

THE ULTIMATE RESOURCE FOR SINGERS

# iSing

ISSUE 7

**THE  
SWINGLES**  
HALF A  
CENTURY  
& STILL GOING STRONG

**THE LOOK BOOK**  
Festival Fashion

**VOCAL STYLE**  
The Art of Ad-Libbing

**THE UNSIGNED GUIDE**  
The Music Industry Bible

**INS  
OUTS** &  
OF BREATHING FOR  
SINGERS

**FOLK SINGER**  
**SAM LEE**  
RESPECTING THE MAGIC

OLD HABITS **DIE HARD**  
BREAKING BAD VOCAL HABITS

# MILITIAVOX

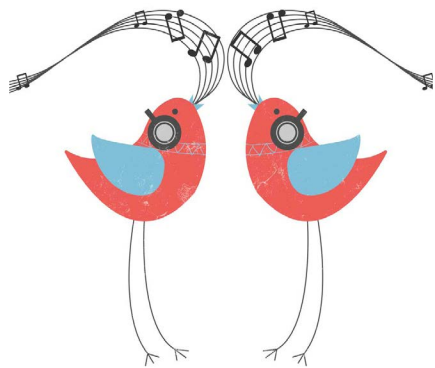
**I REVIEW**  
Lalah Hathaway @Ronnie Scott's

**VOCAL HEALTH**  
Allergies and the Voice

**VOCAL NERDS**  
Avoiding Vocal Strain



# DEAR READERS



Here in the northern hemisphere summer seems to have brought not only the sun, but also a high pollen count and as a consequence the dreaded hayfever. In the UK it is estimated that around 16 million folks suffer from this affliction, with an expected rise to 30 million over the next 20 years. From what I see in my own teaching, studio singers

are not exempt from that population of hayfever sufferers. According to the NHS website, "Hay fever does not pose a serious threat to health but it can have a negative impact on your quality of life." What they don't mention is that it can be devastating on the singing voice. So needless to say I shall be pointing my students to this issue's Vocal Health article on "Allergies and the Voice" by the lovely Dr Reena Gupta.

Our awesome cover shot is of a singer who hails from New York City. She loves to defy her stereotype, as you will find out. Female metal singers aren't common, let alone black female metal singers. Militia Vox revels in her ability to breakdown the expectations of her 'type'. Having started in musical theatre, she had early experiences of the bias of stereotyping. Even if metal isn't your thing this interview will entertain and enlighten you.

Beyond that you will find yet another packed issue of inspiring articles and great information to dig into.

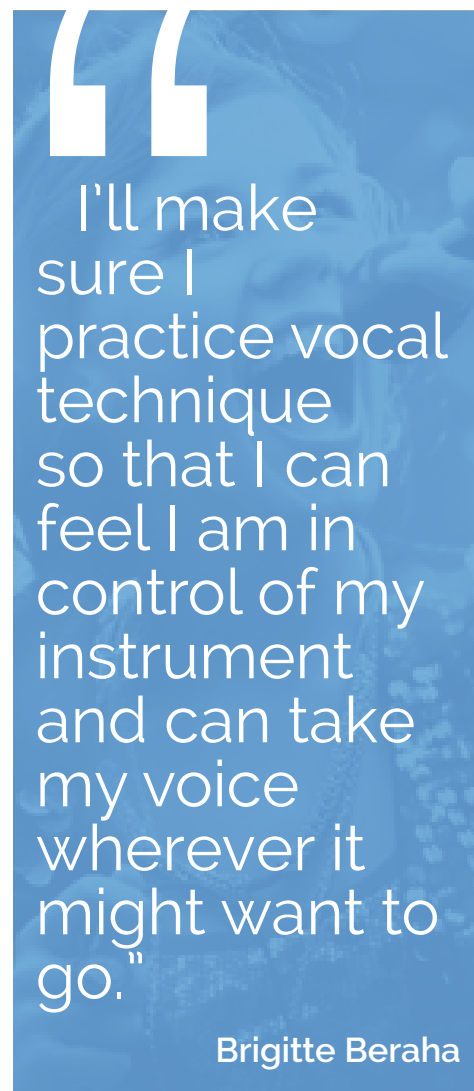
So off you go - start digging!

Yours in singing,

*Line Hilton*  
Editorial Director



- The Art of Ad Libbing
- Ins & Outs of Breathing
- My Vocal Instrument, Brigitte Bereha
- The Swingle Singers
- 4 TED talks to Motivate You
- World Singer - Sam Lee



Please don't hesitate to send us your music for review, feedback, or topics requests to

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

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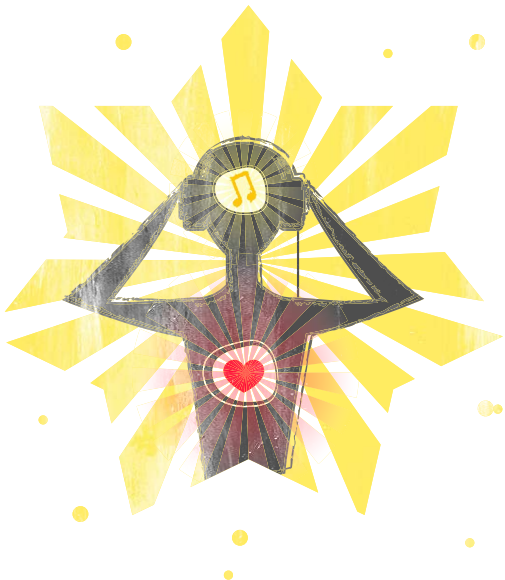


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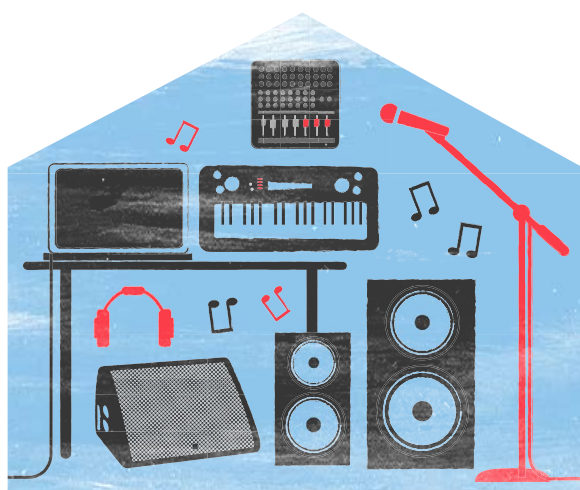
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SWIPE FOR MORE













# *The* **FUNDAMENTALS**



- |                           |  |   |
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| <b>VOCAL NERDS</b>        | <b>Avoiding Vocal Strain</b>                     |  |
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# Avoiding VOCAL STRAIN





vocal muscles is off in some way, then strain is likely to occur as a compensation for that. But don't feel disheartened! Almost everyone has some kind of imbalance going on somewhere. It's impossible to be perfect (unless you're us, of course). As teachers, part of our mission is to ensure that singers are singing with as little excess tension as possible. The reason I use the word 'excess' is simple: singing actually relies on tension, but in the right muscles and to the right degree. The only reason we can even achieve a higher pitch is by increasing tension in the vocal cords! So, with a tension-based activity, we can so easily generate tension elsewhere by accident. That's the singers predicament right there!

deeper, we must first acknowledge and accept that the human voice is one of the most adjustable instruments ever created. It's rarely in a fixed position. It has a number of parts that make it work and a prolific singer is constantly doing a fine job of managing these moving parts. In short, think of a singer as a chef. If the toast pops up before the beans are done, and you didn't take the butter out the fridge early enough you're going to have a pretty miserable meal.

We know what you're thinking "what sort of chef cooks beans on toast anyway?" That and, "how on earth does that relate to vocal strain?" In answer to question two: there are many parts that can contribute to vocal strain, either on their own or normally all at once. If the larynx is moving around too much when you sing there's a chance strain is on its way. The thyroarytenoid muscle (or TA, the one that works the low notes), if

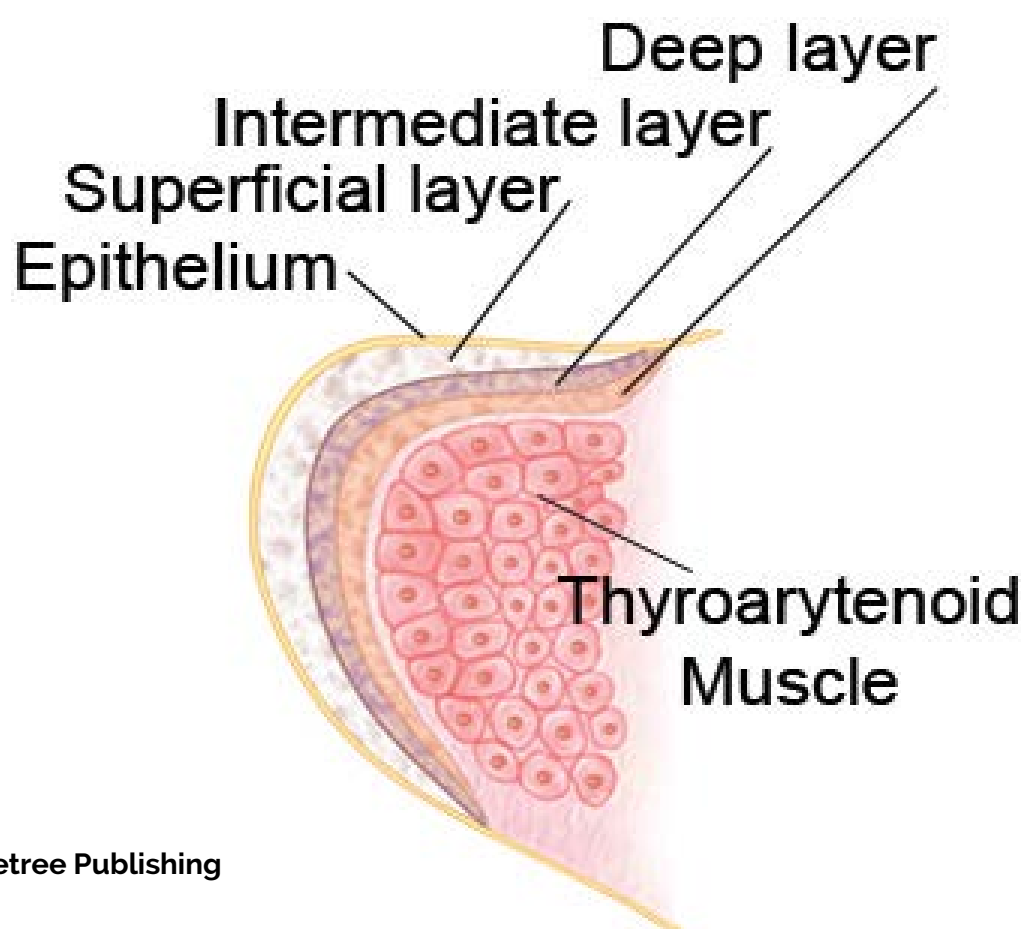
### WHY DO I STRAIN? QUEUE ANOTHER TERRIBLE ANALOGY...

To dig into the causes a little

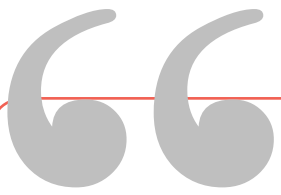
**S**train. Some (or rather many) of us are good friends with that little devil. It wraps itself around our neck like a boa constrictor, squeezing the blood into our pained faces. That may be a little dramatic, but let's be honest; it's a pain in the butt right?

But what exactly is strain? There are several definitions to strain, but here's a good one: "A force tending to pull or stretch something to an extreme or damaging degree." One could relate it to tension, tightness or over-exertion. You get the idea.

As singers, we are often putting our voices under unnecessary strain. Singing is massively underestimated as a task, and it requires much more balance, attention and training than it is usually given, especially if you're singing the high and loud stuff. If the delicate balance of coordination in the



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If the larynx is moving around too much when you sing there's a chance strain is on its way."

over engaged, will assist in making things difficult for you. This is the case with singers who yell! If you have too much extrinsic muscle activity (i.e. the muscles of the neck are getting involved) there's a chance you'll be feeling some squeeze too. Lastly, if you blow too much or too little air, you're likely to see the pain face again.

All that said, there is one more main culprit. Sorry to get all 'sciencey' again, but the resonance can also play a massive role in just how much we strain. As the resonance shifts at the passaggio (see our article in iSing [issue 3](#) for more on this), we are at risk of "hanging on to the bottom voice". If we aren't well-versed in allowing this movement of resonance we're likely to needlessly invite strain as a way of holding our voices together during this weird transition. The truth is that we don't need to hold it together. Trusting that it will, using good voice training tools, is something we all need to get better at.

*NB: The next time someone says "singing is easy", you have our permission to slap them in the face.*

## ANTI-STRAIN STRATEGIES

OK, so firstly we need to keep an eye on a few things to ensure we are

### Be Prepared

**Posture** - To begin, we can pinch something from Alexander Technique. Stand up and position yourself as if you are hanging from a string that's attached to the top of your head. This will help to position your head, sit your shoulders down and align your back. All of these can reduce stress on the vocal apparatus.

**Breathe** - Take a full breath quietly through a 'yawn' throat shape. Be sure to let this breath feel like it fills your lower chest and expands your back a little. Keep the belly relaxed even whilst singing, and be sure that your rib cage and shoulders aren't moving up and down much as you breathe in and out. This all has a positive effect on the positioning of the vocal tract, and allows you to manage the air pressure below the vocal cords needed for good singing.

**Relax** - This does apply to your whole body for now, but we think

reducing tension the best way we can. Then there are a few tools to help us rid those hidden tensions that you can't just 'think away'.

the key is in the mind. Yes you're going to try and sing a big one, but you don't need to tense up and freak out as preparation for the note. It's just a note. Care less about it.

**Warm up** - If you have a great physical and vocal warm up that you find easy and relaxing then make sure you do it before you begin. A lack of warm up is a huge contributor to pulsating veins in your forehead! Check out [issue 1](#) of iSing for some warm up ideas.



**Breath** - This has a positive effect on the positioning of the vocal tract, and allows you to manage the air pressure below the vocal cords needed for good singing.

## TENSION TOOLS

**Larynx positioning** - This is a singing teacher staple. Some call it witchcraft. For someone who strains a bit, a move of the larynx can have a massive effect on muscular tension and resonance, and hence ease. Most will opt for the 'dumb' or 'hooty' tone to lower the larynx and reduce strain. However, a small bunch of singers do better using a twangy witch-like tone to help adjust. Experiment away but be aware, these sounds are

temporary and should be dropped for your normal vocal tone as soon as strain is less present.

**Reduce the volume & stop pushing** - Singing loud often feels really awesome. Like a good type of effort right? But unless the singer is trained, it usually sounds (and looks) the opposite of how it feels. Singers look red, get out of breath and go really flat. Consider turning down your effort, avoid



pushing and lower the volume for a moment. Enough so that your voice relaxes and you find that more subtle place and more importantly, so you're NOT straining anymore. But don't fret y'all. In time you'll be able to build some beef back into those notes without strain, but first you have to take it slow and steady.

**Embrace your head voice** - My what? Check out **issue 5** of iSing for a head voice explanation, but head voice is the key to comfortable range. And what are we usually straining for? A high note! So, if you don't have a clear sounding head voice already in place then get it on top of your list. If you have

some kind of clear head voice then embrace it for a while. Let yourself go there for a bit instead of dragging your poor little cords to the pitch. It's OK, it may disagree with everything that you want to achieve but believe us, it's the start of something huge.

**Visual clues** - Keep an eye on yourself by watching yourself sing in the mirror. Look out for the jaw (clenched or jutting out?), neck, chin (raising high or pulling down?), shoulders (shrugging with the raising pitch?) or any other part of your body that is flailing with the high note. Consciously relax the offending body part(s) and let only your vocals do the work!

### OPEN YOUR MIND AND STICK WITH IT!

Vocal strain comes in many forms and working through it can feel like an absolute labour of love. There's also many more nifty little tricks that can help you relax, so scour the internet for the weird and wonderful. Hopefully some of

the tips above will aid you in your quest for freedom but, if you can, we also suggest you take a look at our article in iSing **issue 3** too. This gives advice on how to balance the passaggio through vowel tuning for a more advanced approach to balancing the voice. Good luck on your journey! ■



## Vocal Nerds Webinar with Chris & Steve

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

### *Avoiding Vocal Strain*

**Friday 4th Sept 2015**

4pm BST (11am ET)

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## THE NAKED VOCALIST



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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.



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PERFORMANCE

# Skills

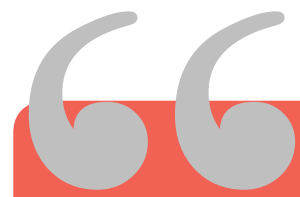
*Connecting with  
the Audience*

*by Tara Brueske*



I think that one of the greatest things about being a professional singer is connecting with PEOPLE! When I do a concert, it isn't simply about me performing music, even though I love singing. It is truly about the audience! If they didn't come to an event or place, I would be communicating with no one. There would be no one to listen to my CDs and no one would buy my merchandise. Though most of us singers would sing whether anyone heard us or not, it is singing for people that makes the concert so enjoyable.

I started singing publicly when I was just six years old. Travelling with my family throughout northern MN and parts of Ontario, I was inundated with the love of singing for others. Maybe being the youngest child makes me more apt to want attention but however it worked out, I started loving being in front of an audience. Without fear. In my twenties, things changed. I would focus on myself during a concert and become super self-conscious. What if they don't like me? What if I say something



Most of us singers would sing whether anyone heard us or not, it is singing for people that makes the concert so enjoyable."

stupid? These questions drove me crazy and made me anxious. How would I relate to an audience? Would they come back?

I believe that connecting with people is crucial as I entertain. To get a consistent audience, it's important to be authentic and relay that you really care about them. They want to know that you do not significantly differ from them and they are truly important. Think of shows like *American Idol* and *The Voice*—I think viewers avidly watch them because they start to invest in the lives of the contestants. Viewers are relating to those individuals. People want to be a part of something bigger. In a similar way, you as a singer can make that happen for your audience.

**Consider the following tips to win your listeners:**

1. Before you ever hit a stage, it's important to plan music that is going to fit with who you are and for whom you are singing. Entertaining an audience is like dating them. The more you find in common, the more they will stick around. A way to find familiarity is to start your shows with cover tunes (aka popular songs others have written). Then gradually flavour it with your own songs. My duo, the BZ GIRLS, starts with two or three cover tunes. Then when we have successfully hooked their attention, we can add our own original songs.
2. Researching your audience can help you connect with them too. What's their age range? Is this background music? Is it for a business event or casual outdoor concert? Most of the people that come to my BZ GIRLS gigs are between the ages of about 40-65. So we will throw in songs from the 60s/70s that they might find familiar. My solo gigs are mostly for senior citizens, so my songs come from the great composers like Irving Berlin, Cole Porter and the Gershwin brothers.
3. To keep variety in a concert, don't be afraid to mix up songs



a bit. Incorporate songs with different keys, varying rhythms, changing instruments—guitar vs piano, etc. Decide which songs have more groove and are up tempo and then throw in a slow one. It's important to keep a mixture so the audience stays with you. When I do solo concerts, it's just me and piano so I really pay attention to my songs changing in tempo, key, range and even what part of my voice I use. If you are a duo, change instruments and who is singing lead and add harmonies. These all create a great show!

4. So you've prepared your set lists and are practiced up and now it's the concert. How do you connect with an audience during the actual event? One of the first things I do as I'm setting up, is to talk to at least one audience member—get to know them a little. People remember how you took the extra time for them.

They will truly appreciate the gesture. During the rest of the concert, I treat the audience as if I am having an individual conversation with them—sometimes asking them how far they travelled, or did they have their coffee today. Bantering conversation loosens people up and they then feel like you care.

As I said earlier making people the focus instead of yourself lets them know they matter. When you obsess if they are going to like you or not, the focus is on you. When you pour attention onto them, you will feel a freedom and typically your nerves will calm down.

I've had times where I'm performing and someone requests a song. I used to resist that because I had my whole program planned out and wanted to stick to it. I've become more flexible with these situations and have had some amazing interactions with people because of

it. Last month, I was singing at our airport in Minneapolis and a man sitting by the piano stayed for an hour listening to me. He seemed in a reflective mode and yet clapped after every song. Finally I asked him if he wanted to hear a certain ballad. He requested *In the Arms of an Angel*. I didn't know the lyrics but played it on the piano for him. Before he left to get on his plane, he came over to me. With tears in his eyes, he said that he had just laid his mother to rest and that my music was healing to him. Somehow in those moments, two humans connected through the beauty of music.

When we make our audience our priority, we open ourselves up to the possibility of comforting, motivating, encouraging or stirring another person. As we do this and touch another person's soul, that connection makes them feel marvelous. They will seek you out so they can return to that place again and again! ■

## TARA BRUESKE



Tara B (Brueske) is a professional singer/pianist, entertainer, vocal coach, composer, recording artist, voiceover talent and public speaker. Since the tender age of six, she has been performing in front of audiences, starting in her home state of MN. Tara has sung at a variety of venues including the Madison Square Garden Theater in New York, many MN wineries, the MPLS International Airport, Sunrise of Beverly Hills and Burbank Senior Artists' Colony. Throughout her years of performing, she has recorded CDs with her early funk, rhythm and blues band IS U IZ, her current duo THE BZ GIRLS and as a solo artist.



<http://www.tarabrueske.com>



# The *Art* of Ad Libbing

## The Spontaneous Power of Ad-libs - Part 1

### UNDERSTANDING AD-LIBS

The abbreviated term “ad lib” comes from the Latin word “ad libitum” meaning “according to one’s desire or “freely as one wishes” with its first known use dating back to 1610.

I feel that ad-libbing is often misunderstood and maybe confused with; being unprepared, a thoughtless and careless way of performing a song or just winging a song or a piece of music. Far from it! Ad libbing is a very useful musical skill, one that can be developed with practice and experience and when utilised well, it can truly move the soul!

Many singers mistake ad-libbing for simply riffing or doing runs (or melisma) again this is NOT what ad-libbing is.

The actual idea and practice of ad-libbing has both a lyrical and musical foundation and this is what truly separates ad-libbing from riffing or runs/melisma.

### DRAMA/ACTING

Ad-libbing is used in acting to describe individual moments during live theatre when an actor speaks through their character using words not found in the play’s text/lyric.

### MUSIC

It is also used to give opportunity to a musician to improvise a melodic line fitting the general structure prescribed by the passage’s written notes or chords. (Amongst other musical discretions).

### THE ULTIMATE COMBINATION

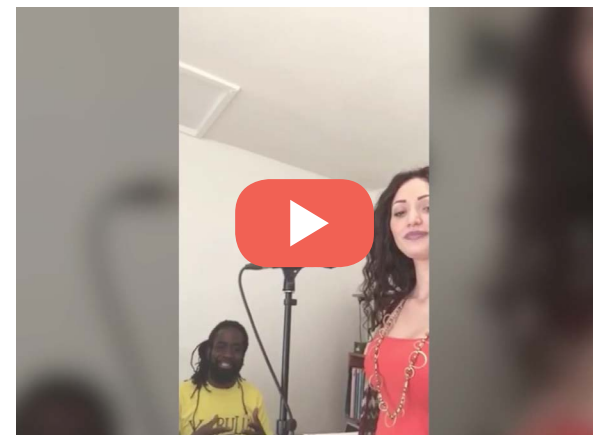
When a singer combines this lyrical and musical permission or freedom, they’re able to combine adding (“Ad”) extra lyrical and musical content at their liberty (“Lib”) to benefit the story of the song and enhance the vocal progression or melody of the song!

Your lyrical additions to the song technically shouldn’t be part

of the original text, but rather it should be something that is important to you. Through your own lyrical command of language, comprehension and vocabulary, you construct a thoughtful lyric that sheds new light on a song whilst improvising your melody. Those that do this well, are highly skilled at being able to freestyle lyrics and improvise melodies, so trust me, this is not kids play!

### MY TOP TIPS FOR LEARNING TO AD-LIB

1 **Study.** Develop and explore your own musical vocabulary through learning fundamental scales, inversions and intervals that form the framework of your musical choices. In this demo



PENTATONIC SCALE, INVERSIONS & INTERVALS

we use the major pentatonic scale (see Fig. 1), which is a fantastic place to start. Start to play around with creating your own interval combinations and using both the root of the scale and its various inversions, explore weaving all of these



Ad libbing is a very useful musical skill."



Make your rhyming more intelligent and guide it."



Fig. 1

musical choices together to form your own “vocabulary of vocal movement” VVM. (melody and rhythm) Play around with these melodic movements in both descending and ascending order.

**2 Practice** lyrical rhyme so that you can develop a freestyle way of creating lyrical content. Rhyming makes it easier to remember and helps you to perceive rhythm and beat, which helps your brain learn best and fast. Start off making up “dummy lyrics” (they don’t have to make sense) then after a period of practice, try to make your rhyming more intelligent and guide it to follow the context of a particular theme, story or emotion.

**3 Vamps/music loops** (a repeating musical figure or chord progression) are great tools with which you can practice how to execute effective ad-libs, it’s about finding the right moments to perform them and just

enjoying trial and error. You can even use an initial lyric from a song you are singing as a kind of ‘lunch pad’ into ad-libbing.

**4 Play Play Play...** Practice playing with different music and lyrical combinations over a backing track. Work from the low to the high parts of your range and most importantly feel free to make mistakes because it’s how we learn. Hang on did I already kind of say that? Well I’m happy to say it again because it’s worth repeating, make mistakes often and enjoy that process, you’ll find magic there.

### AD-LIBS DEMO TUTORIAL

In the first demo tutorial, we take the R&B song “My Life” by Adrian Marcel. I guide Martina, in creating ad-libs. We have decided to just focus on the chorus. Please note ad-libs can be implemented into any style or genre of music. In the next issue I will look at how ad-libs work in different genres of music.



MY LIFE - ADRIAN MARCEL

### Lyrics:

*And girl I don't mind giving you nothing*

*Cause in the lowest once of my life  
You made feel like I am something*

*Girl you've changed my life  
Loving you is easy it does feel so right*

*It's just us against the world  
You and me girl*

*My life, my life, my life*

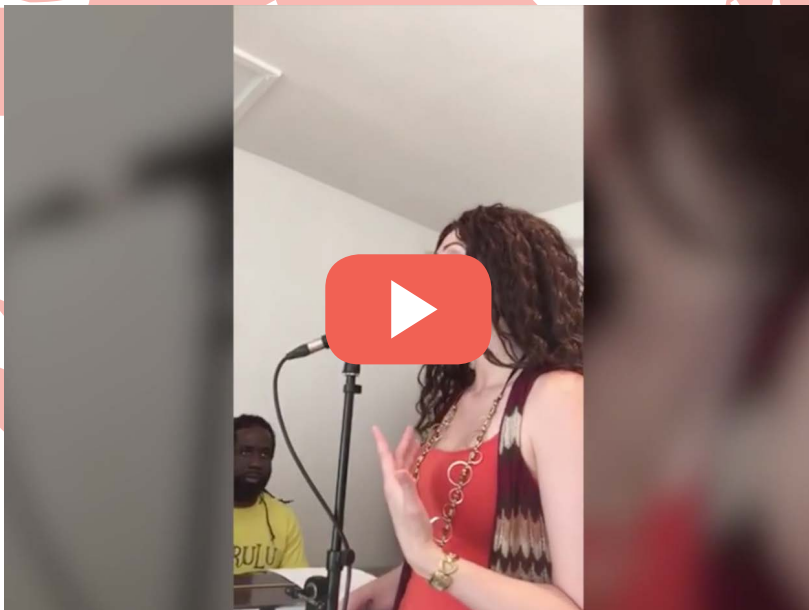
*Girl you just that special  
And it's us against the world*

*You and me girl*

In the tutorial demo 2, we take an old classic Gospel song that I am pretty sure most singers and non-singers already know. Watch as I guide Martina into using some of the tips I prescribe in this article. Take a song that you like and find a backing track to it or get someone to accompany you and just explore and have fun. I hope you have found the first instalment of this topic useful ■

SEE DEMOS ON NEXT PAGE





MY LIFE DEMO 1



AMAZING GRACE DEMO 2

## 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>

A man with dark, curly hair is looking down at a vintage typewriter. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent red filter. The background features geometric shapes in shades of red and orange. A dotted white line forms a crosshair on the left side of the page.

# song DNA

SHANE ADAMS GUIDES YOU THROUGH  
THE CRAFT OF GREAT SONG WRITING.





# Partner **RHYMING** in Song *Writing*

**L**et's dive into the science of rhyming for a moment. A rhyme consists of the duplication or approximation of the sounds of a syllable: its onset, nucleus, and coda (bear with me, I realise this is sounding too academic already...there really is a payoff!).

**THE ONSET IS THE FIRST CONSONANT YOU HEAR.**

**THE NUCLEUS IS THE VOWEL SOUND.**

**THE CODA IS THE ENDING CONSONANT.**

For example, “cat” is comprised of the onset “K sound”, followed by the nucleus “short A sound”, ending with a “T sound” coda. Words like: a, I, and oh, are entirely nucleus; some words like: ear, at, ease have no

“onset” (officially called: null onset!); while other words have no coda, like: may, too, go.

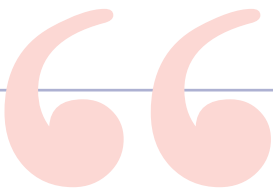
Most of the time, when I’m creating a rhyme, I’m trying to match the nucleus (the vowel sounds) and the coda (the ending consonant). Obviously, there are words that have no coda (you, may, too, go, etc.), but for this article I’m going to stick with words that have a coda.

We’re all familiar with the mainstay of songwriting: the perfect rhyme (insert angelic “ahhh”). A perfect rhyme consists of two words that match their nucleus and coda (fat/cat; dog/hog; etc.). Perfect rhymes are the workhorses of songs and poetry. However, perfect rhymes have inherent limitations. First, perfect rhymes can be cliché; second (and more frustrating for me

personally), though it is usually easy to find words that rhyme perfectly, it is another thing altogether to find a word that rhymes perfectly AND is perfect for the meaning of a lyric. Maybe “I don’t want to put a hat on my cat, or give him a bat, or have him lie on a mat.”

THIS IS WHERE I TURN TO PARTNER RHYMES

To understand *Partner Rhymes*, we have to dive a little deeper into what creates the sound of a consonant. First consonants are either “voiced” or “unvoiced”. A voiced consonant contains a pitch or a note. For example, hum a melody using the sound of “M”. Easy, right? You can do the same thing with an N, Z, or V. Some voiced consonants are short, but you can still eke out a note. Try a melody with a G sound, or a D, or B (*author’s note*: a small part of me hopes you’re singing these in public somewhere, and the people around you think you’re a little crazy). Whether singing or speaking (not counting whispering), a voiced consonant will always have a note, whether it is the not of an actually melody or the usually ignored natural pitch of your singing voice.



I don't want to put a hat on my cat, or give him a bat, or have him lie on a mat."

On the other hand, unvoiced consonants have no pitch. “T” is a good example, so is “S”, or the consonant “F”. Same thing with P, K, SH, etc.

What’s interesting, is that some voiced and unvoiced consonants are created using the exact same mouth shape. The only difference is whether they have a pitch or not. Make a SSSSSSSS sound. Now make a ZZZZZZZZ sound. Now switch back and forth without a break in between them: SSSSS...ZZZZZ...SSSSS...ZZZZZ! Notice there is no change in your mouth when you switch between these two sounds, the only difference



is that Z has a pitch, while S does not. This makes Z and S *Partner Consonants*, and therefore candidates for *Partner Rhymes*.

Remember when I introduced the nucleus, or vowel sound? When we sing, the nucleus takes over the spotlight (usually) from the pitch of any voiced consonant. In other words, the pitch of a consonant is significantly shorter than the vowel sound, almost becoming unnoticeable unless you emphasize the consonant on purpose. This means when we sing, if two words have the same nucleus and *Partner Consonants* as their rhyming coda (remember: a “coda” is the last consonant of a word) they create a connection almost identical to a perfect rhyme called a *Partner Rhyme*. This means that if you don’t find a *Perfect Rhyme* that works, a *Partner Rhyme* becomes a brilliant alternative.

Here’s a table of the voiced and unvoiced *Partner Consonants*.

Voiced	b	d	g	v	TH	z	zh	j
Unvoiced	p	t	k	f	th	s	sh	ch

Partners





Some languages blur the line between zh and sh. In fact, in some dialects vision and mission are pronounced as a perfect rhyme."

Most of these are self explanatory, but let me explain the difference between the uppercase "TH" and the lower case "th". Also, what the heck is: "zh"?

#### TH versus th

"TH" is voiced, as in: *breathe*, *seethe*, and *thee*.

"th", is unvoiced as in: *wreath*, *teeth*, *beneath*, and *think*.

#### zh

Except for zhuzh (!), the sound for "zh" comes from various combinations of other letters. Listen to the sound of the letter S in the words: *Asian*, *pleasure*, *conclusion*, *usually*, and *visual*; or the Z in *seizure*; or the GE in *massage*, *mirage*, *beige*. Some languages blur the line between zh and sh. In fact, in some dialects *vision* and *mission* are pronounced as a perfect rhyme.

The key to finding a *Partner Rhyme* (or *any* rhyme, for that matter) is to pay attention to how you say a word, not how it is spelled. For example: the word "judge" is spelled with a D and G, but the coda sound is J. So you will use the *Partner Consonant* for J instead of D and G. In other words, the *Partner Consonant* for J is CH, so a partner rhyme for judge would be: much, judge/much is a Partner Rhyme), not D and G), is CH. So a *Partner Rhyme* for "judge" would be "much" or "crutch".

As a songwriter, I am constantly looking for the right words to convey a hard fought for message in my lyrics. Partner Rhymes grant more flexibility and ultimately allow more precision in crafting that message.

Good luck!■

## SHANE ADAMS



Shane Adams is a twice Grammy nominated music educator (non-self-nominated), award-winning producer, composer, and songwriter. Shane is president of Artist Accelerator and is a founding lyric/songwriting instructor for Berklee Online. Shane is a featured songwriter and instructor for the Taylor Swift Education Center at the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum, they honored him with their TOP TEN HITMAKER award for 2014. He is recognised internationally as a groundbreaking songwriting lecturer and music production panelist. Current projects include developing two songwriting apps for the iPad platform and Shane is in pre-production as co-host/co-producer for *Studio Soundtrack*, a songwriting radio program/podcast for National Public Radio.



<http://www.artistaccelerator.com>

## BREATHING FOR SINGING

# THE Ins & Outs



Pupils studying the voice often have glazed eyes when the subject of breathing is raised. Meaningless phrases such as ‘support the voice’ and ‘sing from the diaphragm’ only result in bewildered expressions and feelings of inadequacy. Voice teacher and author of *Singing and the Actor*, Gillyanne Kayes, describes this experience as the ‘holy grail of the breath’, where all singing woes will be resolved once a breathing utopia has been discovered. These ‘catch all’ pieces of advice are used when singing teachers and choral directors are unable to diagnose the real cause of the problem but feel the need to appear knowledgeable.

Singing terminology has evolved historically from a time when teachers had little understanding

“Although the diaphragm helps to regulate the air flow, it does not support the tone.”

of anatomy and physiology. Consequently, scientifically inaccurate terminology such as ‘sing from the diaphragm’ became commonly used phrases. Given the invisible nature of the voice, it is hardly surprising that a limited range of expressions were used. As the voice researcher Hixon recognises: “The phrase is burned into singing folklore.... No other

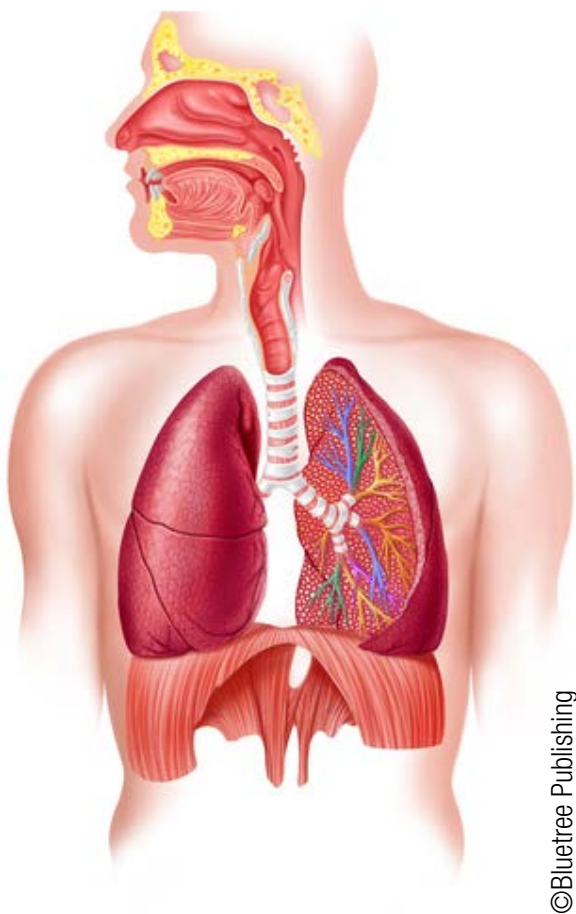
muscle gets near the press that the diaphragm does when it comes to singing.”

Fortunately, we are now more enlightened and there has recently been a move away from establishing a rigid breathing methodology and many singing students are more appropriately advised. Perhaps it is more important to teach why the old terminology is no longer useful



so that confusions can be avoided and old ghosts can be laid to rest. There is also merit in identifying the perils of teaching a 'one size fits all' breathing methodology. These reasons will now be explored.

We are not able to sense our diaphragm and therefore there is little point in teaching anyone to sing from it. What people are sensing is the movement of their abdominal wall rather than the diaphragm. Although the



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diaphragm helps to regulate the air flow, it does not support the tone.

Excessive focus on breathing techniques can cause a singer to over-breathe. Over breathing occurs when breathing becomes unnecessarily effortful. Taking in more air than is necessary can cause unnecessary tension in the throat muscles which can then lead to other problems in the long term. Research by Wyke also shows that over-breathing

leads to a build-up of carbon dioxide in the lungs which then further stimulates the need to breathe giving the impression of breathlessness even though the lungs are full. Conversely, singers who always exhaust the airstream completely before taking another breath become fatigued and singing can then become arduous and effortful which in itself has vocal implications.

Voice researcher Jo Estill believed that it was important to allow the breath to respond to what it meets on the way out. This phrase refers to the complex, dynamic relationship that exists between the vocal folds and the breath during phonation. The vocal folds are a multi-layered structure which are capable of a myriad of different configurations. This impacts on the amount of breath required during singing and renders it futile to adopt only one method of breathing.

For example, some singers sing with only fleeting vocal fold contact and therefore they require more air. This is sometimes referred to as falsetto and many pop and jazz singers will adopt it as a vocal

colour to vary the dynamics of a song. This will mean that more air is required at those points. Voice scientists Thomasson and Sundberg conducted a comparison between classical and country singers and unsurprisingly found the breathing patterns of country singers to be very similar to the breathing patterns adopted during natural speech. They initiated inhalation at only 55 per cent of their total lung volume. This differed from classical singers who used 70 per cent of their lung volume with each inhalation. As classical singers sing elongated legato phrases, they engage in highly athletic breathing and train for years to do so.

Sophisticated, skilled singers will adopt several distinct vocal qualities all of which require differing degrees of breath. This is particularly true of pop and musical theatre and to some extent, jazz. A belter will take tiny sips of breath because too much breath will simply blow the vocal folds apart at a time when full vocal fold closure is paramount to a clear, safe belt. Even the finest belters will only treat the audience to the white knuckle ride for a couple of bars of

“...Scientific research has failed to find any common breathing strategy adopted by classical singers.”



**The reality is that singers adopt configurations between the two extremes."**

a song before moving into a vocal quality that will require different breathing strategies to be used.

It is generally held that classical singing requires a low, abdominal breath but scientific research has failed to find any common breathing strategy adopted by classical singers. Instead it seems to point to a great variation in breathing methods and we are therefore none the wiser. Respiratory expert Hixon divides the breathing position into two extremes; the belly in method where the abdominal wall adopts an inward position in contrast to the chest wall which adopts an

outward position. This position, when taken to an extreme, resembles an inverted pear. This can be contrasted with the belly out method where the position of the rib cage is inward and the position of the abdominal wall is outward. When this position is taken to an extreme it resembles a pear. The reality is that singers adopt configurations between the two extremes. That said, the research that has been done has received criticism in terms of its validity, as it was conducted on a smaller number of subjects and did not necessarily take into account the skill and training level of the singers.

This contrasts sharply to recent research undertaken by Ron Morris on the use of the accent method of breathing. Developed by Danish speech therapist Svend Smith, the accent method focuses on lower abdominal breathing. This was emphasised by Thyme Frojkaer: "During the breathing cycle, contraction of the diaphragm alternates with the contraction of the abdominal muscles." Ron Morris argues that the muscles that surround the ribcage can cause tension and have a negative impact on vocal quality. In contrast, the abdominal muscles can be recruited during expiration to work like a brake, enabling a steady breath flow to be released through sung phrases.

The only issue that scientists seem to agree on is that an ideal breathing strategy does not exist and it is probably wise to err on the side of caution and allow the breath to respond accordingly ■

## DEBBIE WINTER



Debbie Winter established Voice Workshop in October 2012, a professional development company that provides teacher training for both singing teachers and professional singers. She has hosted a number of workshops with leading pedagogues and has worked alongside Dr Jenevora Williams, ENT surgeon Declan Costello and Cardiff Metropolitan University to develop a postgraduate certificate that facilitates the study of Vocal Pedagogy. This pioneering qualification has been featured on the Science and Singing programme on Radio three. You can view both her courses and her articles at website below.



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



# CO • WRITING

NASHVILLE BASED SONGWRITER, DEAN  
MADONIA, EXPLAINS HOW TWO MINDS ARE  
BETTER THAN ONE IN SONG WRITING.

**Q: How many Nashville songwriters does it take to change a light bulb?**

**A: Three. One to change the bulb and two to write a song about the old one!**

While today's country songs rarely focus on "the old one" any more, most of them are co-written by two or more writers.

When I first learned to play the guitar in the 70s, I bought a lot of songbooks. I saw that some songs were written by my favourite performers but I also noticed that songwriters like Bob Dylan, Carole King, Janis Ian, Paul Williams, Burt Bacharach and Jimmy Webb had written songs *for* the artist. This revelation regarding professional songwriters began a life-long fascination with writers and writing and set me on a long journey, eventually leading me to "Music City USA," Nashville, TN.

Co-writing is key in Nashville. This is where you will schedule a writing appointment with someone that you have met somewhere, maybe at a writer's night. You get together with them in a room – maybe at your house or theirs, or maybe in a writing room at (NSAI) National Songwriters Association International or American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP), or some other performing rights organisation.

There are many benefits to writing with others. Co-writing expands your professional network. It gives you a sounding board for your ideas and also, you can learn new techniques from the other writer(s).

Co-writing doubles the chances of the song finding a home because now there are two or more people who really want to make that happen.

There is a saying in Nashville that you sharpen your tools by writing all of the time so that when you get "the big idea" that you will know just what to do with it. Some people claim that it takes at least 200 songs to get

there. I don't know if there really IS a number, but I do agree that you need to write a lot of songs.

According to my copy of *Master Writer*, a mostly-handy songwriting program that I use, I have 426 songs as of this morning. Though some of these songs are terrible, I had to write the bad ones to make way for the



Co-writing is key in Nashville."

good ones.

Many of the best of these have found their way onto my own CDs, other peoples CDs and even soundtracks of movies. 426 songs and counting, and I have learned something from every one.

I have always found it helpful to keep a list of songwriting ideas handy to kick off writing sessions. This may be a "hook" or a "concept". When I have an idea for a song, I try to write down the hook and a brief explanation of what I meant at the time. It's easy to forget your train of logic later, so you should always write an explanation for yourself to jog your memory. Trust me, I have been very excited about an idea, found



“

I had to write the  
bad ones to make  
way for the good  
ones.”

it a year later and had no clue what I was thinking or how to make it work.

One song idea I had was completed with long-time co-writer; David G. Smith. It's called *that's When I Miss You the Most*. I had the title in my hook-book and the setup: "...When we're close enough to kiss and we don't. That's when I miss you the most." This song was really easy to finish because we had the hook first and we could write the verses to support the idea – always referring back to the hook.

Sometimes, you may find that you have a concept for a song but no title. I wrote (*I called her*) *Tennessee*, with CURB Recording artist, Tim Dugger. He wanted to write a fun song about meeting a girl who was sitting on

a University of Tennessee beach blanket during spring break, but we had no hook. We started writing the chorus:

*Lipstick tan lines  
Pink flip-flops and corona light  
That college girl taught me a thing or three  
That sweet smile, soft hair  
The way she'd laugh when guys would stare  
It's funny how she was so into me*

We liked the imagery but had no idea what the hook was going to be until we got to the last line...

*I never knew her name so I called her Tennessee*

That was a gift from the universe. When we finished, we looked up at each other and I could tell by the grin on Tim's face that he felt the same as I did. We knew we had written a good one. This song ended up being a single for Tim, peaking at #40 on the Music Row Chart.

While I highly recommend co-writing, you should write solo too. Since moving to Nashville, I have found that my most esoteric ideas cannot be easily explained to a co-writer and that the distracting effort needed to defend an idea may be all I need to lose track of a unique concept. Once a fledgling idea has been criticised, it may never mature.

However you do it, the important thing is to keep on writing. Now, off with me – it's time to write number 427! ■

## DEAN MADONIA



A songwriter, performer, producer and visual artist, currently living in Nashville. Dean has performed and recorded with over 40 bands, released 10 CDs and opened for an array of acts including: New Grass Revival, Steve Vai, Dee Dee Ramone, Company B, Dottie West, The Romantics, and Ygnwie Malmsteen. He has placed songs in movies and with various artists including Tim Dugger on Curb Records. His latest project is the concept CD *Shadow to Shadow*, *Dean Madonia's Frankenstein*.



<http://deanmadonia.com>



# *singing* CAREERS



**ON THE COVER** Militia Vox - Disgracing Her Stereotype



**INTERVIEW** My Vocal Instrument, Brigitte Beraha



**WORKING SINGER** Inner Visions and Transitions with Babette Labeij



**VOCAL ZONE ARTIST FAQ** The Swingles: 100 Years and Still Going Strong







# on the COVER

"The Metal Goddess"

**MILITIA VOX**



New York, USA



**Q**PROFESSION? Artist/  
Entertainer, known as “The Metal  
Goddess”.

**Q**WHO INSPIRES YOU NOW?  
Horror movies, film scores, current  
events, Danny Elfman, Trent Reznor

**Q**NAME DROPPING (PEOPLE  
YOU’VE WORKED WITH/  
SUPPORTED) Dee Snider, Cyndi  
Lauper, Sandra Bernhard, Taylor  
Dayne, Ana Gasteyer, Nancy Sinatra.  
CX KiDTronic (Atari Teenage Riot,  
Saul Williams), Living Colour,  
Corey Glover (Living Colour), Dug  
Pinnick (King’s X), Kevin Martin  
(Candlebox), Ron “Bumblefoot”  
Thal (Guns n Roses), Tony Harnell  
(TNT, Skid Row), Acey Slade,  
Parliament Funkadelic, Handsome  
Dick Manitoba (Dictators), The  
Paul Schaffer Band (Tonight Show  
with David Letterman), Razorlight,  
Living Things, Theo (Lunachicks),  
Alison Wolfe (Bratmobile), Kathleen  
Hanna (Bikini Kill, LeTigre)...

**Q**WHO ARE YOU LISTENING  
TO NOW AND WHY? Pallbearer,  
Deafheaven, revisiting Damage  
Plan, Cocteau Twins. I don’t know  
why - I just seem to be craving these  
sounds right now.

**Q**MOST MEMORABLE  
CAREER MOMENT TO DATE?  
Seeing my name and face in lights in  
Times Square, Manhattan. The little  
girl in me was beyond geeked.

**Q**ONE BOOK/FILM THAT

INSPIRED YOU AND WHY?

*Meeting the Madwoman:*

*Empowering the Feminine Spirit* by  
Linda Schierse Leonard. A must  
read for any female. Once you read  
it, you’ll understand. No spoilers  
here!

**Q**WEIRDEST PLACE YOU’VE  
PERFORMED AT? In Manhattan’s  
Penn Station at rush hour!

**Q**3 THINGS YOU CAN’T LIVE  
WITHOUT WHEN GIGGING?  
I love the new Zoom recorders -  
they’re so versatile. They do amazing  
recordings of gigs and rehearsal  
through the in-built mics, but then  
can also be used as an interface for  
proper recording mics.grateful for  
them because they are your link to  
sounding good!

**Q**3 THINGS YOU CAN’T LIVE  
WITHOUT ON TOUR?  
Water, Singer’s Saving Grace Throat  
Spray, False lashes + lash glue

**Q**WHAT YOU WISH YOU’D  
KNOWN FROM THE START? Not  
every show is rainbow cast.

**Q**WHAT’S UPCOMING?  
Lots of shows with the Militia Vox  
band and Judas Priestess. Also,  
there are some things in the works  
that I can’t speak about just yet but  
they will be revealed in time! My  
new album *The Villainess* will be  
out later this year and I’m in a new  
feature film called *Octavia: Elegy for  
a Vampire*■

**GET SOCIAL**  
with Militia Vox





## MILITIA VOX

## Disgracing Her

## Stereotype

by Line Hilton

**T**here is nothing stereotypical about vocal dynamo Militia Vox. She commands attention as soon as she enters the room. From her artistically wild afro hair down to her studded boots. A self-confessed metal head, there is also a hint of vulnerability about her fierce persona, particularly evident when she talks about her pet dog, Bella, a tiny Chihuahua. Known for her passionate vocal prowess, her eight-octave range never fails to impress on the big, or small stage.

The Judas Priestess lead vocalist's talents doesn't end there, she also releases solo material and is the principal singer/songwriter of progressive hard rock band Swear on Your Life.

**iSing:** Tell us a about where you are from originally.

**Militia Vox:** I am from this town called Columbia, Maryland. Kind of seemed like an interracial safe haven for interracial couples like in the 70s and 80s. And, it kind of still is, I think. It was very natural that like every other couple on my street was a mixed couple. When I left there and found out that's not how the world is, it all really sucked. [Laugh]

**iSing:** What was the music scene like there?

**MV:** Nothing. [Laugh] It was nonexistent really. I was the only person playing music out of my friends and the people in my

school. No one played music. And, the only one that felt passionate about it was me. It was really like being in a bubble. And, I just got into like being alone and doing it on my own terms and in my own way.

I have been a classically trained pianist since I was seven. I was playing solo concerts and I just excelled really quickly at it. I was playing at Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore and winning competitions and it got to like a certain point where I was pretty bored. It was no longer exciting and I thought, 'How long am I going to play dead composer's music?' There was nowhere to go with it.

I was scared to death of singing even though I really wanted to do it. I hadn't found my voice yet. You know, I was just kind of imitating what I heard on Broadway recordings and stuff like that. My dad gave me records as a kid so I was listening to the likes of Led Zeppelin and King Crimson, psychedelic 60s rock music, but it was mostly metal voices. I wasn't thinking to emulate them that much but I would try. Really it started with the musicals because that what I would see on TV.

**iSing:** What was your voice like then?

**MV:** I really admired Janis Joplin, but I didn't know how to sing like her yet. I hadn't discovered blues yet I guess. So I started doing

musicals and choir in high school, my voice was really lyric soprano sounding.

It took years of incubating what I wanted to sound like and what I was physically capable of. I really had to make a hard transition from doing lyric soprano work to being an alto voice. You wouldn't believe the things that I did to get there! [Sheepish laugh] Like smoking. I started smoking to lower my voice and to sound raspier. I wanted that like aggressive raspy voice. And I didn't have it. My voice sounded like sunshine.

**iSing:** Were you having any voice lessons at that point?

**MV:** No. But I was doing concert choir.

**iSing:** How did you then take the next step?

**MV:** Well bands and doing musical ways seemed a far off, distant, glamorous thing that like people in Hollywood did. It just seemed so far away from where I was. I didn't know how to get there at all. My piano teacher was pretty disturbed that I was throwing away everything that I had worked for in the piano world. But, it was just too limiting for me.

So, when I got to high school and started doing musicals my drama teacher said, "Oh you may consider going to a theatre school." And I said, "You can go to college for musical theatre?" Like, I had no idea.

“

I wanted that like aggressive raspy voice. And I didn't have it. My voice sounded like sunshine.”

**iSing:** Where did you go to music school?

**MV:** I ended up going to the Boston Conservatory, and it was great training, even though it was like a really tough program. I was definitely considered rebellious in nature. I got thrown out two weeks before graduation for being rebellious.

And, you know I kind of just did everything the opposite way. I didn't really fit in to their rules. I just came across like a space alien and I was always on my own, a lone wolf.

But, when I was at school I met my boyfriend at the time. He was in a band and went to the Berkeley College of Music. I didn't even know Berkeley existed, in hindsight I probably should have gone there instead of going to Boston Conservatory. But, he had a band and they were looking to get rid of their female singer. And he said, “Well why don't you come and sing a part?”

I was like, “Me? Why would you bring me in? Like I don't even



35th Anniversary Rocky Horror Picture Show - as Columbia

know how to do like Rock n Roll?” And he was like, “Yeah you do”. I sang on a demo that they had and that was it. I was in a band. Like it just started that way.

It was pretty exciting because I was the only person in my school that was in a band. Now, I am sure there are plenty of students that are in bands, but back then no one did that. If you did musical theatre, you were only there to do musical theatre. And, if you did anything else it meant you weren't serious.

But thank goodness they brought me in because I got so much release from it. You know, and I was able to do what I wanted on stage and play live shows in front of an audience and that band was doing really heavy industrial dance music kind of like, *My Life at the Thrill Kill Kult* type thing. And it was really chaotic and fun. Since then I've been hooked.

**iSing:** Were you thinking about the all-female band set up at this stage?

**MV:** I moved into a band called

Vulgaris, It was a revolving door of members, and at one point it was all girls. And I was like, “Yeah. I always wanted to be in an all-girl band.” You know, I always thought girl bands were really exciting. I was listening to Hole and L7 and Bikini Kill and the Riot Girl Bands, Babes in Toyland, all that stuff in high school.

That was probably the moment in musical history where I really felt like I identified with what was on like mainstream radio. The Grunge era was really eye opening for me. As the 80s were so full of Unskinny Bop and like this whole like Cherry Pie, like L.A. Sleeze Rock thing; which was fun and I liked it, but I always felt like I was invited to the party.

But, when Grunge came out I felt like so relieved. I was like wow here is something I really understand. The whole alienation and the aggressiveness of it. I really took to it. Listening to all of that music was you know helped me decide what I wanted to do musically.





Vulgaris days

**iSing:** What kind of music were you attracted to and why?

**MV:** I knew I wanted to make aggressive music. So, when I did Vulgaris it was like a shock rock band. It was pretty brutal actually. It was like very grind, core heavy female vocals and the singer was a performance artist. I was playing bass and I was the scream voice.

**iSing:** Do still scream?

**MV:** Now I can do it and it doesn't hurt me at all. I know how my machine works now. But, I listened to some of those old recordings and I just go, "Damn, I know that hurt," [Laugh] But you kind of just have to do it or else you never learn how to do it. You can't like half-ass a sound like that.

Not everyone can do it.

**iSing:** How did you get to work with Sandra Bernhard?

**MV:** I literally got sucked into the world of background singing because I never intended to do it; like it wasn't even on my radar at all. I did a European tour of Jesus Christ Superstar for about a year and to this day it's the longest tour I have ever done. They were going to renew my contract.

One of the guys that did the show with me was selling merch' for Sandra Bernhard, the comedian. And he was like, "Oh you gotta meet Sandra, she'll love you." I am half-Jewish so he thought that was a big selling point to her; which it was. [Laugh]

Next thing you know I'm singing backing for her. And then like she

**iSing:** How long did you work with Sandra for?

**MV:** Oh, it went on for a long time. Years. Let me think, that must have been 2002. I only recently stopped that. I stopped in like 2009-2010.

My tribute band Judas Priestess was taking off, and I was to starting to get identified at Sandra's shows for my band. "Oh my like you are the singer of Judas Priestess." And I'm singing *Tell It to My Heart*. So, I was kind of like I'm like is this a conflict of interest.

I was really unsatisfied for a long time I was just doing it because obviously the name attachment and you know when you are singing back up for a celebrity you live the life with them on the gigs. You are staying in the four-star hotels. You are going to the awesome parties. You are meeting all of these great people. And then you are befriending someone that is famous and really talented.

I was staging all these shows, and thinking why don't I just do that,

“

I know how  
my machine  
works now.”

is like, "Oh I like the way you do your makeup". The next thing you know I'm her makeup artist too. I'm just like how did this happen that you get a two-for? But, Sandra is always the gal with an eye for a bargain.



Militia &amp; Sandra Bernhard



but for myself?

So, like finally when I worked up the cojones to do it, it just felt so good. I was like “wow a girl could get use to this. Do I ever want to look back? Probably not.

**iSing:** Did you put Judas Priestess together?

**MV:** I wish I put Judas Priestess together. [Laugh] I can't take credit for it. I was brought in. But, I always admired Judas Priest and I remember I got *British Steel* when I was in college because I thought the cover was so cool with the razor blade and all.

Rob Halford [from Judas Priest] had these power vocals that were similar to mine. You know it was still kind of high, but really loud and powerful. I thought that singer is kind of a parallel to my voice. I really enjoyed studying how he made sound over heavy music.



Militia & Nancy Sinatra

One of my friends had told me that they were putting together an all-girl Judas Priest tribute band. I e-mailed them and they were pretty rattled that I had responded because of my resume. They were underground punk and metal musicians. And, I was coming in with these pretty like big mainstream credits and they were



just like, “Oh we got to get ready for her”. So, they rehearsed for like months before they even brought me in.

When I came in it was jaw dropping how great they sounded. I knew when I walked into the room. You pretty much know when you walk into a room how it's going to be and if you are going to gel with people.

But, we just celebrated our five-year anniversary on the 13th May and you know we are going strong. We are like kicking ass and taking names. So, it's cool stuff.

**iSing:** Are Judas Priest aware of you?

**MV:** Oh yeah. Oh they definitely know about us. We met Rob Halford when we first joined. We went to the set of *That Metal Show* on VH1 and he was there as a guest. He came out and he hugged us all. It was so amazing.

And during the break you know he was talking to us and he asked, “Well who is the singer?” And I'm like, “Hi”. I had been going to his autograph signings and fan stuff for years, so, he was like, “Oh I know you!”

So, yeah he was pretty stoked and really embraced us, gave us his blessing from the get-go. I send

videos over to his people, I hope he watches them. He's such a great vocalist. It's just an honour to try to even come close to what he has created.

**iSing:** What do you think the skills, abilities and character traits of being a great metal singer are?

**MV:** Well, I know there are a lot of metal singers that try to sound like other metal singers. And that's definitely a trap. I don't know how many singers I have seen that try to sound like Phil Anselmo. It is more important to foster your own sound and it takes a long time to do though I know it's a lot easier to emulate someone else.

If you can find what makes your voice unique that is so important, - it's infinitely more powerful as a metal singer. A seriously underrated voice in metal I would say is Julie Christmas. She was in a band called Made out of Babies and



JUDAS PRIESTESS - GRINDER



Battle of Mice.

You know if you are a great screamer that's awesome because it is hard to do. But, if you can mix it up I feel like you can do more. Like Cory Taylor from Slipknot.

There is a band called Pallbearer that I really love that does Doom Metal. Brett the singer sings so clean and it's majestic and gorgeous. Or, look at Ozzy Osbourne. Yeah, Ozzy is like one of my idols. I really love what he has done with the genre. I would say that Ozzy was able to take metal and make it popular.

I would say the most important thing is that you have to know yourself. You know it because my thing on stage depending on what the music dictates to me is how I perform. You know, so like I try to physicalize the music. So, if I am doing Priest a lot of it is very active. I use my body through the whole thing to accent the music.

I just always connected with that even when I didn't know what I was doing. So, it's important to be the music. You have to be the music. There are some singers that I see that like they are that channel and they don't even have to move at all. You know, like Patty Smith has the channel. Her channel is like wide open. It's not metal, but it's an example of a singer that's not even technically a great singer, but her channel is open, and she is the music. See, that's what's exciting. That's what they don't show on shows like *The Voice* or *American Idol*.

I feel to be a great singer it doesn't even matter if you got notes or not. It matters if you can be the music and your channel is open

and you connect with the audience. That's what being a great voice is to me.

**iSing:** Are you ever concerned about vocal damage?

**MV:** No, the last time I went to the ENT they said that my cords were a little thicker in the middle. And that was it. So, I have never had any kind of nodes or anything like that or any paralysis of the cords or anything kind of stuff like that. And, it's like pretty amazing, because I have definitely let it rip plenty of times.

**iSing:** What about the smoking and the drinking?

**MV:** Well, I quit smoking just because it was time. I hit 30 and I always said that I was going to quit by the time I was 30. It gets to a point where it's just like not sexy anymore. [Laugh] And it does things to your skin and it does things to your breathing. Drinking. Can't say that I quit that so much, [Laugh]. But, I know what I need to do. If I have got to sing I can't have more than a drink the night before.

**iSing:** Tell us about your more recent solo work?

**MV:** Honestly, like recording now is probably the happiest time of my life to date. [Laugh] It just felt so good to finally just do it. I have been planning this album for a year and change. Had been incubating for a really long time.

I basically created a list of songs that I liked that were influential to me and I posted them on Facebook and my Social Networks and I



Militia Vox

asked my friends and supporters.

"If you can hear me sing anything on this list. What would it be?"

Then I tallied up the votes over a week. I put the top six songs on the album. So, I let the people pick it.

I really am into this supply/demand thing. I'll make the supply if there is demand. But if there is no demand then it's very masturbatory you know? It really ended up being like a platter of songs; which I feel like as a vocalist you can get away with making platters like that.

It's an EP, six songs. I didn't want to do any more than that. I feel like the public's attention span is so short that to do anything more than that without like a huge budget is insane. [Laugh] Especially for someone like me that's DIY.

I'm excited about this project because it's something that like, I needed to do. This is the step one of *The Villainess Project*. The Villainess is a two-part concept project, this EP being the first one.



**iSing:** So, you did your own arrangements?

**MV:** Yeah. There is a lot of arrangement liberties that I took on it. Some more than others. But, it was important to me to make everything sound modern and heavy.

You either have to make it sound different or, you have to make it sound better than the original.

With these songs I didn't want to do anything that had another voice on it, but my own. So, like *Waiting for the Night* comes from a very personal place. I'm very exposed on it vocally. It was so raw. *Rid of Me* is like that too. It's just like I'm laying out my true voice on those songs in particular.



RID OF ME - MILITIA VOX

**iSing:** Can you tell us why you've done a part one and two?

**MV:** Part one is basically just like to warm people up and get them ready for *The Villainess* which is going to be all originals. And being someone that has done originals for a long time and didn't get a whole lot of attention for them; I always got more attention for the covers. I

feel like a lot of people get that too, the new artists.

So, I wanted to basically like capture attention. You know, there is a whole other side of women that is constantly ignored in the media. Definitely in music, because I feel like a lot of girls feel like they have to be this way that is expected of them, and it's bullshit. You know, the guys don't have these expectations on them.

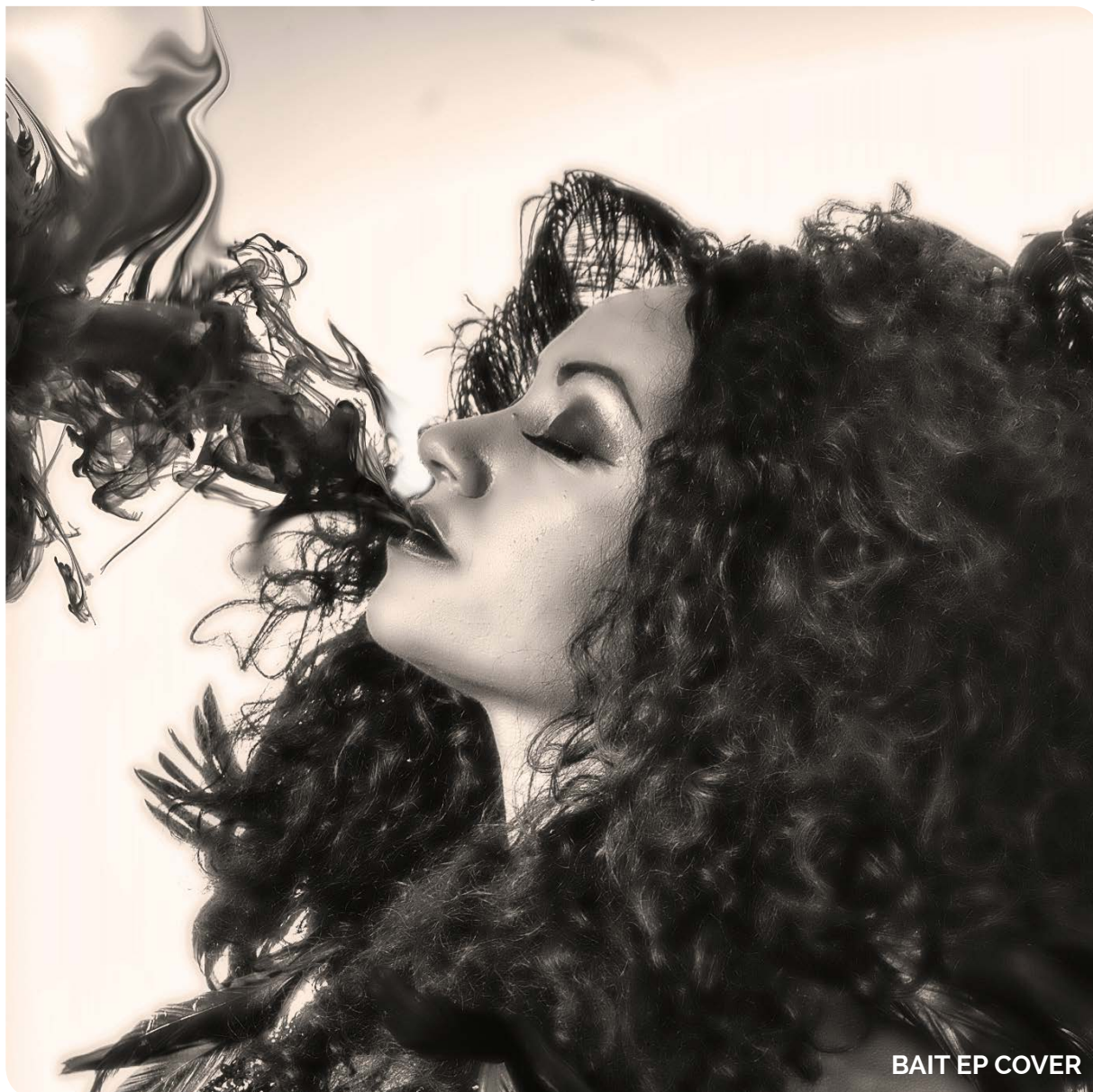
I was asked to be on *American Idol*. Randy asked me personally. I turned it down and when I said it to him he stood there in shock. I said to him, "I don't want to be America's Idol." He was like, "What?" [Laugh] And, I was like yeah. The singers that I idolize would never even be on a show like that. They wouldn't make it passed the auditions. And I would have to do what everyone else is doing. You know and sing those pop songs and whatever is what they do. And it's not me.

**iSing:** What are your thoughts on image and the music artist today?

**MV:** I remember when Mariah Carey came out and did *Vision of Love*. I thought that was her best vocal ever, that song.

She also looked like herself. Now, all of the sudden we are, who is that? And it just goes to show how the machine can really convince all sorts of things that you are not.

Look at like someone like Nicky Minaj, who she is a very powerful female, except for the fact that only until now she is starting to shed off her layers. But, when she first came out she was wearing a blonde wig and blue contacts and like she







Diversity is so much more exciting."

looked like she was calling herself 'Barbie Doll'. I was like you are sending like the weirdest message to people.

I look at magazine newsstands and see what is considered beautiful right now. You know, Kate Uptons and the Brooklyn Deckers. Like yeah, they are beautiful, but it's like when did that become like the ideal female only?

Diversity is so much more exciting. This is like a weird thing to say, but, there is more beauty in National Geographic than in Vogue Magazine, because you can see the diversity of the planet, and it is so much more intriguing.

**iSing:** Tell us about your sponsorships.

**MV:** I have been lucky that some companies that I have liked and admired ended up liking and admiring me back. I met Tish and Snookie from Manic Panic, which has been a Punk Rock hair color company since 1977. They have had that company longer than I have been alive. [Laugh]. Those two have that rebel spirit, if you have that spirit you identify it in others as well.

I have been dyeing my hair with Manic Panic since I was a teenager.

They endorse me now as a Manic Panic artist. It's great because you know I get to bring them on certain projects. For example, there are little *Villainess* gift sets that they made for me for my album.



I also have a whiskey sponsorship, which is kind of random. They actually made me my first drink this October. They have a Militia drink called Militia's Macabre that just came out. It's pretty awesome.

**iSing:** How do you fund your projects?

**MV:** From singing. [Laugh] I sung as much as I could and got paid for it as much as I could and I put it back into myself. That was it. I don't work like a day job. I don't work in other industry. I'm a singer full-time.

**iSing:** Tell us about your image and brand.

**MV:** It all comes from a very real place. I'm doing a lot of opposite things that are expected of people of my type. And, I find a lot of

power in that.

**iSing:** What is your type? And what would be expected of it?

**MV:** Well, as a black female singer a lot of people expect me to say, "Oh I sing R&B and soul," when I tell them I'm a singer. And so, you know I pride myself on being the opposite of my stereotype. So, like that's my flag to wave is that I am the opposite of my stereotype.

Disgrace your stereotype, that's like my mantra. I put it on t-shirts. It's on my website. You know I mention it often because I really believe your image is what you make of it.

I'm sorry, I don't wear extensions. This is all real. It's how it grows out of my head, save some color choices. I've turned down every record deal I have ever been offered because they wanted to change me into what they thought I should be.



And, there was moments where I was just 'Did I just turn my back on what could have been a promising career?' But, no because I wouldn't have been into it and then it would have collapsed.

So I know now I don't need that to make the music I need to make. That's why I'm like DIY and proud. Because no one else can take credit for what I have built except for me ■

# MY VOCAL INSTRUMENT



UK jazz artist Brigitte Beraha is known for her dulcet tone and renowned collaborations with some of the top dogs on the jazz scene. From John Parricelli and Bobby Wellins to Henry Lowther, to name but a few, but her accolade does not end there. She has produced four albums to date, one of which, *Babelfish*, was named in the top three by the founder of LondonJazz. Now the singer is touring the country, gigging and sharing her talent in workshops and events throughout the summer. iSing caught up with her to find out more...

**iSing:** Why do you sing?

**Brigitte Beraha:** I started off as a pianist, I always played piano growing up, and sang too without thinking about it, as I guess most people do. Then when I went on to study music in London as a pianist, it was always my 'random' singing that seemed to get to people, rather than my piano playing! I always worried about getting things 'wrong' in a performance on the piano, whereas with singing it always felt so natural and very freeing. It's my best way of expression I guess.

**iSing:** Why jazz?

**BB:** Jazz because it allows me to be free and improvise and I can use my voice in so many different ways. Jazz is a very broad term

which encompasses many styles, but I guess I generally connect with Jazz more than I would with pop say, because of the richness of the harmony and the fact that one piece can take you on a beautiful journey, which might be completely different to the next time you hear it played - or indeed perform it yourself, due to the improvisational nature of the genre and the interaction between players.

**iSing:** What else do you do to earn an income?

**BB:** I also teach Jazz voice at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music & Dance, The Guildhall School of Music & Drama and at the Welsh College of Music & Drama. I also lead workshops and summer schools, such as Loire Music, a



Jazz allows me to be free and improvise and I can use my voice in so many different ways."

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great jazz summer school in France and the Falmouth-Yamaha Jazz Summer School in Cornwall.



**iSing:** How do you feel about the need to supplement your income with work outside of singing, writing and performing?

**BB:** I feel absolutely fine about it, as long as the balance is right. I am lucky that my teaching is completely connected to my performing and I love it. When I first started teaching it was so I could survive as a performer, but then I discovered it was something that I loved doing. Furthermore, the fact that I mostly teach jazz singing at higher education level keeps me on my toes and I learn so much from my students too. I have to keep checking out new music and practicing what I preach as I constantly come across such amazing talent; so this helps me stay on top of my game as a performer and writer too.

**iSing:** What is the state of the jazz vocals scene in the UK?

**BB:** I think the state of the jazz vocal scene in the UK is extremely healthy at the moment. Apart from the already established singers such as Norma Winstone, Anita Wardell, Christine Tobin, Ian Shaw, Claire Martin and Liane Carroll etc., there are now lots of brilliant younger contemporary jazz singers, many of whom have come out of music college, who either keep singing jazz in the more traditional way (like great singers such as Georgia Mancio), or who have a more modern approach and are clearly also influenced by other music, such as Emilia Martensson (who fuses jazz with folk traditions), Lauren Kinsella, Nia Lynn, Alice Zawadski, Fini Bearman and many more.

**iSing:** What is the biggest challenge you face as an indie jazz artist?

**BB:** I suppose the biggest challenge I face is making a living out of being a jazz artist. There are so few artistic gigs that can pay properly due to the lack of funding currently available for jazz and even though the jazz scene is really exciting at the moment and seems to be thriving with more and more talent, this also means it's becoming increasingly difficult to get gigs as we are all going for the same ones, whether the artist is established or up-and-coming.

**iSing:** What do you enjoy most about your work?

**BB:** I love playing, creating and improvising music with others and seeing the joy that the audience gets out of this.

**iSing:** What's your typical daily/weekly routine?

**BB:** It's hard for me to have a daily routine due to the current nature of my work and that is probably the most challenging thing in my life; to try and keep a healthy lifestyle. I do try and slot in around the current weekly teaching/gigging that I do, a healthy dose of vocal and piano practice, some composition and lyric writing (I have a silent piano so often end up writing at night) and as much cycling as possible. I also try to see a gig and meet with friends - often for food - at least once a week... This seems to keep me sane!

**iSing:** What is your writing process?

**BB:** I try to vary my writing process and often tend to be at my

most prolific during more difficult times. If I'm feeling melancholic I tend to just want to sit at the piano and start playing and singing without really thinking about the process and let it just happen until something will just stick; I'll want to keep playing it round and round until the neighbours have had enough. That's when I know I've got something special that I (and the neighbours) won't forget; this will often be the bulk of a tune, which I'll then bring to one of my bands to play and fine tune. Only then will I know if it's any good! If I'm not feeling as inspired I might start with a bass line, or a few chords, or some kind of hook, or a melody. Once that particular fragment is strong enough, usually the rest follows quite naturally. Regarding lyrics, I might write the lyrics first as a poem, or after, to the music and that in itself generally helps keep my pieces quite contrasting from each other.

**iSing:** Can you explain your process of vocal improvisation and do you have to improvise to be a jazz singer?

**BB:** I've always thought of my voice as an instrument, so I think I approach my process of improvisation the same way another instrument would. On stage my aim is to 'lose' myself, so that I have no inhibitions when it comes to improvising and sing wherever my voice or mood will want to take me, according to what's happening musically around me. However in order to achieve this, at home I practice improvisation in a much more structured way. I'll make sure I practice vocal

technique so that I can feel I am in control of my instrument and can take my voice wherever it might want to go. Then I will practice harmony, rhythm exercises, scales, patterns etc. on specific pieces that I might perform (assuming I am not playing in a completely free jazz setting). If I feel I know the pieces inside out (their melody/rhythm, form, chord progression, etc.) I am more likely to feel free and let go. If I am improvising around the song and with the lyric, I will approach improvisation in the same way but whilst trying to always retain the meaning and the emotion of the lyrical content, as the improvisation needs to serve the lyric and the emotion of the piece, not hinder it.

I do believe that in essence, if one calls themselves a jazz instrumentalist or singer, this means they will improvise. For a jazz singer, that does not necessarily mean they have to scat sing (improvise wordlessly), but I would expect them to improvise in a way that their rendition of a song will be unique. If I hear a singer sing a song one night and hear them sing a song in exactly the same way the next night, however beautifully sang, that for me isn't a jazz singer. They might be a great singer, but not a jazz singer. Of course we all get into patterns and will often sing/play in the same way as before as it's impossible to always improvise, all the time. But as a jazz musician, we strive to bring something fresh to the table at every performance. A big part of what excites me about hearing a great jazz singer is that I don't know what they are going to do next and similarly, when I go up to sing, I am excited about the fact

that I'm not sure where the song and the musicians involved are going to take me, which means that something beautiful might happen, but then it might not. That is the risk and that is the excitement.

**iSing:** Why should a singer explore the jazz genre?

**BB:** I know a lot of singers that have benefited from exploring the jazz genre as it has helped them put more creativity in whatever other genre it is that they might love to sing. Jazz singing is very freeing, one often feels, after exploring jazz, bolder and less scared of making 'mistakes'. You know that if you sing a certain phrase slightly differently to how you intended, it might help you take a slightly different route, which is no bad thing. It often also opens ears to new sounds and broadens the possibilities and the colours of one's voice. Often when exploring jazz, singers also (if they haven't already) get to find out more about chords, structures, forms, therefore learning to approach the music as a more rounded musician. And, it's fun.

**iSing:** What was the inspiration behind your latest album Babelfish?

**BB:** The inspiration behind Chasing Rainbows is love, the cycles and stages of relationships, just love in many different forms - including love for sushi.



Bablefish Chasing Rainbows Promo

**iSing:** What is the aim of your band, Babelfish, and why that name?

**BB:** The band's ethos is to play music that we love, regardless of where it comes from, which is what we've done with this album too. A mixture of originals, little free improvisations, songs from the Folk, classical contemporary and Latin repertoires; there should be a little something for everyone.



Babelfish is Barry Green (pn), Brigitte Beraha (voc), Paul Clarvis (perc) and Chris Lawrence (bs)



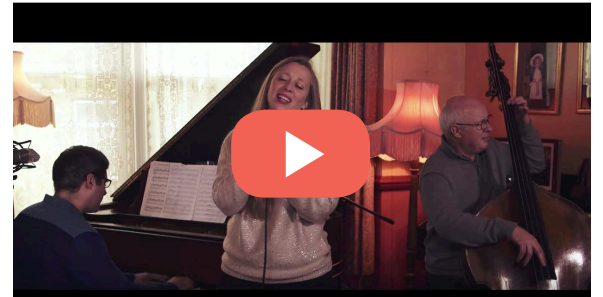
As the name Babelfish suggests (from the Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy), we translate any genre of music into one that hopefully feels universal and accessible to all.

**iSing:** What's next for you?

**BB:** Babelfish are currently organising a UK/ European tour which will take place in 2016 onwards, so watch this space! I have also recorded a debut album with this amazing sextet Solstice which will come out later in the

year, in which every member of the band contributes writing, and where I use my voice both as an instrument as well as with lyrics. I am also a member of a few other bands so I am looking forward to doing more concerts with these various ensembles throughout the year. If you'd like to know more about those, visit my website or sign up to my mailing list. This summer I will be busy teaching at the Loire Summer School for three weeks and at Falmouth -Yamaha Jazz Summer School in Cornwall

for one week, then I'll be heading to Edinburgh at the end of August to do a week of gigs as part of the Festival Fringe■



SUSHI HERO - BABLEFISH

## GET SOCIAL WITH BRIGITTE BERAHA



JOIN  
THE  
TRIBE

# The Working SINGER

DENOSH BENNETT EXPLORES  
THE INNER VISIONS AND  
TRANSITIONS WITH  
BABETTE LABELIJ



# MEET BABETTE LABEIJ By Denosh Bennett

I always had my eye on the prize. Wasn't sure how I'd get the prize, but I knew I had what it took to get it. I was only six and when asked what I wanted to be when I grew up, I already had a vision for what would later become my career. I wanted to move like Janet and sound like Whitney, and did everything to be exactly like them. Call it daydreaming or delusions if you will! What I wasn't prepared for, was that the world didn't see me the way I saw myself and this began to alter the vision I had for my career as I grew up.

As a singer and a dancer, I thought I had the ingredients to become the ideal pop star. My career as a dancer took hold first, and then the opportunities to sing came shortly after. I went back and forth between the two effortlessly, finding what I thought the perfect balance and setup for the future. A few music videos, a world tour, Broadway, and then a record deal; my dreams come true. "The best laid plans of mice and men often go astray"...I'm a planner so the first time I heard that phrase, it upset me. Or how about this one "When we make plans, God laughs!" I'm not a man or a mouse, and I don't like being laughed at, but the plans for my life as an artist took several twists and turns. Vision derailed!

What do we do when that happens? Do we keep on believing, pushing forward? Yes. Still waiting for a record deal or contract? Re-invent. Get signed and then shelved waiting for your turn? Get creative. When the phone

“

Still waiting for  
a record deal  
or contract?  
Re-invent.

stops ringing? Easier said than done, I know, but let's face it, in an industry that's flaky, unpredictable, so much built on image and over-saturated with incredible talent, the more experienced we become, the inevitable happens; we get older. And with that comes the risk of being less desirable. For many, the options and opportunities can be fewer and far between.

We have a passion and a desire that is born in our hearts and our vision for our gift is created in our minds, so it can be hard to know when it's time to let go, switch lanes, and move on. Some are lucky to transition to other lucrative singing and music-related careers in the industry, and we all know those who waited too long, or missed their chances. Don't stop believing, but there comes a time when we have to be honest with ourselves and make a transition; one that will give us security and stability, and through which we can continue our musical and creative journey.



Babette Labeij

My detour has taken me from solo artist, background dancer to songwriting, and arranging, background singer, vocal coaching and back around and everything in between! During her own budding singing career, Babette Labeij (famed vocal coach and expert, talent judge and creative consultant) transformed the vision she had for herself as an artist into a successful business. She took her talent, experience, and passion for music and now gives it to the people she works with at her very own music academy in Amsterdam, and to many TV contestant hopefuls as the head vocal coach and creative consultant for The Voice, The Voice Kids, and now it's Latin American version La Voz Kids. How can we as singers survive and grow and leave a legacy or a footprint for the musical community to remember and follow for years and generations to come? Let's find out how Babette did that very thing and what inspired her inner vision and transitions in the music industry ■

## 5

**BABETTE LABELIJ'S INNER  
VISION AND TRANSITIONS FOR  
THE WORKING SINGER**

1

**Drink lots of water; water is the best liquid and cannot do any harm.**

**Listen to your body; your body is the best indicator. When something doesn't feel right you know you're doing something wrong.**

2

3

**Give your voice the time to rest and recover! Be aware of the fact that too much use of your voice and no rest can build up voice problems.**

**Get yourself out there and have a vision. Make sure your website, social media and demos are always up to date.**

4

5

**Keep dreaming, believing and work hard. There are no guarantees, never, but give it all and do it with your body and soul!**





DENOSH'S INTERVIEW WITH BABETTE LABELIJ

## GET SOCIAL WITH BABETTE LABELIJ



## 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>



# the Vocalzone®

ARTIST FAQ: THE SWINGLES: 100  
YEARS AND STILL GOING STRONG





Interview

# THE SWINGLES

We are right in the middle of the festival season when everyone is looking forward to see their favourite artist at their favourite event. At Vocalzone we all share a passion for music which is why enjoy going to festivals. Each year we have a great time working backstage at various events such as Wireless, Sonisphere or Bloodstock Festival where we sponsor a stage for unsigned bands. That's how we get introduced to a lot of artists and bands and send them vocal care packages when they need them. In this month's episode of Vocalzone Artist FAQ we are excited to introduce to the legendary a cappella group The Swingle Singers. We first met them last year at their own London A Cappella Festival taking place at Kings Place each January.

The Swingle Singers also known as The Swingles have pushed the boundaries of vocal music for more than half a century. The seven young singers that make up today's London-based group are driven by the same pioneering spirit that has defined the five-time Grammy winners since they

first made waves in the 1960s. With their latest album *Deep End* (released on 29 June), The Swingles celebrate that legacy by starting a whole new chapter.

In 1963, American-born Ward Swingle first assembled a group of Parisian session singers to sing Bach's keyboard music. The resulting album, *Jazz Sebastian Bach*, launched the Swingle Singers to fame. Since then their repertoire has grown to include a huge variety of music, as well as new original songs. They have released more than 50 recordings, winning five Grammy awards and appearing on numerous film and TV soundtracks including *Sex and the City* and *Glee*. Recent releases include 2013's *Weather To Fly* and a winter EP, *Yule Songs*.

The group's versatility has led to collaborations with artists as diverse as the Modern Jazz Quartet, Jamie Cullum and Labrinth. Luciano Berio was one of the first composers to explore the sound of the Swingles' amplified voices in an orchestral setting, and the group continues to perform his groundbreaking *Sinfonia* around the world, including recent

performances at the Royal Festival Hall and La Scala.

The seven-piece vocal ensemble is composed of singers Joanna Goldsmith-Eteson (soprano), Sara Brimer (soprano), Clare Wheeler (alto), Oliver Griffiths (tenor), Christopher Jay (tenor), Kevin Fox (baritone) and Edward Randell (bass).

We have recently met up with Sara and Oliver and talked about their music, singing career, influences, vocal style as well as their latest album *Deep End*.

Enjoy!

Luke & George  
(The Vocalzone team)



PIPER - THE SWINGLES





SARA BRIMMER AND OLIVER GRIFFITHS FROM THE SWINGLES TALK TO VOCALZONE

Download The Swingles' latest album 'Deep End' from iTunes

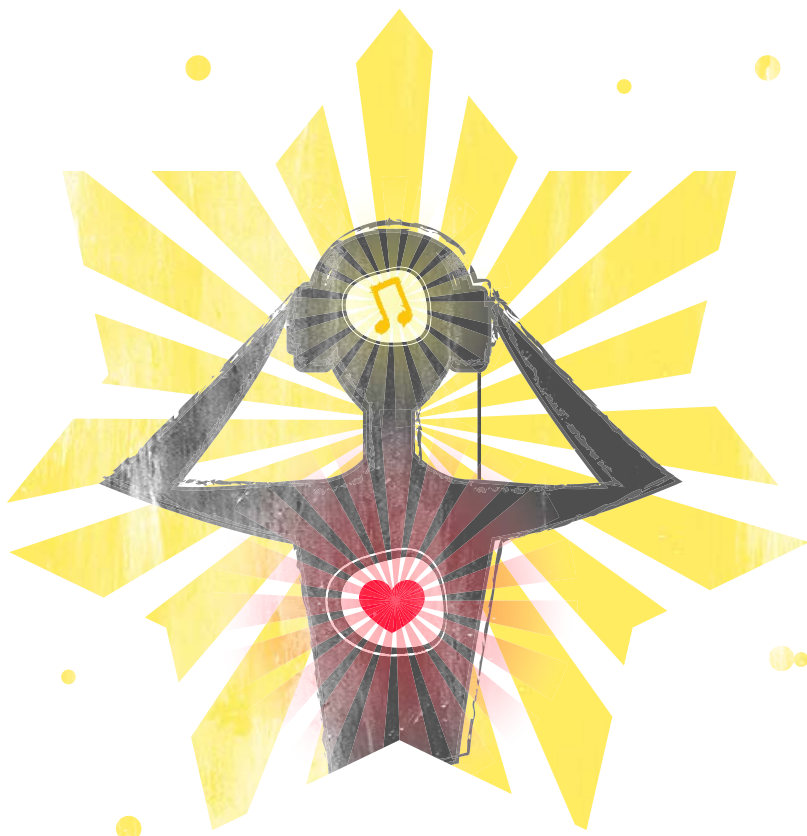


GET SOCIAL  
with The Swingles



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PASTILLES





# *mind body* & SOUL



**VOCAL HEALTH** Allergies and the Voice



**NUTRITION** Healthy Gut, Healthy Brain



**CHIROPRACTIC  
MEDICINE** Temporomandibular Joint (TMJ)  
Dysfunction - Cause or Effect?



**MINDSET** 4 TED Talks that will get you Motivated  
About Your Music



**THE LOOK BOOK** Festival Fashion 2015



# ALLERGIES & THE VOICE

by Dr Reena Gupta





Most people associate allergies with the classic symptoms seen on commercials: itchy, watery eyes, runny nose and sneezing. For singers, allergies, even when not accompanied by these dramatic symptoms, can have very sinister effects on the voice. The postnasal drip that is caused by allergies can actually cause laryngitis. When mild, this may only cause subtle symptoms, including the loss of one to two notes from the top, a difficult to navigate vocal break, or an inability to sing softly. As the severity progresses, so do the symptoms and may eventually lead to severe injury.

### What is postnasal drip?

Postnasal drip is the term for mucous that drips down from the nose to the back of the throat. Mucous forms in glands throughout the respiratory tract, and much of it forms in the nose and sinuses. The body produces a significant amount of mucous – about one to 1.5 liters per day. The vast majority of nasal mucous slides down the back of the nose, into the throat, where it is swallowed.

The symptoms of postnasal drip are noted when nasal mucous changes in quality or quantity. For example, when suffering from allergies, is produced in a greater quantity. It also becomes thicker. When this drips down the back of the throat, it is sensed as postnasal drip.

### Do allergies cause postnasal drip?

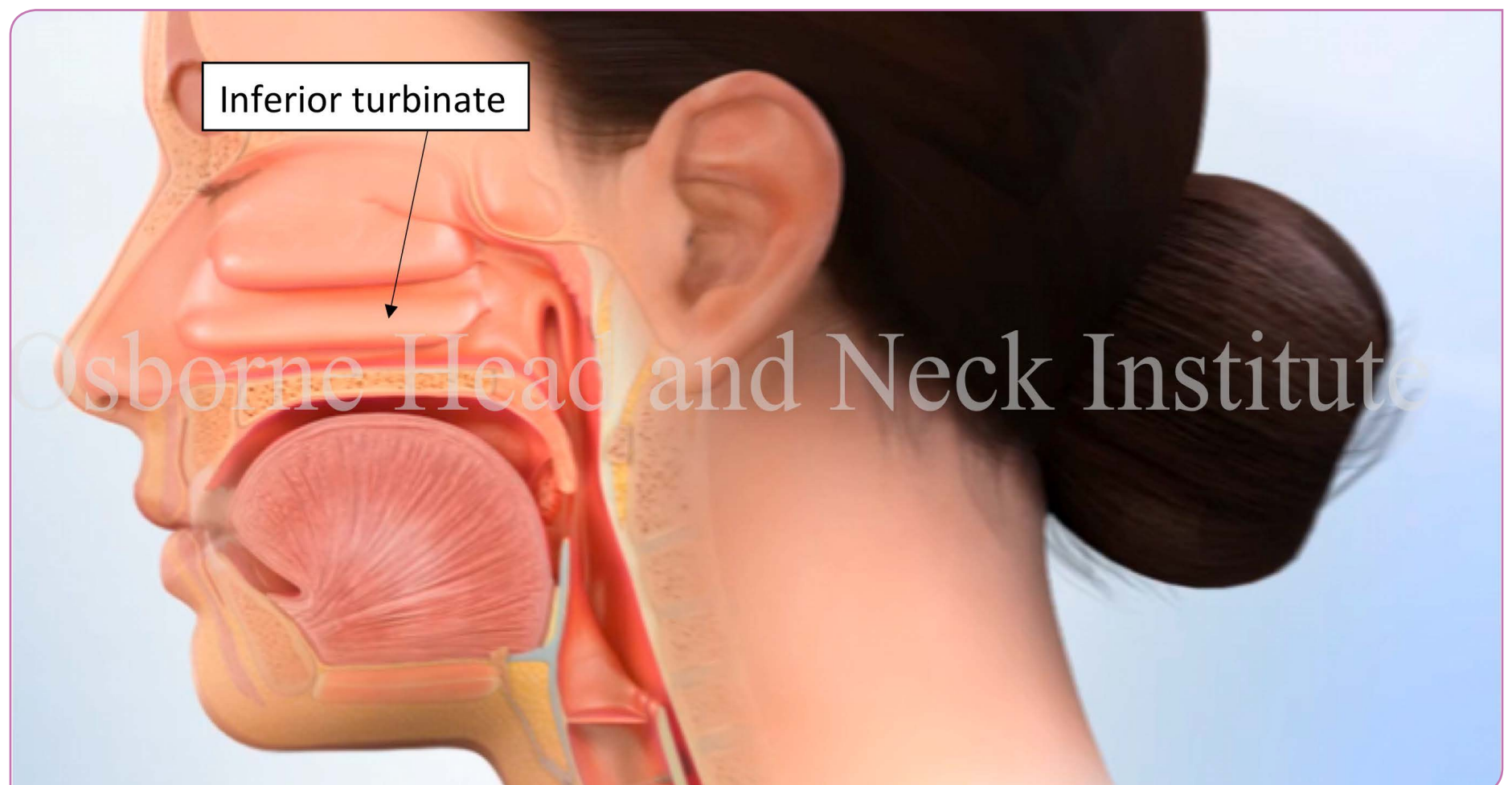
Allergies occur when the body falsely identifies a benign particle, such as dust, as an “enemy” and treats it as it would a virus or bacteria. It launches an immune response, including nasal inflammation and increased mucous production.

When an allergic reaction occurs, mucous production increases, and the contents of the mucous are more inflammatory. This is why sufferers will often wake up with a sore throat in the morning. They have been lying down all night, during which the allergic and irritating mucous has dripped into the throat, causing discomfort.

### How does this affect my voice?

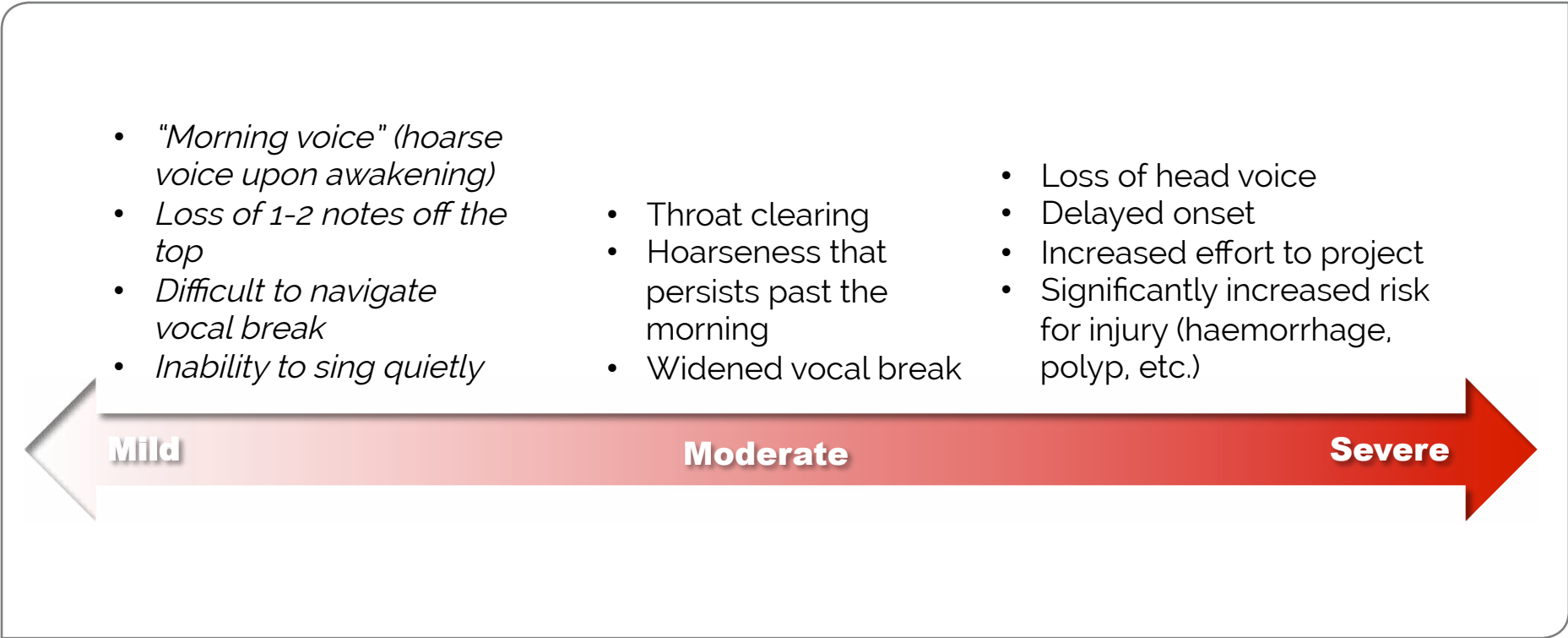
Allergies and postnasal drip will affect the voice in two ways:

1. Laryngitis – Postnasal drip results in irritating mucous contacting the vocal folds, particularly at night. This will result in vocal fold swelling. Symptoms may be severe (i.e., raspiness, decreased range) or subtle (i.e., delayed onsets, prolonged warm up time). Over time, this increases the risk of injury and may become permanent.



2. Decreased nasal resonance – nasal structures, called turbinates, become inflamed with chronic allergies. Turbinate inflammation results in less nasal airflow and less of a resonance chamber for sound. This

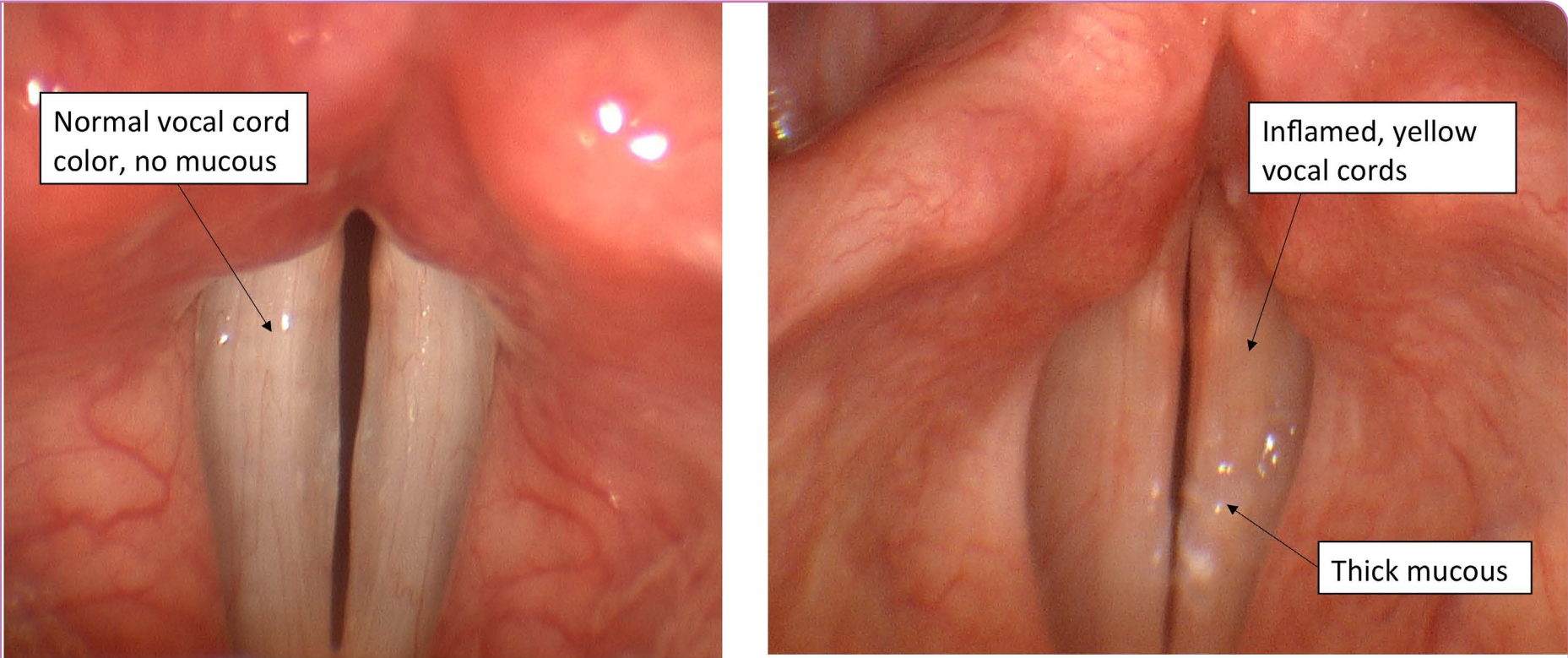
makes the singer sound congested, and less resonant. Over time, this may become irreversible and require surgery. Symptoms are on a continuum from mild to severe:



What are turbinates?

Turbinates are long, tubular structures that extend from the front of the nose to the back. They are the nasal humidifiers, allowing environmental air to be warmed, moisturised, and filtered before entering the

lungs. They are the body's first line of defense against viruses and allergies, trapping these particles in mucous on the turbinates. Turbinates swell from allergies and cause nasal congestion, increased mucous production and decreased nasal resonance.



Caption: Normal (left) vs. Allergic laryngitis (right). Note the color change of the vocal cords, where they are yellow and pink in the laryngitis picture. There is also thick mucous on the vocal cords in the laryngitis picture.



### Can I just blow my nose to treat symptoms?

Blowing your nose will help with mucous production, but only during the day and for a small amount of mucous. The real solutions for allergic laryngitis include:

- Sinus Rinse – similar to a Netti Pot (which is a good alternative for those who prefer this), this nasal irrigation system is excellent at removing the particles that cause allergy and inflammation.
- Prescription nasal spray – Certain medicated nasal sprays are excellent at reducing allergic inflammation without causing laryngitis, a common side effect of many nasal sprays.
- Allergy management – allergy desensitization is an excellent way to “cure” your allergies, avoiding the need for anything besides a Sinus Rinse.
- Turbinate reduction surgery – If left chronically untreated, turbinates may become so swollen that conservative options do not work. In these patients, turbinate reduction surgery will improve nasal airflow, reduce postnasal drip, and reduce the frequency of infections. Care must be taken to work with a surgeon who is familiar with vocal outcomes of nasal surgery and who is partnered with a laryngologist■

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Division of Voice & Laryngology

## 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>







# HEALTHY GUT, HEALTHY BRAIN

There is a mass of new information emerging, relating many lifestyle factors and modern foods to excess internal inflammation. When we have inflammation in the body, it can trigger many health issues, from acid reflux, indigestion and abdominal bloating, to aches and pains and even brain disease. New research is focusing on the health of our digestive systems and specifically the quality of the bacteria that live in the digestive tract and it is looking increasingly like reducing inflammation and attaining true health starts in the gut.

This is such an exciting time for nutritional science, especially in the field of the microbiome (gut bacteria) because it is gradually being understood to influence so much of our health, not least our brain health and this is largely due to how our gut health can trigger or calm inflammation all around the body including within our brain.

A healthy microbiome can directly affect our mood, depression, anxiety levels, duration of concentration and, as explained previously, the development and progression of very serious illnesses such as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's disease, type 2 diabetes and even autism, obesity and eating disorders!

This, to me, is utterly staggering news, so let me spell it out. The quality of the bacteria in our gut has

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“

It is looking increasingly like reducing inflammation and attaining true health starts in the gut.”

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been shown to be directly associated with mental health illnesses, weight problems and whole host of deadly diseases. Clearly, it is, therefore, imperative that we all look after our magical gut bacteria as best we can.

There are many factors that can influence the quality of our gut flora, many of which are in our direct control:

Negative Influences include the more obvious and well known antibiotics, alcohol, sugar and gluten (actually grains in general). Less well known, the

contraceptive pill, anti-inflammatory medications, environmental pollutants, genetically modified foods, lack of sleep, too much stress, highly processed foods, chlorinated water, cooking oils ..... and so, so much more.

Hence, we have to put some effort in to really supporting our gut health. This is simply done, but needs to be done daily and for the long term as the gut bacteria are up against it all the time ■

### The key ways to support a healthy gut and therefore a healthy brain .....

- **Plenty of fresh veg** – the fibre in vegetables are known as pre-biotics, providing food for our good bacteria.
- **Fermented Foods** – foods containing live bacteria and lactic acid serve to create the ideal environment for our good bacteria to thrive, while suppressing growth of the nasty ones. Fermented foods also take live bacteria in to the gut. The most commonly eaten fermented food in the UK is probably live yogurt, which is a good start, but actually contains relatively few desirable strains of bacteria. This is largely because commercial yogurt is not allowed to ferment for long enough. If you can make your own and leave it to ferment for at least 12 hours, you will get a far more useful fermented food. For



*greater quality and quantity of good bacteria, aim to eat raw sauerkraut or kimchi (Korean fermented veg), water kefir or dairy kefir (I will explain all next time, including how to make it yourself) and kombucha (fermented tea).*

- **Eat whole foods**, greatly minimise processed foods (aim for no more than 4 ingredients if you are buying packaged foods) and cut the sugars and the grains.
- **Get more sleep!**
- **Manage your stress** and prioritise a least a few minutes a day to stop and BE.
- **Take time to eat** – focus on your food when eating, take some deep breaths before starting to eat and the chew, chew and chew a bit more.
- **Being too clean is NOT helpful** – greatly reduce use of household bleaches and stop using hand sanitizers.

*This is seriously serious stuff and the great thing is, if we choose to put in a little time and effort to feed our gut bacteria well, we can greatly influence the health of our future. Now that's empowering!*

## STEPHANIE MOORE



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



<http://health-in-hand.co.uk>



# Temporomandibular Joint (TMJ) Dysfunction - Cause or effect?



**T**MJ dysfunction syndrome is a common joint ailment, yet curiously, the many sufferers of it find they have few obvious treatment options to resolve it. It can be a distressing affliction, diminishing the enjoyment of even the simplest of life's pleasures, such as eating a meal or having a conversation with a loved one. Singer LeAnn Rimes has long documented her struggle with TMJ dysfunction syndrome on Twitter and Facebook, and in 2013 even took time away from singing to have surgery on her jaw.

Often, the pain will quickly arrive out of nowhere, and the sufferer will discover that far from having the healthy jaw they had taken for granted, they have a damaged meniscus, arthritis or 'slipped

condyle'. Even worse, there may be 'nothing wrong' with the joint itself, leaving them floundering as they try to define, label and analyse what is happening to them. Although this information is all useful to have, it is not a complete diagnosis, as it doesn't illustrate why our bodies have behaved this way in the first instance. To solve the puzzle that is TMJ dysfunction, we must first begin with why.

The TMJ joints are small, but they take up a lot of nerve cell space in your brain; Greys Anatomy estimates that the face and TMJ use an incredible 2/3 of the cells in the brain. This means that dysfunction in the TMJ can cause problems and be caused from other areas, and are associated with issues that may not be immediately recognized as being

related. If one leg is shorter than the other, the body will become unbalanced. As any dentist will confirm, your jaw works the same way; if your teeth don't meet evenly, it will have an effect on even remote areas of your body.

The TMJ is part of the 'Stomatognathic' system, which includes the cranium and its connections to the pelvis, the teeth, the hyoid, the neurological reflexes controlling head position, and muscles of the neck and the head. It is because of these complex interactions, that TMJ dysfunction can have consequences for vision, balance, voice and breathing, spinal function, emotions, and, of course, singing!



The Temporomandibular joint (circled)

Getting to the root cause of any jaw problems can be a frustrating and confusing experience; so-called 'TMJ dysfunction Syndrome' simply means a group of symptoms that have been pushed together and

given a name for classification, it is not a condition with a prescribed remedy. Treating the classification is often an unreliable way to achieve optimal health and wellbeing. Years ago, I realised that the TMJ is an area of the body that always compensates for other parts of the stomatognathic system. This means that although you may be emphatically feeling the effects of pain and inflammation in your TMJ, the true cause is more likely to be nerve interference in your upper neck, a cranial distortion, or a pattern of dysfunction in your neurology. This can pose a dilemma for those trying to resolve these issues, as looking for a cause away from the site of pain may sometimes feel counter-intuitive.

Think about it this way; your brain is constantly sending messages to the TMJ instructing it where to be positioned, and controlling the muscles of the hyoid, chewing muscles, and all of the muscles involved with speech that attach to, or affect, the



TMJ. The TMJ is also intimately related, in a functional sense, to the neck and sacrum. That leaves many opportunities for the nerves affecting the TMJ directly or indirectly, to become irritated or impinged, altering the function of the TMJ, and setting the scene for problems down the track.

Conversely, the only way to completely resolve the problem will be to identify and remove any sites of nerve interference, restoring normal function to the area, and

allowing the joint the time to heal. Splints, and the like, prescribed to relieve some of the immediate stress on the joint, may help to alleviate pressure in the short term, but will not be able to correct any nerve dysfunction in the body. A simple trip to your chiropractor may be an easy way to have your functional neurology tested in relation to your jaw, alleviate any nerve pressure, and begin the road to recovery. Rather than looking for external fixes, the answer may lie within ■

## EDWINA WADDELL



Edwina Waddell, Doctor of Chiropractic, has been a chiropractor for 13 years and is originally from Australia, now practicing in London for the last eleven years. She helps people from the smallest baby, to professional athletes, get more life from their body. Dr Edwina enjoys helping people optimise their health by removing interference from the nervous system. Her love of people and chiropractic medicine has taken her around the world in her quest for knowledge, and even to the Houses of Parliament to inform people about the benefits of focusing on their health from the inside-out.



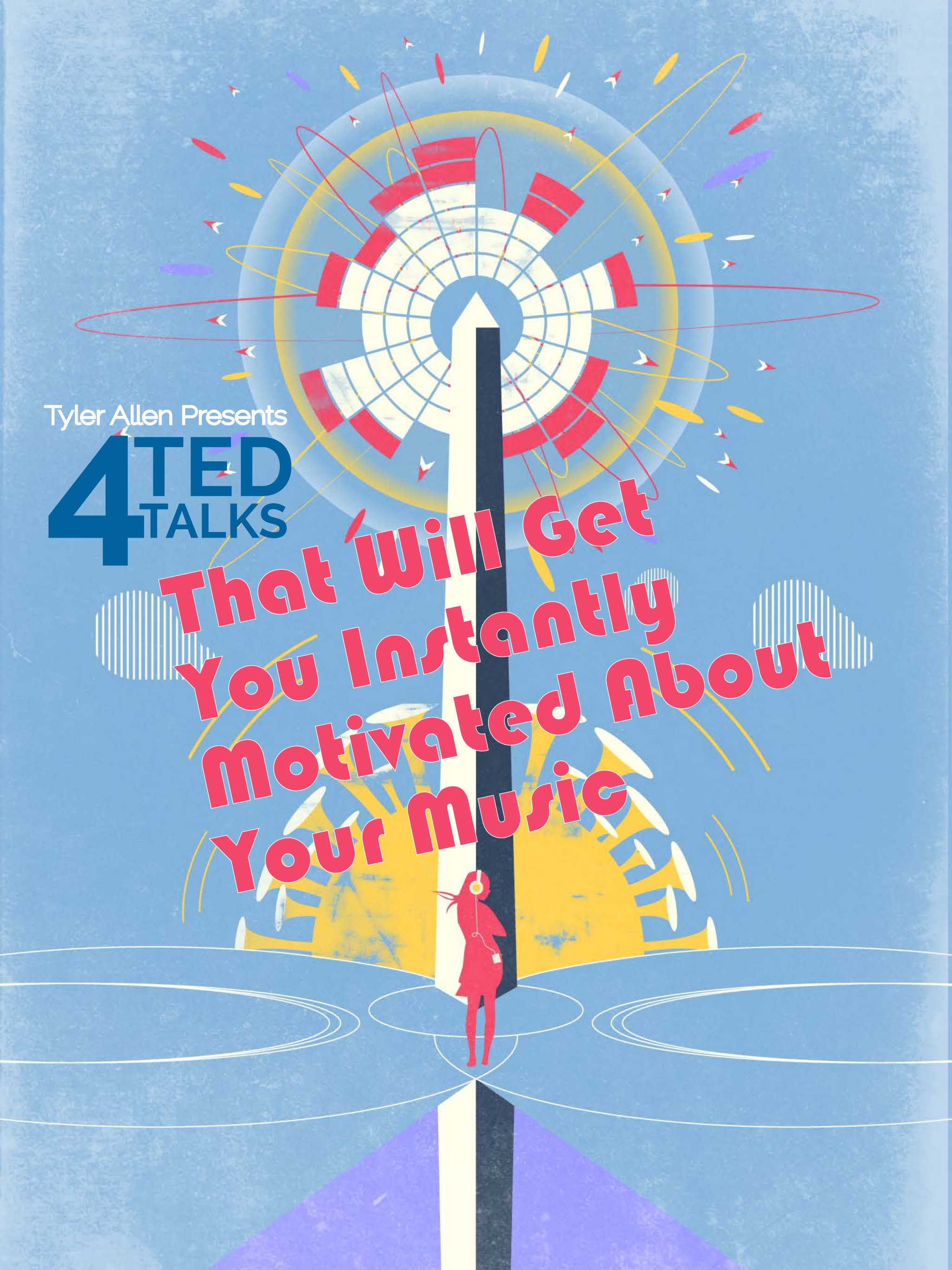
<http://www.putneychiropractic.co.uk>



Tyler Allen Presents

# 4 TED TALKS

**That Will Get  
You Instantly  
Motivated About  
Your Music**





TED Talks are notorious for their education, and inspiration. They genuinely inspire millions of people around the world on a variety of different topics and subjects. If you're feeling a little lack of inspiration these days for your music, then we highly recommend checking out some of these music-centric talks! Not only will you find technical talks on how to better compose your music, but you'll also find some great pieces on music history, music business, and much more. *Here are a few of our favourites:*

1



STING

### Sting, How I Started Writing Music Again

In this intimate talk, Sting recounts his writer's block that seemed to last for years. Aside from finding inspiration, he performs multiple songs from his musical, as well as a rendition of "Message in a Bottle".

2



MARK RONSON

### Mark Ronson: How Sampling Transformed Music

Musician, DJ, and producer Mark Ronson, who is currently seeing major success for his track "Uptown Funk" gives a unique lecture on how and why sampling in music works. During his lecture, Ronson meshes various TED Talks into one A/V presentation and traces the evolution of sampling through "La Di Da Di" by Doug E. Fresh and Slick Rick, one of the most sampled songs in music history.

3



BENJAMIN ZANDER

### Benjamin Zander: The Transformative Power of Classical Music

Conductor Benjamin Zander focuses on social conditioning, cognition, and emotions and how they relate to music in his TED Talk. He also discusses the cultural perceptions of various classical masters like Chopin and more.

4



RYAN HOLLADAY

### Ryan Holladay: "To Hear This Music You Have To Be There. Literally."

With the help of his brother, musician Ryan Holladay, has created pieces of music that only play via a cell phone when the listener stumbles upon certain geographical locations. A very unique way to combine technology and music!



MIND, BODY & SOUL

# the LOOK BOOK

FESTIVAL FASHION 2015

# 3 Ways to Nail Festival Fashion

Going to a festival this summer? Whether you're performing or spectating, take a look at our favourite trends this season and our top tips on what to wear to ensure you're looking effortlessly cool. Whatever festival you're at.



*KEEP  
IT  
CASUAL!*



Top trend this summer is casual wear. Think neutral colours on natural fabrics such as cotton and denim. Teaming denim shorts with a slouchy tee and shirt combo for effortless style. We love these Topshop Mom Denim Shorts at £30, teamed with this H&M cropped shirt. Get yours for just £12.99. Accessorise with layers of delicate necklaces and a printed rucksack or opt for this season's must have; a bum bag! River Island £20. This style is super comfy and hassle free so you can spend all day watching your favourite artists!



*A LA  
FRINGE!*



Seventies inspired pieces are a key look for summer 2015. Vintage inspired, throwback to the free spirited 1970s where must haves include maxi dresses, crochet and fringing detailing. Check out New Look for these shorts £17.99. A cooler alternative to flares, match with Urban Outfitter's off the shoulder top for £29. Boohoo.com have some great Maxi dresses. We love this printed ¾ sleeve for cooler days. Add tan accessories for an authentic look, such as this Topshop Vintage Tan Belt, £26.



*HIPPIE  
COOL!*





Summer is here with these gorgeous pieces. Go wild with colour and tropical prints. Pick a piece that suits your style, let loose and have fun with it. Our must haves are this playsuit for £35 from Miss Selfridge and we'll definitely be buying this skort from River Island! Team with a neutral tee and sandals (or wellies!). Finally don't forget your cover up; H&M have this Asian inspired printed kimono at £29.99 which is perfect for wearing around the campsite at night■



*TROPICANA!*



## LAYLA RUDKIN



Layla Rudkin is a retail buying graduate from Demontfort University. Currently working for a well known fashion retailer in London. She has experience working with men's and women's fashion and accessories. Layla is passionate about music and attends local gigs and music festivals in her spare time. Follow her on Instagram.



@lrudkin





# *the* **BIZ**



## **INTERVIEW**

**Online music production service -  
SongCat**



## **RESOURCE**

**The Music Industry Bible: The  
Unsigned Guide**



## **PASSING IT ON**

**Old Habits Die Hard: Breaking  
Bad Vocal Habits**



Get

RADIO  
READY

with



## Gemma Wilson talks to SongCat Producer Chris Erhardt

**iSing:** What is SongCat?

**SongCat:** is an online music production facility offering services such as demo production, full song productions, mixing and mastering for singers and songwriters across the globe.

**iSing:** How did it begin?

**SC:** We founded SongCat in July 2014 to offer professional music production services at a reasonable rate. Our goal is it to enable as many singers and songwriters as possible to get a high quality recording sound, without the usual high cost normally involved with that kind of service. Professional music production shouldn't only be available for a select few but to anyone who seriously considers a career in music.

**iSing:** What can SongCat do for independent singers?

**SC:** Well, being primary a music production company, we can help singers create high quality, original music. It really comes down to the individual singer. We can assist in writing the song, produce the entire project

Interview

or take on specific parts of a project. We don't offer vocal classes or lessons, but we do give free advice for everything music related, including singing and performance advice through our weekly newsletter and on our blog. You can subscribe directly on our homepage

**iSing:** Tell us about the service

**SC:** As we are an online company working with singers and songwriters all around the world, we work a bit different from "normal" recording studios. When working on a full project, a singer would normally get in touch with us. We will discuss the production and the direction the song should go. This can happen by email, phone or chat, depending on the client's preference. We would then start playing the different parts and instruments of the song, finishing an instrumental as per the singer's specification. The instrumental will then be sent to the client and he/she can record the vocals in a studio near his/her home or in a home studio if the vocal quality is professional enough. The singer would then send the vocals raw back to us and we mix and master the project to finish it. The whole process normally takes between 1-3 weeks and is much more cost effective than hiring a local studio for the entire project.

**iSing:** Are there any particular offers?

**SC:** We don't have any particular promotions running for singers at the moment, however iSing readers receive a 20% discount on all services by visiting <http://songcat.biz/ising.html>

**iSing:** What stands out about your services above other similar production companies in the industry?

**SC:** Our big advantage is that we were able to source some highly skilled musicians and engineers that have the same spirit as the founding team and would love





Chris Erhart

to open up professional recording quality to a larger group. Through this and some strategic partnerships, we can offer radio ready productions for a much lower rate than most competitors or local studios can. A fully produced song can cost thousands with other studios while our rate is under \$300 for the same, if not even higher quality. We recently had a client survey which covered over 100 songs we produced within the last six months and got rated with a 4.65 out of 5 by previous clients with the majority of clients who have used a competitor in the past, stating that our quality was higher compared to the previous choice of recording facility.

**iSing:** How much does it cost to use you?

**SC:** It depends on what is needed. A simple five track mastering costs \$49 while a full blown production with a session vocalist as a background singer or to give the lead vocal guide would run up to \$299.

**iSing:** Do you work internationally?

**SC:** Yes, we operate worldwide from our headquarter in Springfield, MO and our partner studios.

**iSing:** Tell us about yourself

**SC:** I have been producing music for the past ten years and was fortunate enough that I got introduced to some highly talented musicians and was able to contribute to their albums or career management. Having worked with many upcoming artists all the way up to Grammy nominated and chart topping musicians in a wide array of genres, I'm really excited about helping singers and

“ I'm really  
excited about helping  
singers and songwriters.”

songwriters to get the most out of their talent. To find out more about myself, you can visit <http://chrisherhardt.com>

**iSing:** What lies ahead for SongCat?

**SC:** SongCat is now one year old and we've been growing within the first year beyond our expectations. We are planning to continue this growth and enable even more singers and songwriters to create high quality music at a low cost. Some exciting new partnerships will be announced soon as well. It's a bit early to talk about that yet, but join our mailing list to get all the latest news first hand.

**iSing:** What's the next step for a musician/singer looking to use your services?

**SC:** Have a look at our website and decide if we're a good match for your music. Define what your goal is with a possible produced EP or album. And then, just contact us. We're available through phone, chat or email and you can directly ask for me if you get someone from the team on the line first. I normally run around somewhere in the studio and easy to find for my colleagues - they just have to follow where the most noise is coming from, I'm normally not too far away from that. If I'm not available any team member can help you and if something is unclear, I'm always happy to call back or email as soon as I'm available again ■

GET SOCIAL  
WITH SONGCAT



## THE MUSIC INDUSTRY BIBLE:

# Unsigned Guide

by Gemma Wilson

**L**aunching a career in the music business? Need a manager? Want to distribute your latest LP? Look no further, The Unsigned Guide is here. This online directory connects upcoming singers to an array of vital information and tools including managers, creative and branding support, legal documents and much more. Editor Louise Dodgson talks to iSing Assistant Editor Gemma Wilson about the music 'bible' and reveals how singers and artists can benefit from membership.

**iSing:** What is the Unsigned Guide?

**Louise Dobson:** The Unsigned Guide is an online music industry directory used by independent bands, musicians, artist managers & music students. The directory lists list over 8,700 UK music contacts across the industry ranging from record label A&R, music publishers, PR companies, recording studios, artist managers to radio stations, venues, gig promoters, festivals and music distribution.

**iSing:** How can it help a budding singer?

**LB:** If you're making music, there are thousands of contacts in there you can send your music onto - whether you're hoping to get a

record deal, or want to promote yourself via radio airplay, music blogs, local and national press, or if you want to book yourself some gigs both locally or beyond, or are interested in festival slots, there are contacts for all these areas, plus loads more. We cover 50 areas of the industry in all, here's a full list of everything featured in the directory: <http://www.theunsignedguide.com/tour>

**iSing:** What services do you offer?

**LB:** As well as the music directory, our members are also encouraged to send us a track a month for consideration for our Spotlight blog. This monthly blog allows us to champion the 5 best songs from our members, and as well as being promoted on our site and across our social media, we also send the blog & tracks onto a select list of 40+ music industry professionals who guarantee to listen to our selections.

Our service also includes lots of advice for emerging acts who are trying to get to grips with the music industry; we regularly have blog posts and articles from the likes of the Musicians' Union, AIM, PRS For Music and loads more organisations and other experts in their fields who can shed light on

the inner workings of the music business.

**iSing:** How is the Unsigned Guide different to other similar services out there?

**LB:** There aren't too many other music industry directories around, but others such as the Music Week directory are aimed exclusively at industry professionals so they will list large scale tour promoters or arena and stadium venues around the UK.

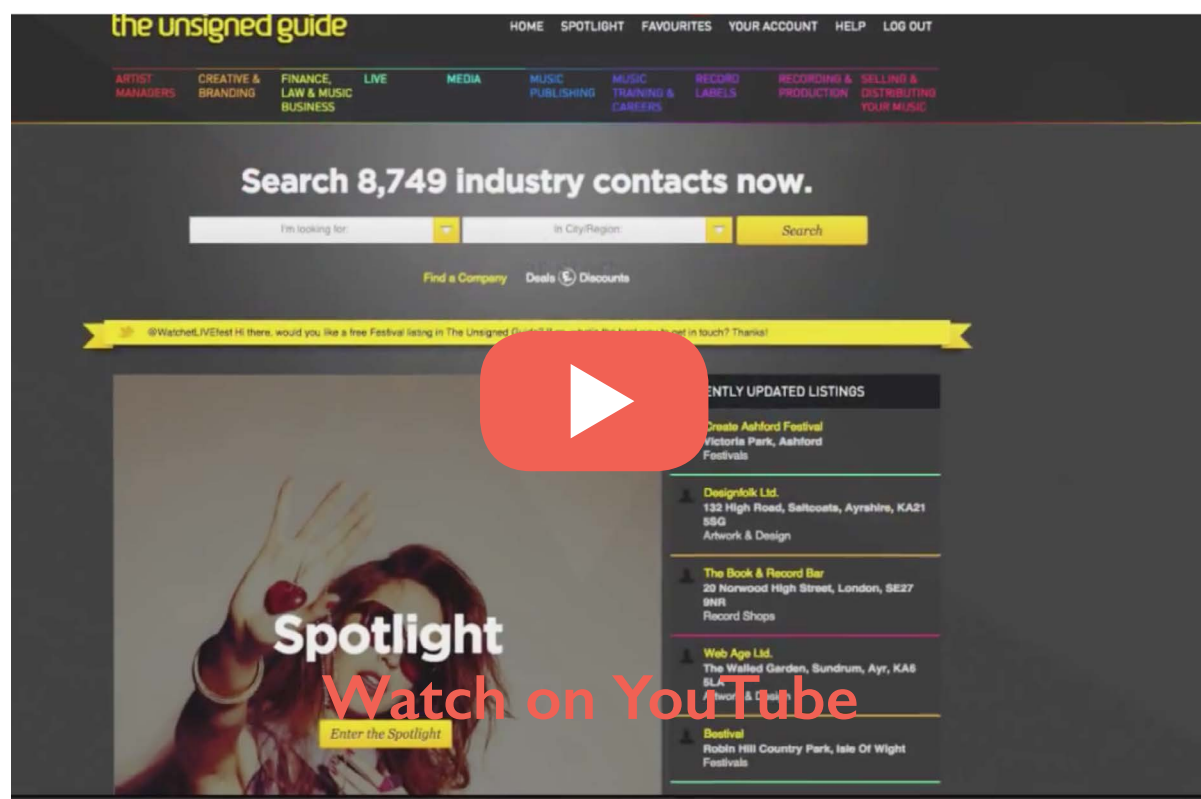
Obviously, these type of contacts



The Unsigned Guide has become the must have for anyone starting out in the music industry."







SEE WHY THE UNSIGNED GUIDE SHOULD BE IN YOUR MUSIC TOOLKIT

are just not relevant to emerging bands & artists so our directory is aimed specifically at this level and contains a great level of detail about each company/individual listed so our users have a good overview of the services each contact offers & how they can help them.

**iSing:** Tell us about the team behind the Unsigned Guide

**LB:** The team is very small, there are only 3 of us. Our director Stef Loukes came up with the idea for The Unsigned Guide and this launched in 2003. I joined the team shortly in 2004 and we have

another member who concentrates on keeping the listings in our directory up to date and finding fresh content in the way of new businesses and individuals to add to the directory, so it is as comprehensive as possible.

**iSing:** What role do you play?

**LB:** I'm the Editor and General Manager so my role encompasses a wide variety of tasks.

Everything from dealing with customer enquiries, posting news and informative blogs on our site, compiling our Spotlight blog, managing our social media accounts, checking & signing off on listings for the directory, approving changes to the website, and just generally finding ways to spread the word and keep moving The Unsigned Guide forward.

**iSing:** How much does it cost?

**LB:** We have a few subscription options for The Unsigned Guide,

making it affordable and flexible. Monthly subscriptions are £4.99, quarterly £9.99 and annually £29.99.

There is no tie-in so you can sign up for a monthly subscription and cancel straight away if you only want to pay for 1 month's access.

**iSing:** Are there any offers?

**LB:** We do run offers from time to time, so keep an eye on our website, Twitter & Facebook. However, we're more than happy to offer a discount to iSing Magazine readers - save 30% on an annual subscription to The Unsigned Guide (making the price £20.99 rather than £29.99), just use discount code TUG30S at checkout here: <http://members.theunsignedguide.com/signup>

**iSing:** How can singers/musicians get in touch with the Unsigned Guide?

**LB:** You can email me at [louise@theunsignedguide.com](mailto:louise@theunsignedguide.com) or submit the Contact Form on our website here: <http://members.theunsignedguide.com/contactus>

**iSing:** What's next for the company?

**LB:** Just to keep maintaining the standard of the directory content, and keep it growing & growing with more contacts & more blogs providing advice and support for unsigned artists and bands ■



# Passing it on

JOHN HENNY

Leading vocal  
coach and

teacher trainer

John gives advice  
on dealing with  
problem voices.





If you are a regular reader of this column, you will have been given an arsenal of great teaching tools with which to help singers.

However, in your teaching career you will encounter voices that we will politely classify as “difficult.” No matter what you try, these stubborn vocal problems don’t seem to want to budge.

In this article, I’m going to break down some of the most common problem singers, and give you new ways to think about and approach them. Often the tools will remain the same, but we will apply them in slightly different ways in order to break through their vocal trouble spots.



### **BREATHY SINGERS**

This is actually one of the most common issues you will deal with, especially with younger female singers. There will occasionally be the singer that you can’t seem to get cord closure no matter what you do.

I find success with getting them out of singing and into emotional speech sounds. Have them chastise someone with an “ah-ah-ah” or to angrily tell someone “go.”

Once they are getting the vocal cords together with these sounds,

“I’ve had more voice teachers ask me about the changing male voice than any other”

quickly move into a scale. If they lose closure, go back to speech and then back to the scale.

The emotional involvement of speech will often get those stubborn cords to come together.



### **MAJOR CHEST PULLERS**

This is another common problem but probably the most difficult to break. These singers have locked into their natural, hardwired defense and warning mechanism – shouting.

The other issue is when the muscles of the vocal cords, that give us chest voice, over-flex and overpower the muscles that stretch and thin the vocal cords for higher notes. This singer basically hits a

wall in their range.

For these singers it may take an extended period of working unfinished sounds. These sounds remove resonances that otherwise need to be balanced, and also help the cord muscles relax for the higher pitches.

Hooty and nasty sounds are both good choices. Also, don’t worry about the student flipping for a while, this will likely be necessary in the short term.



### **PUBESCENT VOICES**

I’ve had more voice teachers ask me about the changing male voice than any other, as it can be the most confusing and challenging.

Basically the young male singer

is moving from having what is essentially a female voice (in terms of registration) to a new and bigger instrument.

What used to be chest voice is now a horrible break, and there's a lot more chest voice below that.

The chest voice muscles will likely be working too hard, which cuts off the upper ranges, and the young cords are often not stable enough to withstand the greater tensions of pitch for the adult male voice.

I often work these male singers in their upper chest voice. This is the area from Bb3 (just below middle C) to D4 (just above middle C).

This area will now function as a type of bridge from lower to upper chest and will require similar coordination and resonance control

as their primary bridge, but it will be much easier for them.

Allow the singer to begin adjusting vowels as they approach this area. This will help set them up for the more difficult task of blending through their main bridge, which starts around Eb4.

I also work them above the break, on falsetto sounds that we slowly add more cord closure to.

The final element in this voice is time. It will simply take a while for the cords to continue to mature and stiffen.

### AGING VOICES

The stiffening of the vocal folds is what is needed for the young voice, but the continued stiffening over time makes the voice less flexible with age.

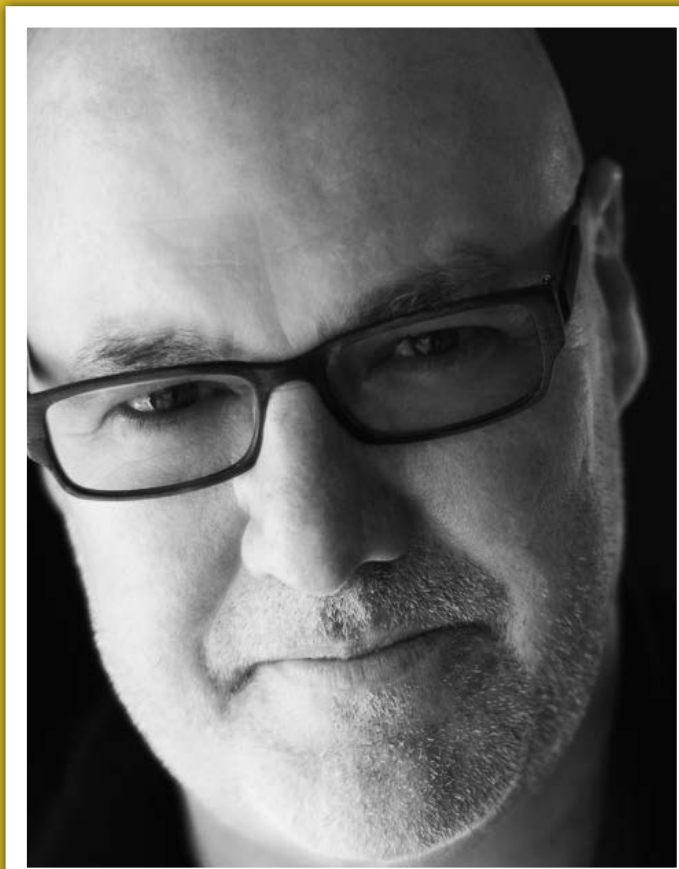


The vocal bridges will become a bit more difficult as well.

A key approach to the aging voice is to start vowel modifications and bridging a little earlier. Keeping the voice in a lighter coordination can help overcome the natural tendency of the aging voice to get too heavy.

You might also start dealing with breathiness, as some of the muscles of singing weaken. Focus on cord closure exercises can also help a great deal■

## JOHN HENNY



With over 25 years of experience, John Henny is regarded as a leading vocal coach in the music industry and as a true teacher of teachers. John's techniques not only keep the voice healthy, they also improve the overall sound, help eliminate cracks in the voice and extend the singer's range allowing the singer to express themselves vocally without limitation.

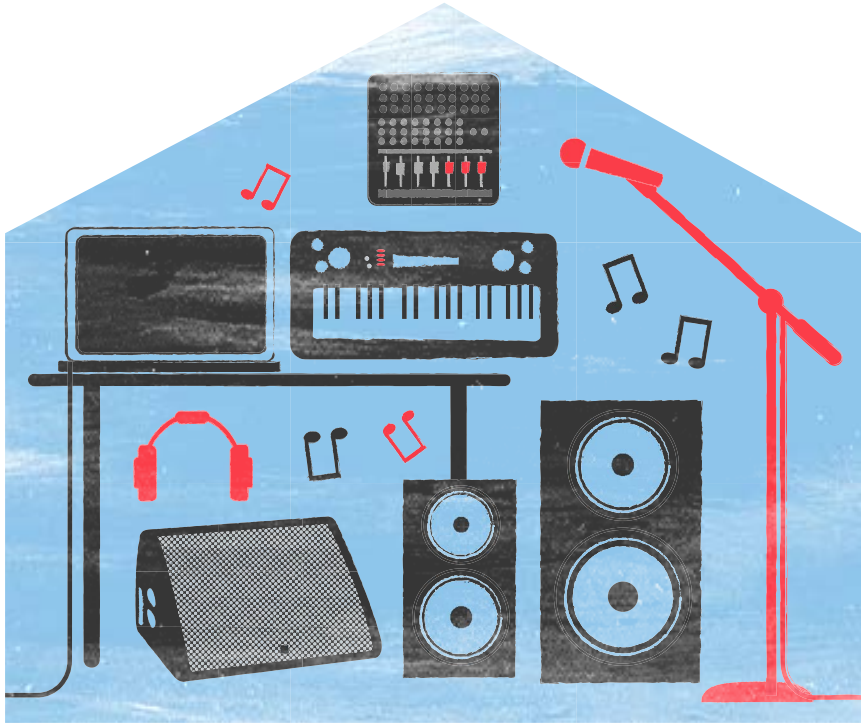
Some of John's current students are on Broadway and in touring productions such as Jersey Boys, Miss Saigon, Godspell, Les Miserables, Movin' Out and Avenue Q. Many have also landed starring roles in Movies and TV Shows including Desperate Housewives, Hannah Montana, Camp Rock and Glee. He also continues to have students who become competitors on American Idol and The X Factor. Many of John Henny's students are recording artists and are signed to various music labels such as Interscope, Warner Brothers, RCA, and Universal.

John Henny has lectured at prestigious colleges and institutes such as USC, Paul McCartney's Liverpool Institute of the Arts and The Academy of Contemporary Music in England. He is also the creator of **Voice Teacher Boot camp**, an online training course for voice teachers.



<http://www.johnhenny.com>





# GEARING<sup>up</sup>



**iREVIEW** Apple Music





# MUSIC

by Patrick Gunther

Since its launch on June 30th, Apple Music has been the latest streaming service to sweep the world thanks to a classic blowout World Leaders Conference headlined by Drake and legendary record executive and Beats co-founder Jimmy Iovine earlier that month. With the meteoric rise of services like Spotify and Pandora, then, it was only a matter of time before the omnipresent tech company dove head first into the trend. Boasting a 30-million-strong song library and expertly curated playlists from some of music's most intelligent individuals, after two weeks, it's become clear that Apple Music is the future of radio.

As of March 2015, it has been estimated that Apple has sold

roughly 500 million iPhones in the past seven years, an absolutely staggering and market-dominant number that cannot be matched by any competitor. With this leg up on every other smartphone manufacturer, coupled with the preloaded Apple Music on each device, Apple has a wide reach and incredible appeal to a dedicated consumer base. Most importantly, though, unlike using algorithms to recommend playlists for users, Apple claims to provide fans with the best way of getting new music possible: human recommendation.

With artists such as Drake, Vampire Weekend's Ezra Koenig, St. Vincent and the legendary BBC Radio 1 superman Zane Lowe, fans are treated to the hottest and widest

array of new and undiscovered tunes through a multitude of radio shows. Even if one cannot tune in when these programs go live, the playlists are then available to listen to at any time, anywhere (with a wifi connection, of course) for as long as you'd like.

With a clean, minimalist design and social media driven components, Apple Music can provide people across the globe with instant access to their favourite artists, new and old, like never before. Additionally, each handpicked track present on an abundance of playlists perfectly ebbs and flows with whatever mood you are going for. As terrestrial radio declines and the popularity of podcasts and digital downloads



“It has been estimated that Apple has sold roughly 500 million iPhones in the past seven years.”

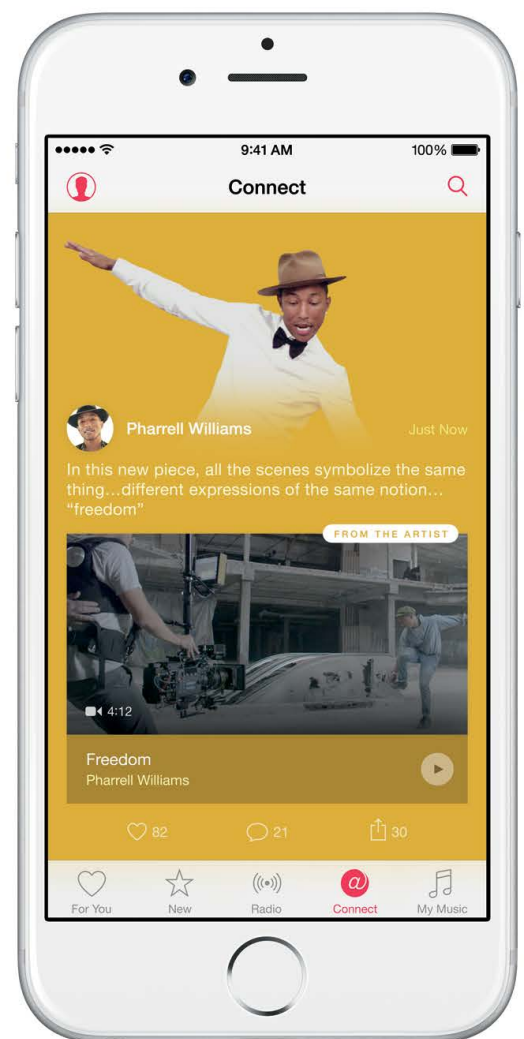
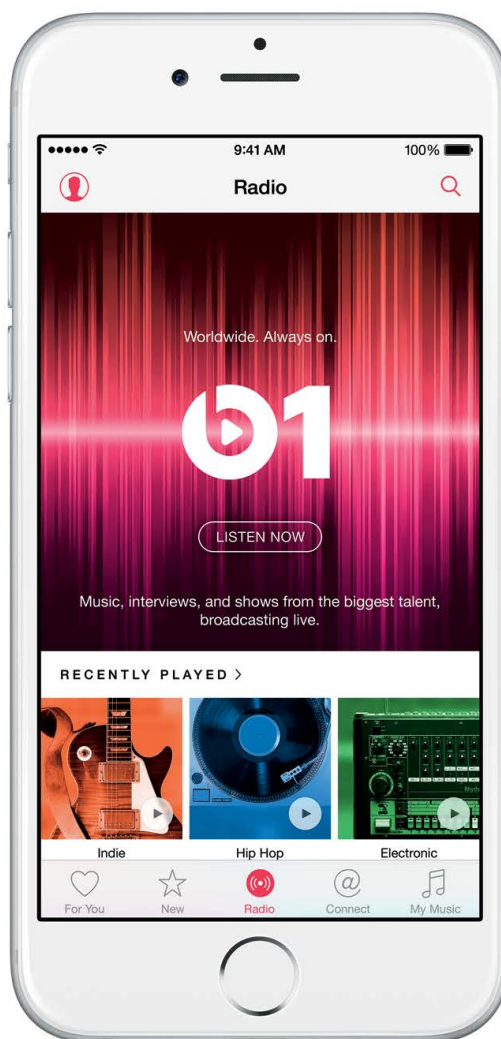
increases, it is only a matter of time before we find Apple Music in the middle of your car's dashboard, primed and prepped for whatever it is you want to listen to.

With a \$9.99 a month flat-fee,

users not only gain access to a vast catalogue of tracks at (a lower-quality than Spotify or Tidal) 256/kbps, in addition to behind-the-scenes insights from your chosen artists. Though Spotify and Tidal

boast higher quality sound, Apple Music has seamlessly integrated a radio component like never before. With tracks coming from the hottest artists and DJs on earth, Apple Music's team of superb curators will undoubtedly shift the paradigm of how we listen to radio. Though only available on Apple devices and still working out some kinks, Apple Music lays the groundwork for something that could drastically change the way we enjoy a form of entertainment as old as time.

For more information or to sign up for a free trial, why not visit [www.apple.com/uk/music](http://www.apple.com/uk/music)





# *look listen* & FEEL



**WORLD SINGER** Folk singer, Sam Lee - Respecting the Magic



**iREVIEW PERFORMANCE** Lalah Hathaway at Ronnie Scott's



**iREVIEW BOOK** Naked at the Albert Hall: The Inside Story of Singing by Tracey Thorn



**iREVIEW** 5 Singers Not To Miss





# world SINGER

CHRISTINE GILLAND  
INTERVIEWS UK BASED FOLK  
SINGER SAM LEE.





WORLD SINGER

SAM LEE

RESPECTING THE MAGIC

London-born Sam Lee has been described as 'Britain's most inventive folk singer', and the Mercury Prize-nominated musician's second album, *The Fade of Time*, has already earned him stunning reviews in 2015. We caught up with him just before he embarks on his first US tour to discuss music, activism and campfire singing.

**iSing:** So Sam, tell us how you developed an interest in folk?

**Sam Lee:** I didn't grow up with folk music in my family. But from a young age, I'd gone off camping with a very alternative organisation which broke away from the Scouts in the 1920s. We had a very strong tradition there, round the campfire, of singing folk songs and

pop songs. I just fell in love with the music, with the story songs and with the experience of singing with other people. But it wasn't until my mid-twenties that I discovered that these were songs that come from an ancient lineage and have an amazing part of our cultural map and heritage in them.

Then I met a man called Stanley Robinson, who is part of the Scottish traveller community, which is an ancient, pre-Celtic community. They're the nomads of Scotland, basically. And Stanley was in some ways the last of those great storytellers and bards. He took me on as his apprentice for the last four years of his life. He tutored me in his way of life; not just in the music but also in his way of singing, the knowledge of the history of the



songs, the lives of travellers. It was an extraordinary, unique apprenticeship.

**iSing:** So you say he taught you how to sing folk: is there a particular technique you had to learn?

**SL:** Actually, it's more of a spiritual experience. It's about how one learns to sing the story of the song; how one engages with the ancestors. It's about giving the songs respect. To me, these songs aren't from dusty old books; they're living, breathing things that evolve and grow and develop. And they can manifest themselves in new ways.

**iSing:** It's interesting that you talk about the evolution of these songs. You're certainly known for reinterpreting folk. What's inspired you in that?

**SL:** I grew up with folk songs in the contemporary music world just being played as folk songs. They weren't being honoured as potentially new and relevant to another generation. And I never got why folk songs had to be played on a guitar or done in a traditional way. These songs can have any sort of instrumentation that you like; anything would work, as long as it's done respectfully. So I thought, 'Ok I'm going to try something different with these.' I wanted to make it contemporary, but honour that sense of history and respect that side of the magic.

**iSing:** How much do you stick to the original lyrics and melody, and how much do you change?

**SL:** Lyrically I stick quite close to the original and melodically I'm using the same tune, but improvising within it. But I don't feel any need to be sort of preservative about the songs. These songs adapt and change all the time.

**iSing:** I wanted to ask you about your aesthetic: the music video for The Ballad of George Collins for example, is so incredibly beautiful, visually. What are you drawing from there?

**SL:** I cut my artistic training in contemporary, conceptual new media and also trained as a dancer. In that particular piece I wanted to create something in a fantastically urban, sort of psychosexual way and it was an opportunity to start making a sort of strange, visual noise out of the songs.

**iSing:** What were the practicalities of shooting something like that?

**SL:** It was hard work, but it was brilliant. I'd never made a music video before and suddenly I had

“ I just fell in love with the music, with the story songs and with the experience of singing with other people.”

this huge production on my hands! Loads of my friends work in film and were really open to help and see it happen. It actually also felt really serious. I'd just made a little album and put it out there and suddenly people are wanting to make a music video. Wow! What a treat!

**iSing:** You've been described as not just an artist but an activist. How do you feel about that?

**SL:** I do see myself as a bit of an activist. I mean, it's a big word, but for me, the activism is about trying to realise that in this immense



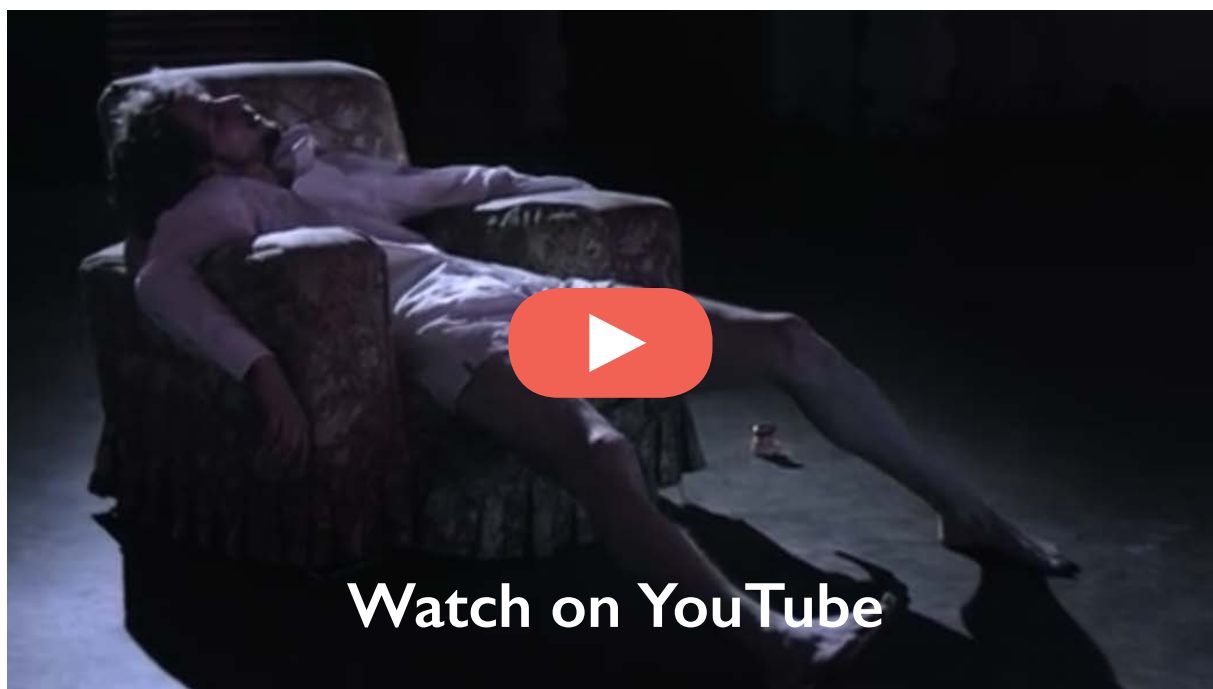
period of social change that's happening, why is it worth fighting for peace and equality if we end up discovering that we've lost our own heritage? So many of the reasons for why we're here and what we're meant to be doing are intertwined in those traditions. Also for me, it's about wanting to shake up that traditional folk community, the community that has kept these songs alive for thousands of years. It's not just about preserving the music, but about seeing it adapt to the modern digital age.

**iSing:** Now tell us: you're going to the States soon! And supporting Patty Griffin!

**SL:** Yeah, an unlikely but exciting teaming up there! The label who puts my album out in the States also puts out Patty Griffin. And so

I got to know her music, and she's great. Her music is so thoughtful and provocative. I'm getting excited to work with her. I actually haven't toured the States under my name before. I did go on the road with the Waterson family, who are kind

of the royal family of British folk, but I went for the fun, really. But I have no track record there, I've just literally released an album - so it'll be interesting to see how the audience respond. I'm very excited about it



THE BALLAD OF GEORGE COLLINS -SAM LEE

## GET SOCIAL WITH SAM LEE



## CHRISTINE GILLAND

Christine Gilland is a freelance writer and editor who moved to London from Australia in search of adventure and is now living in South East London. She trained as a classical singer and loves the fact that she gets to meet interesting artists, write about music and call it a job.



@CIGilland



# LALAH HATHAWAY

## @Ronnie Scott's

by Line Hilton



Photo by: Carl Hyde [www.carlhyde.com](http://www.carlhyde.com)

**T**True soul music lovers will already be familiar with vocalist Lalah Hathaway. As well as being an established soul artist in her own right she has soul royalty souring through her blood, care of her father, Donny Hathaway and musical genes from both her father and mother, Eulaulah. Some people may have encountered her more recently when her vocal self-harmonising improv on Snarky Puppy's Grammy winning "Something", went viral amongst the singing community.

Fascinated with this ability to self-harmonise I was excited to hear Layla was coming to London

to perform for two nights at the infamous jazz club, *Ronnie Scott's*. I was going to be able to see/hear it in the flesh.

From the moment Lalah Hathaway stepped onto the legendary *Ronnie Scott's* stage she had us enthralled. She appeared on the crowded stage wearing a slinky, body-clinging long sleeved black leather-like dress with her slender dreads swishing about in time to the music and hanging to below her bum.

After her opening song, "Baby Don't Cry" Hathaway proceeded to remove her shoes explaining, "Only brought the shoes so I could

see you". This instantly beguiled the audience as they sat back and relaxed into the piano solo setting up the beautiful intro to the song "When Your Life was Low". This song came from the collaborative "The Song Lives On" album, with well-known jazz pianist and composer, Joe Sample. Hathaway's husky contralto voice plunged to depths unknown and then soared up with the utter confidence of a well versed improviser of her experience.

At one stage she asked us singing along, then clarified: "unless you are terrible," this caused laughter, and I am sure relief amongst those

Photo by: Carl Hyde [www.carlhyde.com](http://www.carlhyde.com)

“

From the moment  
Lalah Hathaway stepped  
onto the legendary  
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had us enthralled.”

not so pitch comfortable as others.

Hathaway has put her stamp on several covers including Anita Baker's "Angel" and Luther Vandross' "Forever, For Always, For Love". Both these songs were beautifully executed utilising those deep down under notes in the region of B3. Before getting into the latter, she surprised me with her comic timing, setting off on several false starts due to being distracted by the good looking food with some delicious looking sauce on the table immediately in front of her; to have a drink (of water); to mention the availability of her latest album, "Live at the Troubadour"; and to remind people to connect with her on social media. It's always great when an artist breaks down the walls and lets us in a bit. Though my one pet peeve was raised as with so many American's she felt the need to put on the Brit accent.

I feel the need to make a special

mention of the backing vocalists, Vula Malinga (Basement Jaxx) and Jason Morales. Solid lead singers in their own right, both had an opportunity to shine and strut their vocal stuff with their leader looking on with pride. One of the fun uplifting songs of the evening was "Shine", a single Hathaway wrote with Malinga and guitarist Ben Jones who together are the electro-soul duo, DivaGeek.

Finally we arrived at the point in the evening I'd been waiting for, "Something". This was a Brenda Russell/David Foster song that Hathaway covered on her self-titled album of 1990. In an interview with GRAMMY.com [add link <http://www.grammy.com/news/the-making-of-lalah-hathaway-and-snarky-puppys-something>] Hathaway admits though she's been able to sing polyphonically since a young girl, she's not sure how she does it nor does she always have

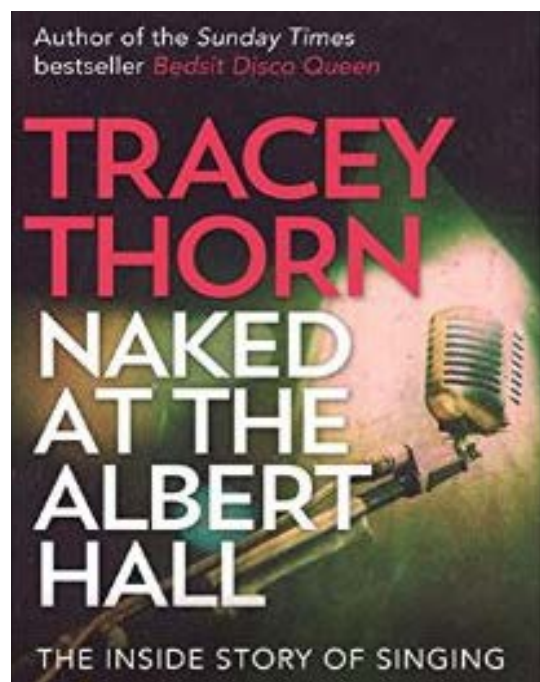
control over it. She felt that the Snarky Puppy version was a case of right musical conditions and enough time to get into that place. Of the moment she says: "On the YouTube video you can see me realising, in the moment, how to control that process. It took six minutes to get to that point, but it was an incredible, expansive experience."

Well I waited in anticipation, there was a brief Louis Armstrong reference, then momentarily in a 'whoop' and out they come – more than one note at a time, then it was over.

As disappointed as I was not to get an earful of polyphonic notes I did recognised that it was probably asking too much of her vocal folds, who were probably tired and swollen from touring and travel, I took what I could get and sat back and enjoyed the band solos and encore.

For up and coming gigs website: <http://lalahhathaway.com> ■





# Naked At The Albert Hall: The Inside Story of Singing by Tracy Thorn

**T**his book was written for me. Just for me. I am quite sure. Yet, I would hazard a guess that, because you're reading this magazine, you will feel it was written precisely for you.

I grew up with the distinctive voice of Tracey Thorn (solo artist, Everything But The Girl, The Marine Girls). Hers has a depth of flavour absent from pop charts today. No squeaky pop, no ostentatious riffs, no belted high notes. Authoritative, soft, breathy, and capable of transitioning to a harder edge without jarring, she sways through degrees of warmth and darkness like a charcoal drawing.

*Naked At The Albert Hall* follows her recent autobiography *Bedsit Disco Queen*, but is an entirely different animal, described by Thorn as a 'compendium of insights'. There is no story here, nor any obvious 'point' to the book. Rather, it is a gloriously idiosyncratic and sometimes tangential meandering through the various worlds psychologically, physically and artistically inhabited

by The Singer. It reads like an A to Z of the conditions, complaints, yearnings, quirks, quandaries and unparalleled pleasures enjoyed by those of us who sing for our supper.

The 'inside' story of singing means inside, the phenomenology of singing; what does it feel like to sing? What is it, to have that experience? She reveals first-hand experiences of inhabiting her own anatomy, but is by no means self-indulgent, drawing upon Scott Walker and Thom Yorke, Tony Bennett and Johnny Rotten, Maria Callas through Karen Carpenter to Jessie Ware and Romy Madley Croft.

However, Thorn travels much further afield than immediate experience. She journeys through status anxiety, health obsessions, stage fright, Auto Tune (misunderstood, apparently), *The X Factor*, microphones, lyrics, obsessive fans, hypnotherapy and most else you would expect to find. She deftly diagnoses functionality and mechanical processes without being academic and tedious. She stretches even to include singing

*Happy Birthday*, Christmas carols and drunken karaoke nights.

Through the portrayal of singers in literature (Daniel Deronda, *The Odyssey*, *Trilby*), Thorn elucidates the differing positions to which singers have been elevated and denigrated throughout history. We see the singer as a Symbol: of purity and sex, of commercial entertainment and Holy Communion. Tracing historical context through Bronte and Austen, the singer is subject and object.

But, this book was written especially for me, because Thorn gives voice to my own complexes. What I had thought distinct, somewhat embarrassing feelings of inadequacy and ingratitude are, it turns out, part of the job description - at least for some of us. She says out loud those thoughts that, even in solitary moments of self-confession, I had previously tried to deny and subdue. Take, for example, the paradoxical symbiosis of the singer and his or her voice. Someone not liking your voice can feel like an incredibly personal attack on you as a person.



Thorn is not reductionist and does not deny the existence of innate talent, but argues for singing as art and musicianship."



Photo by: Edward Bishop <http://www.edwardbishop.me>

Conversely, we can feel eclipsed by our own voices, resentful and suspicious that we are loved only for our voice, not ourselves. We can find it annoying and intrusive when people mistakenly believe they know us intimately just because they have heard us sing. But isn't this kind of honest expressivity, as veneer at least, what we strive for?

Thorn tackles the relationship between singers and their art emotionally and respectfully without off-putting, drippy

sentimentality. Reading her deconstruction of singing as a divine or natural gift, I discovered that, through the sheer ubiquity of the notion, I myself had bought into a conception of singers that belittles and frustrates me

*'Decisions...which require attention and focus – settling on the range in which you're going to sing, which part of our voice you're going to use, your pronunciation, accent, inflection, sense of rhythm, volume, dynamics... on-going operational*

*decisions which may feel instinctive... but which are nonetheless mental and intellectual activities, not simply happy accidents....And the question of 'taste' ... brings an aesthetic consciousness to the process of singing. Again, this is a mental process, not a mere outrush of emotion.'*

Thorn is not reductionist and does not deny the existence of innate talent, but argues for singing as art and musicianship. For her, the singer is no clueless conduit, no mere channel for something





Thorn eloquently articulates contemporary singing as art and musicianship, as an intellectual activity."

understand myself better as an artist, nor do I feel more secure in my talent or my voice. But – crucially – I no longer feel alone in the madness. I don't imagine that I will cease to periodically doubt my own validity and authenticity. But now, I know that, in all my splendid and maddening neuroses, I am among company - the best possible company. I belong to a tribe■

otherworldly because, viewed from this perspective, it's not really art, is it? Singing becomes more exalted, more awesome, and more respected when we take seriously the myriad complexities and decisions that go into it.

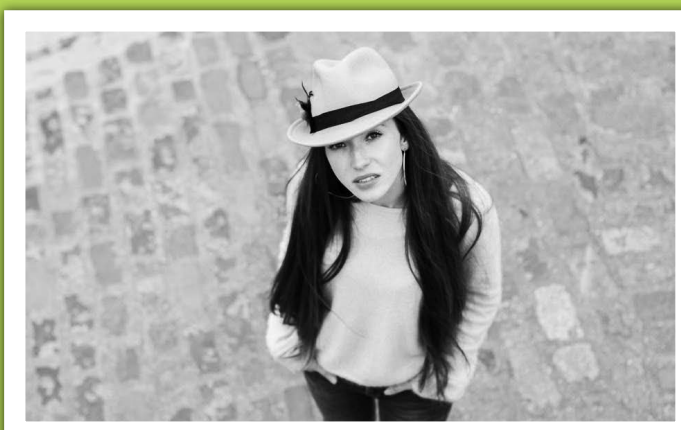
Yet, there at the fore, is still full and proper acknowledgement of the transcendence of the act. Yes, it is contrived and constructed, directed and deliberate, but it also allows us to step outside ourselves and, simultaneously, be the truest,

most sincere version of ourselves. Singing is special.

Thorn eloquently articulates contemporary singing as art and musicianship, as an intellectual activity that requires immense creativity and skill and is worthy of respect and admiration, rather than a trivial accident of birth. I, for one, feel bolstered by the legitimacy she provides.

I am not a better singer for having read this book. I don't

## CLARISSA LAND



Clarissa Land is a London-based singer and songwriter currently recording her debut solo album. She sings, tours and records with major artists, most recently Crystal Fighters. She also has a busy teaching practice, where she provides vocal coaching to a wide range of singers; from the novice singer all the way through to bands signed to major labels.



<http://www.thevocalvibe.com>



## SINGERS NOT TO MISS

BY PATRICK GUNTHER

**The Arcs**

The result of Dan Auerbach's omnipotent rock recording prowess mixed with a dash of traditional soul courtesy of Lee Fields and The Expressions, The Arcs firmly solidified their status as one of the most intriguing, catchy and widely appealing indie acts with their 2015 single *Stay in My Corner*. A favourite of Apple Music curator and BBC's boy-genius Zane Lowe, this cut sure to be on their debut *Yours, Dreamily* eschews the typical indie rock tropes by slathering the track in R&B melodies and tonality to create a truly encapsulating work that has caught the attention of all the right people.

**Shamir**

The Nevada natives' debut LP *Ratchet*, courtesy of XL Records, creates an androgynous and fun-filled cochlear experience that touches on each and every cornerstone of pop music. From the first unloading of pulsating synths, Shamir's falsetto evokes imagery of a cryogenically frozen Michael Jackson coming to life as a 17-year-old teen in modern America. The punchy and incredibly alluring production is a perfect compliment to the unique and über catchy Shamir who lets his star shine over the course of *Ratchet*'s short but wildly fun 10 tracks. Musical ability aside, Bailey's messages are sure

to keep you enjoying life. After all, adulthood is one big mess so why not go out and make a scene?

**The Symposium**

Hailing from Chicago, Ill. The Symposium is The Strokes, but more angsty, artistic and full of experimentation with appealing modernity. They achieved 2014 band camp success with *Drugs*. It only spans 25 minutes, but draws in from a wild abundance of influences such as Mac Demarco and Harry Nilson. As described on their Facebook page as "a bunch of dudes in a bad mood, trying to make a difference" The Symposium offers up relatable and catchy lyrics over instrumentation that will appeal to your 30-year-old cousin or your 60-year-old mother. Sunny melodies linger over guitar work that Albert Hammond himself couldn't have drawn up any better. For fans of that slacker sound (*Thanks, Mac*) the follow up to *Drugs*. It must be on your radar.

**Jessica Pratt**

The somber yet soothing vocals of LA's very own, Jessica Pratt, are equally haunting and engrossing on her latest LP *On Your Own Love Again*. Though dreary at times, Pratt's innate songwriting ability coupled with her penchant for acoustic instrumentation allows for the easy comparisons to Joan Baez and Joni Mitchell, but Pratt's songwriting has firmly established her as a unique individual. Though a bit abstract and out of touch from the mainstream,

Pratt's success is a testament to the fact that artistry, in all forms, will still pay dividends. Her ability to gracefully maneuver across a track is something not often found within modern folk music, and can make her 31 minute LP feel like an eternity in the best way possible.

**Moses Sumney**

After his spectacular EP, *Mid City Island*, dropped in late 2014, the former UCLA student began receiving praise from the likes of Solange and got a gig opening for indie sweetheart Sufjan Stevens. The five track record explores Sumney's immense talent via his instrumental looping, building each track piece by piece before laying his dulcet falsetto over painstakingly assembled tracks that reflect his life as a star in the making. Though Sumney has been hush-hush on a full-length, *Mid City Island* has enough replay value to keep listeners craving more in the meantime ■