

Choral Tune Up



WHO AM I?

My name is Elise Witt. I was born in Bern, the capital of Switzerland. I speak five languages fluently and sing in at least a dozen more. I make my living travelling around the world concertizing and teaching, singing at places as diverse as Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center in New York, the Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change in Atlanta and in Latin America and Europe as well. I am also a guitarist and a songwriter and have 11 recordings on the EMWorld label. In addition to touring the world as a professional singer, I also sang for twenty years with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra Chorus and Chamber Chorus under the direction of choral genius Robert Shaw.

WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?

I will be working with your chorus to fine tune some of the basics of choral singing that you have been working on with your teacher. We will work with breath control, warm ups, vocal production, dynamics, diction, and group singing. We will learn a song that is polyrhythmic and polytonal. This will be a song that is easy to learn but sounds awesome when sung in parts by the whole ensemble. We will give special attention to the art of listening, which is as at least as important as the actual production of sound, and we will have some fun with vocal improvisation.

Vocabulary

TIMBRE - The color of sound. As singers we use timbre like a painter uses a color palette.

DICTION - Fitting the exact sound into an exact space in time. Clearly enunciating, often exaggerating pronunciation so that audiences can understand our words.

DYNAMICS - Loudness and softness (*forte* and *piano*) and every range of volume in between. We use dynamics in singing much like we use timbre, to express the meaning of the music through its sound.

PITCH - The actual note we are singing, created by sound waves.

ENSEMBLE - French word meaning *together*. In music, a group of people striving to sing harmoniously together, blending pitch and matching dynamics, timbre, and diction.

DIAPHRAGM - The muscle that is most key to singing. Like any other muscle it is strengthened through exercises and use.

IMPROVISE - To make it up as you go along. To use what you already know to create a new idea. You can improvise in music (take a solo), and also in life.

UNISON - In an ensemble, singing the exact same note at the exact same time with exactly the same timbre.

HARMONY - (In music) two or more musical lines that when sung or played together make a pleasing sound. (In life) two or more people or things or cultures that are different but live together in peace.

CALL & RESPONSE - a musical form often used in Africa where someone sings a line or phrase and the group sings back an answer.

COUNT SINGING - Singing the rhythm of the music by counting the note values.

DIPHTHONG - a vowel made up of two or more sounds eg. day, oh

Letters

I enjoy hearing students' reactions to my program.

- Do you have any new ideas about singing as a result of the session?
- What did you enjoy most/least about our session together?
- Other comments?

Send your letters to the address below.
Many thanks!

CD's

www.EliseWitt.com



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