

VOICE FUNDAMENTALS

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Voice fundamentals by Harold Hurlbut

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HAROLD HURLBUT

**VOICE
FUNDAMENTALS**

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HAROLD HURLBUT

The Singer is Merely the
Channel for Vocal Expression
Not the Source



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CHAPTER I.

Introductory.

The principles advocated in the following pages are not the "method" of the Italians, the Germans or the French, nor of any other race of singers. The writer does not believe that the myriads of different vocal problems can be solved by any stereotyped "method."

Voice Training is a matter of Diagnosis and Treatment. However, there does exist a System of Fundamentals that is absolutely essential to correct singing.

Mental Vision plays a leading part in the study of the fundamentals of singing, and a mental vision that should be retained at all times by the singer who is following the suggestions in this book, is that of **blowing the tone** rather than that of singing it; and the vision or thought by the singer of being

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the **channel for the tone** rather than that of being its source or producer.

The aim of this work is to eliminate to the utmost the "chaff," or wordy non-essentials, and to present to the student the kernel of the grain—the necessary fundamentals of voice production. All reiterations are made for the purpose of emphasis.

The four absolute essentials or fundamentals of voice development are, **Breath Support and Control—Open Throat—Tone Placement—Vowel Formation.**

CHAPTER II.

Breath Support and Control.

Before beginning the practice of breathing exercises, the correct position of the body should be assumed. The position of the body is a highly important factor in singing that is frequently overlooked.

The body should be in an erect position, the chest elevated, but not tensely forced up. Before inhalation the abdomen should be flat. The shoulders should be dropped loosely into their **natural** position, **never forced back**. The trunk should incline very slightly forward from the hips, to avoid a swayed back, which causes a protruding and inflexible abdomen. The head should be erect, the chin neither tilted up nor drawn in too far against the neck. A sensation of freedom and alertness of body should predominate.

The foundation of the tone is breathing. If the breath is emitted fitfully, or in a jerky fashion the tone will be fitful, jerky and given over to the vicious habit of tremolo. The principal cause of this is the sinking of chest and ribs, during the emission of tone, thus placing a resisting weight on the rising diaphragm of from ten to fifteen pounds or more, during each phrase. This downward pressure on the diaphragm, in the case of all "upper-chest" breathers, is singularly persistent, especially during the latter part of each phrase, causing an unnecessary tension and resultant quivering of the diaphragm.

During inhalation, this weight must be raised again, as the lungs expand, and if the breath be taken in quickly, a noticeable gasping sound is heard. The raising and lowering of a ten or fifteen-pound burden during a song, by the diaphragm, naturally causes a serious interference with its normal