

TIPS ON POPULAR SINGING

By **FRANK SINATRA**

IN COLLABORATION WITH HIS VOCAL TEACHER **JOHN QUINLAN**



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A WORD OF COMMENDATION

by

TOMMY DORSEY

From the standpoint of convention, it would seem rather bizarre for me to step out of my role as an orchestra leader and master of ceremonies in the field of entertainment and enter the realm of belle-lettres, even in a minor capacity, but the subject matter of "Tips On Popular Singing" appealed to me so forcibly that, when I was requested to write an opinion on it, I immediately followed up the idea.

In my travels, throughout the country, I have always made it a point to assist the aspiring song writer, the singer and the musician, in their respective careers. Now that Frank Sinatra and John Quinlan have given the public "Tips On Popular Singing," I wish to further voice my co-operation by highly recommending this book.

Frank Sinatra, who is a member of my organization, is an unusually talented, conscientious artist. Through his interpretive qualities, he has not only brought success to himself, but he has made many hits for the various music publishers and, of course, has brought pleasure to thousands of listeners.

In writing this book, Mr. Sinatra was extremely fortunate in securing the collaboration of his well-known coach and voice teacher, John Quinlan. They have written a work which, I hope, is the beginning of a subsequent series of books of this type.

"Tips On Popular Singing" is the answer to many a query I have received as to whether or not such a book might be procured — and where.

It goes without saying that "Tips On Popular Singing" has my very best wishes for success, and I trust that the untiring effort put into it by the above mentioned authors will prove to be of great help to those who are at the beginning of a road which may ultimately lead to fame and fortune.

PREFACE

In the music world of today, the popular song seems to play a more important part than at any time in previous history; in camp, at community sings, at parties and wherever entertainment of any sort holds sway, the popular song has proven to be the best means of establishing joviality, hilarity and good fellowship and maintaining a general spirit of fun in a crowd.

Whether it is a ballad, a hill-billy, a swing number, a novelty song, a marching song or a comedy number, the popular song has that "something" which makes people forget their troubles and cares, when together, better than any other medium.

Everyone can sing a little; some have better voices than others. Those with trained voices are, as we all know, not nearly as numerous as those with non-trained voices. However, the fact remains that a great many of the latter have an earnest desire to become popular singers.

This book, "Tips On Popular Singing," was written for anyone with the ambition to become a popular song stylist of the type now appearing with the various bands on the radio, in night clubs and other places of amusement.

"Tips On Popular Singing" contains all that is necessary, in the way of vocal instruction. All instructive matter in this book is written in a clear, understandable manner and, if strictly followed, it will be of great help to the aspiring student in the popular field.

"Tips On Popular Singing" was written by Frank Sinatra, in collaboration with John Quinlan, only after numerous requests for a work of this kind had been made.

It is needless to say that Mr. Sinatra, at present connected with Tommy Dorsey's famous orchestra, is one of the country's outstanding popular vocalists. Not only have his records enjoyed a tremendous sale, but he is also given credit for popularizing many songs in the hit class.

Mr. Sinatra's marvelous success is due, to a great extent, to the careful and systematic coaching given him by Mr. Quinlan, one of America's leading voice teachers. Mr. Quinlan's success is backed up with many years of experience as a professional singer and teacher.

It is our opinion that the authors, Mr. Sinatra and Mr. Quinlan, have done excellent work in writing a book which will prove invaluable to the ambitious singer of popular songs.

We sincerely hope that the student will enjoy the study of "Tips On Popular Singing."

The Publisher

INTRODUCTION

Many young people are under the erroneous impression that, in order to become a successful singer, it is necessary for them to have had years of intensive voice training. The truth of the matter is that the popular vocalist, who has had voice training, beyond a few simple exercises, is the exception rather than the rule.

The comparatively simple procedure of analyzing a melody often results in the birth of a certain style which, as a matter of fact, is nothing more than an individual's own interpretation of phrasing, breathing and diction.

It is suggested that the student listen to the records of as many different vocalists as possible, take, for instance, the Valleys, the Columbos and the Crosbys, down to the present era of the Eberleys and the Leonards. Then select some of their little mannerisms of phrasing and diction, from which it may be possible to invent an individual style of interpretation and expression, being careful to always employ intelligence and good taste.

If the student desires to attain success in the popular field, good health, hard work, and plenty of patience are obligatory.

At the very beginning of one's career it is absolutely necessary to take up the correct method of voice culture.

The examples in this book have been selected with great care. They are simple and effective, and have been written for the sole purpose of developing and broadening the voice range.

THE CARE OF THE THROAT

It is only natural that a singer should take excellent care of his throat which, it seems, is the most susceptible part of his anatomy. Great caution must be taken, at all times, to avoid a cold or sore throat, in any form. One may ask the question, "How do I go about avoiding a cold?" In answer to this, using a little common sense is a great help, but the best advice on this subject is: "Keep the feet dry and avoid sitting in a draft."

The throat, as a rule, is always in a healthy condition; otherwise you wouldn't possess a voice. It is advisable not to pay too much attention to the throat but, at the same time, it would be foolhardy, in the event of symptoms appearing, such as a slight burning feeling in the throat, stuffiness in the head, a catarrhal condition in the nose, etc., not to act at once. A singer cannot afford to procrastinate, hoping against hope that a slight cold will disappear over-night. It is extremely dangerous to allow a cold to become chronic, as that would not only prove harmful to the voice, but it would also interfere with one's health in general.

When the symptoms of an approaching cold appear, it is beneficial to drink hot water with a little lemon juice added. The latter not only tends to make the hot water more palatable, but it also helps to counteract any acid conditions in the system. Should the hot water remedy, after a fair trial, prove insufficient in restoring the voice, it is suggested that the singer consult a throat specialist of the highest reputation.

THE ART OF BREATHING

It is wise to stress the importance of breathing, as it is the most essential part of singing, yet is far from being the complicated procedure which some teachers claim. There is but one way to breathe, and that is in the natural way. Stand erect, relax the chest and inhale deeply through the nostrils. Avoid making the mistake of pushing the chest out as you inhale — let the breath do that. You'll be surprised at the amount of breath you can inhale.

When exhaling, do not let the chest collapse. Hold the position you had when you finished inhaling, and then slowly exhale through the mouth. You will notice that the stomach takes an inward direction toward the spine. This is also what eventually happens when the singer sustains high notes; it gives the appearance of the voice *floating* out, instead of being *pushed* out. Practice the above exercise twice a day for ten-minute periods.

A splendid breathing exercise is to lie flat on your back, hands extended at your sides with the back of the hands on the floor. Relax completely and take a slow deep breath through the nostrils; then exhale slowly through the mouth. While doing this, do not push the chest out but let it gradually rise of its own accord. This is extremely important.

Shallow breathers are so called, because they do not relax the chest while inhaling. In order to get the real significance of this, try extending your chest as far as you can, before inhaling. See how much breath you can inhale. Practically none. While exhaling, do not let the breath *rush* out, but try to control it. This also applies to singing. It is not advisable to allow a great amount of air to escape on the first word you sing. Observe all words commencing with the letter H, such as the words HERE, HE, HER, etc., as some singers, for want of knowledge, are inclined to let a lot of air escape on these words.

As you exhale, you will discover that, by holding the chest in the position it was in at the end of the intake, the stomach will recede. Do not think too much about this! The chest, diaphragm and stomach will all co-ordinate in the natural manner.

Walking is one of the best physical exercises for a singer. However, this does not mean just strolling along, neither does it mean rushing, as though you had to catch a train. Set a good medium pace, and, while walking, remember the instructions given in the aforementioned exercises on breathing.

Golfing, when done in moderation, is also good exercise for a singer. It is advisable, however, not to overdo golfing by playing an extra round, especially when you have a singing engagement that same evening. A good rule to follow is: "Be moderate in all physical exercise."

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

When singing a descending passage in an exercise, try to keep each succeeding lower tone in the same position as the one that precedes it. In this way, you will learn to place the voice correctly and, at the same time, eliminate all throat strain.

Whenever you feel a little pressure on the throat, you'll know that you are singing incorrectly. Concentrate on the tone and on the throat. You can only overcome that harmful throat pressure through the mind. After a while, when your voice is properly placed, you will be able to relax somewhat against the incorrect habits you may have had.

Never practice too long at a time! It is better to practice four fifteen-minute periods a day than one hour steady, or two half-hour periods. The throat and vocal chords are quite sensitive and need an occasional rest. Whenever the throat begins to feel tired, take a rest and continue to practice later. Never force the voice, for harsh tones eventually wear out the vocal chords.

All of the exercises in this book are suitable to any voice, regardless of range. For instance, if the lowest clear tone in your voice range is low F, start the exercise one tone higher, on G, and continue, ascending to your most comfortable high tone, without straining. When this is done, complete the exercise by descending, phrase by phrase, until you arrive at your starting point. This rule applies to all exercises, except when otherwise mentioned.

EXERCISE I

This exercise is based on a series of five notes, the first three of which form a major triad (chord). Each group of five notes is a separate phrase which is slurred by a curved line. This means that the entire phrase, or group, should be sung in a legato, or smooth manner, using the syllable UH, as in UP. Do not use an UH for each note!

On the first and second notes in each group, the mouth should be opened just a little (see FIG. 1, p. 31); on the third, or top note, it should be opened a little more (see FIG. 2, p. 31), and this mouth position should be retained for the two remaining notes.

Breathe before each phrase. (See chapter on "The Art of Breathing." p. 7.)

Slowly

UH _____ UH _____ UH _____

See Fig. 1 _____ 2 _____ etc.

UH _____ UH _____ UH _____ UH _____

UH _____ UH _____ UH _____ UH _____

UH _____ UH _____ UH _____ UH _____

UH _____ UH _____ UH _____

EXERCISE 3

As in the two previous exercises, the mouth should be opened slightly more on the highest note in each group, than on the preceding notes. This mouth position should then be retained for the balance of the notes in each group. Always remember to keep the tone well in front.

In the sentence, "Let us wonder by the bay," sing each word in a natural manner, and pronounce each syllable very distinctly.

Breathe before each phrase.

Moderately



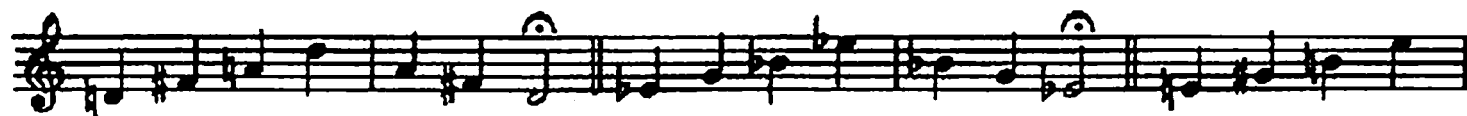
Let us wan-der by the bay. Let us wan-der by the bay.
See Fig. 1 _____ 2 _____ etc.



Let us wan-der by the bay. Let us wan-der by the bay. Let us wan-der



by the bay. Let us wan-der by the bay. Let us wan-der by the bay.



Let us wan-der by the bay. Let us wan-der by the bay. Let us wan-der



by the bay. Let us wan-der by the bay. Let us wan-der by the bay.



Let us wan-der by the bay. Let us wan-der by the bay. Let us wan-der



by the bay. Let us wan-der by the bay. Let us wan-der by the bay

EXERCISE 4

This exercise consists of a series of Major scales. Each scale is an individual phrase, and should be sung with but one UH. Begin each scale with just a little mouth opening (see FIG. 1, p. 31) until you reach the top note; then open slightly more (see FIG. 2, p. 31) and hold that position while descending to the lowest note.

Breathe deeply before beginning each scale. (See chapter on "The Art of Breathing," p. 7.)

[illegible]

EXERCISE 5

Sing this exercise quite slowly, and sustain each note to its full value. On the word YOU, use the mouth position as shown in FIG. 4, p. 31, instead of that shown in FIG. 5; while doing this, it is important that you concentrate, nevertheless, on the OO sound. At first, this might seem a little difficult to do, but through constant practice, you will discover that it is a comparatively simple matter.

Breathe before each phrase.

Sing the words COME and GO in a natural manner, and pronounce them clearly.

Slowly

You come and go. You come and go. You come and go.

Sec-Fig. 4 — 2 — 4 etc.

go. You come and go. You come and go.

You come and go. You come and go. You come and go.

You come and go. You come and go. You come and go.

You come and go. You come and go. You come and go.

You come and go. You come and go. You come and go.

EXERCISE 6

Sing the word YOU lightly (see FIG. 5, p. 31). Do not use too much mouth opening on UH, and keep the same position for the next two notes; then open slightly more on the next, or highest note, in the phrase, and retain this position all the way down the scale. When you arrive at the bottom notes again, close the mouth slightly; then proceed to the top note and open a little more, retaining this position throughout the phrase.

At all times, the mouth should function with an upward and downward motion. In other words, when opening the mouth, let the jaw drop. This method produces what is known as "dark" tones. Never spread the mouth! This calls for "white" or "light" tones, which are thin and weak, and will contribute nothing to a singer's success.

Breathe deeply before beginning each phrase.

Moderately



You_UH

See Fig 5 1 2 1 2 1 2 etc



You_UH



You_UH



You_UH

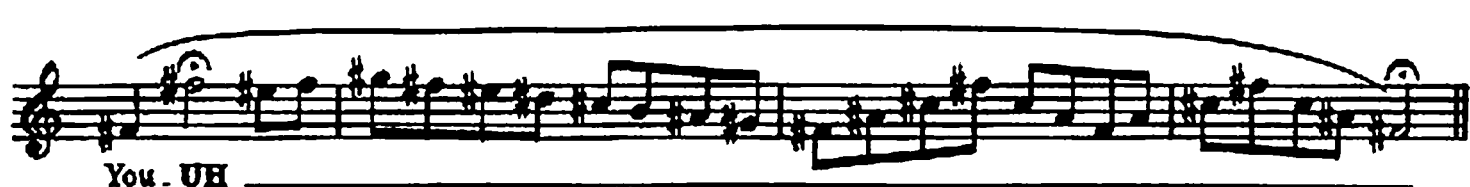
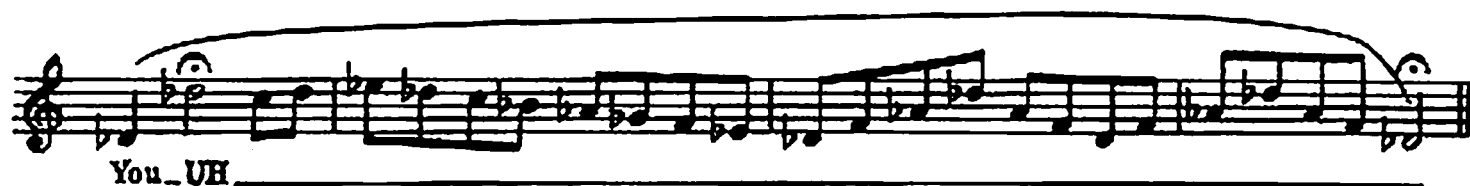


You_UH



You_UH

Ex 6 cont.



EXERCISE 7

On ascending the scale, try to keep the words as close to the lips as possible. Naturally, the word EAT must be sung on the lips and teeth (see FIG. 3, p. 31), which is also applicable to the succeeding words. Do not use too much mouth opening! Upon reaching the syllable BAR, open the mouth a little more and retain this position while descending to the lowest note. When you get to the syllable LEY, you will, of course, have to alter the position of the mouth. Take this tone in the natural manner, as the change will come automatically.

Breathe deeply at the beginning of each passage.

Moderately

Eat__ your__ beans__ and__ bar - - - ley, too!

See Fig. 3__ 5__ 3__ 1__ 2__ 3__ 5 etc.

Eat__ your__ beans__ and__ bar - - - ley, too!

Eat__ your__ beans__ and__ bar - - - ley, too!

Eat__ your__ beans__ and__ bar - - - ley, too!

Eat__ your__ beans__ and__ bar - - - ley, too!

Eat__ your__ beans__ and__ bar - - - ley, too!



EXERCISE 8

Before commencing each of the following four-note groups, take a good, deep breath. Keep the chest up, and be sure to support it with the stomach throughout. Do not use too much mouth opening on any of the words. This method will help to bring all of the tones forward to equal placement.

Slowly.



Sing a plain UH. Sing a plain UH. Sing a plain
See Fig. 3 — 2 — 1 — 2 etc.



EXERCISE 9

Always remember to breathe deeply. Keep the chest up and the stomach in!

This exercise is to be sung very slowly, giving plenty of support to each tone. The vowel AH is used throughout. On the first AH, open the mouth comfortably wide (see FIG. 2, p. 31) and do not change this position for the succeeding three notes. In other words, the entire group of four notes should be sung with one AH, allowing absolutely no change in the mouth position. With a little concentration on this point, you will soon have perfect control of the mouth and throat. Now take another deep breath and repeat the above process for the ensuing group of five notes. However, for this latter group, you will find that you won't need quite so much mouth opening as that used for the first group of four notes.

The singer is again cautioned to pay strict attention to the jaw, when opening and closing the mouth. Do not spread from ear to ear!

As this exercise is a rather exacting one, it is not advisable to descend chromatically, scale by scale, until you reach the starting point.

Moderately



EXERCISE 10

In the following exercise, use very little mouth opening on the word GIVE, and keep this position for the second note. Open the mouth a little more on the word THAT, and still more on the word BOY, then retain this position for the rest of the notes in the phrase. On the word BREAD, it will be necessary for you to close the mouth somewhat, in order to pronounce the word correctly.

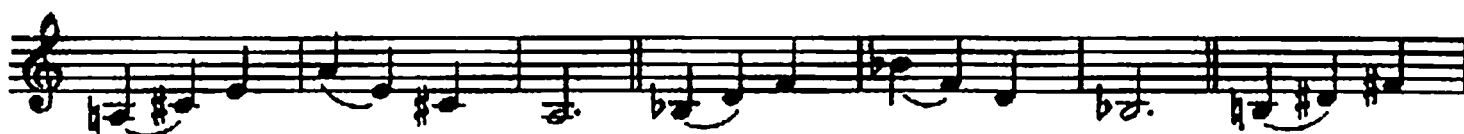
Breathe before each phrase.

Moderately



Give that boy some bread! Give that boy some bread!

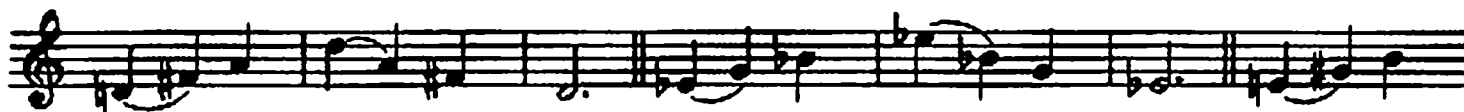
See Fig. 3 1 2 1 etc.



Give that boy some bread! Give that boy some bread! Give that



boy some bread! Give that boy some bread! Give that boy some bread!



Give that boy some bread! Give that boy some bread! Give that



boy some bread! Give that boy some bread! Give that boy some bread!



Give that boy some bread! Give that boy some bread! Give that



boy some bread! Give that boy some bread! Give that boy some bread!

EXERCISE 11

The instructions given in exercise 4, p. 12, also apply to this one (Ex. 11). Do not use too much mouth opening until you reach the top note, then open slightly more and hold this position for the balance of the phrase. Breathe deeply before each phrase.

Lively

See Fig. 1

UH

2 etc.

UH

UH

UH

UH

UH

UH

UH

Ex il cont.

The musical score consists of eight staves of music, each featuring a single melodic line. The notation includes various musical symbols such as treble clefs, key signatures (one flat and one sharp), and a variety of note values including eighth, sixteenth, and thirty-second notes. Slurs are used to group notes across measures. The piece is marked with 'UH' at the beginning of the first staff and at the end of the second, fourth, sixth, and eighth staves. The music is written in a style typical of early 20th-century musical notation.

UH

UH

UH

UH

UH

UH

UH

EXERCISE 12

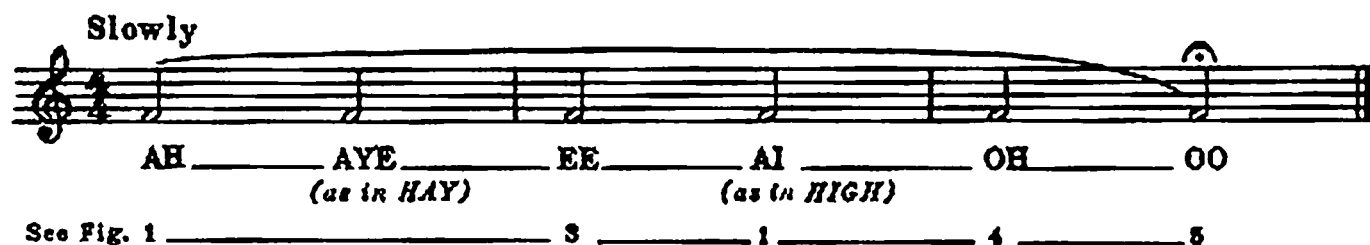
This exercise consists of six vowels, namely: AH, AYE, EE, AI, OH and OO. Take a good deep breath, and begin on a note which lies about half way between your middle and lowest tones. Do not ascend and descend chromatically, as you did in previous exercises, but merely select various notes at random. For instance, if you should start on F (first space), let your next note be the first B \flat above this F; then go down to the first D below the F; then to G, one note above F; then to low C, etc., etc.

Do not try this exercise on the high notes unless, of course, you can do so without straining. Whenever your voice feels strained, it is best to discontinue singing. Time and practice will take care of this, because you will soon discover that, what is difficult for you to do today, will apparently be much easier a little later on. The word *apparently* is used advisedly here, because all high tones need the full support of the breath and stomach.

This exercise is to be sung slowly and well sustained. The AH and AYE have the same mouth positions (see FIG. 1, p. 31). On the EE, close the mouth somewhat, with just a slight space between the teeth (see FIG. 3, p. 31). On AI (as in HIGH) return to the original AH position. For OH, see FIG. 4, p. 31. On the OO (see FIG. 5, p. 31), the lips will protrude slightly more than they do on OH.

You have only one attack, and that is on the AH; from there on, just keep singing, changing the mouth positions as you proceed.

A series of about ten exercises, selecting various notes at random, will be sufficient practice with these vowel sounds.



EXERCISE 13

Breathe deeply before you start this exercise, and do not use too much mouth opening when you hold AH (see FIG. 1, p. 31) on the second line G. Keep this position for the next two notes; then open slightly more on the next note, and retain this position for the rest of the phrase.

As you proceed with these exercises, you will notice that you vocalize more on AH than on UH. The vowel UH, used in the earlier exercises, will be of great benefit to the singer in placing the AH sound high and forward; which is extremely important. Both the UH and AH sounds are very closely related. UH will, of itself go forward more naturally than the AH. Try the following suggestion and you will understand more clearly just what is meant by this. Sing UH and sustain it a little, then, without stopping or making a fresh attack, go right into AH. Be sure to retain the exact same position for AH as that of the UH. In reality, the only difference between the two vowels is in the sound; and that is so slight that it is hardly noticeable. By dilligently practicing the above, it will be only a matter of time when you will have a perfectly placed AH.

In this exercise, it is not necessary to descend chromatically, as you have done in most of the previous exercises. When you arrive at a comfortable high note, pause slightly before you repeat the exercise.

Moderately

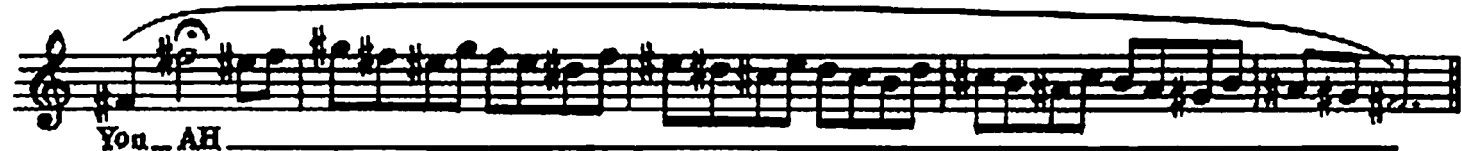
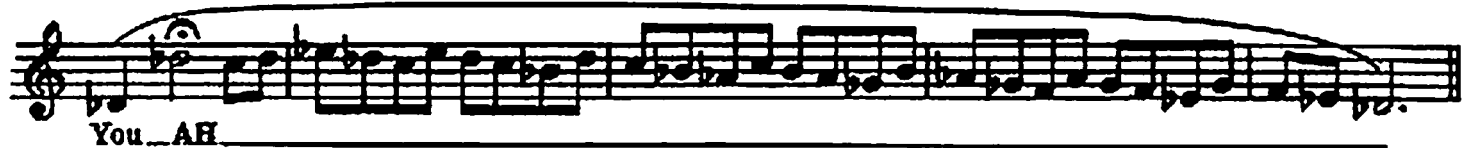
You AH
See Fig. 5 1 2 etc.

You AH

You AH

You AH

Ex 13 cont.



EXERCISE 14

Sing this exercise slowly, and be sure to take a breath after the word LONG.

Begin with just a little mouth opening on the word THE, and open wider on NIGHT. The word IS calls for a small opening, with the upper and lower teeth barely touching each other (see FIG. 3, p. 31). Open again on LONG (see FIG. 1, p. 31). Then, after taking a breath, sing the word AND with only a slight mouth opening, and hold this position to the end of the phrase.

It is not necessary to descend in this exercise.

Moderately

[illegible]

Ex 14 cont.

[illegible]

EXERCISE 15

This exercise of arpeggios is composed of two phrases: a slow one in 3/4 and a faster one in 4/4. In the 3/4 phrase, use a small mouth opening on AH (see FIG. 1, p. 31), until you reach the top note, then open wider (see FIG. 2, p. 31), and keep this position while descending to the low note. Then take a deep breath and sing the 4/4 phrase. The same mouth positions, as those used for the 3/4 phrase, are also used for this phrase. The second measure, in the 4/4 phrase, is to be sung exactly like the first measure.

It is not necessary to descend in this exercise.

Moderately

**AB**

See Fig. 1

2

Lively



AH

See Fig. 1.

2

1

2

eto.

Moderately (Same tempo for each of the following 3/4 phrases)



AH

Lively (Same tempo for each of the following 4/4 phrases.)



AH.



ΛΗ

**AH**

АН



ΔH

This musical score, labeled "Ex. 15 cont." and page "29", consists of 12 staves of music. The notation is primarily in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The music is organized into six pairs of staves, each pair containing a melodic line and a corresponding line with articulation and phrasing marks. The first staff of each pair begins with a long slur and the letters "AH" below it. The second staff of each pair contains a melodic line with a slur, a bracketed "3" (triple), and the word "simile" below it. The third staff of each pair begins with a long slur and "AH". The fourth staff of each pair contains a melodic line with a slur, a bracketed "3", and "simile". The fifth staff of each pair begins with a long slur and "AH". The sixth staff of each pair contains a melodic line with a slur, a bracketed "3", and "simile". The seventh staff of each pair begins with a long slur and "AH". The eighth staff of each pair contains a melodic line with a slur, a bracketed "3", and "simile". The ninth staff of each pair begins with a long slur and "AH". The tenth staff of each pair contains a melodic line with a slur, a bracketed "3", and "simile". The eleventh staff of each pair begins with a long slur and "AH". The twelfth staff of each pair contains a melodic line with a slur, a bracketed "3", and "simile". The music is written in a style typical of 20th-century pedagogical or technical exercises, with a focus on melodic contour and articulation.

EXERCISE 16

This is a signing off exercise. Just sing it in a natural way, bearing in mind the things you have learned in the previous exercises. You will, undoubtedly, notice a marked improvement in your voice, because of the splendid results obtained from this book.

[illegible]

MOUTH POSITIONS



FIG. 2



FIG. 3



FIG 1



FIG. 4



FIG. 5

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Now that you have concluded the foregoing exercises you will, undoubtedly, notice the marked improvement in your voice; that is, if you have followed all the instructions carefully.

You may now select a song of medium range and try to sing it according to the various ideas you have learned from this book. Just sing the song in a natural way, without straining, and you will find that the voice will do what is expected of it. You'll be surprised at your progress.

Never be careless when learning new songs. If a certain phrase does not sound as it should to you, go over it again and again, until you are perfectly satisfied.

Remember that a good voice cannot be developed overnight, and that only through ambition, intelligent study, hard work and patience will you be able to gain perfect voice control.

The instructions and exercises in this book have been written for the purpose of giving the student all that is necessary for him to become a successful singer of popular songs. If, however, he should feel the need of individual instruction, it is suggested that he engage a reliable competent voice teacher.



"TIPS ON POPULAR SINGING"

by FRANK SINATRA

Contains all that is necessary in the way of vocal instruction. All instructive matter in this book is written in a clear, understandable manner and, if strictly followed, will be of great value to the aspiring student in the popular field.

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