

LET'S GET SINGING!

Raise up your Voices

by Suzzie Vango from *How to make your choir sound awesome – the ultimate warmup book* by Lucy Hollins & Suzzie Vango, copyright 2022 Banks Music Publications www.banksmusicpublications.co.uk Used with permission.

Raise up your voices, come on and join us
Sing it loud, sing it proud today
Raise up your voices, come on and join us
Starting a brand new day

This is a great rousing song to get singers energised. Suitable for all ages, it will make an excellent addition to both classroom and assembly singing.

About the presenter



Megan Flint has a background in education and music, as both a primary school teacher/leader and music specialist. Megan teaches classroom music programmes, conducts choirs, mentors teachers and facilitates professional development opportunities for educators around the country alongside working on her PhD in Music Education.

About the composer

UK-based Suzzie Vango is a professional singer, vocal coach, conductor and composer whose career has taken her all over the world. She is in high demand as a workshop leader and is a regular conductor of the National Children's Choir of Great Britain.

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Warm-ups

Warm-ups help to prepare us physically and vocally for singing. They help to relax our bodies and sharpen our minds.

Physical/Mental focus

1 Introduction circle.

Objective: feeling the beat, working as an ensemble, mental focus. Students give their names and three pieces of information within an established beat pattern. Feel free to keep the beat using a percussion instrument or body percussion actions e.g. clicks, claps, stomps.

Physical/Vocal

2 Body warm-up.

Objective: relaxed facial muscles. Our facial muscles, and tongues, help us to form vowels and consonants. Relaxed muscles, free of tension, support clear vocal tone, good diction and expressive faces. Have fun and lots of laughs with this.

3 8-beat warm-up.

Objective: physical alignment and relaxation; clear, well-supported vocal tone and confidence using the entire vocal range. Once you are familiar with the structure of this warmup you can make up your own physical and vocal activities. Better yet, have students make up different ways of using their voices and bodies to share as part of a warm-up sequence or brain break. We can use our voices in lots of different ways. As students become more confident using their voices they will be less self-conscious about singing. (Inspiration Suzzie Vango and Suzie Purkis. For an extension: <https://youtu.be/b3rMKpBR0iU?si=-oZLHrFBSPtIPdfz>)

Teaching notes

- Line one of the song is made up of two musical phrases “Raise up your voices” and “Come on and join us”. Each phrase has the same musical material – melody and rhythm – but different words. The melodic line jumps around.
- Line two is one musical phrase. It has a much smoother, stepwise melodic character. Make sure to breathe deeply so that you have enough breath for the whole phrase. See if you can make the words connect smoothly to each other.
- Line three is the same as line one.
- Line four also has a jumping, spiky character. It needs lots of energy and pizzazz when singing!
- This song is very short but it needs lots of energy to sing it convincingly.
- Take care not to let it become too choppy. Even though the melody jumps around, it still needs to be sung with a sense of line and connection through each phrase.

Glossary of musical terms

Beat	The steady heartbeat of the music that continues as long as the music does. It only gets faster or slower if the music requires it. Sometimes the beat is audible and sometimes it is implied. An ensemble stays together by sharing a sense of beat. Keeping the beat means keeping in time.
Ensemble	A musical group or team, usually of more than ten. Groups smaller than this have names according to the size of the group eg. duo (2), trio (3), quartet (4), quintet (5). Ensembles can be instrumental or vocal.
Melody	A series of notes/pitches that make up a tune.
Phrase	A musical sentence.
Rhythm	The pattern of long and short sounds that move the music forward through time. In a song, the rhythm is the pattern of the words.

What else could you do with this song?

Extension/Curricular links

- Use the actions suggested to help support the singing sound. Have students make up their own actions too.
- There are lots of songs about singing and the joys of music – can you think of others? Make a playlist. Learn to sing some of them. Some examples to get you started:
 - » Cum decore
 - » Viva la music
 - » Sing, sing a song
- Introduction circle – Once the students can do this successfully, the structure can be used to share any information – key facts, topic knowledge or basic facts.

Important messages

- Singing is fun!
- It is important for the health and safety of children’s voices that they are singing in a pitch range that is not too low.
- Never louder than beautiful. Let the natural beauty of children’s voices shine. Understand that the volume they produce is directly proportional to their age, size and stage of development. Encourage healthy singing, not shouting.
- Singing voice, speaking voice, whispering voice – we can use our vocal mechanism in different ways. Ensure that children are using their voices in a ‘singing’ way. A light and ringing sound will help protect young voices from overuse and possible damage.
- Our body is our instrument. That means that no two voices will sound the same – we are each unique!
- We need our whole body to sing – energy, breath, posture, expression as well as a singing voice.
- Again – Singing is fun! And important! And good for us! Singing every day will energise you and your students.