

## Balancing Your Instrument to Master Every Day Living

Friday, August 5, 2011

10:00 a.m. Concurrent Session

Charlene O'Connor, Faculty

Handout #1

### **BALANCING YOUR INSTRUMENT THROUGH EVERY DAY LIVING**

INTRODUCTION: Basic questions asked to the group

Visually:

- 1) What concerns do you have when asked to work on the character of a song
- 2) When working on choreography moves, what worries you
- 3) Do the moves seem uncomfortable

Vocally:

- 1) When singing, do you find yourself getting physically tired
- 2) Do you have a difficult time getting emotionally involved with the message of the song
- 3) When putting vocal and visuals together, do you find yourself getting frustrated

BODY: We will address these issues with Body Balancing using simple exercises that we will apply in our daily lives

- 1) We will explain the importance of using what Physical Therapists call High Definition exercises for Body Balance
- 2) Will explain how Body Balancing will help us improve our performance for both vocal and visual
- 3) We will give the reasons why these exercises are needed to be used in daily living to be successful while performing as well as improving your daily life

Posture:

- 1) Will demonstrate how to achieve proper body posture
  - a. This will be done using chairs and the walls in the room
  - b. Will explain how our head needs to "float" to maintain proper posture/alignment with the spine
  - c. Will explain how a toddler walks properly
- 2) All this will heighten our awareness of our posture through daily living
- 3) Will demonstrate these exercises and all will do them
- 4) Will talk about how we feel when and after we have done these exercises

CLOSING: Will once again explain the importance of following through with Body Balancing on a daily basis and how much easier performing will be vocally and visually

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Handout #2

### **BALANCING YOUR INSTRUMENT WITH POSTURE EASE AND POISE**

**How we move affects how we look.** Though we may not realize it, what we do and how we do it, affects the shape, tone and feel of our body. We are constantly in motion, even while sitting. By changing the way we execute our daily activities, our posture naturally will improve.....along with our singing performance.

**We can change our posture.** By redefining our overall body awareness, we can start to recognize when our alignment is out of balance. By letting our neck and shoulder tension go, we will allow an easy relationship between head, neck and spine.

**When our neck muscles do not overwork, our head balances lightly at the top of the spine.** Young children have this natural poise. They have an erect spine and free joints with a head that balances easily on their neck. Over the years we lose this natural poise, but with proper posture through daily living we can restore this alignment.....barring health issues of course.

**With proper posture we restore ease and poise.** As we redefine our posture through our daily activities we find we develop a greater stability and balance. Good posture improves our singing. Our stance looks better because our bodies look good and work well. Therefore our time on the risers become more fun, adding confidence, better concentration and longer endurance.

### **CORRECT SINGING POSTURE**

**Stand Straight! Oh no.....We need to try and avoid such "generalizations". The worst thing for a singer is tension and thinking to "stand straight" can cause tension. Good singing posture is to stand relaxed and natural:**

Chin should be parallel to the floor

Do not lock knees

Avoid raising shoulders. Keep them down and back while we hold the chest high

Hands should be at the side of the body

Place feet a bit apart in order to balance your body (usually about shoulder width)

Keep the neck loose and relaxed.....do the same with back muscles

**Always keep correct posture, even through daily living, to help adopt the best position for performing and to protect our bodies from injuries.**

### **EXERCISES TO CONTROL POSTURE**

Place a book at the middle of head. Stand in front of a mirror and try to move the head to the left and to the right without losing our chin level while keeping the movements smooth.

Sing in really bad posture and then sing with good posture.....**Notice the difference!**

## **BALANCING YOUR INSTRUMENT THROUGH EVERY DAY LIVING**

### **QUOTES**

If you could kick the person in the pants responsible for most of your troubles, you wouldn't sit down for a month.

Theodore Roosevelt

Ability is what you're capable of doing. Motivation determines what you do. Attitude determines how well you do it.

Author Unknown

Strength does not come from winning. Your struggles develop your strengths. When you go through hardships and decide not to surrender, that is strength.

Author Unknown

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## **EXERCISES FOR BETTER BALANCE**

### **ANKLE PUMPS**

- With legs straight, bend feet up toward face then point feet away from face
- Repeat 10-30 times

### **BUTTOCKS SQUEEZE (GLUTEAL SETS)**

- Lie on back with legs straight
- Squeeze buttocks together
- Hold for 5 counts
- Relax Repeat

### **QUAD SETS**

- Lie on back with legs straight
- Tighten up top of thigh and press the back of knee into floor/bed
- Hold for count of 5
- Relax Repeat

### **HEEL SLIDES**

- Lie on back with legs straight
- Bend knee by sliding heel toward buttocks as far as possible
- Straighten leg
- Relax Repeat
- Change legs

## STANDING HIP ABDUCTION

- Hold onto a chair
- Keep toes pointed straight ahead and trunk upright
- Lift leg out to the side and back
- Relax Repeat
- Change legs

## MINI SQUAT: DOUBLE LEG

- Stand in front of a stable surface
- Feet shoulder width apart
- Reach forward for balance and do a mini squat
- Knees do not go past toes
- Keep heels on the ground
- Repeat 15-30 times

## STANDING BILATERAL HEEL RISE

- Rise up on balls of feet
- Return flat
- Repeat 15-30 times

## FLAMINGO STANCE

- Bend leg with foot reaching knee
- Hold as long as possible
- Change legs
- Repeat 10-30 times

## SIDE LIFT WALK

- Lift right leg up and over an invisible hurdle
- Bring left leg up and over to right
- Walk on direction 10 steps
- Now go back the other direction 10 steps

**THERE IS EXTRA SPACE FOR YOUR OWN DRAWINGS!**