

# 1 Beginning Warm-Up, Breathing

Bingham Wick, Jr.

Use your warm-up time to teach good breathing-for-singing techniques:

- inhale slowly through the nose, like smelling a fragrant rose
- pull the air down deep to the “bottom of the stomach”
- blow air out by pulling in your abdominal muscles and “blowing a feather”

Once the singers’ attention is focused on the work at hand and they are responding

to the verbal and non-verbal communication (gestures) from the conductor, it’s time to begin to sing, or rather to *hum* quietly. Start with a quiet hum on a single pitch, mid-range tone, from which singing and listening can follow. Remind the singers to have a loose jaw, tongue down in the bottom of the mouth, and, most important, *listen*—to yourself and to the ensemble. Move from the hum into simple, primary vowel warm-ups.

# 2 Beginning Warm-Up, Pitch, Resonance, Watching the Conductor

Mark Munson

The objective of this exercise is to gently begin phonation and to develop resonance. It is a good exercise to use after stretching and breathing warm-ups. Junior High/Middle School students especially enjoy it.

1. The teacher stands facing the chorus with his/her hand just in front of his/her chest, palm facing down.
2. Remind the students that there are three ways to hum: on an *m*, an *n*, or on an *ng*.
  - *m*: lips lightly together and teeth apart on the inside
  - *n*: open the lips and position the tongue behind the teeth
  - *ng*: drop the jaw to the “ah” position and raise the back of the tongue to the soft palate

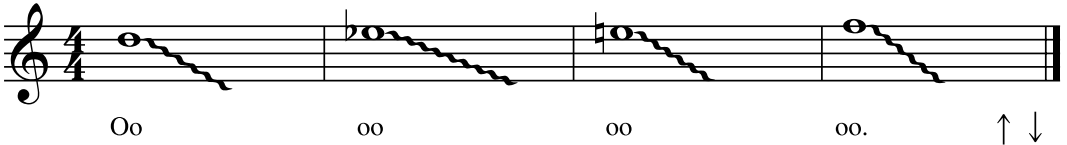
3. Students hum an *m* somewhere in the middle of their vocal range.
4. As the teacher moves his/her hand down, the students move their voices down in pitch. Likewise, as the teacher’s hand moves up, their pitch moves up.
5. As the teacher moves his/her hand to the right, the students *crescendo*. Likewise, as the teacher’s hand moves to the left, they should *decrescendo*.
6. After humming on the *m* for a few seconds, repeat the exercise on an *n* and then on an *ng*, reminding the singers how the sounds are made. To increase awareness, have the singers describe where they feel vibrations as they hum each of the three sounds.

### 3 Beginning Warm-Up, Range

Joanne Rutkowski

It is important that warm-ups for young singers encourage the placement of the voice in the upper register, and then move down into lower registers. This warm-up is useful for working on proper breathing techniques, initiation of sound, and vowel placement. The director may perform the vocal "sigh" first while the singers prepare

their breath. Then the singers should echo the director. The exact pitch of the initiated sound is not crucial. The *oo* vowel seems to elicit the most focused sound, while encouraging an open, long mouth position (as opposed to a smile-like position). Vary the warm-up using other vowel sounds.

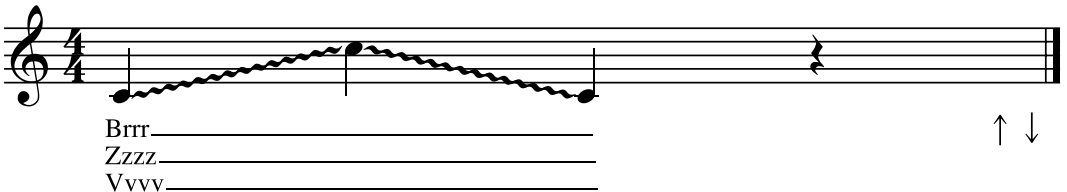


### 4 Beginning Warm-Up

Philip Kern

Try these lip trills. Let the lips remain limp; they will vibrate as you sing the notes. Be sure to keep supporting the

breath for good intonation. (Be careful, the front row may become the splash zone!) Also try *Zzzz* and *Vvvv*.



### 5 Beginning Warm-Up, Physical

Janet Gardner

Create focus and energy within your group with this physical warm-up. Set a slow 2/4 tempo. The director holds a hand up while saying "one." The singers mirror the movement on the next beat saying "two." The director moves his/her hand position to another place saying "one." The chorus

mirrors saying "two," and so on. Keep a steady tempo. Try other time signatures 4/4 (leader is 1 and 3), 6/8 (leader is 1, 3, and 5) and different tempos. Invite a student to be the "leader." The chorus can also do this activity in partners. Add pats, claps, snaps, foot stomps, etc.