

## Vocal Technique Lesson with Romain – Handout Friday 29 May 2020

### The major scales warm-up

Hi everybody!

Some of you may already be familiar with the concept of scales, or if not you may probably have heard of keys. Well, every key has got its own scale, whether it is a major key or a minor key. The scale is basically the succession of notes that belongs to that key, going upwards or downwards. For example, you may know that in C Major, the notes that belong to that key are all the white keys on the keyboard. If you press any of the black keys, none of these notes belong to the key of C Major. It does not mean though that you cannot come across black keys if you play something in C Major. You can of course, but these notes are not the fundamental notes of C Major. So, the C Major scale starts from the note 'C' and uses all the white keys going upwards: C, D, E, F, G, A, B and C again. If it is what we call a 'one octave scale', we stop there. If it is a 'two octaves scale', we carry on for another set of 8 notes which we call 'octave'.

While the normal and full size of a scale is an octave (from C to C in C Major for example), warm-up scales are also quite often split in two, the size of a fifth instead of a whole octave. A C Major short scale, in that case goes from C to G instead of C: C, D, E, F, G.

That is the kind of scales we are going to work on now.

The last thing to know about these scales is intervals.

An 'interval' is another technical word meaning the gap between each note. The smaller gap is called a semi-tone, and it is found between a key on the piano and the very next one going upward or downward (or between two frets on the guitar). The other important interval is a tone, which is twice bigger than a semi-tone.

A scale is made up of tones and semi-tones, and the order will always be the same, in any key:

For the ascending C Major whole scale, we start from C, and then we go up a tone to D, then up another tone to E, then a semi-tone up to F, followed by a tone up to G, then another tone up to A, and another tone up to B, and finally a semi-tone up to C.

So the whole pattern is: tone, tone, semi-tone, tone, tone, tone and semi-tone.

### SHORT MAJOR SCALES

We will sing a succession of short major scales 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 scales - low voices women/men	Short major scales - high voices women/men
<p>For this warm-up, 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. We will start by singing a G Major short scale. The notes are G, A, B, C, D. Firstly find with your voice and sing the very first note G. 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. 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 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.</p>	<p>For this warm-up, 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. We will start by singing a C Major short scale. The notes are C, D, E, F, G. Firstly find with your voice and sing the very first note C. 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. 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 voice: 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.</p>

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 and loud enough for as long as possible, on 'la' or 'o'. Now let's find out the other notes of the scale, imagining that every new note is a step up. The second note is A. We said earlier that this second note is a tone above G.

Sing this interval G to A a few times, this is a tone, and it is probably the most common interval. Then, after A, we go another step up to reach B. Now you can sing the first three notes of that scale: G, A, B.

Do it a few times to get familiar with it.

Then, the fourth note of that G Major scale is a semi-tone above B: C. Once you find it, repeat this series of four notes: G, A, B, C. Notice that the last step is smaller than the other ones. We go up a tone, then another tone, and then a semi-tone. Finally the fifth note will be a tone above C: D. We've got our whole G Major short scale now: G, A, B, C and D. Once you are confident enough with those notes, sing the scale downward as well: G, A, B, C, D, C, B, A, G.

The next step in this warm-up is being able to sing this short scale in all the other keys.

After singing the G Major scale we will sing the next major scale going a semi-tone upward which is Ab Major. The notes will become: Ab, Bb, C, Db, Eb. Because the scale is still major, the intervals are exactly the same as for the G Major one.

After the Ab, we go a tone above it: Bb, then another tone up to C, then a semi-tone up to Db and finally a tone up to Eb.

Here are all the short scales for that warm-up with all the notes you need to sing:

G Major: G, A, B, C, D, C, B, A, G

Ab Major: Ab, Bb, C, Db, Eb, Db, C, Bb, Ab

A Major: A, B, C#, D, E, D, C#, B, A

Bb Major: Bb, C, D, Eb, F, Eb, D, C, Bb

B Major: B, C#, D#, E, F#, E, D#, C#, B

C Major: C, D, E, F, G, F, E, D, C

Db Major: Db, Eb, F, Gb, Ab, Gb, F, Eb, Db

D Major: D, E, F#, G, A, G, F#, E, D

Eb Major: Eb, F, G, Ab, Bb, Ab, G, F, Eb

E Major: E, F#, G#, A, B, A, G#, F#, E

F Major: F, G, A, Bb, C, Bb, A, G, F

F# Major: F#, G#, A#, B, C#, B, A#, G#, F#

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

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

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 and loud enough for as long as possible, on 'la' or 'o'. Now let's find out the other notes of the scale, imagining that every new note is a step up.

The second note is D. We said earlier that this second note is a tone above C.

Sing this interval C to D a few times, this is a tone, and it is probably the most common interval.

Then, after D, we go another step up to reach E.

Now you can sing the first three notes of that scale: C, D, E.

Do it a few times to get familiar with it.

Then, the fourth note of that C Major scale is a semi-tone above E: F. Once you find it, repeat this series of four notes: C, D, E, F. Notice that the last step is smaller than the other ones. We go up a tone, then another tone, and then a semi-tone. Finally the fifth note will be a tone above F: G. We've got our whole C Major short scale now: C, D, E, F and G. Once you are confident enough with those notes, sing the scale downward as well: C, D, E, F, G, F, E, D, C

The next step in this warm-up is being able to sing this short scale in all the other keys.

After singing the C Major scale we will sing the next major scale going a semi-tone upward which is Db Major. The notes will become: Db, Eb, F, Gb, Ab. Because the scale is still major, the intervals are exactly the same as for the C Major one.

After the Db, we go a tone above it: Eb, then another tone up to F, then a semi-tone up to Gb and finally a tone up to Ab.

Here are all the short scales for that warm-up with all the notes you need to sing:

C Major: C, D, E, F, G, F, E, D, C

Db Major: Db, Eb, F, Gb, Ab, Gb, F, Eb, Db

D Major: D, E, F#, G, A, G, F#, E, D

Eb Major: Eb, F, G, Ab, Bb, Ab, G, F, Eb

E Major: E, F#, G#, A, B, A, G#, F#, E

F Major: F, G, A, Bb, C, Bb, A, G, F

F# Major: F#, G#, A#, B, C#, B, A#, G#, F#

G Major: G, A, B, C, D, C, B, A, G

Ab Major: Ab, Bb, C, Db, Eb, Db, C, Bb, Ab

A Major: A, B, C#, D, E, D, C#, B, A

Bb Major: Bb, C, D, Eb, F, Eb, D, C, Bb

B Major: B, C#, D#, E, F#, E, D#, C#, B

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

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

After a few weeks of practise, you should hopefully be able to sing this warm-up more fluently, without hesitation or break, and not too slow. Enjoy!