

THE ULTIMATE RESOURCE FOR SINGERS

iSing

ISSUE 14

ISSUE 13

UP & COMING
MEET RISING STAR DAN OWEN

**ARTIST VERSUS
TECHNICIAN**

DO SINGING LESSONS KILL
YOUR CREATIVE EDGE?

**GETTING DOWN TO
BUSINESS**

THE SECRET OF THE UK MUSIC
INDUSTRY'S SUCCESS

TEAL TALES

CLARE TEAL ON BEING A JAZZ
SINGER AND BROADCASTER

HIT THE SCALES

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FREE YOUR SOUND

WAYS TO RELIEVE JAW TENSION

**MANDY
HARVEY**
SINGING WITHOUT HEARING

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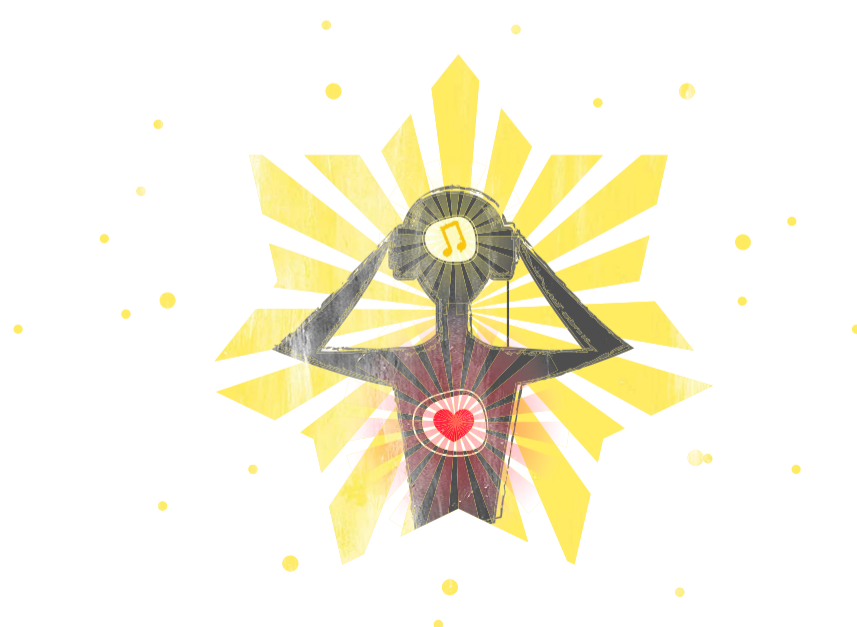
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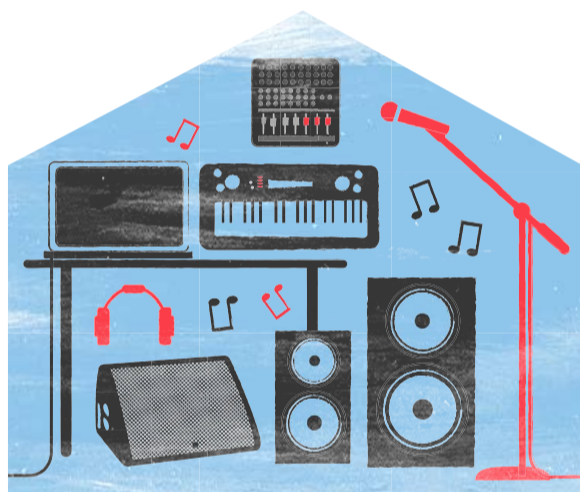


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SWIPE FOR MORE



Passing it on

Clarissa Land reports
back after attending the
inaugural BAST Singing
Teachers Retreat 2016



The BAST Singing Teacher's Retreat 2016 was about as inspiring and uplifting a weekend as a vocal geek like me could hope for. My brain was filled to bursting with new science, research, techniques and teaching methodology. I left feeling invigorated by the people I'd met and the lectures I'd attended and eager to get back to my students to put it all into practice.

For those who don't know, BAST (Be A Singing Teacher) is a fantastic teacher-training course in association with and endorsed by the VIP (Vocology In Practice) singing teacher network. Although aimed at beginner teachers, the course is thorough and comprehensive and has given rise to an international network of singing teachers. In fact, it's how I first became a singing teacher myself.

The retreat was an opportunity



The size of the classes was perfect because everyone felt they could speak up and everyone got an equal amount of attention



NUTRITIONIST STEPHANIE MOORE TALKS ABOUT GASTRIC REFLUX, THE BANE OF A SINGERS LIFE

for networking and continuing education held over a Saturday and Sunday at the University of Hertfordshire; a slightly labyrinthine campus, but easily accessible from London with good facilities and plenty of accommodation on site.

The mornings kicked off with two seminars each day from guest speakers. First up, a fascinating lecture on Care of the Professional Voice from Dr Nicholas Gibbons, consultant ENT surgeon and voice specialist. Warm and funny, he took us on an evolutionary journey of the larynx over 500 million years into its current architectural and anatomical form. He impressed upon us that singers are elite athletes and as such need access to the same resources: a great coach, physio, psychological support, nutritional guidance and a top doctor.

Next, Jenny Nash, a senior physiotherapist at PhysioEd followed with Muscle Tension Dysphonia and The Role of Ultrasound in Breath

Management For Singers. We were given a clear explanation of the muscle system of the larynx and voice with a focus on the effects of an imbalance in this system, how imbalances can occur, how we can spot them, how we can prevent them and how we can treat them with physiotherapy, laryngeal massage and ultrasound. Having never heard of laryngeal massage before, I can't wait to try it out for myself.

On Sunday, Debbie Winter, founder of Voice Workshops, gave the seminar Breath management: what's the literature saying? She delved into the minefield of conflicting approaches to breathing in singing and reached the conclusion that, while there is evidence to suggest that an appropriate breathing strategy based on a sound anatomical understanding can be beneficial in relation to classical singing, it isn't clear if it can be applied to other genres. Breathing patterns seem to be

individual and so, if you choose not to employ breathing exercises, the body may well just figure what best to do by itself.

My favourite talk came from nutritionist Stephanie Moore who spoke to us about Reflux: The Singer's Worst Nightmare and the fascinating interplay of hormones that occurs when our bodies are stressed. Top tip: good sleep is more important than good nutrition. Best get an early night, then.

Afternoons saw attendees split into smaller groups for elective classes given by certified BAST instructors Line Hilton (yes iSing's founding editor), Ian Davidson, Lisa Hauptert, Kaya Herstad Carney and guest vocal nerd Chris Johnson of The Naked Vocalist.

In Working With Choirs and Harmonies, Ian (who runs the Liverpool Community Choir) taught us how to create block harmony using the zoning model as well as how to teach harmony through round songs. And in Student Centred Learning, Kaya showed us the importance of positivity, building growth mindsets as opposed to fixed mindsets and how to engage students in the learning process by adapting our teaching to suit different learning styles (VAK versus theory of multiple intelligences).

A plethora of other electives gave wide choice to individual needs and interests: vocal science, anatomy and physiology, formants, creating individual workout programs for students, vowel modification, diagnosing and assessing the singing voice, essential teaching tools, vocal health, extreme vocal qualities, the influence of vocal styles on teaching methodology, how to structure

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lessons and transitioning from exercise into song.

One of the attendees Hannah said: “I thought the smaller groups were amazing. The size of the classes was perfect because everyone felt they could speak up and everyone got an equal amount of attention.”

Days closed with either panel Q&As with the BAST team or teaching clinics where participants could teach each other under

expert guidance and have a crack at applying their new-found skills.

Attendee Lucy said: “It was good to have the opportunity to put into practice all the information that you'd been given in the morning, to watch other teachers and suggest things that you would do if you were in that position with a student in real life. It was really cool to hear all the different opinions and approaches and what everyone would do differently. There wasn't necessarily one right answer, but lots of different approaches that led to the same outcome.”

There was also ample opportunity for attendees to brush up on their own technique with private lessons from VIP teachers (at an extra cost).

Obviously, the weekend is aimed at those singing teachers who have completed BAST, but you can attend the retreat even if you have not and the retreat is geared up to cater to this, with BAST staff helping you choose suitable electives for your level of knowledge, experience and



THE PANEL Q&A - IAN DAVIDSON, LISA HAUPERT, LINE HILTON, KAYA HERSTAD CARNEY AND CHRIS JOHNSON

“ I loved meeting everyone and hanging out

ability. But be warned: those who came to the weekend without having done BAST were champing at the bit to enrol.

Maegan is a vocal producer and arranger and now wants to take the BAST course. She said: “I really enjoyed the breadth of specialists that they had covering different topics in a lot of detail. It’s mind blowing. From every single topic, there was something for me personally to take away and apply in the studio. It’s really whet my appetite to learn more. I would do a week of this if it was available. I’d book it right now.”

Personally, I loved meeting everyone and hanging out in



NEW AND EXPERIENCED SINGING TEACHERS AT THE BAST SINGING TEACHER’S RETREAT 2016

a learning environment full of enthusiastic teachers as excited as myself to expand their knowledge and improve their students’ performance. Teaching can often be a solitary experience, so it feels important to connect with others in your field and build a network of colleagues and friends. With attendees ranging from singers to producers, backing vocalists, West

End superstars and teachers of all ages and genders from all across the globe, my only complaint is that it didn’t last a week. Bring on the BAST Teachers’ Retreat 2017 ■

For more information on
BAST singing teacher training



www.basttraining.com

CLARISSA LAND



Clarissa Land is a London-based singer and songwriter currently recording her debut solo album. She sings, tours and records with major artists, most recently Crystal Fighters. She also has a busy teaching practice, where she provides vocal coaching to a wide range of singers; from the novice singer all the way through to bands signed to major labels.



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