

Kathleen Klosterman  
MUSE 356- Choral Methods

Citation

Chapter 15: Energizing the Choral Warm-Up  
Kenneth H. Phillips  
2004

Discussion Question Number 14

What is martellato articulation, and when is it used?

Martellato is the Italian term that means, “to hammer.” Sometimes it is said, “to pulse” instead. It is used to make fast-running sixteenth-note passages clean and bright. It is used in melismatic singing, especially of the Baroque era. Martellato is characterized by light singing, a mental repetition of the vowel for each note, and individual pulses from the breathing musculature. It can be used in pieces with melismatic phrases such as the refrain of “Angels We Have Heard on High” preventing it from sounding too heavy. Pulsing the notes and articulating the separate vowels cleanly creates the martellato sound. Practicing pulsing sixteenths by thinking a light bouncing sound. Practicing with a consonant at the beginning of it then slowly moving to drop the consonant will allow the students to understand how to articulate the vowels correctly, and perform the right way. Students can eventually grow to more complex vocalizes such as the bump and pulse that will expand their range and their ability to sing melisimas. Applying this technique to singing the pieces that may require a more light feeling will benefit the sound of the choir as a whole. This will unify the sound and make those songs being performed sound completely connected. Teaching this technique to students will also benefit them in the future when they will need to sing with different articulations.