

## Sing Your Life Newsletter - Dec 2003

Hi Singers!

Hope your Thanksgiving day weekend was all that you hoped it would be.

Mine was spent moving into new quarters, which after 5 days finally has telephone service, electricity, gas, and cable TV. Thus, the delay in getting out this newsletter.

I usually skip December's newsletter as my local students and I gearing up for several holiday functions, but I have decided that circumstances involving all of you loyal readers dictate that I publish a newsletter this month to keep you focused and on track with your singing pursuits. Every now and then, it's important to go back to the fundamentals - - to remind ourselves how the voice we love to share is created, maintained and strengthened. I heard from one of our members today that my breathing exercises are causing great difficulties. Many of you over the years have reported that breathing the way I advocate for singing feels unnatural. Actually, it is the most natural way to breath, and not just for singing but for living. Ever take a stress-reduction course at work? Ever gone on a prayer or meditation retreat? Or maybe you've taken a Yoga class or other relaxation or weight-loss class. If you have , then you know the very first thing you are taught how to do is how to breathe deeply. Breathing deeply floods the blood stream with oxygen, which in turn relaxes the muscles of the body while also giving you more energy. Indeed, it is the day-to-day hurry-up, make-a-buck stresses of our present culture that has programmed us to shorten our inhales, become mouth-breathers, and hyperventilate on a regular basis until THAT seems natural, and the way we took our first breath out of the womb seems too hard to do. Let me tell you this. Not breathing between the phrases of a song is the single most reason our songs may run out of potency as we sing them. We may start out great, but by the end of the tune, we are practically worn out, dry and hoarse. Why the last two? Because when you haven't taken enough air into your body to support the sound, there is a tendency to bring everything up into the throat, and when that occurs, we strangle our sound and strain the throat, neck, jaw and face.

One of the perks of membership is access to me, and I have invited my members to call me personally on the cell phone if they are having problems with the breathing drills. For it is crucial that you breath correctly, and even if it does feel unnatural at first, once you have established the "habit" of breathing correctly, you'll breathe this way all the time, stay healthier, lower your blood pressure, oxygenate the muscles in your body for more energy, and of course, hold out those long luscious phrases.

## **You are teaching ME!**

They say that a good teacher learns as much from his/her students as he/she teaches them. In our case, I can truly say that every time I receive an email from you, asking for a tip on how to do something, whether it's choosing an audition piece, or doing a particular drill, I learn something from you. I learn that each of you is an individual with your own unique gifts and your own ways of learning.

By finding the "right" way for you to learn what I am giving you, I have raised the bar for myself and my practice. Each time, I discover a technique for you to break through whatever barriers there are to your singing and performing, I incorporate it into my overall teaching methods.

The articles I post in these newsletters are a direct result of your questions and concerns about your own vocal pursuits. You have literally opened up my mind to always continue to strive for the perfect "door" that will reveal your true nature as an artist.

This is a wonderful gift and you have given me this gift. I can't even express to you adequately the humility I feel through the activity of teaching all of you. Whether you are just a reader to this newsletter, or a paid member, or anything in between, each of you, in your own way, are making me a better teacher, coach, and performer. We can't grow unless there is something to learn, right?

And always remember that no matter how great we are at this moment, there is still something new to learn, and something to improve upon. I want you each to have an excellent holiday season, full of music and sharing your gifts. Never hold back for fear that your voice or your performance isn't perfect. You have been blessed with a deep burning desire to sing. So sing, for all you're worth, and heal someone in the process. And thanks for being there for me, just as I try to be there for you.

Have a wonderful season of joy and hope, singers! See ya next year!