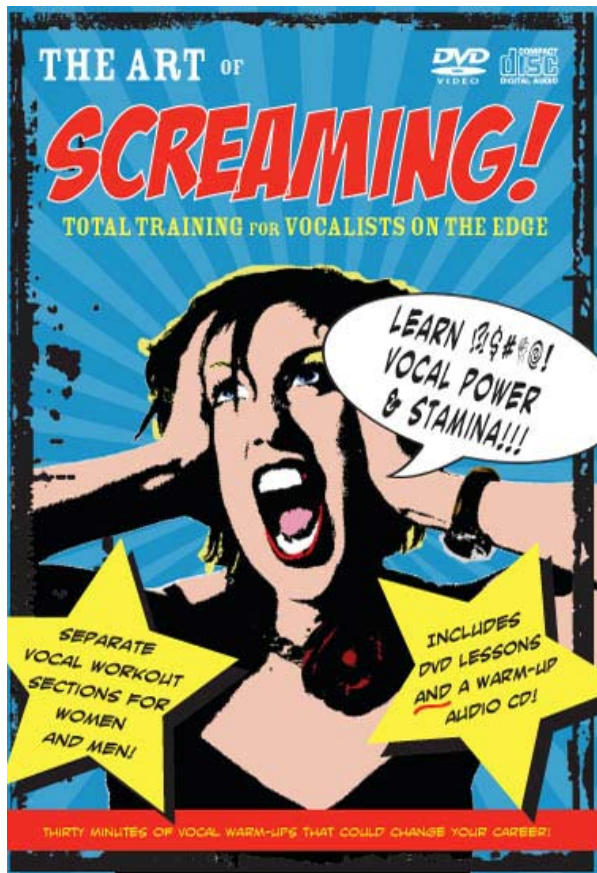


SF Weekly

DVD review: **The Art of Screaming!**

The vocal exercises employed by **Susan Carr** in the new DVD ***The Art of Screaming! Total Training for Vocalists on the Edge*** are bound to make you feel a bit silly at first. It's hard not to feel odd while performing stereotypical choral warm-ups while hanging upside down, or trying to project a falsetto through the top of your scalp while doffing a literal hat to an imaginary person. Of course, a little bit of indignity is a small price to pay to for a voice like AC/DC's Brian Johnson or Opeth's Mikael Akerfeldt, especially when you can suffer it in the privacy of your own home, wearing a bathrobe.



The video opens with an anatomy lesson, as **Carr** instructs Wesafari singer Wolf Carr on how to locate his diaphragm and abdominals and then guides him in a breathing exercise. The bulk of the instruction provided offers this kind of focus on how your body creates and amplifies sound using different groups of muscles and biological "sounding boards." It all seems a bit odd at first, but when you actually bother to follow along, it clicks. You can actually feel what **Carr** is talking about, from the contraction on your internal obliques when you make "karate sounds" to a kind of vibrating tingle in your scalp when practicing falsetto from the "head voice."

Carr also points out what we all knew intuitively: The Germans are built for screaming. The harsh, glottal sounds of the German language lend themselves perfectly to an investigation of the mechanics of growls and shrieks, and **Carr** puts all those throaty Hs and stiff consonants to good use in demonstrating the basic formation of a growl.

Throughout the instructional portions, though, **Carr** doesn't really get into much of what you would actually call screaming, which is a shame. It would be really cool to hear this diminutive, classy older woman really let loose and belt out some Satan vocals.

© 2008 Village Voice Media

