Basic Vocal Exercise No. 4 - Script

Exercise 6 is the first of the basic exercises that moves us higher in our range.

In addition to continuing to develop mastery of the “Foundation Four,” Exercise 4 adds the challenge of maintaining a stable vowel position in the throat, so that as we sing higher and lower, the quality of each pitch we sing sounds just like the others. At this point, we’re not singing every pitch between the starting and ending pitch, only the first and the interval of a Perfect 5th (5 tones) above.

The goal is to develop consistency in the vocal tone -- something that is very important in singing – and is also easier on the voice than a vowel that is constantly changing with every pitch.

Portamento – a gentle ‘slide’ between pitches instead of an abrupt pitch change motion, is also important. Listen closely to the demonstration and you’ll hear the singers demonstrate Portamento –sliding between the pitches—as they sing.

As notated, the exercise begins on “Middle C” on the piano keyboard, which is correct for women singers. Men singers sing one octave lower, so their starting pitch for this exercise is the C below Middle C, or what’s called “C3” on the piano keyboard.

After singing the starting pitch, you’ll slide gently upwards the interval of a Perfect 5th, then back down to the starting pitch; your goal is to maintain stability of the vowel sound while allowing the voice to move freely through the pitches. This is called ‘agility’ and is one of the Foundation Four.

After completing that rep, you’ll move up the keyboard by half-step, singing progressively higher until reaching the top of the exercise.

Then, you’ll descend by half-step, back to the starting point of your original C – Middle C for women, and C3 for men.

It's important to not worry about trying to sing all the way up as high as the accompaniment plays.

Instead, keep working up by half-step and when the exercise grows uncomfortable for you, simply drop out, wait for the exercise to begin descending, then begin singing again when it reaches your comfortable pitch range. Over time, you’ll find that you’ll be able to sing higher with greater ease.

When the accompaniment begins, I’ll play the guide pitches for both men and women for the first few repetitions of the exercise, then begin playing the accompaniment.

Here are MaJoVTA members James and McKenzie to demonstrate Exercise 4.

Have Fun!

