



# The United States Army Field Band

## *The Joy of Singing*

### Companion Lesson Plans

#### **THE JOY OF SINGING: WARMING UP**

*This lesson is suitable for inclusion in a middle or high school choral, or collegiate “class voice” environment.*

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

- Students will learn the value of warming up regularly.
- Students will be provided with effective warm-ups for their genders and voice types.
- Students will recognize their continual healthy progress.
- Students will be encouraged to participate further in musical programs.

#### **MATERIALS:**

- *The Joy of Singing* video
- The exercises provided in this lesson plan

#### **PROCEDURES:**

*\*When warming up the voice, the difference in gender cannot be ignored. Males and females, based on physiological differences, have different “trouble spots” in their ranges as well as different places where resonance is optimum. We always try to maximize the “ring” in an individual voice.*

1. Warm up the body before the voice with simple exercises: a slow neck roll, a repeated shoulder lift followed by a drop, touching toes and slowly rolling up one vertebra at a time, massaging the muscles of the jaw and face, and opening arms and stretching them as far back as possible, gently.
2. With the group, complete the respective vocalises found below. Note: explore the ranges of your young singers, but be careful not to take any of these exercises to extremes.
3. Listen for things over time such as: **relaxation of tongue tension, greater release of air, mixing in the higher voice to blend the registers, increased agility, and a more focused tone.**
4. Employ, as much as possible, the descending vocalise to achieve the effect of a well-blended sound. This is especially useful for a good mix with choral singing but serves the soloist as well.
5. Although it is more time-consuming, work with students individually to demonstrate certain points.
6. Keep a moderate dynamic in mind. Singers can hear themselves better and hence blend with each other better when they are not over-blowing.

#### **EXPLORATION:**

1. Give students the assignment of listening to a recording of your choice and ask them to discuss it, focusing on their impressions.
2. Ask your students to attend a certain number of musical events during the year and report on the style and execution, asking for their specific observations regarding group performance.
3. Split them into small groups and have them work on a short piece to perform for the group, focusing on diction and communicating words. They may consult other teachers for help.

#### **ASSESSMENT:**

- Did students have insightful observations about the recordings that were assigned?
- Did students attend musical events and gain something from their experience?
- Did students approach their individual projects with enthusiasm and explore the diction of the pieces?

*Note: Coupled with the importance of choosing exercises that most benefit students is the responsibility of treating young voices with care. Barbara Doscher, a well-known pedagogue from the University of Colorado, said, "The single most important trait of the young voice is its limited endurance." Although warming up the voice is vital, over-rehearsing can be a danger. At an age when talking and socializing is at the center of their worlds, students are often at risk of over-exerting their vocal cords.*

*As teachers, we all want the students to come away with a positive experience. If they are pushed beyond their limits at a young age, they have little chance of achieving this goal. To err on the side of caution will ensure that they can grow and learn in a healthy, happy, and enthusiastic way. Making music will then be a tool that they can keep and use forever, and perhaps even pass on to students of their own.*

**NATIONAL STANDARDS\*:**

1. Singing alone and with others.
- 6a. Students analyze aural examples of a varied repertoire of music.
- 6c. Students identify and explain compositional devices and techniques used to provide unity, variety, and tension and release in a musical work, and give examples of other works that make similar uses of these devices and techniques.
- 7a. Students evolve specific criteria for making informed, critical evaluations of the quality and effectiveness of performances, compositions, arrangements, and improvisations and apply the criteria in their personal participation in music.
- 7b. Students evaluate a performance, composition, arrangement, or improvisation by comparing it to similar or exemplary models.
- 7c. Students evaluate a given musical work in terms of its aesthetic qualities and explain the musical means it uses to evoke feelings and emotions.

**PROVIDED EXERCISES\*:**

**FEMALE EXERCISES**

1. th-ae-th-a th-ae-th-a - thae      2. puti-puti-puti-puti - puti      3. shu-tha-tha-tha-tha

**MALE EXERCISES**

1. tho - tho - tho - tho - tha - tha - tha - tha yo-a yo-a - yo-a - a ha - ha - ha - ha -

2. th - a - th - o - th - a - th - o - tha

*\*From National Standards for Arts Education. Copyright © 1994 by Music Educators National Conference (MENC). Used by permission. The complete National Arts Standards and additional materials relating to the Standards are available from MENC—The National Association for Music Education, 1806 Robert Fulton Drive, Reston, VA 20191.*