

— SESSION 1 —



SITTING PRACTICE

Try sitting firmly with your feet flat on the ground and stretch tall. Notice the strain on the lower back? Now sit back against the chair. It feels comfortable for a few moments, but do you feel the muscles around the waist collapse? Instead, sit with your centre of gravity above the toes (tuck your feet in, rest on your toes and keep your back straight). You can also sit forward with your bottom away from the back of the chair and feet flat on the floor. Make sure you can feel your thighs involved in supporting your weight.



STANDING UP

An inefficient way to stand up is by pushing yourself upwards, leaning on a hand. Can you feel the strain in your back? Instead, go back to sitting with your weight on your toes, and push yourself gently upwards by straightening the legs (thigh power!). Keep your back straight, but not tense. Practise this standing movement several times.



WHOLESOME BREATHING

Breathe naturally and lightly. Put one hand on your lower abdomen with the thumb on your navel and feel where the air goes (it may help to lie on your back). Enjoy the sensation of air apparently 'filling' your back. Gradually increase the strength of your breathing, feeling the increased expansion in your lower back. Blow your breath out with lips slightly forward, producing a constant sound.



STARTING A SOUND

Be a monkey: flex your knees, relax the shoulders, swing your arms and relax the jaw (with lips open and slightly rounded). Enjoy this posture. Make gentle 'cooing' sounds on any vowel at varying pitches, keeping them short. Create a little monkey poem of *oo* and *ah* sounds, keeping the rhythm free. Repeat this to the vowel *o* (as in *dog*, with the lips slightly rounded).



THE BEST MEDICINE



Start and release each note cleanly with even breath support. Repeat each bar/measure several times. Start at a slow tempo, then try a little faster. Repeat the exercise with different vowels, then at different pitches (for example: G, A, Bb, C and back down again).



OVER THE RAINBOW

Make the word *wow* into an exciting sound and throw it overarm in a rainbow shape. Then make a sound like a siren up and down from the top of your range (using the head voice) to *yeeaa!*



TONGUE TWISTING

Say quickly:

The tip of the tongue if it slips will eclipse both the lips as it flips.

Now sing it to this tune:



— SESSION 10 —



SPINDLE ARMS

Extend your arms to the sides with your fingers held out straight, and begin to rotate them forwards. Gradually increase the size of the circle, before decreasing again. Feel the control in the upper arms. Repeat, rotating the arms backwards.



LET IT HAPPEN

Breathe in and then slowly expel as much air as you can (it will be less than half the content of the lungs, honest!). When you have deflated as far as you can, let the pressure go. The lungs will fill of their own accord. Expel the air again, hold your breath and release. Rejoice as your whole breathing apparatus expands to let the air back in. Just let it happen!



SILENCE IN COURT

Make long sounds on *sh*, and revise breath support (see **Tips and terms**, page 40). Whisper words, connecting the vowel to the *sh*; as in *shoo*, *show*, *shore* and *shy*. Make them long and even. In a choir, whisper this to your neighbour on each side then pass it along, filling the room with sound.



INTERVAL DRINKS

Slide smoothly up and down intervals of a fifth. Check that the sound is supported and the tone even. Repeat the warm-up to *nn* and *ng*.



AFRICAN RHYTHMS

Soloists, try these warm-ups one at a time. Choristers, get into groups and try all three at once. Vary the pitch, for example: group 1, high; 2, middle of the range; 3, low. Then change round.



— SESSION 36 —



HANDBAGGING

Swing your arms lightly, as if they have no power—only their weight. Then repeat with an imaginary handbag in each hand.



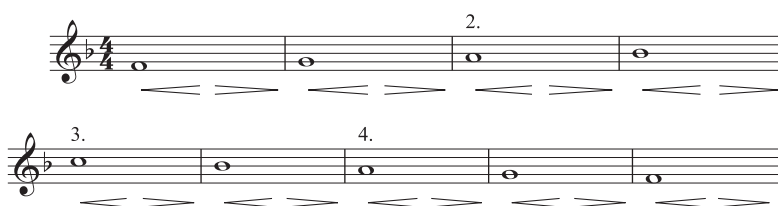
VIBRATO GAME

- ① Sing alternate notes, as close to each other in pitch as you can (less than a semitone).
- ② Sing a single mordent, then hold the note on without vibrato.
- ③ Now sing a double mordent.
- ④ Now sing a short trill, followed by a long note without vibrato.
- ⑤ Now sing a long trill.



MESSA DI VOCE

Revisit **Volume control** (page 36), altering the colour as well as the volume. Now sing the following, first with a hum, then with *oo*, *aw*, *ah*, *eh* and *ee*.



ACTION

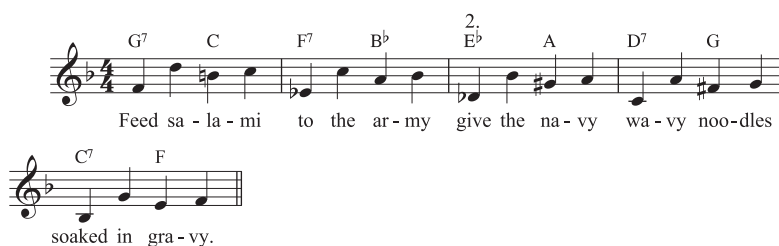
Be a string player. Get louder by:

- Increasing the bow weight (support).
- Increasing the bow speed (lift of the sound).
- Increasing the vibrato.



FORCE FOOD

Sing this exercise through slowly to tune each interval. Choristers can then try it in a two-part canon, with the first part finally pausing on the last note until part 2 catches up.



CHORD PROGRESS

Add more chords to your harmonic progression, for example: I–IV–V–VI–II. The conductor can control the progression through shorthand signals. Add suspensions by delaying the movement of one of the parts.



REACTIVATE

Now do something very energetic to reactivate the adrenalin! Jog on the spot, or enjoy some animal calls.