

Want to Sing Like a Pro?

Part of the Learn to Sing with Joett Vocal Training CD



“Barua Kutoka kwa Mwalimu wa Sauti”

A collection of helpful tips & articles for singers!
by Joett



Letters from a Vocal Coach JoettMusic.com



Letters from a Vocal Coach (Barua Toka Kwa Mwalimu wa Sauti)

If anything, working as a vocal coach over the years has helped me understand the human voice better. Whenever I'm dealing with voice issues that my students are going through and trying to solve their problems—as everybody is different—I almost always pick up yet another solution to seemingly insurmountable difficulties and challenges singing throws at you. Letters from a Vocal Coach is intended to serve as a reference point you can return to again and again should you run into any difficulties with your singing. Contained herein is a fountain of articles and knowledge that you can draw inspiration and guidance from. It's very easy to regress in this business, you'll be amazed. So please treasure this handbook and be

blessed with a great singing voice for always.

My comeback single *I Could Never Live (Without Your Love)* began life as a supplementary training program I gave to my students back in 2010. One of my students said to me “this is such a beautiful song, why don’t you finish it off and record it?” Well, I took their advice and the next thing you know I was not only recording the single, I was also recording an entire training program around the song, the result of which is my *Learn to Sing with Joett* vocal training program on CD.

What makes this program particularly unique AND useful, is that, unlike many vocal training programs on the market today, it is based on a song and requires you to do the scales within both a vowels and lyrical setting. One of the greatest challenges with teaching voice is that, the exercises prepare the voice, but when it comes to applying your newly

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acquired skills to singing a song, I find, students have difficulty in making that transition. That's where this program cuts through that hurdle like a knife. Because, as you will also be training with the scales in a lyrical setting, when it comes to singing any other song...be it pop, soul, R&B, jazz, gospel etc. it should be dead easy to apply the scales to whatever you want to sing because you will have done it before...in the scales with lyrics. These exercises basically hit two birds with one stone. I wanted to make it easier for you to learn to sing from the comfort of your own home—without a vocal coach present, and get results.

In an easy-to-understand fashion, I have compiled hereunder a collection of some of my best articles on singing. I'd like you to refer to these every now and again to help you along with your quest to becoming a better singer. Voice training alone doesn't quite cut it. I'm almost certain you will fall back to your old ways at some point—at times, it happens to the best of us—so let

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these articles serve as a constant reminder. Call it your *singers tip sheet* if you like, but use these articles to keep you on the straight and narrow. You'll be glad you did.

How to Use the Training CD

Start by listening to the *introduction*. You must then listen to my brief tip on *posture* and then proceed with the breathing exercise on track three. Follow these three steps sequentially, each time you begin training, as it will serve as a constant reminder. The program runs for an hour. Please make sure you train for just an hour once a day. That's all you need. Don't overwork your voice. Contained in this training package is my single *I Could Never Live (Without Your Love)*. Have a listen to the different versions of the song, rehearse, and then use the backing tracks to sing along to. That would be a great way to push you to applying the exercises and techniques in the voice training program. You will discover

that the same principles and techniques apply.

Let's begin by giving you a quick guide to the lyrics and vowels on the training CD. There are two sets of vowels in the following order: AOIEU and AEIOU. In the vowel exercises with octaves, you may change the order of the vowels from AEIOU to AOIEU. The latter is easier to pitch when the octave hits the vowel O. And when, at a more advanced level you go with the vowels AEIO as per the recording, please ensure that your mouth half opens at the beginning with the vowel A and then do a sudden jaw-drop to hit the octave on the vowel E just to give the sound a bit of space the higher up the scale you go. Please be guided accordingly.

Breathing

Please listen to the instructions on the CD each time you train. Let this serve as a constant reminder on HOW to breathe to

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sing; and ALWAYS do your breathing exercises BEFORE you begin the exercises.

Training with Vaaagh

Please follow the instructions on the CD very carefully each and every time. Take this exercise very seriously. When done correctly, it helps to improve your projection and to eliminate the nasal tone.

ALTERNATIVE VOCAL WORKOUT

Instead of VAAAGH (as per recording) you can switch this to NA and also NO (pronounced NOU).

Arpeggios vocal exercises on track 6 hereunder are recorded with the vowels AEIOU. Note all vowels have been isolated. And I've also added the lip bubble, tongue trills and humming (mm/nn/ng) to this as well. Remember, to find demonstrations of these variations look up my blog at joettmusic.com

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- a) Mm
- b) I (eee)
- c) A (uh)
- d) Lip Bubble
- e) Tongue Trill
- f) Aah
- g) Oh
- h) U
- i) Ng
- j) Nn
- k) Eh

Octaves alternative are as follows:

- a) Mm
- b) I
- c) UIU
- d) Tongue Trill
- e) Lip Bubble

Chromatic Scales alternative exercises are as follows:

- a) Mm
- b) Lip Bubble

- c) Tongue Trill
- d) UIU (with extended Uu in places)
- e) Na
- f) Mum
- g) Ney

Descending Scales alternative exercises are as follows:

- a) Mm
- b) Lip Buble
- c) Tongue Trill
- d) Ng
- e) N
- f) I
- g) U

Vowels and Lyrics

A O I E U ... “I Could Never Live”

Arpeggios

Rose petals {fall} upon your feet

Octaves

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I {could} never live

Chromatic Scales

I'm on my knees and I r-e-a-ll-y do want
your love → I am on my knees and I r-e-a-ll-
y do want your love

Descending Scales

I could never {live} without your love

Articulation Exercise

Exercise 1: I could never live, I could never
live, without your love

Exercise 2: I could never never live X 2
without your love

Exercise 3: I could never never never live X 2
without your love

Correct Breathing Technique

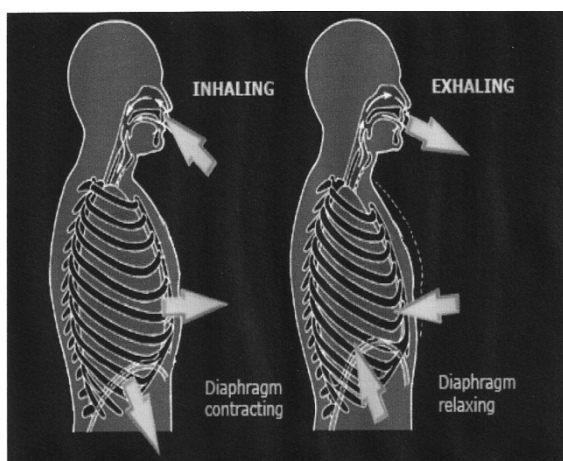
Correct breathing is vital for good singing. Imagine the note as a kite, resting on a stream of air - if there's no air it can't fly. In that same way, correct breathing supports your singing and enables you to hit any note you want, as loudly or as softly as you want, without hurting your voice.

When we do not have enough air coming out to carry the note, it will waver and fall. Even worse, without good breathing technique, we may start to put pressure on our throats, which can cause great damage to the voice. But when you breathe correctly, everything you sing feels and sounds so much easier.

Stand in front of a mirror and take a deep breath. Watch what happens to your body.

Does your chest expand? Do your shoulders rise? Does your stomach go in? If so, you are among a huge number of people who are overriding their automatic breathing response, and have learned to breathe incorrectly. We begin to do this for a number of reasons - holding our tummies in to look slimmer, poor posture or anxiety for instance.

Correct breathing technique is called diaphragmatic or stomach breathing.



We automatically breathe this way when we are born. When we sleep we still breathe this way.

The sort of breathing most people have learned to do involves expanding the rib cage so that the lungs are forced to expand outwards only.

Diaphragmatic breathing uses the diaphragm muscle (a strong dome shaped muscle located under the ribs and above the stomach) and involves expanding the lungs *downwards* as well, moving the diaphragm muscle downwards. *See picture above.*

When we breathe in, we push the muscle down, and the tummy moves forward. When we breathe out, the diaphragm muscle moves back to resting position and the tummy moves back in. There is little or no upper chest movement.

Diaphragmatic breathing is used in yoga, and is often recommended as a therapy for anxiety disorders and hyperventilation.

When we say “take a deep breath”, it is intended to calm us down by ingesting oxygen, so correct breathing not only aids your actual singing

technique, it will also enhance your performance by helping you to relax.

Breathing Exercises

Here are some exercises to help you form the habit of correct breathing.

It may feel strange at first, as we have to undo bad habits, but with enough practice, diaphragmatic breathing can become your standard way of breathing. After all, it takes only 28 days to form a new habit.

Practice these exercises lying down at first, as it is easier to feel your stomach rising, and be sure you are doing it right! As you get more confident, you can do them standing up. Just remember to stand up slowly - you may feel light headed from all the oxygen rushing through your system!

Starting to breathe from the diaphragm

Place one hand on your tummy and the other on your chest, then breathe in slowly and deeply.

Imagine your stomach as a bag filling with air. Try to fill the bag from the bottom first.

Don't take in more air than is comfortable - it's not the amount of air you inhale that is important, but the rate at which you let it out.

You should feel your stomach rising as you inhale and dropping as you exhale. You should feel little or no movement from your chest. You may also feel your sides and back expanding. That's good.

When you breathe out, try to let the air out from the bottom first too, rather like you would squeeze a tube of toothpaste from the bottom to leave nothing unused and wasted.

Practice breathing like this until you feel comfortable with the process of diaphragmatic breathing, then you can move on to the exercises and begin to control how the air comes out.

Exercise 1

Take a comfortable breath in, hold for a moment, and then begin to let the air out gently

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with a *Tssss* sound, rather like air escaping from a tyre or balloon.

Let out all the air you have. Don't leave any unused.

Repeat the exercise several times, experimenting with different velocities - louder, softer etc. Then you will get used to controlling the diaphragm muscle, and so controlling the air coming out.

Don't worry about how long you exhale for; the important thing is to keep the sound as even as possible. If you hear yourself getting louder, stop pushing so hard. If the sound of the air coming out begins to stutter, then you are not letting out enough air, so step it up a little. It's rather like how a car engine stalls when we don't apply enough gas pedal.

Exercise 2

The diaphragm muscle controls the dynamics of the voice - that is how loud or how soft we sing. If we try to create volume with the throat instead, we will do damage to our vocal cords.

The next exercise will help you to practice controlling your volume with your diaphragm.

Remember to take a good breath in, then let out the air with a *Sshhh* sound.

Begin softly and push with your stomach to increase the volume, then relax it for the sound to become quiet again. You should feel your diaphragm muscle contracting with each push.

Repeat the exercise several times.

Don't be tempted to move your chin up with each push - let your diaphragm muscle do all the work.

Exercise 3

Now we're going to do the same exercise, but much slower.

Don't worry if this seems very difficult at first. It will get easier with practice. Repeat the exercise several times.

Exercise 4

The final exercise involves the same contractions as Exercise 3, we're just going to put a sound behind them. Don't try to sing a note, just make the sound.

This should be easier than the previous exercise, as you won't be letting out as much air as you did with the Sshhh sound.

As well as working the diaphragm muscle, the exercise has the added bonus of throwing the voice forward towards the lips and teeth, rather than back into the head and throat.....but that's a matter of placement, which deserves a lesson all of its own.

Repeat these exercises every day for a month, and you will feel the difference it makes to your singing.

How to Maintain a Healthy Throat

One of the most frequently asked questions my students throw at me is..."how do I look after my throat?" Well, I'm going to begin by telling you what you **SHOULDN'T** do, and then I'll fill you in on **HOW** to preserve your voice and what supplements to take to maintain a healthy throat.

DON'T smoke. **DON'T** take recreational drugs. **DON'T** booze excessively. It practically destroys the voice (Want proof to all of the above? Look at Whitney Houston towards the end of her life!). **DON'T** drink ice cold drinks. They interfere with the vocal chords. **DON'T**

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scream and shout when you're out on the town partying. You'll have lost your voice the next day and if you don't know how to fix the problem (as I will show you later in this article), you'll have a croaky voice lingering on for longer than you'd want. And here's a message to those of you who go to the beach to practice singing by yelling your lungs out. DON'T do it! This is the fastest way to ruin your voice completely. Now let's take a look at what you CAN do to preserve your voice.

1000 MILLIGRAMS VITAMIN C

I'll begin with a quick remedy tip for putting a stop to flu symptoms, including a tired sore throat from overuse. Simply pop a 1000 milligram vitamin C effervescent tablet into a glass of water and drink up. If you're in a really bad way, pop up to 3000 milligrams over the course of the day. I regularly take vitamin C once a day. Especially when I'm using my voice a lot

(teaching), and when I have concerts lined up. Vitamin C protects me. Always!

VITAMINS & MINERALS

Let's take a look at the whole body nutritional approach for a minute. Essentially you need to keep your immune system working optimally. And the quickest way to do that is to ensure that you're taking vitamins and minerals to stay healthy. I take Super Potency Megavites (or if you'd prefer liquid vitamins, Veriuni Advanced Liquid Nutrition is superb AND delicious!). And to add to that arsenal, I also take Super Antioxidant Formula, all of which are available from tripleclicksdeals.com or via my blog at joettmusic.com. To access, simply click on a TripleClicks banner in the sidebar on my blog at joettmusic.com. So in a nutshell, there you have it, what-to-do and what-not-to-do to maintain a healthy throat.

DRINK WATER

Keeping the vocal folds moist through good hydration is very important for good voice health. We can provide moisture to the vocal folds by drinking water. It is highly recommended that you drink at least 2 liters of water a day. And when you're singing, it's advisable to have a bottle of water handy.

How to Learn Style through Imitation

Developing your own style doesn't get easier than this. Listen to a variety of good music and try imitating the different styles. If you've been through voice training you'll have the advantage of having a far better understanding of the tricks that professional singers use. It helps to know

the little secrets behind their successful delivery of songs. But for the purpose of this book, consider learning through imitation. Cos in the long run it'll help you develop your own unique style.

And on that note, I think it's time to take a look at what you ought to be listening to. What defines good music? I'll tell you this for nothing. Go back to the 90s, 80s, 70s, 60s, 50s and you'll find an archive of really good music. With the exception of the 90s, they didn't have computers back then. Singers had to be perfect. They had no technological assistance the way we do today. So have a good listen and then fast forward to the 00s if you like...but never forget your roots. As the saying goes, old is gold.

And now I'll throw in a few names and songs for you to go and look up: Luther Vandross (Give Me The Reason/Always & Forever/A House Is Not A Home), Haddaway (What Is Love), Aretha Franklin

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(Who's Zoomin' Who), Tevin Campbell (I'm Ready), Atlantic Starr (Always/Secret Lovers/Silver Shadow), Imagination (Body Talk), Shalamar (Full Of Fire).

In coming *Letters from a Vocal Coach* blog posts on joettmusic.com, I will be suggesting more songs for you to listen to...and to try and imitate. Have fun!

How to Overcome Your Fears

Yes, this happens a lot. Perhaps you're not too sure of what you're doing and kind of get derailed with your singing (I'm talking recording session and rehearsals here), how on earth do you overcome that? There are a couple of things you'd want to pay attention to.

1. Are you abrupt in your delivery of notes?
2. Are you panicky?

3. Are you unsure as to where or when to come in?

SOLUTION: Pay particular attention to listening. I'll say this again, listen and listen well. Your voice should blend in with the music and flow with it. And here's a great way to get it right. In-between notes there are always gaps to BREATHE. Use those gaps to do just that. Cos you see, when you're idle you'll think "well, what do I do now?...I'll just sing!" And then your timing goes off and you begin to race with the track, albeit breathlessly. So here's the secret: when you breathe, not only do you get to stabilize your voice, you'll feel better, more confident and more balanced... and your voice, instead of falling apart and sounding rushed and disconnected, will actually sound better and more controlled. And what's more, when you breathe you're also filling those little gaps in a song where you'd otherwise be idle and singing before you should BECAUSE of that. So the next

time you're getting your notes in a maze of twisted benders, read this article!

To find more handy singing articles, visit my blog at joettmusic.com and run a search for *Letters from a Vocal Coach* or *Singing Lessons*.

How to Realign Your Vocal Placement

Whilst training a student who has struggled with voice placement issues for quite a while, I decided to write an article solely based on how I discovered the root of the problem and how I solved it. So yes, this, as it were, is a case study piece that may trigger a few alarm bells should you be experiencing a similar problem.

Do you feel a strain in your voice? Are you singing unnecessarily high and reaching the limits of your range and feeling desperately uncomfortable? Are you experiencing a sort

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of whiny, screechy tone coming from your voice and is there a nasal tone added to the list of vocal malfunction? Let's correct your placement!

A strained whiny voice when singing just doesn't sound right. It can be irritating, and I'm sure—if you listen to yourself well, you'll realize something is amiss. People carry such baggage around them for years and I'll tell you something, some habits are unbelievably difficult to ditch. You have to want to do this. I've seen so many people hanging on to their old habits. To become a better singer, you have to make a decision to change. I'll show you a quick solution to realigning your vocal placement.

Go back to the voice you speak in. That's the one area you could never go wrong. I've never heard anybody run into any of the above problems when they speak. So let's get back to basics. Speak. Speak the line you want to sing, first. And then try singing that line in that same voice. If you've managed to

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wing it correctly thus far, your next step is to take it up a few octaves whilst ensuring that your placement, as in the way you're well placed when you speak (no strain no pan), is right. If you do this correctly, you'll be surprised how farther up the scale you can go with the same good placement and form. If you lose your balance, go back and start again.

Time and time again I've corrected, quite easily, students who couldn't help but sing way above key, by simply asking them to stop and speak out the note instead. And then I would say... "Now, on that note, here comes the next key." And miraculously, this little maneuver manages to realign their vocals in key. Don't ask me why people shoot up to high octaves like that, it's so endemic, one has to make a concerted effort (even under supervision) to correct this. These are one of the many reasons one's placement would go wonky. That's when the strained vocals and mangled tones become commonplace with you and leave

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you wondering WHY you're not singing properly, comfortably, and enjoying the experience. Singing is meant to be fun and enjoyable. Not some arduous task that puts you in a position of wanting medical attention. Singing properly can't be that difficult to achieve when you go back to basics. So in future, whenever you're stuck, please return to this article for guidance.

To find more handy singing articles, visit my blog at joettmusic.com and run a search for *Letters from a Vocal Coach* or *Singing Lessons*.

How to Hum Your Way to Better Projection

It really pains me to see how people struggle with projection. If you sense your voice is weak or that it has no power behind it when you sing certain notes, you'll need to take a quick step back to analyze how you sound. Take a good hard look at yourself in the mirror if you can while you're at it. I'm going to point out the most common reasons why good projection

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eludes a lot of people, and how to quickly fix the problem.

I don't know if you're aware of this, but when you speak your voice is at its most powerful. Why then do you struggle to project the same power when you sing? The reason is very simple. You're not using your speaking voice to sing. And I'll warn you right here. This is the hardest bad habit to kick. And here's another reason why you're experiencing the undesirably low levels of projection with your voice. You're lacking thrust. Yes, if you don't push it isn't going to happen. So how then do you fix this singing problem and break the cycle of bad habits that have plagued your advancement as a singer? Here's what I'll recommend you do.

What I like about humming is that, if you do it correctly, it helps focus the voice so that the voice projects through the mouth area. Now to be sure that it really is projecting, you'll want to hear a powerful voice wanting to leap out of your closed mouth

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and furthermore, you should feel a buzzing sensation around the lips—and a tingly feeling at the front of your face. If your voice is weak and you experience none of the above, then this is what's hindering your projection when you sing. How to fix this? Practice humming so that you experience all of the above when you do. Pick any old song and hum that song using, at first, your speech level and work your way up the scales as you hum. The irony is that, if you can't project your voice on speech level when you sing, you'll have a lot of trouble projecting a voice that's not only fuller, but one that's got timber in its vocal.

In Summary: voice projection is one of the most common problems untrained singers tend to experience. This little problem could hold you back from achieving your dreams of becoming a better singer. The solution is simple. Hum your way to better projection. Humming is by far one of the quickest ways to focus the voice so that you are projecting it properly and more effectively when you

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sing. Who wants to listen to a meek, thin, powerless voice that lacks conviction? I know you don't. So why would you allow this simple-to-fix problem hold you back? Hum in your speaking voice and work your way up the scale, and you'll be projecting your voice like a pro when you sing in absolutely no time at all. It's definitely one of the easiest ways to correct this common singing problem.

Are You Singing In One Straight Line?

Singing in one straight line is very typical of the untrained voice. To sound interesting when you sing, you'll want to be able to work your voice around as many highs and lows within a note or a group of notes. Did that sound a bit like Chinese? I'll explain. When a new student walks into my studio for an assessment, the first thing I do is ask them to sing so I could hear what they sound like and what I'm going to be working with. Believe it or not, the majority of them will

jump to a high octave, thereby limiting their range and connecting notes rather awkwardly. It doesn't have to be that way. This is a problem even YOU can fix when you know how and especially, when you're aware of what's holding you back and causing your limited range. This article will offer tips on how to easily broaden your singing range in a very easy-to-remember formula.

Pick a word like Malaika from the song Malaika, for example. And try speaking the word. All is OK? Are you sounding normal like you would when you talk to someone? OK, now switch on the record button on your phone (assuming you have a voice recorder on your mobile) and sing the word Malaika using your speech level, first. Stop and play that back and ask yourself: are you singing on speech level or did you shoot up to a higher octave all of a sudden? Chances are you jumped several octaves to sing Malaika and if that is so, endeavor to work your way down to speech level. Do this

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exercise again, recording and playing back until you've got it right.

Going back to the point in this article: are you singing in one straight line? Well, if you don't use your entire range from speech level upward, you are limiting your range. Hence, singing in one straight line is inevitable because you basically have no room to maneuver. So the next time your vocal range is maxing out prematurely, take a look at where you're singing from. If you're too high at your lowest end of the scale, take it down a few octaves to where it's comfortable for you (as you would in speech) and then work your way upward. It really is that simple!

Yes, you're going to have to train your voice using the scales in order to train your voice and your ear, but above all pay particular attention to navigating the lower notes as this is the problem area that needs addressing should you fall in the category of the above (shooting off to high notes on a

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low key). Trust me, it takes a while to break away from *this* bad habit, but if you want to have a better vocal when you sing; to be in better control; and to widen your range, you will have to make a concerted effort to learn to sing with your speaking voice, first.

How to Improve Your Breathing Technique

I've reviewed quite a few learn-to-sing CDs and one thing a lot of them seem to have in common is the lack of in-depth information on breathing technique.

There's so much detail about breathing properly in order to sing properly that I feel is key to developing a great singing voice. I want to address this element of singing – beginning with this article. As a vocal coach I always tell my students, if you open your mouth to suck in that breath gradually as you drop the jaw, you will sing that way—correctly. It's about developing a new habit and dispensing with the old. There is a direct connection between opening your

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mouth to sing and opening your mouth to breathe. Get the breathing bit right, and you'll be singing like a pro in no time. This article will explore the pros and cons of breathing technique to help you not only sing better, but also sound a heck of a lot better than you ever did. It's all in the breathing.

Try stifling a yawn right now—genuinely, whilst looking at yourself in the mirror. Notice the way your jaw drops. Now that's how you're meant to breathe when you sing. In through the mouth as you gradually drop the jaw. If you could create a breathing exercise where you breathe in through the mouth, as above, to the count of eight beats (put a piece of music on); hold your breath for eight beats; and then slowly exhale with a hiss (controlled) to the count of sixteen beats, and you're half way there. But do it properly, using the yawning example above.

As a vocal coach I always tell my students, the way you breathe is the way you're going

Letters from a Vocal Coach JoettMusic.com

to sing. If you breathe incorrectly, you will sing incorrectly. Here's a very simple example: With your teeth separated just two inches apart, try holding a note with the vowel "A" for several seconds. Now take a look at your mouth in the mirror. As you sing AAAAA start to drop the jaw gradually whilst maintaining the same amount of thrust and see how that alters your voice. You will notice that you begin to scale upward without really doing much at all. It is effortless. So here's the crux. When you learn to sing with the jaw-drop pattern as illustrated above, you will also be inadvertently learning to go up the scale by simply dropping the jaw—to create more space down the throat—with the vowels A and E—or with words that sound like that.

Here's a good example. Listen to the first verse of the song "Touch Me In The Morning" by Diana Ross. Note the second line "Then just walk away." Now try singing

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that line and when you sing the word AWAY drop the jaw gradually in the second 'A' and slowly close the mouth to fade the note. It would sound like an extended W-A-A-A-Y. This action produces a very refined articulation of the vowel. Dropping the jaw at the right time and at the right pace will produce a better-sounding vocal. Try working with the entire verse again, this time focusing on the breath intake spots before the note. Make sure you drop the jaw to breathe each time there's a gap that allows you to. And remember this. The pattern with which you open your mouth to breathe is the exact same pattern with which you should open your mouth to sing and articulate the vowel. The two work in synergy.

Speech Therapy: The Key to Finding Your True Singing Voice!

How you speak could very easily prevent you from harnessing your full potential when you sing. Often referred to as your chest voice, your speaking voice, in singing, is in your lower register. The trouble is, if your voice when you speak, lacks clarity, power, balance, consistency and resonance, chances are you will likely fall short of the basic qualities needed to becoming a better singer. Singing is defined as sustained speech over a broad range of connected notes using vibrato, dynamics and emotive interpretation. 'Connective' being the operative word -- and the reason why this article can help you understand better, the reasons why speech level singing can tremendously improve the quality of your voice.

As a vocal coach, I have seen countless people walk into my studio and make the

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same mistake over and over again -- they start to sing on a high octave and completely ignore their true voice -- the lower register. In some cases this tendency is so endemic it takes many lessons to help them kick the habit. When you ONLY sing at the top of your range, where else can you go? Doing this seriously limits your range. I always point this out to my students: make sure you use your lower register -- it helps keep you grounded, not to mention, it helps you expand your range effortlessly.

I'll give you a very useful tip. Get some old records from yesteryear and have a listen to those. Listen to Frank Sinatra (Strangers in the Night), Shirley Bassey (Goldfinger), Julie London (Cry Me a River), Tom Jones (Yesterday), Nat King Cole (Unforgettable), Andy Williams/Nancy Sinatra/Barbara Streisand (Shadow of Your Smile) and you will see that they all have one thing in common. They use their lower register -- a lot. What I like about old songs is they were very well composed... and made to sound

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simple and easy to sing. Well, because I use a lot of these songs in my jam sessions with the students I vocal coach, they will all attest to the fact that these songs are far from easy to sing...even though they may sound so, they're quite the contrary. All the more reason, I say, to practice with these enormous classics. If I'm honest, when I was a kid, THIS is how I learned to sing.

Try speaking the following well-chosen sentences into a tape recorder and LISTEN to your voice very carefully. If you don't like what you hear, chances are you're not speaking in your true voice. So: work on CHANGING the way you speak by using your lower register to speak (as low as you can get); and then try to sing in that same (lower) register, and work your way up the scale. Use that (lower register) as your base voice (your foundation). You'll be amazed what a huge difference it can make to your singing voice. So, speak the following words, and then try singing them.

Good morning Andy.

How's your leg?

When are you coming back?

Oh, that's really wonderful.

In summary: An amateur singer, in most cases (watch and observe), will use ONLY their upper register (or thereabouts) when they sing, limiting their range and the quality of their voice with this one endemic singing faux pas. Combine your lower and upper registers to deliver a well balanced vocal range. Turn to old records for inspiration. It worked for me, I'm sure it'll work for you. Listen to Frank Sinatra, Shirley Bassey, Julie London, Nat King Cole, Tom Jones, Andy Williams and you will see that they all have something in common. They all use their lower register and work their way up the scale. The next time you find yourself singing at the top of your range from start to finish, stop and go back

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to basics. Work your way into a song from the ground up. You'll only discover your true voice when you use your lower register.

How to Memorize 13 Songs in 8 Days

When I received an invitation to perform at a Beaujolais event celebrating French wine, I decided on a jazz repertoire. But wait a minute. I had to memorize enough songs to give a one-hour concert. Daunting? Indeed, and I only had a few weeks to rehearse. But I knew I could do it. And so I set about selecting all the jazz classics by all the greats I've always wanted to perform (but hadn't)...Frank Sinatra, Andy Williams, Shirley Bassey, Nat King Cole, Luther Vandross, George Benson, Julie London, Dionne Warwick to name but a few. If you've struggled with memorizing songs – whatever your circumstances –this article will show you how it is possible to memorize thirteen songs in eight days. I did it. And so can you.

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I run a vocal coaching business, which meant for most of the day, I am teaching. The only solution to this problem was to close down my studio for a week so that I was able to rehearse all day long from Sunday to Sunday without interruption. Eight days in rehearsal! I started at around 11am and didn't stop till midnight. Well, I took the occasional breaks AND a nap in the afternoons to recharge my batteries, but other than that I just kept going. Now let me show you how to do this (my way).

Most importantly, read the lyrics as you sing along to the original songs. Don't attempt to commit ANYTHING to memory from the outset. READ everything. Rehearse only a couple of songs a day. Don't overload yourself with too many songs. On subsequent days, ALWAYS move on to the next batch of songs. Don't look back. When the eight days are up, take a rest. I reopened my studio for another week, during which I didn't touch ANY of the songs. And then I

closed down my studio AGAIN for eleven days in the run up to the concert date.

Remember, I had already memorized the songs (pretty much) during the first eight days. What I was doing now – in phase two – was to make sure I didn't have to think. It had to all fall in place naturally. This is the time when I started to work with the backing tracks to all the songs I had been rehearsing. I sang along to the original songs and immediately stepped into the backing track—I was able to do this by sequentially recording the tracks on a CDR labeled “rehearsals”. In addition, I sang the songs ‘a cappella’ – without the music—and without the lyric sheet in front of me. This helps you memorize the song in its proper order and structure—further committing it to memory as it should sound. Memorizing songs can be hard work, especially when you tend to forget the next line. Does that happen to you? Well, here's a clever way around that. I use a system called queuing. This is where I queue the next line (in my mind) before the

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time comes to sing it. It helps you stay focused. And once you've done it enough times, it comes naturally. Queue every line before you hit it. Play the songs you're struggling with whilst you sleep at night. Have it play in the background, on low volume. While your mind is resting in the alpha and delta levels, your subconscious mind soaks up all the lyrics in their exact order. You will be amazed how much easier it becomes to sing your song the next day without referring to the lyric sheet.

In Summary: Memorizing a large batch of songs – especially – may seem next to impossible, but with a good system in place it is very much achievable. You'll want to stop everything you're doing to focus. I closed down my studio and stopped working altogether. There was no other way for me. I don't know what YOUR circumstances are, but please do bear this in mind. You will need TIME to focus...with minimal interruption. Read the lyrics as you sing along to the original songs. Repetition

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makes perfect. Play the songs you're struggling with overnight whilst you sleep; remember to rest at some point during the day; and after several days of rehearsal, take a few days off to allow the brain to decipher all of this information you've been feeding it. The brain will remember if you give it time. Never push or force yourself to remember. Just feed the brain, and let it take care of the rest. That's how I memorized thirteen songs in eight days.

How to Break Away from Bad Habits

Believe it or not, the hardest thing to do is to break away from bad habits. Only those who succeed in doing this will become better singers. I've had calls from musicians (voice trained by me) complaining their vocal performance on stage had gone downhill and that they want to come back for more lessons. When I dig deep, it quickly becomes apparent that they've gone back to their old ways; I see my OWN student competing in a reality TV singing competition and doing NOTHING I taught them to do. It's like they

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never went for vocal training at all. The whole shebang: bad pitching, yelling and screaming their way around a song--I mean the whole flaming caboodle LIVE on TV. Unbelievable! I've seen my own students fall apart in the recording studio. Everything they've learned goes suddenly out the window. They even forget to BREATHE before a note. How bad habits die hard, hey? This article will investigate the perils of regressing into your old singing habits and how to break the cycle so as to not only embrace and adapt to a new system, but also--and most importantly--to blend and blossom with your new skill in order to grow as a singer.

I can go on about this all day. Those bad old singing habits are so endemic out there—seemingly, they just won't go away. I want to help aspiring singers put an end to this vicious cycle of bad breathing, bad pitching, strained vocals and everything in between. These problems CAN be fixed. The number one culprit in this equation is HABIT. It almost always comes back to haunt you. So what then are the most common singing stumbling blocks and what are the proven ways to steer clear of them.

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NOT breathing before a note is probably—in my estimation, and judging from students I have observed over the years, one of *the* most persistent problems. How to fix this? Pick a simple verse from a song you like. Look for two breathing spots--one at the beginning of a note, and one in the middle. Let's say your line looks like this: [breathe] "The shadow of your smile [breathe] when you are gone"... Your breath intake being at the very beginning and between the words Smile and When. Now your task is to practice singing just that one line over and over again whilst breathing in with the drop of the jaw at that very same spots in precisely the same way every time--wherever and whenever you feel like practicing.

NOT opening your mouth enough... which I sometimes jokingly refer to as singing with your mouth shut, is another problem that tends to work its way back into your life as a singer to cause all the problems that go with it. How to fix it? Sing a song you like, but look in the mirror to ensure that you ARE opening your mouth as you should. Practice in front of a mirror for this one. It's the only way to break the cycle.

NOT projecting your voice as you should is another menace a singer should be particularly weary of. It's so dead easy to sound muted again. How to fix it? Using your fuller voice, say VAAAAGH and look in the mirror to see your mouth drop to its full extent while you're at it. And listen very carefully to the way your voice projects better. Once you've got your projection technique reigned back in, go straight to your song and use that same well-projected voice when you sing. So the next time bad old singing habits encroach upon your vocal space, you'll know what to do to break free!

Are You Creating Enough Space On Your High Notes?

A typical singing mistake is to sing a high note with a half open mouth. It won't get you there. All you're going to achieve is a note that sounds not-quite-there yet, *if* you're lucky. Worst case scenario, you'll sound just plain awful and nasal. I always tell my students, the higher the note the wider the space. And it's all in the vowels. Whatever word you

sing that includes an A (AAAA) or E (EEEEH) sounding vowel, allows for spreading the mouth to articulate and to scale the note in any direction. Use these little opportunities when you sing. In this short article, I'll show you a very simple example to help you create space for your high notes.

Let's take a song like "I Shot the Sherriff" by Bob Marley. As the famous line goes..."I shot the Sherriff, but I didn't shoot the deputy", your highest octave is at the very beginning of that note with the word "I". Your mouth therefore, would need to be open at its widest (but without locking the jaw) on the word "I" (AAAAAI).

If you go through *any* song, try to look at the highs and lows to ascertain how much space you may need to project and scale the note correctly, taking into account the above example. Another helpful pointer I'd like to give you here is: get to know your own anatomy! Get to know how much space

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between the teeth produces what sound, for example. It really helps to get to know your acoustic factory a bit more. So experiment with a few ideas and see what discoveries you make. You'll be glad you did. I'll give you a couple of examples.

Open your mouth to take a deep breath and when your mouth is at its widest, immediately hit an extended long note with AAAAAAA; and then begin to slide your mouth shut very gradually. Listen to yourself very carefully. You'll notice that as you continue to close down the gap your tone and pitch begin to change. Try the same exercise again in the next key up and keep moving up key by key. All the while, continue to listen to your voice. Get to know your voice. Get to discover your voice. The more you do this, the more knowledgeable you become about what sounds your voice, in synch with your mouth, can produce. In a separate article, I will show you how to capitalize on your acoustic factory.

Creating space gives you more leverage. So instead of your tone going nasal for lack of space—yes, that’s one of the reasons that bring about the nasal tone—you’ll scale the high notes with greater ease and with good placement. So whenever you’re sensing difficulty in hitting the high notes, take a look in the mirror as you sing to make sure that the space between the teeth is wide enough to hit that note. Don’t leave this to chance. Calculate everything you do to ensure you’re applying this very important technique.

How to Smoothen Out Corrosive Vocals

This is a typical one. Insufficient breath and bad placement cause the corroded vocals you may be experiencing, when you sing. I will elaborate on this. If you sense that your vocal chords actually hurt when you sing, and that your tone is strained and somewhat displaced, then you certainly ARE corroding your vocals when you sing. I think the first

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thing you need to ask yourself is *why* is it that when you speak everything seems normal, yet it is quite the contrary when you sing? Does it make any bit of sense to you that when you speak you're alright and when you sing – suddenly, your vocals are all stressed out and worse yet, you're hurting? This short article will offer tips on how to go back to basics, relax; how to stop panicking and stressing out your vocal chords; and how to get on with it--smoothly.

Insufficient breath flowing through your vocal chords as you sing is the number one stumbling block. You *must* have enough breath flowing through that area to coat the chords when you sing. How to fix the problem? Start by opening your mouth wide and just breathe out HAAAA. Make sure you're not emitting any sound when you do this. Only release the breath. Now, once you've got the hang of this, repeat this exercise whilst adding just a bit of voice to it. Gradually increase your voice whilst ensuring that it stays SMOOTH—in that

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you're not feeling any pain or corrosion in that area. Once you've struck the ideal balance, use that same balance when you sing ANY song. You'll not only sound great, you'll feel a lot better and more in control of what you're doing.

How to Quickly Eliminate Breathy Tones

This is another common one. Vocals that have way too much breath inadvertently have you relinquishing your breath control.

It's alright when it's deliberate...like Donna Summer did in Love to Love You Baby. But aside from that, don't do it! I'm going to show you how to gain control over your breath expenditure in just a couple of very simple steps.

Now let's take a closer look at the vowels AOIEU. The sharpest vowels for clear cut clarity and breath-filtering projection are OIU as by and large you would have limited spacing between the teeth. Therefore, if you

want to practice eliminate the breathiness in your tone, experiment with singing a straight bar IIIII for example, or OOOOO and UUUUU. Work with your first as well as your second register i.e. the range within your speaking voice and that of your head voice area in your upper register. Once you're able to refine your voice to sound clean and clear without the breathy overtones, try connecting immediately to the vowels AAAA and EEEE whilst maintaining that same clean and clear vocal. If it works, as I'm sure when you do it correctly it will, you'll have found the key to eliminating the unsavory breathy tones.

Planning for Long Notes: An Effective Technique to Gain Vocal Control

How long is your note? Well you'll be amazed to learn that the shorter your note the more likely you are to take insufficient

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breath; and the more likely you are to get really lazy; and if you bundle all of the above to describe your performance? Well, mediocre is as good as it gets! When you're walking down the road to a corner shop just a few yards away, you'll take your time about it. But if you had to walk a mile, you're likely to put in a bit more effort. The same goes with singing, well, that's if you're a lazy singer and can't be bothered to hold a note properly. In this short article, I'm going to show you how THINKING long-distance (even if you're only singing a couple of words) is the best way ever to correct your projection.

To begin with, sing a three-word-note...let's say you sang the words "we are the world" from the Michael Jackson-penned classic. Listen very carefully to how you sound. Did you run out of breath at the word "world"? Well, if you did, then that illustrates my point. You only had 3 words to sing and so you simply couldn't be bothered to take enough breath and what suffered was your

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vocal quality in that rendition. Simple! It couldn't have sounded great and I wouldn't imagine anyone would want to listen to that. SO: how do you fix this? Take in lots of breath and make sure that by the word "world" you haven't run out of breath so that even if you were to extend the word "world" for a while longer, you could.

This happens a lot with students attending private lessons in my studio. It's so typical. So if you're in that boat, trust me, you are not alone. The solution is as stipulated above. If you tricked your brain into thinking this-is-not-the-end-of-the-note, you'll likely use a lot more control to hold that note. Your brain is very powerful. It can prevent you from adapting to new ways of doing things. Singing is the one place where the brain is to blame for your lack of success. This is another topic altogether, but the facts are clear as day, that if you allow your brain to pull you back, it will. What you need to learn to do is to trick your brain into conforming.

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In summary: How would you describe your voice? Would anybody actually enjoy listening to you sing? A pertinent question, I'd say. You really need to take a closer look at yourself, first. If you don't like what you sound like, don't expect anyone else to. It's not rocket science. It's plain and simple fact. Now let's take a closer look at WHY you don't sound great. One of the most recurrent performances by my students in my studio EVEN after voice training...is the hollow, bland, boring, displaced, uninteresting, sing-like-you-used-to-before-training type of vocal. The question is? Who is to blame for this lack of adapting-to-change? Well, I'll tell you this for nothing. It's your brain. Yes, your brain doesn't want to move on. If you've had the training, the voice will have moved on, but your brain may still want to hang on to the past. For *some* slow learners that come to my studio for voice lessons, this happens all the time. So don't be surprised at this shocking statement. In my observation, in such cases, my students will be doing the scales perfectly at this point,

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but the minute you take them out of that environment and ask them to sing a song: typically, it's like they never went through voice training. Ever! That's when tricking the brain by planning for long notes is one of the most effective ways to gain vocal control and to rectify your situation. It works every time and only takes a minute if you concentrate. So the next time you figure you're sounding crap, trick your brain into thinking long-distance.

Singing Lessons: Focus On Improving What You Already Have

This article is going to be a pretty twisted article in that, although it is intended to motivate you, it may well do quite the opposite. When you're potentially a good singer, with training, you could improve on that and the sky truly is the limit. However, when your singing ability is average--like I've seen so many in my line of work--you can only develop and improve your voice from that point on, but mind you,

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you will have limitations. The trick is to accept it and to work with what you've got within the boundaries of your ability.

Nothing more, nothing less! Don't try to be what you can't be. But instead, design your musical works to suit your style and ability. Don't even attempt to go beyond that. It'll only lead to anger, disenchantment and frustration. There's nothing wrong with pushing the envelope but KNOW your limitations.

I've watched aspiring singers pop into my studio for singing lessons over the years, and I've seen firsthand how working with what you've got is the best approach. Not everybody can be the best in the world. There's no such thing. Ever! But you can do it your own unique way, and do it properly, AND get away with it. Now with that in mind, I'm going to suggest a few simple tricks that can, if you exercise a lot of patience and perseverance, improve your voice beyond what you know to be the limit of your ability. Try listening to good music!

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Seriously, this may sound a little patronizing but it CAN do wonders for your voice. Allow good music with great vocals to surround your home. Put the music on very low volume when you go to bed and let that whisk you into the depths of sleep. Your subconscious mind will pick up the music while you sleep, and with time, you may become the singer you want to be by simply listening to great music in your sleep. And if you combine this with a proper vocal training program by day, you will tremendously improve your singing voice. Of that I am certain.

I'll tell you an interesting story. I've got a young student whom, when I first heard him sing I thought, for crying out loud this dude is good! He sounded amazing. Yes, he needed training, and he knew that he did, but then he already had a natural talent. When I dug deep into his past, I discovered that his dad had been a DJ in the 1980s and that when the kid was growing up, not only did his dad play music

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from the 80s, 70s and 60s around the house, the boy went to bed with the music playing in his bedroom throughout the night on low volume. Henceforth, the music and singing style became him. That was the foundation that this lad had had from a very early age. The bottom line is, if you listen to good music (AND you have a bit of talent), you will become it. You see, the truth is, you are the instrument! If you listen to the pros, you too can become LIKE the pros. The way I see it, we humans were on this planet first, and then we invented the musical instruments.

How to Spot the Perfect Record Producer for YOU

On the surface, my very first record producer back in the mid nineties seemed like the perfect match for me, and I actually travelled, especially, to another city AND country to work with him. We'd previously agreed on a couple of hundred dollars to record four tracks but by the time we'd begun laying down the first track,

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immediately after the first session, he hiked his fee to \$5,000. What brought on the price hike? Well, I arrived by plane and booked myself into a five star hotel. Yes, he'd suddenly realized I wasn't poor.

Unscrupulous he was, yes, and you won't believe what I did next. I went to the local Diners Club Rep and withdrew the money. I was so desperate to do this I couldn't see nor think straight. And I'm sure some of you reading this article can relate to this. Ever felt like you wanted something SO bad you didn't give a damn what it cost? Well, that's what it felt like for me at the time.

Regrettably, I was so gullible I made the wrong move. I should've packed my bags and flown home. Let this be your red flag number one. If you ever run into this, don't ignore it. Take a moment to think.

Reevaluate your predicament before you make any rash decisions. Sleep over it if you have to. You'll probably have a clearer head the next morning.

OK, so money all paid up and project underway full throttle when I discover his attitude in the studio is pretty much dictatorial. He pushes too hard and it's rather his way or no way and he's tactless. Not a very nice person to work with. I wasn't impressed. That's your red flag number two right there. If you can, book a trial session and agree on a small fee just to get to know your producer before you commission them. This would save you the hassle of having to work with someone you're not even comfortable with. Be picky about who you work with. You want a good product and you want to enjoy the experience. There's just as much fun in recording. It can be a magical experience when you work with people you have a good rapport and chemistry with.

And then I met multimillion selling record producer Tambi Fernando in London, who'd had numerous number one hits in the UK and had worked with top recording artists. We basically hit it off from

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the get-go. Excellent rapport, great chemistry and an absolute joy to work with he was. And we made good music. Not only did he have an incredible knack for drawing the best out of me, he made me—through my own effort—sound incredible. He was good at what he did. He brought the best out of an artist. Period! And when it comes to quality, there could be absolutely no comparison to my first producer. Never you mind the cost...it cost me one thousand pounds per track. Cheaper than the rip-off merchant I encountered in Mombasa. Your red flag number three? Indeed. Be on the lookout for that chemistry. That special connection between artist and producer will unlock your hidden talent and help you achieve the recording success you've always wanted.

And I can go on. There was the utterly disinterested producer I encountered in Manchester, UK. I was recording a track for an American music executive who'd hired an English producer to record my

vocals. The producer had absolutely nothing in him. He was useless and the atmosphere in the studio was utterly inhospitable. It resulted in the project being cancelled after less than fifteen minutes of me being in the studio. In fact, we recorded nothing. So again, if you don't like the atmosphere and the producer you're working with isn't one bit interested, forget it! Don't waste your time. Tomorrow is another day. What more can I say?

How to Adapt the Booster Program to Speech Level Singing Scales

For those of you who've purchased my Learn to Sing with Joett vocal training Booster Program CD, you will be familiar with the vowels Arpeggio exercises on track 6; Octave exercises on track 7; Chromatic Scale exercises on track 8; and Descending Scales on track 9. Now, to adapt Speech Level Singing exercises to the same scales, simply replace the vowels with a hum (Mmm). Yes, you heard that right! With

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your mouth closed and only breathing in BEFORE each note, humming induces the head voice and helps connect your chest voice to your head voice in a seamless link through your bridges or blend area. Give this a try, you'll love it AND you will get RESULTS. There are so many different exercises you can adapt to my Learn to Sing CD. I plan to continue publishing these ideas right here on my blog. So stay tuned!

How Your Voice Works Best: The Natural Technique of Speech-Level Singing

Most singers use excessive muscular effort when they sing. Muscles the body normally uses to chew and swallow food, as well as open the throat wider when it needs to get oxygen into the lungs quickly, are used to manipulate the larynx—forcing it up or down. This is done to accomplish a difficult pitch, increase intensity, or "improve" the quality of one's tone. We call these muscles the outer muscles, because they are located outside the larynx.

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Whenever you use your outer muscles to control your voice in any way, however, you prevent the free vibration of your vocal cords inside your larynx, and alter the relationship (and the over-all condition) of the resonance spaces above your larynx. The result is a labored and unbalanced sound.

Only when your larynx is in a relaxed, stable position can your vocal cords adjust easily with your breath flow, to create the pitch and intensity of your initial tone. And, only when your larynx is in a relaxed, stable position will your final tone contain a balance of top, middle, and bottom harmonic qualities—like a good stereo system—so you never sound "muddy" on low notes or "splatty" on high ones.

Yet, there's another important reason why your larynx must be kept free of outer-muscle interference. Many of these muscles are involved in the production of speech sounds, and their interference in the tone-making process inevitably disrupts the

word-making process as well. It's hard to form vowels and make consonants when the muscles controlling the movement of your tongue and jaw, for instance, are also trying to control your tone. Hence, voice production using the muscles outside your larynx is a hopeless battle in which both your tone and your words become the casualties.

Your speech: Generally, when you speak in a quiet, comfortable manner, your outer level— muscles do not interfere with the functioning of your larynx. That's because a foundation for tone is not your primary concern—communication is. Therefore, your larynx is allowed to rest in a relatively stable position, or what we call a speech-level position. This is the ideal vocal condition or posture with which to sing.

If you can learn to initiate and maintain your tone with this comfortable speech-level posture when you sing, you can sing with the same easily produced voice you use—or

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should be using— when you speak. Nothing will feel any different in your throat or mouth. Both your tone and words will feel natural and sound natural.

But be careful! Speech-level singing doesn't mean "sing like you speak!"

Learn to Sing with Complete Artistic Freedom

Whence training one of my pupils the other day, I came across this little stumbling block that was evidently impeding my pupil's progress as a singer: Holding back. Not letting it out. Not allowing oneself to let go of your old ghosts to find your musical freedom. Your TRUE artistic freedom! This is a pretty common scenario. I come across this all too often.

When you've done the training, to the letter, and by this I mean singing in key, working your way up and down the scales with a clear, powerful, connected tone and with

good control, you SHOULD be able to do exactly *that* when you sing ANY song. Training prepares the voice. It prepares YOU. It helps you FIND your true voice. So why then should you not use that to YOUR advantage? I know... it's easy to regress into your old ways, but if you really want to improve your singing voice, allow yourself to adapt to change. Stop holding on to the past! USE your voice. Don't hold back. Let it out! It really is that simple.

What you need to understand is that if your voice has *been* there in training, it can do it again if you let it. So instead of THINKING too much, WORRYING too much and such like—let the voice do the job it is meant to do. If it HAS been there before in training, YOUR voice can do it again when you sing a song. Try to understand WHY you train. And try to APPLY your training. Best way to go about it, is to just let it happen. Throw away your inhibitions and Sing with Complete Artistic Freedom! It's a lot easier than you think.

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Jifunze Kuimba na Joett

Mafunzo ya kuimba ni kitu muhimu sana katika kujiendeleza kama muimbaji, kwasababu huraisisha uimbaji wako kwa kuwezesha sauti yako kuendana na funguo za kinanda katika levo zote. Maelezo yafuatayo yanaeleza kwa ufupi, baadhi ya hayo ambayo nimeyagusia hapo juu kwa lugha ya Kiingereza.

Jinsi ya Kutumia CD Yakujifundishia

Anza kwa kusikilaza *introduction*. Sikiliza ushauri wangu kuhusu *posture*, yaani jinsi ya kukaa au kusimama wima na mgongo

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ulionyooka wakati wakuimba. Alafu endelea kufanya mazoezi ya pumzi kwenye traki namba tatu. Fuata huu mtiriko kila mara unapoanza mazoezi, kwasababu ni njia nzuri ya kukumbushia. Program hii inatembea lisaa lizima. Tafadhali hakikisha unafanya mazoezi lisaa limoja tu kwa siku. Usichoshe sauti yako. Pamoja na program hii kuna singo yangu *I Could Never Live (Without Your Love)*. Sikiliza, fanyia mazoezi, alafu tumia trak zenye vyombo vitupu kuimbia.

Tuanze kwa maelakezo zaidi juu ya shahiri na irabu (vowels) kwenye CD hii yakufundishia. Kuna aina mbili za mtiririko wa irabu kama ifuatavyo: AOIEU na AEIOU. Kwenye mazoezi ya octaves, unaweza kubadili mtiririko wa AEIOU ukawa AOIEU. Ya pili (AOIEU) ni rahisi zaidi kuimba pale octave inpoangukia kwenye irabu O. Alafu utakapo kuwa mzoefu kidogo unaweza kujaribu mtiririko wa AEIO kama ilivyo kwenye CD, ila hakikisha unafungua mdomo nusu kwenye

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irabu A alafu unauteremsha ghafla kidogo tu kuipa sauti nafasi kwenye irabu E (yaani pale octave inapodondokea). Mazoezi ya mashairi yako kama ifuatavyo. Japo haya ni katika lugha ya kiingereza, haijalishi. Manake, hata kama haufahamu lugha, ukifatilia utaweza kuyatamka maneno—hatakama ingekua kwa lugha ya kifaransa au Lingala.

Pumzi

Hakikisha unapumua kila mara kabla ya kuanza mazoezi. Kumbuka, jinsi unavopumua ndivo jinsi utavoimba. Yaani, kutanua mdomo taratibu kupumua baadae utakurahisishia kupanua mdomo pale unapo imba wimbo wowote ule. Zingatia hilo.

Mazoezi na Vaaagh

Fuatilia muonogozo kutoka kwenye CD kwa umakini sana. Chukulia hili zoezi kwa umakini sana kwasababu husaidia

kuboresha sauti yako ya kuimba na
kuondoa sauti ya kuimbia puani. Hii ni
muhimu sana katika kukuendeleza wewe
kama muimbaji.

Vowels (Irabu)

A O I E U ... “I Could Never Live”

Arpeggios

Rose petals {fall} upon your feet

Octaves

I {could} never live

Chromatic Scales

I’m on my knees and I r-e-a-ll-y do want
your love → I am on my knees and I r-e-a-ll-
y do want your love

Descending Scales

I could never {live} without your love

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Articulation Exercise

Exercise 1: I could never live, I could never live, without your love

Exercise 2: I could never never live X 2 without your love

Exercise 3: I could never never never live X 2 without your love

KUPATA MAZOEZI YA ZIADA

Kuna mifano ya jinsi ya kufanya mazoezi haya vingine. Neneda kwenye blog langu alafu tafuta “speech level singing” ili kupata mifano ya mazoezi niliotengenezea video maalum. Nenda www.joettmusic.com

Pumzi hadimu ni sauti hafifu, kwenye upande wa kuimba. Hili ni tatizo linalowakabili watu wengi. Jinsi ya kuepukana na upungufu wa pumzi ni kujizoesha kupumua kabla ya kila mstari wa shairi. Yaani kabla ya kila kipande cha shairi. Hakuna wimbo ulioatungwa moja

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kwa moja bila hata sehemu ya kupumua...sidhani. Kwahiyo, kila pahala penye sehemu ya kupumua, tumia hiyo fursa kupumua. Kupumua ili kuimba ni tofauti na pumzi la kuzungumza.

Ili kua napumzi ya kutosha kuimba unahitaji kujaza pumzi kwa haraka zaidi. Jinsi yake ni kama nilivoelekeza kwenye zoezi la kupumua kwenye CD yangu Jifunze Kuimba na Joett. Tanua mdomo taratibu huku ukivuta pumzi kama unavyopiga miayo, na kujaza pumzi hilo kwenye maeneo ya tumbo lako. Zingatia hilo, na ufanye hivyo (kwa haraka) kila kabla ya note. Kwa mfano, ukiimba “*Malaika, Nakupenda malaika,*” unapumua kabla ya Malaika alafu unapumua tena kabla ya Nakupenda.

Panua mdomo kwenye maneno yenye muelekeo wa kusikika kama irabu (ama vowels) A na E. Kwa mfano, tanua mdomo ukiimba neno kama *malaika*. Kupanua mdomo

kunatanua koo vile vile, na hukuwezesha kupandisha levo ya sauti yako bila ya kupiga makelele. Mazoezi ya scales kupitia kinanda kama yanavopatikana kwenye CD yangu *Jifunze Kuimba na Joett*, yanasaidia kupangilia sauti yako, lakini pamoja na hivyo, ni muhimu sana kuzingatia swala la kupanua mdomo ili kuimba bila ya kizingiti. Nataka nikupe mfano mdogo hapa.

Sema AAAAA, lakini anza huku mdomo wako una nafasi ndogo, halafu taratibu anza kutanua mdomo. Utagundua kwamba, mdomo wako utakapo tanuka kabisa, sauti yako itakua inanguvu zaidi na imepanda levo bila ya kuongeza sauti ya ziada. Tendo lakupanua pekee huwezesha sauti kupanda.

Alafu jaribu kufanya hili zoezi tena, ila safari hii badala ya kusema AAAAA, imba AAAAA lakini anzia kwa kutanua mdomo wazi kabisa halafu anza kuufunga mdomo taratibu. Sikilizia jinsi sauti yako inavyo teremka kwenda chini yenyewe. Tumia kasi ile ile ya sauti. Usiongeze wala kupunguza.

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Je, umejifunza nini?

Kupanua mdomo husaidia sauti yako kwa namna nyingi, bila ya kupiga makele ili kupanda. Kwa mantik hiyo, ningependa kugusia swala la kupiga makele na athari zake. Ni tabia ambayo, kwa Tanzania, imeshamiri sana. Ni mbaya sana kwa sauti yako, kwasababu huharibu sauti vibaya sana. Kipengele kifuatacho kinatazama hili swala kwa undani zaidi.

Kwanini Kupiga Makele ni Mbaya kwa Sauti Yako

Katika kazi yangu ya kufundisha kuimba, nimekutana na waimbaji wengi hapa bongo ambao hapo awali, kabla ya kukutana na mimi, walikua wana desturi ya kujifunza kuimba kwa kupiga makelele. Nimepata ripoti ya

kua kuna baadhi ya kwaya ambazo
hushauri wanakwaya wao kupiga kelele
hadi siku ifuatayo wanakuta sauti
zimakauka. Nimepata ripoti kuhusiana na
vijana wa bongo flava wanavokwenda
kwenye ufukwe wa bahari kufanya mazoezi
ya kuimba kwa kupiga makelele. Sii makosa
yao. Kwani asiejue atafanya lolote lile
analoambiwa kwa kuamini kwamba hicho
kitendo kitamsaidia kua muimbaji mzuri
zaidi. Hivyo ndivo jinsi wanaadamu tulivo.

Kwa mantik hiyo basi, ningependa kutoa
ushauri wangu hapa, kwamba huo
mwenendo potovu husababisha uharibifu
wa sauti, na usipoangalia, unaweza
ukawacha kuimba kabisa kwasababu
kunakiwango cha uharibifu ambacho
hakiwezi kurekebisha. Kwa maana ukisha
fikia kiwango hicho, sahai habari za
kuimba. Hutakua na sauti tena.

Ni hivi: Sauti, ili kuendana na muziki wenye
mpangilio maalum kupitia kinanda, guitar
na kadhalika, inatakiwa kuweza kupanda

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na kushuka kirahisi na bila kelele za kuumiza koo. Na vilevile, hupaswa kua na melodi yakuvutia ambayo inaendana na muziki huo. Sasa basi, ili kuweza kufika katika levo hiyo inabidi ujifunze kuimba kufuatana na fungua (ama key) za muziki kupitia, kwanza kabisa, chombo asilia cha muziki kijulikanacho kama kinanda.

Kindanda kina panga sauti yako katika njia tofauti kupitia mazoezi maalum kwa ajili hiyo, kama vile arpeggios, octaves, chromatic scales, descending scales na kadhalika. Hiyo ndio misingi ya kuimba ambayo nimepangilia mazoezi kamili kwenye CD yangu *Jifunze Kuimba na Joett*.