Exercise 3

Establishing the open throat position, using a deep, rich stable vowel, and then learning to keep the quality of the vowel stable as the pitch moves is one of the most important aspects of learning to sing.

Exercise 3 has three components:

First, you alternate gently between the pitch immediately below the starting pitch.

Then, you alternate gently between the pitch one whole step above the starting pitch.

Finally, elements of the second part of the exercise are combined with a new interval – that of a M3rd, and the upper pitch is sustained briefly for several seconds before settling back down to the original pitch. Be sure to use portamento to move between the pitches, and allow the vibrato to function as you sing the upper pitch for those several seconds.

Use the vowel [o] or [a] as is comfortable for you. Sometimes, it’s easier to find the ideas using the [o] vowel, then transition to the [a] vowel, as the [o] becomes stable and easier for you to perform. Do your best to establish a beautiful, resonant tone that is neither breathy nor ‘pushed’ or strained, and use a fully opened throat, with a mouth consistently open at the “two fingers” position.

A couple of important notes of caution:

1. This exercise is considerably longer in duration than either Exercise 1 or 2. It’s the beginning of a real vocal workout! Properly sung, this exercise should take approximately 7-9 minutes total time.
2. You’ll hear in the guide video and accompaniment track that this exercise is sung no higher than Eb 4 for women and Eb 3 for men. This is because of the vigorous nature of the exercise, and the load it places on the various muscles of the larynx as it is sung.

This load is not unhealthy in any way – we’re training! But what is also true is that just as with any new physical exercise, care must be taken not to “overdo” it, even when we feel it’s going well for us.

Finally, after singing Exercises 1, 2 and 3, you’ve given yourself a great start to your Daily Vocal Preparation, by singing the 3 exercises for a combined 12 -15 minutes total time.

Take a brief rest, then continue on with additional Exercises or transition to working on your song material.

As you gain experience with using them, you may also reasonably shorten your use of Exercises 1, 2 and 3, and move on more quickly to using other exercises to train.

Especially if you’ve already sung through Exercises 1, 2 and 3 in a previous session that day, you need not repeat them, but you can move on to working exercises of greater length and complexity. In other words, time for more training!

Here are MaJoVTA studio members James and McKenzie to perform the demonstration for you for Exercise 3.

Have fun!

