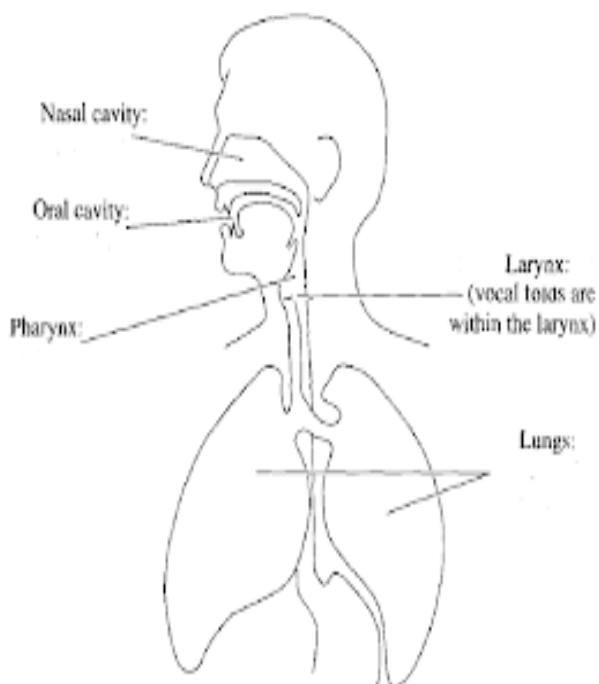


## UNIT 9: THE HUMAN VOICE

### 1. The human voice.

The human voice consists of sound made by a human being using the vocal chords for talking, singing, laughing, crying, screaming, etc. Generally speaking, the voice can be subdivided into four parts; **the breathing, the vocal chords, the articulators and the resonators**. The lungs must produce enough **airflow** to vibrate vocal chords (air is the fuel of the voice). The vocal chords are the vibrators that produce the fine pitch and tone. The articulators (tongue, palate, cheek, lips, etc.) articulate and filter the sound. Finally, the resonators amplify and intensify the sound: the final result of resonance is, or should be, to make a better sound. The vocal chords, together with the articulators and the resonators, **are capable of** producing many sounds. The tone of voice **may be modulated** to suggest emotions such as anger, surprise, or happiness. Singers use the human voice as an instrument for creating music.

### 2. Vocal resonance, vocal registration and vocal ranges



Vocal resonance is the process **by which** the timbre and/or intensity of the sound is **enhanced** by the use of the **air-filled cavities**. There are seven areas that may be listed as possible vocal resonators. These areas are the chest, the trachea, the larynx (voice box), the pharynx, the oral cavity, the nasal cavity and **the sinuses**.

## *-The vocal resonators*

Vocal registration refers to the system of vocal registers within the human voice. A register in the human voice is a particular series of tones that possess the same quality.

## *-Vocal Ranges*

A typical choral arrangement divides women into **higher and lower voices** and men into higher or lower voices too. The four main vocal ranges are:

*-Soprano:* A high female (or young boy's) voice.

*-Alto:* A low female (or young boy's) voice

*-Tenor:* A high (adult) male voice.

*-Bass:* A low (adult) male voice.

There are some ranges between the main ones:

*-Mezzo-soprano:* In between soprano and alto.

*-Contralto:* Contralto and alto originally referred to the same voice. But some people today use "contralto" to refer to a female voice that is even lower than a typical alto.

*-Countertenor:* A male voice that is unusually high, **light and agile**, even for a tenor.

*-Baritone –* A male voice that falls in between tenor and bass.

**Voices are as individual as faces**; some altos will have a smaller or bigger range, or the softest and strongest part of their range **might be** in a different place than other altos.

### 3. Choral music

A choir, chorale, or chorus is a **musical ensemble** of singers. Choral Music, **therefore**, is the music written specifically for a choir to perform. Choirs are often **led by a conductor or choirmaster** and can be categorized by the voices:

-*Mixed choirs* (i.e., with male and female voices). This is perhaps the most common type, usually consisting of soprano, alto, tenor and bass voices, often abbreviated as SATB.

-*Male choirs*, with the same SATB voicing as mixed choirs, but with boys singing the upper part (often called treble or boy soprano) and men singing alto (in falsetto), also known as countertenor. This format is typical of British cathedral choirs.

-*Female choirs*, usually consisting of soprano and alto voices, two parts in each.

-*Children's choirs*, often two-part SA or three-part SSA, sometimes more voices. This includes boys' choirs.