

## Five Steps for Scatting - with Confidence!

This sheet is designed to go with my video series: **SCAT JAZZ 'How to Scat'** :

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLIKeaBxqCNYae96W8aUt0Thw5CAA10NtO>

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1. **Learn the Melody and the Song Structure:** from sheet music, a 'crooner' version (Sinatra, Crosby etc.), or a Broadway show version (youtube). *Not* a jazz version! Be able to sing a 'no frills' version - both with and *without* the words (sing to *la* or *da*). Listen to your pitching. Sing to a strong beat (click or clap along). Pay attention to the structure of the song. Is it AABA, ABAC or something else? You need to know where you are!
2. **Swing and Scat Syllables:** building on Stage 1, *manipulate the rhythm* of the melody, so that it swings in the way you want it to! Don't add any extra pitches for now; this should really be about developing your rhythmic and sonic variety. **Scat Syllables:** experiment with different vowels (ooh, oh, ah, eh, eeh), and consonant combinations (try Daah, Baah, Laah to begin with). **Rhythm and Phrasing:** try changing the rhythm of the original melody. Compress phrases...or expand them; start them earlier...or later. Experiment – listen to yourself – what sounds good? Is it starting to swing?
3. **Embellish the Melody:** building on Stage 2, you can now *embellish* the melody with other notes. Listen to vocal and instrumental versions for inspiration. Don't add too much to begin with - the original melody needs to shine through! Start by introducing adjacent pitches (tone or semitone), to the main melody notes. If the original melody utilises chord tones, try 'filling in' the gaps with scales. Try leading into the melody - or tailing off from it. Don't forget to click or clap along. Have fun – this is improvisation!
4. **Add Licks:** building on Stage 3, introduce other jazz phrases (licks) for melodic and harmonic variety. Identify the main cadences of the tunes and 'insert' some of your favourite licks at these points. After singing the lick, return to improvising with the melody. Try to make a seamless connection between the two (this can be tricky!).
5. **Mix it All Up:** Practise with abandon – mistakes are fine! Think about telling a story (don't guess!). Make each new phrase connect with the previous. If in doubt or you get lost, return to the melody and sing it with as much swing and soul as possible. Think of the melody as your 'rock' which you can swim away from - and return to at any time!

I hope you find this useful! If you do, please encourage others to subscribe to my mailing list – I'd appreciate it (*I'd prefer it if you didn't just share the document – thanks!*)

<https://www.malcolmearlesmith.com/subscribe>