

NICKI KENNEDY, Soprano

Nicki Kennedy read Spanish at Bristol University and studied singing at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama and at the Royal College of Music.

Nicki has experience teaching all age groups from young choristers, boys with changing voices, adolescents to young (and not so young) adults. Teaching posts include Trinity College of Music Junior Department, Southwell Minster and Repton School where she was Head of Singing until 2016. She is now Head of Singing at Gresham's School in North Norfolk.

She is a voice teacher for both of this country's most prestigious choral and vocal training programmes for young singers, the **Eton Choral Courses** and the **National Youth Choirs of Great Britain**. She also teaches undergraduates at **Cambridge University**. Nicki has undertaken education projects and given workshops and masterclasses at **Dartington, The Wigmore Hall**, in the **Czech Republic, Spain, France** and the **UK**.

Teaching Across Genres: Style and Training

Knowledge is key for a singing teacher, who must understand how the vocal mechanism works, and must be able to diagnose very swiftly when working with a new pupil.

However important that diagnosis may be, communication, empathy and improvisation skills are the primary attributes that are required to teach a young singer. We must have empathy, because we must understand the type of learner that we are working with and what sort of information they are more likely to absorb. It is important to find simple and straightforward instructions for a young singer to follow, whilst being able to discuss and try to answer the probing questions of some of the more curious young singers who may wish to know more about the physiology behind the one's teaching.

Nicki teaches with a firm emphasis on body balance and flexibility, with a good alignment. This is combined with good breathing habits and classic Bel Canto technique, with attention to clear vowels that are well matched, and a really good setup in the vocal tract for maximum resonance, watching out for unwanted tensions in the tongue and jaw area. Fluid, gliding legato and easy access to the whole range are the key targets in her work with young singers as she strives with her pupils to work towards a healthy, economical and efficient production of sound, just as a coach would work with a young athlete.

Nicki has familiarised herself with several pedagogical methods in order to become confident teaching in different genres that are removed from her own Classical background. She is confident teaching across styles in Musical Theatre and CCM, from high intensity belting to the classic 'legit' styles of Rogers and Hammerstein and into pop and rock. She has done the Estill 5 day course and attends numerous workshops, conferences and courses. Most recently she has attended days with rehabilitation specialists Ed Blake and Dane Chalfin, and is especially concerned with the safeguarding of young singers' voices when they are working intensively towards a concert, tour or show.