

Taking it to the Streets

ARTIST-DEVELOPED OUTREACH EDUCATION PROGRAMS

By David R. Adler

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→ Grace Testani's Singer's Center, operating in Manhattan for just over two years, also caters mainly to adults but in particular to the needs of vocalists. "When they come out of my school, they're musicians," Testani says, "and they have the respect of musicians. They know how to lead a band and can write a sophisticated arrangement." A veteran teacher with an affiliation at New York University, Testani focuses on technique, ear training and sight-reading but also such practical skills as booking and promoting a gig, handling a recording session, preparing for an audition and even putting up a Web site. She also notes that the center's mandate extends beyond jazz. "Singers want grounding in musical theater and other things," she explains, mentioning the center's forays into gospel and pop music. Students as young as 16 have enrolled, but most are young adults and older. Some go on to become professionals, but that's not all that impresses Testani. "It's great to see development from someone scared to death to open their mouth in the beginning," she says.