered a more holistic approach to vocal pedagogy and performance practice.

### Philosophical Influences

The concept of holons, found in Ken Wilbur's *A Brief History of Everything*, provided a structural approach for connecting the disparate ideas JoAnn encountered in her studies.<sup>11</sup> Rather than a linear development of ideas, the holon model emphasized growth "to transcend and include, meaning to include all that has been learned before—not sectioned as in a pie."<sup>12</sup> Wilbur visually represented holons as spheres, which grow and transcend, while including the former ideas in concentric circles. JoAnn viewed this as similar to how she maintained personal balance among the many elements of life throughout her singing and teaching career.

Accepting the old ideas or singing paradigm kept singers and music educators in a reactive state, always working within the belief system and consequent structure of tradition—the way things had always been. Understanding, deepened by questioning, could transcend the status quo and provide choices and possibilities not previously conceived, without excluding more traditional ideals.<sup>13</sup> JoAnn applied the model of

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<sup>11</sup> Ken Wilbur, *A Brief History of Everything*, 1996. Referenced by JoAnn Ottley, "Why Singing?," *Classical Singer*, p. 32-33, March 2004.

<sup>12</sup> Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes for author, unpublished, April 19, 2018.

<sup>13</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, October 20, 2017.

holons to singing. The question, “why sing?” did not exclude how, what, and where, but rather expanded and transcended that view.

JoAnn subscribed to a quarterly publication for several years titled, *The Open Ear*.<sup>14</sup> A paper by James Oshinsky,<sup>15</sup> published in the journal, resonated with JoAnn’s growing belief that music, and especially singing, was fundamentally more important to the human experience than previously realized. Perhaps “building a better wall” could benefit singers and the greater community.

The holon model helped JoAnn incorporate the greater value of singing by including the explanation of New Physics in her new paradigm. Throughout her career, audience members had shared with JoAnn a sense of being changed, lifted, or in some way healed by her singing. Vocal students and Tabernacle Choir members who arrived at a lesson or rehearsal feeling ill or stressed, often experienced physical and emotional relief from the act of singing and left the lesson renewed. JoAnn personally experienced

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<sup>14</sup> Pat Moffitt Cook, editor of *The Open Ear Journal*, email to author, October 29, 2017. The *Open Ear Journal* was a quarterly publication from Bainbridge Island: Open Ear Inc. between 1990-2004, which “highlighted the work of several researchers in each edition.” At the time of this writing Pat Moffitt Cook is director of the Open Ear Center; Sound and Music in Healthcare and Education (OEC) in Santa Fe, New Mexico. OEC, which began in Washington State in 1994 and moved to New Mexico in 2012, “provides workshops and training in applications of cross-cultural sound and music in healthcare and education.” [www.openearcenter.com](http://www.openearcenter.com); [openear@nwling.com](mailto:openear@nwling.com), accessed November 4, 2017.

<sup>15</sup> James Oshinsky, email to author, October 19, 2017. In 1994, James Oshinsky was a clinical psychologist, and “inspired by a group of musicians whose talents combined performance, education, and in some cases, healing. . . all associated with the saxophonist Paul Winter, and the ‘Music Village’ workshops.” Cellist, David Darling, subsequently founded an organization called, “Music for the People.” Oshinsky documented Darling’s work in the book, *Return to Child: Music for People’s Guide to Improvising Music and Authentic Group Leadership; Philosophy, Games and Techniques developed by David Darling, Bonnie Insull, Mary Knish and Participants of Music for People Workshops*, [mfp@musicforpeople.org](mailto:mfp@musicforpeople.org). Oshinsky also authored the “Workshop Leaders Guide” for “Music for People” and taught the concepts in an improvisation course at Adelphi University in New York. At the time of this writing, Dr. Oshinsky teaches improvisation workshops each summer in Long Island, New York. <http://www.music-from-the-heart.com>, accessed November 4, 2017.



the rejuvenating effects of singing—the euphoric sensation of being in the eye of the storm—powerful, yet effortless—while her voice swirled around her. She reasoned singers must receive more vibratory energy than the listener. However, the vibration of the human voice, combined with bone conduction, “electrically charged the brain, making it beneficial to the health and well-being of both.”<sup>16</sup>

Another New Physics concept, “energy follows intent,” contributed to the development of JoAnn’s new singing paradigm. All singers were equal, regardless of ability level or performance venue when the singer’s intention aligned with the expanded purpose of singing. A singer on the Metropolitan Opera stage (a “one” according to the old paradigm) and a singer considered “a “two” or even a “twelve,” were equally valuable, if the intent was to lift and serve the audience through the voice.<sup>17</sup>

### Initial Hurdles

JoAnn envisioned an organization based on her new paradigm for singing, which would promote the greater benefits of singing and offset the negligible chances of success as a professional singer. A community career could potentially accomplish both goals if the public was educated on the value inherent in singing.

Realizing an organization would require space and initial funding, she and Jerry moved into a beautiful home at 2982 Casto Lane, with an open room large enough to house a recital or a workshop. The space comprised most of the basement and was fully

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<sup>16</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, November 5, 2017.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

finished. Getting the grand piano into the basement recital space proved problematic, and required completely removing a large window. Once the piano was in place, however, the room was perfect for JoAnn's growing plans to create an organization based on her new paradigm.<sup>18</sup>

The new home was in a neighborhood with a Home Owners Association (HOA). The Ottleys had lived in the house only a short time when the HOA received complaints from neighbors. The complaints centered on the varied people arriving and leaving the Ottley home, who were mostly JoAnn's voice students. Once neighbors realized JoAnn was teaching at home, the complaints became more frequent. Jerry and JoAnn knew their plans would bring more people, often groups, and worried the HOA might block their efforts. The neighborhood's social climate grew more unfriendly and negatively affected the Ottley's daily activities. Jerry and JoAnn persevered and hoped the neighborhood pressure would ease once they had been there longer. The first large gathering in the home proved otherwise.<sup>19</sup>

A primary source of concern for JoAnn was the fear she observed in voice students who neared graduation with no plan for supporting themselves financially. A degree in vocal performance provided few employment avenues. It occurred to her if singers were not as concerned about income, it would reduce stress and allow them to explore other possibilities for their self-expression and service through song.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, November 5, 2017.

<sup>19</sup> Recollections of author.

<sup>20</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, November 5, 2017.

With that in mind, JoAnn and Jerry invited an Amway<sup>21</sup> representative to present the company's concept of direct selling to singers. On March 12, 1994, the Casto Lane basement JoAnn envisioned as a potential recital hall and meeting place was packed with singers waiting to hear the Ottley's ideas for creating income. They were not, however, prepared for the nature of the plan.<sup>22</sup>

JoAnn shared her hopes for the room to become a recital hall and workshop space. Jerry introduced the marketing idea as a potential way for musicians to help each other by joining forces in the endeavor and buying the majority of the household goods they already used through Amway. The Amway representative then gave a standard company sales presentation, which was not well-received, and the idea of creating a singers' network through Amway to generate funds was rejected.<sup>23</sup> The meeting was an overall negative experience for Jerry and JoAnn, who decided afterward it had been poorly conceived and presented.<sup>24</sup>

More complaints were made to the HOA concerning the gathering of people for the meeting, and against JoAnn's private teaching. JoAnn held a few small vocal workshops, which also upset the neighborhood. The Ottleys realized they would never be allowed to utilize their home for recitals or workshops, nor would they feel at home

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<sup>21</sup> Amway is an international direct selling business based on multi-level marketing concepts and providing an avenue to buy products directly from the manufacturer, presumably reducing the cost of household expenses. <http://www.amway.com/>, accessed April 8, 2018.

<sup>22</sup> Recollections of author.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, November 5, 2017.

amidst such hostile, petty neighbors. The situation became untenable with Jerry and JoAnn moving within one year.<sup>25</sup>

### First LifeSong Meeting

In February 1994, before leaving the university faculty, JoAnn compiled a list of 42 possible LifeSong participants. After completing her university teaching, adjusting to life changes, and collecting ideas for her new paradigm and LifeSong, she contacted the individuals on the list. Twenty-eight people expressed interest. These were invited to the first LifeSong meeting held on January 20, 1995.<sup>26</sup>

At the meeting, JoAnn presented her concerns regarding the generally-accepted paradigm for singing, which ultimately excluded most singers and was perpetuated by the current higher music performance approach. Her goal was to share ideas for a new paradigm and determine if support to create an organization dedicated to its perpetuation existed. Many in the room had not heard her concerns about the singing profession's accepted paradigm, her views implicating higher education music degrees for contributing to the profession's potentially destructive elements, or why she had left her university teaching.

She briefly explained the current paradigm's basic tenets and applied it to most university programs, which legitimized opera above other genres. Winning contests and securing roles in collegiate operatic productions were emphasized. This fostered

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<sup>25</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, November 5, 2017.

<sup>26</sup> JoAnn Ottley, "First LifeSong Meeting," *LifeSong Organizational Notebook*. Unpublished, 1994.

competition between students and linked self-worth and the act of singing to winning or losing. Eliminating students through competitive measures supported the main goal of vocal performance areas to search out the “one in a thousand” students capable of pursuing a professional operatic singing career. JoAnn labeled these students as “ones,” and remarked that music programs continued to collect tuition and raise the hopes of the “twos” and “threes.” JoAnn noted most of those assembled in her front room that day were “ones,” as she had been.<sup>27</sup>

After her introductory material, JoAnn’s presentation focused on the remote likelihood of succeeding as a professional opera singer. Likening the probability to success playing professional baseball, she shared the opinion of a major league pitcher. He was asked in an interview what he thought the chances were for others of succeeding in the sport as he had. He estimated it was about one in ten-thousand. JoAnn posited, “The odds for an opera singer, competing with all the other ‘ones’ from diverse universities and backgrounds are as remote as a major league pitcher. Only a few extraordinary students will be successful in the marketplace.”<sup>28</sup>

JoAnn concluded her edict against the current paradigm by explaining it required the singer be “younger than 30 years old, slim, good looking, and with a fully developed, appropriate repertoire.”<sup>29</sup> Financial resources sufficient to establish the career while the singer traveled for auditions and ill-paying initial singing engagements were necessary,

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<sup>27</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, June 28, 2017.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> JoAnn Ottley, “Paradigms, Old and New,” see Figure 9.1.

along with imagination, proficiency in several languages, the dedication to place career pursuits above all other aspects of life, and being “95% available” for any opportunity. Marriage, children, and close ties outside the career were considered an impediment. The singer’s voice teacher was considered indispensable, and singers were encouraged to be dependent on teachers during their careers. When professional singers were not singing, time would be spent seeking future singing engagements.<sup>30</sup>

JoAnn now presented her alternative paradigm—a broadened perspective of singing’s importance with a focus on service (see Figure 9.1.) This paradigm shift would create and validate options for vocal performance majors other than operatic careers. It would offer continued resources for singers who teach singing and redefine successful singing careers to include varied genres and community service. Thus, connecting “those who needed to sing with those who needed the singing.”<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, June 28, 2017.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

Old Paradigm	New Paradigm
Only geniuses need apply: (Profile: Unencumbered, perfect technique, under thirty, slim, good looking, fully developed appropriate repertoire, large voice, sufficient money to establish career, imagination, dedication, several languages, and 95% available.)	"Good enough" singers (as with teachers, doctors, engineers, etc.) are valuable, plentiful, eager, often powerful, and able to make a difference. That includes those outside the narrow profile outlined in "Old Paradigm."
There is important singing and there is unimportant singing.	Singing is important, including but not limited to professional singing.
Only "significant" artistic experiences are worthwhile since singing exists for artistic purposes. Art is the goal.	"Significant" artistic experiences include the simple ones where the act of singing serves humans at the level of their needs and desires.
Being married and/or a parent constitutes a penalty.	Being married and/or a parent should be considered an advantage, since expanded awareness and power are vital for singers.
In the pursuit of excellence as a singer, options become continuously more narrow, leading almost exclusively to opera. (See first item, above.)	There is much to be gained, by individuals and the community at large, by a broadening of options for singers.
Some basic questions from which advanced singers operate are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How can I get an audience to hear me?</li> <li>▪ How can I educate them to like what I want to sing?</li> <li>▪ How can I prove my superiority to my fellow singers (roles, auditions, competitions)?</li> </ul>	The basic questions from which singers might operate are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What is needed?</li> <li>▪ How can I help?</li> <li>▪ What do I need to learn in order to serve more effectively?</li> <li>▪ How can we as singers sustain and complement one another, mirroring one another's strengths, co-creating something of value?</li> </ul>
	When the mind (left brain) is consistently occupied with tasks beyond abilities, the heart cannot speak. To impress is good, to express and communicate is fundamentally valuable.
My teacher is the one and only.	The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.
There exists currently only a single model of focus and standard for comparison. It is the professional, operatic model.	There is need for an expanded, multi-faceted model for singing, practical and applicable in any singer's home community.
Higher education begins and ends by being given the presumption of, and training for, a professional career, which can set a student up for feelings of failure and disappointment when the career fails to materialize (as is the case in nearly every instance). NOTE: the odds of winning at Blackjack are 16%...much higher than for becoming a professional singer.	A reasonable, reality-based preparation would be for a "community career," with operatic career preparation geared toward the true percentage of qualified candidates (the genius from the first item, above). Since at present such preparation is unavailable, the cooperative efforts of community teachers and singers can do the job.

Figure 9.1: Paradigms—Old and New

The meeting was lively. Those attending discussed alternatives to current practices in higher education and other possible performance opportunities with the

paradigm shift. They brain-stormed specific programs the organization might offer and generated a business model (see Figure 9.2). The proposed organizational structure included paid area coordinators, certified private voice studios with teachers committed to the LifeSong philosophy, volunteer opportunities for singers, partnerships with organizations (e.g. schools and hospitals) where volunteer programs might be implemented, and an educational design for singers of all abilities. Singer education was designed to develop self-motivation rather than teacher dependency, and would require a commitment to pro bono service hours by teachers and singers participating in the program. Opportunities for accompanists and instrumentalists who understood and worked with LifeSong ideals were included.

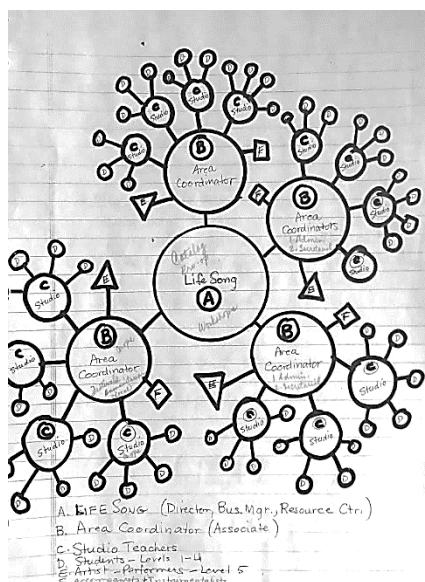


Figure 9.2: Proposed LifeSong Organizational Model<sup>32</sup>

<sup>32</sup> JoAnn Ottley, model of proposed *LifeSong* organizational structure, *LifeSong Planning Notebook*, unpublished, 1995-1997.



The vote was unanimous in support of the development of LifeSong and everyone present agreed to work toward its realization. JoAnn's only caveat—everyone participating in LifeSong would be required to complete the Level One Workshop—also met with approval. The Level One Workshop would explore the fundamental importance of singing and the new paradigm. JoAnn believed acceptance of the new paradigm by those involved with LifeSong as crucial for its ultimate success.

### Developing LifeSong

LifeSong was to be a resource for singers, which would offer workshops exploring the new paradigm, training for workshop facilitators, opportunities for singers of all abilities to improve—in a spirit of cooperation rather than competition—technical and performance skills, a business identity, a catalog of LifeSong programs, singer resources, and a directory of participants.<sup>33</sup>

On August 2, 1995, JoAnn set up a “Doing Business as *LifeSong Institute* (DBA)” bank account. She deposited \$7,100.00 of personal funds, which represented all her teaching money for the current year. She and Jerry had counted the money on their taxes as income, so she intended to leave only \$1000.00 in the account as “seed money” for the organization, but for now left it all in the DBA account.

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<sup>33</sup> JoAnn Ottley, “Notes from meeting with Charles Ulrich, October 26, 1995,” *LifeSong Planning Notebook*, unpublished, 1995-1997.

The following October, JoAnn met with their personal accountant, Charles Ulrich, who offered his advising services to *LifeSong* free of charge. JoAnn shared the business structure, organizational design, programs, and paradigm shift developed by the group at the first meeting. Ulrich reviewed the information and met with JoAnn the following month. His positive feedback further encouraged JoAnn. They discussed the legal details of achieving a non-profit status and the best processes to create a business entity without risking personal finances. Ulrich assured JoAnn that once she applied for the 501c3 status, *LifeSong* could collect dues without worrying they would be considered as personal income.<sup>34</sup>

The original group from the January 1995 meeting met several times, joined by other interested individuals. The group created an informal LifeSong board. All board members continued following their private and occupational pursuits while volunteering with LifeSong, including JoAnn who remained as coach for the Tabernacle Choir, taught private lessons, and continued performing.<sup>35</sup>

On March 27, 1996, the board met at the Ottley home to form teams for specific organizational areas (e.g. Research and Development, Marketing, Legal/Financial, and Administration). Teams were charged to develop a strategic plan which included six-month goals for their areas, an outline for three-month assignments toward reaching those goals, and a list of possible subdivisions related to their area. Each team had a

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<sup>34</sup> JoAnn Ottley, "Notes from meeting with Charles Ulrich, November 5, 1995," *LifeSong Planning Notebook*, unpublished, 1995-1997.

<sup>35</sup> See Appendix A for a comprehensive list of JoAnn Ottley's performances.

coordinator who reported directly to JoAnn. Rather than delegating the education element to a team, JoAnn retained sole responsibility, so she could continue developing LifeSong workshops.<sup>36</sup>

JoAnn organized the initial work of the LifeSong teams in a binder. The first page of the binder listed “LifeSong’s Guiding Principles,” (see Figure 9.3) based on the new paradigm of singing.

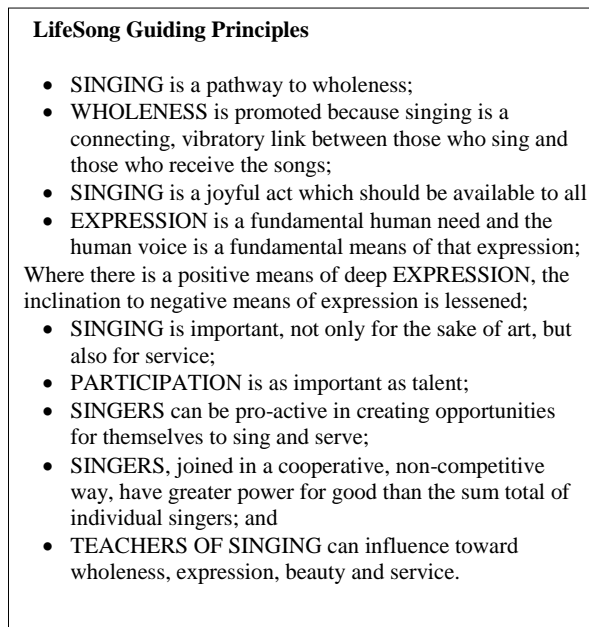


Figure 9.3: LifeSong Guiding Principles<sup>37</sup>

JoAnn delineated the binder’s sections with tabbed dividers. She labeled them as follows: Principles, Purpose, Mission, Goals, Flow Chart; How it Works; Identification

<sup>36</sup> JoAnn Ottley, *LifeSong Planning Notebook*, unpublished, 1995-1997.

<sup>37</sup> LifeSong’s “Guiding Principles,” capitalization and punctuation from original document, *LifeSong Planning Notebook*, unpublished, 1995-1997.

of Needs; Marketing; Legal/Financial; Catalog; Special Services; Service to Teachers; Service to Singers; and Service to Community.<sup>38</sup>

The first section of JoAnn's LifeSong notebook contained the guiding principles followed by a statement of purpose, a description of the new paradigm, and the board's mission statement. The purpose was stated simply, "to offer a new paradigm for singing." The paradigm description explained the importance of singing.

New Paradigm: Singing is a physical, emotional, and spiritual phenomenon which inspires, enlivens, heals and comforts people. It is an act of service, and can be taught and shared in ways which are nurturing to the soul of teacher, student, performer and listener alike.<sup>39</sup>

The mission statement listed specific elements of singing and ways the LifeSong organization could foster those elements and benefit others. The list included: 1) To serve through song and singing, fostering such healing, wholeness and pleasure in our society as can be affected through the human voice; 2) To encourage and teach others the joy and benefits of singing; 3) To provide a fulfilling avenue of expression for singers who may find traditional pursuits incompatible with their lives, values, or preferences; 4) To provide an avenue for continued growth among singers and teachers; and 5) To make available guidance, instruction and opportunity to sing.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> JoAnn Ottley, *LifeSong Planning Notebook*, unpublished, 1995-1997.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

JoAnn met with her accountant, Clint Combs,<sup>41</sup> on August 27, 1996. He suggested they build *LifeSong* at a slower pace, avoid filing for a 501c3, and apply for a Utah Non-Profit status instead. He believed this would provide the organization time to mature. He described the Utah Non-Profit status as halfway between a corporation and 501c3, while still protecting the Ottley's personal funds. Combs explained JoAnn would need to write Articles of Incorporation and By-laws for the group, which would require an attorney, but agreed to review them before submitting to the state.<sup>42</sup>

### LifeSong Catalog

JoAnn believed the LifeSong Catalog central to achieving the organization's mission, as it would include all LifeSong programs and services. The group decided copies of the catalog should be offered free of charge, but inclusion in the catalog would require a nominal five-dollar fee to defray costs. August 1997 was chosen as the goal for the first edition's completion. Targeted groups for inclusion were voice teachers associated with the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS), school districts and K-12 music teachers, college and university voice teachers, choir directors of collegiate and community groups, professional organizations (e.g., Utah Symphony and Utah Opera), music festivals, accompanists, individual singers and voice teachers,

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<sup>41</sup> Clint Combs, the Ottley's personal accountant, provided JoAnn with financial advice for LifeSong from its inception.

<sup>42</sup> Notes after consultation with Clint Combs, August 27, 1996, *LifeSong Planning Notebook*, unpublished, 1995-1997.

language coaches, and music therapists. The board planned to distribute the catalog through music stores and “word of mouth.”<sup>43</sup>

The catalog’s table of contents provided the framework for developing the organization and illuminated areas needing attention. Committees within the board were asked to develop aspects of the catalog. Research and Development would create course content, identify potential costs, and suggest course fees. Marketing would provide lists of information needed for inclusion in the catalog, depending on category. For instance, private teachers would need to list credentials, years of teaching experience, and specializations. Choirs or other performing groups would list availability and descriptions of the ensemble’s history and style. Legal/Financial was assigned to discern catalog production costs and derive the fee for catalog inclusion.<sup>44</sup>

### LifeSong Educational Opportunities

Pro-ops and co-ops were based on the new paradigm of singers working in cooperation rather than competition. Co-ops, geared to small groups of beginning and intermediate singers, would be pedagogical and interactive, nurture support between peers, and provide community service. Participants would perform for each other and give feedback and support guided by a master teacher, whose fee would be added to the participants’ shared costs. These co-ops would enhance work with a private teacher.

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<sup>43</sup> JoAnn Ottley, *LifeSong Planning Notebook*, unpublished, 1995-1997.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

Co-ops for intermediate and advanced students would be offered, also guided by a master teacher who would provide feedback to each performer. Co-ops for voice teachers would provide opportunities for teachers of singing to improve personal skills by bringing their students to sing for the group and work with a master teacher. Co-ops for advanced students, led by a master voice teacher, would provide a less-expensive, more cooperative, community-supported pathway toward the skill development needed to advance to a professional-level singer.

Co-ops for professional singers would not include an outside teacher. The participants would provide each other feedback, thus strengthening their performances through cooperation while gaining valuable experience teaching high-level singers. The professional level co-ops were eventually nick-named “Pro-ops.” No fee to LifeSong would be required for Pro-op II participation. The pro-ops were to be completely self-directed and funded. Venue and accompanist costs would be divided equally and paid by participants. Professional-level singers required coaching and guidance while mastering repertoire and preparing for singing engagements, but not weekly lessons. Participating in a pro-op could provide much of the input singers needed at a fraction of the cost. Coaching each other would provide the additional benefit of honing teaching skills, thus expanding expertise for private teaching beyond typical beginning or intermediate students.

Co-ops would also be offered for voice teachers, with participating teachers allowed to bring students. The focus of these co-ops would be teacher development, with the teachers evenly dividing the event’s costs. Each student would have an opportunity to

sing for the group and receive teacher feedback. Clarification and additional insights would be provided by the facilitator. Teachers in the co-op could glean new teaching ideas, and participating students would benefit from performance opportunities and varied suggestions.<sup>45</sup>

All educational opportunities available through LifeSong would be listed in the catalog, including the three levels of LifeSong workshops. As decided in the first LifeSong meeting, Level I would be mandatory for participation in LifeSong, with the other levels available for those wishing additional training. Level II would further explore singing concepts experienced in the first workshop, and Level III would certify workshop trainers. Also open to interested individuals would be special events featuring guest presenters, workshops, and certification classes in Brain Gym® and Touch for Health.<sup>46</sup>

Specific LifeSong courses, workshops, and seminars were conceived to support vocal music in the community. These included a workshop for children in elementary school and taught in the classroom by volunteer visiting artists from LifeSong. This offered the potential to supplement the music curriculum of participating schools through regular visits. Vocal workshops for singers, called Co-ops, would be offered according to

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<sup>45</sup> JoAnn Ottley, *LifeSong Planning Notebook*, unpublished, 1995-1997.

<sup>46</sup> Brain Gym® International [Educational Kinesiology] is committed to the principle that moving with intention leads to optimal learning. Through our outstanding instructors and movement-based programs, we empower all ages to reclaim the joy of living. Official Website for Educational Kinesiology, "Brain Gym International," [www.braingym.org](http://www.braingym.org), accessed June 5, 2017. Touch for Health (TFH) is the most widely used system of kinesiology in the world. It is recognized and respected as the foundation training for other kinesiology systems as well as being a healing modality in its own right. Energy Medicine, Brain Gym, Energy Kinesiology, and Energy Psychology are all outgrowths of the Touch for Health body of knowledge. Official website for Touch for Health, [www.touchforhealth.us](http://www.touchforhealth.us), accessed June 5, 2017.



age and ability level, and would include a singing class for students age 14 and younger, beginning voice for students ages 15-21, a possible course for older beginners, and a workshop for families. “Finding Your Voice” would provide a personal evaluation by a master voice teacher to identify the student’s color-point and probable voice type for choir or solo work. JoAnn would initially be the sole evaluator for that course, but upon completing training, other LifeSong teachers would also be able to provide that service.<sup>47</sup>

Accompanist workshops would apply the new paradigm to accompanists and coaches, who work closely with singers and teachers of singing. Participants of this workshop would be prime candidates to accompany LifeSong pro-ops, co-ops, and performance events.

All co-ops and pro-ops were meant to provide an environment of “safety, possibility and encouragement” for participating singers and teachers. They could be held once a month, or more frequently if the group desired. Quarterly special events could be held with JoAnn or another seasoned teacher rooted in LifeSong principles working with the group. Ultimately, the pro-ops and co-ops would “gently, gradually change the [old] paradigm,” within communities where they were offered.<sup>48</sup>

Projecting wide-spread membership, the board foresaw the eventual need to create community chapters in smaller communities or sections of the greater Salt Lake area. Responsibilities for organization and management of those smaller groups would be overseen by a volunteer Chapter Coordinator. Once LifeSong secured financial support,

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<sup>47</sup> JoAnn Ottley, “LifeSong Teams,” *LifeSong Planning Notebook*, unpublished, 1995-1997.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

the job of Chapter Coordinator might become a paid position. Chapters could offer co-ops for singers and teachers of all ability levels, pro-ops for advanced and professional singers, and community events or service projects within their areas.<sup>49</sup>

### Service through Singing

JoAnn envisioned required service hours for LifeSong participants and the board agreed. The organization's guiding principles (see Figure 9.3) specified, "singing is important, not only for the sake of art, but for service."<sup>50</sup> The hourly commitment to service and tracking practices accounting for those member's hours were yet to be determined. Also undeveloped was the criteria for performer and teacher ability-level distinctions. Singers' options for service, and participation in co-ops or pro-ops would be influenced by ability, which required set performance standards for level classification.<sup>51</sup>

Available services through LifeSong would be listed in the catalog directly after educational opportunities. Organizations such as schools, hospitals, and nursing homes—most likely to benefit from these services—would be included. A third category in this catalog section would be charitable organizations wanting to fundraise through benefit concerts. Qualified singers could fulfill service-hour requirements performing for the organizations, who could market the event to the supporters. Before leaving the university, JoAnn told her students, "There is no difference in the worthiness of an

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<sup>49</sup> JoAnn Ottley, "LifeSong Teams," *LifeSong Planning Notebook*, unpublished, 1995-1997.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

audience in New York and an audience in Salt Lake City.”<sup>52</sup> The LifeSong guiding principles (see Figure 9.3) declared singing “a pathway to wholeness . . . a vibratory link between those who sing and those who receive the songs.”<sup>53</sup> This wholeness through singing created joy by fulfilling “a fundamental human need” for expression through the human voice, which “should be available to all.”<sup>54</sup> Through service, LifeSong could bring “those who needed to sing to those who needed the singing.”<sup>55</sup>

### Initial Marketing

By October 1996, the group decided they had adequate information to publicize. They compiled names and contact information for possible LifeSong participants in a data base, then mailed the first brochure which included a registration form.<sup>56</sup> The brochure summarized LifeSong principles followed by the mission statement and a list of the LifeSong team. Each LifeSong program was described, along with dates, prices, a registration form, and policies concerning cancellations and refunds.<sup>57</sup> Initial events were considered pilot programs, and would be scrutinized according to the new paradigm during and after the event for effectiveness and appeal. Work had begun to gain non-

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<sup>52</sup> Recollections of author from her study with JoAnn Ottley, 1991-1994.

<sup>53</sup> LifeSong Guiding Principles, *LifeSong Planning Notebook*, unpublished, 1995-1997.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, June 28, 2017.

<sup>56</sup> LifeSong Newsletter and Registration Form for workshops and classes beginning January 1997, distributed during summer 1996.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

profit status and a business license. The teams had developed and met organizational goals. LifeSong was ready to launch.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> JoAnn Ottley, "Names for Data Base, 10/17/96 (update from 8/14/95)," *LifeSong Planning Notebook*, unpublished, 1995-1997.

## CHAPTER TEN: LIFESONG

(1997-2006)

The first official LifeSong events began in January 1997 and included co-ops and LifeSong Workshops I and II. Although many questions remained concerning the business and financial aspects of creating a viable non-profit organization and most programs were yet in the planning stages, JoAnn and the board were ready to make their ideas public and invite larger participation. If the new paradigm for singing was to grow in acceptance, it needed to be shared. Response to the brochures was encouraging, yielding adequate registration to hold the first workshops and co-ops.

### Classes and Workshops

A “Class Voice Checklist” was created for the LifeSong Co-ops. Handwritten by JoAnn, it included the following: 1) Voice –body alignment, jaw position and vocal freedom; 2) Breath –specific elements of breath management; 3) Vowels –connection of pure vowels to vocal core; 4) Diction –language requirements through articulation; 5) Tone Quality –range, resonance, evenly sung scales, and free vibrato; and 6) Song – aspects of communication, linguistic issues, authentic style, and the singer’s intent either to connect or impress.

Various geographical areas and facilitators were chosen for the co-ops, but, only JoAnn would serve as the master teacher until others could successfully complete Workshop III. “This concept is very new,” JoAnn noted at the bottom of the class outline,

“To do this we need to be ORGANIZED and a COOPERATIVE ORGANIZATION. No ownership. No prima donas.<sup>1</sup>

Co-ops were held in homes, but workshops required more space. The house on Casto Lane would have worked well, but since it was no longer an option, the board opted to rent the recital hall at Riverton Music—a retail store selling pianos, other musical instruments, and sheet music. The spacious hall was an ideal venue for the LifeSong Workshops, which included movement and vocalizing.

Understanding the inherent value of singing—its power to communicate beyond speech, connect, and even heal—served as basis for the curriculum JoAnn developed for all three LifeSong Workshop levels. LifeSong workshops commenced with Workshop I on January 18, 1997, in the Riverton Music Recital Hall, almost two years to the day—January 20, 1995—when JoAnn initially presented her ideas for an organization promoting a new paradigm for singing to those gathered in her living room. All board members attended a LifeSong Workshop I that winter, setting the precedence for the workshop as prerequisite for all LifeSong participation. Based on the New Physics theory, “energy follows intent,” every LifeSong member needed to understand the new paradigm if the organization was to successfully create change.

The four-hour LifeSong Workshop I cost \$40.00 and was offered three times in the first quarter. The Saturday sessions included January 18 and February 8. On March 11, the workshop was held on Tuesday evening from 6pm to 10pm. Workshop II required

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<sup>1</sup> JoAnn Ottley, “Group Voice Checklist,” dated March 27, 1996, *LifeSong Organizational Notebook*, unpublished, 1995-1997. Uppercase letters and underlining included in original.

two sessions, cost \$65.00, and was held on a Friday evening and Saturday morning, February 21 and 22, 1997, respectively.

### LifeSong Workshop I: Introduction

The first workshop participants varied from professional singers to individuals who had never sung in public. All attendees had been instructed to “dress for movement,”<sup>2</sup> as the workshop began with creative movement. Participants were instructed to move however the music made them feel. “Walk, breathe, swing your arms, move backwards or sideways if you wish,” JoAnn instructed. “Do something different!” While they were moving, JoAnn bounced tennis balls into the group, encouraging them to incorporate the balls with their movement.<sup>3</sup>

When the recorded music ended, JoAnn began singing *Row, Row, Row Your Boat*, and the group quickly joined. Using body percussion, JoAnn added a repeating ostinato sequence to the song, consisting of a foot stomp, followed by the hands patting the thighs once, a clap and a snap. JoAnn voiced the pattern as she demonstrated, “Stamp, thigh, clap, click.”<sup>4</sup>

Everyone had arrived by the end of the song and the mood was lighthearted from

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<sup>2</sup> JoAnn Ottley, Workshop No. I, *LifeSong Workshops*, unpublished, May 31, 1996.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

the dancing, singing, and moving.<sup>5</sup> JoAnn welcomed everyone, asked them to sit in a circle, and taught them a song they would use at the end of the workshop, entitled, *Sing!*<sup>6</sup>

Sing, sing a song!  
Sing out loud, sing out strong!  
Sing of good things, not bad;  
Sing of happy, not sad!  
Sing, sing a song!  
Make it simple to last your whole life long!  
Don't worry that it's not good enough  
For anyone else to hear,  
Just sing, sing a song!<sup>7</sup>

The group participated in three activities before JoAnn gave a verbal introduction to the workshop, in which she acknowledged the workshop had not begun in a traditional way. “Communication through singing is unseen, but very much felt,” she explained. “It’s my heart to your heart. It’s direct. Eye to eye.”<sup>8</sup>

Attendees were asked to become acquainted with the person sitting directly to their right. In addition to exchanging names and general information, they shared individual reasons for singing. Participants then introduced each other to the group, including the various answers given to the question, “Why do you sing?”<sup>9</sup> JoAnn

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<sup>5</sup> Recollections of author from attendance at the first LifeSong Workshop, January 18, 1997.

<sup>6</sup> Joe Raposo, “Sing!” composed for the Public Broadcast System (PBS) children’s television program *Sesame Street*, 1971 and made famous by the cover released by The Carpenters in 1973.

<sup>7</sup> Selected lyrics to the song, *Sing!* by Joe Raposo.

<sup>8</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 22, 2014.

<sup>9</sup> JoAnn Ottley, Workshop No. I, *LifeSong Workshops Outlines*, unpublished, May 31, 1996.



concluded the introductory section by saying, “Put on your ‘play’ shoes. Everyone is safe. We’re playmates for the day.”<sup>10</sup>

### LifeSong Workshop I—Part One: Vocal Exploration

The first exercise, “Breath into Sound,” was an individual exploration of voiced sounds. Participants inhaled and then transformed the breath into hums, groans, and vowels. They were asked to check their head positions and “determine the best [alignment] for sound.” JoAnn encouraged listening to their own sounds in a variety of ways, including cupping their hands over their ears (which she called “Mouse Ears”), singing with the heels of the hand on the chin, fingertips toward the ears, and plugging one ear.<sup>11</sup>

The next exercise required a partner and taking turns placing their fingers on the other’s throat. They felt the vibrations of their partner’s larynx during phonation on the sounds [m] and [z],<sup>12</sup> and while singing vowels at various pitches from “very low” to “very high.”<sup>13</sup>

After exploring the larynx through touch, JoAnn taught the group a short chant, “Jubilate Deo,” explaining that people often sing to “praise, petition and participate.” She

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<sup>10</sup> JoAnn Ottley, Workshop I, *LifeSong Workshops*, unpublished, May 31, 1996.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> In the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) [m] represents the sound which begins the word, “Mother,” and [z] is the sound beginning the English word zoo.

<sup>13</sup> JoAnn Ottley, Workshop No. I, *LifeSong Workshops*, unpublished, May 31, 1996.

instructed participants to “be still and experience the silence,” when the chant came to an end.<sup>14</sup>

JoAnn guided the group back to the thesis question and title of the workshop—Why sing? “Answers are many and varied,” she said, “let’s consider a few (see Figure 10.1).”

- Why Sing?**

  - Feels good
  - Sonic massage (Tomatis, Burleson) – massages blood & bones
  - Charges brain (electrical charge)
  - Cells of the body tuned to each other
  - Tunes us to others
  - Expression (stress reduction, voice within, soul made manifest, or inner world to outer)
  - Healing (Tomatis Centers, BYU volunteers, hospices)
  - Just ‘cuz
  - Etc.

Figure 10.1: Possible responses to the question, “Why Sing?” presented in LifeSong Workshop 1<sup>15</sup>

Following her short presentation of possible reasons for singing, JoAnn led the group in another exploratory exercise. She asked participants to hum on any pitch, and

<sup>14</sup> JoAnn Ottley, Workshop No. I, *LifeSong Workshops*, unpublished, May 31, 1996.

<sup>15</sup> *The Tomatis Method: Improves Motor, Emotional and Cognitive Abilities through Music and Language*, [www.tomatis.com](http://www.tomatis.com), accessed May 12, 2018.

guided the humming with various suggestions during the exercise. “Let the sound ebb and flow. Just follow it and let it be what it will. Feel it happening in your body. Be aware of your breath becoming sound.”<sup>16</sup> After the humming exercise, time was allowed for responses before participants were asked to lie on the floor for another activity.

In this exercise, participants were asked to breathe normally and relax, then alter their breathing and make it shallow. “A song will come to mind,” JoAnn suggested, “perhaps from your life experiences.” She gave them time to think of a song, asked them to remember it for later, then had them vocalize a sigh from the same shallow place as the breath.<sup>17</sup> Next, JoAnn asked the group to breathe more deeply, find and remember another song based on the deeper breaths they were taking, and sigh from that “somewhat deeper place.”<sup>18</sup> Finally, JoAnn asked participants to “breathe from the bottom of the well.” As before, they were to find and remember a song, this time from their deepest breaths, and then sigh from that deepest breath source.<sup>19</sup>

After sitting for a brief discussion of the breathing exercise, the participants were again asked to lay on the floor. JoAnn said, “I will read a list of words which will likely evoke an emotional response in you.”<sup>20</sup> She instructed them to notice where they felt those various feelings in their bodies.<sup>21</sup> After reading the list of words, time was allowed

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<sup>16</sup> JoAnn Ottley, Workshop No. I, *LifeSong Workshops*, unpublished, May 31, 1996.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

for everyone to note their emotional and physical responses (see Figures 10.2 and 10.3 for sample word lists). Afterward, discussion time was provided for the group to share their perceptions.<sup>22</sup>

- | <b>Emotion Exercise List of Words</b> |
|---------------------------------------|
| • April                               |
| • Jealous                             |
| • Monkey                              |
| • Sick                                |
| • Butterfly                           |
| • Mother                              |
| • Rage                                |
| • Mud puddle                          |
| • Tiny                                |
| • Tone                                |
| • Love                                |

Figure10.2: Emotion words used in LifeSong Workshop I

- | <b>Alternate Emotion Exercise Words</b> |
|---|
| • Honey                                 |
| • War                                   |
| • Funny                                 |
| • Simple                                |
| • Heaven                                |
| • Proper                                |
| • Dad                                   |
| • Beauty                                |
| • Song                                  |
| • Boredom                               |
| • Yellow                                |
| • Longing                               |
| • Excited                               |

Figure10.3: Alternative emotion words for LifeSong Workshop I

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<sup>22</sup>JoAnn Ottley, Workshop No. I, *LifeSong Workshops*, unpublished, May 31, 1996.

JoAnn asked for a volunteer to sing one of the songs chosen during the exercise exploring shallow, medium, and deep breathing. She specified she wanted someone who had a song with a message. Once selected, the volunteer chose another participant to whom they would sing the song. The two faced each other and placed a hand on the other's heart while the first sang the chosen song. This exercise was demonstrated several times with different volunteers.

In the discussion afterward, those who sang and those who received the songs expressed feelings of deep connection with the other. Participants who were observers also shared feeling emotional as they watched. JoAnn stressed the difference in intent when singing to connect rather than impress.

We live in a society of the head. And a great many also live from a gut-level animalistic basis. But, what do you get if you meet in the middle between those two places? The heart.<sup>23</sup>

The importance of singing from the heart was the concluding focus of the first half of LifeSong Workshop I. In her final remarks before the group took a short break, JoAnn emphasized singing from technical prowess alone was inadequate, and singing for passion alone could become self-serving.

In all music making, we are not doing our job if we stop at technical prowess alone. Singing is first and foremost an excursion of the heart, for both the giver and the receiver. Voice is manifest soul. It erases boundaries.<sup>24</sup>

This served as the final message of the first half of the workshop. Only singing with

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<sup>23</sup> JoAnn Ottley, Workshop No. I, *LifeSong Workshops*, unpublished, May 31, 1996.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

the intent to connect transcended technique and passion to create wholeness for singer and listener.<sup>25</sup>

### LifeSong Workshop I, Part Two: The New Physics and Singing

The second half of the workshop began with a discussion of the body as a musical instrument. Referring to the power of words explored before the break, JoAnn introduced the concept of vowels as she perceived them from her study of the New Physics. “Vowels are frequencies,” she explained, stressing that in some ancient civilizations they were considered sacred. She shared several examples from her study of New Physics experiments by scientists confirming the power of frequencies found in specific vowels and pitches.<sup>26</sup>

An exercise exploring vowel frequency through chant followed. “Be in tune and perceive the different frequencies, how they feel, how they affect you,” JoAnn instructed. The group chanted the vowel sequence [i e a o u]<sup>27</sup> together, before exploring vowels and pitches independently. Chanting vowels, “dissolves boundaries between mind and body... [integrating] the inside and the outside worlds of the individual,” she explained.<sup>28</sup> Describing stress as a symptom of trapped energy, JoAnn asserted the widespread stress

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<sup>25</sup> JoAnn Ottley, Workshop No. I, *LifeSong Workshops*, unpublished, May 31, 1996.

<sup>26</sup> See Appendix E—JoAnn Ottley’s bibliography of sources used in her study of New Physics and creation of a new paradigm for singing.

<sup>27</sup> In the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) [i e a o u] represent the vowel sounds found in the English words (respectively): feet, cake, hot, coat, true.

<sup>28</sup> JoAnn Ottley, Workshop No. I, *LifeSong Workshops*, unpublished, May 31, 1996.

in current society was evidence that most had lost the ability to self-express. “We don’t know how to get to it and release it ... the release of the soul.”<sup>29</sup>

The chanting exercise led to an introduction of Flow Theory, according to psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. JoAnn described the state of Flow as losing oneself in the moment, thus, creating vital personal expression and integration.<sup>30</sup> She posited this state of mind was often achieved through the frequencies and vibration inherent in singing. If Flow in everyday life could be enhanced by singing, singing could benefit everyone.<sup>31</sup> Paraphrasing Ed Thompson, JoAnn added, “If everyone sang in a choir, there wouldn’t be any gangs!”<sup>32</sup>

The artificial, competitive goals of the singing profession’s current paradigm and the higher educational programs which propagated it, interfered with the vital expression singers could provide themselves and others. JoAnn reasoned the skewed intent of singing, within the construct of the old paradigm, often induced stress, reduced Flow, and impeded the voice’s authentic power rather than promoting personal expression and wholeness

Vowel frequencies, stress, expression, intent, and Flow led to the first formal connection to New Physics in the workshop. JoAnn briefly explained the non-duality of

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<sup>29</sup>JoAnn Ottley, Workshop No. I, *LifeSong Workshops*, unpublished, May 31, 1996.

<sup>30</sup> Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*, Harper and Row, New York, NY, 1990.

<sup>31</sup> JoAnn Ottley, Workshop No. I, *LifeSong Workshops*, unpublished, May 31, 1996.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

particles and waves, and vibration's universal, connective nature. Vibration was inherent to music, especially singing, because of its interconnection to the physical body. The merging of language with music added the power of frequencies and intention. The question, "Why sing?" was ultimately answered by the discoveries of New Physics.

#### LifeSong Workshop I: Conclusion:

Most participants attending the first workshops were new to LifeSong, so JoAnn had flyers available for anyone interested in becoming a LifeSong member. She shared the goals of the organization and the new paradigm on which it was built. JoAnn assured the group there was no obligation incurred by joining LifeSong, "The aim is simply that of serving one another and our community. . . Our hope is to create a goal for singers of every level in the community to serve and support one another."<sup>33</sup>

JoAnn led the group in an exercise symbolizing the connection and support which could exist between singers of all levels. Working in pairs, partners moved each other into different poses like puppets. Participants were focused and quietly joyful as they completed the puppet exercise. It seemed many were achieving Flow as they guided each other and allowed themselves to be led.<sup>34</sup>

The final exercise, "Sound Flower," was modeled after African villages where singing was used for healing. All participants stood in a circle. JoAnn invited anyone not

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<sup>33</sup> JoAnn Ottley, Workshop No. I, *LifeSong Workshops*, unpublished, May 31, 1996.

<sup>34</sup> Recollections of author from attendance at the first LifeSong Workshop, January 18, 1997.



feeling well or needing emotional support to stand in the center of the circle.<sup>35</sup> The entire exercise was improvisational. Participants began with a hum, then sang on any vowel or pitch they chose, changing as they wished. “Take your time,” JoAnn said, “the sound will close on its own.”<sup>36</sup> She started the process by humming, then moved to a vowel. Others joined until all were singing, the sound forming harmonies, rhythmic and melodic motives, and variations in tempo and dynamics. Without cue, the harmonic texture began to thin. Melodic, rhythmic, and vowel changes decreased until all sound ceased. No one spoke as the previous sounds seemed to hang in the air. Reluctantly, the participants broke away and quietly returned to sitting.<sup>37</sup>

JoAnn gleaned feedback and promoted self-reflection by asking the participants to take turns around the circle, saying, “I sing because \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in the blank)” or, “Today I learned \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in the blank)” In a few short hours, the group had evolved from a room full of strangers to a room full of friends, “Playmates for the day,” as JoAnn predicted in her workshop introduction. “Their understanding of the connection between the act of singing, the physical world, and the integration of these phenomena was greatly enlarged. A new level of purpose for both singing and for LifeSong was achieved.”<sup>38</sup> The

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<sup>35</sup> “In this and subsequent experiences with the “Sound Flower,” the person sitting in the center of the circle often had unique experiences Some wept, some felt relief from stress and tension, some were energized, even healed.” Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes to author, unpublished, April 19, 2018.

<sup>36</sup> JoAnn Ottley, unpublished workshop notes for “Why Sing? Singers’ Workshops presented at two Classical Singer Magazine Conventions, May 15, 2004 in Hartford, Connecticut and May 28, 2005 in New York City, NY.

<sup>37</sup> Recollections of author from attendance at the first LifeSong Workshop I, January 19, 1997.

<sup>38</sup> Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes to author, unpublished, April 19, 2018.

day closed with participants joining their voices together and singing the song learned at the beginning of the day, “Sing, sing a song . . .”<sup>39</sup> The first LifeSong Workshop I was a reality.

#### Evaluation of LifeSong Educational Pilots

All three sessions of LifeSong Workshop I that winter were successful, but participant feedback indicated Workshop II was too similar to Workshop I, and so it was abandoned. Instead, Workshop I registration was opened to include repeat participants for \$15.00 per session. No one in the LifeSong organization was ready for the deeper commitment Workshop III would require, so it was postponed until participants were prepared to become workshop facilitators.

The Beginning Co-Ops and Teacher Co-Ops received rave reviews and drew many participants, but the advanced co-op was disbanded. JoAnn felt advanced singers wanting to become professionals were enmeshed in the old paradigm.

[Advanced singers] were too busy with their own pursuits . . . [perceiving] LifeSong as worthwhile for many reasons but non-productive of progress to their own goals. The service component was not a high priority for them. . . It became obvious that some reassessment was necessary to refocus efforts toward the ninety and nine who are generally left behind in university vocal programs.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> JoAnn Ottley, Workshop No. I, *LifeSong Workshops*, unpublished, May 31, 1996.

<sup>40</sup> Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes to author, unpublished, April 19, 2018.

These personal agendas ran counter to the mission of the organization, and JoAnn felt LifeSong could not be held responsible for the careers of advanced singers wanting to become professionals.<sup>41</sup>

### LifeSong Outreach

JoAnn presented LifeSong concepts as a guest presenter at several functions, including the Mormon Arts Festival the year before (1996) and the BYU McKay School of Education in 1997.<sup>42</sup> She found the most skeptical workshop participants or audience members were those whose education, experience, and/or belief systems prevented them from seeking answers outside traditional explanations. Applying the concept of holons<sup>43</sup> reduced this resistance, since the model included growth and transcendence rather than linear idea development. She gave several workshops based on LifeSong Workshop I with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. Just as she had avoided including all sources behind her vocal work when coaching the choir members, she was less specific concerning the influence of New Physics concepts on her paradigm shift when leading workshops with choir members.

The local NATS chapter invited her to speak in March of that year. She shared the principles of LifeSong, its programs and opportunities, and invited the NATS teachers to

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<sup>41</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 22, 2014.

<sup>42</sup> JoAnn Ottley, "Performance Log," *Essays*, unpublished, Salt Lake City, UT, 2002.

<sup>43</sup> Ken Wilbur, *A Brief History of Everything*, 1996. Referenced by JoAnn Ottley, "Why Singing?," *Classical Singer*, pp. 32-33, March 2004.

participate. The response was only mild interest. The overall lukewarm reaction from the NATS members was disappointing, but not surprising, as most were solidly entrenched in the old paradigm. However, Glen Glancy, a businessman in attendance, was impressed and subsequently offered legal, organizational, and financial advice.<sup>44</sup>

### Marketing Plans

Glancy suggested marketing to a larger, more diverse audience rather than such a specialized demographic. This could include other singing groups, such as the local chapter of the Barbershop Harmony Society (SPEBSQSA) led by Dr. Greg Lyne, of which Glancy was a member.<sup>45</sup> LifeSong principles applied to all types of singers, lending itself to a broad population. “Reach out to the masses,” he advised JoAnn.<sup>46</sup> Glancy also recommended children’s programming as a viable market for LifeSong. Providing musical support for families with children, and presenting a children’s concert with newspaper coverage might produce a headline reading, “LifeSong: We are on our way!” Such a headline could provide widespread exposure leading to membership and donors.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> JoAnn Ottley, notes from meeting with Glen Glancy after the LifeSong NATS Presentation, unpublished, March 1997, *LifeSong Organizational Notebook*, unpublished, 1995-1997.

<sup>45</sup> Glancy was the sound reinforcement engineer for the international conventions for the Barbershop Harmony Society (SPEBQSA) for twenty-five years. Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes to author, unpublished, April 19, 2018.

<sup>46</sup> JoAnn Ottley, “notes from March 1997 meeting with Glen Glancy after the LifeSong NATS Presentation,” *LifeSong Organizational Notebook*, unpublished, 1995-1997.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

Glancy's solution to LifeSong's lack of capital was soliciting donor support. JoAnn was concerned about seeking donations before achieving a 501(c)3 status, but Glancy assured her that money could be accepted if the non-profit status was in process. He advised, however, that further clarification of the mission statement was needed. He encouraged JoAnn to include a specific list of ways to become involved before presenting LifeSong to possible donors—especially men.<sup>48</sup> Glancy saw LifeSong services to singers as another source of needed funds. For example, he envisioned a web page serving the function of the LifeSong Catalog. He reasoned an online presence could provide broader distribution and easier access to LifeSong programs. Easier access could benefit individual singers, as they could pay a fee to publish biographical and contact information on the site. "All you need is a singing, clerical, computer whiz . . . and one successful pilot program!" he declared.<sup>49</sup>

Glancy suggested creating an advisory group of "5 exceptional minds," and meeting bi-monthly to generate ideas for LifeSong's growth and success. He suggested the board was too homogenous; therefore, input from non-singers might be useful.<sup>50</sup>

A few days after meeting with Glancy, JoAnn discussed his ideas and the business aspects of LifeSong in a telephone conversation with Clint Combs, the Ottley's financial advisor. Like Glancy, Combs was positive about the organization's business prospects,

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<sup>48</sup> Glancy's suggestion that men receive a different approach than women is evidence of the widespread gender bias in the business culture of Utah at that time.

<sup>49</sup> JoAnn Ottley, "notes from March 1997 meeting with Glen Glancy after the LifeSong NATS Presentation," *LifeSong Organizational Notebook*, unpublished, 1995-1997.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

suggesting LifeSong could become a wealthy company and “help a lot of people.” He encouraged JoAnn to start the process for the 501c3, saying, “Let’s raise a million dollars this year!”<sup>51</sup>

Encouraged by positive feedback, JoAnn and the board planned pilot programs. These programs included the following: LifeSong packages for interested public schools; LifeSong packets created for teachers of singing; launching a LifeSong humanitarian program; and fully-functioning co-ops and pro-ops. They set six-month goals which included organizing, implementing, and testing each pilot program, and achieving 100% completion of LifeSong Workshop I by all LifeSong members. Goals to be reached by September 1997 included developing a viable financial plan for year one, solidifying the organizational entity through branding, and fully staffing programs through volunteers.<sup>52</sup>

One month later, JoAnn met with Combs again via Telcon.<sup>53</sup> She was concerned about the time LifeSong required and realized more time would be needed as it grew. Neither she nor the board members had much time to contribute as all were balancing busy lives. A solution would be to hire someone to manage LifeSong business affairs, and JoAnn wondered about the rules governing a paid employee for a non-profit organization. According to Combs there were two ways individuals could be financially

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<sup>51</sup> JoAnn Ottley, notes from March 27, 1997 telephone meeting with Clint Combs, unpublished, March 27, 1997. *LifeSong Organizational Notebook*, unpublished, 1995-1997.

<sup>52</sup> Life Song Board, “Six Month Goals,” dated March 27, 1996, *LifeSong Organizational Notebook*, unpublished, 1995-1997.

<sup>53</sup> JoAnn Ottley, notes from telcon meeting with Clint Combs, April 28, 1997, *LifeSong Organizational Notebook*, unpublished, 1995-1997.

compensated under the rules of the 501(c)3: a salary not exceeding 10% of the total company earnings, or a percentage of the fees for an event, but not both.

Time and money were scarce. Current board members, including JoAnn, had busy lives and none were in a financial position to provide needed capital. Though Glancy and Combs suggested donors, JoAnn's concern was the unlikelihood of raising capital successfully because the Arts were struggling for funding nation-wide. Combs reassured her it was possible, and advised her to "use the Ottley name, nothing else," with "JoAnn as front runner," when seeking donations. He suggested Jerry could be a guest conductor in exchange for large donation.<sup>54</sup> JoAnn included all Combs comments in her notes, but knew some, like using Jerry's position as conductor to raise money was not a possibility they would even consider.<sup>55</sup>

Combs saw the Ottleys as "magnets." Once potential donors were reached through the Ottley influence, "the troops could come in." LifeSong members would contact possible donors and administrate fund collection. Combs warned the first donation was the most difficult, but the rest would come more quickly. He modeled ways potential donors might be approached. "This is what we are doing. Is it possible for you to give us \$100,000 to get started?" JoAnn was startled by the large amount. Combs responded, "Ask for a little you appear cheap. Ask for a lot and you look successful." He

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<sup>54</sup> JoAnn Ottley, notes from telcon meeting with Clint Combs, April 28, 1997, *LifeSong Organizational Notebook*, unpublished, 1995-1997.

<sup>55</sup> Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes to author, unpublished, April 19, 2018.

suggested listing the services offered, emphasizing it was “very different from paying her to yodel.”<sup>56</sup>

If LifeSong was able to raise significant funds, JoAnn wondered how quickly they would be required to use the money. Combs explained the IRS would expect to see financial movement, but it need not be all spent within the fiscal year.<sup>57</sup> Reassured, JoAnn reported the information to the board and an application was made for the 501(c)3, non-profit distinction.<sup>58</sup>

### Balancing the Bigger Holon

Primary aspects of JoAnn’s life remained unchanged despite LifeSong’s additional time demands and responsibilities; rather, the holon of her life expanded to include these duties while still including previous views of personal balance. faith, marriage, and family remained preeminent, followed by career. She was: 1) a daughter of God who would go home to report; 2) in an eternal, sacred companionship with Jerry as husband and wife; 3) a mother, with added familial demands as daughter and sister; and 4) a singer, teacher and philosopher of music. Concerning her deepened understanding of this last category, she wrote:

Because of my studies . . . I have learned that music in general, and the act of singing in particular, are profound in their effects, both on the individual and in

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<sup>56</sup> JoAnn Ottley, notes from April 28, 2017 telcon meeting, Clint Combs, *LifeSong Organizational Notebook*, unpublished, 1995-1997.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> JoAnn Ottley, notes from May 5, 1997 meeting with Chuck Ulrich and application for the 501c3 status, May 5, 1997, *LifeSong Organizational Notebook*, unpublished, 1995-1997.



groups, and those effects go far beyond the “feel good” category. They are actually effective at the cellular /atomic level, have an effect on brain development, general mental and physical health, and even reach into societal unification with their physics-oriented powers. After spending a lifetime as a singer, it has been astounding to me to discover, so late in the game, how little I realized about the larger purpose of what I was doing.<sup>59</sup>

JoAnn’s deepened understanding of the importance of singing increased the value she attributed her career, connecting it to her greater spiritual purposes. It did not, however, shift the balance of her primary concerns for spiritual, marital, and familial concerns. As JoAnn extended herself to do “all that was required,” she often felt physically and emotionally exhausted.<sup>60</sup>

Jerry was involved with the formation of LifeSong and supported JoAnn’s work to disseminate the new paradigm for singing. His work as Tabernacle Choir conductor remained demanding, and JoAnn tried to ease that burden, even as she created the LifeSong organization. Jerry was extremely stressed during an especially busy time for the choir because he could not physically complete all that needed to be done. In an effort to reduce his burdens, JoAnn wrote a letter to Wendell Smoot of the choir leadership, explained what Jerry was facing, and suggested he needed more help. In the letter’s conclusion JoAnn wrote, “Jerry has no knowledge of this letter – I thought it best.”<sup>61</sup>

Her efforts to ease Jerry’s burden included managing the household responsibilities, creating a sense of normalcy through routines such as regular meal

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<sup>59</sup> JoAnn Ottley, letter to Clint Combs, unpublished, April 6, 1997.

<sup>60</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 22, 2014.

<sup>61</sup> JoAnn Ottley, letter to Wendell Smoot, unpublished, January 20, 1998.

preparation, and assisting with the administrative overload of choir tour management and auditions when possible. She attended most official public events with him. Behind the scenes, JoAnn and Jerry shared their daily concerns, laughed at small absurdities, and nurtured their relationship so it thrived despite busy schedules, and the numerous responsibilities accompanying their expanding holons.<sup>62</sup>

Although Brent and Allison were grown, JoAnn's relationship with them continued to be a priority. She spoke with her children often during the week, and they emailed back and forth. She and Brent continued their philosophical discussions via email. JoAnn remained apprised of her children's successes and concerns, offering maternal support as needed. On July 14, 1997, JoAnn and Jerry became grandparents with the birth of Brent's son, Jack Ottley.<sup>63</sup> JoAnn joyfully expanded her maternal role to include grandmother. Sadly, JoAnn's familial responsibilities had also expanded to include providing care to her father and sister, who were both very ill.

Not only did the scope of JoAnn's career expand to include LifeSong responsibilities and presentations, her perceptions of the inherent value in her singing and teaching increased. Before JoAnn's study of New Physics, JoAnn had considered singing merely entertainment. She now viewed singing as a fundamental human source of wholeness and even healing. Her career, therefore, both past and present, held greater importance. Consequently, she perceived inherent value in her singing and teaching. However, the position of her career within the hierarchy of her life's balance remained

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<sup>62</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 22, 2014.

<sup>63</sup> JoAnn Ottley, "Historical Points."

unchanged. The concentric circle representing career came after personal spirituality, her relationship with Jerry, and familial obligations. JoAnn maintained balance by reducing the time demands of career whenever possible. She taught fewer private students, and seldom on a weekly basis. Though she continued to perform, she accepted fewer singing invitations.<sup>64</sup>

The extensive time commitment required as coach of the Tabernacle Choir included the short, focused lessons she gave during rehearsals, targeted training sessions for the entire choir or small sections, preparing soloists for performances and recordings, and auditioning potential members. Her increased valuation of the choir's purpose and potential impact, deepened the importance she placed on her work as the choir's vocal coach. She utilized novel approaches discovered through developing LifeSong when teaching individual choir members. These included slightly modified versions of LifeSong Workshop I with the whole choir, divided into sessions so the number of participants was small enough to effectively participate in the experiential workshop activities. Because of the group's conservative culture, she rarely specified her less traditional sources when officially working as the vocal coach.

Invitations to speak on the topic of "Why Sing?" became more frequent, and for these she spoke freely about the connections between her philosophies for singing and the discoveries of New Physics. Speaking engagements included a presentation for the Kindermusik Educators Conference (June 1997) and the Suzuki Association of Utah at

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<sup>64</sup> See Appendix A for a comprehensive list of JoAnn Ottley's performances.

their September conference celebrating “The Whole Child.”<sup>65</sup> JoAnn was thrilled to meet music educators at the Suzuki conference who shared a holistic view of music’s inherent value.

JoAnn’s understanding of the potential for good through singing led to greater satisfaction in all facets of her career. Her understanding even added a spiritual element to her work, but did not shift her focus away from the life aspects she placed closer to the core of her concentric circles.

#### Unforeseen Obstacles

In May 1997, after applying for a patent for the name LifeSong through the patent attorney, Vaughn North, JoAnn and the board faced an unexpected obstacle. An organization in California, though not for singers, already held the patent for the name. North told JoAnn he thought LifeSong of California might not be a problem, because it focused on wilderness programs, not singing. Vaughn offered his services pro-bono and submitted the application.<sup>66</sup> Unfortunately, the request was refused and the application denied in September. JoAnn and the Board had the task of renaming LifeSong after the process of building a brand around the name for public recognition had begun.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> JoAnn Ottley, “Performance Log,” *Essays*, unpublished, Salt Lake City, UT, 2002.

<sup>66</sup> Vaughn North, telcon with JoAnn Ottley concerning trademark issues November 14, 1997, *LifeSong Organizational Notebook*, unpublished, 1995-1997.

<sup>67</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 22, 2014.

The Ottley's accountant, Chuck Ulrich, continued to advise JoAnn concerning the business aspects of LifeSong. He suggested the name change could be used to their advantage by using the opportunity to change LifeSong's designation from "Doing Business As" (D.B.A.) to a "Non-profit," (N.P.) organization.<sup>68</sup>

The dissolution of the name "LifeSong Institute" was official on October 15, 1997. The board convened, and chose a new name, "Sing for Life" (SFL). Vaughn North continued his pro-bono work for the organization and began the patent process for the new name on November 17, 1997. The filing fee was \$245.00 and, at North's suggestion, JoAnn sent \$275.00 to cover mailing and incidental copy costs, along with a statement and sample of how the trademark would be used.<sup>69</sup> All LifeSong members and those who had attended LifeSong events were sent a letter explaining the name change. Though JoAnn and the board members were upset by the circumstances, the letter was upbeat, blaming the need for the change on their lack of business knowledge.<sup>70</sup>

Vicky Morris, a board member serving on the Financial Team handled the forms needed for taxes and created a final financial report for the year.<sup>71</sup> The total income for LifeSong that year was \$4,403.00. Combined expenses equaled \$3,424.37, which left a small capital gain of \$978.63, much less than the possible million dollars Combs had

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<sup>68</sup> JoAnn Ottley, unpublished notes from telcon meeting with Chuck Ulrich, dated October 15, 1997, *LifeSong Organizational Notebook*, unpublished, 1995-1997.

<sup>69</sup> Vaughn North, telcon with JoAnn Ottley concerning trademark issues November 14, 1997, *LifeSong Organizational Notebook*, unpublished, 1995-1997.

<sup>70</sup> JoAnn Ottley, letter to LifeSong members, unpublished, November 16, 1997.

<sup>71</sup> Itemized financial report created by Vicky Morris, October 17, 1997. *LifeSong Organizational Notebook*, unpublished, 1995-1997.

suggested they could raise.<sup>72</sup> The SFL board sought other avenues for income, but donations did not materialize.

#### Tabernacle Choir 1998 European Tour

The SFL calendar followed an academic schedule, leaving summers free. This allowed JoAnn to meet her obligations during the Tabernacle Choir European tour to London, Brussels, Geneva, Genoa, Turin, Rome, Marseilles, Barcelona, Madrid, and Lisbon from June 12 through July 2, 1998.<sup>73</sup>

The Rome leg of the tour was hectic. Because the ship was not near, once they disembarked, choir members milled outside for hours in hot, humid conditions between concerts, with no place to rest or escape the heat. The ship had provided sack lunches, but they contained eggs that had to be thrown away uneaten. Choir members had nowhere to change clothing, consequently, all sight-seeing was done in concert dress, despite the oppressive heat and humidity.

JoAnn worked with the exhausted choir before each of the two concerts that day, “using all [she] knew to take a voice from 0 to singability.” She began with gentle “kindergarten” vocalises and progressed to difficult exercises only when their voices were ready.<sup>74</sup> JoAnn’s understanding of the mechanics of vocal

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<sup>72</sup> Itemized financial report created by Vicky Morris, October 17, 1997. *LifeSong Organizational Notebook*, unpublished, 1995-1997.

<sup>73</sup> Jerold Ottley, TAB History, notes for article, personal papers of JoAnn Ottley, unpublished, 2000.

<sup>74</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, November 7, 2014.

performance were unchanged by her work with LifeSong, but teaching technique was enhanced by the higher context of human connection and service promoted by her singing paradigm shift.<sup>75</sup>

In an interview with journalist Bonita Cross about JoAnn's work with the choir and support of him during their marriage, Jerry said,

There is no question that [JoAnn] has been a full-time partner with me in this enterprise right from the very beginning. I am convinced that the Lord called me to be Choir director so that HE could get JoAnn, because she brought an element to this work that they had never seen the likes of before in terms of a fine professional singer. She's a first-rate vocal mechanic who could work in the context of our busy, busy schedule to help keep people vocally healthy and keep them moving ahead and to help them overcome vocal problems. She has been, as she often says: 'an extension on the ends of my fingers to reach a little farther into the work that had to be done.' So, in addition to being my own personal companion and the person who has kept the arena tidy at home in all of the time that I have been so busy, she has also been an important part of the work here. She will always have my love, gratitude and admiration for having fulfilled so nobly her role.<sup>76</sup>

#### Sing For Life Pilot Programs

JoAnn remained involved in all aspects of SFL and its programs, which included sessions of Workshop I, continued co-ops, and service projects. These included a Christmas recital created by Trish Wade, and presented in December 1998 at Jackson

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<sup>75</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, July 1, 2017.

<sup>76</sup> Bonita Cross, "JoAnn Ottley," *Keeping Tab, Volume 50, no. 2* (Tabernacle Choir biyearly newsletter for choir members). Tabernacle Choir, October 1999.

Elementary School.<sup>77</sup> The recital was successful, but received little attention and did not lead to further school involvement with Jackson Elementary or other schools as hoped.

Another service event was a benefit recital given in February 1999 by Laurel James and Connie Nokes, both were initial board members and professional-level singers.<sup>78</sup> The singers met with a homeless shelter representative who agreed to accept any money raised, and allowed use of their organization's name, but offered no assistance promoting the event. Attendance was poor with minimal money raised. Most attendees were parishioners of St. James Episcopal Church, which had provided the venue without a fee and advertised the event in their weekly service bulletins and newsletter.<sup>79</sup> The church had only an organ. Dayne's Music<sup>80</sup> donated a piano for the evening, but the singers were required to pay the piano moving costs. The photography and poster design were donated by Laurel James' husband, Doug James, and the singers covered printing costs for the posters and programs, as well as the pianist's fee.<sup>81</sup>

Sparse advertising was donated by the newspaper and the local radio station affiliated with the Public Broadcasting System (PBS). It generated little interest, evidenced by the small handful of audience members outside of the parish community

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<sup>77</sup> Jackson Elementary School is located at 750 W. 200 N. in the Rose Park neighborhood of Salt Lake City, near the JoAnn South's childhood home on Navajo Street. Rose Park demographics have historically included immigrants and lower income families.

<sup>78</sup> Recollections of author.

<sup>79</sup> St. James Episcopal Church is located in Midvale, a small suburb southeast of Salt Lake City.

<sup>80</sup> Daynes Music is a piano store located in Midvale, Utah, [www.daynesmusic.com](http://www.daynesmusic.com), accessed December 28, 2017

<sup>81</sup> Recollections of author from the benefit recital, "Love Song for the Homeless."



attending. The recital was well received by those in attendance. The program included duets and solos all loosely tied to the Love Song recital theme, held in February as a reference to Valentine's Day. Donations of money or canned foods were accepted, and resulted in a donation to the shelter of less than \$200.00 and a garbage-sized bag of food.<sup>82</sup>

The SFL Study Group, which began in Fall 1999, continued until Spring 2001. Books were selected from JoAnn's initial bibliography and suggestions of group members.<sup>83</sup> The study group met during the academic year, rotating the meeting to different club members' homes and recessing during summer. The chosen books were listed for the year on a calendar, which also designated the host and discussion leader for each month's meeting. Members each took a turn hosting and leading the discussion.<sup>84</sup>

#### Milestones and Transitions

Jerry's last official broadcast, as conductor of the Tabernacle Choir occurred in October 1999. He officially retired in January 2000. His retirement concluded JoAnn's work as the Tabernacle Choir Vocal Coach. He came home after his final day and announced with relief, "It's done."<sup>85</sup> The couple's work with the choir, however,

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<sup>82</sup> Recollections of author from the benefit recital, "Love Song for the Homeless."

<sup>83</sup> See Appendix E for the bibliography JoAnn compiled of sources used in her study of New Physics and creation of a new paradigm for singing.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid. Sing For Life Study Group, Roster and Book List, 1999-2001. Unpublished, LifeSong Files.

<sup>85</sup> Jerold Ottley, quoted by Bonita Cross.

continued in a new capacity. Jerry and JoAnn were “appointed to create, run and teach a Mormon Tabernacle Choir Training School.”<sup>86</sup> The school was an offshoot of their work together to improve the choir member’s musicianship and tone quality through Jerry’s tenure as director and JoAnn’s as vocal coach. The choir’s progress during their years of leadership had not gone unnoticed, and the choir training school proved a joyful pursuit.<sup>87</sup>

The Tantara Productions CD highlighting key performances of JoAnn’s singing career was released in 2000.<sup>88</sup> Her copy arrived by mail, and she gasped when she saw it. She did not know what to expect when she played it, but as she listened, JoAnn was overcome with memories and joy. She thought it must be like watching her life flash before her eyes at death—a record of her life through singing. She cried while listening. Though she had worked with the producers choosing the songs and been involved in the project through every step, listening to the CD in its entirety was unexpectedly profound.<sup>89</sup>

In addition to collaborating with Tantara Productions, creating and teaching the new Tabernacle Choir School and devoting hours to Sing for Life, JoAnn was caring for her father and her sister. LaRue was in tremendous pain, and though she could manage her basic needs, JoAnn visited her sister at least once a week and helped with whatever she needed. George was “mad as a wet hen!” when Melba didn’t come and “tickle his

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<sup>86</sup> JoAnn Ottley, “Historical Points.”

<sup>87</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 22, 2014.

<sup>88</sup> JoAnn Ottley, “JoAnn Ottley Retrospective,” CD, Tantara IM 42998425.

<sup>89</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 22, 2014.

toe,”<sup>90</sup> as he had requested just before she passed away ten years before. His diagnosis of prostate cancer shortly after her death led to a steady decline in his health, and he eventually was moved to a care center, but he lived ten more years after Melba’s passing. JoAnn visited her father often, provided love, companionship and cared for his needs as best she could. In 2001, just after making JoAnn laugh with a final wry, witty comment so typical of George South, her beloved father passed away,<sup>91</sup>

#### Dissolution of Sing for Life

That same year, the Sing for Life organization faced fatal challenges. The non-profit corporation had continued with little progress through 2001, stunted by the lack of financial resources to implement the programs conceived by the board. Some large donations had been offered, but always with stipulations. JoAnn found it antithetical to the organization’s mission or unlikely given the financial status of the members.<sup>92</sup>

An application was submitted for an arts grant through the Utah State Arts Council in 2001, but it was denied. JoAnn and several board members met with the council to discuss the decision and were told the Arts Council members felt SFL was too

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<sup>90</sup> George South’s request to Melba to “tickle his toe,” was a request for her to come and get him after she died so they could be together in heaven. George and Melba had a deep, abiding love that continued unabated through her Alzheimer’s disease and death. He did not want to be without her.

<sup>91</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author. Salt Lake City, UT, June 20, 2016.

<sup>92</sup> The problems with donation offers included the need for matched funding and expectations from donors that funds should be collected from singers paying for SFL services. One donor referred to singers as “potential cash cows.” JoAnn Ottley, notes from telcon meeting with Chuck Ulrich, *LifeSong Organizational Notebook*, unpublished, 1995-1997.

homogenous to succeed because all board members were singers. The Arts Council advised SFL populate the board with interested people who held other specializations, such as business management, marketing, and accounting. The suggestion resembled the earlier ideas of Glen Glancy, who had envisioned a group of five diverse advisors meeting once a month concerning LifeSong's corporate affairs.<sup>93</sup>

Faced with lack of financial support and subsequent stagnation, JoAnn and the board met after the disappointing decision of the Utah Arts Council and decided to dissolve the organization. Though saddened by the failure of the organization, JoAnn took comfort in knowing, "the spirit of its purpose continued in the lives of many who had participated Their singing was richer. Their teaching was more focused. Some had invented new ways to express the benefits of singing."<sup>94</sup> Sing for Life officially ended in 2002.

When LifeSong was created, JoAnn viewed it as an experiment. At its best, LifeSong would become a successful organization fostering her new paradigm for singing. Conversely, she reasoned, at its least, LifeSong would shift the paradigm for individuals on a case by case basis, and spread from them. Despite her philosophical attitude at the onset, the ending of the Sing for Life non-profit corporation—after eight years of devotion to its development—was emotionally difficult. JoAnn withdrew for a time, limited her social engagements, and focused her efforts on an upcoming recital and

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<sup>93</sup> The suggestion to diversify board members was made prior to the name change from LifeSong to Sing for Life. JoAnn Ottley, notes from meeting with Glen Glancy after the LifeSong NATS Presentation, unpublished, March 24, 1997. *LifeSong Organizational Notebook*, unpublished, 1995-1997.

<sup>94</sup> Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes to author, unpublished, April 19, 2018.

work with the choir. Though the copyright law had forced a name change, once the “organization went into hiatus,”<sup>95</sup> she and most board members returned to calling it LifeSong. JoAnn’s mixed emotions led her to call LifeSong “the failed experiment,” or “the gallant experiment,” depending on how she felt at a given moment.<sup>96</sup>

As JoAnn had predicted in the beginning, former LifeSong members continued to utilize and spread the fundamental ideals of the new paradigm. Laurel James<sup>97</sup> began a successful Pro-Op with other professional singers, who met monthly at The Cathedral Church of St. Marks in Salt Lake City, shared the cost of the pianist, sang for each other and offered feedback. Maureen Hearn began studying music therapy.<sup>98</sup> Dyanne Riley succeeded JoAnn as the Tabernacle Choir Vocal Coach.<sup>99</sup> Some began singing in hospices and hospitals, a few adding small harps used by music therapists in those situations. Private voice teachers contacted her occasionally and shared the positive effects of teaching from principles gained through LifeSong.<sup>100</sup>

JoAnn continued presenting the principles by invitation as a presenter and workshop facilitator. In 2004, *Classical Singer Magazine* asked her to write a two-part

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<sup>95</sup> Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes for author, unpublished, April 19, 2018.

<sup>96</sup> JoAnn Ottley, notes for autobiography, unpublished, date unknown.

<sup>97</sup> Laurel James was an original LS/SFL board member, longtime student of JoAnn Ottley and a successful private teacher. At the time of this writing, James is on the voice faculty of Snow College in Price, Utah.

<sup>98</sup> Hearn eventually headed the Music Therapy department at Utah State University. Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes to author, unpublished, April 19, 2018.

<sup>99</sup> Riley later became the choral area chair at Utah Valley University. Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes to author, unpublished, April 19, 2018.

<sup>100</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 22, 2014.

article, entitled “Why Singing?” and present her workshop at their convention in 2004 and 2005. In the first article for the magazine, JoAnn summarized the questions and concerns which eventually led to LifeSong.

The questions that began to niggle<sup>101</sup> at me as a professional singer grew to proportions of real discomfort as a teacher of advanced students, and they came to full flower as a university professor, eventually wielding a torturous force sufficient to cause me to resign from my university job in order to pursue some solutions to a problem that had become intolerable to me.<sup>102</sup>

Like the original LifeSong Workshop I, JoAnn’s workshops, “Why Singing?” at the *Classical Singer Magazine* conferences of 2004 and 2005, were experiential rather than didactic. She included many exercises from the LifeSong Workshops, presented her synthesis of New Physics principles with singing, and asked participants—many of whom taught on university voice faculties—her perplexing questions, including, “Is there a place for the 999?”<sup>103</sup>

Whether perceived as a failed, gallant or unfulfilled experiment, JoAnn’s work creating and implementing LifeSong/SFL continued after the formal organization folded. She spread her message as presenter, writer, teacher and singer. Former LifeSong/SFL members disseminated the principles through individual activities in their singing and teaching pursuits. Like a river that meets a dam, diverting the flow through new channels

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<sup>101</sup> Niggle: to cause one to be consistently preoccupied, annoyed or uncomfortable. *The Free Dictionary by Farlex*, [www.thefreedictionary.com/niggle](http://www.thefreedictionary.com/niggle), accessed May 6, 2017.

<sup>102</sup> JoAnn Ottley, “Why Singing?”, *Classical Singer*, p. 30, March 2004.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

around, under, or through the barrier, JoAnn's message continued to spread, without the title and trappings of a corporate entity

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### A Woman Interrupted (2004-2016)

After the dissolution of Sing for Life, JoAnn sometimes referred to the effort as the “Why Sing? Movement,” borrowed from the title of her articles and presentations for *Classical Singer Magazine*. Subsequent presentations bore the name “Sing for Life,” but she and former participants returned to calling it by the original name of “LifeSong.” LifeSong was JoAnn’s primary career focus during the eight-year span of the experiment, but not her only professional pursuit.

#### Tabernacle Choir School

JoAnn’s work with the Tabernacle Choir continued unabated until Jerry’s retirement in 2000. She coached individuals during Thursday rehearsals, taught workshops, led warm-up exercises, especially for performances during tours, and assisted equally with the arduous auditions alongside Jerry and Associate Conductor, Craig Jessop.<sup>1</sup> Jessop was a dear friend of JoAnn and Jerry; the three were an effective team. Jessop became Musical Director upon Jerry’s retirement. He understood the role JoAnn played in the choir’s success through her workshops aimed at specific vocal needs and providing individual coaching sessions during weekly rehearsals. Rehearsals were streamlined because each new choir member attended an introductory workshop with JoAnn. This minimized miscommunication as new members were presented with

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<sup>1</sup> Craig Jessop joined the choir music staff in the summer of 1995.



unifying vocal and musical skills. Jessop wanted this training to continue. He gained approval from the church for a choir training school, and the Ottleys agreed to develop and lead the program.

Potential choir members, who passed the rigorous choir audition process, were required to attend the choir training school. Meetings were on Tuesday and Thursday nights for ten weeks. The Tuesday curriculum included musicianship skills, vocal training, and terminology. On Thursday nights, students rehearsed a chamber work during the regularly scheduled Tabernacle choir rehearsals and then performed the piece as their final project. After successful choir school completion, an individual was immediately called as a choir member if an opening existed in her or his vocal section. When a vacancy did not exist, graduates were placed on a waiting list, cleared to be called when an opening became available. The school helped Jessop continue the choir's high-quality performances achieved through Jerry and JoAnn's expertise. JoAnn loved her association with the choir, enjoyed the continued participation through the choir school, and working with Jerry as a team.

#### What Next?

Jerry actively supported JoAnn's efforts for LifeSong before and after retiring as the Tabernacle Choir director. He attended initial meetings, made suggestions as she grappled with decisions concerning its organization, discussed the concepts of New Physics and singing, the limits of the accepted paradigm for professional singing, and the new paradigm's implications for singing. When financial solutions were sought, he

reached out to potential advisors within his circle, and stood with JoAnn when they made the ill-fated presentation for Amway as a means of support for singers not successfully generating personal income through singing. Jerry's active involvement with LifeSong was natural for them. The Ottley's marriage incorporated their professional pursuits from the onset, JoAnn "gathering crumbs from Jerry's education," the two concurrently completing Fulbright scholarships, and eventually working side-by-side with the Tabernacle Choir. Creating and teaching at the Tabernacle Choir Training School was joyful for both of them.

In 2003, Jerry was called to be bishop of the South Cottonwood 4<sup>th</sup> Ward.<sup>2</sup> The position was too demanding to allow time for the choir school, so Jerry and JoAnn separated from the choir and left it in the hands of others. JoAnn worried about Jerry becoming a bishop so soon after his retirement. Still exhausted from his enormous responsibilities as director of the Tabernacle Choir, she did not think he had completely regained his strength. JoAnn observed his mounting stress, but could not help as she had when they both worked with the Tabernacle Choir because as the ward bishop, he was not at liberty to divulge concerns or confidences related to that office.

The sudden loss of time together and mutual responsibilities was a difficult adjustment for JoAnn. Their relationship was as strong as ever, but she missed the daily interactions and combined problem solving they shared during their years with the choir.

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<sup>22</sup> A Mormon Bishop serves as lay pastor for the LDS church members of a Ward. In addition to administrative duties, he provides counseling for Ward members, seeks inspiration, and then chooses members for the various volunteer positions within the ward. He conducts yearly temple-recommend interviews with each ward member who attends the Temple and yearly tithing-settlement interviews with each active member who contributes financially. The Bishop has two counselors, and the three comprise the ward's bishopric. Bishops hold ward member needs and concerns in strict confidence.

Without LifeSong, choir responsibilities, a full studio and a plethora of singing engagements, JoAnn found herself with an excess of time, and lack of meaningful professional pursuits.

JoAnn's sister, LaRue, was increasingly ill, but still able to cook and provide for her daily care. JoAnn visited her sister at least once a week, did her laundry, and provided encouragement. Brent, had completed his formal studies in Chinese Medicine, was growing an acupuncture practice. Though busy, he often brought Jack to visit. Allison also lived nearby. JoAnn loved seeing her children when their schedules allowed. She did not resume teaching regularly scheduled voice lessons, but often taught professional singers preparing for concerts or opera roles. JoAnn considered writing her personal history and sketched ideas for the project after researching approaches and corresponding with an acquaintance who specialized in historical writing. She settled on a thematic outline with three main sections: 1) Ten Defining Moments, 2) Seven Critical Choices, and 3) Five Critical People.<sup>3</sup>

#### A Late-Life Adventure

Nearly three years after Jerry became the ward's bishop, he received a telephone call from friend and colleague, Barlow Bradford. Bradford was a music faculty member at Brigham Young University Hawaii (BYUH), located in Oahu. Bradford told Jerry of an upcoming, temporary opening in the music department and asked if he and JoAnn

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<sup>3</sup>JoAnn created this approach to writing her life story after researching several sources. See Appendix D for various outlines of her life history project.

might like to share the faculty appointment, split the salary, and live in Hawaii for three years. Jerry told Bradford it was not likely because of his obligation to continue as bishop, but agreed to discuss it with JoAnn.

JoAnn was thrilled at the possibility. She had no current obligations that would interfere. JoAnn thought teaching at BYUH would be a “fun late-life adventure.” Jerry told Bradford they were interested, but remained doubtful it would be possible as he thought it unlikely that the Stake President would release him from his calling as ward bishop. Bradford immediately contacted the president of BYUH, who served as an LDS area general authority for Hawaii.<sup>4</sup> This gave the university president access to key church leaders. Subsequently, the Ottley’s Stake President agreed to release Jerry as bishop, and whole-heartedly encouraged him to accept the BYUH position.<sup>5</sup>

The couple packed only necessities, leaving their Salt Lake City house stocked and decorated for summer visits. Brent and Allison agreed to watch the house. BYUH shipped their belongings to Oahu. JoAnn and Jerry boarded a plane and flew toward their new island home and the next adventure.

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<sup>4</sup> The LDS Church is organized according to leadership positions. General Authorities include the president of the church, also called the prophet, his two counselors, twelve apostles and the quorum of the seventy. General Authorities oversee the larger body of the church, and are often asked to travel, teach and govern where there are members of the church around the world. Area general authorities provide general church leadership in specific geographical areas to which they are assigned. These are further divided into regions, which are delineated into stakes (groups of wards). The stake is led by a stake president and his two counselors. Wards are congregations determined by geographical location and each ward is led by a bishop. In areas where church membership is smaller and more spread out geographically, church members belong to a branch rather than a ward, and a branch president leads instead of a bishop.

<sup>5</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, February 10, 2018.

The Ottleys had thought of going on a cruise to the Hawaiian Islands for their upcoming 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, but now “it was their address!”<sup>6</sup> They were billeted in a university-owned small, three-bedroom faculty row house.<sup>7</sup> A large, mango tree—beautiful though barren—shaded the backyard. The kitchen was almost as tiny as the one in Germany many years earlier. As in Germany, there was not a piano in the apartment, but with a piano in her university studio she did not feel the need to procure one. The Ottleys lived close to the LDS Temple, the university, and the Special Events Center. “Everything was a five-minute walk or a three-minute drive. [They] had always wanted to be in a college town and [they] just loved it.”<sup>8</sup>

The beauty of the island intoxicated JoAnn, and she told her family it was an addictive place. She and Jerry loved watching the sunsets with the palm tree silhouettes framed by the multi-colored sky. JoAnn appreciated that wherever they went a ward family was always waiting to welcome them. “After all, aloha means love,” she said.<sup>9</sup>

The BYUH student population was less than 2000 students, so the faculty was small. JoAnn celebrated her 70<sup>th</sup> birthday in an auditorium on the main campus during a faculty gathering commemorating the new academic term. She was asked to perform, and

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<sup>6</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, February 10, 2018.

<sup>7</sup> Row houses are small homes, with usually more than one story, built in close proximity to neighboring houses. They often sit on lots with backyards, but the sparse space between houses does not allow for landscaping or grass.

<sup>8</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, February 10, 2018.

<sup>9</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 22, 2014.

chose to sing, *A Birthday Song*.<sup>10</sup> The Rossetti text aptly expressed her feelings that day, “My heart is like a singing bird . . .”<sup>11</sup>

### Shared Professorship

JoAnn’s initial interview for the BYUH position was with the Music Department Chair—a specialist in French piano—who “knew nothing about singing” and provided little preparation for her upcoming responsibilities. He asked if she could teach French diction. She answered carefully, not wanting to misrepresent herself. She taught a German Diction class at the University of Utah, but never a French Diction class, though she included French diction in lessons with her private students. She left the interview expecting to teach French diction and voice lessons. Once at the university, she discovered she was slated to teach all academic classes in the vocal area, including diction in French, German, Italian, and English; the repertoire survey class; and the pedagogy class which focused on “scientific stuff.” JoAnn had a working understanding of the science behind singing, but did not feel qualified to teach a class on the subject.<sup>12</sup>

She began researching in earnest determining the information university freshman and sophomore students would need from such a course. She had not pursued the subject in her own study because she felt “much was lost” when William Vennard introduced the

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<sup>10</sup> “A Birthday Song,” musical setting of poem by Christina Georgina Rossetti by Harry Thacker Burleigh, 1940.

<sup>11</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, February 10, 2018.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid. *Dead Poets Society*, film directed by Peter Weir, starring Robin Williams, 1989.

science of singing through “measurements with laboratory equipment.” She felt the focus on anatomy, in subsequent research published in the NATS Journal, interfered with training the whole singer.<sup>13</sup> One NATS article in particular, called, “Beautiful Singing,” explored the question, “what makes beautiful singing?” using graphs and charts. She and Brent had laughed together over that article, comparing it to the “poetry grid,” in the movie *Dead Poets Society*, where Robin Williams’ character debunked the required textbook’s approach because the meaning of poems was lost by overanalyzing their forms.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, JoAnn reasoned an exclusive focus on the science of singing “could get it all technically correct and still not result in singing.”<sup>15</sup>

Throughout her singing and teaching career, JoAnn had focused on technique as only one part of the whole. Her personal study on the functional anatomy of singing was extensive, and mostly guided by the needs of the Tabernacle Choir while she was vocal coach.<sup>16</sup> Keenly aware of her strengths and limitations, JoAnn knew teaching the class was outside of her scope of experience. She recognized her “educational gaps” as a singer and teacher, with much experience but no formal university degree,<sup>17</sup> and felt it required a background “not included in her autodidactic education and her conscious choices as a pedagogue.”<sup>18</sup> During the first year at BYUH, after full days of teaching, she spent

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<sup>13</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 22, 2014.

<sup>14</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, November 10, 2014.

<sup>15</sup> Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes to author, unpublished, April 19, 2018.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, November 10, 2014.

<sup>18</sup> Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes to author, unpublished, April 19, 2018.

evenings studying to “stay ahead” of her students, and organizing the knowledge gained as the Tabernacle Choir Vocal coach.<sup>19</sup> Though she would never have accepted the position if forewarned of the actual responsibilities, it was still a relief to be away from Salt Lake City, free of familial responsibilities, and again in partnership with Jerry.

On the other hand, Jerry’s workload was “incredulously light.”<sup>20</sup> The first night after receiving their schedules, Jerry and JoAnn looked at each other with amazement. The university had procured the former Mormon Tabernacle Choir director, yet the only choir assigned was “the walk-in, warm body, exhibit a pulse choir.”<sup>21</sup> The current choir director did not relinquish any of his advanced choirs. Jerry was assigned a few music education classes and served on the university faculty advisory committee handling general school issues. “Gradually, by mutual agreement, he became mentor to the music department chair.”<sup>22</sup> Although enjoying the interaction with colleagues, the job did not offer much challenge. After the stress surrounding his position as Mormon Tabernacle Choir director, compounded by the almost immediate call to be their ward’s bishop, JoAnn was relieved that Jerry would be able to rest and regroup during their time in Hawaii.

The Ottleys were confused by the uneven responsibilities, since Bradford had said they were sharing a position left open due to a faculty member’s retirement. They

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<sup>19</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, February 10, 2018.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes to author, unpublished, April 19, 2018.



expected to fill the former professor's classes, so the department could implement changes before hiring a permanent replacement. After teaching for a few weeks, JoAnn and Jerry realized they were not actually covering the loss of an instructor. Rather, they were hired to fill an instructional gap while the music department made policy changes. A faculty meeting had not been held in over one year as the animosity among faculty had become too divisive. Two camps had developed on either side of an unresolved issue, caused by a faculty member no longer at the school.

The university was private and affiliated with the LDS Church, and the former professor had adopted a "pseudo-spiritual" approach to music instruction, which some faculty members found suspect. Even more divisive was that some administrators favored "pseudo-spiritual music" over music that represented an institution "higher learning."<sup>23</sup>

The division grew until roughly one-half of the music faculty chose to teach all classes from a spiritual lens, while the others adamantly rejected blurring the line between spirituality and academics.<sup>24</sup>

The crisis had eased, somewhat, after the instigating instructor left, but tensions remained high and JoAnn and Jerry's presence was met with cool reservation. Both camps were largely suspicious of the Ottley's presence at the university. Jerry and JoAnn realized the other professors "thought they were spies," with no one certain of whose "side" they represented. Rather than become involved in an issue which preceded their arrival, they decided to focus on work and hoped their colleagues would realize their only agenda was to "serve and teach." This approach succeeded, and eventually Jerry and

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<sup>23</sup> Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes to author, unpublished, April 19, 2018.

<sup>24</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, February 10, 2018.

JoAnn were accepted as colleagues. In time, the division between camps became less volatile. The department returned to more secular classroom approaches based on policies and faculty meetings resumed.

### Instructional Differentiation

BYUH students were from “the Pacific Rim countries as far North as Russia and Mongolia, and as far south as Australia and New Zealand. A few students came from mainland USA but the bulk of the student body came from islands scattered throughout the South Pacific.”<sup>25</sup> Some of the students were quite talented, but none had significant musical training or experience. Though JoAnn’s Asian and mainland voice students had taken lessons prior to attending BYUH, the Polynesian students had not. One singer in Jerry’s choir had never seen a sheet of written music.<sup>26</sup>

The music faculty was mostly comprised of instructors holding doctoral degrees, who did not adapt to meet the needs of the school’s student population. JoAnn and Jerry observed a large gap between the curricular content and the students’ ability levels. The instructors were “trying to teach principles at a level 8 or 9, while the students were at a level 3 or 4.”<sup>27</sup> The music faculty was resistant to change and, as new faculty, the Ottleys could not alter their attitudes. Instead, they sought inroads to reach and guide the diverse

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<sup>25</sup> Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes to author, unpublished, April 19, 2018.

<sup>26</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, February 10, 2018.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

students within their classes, and felt touched by the students' simplicity, vulnerability, and desire to learn.

JoAnn was assigned about fifteen voice students. Though some were voice majors, and some had "glorious, natural voices," none possessed the background needed to pursue a performance degree within the construct of the old paradigm.<sup>28</sup> Many female students were not interested in careers and planned to marry and stay home with children. JoAnn often reminded herself she was only there temporarily, and understood her limited level of long-term influence.

Unlike pedagogy, which required an additional personal study, teaching French diction came easily. Just as she had when teaching German Diction or working with private students on language acquisition, she started by encouraging students to gain a feel of the language. "Ven you speak ze French," she said playfully, "You always need ze pucker." Isrin, a student from Thailand, was engaged to a young man from France. Isrin's fiancé complimented her improved accent while enrolled in JoAnn's French diction class. Isrin excitedly shared the compliment with JoAnn, which eased JoAnn's insecurities about her effectiveness teaching the class for the first time.

At the end of the first semester, JoAnn was surprised to discover the department did not hold juries. Instead, the students each sang a song in a recital format. The faculty did not provide feedback during the recital and expectations for student growth were low. JoAnn told Jerry she was, "heartsick after hearing what was coming from the four

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<sup>28</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, February 10, 2018.

studios.” Afterward, JoAnn met with Mike Belnap, the head of the vocal area and a graduate of Indiana State University. “How can you possibly not require a jury?” she queried. They discussed it at length, and a jury was added to the requirements for applied voice students by the next semester. In this way, JoAnn and Jerry influenced faculty and created policy change. They looked for moments to share ideas without threatening their colleagues and made “some headway” with fellow music teachers, who began shifting their instruction to better meet the students’ needs.

The first year behind them, JoAnn and Jerry celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary with friends from California who joined them for a cruise around the Hawaiian Islands.<sup>29</sup> They then returned to Salt Lake City for the summer. In honor of their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, JoAnn wrote a small history of their married life, which they gave to relatives as a keepsake.

### The Old Paradigm Regime

Many of the BYUH music faculty were Indiana University graduates. Belnap, and other permanent faculty, selected the students they considered most talented for their studios, and continued teaching from the old paradigm JoAnn had tried to transcend with LifeSong. They gave JoAnn the students they did not want, carefully sifting students in their quest to find and develop those JoAnn would characterize as “ones.” JoAnn decided not to voice her concern, and told Jerry, “If I were permanent, I would fight, but, I am not

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<sup>29</sup> Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes to author, unpublished, April 19, 2018.

permanent.”<sup>30</sup> She taught her students fundamental techniques as she always had, while exploring the more creative, right-brain instincts her students possessed. Her students improved, gaining technical skill and artistry, while experiencing the effects of singing JoAnn knew were more beneficial than what the old paradigm could provide.

JoAnn trained students to rely on their natural voices and guided vocal development accordingly. One of her most advanced students was “built like a Russian sergeant: solid, with big hands and stubby fingers, a thick waist and a big jaw.”<sup>31</sup> JoAnn suspected the voice belonging to a singer with such large physical traits would also be large. She trained the singer with that in mind, and the student’s voice blossomed. The student sang a beautiful senior recital, and was subsequently accepted into the vocal performance master’s program at the University of Idaho. The next year, the student sent JoAnn a recording of her first master’s recital in Idaho. JoAnn was saddened to hear the vibrant voice of her student confined into the small fach of a soubrette. It was clear to JoAnn that the goal of vocal music programs in higher education continued to propagate the old paradigm. Teachers sought to mold students into a predetermined model, meant to eliminate the many in search of a few.

### Island Paradise

The Ottley’s time in Hawaii passed quickly. Neither Brent nor Allison were able to make time for a visit while their parents lived in Hawaii, but Jerry and JoAnn wanted

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<sup>30</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, February 10, 2018.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

to share the experience with their grandson. They flew Jack to Hawaii and had a wonderful time showing him the sights and exploring their new island home.

Mother's Day in Hawaii was a highlight for JoAnn. Leis were often given as gifts, and the windows of the Ottley's little house were usually decorated with leis received from church member and students. On Mother's Day every woman was bedecked in flowers, "leis upon leis." The sight and scent of so many leis combined with the beautiful smiles of the mothers and grandmothers at church filled JoAnn's senses and would become a lasting memory of their tenure there.

#### Final Words for BYUH

At the end of the three years, the music department chair said he would keep Jerry and JoAnn until they were 90 years old if he could. The Ottleys, however, were ready to return home. They worked together on a document to leave with the music department, which listed their observations, concerns, explanations and suggestions.<sup>32</sup>

The list served as the Ottley's last attempt to influence the direction of the BYUH music department and address the problems they perceived while teaching there. Many issues listed in the letter mirrored concerns JoAnn had expressed when creating LifeSong. Even in Hawaii, "this little black dot in the middle of the big ocean," the vocal degree was "hopelessly irrelevant to the lives of the students who wanted to sing but had little desire or hope for an operatic career."<sup>33</sup> The degree requirements and class choices

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<sup>32</sup> Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, *Exit Letter BYUH*, Unpublished 2008.

<sup>33</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 8, 2014

offered little relevance to the students' lives; therefore, the music and the musicians were separated from the community they might have served.

### Return to the Mainland

Jerry and JoAnn returned to Salt Lake City in June 2008. JoAnn declared the island addictive, and was homesick for Oahu's sights, sounds, and culture. She cried easily when she heard Hawaiian music and found it difficult to wear shoes, after three years wearing sandals. Their LDS stake had been reorganized shortly after they left for Hawaii, dissolving the ward where Jerry had served as bishop. The new ward was called the Cottonwood Acres Ward. JoAnn was waiting in the car for Jerry one Sunday as ward members left the building after services. The ward population was predominantly senior citizens and JoAnn watched several go by with walkers. When Jerry climbed in the car, she pointed out the many ward members who seemed infirm. She and Jerry laughed and nick-named it the "Cottonwood Achers" ward, since all the members suffered aches and pains.<sup>34</sup>

JoAnn was exhausted after the three-year assignment in Hawaii and decided not to return to full-time teaching. She accepted students on an "as needed" basis, helping her professional singers prepare for singing engagements. She and Jerry rented a seaside home from friends in Oregon and spent one month resting and regrouping. JoAnn turned

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<sup>34</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, February 10, 2018

seventy-three during the vacation. The month by the sea provided a block of time to start writing their personal histories, and they spent each morning working on the project.<sup>35</sup>

### Unofficial Retirement

The languor of their month in Oregon and the luxury of time to write personal histories was immediately curtailed upon returning to Salt Lake City. The health of JoAnn's sister, LaRue, spiraled downward. By necessity, JoAnn's focus shifted to LaRue and she became her sister's caretaker. It was evident that LaRue needed more help than JoAnn could provide, and arrangements were made for LaRue to move into a care center. She and Jerry packed her sister's apartment. The task was daunting, not only because her sister was in pain and largely helpless, but the house was disorganized and over-filled with random possessions collected through the years. It took weeks to sort through the belongings, save what was needed, and dispose of the remainder.<sup>36</sup>

Though LaRue's basic needs were met in the care center, JoAnn visited several times a week to provide emotional support. LaRue was in great pain. JoAnn sang to her sister, "using a technique known as 'toning,'"<sup>37</sup> searching for frequencies that would ease the discomfort. The singing greatly reduced LaRue's pain, and she often called JoAnn and asked her to come "sing to her neck."<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> See Appendix D for various outlines of JoAnn Ottley's life history project.

<sup>36</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 22, 2014.

<sup>37</sup> Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes to author, unpublished, April 19, 2018.

<sup>38</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 22, 2014.



JoAnn did not officially label herself retired, but “kept it loose.”<sup>39</sup> She continued teaching students who contacted her for help with upcoming performances. In 2009, she presented the core ideas of LifeSong at the local NATS chapter, and provided each attendee a handout with sound exploration exercises. Afterward, a bemused JoAnn told Jerry the reception to her ideas was “polite, they thought it was nice.”<sup>40</sup> In November 2010, JoAnn performed for a concert celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Temple Square Concert Series. She was asked to sing, but told them she was “too far past her warranty” and narrated the program instead.<sup>41</sup>

### Sudden Blindness

Both of JoAnn’s parents developed glaucoma in their later years, which they controlled with medicinal eye drops. JoAnn was diagnosed with the disorder and began using medication in her sixties. She learned that Vikings often suffered with glaucoma, and knowing she had Viking ancestry, JoAnn joked that “some Viking ancestor or another must have gotten into mischief<sup>42</sup> during the conquest of the Isle of Man.”<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, February 10, 2018.

<sup>40</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, October 20, 2017.

<sup>41</sup> Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes to author, unpublished, April 19, 2018.

<sup>42</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, March 22, 2014.

<sup>43</sup> Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes to author, unpublished, April 19, 2018. Between 800 and 850 AD, the Vikings periodically plundered the Isle of Man and eventually made it a home base. “About the Isle of Man,” *MANX DNA*. [http://www.manxdna.co.uk/about\\_the\\_isle\\_of\\_man.htm](http://www.manxdna.co.uk/about_the_isle_of_man.htm), accessed May 19, 2018.

JoAnn's form of glaucoma was more aggressive than her parents', and after returning from Hawaii, her vision deteriorated rapidly. She was examined by Dr. Zabriskie at the University of Utah's Moran Eye Center,<sup>44</sup> who discovered the trabecular meshwork<sup>45</sup> in both eyes were clogged. Zabriskie performed a series of surgeries to ease the pressure from fluid pressing behind JoAnn's optic nerves to offset further deterioration.

The first two surgeries, performed with a laser, proved insufficient.<sup>46</sup> JoAnn's left eye was the poorest, so Zabriskie performed the more invasive surgery on that eye first, punching a hole in her trabecular meshwork. After it healed, he performed the same procedure on her right eye.<sup>47</sup> Unfortunately, the hole created to relieve the pressure healed, a common problem with this type of surgery. Zabriskie prescribed eye drops which JoAnn was to use along with gentle massage several times a day to force fluid through the holes in each eye in an effort to keep them open.

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<sup>44</sup> The John A. Moran Eye Center provides patient care and research in vision care with 35 specialists on staff. Their website states, "We believe no person with a blinding condition, eye disease or visual impairment should be without hope, understanding and treatment." <https://healthcare.utah.edu/moran/>, accessed March 4, 2018.

<sup>45</sup> The trabecular meshwork is an area of tissue in the eye located around the base of the cornea, near the ciliary body. It is responsible for draining the aqueous humor from the eye via the anterior chamber (the chamber on the front of the eye covered by the cornea.) [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmedhealth/PMHT0022392/](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmedhealth/PMHT0022392/), accessed March 3, 2018.

<sup>46</sup> In laser trabecular surgery approximately 80 to 100 tiny laser burns are made in the area of the trabecular meshwork. The procedure increases the drainage of aqueous humor (a thin, transparent fluid similar to plasma, which nourishes the cornea and the lens) most likely by stimulating the activity of trabecular cells. The procedure takes about 15 minutes and is performed on an outpatient basis, using eyedrops for anesthesia. [www.healthcommunities.com/glaucoma/surgery-to-treat-glaucoma\\_jhmwp.shtml](http://www.healthcommunities.com/glaucoma/surgery-to-treat-glaucoma_jhmwp.shtml); [www.visioneyeinstitute.com.au/eyematters/aqueous-humour](http://www.visioneyeinstitute.com.au/eyematters/aqueous-humour), accessed March 3, 2018.

<sup>47</sup> Optical fluid must pass through the trabecular screen. Glaucoma can cause the optical fluid to become clogged.

JoAnn and Jerry were invited to present for a group on a Mediterranean Cruise. Zabriske hesitantly approved the trip. While on the cruise, her eyes worsened. She became so ill and was in so much pain, that they went directly from the airport to the emergency room upon their return. JoAnn's eye pressure had climbed to 70 mm HG.<sup>48</sup> The microscopic matter that had collected on her trabecular screens, along with scar tissue from the previous surgery, required another surgery. However, because JoAnn's ocular pressure was so high, surgery was impossible. JoAnn was given a medication to force the pressure down.<sup>49</sup>

For a time, this seemed to be working, but during the period of her recuperation, JoAnn noted that her vision seemed to be waning. After spending an evening singing for a dear friend's birthday party, she awoke the next morning unable to see. Her vision was obscured as though she were in a "white out."<sup>50</sup> Jerry rushed her to the Moran Eye Center where Dr. Zabriskie's academic fellow was on duty. After discovering her eye pressure was extremely elevated, he consulted with Dr. Zabriskie, who prescribed [another] medication.<sup>51</sup>

JoAnn called it the "Zombie Pill," because it made her extremely dizzy and incoherent.<sup>52</sup> She hated the sensation, but, fortunately, the medication brought the ocular pressure down to a level that would allow surgery. The surgeon inserted a stent to keep the fluid

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<sup>48</sup> "Normal optical pressure is between 12 and 22 mm HG, and eye pressure greater than 22 mm HG is considered higher than normal." James C. Tsai, M.D., "High Eye Pressure and Glaucoma," *Glaucoma Research Foundation*, [www.glaucoma.org/gleams/high-eye-pressure-and-glaucoma.php](http://www.glaucoma.org/gleams/high-eye-pressure-and-glaucoma.php), accessed April 12, 2018.

<sup>49</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, March 22, 2014.

<sup>50</sup> "White Out" is a colloquial term describing a heavy snowstorm accompanied by wind, so the snow is coming down and blowing up simultaneously, completely obscuring visibility.

<sup>51</sup> Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes to author, unpublished, April 19, 2018.

<sup>52</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, March 22, 2014.

from building up again. In an effort to lighten her own fear, and create “fun” in spite of the circumstances, JoAnn laughingly called it, “her drain pipe.”<sup>53</sup>

Despite JoAnn’s humorous outlook, the surgery and its possible complications were serious and included the possibility of blindness. Knowing many of her mother’s friends and former students would want to know the dire circumstances, Allison posted a brief explanation on Facebook.<sup>54</sup> Jerry and both children were with her when she came out of surgery. They took her home and she went to bed. That night, as she was resting, she read a story on her Kindle. It was a sweet, easy read and she fell asleep, but awoke terrified. “Jerry!” she cried out, “I can’t see!”<sup>55</sup>

The blindness, described by her doctors as low vision designation was profound, but not complete. Low vision changes somewhat day to day, but JoAnn’s sight was never clear. It was “like looking through milk.”<sup>56</sup> She could see some shapes and shadows, but not distinguish what those might be. To preserve the small sight remaining after the surgery, JoAnn used medicated drops five times per day, followed by eye massage to ensure the fluid moved through her eyes. Without the drops and massage, the fluid would build and create pressure that could not be released, and ultimately destroy her optic

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<sup>53</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, March 22, 2014.

<sup>54</sup> Recollections of author.

<sup>55</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, March 22, 2014.

<sup>56</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, November 7, 2014.

nerve. Post-surgery rehabilitation also required a steroid regimen, which, as before, made JoAnn extremely ill.<sup>57</sup>

### Adrenal Failure

JoAnn became increasingly ill, and experienced symptoms more terrible than the blindness.<sup>58</sup> It felt as if electrical currents were constantly pulsing through her entire body, “like being shocked.”<sup>59</sup> She felt unable to breathe. Almost overnight, she dropped thirty pounds. She recalled an article she had once read by a doctor of geology who posited there are a quadrillion cells in the body, each containing 1.7 volts. JoAnn felt like all quadrillion were being charged simultaneously.<sup>60</sup>

The terror JoAnn experienced after losing her sight and the subsequent systemic illness hurt her voice. Night after night she grieved her losses, sobbing out loud, depressing her muscles in the process. Many of those nights she sat outside “in the dry air, singing hymns from A to Z so [she] could put down the terror.”<sup>61</sup> Both the crying and singing conditions hurt her singing voice. She decided it was not worth trying to repair.

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<sup>57</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, November 7, 2014.

<sup>58</sup> Eventually, JoAnn’s symptoms were diagnosed as a systemic adrenal crash. Though there has never been a definitive diagnosis for the cause of JoAnn’s systemic adrenal crash, “as near as can be determined, it was in response to the continuing steroid therapy.” Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes to author, unpublished, April 19, 2018.

<sup>59</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, November 7, 2014.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

“I’ve just ruined it. It’s just gone.” She said, “And it is not worth trying to do repairs. I have lost my motivation. I have lost my impulse to move forward.”<sup>62</sup>

Eventually she could not sing at all and thought her singing voice was gone forever.<sup>63</sup> In despair, she laid on the couch day after day, listening to soft jazz. She had not previously listened to the genre but wanted the comfort of music. She could not sing and wanted no reminders of her life before her illness. Smooth jazz was the most aural stimulation she could tolerate and it seemed to slightly soothe her hypersensitive state.<sup>64</sup>

She could not go downstairs for one month, preferring the relative familiarity and safety of the four rooms comprising their condominium’s main floor. A side-effect of low-vision was sensitivity to light, so JoAnn kept the lights low and blinds closed. Clothes hurt her skin, so she wore only lightweight clothing like muumuus that barely touched her skin. The only people she allowed near were Jerry and the children. Though she could talk a little with them, she could not handle actual conversations or answer questions. She felt “fragile, absolutely erased,” and with no hope of recovery, “was terrified of everything.”

Jerry was steadfast throughout the ordeal, taking JoAnn to her appointments, trying to make her comfortable at home and visiting LaRue each week to help her in JoAnn’s stead. JoAnn continued making meals, even during the terrible early months of

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<sup>62</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, November 7, 2014.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

her illness. She kept meals simple, and immediately afterward would lie back down on the couch, where she stayed most of the day, leaving only to pace along the sidewalk. She tried walking outside along the little sidewalk lining their condominium complex, but could only travel a few feet before she was unable to continue and returned home. She tried each day and eventually began retracing her steps back and forth before returning to the condominium. It became a ritual, walking back and forth along the same stretch of sidewalk. Day after day she walked the same path, speaking to no one, unable to stop.<sup>65</sup>

Her doctors called her condition an anxiety disorder, but JoAnn disagreed, reasoning anxiety was an emotion and this was physical. Doctors used the analogy of the body responding with extra adrenalin, as if the person experiencing anxiety encountered a bear. JoAnn tried to explain the difference between what she was feeling and anxiety, but received no indication the doctors understood the severity of her physical symptoms. “I’m not afraid of the bear,” JoAnn said, “This is much worse. I am sure the bear will eat me. This is full-fledged terror.”<sup>66</sup> JoAnn did not know where to find the help she so desperately needed. While her symptoms appeared to be emotional to her traditional doctors, she knew there was something very wrong physically.

This was the Mississippi of the little brooklet which is anxiety. The Mississippi version is to the 100<sup>th</sup> degree. And I was crying, crying, crying, and trying to find anything that would alleviate this and finding nothing. I was just lying there, was just listening to soft jazz all the time. I couldn’t listen to anything that related to my own life.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, November 7, 2014.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

Her symptoms worsened quickly. JoAnn experienced acute claustrophobia. She could not be around other people. Her “entire system felt broken.”<sup>68</sup> A nurse suggested the problem might be Somatic Symptom Disorder,<sup>69</sup> explaining JoAnn had likely developed a hormonal imbalance in response to the trauma of her sudden blindness.<sup>70</sup> JoAnn investigated this possibility by seeing an endocrinologist, “but he was stumped,”<sup>71</sup> so she began therapy for Post-Traumatic Stress disorder with Lisa Ord at the Moran Eye Center.<sup>72</sup>

## Recovery

The PTSD therapy with Ord, lasted six months, and was helpful, but not curative. At first, JoAnn could only manage short sessions with Ord. The violent symptoms of her illness caused her body to vibrate, as if “plugged into a wall socket.”<sup>73</sup> As part of the

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<sup>68</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, November 7, 2014.

<sup>69</sup> Somatic symptom disorder is another theory of the cause of JoAnn’s adrenal crash, connecting it to the trauma of her sudden blindness. Somatic symptom disorder occurs when a person feels extreme anxiety about physical symptoms such as pain or fatigue. The person has intense thoughts, feelings, and behaviors related to the symptoms that interfere with daily life. The extreme reaction and behaviors about the symptoms are the main problem. Somatic symptom disorder: MedlinePlus: [www.nlm.nih.gov](http://www.nlm.nih.gov). Accessed June 8, 2016.

<sup>70</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, November 7, 2014.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid. Lisa Ord was head of patient services at the Moran Eye Center in Salt Lake City, UT, and a sociologist who worked with returning soldiers suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, (PTSD).

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.



treatment, she kept smelling salts and a homeopathic medication called Rescue Remedy with her at all times, using them when the sensations were most overwhelming.<sup>74</sup>

When JoAnn could not find adequate answers or treatment plans in traditional western medicine, she sought alternative methods. Brent began treating his mother at his acupuncture clinic. His diagnosis was Hyperarousal of the Sympathetic Nervous System coupled with Adrenal Failure and Blindness. JoAnn had previous successful experiences with acupuncture, but in her hypersensitive state could not tolerate the acupuncture needles. Brent persisted. He introduced the needles cautiously until she was able to endure them. His sole treatment focus was the nervous collapse, not the blindness. His clinic partner suggested herbs, which also seemed to help.<sup>75</sup>

Brent worked with JoAnn consistently. As with her doctors after the surgery, she tried to describe the sensations in her body to him, distinguishing between anxiety and what she was feeling. Brent advised allowing and experiencing her symptoms, rather than trying to stop them. “Mom, you’ve got to quit using your energy to problem solve the problem,” he said. “It’s going against you.”<sup>76</sup> Though difficult, JoAnn implemented his suggestion as often as possible.<sup>77</sup>

Dr. Kory Branham, the trusted friend and chiropractor who had introduced JoAnn to kinesiology, agreed with Brent’s diagnosis of adrenal failure. To JoAnn, this diagnosis

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<sup>74</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, November 7, 2014.

<sup>75</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 10, 2014.

<sup>76</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, November 7, 2014.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

most closely aligned with how she felt. Allison agreed. “Mom, you just burned out your circuit board.”<sup>78</sup> Though JoAnn tried to heed her children’s advice, merely accepting and experiencing the illness went against her nature. She continued seeking answers.

### Search for Meaning

As a woman of faith, JoAnn sought spiritual channels for guidance as well as medical, psychological, and emotional. “How can you ask this of me at this age?” she prayed, “How can you possibly?”<sup>79</sup> Merely surviving was not her goal, JoAnn wanted “to conquer, to transcend.”<sup>80</sup> Transcendence meant expanding the holon of her personal growth. JoAnn struggled to find meaning in her suffering, as she had learned from reading Viktor Frankl,<sup>81</sup> and a lifetime of rich experiences.

JoAnn knew she was in a precarious state. Because the diagnosis was unclear, it was difficult to explain what was happening to others. Social contact, conversation and especially answering questions remained difficult. She felt lonely, but, could not reach out to others for support. Yet, JoAnn “desperately wanted to attend church.”<sup>82</sup> Ten

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<sup>78</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, November 7, 2014.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 10, 2014.

<sup>81</sup> Viktor E. Frankl (1905-1997) developed logotherapy (an existential search for meaning in life, rather than happiness) after surviving the holocaust as a prisoner of several camps, including Auschwitz, where the rest of his family, including his pregnant wife, died. He first published *Man’s Search for Meaning* in 1946. It continues to be widely read, and the Library of Congress named it one of the ten most influential books after a survey in 1991. [www.goodreads.com/book/show/4069.Man s Search for Meaning](http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/4069.Man_s_Search_for_Meaning), accessed March 11, 2018. The book was studied by the Sing for Life Book Group.

<sup>82</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 10, 2014.

months following the onset of blindness and subsequent shock, she decided to attend a Sacrament Meeting.<sup>83</sup> Knowing she would not be able to participate in conversations, nor explain the intensity of her trauma, she and Jerry arrived late and left early. She avoided any interaction, including well-meaning sympathy and especially questions. Ward members naturally assumed the only source of JoAnn's illness was blindness and she did not desire to explain. "Sorry, folks," she quipped later, "I could have rolled up my sleeves and done just fine with that."<sup>84</sup> JoAnn's skin was still hypersensitive, so she avoided her usual church dresses, and instead wore the loosest clothing she could find, minimizing the sensation of cloth touching her skin. She eventually added one more meeting to her church attendance, where she, "sat quietly and spoke to no one." For JoAnn, "everything was just shattered."<sup>85</sup>

In her pursuit of spiritual guidance and transcendence, JoAnn received several Priesthood Blessings,<sup>86</sup> but found them "empty."<sup>87</sup> Finally, a close friend gave her a

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<sup>83</sup> LDS Sunday meetings consist of a block of three events. Sacrament Meeting is a church service with singing, speakers, and communion, which Mormons call "the sacrament," hence the name of the meeting. Sunday School is divided according to age for children and teens, and often includes several choices of classes for the adults. The third meeting block is divided for men, women, teens and children. Men go to Priesthood Meeting, women to Relief Society, teenagers to Young Women's and Young Men's and children under twelve attend Primary.

<sup>84</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, November 7, 2014.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> A practice of the LDS faith is for men in the church who have reached the level of Elder in the Priesthood hierarchy to give blessings, including blessings for healing where they anoint the person who is ill with oil, then place their hands his or her head, and say a blessing. The blessing is spoken not as a prayer, but as a direct intercessory communication with God, whom they call Heavenly Father, on behalf of the suffering one. [www.lds.org/handbook/handbook-2-administering-the-church/priesthood-ordinances-and-blessings/20.6](http://www.lds.org/handbook/handbook-2-administering-the-church/priesthood-ordinances-and-blessings/20.6), accessed October 14, 2014.

<sup>87</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, November 7, 2014.

blessing which felt meaningful. During the blessing he said, “JoAnn, there is a purpose in this. It is refinement and sanctification.” His words stayed with her, and provided comfort and strength. Ever the kitchen philosopher, she began earnestly seeking to understand what refinement and sanctification required.<sup>88</sup>

JoAnn’s natural inclination was to research possible solutions until she found a cure, the right combination of treatments, or the correct approach. That was how she had handled her daughter’s problems, her mother’s Alzheimer’s, her sister’s health and emotional issues, and the questions that guided her singing and teaching career. Meaning, sanctification, and refinement were complex concepts, and her medical conditions made critical thinking difficult. The stress of searching only heightened her symptoms and frustration levels.<sup>89</sup> JoAnn needed a different approach. She turned to creating normalcy where she could, at home.

### The New Normal

JoAnn had continued performing small household tasks like laundry and meal preparation throughout the months of her illness. She now expanded those efforts, working for greater autonomy and even creativity. “Experts from the blind center helped

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<sup>88</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, November 7, 2014.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

her organize the kitchen so she could find specific food, cookware, and dishes.”<sup>90</sup> Jerry then guided her through each detail until she could manage independently.<sup>91</sup>

Certain sensory experiences helped JoAnn cope with the hypersensitivity. Jerry rubbed her feet each night, and took her for drives with the car windows open, so she could feel the wind on her face. She continued listening to soft jazz. One day seemed like the next and it was difficult to assess any improvement. Using her “initial crash” as the lowest denominator, which she called “the basement,” JoAnn conceived a six-level rating scale gauge her recovery. She assigned descriptors to each level. None included sight recovery, but rather focused on the debilitating symptoms of hypersensitivity associated with her adrenal crash. Levels 1 and 2 chronicled barely perceptible improvement. Level 3 included “echoes of the initial symptoms,” and was the half-way mark for JoAnn. Level 4 included the ability to minimally engage in activities outside of home if Jerry was with her. Level 5 would mean she was “beginning to feel like a person,” and Level 6 would bring the possibility of “taking on life again.” Her system of levels provided a framework in which to watch and wait for recovery. She doubted she would ever reach Level 6, because in addition to the profound symptoms of her illness, she was aging. After caring for her parents, she knew aging was fraught with possible complications and added issues. However, JoAnn felt she could accept living at a level 4 or 5 “even if full recovery was not possible.”<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes to author, unpublished, April 19, 2018.

<sup>91</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, November 7, 2014.

<sup>92</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 27, 2014.

Six months following her adrenal crash, JoAnn reached Level 3, but then progress seemed to stop. By ten months, she could recall only three days when she surpassed Level 3 and experienced Level 4. At that point, she regarded Level 3 as her “new normal,” and hoped Level 4 would eventually take its place.<sup>93</sup> During this plateau JoAnn felt increasingly depressed and frustrated. “Level 6 may be more than I can achieve,” she said, “But, I would sure like to divorce Level 3.”<sup>94</sup>

Other than organizing the kitchen, JoAnn had not sought coping strategies for her blindness. Dealing with the adrenal failure was all she could manage. However, once JoAnn reached recovery Level 3, she began taking classes to develop functional life skills through the Utah State Division of Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired (DSBVI) which she referred to as the Blind Center.<sup>95</sup> The staff at the Blind Center talked of adapting to “the new normal.”<sup>96</sup> Knowing her blindness could not be reversed, JoAnn’s new normal meant learning to live productively with visual impairment. To this end, JoAnn incorporated ideas from the Blind Center classes into household tasks. Her recovery level from the adrenal failure varied day to day, but on her best days she

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<sup>93</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 27, 2014.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> The Division of Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired (DSBVI) provides a variety of free services for Utah residents with visual impairment, including vocational rehabilitation, and adjustment training, free access to audiobooks, Braille training, and targeted programs for children, teens, working adults and senior citizens. DSBVI is affiliated with the American Foundation for the Blind, and share their mission to “create a world of no limits for people who are blind or visually impaired.” <http://www.afb.org/directory/profile/utah-state-division-of-services-for-the-blind-and-visually-impaired-dsbvi/12>, accessed March 17, 2018.

<sup>96</sup> New Normal is a psychological term used to describe permanent changes in life due to traumatic events or illness.

creatively expanded efforts toward accepting her new normal by attempting new recipes, managing tasks without assistance, or trying short activities outside the house, like grocery shopping with Jerry.

JoAnn recovered further, reaching her Level 4 distinction more often. She was able to remain for all meetings at church on most Sundays, and attended selected recitals and concerts with Jerry. Though her sensitivity to fabric lessened somewhat, it did not completely disappear. On lower-level days, JoAnn needed to wear the loose clothing, like her muumuus, but as long as the fabric was light-weight, she could usually handle wearing more close-fitting clothes. Her eyes remained sensitive to light, and she started wearing visors to reduce the uncomfortable glare. She purchased a collection of them so she could coordinate the visor color with daily outfits.

Depending on others was a necessary component of JoAnn's new normal, but she was not comfortable with accepting, rather than giving help. In the spring of 2014, wearing a pair of white slacks, spotless white tennis shoes, a flowing cobalt blue blouse and a matching visor to shield the sun, JoAnn sat on her front room couch conversing with a friend. Unknown to JoAnn, a little spider crawled across the visor, and the friend reached up and brushed it away, explaining as she did so. "I'm used to being rescued!" JoAnn said, ruefully. Then added, "Oh! It is such a frustration to not have my vision!"<sup>97</sup>

Jerry supported JoAnn through every phase of her illness and recovery efforts. LaRue's health had deteriorated while Jerry and JoAnn were in Hawaii, and JoAnn had

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<sup>97</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 27, 2014.

been consistently providing her sister assistance since their return. When JoAnn's sight failed and she became ill, JoAnn wanted to be at LaRue's side, but was too ill to manage it, so Jerry visited his sister-in-law at least once a week in JoAnn's stead, until LaRue's death in 2015. As JoAnn expanded her efforts to accept and reach higher levels of function, Jerry sought ways to help her meet the challenges. He found a tool that magnified and increased light on printed matter, such as grocery labels and sheet music. A trainer from the Blind Center came to their home and taught them how to use it.<sup>98</sup> She used the tool to relearn a passage of "Nola"<sup>99</sup> she had forgotten. The Blind Center provided 20/20 pens, designed to produce high contrast writing, along with thickly lined paper so she could write lists or notes to herself and others.<sup>100</sup>

Though the vision enhancer helped with shopping, and even music, it showed too small a section of print for practical use reading books. JoAnn's love of reading fueled her autodidactic pursuits throughout her life, and not being able to read was a terrible loss. Allison came and read to her mother often, as did friends and neighbors. JoAnn also had free access to audiobooks through the Blind Center. Those avenues were helpful, but not the same or as satisfying. JoAnn had thought she would never be bored or lonely when she grew old, because she would always have a book to read. Visual learning had

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<sup>98</sup> Author observations, home of Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, Salt Lake City, UT, February 2, 2015.

<sup>99</sup> As discussed in Chapter Four, "Nola" was the first piano song JoAnn performed in recital. She was 12 years old and it was a surprise for her father.

<sup>100</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 27, 2014.



always been her strongest, and aural did not offer the same gains. “I hate the new normal,” she quipped.<sup>101</sup>

### A Shrunken World

Throughout JoAnn’s life, she had often felt an outsider. As a child, her parents were quite inexperienced, both coming from small-town, rural ranch-life with little cultural background. They supported her gifts, but did not understand the life JoAnn would lead because of her music. She did not like the music of her peers in school, and—though they still liked her and she was involved in their activities—her musical tastes made her feel slightly different.

When working in an office, she was the employee who sang professionally, taking time off occasionally to audition or perform. Her employers generously provided her time for her musical pursuits, but those pursuits separated her from coworkers. She became a mother later than most women in her circle of friends, and when studying in Germany, she was the only student with a child and a husband. She usually felt out of place in her ward, due to her desire for deeper discussions in the lessons, her fame as a singer, or Jerry’s position as Tabernacle Choir director.

The limelight of his position with the choir had created situations where strangers wanted to meet them, shake hands, hug, ask questions, and share stories or music. JoAnn and Jerry learned to negotiate those experiences with grace and kindness, but often felt a

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<sup>101</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, March 11, 2018.

sense of anomie—alone in a crowd of well-meaning people who considered the Ottleys friends, but did not really know them.

Of all her groups of acquaintances, colleagues, and friends, JoAnn found the most acceptance and belonging when working with the Tabernacle Choir. She missed the association immensely. The safe community it provided was no longer readily available. Her loss of sight created further distance between herself and others.<sup>102</sup>

Not only had JoAnn's loss of sight increased her loneliness, the decrease in activities and abilities left her with hours to fill and no idea what to do with them. In her full, rich life she had learned to "balance and juggle," but had seldom experienced boredom. The days stretched endlessly in front of her. Unless accompanying Jerry, she stayed at home. The woman who had studied and performed abroad, performed with symphonies across the United States, traveled to speak as guest presenter or teach at conferences, and filled an interim teaching position in Hawaii was now trapped in four rooms on the main floor and two in the basement of a small condominium. "It is terrible to go from a life so big, to one so small," she lamented.<sup>103</sup>

### The Good Fight

In September, 2014, the Ottleys traveled to Oregon, joining friends they had known since Jerry completed his doctorate there. Jerry and JoAnn were invited to spend

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<sup>102</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 8, 2014.

<sup>103</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, October 19, 2017.

the week with them at a timeshare<sup>104</sup> about 200 miles outside of Eugene. It was the second time for the Ottleys to vacation with the other couple, and the trip was a welcome respite. JoAnn had been “so sick, so handicapped, so miserable, and all of a sudden that all lifted!”<sup>105</sup> It was the first extended trip made since the onset of her illness. She and Jerry flew, then journeyed by car from Eugene to the timeshare. The traveling proved taxing for JoAnn, but once they arrived and throughout the week, she “felt fabulous!”<sup>106</sup>

The trip was blissful, but returning home was difficult. As she walked through the front door of their condominium, JoAnn was overwhelmed with pain and sorrow, completely reverting to her mental and physical state before the Oregon trip. The relief and healing experienced during their vacation, however, became a beacon of hope. “Perhaps it is telling me what is still possible,” she told Jerry, “That I can get well again. And I can have energy. And I can make a contribution even if I cannot see.”<sup>107</sup>

JoAnn’s recovery continued, and two years after the initial crises, she began gently working her voice. She adopted a method for vocal therapy created by nationally renowned vocal pedagogue, Ingo Titse. The technique included singing gently into small cocktail straws as a tool for rebalancing her vocal core. After a few months, she was able

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<sup>104</sup> A Timeshare is a resort community of vacation rental homes or condominiums for members only. Members buy a week or more at the property, which reserves accommodations for them during that period of time each year. Once paid, members are able to use the property without further cost except for yearly property maintenance fees. Members own their weeks, and so have the right to sell their weeks to someone else or pass them on as inheritance after death.

<sup>105</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 10, 2014.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid..

to sing “The China Doll.”<sup>108</sup> Though she sang it simply, with little extended technique, she added nuances and dynamics that hinted at vocal artistry and revealed the presence of her vocal core. The legato phrases were connected to her breath, and she added whimsy and delight to the song.<sup>109</sup> JoAnn’s initial response to give up on her voice was temporary. She rallied, just as she had with other facets of her life affected by trauma.<sup>110</sup>

### The Imp is Back

JoAnn received a poem written by a friend after they shared a deep conversation. The free-style poem included the recurrent phrase, “Her heart still sees.” Allison stopped by for a visit and JoAnn asked her to read the poem out loud. Afterward, they discussed the poem at length. Allison, referring to the written copy, commented on the form and JoAnn concurred with her analysis, saying, “I see.” Allison looked at the poem, then teasingly asked, “How?” She put the paper down, and said more seriously. “Cruel question, I know, but we’ve got to start poking fun at some point.” JoAnn giggled back and replied, “Oh, I do, I do. We laugh about it all the time.”<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> “China Doll,” from *Marguerite*, with music by Michel LeGrand and lyrics by Alain Boublil and Herbert Kretzmer, 2008.

<sup>109</sup> Observations by the author of JoAnn Ottley singing “The China Doll” during interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 10, 2014.

<sup>110</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 10, 2014.

<sup>111</sup> JoAnn and Allison Ottley, observation by author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 10, 2014.

Jerry said he knew JoAnn was recovering when she began joking and teasing again. “How do you make a blind person crazy?” JoAnn asked him at dinner, then answered, “Give her water in a clear glass.” “The imp is back,” he said.<sup>112</sup>

Since JoAnn could not see piano music without magnification, and she had never memorized her piano pieces, she began improvising. She always played for her students, “using chords and arpeggios and octaves and combinations,”<sup>113</sup> but had never felt an inclination to compose until she could not see to read a musical score.

I’ve been so grateful for it, to dispel some of this wretchedness inside me. It’s been so helpful. It’s that tactile thing. It’s so good. I just think there is something so very basic about what’s required of the body, the mind, the spirit the emotions, everything in that keyboard situation and the sound that goes with it, and the complexity of the multiple notes. I think there is something about it that nothing equals!<sup>114</sup>

Improvising at the piano became a form of self-healing, providing relief and a means of self-expression.<sup>115</sup>

Jerry and JoAnn attended concerts more frequently as she recovered, and they would discuss the music afterward, comparing thoughts as they had before her illness. Though JoAnn could not see, she listened with musically-trained ears and a personal philosophy built from a lifetime of observation and bold questioning. Driving home after a choir concert, she and Jerry discussed the performance. JoAnn found the concert,

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<sup>112</sup> Jerold Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, February 2, 2015.

<sup>113</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 12, 2014.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

“almost technically perfect,” but felt it lacked feeling. Jerry suggested the digital age negatively affected the perceptions of musicians who sought a perfection unattainable outside of the recording studio. JoAnn agreed.

Everything was precise, everything right, perfect. But, there was no gut. No sweat. There was no pain. There was no mess. People are looking for what they’re calling perfection, because of what they hear in digital recordings, but, they lose the music to that pursuit.<sup>116</sup>

Quoting Jerry, she added, “We’ve come to a place where music making has surrendered to perfection. We miss so much.”<sup>117</sup>

JoAnn’s voice recovered, and she even sang a duet with a friend at church. They laughingly called it, “The Old Lady Twilight Tour.” Though she did not officially reopen her studio doors, JoAnn began accepting students who requested occasional lessons. One such request came from a singer experiencing emotional and vocal issues. “It happens all the time to vocal teachers,” JoAnn said after the lesson, “It’s just part of the deal. It’s often the music that heals us.” She paused for a minute, then added, “The sound keeps us.”<sup>118</sup> Throughout her physical and emotional ordeal, and without her sense of sight, JoAnn’s message for singers and teachers of singing remained the same. It is often the music that heals us. The sound keeps us. Singing is more powerful than we know. “When it comes right down to it,” JoAnn told Jerry as she started LifeSong, “we are all healers or teachers. Nothing else really matters.”<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 22, 2014.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, November 5, 2017.

<sup>119</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 22, 2014.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

### EPILOGUE

#### Summary

The grand piano serves as the focal point of the Ottley's condominium at Fountains East in Murray, Utah. From the front door, it precedes the furniture and occupies much of the living space. JoAnn Ottley recently invited several former students to look through her files of music and take home as much as they chose. It was a fun afternoon, reminiscing with students. Though JoAnn was happy to see her music given to individuals she knew, and that it would be appreciated and utilized, she was saddened to see the once full shelves now empty of the music she loved.

Jerry and JoAnn Ottley are planning their upcoming move to a retirement community.<sup>1</sup> The downsizing of personal belonging is necessary for the much smaller living space. Regardless of how small the new apartment might be, the grand piano will move with them. For JoAnn, access to a piano at home is a necessity.

Despite losing her eye sight five years ago to complications from glaucoma, JoAnn continues to play piano. Improvising is required since she can no longer read sheet music. Using a small magnifier, however, she recently memorized Nola—a piece learned as a surprise for her father when she was age 12. Piano was JoAnn's introduction to musical performance, replaced in junior high with singing as her primary instrument. Her remarkable voice and talent led to performances spanning the globe.

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<sup>1</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, June 28, 2017.

JoAnn managed to maintain personal, spiritual, and professional balance throughout her career. She relied on a personal design of concentric circles to prioritize, circles which focused first on faith, then marriage, followed closely by her role as a mother. JoAnn used these focal points to measure every career decision. Her marriage to Jerold Ottley was in all aspects a true partnership. When he became director of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, JoAnn supported him by accepting his invitation to be the choir's vocal coach.

JoAnn struggled throughout her career to understand the obligations she had as a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, with her world-class talent. Was it important to develop her career as a flagship for the church she loved, even if it was not the direction she wished for her life's trajectory? She was criticized by those who presumed her many performances caused her to neglect her family. Others suggested she was wasting her gifts by for limiting her singing engagements.

JoAnn taught voice students early in her singing career, but focused more on performance until she turned age 50, when she allowed teaching to take precedence over performing. Using tools discovered when seeking non-traditional medical modalities to help family members with health issues, JoAnn explored connections between neurology and singing. This eventually led her to an autodidactic study of New Physics.<sup>2</sup> Her studies provided startling answers to her long-held personal question, "Why sing?" New Physics

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix E for the bibliographical list JoAnn compiled which includes the books she read when studying New Physics.



reduced all properties within the universe to vibration. As singing is vibrational, New Physics principles reveal intrinsic value in singing extending beyond the accepted paradigm of competitive, classical singing careers perpetuated by most vocal performance degree programs in higher education.

While teaching voice at the University of Utah, JoAnn became disillusioned by the lack of care given to the majority of students who were not part of the upper echelon who might compete for successful careers in the exclusive, highly-competitive world of opera. She was deeply troubled by the overwhelming sense of failure she witnessed in most graduating voice students, who realized a singing career was unlikely after expending the energy and financial cost of studying voice at the university, and who loved to sing but had no way to make a living in the field. She saw some who graduated and pursued singing careers at the expense of other facets of life, though even the most talented had little chance of ultimate success despite their enormous sacrifices. She reasoned there were better ways to utilize singers' gifts and placed her efforts on the concept that singing was important because it allowed human beings to transcend and connect. If all singing was valuable, as the principles of New Physics suggested, then all singers had the potential to provide needed service to their communities and the world through song.

JoAnn eventually left her university teaching position to create and disseminate her socially-just, and ultimately vital, new singing paradigm. She formed an organization called LifeSong with a small group of like-minded singers. LifeSong sponsored several successful programs, but the organization ultimately failed. When asked by this author if

she would create the organization again, JoAnn stated she would bring the principles of the new paradigm into existing organizations, rather than build a separate corporation. JoAnn's new paradigm for singing continues to influence and benefit many, through the students and former LifeSong members who utilize it with their students. Her new paradigm inspired some to serve hospitals, hospices, schools, and communities through singing. For example, Maureen Hearn went on to study music therapy, and eventually became head of the music theory department at Utah State University. Dyanne Riley succeeded JoAnn as the vocal coach for the Tabernacle Choir before becoming the choral area chair at Utah Valley University. This author has successfully implemented innovative teaching techniques based on JoAnn's ideals with private voice students, vocal performance majors in the university setting, and in the music classroom.<sup>3</sup> Private voice teachers such as Laurel James and Tricia Swanson have contacted JoAnn periodically and shared the positive effects of teaching from principles gained through LifeSong and the new paradigm.<sup>4</sup> Peggy Cann and others sing for patients in hospitals and hospices, using small harps to accompany their voices and serving through song.

Performers who have shifted their awareness through JoAnn's new paradigm have discovered singing for a hometown audience is as important as singing for an audience in Carnegie Hall. According to JoAnn's paradigm, the value of singing is not connected to the financial gain procured through singing; therefore, singing as an avocation is no longer a failure. Just as JoAnn worked as a secretary when she first began singing,

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<sup>3</sup> Jerold and JoAnn Ottley, notes to author, unpublished, April 19, 2018.

<sup>4</sup> Laurel James, email to author, March 18, 2018. Tricia Swanson, telephone interview by author, March 15, 2018. Peggy Cann, email to author, May 20, 2018.

highly-trained singers can work in a fields outside of music while continuing to use the important skillsets developed through studying voice at the university. Thus, fulfilling the desire to sing while bringing others the benefits of song.

JoAnn describes herself as a “kitchen philosopher” and doggedly searches for answers to questions most are afraid to ask, such as, “Why sing?” At age 81, despite blindness, JoAnn performed a duet in church with a friend. They jokingly called it, “The Old Lady Twilight Tour.” JoAnn’s voice remains strong and flexible, proof of a solid technique and unique musical gift. She has passed that technique to students, but her true legacy is found in the continued dissemination of her new paradigm for singing. This paradigm supports her unrelenting questioning of higher education’s focus on finding the one in a thousand from any given vocal performance degree program who might be able to compete successfully within a singing career. Instead, the new paradigm values and nurtures all singers’ contributions equally, from those who sing in major opera houses to those who sing lullabies to their babies.

JoAnn was age nine when her grandparents gave her family their piano. That moment was the beginning of a journey she could not yet imagine. The vibrations of her voice and the message of her new paradigm for singing continue to reverberate in those who have been touched by her music and ideals. The Nola sheet music JoAnn used as a child and then as a veteran musician no longer able to clearly read the notation (see Figure 12.1) is tattered and worn. It serves as a symbol of a life devoted to sharing music and educating others to do likewise. JoAnn courageously asked the

question, “Why sing?” and provided possible answers which continue to reverberate and inspire. Her work disseminating a new paradigm for singing is her true legacy.

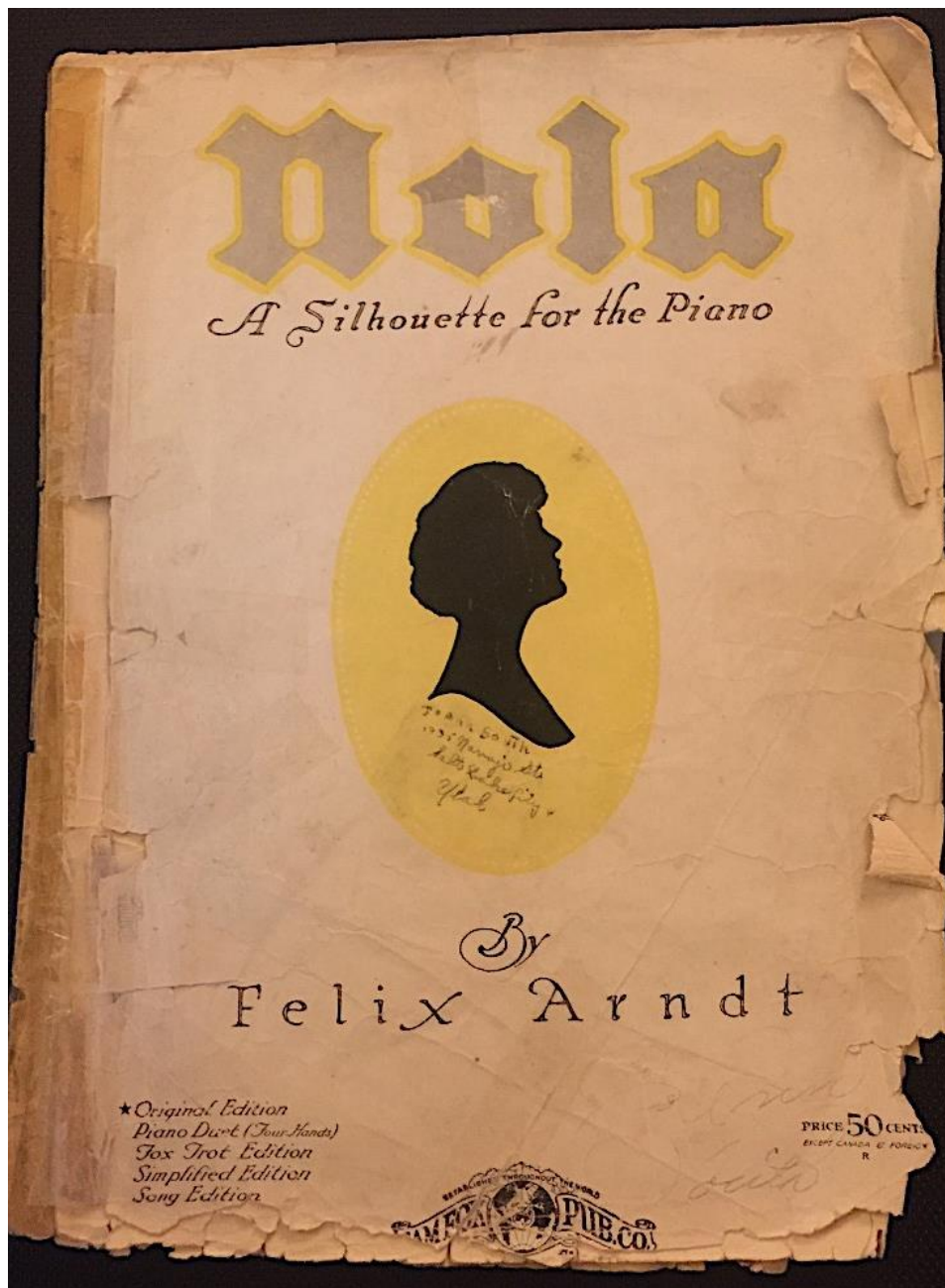


Figure 12.1: JoAnn’s original copy of the musical score for Nola. Note her handwritten name in the center, “JoAnn South.” Used by permission of JoAnn Ottley.

### Implications for Music Educators

This study of JoAnn Ottley highlights three main issues relating to the Music Education field: 1) social justice and a holistic approach to vocal performance; 2) balancing the teacher and performer roles as a teaching artist; and 3) the inherent value of all singing, explained through concepts of New Physics—regardless of ability level or style—for the performer, audience and community.

#### Social Justice and a Holistic Approach

JoAnn's question concerning the responsibility of music educators to the students who cannot or do not pursue a vocal performance career in opera is valuable for voice instructors, chairs of vocal areas, and deans of music or fine arts programs in higher education. Social justice is vital to the integrity of arts education. When asked if she would do LifeSong again, JoAnn said she would not create a separate organization, but would work within existing organizations to promote change.<sup>5</sup> This is the direction LifeSong has taken. LifeSong participants have carried JoAnn's new paradigm for singing into their individual endeavors. Some have gravitated toward music therapy, using harps, and singing for patients in hospitals, rehabilitation centers, and hospices.<sup>6</sup> Many teachers of singing who worked with JoAnn have incorporated her paradigm shift

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<sup>5</sup> JoAnn Ottley, telephone interview by author, February 10, 2018.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. Peggy Cann is one of the former LifeSong participants serving in this way.

in their teaching, by valuing all students' goals rather than focusing only on competitions and performance careers.<sup>7</sup>

When working toward social justice, reformers look at the strengths and weaknesses of the status quo, compare those to the ultimate goal, and find ways to move toward that goal. The problem of training singers with little opportunity for success upon graduation needs to be addressed by individual teachers and leaders within vocal performance music programs in higher education. The new approach requires tailoring progress according to the unique needs and capabilities of each individual and the communities they will serve. For example, many community choirs thrive in Salt Lake City. The music performed by the choir members provides singers and audiences the opportunity to benefit from song. In communities where Mariachi is prevalent, vocal music programs in the area might serve their singers and community by recognizing local Mariachi organizations, teaching students Mariachi singing style and repertoire, and coordinating events within the community. Most importantly, recognizing and teaching the inherent value of all singing validates singers who choose to utilize their training outside the expectations and limitations of the old paradigm.<sup>8</sup>

Classes in entrepreneurship and business management can be useful in guiding graduates to create musical opportunities for themselves and others within their communities. Skills such as creating websites, writing grants, and knowledge of marketing techniques and organizational psychology will benefit those who develop

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<sup>7</sup> See Figure 9.1 Paradigms—Old and New.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

private voice studios, pursue performance careers in opera, musical theatre or commercial enterprises, or create diverse vocational and avocational pathways in music. Such skills would assist graduates seeking employment outside of music until their musical careers become established, or would increase access to meaningful careers for those who make music an avocation.

Ensemble training is traditionally reserved for graduate work in music, but if undergraduate vocal majors received such training, they could gain needed musical, leadership, and critical thinking skills to create ensembles, music organizations, and stage productions. Collaboration between music performance majors and other areas (e.g., music education, business, science, technology, etc.) would build skill sets, and potentially create new avenues for all involved after graduation.

Many vocal performance graduates teach privately, but undergraduate vocal performance programs offer minimal pedagogical training. Students, therefore, tend to teach as they have been taught, without fundamental theories or teaching techniques to guide them. In many music programs, music education and performance areas are divided. Music education majors with a vocal or choral focus often receive less voice training than vocal performance majors. Conversely, vocal performance majors are not likely to study educational techniques or foundational approaches. Collaboration between the two areas would benefit all students. Music education majors with a choral emphasis are responsible for the vocal training of primary and secondary students; therefore, they need more, not less, voice training. Music performance majors with strong pedagogical backgrounds are more likely to succeed as singers because they understand the

foundations of vocal technique and are better equipped to effectively teach private voice lessons.

JoAnn's paradigm shift requires a "life focus" rather than a "performance focus" in education. Vocal performance programs might establish broad categories for each requirement, allowing students to individualize their program of study within those categories. Teachers of singing can include individual student goals, and tailor each student's training to include various styles, collaboration with other disciplines, service-centered projects using voice in the community, and entrepreneurial or ensemble work. Such differentiation would increase the meaningfulness of degree requirements and the usefulness of a completed degree. Implementing holistic approaches to the curriculum of vocal performance degree programs would lessen the existing stress, competition, and fear by increasing the self-efficacy needed for success in their education, careers and all aspects of their lives after graduation.

Students in vocal performance degree programs constantly face an unanswerable question, "Do I have what it takes?" They are essentially wondering if they meet the criteria to be included in what JoAnn called "the ones," meaning the "one student in a thousand" capable of competing in an opera career defined by the existing paradigm with the "ones" from other vocal performance programs.<sup>9</sup> Even those considered part of that upper echelon of singers have no guarantee of success. A career in opera requires contacts, mentors, financial resources, entrepreneurism, marketing strategies, and more.

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<sup>9</sup> JoAnn Ottley, "Why Singing? No. 1," *Classical Singer*, CS Music, March 2004.



Vocal performance degree programs could assist all students by requiring a second major, a minor, or a separate certification. Graduates representative of the “1 in 100,” capable of pursuing a career in opera or other professional singing genre would therefore have additional pathways to support themselves throughout the processes of post-graduate training, auditioning, securing management, and other facets required to build that career. A separate certification would also support singers of that caliber who do not wish to pursue performance as a career or within the context of the old paradigm. The requirement would additionally serve the majority, or remaining “999” students who love to sing and have honed their craft, but are unlikely to succeed in performance careers. An alternate source of work and subsequent income would allow these graduates to create avenues for singing within their communities, thus utilizing their vocal performance training creatively and meaningfully while benefitting others through the inherent value of singing JoAnn described through the concepts of Einsteinian or New Physics. All graduates would leave their music programs with a broad range of possibilities, furthering their chances of success within the context of JoAnn’s new paradigm for singing.<sup>10</sup>

This and other holistic life approaches to music education could replace the frustration and sense of failure many vocal performance majors experience upon graduation. Classes and degree requirements in the context of JoAnn’s new paradigm can

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<sup>10</sup> See Figure 9.1 Paradigms—Old and New.

provide the skills and self-efficacy needed for graduates to create new avenues for vocal performance the singer, enriching audiences and the greater community.<sup>11</sup>

### Balancing Roles as a Teaching Artist

JoAnn's life's work included a constant balancing of her career's performing and teaching aspects. By asking the question, "Why sing?" she opened the door for her students to ask the same question. She was able to teach from a set of principles, rather than the near-sighted goal of professional success on the operatic stage. Dr. Barbara (Bobbi) McKean posits each teaching artist must find a way to include the important properties of their artistic form into their teaching; therefore, teaching becomes a component of the artist's creative pursuits.<sup>12</sup>

JoAnn taught vocal technique as a means to an end. Technique was meant to support expression. When teachers of singing explore the context and content of student repertoire, and facilitate technical growth toward expressing those elements, all student and teacher interactions become creative, regardless of ability level or repertoire genre. Recognizing and encouraging student artistry, while teaching foundational singing techniques, propels students to explore with and without the teacher. Such personal ownership of talent and artistry promotes the confidence needed to create or pursue vocal performance opportunities.

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<sup>11</sup> See Figure 9.1 Paradigms—Old and New.

<sup>12</sup> Barbara McKean. *A Teaching Artist at Work: Theatre with Young People in Educational Settings*, Heinemann Drama, Portsmouth, New Hampshire, 2006.

Recognizing students as artists utilizes the teacher's artistry as performer and music educator, thus increasing teacher satisfaction.<sup>13</sup> The teacher serves as mentor and co-artist. Teaching becomes facilitative in nature; encouraging student innovation and potentially transforming the field of vocal performance for the twenty-first century.

### Singing and The New Physics

The principles of vibration found in New Physics served as the underpinning of JoAnn's pedagogy. Recognition of the vibrational effects for the singer and audience confirms inherent value in the act of singing, i.e. if singing is important, then all manifestations of singing are important.<sup>14</sup>

Students who pursue a Vocal Performance Degree often feel "called" to sing. They study voice regardless of indications that the degree will provide limited future opportunities and/or financial prospects. When the importance of singing becomes the reason for singing, fame and fortune are no longer the only measures of singer success, thus validating the choice to study music in higher education and increasing the probability of success after graduation.

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<sup>13</sup> Barbara McKean. *A Teaching Artist at Work: Theatre with Young People in Educational Settings*, Heinemann Drama, Portsmouth, New Hampshire, 2006.

<sup>14</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, March 22, 2014. Through her investigation of New Physics, JoAnn discovered the concept that all material manifestations in the universe are vibrational at the fundamental level. See Appendix E for a bibliography of the books she utilized in that study.

Understanding the importance of singing through the theories of New Physics was the bedrock of JoAnn's paradigm shift for singing.<sup>15</sup> Teaching the connection between physics and music can shift the paradigm for students. Such a shift promotes exploration and innovation, thus increasing opportunities for singers to positively impact society through singing.

### Applications for Music Education

The broader implications for the Music Education field can be immediately realized by applying JoAnn's principles to teaching practices. JoAnn viewed music as a metaphor for life and often observed a correlation between the positive changes in singing and subsequent positive shifts in the student's life outside the studio. The whole brain learning required for singing and other music making fosters the integration of all learning, promotes self-efficacy, and inspires creativity.

Examined through the lens of New Physics, the vibrational nature of singing benefits singers. Because energy follows intent, the singer's intention while singing affects others, who vibrate in response. Singing facilitates connection, and thus has the potential to create meaningful learning communities and influence the larger communities of which these smaller groups are a critical component.

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<sup>15</sup> See Appendix E for a bibliography of the books JoAnn studied as she formed her new paradigm for singing..

### Holistic Approaches in the Vocal Studio

A casual observation of JoAnn teaching a voice lesson resembled standard practice and contained traditional components of applied voice study. Lessons began with vocalises to build technique. Repertoire followed, with JoAnn connecting techniques from the exercises with the piece's technical requirements. Musicianship was reinforced, language and diction exacted, stylistic nuances considered, and issues in technique or performance addressed. Elements of her new paradigm, however, were included throughout the lesson (see Figure 9.1). Similarly, teachers of singing can create deeper learning experiences for their students within any preferred lesson structure.

### Teaching the Whole Person

Before beginning vocalises, JoAnn visited with the student, inquiring about school, family, relationships and other aspects of personal life. She built a relationship of trust and friendship with each student, and remembered details when they met again. Honoring all facets of life, rather than only their singing, gave JoAnn an opportunity to know each student individually. She could thus give specific feedback when a student wrestled to balance singing with their lives and could highlight similarities between a technical issue and a personal problem when appropriate. Teachers of singing hold a rare position in their students' lives because of the one-on-one teaching environment. This connection is heightened by the vibratory nature of singing.

JoAnn's principles of training the whole person and balancing music with the other facets of life can be implemented by teachers who get to know their students well,

and encourage them to balance singing with the varied aspects of their lives. This personal balance equips students to view difficulties which arise as developing musicians, and later during their careers, as challenges rather than evidence of personal failure. It also discourages completely merging personal identity with voice.<sup>16</sup> Teachers using a holistic view of each student are able to differentiate teaching approaches and guide students toward successful outcomes even when facing life challenges.

JoAnn partnered with her students in their creative processes. She included students in repertoire selection. She listened to their insights concerning their practice between lessons and discoveries or frustrations during lessons. She allowed them to guide song choice during lessons. She assessed student progress by checking comprehension in addition to skill demonstration. When JoAnn's student, Julie Reynolds was unsure of her vocal fach<sup>17</sup>, rather than imposing her own opinion, JoAnn gave Julie the tools to discover her own vocal classification.<sup>18</sup> JoAnn encouraged all her students to embrace their own creativity, sing with the intention to connect rather than impress and trust their own artistry and technique. Many of her professional students only scheduled lessons when working on music for an upcoming performance because she had trained them to be autonomous.

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<sup>16</sup> Lynn Eustis posits singers often link their voices to personal identity, risking loss of personal life balance. Lynn Eustis, *The Singer's Ego: Finding Balance Between Music and Life*. GIA Publications, Chicago, Illinois, 2005.

<sup>17</sup> *Fach* is the classification system of operatic voice types.

<sup>18</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, October 10, 2014.

### Building Community

JoAnn taught her students exercises from Educational Kinesiology in a studio workshop. Students were instructed to arrive to lessons five minutes early and use that time to warm up with kinesthetic exercises. The previous lesson was still in progress, giving the next student an opportunity to hear and notice progress in the other singer, and providing the first student a small performance opportunity. These short interactions promoted student camaraderie.<sup>19</sup>

Voice teachers can create camaraderie by providing time for students to support each other in master classes, before and after lessons, and in concerts and recitals. Creating community fosters peer support and reduces the competitive animosity which can develop between voice students.

### Brain-Based Learning

Using Educational Kinesiology facilitated connection between the right- and left-brain hemispheres and reduced student stress which optimized learning. JoAnn actively separated left-brain technical learning from right-brain expressive singing while mindfully distinguishing between the two. When a student had difficulty transferring from technical to expressive renditions of a piece, JoAnn used Educational Kinesiology to assist with the shift.

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<sup>19</sup> Recollections of author.

Optimal learning requires student receptivity. The cognitive dissonance which occurs during the process of expanding knowledge and skill can increase stress and fear of failure. Using kinesiology acknowledges these moments of frustration, and assists students in recognizing mistakes or limitations as information leading to the next discovery, which JoAnn called the “ah-ha” moments. When students learn to expect and value challenges, they are less likely to slow the process of learning through self-judgment, fear of failure, and frustration.

### Expressive Singing

JoAnn guided students to explore music with a principle of macro-micro-macro, reasoning that students learned best when they saw the whole before delving into the parts. Dividing the piece into small sections and working on technical and expressive details separately came next. Every lesson ended with the student reassembling the parts and singing the piece with a focus on expression rather than technique. JoAnn reassured students the detailed work they completed during the lesson would eventually infuse the whole, but it would likely take time. She urged students to allow expression even in the face of imperfection.<sup>20</sup>

Teaching expressive aspects of singing validates student artistry. Such exploration highlights the importance of singing for connection and communication rather than only impressing listeners. Technical skill promotes vocal health and is a tool supporting the

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<sup>20</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 10, 2014.



singer's expressive choices. Taught this way, expression becomes more important than technical perfection, and singing becomes more meaningful to the singer and the audience.<sup>21</sup>

JoAnn taught the differences between the functions of the right and left brain hemispheres and the need to ultimately integrate the two. To accomplish this goal, she separated technical work from expressive work in lessons. JoAnn stressed the use of technique as a tool toward expression, and focused much lesson time on the creative, expressive aspects of singing. She guided students to discover musical and textual nuances, by working each separately before joining the two again. When the text and music were brought together, nuances from both were present.<sup>22</sup>

Teachers of singing can encourage expression and creativity in students by providing a consistent time allotment for expressive singing within each lesson, and using technique as a tool rather than the goal. Singing with expression after working through technical issues helps solidify techniques and creates more opportunity for students to discover not just what to sing, where to sing, and how to sing, but the question which led to JoAnn's paradigm shift, why sing?

### Why Sing?

Knowing why the act of singing is important validates all singing, regardless of venue, potential fame, or financial gain. JoAnn stressed the value of singing for service in

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<sup>21</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, October 10, 2014.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

the community. Throughout her career, JoAnn sang at rest homes, hospitals, and funerals. She viewed it as her most important singing and encouraged her students to do the same.<sup>23</sup> Teachers of singing can organize service recitals or encourage student-created projects which bring singing into the community and reinforce the value of the singing act, rather than limiting student recognition to leading roles in productions or performances or winning contests.<sup>24</sup>

#### Holistic Approaches in the Classroom

JoAnn's classes were interactive and collaborative, similar to her approach in the private studio and when presenting workshops. She included the principles of fostering community through music, holistic learning, and exploring the importance of singing. These principles foster student partnership in learning, which enhance self-efficacy, leadership, and critical thinking skills. The classroom community, strengthened by singing, encourages students to collaborate during learning challenges and celebrate individual and group successes. Students who experience collaborative, community-based learning are better equipped to successfully contribute to group projects after graduation.

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<sup>23</sup> JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, June 28, 2017.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

## Suggestions for Further Research

### Historical Research

Historical accounts have traditionally focused on well-known individuals, making the body of historical research largely a “top down” representation, and thus missing the discoveries, accomplishments, cultural shifts, and struggles of “rank and file” music educators within communities. More historical research in music education is needed so music educators can learn from other educators facing similar challenges and build on their work. The collective conversation made possible by historical research in music education can help music educators learn from the mistakes of others and how they implemented new ideas or approaches.

Music is culturally based, it varies greatly depending on the culture of origin and the evolution of music within a culture over time. Ideas gleaned from the grass roots work of music educators in one culture can be applied to another by shifting and adapting approaches to better serve individual communities while building on fundamental concepts. Histories of music educators will make their work accessible to others, and like a conversation, the adaptations of music educators to meet the needs of their disparate communities can disseminate collective knowledge and foster innovation based on common ideals.

### Social Justice in Higher Music Education

It remains obvious that vocal performance degree programs largely focus on a small group of students who have a small chance of success in an operatic singing career. Further research exploring shifts in degree requirements toward more realistic goals of music departments can provide needed changes so all music students graduate with marketable skills. Changes in higher education vocal performance programs must be made for the degree to be meaningful, useful, and socially just.

### Collaborative Research

Collaborative research between physics and music education concerning the value of music in general and singing specifically is needed. Understanding the inherent benefits of vibration and music could create opportunities for singers and provide needed service within communities. Collaborative research is needed concerning the whole brain activity music incites<sup>25</sup> and the subsequent model for holistic education music provides. Understanding the greater benefits of singing and music education could potentially shift perceptions held by policy makers. Instead of dismissing music education as a career path less important than performance, the community building and vibratory aspects of music education should be recognized and utilized to enhance all education.

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<sup>25</sup> Hearing and/or making music activates both sides of the brain.

**APPENDIX A: LIST OF JOANN OTTLEY'S PERFORMANCES**

### List of JoAnn Ottley's Performances

This list of JoAnn Ottley's performances is not complete, but is representative of her career and compiled from the following sources:

1. JoAnn Ottley's VITA, dated April 1993 and updated April 1994/1994
2. JoAnn Ottley's handwritten list of performances
3. LDS Church History Museum, Special Collections, Ottley Collection: 26291 Box 4 Fd.1
4. Personal papers of JoAnn Ottley, including contracts and programs

#### 1953:

- Utah State Fair Vocal Competition, Brigham Young University (BYU), Scholarship Winner

#### 1957:

- Offenbach, *Husband at the Door*, Fuchs directing, BYU
- Menotti, Role: Mother, *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, (Jerold Ottley sang the role of Melchior), Fort Sill, Washington.

#### 1958:

- Role: Musetta, Puccini, *La Boheme*, community production managed by Brent Curtis, Provo, UT.

#### 1963:

- Soprano Soloist, Mahler, *Symphony No. 8*, recording made of the performance, Utah Symphony

#### 1965:

- Soprano Soloist, Fauré, *Requiem*, Utah Symphony

#### 1967:

- Soloist, Utah Arts Council Recital Tour

#### 1968:

- Soprano Soloist, Schubert, *Mass in G*, Utah Symphony

**1971:**

- April 29, 1971, Soprano Soloist, Mendelssohn, Elijah, Spokane Symphony

**1972:**

- Soprano Soloist, Oregon Festival with Helmuth Rilling

**1973:**

- March 18, 1973, Soprano Soloist, Beethoven, Mount of Olives, and Bach, Saint Mark's Passion, The Salt Lake Oratorio Society
- Soprano Soloist, Oregon Festival with Helmuth Rilling
- December 15-16, 1973, Soprano Soloist, Handel, Messiah, Salt Lake Oratorio Society

**1974:**

- February 6-9, 1974, Role: Rosalinda, Strauss, Die Fledermaus, Utah Opera Company
- March 27-30, 1974, Soprano Soloist, Orff, Carmina Burana, Ballet West
- April 5, 1974, Soprano Soloist, Orff, Carmina Burana, Ballet West
- November 20-21, 1974, Soprano Soloist, Beethoven, Symphony no. 9, Utah Symphony

**1975:**

- March 28, 1975, Soprano Soloist, Mahler, Symphony no. 2, Utah Symphony
- January 29-February 1, 1975, Role: Queen of the Night, Mozart, The Magic Flute, Utah Opera Company
- February 1975: Rehearsed with symphony in Roberta Peters' stead for Peters' upcoming concert, Utah Symphony
- December 5, 1975, Soprano Soloist, Haydn, Creation, Utah Symphony

**1976:**

- January 19-21, Soprano Soloist, Mahler, Symphony no. 2, Utah Symphony Utah tour
- February 11-14, Samuel Barber, "Knoxville, Summer of 1915," Ballet West

- February 27, 1976, Soprano Soloist, Mahler, Symphony no. 2, Utah Symphony, Pasadena, CA
- March 6, 1976, Samuel Barber, "Knoxville, Summer of 1915," Ballet West
- March 8-9, 1976, Soprano Soloist, Brahms, Requiem, Boise Philharmonic
- December 1975: Hayden, Creation, Utah Symphony, Pasadena, CA

### 1977:

- February 1977: Mahler, Symphony no. 4, Utah Symphony, in Los Angeles, CA
- February 1977: Emergency substitute for Roberta Peters, Soprano Soloist, Berlioz, "Les nuits d'te," Utah Symphony
- April 1977: Soprano Soloist, Bach, B-minor Mass, Utah Symphony
- June 1977: Soprano Soloist, Beethoven, Symphony no. 9, Utah Symphony
- July 13, 1977, Soprano Soloist, "Opera Night," Sun Valley Opera House, Sun Valley, ID
- August 10, 1977, Recital, University of Utah Snowbird Summer Arts Institute
- November 26, 1977: Soprano Soloist, Dvorák "Te deum," Utah Symphony
- December 9, 1977: Soprano Soloist, Mahler, Symphony no. 2, Utah Symphony
- December 14, 1977, Soprano Soloist, Handel, Messiah, Southern California Mormon Choir

### 1978:

- March 5, 1978, Guest Soloist, Recital, Los Angeles California Santa Monica Stake
- March 22-24, Soprano Soloist, Orff, Carmina Burana, Ballet West, Kingsbury Hall, Salt Lake City, UT
- April 7-8, 1978, Soprano Soloist, Orff, Carmina Burana, Ballet West, Tempe, AZ
- April 12-13, 1978, Soprano Soloist, Orff, Carmina Burana, Ballet West, Ogden, UT
- April 1978: Soprano Soloist, Mahler, Symphony no. 8, Utah Symphony



- June 1, 1978, Soprano Soloist, “Thou, Whose Unmeasured Temple Stands,” Robert Cundick, piano, Dedicatory Program for the new Visitor’s Center, Temple Square, Salt Lake City, UT
- November 4, 1978, Soprano Soloist, Verdi, Requiem, Spokane Symphony Society
- December 1978: Soprano Soloist, Vaughan-Williams, “Sea Symphony,” Utah Symphony
- December 19, 1978, Soprano Soloist, Handel, Messiah, Southern California Mormon Choir

### **1979:**

- February 22-25, 1979, Soprano Soloist, Vaughan-Williams, “A Sea Symphony,” San Diego Symphony Orchestra
- April 5, 1979, Guest Soloist, Recital, University of Southern Utah (USU) Convocation Series
- April 21, 1979, Soprano Soloist, Verdi, Requiem, Utah Symphony
- June 19-21, 1979, Soprano Soloist, Bach B-minor Mass, Anchorage Alaska Festival, Helmuth Rilling
- July 6, 1979, Soprano Soloist, Mozart, C-minor Mass, Oregon Festival with Helmuth Rilling
- April 21, 1979, Soprano Soloist, Verdi, Requiem, Utah Symphony
- November 1979, Soprano Soloist, Hayden, “Kleine Orgelmesse,” Utah Symphony
- November 1979, Soprano Soloist, Mozart, Requiem, Utah Symphony
- November 9-10, Soprano Soloist, “Songs of Mahler,” Ballet West
- December 1979, Soprano Soloist, Bach, Christmas Oratorio, “Abravanel Farewell,” Utah Symphony
- December 9, 1979, Soprano Soloist, “Messiah Sing-In,” Utah Chorale, in the new Symphony Hall
- December 15-16, 1979, Soprano Soloist, Handel, Messiah, Oregon Symphony
- December 18, 1979, Soprano Soloist, Handel, Messiah, Southern California Mormon Choir

### **1980:**

- February 8, 1980, Soprano Soloist, Pro Musica Concert
- March 4, 1980, Soprano Soloist, Beethoven, Missa Solemnis, Spokane Symphony

- March 13-14, 1980, Soprano Soloist, Handel, Messiah, Dallas Symphony Orchestra
- May 11, 1980, Soprano Soloist, Robert Cundick, composer. The Redeemer, "Church Sesquicentennial Celebration," with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir
- October 1980, Role: Violetta: Verdi, La Traviata, Utah Opera
- November 1980, Soprano Soloist, Carmina Burana, Kojian conducting, Utah Symphony
- December 14, 1980, Soprano Soloist, Handel, Messiah, Oratorio Society of Utah, taped for Public Broadcast System (PBS)

### 1981:

- Soprano Soloist, Carl Orff, "Carmina Burana, A Celebration of Life," Feb 18-21, 1981, Ballet West: taped for later broadcast.
- April 1981, aired on BRAVO, Carl Orff, "Carmina Burana," live taping, Ballet West with Utah Symphony and the Utah Chorale.
- Review, Dorothy Stowe, "JoAnn Ottley sings her almost childlike airs with poised simplicity."
- March 2, 1981, Nova Series, Evening Concerts, Salt Lake Chamber Ensemble with JoAnn Ottley – Soprano,
- Program:
- "The Eternal Day," Erich Katz
- "Ich end behind mein irdisches Leben," Bach, Cantata No. 57 (Christmas Cantata)
- "Gelobet sei der Herr, mein Gott," Bach Cantata 129
- "Lo! Here the Gentle Lark," Sir Henry Bishop
- Trio Sonata from A Musical Offering, Bach
- Review, Tribune, Paul Wetzel, "A Stylish finale to Nova series . . . "Miss Ottley gave a lovely, rounded performance [Bach] . . . The Bishop work is a coloratura showpiece, and Miss Ottley gave it an outgoing, lyric performance. In short, she sang it for all it was worth, showed off the dynamic control and agility the piece was meant to display and had a great good time in the process . . ."
- March, 1981, Utah State University (USU) Chorale Concert, Guest Soloist, JoAnn Ottley, directed by Marshall Hill.
- Review in The Utah Statesman, Friday, March 13, 1981
- "Ottley showed the audience what singing is all about. She has great support and control. There were no loose ends, no strained notes. She came down on top of the high notes instead of reaching for them . . . Ottley was stunning."

- March 13, 1981, “Festa d’Opera,” Utah Opera Company, Capitol Theatre, Benefit Concert
- JoAnn Ottley, soprano, Claudia Ward accompanist, with Andrea Thornock, Aprile Millow, Norman Mittlemann and Glade Peterson.
- Program included:
- Bellini songs
- Queen of Night Vengeance Aria
- April 18, 1981, Verdi, “Requiem,” Portland Youth Philharmonic, Jacob Avshalomov Conductor, JoAnn Ottley, with, Alyce Rogers, Bruce Browne Jon Enloe, Choruses from Oregon College of Education, Portland State; Pacific University, Portland, Oregon.

**1982:**

- Tivoli Festival, Copenhagen, Denmark
- Carmel Bach Festival, Sandor Salgo
- April 1982, Guest Soprano, Jerold Ottley, Guest Conductor, Utah Symphony
- May 1982, Pops Concert, Utah Symphony
- December 1982, Vaughan-Williams, “Dona nobis pacem,” Utah Symphony

**1983:**

- Teton Festival, Ling Tung
- April 1983, Mahler, Symphony no. 2, Utah Symphony
- May 1983, Beethoven, Symphony no. 9, Utah Symphony
- August 1983, Promised Valley, Snowbird, Crawford Gates, Utah Symphony
- December 1983, Poulenc, Gloria, Uri Mager, Utah Symphony

**1984**

- Utah Performing Artist of the Year, Recital Tours

**1985**

- Utah Performing Artist of the Year, Recital Tours
- October 1985, Mahler, Symphony no. 4, Utah Symphony

**1986**

- November 20-22, 1986, Soprano Soloist, Brahms, A German Requiem, Utah Symphony
- December 10 & 12, 1986, Soprano Soloist, Ralph Woodward Chorale, Temple Square Recital Series

**1987**

- March 20 & 22, 1987, Soprano Soloist, Mendelssohn, Elijah, Tanner Gift Concert, Utah Symphony
- July 1987, Recital with pianist, Mikael, Temple Square Concert Series
- November 11-16 & 20-21, 1987, Soprano Soloist, Orff, Carmina Burana, Ballet West
- November 29, 1987, Soprano Soloist, Handel, "Messiah Sing-In," Utah Symphony

**1988**

- March 24-25, 1988, Soprano Soloist, Mahler, Symphony no. 2, Utah Symphony
- July 29, 1988, Soprano Soloist, "Exultate Jubilate," Mass in C minor, Utah Symphony
- December 2-3, 1988, Soprano Soloist Brahms, German Requiem, Utah Symphony

**1989**

- July 28, 1989, Soprano Soloist, Mozart, Requiem, Utah Symphony

**1990**

- January 19-20, 1990, Soprano Soloist, Hayden, "Missa Brevis," Utah Symphony
- September 13-15 & 19-21, 1990, Soprano Soloist, Orff, Carmina Burana, Ballet West
- December 15-16, 1990, Soprano Soloist, Handel, Messiah, Oratorio Society of Utah

**1991**

- April 9, 1993, Soprano Soloist, 1993 LDS Women's Conference

- April 15-16, Soprano Soloist, Las Vegas Symphony Orchestra
- April 19-20, 1991, Soprano Soloist, Mahler, Symphony no. 4, Utah Symphony
- December 12, 1991, Soprano Soloist, Handel, Messiah, Ralph Woodward Chorale, Provo UT

### **1992**

- May 1992, Soprano Soloist, South Davis Community Choir, Bountiful, UT
- November 29-30, 1992, Soprano Soloist, Handel, Messiah, Utah Symphony

### **1993**

- October 15-16, 1993, Soprano Soloist, ZCMI “Gala Concert” with Michael Ballam, Utah Symphony

### **1995**

- December 13,15 &19, 1995, Soprano Soloist, Handel, “Messiah Sing-In,” Utah Symphony

### **1997**

- January 1997, Soprano Soloist, Bach, Magnificat, Utah Symphony

### **Opera Roles**

- Mimi, La Boheme
- Lucia, Lucia di Lammermoor
- Violetta, La Traviata
- Nightingale, Le Rossignol
- Gilda, Rigoletto
- Musetta, La Boheme
- Nella, Gianni Schicchi
- Constanza, Entführung aus dem Serail
- Rosalinda, Die Fledermaus
- Queen of the Night, Die Zauberflöte

### **Oratorio Roles**

- Messiah, Handel
- Elijah, Mendelsohnn
- Carmina Burana, Orff
- Gloria, Poulenc
- Symphonies, nos. 2, 4, 8, Mahler
- Symphony no. 9, Beethoven
- Sea Symphony, Vaughn-Williams
- Creation, Haydn
- Requiem, Verdi
- Missa Solemnis, Beethoven
- St. John Passion, Bach
- St. Mark Passion, Bach
- St. Matthew Passion, Bach
- B-minor Mass, Bach
- Various Cantatas, Bach
- Mount of Olives, Bach
- Requiem, Brahms
- Lord Nelson Mass, Haydn
- Grand Mass in C minor, Mozart

### **Recitals**

- Guest Recitals: Regional Convention NATS, Flint Hills Choral Symposium at Kansas State U, Temple Square Concert Series (2 solo recitals, participant in many others) LDS Church in CA, TX, OR, and SLC

### **Other**

- 25 performances of Carl Orff's Carmina Burana with Ballet West, UT Symphony in SLC, AZ and CA
- Tab Choir Soloist: Broadcasts and Concerts. Tours in US, Canada, Japan, Norway, Denmark, Europe, England and Brazil.
- SL Oratorio Society and Orchestra, Soprano Soloist, Messiah
- PBS Broadcast of Handel's Messiah
- Thousands of funerals: LDS, Catholic, Episcopal, Baptist, Methodist, etc.
- Civic Luncheons, University award dinners, conventions, special community events, graduation ceremonies

**APPENDIX B: DETERMINING SINGER COLOR-POINT**

### **Determining Singer Color-Point**

JoAnn determined individual color-point to guide sectional placement of each singer in the Tabernacle Choir, and each of her private students to decide the best *Fach* or voice type distinction for his or her voice. The following excerpt is taken from an interview by this author with JoAnn Ottley on November 19, 2014. In it, JoAnn describes her process for determining singer color-point.

#### **Transcript segment, JoAnn Ottley, interview by author, Salt Lake City, UT, November 19, 2014.**

JoAnn: I also saw some teachers who were extremely successful with the head voice, but there are some voices that don't work that way. They just don't work...especially mezzos. Because very often, they just can't quite do much of anything because they're stuck in the place that their voice doesn't really thrive. And, so there were some that worked better from a more middle point. And so, my job as vocal coach and as a private teacher was to realize (after a period of time—months or a year or two sometimes before you find out for sure) this [voice] is not thriving, we should try the other thing.

Now, a lot of that came out of my husband's understanding about placing voices for choirs. The middle voices, the 2<sup>nd</sup> tenor. Real high, real low, we know where they belong, but with the middle voices it's really important for sopranos, well no more so than tenors, that they be put in the right place, because they sing soprano all the time, and if that voice is really edging toward the lower voice, toward first alto, (and it is a very fine point) of they really belong [in soprano] their voice will not thrive! After a year in the Tabernacle Choir, they're going to be really suffering. And so, it is very important that those be placed in the right place.

We used what we called, "The Color Point." Of course, it's what you can call the break or the *übergang* in German, but [basically] the transition point. Jerry learned this in his doctoral program, that we used a four toned scale on the syllable, "ooh."

*At this point, JoAnn demonstrated by singing a four-toned scale on [u] (do-re-mi-fa-mi-re-do)*

It's just very simple [vocal exercise] and you will be able to hear where the color of that voice changes. It is ever so delicate. It is ever so delicate! But, it will shift just a little bit on one of those notes, and it will cover about a step and a half where it changes. And, where that happens, tells us where they belong. And, we did that a bazillion times for those inner voices. It worked really, really well. We had a few errors, there were times we had to say, "You're not really thriving here, you're going to have to relearn some of your music, because your voice will be much happier!"



Author: What range would you use for that four tone scale?

JOA: Oh, well, if it were, let's say it's a second or first soprano. If it were a second or first soprano I would start on...maybe an Ab above Middle C. Ab, Bb, C, D.

*JoAnn demonstrated by singing those pitches on the syllables: la, da, di, da*

[They sing it] on a very simple ooh, not really sung, just a very simple ooh . . . And, you have to learn to tune your ears to it, I don't suppose very many people get it immediately, but, by the time you've used it a few times it becomes this marvelous tool.

So, I would do that from an Ab, then we'd go up a half step, and [I'd] listen, and then go up another half step, and then, go up another half step, and pretty soon you can begin to hear where that voice is changing gears, just a little bit. So, if that happens, primarily at a B, then you've got a second soprano. But, if that goes up to a D, and I found that my color point was at a D,

*JoAnn chuckled, then added*

Mine is probably at a Q now. But, mine was at a D, and mine went from C# to D to D#, those three half steps. And a few times, less than the fingers on one hand, maybe 3 or 4 times I found some with a D# as the core note. Those were the very, very high voices. And some of them may have been singing 2<sup>nd</sup> Soprano!

*She chuckled again*

Because it has very little to do with how they learned HOW to sing the high notes, it only says what the instrument is. The key the instrument is built in. So, we used that, and then if it were an alto, well, if it were a Second Soprano, they were what I called, and I knew that this was a "JoAnnism," but they were what I called a Bb Soprano!

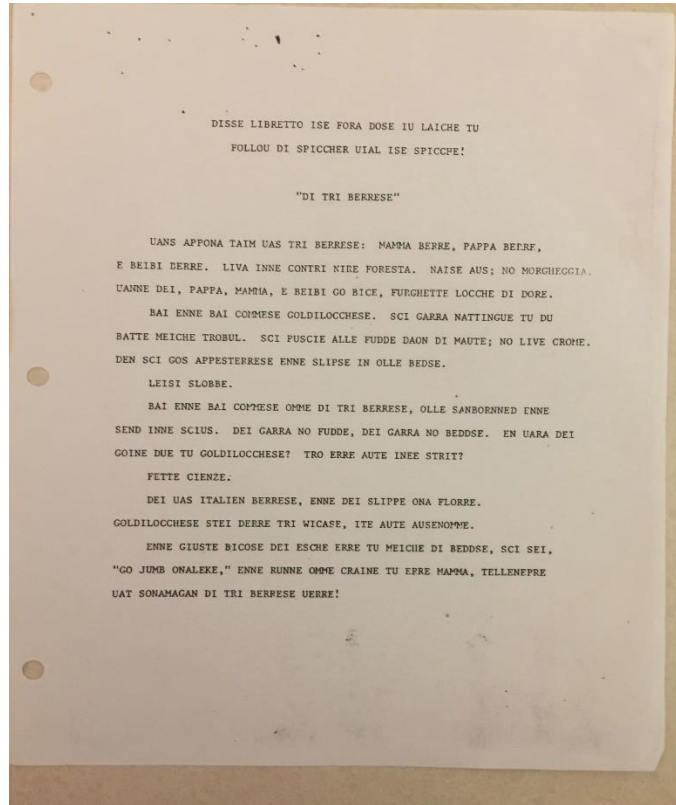
But if I suspected it was a Bb Soprano, which is hanging there right between 1<sup>st</sup> Alto and 2<sup>nd</sup> Soprano, uh, no, between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> Soprano, and if the core is there, then you have to be really careful whether that is going to go up or down from there. Because it might be more toward Ab, A, Bb, or it might be more A, Bb, B. And that's where it gets really tricky. Because if they're a First Alto they should be leading down from that, then they'll be much happier. Because if you've got a true First Alto and you've got them placed in 2<sup>nd</sup> Soprano, they'll be most of the time singing, well, floating in their upper notes. And for choral stuff, of course, they'll be mostly singing around a G. So, that worked for me with every voice for many, many years. It was very, very, very helpful. I thanked my husband for that.

**APPENDIX C: STUDENT HANDOUTS**

## Student Handouts

Examples of informational handouts JoAnn provided her voice and classroom students.

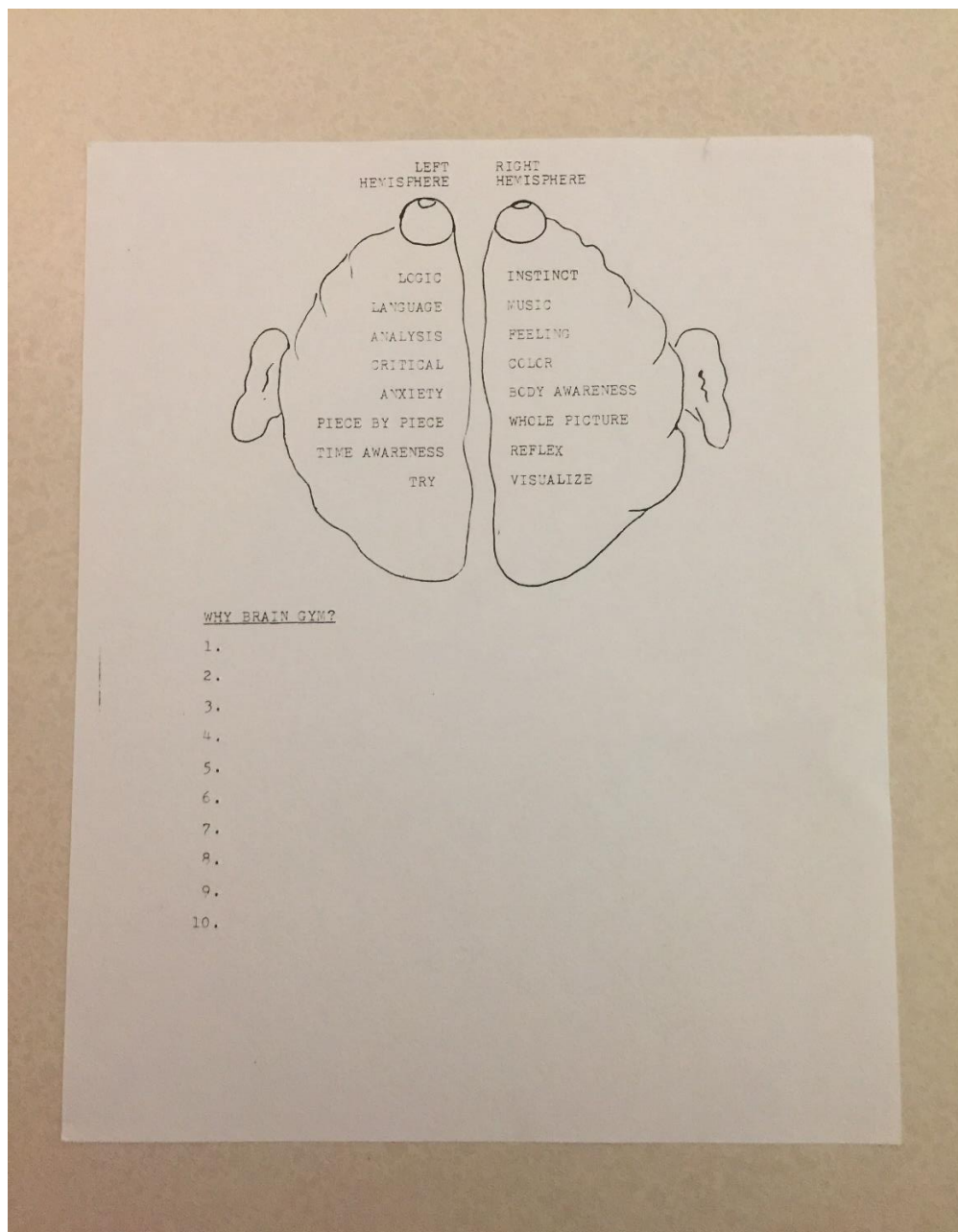
### 1. DI TRI BERRESE



By reading this story aloud, using Italian phonetic principles, the speaker told the well-known fairy-tale of The Three Bears with an exaggerated Italian accent. JoAnn taught the elongated double-consonants in Italian as the place where the language had more oregano, and she would emphasize this with her hands, playfully capturing the expressive color of the language.

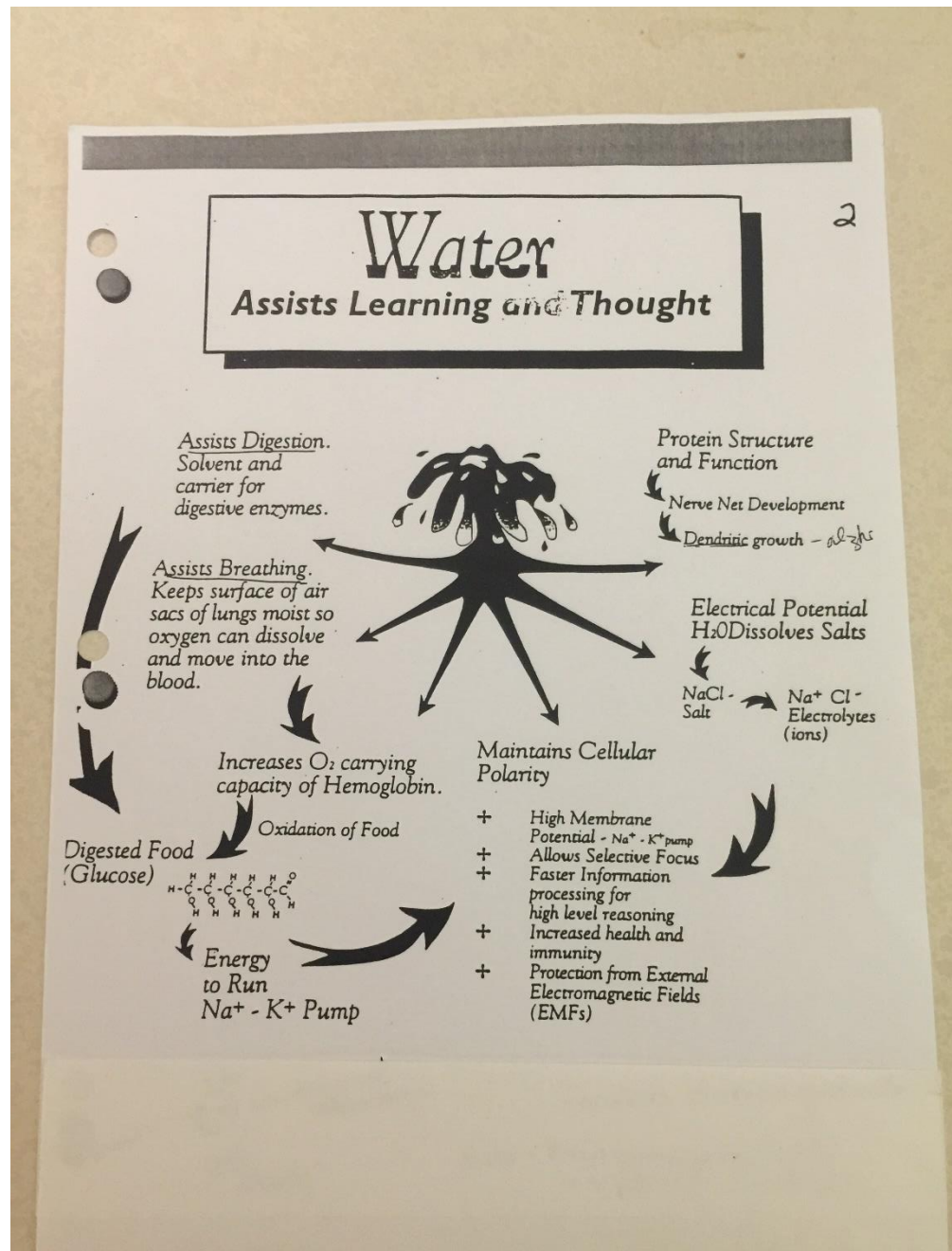
## 2. EDUCATIONAL KINESIOLOGY (BRAIN GYM)

### a. Examples of left and right brain hemisphere functions



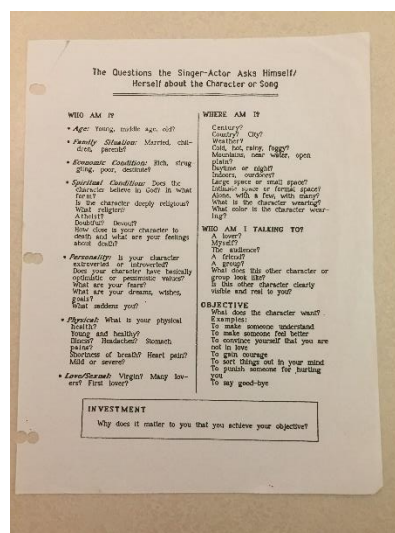
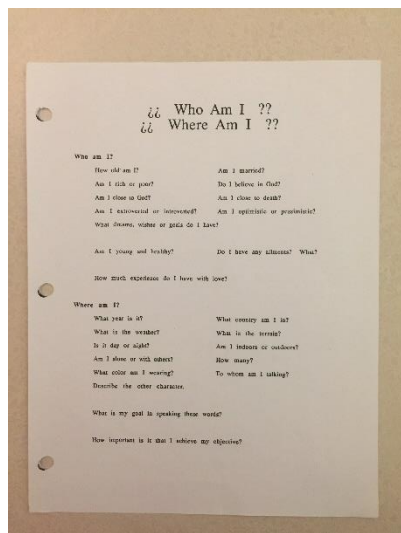
JoAnn initially used this hand-out during a masterclass introducing Brain Gym to her University of Utah students in 1993. Note the space she provided for student reflection on the subject matter during her lecture and guided exercises.

b. Importance of water on brain function



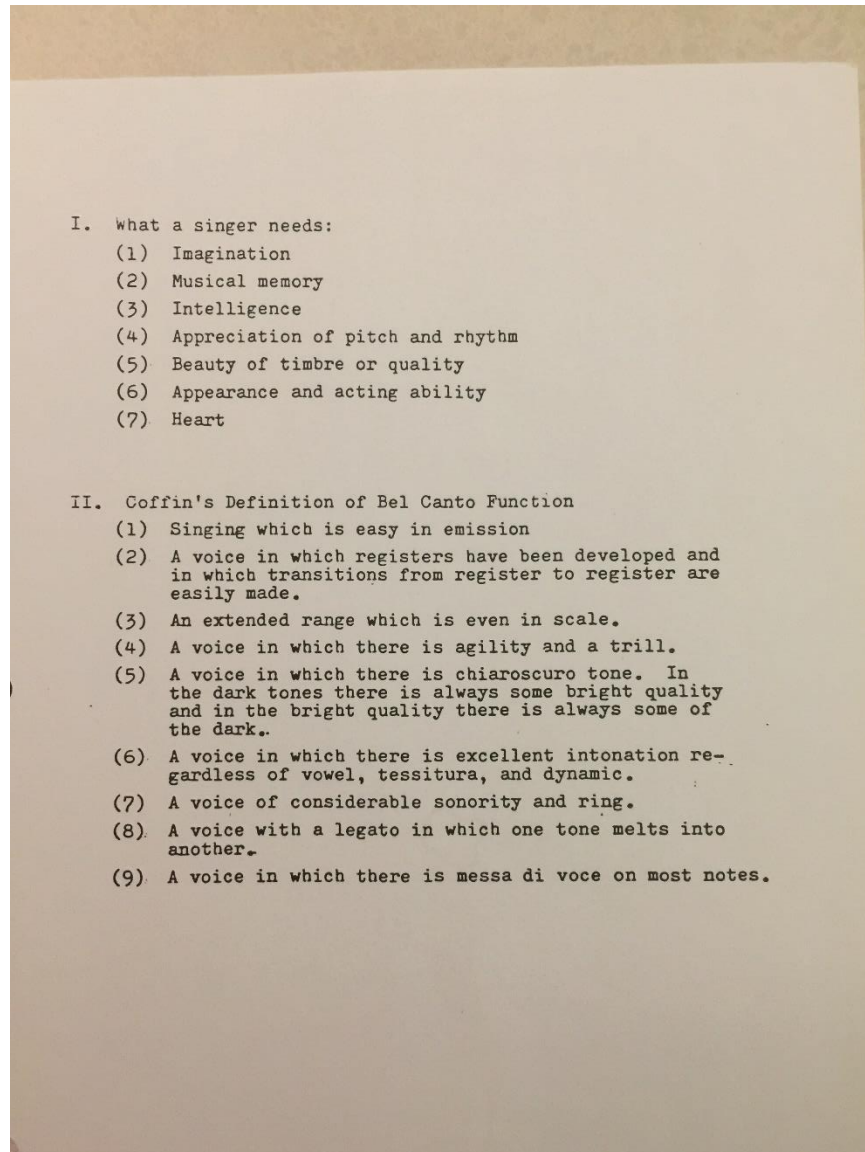
This handout on the importance of water was also used in the 1993 studio masterclass introducing Educational Kinesiology (Brain Gym) to her University of Utah private students.

### 3. CHARACTER STUDY FOR THE SINGING ACTOR



These two handouts were given to private students during lessons and also used in studio masterclasses focused on communication and intention during performance, rather than mere vocal technique.

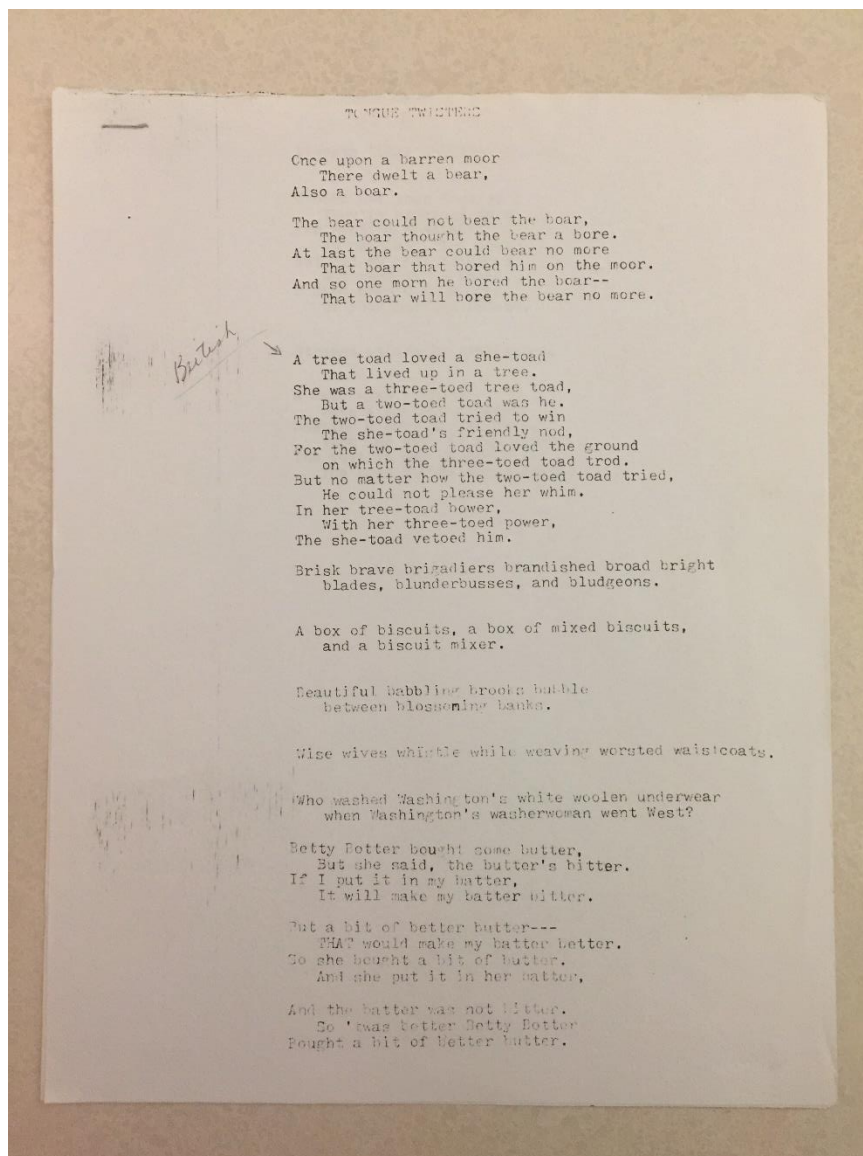
#### 4. WHAT A SINGER NEEDS



JoAnn taught her students the importance of vocal core, balance in the tone and overall technical skill. She also emphasized musicianship. Both were presented as tools to realize the composer's and poet's intentions, interpreted by the singer in order to communicate and express. JoAnn's paradigm shift for singing in no way reduced the rigor she expected from her students. She believed an audience in Salt Lake City was as important as an audience in New York, which meant singers could choose a community career without shame. It also meant the community deserved the best the singer could offer.



## 1. DICTION



JoAnn taught Metternich's concept of *Schlechtsprechen* (Sloppy Speech) for every language. She often demonstrated the duality of vowels and consonants by singing one long pitch while she quickly spat out a stream of consonants without altering the consistency of the tone. Tongue twisters were given to all her private university students and used to support this concept.



**APPENDIX D: OUTLINE FOR AUTOBIOGRAPHY**

## Outlines for Autobiography

JoAnn considered writing her life history, and researched several approaches toward this endeavor. The following is taken from outlines she created for the project. Punctuation and highlights are taken from her original sketches. The last pages of her outline are in short-hand, and at the time of this writing, no one has been able to translate those. JoAnn could not translate them because of her visual impairment, which is the same reason she did not complete the autobiography outlined here.

Example 1:

Part A:

### 1. Growing Up

- 1035 Navajo St
- All other homes
  - Young adulthood (Edgehill Ward)
  - Young Married
  - The Rest
- Family
  - Dad
  - Mom
  - LaRue
  - Johnny
  - George
  - Grandparents
  - Ancestors
- Pianos?
- Teens
- Cars
- Boys
- Driver's License
- Dances
- Dating

### 2. Becoming

- Earning My Way – From Baby Sitter to Professor

- Getting Smarter—The Many Worlds of School
  - Elementary
  - Junior High
  - High School
  - University
  - Fulbright
  - Auto-Didact
  - Scholarships
  - Lack of perspective, what might have been
  - On-the-job Training (13 yrs. on U. faculties)
  
- Growing in Faith
  - Childhood
  - Born Again
  - Testimony
  - Blessings (Patriarchal, Other)
  - Challenges
  - Service/Callings
    - Prison, etc.
    - Primary Pianist, age 12
    - Why Sing Mvt
  - Growth of Faith, heart breaks, etc.
  
- 3. All – Always: From Blind Date to Forever
  - Golden Wedding
  - Money
  - Decisions
  - Support
  - Challenges
  - Children
  - TC Years
  
- 4. Motherhood
  - Brent
  - Allison

5. The body I live in (Health)
  - Strengths
  - Weaknesses, Illnesses
  - Childhood
  - Physical development
  - Personal Accountability, Study
  - Aging
6. Friends: You say merge two writings? What does this mean?
7. The Funnies?
  - Jerry and the geese
  - Jumping washer
  - Skinny visitor and the crawl space
  - Ken Plain and “his” dog
  - Dad and windy sledding
  - Dad’s gift to us all
8. Far From Home
  - Germany
  - Hawaii

#### Part B: The Reluctant Soprano

1. The Not-So-Careful Record
2. Why I’m not Shy
3. Tabernacle Choir
4. Career
  - Vita
  - Performance History (Major Events)
    - Short List
    - Long list
5. Teaching

6. LifeSong “The Gallant Experiment” (Workshops Etc.)
7. Backward Glance
8. General History
  - World War II
  - Television, radio
  - Movies, little brothers
  - Relatives (Dennis, etc.)
  - Back-yard Wonderland
  - Picking flowers
  - Swings
  - Slide
  - Sensitivity
9. Explorer
10. Super Sensitivity – No messes
11. Jobs
  - State Capitol
  - Meteorology Department
  - Math Department
  - Baby Tending
  - KSL
  - BYU Presidency
  - U.S. Army (Roving Steno)
  - Teaching, pvt and faculties
  - Independence Streak ... Autonomy
12. Why Sing Movement
  - Disillusionment
  - Corporation
  - Bk Infl.

13. Music: Talents, Interests (“Of all your talents,...”) Miss Piggy

- Piano (Mrs. Lewis, church, school)
- Organ (Frank Asper,) Lifetime
- Marguerite, other teachers
- Triple Trio
- Bonnie and I, duets
- Contests
- Dad (poor man!) (“I get a cold!”)
- Jerry
- BYU – Lunch hour for choir (Secty)
- Tours
- Soloist
- Fulbright
- Professional
- Patriarchal Blessing
- Operas
- Teaching, Hopes, frustrations, why? Decisions
- Tab Choir
- TC Solos
- Ardean Watts, Leading roles
- Utah Opera
- U of U Years
- Resignation, Reason
- New world of understanding, New physics
- CS Magazine
- BYU Hawaii
- Marguerite (Training for 60 not 16)
- Honolulu Symphony, Age 72
- Ut Symphony, Abravanel, Kojian, Joey
- Critiques
- Recordings (on to CDs)
- TV Performances
- Interviews
- Sample Schedule

### Part C: Appendix

- Poems
- Letters
- Reference to Archives
- Etc. (TBA)
- Videos
- Recordings (Tapes, CDs)
- Talks
- Certificates
- Awards
- Archival: Brother Christiansen
  1. Scrapbooks
  2. Journals
  3. Professional Correspondence
  4. Talks

### Example 2:

Approach to Auto-Biography—Chronological: Merge extant lists, add short comments

#### Part One: Memoirs:

- Preface – The Wider View/ 10-7-5 Outline
  - 10 Defining Moments
  - 7 Critical Choices
  - 5 Pivotal People
- Navajo Street. (1939-1952)
  - Check “General History” for items to add
  - Separate title
  - Home is Where the Heart Is?
- All, Always – From Blind Date to Forever
  - Find Golden Wed Stuff
- Earning my Way – From babysitter to professor
- Germany
- Hawaii

- It's All About Family
  - Jerry
  - Motherhood/Grandmotherhood
    - Brent
    - Allison
    - Jack
- Health (Two: The Body I Live In/ My body, ....) Merge
- Growing in Faith
- Education
  - Getting Smarter
  - The World of School
- Friends I/II Merge?
- Difficult Times
- The Funnies
- Essays
  - Letter to President Kimball
  - Letter to Elder Packer's wounding words
  - The Relevant Soprano
  - Song for a New Day – Failed Experiment
- Chronology of Professional Engagements
  - UT Symphony
  - 1971-Present

Example 3:

Formula for Auto-Biography

Ten Defining Moments: We've Talked about them all

1. Gift of maternal Grandparents' piano
2. One-dollar-per-lesson piano lessons for five years with Mrs. Lewis
3. The move of my family from Glendale Park to Kensington Ave and the Edgehill Ward
4. Blind date with Jerry Ottley, introduction by Joan Naylor
5. The agreement to be married, sealed, welded body and soul to Jerry Ottley



6. The birth of Brent Ottley and emergence into the profound world of motherhood
7. The birth of Allison Ottley and the European drama that accompanied it.
8. The decision to go to Germany to study
9. The decision to come home from Germany; that our work was at home rather than in Europe
10. Jerry's calling to the directorship of the Tabernacle Choir

#### Seven Critical Choices (Actually, 9)

1. My choice to trust my parents, and teachers, and God, to know how to conduct my life
2. My choice to do well in school
3. My choices (passion) to pursue music in any form whatsoever, and do what was required to do it to the best of my ability and awareness
4. My choice to marry and support to the fullest possible extent my husband's pursuits, rather than my own advanced education and profession
5. My choice – Not a one-time but moment-by-moment choice – to trust God more than I trust me, and eventually trust him enough to put Him fully in charge.
6. My endless professional choices, often in tears, to weigh and measure all possibilities put before me and accept only those things that would allow me to fulfill patriarchal admonitions without damaging marriage and children
7. My choice to care for parents and siblings, nearly to the point of my own demise.
8. My choice to go to the ends of the earth if necessary to [help my family]
9. My choice to support my children's choices

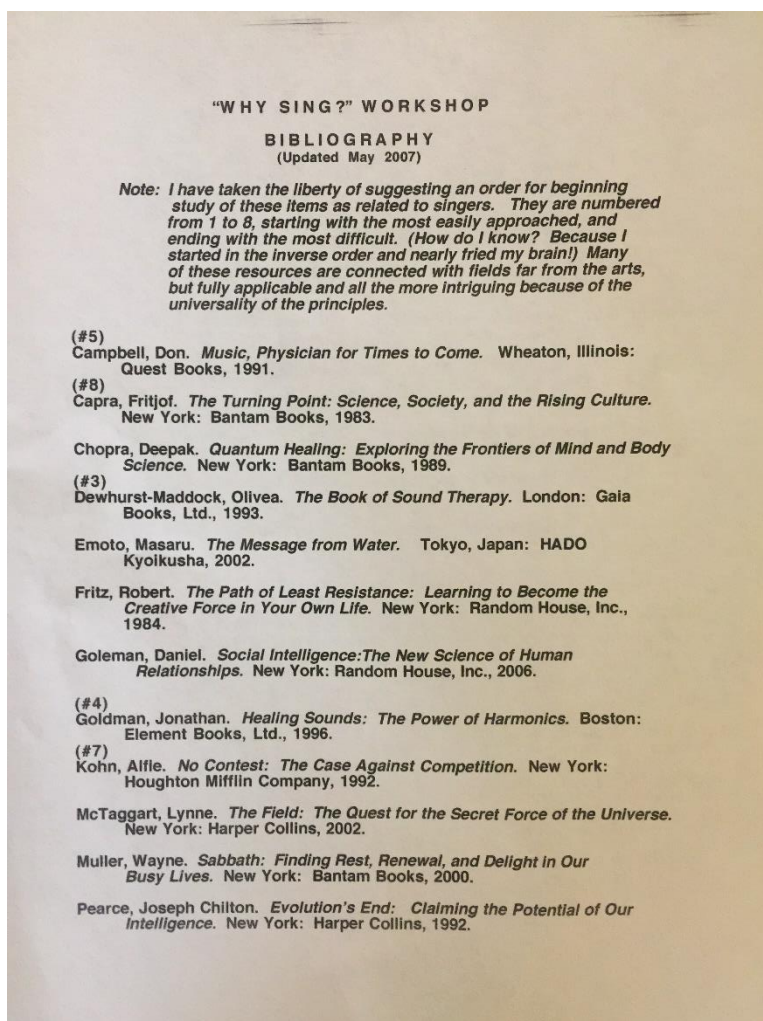
#### Five Pivotal People

1. My parents. Rare blessings
2. My Voice Teacher, Marguerite Johnson
3. My boss, Clyde D. Sandgren
4. My husband, my anchor and my wings
5. My children, my ultimate teachers

## APPENDIX E: "WHY SING?" BIBLIOGRAPHY

## “Why Sing?” Bibliography

JoAnn compiled this list of sources which explore the New Physics, connect that information to the importance of singing and ultimately support her new paradigm for singing. She gave this list to participants of her “Why Sing?” workshops. JoAnn believes that once a singer or listener understands the deeper benefits singing offers, the paradigm will change one person at a time. Without this understanding, the paradigm shift for singing lacks the core principle on which it is based.



- “WHY SING?” BIBLIOGRAPHY PAGE 1

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- "WHY SING?" BIBLIOGRAPHY PAGE 2

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