

THE ULTIMATE RESOURCE FOR SINGERS

iSinging

ISSUE 1

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fashion for singers

**MIND BODY
& SOUL**
health advice & tips

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HEARING LOSS
it really happens!

PASSING IT ON
getting started as a singing
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getting ready to sing

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On the cover
Issue 1, March 2014
Katie Holmes
Photographed by
Matthew Joseph



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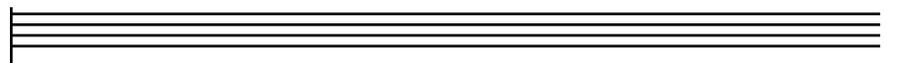
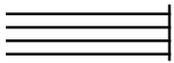
iSing FOUNDER & EDITORIAL DIRECTOR: LINE HILTON | EDITOR: AIDAN RUSH | GRAPHIC DESIGNER: LAURA SALESA | PHOTOGRAPHY: MATTHEW JOSEPH, ISTOCKPHOTO, CANSTOCKPHOTO, SHUTTERSTOCK | VIDEOS: LAWRENCE ESSEX, CHRIS JOHNSON, STEVE GILES, LINE HILTON | ILLUSTRATIONS: CARLA TRACY | CONTRIBUTORS: JOSHUA ALAMU, NERISSA CAMPBELL, ERIKA FOOTMAN, SARA GOLDSTEIN GALL, STEVE GILES, MICHAEL HARMAN, JONO HEALE, LINE HILTON, CHRIS JOHNSON, SOPHIA MOON, STEPHANIE MOORE, AIDAN RUSH, KATY SALT, OLIVER SUSSAT, GERALD WHITE

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A singer is born with his or her instrument and is stuck with it forever. This fact makes singing unlike any other form of music, and in my eyes, also makes it an equalizer of sorts that levels the playing field; there are fewer barriers to entry for those in pursuit of a singing career than there are for any instrumentalist who needs to spend time and money acquiring gear.

The effort you put in to training your voice and how far you take the art form is more under your control with singing than are those same factors for other musicians.

This notion is enticing. One need not look further than the proliferation of singing reality shows over the last decade and the singers that flock to them en masse for evidence of just how infectious and gripping this passion can be. It's played a major role in our lives, too, and is the driving force that inspired us to create iSing – the only digital publication exclusively dedicated to all things singing. It is our intention that the magazine will serve as a resource hub for the global network of amateur and professional singers alike, both providing valuable information about the trade and uniting singers around the world in their shared dream of making it, however that dream is defined.

In this first issue you'll find a wide range of topics and content formats – short lists on techniques and video interviews with singers to long feature articles on vocal health and vocal analysis of songs and performances. Every piece of content enclosed is excellent, though I feel a special few deserve to be highlighted: Chris Johnson and Steve Giles' (of The Naked Vocalist) article on best practices for warming up, The video interview with the Band of Voices about the roles and responsibilities of a backing vocalist, Oliver Sussat's question-

posing piece on the part geography plays in a singer's ultimate success, and nutritionist Stephanie Moore's article about ridding your body of mucus the natural way.

Our readers are our lifeblood, and we want to make sure we're developing content you're interested in reading. That said, if you have editorial ideas, are interested in contributing yourself or buying advertising space, please don't hesitate to get in touch with me at editor@isingmag.com.

Thank you for reading iSing and may this issue be the first of many intriguing and enlightening issues to come!

Sincerely,

Aidan Rush
iSing Magazine Editor





the

FUNDAMENTALS

VOCAL NERDS: Warming up



VOCAL STYLE: The Jelly Bean Effect



SIGHT-SINGING: An Introduction



VOCAL NERDS

GETTING DEEP & MEANINGFUL
ABOUT VOCAL TECHNIQUE WITH
STEVE GILES & CHRIS JOHNSON
FROM **THE NAKED VOCALIST**

VOCAL NERDS: WARMING UP

Chris & Steve explain the virtues of warming up & why tension is a dirty word.

We would describe it as not only hugely beneficial but also an essential part of a singer's daily ritual.

In truth most people see it as a mundane pain in the ass. Hence this essential practice is overlooked, sacrificed, under-appreciated or brushed under the carpet by so many singers. We would like to restore importance to this singing staple.

Back to school

Let's start at the anatomical level (stay with us... we'll try and make it fun). The vocal mechanism which includes the vocal cords (also known as vocal folds), structures of the throat and mouth, respiration and supporting body parts all coordinate and move together to ensure good vocal function; muscle itself is responsible for those movements. Many singers do not realise that the vocal cords themselves consist of muscle. Just like the antagonistic relationship between the biceps and triceps, the vocal cord muscle adjustments allow your voice to create pitch and coordinate smoothly throughout your range.

Anyone who has ever been to the gym will have heard their friendly trainer hammering

home that a warm up for anything physical is a must. Otherwise you'll be in danger of having to drag your jelly legs out of the gym after five star jumps. The reason is when muscle is 'cold', as a result of being unused, it has less blood flow. Good blood flow helps a muscle to be pliable, coordinated, impact resistant and reactive; all of which ultimately prevent you from getting injured.



It's the classic analogy of sleeping like a log the night through and waking up feeling about as flexible as a railway sleeper. You can totally apply this rationale to your voice. Vocal cords also need to warm up their muscle fibres before they can think about getting to work.

So, why is a physical warm up essential?

We are sure you will agree that, in most circumstances, tension is bad and restrictive. It limits our body's potential and in turn dampens our creativity. As singers, we want to create an environment where our body can maximise its strengths and allow us to be as creative as possible. Cue the warm up regimen.

You may think that a full body warm up is only necessary for those people hanging out in gyms wearing Lycra pants, but you'd be wrong. The human body is a complex little fellow/gal. Connected from head to toe with complex systems, it is impossible to isolate one part, including the voice! That's right, a shoulder roll or side bend really will have a positive impact on the performance of the vocal muscles, not to mention what a state of relaxation will do for a singer's mindset!

Now to vocal warm ups

The warm up is fundamental to producing a healthy, creative environment and prepare the voice ready to tackle those high C's with power and intensity.

'Vocalising' or 'using sounds' are the most common choice of exercises for vocal warm ups.

[Read MORE](#)



VOCAL NERDS

The main goal is to use sounds that encourage comfort and steer clear of unnecessary tension (our swear word of the day). By doing this we are allowing the vocal cords and surrounding muscles to move, flex and stretch gradually. Blood flow to the area will increase which, as we now know, helps pliability. Synergistically it increases energy and nutrient supply to the muscle and cartilage, which helps to keep them in good working condition.

So let's take it that your alarm has just gone off (for a singer that's probably around 11am). You need to prepare for an afternoon trill. After plenty of water and a cup of green tea (believe us, these are musts) it's time to get some flexibility in your stiff ol' body..

Starting with physical warm ups

These are designed to increase flexibility of the upper body and areas where tension or stiffness could affect your voice.

Each exercise has a description and accompanying video for you to follow. Please read the warning below before doing the exercises:

NOTE: To do the following exercises it is assumed that you are fit and healthy, without back, neck or voice issues. Naturally if you feel pain or discomfort at any point then stop the exercise immediately. If the pain persists then consult a general practitioner.



WARMING UP: The body

EXERCISE 1

Shoulder Rolls
Circle your shoulders clockwise and then anti-clockwise reasonably slowly till they feel a little free.



EXERCISE 2

Spine Roll
Stand steady with your feet hip distance apart. Hang over from the waist dangling your hands down to the floor with a dead weight from the waist up. This should begin to stretch your lower back and the back of your legs. After a few seconds, slowly bring your torso back up, rolling out the spine vertebrae by vertebra from the bottom up till you are at a standing position and repeat.



VOCAL NERDS

EXERCISE 3

Trapezium Stretch

Tilt your head to the left and put your left hand on your right temple. With your fingers pull your skin up and out (in the direction your head is tilted) and drop your right shoulder back and down. Hold for 30 seconds. You should feel some stretching in your right shoulder. Repeat for the other side.



EXERCISE 4

Shake the Bars

You're supposed to imagine you're in prison for this one. We prefer to imagine we're throttling the DJ for putting on the "Frog Song". Hold out your hands in front of you like you're grabbing hold of some prison bars and then proceed to shake those bars letting your relaxed jaw chatter as you do it. Making a ridiculous noise helps greatly.



EXERCISE 5

Jaw Massage

Place your hands in front of your ears so your palms are on your jaw line and bite down. Did you feel the muscle stick out as you did it? This is the one you want to massage with your fingertips, great for releasing the jaw tension common in nocturnal teeth grinders.



See MORE exercises



VOCAL NERDS

WARMING UP: The voice

Don't get us wrong, physical warm ups are important, but it is the regular vocal warm ups that will prevent you from coughing up your larynx mid-croon.

NOTE: To do the exercises in these videos it is assumed that you are vocally fit and healthy. Naturally if you feel pain, discomfort or a change in your vocal tone at any point then stop the exercise immediately. If the pain persists then consult a general practitioner or voice specialist.

EXERCISE 6

Humming: Yes, the lowly hum. This is an easy, low intensity start to your warm up. The aim is to get the vocal cords coming together and the muscle fibres warmed up. It is best to start at the bottom end of the voice i.e. 'chest voice' (the range where you speak). You could hum a melody, or hum up and down a scale such as the '5-tone scale' (i.e. the first 5 notes of the major scale).



Vocal Nerds:
Warm ups for Singers -
The Hum

THE HUM

EXERCISE 7

Lip Trill / Tongue Trill Sirens: Lip trill being preferable, this is the go-to exercise for most voice coaches to begin a lesson. Best done with a slightly hooty tone underneath and imagining the vowel 'UH' is being said underneath the lip or tongue. Instead of the siren glide approach you could use a structured scale like a 1.5 octave.



Vocal Nerds:
Warm ups for Singers -
The Lip Trill

LIP TRILL/TONGUE TRILL

Semi-Occluded Exercises

These are the best things ever invented. Period. They are a logical step in the warm up progression as they slightly open the mouth from the hum whilst still restricting airflow through the vocal cords. Semi-occluded sounds create a raised air pressure in the vocal tract, which in turn presses back down on the vocal cords helping them to close effortlessly.

Afterwards you will experience an increase in output with reduced effort. This aerodynamic process supports the function of the vocal cords giving you the best possible results, and not taking all day to do it either.

See MORE exercises



VOCAL NERDS

EXERCISE 8

Voiced Fricative Sirens

We know it sounds like we're having you on, but these are killer ways to create semi-occluded airflow. Siren from the bottom of your range to the top and down again for a few minutes. Experiment with 'VV', 'ZZ', 'TH' (as in 'the') and a French 'J' (as in 'Joue', 'Je' or the English 'seizure').



Next step

So we're at the point where the vocal cords are hopefully fairly well supplied with the red stuff (oxygenated blood), and now we need to delve deeper into open and resonant vowel sounds to fully engage the voice and continue to improve coordination between the vocal registers.

Considerations

Creating a 10-15 minute length combination of these kind of exercises should suffice as a warm up, but listen to your intuition if it tells you otherwise. Ideally you will work all areas of your range, from bottom through the middle and to the top. Though there may be times when it is enough to aim for 1.5 or 2 tones above the highest note of your repertoire for that night's performance.

Moving on to a stage-ready warm up

Repetition is the game changer when mastering any skill. The human body will remember anything if you get it to do it enough times. This is why the popular phrase 'practice makes perfect' is so true, though it has to be good practice of course. So how does repetition relate to warm ups, and more importantly, getting ready for the stage?

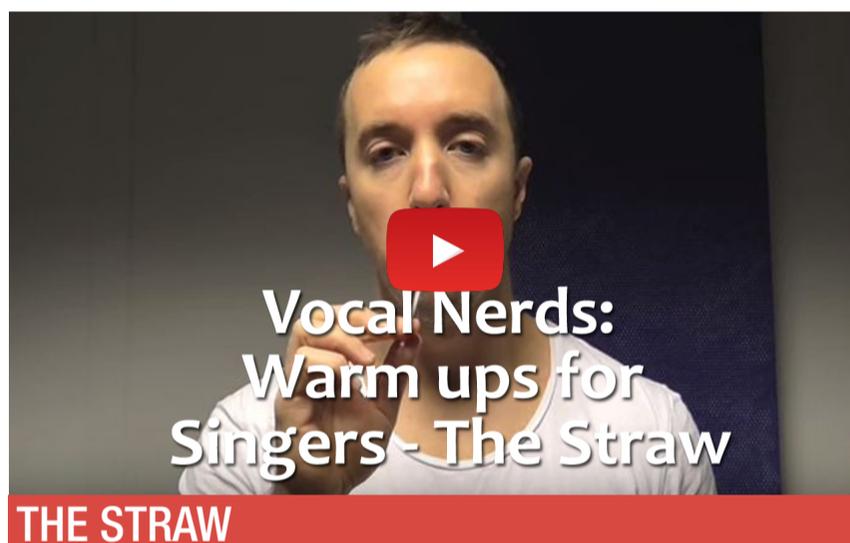
EXERCISE 9

The Straw

To test the effect of this exercise count out loud 1 to 10 before and after, you will be amazed at how much better it feels and sounds.

Take a thin cocktail straw (not a drinking one... it's too wide) and vocalise through it at a normal singing volume. Start off by sirening from the bottom to the top of your range and then back down. Move on to 'hills', or accents, taking higher each time. Finish by singing a melody through the straw and then you're done!

The great thing about the straw is that it's very quiet and you can get away with doing it on the bus or walking down the street without a threat of a clip round the ear or dirty look!



EXERCISE 10

Vowel Sirens: Good sounds for this are EE (as in 'been') and OOH (as in 'you'). These will assist the singer in gliding smoothly into the upper voice ('head voice' for the geeks). But everyone responds differently so you may have to experiment to see what works best for you. Perfect opportunity to ask your voice teacher's advice!



VOCAL NERDS

Learning from other disciplines

We will look at Olympic hurdlers to help explain this. These guys undertake a gradual muscle warm up to begin with, just to encourage more blood flow and make things a little more supple. Sound familiar? Then you'll see them 'practicing' the skill of jumping over hurdles time and time again. This isn't because they keep forgetting how to do it. Rather it is to develop muscle memory so they can execute this skill as optimally as possible in competition.

How does this work in singing?

The way we singers know when we have control of our 'singing race', that is the 'performance', is when we have control over:

- intonation (pitch)
- dynamic crescendos and decrescendos
- sustained vowel changes
- vibrato
- a smooth transition between the lower and upper range
- breath management

Essentially all of the attributes that songs will require as we perform them.

On to the exercises

As a continuation we can use similar sounds to the ones suggested in the last section. We can also use contrasting vowels to experiment on held notes whilst varying levels of intensity and volume. Remember the sounds you use will depend on you, your voice and your current vocal circumstances.

It's tricky to give you definitive sounds to use for this section of the warm up, but as a general rule, sounds such as UH (as in 'mother') or OH (as in 'no') are pretty safe choices to find your groove.

You can also supplement vowels with consonants in order to achieve a different result.

As a guide:

- 'g' (e.g. 'guhg') would be a good start to add some intensity
- 'w' (e.g. 'wuhn' or 'won') for those looking for freedom from tension
- 'm' (as in 'muhm' or 'mum') for a middle of the road balanced production.

The octave repeat-sustain scale (see EXERCISE 11) is an excellent scale as you can sit on a certain pitch whilst playing around with these variables as you search for the most comfortable result.

EXERCISE 11 Getting Stage Ready Pt 1:



GETTING STAGE READY 1

EXERCISE 12 Getting Stage Ready Pt 2:



GETTING STAGE READY 2

VOCAL NERDS

Preparing when not 100%

The common cold, five intense performances in a row or a day screaming at the theme park are all scenarios that can wreak havoc on the voice. These situations can result in oedema (swelling) of the vocal cords. This swelling will make it impossible to coordinate the vocal cords in the usual way. They will require plenty of rest to heal, and this is our recommendation. If the gig is unavoidable we may have to adjust our warm up regimen to accommodate the problem. Approaching things more gently will get the blood flowing without creating further problems.

What if my voice seems to take longer?

In some cases warming up is just a slow process and not down to anything sinister, for instance in the morning. At some point in our amateur or professional careers we may have to rock out the high notes for a morning gig. Maybe it's because you've been asked on the *Daybreak* show to promote your next single or someone decides it would be a great idea to have a live band playing over breakfast (it happens!). In these instances some more direct exercises may be required to limber up quicker. Staccato exercises on sounds such as A (as in 'cat') and an edgy sounding MM, as in the *'mmm mmm, that is a tasty burger'...* Pulp Fiction style, (EXERCISE 13). These sounds will bring the vocal cords together more directly to stimulate blood flow. However, there is a health and safety message here: do not overuse staccato exercises, they do not work for everyone, and remember to remain relaxed as you do them. Part 2 of the message is to get checked out by your GP for gastric reflux if your morning croaking persists and feels beyond the help of a warm up.

SEND US YOUR QUESTIONS OR
COMMENTS FOR VOCAL NERDS TO
QUESTIONS@ISINGMAG.COM

EXERCISE 13 Staccato MMs:



STACCATO MMS

The take home message

Every singer knows they should warm up before singing, yet many sacrifice it. Look past the tedium and attach yourself to the benefits it will bring to your performance and career. You won't have to structure a set list with low songs at the beginning and waiting till the 2nd set before hitting the big guns. Instead you can smack 'em in the face with a huge intro! Create a show that has the best dynamic for your audience, rather than around your lack of vocal preparation.

When singing is your job, warming up is imperative if you want to keep earning this way. It will save you from having to take that administration job you were never made for.

All that is left is to find somewhere to do it. This could be in a dedicated practice room, the car, the bathroom, the dressing room, your penthouse, wherever. Animated rock voice coach Jaime Vendera sings whilst bench-pressing in order to save time. (Unless you have a private gym we wouldn't recommend that!)

We will be holding a FREE webinar in May (to register see next page) so we can answer questions in person. Hope to see you there.

Otherwise catch you in the next issue for more vocal nerdiness. ■

Vocal Nerds Webinar with Chris and Steve

They answered your questions on this issue's topic:
Warming Up.

Sunday May 4, 2014

7-7.30pm BST (2-2.30pm ET)



TRIBE MEMBER?
Watch it for FREE
click [HERE](#)

Find out more about tribe membership [click here](#)

The Naked Vocalist



WHO ARE THEY? Chris and Steve are both experienced vocal coaches working in Southampton and London. They are with the Vocology In Practice teacher network and specialise in training clients in advanced vocal technique, style and improvisation. They are co-founders and presenters of popular iTunes singing podcast The Naked Vocalist ([iTunes link](#)). Amongst all of the coaching they are also in-demand performers and manage their own successful soul acts.

WEBSITE: www.thenakedvocalist.com

VOCAL STYLE

JOSHUA ALAMU **EXPLORES**
THE HOWS, WHEN'S AND
WHERE'S OF VOCAL STYLE

VOCAL STYLE

THE JELLY BEAN EFFECT

For most singers the term vocal style has an assorted line-up of descriptions. Allow me to digress a little. I promise you there is a point to this meandering.

For those of you who don't know, let me fill you in on a little secret love of mine: Jelly beans. Jelly beans are probably the most moreish (can't stop eating) and flavourful little sweets ever invented. You know that old phrase "like a kid in a candy store"? That's me with Jelly beans. Jelly beans to me are like fruits are to a fruit bat or carrots are to Bugs Bunny or spinach is to Popeye...I think you catch my drift. I never really know what I am going to get bite after bite. Distinctive flavours explode onto my tongue, drawing me into a blissful experience that inspires that unavoidable "mmm". They're simply amazing!

Ok, so I hear you asking, "Josh where are you going with this? What do jelly beans have to do with vocal style?" Well, I would like to present the idea of vocal style as 'Ear Candy', a phrase coined by producer Quincy Jones. Or as I like to call it, "jelly beans for your ears". Distinctive flavours and colours that leave you wanting more, igniting the senses with such vocal



delights that your audience members almost feel like they are kids in a candy store. The Jelly Bean Effect.

Style by its very definition is about being individual, distinctive in appearance, idiosyncratic. In fact the word idiosyncrasy is made up of 3 Greek words: "*idios*" which means 'own, private', "*sun*" which means 'with', and "*krasis*" which means 'mixture'. In other words, style can be defined as your "own mixture". Isn't that what we are all trying to be... ourselves? For me, vocal style is about being YOU - singing in a way that gives people the pleasure of hearing your "own mixture" of different vocal shades,

colours, nuances, effects and so forth. Causing your very own Jelly Bean Effect.

As singers we should create the time and space to really explore this idea. To allow ourselves to embrace the sound making process and all it involves: making mistakes, trial and error, discovery and acceptance of one's 'own mixture' of voice. It's the one thing that makes you different, that makes you stand out from the crowd. But all too often singers try to hide their own voice (consciously or unconsciously) in favour of another sound that they feel is more acceptable. The journey to discovering your own vocal style starts with accepting and loving yourself, your voice and

VOCAL STYLE

realising that yours is a truly unique and significant voice. It *does* mean something and it brings meaning to others.

To my mind, vocal style looks like different colours, textures and effects containing vocal nuances (subtle expressions and shades of meaning) that a voice is capable of creating. Singers should explore wearing these 'vocal effects' to understand how they can make a variety of sounds with their voices. Once the singer has grasped a few of these ideas and tones, the process of implementing these nuances into a song with the appropriate emotive intention is the next stage. This process should be based on what the artist is trying to achieve or communicate. A unique

mixture of vocal subtleties and niceties helps to convey the story embedded within every song.

Why should singers explore wearing these 'vocal effects?' Lets put it in the context of getting dressed in the morning. When faced with a variety of outfits we all ask ourselves, 'what should I wear today?' However, in actual fact we are unconsciously asking, 'who can I be today?' We dress according to our emotions and feelings, choosing the appropriate mixture of colours and outfits that reflect the way we feel inside. One answer to why singers should explore vocal effects is because doing so is the power of an artist's self-expression and it helps

form part of the bigger artistic picture, our deeper connection to music. The freedom of being able to fully express how you feel inside, the liberating feeling of having your message heard, listened to and responded to, the magic of being at the helm of that mutual exchange of energy between performer and audience member, these are the components that have inspired both sides of the stage for centuries.

That said, vocal nuances should always come from a place of intention. They should be used to convey various emotions and feelings rooted in the song's story rather than simply used for their own sake or to show off. However, I think this depends on what the singer is trying to achieve. A sense of fun and vocal flair also has its place – younger singers tend to approach songs in this way. I believe in allowing younger vocalists to express this way because it's part of their musical journey. This should, however, be balanced with an emotional connection to the song, achieved in an intelligent way and with the right emotive intention utilising vocal colours such as riffs and runs, breathy qualities, nasal qualities, growl qualities, vocal fry, flips, blips, whistles, falsettos, belts, vibratos, etc.



VOCAL STYLE

The list is endless. (Please note that these vocal nuances should always be complemented with good healthy vocal technique so as not to damage your voice.)

Vocal style is incredibly empowering; it is able to do more than we realize, and singers would do well to explore it more consistently. Consider what colours or vocal nuances your voice can manage. Start with the sounds you like by turning them into 'ear candy' within the delivery of your songs and see what responses you evoke in yourself and your listeners. Simply experiment with them, be patient with yourself and start walking the path to creating your own Jelly Bean Effect today!

Future articles will be dedicated to exploring vocal expression and understanding its depth in more practical ways. Using video and audio demonstrations, I'll be illustrating different exercises and methods that are used to apply vocal expression successfully. I hope that, together, we can discover more about this magnificent, built-in musical instrument in a way that helps us all to "play it well". ■

About the videos

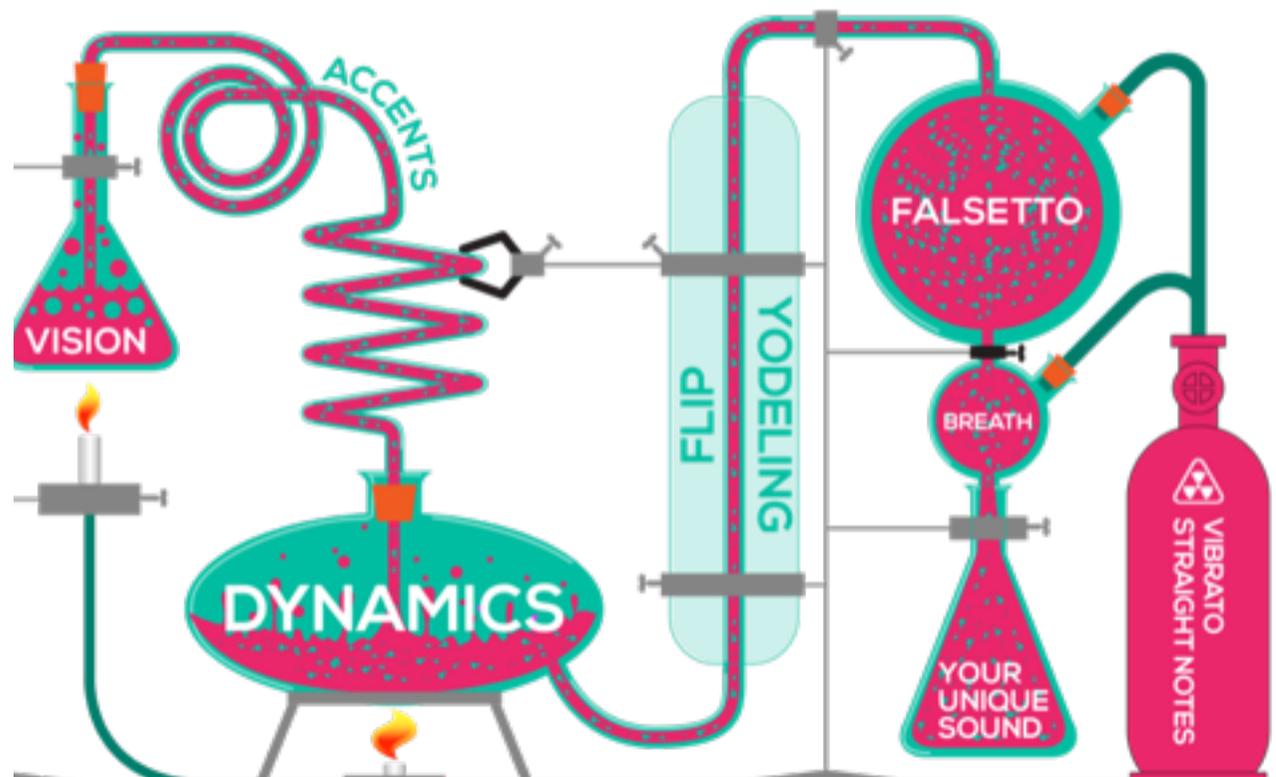
Check out the videos on the following page. They are taken from my new book 'Mad About Vocal Style Part 1' in which I focus on the 7 vocal nuances seen in the diagram below - how to practice them and utilise them in developing your unique sound, your Jelly Bean Effect.

These videos look at using flip/yodelling as a vocal nuance. I believe that when used deliberately and intelligently it can bring something quirky and compelling to a song.

Yodelling isn't restricted to the Swiss Alps! Artists such as Adele, The 1975, Björk, Shawn Stockman (Boyz II Men), B. Slade and many more all use this nuance to give added colour and interest to their performances. It is part of their vocal identity, part of their unique sound and how they bring about their Jelly Bean Effect.

This nuance is only one of a plethora of nuances that I cover in my 'Mad About Vocal Style' video enhanced eBook series. See www.madaboutthevoice.com for more details about the series.

Cheers Joshua



VOCAL STYLE

THE FLIP AND YODEL

EXERCISE 1

Joshua demonstrates vocal flipping and yodelling and how you can practice these vocal qualities .



HOW TO FLIP AND YODEL

EXERCISE 2

Joshua demonstrates how to apply the flip and yodel on his song "A Kiss". Go to **YouTube** where you can hear him sing the whole song with Valentina Monetta.



APPLYING FLIPS AND YODELS INTO SONG

NOTE: To do the exercises in these videos it is assumed that you are vocally fit and healthy. Naturally if you feel pain, discomfort or a change in your vocal tone at any point then stop the exercise immediately. If the pain persists then consult a general practitioner or voice specialist.

JOSHUA ALAMU



WHO IS HE? Joshua is a professional voice coach with over 10 years' experience as a singing teacher within the music and television industry and a voice coach for the BBC's talent show, "The Voice UK" – series 1 and 2. Joshua's video enhanced e-book Mad About Vocal Style was launched in March 2014.

WEBSITE: www.joshuaalamu.com

Mad About Vocal Style

A video enhanced eBook
by Joshua Alamu

Click **HERE FOR MORE** info



SIGHT SINGING An Introduction

Introducing the benefits of learning to sight-sing

Have you ever wondered how some singers pick up a sheet of music for the first time, read it

cold and sound like they've rehearsed it for months? It's quite an incredible thing to experience, especially if you are the person sight-reading and hearing the music for the first time yourself.

I learned the process of traditional sight-reading growing up during my years studying music theory. However, after completing a Master's Degree in music, I realized that although I could sight-read music very well as

a pianist, sight-reading as a singer, also known as sight-singing, was an entirely different process. So, I ended up taking a reading class for singers and later took over that class as teacher.

After teaching sight-singing in Los Angeles for 12 years, I've come up with a process of sight-singing that is simple and eliminates all of the obstacles I felt were preventing students from learning to sight-sing easily.

The video on the next page contains a summary of the process that I teach - how it works over an extended period of time while also walking you through many drills and practices that can improve your ability to sight-sing.

My own sight-singing ability also has given me the opportunity to sing on over 100 TV and film projects such as Avatar, Spiderman, Family Guy, The Academy Awards, and more. All of these jobs require strong sight-singing skills. We singers are always on the clock and have no rehearsal so companies need singers who can read a song cold and perform it perfectly with only 2 or 3 takes. My sight-singing abilities have allowed me to have a great career as a session singer and musician.

Even if you don't plan to work as a session, or otherwise hired, singer, being able to sight-sing greatly enhances your experience in the music world. It also makes you a much more viable singer for bands, choirs, and other venues that need a singer who can step up to the plate and produce on the spot.

If you are interested in more detailed tutorials or the online program, please log on to www.lasightsinger.com and give it a try.■



See Gerald's video!



isingmag.com



VIDEO: INTRODUCTION TO SIGHT SINGING COURSE WITH GERALD WHITE

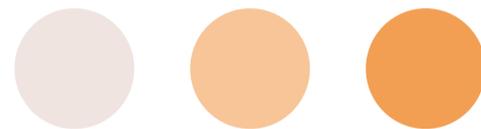
GERALD WHITE



WHO IS HE? Gerald is a prolific singer/songwriter, accomplished pianist and teacher based in Los Angeles, CA. His most recent accomplishment has been LASightsinger.com, an online tutorial which is interactive and teaches singers how to read music. He runs a voice studio in LA focusing on vocal health and incorporating this method of sight-reading for singers. His work can be heard in projects such as Family Guy, Avatar, Spiderman, Frozen and more.

WEBSITE: www.lasightsinger.com (sight-singing course)
www.music1on1.com (private lessons)

singing



CAREERS

ON THE COVER: Katie Holmes



CAREER PROFILE: The Backing Vocalist

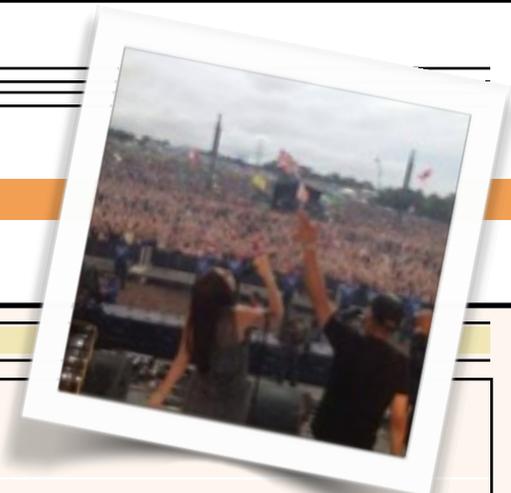




on the
COVER

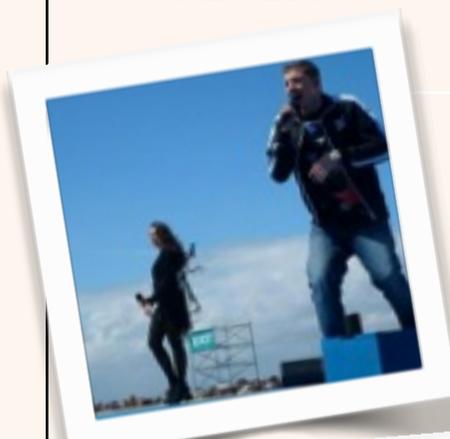
KATIE HOLMES
PROFESSIONAL PROFILE

ON THE COVER



PROFESSIONAL PROFILE

NAME AND LOCATION	Katie Holmes, London, UK
PROFESSION	Backing vocalist, session singer, songwriter and singing vocal coach
VOCAL RANGE	3 octaves - low soprano F(3) - high F(6)
YEARS YOU'VE BEEN SINGING FOR?	10 years
WHO HAVE YOU WORKED WITH?	Jessie J (current), Molly Smitten-Downes (current) Lily Allen, Gareth Gates, Corrine Bailey Rae, Omar, Professor Green, Leona Lewis, Gnarl's Barkley.
TOP CAREER MOMENT	So far, headlining the main stage at Glastonbury Festival 2013.
HOW DO YOU KEEP FIT FOR PERFORMANCE?	I look after my voice by taking singing lessons to maintain and improve my voice. The knowledge of good vocal technique provides me with tools to achieve my vocal goals. I respect my instrument by trying to warm my voice up in preparation for vocal work and stay fit and healthy. I don't smoke, drink in excess and try to get enough sleep as and when I can.
3 THINGS YOU CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT ON TOUR	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. My IEM's (In Ear Monitors) to assure a good sound on stage to allow me to do my job well. 2. Laptop or iPad to keep up to date with emails, set lists, call times, calendars. 3. My iPhone to keep me in touch with the rest of the world!
WHAT YOU WISH YOU'D KNOWN FROM THE START	I wish I known a lot of things from the start. I wish I'd known about music colleges and performing arts schools such as The Brit School & ACM Guildford, when I was younger. I was from the country so they weren't on my radar. I think I'd have learnt a lot sooner by surrounding myself around like-minded people. I wish I'd had the social media opportunities such as YouTube, as they are great free avenues to promote music and build a fan base. I wish I'd stayed with playing the guitar and learnt the piano from a young age....
SOCIAL MEDIA	Twitter ' lamktholmes ' Facebook as Katie Holmes or for vocal tuition enquiries go to www.bromleyvocaltuition.com



"Being a singer was something I always wanted to do. Even as a small girl, it was never a hesitation in my mind. It's a job I genuinely love and each day brings new people, experiences, challenges and achievements. My parents are extremely proud that I do a job I love, many people can't say that."

Click [HERE](#) to hear Katie talk about her job on The Naked Vocalist podcast

LISTEN



TRACK: SUMMERTIME
ARTIST: KATIE HOLMES

WATCH

VIDEO: [SOURCE - BBC Events](#)
bbc.co.uk/events ©2013 BBC
[BBC Credit Link](#)

ARTIST: PROFESSOR GREEN
Glastonbury Highlights 2013

VIDEO: [CHILDREN OF THE UNIVERSE](#)
ARTIST: MOLLY SMITTEN-DOWNES



Career PROFILE

THE BACKING VOCALIST

THE BACKING VOCALIST

I Sing met up with cover gal - Katie Holmes, Lloyd Wade, Andy Playfoot, Louise Bagan and Craig Stein - five very talented

singers who work regularly as backing vocalists. These guys have sung with some of the biggest artists out there, such as Jessie J, Professor Green, Lily Allan, Kylie Minogue, Will Young, Chaka Khan, Westlife, George Michael, Eliza Doolittle and Take That. Between them they have performed at all the major UK music festivals, as well as strutted practically every

“You can go from pop sessions, to classical singing, to gospel, to any style of singing and I love the variety of it.”

significant stadium and live venue. They all have careers in their own right, both as singers and, as in the case of Andy and Craig, actors too.

Recently these five came together to form a vocal group called Band of Voices, showcasing their talents on last year's *Britain's Got Talent*. They blew away Simon Cowell

and all the judges with their rendition of Jessie J's "Price Tag", going on to eventually reach the semi finals.

In this video interview, we meet the group and hear what they have to say about the role and job of the backing vocalist, how each of them got into the game, what kinds of experiences it has brought them, how they fit their job in and around their own artistic ambitions. We get some top backing vocal tips and they sing live for iSing. ■



Singing Careers: The backing vocalist with Band of Voices

Watch MORE!



THE BACKING VOCALIST

More from

Band of Voices



Band of Voices:
ROAR
(Katy Perry Cover)

iSing Exclusive - BOV sing Katy Perry's "Roar" - live



Band of Voices - Kiss From A Rose (Seal Cover)



Take That - Beautiful Tour - Relight My Fire -Ft Lloyd Wade

BAND OF VOICES

WHO ARE THEY? A British vocal band who got to the semi finals on ITV's Britain's Got Talent in 2012. The band consists of five very talented UK based session singers with a collective history of backing vocal work that runs from Jessie J to Take That to Adele to Professor Green. They are currently in the studio writing and recording their debut album.

WEBSITE: www.bandofvoices.co.uk

mind, body 

& SOUL

VOCAL HEALTH: Do's & Don'ts 

THE NATURAL WAY: To Zap Mucus 

THE LOOK BOOK: Finding My Look 

5 BENEFITS: Of Alexander Technique 

VOCAL HEALTH DO'S & DON'T'S



Vocal Health Do's & Don'ts

What's worse than losing your voice? As a singer, nothing! In fact it is a tragedy of catastrophic proportions when a singer loses their voice or has difficulty singing in tune due to vocal illness. We all hate to sound bad, but more than this vocal illness will prevent us from earning our keep, taking that dream gig or the opportunity to showcase in front of someone who can make a difference to our

career. For the most part vocal health issues are preventable. Voice professional, Katy Salt, tells us what can go wrong with the voice and how we can prevent it. In this regular column Katy will address common issues and answer your voice care questions. ■

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS FOR VOCAL HEALTH
QUESTIONS@ISINGMAG.COM

KATY SALT



WHO IS SHE? Katy initially trained as an actress, working

- as a professional in the West End, repertory, TV and film
- for 10 years. She then went on to retrain as a Speech and Language Therapist. She is currently the Senior Voice Specialist at the Royal Surrey Hospital, UK, where she
- runs the Voice Clinic helping professional voice users and others who have been affected by voice issues.

Natural SOLUTIONS

NUTRITIONIST STEPHANIE MOORE
GIVES ADVICE & TIPS FOR MAINTAINING
A HEALTHY VOICE FROM THE INSIDE

NUTRITION ZAPPING MUCUS THE NATURAL WAY

MUCUS ON THE VOCAL FOLDS is the bane of any singer's life. There are ways to tackle this issue using natural solutions. Stephanie tells us how.

For a singer, having a build up of mucus in the throat is really bad news. Mucus production can be triggered for various reasons, but if you are trying to hit those top notes or belt out a big number, you'll struggle if your vocal folds are all bunged up with mucus.

The constant clearing of the throat to eliminate the mucus build-up can cause irritation and soreness, triggering even more mucus production, so what can be done to rid your throat of mucus and prevent its return?

Why does it happen?

Firstly let's look at the possible causes of mucus production. If you have an infection – a cold, the flu or a respiratory bug, your natural immune response will create mucus to help the body eliminate nasty invaders by expelling bacteria and viruses through the mucus when you cough and sneeze. So, keeping your immune system strong is essential to warding off bugs in the first place.

Keys to a healthy immune system: plenty of sleep; a diet high in fresh, natural foods as unprocessed as possible; limited refined sugars in the diet such as sweet foods, baked goods, chocolate etc.; getting some exercise and managing stress levels by making time to properly relax on a regular basis.

Water is also a key factor for both healthy immune function and keeping mucus levels down. Taking a supplement containing vitamins C, D & E plus some Zinc will also boost immunity and help dispel the mucus.

Another cause of mucus production is a protection mechanism from irritants like cigarette smoke and other fumes. Smoking is one of the

very worst things you can be doing for vocal health and overall well-being. The heat and noxious chemicals in cigarette smoke are so damaging that the body makes mucus to protect the delicate cells that line the oesophagus (throat). When people give up smoking, they often find they develop a hacking cough, producing seemingly endless amounts of mucus. This is because the body begins to eliminate the mucus that has built up over the years to protect the throat.

Other irritants like car or paint fumes, chemicals in the air and pollens, dust and other common allergens, all stimulate mucus production to catch the irritants before they reach the lungs.



NUTRITION

To help loosen and reduce the build up of mucus in the throat, there are various effective, natural remedies you can try:

Drink hot liquids such as herbal tea or a good quality chicken broth to moisten the airways and break up the mucus



1



3

Avoid eating too many dairy products as they increase mucus production. Most dairy foods contain a protein called casein which many people struggle to breakdown properly, resulting in mucus production. If you find dairy foods are a problem, try eating goat, sheep or cow products from brown cows – Guernseys and Jerseys. These animals' milk contains a protein, called A2 protein, also found in human milk, making it much easier to digest. Goat and sheep cheeses, milk and yogurt and products using only Guernsey or Jersey milk are now easy to find in most supermarkets.



4

Add a few drops of eucalyptus oil to a vaporizer to loosen phlegm and relieve congestion.

2

Gargle regularly with warm water and sea salt.



5

Use lemon and honey as a healing drink. Manuka honey is particularly effective as it has potent anti-viral, antibacterial and anti-inflammatory properties. Mix ½ a freshly squeezed lemon with a tablespoon of honey in to a large glass of warm water. You can also add a teaspoon of turmeric. Turmeric is a spice that contains antiseptic and anti-inflammatory properties, which will help to fight infection and calm irritation. This mixture should help clear your throat, as the lemon will cut through the mucus while the honey and turmeric will help to soothe and heal the throat.



NUTRITION

Along with milk products further mucus-forming ingredients include caffeine, sugar, salt, and soy-based products. Many people use soy milk and soy-based meat alternatives as a seemingly healthier option, but soy is one of the most mucus-making plant foods there is.

The Dreaded Reflux

One of the most common causes of mucus production I see in my clinic is due to acid reflux. Acid reflux is quite simply stomach acid coming up the oesophagus (gullet) rather than staying in the stomach. The acid in the stomach is incredibly strong and is there to kill off bacteria and other nasties like parasites in our food as well as helping to break down protein before it passes in to the intestines for absorption.

Acid reflux is often considered an excess acid problem where too much of the stomach acid forces its way back up the throat, irritating the tissues and causing burping and an uncomfortable burning sensation. However, the vast majority of patients I see, including many singers, exhibit these symptoms due to *too little* stomach acid.

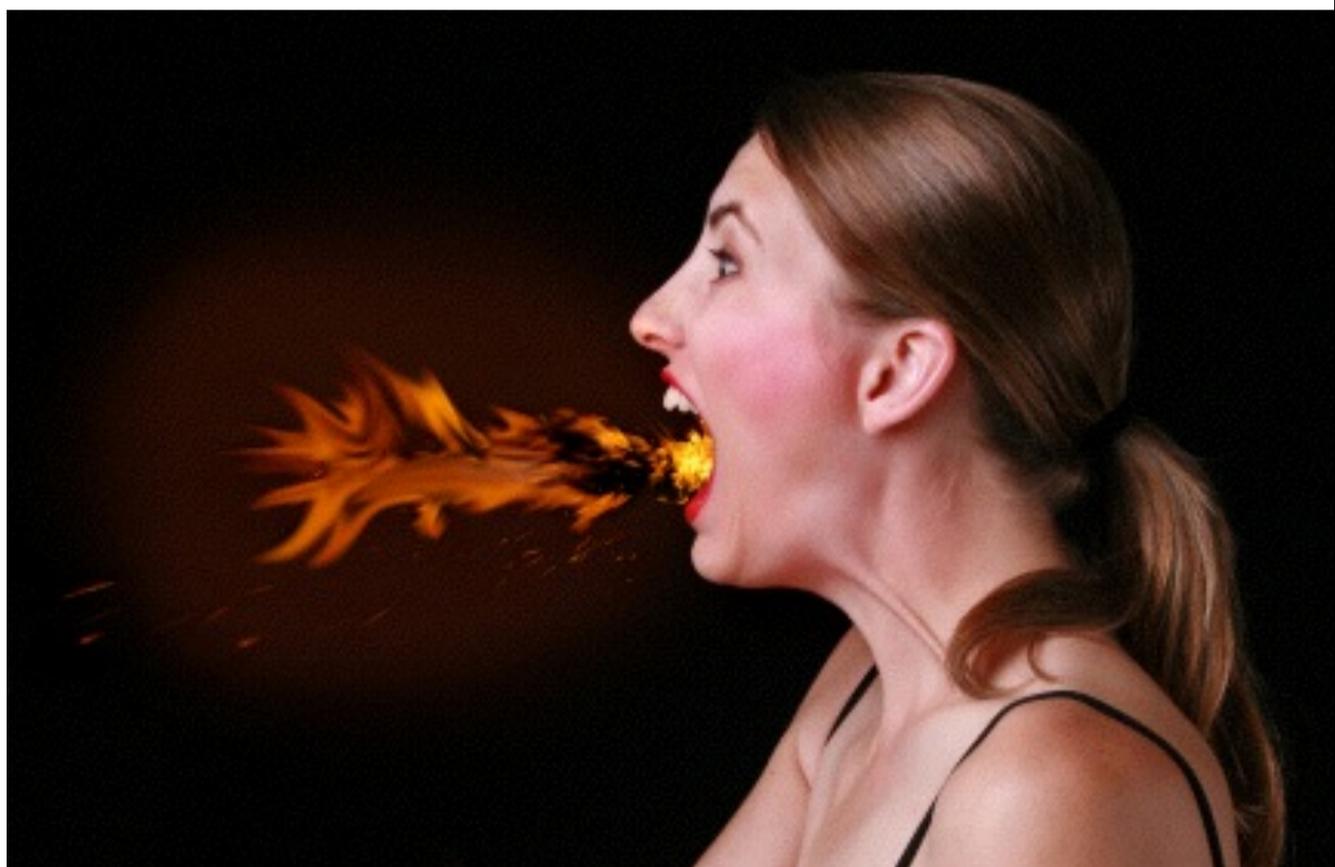
This may seem strange when the problem is acid coming out of the top of the stomach, but the cause is very simple:

there is a sphincter (valve) at the top of the stomach. When acid levels are good, there is a strong trigger for the sphincter to clamp shut so nothing can escape back up. If your body does not produce enough acid, the opening does not close properly, allowing acid to leak back up the throat.

There is another common condition called asymptomatic acid reflux where there is no burning sensation commonly associated with reflux, or heart burn, but instead the voice is constantly hoarse, the patient is continuously feeling the need to clear the throat and there is a steady production of mucus. Also, there is often a sensation of a little lump at the back of the throat. This is also a reflux

issue where the potent acid is finding its way all the way up to the top part of the oesophagus, causing inflammation and potentially damage to the lining of the throat and to the vocal folds.

Other symptoms of low stomach acid include bloating, as your food will not be getting broken down properly and will be fermenting in the gut; foul-smelling wind; poor bowel function – usually constipation; bad breath; feeling heavy and full for a long time after eating and if this condition goes on for some time you will become fatigued and run down as your absorption of nutrients from your food will be seriously impaired, potentially leading to much more serious ailments.



NUTRITION

I think I have reflux!

There are 2 simple tests you can do to get a good idea if your digestive issues and/or heartburn are caused by too little stomach acid.

Test 1

Firstly, get yourself some good quality apple cider vinegar (ACV). It needs to be unfiltered and unpasteurised, so you'll have to hunt it down in a health food shop or buy online. It should contain floaty bits and sediment – this is the good stuff, full of beneficial bacteria and enzymes known as 'The Mother'. Take 1 tablespoon in some water with your first mouthful of food. This will help generate a balanced amount of stomach acid and ensure your sphincter shuts properly. If better after a meal using the ACV, it is very likely you have low acid. If you feel worse, you are probably producing excess stomach acid.



Test 2

Add a level teaspoon of bicarbonate of soda to a glass of water and drink on an empty stomach. The very alkaline bicarb will react with your strong stomach acid and cause gases to be produced. Time how long it takes you to burp. Immediately producing large 'comedy burps' indicates high levels of stomach acid; burping after 2 – 3 minutes, a healthy level and no or few burps after 5 minutes indicates your acid levels are low.

Remedies

Here are a few suggestions to correct levels of low levels of stomach acid and to address acid reflux:

1

Take a tablespoon of apple cider in a little water (as above) at the start of each of your meals. If this does not prove effective, a more potent remedy is to actually take some hydrochloric acid (see next pointer).



2

Take a Betaine and Pepsin supplement – this stimulates hydrochloric acid production in your stomach and helps in the breakdown of proteins.

3

Liquorice

- you can chew on natural liquorice sticks, or use a chewable liquorice supplement (Called DGL liquorice). This is highly healing for an inflamed oesophagus and helps to manage acid reflux.

4

Aloe Vera – highly anti-inflammatory, soothing and healing. Gargle with a high quality Aloe Vera gel in a little water to soothe a tired, sore, inflamed throat.



5

Take a broad spectrum **digestive enzyme** with your meals to help breakdown your food.

NUTRITION

Also...

CHEW, CHEW, CHEW – this will stimulate stomach acid production and massively improve digestive function.

Manage your stress: whenever you are anxious, over-tired, over-worked, production of stomach acid and digestive enzymes dramatically reduces, making you much more prone to acid reflux issues.

Keeping on top of your general health; eating well to support your digestive health and immune function; ensuring you get enough sleep and making sure you keep your stress levels in check will all significantly support your vocal health.

In conclusion

Mucus build-up is a sign that your body is struggling. If you are battling with excess mucus start by taking a look at the quality of your food.

STEPHANIE MOORE



And don't underestimate the importance of rest and relaxation to help your body help itself stay fit healthy and mucus free.■

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS
FOR NUTRITION
QUESTIONS@ISINGMAG.COM

WHO IS SHE? Stephanie is a Clinical Nutritionist (MA(Hons) BA(Hons) BSc(Nut.Med) and with a background in counselling psychology and nutritional medicine, Based in Hazelmere, Surrey and SW London Stephanie addresses the psychological and physiological aspects of health to develop personalised health and well-being programmes for her clients. Stephanie specialises in body image and weight / eating issues; digestive health; blood sugar and stress imbalance.

WEBSITE: www.health-in-hand.co.uk

the LOOK BOOK

BECAUSE **IMAGE AND STYLE** GO HAND
IN HAND WITH SINGING!

THE LOOK

Singer ERIKA FOOTMAN, who has worked with the likes of MIKA, BASTILLE, and is about to tour with British band SKUNK ANANSIE, tells us about her evolving image and style as a solo artist.

My whole life I have always been a bit of a chameleon. Not only is my fashion taste constantly changing, so is my taste in music. Looking back over all my band photo shoots and videos, you can really see how my fashion and musical styles have changed. Here is a little insight into my forever growing fashion and music statements...

One of my first bands was a new metal band called The Finger (2006-8)

FINDING MY LOOK

As you can imagine there was a lot of black involved in our wardrobe – homemade netted skirts, customized t-shirts, comedy bows that were meant to be headbands worn as boob tubes and added to clothes! Black lace was featured a lot at this time in my musical life, not only on my clothes, but on my face, too. Back then, my clothes would always magnify how I felt or what was going on in my life, and that has never changed.

LACE FACE!



Photo by Jennie Fagerstrom

THE FINGER



Photo by Jennie Fagerstrom

After I had exhausted most of the black lace stock in South London, my band went slightly less metAAAAAAI and more rock-y. So from The Finger, the band iMMA was born. The sound and name change didn't really alter our colour theme, but black lace was definitely featured less.

THE LOOK BOOK

On iMMA's first photo shoot, I was styled by a stylist as were the guys. I had an idea of what I wanted, however, the clothes they put me in were clothes that I never wore again. Sadly, the photo shoot misrepresented my own personal character and was a cliché of that genre. In truth, during this period I wore a bit more colour, dresses were featured a lot and comedy bows disappeared for good.

At the time, some old dresses from when I was a little girl found their way into my gig wardrobe and the waistline became an empire line! I think it may have been the first time a Shirley Temple dress graced the rock toilet scene! Cute dresses and dirty converse was my thing - I rocked it and flaunted it.



Photo by Hilary Knox

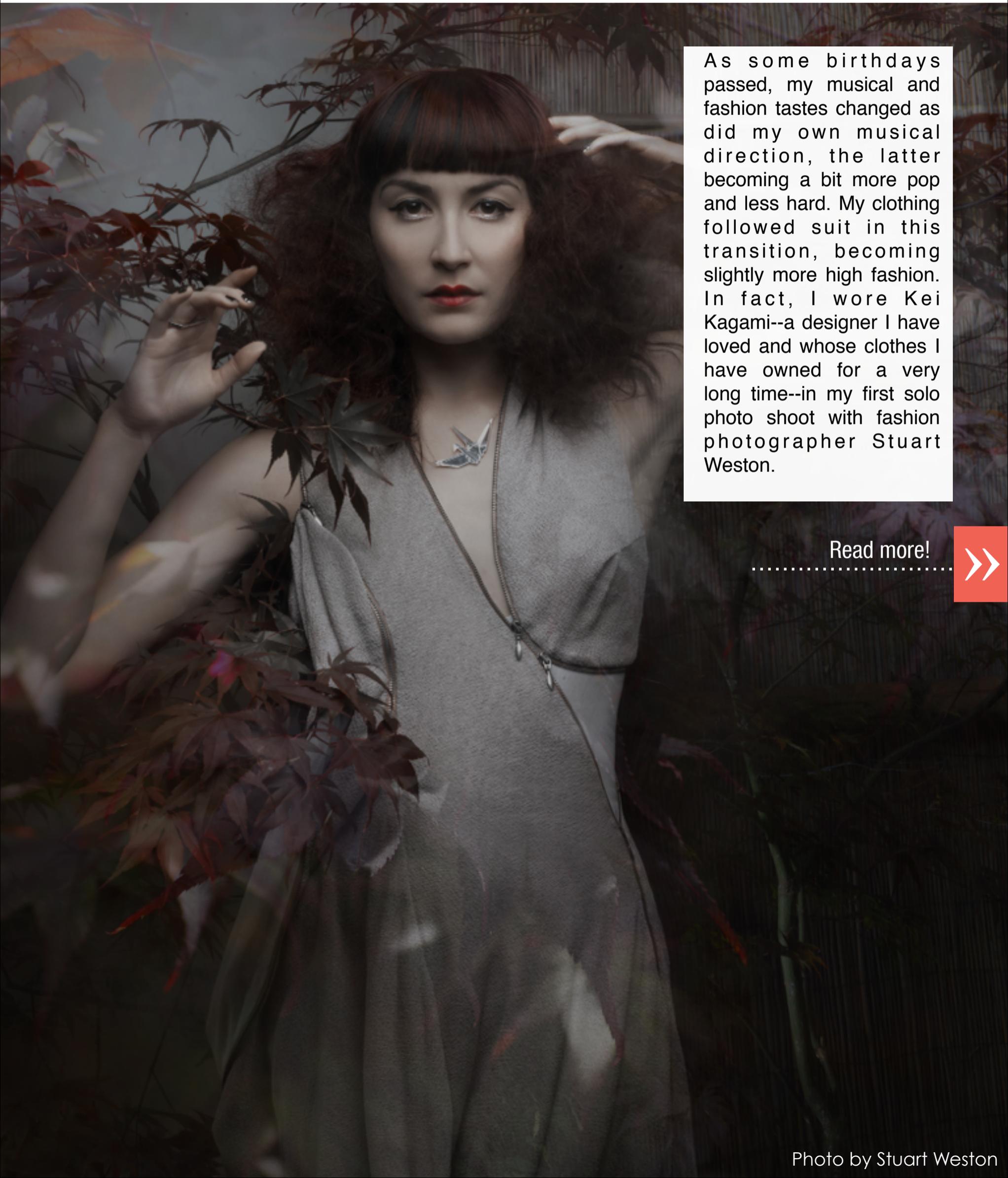
iMMA stayed the same musically through these fashion changes, however iMMA the band eventually became iMMA my solo artist project. I recorded my album and released it through my own label, my clothing staying roughly the same during this new solo venture.

I was still wearing cute dresses with high tops, but in photo shoots the heels came out, as did they for acoustic shows! I also got an endorsement with PUMA, so I was lucky enough to get some wonderful trainers and clothes!

[Read more!](#)



THE LOOK BOOK



As some birthdays passed, my musical and fashion tastes changed as did my own musical direction, the latter becoming a bit more pop and less hard. My clothing followed suit in this transition, becoming slightly more high fashion. In fact, I wore Kei Kagami--a designer I have loved and whose clothes I have owned for a very long time--in my first solo photo shoot with fashion photographer Stuart Weston.

Read more!



THE LOOK BOOK

On stage I am very aware of how things move and what shape they create. I always try to either pick pieces that have structure or for those that don't, try to imagine how they move on stage before I buy them.

I like picking really interesting clothes, and though I sadly can't afford high-end fashion couture, I have been able to get a lot out of my budget at places like TK Maxx, which has been a great help. I have been picking up some lovely pieces there, including a Galliano structured jacket, Chloe dresses, etc. Asos is also great for finding unique

pieces - I managed to find some incredible gold palazzo trousers there that are shiny, shimmered and move beautifully in the light.

I also found a gorgeous polka dot sheer skirt, which I not only wear for my own stage, but also for when I sing with Skunk Anansie. This looks great on a big stage and it's not too much for a smaller stage either. It's also nice to mix high street fashion with some uncommon high fashion pieces, too. One of my favourite outfits was skintight disco pants from Primark paired with a lace shirt from Monki and some killer Jeffrey Campbell studded flat-forms! Kill 'em with the shoes!



Photo by Brad Inglis

[Read more!](#)



Photo by Mark Richardson



Photo by IC Music Photography

SEP 80

THE LOOK BOOK

At my recent EP launch party, I really wanted to get the audience involved with what I wore. My initial thought to accomplish this was to get the audience to be a part of my dress, which I used as my finale.



Photo by Line Hilton

Read more!



THE LOOK BOOK

During the process of coming up with the idea for the dress, its designer Kei Kagami came up with the idea of it being made out of Velcro, and I had the idea of getting the audience to actually design the pattern of my dress, which I thought worked really well!

I love fashion. When I was quite little my dad would often ask me, "who have you come as today?" When I was a younger artist I tried and challenged many fashion/style ideas. Today I have settled with what makes me comfortable, this still changes everyday, it's just the way I am. There is a definite need to express my mood through fashion as well as my music.

The more I'm on stage, and the more often I organise my own photo and video shoots, the more I have realised that actually I am the chameleon.

My skin changes, not my clothes - clothes are just the leaves that I rest on, the flowers framing my head. My mentality and motives for my day, and my show are what makes my clothes sing. So for my next gig I am wearing a black sack with some killer heels! Ha ha ha! ■



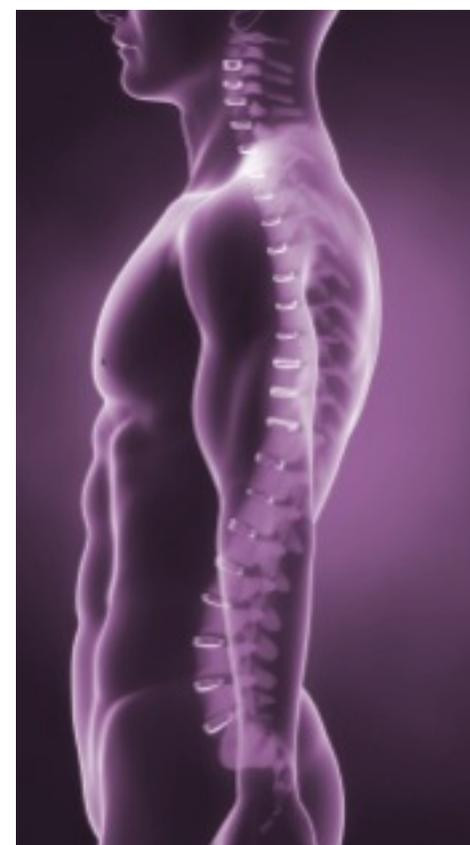
ERIKA FOOTMAN (ERIKA/iMMa)



WHO IS SHE? ERIKA Footman, artist, session musician and fashion lover. Half British, half Japanese, ERIKA was brought up in London and having always been creative, used fashion to express how she felt on the inside. ERIKA's vocals have caught the attention of some big names including, Bastille, MIKA, Skunk Anansie and SENSER.

WEBSITE: www.officiallyerika.com

5 things YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE



The Alexander Technique is a teaching approach based on the discoveries of F.M. Alexander (1869-1955), an

Australian actor who suffered from chronic hoarseness and respiratory ailments. He spent years studying how to "unlearn," or prevent habits that limited his abilities as a performer.

Using gentle hands-on guidance, Alexander teachers help their students to access greater freedom and ease in their activities. The Alexander Technique is taught throughout the world, and is of special interest to performing artists.

Alexander Technique students can experience improvement in these key areas:

- 1 AT will expand your sensory awareness, giving you greater access to your support, and expressive powers.
- 2 AT will help you "undo" acquired habits that interfere with your natural poise, leading to improved coordination and access to vocal potential.
- 3 AT will enhance breathing by freeing the mobility of the spine and ribs.
- 4 AT will reduce performance anxiety by developing your ability to respond to stimuli, and make choices in the moment.
- 5 AT will release postural reflexes, allowing greater buoyancy, and better mental focus.

Alexander Technique lessons and classes are available at many conservatories and arts institutions as well as privately. Here are a few links to find qualified teachers:

AUSTRALIA www.austat.org.au

CANADA www.canstat.ca

UK www.stat.org.uk

USA www.ati-net.com or www.amsatonline.org

SARA GOLDSTEIN GALL



WHO IS SHE? Sara teaches voice and The Alexander Technique at The Boston Conservatory

WEBSITE: www.saragoldsteingall.com



the

BIZ

LOCATION & VOCATION



PASSING IT ON



location & VOCATION

OLIVER SUSSAT WANTS TO KNOW: HAS THE LAND OF OPPORTUNITY MOVED ONLINE?

LOCATION & VOCATION

Having grown up in the South Wales Valleys, my connection with music has always

been strong. Even decades on, I still so vividly remember the sound of our small mining village waking up for work each morning. Hundreds upon hundreds of men arrived over the mountains that created the valley we lived in, bringing with them unmistakable and deep choral voices that defined the sound of this beautiful but rugged part of the world so well. Miners by day and musicians by night, their talent was abundant and the male voice choirs they were part of built a substantial local following thanks to the amount of effort they put into their performances at working men's halls across Wales.

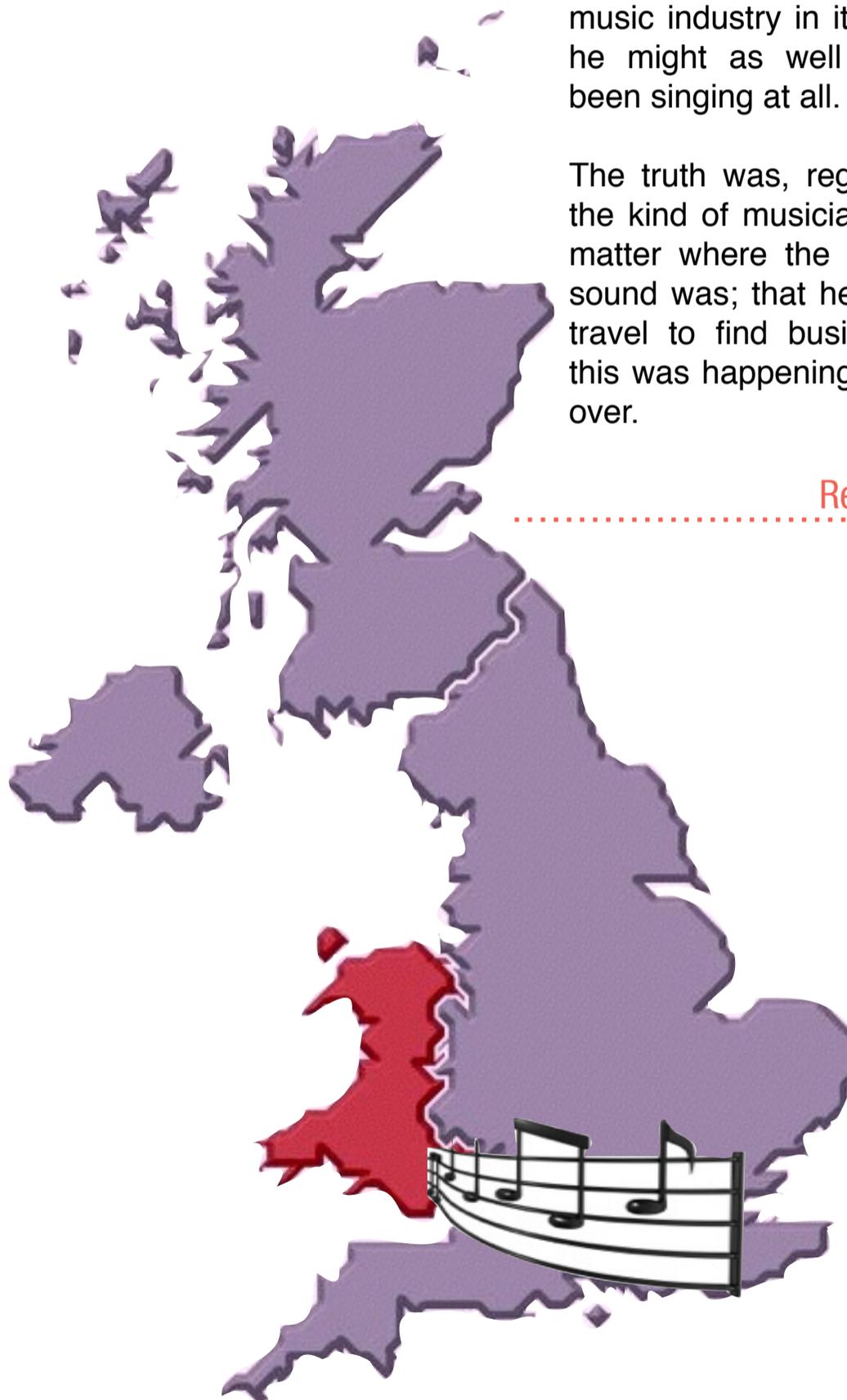
Whilst it's true to say that for as long as a choir was at home, this was not a commercial operation (and rather about community, about camaraderie, patriotism and pride), some of the finest such workingmen's choirs did make it to London to record and perform professionally.

Not so far away in Cardiff, musicians such as Dame Shirley Bassey and Sir Tom

Jones were shaping a more contemporary sound for Wales, chasing commercial stardom in ways inspired by a very American youth culture. A valleys-boy himself, Tom had built a great reputation as a musician, locally, but to

achieve true commercial recognition and a chance of real work, Tom had to move away from home and again, towards London, if he was going to make it. Should Tom not be represented by somebody on Denmark Street (the heart of the UK music industry in its infancy), he might as well have not been singing at all.

The truth was, regardless of the kind of musician, it didn't matter where the heart of a sound was; that heart had to travel to find business. And this was happening the world over.



[Read more!](#)



BUSINESS & MARKETiNG

On the other side of the Atlantic, Dolly moved to Nashville, whilst Elvis moved to Memphis (two of the three musical hearts of Tennessee). And have you ever seen the film Coyote Ugly? Why did Violet leave her hometown of South Amboy, New Jersey for the bright lights of New York? It's a well documented fact in history that musicians regularly moved to find the relevant commercial centres of their chosen industry, and each one of those commercial centres had a distinct personality, its own way of working. Applying some modern business terminology to the act of touting one's self around town in order to get a recording contract, the 'marketing methodology' of a musician in Memphis would have been markedly different to the one in Denmark Street (or even in Nashville, for that matter).

Taking an opportunity to get a little more detail on that, modern marketing methodology was (and for many, still is) based on a marketing mix termed the four P's: Product, Place, Price, Promotion.

The point of the mix is to create desire in a consumer's mind, leading them (hopefully) towards a purchase. You offer a product or service (for instance, an apple) that a particular group of people wants. You make it visible in some place they visit regularly (for example, the supermarket), at a price level which matches the value they feel they would get from the product/service (what is the taste of that heavenly sweet apple worth?) and you use promotional techniques (such as in-store announcements) to let people know all about your product/

place/price combination in the hope of selling lots of apples. Got it?

Now apply this to your own musicality. For aspiring artists searching for a record deal, the product / service (that's you and your voice) would perhaps be made visible in the venues frequented by the influential people at the record labels. Those people would be invited as guests (dealing with the price aspect) and artists would communicate with a whole host of people in a variety of ways (making phone calls to personal assistants and other colleagues etc, some of them even at competing labels) in order to create awareness of and promote the gig/showcase. The combination of you/your voice/the gig/the venue/the free invite and all of the promotion undertaken will hopefully have created a desire for a particular label representative to listen to you sing. You'll have needed to do lots of research along the way, and of course, there was no guarantee that things would go any further even if someone did show up, but it was a start.

Going back to Shirley and Tom and Dolly and Elvis, it was therefore with great excitement that I received my



Read more!



BUSINESS & MARKETiNG

brief for this piece of writing; - to explain the main differences between how singers should market themselves in the US and the UK.

I was thinking of all of the stories I could retell; of subtle business and cultural difference, of places you should go, of things you should do, and people you should talk to in your area. But then it became apparent to me that this localised knowledge is far less relevant to today's musician than the musicians of the past, for thanks to the internet, the land and sea borders we once held so important for the purposes in the way that they used to.

Consumers certainly didn't want to leave the comfort of their own homes in order to discover new music now that they didn't have to, so neither did the A&R reps. These new technologies, shifts in behaviour and changes in values created a whole new way of marketing one's music, one where location didn't really matter at all. Whether Smalltown, Alabama or New York, New York, everybody had the same chance. Hoorah, I hear you cry. But is this really a benefit in the grand scheme of things? With the original brief now left to languish in the doldrums (along with my Tom Jones and Shirley Bassey collections, may I add), I turn

my thoughts to today, and to tomorrow. If marketing is less about location than it was before, what *does* really matter when it comes to getting you and your voice noticed? How do you rise above not only the noise of a city, but the entire creative output of the internet? That can't be an easy task.

Over the forthcoming issues of iSing, together we'll discover exactly what is and isn't working for content creators all over the world. Notice the terminology change, there? For whether you are a singer or a story-teller, the important thing is that you create. We'll consider quality vs quantity as well as 'the growth stage'. With bloggers such as charlieissocoollike and jacksgap having learnt by doing it for real, with that growth period available (even now) for people to scrutinise, we'll ask ourselves whether our own industry would be so forgiving when it comes to accepting that a product does not arrive, but grows. We'll also question whether singers around the globe should be looking to those bloggers for inspiration. He might not have been made famous by a corporate entity, but Charlie



Shirley Bassey

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BUSINESS & MARKETiNG

McDonnell makes his living from blogging. And he doesn't just get by. He especially since he bought an entire house using his YouTube royalties.

Bringing this concept back to you, dear readers, I wonder whether a 'record deal' is still deserving of its place at the summit of the metaphorical mountain that represents your career aspirations, or is that SO last century? If the world has changed, maybe our dreams should, also?

I wanted to end this piece with one more little something on content and creativity, for those of you who are accepting of the fact that we're all still developing our art, in some shape or form. The quote is from Ira Glass, an American Broadcast journalist.

"What nobody tells people who are beginners - and I

really wish someone had told this to me . . . is that all of us who do creative work, we get into it because we have good taste. But there is this gap. For the first couple years you make stuff, and it's just not that good. It's trying to be good, it has potential, but it's not.

But your taste, the thing that got you into the game, is still killer. And your taste is why your work disappoints you. A lot of people never get past this phase. They quit. Most people I know who do interesting, creative work went through years of this. We know our work doesn't have this special thing that we want it to have. We all go through this. And if you are just starting out or you are still in this phase, you gotta know it's normal and the most important thing you can do is do a lot of work. Put yourself on a deadline so that every week you will finish one story."

Or in your case, one song.

"It is only by going through a volume of work that you will close that gap, and your work will be as good as your ambitions. And I took longer to figure out how to do this than anyone I've ever met. It's gonna take awhile. It's normal to take awhile. You've just gotta fight your way through."

I take so much strength from these words, and if any of them resonate with even a tiny part of your being, please find the strength to keep on doing what you're doing. The reality is that every overnight success has been twenty years in the making, in some way. ■

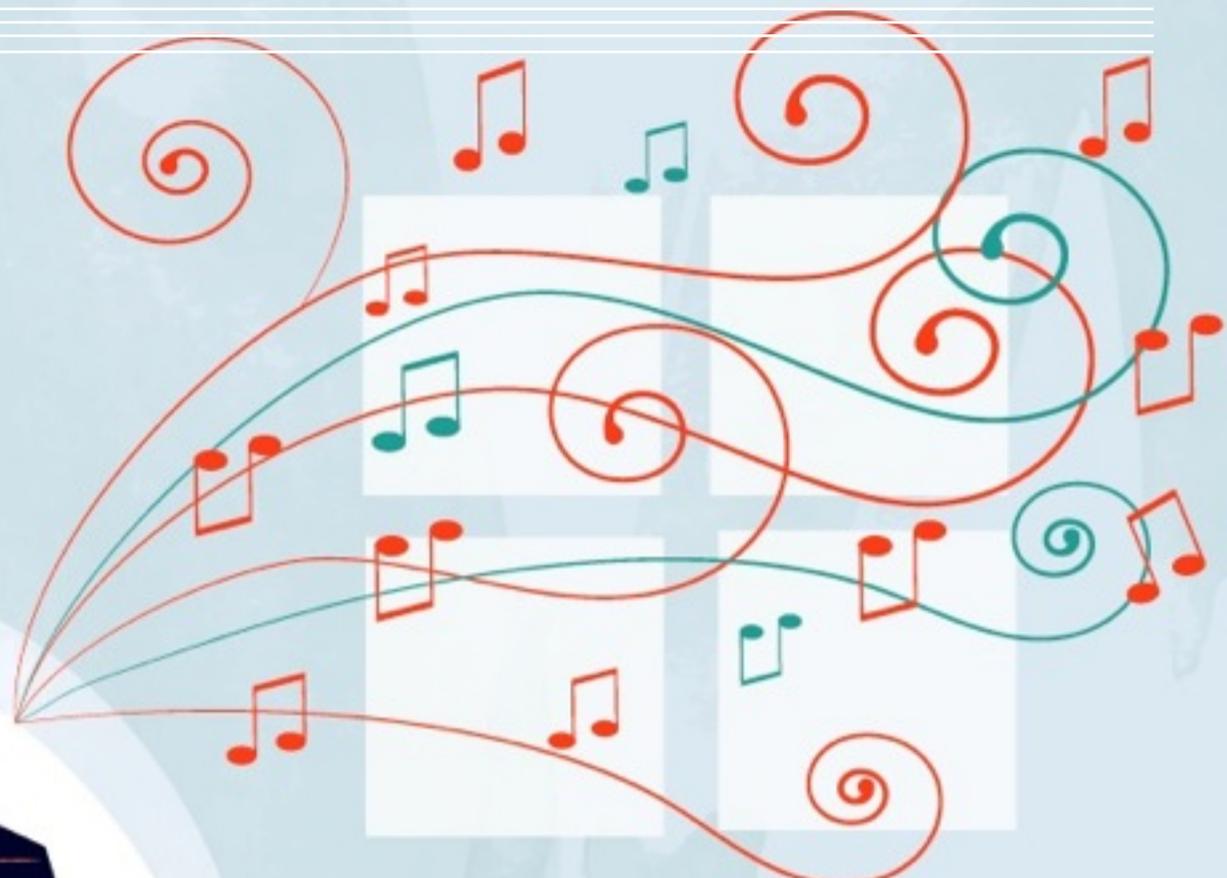
QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS FOR BUSINESS&MARKETING
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OLIVER SUSSAT



WHO IS HE? Based in Guildford, UK. Oliver has a diverse business and entrepreneurial background spanning music, media and technology. He built a multi-platform brand involving a roster of high-end music and television talent for the pre-school marketplace. It achieved music product sales well in excess of 2 million units worldwide and has been linked with companies such as the BBC, EMI, Universal and The Glastonbury Music Festival. He consults in Music, Media and Technology and works as a Senior Lecturer at the Academy of Contemporary Music in Surrey.

TWEET: @osussat



Passing it ON

LINE HILTON DEMYSTIFIES THE
PROCESS OF BECOMING A
SINGING TEACHER

PASSiNG iT ON **TEACHING SINGING**

Are you considering taking up teaching? Maybe you've started and you are

realizing that there is more to it than you first thought, or maybe you are a teacher with many years of experience just curious to see how others do it. No matter where you are in the process I hope this column will either help you get started, fill in gaps in your teaching practice or open a dialogue about the craft of teaching singing.

Being a private singing teacher can be a bit of a lonely job. Teachers often crave the stimulation of other like-minded folk as well as seek opportunities for ongoing professional development. Hopefully this column will be a useful forum for singing teachers!

The why

Taking up teaching is a common occurrence for jobbing singers. It's a great way to earn money whilst staying within the profession. There is also the convenience of being able to work a teaching schedule around gigs, family, holidays and other commitments, offering much more flexibility and stimulation than a soul-sacrificing day job. You can

target a wide variety of student levels, ages, vocal styles and performance needs based on your own experience and know-how.

Some, like myself, decide that they want to dedicate their career to teaching; others use it as a means to supplement their income. Both are valid. The first hurdle is learning the craft. Sadly there are not many places you can go to study the process of becoming a singing teacher.

Many teachers start out by either copying their own teachers' style and method -

some 'wing it', to varying degrees of success and others find a specific technique with a training process. The appalling truth is that there are many teachers out there who have little or no understanding of the teaching process or how students learn, let alone the skills to develop another's voice or how to correct vocal issues. Even worse is there are times when an uneducated teacher actually does harm to their student's voice or psyche. This, in my mind is unforgivable.

Ensuring singing students have access to high levels of teaching expertise has been my driving force as a teacher trainer. I want to help educate singing teachers in the craft and process of one2one singing teaching. I believe that singing teachers should know the anatomy and physiology of vocal instrument, how to assess, train and develop it, as well as an understanding of performance, vocal health, student personalities, their learning styles and how to apply good business practices in their studio.

This column will cover many of these topics and more. So let's go!



[Read more!](#)



PASSiNG iT ON



In the beginning

Once upon a time there was a singer who decided the time had come to pass her knowledge of the craft on by teaching privately to anyone who wanted to learn from her. She had studied voice for seven years with a couple of well known teachers in her country, performed regularly in a variety of settings from professional solo work to contemporary and classical choirs, studied classical and jazz music, and worked on stage in musical theatre productions and in contemporary function bands. "So," she thought, "I have a lot of the experience needed to help others sing!"

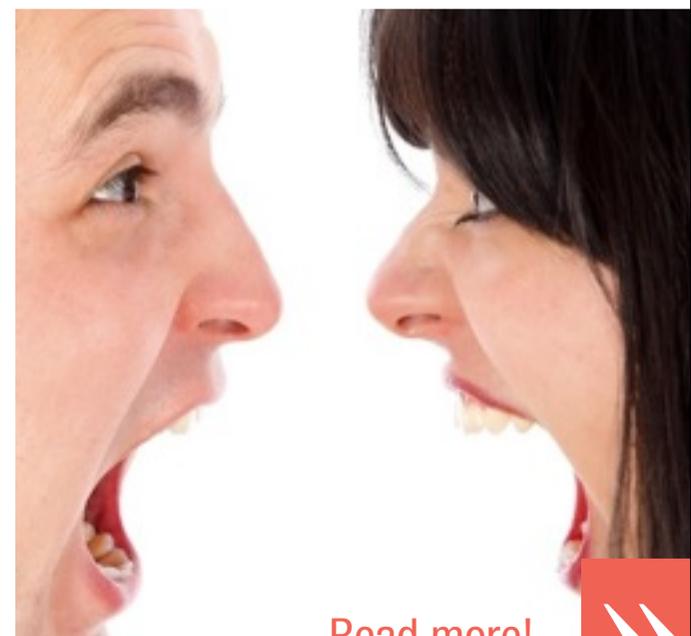
She set about advertising her new service in her local area, using self-made posters with tear off telephone strips. She put an advert in the local rag

and then sat back waiting for the call. She didn't have to wait too long, two calls came within a week and she made arrangements to book the callers in.

The wannabe teacher set up her teaching space with all the equipment she knew was required from her own experience as a voice student. Soon the day came for the first lesson. There was a nervous tingle in her tummy as she answered the door to her first student. She brought him into her teaching space, sat him down to find out a bit more about his previous singing and music experience, and asked him where he wanted to take his singing. He was in his late 40s, in casual employment, leading a rather alternative lifestyle (in other words a hippy dude). Recently he had

taken up the guitar and wanted to be able to sing along as he played his favourite songs. Maybe one day he would feel confident to write and sing his own songs. He'd never really sung before but was willing to put in whatever work was required to get better, he had plenty of time on his hands.

The new singing teacher made her way to her keyboard and asked her new student to stand in front of her so that she could take him through a few scales. Finally the moment had come to vocalize! She raised her hands to the keys and just as they began to descend it suddenly occurred to her she had no idea where on the keyboard she should lay down her fingers. This was not because she couldn't play, but because she had no idea where men's voices sat on the keyboard range... AAARGH!



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PASSiNG iT ON

The next shock came when she realized this new student of hers had no idea how to pitch from a piano. This problem had never occurred to her, she'd been born with a musical ear and all her musical friends were the same. Her non-musical friends often told her they wished they could play or sing, but they knew their limitations and resolved themselves to being audience members forever. She assumed that anyone wanting singing lessons would be musical and know how to pitch him or herself!

So now what?

The teacher managed to 'make up' some relevant pitch exercises to help the student understand what was required if he was to progress in singing. The lesson was a struggle as she had made so many assumptions about her student's knowledge of singing and music. As he was a total amateur it meant she needed to adjust her language, pace and approach. At the end of the lesson she gave him some homework, a recording of the lesson and sent him on his way.

After the student left, this fledgling teacher reflected on the lesson. She realized that she had a lot of holes in her

teaching knowledge, that being able to play instruments, sing and perform was not enough to be a singing teacher. She needed to find out more about the voice, teaching different sexes, ages, vocal styles and abilities as well as understanding the general teaching processes. Whilst she knew her student had left her with some new knowledge, she felt she'd learnt far more from this first lesson, and mainly about her own shortcomings.

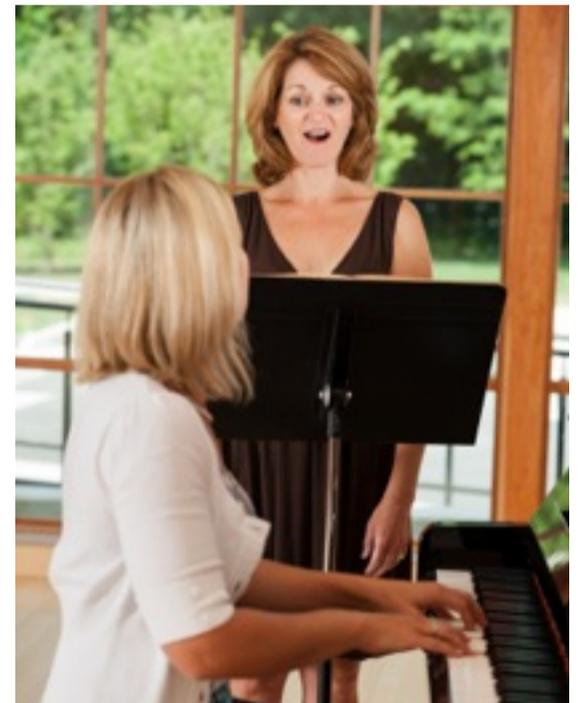
Guess what?

It will not come as a surprise to discover this fledgling teacher was none other than moi! That was in 1994. I continued with two students for a while but when they drifted off I decided not to continue teaching. I didn't feel comfortable with the gaps in my skills and knowledge. I needed to know more about the teaching craft if I wanted to be a good singing teacher.

My way in was to go to university and get a Music Education degree. I also began to read about and attend workshops on singing and vocal technique.

When I recommenced teaching in 1998 I was much more effective. I was still in the process of understanding the voice and teaching

contemporary vocal technique but already I had better, more efficient tools and processes to competently help singers. When I finished my degree I discovered Speech Level Singing, a contemporary vocal technique that helped my voice immensely, finally eliminating the flip between my lower and upper ranges as well as giving me a strong sound throughout my range.



This technique had a training programme so I decided to certify as an instructor. I moved on about 10 years later as my understanding of the voice and the performer compelled me to approach the singer more holistically - to incorporate new developments in vocal science, neuroscience and psychology. By this stage I had also been working as the head of the vocal department

PASSING IT ON

at a large contemporary music college, where I had needed to embrace a wide range of student and teacher experiences, styles and needs.

Now, 20 years since giving my first lesson I have found myself in the position of helping other singers to transition from performing to teaching. How I wish I had had access to this kind of education back in the day. It would have saved my poor students and I a lot of time and frustration.

You can benefit from my experience, start off on a better foot than I did. The digital age means you have access to a lot of information so take advantage of this amazing resource...Google it!

First do an honest evaluation of what you have to offer in terms of training, experience, business acumen etc (see Self Evaluation).

LINE HILTON



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Next step

If you notice that you have gaps in your skills or knowledge then address these before getting started. It may be OK to acquire some of these along the way e.g. business bookkeeping, widening your vocal style knowledge, vocal anatomy and physiology, piano accompanying skills.

Certain areas may need to be achieved before you set out to teach e.g. how to assess the voice and singer, relevant vocalizes (exercises), male and female ranges and playing basic scales on the piano.

Hope this helps you get started. Please feel free to email any questions you have about getting started as a singing teacher. ■

Self Evaluation

- ✓ What current singing, performing and musical experiences can I bring to a potential student?
- ✓ What are my personal strengths/weaknesses?
- ✓ What are my professional strengths/weaknesses?
- ✓ Do I have enough understanding and skill required to teach singing? Such as:
 - Teaching males/females, adults/children/elderly, musical/non-musical, professional/non-professional, specific genre requirements e.g. jazz, pop, R&B, musical theatre.
 - Vocal technique, health and anatomy.
 - Application of technique to song
 - Appropriate piano skills
- ✓ Do I have a suitable place to teach?
- ✓ Do I have the right equipment?
- ✓ Am I available on a regular basis and at suitable times for potential students?
- ✓ What am I worth per hour? (Usually the first question a potential student asks)
- ✓ Is there a market in my area?
- ✓ What do I know about starting up a business? E.g. admin/marketing/tax

WHO IS SHE? Line helps pro and semipro singers, artists and voice teachers with their voice, performance, mindset and training. Her speciality areas include anatomy, health, technique and mindset. She pulls on a wide range of qualifications, experiences and interests to assist her clients to build and develop the knowledge and skills they require for their craft. She is currently the Education Director of Vocology In Practice, a voice teacher network, and is doing a MSc in Performing Arts Medicine at UCL in London.

WEBSITE: www.linehilton.com

gearing

UP

BUILDING A HOME RECORDING STUDIO



MICROPHONES 101



HEARING PROTECTION



Building A HOME RECORDING STUDIO

JOURNEY WITH SINGER ROSE KIMBERLEY
AS SHE CONQUERS THE FEAR OF
TECHNOLOGY AND TAKES CONTROL OF
HER CAREER

BUILDING A HOME RECORDING STUDIO FROM SCRATCH



GETTING STARTED...WHAT DO I NEED?

Hi! My name's Rose Kimberley - I'm a singer, songwriter and vocal coach and, like many people in my position, I've generally kept pretty clear of the more 'techie' side of the music world!

However the more I find myself wanting to develop in all musical areas, the more I feel the need to get over my technological fear and get set up with a home recording studio. Doing so will allow me to work much more independently as a writer and session singer,

as well as enable me to provide a recording service to my students. In this column I will be sharing with you my journey from being a simple singer to (hopefully) a singer with a side of sound engineer! I will be swatting up on equipment and speaking to people who can help me (and you) get over the fear and become proficient with home-based recording technology. My goal is to become skilled enough to use my studio as a resource to do my job to the best of my ability! ■

ROSE KIMBERLEY



WHO IS SHE? Originally trained in dance UK-based Rose now combines performing as a singer/songwriter, working as a function singer and teaching singing to private clients. She is a typical representative of the majority of singers out there who have the dream of being 'discovered' but mostly just want to make a living from what they love the most, singing.

WEBSITE: www.rosekimberley.com

Microphones 101

MICHAEL HARMON INTRODUCES YOU TO
MICROPHONE FUNDAMENTALS.

MICROPHONES 101

mi·cro·phone
noun

1. an instrument for converting sound waves into electrical energy variations, which may then be amplified, transmitted, or recorded.

Microphones come in all shapes and sizes - as some of you may have already encountered. There are different varieties of microphone that singers use in a few different settings such as live performances, in the studio, and in the shower. But in this article, we won't be discussing that last example!

So, what components make up a microphone anyway?

The technology that's used in microphones is fairly simple. Aside from the actual casing itself, most microphones have a common mechanism that helps turn an acoustical sound into audio signal. The main component is known as the Capsule, which is essentially a mini speaker that's reverse-engineered to detect sound rather than project sound. Yes, I said that correctly - microphones contain the same technology as that in a speaker, just working in the opposite direction. The components are housed in a casing, and have connections to hook the microphone into an



XLR Mic cable. Voila! You have yourself a microphone.

Though there are many different brands and manufacturers, there are two types of microphones that we see used by vocalists: Dynamic and Condenser microphones.

Dynamic Microphones

Dynamic Microphones are what you'll most commonly encounter. If you've sung into a microphone before, chances are that it was some variation of a Dynamic Microphone.

The most common example of a dynamic microphone is the Shure SM58, which has earned its place as the industry standard for a number of applications, most commonly with live vocals. These microphones are built to last, and can not only

withstand loud decibel levels, but can pretty much survive all scenarios on stage.

In fact, many people like to test build quality of the microphones [off the stage](#) just to make sure their mic will stand up to anything.

Condenser Microphones

Condenser microphones differ from Dynamic microphones in several ways, with the main difference being that they require an external power source.

Many mixers have a "Phantom Power" or "48v" switch that engages this power signal to be sent to the microphone, which is transmitted through the microphone cable to the mic. Condenser microphones are most commonly seen in the studio versus live applications because of the

MICROPHONES

delicacy of the microphone, and their need for phantom power. Condensers come in two different forms: Large Diaphragm and Small Diaphragm. These two types look exactly how you'd expect: some have larger components and are housed in a large casing and shockmount, while others are smaller and are considered "pencil condensers." Large Diaphragm Condenser (LDC) mics are commonly used for vocals in the studio, while Small Diaphragm Condenser (SDC) mics may be used on live vocals and a variety of other instruments. Examples of each are the [Neumann U87](#) (LDC) which is a studio staple, and the [Neumann KMS 105](#) (SDC) which is great for live vocals. Lastly, some condenser mics have the ability to pick up sound from a number of different angle. This is called a Pickup Pattern and is selectable on the microphone. Most commonly you'll see these three options: Cardioid (180°), Figure 8, and Omni (360°).

Microphone Buyer's Guide

If you're in the market for a new microphone for either live or studio purposes, we've put together a small list of industry-standard examples that will get you off on the right foot. Priced in a few different levels, this guide is

meant to serve as an introduction for vocal microphones for every budget and purpose.

Dynamic Microphones

Live use

[Shure PG58](#) - A solution to a beginner live vocal mic for under £50. This particular mic features an on/off switch, and its sound quality is best suited for amateur to intermediate performers.



Shure PG58

[Shure SM58](#) - The industry standard for live vocal mics. This is a built-to-last microphone whose sound quality can serve beginners and professionals alike. Similar alternatives are the [Shure Beta58](#) (better build quality and slightly better sound quality at a higher price), or the [Sennheiser e835](#) (a slightly cheaper solution of similar sound quality to the SM58).

Dynamic Microphones

Studio use

[Shure SM7b](#) - Though dynamic microphones are less commonly used for studio vocals, the Shure SM7b holds its own against its condenser competitors. It has been used on classic recordings by Michael Jackson, Red Hot Chili Peppers, and many more. This microphone is best suited for aggressive, in-your-face vocals like Rap, Hard Rock, or Funk.

[Electro Voice RE20](#) -

Another dynamic studio vocal microphone, the RE20 was originally designed for broadcast, but has found a home on recordings by Stevie Wonder and Thom Yorke, to name a few. This microphone is slightly darker in character than the SM7b, thus it is less common as a vocal microphone for studio recordings.



Electro Voice RE20

Read more!



MICROPHONES

Large Diaphragm Condenser Microphones

Studio use

AKG Perception 120 - The most basic of its series, this microphone is a great starter LDC mic for anyone looking to try out recording. If you are feeling daring, this mic has several older siblings, such as the Perception **220**, **420**, and the vacuum-tube-powered **820**, which offer a good-better-best sound and build quality.

Neumann TLM 103 - Neumann is unparalleled in its quality for professional vocal applications in the studio. The TLM 103 is a great product by Neumann, and is offered at a reasonable price for top quality vocal recordings. This microphone is partly designed after its legendary older brother, the **U87**, which is a staple in the recording industry for being one of the most versatile and best sounding microphones available.



Neumann KMS 105



Neumann TLM 103

Small Diaphragm Condenser Microphones

Live use

Shure Beta87A - This is an example of an everyday SDC mic used for live applications. This microphone is similar to the Shure Beta58A, but has a slightly different pickup pattern and requires phantom power.

Neumann KMS 105 - A high end solution for the professional vocalist. From build quality to sound quality, the detail involved in manufacturing this product is superb. This microphone is a true gem for vocalists looking for the highest quality in a live microphone.

Though there are thousands of different microphones by hundreds of different manufacturers, the two main types (Dynamic and Condenser) are what you'll encounter most. With this guide, you should be able to easily identify a microphone by type and what application it's best suited for. ■

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MICHAEL HARMON



WHO IS HE? Michael is a Berklee College of Music graduate living in Central Massachusetts. He owns and operates the Wachusett Recording Co., where he educates young musicians in audio production and supports the art of independent record making. While drumming remains one of his first passions, Michael performs with several bands around the Northeast U.S."

WEBSITE: www.wachusettrecording.com



Hearing PROTECTION

PROTECT YOUR ASSETS &
PREVENT HEARING LOSS.



HEARING PROTECTION



Why Hearing Protection for Singers is Vital

PROTECTING YOUR EARS...WHY AND HOW



The Skin On In-Ear Monitoring for Singers

ERIKA FOOTMAN GETTING AN EAR MOULD

Jono Heale from Advanced Communications Solutions (ACS) explains how hearing loss occurs amongst musicians and singers.

In the first video, Jono describes how you can avoid damaging your hearing, on and off the job. He then shows us how easy it is to get the ear mould fitted.

A musician himself, Jono knows only too well from personal experience how devastating noise induced hearing loss can be.

After your voice, your ears are your most valuable assets. Make sure they are protected!



QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS FOR HEARING PROTECTION
QUESTIONS@ISINGMAG.COM

JONO HEALE



WHO IS HE? Jono's background comes from the entertainment industry working both sides of the curtain for over 25 years. Formally a professional musician working at the BBC, tours and recording then later in studio production, he went on to work as a national events and project manager in the creative arts sector and a freelance Health and Safety Advisor for music festivals and events. Jono suffers from tinnitus and noise induced hearing loss and is passionate about these issues. He is now Director of Education and Business Development at ACS Custom.

WEBSITE: www.acscustom.com

look, listen 

& FEEL

APP REVIEW: InTune 

BOOK REVIEW: The Singer's Instinct 

PERFORMANCE REVIEW: Bruno Mars 

SONG REVIEW: "Roar" Katy Perry 

APPS REVIEW

TAKING A LOOK AT USEFUL APPS FOR THE SINGER. LET US KNOW IF YOU THINK THERE ARE APPS WE SHOULD BE REVIEWING.



InTune

Wittenburg University

99cents

[iTunes link](#)

Editor's verdict: ★★★★★

Musicians of all kinds rely on their ears to make sure they're in tune with the other sounds around them. Horn players, string players and especially singers simply can't reach their fullest potential if their ears haven't been properly trained. However, ear training is usually conducted over years of lessons and performances little by little, very much making the process a gradual one dependent on the frequency of practice and lessons. This fact also makes it difficult for late-blooming musicians to catch up. Shouldn't there be an easier, faster way for artists to get their ears in shape whenever it's most convenient for them?

Enter the InTune app. What originally began as Wittenburg University music professor Dan Kazez's gamified method of testing pitch discrimination, InTune is now an app designed both to test *and* improve pitch discrimination ability and a top 10 music app in 15 countries.

The app works like this: two tones are played and the listener has to determine whether the second tone was higher or lower than the first using an up or down arrow. Every time the listener answers correctly, the next two tones are closer together in pitch, making the task more difficult. If a listener answers incorrectly, the following two tones are further apart in pitch.

Once a listener has entered three incorrect answers, the game ends and the app provides the listener with two scores: one that is point based (you get between 10 and 30 points for a correct answer depending on difficulty) and another that is percentage based and states the interval between the two closest pitches you answered correctly, i.e. 2.5% of a half step.

All in all, InTune is a simplistic, aesthetically pleasing, and addictive app

that is easy to use and accomplishes its goal very quickly; my score has improved every time I've played. And it's not just me. A research study showed InTune to improve students' listening the more often they played - at triple the rate of those who did not.

If I have one criticism, it's that the app doesn't let the listener know if their scores are good or bad compared to the average for someone their age. Maybe this is just my competitive juices flowing, but I'd have a better sense of whether I need to use InTune a lot (or if my parents were right about loud headphones ruining my hearing as a teenager) if I saw that the average for people my age is higher than I'm consistently scoring.

In this vein, it might also be interesting to have a user leaderboard of sorts that shows the top 10 highest scores ever recorded, or even to see basic info about other users like what instrument they play. Then we could finally settle the argument about what group of musicians has a better ear after all!

InTune is available in the iTunes App Store for only 99 cents! Download it [here](#). ■

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NERISSA CAMPBELL REVIEWS BOOKS, VIDEOS, TRAINING AND BASICALLY ANYTHING SHE THINKS WILL BE USEFUL TO SINGERS.

The Singer's Instinct

Brandon Brophy

\$16.55

<http://singersinstinct.com>

Nerissa's verdict: ★★★★★

As a vocalist and singing teacher, it was so exciting to read a book like *The Singer's Instinct* by Brandon Brophy. As is the case with so much that is currently happening in the world of singing (ahem, like this magazine for example!), as I was reading it I kept thinking, "I wish this book was around when I was starting out singing!" Oh how it would have helped me to clearly identify my voice as a beginner.

Looking back, I was a 'flipper' who became a 'strainer' with the onset of voice lessons and I struggled for many years before being SAVED by a teacher who really understood the voice. This book would have helped guide me not only on how to address my voice type, but also taught me about the physiology behind my instrument, its challenges and joys, and of course, lessons in good technique. In a broader context, it would have helped further develop my understanding of music, song, and how to seek out and experiment with my own style. WOW! What a tool for any singer to have, and an



amazing reference for a teacher.

The Singer's Instinct claims it will help you "activate the 4 impulses that unleash the power of singing" and gives a great overview of how to accomplish just that. It is brief and concise, imperative for this kind of book, with sections clearly defined and broken down into informative chapters with diagrams, exercises and inspirational quotes. This makes it a fantastic jumping off point for anyone looking to get started in singing or teaching.

The Vocal Impulse is the book's first and most in-depth section, and not coincidentally, the one that I found the most informative. Most importantly, I think this section is crucial for aspiring singers as it addresses finding your particular voice-habit and how to structure your technique work around that habit. This invaluable information has the potential to empower any singer to understand and learn about his or her instrument, and

Brophy spells it out clearly.

The following three sections are equally important, each giving practical advice and exercises to the aspiring singer. The Musical Impulse section deals with the importance of critical listening while providing comprehensive instruction on the fundamentals of keeping time, rhythm, and intonation. You may find this chapter very basic if you know your music theory well, but it supplied me with a helpful perspective to reference when trying to get basic music theory information across to students in a way that helps them develop as singers. The section offers practical advice on what to do as well as how to go about doing it (while still addressing your voice-habit and the importance of getting your voice on track technically). What everyone wants, right? The next section, The Vocal Personality Impulse, discusses understanding your natural vocal timbre and how to develop your voice to make it *your* voice. I loved that this chapter was included. For me personally, it's something that I put a lot of emphasis on and

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sometimes find very difficult to achieve as a vocalist. We often begin singing because we love certain songs or a particular singer, and at some point start singing along and emulating our idols. This is great training ground! But what about when it comes to finding your own style? This search can often be daunting and overwhelming, but *The Singer's Instinct* offers up a small section (the smallest of the four) covering tips meant to help singers find *their* voice. Again, it offers practical advice and exercises, for example: how to approach your voice if it sounds too nasal, assessing your voice for your own unique qualities, being gentle on yourself (oh so hard for many of us!), how to work on riffs & embellishments, different types of vocal effects, and adding elements of rhythm and intuitive phrasing to develop your individual vocal style. Though I would have

loved for this section to be more expansive, it was a smart move to keep it short as it offers inspiration and practicality without overstepping the importance of objective #1: working on your voice habit!

The book's final section, *The Impulse of Wise Practice*, is another great addition. It offers general practice guidelines tailored to your level of expertise and what you may be focusing on e.g. recording, vocal development, performance prep, maintenance, the importance of reviewing your practice, tips on finding a good teacher, guidelines on vocal health and voice training myths. Lots of juicy information that I know students are keen to know the answers to. Mr. Brophy has held nothing back!

I am really impressed with *The Singer's Instinct*. Kudos to Brandon Brophy for writing a really tight and concise book on singing instruction! It

is a clear, informative and not at all overwhelming book capable of guiding any singer or teacher on their journey in a practical manner. I got very inspired reading it and am really glad to know that all those flippers, strainers, light and balanced voices out there can have access to the knowledge that helps us singers better understand our voices. ■



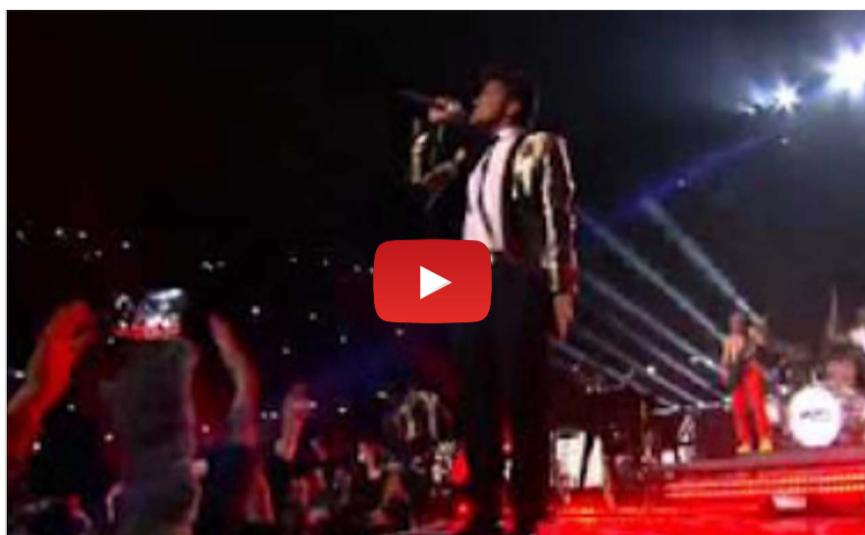
The Singer's Instinct by Brandon Brophy is available from www.3rdvoice.com

NERISSA CAMPBELL



WHO IS SHE? Nerissa is a vocalist, songwriter and music teacher based in Brooklyn, NY. Her background is in jazz and improvisation, but she loves exploring and learning about many aspects and genres of music, as well as inspiring others to express themselves through singing & songwriting.

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BRUNO MARS

Superbowl XLVIII Halftime Performance

“Wow, Amazing.” I believe those were the very words that escaped my lips as I watched Bruno Mars’ Super Bowl XLVIII halftime performance. I have super high standards for what I deem a great live performance and it’s hard to isolate and evaluate any one factor in a vacuum.

Pitch is affected by breathing, and breathing is complicated by excessive movement. Singers are instructed to stand still at an optimal posture for singing, but it would have been a lackluster show if Mars abided by all the technical rules. After entering on a moving platform, Mars drummed his heart out even before he uttered one note, which is no easy cardio feat. He also danced a good amount, showing off fancy footwork and gyrating his hips in line with his band. All of this affected his pitch at certain points where he lost his breath and delivered sharp or flat notes. The energy in the stadium, any butterflies Mars might have been experiencing backstage, or even the technical equipment could affect his ability to control his pitch. Though where pitch gave way a little,

Mars made up for it tenfold with his energetic performance.

The performance overall was incredibly dynamic - a great arrangement of his original songs and a feature by the Red Hot Chili Peppers that took the audience on a journey of emotions. The first minute was a huge buildup backed by a choir and Mars on drums, followed by 5 minutes of high energy singing and dancing from a stage full of men in matching gold jackets. 6:15 into the show, Mars brought the audience down “a little bit softer now...” until he was at a complete whisper before bringing it back up to full energy (reminiscent of James Brown in the best way possible). The Red Hot Chili Peppers then took over, adding a great level of diversity to the show. Mars ended with an amazing performance of “Just The Way You Are”, which was immediately preceded by a dedication video from servicemen and women. I don’t know about you, but I got chills, wanted to get up and dance, and nearly shed a tear, all in 13 minutes.

Bruno Mars is such an amazing talent - he has great mastery over his voice, even with all of the challenging factors involved in a super bowl halftime show. He supports his strong chest voice by dropping his jaw and opening his whole face, and his vocal inflections are smooth like butter. Note: in his last song, “Just The Way You Are”, he stands in place, with near perfect singer’s posture (with the exception for how he tilts his chin upward at the higher notes). And, I’ll add that it is no coincidence that this was the most perfect segment of his entire performance from a strictly vocal perspective. ■



KATY PERRY “ROAR”

WRITERS: Katy Perry, Lukasz Gottwald, Max Martin, Bonnie McKee, Henry Walter.

Anyone who has attempted to cover a Katy Perry song, whether singing in the shower or at an open mic, knows how much vocal stamina is required. “Roar”, Perry’s single from her album *Prism*, is no exception.

In the verses, Perry uses a comfortable chest voice fitted to telling her story of self-discovery and empowerment. The melody is simple and she reserves the use of vibrato and breathiness for ending her phrases, so it’s very easy to sing along with (unlike a typical Whitney Houston ballad replete with runs that last as long as phrases do). Perry’s diction and pronunciation are clear and she exudes a certain swagger in her delivery, characteristic of her individual style as a singer.

Much like her previous single, “Firework”, “Roar” is an anthem and the hook is sung in the upper register of Perry’s chest voice at high energy. There are two major things she does to maintain control of her voice: good breath placement, and the use of exaggerated vowels.

Proper breath placement does more than give her the power to execute those notes with precision; it allows her to phrase the lyrics in a

meaningful way. Using exaggerated vowels allows Perry to drop her jaw, loosen her face muscles, and belt the hook with less strain on her vocal cords. The emphasis on the vowels also highlights an internal rhyme.

(breath) I got the **EYE** of the **TI**-ger,
 (breath) a **FI**-ghter,
 (breath) **DANC**-ing thr**OUGH** the **FI**-re
 (breath) 'Cause I am a **CHA**-mpion
 (breath) and **YOU**’re gonna hear me **ROAR**
LOU-der, (breath) **LOU**-der than a **LI**-on
 (breath) 'Cause I am a **CHA**-mpion (breath) and
 you’re gonna hear me
RO-Uh-Uh-Uh-Uh-Uh-Oar
 (breath) **Uh-Uh-Uh-Uh-Uh-Oar**
 (breath) **Uh-Uh-Uh-Uh-Uh-Oar**
 (breath) **YOU**’re gonna hear me **ROAR**

Note: If you find yourself needing to cover this song, it would serve you well to internalize the breaths, phrasing, and vowel placements. If you have a hard time singing this live, don’t feel bad cause it isn’t easy for her either. It’s a very tough song.

Katy Perry has a down-to-earth, relatable voice; she has mastered smooth transitions between her different vocal registers and is dynamic in her delivery. So, whether you love it or hate it, it is a catchy song that is well-matched with Perry’s vocal strengths. ■

SOPHIA MOON

WHO IS SHE? Sophia is a seasoned recording artist, singer-songwriter & performance coach with an entrepreneurial spirit. She released her solo album, *Staring Back at Me*, on iTunes in 2009. In prior years, she co-founded a record label (Fifth Street) and released an album (*No Limit*) with two featured artists from the label. Most recently she released the single, “Real Thing” and started her own boutique marketing agency, JaggerMoon Creative Group.

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