



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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CHRISTMAS TIME WAS HERE

We had many opportunities for singing out in December.

We had a partially sponsored big gig at the gazebo in downtown St Augustine.

We had a huge sponsored gig at Maggiano's in Town Center.

We had gigs at Starling Assisted Living Center and again at Starling Independent Living Center in Nocatee.

We were received extremely well by enthusiastic audiences at all venues. The singing was excellent.

We had several other requests to perform that we were unable to have enough singers on the dates they wanted us.

The month was capped with the gigantic Christmas Caroling Party for the whole neighborhood at the Polish Ponderosa. The Bridges of Harmony and several quartets joined in. A fantastic time was had by all.

WANTED!!

MEN WHO LIKE TO SING!



Call 355-SING



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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 editor.

John Alexander, Editor
2429 Southern Links Dr
Fleming Island FL 32003
johnalexander@att.net
904-278-3987

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

EDITORIAL

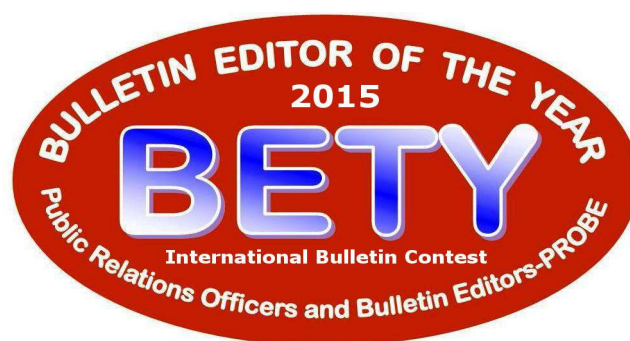
As we continue in the new year with our rebuilding efforts, let's pledge to learn our notes and words faithfully, practice on our own regularly, and perform to the best of our abilities. Our Christmas shows were very well received, The crutch of having some people holding music is not something that we should do again. We had other opportunities that we had to decline for lack of singers in all four parts. We look forward to a harmonious New Year.

Let's see if we can get more people interested in coming to our rehearsals. Ask anyone you know who likes to sing. Invite friends, acquaintances, and even strangers. Singing is fun. Singing well is even better. Performing in public shares that fun with lots of people. Everybody wins.

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

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

An optimist stays up
until midnight to see the
New Year in. A pessimist
stays up to make sure
the old year leaves.



WHY DO I SING OUT OF TUNE ON HIGHER NOTES, BUT MY LOW NOTES ARE FINE?

by Ken Taylor
from askavocalcoach.com

Have you ever wondered why your high notes always seem to be a little bit off-key, while your low notes sound just fine? You're not alone! Many singers struggle with this issue.

Let's explore some normal causes of pitch discrepancies in singers, and provide some tips for how to correct them.

Higher notes are generally harder for most people.

Singing high notes requires your voice to be more balanced than low notes. Most people either work a bit harder when singing high notes or shy away altogether. Both of these options can lead to less than favorable singing, as well as pitch issues.

However, when we return to our lower range, we're usually closer to the pitches that we use to speak, making singing accurately in this pitch range much easier.

Usually, the cause of off-pitch high notes is tension.

Tension is a common enemy of good singing. When we sing high notes, the vocal cords are stretched thinner and must vibrate faster than when we sing lower notes. When we sing with tension, this can negatively affect the vocal cord vibrations, which can cause pitch problems.

Typically, when this happens, the pitch is pushed flat. It often feels weighty and less free because of the extra weight on the vocal cords.

Some solutions for singing high notes out of tune...

1) Drop the Jaw

Dropping the jaw helps us in a few ways. It helps us take advantage of more resonance, which can give us more sound for less effort. It also allows us to release our tongue out of the way, which is often the source of tension.

2) Narrow the Shaping of the Mouth

A wide shaping negatively affects our singing at the cord level. We need those vocal folds to come together effortlessly to sing high notes in tune, and keeping a narrow shaping in the mouth and throat makes that

much more likely.

3) Relax your throat

If you feel the pressure of tension in your throat, you're working too hard. It's that simple. This extra weight on the voice can help push high notes off-pitch. So, try to sing those higher notes with more of a speech level pressure and you'll be much more likely to sing them on pitch.

4) Bring head voice down.

This is a great way to warm up your voice if you are the type of singer that pulls weight up as they sing. Instead of starting in chest voice and trying to take a full sound upward, start off singing head voice, and try to take that lighter feel down. This can really help balance your voice if you're used to carrying too much weight up.

Want to sing high notes more easily? Check out our how to sing high notes article.

<https://askavocalcoach.com/articles/how-to-sing-high-notes/>

Another interesting point about singing high notes in tune shared in the video...

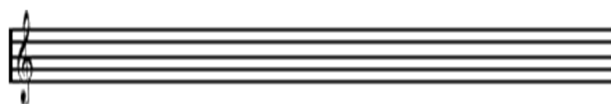
The higher you sing, the more space there is in-between the notes. So, it can be more difficult to sing with accuracy the higher we go.

This is why it's easier for male barbershop quartets to be in tune than a ladies group (if you'd like to understand this concept better, learn more about hertz and how they work pitch).

In Summary...

There are several reasons why people can have difficulty singing high notes. One of the most common is tension. But that can easily be overcome when you follow the steps mentioned in this article.

Alright all, I hope this helps! Want to join in the conversation? Ask your own singing questions for free by joining our Singing Family community. Find out more here (<http://singfam.com>).



MAGIC CHORAL TRICK #382 CELLO BOWING

by Janet Kidd
from betterchoirs.wordpress.com

Legato is always a tricky concept for amateur singers. Here's another kinaesthetic technique that I use.

Have your singers sing a slow 5 note scale 1 2 3 4 5 4 3 2 1, using the numbers as lyrics. (Think half notes at about mm 80)

If you notice any energy leaks or lack of synchronization try having them physically mime bowing each note along with you, as if they were playing a cello – one note per bow.

1 – Down bow – as if you're bowing a note, drawing the bow out to your right

2 – Up bow – as if you're moving the bow over the string across the body towards your left side

3 – Down bow – to your right

4 – Up bow....etc

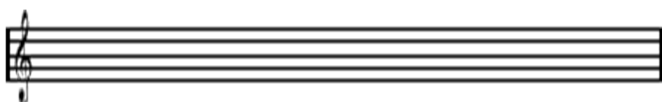
It works well when they understand that there's always some resistance – a bit of grip on the string by the bow because of the rosin on the bow hair. So it takes even, deliberate pressure and pull to create a lovely cello sound.

Once they can imagine this, vowels in the 'lyrics' will become more defined, and longer, without your singers having to deliberately think those thoughts.

Yes, of course, they should know about target vowels and diphthong resolutions to words – but if they are physically bowing each note those things tend to fix themselves.

Once the singers become accustomed to physically bowing the phrases they're singing, sometimes all it takes to bring back the legato into a phrase is for me to mime the bowing as I direct.

And those pesky pick up beats that inevitably get accented when the singers' brains stop working can be radically altered into something much more pleasing by me miming the pick up as a short, but smooth up bow.



POLLUTED VOWELS

by Brody McDonald
from choirbites.com

I have noticed that my choirs often sing less-than-pure vowels when the end of the syllable/word contains a singable consonant. R's, L's, and N's are especially troublesome. I call these polluted vowels. Vowels can also be polluted when anticipating the second half of a diphthong.

Imagine you have a bottle of drinking water. Now add just a bit of ink. It isn't like you dropped a dime into the bottle, where you can see it shouldn't be there but can drink the water anyway. The ink has polluted the water throughout, turning what was once clear into a murky grey. That's what singable consonants/diphthongs can do to a vowel - tainting the purity to our ears.

My Men's Chorus is singing Laudamus, a Welsh hymn, done in English. Many phrases end with the word EVERMORE. When they hold the last note, I can so clearly hear the R polluting the OH vowel.

Just say the word MORE in slow motion. You'll feel the point at which the OH has been compromised, but it comes before you are sustaining a pure R. Try the word bound, and notice the collapsed point between the AW and OOH of the diphthong. These are polluted vowels, and choirs sing them all the time because they cling their speaking constructs of the language.

Fear not-I have a solution! It's called word switching. Let's try it on this MORE scenario. I had my men sing and hold the chord on MORE. Polluted. I explained the concept of polluted vowels and asked them to only sing a pure MOH with no R. Didn't work. Then I asked them to sing the word MOTION, which does not have a singable consonant following the MOH. "Sing MO-TION, but hold the MOH until I cue you to go on to TION." BOOM! A crystal clear OH vowel!

It works for diphthongs, too. Having trouble with BOUND? Hold the first half of BOSTON. MAKE? Try MEXICO. LIGHT? Try LOBSTER. Get the pattern?

By changing the English word, we are using our singers' tendencies against them. It's a simple trick that can be used in the short term until singing the correct pure vowel becomes a long-term habit. Listen in your next rehearsal and clean up those vowels. No one likes pollution.

SINGING CONTESTS THE HOW TO GUIDE

by Ken Taylor
from singingtipsblog.com

Hey Everyone!

Ken Taylor here sharing some advice with you on the “How to’s” of a singing contests. Below are a few horrifically simple tips that I all too often wish people would consider when I’m judging these contests. Do these things, and you will help present yourself in a wonderful light and up your chances of walking away with the trophy and maybe even some money.

1. It Sounds Overly Simply, but Do A Song You Can Sing & Can Sing Well

If you are going into the competition wondering if you’re going to hit the high note at the end of the bridge, you’ve definitely picked the wrong song. If you’re running out of air because the phrases are too long, then it’s probably not a safe bet. For your singing contest, I suggest picking a song you can sing most any day, not just on your best vocal days.

2. Pick Something Your Audience Will Enjoy

To illustrate this, I’m going to tell a story. I know of a group here locally that got on *America’s Got Talent* that sang a barber shop quartet-ish version of “Don’t Rock the Boat.” Honestly, it was kinda nifty and the singers sounded pretty good, but sadly, it didn’t take long before people were booing them and soon the three X’s followed. I believe it was Sharon Osbourne that said something to the effect of she could see them performing that song at an elderly home, but not on that show.

Lesson to Learn – Choose a song that your audience will enjoy! Consider the age range of your audience as well as the type of music they’d enjoy, then simply don’t let them down. You wouldn’t Sing Led Zeppelin at your grandmother’s 90th Birthday party, just as you probably wouldn’t get a group together to sing the Halleluia Chorus at Woodstock. Keep your audience in mind and you won’t end up with funny looks or worse, booing.

3. Know Your Strengths

Some singers sound better on ballads, and some shine singing up tempo songs. Some people have an impressive high range while others can hold out a note long after the cows come home. So, know your vocal strengths and choose a song that high-

lights them. Last year, I remember literally spending 3 weeks searching for the perfect song for a student of mine. Sounds excessive, right? The results... she blew the judges away and walked away with one of those shiny trophies and a check. Just a side note, the trophy was practically as tall as she was... I was proud. So yeah, it pays to know your strengths :)

4. Connect with Your Audience

You can’t just sing the song for the sake of singing it. Tell the audience a story. Involve them. Make them feel special. The more you can do this, the more they’ll enjoy it. The more they enjoy it, the more likely you’re name will be called at the end of the contest as they’re announcing the winners. Simple as that.

5. It’s Not Enough to Just Sing

They say 30% of people take in the world through sound, but a whopping 60% of people are visually dominant. So if that’s the case, your number will more greatly impact the majority of people if you’re able to stimulate them through both sight and sound. Now don’t get me wrong, I’m not saying you should include a dance routine in your number, but I do encourage you to be brave enough to step out from behind your mic stand and use your hands, arms, body, and facial expressions to further express the depth of the story you’re telling.

6. Focus on the Audience and Yourself, NOT YOUR COMPETITION

This is a little pet peeve of mine and I’ll try not to stay on top of my soap box for too long here, but if you go into a competition focusing on beating a certain person or persons, you’re going to fail 9 times out of 10. I say this simply because you’re focusing entirely on the wrong thing. Singing/performing is about the AUDIENCE. The more you focus on how you can give them the best show possible, the better you’ll do. The more you focus on beating someone else, the more you’re not focusing on what counts. End of story. Okay, I was able to keep that pleasantly brief. Yay!

7. Be Positive

Finally, I suggest a little pre-performance ritual. Before I go out and sing, I always visualize my performance going exactly how I want it. I see the audience enjoying it, and hear a roar of applause after I’m finished. I mentally go through my whole routine seeing myself having the best performance of my life. Strangely, I’ve found this routine proves to

(Continued on page 6)

SINGING CONTESTS (continued)

(Continued from page 5)

be much more effective than pacing around telling yourself you're going to forget your words and worrying about what the person before you is doing. Matter of fact, I've always gotten great results with this, and I believe you will to.

Well, that's all I've got for today. Hope this helps! Please feel free to leave a comment with any success stories or other suggestions.

Thanks for reading and as always, Happy Singing!

"You wouldn't worry
so much about what
others think of you
if you realized how
seldom they do"

- Eleanor Roosevelt



Emotional Outlet

CHRONIC VOCAL PAIN MYTHS: PAIN WHEN TALKING MEANS INJURY

by Katarina Hornakova
from how2improvesinging.com

People ask me a lot of questions about vocal pain. For example: Katarina, when I feel pain when talking, should I stop talking? Does it mean that I am harming my voice? What is really going on in my throat when I feel pain? Let me answer these questions and dispel some myths about chronic vocal pain.

I work with people who experience vocal strain, tension and pain in their voice when talking and I know that persistent pain is scary and frustrating. A lack of understanding of chronic pain is also confusing and leaves people either paralyzed because they are afraid to use their voice or it keeps them wondering what they are really supposed to do to get rid of it. So, let me share some important pain facts to give you a piece of mind.

Vocal Pain Facts

Our understanding of pain has changed in the last decade or so. And scientists now agree that pain is a sophisticated protective mechanism designed to protect you. I always say: pain is a good thing because the purpose of pain is to protect you and your body.

The problem is that this system is not perfect. The longer pain persists, the easier it is for our pain system to become overprotective. It means that the sensation of pain is triggered even when the stimulus should not cause any pain or it is triggered with a very small amount of danger signals.

You Have Superpowers

The good news is that you're equipped with coping strategies and you can lessen your pain and you can learn to stop thinking the worst about vocal pain. If you feel that pain is dangerous and uncontrollable, it will be challenging to turn off your negative thoughts and start thinking more optimistically.

Misconceptions About Vocal Pain

Myth #1 Vocal pain means tissue damage

It's critical to understand that pain is not proportionate to damage. Knowing this pain fact can really em-

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CHRONIC VOCAL PAIN MYTHS (continued)

(Continued from page 6)

power you in what you do next. We know that you can have no pain with a significant injury and you can also feel a lot of pain with no injury or very small injury. For example, a paper cut hurts really badly but maybe at some point in your life, you noticed a bruise on your body but did not remember how you got it.

Note: I am also not saying that you should now go and talk for hours. If you have been dealing with a vocal issue for some time, you need a plan to get your voice back gradually.

Pain is a construct of your brain. Your brain will decide if it creates pain or not. How does that work? Your brain constantly receives signals from receptors in your body, including your voice. There are a lot of receptors in your vocal mechanism. So your brain receives these messages and no pain is felt until the brain interprets this information and decides that the pain may protect you in some way.

Myth #2 Pain is in your head

I am not saying that pain is in your head. Absolutely not! Pain that you are feeling is as real as it gets. It is very physical. I want to make absolutely clear that your pain is valid. But it is a complex biopsychosocial reaction to what is going on inside and outside of your body.

Persistent pain is a learned behaviour. If your brain has been creating pain for some time to make you safe, it has no reason to stop. Your brain evaluates a massive amount of information when creating pain, including messages from your body, previous experiences, cultural and social norms, your belief system, the context of the situation, and much more. This happens very fast and it is not a conscious decision. It's not something that you decide or not.

Myth #3 Chronic pain is forever

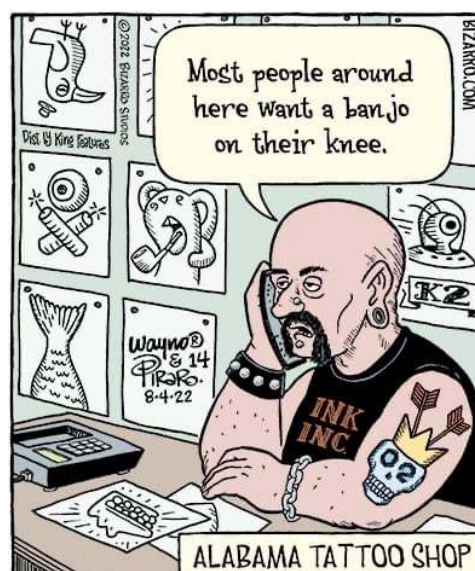
For some people, the word chronic means that the pain will never go away or the pain is going to last forever. But the word chronic in relation to pain simply means that it has lasted for some time and beyond the usual time of healing. Therefore, some people call chronic pain persistent or ongoing.

So, what I want to say is don't give up. Vocal pain

is not a life sentence. There are strategies and techniques you can use to lessen the amount of pain you feel. You can develop an action plan to gain your voice back, you can learn what vocal or other activities are best for your voice and how to gain your vocal endurance and stamina back.

If you are experiencing vocal strain, tension or even pain when speaking, and you are ready to work with me towards a free, strong and confident voice, you can apply to our Vocal Freedom System coaching program. Click this link (<https://calendly.com/myhealthyvoice/vocalfreedom>).

Watch this video for more information about vocal pain: (<https://youtu.be/xOF5QS9KcDI>)



NEW TECHNICAL TERM: CANUTE PASSAGES

by Liz Garnett
from helpingyouharmonise

There are those who attempt to make music theory into a fully-rational and systematic endeavour, but those of use working at the sharp end of music-making* know that it is messier than that. Yes, you can organise a lot of it into logical patterns that help you generalise and draw inferences, but a lot of music theory is about finding ways to identify and make sense of stuff that happens in real life.

So, from the Concrete-Experiential school of music theory that brought you the [Icicle 7th](#) (Karri Quan), the [Phnert](#) (Lori Lyford) and [Swooshythroughiness](#) (me), I bring you the concept of Canute passages.

Canute was an Anglo-Saxon monarch, famous for sitting on the beach and commanding the tide not to come in. The tide came in anyway, obviously, and the incident has become a metaphor not only for the limits of kingly power (the point he was trying to make) but for the broader principle of the futility of trying to prevent the inevitable.

He has also, now, given his name to passages of music in which there is an obvious and intuitively-natural mistake available to be made. You discover it when a section makes this mistake cleanly and beautifully together, and then also find it very very hard to change to the correct version. You work on it, starting with demonstration, then increasingly imaginative ways of breaking it down to help people grasp what is different about the correct way, and they may get the hang of it briefly, but immediately rubber-band back to the incorrect way once you put it back into context.

Sometimes, well most of the time, persisting in getting things right is a Good Thing to Do. Quite apart from our shared convention of respecting the composer's text, we'll only get better at accuracy and attention to detail by practising accuracy and attention to detail; singing the line of least resistance as a matter of course limits our musical growth. And of course a lot of the time, what one part wants to sing just doesn't go with what other people are singing. I spend a lot of my life saying things like, 'Yes I know that feels like a great line for you, but it's going to sound terrible when you put it with the basses.'

But just occasionally, the intuitive pull of the incor-

rect version is so powerful that you just need to relinquish the struggle and let them sing it the way they feel it. If you've worked on it in some detail twice, and it comes back as wrong as ever on the third rehearsal, you may be getting to that stage. There's a tipping point where the value of the correct version (both in the specific musical context, and the principle of developing skills of precision) is outweighed by the dispiriting effects of working on the same bit for too long. The people who are getting it persistently wrong start to lose confidence, the others start to get bored.

The decision to label a passage a Canute passage is easiest when it doesn't impinge on what other parts are doing. There is a kind of 'no harm, no foul' principle going on here. Also, you don't have the same opportunity to use what the other parts are doing to help make sense of the unintuitive passage. (Though I have occasionally found that it's easier to teach a different part a couple of new notes to fit with the Canute passage than to correct the original mistake.)

There's also the question of the artistic impact of the two versions. When a passage is somewhat unintuitive in a way that contributes to making a particular expressive effect, it's worth investing in, as you get more music out of it. Another phrase I use a lot is, 'the bits that surprise you when you're learning the music are the bits that will make the audience go "Ooh!" when you perform it.' And the expressive impact of these kinds of moments usually provide a means for people to get their heads round how it should go.

The discovery of Canute passages is something I experience as a director and a coach. As an arranger, I dedicate my life to trying not to write them, as I know how much rehearsal time they eat up. The things that pull people into incorrect-but-intuitively-appealing musical gestures are often to do with prosody – the combination of the accent patterns of language with a line's rhythm and/or contour. I've written about the creation of lines that are intuitive to sing a bunch of times over the years (example links at the bottom of the post), and I'm sure I write fewer Canute passages now than I did 20 years ago. But I feel this one is going to be a work-in-progress for as long as I continue working with human beings.

Anyway, the key take-away for me, having shared my reflections on our new technical term, is to refine my judgements on when something is genuinely a Canute passage, and when it is merely tricky and the application of patience and persistence will deliver accurate music and an upgrade in skills.

WHY A LITTLE SELF-DOUBT BEFORE PERFORMING COULD BE A GOOD THING

by Dr Noa Kageyama
from bulletproofmusician.com

You know those days when you walk into an audition, or a performance exam, or a music theory final, and for whatever reason, you just know that it's going to be a good day?

These moments can feel pretty terrific indeed – I mean, everything is funner and so much easier when we don't have that knot in the pit of our stomach.

But days like this are more the exception than the rule. Usually, we go into auditions and performances battling doubts and fears for days, even weeks in advance. And we wake up the morning of, feeling a little unsettled and slightly uncomfortable.

After all, eradicating doubt is really difficult! No matter how hard you work to stay in a positive headspace filled with pink fluffy unicorns dancing on rainbows.

So how important is it really to get to that place where you're fully confident? Or is possible that maybe a little bit of doubt isn't the worst thing in the world?

A jump-rope challenge

A team of British researchers (Woodman et al., 2010) recruited 28 participants to take part in a simple jump rope challenge.

Everyone was assigned to one of two groups, and then asked to jump rope for one minute, while saying the word "now" out loud every time they heard a beep (the **practice** trial).

And then, a competition

After a 5-minute rest, one of the groups (**control** group) was asked to repeat the task – except this time, there would be something at stake. The person with the most skips and quickest reaction to the beeps, would win a prize of \$45.

The **experimental** group took part in the competition as well, but they were given a different jump rope to use. One that they were told might "interfere slightly with performance due to differences in weight, length, and stiffness."

In reality, the rope was actually exactly the same as the first one in every way except color. This was just the researchers' sneaky way of injecting a little self-doubt into the competition.

Was there a change in confidence?

And it seems the researchers were successful, because the participants took a confidence assessment before each trial, and those who had to use the "challenging" jump rope in competition did experience a dip in confidence, going from **73.79** in practice to **65.14** in competition. Whereas the control group's scores stayed pretty much the same, going from 75.86 in practice to 76.79 for the competition.

So...how did self-doubt affect their jump rope performance?

How did self-doubt affect performance?

Well, you'd think that a decrease in confidence like this would be bad for performance, but that's actually the opposite of what the researchers found!

That slight increase in self-doubt actually seemed to enhance performance, as the experimental group went from **75.93** skips in practice to **85.57** skips in competition.

Meanwhile, the control group's performance stayed pretty much the same – with 71.43 skips in practice and 72.29 skips in competition.

And why might this have happened?

Why did self-doubt help?

The researchers believe that this counterintuitive confidence-performance effect is related to **complacency**.

The idea being, when we're too confident, it might be harder to bring our "A+" game, and we end up being a little too casual about the task at hand.

Which made me think of a few conversations I've had with musicians who have admitted to "underpreparing" a tiny bit on occasion. Not out of laziness or because they're too busy, but it's something they do very intentionally before performances that they are starting to feel a little too lackadaisical about. They explain that this helps to ensure that when the time comes, they'll be really motivated to turn their focus and effort up to 11.

And no, this isn't a valid excuse to underprepare for

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WHY A LITTLE SELF-DOUBT
(continued)

(Continued from page 9)

your next lesson, if that's where your thoughts were going!

Caveats

Of course, jumping rope while responding to beeps is not on the same level of complexity as playing the octaves in the opening of the Beethoven violin concerto when your left hand has frozen into a claw (or, the opening of the Paganini or Mendelssohn concertos – which garnered higher difficulty ratings on Nathan Cole's list 'o the most difficult violin concerto openings).

But researchers have observed this same counter-intuitive confidence-performance effect in more complex performance domains too, like with medium-handicap golfers and pistol shooting competitors.

So there is something to be said for giving yourself permission to experience a little doubt from time to time. Because the relationship between confidence and performance is a little more complex and nuanced than simply saying confidence=good and self-doubt=bad.

Takeaways

Still, there's a big difference between a little bit of "healthy," performance-enhancing self-doubt, and the more debilitating question-all-your-life-choices-as-your-stomach-churns-and-panic-starts-to-set-in level of self-doubt.

So it's still important to build confidence through the right kinds of practice, and through cultivating clear musical ideas, productive self-talk, imagery, and more. But if you know you've done your best to prepare as thoroughly as you can, and there's still a little bit of doubt lingering in your thoughts – maybe that's ok!

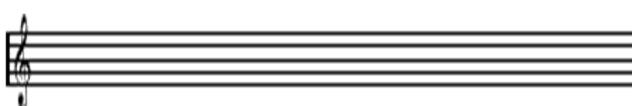
Rather than fighting what is a pretty normal way to feel, and getting worried about the fact that you're not feeling 100% confident, which only makes you less confident, which makes you worry more and sucks you into the confidence-anxiety death spiral, it may be more productive to embrace a tiny bit of self-doubt as a good thing, and remind yourself of those times when you went into a performance feeling less confident than you would have liked, yet still played better than you expected.

After all, that tiny little nugget of uncertainty may turn out to be the exact motivational boost that keeps you dialed in and focused when you need it most!



**Musicians must
always be thankful
for the people that
did show up to
their gig. Not angry
at the people that
didn't show up.**

www.musiciansunite.com



15 TIPS FOR SINGING WHILE SICK

by Meagan Earls
from spinditty.com

The Show Must Go on!

Getting sick can be very hard on singers. As the front person for the Lansing, Michigan-based, progressive, indie, rock n' roll band Odds Fish, I understand completely! I actually just did a series of shows while I suffered from a nasty summer cold, and believe me . . . it was no walk in the park.

But there are ways to minimize the agony of illness, diminish the mucus overloads, cut down on scary inflammation, and prevent vocal pain and long-term damage, and I happen to know a lot of them. (How do you think I got through those shows?)

How do I know these magical tips for singing while you're sick? Well, I happen to have a degree in music education from Grand Valley State University, vocal music was my area of expertise as an educator, and I happened to learn a lot about vocal health in college and beyond.

Plus, I once had vocal polyps myself and had to go through vocal physical therapy to learn how to truly use my voice in healthy ways. Not to mention that over the years, I have had training in health, nutrition, and fitness, I took voice lessons myself, taught voice lessons to others, and am a lead singer in a rock band. So I have a bit of experience on the subject of singing while one is sick.

(All that being said, I am not a doctor, so be sure to talk to your doctor before making any major changes to your diet, fitness routine, or lifestyle, or before adding any foods or supplements that you've never made use of before, as some of the suggested foods and supplements can have adverse effects on people with certain medical conditions.)

15 Tips for Singing While Sick

1. Stay Hydrated—Drink Lots of Water
2. Take Vocal Rest Seriously
3. Get Plenty of Sleep
4. Drink Throat Coat Tea
5. Get Steamy
6. Meditate
7. Opt for Lozenges, Throat Drops, and Candies Over Cough Drops
8. Get Comfort from Throat Sprays

9. Eat Foods That Fight Inflammation and Promote Healing
10. Avoid Irritants and Damaging Behaviors
11. Make Accommodations
12. Make Use of Alternative Throat Soothers
13. Embrace the Act of Humming
14. Warm Up and Cool Down
15. Don't Overdo It

1. Stay Hydrated—Drink Lots of Water

Hydration is essential for good vocal health in general, and it is even more important when a vocalist is sick. Singers should drink far more water than normal. Peeing a lot is fine—it's good, actually! Just make sure you re-up on your water after each restroom trip.

Bonus tips: Ice water can help reduce inflammation, and water with a bit of lemon juice becomes a stellar way to stay hydrated, get extra vitamin C, and satisfy cravings for something other than plain ol' water. If you need to mix it up even more, Vitamin Water and Gatorade work, but regular water is best.)

2. Take Vocal Rest Seriously

If you can avoid talking completely while you're sick, that is ideally what you should do. But as many of us have jobs and other responsibilities, this kind of dedicated vocal rest is not always possible.

That's why, when you do have the chance to partake of long periods of vocal rest, you must be sure to make the most of them! Don't talk about trivial things that can easily be taken care of at a later date or written down, don't whisper, and definitely do not sing! Try to remain as silent as possible, and if you have to talk, make sure that you are hydrated and that you take a big, healthy breath before words exit your lips.

3. Get Plenty of Sleep

Our bodies do a lot to heal themselves and fight illnesses when we're sleeping. In general, it is wise to get 6 to 8 hours of sleep a night consistently, even when one is completely healthy because getting consistent sleep is so important for our overall body function and health. But getting that consistent sleep is even more important when one is sick. In fact, when one is sick, I recommend bumping those hours of sleep up to 8 to 10 per night instead, as our bodies are tackling much more than normal.

4. Drink Throat Coat Tea

I specifically recommend Traditional Medicinals Throat Coat Tea with Echinacea and Lemon. This amazing, soothing, and seemingly magical tea has licorice root, marshmallow root, and more to fight inflammation and digestive upset; it has echinacea, which helps in easing sinus-related symptoms of colds and flues, as well

(Continued on page 12)

15 TIPS FOR SINGING WHILE SICK

(Continued from page 11)

as assisting with coughing and body aches; and it has bitter fennel fruit which helps with lung function and more. So, basically, it's awesome.

I like to add extra lemon and some honey to mine as well. I also like to combine the tea with my coffee. (Coffee can be dehydrating, but it does help with inflammation and the heat is soothing.)

5. Get Steamy

Steaming the voice can be very helpful when a singer is sick. Some of the benefits of steaming include:

- relaxed muscles,
- toxin elimination,
- an immune system boost,
- moist mucous membranes (instead of painful, dry ones),
- reduced coughing (and more productive coughs when one does have them),
- relief from inflammation and congestion in the upper respiratory tract, and more!

Great ways to "get steamy" and help your voice:

- A steaming pot and a towel over the head (oldie, but goodie)
- A hot and steamy shower
- Sauna time!
- Steam baths and steam rooms

6. Meditate

Meditation can assist singers (and everyone) in so many ways. But some of the more obvious ways in which meditation assists vocalists, especially when sick, are as follows:

- It forces vocal rest.
- It provides a sense of calm, peace, and stillness which distracts from the physical suffering of being sick.
- It helps to reduce inflammation and body aches and pains by relaxing the body.
- It allows the singer to not worry about the upcoming performance, at least for a while. And the elimination of stress and worry lets the body focus on fighting the illness and not one's own fears.

But meditation may be able to help in other ways too. Depending on how open you are to alternative therapies, meditation may be able to do much more for you when you're sick. I know it helps me very much.

7. Opt for Lozenges, Throat Drops, and Candies Over Cough Drops

When people are coughing a lot, they assume "cough drops" are the way to go for relief. (I mean, they have "cough" in the name!) But on the whole, cough drops do more bad than good, especially if you need to sing!

Most cough drops remove moisture and dry the throat and mucous membranes, getting rid of dreaded phlegm and stopping coughs for short periods of time. But, as we have already established, hydration is incredibly important for singers, so anything that removes moisture from the throat, vocal folds, and mucous membranes in the respiratory system is not the best option.

What's better? Well, water and throat coat tea, for starters! But when it comes to a soothing drop that is easy to pop, my favorites are Luden's Cherry Throat Drops, little hard candies (especially candies made with honey), and mints.

Recommended Throat Sprays

- Vocal Eze™
- Comfortably Numb Deep Throat Spray — Cinnamon: Beauty

8. Get Comfort From Throat Sprays

I wouldn't recommend using throat sprays all the time, but when one is sick, they can provide some temporary relief. My favorites to use are Vocal Eze throat spray, which was designed for people who make heavy use of their voices, and Comfortably Numb Deep Throat Spray in Cinnamon, which was designed for something a little different, but still works wonders when it comes to soothing an irritated and/or sore throat.

Do not use these sprays within an hour or so before you perform, though—you need your throat to be active and responsive when singing, not over soothed or numbed.

9. Eat Foods That Fight Inflammation and Promote Healing

Great foods that fight inflammation and promote healing and are therefore great for vocalists when they're sick (or any time really) include:

- Basil
- Spinach
- Arugula
- Cucumbers
- Celery
- Blueberries
- Kale

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15 TIPS FOR SINGING WHILE SICK

(Continued from page 12)

- Red peppers
- Cinnamon
- Garlic
- Dandelion leaves
- Strawberries
- Ginger
- Sage
- Tart cherries
- Avocado
- Salmon
- Corn chips and tomato-based salsas
- Almonds
- Oranges
- Pineapple
- Bok choy
- Beets
- Romaine lettuce

10. Avoid Irritants and Damaging Behaviors

We've talked a lot about things to do, but now we're going to focus on some things to avoid when one has to sing while sick.

The biggest things to avoid are irritants. Irritants include:

- Alcohol
- Cigarettes
- Cigars
- Hookah Pipes
- Sugary, carbonated drinks (if you need a pop, go with a clear option)
- Damaging behaviors also need to be avoided. These include:
- Whispering
- Yelling/screaming
- Singing without warming up
- Continuing to push for notes when pain is present

Finally, there are a few other things to try to avoid:

- Dairy products (they cause a lot of extra mucus to accumulate, which you don't need.)
- Extremely dry environments (get a humidifier if you can't avoid this!)
- Other sick people. (You already have a weakened immune system! Let's not make this worse.)
- Carb-heavy meals (pastas, pizzas, processed boxed dinners, and most fast food, for exam-

ple, as they may contribute to problems in the sinuses)

- Negativity (don't let the illness break your spirit!)

11. Make Accommodations

It is not the end of the world to make a few changes to your set in order to accommodate a weakened voice when you're sick. In fact, it can lend itself to some interesting shows, as you may pull out "easier" songs you haven't done in a while or sing a "harder" song down an octave and acoustically, changing the feel of it entirely for that one performance. Be open to a few tricks and fixes, and the overall show will only benefit, not suffer. Plus, the chance of damaging the voice is reduced when the stress of "having to hit that one big note" is eliminated.

12. Make Use of Alternative Throat Soothers

Some people don't believe in teas, sprays, lozenges, cough drops, and throat soothing medications. That's okay. If you are looking for alternative throat soothers/healers, here they are (or at least, here are a few suggestions):

- Aloe vera juice
- Liquid form coconut oil
- Olive oil
- Apple cider vinegar
- Lemon water
- Raw honey
- Black tea
- Green tea
- Chamomile
- Warm salt water (gargled or swallowed)
- Pomegranate juice
- Pineapple juice
- Concord grape juice

Another pain-relieving alternative is using a heating pad on the front of the neck. (If it is lavender, cinnamon, or menthol/mint-infused, even better!)

13. Embrace the Act of Humming

Humming is a wonderful way to warm the vocal cords without providing unnecessary strain. Humming should always be done before warming up and performing, but it is even more important to hum when you have to sing while sick!

I would suggest humming early in the morning to activate the voice (after a glass of water), and for at least 20 minutes to an hour before officially warming up before any practice or performance. Luckily, humming is not loud and can usually be done while other bands perform without detracting from their show. But humming can also be done in green rooms, bathrooms,

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15 TIPS FOR SINGING WHILE SICK
(continued)

(Continued from page 13)

touring vans, etc. So, hum on...

14. Warm Up and Cool Down

Warming up and cooling down the voice are both so vital for singers, especially when singing sick, and often vocalists neglect these two important aspects of vocal health. No more! Make it a point to warm up and cool down!

Warming up starts with humming but moves into bigger and broader exercises. Every singers' warm-ups are slightly different, but the main point is to make sure that one's vocal cords are relaxed and flexible and that there is no strain or pain.

Cooling down the voice is much like cooling down the body after an intense workout. Long, drawn-out notes that are allowed to drift off are nice, as is settling back into a happy hum. But much like warming up, each performers' cooldown is going to be slightly different. What matters is that you DO it!

15. Don't Overdo It

This seems like a simple statement, but as a lead singer who loves to perform, even when I'm sick as all else, I know how challenging it can be to stop oneself from going all out! But when one is singing while sick, "going all out" really needs to be avoided.

This is not to say that you can't put on a good show, because, yes, you can! I have given many a great performance while ill. It's not about that; it's about knowing your limits, respecting your instrument, and listening to your body.

If it literally hurts to sing, and every note is a battle, then you're overdoing it. You need a break, and you need to go through the rest of the suggestions on this list!

A Few Final Thoughts

When it comes to singing while sick, the best advice of all is NOT to do it. But, as we know, that is not always the best option for us singers career-wise, business-wise, or financially. So, as that is the case for so many of us, I do hope that these 15 tips for singing while sick can help other vocalists out there as much as they have helped and continue to help me.



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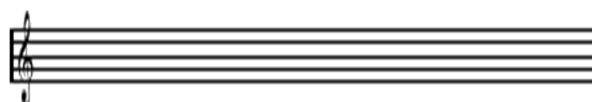


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Thanks in advance!!

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

The Jaw

The tongue is the bane of many singers' existence. An overly tense tongue restricts the channels for your breath and voice, and this restricts your vocal resonance.

Essentially, the less your tongue does when you sing, the better. Stop over-achieving with it. It does not need to be used with Olympic-level muscle power for pitching or shaping or anything. You *do* need subtle control over the muscles, no question. You *do* need to learn how to:

1. use the tongue in extraordinarily subtle and tiny movements,
2. make those adjustments and movements as relaxed as possible, and
3. execute those subtle movements in isolation from other muscles in and around the throat.

Release, relax and rest your tongue at every opportunity. That means the entire length, right down to its base near your larynx. Too many singers use their tongue muscles more than they need for vowel shaping and pitch control. Use it just barely enough to enunciate. Otherwise relax it and let it stay out of the way naturally.

Train your mind to let it rest as much as possible. Your vocal health and stamina will thank you.

Of course, classical singers flatten the tongue down and raise the soft palate to increase resonant space. This is indeed a good thing to do. I can do it better now than I ever used to, even though doing it more than a fraction does not suit my voice. However, in the inexperienced singer who has not yet mastered the natural voice, the tension of the tongue and soft palate muscles will focus the vocal sound in the area of the manipulations. The rear of the mouth is all soft tissue which darkens and even 'muffles' sound. Many have been told to sing as if they have an egg in the back of their mouths, but without mastering the release of the natural voice this often results in a covered, 'swallowed', 'dark', and unpleasant sound.

I encourage singers to master the natural tongue position and the natural 'ring' in the nasal resonators before attempting to open the soft palate and tongue space. Mastery of the former means the powerful frontal resonance should not disappear when applying the latter.

(to be continued next month)

FREE SINGING TIPS

by Yvonne DeBandi
from a2z-singing-tips.com

H = High notes require consistent and steady airflow. Many students tend to hold their breath as they sing higher. Let the air flow. Try increasing your airflow and gauge your result.

FREE SINGING TIPS

by Nicole LeGault
from a2z-singing-tips.com

H is for Hoarseness. The vocal cords are very delicate, and improper use of them will cause bruising, and if repetitive, calluses. When damaged, the vocal cords lose their elasticity causing a reduced ability to produce clear tones, limitation of range, and a great deal of stress for the performing singer.

FREE SINGING TIPS

by Mick Walsh
from a2z-singing-tips.com

H. Learn to support your head, I don't mean save all your money to put it through college, I mean learn the correct posture. Just as there are optimum body postures for singing there is also correct head posture. If you believe my fellow countryman Charles Darwin you'll know that the human body was not designed to stand erect, something went wrong during our evolutionary development and we ended up upright. The neck muscles therefore get very tired if we don't use correct posture. Head rolls and self massage are great. So no more monkey business!!

FREE SINGING TIPS

by Teri Danz
from a2z-singing-tips.com

H= Hydration - Stay hydrated. Drink lots of water (no lemon). It takes energy and lubrication to sing.



QUARTET CORNER

Our quartets are regrouping.

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



No Name Yet

? tenor

Mark Roblez lead

Jason Dearing bari

John Alexander bass

No Name Yet

? tenor

? lead

? baritone

? bass



Big Orange Chorus

REHEARSAL SCHEDULE

Thu	05 Jan	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	12 Jan	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	19 Jan	Palms At Ponte Vedra
Thu	26 Jan	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	02 Feb	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	09 Feb	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	16 Feb	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	23 Feb	Shepherd of the Woods

BIRTHDAYS

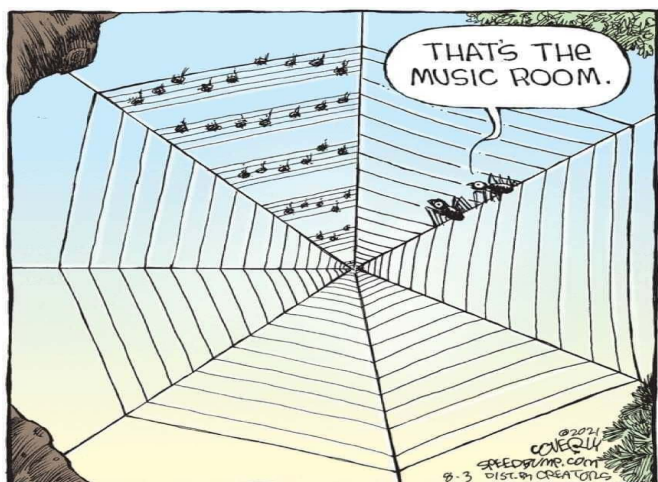
Alexander Burney	03 Jan
George Gipp	14 Jan
David Walker	21 Jan
Mark Roblez	31 Jan

PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

Thu	19 Jan	Palms At Ponte Vedra
Mon	30 Jan	Westminster Woods
Tue	14 Feb	Singing Valentines
Sat	25 Feb	Icemen Game
Fri	17 Mar	Sunshine District Spring Conv
Sat	18 Mar	Sunshine District Spring Conv
Sun	19 Mar	Sunshine District Spring Conv
...more to come		

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G Lane	Brandon Edwards
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Christian Cornella-Carlson	
Michael Reynolds	Kyle Batchelder
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Pat McCormack	David Brown
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Doug Schultz	Ryan Himes
Ron Geno	Mike Ryan
Dale Patricu	Gary Weddel
Stephen Gramza	Curt Shepherd
Conner Barber	Craig Dopp
Julian Bryson	Bob Lemons
Jim Hughes	Chris Loken
Dale Martin	



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.

WELCOME

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Ray Parzik	August
Ed Fitzgerald	September

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Les Mower
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John Alexander
Bulletin
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Frank Nosalek
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Technology

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vacant
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EDITOR'S NOTE

Article and column submissions are solicited.
Help make this a better bulletin. Send me stuff!
The deadline for February is 24 January.
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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**IMAGINE 80 MEN ON THE RISERS
BE A SINGER-BRINGER**



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