

The Stage Coaches

MAKING THE MUSIC SING -- -- DON'T BE A RISER POTATO!

Character: *The development of a real person, living truthfully, in imaginary circumstances.*

- The character is chosen *before the vocal work begins* because the choice of a character with whom everyone can identify will affect unity, dynamics, forward motion, inflection, interpretation, visual plan/choreography.
In other words, Music, Sound, Expression and Showmanship.
- Using character will color the lyrics and give believability and passion to a song.
- Active emotion for the ballad will evolve almost naturally when the character's intention and motivation are found.
- Identifying with the imaginary circumstances and the emotions of a character -- *a person that is not you* -- will help you to consistently access emotion in the song. The character's action and dialogue will free you from singing the song as a soliloquy.

That in turn opens the door for choreography and unplanned movement that is organic to the song: when we know what we want as the character, and to whom we are speaking, we will know how to convey the words of the song vocally and visually:

TASKS IN PREPARATION FOR FINDING CHARACTER IN SONGS:

- A. Identify the character
- B. Find the circumstances
- C. Find the emotion through action

A. Identify the character:

1. Read the words of the songs as prose.
2. Ask for whom the words are relevant and motivated, by asking:
 - a. Who Am I?

The answer might be found in the movies. Characters in good movies are ageless and real. The person you choose will help you find a "back-story" and an emotional context for your songs.

b. Where am I?

Look for scenes in the movie in which your songs might be sung.

c. What do I want?

Does the character want *to tease, fight, flatter, seduce, or cheer*? The needs of the character will guide you to your interpretation and your performance plan.

B. Find the circumstances:

1. The plot and events of the movie will provide a framework for the character's conflict.

C. Find the emotions through action:

1. Based on the circumstances in the movie what does the character feel in each song, as she sings? For example: *is she excited, torn-up, conflicted, relieved? All of these? There will be more than one emotion in a song that is telling an emotionally authentic story.*

2. What happened in the moment just before the pitch pipe sounded that motivates the song? *Was there an argument, a revelation, or "a last straw"?*

Be sure the character is someone for whom the words of both songs are motivated and true. The songs need to fit the style of the character.

You can choose to use the character for both the up-tune and ballad, creating a musical scene. That means that the break between songs is another device in connecting the vocal and the visual and enhancing the performance.