

What the Fack? Voice Dysphoria and the Transgender and Genderqueer Singer

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Introduction

- One size does not fit all! Trans Singers are individuals. There are several options for the singing voice.
- Trans woman (AMAB, MtF, M2F, or trans feminine) may prefer she/her/hers
 - May sing with baritone or tenor voice (with or without voice dysphoria)
 - May sing head voice and label as soprano or mezzo
- Trans man (AFAB, FtM, F2M, or trans masculine) may prefer he/him/his
 - No Testosterone – Probably sings mezzo soprano or soprano (with or without voice dysphoria)
 - After Testosterone – May sing tenor or baritone or countertenor
- Third Gender or Gender Fluid (Non-binary or Genderqueer) – prefers non-binary pronouns they/them/their or something else (You must ask!)
 - May sing with any voice type (with or without voice dysphoria)

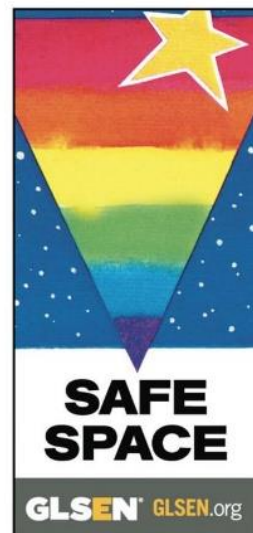
Creating a Gender Neutral Learning Environment

- Gender and sex are not synonymous terms.
- Cisgender means that your assigned sex at birth is in agreement with your internal feeling about your own gender.
- Transgender means that there is disagreement between the sex you were assigned at birth and your internal gender identity.
- There is also a difference between your gender identity and your gender expression.
- Many other terms fall under the trans umbrella: Non-binary, gender fluid, genderqueer, and agender, etc.
- Remember that pronouns matter. Never assume. The best way to know what pronouns someone prefers for themselves is to ask.
- In addition to she/her/hers and he/him/his, it is perfectly acceptable to use they/them/their for a single individual if that is what they prefer.
- Some other pronouns are coming into use such as ze/hir/hirs, and may become more familiar with time.
- Post something that let's all the singers know that it is a Safe Zone or Safe Space.
- Never assume that you know someone's gender identity or sexuality based on their appearance.
- The most important thing for you as a teacher is to be an ally. You must be open-minded enough to treat these students with respect and try and support them however possible.

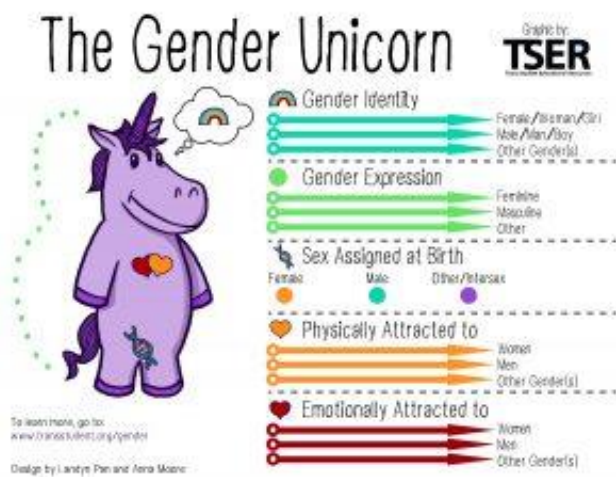
The Effects of Hormones on the Singing Voice

- Estrogen therapy for a post-adolescent trans woman (AMAB, MtF, M2F, or trans feminine) will make no change in the voice.
 - These individuals may choose to feminize the voice in both speech and singing. Many times a speech therapist may be needed to accomplish this change because fundamental frequency and resonance changes will likely be necessary.
 - If this individual wishes to sing alto or soprano, training the falsetto or head voice will be necessary. Some individuals are more successful than others in this process.
 - Some trans women are perfectly comfortable singing with their tenor or bass voices, even while feminine presenting.
- Testosterone therapy for a trans man (AFAB, FtM, F2M, or trans masculine) will make a profound and permanent change in the pitch of the speaking and singing voice.
 - The chest voice range increased and the soprano or alto range will be drastically diminished. Falsetto/head production may be unavailable for a while.
 - Because of the permanent nature of these changes, some trans men may wish to keep their soprano or alto voices even while presenting as masculine.
 - Due to the diminished range early in the treatment, it is important to check in often with the singer who has shared this information with you.

Lucia Lucas <http://www.lucialucas.de/>



Adrian Angelico <https://www.adrianangelico.com/>



Holden Madagame <http://holdenmadagame.com/>



Selected Vocalises

SOVT exercises for all, particularly with siren slides from high to low.

You-hoo calls to find falsetto/head or Mode 2 production. (AMAB)

Talking pitches to find chest or Mode 1 production. (AFAB)

“Houston” [i] shape to find all other vowels.

“Uh-oh” to find glottal closure.

Bozeman’s “passive vowel” modification. (AFAB after T)

The image displays six musical notation exercises on a treble clef staff in 2/4 time. Each exercise consists of a melodic line with a slur over it, and a corresponding vowel or syllable sequence written below. The exercises are: 1. A single note on G4 with the label 'SingNG'. 2. A sequence of notes: E4 (labeled 'ee'), G4 (labeled 'ah'), E4, G4, E4, G4, E4, G4, E4. 3. A sequence of notes: E4 (labeled 'oo'), G4 (labeled 'ee'), E4, G4, E4, G4, E4. 4. A sequence of notes: E4 (labeled 'ah'), G4, E4, G4, E4, G4, E4. 5. A sequence of notes: E4 (labeled 'My'), G4 (labeled 'boat'), E4 (labeled 'is'), G4 (labeled 'wet'). 6. A sequence of notes: E4 (labeled 'My'), G4 (labeled 'boat'), E4 (labeled 'is'), G4 (labeled 'wet').

Selected Resources

- Richard K. Adler, Sandy Hirsch, and Michelle Mordaunt. *Voice and Communication Therapy for the Transgender/Transsexual Client: A Comprehensive Clinical Guide*. Plural Publishing, 2012.
- Liz Jackson Hearn and Brian Kremer. *The Singing Teacher’s Guide to Transgender Voices*. Plural Publishing, 2018.
- Brian Manternach, Michael Chipman, Ruth Rainero, and Caitlin Stave. Teaching Transgender Singers. Part I: The Voice Teachers’ Perspectives. *Journal of Singing*, September/October 2017, Volume 74, No. 1, pp. 83–88.
- Brian Manternach. Teaching Transgender Singers. Part II: The Singers’ Perspectives. *Journal of Singing*, November/December 2017, Volume 74, No. 2, pp. 209–214.
- Josh Palkki. https://acda.org/files/choral_journals/PalkkiJu-Ju17.pdf and <http://www.queeringchoir.com/>
- Loraine Sims. Teaching the Transgender Students. *Journal of Singing*, January/February 2017 Volume 73, No. 3, pp. 279–282.
- Loraine Sims. Teaching Lucas: A Transgender Singer’s Vocal Journey from Soprano to Tenor. *Journal of Singing*, March/April 2017 Volume 73, No. 4, pp. 367–375.
- Loraine Sims. What the FACH? Voice Dysphoria and the Trans or Non-Binary Singer. *VOICE Prints Journal of the New York Singing Teachers’ Association*, Volume 15, Number 5 May--June 2018.
- Helpful weblinks
 - <http://www.transstudent.org/>
 - <https://www.glsen.org/safespace>
 - <https://keyoft.com/>
 - <http://www.lucialucas.de/>
 - <https://www.adrianangelico.com/>
 - <http://holdenmadagame.com/>

Contact

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