

# 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:
  - Translating, speaking foreign language text, or repertoire research;
  - Score study at the piano, section by section, in varying orders;
  - Singing through a learned score, focusing on various technical and/or artistic aspects, section by section, in varying orders;
  - 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. Practice in following order. **Never practice full-voice until music and text are completely learned.**
  - a. Speak English translation until you understand the poetry/text.
  - b. Speak the text slowly until the pronunciation is easy.
  - c. Speak words in rhythm (focus on maintaining resonance and pharyngeal space with continuous breath energy and articulatory freedom).
  - d. Learn rhythm of accompaniment and bass line.
  - e. Speak words dramatically, declaiming the text with expression.
  - f. Learn, then sing melody with semi-occluded vocal tract (lip-trill, straw phonation)
  - g. Sing melody on a vowel (focus on breath, resonance, and pharyngeal space).
  - h. Speak words dramatically with correct rhythm and musical articulation.
  - i. Intone words with correct melody and rhythm.
  - j. Learn the harmony of the accompaniment.
  - 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:
  - Record yourself speaking text and listen to it.
  - Write out text by memory, noting words you missed.
  - Memorize the translation, associating words from your native language to the text.
  - 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 a mirror, with the music and text as your inspirations. Notice your facial expressions, emotional states, and physical movements and refine them until they clearly express your interpretation.