

Book Review

Sing Anyway by Linor Oren

Reviewed by Alexa Terry

Singing Teachers Talk Podcast by BAST Training

If you've been a long-standing listener of the Singing Teachers Talk podcast, then you know me by now: I love books. And if you are new to the podcast, then that's probably the most important thing you need to know about me. So when Linor Oren reached out to BAST and introduced us to her book, *Sing Anyway*, of course I was interested in a bit of a read. Here is my rundown of the book from my point of view as the reader.

The first thing that struck me was its voice — pardon the pun. Right from the introduction, Linor immediately feels conversational, warm, and reassuring. It feels a little bit like meeting someone for the very first time and very quickly thinking, “I think we’re going to get on.” If you’ve ever been told that you can’t sing, shouldn’t sing, or you’ve somehow learned that your voice is something to hide from rather than share, I think you’ll likely feel in safe hands immediately.

What I also appreciated is where Linor chooses to begin. Rather than launching into anatomy and vocal exercises, she starts with mindset — something which can sometimes be relegated to the final chapters of a book on singing. There was a lovely balance struck throughout part one between empathy and accountability. We’re encouraged as singers to give ourselves permission to take up space, while also gently challenging the excuses that maybe sometimes we hide behind. She encourages readers to develop a vivid, meaningful dream for their singing, so that when frustration inevitably surfaces — as it probably always does when learning a new skill — you have something deeper to return to.

Reading this section actually became unexpectedly personal for me. I haven’t sung or performed publicly in quite a long time. I still sing and try to work on my voice, but it’s not in front of other people. The next time I’ll be singing in front of people will actually be at one of my friends’ weddings. So as I read part one, I found myself thinking about my own goal. I really want to accept this privilege of being asked to sing at such an important event, deliver the vision that they want for that moment, and allow myself to just get lost in the movement of music instead of getting trapped by the self-consciousness that has sometimes accompanied singing when people are watching.

What surprised me also was realizing how many old comments I’d maybe quietly carried with me without really acknowledging them. I once had a colleague who told me I sounded like a

squealing pig. Charming. But then I caught myself thinking, “Up yours.” Because alongside those comments were lead roles, and people asking for recordings of my public performances, and audience members who genuinely connected with what I was doing. Those voices had simply become louder in my own head than all of the positive ones. That’s exactly the sort of reflection this first section encouraged, and I think many readers will actually recognize themselves in it.

There are some lovely moments of humor as well. One of my favorite lines comes from when Linor suggests singing into a pillow or a blanket to help reduce self-consciousness. She says, “You’ll look absolutely unhinged, but your vocal cords won’t care.” I think it’s just the word *unhinged* — it really made me chuckle. The accompanying online resources are a nice addition, including an easy song list, warm-up videos, and practice guidance. I did notice one or two resources referenced in the book that weren’t immediately available because they’re still under construction, and I found myself briefly wondering whether I’d missed something. That’s perhaps just a minor point, but worth mentioning for anyone reading it soon after publication.

Part two is where the practical work really begins, and Linor guides readers through a series of self-exploration exercises, looking at areas like the jaw, the tongue, shoulders, and head, encouraging singers to investigate where tension may be coming from rather than simply treating the symptoms. As someone who teaches professionally, there were one or two places where I wondered whether an instruction could be refined slightly. But what I particularly appreciated was Linor’s honesty about teaching itself. There is a passage where she describes trying multiple approaches with a student without success, before an almost throwaway idea suddenly unlocks the problem. I love that. As teachers, we sometimes feel the pressure to have the perfect answer immediately. In reality, so much of teaching is making informed observations, trying different approaches, and seeing what resonates with that individual singer. I found those moments deeply reassuring, because they reflected the reality of teaching rather than pretending it’s always linear.

The technical exercises themselves are practical and approachable. They’re clearly aimed at helping singers experience change rather than overwhelming them with theory, and they’re also accessible enough that beginners could generally follow along quite well. The book certainly doesn’t attempt to cover every aspect of vocal technique, and I don’t think it’s trying to. Instead, it offers several useful ways into common technical challenges, often drawing on the speaking voice as a bridge into singing. Some teachers may agree with every approach, while others might choose different routes, but that’s the nature of vocal pedagogy.

One piece of advice that particularly stood out to me is: if you have five things you want to improve, choose the three most urgent ones and give yourself permission to ignore the rest for now. That word *permission* appears throughout the book, and I think it’s one of its strengths. Singing can feel overwhelmingly complex, and giving people permission not to fix everything at once is incredibly valuable. One of my favorite quotes in the entire book was: “Let’s face it, there

are so many facets to singing that our number one goal should not be losing our minds.” Part three returns to mindset, this time focusing on performance itself. Linor helps readers identify where they sit on the scale of fear, and offers different strategies for before, during, and after performing.

Overall, I think *Sing Anyway* knows who it’s written for. For me as the reader, it seems like it would be very welcome in the hands of someone who has stepped away or ignored singing for a really long time, even though they really want to do it. It isn’t primarily a technical singing manual or an in-depth exploration of vocal pedagogy. It’s a starting point. Neither is it heavily referenced in science, but perhaps more anecdotally presented. The technical explanations are intentionally simplified, and that’s refreshing, because it makes the book highly accessible — although some readers with a deeper background in voice may notice areas where there’s naturally more nuance than the book explores.

It’s an encouraging, experience-led guide with suggested week-by-week pacing that readers can genuinely work through. If you’re looking for someone to stand beside you and say, “I know you’re frightened, but I think your voice deserves to be heard,” then I think that’s exactly what this book offers. It’s for the person who desperately wants to sing but feels held back by fear; the person whose voice has been shaped more by past criticism; and the person who truly is convinced that everyone else is allowed to sing except for them. More than anything, Linor’s personality shines through every chapter, and she comes across as someone who genuinely wants people to stop hiding and start singing. And maybe that’s a message that a lot more singers need to hear.

Watch the full interview on YouTube: youtube.com/watch?v=d0oR2pUYZjE

Listen to the episode: [Ep. 270 — How to Help Singers Overcome Fear and Build Confidence with Linor Oren](#)