

Your Name

Professor's Name

Course Title and Number

Singing as a Kind of Musical Activity

The act of producing musical sounds by means of the voice is called *singing*. It obviously contrasts with normal speech. The air is expelled from the diaphragm in both breathing and singing. However, the vocal cords alter the pitch. Singing with closed lips is usually called *humming*.

Music with words either accompanied with instruments or *a cappella* is called a *song*. A *singer* is a person who sings. Singing involves tuning the voice so that it can produce words. Almost everyone who can speak can sing, as far as singing being considered as speech lasting for a short period of time. According to the degree, singing is divided into *informal* which is for pleasure, like singing at home or humming some nice melody while walking down the street, to *formal* which is called serious or professional, like performing in a concert or in a recording studio. Professional singing suggests regular practice and proper guidance. Professional singers take voice classes their entire career, whereas amateur singing can be done spontaneously, without concern for audiences.

The basic definition of singing was formulated many years ago by the famous British composer and musician, Alfred Alexander. He stated that “a singer is a person of adequate musicality, who is gifted with a voice of such power and beauty that content judges can recommend singing as a career” (Alexander, 1971). He supposes, that only 1 out of 50, 000 in Great Britain has that kind of talent. That means only 16 people a year are born with such a voice. Thus, there are 500 “first class voices” active during any generation.

It is common practice for singing to be performed by a group called a *choir*. A choir can be accompanied by a single musical instrument, a band, or an orchestra. Singing is called *a cappella* when it is not accompanied by any music instrument. When a singer reaches a high professional level, he still continues to take compulsory music and singing lessons, completing the exercises that aim to strengthen his vocal cords and improve singing skills. Such constant practice is essential in avoiding a possible decrease of voice capability. Every music class for a professional singer begins with a *vocal warm-up*. Some begin with specially designed singing exercises. The purpose is to get the vocal cords ready to perform a song. Proper breathing exercises and techniques are also important in completing these kinds of vocal activities.

The human voice has three *voice registers*. They range from the lowest – the *chest register*, to the highest – *false alto*. In the middle is the *head register*. Some singers prefer to remain within

only one register throughout an entire song. As a rule, it is the lowest register. However, many tend to switch between ranges, producing a wide range of pitches sounds (Alexander, 1971).

Works cited

Alfred Alexander. *Operanatomy: an eclectic introduction to the art of the conductor, instrumentalist, composer, producer, and to score reading, analysis of sound, singer, libretto and public, and adjudication of the critic*. Messina [Italy]: Orion , 1971. Print.