**GETTING BACK TO FACE TO FACE REHEARSALS – SOME TIPS**

It’s an exciting prospect to be singing together again after 18 months of remote rehearsals but there are some easy solutions to the voice issues that may occur after singing together indoors or outdoors.

First of all, a tired voice after this enforced incarceration during the pandemic is normal. Even if we have been attending Zoom rehearsals regularly we may not have used our voice in the “normal” way. Singers have mentioned that they haven’t been able to sing at their normal volume for fear of disturbing others nearby, that singing to learning tracks has not always worked for them, and that they haven’t been able to generate the same enthusiasm when singing solo rather than being surrounded by their riser buddies.

So where do we go from here? I’d like to share a few tips to help with our return to normal rehearsals so that our voices stay healthy and free.

* Firstly, try to do some singing every day. The vocal rehab exercises I outlined recently (in the attached powerpoint) will help. Ideally 15 minutes a day of relaxed and open vocal exercises will be really beneficial.
* If singing outdoors maintain the freedom and openness in your voice, There is always a risk when singing outdoors that our voices may not be heard and it is natural to try and increase the volume. Be aware of this and make sure that everything is freely produced.
* Watch your alignment. Remember to make sure your ears are over your shoulders, you maintain a long neck, and your chin doesn’t jut out. An excellent alignment will ensure your voice remains tension-free. Tension often results in tiredness so keep checking your alignment.
* Cooling down after rehearsal will also help to restore your voice to the default speaking setting. Some of the things you can do to cool down include :
  + Use the syllable HOO and gently sing down from 5-4-3-2-1
  + You could also use SOO and repeat the same exercise.
  + Plenty of “yawn sighs” and sighing downwards using a gentle and relaxed HAH.
  + NG is always a good cooling down exercise as well as an excellent warmup. Again try a gentle 5-4-3-2-1 on NG.
  + A little straw phonation (straw without water is good) again using the pattern 5-4-3-2-1
  + Sirens on NG or bubbling (as an alternative try VVV or ZZ for anyone finding bubbling more challenging)
* Any questions? Just ask. Good luck!

*Alyson Chaney, August 2021*