

Warm-Ups and Voice Building for Middle School Singers

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Voice Building

“Improving each singer’s tonal core – that is, training a focused tone – allows for blend despite differences in timbre... Bringing all of the singers to their best, focused, and supported singing makes vibrant, expressive tone possible.” ~ Emmons & Chase, 2006, p. 157

Goals for Tonal Development

- Resonance
- Warmth
- Freedom
- “Spin”
- Intonation
- Core/Focus

Conductor as Voice Teacher: Warm-Up Sequence for Vocal Development

Focus Activity: “Mirror Me”

- mirror ‘body percussion’ in various time signatures
- Mirror at the same time, two beats after, four beats after
- Add ‘rests’ or vocal exploration in time

Relaxation & Alignment

- Stretch large and small muscle groups
- Massage, if appropriate
- Act out activities (swimming, picking apples, making pizza)
- Scrunch/wiggle face, jaw, tongue
- Body Awareness map
- Yoga/Tai Chi poses/principles
- Balance & buoyancy (balance fruit, tree swaying)

Breath

- Breath circles
- Hissing or pulsing on “sh”
- Lip trills
- Beat boxing and vocal exploration
- “Spin” sensation
- Act out activities: sip through straw, pant like a dog, laughing

I IV

He Haw He Haw He Haw He He Haw He Haw He Haw He

3 I V⁷ I

He Haw He Haw He Haw He He Haw He Haw He Haw He Haw

Solfege Exercises: vowels, placement, and aural development

➤ Sing scale pattern below

Do Do Re Do Do Re Mi Re Do Do Re Mi Fa Mi Re Do Do Re Mi Fa Sol Fa Mi Re

5

Do Do Re Mi Fa Sol La Sol Fa Mi Re Do Do Re Mi Fa Sol La Ti La

8

Sol Fa Mi Re Do Do Re Mi Fa Sol La Ti Do Ti La Sol Fa Mi Re Do

➤ Sing scale pattern, but choose one syllable to eliminate in the pattern (example below)

Continue to eliminate syllables for as long as you'd like

Let students choose syllables to eliminate – fun for all!

Do Do Re Do Do Re Re Do Do Re Fa Re Do Do Re Fa Sol Fa Re

5

Do Do Re Fa Sol La Sol Fa Re Do Do Re Fa Sol La Ti La

8

Sol Fa Re Do Do Re Fa Sol La Ti Do Ti La Sol Fa Re Do

- Learn Solfege pattern in time
Add movement:
Pat lap on Do
Clap on Mi
Snap on Sol
Increase tempo for extra fun

Do Re Mi Fa Sol Sol Fa Mi Re Do Do Sol Fa Sol Mi Sol Re Sol

4

Do Sol Fa Sol Mi Re Do Do Sol Fa Sol Mi Sol Re Sol Do Sol La Ti Do

Rounds

- Use rounds to connect all aspects of the warm-up sequence
- Develop aural skills and musical independence
- Bridge connection to repertoire

Belle Mama

Bel - le Ma-ma bel - le Ma-ma ay Bel - le Ma-ma bel - le ma-ma ay

Be-le Ma-ma bel-le Ma-ma bel-le Ma-ma bel-le Ma-ma Bel-le Ma-ma bel-le Ma-ma ay

- Movement:
Belle mama – Step & hands L x 2
Ay – hands out & circle

Belle mama (descending scale) – hands in circles from head to waist

Last Belle mama – Step & hands forward
Ay – hands out & circle

Resources:

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