

# ACTING FOR SINGERS\* Workshop Summary

*"Sometimes when my feelings are big, I like to sing them."*

Gideon, age 7

## EXPRESSIVE COMMUNICATION

**Singing** and **Poetry** are the most *efficient* & most *compact* ways to communicate emotions, especially "big" ones.

**Singing** should be a *natural extension* of your speaking voice. Sing when you can no longer speak and dance when you can no longer walk.

**MUSIC** is a very effective storytelling medium!



## BELIEVE IT!!

Every time you go on stage (or sing a song), your character must know:

- Where they came from immediately before coming on stage
- What they were doing there
- What they want now, or their **objective**
- Why they want it, or their **motivation**
- What prevents them from getting what they want, or the **obstacles**

**IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE THESE THINGS, NEITHER WILL THE AUDIENCE**

## ACT ACTIONS

Give the audience physical clues to your character's world beyond what they speak, sing, and their non-verbal noises

- Don't layer movement on words, let the words create movement
- Movement through face, hands, torso, extremities
- Consider using acting "focal points" as discussed
- All actions begin with an impulse (external/internal change)
- Music and Action must be synchronized as one

## ACT FEELINGS

You can't "act" love, hate, etc., through a *single action* but you can layer **multiple actions** to convey to the audience what your character is feeling

- Use action verbs (see *Actor's Dictionary* handout)
- Emotion created on stage is either real (Method) or artificial (Mimicry)

## SINGING AND ACTING TOGETHER - BELIEVEABLY

It's "simple" – just commit your voice and body to express your character's feelings and convey it convincingly to the audience 😊

- a. Have awareness of the song's shape -- beginning, middle, and end
- b. Know the composer and librettist are selective with what they choose to include in the song
- c. Music effectively evokes emotion and can/should/must arouse an emotional response in the audience – yes, it is OK to and required that you **MANIPULATE YOUR AUDIENCE!!**

## WHAT STORY IS YOUR CHARACTER TELLING THROUGH SONG?

For every song, you need to answer these questions:

- a. Is the song a **continuation** of the character's existence or a **pause**?
- b. Is the song part of **normal** communication or a **musical theatre moment**?
- c. Is the song *primarily* directed to **another character** on stage or to the **audience**?

## ART IS AN IMITATION OF LIFE

As hard as you try and as skilled and talented as you are, the song is only a simulation of life, not life itself:

- a. Each song has an objective and motivation
- b. Each song has clear boundaries that distinguish it from actual life
- c. Boundaries make the song's task achievable by limiting content
- d. Each song must convey the character's personality
- e. Songs must not stop the action of the play (unless it's a MTM)

## INCREASED CONFIDENCE COMES THROUGH TRUSTING YOURSELF

The audience wants to see and hear your character, not wonderful you:

- a. Though difficult, concentrate on your character's issues  
NOT your vocal technique (mechanics)
- b. Trust that your rehearsal work will take care of your mechanics;  
if not, you need to rehearse more
- c. Control what you can control

**YOUR ULTIMATE GOAL IS NOT TO "JUST GET THROUGH" THE SONG  
BUT TO TRANSPORT THE AUDIENCE VIA YOUR SINGING**