

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why get vocal lessons if I can sing really well already?

Vocal cords are like muscles and with proper training you can get a lot more out of them. With age and use your vocal cords can become sore, developing nodules which could end a career. Speech Level Singing (SLS) will get you through these hazards safely and unleash all of your potential.

Do you teach opera, jazz and all genres of music?

We give you the vocal coordination you need, enabling you to sing any style you want.

How many lessons do I need?

This is very much like fitness. Some need a coach to get through a problem area; others want to continually refine their skill. We have solved range and mix problems in a single lesson, but many have been students on-and-off for their entire careers. Master-level coaches are often called in before recording sessions, or brought by singers on tour to prevent them from hurting their voices.

I hear a lot about bad coaches ruining voices. Is this a real problem?

Sadly, yes. A bad coach can lead a singer into physically harming their vocal cords. The good news is that in many cases the damage can be undone. The other problem is teaching bad habits that can prevent a singer from maximizing their voice. It is not uncommon for us to work with experienced singers and increase their range dramatically in a handful of lessons.

Can you be too young or too old to start singing?

Not really. If a student can understand the music, they can work to improve their energy and control - thus becoming more able to accomplish their goals.

Are singers born with the gift to sing ?

Some certainly are more gifted than others, but as long as you can speak and are not tone deaf, you can sing. The music world is filled with diverse voices ranging from a Bob Dylan to a Pavarotti. Would we not have missed the one if he had decided not to sing because he did not sound like the other?

Why do you call your method "Speech Level Singing"?

Generally, when you speak in a comfortable manner, your outer muscles do not interfere . You can learn to maintain your tone with this comfortable speech level posture when you sing, no matter where the note is in your range. You can then learn to add volume while maintaining this healthy balance, resulting in a strong, powerful voice that can last forever!

Most voice methods start with "breathing". Is that how this method works too?

The voice is a subtle instrument that doesn't need huge amounts of air to work properly. We generally don't start with breathing unless the student is having a problem in that regard. We begin by helping you find a balance in your voice, and show you how to keep the vocal cords closed so that you are using your air more efficiently.

It's more about the subtle coordination of how you use your air, than about having huge amounts of air. Eventually, you will learn to lean in with more air behind a balanced instrument.

Can I learn to sing if I think I'm "tone deaf"?

If a person has trouble singing on the right notes, there may be a variety of reasons for this. Sometimes they just haven't learned how to use all the different parts of their voice (from low to high) so the notes don't go up when they need to go up. We can certainly work with you to pinpoint what your problems are, and to help you improve. All students notice improvement from studying this technique.

What is so different about this technique?

The key to speech level singing is understanding "Mix". As you sing higher into your range, you quickly encounter areas where your voice may "jam up", or it "breaks" and sounds weak. We call this area a bridge or passaggio. When you learn how to approach these areas in the right way, you can negotiate through them with finesse, increasing range into the higher areas.

Can anybody learn to sing, using this technique?

We like to think that anyone who can talk can learn to sing. Every student who comes in experiences great improvements in their voice.

What is the key to singing well?

The ability to always maintain a speech-level production of tone – one that stays "connected" from one part of your range to another. You don't sing like you speak, but you need to keep the same comfortable, easily produced vocal posture you have when you speak, so you don't "reach up" for high notes or "press down" for low ones.

Is singing really that easy?

Yes. There's no great mystery involved. But although it's easy to understand, it takes time and patience to coordinate everything so that you can do it well.

How do you classify a singer's voice?

It's wrong to prematurely classify a voice before you really get to know what it can do. Too often, existing range is the sole determining factor in placing a singer into a certain

category. The most important factor to consider is the basic quality of the voice. Assuming that your speaking voice is clear and unforced, your singing voice should be based on the quality of that speaking voice.

How do you determine what the tone quality of a singer's voice should be?

A singer's tone should be determined by his or her own individual vocal anatomy and not a predetermined ideal held by a teacher – or the student, for that matter! It should be a blend of the top, middle, and bottom resonance qualities that results when the singer's larynx remains in a relaxed, stable position.