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ISSUE 5

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FOR THE VOICE  
DOES IT FLOW?

**TRAVELING  
& THE VOICE**  
Staying well on the road

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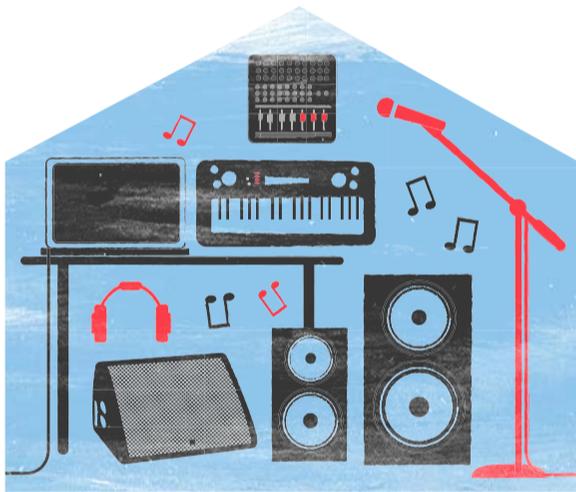
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# *the* **FUNDAMENTALS**



**VOCAL NERDS** Head voice vs falsetto,  
is it a battle?

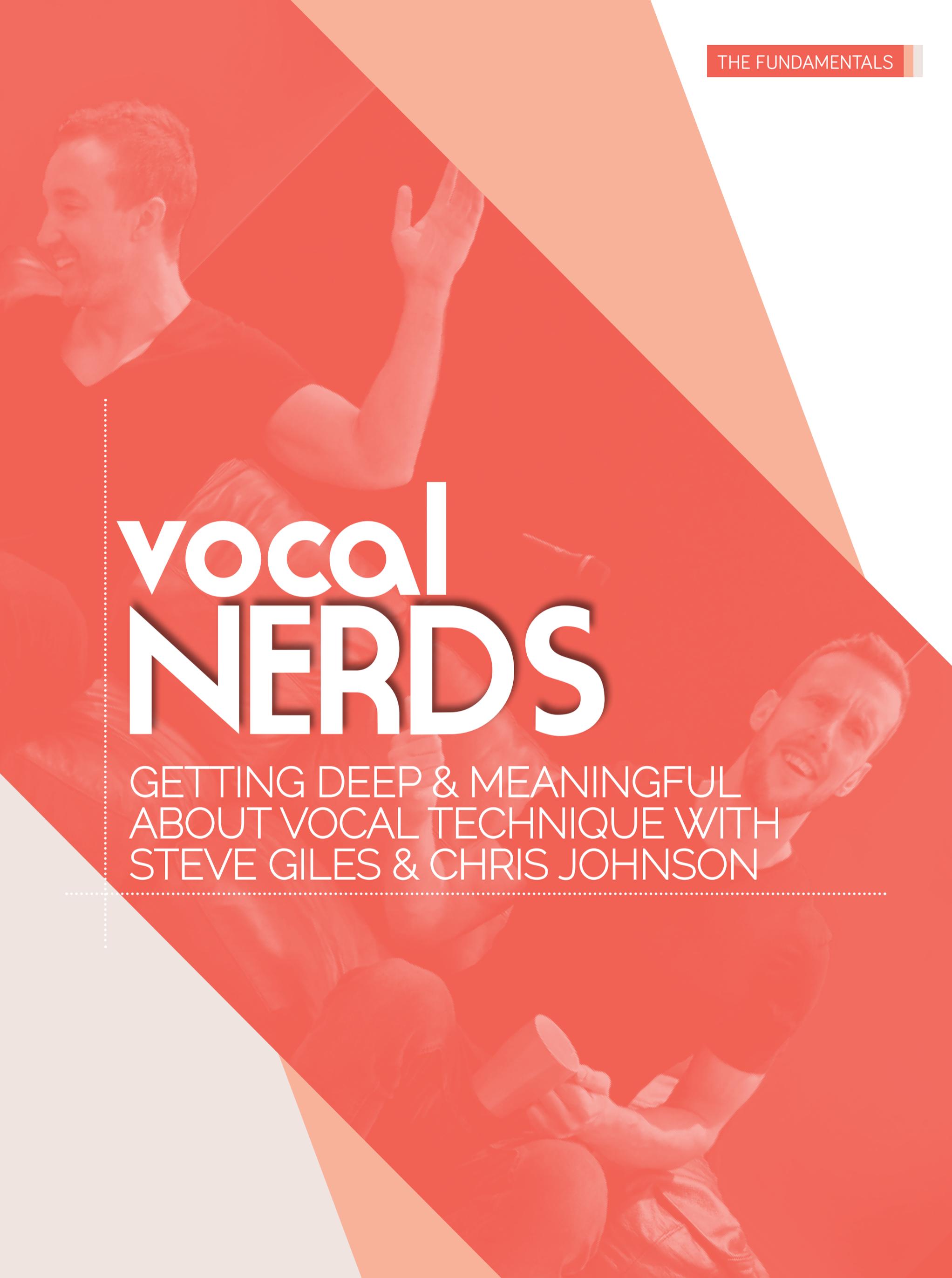


**VOCAL STYLE** Riffamaniacs!



**MUSICAL THEATRE** The secrets to a successful MT  
audition from 4 top MT pros





# Vocal NERDS

GETTING DEEP & MEANINGFUL  
ABOUT VOCAL TECHNIQUE WITH  
STEVE GILES & CHRIS JOHNSON



# Head Voice vs Falsetto ...is it a battle?

**I**t sounds like a battle—the Incredible Hulk vs Iron Man, though definitely not as exciting. Probably less damage to public property however. Joking aside, this topic is the source of much confusion in the singing world. We're sure many of you are saying, "Aren't they basically the same thing?" Well, in this article we hope to be able to clear up the differences between these two vocal qualities and shine some light on the pros and cons of each one. This is, of course, only our understanding of it so far. There are many opinions on what each sounds like across the singing world... so we are totally open to

debate on if you want to chip in via the mag!

If you're asking yourself what the use is in knowing the differences between these two vocal registers, then here are a couple of thoughts. The big one is in communication; either for you to discuss what you want to do with your voice or from the other end so a singing teacher, an MD or a producer can communicate their ideas to you. If you are clear about what each voice register is, and what it sounds like, then the process of working with someone who's directing you will be smoother. The other reason belongs in the technique camp; what each can do for, or against, your voice.

## RANGE

Let's dig into why these two vocal registers are often confused. Firstly, this is because they are normally produced around a similar group of pitches. Some would classify this 'group' as anything above the first bridge or 'passaggio' (covered in iSing Issue 3). In more simple terms it's where the high notes are. For guys this would start (and ascend) on or around Eb4. So knowing that these two vocal registers usually exist around the same pitches, how on earth can they be so different?

Google '*what's the difference between head voice and falsetto*', and you're likely to see a vast

amount of attempts at defining the difference. Some discuss what it isn't and most define it by what it sounds like. Vocal geeks (like us) will want to understand exactly what is happening at the source: the vocal cords. This way, at the very least, you can unleash your newfound wisdom at your next singers' meet. For this, we have to enlist the help of some voice scientists, namely our good friends at the National Center for Voice and Speech in Iowa, USA.

### SOME BASIC ANATOMY

It's said that the main distinction occurs at the vocal cord level. If you didn't already know, the

vocal cords are made from several different layers and types of tissue. Remember the cross sections of planet earth that we used to look at in science lessons at school? Visualise the cross section of a vocal cord in the same way, but replace the names of the different layers of rock with the tissues within the vocal fold structure. These are: the epithelium (outer skin), three layers of vocal ligaments and the thyroarytenoid muscle (TA) at the core.

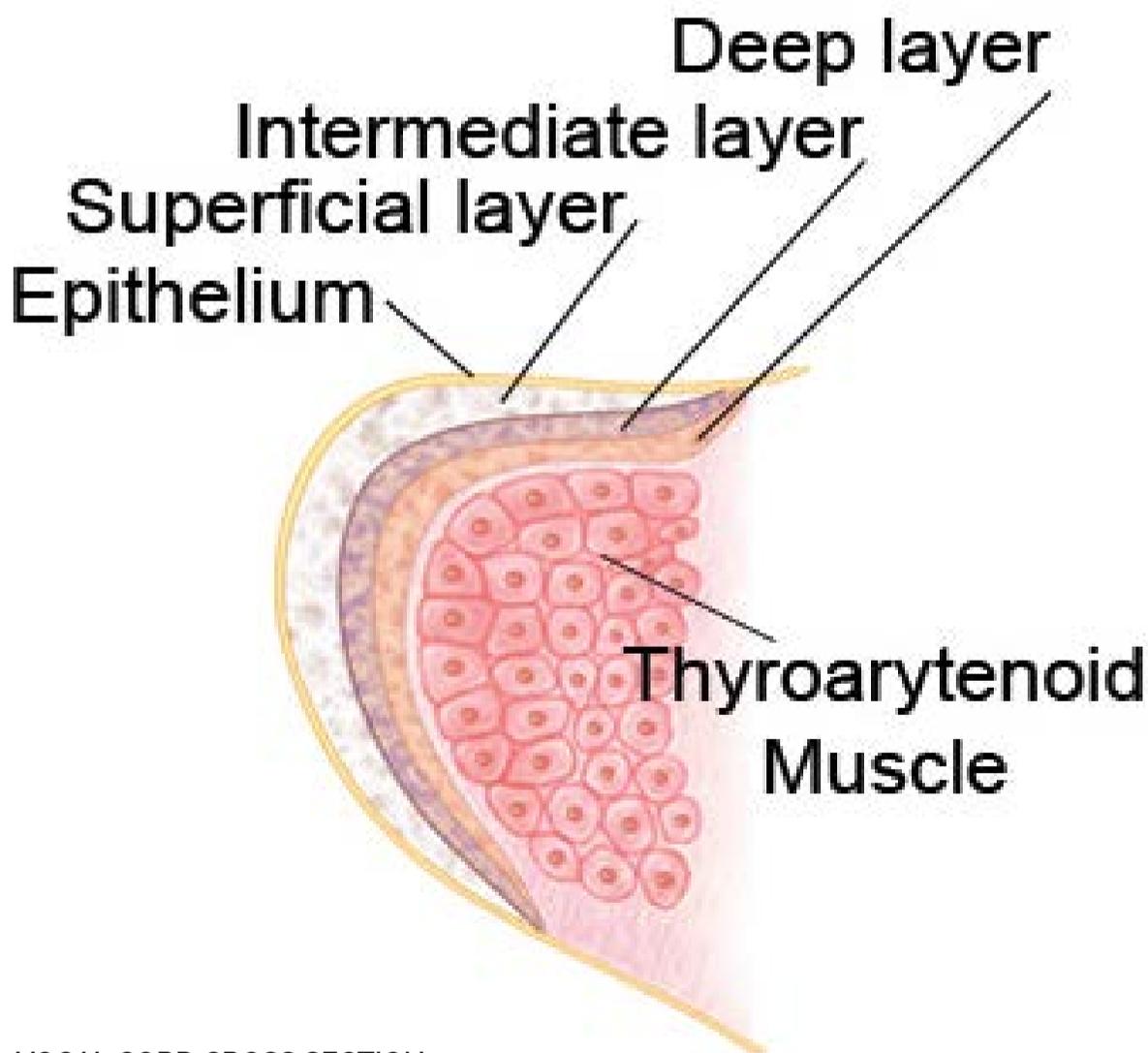
The point to remember is that the distinct falsetto sound is created by the exclusive use of the 'superficial' layers of the vocal cord. The deeper layers of the vocal cords

are disengaged when they vibrate so contact is made solely by these outer, and more pliable layers. We can't help but think that we've been unnecessarily pretentious in our explanation here and so another way to put it is: during the time that the singer is choosing to sing in falsetto, a large proportion of the vocal cord is taking some "time out".

As far as creating these same notes in head voice, we can simply say that more of the vocal cord mass is being used to create the sound. Like falsetto, the outer layers of the vocal cord are vibrating, but more of the deeper layers are involved in vibration. This generates a richer sound wave with more harmonic energy, which, in head voice range, resonates mostly in the mouth cavity. This resonance sends vibrations throughout the bone structures of the head. And that, ladies and gentlemen, is where it gets its name!

Some singers, especially those in the early stages of head voice development, may feel like there isn't much of a difference between the sensations and sounds of falsetto and head voice. We must remember that although falsetto and head voice each have a unique vocal cord setup, it's still one instrument that is being used. In real life, these vocal cord configurations don't have to be mutually exclusive. We may be experiencing a little bit of everything from time to time and across phrases.

Now you've been armed with the anatomical knowledge, what kind of sound can you expect?



VOCAL CORD CROSS SECTION

©Bluetree Publishing

### LET'S START WITH THE HEAD VOICE.

Due to the extra body of the vocal cord vibrating, the head voice sound is very clean, round in tone, with no breathiness and clear as a bell. We know you're all probably 'Rockers and Poppers', but a classical soprano is a great example of an exclusive head voice user. She will be able to fill a theatre (and break some windows), un-mic'd, with her head voice without having to add much effort, chest-like quality or belt sound. This is because the rich sound wave coming from the body of the vocal cord is carrying like a dream. If you were to ask her to go into falsetto you would immediately notice a sharp drop in volume and energy. This is because falsetto loses a lot of the sound energy due to the lack of vibrating vocal cord body.

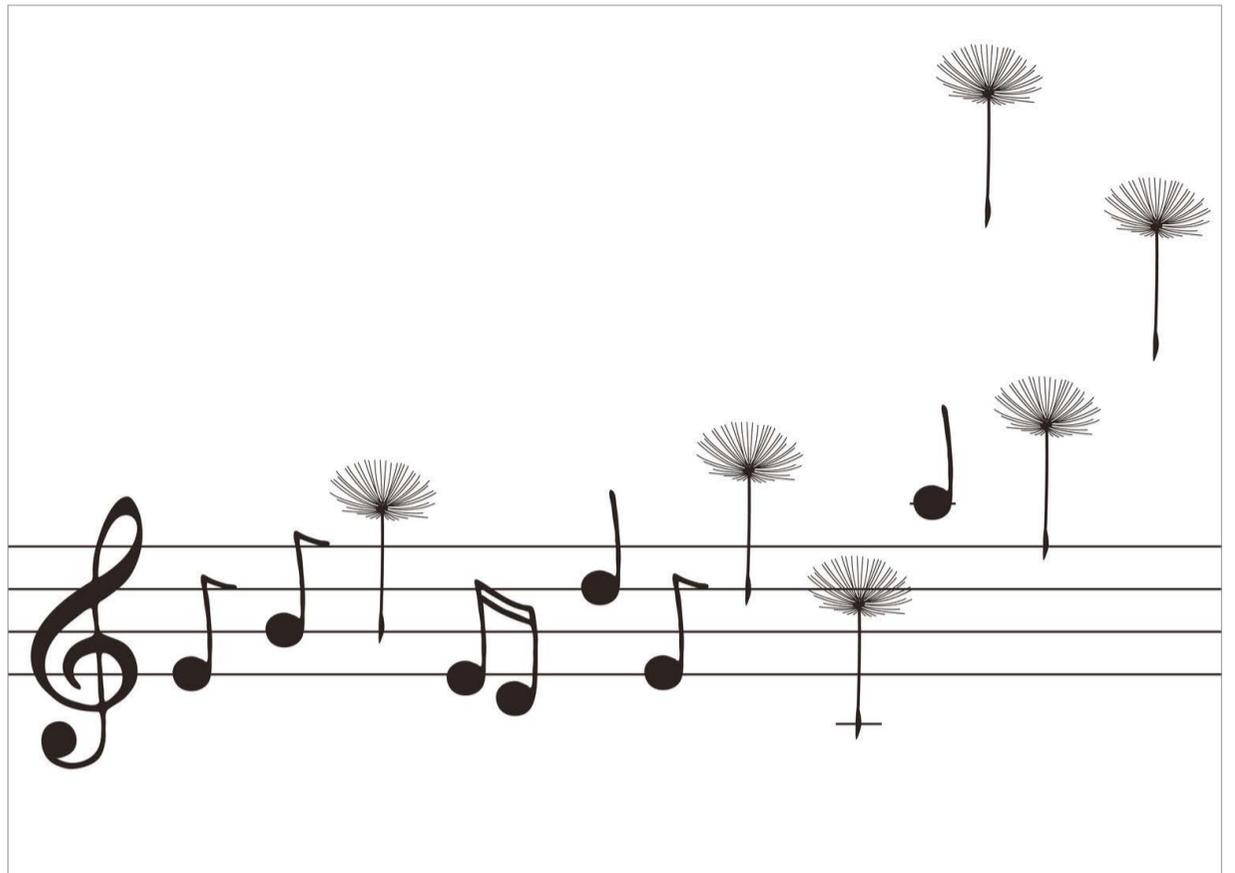
### THE FALSETTO SOUND

Falsetto, on the other hand, is flute-like and a little softer typically, but not exclusively.

*Some singers, e.g. Frankie Valli, have managed to develop a very strong falsetto sound.*

Singing in falsetto can also require quite a bit of effort if it's breathy. This is because you get less output for the same (or often more) effort than head voice. This makes falsetto an inefficient sound. Which means going soft and airy on a sound in order to "save our voice" can often leave us more ragged due to this principle.

Another pro of head voice is its muscular similarity with the chest voice. As we've already said, in head voice the vocal cords



are together and active in their different layers. Because chest voice also has more beef in the vocal cord, it has some common ground with head voice and can smoothly blend there. Huge benefit: Not only can you blend there, but you can add more vocal cord activity to it, resulting in what many may describe as the elusive 'mixed voice' [OOOOOOOOH]. However, when moving to a falsetto sound from chest, much of the vocal cord muscle has to switch off. This is why we hear such a difference in tone when moving between them, often called a 'flip'.

### THERE ARE NO RULES WHEN STYLE IS CONCERNED

When it comes to vocal style anything goes of course! You could quack through a song in the name of 'freedom of expression', who are we to argue? However, if you would like to sell a few albums or get people to turn up to your show then the farmyard stuff might have

to stop. Instead you could choose falsetto to get very tender lyrics across. Flipping into falsetto from your chest will deliver a more dreamy and emotive dynamic. Here's a great example from David Ruffin as he sings "...break my heart." In the chorus of Walk Away from Love.



"WALK AWAY FROM LOVE"- DAVID RUFFIN

Typical contemporary genres that use both the falsetto and head voice are soul/RnB, pop, country and folk. Singers that create a feast of both falsetto and head are:

Male - Frankie Valli, Philip Bailey (Earth Wind & Fire), Barry Gibb

(Bee Gees), Justin Timberlake, and UK's very own 2015 Grammy Award winner, Sam Smith.

Female - Ellie Goulding, Donna Summer, Dido, Sarah McLaughlin, Sade.

preferred sound for the ladies and sometimes the guys, for example in parts of Bring Him Home from Les Miserables.

THE ROUND UP

Head voice and falsetto can compliment each other, and any style of singing. They are, simply, two different vocal cord settings used over a similar pitch range producing different sound colours. Because of the insane amount of variety there is in our voices and genetics, falsetto and head voice can sound wildly different between singers. Which is why it's sometimes hard to figure out which one is which! But, in a general sense (and this is very, very general) one is usually clearer, fuller and cleaner than the other. Whatever the resulting sound is, it's about what level of emotion and connection that head or falsetto respectively bring to a piece. That's their best attribute! ■

When it comes to classical music, and the more 'legit' (stage speak for 'classical-style') musical theatre, a clean head voice is often the



Vocal Nerds

Webinar with Chris & Steve

.....  
They answered your questions on the topic of:

*Head vs Falsetto*

Friday 10th APRIL, 2015

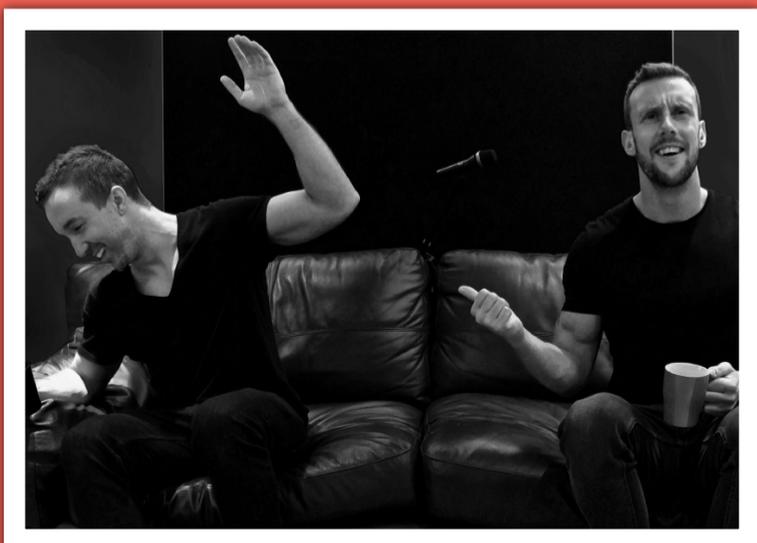
4-4.30pm BST (11-11.30am ET)

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THE NAKED VOCALIST

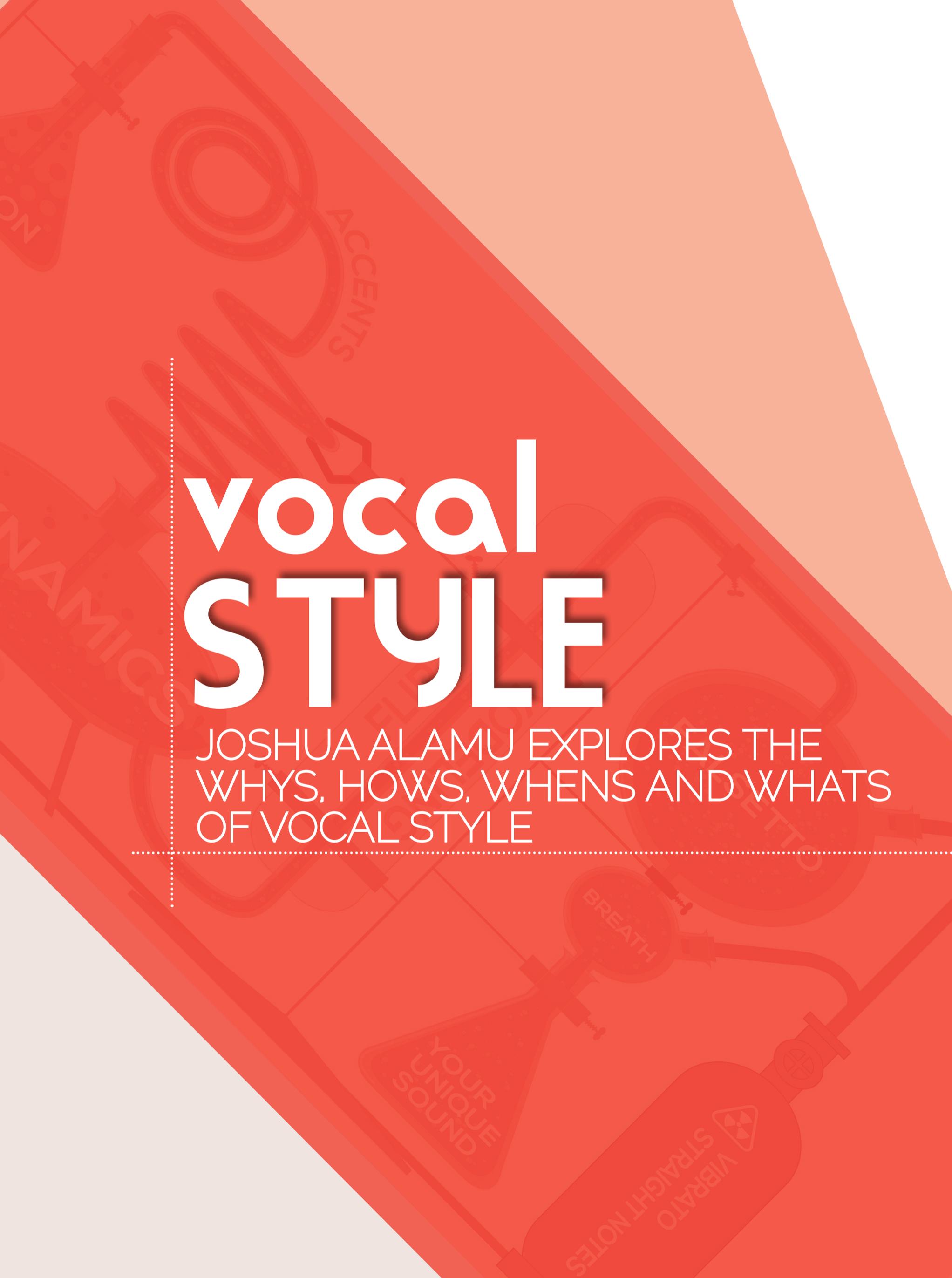


VOCAL NERDS IS SPONSORED BY THE NAKED VOCALIST



Chris Johnson and Steve Giles 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 the popular iTunes singer's interest podcast The Naked Vocalist. As well as coaching and podcasting they are also in-demand performers and manage their own successful soul acts.

 <http://thenakedvocalist.com>



# vocal STYLE

JOSHUA ALAMU EXPLORES THE  
WHYS, HOWS, WHENS AND WHATS  
OF VOCAL STYLE

# Riff-a-maniacs

**H**ere comes the “Riff-a-Maniac”. This was the name I was given back in the day when all I did was just riff out every song.

It didn't matter what genre the song was: classical, musical theatre, soul, or plain pop, for me it was an opportunity to indulge myself in the art of copying my vocal idols, singers like Stevie Wonder, Boyz 2 Men, Mariah Carey, and many more.

If they could riff, run, or sing melismatically (the posh word for riffs and runs) then they had my complete attention. If they couldn't sing melismatic embellishments, then for me, they weren't worth listening to.

This is how I used to think when I was younger and it's surprising to me how much of that vein of thought still exists today, particularly with the younger singers.

## Where Does It Come From?

It took a much older singer to point out to me, “Joshua, it's not all about riffing, it's about tones and dynamics as well.”

When he then demonstrated what he meant, I was completely sold on the idea and understood

“*The weird and wonderful world of riffs, licks, runs, melisma, scats, trills, and then some.*”

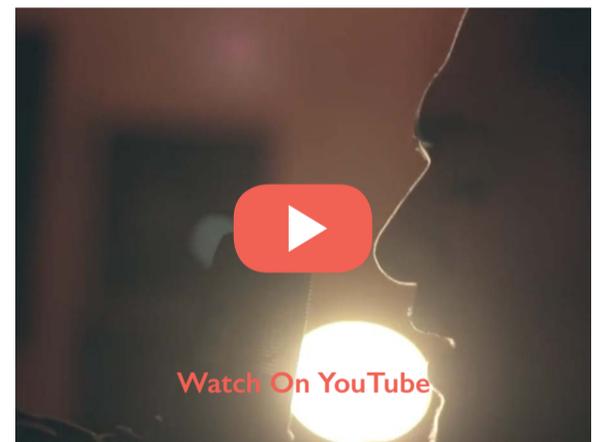
for the first time what singing was really all about: communicating ideas, feelings, and emotions. Not necessarily “vocal gymnastics”. However, it's still a very much important and expressive way to perform and sing.

Historians believe that the origins of melismatic singing date back as early as 1600 BC. It seems to have made its way to the mainstream through worship songs, as well as work songs meant to pass the time.

There were also cultures that had different styles or systems of improvisatory singing, each belonging to different families or “houses”. These houses handed down a tradition of musical and vocal ideologies that subsequent generations had to learn and uphold in order to maintain the family reputation.

It was taken very seriously and taught from an early age with very strict and disciplined methodology. The result today is the incredible vocal flexibility and precision in the application of melismatic singing,

especially when combined with pop music in a commercial way: check out Sid Sriram's cover of James Blake's “Life Round Here” for a cool example of this:



LIFE ROUND HERE - SID SRIRAM (JAMES BLAKE COVER)

Ultimately, we do it because it feels great when we sing like that. It feels as if we are really expressing ourselves in a way that words alone fail to achieve. It's also one of those things about music that people will either love or hate.

There's no way I can wrap this up without mentioning the popularisation of melismatic singing in music today. Despite it's origins (which seem to be from



BEYONCÉ

all over the map), melismatic singing was mostly popularised in the United States by singers from African-American gospel churches that portrayed a very charismatic approach to worship.

When these singers realised that there was money to be made singing what was then labeled as worldly music, they carried their expressive and melismatic style to singing into the mainstream music scene inspiring singers like Little Richard, Jackie Wilson, Ella Fitzgerald, Aretha Franklin, Sam Cooke, Marvin Gaye, Stevie Wonder, Karen Clark Sheard, Mariah Carey, Whitney Houston, Joe, Tank, Beyoncé, and many more.

## Let's have some fun. Have a go.

The key to being a good “Riff-a-Maniac”, is to do it with musical

creativity and intelligence. It's so nice when a singer has done their “musical homework” and has taken the time to study music and ground themselves in the

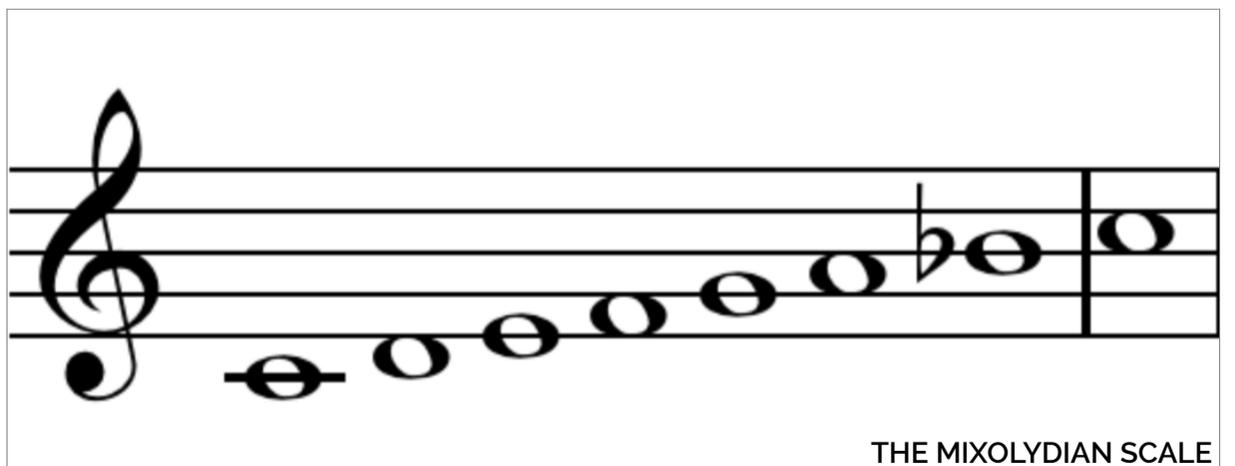
foundations of scales, modes, intervals, and so forth. This musical understanding opens up a whole world of vocal expression that is extensive, varied, and unpredictable as opposed to cliché.

I'd like you to try learning the Mixolydian scale (in whatever key suits you) and the blues scale (in whatever key suits you). Now once you have locked those scales into your musical system, try and see if you can mix the two scales together coming out of the Mixolydian and weaving into the blues scale and visa versa. Take things slowly at first and once you are gaining more of a feel for it, then try and see if you can mess around with the rhythms, phrasings, and timings.

Then when you are confident with all that, try throwing what you have learned into a suitable song lyric and see how you get on ■



THE BLUES SCALE



THE MIXOLYDIAN SCALE

# CHECK OUT SOME OF MY FAVORITE RIFF-A-MANIACS OUT THERE ENJOY!

**Issue 5: Riffamaniacs**   
by isingmag • 1/5 videos

-  Terrell Carter's answer to Jazmine Sullivan's "In Love With Another"  
terrellmusic
-  Jazmine Sullivan - 10 Seconds  
JazmineS
-  Keke Wyatt - You  
ZIONOLOGY
-  Joshua Ledet - "It's a Man's Man's Man's World" - American Idol: Season 11 - Top 4  
Adam Fox
-  Whitney Houston and Kim Burrell perform "I look to you" **Watch On YouTube**  
Felipe FUNari



If you want more on developing vocal style then why not buy Josh's highly recommended eBook 'Mad About Vocal Style' with video instructions on how to go about developing your own vocal style.

## JOSHUA ALAMU



Joshua is a professional voice coach with over 10 years of experience as a singing teacher within the music and television industry both in the UK and overseas. He has worked as a vocal coach for the BBC's talent show The Voice UK - series 1 & 2. Joshua's video enhanced e-Book Mad About Vocal Style was successfully launch in 2014.



<http://www.joshuaalamu.com>

# music THEATRE

4 TOP PROS SHARE THEIR SECRETS  
TO GIVING A SUCCESSFUL AUDITION

# THE SECRET TO A SUCCESSFUL AUDITION

If there's one industry challenge that singers of every genre can relate to, it's the nerve racking process of auditioning. In musical theatre, this process is unavoidable. So how do you stand out in the audition room and make sure the panel sees you at your best? Kirsty Roberts decided to ask the professionals.

## TIFFANY LITTLE CANFIELD

**T**iffany is a casting director for Telsey + Company in New York. Some of the projects Tiffany has worked on include SMASH for NBC, Rock of Ages and Addams Family on Broadway. Most recently, she was the casting director for the Disney feature film, Into the Woods.

**iSing:** You're a highly sought after casting director, working in film and TV as well as on Broadway shows. How did you first get into the industry?

**TLC:** I had recently graduated from the North Carolina School of the Arts Drama Directing program. I answered an ad on Playbill Online to work on Baz Luhrmann's production of Puccini's La Boheme on Broadway...mainly because I had just seen Moulin Rouge 7 times! I got the job and started assisting the casting director, and 6 months later I took over casting the production for the next three years! I had never heard of casting as a profession and I fell in love.

**iSing:** Can you explain your casting process for stage, and how



it may differ from your process for film?

**TLC:** The biggest difference is that stage productions generally have several readings

and workshops leading up to the actual production. Also, the actor's union for theatre, Equity, requires open calls for its members. Films generally have

developmental readings, but no required auditions. Otherwise, the process is typically similar: Release a breakdown, go through submissions, create lists of ideas and start holding auditions and potentially making offers to namier performers for the leads.

**iSing:** You've worked on both the hit series *Smash*, and the blockbuster film adaptation of *Into the Woods*. When casting a musical film or TV series, how important is the actors singing voice?

**TLC:** It seems like when we work on something, the singing voice is very important. I always joke to Bernie, "When are we going to work on a show where they don't REALLY have to sing?" But I'm really kidding, because I love to find the right performer for the part, including the singing ability.

**iSing:** Did the actors receive vocal coaching during the audition process or throughout production?

**TLC:** No vocal coaching during the audition process... but potentially during the production...I wouldn't know, as I'm not involved in that process.

**iSing:** When it comes to audition preparation, what advice would you give to emerging musical theatre performers?

**TLC:** LOVE YOUR MATERIAL. Don't do it because a teacher assigned it to you at some point in your education. Also, tell me what to cast you as...often performers come in and sing a song that they

love, but that is way off type and ultimately we get confused about where you fit. Tell us where you fit.

**iSing:** What qualities might you immediately be looking for in an actor you've never worked with before?

**TLC:** Confidence, training, and creativity.

**iSing:** Would you prefer to see a unique performer with standout style or an actor who is flexible and adaptable, who doesn't appear to fit a particular niche?

**TLC:** Hmmm...both have their place in the business. The issue is when you don't choose.

**iSing:** Out of all the submissions you receive, how do you decide which actors you're going to call in for an audition or screen test?

**TLC:** We take into consideration their experience, their training, and their type. That's why it is important for your resume and headshot to be up to date and clear to read.

**iSing:** Are there any particular training opportunities that you would encourage actors and musical theatre performers to pursue? Do you offer any coaching yourself?

**TLC:** I do coach and teach, and I love it. Also, I ALWAYS think it is a good idea to take improv classes.

**iSing:** What are some of the common mistakes you see in the audition room from actors? In other words, what are your audition "DONT'S"?

**TLC:** It sounds obvious, but don't lie. Don't say you only got one scene when you were given the entire package. Also, don't come in with the attitude "What do you want?" We are looking for you to come in and show us your take on the material...not for you to be asking us what you should do.

**iSing:** What do you love about your job, and what has been your favourite project to work on so far?

**TLC:** I love collaborating with different teams on different styles of projects. I'm very lucky to get to work in so many mediums. I could not name my favourite project because I've been so lucky to work on many that I loved...I know it's cheesy, but it's true!

**iSing:** Is there any other advice you would like to offer to those working towards a career in musical theatre/film and TV?

**TLC:** Go see everything and put positive energy into the universe. It sounds crazy, but I do think that online snarking (whether hid behind an anonymous username or not) will be the ruination of art as we know it. If you want to critique something, do it person to person, or text your friend privately...don't add to the pollution of negativity online ■

Tiffany has worked for Telsey + Company for over ten tears. For more information about this award winning organization and the hit musicals, films, and television shows they have cast.



<http://www.telseyandco.com>



## NATALIE WEISS

Broadway actress, American Idol Finalist, teacher, and creator of the hit web series for singers, *Breaking Down the Riffs*.

“Make sure you are prepared with the material. Be open to taking direction! Take a big deep breath. Treat it like a performance. Enjoy yourself. This isn’t life or death! Most importantly, always expect a “no”. That way if and when you get the job, you are **EXCITED!**” ■

For more about Natalie and links to her videos, visit

 <https://www.natalieweiss.net>

## JOHN BUCHINNO

**A**ward winning & internationally acclaimed Broadway composer, lyricist, pianist, and teacher. “An important thing to remember when auditioning is that we behind the table WANT you to do well. We want you to solve our casting problem, so we’re really rooting for you. Hopefully, knowing that will help you to leave nervousness at the door and just have fun with whatever you’re singing or performing for us. Throw yourself into it, be the most YOU you can be. We want to see what is unique and fabulous about you, not some persona you put on to try to impress us. The real you is the most impressive, beautiful thing you can

show us. And if, as will happen much of the time, you do not get cast, it only means that you weren’t exactly what we were looking for. There have been so many times when I’ve been part of a casting team and we LOVED an actor, and so wished we could hire them, but they didn’t fit in with the rest of the ensemble, or they were too young, or too old, or too... you fill in the blank. So, if you don’t get cast, don’t take it personally. Simply move on with confidence to the next opportunity to share who you are” ■

For downloadable sheet music, piano accompaniment tracks, and masterclass opportunities, please visit

 <http://www.johnbucchino.com>



**SHOSHANA BEAN**

**B**roadway star, songwriter, arranger, powerhouse vocalist, and chart-topping recording artist.

**iSing:** What was the most memorable audition experience you've had?

**SB:** Hairpsray. The most fun environment, the most talented crew in New York, and the best choreography and music one could ever hope to be given to audition!

**iSing:** What advice would you give to young performers who are hoping to stand out in the audition room?

**SB:** Be confident, and be YOU. Don't try to fit a mold or copy what you've seen or heard done. Remember they need and want you to be it just as much as YOU want to be it, so show up as if you are the answer to their prayer! With the energy and attitude of "you've found me, your search is over!" Also, preparedness is key. You can NEVER be too prepared.

**iSing:** How do you warm up your voice and body for an audition? Do you also do a cool down afterwards?

**SB:** I vocalize to warm up yes, and I also do yoga to get my whole body warmed up as well. I only typically cool down after a big or hard sing.

**iSing:** Is there anything special you do or wear for good luck on the day of a big audition or performance?

**SB:** Nope. Just pray and focus and get really grounded and clear about my heart's intentions for my work. It has to be bigger than just my selfish desires. Who am I being for the world with what I do? How do I want to effect people? I usually take some alone time to get very quiet and centred and clear.

**iSing:** Can you suggest any strategies for dealing with nerves?

**SB:** The above is great for nerves. Getting out of your ego mind and into your highest purpose makes your intentions clear and when your intentions are clear and you're coming from your



heart there is no need to be nervous because no matter WHAT happens, it's perfect. Breath work, self talk, controlling a wandering mind, focus, grounding. . .all help with nerves ■

To keep up to date with Shoshana's music and tours, go to <http://www.shoshanabean.com>

**KIRSTY ROBERTS**

**K**irsty Roberts is a singer, songwriter and qualified voice teacher based in Adelaide, Australia. She offers vocal training, audition coaching and artist development to talented performers in Australia and throughout the world. Kirsty is highly dedicated to nurturing and mentoring young talent. She especially enjoys working with singer songwriters, recording artists and musical theatre performers, and making dreams come true.

<http://www.kirstyanne.com>



# *singing* CAREERS



**ON THE COVER** Verity & Violet, UK-based vintage influenced duo



**INTERVIEW** Verity & Violet, we are our own boss!



**WORKING SINGER** Broadway to LA with Rhett George





on the  
**COVER**

UK-Based vintage influenced duo  
**VERITY & VIOLET**

# Professional Profile VERITY & VIOLET

**LONDON, UK**



**Q NAME AND LOCATION?**  
Verity & Violet, UK (aka Jessica Dolman & Loui Lawson)

**Q PROFESSION?**  
Singers/Actors

**Q VOCAL STYLE?**  
Vintage Inspired/Swing and Jazz

**Q VOCAL INFLUENCES?**  
Judy Garland, Barbra Streisand, and Caro Emerald.

**Q HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN WORKING AS V&V?**  
We have been gigging for about 2 years, but we spent about 6 months prior to that setting it up.

**Q WHAT KINDS OF GIGS DO YOU DO AND WHO FOR?**  
Mainly lots of parties and events around London. For example, London Fashion Week, parties at Kensington Palace, events at The Dorchester and The Savoy. But we also travel to Europe, mainly Marrakech and France.

**Q TOP CAREER MOMENT TO DATE, WHY?**  
Singing in Antibes, on a beach, as the sun was setting over the mountains. Felt like singing in heaven. A pinch me moment for sure. Also, our own sell-out show at The Pheasantry on The Kings Road.

**Q HOW DO YOU KEEP FIT FOR PERFORMANCE?**  
We're really into healthy eating and love yoga, walks, and running. This all helps to keep our stamina up and bugs at bay.

**Q 3 THINGS YOU CAN'T DO WITHOUT WHEN WORKING?**  
We've dealt with some comical performance situations! And we are good at just getting on with the job at hand. But the very basic thing we need is good sound! Then of course our sexy vintage mics, red lips, fashionista outfits, and heels ;)

**Q WHAT YOU WISH YOU'D KNOWN FROM THE START?**  
We've learnt valuable lessons along the way but we absolutely have no regrets. We've always worked hard and stayed smiling. We tend to deal with any given problem as it happens, but back to the technical side of things, which most singers find a little boring, is be prepared. Also, to invest in good equipment, and if you're lucky enough to have sound provided and a sound engineer, be very grateful for them because they are your link to sounding good! ■

## MEDIA CORNER

### LISTEN



TRACK DR WANADO  
ALBUM DEMO



TRACK LULLABY OF BROADWAY  
ALBUM DEMO



TRACK GLORY OF LOVE  
ALBUM DEMO

### WATCH



Internet connection required  
VERITY&VIOLET PROMO VIDEO

**GET SOCIAL**  
with VERITY & VIOLET





# VERITY & VIOLET

## WE ARE OUR OWN BOSS!

**V**erity & Violet are a vocal duo that are making waves around London and the U.K. for their vintage look, fun, unique sound, and overall charismatic energy. The two artists operate under the pseudonyms and “characters” Verity & Violet.

We will be speaking to them about how they got their ideas for their look and music, their experiences, and what’s in store for the duo.

**iSing:** Let’s start off with who is who.

**Loui:** So, I am Violet.

**Jessica:** And in the band I am Verity.

**iSing:** Maybe you could tell us how you came up with the idea for Verity and Violet.

**Loui:** We went to a 1940s party, you know those sort of Blitz Nights that they have, themed nights, just with our husbands. We dressed up as characters from the 1940s. They were GIs. And we gave ourselves names. I was Violet Kingsley and Jessica was Verity.

**Jessica:** Verity Swanell. We took it very seriously. [Laugh]

And the idea for the band came from two out-of-work actors, drunk in a pub, well tipsy. Little bit of cider. We were like “Right let’s take control of our career. Let’s not just keep waiting for the phone and let’s do something that is ours”. And we came up with a singing duo.

**iSing:** What came first the songs or the look?

**Jessica:** I think we appreciated that the most important part was the singing because that is ultimately what we were selling. So we put a lot of work into picking the right songs and testing lots and lots of different kinds of genres. But it was very exciting to get to that stage where we could talk about outfits and look.

**Loui:** Our look also has developed because originally we were doing the Victory Roll from the 1940s thing. Now, we have injected a bit of contemporary into our look.

**iSing:** Can you explain the band set up?



**Loui:** Just the two of us with our mics and tracks, which were all recorded with a band so they have got a full lovely sound.

**iSing:** Where do you get the tracks from?

**Jessica:** We had them recorded with a band in the early stages. It was quite a long, pricey, process, but we really wanted to put that work in initially. We had an amazing musical director, Jennifer Whyte (Les Miserable movie, Avenue Q). She went above and beyond to orchestrate the arrangements.

**iSing:** How do you get hired/booked?

**Loui:** We find places that we’d want to gig and then we e-mail them with a lovely letter, music and images, asking if they are looking for entertainment.

**Jessica:** And of course for every 50 you send you would get one person interested. Now, it’s mainly agents.

**iSing:** Did the agents come once you had been established?

**Loui:** In the early stages we wrote to a few that we knew, who people had recommended.



**Jessica:** They suddenly just all came calling and good ones as well for the type of work we do. And you can have as many as you want in the corporate singing world; it's not like an acting agent or a manager. So, we just did a bit of research on them and if we liked them we said "yes" and it's lovely because the more agents the more work.

**iSing:** Describe the typical kind of gig for you?

**Jessica:** There is no typical gig. [Laugh]

**Loui:** They vary. We tend to do kind of a couple of sets; like two 40 minute sets.

**Jessica:** Well, in terms of length it is like short, sharp bursts are always best to keep people interested. We mean this when we say it: we are not divas. There are no huge egos here. If people want us for background music, reception music, where people aren't necessarily watching and clapping and that whole sort of scenario that you are perhaps used to as a performer.

It ranges from that to pub gigs where people are really up for it and really into it, to people being on stage and quietly watching and clapping after every song. Then in terms of gigs, we love a pub gig. We love singing at the Dorchester Hotel or the Savoy or doing London Fashion Week. It can be the most down to earth, sloppy, great pub to the most posh hotel in the world. To be honest you still get the same—we are who we are, and we like it all.

**iSing:** How do you go about deciding on and sourcing your outfits?

**Loui:** We look online for inspiration and in magazines.

**Jessica:** And I mean, if Stella McCartney came calling we wouldn't say "no". But at the moment we just love sorting cute outfits from the High Street. There is nothing more exciting for us than going out having a glass of champagne and being like, "Right we have this amount to spend on Verity & Violet costumes, let's go".

**iSing:** Has your look changed since you started?

Going back to the name we were obviously vintage-inspired, but we've gone on to realise that perhaps we would become more original if we had a contemporary element. There are a lot of great Andrew Sister-type groups out there, doing the vintage thing brilliantly. We wanted to find something a bit more niche, so with the set list developing so is our look. It is less vintage,

though there is always a hint of old school glamour, but you will find us in just a cool outfit that has no rhyme or reason other than we loved it.

**iSing:** Both of you come from other performing disciplines. Loui, you started off in dance and have an acting background. You worked in television in a UK soap called Holly Oaks as a character called Sarah Barnes.

**Jessica:** One second, I know this is not about me, but this is how I describe Sarah Barnes to people: the lesbian that fell out of a plane without a parachute. Pretty exciting life she had.

**Loui:** It was a fun character to play.

**iSing:** And then you died this tragic death.

**Loui:** Yeah, my Mom and Dad can't watch (the scene). It's really quite hideous.



Favourite outfit to date the "Carrie Bradshaw skirt"



Watching yourself die and be splattered all over the Pennines is not nice.

**Jessica:** There were little bits of Sarah Barnes everywhere.

**iSing:** Who decided it was time for “Sarah” to go?

**Loui:** I wanted to leave, so I said I’d like to leave at the end of my contract. Then they came up with this idea. I think they thought I would be like “oh I don’t want to die”. I was really happy. I had done six years in Hollyoaks and I didn’t want the temptation of going back. I wanted to make a clean break. It was amazing, but I’m done and I want to do other stuff now. So I was really happy that I died a hideous death. [Laugh]

**iSing:** And Jessica you have a musical theater background. What are the similarities and differences between the disciplines that you have been in before

and what you do now? And how has that prepared you for your singing career?

**Jessica:** We met on a panto years ago. What I loved about Loui, and perhaps what you could call her discipline, was that she just sang, she just sang from her heart. She learnt the notes and sang them and meant the words. It was so pure and so gorgeous. It was really, really inspiring for me to be around.

I wanted to be more like that because I was all controlled and use to singing Fantine from Les Miserables. Hitting all of these notes so perfectly or at least trying to be perfect.

Coming from quite a disciplined three years of being taught to sing technically perfectly, not that of course I wasn’t taught to sing emotionally as well. But I think that got lost a little on me with all the technique. Then being around Loui made me just want to start again and just sing from the heart because the most beautiful sound is an honest one. That was the main difference that I’ve found between the two of us. [Laugh]

**iSing:** So Loui, what is the difference between what you are doing now and what you have done in the past, if we compare it to, say, to your dance in particular?

**Loui:** I think dance was good for discipline. Dance really helps with discipline and being respectful of people. The difference now is we are our own bosses and we can create. We are in control, which is really lovely.

**Jessica:** Yeah. And I think when I did a bit of part-time work initially and then took that step where I realized that we could probably just do Verity & Violet and that be our living. Obviously, we both still would like to do other things performing-wise. But, taking that leap where Verity & Violet is our income, then being disciplined is vital. You know especially Monday to Friday. If you have got a gig that’s fine because you are going to turn up to that gig and you are going to be as good as you can be.

**Loui:** You have to be proactive.

**Jessica:** Right. What are we going to do today? Whether it is separately and it’s admin or whether it’s together and rehearsing. You could end up weeks passing and you haven’t done a thing because you are ‘your own boss’.



Photo by: Simon Lawson

“

*There is nothing more exciting for us than going out having a glass of champagne and being like, “Right we have this amount to spend on Verity & Violet costumes, let’s go”.*

Performing at London Fashion Week



And obviously everyone who is self-employed must find that. I still set my alarm and I get up.

**Loui:** To keep the gigs coming in you have to be on it.

**Jessica:** And then you are allowed that glass of wine on Friday night. [Laugh]

**iSing:** Any 'worst moments' on stage?

**Loui:** What is our worst?

**Jessica:** Giggles if you want to call that bad, because laughing is a wonderful thing. But we all know you can't sing when you are laughing.

**Loui:** Yeah, one gig we were doing two full days from 9 until 5. Short sets, but all day...

**Jessica:** What was that song that they wanted us to do every five minutes?

**Loui/Jessica** (spontaneously start singing singing):  
"If I knew you were coming I would have baked a cake, baked a cake"

**Jessica:** Because it was the Cake and Bake show!

**Loui:** So they wanted us to do that song and three other songs. They said, "For the first half an hour could you just sing that song?"

**Jessica:** We lost the plot. [Laugh]

**Loui:** I said, "We can't just sing that song ALL day. People will think that is all we can sing". They said, "Oh can you do it every other song?"

By the second day this song, it was like, "If...I knew...you were...coming I'd mumble, mumble" (voice peters out). We just got quite delirious towards the end. It just took one thing and I could not stop laughing to the point where it was like "please let this be over".

**Jessica:** If one gets the giggles the other has to take over. Normally one of us can get it together. So on that occasion I think I did about an hour solo singing. [Laugh] Trying to get it together. But it has happened to

both of us. It's lovely to laugh and then you laugh more when you are not meant to be laughing.

**Loui:** And the odd, dodgy lyric that comes out sometimes...

**Jessica:** And that's me. Loui is incredible with lyrics. Maybe it's her Hollyoaks script learning days. I know my lyrics deep down. [Laugh] I really do. I get them right most of the time. But when I don't I carry on and I make them up, and that makes Loui laugh.

**iSing:** Proudest professional moment to date as the duo?

**Loui:** Well, the south of France was pretty gorgeous.

**Jessica:** We did a gig at the Café in Antibes. It was a proud moment but just also very gorgeous, one where you pinch yourself. You are looking at mountains and sea. It's a gorgeous audience and they are, like, dressed in beautiful clothes. The champagne is flowing, the sun is setting, and you're kind of going, "We are getting paid to do this?"

**Loui:** It was beautiful. Other proudest moments?

**Jessica:** Our own cabaret.

**Loui:** In April last year we put on our own cabaret show. We had all of our friends and family. That was pretty cool because it was our own thing and it was more of our gig. Sometimes we have background, but this was, like, our thing.

**Jessica:** That was really cool. We sold out the Pheasant Tree. It's a small venue, but it was so exciting to have an all sell-out show that was just ours. I would love to do that more often.

**iSing:** Top tip for any one wanting to transition to become gainfully employed as an act?

**Loui:** Find a genre and a look that you love, that makes you happy and that you enjoy doing. Because, when we gig we enjoy it. People notice, saying things like, "Oh you really look like you were loving it and love what you do".

**Jessica:** I'd say that's really good advice. Let's say you are an actor or musical theater actor and you are being sent out for auditions and you are auditioning for a role. The difference is that if you want to start a little business and get paid to sing in a different way, which we are doing, it is a about creating your own niche. Finding something you really love so you are excited to perform ■

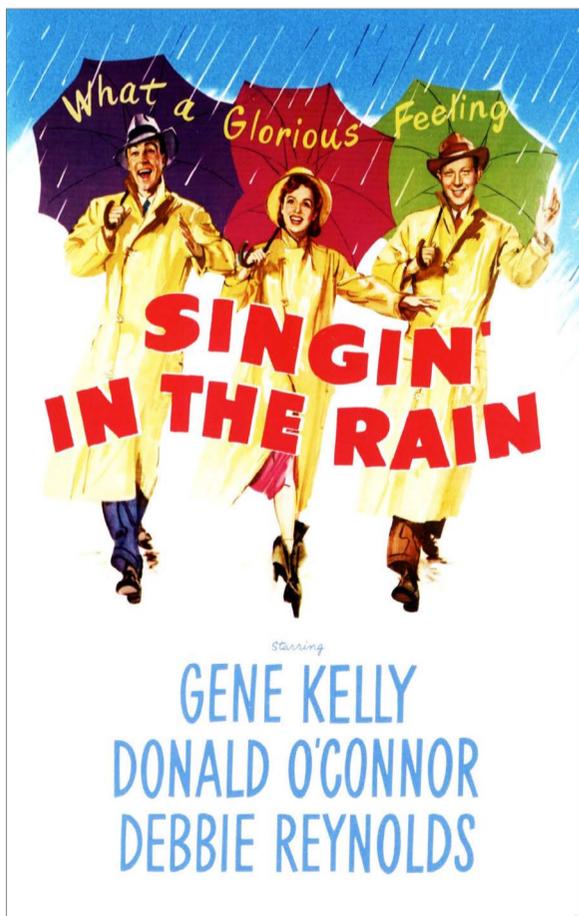
# the **WORKING SINGER**

DENOSH BENNETT EXPLORES  
THE INS AND OUTS OF THE  
WORKING SINGER

# “BROADWAY

# MELODIES”

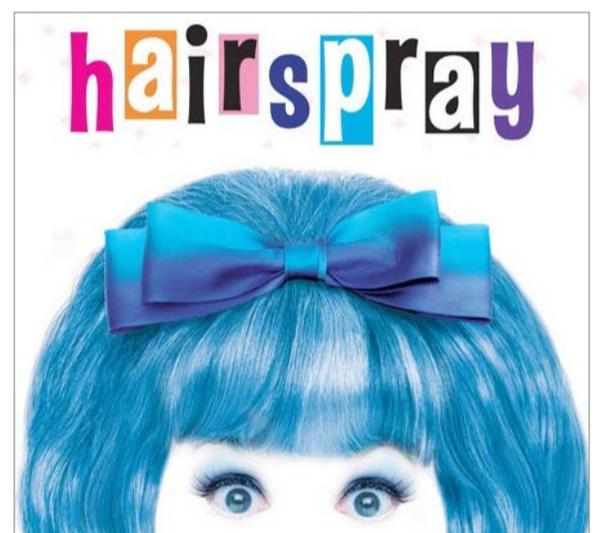
I remember as a child I used to sit and in awe as singers and actresses danced and pranced their way across the television screen, thinking, “I want to do that!” Heck, I still say that! In fact, on one Christmas Eve, in anticipation of our midnight “open-one-gift” tradition, my sister and I were sitting in front of our television set, and a musical came on. I was instantly mesmerized at



what I saw. People who were acting were now singing and dancing, all in one! I’d never seen anything like it. It’s true that back in those days it was common to be a “triple threat”.

Musicals and Musical Theatre have a broad and diverse history dating back to the middle ages, performed in a more operatic style in the 19th century than today when you hear fusions of traditional sounds mixed with R&B and Rock music. Of course, as I sat in my onesie pajamas, unwrapping my new Barbie dolls and watching “Singin’ In The Rain”, I swore that Gene Kelly, Debbie Reynolds, and Donald O’Connor were the inventors of this amazing new concept!

Musicals have had a long journey from the silver screen to the Broadway stage. Although I haven’t sung in a film, yet, in 2002 I had the incredible opportunity to perform in the Tony Award Winning musical “Hairspray” (another musical I watched on TV) as a “Dynamite”. I remember nailing the dance audition, but had a bit more of a challenge with the



singing part. For most Broadway auditions, it’s common to sing a musical/Broadway standard, 16 bars, hit it and quit it. But what did I know? I was an R&B pop singer and a back up dancer for R&B and Hip Hop artists. So I sang “Natural Woman” by Aretha Franklin. Not your ideal song, but I went with it. I remember trying to sing with so much feeling and soul and style. After I was done, the casting table smiled at me and one lady asked, “Can you do that again, but with less vibrato and runs?” Embarrassed, I swallowed real hard, smiled and nodded yes, and did it again. Thank God I can take direction because I got the gig! It was a lot of work having to

re-tune my R&B sound and use a different approach vocally, but I learned a new style of singing and the amount of vocal strength, stamina, range, and technique that is required to sing an entire Broadway show, night after night, week after week, with little to no rest in between. Not to mention the choreography and lines! But it made me a stronger singer and performer and now when someone asks me to sing in a “Broadway style” I know what to do.

It’s not easy to sing that style or to make it to Broadway. A lot of us are out-of-towners with big talent and even bigger dreams. The way is broad, indeed, but there are many



*Musicals and Musical Theatre have a broad and diverse history dating back to the middle ages.”*

possibilities. And with the right tools, it is a fulfilling, and stable way to make a great living and has long since been a very lucrative career for many actors, dancers, and singers.

In this issue of iSing, you’ll meet my fellow Canadian-Caribbean brother Rhett George, a triple-threat performer whose artistic diversity as a dancer, singer, and actor has led him to incredible Broadway success in some of the top-grossing and most popular modern musicals and musical revivals to date. We’ll find out how Rhett did it and, more importantly, what it takes to make a Broadway Melody ■



BROADWAY MELODIES - INTERVIEW WITH RHETT GEORGE

# Top 5 tips for getting in the door and *singing* your way to the top

1

If you don't have an agent, you can always find auditions. Broadway will always have an agent call and an open call. You can find these auditions in Backstage or backstage.com, Playbill.com and the Equity casting website

4

Stay humble and maintain a good and positive attitude as much as possible. A lot of your work will come from referrals from directors, choreographers, musical directors, and show producers. Be on time, be prepared and be at your best!

3

Warming up your voice and body is extremely important to staying healthy during a show run. Know your body. Find a healthy balance between your work and your social life so you never have to compromise your job.

2

During the audition process do your best to know your material inside and out. Have sheet music and know the key of the song. Song choice is really important. Choose songs in the style or period of the show. Be familiar with songs of that musical (if they exist) and be ready to sing one if you're called up. 16 bars is all you need.

5

Be yourself, and don't try to change who you are. If you're great at what you do, your talent will find its way and you'll shine, no matter what. The people who need to see you will see you. Keep pushing, and be open to opportunities, no matter how strange or small. You never know what door is going to open for you. Don't take no for an answer!

# LISTEN TO RHETT GEORGE

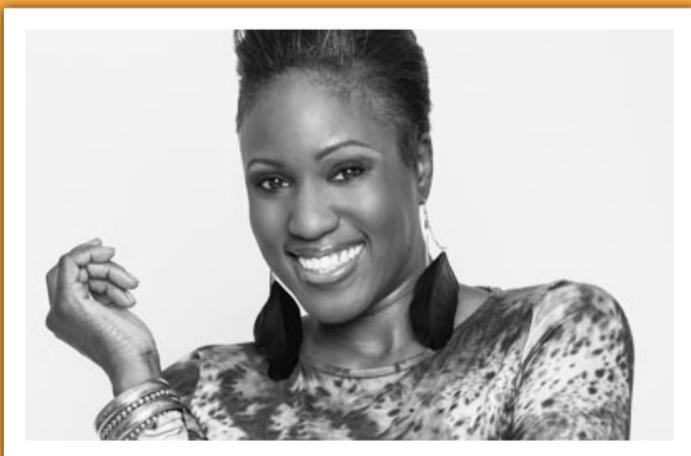


LOVING YOU IS EASY - RHETT GEORGE

## GET SOCIAL WITH RHETT!

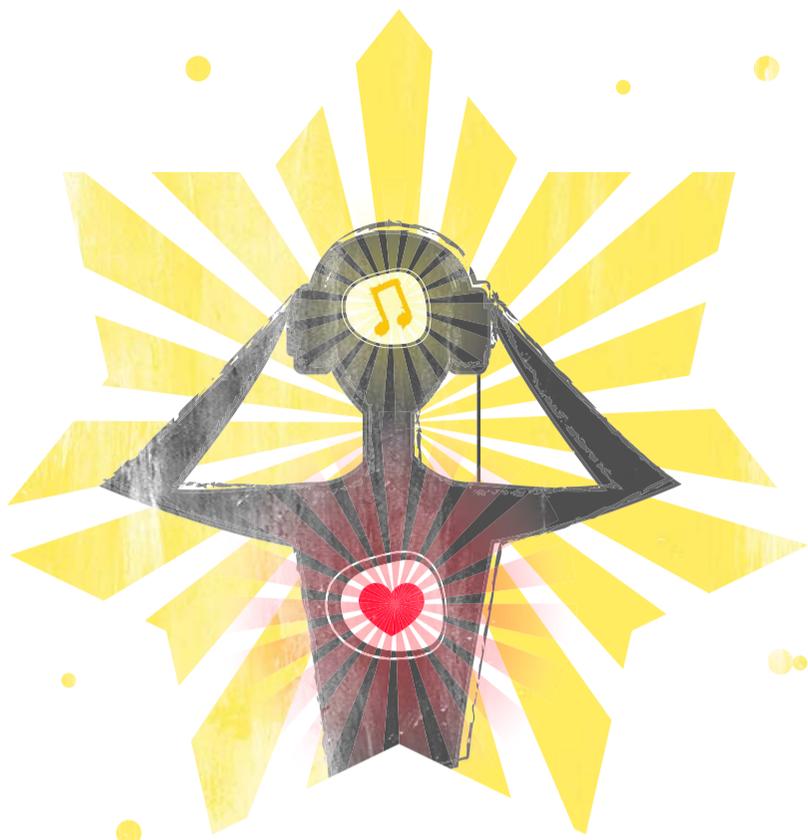


## DENOSH BENNETT



Denosh Bennett is a Canadian-born singer, dancer and artistic director with 2 decades of experience in the entertainment industry. Her versatility and broad résumé has led her to tour as a dancer and/or backing vocalist with many international artists including Faith Evans, Justin Timberlake, Alicia Keys, Drake, Whitney Houston, Robbie Williams, Demi Lovato and Rihanna.

 <http://DenoshBennett.com>



# *mind body* & SOUL



**VOCAL HEALTH** Travel & the voice, staying healthy on the road



**WELLBEING** Yoga & the voice, does it flow?



**THE LOOKBOOK** Style, music with UK singer/songwriter Lucinda Bell



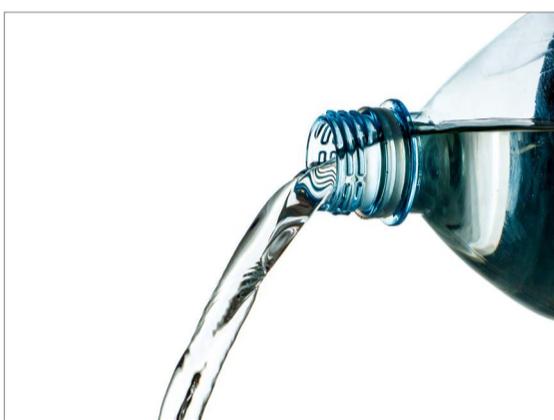
**MINDSET** Hypnosis for performance confidence



# Travelling and Your Voice

The touring artist is very familiar with how traveling can wreak havoc on the voice. However, there are ways to reduce the strain of travelling and increase the odds of surviving tour.

## Dehydration



Whether you are packed into a tour bus or flying across continents, travelling results in dehydration. On a tour bus, riders tend to drink less water. There may also be the compounding

effect of drinking alcohol. In the case of air travel, the above still applies, but this is worsened by the re-circulated, dehumidified air.

When you exhale, you release humidity from your body into the air (think of the “steam” you see when you exhale on a cold day). Your body hopes the air it inhales will replenish what it has lost but, in the case of airplane air, this doesn’t occur. Sweating due to an overly warm cabin will result in more water loss. To manage these losses, do the following:

- Drink water

- Do not drink alcohol
- “Pee clear” — you’ll know you’re hydrated when your urine is clear/pale yellow. And when the person sitting next to in the aisle wants to strangle you for climbing over them every 2 hours.
- Medical grade personal humidifiers — These devices are designed to deliver water particles at the exact size needed to get humidity into your body. Cheaper drugstore models create particles that are too large, resulting in a moist mouth but not much else.

## Sleep



No one gets a good night’s sleep when travelling. Add the distractions of your neighbor watching a movie, the in-flight announcements, and the

uncomfortable positioning, and you are getting to your destination exhausted.

If a new time zone is entered, your sleep-wake cycle is thrown off and it takes time to adapt. A rested body sings better, and more healthfully. To manage sleep when travelling, consider the following:

- Book travel during the day — you lose the day but are able to sleep in a bed.
- Sleep when you can — Europeans enjoy a siesta for a reason. These midday naps are extremely restorative, even

when they are only 45 minutes long. Cat naps will make up for losses while travelling.

- White noise — Noise-cancelling headphones or white noise played through basic headphones minimizes awakenings from cabin noise. Download a white noise track and play it on repeat while you doze.
- Sleep for the time zone you are entering — Try to sleep when it’s nighttime where you will be. Adjusting even 1-2 hours in flight makes it easier when you arrive.

- Sleep aids — If deemed safe for you, sleep aids like Benadryl or melatonin can help you fall asleep faster and get better quality sleep.
- Treat medical sleep problems — Sleep apnea is one of the most undertreated disorders in the modern world. Seek evaluation to ensure you do not have a sleep disorder.

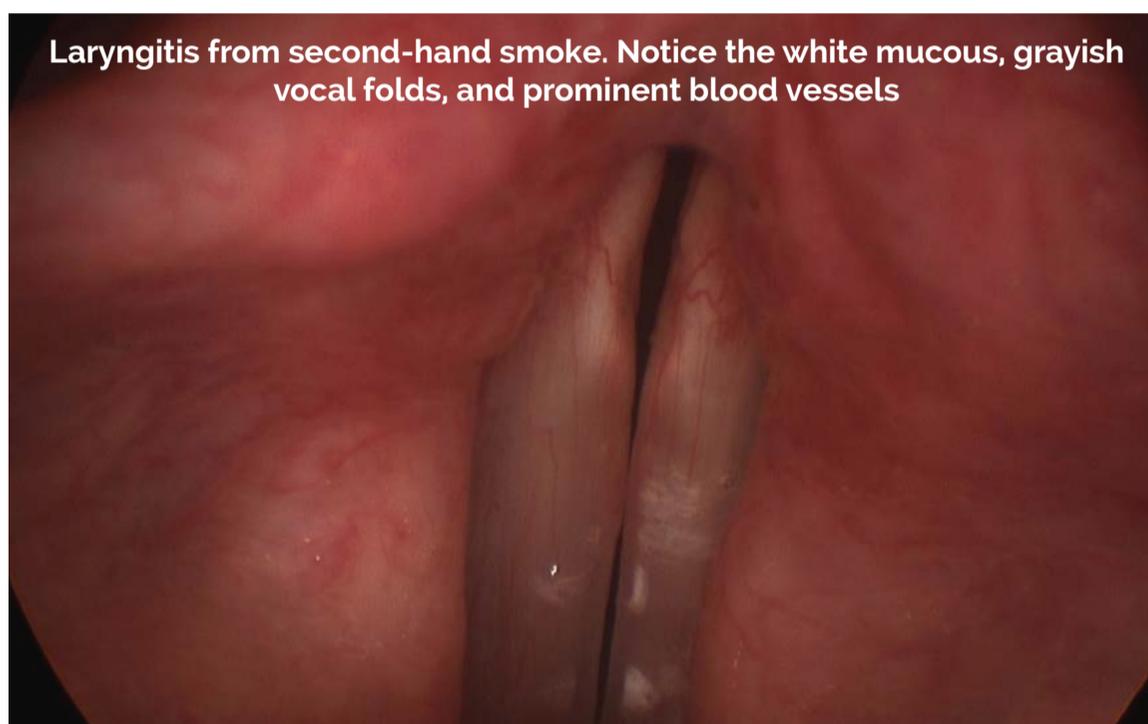


- Inefficient sleep results in suboptimal performance.
- Turn off electronic devices — The stimulation from these devices makes it hard for your brain to wind down for sleep. You will fall asleep quicker—and get a more restful sleep—if you fall asleep reading or simply drift off by closing your eyes.

## Illness

You're trapped in a metal container with re-circulated air for hours on end. The cough of the person 10 rows behind you will release viral particles that will eventually be pumped through that annoying circular wind tunnel above your head. To avoid contracting passenger 26A's respiratory illness, do the following:

- Hydrate
- Optimize health before travelling — Manage your medical conditions (especially allergies) before you fly. Your immune system can fight bugs when it's not distracted by a pre-existing problem.
- Use Nozin — This, and other similar products, are



swiped on the inside of your nostrils. There is an anti-viral compound (usually alcohol or something similar) that may help to reduce inhalation of viruses.

- Get a medication travel pack — It is difficult to find medical care in another city and even harder in a different country. Partner with your laryngologist to travel with a pack of medications. If illness strikes, you will be armed with what you need.

*I don't do that but my band members....*

While you may be doing everything right, the band member who grabs a smoke at a pit stop will re-enter the bus with smoke clinging to their clothes. Just as children of smokers get asthma from being near smokers, the singer whose band smokes will find their airway irritated from second-hand exposure. If you can't eliminate it completely, suggest electronic cigarettes (which have less inhaled toxin), patches, gums, or, for other substances, oral consumption, to avoid the irritating fumes.

### In general

Being on tour is extremely hard on the voice. Back-to-back performances means little time for rest and vocal recovery. To improve the chances of surviving a demanding tour schedule, consider the following:

**1** Change time zones gradually

**2** Book a day off between performances

**3** Use backing tracks if permissible/acceptable

**4** Travel with a sound technician — This reduces the singer having to push due to bad sound engineering.

**5** Do interviews/press in a quiet environment and limit the number of interviews

**6** Do not go out between gigs. The touring singer needs to use down time as vocal rest time. Silence is ideal.

**7** Have a laryngologist resource — It may not be possible to know of a laryngologist in every city you travel to. But if you have a laryngologist in your home city you trust, you can call this person if you run into trouble. They should be able to connect you with someone reliable, wherever you are.

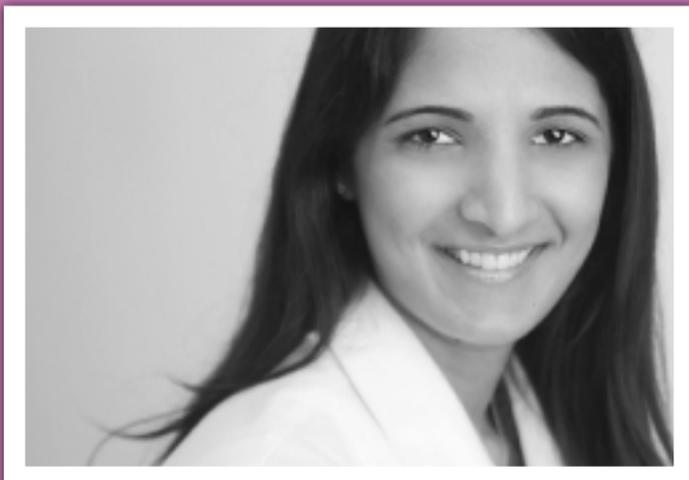
Many of these things are easier said than done. While few can adhere to every guideline, I tell my touring musicians to do as many “right things” as they can. Every positive decision lowers the risk of injury and makes surviving tour that much more likely ■



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## DR. REENA GUPTA

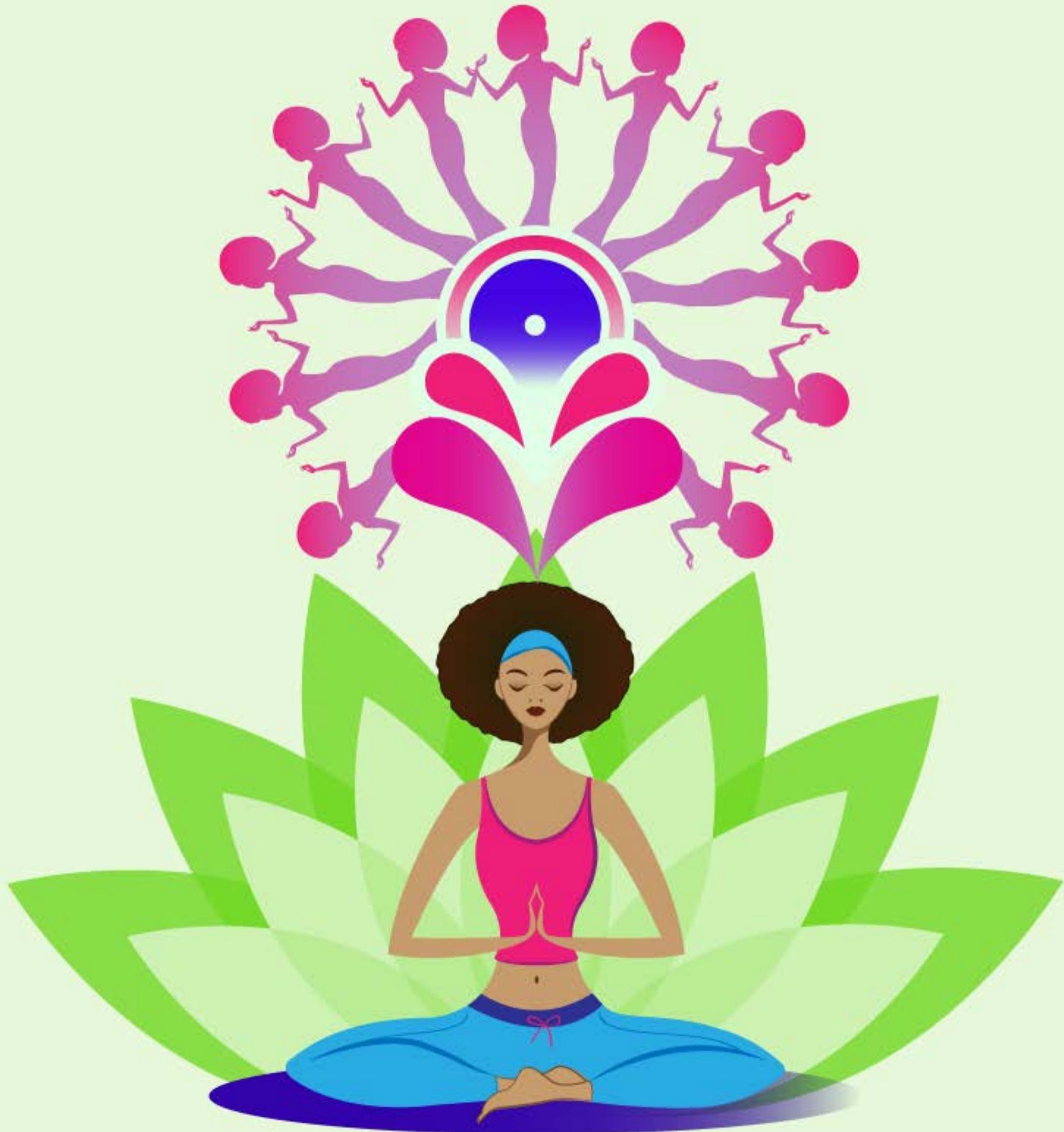


**Dr.** Reena Gupta is the Director of the Division of Voice and Laryngology at the Osborne Head and Neck Institute (LA, California). She is a laryngologist/voice specialist who has devoted her career to caring for professional voice users. Dr. Gupta's desire to care for voice patients stems from her passion for the vocal arts. She began singing in elementary school and continued through college and medical school, while pursuing her love for the art of medicine. She completed residency at New York University School of Medicine in Head and Neck Surgery and the prestigious fellowship in Laryngology and Care of the Professional Voice at Drexel University College of Medicine. Dr. Gupta strongly believes in advocating for performers and designs treatment plans that enable her patients to thrive in their careers.



<http://www.ohniww.org>

# Wellbeing: Yoga and the Voice, Does it Flow?



By W. Tyler Allen

Throughout university I had a part-time job as a yoga instructor. I became certified and taught 3-4 classes per week and all in all it was a great experience!

I had gotten in great shape, met amazing people, and made some pretty solid cash—for a university student.

However, as time went on I slowly became disenchanted with yoga. Sure, it bugged me that something that had started as a religious practice in India had slowly transformed into “bending” in hip studios, but more so I was bothered by how it had become a “cure-all” for just about anything.

If you went online or to your local gym, people were promoting yoga for just about anything: *yoga for aging*, *yoga to help with exams*, *yoga to help you get richer*.

Sure, yoga, stretching and deep breathing can help with a wide array of mental and physical ailments, but can it really go beyond fitness? As I began my career in the music world I had come across plenty of articles touting how yoga can help singers and vocalists. I couldn't help but to wonder what these courses were like, and if they really work.

After looking into these programs with a skeptical eye, I've actually concluded that these practices can in fact be beneficial. Here's how yoga can help your voice.

## WHAT TO EXPECT

If you look into any program that offer tools for yoga and the voice,

you will find a mix of simple yoga poses, as well as lots of chanting and breathing exercises.

Meditative or yogic breathing is also referred to as Pranayama, which simply means “breath control”. The breathing techniques are done in pretty much every ordinary yoga class, though in a “vocal yoga” course you will likely be doing mostly breathing exercises that are good for your voice and voice control.

This could be deep belly (diaphragm) breathing, humming, or even chanting—all used to relax the voice and exercise your breath control.

However, don't vocal exercises also promote proper breathing technique? Yes, but vocal yoga touches on something very interesting: the relationship between voice and emotion.

## YOGA FOR THE LUMP IN YOUR THROAT

The term “lump in your throat” is one that vocalists hear often and one that we've actually discussed briefly here in *iSing*. It's not a physical condition but something emotional.

You may have been in a similar circumstance: a speaking engagement, a job interview, answering a tough question to a client, and your voice seems to shrink. And there's a reason for this.

Evolution pioneer Charles Darwin theorized that the human voice might have originated when certain chest and throat muscles contracted in excitement or fear. In other words, he believed voice

and emotion came from the same impulse. Science hasn't mapped exactly how it works, but the larynx, or voice box, is thought to be wired directly into the brain's emotional center, the limbic system. This may be why a lump in the throat is often the first sign of emotional distress.

A typical yoga class is said to relax the body and de-stress the mind, which can relieve any tension that may be caused from nerves. However, if you're looking for something more voice-centered, some instructors swear by chanting, as they believe that partaking in a yogic chanting class will give the throat the perfect vibration to relax it.

Lastly, proper posture is amazing for your voice. Speech-language pathologist Arboleda, who's also a yoga practitioner, promotes posture in particular—and not only because it helps with the breath. “How you're positioned affects the shape of the throat and the alignment of the very small pieces of the larynx,” she said in an interview with *Yoga Journal*.

“It's a complex system and everything needs to come together symmetrically.” Poor posture can bend the soft tissues of the throat out of shape, muting your sound.

So the next time you want to unwind and also strengthen your voice, look into classes that combine yoga and the voice ■

### FOR YOUR REFERENCE: YOGA EXERCISES FOR THE VOICE

- Lions Pose
- Shoulder Stand
- Fish Pose
- Upward Bow Pose



the  
**LOOK BOOK**

UK SINGER/SONGWRITER/HARPIST,  
LUCINDA BELLE, FINDS EXPRESSION  
THROUGH WHAT SHE WEARS

Interview

## LUCINDA BELLE



“

*Style is very important for an artist, it's important to have a sense of your own style, step to your own beat if you will.”*

**L**ucinda Belle is a phenomenal musician with a captivating story—and an even more captivating sound.

Lucinda's love affair with music began at a young age. At the age of six she began learning the harp, which led to her becoming the first harpist in the National Children's Orchestra. She later took on roles as a session harpist and backing singer for in-demand stars such as Rufus Wainwright, Annie Lennox, and Robbie Williams.

Belle's vocal talent and musical ability eventually led to a record deal in 2010 with Universal, and a spot on the Radio 2 playlist with

her acclaimed album, *My Harp & 45 Strings*.

Her incredible work ethic and skill has all led up to where Lucinda is today: a solid fan base, a catalog of phenomenal music, and a new album in the works.

Lucinda Belle is one of those unique artists naturally equipped with the full package: a unique and strong voice, incredible skill, but also really great style. We decided to chat with Lucinda about her wardrobe, work, and how one can use fashion to brand themselves and propel their career.

**iSing:** How do you feel style impacts an artist's career?

**LB:** I think style is different to fashion. Style is very important for an artist, it's important to have a sense of your own style, step to your own beat if you will. Discover yourself and find your expression with what you wear. I like the idea of the juxtaposition of merging opposites...delivering the unexpected as well as the expected, combining opposing music and fashion/style forces.

**iSing:** What are some of your style influences?

**LB:** My style influences tend to draw upon more retro influences, namely the '30s and '50s. I suit

vintage clothes and feminine clothes. I often shop in flea markets and buy things I like or I follow high couture designers and have dressmakers make my own version, but always ensuring it suits my shape. Finding clothes that suit your shape I think is very important. And daring to be original is also necessary.

**iSing:** What are some easy fashion tips you would give to aspiring artists?

**LB:** Find someone who you think has a similar shape to you whose style you like and start trying out that style on yourself. Play with



*Finding clothes that suit your shape I think is very important. And daring to be original is also necessary.*

makeup and hair ideas and find great Youtube videos that teach you different styles you can try yourself. Then get dressed up and go out, and see what response you get. I once got dressed up with pink eyelash extension, a huge puffed out skirt top, fur throw heels and fishnets... just to go to my hair stylist...I wanted him to see my whole look. By the time we finished my hair had been teased so high I couldn't drive home, as it was higher than the roof of my car!

I went home and made a Youtube video instead, go check it out! I'm singing, "Do It Like a Dude", by Jesse J.



WHERE HAVE ALL THE GOOD MEN GONE? - LUCINDA BELLE



**iSing:** Has your style evolved with your career at all?

**LB:** I'd say my style evolution has evolved from Rockabilly to Rock n Roll. I've gone from Rockabilly swing dresses that I used to customize, to corsets, all the way to pencil 50's dresses. I'm now re-emerging into blinged out rock n roll look with trousers and lots of bling. Who knows? Just how I feel. I'm into Elvis right now.

**iSing:** How does fashion affect your stage presence and performance?

**LB:** Fashion and style do give me more confidence on stage. It's hard to find the balance of comfort on stage and making an impact. Performing in something that pulls you in the wrong places or obstructs your performance in some way can be very distracting and affect a show.

**iSing:** What are some do's and don'ts for artist fashion?

**LB:** Just one thing, whatever you wear...OWN IT!!!  
Don't follow trends. Do find your own style. Don't completely imitate another artist or celebrity's look. Do play with it, mess around and make it more your own! Don't get stuck in a rut, give yourself freedom to try new things and keep on growing■

## GET SOCIAL WITH LUCINDA!



performer's  
**MINDSET**

HYPNOSIS FOR PERFORMANCE  
ANXIETY

# GET YOUR SUBCONSCIOUS MIND ON SIDE!

## So how do you control anxiety and intense nerves when performing?

The simple answer, is not very well, if at all.

Telling yourself not to be anxious when performing is akin to telling yourself not to blink!

The reason being is that feelings of anxiety are not only unwelcome but they are involuntary and automatic. Involuntary and automatic responses come from your subconscious mind, and your subconscious mind is far more powerful than your conscious mind. Therefore trying to control a subconscious response of performance anxiety is a struggle at best, impossible at worst! In order to get real and lasting relief from performance anxiety, you need to align your subconscious with your conscious. You need to get your subconscious mind on side.

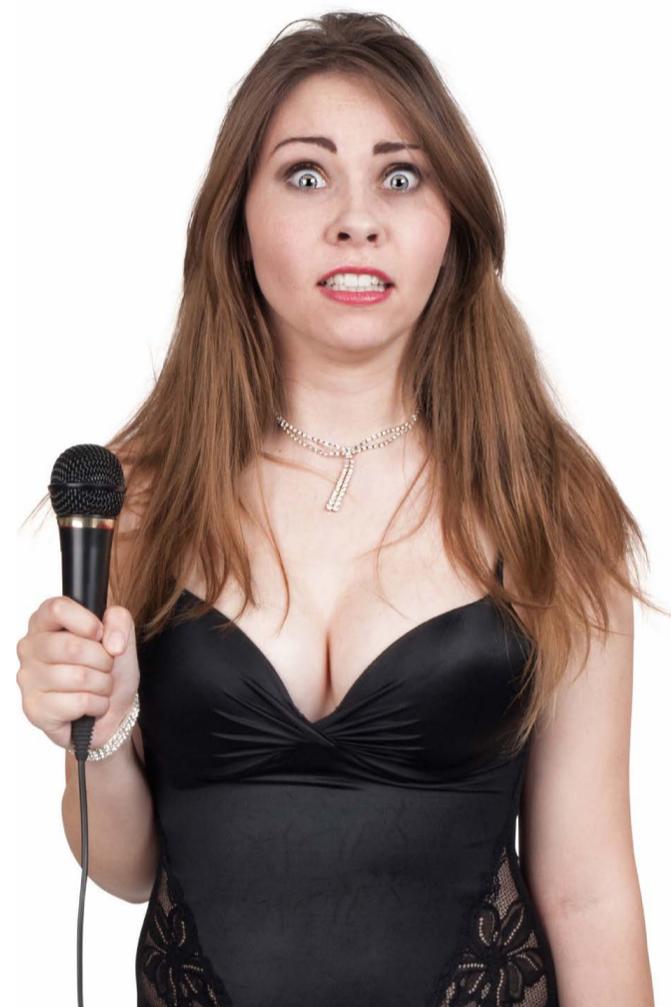
Before we talk about how we do that, it's useful to understand the difference between the conscious and subconscious mind: your conscious mind is your logical, reasoning, rational mind and your subconscious mind is your belief system, your imagination, and your emotional mind. There are two main characteristics to your subconscious mind: firstly, it is your inner protector, its main role is to keep you safe at all times – mentally, physically, and emotionally. Secondly, there is no time in your

subconscious mind. It simply doesn't understand linear time.

What this means when it comes to performance anxiety is this: if at any point in your life you felt anxious about being 'seen', 'judged', 'messed up' or 'being exposed' your subconscious mind would have come to a belief that it needs to protect you and therefore activates feelings of anxiety involuntarily in order to do this. Because your subconscious mind doesn't understand time, it doesn't understand that consciously and logically you have no reason to feel anxious. It doesn't understand that you have practiced and rehearsed incessantly, that you can sing or play with consummate ease when you are by yourself or in front of your coach. It doesn't care that you have been told many, many times by friends, teachers, fellow students, musicians, and performers that you have real and solid talent and have no reason to doubt yourself or your ability. All it cares about is protecting you based on a belief it probably came to many, many years ago, often when you were very small indeed.

## So why does your subconscious mind come to this, quite frankly, unhelpful belief?

Well if you think about it most of us, unless we were child stars or prodigies, were not brought up in the limelight. We are not used



to being 'out there' and the first time we do anything big can feel rather frightening and exposing. It can be a real jolt to the system to perform in front of an audience initially. It is also true that any situation in which we may be judged and left wanting can leave us very nervous indeed. Combine this with the subconscious's intense drive to protect you and lack of understanding around time, and performance anxiety can become a very real problem indeed!

But there is good news! And the good news is that all of this can be resolved with the right work. As a hypnotist with over a decades

experience, I have witnessed many clients overcome crippling performance anxiety to go on to perform with confidence, ease and joy. The reason hypnosis is so effective for performance anxiety is that it communicates directly with the subconscious, which is exactly where the problem resides.

Every client that comes to see me at my practice in Harley Street is presenting with a 'subconscious' problem. If it were a conscious problem they would have told themselves to either stop doing or feeling the thing they didn't want to be doing or feeling and stopped it. However the subconscious does not work like this, as its dominant and has its own agenda. The subconscious mind needs to be communicated and negotiated with to let go of the issue. Once this is done effectively and agreement is given by the subconscious, the issue and its effects can often dissipate very rapidly indeed. Once the subconscious has agreed to release the anxiety, I affirm to the subconscious that it is now a very safe, and indeed, positive

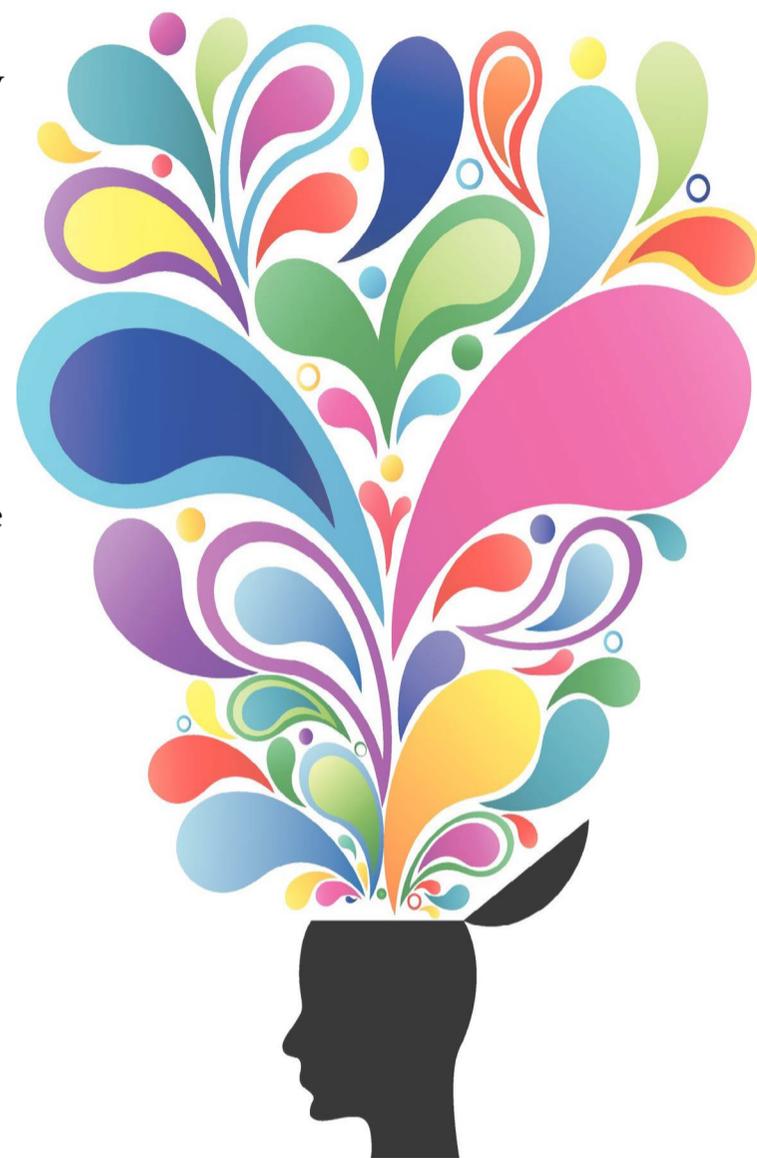
experience for the individual to perform. We will also use visualisation to get the individual focused on how they do want to feel and not on the way they don't. Without exception every musician or performer I have treated for performance anxiety presents to me initially with a very strong focus on what they don't want to happen: a panic attack, trembling hands, wobbling voice, forgetting words or notes, and so on. I call these 'negative fantasies'. It's no secret that what we focus on we get more of, so by using hypnosis to get the mind focused on performing well to an audience with ease, flow, and confidence, we can then anchor these good feelings to be triggered for all future performances.

The other good news is that musicians and singers generally respond very well to hypnosis as they are already so in touch with that creative powerhouse: their subconscious mind.

In essence, no matter how much you are battling with anxiety and performance fears currently, I

assure you, with the right focus you can become free and begin to not only perform with confidence but with genuine enjoyment and excitement too.

Now, how does that sound? ■



## ZOE CLEWS



Zoe is a Senior Qualified Hypnotherapist & Hypnotist, EFT Trainer & Matrix Re-imprinting & NLP Practitioner specialising in anxiety, performance anxiety, confidence, self-esteem and emotional trauma issues.

She has run a busy practice in London's Harley Street & Liverpool Street for the last 10 years.



<http://www.zoeclews-hypnotherapy.co.uk>



# *the* **BIZ**



- |                         |   |   |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| <b>MUSIC BIZ</b>        | <b>Unexpected licensing opportunities for your music</b>        |  |
| <b>MARKETING</b>        | <b>6 Steps to your first marketing plan as a function band</b>  |  |
| <b>SPOTLIGHT ON</b>     | <b>The Unsigned Only competition</b>                            |  |
| <b>HIGHER EDUCATION</b> | <b>Should I take the educational route to a singing career?</b> |  |
| <b>PASSING IT ON</b>    | <b>Finding chest register</b>                                   |  |

# UNLIKELY LICENSING OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUR

# MUSIC



Licensing your music is a great way to pay the bills. This article will examine some of the more unlikely opportunities for licensing. Obviously, most people would want their song playing over the credits of an Oscar-winning film, but these are some good second bets:

## VIDEO GAMES

Video games are a fantastic opportunity for musicians to rake in some side cash while reaching a wide audience of people who may not otherwise check out their music (because they'll be too busy gaming). For licensed music in video games, royalties range from eight cents to fifteen cents per composition, and buyouts range from \$2,500 to over \$20,000. (link: <http://www.ascap.com/Home/Music-Career/articles-advice/ascapcorner/corner16.aspx>)

## SPORTING EVENTS

Your music blaring over the loudspeakers at a huge baseball or hockey game during a commercial break or time-out can be a great way to license your music. If the MLB or NHL won't play your music, approach the minor league teams.

## COMPILATION ALBUMS

Being included in a compilation album—whether it is a mix CD released with a music magazine or a themed release like “Indie Rock Greatest Hits”—is another

key way to rake in the cash, especially if you're placed among famous bands on the comp.

## RESTAURANTS

Chains like Chili's and UNO's will often have a certain playlist that gets played across all the locations they have. If you can get on the list, you've struck gold.

## SKATEBOARDING / SNOWBOARDING / ETC. VIDEOS

Approaching Hollywood right off the bat can be daunting. Starting off with a feature in a skateboarding or snowboarding video that promotes a certain company (for example, Blueprint's excellent Make Friends With The Colour Blue) is a much more likely move.

## PODCASTS

Listening to Podcasts like Marc Maron's WTF, or Bret Easton Ellis' new podcast, you notice that there's always music interspersed throughout. That next jam could be yours!

## BOUTIQUES

Getting on the soundtrack of an expensive boutique or store can be a huge help toward reaching influencers. For example, if you're an underground hip-hop artist, try to get played in a high-end sneaker boutique like New York's Flight Club or Boston's Bodega ■

## NICK MOOREHEAD



Nick Moorhead is an overall advocate of finding cool ways for artist's to license (aka synch) their work. Nick is based in the United States, so therefore these opportunities take on a more “American” feel. He has been writing music criticism since 2011 in numerous publications. Before that, he worked as project manager at Cybersound studios in Boston. He majored in English Literature at Trinity College in Hartford, CT.



@MoorheadNick.



## 6

# STEPS TO YOUR FUNCTION BAND MARKETING PLAN

If you're a performing singer working in a cover band, you're going to need marketing plan.

Most music marketing advice tells you that you need "exposure". While not necessarily untrue, you don't need "exposure" per se, rather, you need to generate actual leads and inquiries from prospective clients that want to book you for their event.

The difference is subtle but has a massive effect on how you go about marketing yourself.

I've been managing, marketing, and selling cover bands to corporate and private event clients for just short of 10 years.

Here are the 6 fundamental steps you need to follow to set yourself on the path to bookings.

## 1

## KNOW WHO YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE IS AND WHAT IT WANTS

Think about who your ideal client might be. Picture them in your mind.

Now think about what you want to stand for as a band. Does it appeal to the ideal client you pictured? Think about how you might tweak what you do to make it more appealing to them.

Giving your market what it wants makes it so much easier to get bookings.

## 2

## CREATE A PROMO VIDEO THAT'S AN ADVERT FOR YOUR BAND

Video is massive. You can't escape it. In fact you should embrace it. The benefits of using a well-produced promo show reel are huge compared to the cost to produce.

Most show reels just show bands doing a straight up performance. BORING. We can do so much better than that.

Think of your promo video as an advert for your band. You've got under 3 minutes to either impress your prospect or turn them off you. Make it count.

Your promo video is the biggest weapon in your marketing arsenal. Don't underestimate its power to get you inquiries and bookings.

## 3

## HAVE A WEBSITE THAT SELLS YOUR BAND WHILE YOU SLEEP

Your website is your cover band's home online. It's one of the first places prospects check you out.

To be taken seriously by them and give yourself the best chance of getting the booking, you've got to have the best website you can possibly afford.



More importantly it must educate them as to why your band is the right choice for their event.

A word of warning: Your Facebook page or any other social platform is not a substitute for a website.

## 4

### PUT YOUR BAND IN FRONT OF PROSPECTIVE CLIENTS THAT ARE MOST LIKELY TO WANT TO BOOK YOU

Most bands are reactive. They cross their fingers hoping the phone will ring and they'll pick up bookings. It doesn't happen like that.

You must have a plan to go and find your audience, bring them back to your website where you must do your very best to persuade them that you're the right band for their event.

But where are they and how do you find them? Start thinking about where your audience hangs out online and offline. What do they do before they book a band for their event?

## 5

### CONVERT MORE INQUIRIES INTO BOOKINGS

You've worked hard on your promo material, your website looks the business, and you've spent money and time going out and generating inquiries.

You now need to give yourself the best chance of converting your inquiries into paying bookings.

How? It's beyond the scope of this article to go any deeper here but it's been shown that you increase your chances of securing a booking the faster you respond to a lead. Yes, you should be responding to a lead within the hour.

## 6

### CREATE AN AMAZING EXPERIENCE FOR YOUR CLIENT SO THAT THEY CAN'T WAIT TO TELL THE WORLD ABOUT YOU

Just thinking that you need to put on a great show for your client

misses the point. They're expecting you to put on a great show. It's why they booked you.

Think about how you can go above and beyond delivering a great show. Make your client feel special and loved.

The better the experience your client has in your hands the more referable you become ■

ARE YOU READY TO TAKE YOUR COVER BAND AND SINGING CAREER TO NEXT LEVEL?

### DOWNLOAD MY FREE GUIDE

'COVER BAND ESSENTIALS  
5 FREE & EASY KILLER  
TACTICS & STRATEGIES  
TO GET MORE BOOKINGS  
& DOMINATE YOUR  
COMPETITION IN THE  
CURRENT ECONOMY'

 <http://giggingsuccess.com/>

## BRAD LAZARUS



Brad Lazarus has been managing and marketing cover bands for 10 years. He is the founder of Giggingsuccess.com a blog and podcast dedicated to helping musicians in cover bands increase their bookings and multiply the income they receive from them.

 <http://www.LM2.co.uk>

SPOTLIGHT ON

# Unsigned Only

## COMPETITION



**S**inging and songwriting competitions serve a great role in the music industry. Not only are they great ways to get your music heard by influential people, but they are also ways for artists to get feedback and learn new ways to propel their career.

One leader in singing competitions is ISC, or International Songwriting Competition, which is based out of Nashville, Tennessee but boasts entries from across the globe. ISC has recently began accepting entries for their competition, Unsigned Only, which has a large array of top-tier judges such as Robert Smith of The Cure, Sinéad O'Connor, ALT-J, and many more.

While ISC's flagship competition, The International Songwriting Competition, is geared towards the best song, Unsigned Only looks for the best all-around unsigned artist. Prizes include \$10,000 as well as mastering services and many other tools that can help an artist in their sound and marketing.

I spoke with ISC/Unsigned Only's Shane Whalen to learn more about the competition and how singers can benefit.

### What makes UO different from other competitions out there?

Unsigned Only is a unique music competition designed for solo artists, bands, and singers all

over the world who are not signed to a major label record company or any of its affiliates, subsidiaries, or imprints. The goal of Unsigned Only is to find an outstanding, talented performer: a band, singer, or solo artist, raw or polished—the “gem” that needs to be discovered. Unsigned Only is looking for the total package.

Yes, it offers great prizes, recognition, exposure, and the chance to be heard by a group of judges consisting of high-profile recording artists and industry professionals, but Unsigned Only also takes it a step further and puts the Grand Prize winner in direct, personal contact with the influential record label executives who are the ultimate decision-makers. For the first time ever, a music competition offers the Grand Prize winner the unprecedented opportunity to be mentored by a group of record company presidents, A&R reps, and more.

### What have been some of your favorite submissions or stories from both ISC and UO?

Last year's Grand Prize winner was in tears when we called him to award him the top prize. He was actually considering quitting music altogether and becoming a cab driver. Winning the competition set his sails again and the resulting publicity has helped keep him get back on the right track.

His name is Shunzo Ohno was he was one of the leading jazz trumpeters in his native Japan by the age of 19. Ohno moved to New York City in 1974 to perform with jazz legend Art Blakey & The Messengers. Since then, he has performed and toured with many of the world's greatest jazz artists, including Art Blakey, Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter, Gil Evans, Larry Coryell, and many more. With numerous recordings under his own name as a leader, he has also appeared on over 30 more as a sideman and has collaborated on two Grammy recordings.

Though after various health issues, Ohno was forced to take a break from music, and take up odd jobs to pay for medical expenses.

The song he performed moved the judges incredibly. It was inspired by Musashi, a writer, painter, and undefeated swordsman who lived in the 1500-1600s in Japan. It was a wonderful piece and we are glad to have had a part in Ohno's musical re-confidence.

### What can artists do to stand out when entering?

Like with most things in the music industry, originality goes a long way in helping people stand out in a crowd. That said, ISC is all about the song (all original compositions), Unsigned Only is all about the talent and it's potential continued growth into the “next



Shunzo Ohno

thing” and allows cover song submissions.

You have a huge roster of incredible judges, how did they get involved? And what’s their involvement in the process?

We reach out to judges every year and get an amazing amount of positive feedback and interest in continuing to judge, namely because it’s a great resource for undiscovered talent.

Here are some actual quotes that help paint that picture, including insights from past winners:

*Judging the competition: I was astounded at the quality and range of abilities on show—the originality, honesty, and depth of so many of the words, the charm, vivacity, and catchiness of the tunes, and the often staggering energy, skill, and intensity*

*of the performances—the talent left me at times breathless! Judging ISC 2006 was a real pleasure.*

– Robert Smith (The Cure), ISC Judge

*We’ve always been impressed with the talented songwriters who participate in the ISC. This is a great A&R source to find new artists.*

– Monte Lipman, President, Universal Republic Records, ISC Judge

**Are there any success stories and names we would be familiar with?**

Some household names that have been finalists in our competition prior to their international success include Bastille, Goyte, Kimbra, Passenger, The Band Perry, Andrew Bird, Gin Wigmore; and (UO)

Goodbye June, Wes Mack, Lara Johnston

**Can you speak more on the grand prize and how it can help an unsigned artist?**

Wes Mack is a prime example. He was UO’s 2013 Grand Prize Winner who later signed with Universal Music / Big Machine Canada (Taylor Swift, Florida Georgia Line) and noted that winning the competition and having the opportunity to be mentored by the industry was instrumental in helping him land his deal ■

FOR MORE DETAILS AND  
TO ENTER



<http://www.unsignedonly.com>

# Higher Education and the singer



# THE HIGHER EDUCATIONAL ROUTE TO SINGING

By Ian Davidson <http://singinliverpool.co.uk>

I have to say at the outset of this article that I am a big fan of higher education. I have a BA and an MA in Music and I have spent the last 11 years lecturing in vocals, until recently at the Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts and now at the Institute for the Arts Barcelona. Regardless of what you choose to study, a degree provides the individual with more than just subject knowledge. Employers tend to favour prospective employees who hold a degree, because a degree can say a lot about an individual's character. A degree means that you can set and accomplish goals for yourself, work to a given schedule, and meet important deadlines. Studying at a university or college can help you to organise yourself, contextualise your art and expose you to different ways to think about, create, research, and promote your music. A good university will introduce you to people from all over the world and leave you with a much broader world-view.

## Having said all this, does that mean choosing to study vocals at university is the right choice for you?

Well, ultimately only you can answer that question, but there are definitely things to think about before rapidly filling out your UCAS form and applying for your overdraft.

Firstly, can you afford it? Virtually every university these days is charging £9000 a year in tuition

fees alone. Now, there are some degrees, like Medicine, for example that have more guarantees of employment upon graduation than others, and you can bet that Music and Vocals are pretty low down on the job-guarantee-upon-graduation list. To be willing to graduate with tuition fee debts of £21,000 and then let's say another £20,000 in living and accommodation expenses is quite a sobering realisation and not something to be taken lightly.

Secondly, what are you wanting from a degree? Is it just the piece of paper? Do you want the experiences that I mentioned earlier? Is there a specific tutor you long to study with or a unique specialism that is being offered by a certain college? These are all pretty valid reasons to go off to university. However, if you just want to learn more and to perfect your art, then there are less costly ways to do it, which leads to my next point.

Thirdly, can you do this yourself? For example, finding a good singing teacher to give you a good 30 minute (the normal length of time you would get one-to-one at university) singing lesson would probably cost around £30 a week. Multiply that by 52 (you would probably never have a singing lesson EVERY week, but at university you would only ever get 28 weekly singing classes per academic year) and you arrive at £1560. Not bad. That still leaves you with £7440 to play with. Now let's double that figure to £3120 and say that you also get a guitar/keyboard lesson every

week as well. A good EP could cost you around £2000 to record and master, but you could always recoup some or hopefully all of the cost by selling it yourself. My point here is that there are other ways to spend less than £9000 and still achieve what you want. Plus, if you are not studying full time you can also be working part-time, or full-time if you want to help fund your "other" career.

As an aside, if Musical Theatre is your passion, then I would strongly recommend that you go to university to study. You not only need a great voice, but you need to be able to dance in a variety of styles and act to a high standard. A Musical Theatre degree will also teach you about the workings of theatre in general and give you the opportunity to get some plays/musicals on your Spotlight profile. Good colleges will regularly hold showcases and invite popular agents along to watch their students and hopefully recruit some of them to work in the industry.

At the end of the day, gigging relentlessly and constantly writing and recording and promoting are the things that are going to get you somewhere within the Music Industry (as well as friends in high places, a lucky rabbit's foot, prayer to a few choice deities, and a lot of luck), so it's worth really looking at the reasons as to why you want to go to university before making a decision based upon what your other friends are doing and what your parents would like you to do ■

# Passing it on



**LINE HILTON** DEMYSTIFIES THE PROCESS  
OF BECOMING A SINGING TEACHER

SWIPE FOR MORE



# FINDING CHEST RESONANCE

**T**his issue I am going to look into how you might approach a voice that hasn't got a strong chest register. This is the lower region of our range (Below ~G4 in females and below ~D4 in males), often associated with the speaking voice. Assuming that the singer's speaking voice is balanced we would expect that when he or she sings the lower register has a full, rich, and clear tone. There are a couple of common scenarios when this is not the case. The first one is in females with a history of classical training or choral singing; the other is female or male untrained singers who are using this vocal quality as part of their vocal identity. In the first instance we may hear a strong head register, but as the voice descends in pitch to the lower regions the vocal folds only close in the upper region and we get a thin, almost disconnected sound. The tone is light and lacking in the bass frequencies. In the second scenario it is likely that the head voice is also breathy and lacking in tonal and sonic substance. Two good examples of this type of singer are Norah Jones and Antony Hegarty from Antony and the Johnsons.

In all cases, as the teacher, the first thing you need to establish is do the singers want to change their vocal tone. Obviously if they are seeing you because they are experiencing voice problems or

have been referred by an ENT then this may well be the case. Vocal problems occur from too much airflow over sustained periods. This tires and irritates the vocal folds. They may swell making singing effortful and unsustainable. Sometimes classically trained singers will go to a contemporary teacher because they want to sing contemporary repertoire without sounding like a 'classical singer singing contemporary repertoire'. This can be quite a difficult transition for them mentally as they may have been told singing with chest resonance is 'dangerous', 'ugly', or 'evil'—I kid you not! Physically it may take time for the nervous system to get used to vocalising in a different way and there may be a period when they cannot control their pitching or their voice. You will need to take it slow, offer reassurance, and good explanations to maintain their confidence.

## HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO MAKE CHANGES?

The transition to being comfortable and in control of a chestier register may take days, months, or years. (Yes it's that proverbial 'how long is a piece of string' answer.) I have had all three experiences in my studio over the years. Each situation has its challenges, and I do love a challenge. Don't expect a one-size-fits-all approach. Make sure

you are taking into account not only the relevant exercises needed to develop a chestier resonance but ensure you are maintaining motivation and setting realistic goals for singers to achieve. Their progress will also be dependant on how much work they do away from you. 30-60 minutes a week can only do so much to change the habit.

Here is a female student I worked with who wanted to gain more chest register in order to sing jazz and contemporary songs. She is an amateur singer who wants to have fun with singing maybe get to a point where she can put on a concert for friends. She started with classical lessons at the age of 26 and took them for a few years, then had a break for several years, and last had lessons of any sort 8 years ago. She wants to sing with a stronger voice, without croaking. Her day job is as a counsellor so she talks a lot.

Here are a few extracts from our 1-hour lesson.

## Assessing the spoken voice



It is a softly spoken voice, slightly breathy in tone, slightly elevated

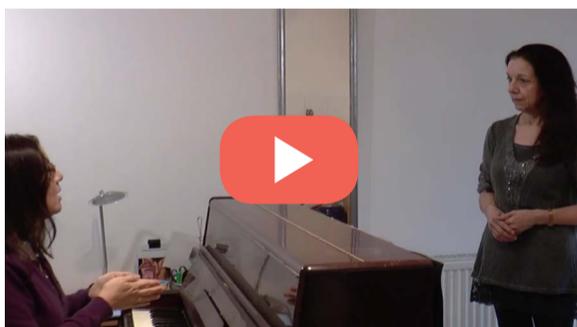
pitch but not much fluctuation in pitch or dynamic, larynx slightly elevated. No glottal attack or hard onsets, tone is clear i.e. no hoarseness or raspiness, no nasality. Neutral British accent.

### Diagnostic scale



I used a 5 Tone/Note scale on the sound AH. Here we can hear a lack of chest resonance, breathy tone with lots of air leakage over all, poor laryngeal stability causing pitch instability, vocal folds flip apart even more from E4. I didn't go any higher as I knew (from experience) nothing much more was going to change and also because she had said she hadn't sung much in the past few years so muscle tone would be poor due to lack of use.

### Experiencing vocal fold closure



Most singers (in fact most people) do not realise that the vocal folds open and close thousands times a day; when we swallow, lift heavy object, cough, and bear down.

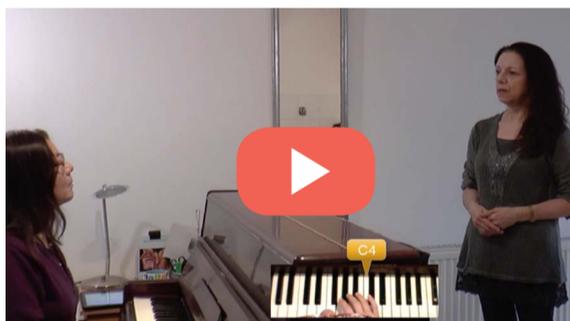
It is possible to voluntarily open and close the vocal folds. In this

video my student is doing such an exercise.

The instruction is to do a HUH as if you're pretending to do a karate chop. Do not linger on the 'h' for too long as then too much air will be expelled. Get to closure quickly and without over-compressing the vocal folds. Don't need to do too much of this exercise, just enough to get the concept across. In this video the student is over-compressing a bit and the larynx rose a bit too much in the first few tries. Dropping the jaw will help alleviate this issue.

Once closure is experienced we quickly move to create a sound from the closed position here we used AH and MM. Watch for students who get good closure but then open their vocal folds again before creating the sound.

### MM-AH

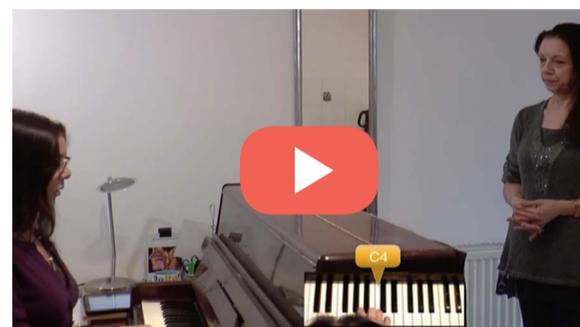


Create the MM sound with a whining or pleading effect. Anatomically the only way to get a creaky sound is to close vocal folds. Sometimes we have to 'trick' the body into doing what it needs to do. Following through to an AH allows the singer to experience more vocal fold closure on an open vowel. If it falls apart and the vowel gets breathy ask them to maintain the creakiness in the vowel as well. AH is a good vowel in this instance as it has a chestier resonance, a

better option than OO or OH, for instance.

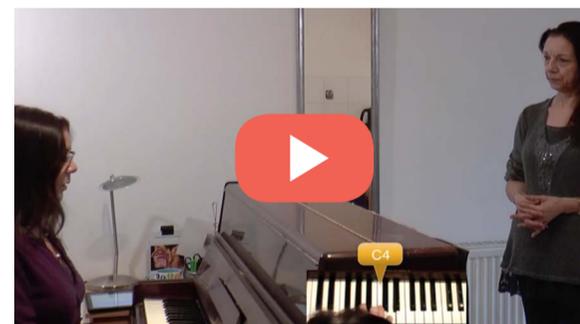
In this video the student has a bit too much or not enough tension on the vocal fold muscles hence the wobble. Can take a few tries to get right so be patient. It may take a few weeks for the voice to get used to this and to take it up past the passaggio.

### Second attempt MM-AH



Here we are a bit later in the lesson. We had a break and did some other exercises then repeated the MM\_AH exercises. There is a definite improvement; she has better control over the closure and into the vowel resulting in a more stable delivery. We can now hear the potential of a rich, full chest register.

### Revisiting exercise 1



Now to check if this has improved from the first exercise we did. Yep, she's figured out how to maintain better vocal fold closure... much improved. I chose not to go

any further with the scale on the open AH. I just wanted her to have a sample comparison.

Go back to video 2 and compare the results.

### Moving on



We want to see if we can take this concept of a chestier resonance a bit further up the scale, but with a safer sound. I have added a 'b' to the AH to help stabilise the sound for the singer. I don't want her to have a negative experience at this stage; an open vowel is very difficult when the vocal fold muscles aren't strong or coordinated. The 'b' will add a bit of backpressure and stabilise the vocal fold closure. Note we don't go too far up the scale. Once the voice gets to G4 we are in the transitional area and the muscle coordination will change. For the moment I don't

want to add too many variables into the exercise as it reduces the successful experience. I would expect with time and practice the student will be able to deliver this sound more consistently and then take it higher in her range. Whilst it's not perfect I am very happy with what she has achieved in our lesson.

### CHECK THE SPEAKING VOICE

So the last video is the student talking at the end of the lesson. There is a stronger lower resonance now with good vocal fold closure. Nice!

*Sometimes classically trained singers will go to a contemporary teacher because they want to sing contemporary repertoire.*



As I have said in the past there are many ways to skin the proverbial cat. I could have tried a number of exercises or strategies and still had success. I'd love to hear of any exercises or strategies you use in helping singers strengthen their chest register. If you have any questions then please [email me](mailto:linehilton.com) ■

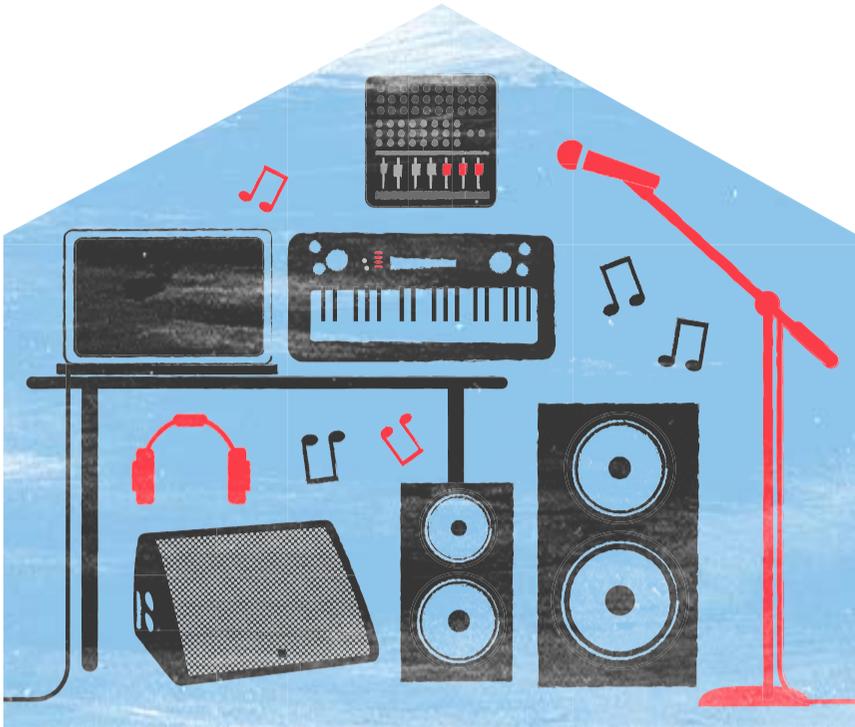
## LINE HILTON



Line helps pro and semi-pro singers, artists and voice teachers with their voice, performance, mindset and training. Her specialty 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](http://www.vocologyinpractice.com), a voice teacher network, and completed a MSc in Performing Arts Medicine at University College London in 2014.



<http://www.linehilton.com>



# GEARING *up*



**THE SINGING  
HARMONIES APP**

**How & why I created it by  
Susan Anders**



**BUILDING A HOME  
RECORDING STUDIO**

**Episode 5: Rose talks to Award win-**



**GEAR**

**Choosing a Portable PA**



# singing **HARMONIES**

SUSAN ANDERS TALKS ABOUT HER  
HARMONY TRAINING APP

# The Sing Harmonies App: **HOW & WHY I CREATED IT**

**S**usan Anders is the creator of the popular Sing Harmonies app, which allows singers to hone in on their harmonizing skills through an array of features centered around popular song harmonies. We had Susan pen a piece this issue surrounding the history and creation of the app.

I've been obsessed with harmonies since I learned how to harmonize in Girl Scout camp. Since then I've sung in a cappella groups and sung backing harmonies for many artists and bands at live shows and in the studio. I started writing vocal arrangements in college at UC Santa Cruz and never stopped. So, early on when I started coaching singers in voice technique, I also taught group harmony classes. After I'd been teaching for several years I started writing and recording different vocal technique books and CDs. One of them, *Harmony Singing by Ear*, is my biggest seller.

My friend Chambers Stevens is a popular acting coach for kids and teens in Hollywood. Chambers has his ear to the ground, and several years ago he told me that apps were taking off and I needed to create some kind of app for singers. I didn't have an iPhone or iPad (still don't), didn't know what apps could or couldn't do, but I thought what would be great would be an app for learning and practicing 4-part SATB harmonies. Something like a simple mixer, where singers could play or mute their part and/or the other parts as the song progresses. I've worked with many harmony singers, and I know that some lose their part as soon as another singer comes in. Others just need the other singer or singers to sing very softly at first. I made sure the app could help those singers.

I drew a stick figure drawing of four singers and added a one-page description of how the app would work and who the potential buyers might be. Luckily, Nashville had a rapidly growing geek community, and through another friend I quickly found and met with



people at two different app development companies. Both liked my idea and wanted to work with me, and I ended up partnering with Ben Henderson and Firefly Logic. I'd supply the tracks and they would do the rest. My husband Tom Manche is a producer-engineer who



runs Studio X here in Nashville. I arranged the vocals, Tom produced the tracks, and some singer friends and I sang the different parts.

The original Sing Harmonies app was released the summer of 2010. It included three songs I knew were good parallel harmony songs: “Lean On Me”, “Teach Your Children”, and “Proud Mary”. I must have listened to “Teach Your Children” several hundred times to figure out the original CSN&Y harmonies! The four icons that trigger the individual singers look much better now than my original stick figures. When the user presses the play icon the 4-part version of the song plays. Tap any singer once to lower it to half-

volume, twice to mute it. Mute all but the part you want to learn until you’ve got it, then add the other voices back in, either at half or full volume. It’s a pretty simple app without a lot of bells and whistles, but it’s very helpful for learning and practicing a part with other voices.

The app included a “Request a Song” function, and the requests flooded in. Most of these requests were from teenagers, and the #1 most requested song for eighteen months was Justin Bieber’s “Baby”, until “Call Me Maybe” took its place. Meanwhile, the Firefly Logic team was working on an update so we could add more songs to the app. This took much longer than we anticipated, but the 2.0 version was finally released in September 2014. This version comes with the original three songs, with nineteen more songs available via in-app purchase.

Among the songs we added were “Baby” and “Call Me Maybe”, but other songs have ended up being much more popular. It wasn’t requested much, but I arranged and added Leonard Cohen’s “Hallelujah” anyway because I love the song, and I thought it would work well in 4-part harmony. To my surprise it’s the most popular song, while “Baby” is the least popular. I like to think that’s because the app users have great taste!

Some of the new songs have trickier harmonies, so we’ve got a page on the [singharmonies.com](http://singharmonies.com) site with the key, arrangement details, and difficulty level for each song. We plan to continue adding more songs in a variety of genres, as long as they are good harmony songs. Now whenever I hear a song with lots of harmonies I wonder “Hmmm, would that be a good one for the app?” ■

## SUSAN ANDERS



**S**usan Anders, MA, has coached thousands of contemporary singers in the San Francisco Bay Area, Los Angeles and Nashville. Her singing methods have been used by thousands of singers worldwide. She is also a singer-songwriter (“A soulful, commanding voice” *the New Yorker*): her most recent album is *Swimmer*. Susan was born and raised in Berkeley, California, and now lives in Nashville, Tennessee.



<http://www.susananders.com>

# BUILDING A HOME RECORDING STUDIO

# EPISODE 5

**H**ome recording can be one of the most beneficial investments an artist can make. Whether it's to find a new way to display your work or simply used as a tool to practice—setting up your own home studio can be incredible for your work.

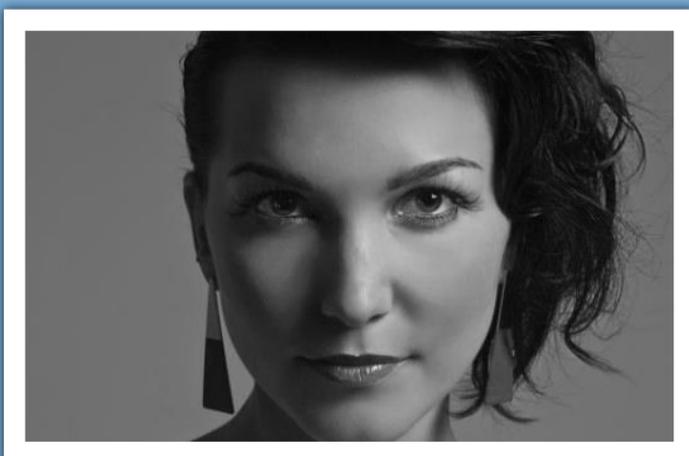
In our home recording series we have discussed

all of the supplies, software, and general knowledge needed to build and operate your own studio. In this issue, iSing's Rose Kimberley sits down with multi Award winning vocalist/session singer/songwriter Ann Bailey to discuss Ann's experience, preferences, and tips for recording from home ■



ROSE TALKS TO ANN BAILEY ON HOW SHE USES TECHNOLOGY FOR HER WORK

## ROSE KIMBERLEY



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.



<http://rosekimberley.com>

# portable PA SYSTEM

HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT PORTABLE  
SYSTEM FOR YOUR NEEDS

# CHOOSING THE Right PORTABLE PA System

By W. Tyler Allen

Whether you're purely a vocalist, you perform solo with a guitar/piano, or even a full band—a portable PA system is key to a great live performance. However, plenty of PAs exist, therefore lots of factors go into which ones make the perfect system for you.

Below are some key notes to consider when choosing the perfect portable PA system for your music.

## THE VENUE AND EVENT

Musical performances held at outdoor events or very large venues are going to require a very powerful PA system, where a small coffee shop gig, or medium-sized venue will require something a bit more concise and simple.

## COMPATIBILITY

The number of input/outputs along with any necessary hook-ups is very important to which PA to choose for your music. Other compatibility instances are if you will be hooking this up with a laptop, or any other similar device—you will need to ensure you have the proper connections.

## POWER REQUIREMENTS AND WIRELESS OPERATIONS

PA systems that contain a battery backup will help with any power outages, and wireless options can play an important role in extending the reach of your sound. You will need to ensure that you are mounting your speakers that work well with your wireless microphone. Wireless and battery options are very important to choosing a PA.

## MIXERS, MICROPHONES, SPEAKERS, AND QUALITY OF SOUND

Whether it is wired or wireless, built-in amplifiers, active or passive – these are all aspects that you

will have to think of when choosing a PA and its compatibility. For larger bands you may need subs and woofers and other extra items. Where, if you are a solo vocalist, you may need something a bit simpler.

However, it is also very natural for soloists to move on to perform with larger bands. Therefore, keep in mind the evolution of your career when investing in a PA. They are an investment, and it is always smart to invest in something you will be using for many years to come. Here are a few portable PA systems to choose from, in no particular order:

## Behringer EUROPORT EPA150

Great for small to medium sized events. It has great connectivity options such as XLR microphones, keyboards, electric guitars, and even CD/MP3 player options.



## Harbinger HA60

A great system for mid to large sized venues, as well as outdoor performances. Its many channels also make it very versatile for use with laptops or any other needed technology.



## Yamaha STAGEPAS 500

The StagePas is a great system and incredibly versatile. It includes a wide array of outputs, as well as great controls for tone control, EQ, and much more. It's a very detailed PA, for a very reasonable price.

A great light-weight option with a four channel option. This is a great option for small, acoustic-based performances.





# *look listen* & FEEL



**SINGER@LARGE** Ways to get your music out there...



**WORLD SINGERS** Sexto Sentido, A Cuban vocal revolution!



**iREVIEW APP** Songwriter's Pad



**iREVIEW SINGERS** 5 singers not to miss



SINGER

@LARGE



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

## WAYS TO GET YOUR MUSIC OUT THERE...

For this issue's column, I wanted to explore digital distribution and selling your music. There are many places that can help you do this, but the three I have investigated the most thoroughly are Bandcamp, CDBaby and Gumroad.

Over the years, I have pondered and researched incessantly about the 'best' ways to get music out into the world, while also trying to make a living and being a stickler about not simply giving away everything for free. There is a lot to consider, but I believe it's important that we do so to avoid ending up with a very expensive hobby!

I am always trying to come up with creative ways to find that balance, and so hopefully this article will help you to do the same.



CDBaby was the first place that helped independent musicians sell their music online and get onto iTunes. Since then, they have grown immensely, and what was once a small and inspiring company is now a huge and rather corporate

entity. They have maintained their indie branding, but I tend to be wary of the things they are trying to 'sell' me because essentially I can see they are making a lot of money off of a lot of people – the model for so many online businesses.

But wariness aside, CDBaby is great and here's why: you can digitally distribute your music pretty much anywhere you might want to—iTunes, Amazon, Spotify, Rdio, Last.fm... etc. The options for the level of distribution you want are varied and can be tailored specifically. You can choose to sell your album in one place only or to any service that pays, or simply give it out for free at dozens of online services.

The thing to note when setting up your album is that streaming services such as Spotify come under the 'everything that pays' category, even though you get a very minimal payment for this. I haven't even been able to buy a beer with my Spotify earnings yet! You get about 1c per stream, but CDBaby takes a cut of that.

### The Details

CDBaby charges a set up fee per album (starting at \$59), and on top of that they charge you a 9% commission. The reporting is

sometimes a bit slow (for iTunes it is about 3 months out), but they are very detailed in what was sold where. They have pretty efficient customer service, too.

CDBaby offers all the bells and whistles to sell your music online—through your own site, or CDB's online shop—such as music players, embeddable shop-fronts for social media, and the CDB marketplace place where customers can review your music. CDB can even store your physical albums at their facility and ship them for you. Their shopping cart system is easy to use and they accept all forms of payment (including check and money order in the US). Easy!

CDBaby also offers sync licensing, which sounds like a great thing, but I am personally really concerned about the setup. I would LOVE my music to be used in film or television, as I am sure most of us would, but with the CDB sync licensing deal you cannot choose where your songs end up, nor how much money you get for them. This deal works best for CDB. They have access to a catalog of thousands of songs so they make a little money on a lot of people, but does this work in your best interest? The most

important thing to ask is “Am I ok having my music in something that I might not like or am even morally against?” Maybe the answer for you is that you don’t mind, but I know I want to always have control of where and how my music is used and want whoever is working for me on sync licensing to get me the most money they can. It’s important to know where you sit with this and know you are making an informed decision.

### The Bottom Line

If you want digital distribution, CDBaby is pretty great. There are other companies like Tunecore and Distrokid, who have slightly different set ups, and depending on how much you sell could end up costing much more in the long run.

## bandcamp

Bandcamp is a great place to host your own online shop, be it selling digital downloads, physical albums, or merch. They have capacity for your bio and a gig calendar on their site, so you can even use them as your main website if you want to.

Their commission and payment system is a little different from other places. The most simplistic way to describe it is that BC takes a 15% commission, but not right away. When someone buys your music, you get paid the full amount straight into your paypal account, and you build up a balance with Bandcamp called a ‘revenue share balance’, which they collect once your balance gets to

*“There is a general misconception that people aren’t buying music anymore, and that may be generally true, but your FANS will buy your music.”*

a certain amount. So, a little more commission than CDBaby, but no set up fee, and some additional bonuses as I’ll explain.

Bandcamp is definitely set up with music in mind (musicians and fans!). I think there is a general misconception that people aren’t buying music anymore, and that may be generally true, but your FANS will buy your music, I promise! So one of the most important things to do is get fans; to develop relationships with them, talk to them, encourage communication by telling them about your world. Social media is a fantastic marketing platform, but your email list is THE most important aspect of building fan relationships. And BC gives you the email of every customer that buys your music. Priceless. (CD Baby gives your fans the choice to offer their email addresses to you or not, but of course CDB gets them for themselves regardless!).

Another great thing about BC is their free downloads. They give you 200 download codes per month. This is an AWESOME tool

for promotion.... I am thinking moo.com for their business cards, which can have a unique design on each card.... Why pay for digital download cards with someone else’s logo all over it when you can make your own DD cards? You can also offer free downloads to friends, press, for competitions and promotions. This is a great tool.

You can also set up a pre-order, allow customers to pay-what-they-wish (or pay more than your set price), offer sales promotions for specific periods, and embed music players with buy buttons across your various platforms. And you are in control of it all. BC offers you lots of stats so you can see what songs are being listened to and where and when, and the social aspect of BC is also really great!

The one weird thing I learned about Bandcamp concerns the Bandcamp app for iOS. It seems like a great idea for listeners, but not necessarily so great for musicians. The problem lies with Apple. You can download

the Bandcamp app, and stream any music in their database for free. No subscription fee for the consumer, which means no streaming revenue for the artist. This bugs me. I would feel a bit better about it if people could listen and with a click BUY my music, but Apple won't allow BC to do this (of course, they want you to go to iTunes), so essentially you are giving your music away for free. Again, that conundrum: if you give something away for free, why would people buy it? I feel a little safer with BC in this situation than say, Spotify, however I worry that that might change...

Also, I have to admit, I am not a huge fan of the design of BC. I wish it were a little more streamlined and... well, pretty.

### The Bottom Line

Bandcamp is a great tool if you want to be in control of selling your music online. They can't get you into iTunes, but they allow you to take your career into your own hands, to forge relationships with fans, and grow your music.



I have recently found out about Gumroad due to its involvement with Hachette Books (read more here), so I have been researching them a bunch. In theory they sound awesome: they take a 5% + 25c per transaction commission, and have a one-click payment system using their own checkout system that takes all credit cards. They don't take Paypal payments from customers, so it makes them inclusive of everyone in the world (there are some countries that don't allow Paypal).

Their platform is really easy to use, and easy to share across your social media platforms. At first, I thought they would definitely be the way to go, until I ran across a few things that gave me some doubts.

1. You can't listen before you buy directly within GR. You can use Soundcloud and link to your GR page or set

up something yourself, but it is a couple more steps than perhaps necessary.

2. Their commission per SONG is actually really high, but per album is low, so it affects how you sell. For example, if you are selling a single for \$1.00, GR takes 5c PLUS 25c, meaning you make 80c (so, that ends up at a 20% commission per song). However, if you are selling whole albums for \$10, they would take their 5% at 50c, plus 25c, so you'd make \$9.25, which is GREAT!
3. It is a little confusing putting your GR shop onto your website. It requires a bit of CSS coding which isn't difficult, but when there are much easier platforms to quickly start selling your music, it is a bit of a turn off. (Another thing to learn and do!).

The thing that Gumroad is GREAT for, it seems, is selling subscriptions or e-publications. So, if you were to sell sheet music, or perhaps say, a subscription to a song you record every month, it'd be great. (You could use this as an alternative to Bandcamp Pro, which also offers subscriptions but with an additional fee on top of their commission).

### The Bottom Line

Gumroad is an easy way to sell full-length digital albums, or digital subscriptions and make the most money per sale. However, it is limiting in its functionality to sell singles, have people hear samples of

*I try to be up with the 'give it all away' attitude and meet it in the middle by treating one or two songs per album as promotion.*

your music, and embed onto your own website. They do give your customers email addresses though!

## TO SUM UP

CDBaby is the easiest site to use to get your music digitally and physically distributed in one place, so if you want to just use one service this'd be it.

I use CDB for digital distribution of my albums to iTunes, and everywhere for a single. I try to be up with the 'give it all away' attitude and meet it in the middle by treating one or two songs per album as promotion. I feel that it is enough to hopefully have some future fans find out about my music.

Bandcamp doesn't offer digital distribution to places like iTunes, BUT it offers something much more important—your ability to grow your email list, make a little more money on digital sales than places like iTunes and Spotify, offer free download codes, and sell merch all in one place. Their social platform is really nice too, and if you want to sign up for Bandcamp Pro there's additional fun perks.

*All three companies clearly offer very different things when it comes to selling your music. Is there only one that is right for you?*

Gumroad is a little more limited than the other two. However, if you want to make the most money off your full-length albums this is the place. It'd be a good thing to use to offer a promotion selling your music, or to sell an e-publication or subscription. I see GR mostly as a promotional tool. If I ever want to encourage my fans to buy an album through social media, I will set up a campaign on Gumroad, paste it to my Soundcloud account to help promote across more platforms and be selling 'albums only'.

All three companies clearly offer very different things when it comes to selling your music. Is there only one that is right for you? If you're like me, you will probably use a combination of all three ■

## QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS

[questions@isingmag.com](mailto:questions@isingmag.com)

## NERISSA CAMPELL



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.



<http://www.nerissacampbell.com>

# world SINGERS

SEXTO SENTIDO - A CUBAN VOCAL  
REVOLUTION

Interview

# Sexto Sentido



When I first heard of Cuban artists Sexto Sentido, I had the impression most would get when looking at a photo of an all-female singing group. I had expected to hear a band that was attempting to be Destiny's Child, TLC, or any other similar R&B act. However, when giving their work a spin, I was blown away with what I heard.

When listening to Sexto Sentido you're met with rich harmonies, jazzy licks, and funky drums. Not to mention beautifully sung lyrics delivered perfectly in both English and Spanish. It's apparent that these artists have something that's hard to find in US or UK-based R&B groups and that's a certain sense of *sabor*. They have this innate "Cuban-ness" that's felt in their music. It's a "swing" that's subtle yet sets their music apart from the rest.

The group consists of Arlety Valdés, Yudelkis LaFuente, Eliene Castillo, and (new girl) Wendy Vizcaíno and they are a force to be reckoned with. Imagine if Beyoncé, Mariah Carey, and Alicia Keys were born and raised in Cuba, and had been friends since 13 years old. Because that's essentially the story of Sexto Sentido. The four friends (which included their original singer Melvis Estevez) met at one of Havana's elite conservatoires that was designed to pick up emerging talent from a young age and nurture it no matter the child's background. They formed their band soon after and became unstoppable, receiving numerous awards and being sent by the Government all over the world as well as working with legendary Cuban musicians such as Chucho Valdés.

Their work has been a large cultural success, often bringing

in talent from other parts of the world. Their first album, "Bossa Cubana", had a Russian producer and was supported by the Brazilian musician João Donato. It gave them their first hit (title track) and was a mix of international covers, as well as their own original pieces.

The second album "Mi Feeling" was rooted in Cuba's indigenous jazz movement ('filin') of the 60s and although it was a niche album, it was rated as one of the best jazz CDs in the USA that year (2008). The songs can still occasionally be heard on rotation in certain US markets.

The group has a particularly huge following in Copenhagen, and this is due to some unfortunate copyright issues they had during the release of "Mi Feeling". The Cuban government-owned record company the group worked with claimed ownership

of their entire album, so they saw very little profit. Therefore the group went to Copenhagen to promote and produce their third album “The Way” (written completely by them) and to also look for opportunities to tour in Europe and take back control of their music.

I had the pleasure of speaking with member, Yudelkis LaFuente, as well as getting input from the other members as well. Due to Cuba’s unreliable Internet connection the interview was part conversation and part email. Though, the group’s warm reception, tenacity to speak, and down-to-earth attitude just shows why they’ve been able to have a

long-term and impressive career since the late 1990’s.

**iSing:** You all have been together since 1997, how has your style evolved and changed since then?

**Sexto:** I believe that working constantly through so many years has made us evolve a lot (keeping up with new trends). Besides that, we have had the luck to be able to perform and to record with many good musicians from all over the world and we have been able to sing different genres and styles, which has allowed us to grow as musicians, and to change our way of feeling and creating music. As a result I believe now we have a sound more solid, more authentic,

and at the same time more universal.

**iSing:** I have read that you are striving to go for a more modern even electronic sound. You all have done well in fusing your Cuban heritage with various genres. How do you intend on going about this?

**Sexto:** That was our main intention when we recorded our last album “Noche de Brujas” (Witches Night), and I believe that in a certain way we have achieved it. We needed more dancing and less complicated songs for a younger audience, an audience that is mostly listening to reggaeton and electronic music in all its variants.



At the moment, thanks to the video clip of “Baila Loco”, and the success of the video clip “Brujas”, there are people calling us “witches”, and that is because it is the most recent and surely the only thing they know of Sexto Sentido. I actually think that is positive!



BRUJAS (WITCHES NIGHT) - SEXTO SENTIDO FEAT. HAVANA QUEENS

**iSing:** In the video for “Canto a Elegguá”, you’re all sitting on the floor and singing, harmonizing and clapping. It’s a very intimate and intoxicating song. I can certainly see why people would equate it with witchcraft!

**Sexto:** That’s another we get a lot of positive reaction from!



CANTO A ELEGGUÁ - SEXTO SENTIDO

**iSing:** If you had to choose three of your songs that you would say “defines” Sexto Sentido, what would they be? Let’s say you’re introducing someone to your work, which songs would you play?

*“I think that the most important thing is how much we evolve in our minds and our heart in regards to the music and life in general.”*

**Sexto:** That is difficult to answer! There are many songs that I could say they have the sound that defines Sexto Sentido, but if I had to choose three, they would be: “Canto a Elegguá”, “Eres feliz” and “Chisme”.

**iSing:** Those are all beautiful pieces! We’ll be sure to link our readers back to them! So, tell us what the group has planned for 2015. Any release or tours?

**Sexto:** We are about to take a long pause to prepare some individual projects. Later, we are thinking of recording another CD, maybe acapella. Meanwhile we are working with a Cuban singer and composer (Luis Barbería) and we will be performing with him in Cuba next month.

**iSing:** As someone that’s been performing for over 20 years, can you give our readers any tips on vocal longevity? And how to keep

your voice healthy over a long career? Would you say your vocal technique has evolved over the years to accommodate your busy career?

**Sexto:** I wouldn’t know just exactly how much my voice has evolved. I suppose it is normal that it sounds a little bit deeper than 10 years before, and I like that. But I think that the most important thing is how much we evolve in our minds and our heart in regards to the music and life in general—that can certainly change our sound! Apart from that, I would always suggest plenty of rest and water! ■

**GET SOCIAL**

with SEXTO SENTIDO



## iREVIEW: APPS



SONGWRITERS PAD (for iPad)

PARGONI, LLC

US\$9.99

<http://songwriterspad.com>

I love songwriting. It has the power and ability to make great men cry and to make little girls invincible. It allows people to dream dreams and live in worlds far away.

The pen and paper has been my trusted “go to” for many years. I have piles of paper and files with little scribbles. Some legible and many others appearing more like hieroglyphics. My phone is almost full of audio snippets of ideas, some of them in a tiny little whisper so not to seem too crazy to the passersby as I walk down the street.

I’ve heard that creativity breeds in chaos, but my organisation of my scribbles and little voice notes started to verge on outright anarchy. So my search for a bit of technology to lend me a hand began.

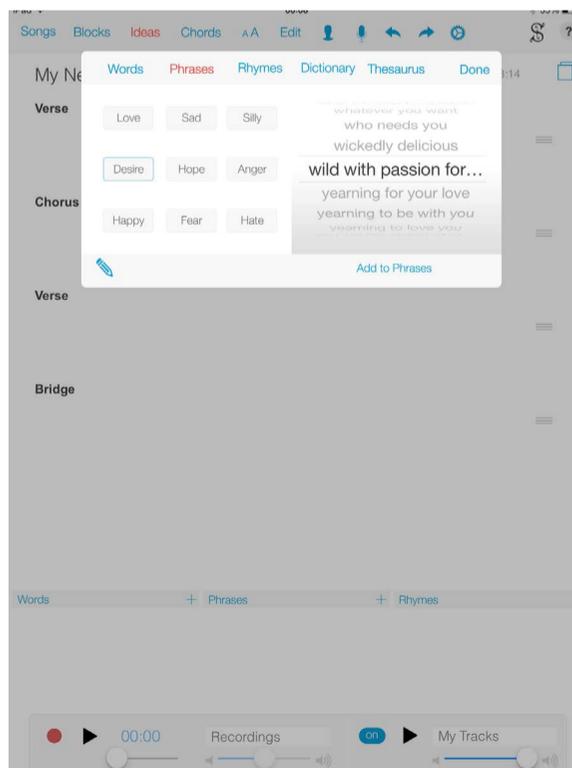
Songwriter’s Pad is an iPad app that I’ve started using and this is a review of my experience with it.

The first thing you will notice when launching the app is the interface has the new IOS 8 feel to it: predominantly white background with blue text for menus and icons. I like the spaced out layout. It doesn’t feel cluttered.

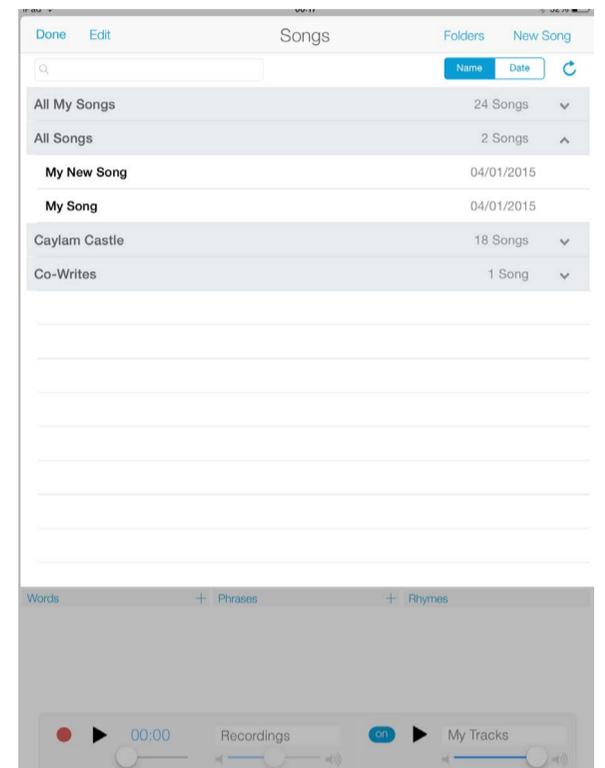
The Songs menu gives you the list of your songs and is also the place where you can organise folders and add new songs. The edit functionality does take a little getting used to. You can duplicate a song from here as well but I would have liked it to be a little more accessible to quickly create new versions of a song.

Blocks allow you to add different writable sections of a song like verse, chorus, and bridge. There is also a freestyle block if you don’t want to be bound to the separate writing blocks. Once you start a song in freestyle mode you are fixed in that mode and can’t use any of the other blocks.

Words, phrases, rhymes, dictionary, and thesaurus are available under the Ideas menu. Words and phrases can be a



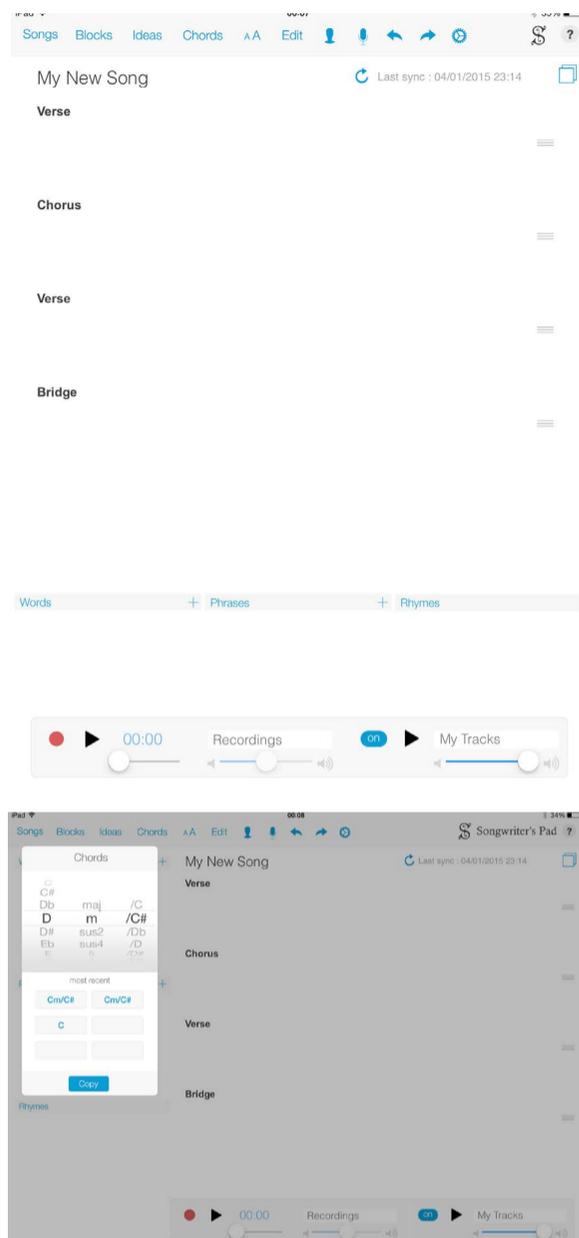
great way to help you with a little inspiration if you are stuck. There are 9 different emotions listed. Tapping on a specific emotion will randomly select a word or phrase related to it. You can then add these to a words and phrases bucket on the side of the screen.



Adding chords is done through a copy and paste process. The chords appear in square brackets amongst your lyrics. I did find this to be rather tedious and time consuming. It’s almost easier to just type the chords in yourself.

You can edit the song’s metadata like the author, publisher, BPM. There is only space for one co-author so I suppose you would have to add a comma to separate more co-authors.

The audio recording functions are basic, but it does what it needs to, including being able to have multiple takes for a song. There’s a function to play a backing track when you record but I found the functionality to control the playback of the track somewhat limiting.



There are also versions of the Songwriter's Pad for iPhone, Windows PC, and mac. The functionality varies slightly between these versions. You are able to sync the songs and audio between them which is handy should you have an idea on your iPhone that you want to work with

on your iPad. You do however have to specify whether to upload or download the song. This means you need to remember which device has the latest version. As you use the Songwriter's Pad servers to sync the songs there is an additional charge if you exceed 50MB of bandwidth.

#### Pros

- Simple, uncluttered interface
- Words and phrases ideas
- Sync between devices
- Price
- 

#### Cons

- Usability issues for some functions
- Lack of song history tracking
- No sync automation
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#### Conclusion

There are a couple of usability issues but not ones that I would say are a deal breaker. I would however have liked to see some sort of history tracking which would allow me to see different versions of a song at different points in time. This is something that Tunesmith does quite well.

While the syncing is a nice feature you can burn through your free allowance quite quickly so you may need to consider an additional

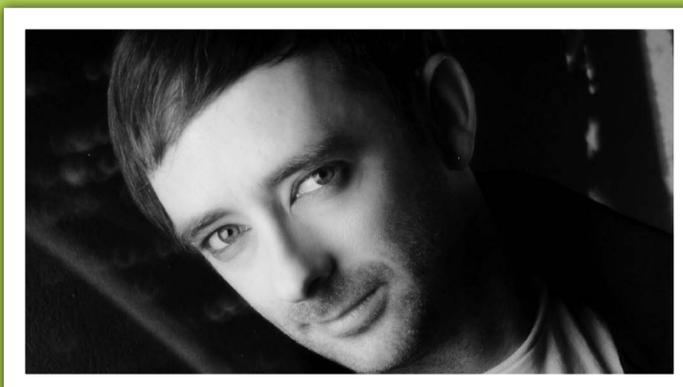
cost, which ranges from £0.69 to £13.99 per month.

Overall, if you are looking for a decent basic songwriting iPad app, I would recommend this app. At a price point (without the sync allowance) of \$9.99 / £6.99 it is good value and is well within the reach of any songwriter.

The iPhone version which is quite similar to the iPad version is available for \$5.99 / £3.99.

The desktop version is available for \$67 but I consider it to be rather overpriced as it seems to have slightly less functionality than the iPad version and an older looking interface as well.

## CAYLAM CASTLE



Caylam Castle is a vocalist and songwriter, who loves pop and is proud of it. Caylam was born in South Africa but now lives in London, and is normally found wearing his trusty skinny stripped jeans. You can learn more of his work at his website below.



<http://www.caylamcastle.com>



# SINGERS NOT TO MISS

BY PATRICK GUNTHER

**LEON BRIDGES**

Hailing from Fort Worth, Texas, this soulful bluesman is poised for a huge 2015. After bursting onto the Soundcloud scene with singles “Coming Home” and “Better Man,” Bridges solidified himself as Sam Cooke reincarnate with a silky smooth voice and suave instrumentation that appeals to nearly everyone. Twangy blues guitar layered over beautiful Southern harmonies on “Coming Home” sets a perfect pace for vivid lyricism that is hard to find in the musical zeitgeist of the modern era. After signing to Columbia Records in 2014, Bridges is set to embark on a tour across the United States, which will have to tide fans over until the release of his debut studio LP, whenever that may come.

**PETITE NOIR**

Yannick Ilunga, better known as Petite Noir, is South Africa’s most promising up-and-coming musician. Combining a number of R&B, electronic, and rock influences, Petite Noir offers up a dose of completely unique sounds that combine to form an energetic and infectious sound that is all his own. With his EP *King of Anxiety* dropping on Jan. 19 via Domino Records, fans of his post-punk,

new-wave sound will be able to get their fix of Noir’s dreamy and pulsating pop music that is sure to be a hit with fans of artists such as Blood Orange and FKA Twigs.

**JESSY LANZA**

Hyperdub’s preeminent female vocalist Jessy Lanza burst onto the electronic/soul scene with the release of her amazing 2013 debut *Pull My Hair Back*. Heralded as one of the best electrosoul albums of the year, Lanza’s ethereal and haunting vocals are perfectly complemented by funky R&B-inspired production that she dexterously maneuvers in and out of. With no word on a follow-up to her first record, fans of the Canadian songstress will just have to continue to spin *Pull My Hair Back* while waiting to catch her supporting Caribou on their ongoing North American tour.

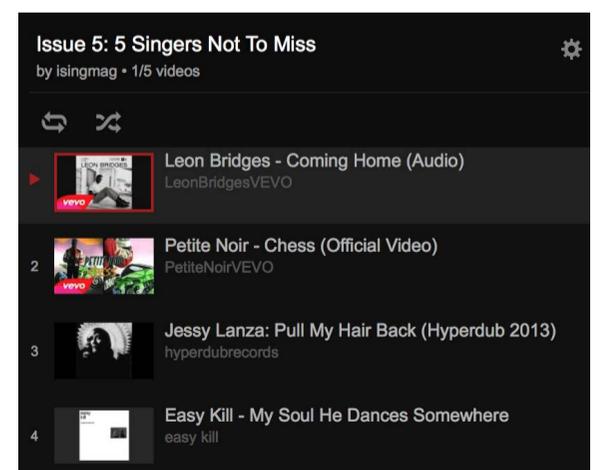
**EASY KILL**

Hailing from Manchester, UK, the alternative rock quartet is ready to release their first EP sometime in early 2015. Their lead single “My Soul He Dances Somewhere” combines instrumentation akin to alternative impresarios The National and vocals slightly reminiscent of a young Jeff Buckley. The group’s ability to blend soft, soothing, Elliott Smith-like musicianship with energetic vocals laden with colorful timbre akin to Grizzly Bear is impressive considering they’ve only been

active for roughly a year and a half. With a few pop-up shows around Manchester coming up in a couple of months, EasyKill and their pristinely crisp sound are a must-listen for any fan of quality rock music.

**FRANK OCEAN**

The R&B heavyweight solidified himself as a bonafide superstar with the release of 2012’s Grammy-winning *Channel Orange*, and is said to be putting the finishing touches on his untitled Sophomore LP. The incredibly talented Odd Future affiliate has effectively shied away from the public eye during the recording process of the new record, which is rumored to be even better than his stellar debut. Ocean’s titillating vocals and innate storytelling ability have drawn comparisons to legend Stevie Wonder, and with good reason. With his second full-length set to drop in the second quarter of 2015, fans will be eagerly waiting for yet another classic from the New Orleans native ■



CHECK OUT ALL 5 ON THE ISING PLAYLIST