

Vocal Performance 3

Edited by Joe Bergamini

Digital book design and cover by Mike Hoff

Layout by Rick Gratton

Music engraving by Willie Rose

MI Curriculum Series

Series Sponsor: Jon Clayden, Vice President of Academic Affairs

Creative Director & Executive Editor: Donny Gruendler, Vice President of Instruction and Curricular Development

Managing Editor: Joe Bergamini

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VOCAL PERFORMANCE 3

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Chapter 1: General Performance Notes

Key

This unit's chart is in two keys: B for male and F# for female—both are diatonic. Be sure that you are looking at the correct chart for your gender. Example 1.1 below illustrates the scale of F#.

Ex. 1.1

Keyboard

Notation

Steps

Whole - Whole - Half - Whole - Whole - Whole - Half

Thirds

This unit's song features ascending and descending melodic thirds in the following locations: the pickup (bar 2), verse (bar 3), chorus 1 (bar 19), and chorus 2 (bar 27). Single vocal intervals (distances in pitch between two notes) are always described as melodic (or "linear") and not harmonic (or "vertical"). This is because the human voice can only sing one pitch at a time.

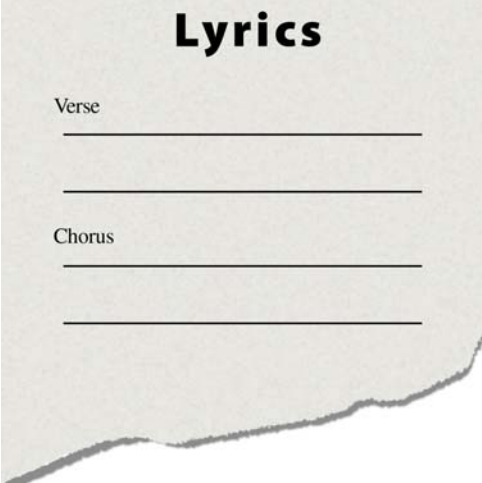
Rhythms

This unit's song features mixed rhythms comprised of syncopated eighth and 16th notes. You may find these types of rhythm more challenging to read than to learn by ear. Therefore, it is important to follow the chart a number of times without singing—while listening to the reference audio.

Subdividing

Most of the notes in the chart are eighth and 16th notes. As the 16th note is the smallest increment of the rhythm, we will use our 16th-note count to learn the song (ONE-e-and-a-TWO-e-and-a-THREE-e-and-a-FOUR-e-and-a).

Cross-Course Study Note: Units 9 and 10 in Sight Singing 2 have a number of training exercises featuring mixed eighth and 16th-note rhythms. Use them to help you to further understand mixed rhythms.



Lyrics

Verse

Chorus

The male and female charts for this song feature gender-altered lyrics. When a song is written in the first-person narrative for a specific gender—words such as “girl” and “woman” are substituted for “boy” and “man” (and vice versa). Be sure that you are looking at the correct chart for your gender.

Spend time reading through the lyrics without listening to the music or attempting to sing the melody. Once you have determined what the writer(s) are describing, spend time thinking about how these feelings or emotions relate to you personally. Tap into the emotion of the piece and convey that feeling to the audience.

Chapter 2: Section-Specific Performance Notes



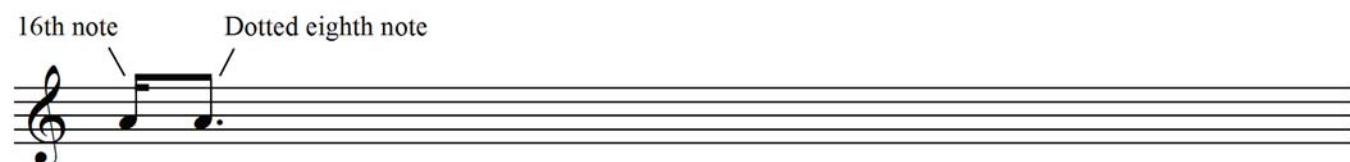
The A Section (Reference audio location: 0:05 – 0:27)

The A section, or verse 1 (bars 3-10), is eight measures long and features a rhythm containing both eighth and 16th notes. Learning this rhythm by ear should be fairly simple, because the pop music we hear on the television, Internet, and radio contains such rhythms. However, sight reading them is a little more challenging.

Slowing down the reference audio (using the Amazing Slow Downer computer program found in the MI Library or Vocal Lab computers) will assist you in breaking rhythms down into their core elements. With the tempo at approximately 72 BPM, count yourself off in the intro measure (bar 1) using a quarter-note pulse subdivided into 16ths: "ONE-e-and-a-TWO-e-and-a-THREE-e-and-a-FOUR-e-and-a." Now read the rhythms of the pickup measure (bar 2) and the first measure of the verse (bar 3). Repeat this exercise until you feel confident that you have locked into the rhythm. Next, try it again with the tempo a little faster. Continue this process until you are able to read (and sing) the rhythms of these two measures at the original tempo. Repeat this practice method for the subsequent measures within the verse (bars 5-10).

The third measure of the verse (bar 5) contains a 16th and dotted eighth note on beat 2 (the word "never"), as in Example 1.2 (below). Remember: a dotted note carries 150% of its original value. In this instance the note is a dotted eighth, and so it should be held for the duration of three 16th notes. You must make sure that you hold the tied eighth notes at the end of this measure for their full duration.

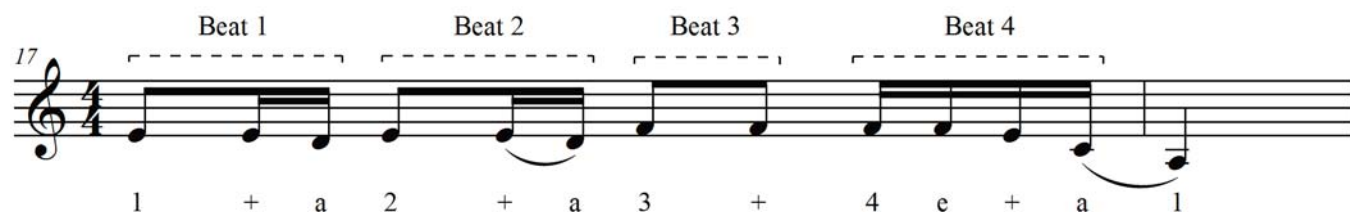
Ex. 1.2



The B Section (Reference audio location: 0:27 – 0:47)

The B section, or pre-chorus (bars 11-18), is rhythmically similar to the verse, but pay close attention to the seventh measure (bar 17). There are eleven notes occupying the space of four beats! Spend time focusing on this measure to ensure that you are able to sing all of these notes at the original tempo. Example 1.3 (below) illustrates how the notes of such a complex eighth and 16th-note rhythm relate to the quarter-note pulse and its values.

Ex. 1.3



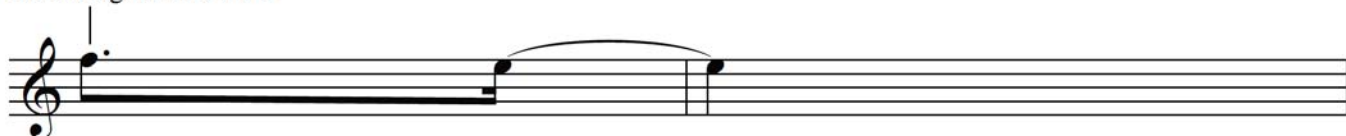
C

The C Section (Reference audio location: 0:47 – 1:09)

In both the male and female keys, the C section, or chorus 1 melody (bars 19-28), sits right on the edge of the passagio (or “break”) between the lower and middle registers (the chest voice and the middle voice). In the male key (“B”), the melody peaks on the note E4 in both dotted eighth-note and 16th-note variations (Example 1.4, below). This note occurs in the C section on the words “over” in bar 21, “inside” in bar 23 and “sober” in bar 25.

Ex. 1.4

Dotted eighth note on “F”



You may sing chorus 1 in either the lower or middle register (whichever is more comfortable for you). If you choose to sing in the lower register, make sure that you are sufficiently warmed up prior to practicing. Do not yell or scream in order to reach the high notes. Alternatively, if you choose to sing in your middle register, pay attention to your placement. Try to continue singing in your upper register as much as possible as you descend into the lower notes of the section. Focus on making sure that your resonance is in your mask. This will allow you to better blend the upper and lower registers into a desirable middle-register sound.

Cross-Course Study Note: As discussed in Vocal Technique 3, to achieve a full and natural sounding middle register, it is better to blend your head voice (upper register) down toward the chest voice (lower register) than vice versa. Your voice may sound “pinched” if you do the opposite (chest voice to head voice) because you may be pushing to reach the higher notes at the upper limit of your chest voice.

D

The D Section (Reference audio location: 1:09 – 1:30)

Unlike many pop songs, the D section or chorus 2 (bars 27-34) is not a copy of chorus 1. Although chorus 2 reprises elements of chorus 1 (such as the word “sober” in bars 29 and 33), the remainder of the lyrics, melody and rhythms are unique to this section.

The rhythms within the D section are mixed. The section contains eighth, dotted-eighth, 16th, tied-16th, and slurred eighth and 16th notes (Example 1.5, below). Remember that although a slur and a tie are visually similar, they function very differently. A tie extends the value of a single note to the combined duration of its tied note. A slur indicates that two or more notes should be sung without separation (“legato”).

Ex. 1.5



The first measure of the D section (bar 27) starts off with a downbeat emphasis, but becomes syncopated at the end of the phrase on the word “down.” This rhythm is repeated in measure two (bar 28). The last word of the phrase (“round”) is also syncopated, but it falls in a different location with respect to its rhyme “down” in the prior measure.

E+F

The E and F Sections (Reference audio location: 1:30 – 2:01 & 2:01 – 2:23)

The melodic peak of the song (F4 on the male chart) is revisited in both the E section, or bridge (bars 35-46), and the F section, or chorus 3 (bars 47-55). This return to the passagio requires you to focus on your technique. Practice singing the E and F sections in your lower register or chest voice (without straining), and then in your middle register or mix voice. This method should highlight the differences in the two registers, warm up your voice, and help you to better transition into the middle register. The more often you practice these sections in your middle register, the easier it will become to execute this technique during your in-class performances.

Example 1.6 (below) shows the average male and female vocal ranges on the piano keyboard (in which middle C, or “C4” is written larger and in bold text). As you can see, the high note in this unit’s song is near the limit of the average male voice (the E above middle C, or “E4”):

Ex. 1.6

A: Baritone range (average male voice: F2-F4)*

The diagram shows a piano keyboard with the notes F, G, A, B, C, D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D, E, F labeled below the keys. The note C is written in bold. A double-headed arrow spans from the first F to the second E. Below the keyboard is a musical staff with a treble clef. The notes F, G, A, B, C, D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D, E, F are written on the staff, with the C note being significantly larger than the others. The notes are placed on the lines and spaces of the staff, with the C note on the first space (F4).

B: Mezzo-soprano range (average female voice: A3-A5)*

The diagram shows a piano keyboard with the notes A, B, C, D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D, E, F, G, A labeled below the keys. The note C is written in bold. A double-headed arrow spans from the first A to the second E. Below the keyboard is a musical staff with a treble clef. The notes A, B, C, D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D, E, F, G, A are written on the staff, with the C note being significantly larger than the others. The notes are placed on the lines and spaces of the staff, with the C note on the first space (C4).

*The baritone and mezzo-soprano ranges are used (for male and female respectively), as they are the most common. However, your own range might be higher, lower or wider than the examples above.

ON YOUR OWN

Homework

- If you have not already performed twice, prepare for your second Unit 1 performance

Practice Suggestions

- Read through Unit 1
- Review the lyrics and vocal chart
- Listen to the reference audio: "VP-3 Unit-1 MP3"
- Practice counting off the song
- Sing the song each day until your next Unit 1 performance

If you have already given your first performance, spend time prior to your second performance working on the in-class critique notes from your instructor. By doing so, you should see a marked improvement in your second performance.

Homework: Looking Ahead to Unit 2

- If you have already given both of your Unit 1 performances, prepare for your first Unit 2 performance

Practice Suggestions

- Read through Unit 2
- Review the lyrics and vocal chart
- Listen to the reference audio: "VP-3 Unit-2 MP3"
- Practice counting off the song
- Sing the song each day until your next Unit 2 performance

Chapter 1: Genre Background Information

Key

This unit's chart is in two keys: Bb for male and C for female—both are diatonic. Be sure that you are looking at the correct chart for your gender. Example 2.1 (below) illustrates the scale of C:

Ex. 2.1

Keyboard

Notation Steps

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Whole - Whole - Half - Whole - Whole - Whole - Whole - Half

Thirds

This unit's song features ascending and descending melodic thirds in the following locations: the verse (bars 11, 19, and 20) and chorus 2 (bar 50).

Cross-Course Study Note: Your Sight Singing 2 course contained training exercises featuring ascending and descending thirds. Use them to help to you to further understand singing in thirds.

Rhythms

The majority of this unit's melody rides on one or two pitches. This restricted melodic range allows you to focus on the rhythm, which is both mixed and syncopated. The rhythm is predominantly comprised of quarter and eighth notes (with some ties), but there are also a small number of whole, half, dotted quarter, and tied and dotted quarter notes.

Subdividing

As the eighth note is the smallest increment of the rhythm within the chart, we will use our eight-note count to learn the song: "ONE-and-TWO-and-THREE-and-FOUR-and."