



## The Bridge Blueprint – The Key to Great Singing

- 1.) What is the bridge in your voice?
  - A. It's a transition area in your voice. This is the transition you experience as you sing from your low notes to your high notes. In musical terms it's called the passaggio. Sometimes it's called the "Middle" or "Middle Voice". Some singers refer to it as "my break area".
  - B. If you're a guy whose voice has changed, your first bridge begins at the A below middle C if you are a very deep bass, or at the E above middle C if you are a typical bass, baritone or tenor.
  - C. If you're a girl, your bridge begins at the E above middle C if you're a low contralto, or at the A above middle C if you're a typical alto or soprano. Young men before puberty bridge here also. For both men and women's voices, simply speaking, your first bridge goes up about 3-4 half tones.

Now I'll refer to singing in and through the bridge as "bridging".

- 2.) There are three key parts to bridging successfully, air, vocal cords and sound wave vibration:
  - A. As you sing, air from the lungs moves through the vocal cords which creates sound wave vibrations. As you sing higher, the vibrations shift from the chest and throat into your head cavities. As this happens the vocal cords also adjust appropriately.
  - B. As the pitch ascends, vibration or resonance shifts from chest to both chest and head together. The chest and head resonance combined is called Mix because it's a mix of chest and head resonance. As the pitch goes higher it becomes only head vibration better known as head voice.

- 3.) What happens at the first bridge if we can't bridge successfully?
- A. Outer neck muscles strain and squeeze the vocal cords and pull the larynx higher. This causes the vocal cords to lose coordination which causes a cracking or breaking sound. You might yell, which can injure your vocal cords.
  - B. The vocal cords don't adjust as needed and flip into falsetto.
  - C. The vocal cords let too much air through which sounds very light or breathy.

- 4.) Why do so many singers have problems at the first bridge?

Some singers don't. They've been born with the ability to bridge without difficulty. The rest of us struggle because we can feel the vibration moving upward and it's strange and uncomfortable. We don't know what to do. We panic. We go into swallowing mode and the larynx rises as the voice jams up.

- 5.) What happens when you bridge successfully?

A. The outer neck muscles **do not engage** and squeeze the vocal cords. This allows the vocal cords to function effortlessly. The transition from low to high notes is easy. There's no straining, reaching, or breaking into falsetto.

- C. The vibration shifts easily from the chest, to the bridge, and into the head cavity and back down. You can sing in chest, mix and head voice without any interruption in tone quality. You sing with confidence and power.

