

CHRISTIN BONIN

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## BELT VOICE TRAINING

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### **Singing with a Belting Voice**

Singing Technique for  
Musical Pop Soul Jazz & Rock

[www.belt-voice-training.com](http://www.belt-voice-training.com)



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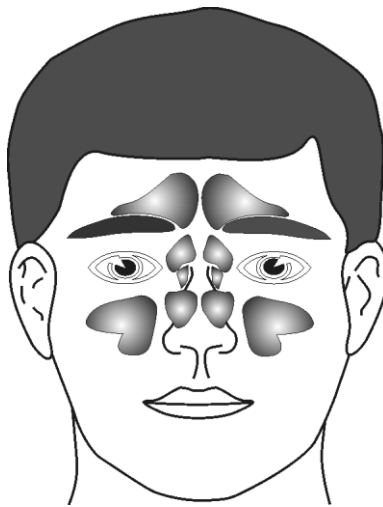
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## 1 VOICE PLACEMENT

To learn how to belt, you need an excellent voice placement.

This means that I have to be able to use the upper part of my resonating cavities, specifically, the paranasal sinuses, the maxillary air sinuses and the frontal sinuses. In fact, even all the small openings of the skull have to be involved.



**Illustration 1**

*The paranasal sinuses represent the most important upper resonating cavities. Using them for a tone production is essential for a perfect voice placement.*

If I would belt without the correct voice placement, all the overtones would be missing and the sound would become a scream.

What exactly is a TONE?

Physically, a tone is only a sine wave; in contrary a musical tone is a sound which is composed of the superposition of partial tones, overtones and secondary tones giving to the listener the impression of a single tone.

That means the physical tone is a single frequency, that produced alone, cannot be recognized as a sound.

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### **Explanation:**

Have I sung down the scale into the chest register function (see 5.2), the larynx has a deep widened position, the rib cage is lifted and expanded and the diaphragm in a deep position. If I try singing up the scale in this position with an as fat tone as possible then I reach my natural limits very fast.

Let's pay attention to our physiological "instrument" exactly: we have the head and the rib cage as resonating cavities and between them sits the smaller cervical, with the larynx as the "tone production center". If we visualize this through our spiritual eye, our instrument "voice" seems to have the form of a sand glass or a guitar body. In the middle, there is a small passage to go through, as if we have to go through a very narrow hallway between two large rooms.

That is exactly the problem.

How do I manage to get through there with a fat powerful chest tone?

Through imagination, that this works!

Depending on the voice character, there are two different possibilities.

### **6.2 Low-Belt Exercise for Strong Dark Voices**

This exercise begins with E4 (in this form also suitable for baritone voices to strengthen the high tones; don't forget: men sound one octave lower).



**Illustration 19**

*Exercise 6*  
(On the CD, 6<sup>th</sup> Exercise: "Low-Belt")

Remembering our first voice placement exercise, we sing now with a light tone on "ni" (Italian vowel), the notes E4 and C#4 and open then to a full chest sound on A3 with the Italian vowel "a". In other words we sing here our 5<sup>th</sup> exercise in a shortened form.



Now sing up to 5<sup>th</sup> that means on A3, B3, C#4, D4, E4 and try to maintain the chest sound by keeping a wide deep larynx position and an open jaw. Imagine the larynx is attached to the lower ribs by two chains in front one slightly towards the left and the other towards the right.

We need this systematically increasing anchoring at the very beginning of this exercise, latest on the A3. We consciously avoid any loss of this support.

Not giving full support, the exercise becomes dangerous.

When you feel only a light pressure coming from below pushing on the larynx, you should stop immediately.

For lower and darker voices with good support, this exercise is not a problem and we easily can sing up to Bb4 or B4. Lighter voices should stop earlier, as soon as it is no longer physically comfortable to continue and you don't have any more enough body strength.

Now, from Bb4 or B4, things become more difficult: we are reaching the higher middle range and even if you are able to keep the chest voice sound you really have to increase the participation of the head voice so that your voice doesn't sound like a roar due to missing overtones.

We have to think back early enough to the focus tone exercise, listening to our personal feeling and timing, but in every case from Bb4 to B4 we sing the higher tones lighter while going up forward without decreasing the sound. We still imagine opening the larynx deep and wide even when singing lighter and in a more frontal voice placement.

The lower jaw definitely remains open! We should remember again the 5<sup>th</sup> exercise and be conscious that we have ended in this exercise on the lowest tones with a wide open jaw. So we should start now on the lowest tone with a similar wide open jaw and keep it open in order to maintain the chest sound.

In this way, natural low-belt voices can sing this exercise up to Eb5 or E5.

Here ends now this voice category, the real low-belt voice, because around Eb5 or E5 start the high soprano register. Here, the voice must be conducted lighter and needs certainly more head voice mixed in, otherwise, we will overstrain the voice and possibly ruin it.

Every exception that exists is and remains an exception by nature.

That is comparable to the dramatic soprano register in the opera: if I have a light, high voice, I can definitely train it, to make it stronger and bigger, sounding a bit more dramatic, but you can never become a real dramatic soprano.

This exercise is very strenuous and should never be done if you are exhausted.

I can only appeal to you once again! Light voices should only use this exercise to strengthen the lower tones to **maximum** Bb4 and then concentrate on the following exercise.

## **7 CONTINUOUS MIX-BELT**

### **7.1 Passage: Full Chest Voice - Middle Voice - High Belt Voice**

Voices like Christina Aguilera, Jennifer Hudson, Whitney Houston and Aretha Franklin, David Lee Roth and Freddie Mercury, to mention only a few, impress us:

They all seem able to do everything, singing in full chest voice and with full belt power on the high notes.

Listen carefully and you will notice that their low notes sound in full chest voice, but there are no really long held, “fat” low tones. These tones have a fantastic sound but there are always only some of them in line and the complete phrase does not last long, but changes either to light head tones or goes to the “easy listening” middle voice. This middle voice sounds absolutely “normal”: technically perfect, on the right pitch, with a good tone production and a light support, not too loud, not too soft, simply well done.

If the phrase continues, then suddenly power tones appear in the higher middle voice, or even in the beginning of the higher soprano range (for men’s voices: in the tenor range), which don’t sound classical or pure head voice but have a large participation of the full chest sound.

That is of course only to realize with a technically healthy voice without a passagio problem.

In order to sing from low to high and being able to produce different levels of power and volume and what seems like a continuing powerful sound, the following mix-belt exercises are suitable.

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## The Refrain

“We are the champions”

Train to sing “we” on “ee” without the “w” and of course focus the “ee” well with a light crescendo.

“We” should not sink down! The sound of “u-ee” would be anyway more correct as “w-ee”, does not help us very much here, because the “u” sits further back than “a” in the vowel position (see vowel-trapeze Page **32**).

Practice on “ee” and then put the “u” as light and short as possible in front of the “ee”. Please keep in mind to have a wide open mouth on the “ee”. Don’t eat a banana sideways.

“And we’ll keep on fighting”: focus well and higher than the “we are”.

Keep on fighting: The “k” has to be placed as short and late as possible before the long “ee” (maintain the same position as in “we” (u-ee))

Instead of “on”, better sing “an” and form the “f” from “fighting” with the flat tongue without any pressure (don’t press the lower lip against the upper teeth—that would damage the next vowel sound!)

Don’t sing the diphthong “ai” in “fighting” but sing a long “ah” with a wide open mouth and the “ee” only at the very last moment, just before the “ting”.

“Through the air” brings a bit of relief, but don’t relax completely and lose support, because you have to return immediately to a high energy level.

The following “we are the champions” lies comfortable in the voice, but sung without support or missing re-intensified voice placement, the next “we are the champions” would definitely be too flat. This “we are” has to be consciously placed high. “no time for losers” is in a major key, attention!

This seems perhaps unimportant but it is necessary for the inner attitude and too often its meaning is underestimated:

Because the following “cause we are the champions” goes into a minor chord, the singer often does not give enough importance to the major chord just before.

Instead of placing it consciously high, the “losers” sounds often off pitch or even simply wrong on a minor chord. Notice this carefully! “for” may slide upwards to “losers” but the “L” must be definitely placed on the pitch of the “o” sound from “losers”, otherwise the tone will be painfully incorrect.

“Of the world” cries for endurance after all that hard work (at least the 2<sup>nd</sup> time, depending on which version you sing): Start the word later (for example, wait until the chord change on “F”) and use the time to breathe deeply.

On the word “world”, articulate “u-e” (e as in her) and evolve into an open, long “a” sound, without losing the “e” sound too much. Keep the voice placement and the support without pushing or becoming physically stiff and hold the tone on pitch.

After three bars, breathe deeply and sing the word “world” once again in exactly the same position, in order to hold the tone for 6 more bars without problems.

Et voilà! You’re done!

#### **8.4 “Hurt” from Christina Aguilera**

“Hurt” is certainly one of the songs that almost every young girl who loves pop music tries to sing.

Actually the song is really not so hard. The difficulty is that most singers try to copy Christina’s sound.

Let’s look at this dilemma in detail:

“Seems like it was yesterday... what I know today”

Here nothing special happens. Christina’s own sound is very present without using very much energy.

On “how proud” she opens the voice, meaning she sings the vowels intensively in the “ah” position, which gives the vowels more time to sound.

Her vocal chords have a kind of a scratching sound; it gives this passage Christina’s personal touch and should never be copied. (Create your own personal touch)

“Ooh, Ooh” – This is simply sung in light head voice, practically in the isolated head voice function.

“I would hold you in my arms... but I know you won’t be there”.

This passage sounds powerful and energetic.

How can you do this?

Because I have not heard Christina live, without a microphone and the usual sound technology, I want to assume she does not push the voice upwards.

To accomplish this sound, most people do this.

That is the main problem: The sound of a voice that we hear on a perfectly recorded CD is made of the complete personal timbre of the singer and the fantastic sound technology being used today.

Let's leave the technology for now out of the game, because we know that even the perfectly recorded singer does not interest us if his timbre and his abilities to give sound don't move us.

This is principally a natural thing and can only be shown by having good technique.

In this case, we have to use the low-belt technique and the complete mix-belt with all the consequences:

"I would hold" and "I would take" are passages, sung in an economical way, on "thank you" we have already reached the next energy level, and we have to maintain our strength. On "forgive" we can re-adjust the voice placement and then we have to hold on to our support through the word "mistakes". Even if we save the voice a bit on "there's nothing I wouldn't do", we must start again to give more energy on "to hear your voice again". Breathe and start on the same energy level for the phrase "sometimes I wanna call you" and keep it on "but I know you won't be there".

Start the new phrase on the same firm energy level (really keep the same support!) and sing "ohh", "I'm sorry for blaming you", then "for everything I just couldn't do" release the support a bit while keeping the sound space like you must for a classical pianissimo.

"And I've hurt", remains there, "myself" gets lighter before she sings "by hurting you" in the isolated head voice position with a breathy ("misty") effect. (This is a popular effect in pop music: a misty sound with husky tones).

For the second verse everything is quite the same.

Listen carefully, where Christina gives full sound and gets in on the same energy level after breathing and where she saves and refuels.

In the bridge then, we have to show that we have learned how to hold our support continuously all the way through:

Sing "If I had just one more day" in full power and immediately restart on the same energy level on "I would tell you how much that I've missed you, since you've been away".

Don't miss to hear how she saves energy on the embellishments on "day" and "away" at the end of each phrase. This is not a loss of support, but a healthy support reduction – like in our high-belt exercise (Focus tone exercise), where we are singing classical pianissimo up to the 5th or eventually even still up to the 6th tone but with activated support!

Getting curious how to belt out a song?

Order now - and you will not regret it.