



Singing Made Easy

Level 1

Written and Performed
by Marcia McCarry



MusicinOurHomeschool.com

Dedication

*This is dedicated to my mother, Mary Vonceil Keets,
who sang with me when I was a young child
and continued to foster me in my many
musical endeavors throughout my adult life.*

Singing Made Easy, Level I
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Coloring sheets by Theresa Doe





Preface

Not long ago a young girl of eleven years came into my studio having every intention of learning to sing. She had a loving family, but no history of listening to much vocal music in her home. Although she had always loved to sing, according to her mother she had never shown the ability to “carry a tune” or even to match a pitch. It was a wonderful opportunity to share my singing program and so I asked them to play the recording of Level I daily.

After about six weeks of regular voice lessons, my young student could match any comfortable pitch played on the piano. In another month she could sing all the songs from Level I on key; within three weeks she was singing songs from Level II with equal mastery. I was amazed that she was able to absorb the material so fast. Knowing that the recordings had played a major role in accelerating this girl’s musical understanding, I suggested that her mom purchase Level III and that her daughter continue to learn the songs by listening to the CD rather than by reading the music. The family played the recordings during every waking moment. I could hardly believe it; my young friend was able to learn all eleven songs from Level III in two months. She was singing very well on pitch and her voice began to take on a much more beautiful quality.

We quickly went on to Level IV. My young student pleaded to start listening to Level V even before she had completed Level IV. She was suddenly quite able to sing rounds and harmony parts with her sister and her mom who always listened to the CDs with her. The family had so much fun singing together that it was apparent that this musical experience had truly changed their lives.

I recall that when I was very small (about three years old) my mother bought a little xylophone for me. She taught me to play some tunes and from that I learned the basic concepts of music, such as up, down, skips, steps, high, low, and how to make my voice match a tone on my instrument.

This intense desire for music and the ability to produce beautiful music from one’s own voice is a natural part of childhood. When I was a child my mother sang to me and with me—songs about everything. We learned all the wonderful children’s songs of that era, and many are now out of print. It took many hours of her time to write out the lyrics. Singing was our favorite activity during my pre-school years and I remember it fondly.

I began studying the violin at age eight. Sometime later we acquired an old upright piano. I couldn't take piano lessons because my parents could only afford to pay for formal instruction on one instrument. My violin teacher showed me how to read the bass clef on the piano keyboard and I taught myself to play. Determination was my first piano teacher!

During my university training I earned a Bachelor of Arts in Music Education and a Master of Arts in voice. The subject for my Master's thesis was the "changing voice." My first experience with piano lessons was not until I quit my school teaching job to be a housewife and mother. Fortunately, during my son's early childhood I was able to practice and carefully develop all three skills of playing the violin, the piano, and singing. I began teaching privately while my two children were still very young.

As time passed I began to realize that there was an attitude among some parents and teachers that no one should ever be "taught" to sing until sometime in their mid-teens. I began to research voice production to an even greater extent and to discuss it with my teacher, Kathleen Darragh. Over the years I have taken younger and younger students. I discovered that I really could help them with good breathing, good posture, relaxation, and their voices would grow and become very beautiful.

My purpose in creating this voice program has been to establish a method that parents and teachers are able to use with very young children to help them to sing well, both by relaxing the body and by training the ear. I feel that it is possible to observe the body while listening to the voice and thereby assist young singers in using their voices properly from the start.

My son, Andrew Pudewa, had searched for a way to teach singing to his own children as well as those in his day-care program. He informed me that there was nothing available that he wanted to use. Due to his constant encouragement and my seven years of research on early childhood music education, I began working on Level I. The singing program that I have developed is intended for children or adults of any age to learn to sing well.

The key to producing a beautiful, pure tone is relaxation. The human voice is by nature a lovely instrument, and if it is treated right it will improve throughout a person's lifetime. Not everyone is able to have singing instruction from a private teacher or even from a school teacher in a classroom, and although there may not be a piano in the home, everyone can learn to sing. All that is needed is a good CD player and the willingness to listen and sing along with the CDs in this program.



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Learning to Sing

Each child is very much an individual. Teaching singing is a very personal experience and is best accomplished in a one-to-one relationship between parent and child or teacher and student.

Many people ask me when I feel is the best time to begin learning to sing. Believe it or not, the most natural time to begin the study of singing is in the womb. An unborn baby can definitely hear music and can also feel the vibrations of the mother's voice. As the baby listens to its mother singing, he or she begins to internalize the sound of a pure tone. This will also happen as the parents play good music to the baby.

After an infant comes into the world, the sound of a parent's voice continues to be a great delight and comfort. Children learn through their five senses: through seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, and smelling. Realizing this, adults can help their children by providing stimulation in each area. Brothers and sisters are very good at helping, too.

If parents and others have sung to the child from birth (or even before) and if they have played good recordings of musical instruments and attended concerts with their children, there is strong evidence that the ability to hear tones is well established before the singing voice starts to develop. This usually happens between the ages of two and three, and sometimes earlier. During these early years we want to encourage the child to sing but not to be too concerned about whether he matches pitches perfectly. Like any other developmental skill, this process could take a while. Just keep singing with your child, playing fine recordings of vocal soloists and choirs, and encouraging your child to sing in groups whenever possible.

When the time comes to assist your child in learning specific songs, you as the parent should never feel that your own voice is not good enough. Because your child has bonded to your voice, it does provide a good instrument; besides, children love to hear anyone sing! In addition to listening to your singing, the child will hear other children and adults sing and will begin to feel comfortable about joining in.

How To Use Your *Singing Made Easy* Learning Packet

Your packet contains:

- Book containing Teaching Points and Song Sheets for Level I
- Coloring Sheets which correspond to each song on the CD
- CD with recordings of all songs in Level I in two keys (high and low)

Before you begin working with these materials it is best to make copies of your Coloring Sheets for coloring. That way you will have the master to copy for other children in the future.

Here are some suggestions for using the materials in this packet:

The CD

As your child begins listening to the CD, he or she will naturally begin to sing along. Children particularly appreciate the experience if their parents sing along with them. Play each of the vocal tracks several times for easy learning. By listening to the songs again and again, your child will become very familiar with each new song and will soon begin to sing by using only the accompaniment tracks.

You and your child can play the CD at home and in the car (it is especially good for long trips). Even if your child does not sing with the recording at first, keep playing it and singing along with it yourself.

The pitches for each song were chosen specifically to accommodate a child's natural vocal range. However, if the pitch of a track seems to be too high, try the lower one. If you should decide to use the lower pitch of a song, you may wish to place the correct chord symbols on the music sheets.

The Music Sheets

Sheets of music are provided with the *Singing Made Easy* materials so that a parent or another assistant may look at the music. It is not necessary to show the music to the child. This is not a music reading course, and during this early stage of learning, children are much better off learning by ear than by note reading. Chords are provided for those who wish to accompany the song with a piano, guitar, autoharp, banjo, mandolin, or even a ukulele. It is good to use these music sheets when young students begin playing instruments; they will enjoy playing their own accompaniment with these melodies they have loved so much!

The Teaching Points

The suggestions in the Teaching Points are to be used by parents and others who wish to help young children to sing. They tell what to look for while observing a child first learning to sing. It really can be a lot of fun to participate in training the young voice. A wise parent makes a very fine teacher.

It is usually easy for a mom or dad to see tension in their own child's body. These guidelines are designed to help the parent find body tension and to help the child learn to relax. It is fine to use teaching aids like CDs, films, mirrors and such, but the best feedback is always from parents, teachers, or anyone who may be assisting.

The Coloring Sheets

The beautiful drawings used with Levels I and II are by Theresa Doe. Each song has a corresponding Coloring Sheet. For the song "Down, Down" there are two pictures, labeled A and B, to be used with two different versions of the song. I suggest that you copy the pictures and retain the originals so that other family members coming along can also have copies. This also allows a child to color the same picture more than once.

If the child is too young to color, the parent could make flash cards out of the pictures and show them while the song is being sung. Use the coloring sheets as a point of discussion and as a help in visualizing the message of the song.

The Method

The ability to relax is probably the most important factor in singing. In order to take a sufficient breath the body first needs to be relaxed. In the beginning stages this is a major consideration. Areas of tension are usually the tongue, lips and jaw, and neck, shoulders and arms. We tend to carry our tensions in these parts of our bodies, so sometimes we actually have to teach the muscles how to let go. Parents and teachers need to recognize signs of tension in children and then guide them by use of relaxation exercises such as those included in the Exercises on page 6.

Once you understand how to help your child sing well, you will be ever so pleased with the results.

We need to think about relaxation through all stages of development.

Some of the important things a child can learn through singing include:

- Good posture
- Ability to follow directions
- Concentration
- Proper breathing
- How to use parts of the body never used before
- Self-esteem
- Poise
- An appreciation of music

The human voice is naturally a very beautiful instrument. All we have to do is make certain that it is used correctly, without strain, tension, or force. This is done through exercises appropriate to each person.

Always try to point out to your child that he/she has done well, making sure there is no criticism of the efforts made at a lesson or during the practice period. Because the voice is part of the body, a child will feel very personal about the voice and may be more sensitive about it. Whenever someone is told that he/she cannot sing well, unfortunately it may take many months or years of careful nurturing to remedy the resulting feelings of distress and frustration.

Plan a regular daily time for the singing activity. The best time is when a child is not in a hurry to do anything else. Encourage him/her during the singing. Listen carefully and let your child know how much you enjoyed the performance. As confidence grows, your child will be delighted to sing for relatives and friends, in school, church groups, or in other social activities.

Other *Singing Made Easy* Materials

Discover the Magic of Self Esteem is a delightful CD of eleven original songs with instrumental accompaniments, music, and coloring sheets. Songs include Self Esteem, Love, Courage, Honesty, Perseverance, Forgiveness, Ability, Kindness, Friendship, Gratitude, and Loyalty. There is joy in singing about these positive attributes necessary to having a good self image.

The *Vocal Warm Up Exercise* CD may be used at any level and is especially recommended for use with Levels III and above.

The entire family will enjoy the special packet of *Christmas Carols Made Easy*. It includes music and coloring sheets, and a CD of traditional carols from Germany, England, Holland, Spain, Puerto Rico, France, and America. Teaching points give an overview of the historical and cultural basis of the songs and advice on the best ways to learn to sing them well.

Hot Cross Buns

This song teaches us to hear the difference between short and long notes and to be able to sing them as such. The song begins with an introduction played by the piano. This is followed by the first version of the song sung with short, detached words. On the music sheet you will notice that the notes for the words *hot cross buns* have rests after each of them, indicating that the singer stops the tone after each note is sung. The second version is sung with long, connected words, which in musical terminology is called *legato*. This is a smooth way of singing the song.

Hot Cross Buns

Lively

Traditional

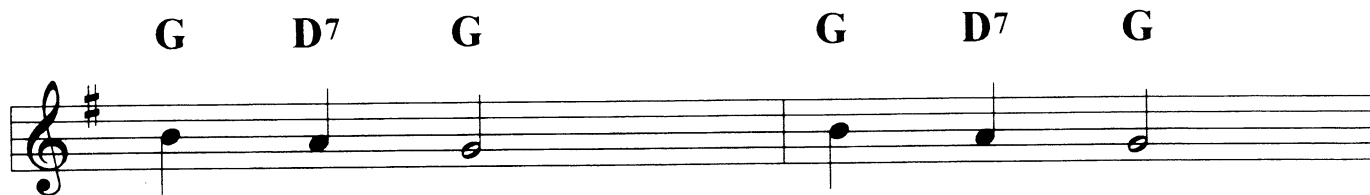


1 Hot cross buns, hot cross buns,



3 One - a - pen - ny, two - a - pen - ny, hot cross buns.

Smoothly



5 Hot cross buns, hot cross buns,



7 One - a - pen - ny, two - a - pen - ny, hot cross buns.

About the Author

When I was very young my mother sang to me and with me. We sang songs about everything. I learned all the wonderful children's songs of that era, some of which have long since been out of print. My mother spent many hours of her time writing out the words to our favorite songs. It was the most worth-while activity during my pre-school years and I remember it well.

I was not too small to remember that my mother bought me a little xylophone. She taught me how to play some tunes, and from it I learned the basic concepts of music such as up, down, skips, steps, high, low, and how to make my voice match a tone on my instrument.

I began studying the violin at age eight. Some time after that we got an old upright piano, which my mother bought from a neighbor by taking in sewing. My parents could only afford to pay for formal instruction on one instrument, so I couldn't study piano with a teacher. However, my violin teacher showed me how to read the bass clef music for the piano keyboard, and I taught myself to play with both hands.

With much determination and by spending a lot of time listening, I learned to play piano enough to get along in college. My first piano teacher, Guy Maier, was a university professor who put up with me and my limited technique for a whole semester. I did not really study piano until I was a mother and decided to quit my public school teaching job to stay home and raise my children. It was my pleasure to practice and develop all three of my skills: violin, piano and voice.

I earned my Bachelor's Degree in Applied Arts from UCLA, then a Master's Degree in Voice from California State University of Los Angeles. The private teachers with whom I have studied include Irwin Windward, Kathleen Darragh, Josefine Lott, and Marie Gibson. I enrolled in some graduate courses at the University of Southern California with harpsichordist, Malcolm Hamilton, and opera coach, Natalie Limonick. After five years of teaching public school, I studied piano privately with Dr. Paul Stoye, and Frances Thiel.

When my children were small I began teaching voice, and later on piano. Music has since been my joy and very fortunately, my livelihood. If this material contributes to your life in any way, I shall be delighted. I feel that I was extremely fortunate to have had a mother who always supported my many musical activities.

~Marcia McCarry



Conclusion

It has been a lot of fun creating this learning packet for you. I hope you will enjoy using it as much as I have preparing it. As you have success with this program, please respect the copyright laws and copy the material only for the use of your own children. This material has been copyrighted, and it may not be copied to give or to sell to anyone else.

My gratitude to all those who have known about this project and who kept trying to spur me on to complete it.

Thanks to all of you who believe in teaching music to your young children. I wish you continued success in your endeavors to achieve greater musical understanding through the use of this material and any future releases.

~Marcia McCarry



From Gena Mayo of Music in Our Homeschool:

I would like to thank Andrew Pudewa of IEW (Institute for the Excellence in Writing) for entrusting me with his mother's Singing Made Easy materials. It is a pleasure to continue her dream of teaching singing, a dream I share as well!

Coming soon: Levels 2-5 and Christmas Carols Made Easy

See all courses at Learn.MusicinOurHomeschool.com

Lesson 5 – Memorizing a Song

Every new piece should be approached through sound. The best way is to hear it performed before trying to learn it. Listen to really good singers, those who have made their performances great.

If you are already a musician and a good reader, play the melody line on the keyboard or on another instrument. If not, have someone play it for you. Decide if the piece is written in the key that is easiest to sing.

To prepare a song (or speech) start with these ideas:

1. Write down the words of your song (or speech) *exactly*. It must be in your own handwriting with no abbreviations.
2. Sing (or speak) your material with expression and proper inflexion, as though you are telling a story. No “sing-song” effects.
3. Write down the first word (or two words, if you need them) of every sentence. Sing (or speak) it again. This time just glance at the first word.
4. Sing your song (without looking) in this way:
 - a) Repeat one **phrase** at a time until it is completely memorized.
 - b) Repeat one **verse** at a time until it is completely memorized.
 - c) Sing your song with the accompaniment without looking at the words. Be certain to know all introductions, interludes, and endings.

5. Watch yourself in the mirror while you sing.
Check body posture, facial expressions, and be sure you cannot see yourself breathe.
6. Add appropriate gestures, body movement, and general excitement to your performance.*
7. Choose the particular style for the songs you will sing; i.e. classical, pops, blues, jazz, rock, country western, movie music, Broadway, etc. Think of ways to stylize each song differently.
8. If you have been using a karaoke machine, try to sing the song without the vocal part.

Note: If you are the character in a musical (or play) think of how the character feels while the song is being sung. Build the emotion of the song by doing all of your “sense memory” exercises before the scene. If there is another person in the scene with you, think how your character relates to this other person.

Hot Cross Buns

Lively

Traditional

Hot cross buns, hot cross buns

One a pen - ny, two a pen - ny, hot cross buns.

This musical score is for a lively version of the song 'Hot Cross Buns'. It is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody is played on a single treble staff, while the piano accompaniment is split between a treble and a bass staff. The lyrics are: 'Hot cross buns, hot cross buns' and 'One a pen - ny, two a pen - ny, hot cross buns.' The tempo is marked 'Lively'.

Smoothly

Hot cross buns, hot cross buns,

One a pen - ny, two a pen - ny, hot cross buns.

This musical score is for a smooth version of the song 'Hot Cross Buns'. It is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody is played on a single treble staff, while the piano accompaniment is split between a treble and a bass staff. The lyrics are: 'Hot cross buns, hot cross buns,' and 'One a pen - ny, two a pen - ny, hot cross buns.' The tempo is marked 'Smoothly'.

