

J A S O N F E R R A N T E

W A R M I N G U P

C O O L I N G D O W N

T O N E B A S E V O I C E



A B O U T T H E A R T I S T

American tenor and voice teacher Jason Ferrante has been praised by Opera News for "singing up a stylish storm" and by the Sarasota Herald Tribune as "one of the best voices I have heard in a very long time." In the past two seasons, Ferrante appeared as Beadle Bamford in a new production of Sweeney Todd with Opera Omaha, Don Basilio and Don Curzio in Le Nozze di Figaro in his debut with both Virginia Opera and Knoxville Opera, the Fourth Jew in Salome in his debut with Tulsa Opera, the tenor soloist in Stravinsky's Pulcinella with the Salisbury Symphony and a debut with the Palm Beach Symphony as tenor soloist in Mozart's Requiem conducted by Gerard Schwarz.



With two decades of experience on the operatic stage in over 80 different roles and on the concert stage as a tenor soloist, Ferrante also maintains a career as a sought-after voice teacher, having taught singers who appear on the greatest stages of the world as soloists, recording artists, and winners in major competitions. As an administrator, he leads the classical voice discipline for YoungArts and is currently on the voice faculty of several American young artist training programs. In 2021, Ferrante served as the Director of the Wolf Trap Opera Studio and continues his role as voice faculty at Wolf Trap, and the training programs at Portland Opera, Minnesota Opera, Pensacola Opera, Brevard, Banff Centre for the Arts and Nashville Opera.

Ferrante's most recent performances also include a debut with the New World Symphony as the tenor soloist in Nico Muhly's Keep in Touch conducted by the composer, Beppe in Pagliacci with Opera Omaha, Bardolfo in Falstaff with Intermountain Opera, a debut with Nashville Opera as Little Bat in Susannah, a return to the Key Chorale as the tenor soloist in Elijah, his first performances as Remendado in Carmen with the Bar Harbor Music Festival and Little Victor in Kevin Puts and Mark Campbell's Elizabeth Cree, a role he created for Opera Philadelphia and reprised with Chicago Opera Theater.



On the international stage, Ferrante made his European debut at Teatro Comunale di Bologna as Beadle Bamford in Sweeney Todd. The production also appeared at Teatro Pavarotti in Modena, Teatro Rossini in Lugo, and Teatro Municipale in Piacenza. He was the Tenor Ghost in Corigliano's The Ghosts of Versailles with the Wexford Festival, and sang Pong in Turandot under the baton of Lorin Maazel in the grand opening of the Zaha Hadid-designed opera house in Guangzhou, China.

On the concert stage, Ferrante has appeared with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, the National Symphony Orchestra, the Jacksonville Symphony, the Boise Philharmonic, The Tucson Symphony, the Traverse Symphony Orchestra at Interlochen, The Key Chorale of Sarasota and the Juilliard Orchestra in masterpieces including Handel's Messiah, Orff's Carmina Burana, Mendelssohn's Elijah, Beethoven's Choral Fantasy and Mass in C, Haydn's Lord Nelson Mass, Stravinsky's Pulcinella and Britten's Les Illuminations.

Ferrante currently serves as a vocal consultant/ faculty member to the young artists programs at Wolf Trap Opera, Minnesota Opera, Portland Opera, Pensacola Opera, Banff, Brevard and Nashville Opera and has served in that capacity for Arizona Opera, Florida Grand Opera and Virginia Opera. He serves as a judge for the Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition, the Schmidt Awards and the NOA Opera Awards. He was on the faculty of the UBC Summer Vocal Workshop in Vancouver, BC and has given regular masterclasses at opera companies and schools around the United States. He is a national panelist and master teacher for YoungArts, the core program of the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts, which recognizes and supports America's most talented high school artists in the visual, literary, and performing arts and includes nominating future Presidential Scholars in the Arts.

The Baltimore native holds Bachelor and Master of Music degrees from The Juilliard School where he held the Alice Tully Voice Scholarship and studied voice with the legendary vocal pedagogue Beverley Peck Johnson. His professional training includes two summers at Wolf Trap where he was a two-time recipient of a Shouse Grant, three summers at the Aspen Music Festival, and two summers at Tanglewood. His additional studies were with Rita Shane, Phyllis Curtin, Cynthia Hoffmann and Richard Leech. He has written articles for the Juilliard Journal and has been a panelist on the Metropolitan Opera Quiz. He is a member in good standing of NATS, Opera America and AGMA.



A B O U T T H E L E S S O N

Jason Ferrante walks us through a quick warm-up and cool-down series for those days when time is short. This brief course offers a systematic process for anyone looking for an efficient, reliable way to prepare for using their voice and maintaining good vocal health after exertion.

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If you have any corrections, comments, or critiques relating to this workbook, please send them to marek@tonebase.co. We strive to deliver the highest quality enrichment experience. Thank you!

T O N E B A S E V O I C E



A quick warm-up and cool-down for those days when time is short. How do you get your instrument “ready to go” when you only have five minutes?

1. PLANKING

The first thing you can do involves no noise! Take the glottis, or cords, into a “plank.” When you wake up in the morning, you have a general feeling of “this instrument needs to be warmed up.”

Keep in mind:

If you’ve been sleeping, the gravitational pull on the larynx has been from behind to the earth; when you stand up, it will take a moment to shift where the weight is.

Using the analogy of an athlete using isometric fixed planking the ideal “strike position” of a baseball bat so their muscles know where to swing:

- Pick a consonant that you can stifle and hold it. (Imagine you were going to cuss someone out but stopped yourself!)
- In this position, you’ve postured your vocal process, as it will hopefully be postured when you make noise. You can practice this without making noise.
- Great for areas where you cannot make noise (hotel rooms, etc.).
- First: “Plank” in this position for about ten seconds, a few times.
- Second: Repeat the process, using the muscles of the chest and the throat to “say” all of the vowels ([i], [e], [a], [o], [u]) in that plank position, silently.

2. CHROMATIC [v]

Let’s add some noise! We’re going to switch to a closed mouth consonant, but one we can put some pitch behind: [v].

Think of it as an athletic crescendo; later in our cool-down, we will do an athletic decrescendo.

1. Using [v] travel chromatically, on a nine-note ascending, then descending pattern.
2. See what vowel your internal structure gravitated towards (behind the [v]) and use that vowel purposefully.
3. Use all the vowels. Your throat and chest must be in a real vowel, not “ugh”!

Tip: Be sure to consciously choose a moderate key to start with, something “conversational” — not too low or too high.

Other options for this closed-mouth-device that are not [v] include:

- a lip trill;
- a straw.

But always remember: behind the closed-mouth-device your throat and chest must be intending a real vowel!

Next Steps:

Continue to start with a closed-mouth device (pick the one that works for you!); gradually open to the first vowel.

- Think about going from a closed window to an open window. The first opening is the [i] vowel, and the most open is the [a].
- Nine-note ascending then descending pattern repeated twice: first starting on [v] then opening to [i] in one breath.

Tip: Be aware of how open your mouth is, and do not open too wide. You may be able to do this with your teeth almost touching (this is different for everybody).
Be wary that you are not going from “out of bed” to hyper-extension.

3. EXPANDING TO VOWELS

Time to open our mouth! Think of this next exercise as opening a window and closing a window using the vowels: [i] [e] [a] [o] [u].

- Use the clearest vowels possible.
- Sing all vowels moving from [i] to [u] on one pitch, moving up chromatically about five or six keys.
- Pick a moderate starting key and dynamic. It's ok to use a mezzo-piano or mezzo-forte dynamic; you want to look for a structure around it, with your muscles and your bones, that could support forte.

Next Steps:

Let's get the chest a little more inflated and hyper-extended than when you're asleep and just not talking.

Exercise: Five-note scale on [i] coming down to an [a].

- The teeth don't have to separate in a big way for this [a] as we start our day.
- Do as many of these in five or six keys or as needed.
- We are warming up our support.
- **Be sure to lift your chest when you come down in pitch.**

Breathing tip: Many of us have been told not to raise our shoulders when breathing. Remember, although the shoulders and the chest look like the same piece in the mirror, they are entirely different. **You can lift your chest and not your shoulders!**

4. ATTACKING ON [a]

The final part of this rapid “athletic crescendo”: we did a few steps that, with vessel and muscle movement and athletics went from small to bigger. As part of the cool-down, we will do the opposite.

Choose an exercise you love that starts on an [a]; make sure that it is something you have a blueprint for and can always explain.

Jason’s exercise of choice:

Five-note scale pattern ascending and descending on [a] (nine notes total), closing mouth on the top note.

Note #5 closes to a hum; note #9 opens back to an [a].

- The goal is to not come out of the gate screaming and in hyper-extension.
- Make sure the distance between the back teeth and the openness in your throat and chest stays the same when you close to the hum.

Tips:

When we warm up, we activate the source posture for sound that has previously been quiet.

- Pick exercises that work for you!
- Jason’s pro tip is to start warming up body parts without any noise, then gradually crescendo into noise and open space.

5. COOLING DOWN: ATHLETIC DECRESCENDO

A cool-down! It doesn’t have to take much time to decrescendo our athleticism back to nothing.

Keep in mind: If you’ve been speaking all day or singing all night, the next thing you would do is just casually talk, which requires a less hyper-extended position of the vocal apparatus.

Driving analogy:

We may drive 70 or 75 MPH on the highway, but when we turn off, we drive slower, even though we are still driving.

- Ideally, you'd have more time to spread it out on a typical day. But this is specifically for those days you don't have much time but want to be ready.

It will be the same thing we did to warm up quickly, but in reverse.

Do the last exercise of the warm-up, first this time:

1. Five-note scale pattern ascending and descending on [a] where the fifth note closes to a hum, and the ninth note opens back to [a]:
 - Use a neutral dynamic and range to take the parts of the voice that have been singing high notes back down to the normal range they will live in for the next twelve hours.
2. Sing all five vowels on one note:
 - The teeth are already starting to settle back into their relaxed position;
 - Remember, relaxed is ready in living people.
3. Five-note scale pattern ascending and descending, attack with a closed mouth on [v] opening to an [i]:
 - Remember to have the throat and the chest in a real vowel;
 - Do a couple of these in a few keys.
4. Take away the vowel and use only the [v].
5. Keep the apparatus engaged while making no noise on a stifled consonant:
 - Hold for ten seconds, and do a couple of reps.
 - You get the bonus gift of slowing your breathing process by holding for ten seconds.

Jason's pro tips:

- Know your warm-up and cool-down routine and try to stick to it. (For example, on a show day, Jason prefers five minutes in the morning, fifteen minutes in the afternoon, and a few minutes before he goes onstage.)
- Do not overlook the importance of cooling down.