

Wavebox Warmup

Please note that each step combines the previous step(s) and we don't go on to the next step until we are satisfied with the step on which we are currently working. Be “positive approached sticklers” and allow for higher level singing. It's not about how quickly we can move through the concepts, but how true we can stay to them. You will find, however, that staying true to the concepts will come more easily over time. Some other very important rules are going to be

- 1) Always use the “thing to think” concept when singing and NOT a “thing to do” mentality.
- 2) Work from successes as opposed to fixing failures.
- 3) This whole exercise is designed to allow individual singers and the ensemble to hear, feel and visualize these concepts, resulting in the ability to feel the music or “swim” in the music. This is NOT meant to be a checklist, nor should we fall prey to the trap of thinking “once we've got it, we've got it.”

Order is as follows:

1. Perform your Proud Regal while thinking "Come to me". This will help to get our minds right. As the arms flow into place remember that the audience wants you to do your very best (they are already behind you). Repeat 3 times or until you are happy with where they are mentally. Don't rush. This is more about getting our attitude right than anything, because what we are going to perform tonight is going to be amazing and glorious.
2. Sing "ZINGloooooooooong" while thinking Wall of Sound and performing the Wall of Sound kinetically by making the "gun" hand movement move in front of the body across the chest with the left hand moving from left to right. (The ZINGloooooooooong also helps with placement as the ZING gets the voice fronted and the air moving and then the "long" helps with openness.) You may choose to do this in unison and then perform it on a chord or on a vocal ease (unison or chords going from 1 to 5, on the May Me Mah Mo Moo, or any other vocal ease). Use varying lengths of time on "long".
3. Sing "ZINGloooooooooong" this time performing the semicircle on "long". As always, use kinetic hand movements and visuals if possible. Use different dynamic ranges and lengths of time on "long". You can crescendo or decrescendo during a semicircle so think about incorporating that when it makes sense. Some will try to perform the Cursive Ending or it may even occur naturally (even better), but at this point we won't care about the Cursive Ending as we are only working the semicircle. You can choose to do this in unison, then on chords, then on vocal eases as you see fit.
4. Sing "ZINGloooooooooong" and this time we are adding the Cursive Ending. Kinetics and visuals are helpful. The kinetics are similar to what the director would be performing, but in general, it feels like sending the music off into the air at the cut off. I know that's a bit ethereal, but much of singing is that way as it is more about how the music feels. Again, vary the lengths of time and semicircles on “long” as well as varying the type of Cursive Ending you would like.
5. Sing "ZINGloooooooooong" thinking about that Oh Really? 360 degree breath of mild surprise and having that Pear in the mouth. This happens quickly so it is important at first to only do one phrase and stop after the breath. Suggest things to think when necessary (back 180 degrees, pear in the mouth, Proud Regal/"Come to Me" posture, et cetera). I want to emphasize that it is only one phrase and then stop after the Oh Really?

breath (connection to the next phrase will take place in the next step). Stopping at the end of only one phrase allows time for the individual singer to take inventory of the breath. Have them think about what they did well during that breath rather than what they need to "fix" allowing them to build from those successes. Corrections will come more quickly, easily and naturally if we build from the things we do well, using them as a base from which to work, rather than trying to "fix" the things we did not do well. Again, vary the styles of the "longs" and the Cursive Endings as we work this concept. It is your choice to perform this in unison or on a chord or a mixture of both.

6. This is a tough one. Sing "ZINGlooooooooooong" varying the styles of semicircles and cursive endings, and allow the Silent H to exist on the beginning of the next ZINGlooooooooooong. Recall that the Silent H comes from the top rather than from the side or the bottom. Have the performer(s) mimic the arc that the Silent H makes when entering the phrase with their hand. I would perform this in unison or on chords as you choose, but put 4, 5, 6 or more of them in a row so that we recognize that we can and will get the air and support we need regardless of the circumstances. It always works out and there is never anything to fear or fight through. Singing is always effortless.
7. Start a song, only working on General Dynamics (enter the phrase smoothly --- finish the phrase). Again, this doesn't preclude a dynamic plan for a song, but it does carry some weight in learning that music is not linear and is always ebbing and flowing.

This will be a very good start! And here's one more helpful exercise to use.

- Start introducing the bent-over-thumbs-outside-your-knees-breathing-from-the-back-exercises. Encourage them to take their time. This is a great time to let the worries of the world waft away and get ready to just enjoy the music that is about to occur (again, getting the mind in the right place). This is likely better done at the very beginning of the rehearsal than in other places, because it all starts with the breath. :)