

Vocal Skills for All Levels

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Vocal Production and Levels of Experience/Skill

1. Posture

Intro	Developing	Excelling
Upright, head aligned with spine, Knees gently flexed, shoulders wide, sternum up lifted. Feet apart	Freedom, no voice on a stick. Can move, is not bolted to the floor. Can reposition and adjust	Fluid, assists the attitude of the message, knows where “home” is and can return there effortlessly Legs become an important factor. Hydraulics that carry and expand sound.
Unwind spine Find shoulder width Sing, Mah, Meh, Mee, Moh, Moo with feet together like a Barbie stance, Sing with feet apart but still one foot angles Then sing with feet parallel	Head circles, hula hoop	Each row hold hands and raises and lowers arms together as dynamics rise and fall. Without holding hands do the same thing, but supporting dynamics with leg flex/hydraulics instead

2. Breathing to Sing

Intro	Developing	Excelling
Abdominal breathing Ribs up and out of the way	Silent, full, immediate inhale Greater length of phrase	Controlled, sustained exhale with power and lift
Rolling “sh” 3X,3X, 7X Abdominal directionality important Rib pushups, count to 10 while singer sings on a continuous “ooh” Put hands on side of ribs and push in giving resistance. Expand ribs out on even numbers, and in on odd numbers. Feel the flexibility and mobility.	Breathe in through jaw hinge area Inhale down back of the neck “pipe”	Upper and lower abdominal wall working together. Fill the deflated beach ball in the upper abdominal area. Use the upper abdominal area last during the exhale. [faculty – see Breathing to Sing DVD]

3 Breathing to Ring

Intro	Developing	Excelling
Silent, breathe above onset note	Breathe an octave above onset note, leave room for the overtone, maintain space throughout the line	Breathe an octave above onset, Put overtone in the breath, not just the tone Take your overtone with you
Breathe in through jaw hinge, this is silent <i>and</i> elevated	“Somewhere Over the Rainbow” Or “Kit Kat” song aka Gimme a Break “I love to be with you”	Unison work with continuous overtone. Stack two octaves of overtone in there. Fish Gotta Swim

4. Space

Intro	Developing	Excelling
Aware of space around individual, not a two dimensional event Can imagine singing to and past director	Sing to neighbors, fill space between singers, More neighbors,	Know how to use all three dimensions and when to add what is needed.
Sing to me Sing past me	Include your neighbors in your sound. Sing to them without out turning your head. Now include more neighbors. Use your imagination about including others in your sound. Sound opens up.	3D box (Tony) Sing with only width Sing with only height Sign with only forward sound Combine any of the two on demand Now all three

5. Resonance

Intro	Developing	Excelling
Sense of singing above the floor of the mouth Tongue down and relaxed in contact with the lower teeth	Open throat, move “bubblized”, energized air. Bubbling opens the throat. Moving air keeps sound in motion.	Use imagination to influence spaces you can move or to direct sound to always be in motion
Sing descending 54321 on Mah Let tongue lie there still, touching lower teeth. Again with tongue pulled slightly back Again with tongue lowered on back Again with tongue arched Again with tongue relaxed, on floor.	Mah, Meh, Mee, Moh, Moo chords Sing it, bubble it, sing it again with the bubblized airflow and open throat.	Imagine your mouth and head as a two story house with a front and back room on each floor. Sing an exercise or passage all in the top front room, bottom front room, top back room, bottom back room. Walk the sound around, experiment. Listen to the different colors of sound

6 Vowel Match

Intro	Developing	Excelling
My voice is the vowel Matching target vowel	Matching target vowel and turning any diphthongs or moving to voiced consonants together. A common approach to vowel unity is in place	A common approach to matching vowel and space. Realizing the overtone is born from matched vowel and maintained by matched space
Parameters *Sing within “goalposts” *Show a bit of the upper teeth *Tongue flat in the bottom of mouth *Jaw relaxed and open *Lips as natural and relaxed as possible while shaping as needed	Target vowel exercise (Jim[speak]) [faculty – see attached page explaining this concept. It uses How We Sang Today as the example]	Wee Wee Wee (vowel exercise)

7 Word Delivery

Intro	Developing	Excelling
Sing words, not just the syllables that line up with the chord changes. Words must be presented at the front of the mouth	Sing as if speaking clearly and emphatically Sing through diphthongs purposefully	Add width and space to high/louds Add forward clarity to lows/softs
Speak[sing Speak a line of How We Sang Today “Tomorrow’s another day. I hope and pray we’ll be together.” Speak it clearly and meaningfully, with great facial and physical expression. Do not speak in the planned rhythm. Do this three times. Between the second and third time have the pitch sound and sustain during the third speak session. On the fourth time, begin singing the plan but use the same mouth, expressiveness and passion as when you spoke meaningfully		Be aware of and sing every part of every word Descending bass line “I can sing and match my voice with you”

8 Dynamics

Intro	Developing	Excelling
Understands and can demonstrate all levels (1- 5 or 1- 10 systems you may use) Messa di voce (oo-ah-oo) Use “speak[sing” but speak to 1 person, 25, 50, 100, 500, 1000. Conduct in such a way it is obvious without being overdone	Understands and can demonstrate seamless movement from level to level Sing EE, sing eh, sing AH with Physical blossom movement on sustained notes	Uses whole voice at all dynamic levels. Send softs directly through the listener. Send louds around the entire audience. During crescendos or decrescendos maintain same quality. Adjust space or clarity to give consistency. Avoid angry louds and wimpy softs.

9 Airflow

Use air, don't save it Knows and demonstrates the difference between warm/cool air a	Bubble AIR, consistent air flow, open throat	Continuous air flow knits together clearly enunciated syllables, words, phrases, ideas seamlessly
Blow cool air, sing Blow warm air, sing	Sing mah-meh-mee-moh-moo Then bubble and sing again with the same air movement and open throat	Bubble a song, then sing Speak-sing and bubbling combo

Intro

Developing

Excelling

10 Synchronization

Intro

Developing

Excelling

Thinks in terms of rhythms	Thinks in terms of rhythms as they are transmitted through syllables, vowels, consonants and the details surrounding delivering them successfully.	Synchronized musical line, space, and directionality. A completeness of sound that enhances the meaning of the lyrics; handling the melodic and harmonic landscape with ease
Doo –doo[doo rhythms on Key note	Sing words on Key note Sing lead line together/ Break to parts	

Notes