

**REGION 17 HARMONY WEEKEND – SEPTEMBER, 2009**  
**DIANE M. CLARK**

**THE SINGER'S TOOL KIT: WHAT TO PRACTICE**  
**AT HOME BETWEEN REHEARSALS**

For each home practice session, no matter how long or short, it is important to set a goal at the beginning and to evaluate your accomplishments at the end. The goal or goals should be appropriate to the length of the session. For example, in an hour session, your goal might be to complete the memorization of an entire song. For a 15-minute session, your goal might be to memorize the introduction or the tag of the song. It is useful to keep a daily practice diary, so that you can get an overview of exactly what you are accomplishing each week, and so you can note which items need to be addressed in your practice. In a long practice session, you might cover several of the points on this page; in a short session, perhaps you will address only one.

Your two best friends in the home practice session are your mirror and your digital recorder. They give you immediate feedback on what needs work and on whether or not your efforts have achieved your desired results. Train yourself to use them almost constantly!

Last but not least, please do not look at this list and be overwhelmed! Yes, the vocal art is multi-tasking at the highest level, and we can spend a lifetime learning to do it well. Just think of this list as a collection of CHOICES of ways to spend your practice time, or a few REMINDERS of things you may want to give attention to. Remember, the journey of 1000 miles begins with one step.

1. Preparing and aligning the instrument.

Physical workout, dance, stretching/yoga  
Skeletal alignment (mirror), recitation/singing while observing alignment (mirror)  
Facial aerobics (mirror), facial aerobics with vocal sound

2. Breath management

Acquisition – abdominal expansion and contraction  
Utilization – hissing, counting, bubbling, counting & singing, quacking  
Private breathing – taking breaths by leaving out syllables or breathing during held notes  
Lifting phrase endings, breathing to create forward motion, rhythmic releases  
Telegraphing emotional cues with each inhalation

3. Vocalizing to improve sound and stamina

Phonation  
Resonance/Ring/Role model vowel  
Register adjustment  
Range extension  
Flexibility

4. Speaking voice

Reciting song texts  
Conversation  
Alternation of singing and speaking

## 5. Characterization

- Reciting song texts – seeing text as dramatic script
- Memorizing song texts – recall, rather than recognition
- Determining emotional cues or attitudes for the text (cards)
- Singing the song with specific, appropriate emotion

## 6. Rhythm

- General rhythm exercises (kinesthetic)
- Working rhythm beats and patterns in songs (kinesthetic)
- Combining rhythms and words, rhythms and pitches, all three
- Working choreography

## 7. Pitches/Tuning

### Melody

- Establishing the tonic (key)
- Determining the relationship of your pitches to the tonic (do)
- Singing your pitches while sounding the tonic note on an instrument
- Singing your pitches and occasionally checking your tuning
- Being mindful of Pythagorean tuning
- Making sure every syllable is completely resonant

### Harmony

- Understanding your part in relationship to the chordal structure of the song
- Understanding your part in relationship to each other part
- Chord balancing – knowing when to sing strong or weak, high or low
- Determining specific chords to ring

## 8. Diction

### Vowels

- Understanding the vowel spectrum – three families of vowels, three dimensions of resonance
- UR tunnel
- Continuum of resonance

### Consonants

- Classical vs. popular diction
- The 5 dangerous consonants

## 9. Artistry

- Effective phrasing
- Meaningful dynamics
- Communication with the audience

## 10. Building stamina

- Repetition of activity to achieve greater efficiency and strength – daily exercise of the vocal muscles

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**FACIAL AEROBICS**  
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The following exercise routine for the facial muscles has two main musical purposes:

1. to achieve greater muscle flexibility in order to be more emotionally expressive in singing and speaking
2. to improve vocal sound by opening up more resonance spaces in the head

Non-musical benefits include improved circulation, healthier complexion, and more effective emotional expression/communication in daily life.

The entire Facial Aerobics routine should be practiced at least once daily. Part One should be practiced at least 3 times daily. If working alone, one should use a mirror. If working in a group, work in pairs, having one person mirror the other, and taking turns leading.

**PART ONE**

Facial Flow  
Closed Face  
Facial Flow  
Open Face  
Facial Flow  
Lower Half  
Facial Flow  
Upper Half  
Facial Flow  
Right Half  
Facial Flow  
Left Half  
Facial Flow

**PART TWO**

Facial Flow  
First Quadrant  
Facial Flow  
Second Quadrant  
Facial Flow  
Third Quadrant  
Facial Flow  
Fourth Quadrant  
Facial Flow

## EXERCISES

The exercises consist of the basic Facial Flow and various Isolation Exercises.

Facial Flow -- This is simply the process of exercising all the muscles of the face. It can take 5 seconds or 5 minutes. Simply move face muscles randomly, making sure to move parts of the face that want to remain still. Use a mirror to monitor progress. The Facial Flow is used as the first and last exercise in the routine, and is used in between the isolations. As one progresses through the routine, the facial flow should feel increasingly freer and more flexible.

Isolations -- All the other exercises involve isolating one part of the face and moving only those muscles. This is difficult, and may take much practice before one is successful. Mirror work is essential. At the beginning, it may help to hold one hand over or actually on the part of the face that is not supposed to be moving. Later the use of the hand should not be necessary.

Closed Face -- With eyes tightly closed, squeeze all muscles toward the center of the face. Scrunch up tight and hold for at least 10 seconds.

Open Face -- With eyes wide open, stretch all muscles out towards the edges of the face. Stretch out wide and hold for at least 10 seconds. (This exercise is similar to the yoga exercise known as the Lion.)

Lower, Upper, Right, and Left Halves -- In each case, move only the muscles in the designated half of the face. Move as many of these muscles as possible, check the mirror to monitor progress. These may be done in any order.

Quadrants -- This is the most advanced, most subtle part of the aerobics routine. Some quadrants may be easier than others at first, but work to make all four equally responsive. Mirror work is essential.

First Quadrant -- muscles of the forehead, eyebrows

Second Quadrant -- muscles around the eyes (not including eyebrows)

Third Quadrant -- muscles of the nose, upper cheeks, upper lip

Fourth Quadrant -- muscles of the lower cheeks, lower lip, jaw

HAVE FUN!!!!

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### EMOTIONAL ATTITUDES

Unstable	Cautious	Confiding
Sarcastic	Forgiving	Ecstatic
Willing	Awed	Colorless
Aghast	Stoical	Happy
Trusting	Admonishing	Respectful
Friendly	Pleasant	Sorrowful
Insane	Cool	Feverish
Hopeful	Simple	Scornful
Rapturous	Sly	Brisk
Gentle	Coaxing	Bitter
Haughty	Accusing	Languid
Inspired	Listless	Astounded
Innocent	Capricious	Domineering
Passionate	Profound	Surprised
Disgusted	Nervous	Lofty
Jealous	Serene	Enthusiastic
Dull	Withdrawn	Foolish
Mocking	Annoyed	Serious
Panic-stricken	Shy	Evil
Smug	Solemn	Indignant
Scolding	Flippant	Courteous
Fanatical	Candid	Derisive
Wild	Indifferent	Thoughtful
Obnoxious	Positive	Satisfied
Pitying	Instructive	Joyful
Timid	Indulgent	Wistful
Spirited	Frantic	Violent
Uneasy	Obedient	Deliberate
Spiteful	Quiet	Curious
Docile	Careless	Hungry
Jubilant	Hesitant	Wary
Cordial	Boorish	Wretched
Inert	Dignified	Feeble
Impressive	Fretful	Fawning
Energetic	Exhausted	Blasé
Regretful	Boastful	Considerate
Suspicious	Uncomprehending	Frank
Worthless	Sincere	Crushed
Accommodating	Fervent	Vacant
Sad	Indignant	Harsh

Good  
Stiff  
Contrite  
Sluggish  
Horrified  
Loving  
Astonished  
Desperate  
Earnest  
Puzzled  
Whimsical  
Saucy  
Approving  
Pitiless  
Doubting  
Sophisticated  
Insinuating  
Studied  
Resolute  
Outgoing  
Bored  
Eager  
Vexed  
Tragic  
Excited  
Arrogant  
Contented  
Reckless  
Helpful  
Condemning  
Comic  
Savage  
Thoughtless  
Hearty  
Facetious  
Hateful  
Troubled  
Reluctant  
Pleading  
Defeated  
Uproarious  
Condescending  
Incredulous  
Crisp  
Irritable

Pathetic  
Argumentative  
Contemptuous  
Modest  
Preoccupied  
Hysterical  
Frustrated  
Egotistical  
Questioning  
Cutting  
Bold  
Belittling  
Playful  
Confident  
Pensive  
Optimistic  
Exuberant  
Sullen  
Curious  
Submissive  
Humorous  
Humble  
Insulting  
Snobbish  
Hostile  
Selfish  
Kindly  
Afraid  
Sulky  
Persuasive  
Insolent  
Cynical  
Fierce  
Pessimistic  
Frightened  
Compassionate  
Shocked  
Apologetic  
Monotonous  
Reproving  
Tired  
Alarmed  
Critical  
Worried  
Dismal

Terrified  
Enraged  
Sympathetic  
Lively  
Proud  
Enraptured  
Exalted  
Groveling  
Soothing  
Unpretentious  
Angry  
Gracious  
Comforting  
Defiant  
Helpless  
Vigorous  
Breathless  
Knowing  
Ashamed  
Cheerful  
Uncertain  
Hopeless  
Solicitous  
Devout  
Impudent  
Depressed  
Impetuous  
Dreaming  
Negative  
Mild  
Pompous  
Lifeless  
Wondering  
Elated  
Hasty  
Satiric  
Greedy  
Tolerant  
Embarrassed  
Reverent  
Amused  
Polite  
Melancholy  
Ardent  
Meek

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### GESTURES

Hand to opposite arm  
Both hands to neck  
Hand on hip  
Both hands to stomach  
Hand to back of head  
Both hands out, palms out  
Hand to mouth  
Both hands to head  
Fingers caress hair  
One hand behind back, one on hip  
Hand to head  
Both hands to cheeks  
One hand to head, one to stomach  
One hand to cheek, one to neck  
Hand out, palm down  
One hand to cheek, one to stomach  
One hand to heart, one to eye  
Hand to neck  
One hand to heart, one out to side  
Arms crossed  
One hand to heart, one to stomach  
Hand to side  
Both hands to mouth  
Hands to cheek  
One fist on heart, one hand held out  
One hand out, one over head  
Hand to forehead  
One hand to heart, one to neck  
One hand to head, one to chest  
Hand behind back  
Both fists out  
One hand to head, one to neck  
Both fists over head  
Both hands touch opposite sides of body  
Both hands to back of neck  
Both hands to back of head  
One hand to heart, one over head  
Both hands to throat  
One hand to heart  
One-arm sweep  
Both hands out, palms down  
Fist over head  
Hand to shoulder  
Hand pointing  
Both hands to ears  
Both hands on one hip  
One hand to head, one to shoulder  
Hand touching opposite side of body  
Both hands on hips  
One hand to cheek, one to heart  
Fist out  
One hand to heart, one to hip  
Hand out, palm up  
Hand caresses body  
One hand to cheek, one to head  
Both hands held out to sides  
One hand to head, one over head  
One hand to head, one hand out  
One hand to heart, one fist out  
Both hands to chest  
Both hands to shoulders  
Both hands out, palms up  
Hand out, palm in  
Hand to stomach  
Hand to opposite ear  
Both hands over head  
Both hands to forehead  
One fist out, one fist over head  
Hand on other elbow  
Both hands caress body  
One hand to cheek, one to shoulder  
Hand out, palm out  
One hand to cheek, one hand out  
Both hands pointing  
Hand to nose  
Hand over head  
Both hands to one ear  
Both hands to shoulders  
Both hands to one thigh  
Both hands to one foot

One hand to chest  
Both hands to feet  
Both hands to waist  
Both hands to knees  
Hands clasped & held away from body  
One hand to foot  
One hand to waist  
Arms folded  
One arm above head  
One elbow moving  
Both hands to eyes  
Asymmetrical arms  
Both arms above head  
Hands clasped & held close to body  
Both hands to chin  
A kick  
Two-arm sweep  
Both hands to neck  
One palm up  
One fist  
One hand to chin  
Both hands to nose

Both hands to heart  
One finger pointing  
One hand to neck  
Both arms out front  
One hand to knee  
Both feet moving  
One hand to throat  
One hand waving  
One hand to ear  
One hand to eye  
Both palms down  
One hand to thigh  
Both arms waving  
One palm down  
One arm out front  
Both hands to thighs  
Both hands to hips  
Both hands to one hip  
One hand to shoulder  
Two fists  
Both elbows moving