Mary Saunders-Barton

Bel Canto/Can Belto

What About The Boys?

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

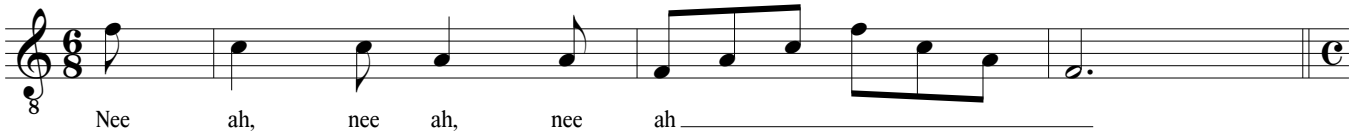
(Mode 1, Thyroaretynoid, Chest)

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

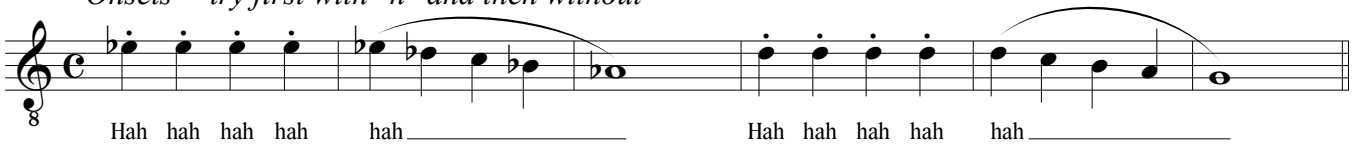
- "Hey!"
- "Wow!"
- "No Way!"

Then Sing:

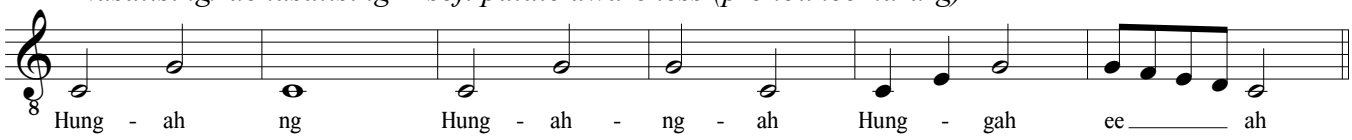
Pitch Range: G2 -- F4



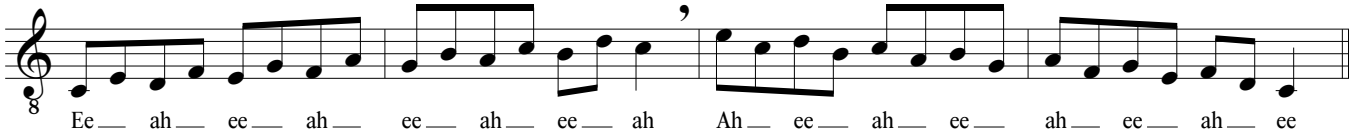
Onsets -- try first with "h" and then without



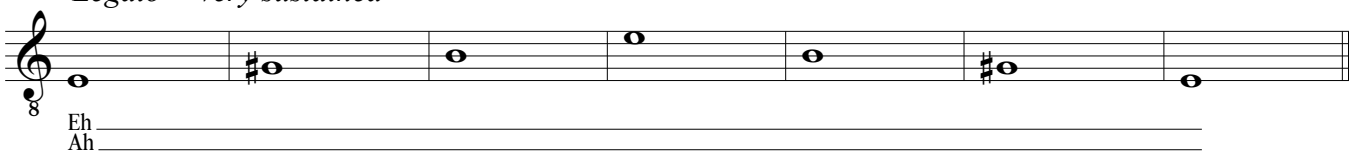
Nasalising/ denasalising -- soft palate awareness (pronounce hard-g)



Coordinating closed and open vowels



Legato -- very sustained



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

(Mode 2, Cricothyroid)

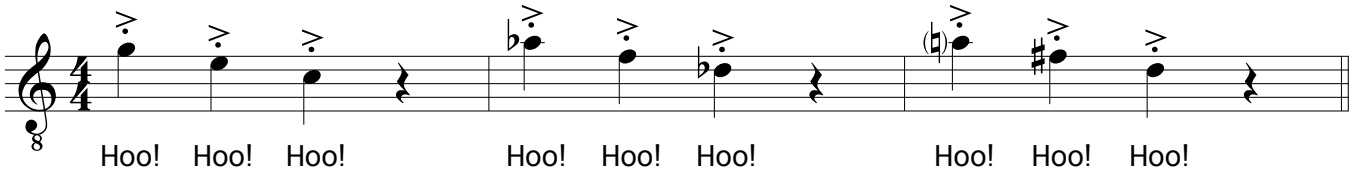
Isolate in Speech:

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

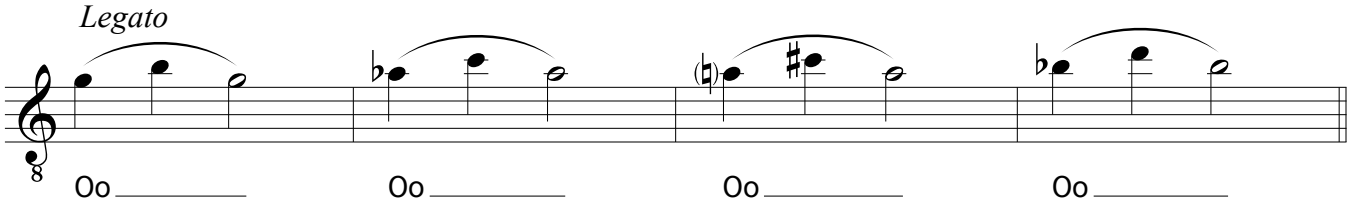
Then Sing:

Pitch Range: C3 -- E5

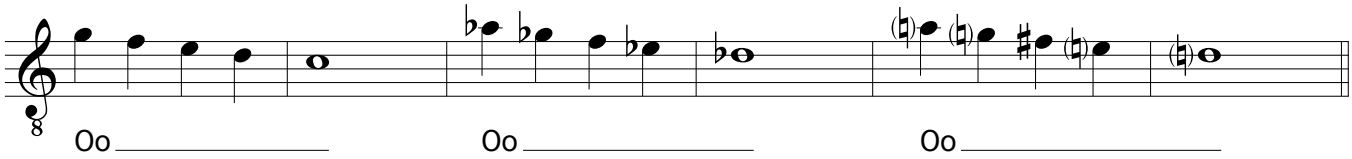
Staccato



Legato

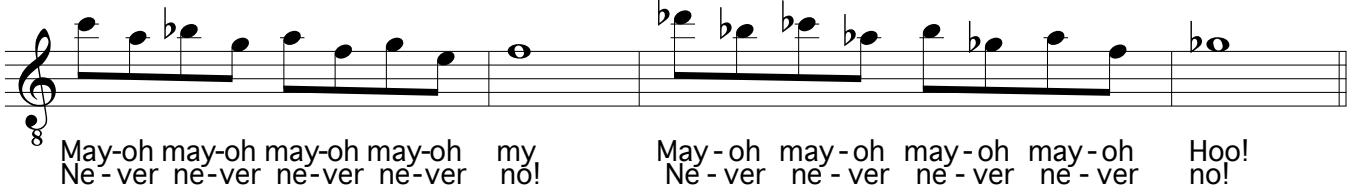


Try to maintain even falsetto (Mode 2) all the way down



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

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



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Objective #3: Integrating Falsetto & Chest

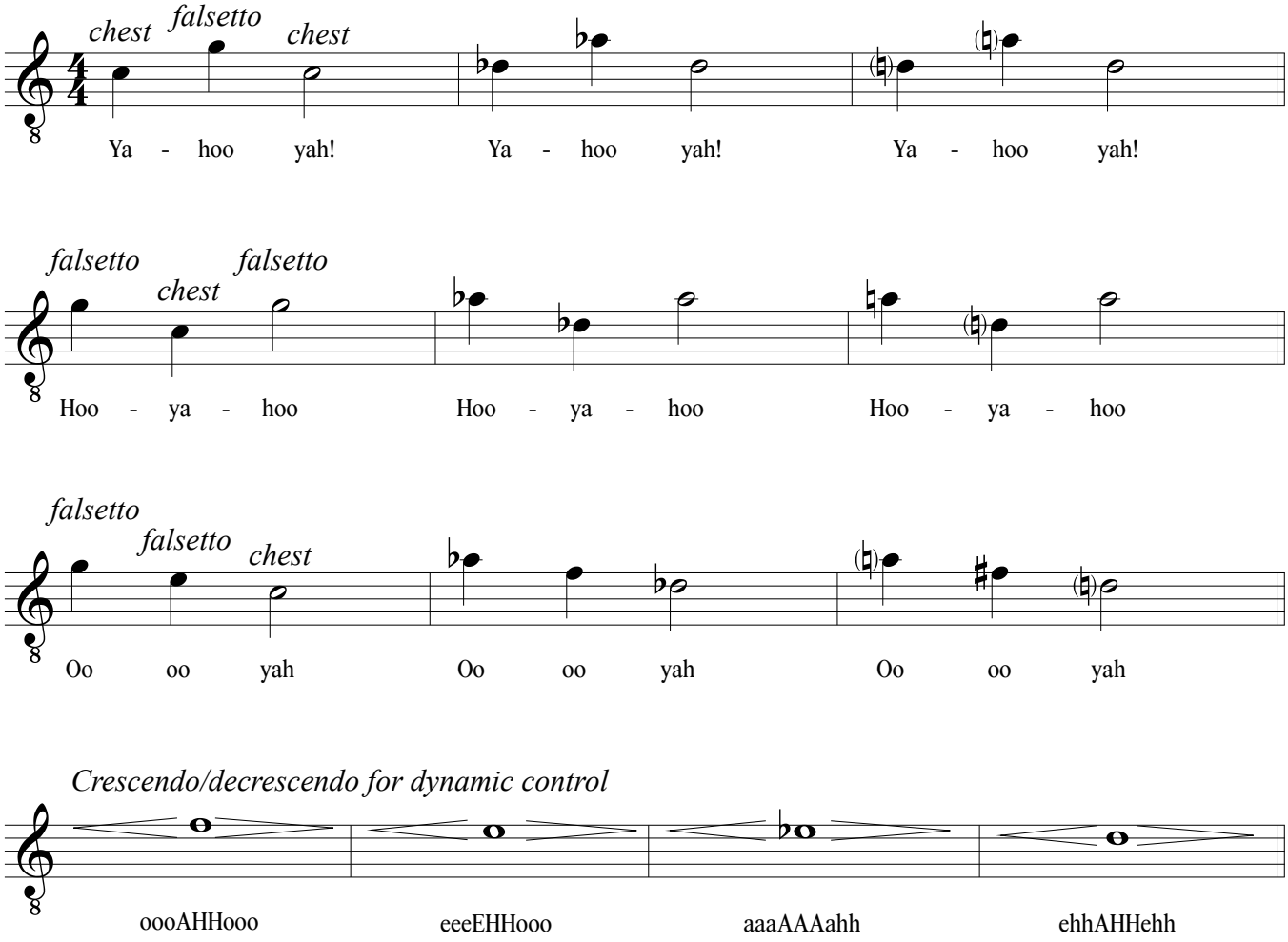
(Cricothyroid/Mode 2 and Thyroaretynoid/Mode 1)

falsetto *falsetto*

Speak: "Yah - hoo! Yoo - hah!"

chest *chest*

Then sing:



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

Traversing the passaggio (F4 -- Bb5)

(Thyroaretynoid/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*?"

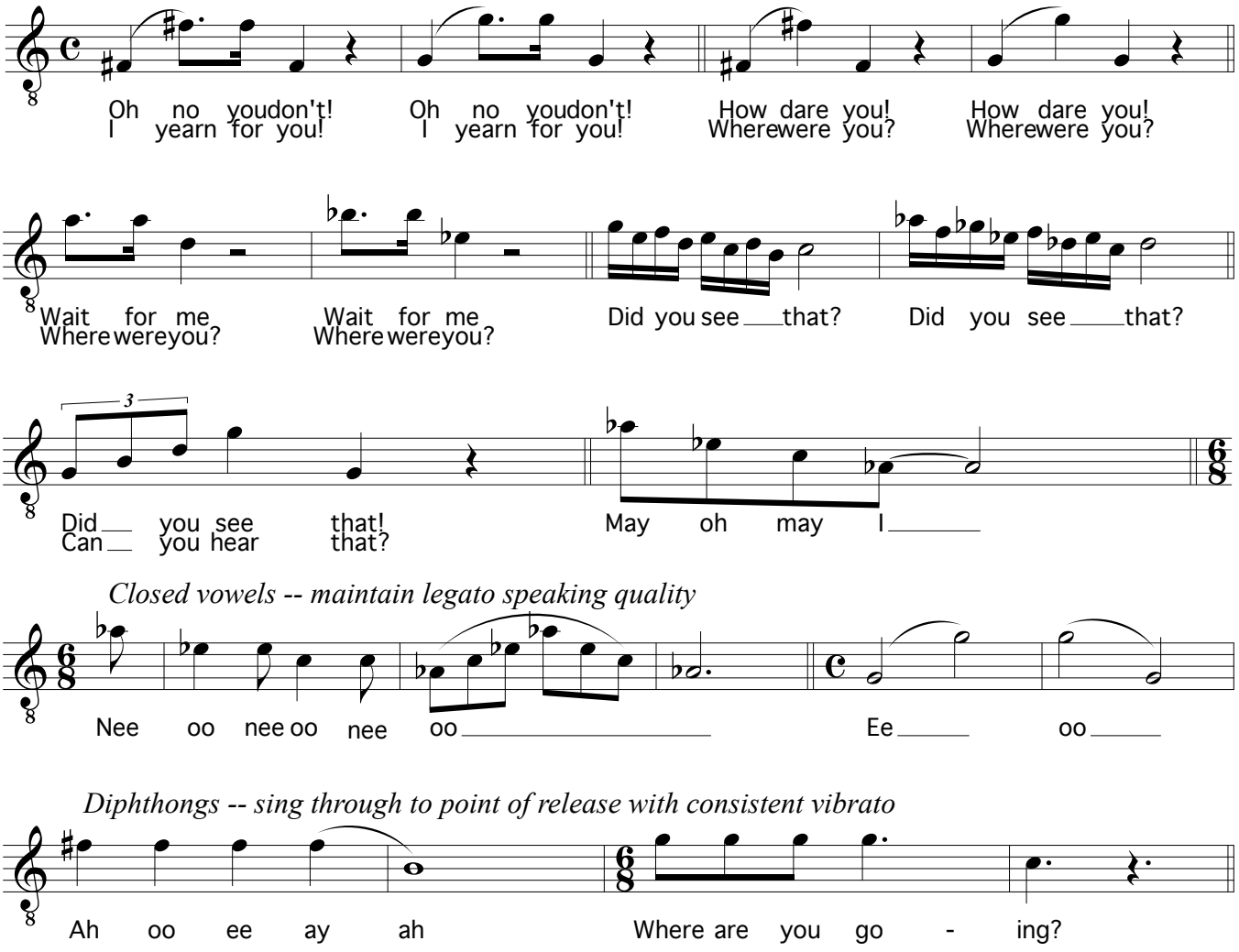
- Emphasizing closed vowel

- 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:



Closed vowels -- maintain legato speaking quality

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

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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

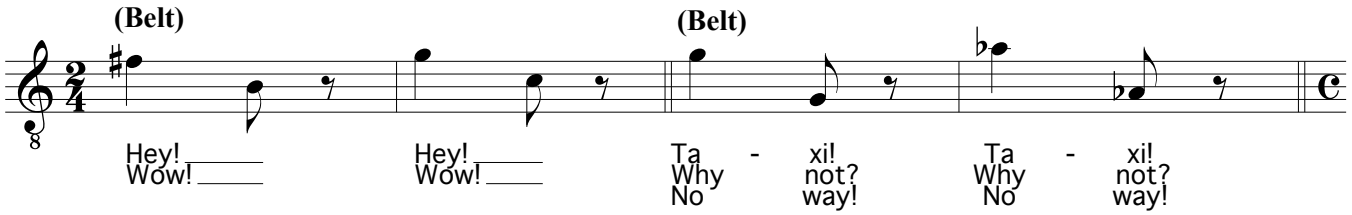
"Hey!"
"Wow!"
"*Ta*xi!"
"*Why* not?"
"No way!"
"Oh *no* you don't!"
"How *dare* you!"
"Oh *yes* we can!"
"I *yearn* for you!"

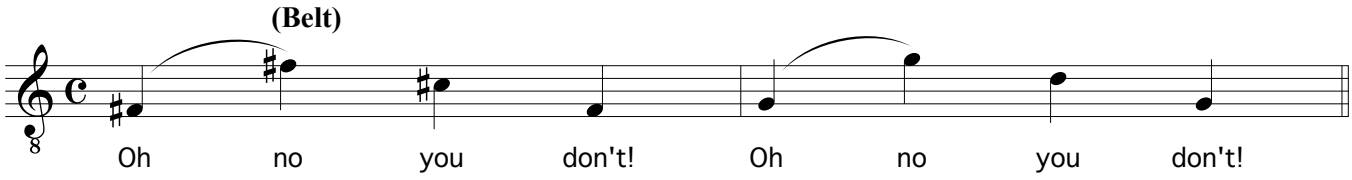
- Be sure to accentuate the primary open vowel of the call in these phrases, not the diphthong

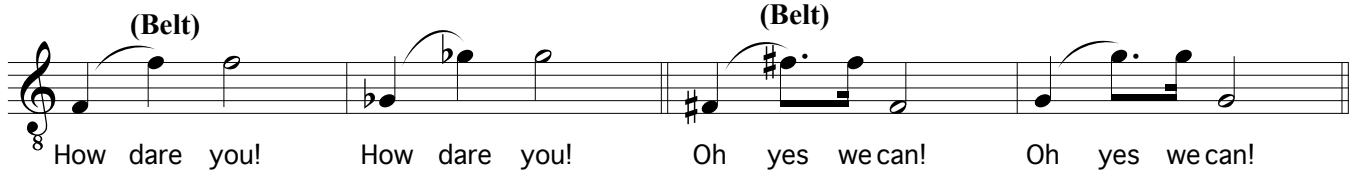
- Speak with intensity and purpose!

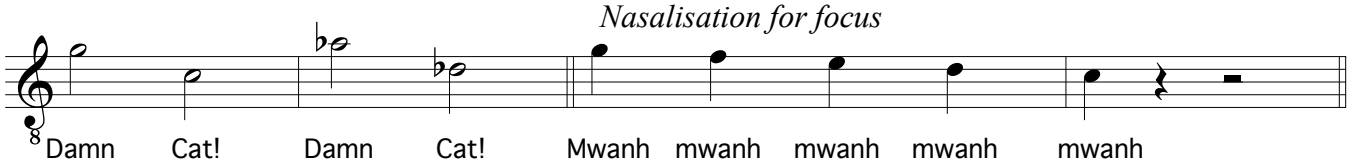
- Make up some of your own!

Speak the phrase, then sing:

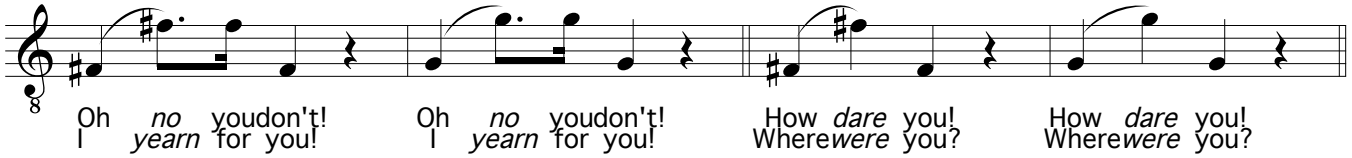








***Back and Forths**:*
Practice these phrases alternating between closed and open vowels on the italicized words



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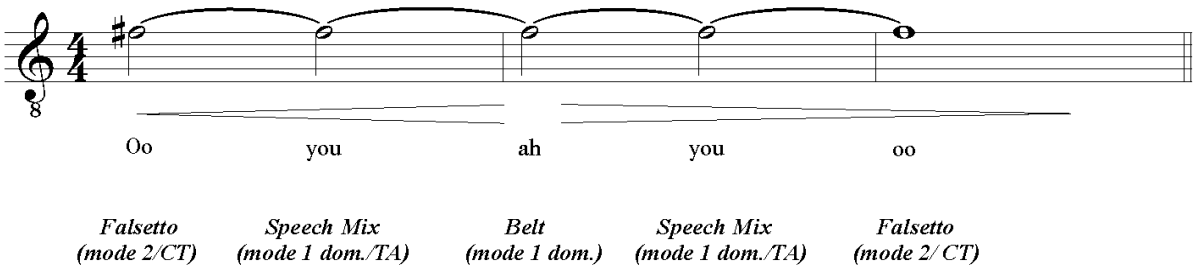
Objective #6: Dynamic Control

Integrating falsetto, speech mix and belt

Crescendo/Decrescendo

Sing: F4 -- Bb5



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 .

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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.

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