

## Holistic Singing

*Alignment and breathing - seeing the whole body as your instrument.*

You wouldn't play a violin without checking the strings were attached. You can't play the piano if some of the keys are missing. As singers, the whole body is our instrument and physical warm-ups are VITAL. Often over-looked, or cut short due to time constraints, making sure to include some physical awareness into a rehearsal will improve the health, concentration and vocal stamina of all musicians.

- Semi-supine (Alexander Technique) for alignment and directional breathing (mindfulness). A little goes a long way. Even 5 minutes at the start of a rehearsal, or as people are filtering in, and you will see and hear the benefits. Improves posture, releases tension. More mindful singers = better concentration.
- Lip and tongue trills (blowing raspberries): feel the lower ribs at the back when breathing in and become aware of lower abdominals/pelvic floor engaging on the out breath. Not a forced muscular effort but awareness – “slip into the role of the observer”.
- Voiced consonants: v, z, rolled r (feel the effort lower in the body)
- Ng - singing in the mask (siren) – stops people from pushing or over singing.
- Finding alignment standing – against the wall. Heels relatively close to the wall, knees bent, hips & shoulders & head in contact with the wall.
- Breathing in, move down the wall; breathing out, move up the wall (hissing).
- Also- blowing out birthday candles, buzzing like a bee (siren)

### Taking this into singing

- vvvv and zzzzzz – v/za – v/zi v/ze v/za v/zo v/zu with one hand on lower ribs at the back, one hand on lower abs. Hands can also be either side of lower ribs. Build it up from small intervals to larger ones/longer phrases.
- How to keep the body aligned and engaged: on the wall, in chair pose (yoga), bending knees, arms up & down
- *Oh I love to sing* (again, can be built up)

- Images for helping the air flow: fish swimming, hands spinning, drawing something in the air (colour on the paintbrush)
- How to check in with body connection: standing on one leg (flamingo/giraffe) or down onto knees and back (fantastic for helping singers to forget about the scary high note), from standing to goddess pose (yoga), sitting to hover to sitting to hover (keep spine long)
- In pairs, hold hands and bend knees balancing each other's weight until you reach the ground then come back up. Do this on hiss, zzz/vvv or any exercise or tricky phrase.

### Keep in touch

[www.katythomson.co.uk](http://www.katythomson.co.uk) / Twitter @scottish\_katy / Facebook @scottishkatysop

Katy Thompson February 2021



Sing for Pleasure is a member  
of A Cœur Joie International



In Partnership with  
Bolton Music Service

*John Lewis Partnership*  
Supported by John Lewis Partnership