



# Unit 3

## Uniting Our Voices in Song

**Discover the instrument you were born with—your voice! This unit includes activities and tips for breath control, posture, and diction. Apply what you’ve learned to vocal repertoire, including “Ode to Joy,” “De Colores,” “Tideo” and a Carnegie Hall song, “A Simple Melody.”**

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“A Simple Melody,” music and lyrics by Nick Scarim, © 2000 Nick Scarim, © 2008 Carnegie Hall. Performed by Sue Landis and Michael Mizrahi.

“Tideo,” traditional American song. Performed by Sue Landis and Shane Schag.

“De Colores,” traditional Mexican song. Performed by Sue Landis and Shane Schag.

“Ode to Joy” by Ludwig van Beethoven. Adapted by John Whitney. Performed by Sue Landis and Shane Schag.

“Au Claire de la lune” by Claude Debussy. Arranged by Richard Mannoia. Performed by Sue Landis.

“Hot Cross Buns,” traditional American song. Performed by Sue Landis.

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# Unit 3: Uniting Our Voices in Song

**Elvis:** I really enjoyed learning how all the instruments in the orchestra work together. I wish I had an instrument to play.

**Violet:** You do have an instrument, Elvis! In fact, everyone does—it's your voice. You use your voice all the time to speak and sing. To sing, try sitting up tall with your shoulders relaxed.

**Composer:** The next thing to think about is your breathing. When you sing, you have to breathe a bit differently from when you talk. You should breathe deeply, from low in your body. If you put your hand on your belly when you breathe in this way, your stomach should expand like a balloon. That motion shows that you are breathing like a singer. Try it!

**Elvis:** Okay, here I go. I feel it—you're right, my belly goes out when I breathe in. Okay, now I'm ready to sing!



**Conductor:** Well, we still might have a few things to practice if we want to become strong singers. Next, we need to get out of our speaking voices and into our **singing** voices.

**Elvis:** How do I know if I'm using my singing voice?

**Conductor:** Usually you can tell because your singing voice sounds higher and lighter than your speaking voice. An easy way to start is by making an exaggerated yawning sound. Now keep repeating it, stretching that yawn higher and lower each time.

## teacher tip

Have your students practice using their beautiful singing voices as much as possible. This will take some time to get used to, and will help them sing with correct pitch. Here are some warm-up activities that should be done at the beginning of **every class**.

1. Model a long, quiet yawn. Begin on a high pitch and gradually go down in pitch, like your voice is going down a curved slide. Students can follow along, using their voices and hands to trace the vocal contour.
2. Have students echo "yoo-hoo!" (Teacher, do this at the beginning of a song or use it to stop a song or to tell students to use their singing voices.)
3. Imitate the sounds of an owl, a siren, a boat whistle, or a train whistle.



listen to **Track 6**

**Violet:** Wow, I didn't know my singing voice could do so much! The high sounds are starting to tickle my nose and forehead.

**Elvis:** And the low ones made vibrations down in my chest!

**Conductor:** Excellent—that's exactly right! Another thing we can do to sing better is to pronounce all of our words clearly with good diction.



listen to **Track 7**

**Composer:** Listen to this example and then we can try it, using clear diction.



listen to **Track 8**

**Conductor:** Now that you're breathing low and deeply, using your singing voice, and pronouncing all your words with good diction, let's hear some really great singing. Don't forget to sit or stand up tall!

*Diction means speaking words very clearly, thinking about every vowel and consonant sound. Any actor you've seen on TV or in a movie has been trained to use good diction. It's also important in everyday speaking so people don't keep asking, "Huh? What did you say?" Remember, people can understand you best when you speak or sing with good diction!*



### Vocal Work: Diction Activity ideas

1. As a class, in groups, or individually, read poems and practice clear diction. Can you understand every single word? Do the words sound mushy, dull, or garbled? How can we speak with words that are clear, clean, or crisp?
2. Create a Reading Lips game: Students can send each other "secret messages" across the room by mouthing the words of a sentence. Over-emphasis of consonant formations wins the game and gives kids great practice for diction training.
3. Practice and discover tongue twisters: Students can make up fun tongue twisters to help them practice good diction.
4. Alliterations: Students can make up their own alliterated sentences to practice good diction. Be sure to exaggerate all the consonant sounds. Explain the meaning of alliteration as needed.

## Gino's Checklist for Being a Singing Superstar

### 1. How's my posture?

- ✓ back is straight
- ✓ shoulders are relaxed and down
- ✓ chin is level

### 2. How's my breathing?

- ✓ breathing low into my body (not raising my shoulders)

### 3. Am I using my singing voice?

- ✓ clear, light sound
- ✓ feeling vibrations in my nose and forehead

### 4. Am I using good diction to make all the consonants crisp and clear?

### 5. Am I listening carefully and correctly, matching the notes with my voice?

### 6. What did the class and I do well?

### 7. What can the class and I do to make the singing better next time?



**Conductor:** Now let's sing and look at one of our LinkUP! songs, "A Simple Melody."



listen to **Track 9**

## lesson extension

1. As a class, listen to the recording of "A Simple Melody." Have your students follow the lyrics as they listen to the song. [US 1; NYC 1]

2. Practice singing the song with the recording.

3. After singing "A Simple Melody" for a couple of weeks, play a memory game with your students. Pick eight students to stand in a line at the front of the room. Starting on one side, have each student sing a line of "A Simple Melody." If a student cannot remember the next line, the student sits down. The last person standing at the end of the game wins.

# A Simple Melody

Nick Scarim



When we sing a sim-ple me-lo-dy, and we blend our notes to-ge-ther,  
It was back in eight een ninety one, on some land a-bove a stream,

it makes some-thing more of you and me, when we sing to-ge-ther.  
that a man named An-drew Car-ne-gie, came to re-a-lize a dream.

And no mat-ter that we're far a-part, or mis-un-der-stand each o-ther,  
For his wife had told him years be-fore, that she knew it was the case,

mu-sic al-ways seems to reach our hearts, and bring us all to-ge-ther.  
to en-joy a con-cert or a talk, peo-ple need a special place.

Like sis-ters and bro-thers the feel-ing is strong,  
It's Car-ne-gie Hall where the best come to play.

with one a-no-ther, our hearts raised in song.  
Car-ne-gie Hall where we're sing-ing to-day.

When we sing a sim-ple me-lo-dy, and we blend our notes to-ge-ther,  
So let's raise our voi-ces once a-gain, to this place we've come to know.

it makes some-thing more of you and me, when we sing to-ge-ther.  
To this build-ing An-drew Car-ne-gie built so ma-ny years a-go.

4. If you have many students who have memorized the verses, play a speed memory game. Again, pick eight students. You sing a line of the song for them, and they must complete the phrase as soon as you stop singing.

**For example:**

**Teacher:** "Our hearts raised in ..."

**Student** "... song."

Although students will not perform these next songs at the LinkUP! concert, they can still use these songs to practice good singing.

teacher **tip**

# listening challenge



listen to **Track 9**

Listen to the singer and follow the words for “A Simple Melody” from page 38. What do you notice about how the singer uses her singing voice?

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Which consonants are pronounced clearly, and with good diction?

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What are the lyrics about?

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## Suggestions for study:

- Listen to a song **without looking at** the music. Reflection questions may include: Which elements of good singing do you hear? What do you notice about the lyrics? What do you notice about good diction? What’s the feeling of the music? What do you like about this song? What’s your favorite part and why?
- Listen to a song with the music. Were you following the lyrics or the notes more often? In which parts of the song were you able to hear the singing really match the notes you were singing on the page? Where did you find it difficult to follow along?

teacher **tip**



**Conductor:** Now we just need to practice a little each day and we'll be performing "A Simple Melody" like singing superstars!

**Elvis:** I love this song, but I'm having trouble singing the whole thing at once. Could we sing just a little bit at a time?

**Composer:** I have an idea. Let's learn it by singing it in **call-and-response** style.

**Elvis:** Call and response? Is that like when my mom calls me downstairs to eat dinner, and I respond by telling her I'm on my way?

**Composer:** Exactly! Call and response is used in lots of music. Let's have our singer go first and then we'll repeat after her, trying to match the great singing habits we hear.



listen to **Track 10**

**Violet:** Wow, we're really sounding good! We should give a concert. Could we sing a few other songs? I like the "Ode to Joy" from Beethoven's Symphony No. 9.



listen to **Track 11**

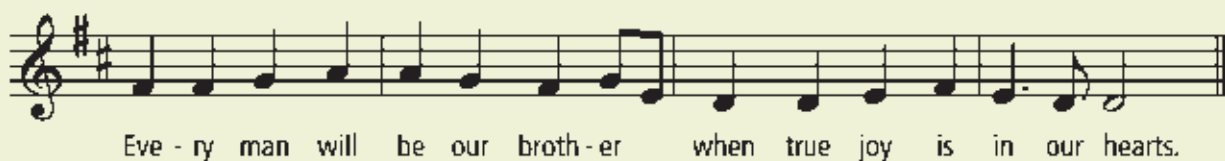
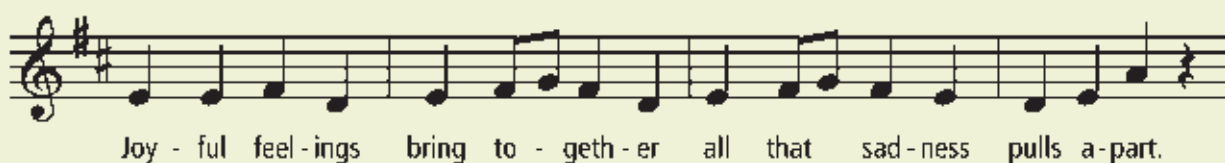
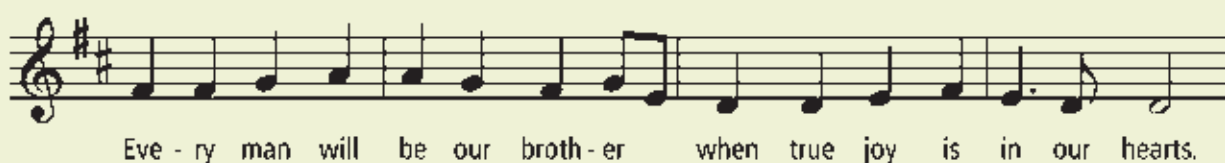
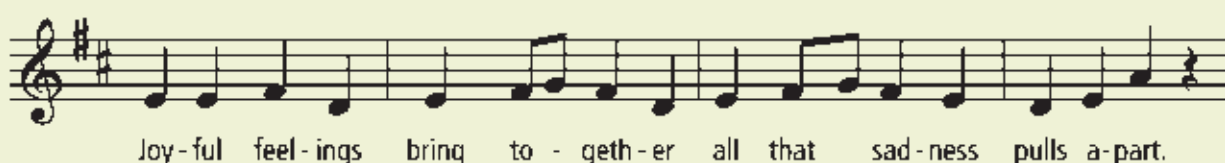
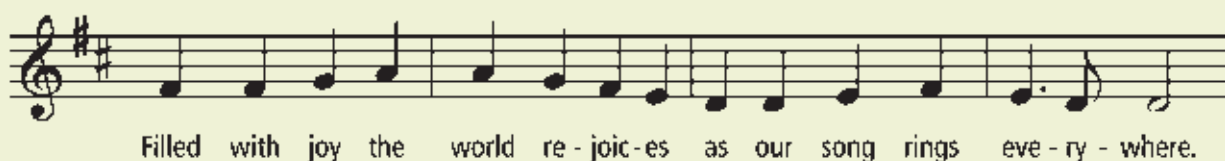
**Lyrics** are the words  
in a song.



- Read and discuss the lyrics **before** listening. Which words do you remember most? What do you think this song is about? What kinds of patterns or rhymes do you notice?
- Plant "seeds" for listening focus. For example
  - Teach a specific rhythm from the music.
  - Sing through a recurring interval pattern from the song.
  - Teach a phrase without the lyrics and analyze contour.

# Ode to Joy

Beethoven





**Elvis:** What about "De colores"? I love that one!



listen to **Track 12**

## De colores

Mexican Folk Song

De - - - co - lo - res, de co - lo - res se vis - ten los  
cam - pos en la pri - ma - ve - ra - - -  
De \_\_\_\_\_ co - lo - res, de co - lo - res son los pa - ja -  
ri - tos que vie - nen a - fue - ra - - -  
De - - - co - lo - res - - - De co - lo - res es el ar - cor  
i - ris que ve - mos lu - cir, y por e - so los gran - des a -  
mo - res de mu - chos co - lo - res me gus - tan a mi, y por  
gus - tan a mi.

**Violet:** And “Jingle at the Window”! Let’s sing that.



listen to **Track 13**

## Jingle at the Window

Traditional

Pass one win - dow, Ti - de - o, pass two win - dows, Ti - de - o.

3  
Pass three win - dows, Ti - de - o, Jin - gle at the win - dow, Ti - de - o.

5  
Ti - de - o, Ti - de - o, Jin - gle at the win - dow, Ti - de - o.

7  
Ti - de - o, Ti - de - o, Jin - gle at the win - dow, Ti - de - o.

The musical score is written on four staves in 4/4 time. The melody is simple and repetitive, with lyrics written below the notes. The first staff starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are: "Pass one win - dow, Ti - de - o, pass two win - dows, Ti - de - o." The second staff starts with a measure rest of 3 measures, then continues the melody: "Pass three win - dows, Ti - de - o, Jin - gle at the win - dow, Ti - de - o." The third staff starts with a measure rest of 5 measures, then continues: "Ti - de - o, Ti - de - o, Jin - gle at the win - dow, Ti - de - o." The fourth staff starts with a measure rest of 7 measures, then continues: "Ti - de - o, Ti - de - o, Jin - gle at the win - dow, Ti - de - o." The score ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.