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August 1st, 2010 | by VoiceCouncil

Recording Great Vocals – Top Tips



Benefiting from years of experience in the recording studio, top UK session singer Kim Chandler outlines her five top tips for recording great vocals.

Once upon a time, not so long ago, the only place you could record your vocals was in a large, expensive studio.

These days, however, it's never been more affordable and easy to record yourself!

This means that more vocalists than ever before are recording themselves and getting their music heard in ways that weren't imaginable even five years ago.

When you're ready to record, it's advisable that you run through this useful checklist in order to make a successful recording.

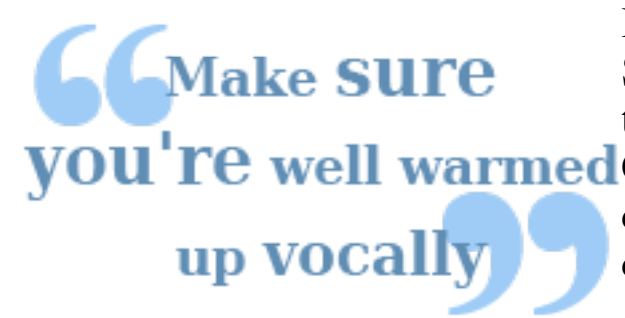
1. Pre-production.

Make sure you know the song you're going to record inside out. It needs to be 'in your system' before you even think of recording it. One sign that you know the song sufficiently is that you know the lyrics off by heart.

2. Warm-ups.

Make sure you're well warmed up vocally before you attempt to record your voice. However, in your enthusiasm don't overdo it and waste vital vocal energy that you'll need for the recording process. When you start to record, sing the song through a few times to "warm" into it.

3. Mic Technique.



Be aware that live mics and studio mics are very different from each other. Studio mics are much more sensitive than live mics and therefore you'll be able to capture a more subtle vocal delivery than you would be able to on stage. Change your mic proximity depending upon the volume that you're singing – closer for softer singing and further away for louder singing. If there are big changes in vocal “settings”, put down a section at a time.

4. Avoidance of “Popping”.

Lyrics that use the plosive consonants such as “p” and “b” can cause big “pops” when sung into sensitive studio mics. You can't always rely on the pop shield to avoid this problem. Try turning your head slightly sideways, directing your vocal signal slightly at an angle, so that these consonants don't go directly into the mic.

5. Acting Skill.

Most singers find it easier to get into a song when they've got a live audience to feed off; in the studio it's just you stuck in a funny little “dry” room with no audience to energize you. This is the moment when you need to call upon your acting skills; concentrate on delivering the lyric with the appropriate emotion – otherwise the song will sound “flat” in vibe.

Move Ahead with your Recording

Here's a rare window into the session singing world – not often seen by ‘outsiders’:

As you watch, you'll see some principles that apply to all vocalists:

- * Maintaining a consistent distance from the mic for the section you're singing
- * Giving a fresh, energetic and committed performance on every take
- * Total focus and concentration on the task

So, when you are approaching your next recording, remember to be kind to yourself and to your voice.

Take time to prepare the song properly, run through the checklist and then give the performance of your life because, unlike live performing, whatever you record will be down for posterity...

Happy recording!

Kim Chandler is one of the UK's top (and busiest!) session singers and vocal coaches. Find out more about her at www.kimchandler.com/

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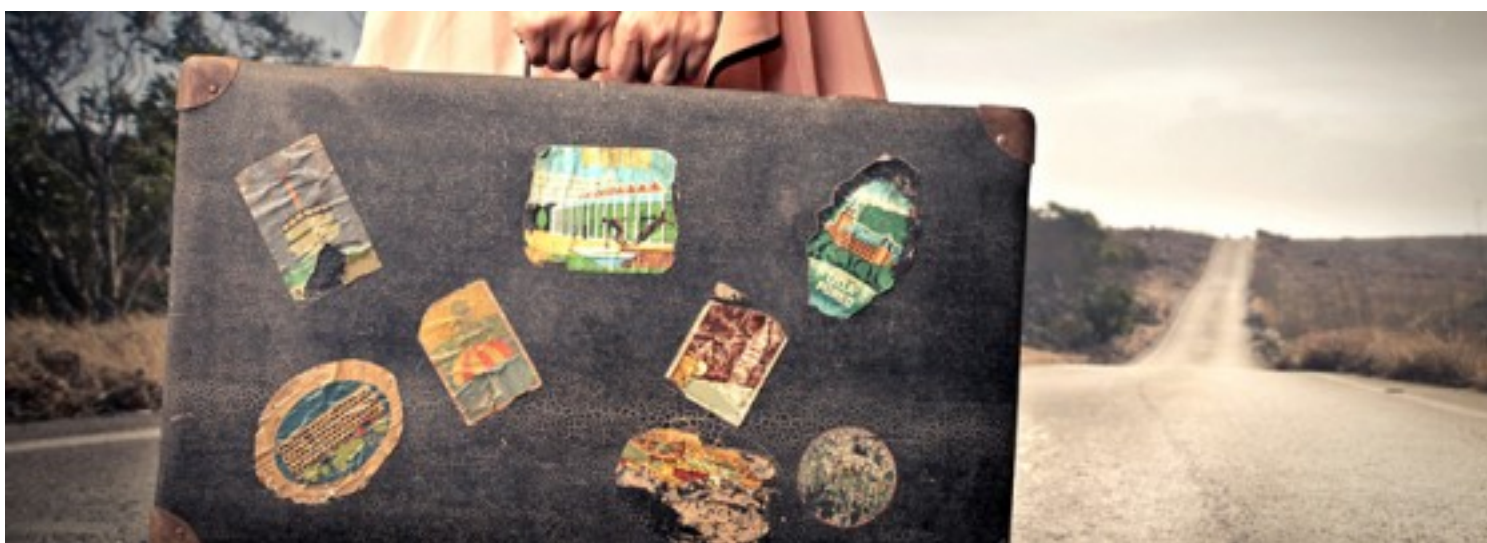


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