

THE ULTIMATE RESOURCE FOR SINGERS

# iSinging

ISSUE 14

ISSUE 13

**UP & COMING**  
MEET RISING STAR DAN OWEN

**ARTIST VERSUS  
TECHNICIAN**

DO SINGING LESSONS KILL  
YOUR CREATIVE EDGE?

**GETTING DOWN TO  
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THE SECRET OF THE UK MUSIC  
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**TEAL TALES**

CLARE TEAL ON BEING A JAZZ  
SINGER AND BROADCASTER

**HIT THE SCALES**

EXERCISES THAT BUILD YOUR VOICE

**FREE YOUR SOUND**

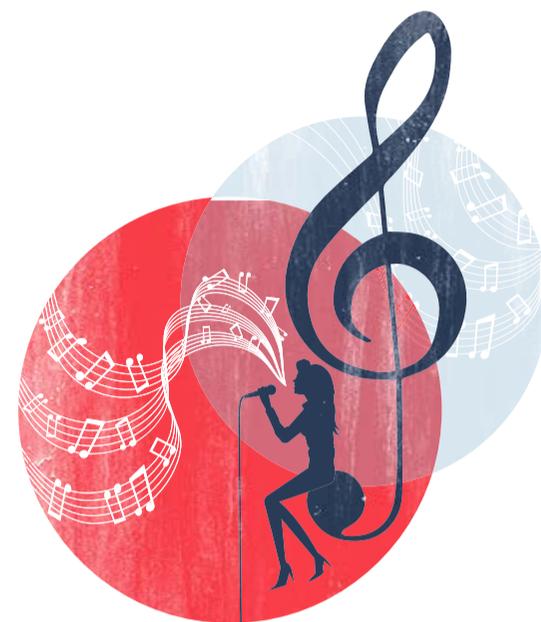
WAYS TO RELIEVE JAW TENSION

**MANDY  
HARVEY**  
SINGING WITHOUT HEARING

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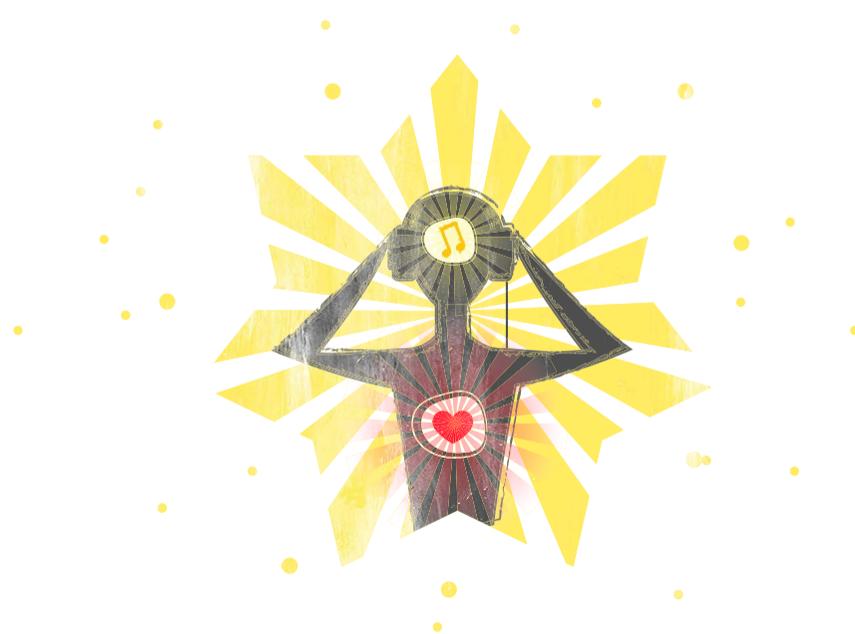


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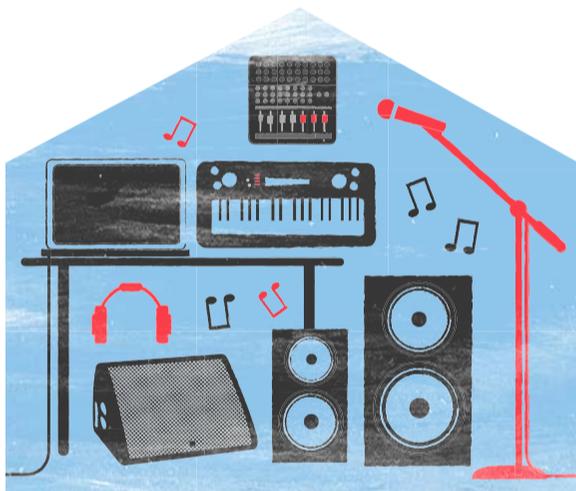
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# DEAR READERS



Here in the UK we are enjoying a “Sprummer” - my word for somewhere between Spring and Summer. It’s hard to stay indoors when it’s like this. Thankfully I have had a few good reasons to get out and about.

The first was the premiere of *Groundhog Day*, the new musical by the same team that put together *Matilda*. Right now I can’t say it’s in the same league as *Matilda*, but I do hope that with a few adjustments they can get it to that level. I also saw the premiere of Ron Howard’s documentary *The Beatles Eight Days A Week* which I definitely recommend. Howard did a good job of covering the Fab Four’s early manic touring years and managed to get his hands on previously unseen footage. The film offers a fresh perspective on one of the most influential bands of all time. Just be warned, if you go with a baby boomer they will be singing along with the songs, out loud.

As you may know, I am a woman on a mission to spread the word about vocal health. So I was delighted to join my colleagues Chris Johnson and Joshua Alamu at the Featured Artist Coalition (FAC) at the start of September. The three of us held a panel on how to care for your voice where we discussed vocal exercises, vocal style and general vocal health. We spoke to about 50 FAC members and answered many questions, and probably raised many more questions. Hopefully we will return and expand on this panel at a later date. Still on the subject of vocal health I delivered a free webinar called *How To Prevent Vocal Health Issues 101*. I spent 90 minutes explaining the how, what, where, why and when of vocal issues for singers and then gave a bunch of vocal health advice, including what to do if you have to sing when you have a cold. It seems like everyone has a cold right now so this might be quite useful to you. If you wish to catch this webinar, it is still available just click this [LINK](#) to access the recording.

I hope you enjoy this issue of iSing, I can’t tell you how stunning our cover artist Mandy Harvey is as a person and what she’s achieved in her singing and music is unbelievable given her circumstances. Make sure you give her some love and catch her on social media.

Yours in singing,

*Line Hilton*  
Editorial Director



- Mandy Harvey’s Silent Victory
- Vocal style: simplicity versus complexity
- Singing through pre menstruation
- Teal Tales - interview with jazzier, Clare Teal
- Rising Star - Dan Owen

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

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

## iSing Magazine

FOUNDER & EDITORIAL DIRECTOR: LINE HILTON | ASSISTANT EDITOR: BRONWYN BIDWELL | LAYOUT DESIGNER: RUBY COLES | PHOTOGRAPHY: LINE HILTON, ISTOCKPHOTO, CANSTOCKPHOTO, DREAMSTIME, HARPER POINT PHOTOGRAPHY, REENA GUPTA, PAUL MARC MITCHELL PA IMAGES, SHUTTERSTOCK | VIDEOS: LINE HILTON | ILLUSTRATIONS: CARLA TRACY | CONTRIBUTORS SHANE ADAMS, JOSHUA ALAMU, BRONWYN BIDWELL, MICHELLE COHEN, STEVE GILES, REENA GUPTA, LINE HILTON, GARY ALBERT HUGHES, CHRIS JOHNSON, DAVID JUNICOS, CLARISSA LAND, ELAINA ROBBINS, DEBBIE WINTER

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# *The* **FUNDAMENTALS**



**VOCAL NERDS** How to scale new heights



**VOCAL STYLE** Simplicity versus complexity



**SONG DNA** Make lemonade like Beyonce



A woman with brown hair in a ponytail, wearing a dark blue long-sleeved top and large black headphones, is shown in profile, singing with her mouth wide open. She is holding the headphones with both hands. The background is a solid dark blue. Numerous white musical notes of various shapes and sizes are scattered across the upper left and center of the image, appearing to float or be emitted from the woman's mouth. The overall mood is energetic and musical.

Vocal Nerds, Chris Johnson and Steve Giles tell us

# How to scale new heights

If you're a singer, there's a big chance you've heard and/or practised a scale or two in your time. A random word spoken, shouted or sung along with a colourful succession of notes, over and over, over and over and over and over again. Just in case you still need clarification, scales are repeated – a lot.

Why do singing teachers love them so much, especially when it seems like most singers aren't – how do we put this? – overly-excited about practising them? Well, it mostly comes down to the fact that we know just how much a voice can change (for the better, with good guidance) after a hard-core vocal workout

regime has been nailed.

Put it this way, if a pianist is to become as expressive as humanly possible, he or she needs first to learn where to put their fingers and then do it really fast whilst pressing pedals with their feet (if you're after piano lessons, don't come to us!). A good pianist has the fundamental skills needed to play well.

In principle, a singer's instrument works in the same way, except that, instead of controlling the keys with our fingers, we have to control our vocal tract, vocal cords and airflow all at the same time. Instead of pressing pedals with our feet, we have to tap our foot or do a little dance, depending on your vibe. We digress.

The point here is that voice training must be executed to the same level as any other activity you look to master. If we consider that the voice isn't fixed like the keys of a piano, it stands to reason that we need to ingrain the optimal combinations of vocal tract, vocal fold and airflow time and time again so that the body remembers where the good stuff lies.

Friends of singers may sometimes refer to the stuff we do as "all that 'do, re, mi, fa, so' nonsense", but there really is a bit more to it than that. Let's take a look.

## Technical scales

Scales really are beneficial, particularly for technique and vocal balance. For example, long scales, e.g. the one-and-a-half-octave scale, are a great way to "run up" to high notes, as well as allowing us to continually experience going over the passaggio (or "the break") and back down again. This is a key part of

getting used to the sensations of the passaggio, getting above the straining point with the top note of the scale, encouraging a movement to the "next place" or even the dreaded "falsetto" and eventually developing the vocal flexibility to build strength into the upper range. A two-octave scale would take these concepts even further and encourage even greater flexibility.

Short scales are ideal for localising the work. For example, if you're a female with – let's face it – probably a classical background and a very light and breathy low range, short scales are a good choice for you. There is little point drilling two-octave scales up to C6 when the problem lies in the "chest voice" configuration of the vocal folds. Going too high too often is the likely cause of this lack of register, so opting for a five-tone major scale (from the root through each interval to the 5th and back down again) won't push you too high. Once this register is working well, you can then use the longer-scale strategy to build a connection to the rest of the range.

When thinking about direction, it's useful to understand that scales that start deeper in the range and move upwards are much more likely to start with a neutral, or occasionally lowered, larynx position. This is a benefit if you are working on reducing external muscle tension. The downside to bottom-up scales is that they can start deep in the muscular configuration of "chest voice", where the vocal fold body is contracted muscle. This can be a pain for those who have difficulty in allowing their vocal folds to stretch well for higher pitches and a tendency to drag "chest" up with



**Voice training must be executed to the same level as any other activity you look to master**

them, like a yell.

Top-down scales, conversely, begin above the passaggio (if you choose the note correctly) and ideally begin at a point higher than the note up to which the singer can yell. Unlike bottom-up, top-down scales start with stretched out vocal folds. This is brilliant if you're trying to increase your range and develop the feelings of the upper registers without running the risk of dragging upwards the contracted setting of "chest", leading to an eventual crack. On the flip side (#streetcred), scales that descend from above might encourage a nervous singer, one who is a bit "scaredy" of high notes, to raise their larynx and tighten up from the anxiety of being up high. Believing you're going to be okay can be a quick cure for this, but some singers genuinely cannot control this tightening in the beginning and need to start further down.

## On a positive note...

Let's say that you're fairly competent and can walk through



SCALES WILL HELP YOU MASTER YOUR INSTRUMENT

“  
 Set up your regular vocal training regime today and discover just how well your voice responds when it's been given its orders

your range with consistency and little or no “break”. Now, you can use scales to reinforce your technique or, of course, challenge yourself. Scales with small intervals between each note, such as a five-tone major scale, can be challenging, especially when ascending through the passaggio semitone by semitone.

The intervals between the notes in this scale are either a whole tone or a half tone. If, in the past, you've been prone to yelling, you may well find that short-interval scales will bring that out in your voice again. These scales will really test your abilities in the break area. On the other hand, if you're a softer singer and wish to build vocal intensity, such small intervals might help you to bring fullness of chest into the passaggio and strengthen it. The one-and-a-half-octave scale has intervals of two tones, a tone and a half, and two and half tones. The bigger gaps demand a bigger change in the stretching of the

vocal folds and require you to switch between registers.

Scales that repeat or sustain a single note are amazing for training a particular part of the range. They're also fantastic for developing one note in readiness to sing a banger. Octave repeated scales, with a sustain and vibrato, are a strong choice and will help you work on the airflow, vocal fold, and vowel control needed for continuous balancing on high pitches, especially if you place them right in your passaggio. The downside? It's hard. Or is that an upside? Our glass is half full.

### The case for sirens

When considering technique, scales (especially the long ones) can present risks. It's common for singers to fall into a habit of choosing when they change register or passaggio as they perform a scale, and this is usually on the same note on the way up as on the way down. This naughty

habit is a consequence of the fact that scales consist of separate notes (we're hoping that's "obvs"). A self-selected register change creates an audible change in tone in the middle of the range – an undesirable outcome when we're attempting to build range and power. An ideal approach is to use excellent vocal control to create consistency right across the range, as if we have just one voice from the bottom to top. Many singers are actually unknowingly able to do this but still segment their voice in their minds, with a result that we can hear when they perform scales. However, we have something up our sleeves: sirens. Whether it's a siren (also

known as a "glide") across a major third, a fifth, an octave, or across your whole range, this approach forces you to develop consistency due to a total lack of note separation in the scale: at no point can you sneak in a little "switch" without being rumbled. Even if you're not one of the sneaky ones, short sirens through the break are another effective voice-builder, aiding you in erasing the vocal break and achieving the "one voice" nirvana.

There are many wonderful apps with lots of technical scales, some free, some paid. Using our advice, you could build your own routine and cut out time spent on scales that

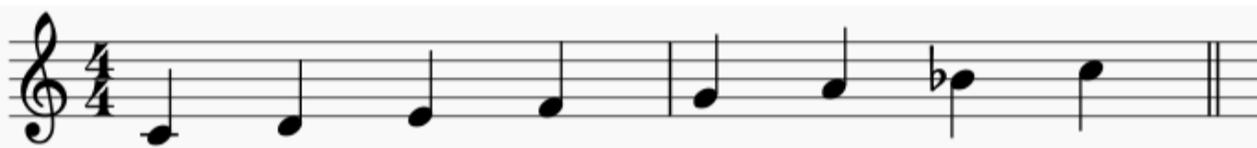
don't serve you. Winner!

## Musical scales

Most singers begin singing scales for the purpose of technique, but why not use scales to turn you into a musical master? Most diploma or degree-level vocalists on a regular UK course are training the modes of the major scale to build their melody writing, riffing and improvisation skills. We're talking Mixolydian, Natural Minor, Phrygian and such like. Well-honed technique will obviously help with the singing of these scales as they have small intervals and will likely travel through the passaggio. Pentatonic scales are a perfect start for creating the majority of riffs and runs. You could structure these musical scales (\*big word alert!\*) sequentially from root to root, or 2nd to 2nd, and so on. You could then mix up the intervals, like when Robin Thicke sings "Maybe I'm out of my mind" in *Blurred Lines*. This is a popular way to use a mixed minor scale, descending from the 5th of the key. Steal it and use it in a variety of keys.

You could sing these scales on a single vowel like EE or you could sing the number of each interval as you hit it to grow your orientation of the key. To improve your riffing ability, practise singing them faster and faster, but don't rush. Only go as fast as you can whilst keeping clear definition between the pitches. Go too fast too soon and it'll be a muddy mess with no discernible pitches.

So, there you have it. The possibilities are endless as are the online resources.



C MIXOLYDIAN



C PHRYGIAN



C NATURAL MINOR



C PENTATONIC

SOME EXAMPLES OF MODAL SCALES IN C MAJOR



ASCENSION (DONT EVER WONDER) - MAXWELL

## Combos

There are some excellent vocal coaches out there who like to combine technical scales and warm-ups with musical scales to kill two birds with one stone. Using popular and recognisable melodies alongside some well thought out tools is a brilliant way of bridging the gap between scales and the important act of singing songs. We've all been that singer, the one who sings a million scales but very few songs. Research shows us that we get the results we want by performing the act for which we are training; singing a scale is not necessarily the same as singing a song. At other times, we've focussed on singing songs and ignored the scales, which doesn't hold much value for less-experienced singers with vocal shortcomings that need to be addressed. If you fall into either of these categories, you are not working

optimally.

It is well worth spending some time seeking out scales that straddle both the scale and the song. Try singing the introductory riff to *Ascension: Don't Ever Wonder* by Maxwell. It's a 15-second falsetto riff on a C major scale that requires sophisticated breath, vowel and vibrato control. Reducing the tempo and/or changing the key to Db and further will make it, effectively, a scale. You're simultaneously building a vocal register, musical ability and lung capacity. In other words, you're a legend.

## How much vocal exercising should I do?

How long is a piece of string? There are so many variables to take into account when answering this question. What do you want to achieve with your voice? What else

do you do with your days? How good are you at maintaining habits?

The standard response of "twice a day for 20 minutes" is seen as an excellent benchmark for vocal training. The sessions are long enough to instil changes, but short enough to achieve consistency over the long term. It's better to have a manageable, long-term approach than to have one killer session that you don't follow up once the novelty has worn off. When approaching your vocal workout regime, it really is essential to analyse how easy it is for you to do your training and to prepare to make lifestyle changes, if necessary.

Remember: if you're doing it right, you will be making a lot of noise during your workout. This is often the biggest workout killer, disguised as the excuse that "my housemates are always downstairs". It

“  
It is well worth  
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the song

may sound obvious, but that's where they will be if that's where they live. You, however, do have the ability to leave the house. It might mean coming home at lunch when no one is around, taking a walk around some local fields, or, as a last resort, sitting in your car for 20 minutes. In the words of the late, great Michael

Jackson, “make that change”.

### Final note

In the past, we've heard many singers say that they have been working to improve their songs by “practising” them, which seems logical. But, in most cases, this translates to repeating the song in a very similar manner to the previous attempt but, this time, with the thought, “I want that high note to sound better”. Wasn't it Albert Einstein who once defined insanity as doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results?

Don't get us wrong, thoughts are very powerful and mental rehearsal is a recognised method of training, but there comes a time when addressing the source of the problem is the best course of action and, in this instance, that means changing the way the instrument works. Set up your regular vocal training regime today and discover just how well your voice responds when it's been given its orders ■

## VOCAL NERDS WEBINAR

They answered your questions on the topic of:

*Scales to develop your voice*

November 18, at 3pm

WATCH IT NOW

## THE NAKED VOCALIST

VOCAL NERDS IS SPONSORED BY THE NAKED VOCALIST



Chris Johnson and Steve Giles are both experienced vocal coaches working in Southampton and London. They are with the **Vocology In Practice** teacher network and specialise in training clients in advanced vocal technique, style and improvisation. They are co-founders and presenters of the popular iTunes singer's interest **podcast** The Naked Vocalist. As well as coaching and podcasting they are also in-demand performers and manage their own successful soul acts.



<http://thenakedvocalist.com>



# Style

## Balance

simplicity versus complexity

**M**aking a “complex” song appear simple and easy is what separates vocal design/musicianship from mere karaoke, especially where singing covers is concerned.

Simplicity is often proclaimed as the holy grail of singing, but complexity has its place as well. We’ve all been exposed to thoughtless and tasteless vocal performances, from “Jessie J-like” renditions of *Mamma Knows Best* to over sung versions of *Somewhere Over the Rainbow*. When we finally get to hear a voice with a controlled, well-balanced delivery, we rejoice and spread the word.

Complexity in singing needs to be

well balanced, tasteful and musical, and based on a good understanding of what is expected at that moment. Let me explain further.

Think about the role of a drummer in a band. Usually the drummer keeps simple time to support the musical backbone of a track, but if



I CAN EXPLAIN (LIVE) – RACHELLE FERRELL



If a jazz singer kept a “spotlight” solo simple, it would take away from the buzz and excitement of a musical moment

a drummer is required to perform a solo, it needs to be thrilling, masterly and organised in a way that gives an audience what they want.

Now let's think about a jazz solo – scat or riff. Serious jazz singers are able to access a variety of musical ideas instantly, and hence deliver a complex performance. If a jazz singer kept a “spotlight” solo simple, it would take away from the buzz and excitement of a musical moment where showing off one's technical and musical command is part of the whole purpose. To not deliver something with prowess would be disappointing to say the least.

The way complexity can serve



FOREVER AND ALWAYS FOR LOVE – LALAH HATHAWAY



SPEND THE NIGHT (LIVE) - RAHSAAN PATTERSON



BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY – QUEEN

a vocal performance is to infuse the workings of an idea into other elements of the song, like the musical arrangement or harmonic arrangement or a “special moment”

in a song, and make plain the concepts that a listener needs to grasp easily and remember instantly.

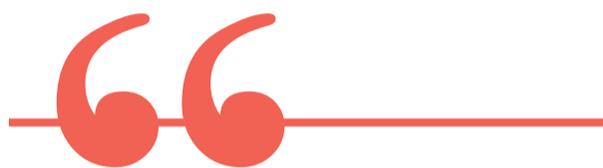
I really like this analogy: a traffic light is one of the simplest and most important devices we rely on daily with three intuitive colours – green, red and orange – telling us what we need to know. Behind it there is an immensely complex system that coordinates and controls the traffic light, but all the driver has to worry about is what is in front of them. This for me sums up what singing is all about, complex ideas made simple to understand.

Research shows that songs with “hooky” melodic movements are easier to remember. When a listener is confronted with a complex cluster of musical ideas, it increases the cognitive load and makes it harder to pick out the moments (musical

or lyrical) he/she wants. A simple “clean” melody/lyric allows a listener to zero in on the desired emotion quickly and easily. This is part of the reason behind why popular music genres shift from era to era depending on what is happening in the world (but that’s another article for another time). The point is a “hooky” song requires less thought to process than one with too many lyrical/musical embellishments.

It’s quite uncomplicated really. Keep things simple and tasteful but choose moments where you can explore a skilled complexity. Design a purposeful balance between the two where necessary and you will gain both fans and kudos.

Singers who combine simplicity and complexity in their music include Freddie Mercury, Rachele Ferrell and Rahsaan Patterson ■



The point is a “hooky” song requires less thought to process

## JOSHUA ALAMU



**WHO IS HE?** Joshua Alamu is a professional voice coach with over 15 years experience as a singing teacher in the music and television industry. He has been a voice coach for the TV talent show The Voice UK and is currently vocal coach stars such as Fleur East, Little Mix and JP Cooper. Joshua’s video enhanced vocal style course Mad About Vocal Style part 1 was launched in 2014 to rave reviews. [CLICK HERE](#) to find part 1 of the course on iTunes. Joshua is also the co-founder of Ultimate Artists, the UK’s most in demand artist development camp (nine days of music industry mentorship and artist development).



<http://www.joshuaalamu.com>

# MAKING LEMONADE

## BEYONCE AND THE PENTATONIC SCALE

I fell in love with Beyoncé's 2016 album *Lemonade* on my very first listen. Artistically and stylistically she stretched herself (again). It's refreshing when megastars fearlessly push musical envelopes.

But even when Queen Bae is pushing the envelope she still retains elements of a signature sound. I've analysed some of her previous singles before (especially the marvelous *If I Were a Boy*, a composition from her *I Am...Sasha Fierce* record), but I've never looked at an entire record at once. That changed with *Lemonade*.

I thought I'd share my biggest

impression with you - and that is Beyoncé's use of the pentatonic scale to craft her melodies, especially her hooks.

The major consist of 7 notes. We've sung them a million times. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7...and then it starts over again (in other words, instead of going to "8" the scale begins again on "1", as in: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7...1 2 3 4 5 6 7...etc.).

A pentatonic scale removes 2 of those 7 notes. Leaving 1 2 3 5 6, for a major pentatonic scale, putting those

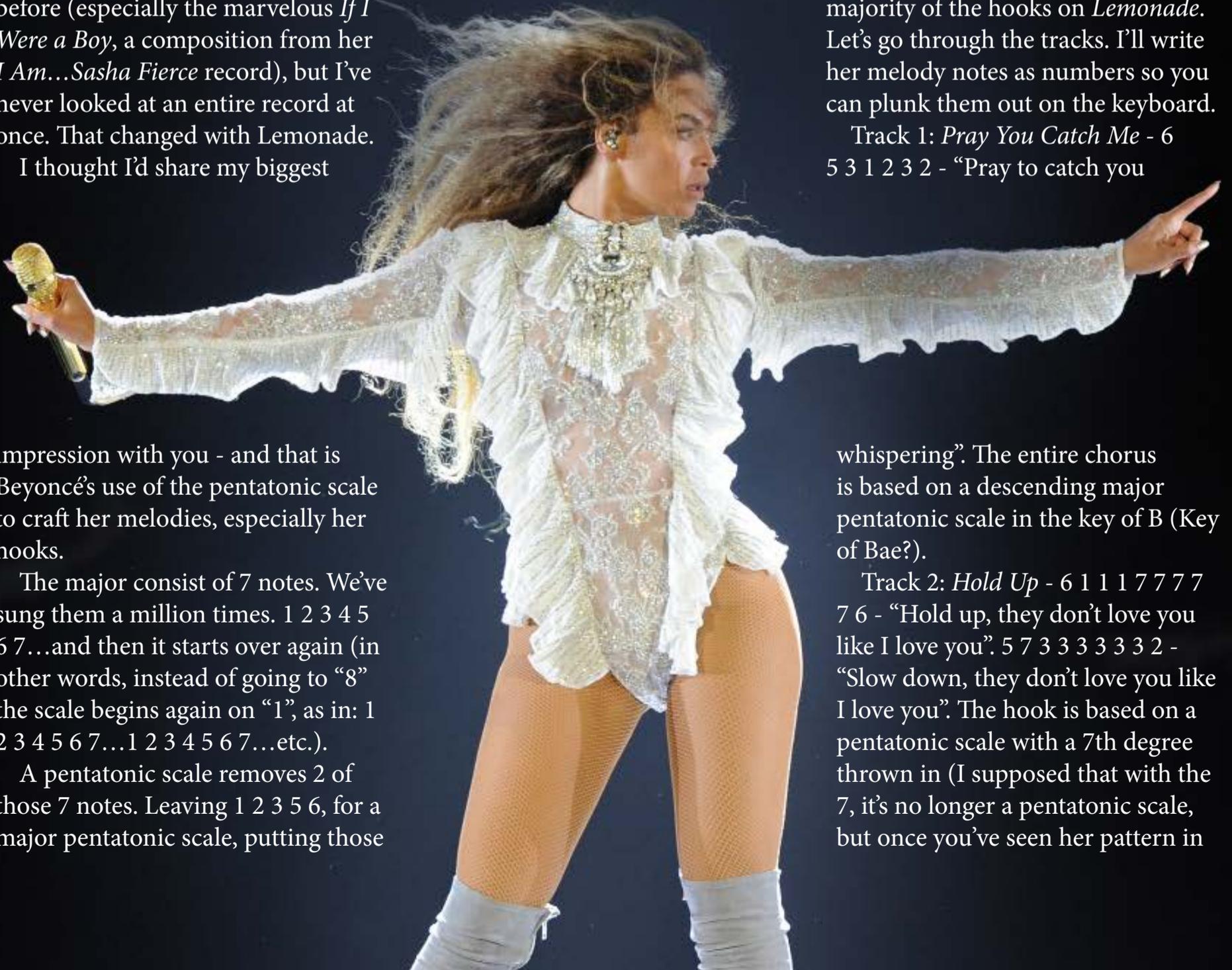
notes in this order 6 1 2 3 5 creates a minor pentatonic scale (for the advanced music theory readers, the minor pentatonic scale is actually 1 b3 4 5 b7...but I want to keep it easy for those just starting out, so I'm going to reference the minor keys to the relative major key).

These two scales, major and minor pentatonic, are the backbone of the majority of the hooks on *Lemonade*. Let's go through the tracks. I'll write her melody notes as numbers so you can plunk them out on the keyboard.

Track 1: *Pray You Catch Me* - 6 5 3 1 2 3 2 - "Pray to catch you

whispering". The entire chorus is based on a descending major pentatonic scale in the key of B (Key of Bae?).

Track 2: *Hold Up* - 6 1 1 1 7 7 7 7 6 - "Hold up, they don't love you like I love you". 5 7 3 3 3 3 3 2 - "Slow down, they don't love you like I love you". The hook is based on a pentatonic scale with a 7th degree thrown in (I supposed that with the 7, it's no longer a pentatonic scale, but once you've seen her pattern in





HOLD UP - BEYONCÉ.

other songs, the pentatonic influence is unmistakable).

Track 3: *Don't Hurt Yourself* - 3 3 5 6 2 1 6 6 2 1 6 6 - "When you hurt me, you hurt yourself, don't hurt yourself". This is definitely a minor pentatonic scale.

Track 4: *Sorry* - 6 1 6 5 3 5 3 2 - "Now you want to say you're sorry". Bonus: the following section "I ain't thinking bout you" is basically 5 3 2.

Track 5: *6 Inch* - 1 2 b3 2 - "Six inch heels". On the word "heels", she bends the 2nd degree up to the b3 blues note and back down. The next line: 1 2 2 1 2 1 1 2 2 1 1 2 3 - She walked in the club like nobody's business. (Key of Db, or Bb minor)

Track 6: *Daddy Lesson* - Here's the first part of the chorus: 3 3 3, 3 3 3 6 6 "With his gun, and his head held high" - 6 5 5 3 1 2 - "he told me not to cry" - 3, 3 2 1 2 2, 3 3 2 1 3 - "oh, my daddy said shoot, oh my daddy said shoot".

Track 7: *Love Drought* - 6 1, 6 1,

6 1 2 3 2 1 2 1 6 (5 2 3) - "You, you, you and me could stop this love (drought)."

Tracks 8 and 9: *Sandcastles* and *Forward* - These gorgeous verse/refrain songs have no chorus, but listen carefully, except for a single note in *Forward*, both songs (including vocal riffs) are brilliantly and entirely contained in the pentatonic scale. Marvellous!

Track 10: *Freedom* - 3 3, 3 3, (2 1) 6 1 - "Freedom, freedom, (I) can't move" - 3 3 (2 1) 6 1 "freedom, (cut) me loose" ...and then the melody basically repeats!

Track 11: *All Night* - 6 1 (2 1) - "All night (long)...". She wonderfully jumps an octave for the "2 1" combination of "long".

Track 12: *Formation* - Much of this song is spoken, but when the melody peeks its head above the rap, it sticks to an F minor pentatonic melody.

Ending and beginning score cards:  
- 6 of the hooks start on the 6th degree;

- 4 of the hooks start on the 3rd degree;

- 4 of the main phrases end on the 2nd degree;

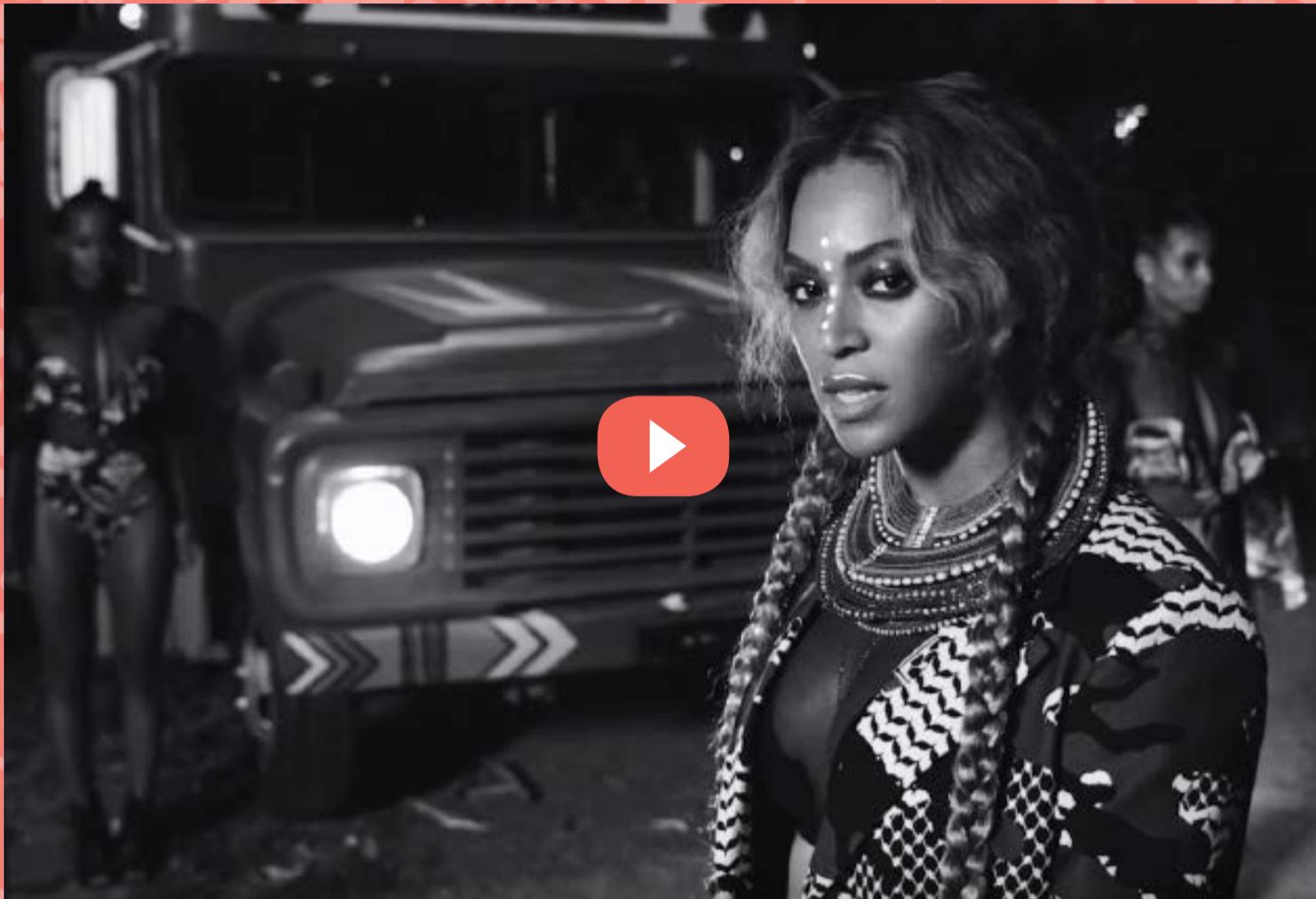
- 4 of the main phrases end on the 6th degree;

- 3 end on the 3rd degree;

- 1 ends on the 1st degree.

Every melodic hook in every song of this magnum opus is based on a pentatonic scale. Let that sink in. Every melody. If you were looking for a Beyoncé melody template, there it is ■





SORRY - BEYONCÉ

## SHANE ADAMS



Shane Adams is a twice Grammy nominated music educator (non self-nominated), award-winning producer, composer, songwriter, and author. 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 honoured him with their TOP TEN HITMAKER award for 2014. He is recognised internationally as a groundbreaking songwriting lecturer and music production panelist. Shane's current projects include developing two songwriting apps for the iPad platform and producing and co-hosting the songwriting podcast Studio Soundtrack available on iTunes. Shane's book: *The Singer-Songwriter's Guide to Recording in the Home Studio*, is available online and most bookstores.



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# *singing* CAREERS



**ON THE COVER** Mandy Harvey's silent victory



**TEAL'S TALES** Jazz star Clare Teal's road to success



**RISING STAR:** Meet Dan Owen



**LEARNING TO BELIEVE** #Believe Jonathan Antoine's story



# on the COVER

**MANDY HARVEY**

ARTIST/SINGER & SONGWRITER



# Q&A

## Professional Profile

# MANDY HARVEY

London, UK



**Q NAME AND LOCATION?**  
Mandy Harvey, Orlando, Florida, USA.

**Q PROFESSION?**  
Singer/songwriter.

**Q SONG YOU WISH YOU HAD WRITTEN?**  
*Without You* by Harry Nilsson.

**Q FAVOURITE PLACE TO WRITE?**  
In the car while driving. I find when I'm not hyper focused on worrying about what I'm writing it flows out of me easier.

**Q HOW DO YOU PREPARE FOR A GIG?**  
I run through every song in order and discuss solos and how many measures the intro is. I always sing *Everything's as if we never said goodbye* when I'm alone that day as a warm up. Just like the song.

**Q THREE THINGS YOU CAN'T DO WITHOUT WHEN YOU GIG?**

Room temperature water, a sound guy who can help the band get their mixes and red lipstick.

**Q WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE INSPIRATIONAL QUOTE?**

"If you lose hope, somehow you lose the vitality that keeps life moving, you lose that courage to be, that quality that helps you go on in spite of it all. And so today I still have a dream." – Martin Luther King Jr

**Q HOW DO YOU KNOW WHEN YOUR AUDIENCE LIKES WHAT YOU ARE DOING?**

Audience smiles and/or gives deaf applause. You can feel the room fill with energy.

**Q FAVOURITE PIECE OF TECH THAT HELPS YOU DO YOUR JOB?**

I like having a monitor that I can put my foot on to feel the beat if I am far way from the musicians. They have vibrating speakers as well that are a lot of fun.

**Q WHAT WOULD YOU BE DOING IF YOU WEREN'T A SINGER?**

I would probably be teaching history or doing computer work. I love history but I also love to code forms.

**Q WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN TEN YEARS TIME?**

Doing what I am doing now just doing it more. I want to be more involved with helping other people pursue music.

# Silent Victory

By Line Hilton and Bronwyn Bidwell

**When Mandy Harvey lost her hearing she thought her music career was over. But deafness proved to be the start of a journey which has seen her grow in strength and blossom as a singer.**

Imagine standing on stage with your band, singing but not being able to hear a thing. You are profoundly deaf. How would you know if you were hitting the right notes or if you were in time with the music? Would you have the courage to trust yourself and your abilities in this situation? Singer Mandy Harvey does. She is profoundly deaf, and has been since she was 18 years old. For her singing is truly intuitive. She focuses on what she *feels* instead of what she *hears*.

But it hasn't always been like this. When Mandy performed for the first time after losing her hearing she literally gripped the piano and dug her bare feet into the floor to get a physical sense of the music. Over time, as her confidence and internal musicality grew, she was able to relax and trust her musical self; to eventually let go of the piano.

And the result is remarkable. It's not a novelty or a gimmick. It's quite possible for audiences to be oblivious to the fact that the performer on

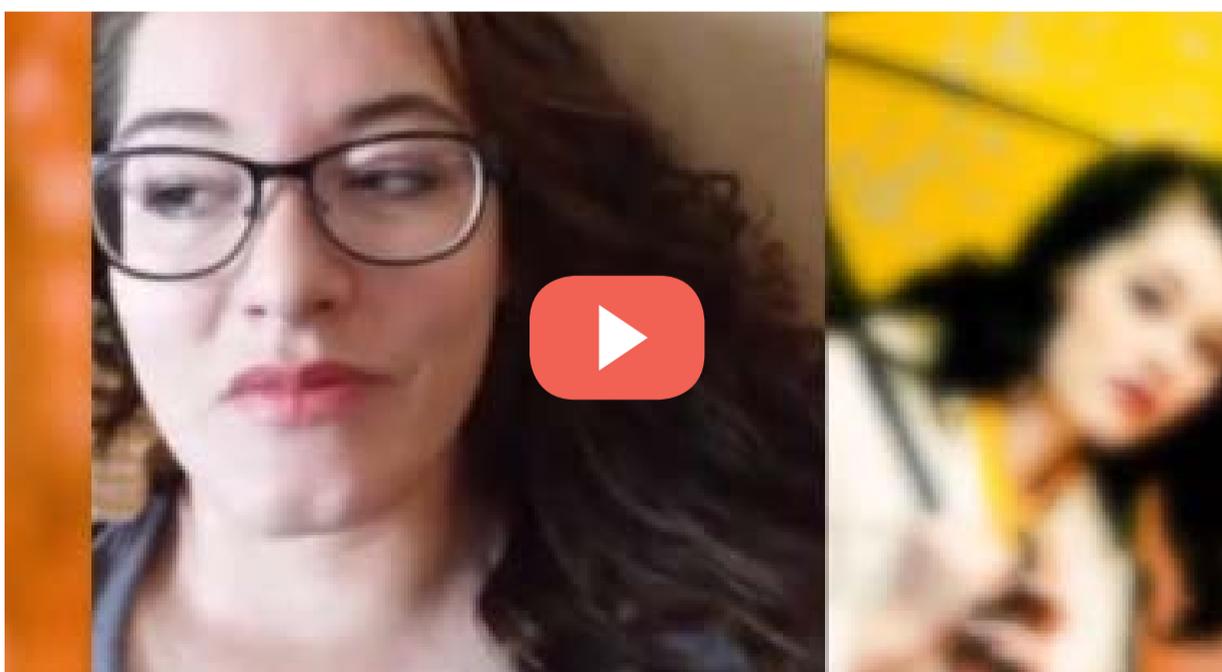
stage cannot hear herself, the band or them. Her pitch is perfect, she's in time with her musicians. It takes huge courage to do this – courage Mandy found only after she had “mourned the loss” of who she was as a hearing person. In fact she came back stronger and wiser.

But how does she do it? It all starts with the note C. Mandy uses a visual tuner to check she has found C and the rest follows. She explains: “C is my note, when I was younger I could always find it in my mind. If I can find C, I can modulate to my starting notes and get to where I need to go.”

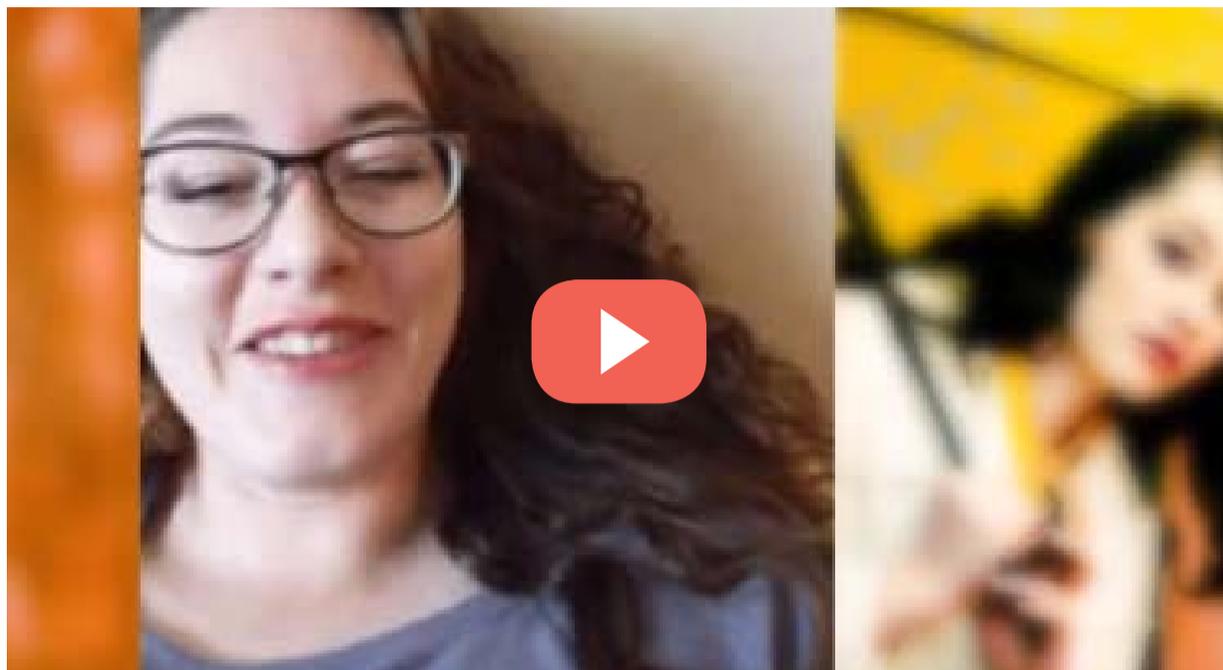
While Mandy's approach is

instinctive it is only possible because of the wealth of knowledge she built up before losing her hearing. Mandy grew up singing – at home, in choirs and on stage in musicals. She loved jazz, doo wop and performers such as Ella Fitzgerald and Blossom Dearie. In high school in Colorado she was named top female vocalist at her graduation. She was so hungry for knowledge she cleaned toilets to fund private tuition.

“Muscle memory is a huge reason why I can sing. I had done so much theory and sung so much before I lost my hearing that I know the feeling when I am singing. I know



MANDY HARVEY EXPLAINS HOW SHE CAN SING WITHOUT HEARING



MANDY HARVEY ON NOT BEING ABLE TO IMITATE OTHER ARTISTS

the feeling if I am singing loudly or softly, if I am too breathy.”

But her early talent was coupled with shyness and severe performance anxiety. For this reason she never dreamed of performing, her heart was set on becoming a choir director. She was studying Vocal Music Education at Colorado State University when she lost her hearing as a result of a connective tissue disorder.

At the age of 18 Mandy dropped out of college and life. It was a struggle to even get out of bed

but Mandy’s family and friends rallied around her. She studied American Sign Language (ASL) and re-evaluated her priorities.

“Eventually I made a slow, painful climb out of a really dark place and decided I was taking it back. I can’t tell you the emotion that was behind the day when I decided I was going to go outside and see the day and choose not to be upset about my hearing.”

She was contemplating a career as a marine biologist or a history teacher when her former college

music professor Cynthia Vaughn encouraged her to sing at a bistro in Fort Collins.

“I thought it was crazy but I didn’t want to disappoint her. I thought ‘What is the worst that could happen? I have lost my hearing, what could be worse than that?’. I sang *My Funny Valentine* and I was astonished – they asked me to come back.

“They kept asking me back week after week. I had never had any intention of becoming a performer. I didn’t like having people watch me, and I was always wondering if I was any good.”

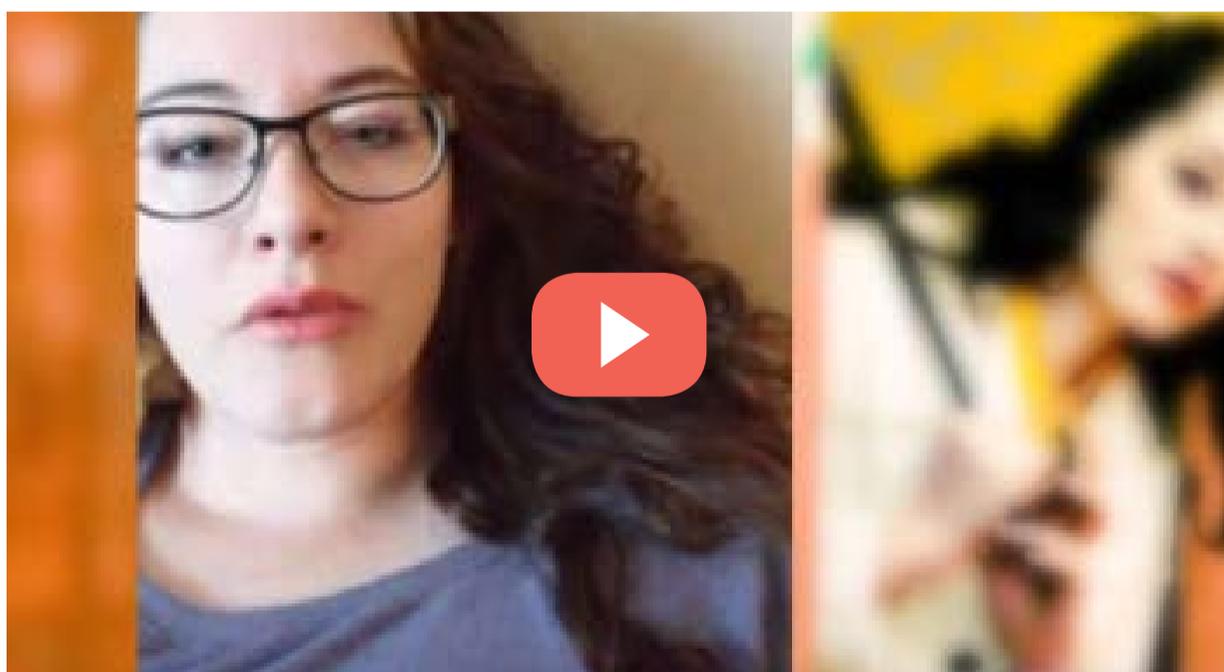
But she was good, and her confidence blossomed. “We convince ourselves what is and isn’t possible and get hung up on what we can and can’t do.

“You can psyche yourself out and say ‘I never sing it the way I want to.’ I don’t psyche myself out so much anymore so I have actually found my vocal range has lengthened.”

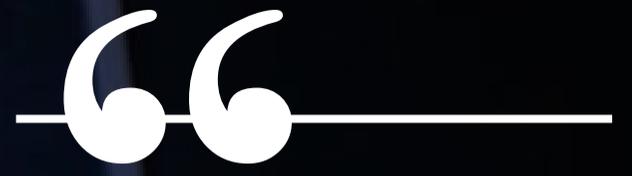
Songwriting, something she was previously too self-conscious to seriously pursue, has also proved a source of freedom.

“I found writing was a beautiful

“  
I found writing was a beautiful way to express myself



MANDY HARVEY EXPLAINS HER PROUDEST ACHIEVEMENTS



“We convince ourselves what is and isn’t possible and get hung up on what we can and can’t do.”

way to express myself. I put a little bit of myself and my story in a song and it ended up being one of the biggest things therapy-wise to help me move out of my depression.” These days she is constantly writing. “Sometimes you write a song and it is just dumb,” she laughs. “I have written dozens and dozens of songs. I just have fun with it. For me writing is a team effort. I create an idea and record it on my phone and send it to someone who can chart it out. They’re not changing the song. Good, bad or ugly they leave it how it is but I need to know what I sang so that I can finish it or grow from it. Even when something is horrible I keep it anyway because it was expressing something at that moment and later I might use it or a piece of it in something else.”

Since those early days performing in a tiny bistro, Mandy’s career has steadily gained momentum. In 2011, she won VSA’s Top Young Soloist Award and realised a personal dream by performing at the Kennedy Centre in Washington DC (and has now performed there four times). She has released three albums – her latest is *All of Me* a mix of jazz standards and her own compositions. A fourth album *This Time* is due for release later this year and features all



her own songs.

Music is her life, and she works tirelessly at it, fearing that what she can do today, might not be possible tomorrow. She performs vocal and breath exercises every day, using a visual tuner to make sure she is singing accurately.

“I never feel sure-footed on what tomorrow is going to bring. I am just eager to learn and to grow.”

She does dream though of performing in Europe and at the Sydney Opera House – where she sang as a high school student. And while she is constantly pushing herself forward, she has in many ways already achieved what she wanted most – to dedicate her life to music. It’s just that her path turned out to be different to the one she initially pictured.

“I think my proudest achievement was the first concert that I did where I had my shoes off and I did the whole show without holding on to the piano. I had a pianist, a bassist, a drummer and a saxophone player around me all mucking up the vibrations on the floor. It was strenuous during rehearsals but it



BUTTERFLY KISSES & GET WELL SOON - MANDY HARVEY

proved really easy, really fast because I found I could really feel the rhythm through the floor.”

“I never anticipated performing and never, ever wanted to perform. But I wanted to be involved with music. I found that instead of doing education I had to shift focus and change my dream. But it is okay to change your dream and modify as you go along and take one step at a time.”

Her advice to other singers is to stop being so critical of themselves. “I found so much freedom after

losing my hearing because I could no longer judge myself and tell myself I could have done it better. It is important to truly get out of your head and enjoy the fact you are doing music. Pay attention to the words you are singing and make sure they mean something and that it is from the heart.”

While her hearing loss was traumatic, she takes a lot of positives from the experience.

“It’s changed my personality. When you have to rebuild yourself you don’t have to put in all the pieces you didn’t like before – the sad, overly-quiet person who wanted to fade into the background and become part of the wallpaper kind of disappeared. I’m okay with myself. If it took all of that to happen for me to become a happy person that it was all worth it.” ■



TRY- MANDY HARVEY

GET SOCIAL  
with Mandy





# TEAL *Tales*

a jazz vocalist's varied road to success

Clare Teal talks to Bronwyn Bidwell about her journey from shy, Yorkshire music lover to Britain's best-loved jazz singer, broadcaster and TV presenter.

All alone in the loft of her Yorkshire home, Clare Teal spent her formative years listening to jazz and swing records. As she tells it, "I spent most of my time between eight and eighteen in a private bubble listening to this old-style music. It was an obsession." Her latest album, *Twelve*

*O'Clock Tales*, honours some of those singers and songwriters who inspired her up in that attic: Peggy Lee, Doris Day, Ella Fitzgerald, Cole Porter. The album's title is a lyric from *Lush Life*, a jazz standard penned by Billy Strayhorn, Duke Ellington's right hand man. The album also includes contemporary works by the likes

of Tim Rice as well as Teal's own compositions.

Now, far from whiling away hours indulging a private passion, her latest album was a whirlwind recording involving 93 musicians over just two days. *Twelve O'Clock Tales* was recorded with the Hallé Orchestra and a handful of long-time

collaborators including the Hall's principal conductor, Stephen Bell, the composer and trumpeter, Guy Barker, who did the arrangements, and jazz pianists Grant Windsor and Jason Rebello.

"It's the most ambitious thing I have ever done", Teal says. "I have worked with a lot of big bands and large ensembles before, but this was still a step up. We recorded in two days; because of the sheer number of musicians involved, it had to be done quickly. But that's how they used to do it."

This will be Teal's 15th album. She has worked with Liza Minnelli and Sir Van Morrison (a "total legend"). She has sung with the BBC Big Band at Proms in the Park and produced, presented and performed 'Battle of the Bands: Duke Ellington vs. Count Basie' for the 2014 Proms Season at the Royal Albert Hall. With such accolades under her belt, it is remarkable to think that her career came about almost by accident.

Teal describes a moment of clarity while studying Music at Wolverhampton University. "For me, singing was a private thing. I was

very shy. Nobody knew I sang and I certainly never did it in public... Then, one day, I had an exam and I had forgotten my clarinet, so I had to sing instead. I used to get terribly nervous when I had to give a recital, but the moment I started to sing it was like falling off a log. I had never felt so relaxed. It was invigorating."

Teal continued her musical studies, funding them by writing and recording radio jingles. Supported by her parents, she recorded her own album when she left university, but it wasn't an auspicious start: "Nothing happened, nothing at all, so I just presumed I wasn't any good."

She took a job in telesales: "Oh, my years in telesales! I still wake up screaming," she jokes. "But, actually, I did learn a lot in those five years: about rejection, how to negotiate and how to put myself out there – all really useful lessons for someone working in the music industry."

Teal eventually signed with independent label Candid in 2001 and released three well-received albums before signing with Sony, in a deal which, at the time, was the biggest deal ever signed by a British



“do what you do passionately, whatever it is. I think the harder you work, the luckier you get

jazz singer.

She rode a wave of success and was named British Jazz Vocalist of the Year in 2005 and 2007 and again in 2015. In 2006, she was named BBC Jazz Vocalist of the Year. When she came out of contract in 2009, she started her own label in a bid to enjoy more creative freedom. "I love what I do," she says, "but I don't like the dressing up and that kind of stuff. This way I don't have to conform so much. There is no pressure. I'm not such a product."

On top of her musical endeavours, Teal has also forged a successful broadcasting career. From 2005 to



THE MAKING OF TWELVE O'CLOCK TALES - CLARE TEAL



I started with a one-hour, pre-recorded show and now, almost 12 years later, I have my own two-hour live show

2009, she presented the BBC Radio 2 weekly show, *Big Band Special*. In 2009, she hosted her own jazz and swing show on Sunday nights. “It had never occurred to me to work on the wireless” she says, “but my view is: any opportunity, jump at it. When I started, I had no idea what I was doing. I learned on the job. I started with a one-hour, pre-recorded show and now, almost 12 years later, I have my own two-hour live show.”

Her radio success has been attributed to her encyclopaedic knowledge of jazz and her flair for connecting with listeners. “I do think I have always had an affinity with audiences. We are all doing something together. Songs are musical stories and I want to take the audience on a musical journey, whether that is on stage or on the radio. The in-between, chatty bits, I never know what I am going to say.”

Teal’s versatility is a key to her longevity. She combines broadcasting



WHY – CLARE TEAL

and touring, switching seamlessly between performing with a pianist, her trio, a big band or a Hollywood orchestra.

“I enjoy the variety. I don’t have a preference for one over the other. For example, when I am with my trio, I can do what I want and know they will follow me if I suddenly change direction. Obviously, the more instruments you bring in, the less you can do that.”

With an impressively long and varied career such as hers, what advice does Teal offer to aspiring artists? To keep performing and trying new things: “I learnt to stop saying ‘no’ a long time ago. Sometimes doing something new which really pushes you and frightens you a little bit is a good thing. And I don’t focus too much on definitions. For me jazz is just a four letter word. It is really a hundred years of music summed up in four letters.”

She believes the best way to carve out a career is to perform as often as possible. “You really only get better by performing. Unfortunately, I don’t think there are enough platforms for



I do think I have always had an affinity with audiences

live music out there these days. We need to be careful. Live music is so precious, we need to nurture it.”

“I would say just do what you do passionately, whatever it is. I think the harder you work, the luckier you get.” ■

GET SOCIAL  
WITH CLARE



# *Saved by the* **BLUES**

## **How Dan Owen turned tragedy into triumph**

By Bronwyn Bidwell

**When Dan Owen's life was turned upside down by a serious accident, music provided the road to recovery.**

**O**n first impressions, Dan Owen, 24, is an easy-going, singer-songwriter from Shropshire, relaxed and chatty, but behind the laidback façade is a musician with exceptional resilience, drive and determination.

Owen is on the cusp of making a big breakthrough into the British music scene. His new single, *Made to Love You*, is currently enjoying plenty of radio play and he is riding high after finishing a 30-date tour supporting songstress Birdy. "It was great. It was me and a few friends in a little Ford Mondeo following her bus around Europe."

Despite his evident love for music, Owen didn't initially consider music a career option. Instead, he began a carpentry apprenticeship with the aim of making guitars, but his dreams of becoming a luthier were soon thwarted by a traumatic



carpentry accident; a piece of wood hit his left eye causing a loss of sight and rendering him unable to do the fine work required to make guitars. He was forced to reassess his life and his future.

Owen turned to that which gave him the most joy – music. He fell in love with music at nine, when he started learning the guitar. His music teacher introduced him to blues and by 13 he was gigging in local pubs with his older sister singing along. Having started his own open mic night at 18, he had immersed himself in the music scene of his hometown of Shrewsbury.

Now, in light of his accident, he got out a map and pressed a pin into his hometown: “I got a piece of string and drew a line around all the areas that were within a two hour drive of where I lived. I then started calling all the pubs in that area.” He called about 40 pubs a day, with the aim of booking a gig a night. Displaying a determination and maturity beyond his years, he notched up between 150 and 200 gigs in the very first year.

“  
You learn how to work with a crowd and how to look after yourself

Many pubs were keen to rebook him after his brand of throaty, guitar blues proved popular with punters,



MADE TO LOVE YOU - DAN OWEN

but he allowed himself to be a little pickier. “The next year I dropped all the really rough places and just did the decent pubs.”

The experience taught him a huge amount. “You learn how to work with a crowd and how to look after yourself. When you are going into pubs, which are not always nice places, it can be a bit touch-and-go, but you just have to deal with it.”

Owen’s loyal father stepped in as chauffeur and partner-in-crime, driving him to gigs now that his son could no longer drive. “He doesn’t play music, but he is really supportive. I can remember him driving me to a gig all the way up in Eyre in Scotland. It took us about six hours to get there. I sang for about half an hour and then we turned back and came home.” Owen’s big break came when footage of him playing a stunning cover of Bob Dylan’s *The Ballad of Hollis Brown* at a music festival went viral. The clip has notched up half a million views and attracted the attention of Ellen DeGeneres and Mick Fleetwood. The phone started ringing and

hasn’t stopped. He has performed at Glastonbury and The Great Escape and been named Best Young Artist at the British Blues Awards. He is now working towards the release of an album in six months. In the meantime, his single *Made to Love You*, written about a friend who was the victim of domestic violence, is gaining airplay in the UK, France, Belgium and Hungary.

Far from starry-eyed about what lies ahead, Owen is determined to keep doing what he has always done. His success has come about through hard graft. “I just want to keep performing and to reach as big an audience as possible. I feel like it’s all good.” ■

GET SOCIAL  
WITH DAN



# #BELIEVE

From bullied and depressed to TV and chart sensation; Jonathan Antoine's personal fairytale.

By Bronwyn Bidwell

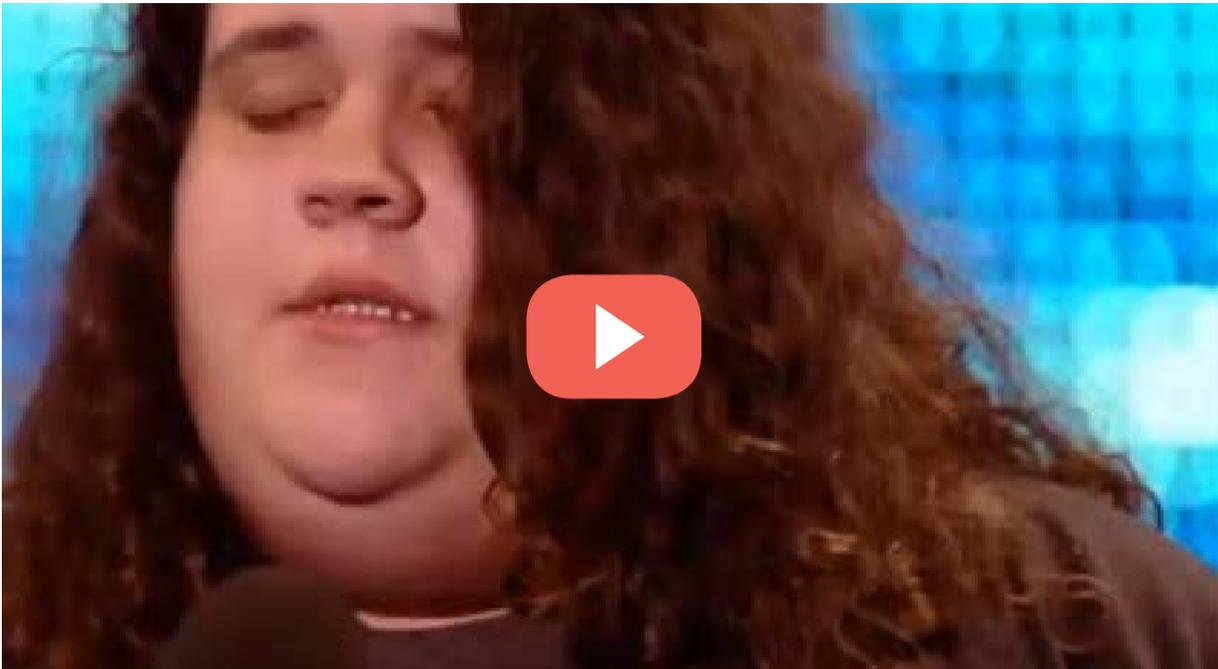
Tenor Jonathan Antoine's story is something of a modern fable. Throughout primary school he was bullied mercilessly about his size. Starting high school at 11, he had a burgeoning vocal talent and a crippling lack of confidence. Vocal coach Jenny Ewington and his school's Head of Music, Ginette Brown, recognised his potential and nurtured the sensitive teenager, aware that singing could provide a path to self-esteem.

When Antoine's voice broke at 13, Ewington encouraged him to try songs such as *Bring Him Home* from *Les Misérables* and *Ave Maria*. At 14, Antoine auditioned for a junior place at London's four major music conservatories. It speaks volumes that he was accepted into all of them. He opted to attend the Royal Academy of Music under the respected tutelage of Sara Reynolds. Around this time, Antoine also began performing with his childhood friend Charlotte Jaconelli, whose poise and self-possession was the antithesis to his own inhibition and insecurity.

Antoine's teenage years were dark. While his voice won him recognition, depression threatened to derail his dreams. "When I was young, every time someone said something negative to me about



JONATHAN ANTOINE - PHOTO BY PAUL MARC MITCHELL



CHARLOTTE AND JONATHAN'S BRITAIN'S GOT TALENT AUDITION

how I looked, it just took a piece out of me. It just drained me of all my self-belief.”

When he and Jaconelli were chosen to audition for reality television show *Britain's Got Talent*, Antoine was apathetic and couldn't muster any excitement. For many aspiring singers, such a prospect would be thrilling, but Antoine felt too low to care much at all. He dragged himself to the audition wearing a scruffy Hendrix T-shirt and scuffed tracksuit bottoms, then proceeded to deliver a show-stopping rendition of *The Prayer*; cue a standing ovation from a cheering, tearful audience. The novelty of a 17-year-old, who looked like he had just crawled out of bed, belting out opera was a reality television dream. His performance in front of Simon Cowell and 14 million viewers was a hit and went viral on YouTube. With his usual abruptness, Cowell delivered an acute assessment: Jaconelli was good, Antoine was a future star.

The operatic duo finished the show as runners-up, pipped at the post by Pudsey the dog, and signed an album deal with Cowell. The fast

and fickle world of reality television could well have overwhelmed a teenager already battling depression, but Antoine drew strength from the experience. He describes the period as “exhausting craziness” but looks back on it positively.

“I couldn't maintain that level of intensity forever. Now, things are more structured and organised, but it was a dream come true to do the thing I love in front of such a huge audience. I learned a lot about how to manage my nerves and deal with some of my insecurities... I would

say to anyone thinking about going down that route to do it, but to remember to have fun and enjoy the process for what it is.”

Under the name “Charlotte and Jonathan”, the duo went on to release two albums with Cowell before parting ways from him. Antoine and Jaconelli then also opted to each pursue solo careers. Antoine's album *Tenore* reached number one in the classical charts and 13 in the pop charts. He toured extensively and now has a band of loyal fans who call themselves “Fantoines”. They are pretty much all his mum's age, he says, and follow him from concert to concert.

“It was a dream come true to do the thing I love in front of such a huge audience”



HALLELUJAH - PERFORMED BY JONATHAN ANTOINE

His new album *Believe* was released last month and is a mix of classical arias, musical theatre and contemporary classics; a perfect vehicle to showcase his range and much-lauded top C. “It has been two years since I released my last album. I really feel like I have matured a great deal in that time. This is a more grown-up version of me.”

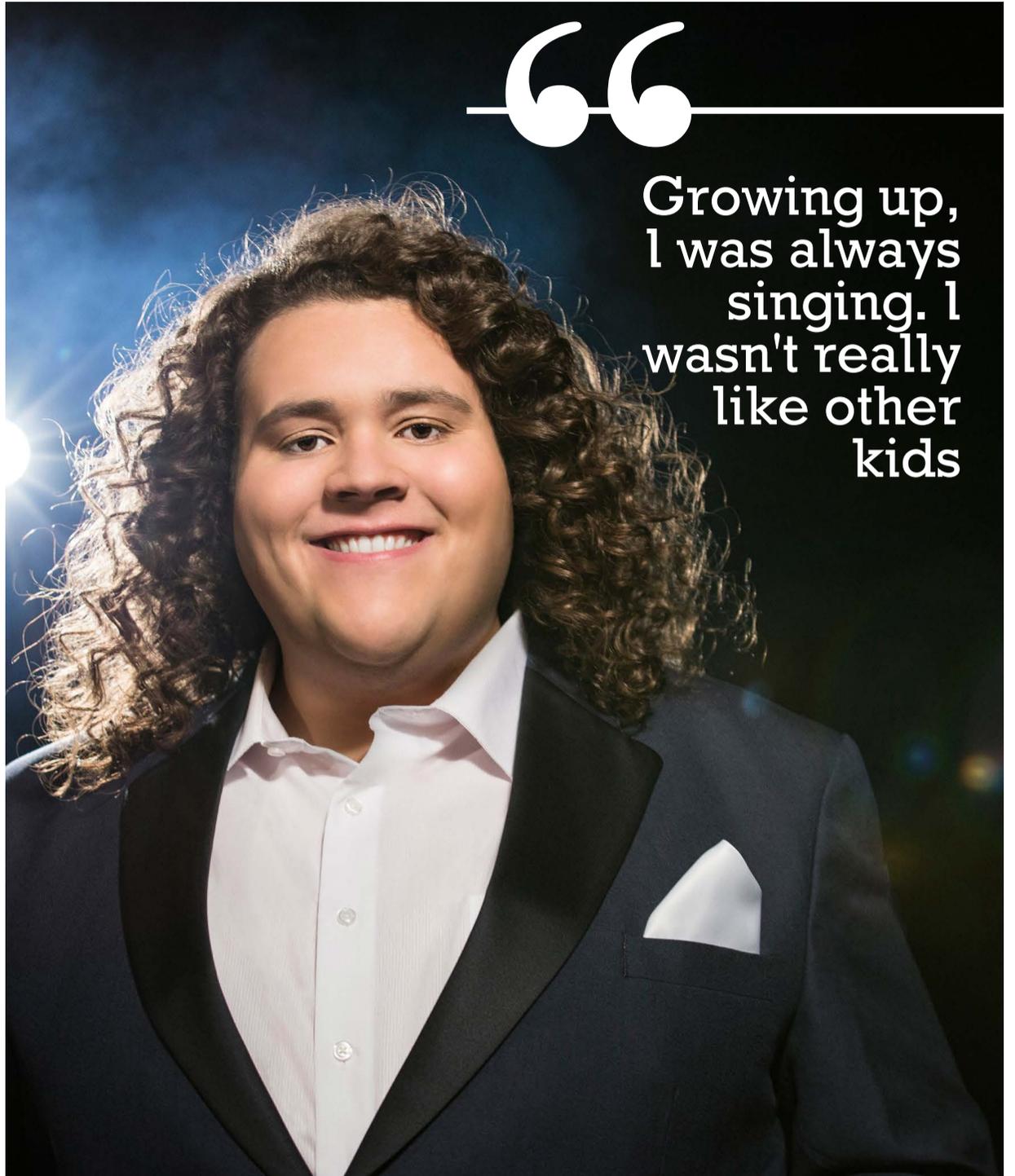
Speaking from his childhood home in Essex where he lives with his parents, Antoine does seem to have found a level of self-acceptance. He still comes across as the shy, slightly awkward teen of the *BGT* days and his sentences sometimes trail off in a nervous giggle, but there is a new edge of self-deprecation.

“I was always a little performing weirdo,” he jokes. “Growing up, I was always singing. I wasn’t really like other kids. The album is called *Believe* because it is a hashtag I started using with my fans in August 2015. It is about battling depression when I was younger and then growing as a tenor and a person.”

Part of his growth has come through performing with the likes of Sting, Ne-Yo and Adam Levine of Maroon 5 – not bad for a 21-year-old.

Antoine has learnt to better manage performance anxiety, aided by the involvement of his parents; his mother is his manager and his dad, a former policeman, acts as his driver. “The thing I hate most is the waiting around, but I always travel with my family. They are really good at knowing what I need. Sometimes I just need space, other times they know how to calm me down.”

He admits some of his voice prep is unusual. “A few hours before I go on stage, I eat dairy. I find it coats my



JONATHAN ANTOINE HAS GROWN USED TO THE LIMELIGHT. PHOTOGRAPH BY PAUL MARC MITCHELL



Growing up,  
I was always  
singing. I  
wasn't really  
like other  
kids

throat and prevents dryness. I know some singers try to avoid it, but I am strange.”

Antoine has also spent the past few years trying to learn as much as he can from vocal experts.

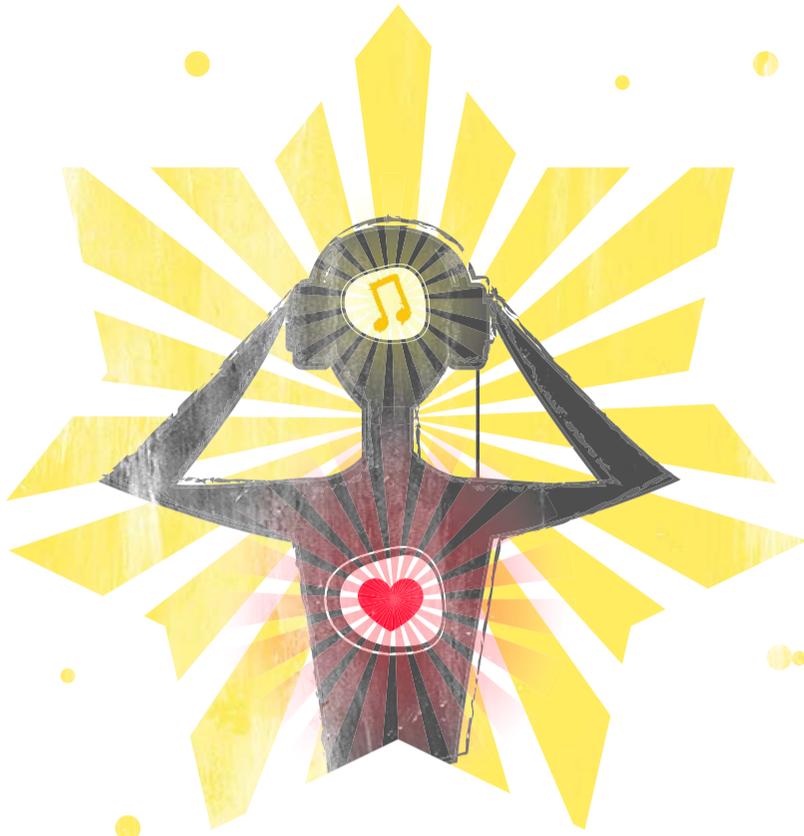
“When I performed on *BGT* I had only ever had two vocal coaches. Now, I would say, I have had about ten. I have learned a lot of interesting things and it has really stretched me. I think the most important thing is to establish a great personal connection and go from there.”

Antoine is ambitious and hopes

to release an album in every genre within the next ten years and perform on every continent. These are realistic goals given his achievements so far. It seems a fairytale ending is in sight ■

GET SOCIAL  
WITH JONATHAN





# *mind body* & SOUL



- VOCAL HEALTH** Why singers should think like swimmers to beat muscle tension dysphonia
- MINDSET** How to manage performance anxiety
- HEALTH** Jaw tension – the causes and treatments
- HEALTH** Singing during pre-menstruation – what the research says
- CAREER DEVELOPMENT** Learn to stand out from the crowd



# MUSCULAR TENSION

why singers should think like swimmers



Nearly every singer has muscle tension dysphonia (MTD). Pause for a moment and think about the fact that nearly everyone reading this article will have a condition almost none have heard of. We fear nodules and polyps and scour the internet for ways to assure ourselves we don't have these dreaded conditions, yet the most common

condition, MTD, is rarely discussed.

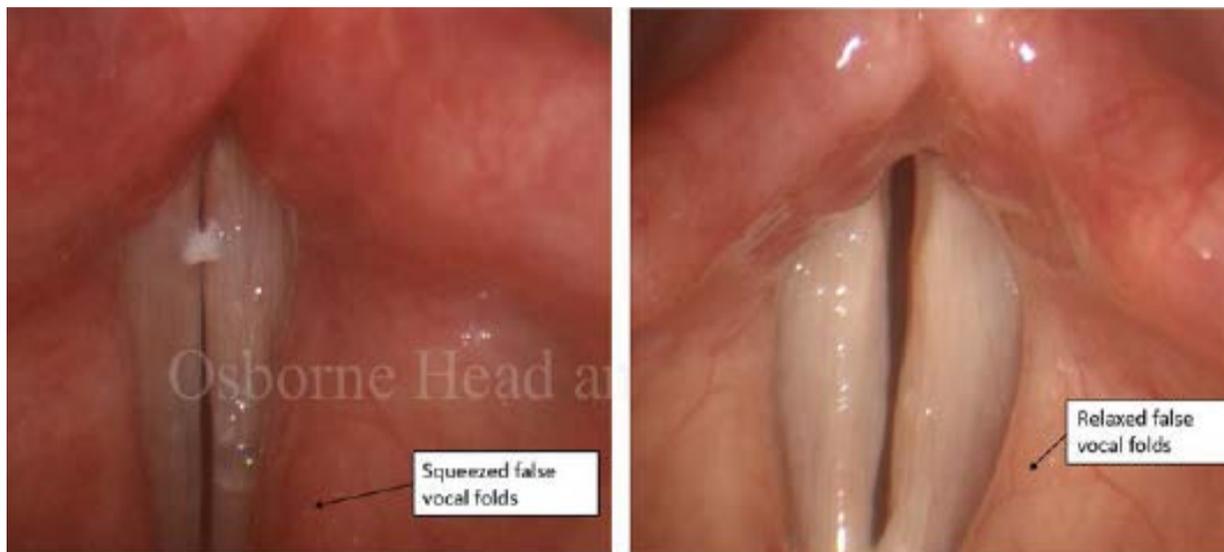
What if I told you that nearly every swimmer at the Rio Olympics had tightness and pain in their lower back muscles? Would you suggest they rush to the doctor, convinced they had torn their rotator cuff?

The analogy here is that the swimmer, pushing their arms and upper backs to an athletic extreme, will fatigue. Such extreme use causes

inflammation in their shoulder joints, which alters their stroke. This will cause tension in their back muscles, due to the unusual pattern of muscle activation while swimming. For example, swimmers are supposed to use their shoulder and upper back muscles, but when pushed in competition, they engage some lower back muscles. After the race, these muscles can ache.

When faced with the achy muscles, we do not usually fear injury in the swimmer. Instead, we understand that athletic excess can cause muscle engagement that allows for a greater outcome (i.e. faster, stronger, longer). Singers are not given the same allowance.

Typically, singers face scenarios when they have to push. Examples include long gigs (the equivalent of swimming a longer race at the Olympics), singing while sick (akin to an athlete swimming with mild shoulder joint inflammation), or working to develop a new part of their range (like training to swim faster). The push causes compensatory muscles to kick in. These muscles can ache because they are performing a task to which they are unaccustomed. As voice use continues, this becomes pain. This is referred to as muscle tension dysphonia. It is the finding, during a voice exam, of excessive use of muscles that are not typically used for voice production. For the singer, these patterns can develop during



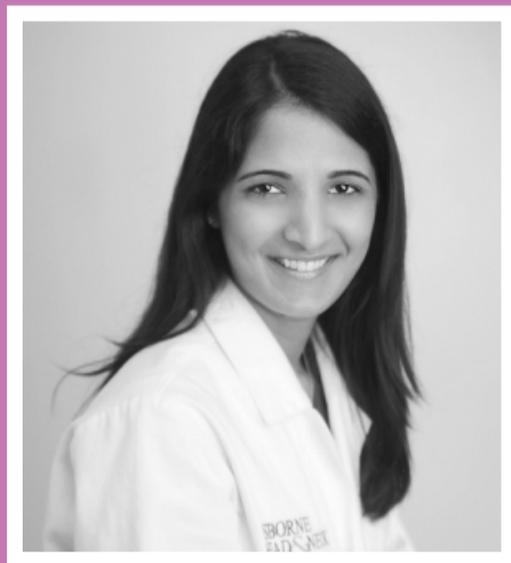
(ABOVE LEFT) MTD IS NOTED BY SIGNIFICANT SQUEEZING OF THE FALSE VOCAL FOLDS, LOCATED ABOVE THE VOCAL FOLDS. THE VOCAL FOLDS ARE PARTIALLY CONCEALED DUE TO THE COMPRESSED MUSCLES. (ABOVE RIGHT) NORMAL - THE FALSE VOCAL FOLDS ARE RELAXED WITH A CONCAVE CONTOUR IN THE NORMAL VOICE.

times of stress (singing while sick, for example) and become hard to undo. Just as an Olympic swimmer needs help to undo stress and tension, so too does the professional singer.

Treatments for MTD vary according to whether or not there are any other findings. Some MTD develops as a compensation for laryngitis and must be treated by identifying the cause of laryngitis. At other times, MTD develops as a strictly muscular condition, in which case therapy may be needed

to release the muscles that are tight. While pain does not indicate a vocal cord injury, it does suggest MTD. However, MTD can be caused by vocal cord damage. Before treatment begins, it is important to rule this out. Just like the swimmer needs to rule out a rotator cuff injury before beginning therapy, the singer needs to undergo a strobe to determine if an injury is present. Once accurate diagnosis is established, treatment can begin and is usually successful within one to two sessions ■

## DR REENA GUPTA



**D**r 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.



[www.ohniww.org](http://www.ohniww.org)

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# ACT

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## A new way to manage performance anxiety

**Psychologist David Juncos explains flexible responding: a new type of treatment for performance anxiety.**

If you suffer from music performance anxiety then this article is for you. But first, I want you to forget everything you know about your performance anxiety for one second...Really, I'm serious.

Give it a shot, just for a few moments. Try as best you can to forget any unpleasant thoughts or memories you may have about it. Forget any uncomfortable sensations it may conjure up, too. Forget the times when your anxiety compromised your talents as a performer and definitely forget any professional or academic impairment it may have caused you. Keep trying.

Ok stop. Were you able to forget anything? Probably not, right? In fact, at this moment, you're probably recalling whatever thoughts,



sensations, memories, or emotions your mind has associated with your performance anxiety. It might even seem like those associations are so poignant that they evoke equally as strong a reaction as an actual music performance does. That's to be expected. In fact, that reactivity illustrates an important principle that psychologists call "cognitive fusion".

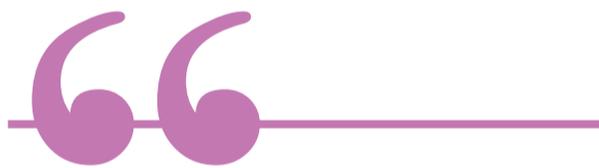
Cognitive fusion is the tendency of our minds to react to our associations of negative events with the same emotional vigour as we do to the actual events with which they are associated. Whenever we buy into or believe these mental associations, we say we are being "fused" with them and our behaviour becomes unnecessarily hooked or controlled by them. Luckily, we can learn to undermine this tendency to automatically believe what our minds tell us. By "defusing" from what our mental associations tell us about our performance anxiety, or about any unwanted emotional states, we become less reactive to our minds.

I am a clinical psychologist in private practice and I use a newer therapy called Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) to treat both professional and student musicians with performance anxiety.

ACT is wholly different to other available therapies because its goal is not to reduce or eliminate symptoms of music performance anxiety (MPA). Rather, it teaches musicians to become more flexible in its presence, so that their behaviour is more focused on achieving valuable outcomes during their performances, even with MPA present, and less focused on attempting to get rid of MPA symptoms. Such flexibility requires a mindful acceptance

of one's MPA symptoms and a continued redirecting of one's attention onto engaging in self-chosen behavior until the valued outcome is attained.

Musicians with MPA typically get stuck when they buy into their thoughts, and other associations, that tell them the MPA is bad or dangerous and needs to be eliminated. When one is fused with such thoughts, their behaviour is hooked by their mind during their performances and they may waste precious energy unsuccessfully attempting to get rid of anxious feelings or sensations. On the contrary, when a person is more accepting of their MPA, they become less fused with what their mind tells them about it, which allows them to persist with valued behaviour, even with MPA symptoms present.



If I can't breathe properly, I won't be able to sing the piece the way I'm supposed to

Let me elaborate on how defusing from one's anxious thoughts can lend itself to engaging in valued behaviour while performing, using a common scenario familiar to many vocalists.

Let's say you are applying to an elite music school for a degree in vocal performance and an audition is required. Obviously, there will be numerous applicants competing for a limited number of spots, which would likely be quite nerve-racking. As you take to the stage to begin your performance, you notice your breath is much shallower than normal and your mouth is dry. You immediately panic, and your mind becomes flooded with anxious thoughts, such as, "If I can't breathe properly, I won't be able to sing the piece the way I'm supposed to" or "If I don't remain calm and sing the piece properly, I'll blow this audition". Well, if you are fused with these thoughts, you will buy into them and attempt to calm your anxiety, while also trying to focus on your audition as best you can. This is a noble endeavour, but is an exercise in futility. It prevents you from mindfully accepting the physical MPA symptoms, because you'll waste energy mindlessly ruminating on how the physical symptoms need to be eliminated. On the other hand, instead of panicking in response to your anxious sensations, or panicking in response to your anxious thoughts occurring after the sensations, you can learn to defuse from what your mind is telling you about your MPA symptoms.

ACT teaches a number of techniques to promote defusion. A common one is to preface your thought, either aloud or silently,

# “ like most things, it gets easier with practice

with the statement, “I’m noticing (... I’m feeling anxious/panicking/breaking out in a sweat).” This simple technique helps you to stay present with your anxious thoughts as they’re occurring, while minimising the likelihood you’ll buy into them. It also helps you to mindfully accept the physical MPA symptoms. If done repeatedly, you may begin to take the content of your anxious thoughts less personally. You may even begin to view them differently, perhaps as

uncomfortable clues that you’re in an anxious mood, just like a fever is an uncomfortable clue that an infection is present. A fever is not meant to be taken personally and neither are anxious thoughts, or uncomfortable sensations for that matter. Once you’re more used to defusing from what your mind tells you about your MPA symptoms, you can focus your mental energy on achieving valued goals during a performance, for example, conveying the meaning of a text, expressing emotion at key times, focusing on good technique. Achieving those goals requires an acceptance of the MPA symptoms and a simultaneous, diligent redirecting of your focus towards enacting those goals. This may sound difficult but, like most things, it gets easier with practice. Once you’re able to defuse regularly, you become more flexible in the presence of your MPA. In other words, you learn to persist with achieving valued goals during your performance, even with MPA symptoms present ■



## DAVID JUNCOS



**D**avid Juncos, PsyD is a 2014 graduate of La Salle University’s Clinical Psychology Doctoral Program in Philadelphia, PA. He is currently a post-doctoral resident with Ivyland Counseling Center, a group private practice with offices in Warminster and New Hope, Pennsylvania. His professional interests include treating student and professional musicians with performance anxiety and providing music educators with individual or organisational consultation for the management of students’ performance anxiety.



[ivylandcounselingcenter.com/staff/david-juncos-psy-d-ccdp](http://ivylandcounselingcenter.com/staff/david-juncos-psy-d-ccdp)

# Jaw tension

## The causes and treatments

**J**aw tension is one of those mystery conditions that almost every performer has experienced at least once in their career. For some, it's constant and debilitating. For others, it's occasional and annoying. What is it? What causes it? And how can you help it?

The TMJ, or temporomandibular joint, connects your jaw to your skull and is located just in front of each of your ears. It is controlled by the motor cortex of the brain, which controls all bodily movements. A huge 50% of the sensory and motor brain cells are devoted to it. This is significant as it means that if there is any form of TMJ dysfunction, it can create confusion in motor functions elsewhere in the body. People who experience TMJ tension may experience difficulty opening their mouths and clicking or popping sensations. TMJ tension is also associated with neck and tooth pain, dizziness and tinnitus. Other symptoms less frequently connected to TMJ tension include lower backache and hip pain, due to the element of the jaw that is interconnected with the nervous

system.

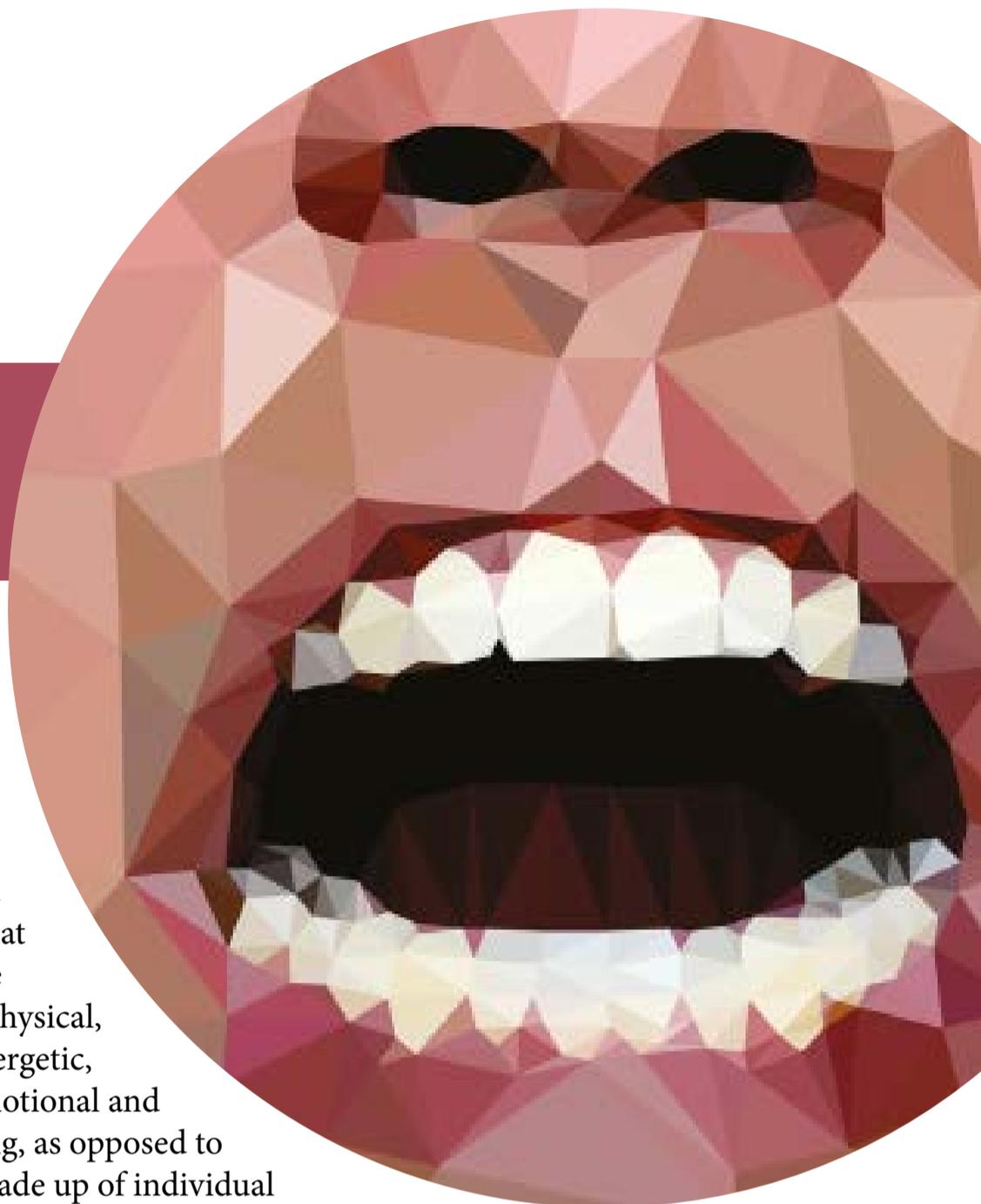
Holistic medicine is an approach to health and well-being that addresses the patient as a physical, chemical, energetic, electrical, emotional and spiritual being, as opposed to a machine made up of individual parts that are not working. From this perspective, we view the TMJ as a “gateway” into the nervous system.

At my clinic, 100% of patients report a worsening of symptoms when under increased stress. Not only does increased stress result in a clenching action that causes pain and discomfort, but it also causes chemical and physiological dysfunction in the body that can lead to symptoms. Cortisol is a chemical created by the adrenal glands to increase blood sugar through gluconeogenesis, to suppress the immune system and to aid in the metabolism of fat, protein, and carbohydrates. It has been shown that people with TMJ issues often have altered cortisol rhythms, which

is indicative of adrenal fatigue.

If you suffer with TMJ issues, it is a good idea to check your adrenal health. You can do this by visiting your doctor or a good practitioner of natural medicine. I have helped many people recover naturally from third stage adrenal fatigue by using herbs, lifestyle changes and energetic and vibrational medicine. You can implement some easy practices into your daily life to help combat this: yoga, meditation, chanting, singing, deep breathing exercises like Qi Gong and slow, gentle walking.

When a person experiences chronic stress, the body starts to resist the effects of cortisol. As a result, inflammation is allowed to



flourish. Inflammation and oxidative stress are also linked to TMJ issues and it is thought that this is what causes the pain. In my experience, taking powerful antioxidant supplements, high doses of vitamin C, some form of strong omega oil and some adaptogenic herbs can work wonders. It is also important to address underlying emotional issues that may be the root cause.

Another important factor in TMJ issues is the hormone oestrogen. TMJ tension is far more common in women and this is why it is believed that hormones play a leading role. High levels of oestrogen damage the TMJ, while testosterone inhibits damage. It is important that both men and women who experience TMJ tension have their hormones balanced. This is done best with a natural medicine practitioner. However, you can make a start yourself by maintaining a healthy weight, promoting healthy gut function, eating lots of fibre and avoiding soy, fat from non-pastured animals, BPA found in plastics and

oestrogen compounds such as birth control.

TMJ tension is renowned in the medical community as being difficult to treat and, even when improvements are made, relapses are common. However, I have seen many patients walk out of my clinic free from tension and pain and able to open their mouths fully after just an hour's treatment. I have seen people get up off the bed and cry at the difference they feel in their jaw.

It is more common than you might imagine to see this in just one session. However, it can take up to three sessions, or possibly more, to really eradicate all the symptoms and clear the root cause.

When I ask a client when the tension began, they almost always cite an emotional trauma or a hugely stressful experience in the months leading up to it. By addressing this with various vibrational, energetic and emotional techniques and bringing in herbs, nutrition, lifestyle changes and mindful practices, patients can see dramatic, drug-free

results very quickly.

West End star Jodie Jacobs recently came to my clinic for help with jaw tension she'd suffered with for years. She was initially sceptical as to whether natural medicine would be able to provide a solution for her, but the experience was a positive one.

Jodie says: "I felt a dramatic difference even after the first session. I woke up the next day feeling totally different with 80% less tension and pain in my jaw.

"Since the second session, I've had barely any issues. I've noticed it most around stressful periods like auditions or in the run up to opening night. It's not only had a physical impact, but a deep emotional one too."

Feedback like this is why I do my job. It is so empowering when we begin to realise we are in charge of our own health and well-being and, ultimately, we ourselves hold the answers to all the questions we have about our physical, emotional and spiritual well being and happiness.

Good luck on your journey ■

## GARY ALBERT HUGHES



**G**ary is an experienced singer, musician and kinesiologist. He trained with full scholarships at The Purcell School of Music, Guildhall School of Music and Drama and the Royal Academy of Music. He is qualified with a diploma in Vocal Coaching and is a Licentiate of the Royal Academy of Music. As well as working as a vocal coach for the likes of The Sam Wanamaker Festival at The Globe Theatre and the Italia Conti Academy of Theatre Arts, Gary runs his own kinesiology practice. At The Balanced Performer clinic he uses a natural, holistic approach to help performers improve their physical, emotional and nutritional health. He helps clients with a variety of issues including acid reflux, skin problems, food intolerances and anxiety and depression.



[www.thebalancedperformer.com](http://www.thebalancedperformer.com)

# Singing

## during pre-menstruation

### What does the research say?

**What influence does the menstrual cycle have on female singers and their voices? Deborah Winter examines the medical research.**

**T**here has been much debate over the years regarding the female menstrual cycle and its impact on voice quality. Many experts in this field, including leading otolaryngologist Robert Sataloff, believe the “hormonal environment” has a significant effect on the female voice.

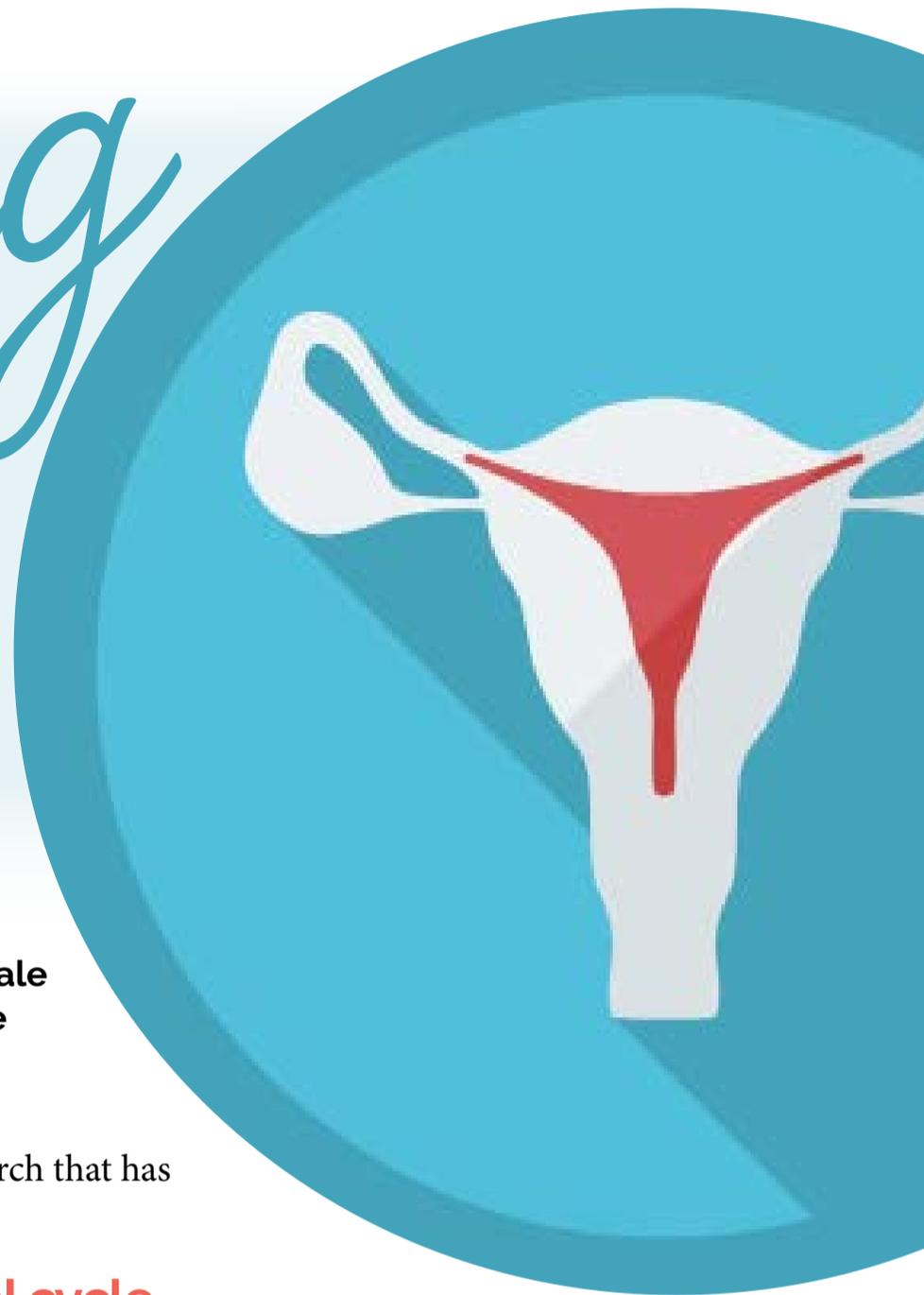
If this is the case, then a greater understanding of the biology relating to the menstrual cycle could help female singers preserve vocal health and maintain vocal quality. After all, professional singers engage in feats of vocal athleticism on a daily basis, so the influence of regular changes to the body should be considered. As with many scientific studies, it is difficult to draw firm conclusions, but it is certainly worth

considering the research that has been undertaken.

### The menstrual cycle

Menstruation, along with pregnancy and the menopause, all result in marked hormonal changes. The ovarian cycle consists of, firstly, the follicular phase, which begins with the menstrual period and ends just prior to ovulation. This is followed by the luteal phase, which begins after ovulation and continues until the onset of menses. Oestrogen reaches high levels just before ovulation and menstruation. After ovulation, progesterone levels increase, reaching their highest levels just before menstruation. Both of these hormones interact and affect the structure and hydration of the vocal folds (Chae et al., 2001).

If this synergistic ebb and flow of hormones alters the structure of the vocal folds, then it may influence vocal quality and, in turn, the performance of the vocal athlete. Submucosal oedema can result from a decrease in oestrogen during the premenstrual phase. Put simply, this is where the vocal folds swell. Changes in vocal fold volume can cause problems in high pitch phonation (Brodnitz, 1971). There is a greater degree of hormonal instability during the luteal phase and all of the research to date examines the extent to which this impacts on both vocal health and voice quality. Typically, this is



experienced four to five days before menstruation and is referred to as premenstrual syndrome.

### Case studies

Brodinitz (1971) presents the case of a young opera singer who experienced small sub-epithelial haemorrhages during the premenstrual phase. The issue abated when she refrained from singing during the premenstrual phase. Luschinger and Arnold (1965) cited an actress who became hoarse during premenstruation. In 1968, Lacina of the National Theatre in Prague documented that “premenstrual dysphonia” affected 40% of all female singers. According to his study, the singers experienced difficulties in high tone phonation,



inaccurate tone and submucosal vocal fold haemorrhage just prior to menstruation. It was also reported that many singers struggled with intricate passages that required vocal acrobatics, impacting upon their scheduling of concerts. This earlier research gives credence to the “grace days” given to female singers by the European opera houses.

Chae et al. (2001) conducted a study of 28 female nurses aged between 21 and 30. They were asked to produce the vowel /a/ as in “father” and sustain it for five seconds. The study concluded that not all women suffer from premenstrual syndrome and that the voice changes were insignificant when the study was viewed as a whole. However, those women who exhibited signs of PMS were more prone to voice changes, exhibiting a higher “jitter” value during that phase. The “jitter” value

is an important measure of vocal stability, measuring the cycle-by-cycle vibration of the vocal folds to evaluate how consistent these are over time. The measure of vocal jitter is observed to increase in voice disorders. This irregularity is responsible for hoarseness. It is also worth noting that, in this study, nurses were asked to sustain a vowel for five seconds. Although it is difficult to compare nurses with singers in terms of day-to-day vocal activity, this study may act as a warning to PMS sufferers to safeguard their vocal health during times of high performance pressure.

### Other research

There have been several studies that utilised a laryngoscope to determine possible changes during menstruation. Abitbol et al. (1999) discovered vocal fold congestion, microvarices and oedema in their

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## “ Singers with heavy schedules with expectations of vocal acrobatics should be advised to take care

study. They also reported a reduction in pulmonary power. These findings were, to some degree, confirmed by a later study conducted by Chernobelsky (2002) who carried out a laryngoscopy in healthy singers and vocally abusive singers.

Prior to menses, all of the singers displayed normal vocal folds. The laryngoscope examination just prior to menses revealed “slight oedema and erythema of the vocal folds” and, although there seemed to be sufficient vocal fold closure, there was a decrease in tension in the vocal fold muscle (Chernobelsky, 1998). The research warns that this hypotension could lead to increased effort which may result in the beginning of a voice problem.

Ryan and Kenny (2009) conducted a study on young female singers in the western classical tradition from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. Their study indicated that not all singers suffered from acute symptoms of PMS, but the small proportion of singers who did were “severely affected” during the menstrual phase of their cycles. These singers found the demands of coordinating their body “more challenging, vocalization more effortful and singing less aurally and

artistically rewarding”. This research also considered the impact of mood on vocal quality and found that PMS sufferers were likely to be influenced by a negative mood which could have an adverse effect on vocal quality.

### Conclusion

The body of research suggests a correlation between the premenstrual phase and vocal difficulties. It is important to appreciate that not all women suffer from PMS and the levels at which they may suffer vary between individuals. However, those with symptoms will experience issues during the premenstrual phase. It may be wise to give appropriate guidance in the form of vocal hygiene. Singers with heavy schedules with expectations of vocal acrobatics should be advised to take care during the pre-menses period. This could mean adopting vocal strategies that carry a lower risk and increasing other vocal health measures to counteract the strain ■

## 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



[www.voiceworkshop.co.uk](http://www.voiceworkshop.co.uk)



**HOW TO STAND OUT**  
*from the crowd*

When David Bowie and Prince died earlier this year, music fans around the world mourned the loss of two great icons. But we lose performers every year, so what was it about these stars that prompted such a massive outpouring of grief? The answer is that they were inherently unique and possessed the indefinable qualities of charisma and extraordinary talent.

Now, you may be thinking, “It’s not fair! These people have a natural gift that I don’t.” That may be true, but let me tell you something else: they worked hard to hone, shape and transform their “natural gift” into something that knocked the socks off people. Bowie consistently reinvented himself, studying not only music but avant-garde theatre, Commedia dell’arte and all forms of dance. Prince’s innovations grew out of constant experimentation and a commitment to trailblazing and exploration.

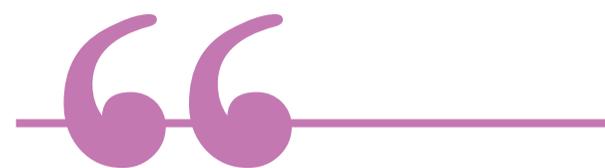
The discovery of what makes a performer stand out is not an exclusive club: it is something anyone can determine through trial and error. So, how do you begin?

First of all, be really honest with yourself. The more you are willing to look frankly at who you are and what you can do, the more you will stand out. Many new artists walk away from their true nature and try to imitate someone who is already successful. Take a moment to look squarely at the parts of you that are trying to be like someone else or something you think everyone wants. To truly be one-of-a-kind, you need to excavate what you have to offer and understand that no one else but you has that gift. Think *Star Trek*:

boldly go where no one else has gone before.

Spend time pondering what makes you special. What is distinct in your sound or gestures or ability to communicate? What is your signature? How do you make and leave a lasting impression? If you figure that out, others may try to mimic you down the line, but ultimately they will only be a shadow of your unmatched brilliance. There is only one Elvis Presley, one Barbra Streisand and one Lady Gaga, despite all of the impersonators.

If you are stuck, listen to singers you love. What makes them stand out for you? Is it the way they ease through a lyric like Tony Bennett or Sarah McLachlan? Is it how they feel everyone’s pain like Janis Joplin or Willie Nelson? Is it how they electrify when they take over the stage like Melissa Etheridge or Sting? Do they dance as well as sing like Shakira or Beyonce? Or do they wield their



**Bowie consistently reinvented himself, studying not only music but avant-garde theatre**

power behind an instrument like Lenny Kravitz or Tori Amos? All of these individuals found their sound, their movement, their presence and



There is only one Lady Gaga.  
© Starstock

their style. Note them and then go on to find yours. Listen to the greats in whatever genre of music interests you: they have tapped into something universal and long-lasting. Study what they are doing that is so appealing and then discover what that is for you.

The next thing to consider is how deep you are prepared to go. The most compelling aspect of any performer is the layer of authenticity he or she is willing to expose. The more you are prepared to share, the more your audience will respond to your daring spirit and complete sincerity.

So, how do you get in there and uncover these aspects of yourself? Record yourself and learn how to listen critically. Ask a safe, wise friend to listen with you and point out what is working and what is fantastically different: sometimes you might take for granted something that others think is truly special. Gently go over what you thought might be a hit but actually is not.

Video yourself, too: what you are visualising when you perform may not be what others see. It is important to take the time and really notice your habits and your presence. Build on that which you think is eclectic or shows who you are. Rework that which you suddenly discover does you no favours.

Channel your thoughts and feelings on being a unique individual. Often, people discover parts of themselves that have been buried and have gone unnoticed for years. There may be aspects you are reluctant to share with the world, but this is a great time to let out your secret.

Visualise yourself on stage or in a recording studio performing at your best. Play with the image you see. Add in aspects of yourself that are a bit outrageous, then add parts that are more understated.

Keep playing with what turns you on and understand that it will probably turn others on as well. Get really intimate with your instincts. Your gut will always show you the

way and is your best friend in this process. Our bodies don't lie. If you are so nervous about a performance that you feel ill, then there is probably something in your choices that has not yet aligned.

If you are feeling great and people are reacting with incredible enthusiasm, you know you are onto something. If you are unsure how to trust your instincts, sit silently and do what you can to relax, then gently ask yourself a simple question about your unique talents. Notice what comes up: words, an image, a feeling, a new awareness. This is your body and soul responding to you.

Self-awareness is key and the more you develop a relationship with your instincts, the further you will go towards establishing and presenting the most incredible, fascinating, awe-inspiring performer you can be. Remember, you are the only one who can be you.

Don't deprive the world of the gift you have to share: we can't wait to see and hear it! We are waiting for you ■

## MICHELLE COHEN



A multi-faceted writer, director, producer, performer and coach, Michelle Cohen and her diverse projects have been featured on CNN, Good Morning America, MTV, NPR's All Things Considered, and in People magazine and Entertainment Weekly. Michelle has been an adjunct member of faculty at several acting schools, including NYU and has privately coached actors and singers for decades. Author of *Of Course You Can Sing!*, her book has been translated into inspirational coaching lessons by Text and Voice Mail. Michelle also produced the off-Broadway mega-hit, *Schoolhouse Rock Live!* in New York.



[www.michellecohenprojects.com](http://www.michellecohenprojects.com)



*the*  
**BIZ**



**PASSING IT ON**

**How BAST is teaching the teachers**



**NEWS**

**Why the UK music industry is in good health**



# Passing it on

Clarissa Land reports  
back after attending the  
inaugural BAST Singing  
Teachers Retreat 2016



The BAST Singing Teacher's Retreat 2016 was about as inspiring and uplifting a weekend as a vocal geek like me could hope for. My brain was filled to bursting with new science, research, techniques and teaching methodology. I left feeling invigorated by the people I'd met and the lectures I'd attended and eager to get back to my students to put it all into practice.

For those who don't know, BAST (Be A Singing Teacher) is a fantastic teacher-training course in association with and endorsed by the VIP (Vocology In Practice) singing teacher network. Although aimed at beginner teachers, the course is thorough and comprehensive and has given rise to an international network of singing teachers. In fact, it's how I first became a singing teacher myself.

The retreat was an opportunity



The size of the classes was perfect because everyone felt they could speak up and everyone got an equal amount of attention



NUTRITIONIST STEPHANIE MOORE TALKS ABOUT GASTRIC REFLUX, THE BANE OF A SINGERS LIFE

for networking and continuing education held over a Saturday and Sunday at the University of Hertfordshire; a slightly labyrinthine campus, but easily accessible from London with good facilities and plenty of accommodation on site.

The mornings kicked off with two seminars each day from guest speakers. First up, a fascinating lecture on Care of the Professional Voice from Dr Nicholas Gibbons, consultant ENT surgeon and voice specialist. Warm and funny, he took us on an evolutionary journey of the larynx over 500 million years into its current architectural and anatomical form. He impressed upon us that singers are elite athletes and as such need access to the same resources: a great coach, physio, psychological support, nutritional guidance and a top doctor.

Next, Jenny Nash, a senior physiotherapist at PhysioEd followed with Muscle Tension Dysphonia and The Role of Ultrasound in Breath

Management For Singers. We were given a clear explanation of the muscle system of the larynx and voice with a focus on the effects of an imbalance in this system, how imbalances can occur, how we can spot them, how we can prevent them and how we can treat them with physiotherapy, laryngeal massage and ultrasound. Having never heard of laryngeal massage before, I can't wait to try it out for myself.

On Sunday, Debbie Winter, founder of Voice Workshops, gave the seminar Breath management: what's the literature saying? She delved into the minefield of conflicting approaches to breathing in singing and reached the conclusion that, while there is evidence to suggest that an appropriate breathing strategy based on a sound anatomical understanding can be beneficial in relation to classical singing, it isn't clear if it can be applied to other genres. Breathing patterns seem to be

individual and so, if you choose not to employ breathing exercises, the body may well just figure what best to do by itself.

My favourite talk came from nutritionist Stephanie Moore who spoke to us about Reflux: The Singer's Worst Nightmare and the fascinating interplay of hormones that occurs when our bodies are stressed. Top tip: good sleep is more important than good nutrition. Best get an early night, then.

Afternoons saw attendees split into smaller groups for elective classes given by certified BAST instructors Line Hilton (yes iSing's founding editor), Ian Davidson, Lisa Hauptert, Kaya Herstad Carney and guest vocal nerd Chris Johnson of The Naked Vocalist.

In Working With Choirs and Harmonies, Ian (who runs the Liverpool Community Choir) taught us how to create block harmony using the zoning model as well as how to teach harmony through round songs. And in Student Centred Learning, Kaya showed us the importance of positivity, building growth mindsets as opposed to fixed mindsets and how to engage students in the learning process by adapting our teaching to suit different learning styles (VAK versus theory of multiple intelligences).

A plethora of other electives gave wide choice to individual needs and interests: vocal science, anatomy and physiology, formants, creating individual workout programs for students, vowel modification, diagnosing and assessing the singing voice, essential teaching tools, vocal health, extreme vocal qualities, the influence of vocal styles on teaching methodology, how to structure

“  
I left feeling invigorated by the people I'd met and the lectures I'd attended

lessons and transitioning from exercise into song.

One of the attendees Hannah said: “I thought the smaller groups were amazing. The size of the classes was perfect because everyone felt they could speak up and everyone got an equal amount of attention.”

Days closed with either panel Q&As with the BAST team or teaching clinics where participants could teach each other under

expert guidance and have a crack at applying their new-found skills.

Attendee Lucy said: “It was good to have the opportunity to put into practice all the information that you'd been given in the morning, to watch other teachers and suggest things that you would do if you were in that position with a student in real life. It was really cool to hear all the different opinions and approaches and what everyone would do differently. There wasn't necessarily one right answer, but lots of different approaches that led to the same outcome.”

There was also ample opportunity for attendees to brush up on their own technique with private lessons from VIP teachers (at an extra cost).

Obviously, the weekend is aimed at those singing teachers who have completed BAST, but you can attend the retreat even if you have not and the retreat is geared up to cater to this, with BAST staff helping you choose suitable electives for your level of knowledge, experience and



THE PANEL Q&A - IAN DAVIDSON, LISA HAUPERT, LINE HILTON, KAYA HERSTAD CARNEY AND CHRIS JOHNSON



## I loved meeting everyone and hanging out

ability. But be warned: those who came to the weekend without having done BAST were champing at the bit to enrol.

Maegan is a vocal producer and arranger and now wants to take the BAST course. She said: “I really enjoyed the breadth of specialists that they had covering different topics in a lot of detail. It’s mind blowing. From every single topic, there was something for me personally to take away and apply in the studio. It’s really what my appetite to learn more. I would do a week of this if it was available. I’d book it right now.”

Personally, I loved meeting everyone and hanging out in



NEW AND EXPERIENCED SINGING TEACHERS AT THE BAST SINGING TEACHER’S RETREAT 2016

a learning environment full of enthusiastic teachers as excited as myself to expand their knowledge and improve their students’ performance. Teaching can often be a solitary experience, so it feels important to connect with others in your field and build a network of colleagues and friends. With attendees ranging from singers to producers, backing vocalists, West

End superstars and teachers of all ages and genders from all across the globe, my only complaint is that it didn’t last a week. Bring on the BAST Teachers’ Retreat 2017 ■

For more information on  
BAST singing teacher training



[www.basttraining.com](http://www.basttraining.com)

## 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.



[www.thevocalvibe.com](http://www.thevocalvibe.com)



# MUSIC INDUSTRY

## in good shape

A new report on the state of the UK music scene delivers a forceful message: the industry makes a massive economic and cultural contribution that ought to be recognised by politicians and policymakers. While the music industry is currently in rude health,

Brexit, the loss of grassroots venues and the trend towards streaming could pose challenges ahead.

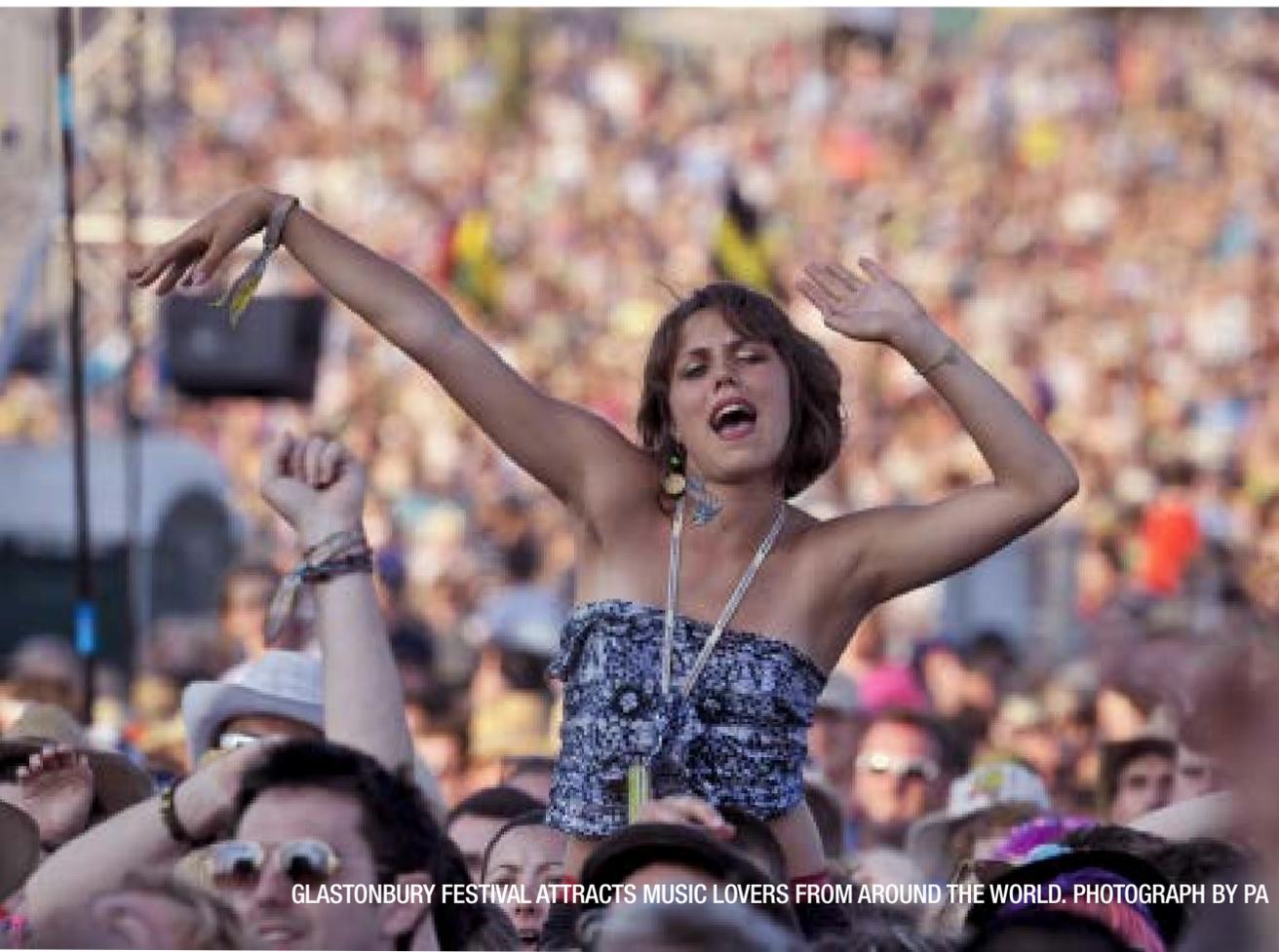
UK Music, the umbrella body that represents all sectors of the industry from singers and producers to labels and venues, looked at the industry's growth over the past four years in *Measuring Music*. The report backs

up what many people have been saying about the industry with cold, hard numbers, some of which are quite staggering. It found that the industry contributed a whopping £4.1bn to the UK's economy in 2015, despite tough economic conditions. The industry outperformed many areas of the UK economy, with a 17 per cent increase in gross value added (GVA) contribution and exports and employment were both up 11 per cent over four years.

### Live action

A key part of this growth was in the live sector. In 2015, a total audience of 27.7 million attended live music events in the UK. There has also been a dramatic hike in overseas tourists visiting the UK to attend music events – up 39 per cent in four years. Each visitor spends on average £751 which goes directly to UK businesses.

However, the report did note a slight dip in its overall GVA



GLASTONBURY FESTIVAL ATTRACTS MUSIC LOVERS FROM AROUND THE WORLD. PHOTOGRAPH BY PA

## “ Sustainability and stability are critical for future growth”

contribution, which it attributed to a decline in grassroots music venues. It raised concerns about the impact the loss of these smaller venues might have in years to come, saying: “It is essential that we must ensure the challenges facing this vital part of the music-ecosystem are addressed in order to secure continued growth and investment in live music. We need policies and investment to secure a platform for the headliners and chart toppers of tomorrow.”

### Protecting income

Technology is changing the face of the industry with CD sales down 3.9 per cent in one year alone as fans opt to get their music fix from the likes of Spotify, Deezer, Tidal, Apple Music and YouTube.

Streaming, to some extent, has offset some of this decline, with revenue from subscription streaming rising from £168m in 2014 to £251m in 2015. However, it is still crucial to ensure artists and publishers are fairly rewarded for their creative endeavours.

The report says: “For the potential of streaming to be fully realised, it must operate fairly and value the music that creates business and traffic for the service. The debate on

fair remuneration for rights holders from digital services like YouTube and from all user-uploaded content has never been more important if our future digital market is to continue to grow and prosper. Sustainability and stability are critical for future growth.”

### Looking ahead

UK Music used the report as a platform to call on the government to recognise the industry’s economic and cultural contribution and to do more to protect it.

UK Music’s chief executive, Jo Dipple, says: “The UK needs to solidify its new, post-Brexit place in the world and music will undoubtedly be part of the glue that does this. Our export profile

is astounding which is partly why music, like sport, gives the world an understanding of our small country.”

Andy Heath, chairman of UK Music, called for a greater emphasis on creativity in the school curriculum, which has been criticised for favouring English and mathematics over the arts.

“Government says it recognises that music is one of the UK’s strongest hands. However, it doesn’t always produce policy to strengthen that hand. Right now, leaving creative subjects out of the new baccalaureate is plain wrong. Technical ability and creativity are the yin-and-yang powers that have made this country great. Leaving creativity to only those that can afford it is completely self-serving in the long run.” ■

## THE UK MUSIC INDUSTRY IN 2015 IN NUMBERS:

The industry contributed £4.1bn  
to the UK’s economy

One in six albums sold around  
the world last year was British

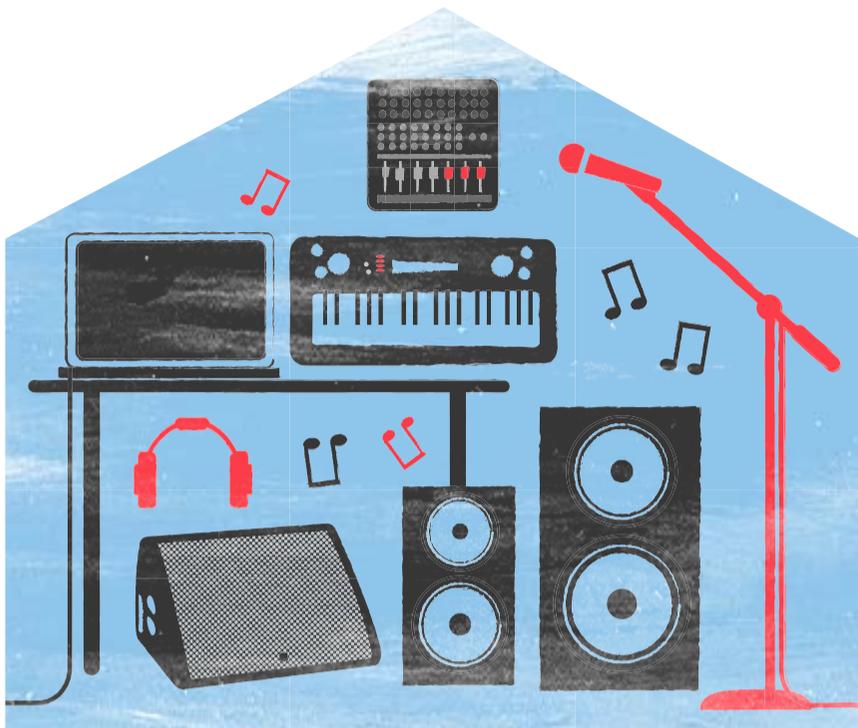
The total live music audience in  
the UK in 2015 was 27.7 million

3.7 million people attended  
festivals in the UK 2015

24 million people attended concerts

There were 10.4 million music tourists

The industry sustained 39,034  
full time jobs



# GEARING<sup>up</sup>



**PRODUCT NEWS** Why the K92s are sound headphones



**PRODUCT NEWS** Take a closer look at RME's new converter



**COMPETITION** Audio Technica prize winner



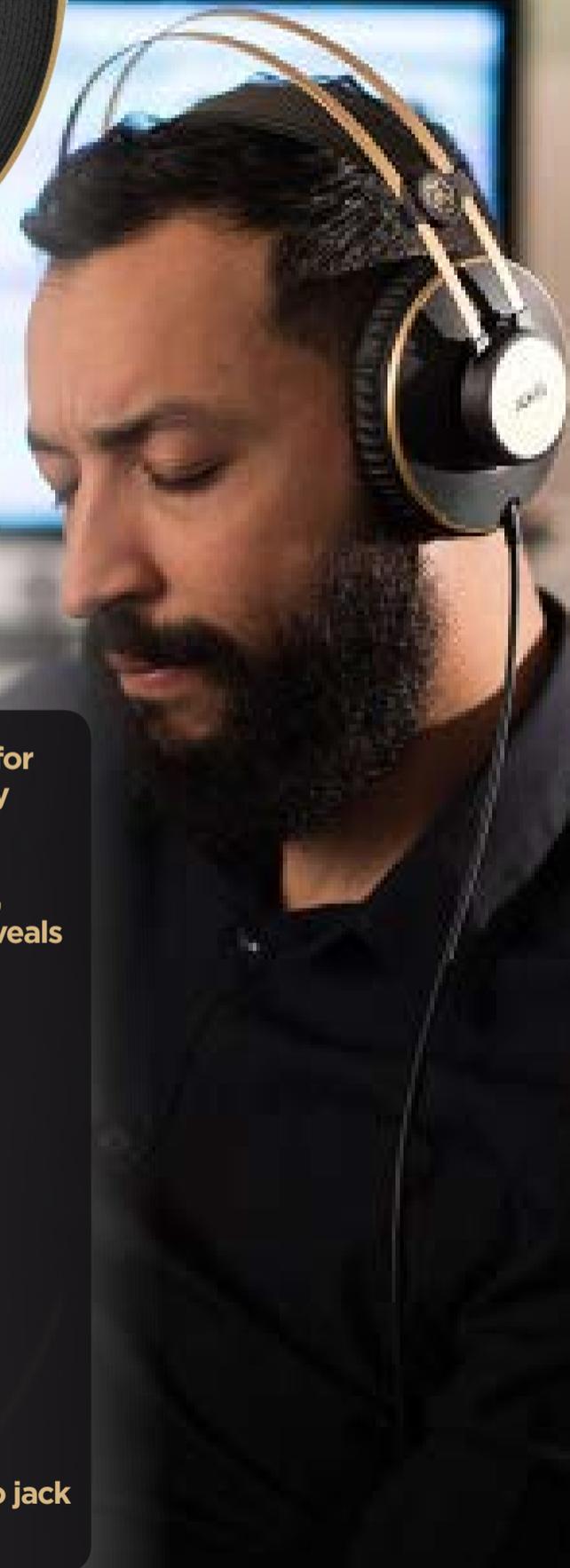
# The K92s are a sound pair of budget headphones

The gear market is awash with achingly beautiful luxe headphones that deliver amazing sound, should you dare to actually use such works of art, but, they don't come cheap; be prepared to fork out close to a thousand pounds for high-end headphones, or even more if you have a serious gear fetish.

Thankfully for those who love music but are on a more modest budget, AKG has brought out the K series, a range at the affordable end of the market, which includes the K52s, the K72s and - our favourites - the K92s.

The K92 over-ear, closed-back headphones retail in the UK for around £59 plus VAT. Okay, they don't deliver the same quality as a top-of-the-range pair but, for the price, you would be hard pressed to find better value. In fact, the K92s punch well above their weight and are good enough to rival headphones that cost twice the price.

Design-wise, they are a little on the bulky side but we love the matte black and gold finish. The other two options in the range (the K52s and the K72s) are only marginally cheaper, so it's worth investing in the K92s ■



- Professional-grade 40mm drivers for extended 16Hz to 20kHz frequency response
- A detailed and precisely-balanced, high-frequency response which reveals the nuance in vocals, guitars and
- Adjustable headband for comfort
- Sensitivity headphones: 113 dB
- Input power (max): 200 mW
- Rated impedance: 32 Ohms
- Cable Length: 3m
- Connection Type: 1 x 3.5mm stereo jack



[www.akg.com/pro/p/k92](http://www.akg.com/pro/p/k92)

# Converter delivers

## high quality sound and compatibility

Over the past 20 years RME has built up a reputation for creating innovative, user friendly and high quality audio products for music industry professionals.

And to mark its 20th anniversary the firm has introduced four new products into the marketplace, one of which is the ADI-2 Pro.

It's a high class, high end AD/DA converter brimming with features. So much so that Mattias Carstens, head of design at RME, enthusiastically described it at Musikmesse 2016 as "absolutely amazing". Watch the video below to hear him explain the features of the ADI-2 Pro.

Carstens says RME is determined to build on the pioneering reputation it has built up over the past two decades so watch this space for more



exciting product launches.

"We are proud of our reputation, our legacy, and have every intention of providing both present and future customers with the best products and support available. We want our customers to share in our celebration as we provide them our best for their continued support." ■



[www.rme-audio.de](http://www.rme-audio.de)

### The ADI-2 Pro features:

- A double headphone amplifier in true high-end quality
- A USB DAC like no other - the most versatile and capable one
- A high-end AD/DA frontend and headphone amp for iPad / iPhone
- A multi-format converter (AES, SPDIF, ADAT) with monitoring function
- A DSD record and playback solution
- An AD/DA frontend for audio measurement at up to 768 kHz sample rate.

### RME market the ADI-2 Pro as the most flexible converter available which also offers:

- Balanced/unbalanced analog I/Os
- Double extreme power headphone outputs
- SteadyClock III
- Four-stage hardware input and output level control
- DSP-based signal processing, external power supply operation,
- Class compliant USB compatibility
- Sample rates up to 768 kHz.



RME'S MATTIAS CARSTENS AT MUSIKMESSE



# *look listen* & FEEL



**#ISINGDOYOU**

Listen to our readers



**A SINGER'S  
STORY**

Artist versus technician



**iREVIEW**

Ultimate Artists – the verdict



**NEWS**

Unsigned Only music competition



**iREVIEW**

Does How Your Voice Works work?



**NEWS**

Katie Melua goes back to her roots



# #iSingDoYou

Many of iSing's readers are passionate artists in their own right creating music across all genres. Lots of performers submit their work to iSing and here are five we think are worth a close listen.

If you would like to share your music with other iSing readers then submit your music and details to [www.isingmag.com](http://www.isingmag.com) select the tab **Be in iSing** and fill in the form. Who knows you might be next to be featured in #iSingDoYou, or maybe we'll do a whole feature on you!



## CLARA BOND



After writing hits for the Sugarbabes, Cheryl Cole and Natalie Imbruglia, Clara Bond is now stepping into the limelight herself with a new Americana inspired EP *Out of Towners*. Bond already has a loyal fanbase, thanks to the popularity on social media of her videos of cover versions. She also recently recorded and filmed an exclusive full band live version of the EP for BBC *Introducing* so expect big things from her in the future.



[www.clarabond.com](http://www.clarabond.com)

## CLIMBING TREES

With three singer/songwriters in their fold, Welsh band Climbing Trees have a depth of talent that sets them apart. Their debut album *Hebron*, back in 2013, was applauded for its eclectic, organic sound. The band's follow up album, *Borders*, took three years to make and was a more mature, radio-friendly offering. It features the single *Tracks* which has gained airplay on BBC Radio 1 and BBC 6 Music. Well worth a listen.



[www.ilikeclimbingtrees.com](http://www.ilikeclimbingtrees.com)

## RED SKY JULY

Red Sky July's hazy blend of Americana and alt-country has seen them playlisted on BBC Radio 2, and support artists such as Steve Earle, Sheryl Crow, 10CC, Tom Jones and Jools Holland. The trio have also ticked Glastonbury, T in the Park and the Isle of Wight Festival off their list. The band have just released *Voyager*, a "mini album" with six tracks featuring delicate female harmonies and first-rate musicianship.



[www.redskyjuly.com](http://www.redskyjuly.com)



## NAYANNA HOLLEY



It's no surprise that Nayanna Holley is a singer – it's something of a family trait as her father sang backing vocals for none other than Michael Jackson. Holley is a trained jazz singer and has carved a successful career singing backing vocals. She has sung BVs for Sheryl Crow, Queen Latifah and Robbie Williams and performed at the White House for the Obamas. She is now looking to take centre stage.



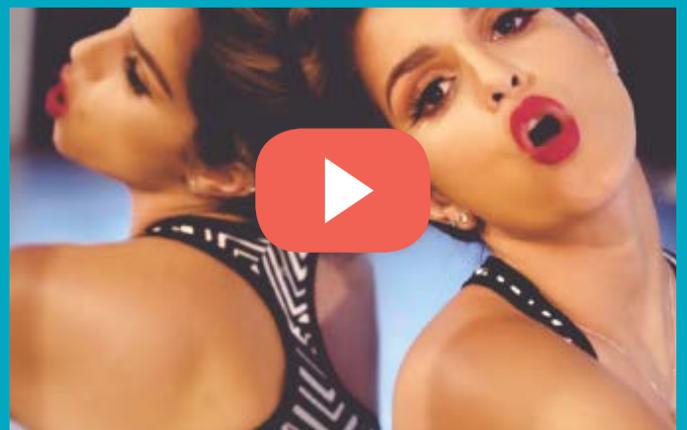
[www.nayannaholley.com](http://www.nayannaholley.com)

## CHESS GALEA

Maltese-born Galea has been singing, dancing and acting since she was a child. She moved to the UK at the age of 18 to pursue music and has been working ever since to carve out a career. Unashamedly influenced by 90s pop, Galea has written and sung toplines for international DJs. She has also released several singles and an album, *1869*, under her own steam.



[www.chessgalea.com](http://www.chessgalea.com)



# Artist vs TECHNICIAN

How one singer learned  
to combine passion  
with discipline



Lately, I've been thinking a lot about the relationship between a musician's inner "Artist" and inner "Technician". The Artist is the passionate, excited part of you that can't stop singing. The Technician is the serious scholar that wants to master the skill of singing. It took me a full decade of musical training to finally balance the two.

I know there are people who are nervous about taking voice lessons because they believe that training might suck the raw joy out of singing. For a long time, and even as I studied at university level, I stubbornly prioritised my inner Artist over my precise Technician. But, after a lot of disappointment and



UNDERSTANDING SINGING TECHNIQUE CAN MAKE PERFORMING MORE FUN

frustration, I learned that balancing the two is the only way forward. After all, there is nothing quite as fun as sounding exactly the way you want to sound.

### The Artist

I have been an avid singer for as long as I can remember and was endowed with a fair amount of talent. I was lucky enough to have been “programmed” with a unique voice, a wide vocal range, a good musical ear and a strong emotional connection to music, but when I got to the University of Southern California (USC) to start my undergraduate degree I was suddenly surrounded by more musical talent than I had ever imagined. I was, at best, average.

Despite this, rather than focusing on learning solid technique, my Artist fought back; I sulked when my teacher interrupted my joyful singing to point out a vocal flaw. I warmed

up and practised because I loved to, but without really concentrating on the boring details. I got better, but not fast enough.

By the time I graduated, reality had hit. Like many of my fellow undergrads at USC, I never got a decent role in a mainstage production. Even worse, I hadn't been accepted into any of the graduate schools to which I had applied. I was crushed and beginning to realise that I didn't have enough of “it” to make a career in classical music easy.

### The Technician

My buried disdain for technique finally subsided during graduate school. My voice teacher at the University of Michigan was extremely technical, focusing on the minutiae of vocal production and using diagrams and illustrations to back up her ideas. I realised



I need the  
precision of my  
Technician and  
the passion and  
emotion of my Artist

something about my fellow students at this prestigious music school; most of them were at about my level, but a lucky few just seemed to have “it”. Their natural level of talent far exceeded mine. Not only did they have stunning voices, they also intuitively understood how to use those voices almost perfectly. They were only in school for a little



I can't even begin to explain how gratifying it is to sing at your absolute best. It is an experience beyond anything the Artist can achieve alone.

tune-up before embarking upon highly successful professional careers. They were the one per cent

of the one per cent, the rare few for whom a career in opera would be relatively easy to achieve.

Right before my penultimate semester came to a close, I had an epiphany: if I didn't do something to drastically overhaul my technique, I would never make it as an opera singer. Maybe I wasn't programmed as well as the "chosen ones" but I could try to close the gap with technique. So, I stuffed my Artist into my locker and got to work. I practised in a completely new way, focusing on and retraining the tiniest parts of the vocal apparatus. I concentrated my attention not on the high notes that were so much fun, but on the weaker, low notes that I had been avoiding for years. I found a new joy – the joy of truly taking ownership of my voice. By the time my final recital came, my singing was transformed. The faculty noticed a difference and so did I. All of my hard work paid off and I landed a full time singing job right after graduation.

### The Perfect Match

It was only recently that I realised that valuing technique over artistry is not the answer. Certainly, I needed to do it for a while but, in doing so, I invited my disgruntled artist to come back out to play again. In the end, the real reason we sing is that we love it, not because we want to be perfect. To sing as well as I can, I need the precision of my Technician and the passion and emotion of my Artist. One is nothing without the other.

You may not want to become a professional singer but, if you have a passionate and excitable Artist inside you, there is no reason to fear voice training. Awakening your Technician will only make singing more fun, as long as you learn to balance it out with your joyous Artist. I can't even begin to explain how gratifying it is to sing at your absolute best. It is an experience beyond anything the Artist can achieve alone. So, go ahead and schedule those voice lessons and get ready for a thrilling and rewarding journey ■

## ELAINA ROBBINS



**E**laina Robbins is a light lyric coloratura soprano from Ann Arbor, Michigan. She has a Master of Music from the University of Michigan and a Bachelor of Music from the University of Southern California. Elaina has been a full-time vocal artist with Heartland Sings in Fort Wayne, Indiana since 2015. As a member of Heartland's full-time quintet, she performs pop, jazz, a cappella, and other small ensemble compositions, along with soprano solos in masses, choral works, and opera and musical theatre scenes. Elaina's past roles include Erste Knabe in Mozart's Die Zauberflöte and Le feu and Le rossignol in Maurice Ravel's L'enfant et les sortilèges. Her oratorio experience includes the soprano solos in Haydn's Theresienmesse, Mozart's Requiem, and the Rutter Requiem. Elaina is also a passionate voice teacher who built her first studio through TakeLessons.com, an online community for private voice teachers and students.



[TakeLessons.com](https://www.takelessons.com)

ULTIMATE  ARTISTS  
More than Music

# THE VERDICT

By Clarissa Land

**H**ave you ever wanted to disappear for a week and really focus on your art? If only there was a place you could go to really dig in deep and dedicate some time to figuring out who you are musically, as a singer, as a songwriter. Perhaps there would be other people there just like you, on their own scary and wonderful journeys; people with whom you could connect, share, and maybe even collaborate. And in this enchanted land there would be wise gurus and fairy godmothers to push you and nudge you and catch you.

They would teach you new tricks and take you into thrilling worlds you've never seen before. Wouldn't that be a wonderful dream? Well, listen up!

Founded by top vocal coach Joshua Alamu, Ultimate Artists (UA) is a nine-day boot camp for aspiring singers, songwriters and artists of all ages and abilities, held each summer at the University of Hertfordshire. I dropped by to check it out and met students in their teens to their thirties from the UK and Ireland, Malta, Poland, Slovenia and further afield; a truly international bunch of talent.

UA costs £1,680 but when you consider what's on offer, you soon start to see the value for money. Food and accommodation aside, the campus has brilliant facilities: recording studios, large rehearsal



JULIE GOSSAGE TAKING PERFORMERS THROUGH THEIR PACES

and performance spaces and state-of-the-art music production suites. Courses are led by industry professionals at the very top of their game: Joshua works with record labels, management companies and TV shows such as *The Voice UK*; Richard Halton played the title role in *Phantom of the Opera*; Grammy award-winning Aamir Yaqub has worked with the likes of Sia and Rihanna. You get the picture.

The schedule is full on and not for the faint-hearted. Each day starts at 7am with an hour of physical and vocal warm-ups before breakfast. At 9am, the 47 students split into four groups according to age and ability for their classes: Vocal Style and Technique, Song Production, Musical Theatre and Rejig Your Gig. In the afternoons, students come

back together for choreography workshops, jam sessions and song collaborations. In the evening, there are lengthy vocal showcases, performance workshops and trips to London's West End that stretch until 11pm, before a good night's sleep and doing it all again the next day. As if that wasn't enough, on my visit a little birdie told me that Joshua had added in extra sessions at 6.30am.

I jumped at the chance to sit in on various workshops and see firsthand what the students get up to. First up, Musical Theatre with husband and wife power duo and West End veterans Richard Halton and Julie Gossage. After a high energy warm-up, a student comes up to sing. She has chosen *Ain't No Mountain High Enough*, but has learnt the wrong version. No problem, Richard

“  
Just be you.  
You are enough.  
That’s a huge  
thing to accept,  
even in life.”

is more than accommodating; from behind the keyboard he quickly pulls up her version and transposes. She begins to sing. The vocal talent is evident, but her confidence is lacking. Julie steps in: “Who are you talking to? What are you saying?”. They talk through the meaning of the lyrics and Julie makes gentle, insightful comments. She sings again and the improvement is immediate. Julie takes away the mic stand and deftly guides her through her next rendition like a pro.

Next, a lively business seminar

on the ins and outs of songwriting and publishing with Aamir and Eva Brandt. It strikes me as obvious that any artist en route to selling their music ought to have a decent grasp of how the industry works and a firm understanding of their rights if they’re not to get screwed over. But you’d be amazed at the naivety of many young artists. It’s refreshing to see that UAI is covering all angles and embracing this as an essential educational component. Aamir is charismatic and funny and has the gift of the gab, a born teacher. He simplifies a complicated business structure and the students seem to really get it, jumping in with their own situations and experiences and grilling him for advice.

Then the large group breaks into smaller songwriting teams; each has picked an artist for whom to write a song, which they will record and perform at the end of the week. I hear strong melodies, good pop harmonies and catchy lyrics and watch as the students collaborate and share roles amongst themselves, all eager to contribute, all putting themselves forward.

Finally, I hit up Vocal Style Artistry with Joshua Alamu. “Work with me,” he says, and they do. He sings a complicated lick and, in turn, the students sing it back to him. I am taken aback at the beauty of the different voices, each confident in their own expression. He sings another run and the cycle repeats. “There is no right or wrong, there is only colour.” He gives each student as much or as little time as they need, allowing this one time to pick it up and nail it, pushing the next a little further, intuitively sensing they have more to give. Some are young teenagers and what he is asking them to do is subtle and sophisticated, intimidating even, but they are all at ease with themselves and each other. He has created an environment that gives permission to fail. “When you are even slightly limited, it’s not art anymore,” he says. “It helps to explore every part of what your voice can do.”

I meet Louise, an Irish woman returning to UAI for her second time. She tells me it was tough the first time round: “Emotionally it was every hard. I think when you get older everything is that little bit harder. You have more ambition and you’re worried about what to give out to people, so this time I’m more able to give. It’s hard to get to that place.”

I ask what she took away from the experience last year: “Don’t compare yourself to other people. Just be you. You are enough. That’s a huge thing to accept, even in life. And also, it’s very practical. When you’re here, you’re in a bubble, but when you go home, what are you going to do? Are you just going to go back to your job? I’ve done more in the last couple of years than I’ve ever done in my



SIMONE CORNELIUS, SOPHIA THOMAS, KERYS NATHAN (PRODUCER, AUTHOR, DIRECTOR, VOCAL COACH AND UA 2016 MENTOR), JASMINE ABELA AND WINNER OF THE 2016 ISING COMPETITION, JAUSME STONKUTE .



SONGWRITING, PRODUCTION, MUSIC INDUSTRY INTERVIEWS, SHOWCASES AND SEMINARS ARE ALL PART OF WHAT'S ON OFFER AT UA

whole life before; recording, writing, open mic nights.”

Louise has come back with a friend who she met at UAI the previous year. She tells me about Rejig Your Gig, a favourite of most students: “You pick a song from the set list, get up and jam it out with the band, but you do a completely different version of it. You do whatever you want to do with the song. It’s really to help you work with a band. Talk to the drummer. Talk to the keys player. Get them to feel what you want to bring out in the song. In theory, it sounds not that difficult, but it’s hard in reality. It’s good practice to work with a live band because some people don’t have that opportunity.”

I meet Sofia, a scholarship student, who tells me how excited she was when she first came out of her college Musical Theatre course, but how she felt type-cast when she entered the industry: “I didn’t like the vocal qualities they wanted to me to express; it’s not how I enjoy expressing myself. Last year I began to feel that I wasn’t sure, so I started some vocal coaching with Josh and he opened my eyes to a whole new

way of using my voice and I really enjoyed it, but it left me so confused and frustrated that I stopped singing. I came here at a real crossroads, wanting to get the fire back for singing and it’s been very, very good. It’s really clear to me now what I should be doing - and it’s music.”

She tells me that her Musical Theatre agent is coming to the final showcase and that she plans to tell her that she is going in a new direction. She has discovered her true sound, Afro Soca Jazz. Brave, I think, and ask what has given her this courage.

“The whole week I’ve felt very free to try anything, and that’s when

you’re most in tune with yourself. Vocal style is more about revealing who you are than trying to dazzle with a song and it is so very clear that this is exactly what I need to do.”

This is real, life-changing, career-changing stuff. Moments of self-discovery and turning points are all around. A special mention must go, then, to the incredible directors and team leaders I met; warm, caring, passionate, endlessly giving and there for the students at every step, with a hug, with advice, with a chat. They gush about the students and the progress they have seen and are excited to show me videos on their phones of students breaking out of their shells and finally hitting “that” note. It’s a source of wonder that they can laugh and smile and care so much on so little sleep, but it’s clear that they live and breathe UAI as much as the students do.

UAI is a very special place. It’s a dream world for singers, creating very real results, real music and real artists ■

“  
I am taken  
aback at the  
beauty of the  
different voices



[www.ultimateartists.co.uk](http://www.ultimateartists.co.uk)

# Get your big Break

with  
Unsigned Only

Unsigned solo artists and bands looking for their big break are invited to enter an international music competition which promises the winner US\$20,000 and plenty of industry exposure.

Unsigned Only (UO) aims to uncover fresh new talent which has not yet been signed by a record label. What sets it apart from other talent competitions is the calibre of its judging panel and the number of entry categories.

The UO judging panel is made up of high profile recording artists – The Killers, Aimee Mann and The Struts, to name but a few – and industry and media execs from companies such as Yahoo, *American Songwriter* magazine and *TimeOut*.

UO has 13 categories in total: adult alternative, adult contemporary, Americana, Christian, country, electronic dance music, folk/singer-songwriter, R&B/hip-hop, rock, pop/top 40, vocal performance, teen and Screen Shot. Screen Shot offers the opportunity for artists to have their music heard by top music execs who are looking to place music in film, TV, advertising and video games.

The winner of the grand prize will not only receive US\$20,000 but the unprecedented opportunity to be mentored by a group of record company presidents and A&R reps.

## Judging criteria

The judges will be looking for originality, songwriting/arrangement, vocals, performance, and overall likeability. The vocal performance category will be judged solely on the vocals.

Artists can enter more than one category in the competition, but as there is a charge associated with each UO entry it is important to read the fine print and competition rules

before entering.

## Deadline

The deadline for final entries is April 28, 2017. However entry costs are on a sliding scale. So each entry submitted before October 31 is US\$30. From November 1 to February 28, 2017, each category entry is \$35 and from March 1 to April 28, 2017, each entry is \$40 ■



[www.unsignedonly.com](http://www.unsignedonly.com)



# Does

## HOW YOUR

# voice works

# Work?

By Clarissa Land

**H**ow Your Voice Works is a joyous online course from Elissa Weinzimmer, founder of Voice Body Connection and is all about – you guessed it – the mechanics of the voice. It’s a science class for “big kids” covering vocal anatomy, basic human biology and voice science. It’s aimed at singers, actors, performers, teachers, public speakers and anyone who wants to further their understanding of the voice.

I’ll say off the bat that I loved this course. Weinzimmer calls it an online “textbook”, but I fear this might put you off, conjuring up difficult memories of tedious biology lessons. In actual fact, this is a series of fun, upbeat, engaging videos with content you can work through at your own pace - around four hours in total, but broken down into much shorter videos. This way of learning is perfect for anyone like me with an unpredictable schedule who can find it difficult to commit to a “live” class. If you’re someone who needs a push, you can set up email reminders to give yourself a nudge along the way.

Why bother to learn your how your voice works at all? Well, as singers, we’re at something of a

disadvantage compared to other musicians – we can’t see our instruments. Quite often, we don’t know what’s going on or what our instrument is made from. Could you imagine trying to play a saxophone if you’d never even seen one? A mechanic needs to know what is under the hood. And as Weinzimmer reminds us, how we understand a thing informs how we use or fix it.

Weinzimmer is a natural teacher, warm and likeable, with a clear delivery and succinct explanations. The videos are snappy and pacey

and provide helpful, in-depth understanding without being convoluted or perplexing. You’ll really get to grips with what’s going on inside that body of yours, but it all feels very accessible, never overwhelming. That said, a pleasure of learning this way is the ability to stop and rewind as much as you need.

She begins by explaining the three necessary components for the creation of any sound; we need power, a sound source, and then a filter. In human terms, this corresponds to the respiratory system, the vocal folds and the vocal tract. The course is helpfully split into three sections, one on each of these, and then subdivided further into modules such as breath, sound, resonance and articulation.

Each module has a main video lesson where Weinzimmer teaches us about the relevant topic using infographics, illustrations and diagrams, which are available to download and print should you wish to. There follows an interview conducted by Weinzimmer with a guest expert in the relevant field: speech pathologists, osteopaths, theatre voice professors. After



## How Your Voice Works

Learn the anatomy and mechanics of the human voice. Taught by Elissa Weinzimmer, vocal health educator and the founder of Voice Body Connection.



ELISSA WEINZIMMER IS AN ENGAGING TEACHER

you've watched the lesson, each module has two videos giving short exercises so you can immediately and practically apply what you've just learnt. Exercises range from how to find good alignment and how to release tension to tongue twisters to practice articulation and meditative techniques for coping with performance anxiety. These are great for daily personal practice and a worthwhile resource for the teachers amongst us to have in our arsenal.

The course comes with tips for

further reading and study and an online community where you can fire questions over to Weinzimmer herself and connect with other students. There is no homework and no test, which means it could be difficult to gauge your own comprehension. However, access lasts a lifetime, so you can review the material to your heart's content.

I would highly recommend this course to all singers and any teachers wishing to further their knowledge or brush up. It's convenient,

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It's convenient, entertaining and enlightening and really will deepen and broaden your understanding of how your voice works

entertaining and enlightening and really will deepen and broaden your understanding of how your voice works.

How Your Voice Works is available for US\$249 (approx. £205).

Singers can also take advantage of the PLUS package. This includes How Your Voice Works and participation in an eight week live online course run by Weinzimmer on Tuesday nights. The next live online course begins October 25. Enrolment for the live class is open from October 11 to 22. The live online course is US\$399 ■



[www.voicebodyconnection.com](http://www.voicebodyconnection.com)

# KATIE MELUA

## returns to her roots



KATIE MELUA WITH THE GORI WOMEN'S CHOIR. PHOTOGRAPH BY PIP

Many artists talk about going back to their roots to find musical inspiration; for singer songwriter Katie Melua this meant returning to her birthplace, the

former Soviet state of Georgia, and recording with a renowned women's choir.

The result is *In Winter*, an album that blends 25 female voices to create a sound that is powerful and

delicate. It was Melua's discovery in 2014 of a recording by Gori Women's Choir that provided the spark for the record.

"I was mesmerised by their tone and sonic richness. They are



DREAMS ON FIRE - KATIE MELUA

essentially a vocal orchestra,” says Melua.

With a vision to create a winter-themed record, Melua, who moved from Georgia to Belfast, Northern Ireland, at the age of nine, enlisted the help of the choir and world-renowned choral composer Bob Chilcott to arrange the vocal parts. “I learnt the importance of restraint and space from Bob. There was simply no one else I could think of who would be more perfectly suited to this particular challenge.”

In 2015, with a clear idea of how the record should sound, Melua and Adam “Cecil” Bartlett (whose engineering credits include the likes of PJ Harvey and Marianne Faithfull) flew to Georgia with 12 boxes of equipment and built a DIY studio in the small town of Gori’s cultural community centre.

The pair then took a leap into

the unknown: the choir had never recorded with headphones; Bartlett didn’t speak a word of Georgian; and Melua was left to communicate their ideas to the singers.

However once the studio was built and recording began, the project began to take shape thanks to the help of choir conductor Teona Tsiramua and vocal professor (and former opera singer) Anzori Shomakhia.

Melua recorded four songs before returning to London to continue to write new material.

Earlier this year Melua and Bartlett returned to Gori, rebuilt the studio, and for the next four weeks immersed themselves again in recording.

One of the songs they recorded was *Dreams On Fire*, the first single to be released from the album.

The video for the song was

shot with the choir in the historic Georgian National Opera and Ballet Theatre of Tbilisi in Georgia.

The theatre, in many ways the cultural face of Georgia, has survived fire (twice), tsars, Soviets and civil war.

The video also gives a glimpse of the way that conductor Teona Tsiramua works with the choir.

“The technique behind their singing is so different to what I have known before and it is fascinating to see how Teona works with the choir. The sound is visualised and sensed – both emotionally and physically.”

Melua, her band, and the 24-piece choir will in November embark on a European tour performing the album and a selection of classic songs from Melua’s catalogue ■



[katiemelua.com](http://katiemelua.com)