

# **W o r s h i p M u s i c M i n i s t r y**

## **T R A I N I N G C O U R S E**

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### **Vocals**

#### *Vocal Technique*

- ◇ The human voice is arguably the most flexible and beautiful instrument in the world, and every human has one.
- ◇ However, just because we automatically have one, doesn't mean we automatically know how to use it.
- ◇ Some people seem to be naturally better at using their voice, but we can all improve with some understanding and practice.

#### **Breathing**

- ◇ Breath support is the engine and power source for singing
- ◇ Breathe deeply
  - ◇ Keep your throat open and your soft palette raised so the air can just 'fall' into your body.
    - ◇ When you yawn, your soft palette is up and your throat is open.
    - ◇ Your breaths should be silent because of this openness in your throat.
    - ◇ Each time you take a breath it should help to relax your body.
  - ◇ Fill every available space with air.
  - ◇ Feel the air filling all the way down below your belt line
  - ◇ Feel the air filling into your sides and back.
- ◇ Breath timing
  - ◇ Generally, use one or two beats to take a complete breath before you start a phrase.
  - ◇ However, you can also take a 'catch breath' very quickly where there is almost no place to breath.
    - ◇ By allowing the air to quickly 'fall' into your body with an open throat you can get an almost complete breath very quickly.
- ◇ Use your diaphragm to control how fast you use the air.
  - ◇ Your diaphragm is a 'belt' of muscle that is around your lower abdomen.
  - ◇ Once the air has entered your body, 'set' the diaphragm so it is solid and not allowing the air to escape.
  - ◇ Don't control the air escaping with your throat; use your diaphragm.

#### **Relax**

- ◇ Tension is your worst enemy when singing.
- ◇ How to breath
  - ◇ When breathing, all the tension needed to control how quickly the air escapes should come from your diaphragm and not your neck or shoulders.
  - ◇ All the tension is down low where you breath and everything above that is relaxed.
  - ◇ Your shoulders should not move breathing.
  - ◇ Your belly should move out as the air comes in.
  - ◇ Your belly should move inward as the air goes out.
- ◇ Keep your head straight and aligned with your body.
  - ◇ Your head should not extend forward.
    - ◇ Your ears should be lined up over your shoulders.
  - ◇ Your head should not be tipped back with your chin pointed up in the air.

- ◇ Your chin should also not be tucked down toward your chest.
- ◇ Don't strain to reach high notes.
  - ◇ Lighten your sound to reach them.
  - ◇ Use even more breath support, but keep everything else relaxed.
  - ◇ Rather than trying to push the notes up, let them fly out with a very free tone.
- ◇ When you feel yourself getting a tight throat, swallow. It helps you relax.

### **Sit up/Stand up**

- ◇ Much of your ability to support your breaths comes from your lower body; not just your diaphragm.
- ◇ If you are sitting down:
  - ◇ Keep your feet on the ground
    - ◇ So your leg muscles can help support your body.
  - ◇ Keep your back off the chair back
    - ◇ So your back muscles can help support the breath.
- ◇ If you are standing up:
  - ◇ Keep your weight on the balls of your feet and not your heels.
    - ◇ This engages all your leg muscles to help support the body.
- ◇ Keep your shoulders rolled comfortably back, and not slouching forward.

### **Tone**

- ◇ A singer's tone comes from their vocal cords vibrating and that sound being amplified by various resonance chambers.
  - ◇ Like an acoustic guitar, you will not hear very much sound if it is just the string vibrating. You need the body of the guitar to amplify the sound of the string.
  - ◇ A singer's resonance chambers are:
    - ◇ The throat
    - ◇ The mouth
    - ◇ The nasal passages
      - ◇ Any place that feels stuffed up when you get a cold is a place that sound can vibrate.
  - ◇ We can choose where we will allow the sound to vibrate and thus effect the tone of that sound.
- ◇ In most situations you will want a balanced tone
  - ◇ Not too bright and not too dark.
- ◇ 'Bright' tone comes from focusing the sound in your nose predominately.
- ◇ 'Dark' tone comes from focusing the tone in your throat predominately.
- ◇ 'Airy' tone comes from allowing lots of air to escape as you sing.
  - ◇ The amount of air that is released is controlled by your diaphragm.
- ◇ In order to have a full, quality sound to your voice, you want to use many of your resonance chambers.
  - ◇ Think of sending the tone straight up and out of the top of your head.
    - ◇ This causes the sound to go to many of your larger sinus passages and helps keep your throat open.
  - ◇ This full, quality sound can then be made to sound more or less bright to suit any application.
- ◇ Let the sound come out!
  - ◇ It's common for a singer to try and control the sound of their voice too much.
  - ◇ The result sounds like (and feels like) the sound is 'stuck' in their throat or mouth.
  - ◇ Imagine that you are yelling at someone across a busy street to get their attention; "Hey!"..