

Vocal Warm-ups for Singers

Sigh: make cave by the fleshy part of your ear; create spaciousness; about 1/4 way through a yawn

Bubble: tell the "story of your day" moving up and down in your range.

Roll Rs: keep an open throat; add Ho Ho to clear mucus

Sing "So fa mi re do" or 5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1: be aware of tuning required in BBS; Do on HUNG-EE. The EE puts the soft palette and tongue in the correct position, both lifted and high. The NG sound drops the soft palette and tongue so that air is forced through the nasal passages. When you switch to EE, the tongue and palette lift into the correct position. Listen for ping and ring!!

HMMMM-Ah-----: 5—5 - 4-3-2-1. Sing HMMM on 5 and open to Ah before continuing down the scale. Use the forward quality of the HM to keep the AH from getting dark. Use a forward resonance.

"Maybe my mammy may move to miami and maybe my mammy may not." Sung on one chord, and move up or down by half steps. Use the forward resonance of the M to create the feel of ping, but keep height inside....when you get to "not" you should hear a lifted, tall sound.

Noo, noo-wee-noo: Creates a forward placement within a limited range; change to noo, noo-wah-noo to keep feeling of singing in the mask on "Wah".

BRAVO: Use an open, wide, "theater" resonance with space, freedom, keeping a forward presence. Used to expand range and vocal flexibility.

I CAN SING AND MATCH MY VOICE WITH YOU: chord exercise; unify vowel resonance; unify dynamic choices; unify first unison pitch on "I"; remind about use of head voice for descending intervals; remind leads that repeated notes need intentional lift; remind basses and baris on echo to keep forward resonance if singing in low key.

Mini exercise: Sing mini on each degree of the scale from 1 to 8, up to 2, back down. Step-by-step intervals, extending range, flowing sound, forward resonance. Change to Bini, wini, vini.

THE ELEMENTS OF TONE: the aspects of PITCH, RESONANCE AND VOWEL

Pitch and its Relationship to "DO": "Do" is the key tone, the anchor, of our part line. Every tone we produce should relate correctly to the key. KNOWING the correct notes (passive knowledge) is not enough to produce tuned chords (applied knowledge). First, be keenly aware of "do" as it comes across in your part line. Use your pitch pipe to check yourselves if necessary.

Unison Tones and Octaves: Lock unison tones and octaves while maintaining good quality.

Interval Accuracy: Every interval sung should maintain its appropriate relation to 'do'. 'Do' is your anchor. When an interval is "missed", we do not have a strong sense of 'do' and it is possible that the interval that follows will be sung ONLY in relation to the previous interval -- we will have established a new 'do' for our part line. If every part sang only ONE interval PER PHRASE just slightly off its relation to 'do', the result usually creates a general sense of out- of-tune as the singers' ears search for a common ground for tuning. Meanwhile, no chord truly locks or creates a solid harmonic structure.

Pythagorean Tuning: In its very simplest form, within the scale, the singer must tune seconds, thirds, sixths and sevenths on the high side.

Tone Flow: "Clean interval singing" does NOT imply that tones should be so separated from each other that breaks occur between tones, creating a vertical delivery style and a situation fraught with subtle and not-so-subtle synchronization error. Keeping your air flow steady and allowing tones to flow one from another will ease the problem.

Clarity: It's not enough to sing "smooth" or with "connection" if these terms are misunderstood. To achieve clarity, vowel delivery must be coordinated and there needs to be a clean precise and lightly pressurized consonant.

Resonance: Resonance, to be complete, must have both roundness and brilliance.

CORRECT NOTES AND WORDS

Here are the reasons why wrong notes occur from time to time, hopefully not on stage!

1. While still in the memorization process, interval patterns may suffer frustrating error.
2. A note may have been learned wrong, or a note may be wrong on the music. Do CHORD WALKS in your rehearsal to locate and eliminate incorrect notes and chords.
3. Stage fright may affect interval accuracy, as well as vocal tension.
4. "Part lapse" may occur due to a changed breath mark, or stage fright. It is always the part of the learning process for any new vehicle.
5. Wrong notes creep into older repertoire or more difficult passages in new music. Do a "chord walk" to check them out.
6. When singing in a quartet, if you're an individual who tends to begin singing before the quartet has established a solid chord, please wait for the correct starting chord. Do not "jump start" the quartet without the benefit of a solid starting chord.

Whatever the reason, when one or more wrong notes in a grouping are incorrect, the result will produce an incorrect chord or progression, or worse yet, no chord at all! Many incorrect or nonchords in a performance can cause an audience to lose the message and mood of the song. Keep in mind that no judge is allowed to give you credit for what you intended to sing, and neither can credit be given for degree of difficulty!