

Solo Workshops

Anne and Christine have been running Solo Singing Workshops for some two decades. A realisation of the need and the desire of singers – as well as their teachers - for this “ half-way house” in performance experience prompted them to devise the workshops, which have offered opportunities to many singers, from teenagers to men and women in their 70s and 80s.

Anne Fradd

Anne studied at Trinity College of Music and at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. She made her solo debut at the Festival Hall aged 17, singing *He was despised* from Handel's *Messiah* at an Ernest Read concert. Anne's background encompasses both stage work and church music; she was a member of the professional choir of St Bride's, Fleet Street in her early career. Her solo performances have included opera, oratorio, recitals and 'cabaret' appearances and her stage rôles range from Iolanthe via Puccini's *Princessa (Suor Angelica)* to the Good Witch of the North from *The Wizard of Oz*.

Christine Gwynn

Christine has been deeply involved with voices as a coach, accompanist and teacher throughout her career. She read music at Southampton University and subsequently studied with Norman Beedie at the Guildhall; Since then she has received individual vocal training from various teachers, including Derek Hammond Stroud and Ghislaine Morgan, and has also learnt much from working with a large number of vocal specialists in the choral field and from the many, many singing lessons and coaching sessions which she has accompanied. This rich experience has led Christine to a deep fascination with voices, which she explores professionally in a number of ways: as accompanist, coach and workshop leader and as the conductor of several choirs. You can read more at

www.cagmus.org.uk and www.arbutusmusic.net

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Further info plus guidelines and enrolment forms at
www.cagmus.org.uk/workshops/html

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Some guidelines to help you to get the most out of a solo workshop:

- You should bring **two pieces that you have prepared to performance standard**; you may be asked to sing one or both, depending on the length and complexity of the songs, points needing attention, time available etc.
- Make sure that both pieces are **really well learnt** - that you're sure of notes *and* music! It's better to bring just one well-rehearsed piece if that's all that you have time to prepare.
- If you aren't able to practise with a pianist ask someone to record the accompaniment. **You need to know the sound of the accompaniment as well as you know your own line!**
- The **style of the piece doesn't matter** at all; you might choose a classical song, music theatre (show, opera or operetta), folk song, pop ballad, church piece etc.
- **The song(s) should suit you and your voice**: think about the character of the song, the emotions expressed, the type of person who might be saying these words. Also take note of register – is the piece too high or too low? – and of the *kind* of voice that it suits. If you sound like Julie Andrews don't go for rich and earthy!
- Choose **something that you enjoy singing**. You need to be able to empathise with the words and music. Do you and the composer and poet have something to say to the audience?
- Think about how you might **introduce your song** to put the audience in a receptive mood! Do they need some background information? Do you need to encourage a reflective mood or set a lighter tone, for instance?
- Try to **memorise your song(s)**; with the exception of church music, including oratorio performances, solo repertoire is usually performed from memory. This helps the singer to get in character and to communicate more directly with the audience. If you're really struggling with this try using a cue card showing key words or beginnings of verses etc.
- **Costumes are not expected** for this workshop but occasionally a prop might be helpful e.g. a book or scroll if you were going to sing Leporello's *Catalogue aria* or a basket for Buttercup's song in *Pinafore*.
- Most of all, remember that **the audience is there to enjoy the song** and its message - you are just the messenger! A few fluffs are far less important than the overall communication that you have with your audience. Live your song.