

THE GEOGRAPHY OF SONG

Interpretation. Embodiment. Performance. A multi-disciplinary approach.

Nicola Harrison

nicolaharrisonwordsmith@gmail.com www.nicolaharrison.co.uk All copyright. ©Nicola Harrison 2018



Practical guides to understanding the geographical placement of a song, its emotional geography, its colour, mood and meaning, through entering the poetry of the song and journeying through the emotional narrative of the lyrics through games, physical embodiment strategies, floorwork grids, wordplay and fuller interpretation of words and music.

This presentation is accompanied by a small booklet for singing teachers that can be purchased. The ideas and strategies in the workshop are published in the booklet for teachers to use practically and put into use immediately.

- Practical guide. Working directly with the workshop audience and singer volunteers to explore the emotional and physical aspects of interpreting and performing art song and any other poetic form of song.
- Physical approaches to understanding, feeling, embodying and performing the words of a song. Finding the Inner Core Meaning.

An example of some of the things we will look at in this workshop:

1. The geography of the song – who, what, when, where, why?
2. **THE WORDS:** In the mind of the poet/lyricist.
In the heart of the poet/lyricist.
3. The Singer's Imagination – imaginative ways to play with the song through wordplay, through imagery, through movement and gesture - and fire up the performance.
4. The singer's body and how it relates to meaning.
5. The singer's identity in the song – who are you? What are you wearing? A lot of strategies here to engage on different levels with the words.
6. The landscape of the song. For example, time of day, weather, terrain etc.
7. **Floor Mapping:** use of grids to denote different emotions for the singer to move between in rehearsal.
8. **Knitting** words and music together – literally!

Nicola Harrison is a singing teacher, vocal coach, author and performer with medical and anatomical training as well as having trained as a singer and degrees and qualifications in crossover disciplines and teaching. She is particularly interested in the use of the imagination to visualise and aid learning and strategies to harness this powerful resource in performance and song preparation.

She has written 2 acclaimed books: *The Wordsmith's Guide to English Song POETRY MUSIC AND IMAGINATION*, Volumes 1 and 2 (Compton) which explore the way a singer can beautifully interpret each song by a vivid and visceral understanding of the words so that we can better express the Inner Core Meaning of the song.

She is Lecturer in Singing: interpretation and Performance of Text at Pembroke College, University of Oxford. She is a professional singer, a poet and performance poet and writes scripts for shows of words, music and song. She has trained musicians in acting skills and actors in musician skills to integrate both skills in performance. Apart from *The Wordsmith's Guide to English Song* she has written two small volumes of poetry. She is currently completing a further book: *A Singer's Guide to the Larynx: ANATOMY AND IMAGINATION* co-written with neuro anatomist Dr Alan Watson.

Her research, presented at Stockholm last year, into the use of motor imagery and gesture to activate abdominal muscles of support and carried out at 3 different conservatoires and 2 universities with many participants has shown how important gesture and movement is in interpreting song as well as improving vocal technique. In this workshop, some of the strategies for finding the geography of the song will involve gesture, movement and speech into song.