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**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

BSO – Warm-ups

Vocal Warm Ups:

Magic Spell

Shh shh shhh (over right shoulder)

Sss sss sss (over left shoulder)

F-t, F-t, F-t, F-t (casting spell – you create a perfect, tiny muffin. You pick it up and breathe in the wonderful smell...)

Mmmmm – ooo – ahhhh – oooo – mmmmm

Put a bit in your mouth – it's hot, so you want to cool it down.

Now say "SING". Now say "SING" without the "S". Now say "ING" without the "I". Down do a little sound drawing using the "NG" sound. Use this sound to swallow down your magic muffin – follow the direction with your voice from high to low on an "ng" sound. When it hits your belly, you realise that it's actually disgusting, so the sound goes back up high and you say "urghh")

Mmm Mmm Ah

Mmm Mmm Ah x2 (Lift shoulders on the mmms and drop on ah)

Eee Yah x2 (roll shoulders back)

Rrrrrrrr (or Brrrrrr or Ohhhhh) lifting hands from low to high

Say: "1, 2, 3, 4"

Now repeat.

Once you're got the hang of the pattern, add your own vocal sounds where the 4 counts are. Get the group to decide on a gesture that fits with the sounds they've chosen.

Now repeat the exercise, getting faster each time...

Elevator

Elevator why don't you take me up, up, up, up, up

Elevator why don't you take me down, down, down, down, down?

Once you've learned this chorus, play around with the up and down bit. Instead of up, up, up etc, use 1 2 3 4 5 and instead of down, down, down, use 5 4 3 2 1 (with a physical action for each number – 1=feet, 2=knees, 3=hips, 4=shoulders, 5=hands in the air). Having got the hang of this, pick different numbers to sing and get the group to sing back (eg 1 1 3 3 5 5 5 or 1 2 3 2 1 etc).

You can vary this by just showing the number (ie touching your feet for 1 etc) and getting the group to sing it back. This is quite a lot trickier but gets the group using their thinking voices.

Another, even more challenging, variation of this is to sing a note without its number and ask the group to show which number they think it is on their hands. Try doing this with eyes closed so that people listen for themselves. Don't worry if people get it wrong – better to let people explore the



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sound for themselves at first. This approach also means that you can make the intervals harder and harder for the most able without the less able feeling silly.

Who Stole My Chickens?

The song goes:

Who stole my chickens and my hens
Shhh, shhh, Shhh
Who stole my chickens and my hens
Shhh, shhh, Shhh
Who stole my chickens
Shhh
Who stole my hens
Shhh
Who stole my chickens and my hens
Shhh, shhh, Shhh

Learn the song as a whole group first. Then work in three groups – the first group sings the first line, the second does one Shhh, the third the next Shhh, the first the third Shhh and then the second group sings the next line etc. OR you can work your way round the group with each person singing a solo: the first person sings the first line, then the second, third and fourth people each do a “Shhh”. The fifth person sings the third line, then the sixth, seventh and eighth people each “shh” and so on round the circle until you start again.

Strengthening Singing

Here are some things that I try out if I feel the group needs to build confidence vocally.

Try asking groups to sing songs as if they were...

- Reception kids
- Witches
- Opera singers
- Football fans

Singing as if you’re someone else can help to make singing feel less intimidating. In these different characters, you’re also activating different bits of the voice which will boost volume and clarity.

I use a lot of lip syncing to support learning new materials. Once people have got the gist of the song or section of song you’re learning, get them to mouth the words whilst you sing out loud. This way they’re able to check what’s in their head against what they hear you singing.

Ask groups to find their playground sound – kids can make a din all lunch and still speak in the afternoon, how?!! It’s the ping in their voices – that’s all opera singers use...

Electricity – what does a cartoon character look like when they’re sleepy? And when they’re being electrocuted? What happens to the eyes? Put those states into your body...sing when you’re electric! This energises the face and body which will energise the singing.



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Teaching Rounds

Try to use lots of visual cues when teaching a song, making it clear when the group should listen and when they should sing. Use hand gestures to reinforce the shape of the melody.

Once the song is learnt, get the group to trail you in the round, so you start and then bring them all in. Once this is stable, sing the round in two parts. Now you can start to divide into smaller groups – making sure that you've got a strong singer in each group. Start the round going in one direction and all you have to do is remember to stop the groups in the order in which they started.