

FINDING A VOICE TEACHER

Where do I find a teacher?

I get emails all the time from folks living out of town, wanting to know where to find a teacher like me - maybe I should clone myself 😂

No, seriously, first place to check is the National Association of Teachers of Singing:
<http://www.nats.org>

Places to go and ask about teachers:

- stores that sell printed music & musical instruments,
- community colleges & night school classes in voice & singing,
- your local university, sometimes vocal instructors also teach privately,
- your local conservatory of music,
- your local musical theatre or opera company may also be able to direct you.

Failing that, ask musicians and choir directors in your area for recommendations.

What should I look for in a teacher?

- 1) Performing experience. Maturity. Self-awareness and continued self-growth. Someone may be a great singer, but will they have the understanding and compassion to nurture you?
- 2) A method of teaching that focuses on YOU, not the method. The method should support you in singing freely and authentically with the voice God gave you. Nothing should EVER be pushed or forced.
- 3) A method that teaches you how to negotiate the break between registers, without trying to push the chest voice up into the head.
- 4) Absolute non-judgement. No criticism should ever come across in the lesson, only critique, and you should understand clearly the value of the critique - it should always and only give you tools for thinking and approaching the phrase/music in the healthiest manner.
- 5) Someone who gently acknowledges your fear, and encourages you to believe in yourself and your voice. The teacher who really helped me find my voice would -- quite literally -- stand on his head to make me believe in myself. He believed in me so much I started to believe in me too. God bless him for that.

What should I think about before I start?

- 1) Are you prepared to commit to (at least) several months of lessons and practice? That means time - time to drive there, to be there; time to practice; making space in your life for your music - and making it a priority, too.
- 2) Do you understand that -- even though it might seem difficult -- strong singing can be mastered with practice and diligence, and that healthy, robust vocal expertise and ease comes with time and experience?
- 3) Have you thought about the financial investment you will be making - monthly tuition fees, blank cassette tapes or perhaps a mp3 recorder to tape your lessons (so you have something to practice with when you go home), buying music, etc.

How long does it take?

My favourite question. My maestro always said, 'It takes as long as it takes.' How long would it take you to say, become somewhat fluent in another language, or play golf well, or play the

piano at an advanced level?

People often get results in the first 12 weeks. Those who continue for a year start to really feel the strength of the voice. Those who study three years discover the remarkable beauty of their own voices. Those who continue after that (I'm 16 years and counting) can't imagine their lives without the joy of singing.

Please let me know if you have any questions I can answer. Finding a good voice teacher is like finding a good demo house -- there's are many out there - but do they really know what they are doing, do they charge a reasonable rate, and will you get the results you want.

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