**VOCAL TERMINOLOGY**

**A cappella** - Singing without any instrumental accompaniment

**Chest voice** - The vocal register usually associated with women's voices, primarily vibrating in the chest cavity. Chest voice is the lower, stronger but more limited range and it can either be used to shout, yell or strain, or be allowed to freely resonate and release when singing. Singing in pop and musical theater is done almost exclusively in chest voice.

**Diaphragm** - The thoracic diaphragm is a dome-shaped, thin sheet of muscle located directly under the lungs, separating the lungs from the abdomen. When inhaling, the diaphragm contracts and moves down, making space and creating suction for air to enter the lungs. The diaphragm relaxes upon exhaling and the abdominal and intercostal muscles contract. These abdominal and intercostal muscles can be strengthened to better control the release of air or more powerfully force air out of the body. This is what we are doing through the breathwork in our foundational vocal exercises.

**Diction** - A singer's enunciation of the words so they are understandable to the listener.

**Falsetto** - Sometimes referred to as the head voice for male singers, it refers to the range of notes produced by men above their normal vocal register. It is often used to cultivate stylistic effect in pop, r & b and other genres.

**Flat** - When a singer or musician sings or plays lower than the precise pitch called for in the music.

**Intonation** - A singer's ability to accurately hear and stay on precise pitches.

**Head voice** - The vocal register usually associated with women's voices, primarily vibrating in the throat, mouth and nasal cavities. Head voice is the higher range and usually softer with a breathier quality. It is the only accessible range to women above a certain point in their vocal register, although it can be used for low notes as well and trained to be strengthened. Most opera and classical singers sing exclusively in their head voice. In general, singing in the head voice tends to be easier on the vocal cords.

**Nodules or nodes** - When a voice is used too forcefully over time, scar tissue can develop on the vocal chords, causing permanent damage. These can sometimes be removed surgically, with varying degrees of success.
**Phrasing** - Phrasing refers to the musicality which a singer or instrumentalist connects notes in a musical line. It primarily refers to when a singer takes their breaths. Having greater breath control allows for more freedom in musical phrasing.

**Passagio** - A term used in classical singing to reference the transition are between vocal registers.

**Placement** - Vocal placement refers to the direction in which a singer intentionally directs their resonance. A brighter, clear placement of tone in the front of the face (sometimes called mask) is generally aesthetically preferred. A tone with forward placement tends to project better and have a brighter quality.

**Projection** - A reference to the volume with which a singer can produce sound.

**Range** - Our individual vocal range refers to the area between the lowest and highest notes we are able to sing. To a large extent this is determined by the length of our vocal cords. Shorter vocal cords tend to have access to a higher range of notes and longer vocal cords tend to have access to lower notes. Most singers have about a 2 octave range, but with practice and training most singers can significantly extend that range, particularly on the top end.

**Resonance** - Resonance is unique to every person, as it is a product of the voice traveling through the body's air-filled cavities and being enhanced, much like guitar strings resonating through a guitar body. The primary areas of the body contributing to resonance include the pharynx, mouth and nasal cavity. The mouth and throat are the areas in which we can most consciously affect our vocal resonance.

**Sharp** - When a singer or musician sings or plays higher than the precise pitch called for in the music.

**Tone** - Tone refers to the unique color of your sound.

**Vibrato** - The fast, natural fluctuation of pitch within a vocal tone. Vibrato is most prominent in opera and classical singing, but is also a natural element in most all genres of singing and is associated with depth, richness, beauty and “shimmer” in a vocal quality. It is naturally produced when the voice is primarily supported by breath, rather than mechanically activated by the throat.

**Vocal register** - The range of tones produced by the voice, including chest voice, head voice, falsetto. Modal voice is the most common vocal register used in human speech but the term is rarely used in reference to singing.