

BUT I'M NOT A SINGER...

By HEATHER OSMOND



Let me begin by saying that I think I am a decent singer, as long as the car windows are rolled up! The reality is slightly different.

I started taking voice lessons in high school simply because I knew I wanted to study piano performance at a university level and would therefore need to prepare a vocal audition. I also knew there would be many courses that would include vocal training. I did not love singing instantly and often dreaded having to perform as a vocal soloist on stage. I've always been grateful to myself, if that is even a thing, that I pushed myself to do this. I faced the challenge and I saw it through. Still, this did not increase my love of singing.

One time, I was asked to sing at my corps. I accompanied myself on piano. It was even a song that I had written myself. I was never asked to be on the vocal roster again! One can try and convince themselves that this was merely a clerical oversight, but I doubt it was.

I have received more than one criticism that I did not have the strongest or most lyrical singing voice, or even that I wasn't always perfectly in tune. Basically, I was only an okay singer and would be lying if I said that those comments didn't have a long-lasting effect on me. Singing was something that I dreaded and was viewed as a necessary evil in my chosen course of study.

During my first year of university, this way of thinking started to shift. It was mandatory to be a part of the university's Festival Chorus. We had been working on David Fanshawe's African Sanctus. I had been assigned to singing "Alto I" which meant that I was an alto who could sing some high notes. I'm not sure how I got into that section, but after a few months of rehearsals, it dawned on me that I was singing high F's for the first time ever in my life! I did understand that the likelihood of me doing this by myself in front of other people was slim to none, but I was able to do it with a band of women around me. As a

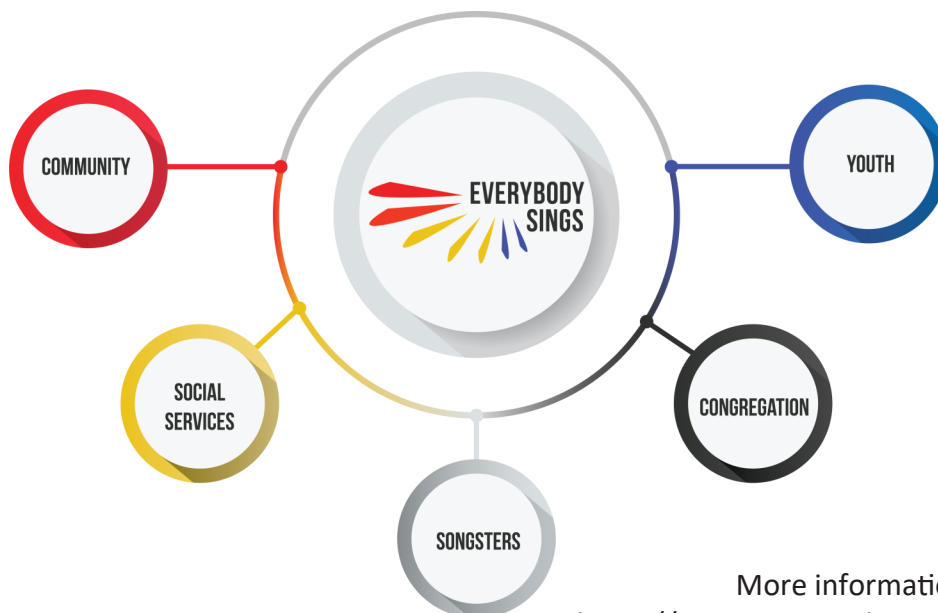
group, we were rocking our harmonies and busting out the high notes like nobody's business. From that point forward, I discovered a real enjoyment of choral singing. The notes are a little less scary when you are surrounded by voices singing alongside you. There is comfort in rehearsing with people that grow to become a part of your life's story. There is immense fun to be had when singing with others, whether it is in the songs you are actually singing, or in the struggle to find the notes you are supposed to be singing. There is a sense of accomplishment and responsibility as a team player. This doesn't just happen in sports.

As Christians, there are new and endless ways to share the gospel through choral singing. It is so easy to grab a few people and sing on a street cor-

ner, or even on the "street corner" of today such as Facebook Live or other instant sharing options that are available to us.

By mere definition, a choir is more than one person singing together. Where two or three are gathered, God moves and His message is spread. Don't wait until you have a 60-piece choir. Don't wait until you have had the right number of voice lessons. Don't wait until you feel good enough to do what God has called and equipped you to do.

I may not cut my solo vocal album anytime soon, but to say I'm not a singer would be incorrect. God has called us to sing His praise. If I am going to try and live out all of the other things He tells me to do, why not that one too?



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