



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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BARBERSHOP LIVE! @ HOME RETURNS - ON NATIONAL BARBERSHOP QUARTET DAY!

from LiveWire

Celebrate the Society's founding with another GREAT night of online singing, learning, and socializing! If OC and Rupe had had Zoom in 1938, they wouldn't have needed to meet on the rooftop of the Tulsa Club. **SAVE THE DATE: April 11, 2021.** Details and lineup coming soon to <http://www.barbershop.org/liveathome>.

WANTED!!

MEN WHO LIKE TO SING!



NATIONAL BARBERSHOP QUARTET DAY

APRIL 11TH 2021

A Better World. Singing.

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The Orange Spiel is published monthly and is the official publication of the Jacksonville Big O Chapter of the Sunshine District of the Barbershop Harmony Society, the home of the Big Orange Chorus. The chapter and chorus meet most Thursday evenings at 7:00 pm at the Shepherd of the Woods, 7860 Southside Blvd. For more information visit our website, <http://www.bigorangechorus.com>. Articles, pictures and address corrections may be sent to the

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

EDITORIAL

I really hope y'all have been singing. We've only gotten together, physically, a few times in over a year, and not everybody showed up. Your voice is a muscle, use it or lose it. Warm ups are a must, singing songs (especially keeping our repertoire fresh), learning new songs (we've got a few on the list that it'd be good to already know when we do start back in earnest) these are all extremely important. We could even be trying to form new quartets.

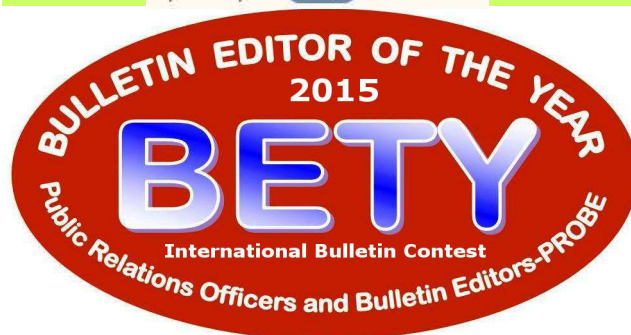
Those who have opted for COVID or other reasons to not be attending rehearsals during this troubling time, please keep in mind how much fun we have had singing together. If you get out of the habit of joining with us or start a new habit on "our" day, we could lose each other. At least, keep singing.

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.



RESTORING YOUR VOICE AFTER LOCKDOWN: THE STRAW TECHNIQUE

by Dr Don Campbell
from The Harmonizer

The muscle tone that you are accustomed to having will decrease significantly if you don't sing. Here's how to get it back.

I no longer had a reason to sing once the pandemic hit, so I didn't. Yes, I know, "Use it or lose it." But this would all be over soon anyway, right? Six months later, the church where I serve decided to conduct services in the parking lot, and I was asked to sing. I found that the muscle tone I expected to have in my vocal folds was no longer there. I had to do some restoration work. Have you ever stopped exercising for an extended time and then had to suffer the experience of getting back into shape? It's not fun, and neither was getting back into vocal shape.



The primary technique I used was the semi-occluded vocal tract, more commonly called the "straw technique," developed by vocologist Ingo Titze. Many vocal pathologists and singers have used this technique to repair and maintain vocal health.

Below are some steps and cautions when using the straw for general vocalizing and building back your voice.

- Use a straw that has a smaller diameter than the ones in the fast food chains—preferably .5mm or smaller. Vocal pathologists often use a coffee stirrer, but I've found, for me, that creates too much back pressure and can create inappropriate tension, *which is not our friend*.

- Cut the straw in half. For me, longer straws produce a weird, unpleasant vibration. Plus, it doesn't use as many straws over the long haul.

- When putting the straw in your mouth, be sure to have your tongue under the straw with the tip of your tongue touching the back of your bottom front teeth. If your tongue is pulled back as if you are sipping a soda, the back of your tongue is pushing down on your epiglottis and partially covering your larynx. This will also create inappropriate vocal tension, *which is not our friend*.

- Using gentle phonation, hum into the straw at a comfortable pitch range with narrow pitch glides (glissandi) up and down. You can do these narrow glides in your low range and middle range.

- Gradually, increase the range distance from the "chest voice" through the mid-range and into the head voice. You can also start in your higher, light head mechanism and do downward glides. As you use the higher registration, allow the vocal folds to thin out. Avoid trying to ram the heavy chest mechanism into the upper registration. The sound you are aiming for is one voice—not three separate voices.

- Repeat. Avoid strain and oversinging.

OTHER VARIATIONS

- Sing simple songs that are in your comfortable range, and then sing them in different keys.

- Sing the songs you are working on in the correct keys.

- Use the straw with the vocal warm-ups your director uses in rehearsals

SOME SUGGESTIONS AND CAUTIONS

- Go slowly.

- If there's pain, STOP! You're doing something wrong. Work carefully through the sequence, noting where discomfort begins. Is it tension? Poor technique? Too much too soon?

- Experiment with different diameter straws.

- Keep your tongue forward and your larynx comfortably low at all times, because *inappropriate tension is not our friend*.

For more information on this technique, check out our blog post, ["A New Tip for Tired Voices."](#)

A NEW TIP FOR TIRED VOICES: HEAD TO THE HARDWARE STORE!

by Jordan Travis
from barbershop.org

Using funnel phonation to help stretch your vocal chords

Anyone in the vocal coaching world knows the importance of **SOVT (semi occluded vocal tract) exercises**. This is why we lip trill, tongue trill, or use consonant sounds like "vvv" or "zzz" in rehearsals. SOVT exercises help us increase back pressure that reflects at the lips back to the vocal folds which helps them vibrate with more ease and much less effort.

Currently, one of the very best SOVT exercises is straw phonation where one would make sound through the straw. Until recently, that is what I used and would prescribe to students.

This video shows a new SOVT technique which allows you to sing "normally" with all of the great benefits of straw phonation:

<https://youtu.be/sZ4EYVLyslg>

How do you use SOVTs in your rehearsal? How do you find them helpful? Let us know in the comments if you try the Funnel Phonation!



WHAT SHAPE IS YOUR BRONTOSAURUS?

by Brody McDonald
from choirbites.com

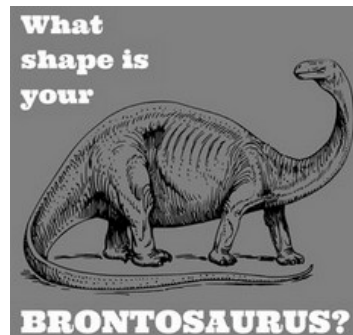
As I was rehearsing my collegiate a cappella group (Wright State University's ETHOS) one evening, we took some time to map out the overall structure of each song in our repertoire. That is to say, we listed out the form of the song over time (Intro, Verse 1, Chorus 1, Verse 2, Chorus 2, Bridge, etc.) and were charting things like volume, articulation, and intensity for each section. The first song we plotted was a power ballad. It started softly and eerily, then grew stronger and louder over time, then eventually faded again in both volume and intensity. I was drawing contoured lines on the white board to create a visual map for them.

One of the students remarked, "That shape looks like a brontosaurus!" Aside from my instant recollection of a Monty Python sketch (<http://youtu.be/U6zWjUhfj-M>), it just hit me that this was a very sticky way of reminding singers that each song has a shape, a journey, a plan for volume and intensity.

And so it came to pass that in subsequent rehearsals, any time ETHOS performed a song without any dynamic contour, I had only to ask "What shape is your brontosaurus?" and the matter cleared right up. This became shorthand for a more complex set of concepts.

I have written before about developing a "choral shorthand" with one's choir: <http://www.choraldirectormag.com/articles/the-practical-conductor/choral-shorthand/>

In fact, my use of choral shorthand is essentially what inspired Choir Bites. People like STICKY phrases, code phrases that feel like inside jokes. By embracing this and finding your own "What shape is your brontosaurus?" moments, you can make your observations quick, inspire a few chuckles, make the singers feel like they are "in the know," and get back to singing in a flash!



"ZOOM FATIGUE" - WHY IT HAPPENS, AND A COUPLE THINGS YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT

by Dr Noa Kageyama
from bulletproofmusician.com

When schools, classes, private lessons, and meetings for work all went online just about a year ago, whether it was Zoom, Skype, FaceTime, or some other platform, I think "Zoom anxiety" was perhaps our first reaction to the changes we had to adjust to.

Because laggy connections, getting our camera and audio to work, trying to figure out how to use a second camera for lessons, fiddling around with advanced settings to make music sound a little better, and learning how to teach and learn and engage with others through videoconferencing overnight made for a pretty stressful time.

At some point though, I think we began to adjust and get more comfortable...and then the term "Zoom fatigue" began to appear. Which refers to the tiredness, exhaustion, or feelings of burnout that many have described experiencing after video calls.

So...is this really a thing? And if so, what is it about staring at a screen of faces in tiny rectangles that causes us to be so fatigued? And is there anything we can do to make this less exhausting?

Researchers are only just beginning to look at this phenomenon, so there isn't a ton of data yet – but a theoretical paper did come out recently which not only proposed four reasons for why "Zoom fatigue" happens, but offers a couple suggestions on how to make a long day of video chatting a little less draining too.

Four factors

Jeremy Bailenson is a cognitive psychologist who studies the psychology of virtual and augmented reality, and is the founder and director of Stanford University's Virtual Human Interaction Lab.

Drawing from research in related areas, he recently published a paper (Bailenson, 2021) suggesting that there are four factors that might explain Zoom fatigue: eye gaze, cognitive load, self-evaluation, and physical constraints.

Eye gaze

You know how direct eye contact can be kind of uncomfortable? Especially if it's too direct, and goes on for too long?

Bailenson references a 1965 study (Argyle & Dean), which found that there seems to be a relationship between eye contact and physical proximity. Where the closer someone is to you, the less eye contact you tend to make.

It's that awkward elevator (or crowded bus or subway) effect. Where you tend to compensate for having to stand so unnaturally close to other people by looking down and minimizing eye contact. Because making and maintaining heavy eye contact in situations like this feels pretty weird and uncomfortable.

But in online video calls, the face staring back at us on our screen often appears to be "closer" to us than it would be in real life. Kind of like having to engage with a "close talker" .

Wait...what?

So it depends on the size of your screen, and the size of your Zoom/Skype/FaceTime/etc. window, but if you take a ruler and measure how big the face is that's staring back at you on your laptop, you'll probably find that in order for someone's face to appear that size in the real world, you'd have to be pretty darn close to them.

On Bailenson's laptop, for instance, he found that a person's face was about 13cm (~5 inches) from top to bottom. Which may not seem all that large, but if you were to take a ruler and measure how big someone's head looks to you in real life, you'd have to get a *lot* closer to them than you'd think. To be specific, your faces would only be 50cm (1 foot, 8 inches) away from each other.

Which is much closer than you'd typically be to someone who isn't a close family member or loved one. Bailenson cites some work on personal space (Hall, 1966) for instance, which found that for most of us, space of less than 60cm (~2 ft) would be considered "intimate."

Eye gaze in group settings

And even in group chats, the sizes of the faces on the screen are often still bigger than they'd be in a real-life classroom or conference room.

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ZOOM FATIGUE (continued)

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Plus, in a normal classroom or meeting setting, unless you're the speaker, you typically just see the backs or sides of everyone's heads. But in a group video chat, we see a bunch of other people staring back at us. And even though they may not actually be looking at us, it can *feel* like all eyes are on us.

Cognitive load

And then there's cognitive load. Or the idea that communicating via video chat takes more work.

If you're speaking, audio and video can be laggy, so you may have to wait a few seconds to see what the participants' reactions to your comment might be. Which makes "reading the room" more challenging.

You also have to worry about your lighting, being centered in the camera, and remembering to look at the webcam rather than the screen when talking. Bailenson even cites a study (Croes et al., 2019) which found that we tend to speak 15% louder when video chatting than in normal life too (although in the case of my son, I swear it's more like 150% louder).

Furthermore, we only see people from the shoulders up, so we miss all the normal hand gestures and body language that would typically help with communication.

So in many ways, we're basically having to work harder to stay engaged and connected and communicate effectively – on both the sending *and* receiving end.

Self-evaluation

Bailenson also notes that the default setting of most video chat software is for us to see ourselves as well as the other people in a chat. Which he says is a little like walking around all day with a mirror in our face.

Which apparently makes us more likely to engage in self-evaluation (Duval & Wicklund, 1972), adding even more stress to the experience.

Physical constraints

And then there are the physical constraints.

In a video call, you have to maintain a certain distance from the screen, make sure you stay in the frame, and you may have headphones on which restricts your movement even further... All of which leaves us more physically constrained than in a regular classroom setting or meeting, where you can lean back, turn around, and move around a bit more, without other people noticing quite so much.

So...given all of this, is there anything we can do to reduce video chat fatigue?

What can we do?

Bailenson offers a couple suggestions.

1: Turn off video?

Regarding eye gaze and cognitive load, he suggests asking yourself if a video call is really necessary, or if a phone call might even be a little better. And perhaps experimenting with audio-only meetings on occasion, so you're free to move around and not worry so much about all of the visual issues we discussed above.

Indeed, I think this could work in certain contexts – and maybe this is partly why some folks naturally turn their video off – but there are other settings where this may not be so practical.

For instance, in teaching contexts – at least for me – the visual feedback I get from students is super valuable, and helps me know if I need to clarify something, slow down a bit, skip ahead to a different topic, try an activity, tell a story, etc., etc. I taught a couple classes in which everyone's videos were turned off, and I have to say that I had a really tough time, as it kind of feels like you're just talking to yourself...

2: Hide self-view

I was pretty intrigued by this suggestion, and tried it out this week. I really liked it – and found it much more freeing to just engage in the class, and not think about myself, my eye contact, lighting, or how I was appearing on camera.

I didn't even know this was a thing you could do, but if you want to experiment with this in Zoom, here's a super short video demonstrating how to turn off your self-view, so you only see the other person (or people) on the call, but they continue to see you (the

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ZOOM FATIGUE (continued)

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video makes the good point that this might be worth teaching to your students, so they are less self-conscious about how they appear in calls): Zoom Tip: Hide Self View

How does your Zoom fatigue compare to others?

If you'd like to see how bad your Zoom fatigue might be, and add to the ongoing research that Bailenson and his colleagues are doing on this at Stanford, you can take the 15-item Zoom Exhaustion & Fatigue Scale here: Zoom Exhaustion & Fatigue Scale: <https://comm.stanford.edu/ZEF>



ON RE-EXPANDING OUR BOUNDARIES

by Liz Garnett
from helpingyouharminise.com

I have been thinking a lot recently about a [post I wrote some years ago](#) on expanding our boundaries. There I was reflecting that if we don't stretch ourselves, in terms of where we go, what we do, and who we meet, our capacities have a tendency to shrink to fit the restricted range we've been operating in.

That was of course written at a time when we could choose to travel or to take up new pastimes as ways of meeting new people. These are choices that have been severely curtailed for a year now, and as we in the UK contemplate our various regional roadmaps back out of lockdown, we are all feeling the emotional and psychological effects of not having been able to stretch in many of these dimensions for so long.

I have had a number of conversations with choir leaders recently in which people report a real hesitancy amongst their singers about resuming live rehearsals. This is quite different from back in the summer when the ban on amateur music groups was first lifted in England – at that point many people were champing at the bit to be allowed to sing together. Now, people are feeling much more anxious about it, even where the demographic of a choir means that a majority will be likely to have had at least one vaccine dose by the time resumption is going to be possible.

It's not just singing together people are feeling nervous about of course. This is part of a wider social anxiety about resuming life as we once knew, and we already seeing [articles about how to navigate](#) those anxieties. When your world has shrunk so much that driving 3 miles for a click-and-collect at Screwfix is your first, wildly over-stimulating, trip beyond walking distance from home in two months, you discover quite how much your overwhelm threshold has lowered.

And this of course has been very adaptive in our circumstances. We have learned to notice and appreciate the incremental changes in the trees we can see from our windows day by day as we obeyed the Stay-at-Home orders, the perception of detail taking up the mental space that used to look outwards for adventures. We've packed ourselves in cognitive and emotional cotton wool as a way to make it through without going too stir crazy.

But the big wide world looks awfully big and wide from

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ON RE-EXPANDING OUR BOUNDARIES
(cont)

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the circumscribed spaces we have got used to inhabiting, and we will need to find ways to ease ourselves back into wider social life as it becomes safe to do so. Our rational knowledge of physical/medical safety is only partially persuasive for our sense of psychological safety, which needs to deal with sensory and emotional overload on top of this. As our boundaries as a whole have contracted, the distance between the outer edge of our comfort zones and the start of our panic zones has contracted with them.

What we can we do, then, either as individuals coping for ourselves, or as choir leaders needing to nurture our choirs to a place where they will be happy to meet again?

The first thing to note is that we will perforce be approaching this through a staged process. If we sit here in lockdown and contemplate the time when all restrictions are lifted, that looks like a huge leap. But in real life, we will be living through a number of steps, each of which will only be taken when the data for the state of the pandemic in the country suggests it is appropriate. So we will have time to adapt at each stage.

This is true in general, and also for the specifics of choirs. In England, small groups will be able to meet outdoors from the end of this month, and then larger groups from Step 2, subject to formal risk assessment. We will have the chance to get used to being together outdoors for at least 5 weeks before the earliest we could possibly meet indoors, and when we get to that bit, we will still be highly regulated.

So, whilst we need to plan in general for the longer process, it is probably most useful at each stage to focus our attention on the immediate steps. What will we do, and how will we do it safely? We can figure that out with a good degree of clarity and certainty for the immediate future, and clarity and certainty are what we need to manage anxiety.

Alongside the specific planning for returning to live rehearsals, we might also usefully think about how we can gradually push our boundaries out again, and rediscover how to enjoy the feeling of stepping out into areas we find slightly daunting. A year ago, everything we did in remote rehearsing was challenging and we put a lot of effort into

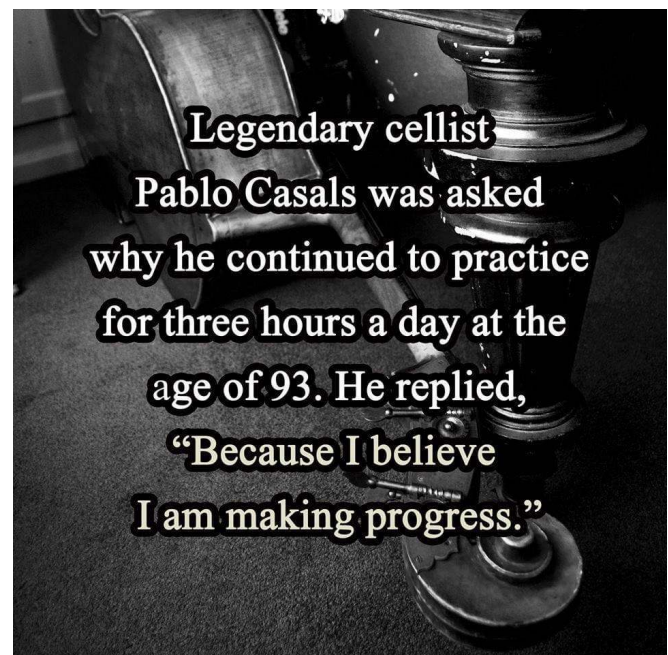
making it into a safe space. Now we have got fluent at it, and comfortable in the medium, we may need to rediscover our sense of stretch.

“One mark of a great musician is they’ll perform a song they don’t even like with just as much passion as one of their most favorite tunes.”

www.musiciansunite.com



The Vital Link



HOW TO PRESERVE AND PROTECT YOUR VOICE BEFORE A PERFORMANCE (OR REHEARSAL)

by Andre Calilhanna
from blog.discmakers.com

There are lots of common-sense things you should do as a vocalist to keep your instrument in top shape to perform, and as performance opportunities will be returning soon, it's worth reminding ourselves of some of the basics.

There are many things that go into a great vocal performance, and they don't all require being the most technically gifted singer with a five-octave range. Confidence, charisma, and the right repertoire are among the many subjective elements that go into any great performance – live or when recording vocals in a studio – in addition to having chops as a singer.

“‘Synthesis’ is this fancy word we throw around in our college,” says Daniel Ebbers, Professor of Voice and Chair of Music Performance at the University of the Pacific, “and I do think it’s an important thing. We study all these things individually, but it’s the synthesis, a command of your vocal instrument, a command of the stage, a command of the language, and the language you use – all these things synthesized together make a great vocal performance.” Of course, much of what helps a performer reach the point where all these elements come together is preparation, practice, and experience. A good vocal warm-up, general vocal care, and protecting your voice leading up to a performance or rehearsal can help ensure you perform at your peak when the time comes.

Vocal performance preparation

When preparing for a vocal performance or studio date, “the obvious thing to do is rest,” recommends Ebbers. “But there are environmental things you might not be aware of or consider an issue, like being in a place where the decibel level is much higher than you think it is. In order to compete with the sound, you have to strain your voice to speak louder to be heard or understood. Many times, people are unaware that they’re in such an environment, because there are so many noisy places in our world, and we’ve come to accept them and adjust. But

when you’re a singer, you have to be more aware of these environmental conditions.”

As the prospect of playing club dates, bars, and parties starts to be a possibility in the coming months, the quality of your performance and your vocal health can be severely impacted in the hours leading up to your set by talking and socializing before you get on stage. “Don’t go shouting to your neighbor across the street or unduly tax your voice before a performance or session, even if it’s a week away,” says vocalist, studio owner, and producer Jon Marc Weiss. “That can take its toll on your throat and vocal cords and can really mess you up. Keep in mind that you need to keep your voice in tip-top shape so that when you’re called on, you can perform.”

But it’s not just the days and hours leading up to a given night’s performance that you need to consider, especially if you are singing in a stage production or any performance ensemble that requires nightly or continuous performances. In “normal” times, “very often, after a performance there’s a party, a reception, or something,” cautions Ebbers, “and many famous singers will say, ‘I’d love to come, but I can’t, it’s not possible.’ It’s all common-sense stuff that revolves around rest and awareness of your instrument.”

“All instruments are subject to environmental conditions – humidity, heat, all sorts of things. But other instrumentalists get to put their instrument in a case and walk away, or put it in a room that’s ideally suited to make it sound good. As vocalists, we have to take our instrument everywhere, and there’s this intersection of our lives and this instrument. So there are all sorts of things you need to pay attention to that other instrumentalists don’t have to. But good health is good singing, and whatever you can do to keep yourself healthy is important. Every person is different, and every voice has its own limitations and set of things it can tolerate.”

Care and maintenance of your voice

You know how your guitarist always wipes down his strings and instrument after rehearsal and packs it in a case with a dehumidifier? Have you ever seen how a classical musician babies and cares for his/her instrument? Become as fanatical about your instrument as other musicians are about theirs. Treat your voice in a way that maintains it from show to show. Try not to talk too much during the day. You may have interviews to do or have a day job that has you on the phone or in meetings, but try to stay quiet as much as you can. Practice vocal warm-ups every day, whether you’re rehearsing/performing or not. And get in the

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HOW TO PROTECT YOUR VOICE (continued)

(Continued from page 9)

habit of doing cool-down exercises after rehearsals or performances to help ensure your vocal cords aren't as stiff the next day.

And, above all, don't yell before, during, or after a performance.

When you yell, you're closing your windpipe while pushing air as hard as you can to get sound out. Your vocal cords are being blasted by air pressure and are resisting it — fighting against it. That puts a lot of wear-and-tear on your vocal cords. As a singer, and certainly as a performing singer, you need to have stamina, and stamina comes from taking good care of your vocal cords. You can't continue to put pressure on them over and over without you losing your voice.

Establish a warm-up routine

A few years ago, professor Ebbers recorded some warm-up routines for us, and they are worth sharing again. Enjoy, and take care of your voice!

Vocal warmup tips part 1:
<https://youtu.be/KU1MkEyp3AA>

Vocal warmup tips part 2:
<https://youtu.be/jnCik3emYns>



HOW TO BREATHE WHILE SINGING A FAST SONG

by Andre Calilhanna
from becomingsingers.com

If you are a frequent visitor to KTV bars, you will often listen to bar singers who would venture to sing a fast-paced song and end up running out of breath. It makes you want to guffaw or chuckle on your seat. Yet, had these singers learned the proper way of breathing while singing, they would have made a sterling rendition of their songs.

One cannot simply take a deep breath as one glides from one phrase to another when singing. One also needs to maintain controlled breathing without making one's breath obvious. Controlled breathing, of course, more often separates the professional from the amateur singers.

Your lack of training in breathing will be most evident if you are singing fast songs or rapping. Rapping relies on vocal delivery that comes with rhyme and rhythmic speech, done in vernacular language. So, if you are desirous of becoming a rapper or a good singer, you need to control your breathing.

Why Do You Lose Your Breath When Singing?

You need air to produce voice when you are speaking or singing. When speaking, for example, your vocal cords within your voice box vibrate feverishly to create sound. The vocal muscles surrounding the vocal folds make these vibrations possible by bringing your vocal cords together while allowing a whiff of air from your lungs to pass through.

However, if you breathe in and breathe out, a significant amount of air passes through your vocal cords. This passing of more air might be useful to your lungs but bad for singing because you will run out of breath as you sing.

Hence, when you are singing a fast song or rapping, you need to sustain your breath. Do not let much air out of your lungs, for you will tend to run out of air and gasp for air. Instead, let little air through your vocal folds, reserving the air inside your lungs so that you will not feel bereft of fresh air.

Sometimes you will find professional singers singing as if they are whispering. These professional singers keep their vocal folds a bit open to create a sufficient amount of sound while allowing little whiff of air to leak out. In this way, the vocal folds will create a clean and

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HOW TO BREATHE WHILE SINGING FAST
(continued)

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clear tone without making the singer sound breathy.

Yet, some singers—not trained in right breathing—will leak out so much air to produce louder sounds. With so much air leaking out of the vocal folds, the lungs would soon run out of air. Like a drowning man, these untrained singers would then gasp for air because of letting out too much air. To compensate for their lack of air, they draw in a massive amount of air, disrupting their singing.

In doing so, they look and sound funny and awkward. It will help to remember that it is not what the amount of air you inhale that matters when singing, but your level of efficiency in using the air you breathe in.

Useful Breathing Techniques
For Singing Fast Songs

As I keep saying, breathing techniques can help you avoid the awkward moment of running out of breath when you sing a fast song. Here are some of the most useful breathing techniques you can utilize:

1) Practice Snatching in-between Long Phrases

When singing long phrases, you need a short rest to catch your breath. You need to get in enough air quickly during this short rest without being noticed.

As a practice, you need to get yourself in a hefty exercise mode to improve your breathing while singing. As your breathing gets fast, stand straight, and sing a song with long phrases. You will feel that your body would want to inhale. Once you inhale, you will see that air goes unimpeded down your body when you breathe.

This type of breathing is different from the normal breathing you would take. It is also different from gasping for air. At this point, your throat is open and helps you make that quiet and quick breath.

2) Practice Sniffing the Air

Practice makes perfect. Thus, if you want to develop good breathing technique while singing, you need to practice the right breathing exercises more often. You can start taking a good breathing posture. Then, start breathing through your nose. Yet, you should not merely inhale; you should quickly

sniff the air. While sniffing the air, you will feel that the sniffed air goes down deep into your lower lungs.

You can engage in this type of breathing as you practice fast-paced songs. Remember, you will practice this breathing type to develop a specific breathing habit perfect for singing a quick tune.

After those short sniffing breaths, you can then breathe in silence through your mouth. Pretend that you are surprised while breathing. Master this breathing type, likewise, and combine it with the sniffing kind of breathing.

As you master both breathing types, you can indeed sing any fast song without running out of breath. Using such techniques, you can hold your breath until you reach a comma or full stop.

3) Control Your Breath on Long Non-stop Phrases.

As you trained yourself in singing, you will soon learn how to control the passage of air out of your nostril. The trick is to be able to hold your breath until you reach the comma or end of the phrase. Along with lengthy phrases, of course, you need to take quick inhalation and slow exhalation.

A quick release of breath may cause tension and make it difficult for you to produce the necessary sound. You can practice slow exhalation by holding a lit candle in front of your mouth. Then, breathe deeply. Now, you would tend to breathe out faster too. Yet, instead of exhaling fast, you can hold your breath a bit and slowly release air without snuffing off the light of the candle.

Watch how the air you exhale passes through the flame. Make sure that you don't extinguish the flame. Continue breathing out until you have breathed out the air. You should do this in the most relaxed way possible.

4) Be Aware of Your Inhalation and Practice Slow Breathing

Another way to develop good breathing for quick songs is to be aware of the way you breathe. Awareness of breathing, of course, would enable you to correct it. Breathe from your lungs deeply. Let the air fill your lungs.

Then, place your index finger over your lips and say, "shhh." As you say "shhh," you will feel the air coming out of your mouth. This practice lets you exhale in a

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HOW TO BREATHE WHILE SINGING FAST (continued)

(Continued from page 11)

relaxed and automatic fashion.

You should practice this method five times a day. As you practice this method, you enable your muscles to gain perfect control of the air that you release.

You can also practice slow breathing. Count one to twenty as you slowly inhale. Then, exhale while counting up to twenty likewise. This breathing practice enables you to control the amount of air you release when you are singing and helps you refrain from breathing with quick air bursts.

Conclusion

You may say that inhaling is the most natural thing to do in life. It is as natural as exhaling. Yet, when singing, you need to control your breathing to create the necessary sound. You need to have perfect control of the muscles around your vocal folds to ensure that you will never run out of breath. Correct inhalation entails keeping a good posture while you breathe in and out.

Your body should be free of tension, and your throat should be open when you breathe. It will help to keep your shoulders steady to let the most air inside your body when you breathe. Moreover, you can master the above-mentioned breathing exercises with a constant breathing practice and employ them perfectly when singing fast-paced songs.

"You can typically point out the people in the audience at any concert who are musicians. They aren't dancing and singing along. They're standing there studying everything going on."

www.musiciansunite.com

IT'S NOT JUST A SONG: WHY TO FOCUS ON THE LYRICS FIRST

by Cindy Hanson Ellis
from barbershop.org

Save time and be more effective performers by first addressing the song's "who" and "why".

When starting a song, the singers usually learn the words and notes first, using sheet music, learning tracks, plunking on a piano, sectionals, and even blowing the notes on a pitch pipe. You rehearse over and over trying to get "off the paper." Next, you are asked to remember breath marks, dynamics, interpretation. After a coach comes in, you now have to remember word color, texture, expression, speed and delivery style, plus the emotional impact you are trying to portray. And don't forget the message to your audience and how you should physically look in your performance, plus the dreaded choreography.

Whew, that's a lot!

What if you read the lyrics as if the song were a poem or a story? Focusing on the words first allows you to look at who might be singing the song and how they might feel when delivering the lines of the song. You become better attached to the song, thus helping you understand expression, feelings, emotions, and a connection to the characters in the song. Once you do this the song will start to build on its own.

Starting on the lyrics first
Instead of the notes

Let's take a line from "Let Me Call You Sweetheart":

"Let me hear you whisper that you love me too!"

Now for ease, let's decide after reading the lyrics, that this is a grandfather speaking to his young granddaughter. This line ("Let me hear you whisper that you love me too!") is a request that would be sung with warm feelings.

So warm feelings lead to an emotion; the emotion could be love. And if the emotion of love leads to energy, the energy could be gentle. And if energy leads to pacing, the pacing might be light and easy. And if pacing leads to dynamics, it might make the dynamic soft. And if dynamics lead to your stance, then your stance would be relaxed. And if your stance is relaxed, it might make you smile. And if your expression is a

(Continued on page 13)

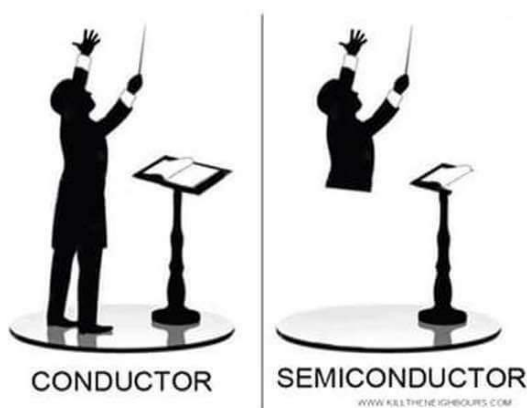
WHY TO FOCUS ON THE LYRICS FIRST (continued)

(Continued from page 12)

smile, it could lead to your movement, and the movement might be a graceful lean in towards your granddaughter.

Now a simple feeling leads to an emotion, and everything follows. The emotion leads to energy, energy leads to pacing, pacing leads to a dynamic, the dynamic leads to a stance, the stance leads to an expression and expression leads to the movement.

Instead of having to remember each and every task, like stance, staging, dynamic, expression, pacing, energy, feelings and more, all you need to remember is that you are a sweet old grandpa singing to his beautiful young granddaughter, asking her to whisper in his ear, "I love you." Everything else falls into place.



FLOATING OR SWIMMING?

By Brody McDonald
From choirbites.com

I was recently working with my top choir about developing habits aimed at increasing technique and literacy, rather than "learning their songs." You know, the "you can do better" speech.

A student came to me after class and said, "You know, Mr. McDonald, it just hit me. I thought I was working hard, but I realize now... I've been learning how to float instead of learning how to swim."

I had not heard that metaphor before, so I asked him to elaborate. "I didn't start choir until sophomore year, so I was so focused on learning how to survive that I failed to really focus on my technique. I've just been worried about not being wrong, so I've been working to blend in. Sure, I'm not sticking out negatively, but I feel like I'm not growing, either."

We all have students who are learning to float rather than learning to swim. They are trying to "survive" by doing just enough to avoid negative attention. There is a big difference between not doing anything wrong, and doing something right. The absence of a negative is not a positive, but starting point for positive behavior to begin.

We've all heard the phrase "sink or swim," but that is a false binary. There's something between the two that is neither failure or progress, and that is FLOATING.

With any choir activity or singing technique, imagine grading the performance by placing it into one of three columns: SINK, FLOAT, or SWIM.

- SINK: poor, negligent, or disruptive behaviors
- FLOAT: doing "OK" or getting by - nothing wrong, but not working towards developing skill or technique
- SWIM: actively engaged, working towards development of consistent skill/technique (mistakes here are A-OK!)

Because the saying is "sink or swim," is it possible that some students mistake floating for swimming? When they can understand SINK, FLOAT, or SWIM, they can be made aware of more levels of engagement, and thus understand that just because you are asking MORE of them, doesn't mean they were "doing it wrong." They could do it more actively and BETTER. And remember: swimming can tire a person out. Everyone needs to float occasionally to catch their breath. :)



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!!



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

Unnecessary tension in the neck is very, very common among singers. The obvious examples are when singers stick their chins and necks forward, or when they lift their chins for higher notes and tip them down for lower notes. However, there are some very subtle problems with neck tension that are not always noticeable without special attention.

Any unnecessary use of your neck muscles may place strain on your larynx and may restrict air flow and resonance.

Your neck should be upright on top of your shoulders, but always fluid and loose in this position, never tight or locked. If you collapse your neck at all, which makes your head and chin stretch forward, your larynx and trachea will not be in optimal alignment. Think that the spinal column in your neck is lengthening upward while your ears stay naturally over your shoulders and your head remains level. Try not to engage heavy effort. Remember that your neck must remain fluid, which means that as you sing, your head should be free to manoeuvre gently and subtly without any movement affecting your vocal tone.

It is extremely easy, and common, for problems to occur during the inhale process. Refer to the chapter about breathing and apply those techniques while also ensuring your neck muscles are not engaging as you inhale.

You may not be aware that your neck muscles are engaging unnecessarily when breathing or singing, so here are some photos for reference and some strategies to try.

Sit on a couch or comfortable armchair (something with generous padding) with your torso leaning back so it is resting at approximately a 45-degree angle. Ensure there is cushioning support under your neck, head, and torso so nothing becomes too rounded. Feel like your torso, neck, and head are melting into the couch or chair. Let all their weight be supported by the cushioning. Now sing in that position. Feel like everything is free and relaxed, especially the sensation of the head and neck melting. As you sing, any slight movement of your head or chin up and away from the couch is a telltale sign you are engaging your neck muscles unnecessarily. Trust the sound that comes out of you when you let your head and neck stay melting. The trickiest moments might be on higher notes - tricky in the mind only because you must give up muscular habits and trust what happens. (If your voice cracks or 'yodels' on higher notes while doing this exercise, let your jaw hinges fall open a little further.) You may need a friend or coach to watch you during this exercise because you may not notice any subtle rigidity in your body. (to be continued next month)

FREE SINGING TIPS

by Yvonne DeBandi
from a2z-singing-tips.com

L = Low notes are often sung with too much airflow. Try decreasing your airflow to achieve a more natural, more relaxed tone.

FREE SINGING TIPS

by Nicole LeGault
from a2z-singing-tips.com

L is for Larynx. The vocal cords are not really cords at all - they're more like flaps which stick out horizontally from the sides of your windpipe. The vocal folds vibrate in accordance to their length, mass and tension using "tensor muscles".

FREE SINGING TIPS

by Mick Walsh
from a2z-singing-tips.com

L. Larynx. Learn to get control over your Larynx. When we sing we need to avoid lifting the Larynx. Find out where it is (ok, it's behind your Adam's Apple). Very gently, hold your Adam's Apple between your index finger and thumb. Sing a high note, then sing a low one. Notice what happens. When we sing high notes the natural thing to do is to raise the Larynx but by doing that the Larynx gets in the way of all that lovely air flow you've been working on. It sounds complicated but if you order, or download *Singing Is Easy!* Basic Foundation Series from <http://singsmart.com/> you'll find all you need to get this and other techniques under your control.

FREE SINGING TIPS

by Teri Danz
from a2z-singing-tips.com

L= Less is More -- Strive to do justice to the song and your interpretation of it. Just deliver the message. Vocal gymnastics is not a prerequisite for doing a great vocal performance.



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.



"We're constantly being bombarded by insulting and humiliating music, which people are making for you the way they make those Wonder Bread products. Just as food can be bad for your system, music can be bad for your spiritual and emotional feelings. It might taste good or clever, but in the long run, it's not going to do anything for you."

Bob Dylan

tips.how2improvesinging.com

Big Orange Chorus

REHEARSAL SCHEDULE

Thu	01 Apr	Zoom
Thu	08 Apr	Zoom
Thu	15 Apr	Zoom
Thu	22 Apr	Zoom
Thu	29 Apr	Zoom
Thu	06 May	Zoom
Thu	13 May	Zoom
Thu	20 May	Zoom
Thu	27 May	Zoom

BIRTHDAYS

Jason Dearing	20 April
Ken Mull	15 April

PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

Sat	10 Apr	SUN Spring Conv (cancelled)
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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 Erestaine
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

...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

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Front Line
Director

PHOTO
NOT
AVAILABLE

vacant
Assistant
Director



Chuck Griffith
Director
Emeritus

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Uniform
Manager

PHOTO
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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 May is 26 April.
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*.

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your family and
one with someone
you are bringing to
a chapter meeting.
Let them know they
belong here!**

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



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