

GUIDELINES FOR LEARNING MELODIES

1. The development of aural skills is a gradual process. Best results are achieved by a little work done every day. This applies to the memorizing of the repertoire melodies - listen a little every day, and don't cram just before class.
2. The aim is that the repertoire melodies will enter your long term memory. For deepening of aural awareness, long term memory needs to be activated. Long term memory takes longer to absorb material than short term memory. This is all the more reason to work on the repertoire melodies frequently and methodically.
3. Music can be either listened to actively or passively. Both approaches are useful for learning the repertoire melodies.
 - a) Active listening involves your full concentration, when you are alert and in a quiet space, free of distractions. Listen to the melody in its entirety several times, and then break it down into phrases or sections. Try singing with the recording, and stopping it before answering each phrase. Be sure to listen back to the recording to check what you've sung for accuracy (pitch, rhythm, intonation etc). Beware of waning concentration - it's better to take a break than to "space out" during this type of work.
 - b) Passive listening involves listening in a casual manner, perhaps while doing some unrelated quiet activity (reading, cleaning, driving, etc). The music's general aspects will still be registered while it sounds on the peripheries of your aural awareness. I recommend that your initial listening of a new melody to be passive, and not too analytical. Progress with active listening will be so much faster thereafter.
4. When you feel the melody has begun entering your long term memory (so that you can sing it the next day without prompting from the recording), try recording yourself singing it, and comparing it with the original. Also, you should get together with your practice partner at least the day before class to check each other's renditions. Experience has shown that different people have different levels of aural awareness in specific areas. It is likely that your partner will always be able to offer advise on how to correct some specific aspect of your rendition.
5. Try to limit the use of the piano or any instrument when learning melodies. Use instruments perhaps for getting starting pitches, but avoid playing along with yourself as you're singing.
6. Melodies can be sung in whatever key and tempo that is comfortable. However, experience has shown that most people find it best to keep to the key of the original melody and change octave where necessary. Get

used to changing octave at important structural junctures in order to keep the melody within your vocal range.

7. Each week you are expected to come to class prepared to sing the due melodies from memory.

8. The only visual aid that may be accepted in the presentation of the melodies are lyrics (where applicable). You needn't sing the actual words of songs ("la" or solfege will suffice), but you may write the words down if you like.

9. The aim is to learn each assigned melody permanently, with an awareness of: metre; form; rhythm; pitch; intonation; microtonal inflection; articulation; duration; dynamic; and timbre. A reasonable degree of accuracy in regards to pitch and rhythm is most critical, but absorption of the other parameters will not only aid memory (by giving phrases and notes a special character), but will also deepen your awareness of the language of the particular style. By following the correct regime and placing all of these characteristics into your long term memory, you are actually developing your musicianship and personal style.

10. You should know the title and composer of each melody, and perhaps a basic stylistic description (where appropriate).

ACTIVE LISTENING GAME-PLAN

After some passive listening, use the following game-plan as a possible strategy for your active listening.

- 1) Form/Structure. Listen for repetition, contrast and development.
- 2) Metre/Time Signature. Tap your foot, conduct the music and try to discern the beat from the subdivision/pulse.
- 3) Tempo. Start memorizing the sound of specific tempi. Use a metronome to match the tempo (at least of the start of the melody).
- 4) Subdivision, Feel, Rhythm, Groove. Observe other temporal characteristics.
- 5) Key. Is it of a major or minor quality? Some pieces don't start in their "home" key but move towards it some bars later. Others end in a different key entirely.
- 6) Function of the first note in the key or opening chord. Identify the degree of the first melody note, with respect to the key and/or opening chord.
- 7) Opening interval. Identify the interval between the first two (different) pitches.