



The Orange Spiel

News Of The Jacksonville Big O Chapter



<http://www.BigOrangeChorus.com>



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We meet at 7:00 most Thursdays at Shepherd of the Woods Lutheran, 7860 Southside Blvd, Jacksonville, FL
Guests always welcome Call 355-SING No Experience Necessary

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DO SINGING VALENTINES MAKE SENSE DURING A PANDEMIC?

by Brian Lynch
from barbershop.org

An annual highlight of barbershop life—and a significant revenue source for many groups—seems unlikely to happen in 2021 due to the global pandemic. Consider these safety concerns around face-to-face Singing Valentines, and potential alternative opportunities.

Although COVID-19 vaccination is beginning to roll out slowly across North America, caseloads are still high, and “normal” barbershop gatherings still look pretty distant. To satisfy their need to sing, barbershop groups continue experimenting with online meeting formats, and innovative outdoor gatherings in cars, parking lots, via FM transmitters and wireless microphones.

Within your own community of singers, your risk tolerance for being together might be manageable; a quartet might be willing to meet together, disciplined in keeping safe distances, and remain relatively “bubbled” together in quarantine. But when it comes to bringing music into other people’s homes, workplaces, and other public settings, a deeper conversation must take place. People who willingly gather together to sing might not be welcome when they show up unannounced in someone else’s environment.

Safety concerns

Your own safety

Rehearsing together indoors is not still not advised by BHS. See BHS COVID-19 guidelines for discussions of the science and engineering behind this recommendation.

- Traveling together in the same car is not advised. A common scenario for Singing Valentines face-to-

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WANTED!!

MEN WHO LIKE TO SING!



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For more detailed,
timely information
see my weekly
publication:
Orange Zest

EDITORIAL

We need to get working on the school presentations that we've received a grant to perform. The pandemic means we will likely be making a video to use until we are allowed to do them live. See the weekly Orange Zest for the current song list. Are you ready to perform all of them (even the new one) right now? If not, you have some learning and practicing to do.

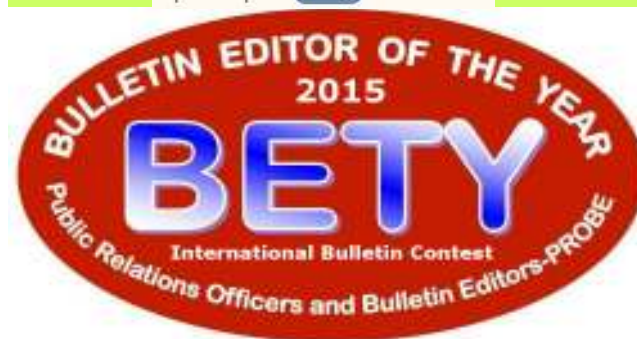
Those who have opted for COVID or other reasons to not be attending rehearsals during this troubling time, please keep in mind how much fun we have had singing together. If you get out of the habit of joining with us or start a new habit on "our" day, we could lose each other. At least, keep singing.

We have some positions (both board and committee) that need filling. If you can help, as a leader or a helper, please see Jason.

We need more members. Please invite friends, acquaintances, and even strangers to come as a guest. Many of those who try what we do, will enjoy what we do. Let's not be a well-kept secret.

Continue looking for gigs (both paying and not). We enjoy performing, more people will see and hear us, and some of them might want to join in the fun.

Each and every man, improving, just a little, each and every day, will result in huge advances for the chorus.



DO SINGING VALENTINES MAKE SENSE (continued)

(Continued from page 1)

face is for the quartet to arrive together, often driven by a fifth person.

- Singing indoors near strangers (the usual delivery method) is not advised. Six feet is not a magic number, especially singing. Reviewing your own delivery experience, you'll probably recall many occasions when four singers crammed into a small office or cubicle farm space... hardly the physical distancing recommended these days.

Safety of your audiences

Like never before, the idea of people showing up unannounced to sing is deeply problematic. We as singers might be perfectly comfortable entering a workplace masked and distanced, with every good intention of a safely distanced performance. That understanding and comfort might not be shared by the recipient or by other people in that setting.

An example: Taylor orders a Valentine for Jordan, unaware that Jordan's workplace does not admit visitors or that Jordan's office mates are in high-risk groups. Maybe the quartet is turned away at the door. Maybe the quartet comes inside anyway, because folks were too polite to turn them away - but inwardly, they are uncomfortable, angry, or resentful of the recipient. Result: What was meant to be a lovely gift becomes a stressful event.

In many ways, this situation resembles Canon Six of the BHS Code of Ethics: "We shall refrain from forcing our songs upon unsympathetic ears" or, in this case, forcing our unwelcome and potentially infectious presence into unwilling spaces.

Recommendation: Do not deliver Singing Valentines face to face this year.

Delivery options

So what can you do? Think differently! Just because you've always delivered in person doesn't make that the only way. A busy Facebook conversation has been sharing interesting ideas, some of which are summarized here.

Deliver outdoors

Some chapters are using wireless mics, FM transmit-

ters, etc. to bring people to sing at acceptable distances outdoors. See recent stories about Somerset Hills Harmony, the Arlingtones, and Da Upper Yoopers (as profiled in the Los Angeles Times), three out of many groups that have put together mobile rigs to keep the singers apart. Add an "insider contact" to switch on an FM radio for the recipient, and you have a stealthy but direct live performance.

A similar approach puts the singers outdoors with microphones, with a small PA speaker delivering the sound. This might get noisy and intrusive, but could be appropriate in some settings.

Video options

Some groups are making multi-track recordings of their quartets or choruses (singers isolated), then adding personalized greetings, titles, etc. The Acapella app (for IOS or Android) might be suited to this, permitting a quartet to assemble numerous highly-personalized deliveries, with the added attraction of encouraging social media shares of the gift.

Live video delivery via Zoom etc. might also be possible, provided you have access to a setting that permits singers to physically distance, and you have mixing gear and a reliable internet connection. Again, your personal risk tolerance must guide you here, although we can't advise it.

Plan for 2022

Regardless of what you choose for 2021, you can experiment this year with alternatives. You might not be able to do everything at full scale this year, but the things you learn from attempting remote deliveries, multi-track recordings, and so on, can furnish experience that serves you in the future. (Hmmm... maybe for Mother's Day? Or next Christmas?)

Get some new tunes

To stretch musically, consider using the new Serenade Songbook, which contains five arrangements in classic barbershop style. It's available in TTBB, SSAA, and SATB/mixed voicings - a chance for new collaborations using virtual choirs, Acapella apps, etc.

GORDON RAMSAY SHOWS US A RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

by Brody McDonald
from choirbites.com

I don't watch a lot of television, but I do have a weakness for Gordon Ramsay shows. Hell's Kitchen, Kitchen Nightmares (UK version is better than the US), The F Word and even Hotel Hell. If Gordon is on, I'm watching. I can't help it – I love the guy. His passion and high standards mixed with a certain “colorful” presentation just hit the mark for me.

Another reason I like watching Gordon is that I love to watch anyone who is the best at what they do. I don't even have to like what it is they're doing. The excellence trips my trigger. That's why I love watching the Olympics. Archery? BORING... unless it's the Olympics. Show me the best archer in the world and I can't tear myself away. If it's an American, even better.

So I look to the best to learn whatever I can apply to my craft of choral music. What does Gordon Ramsay have to say to musicians? If you can buy into an extended culinary metaphor, quite a lot.

1) Have high standards – It's important that everything is important. I once heard that Jim Miller (director of the international champion barbershop choruses The Louisville Thoroughbreds and Southern Gateway Chorus) said that if you wanted to be the best, you had to do everything the best. You had to have the shiniest shoes. If you made coffee for a chorus function, it had to be the best coffee. In the same vein, Gordon hammers home the value of standards to all who cross his path. The kitchen must be spotlessly clean. The food must be fresh and cooked to order. Anything over- or under-done must be cooked again. The seasoning must be spot-on. If Gordon were in charge of a choir, he'd say everything matters: posture, face, breath control, vowel shapes, resonance, attacks, releases, dynamics, word stress, visual package and even clothing must be planned and executed right down to a gnat's eyelash.

2) Manage your station – In the kitchen, there are multiple stations: garnish, fish, meat, dessert, etc. Some restaurants even go so far as to have a saucier. Each chef is in charge of running their own station, but not in a vacuum. They must all receive the

orders from the head chef, then communicate constantly with each other to ensure that the table's food is all finished at the same time. Whether in a choir, acappella group, barbershop quartet or show choir – every singer has a role to play. They must not only know their role, but execute it at a high level that coordinates with the rest of the ensemble to maximize the performance. This includes aspects of tuning, chord balance, synchronization, and texture. And of course, every station has to coordinate with the head chef. Every part of the ensemble must be coordinated with the director.

3) Stop it at the pass – “The pass” is where the head chef not only calls out orders, but coordinates with the brigade to ensure that food comes out in a timely fashion: (a) all the dishes for one table at the same time and (b) appetizer, entree, and dessert all go out in proper intervals. (No one wants the entree to show up at the same time as the appetizer!) The head chef is also responsible for quality control. If a piece of fish is still raw, it gets sent back to be re-fired. If it's burnt, the dish has to be re-done completely. Why wait until the customer discovers the mistake and then complains? The head chef proactively prevents customer dissatisfaction. So, too, the director must stop bad singing “at the pass.” In rehearsal, any substandard singing must be sent back and re-fired until it is correct. Singers, like line chefs, must learn to sing to the standards laid out by the director. Singers are prone to singing “their way” which can mean that important details get overlooked. Singing must be crafted: vowels shaped, air moved at specific speeds, consonants produced in a way that enhances rather than detracts from the tone. Just as a chef should not bother sending raw fish to the pass (it will be sent straight back), singers should learn what product will pass muster for the director (and thus the audience). They must plan their “product” in advance and sing within that plan, executing at a high level over and over. Building consistency this way singer to singer is the way any ensemble improves.

4) Let the ingredients speak – sometimes chefs on the various Ramsay shows fall prey to one of two traps: (1) cutting corners by using cheaper ingredients (2) using quality ingredients but throwing the kitchen sink at the recipe until the diner can't tell what is the “star” of the dish. In the case of singers, the star of the dish is always their tone. Yes, there are considerations of style in each piece. Yes, there are sometimes soloistic stylings that occur in pop music. Yes, there are dynamics, articulations, cutoffs, tunings, etc. that enhance the music. However, we

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GORDON RAMSAY SHOWS US A RECIPE (continued)

(Continued from page 4)

should rarely sacrifice our tone to make them happen. What good does it do to sing immaculately in-tune with a forced, tense tone? No good at all. When the singer modifies their tone to be more pleasing, the tuning will change. Now they have to start over to keep the good tone and get it back in tune. Always sing with a freely-produced, resonant tone and only add musical/stylistic enhancements that can be done while maintaining great sound. Otherwise, the “star of the dish” is lost (we as the audience want to hear your beautiful voices) because the cart came before the horse.

In the case of the overall ensemble, the star of the dish is the song. The ensemble exists to provide the audience with music - with songs. We’ve all heard the singer who mutilates the national anthem by adding runs upon runs upon runs until the melody is obliterated. We’ve all heard arrangements that are so concerned with being difficult or clever that they mar the impact of the actual song. What good are vocal pyrotechnics and difficult arrangements if the song doesn’t speak to the audience? Again – no good at all. Always make musical/arrangement choices that enhance the song and its message rather than being too clever by half.

There’s something exquisite about a well-seasoned, perfectly done steak – far better than a cheap steak slathered in A1 steak sauce or a beef entree with 17 ingredients. So it is with all our ensemble singing. Create wonderful tone, add in as many musical elements as you can without diminishing that tone, and don’t try to over-complicate the music. Let the voices speak and carry forth the true intent of the song.

Summary

I don’t know if this kind of thing is helpful to you. My mind just works this way – I love to find new ways to reinforce tried-and-true musical principles. Whether this was helpful or not – leave a comment. Let me know what things on the site you like the most as well as any topics you’d like to see me write about in the future. I’m posting this stuff to entertain and/or help all of you (or at least provoke some thought), so what you want matters to me. Don’t sit on the sidelines – chime in!

STRESSED AND HAVING DIFFICULTY GETTING OUT OF A NEGATIVE THOUGHT SPIRAL? HERE'S HOW MOTHER NATURE MAY BE ABLE TO HELP

by Dr Noa Kageyama
from bulletproofmusician.com

Have you ever found yourself stuck in a negative loop of repetitive thoughts? Like when you mess something up in rehearsal, and start reliving the moment in your head on the drive home. Where it’s like your brain tries to figure out how bad it was (or wasn’t). Which leads to an attempt to interpret the ambiguous look the conductor gave you. And the body language and facial expressions of colleagues around you. As well as the brief interaction you had with a colleague after rehearsal, and what their seeming compliment about your playing really meant. Which leads you to start wondering if you’ll ever be asked to play with the orchestra again. And what people will think if you lose this gig. And so on and so on, inevitably ending with you worrying about living in a van down by the river .

There are plenty of times when reflecting on the past, or planning for the future can be a good thing. But times like the scenario above, where we get stuck in our heads, thinking and rethinking a situation, analyzing and overanalyzing it to death? Yeah, that’s a whole other thing.

This sort of brooding, negative, spiraling thinking pattern is called rumination. It’s kind of like our mind’s version of doomscrolling, but using just the thoughts and images in our own heads, no phone necessary.

Escaping the negative rumination loop

Indeed, with all of the uncertainty and change we experienced in 2020 (and with whatever lies ahead in 2021), it can be easy to get lost in our own thoughts, and stuck in an endless list of what if’s or should have’s. Which makes us feel pretty crappy, and even more stressed out. Which in turn can set off a negative feedback loop, where the more we ruminate, the worse we feel, which makes us ruminate more, which makes us feel even worse, which makes us ruminate some more...and so on.

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STRESSED AND HAVING DIFFICULTY (continued)

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This is not a particularly enjoyable headspace to hang out in, of course, and can also make it harder to get stuff done. Never mind - get into that zone, whether it's practicing, reading a book, taking a class, or getting in your TRX workout, where we lose track of time, and for a brief blissful moment, totally forget about whatever it was in our life that was stressing us out.

Of course, like trying to escape from quicksand, interrupting the rumination cycle can be easier said than done.

So what are we to do? Are there any proven ways to get ourselves into a better headspace on cue?

A walk in the park

A team of researchers (Lopes et al., 2020) set out to test one particular strategy for reducing rumination. Especially for those who live in cities. (Because apparently, people who live in cities may be more stressed out...?)

And what was this strategy?

Walks. Specifically, nature walks.

We've actually looked at the benefits of walks a couple times before (like here and here). At least in terms of how they can reduce stress, improve our emotional state, or enhance creativity.

But are nature walks also an effective way to interrupt the rumination loop and get us out of our own heads?

Two different paths...

The researchers recruited 62 participants, who all started off by taking a set of assessments designed to measure rumination and mood.

And then they were randomly assigned to one of two groups.

The "walk in nature" participants were asked to take a 30-min walk, along a 2 km path in a garden-like setting near the university where the study took place.

The "walk in city" group on the other hand, though they began their walk at the same starting point and likewise took a 30-min, 2 km walk, theirs was devoid of trees, flowers, and picturesque views of the river, and filled instead with concrete, sidewalks, cars, shops, and other buildings.

Upon finishing their walk, participants retook the rumination and mood assessments. And also reported the degree to which they experienced awe during their walk. And also to what degree their thoughts were directed more externally during their walk (to the scenery around them) than internally (i.e. lost in their own thoughts and unaware of their surroundings).

So...did the different walk settings have any impact on the walkers' moods? Or their ruminating?

Rumination changes

Walking, in and of itself, had no impact on rumination for the participants who took a walk in the city (290.17 before the walk vs. 298.37 after).

On the other hand, there was a significant decrease in rumination for the participants who took a walk in the park (310.13 before the walk vs. 196.94 after)

Mood changes

The researchers measured two aspects of the participants' emotional state – both the positive and negative sides of the spectrum. Positive affect being the experience of emotions like joy or enthusiasm. And negative affect being emotions like sadness, fear, or distress.

When it came to the nature group, a walk in the park didn't do much to boost their positive emotions. However, it did take the edge off their negative emotions, with a decrease in negative affect that was statistically significant.

Meanwhile, the city walkers had the opposite experience. Walking around in the city actually made them feel less positive, while their negative emotions stayed about the same.

The tl;dr version

So all in all, the 30-min nature walk seemed to put participants in both a better mental state, and a bet-

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STRESSED AND HAVING DIFFICULTY
(continued)

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ter emotional state, by reducing rumination and improving their mood.

Which is pretty cool to know – but how? Why?

But how? Why?

The researchers dug into the data a bit deeper and did a “mediation analysis” to see if they could figure out what the underlying causes of this phenomenon might be.

Turns out that awe and mood are two of the key factors. As in, the more awe participants experienced, the greater their reduction in negative affect, and the more they shifted away from rumination.

And actually, it turns out that awe may not even be necessary! Because the researchers also found a significant link between nature, mood, and rumination that was even stronger than the link between nature, awe, mood, and rumination.

Which is to say, that even if a walk doesn't lead to the experience of awe, it may still put you in a better mood, which in and of itself is likely to break you out of a ruminative thinking spiral.

Because it seems that nature walks serve as a positive distraction away from the self. Like, it gets our minds to shift away from putting a microscope on us and whatever situation we're stressing about, and directs it instead on the cool breeze, the cute dog, the old couple holding hands, the leaves fluttering in the breeze, the smell of fresh air, and all of the beauty in the little things outside of ourselves.

So how would you recreate the experience of the participants who gained the most from their walk?

How to replicate the walk in the park

Well, the participants actually followed behind a pace walker, who walked through the park at a consistent 4 km/hr, for the duration of the 2km path. No phones were allowed. And they were specifically asked to focus on their surroundings.

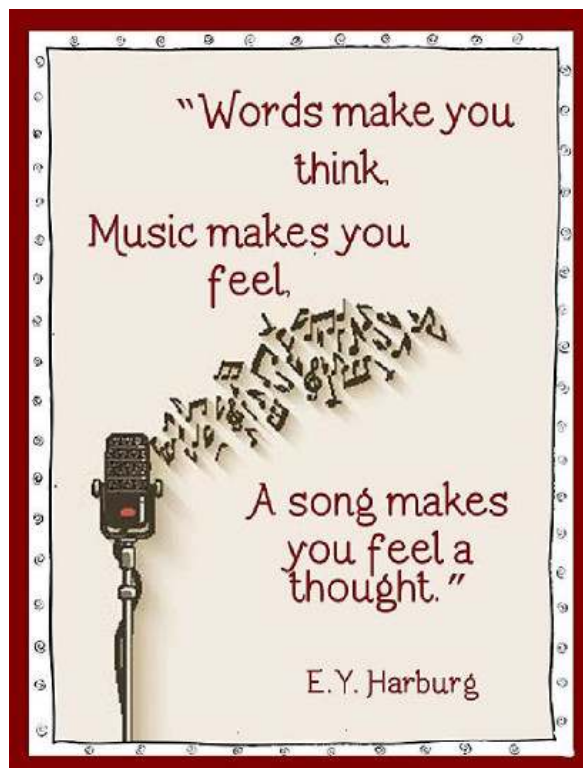
I think you can scratch the whole pace walker

thing. Although I could see how that might be kind of hilarious to try with a friend. I do think though that putting your phone on airplane mode would be a good idea. So that you're not distracted by notifications, and are able to focus on your surroundings, rather than being distracted by music or a podcast, or whatever else you would ordinarily be listening to on a walk.

And does it have to be a 2 km walk (1.24 miles)? Yeah, that part isn't really clear. I'm guessing you could start with 30 minutes, and then try 25, 20, etc. to see if there might be a good balance there somewhere between the investment of time put in, and the mind-clearing benefits you experience.

For what it's worth, novelty isn't really part of the equation. As in, it doesn't seem like you need to go to an unfamiliar park for this to work. Participants were walking in a park that they visited on a regular basis, so any old green space could probably work for this. Maybe the closer and easier to get to, the better.

So if a bad practice day, or watching too much news, or a roommate/family squabble is bringing you down and making your brain spiral to the bad place, experiment with a walk in the park and see if that helps put you in a better mental and emotional place. It's free, doesn't take very long, and walking is supposed to be good for us anyway, so it kind of sounds like a win-win all around!



THOUGHTS ON BARBERSHOP AND MUSICAL COMEDY

by Liz Garnett

from helpingyouharmonise.com

The shibboleth in barbershop circles is that any attempt at comedy has, first and foremost, to be sung well if it is to work. The better it's sung, the funnier people will find it. This post unpicks this assumption: there's something to it for sure, but I don't think it tells the whole story.

The reason why this generalisation seems generally plausible is, I think, because 'well sung' functions as an effective proxy for 'thoroughly-rehearsed' and 'has high standards'. Ensembles that develop their skills in one of these dimensions typically improve in the others too. Lurking behind the truism is the memory of mediocre performances that were not very well executed as comedy, didn't have enough jokes in them (those they did have being rather obvious), and that were also not very well sung.

But this is a case of correlation, rather than causation. It's not necessarily the fact that they're singing better that makes a successful group more funny. In fact, these two dimensions are at least moderately dissociable once you're beyond the base level of 'does the audience trust your skill-set?'

If you think about your favourite musical comedians, and your favourite singers' voices, they're rarely the same people. Pavarotti wasn't very funny, and Tim Minchin rarely uses his full vocal resources when performing as a comedian (I'm thinking here what a revelation it was to hear him in the role of Judas in *Jesus Christ Superstar*). Noel Coward wrote notes for every syllable of his songs, but in performance spoke at least two-thirds of them. Excellence in the execution and delivery of comedy are in many examples almost totally independent from those qualities usually associated with excellence of singing.

And I think this is not merely that 'better singing' is not a pre-requisite for 'better comedy', but can actually be antithetical to it. To sing with beauty is to show that you take your art (and, by extension, yourself as a singer) seriously. Comedians work primarily within an aesthetic of self-deprecation;

polish – unless handled ironically – can actually impede their comedic impact.

Approaching the question from the other side, the primacy of singing quality as indicator of value in barbershop contest terms is entirely appropriate: it is after all a singing contest. Whatever you want to move your audience to (laughter, tears, tapping of feet) is subordinated to the clarity and ring of the harmonies. This doesn't mean that the group that wins because they sing the best necessarily has the best sense of rhythm (we know this is barbershop's musical Achilles heel), and it likewise doesn't make ordinary punchlines funnier.

Indeed, notwithstanding the pretty strong correlation between the best-sung and the funniest barbershop comedy performances, you do see very well sung performances scoring very heavily despite somewhat inconsistent and/or self-indulgent comedic material. It's a singing contest, they deserve their rewards, but it does perhaps lower the bar on what a barbershop audience will regard as hilarious.

So, my practical take-aways from this are:

1. Whatever else you do, you need to sing well enough so that any audience can relax and not worry about whether you are going to get through the performance safely.
2. If you want to win singing competitions, you need to sing better than everyone else.
3. If you want to make people laugh, you need good material. This means lots of jokes, with well-crafted punchlines falling in the right musical places, and that will be meaningful to your chosen audience(s).
4. If you want to do 2 & 3 at the same time, you need to find a way to navigate the potential contradiction between vocal/musical excellence and the aesthetic of self-deprecation.

And that last thought led me to a wider conclusion. Barbershop is, you would think, quite well placed to chart that course, what with its commitment to vocal craft and its roots in popular entertainment. But actually, one of the things that barbershop runs into difficulty with in managing its public image is precisely the way its tendency to take itself seriously (power ballads, anyone?) sits rather awkwardly in the vaudeville frame through which wider culture observes it.

SIX WAYS SINGERS CAN MAKE THE MOST OF BEING STUCK INSIDE

from backstage.com

Like many, singers right now find themselves social distancing and spending lots of time at home. I'm devastated for my students whose Broadway and regional shows are canceled. I'm heartbroken for my Juilliard dance seniors who are learning to sing to have a Broadway career. They're so disappointed that they won't have the opportunity to sing for their peers in our showcase or dance with their classmates again or experience a traditional commencement.

Even with these disappointments though, there are ways you can make the best of this time and use this opportunity to continue working on your craft. Here are six things you can do when at home to help your singing career.

1. Take online lessons.

Many lessons have moved online and they're a great way to keep up with your training during this time. For online voice lessons, I've found that it's useful to have FaceTime, Zoom, and Skype ready to go. If one isn't great, we can switch and if none work, most good voice teachers can hear everything on the phone. I find it best for my students to have earbuds or earphones, and use them in one ear only so they can hear themselves.

Make sure you have backing tracks for your vocalises and exercises, and songs. There are numerous resources for finding accompaniments in all genres. I make tracks of the basic exercises we use in my studio for my students to use for practice and lessons. I simplify many exercises since it may be more difficult for some students without a piano in the room.

2. Build your technique.

Use this time to continue making progress in your technique. Before now, you may have had lots of auditions and performances, and used lesson time to prepare for them. Often this doesn't always leave sufficient time to build all the technical aspects of your voice. Now is the time to work on your extreme high notes, your whistle tones, your resonance, and make sure you're supporting correctly.

For example, an online student of mine was having trouble accessing her whistle tones with her hectic performance and audition schedule. Since the audition songs were low range, I couldn't work the whistles intensely as it requires the thinning of the cords, which reduces volume in the lower register when one is just learning how to produce these notes. Without the demands of performances and auditions however, she easily achieved her high F in her online lesson!

3. Build your mix.

When you had lots of auditions, you had to be expedient in previous lessons to learn audition songs and record self-tapes. As a result, you likely haven't developed your mix. Now is the perfect time to work on your mix so when things are back to normal, your voice will be completely built. This will give you the ability to sustain eight shows a week.

4. Build your audition book.

Create a list of your current repertoire to have an overview to look at. Check what is lacking. Make sure you have songs from every era, in every style, showing vocal and emotional range. Do you have an uptempo and ballad for contemporary musical theater? One for Golden Age and one for every decade? Don't forget pop-rock and jazz! Use your online lessons with voice teachers and coaches to help make critical repertoire selections.

5. Use this time to learn.

Become a consummate musician! If you have a keyboard or piano, take online lessons or check out the free courses on YouTube. Learn Solfeggio or how to read music using the "Do, Re, Mi" systems. Also, consider taking some time to learn music theory.

6. Become the artist you want to be!

Use this time to become the artist you always wanted to be. Make sure you understand the basics for analyzing a song and deciding what you want to do with phrasing. I tell my students not to listen to others singing the song until they've come up with their personal approach. Do you understand what phrasing is? There's an art to learning how to analyze a new song and phrase it.

A few more last-minute tips while you're stuck indoors: Keep yourself in top physical shape. Make sure to eat healthy and keep your immune system strong.

Be ready to go, because Broadway will be back!

UNDERSTANDING LIP TRILL, LIP BUBBLES, AND LIP ROLL EXERCISES

from becomesingers.com

Vocal folds, as well as the different muscles of the mouth, do sleep sometimes, but this sleep should not be taken in the literal sense of the word. Vocal folds are made of tissues that need to be warmed up to function well. Similarly, the lips and the different muscles and bones that make up the mouth are instrumental in creating great sound. Thus, these muscles and bones should be warmed up too.

There are different exercises that could create balanced coordination between breath support and vocal folds, and one of these exercises is the lip roll, lip trill, or lip bubble exercises. But what is lip trill? In this article, we are going to discuss the lip trill to give you a clear understanding of how to engage in this exercise.

What Are Lip Trill, Lip Bubbles & Lip Roll?

Lip trill is the act of closing your lips altogether and allowing air to pass through them via quick and rapid puffs. This action then creates a typical “brrr” sound. The lip trill is also termed “lip roll or lip bubbles.” Vocalists and singers usually add notes to their lip roll as a proper warm-up within their vocal range. Lip trill, of course, is necessary if you are a singer. It can help your vocal folds and mouth build proper coordination while it also makes a healthy voice.

Lip trill is singing with semi-blocked or occluded vocal tract. This way of singing is also referred to as “SOVT.” When you perform lip trill, you are singing while partially blocking or making a hindrance in your vocal tract. In doing so, you alter the setup of the resonating cavities. And we all know that sound travels through these resonating cavities. Lip roll, therefore, changes the vocal folds’ vibratory pattern. This change causes back pressure that allows the vocal folds to vibrate easily.

The vocal cords’ thin edges also vibrate vigorously, and this vibration is helpful to the health and strength of the cords. This vibration is also very healthy for the vocal cords, especially if you are warming up your voice. Hence, lip roll or trill is

considered as one of the best exercises for the vocal folds.

How Do You Best Achieve Vocal Trill?

To best perform the lip trill, you need to let even air-flow through your lips. You can achieve this by relaxing your lips and vocal folds while controlling the air pressure. You should not force this air pressure. It must be very constant and should not be high.

To do it right, you should follow the abovementioned simple guidelines. You can easily learn the process, and it doesn’t require much practice. Once you do it right, your vocal folds readily thin out, and you would notice that register breaks seem to be non-existent. With lip trill, you can vocalize all the notes within your range, and surely, this is a great warm-up exercise. Here are the simple steps on how to do it right:

- First, you need to blow air via your pursed lips gently.
- Let out any sound on a given pitch.
- Perform any scale, melody, or interval as you do the lip trill.
- Lift your cheeks slightly using your fingers towards your lips.
- Get the feel of the sound while your jaw is relaxed.
- Imagine the “oo” vowel moving inside your mouth. This will relax your larynx.

Factors to Keep in Mind When Doing the Lip Trill Exercises

There are several factors and tips that you should bear in mind when doing the lip trill. Here are some of these factors:

1) Build up the Right Air Pressure

Lip trills should be performed correctly to gain the optimal benefits from such exercise. Many practitioners usually commit the common mistake of blowing too much air through their lips. This mistake, of course, creates harsh, breathy sound. This should not be the case. The correct way to do lip trill is to ensure that your vocal folds produce firm vibration. This vibration should translate to low sound within your speaking range. Afterward, you should gently raise the sound. Pull your lips slightly forward to form a pout or hold your cheeks with your hand.

The key is that it is not the airflow that you should focus on. You should focus instead on building up the right air pressure. It is actually not the airflow that cre-

(Continued on page 11)

UNDERSTANDING LIP TRILL (continued)

(Continued from page 10)

ates vocal folds' vibration, but it's the air pressure. Hence, if you engage in lip trill, you should keep track of the air pressure and not the airflow. Moreover, you should ensure that no air is escaping when you do lip trill, or you should ensure that minimal air comes out when you do the lip trill. So, again, always be mindful of the air pressure that you create.

2) Utilize your Lips When Doing Lip Trills

Some singers commit the mistake of doing the lip trill using their hand to create air pressure. This should not be the case, for it is not called "lip trill" if you are going to use your hand. The right way to do it is to use your lips and not your hands. You should have control over your cheeks, lips, teeth, and tongue if you want to become a great singer. Thus, in the lip trill, you should rely heavily on the articulators. It is, of course, better to start right because if you start wrongly, you may end up developing wrong habits when performing lip trill.

Start with the correct positioning of your lips. Make sure that you gain control of the articulators because this control will factor well in your becoming a great singer. Some practitioners of lip trills do experience issues when they perform lip trills — problems like lack of middle-range sound when doing lip trill. At the onset, this should be corrected for doing the lip trill right is undoubtedly indicative of your good future as a singer.

Benefits Concomitant with Lip Trill Exercises To Singers

Warm-up exercises for vocal cords are undoubtedly beneficial to the vocal cords. As mentioned earlier, the vocal cords are stiff and sleepy after a good night rest or after a hiatus from singing. They need to be warmed up, and lip trill exercises are some of the best ways to warm them up. Here are the advantages of concomitant with regular lip trill exercises:

1) First, It Warms Up the Vocal Cords and It's Healthy for Your Voice.

The vocal folds, as well as the other articulators, need some warming up like what we usually do with the engine of the car. Warming up means you need to stretch out the tissues and muscles of your articulators and other organs responsible for voice crea-

tion. Lip trill does this well. It relaxes your lips so that you can better enunciate the lyrics of the song that you are singing. It also helps hone the muscles and tissues of your articulators so that they can be relaxed when you work on your musical range.

Without a warm-up, your vocal folds will be immediately set to produce tones and notes that they are not yet ready to belt, putting a lot of stress on these tissues. But with a proper warm-up, they loosen up and relax and become prepared for the rigor of singing.

It is, therefore, advisable to engage in lip trill before every singing session. It sets the tissues of the vocal folds right, relaxing them for the task of singing. There is always the concomitant risk of straining your vocal cords without a warm-up. So, to avoid this risk, you should engage in lip trill exercises.

2) Lip Trill Warms up your Diaphragm

The diaphragm is a significant part of the breathing system that helps in the regulation of breathing. Thus, it is also instrumental in producing better sound. Yet, the diaphragm needs to be regularly exercised to ensure that it is in topnotch condition. One exercise that could help condition the diaphragm is the lip trill. It enhances the functioning of the diaphragm by allowing you to control the contraction and contraction of the diaphragm. It likewise warms up the muscles of the diaphragm for the more rigorous breathing consistency when singing.

3) Let Loose of the Tension within the Vocal Cords

The vocal cords, after a hiatus from singing, usually becomes tense. Tension builds up in it if it is not vibrating. Well, this is but natural considering the law of inertia that says an object at rest tends to remain at rest. But once you start speaking, the pressure usually is released gradually. The best way, however, to gradually loosen up this pent-up tension is by doing a lip trill.

Lip trill allows you to transfer air pressure from your vocal folds to that of the lips. With less pressure on the vocal cords, you can readily go on warming up your voice and belt notes within your vocal range easily.

4) Lip Trill Helps You Have Consistency in the Air Flow and Air Pressure

The good thing about doing a lip trill is that it enables you to connect your air support with that of your voice. To produce sound, you need to produce air

(Continued on page 12)

UNDERSTANDING LIP TRILL (continued)

(Continued from page 11)

pressure and flow continuously. Remember that you can't produce lip trill without consistent airflow and support. Thus, once you engage in lip trill exercises, you are enabling your lungs to supply air pressure to create that necessary lip trill continuously.

The voice box will surely struggle to create sounds when singing if your neck and shoulders are bedeviled by too much tension. Moreover, if you don't have good breath management, chances are, you will never be able to sing well.

Hence, in such a case, you need to engage in lip trill to loosen up those pent-up tensions and regulate your breathing. Yet, many vocalists and singers fail to do the lip trill right. This is because they don't know how to loosen up the tensions that have built up within their vocal cords. They also have not yet mastered the art of proper breathing.

So, more often, when they do lip trill, they only push air beyond the larynx using high-pressure levels. They fail to manage; therefore, the muscular tension and are unable to regulate their breath. Thus, they produce air and lip sounds that are not really indicative of correct lip trill. Always remember that you will readily know that you are doing the lip trill right if you hear a distinguishable tone, especially, when your larynx is vibrating freely, enabling you to move from one vocal register to another with ease.



DOES YOUR CHORUS HAVE A SUNSHINE PERSON?

by Herb Mordkoff
from barbershop.org

Perhaps you are not familiar with the title of "Sunshine Person" or its function. The Sunshine Person is the liaison between your chorus and members who may have missed rehearsals or who have not been seen or heard from in a while. It can be called different names, but the function is the same: to find out why a member has missed one or two meetings or if the member is ill or has some other problem that is preventing him or her from being active in the chorus.

This does not have to be a board position, so it can be done from home and may consist of a telephone call or the sending of a "We Miss You," "Get Well," or "Condolence" card. Of course, you should also send happy cards for birthdays, weddings, engagements, anniversaries, new babies, etc.

Why is the function so important? Because you are telling a member that you care about them. That you are there for them to share the good times and to give support in the difficult times. Some members may not have a family and may live alone -- your chorus becomes an extended family for that person.

A dual function: Member support
and member retention

By providing the necessary contact with someone who has not attended a meeting in a while, you may be able to motivate that individual to come back and perhaps renew their membership. In essence you are performing a dual function: supporting a member who may be going through a difficult time AND advocating for your chorus by helping to retain membership.

So, if you have neither the time nor the desire to be on your chorus or chapter board but still want to support your organization, the "Sunshine Person" may be the right fit for you. It will bring you enormous satisfaction when you reach out to a fellow barbershop who is going through a difficult time and hear the appreciation via phone or email. You know you can do it; why not volunteer for this function at your next meeting?

Why I became a Sunshine Person

(Continued on page 13)

CHANGING CHORAL EXPECTATIONS (continued)

(Continued from page 12)

Why do I do this for my chorus the Morris Music Men? Because when I joined the chorus six years ago after moving from Long Island to New Jersey, I encountered two major health issues: first, my wife was diagnosed with cancer, and then I was diagnosed with Peripheral Neuropathy. The chorus reached out to me with phone calls, email, and cards.

My chorus helped me get through one of the most difficult times in my life.

My chorus truly became my extended family who has shared my joyous times and provided support and comfort during my trying times. So I volunteered to become the Sunshine Person as a small way to say, "Thank you," to the Morris Music Men Chorus. I feel blessed that I became part of that organization and are now friends with some of the most caring men I have ever met. I could not be a board member, but I am providing a service to the chorus in a way that makes me feel good and makes the members I contact feel good as well.

It's great to be a Barbershopper!



The Vital Link

HARMONY UNIVERSITY 2021 CANCELLATION

from barbershop.org

The Barbershop Harmony Society has made the difficult decision to cancel our 2021 Harmony University, held on the campus of Belmont University in Nashville. While we are hopeful about the new vaccines and look forward to declining infection rates, the ongoing challenges of general uncertainty and COVID safety measures in an environment with shared

dorm housing and group meals make it very difficult for us to ensure safe social distancing for our students. We are pleased to announce that with the success of our 2020 event, the Barbershop Harmony Society will again offer Virtual Harmony University, currently being planned for July.

While the timing of the events is similar, the decision to cancel Harmony University Belmont is not connected to decisions about the BHS International Convention in Cleveland, Ohio this summer. At this time, we are still planning for an in-person event in Cleveland. Regrettably, the decision is being made now regarding in-person Harmony University due to the different nature of the two events.

- Harmony University is built on 7 days of deep immersion, daily close physical interaction with faculty and students, group meals, general sessions, and shared housing for staff, faculty, and students from all over the world, housed in college dormitories.
- The BHS International convention is traditionally 2-5 days of attendance, with ample opportunities for social distancing, groups and families able to isolate together in hotel rooms all over the city, and distanced seating options in performance venues. Unlike HU, it is possible to limit participation, maintain small social groups, or opt-out of activities at any given time.

Refunds are available for our students who carried over funds from the previous year, as well as options to transfer the registration to HU 2022 or the 2021 Virtual Midwinter Convention. All registered students have received an email message with more details and next steps.

To say we are heartbroken about canceling our flagship education event for the second summer in a row would be an understatement. At the same time, we are excited about expanding on the success of VHU 2020 and all the possibilities offered by a virtual format. We look forward to welcoming even more barbershop participants in July.

***You have achieved success
when you don't know if what you
are doing is work or play...***



Here's a simple way to financially support the Big Orange Chorus, at no cost to you! If you shop on amazon.com you can sign up for the Amazon Smile program, and designate the Big O as your charity of choice. Then anytime you make a purchase on Amazon (Smile), they make a donation to us! No cost to you, and a donation to us: win win!

To sign up, visit smile.amazon.com/ch/59-1981228 and sign in to your Amazon account.

From then on, any Amazon purchase you make (at smile.amazon.com) will help the Big O.

Thanks in advance!!

FlipGive

Here's a simple way to financially support the Big Orange Chorus, at no cost to you! If you shop at any of the more than 400 merchants or like to purchase eGift Cards, FlipGive will give us back from 1% to 20%, depending on the merchant.

To sign up, visit <https://www.flipgive.com/f/570688> and start shopping.

Thanks in advance!!

Editor's Note: The latest version of the Amazon app (both android and iOS) now has an option to activate smile in the app, so that you can get the charity donations for purchases made in the app (if you enable it). Open the app and find 'Settings' in the main menu. Tap on 'AmazonSmile' and follow the on-screen instructions to turn on AmazonSmile on your phone.

CHAPTER QUARTETS



On Point

Dillon Tidwell, tenor
Daniel Pesante, lead
Timothy Keatley, baritone
Alex Burney, bass

Slice!

Terry Ezell, tenor
Eric Grimes, lead
Jason Dearing, baritone
Ryan Feeney, bass

No Name Yet

? tenor
? lead
? baritone
? bass



FREE YOUR VOICE

by John Newell, Lead, *Realtime*
from Let It Out ©2013 Used by permission

Find your own way of looking energetic and engaging while keeping everything free and loose. Be balanced enough so you can move in any direction.

Feet. Place them approximately shoulder width apart. Your weight should be distributed fairly evenly from balls to heels but ever so slightly favoring the balls of the feet when ready to sing. Slightly. Release your toes so they are not gripping the floor. Having one foot slightly forward of the other can be advantageous, also, because you are better balanced and prepared should you need to more.

Calf muscles. Keep them as loose as possible. Be sure you are not gripping with your toes or tightening your ankles.

Knees. Keep them unlocked and loose. If you lock them back and straight, you are more likely to cause tension in your quadricep, waist, abdominal and back muscles. These muscles need to be relaxed for singing, unlike in dancing and some sports. If you play golf, flex your knees about 25 percent as much as you would when addressing the ball.

Quadricep muscles. Like the knees, release them as much as you can. They are most likely to tighten if you lock your knees, or if you bend your knees too much, or if you lean forward at the waist.

Pelvic muscles. Relax all muscles within the pelvis. That includes your glutes and pelvic floor muscles (i.e. 'bathroom' muscles). The pelvis is a weight-bearing apparatus and the center of your body's balance. Any unnecessary tension there will spread. I hear a marked difference in vocal freedom and resonance when I remind singers to keep all muscles within the pelvis free and easy. When you inhale you should be able to feel a slight downward motion in your pelvic floor. Imagine you have a tail and ever so slightly tuck it under, just the tiniest amount. This adjustment may result in a deeper inhale.

Abdominal muscles. If you tighten your abdominals and inhale, you will feel somewhat stiff and locked in place. Release them and breathe again. Try not to push them out or suck them in. think of aligning your body rather than supporting it with muscular power. Keeping abdominal muscles released will help you achieve a better diaphragmatic inhale. More about this in the chapter on breathing.

(to be continued next month)

FREE SINGING TIPS

by Yvonne DeBandi
from a2z-singing-tips.com

J = Jumping Jacks. If you are having trouble getting your body completely involved with singing, try doing some cardiovascular activities, like jumping jacks, for a few minutes before getting started again. Sometimes your instrument simply needs an airflow wake-up call.

FREE SINGING TIPS

by Nicole LeGault
from a2z-singing-tips.com

J is for Jabberwocky. When you are composing lyrics, don't forget that nonsensical words, sounds, and scat are legitimate prose. La la la, do do do, bottle op' botten doh, bottle op bop 'n bayden day dow dow...

FREE SINGING TIPS

by Mick Walsh
from a2z-singing-tips.com

J. Join a group or a band. There's no point in spending your hard earned cash, on singing lessons if you are not going to disclose to the world just how great you are. Choral groups and choirs are also great places to meet kindred spirits and to have fun

FREE SINGING TIPS

by Teri Danz
from a2z-singing-tips.com

J= Jaw -- Relax your jaw. Called a Dumb Duh, it will feel unnatural to keep your jaw loose and dropped but it is the best way to get a smooth sound and not effort in singing. It also allows you to get exact placement of pitch and replicate it.



QUARTET CORNER

Our quartets are practicing social distancing.

What is YOUR quartet doing? Don't have one? Find three other guys and start one! Can't find a match? Drop me a line and I'll run a list of guys looking to quartet up here in the bulletin. It's one of those really fun things that you don't fully understand until you've done it.

It's never too early to be thinking about Singing Valentines. Quartets are always needed, officially formed or pickup. It's only a few easy songs. Learning more than one voice part to these songs can help make you easier to fit into a quartet.



CHAPTER MEMBER STATS

The following are our current membership statistics:

type _____ active _____ lapsed _____

Not available in "new" Member Center

Total Membership

PAST DUE MEMBERS

The following members are listed separately on the BHS website as past due or within two weeks of due. They will automatically be removed from the society roll at 30 days overdue.

Not available in "new" Member Center

COMING DUE MEMBERS

The following members are coming due in the next 60 days.

Not available in "new" Member Center

Big Orange Chorus

REHEARSAL SCHEDULE

Thu	04 Feb	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	11 Feb	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	18 Feb	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	25 Feb	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	04 Mar	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	11 Mar	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	18 Mar	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	25 Mar	Shepherd of the Woods

BIRTHDAYS

Not available in "new" Member Center

PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

Sun	14 Feb	Singing Valentines (TBD)
???	?? ???	Ice Men Anthem (TBD)
Sat	10 Apr	SUN Spring Conv (cancelled)

RECENT GUESTS

Chuck Cashin	Jim Akers
Willy Vidmar	Mike Morgan
Dale Pratt	Hudson Pratt
Dan Newsom	Trans Maynard
Asrul Dawson	Bill Caruso
Ethan Erastain	Alex White
Tristan Arthurs	Mark Murillo
Josve Jorpe-Silva	Roger Erastaine
Jon Greene	Jim Harper
Ron Blewett	Dave Scott Sr
G Lane	Brandon Edwards
Joe McLean	Adom Panshukian
Christian Cornella-Carlson	

⇒ **BIG O BUCK\$** ⇐

BIG O BUCKS SCHEDULE

Sat 13 Feb Monster Truck Jam

...more to come

See Mike Sobolewski to help fund your experience

WELCOME

NEWEST MEMBERS

John Kauffman	Feb
Ryan Feeney	Oct
Joe Williams	Oct
Ian Le	Sep
Hunter Stanford	May
Tom Frutchey	Apr
Dillon Tidwell	Apr
David Scott	Feb

I'll talk to anyone about anything,
but sooner or later I'll tell him I sing.
I'll invite him to visit on Thursday night
and if he likes what he hears, he just might
become a member and maybe
he'll bring another good man
who likes to sing.

2021 DIRECTING TEAM



Jay Giallombardo
Front Line
Director

PHOTO
NOT
AVAILABLE

vacant
Assistant
Director



Chuck Griffith
Director
Emeritus

2021 OTHER CHAPTER LEADERS



Dave Walker
Uniform
Manager

PHOTO
NOT
AVAILABLE

vacant
Chorus
Manager



John Alexander
Bulletin
Editor



Frank Nosalek
Webmaster &
Technology

PHOTO
NOT
AVAILABLE

vacant
Show
Chairman



Mike Sobolewski
Big O Bucks
Coordinator

EDITOR'S NOTE

Article and column submissions are solicited.
Help make this a better bulletin. Send me stuff!
The deadline for March is 26 February.
Items without a byline are from the Editor.

The Orange Spiel
John Alexander, Editor
2429 Southern Links Dr
Fleming Island FL 32003

Back issues are available online at:
www.bigorangechorus.com/newsarchive.htm
More specific and timely performance information
is in my weekly sheet, *Orange Zest*.

**Print off two copies
of this newsletter
to share – one with
your family and
one with someone
you are bringing to
a chapter meeting.
Let them know they
belong here!**

2021 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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Performance



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Jay Giallombardo
Front Line
Director



Mike Sobolewski
Presentation
Coordinator

**IMAGINE 80 MEN ON THE RISERS
BE A SINGER-BRINGER**



John Alexander, Editor
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