

Practice Room Routines
Carol McAmis

I. Wake up the voice

- A. Non-judgemental
- B. Making sound for its own sake, just because it feels good
- C. Shifting consciousness and physical presence to the present moment
- D. At least 10-15 minutes
 - i. Shift in oxygen/CO2 balance in the brain takes that long
 - ii. Body will begin to feel lighter, more 'lined up', mind seems more focused
- E. Methods
 - i. Breathing
 - ii. Toning
 - iii. Movement
 - a. Feldenkrais
 - b. Yoga
 - c. Tai chi
 - d. Warm-ups from acting classes
 - e. Work with exercise ball
 - f. Educational Kiniesiology

II. Warm up the voice

- A. Observing what you are doing right now
- B. Non-judgemental, detached, observing like a scientist (Hm, when I do this, that happens.)
- C. Not yet technical practice, but these observations can also be used in learning a song
- D. Observations
 - i. Breath Management
 - a. Inhalation
 - b. Onset (suspending the breath & beginning the tone)
 - c. Exhalation
 - d. Completion of phrase into onset
 - ii. Diction
 - a. Vowels
 - 1. Vowel purity
 - 2. Vowel consistency
 - a) Note-to-note
 - b) Throughout range
 - 3. Connection from one vowel to the next
 - b. Consonants
 - 1. Phonation of consonants (Are they on the breath?)
 - 2. Clarity of consonants
 - c. Vowel/consonant connection
 - iii. Co-ordination
 - a. Locating holding, extra effort, 'black holes'
 - b. Could do Feldenkrais at this point while singing

III. Work on vocal technique

- A. Sustained tones
- B. Legato
- C. Staccato, marcato
- D. Registration
- E. Resonance/'placement'
- F. Intervals/leaps
- G. Scales/major, minor, chromatic
- H. Runs
- I. Arpeggios
- J. Trills and other ornamentation
- K. Portamento
- L. Dynamic control

- M. Emotional communication (How to express what the text calls for while maintaining the co-ordination needed for beautiful singing.)
- N. Expressiveness (phrasing, musicality, rhythmic vitality)

IV. Learning the song

- A. Basic musicianship: notes, words, rhythms
- B. Basic interpretation: who, what, when, where
- C. Basic technique
 - i. Find the challenging spots and work with them many different ways
 - ii. Ideas for working technically come from the wake-up/warm-up/vocal technique parts of practice.
- D. Working with the accompanist
 - i. Learning the whole song, not just the vocal part
 - ii. Is the accompaniment space or energy?
 - iii. Rehearsing ensemble
- E. Practicing the performance