

Complementary Modalities in the Voice Studio

by Stacey Mastrian

Imagine having a student arrive frazzled — which seems to be more often than not with worldwide uncertainty and upheaval — or perhaps a student who tries repeatedly to make a vocal change but gets frustrated when they can't do so. (Maybe you can relate to these as well!) In these tense situations, we might find ourselves saying “Calm down,” or “Take a deep breath,” reflecting the voices we may have heard over the years. Although these directives might be well-intentioned, they may not result in the desired shift; a more productive approach could be to acknowledge the experience and then to combine mind and body methods in an actionable way that allows the individual to be present with themselves.

As an example, I invite you to try this instead (please take a moment to experience this, not just read about it!):

From a seated position, what if you tapped your lower back with loose fists on either side of your spine, then rested your hands on your lower back (palms in the area of the low back ribs, fingers extending below), fingertips pointing diagonally down and in toward your spine, thumbs around toward your sides, leaning somewhat forward with your torso, and feeling your low back ribs ever so slightly “release” into your hands on inhalation, starting near the spine (your fingertips) and blossoming out to the sides (your palms) — gently, like the billowing quality you get when you unfurl a sheet?

We don't need to *make* this happen; we can simply image the buoyant, spiraling character and feel the connection between our back and our hands — the barest of movements, the warmth . . . If your attention wanders, return it to the contact points between your lower back and hands as you inhale, wavelike, gently back and wide.

How does that feel? Does it bring a sense of calm? Deep groundedness? Expansiveness? Release? If it doesn't, try shifting positions from sitting to standing with slightly bent knees, the amount of leaning, the location of your hands, or an even more subtle thought of a movement; if that does not help, there may be some existing lower back tension. It might take some time for you to begin to notice the feeling



Stacey Mastrian

in your lower back, or another area of focus or type of intervention might be more useful for you.

This is an example of using the body, and specifically touch and breath, in conjunction with the mind, as a concrete intervention to change your state of being. The tapping wakes up and warms the lower back fascia (connective tissue with the consistency of honey in various states — it's the white stuff you see on chicken

in the store, which makes a sort of pantyhose-like netting that surrounds every cell, muscle fiber, organ, etc. in our body), the tactile connection provides a clear focal point for attention, and the imagery lends a restful qualitative feel. The result is that you breathe more deeply, your nervous system is calmer, you can focus, be more perceptive and objective, make decisions about changes you would like to enact, and your voice is freer. Congratulations, you can self-regulate!

“Although the modalities discussed in this article may be diverse, each of them leads to enhanced discernment in the form of improved exteroception (external — our five senses), proprioception (our sense of self in space and during movement), and interoception (internal — our breathing, emotions, etc.). Ultimately this means more available options for comfort and change.” — Stacey Mastrian

In order to help my students and myself, I've spent the past three decades collecting and combining mind and body tools like these from numerous types of practices. Many modalities that I've explored put more emphasis on mind *or* body, but most of what I've included below — Franklin Method®, mindfulness and self-compassion work, trauma and resiliency work, dance/movement therapy, Alba Method, sound healing, and energy work — involves both of these aspects. In reality there is no distinction; mind and body are inextricably linked to each other and to our vocal instrument. We can retune ourselves

through these experiential modalities that increase our ability to be aware and to make self-generated changes. These practices complement vocal technique work by revealing underlying causes and patterns, and they can lead to significant and lasting transformations.

This article is meant as an opportunity to share introductory information about each modality, the positive effects I have witnessed, and some ways I've incorporated elements of each into voice work: what it is, why it has been helpful, and an example you might employ for yourself or for your studio. (The application sections are mine or are my adaptations.) Some of these practices may already be familiar to you and some may be new, but I welcome you to peruse this menu of options. Whenever possible, I encourage you to experience directly from practitioners who specialize in each of these areas, taking classes or lessons yourself, sharing their videos or writings with your students, and bringing these experts into your studios as guests.

The Franklin Method

The **Franklin Method®** uses “Dynamic Neuro-cognitive Imagery™, anatomical embodiment and educational skills to create lasting positive change in your body and mind.” (franklinmethod.com) This means learning anatomy by feeling it in your own body during movement, as well as utilizing vivid, multisensory imagery and self-talk to generate changes. The work harnesses the power of practical neuroplasticity — using your brain to improve your body's function.

More than in any other modality I have encountered, the way the Franklin Method® uses extremely specific anatomical landmarks and language means a crystal-clear body schema and toolbox of options that can make precise adjustments. This work has allowed me to pinpoint areas of tension and weakness that had gone unresolved for decades, despite endless outside interventions. What makes it so effective is that the learning is participatory and self-initialized; there is no ongoing reliance on external manipulation as there typically is in other techniques. With Franklin Method®, you are actively in charge of your own well-being. This does require exact structural knowledge plus mental focus; these are not a series of mindless exercises, but this combination of mental plus physical is exactly what makes it so successful. Franklin Method® is not intended to deal with pathologies but to prevent issues in advance, although its use of detailed visualization (known as Mental Simulation of Movement, Neurocognitive Simulation of Movement, or Motor Imagery) to image ideal anatomical function does mean that the work can happen even if you are injured, fatigued, or have limited mobility. Although up until

now this work been the purview of dance and bodyworkers, my deep dives into it have led to massive changes in my own singing and teaching, my ability to move with ease in my own body, as well as students' alignment, breathing, resonance, self-confidence, and more.

One of my high school students wrote that Franklin Method® has “. . . vastly improved my understanding of my body's structure and movement. My ability to self-analyze my singing has greatly increased with this type of awareness, as has my agency in my own body . . . These workshops have also expanded my understanding . . . of what my instrument is to include much more than simply my airways and vocal tract. Workshops on shoulders, knees, and pelvis have been eye-opening as to how my body interacts with itself and forms one complete instrument . . . The Franklin Method® classes also teach me the ability to make changes, and I have found myself implementing strategies Dr. Mastrian uses in Franklin Method® workshops to adjust my singing on my own to be more comfortable, free, and intentional.”

This is exactly the type of independence that I wish for my students and for all of us!

APPLICATION:

When encountering a forward head position while standing, we may have heard to pull up to the ceiling from an imaginary string at the back of the head or to put our ears over our shoulders. (Please take a moment to stand up and experience each of these. Note if you are holding your breath. Trying singing a single tone, and notice the sound and feel.) While these instructions may be partially useful, they are prescriptive, and they only cue an external aesthetic end result rather than getting to the root cause — in fact they tend to create more tension as we attempt to force ourselves into a fixed position.

Instead, use your index (pointer) fingers to find the bumps on your skull behind your earlobes (at the level where many people have earrings); these are your mastoid processes — outcroppings with many fascial and muscular connections. Place your index fingers horizontally on the mastoid processes and imagine the halfway point between them inside your head; this internal location is where your skull meets your spine. Imagine a tightrope connecting your fingers, and imperceptibly nod your head “yes,” rocking ever-so-slightly over that tightrope. This movement should be as if a butterfly landed on your nose and then a feather

landed on the back of your head. As you do this, very gently push up on your mastoid processes and continue to envision that central connection. After several seconds of this, remove your hands and take a moment to notice how you feel: breathing, alignment, and overall sense of calm. Finally, sing the same tone as you did earlier and notice the difference in the sound and feel.

Mindfulness

Although some people may associate **mindfulness** with emptying your brain of thoughts, it has more to do with acknowledging your current state, including whatever thoughts float by, and the ability to continually refocus.

Mindfulness and meditative practices, such as sitting, walking, body scanning, constructive rest, and the like, most of which include conscious breathing or attention on another basic activity, have a tremendous impact on vocal production, productivity and progress, overall health, and aging. A striking illustration of the beneficial effect of these practices on speech habits came while I was participating in a Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction® program (which I would highly recommend!): over the course of the 8-week MBSR program, there was an astonishing change in the amount of pressure in the voices of every single person in the group. Although speech production was never discussed, flow phonation naturally happened as everyone released tension in their bodies and nervous systems.

Mindfulness can be helpful during voice practice time. Rather than beating yourself up, dwelling on a problem, or avoiding something uncomfortable, you simply note what happened and return to the task and what you would like to try next. You can decide your intention, attention, and attitude. If nervousness or racing thoughts occur, mindfulness can be used to consciously affect breathing: breathe in as you count “1” in your head, breathe out as you count “2”; in 3, out 4; in 5, out 6; in 7, out 8; in 9, out 10; begin again with “1,” and repeat the series several times until you feel calmer. As an actor or director, mindfulness can be valuable when there are characters with beliefs or behaviors that are different from ours in real life; rather than judging those characters, our job is simply to accept them as they are and to experience the world as they do.

APPLICATION:

Imagine a situation in which you feel an immediate and strong reaction — perhaps when receiving critical

feedback after a competition or during an upsetting exchange with a peer. Before you respond, STOP: Stop / Take a Breath / Observe / Proceed. First, stop and identify how you are feeling: “I feel angry, frustrated, disappointed . . .” Note the places in your body where this emotion seems to be lodged: clenched jaw, tense sides of throat, painful neck and shoulders, held upper chest, nauseous stomach, etc. Feel it and allow yourself to be curious about that feeling. Are you breathing? Allow yourself to breathe, particularly focusing on a lengthened exhalation in an “oo” or “oh” shape. Observe: how do you feel now? Finally, choose the way in which you would like to respond. This is your “response”-ability, and like any skill, it will become easier over time!

Self-Compassion

Self-compassion work comes from Buddhist teachings related to mindfulness, self-kindness (rather than self-judgement), and connection (rather than isolation in our suffering).

In my own work and as a teacher whose job it is to help students to improve, I have asked myself “How can I affect change without being overly demanding? Is it possible both to accept what already is and at the same time strive towards something different?” The self-compassion idea offered in response is: “I’m doing the best I can, *and* I can do better.” We can contemplate both truths simultaneously. We also can provide ourselves with comfort and reassurance, even during times of separation from others who might normally give us hugs and supportive words; we can wrap our arms around ourselves, enjoy breathing, and say something like, “I am wonderful. I am fabulous. I love myself.” This may feel utterly ridiculous at first, but why should we be able to say things that demean but not say things that ameliorate?

APPLICATION:

If you are practicing and find that you are berating yourself, or when you are critiquing yourself post-performance, is your feedback destructive or productive? Reframe your thoughts by asking, “How would you say these things to a friend?” It may be helpful to remind yourself of at least three things you did well, rephrase criticism as something positive and concrete to do during future work (ex., “Don’t sing so flat anymore,” becomes “In descending phrases, feel the Julie Andrews



headiness and reiterate your low abdominal engagement every couple of notes.”), and reassure yourself that others have had similar feelings of dissatisfaction. This was a snapshot in time: you did the best that you could in that moment, and you have other choices in the future!

Trauma And Resiliency Work

Trauma and Resiliency work refers to ideas and practices exemplified by figures such as Bessel van der Kolk (*The Body Keeps the Score* — which I’d like to call *Manual for Being a Human* and strongly believe everyone on the planet should read!), Stephen Porges (Polyvagal Theory), Gabor Maté (Compassionate Inquiry), Peter Levine (Somatic Experiencing™), and many others. Contact with this work is **not** intended to turn you into a therapist; rather it is to help you to be more aware of habitual tendencies in your own self and the ways that you show up in your daily interactions, as well as to be sensitive to physical and emotional cues that your students may be giving you. It is imperative that teachers respond to the students who are in front of them, as they are in that moment, not formulaically or with an inflexible agenda, and it is essential that they do not inadvertently make things worse by dismissing students’ feelings or by perpetuating problematic teaching models, such as those that claim to be hard on students “for their own good.”

There are many times that we encounter what we perceive as vocal issues or attitude problems in the studio that have much deeper roots. For example, I have had multiple singers come to my studio to work on breathing that they have described as feeling “stuck”; what they thought was a singing problem was actually a manifestation of previous trauma, but they had never put these ideas together: our protective instinct in situations of fear is to remain still as we assess the situation around us,

and our throats, abdominal diaphragms, and our pelvic floors are particularly susceptible to this immobilization, tensed in anticipation of the next terrible thing — so perpetually holding their breaths became their new normal, and when they wanted to “let go” for singing, it was not fully possible. This is something that likely necessitates external therapeutic support, as well as an understanding that the musculature itself requires time to repattern after having remained in a chronically shortened and thickened state. As a teacher, depending upon the situation I might recommend that they consider therapy, including [EMDR®](#) (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing) or movement therapy or other somatic processing with appropriately certified individuals. In that moment I can help them to notice their response and/or refocus them on a physical approach that feels accessible at the time, changing course to work around the triggering aspect or offering alternative exercises so as not to exacerbate their distress.

Similarly, offering modifications to language can make a significant difference: for example, when mentioning to an adult student that the onset of sound was like a “cry,” “whimper,” or “whine,” she immediately recognized that those terms would not be useful for her because they were associated with being yelled at as a child and taught to suppress her emotions. I adjusted the wording to “groan” or “laugh” to elicit a similarly activating result without the negative connotations, and then I switched tactics entirely to an anatomical discussion with no emotional undertones. Many students might shut down but not realize they are doing so, nor may they be able to ask for what they need, so varied approaches can be useful.

Particularly with pandemic-related stressors, many people are numbing out — disconnecting or escaping — which can show up as a seeming lack of reaction or caring, inability to notice tension in the body, an absence of “normal” progress or retention of concepts, and more. During these times, students need helping hands, not harshness. We can assist by setting reasonable expectations and altering our pacing to what is achievable, rather than unrealistic or forced — which unintentionally creates further hurdles, tension, and a sense of failure. Other modifications can include shifting our language from telling to inviting, as well as allowing for guided exploration instead of giving dogmatic cues.

APPLICATION:

When teaching, instead of saying “You *always* look up at the ceiling; stop it,” or “Don’t worry, it’s easy; I don’t

understand why you can't just be in it and have fun," listen to the student's concerns, observe with multiple senses, then help them to find the underlying technical cause for a certain behavior that may be causing them to turn their attention inward. Focus on what they can control or shift, such as "How does your breathing feel when you look up to the ceiling as you start that line? (Let them try it out and see if they can note that they are tensing their body and holding their breath.) What if you were to inhale imagining a calm, wide base of your throat, with no squeezing in and up? (Let them try out this physical sensation, then ask if that time felt different or better.) How does it feel if you were to look at your stuffed animal or the person in that poster on your wall and share the good news in this song with them? Or to sing while bouncing from one foot to another?" In this way you are directing their attention to productive options, and you are doing it in steps, i.e., with a suitable dosage so they are not overwhelmed and can find a successful route.

Dance/Movement Therapy

Dance/Movement Therapy, not to be confused with physical therapy, is a branch of psychotherapy that uses movement, our first language, "to promote emotional, social, cognitive, and physical integration of the individual, for the purpose of improving health and well-being" (American Dance Therapy Association). Dance/Movement therapy allows for revealing and processing emotions and accessing different ways of moving through life. This work also may include playing with developmental movement patterns — those that humans experience from birth through crawling, walking, and more. Access to an array of possibilities is the goal; as activist and dance movement therapist Amber Elizabeth Gray states, "Every human being has the right to inhabit their body in the way they choose."

"Every human being has the right to inhabit their body in the way they choose."

— activist and dance movement therapist
Amber Elizabeth Gray

Again, although voice teachers are not therapists, elements of the movement patterns elucidated by figures such as Rudolf Laban (Laban Movement Analysis), Irmgard Bartenieff

(Bartenieff Fundamentalssm), Judith Kestenberg (Movement Profiles), and other somatic frameworks can offer a window into our routine modes of being, reflected in our bodies, minds, and voices, and enhance our palette of creative possibilities. In fact, I was first introduced to Laban's Movement Analysis work in a voiceover class: for any phrase, you can apply concepts like effort and shape of gesture, which affect attitude and physicality of characterization, as well as vocal quality and expression. As you embody different characteristics, notice what is most easily accessible and what is challenging. Ideally we do not want to be stuck in one movement pattern (bound vs. free, biting vs. twisting, etc.) but to have the flexibility to move between them and thus amongst varied states of existing.

APPLICATION:

Help your students find new approaches and colors by having them try out the same phrase in a multitude of ways: direct/indirect, strong/light, accelerating/decelerating, bound/free, with the qualities of wringing, press, flick, dab, glide, float, punch, or slash. These can be vocal attributes and/or could be accompanied by physical gestures. (You may note some similarities to the delineations in Chekov's "psycho-physical" acting approach that involves inner and outer gestures including push, pull, lift, smash, gather, throw, penetrate, tear, drag, and reach.)

For example, if you were singing the opening line of the lilting "Deh, vieni, non tardar" from Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*, you might try it with the indications of indirect, light, accelerating, and free; next try out direct, heavy, deceleration, and bound. Some of these may perfectly fit the mood of the piece. Others may seem highly inappropriate, but this is also revealing — either of what is less effective OR what is surprisingly useful because unexpected results often can occur, in terms of connection to breath, trajectory of a phrase, type of articulation, or commitment to an intention!

Alba Method

Alba Method or **Alba Emoting**, another modality that has psychology at its core, is a form of acting training that "is a means for identifying, inducing, and regulating genuine emotion through conscious application of patterns of breath and muscle tension organic to basic emotions. It was initially aimed at actors and acting teachers looking for alternatives to using personal memories or other indirect means to enhance

emotional expression in performance . . . The method identifies six basic emotions — anger, joy, sadness, fear, tenderness, and eroticism — which blend to create the full range of human feeling, as well as the physiology of emotional calm (neutrality).” (albamethod.com)

Alba Method work has drawn my awareness to breath patterns, facial expressions, and body posture, enabling me to identify habitual tension as I move through life and to recognize reactions occurring in students’ bodies — for example, held breath, fixed eyes, and a tight back as in fear, or a downward gaze, inward expression, and bodily deflation on exhalation as in sadness. It becomes apparent when one is gravitating to a particular pattern throughout each day, for example when stuck with worry inside one’s head, and it becomes possible to intentionally shift one’s state by changing eye focus, breathing blueprint, and how one is holding one’s self.

Although only certified teachers are permitted to guide others through this work, and those practicing it have specific steps of what they are allowed to practice according to their level of facility, I would highly recommend attending workshops, not only for the acting benefits but for the impact on everyday life. In the meantime, you could start noticing the type of eye focus you see when people are angry vs. when they are looking at someone or something with tenderness — both are directed outwardly, but they are very different. You might also observe the downwardly- and inwardly-directed focus that occurs when you encounter sadness and the loose or random focus that happens with joy.

APPLICATION:

When students are singing with a glazed-over look, or when you are at a funeral and are sad but need to sing, try looking directly at an object at eye level or above. Truly see the colors and textures and gaze at it pleasantly. Breathe in and out evenly.

Sound Healing

Sound healing involves the use of sound produced by voices, bowls (crystal or metal), gongs, tuning forks, drums, shakers, and so forth to alter brain wave and body states. Have you ever been to a concert where the sound felt like it was reverberating through you, and you were swept up by the energy of the crowd? That sense of connectedness with the vibrations in the music and with other people has to do with resonant frequencies and entrainment: the phenomenon in which our brains,

breathing, heartbeats, and movements begin to sync. Music does not simply evoke moods, it provokes them, and “being on the same wavelength” is not just a figure of speech.

Sound healing can occur with people lying down or sitting and listening to vocalizations or other sustained sounds, often directed toward various energy focal points, called chakras. Since sound healing can induce an extremely blissed-out mode (Theta brain wave activity), I have found it to be an extraordinarily useful alternative for people who are restless during silent or breathing-based mindfulness activities. (You do have to find a style that is appealing to you: for example, I prefer real instruments to electronic sounds and practitioners who are genuinely immersed in giving and receiving sound to those who behave performatively.) Sound healing also can occur when you are singing, toning (sounding on “om” or another phoneme), or humming yourself; when you do this you are stimulating your vagus nerve; this is the longest nerve in the body, connected to muscles involved in vocal production and almost every single organ. Sounding practices activate your parasympathetic (rest and relax) nervous system and therefore beneficially affect breathing, digestion, and more.

In addition to the aforementioned advantages, sound healing sessions have reminded me of the importance of acceptance and play. There is no judgement — whatever sounds happen to come out are valid. We can tune into ourselves and express our inner voice, as well as listen to others and to our surroundings, responding flexibly. Teaching voice in the western world we often focus on crafting a finalized, polished sound product, but centering our attention on the *feeling* of sounding itself in any moment can be revelatory.

APPLICATION:

Body Scan/Chakra Cleanse & Vocal Function Exercise: this combination vocalise allows you to warm up, check in with your body, and clear your energy centers. Most people notice a feeling of relaxation, as well as easier access to notes through the transitional areas of their voices.

Imagine that your legs are roots. Feel like you could inhale with gentle expansiveness from around the area of your tailbone (root chakra), then release air to allow an “uh” to happen on a comfortable low range pitch (typically C), sustained for a few seconds without any strain or force. We aren’t going after a particular sound but rather the soothing, unimpeded feel of airflow → sound. Next, imagine the expansiveness of

your root chakra followed by your pelvis (sacral chakra), from which emanates an “oo” on a D. Then while you imagine root, sacral, and bottom of ribcage (solar plexus chakra), intone “oh” on an E. Next while you imagine a connection to the preceding chakras and the middle of your ribcage (heart chakra), allow “ah” on an F to release, followed by the throat (throat chakra) – “aye” on G, forehead area above nose (third eye chakra) – “ey” on A, above the top of the head (crown chakra) – “ee” on B, and feeling a connection from the ground throughout your body and out the top of your head, returning to “uh” in the original low octave of C.

Energy Work

Energy work, which is often part of sound healing, opens us up to all available possibilities and encourages us to trust our intuition. Everything in the known universe is made of energy, the building blocks for everything. My first introduction to this work was the idea of visualizing pre-audition nervous energy as black smoke exiting on the exhale through the bottoms of my feet and dissipating into the earth. I then could imagine filling back up with light as I inhaled and discharging the unwanted smoke-anxiety on each exhalation.

APPLICATION:

To clear and recharge between students or to prevent others’ criticisms or negative attitudes from affecting you, envision light extending past your body in the form of a golden egg. You might see if you prefer a different color or image, such as a bubble, cocoon, force field, bouncy structure, or waves that flow or radiate outward.

Many other modalities have influenced my work. From Kristin Linklater’s voice work I have incorporated the concepts of consistency and freedom, and I have enjoyed having new students draw on the outline of a person where their voices feel trapped and then letting them make an air sculpture of how their voice currently feels and how they would like it to feel. From speech and singing voice rehab and from myofunctional tongue and cheek work, I honed the skill of hearing even a hint of tension in the onset of sound, realized that is always useful to return to fundamentals, and learned details of coordination and training that I never would have otherwise. CranioSacral massage and myofascial colleagues have taught me self-massage and calming techniques such as putting your

fingers in your ears and pulling them slightly out to the sides, then diagonally downward, then up like elf ears. Alexander Technique and Feldenkrais Method®, body mapping, yoga, acupuncture, visceral manipulation, and more have been a part of my journey.

I will conclude this compilation by mentioning Pilates, a mindful movement practice that has been of tremendous assistance to my own core and pelvic floor awareness, strength onstage, and falling-related injury prevention in real life. For many, [Pilates](#) conjures worrisome cues such as “pull your belly button to your spine and hold it”; although I have unfortunately encountered this form of inflexible instruction (as well as neck tension and abdominal/pelvic floor tension issues that affect the responsiveness of the vocal instrument), I also have worked with incredibly sensitive instructors (particularly with [Balanced Body®](#) training) who encourage only the degree of tone that occurs in normal exhalation: this provides sufficient transverse abdominal and other muscular engagement to protect for most movements aside from spinal extension. Amongst the Pilates teachers and participants I have taught, the consistent phenomena I have noted have been an adeptness with centering and directing one’s own attention, an incredible cognizance of subtle bodily changes, and the capacity to integrate new ideas quickly, especially related to breath support.

Although the modalities discussed in this article may be diverse, each of them leads to enhanced discernment in the form of improved exteroception (external — our five senses), proprioception (our sense of self in space and during movement), and interoception (internal — our breathing, emotions, etc.). Ultimately this means more available options for comfort and change.

I encourage you to continue exploring, to find what is most useful to you and your students, and to enrich their experiences as comprehensively as possible. In the springtime, the image of a garden comes to mind, filled with lush foliage and multicolored flowers: it can be amazing to encounter a variety, and we also may prefer certain colors or types. If you display numerous offerings, you and your students will be able to build a bouquet that best suits them. Everything may not be appealing, but exposure can let them know the possibilities that are out there; you never know what will unleash a slew of self-discoveries!

I look forward to nurturing new seeds by furthering my investigation of Authentic Movement, Body-Mind Centering®, interpersonal neurobiology, and more. I urge you to be curious and wish you all the best in your journey toward functionality and freedom; acknowledging your full selves; understanding the

profound links between psychology, physiology, and pedagogy; and gaining deeper awareness and adaptability as singers, teachers, and human beings.

For links to resources and practitioners, visit mastrianstudio.com/resources.

Dr. Stacey Mastrian is a soprano, voice teacher, functional anatomy facilitator, and diction coach who empowers her students to make lifelong changes through holistic, client-centered learning that focuses on healthy minds, bodies, and voices — a process which she calls *Endogenous Education™*. She has been a NATS Intern, a Fulbright fellow to Italy, and has sung

around the globe at venues such as Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center in New York, the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C., the Konzerthaus in Berlin, and Teatro La Fenice in Venice. Mastrian has taught at American University, Gettysburg College, Peabody Conservatory, and University of Maryland. She is the founder of *Mindful Vocal Engineering™*, *Singing with Ease™*, *Sounding the Voice Within™*, and *Vocal Freedom for Life™*, and she currently teaches privately and as guest clinician for masterclasses and workshops worldwide.

Mastrian is a certified Franklin Method® Level I Movement Educator (Level II in progress) and a Lower Back and Pelvic Floor Trainer but has not received endorsement compensation from any of the parties mentioned.

UPDATES



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2022 National Election Results

The National Association of Teachers of Singing has elected officers for the 2022-2024 term and will install the leadership team during the organization’s biennial business meeting on July 6 at the 57th National Conference in Chicago.

Newly elected officers include President-Elect Alexis Davis-Hazell, Secretary/Treasurer Randall Umstead, Vice President for Auditions Alisa Belflower, and Vice President for Outreach Nicholas Perna. Reelected for second terms are Vice President for Membership Torin Chiles and Vice President for Workshops DeMar Neal. Diana Allan was installed as president-elect in 2020 and also will be installed as the organiza-

tion’s president in June. Carole Blankenship will serve on the board as immediate past president.

“NATS is fortunate to have so many talented professionals in our organization,” Executive Director Allen Henderson said. “I have full confidence that these elected officers will lead this organization forward with great conviction, talent and dedication to serving the NATS membership. The NATS staff and I are thrilled to work with these individuals for the next two years as we set forth on our continued path of success.”

[Read more.](#)