



The Orange Spiel

News Of The Jacksonville Big O Chapter



<http://www.BigOrangeChorus.com>



Volume 41 Issue 9

September 2021

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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LABOR DAY JAMBOREE



Imagine an event where your family and your closest friends plan a long weekend together full of music. Not just any music though, but the sweet sounds of Barber-shop Harmony! Over the long weekend you choose to participate as much or as little as you'd like. A weekend that you and your family will enjoy floating on a lazy river, playing in the wave pool together, maybe taking some time to visit one of the many nearby attractions, and of course – live shows!

What happens when the Sunshine District joins forces with the Association of International Champions & Harmony Foundation International? You get the Labor Day Jamboree of your dreams! Not only will LDJ 2021 feature all the things you love about Labor Day Jamboree – family, fun, food, pool time, incredible entertainment, tags, and more – this year LDJ also hosts the return of the annual in-person 'AIC Show' that we've missed for over two years. Come and spend a few days with hundreds of your closest friends watching the best in barber-shop strut their stuff.

The Sunshine District and LDJ team are committed to the health and safety of our attendees and performers as our highest priority. Along with Omni's "Safe and Clean" initiative, we will be implementing several safety

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WANTED!!

MEN WHO LIKE TO SING!



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2021 Committees

Pole Cat Program:
vacant

Community Outreach:
vacant

Show Chairman:
vacant

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 editor.

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

EDITORIAL

We are continuing to sing together while we focus on rebuilding. We are getting our voices back in shape after more than a year. We are getting our brains back in gear. We are going back to basics as we work toward being able to return to performing at a level of which we can be proud.

There are minimum numbers of singers we need to have as well as a proper balance between the parts in order to move ahead at full speed.

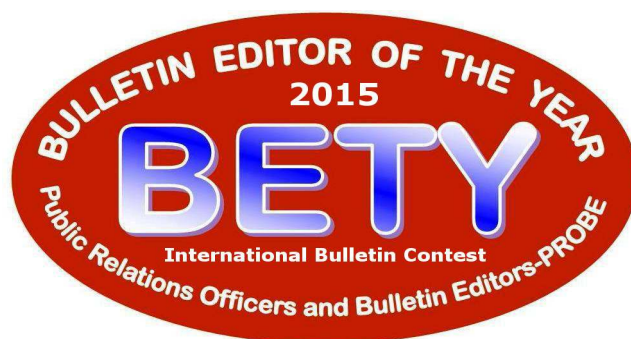
Now is the time for former members to return and for prospective members to join in on the ground floor as we move forward together. The goal continues to be to return to the level where we were before and continue beyond.

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.

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



LABOR DAY JAMBOREE (continued)

(Continued from page 1)

measures including contactless entry, physical distancing, screening for symptoms, and much more. The best way to protect yourself and others from COVID is to get the vaccine. All attendees are required to wear a mask, regardless of vaccination status. We will also be using RFID wristbands instead of paper tickets in orange and green so that you can indicate your level of comfort in being near others. To view the current LDJ Safety Policy <https://www.sunshinedistrict.org/specialcase/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/2021-LDJ-Safety-Policy-rev-Aug-10.pdf>

The Labor Day Jamboree has been a Barbershop tradition in Florida (also known as the Sunshine District to us Barbershoppers) for over 50 years now. LDJ is an amazing weekend and those of us that make the annual pilgrimage thoroughly enjoy adding our experiences to that legacy. Please plan on joining us. You'll be glad you did.

We have TWO jam-packed shows and the bar has been raised this year to create the LDJ of your dreams. In partnership with the Association of International Champions and Harmony Foundation International, LDJ will be hosting the return of the in-person AIC Show on Sunday night.

Saturday, September 4 at 7:00 pm (EST) – The Jamboree Show Featuring: Quorum, Rooftop Records, Wildfire, Duly Noted, Singing Double, Hot Pursuit, Bourbon Brothers, and more!

Sunday, September 5 at 7:00 pm (EST) – The AIC Show Featuring: After Hours, Crossroads, Four Voices, Interstate Rivals, Main Street, Nightlife, Signature, and Vocal Spectrum.

Registration: <http://ldj.eventfarm.com/>

Hotel: <https://www.omnihotels.com/hotels/orlando-championsgate/meetings/sunshine-district-labor-day-jamboree-2021-08302021>

Editor's Note: LDJ is currently sold out, although tickets and hotel rooms are transferrable. I have seen people selling them online when their plans change and they can no longer attend.

MAKE THEM THIRSTY

by Brody McDonald
from choirbites.com

"If you want to build a ship, don't drum up people to collect wood and don't assign them tasks and work, but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea."

– Antoine de Saint-Exupery

This is an amazing quote for teachers of all stripes. Here are two more that, when paired, help communicate the same concept.

My Dad said, "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink. You can, however, drown it." And by that he meant that if you try to force any action too much, you can create resistance that leads to failure.

Someone else whose name escapes me (please comment below if you know; I want to give them credit) said "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink. Our job is to make it thirsty."

I tell students all the time that TEACHING and LEARNING are two different verbs. If a student is dead set against learning, the teacher's job becomes difficult if not impossible. However, if the student WANTS to learn, nothing can stop them. People learn things, complex things, all the time - on their own. Piano, guitar, other languages, how to fix a car, how to cook chicken piccata. Information is everywhere, all the time, and available for free. When I tell students that nothing can stop them from learning if they really want to, they chuckle. Then I say, "So... how many of you know someone who figured out how to bypass the school's website blocker?" Case closed.

The following are two stories of students who went above and beyond to learn. They were inspirations to me, and showed me new avenues for my teaching. I tell these stories from time to time in my rehearsals to help open my singers' minds. It's Thanksgiving, and these stories came into my head as I began to do my annual accounting of things for which to be grateful. Awesome students make that list.

Just over a decade ago, I had a student named Caitlin. Caitlin always wanted to succeed. At the start of each year we hold auditions for section leaders. One of the requirements is to play the section's part on the piano. Caitlin told us she had

(Continued on page 4)

MAKE THEM THURSTY (continued)

(Continued from page 3)

been working all Summer, and was hopeful to be chosen.

When the time came to play, she seemed flustered. It wasn't awful... but not good enough. Caitlin was disappointed, but moved on.

Fast forward another year. Caitlin came in again, this time looking VERY confident. She played the alto line flawlessly. The piece was in closed score, so I asked her if she could play the soprano and alto lines together. She could. No problems. I was blown away!

"Have you been taking piano lessons?" No

"You've just been working on this on your own?" Yes.

"How did you get so far this time? Last year you struggled. Was it just having more time?"

What she said next is the answer I'll remember above any other in my career.

"Last time, I didn't know the note names on the piano, so I put stickers on the keys to help me. I learned how to play with the stickers. But then I came in for the audition and when I looked down... there were no stickers. I was lost. When I went home, the first thing I did was to take all the stickers off my piano and start over."

Caitlin set a learning goal for herself, invested time, and used what she could (stickers) to help. When she failed to achieve her goal, she didn't pout or quit. She realized she miscalculated by not transitioning OFF the stickers. She didn't FAIL, she LEARNED, and immediately used that knowledge to adjust and become successful in the next cycle.

I had another student, Sam, who was a Senior and the new Vocal Percussionist for Eleventh Hour. He was trying to fill some big shoes. The VP before him was Kurt Zimmerman, who was on The Sing-Off in Eleventh Hour, and then went on to leave high school and immediately become a professional VP with Street Corner Symphony for eight years. Sam started the year less than enthusiastic, and when I talked with him one-on-one he confessed, "I just thought I'd have more opportunity to create in this group." I explained to him that he could create as much as he wanted, that I cherish such ambition, and asked him what he

had in mind. "Looping pedals and effects pedals. I really like what SONOS does." So... I got in touch with one of the members of SONOS, connected him with Sam, and told Sam: "Learn what you need... here's our budget. Come back to me with a plan." Sam did just that, and went on to create music that year that people in Kettering still talk about to this day. (Check this link if you want to see. It's not the greatest footage, but Sam is using a looper to build a complex drum battery in the beginning in "Some Nights" as well as using a phaser. He does some looping in his VP solo at 13:40 - <https://youtu.be/jcSgtD5EvtI>)

And so it is that these two stories provide us with great reminders.

FOR TEACHERS: Teach as well as you can, but also look for ways to empower students to learn on their own. Do what you can to "make them thirsty." Ask them what's possible, ask them for help, ask them to get creative. You'll be surprised at the results.

FOR STUDENTS: Don't wait around. Your director can't do or be everything for you. You are responsible for your own learning, and much of it comes from your own curiosity outside the classroom. When things don't go your way, don't see it as a FAILURE. It's an opportunity to LEARN and to come back stronger the next time.

**Musicians – The only people
who will stand there and try
to figure out what key your
doorbell is in.**



5 QUESTIONS TO ASK A PROSPECTIVE SINGING COACH

by Adam K Roberts
from backstage.com

If you're considering adding a vocal coach to your training team, it's best to have some questions on hand as you shop around; there are important things to consider when investing in a voice trainer. Although this list isn't exhaustive, it's a solid starting point for determining the questions you might want to ask prior to booking an initial session.

1. "Are you a voice teacher, vocal coach, or both?"

Although the distinction between "voice teacher" and "vocal coach" has become blurrier in recent years, it's important to determine that your candidate is able to help you achieve your goals.

Traditionally, voice teachers in the contemporary commercial world tend to focus more on technical aspects of the voice (expanding the range, achieving more flexibility and consistency of tone, etc.), whereas vocal coaches have dealt more with the ways in which a performer engages a piece through the voice.

2. "What's your philosophy for training the voice?"

Some voice trainers work from a single school of voicework (like those founded by Linklater, Estill, or Lessac, for instance), while others combine many approaches or create their own. Whatever the case, your coach should be fluent in the fundamental anatomy and physiology of the vocal mechanism, especially if your focus together will be technical in nature. If you're planning to audition for contemporary musicals, it's important to confirm that your teacher is fluent in techniques and industry standards particular to contemporary commercial performance.

3. "What are some of your students' professional accomplishments?"

Provided that your goal is to work professionally, it's extremely helpful to know what your trainer's former and current students are up to. (Or, in the case of a college audition coach, where their students are currently studying.) To train the voice generally means allocating significant finances to the pursuit, so the more you know before you invest, the better. Of course, some aspects of whether a teacher will prove a good fit can be learned only after experiencing a few sessions together.

4. "Do you play the piano?"

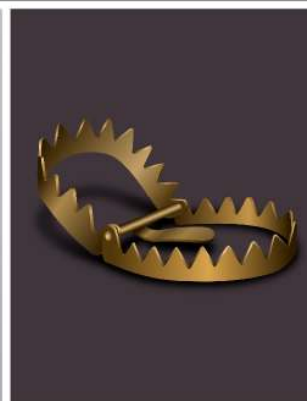
Some—but not all—vocal coaches are skilled pianists. If it's important to you to sing with live accompaniment, be sure to confirm that your candidate has the ability to provide it. Otherwise, you might need to pay an accompanist to attend lessons with you, particularly when working toward an upcoming audition.

5. "Do you coach virtually? If so, what's your process?"

Virtual coaching's not for everyone but some prefer it. If you think you might be interested in a virtual/in-person swap at some point, ask about your prospective coach's process and approach to virtual coaching ahead of time.

There are few hard and fast rules for what makes a voice trainer great, and the recommendations above aren't meant to indicate must-haves or make-or-breaks...unless they're make-or-break for you. Ask trusted friends for the name of their coaches. Check out reviews. Remember, too, that unless you sign with a vocal coach long-term (and I wouldn't suggest it, at least not at the very beginning), it's always within your purview to try out a few options and to switch individuals if things aren't working out. And as you navigate the world of professional vocal coaching, remember that the best piece of advice was belted out by Liza Minelli in "Flora the Red Menace": Sing happy!

WHAT DO YOUR MOUTH AND A BEAR TRAP HAVE IN COMMON?



**BAD THINGS HAPPEN IF
THEY DON'T STAY OPEN**

WHY THOUGHT STOPPING DOESN'T WORK (AND THE PARADOXICAL STRATEGY THAT MIGHT WORK BETTER)

by Dr Noa Kageyama
from bulletproofmusician.com

Have you ever found yourself struggling to suppress a negative thought?

Like, maybe you're making a recording, and things are going well, and you find yourself trying your darnedest to avoid thinking about the really tricky shift coming up?

Or maybe you're warming up on the morning of an audition, and trying really hard to stop worrying about getting dry mouth?

Or perhaps you're on a road trip, and desperately trying to avoid thinking about Niagara Falls and Mountain Dew, because you really have to go – but the next rest stop isn't for another 26 miles...

Whatever the situation, you've probably heard that trying to suppress a thought only makes it more likely that you'll have more thoughts about that very thought. Which is often illustrated with the "white bear challenge" – where someone tells you *not* to think about a white bear, and then you see how long you can go before the white bear pops into your head.

And sure, that certainly sounds reasonable – but is there any truth to this? Like, is there any actual evidence that trying to suppress a particular thought leads to more thoughts about that thought? And if so, what are we supposed to do instead, if we want to minimize negative thoughts or worries, and stay in a more positive mental headspace?

There's a study about that!

Believe it or not, there's a study that explores this very question – and even uses the white bear!

A team of researchers (Wegner et al., 1987, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.53.1.5>) recruited 54 undergraduate students, who were randomly assigned to one of three groups – a **suppression** group, an **expression** group, and a **focused distraction** group.

Participants in each group were asked to spend several 5-minute sessions describing "everything that

comes to mind" to a tape recorder (ha! remember those? – if you think the audio quality of your phone's recordings is bad, here's a great 6-minute video that will remind you how awful tape recorder recordings sounded, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CamOI-txuaY&rel=false>).

Suppression

After participants' first recording session, the experimenter gave the **suppression** group the following instructions:

"In the next five minutes, please verbalize your thoughts as you did before, with one exception. This time, try not to think of a white bear. Every time you say "white bear" or have "white bear" come to mind, though, please ring the bell on the table before you."

When the five minutes were up, the experimenter popped back in and asked participants to repeat the exercise, but this time they were given permission to actively "try to think of a white bear" and again ring the bell whenever the thought came to mind.

Expression

The **expression** group went through the same series of 5-minute recording sessions, but their instructions were flip-flopped. Where they were asked to think of a white bear for one five-minute session, and then asked to try *not* to think of a white bear in their next recording session.

Focused distraction

The **focused distraction** group were given instructions similar to the **suppression** group, except that their instructions included this one little add-on:

"Also, if you happen to think of a white bear, please try to think of a red Volkswagen instead."

The idea being, maybe having a specific replacement thought to think about would help them shift their thoughts away from the white bear a little quicker.

So...what happened? Was trying *not* to think of a white bear an effective thought suppression strategy?

Results

(Continued on page 7)

WHY THOUGHT STOPPING DOESN'T WORK (continued)

(Continued from page 6)

The findings were kind of intriguing.

What's up with those white bears?

One thing they found, was that we do indeed not do well at trying *not* to think of white bears. On average, participants thought of a white bear ~6 times, in a 5-minute span.

A rebound effect?

However, there was a significant difference between the suppression and expression groups in terms of how often the white bear popped into their thoughts. Both when they were asked to *avoid* thinking about a white bear, and when they were given permission *to* think about a white bear.

Ok...so...what does that mean exactly, and why does it matter?

The numbers

So here are the numbers:

The **suppression** group was asked to *suppress* all thoughts of a white bear first, yet still reported **9.17** white bear thoughts in the 5-minute session. And when they were *allowed* to think about white bears in the next 5-minute session, they reported a whopping **34.05** white bear thoughts.

Conversely, the **expression** group was asked to actively think of white bears first, yet reported only **15.47** white bear thoughts (vs. 34.05). And when they were then asked to *suppress* all white bear thoughts, they reported just **4.13** white bear thoughts (vs. 9.17).

So in each 5-minute session, both when asked to avoid white bear thoughts and when given permission to think about white bears, the **expression** group reported experiencing significantly fewer thoughts of a white bear. The only difference between the groups being the *order* in which they were asked to suppress their thoughts.

Which suggests that there may be something of a "rebound" effect. Where trying to suppress a thought, could indeed lead to an increase in those thoughts once you stop actively trying to suppress them.

Whereas allowing yourself to engage with the thoughts for a time first, and *then* trying to suppress them seems to make the suppression more effective.

Which reminded me of the research on expressive writing and test anxiety.

Eh?

Expressive writing

You can read more about the performance benefits of expressive writing in this post from a while back (How to Clear Your Mind of Worries Before a Big Performance, <https://bulletproofmusician.com/how-to-clear-your-mind-of-worries-before-a-big-performance/>), but the gist, is that text-anxious students who wrote down their worries and negative thoughts 10 minutes before an exam scored half a letter grade higher than students who didn't write out their worries.

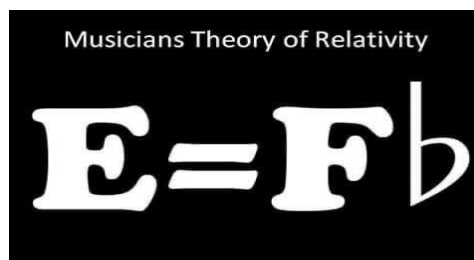
Which seems to mirror the results of the white bear study, no?

It makes me wonder if maybe these two findings are related in some way. Where instead of trying really hard to suppress one's worries and negative thoughts in the leadup to a performance and paradoxically experiencing an explosion of negative thoughts during the performance itself, it might actually be easier to stay in a more positive headspace and suppress negative thoughts onstage, if you've allowed yourself a bit of time to actively engage in your worries and doubts in advance.

Take action

It does sound like a pretty backwards sort of thing to do, but maybe worth a try, the next time you have a relatively low-stakes performance situation to experiment with? A studio class or mock audition for a trusted friend might be a perfect time to try out something like this.

In any case, if you do give it a try, or have already experimented with something along these lines, I'd love to hear about your experience!



THE BALANCED VOICE PART 2: THE ELEMENTS OF BALANCE

by Liz Garnett
from barbershop.org

In my first post in this series I talked about why I've been reflecting on the ideal sound of my imagination, and how the idea of a *balanced* voice has emerged as the primary organising metaphor to describe what I desire. Today I'm going to look at a variety of different dimension in which this metaphor plays out. It won't be exhaustive, in the same way that imagination is never exhausted, but it will take the metaphor into a number of different modes of experience.

Physiological

The source domain for the concept of balance is physical experience, and so it makes sense to start here, where it applies literally.

[Tone Bianca Dahl](#) talks about physical balance in three dimensions – she refers specifically to conductors, but as is usually the case, what makes a good physical set-up is the same for both director and singers. The first two dimensions are left/right, which is readily checked visually, and front/back, which you can check by alternately standing on tip-toe and bending your knees. If you are centred, these actions won't make you topple over.

The third dimension, top/bottom, is perhaps already metaphorical, even while it still refers to the body, as it refers to the relationship between the two halves of the body, rather than the whole body's relationship with gravity. It also draws attention to how balance in the body isn't merely a matter of position or symmetry, but also one of muscular engagement. A lot of problems that singers (and conductors) encounter can be ameliorated by increasing engagement in the lower body and decreasing it above the waist.

Once you're talking about muscular engagement, then the literal meaning of balance becomes a matter of balancing energy and relaxation. This is where physical experience becomes a metaphor – dealing with concepts rather than objects – and is ready for transference it all kinds of other domains.

But before we leave the physiological world, it is worth noting that another of the ways through which we experience energy/relaxation is the interplay between the [sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems](#). Over-dominance of either of

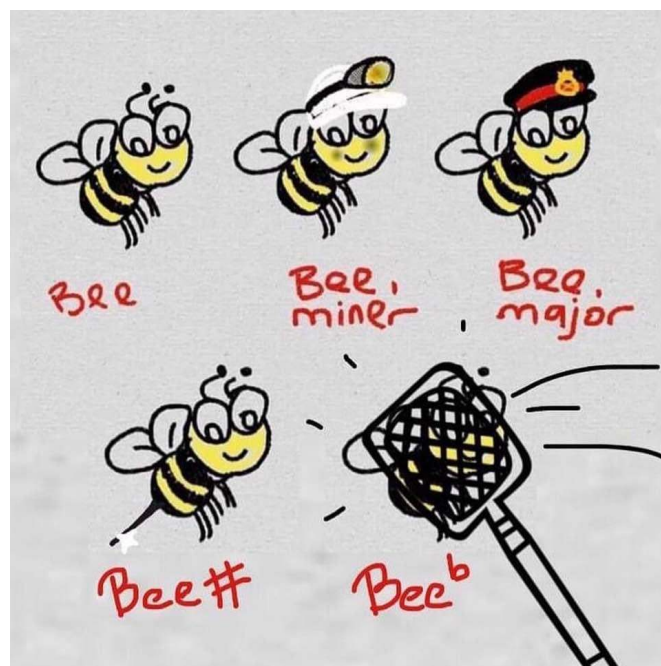
these impairs singing; balance between them helps it.

Sound

Vocal tone is like flavour – individual people (ingredients), ensembles (dishes), and genres (cuisines) have their own distinctive characteristics that set them apart from others, but those sonic/gustatory identities have the capacity to be wonderful, ordinary, or unpleasant according to how well they combine the various qualities that contribute to the whole. Spectrographic or chemical analysis will reveal the precise composition of that whole, but adjusting that mix is more readily achieved in practice by finding the balance between the primary experiential elements.

In cooking, we're balancing salt/sweet/sour/bitter and adjusting umami levels to create flavour. In singing we're balancing the relative of volume of fundamental and overtones to create timbre. We do this via descriptors such as ping/richness, brightness/depth, twang/space – the first two of which are clearly metaphors to describe sound, while the last indexes elements of vocal technique as well as their desired effects.

Balance's synonym of *poise* also has this quality of referencing sonic qualities and physical technique at the same time when applied to the vocal folds and their relationship with airflow. [SOVT exercises](#) are all about balancing the air pressure either side of the larynx to help the folds hover over the airstream with a clean contact such that we hear via a regular waveform without noise in the sound.



THE BALANCED VOICE PART 3: MORE ELEMENTS OF BALANCE

by Liz Garnett
from barbershop.org

So far we have explored the more concrete elements of balance in a voice – those to do directly with the use of the sound-producing body, and those to do with the acoustics of the sounds we hear. It is time to move on to balance in the more experiential dimensions. Here we are clearly working more metaphorically, counter-posing ostensible opposites within the singer's awareness.

Experience of Self

The first cluster of opposites all relate to the singer's executive control functions: to what extent do sing with a conscious awareness of what we're doing, and to what extent do we lose ourselves in the music?

- Head/heart
- Analysis/intuition
- System 2/ system 1
- Control/abandonment
- Decoro/sprezzatura

The opposition between head and heart is the classic metaphor to describe this experiential distinction. Actually, the difference lies entirely in the head, with both analytical, system 2 thinking and holistic/intuitive system 1 thinking taking place in the brain, while the heart continues to beat throughout, helpfully keeping us alive.

Still, such is the power of metaphor that our brains intuitively understand that to invoke the cognitively -irrelevant organ of the heart is to describe a mode of experience in which we commit ourselves without reservation. The lack of calculation entails both a sense of honesty, authenticity, and the risk of folly.

Now, clearly musical performance needs some sense of control, some respect for good form as implied by the word 'decoro', some decorum. But it also needs some sense of spontaneity, of living in the moment, of letting go, of sprezzatura. The simultaneous requirement for logical and experiential opposites is something I will return to in my next post when I consider what kind of relationship between elements the word 'balance' can suggest.

Relational

All of my metaphors so far have been expressed in terms of the individual singer, though some – particularly the sonic qualities – can also apply to the collective. The next cluster of opposites pertain to the relationship of the individual to the group.

- Self/other
- Giving/taking
- Leading/following
- Inner ear/outer ear

There are two types of novice choral singers. The first are good at blending their voices into the sound around them, but are easily pulled off piste by voices singing other parts; they get labelled 'leaners'. The second are good at holding their own part but don't yet have the knack of harmonising, of slotting their voice into the whole; they get labelled as 'overly soloistic'. The leaner needs to develop the stronger sense of self that the soloist brings to the party, while the soloist needs to develop the awareness and sensitivity that comes easily to the leaner.

You can express this distinction in purely musical terms of inner/outer ears – to what extent is a choir member singing along to their internalised guide track of how the music goes, and to what extent are they singing along to the actual sound around them? But self/other captures the sense that it's not just about musical skills, it's also about direction of attention and attitude.

Likewise, giving/taking and leading/following describe aspects of teamwork that need to be in equilibrium if the ensemble is going to function effectively. All the individuals involved need to participate both proactively and responsively, otherwise the sound won't cohere. A balanced choral sound refers not just to volume relationships, but a sense of equality of contribution and commitment across the group.

I am sure that by now you will have a host of other analytical elements that need to be balanced in the individual voice and/or the ensemble sound. But I am going to stop here on the enumeration of elements because we have enough in hand to generalise from as we move in the next post onto considering what kind of relational structure the word 'balance' can entail.

VOCAL TENSION RELEASE EXERCISES FOR A STRAINED VOICE

by Katarina Hornavakova
from how2improvesinging.com

There are many ways to release vocal tension from a strained, tired or even painful voice. You may have tried some of them and they did not work. Well, the truth is that we are all very different and the strain or pain that you experience in your voice may come from many different places. Maybe your strain comes from a bad habitual posture, maybe it comes from using inefficient vocal technique or maybe there is accumulated muscle tension even before you say anything.

Therefore, there are many different techniques to release tension. Every week in our coaching program Vocal Freedom System for the speaking voice, we explore several of these techniques. I then ask the members of the program to choose what works for their voice, body and their vocal needs.

Today, I will show you three different types of these techniques and it is up to you to try them and then choose the ones that benefit your voice.

Baseline

How do you know if an exercise has benefits for your voice? The answer is: take a baseline. Briefly assess your voice before an exercise and then compare it to your voice after the exercise. If the exercise is beneficial, you will feel an improvement in some way – more resonance or ease of production? Assessing your voice is easy, just count from one to ten or say the days of the week or sing a cut from your song and notice how your voice feels. And do the same vocal task after you finish the exercise and notice if your voice feels any different. So, now it's time to take your initial baseline.

Technique #1 to release vocal tension from a strained voice is Manual Tension Release

This can be anything from a massage, manipulation, myofascial release, trigger point therapy, some people even go for acupressure or acupuncture to release tension from the muscles of their head, neck, shoulders, upper torso or even lower torso. Everything in our body is connected so even locked knees can affect your vocal function. If you have that option you can go and find a physiotherapist or other specialist who can give you a good massage

or similar treatment.

In the video below, watch a short self-applied massage to your suprahyoid region so the area under your chin. Suprahyoid muscles that are attached to the hyoid bone from up above affect our larynx and where it likes to sit. People with tension often have their larynx too high and they feel tension under the chin or around the jaw and this can spread even further.

Of course, this is just one example of a massage or myofascial release that can improve your vocal function.

Technique #2 to release vocal tension from a strained voice are Straw Exercises

From my experience, people either love them or hate them. I personally love them but I know a lot of people who really have not figured them out yet and they don't particularly like them. One of the members in our coaching group, she never liked them in the past. But I challenged her to give it another try and now she loves them! It takes time to figure them out!

For our purpose today, which is releasing tension, I want you to use a wide straw. If you don't have a selection of straws, just choose the one that has the least amount of resistance, so a short or wide straw. Make a good seal with your lips around the straw. Inhale through the nose and gently blow through the straw while making a neutral sound underneath. Something like "uh". And just sustain the sound at a comfortable pitch and make it even and stable. If your voice becomes unstable that is ok. Just continue holding that sound.

Technique #3 to release vocal tension from a strained voice is very simple – Humming

One of my favourites. And if you are saying that it's nothing new, you are right. You can do humming exercises for the rest of your life and can always find more and more vocal resonance every time. This exercise helps you get to know your vocal tract very intimately. Tiny changes in the shape of the vocal tract can affect the strength and ease of your voice tremendously. Watch the video below for demonstrations.

How is your voice feeling now? Time to take the final baseline. I hope you feel less strain than when we started!



Link to the video: <https://youtube.com/TFgWuB9n8>

WHY SHOULD I WARM UP MY VOICE?

by Chelsea Wilson
from thebalancedsinger.com

Many singers don't take the time to properly warm up their voices. And why not?

Singing is a physical activity, just like running or dancing or even playing an instrument, and we warm up before we do those things, right?

So why do so many singers skip that crucial warm-up time before an audition, rehearsal, or performance?

I wish I knew the answer to that. But here's what I do know: *Don't skip it!*

To encourage you to get into your own warm-up routine, here are my TOP TWO reasons why you should take the time to warm up your voice.

Avoid injury

All athletes take a few minutes to warm up their bodies before practices or competitions. Our bodies need to be prepared in order to perform at their best, and it's the same with our voices! (After all, our voices *are* a part of our bodies.)

You know how your voice feels in the morning when you first wake up? Do you really want to walk on stage sounding like that?

I didn't think so.

Imagine Usain Bolt rolling out of bed a few minutes before one of his Olympic sprints. He doesn't take the time to stretch, work out his muscles, or mentally "get in the zone" for the race. Chances are, no matter how talented of an athlete he may be, he could incur an injury.

Cold muscles = risk for injury.

And it takes as little as 5 to 20 minutes to warm up our voices. Contrast that with the days, weeks, or months it can take to recover from a vocal injury. Do the math and do your warm-ups!

Find Vocal Balance

My friend Elisabeth recently invited me to sing four songs in a concert she was putting on. Two of the songs were duets, two were solos, and all four had

a very different stylistic feel to them. Within those four pieces, I needed to make a wide variety of sounds. With my voice in good working order, I could spring-board from one style to another because I took the time to warm up!

I used intentional vocal exercises to help me find "home base," or vocal balance, helping me find connection and properly preparing me to sing those four very different songs.

Without first finding vocal balance, your voice may feel squeezed, pushed, or overly breathy, and none of those feelings will lead to a successful performance!

When you find vocal balance—by warming up!—you can sing anything.

What is your warm-up routine? If you don't usually warm up, I'm curious . . . why not?

If you don't know how to warm up or don't feel like you have the time, please check out our TBS Warm-Up Series! These warm-ups are suitable for all styles of singing, they can be accessed right from your phone, and you can get your voice ready for anything in *less than ten minutes!*

So now you've had the pep talk *and* you've & been given the tools, so don't skip another warm-up again! Your vocal cords will thank you



PRACTICE MUSIC LIKE AN OLYMPIC ATHLETE

By Michael Gallant
from blog.discmakers.com

Whatever your musical style or genre, establishing an effective, consistent practice routine will set you up for musical success. Here are some tips to get you started.

The Olympics give viewers a great opportunity to marvel at athletic excellence. Even if you've never pole-vaulted in your life it can be inspiring to watch the world's top athletes do what they do best.

For serious musicians, there's a great deal to learn from Olympic athletes when it comes to structuring the most effective practice sessions possible. After all, just like sprinting, gymnastics, and Judo, making music is a physical act that relies heavily on skill, strength, timing, and dexterity. Many similar principles apply.

Read on for some ideas, inspired by the world of athletics, that can help you get the most out of your own practice sessions.

Keep your practice space ready

Dirty, cluttered, disorganized gyms can interfere with effective training — and the same applies to your music training. Make sure your practice space is clean, organized, well-maintained, and is in a location where you're comfortable and free of distractions.

Also, remove as many physical barriers as you can between you and your studio, instrument, or microphone. The less stuff you need to move to begin practicing, the easier it will be to get started and the more likely you'll adhere to a consistent practice regimen.

Keep a mirror (or audio/video recorder) handy

Many top athletes look at their form in a mirror as they train — or record and analyze their competitions after the fact. The [same idea can benefit musicians](#) as well.

Work with a coach

It's uncommon to find an Olympic-level athlete who doesn't receive help and guidance from a qualified coach. Getting regular input from someone experienced in your discipline can help you identify your

weak points. It can also leverage your strengths and keep you on a positive training path while avoiding injury and burnout.

Regardless of whether you're working with a teacher for your performance or technique, it never hurts to partner with someone more musically experienced than you to periodically check in and help structure a practice plan that will get you where you want to be.

Plan your practice

Top athletes begin training sessions with a game plan. The more you can structure your musical practice sessions with similar foresight and discipline, the more effective they can be.

The exact structure of your practice sessions matters less than having a solid roadmap going in — and planning your practice sessions doesn't mean you need to be rigid. If you're not feeling a certain practice routine one day or you find yourself hitting a wall of physical or mental resistance, pivot to something else. Just be mindful of your choices and your reasons for them. Don't shy away from practicing something hard just because it feels intimidating or because you're afraid you might not be good at it.

As you plan, remember to switch things up day to day. Top athletes generally don't hammer the same muscles, technique, or routine every single training session, as that's a good way to burn out both the body and mind. Rather, they plan ahead and vary their training regimens with long-term growth and success as a goal. Follow the same example in your music practice and see how it feels to plan different skills, songs, or techniques for different days. You may be surprised at how quickly you find all areas of your musicality expand in tandem as your cross-training continues.

Ease into it

When top sprinters enter a training session, they don't go straight from relaxed walking into top-speed sprints — and world-class gymnasts don't dive into multiple body-twisting flips immediately upon entering the gym.

When you start your practice sessions, don't jump into your most physically challenging or mentally rigorous work. Warm yourself up with something that your body already feels comfortable doing.

Effective warmups could include playing through low- or medium-intensity songs that don't push your chops too far or simple exercises that help you get into the

(Continued on page 13)

PRACTICE MUSIC LIKE AN OLYMPIC (continued)

(Continued from page 12)

groove. Whatever you choose, make sure it puts you in a good mental and physical place before moving on to more intense work.

Challenge yourself

Athletes and musicians alike can benefit from pushing boundaries. Is today the day you feel up to jamming along with that complex prog-rock song that constantly shifts between 7/8 and 5/4? Ready to reproduce your favorite rapper's rapid-fire flow and timing, hit for hit and breath for breath? Growth is one of the things that makes both music and athletics so rewarding — challenge yourself, stretch your abilities, and find places to grow as a musician.

Take a break

Even the greatest athletes have off days, and the same is true of musicians. Don't expect to perform optimally every time you start a practice session and don't punish yourself if you can't nail today what you could easily knock out yesterday. Regardless of daily anomalies, consistent and thoughtful practice is key to long-term musical growth. Relax, keep at it, and see what fresh won-

**I just got my
musician friend
a 'get better
soon' card.
He isn't sick. I
just think he
can get
better...**



HOW TO IMPROVE SINGING WITH PRACTICE

By Ken Taylor
from askavocalcoach.com

It's not overly uncommon for students or any growing vocalist for that matter to come up and ask me my opinions on how much they should practice. But to me, how much you practice isn't near as important as what you're doing while you practice.

Don't get me wrong, practicing on a regular basis is a very important part of developing as a singer. If you want to get better, you've got to practice. But not all practice is created equal, so I figured I'd write this article to give you some pointers as to how much to practice, what to focus on, and what you can do to make yourself that much more effective. So enjoy!

The Process – What To Do While Practicing?

In the way of structure, one of the most effective ways to organize your practice is as follows. First, start off by balancing your voice with a warm up. Then, take the time to break the song down into smaller pieces so that you can focus on these sections in more detail. After you've done that, put the song together piece by piece, making sure you're continuing to execute what you were working on in the smaller groups perfectly until you're singing the whole song.

Now, let me go into a little bit more detail about that.

The Warm Up

When practicing, I'd always start with a warm up. The purpose of a warm up is to build the proper coordination and balance for singing... it's just like stretching for an athlete. Warm up properly and you'll be poised and ready for singing. Skip the warm up and you'll likely feel more clunky and experience less vocal freedom. I'd suggest taking at least 10-15 minutes to warm up (I regularly go as long as 30 mins).

Breaking the Song Down

The most effective way to practice anything is breaking it down to it's simplest element. This is why we typically use a single vowel and consonant sound during warm ups, because the more simple something is, the more likely we'll experience success with it. Then, once we've experienced that success, we're ready to move onto more complex combinations.

But don't worry, this whole article isn't about warming up. When you start practicing your song, you want to

(Continued on page 14)

HOW TO IMPROVE SINGING WITH
(continued)

(Continued from page 13)

break it down into smaller sections. You may do a verse/chorus at a time, or maybe even want to break things down more and practice one line at a time. While you're working on these smaller sections, you can focus on perfecting every element... the inflection you use while saying the words, the stylistic elements you add, the tone you use to best reflect the emotion, and more. Once you perfect your first smaller section, move onto the next one, then the next... *this* is how one truly perfects a song.

As a side note, I believe waaaaay too many singers make the mistake of repeatedly singing through the whole song over and over while practicing. This is bad because once you're a few lines in, you go on auto pilot and rarely change anything.

You can't build a house in a day... first you need to lay the concrete, then put up the framework, then wire the electrical, then add the walls, the roof, windows, etc. It can't all be done at once, and you can't focus on all of the various different elements you want vocally in a song while singing the whole thing over and over.

So don't be afraid to take the time to break things down and really perfect the song piece by piece. Once you do this, you're ready to start putting it all together.

Putting It All Together. . .

With all your smaller sections perfected, start putting them together back to back, adding one more each time. Adding one smaller section at a time will give you the ability to focus on these newer sections while singing through the previous sections over and over helps to establish the habit of doing it the way you want. You can break the song down into a few bigger sections while doing this (verse/chorus marks are usually a good place for this).

Then all you have to do is put your bigger sections together, and your song should be sounding pretty incredible. This method of piecing together the song has been extremely effective for me as a teacher, and for my students. Give it a try and see if it's as effective for you as it has been for me.

The logo for Amazon Smile, featuring the word "amazon" in black and "smile" in orange, with a small orange arrow pointing from the 'a' to the 'i'.

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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.

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Thanks in advance!!

The logo for FlipGive, with "Flip" in black and "Give" in teal.

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.

FREE YOUR VOICE

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

Continued from last month

- As you let the air fall in, you will notice that you expand in the lower part of your torso. Good. Exactly right. If your chest has risen, you have not stayed relaxed. It is not about sucking in air or gulping down a big breath; it is about allowing the air to pass through an unimpeded space deep into your lungs and letting your abdominal and diaphragmatic muscles expand.
- Watch for, and avoid, upward movement in your chest and shoulders. But do not become fixated on this. See in a mirror which area expands more - your upper or lower torso. A tiny motion in the chest or shoulders is not the end of the world. Attempting to hold everything perfectly motionless will create unwanted tension. A heaving chest is a problem, however.
- Do not overfill your lungs. Imagine your lungs are filling like a glass of water - from the bottom up,. You need fill them only about two-thirds of your torso are filled with breath, while the upper third has virtually none. That is not what happens physiologically, but that is how it can feel. Filling your lungs to their maximum will cause much tension in your chest. Try it.
- Accept nothing less, not even once. It must apply for every single inhalation.
- Sometimes allow your first inhale for a piece of music to be taken in through your nose, as if smelling a rose.
- Sometimes allow breath in through your mouth and nose simultaneously. This is an excellent exercise that some singers benefit from doing for every inhale. It helps the throat and base of the tongue to remain relaxed and loose.
- Practice inhaling this way both slowly and quickly. Either way, the process remains the same.
- Repeat this many times, even the deliberate set up of the jaw, until it becomes habitual and automatic. This can take time. It may take months for you to set new habits. Stick with it. You can do it at any time of the day or night, so keep repeating whenever you think of it. You do not need to be singing to practice this. You can even do it when driving the car:
- Inhaling is that simple. Do not over-complicate it. Many singers work harder to inhale than they sometimes need. Unless you are singing a particularly demanding style like opera, a singer seldom needs more inhalation effort than this. By all means work hard in exercises to build strength and stamina, but you do not need to 'burst a boiler' when breathing to sing.

FREE SINGING TIPS

by Yvonne DeBandi
from a2z-singing-tips.com

Q = Quit smoking. Quit talking too loudly. Quit talking too much

FREE SINGING TIPS

by Nicole LeGault
from a2z-singing-tips.com

Q is for Quench. When I'm recognized in public as a vocal coach, a lot of people ask first: "What should I drink"? I tell them that if they're singing properly, it doesn't matter much what they drink. I prefer to avoid caffeine, because I don't like the crash that follows the artificial stimulation. Avoid hard liquor, it burns going down and the fumes may irritate. Avoid dairy products, they may help generate phlegm. Other than that, just try to remain hydrated and fueled - I like to drink spring water and fruit juice. When consuming carbonated beverages, be sure that you can keep your burping under control! It can be embarrassing, especially during ballads.

FREE SINGING TIPS

by Mick Walsh
from a2z-singing-tips.com

Q. Quiet time. I always start my classes with quiet diaphragmatic breathing. Gently winding down from all the stresses of the day. Focus on getting your breath down from the chest and into the diaphragm area. If you have a puppy or a kitten watch how they breathe. Their tummies' rise and fall gently, with no stress or pressure. Breathe in for a count of 7 then out for 11, This fools the body into becoming very relaxed, very quickly. This is a great technique to try if you are waiting for an interview or an exam. Don't do this when driving though as it can lower blood pressure and increase your vehicle insurance should you crash!!

FREE SINGING TIPS

by Teri Danz
from a2z-singing-tips.com

Q= Quit Pushing -- Feeling powerful in singing and being powerful in singing are two entirely different things. While efforting -- pushing chest, singing louder to hit pitches, creating and pushing sound from the throat - may feel powerful, it actually sounds worse. It's easy to go off pitch, sound strident (even painful), hurt your voice, crack etc... when you sing in this way.

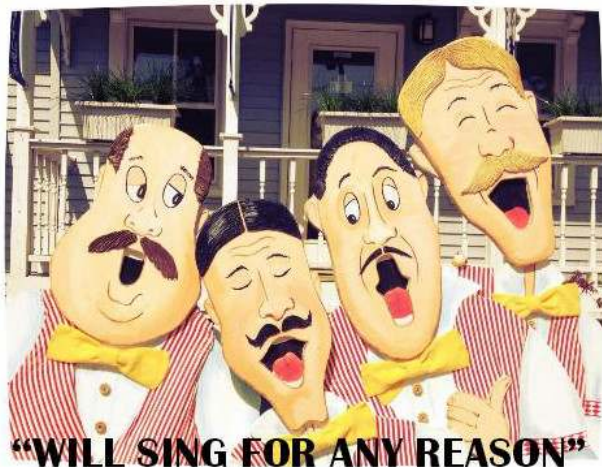


QUARTET CORNER

Our quartets are practicing social distancing or re-grouping.

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 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
vacant, bass

No Name Yet

? tenor
? lead
? baritone
? bass



Big Orange Chorus

REHEARSAL SCHEDULE

Thu	02 Sep	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	09 Sep	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	16 Sep	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	23 Sep	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	30 Sep	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	07 Oct	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	14 Oct	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	21 Oct	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	28 Oct	Shepherd of the Woods

BIRTHDAYS

Lou Richardson	15 Sep
Andy Schrader	15 Sep
Joe Russ	18 Sep

PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

...more to come

⇒ **BIG O BUCK\$** ⇐

BIG O BUCKS SCHEDULE

...more to come

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
Roger Erastaine	Ron Blewett
Jon Greene	Jim Harper
G Lane	Brandon Edwards
Joe McLean	Adom Panshukian
Christian Cornella-Carlson	
Ray Parzik	Michael Reynolds
Ed Fitzgerald	Kyle Batchelder
David Brown	Thomas Barhacs
Pat McCormack	David Brown
Thomas Barhacs	

WELCOME

NEWEST MEMBERS

Les Mower	April
Ray Parzik	August

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

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



vacant
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 October is 26 September
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!**

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



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Orange Park FL 32003



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