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## Choralist

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**Note:** the @ sign in e-mail addresses has been replaced with (a) to foil spam robots.

**Date:** 2002-07-20  
**From:** Allen H Simon <allen(a)sdgloria.org>  
**Subject:** Compilation: first-time microphone

I received lots of useful suggestions to this query.

Original post:

> I have a small vocal jazz group which is using mikes for the first  
 > time. They're all experienced classical singers. What advice would  
 > you give them for using the mikes? So far I've advised them to sing  
 > as if the mike weren't there, in terms of projection and so on,  
 > because I've heard groups which use the mike as a substitute for  
 > proper breath support. I've shown them how to hold the mikes and  
 > encouraged them to listen to the monitors. What else?

Responses:

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I, too, took my group to 1-1 mikes a few years ago. In trying to learn/teach myself, I have had a couple of interesting inputs from different VJ sources I respect. The first was to hold the mike two fingers away from the chin, the mike pointed at the chin, just "under the chin". My "knew it all" singers never took well to that one. They thought they should "eat" it. And I have heard that from workshops, also. One person even made sure each had his "own" mike so there would be no germs spread. I really didn't like that, though. The latest I heard was from Gene Aitken, head of jazz at UNC. In a short festival workshop with my group, helped them find their natural mezzo level by saying their name at about the energy you would use when introducing yourself. He encouraged then to sing at that comfortable level and use pulling the mike closer and further for dynamics. I find this a really good idea. It lets the singer sing at the energy needed to produce the tone well ( or however they can when they're sick!) and then use the closeness of the mike to determine volume. I have an almost all new group this year, so I will try to get this group indoctrinated early!

By the way, you mentioned holding the mike. The way all my mentors have suggested is fingertips, not in the fist. Hope that's what you had in mind.

I've been learning as I go, so I'm not the authority, but all this comes from those who do this, and have done it, for a lot longer than I! Good luck. And let us jazzers know what you get.

Sincerely,  
 (Mrs.) Pat Lacey  
 Missouri Baptist University  
 St. Louis, MO