Name_____ Ensemble_____ Date_____

Vocal Anatomy Key Terms and Concepts

Singing: The act of producing musical sounds with your voice
4 Major Steps of the "Singing Machine": Posture, Breathing, Phonation, Shaping/Resonance

POSTURE:

Posture Checklist: feet shoulder width apart, legs straight but not locked, abdominal muscles relaxed, rib cage lifted, shoulders relaxed, arms at your side, head straight toward conductor

BREATHING:

Lungs: organs in your chest that fill with air and convert oxygen to carbon dioxide

Trachea: windpipe, pathway for air between your mouth and lungs

Epiglottis: thin flap that covers your trachea when swallowing, directing food and liquid into your esophagus.

Esophagus: pathway for food from your mouth to your stomach

Inhalation: breathing in

Exhalation: breathing out

Diaphragm: horizontal muscle, located underneath your lungs that is used to control and support your breathing

Breath Support: the act of using your diaphragm and other abdominal muscles to provide consistent air pressure, strengthen your vocal tone and sustain pitches for durations of time.

PHONATION:

Phonation: the act of creating vocal sound by vibrating your vocal folds.

Vocal Folds: thin membranes located inside your larynx that come together and vibrate to produce sound. When breathing in or out, they open to allow air to pass through.

Vocal Chords: the thicker edge of your vocal folds that contact each other and vibrate

Larynx: otherwise known as your "voice box". It is the housing *(located in the middle of your throat)* that surrounds and protects your vocal folds. In gentlemen, it is commonly referred to as the "Adam's apple".

SHAPING:

Vocal Resonance: the process of sound improving and intensifying by passing through empty cavities in your body *(chest, mouth, nasal cavity, head)* before being projected out towards the listener.

Tone: the relative quality of sound produced by any instrument/voice. Someone's "vocal tone" can be thin, nasal, full, airy, clear, etc. Your tone quality is directly impacted by your ability to support, open up, and allow your sound to resonate.

Timbre: similar to tone, means the distinguishing characteristics of any instrument's sound. It is how you can tell one instrument from another. For example, the timbre of a flute is light, airy, and smooth. The timbre of a trumpet is clear and bright.

Soft Palette: fleshy part of the roof of your mouth, located towards the back. Singers can develop the ability to lift or relax this part of the body to control tone quality and fine tune pitch.

Nasal cavity: empty space behind your nose and cheek bones, should fill with sound and "resonate" when singing.

Articulators: lips, teeth, tongue. Used to create and shape your vowel and consonant sounds.

Range: the distance between your lowest comfortable singing pitch and your highest comfortable singing pitch.

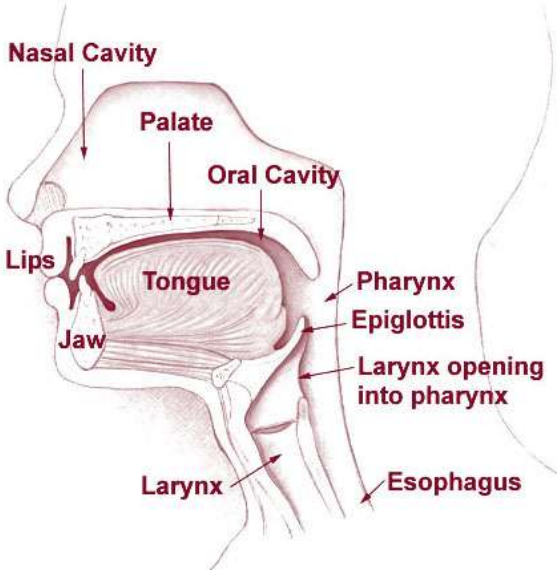
Register: portions of your entire vocal range. *(See "chest voice" and "head voice".)*

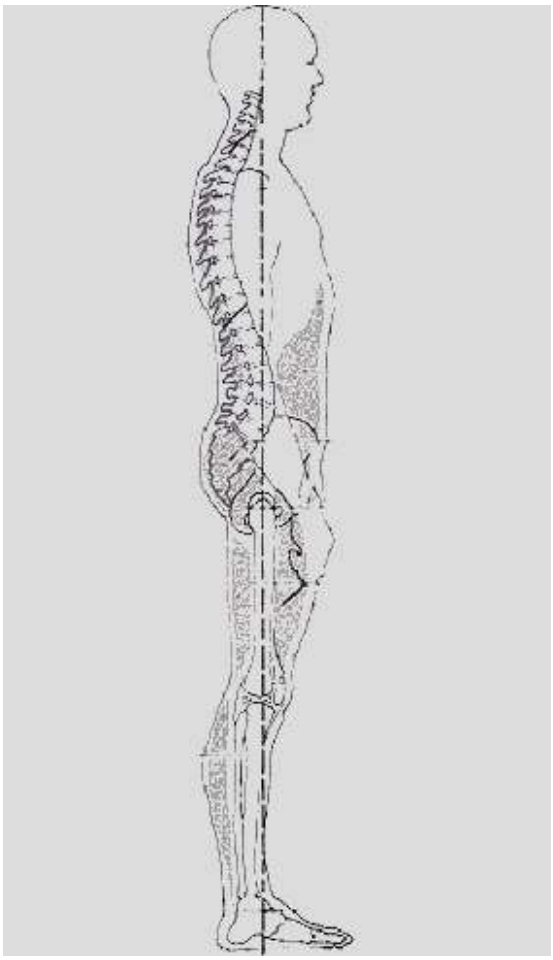
Chest Voice: an extension of your speaking sound, you will feel your sound resonating mainly in your chest and throat. Used mainly for your mid-low register.

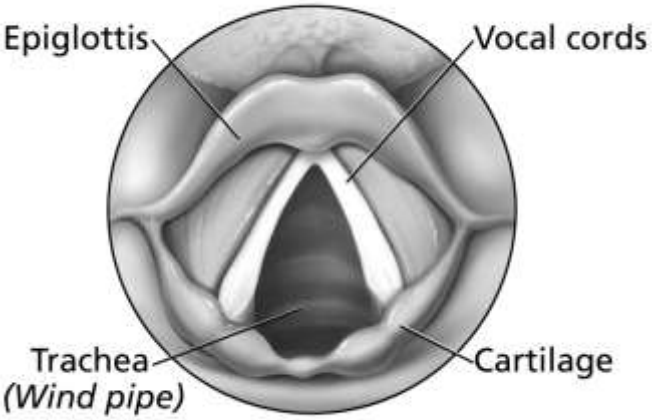
Head Voice: your "high voice". Used for notes that are above your comfortable chest voice register, and for some lower notes that require a lighter sound. You will feel your sound resonate mainly in your nasal cavity and head.

Mix Voice: a blend of both your chest and head registers. This approach is used for a range of notes that overlap the higher part of your chest register and lower part of your head register. By having the vocal folds vibrate the same way as your chest voice while your sound resonates in the same area as your head voice, you create this "mix voice" blend.

Disclaimer: Simply knowing these terms and descriptions won't make you a good singer. You still need to practice every day to develop the strength, confidence, and control of your body necessary to produce the best possible sound!







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