

# SINGING MADE SIMPLE – SAGE 2011

## Why: Singing Made Simple?

I talk about this all the time. I'm simple, Music is simple, and so it seemed like a natural fit. However, in the simplicity there is a real complexity. (But it's still simple!)

First thoughts on what makes a strong program and in turn a strong choir:

- It **MUST** be FUN. I know this sounds trite, but hear me out.....
- BUILD SLOWLY (Rome wasn't built in a day) If you do this, things will stick!
- There is no such thing as tone deaf. (Is this is this still hard to believe?)

The start of strong singing is FUNDAMENTALS! Fundamentals are the most basic building blocks. When you adhere to these basic ideas, big changes occur.

## The Tricks/Strategies

Fundamentals – **Remember:** What is common sense for us is new to them!!!!

- Posture: It all begins here! Head on a string/lead from the sternum/feet shoulder width apart/unlock the knees
- Face: Eyebrows raised/smiling eyes (you know when they have it, to check, you have to look in their eyes)
- Breath: Belly Breathing: **This is tricky!** (K.I.S.S.) Talk in terms they can understand

**How to Breathe:** Surprised Face/Sit down, lean over/Lie down(baby breathing)/Fill the stomach with air/Feel the breathe with a YAWN/Silent breath

- Sing an “A” – This builds a relative pitch
- Vowels: Open Resonant, Feel it in the face

“Ah” Vowel (This is my starting point) Tall, North/South, not East/West

“EE” Vowel – Use the lips, anchor the tongue

“Oo/Oh” Put an “egg” in the mouth

- Consonants: This is simple, when you over do it, it's usually right (some current examples, T.V. The Simpsons, Family Guy? Etc) If you really listen, you'll hear the clarity.
- Connecting Consonants: Some words attach to the next one. Ex: All Ye Who Music Love “Cease not daily”

## Rehearsal Ideas:

- They Memorize, You Memorize: Communication goes through the roof, as does the Sound/Emotion/Style
- Sing it Bad, to Sing it Good or Conduct Bad, then Conduct how you want it. (Contrast!)
- Homer Simpson Technique
- Circles/ Mix-Up/Lights Out (almost)
- Find a different space to sing in
- Accompanist: GET ONE!!!!
- Keep it going! You've got 40 Minutes, Make them count!
- Lie down like Homer the Opera singer
- Get a mirror/take their picture
- What I Learned from "Angry Birds" (Be insistent!)

## Other Thoughts

- Repertoire: Pick what you like, but make sure it's good. Trust your judgement. Make it Balanced, ex: different styles, languages, some 'POP' is OK. Find some songs that are easy and get them singing!
- The Community Strategy: Steal from Everyone, borrow ideas. Always ask questions! Be brave enough to admit it's not going well. **Call your colleagues.** Anyone who is any good, wants to help.
- "People more frequently require to be reminded than informed" – Samuel Johnson
- Move your choir from Compliance to Commitment. Look to your leaders to make your room exciting. Remember your influence on the group and how your attitude shapes the culture of the choir. When they buy in, they'll try anything.

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