

Mary Saunders-Barton

Bel Canto/Can Belto

What About The Boys?

Objective #1: Reinforcing The Core Voice (Below F4)

(Mode 1, Thyroaretnoid, Chest)

Speak: Calling exercises to determine range: young men will normally top out at the register transition between Eb4 and G4

- "Hey!"
- "Wow!"
- "No Way!"

Then Sing:

Pitch Range: G2 -- F4

Musical notation for the exercise "Nee ah, nee ah, nee ah". It is written on a single staff in treble clef with a 6/8 time signature. The notes are: quarter note G2, quarter note A2, quarter note B2, quarter note C3, quarter note D3, quarter note E3, quarter note F3, quarter note G3, quarter note A3, quarter note B3, quarter note C4, quarter note D4, quarter note E4, quarter note F4, quarter note G4, quarter note F4, quarter note E4, quarter note D4, quarter note C4, quarter note B3, quarter note A3, quarter note G3, quarter note F3, quarter note E3, quarter note D3, quarter note C3, quarter note B2, quarter note A2, quarter note G2. The lyrics "Nee ah, nee ah, nee ah" are written below the first three notes.

Onsets -- try first with "h" and then without

Musical notation for the exercise "Hah hah hah hah". It is written on a single staff in treble clef with a common time signature. The notes are: quarter note G2, quarter note A2, quarter note B2, quarter note C3, quarter note D3, quarter note E3, quarter note F3, quarter note G3, quarter note A3, quarter note B3, quarter note C4, quarter note D4, quarter note E4, quarter note F4, quarter note G4, quarter note F4, quarter note E4, quarter note D4, quarter note C4, quarter note B3, quarter note A3, quarter note G3, quarter note F3, quarter note E3, quarter note D3, quarter note C3, quarter note B2, quarter note A2, quarter note G2. The lyrics "Hah hah hah hah" are written below the first four notes.

Nasalising/ denasalising -- soft palate awareness (pronounce hard-g)

Musical notation for the exercise "Hung - ah ng". It is written on a single staff in treble clef with a common time signature. The notes are: quarter note G2, quarter note A2, quarter note B2, quarter note C3, quarter note D3, quarter note E3, quarter note F3, quarter note G3, quarter note A3, quarter note B3, quarter note C4, quarter note D4, quarter note E4, quarter note F4, quarter note G4, quarter note F4, quarter note E4, quarter note D4, quarter note C4, quarter note B3, quarter note A3, quarter note G3, quarter note F3, quarter note E3, quarter note D3, quarter note C3, quarter note B2, quarter note A2, quarter note G2. The lyrics "Hung - ah ng" are written below the first three notes.

Coordinating closed and open vowels

Musical notation for the exercise "Ee ah ee ah". It is written on a single staff in treble clef with a common time signature. The notes are: quarter note G2, quarter note A2, quarter note B2, quarter note C3, quarter note D3, quarter note E3, quarter note F3, quarter note G3, quarter note A3, quarter note B3, quarter note C4, quarter note D4, quarter note E4, quarter note F4, quarter note G4, quarter note F4, quarter note E4, quarter note D4, quarter note C4, quarter note B3, quarter note A3, quarter note G3, quarter note F3, quarter note E3, quarter note D3, quarter note C3, quarter note B2, quarter note A2, quarter note G2. The lyrics "Ee ah ee ah" are written below the first four notes.

Legato -- very sustained

Musical notation for the exercise "Eh Ah". It is written on a single staff in treble clef with a common time signature. The notes are: quarter note G2, quarter note A2, quarter note B2, quarter note C3, quarter note D3, quarter note E3, quarter note F3, quarter note G3, quarter note A3, quarter note B3, quarter note C4, quarter note D4, quarter note E4, quarter note F4, quarter note G4, quarter note F4, quarter note E4, quarter note D4, quarter note C4, quarter note B3, quarter note A3, quarter note G3, quarter note F3, quarter note E3, quarter note D3, quarter note C3, quarter note B2, quarter note A2, quarter note G2. The lyrics "Eh Ah" are written below the first two notes.

Objective #2: The "Hoot" Space -- Finding Falsetto

(Mode 2, Cricothyroid)

Isolate in Speech:

- "Hoo hoo!" (owl)
- "Woo hoo!" (team cheer)
- "Whoop!"
- "Hello boys & girls!" (Mickey Mouse)

Then Sing:

Pitch Range: C3 -- E5

Staccato

Hoo! Hoo! Hoo! Hoo! Hoo! Hoo! Hoo! Hoo! Hoo!

Legato

Oo Oo Oo Oo

Try to maintain even falsetto (Mode 2) all the way down

Oo Oo Oo

Falsetto Mix/ Reinforced Falsetto (Mode 2/ Cricothyroid Dominant Mix)

Heard in the musical "Jersey Boys"/ The Four Seasons

May-oh may-oh may-oh may-oh my Ne-ver ne-ver ne-ver ne-ver no!

May-oh may-oh may-oh may-oh Hoo! Ne-ver ne-ver ne-ver ne-ver no!

Objective #3: Integrating Falsetto & Chest

(Cricothyroid/Mode 2 and Thyroaretnoid/Mode 1)

Speak: "Yah - hoo! Yoo - hah!"
chest *chest*
falsetto *falsetto*

Then sing:

chest falsetto chest
 Ya - hoo yah! Ya - hoo yah! Ya - hoo yah!

falsetto chest falsetto
 Hoo - ya - hoo Hoo - ya - hoo Hoo - ya - hoo

falsetto falsetto chest
 Oo oo yah Oo oo yah Oo oo yah

Crescendo/decrescendo for dynamic control

oooAHHooo eeeEHHooo aaaAAAahh ehhAHHehh

Objective #4: The Speech (or "Chest") Mix

Traversing the passaggio (F4 -- Bb5)

(Thyroaretnoid/Mode 1 Dominant on closed vowels and vowel phrases)

Speak: F4 -- Bb5

"Oh *no* you don't!"

"I *yearn* for you!"

"How *dare* you!"

"Where *were* you?"

"*Wait* for me!"

"*Where* were you?"

"Did you *see* that?"

"Can you *hear* that?"

"Where are you *going*?"

- **Emphasizing closed vowel**

- **Clear, dramatic intention!**

- **Eke out more range *gradually***

These phrases will feel pinched in the beginning and difficult to speak with ease.

We are training the speaking and singing range at the same time.

Most boys will instinctively open or yell all sounds above the passaggio.

Then Sing:

Oh no you don't! Oh no you don't! How dare you! How dare you!
I yearn for you! I yearn for you! Where were you? Where were you?

Wait for me Where were you? Wait for me Where were you?
Did you see ___ that? Did you see ___ that?

Did ___ you see that! Can ___ you hear that!
May oh may I ___

Closed vowels -- maintain legato speaking quality

Nee oo nee oo nee oo _____ Ee _____ oo _____

Diphthongs -- sing through to point of release with consistent vibrato

Ah oo ee ay ah _____ Where are you go - ing?

Objective #5: Introducing the Belt

The belt is an optional color on open vowels above F4, once a mixed quality is established

Speak: F4 -- Bb5

"Hey!"

"Wow!"

"Taxi!"

"Why not?"

"No way!"

"Oh *no* you don't!"

"How *dare* you!"

"Oh *yes* we can!"

"I *yearn* for you!"

- Be sure to accentuate the primary open vowel of the call in these phrases, not the diphthong

- Speak with intensity and purpose!

- Make up some of your own!

Speak the phrase, then sing:

(Belt) (Belt)

Hey! _____ Hey! _____ Ta - xi! not? way! Ta - xi! not? way!

Wow! _____ Wow! _____ Why No way! Why No way!

(Belt)

Oh no you don't! Oh no you don't!

(Belt) (Belt)

How dare you! How dare you! Oh yes we can! Oh yes we can!

Nasalisation for focus

Damn Cat! Damn Cat! Mwanh mwanh mwanh mwanh mwanh

Back and Forths:

Practice these phrases alternating between closed and open vowels on the italicized words

Oh *no* you don't! Oh *no* you don't! How *dare* you! How *dare* you!

I *yearn* for you! I *yearn* for you! Where*were* you? Where*were* you?

Objective #6: Dynamic Control

Integrating falsetto, speech mix and belt
Crescendo/Decrescendo

Sing: F4 -- Bb5

Oo you ah you oo

Falsetto *Speech Mix* *Belt* *Speech Mix* *Falsetto*
(mode 2/CT) (mode 1 dom./TA) (mode 1 dom.) (mode 1 dom./TA) (mode 2/CT)

Some Notes on these Exercises

First Things First

These exercises are intended to facilitate a balanced instrument with easy access to a full expressive range in speaking and singing. The first order of business for young male singers is to identify the “core” of the voice and to work gradually up and down from there. Think of a tree with trunk, roots and branches.

- The exercises are speech-based.
The speaking voice is a parallel function in musical theatre singing.
Students should be able to identify the pitch of a spoken tone and move easily back and forth from singing to speaking.
- The exercises are resonance- based, designed to encourage the diverse interactions of the vocal folds and the flexible vocal tract .

Objective 1 Assess the speaking voice of a new young singer and introduce the concept of balance in the modal range. You will probably have plenty of exercises of your own to develop this part of the male voice. It is essential introductory work for all voice types.

Objective 2 Introduce falsetto. Falsetto function is a critical component of male training, key to mixing and an important quality in contemporary styles. I suggest you introduce it early on.

Objective 3 Integrating falsetto and chest. This should be fun and playful. Let them enjoy isolating both qualities. Cracking is expected!

Objective 4 The speech mix. High passaggio speaking is challenging and should also feel playful. The atmosphere you create for this work will determine its success. Help them line up all the vowels to match the closed resonance of “oo” and “ee.” Always chest dominant. No belting yet.

Objective 5 Last but not least. The belt is a floated call (F sharp to B flat). The sound pops forward on open vowels (“ah” “eh” “uh” “oh”) A belt should feel effortless but powerful. Remind them to raise the soft palate on inhalation. Make up your own calling exercises!

Objective 6 Crescendo/decrescendo. Integrate functions for dynamic control.