



Song Authenticity: A Marriage of Singing and Acting

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Some things to consider when working and preparing a song for performance

I. Ask Actor Questions

1. Who am I?

- Describe your character in detail: physically, sociologically, personality, their age, their posture, their center of energy, etc.
- How does the character fit into the book?
- Have you experienced any of the character's scenarios?
- Are you able to connect with the character or imagine what their emotions feel like?
- How does your diction reflect your character? Is there an accent? What does the character's speaking voice sound like?
- What has happened the moment before that causes your character to sing?
- What is the emotional state of your character as the song begins?

2. Who am I talking/singing to? (scene partner or perhaps no one)

3. What do I want? (Objective)

4. How do I get it? (Conflict)

5. How do I actively achieve my objective? (Intention)

6. What ways can I achieve my objective? (Tactics)

II. Text

1. Speak your song as a monologue/conversation without consideration to musical notation and without sounding “poetic”. Are there any changes in thought?
2. Alliterations – repetition of sound (often found in patter or rap)
3. Onomatopoeia – word sounding like an action
4. Possibilities for text painting
5. Rhyme
6. Dialect

III. Music

1. What’s the key signature? Does it modulate?
2. Style/Orchestration/Arrangement
3. Syncopation - Weak beat accents
4. Improvisation – Riffs, Word or note changes
5. How do the dynamic and possible modulation changes affect the vocal quality? Does it cause you to sing in chest register, head register or mix?
6. Are there emotions behind the dynamic changes?
7. How does tempo change affect the mood of your character and your voice?
8. Are there any repeats of phrases? Words? If so, how are you going to express these repeats?

IV. Vocal Expression/Styles

1. Tone - Head, mix, chest, belt
2. Vocal coloring - dark, bright
3. Vibrato – fast, delayed or straight tone
4. Alliterations/consonants for expression
5. Onomatopoeia
6. Text painting
7. Dynamics

V. Physical and Emotional Expression/Gestures

A. Lacking Energy/Connection

1. Use these five Michael Chekhov psychological gestures: Pushing, Pulling, Lifting, Throwing and Tearing. Speaking and then singing.
2. Working with Adjectives
3. Center of energy/Posture

B. Excessive Energy (over acting)

1. Explore Sanford Meisner, which focuses on simple and direct; listening and reacting to your scene partner.
2. Lose the gestures