



The *Art*
of
the Warm-Up

Patty Cobb Baker

The *Art* of the Warm-Up

- Vocal Warm-Ups
- Physical Warm-Ups

The *Art* of Vocal Warm-Ups

- An essential part of your chorus Vocal Education Program
- Focus is on individual **SKILL BUILDING** (not voice warming) and group **UNIT BUILDING**
 - **CONSTANT** reinforcement of “The Basics”
 - Breathing for Singing/Breath Usage
 - Proper Phonation
 - Balanced Resonance
 - Blended Voice (a.k.a. “Placement”)
 - Articulation
- Work skill levels for extended period of time, until chorus “gets it”
 - Where to start? HELLO! Breathing!!
 - Then add next level skill, continually reinforcing the previous skill
- Vocal exercises must be relevant to music being learned/performed

The *Art* of Vocal Warm-Ups (cont'd)

- Your job is to:
 - Engage the singers' brains
 - Prepare them vocally, mentally and “spiritually” for your director!
 - Therefore:
 - Do not use the same vocalises week after week – mix it up! This keeps your singers on their toes – forces them to focus, which prepares their brains for the rest of the rehearsal
 - Don't make exercises too difficult – frustrating your singers doesn't put them in a good frame of mind for the rest of the rehearsal! If an exercise isn't working for them, drop it! Challenge your singers, but don't go overboard
 - Keep exercises moving - don't talk too much except for necessary explanations as to what you're working on or to answer the occasional question
 - Be consistent in what you are teaching! This is very important! Same message, same good technique, until they “get it!”

The *Art* of Vocal Warm-Ups (cont'd)

- Vocalise Categories to Include for **INDIVIDUAL SKILL** Development
 - Mindset/Goal(s) for Session
 - Physical Stretches/Body Alignment
 - Breath Work
 - Looseners
 - Balanced Resonance
 - Vowels/Diphthongs
 - Vocal Agility/Flexibility/Finesse
 - Range
 - Register Blending/Passagio Management
 - Vocal Projection/Dynamics
 - Cool Down

- Always start mid-range; work mid- to lower first, then back to mid-, then upper

- Use descending exercises first (e.g., five notes descending); add ascending exercises (e.g. 1-3-5-3-1) when you hear that the chorus sound is free, open and “placed” well. Octave exercises for range stretching.

The *Art* of Vocal Warm-Ups (cont'd)

- Check the “state” of the chorus sound as you work their voices; always ensure sound is open, free, relaxed, supported – your EARS are your most important tool!
- For **UNIT SOUND** development, listen for and work on:
 - Voices that have a blendable quality and matched resonance
 - Vowels that match, vowel space that matches
 - Synchronization – breath skills, word sound delivery skill
 - Tuning and Balance
- Be sure to make warm-ups fun as well as educational – end with a fun round/canon that also reinforces basic skills
- Build your database of vocal exercises and make up your own! Be creative!

The *Art* of Vocal Warm-Ups (cont'd)

- Resources – Only “steal” from the best!
 - “The Choral Warm-Up Collection”, Albrecht
 - “Improving Vocal Techniques Through the Warm-Up”, BHS
 - “How to Train Singers”, Henderson
 - All of the “Sing, Baby, Sing!” CDs
 - Roland Wyatt’s “Guideposts to Singing”
 - “The Perfect Blend”, Timothy Seeling
 - “Prescriptions for Choral Excellence”, Emmons & Chase

The *Art* of Physical Warm-Ups

- An essential part of your chorus Vocal Education Program!
- Whereas this IS about warming up the body, you also need to teach physical movement skills during this time
- Your job is to:
 - Engage the singers' brains and bodies
 - Prepare them mentally, physically and “spiritually” for your director!
 - Therefore:
 - Do not use the same physicals week after week – mix it up!
 - Don't make exercises too difficult – challenge your singers, but don't go overboard
 - Keep exercises moving - don't talk too much except for necessary explanations as to what you're working on or to answer the occasional question
 - Be consistent in what you are teaching!
- **EVERYONE PARTICIPATES!** Modify if you can't do an exercise. Do what you can and challenge yourself to do more!

The *Art* of Physical Warm-Ups (cont'd)

- **Elements of a Good Physical Warm-Up**
 - A variety of good, FUN recorded music!
 - Stretches for your body (your musical instrument!)
 - Neck, shoulders, rib cage, back, legs
 - Do this first; use slow, relaxing music
 - Movement that warms muscles up, gets blood flowing to them
 - After stretching - pick up the musical and movement pace!
 - Movement that strengthens the body – muscles and cardiovascular system
 - Legs squats, arm lifts, knee lifts, other things that hurt...in a good way!
 - Work on facial and physical expressions
 - Body and head angles, arm positioning and movement
 - Use actual choreo moves from your repertoire
 - Focus on good breathing during all exercises

The *Art* of Physical Warm-Ups (cont'd)

- Create fun, choreographed warm-up routines – people learn more when they're having fun!
- Wear comfy clothes to rehearsal – don't come dressed to the nines!

○ WE ARE MEMBERS OF A **CHORUS**
AND CHORUSES **MOVE!!!**

○ **GO BIG OR GO HOME!**