

The Voice Box

Voice box: Also called the vocal mechanism or the vocal apparatus, these terms are commonly used to refer to the larynx (LARE-rinks" literally "throat" in Greek). All name the cartilaginous structure in the neck that houses the vocal folds.

Unlike other instruments, the voice cannot simply be lifted from its hard case, examined and adjusted, fixed, cleaned, and tuned up. Nor can the vocal folds ever be put away for safekeeping. The voice is just one component of a constantly functioning system, affected around the clock by internal as well as external environments, making the guarantee of optimal performance impossible. In fact, the voice box is not primarily a musical instrument. Its many roles prevent it from ever being at rest. From assisting in swallowing, protecting the airway, and helping to lift heavy objects, to assisting with phonatory functions including sophisticated musical capabilities, its instrumental potential falls subject to misuse, wear and tear. As singers, we talk about our voice as an intangible phenomenon and perhaps take it for granted. But what happens when something goes wrong? What do we do when something feels wrong? To whom can we turn and whom can we trust?

How could we have prevented "it" and ensure "it" won't happen again? We go on voice rest, blame it on stress, a sore throat, a cold, the weather, being out of shape, being physically tired, or over-singing. The Voice Box will provide tools for every Sweet Adeline's toolbox, and offer insights on the instrument that she'll find helpful as well. The information that will be provided here is for self-edification and not a substitute for professional care.

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