

Musical Performance Notes

•Objectives when training the voice.

Usual objectives are:

Extending range

Projection

Technique

What objectives do you have?

Technique = Muscle Training

Nothing is final. You can train anything in if you know what to practice.

All learning requires repetition and feedback.

If you can't feel it, you can't train it.

We want to create AWARENESS.

•What is voice?

A complex wave of sound pressure, comprising a fundamental frequency (pitch) and harmonics (overtones).

•Primary Function of the Larynx

The larynx is a valve and a constrictor.

The vocal folds open for us to breathe in and out.

The vocal folds close and constrict during thoracic fixation (chest bracing), a natural action in preparation for strenuous activity such as lifting heavy objects. This closure also occurs when you prepare to fight, flee or scream.

Breathing needs to be efficient and responsive.

The breath must be allowed to respond to what it meets on the way out.

Pushing will make your Larynx shut down.

•Voice Qualities

Can practice these by playing different party guests singing Happy Birthday.

Party Guest (Speech)

Innocent child (Falsetto)

Teasing bully (Twang)

Remorseful child (Sob)

"Proper" singer (Opera)

We can learn to isolate parts of the Larynx.

Voice production begins before the voice is heard.

•Voice Production

How does voice work?

How does your voice work?

What does your voice need?

How do we engage with that creatively?

How do we cope with performance pressures?

•Model of Voice Production

POWER	SOURCE	FILTER
Breath	Vocal Folds	Vocal Tract

How do we move from breath to voice?

Airflow - Yes

Air Pressure - No

We want to isolate the tongue from voice production.

•Attractor States

The term attractor state is used in dynamical systems theory to describe a condition of stability during motor tasks. Some structures are naturally attracted to a specific condition at a given pitch or volume. Attractor states are influenced by task, environment, training, and physical make - up. Attractor states can be modified with training. Think of them like the default setting on a computer. They are there from the get go but you can go in and change them. During the initial phase of training, movement away from an attractor state may cause a period of instability, but after deliberate and focused practice a consistent new attractor state can be established.

•Range

Restricted movement = Restricted range

The Siren - Exercise for Finding Range

On an 'ng,' Siren as high and as low as possible.

The Siren should move from the lowest to highest pitches in the range without any break or roughness and no change of quality.

Warm Ups

What are warm ups?

What are we warming up?

Warm ups should work on the conditions that the voice needs. We shouldn't use volume to wake up the body.

A louder sound requires more resistance to breath - not more breath.

•Thyroid Cartilage

'Meow' high, soft, like a kitten whimpering.

Or

'Whimper' on an 'ng' like a puppy or dog to find the Tilted condition.

Many singers, in any number of musical styles, add a bit of Thyroid Cartilage Tilt to a note as they hold it, 'sweetening' the tone. This can also help vibrato.

Thyroid Cartilage Tilt can be used to 'sweeten' any voice quality, even Belting.

A bit of extra effort in Thyroid Tilt will also enhance the upper range.

Thyroid Tilt is the main difference between speaking and singing.

•Cricoid Cartilage

Breathe out, prepare to shout "Yay!" then shout "Yay!" (happy, excited!) to find the Tilted condition.

Cricoid Tilt is a defining attribute of the Belting voice quality and loud voicing.

Notice that you do not need more breath to make a more intense vocal sound.

•True Vocal Folds Onset/Offset

Glottal: closure precedes/ends airflow

Aspirate Abrupt: abrupt movement in/out of airflow

Aspirate Gradual: gradual movement in/out of airflow

Smooth: movement and airflow coordinated simultaneously

The breath responds to the Vocal Folds.

Who	the hell	are	you?
Aspirate	Aspirate	Glottal	Smooth
Abrupt	Gradual		

•Velum (Soft Palate)

Practice "hung - gee" to feel the soft palate lift.

A lot of the time we will want the soft palate lifted when singing.

•Breathing recap

The amount of air we need is to speak the line in tempo. Everything else is muscular.

Basic breathing is having enough to speak or sing.

Abdominal pressure is for forceful exhalation. For coughing, straining, sneezing.

We need some air to make the vocal folds vibrate. Not as much as you think - BREATHE OUT. We need more stability higher through the range. The air pressure will increase but we do not need to add to this. If we work the abdomen we move the viscera against the diaphragm in a random way, pushing against the lungs and pushing air.

To make a louder sound we need more contact in the Vocal Folds which gives us a stronger abdominal response which is where the misconception has started.

We want efficient breathing not capacity and velocity and force.

Too much air and abdominal engagement will trigger constriction.

Start with letting go of the abdominal wall.

We don't want to see management of breath over communication.

Basic rule - Use the breath and then take a new one.

- Tongue

Tongue rolls to stretch the tongue.

We do not need the tongue for voice production. The tongue is used for diction and shaping the sound once made.

Projection is intensity.

First rule of voice is contact.

Maintain contact to help with projection. Keep the tongue high and forward.

Position of the tongue influences brightness.

- Larynx

Explore your range regularly with the Siren. It will get smoother and easier.

- Lips

Lips are for colouring the vowels and can help with accent work. Protruded Lips "darken" the tone and Spread Lips "brighten" the tone.