

Review of the CD „Stimm-Übungen“

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Treasure chest for voice lessons

Vocal exercises on CD motivate students and make practicing easier

Rainer Templin: "Stimm-Uebungen" (Vocal exercises). Piano accompaniment of 99 Exercises for vocal instruction and practicing at home, ISMN M-000-00053-7, available through Rainer Templin at www.stimmuebungen.de (or via Tel.: 49 - 211 - 49 20 550) for 45 DM (23.10 EUR/19.80 USD).

Rainer Templin, known to many as long-time member of executive committee of the Association of German Teachers of Singing and as co-author of papers about adult education for the music schools in the Association of German Music Schools, had an outstanding idea: why not improve the motivation of voice students to practice vocal exercises by giving them the piano accompaniments on a CD that they could play at home?

I put it to the test and let several of my students use this CD in their lessons and at home. At first almost all of them had problems to begin singing together with the accompaniment and wanted to have an indication of the tempo and/or the initial pitch. Beginners, who were not so well-versed in reading music, wanted a (parallel-) track with only the melody for repeating at home, since the accompaniment doesn't provide it. But the enthusiasm already began in the second and at the latest in the third lesson. Not only did the students practice more, with audible results(!!!), but the initial difficulties were surmounted through repeated use and the fun of learning by doing. A blind student was inspired to try free improvisations over the accompaniments to the for her unknown exercises for example. The ascending scale of difficulty from easy to rather demanding „Coloratura-exercise-arias“, the manifold possibilities of combining vowels and consonants as well as changing the articulation make this CD a treasure chest for daily use and assure that our students practice more enjoyably and with lots of fun.

The possibility of selecting the most favorable keys for each special vocal tessitura and a perhaps necessary copying of only the required tracks onto a cassette allow a spirited warming up in the car at any time or on the way to the voice lesson (in case there is not a CD-player built in already).

Here we recognize Rainer Templin as a practical expert, who knows how difficult it is for many students to sing their exercises without accompaniment but with secure intonation. For the sake of the success of this CD, I hope that many voice teachers will get involved into using this since the invention of Music-Minus-One not so new a medium. A rebate for buying in quantity allows an advantageous purchase for the whole voice-class.