

Michael Leeds

Re: ALL Music Classes

Dear Parents:

In the past I've found that the students who accomplish the most, are those who find the songs they'd like to work on as early as possible so that the weeks of class can be spent exploring vocal technique and song interpretation.

I have included a sample list of online sites you can explore with your child to help find the song/s they would like to sing. In addition, there are also sites for just sheet music as well as sites for just the lyrics.

Please have your child bring in a CD that contains preferably two different song choices. Each song should have a version with the original vocal and a version with just the music, as well as a printed out page with the lyrics. If it's possible to get the sheet music, that would be helpful.

Once again, the sooner your child brings in the material he/she would like to sing, the better.

Karaoke Sites

www.KaraokeWarehouse.com
www.Karaoke.com
www.Pocketsongs.com
www.StarKaraoke.com
www.MusicMinusOne.com
www.KaraokeUnlimited.com
www.AceKaraoke.com
www.Rhapsody.com
www.Itunes.com
www.prosing.com
www.buykaraoke.com
www.loudkaraoke.com

Sheet Music Sites

www.Sheetmusicplus.com
www.Freehandmusic.com
www.Stagepass.com
www.Musicnotes.com
www.halleonard.com

Lyric Sites

www.Lyricsondemand.com
www.Lyricsmania.com

WHO? WHAT? WHERE? WHEN? WHY? HOW?

Questions To Ask Yourself When Working On A Monologue, Scene, Side, Or Song

(Note: The * reflects those questions that ESPECIALLY APPLY TO SONG STUDY)

1. WHO? Who are you in this scene (or song)?
***Who are you talking (SINGING) to? [Personalization]**
Who are you talking about? (if anyone)

2. WHAT? ***What do you want in this scene (SONG)? [Objective/Goal]**
What do you want overall? [*Super Objective*]
What are the immediate obstacles/hurdles/challenges? [*Problem*]
***What are you feeling? [Emotional Condition]**
What is being (or has been) said about you?
***What happened right before this scene (SONG) started?**
[Moment Before/Trigger]

3. WHERE? Where are you? [*Environment*]
Where were you before the scene (or song) started? [*Back story*]

4. WHEN? When is this scene (or song) taking place? [*Time of day, etc.*]

5. WHY? Why are you speaking/singing? [*Motivation*]
What compels/impels you to talk/sing to this person?
(or, to put it another way..)
What would happen if you didn't talk/sing to this person now? [*Stakes*]

6. HOW? How do you get what you want? [*Intention – Active Verbs*]
What are you physically doing to get what you want? [*Action*]
How are you or the situation changed by the end of the scene (or song)?
[*Arc*]
How (if at all) does this scene/song relate to your own life?
[*Substitution & Sense Memory*]

BREATHING EXERCISE AND HELPFUL HINTS FOR SINGING

The basics for any singing class, no matter what style, will always be proper voice production. This starts with proper breathing.

Breath should always originate in the diaphragm (that is the area immediately behind and below the naval. In addition, the area under the rib cage stretching all the way to the back can be a huge reservoir of air.

Picture yourself wearing a tire around your middle. When you breathe that tire should fill with air.

BREATHING EXERCISE

Sit in a chair and bend over so that your chest is close to your knees.

Put your hands on your waist so that the thumbs reach toward your stomach.

Inhale through your nose.

Feel how the belly and sides of the waist expand.

THAT is breathing from your diaphragm and rib cage!

Now stay bent over, keep your hands on your waist, inhale through your nose and sing any note that's comfortable for you, counting aloud on that note until you run out of air.

At what number did you run out of air?

Try it again and see if you can last one number longer.

The object is to hold the note as long as you can, keeping the muscles of the diaphragm and rib cage expanded with air as long as you can.

Now sit up a little straighter and repeat the exercise

Now sit up completely straight and repeat the exercise

Now stand and repeat the exercise

Note that the straighter you are, the less automatic it is to breathe from your diaphragm. Instead you might start breathing from your chest. Don't!

The chest will automatically expand with air when you start by using the diaphragm.

But the diaphragm will never fill with air if you start by using your chest!

(You can also accomplish the same exercise lying flat on the floor, with hands on the stomach.)

HELPFUL HINTS

1. Place one finger under your jaw as you sing. If the skin starts to feel taut and/or tight, it means you're straining, singing from a tight throat and not from your diaphragm.
2. Smile – the face muscles help the correct placement of the note
3. Yawn! That wide relaxed feeling in the throat is how your throat wants to be when you sing.
4. As with anything else, much of singing is mental. A little trick for very high or low notes, is to be thinking the opposite (for example, if you're singing a very high note, visualize it as being very low – and visa versa).