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MUSE 356- Choral Methods

Citation

Chapter 13: Vocal Development, Part 1
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2004

Discussion Question Number 14

What is meant by breath support, and what muscles are the major source of breath energy?

Breath support is described as the “energized breath column” for singing. Breath support is the foundation for good singing. The muscles that are the main source of breath energy are the abdominal muscles. These muscles contract upward and inward against the diaphragm creating resistance that balances for breath pressure and support. There are four sets of abdominal muscles that are engaged when breathing and singing. The outermost muscle is the rectus abdominus, which contracts outward, but should not be pushed outward when singing, rather, it must relax upward during exhalation. The innermost muscle is the transverse abdominis muscle, and contracts to lift the abdominal area upward and inward. This muscle is especially important in the breathing process. Those muscles positioned on the sides of and under the rectus abdominis muscle are the external oblique and internal oblique. When these muscles contract, they lift the outer areas of the abdominal region, applying an even pressure to the diaphragm with the transverse abdominis. Along with these muscles, the rib cage is uplifted and the sternum is elevated during breath support. When done properly, and a singer stands tall, has an expanded posture, breaths deeply, singing becomes comfortable and correct. The singer will feel the breath support and energized singing if these muscles are engaged their technique is proper.