

## Teaching Mixed Voice

### Lea Baker – Region 25 Summer School, 2024

Please refer to the handouts for ‘Chest, Head and Mixed Voice’ class, before proceeding.

#### HELPFUL APPROACHES

Encourage singers to ‘explore’ their voice rather than do vocal ‘exercises’. Be curious. Have fun, and get your body involved.

We are always aiming for EASE. Check the sounds SOUND CLEAR, the singer LOOKS at EASE and they FEEL GOOD doing the vocal explorations or singing in general.

The first way to explore all the registers of our voice (and mixing them) is through our speaking voice. PS - that’s the same instrument we use for singing!

Add vocal inflections to our speaking voices. Explore all the fun ways you can speak!

Fun sounds (not singing) to start with, eg “woo-hoo!” “oh know!”. “Weeeeeee!” “meow” like a cat. Explore other sounds.

Linklater Resonance Ladder (see below)

Keep the body involved – move!

The terms “high” and “low” when describing sounds is abstract and can lead to unnecessary muscle tension. Attempt to stop using the terms “high” and “low” with your singers!

When vocalizing “high” and “low” – use the opposite physical gesture with arms.

Check that the head is staying level (neck soft) and NOT moving up as the singer ascends or down as they descend.

To release neck tension, move the neck slowly as they vocalize.

Moving muscles cannot be tense at the same time.

Notice unnecessary muscle tension, especially in the shoulders, neck, jaw and tongue and release this. Knees unlocked.

#### **FINDING your M2 (Head register)**

Pretend to be a ghost “oooooo!” (include physical gestures!)

Instinctive sounds (not ‘singing’) : Yoo-hoo!!

#### **FINDING your M1 (Chest register)**

Say “yee” in an easy speech like manner. No added resonance (space). Mouth shape is neutral, not spread. Should feel and sound buzzy and forward in the mouth. Alternative is “Zee-zee”.

## **SINGING EXPLORATIONS for MIXED VOICE**

Semi Occluded Vocal Exercises (SOVT's) are helpful for register transitions and developing the mixed voice. Examples:

Slides / glides (5 ---1). Start well above the singers register transition point. Work down in half tones. Imagine the notes are not descending but moving in one direction away from you or side to side (rather than “up” and “down”).

Aim for no ‘clunks’ or obvious register transition ‘breaks’. Slow, easy and no pressure. It might take a couple of weeks of daily work on this. Be patient. Then slide up through a 5 note scale. When no obvious clunks, change to ‘oo’ or ‘ee’.

- Humming (lips soft, teeth apart)
- NG
- Puffy cheek (trumpet)
- Retroflex R
- Tongue Trills
- Z
- Dz (the final sound in the word “Rouge”)
- V
- Straw phonation

Close vowels (more occluded in nature than open vowels). Easy slides. Start above their passagio or register transition point and descend in a 5 note slide. 5----1, then 5---1---5.

- “oo” vowel eg “soo” or “moo” or “too”
- “ee” eg “yee” “mee”

5 note scales descending / ascending (individual notes now sung rather than slides)

“bee” “mee” “noo” “boo”

Whiney sound “Nay” 5 4 3 2 1, 1 2 3 4 5 through the register transition / passagio

MESSA Di VOCE – one of the most powerful ways to develop CT / TA muscle co-ordination (requires a good grasp of breath support). Check out Kim Vaughn’s video on this below.

## **RESOURCES**

Johnson, Sam. Open Your Mouth. Learn How To Learn How To Sing. Amazon.

Bozeman, K. 2017. Kinesthetic Voice Pedagogy – Motivating Acoustic Efficiency. Inside View Press.

Bozeman, Kenneth W. Practical Vocal Acoustics. Pendragon Press, Hillsdale, NY, 2013.

Vocalcraft UK – James Platt

Nikki Blackmer – Vocal Warm Ups

Voice Science Works website: <https://www.voicescienceworks.org/>

Chapman J (2012). *Singing and Teaching Singing. A holistic Approach to Classical Voice*. Plural Publishing.

SOVT exercises – Kathleen Hansen <https://youtu.be/tm6wUbtwQc>

Lustre Quartet – Mixed voice example <https://youtu.be/3qS25VU0EyA?t=638>

Developing Consistency Through the Mixed Voice. Maggie Alexander:  
<https://youtu.be/TcWXkDuRoNQ>

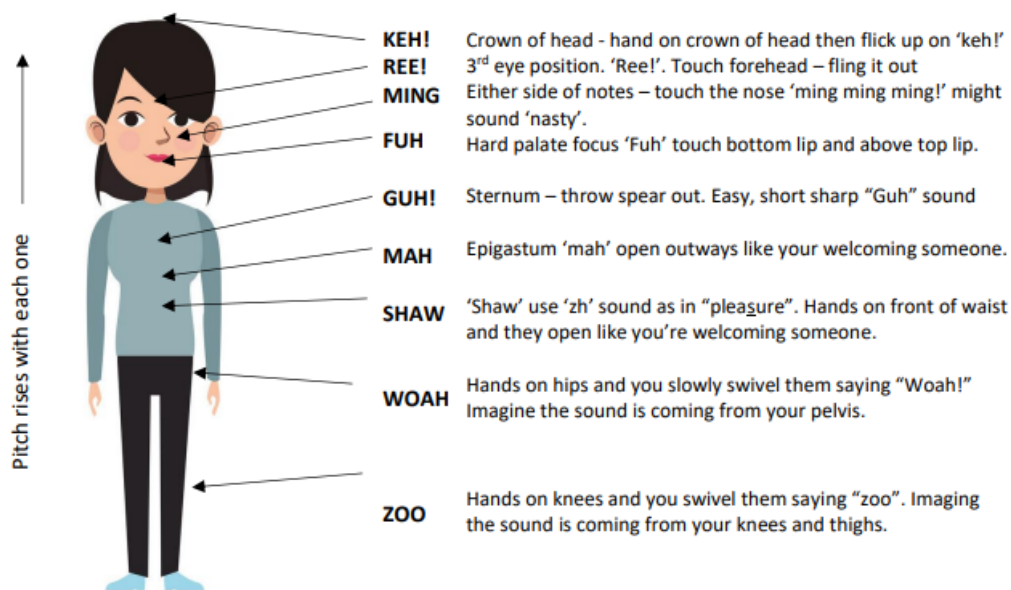
Messa Di Voce- Kim Vaughn: <https://youtu.be/igO7Q9gcnMs>

Mixed Register Exercises: Kathleen Hansen: [https://youtu.be/xPVz8DI\\_oVw](https://youtu.be/xPVz8DI_oVw)

Developing Consistency Through Mixed Voice Training: <https://youtu.be/TcWXkDuRoNQ>

### Resonance Ladder – Feeling resonance in the body.

Imaging you can feel the vibrations from these sounds in various parts of your body. Start low on the “Zoo” and the pitch rises with each one. Let the sound be tension free, open and easy and *clear*. This is about movement and sound together. Explore and have fun!



*Adapted from Kristin Linklater- The Resonance Ladder.*

Lea Baker – Voice Teacher

<https://www.raiseyourvoice.net.au/>

<https://bettersinging.thinkific.com/>