**Connecting Voice Science to Vocal Art**
Presentations offered by Lynn Helding
Associate Professor of Voice/Dickinson College
Contact: helding@dickinson.edu

**Lecture I: Voice Science and Vocal Art: In Search of Common Ground**

**Voice Science or Vocal Art?**
Which vocal teaching method is better? A scientific approach, based on a thorough knowledge of physiology and acoustics, or an empirical one, based on professional artistic experience? Lynn Helding, Associate Professor of Voice at Dickinson College, offers a series of lectures entitled *Connecting Voice Science to Vocal Art* to explore this dilemma. Helding is both a professional singer and trained vocologist. Her work has positioned her between both worlds, where she believes a rapprochement between science and art can be found within the field of cognitive science.

It is almost twenty years since the the 1990s was named *The Decade of the Brain* by presidential decree, in order to “enhance public awareness of the benefits to be derived from brain research”. Now is the time for research in the physiology and acoustics of singing to include the fruits of cognitive science research. Cognitive science augurs profound implications for the future of enlightened vocal pedagogy, generating a paradigm shift in emphasis from how well teachers teach, to how well students learn.


**Lecture I: Voice Science and Vocal Art: In Search of Common Ground**

The definitive appearance (or “invasion”, depending upon one’s point of view), of science into the field of artistic singing began when Manuel Garcia II demonstrated the laryngoscope to the Parisian *Académie des Sciences* in 1840, an act which firmly solidified his reputation as one of the premiere voice teachers of his time. His presentation in a place of science rather than the Paris Conservatory of Music was significant not only for Garcia personally, but effectively established an alternate, scientific track in the world of elite vocalism, a track which has grown continually in both importance and influence since that time.

While few voice experts agree on the quality and extent of this influence, most would concur that it is significant, that this influence has been both positive and negative, and finally, that disagreement and miscommunication between voice scientists and voice pedagogues unfortunately persists.

In this lecture, I explore the relationship between science and art through its history, its current state, and the new field of cognitive science to which voice pedagogy
could look for a rapprochement between these two valid modes of understanding and teaching voice. This lecture is based on my article *Voice Science and Vocal Art: In Search of Common Ground*, published in the November/December 2007 volume of the *Journal of Singing*. 