

Highly recommended by all - from respected experts to beginners

How to get off the Sofa and Sing like a Professional (Opera) Singer

A Practical, Step-by-Step Guide to
Developing the Tone and Techniques required of
a Singer who sings in the
Classical or Romantic Style



Written by the writer, author, broadcaster
and singer

Robert Little

“Never sing louder than lovely.”

Isobel Baillie (1895 – 1983), one of the 20th century’s greatest
exponents of oratorio singing.

Published by
The Endless Bookcase
Available from theendlessbookcase.com

The Endless Bookcase is a Trading Name of

Facture International Ltd
71 Castle Road
St Albans
Hertfordshire
England UK
AL1 5DQ

Website: www.facture.co.uk

Copyright © 2011 Robert Little
All rights reserved.

This booklet is available in a variety of formats
both paper and electronic.
Check www.theendlessbookcase.com for availability.



Acknowledgements

I'd like to express my thanks to:

- Carl French, of The Endless Bookcase, for his support and encouragement with this project.
- Edgar Evans, a former principal tenor at The Royal Opera, Covent Garden, who shared the secrets of vocal technique with me over many years – which has enabled me to enjoy singing in concerts, oratorios, light, comic and grand operas.

Robert Little



Robert Little, in the role of the sailor, Richard Dauntless, in Gilbert & Sullivan's opera, Ruddigore (performed by the Putteridge Bury Gilbert & Sullivan Society in May 2011)

Review Comments

“The author’s infectious enthusiasm and humorous approach to his subject permeates the whole text of this new e-book... This book will surely be a source of encouragement and a useful guide for the aspiring singer.”

John Falk

Retired. Formerly, Assistant Director of Studies and Head of Student Services at Trinity College of Music in London

“Bob Little’s useful book takes a singer interested in perfecting their technique by the hand and shows them in easy steps what can be achieved. Understanding that singing in public is also about confidence, through amusing anecdotes and inspiring quotations, Little shows that he has learned from the best and applied what he himself has learned to his love of being on the stage. This book is both practical and wonderfully inspirational. When I next want to ensure I keep in tune I, too, will lift my eyebrows!”

Professor Frank Banks

The Open University

Preface

It's now a long time ago since I decided I wanted to learn how to sing. It took me about ten years to pluck up the courage and find the opportunity to begin to learn to sing – and it's a skill, an art and a technique which, many years later, I'm still trying to perfect.

This booklet tells a little of my sojourn in singing but it sets out a lot more of the singing technique that I've learnt along the way. That technique, along with some excellent vocal coaching, has been culled from professional opera singers who, in turn, learnt their technique from the rather stern teacher of experience and, in one case, the even sterner (but ultimately hugely rewarding) experience of working with a world class singing teacher in Rome.

I hope this booklet will give you some useful tips and techniques in your search for the secrets of successful singing – and that you'll have at least as much fun from this extremely demanding but rewarding performing art as I've had over the years.

Robert Little
December 2011

CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	i
Review Comments	ii
Preface.....	iii
1 The maestro – and his teacher	1
1.1 Roles.....	3
1.2 Opportunity	3
1.3 Covent Garden audition	4
1.4 Well respected	5
2 Setting the scene	6
2.1 Recommendation.....	7
2.2 Advice which broke the ice.....	8
2.3 Deeper appreciation	9
3 The art of singing	10
3.1 To begin at the beginning.....	10
3.2 What goes in must come out.....	11
3.3 Schools of thought	12
3.4 The hard and soft palates	13
3.5 The soft palate	13
3.6 The “passagio”.....	15
3.7 The value of a vocal coach	16
3.8 Singing sounds	16
3.9 The lips.....	17
4 Which one are you?	20
4.1 Voices: types and ranges	21
4.1.1 Bass	21
4.1.2 Baritone	22
4.1.3 Tenor	22
4.1.4 Contralto	22
4.1.5 Mezzo Soprano	22
4.1.6 Soprano	22
4.2 Voices: derivations.....	23
5 Tenors	24

5.1	Some history.....	24
5.2	The formation of the tenor voice	25
5.3	Power	26
5.4	Types of tenor voice	26
5.5	Getting to the top	26
6	Down to business	27
6.1	Recap.....	28
6.2	Some basics	28
6.2.1	Breath	28
6.2.2	Eyebrows	28
6.2.3	Listen	28
6.2.4	Singing softly	29
6.2.5	The face	29
6.2.6	The jaw	29
6.2.7	The mouth	29
6.2.8	Think	30
6.2.9	Throat	30
6.2.10	Vocal cords	31
6.3	Vocal Exercises.....	31
6.4	“Line” in singing.....	37
6.5	The value of a reputable vocal coach	38
6.6	And finally... ..	38
7	Words of wisdom	39
7.1	Preparing a role.....	39
7.1.1	Performing	39
7.1.2	Rehearsing opera	40
7.1.3	The voice	40
7.1.4	The work	41
7.2	Pitch	41
7.3	Potential and perseverance	42
7.4	Points to ponder.....	42
7.5	Pronunciation.....	43
7.6	Technique	43
7.7	Training	45
7.8	Vocal development.....	46
7.9	Vocal maturity	47

How to get off the Sofa and Sing like a Professional (Opera) Singer

7.10 Vocal power.....47
7.11 Workload48
8 Glossary of musical terms 48
Other e-Book Formats52