

# GENERAL ADVICE ON HOW TO WORK WITH THE VIDEO COURSE AND HOW TO EVALUATE THE FINAL RESULT

- 1. Practice one exercise at a time, while paying utmost attention to small details of description. The work is completed when the exercise is not only memorized but can be executed with minimal control.*
- 2. Each training session should take no more than 30 min and they can be repeated 2-3 times each day. The most important thing is to find a very quiet time to focus completely without any distractions.*
- 3. When you work with each new exercise all previous ones should be reviewed beforehand.*

## Exercises 4-6

*Exercises 4-6 require substantial time to be absorbed. Exercise 6 in particular should be practiced until the special breath control becomes second nature. Voice teachers worked for years to instill this fundamental skill. In our method it still will take at least one month of nearly daily practice.*

## Exercises 7-10 and preparation for final evaluation

*After Exercise 6 is completed be prepared to record your singing (ideally with video). It is common knowledge that the singer does not hear his/her sound the way the audience does. This is the very important reason to examine your sound while listening to recordings. If you would like your result evaluated after Exercises 7-10, begin at first by recording your voice prior to beginning Ex. 7: find 2-3 phrases of some slow piece of music and record it in two versions—with vowel, **a**, and with lyrics (both without accompaniment). After completing Exercises 7-9 record the same phrases with vowel, **a**, and with lyrics only after Ex. 10. Exercises 7-10 will require substantial time to practice--first to comprehend the details of the instructions and then to feel comfortable with the new approach.*

# Preliminary exercises

## Exercise for the balanced neck

A not tensed condition of the neck is important for the singing process. Inside of the neck is the throat and the larynx and inside of the larynx are vocal cords. Excessive tension of the neck complicates the work of these organs. The balanced condition of the neck is demonstrated in the following exercise.

### **Action:**

Drop the head forward. Slowly raise it and stop when you feel that the head is ready to go backwards. This balanced point between forward and backward directions feels very light and flexible with the neck easily movable. This is the criteria for the balanced neck.

### **ILLUSTRATION**

The condition of the head is very important for the understanding of singing without tension and should be maintained for the duration of the course.

## Exercise for the condition of the upper body

Lungs should be prepared to receive increased amount of air necessary for the process of singing.

### **Action:**

1. Raise the shoulders a little. Release them all the way down.
2. Finally slide the shoulder blades a bit together without raising the shoulders.

The movement of shoulder blades will slightly stretch the intercostal muscles: the muscles between the ribs. As a result, the lungs have more space to receive the increased amount of air.

### **ILLUSTRATION**

*Both preliminary exercises are advised to be performed prior to singing. The balanced neck serves to create the best condition for the work of the vocal chords that are located inside the larynx.*

*There are many misconceptions regarding the position of the upper body. The upper body that includes a cage for the lungs should be prepared before the singing process. Quite common is the idea of raising the chest which creates a fixed, unnatural looking and tense condition. In the described exercise it is important to begin with maximal relaxation of arm muscles as in walking and completely relaxed conditions of shoulders. Afterwards with eyes closed, preserving initial relaxation, there is a small movement of shoulders moving backward. As a result shoulder blades are*

*moving a little bit toward each other and elastic intercostals muscles are lightly stretched, thus preparing lungs for a bigger amount of air.*

## **Exercise 1**

### **Exercise for the release of tongue, throat, larynx, and lower jaw**

The strongest contraction of the tongue, throat, larynx, and lower jaw occurs during the action of swallowing. The release after swallowing will result in relaxation of these four organs.

The tongue will be relaxed with its tip touching the lower teeth, the middle section lying flat and the back slightly elevated.

The throat will assume its neutral condition acting as a pipe for the air to pass through.

The larynx that was elevated during swallowing returns to its neutral position as well.

While the lower jaw is squeezed during swallowing, when released it becomes unhinged. The movement of unhinging results in a slight opening of the mouth. Excessive opening of the mouth recruits muscles that are not beneficial for singing.

The singer should practice this action of unhinging of the lower jaw until it becomes a good habit. It plays an enormously important role for singing without tension.

Overall this exercise should be routinely performed prior to singing.

### ***ILLUSTRATION***

*After swallowing during the release phase many very important things are happening: the tongue assumes its resting condition and the throat and larynx assume their neutral position. Many pages were written by outstanding teachers of the Golden Era about these released conditions. This exercise quickly replaces all prior explanations. As to the lower jaw, there are also many descriptions like “natural” or “released” or “relaxed”, etc. in the literature to address the effect of tension of the lower jaw. A practical solution for releasing the muscles of the jaw is to separate the lower jaw from the fixed upper jaw. Unhinged lower jaw does not mean a large opening of the mouth. It is rather a modest opening but lower jaw becomes very movable, light, and capable of moving quickly. Overall very often singers use the lower jaw excessively that brings considerable tension. All of the following exercises will demonstrate an alternate, more effective way of usage of lower jaw to avoid tension.*

## Exercise 2

### Exercise for diaphragmatic breathing

The diaphragm is a major muscle of inhalation. In the process of inhaling the work of the diaphragm results ultimately in the passive stretching of the muscles of the abdominal wall. The movement of the abdominal wall indicates the inner activity of the diaphragm.

Diaphragmatic inhalation is going to be used in the following breathing exercises and the same inhalation will be used only with increased amount of air in the singing exercises.

Natural exhale includes the collapse as well as active contraction of the respiratory muscles including the abdominal wall, the diaphragm and the lungs. The exhaling process will be modified to provide singing with slow, gradual consumption of air.

#### **Action:**

1. Swallow and release then unhinge lower jaw as in Exercise 1.
2. Breathe evenly; imagine being asleep, sensing only the work of the diaphragm.

The indication of the work of the diaphragm is the passive slight stretching of the muscles of the abdominal wall.

### **ILLUSTRATION**

During singing diaphragmatic breathing will be used with increased amount of inhaling air.

*The main organ of breathing is the diaphragm. To feel the work of the diaphragm is to imitate breathing during sleeping. However, we typically breathe in our sleep with the mouth closed. During singing the mouth is slightly open with an unhinged lower jaw. It is extremely important to understand that the opening of the mouth is just a passive passage for air to flow, but the active work in breathing belongs to the diaphragm. Inhaling and exhaling are performed evenly with the end of inhaling being fused with the beginning of exhaling. One feels the collapsing abdominal muscles during exhale. The exhaling phase must be necessarily modified in order to provide a singer with gradual prolonged exhaling without creating tension of abdominal muscles.*

## Exercise 3

### Exercise for the release of muscles of the abdominal wall

The muscles of the abdominal wall should only be passively stretched by the diaphragm; it is important not to contract them during singing.

The following exercise will provide criteria for the released abdominal wall that should be routinely performed before singing.

#### **Action:**

1. Bend over at the waist and verify with your hands that the abdominal wall is released. Memorize this sensation.
2. Slowly raise the upper body retaining as much as possible the sensation of the released condition of the abdominal wall.

#### **ILLUSTRATION**

As a result the released abdominal wall creates an image of the abdomen as an empty sack hanging loosely from the ribs. This is an ideal sensation and this exercise should be routinely performed prior to singing.

*During breathing exercises (4-6), the abdominal wall will be neither relaxed nor tense either, being passively stretched by the diaphragm. Exercise 3 describes the relaxed condition of abdominal muscles necessary to achieve passive stretching during breathing and singing.*

## Exercise 4

### **Modification of exhaling process**

Since the beginning of the development of the vocal art, voice teachers recognized the necessity to modify the exhaling process. The art of singing requires a gradual, slow escape of air without creating tension of the respiratory muscles. Vocal teachers worked very hard for years to accomplish this goal. However, the phenomenon of modification of the exhaling process was never explained with precision of the work of muscles. The explanation for modified breath control for singers is presented with Exs. 4a and 4b, 5a and 5b, and 6.

#### **Exercise 4a: imitation of action of blowing out candles**

##### **Action:**

1. Place hand close to pursed lips.
2. Exhale in short puffs imitating the action of blowing out candles.
3. Perform in light and fast manner.

Notice the slight expansion of the abdominal wall as a result of this action. This exercise serves as a quick and efficient warm up of respiratory muscles.

##### ***ILLUSTRATION***

*This exercise demonstrates a very active, forced exhale or blow out, being executed lightly and quickly. It is a first step for understanding the exhaling process without collapsing the abdominal muscles. It can also serve as a quick and effective warm-up of diaphragm before actual singing.*

#### **Exercise 4b: complete exhale with slight expansion of the abdomen**

##### **Action:**

1. Begin with Ex. 4a and continue to blow out while gradually slowing down the rate of exhale in the downward direction.
2. In the final round, exhale completely in downward direction to the bottom of the abdomen while continuing the blow out approach as described in Ex. 4a.

This type of exhale demonstrates that the air can be expelled from the lungs as in a natural deep sigh while the abdominal wall is slightly expanded. This is a skillful exhale without collapsing the abdominal wall that we will refer to “deep exhale”.

##### ***ILLUSTRATION***

*“Deep exhale” is the most essential skill in effective singing. The TIMING of “deep exhale” should approximate the TIMING of natural exhale.*

## Exercise 5

### Exercise 5a: application of sipping force

#### Preparation:

A finger is lightly touching pursed lips.

#### Action:

1. Imitate the action of sipping through a straw.

The effort at the lips is quite strong continuing as a lighter drawing in force in the mouth cavity.

#### **ILLUSTRATION**

*A special adjustment of muscles is needed to allow singers to have a gradual prolonged exhale. It is important to understand that imitation of sipping force requires still a quite strong, muscular effort. Even the head may have a tendency to move slightly backward during this effort. In the singing process, this strong effort will be replaced by the lightest drawing in force in the mouth cavity. The lightest drawing in force will be sufficient to bring about the desirable result of exhaling without collapsing of abdominal muscles.*

### Exercise 5b: synchronization of sipping force with “deep exhale”

#### Action:

1. Apply sipping force (Ex. 5a) simultaneously with beginning of exhale (Ex. 4a).

This synchronized action provokes continuation of expansion of the abdominal wall.

#### **ILLUSTRATION**

*Ex. 5b is a combination of Exs. 3, 4 and 5a. It should be executed in a fast, light manner. Once the sipping force is applied (Ex. 5a) reaction of the abdomen moving “out” will happen simultaneously. Actually this movement “out” of the abdomen is going to be an indicator that sipping force is applied. Practically, review Exs. 3, 4 and 5a and focus on the application of sipping force while observing the opposition force in the abdomen. Force “in” in the mouth cavity will provoke force “out” in the abdomen. The following Ex. 6 will finally demonstrate the process of gradual and prolonged exhale that is necessary for effective singing.*

## Exercise 6

### Exercise for the modification of the exhaling process

#### Preparation:

Abdominal muscles are released creating a sensation of the abdomen as an empty sack, hanging from the ribs as in Ex. 3. One hand is placed in front of pursed lips to monitor the flow of exhaling air. The other hand is lightly touching the abdomen, to monitor the activity of the abdominal wall.

#### Action:

1. Inhale as in Ex. 2 and in a smooth, uninterrupted fashion transition to pursed lips to synchronize sipping force with “deep exhale,” combining Ex. 4b and 5a.

The sensation is that the end of inhale is fused with the beginning of sipping force synchronized with “deep exhale”. As a result the passive stretching of the abdominal wall continues without break.

#### **ILLUSTRATION**

Modified exhale leads to the slowing down of the exhaling process. Once applied to singing a musical phrase, this gradual exhale will provide slow escape of air avoiding tension of respiratory muscles. As the lungs are gradually depleted in the process of singing, the abdominal wall nevertheless remains passively stretched by the action of the sipping force.

*Ex. 6 is the final exercise in the training of special breath control. Beforehand all previous exercises should be reviewed with special attention to Ex. 2 for diaphragmatic breathing. Inhaling process in Ex. 6 is the same as in Ex. 2, but exhaling is modified to avoid collapsing of the abdomen. Slowly inhale and do not miss the end of inhale that is fused simultaneously with sipping force and “deep exhale” simultaneously. During the process of drawing in the mouth cavity, the abdomen slowly “moves out” (an example of this synchronization was presented in Ex. 5b but only at fast speed). This opposing force leads to a slow, steady, gradual exhale. Never get too tired to practice this exercise—singers of the Golden Era worked with this special breath control for years!*

## Exercise 7

### The singing process

The process of singing becomes more complicated with addition of articulation that tends to disrupt a smooth singing line. This especially concerns the production of consonants that activate a variety of muscles including tongue, soft palate, facial muscles and others. An effective solution is to functionally separate consonant and vowel production. Since vowel sounds require much less activity of muscles of articulation they approximate the singing process (Ex. 8-9). Separation of vowel and consonant production is the single principle that is applied to all of the different languages which significantly simplifies the study of the singing art.

The mastery of singing requires the blending of registers, smooth connection of intervals, and overall evenness. To achieve these qualities a single focusing point for all vowels, which is located in the region of soft palate adjoining the edge of the hard palate, is required. This focusing point, which is the highest point of the mouth cavity helps to separate the upper part of the mouth cavity from the throat, larynx and lower jaw.

Singing in the seemingly separated space of the upper part of the mouth cavity brings the best quality of voice due to minimized tension and negative vibrations in the throat, larynx and lower jaw. Outstanding vocal teachers and great singers of the “Golden Era” described the sensations of their beautiful, tension-free singing such as “singing in” (Garcia II), “singing as inhaling” (Lamperti), “singing as drinking” (Tetrazzini), and “singing within” (Caruso). However, this most important phenomenon was never explained by the language of muscles. In Ex. 6 it was demonstrated how application of sipping force contributes to the slowing down of exhaling. Once applied to singing, the sipping force also helps to retain the throat and larynx in the neutral condition thus avoiding tension. Ex. 8 will demonstrate how to apply the principle of sipping force to singing when resistance of pursed lips is effectively replaced by activation of the vocal chords.

### Exercise for the location and light activation of the soft palate

1. Swallow, and release the throat and larynx, unhinge lower jaw as in Ex. 1, and imagine the highest point of the mouth cavity – that is the soft palate adjoining the edge of the hard palate.
2. At first with your finger lightly touch this point and with almost imperceptible click activate slightly this region of soft palate.
3. Now practice this light activation without finger touch.

It is crucial that the neighboring muscles are not engaged in this moment of light activation.

### **ILLUSTRATION**

During singing inhale will remain essentially diaphragmatic as in Ex. 2, but the singing process requires increased flow of air. Consequently the diaphragm will be more active and the increased air flow will create a bigger passage in the mouth cavity.

The increased air flow will passively support activation of the soft palate adjoining the edge of the hard palate. The drawing in force as continuation of sipping force inside of the mouth cavity will lightly maintain this activation during singing.

*A constant focusing point helps to keep the throat and larynx in neutral condition and to avoid using the lower jaw excessively. Excessive usage of the lower jaw happens when the action of unhinging from the upper jaw is replaced by big opening of the mouth (like in screaming). Activation of the soft palate should also be used very carefully. Excessive activation (as in yawning) engages wide arches that are connected to the lower jaw and ultimately to the throat and larynx. It is very important to follow carefully Ex. 7 that demonstrates the precise location of activation of the soft palate and to be sure that there is complete absence of any other muscles.*

*Combining Ex. 7 with Ex. 6 as a preparatory step before singing (Ex. 8):*

*As a preparation before singing vowels it is very helpful to combine Ex. 7 with Ex. 6. With this step singers can achieve a clear perception of upper space of mouth cavity and a clear feeling of sipping force stretching along the hard palate. With addition of the focusing point for vowels singers will be ready to sing beautifully and without tension.*

*To combine Ex. 7 with Ex. 6, open the mouth with unhinged lower jaw and activate soft palate as described in Ex. 7. Retain this activation lightly and proceed with Ex. 6 for prolonged exhale. Make this combined exercise your constant warm-up before singing.*

## Exercise 8

### Exercise 8: singing with vowels only

#### Preparation:

1. Release abdominal muscles as in Ex. 3, release the throat and larynx and unhinge the lower jaw as in Ex. 1.
2. Prepare pursed lips as resistance for exhaling air as in Ex. 6.

#### Action:

1. After swallow and release, focus on the sensation of the upper part of mouth cavity separated from lower released part.
2. Activate in the lightest way the focusing point as in Ex. 7. Without break inhale with increased amount of air that on its way will passively support activation of the focusing point. Blend the end of inhale with beginning of sipping force, synchronized with deep exhale (Ex. 6). Open the mouth with unhinged lower jaw while producing the sound of the vowel, **a**, placed in the focusing point (Ex. 7) in a breathy manner.

The sipping force now continues as a light drawing in force in the moment of vocal chords activation, provoking movement out of the abdomen. The movement out indicates not only the slowing down of the exhaling process, but allows production of the sound of vowels without tension of the throat and activation of the larynx.

3. Now repeat the same exercise without pursed lips, that is, in a non-breathy manner.

The most effective way to master this exercise is to alternate between breathy and non-breathy beginning making sure that the spectrum of sound is identical and feeling the drawing in force as continuation of sipping force.

### **ILLUSTRATION**

*In this exercise breathy and non-breathy initiation of sound are presented. The breathy approach describes a more concrete flow of exhaling air and helps to explain the internal process in non-breathy singing. Exercise 8 begins with pursed lips that are very lightly activated and momentarily abandoned only to demonstrate that sipping force continues as a light drawing in force once the mouth opens. Drawing in force applied to a vowel placed in the focusing point (prepared beforehand) becomes the new resistance during sound attack, replacing pursed lips' resistance in breathing exercises. The goal is to initiate sound avoiding harmful pressure on the throat. Application of drawing in force that feels as light pulling at the moment of sound attack ensures that the throat and larynx remain neutral. The image of a horseman lightly pulling on the reins comes to mind. This analogy helps to visualize the light, muscular effort inward that replaces similar effort*

*applied to pursed lips in the breathing exercises. The end of inhale (Ex. 2 with increased air supply) is blended with drawing in force seemingly along the hard palate that provokes movement of the abdomen out (Ex. 5-10). Drawing in force should be the focus of training becoming a habit close to reflex, while the reaction of the abdomen is seemingly automatic (Ex. 5). Drawing in force is accompanied by skillful exhale with the same timing and approximately the same condition of abdominal muscles as natural deep exhale, but without collapse of the abdomen. Non-breathy approach imitates the breathy one. The end of inhale blends with drawing in force seemingly along hard palate applied to a vowel placed in the focusing point. Drawing in force provokes movement of the abdomen out. Non-breathy exhale imitates the timing of skillful exhale which results in an instant of delay of sound initiation. This leads to soft, non-violent attack that was the trademark of outstanding singers. Even during loud singing and dramatic moments these singers never crossed the line of beautiful quality of singing. Their approach can be detected in slow music and is recommended for listening:*

*Feodor Chaliapin— Elegie (Massenet)*

*Ferruccio Tagliavini— Lamento di Federico from L'Arlesiana (Cilea)*

*Marian Anderson— Ave Maria (Schubert)*

*Elena Cernei— Arias from Samson et Dalila (Saint-Saëns)*

*Frank Sinatra— "It was a very good year"*

*Ella Fitzgerald— "I hadn't anyone 'till you"*

*Roy Orbison— "Crying"*

*Patsy Cline— "Crazy"*

*The Carpenters— "Superstar"*

*k.d. lang— "Hallelujah"*

## Exercise 9

### Connection of wide intervals

Smooth connection of intervals, especially wide intervals in ascending direction is a very important skill in singing. The principle of separation of the upper part of mouth cavity from the throat, larynx and lower jaw by placing vowels in the same focusing point laid the foundation for smooth connection of intervals (Ex. 7-8). However, for ascending wide intervals, application of drawing in force should be internally increased to compensate for more consumption of air. As to descending wide intervals, drawing in force is naturally diminished for the lower note. To acquire the skill of smooth connection of ascending wide intervals follow Ex. 9, which is preliminary for singing any musical phrase that includes the wide ascending intervals.

#### Exercise for the connection of wide ascending intervals

##### **Action:**

1. Release muscles of the abdominal wall, release the throat and larynx and unhinge lower jaw (ex. 1). Without special breath control activate focusing point (ex.7).
2. Produce at once in a small volume the higher note of the ascending interval, placing it in the focusing point.

While the vocal chords are activated in the larynx, their reflection feels seemingly from above in the highest point of the hard palate.

3. Follow quickly and lightly with descending scale ending with octave interval. Memorize the feeling of all sounds placed in one focusing point.
4. Now return to special breath control (Ex. 6, 8) and repeat this exercise singing in full voice, with unhinged lower jaw.

#### **ILLUSTRATION**

While singing a phrase that includes a wide ascending interval, increase drawing in force for the higher note production to compensate for more consumption of air required for higher and/or louder sounds. Even in a phrase that begins in a low register be sure to place the low note in the focusing point in the upper part of the mouth cavity.

#### **ILLUSTRATION**

*The most important principle is not to abandon the constant focusing point while singing wide intervals ascending or descending. Another goal is to blend both notes of wide intervals across registers. Singers need to resist the natural tendency to rush to the higher note of the interval thus slightly shortening the duration of the lower note to produce an ascending interval. To avoid this tendency, it helps to imagine an inner glissando as a quick sliding from one note to another in order to connect them smoothly. This trick will result in sufficient duration of the lower note. The same inner glissando is helpful while practicing descending intervals as well.*

## Exercise 10

### Singing with articulation

The mastery of smooth connection in the singing process combined with clear articulation as in the speaking process seems an almost unattainable goal. However, clear articulation is crucial, allowing singers to find the most truthful intonation and to achieve the most convincing interpretation. An effective solution is to focus vowels in the highest region of the mouth cavity while focusing consonants in the upper frontal part. The advantage of this approach is that these two processes work independently while still complementing each other. This principle is valid for any language and singers of any style will benefit from it.

Consonant production is a complex process with many muscles engaged in different combinations including the tongue, the lower jaw, the soft palate, the lips, and other facial muscles. The focusing region for consonant production becomes the frontal upper part of the mouth cavity. The muscles of the upper lip that are very flexible and can be easily activated take a lead in production of consonants. The lower jaw and the muscles of the lower lip participate in articulation but not too excessively. Excessive activation of the lower jaw contributes to tension of the throat and larynx. This tension deteriorates the condition of work of vocal chords, having a negative impact on the spectrum of sound. Furthermore, the lower jaw is heavy and slow moving, thus impeding technique and interfering with the clarity of articulation if used excessively. The lower jaw should routinely return to its unhinged condition after being more activated. In the process of singing with consonants, the retaining of the focusing point for vowels remains the most important consideration (Ex. 7-8). The focusing point for vowels should be established once, right in the beginning of singing a song or aria. Activation of the muscles of the upper lip begins from the moment of articulation. During singing of a musical phrase activation of the focusing point for vowels is maintained by increased air flow.

### Exercise for singing with articulation

#### Preparation:

1. Release abdominal muscles as in Ex. 3, release the throat and larynx and unhinge the lower jaw as in Ex. 1. This vocal exercise is a repetition of Ex. 8, but with addition of syllable, **ba**.

## Action:

1. Activate the focusing point for vowels (Ex. 7-8) and inhale at once with increased amount of air. Apply drawing in force synchronized with deep exhale; place the vowel, **a**, in the focusing point and add the syllable, **ba**, while activating the muscles of the upper lip.

Do not abandon the focusing point for vowels while adding activation of the upper lip.

The drawing in force applied to vowel, **a**, will provoke movement out of the abdominal wall (Ex. 8). The movement out of the abdomen indicates that throat and larynx remain neutral.

### ILLUSTRATION

2. Now continue this exercise this time beginning with the syllable, **ba**. The focusing point for vowel, **a**, is activated prior to inhaling, while the muscles of the upper lip are activated in the moment of articulation of the syllable, **ba**.

Do not abandon the focusing point for vowels while adding activation of the upper lip.

The drawing in force is applied now to the syllable, **ba**, provoking movement out of the abdominal wall (Ex. 8). The movement out of the abdomen indicates that throat and larynx remain neutral.

### ILLUSTRATION

The style of Musical Theater requires especially clear articulation, meaning that the muscles of the upper lip will be more activated. Consequently, the lower jaw and lower lip will be more actively engaged but still should not be used excessively as to provoke tension of the throat and larynx. In this example the attack of sound is rather energetic; consequently the drawing in force synchronized with deep exhale is applied faster.

### ILLUSTRATION

*Attitude toward articulation during the singing process changed with music style. In the beginning, music had a religious application. Articulation demanded to be very clear to convey content of Bible to mostly illiterate audiences. With development of the Operatic style of Bel Canto, the quality of singing mastery became the most important goal. Articulation took on a secondary role and some voice teachers of the past even perceived it as a hindrance to smooth and beautiful singing. Gradually composers turned toward more dramatic and realistic content that demanded greater clarity of articulation. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century for all styles: Pop, Music Theater, and Operatic, a clear articulation became an integral part of artistic expression. However, how to combine a smooth singing line with precise pronunciation was never explained. Ex. 10 demonstrated this possibility by having two focusing points: one for vowels and another for consonants. It thus allowed these two processes to be seemingly independent while working in concert.*

*After release of the throat, larynx, and unhinged lower jaw (Ex. 1), both focusing points should be prepared in an instant before inhaling and then singing. Focusing point for vowels is described in Ex. 7. The frontal focusing point for consonants is prepared by separation of upper lip by slightly barring*

*the upper teeth. The frontal focusing point will be perceived in the center of the separated upper lip. During singing the two focusing points will work together while being located in different spaces. However, the focusing point for vowels (that is the singing process) should always prevail, while supporting the high space along the hard palate in the mouth cavity. In fact even when interpretation requires exaggerated articulation, still smooth singing line should be preserved. The Truth of effective singing is best demonstrated by our idol and guide for many years of our research— the greatest Operatic singer of the 20<sup>th</sup> century— Feodor Chaliapin.*

## Acquired method of exercises provides minimal control of the work of vocal apparatus during performance

*While performing a singer is occupied with artistic expression. Our method of ten exercises allows the singer to focus on expression while the vocal apparatus works close to reflex. Indeed two focusing points (Ex. 8, 10) will be prepared an instant before sound attack. These focusing points are sustained lightly while singer continues a musical phrase on a single breath. In the moment of sound attack, only drawing in force should be applied to the vowel placed in constant focusing point (Ex. 8). Accompanying “deep exhale” (Ex. 4b) will relax outer abdominal muscles while the diaphragm moves out. As a result the singer can enjoy gradual prolonged exhale without tension. Equipped with effective vocal apparatus the singer has a secure feeling of preservation of his voice. The Beauty of sound combined with clear articulation and truthful intonation will produce an indelible impression on the audience. The legacy of the Golden Era can thus be continued while applied to ever changing musical styles.*

## Our thoughts about the future of Opera

*The described method is especially important for Operatic singers. Interest toward the genre of Opera is gradually declining. Most of the popular Operas were composed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They have very beautiful melodies but their content is quite primitive and outdated. Thus it is hard for audiences of the 21<sup>st</sup> century to relate to them. The salvation of Opera is only in constant improvement of the mastery of singing-- the special quality of sound that is soulful, soothing, and tender, always touching people’s hearts. Even in dramatic moments the voice should not cross the line sacrificing Beauty. Exaggerated expression of negative emotions is not only unpleasant for ears but damaging for vocal chords. In addition it seems that now acting in the Opera is more important than quality in singing. Opera is musical theater. So acting should not be exaggerated distracting singers from the control of quality of sound. In our opinion, it is possible to win Opera back but only with acquired mastery of singing. Audiences will be immersed in the beauty of timeless melodies if they are sung with exceptional quality of sound. To conclude mastery in singing is not a burden but a necessity. The effectively built vocal apparatus will preserve the voice in its youthful state for many years. Combining mastery of singing with clear articulation will allow singers to truthfully express the entire gamut of human emotions without ever sacrificing the beauty of sound.*

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