

## **“Read My Lips”**

BlogTalkRadio “Read My Lips” with Bonnie D. Graham

March 14, 2016 LIVE Interview – Excerpt 3:21 minutes

*Monday 7-8pm with two guests phoning in per show.*

*Topics include personal relationships, workplace and business, lifestyle, and mind/body/spirit practices. Listeners, who span all ages, are informed, inspired and entertained by engaging guests.*

<http://www.blogtalkradio.com/bonniedgraham>

## **“BlogTalk Radio”**

Bonnie Graham:

So now let me officially welcome Barbara J. Simon, singing teacher, author and speaker, and the author of *Singing Body and Soul: A Medley of Fresh Ideas about Musical Theater*. She has students who have performed on the Oprah Winfrey show, in New York at CBGB, the Bitter End, and even opening act for Rockapella and Sebastian Bach.

Well, my goodness, if those aren't credentials, I don't know what are. So I'm looking forward to welcoming Barbara J. Simon. So, Barbara can anybody become a decent singer? Or is that outside the reach of most mortals, shall we say?

Barbara J. Simon:

Oh, no, I would say most people can become decent singers. And I usually try to take that question (because I get asked that a lot), and I try to step back a step, and say that I believe that “everyone has a desire to sing.” I think that's more the issue, because there is a hormonal connection to your throat. And the singing really is “the mating call.” Just as you have a desire to find a mate, and no one would try to say you are the one person in the room who can't do that. You also have that desire in your voice, as you call out for what you want. And it's larger than that. It's not just “wanting a mate.” It's wanting a career, it's wanting to live where you want to live, wanting to live the lifestyle you want, wanting the health that you want.

When you call out for what you really want, you're pretty connected already. You just need a teacher to show you how to bring that into the music so you can sing a song that's composed by someone else, and that you are not just howling at the moon.

There are very few people who have medical problems with their vocal cords. I mean, it does exist. Every once in a while, I do send a singer to the doctor just to make sure that there's not a cyst or a polyp or something there that I'm going to irritate doing the these exercises. But that's unusual. It's very rare. Most people can sing.

BG: So my question to you is, have styles changed so that young people learning to sing today - who want to be performers, Barbara - who have that fire in the belly, that passion. Are they learning a particular vocal style? Meaning: "here is what country music voice is supposed to sound like. Here is what soul is supposed to sound like. Here is what rock is supposed to sound like. Because they start to sound alike to me within their genres." Is that something that you observe? That people are following a style for a particular kind of music. Or is there still room to be very unique in a genre?

BJS: I think there's always room to be very unique in a genre. And I don't think that will ever go away. But what I think you are describing is when people are more focused on the surface of the sound, rather than the source of the sound. And they are trying to imitate what they think the song sounds like. And one of the things I say in my book is, "Please don't decide that your voice is supposed to be beautiful, because that is not the point." You are supposed to sound authentic. You are supposed to be truthful.

I even quote Joseph Campbell at one point, who had a quote about is the beauty of the bird's song conscious? Does the birds know that they are trying to make it beautiful in calling for a mate, or is it just the sound of how beautiful it is to be alive. I would go for that. I would try to find the beauty of being alive in your own body and heart. Let's see what that does to your vocal cords. That will probably help you find your most authentic sound.