



Everyone Sings: A guide to open singing

Tom Johnson

Grand Prix of Polish Choral Music 2025



- Tom Johnson
- Violinist & Conductor
- Open Singing Leader

What is open singing?

- Emphasis on connection
- Joy of singing
- Process not product
- Different then normal rehearsal



Goals during Open Singing

- Everybody Happy
- Everybody involved
- Something for Everybody



Throw Catch

Jikeleza = turn around (Xhosa) from East London in South Africa

Throw Catch Throw Catch Throw Catch Ji - ke - le - za

The first staff of music is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of four measures. The first three measures each contain a melodic phrase: a quarter note G4, an eighth note F#4, a quarter note E4, and a quarter note D4. The first three notes are beamed together. The fourth measure contains a quarter note G4, a quarter note F#4, a quarter note E4, and a quarter note D4. The lyrics 'Throw Catch' are placed under the first two notes of each of the first three measures, and 'Ji - ke - le - za' is placed under the notes of the fourth measure.

Na na

The second staff of music is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of two measures. The first measure contains six eighth notes: G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4, and B3. The second measure contains six eighth notes: G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4, and B3. The lyrics 'Na na na na na na' are placed under the notes of the first measure, and 'Na na na na na na' are placed under the notes of the second measure.

Na na na na na na Ji - ke - le - za

The third staff of music is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of two measures. The first measure contains six eighth notes: G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4, and B3. The second measure contains four quarter notes: G4, F#4, E4, and D4. The lyrics 'Na na na na na na' are placed under the notes of the first measure, and 'Ji - ke - le - za' are placed under the notes of the second measure.

TEATRO, MUZIKOS IR KINO MU



Preparation: 1 song

- Study the score
 - Find the entrance
 - Find the difficulties
 - How to avoid them
-
- Make a plan
 - What & how

AIN'T GONNA LET NOBODY TURN ME AROUND

African-American spiritual with additional text from 'Words Like Freedom' by Langston Hughes

Arrangement by Rollo Dilworth

A

Ain't gon-na let no-bod - y turn me a - round, turn me a - round,
Ain't gon-na let no-bod - y turn me a - round, turn me a - round,
Ain't gon-na let no-bod - y turn me a - round, turn me a - round,

turn me a - round, Ain't gon-na let no-bod - y turn me a-round. I'm gon-na
turn me a - round, Ain't gon-na let no-bod - y turn me a-round. I'm gon-na
turn me a - round, Ain't gon-na let no-bod - y turn me a-round. I'm gon-na

keep on walk-in', keep on talk-in', march-in' up to Free-dom
sing-in' shout-in'
keep on walk-in', keep on talk-in', march-in' up to Free-dom
sing-in' shout-in'
keep on, keep on march-in' up to Free-dom

Land, march-in' up to Free - dom Land!
Land, march-in' up to Free - dom Land!
Land, march-in' up to Free - dom Land!

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Ain't gon-na let no-bod - y turn me a - round, turn me a - round,

turn me a - round, Ain't gon-na let no-bod - y turn me a-round. I'm gon-na
turn me a - round, Ain't gon-na let no-bod - y turn me a-round. I'm gon-na
turn me a - round, Ain't gon-na let no-bod - y turn me a-round. I'm gon-na

keep on walk-in', sing-in', keep on talk-in', shout-in', march-in' up to Free-dom
keep on walk-in', sing-in', keep on talk-in', shout-in', march-in' up to Free-dom
keep on, keep on march-in' up to Free-dom

Land, march-in' up to Free - dom Land!
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turn me a - round, Ain't gon-na let no-bod - y turn me a-round I'm gon-na
turn me a - round, Ain't gon-na let no-bod - y turn me a-round. I'm gon-na
turn me a - round, Ain't gon-na let no-bod - y turn me a-round. I'm gon-na

keep on walk-in', sing-in' keep on talk-in', shout-in' march-in' up to Free-dom
keep on walk-in', sing-in' keep on talk-in', shout-in' march-in' up to Free-dom
keep on, keep on march-in' up to Free-dom

Land, march-in' up to Free-dom Land!
Land, march-in' up to Free-dom Land!
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turn me a - round, Ain't gon-na let no-bod - y turn me a-round. I'm gon-na
turn me a - round, Ain't gon-na let no-bod - y turn me a-round. I'm gon-na
turn me a - round, Ain't gon-na let no-bod - y turn me a-round. I'm gon-na

keep on walk-in', keep on talk-in', march-in' up to Free-dom
sing-in' shout-in'
keep on walk-in', keep on talk-in', march-in' up to Free-dom
sing-in' shout-in'
keep on, keep on march-in' up to Free-dom

Land, march-in' up to Free - dom Land!
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B



There are words like Free - dom, - sweet and won - der - ful to
There are words like Li - ber - ty - that al - most make - me -

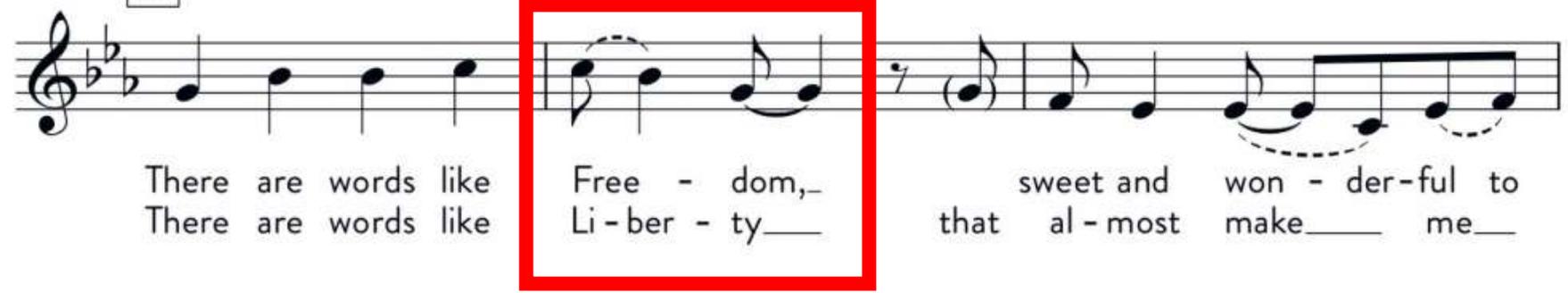


say. _____
cry. _____
If On my heart - strings
you had known what



free - dom sings - all day ev - er - y day.
I - know, - you would know - why.

B



There are words like
There are words like

Free - dom,
Li - ber - ty

sweet and won - der - ful to
that al - most make me



say.
cry.

If On you my had heart - strings known what



free-dom I know,
all day you would ev - er - y day. why.

B

There are words like Free - dom,
There are words like Li - ber - ty

sweet and won - der - ful to
that al - most make me

say.
cry.

If

On my heart - strings
you had known what

free - dom sings
I know,

all day ev - er - y day.
you would know why.

B

There are words like Free - dom,
There are words like Li - ber - ty

sweet and won - der - ful to
that al - most make me

say.
cry.

If

On my heart - strings
you had known what

free-dom sings
I know,

all day
you would

ev - er - y
know

day.
why.

B



There are words like Free - dom, - sweet and won - der - ful to
There are words like Li - ber - ty - that al - most make - me -



say. _____
cry. _____
If On my heart - strings
you had known what



free - dom sings - all day ev - er - y day.
I - know, - you would know - why.

1 **C** VAMP

No, no, no, no. Can't turn a - round!_____

2

Can - not turn a - round. No turn - ing back!

3

I can - not turn a - round._____ No!

Preparation

Open Singing set

- All the plans of the songs
- Make the puzzle
- Variety of styles, tempi, approaches...
- Visualise



25. Ja dan duia 8-part canon

Soili Perkiö (b 1958)

G (1) Dm7 (2) Dm7 (3) simile (4) (5) (6) (7) (8)

Ja dan du - i - a, ja dan du - i - a, ja dan daa dan daa dan dei - ja ja dan daa dan duu - i - a.

© Soili Perkiö

Ending: Repeat the last 4 bars (with upbeat) until all groups have reached the end, or alternatively end in canon on beat 1 of the G major chord

Movement

Always supporting
the overall musicality.

- With a didactical goal
- With a vocal goal
- With an esthetic goal



Marvelous Things

C G/B Am Gm C7 F F/G C G7

He has done mar - ve-lous He has done mar - ve-lous things, Praise the Lord

Mar-ve-lous mar-ve-lous mar-ve-lous mar-ve-lous things, Praise the Lord

He has done mar-ve-lous things, Praise the Lord

Detailed description: The image shows a musical score for the hymn 'Marvelous Things'. It is written in 3/4 time and consists of three vocal parts and guitar accompaniment. The guitar chords are indicated above the first staff: C, G/B, Am, Gm, C7, F, F/G, C, and G7. The lyrics are: 'He has done mar - ve-lous He has done mar - ve-lous things, Praise the Lord'. The first staff has lyrics: 'He has done mar - ve-lous He has done mar - ve-lous things, Praise the Lord'. The second staff has lyrics: 'Mar-ve-lous mar-ve-lous mar-ve-lous mar-ve-lous things, Praise the Lord'. The third staff has lyrics: 'He has done mar-ve-lous things, Praise the Lord'. The music is written in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb).

Bee! I'm expecting you – Mirjam de Wit

- Composed on my request for open singing
- Flexible score
- No obligations

- Find:
- Difficulties?
- Solutions?
- Possibilities?
- Ideas?

Bee! I'm expecting you – Mirjam de Wit

- Difficulties:

- 5 bar structure
- Body Percussion
- Melody
- Bass part
- Score

- Possibilities:

- Harmonic scheme
- Sounds
- Discant at letter C

Bee! I'm expecting you!
Was saying yesterday,
to somebody you know
that you were due.

Bee! I'm expecting you!
Was saying yesterday,
to somebody you know
that you were due.

Bee! I'm expecting you!
Was saying yesterday,
to somebody you know
that you were due.

Bee! I'm expecting you!
Was saying yesterday,
to somebody you know
that you were due.

Bee! I'm expecting you!

Was saying yesterday,
to somebody you know
that you were due.

Bee! I'm expecting you!
Was saying yesterday,
to somebody you know
that you were due.

Bee! I'm expecting you!
Was saying yesterday,
to somebody you know
that you were due.

Bee! I'm expecting you

Mirjam de Wit

Yours, fly _____

Bee! I'm ex - pec - ting you! wassay - ing Yes - ter - day _____ to

Bee! I'm ex - pec - ting you! wassay - ing Yes - ter - day to

Bzz

Dum dum dum dum dum dum dum dum

some - bo - dy you know that you were due

some - bo - dy you know that you were due

dum dum dum dum

ooh

The Frogs got home last week - are set - tled, and at work - Birds, most - ly

The Frogs got home last week - are set - tled, and at work -

You'll get my let - ter by the se - ven - teen thre - ply or bet - ter be with

back The Clo - ver warm and thick

-Birds, most - ly back and the Clo - ver warm and thick

me or bet - ter be with me