Glossary / Index of Vocal Terms

ADDUCT, ADDUCTION: bring the vocal cords together for phonation. [see “focus” page 17]
ALTO: lower female voice in a four-part chorus [page 57]
ANTICIPATION: coming in before the downbeat
APPROXIMATE: bring the vocal cords close together. (adduct)
ARTICULATION: positioning and movement of the articulators [page 21] to form language sounds[page 25]
ATTACK: onset of vocal tone [see “silent H” page 25, 33]
BACK-PHRASING: phrasing after the written rhythms
BARITONE: male voice range below tenor and above bass
BASS: low male voice, lowest voice in a four-part chorus
BASSO PROFUNDO: lowest and strongest bass voice
BEL CANTO: beautiful singing, especially in the classical style.
BELT MIX, POP MIX, UPPER MIX: blending of head and chest registers for loud, high energy singing, designed to match the chest register quality [page 57]
BREAK: (register break) an abrupt change in vocal quality when moving from one register to the other. [page 57]
BREATH MANAGEMENT: [see Support] [page 13]
CHEST COLOR: deepest, darkest tone color, felt in the chest area of the resonating system [page 47, 53]
CHEST MIX, LOWER MIX: combination of chest and head registers for strong singing, designed to match the head register quality. [page 63]
CHEST REGISTER = CHEST VOICE = LOWER REGISTER = LOWER VOICE = SPEAKING RANGE = ALTO = “BELT RANGE”. [page 57]
COLOR, TONE (timbre): vocal tone color ranging from bright to dark as treble to bass, determined by factors of vowel and resonance tract shaping, helpful in expressive communication. [page 47]
COLORATURA: embellished, ornamented singing, using arpeggios, trills, staccato, fast scales, etc. [page 91]
COLORATURA SOPRANO: highest and most flexible soprano voice displaying arpeggios, trills, staccato, fast scales, etc.

CONTRALTO: lowest female classical voice, lower & darker than mezzo-soprano
COUNTERTENOR: male voice in the female alto range, using much falseetto
CREAKING DOOR EXERCISE: bringing vocal cords together with less air flow than to create a full vocal tone to elevate consciousness of adduction
DIALECT: pronunciation associated with a specific locality or social group.
DIAPHRAGMATIC / ABDOMINAL: the muscles in the body's mid-section capable of precise control of air flow. See: Breathing [page 9], Support, [page 13], Volume [page 29], Vibrato [page 35]
DIPHTHONG: double vowel sounds, one moving to another within a single syllable [page 24, 43]
DYNAMICS: volume level variation [page 29, 75]
FALSETTO: light upper register voice quality of the male singer [page 57]
FOCUS, FOCUSING: adduction, approximating, bringing the vocal cords together to reduce breathiness, control clarity, volume, pitch accuracy, breath extension, etc. [page 17]
FORWARD PLACEMENT, MASK / FRONTAL RESONANCE: having nasal/mouth resonance, created by an unobstructed channel for the vocal tone. [page 47, 50]
GLOTTAL ATTACK: closed vocal folds & throat suddenly bursting open with the onset of the vocal tone, a “cough-like” sound [page 33]
HARD PALATE: the bony, forward part of the roof of the mouth.
HEAD COLOR, HEAD RESONANCE: light tone color, sensation of resonating in the head [page 47]
HEAD VOICE = UPPER REGISTER = FALSETTO = SOPRANO VOICE. [page 57]
LARYNX, “VOICE BOX”: structure of cartilage and muscles, containing the vocal cords and seen externally as the “Adam’s Apple”
LOWER MIX: the sound of the lower register matching the upper register quality; used as a downward extension of the upper register sound. [page 63]
LOWER REGISTER: see Chest register [57]
LYRIC SOPRANO: most commonly found high female classical (“legit”) voice type, lyric singing style
LYRIC TENOR: most frequently occurring high male voice, with lyrical, light tone quality
MEZZO-SOPRANO: female voice, slightly lower and darker the typical lyric soprano voice
MIXED REGISTER: blending of upper and lower vocal qualities
MIXING: moving freely between upper and lower registers with a smooth and matching vocal quality. [page 58, 59]
MOUTH RESONANCE (COLOR): speech-like tone quality
NASAL RESONANCE (COLOR): tone color produced when some of the vocal tone flows through the nasal passage
OPEN THROAT: a desirable condition of un-blocked, free-flowing vocal sound
PASSAGGIO: the overlap or transition area between head and chest registers. [page 57, 58]
PHRASING: grouping of words from breath to breath and choices of emphasis & contour within the group [i.e. inflection, sliding, attack, word rhythm, dynamics, licks etc.]
PLACEMENT: the art of coloring the vocal tone, using the resonators - head, nasal, mouth, chest, emphasizing one or another or blending them [page 47]
PREPARATION: a state of readiness to sing, the moment before the sound is produced - a full breath has been taken, throat and resonators are open, support is created (preparation should occur before each phrase). [page 19]
REGISTERS: upper and lower parts of a vocal range, usually differing in quality. [page 57]
RESONANCE, VOCAL: refers to the way in which the resonators contribute to the quality (color) of the vocal sound [page 47]
SCATTING: improvising melody using syllabic non-word vocal sounds
SILENT H: useful device in avoiding a glottal attack for words beginning with a vowel sound [page 25, 33]
SUPPORT: (breath management) a co-ordination for precise control of airflow, a dynamic balance between the muscles of inhaling and the muscles of exhaling. [page 13]
TENOR: Higher male voice in a four-part chorus.
THROAT VIBRATO: Pulsating pharyngeal walls involved in wave-like tone.
UPPER MIX: the sound the upper register can produce to imitate and match the lower register; used as an upward extension of the lower register sound [page 59]
UPPER REGISTER: See head voice.
VIBRAMETRICS: vibrato training & voice balancing method using measured pulsations [page 35]
VIBRATO: a wave-like pulse in the sustained tone [page 35, 89]
VOCAL CORD VIBRATO: rapid interruptions in the adduction of the vocal folds, a fluttering sound.
VOCAL CORDS (FOLDS): valve-like organs in the larynx, which can close in the path of flowing air and vibrate to produce phonation (vocal sound) [see “focus”, page 17]
VOCAL TRACT: the entire sound producing and resonating parts of the vocal instrument other than the support system from the throat to the lips and nose
VOICEPRINT: visual representation of vocal sounds, measured with a spectrograph as individual as a fingerprint
VOICED CONSONANT: consonant that uses vocal cord vibration [page 24-26]
VOICELESS CONSONANT: consonant that does not require the vocal cords to vibrate [page 24-26]
Glossary of Musical Terms

A cappella: sung without accompaniment.

Accel. (accelerando): gradually becoming faster.

Adagio: slow tempo, between andante and largo.

Ad lib. (ad libitum): freedom to vary from strict tempo

Al coda: (go) to the coda.

Al fine: (go) to the end

Al segno: (go) to the sign.

Allargando: growing gradually slower.

Allegro: quick tempo, lively. Al segno: to the sign.

Andante: moderately slow.

Arp. (arpeggio): indicates an instrumentally played ascending broken chord, often used just prior to the singer’s entrance, often the dominant chord (5 chord) to establish the key.

Aria: a cohesive section of music (song) for solo voice, within a larger work, classical style.

A tempo: return to original or normal tempo after a departure (i.e. rit., ad lib., etc.).

Break: instrumental interlude within a song.

Cadence: the final two or three chords ending a composition.

Cadenza: an extended vocal section in free improvisatory style, usually at the end of an aria.

Chart: usually refers to printed or hand written music for a song, indicating the chord progression, tempo & rhythm, with chords written above the staff. The chart may include melody and lyrics.

Coda ( ): an added section of music concluding the piece.

Colla voce: accompaniment is to follow singer’s tempo

Cresc. ( ) (crescendo): growing gradually louder.

Cue: musical, verbal or visual communication between singer and musicians.

D.C. (da capo): (play again) from the beginning of the music.

Decresc. ( ) (decrescendo): gradually decreasing volume.

Dim. (diminuendo): same as decrescendo.

D.S. (dal segno): sing the section of music preceded by the sign, ( )

Fermata ( ): sustain as long as desired.

Fill: improvised melody played by an accompanying instrument in between the sung phrases.

Fine: end of piece.

Forte (f): loud.

Fortissimo (ff): very loud.

Gliss. ( or glissando): sliding down or up from one pitch to another.

Hook: memorable, catchy musical and/or verbal phrase, mostly used in non-classical music.

Intro (introduction): opening accompaniment leading to the entrance of the singer.

Largo: very slow tempo.

Legato: sing or play smoothly and connected.

Lento: slow tempo.

Lick: a melodic embellishment on a syllable or word, often improvised, non-classical term.

Meno: less.

Mezzo forte (mf): moderately loud.

Mezzo piano (mp): moderately soft.

Mezzo voce: sing at moderate volume.

Molto: very (e.g. molto allegro - very fast tempo).

Non troppo: not too much (e.g. non troppo allegro - not too fast)

Pianissimo (pp): very soft.

Piano (p): soft.

Piu: more (e.g., piu forte - louder)
Poco: little (e.g., *poco allegro* - a little faster).
Poco a poco: little by little (e.g., *poco a poco forte* – gradually louder).
Presto: very fast tempo.

**Railroad Tracks (∥):** abrupt completely silent pause in the music.

Rall. (*rallentando*): gradually slowing down.

Riff: a repeating melodic or rhythmic figure used in non-classical music.

Rit. (*Ritard, Ritardando*): same as *rallentando*.

Rubato: flexibility and freedom of tempo, similar to *ad lib*.

Sforzando (*sf, sfz*): strong accent on a single note or chord.

Sost. (*sostenuto*): momentarily slackening the tempo.

Staccato: detached, short note, indicated by a dot above the note, a reduction of its written duration by half.

Subito: sudden, immediate (e.g., *subito piano* = suddenly soft)

**Syncopation:** Accents on the weak beats

Tacet: silence.

Tag: a short added ending to a piece, often a repeated last phrase, non-classical term.

Ten. (*tenuto*): sustain.

Tessitura: the general range in which the majority of notes lie in a song, aria, etc.

Vamp: repeating musical pattern, used as an intro, between verses or as entrance and exit music, used in non-classical music.

Vivace: fast, lively tempo.