



*The Kikuchi Music Institute Library*

**KIKUCHI**  
**VOCAL METHOD**  
**LESSON**  
**(Level 1)**

By Lee W. Kikuchi

The ***Kikuchi Vocal Method*** is a wonderfully new systematic vocal teaching approach unlike any other method currently available. The Kikuchi Vocal Method includes coordinated books in **four** areas of instruction: *Lesson*, *Vocalise*, *Diction*, and *Songs*, and Level 1 is intended for students ages 12 and older. Students under the age of 12 should be given *Kikuchi Vocal Method Primer Level* to prepare for this book. Since the student is expected to receive (or to have had) piano training with accompanying theory, this method system does not address issues of theory or music reading except when they specifically relate to the voice. The student is expected to learn the general music concepts through study of the piano and the vocal concepts through this vocal method system. The *Lesson* book introduces each new vocal concept with short musical examples to practice. The *Vocalise* book contains vocal exercises which should be performed daily to help build the vocal technique, and develop the student's daily warm-up routine. The *Diction* book covers issues of language, phonetics and pronunciation as they apply to singing. As the student advances to the other levels, the *Diction* book will include study of other languages, namely pronunciation rules and basic vocabulary. The student then synthesizes the skills learned in these three books by learning the repertoire songs provided in the fourth book, *Songs*. This book is a sampling of actual vocal literature of all types: hymns, children's songs, folk songs, popular songs and classical literature arranged in order of difficulty. Since these songs will not contain any new material, the student should be assigned them to learn without any teacher preparation as a way of testing what the student has mastered to-date. This series progresses through Levels 1, 2 and 3 after which the student is will be prepared to study the standard operatic and concert literature. The author is currently writing intermediate materials to follow the Level 3 books, primarily in the areas of Italian, German, French, Spanish and Russian diction, that should be available in a few years.

To order copies or to provide feedback, contact the author at:

Kikuchi Music Institute  
1515 Warren Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15212

(412) 322-0520

LWKikuchi @ KikuchiMusic.com

OR visit **[www.KikuchiMusic.com/publications](http://www.KikuchiMusic.com/publications)**

***Special thanks to Randall D. Christner, Sr. and Barbara King Kikuchi for assisting in the proofreading of these books.***

**First Printing**

© 2006 Kikuchi Music Institute, 1515 Warren St. , Pittsburgh, PA 15212 (412) 322-0520

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface.....	vi
Introduction .....	ix
What is Singing? .....	1
Energy Source, Vibrator and Resonator.....	2
Breathing.....	3
Big Breaths.....	4
The Lip Trill .....	5
Sliding Up and Down.....	6
Pitch Matching.....	7
Rhythm in Singing .....	8
Quality Control Rules for Clapping and Saying 'ta' .....	8
Clapping and Saying 'TA' .....	9
Review 1 .....	10
The Musical Alphabet.....	11
Singing do-re-mi .....	12
Singing on the Vowel.....	13
Singing mi-fa-sol .....	14
Singing do-re-mi-fa-sol .....	15
Singing Final Consonants .....	16
Merrily Greet the Morn .....	17
Multiple Verses.....	18
The Minor Mode .....	19
Singing do-mi-sol .....	20
Skipping Along .....	21
Review 2 .....	22
Skipping do-mi-re-fa-mi-sol .....	23
Singing la .....	24
Alphabet Song.....	25
Eighth Note Rhythms .....	26
This Old Man.....	27
Singing ti .....	28
Horse to Trot.....	29
Singing Consonants on Pitch .....	30
Girls and Boys Come Out to Play.....	31
Singing fa-re-ti.....	32
Pat-a-Cake .....	33
Mary Ann.....	34
Review 3 .....	35
The Seven Sound Qualities.....	36
The Vocal Ailments .....	37
Sound Production.....	38
Appoggio Breathing .....	38
Onset/Release Exercises.....	38
Quality Control Rules For Good Sound Production.....	39
The Basic Onset .....	39
Subvocalization .....	40
London Bridge.....	41
Continuants .....	42
She Sells Sea Shells .....	43

Voiced Consonant Clusters .....	44
Unvoiced Consonant Clusters .....	45
Review 4 .....	46
Review 5 .....	47
Slurs and Melismas.....	48
Little Bo-Peep .....	49
Singing Duets .....	50
Oh How Lovely is the Evening .....	51
Hearing Chord Pitches.....	52
Controlling the Velum.....	53
Patter Songs .....	54
Let's Go to the Zoo .....	55
Review 6 .....	56
Review 7 .....	57
Flats.....	58
The Key of F Major .....	59
Movable and Fixed <i>do</i> .....	60
Tonic / Dominant in F Major.....	61
Singing B $\flat$ .....	62
Dotted Rhythms .....	63
Scale Triads.....	64
Old Blue .....	65
Review 8 .....	66
Review 9 .....	67
Singing do-mi-sol-do .....	68
The Major Scale.....	69
Joy to the World.....	70
Sequences.....	72
Gloria .....	73
Sharps .....	74
On the Banks of the Wabash .....	75
Perfect 4ths and 5ths .....	76
Rock of Ages .....	77
Inverted Major Triads.....	78
Brahm's Lullaby .....	79
Review 10 .....	80
Review 11 .....	81
The Key of G Major.....	82
Octave Leaps.....	83
Singing 6ths .....	84
Singing 7ths .....	86
3-Part Harmony.....	88
All the World Is Sleeping.....	89
Review 12 .....	90
Review 13 .....	91
Major and Minor Triads .....	92
Dance, Dance .....	93
Pentachords.....	94
Singing Hymns and Voice Types .....	96
Colloquial Language .....	98

Singing Latin .....	100
Final Review 1.....	102
Final Review 2.....	103
Final Review 3.....	104

# Preface

The Kikuchi Vocal Method system teaches students how to sing from the ground up, starting with the simplest steps and gradually progressing sequentially through the musical concepts and technique with incrementally increasing difficulty and complexity. This system is modeled after several very successful piano method books, which teach piano playing in a very progressive and systematic way. The existing vocal materials assume the student already has two basic musical skills: reading music and singing in tune. Many students seek voice training who do not have prior musical knowledge, and this method system was written specifically for all such students.

The Kikuchi Vocal Method series will have three levels and four books at each level: Lesson, Vocalise, Diction, and Song (repertoire). This system assumes that the student knows nothing about music, and can be used for children as well as adults. However, Level 1 of this series has been written with the adult singer in mind and should be used for students ages 12 and older. Many teachers refuse to accept voice students before age 12, but since the Kikuchi Music Institute enrolls many voice students under age 12, a special set of Primer Level books will be published to help prepare those young students for the Level 1 of the series. Students age 12 and over as well as students who have completed the first level (primer) books in piano may begin directly with Level 1.

The Kikuchi Vocal Method - Primer Level is specially designed for the younger voice and will teach many basic concepts much more slowly. There will be two Primer books: *Voice* and *Language*. The Primer *Voice* book starts with pre-staff notation, and on the black keys (with pictures to help students find notes) to coincide with many of the piano methods. It will contain basic instruction on breathing, singing, and pitch matching, with coordinated exercises and songs. Teacher accompaniments are provided as insert boxes, so that the student is not confused by trying to pick out their melody line in complex music and to preserve the reading sequence of pre-staff, lettered note and big note notation. The Primer *Language* book will give the student important foundation for the Diction book at Level 1 by addressing issues of vowels, consonants, spelling, grammar and vocabulary, to ensure that the student is prepared for study of diction, regardless of his or her grade level in the traditional school. The Primer books should be completed in about one year's time, commensurate to the student's progress on the piano.

The Kikuchi Vocal Method is a 'play and sing' approach that helps develop the student's ability to sing and play the accompaniment at the same time. Therefore, all accompaniments are arranged according to the student's expected piano ability level. As the student progresses vocally, the accompaniments will become more difficult (especially issues of coordination) assuming that the student's piano playing ability is progressing at the same rate. In Level 1 all songs are written in simple Grand Staff piano notation, but at Level 2 the student will be introduced to voice line + Grand Staff notation in order to gain competence in reading and playing from scores of that complexity (3 staves).

These books do not teach the fundamentals of music theory as are necessary for any musician, and it is assumed that all voice students will always study some piano to obtain the necessary theory and piano playing skills that all singers must have. Only the musical concepts which relate specifically to voice are covered in this series, and as is evident by the size of these books, that is clearly enough.

Students are expected to learn all the singing concepts primarily from the Lesson book in a step-by-step progression. Each lesson contains a musical example to learn (song or exercise) that represents one new musical concept or the application of a recently taught concept to a previously established technique. As necessary, written text and pictures will explain the new concept or skill. The *Vocalise* book organizes the student's daily practice routine and teaches exercises the student must perform daily to master the techniques taught in the Lesson book. The *Diction* book

teaches the student the important concepts of diction (including phonetics) that must be mastered and applied to singing. The *Song* book contains actual songs to which the student will apply the skills learned in the other three books. All books are in progressive order and normally should not be used without the other books in the system at the same level, but some schools or teachers may choose to use the *Diction*, *Vocalise* or *Song* books separately to fulfill an educational need not met by existing materials.

The Kikuchi Vocal Method prepares the student for a wide variety of singing opportunities: party singing, community chorus, concert, recital, church choir, opera and theatre. The musical examples include solos, duets, trios, and four-part writing. The songs may be in standard English, dialectical American or even foreign languages such as Latin, Spanish, Italian, German, French, or Hebrew. All musical styles are represented including: classical, folk, popular, gospel, country, jazz, Broadway and religious.

The breathing technique taught in this method is *appoggio*, and teachers not completely familiar with this technique should investigate it further before teaching it. A leading teacher and writer about *appoggio* breathing is Dr. Richard Miller, professor emeritus of Oberlin Conservatory of Music. His books can give a singer a basic understanding of the technique as well as a fairly substantial bibliography of other sources for further study.

Beyond breathing, there is another philosophical approach to teaching singing which can vary from teacher to teacher. In this method, the student is expected to learn both *fixed do* and *movable do* solfeggio systems. Many leading schools have chosen just one of these systems, and even though *movable do* is the most popular, the *fixed do* system has its benefits especially for atonal music. For these reasons it seems reasonable to teach both and let the student make a choice later on – especially after gaining admission to a music school where one or the other system is used exclusively.

Probably the most important aspect to this method is the systematic approach to reading music in keys that is taken directly from the piano method books. Students begin learning all songs in C major then are gradually progressed through the keys (a circle of fifths approach) until they acquire facility in all the keys. Even though, the student is exposed to chromatic exercises in the beginning that help with ear training and vocal range, the student does not actually learn songs or exercises that she or he cannot read and understand theoretically. In the many vocal methods that choose repertoire according to range and with no regard to complexity of rhythm or key, the student is expected to learn the music more or less by rote.

Level 1 teaches singing in the Keys of C, F and G and covers rhythmic complexities of whole notes, dotted half notes, half notes, quarter notes, dotted quarter notes, and eighth notes. Melodic intervals include 2nds, 3rds, 4ths, 5ths, 6ths, 7ths and 8ves, with special emphasis on intervals of chord outlines. Scales and scale exercises as well as major/minor triad and pentachords are also introduced in all keys, to prepare the student for singing in other keys.

Level 2 proceeds with progress through the various keys. The concept of *tonal anchors* is introduced, so that the student will have vocalises that orient the ear to the new key using pentachords, scales and primary chord outlines. The Keys of D Major, A Major, E Major, A minor, E minor and D minor are introduced. Rhythm complexity proceeds to 6/8 time and dotted eighth notes. Melodies will include 9ths and 10ths and the student will be introduced to the quality differences of Major/Minor 2nds, 3rds, 6ths and 7ths. Harmonic complexity will proceed to diminished and augmented triads and dominant 7th chords as well as issues of modulation from one key to another. Musical repertoire will include music of all types (classical, religious, jazz, popular, folk, Broadway) that have texts in English, Italian and Latin, with the occasional German as a preparation for Level 3.

Level 3 will complete the introduction of all remaining keys, with appropriate tonal anchor vocalises to help the student orient to each new key. The student will be introduced to atonality and hypertonicity (extremely complex tonal music), as well as music using alternate tonalities such as modes, whole tone, middle eastern and chromaticism. Melodies will include all types of

intervals, including augmented and diminished. Harmonic complexity will include all types of triads, 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> chords, including half diminished, Neopolitan, and Augmented 6<sup>th</sup>. Musical repertoire will include all types of music, in English, Italian, Latin, German and French. Some exposure to Hebrew and Russian will be provided.

All the Lesson books Levels 1-3 will be coordinated closely with the *Diction*, *Vocalise* and *Song* books of the series so that the student will have ample practice in applying the singing skills learned. Throughout this book exercises have been included to help the student practice and apply all the different skills right away (including diction). Even though this book should not be assigned without the supporting material found in the other books of the series, there is ample material within this one book for the student to drill and master many of the singing skills.

By completion of Level 3 the student should be fully competent to sing in a professional choir, but to sing solo (especially in other languages) the student should continue study at the intermediate and advanced levels. In order to learn and perform arias and songs in foreign languages, the student must acquire more knowledge of the language than the basics provided in these beginning books.

Beyond Level 3 the author is considering developing a much more in-depth diction books for each primary language (English, Italian, French, German, Latin) as well as supplementary ones for Spanish and Russian. A workbook for the war-horse, *Twenty Four Italian Songs and Arias*, will be developed to help students learn this fundamental and important material through readings, written exercises, vocabulary builders, musical analysis and preparatory technical exercises. Any books beyond Level 3 would not be part of a method series, but will be stand-alone texts/workbooks for continued study at the intermediate and advanced levels. At the Kikuchi Music Institute, these books would be part of the Music Appreciation or Young Artist Programs, and music schools might choose to use them for their entering freshmen.

This method series is truly a wonderful new approach to singing, and one which heretofore has not been approached. It teaches singing in a step-by-step sequence that is parallel to what the piano method books use, especially in regard to playing in keys and is in fact designed as a “play and sing method” so that the student is capable of accompanying him or herself. The four area approach insures that the student learns all aspects of singing: reading music, sight singing, ear training, diction, foreign language, harmony, duets, trios, 3- and 4-part harmony, choral singing and learning solo repertoire. The Kikuchi Vocal Method expects the student to understand all the music fully every step of the way (including the accompaniment). Teachers should never resort to rote learning or playing/singing on tape for the student to learn the songs. Anyone with a reasonable ear can learn by imitating recordings, and students do not need to pay the high cost of music lessons to develop that skill. **The goal of this method is to give the voice student all the knowledge and skills needed to learn new music without having to resort to listening to recordings or rote learning.**

Lee W. Kikuchi  
March, 2006

# Introduction

In general, the student should master each page of this book before advancing to the next page. If a particular skill seems to be taking the student more time than would be normally expected, it is acceptable to advance the student onto new material while still trying to overcome those difficulties. The books are coordinated according to concepts taught and level of difficulty. In general, the songs in the repertoire book (*Song*) should not be attempted until the prerequisite material has been mastered and in fact can serve as a form of test to see how much the student has mastered, retained and is able to apply.

Daily practice is absolutely essential for mastering any musical instrument, and for the voice it is doubly important because singing involves muscles of the abdomen, neck, larynx, face and mouth. When any activity includes so many muscle groups, the practice routine must be that much more regular and disciplined. To miss even one day of practice (except in the case of illness) can be the muscular equivalent of forgetting one day's work. It is virtually impossible to make up for missed practice time and progress will not only seem slow, but in fact might move backward in weeks of little practice. The lesson time will be spent relearning skills as if they are new, and possibly fixing bad habits that have formed as a result of careless and inconsistent practice.

The Kikuchi Vocal Method includes all the necessary daily practice exercises to ensure that the concepts are not only learned but actually retained by the muscles involved. The *Vocalise* book has special "Warm Up Routine" pages that help the student monitor daily progress. The student **must** be honest about recording the daily activity so that the teacher can make fair assessment of how to proceed. If a student claims to practice daily, but the results appear to be ineffective, the teacher will take a different course than if the student simply did not practice as much.

A **glossary** is provided at the end of the *Diction* book as a quick reference in case the student forgets any terminology already taught. These books are written at an adult level, and the author realizes that some words may not be familiar to a student still in middle school or high school, and this glossary includes those terms as well. Such words are primarily linguistic or physiological terminology. A glance at the entries in the glossary can give the new student a quick understanding of exactly how much material must be learned at this level. Likewise, a read-through of the glossary after completing the book can be a good test to see how much the student has retained.

**Review** pages are provided throughout the *Lesson* book to test the student's retention of terminology and concepts presented to-date. The student should do these review exercises without referring to any other pages in the book, and without looking up answers in the glossary. This way the teacher will know what needs extra review before proceeding to the next lesson. The review pages are designed to make the student think carefully, to ensure that the student can actually apply the concepts and not simply recite rules and definitions verbatim.



# What is Singing?

The act of singing is probably the oldest form of music making, because it seems to come naturally to practically everyone. Song birds sing. Even many of the harsh cries and screams of various forest animals can be considered singing. For all these animals, singing is used for special communication: mating calls, warnings of danger and even lament. A dog will issue a plaintive howl when a pack member has died both as an emotional response and to communicate that feeling to others. Children learn to sing at the same time they learn to speak, and in fact many children's songs are designed to help children speak and read – because words set to music are easier to remember than words by themselves. (Example: The Alphabet Song). Singing is the unique combination of language and music. Although there exist many musical examples where singing does not include language, but rather a hum, an 'oo' or some other utterance, for the most part all singing includes a language, whether English, Italian, German, Latin, French or another. For this reason alone, singing is unique among all the music making processes and explains why singers must master skills that no other musician must consider: acting, phonetics, and foreign languages. As you learn to sing, not only will you learn all the important musical concepts needed to make beautiful music, you will also learn how to express the meanings of the text (from facial expressions to actual body language). Most importantly, you will learn the fine art of vocal diction that allows the singer to be understood despite the many musical and acoustical demands that can often impede the clarity of the language. A common misconception is that singing is just spoken language on pitch. In fact, the demands of singing distort many aspects of the language such as sustaining vowels much longer and exploding consonants much harder and faster. Instead, singing is the art of making beautiful musical sounds that sound like language to the listener.

**List below the songs you know how to sing, even though you do not know music yet. This can include children's songs, church hymns, patriotic songs and popular songs:**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# Energy Source, Vibrator and Resonator

All of music contains these three important elements: *energy source*, *vibrator* and *resonator*. The **energy source** is whatever method generates the sound. For voice and wind instruments, it is the human breath. For string instruments it is the bow. For the piano it is the hammers (controlled by fingers striking the keys). For the organ it is a wind box powered by a turbine blower. The **vibrator** is also different for every instrument. For the flute, it is the open hole mouthpiece. For reed instruments it is the reed. For brass instruments it is the lips buzzing against the mouthpiece. For string instruments and the piano it is the string. For the voice it is the vocal folds. For the organ it is the open hole on the pipes (most function in the same way as the flute but some have reeds). The **resonator** is also different for each instrument. For all wind instruments it is the tubing (whether brass, wood, silver, resin or other material). For the string instruments it is the wooden box of the instrument. For the piano it is the sound board and case. For the voice it is the throat, mouth and nasal passages. In learning how to sing we must master techniques for controlling all three elements. We control the energy source through our breathing mechanism (abdominal muscles). We control the vibrator to make specific pitches as required by the music. We control the resonator to produce beautiful vibrant tones, good vowels and correctly execute consonants. We already know how to use all these elements for every day speech, just as we already know how to walk and run. However, knowing this basic step does not mean we know how to sing, just as knowing how to run does not make us an athlete. The process of attaining the next level of ability is a long and difficult one requiring thousands of hours of practice over the course of several years.

**On the chart below specify the energy source, vibrator and resonator for each instrument:**

INSTRUMENT	ENERGY SOURCE	VIBRATOR	RESONATOR
VIOLIN			
TRUMPET			
VOICE			
PIANO			
FLUTE			
CLARINET			
ORGAN			
GUITAR			

# Breathing

We will begin our voice lessons with the first of the three elements of sound production: the energy source or **breathing**. We all breath continually, every day, hundreds of times a day without even thinking about it. We do it correctly. We do it naturally. However, the minute we do it deliberately we often make mistakes and distort the correct breathing mechanism. Take a moment now to go in front of a full length mirror and take a big breath. What did you observe? Did your shoulders rise? Did your face make any distortions? Did any other parts of your body move? In natural breathing, only the abdominal muscles (primarily the ones between the naval and the sternum) move to draw the air in and push the air out. Lie down on a sofa or bed. Place your hands clasped over your naval and lie quietly while breathing normally. Notice how your hands move up and down. You should not feel any motion in the chest or shoulders. You should not have to do anything different with your mouth or face. In singing, we want to use the same muscles as we use during normal breathing, but we need to use them in slightly different ways. In trying to learn how to breath correctly for singing, you must constantly examine yourself to make sure you are not breathing incorrectly. When you sing, you use the normal breathing mechanism but in a different way according the demands of singing. At all times, make sure you exhibit **no head, neck or upper body motions**. Make sure you do not tense up muscles in those same regions. Make sure you do not change your mouth shape or tongue position to breathe. When it comes to the energy source – only the abdominal muscles move. Keep the other muscles free to express language, act or execute theatrical blocking.

## Relaxed Breathing

**For the next few weeks, take a minute at bed time to reflect on your breathing. Put your hands on your belly and just lie quietly breathing. Notice how the hands move up and down in a continuous even motion. There should be no shoulder movement, no chest or upper body movement and no head or facial movements.**

## Prolonged Breathing

**This exercise is also a good one to do at bedtime, and may even help you fall asleep. Place your hands on your belly as above, and breath in and out with even regular breaths. However, in this exercise there are three phases you will be monitoring: *inhalation*, *holding* and *exhalation*. Time each phase by counting your heartbeats. The first one should be about 5 or 6 beats. Each phase of breathing should be the same amount of heartbeats, and for the purpose of this exercise deliberately make them match. After the first breath, take the second breath counting one more heart beat for each of the three phases. With each succeeding breath, prolong the breath (slow it down) by one more heartbeat. Try to get up to 10 or 12 heartbeats before quitting. For example:**

[in-2-3-4-5 / hold-2-3-4-5 / out-2-3-4-5]

[in-2-3-4-5-6 / hold-2-3-4-5-6 / out-2-3-4-5-6]

[in-2-3-4-5-6-7 / hold-2-3-4-5-6-7 / out-2-3-4-5-6-7]

[in-2-3-4-5-6-7-8 / hold-2-3-4-5-6-7-8 / out-2-3-4-5-6-7-8]

[in-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9 / hold-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9 / out-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9]

[in-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10 / hold-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10 / out-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10]

# Big Breaths

In singing, we must breathe at different rates from normal breathing. We use the same muscles, but we use them with different speeds. When we breathe in (*inspiration*), we try to take in the air very quickly, and when we breathe out (*expiration*) we must move the air very slowly. This is because singing requires that we sustain the sounds of the voice over several seconds (a long melody) but we must then take the next breath very quickly (often a split second) to be ready to sing the next phrase of music. In normal breathing, you inhale and exhale at more or less the same rate. When you perform the bedtime exercises described on the previous page, you do not change this regular rhythm of breathing, but instead simply prolong it to help develop deeper and more controlled breathing. The exercises below focus on quick inhalations and slow exhalations that are specifically what we need for singing. Always pay attention to the breathing mechanism and the upper body so that only the correct muscles move (no head, chest or shoulder movement).

## Blow Out Candles (Paper)

When we take a big breath to blow out candles, we inhale quickly and pucker our lips to create a forceful steady stream. The puckered lips help impede the airflow and focus it to make it more forceful. Hold a piece of paper at arms length from the face, take a big breath and blow the paper. If you do not pucker your lips adequately the force of the airflow will not make the paper move (it should flap significantly). When you inhale, make certain you do not make any gasping sounds. The inhalation must be quiet and quick, almost the same kind of breath you might take when startled: open mouth, open eyes, open throat, fast inhalation but not a gasp. When you blow, try to keep the paper moving for several seconds. Time yourself every day to see if you can prolong the time you blow the paper.

## Lip Trills (Fluttering Lips)

In this exercise, take big breaths and slowly blow the air out through the closed lips to make them flutter. Many people must practice this one to get it right. The lips must be wet and loose, but must be held together (as if humming) just enough so that the air pressure makes them flutter. If the lips stop fluttering the air pressure is either too forceful or too weak. Try to prolong the lip trill for as long as possible, timing yourself every day.

# The Lip Trill

A basic exercise used by leading voice teachers around the world is the *lip trill*. The reason this particular exercise is so useful is that it gauges the actual airflow (pressure). When singing, it is possible to use too much air or not enough air to produce good vocal sound, and the lip trill is a kind of measuring device to monitor your control of airflow. If the airflow pressure increases or decreases in any way, you can sense it by either a change in the sound of the lip trill or by the fact that the lips stop flapping. This type of direct feedback is much easier to recognize than changes in vocal quality, especially by the student, so it is a very useful tool in helping students learn good breath control. As with all breathing exercises and singing, be sure to take a good big breath quietly (no gasping) before executing the lip trill. We must build step-by-step on the skills already learned and constantly apply them to the next technique.

## Lip Trill (With and Without Voice)

Pitch: \_\_\_\_\_

You learned how to produce the Lip Trill without voice (just air) in the previous lesson, and now you should learn how to do the same exercise using the voice. A good starting pitch is F#, but your teacher may have you do the Lip Trill on another note. Make sure that the lips flutter continuously and without changes. Make sure the pitch is stable (does not wobble). Monitor your daily progress on both the lip trill without voice and the lip trill with voice, recording how many seconds you are able to sustain it.

## Lip Trill (Singing a Song)

Name of Song: \_\_\_\_\_ Start Note: \_\_\_\_\_

Try singing one of the songs you listed on page 1 while doing the lip trill. How far can you sing on one breath? A good song for this is *America* ('My country 'tis of thee') if you can remember it. *Mary Had a Little Lamb* is a good second choice. Your teacher will write a starting note above so that you do it the same way each time.

## Lip Trill (Sirens)

Once you learn the siren technique on the next page, do Lip Trills while singing the siren. Be sure to go higher and lower each time you Lip Trill the Siren, to help extend your range in each direction.

# Sliding Up and Down

Now that we have addressed some basics regarding the energy source (breathing), let us move on to the **vibrator** (the voice box or vocal folds). To sing, we must match the pitches of the melody exactly, and we do this by tightening or relaxing the vocal folds in the larynx (voice box). Unlike any other instrument where we can see exactly how our fingers change the notes, the voice box is not visible to us, so we cannot see how our voice works. The only way to know we are singing correctly is by listening to the sound that we are producing and comparing it to a pitch source such as a piano. Brass instruments share this feature to a degree, as the performer must tighten the lips according to certain notes and it takes time to *feel* this technique. In singing, we learn to *feel* what our vocal folds do to produce a note, so that we do not have to adjust the pitch with every note we sing by comparing it to the piano. After enough practice, we just open our mouths and the right note comes out. As was mentioned above, the pitch of our voice changes by tightening or relaxing the vocal folds. As we tighten them, the pitch rises, and as we relax them, the pitch lowers. The same effect can be observed in a rubber band. Stretch the band and pluck it. As we stretch the band tighter, the pitch gets higher and as we let the band relax the pitch lowers. The exercise below is one to help develop the muscles in our voice that control pitch. We are not concerned with the exact pitch yet – we are just using the muscles to make pitch changes. This could be compared to a baseball pitcher swinging his arm before a pitch – he is moving his muscles in a general way without worrying about throwing the ball in any specific direction.

## Sirens Up

**Making a sliding sound with the voice is very much like imitating the sound of a siren. For this exercise, take a good full quiet breath (no gasps) and begin singing a sound starting in the lower part of your voice range. Slowly slide up as high as you can go without straining. If you hear any gaps or breaks, try to sing through them (eliminate them). You should sing Sirens Up at least 10 times each day as a daily practice routine. With each successive attempt try to start lower in the voice and end higher in the voice, and try to slide up more slowly (make sound for a longer time) and continuously (no jumps or breaks).**

## Sirens Down

**This exercise is exactly the same as Sirens Up except you start at a high pitch in your voice and gently slide down to the lowest pitch in your voice. Sliding down can often be more difficult to control, and you should work hard to make it gentle, slow and even. Relaxing the vocal folds in a slow controlled way is more difficult than tightening them up. Do this exercise at least 10 times daily. This one requires more work to master.**

## Sirens Up and Down

**Once you have mastered Sirens Up and Down you can replace them with this one where you slide up and down on the same breath. Make sure your slide down is just as controlled as the slide up and for the same length of time (not quicker).**

# Pitch Matching

Any steady sound you make with your voice, as long as it does not move up and down, is a specific **pitch**. In music, we sing the specific pitches that can be found on the piano keyboard. Each key is a different pitch and for the most part we limit our singing pitches to the same ones we can find on a piano. However, like many other instruments the voice can slide between pitches and this ability is used according to the style of music or demands of the composer. Before we can just sing the right notes because we can feel them in our voice and hear them in our head, we must first learn to match our voice to the correct pitches of music very carefully and deliberately. You must first hear the sound, then start singing, then adjust your voice to match the sound if your voice is too low or too high. You will slide your voice using the siren technique from the previous lesson until your ear tells you that your voice is matching the pitch of the sound. To practice this skill you must use a good pitch source for comparison, and for singers this is always an **in-tune piano or keyboard**. To use any other instrument can be less than useful because other instruments have the ability to adjust pitch just as the voice does – so they can often be not as accurate as the piano. With the piano, you press the key and whatever sound you hear is a stable and unvarying pitch.

## Pitch Matching

Start on: \_\_\_\_\_ Stop on: \_\_\_\_\_

For this exercise it is important to follow the steps exactly:

1. Press and hold the key on the piano.
2. Listen to the sound.
3. Start singing 'la\_\_\_\_\_'.  
'
4. If the sound you are singing does not match the pitch, slide up if it is too low, or slide down if it is too high.
5. Breathe and go on to the next key (pitch).
6. Start on the note specified above and repeat this exercise with each key going up the piano. This includes all the black and white keys, one-by-one. Stop on the note specified above.

It is important always to press the key before singing, and to take the time needed to listen to the sound. This can be as much as 2 seconds. Once you start singing, do not let go of the key, but instead hold it so you can compare your voice to the sound of the piano. Listen carefully and try to decide if you are matching the pitch or are too high or too low. If you cannot tell that you are too high or too low, slide your voice a little both up and down until you can sense that your voice is matching the pitch of the piano. If this takes too long and the sound dies away, re-strike the piano key and repeat the process. On a keyboard, you can change the setting to 'organ' which will sustain longer if this helps.

## Sustained Pitch Matching

This is a variation of the Pitch Matching exercise and all the same instructions still apply. However, once you have matched the pitch exactly continue singing the note for at least 4 counts (seconds) before moving on to the next note. Monitor your sound carefully and do not let the pitch slide away from the correct sound. Make sure your vocal sound is clear, and the same loudness (don't let it die away). With each note that you are singing, make a good vocal sound that does not change for the full 4 counts that you are sustaining it. Then breathe and move to the next pitch (piano key).

# Rhythm in Singing

All music has *rhythm*, which is the fact that each sound has a different length – some sounds are short, some are long and some are in between. In addition, all music has a steady *beat*, which is the steady pulse of the music. The rhythm of music must fit within the steady beat at all times. Most musicians count while they perform in order to keep themselves steady with the beat. Depending on the music and the complexity they might say, ‘1-2-3-4’ or ‘1-2-3’ or a variety of much more complicated number patterns to help them stay with the beat and not get lost when the music gets complex. In practice, musicians will count aloud to make sure they are on track. In performance, musicians will count silently (to themselves). Singers cannot count aloud because we are using our voice and mouth to produce sounds and words. In fact, we cannot even count silently in our head while singing because we sing words, and that would be too confusing! Similarly, wind instrument players cannot count with their mouths either because they have a mouthpiece in their mouths while playing. Until you can count silently in your head, which is a skill that takes years to develop, you must practice other ways to keep steady and on the beat. Because the hands are engaged in playing, instrumentalists learn to tap a foot to keep the beat (although this is considered totally unacceptable in performance). For singers, clapping is the best choice because it feels closer to us (the foot feels far away). Even if the singer is singing just ‘ta-ta-ta’ (that is, no words), clapping a steady beat is a great way to keep on the beat and not get lost. As you practice the clapping skills, feel the ‘1-2-3-4’ or ‘1-2-3’ pattern carefully, maybe even clap beat number 1 a little harder so you can feel the pattern. The more ingrained your sense of clapping rhythm is, the more you can use it to help learn difficult music. In addition to clapping, singers can also *pulse their voices* to match the beat. For example, a half note would be ‘ta-ah’ with two pulses for the two beats, a whole note would be ‘ta-ah-ah-ah’ in the same way.

## Quality Control Rules for Clapping and Saying ‘ta’

When doing the clapping exercises on the following page, and whenever you clap the rhythm of a song before learning to sing it, pay attention to the following quality controls:

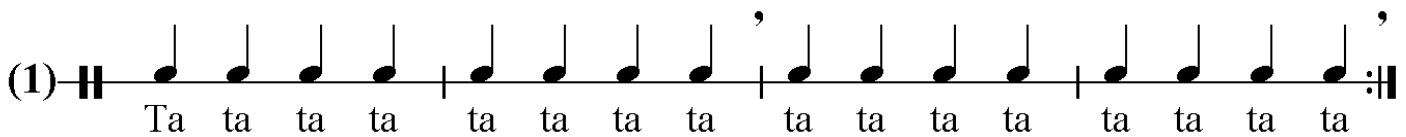
1. **Sustain** the ‘ah’ sound continuously between notes. No gaps before the next ‘t’.
2. **Clap** steadily and evenly.
3. **Maintain** consistent vocal sound: timbre, loudness, and pitch (no scooping).
4. **Breathe** only at the breath marks.
5. **Pulse** the voice to keep the beat. (‘ta-ah’)
6. **Move only** the tongue to make the ‘t’ sound (not the jaw or head).
7. **No pauses or gaps** in sound.
8. **No head bouncing** or other extraneous motions.

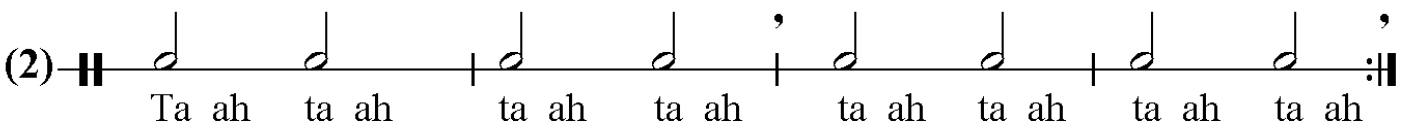
# Clapping and Saying 'TA'

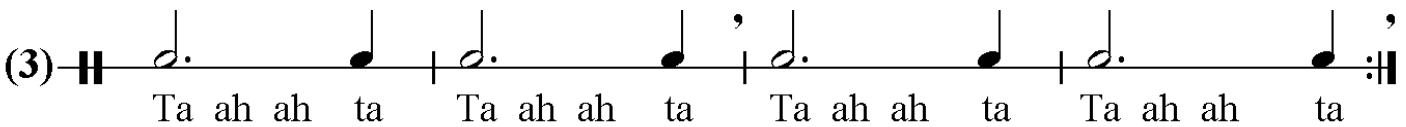
Practice Directions:

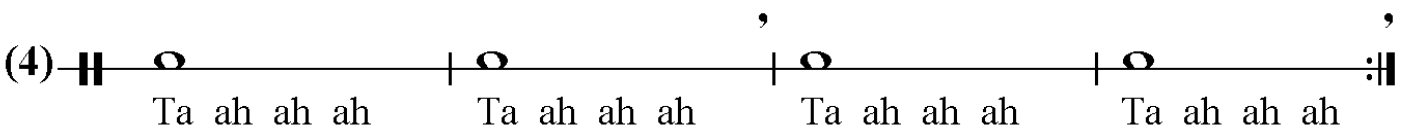
M.M. = \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

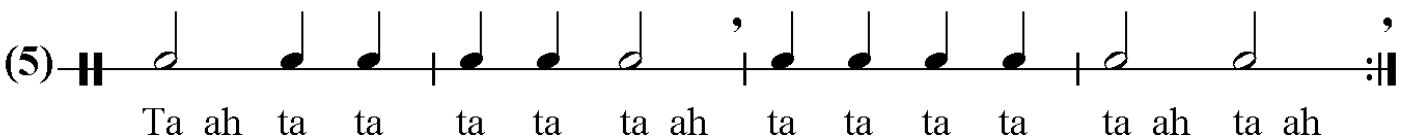
1. Clap a steady beat and say these rhythms on 'ta',
2. Pulse your voice to match the beats that you are keeping with the claps.
3. Repeat 4 times each, and observe the Quality Controls listed on page 8.
4. Follow the syllables for pulsing the 'ta' carefully with your eyes.
5. Do not look away or you will get lost in the music.
6. Practice at all three metronome speeds.
7. Once you know this exercise well, practice it without pulsing your voice.

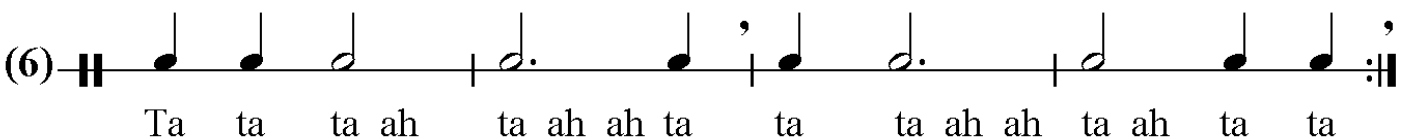
(1) 

(2) 

(3) 

(4) 

(5) 

(6) 

# Review 1

Fill in the blanks:

1. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a vocal exercise that monitors the control of the \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_ the lips. This exercise can be done with or without the \_\_\_\_\_.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ is the skill of singing the correct note exactly the same as on a fixed pitch source such as a \_\_\_\_\_.
3. When practicing a \_\_\_\_\_ by clapping and singing or saying 'ta', it is important to \_\_\_\_\_ the voice so that you feel all the \_\_\_\_\_ of the notes.
4. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a vocal exercise where you slide the pitch \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ the full range of the voice.
5. A common misconception is that singing is just \_\_\_\_\_ language on \_\_\_\_\_. Singing is very different because the vowels must be \_\_\_\_\_ much longer, the consonants must be \_\_\_\_\_ much harder and faster.
6. The voice, just as all other musical instruments, has three elements contributing to sound production: \_\_\_\_\_ (breathing), \_\_\_\_\_ (the vocal folds), and \_\_\_\_\_ (the throat, mouth and nasal passages).
7. In \_\_\_\_\_, we use our heartbeat to count and time three different phases of breathing: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. On each succeeding breath we try to sustain each phase \_\_\_\_\_ heartbeat longer.
8. During normal breathing and while singing, only the muscles in the \_\_\_\_\_ should move, never any part of the \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, or \_\_\_\_\_.

# The Musical Alphabet

American, English and German music uses letters of the alphabet (A, B, C, D, E, F, G) to describe the different pitches or **notes** in music. The Romance language countries, particularly Italy, where all written music originates, use a different system for describing pitches (do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, ti) called *solfeggio syllables* and singers around the world almost universally use the same system for a variety of reasons. The first reason is that the solfeggio syllables have different vowels which makes them easier to understand and associate to the notes than the plain letters (5 of which have the same 'ee' vowel). The second is that their 'consonant + vowel' construction makes them particularly useful for singing. The third is that all singing technique comes originally from Italy (*bel canto*) and the Italians use the syllables to describe the pitches for all music, even for instruments. [do=C, re=D, mi=E, fa=F, sol=G, la=A and ti=B]. When singing a song for the first time, it is useful to sing it first using the solfeggio syllables. The lack of consonant clusters, diphthongs and final consonants removes the need to think about diction issues, and allows the singer to focus on notes and rhythm. For the purpose of learning music theory and playing the piano, you will be required to identify notes by their letter names. For the purpose of singing, you will identify notes by their solfeggio syllable. A singer with a solid background in solfeggio can sight sing a new song easily, because the use of the syllables helps the ear find the correct notes. Throughout these books, you will be asked to sing the musical examples first using solfeggio syllables before anything else. Once you know the song well just singing 'do-re-mi' you can begin the process of singing with words – which requires applying a complex set of diction rules.

## Recite The Syllables

M.M. = \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Every day recite the syllables forward and backward until you know them solidly. You should be able to do this quickly from memory. Clap while reciting to keep a steady beat. Do the recitation slowly, then faster and faster without stumbling. Rhythm helps to solidify the memory process. Use a metronome at three different speeds to monitor your ability.

1. DO – RE – MI – FA – SOL – LA – TI – DO
2. DO – TI – LA – SOL – FA – MI – RE – DO

## Play and Sing the Scale

Play and sing the scale below, up and down, to get used to singing 'do-re-mi' and the notes of the scale. Always play the next note before singing it, so you can hear the correct pitch.



do re mi fa sol la ti do do ti la sol fa mi re do

# Singing on the Vowel

Whenever singing songs with words, it is important to *sing on the vowel*. This means that you sustain the vowel on pitch as long as possible before singing the final consonant(s). There are many reasons for this, but the primary reason is the importance of maintaining the melody while singing. If you stop the vowel too soon to form the consonant the melody becomes broken or choppy just like a street with pot holes. When singing, we want the melody to be as continuous and connected as possible, with the consonants interrupting the sound of the melody only briefly, just enough to be understood but never so much as to stop the singing sound. When singing on solfeggio syllables, it is easy to sing on the vowel because they do not have any final consonants (we always sing 'so' instead of 'sol'), and the initial consonants are single and simple. But even when singing on solfeggio syllables it is important to sing continuously on the vowel so that there is no break to the sound between notes. Do not stop the voice! Do not breath! The vowel of one syllable should flow seamlessly into the consonant beginning the next syllable. Singing on the vowel correctly while using solfeggio syllables is the first step to singing on the vowel correctly when singing the actual words of the song.

## Practice Directions:

M.M. ♪ = \_\_\_\_\_

1. Clap and say 'ta-ah' or 'ta'.
2. Sing the song using solfeggio syllables. (Play chords in LH while singing).
3. Clap while saying the words rhythmically and sustaining the vowels.
4. Sing the song using words. (Play chords in LH while singing).

## We Play Every Day

Musical notation for the first part of the song "We Play Every Day". The music is in 4/4 time. The melody is written on a treble clef staff, and the bass line is written on a bass clef staff. The lyrics are: "We play ev - 'ry day, sun or rain, it's all the same." The melody consists of quarter notes and eighth notes. The bass line consists of chords. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1, 2, 3, and 5.

Musical notation for the second part of the song "We Play Every Day". The music is in 4/4 time. The melody is written on a treble clef staff, and the bass line is written on a bass clef staff. The lyrics are: "Will you play with us, in our hap - py game?" The melody consists of quarter notes and eighth notes. The bass line consists of chords. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 2 and 3.

# Singing Final Consonants

The concept of singing on the vowel is closely related to the concept of *singing final consonants*. In order to execute consonants at the correct time in the rhythm, it is important to know how long to sing the vowel before making the final consonant. The vowel must be sung continuously until the consonant is formed, without any break or decrease in the vocal sound. It is also important not to form the consonant early. Allowing tongue or lips to move toward the consonant early, even just a little, can distort the vowel or impede the sound. The vowel must remain pure until time for the consonant, then the consonant is executed quickly in the time remaining. Final consonants are executed in two different ways: If another word is to be sung without a break (*legato*), then the final consonant is *elided* to the beginning of the next word. That is, the consonants are pronounced together as a cluster. If, the final consonant is at the end of a phrase (before a breath,) then the consonant becomes a *consonant release* because it is followed by a breath. If necessary, we shorten the note slightly to place the consonant on the final beat of the note, or if there is a rest following the note, we can allow the vowel to take the full value of the note and place the consonant release on the available rest. The decision regarding which to do depends on the style of the song, as well as how the music was written. Some composers write in rests for singers to use for consonants, and others leave it to the singer to decide where to place the consonant releases.

## Practice Directions:

1. Sing the song using solfeggio syllables. (Play LH notes while singing.)
2. Mark the consonant releases with an up arrow (↑).
3. Clap while saying the words rhythmically and placing final consonants correctly.
4. Take a quick breath at each rest (after the consonant).
5. Sing the song using words. (Play LH notes while singing.)

## Come, Sleep, Little Children

Slow lullaby

The musical score is for a slow lullaby in 4/4 time. It consists of two systems of music, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano accompaniment is in the left hand (LH) and features a simple harmonic accompaniment with fingerings indicated by numbers 1-5. The vocal line is in the right hand (RH) and includes lyrics with rests for consonant releases. The first system covers the lyrics: "Come, sleep, lit - tle chil - dren, Time to rest your head,". The second system covers: "Dream of hap - py play - time in your warm soft bed.".

**System 1:**

- Vocal Line:** Treble clef, 4/4 time. Notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (quarter). Fingerings: 3, 4, 3, 5, 2, 3.
- Piano Line:** Bass clef, 4/4 time. Notes: G2 (quarter), B1 (quarter), D2 (quarter), E2 (quarter), G2 (quarter), B1 (quarter), D2 (quarter), E2 (quarter), G2 (quarter), B1 (quarter), D2 (quarter), E2 (quarter), G2 (quarter), B1 (quarter), D2 (quarter), E2 (quarter). Fingerings: 5, 3, 1, 4, 2, 1.
- Lyrics:** *mp* Come, sleep, lit - tle chil - dren, Time to rest your head,

**System 2:**

- Vocal Line:** Treble clef, 4/4 time. Notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (quarter). Fingerings: 3, 4, 2, 2.
- Piano Line:** Bass clef, 4/4 time. Notes: G2 (quarter), B1 (quarter), D2 (quarter), E2 (quarter), G2 (quarter), B1 (quarter), D2 (quarter), E2 (quarter), G2 (quarter), B1 (quarter), D2 (quarter), E2 (quarter), G2 (quarter), B1 (quarter), D2 (quarter), E2 (quarter). Fingerings: 5, 3, 1, 4, 2, 1.
- Lyrics:** *p* Dream of hap - py play - time in your warm soft bed.

# The Minor Mode

Until now you have been singing songs in the Key of C, which is the easiest key because it has only white keys (on the piano). More specifically the Key of C is called C-Major. Western music uses two different kinds of keys: *major* and *minor*, also called major *mode* and minor *mode*. Major keys are usually described as 'happy' and minor keys are usually described as 'sad', based on what the different modes sound like. In the Key of C-Major, you ended your songs on the note C. For our song in this lesson, you will begin and end on the note D and learn to hear the Key of D-Minor. Notice how starting and ending on different notes gives the melody a totally different sound even though you are singing the same 5 notes you have already learned: do-re-mi-fa-sol! Just by using different starting and ending notes, and different notes in the harmony (re & fa, instead of do-mi-sol) you can create a totally different mood and sound – and that is what is called *tonality*.

## Practice Directions:

1. Sing the warm ups for 'Gloomy Night' at least 4 times each.
2. Sing the song using solfeggio syllables. (Play chords in LH while singing.)
3. Mark the consonant releases with an up arrow (↑).
4. Clap while saying the words rhythmically and placing final consonants correctly.
5. Sing the song using words. (Play chords in LH while singing.)

## Warm ups for 'd minor'

re mi fa mi re      mi fa sol fa mi      mi fa sol fa mi do re

# Gloomy Night

Slow and creepy

*mp* Dark and gloom-y is the night, scar-y mon-sters are a fright.

If you go out all a-lone, We don't know if you'll come home.

# Skipping do-mi-re-fa-mi-sol

A very common pattern in music is the *sequential skips*, that is do-mi-re-fa-mi-sol, etc. This kind of skip pattern can be a few skips, or can be a long series of skips going up and down the scale. The technical term for this pattern is *broken thirds*. Thirds because a skip is also the interval of a third. Broken because the notes are melodic thirds (not harmonic thirds). All instrumentalists as well as singers must learn this technique. This lesson includes only the broken thirds of do-mi-re-fa-mi-sol, up and down. Eventually, you will need to learn this technique pattern for notes up and down the entire scale.

## Practice Directions:

1. Sing the warm ups for 'Handy Spandy' at least 4 times each.
2. Sing the song using solfeggio syllables. (Play chords in LH while singing.)
3. Sing the song using words. (Play chords in LH while singing.)

## Warm ups for 'broken thirds'

do mi re fa mi sol sol mi fa re mi do mi do fa re sol mi mi sol re fa do mi

# Handy Spandy

Quickly

*mf* Han-dy Span-dy fine and dan-dy loves plum cake and sug-ar can-dy  
Bought it from a can-dy shop, and a-way he went hip hop, hip hop.

# Singing fa-re-ti

The notes 'fa-re-ti' outline part of a V7 (said, 'five-seven') harmony, or can stand alone as a vii° harmony (that is a chord built on the 7<sup>th</sup> note of the scale, which is a *diminished triad*). This song helps you hear the notes 'fa-re-ti' as a chord outline in the context of a melody.

## Practice Directions:

1. Sing the warm ups for 'Hickory Dickory Dock' at least 4 times each.
2. Sing the song using solfeggio syllables. (Play chords in LH while singing.)
3. Mark the consonant releases with an up arrow (↑).
4. Clap while saying the words rhythmically and placing final consonants correctly.
5. Sing the song using words. (Play chords in LH while singing.)

## Warm ups for 'fa-re-ti'

do mi sol fa re ti mi sol do re fa ti mi do sol re ti fa

# Hickory Dickory Dock

## Quickly

*mf* Hick - or - y, Dick - or - y Dock, the

mouse ran up the clock.

# Sound Production

Everything related to making good vocal sound is called *sound production*, and this includes all aspects of breathing (inhalation and support), pitch, dynamic, timbre and vowel formation. The cornerstone of the *appoggio* [a-POH-jee-o] technique is the breathing mechanism which includes quick inhalation and support using *muscle antagonism*. This technique is then applied to all other aspects of sound production. The two areas which best demonstrate good appoggio breathing are the *onset* (beginning of vocal sound) and the *release/breath* (stopping the vocal sound **combined** with the breath). In the appoggio technique the onset is always clean without grunt (*glottal stroke*) or aspiration (breathiness or ‘H’ sound), and the breath must be silent (no gasp). Hearing a gasping sound indicates that the *glottis* (the space between the vocal folds) is not fully opened. Further, skill must be developed to ensure the singer is correctly sustaining the vocal sound. Problems can occur in two general areas: breath support and facial/mouth motions. If the breath support is inconsistent the timbre or dynamic will change. Unwanted facial or mouth motions will change the vowel sound, which can happen when the tongue or lips move toward the next vowel or consonant, or when some part of the face or mouth performs an extra motion that does not belong. This latter problem is usually caused by the unconscious act of moving out of the singing posture during breathing and this must be corrected should it occur. All the parts and muscles of the face and mouth must maintain a continuous singing posture, even during breathing and the singer must treat the breath as a part of singing, not a different set of motions.

## Appoggio Breathing

The word *appoggio* [ah-POH-jee-o] comes from the Italian word *appoggiare*, ‘to lean’, and is used in the *bel canto* school of singing to describe the technique of singing on a supported and full reservoir of air. Good *sound production* requires that the air pressure on the voice be firm and steady, but never pushed or forced. Forcing or pushing are very common ailments of the amateur singer, which are evident by changes in pitch or timbre (harshness). In addition, such pushing can strain the voice and potentially damage it. With appoggio breathing, the singer supports the air with firm abdominal muscles, and the air is used sparingly – only enough to sing the notes. The classic expression, ‘less is more’ could not be more true for singers, where a good supported breath can produce vibrant sounds that can carry over a hundred piece orchestra into an opera hall of 3000 listeners, and virtuoso singers can sing long melodies for 20-30 seconds as if never needing to breath. A voice used with good supported breath will not strain or be damaged.

## Onset/Release Exercises

The onset/release exercises taught in these books are based on the exercises created by Dr. Richard Miller, Professor Emeritus of Voice, and Retired Chairman of the Voice Department, Oberlin Conservatory of Music, Oberlin, Ohio. They are designed to practice all aspects of *appoggio* technique sound production, including onset (*vocal fold approximation*), release (open glottis), pitch, supported breath (*muscle antagonism*), vibrant timbre, vowel formation, *aggiustamento*, and controlled body motions, so that the student can begin incorporating good sound production into all singing. The first exercises focus on clean onset, vibrant timbre and quiet release. Later exercises will expand the technique in application to more complex musical and diction issues as the student becomes more accomplished in areas of language, flexibility, acceleration, rhythm, harmony and musicology.

# Quality Control Rules For Good Sound Production

As you master the various vocal techniques, you must continually monitor these 12 very important qualities regarding good sound production. Notice that qualities 1-7 are sounds you can **hear**, and qualities 8-12 are body motions you must **see or feel** (use a mirror). Review the list daily until you have completely memorized it so you can monitor these qualities every time you sing:

		QUALITY	GOAL	AILMENTS
SOUND (HEAR)	1.	PITCH	PRECISE, UNWAVERING	off pitch, scooping, sliding, wobbling
	2.	DYNAMIC	STABLE	creeping in, fading out, accenting
	3.	TIMBRE	VIBRANT, CLEAR	breathy, raspy, straight tone
	4.	ATTACK	CLEAN	grunting, aspiration
	5.	VOWEL	PURE, CONSISTENT	diphthong, anticipation, laziness
	6.	RELEASE	COMBINED WITH BREATH	inverse grunt, excess breath, non-rhythmic
	7.	BREATH	SILENT, QUICK	gasping, uncoordinated, slow
BODY (SEE/FEEL)	8.	LUNGS/CHEST	FULL, EXPANDED	collapsing, feeling overcrowded
	9.	ABDOMEN	MUSCLE ANTAGONISM Firm and Controlled Motion	pushing, lacking support, belly moving instead of upper abdomen, abdomen moving too much
	10.	UPPER BODY	STILL, RELAXED	tension, motion during breathing
	11.	JAW / FACE	CONTROLLED Moves Only As Needed	moves unnecessarily, tension, moves during release/breath
	12.	TONGUE / LIPS	CONTROLLED Moves Only to Form Vowels or Consonants	moves early to form next vowel or consonant, does not maintain correct vowel sound throughout, moves during release/breath

## The Basic Onset

Start note \_\_\_\_\_ End note: \_\_\_\_\_

The exercise given below is only the first of many exercises to practice the *appoggio technique*. Learn this exercise first at a slow tempo (MM = 60) to make sure that phonation begins exactly on beats 1 and 3, and the release (breath) happens exactly on beats 2 and 4. Place the hands above the waist where the hands can feel the lowest rib in order to feel proper breathing muscle motion. The motions for singing and breathing should be only minimal, and the posture should be still. Continue singing the notes up the keyboard as instructed by your teacher (specified above). Once this exercise is mastered at a slow tempo, the rate can be increased gradually to master more rapid execution of the onset + release mechanism. The teacher will assign vowel changes as needed.

Eh      eh      eh \_\_\_\_\_      Eh      eh      eh \_\_\_\_\_ .....      Etc.

# Voiced Consonant Clusters

In addition to disappearing when it is a final consonant, the other place where a voiced plosive often disappears is before another consonant. The tongue or lips move into position for the plosive (that is, close to form it) but never complete it. In addition, voiced continuants must be fully executed (slightly sustained) in order to be heard before another consonant. This exercise consists of consonant clusters to help practice forming voiced plosives and continuants before other consonants. These sounds may seem unnatural at first, because they do not sound like words in English, but in fact such combinations occur regularly when the final consonants of one word *elide* (i.e. are said “back-to-back”) with the initial consonants of another word. Being able to sing these consonants with just the right amount of subvocalization or sustaining before the second consonant is an important skill in singing.

These exercises practice executing voiced consonants in clusters. While singing them, make sure, that 1) if the initial consonant is a plosive, there is a subvocalized neutral vowel after it, or 2) if the initial consonant is a continuant that it is properly sustained, before executing the second consonant and vowel. All the sounds must be clear and distinct and the consonants must precede the beat (the vowel is on the beat). Treat the ‘L’ as plosive. The following consonant cluster grid is provided so you can be sure to practice all possible combinations:

VOICED CONSONANT CLUSTERS

	B	D	G	L	M	N	V	Z
B		BD	BG	BL	BM	BN	BV	BZ
D	DB		DG	DL	DM	DN	DV	DZ
G	GB	GD		GL	GM	GN	GV	GZ
L	LB	LD	LG		LM	LN	LV	LZ
M	MB	MD	MG	ML		MN	MV	MZ
N	NB	ND	NG	NL	NM		NV	NZ
V	VB	VD	VG	VL	VM	VN		VZ
Z	ZB	ZD	ZG	ZL	ZM	ZN	ZV	

1. bdi bde bda bdo bdu bdo bda bde bdi  
 2. bdu bdo bda bde bdi bde bda bdo bdu

# Singing Duets

Music to be sung as a *duet* is also called two-part vocal writing. The two lines sound harmonious together because the notes of the duet part are also part of the same chords or harmony that go with the melody. Being able to sing a duet with someone else is an important part of singing, and requires that each person have a good ear so they stay in tune. When practicing at home alone, play the duet line on the piano and sing along with it. At the lesson your teacher will happily sing the duet with you. Be sure to learn both parts so you can trade off!

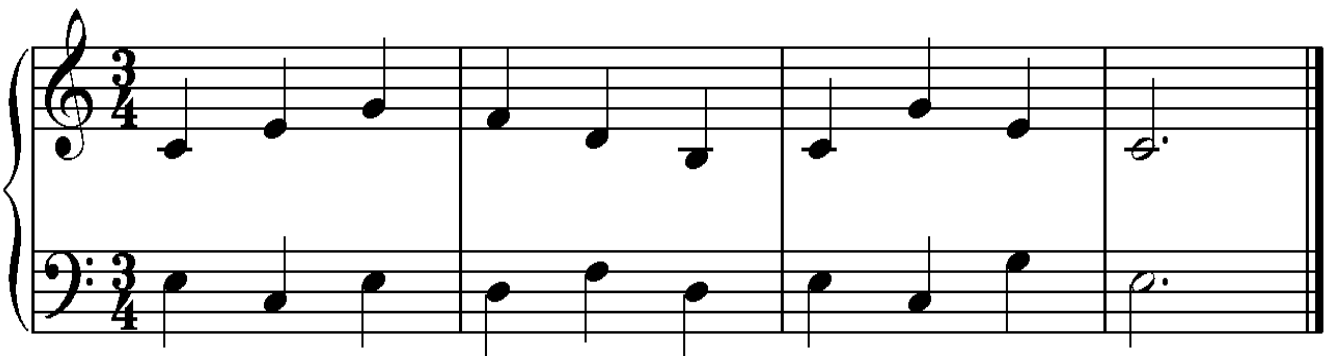
**Sing these exercises on solfeggio syllables. Learn both parts to sing with your teacher:**

(1)




Musical exercise (1) is written in 4/4 time. The treble clef part starts on G4 and moves up stepwise to D5, then down to C5, B4, A4, G4, and finally rests. The bass clef part starts on G3 and moves up stepwise to D4, then down to C4, B3, A3, G3, and finally rests. The exercise consists of four measures.

(2)



Musical exercise (2) is written in 3/4 time. The treble clef part starts on G4 and moves up stepwise to D5, then down to C5, B4, A4, G4, and finally rests. The bass clef part starts on G3 and moves up stepwise to D4, then down to C4, B3, A3, G3, and finally rests. The exercise consists of four measures.

(3)



Musical exercise (3) is written in 4/4 time. The treble clef part starts on G4 and moves up stepwise to D5, then down to C5, B4, A4, G4, and finally rests. The bass clef part starts on G3 and moves up stepwise to D4, then down to C4, B3, A3, G3, and finally rests. The exercise consists of four measures.

# Flats

In music the flat ( $\flat$ ) symbol indicates that the pitch must be **lowered a half step**. On the piano, this means striking the next key to the left (whether black or white). In singing, the pitch adjustment must be heard and felt. In all of music, a half step is an equal distance from any note regardless of its position in the scale or octave location. You first encountered half steps when singing the notes 'mi-fa' and then 'ti-do' and these are the naturally occurring half steps in the major scale. A flat can appear in front of any note, and therefore any note can be adjusted down a half step. Therefore,  $F\flat$  is in fact equal to E and  $C\flat$  is equal to B since there is no black key between E and F or between B and C. In the solfeggio syllables, a flat is represented by a vowel change. The initial consonant is preserved so that we still know which note it is (letter name), and the vowel is changed to either an 'a' or 'e' depending on the original syllable. Notice that Do and Fa do not have a flat equivalent. Remember that the bar line cancels any flats in the previous measure!

$C\flat$	C	$D\flat$	D	$E\flat$	E	$F\flat$	F	$G\flat$	G	$A\flat$	A	$B\flat$	B
TI	DO	RA	RE	ME	MI	MI	FA	SE	SOL	LE	LA	TE	TI

1 2

do re mi me mi re do do mi me mi me mi do

3 4

do mi do me do mi do do me mi me do me mi me do me do

5 6

do re mi fa sol se sol fa mi re do do sol se sol se sol do

7 8

do sol do se do sol do do se sol se do se sol se do se do

# Scale Triads

A *triad* is a chord of three notes built in thirds. Do-mi-sol is a triad, because do to mi is a third apart and mi to sol is also a third apart. We label each note of a triad as root, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>. The root is the lowest note, the 3<sup>rd</sup> is the middle note and the 5<sup>th</sup> is the top note (because it is a 5<sup>th</sup> from the root). There are technically four types of triads, but we will consider two for right now: *major triads* and *minor triads*. In a major triad the interval between the root and 3<sup>rd</sup> is a major third (four half steps), and in a minor triad the interval between the root and 3<sup>rd</sup> is a minor third (three half steps). Since the 5<sup>th</sup> is always the same (seven half steps) this means that the upper third (between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the 5<sup>th</sup> of the triad) changes too: In major triads the upper third is a minor third and in minor triads the upper third is a major third. In music, a triad can be built on every note of the scale and we label those chords using Roman numerals I, ii, iii, IV, V, vi, etc. The I chord is built on the first note of the scale and is also called the *tonic*. The ii chord is built on the second note, etc. We use upper case Roman numerals of major triads and lower case Roman numerals for minor triads.

Practice singing these broken chord exercises based on the triads of the C Major scale. Notice which ones are major and which ones are minor, and *feel* how they sound different.

## The I Chord (tonic)

do mi sol mi sol mi do mi do sol mi sol mi do mi sol do

## The ii Chord

re fa la fa la fa re fa re la fa la fa re fa la re

## The iii Chord

misol ti sol ti solmisol mi ti sol ti solmisol ti mi

## The IV Chord (subdominant)

fa la do la do la fa la fa do la do la fa la do la

# Gloria

The words 'Gloria, Hosanna in excelsis' come from the Latin Roman Catholic Mass. These words are very commonly used as a refrain in Christmas carols where the verses are in the common language (English, French, German, Spanish, etc.). Further, the word 'gloria' is most often set to a sequenced pattern (as below). Since good churchgoers would be familiar with the most common verses of the Latin Mass, such a mixing of languages would not seem at all out of place. It is certainly no more unusual, than the peppering of Spanish phrases in the common speech of the people in California, or the use of French phrases among the elite of New York. Literally, 'Gloria, Hosanna in excelsis' means 'glory and praise in the highest' and is meant to express the most exuberant joy possible. The use of Latin is probably meant to tap into the inner soul for meaning that goes beyond the poetry of the regular text. The pronunciation in IPA is [glɔːriːa ɔːzənə ɪn ɛkˈsɛlsɪs]. Notice that 'h' is silent in Latin and the 'c' becomes 'sh' after 'x'. Be careful to make the [i] a bright 'ee' sound (it is not 'in' as in English, but rather 'een') and the [ɛ] should be brighter than the 'e' in English 'met'. The [ɛk] should sound almost like 'ache'.

## Practice Directions:

1. This *Gloria* is excerpted from the well-known French Christmas carol *Ding Dong Merrily on High*.
2. Learn the song using solfeggio syllables. (do = F)
3. Practice singing with words.

Glo - - - - -

- - - ri-a, Ho - san-na in ex - cel - sis.

# Rock of Ages

Notice the use of perfect 4ths and 5ths in the traditional Hebrew melody. Do you think the use of these intervals makes the melody sound more majestic?

Practice on fixed and movable *do* before learning with the words.

## Majestic

1. Rock of A - ges let our song praise Thy sav - ing pow\_\_ er,  
2. Thou a - midst the rag - ing foes, wast our shelt - 'ring tow\_\_ er.

The first system of music is in 4/4 time and B-flat major. It features two vocal lines with lyrics. The melody is characterized by wide intervals, including perfect fourths and fifths. The piano accompaniment consists of simple chords and single notes.

Fur - ious they as - sailed us, but Thine arm a - vailed\_\_ us.

The second system continues the melody and accompaniment. The vocal line features a melisma on the word 'availed' with a long horizontal line under the notes. The piano accompaniment provides harmonic support with chords and moving lines.

And Thy word broke their sword

The third system continues the melody and accompaniment. The vocal line has a melisma on the word 'sword' with a long horizontal line under the notes. The piano accompaniment continues with chords and moving lines.

when our own strength failed\_\_ us,  
1. failed\_\_ us,  
2. failed\_\_ us.

The fourth system concludes the piece. It features two endings for the phrase 'failed us'. The first ending leads back to the beginning of the phrase, and the second ending concludes the piece. The piano accompaniment provides harmonic support throughout.

# Singing 6ths

Hearing and recognizing the different intervals comes with many hours of practice. Already we have covered 2nds, 3rds, 4ths, and 5ths. We have even seen that 3rds can be major or minor (as in major and minor chords). Many musicians use *catch melodies* to help remember intervals. For example, 'Here comes the bride' for perfect 4ths and 'Twinkle, twinkle, little star' for perfect 5ths. The most common melody for remembering major 6ths is *My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean*, and for that reason it is a great song to help practice them. Notice that we have already sung 6ths because they were part of the inverted major triad patterns on page 70 and have been in other songs such as *Over the Rainbow*. (Note: in this song, the word 'bonnie' is not a name but rather a word that means 'beauty' or 'sweetheart').

Practice the warm ups and song using solfeggio syllables first. Can you recognize which 6ths are major and which are minor?

## Warm ups for 'My Bonnie'

do la do re fa re mi do mi fa re fa C: ti sol re ti la sol  
G: mi do sol mi re do

The warm-up consists of two phrases. The first phrase is in 4/4 time and contains the notes do, la, do, re, fa, re, mi, do, mi, fa, re, fa. The second phrase is in 3/4 time and contains the notes C: ti, sol, re, ti, la, sol and G: mi, do, sol, mi, re, do. Both phrases are marked with a first ending bracket and repeat signs.

# My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean

Longingly

My bon - nie lies ov - er the o - cean My  
bon - nie lies ov - er the sea, My

The song is written in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. It consists of two systems of piano accompaniment and vocal melody. The first system covers the first four measures, and the second system covers the next four measures. The vocal melody is written in the treble clef, and the piano accompaniment is in the bass clef. The lyrics are: 'My bon - nie lies ov - er the o - cean My' and 'bon - nie lies ov - er the sea, My'.

bon-nie lies ov-er the o-cean Oh, bring back my

bon-nie to me Bring back,

bring back, oh, bring back my bon-nie to me, to

me, Bring back, Bring

back, oh, bring back my bon-nie to me

# Dance, Dance

Slavic melodies have the charming element of alternating between the major and minor triads, often as a direct repeat in rapid succession. What better way to practice hearing and singing the two type of triads back-to-back!

**Vivace**

Based on Slavonic Dance #8 by Antonin Dvořak

*f* Dance, dance now the rhy - thm's cont - ag - eous, so

The first system of musical notation is in 3/4 time. The treble clef staff contains a melody starting on a whole note, followed by quarter notes. The bass clef staff provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and single notes. The lyrics are: "Dance, dance now the rhy - thm's cont - ag - eous, so".

Come dance, now we all will have fun. *Fine*

The second system continues the melody and accompaniment. The lyrics are: "Come dance, now we all will have fun." The system ends with a double bar line and the word "Fine".

*mp* 1. Let your feet feel the beat, first you go ve - ry slow,  
*mf* 2. Ev - 'ry step that you take, it be - comes eas - y, the

The third system introduces two different lyrics for the same melody. The first line is marked *mp* and the second line is marked *mf*. The lyrics are: "1. Let your feet feel the beat, first you go ve - ry slow, 2. Ev - 'ry step that you take, it be - comes eas - y, the".

Then when you mast - er it, you can dance fast - er!  
rhy - thm com - pels you to dance fast and breez - y! *D. C. al Fine*

The fourth system continues the melody and accompaniment. The lyrics are: "Then when you mast - er it, you can dance fast - er! rhy - thm com - pels you to dance fast and breez - y!". The system ends with a double bar line and the instruction "D. C. al Fine".

# Singing Latin

Although Italian is the most important language for opera, Latin is the most important language for concert singing – both choral and solo. Almost all the major works for chorus and orchestra are in Latin because composers use the Latin text for the Roman Catholic Mass. The Requiem Mass is a special version of the regular Mass text that is used for funerals, and has special sections relating to death, the judgement day and salvation. Latin was used in all Roman Catholic services (the Mass) until the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) decreed that it was acceptable to conduct Mass in the common language of the people. However, even to this day, composers still write Masses in Latin, and in many churches throughout Europe and the United States, musical settings of the Mass in Latin are performed regularly. Since Latin is considered a dead language, there is no consensus regarding pronunciation and in fact there now exist several different accepted pronunciation schemes. The most commonly used is Italianate Latin (based on Italian pronunciation rules, and is the version of Latin used in the Vatican). Other versions are Germanic, and Academic which will be addressed in more detail later. In the past, singers would use only one pronunciation system depending on their country of origin, but today the accepted practice is for singers to use the pronunciation system that the composer would have had in mind when writing the music. Hence, today's singers would sing Germanic Latin for a Mass by Mozart, and sing Italianate Latin for Verdi's Requiem. Competence and versatility in all versions of Latin are now standard practice for professional singers. You have already learned the Latin text, 'Gloria, in excelsis Deo'. The song below is actually an old children's *round* with a very simple text, 'Dona nobis pacem' means 'Give us peace' and is pronounced [dona nobis paʃem] in the Italianate pronunciation. Both texts are taken from the Latin Mass.

## Dona Nobis Pacem (3-Parts)

Andante

*mp* Do\_\_ na no\_\_ bis pa\_\_ cem, pa - cem,  
Do - na no\_\_ bis pa - cem,  
Do\_\_ na no\_\_ bis pa\_\_ cem.  
Do - na no - bis pa\_\_ cem.

*mf* Do - na no - bis pa - cem, pa - cem,

Do - na no - bis pa - cem, pa - cem,

Do - na no - bis pa - cem.

Do - na no - bis pa - cem.

*f* Do - na no - bis pa - cem, pa - cem,

Do - na no - bis pa - cem pa - cem,

Do - na no - bis pa - cem.

Do - na no - bis pa - cem.

*rit.*