

Book Look

THE SPIRITUAL PATH TO FINDING YOUR VOICE
NORA MCCARTHY

BY CHRIS BRANDT

What Nora McCarthy has gathered together here is a monumental achievement. If you use your voice at all – to entertain, to persuade, to teach, or to sing in the shower – this book will help you get the most out of it – it does it all – teaches us techniques and exercises, guides us in our thinking and meditating, inspires us, and even helps us find the core (or heart, or soul) of our genuine voice.

One of the things that makes this book so useful is the melding of Eastern spiritual life teachings with Western empirical and rational thought. McCarthy explains the terms on both sides of the East/West “divide” and brings them together to heal that historical breach.

McCarthy reflects on her most influential teachers and describes a learning experience she had singing solo for the first time in a club on the L.E.S. many years ago where she and bassist Juini Booth had a regular weekly gig. To start off their first set, Juini asked her to just start singing and when he heard something, he’d come up and join her. “Try being both focused and submerged in the music while letting go— free falling as it were; in the process yet unaware of self; fearless and surrendered; all at the same time not easy to do. That’s improvisation!” Let us not forget that free falling in dreams, a Malaysian shaman once said, is the way to learn to fly.

Christopher Hirschmann Brandt, writer, translator; a man of the theatre, and a college professor teaches poetry workshops in the Fordham University English Department’s Creative Writing Program, and lectures in Fordham’s Peace and Justice Program.

Brandt’s poems, essays, anthologies and translations have been published here and abroad in many prestigious international journals; the National Poetry Magazine of the Lower East Side; The New Yorker; Seven Stories Press; Univ. of California, Berkeley; Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña; and, the on-line journals Syndic, AMP, and (One).

