

Vocal Jazz Concepts for Young Singers
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By: Sara E. Alswager sara.alswager@gmail.com

Vocal Improvisation and Scatting Exploration in a Group Setting

- ★ Post a Scatting Word Bank: Doo, Do, Ba, Da, Day

- ★ Large group word string/scatting story (spoken OR pitched).

- ★ "Planet Scatting" conversational improv activity: large group, then partners.

- ★ Replace words of familiar songs with pitched scatting syllables, like Mary Had a Little Lamb:
 - Select a scatting syllable, singers will sing original melody using that word.
 - Then, they get to choose their own scatting syllable(s) for singing the melody.
 - Next step would be to choose to scat the Mary Had a Little Lamb melody "as written" or to "play with the rhythm" making some words shorter, stretching some words longer, or adding moments of silence .
 - Model each step of this process for them before it is attempted all together as a group.
 - *"Replace words of familiar songs with pitched scatting syllables"*
See example=Your Bubble, by Nicole Chapman

- ★ Work vocal jazz stylizations into echo activities where singers can mimic them from the teacher: vocal shakes, slides, pretending to play an instrument while scatting timbre imitation of that instrument, etc.

- ★ Imitate recorded or live instrumental riffs by singing on pitch with scatting syllables. Utilize instrument-like phrasing, articulation, and timbres. Add movement by pretending to play the instrument that is being imitated. (Tracks utilized today are from *Freddie the Frog and the Jungle Jazz: A Jazz Musical for Young Voices* by Sharon Burch & Rosana Eckert).

- ★ Group Improvisation and Variation with a Familiar Melody
 - Review a familiar melody, such as Mary Had a Little Lamb.
 - Sing the melody in unison with original lyrics, then replace the lyrics with a syllable (or syllables) from the Scatting Word Bank (you choose for them first, then they choose their own).
 - Progress to group scatting Mary Had a Little Lamb melody with singers adding their own rhythmic variation.
 - Repeat the "Goal Note and Guide Tone Improvising" process (see below), but outline chord voicings of Mary Had a Little Lamb.
 - This process can be repeated with other melodies or scatting solos you wish for them to improvise: Choose the guide tones for the solo, group sing them first, then add variation to those guiding pitches.

Your Bubble

Nicole Chapman
G

Voice

The musical score is written on two staves in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The first staff is labeled 'Voice' and contains the melody for the first two lines of the song. The second staff is labeled '3' and contains the melody for the third line. Chord diagrams for G, D7, and G are provided above the notes. The lyrics are: '1. Walk ing in your bub - ble Walk-ing in your bu - ble Walk-ing in your bub - ble Please don't let it pop!'

1. Walk ing in your bub - ble Walk-ing in your bu - ble

3 Walk-ing in your bub - ble Please don't let it pop!

Other Verses

2. Tiptoe
3. Marching
4. Heel walking
5. Crawling
6. Crab Walking
7. Jumping
8. Hopping
9. Slithering
10. Rolling
11. Scooting
12. Bear Crawl
13. Leaping
14. Sliding
15. Skating
16. Twirling
17. Prancing
18. Galloping
19. Skipping
20. Grapevine
21. Jogging
22. Running

Movement Exploration Activity

This activity is for establishing boundaries in the music room, but also turns into a fun game for students. Students blow up their bubble and move around the room without getting "popped" (running into anyone or anything). If every child in the class makes it through, then we progress to Level II. We play like a video game, and everyone in the class has to be successful to move through the levels. We play this game for about 5 minutes at the beginning of every class the first few weeks until the class has "mastered" the game by completing all the levels. When we are struggling to move safely during the year, we bring back the game and review. We always play this game again in January once we return from break.

One fun way to motivate classes to move safely through the levels is to list each class and their current level on the board.

Transpose the song as needed!!

"Walking in Your Bubble" shared with written permission from Nicole Chapman.

Walking in My Bubble with a Walking Bass Line

Chapman
Arr. Alswager

Piano

Walk - ing in my bub - ble, Walk ing in my bub - ble.

Pno.

5

Walk - ing in my bub - ble, Please don't let it pop!

★ Echo Singing and Question/Answer Scatting with Young Singers

- Can occur a cappella, with pitched accompaniment on piano or barred instruments, using a simple chord structure (I-V-I) or the 8/12/16-bar blues chord structures, etc.
- Any accompaniment arrangement should maintain each chord for consecutive measures, long enough for the leader's initial phrase, and singers answering phrase to occur without the chord changing. Ex: 4-beat phrase, 4-beat echo; 4-beat question, 4-beat answer.
- Can first introduce using puppets, toy microphones, or toy telephones to help young singers experience question/answer pattern as a conversation.
- Track utilized for echoing singing and question/answer scatting today is from *Freddie the Frog and the Jungle Jazz: A Jazz Musical for Young Voices* by Sharon Burch & Rosana Eckert.
- Echo Process:
 - Teacher scats short phrases and all learners echo.
 - Ask if there are any volunteers that would like to solo scat their echo?
 - Ask for class volunteer(s) to lead their class in the same process: scat short phrases and whole class echos.
 - Student leader asks for a volunteer that would like to solo echo the leader.
 - Partner work: one partner scats and the other partner echoes (spoken OR pitched).
- Question/Answer Process:
 - Consider introducing question/answer conversations to younger singers using puppets or stuffed animals.

- Teacher scats question and learners group scat their answer.
 - Ask if there are any volunteers that would like to scat their own solo answer?
 - Ask for class volunteer(s) to lead their class in the same process: leader scats question and whole class scats answer.
 - Student leader asks for a volunteer that would solo scat an answer to the leader's question.
 - Partner work: one partner scats a question, other scats an answer (spoken OR pitched).
- Vocal Percussion/Non-Pitched Percussion Imitation Process:
 - Singers can utilize the same process as echo singing and question/answer (detailed above) to practice vocal percussion sounds in an elemental way. Teach a simple vocal percussion pattern using plosive OR fricative consonants, as well as non-pitched percussion instrument imitation. While singers perform it in 2 or 3 part divisi, the teacher could improvise over them to add an extra layer. Then, ask singers if they'd like to join in improvising consonant sounds (as well as spoken OR pitched scatting!) over the group's vocal percussion.
 - Consonant sounds suggestions [p] [k] [t] [dʒ]
 - Instrument imitation sounds suggestions [tʃ] [ʃ] [ts] [ks]

Children's Literature Written with Jazz Themes

★ *Book examples with scatting syllables in the text...*

Examples: Jazz Fly series by Matthew Gollub, Freddie the Frog and the Flying Jazz Kitten by Sharon Burch, When Louis Armstrong Taught Me Scat by Muriel Harris Weinstein, Hip Cat by John London.

★ *Use scatting to improvise a replacement for the words of well-known nursery rhyme books or other books with song texts that learners find very familiar...*

-Examples: Singin' in the Rain, What a Wonderful World, Moon River by Tim Hopgood.

-Introduce melodies by singing it solo, via recorded track, media clip, OR play a fun game!

Goal Note & Guide Tone Improvising

★ Goal Note and Guide Tone Improvising Process for Young Singers:

- Start with playing a single pitch pedal tone Do quarter note pulse. Singers sing Do on quarter note pulse. Choose a scatting syllable from the Scatting Word Bank for them to use.
- Move to pulsing a single pitch pedal tone So on quarter note beat. Singers sing So on quarter note pulse.
- Singers alternate between pulsing Do and So while it is played on pitched accompaniment. Ask singers to listen for when accompaniment changes pitch so that they change their singing pitch to match what is played on the quarter note beat (Do or So).
- Once singers are confident and comfortable, ask singers to improvise the rhythm while singing Do. The pitched accompaniment continues to play a Do quarter note pulse. TIP: if they run out of ideas or get stuck, remind them they can always return to

"doing what the accompaniment is doing" (playing quarter note pulse). Play/sing this first on Do, then on So. Repeat.

- Incorporate this same process while alternating between Do and So, ask singers to change pitch when they hear the accompaniment change. They can continue improvising the rhythm and changing it as much as they want, or they can always return to singing along with the pedal tone pulse of the accompaniment.
- Eventually, when comfortable, instead of a single pitch pedal tone, you can "graduate" to playing Tonic chords while learners improvise rhythm & phonate single pitch Do and Dominant chords while learners improvise rhythm & phonate single pitch So.

Next Extensions:

- Add more chords (when ready) while learners improvise rhythm using the root pitch (or other pitches of the chord you wish to highlight) such as pulsing a subdominant chord as accompaniment to rhythmic/pitched improvisation on Fa, chords of the 12 bar blues while improvising on each chord's Do, etc.
- When comfortable, ask learners to "fill in the space between the pulse" with additional rhythms and pitch variations. Remind them of their safety blanket: if ever stuck, just go back to doubling the accompaniment rhythm and pitch (Do, So, Fa, etc.)".
- Repeat this entire process, teaching learners to sing the 3rd of each chord (Tonic, Dominant, Subdominant, etc.) instead of the root, then the 5th of each chord.

Experiencing Vocal and Instrumental Jazz Concepts Through Elemental Repertoire

★ "Circle Singing Starter Pack" is an elemental example of circle singing with 3-part scattling & beginning-level vocal percussion. For younger singers, consider teaching only Part 1 + Part 3 + Vocal Percussion. For intermediate-level singers, teach as written. Add improvised descant!

Circle Singing Starter Pack

(Made to Modify & Evolve)

Sara Alswager

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It consists of four staves:

- Part 1:** Treble clef, notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), Bb4 (quarter), A4-G4 (beamed eighth notes), F4 (quarter). Lyrics: Day Day Day Day.
- Part 2:** Treble clef, notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), Bb4 (quarter), A4-G4 (beamed eighth notes), F4 (quarter). Lyrics: Day Day Day Day.
- Part 3:** Treble clef, notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), Bb4 (quarter), A4-G4 (beamed eighth notes), F4 (quarter). Lyrics: Doom- Doom Da - Da Doom - Doom.
- *Vocal Percussion:** Bass clef, notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), Bb4 (quarter), A4-G4 (beamed eighth notes), F4 (quarter). Includes 'x' marks above the staff and 'tsh' written below. Lyrics: tsh tsh.

*Imitate the sound of a Tambourine OR Shekere

Partner Songs: "The Edge of Reality" and "Mystery in Me"

"The Edge of Reality": © Jo Ella Hug
"Mystery in Me" : © Sara E. Alswager

The image shows a musical score for two partner songs. The score is written for two voices, with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The time signature is 3/4. The lyrics are as follows:

Tell me the fu - ture, is it in the stars?
Why do the stars live bright - ly a - bove? And do they
Tell me the fu - ture, will I ven - ture a - far? To the
whis - per the an - swers to life? Do they know _____ the
edge, to the edge, to the edge of re - a - li - ty, to
fu - ture, the mys - t'ries of the world cal - ling my name?
find the mys - t'ry is me?
Cal - ling the mys - t'ry in me.

"The Edge of Reality" partner song shared with written permission from Jo Ella Hug.

★ **Edge of Reality/Mystery In Me Teaching Process & Performance Form**

- Accompaniment is quarter note pulsed chords switching every measure in this pattern: e minor, D major, C major, B major.
- Teach each partner song, separately. Then sing together as partner songs.
- To teach vocal scattening/improvisation for this piece:
 - Isolate the 3rd of each chord, teach goal notes using the 3rd. That pattern in quarter note pulsed single notes is G, F#, E, D#.
 - Apply the goal note approach as outlined above, asking students to sing on the 3rd along with the pulsing quarter notes first then allow them to “play with the rhythm” as they wish while you still pulse the quarter note, then once they are comfortable allow them to add pitches/melodic notes as they wish while still pulsing the 3rd of each chord. In the end, allow them full freedom to start singing melodic improvisation as they spontaneously create it. Please give grace for this. Some may sing on pitch, some may switch back to talking. If enough are not displaying awareness of the harmonic structure, go back to the beginning and teach from pulsing 3rd's and give them another chance to adapt to the harmonic structure.
 - Final performance form suggestion: Chords pattern 8-bar introduction, Edge of Reality, Chords 8-bar interlude, Mystery in Me, chords 8-bar interlude, scattening solo (or group scat), combine both partner songs full time through, repeat as partner songs again with scattening solo (or group scattening) sounding above singers as a descant, optional outro chords 8-bar pattern.

Vocal Jazz Themes in Elementary-Friendly Classroom Resources

- ★ Freddie the Frog and the Jungle Jazz: A Jazz Musical for Young Voices by Sharon Burch & Rosana Eckert
- ★ Freddie the Frog children's literature with singing activities, Freddie the Frog and the Flying Jazz Kitten Scat Word Flash Card Set by Sharon Burch
- ★ Scat Singing for Kids: A Step-By-Step Journey in Jazz by Sharon Burch
- ★ All Blues: Jazz for the Orff Ensemble (Jazz Education Series) by Doug Goodkin
- ★ Choir Builders for Growing Voices 2 by Rollo Dillworth
- ★ Now's the Time: Teaching Jazz to All Ages by Doug Goodkin
- ★ Jazz Junior Arr. Jay Althouse, Lisa DeSpain, Russell Robinson, Kirby Shaw, and Michele Weir
- ★ Compositions by Natalie Wilson, you can contact her at nataliejwilson.njw@gmail.com
OR check out her website <https://www.vocaljazzconcepts.com/>
- ★ Use iReal Pro app to accompany Jazz Standards in your classroom, singing solo or in unison.
- ★ Jazz Education Network website <https://jazzednet.org/>

Introduce Scatting to your Classroom Environment via Listening to Songs that use Vocables, Vocal Scatting, and Vocal Jazz Harmonies

- ★ Vocal Jazz Ensembles: The Real Group, New York Voices, Manhattan Transfer, Take 6.
YouTube Performances: SWCC School for Music Vocations (directed by Jeremy Fox), California State University at Long Beach (directed by Christine Guter), Grass Valley Elementary Vocal Jazz (directed by Natalie Wilson, performance videos available on her website).

- ★ Solo Vocal Jazz Artists to Explore: Bobby McFerrin (live improvisation shows, Circle Songs 1-8), Ella Fitzgerald, Dinah Washington, Anita O'Day, Nina Simone, Louis Armstrong, Christine Guter, Michele Weir, Vijay Singh, Jacob Collier, Scatman John (kind of a silly example HOWEVER very popular with Elementary kiddos right now because of TikTok videos), etc.

- ★ Listening Activity Idea:
 - Objective: Singers will identify a syllable from the Scatting Word Bank using printed cards as a signal for when they hear it.
 - Print/laminate cards with scatting syllables on them, individuals/groups hold up their card when they hear their syllable in the song. Switch cards, listen for a new syllable.
FYI: Ella scatts ALOT of syllables very quickly, the room could become very energetic!!

Experiencing Vocal and Instrumental Jazz Through Creative Movement

- ★ Free movement, Mirroring, and Shadowing activities to vocal jazz standards.

- ★ Can mirror or shadow with: 1. Teacher up front leading the whole group of learners, 2. Small group of student volunteers leading the large group in improvised, mirrored OR shadowed movement, 3. Shadowing can occur in diamond-shaped patterns throughout the classroom where groups of four learners stand in a diamond formation shadowing the movement of the learner at the top spot of the diamond, and turn to their right to shadow the next person in diamond formation every time the teacher rings a triangle or finger cymbals.

- ★ Scarf Dance to Autumn Leaves by Nat King Cole
 - Start by working backwards! Teach starting from the circle portion-end. Once familiar and displaying they can be responsible, work from the beginning.
 - Song Movement (starts when song text begins, starts with students in scattered formation):
 - *The falling leaves*...Right arm move up and down slowly, 2X
 - *The autumn leaves*...Left arm move up and down slowly, 2X
 - *I see your lips*...Hold scarf out in front of face, in a square, shake
 - *I used to hold*...Ball up scarf inside both hands
 - *Since you went away*...Shake in low level, then medium level, then high level
 - *Old winter's song*...Toss up into the air
 - *But I miss you most of all*...Figure 8's in the air
 - *Start to fall*...Toss up in the air

- Interlude=student choice/free movement in scattered formation
- After interlude=Circle formation 8 counts, counter clockwise, lightly moving scarf positioned in inside hand
- Then clockwise 4 counts, lightly moving scarf positioned in inside hand
- *Old winter's song*...Toss scarf into air and catch it
- *But I miss you*..."Walk the dog" scarf in one hand, slowly walk to center of circle
- *When autumn leaves start to fall*...Gently shake scarf moving slowly from low level, middle, high, then middle, then low
- Wait for the ending cadence=all gently toss scarf into the air in the center of the circle, and allow scarves to fall without catching them.

Considerations for a Safe and Creative Learning Process...

- ★ Post a Scatting Word Bank of simple terms: Doo, Do, Ba, Da, Day at all times when facilitating scatting activities with young singers.
- ★ Explanatory vs. Exploratory teaching in the elementary music classroom.
- ★ Remember: scatting and improvisation is like teaching a new language. Simplification and layering is best with this process:
 - Teacher models before singers attempt on their own.
 - Practice new skills as speech before adding pitch, then singing phrases.
 - Practice new skills as a cacophonous group, then as partners, then solo volunteers, then solo assignments.
 - Some students may revert back to spoken scatting at times they are supposed to be singing....it happens, and it's okay! Just means they need more practice or to slow down their individualized process. Try not to draw too much attention to it at first.
- ★ Strive to protect the social/emotional aspect at all times:
 - Remind students, consistently, that it is okay to take a risk. It is okay to be assertive. It is okay to watch others perform until you feel comfortable performing. It is okay to make mistakes when we take risks. It is okay to get stuck, make a mistake, and start over during the rehearsal process.
 - "We are just having fun making some sounds today."..."Let's have fun exploring some sounds today."..."Can you speak your own short phrase using one word from our Scatting Word Bank? How about with two words? Do you think you could sing it now?"
 - "We are trying something new and creating, it might get a little messy. Is that okay?"
 - "Allow yourself to make mistakes today. Allow others to make mistakes today. If we're making music, chances are we're making mistakes. Mistakes are welcome here."

A link to an updated copy of today's notes:

<https://tinyurl.com/4uywr9n6>



A link to today's slides:

<https://tinyurl.com/9xnx7cw9>



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