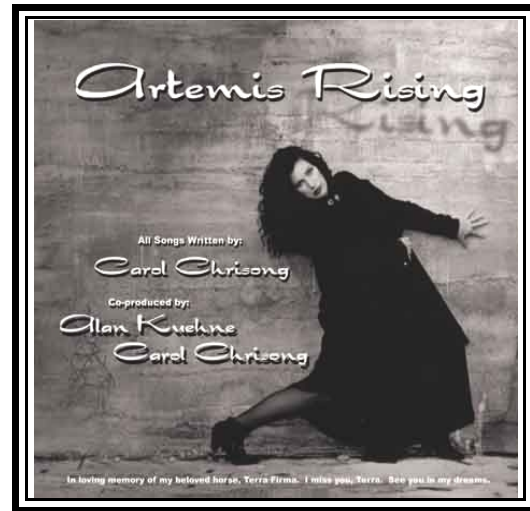

The Pop Sound - Upper Mix

(Techniques CD track 29-30 / DVD chap 11)

The upper mix is used to increase the upward range of singers who sing primarily in the chest register to give the impression of extending the chest range. The upper mix is used by both female and male Pop, Jazz, Gospel and Musical Theatre singers and by tenors, baritones and even basses in Classical singing.

The upper mix for females begins at approximately A above middle C and may extend even as high as high C or above. For the male voice, the upper mix usually occurs somewhere between F above middle C and the B \flat above that, but may extend far above that, depending on the individual singer.



Carol Crisong – Recording Artist

It is not authentic Pop style to suddenly "**break**" into soprano / falsetto when going for the high notes. Instead, as you move upward through the passaggio, maintain the mouth-nasal resonance and control the focusing strength of the vocal cords so that you gradually and smoothly move into the upper register while keeping the color of the lower register. This feels like you are gradually releasing or relaxing the focusing strength of the cords, but don't unfocus the cords to the point of breathiness. Maintain a clear tone throughout the passaggio.

To add richness to the mix, add some chest color by opening the throat space but do not necessarily add volume. This technique allows you to sing higher notes in your Pop voice without bringing full chest register too high. Singing too high in full chest register can be damaging to the voice. Many Gospel singers use the mix to carry the chest quality up into the soprano or falsetto range for a more powerful sound.

Exercises for upper mix also help strengthen the upper register of the Classical and legit female voice.

Singing too high too soon can put undue stress on your voice. You must stretch the range gradually, never force and never repeat an exercise over and over in a range where your voice is still not stable and strong. We are building a technique. Vocal stamina comes through slow, steady and consistent practice, not by trying to make up for lost practice time by suddenly jamming your instrument with vocal gymnastics for hours at a time.

The passaggio is a somewhat vulnerable area of the voice and is often the first area to weaken when there is vocal fatigue. You may understand a concept immediately but your voice needs time to learn and absorb since it involves muscles and coordination.

EXERCISES:

In the following exercises, use medium volume until your register transition is consistently smooth.

1. On the sound "**Hey**" or "**nyaa**" ("**aa**" as in *hat*), slide your voice on a siren-like tone, beginning in the lower register, moving upward slowly and smoothly through the passaggio into the upper register and then back down. Keep your support firm through the whole exercise. Use your fingertips to check.

2. For the female voice.

Sing: (Tech CD trk 29)

Musical notation for female voice exercise. The staff is in treble clef, key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and 4/4 time. The melody consists of a half note G4, a half note A4, a half note B4, and a half note G4. The notes are connected by a slur. Below the staff, the lyrics "Hey" and "Nyaa (as in hat)" are written on a line. The word "Hey" is aligned with the first note, and "Nyaa (as in hat)" is aligned with the second note. The word "Slide" is written below the staff, with a line pointing to the interval between the first and second notes. Another "Slide" is written below the staff, with a line pointing to the interval between the second and third notes.

For the male voice.

Sing:

Musical notation for male voice exercise. The staff is in treble clef, key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and 4/4 time. The melody consists of a half note G4, a half note A4, a half note B4, and a half note G4. The notes are connected by a slur. Below the staff, the lyrics "Hey" and "Nyaa (as in hat)" are written on a line. The word "Hey" is aligned with the first note, and "Nyaa (as in hat)" is aligned with the second note. The word "Slide" is written below the staff, with a line pointing to the interval between the first and second notes. Another "Slide" is written below the staff, with a line pointing to the interval between the second and third notes.

Maintain forward placement and a pure vowel. Gradually release the focusing strength of the vocal cords as you move upward through the passaggio. A yawn-like sensation will help smooth the transition by relaxing the focusing of the vocal cords. As you move back down, gradually increase the focusing strength without tightening the throat muscles or losing the yawn-like feeling.

The objective is to eliminate any abrupt changes in volume, focus, placement, vowel clarity or vocal color. Don't give in to the tendency to relax support on the downward slide. Use your fingertips to check. Begin in chest color and feel a gradual shift along the resonance track into mouth-nasal color, then nasal-head color and back down.

3. Use this exercise for working on your blend (mixed register).

For the female voice:

Sing: (Tech CD trk 30)

Musical notation for female voice exercise. The staff is in treble clef, key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and 4/4 time. The melody consists of a half note G4, a half note A4, a half note B4, a half note G4, a half note F4, a half note E4, and a half note D4. The notes are connected by a slur. Below the staff, the lyric "Eh" is written on a line, aligned with the first note.

4. And for the male voice.

Sing:

Musical notation for male voice exercise. The staff is in treble clef, key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and 4/4 time. The melody consists of a half note G4, a half note A4, a half note B4, a half note G4, a half note F4, a half note E4, and a half note D4. The notes are connected by a slur. Below the staff, the lyric "Eh" is written on a line, aligned with the first note.

5. On a comfortable high note in your lower register, sing this downward arpeggio as short, single, detached notes or staccato and then connected or legato. Use the sound "ow" (as in ouch). Begin it with a pure "aa" (as in hat). To avoid a glottal attack, approach the beginning of the vowel with a "silent H".

Sing:

B \flat

Ow! Ow! Ow! Ow! Aa (As in hat) Ow!

6. Repeat Exercise 5 a half step higher each time. Gradually increase the head-nasal emphasis as you move higher in pitch.

7. Sustain each note in the following exercise with 6 pulses of vibrato using the word sounds below:

Sing:

Nyaa(as in hat)
Nay (as in pay)

8. Repeat Exercise 7 a half step higher each time. Gradually increase the head-nasal emphasis as you move higher in pitch.

9. Repeat, using the phrases on page 46.

10. Once the mix is smooth at medium volume, repeat the exercises a little louder and then a little softer.

11. Continue to develop your mixture with these more advanced exercises.

Use the "nyaa" and "nay" sounds.

Sing: a)

Nyaa
Nay

b)

Vibrato (8) (8)

c)



Keep practicing these exercises until you have mastered the mix and the smooth blend between lower and upper registers.



NOTES