

# Introduction to Success

What will your friends' say when they realise you have the knowledge and the power to really make waves in the music industry? This book will guide you through developing talent and give you the opportunity to get the break you deserve. You will learn techniques used by professional vocal performers and each simple step will increase your confidence, creativity and vocal competence.

Vocal performance experience is not required to benefit fully from the available techniques. Each chapter is in plain language so it will not be necessary to learn about complex musical terms. Most importantly this book will help you develop a great voice so there is no need to worry about how you sound now.

Many readers may have already accrued some experience as a vocal performer. This book is for advanced singers as well as complete beginners. The techniques are new, exciting and beneficial to all. I have worked alongside many seasoned performers and opened the eyes of many other vocal teachers with the techniques I am about to share with you. Please do not underestimate the speed and simplicity of the techniques. They will turn a great voice into a sensational voice.

The term 'Pop' describes any music that is popular (favoured by lots of people). The techniques used here are suitable for all types of 'Pop' music including Musicals, Rock, R&B, Garage, Soul, Rap, Swing, Easy Listening, MC and so much more.

In order for you to increase your potential as a 'Pop Sensation' it is important to be individual and discover the unique sounds you are capable of. Sure, it would be great to produce the same sound as your favourite performer but do we really need two identical performers in the charts? You will shortly be able to closely emulate the sounds of other performing artists as you experiment with the many sounds available to you and explore your versatility to help develop your own sound.

Being a 'Pop Sensation' involves far more than just singing. The role also involves managing a busy schedule, allowing the world to view you twenty-four seven and providing a role model for thousands of people. Think of performers that you enjoy. These people have inspired you to become part of the music industry and you too will need to inspire and excite your audience. 'Pop Sensations' are in a very powerful position with each action potentially changing the lives of others. Hopefully, successful artists created with the help of this book will have a positive impact on their audience.

Before going any further, you must become more focused and motivated than ever before. It is important to stay excited about your goals and enjoy every step you make toward them. Sit down and ask yourself "Why do I want to be a 'Pop Sensation'?" Take some time to write a list of all your possible answers. This list will become your motivation fuel. You should try to make sure that you read the list every day. By writing down your reasons, reading them everyday and maybe adding to them occasionally,

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you will always keep your goals in mind. Every time you read the list you will feel excited and inspired to continue with your development. Picture all the positive things that success will bring. It will be yours one day.

### How to use this book

Regardless of current skill level, it would be advisable for anyone using this book to work through every chapter. It is important to practice each chapter until you are comfortable with the techniques shown. As well as being able to achieve the desired technique, you must also be able to understand how the technique works. As you practice you should be able to agree with these statements:

*"I am free of all struggle and strain."*

*"I feel no pain or tickling sensations in my throat."*

You should also explore the following:

*"What's happening to the sound?"*

*"How could I use this technique?"*

*"Why am I doing this?"*

*"How do I feel?"*

*"What can I feel happening?"*

*"Could I explain this technique fully to someone else?"*

You will be reminded of the above points throughout the book. They are your gauges as to your level of understanding. When you feel you have mastered a section, move on to the next, but keep returning to previous sections. As a professional performing artist your practice should be continuous. Racing through the techniques will not allow you the time required to adopt the skills necessary to be a professional performer.

Everyone's voice is very different. You may find it necessary to rework some chapters more than others to strengthen specific areas of your voice or style. Having said this, at no point will any chapter become invalid. Each chapter contains specific instructions that should be followed exactly to gain maximum benefit. Please do not skip sections, as you will only be slowing your progress.

Keep this book in good condition...you will need to refer to it even as a professional singer!

### Practice makes closer to perfect

Anyone who believes that their performance leaves no room for improvement is perhaps not serious or knowledgeable enough about their art. Many thousands of muscles in the body are required to be toned and conditioned regularly to achieve continued success. Conditioning these muscles must be a constant regime. As with exercising any part of your body, you would not expect it to retain stamina, condition or strength whilst not in use for a long period of time. Vocal performance requires the same level of commitment because muscles are involved. Vocal fitness will be greatly enhanced by practicing the techniques in this book on a daily basis. Don't worry, you do not need a jogging suit or sweat bands! The exercises

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you will be undertaking will gently tone your muscles and allow you to work comfortably at your own pace with no pain or strain of any kind.

Before you begin to practice it is a good idea to find a space where you have privacy to work without fear of being interrupted or overheard. My favourite place to practice is in the car. With an extremely busy schedule, my travel time is usually the only time available to work on my own sound. It is also a good idea to practice at the same times every day. Creating a time-based routine will be easier to stick to. If you just fit in practice here and there, whenever you can, you will find the practice becomes too much like interference in your life and your plans for success will be put on hold time and time again.

During practice you will be experimenting with your voice, producing some weird sounds and making mistakes. This is what practice is all about. I frequently make mistakes and sound very peculiar during my vocal workouts. Remember, every time you make a mistake you are one step closer to getting it right. Some of us need more steps than others but the end result will always be worth the effort. It is for this reason that it is a good idea to work in a space where you cannot be overheard. The last thing you need is the stress or embarrassment of wondering what others are thinking of you as you practice. Usually when you feel you are being overheard there is a tendency to only work the areas that are already comfortable to you. This will slow down your progress dramatically. Performance and practice are very different. You will not be experimenting with your voice during a performance and you should not have an audience during practice.

One of the questions mentioned earlier was 'How do I feel?' This question is vital to your continued success over a period of time. We are going to look at emotion links to make your practice more enjoyable and productive. Let's start by considering how some specific songs can make us feel and act differently. These songs will be different for every person. During periods of any emotion throughout our life we react to various stimuli, sometimes without even noticing them. There may have been a birthday party where a particular song was playing and we were feeling really happy. Although we may not even remember the song, our brain still dealt with sound at the time. Years later we may hear the same song and start to feel really happy without realising that it is the song which is triggering our emotion. All our senses can link past emotion in our lives and create new emotion links. This happens every day. With this in mind it is important to feel happy, focused and motivated during each practice session. You will be able to use your 'Why do I want to be a Pop Sensation' list to help you get into a positive, happy state of mind before you practice. If you are feeling depressed or your stress levels are high, there is a risk of linking this emotion to your practice sessions. This will make your session hard work instead of enjoyable and your progress will slow as a result. I want you to have the best possible chance of success. Happiness and motivation is the key to achieving your goals.

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Dealing with huge chunks of information can make completing tasks seem very daunting. The human brain can cope far better with small pieces of data which it has had time to process. It is advisable to read only a small section of a chapter at a time and work any new exercises for no more than ten minutes then take a break. Even whilst making a cup of tea your brain will still be busy understanding and dealing with what you have just learnt. Three ten-minute sessions will be more beneficial to you than an hour of constant practice. When all the techniques have been learnt, practised, and understood, you will be able to extend your practice time. Your brain will have already processed the information required. Everyone is different, but as a guideline I would suggest building toward at least one hour of practice each day, which should ideally be split into two sessions.

### Better safe than sorry

I have already mentioned that practice involves conditioning the muscles in your body. As with any sport, if you have any medical condition or doubt about your physical ability to work these muscles then please consult with your doctor before you start to practice.

If you feel any deterioration to your sound, due to even a simple head cold, then please allow proper recovery time before you commence further practice.

Overworking muscles can cause damage to the voice. Incorrect technique may cause vocal weakness and slow your progress. Each exercise will guide you through the safest route to developing a great sound. It is important to read and understand the instructions before attempting any exercise. Your voice should be warmed up before it is used fully. Each voice technique chapter will ensure your voice is gradually warmed up by simply working through the exercises in order.

There are two main warning signs of voice damage for any singer. The first is pain and the second is a tickly sensation, both occur in the throat. If you feel either of these then take a break, have a glass of water and do not start practice until these warnings have gone. Recovery time could be anything from half an hour to a week. If the problem persists, you should consult with your doctor.

### Something to remember

Throughout my career I have received countless pieces of wonderful advice from all sorts of people. I have also been knocked many times and told that my chosen career was nothing more than a 'Pipe Dream'. Many people have said, "You have to be so lucky to get that kind of job". Well, I have 'that kind of job' now. Luck is a real factor, but remember this, "THE HARDER YOU WORK THE LUCKIER YOU GET!"