

## Evoking Sound the Choral Warm-Up

By: James Jordan/Helen Kemp

I thoroughly enjoyed reading this book. The person that put it together has some great ideas in it. I thought I would list the pages and ideas I thought to be very helpful:

- p.28 - table
- p.25 - activity
- p.39 - alignment vs. posture
- p.43 - rehearsal room chair alignment
- p.52 - soft palate
- p.61 - trachea vs. esophagus
- p.64 - breath kneading exercise
- p.71 - Lip trill dangers
- p.74 - humming/chewing exercise/vowel color and placement
- p.88 - dynamics
- p.92 - range extension
- p.97 - vowel length/consonant length
- p. 104-106 - 6 Step Diction Teaching Technique
- p.119-121 - general teaching procedure
- p.123 - rehearsal room chair arrangements
- p.141-149 - physical gestures/warm-up principles
- p.151-174 - physical gestures continued
- p.182-190 - efforts in combination
- p.191 - vocal color of choir/breath
- p.194 - no verbal repetition or clapping to teach rhythm
- p.195 - rhythm felt/experienced and consistent tempo
- p.196 - movement coordination sequence
- p.198 - rhythm learning/not theory but audiation
- p.199 - macro beat, micro beat, melodic rhythm
- p.200 - table
- p.202 - metronome/kinesthetic tempo
- p.206 - warm-ups (5 X 7" cards)
- p.208-217 - planning templates
- p.220-233 - troubleshooting chart
- p.237 - accompanied, harmonic warm-ups
- p.238-239 - strong suggestions

There are a couple of pages I marked in yellow post-it tabs. I marked them because I thought that the explanation of the topic was very vague and could be explained better to help the director/voice teacher teach the concept in a more effective manner.

p. 10 - The Section entitled **Rule 2 REALIGN AND EMPLOY BODY MAPPING PRINCIPLES TO REEDUCATE THE SINGERS**

*Better visual example could be:*

Refer to book: How to Train Singers pp.8-54 for “Aligning the Body – The Alexander Technique “Breathing Procedure”

I understand that you would have a difficult time having your students lay on the floor and/or line themselves up against the wall during a rehearsal. The concepts however and the pictures provided give an excellent example of body alignment when using the gift of your voice.

pp.53-54 - The Section entitled: **5. Make certain the choir “wraps their lips around the sound.”**

Refer to book: How to Train Singers pp.55-58 for “Inside Smile” and also pp.68-76 for the use of face muscles and lip pads engaged in providing direction of vowel placement and resonance.

The warm-ups provided here have shown from my experience some phenomenal results. I think that they could easily translate into choral warm-ups as well.

p.111 - The Section entitled: **“The Tip of the Tongue “L”**

Refer to book: How to Train Singers pp.65-67 for “Flah-Flah-Nee Exercise”

This is a great warm-up for correct placement of “L’s.”

p. 136 - The Section entitled: **“Approach 2: Awareness”**

Refer to book: How to Train Singers pp. 52-53 for “Plie.”

This little section shows the importance of using your lower body for muscular support while singing. The legs are such a key part of proper breathing. Those wonderful thigh muscles were given to us by God for a great many reasons. I was hoping that by pointing this out, it could be helpful for you.

Now, I did notice that some of the information in this book could be relayed as confusing or even contradictory to the study of voice. I have been aware that training choral members and voice students are two entirely different processes and have tried to take the best of both worlds in my years of

experience. However, I thought by pointing these few things out in the book it could bring an excellent discussion on the continuity you hope to achieve in the voice program and your choirs. I marked these pages with red tabs.

p. 27 - Third paragraph: "Method is central to all efficient and enduring teaching. Method also contains a combination of bias and experience on the part of the person who writes the method. **The "list" or method below may not, and probably is not, the method by which the studio teacher would teach voice.**

p.50-51 - The Section entitled: **2. Create space by the use of the "cave."**  
Refer to book: How to Train Singers p.10 "The Case Against Combining Opposing Techniques" and also pp.64-65 for "Kee-kay and Kee-kah exercises"

The warm-ups on pg. 64-65 are wonderful for correct placement of releasing the jaw-hinge.

pp.62-63 - The Section entitled: *Verbal Cues for Inhalation and Exhalation*  
Refer to book: How to Train Singers p.26-28 "The Lungs and Chest," "The Diaphragm"  
And also pp.31-38 "Natural Breathing," "High Chest Breathing" "**Circle Arm Breath**"

The main source of breath control are the abdominal muscles. They control the diaphragm which controls the intake/exhale of air. When you are proficient on using these muscles correctly you also need to use your lower back muscles and your back rib cage. The suggestions that were given in the Jordan book were confusing, not necessarily incorrect. I thought you might like to see how it was laid out in the book I suggested as the pictures are so helpful and the flow of description more easy to follow.

p.76 - The second to last paragraph: The recommended starting key for all warm-ups of this type is E-flat.

I was always taught (by 4 different voice teachers) that middling a voice would require all warm-ups to begin on C. I am not sure if this is a big deal to you. However, the passagio (or passageway) from chest voice to head voice on a soprano starts at Treble C and ends on F above Treble C. If the warm-ups were to actually middle the voice it is exceeding the natural mid-range of a soprano and heading into the head voice on every warm-up. I thought this might be helpful. Hopefully, I am not being too picky. (tee, hee)

p.78 - The second to last paragraph: A word must be added here concerning experienced, trained singers within any choral ensemble. Vowels employed in the studio and on stage that are beautiful in those situations are probably too "open" for a choral situation. I have heard so many beautiful voices compromised in choral rehearsals because the conductor keeps "shooshing" the voice or telling the singer to sing "quieter."

However, that is not the issue. It is a question of vowel! That singer's beautiful color is needed in the ensemble, so that singer should never compromise vocal technique to "blend." The singer should instead simply close vowel sounds more than he/she does in the studio or on stage. Singers who share both the choral experience and the stage experience must use the vowel as their primary tool in adapting to the specific performance needs of both.

I thought pointing this out was important. As this was my experience and something that I have tried to work on myself with continued training in voice.

p.150 - **The section and illustration for "Body Tip."**

Refer to book How To Train Singers pp.46-47 "The Head Position"

This particular illustration and suggestion alarmed me. I have always been taught that your head must always be level and your shoulders should never be rounded. It actually does damage to your larynx. I would be curious to find out more information on the background behind this suggestion and what "covering" actually is in vocal pedagogy literature. I hope that by pointing this out, it may bring about some more helpful information.