

The Choral Director's Bag of Tricks

Composed and Arranged by

Jeremy M. Nabors

Editor: Victor Johnson
Music Engraving: Linda Taylor
Cover Design: Jesse Mattson



choristersguild

Copyright ©2026 Choristers Guild. All rights reserved Printed in U.S.A
Reproduction of all or any portion in any form is prohibited without permission of the publisher.

Foreword

This adventure started as a quick project to fill out a few missing spots in my warm-ups throughout the year. I needed a few more rounds and warm-ups that my changing voices could sing early in the year, and a few more tunes for my 6th graders to use towards the end of the year. It exploded into this, hopefully, helpful resource for beginning choirs. Learning to sing is different from learning an instrument. It can often be frustrating or mystifying for a singer because there is no button to push or a visual part of the vocal track to look at. Singers have to learn how their instrument works without being able to see some of the most important parts. While there is no substitute for being able to describe to a singer what they need to do inside their body to create a free sound, many singers are helped by imagery to explore concepts like placement, the mask, support, and other vocal-technique descriptions. While these warm-ups have been extremely helpful for my changing voices and my beginning 6th graders, they have also been effective with my high school students.

-Jeremy M. Nabors

Contents

Create A Space	4	Buttercups and Daisies	30
Don't Be Like A Duck	6	I Stood Beside a Hill	32
Lift Inside	8	Found a Penny – Riveting Stuff	34
Which Wristwatches	10	The First Sleigh-Ride	36
Peaches and Nectarines	12	Dilly Dally in the Parlor	40
Race Cars Go Fast	14	Chumbara	42
Fuzzy Wuzzy	16	The North Wind Doth Blow	44
Picolomini	18	Spring Song	46
Who Has Seen the Wind	21	Solfege Round	47
La Be Da Be	24	Sunday Plans	48
Six Slippery Snails	26	He Threw Three Free Throws	50
Rain	28	One Black Bug	52

Downloadable Singer's Edition

Access a downloadable singer's edition at
bit.ly/botsinged

Create a Space

Teach the singers about their soft palate! The image of a candy cane standing vertically inside their mouth can help a singer envision raising their soft palate as they breathe. Ask the singers to sniff an imaginary rose through their nose so they can feel the cool air hit their soft palate. Remind them to feel their “candy cane breath” each time they breathe.

Molto legato (♩ = ca. 100)

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It consists of three systems of music, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo is marked 'Molto legato' with a quarter note equal to approximately 100 beats per minute. The lyrics are: 'Cre - ate a space in - side your mouth with room be - tween your teeth. Re - lax your jaw in - side your mouth, your teeth should nev - er'. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note bass line and a more active treble line with chords and moving lines.

Cre - ate a space in -

side your mouth with room be - tween your teeth. Re -

lax your jaw in - side your mouth, your teeth should nev - er

Copyright © 2026 Choristers Guild. All rights reserved. Printed in U.S.A.
Reproduction of all or any portion in any form is prohibited without permission of the publisher.

Don't Be Like a Duck

Duck bills open tall in front but grow shallow towards the throat. Snakes, on the other hand, drop their jaws to open both front and back. This visual helps singers remember to make a tall shape in the front AND back of their mouth.

Swing! (♩ = ca. 92) ♩ = $\overset{\frown}{\text{trill}}$

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of two sharps (D major). It consists of three systems of music. The first system shows the piano introduction with a treble and bass clef. The second system includes the first vocal line with lyrics: "Don't be like a duck. Tall up front but shal - low in back." The piano accompaniment features a steady bass line and chords in the right hand. The third system includes the second vocal line with lyrics: "Em - u - late the snake! Re - laxed in front and back!" The piano accompaniment continues with similar harmonic support. A large, diagonal watermark reading "PREVIEW" is overlaid across the entire score.

2
Don't be like a duck. Tall up front but shal - low in back.

4
Em - u - late the snake! Re - laxed in front and back!

Copyright © 2026 Choristers Guild. All rights reserved. Printed in U.S.A.
Reproduction of all or any portion in any form is prohibited without permission of the publisher.

Peaches and Nectarines

Like an unsupported singer's sound, peaches have "fuzz" on the outside. Nectarines on the other hand, are "smoooooooooooooth." Remind the singers to engage their breathing and focus the sound as they sing so the fuzz disappears. Be careful to avoid singing on the "r's" to keep the tone open and flowing.

Spirited ♩ = ca. 104

We don't want to sound like peach - es, with

fuzz— all a-round the sound. We want to sound like nec - ta - rines,——

clean and round. We

Copyright © 2026 Choristers Guild. All rights reserved. Printed in U.S.A.
 Reproduction of all or any portion in any form is prohibited without permission of the publisher.

La Be Da Be

Keep the air flowing without breaks! Avoid the dreaded “h” between syllables. La “h”a be “h”e da “h”a be “h”e is the enemy of flowing air and a smooth sound. Have the singers use their hands to paint long strokes of color on a wall or spread peanut butter over a sandwich.

Smoothly connected (♩ = ca. 80)

La be da be ni po tu la be

La be da be ni po tu la be

La be da be ni po tu la be

Pronunciation: *Lah Bay Dah Bay Nee Poh Toolah Bay*

Copyright © 2026 Choristers Guild. All rights reserved. Printed in U.S.A.
 Reproduction of all or any portion in any form is prohibited without permission of the publisher.

Buttercups and Daisies

Long phrases can be a struggle for choirs. Help the choir work on stagger breathing by encouraging your singers to discreetly take a breath whenever they need to without ending the word they are singing, rather than singing until they run out of air. Choir is the ultimate team sport. Every singer plays every moment and can rely on their teammates to keep singing when it is time for a quick breath in the middle of a word or phrase.

Gently, waltz-like (♩ = ca. 92)

The musical score is written in 3/4 time with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). It consists of three systems of music. The first system shows the piano introduction. The second system begins with a vocal line starting at measure 4, with lyrics: "But - ter - cups and dai - sies, Oh, the pret - ty". The piano accompaniment continues. The third system begins with a vocal line starting at measure 7, with lyrics: "flow'rs, Com - ing ere the spring - time, to". The piano accompaniment continues. A large, diagonal watermark reading "PREVIEW" is overlaid across the entire score.

Text by Mary Howitt (1799–1888), alt.

Copyright © 2026 Choristers Guild. All rights reserved. Printed in U.S.A.
 Reproduction of all or any portion in any form is prohibited without permission of the publisher.

The First Sleigh-Ride

This winter round focuses the singer on centering the pitch while singing arpeggiated motion and leaping intervals. Ask the singers to dip their hands in imaginary bowls of water and then flick the water droplets lightly on each note.

Merrily (♩ = ca. 76)

S

A

2

hap - py time of fleec - y rime and fall - ing flakes and O, the

Words by Sara Teasdale (1884–1933), alt.

Copyright © 2026 Choristers Guild. All rights reserved. Printed in U.S.A.
 Reproduction of all or any portion in any form is prohibited without permission of the publisher.

He Threw Three Free Throws

Descending intervals can be a big challenge for singers. This tongue twister focuses the singers on keeping their intervals in the center of the pitch. The image of throwing darts at a precise spot helps singers keep the pitches in the center of each note. Be sure the singers maintain a light and bouncy vocal production to avoid heavy or shouty singing.

Gently, unhurried (♩ = ca. 80)

He threw three free throws and she threw thir - ty foot threes.

3 He threw free throws, she threw four threes, then passed it back to me.

5 He threw three free throws and she threw thir - ty foot threes.

Copyright © 2026 Choristers Guild. All rights reserved. Printed in U.S.A.
 Reproduction of all or any portion in any form is prohibited without permission of the publisher.

Index

Limited Range

Chumbara, 42
Found a Penny – Riveting Stuff, 34
Fuzzy Wuzzy, 16
I Stood Beside a Hill, 32
La Be Da Be, 24
Lift Inside, 8
The North Wind Doth Blow, 44
One Black Bug , 52
Peaches and Nectarines, 12
Rain, 28
Solfege Round, 47
Spring Song, 46
Sunday Plans, 48

Extended Range

Buttercups and Daisies , 30
Create A Space , 4
Dilly Dally in the Parlor, 40
Don't Be Like A Duck , 6
The First Sleigh-Ride, 36
He Threw Three Free Throws, 50
Piccolomini, 18

Vocal Technique

Create A Space , 4
Don't Be Like A Duck , 6
Lift Inside, 8
Peaches and Nectarines, 12
Race Cars Go Fast, 14

Phrasing/Breath Management

Buttercups and Daisies , 30
I Stood Beside a Hill, 32
Lift Inside, 8
Six Slippery Snails, 26

Agility

Fuzzy Wuzzy, 16
La Be Da Be, 24
Piccolomini, 18
Rain, 28
Six Slippery Snails, 26
Who Has Seen the Wind, 21

Harmony Skills

Dilly Dally in the Parlor, 40
The First Sleigh-Ride, 36
Found a Penny – Riveting Stuff, 34
Lift Inside, 8
The North Wind Doth Blow, 44
One Black Bug , 52

Minor

The North Wind Doth Blow, 44
Six Slippery Snails, 26
Who Has Seen the Wind, 21

Tongue-Twisters

Chumbara, 42
Dilly Dally in the Parlor, 40
Fuzzy Wuzzy, 16
He Threw Three Free Throws, 50
La Be Da Be, 24
One Black Bug , 52
Piccolomini, 18
Six Slippery Snails, 26
Sunday Plans, 48
Which Wristwatches, 10

Rounds

Dilly Dally in the Parlor, 40
The First Sleigh-Ride, 36
The North Wind Doth Blow, 44
Solfege Round, 47
Spring Song, 46
Spring Song, 46

Partner Song

Dilly Dally in the Parlor, 40
Found a Penny – Riveting Stuff, 34