

Monteverdi's Gloria for 8 voices M 5

Practise singing semitones and tones accurately

You really need to have a keyboard for this to copy and check what you are doing. If you are not sure of the names of the notes, have the keyboard diagram on Activity Sheet 2 to hand.

If you would like to improve the accuracy of both your ear and your voice, it is worth practising these exercises slowly and thoughtfully until they feel easy.

1. Find an adjacent pair of white notes with a black note between them. They must be comfortable for you to sing. This example uses F and G.

1a. Play the lower and then the higher note, holding each for 4 steady counts so you have time to really focus on the sounds. Copy with your voice what you have heard. Repeat it, and think - these two notes are a tone apart.

1b. This time you fill the gap between the two white notes with the semitone step. Again, play, listen, think - these are semitone jumps. Sing thoughtfully, check against the keyboard.

Try to be a critical but kind teacher of yourself if you find it tricky to pitch the semitones. You will improve with practice.

1c and 1d are the same exercise going down instead of up. You may find these harder or easier than going up.

Repeat the exercises with other sets of three notes a semitone apart. Gradually take them faster.

1a 1b

F G F F# G

1c 1d

2. These exercises are relevant for the Gloria, and lots of other pieces where you have to change from F natural to F# within a few notes. Always be conscious whether you are singing a tone or a semitone. Exercises 2c and 2d bring in the note E.

2a 2b

2c 2d

E

3. Exercises you can do anywhere. You don't need the keyboard for these. "Consider Yourself at Home" from "Oliver" fills in the gaps in "This Old Man" with semitones. Sing the beginning of "This Old Man" as your reference and then the beginning of "Consider Yourself". Is the G in tune?

G E G G E G

This old man, he played one, Con - si-der your-self

Fill in the gaps between the tones If you are feeling very brave!

Fre - re Jac - ques, Fre - re - Jac - ques Fre - re - Jac - ques