

HOW TO PRACTICE SINGING

5-6 Days/Week:

1. Spend 15-25 minutes warming up. Begin with stretching, followed by breathing exercises, followed by the warm-up routine you learn in your voice lessons.
2. Plan what you will accomplish in your practice session. Possible tasks include:
 - a. Translating, speaking foreign language text, or repertoire research;
 - b. Score study at the piano, section by section, in varying orders;
 - c. Singing through a learned score, focusing on various technical and/or artistic aspects, section by section, in varying orders;
 - d. Performing music you already know. **Include a performance in one of your practice sessions every day.**

Score Learning Process:

1. Find a good edition of the score (library or online). Purchase scores you will perform if they're not in the public domain. Make/scan two clean copies: one for study and one for collaborative pianist.
2. Make your own word-for-word translation, IPA transcription, and poetic translation. Consult a dictionary and diction resources as necessary.
3. Translate all tempo and expression markings in the vocal line and accompaniment.
4. Complete a **Song/Aria Analysis**. This will help you understand the composer, author, style, musical features, and dramatic features of the song/aria.
5. Mark possible breath places in your music, taking into account melody, rhythm, tessitura, and meaning of the words (if you have to put a breath mark in the middle of a sentence, draw a dashed line over the breath mark).
6. Combine different elements in practice, but do not combine words/melody/rhythm until the text is translated and can be accurately pronounced. **Do not sing full-voice until melody/rhythm/accompaniment is learned.**
 - a. Speak words in rhythm (focus on feeling of words, jaw, tongue, lips, resonance, support).
 - b. Speak words dramatically, declaiming the text with expression.
 - c. Sing melody on a vowel (focus on technical issues: breath, phrasing, vocal freedom, resonance, musical expression).
 - d. Speak words dramatically with correct rhythm and musical articulation.
 - e. Intone words with correct melody and rhythm.
 - f. Sing melody and text on vowels only, without consonants (focus on breath, line/legato, resonance, phrasing, musical expression).
 - g. Sing combining words, melody, and rhythm (focus on musical, textual, technical accuracy and efficiency).
 - h. Sing combining words, melody, rhythm, and dramatic expression. (What technical elements become easier/more difficult when adding dramatic expression?)
7. Memorize score (**always memorize text before music**). Aids for memorization:
 - a. Record yourself speaking text and listen to it.
 - b. Write out text by memory, noting words you missed.
 - c. Memorize the translation, associating words from your native language to the text.
 - d. Sing song in your mind while doing mindless tasks (walking, laundry).
8. Practice and polish your performance of the piece. Develop your dramatic presentation, using the music and text as your inspiration. Notice your facial expressions, emotional states, and physical movements and refine them until they clearly express your interpretation.