



St. Catherine University

From the Selected Works of Patricia Connors, DMA

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Choral Warm-ups 2020.docx

Patricia Connors, *St. Catherine University*



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Choral Warm-ups
Twin Cities Women's Chorus
October 14, 2020

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I. Purpose(s)

- Prepare the musculature (“warm” up, “stretch”)
- Gather focus
- Build the sound
- Further the singers’ understanding of the physiology
- Foster musicianship
- Prepare for specific challenges of the repertoire

II. Examples – let’s do some (a whole bunch, as a matter of fact!)

A. Physical: stretch, swing through, lunges, “shake down,” body circles, “twist”

B. Vocal register (and ‘warming’ – getting the voice moving):

- “Hi there; how are you?”
- Sirens – high and low
- “Yoo hoo”
- Pitched gliss: 1 ---5 --- 1 ---- 8 ---- 1
 “i - e - i”

(numbers = pitches of major scale; letters – IPA)

C. Breath/onset:

- SH, then sh – o (with hand motions)
- Hi : 5 --- 1’ 5’ 1 (with hand motions)
- Ha-ha-ha, Ho-ho-ho, Ha-ha-ha (tonic pitch, supported by I-IV-I triads)
- Hu –hu, ho-ho, etc. on 5-5, 4-4, 3-3, 2-2, 1-1
- Vi – va, expanding: 1—5—1—5—1 2 3 4 5 4 3 2 1
 Vi va vi va vi-----va-----vi (on one breath)
- Yo – ho, 1’8 5 3 1 – throw a ball

D. Always vowels – think “roof, floor, walls” (demo with hands)
- handy images: “morning-glory” lips (Madeline Marshall), paper bag

- Bi (5 4 3 2 1) – smile at neighbor
- Zi ze za zo zu (5 4 3 2 1)

E. Freedom/resonance/range:

- Bum (1- 321) – quick
- Hi-ye-ya (5, 5, 54321) – body and hand movements
- Yum – yum – yo yo yo (“yum”=staccato, “yo’s” are slurred)
- Va – vo – va (1358531) – small circle, deep oval with hand (along with knee bend), “depth and height” for upper range
- Ho – u-woh, 8 5 3 1, 5 8 5 3 1 – “dig” down with hands/knees
- Staccato/legato “la,” 1 3 2 4 3 5 4 6 5 3 4 2 1 (twice at same pitch level)
- Hu – o – a (or Hi – e – a), 5 3 4 2 1 with hand motions, eventually add gliss back up to 5 and back to 1, with “paint brush”

F. Articulation:

- “ih” 8 – 5 3 1 – 3 5 8 – 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 (“jiggly,” add other vowels)
- ssss / “ih” 5435 4324 3’1’1 (or other pattern/ other vowels)
[“spooky hoo’s”]
- “ih” 1 ‘ 1212121 (I – IV – V chords)

G. Tuning/developing the ear

- sustained u-o-a, listen for overtone (a la Robert Shaw)
- unison/1/2 and whole steps
- chain of suspensions
- moving 6/4 chords. Begin with T on 8, A on 3, B & S on 5. A moves down ½ step (minor), then T moves down ½ step (augmented), others move down together ½ step (back to major). Can play around with mj/minor and balance as well.
- Quartal chords – explore the P4’s and the Mj 2nds
- Build “jazz” chords with solfege