

Koo raw mah veh shi



This exercise is designed to encourage several outcomes. I generally use it one syllable at a time to begin, concentrating on the correct placement and “feel” for the varying pitch. Over time, the singers learn that they can control what spectrum of frequencies their larynges supply only by controlling the resonating spaces. It is as though the larynx can only “read” space, not words.

- The first and third notes should feel the same, but singers who find they are different need help to ensure uniformity.
- The exercise is repeated a semitone higher, gradually working towards the highest notes of the singer’s range.
- Good legato should be maintained.
- The [k] of koo, made by the meeting and parting of the back of the tongue on the velum, sets up space appropriate for the long (“telescope-like”) resonance of [ʊ]. A rolled [r] initiates the extra support needed for the ascending interval and provides time to prepare extra space. [m] concentrates resonance forward at the lips and reminds the singer that most descending intervals need forward placement. I encourage strong voicing of the [v], again assisting forward focus, while the “fish-mouth” (Ehmann and Haasemann, 1981, p. 137) that results from the [ʃ] both places the vowel forward and prevents spreading.
- When all five vowels are used, there is an elegant progression between the syllables, each helping to prepare the next.
- The teacher monitors, and corrects when necessary, vowel shape and placement, always listening and watching for good phrase shaping and competent release breathing, especially between each repetition and the subsequent (higher) one.

From “Building Voices and Concepts”, p. 163-4. See below.