



August 29, 2008



## Hello, My Name is Susan

### Q&A With Susan Carr

**IE: So how did you get into this area, screaming, of vocal training?**

**Susan Carr:** When I was going to school for my degree — I have a degree in vocal performance and also in vocal pedagogy, which is the study of voice — I started to take a lot of the classical exercises that I was being taught and sort of switch them and explore them more for contemporary types of singing. It really emerged from all the exploration I did and working with students during the grunge music scene. I really solidified a lot of these exercises that are in the DVD then.

**IE: What's the the most common misconception about the technique of screaming?**

**SC:** [Students] always think it's from their throat; they always point toward the larynx area. I try to get them to approach it in a higher spot. That's what's great about the DVD: It actually shows you the anatomy and the certain part of the anatomy I'm trying to get you guys to stimulate to make that interesting, a scream/growl, or whatever. The other misconception that most people have, a lot of people know about the diaphragm, but I really, really focus on the abdominal, and I have a lot of different wild ways of getting those people to get those muscles activated.





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**IE: Troy Sanders said his work with you helped broaden Mastodon's sound on Blood Mountain. That's a pretty hefty compliment.**

**SC:** I think a lot of it was neat because they [Sanders and Brent Hinds] experimented with not just doing screaming the whole time — they actually showed their voices. I make people sing Italian and operatic pieces [laughs], so they all get a little chance to show they can really sing something melodically and show off their beautiful voices.

**IE: Do you know why Troy is wearing a bath robe and a stocking cap whenever he appears on the DVD?**

**SC:** I don't really know. You know it's funny, I never really asked. I always thought "Oh, that's so cool, he's wearing a bathrobe." Mystery is always important, though, right?

**IE: What is your most basic, obvious, free piece of advice you would give any aspiring vocalist?**

**SC:** One is they've got to strengthen their abdominal muscles — that's the first thing . . .

**IE: Like good old-fashioned sit-ups?**

**SC:** I'm totally into Pilates because it deals with the core. That is ultimate, to know the core. Each individual needs to know the core of the body, and the strength that comes from that. The other thing is that if you can speak it with this growl/scream, you can usually sing it with a growl/scream.

*Susan Carr's instructional DVD, The Art Of Screaming! Total Training for Vocalists on the Edge, is available now.*

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