



What Every Singer Needs to Know About the Body

By Melissa Malde, Kurt-Alexander Zeller, MaryJean Allen

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How well do you know your body? Well, the here's how and what's what of your vocal instrument your entire body, not just the larynx are contained succinctly, clearly, and simply in this practical book, now in its second edition.

What Every Singer Needs to Know About the Body, Second Edition gives singers and their teachers a Body Mapping resource from anatomy and physiology to body awareness that helps them discover and correct misconceptions about the way their bodies are built and the way they function. In doing so, it provides maps with detailed descriptions of the structures and movement used in breathing, phonation, resonance, articulation and gesture illuminated with numerous illustrations and supported by many exploratory exercises.

Because the structures and movements inherent in the vocal instrument are the same for every singer, they apply equally to every kind of singing. Differences in style result from differences in the choice of movement. Understanding and mapping the structures and movements used in singing provides the technical foundation for all singers. The purpose of this book is to provide singers with that foundation. This book does not espouse a single method or attempt to teach singing techniques. Rather, it describes the movements of singing with accuracy and detail so that singers may experiment on their own and communicate with each other more effectively. This has never been done before and it is a substantial contribution to music education in general and the education of singers in particular.

For the second edition, the authors have greatly updated and expanded the content throughout the volume, reflecting the latest research on and knowledge. Some specific additions include:

- *New images and exercises on breathing
- *Substantially revised chapter on physical expression
- *Fresh material about visual focus and facial expressions
- *Many updates and extensions in response to reader feedback
- *A comprehensive glossary of key terms

In one author's words, "This book is needed because singers deserve to know the truth about their bodies. There are many pedagogy books that present the anatomy and physiology without helping singers find its practical application. There are books that take a holistic approach without sufficient anatomical and physiological detail. *What Every Singer Needs to Know About the Body* will strike a balance, giving singers the information they need and the tools to embody it so that they can use the whole body for creative vocal expression. It will de-mystify the process of singing, opening up a world of artistic choice.

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Editorial Review

Review

This is the second edition of this popular resource for singers and singing teachers. The book is designed to help singers learn the correct physiology and function of the body through the process of Body Mapping, a technique first developed by the Alexander teacher, Barbara Conable. Through a variety of techniques, particularly the use of inclusive awareness, singers learn to create an accurate mental representation of their body's structure and function. This in turn leads to improvements in movement, tone production, breathing, and expression.

The three principal authors have all studied Body Mapping with its founder and make their own individual contributions. ...[Melissa Malde] makes the point that the book is not to be read as a standard textbook, but is intended to be used as a guide for experimentation and discovery. It is certainly a book which requires the reader to engage with it on a number of different levels, and deserves to be revisited whenever a singer struggles with physical understanding of how their body functions.

Each chapter has a wealth of detail, which takes some time to work through. The illustrations will appeal to those who prefer a visual learning style, while the exploratory exercises offer a practical way of embodying the knowledge described in the book. From a teacher's viewpoint, some of the most interesting and helpful insights I received from the book were details about popular misconceptions that singers may have about how their bodies function.

I explored a number of exercises from the chapter entitled The Singer's Breath with one of my adult students. My student certainly benefited from the information and illustrations about the movement of the ribs, a subject that she has struggled with in the past and there was a noticeable improvement in her breathing after going through the practical exercises. ...

The second edition of this book has been updated with the addition of a glossary of key terms used throughout the book and updated references to websites for further information. The number of topics remains the same but there are now extended chapters on breathing and physical expression with a number of new exercises and illustrations. It is a book that I would recommend to singers and singing teachers as being essential reading. ... --Carrie Garrett, *Communicating Voice*, The British Voice Association (2014)

Deborah Garvey, *Voice and Speech Science*, (July 2013):

"This book's practical focus on body mapping, kinesthetic and inclusive awareness to support craft and artistry offers a commonality between singers based on [the unquestionable facts of] human anatomy. Reading through this book I gained a strong sense that these skills can be employed by the singer to produce a desired sound, replicate it and troubleshoot if necessary. Its clearly illustrated descriptions and exploratory exercises make it a highly accessible reference companion for singing teachers and students alike."

Rona Commins, Mu Phi Epsilon, International Professional Music Fraternity, (2009):

"... Describes the movements of singing with accuracy and detail so that the singers may experiment on their own and communicate with each other more effectively. This has never been done before and it is a substantial contribution to music education in general and the education of singers in particular."

Donald Callen Freed, *Choral Journal*, (2009):

"There are excellent tables and anatomical illustrations, and both can be readily perceived by the layperson. Vocal registration and its muscles and cartilages are also explained in clear ways that this author wished for years earlier."

Patrick Gundry-White, Statnews, (2010):

"I found the last two chapters of Kurt-Alexander Zeller's the most compelling on many levels: warm, informative, articulate, displaying a wealth of experience and respecting his reader - I could read his prose all day long"

Debra Greschner, Journal of Singing, (2010):

"...An excellent introduction to Body Mapping. It is an exceptional resource for the singer and teachers of singing to understand the anatomy and physiology of the voice. Singers and teachers unfamiliar with Body Mapping will find the text both a useful introduction to the process, and an all-purpose reference text for the anatomy and physiology of the body. The book is highly recommended."

Anne Leatherland, Communicating Voice, (2010):

"...The reader is encouraged to go at his/her own pace and to return to material until ideas are grasped and the body "mapped." ...This practical book would be an excellent addition to any teacher's bookshelf whilst being accessible and useful for committed students." --Reviews of the First Edition

About the Author

Melissa Malde, D.M.A., is a certified Andover Educator and an active performer in opera, concert, recital and musical theatre. She has presented papers and clinics at numerous national and regional conferences. She received her D.M.A. in Vocal Performance and Stage Direction from the College-Conservatory of Music at the University of Cincinnati. Other degrees are from the Hochschule Musik in Munich, Northwestern University and Oberlin. She taught at the University of Wisconsin at Platteville and Luther College before returning to her home state of Colorado, where she now teaches Voice and Vocal Pedagogy at the University of Northern Colorado in Greeley.

During her twenty-two years as an Alexander Technique teacher Barbara Conable helped to save hundreds of musical careers and to enhance hundreds more. She experienced frustration, however, because she knew that thousands more musicians were losing careers and capacity. To enhance her effectiveness, she wrote the book *What Every Musician Needs to Know about the Body* and developed a Body Mapping course by the same name which is now taught by Andover Educators around the world. The goal of Andover Educators is to put music education on a secure somatic (anatomical) foundation for all time. Barbara Conable is the author of *How to Learn the Alexander Technique: A Manual for Students*, *What Every Musician Needs to Know about the Body*, and *The Structures and Movement of Breathing*. Now retired from teaching, Barbara Conable continues to develop the theory and practice of Body Mapping.

Kurt-Alexander Zeller, D.M.A., is a certified Andover Educator and performs frequently as a singer of theatrical, concert, and early music. He currently serves as Director of Opera and Vocal Studies at Clayton State University and is active throughout the country as a vocal adjudicator and clinician. Dr. Zeller holds undergraduate degrees in Music and Theatre from the Meadows School of the Arts at Southern Methodist University. His graduate degrees are from the College-Conservatory of Music of the University of Cincinnati. He has done further study at the Early Music Institute of Indiana University and the 1995 National Association of Teachers of Singing Internship Program at Florida State University.

MaryJean Allen M.M. is a certified Andover educator and a private voice teacher in Chicago. She holds a Master of Music and an Artist Diploma in vocal performance, with a minor in piano performance. MaryJean travels frequently to teach the course *What Every Musician Needs to Know About the Body* to all kinds of musicians in colleges, universities, high schools, and church choirs. She is also a first year trainee to become an Alexander Technique Teacher at Robin Gilmore's teacher training program in North Carolina. MaryJean

performed leading roles in opera and operetta throughout the United States, and was competitively selected to sing in two Art Song Festivals, coaching with Dalton Baldwin, Elly Ameling, Gerard Souzay, and others.

Users Review

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Andrew Parker:

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Ira Knudsen:

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