

Vocal Technique Lesson with Romain – Handout Friday 19 June 2020

Major arpeggios

Hi everybody!

Have you heard of the word ‘arpeggio’?

It does sound Italian, doesn't it? It is not about food, it is musical of course.

It means a melodic succession of notes that belong to a specific chord.

You know what a chord is? A group of three or more notes played at the same time, which you can call ‘harmony’ too.

Well **the notes in an arpeggio are the same as in a chord but not played all together, played separately, one after another, in a ‘melodic’ way.**

Example: The C Major chord is C, E and G played all together, in any order.

The C Major arpeggio is therefore C, E and G played in any order, one note after another.

So major arpeggios have usually only three notes, except if they extend to a fourth top note.

Then the arpeggio would span a whole octave: C, E, G and high C.

Both ways of singing these arpeggios are fine.

But obviously the ‘octave arpeggio’ is a bit more challenging to sing as it is bigger.

So if you have never done any ‘arpeggios’ warm-up before, you should focus on the ‘normal’ 3-notes arpeggio. And if you are already familiar with the 3-notes arpeggio, you may want to practise the ‘octave’ one.

The arpeggio uses the first, the third and the fifth note of a scale.

If you take the C Major arpeggio, think of the notes of the short scale we worked on a few weeks ago: C, D, E, F and G, five notes.

Now, let's keep only the first, the third and the fifth notes of that scale in order to get the C Major arpeggio: C, E and G, as I told you a moment ago.

This is the same principle for all the major and minor arpeggios as well as major and minor chords:

Keep the 1st, 3rd and 5th note of the scale or chord you want to sing and you'll obtain the arpeggio.

In terms of intervals, because there are less notes in an arpeggio than in a scale, it means that every interval or step up or down is a bit bigger.

C to E: two tones and E to G, one tone and a half

The difference between the interval C to E and the interval E to G is subtle but real. Both are called thirds. C to E is a Major third (which explains why we call it major arpeggio) and E to G is a minor third. A minor arpeggio would have the opposite, a minor third first and then a major third. But we'll talk about the minor arpeggio another time.

We will sing a succession of short major arpeggios going upward and then downward. If your voice is rather low, read the left column, if it is rather high, read the right column please:

Short major arpeggios - low voices women/men	Short major arpeggios- high voices women/men
<p>You definitely may want to help yourself by playing these notes on an instrument: keyboard, guitar or anything else, to make sure you are singing the right notes and in tune.</p> <p>We will start by singing a G Major arpeggio. The notes are G, B, D. (the 1st, 3rd and 5th notes of the G scale). Firstly find with your voice and sing the very first note G.</p> <p>If this feels low but comfortable for your voice, then this is the right warm-up for you, your voice is considered as low: bass/men, alto/women.</p> <p>If this feels low, not very easy to sing, but you can still hear a sound, even if it is a bit weak, then you</p>	<p>You definitely may want to help yourself by playing these notes on an instrument: keyboard, guitar or anything else, to make sure you are singing the right notes and in tune.</p> <p>We will start by singing a C Major arpeggios. The notes are C, E, G. (the 1st, 3rd and 5th notes of the C scale). Firstly find with your voice and sing the very first note C.</p> <p>If this feels low but comfortable for your voice, then this is the right warm-up for you, your voice is considered as high: baritone or tenor/men, mezzo-soprano or soprano/women.</p>

may have a range in-between low and high voices: baritone/men, mezzo-soprano/women. In that case, you may want to try both warm-ups, the one for low voices and the one for high voices, and take the most out of both. If you do that, it is totally fine to not sing certain notes. If it feels very low and hard to sing, then you should work on the warm-up for high voices.

So, sing that very first note G, for as long as you can. Breathe well, relax your shoulders and upper body, and try to sing a note that sounds even, loud enough and for as long as possible, on 'la' or 'o'. Now let's find out the other notes of the arpeggio. The second note is B. We said earlier that this second note is two tones above G. Sing this interval G to B a few times. Then, after B, we go another step up to reach D. Now we've got our whole G Major arpeggio already: G, B and D. Sing it a few times to get familiar with it. Once you are confident enough with those notes, sing the arpeggio downward as well: G, B, D, B, G.

The next step is, like for the major scale warm-up, being able to sing this arpeggio in all the other keys.

After singing the G Major arpeggio we now sing the next major arpeggio going a semi-tone upward which is Ab Major. The notes become: Ab, C, Eb. Sing it up first and then sing it up and down.

Here are all the arpeggios for this warm-up with all the notes you need to sing:

G Major: G, B, D, B, G

Ab Major: Ab, C, Eb, C, Ab

A Major: A, C#, E, C#, A

Bb Major: Bb, D, F, D, Bb

B Major: B, D#, F#, D#, B

C Major: C, E, G, E, C

Db Major: Db, F, Ab, F, Db

D Major: D, F#, A, F#, D

Eb Major: Eb, G, Bb, G, Eb

E Major: E, G#, B, G#, E

F Major: F, A, C, A, F

F# Major: F#, A#, C#, A#, F#

And G Major again, to end: G, B, D, B, G

Once you are confident, sing the whole warm-up, going through all the different keys, up and down.

If this feels a bit too low, not very easy to sing, but you can still hear a sound, even if it is a bit weak, then you must have a very high voices: tenor/men, soprano/women. In that case, this is still the right warm-up for you.

If it doesn't feel very low and well above the lowest note you can sing, then you should definitely work on the warm-up for lower voices.

So, sing that very first note C, for as long as you can. Breathe well, relax your shoulders and upper body, and try to sing a note that sounds even, loud enough and for as long as possible, on 'la' or 'o'. Now let's find out the other notes of the arpeggio. The second note is E. We said earlier that this second note is two tones above C. Sing this interval C to E a few times.

Then, after E, we go another step up to reach G. Now we've got our whole C Major arpeggio already: C, E and G.

Sing it a few times to get familiar with it.

Once you are confident enough with those notes, sing the arpeggio downward as well: C, E, G, E, C.

The next step is, like for the major scale warm-up, being able to sing this arpeggio in all the other keys.

After singing the C Major arpeggio we now sing the next major arpeggio going a semi-tone upward which is Db Major. The notes become: Db, F, Ab. Sing it up first and then sing it up and down.

Here are all the arpeggios for this warm-up with all the notes you need to sing:

C Major: C, E, G, E, C

Db Major: Db, F, Ab, F, Db

D Major: D, F#, A, F#, D

Eb Major: Eb, G, Bb, G, Eb

E Major: E, G#, B, G#, E

F Major: F, A, C, A, F

F# Major: F#, A#, C#, A#, F#

G Major: G, B, D, B, G

Ab Major: Ab, C, Eb, C, Ab

A Major: A, C#, E, C#, A

Bb Major: Bb, D, F, D, Bb

B Major: B, D#, F#, D#, B

And C Major again, to end: C, E, G, E, C

Once you are confident, sing the whole warm-up, going through all the different keys, up and down.

Try to sing 'legato' not 'staccato'. Two other Italian musical words meaning: 'try to sing as smoothly as you can, not dry and stopping between each note. Ciao!