

LEARNING RESOURCE

SPA - MUSIC



VOICE TRAINING ACROSS LEVELS Grade 7

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LEARNING RESOURCE for MUSIC

VOICE TRAINING ACROSS LEVELS GRADE 7

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Development Team of the Learning Resource

Writer: Editha C. Fuentes

Editor: Jose S. Soliman, Jr.

Illustrator: William Matawaran

Layout Artist: Arvin Manuel R. Villalon

Management Team: Marichu Tellano and Henrietta Kangleon (NCCA), Tanya P. Lopez (PerfLab)

For inquiries or feedback, please write or call:

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR CULTURE AND THE ARTS

633 General Luna Street, Intramuros, Manila

E-mail: info@ncca.gov.ph

Trunkline: (02) 85272192 8527-2202 8527-2210 8527-2195 to 97 8527-2217 to 18

FOREWORD

Welcome to this Learning Resource for Vocal Music.

This Learning Resource was developed by experts from the National Commission for Culture and the Arts as a reference to aid you in developing rich, meaningful, and empowering learning in the creative fields. Every effort has been exerted to produce a Self-Learning Learning Resource that incorporates the most fundamental elements and principles of each discipline, while providing a spiraled, scaffolded, and multi-sensory approach to allow you to explore your innate creativity while building discipline and rigor in your chosen discipline.

Each lecture, activity, or reflection here is designed to be meaningful. Each one designed to build from the previous one, and each one with the objective of building up for the next skill or competence. We hope that you will find these activities challenging but empowering, and that your potential as a Filipino artist and Creative is further enhanced and inspired.

These Learning Resources take into consideration the various limitations and challenges brought about by the current situation and provide you with the flexibility to manage content and pace to your individual needs while maintaining standards for creativity, embodying 21st Century skills, and aspiring towards artistic excellence. Beyond compilations of dry information, these Learning Resources seek to develop *Higher Order Thinking Skills* of Analysis, Evaluation, and Creation.

If you are planning to use this Resource as a facilitator or teacher, you are expected to guide and orient your learners in the proper and efficient use of this Learning Resource. Most, if not all activities, will entail exploration, investigation, and experimentation, as such it is imperative that you, as the facilitator, establish the guidelines which will allow your students to be creative but within responsible, safe, and academically-sound limits. Your guidance and mentorship is expected and encouraged throughout the learning process.

We look forward to your journey as an artist, MABUHAY!

INTRODUCTION and OBJECTIVES

Dear Readers,

The human voice is the first musical instrument and the most unique. It is as special as the fingerprints of human hands, one voice is like no other in the multitude. The human voice is also the most affective of all musical media, able to evoke feelings of love, loneliness, joy, anguish. Before there were instruments, there were mothers singing songs to their children in sleep, in play. The voice remains the easiest way for people to study the system of music.

The Philippines is a country where it is said babies are born singing, not crying. Such is the accomplishment in this field of music that Filipinos are often in the cast of musical plays or contenders in voice contests. In classical and choral singing, Filipinos have made a name for themselves winning competitions such as the Guido d'Arezzo choral Olympics. Perhaps one day, governments will allot the same price for singers and performers as they do Olympiads. More reason to study the art and Science of singing.

At the end of this Learning Resource, you will be able to:

1. explain the musical apparatus of the voice and the mechanics of singing;
2. use the knowledge and skills in voice culture to perform level-appropriate songs from different nations and periods;
3. perform solo and choral compositions.
4. take care of the voice

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VOICE TRAINING ACROSS LEVELS

One of the most memorable experiences of my life involved my love affair with choral singing. I was 11 years old when the Angono Elementary School decided to organize a children's choir with the hope of joining the national competition. For almost fifty years after that life-changing experience, I would find myself singing with a choir, accompanying for a choir, and directing and teaching choirs. The highlight of those years would be a short two-year stint with the Philippine Madrigal Singers where I learned many valuable things and honed my skills as a singer. More than singing and performing, being with a choir taught me many things about myself, other people, and life in general. As a choir director to many young people, I have made it my mission to help young singers grow musically but also to help them in their journey and find meaning in their lives through music. There are many principles intrinsic in music that reflect the human experience and values worth passing on. These I try to reveal to choristers I work with. In my choices of materials, I make sure that choristers are bequeathed with a treasury of songs that they would want to sing all their life. As I taught and teach, I have learned and continue to learn. Being with a choir has renewed me again and again and given me a chance to view things from different perspectives and generational vantage point. Isaac Stern, world class violinist, put it succinctly when he said, "Between music and young people, the world is a better place." Indeed a choir is a good place to start renewing the face of the earth.

WHY PUT UP A CHOIR?

There are many reasons why choirs are organized from the most utilitarian to the word of the millenia, mental health. Can you identify with these reasons?

1. Your school head wants to join a competition. It can be the NAMCYA or a local competition sponsored by the LGU for a special local event. It can be SM sponsoring a carol fest or the Boy Scouts of the Philippines thinking of spicing their activities with a choral festival.
2. Parents are seeking an after-school activity for their musically inclined children and requests the school to organize a choir.
3. The church wants to put up a choir for services.
4. The school included the GLEE Club as one of its co-curricular activities or the school adopted the Special Program for the Arts curricula.
5. The head of the Senior Citizens agency thinks it is a good activity for senior citizens.

Whatever the reason, organizing a choir is a good opportunity to bring people together. It also has a lot of benefits.

1. Socialization
2. Mental Health
3. Aesthetic Expression
4. Worthy use of time among young people
5. Development of self-esteem among young people
6. Development of discipline and teamwork
7. Development of a sense of organization
8. Avenue for civic awareness and advocacy
9. Avenue for character and values formation
10. Avenue for career development

LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS OF A CHORAL ORGANIZATION

Whatever the setting of the choir and its *raison d'être*, what will guide it are its vision, mission, and goals. Sometimes such VMG will come from the mother institution or it is something that the choir organizers formulate together. The VMG will influence many decisions that a choral organization will make in the course of its existence including the kind of performances it will render, the organizations it will tie up with, even the repertoire that it will use.

Choir policies and procedures must also be spelled out in a document and understood by all members. This makes it easier to run the organization and prevents misunderstandings. Such policies should emphasize discipline, which is one of the hallmarks of a good choir, and commitment which ensures the viability of any choir.

Other rules should cover rehearsal procedures. Sample rehearsal rules and procedure are as follows:

REHEARSAL RULES

1. Come on time, properly groomed and dressed comfortably according to the choir's dress code.
2. Bring your pieces with you and a marker for instructions.
3. Listen. Listen. Listen. Mark your scores with conductor's instructions.
4. Bring water at room temperature to occasionally wet your throat.

PROCEDURES:

1. Attendance
2. Stretching and Vocal Warm-up
3. Review and fine tuning of known
4. Pieces Study or sight-reading of new piece
5. Loose ends (reminders, announcements)
6. Prayer

SELECTING MEMBERS

If the choir is for the mental health of old people, it is possible that you will find prospective members who have musical problems. If such people cannot be weeded out, they can be put to good use as members of an accompanying rhythm section. Instruments such as triangles, bongos, tambourine, and maracas can be assigned to them. If this is not possible, remember the purpose of the choir and accommodate as many for their sense of belonging and their emotional well-being.

Whenever possible, do select members of the choir.

If you are putting up a community choir or a church choir, it is a challenge to audition people especially if they are personally known to you. Oftentimes, one is pressured to accept applicants in the spirit of fraternity. However, it must be stated that in organizations and communities, people are gifted differently. A good voice, a good ear, and a good sense of rhythm are a must for choral singing. The choir is not the place to “cure” a monotone or someone who has a poor sense of pitch. One pitch-challenged member can ruin the sound of the choir. This must be understood by the community.

HOW SHOULD WE SELECT?

INTERVIEW

Begin by talking to the prospective member. This will enable you to determine many things.

1. It will unearth the persons' motivation in joining the choir. Some young people can be in it to meet other young people. Others need approval and applause. Others need a sense of belonging to and identification with a group. Many would just be aching to sing and perform. No motive should be looked down as superficial and no one should be turned away based solely on motivation unless it goes against the very purpose of the choir. Remember that leading a choir is an opportunity to shape young voices but also young minds and spirits.
2. It will reveal the person's support system. This is important especially for minors who need to seek their parents' permission. Regular rehearsals will take time from the home and school and

parents are expected to help their children manage their time. Performances will also affect family schedules. It helps if parents are equally committed to the choral experience.

3. It will determine the person's other entanglements and personal schedule. This will help determine if the applicant will be able to commit fully to rehearsal schedules and performances. A person who is so thinly spread must be discouraged from joining the choir because there is a good chance of conflict of schedules.
4. It will gauge the person's level of confidence which is important in performance arts.
5. Other things that an interview may yield include:
 - a. Inherent voice quality including hints of hoarseness or vocal stress
 - b. Other musical skills such as piano or guitar skills
 - c. Previous experience in singing and performing

AUDITION

1. Allow the singer to sing the chorus part of song (personal choice) unaccompanied. This will give a hint of the singer's preference. Singing a capella will help gauge the singer's sense of pitch and tempo. It will allow you to clearly hear the voice without instrumental interference.
 2. Ask the singer to sing the third section of Lupang Hinirang "...lupa ng araw, ng luwalhati't pagsinta..."
 - Give the cue at the person's key (A major, Bb major, or C major)
 - Ask the singer to sing a capella. If possible, move the key higher or lower to observe how the singer adjusts the voice.
 3. Ask the auditionee to sing AH to the notes you play on the keyboard. Go through the scale of C up and down to determine the singer's range and shifting notes.
 4. Play five intervals on the keyboard and ask the auditionee to sing them.
 5. If possible, ask the auditionee to sight-read a melody.
- Suggested material: (Remove the lyrics to prevent recognition of this Beatle classic).



6. Clap rhythm patterns to see if the auditionee can clap them back to you.

➤ Suggested rhythms:



CLASSIFY THE VOICE

Range is not the basis for classifying voices, it is tone color. However, it is also true that lighter and thinner voices easily sing notes in ledger lines above the treble staff. Conversely, deep and darker voices can reach notes at the bottom of the staff. This is true for women and men.

Among female singers, the highest and lightest voices are the sopranos. We usually classify sopranos into coloratura, lyric, and mezzo soprano. A special classification is the child soprano, a voice unique to children before puberty.

The contralto or alto voice used to be applied to the high range of falsetto tenors. It has subsequently been used for the lower ranges women's and boy's voices.

In a choir, we normally classify female voices into:

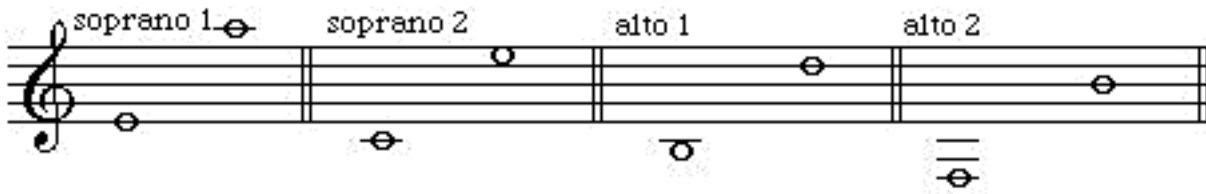
Soprano 1 – lighter female voice, range up to notes on the ledger line of the treble staff

Soprano 2 – female voice with more body, range up to notes on the ledger line of the treble staff,
can be a mezzo soprano

Alto 1 - female voice with more body, comfortable with middle range

Alto 2 - darker female voice, comfortable with middle and lower treble notes

The range of the female voices are shown on the staff below.



Among male singers, at least in the Philippines, there are usually more baritones than tenors and true basses. Male voices are classified as follows:

Tenor 1 - light or brilliant male voice, able to shift from natural voice to light (not falsetto)
but solid male voice reaching the lower and middle alto range

Tenor 2 - basically baritone with capacity to sing falsetto in the upper range

Bass 1 - basically baritone with fuller body and able to sing bass notes

Bass 2 - full bodied, dark male voice able to sing bass notes to the bottom of the base staff and beyond

The range of the male voices are shown on the staff below.



Singing tenor and alto parts can be very demanding. Tenor notes hover within the shifting notes between natural male voice and falsetto. The high notes can also be challenging especially for beginning singers. One of the strategies to take is to allow the tenors to sing comfortably in their natural voice and to sing falsetto in the higher notes. Some tenors have a very thin falsetto so different from their natural voices. Shifting discomfits them. There are also those who have not explored singing falsetto. Once comfortable with their falsetto voice, tenors can be instructed to work on thickening their falsetto or blending their natural voice with the falsetto. Singing “mee” and focusing the sound of the voice towards the back of the nose also helps create a good tenor sound that can go up to the higher notes aided by a robust falsetto. Altos, on the other hand, have to go to the lower notes below middle C. Singing with the chest tone from low notes up to middle notes can be very taxing to the voice. There are also many times when alto notes

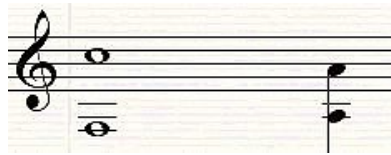
can be as high as soprano notes. Shifting from chest tone to head tone needs vocal adjustment and can cause some difficulty. Vocalises must be chosen to address the changes in register.

UNUSUAL VOICES

Sometimes, a young male singer will come to you whose voice is still a child soprano. Remember that such a voice will still change. A child soprano's voice is also different in timbre from female soprano voices. Such a voice can be placed in the soprano line-up but gradually moved to the alto section when the voice starts showing signs of change.

The Italians call this voice *cambiata*, the changing voice. The change will not occur in the same manner for every boy soprano, neither at the same time. Some will experience a sudden change. One day his voice is soprano and then the next day he cannot sing any note without his voice breaking. Some breeze through change, slowly and gradually losing treble notes and moving to the lower alto to tenor range. All these must be explained to and understood by the boy singer. Change must be expected and managed so that it does not result to voice harm and frustration.

The range of the *cambiata* voices is shown on the staff below:



A boy soprano will become a *cambiata* and eventually settle to become either a tenor, a baritone, a bass, or a countertenor. A countertenor sounds like a tenor singing in strong falsetto. This voice can sing easily in the soprano range. There is no special vocalization for *cambiata* voices. The same vocalizes can be used but moving down the lower treble notes would help prepare for the change. In extreme cases, *cambiata* voices may be asked to stop singing for a while. This happens when singing causes discomfort or when the voice would break at every note. These changes occur because of hormonal change that causes the thickening of the vocal cords, the voice box, even the larynx and the pharynx. The thickening may not occur evenly and this makes it difficult for the boy soprano to control his changing voice.

If you have such voices in the choir, especially if you are handling a children's choir, you must give boy sopranos additional care. Aside from this, the rest of the choir must know what is happening so they, too, can provide support.

If you are handling a children's choir, a community choir, you must plan how to incorporate a *cambiata* voice into your choir. This will affect the choral sound and may need re-arrangement of choral pieces. It will also influence future repertoire choices.

Listen to the following selections and familiarize yourself with different kinds of voices.

FEMALE VOICES

1. Diano Damrau, coloratura soprano <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IJJW0dE5GF0>
2. Jackie Evancho, lyric soprano <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CM1KN7zT3IE>
3. Chloe Agnew, soprano singing with natural voice <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tVp0k0HRH1Y>
4. Ewa Podles, Russian romance by Tchaikovsky. VI International Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow(1978) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o0kZJqQfez>
5. Ewa Podleś - Spero per voi, sì, sì (2008) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GWenEx1kCXQ>
 - Compare the three sopranos in terms of the color of their voices.
 - Compare the voice of Ewa Podles in 1978 and her voice 2008.
- 6.. Andreas Scholl: Largo di Handel : Ombra mai fu : Aria da Xerxes
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N7XH-58eB8c>
7. G.F. Händel - "Ombra mai fu" - Sara Mingardo, Accademia degli Astrusi, Federico Ferri dir.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V9-LBIGenJo>
8. Ombra Mai Fu-Kirsten Flagstad <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IRkHYwaDhfE>
 - Compare the three renditions of Ombra Mai Fu by G.F. Handel.
 - Compare the voices in terms of resonance, range, clarity, intonation, and other aspects.

MALE VOICES

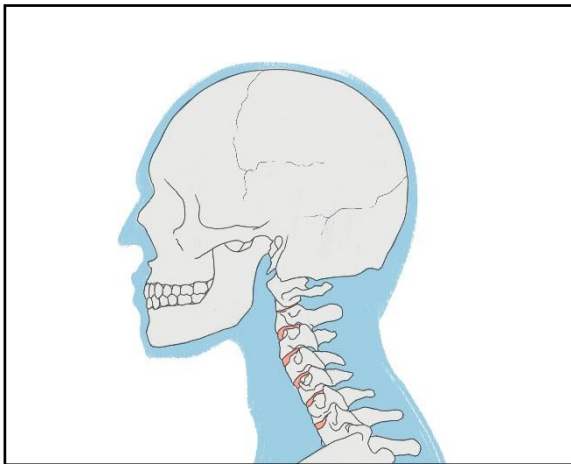
1. Danny Boy - Irish Pop Tenor Emmet Cahill <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ebulR9HNvY8>
2. Matthew Polenzani and Ken Noda perform Danny Boy <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X9hqxc0za-g>
 - What is the fine difference between a pop tenor and a classical tenor?
 - Compare the rendition of the two tenors. Which one do you prefer? Why?
3. Ronell Warmuth | Voice/Classical Baritone | 2020 National YoungArts Week,Der Doppelgänger, by Schubert <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qR6Vz72H1h4>
4. Nicholas Brownlee, BASS-BARITONE, USA, 1st Prize Winner, Engagements PrizesG. Verdi, Macbeth: Come dal ciel precipita <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ptf4LejB20>
5. Sir Willard White - Ol' Man River - The Sound of Musicals
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rub0VNrf3dY>

STARTING TO SING

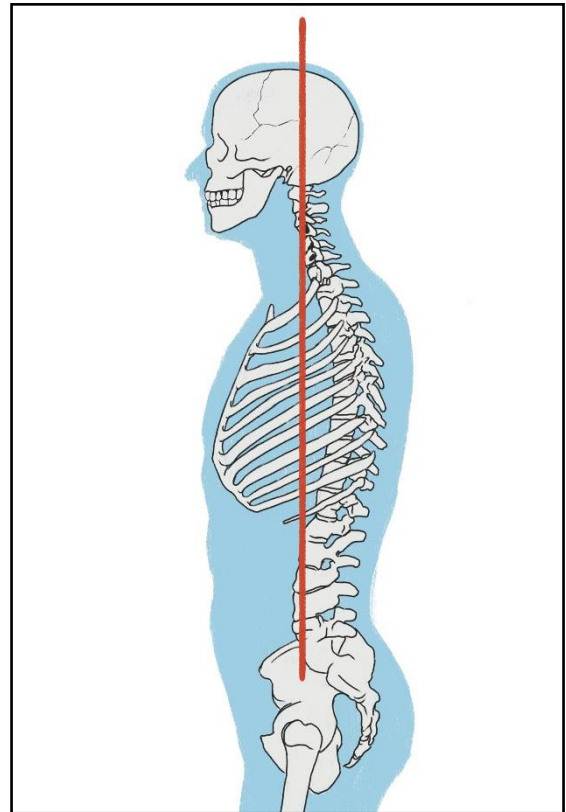
SINGING POSTURE AND DEMEANOR

Feet slightly apart, one foot slightly forward. The idea is to be able to shift one's weight from one foot to the other. This stance also allows one to bend a little at times from the knee or in the case of solo singing, even move a step towards a direction if necessary.

The head must be in normal eye level position, not tilted up as many singers are inclined to do. On stage, it is even better to look down a little as the audience is generally lower than the stage. There must be no tension on the shoulders, the nape, and the neck. Any form of stiffness affects voice production. Somebody said that singing is a state of relaxed tension.



by W. Matawaran



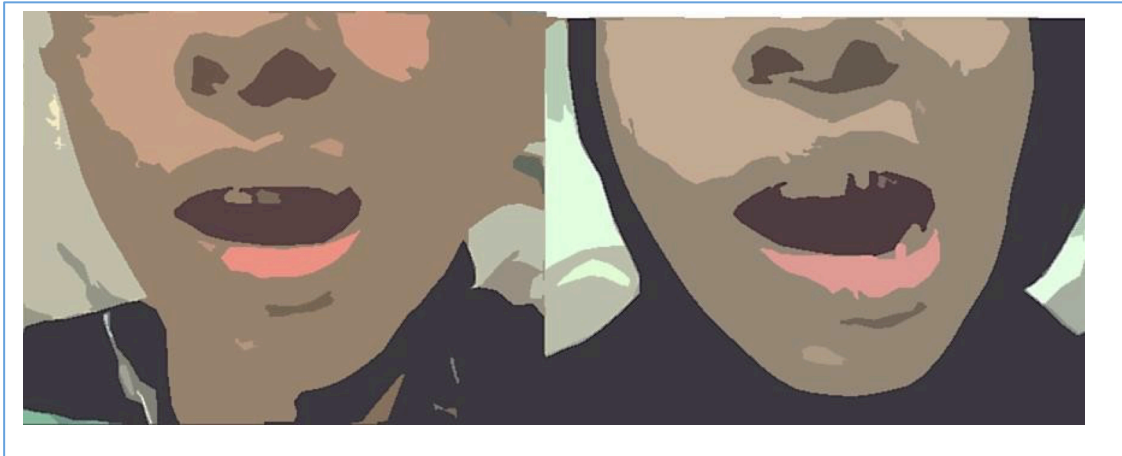
by W. Matawaran

Sometimes singers, when they want to give expression to a song, resort to grimacing, contorting their faces, or knitting of eyebrows while singing. The audience understands expression but there are mannerisms that they may interpret as discomfort on the part of the singer. There are singers who start showing stress when they reach high notes. Student-singers are prone to this. Observe them going through their high notes in vocalizes and note their expressions. While singing is a strenuous exercise, it must seem the easiest thing to do for the audience, so much like ballet. Closing one's eyes while singing should not be encouraged especially when there is an audience.

For the most part, singers are not aware of their mannerisms. Voice teachers and coaches are better able to see these and tell which mannerisms are distracting to the audience and which are a result of poor technique that may eventually harm the singer's voice.

When rehearsing with beginning singers, it is always best to have a mirror where they can see themselves stand and open their mouths in singing. Do not be surprised to see singers with strange mouth openings.

Some people suffer from misaligned mandibles that become more apparent when they open their mouths wide.



When you see such cases, advise the beginning singer to see a dentist. Such conditions can be corrected with not only singing benefits but also general health benefits to the person.

PHYSICAL WARM-UP

1. NECK

- bending sideward left and right, forward and back
- twisting to the left and to the right

2. SHOULDERS AND RIBS

- circular twisting forward and backward
- raising interlocked hands forward to stretch shoulder and back muscles
- raising interlocked hands above the head and bending to the left and to the right to stretch side muscles
- gently release hands and let arms arc sideward to stretch rib muscles

3. TORSO

- slowly bending the vertebrae from the neck, shoulders up to the waist forward and hanging limp without bouncing to release tension on the back.

4. ARMS AND LEGS

- shake your hands forward, sideward, and upward
- bend the knees and shake your legs.

5. YAWN

- without a sound and with a loud AW to open the mouth cavity

UNDERSTANDING THE VOICE

The human voice is a unique musical instrument that is often taken for granted. Unlike other instruments, it is always in use. When we breathe, speak, laugh, cough, eat, many parts of the vocal apparatus are involved. Unlike other instruments, the vocal apparatus cannot be put in a case and given rest until the next performance. When we sleep late, when we are physically tired, when we cry or shout out loud, we strain this hardworking musical instrument.

Compared to other musical instruments, the human voice is feeble in sound. What it lacks in power, it makes up for in terms of expressiveness. The human voice can produce pure sounds as in the humming chorus from Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* opera. Using the faculty of speech, the voice gives expression to songs that connect in sound and thought to listeners more than any other music instrument.

Anyone handling a choir, anyone who wants to sing, must understand how the human voice is produced and how the singing voice is developed.

Singing involves many parts of the human body aside from the vocal cords.

THE BREATHING MECHANISM

Without air coming from the body, there is no voice. Breathing is a very important part of singing. The parts of the body involved are the lungs, the muscles on the chest, the neck and in the abdominal region, particularly the diaphragm.

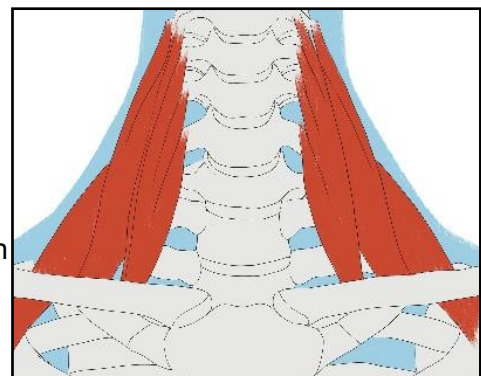
Air (oxygen) enters the body through the nose and the mouth. As much as possible, breathing through the nose is preferred. The nose has hairs that can filter large particles in the air. Breathing through the mouth can dry the throat and cause difficulty in speaking and singing. There is also the chance of particulates and even insects being sucked into the mouth when you breathe.

The lungs convert the air into carbon dioxide and expel it out through the nose and the mouth.

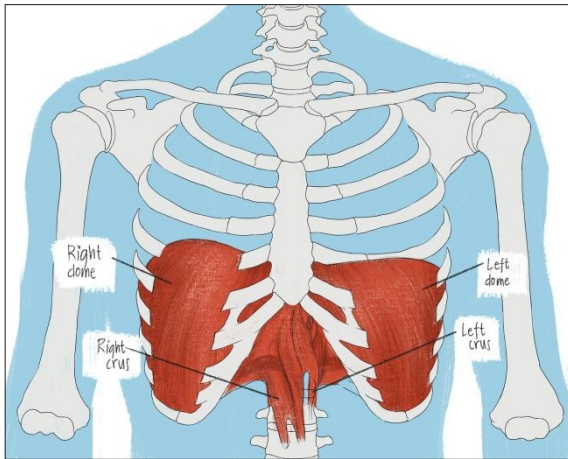
The scalene muscle system is found in the neck. It lifts the first and the second ribs during respiration. Breathing using the neck muscles is considered "shallow." Less air is taken in and it results in tension on the neck muscles. Most of the time, the air is expelled immediately to relax the muscles making it difficult for singers to sustain a note or a long melodic line.

SCALENE MUSCLES

By William Matawaran

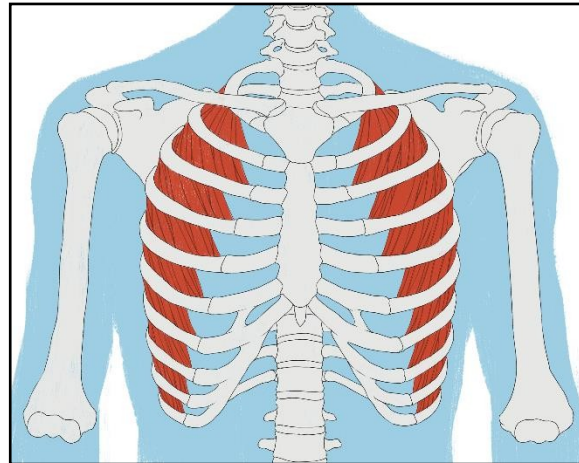


The diaphragm is a muscle system that separates the thorax from the digestive system. It supports the lungs in breathing. As air is taken in, the diaphragm contracts. This increases the chest cavity and allows the lungs to expand. The intercostal muscles between the ribs help lift the rib cage and allow the lungs to take in more air. The work of the diaphragm doesn't end there. It aids the lungs in slowly releasing the air in singing by slowly relaxing until the last breath. Air can also be released in controlled bursts by the action of the diaphragm in staccato passages. The release of air for high notes is also best done when supported by the diaphragm. Any form of singing that does not involve the diaphragm can cause damage to the vocal apparatus.



DIAPHRAGM MUSCLES

by W. Matawaran



SCALENE MUSCLES

by W. Matawaran

Breathing properly is one of the challenges for beginning singers. Many people have become so used to shallow breathing that they use it even in singing. Aside from the tension it creates around the neck and the shoulders, there is simply not enough air to support phrasing and high notes.

Other beginning singers arch the diaphragm against the lungs when taking in air. This squeezes the lungs and lessens the space for air coming in. During such inhalation, the air is almost always expelled immediately as soon as the person starts singing.

Still others are not even aware of the role that the diaphragm plays in singing. Such beginning singers rely on their natural voices. The resulting voice is either too strained or too weak with no power to attack high notes neither to sustain even middle notes.

Breathing Exercise A

1. Blow air out of the lips while the diaphragm expands and stretches against the lungs.
2. Take in air through the nostrils while the diaphragm contracts and moves downward to allow the lungs to expand to accommodate the air.
3. Feel the movement of the diaphragm as it expands upward and contracts downward.
4. Feel the rib cage opening wider to the sides to allow the lungs to fill in.
5. Do not lift your shoulder during inhalation.

Vocal Exercise 1

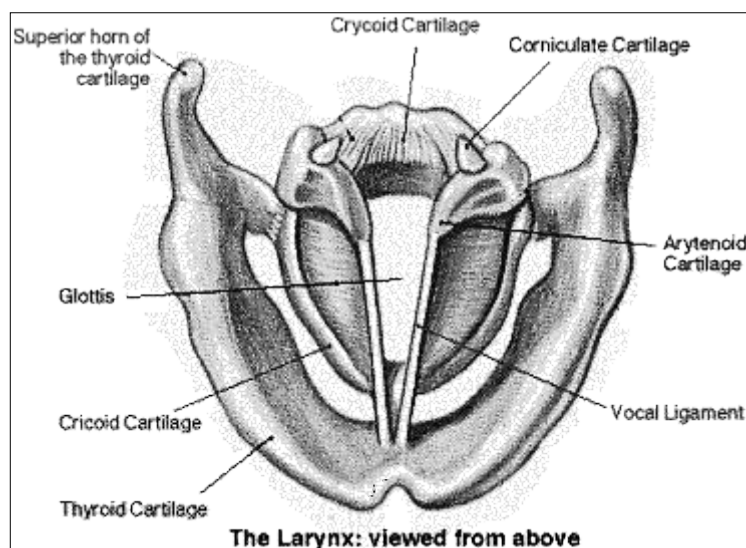
Focus: Intonation and Diaphragm Use



1. Follow steps 1 and 2 of the physical exercise.
2. Expand the diaphragm on the first note, sustaining it for at least three beats.
3. Contract the diaphragm after the last note, while taking a breath for a beat.
4. Repeat at a pitch half-step higher every time. Do not go beyond your comfort zone.
5. Focus on creating a beautiful sound and controlling the breath with the use of the diaphragm.

THE VIBRATORY SYSTEM

Like any musical instrument, the voice apparatus needs a vibrating medium. This vibrating medium are the vocal cords, also called vocal folds. The vocal cords are found in the voice box which is the larynx.



The Larynx

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The larynx sits in front of the neck on top of the trachea through which air from the lungs passes. It is made of a system of cartilage that houses the vocal cords.

The vocal cords are made up of two muscle folds on the left and right side of the larynx. The rims of these folds are ligaments that open and close to a V shape. To produce a sound, air passes through the vocal folds causing the ligaments to vibrate. The tighter the muscles come together, the higher the pitch of the sound produced. When the vocalis muscles relax and allow more air to pass, the lower the pitch of the sound produced. The vibrating column of air is carried through the throat and the mouth where it is amplified.

The glottis is the space between the two vocal folds. The larynx does the complex job of closing and opening the glottis for speaking, singing, coughing, and swallowing. Since the larynx leads to the lungs, food and water should not find its way to the larynx.

It must be mentioned that the pitch of the tone produced is actually controlled by the brain. The brain leans on the specialized cells inside the ear called cilia of which there are about 80,000. Each cilia vibrates to a particular frequency allowing it to send signals to the brain. The brain then orders the tension needed to squeeze the vocal folds together based on the frequency of the sound it desires to produce. This complex signaling occurs in split seconds. To sing involves the vibratory system. To sing in tune involves the auditory system. Listening comes before singing. This is the reason why Zoltan Kodaly insists that children be exposed only to good music and well-tuned instruments and voices.

Singing becomes difficult when the vocal folds are in a poor condition. What brings this about?

Since the vocal folds are made of muscles, they are also prone to fatigue. Lack of sleep causes vocal fatigue. Singing without a warm-up can also damage the vocalis muscles. Taking in very cold drinks or food after strenuous singing is like taking a cold bath after running a marathon. The coldness will shock the inflamed muscles and contract them instead of slowly resting and relaxing. Take in food and drinks at room temperature after a concert or a voice lesson.



[pinterest.com](https://www.pinterest.com)

We can think of the vocal cords as reeds in an instrument like the oboe, the clarinet, the English horn, and the bassoon. The reed is placed in the mouthpiece of these instruments. When air is blown through them, the reeds vibrate. One will notice musicians wet their reed with saliva before playing. If the reed is dry, the musicians have to blow extra hard for them to vibrate. The resulting sound becomes brittle. The same is true for the voice. A singer needs to hydrate the vocal cords so that the vocal ligaments will be pliant and will vibrate freely. Singing on a dry throat causes straining and needs more push of air

that can damage the vocal cords.

Hydrating with water at room temperature is recommended. When water is not available, singers may be advised to play with their tongue to induce the production of more saliva to wet the throat. Some people chew candy, peppermints mostly, supposedly to remedy the dryness. This should be discouraged. Candies coat the throat with fluid thicker than the saliva. Peppermints contain mentholated oil that numbs the vocal cords. Such numbness may mask symptoms of vocal stress.

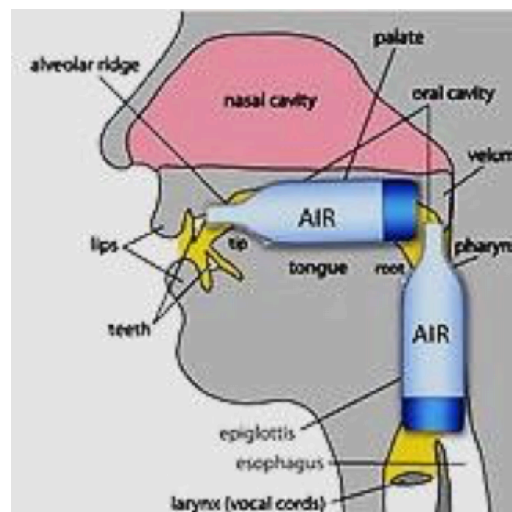
There are many other things that could go wrong with the vocal folds. It may be caused by the wrong way of singing. It could be brought about by stressful coughing and overuse. Ageing can affect the capacity of the vocalis muscles and the vocal folds to create tension needed to produce the notes at the right pitch. Just like any muscle, the factor of age can be lessened with regular exercise and care.

Any discomfort or pain caused by singing must be a cause of concern. If it cannot be addressed by the proper singing technique, singers should be advised to seek medical help.

THE RESONATING SYSTEM

The piano has its own sounding board and the violin has its own rounded body to shape and increase the sound it makes. Many other instruments have a medium that increases the depth and volume of the sound they produce. A medium that increases the fullness of a sound is called a resonator. Sound waves hit such medium creating sympathetic vibrations that increase the volume and reverberation of the sound.

The voice has its own resonators. The resonators pick up on the vowel sounds and amplify them. These resonators include the throat cavity or the pharynx, the nasal passages or sinuses, and the hard palate. The bones of the mouth cavity absorb the vibration from the larynx and make it louder and give it a ring or an echo. It becomes important for singers to be aware of the need to “throw” the voice to the upper part of the mouth cavity before allowing it to come out of the mouth. Rounding the lips and the mouth allow the vibration to create more sympathetic vibrations inside the mouth.



The Resonant Voice — Beth Roars

bethroars.com

THE ARTICULATORS

Singing involves the production of a whole gamut of sounds from pure vowels to many other combinations of consonants like diphthongs and triphthongs. Producing clearly these sounds is called articulation. It involves the teeth, the tongue, the soft and hard palates, and the lips. Individual sounds of letters can be classified according to the articulator involved in producing them. The table below show some of the main categories.

Consonant Classifications	Articulator	Letters
Dentals	teeth	d, t, n, l, th
Labials	lips	b, p, m, w
Labio-dentals	lips, teeth	f, v
Sibilants	tongue, teeth	s, soft c, z soft g, j, sh, soft ch
Palatals	palates	r, y
Aspirate	mouth cavity	h
Gutturals	pharynx	hard c, hard ch, k, hard g, q, x

Since language is the medium of singing, a good articulation makes the words of a song understandable. Good vowel intonation is desirable but without clear consonant sounds, a song will sound like a vocalization. On the other hand, remember that consonants are sounded clearly but not sustained. This is the reason why some voice teachers would say, ‘Sing to the vowels and clearly sound the consonants.’

Sometimes after a performance, some people would say, “Your voice is so good. What was the song about?” This shows that the words were not clearly understood. On a stage in a large theatre, most of the sound that translates to the audience are pure vowel sounds. This makes it important to exaggerate consonant sounds, particularly terminal ones. Terminal dentals, labials, and gutturals are usually neglected by non-native English speakers. The words *learned, find, alone, small, heal, loved, believe, home, light, worth, lamb, rough, room, lift, sick, meek* are some examples. Non-native speakers would sound the consonants but not enough to be clearly heard in a large venue. Other singers would either explode the sibilants or extend the sound unnecessarily. “Seal it with a kiss” becomes “Seal it with a kisssssssss.” In a choir, sounding the sibilants at the same time and keeping them blunt is the rule. Otherwise, several voices will be exploding the sibilants at different points in time.

Filipino singers tend to neglect consonants. This is especially true when they sing in Filipino. In the Filipino language, some of the problematic ones involve words ending in *ng* and *n*. In singing the words *isang*,

bayang, pawang, bayan, duyan for example, some singers would emphasize the *ng* and *n* and clip the vowel sound.

Filipino diphthongs such as *aw, iw, ay, oy, uy* should be approached differently. Diphthongs have two sounds. Singers should emphasize the first pure vowel sound before gently ending with the second vowel sound. In doing this, one must make sure not to neglect the second vowel sound and drop it carelessly. In the Philippine National Anthem, many singers tend to drop final sounds of words such as *magiliw, buhay*, and *bughaw*.

A whole is the sum of its parts and a chain is only as strong as its weakest link. For a choir to be strong, its individual members must have their own program for vocal development.

VOCAL MUSIC FOR GRADE 7

Age Range : 11 ½ to 13 ½

Grade 7 is a time for exploration for new singers. Not only will they be exploring the use of their voice but also put into real use their music lessons from the grade school. During this time, they will review the elements of music and the elements of notation. They will read and perform music in simple meters and become more familiar with expression marks such as tempo and dynamics. They will begin to attempt sight-reading guided by an accompaniment. They will also begin to identify (visually and aurally) and sing the different intervals of the diatonic scale. As they study music scores, they will begin to identify similar and contrasting phrases and sections of a musical composition.

SKILL TARGETS

1. The student will use proper posture, stance, and facial expression for singing.
2. The student will use proper breathing technique for singing.
3. The student will identify the parts of the vocal apparatus involved in singing.
4. The student will sing with a free and clear tone.
5. The student will sing in pitch (intonation).
6. The student will sing with proper articulation for better understanding of song lyrics.
7. The student will be able to shift from the chest tone to the head tone and vice versa.
8. The student will start to become familiar with the piano or keyboard as a tool in finding notes and pitches.
9. The student will be able to sing Filipino, English, and Italian or Latin songs.
10. The student will be able to sing the required repertoire with or without accompaniment.

(Targets #1-#4 have previously been discussed.)

WARM-UP

A simple stretching and limbering exercise may be done before even singing. This will remove tenseness and free the muscles for the workout ahead. It is important to have at least 15 minutes of warm-up before singing. The level of difficulty of warm-up vocalizes must be graduated, beginning from the easiest to the more difficult. Warm-up vocalizes may be the same for a month, even a quarter, until new targets are set by the teacher. Do not resort to fancy tricks in vocalization. Pop stars lie flat on their backs to sing high notes to show their prowess. There are coaches who ask their singers to bend from the waist down while singing. Such physical challenges are unnecessary and may be harmful. For one, singing is not really done while lying down. Bending down obstructs air passage which is not good for the voice and the singer.

CHECK THE SINGING APPRATUS

Check the way the singer is breathing. There are people who have been singing for a long time but who still do not breathe properly.

The tongue must lay flat on the mouth floor, the tip touching the base of the teeth. One of the common mistakes of beginners is the way they open their mouths and position their tongue. The stiffness of the tongue affects the neck and shoulder muscles and makes singing difficult. It also blocks the passageway of the vibrating air that is the voice. It is painful to watch singers struggle to sing with an arched tongue. Look out for any tenseness and immediately correct the source or the wrong singing habit.

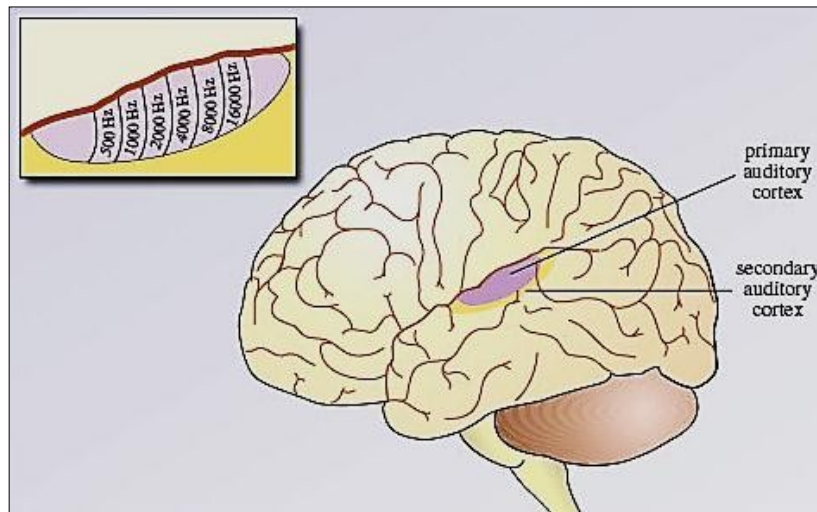
Other singers would squeeze their neck muscles to force their voices out, instead of using the diaphragm. The struggle can be so noticeable when the pitch goes higher because the neck starts to turn red from the stress. This kind of singing can cause damage to the voice, the first signs of which is hoarseness and sore throat.

PITCH AND INTONATION

When teaching music, whether vocal or instrumental, it is important to have a well-tuned instrument at hand as a reference.

As much as resources will allow, all singers must have a printed copy of the vocalises whether for solo singing or for choir.

Train the singer to listen before singing and to commit the memory of the tone to the auditory cortex of the brain.



Pinterest.com

In singing a single tone to a neutral syllable, have the singer try different kinds of mouth openings and observe how the sound produced changes.

VOCAL EXERCISE 7A

Focus : Intonation

The musical notation is in 4/4 time, starting with a treble clef. It consists of three phrases, each with five notes. The first phrase starts on a whole note, the second on a half note, and the third on a quarter note. The notes are: C4 (whole), D4 (half), E4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), G4 (half). The syllables are: ee - eh - ah - oh - oo and mi me ma mo moo.

ee - eh - ah - oh - oo
mi me ma mo moo

ee - eh - ah - oh - oo
mi me ma mo moo

ee - eh - ah - oh - oo
mi me ma mo moo

Vocal Warm-Ups and Breathing Exercises ...

musicnotes.com

VOCAL EXERCISE 7B

Focus : Intonation

Sing the notes in staccato and legato. Be sure to hit the right pitch.

Use only one mouth opening. Keep the mouth open. Hit the notes by pulsing the air with the diaphragm.



Vocal Warm-Ups and Breathing Exercises ...

musicnotes.com

VOCAL EXERCISE 7C

Focus : Intonation

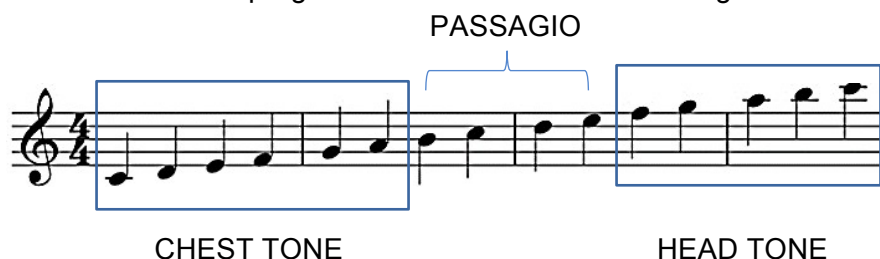
Practice singing major and minor thirds. Many singers can be very sloppy in singing these intervals.



RANGE AND REGISTERS

For Grade 7 students, it is important for the voice teacher to take note of the range of each student singer. **Range** is the compass of notes that a voice can sing from the lowest to the highest.

In the diagram below, the full range of the sample voice begins on the middle C and ends on the high C. This may vary from one singer to the other. Younger singers may yet to reach the last three highest notes. There are also those who can sing below the middle C. As the voice program progresses, the voice teacher must take note of the progress of the voice in terms of range.



The voice will have three different registers-----the chest voice, the passaggio, and the head voice. These registers are also called chest tone, middle tone, and head tone.

The chest tone is so called because the voice seems to emanate from the chest. When the note is low in pitch, the vibration cannot be projected upwards into the other resonators. The vocal cords vibrate freely in almost open position and the vibration bounces against the larynx. The chest tone can be used up to F or G but as soon as A is reached, the voice begins to feel the strain. The notes where the voice begin to strain are called “shifting tones.” The Italians call these notes the “passaggio.”

The higher subset is the head tone. Some people call the head tone the falsetto or false voice, maybe because it is different from the normal speaking voice and the chest tone. The head tone is sounded in the upper resonators. If you touch your neck while singing, you will be able to feel the vibration of the neck when you sing with the chest voice and almost none at all when you sing with the head voice. Instead you will feel the vibration in the hard palate and sometimes the back of the nose.

The aim for beginning singers is to make uniform the tones from the chest voice to the head voice. It is like seeing a monochromatic color scheme in the voice. How can this be done?

Vocal Exercise 7D

Focus : Vocal Monochrome

Sing the diatonic major scale in a descending manner. Use the vowel AH. Flatten the tongue, open round the mouth. Expand or lift the diaphragm as you sing the first note. Observe how you sound the first note (C¹). Do not change the way you open your mouth as you slowly go down. The way you sing the first high note should be the same as the way you sing the last and the lowest note.



Vocal Exercise 7E

Focus : Vocal Monochrome



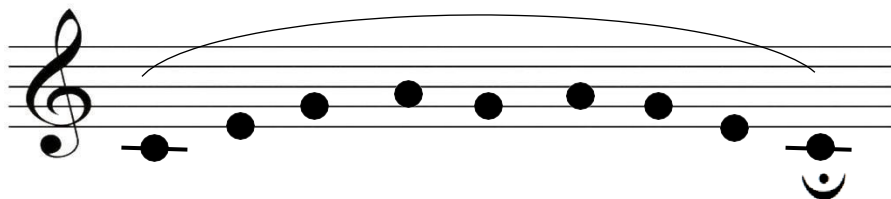
Use the vowel AH. Lift or expand the diaphragm as you sing the high note. Be careful as you move down from C¹ to G. Do not slide down. If you are unsure of the pitch of G, go back to Vocal Exercise C. Do not change the mouth opening.

Notice that both vocalizes begin on the high note. The technique used to sing the high note is used to sing the low note. These vocalizes aim to “bring down the head tone” so that the passagio become as stable and as strong as the head tones.

Vocal Exercise 7F

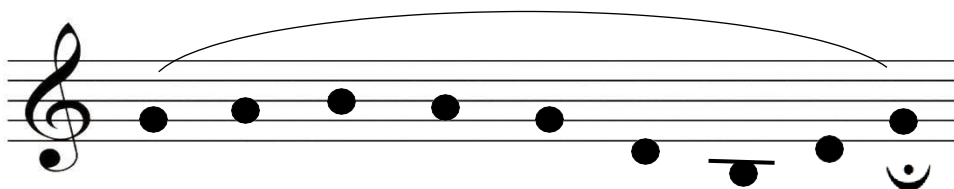
Focus : Strengthening the Passagio

Go up the keyboard using the following exercise. Open the mouth, flatten the tongue. Feel the vibration of the notes on your pharynx. Use this vocalization until C¹ or D¹ only.



Vocal Exercise 7G

Focus : Refining the Chest Voice

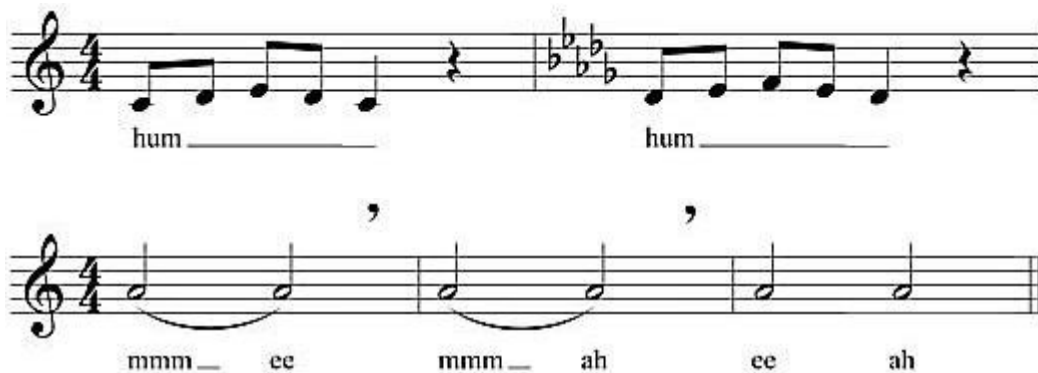


In all the vocalizes, the singer must ensure that the pitch is accurate. This involves listening carefully to the sound that is produced and making sure that it matches the desired pitch.

VOCAL EXERCISE 7H

Focus : Resonance

Humming is one way to develop a voice that will carry across distance. The second exercise will allow the vibrating sound to bounce around in the mouth cavity on mmmm, giving it a fuller sound . When the vowel is pronounced, the sound is push forward by the lips.



ARTICULATION

If you listen to a chorus of children singing the Philippine National Anthem, you are bound to hear it this way:

Bayamagili pehla ng silanganaN
Alab ng puso, sa didib mo'y buhay.
LupaNG hiniraNG, duyaka ng magitiNG
Sa manlulupig, di ka pasisiil.

This kind of pronunciation is a result of careless articulation that neglects final consonants or puts too much emphasis on them.

For beginning singers, the following tips may help:

1. Remember to sing on the vowel and sound the consonant.
2. Resist the tendency to cut short the vowel in anticipation of the final consonant.
3. Do not sustain the consonant as in the sibilant ssssss in the word “kiss” or the labio-dental fffff in “laugh.”
4. Final consonants must be sounded all the time but not by accenting them unduly unless the language dictates it.
5. Avoid overgrinding of the r producing a sound that calls attention to itself and blurring the purity of the tones.
6. At the same time, avoid blurring the r so that *ever* become *evuh*; unless the song is a Negro spiritual.

SUGGESTED SONGS FOR GRADE 7 VOCAL MUSIC

Filipino Songs

Dandansoy
Ili-ili, tulog Anay
Katurong na, Nonoy
Ti Ayat Ti Maysa Nga Ubing
Nahan (Ernani Cuenco)
Ang Barong Tagalog (Ruben Tagalog)
Saan Ka Man Naroroon, Sinta (Restie Umali)
Ang Langit sa Lupa (Leopoldo Silos)
Alaala ng Lumipas (Restie Umali)
Katakataka (Santiago Suarez)

Foreign Songs

Early One Morning (English traditional)
Far From the Home I Love (Jerry Bock)
Greensleeves (English traditional)
I Know Where I'm Going (Irish traditional)
Man is For the Woman Made (Henry Purcell)
Old Folks at Home (Stephen Foster)
O Rest in the Lord (Felix Mendelssohn)

CHORAL MUSIC FOR GRADE 7

Consider Grade 7 students as beginner choristers. They will be undergoing physical change brought about by the secretion of hormones heralding puberty. Girls would have an easier time as their voices become sweeter. As previously mentioned, at least in the Philippines and at this age, there will be few true altos. Assigning fuller soprano voices to the alto section may be done. Be sure, however, that altos have keen sense of pitch since their lines are harder to sing and remember.

Boys on the other hand will be at the crossroads, many moving to cambiata voices. There will be few true tenors and true basses at this time. The arrangement of choral songs has to reflect this composition of members. Pieces arranged for SSA or SSB may be sung. If there are few to no cambiata voices, two-part songs may be sung with males in one group and females in another. Be sure to provide opportunities for each group to sing the melody and to sing the second voice.

Do not expect young singers to have a vibrato. This is something that develops as the voice matures.

The following are reasonable targets to set:

1. The students will be able to blend with other singers on the same vocal part.
2. The student will be able to blend with other voices in harmony.
3. The student will be able to sing independently in a choral ensemble.
4. The student will be able to sing Filipino, English, and Italian or Latin songs.
5. The student will be able to sing the required repertoire with or without accompaniment.

UNISON SINGING

Some people would look down on a choir that sings in one voice but unison singing is difficult to do. The challenge is to create a fine weave of voices. Where each voice is a thread, in unison singing, each voice must come together to become a single seamless piece of textile. Learning to sing as one helps make the vocal lines clean and clear. It is very distracting to hear individual voices stick out when choirs sing. Singing in a choir is not a contest of who will be heard more by the audience. Each member of every section should be able to somehow blend his or her voice with the others.

Vocal Exercise 7H

Focus : Unison Singing

Given a sustained note, ask the girls/boys to sing it in two ways:

1. First, sing Loo to the note all at the same time. Focus on blending the voices into a seamless sound where individuals voices can no longer be recognized. Sustain the note for at least 8 beats.
2. Second, sing Loo to the note but come in one by one until everyone is singing. Focus on unifying the sound of the voices. If you run out of breath, gently cease singing and take a breath quietly. Resume singing the sustained note, coming in gently without disrupting the quality of the sustained note.



Vocal Exercise 7I

Focus : Unison Singing

Assign a song for the boys and a song for the girls. Have them practice singing it in unison with the aim to create a single vocal sound. Try folksongs such as:

BOYS : Ti Ayat Ti Maysa Nga Ubing (Ilocano folksong)

GIRLS : Ili-ili, tulog Anay (Visayan folksong)

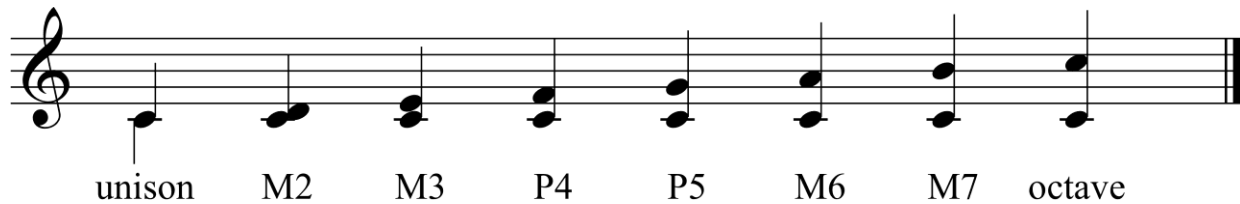
II. TWO-PART SINGING

Two-part singing may be done for all-female and all-male sections, or male and female parts in a choral piece. It is easier to balance an all-female and all-male choir because the voice quality and the range are similar. In blending male and female voice in two-part, the arrangement must not be made in such a way that the harmony is not too far apart in terms of interval and each part showcases the unique quality of the female and male voice.

One common practice that must be avoided is to have the female voice sing the melody while the male voice sings ten notes lower (an octave and a third). Singing in parallel thirds may be done for all-female, all-male choir but not for the entirety of a choral piece.

VOCAL EXERCISE 7J

Focus : Harmonizing Intervals



Have the alto sing middle C and the soprano sing the higher notes. Begin both voices on the middle C. Do the same exercise for the basses and the tenors. Have the singers listen well to the sound of each interval.

III. THREE-PART SINGING

All voices should recognize that the melody is the most important voice in the choral composition and all voices support it instead of overpowering it. Most of the time, the melody is carried by the sopranos but there are other times when male voices do this instead. Sometimes the melody may move from one voice to another. Choristers must be reminded that when they are not singing the melody, they must tone down their voice. Many composers and arrangers make dynamics marks to indicate this balance but choristers tend to forget.

Choristers must learn to sing their lines not as single notes but as connected tones with their own expression. In the alto, tenor or baritone lines, for example, it is common to find repeated notes that may seem so boring to sing. The example below is one such choral passage:

When singing this kind of passages in the tenor/baritone part, the singers must continue building melodic lines instead of thinking of the notes as discreet and separated.

Rather fast

Snare Drum (Continue to end of song)

Dm

1. Pat-a - pan, pat-a - pan, pat-a - pan, pat-a - pan, pat-a -
2. Pat-a - pan, pat-a - pan, pat-a - pan, pat-a - pan, pat-a -

Flute and SongFlutes

SUGGESTED CHORAL PIECES FOR GRADE 7

I Know Where I'm Going (Irish Traditional, arr.)
Lord, Thy Glory (based on L.V.Beethoven's 9th symphony)
Deep River (Negro Spiritual)
The Turtle Dove (English Folk song)
All Creatures of Our God and King
Jingle Bells (Traditional Carol)
Joshua Fit the Battle (Negro Spiritual)
The Lord Bless You and Keep You
Sweet Bells (based on a melody from Magic Flute by W.A. Mozart)
Ding-Dong Merrily on High (French Carol, arr. D. Peter, 3-part)
Ikaw ang Mahal Ko (Mabuhay Singers)
Sinisinta Kita (Mabuhay Singers)
Pandanguhan (Tagalog folksong)
Pipit (San Pedro-Celerio)

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