

Class Title: Musical Techniques for Small Choruses

Objectives: To share successful teaching tools for choruses of 30 and under.

To actively engage the class participants while using these techniques to teach the demo chorus.

To build musical skills in leaders of small choruses.

1. Universal singing goals for all voices
 - a. Intelligibility: Words are easy to understand and natural, not effected
 - b. Pure intonation: Follow Pythagorean Tuning
 - c. Dynamic variety: Use appropriate abdominal muscles and keep the same open vocal quality at all dynamic levels
 - d. Timbre variety: Keep voice aligned in all ranges but able to change the vocal tone color to enhance music when needed
 - e. Vibrato control: Produce and control a vibrato
 - f. Range extension: Sing over two octave range
 - g. Free and easy: Use vocal/physical energy without looking/sounding like you are working hard.
2. Physiology of the vocal instrument
 - a. Generator: Respiratory system – Body alignment and breathing
 - b. Vibrator: Vocal folds – breathing and larynx coordination
 1. Vocal onsets – hard, breathy, and soft
 - c. Resonating area: Vocal tract (laryngo-pharynx, oro-pharynx, naso-pharynx; control the vocal instrument without tension)
 - d. Singer's Formant – the very best place to sing!
3. The member's part in building a chorus
 - a. Warm-up to warm-up
 - b. Stamina building – have a personal program
 - c. Develop, maintain and carry a tall body alignment/raised sternum
 - d. Breathe to sing – make breathing correctly a priority
 - e. Don't over-sing; no "save the chorus" voices
 - f. Relax when articulating; no tight, prune lips; show a little teeth.
 - g. Be prepared for each rehearsal; take personal responsibility for learning music
 - h. Avoid talking on the risers; show respect for others
 - i. Have a daily voice building routine; make a personal commitment

- j. Take private lessons or work in sectionals/smaller groups; develop personal vocal goals
- 4. Tools for good singing
 - a. Breathing exercises
 - b. Bubble/hum exercises for masque/forward placement identification
 - c. Fog exercises for soft palate lift and muscle building
 - d. Finger on larynx for relaxed tongue/jaw while singing (especially leaps, octaves)
 - e. "Wee, wee, wee" exercise for solidifying ring in the tone, matching vowels, tuning, phrase extension, etc. (see attached for vocalise)
- 5. Rehearsal Techniques for accurate learning
 - a. Everyone learns and sings the lead
 - b. Everyone learns the breathing places and dynamics while singing lead
 - c. Other three parts sing their part as a solo, then duet it with the lead for synchronization and agreement on dynamics, vowel match, tuning, and articulation (all words are not created equal)
 - d. All parts duet with the other three parts until everyone has sung with everyone
 - e. While dueting, one of the other parts sustains the keynote – human pitch pipe technique
 - f. While dueting, one of the other parts does the patsch/clap to keep tempo (this is only on uptunes) – human metronome technique
 - g. Use four parts only when all else is in place
- 6. Creative ways to help the chorus retain and improve skills that have been taught
 - a. Sing in a circle
 - b. Sing in a square, one part on each side
 - c. Sing in double quartets or in quartets
 - d. Circle sectionals
 - e. Duet/trio sectionals

Fred Waring - Tone Syllables

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RAISE YOUR SCORES - WARM-UP

Start in the key of Eb and go up to key of Ab by 1/2 steps

The first exercise consists of a piano accompaniment and a vocal line. The piano part is in Eb major and features a simple harmonic accompaniment. The vocal line is in the treble clef and contains three notes, each with a 'we' syllable written below it. Each note has a small arch above it, indicating a sustained vowel sound.

Sing the word three times; match the vowel.

The second exercise features a piano accompaniment and a vocal line. The piano part provides a harmonic accompaniment. The vocal line starts with a 'we' syllable and then descends through a scale of notes. The notes are connected by slurs, and the syllable 'we' is written under the first note.

Hold the target vowel as you sing down the scale. Turn endings together.

The third exercise consists of a piano accompaniment and a vocal line. The piano part provides a harmonic accompaniment. The vocal line starts with a 'we' syllable and then moves through various intervals between notes. The notes are connected by slurs, and the syllable 'we' is written under the first note.

Hold the target vowel as you sing the intervals and turn endings together.

The fourth exercise consists of a piano accompaniment and a vocal line. The piano part provides a harmonic accompaniment. The vocal line contains five notes, each with a 'we' syllable written below it. Each note has a small arch above it, indicating a sustained vowel sound.

Sing the word each time you change notes (chords).

Use Fred Waring Tone Syllables.

Work on vowel match, breath support/management, wall of sound, placement match, dynamics.