



Cantabile

VOICE CLASS

Katharin
Rundus

A Manual about Beautiful, Lyrical
Singing for Voice Classes
and Choral Singers



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Contents

Acknowledgments.....	1
Table of Contents	2
Purpose and Introduction	3
Anchor #1 - Releasing Tension from Your Instrument	5
Anchor #2 - Aligning Your Instrument	8
Anchor #3 - Opening the Vocal Tract	10
Anchor #4 - Breathing for Singing	13
Anchor #5 - Starting and Stopping the Tone	17
Anchor #6 - Resonance in Singing	20
Anchor #7 - Vocal Registers	26
Anchor #8 - Voice Classification	29
Anchor #9 - Articulation and Diction	31
Anchor #10 - Musical Expression: Telling the Story.....	34
Anchor #11 - Attentive and Deliberate Practice	37
Anchor #12 - Vocal Health	41
Appendix One Guide to International Phonetic Alphabet	45
Appendix Two References for Further Reading.....	46
About the Author	47

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Where's the Anthology?

Many academic voice classes use anthology text books that include expensive copyrighted song material. These costly song collections drive up the of the text book beyond what many students can afford.

Cantabile Voice Class is designed to use public domain arias and songs, and low cost Internet download singles, which allows the student to download and print only those songs needed for their class use. Alternately, teachers can prepare public domain, fair use and single purchased copyrighted material in a *Course Pack* that can be reproduced at a very low cost, usually at the campus bookstore. All of the traditional 17th and 18th century "little" *Italian Arias* are in the public domain and available to print from the Internet, as are almost all of the *German Lieder* and *French Chansons* of the 19th century. *English and Irish Folk Songs* are available as are *Early English Songs*. Internet sources are numerous and change and improve rapidly; any browser search will bring thousands of examples. Students can then download or purchase only the songs that are used in the course of the class keeping textbook costs low.

Teachers are directed to www.pavanepublishing.com/freedownloads/ for a recommendation of commonly used music for study and use in Folk Songs, Musical Theater, Art Songs & Arias, and Film Music.

Cantabile on YouTube

Many video examples from this book may be found on YouTube at the Pavane Publishing Channel.

Enlarged Illustration Singles

All the illustrations in this book are from P5023 CANTABILE - *A Manual about Beautiful Singing* and can be purchased separately. Go to PavanePublishing.com, Cantabile tab, for details.

Cantabile Voice Class

A Manual about Singing in a Beautiful, Lyrical Style

for Voice Classes and Choral Singers

Purpose and Introduction


This book is for singers who are serious about improving their voices. They want to know how their voice works and how they can advance their technical ability and cultivate artistic singing.


Does that describe you?



If it does, keep reading and you will find information about how to find and use your authentic voice, and how to develop it to the best of your ability. Your unique instrument deserves the very best training, which includes the following aspects: a free vocal production, a beautiful performance result and a healthy voice that is strong and reliable. These four attributes of singing, based on CANTABILE¹ principles, can be summed up as follows:

Freedom, Beauty, Health and Strength

This book is a guide for serious learners, committed singers who are pursuing these goals.

You will find in this book 12 ideas about how your voice works mechanically, technically and psychologically. These ideas are identified as Anchors. When you see the Anchor Icon , you will know that you should pay attention to an important and fundamental idea about singing. These Anchors are the basic building blocks of your technique, and your increasing skill depends on an expanding knowledge of them.

However, to achieve success as a singer, you will need to do more than just study the information and knowledge presented in this book. You will also need to make a commitment to cultivate your voice. Singing is a lot like gardening: it is not enough simply to *know* how to grow beautiful flowers; you have to actually plant, water and provide sunshine for them if they are going to flourish. You have to cultivate your garden. Just like your garden, if you ignore your voice and don't tend to it regularly, it is not likely to grow (improve) and it certainly won't get the results (a strong, expressive voice) that you desire. This book will guide you on how to set up an intentional, purposeful, directed practice schedule and provide proven vocalises for you to use. When you see the Gardening Icon  in the text, it brings to your attention practical and interesting vocal tools and exercises that will help you get the serious results you want and deserve in your singing.

The ultimate goal of every singer is to be technically secure enough to put aside concerns about how the voice works, and to sing emotionally and expressively. Singing expressively means that you are able to tell stories, express feelings and share these thoughts with your audience in an "unselfconscious" and authentic performance manner. The Heart Icon  will draw your attention to the emotional and psychological aspects of your singing. At the end of every Anchor section you will see a Diver Icon . This section will sum up some of the important ideas of the chapter and will help you dive more deeply into your voice study. Many of these points will be used for class discussion and journaling and for discussion with other singers.

Singers can only be authentically emotional when they are secure in their technique, and that security only comes with practice. So you see, knowledge, practice and expressivity are all important in your journey to be a serious performer. Your life is so much more interesting because you have chosen this path. Welcome to the journey!






¹ Teachers, conductors and advanced learners are directed to *Cantabile: A Manual about Beautiful Singing* (Pavane Publishing, 2009) also by this author. This textbook provides more detailed and in-depth scientific information as well as many more vocal exercises, teaching examples and illustrations. The *Cantabile* icon will indicate when further information is available and the page numbers where you will find the relevant information.

Things to Think About and Remember As You Start Your Journey

- 1 ♪ What does the word “cultivate” mean and how does it relate to your voice training?
- 2 ♪ How can you be more intentional and purposeful in your voice practice?
- 3 ♪ What does it mean to sing with your authentic voice? What is the opposite of authentic?
- 4 ♪ Why is it important to sing expressively? What emotions are easy for you to portray? Which ones are really hard to do?

GUIDE TO THE ICONS

To help you organize your study and thinking, you will find five icons throughout the text. They are shown below, along with an explanation to guide you in your voice training journey.

Anchor  Foundation	Gardener  Cultivation	Heart  Emotion	Diver  Deeper	Cantabile  Source
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- ANCHOR — Important and fundamental ideas about singing.
- GARDENER — Exercises and strategies to help you cultivate your singing. Ideas for more effective practice.
- HEART — Emotional and psychological aspects of singing. How to enhance your storytelling for an authentic performance.
- DIVER — A summation of each chapter’s ideas and an invitation to dive more deeply into your voice study.
- CANTABILE — A reference to *Cantabile: A Manual about Beautiful Singing*, (Pavane Publishing, 2009) for further study and reading.

An artist is one who has met all the requirements, both objective and subjective, of his art.

Talent, though necessary, is not a substitute for knowledge.

Facility is advantageous, but cannot take the place of co-ordinated technique.

Emotion unifies, but needs imagination to arrange details.

-Giovanni Battista Lamperti (1839-1910)²



p. 13-31

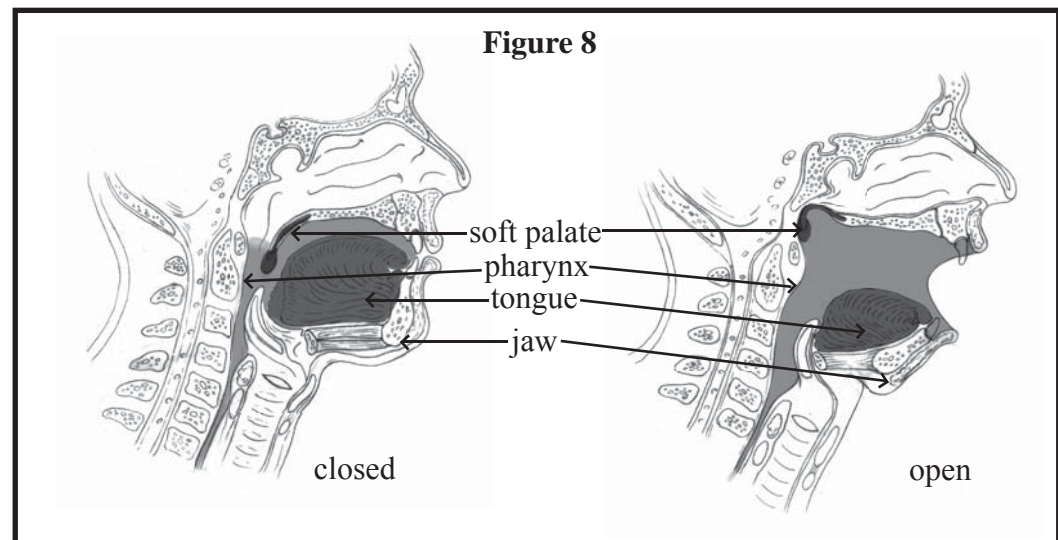
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ANCHOR #3

Opening the Vocal Tract

Now that you have shaken out any tension in your instrument and aligned your body, you are ready for the initial gesture of singing. A gesture is an intentional movement. Your next step is to intentionally open your vocal tract so it is free of tension and ready for the many actions that are required of it in singing.

Your vocal tract extends from the tip of your nose and the end of your lips down to your larynx, a little like the shape of a question mark. In adult men it is about 6½ inches (17 cm) long and in adult women may be an inch less. For singing, we are concerned with the aspects of this tube that can be manipulated to change its shape.



If you compare the pictures of a closed vocal tract and an open vocal tract, (see Figure 8), you can see that there is quite a difference in the two drawings in the spaces shown in light gray. The extra space you see in the open vocal tract is created when you manipulate the “moveable” aspects of your vocal tract tube. If you start with this initial gesture of singing, sometimes referred to as an “open throat,” you will have prepared your vocal tract to swiftly change into the various shapes that are needed to form resonance and vowels. Resonance is dependent on a freely open vocal tract, so we are going to prepare the vocal tract in advance. Just like the rest of your body, we are going to get your vocal tract open and “ready to sing.”

The aspects of your vocal tract that you have some control over are your lips, jaw, tongue, soft palate, the muscles that form the back wall of the throat, your epiglottis and your larynx. Not only can you control and manipulate these muscles, you *must* move them in order to sing beautifully. Four of these areas are of special concern to singers and will be highlighted here.

The **jaw** should be able to freely rotate down and back around an axis just in front of your ear holes. It should not jut out and there should be no visual or felt tension in the “down-and-back” movement of your chin (see Figure 4, page 7).

The **soft palate** should be flexible, able to move freely and should never be stiff or held rigidly in position. Most of the time in singing, it is raised, shutting off any airflow to the nose and creating a large space in the back of the throat. It needs to be flexible enough to partly close off the nasal passage for certain consonants and some vowels.

The **pharynx** or the throat should feel open like the beginning of a yawn, but not a stretched feeling. The big swallowing muscles lining the back wall of your throat should be uninvolved and released, creating an airy, open feeling.

The **tongue** should not be tense or bunched, neither thrusting forward nor backward blocking the throat. Most of the time when singing, the tip of your tongue will remain behind your bottom front teeth, barely touching your gum line except when you are forming certain consonants.

Exercises for Opening the Vocal Tract

Imagine that you have borrowed your friend's car. After you put on your seatbelt and before you start to drive, you adjust the mirrors. You don't wait until you are on the freeway going 70 miles an hour and want to change lanes — you adjust them in anticipation of an optimal journey, so they will be ready when you need them. The following exercises will help you "adjust your mirrors" (open your vocal tract) *before* you get on the freeway and want to make a lane change (*before* you are singing).

- ☀ In a mirror or phone photo viewer, watch yourself release your jaw down and back. (No selfies, please! Or heck, post them on YouTube; I'd love to see all of your jaws opening freely!) Does the shape of your mouth look "tall" and not wide or stretched? Now do it by feel without the mirror or phone. It should feel flexible and free.
- ☀ Now inhale through that open jaw space in a "gesture of a yawn." Inhale deeply into your body, all the way "down to your toes." Don't really yawn; that would be a stretch. You want just a tall release of your jaw while you inhale.
- ☀ Here is the important part: when you start to exhale, be intentional about not changing anything in your vocal tract. Inhale and exhale through the same open space. Practice that until it feels automatic. Memorize this open and free feeling so you can recall it when you are singing.
- ☀ Inhale through your nose a couple of times, like you are smelling something wonderful. Do you notice that your cheek muscles lift a little? That helps to lift your soft palate. Exhale through your mouth by releasing your jaw (down and back), but don't change anything in the back of your throat.
- ☀ Now inhale through your mouth, still through the gesture of a yawn, but changing as little as possible in the back of your throat. Make a long face by closing your lips (keep your teeth separated) and exhale through your nose. Practice that until it feels automatic.
- ☀ Practice the following "m" hum exercise. Remember to start with the yawn gesture on inhalation and then gently close your lips around that gesture and hum. Make sure that your teeth are apart. It should feel "easy" at your throat and buzzy in your face and lips. (Exercise 1)

Exercise 1

With a "long" face ascend by half-steps

[m] (inhale)



- ☀ To practice your released jaw action, sing the exercise. Notice how your tongue “fronts” on the “ni” syllable, and then easily follows your jaw as it moves down and back (not out and forward). (Exercise 2) Monitor your chin with your finger or look in a mirror to make sure your facial expression looks “tall.”

Exercise 2

Use a "tall" [a] ascend by half-steps

[ni - a _____] (inhale)

- ☀ Your soft palate needs to be trained to be supple and flexible. Sing Exercise 3. Immediately close to the “ng” sound on the first note and feel how the “ng” closes the back of your throat as well as your jaw. Now spring open to the [a] (like father) vowel and descend down the scale. Do you feel an openness in the back of your mouth as the tongue and soft palate spring apart to form the [a] vowel? It should be the very same tall vowel that you had in the previous exercise. The most beautiful [a] vowel will be open and bright with a tall soft palate and a flexible tongue.

Exercise 3

ascend by half-steps

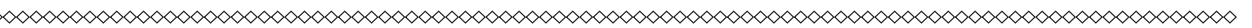
[Ziŋ a _____] (inhale)

- ☀ Now to put everything together. Watch in a mirror as you do the following: inhale on the gesture of a yawn — remember, not a stretch; your jaw rotates down and back; your cheek muscles raise slightly; the tip of your tongue is behind your bottom front teeth and is not tense. Sing Exercise 4 maintaining your tall, flexible jaw; tall soft palate; and an open, yawny throat. Your vocal tract is open and ready for all sorts of beautiful singing.

Exercise 4

ascend by half-steps

[na _____] (inhale)



Things to Think About and Remember from Anchor #3

Opening the Vocal Tract

1. 🎵 What is the initial gesture of beautiful singing?
2. 🎵 What aspects of your vocal tract can you NOT change or manipulate? Which ones can you control?
3. 🎵 Creating and cultivating an open vocal tract enables a singer to inhale efficiently and quickly and sets up the right conditions for optimal resonance and beautiful singing on exhalation. Why is this important to you as a singer? What happens if you don't start with this initial gesture of singing?





p. 71-91

ANCHOR #6

Resonance in Singing

Resonance in singing is associated with tone quality. We say, “She had beautiful resonance in that song.” Resonance and tone are also associated with creating space in the instrument, so consider the following axiom:

Resonance = tone = space

However, it is a specific space: a cultivation and balance between two specific areas in your instrument, your pharynx (throat) and your mouth, will create this resonance space.

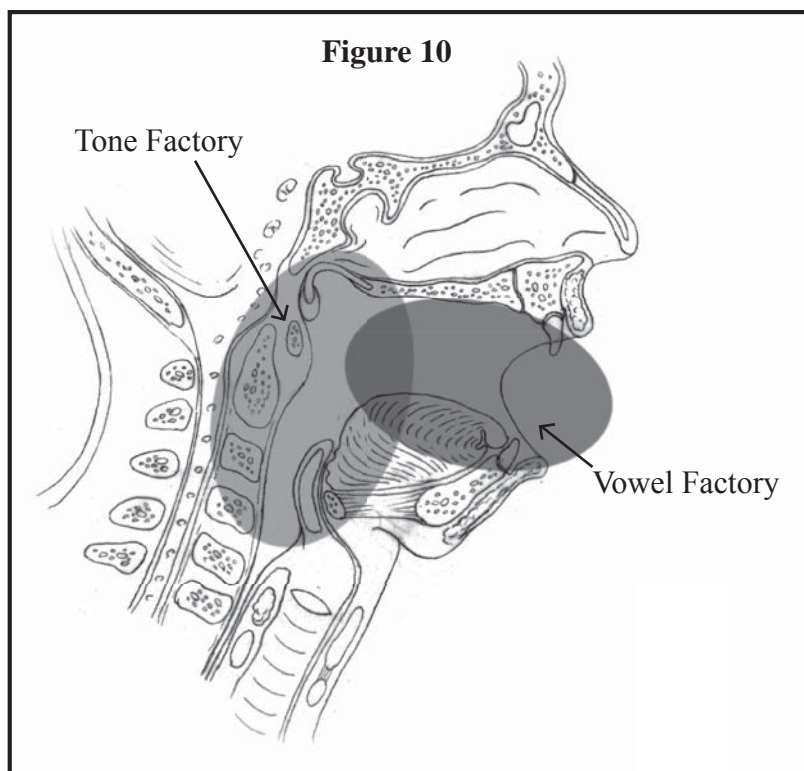
Imagine that your voice is an instrument that receives its energy from the breath. The breath is turned into a series of “puffs” or vibrations at the vocal folds. Oddly enough, if you could hear those vibrations immediately after they come away from your larynx, you’d discover they do not result in a beautiful sound, but more of a low-pitched “buzz.” Those vibrations now move to your pharynx and are changed there, and then move along to your mouth and are shaped further by the tongue and other articulators. Then consonants are added just before the vibrations travel out into the room where your ear perceives them as beautiful singing. It takes much longer to describe this than to do it; it all happens instantaneously. But each step of the way has to be cultivated and trained so that the result is beautiful singing and not talking or screaming or some other sound. The resonance part is what happens primarily (but not exclusively) in your throat and mouth.

Resonance can be defined as follows: sound waves produced in one way are acted upon in another way, where they are enriched, enhanced, intensified and attenuated (reduced in strength). Think about an acoustic guitar. The vibrations are created by the strings; but without the body of the guitar (the wooden box with the sound hole), the sound is small, barely heard. But when the sounds are allowed to go into the wooden box (the resonator), they are acted upon, enriched, enhanced, intensified and even attenuated, and come out of the sound hole into the room to be perceived by your ear as a beautiful guitar sound.

The same is true of your voice: those glottal vibrations come from your vocal folds and travel to your throat and mouth and are changed there, depending on the space that you, the singer, create for them. *You* create your own resonance by how you shape your throat and mouth.

There are many different resonance choices that a singer can make, but an optimal and healthy tone will be produced when the resonators are tension-free with a general feeling of openness in the vocal tract (remember Anchor #3). Historically, we have preferred a three-dimensional sound, one that has tallness, depth and breadth. The old Italians called this the “*chiaroscuro*” sound, and once again it turns out they had it right without much scientific knowledge about acoustics. This “*chiaroscuro*” resonance (light and dark qualities at the same time) carries the most efficiently into a room, requires the least amount of effort for the greatest amount of result and, it is the healthiest way to sing over the long term. And it turns out that our human ears are uniquely anatomically suited for these particular frequencies, and our ears and brains crave and prefer these sounds.

One model to train this 3-D sound assumes that your throat and mouth work together to create beautiful tone and to shape consistent and beautiful vowels. To create a free tone, your throat should be open and free of tension. This means that your larynx is not elevated, the back wall of your throat is not constricted, your soft palate is lifted, and your tongue is in a state of tonus (ready to act) and slightly grooved (see Figure 10). As a semantic choice, we will call this the “Tone Factory”: where tone is manufactured. The goal is for this area, the Tone Factory, to remain in a relatively open state, even as vowels and consonants are formed in front of it. Likewise, the “Vowel Factory” (primarily your mouth, see Figure 10) can be defined as the area in front of your soft palate and the base of your tongue, where vowels are shaped by the actions (primarily but not exclusively) of your lips and tongue. The goal is for these areas to coordinate freely with each other to maintain openness in the Tone Factory, while the Vowel Factory independently “manufactures” and shapes consistent and beautiful vowels.



Training the Tone Factory - Building the Three Dimensions

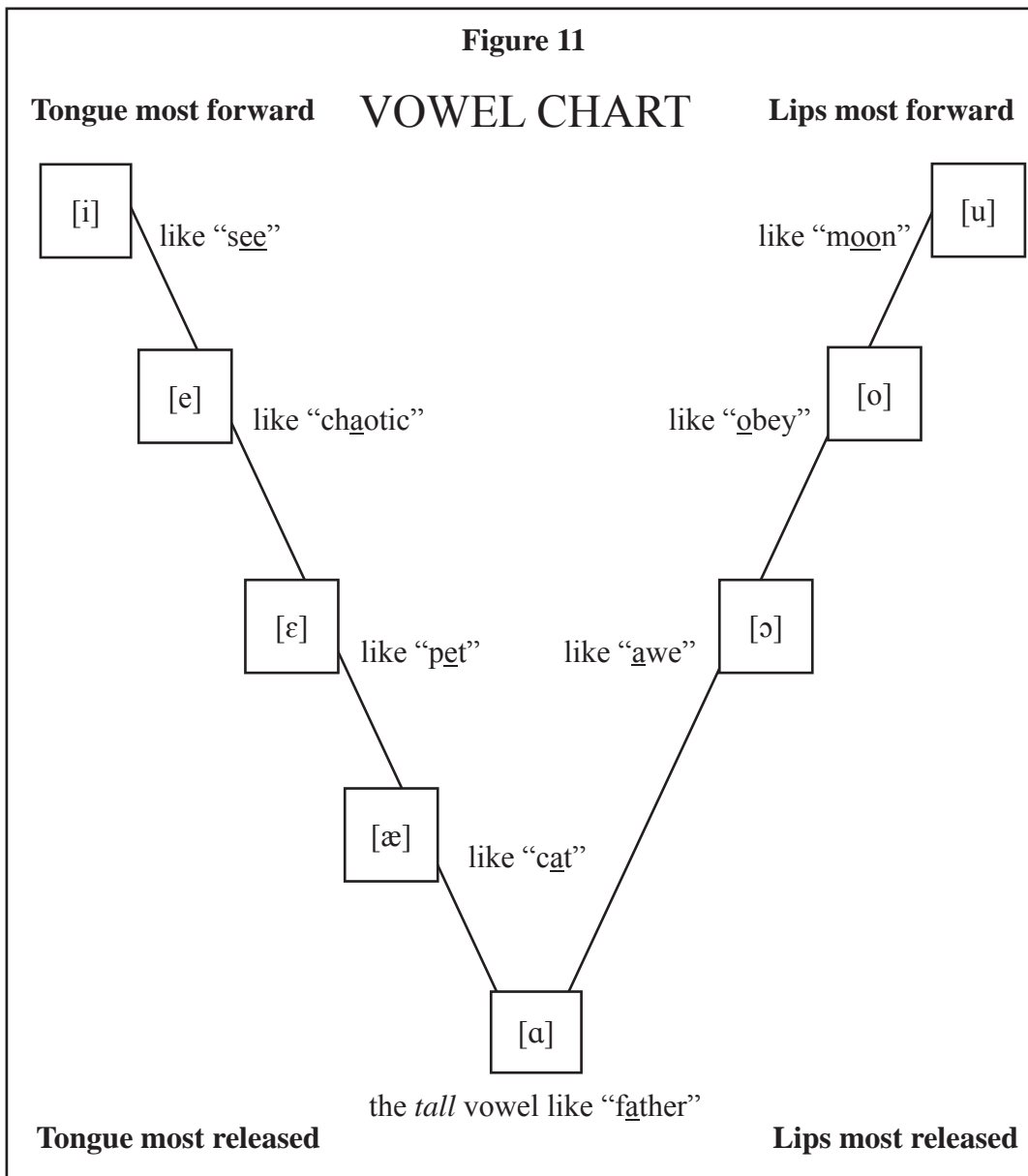
- ☀ Start your voice building by doing just a little negative practice. Sing one pitch, A=440, (Exercise 14) but don't attempt to open your throat — just sing a real dull “duh.” Notice that the sound seems subdued, doesn't carry very well and listening to it is pretty uninteresting. Give yourself a negative message about this feeling and sound; we are not trying to train this. Now, after singing that dull sound, suddenly sing the tall [a] (as in father) as you continue with Exercise 15a. When you change from “uh” to [a], can you feel more tall space in the back of your throat? Your tongue may also lower a bit in the back, and your soft palate most certainly will lift. This is the tall dimension of your Tone Factory, the North/South Axis. Think about it and remember how it feels so you can recall it later. (“The memory of how it feels is your best guide.”)

Exercise 14



Exercise 15a





Things to Think About and Remember from Anchor #6

Resonance in Singing

- 1 🎵 Resonance = tone = space.
- 2 🎵 Vowel = shape.
- 3 🎵 Resonance is when sound waves from one source are enhanced, enriched, intensified or attenuated in some other way. In singing, vibrations created by the vocal folds will be acted upon by your resonators, primarily your throat and mouth.
- 4 🎵 "Chiaroscuro" (meaning dark/light) is one way that we describe a three-dimensional tone quality.
- 5 🎵 One strategy for improving resonance in singing is to cultivate and maintain an open, three-dimensional Tone Factory while shaping lip and tongue vowels in the Vowel Factory.
- 6 🎵 All vowels in any language can be represented on the Vowel Chart, Figure 11. Where would the American [ʌ] (like "up") be placed? Where would the German and French [y] (like "über") be?

ANCHOR #11

Attentive and Deliberate Practice



Singing is a motor function; that means it is dependent on muscles that move. You are a (singing) athlete, just as surely as are swimmers, runners, tennis players, and soccer and football athletes. You are dependent on your muscles' ability to "perform" reliably and consistently. This is particularly interesting in singing because you use the minutest muscles and also the largest muscles to achieve your desired result, which is singing beautifully and freely. In addition, the muscles all have to work and coordinate together. And that takes practice.

In the past 20 or 30 years, cognitive (brain) scientists have studied what happens in our brains when our muscles "learn." This is of interest to athletes because if we can train our muscles' activity to be consistent and reliable, then our result, our performance, will be more effective. So a well-placed forehand stroke in tennis is not so different from an open vocal tract supported with breath regulation. Both take practice in order to be recalled during performance.¹⁵

But the cognitive studies have discovered that not just any old practice will do. To be able to recall (memorize) the muscle memory that is needed for these motor skills, your practice must be attentional and effortful. You must be completely focused on the task (in the moment, in the "flow") and you must be exerting yourself (it seems "hard" to do, requiring effort). These two attributes, among others, are what enable your brain to learn, so that the muscle memory can be recalled later for performance.¹⁶ The following practice guidelines will help you stay focused and motivated, and your singing performance will improve. These things are essential to your continued growth and success as a singer.



How to Practice

- ☀ Find a practice space that is comfortable and safe. (This does not include your car while driving down the highway.) Ideally your space will have a mirror and a piano keyboard, but it must be a place where you feel free to experiment.
- ☀ Determine when you are going to practice during the week and put it into your schedule. For example, Monday at 2:00, Tuesday at 11:00, etc. This is really important. Without committing to the time, you will always find something more pressing. If singing is important to you, you will schedule the time and keep your appointment with yourself.



¹⁵ Titze, I. and Verdolini Abbott (2012); Verdolini-Marston and Balota (1994); Wulf G., Prinze W. and Hob, M. (1998) p. 169; McNevin, N., Shea, C., Wulf, G. (2003) pp. 22-29

¹⁶ Ericsson, K. A.; Krampe, R.; Tesch-Romer, C. (1993) pp. 363-406

- ☀ It is better to space out your practice than to do it all at once. Beginners should practice 20-30 minutes a day, five days a week. As you become more skilled and have harder music to practice, you will increase that to 20-30 minutes twice a day (once in the morning and once in the afternoon), five days a week. The more serious you are about improving your performance, the more sessions you will add during the week. (Professional singers generally practice four to six hours a day, but never all at once; it's usually broken up into three or four sessions with at least an hour between for rest.) To keep things in perspective, behavioral scientists tell us that it takes about 10,000 hours of practice to be really good at something, to reach mastery. Ten thousand hours usually takes ten years to accomplish; the clock is ticking for you. (Put this book down and go practice!)
- ☀ At the beginning of each practice do two things:
 - ♪ Turn off your phone or any other distractions. If you practice for 20 minutes and you answer or read four texts during that time, your practice time has now been reduced. However, that is not the most important thing. More importantly is that your "flow" has been interrupted and you have robbed your brain of the opportunity to learn deeply.
 - ♪ Set one or two small, achievable goals that you can accomplish during your time period. For example: "I'm going to sing through the Italian song that I already know and think about and add emotional meaning, and I'm going to learn the melody on the first two pages of the new song I was just assigned."
- ☀ Expect your practice to be "hard" work. If it doesn't seem effortful, then you need to work harder and set more challenging goals. It doesn't matter if you like to practice or not; it doesn't matter if it seems like drudgery. Push through those feelings and keep at it. The reason you practice is to improve your performance, not because you like to practice so much.
- ☀ Don't practice anything that you know is wrong. Always practice musically and freely. Keep a positive attitude, like, "I'm pretty good at this and I'm going to get better."
- ☀ Figure 13 is a sample practice journal. Two minutes before your practice time is up, do three things:
 1. Write down one observation or thing that you learned during this practice session.
 2. Decide your goals for the next practice session and write them down in your practice journal.
 3. Record how many minutes you practiced.