

Rehearsal Techniques

Objective; To provide directors techniques to enhance the rehearsal experience and assist them in making improvements in the areas of tuning, vowel production and synchronization.

Resources

Judging Category Description Book - SAI

Directing a Chorus - BHS

Above the Pipe: How Never To Sing Flat Again - Jim Henry

Tuning and Tonal Center - Sharon Babb

The five elements of vocal production;

- Posture
- Breathing
- Phonation
- Resonation
- Articulation

Posture

Correct singing posture is an upright, slightly forward stance with the body weight primarily on the balls of the feet. The knees should be flexed, rib cage lifted (erect), shoulders back and relaxed, and the head aligned over the spinal column so that the column of air in the pharynx (the primary resonating chamber) is upright. A careless body stance will impede the actions of the breathing and vocal mechanisms.

Breathing

There is no shortcut to proper breathing, it is the foundation of good singing. A significant majority of the problems experienced by the average singer can be attributed to either faulty breathing or improper breath support. These problems can include the inability to sustain phrase endings, inconsistency of tone quality and lack of tone flow. Mastery of this one area will accomplish more than any other single factor in improving the caliber of vocal performance.

Phonation

Phonation is the action of the vocal cords in speaking and singing, functions which have been superimposed upon the vocal cords. Vocal problems arise when phonation is not coordinated with the release of air. A breathy tone lacks energy and power; a constricted tone cannot make full use of support from the breath and will not be properly resonated. A completely relaxed throat is a must for proper functioning of the vocal cords to produce clear, beautiful tones.

Resonation

Resonation is the amplification and reinforcement of the tones produced. Without resonance, tones would be thin and barely audible. A tone that is not resonated will not ring.

Articulation

Articulation is the process by which sounds are shaped. In speaking, articulation refers to the pronouncing of words with the emphasis on the consonants. In singing, vowels are sustained and consonants provide only split-second interruption. The articulators are the lips, teeth, tongue and jaw, when there is tension in any of these articulators then the sound is constricted and creates an inconsistent tone quality.

Vocal Exercises

Breathing

Shh breathing exercise - on two sets of eighth notes followed by a half note, do that for two measures and then a sustained SH on a whole note.

30 second exhale (release) on an "OO" vowel, on middle C.

Phonation

"hungah" -5-4-3-2-1 on a G above middle C – engages the soft palate, the "h" gives you the phonation start, the "ng" helps to raise the soft palate, and the "ah" helps you to get ring, focus and resonance.

Resonation

Bubbling - 1,2,3,4,5,5,4,3,2,1,1,3,5,8,5,3,1 Starting on Middle C

Bubbling - 1,3,2,4,3,5,4,2,1 - Starting on Middle C

"NG" vocalize on Eb - 1,2,1,7,1,down a 4th,1. Eb, F, Eb, D, Eb, Bb, Eb. Continue this exercise ascending by 1/2 steps. When you get to G or Ab, open on an AH and continue the exercise.

Articulation

Exercise - "THE LIPS THE TEETH, THE TONGUE AND THE JAW" - sung on a unison note or a chord. If singing it in unison, start on an Eb above middle C. Work for tone flow and connected sound.

Exercise - 4 part barbershop warmup using the words "WE COULD SING ALL NIGHT". Work for connected sound, matching vowels and turning diphthongs together.

Maintaining Pitch/Singing in tune

Tuning and maintaining pitch begin with the development of good vocal skills and accurate intervals.

Singing in tune is affected by the following;

1. Correct words and notes
2. Pitch maintains relationship to "DO"

3. Accurate Intervals

4. Vowel production

Exercises

- Singing a scale – 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1
 - Sing 2, 3, 6, 7 on the high side.
- 1,1,2,1,1,2,3,2,1,1,2,3,4,3,2,1,1,2,3,4,5,4,3,2,1,1,2,3,4,5,6,5,4,3,2,1,1,2,3,4,5,6,7,6,5,4,3,2,1,1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,7,6,5,4,3,2,1. 8,8,7,8,8,7,6,7,8, etc.
 - 1 is not a destination, it is part of the journey. Things to focus on when singing this exercise: Maintaining pitch, singing with lift, sneak breathing, singing tall intervals.
 - THIS EXERCISE IS ALSO GOOD FOR DEVELOPING GOOD SNEAK BREATHING.
- 1,3,5,8,5,3,1 – 1, 4, 6, 8, 6, 4, 1 – 2, 4, 5, 7, 5, 4, 2, - 1, 3, 5, 8 5, 3, 1 – 8, 5, 3, 1, 3, 5, 8 – 8, 6, 4, 1, 4, 6, 8 – 7, 5, 4, 2, 4, 5, 7 – 8, 5, 3, 1, 3, 5, 8.
 - Make sure octaves are locked and intervals are sung on the high side. This is a great exercise to build chords – Bs 1, Br 3, Ls 5, Ts 8, - Bs 1, Br 4, Ls 6, Ts 8, - Bs 2, Br 4, Ls 5, Ts 7, Bs 1, Br 3, Ls 5, Ts 8 –
- 1, 2, 1, 3, 1, 4, 1, 5, 1, 6, 1, 7, 1, 8, - 8, 7, 8, 6, 8, 5, 8, 4, 8, 3, 8, 2, 8, 1
 - Have half of the chorus sing 1 and the other half sing 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. Then that half of the chorus sing 8, and the other half sing 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, . Make sure octaves are locked and which ever side is singing 1 or 8 they need to maintain the tonal center – “DO”
- 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, -1, 5, 4, 5, 3, 5, 2, 5, 1, 5, 4, 5, 3, 2, 1 – 1, 5, 4, 5, 3,5 2, 5, 1, 5, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
 - Clap on 1, then clap on 5. 1 is on the beat and 5 is off the beat. Then clap by row.

Interval singing can be very challenging, but it is crucial in the development of ear training and tuning.

Vowel production

A lack of a uniform approach to vowel sounds can affect the development of a blended sound. To produce matched vowel sounds, it is important that the jaw be relaxed and free, the throat relaxed and open and tones projected with the energy provided by a foundation of good breath support.

Vowels must be resonant in order to ring. All singers must understand where each vowel is produced – AH, EH, EE, OH, OO

we, sit, let, late, hand, high, sun, moon, far (heart), look, go, now, urge, you, joy.

Diphthongs – 2 vowel sounds, the diphthong must be turned together by all singers.

High – AH-EE,

Late – EH-EE, Go – OH-OO, Now – AH-OO, Joy – AW-EE. R is a vowel.

Vowel Production

- Relaxed Jaw
- Upper teeth showing
- Relaxed lips
- Sing inside the goal posts

Vocal Exercise

16 Vowel Exercise - Starting in the F

- Proceed through all 16 vowels in order.
- Ascend by 1/2 steps before going to the next vowel.
- Note what each singer needs to do to produce the correct vowel, focus, resonance and ring to match the other's voices (blend).
- Keep the target vowel as true as you sing through the range.

Synchronization

Synchronization is a necessary element of harmony accuracy. A lack of synchronization effects unit sound because it can mar a blended musical unit, prevent instantly matched vowels and distort a solid barbershop sound.

Synchronization goes hand in hand with attacks and releases. This not only means at the beginning and end of musical phrases, but each syllable also involves an attack and release. Internal synchronization often refers to the vertical aligning that must exist within words and within phrases if the unity of the presentation is to be maintained.

Skills that will help synchronization

1. Uniform vowel production
2. Matched vowels
3. Turning diphthongs together
4. Breathing in tempo
5. Effective sneak breathing

Exercises to achieve synchronization

- 1.1, 1, 2, 1, 1, 2, 3, 2, 1 etc.
2. My country tis of thee.

16 Vowel exercise

Proceed through all 16 vowels in order.

Move up or down a half pitch before going to the next vowel.

Note what each singer needs to do to produce the correct vowel, focus, resonance and ring to match the other's voices [blend].

Keep the target vowel true as you sing through the range.

We Sit Late Men, Have Hind Heart Sun, Mute Moon Full Urge, Long Go Now Joy

The first system of musical notation consists of two staves (treble and bass clef) with a grand staff bracket on the left. The melody is written in the treble clef and the accompaniment in the bass clef. The lyrics 'we we we' are placed below the notes. The first two 'we's are on a single note, and the third 'we' is on a note that rises to a higher pitch.

The second system of musical notation consists of two staves. The melody is written in the treble clef and the accompaniment in the bass clef. The lyrics 'we' are placed below the notes. The melody consists of a series of notes that rise in pitch, with a horizontal line indicating a sustained note.

The third system of musical notation consists of two staves. The melody is written in the treble clef and the accompaniment in the bass clef. The lyrics 'we' are placed below the notes. The melody consists of a series of notes that rise in pitch, with a horizontal line indicating a sustained note.

The fourth system of musical notation consists of two staves. The melody is written in the treble clef and the accompaniment in the bass clef. The lyrics 'we we we we we' are placed below the notes. The first four 'we's are on a single note, and the fifth 'we' is on a note that rises to a higher pitch.

GOALS TO ACCOMPLISH DURING WARMUPS (VOCALISES)

1. Posture
2. Breath management
3. Physical energy
4. Focus
5. Resonators open
6. Relaxed jaw and throat
7. Vowel production
8. Ear training
9. Vocal freedom
10. Vocal breaks
11. Tuning
12. Interval training
13. Singing smoothly
14. Building range
15. Dynamics