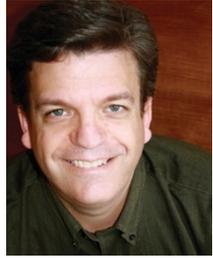




## ASSOCIATION NOTES



### I Know Nothing! Do You?



Allen Henderson  
NATS Executive  
Director

One of the most endearing characters of the late 1960s sitcom Hogan's Heroes is the lovingly inept Sergeant Schultz whose most quoted line is "[I know nothing! I see nothing! I hear nothing!](#)" He was often an unknowing accomplice of the WWII POWs when they carried out their weekly efforts to subvert the work of the German's any way they could. Over the years I have found myself repeating "I know nothing!" When I attended a Voice Foundation Symposium, NATS National Conference or Workshop or other professional development event

and listen to some of the presenters speak about their research and vast knowledge on a topic I find it easy to just hang my head and exclaim to myself, I know nothing! Yes I have three degrees in music, I have read, I have attended, I have interned, I have networked, I have taught voice for over 25 years and yet still there is so much to learn. I know nothing compared to how much there still exists for me to learn about this wonderful instrument called the voice. In recent years I have had the privilege to help create and lead the professional development efforts of NATS so I have had a front row seat as members of NATS and others discuss the training needs of our profession. I have also sat in sessions where colleagues have shared their knowledge freely and generously in an effort to help all in attendance broaden their skillset and increase their ability to teach effectively in an increasingly diverse field.

"I know nothing!" as I have exclaimed it to myself over the years has never been spoken in a defeated manner. Well, there have been a few times such as when, in casual conversation over dinner with Donald Simonson and Scott McCoy, they ventured into a conversation on physics and everyone else at the table just sat there. Believe me, everyone else was internally shaking their heads saying "I know nothing!" A majority of the time, this exclamation has spurred me to expand my knowledge and ability as a performer, teacher, or leader.

I know nothing! keeps me grounded in the reality that while I have a considerable knowledge base there is always more for me to learn. What we know about the voice and its basic function has expanded exponentially in recent years with advances in technology and our ability to access research in new and more accessible ways. One example is the [NATS Live Learning Center](#).

I know nothing! shields me from a know it all attitude. It is easy for the attitude of confidence and assuredness necessary to command the stage as a performer to mislead one into a false sense of equal assuredness as a teacher. Exposure to the teaching of singing may primarily have been focused on our own learning and our own voice type. Unfortunately, it is still possible for singers to have several degrees in music without ever having taken a voice pedagogy course!

I know nothing! grounds me in the fact that, while I likely have a greater knowledge base than my students, I need to maintain a thirst for knowledge as an example to them. If I do this successfully they are likely to teach me a thing or two as well. I know nothing! encourages me to dive deeply into certain aspects of my knowledge base and develop

**expert level skills. I may not be a comprehensive expert on everything about singing, but I can become a recognized expert on a subset of that knowledge and contribute significantly to the profession.**

**I know nothing! reminds me that the business of singing is in continual flux and that I need to remain knowledgeable about the current expectations my students and I face as they prepare for auditions for summer programs, academic appointments, casting auditions, and agents.**

**I know nothing! opens my mind as I anticipate the various professional development opportunities I have before me this coming year. Whether a national conference, master class, or chapter event closer to home, an open mind allows me to be receptive to new ways of communicating concepts that**

**may help me reach a particular student who needs a different approach to a technical issue related to their singing.**

**I encourage you to be present at more than one of the professional development events NATS organizes this year. They are highlighted elsewhere in InterNos.**

**I know nothing! Do you?**

**As always, I welcome your comments at [allen@nats.org](mailto:allen@nats.org).**