The Eight Phases of Singing Mr. John P. Mullinax – Instructor

MYTH - “I can’t carry a tune in a bucket! I would like to be able to sing,

but I am totally tone deaf! I simply was not born with that ability.”

How many children do you know that do not sing? I know. Right?

Therefore - Everyone can sing! Some of us just get lost along the way!

Why do we sing? It feels GOOD! So WHY do so many people abandon their voice?

The mid-twentieth century is the first time in history large masses of people stopped singing. Why?

* + - Media - Entertainment
		- Celebrities - Professional musicians / popular singing
		- Self-Conciseness / Self-Awareness / Fear of Ridicule or Criticism
		- Changes in the voice - (middle school / senior years)
* The voice does not have to be a GREAT mystery or secret! It is basically sustained speech. If you can speak, you can sing!
* Your voice is unique to YOU! Avoid trying to "copy" other singers
* The voice is a part of our body that is designed to work very efficiently!
* The voice is like any other muscle group in our body. If well trained, unless there is an underlying medical condition, then the voice is designed to work beautifully.
* Get out of the way! It knows what to do!
* Becoming a disciplined singer will eventually lead to being a happy singer!
* Tension is a singers' worst enemy!
* Diagnosing vocal problems should be left to a vocal specialist! (The voice? The ear? Neurological?)
* Know your instrument! Learn how it works and understand its limits!

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1 - Preparation

SPIRIT

Singing should be relaxing, easy and ultimately LOT of fun.

No one can sing if he / she is crying or in a bad mood.

Leave your luggage at the door - small carry-ons only please!

MIND

Singing is a disciplined art form. Perfect practice makes perfect.

It takes a lot of mental energy to sing.

The voice will do mostly what we tell it to do, it does not know unless we tell it.

BODY

We should be in overall good physical health. Be nourished, hydrated and rested.

Proper Alignment - (Exercise - feet together, apart, boxer's stance)

Feet - Shoulder width apart

Knees - relaxed and slightly bend

Hips - rotated slightly forward

Ribcage - comfortably high but not pushed up

Shoulders - Relaxed, back and down

Neck - unlocked, free to move

Head - chin level to the floor, not fixed Notes: Notes\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2 - Inhalation

Singers are wind instruments. We rely on our breath to create sound.

Relax the jaw, tongue and throat

Expand the intercostal muscles. (Creates a vacuum)

The diaphragm (this is a muscle we have little control over)

Separates the gastro-intestinal system from respiratory system

We do not breathe with our diaphragm!

The larynx (voice box) should be in a relaxed and downward position during this phase.

Breathe through my mouth or through my nose? How about both?

Think of filling lungs from bottom to top.

Allow gravity to do the work for you!

Exercises - 1. Think of a column of air that is above you falls into your body.

 2. Lie down, place book on tummy, and watch it rise and fall

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3 - Suspension

Suspending the air in our body without allowing it to escape until we begin the tone.

Sets up the proper muscle tone necessary for singing. (Tonus)

Feeling of buoyancy. (Floating)

Leave the valve OPEN.

Purpose of the valve. (Epiglottis)

Lift heavy objects.

Defecation.

Child Birth.

Using only the intercostal muscles suspend the breath in the lungs

Exercise - "pant like a big dog"

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4 - Phonation

-the process of creating sound - the vocal folds begin to vibrate.

Bernoulli effect - ... a concept that creates lift in airplanes

Air passes through the vocal folds and gently brings the folds together

(Demonstration - Air passing over a piece of paper)

Pitch is determined by frequency of vibration. (Measured in hertz)

The amount of air and core muscle used to determine volume.

(Muscles in the neck and upper chest should never be involved.)

Hyper-phonation (too much) vs. Hypo-phonation (not enough)

Exercises. Yawn - Sigh (h) Ah slide

Notes:

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5 - Resonation

- amplification of sound, tone

3 primary resonators - Oral Cavity, Nasal Passages and Pharynx

Duck (bright, front) / Swan (dark, back)

Hard surfaces (tissue) are better resonators than soft surfaces (tissue)

Placing the voice

- messa di voce (different vowels / dynamics on each note of your range)

Beauty of the voice lies in the vowel

4 basic types to remember when singing.

Open vowels - Ah, Oh

Closed vowels - ee, ih, oo

Neutral vowel - Uh

Diphthong - Combination vowel AI, AU, EI, OR, OI

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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6 – Articulation – (textual) creating words and phrases

"If the beauty lies in the vowel, the drama lies in the consonant!"

Most consonants restrict air-flow, therefore, we want to move through them quickly.

"If you do not feel it, I do not hear it!"

5 primary articulators - lips, teeth, tongue, hard palate, soft palate

Consonants

Voiced / vocal cords vibrate (examples ... z, th, zh, d, g, b)

Unvoiced / vocal cords do not vibrate (examples ... .., s, th, sh, t, k, p)

Nasals (m, n, ng)

(Musical Articulation is different - how to perform any given pitch. Legato, Marcatto, Stacatto)

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

7 – Expression

Your audience will not remember what you sing, but they will remember how they felt when you sang it.

Aesthetics - pertaining to the beautiful

Singing is an aesthetic art form. Is beauty in the eye of the beholder?

Communication

Text - use of sense stress (nouns, action verbs, adjectives)

Phrase - rise and fall of the line assists in musical expression

Spirit - convey the composer's intent

Physical considerations

Body involvement - does it distract or enhance our performance

Facial Expression - does it match the emotion of the song?

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8 – Conclusion -to finish; Bring to an end

Sing through it - NOT to it. The end of the phrase is not complete until the vocal folds stop vibrating!

Relax abdominal muscles.

Release "old" or used air.

The "end" or conclusion of each phrase in every song we sing offers us the unique opportunity to begin this process all over again.

"You will never be able to end a musical phrase better than you began it."

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