

# **You Can Learn To Scat Sing**

by

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*Techniques and concepts to enhance the  
learning of beginning vocal improvisation*

**From The Book**

***The New Scat Singing Method***

**Published By**

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## **Introduction**

### **You Can Learn To Scat Sing**

Vocal improvisation can be easily and effectively learned by singers or taught in a classroom situation. For choral ensembles, it is educationally valid as a supplement to the total choral musical curriculum by increasing creativity in individual students, and by enhancing the over-all musicianship of entire ensembles. For individual singers, it can increase vocal skill, musicianship, and performance confidence.

### **Theme And Variation**

This new approach is based on the technique of theme and variation. By using the elements of vocal improvisation: syllables, melody, and rhythm, and applying the techniques, musical objectives can be met and instant success achieved. In other words, you can learn to improvise right NOW!

The audio tracks for these lessons are available at the following web link:

**ScatSinging.com**

On the following pages of this manual you will find annotated scat examples. To listen to the example, click on the “**Take A FREE Lesson**” link on the web site.

To practice with the recorded rhythm section, click on the “**Practice**” link on the web page.

When you have completed a lesson, click on another one

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## Lesson #1

### Syllables

The first step in learning to improvise is creating new syllables over a given melody. Select any tune you would like to improvise with and replace the text with the syllables *du* and *du*. Use the syllable *du* on the longer note values, and the syllable *du* on the shorter note values. Here is an example using the tune entitled the *Scat Blues*.

The image shows three staves of musical notation for the tune 'Scat Blues'. Each staff contains a melody line with notes and rests. Below the notes, syllables 'du' and 'du' are written to indicate improvisation. The first staff starts with 'Du du du+ du+ du+' followed by 'du du du' and a long rest, then 'du+ du du du du+ du'. The second staff starts with 'Du du du+ du+ du+' followed by 'du du du' and a long rest, then 'du+ du du du du+ du'. The third staff starts with 'Du+ du du du du+' followed by 'du' and a long rest, then 'du du' and a long rest, then 'du du' and a long rest, then 'du' and a long rest, then 'du' and a long rest, then 'du' and a long rest.

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## Lesson #2

Now, sing the melody and make up a few of your own syllables. Simplicity is usually the best choice. Here are a few other syllable suggestions that are long sounds: *vu, du, shu, wee, vee, zee, bee, vah, dwee*, and *skwee*. Here a few other syllable suggestions that are short sounds: *dop, bop, vop, dot, bot, zot*, and *dit*. Practice these syllables and others until you find the ones that feel right for a particular rhythmic articulation, inflection, or melodic interpretation that you desire. Here is the Scat Blues with other syllables. The original melody sung with new syllables can be a very simple but effective improvised solo. Try it.

Du vee du vee du vee du vee — du vee du vee du vee —

Du vee du vee du vee du vee — du vee du vee du vee —

Du vee du vee du vee — du vee — du vee — du — vee — du —

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### Lesson #3

### Melody

The second step in learning to improvise is altering and embellishing the melody. This means adding and substituting notes to the original melody. Sing the original melody of the tune using the syllable *du* (Example #1). This brings you back to ground zero so that when the new variable (melody) is presented, you can easily relate it to the original melody. Now, while singing *du*, change several notes of the melody. Make sure that you maintain the original rhythms and the syllable *du*.

The image shows three staves of musical notation in 4/4 time. Each staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The first staff has a melody with lyrics: "du du dut dut dut du du du \_\_\_ dut du du du dut du \_\_\_". The second staff has a different melody with lyrics: "du du dut dut dut dut du du \_\_\_ dut du du du dut du \_\_\_". The third staff has a third melody with lyrics: "dut du du du dut du \_\_\_ du du \_\_\_ du du \_\_\_ du \_\_\_ du \_\_\_ du \_\_\_".

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### Lesson #4

While singing *du*, gradually change more of the original melody. Make sure that you do not change the rhythms. One of the keys to success with these concepts, is to maintain the self discipline to alter only one element at a time. As you change more of the notes of the melody and add more embellishments, always keep the original melody in mind. If all else fails, you still know where you are in the melody, and can sing it, using the syllable *du*.

The image shows three staves of musical notation, each with a key signature and a 4/4 time signature. The first staff is in G major (one sharp) and contains the following notes: G4, A4, B4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The second staff is in F major (one flat) and contains: F4, G4, A4, F4, E4, D4, C4, B3. The third staff is in D major (two sharps) and contains: D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4. Below each staff, the syllables 'du' and 'dut' are written to indicate the rhythm and pitch of the notes.

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## Lesson #5

### Rhythm

The third step in learning to improvise is altering and embellishing the rhythms of the original melody. Sing the original melody on *du* (Example #1). This will again bring you back to ground zero. Now, sing the melody on *du*, and create a few of your own rhythms. Always make sure that you do not change the original melody. Keep the rhythmic changes simple.

DU du dut dut dut du du du — dut du dut du du du —

DU du dut dut dut du du du — dut du du du dut du —

Dut du du dut du — du du — du du — du — du — du —

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### Lesson #6

Sing the melody on *du*, and gradually change more of the rhythms. Make sure that you do not change the original melody. Your goal is to rhythmically re-package the melody and not add new melodic events.

The image shows three staves of musical notation. Each staff contains a sequence of notes and rests, with 'du' and 'dut' syllables written below them to indicate the rhythm. The first staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The second staff has a bass clef and a key signature of one flat. The third staff has a bass clef and a key signature of one flat. The notes are primarily quarter and eighth notes, with some rests and a dotted note. The syllables are: 'du du dut du du du du du du dut du', 'du dut du du dut du du du dut du dut dut du', and 'dut du du du du du du du du dut du du'.

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## Lesson #7

### Integration

The fourth step in learning to improvise is gradually putting together the three previously isolated concepts: syllables, melody, and rhythm.

#### Melody and Rhythm

Start singing the melody on *du*, and change a few notes of the melody and one or two rhythms.

The image shows three staves of musical notation in 4/4 time, each with a different key signature and rhythm. The first staff is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time, with a melody of quarter and eighth notes. The second staff is in B-flat major (two flats) and 4/4 time, with a melody of quarter and eighth notes. The third staff is in D major (two sharps) and 4/4 time, with a melody of quarter and eighth notes. Each staff has lyrics 'du du dut dut dut' and various rhythmic patterns indicated by lines and dots.

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### Lesson #8

Proceed gradually by adding more of your own melody notes and rhythms. Sing only *du* during this section.

Du du dut dut dut dut du du — dut du du dut du —

Du du dut du du dut dut du — dut du du dut du —

Dut du du du dut du — du du — du du — du — du — du —

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## Lesson #9

### Syllables and Melody

After you have become proficient at putting together melody and rhythm, try changing syllables and melody at the same time. Start singing the melody on *du*, and change a few of the melody notes and add a couple of new syllables. Maintain the original rhythms.



The image shows three staves of musical notation in 4/4 time. Each staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (Bb). The first staff starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The second staff starts with a bass clef and a key signature of one flat. The third staff starts with a bass clef and a key signature of one flat. The lyrics are written below the notes, with some words underlined to indicate syllables. The lyrics are: "Du du dut du skwee du bee du \_\_\_ dut du vee du vee du \_\_\_", "zu bee dut dut dweet dut dwee du \_\_\_ dut du bee du dut du \_\_\_", and "zut du bee du bee du \_\_\_ zee du \_\_\_ du du \_\_\_ vee \_\_\_ du \_\_\_ vee \_\_\_".

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### Lesson #10

Proceed gradually by adding more of your own notes and creating new syllables. Maintain the original rhythms.

Du du dut dut dut zu vee du \_\_\_ zut vee bah du dut du \_\_\_\_\_

zu bah dip vahp bu zu vee doh \_\_\_ zut bu bah du vut vu \_\_\_\_\_

zip ba bah bu bip vu \_\_\_ zee voh \_\_\_ bu dwee \_\_\_ vu \_\_\_ dwee \_\_\_ dah \_\_\_

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## Lesson #11

### Syllables and Rhythm

Now, try changing syllables and rhythm at the same time. Start singing the melody on *du*, and change a few of the rhythms and add a couple of new syllables. Maintain the original melody.



The image shows three staves of musical notation in 4/4 time, each with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The first staff has a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The second staff has a bass clef and a 4/4 time signature. The third staff has a bass clef and a 4/4 time signature. Each staff contains a melody line with lyrics written below it. The lyrics are: "Du du dut du du du \_\_\_ du du \_\_\_ zut du vee du dut du \_\_\_", "zut dut du \_\_\_ vee du \_\_\_ vee du \_\_\_ zut du vee du but du \_\_\_", and "dut du du du dut du \_\_\_ du du \_\_\_ zee du \_\_\_ vee \_\_\_ bee \_\_\_ bah \_\_\_".

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## Lesson #12

Proceed gradually by adding more of your own syllables and rhythms. Maintain the original melody.



zu bah doh bah du zee — du doh — zut buh bee twee du doh —

zeh bah dop vahp bu zu vee doh — zah bee bop sun doh —

zut bu be vah du zee — bu vee — du doh — vee — dah du —

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### Lesson #13

After you have become proficient at putting together any two of the three isolated concepts, try including a small amount of all three as you start singing the melody on *du*. Gradually increase the amount of your own material in the solo as you sing the tune. Remember, if you isolate the elements and practice them separately, you are more likely to achieve the proficiency that you desire in vocal improvisation.



Du du dah zuit du vwee du doh \_\_\_ zah du du dot zu dwee du doh \_\_\_ oh \_\_\_ vah  
du bah dot zahp bu bah du zah dah voh doya deb zeb zu bah dee vew doh \_\_\_ zah  
du bah dah soh deen du vwee \_\_\_ du doh \_\_\_ zu bah du dah ba du bah bu du du \_\_\_ deh ah zah

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## **Conclusion**

Improvisation is a basic element of music, and can encourage individual creativity. It can be one of the most exciting and satisfying forms of musical expression. Here are a few things to remember:

- Keep the melody in your mind at all times, and start listening to the way it relates to the chords of the tune. This will be helpful as you later learn the theory (chord structure, scales, etc.) of improvisation.
- At first keep your solo simple and near the melody.
- Always observe good vocal production, even when trying to make new and unique sounds.
- Listen to as many jazz singers as you can, and compare their solos with the concepts you have just learned.
- Now use a tune of your own choosing, and repeat each of the isolated concepts (syllables, melody, and rhythm). Gradually put the three concepts together and you will find that you have a very good, logical, and musical sounding improvisation.

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