

REGION 17 HARMONY WEEKEND - SEPTEMBER, 2009

DIANE M. CLARK

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PVIs

My goal for a 30-minute PVI is that you will come away with at least ONE new or reclaimed idea or tool that you can use to work on your voice in your daily practice at home. If you get more than one tool, that's icing on the cake.

The basic procedure will be this. I will first have you sing for me one of the songs from your current barbershop repertory. People are always nervous about singing, so we get that out of the way right at the beginning. Then I will ask you what one thing you would fix, if you could improve one thing about your singing. You may have ten concerns, but I want to know your top one. Then I will describe for you some of the things I heard/saw in your performance, both things you did well and things you might want to work on improving. Then we will move into trying some things that will help you make some of those improvements. We may spend the whole time working on one song, or we may work on two, so please have two selections available. Choose songs that you know fairly well, so we can work on vocal aspects and not stumble over notes and words. Please bring copies of the music for me to look at, and extra copies for yourself, if you need to refer to them. At the end of the PVI, I will ask you to summarize for me the things that you have learned - i.e., what ideas or tools you will take home to work with in your daily practice at home. You may want to bring a notebook to write down any pearls of wisdom that come forth, or you may want to record the session so you will have everything at your fingertips to review as needed.

I look forward to working with you!

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PERSONAL VOICE INSTRUCTION (PVI)
SCRIPT

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. During the session the singer will experience success by demonstrating improvement in one or more aspects of singing and will acknowledge aloud her talent and worth as an individual.
2. At the end of the session, the singer will name aloud two or more tools which she can use at home to improve her own singing.

LESSON PLAN

1. Have singer perform a song of her choice (preferably something she knows well and feels confident in singing).
2. While the singer is performing, make mental (or physical) notes on what she does well and what she needs to improve.
3. After the performance, thank and compliment (in a general way) the singer.
4. Ask the singer about her musical background and training.
5. Ask the singer what aspects of singing she would like help with.
6. Give the singer feedback on her earlier performance. First, praise her on specific things she did well. Second, mention a couple of things that she might want to work to improve. (Choose the things that need to be addressed first.)
7. Work with the singer on Item One. Achieve success and repeat to confirm.
8. Work with the singer on Item Two. Achieve success and repeat to confirm.
9. At the end of the session, ask the singer to summarize the things she has learned and the tools she will take away to work on at home.
10. Thank the singer for singing for you and allowing you to work with her.

NOTE

The above is a very general outline, but personal voice lessons should unfold according to the needs of the individual singer and may not always follow this plan exactly. Because an individual must have a strong sense of self-esteem, both as a person and as a singer, in order to sing well, it is important to address this as the foundation of good vocal technique. As people feel better about who they are, they naturally begin to express themselves (use their voices) more freely and confidently and are more responsive to suggestions about vocal technique. It is the joy and challenge of the voice teacher to try and find the key that helps each individual singer to blossom.

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QUICK VOCAL ANALYSIS
(Things I look for when someone sings for me)

1. Alignment -- Is the posture upright with alignment along the six points of balance?
2. Respiration – During inhalation, does the lower abdomen expand and does the upper chest remain open and quiet?
3. Phonation – Is the tone clear and focused with proper support? (Are the abs resisting fast deflation?)
4. Phonation – Is there proper use of head and chest registers and smooth passage between the two?
5. Resonance – Do all vowels match in resonance?
6. Resonance – Is there a full complement of overtones in every vowel?
7. Resonance – Is the tongue properly relaxed?
8. Diction – Are all vowels pure without interference from consonants (especially the five dangerous ones – R, L, M, N, NG)?
9. Diction – Are all diphthongs properly executed?
10. Diction -- Are all consonants articulated clearly in a style appropriate to popular music?
11. Communication -- Is the face expressive?
12. Communication -- Is the body expressive?
13. Communication – Does the voice convey a variety of emotions & vocal colors?
14. Efficiency/Stamina -- Are there unnecessary tensions or unusual behaviors of any kind?
15. Efficiency/Stamina -- Is the overall level of energy high?