

The Little Book of Ups

A collection of activities, exercises, and games to

Warm Up Voices
Lift Up Spirits
& Build Up Community

by
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Safe to Be Ourselves

If we're going to ask singers to open up and be vulnerable so they can make music that is emotionally authentic, we have to foster an environment where they know it is safe to do so.


This exercise emphasizes that ideal while also working to extend the range. When we feel emotionally safe, we are more likely to open up, to reach out, and to extend ourselves.

Consider writing each of the eight phrases of this exercise on a white board or chart paper. You can put a star over the word with the highest note in each phrase. Point to each phrase as the choir sings. This will make it easier for them to track where they are in the exercise.


For an added challenge: Sing this exercise on a minor scale (page 15, top) or begin on high *do* and invert the melodic pattern (page 15, bottom).



Here. Here is where. Here is where we all. Here is where we



all are safe. Here is where we all are safe to be. Here is where we all are



safe to be our-selves. Here is where we all are safe to be our-selves and so...



Here is where we all are safe to be our-selves and so we sing!

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Safe to Be Ourselves (Minor)

Here. Here is where. Here is where we all. Here is where we
 all are safe. Here is where we all are safe to be. Here is where we all are
 safe to be our-selves. Here is where we all are safe to be our-selves and so...
 Here is where we all are safe to be our-selves and so we sing!

Safe to Be Ourselves (Inverted)

Here. Here is where. Here is where we all. Here is where we
 all are safe. Here is where we all are safe to be. Here is where we all are
 safe to be our-selves. Here is where we all are safe to be our-selves and so...
 Here is where we all are safe to be our-selves and so we sing!

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How Can I Help?

A choir is a community of helpers and healers. So many singers, simply by joining a choral community, are asking in their own special way: “How can I help bring healing and hope to whomever needs a hand?”

This short song is a wonderful exercise for helping singers engage their abdominal muscles. When we sing with more support, we’re less likely to wear out those tender vocal cords. It also offers an opportunity to touch on the five main vowels – *ah, eh, ee, oh, oo*.

Encourage singers to really emphasize the onset ‘H’ as well as the staccato articulation. Have the singers place their hands on their waist and press in ever-so-slightly as they sing. This will help them feel those abdominal muscles at work.

With bounce (♩ = 80)

The musical score is written on three staves in 6/8 time with a key signature of two flats (Bb and Eb). The tempo is marked 'With bounce' and the quarter note is equal to 80 beats per minute. The lyrics are: 'Hah, hah, hah, how can I heh, heh, heh, help bring hee, hee, hee, heal-ing and hoh, hoh, hoh, hope to hoo, hoo, hoo, whom-ev-er needs a ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, hand?' The melody is simple and rhythmic, using eighth and quarter notes.

Leaving Space (Solfege)

When someone from our community isn’t there in person, we can still feel their presence. Their place still matters. This is a great exercise for helping singers hear pitches internally. Using the framework of a major scale, singers will gradually remove sung pitches while leaving space for missing scale tones.

Practice singing an ascending and descending scale on solfege (or numbers, if you prefer). Next, choose one scale tone to omit - but leave space for it when you get to that point in the scale. It may take a couple of passes to get everyone on board.

Try the same exercise, leaving space for two scale tones. It might be helpful to display the scale tones on a board or magnetic board and circle/remove the tones that will only be heard internally.

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1

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

2

do re mi (fa) sol la ti do ti la sol (fa) mi re do

3

do re mi (fa) sol la (ti) do (ti) la sol (fa) mi re do

Leaving Space (Names)

Replace solfege syllables with the names of eight choir members, including at least one member who isn't able to be at rehearsal. When singing the ascending and descending scale on choir members' names, leave a space for whichever member is absent. While the name might not be heard aloud, it can be internally felt by all. Not every name is one syllable like solfege, so don't worry about trying to sing the scale to a particular tempo or rhythm. The pitches, the names, and especially the *people* those names represent are what matter most.

1

Sam, Han-nah, Ju-li-o, Raj, Ja-qui, Beth, Mar-co, Kate,

Mar-co, Beth, Ja-qui, Raj, Ju-li-o, Han-nah, Sam.

2

Sam, Han-nah, Ju-li-o, Raj, Ja-qui, (Beth) Mar-co, Kate,

Mar-co, (Beth) Ja-qui, Raj, Ju-li-o, Han-nah, Sam.

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Judgment-Free Zone (Round)

I have to say this to choirs all the time, especially youth and adult choirs: *You are in the judgment-free zone.* Will there be discernment? Yes. Will we take time to explore, to evaluate, to adjust? Yes. But we are not here to judge each other. We are not here to determine whose voice is worthy and whose is not. That's an easy concept to hear, but not always so easy to internalize. So, let's sing it! This short song can be sung in unison or as a two- or three-part round. Have the singers affirm one another by looking at each other as they sing.


$\text{♩} = 120$

①




You are in the judg-ment - free zone.

②



Judg-ment - free, judg - ment - free, judg-ment-free zone.

③




Judg - ment - free zone.

You Are Part of the Song (Round)

You have a place where you belong. May we never get tired of sharing this message with singers, with listeners, with the world. This song can be sung in unison. It can also provide an opportunity to explore part singing by being sung as a two-, three-, or four-part round. Encourage singers to lean into the *ng* sound at the ends of each phrase. The *ng* sound is great for bringing more resonance into the sound.

$\text{♩} = 76$


①



You have a place where you be-long. You have a voice to bring.

②

③



Sing, sing, let mu - sic ring. You are part of the song.

④

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Hello in Many Languages

Learning to say *hello* in someone else's language of origin is an act of kindness, friendship, and respect. It asks us to reach beyond ourselves, grow personally, and build community. This song incorporates *hello* in many languages. It is also a subtle exploration of ranges and intervals. Teach both parts to the entire choir so singers can take turns singing the expanding melody as well as the tonic foundation.

Part I begins on D, and each subsequent measure begins on a higher pitch until all intervals of the major scale have been covered.

Part II remains on D throughout, providing a solid foundation for singing this song unaccompanied.

Hola	<i>OH-lah</i>	Spanish
Bonjour	<i>boh(n)-ZHOOR</i>	French
Sawubona	<i>sah-woo-BOH-nah</i>	Zulu
Shalom	<i>shah-LOHM</i>	Hebrew
Namaste	<i>NAH-muh-steh</i>	Hindi
Ni hao	<i>NEE how</i>	Mandarin
Aloha	<i>ah-LOH-hah</i>	Hawaiian
Salaam	<i>sah-LAHM</i>	Persian
Jambo	<i>JAH-mboh</i>	Swahili
Konnichiwa	<i>koh-NEE-chee-wah</i>	Japanese
Niltze	<i>NEEL-tseh</i>	Nahuatl
Hello	<i>heh-LOH</i>	English

$\text{♩} = \text{c. } 144$

I
Ho - la, bon - jour, sa - wu - bo - na, sha - lom.

II
Jam - bo, kon - ni - chi - wa, nil - tze, hel - lo.

Na - ma - ste, ni hao, a - lo - ha, sa - laam.

Jam - bo, kon - ni - chi - wa, nil - tze, hel - lo.

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