

## “Vocal Knows”

### **Hydration:**

- Your vocal chords are a muscle which require hydration.
- If you are preparing for a concert, it is very important that you hydrate at least one day prior to your concert.
- Water is the best always for hydration--Sodas, and caffeine (coffee, teas, excessive chocolate) will dehydrate the body.

### **Vocal Health:**

- The health of your body affects the health of your singing voice. Try to get at least 8 hours of sleep each night, especially the nights leading up to your lesson, rehearsals, and/or a concert.
- Yelling, screaming, or clearing your voice takes a toll on your voice and could cause temporary or permanent damage. Be aware always how you use your voice to communicate each day.
- Over singing throughout the day may cause fatigue. If you are new to singing, try not to sing more than 30 minutes at a time without taking a at least a 15 minute break. Overall you should not sing more than 1-3 hours a day if you can help it. If you are in a rehearsal, you can always mouth the words, or pay attention to other details in your scores. You are responsible for your own voice, and regardless what a director says, you will live with the consequences whether good or bad for how you treat your voice.
- Warming up in the morning will ensure that your voice will sound the best throughout the day, **especially if you have a lesson, rehearsal or concert** in the evening. I would encourage at least spending 15 minutes in the morning and then subsequently doing warm ups throughout the day on the day of your lesson, rehearsal, or a concert.

### **Posture**

- It is important when singing that the singer wears clothes that are suitable for singing. If your clothes are too tight through the abdomen and back you might have a hard time with your breath support. It is essential that the performer also wears a pair of stable shoes for balance.
- When standing it is important that equal weight is placed on both legs--this will ensure that you are balanced. You may have your feet shoulder length apart or lead with the right or left foot.
- Your quadricep muscles should be engaged. I always think of a boxer in a ring. In order for them to be successful in not loosing their footing, their legs are engaged.

- Keep your knees soft--if you lock your knees you will cut off circulation to your legs and you might even pass out.
- Keep your shoulders relaxed and back--this will help to make sure that you use your breath to it's fullest capacity.
- Your torso should be perpendicular to the floor when standing with your hands at your sides.

**Correct Breathing:**

- Your use of your breath is the life of your singing. It is what determines your pitch, color (timbre), vibrato, and endurance. If done incorrectly, one might experience fatigue, soreness, injury, and even the loss of one's voice.
- When taking a proper breath, you will want to use both your mouth and nose to inhale. For those people who struggle with allergies or a stuffy nose-- this might be a little bit difficult.
- Think of your lower belly as a beach ball. Allow it to expand as you breathe in from the lowest part of your stomach. As you sing, think of your air like fluid coming consistently from your stomach all the way up through your esophagus. This will ensure that you sing with a legato touch.
- You never want to force the breath in or out. Tension is not healthy for any part of the body.