

## Qi and Qi Gong for Singers

QiGong, which translates to “Life Energy Information and Cultivation”, is an ancient Chinese holistic system of meditation and postures to maintain and improve health and well-being. Information is contained in all objects around us, so having better information can fill the void of and deepen the mind-body connection for a singer’s technique and journey.

In this presentation, participants will learn what QiGong is, how to feel your body’s energy and the information around us, and how this can be applied to assist in effortless singing. Information is the essence of MZI QiGong and one of the best things about it is that these methods are easy to learn.

Our presentation will start by introducing QiGong, the basics of qi, and how to use qi in everyday life. Then all participants will learn a simple QiGong exercise together to feel and experience qi. The presentation culminates in explaining the basics of integrating Qi and singing, which once understood, aids in effortless singing.

When practicing QiGong, qi is activated to balance and rehabilitate the body’s internal system and recover from daily stress and illness. Meridians are also cleared, and circulation is restored. Finding this important balance will improve every aspect of life: mental and physical health, relationships, stress level, and work. With practice, one will develop a keener kinesthetic awareness of body and breath for singing and be better equipped to send correct brain signals to your body so your instrument is more efficient.

### BIO

Lyric soprano **Annie Picard** is a soloist, chamber musician, and voice teacher who has been a vibrant and respected part of the Chicago music scene for more than two decades. A dedicated teacher, Dr. Picard has served on the faculty of North Park University since 1998. Her unique teaching style strikes a balance between the pedagogical and the “natural”. Annie is an active supporter of the Chicago Chapter of NATS, serving as Vice President of Competitions from 2012-2014. She holds degrees from the University of Missouri, New England Conservatory, and University of Illinois. Her principal teachers include Susan Clickner, John Wustman, Margo Garrett, Louis Krasner, John Moriarty, Virginia Pyle, and Costanza Cuccaro. In addition to her academic studies and professional work, Annie has been a passionate practitioner and healer using MZI Information Rehabilitation QiGong methods since 2008. In 2017, she co-founded the Picard-Stanton Institute (PSI) to develop and teach MZI QiGong workshops for singers.

Baritone **Sean Stanton** is the recipient of the Lola Fletcher Award for outstanding voice from the American Opera Society. In 2017, he placed 2nd nationally at New York Lyric Opera Theatre’s voice competition, 1st place at Classical Singer (Chicago), 1st place at NATS Chicago, Bella Voce and Bravo awards from the Bel Canto Foundation, national finalist for James Toland Vocal Arts Competition, and two-time finalist for the Luminarts Cultural Foundation. His previous opera credits include Publio (Ignite Opera), Curio (Handel Week Festival), Horace

Tabor (NPU), Papageno (American Chamber Opera), Prince Yamadori (DuPage Opera), and Lockit (NPU). Sean is a member of the Chicago Symphony Chorus, Grant Park Chorus, and teaches private voice at Niles West High School in Skokie, IL. He has worked with many international musicians in master classes led by Dame Emma Kirby, Margaret Jane Wray, Sherrill Milnes, and Renée Fleming. Currently he is finishing his master of music degree at North Park University where he won the 2014, 2016, and 2018 School of Music Performance Awards. Sean and his life long teacher Annie Picard founded the Picard-Stanton Institute in 2017, teaching holistic techniques for musicians based on Informatics QiGong.