

How to Sing Musical Theatre! Workshop

by Narelle Ong

www.singtherightway.com

What Makes Musical Theatre different from Pop ?

1. Conversational Singing

With musical theatre repertoire, you want the sound to be conversational, and not oversung. The simplicity of the voice allows the singer to portray the text, which is the most important as it's all about the story. Musical theatre singing does have to make beautiful sounds, but the sound should reinforce the text.

2. Stamina & Healthy Techniques

It is very vocally and stylistically demanding. Try using a beautiful open, round sound to sing. Apply the Open Throat Technique and create 'space' between your lower mouth and upper palate.

> Exercise 1: Belting Workout with Open Throat Technique

1-2-3-4-5-5-5

Ho oh oh oh Hoh Hoh HOHHHHHH (4 secs)

> Exercise 1: Belting Workout with Karate!

Single notes 1-1

HAH....YAH!

3. Playing with Your Voice to Create Different Characters

> Exercise 3: Versatile Character Experience

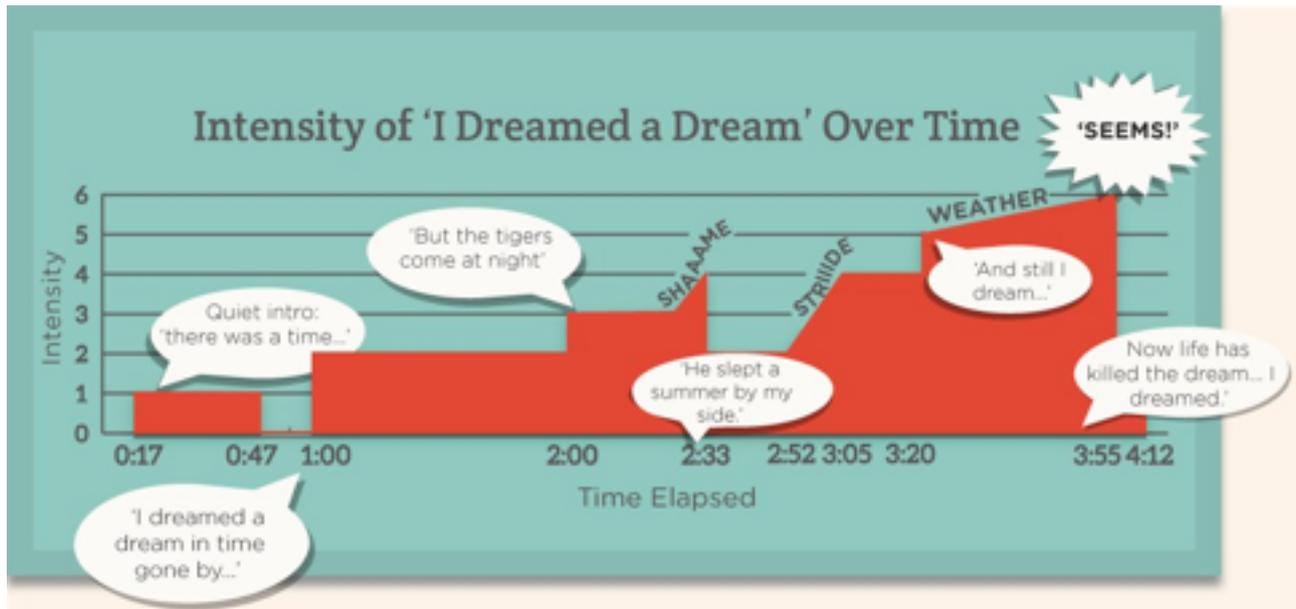
Muppets (Mix, Chest, Head Resonance)

- Kermit: "Why are there so many songs about rainbows, and what's on the other side?"
- Statler & Wardorf: "Including that one! Hoh hoh hoh hoh hoh!"
- Miss Piggy: "Are you gonna love me?"

Disney Princess (Bright tone, Head-Mix Resonance)

- Ariel Mermaid: "Look at this stuff, isn't it neat?"

Breaking Down “I Dreamed A Dream”



Background: The song is a lament, sung by the anguished Fantine, who has just been fired from her job at the factory and thrown onto the streets. She had to be a prostitute, sell her hair and 2 front teeth in exchange for money to raise up her daughter, Cosette.

Beginning of the Song:

- Recitative - to express Fantine's weary, rambling thoughts
- Sing in a quiet spoken style
- Use HEAD MIX

Rising Momentum:

The song builds to more of a controlled intensity on “But the tigers come at night.”

- You still won't be at full power.
- Make this part conversational
- Start to open your mouth more on your sustained vowels. For example, instead of singing the words *tigers* and *night* the way you'd speak them, try modifying to “taahhhye-guhs” and “naaahhigh”.
- ‘Chew’ your articulation, move your lips and jaws more
-

First Climax:

- One of the most difficult moments of the song is the 5-note climb up on the word *shame*.
- Two options to sing ‘shame’
 - Mixed belting: SHAY-EH-EH-EH-**Airrrrrr**(m)
Tongue is rested down on the bottom of your mouth.
 - Head-dominant mix: SHAY-EH-EH-EH-**Eeeeeee**(m)

Second Climax:

The next climactic moment happens at the word *stride*.

Try “STRAY.....(d) or STRAH...ide

This will allow for both more openness and more twang.

Final Climax:

Whether students are belting the word or not, it typically helps to open up the “HEE” sound a little and it helps with the projection and ‘punch’. Sing as “sHEEE.....m(d)

End:

After the song’s final climax, the intensity abruptly drops back down to a weary, defeated, “Now life has killed the dream I dream.” Let your voice drift back into the fragile Head-mix.

Comparing the 3 Versions - Ruthie Henshall, Lea Salonga, Anne Hathaway**Ruthie Henshall**

- piercing emotions
- growls, belt

Lea Salonga

- head-dominant mix resonance
- heavy vibrato at ending phrases

Anne Hathaway

- very touching and heart wrenching
- ‘crying’ through her belts, very conversational

QUESTION...**HOW WOULD YOU WANT TO EMOTE & STYLE THIS WHEN YOU SING?**

Les Miserables - I Dreamed A Dream

There was ZUH time when men were kind
When DARE voices were soft
And their words inviting
There was a time when love was blind
And the world was a song
And the song was exciting
There was a time
Then it all went wrong

I dreamed **Muh** dream **Meen** time gone **BAH...aye**
When hope (p)was high
And life **WUH-th** living
AHye dreamed that **LAH(f)** would never **DAH...aye**
AHye dreamed that God would be FOR...giving

Then **NAHye** was young and **Dun-nuh-fraid**
And dreams were made **Dand** used **AIRn waste-TAIR(d)**
There was no ransom to be PAY...d
No song (ng)unsung
No wine **Nun-tasted**

But the **TAAAHye-guhs** come **Mat NAAAAHHight**
With their voices sof(t) as thun-DUH
As they tear! your hope **UH-PAH...(d)**
As they turn **NIOR** dream to **SHAY eh-eh-eh-*AIR/EE(m)**

He slept **Tuh** summer by my SAH...ide
He filled my days with endless won-DUH...
He took my childhood **Din** his STRAH...ide
But he was gone when autumn KAY...aim
And still-**LAHye** dream he'll come to **mHEE**
That we will live the years to-gether
But there are dreams that **canNAHd bHEE**
And there are storms we **canNAHd** wear-DUH...(r)

AHye had **Duh** dream my life would be
So different from this hell **LAHime Lair-air-ving**
So different now from what it sHEEeeeeem(d)
Now **LAHife** has killed **Duh** dream
AHHye, Dreeeeeeem(d)