

Building a vocal warm up routine for your chorus

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Why warm up?

- § Singers are athletes
- § Need to waken up the body to the physical aspects of singing
- § Need to focus the mind *and ear*
- § Reinforce *proper* use of the voice
- § Teach concepts important to us in our style of music
- § Onwards and upwards

Who does the warm up?

- § Director?
- § Assistant director?
- § Regular warm up act?
- § Different chorus members?
- § Choreographer or member of visual team?
- § CD of vocalises?
- § A reluctant conscript?
- § No one !

Choose your warm up act carefully!

- § Sets the tone for the rehearsal
- § Injects energy
- § Injects quality
- § Reinforces good vocal technique
- § Is fun and interesting
- § Makes singers want to be there at the start of the rehearsal!

Basic elements of a successful warm up routine

- § Relaxation and alignment
- § Breathing
- § Vowel and diphthong matching
- § Developing resonance in the tone
- § Awareness of correct intonation

You could also include....

- § Range and agility
- § Phonation
- § Physical and mental stamina
- § Chord progressions
- § Balance and blend
- § Tone production
- § Articulation

Tips – keep it memorable!

- § Warm up the body (physical stretching, massage, make it fun)
- § Rap to reinforce posture and have fun
- § Breathing exercises which work (counting, sipping / hissing, “get rid of it”!)
- § Humming and bubbling
- § Descending warm ups first (head voice comes down rather than chest voice being pushed up)
- § Develop lift and space (thumb between teeth)
- § Warm air ALWAYS

To begin with.....

- § Breath control – hiss, bark, pant , meow
- § Humming and hissing (hum on a pitch, hiss with no pitch, go up by half steps)
- § The killer (Britt-Helene's creation)
- § The steps (BHS video)
- § 3,5,7,13

Phonation and onset of sound

- § Humming on any combination of notes
- § Staccato humming (13531 then up a half step)
- § Bubbling (see how far you can go!)
- § Bubbling into vowel
- § Bubbling into tune up chord of repertoire song
- § Bung – ah (*bung* unison then form *ah* chord on key note, 3rd, 5th, 8th. Change vowels.
- § Sandi's snoring exercise (1234 / 5678 / 9876 / 5432 / 1)
- § Åse's motorbike
- § Sandy's dead battery (vvv-vvv-vvv)

Developing resonance

§ “ a diamond on a black velvet cloth”

§ Vocalises containing lots of *m, n, ng*

§ Minnie minnie minnie minnie

§ Nee nee nah nah noh (54321)

§ Bring brang brung (531)

§ Nnnn ah, ng ah, m m m m mee x 3 (down a semitone) yew ee ay yew ee ah x 4 (down a semitone to resume)

Range and agility

- § Bravo (156589 10 8 543211 then up a semitone)
- § Señora (156565 656531 then up a semitone)
- § O mio padre (1358531)
- § Doo wah (12 34 56 78 876765 654543 432321 2171 then up a semitone). This can also be sung as a 3 part round.
- § Pizza is great / can't believe how many pieces that I ate (1358 78987654321 then up a semi)
- § I love to be with you (187656 1887766554421 187656 988776654 + variations on a theme)

Vowels and diphthongs

§ Mee meh mah moh moo

§ Keep the sound the same as the pitch changes : image of the “lift shaft”

§ Target vowels always

§ 90 – 10 : “Dip your thong!”

§ Use other languages to help promote good vowels and diphthongs: Nee-sa; Abeyo;
Oo a lay lay

Nee sa and others

Nee sa nee sa nee sa x 3

Gah weh oh, gah weh oh (134315, 467644,
134315, 111,111)

Abeyo, abeyo, abeyo, beyo, beyem mama

Oo a lay lay, mala teeka tumba, oo a lay
maloo-wah, maloo-way

Articulation

- § Red leather yellow leather (down a scale)
- § Laughing is contagious and it's advantageous
ha ha ha ha ha ha ha (keep repeating the *ha ha*
phrase) 1234321234321234321
- § Maybe my mammy may move to Miami and
maybe my mammy may not (4 parts - 1 5 8 10)
- § Tongue twisters (Unique New York, Fluffy
feathers, Bibbity boo...)
- § Italian food (macaroni / minestrone / carbonara /
tagliatelle)

Sustained tone production

- § Looo held tone (13531 then 1358531) then change vowels (lah lee leh). Make sure the *tone* stays the same even when the pitch gets higher or lower.
- § Looo repeated (54321). Change the vowels. Also good for negotiating the passagio. Can extend to 5432171234321
- § Mee meh mah moh moo (down the scale – watch out for good tone throughout)

Downward progressions

§ Ee oh ee oh ee oh ee oh ee then down a semitone (534231271). Can be ee oo

§ Too tall to tickle (8 5 4 3 1) then down a semitone. Good for developing awareness of key changes.

§ Thoh ay ah (Dale Syverson)
5432171234321

Intonation and accuracy

- § I love to sing (to eat, to dance) 18531
- § Get on top of ray (Waffles are wonderful)
- § Sing the numbers (18765432187654321) then leave out a number as you continue.
- § Loo lee loo lee loo lee loo lee (everyone sings up the scale, then tenors stay on 8, leads come down to 6, baris to 4 and basses to 2, then resolve chord at end with all except tenor going down a tone to make a 1358 chord.)
- § Sing the numbers as a round (1 121 12321 1234321
123454321 12345654321 1234567654321
123456787654321 then reverse)

To conclude

- § Variety is the key
- § Build and develop skills
- § Keep the singers involved at all times
- § Keep looking for new exercises – don't be content with the same routine every week!

Some resources to help you

- § Darlene Rogers with Dale, Peggy and Charla :
Sing Baby Sing # 1, 2 and 3
(3 separate CDs on sale this weekend!)
- § Mike Brewer's Choral Warm Ups (Faber Music)
- § Chris and Carol Beatty : Vocal Coach Daily
Workout
- § Jay Althouse and Russell Robinson : The
Complete Choral Workout Book
- § Sally K. Albrecht : The Choral Warm Up
Collection
- § BHS : Effective Choral warm Ups (DVD)

Warm Ups swap shop

§ Let's share them!

§ Email me alysonchaney@yahoo.co.uk and we can upload them onto the Region 31 website.

§ We could compile a book of our own one day!

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