

Introduction

“At each moment you choose the intentions that will shape your experiences and those things upon which you will focus your attention.

If you choose unconsciously, you evolve unconsciously. If you choose consciously, you evolve consciously.” —Gary Zukav

Contemporary Singing Techniques is designed to **refocus your vocal efforts, eliminate the resistance** of your present approach, **freeing your voice** to sing from your diaphragm to your lips **without impedance**. This enables a **relaxed, open throat** and a **free-flowing air stream**. In fact, it ties your instrument’s components and the mechanics of your whole voice together to work as one. *It’s the mechanical link-up and its proper usage that assure an unobstructed operation of your instrument.*

The result is relaxation as well as a consistent and controlled air stream, enabling **increased power, range, pitch, endurance** and **ease of singing**, with connection, in any situation or style. To sing with connection is a matter of a **constant air stream adjustment**, note to note, from one end of your range to the other, leading to the development of a new sense-memory (i.e., experiencing a new feeling of what you need to do) note to note, vowel to vowel, extending and relaxing your whole range until it becomes second nature in your singing or speaking.

The following text is drawn mostly from the *Contemporary Singing Techniques* CD, with additional information for further clarification where the author felt it necessary.

Introduction

For all of the figure references on the CD, see the illustrations in this text.

Note: *Exercises 1- 6 can be done **just about anywhere**, while **Exercises 7-15** require **more focus** and **concentration**, and therefore, should be confined to a more suitable atmosphere.*

*Finally, the correct use of this CD will produce excellent results. You must pay **close attention** to the exercises and text to **execute the method correctly**. Always make sure you begin in good physical voice.*

Important Note: *If you feel there are any problems with your voice prior to embarking on any vocal program, check with a vocal specialist such as an E.N.T. or laryngologist.*

Concept

The following exercises are:

- 1) **Narrated**
- 2) **Instructed and**
- 3) **Demonstrated** by students while the instructor critiques them to uncover typical problems the student is having that often occur with many vocalists.

Segment 1 is provided to:

- 1) **Warm up**
- 2) **Open**
- 3) **Stretch**
- 4) **Align and**
- 5) **Direct your voice toward its optimum performance**

“For many reasons, trilling is a good monitor for exercises or singing as there are no words, vowel sounds, or consonants to interrupt the flow of air or take the ear’s attention away from the operation of your instrument.”

Exercise #8 **The Trill**

Concept

Trilling the tongue or the lips by:

1. Using the **tongue** (*see Fig. 6*) or
2. Using the **lips** (*see Fig. 7*)

It’s your choice. Either one will work. I call this an **infinite consonant**, which is stopping the air flow on and off using a constant air stream. For many reasons, trilling is a good monitor for exercises or singing as there are no words, vowel sounds, or consonants to interrupt the flow of air stream or take the ear’s attention away from the operation of your instrument. Your whole singing system is now given the ability to operate with **an unimpeded, controlled air stream** while giving you the opportunity of just **hearing what you’re singing**: the pitch, the placement, the resonance and air flow without interruption, just a constant pulse that you will even out as you practice it. (*Listen to the CD*).

Quick Check

Remember to **1) maintain a firm stomach** as you exhale so that your air is **completely controlled** (by your diaphragm) while you **2) use a partial yawn** to keep your larynx down and **3) release some air through the nasals** during trilling (like a silent hum). Remember to **4) relax your chin and facial muscles** without any contortions (monitor in a mirror). These four basics allow the air to flow continuously through your throat, mouth and nasals. (*See Figs. 6, 7, and 8.*)

“The better you can trill a song, the better you will sing it.”

THE TONGUE TRILL

Instruction/Application

- 1) Position your tongue toward the front of the hard palate just behind the gum ridge above the top teeth (not on them) where the tongue feels relaxed.
- 2) To get started, you may want to use little percussive blasts of air from the diaphragm until you can sustain the trill.
- 3) Use an ‘R’ sound to aid the tongue in its proper positioning off the sides of the teeth keeping it from sticking if necessary. (See **Fig. 6** and *listen* to the CD.)

This may take a little time so be patient, *listen to the CD and practice, practice, practice!*

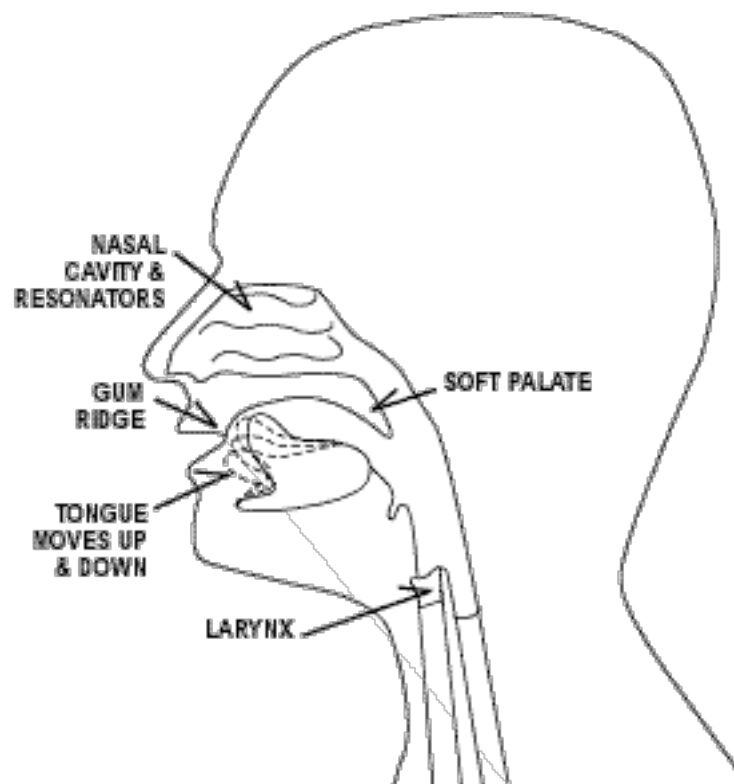


Figure 6: The Tongue Trill

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Instruction

Trill with your lips by simply 1) making a sound like a horse, relaxing the lips and 2) initiating it with a glottal attack (*see Glossary of Terms*) to get the feel and a start. 3) *Listen* to **Exercise 6**, but use your lips (*see Fig. 7*). With a good air stream and relaxed lips, try 4) sustaining the sound as you hear it on the CD, but using the lips.

Application

(Tongue and Lip)

Using a tongue or lip trill apply:

- 1) A siren sound from your low- to high-range
- 2) A scale
 - a) Add a partial yawn to lower your larynx
 - b) Add a partial hum to open a nasal release and resonance
 - c) Combine the yawn and hum together with these exercises for release and resonance

(*See Fig. 6 and 7 and listen* to the CD).

This may take a little time, so be patient, **listen to the CD and practice, practice, practice.**

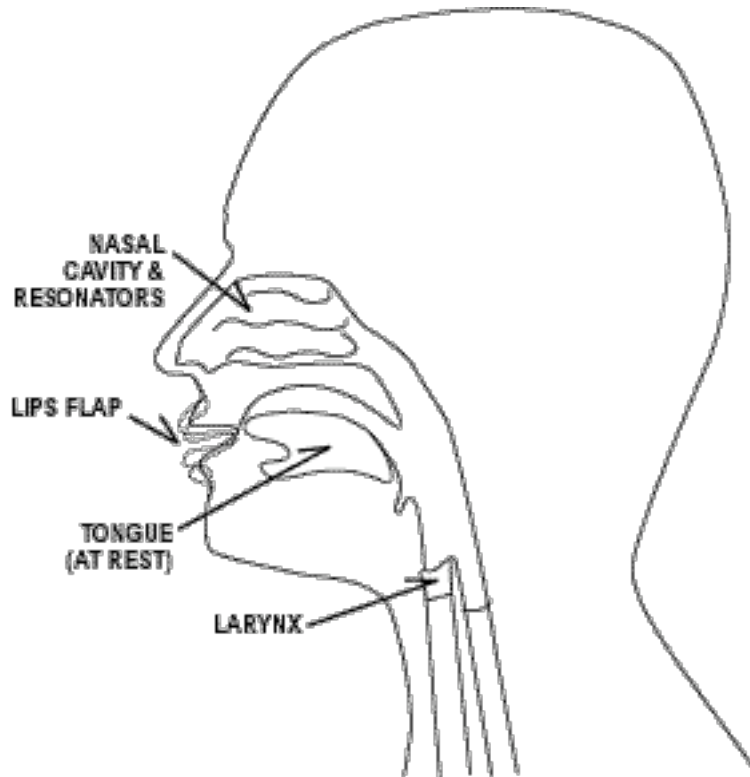


Figure 7: The Lip Trill

Additional Applications

- *When you feel you are doing the exercise well, trill a song melody all the way through. The better you can trill a song, the better you will sing it. Also, it will help you to warm up to that particular song. Try it and feel the difference! (Listen to the example in **Segment 2**, Track 25 of the CD.)*