Basic Vocal Exercise No. 5.a - Script

Beginning similarly as Exercise 5, exercise 5.a uses notes of a shorter duration – eighth notes – and moves more quickly through the individual pitches of the interval of the perfect fifth.

Just as athletes train for both strength and speed, that’s what this exercise does for us.

The goal is essentially the same as Exercise 5, that is, to develop our ability to allow the voice to freely move from pitch to pitch, with the goal of the tone quality sounding consistently the same on each individual pitch across the interval of a perfect fifth.

Now, however, the notes are moving by at a much quicker pace – increasing the difficulty of the exercise and providing more of a challenge to keep the vowel consistent.

As before, 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.

Using a tempo of approximately 120 BPM, the first pitch is sustained briefly for three beats, then the notes are sung up the scale quickly to the interval of a perfect fifth.

The interval of the fifth is also sustained briefly for three beats, then the notes are sung back down the scale quickly to the original starting pitch.

The combination of both agility and sostenuto (the ability to sustain) in the same exercise is the challenge that exercise 5.a provides as being more complex and difficult than Exercise 5.

It’s as if you’re now asking the voice to do two things at one time – to both sustain and move – which results in a greater level of challenge. Once mastered, you’ll also experience a greater level of growth and ability in your vocal technique.

You’ll also notice that many of the songs we sing also follow this same exact pattern of movement. What we’re accomplishing is to train the voice, and at the same time, that training prepares the voice to perform as we want in our songs.

A “Win-Win” if you will!

After completing the rep of singing more quickly through the pitches, you’ll again move up the keyboard by half-step, singing progressively higher until reaching the top of the exercise, and descend by half-step, back to the starting point of your original C – Middle C for women, and C3 for men.

As with the others, don’t 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 5.a.

Have fun!

