



# The Orange Spiel

News Of The Jacksonville Big O Chapter



<http://www.BigOrangeChorus.com>



Volume 43 Issue 3

March 2023

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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## SINGING VALENTINES

We had a successful Singing Valentine program this year. The final accounting is not yet available, but we had five quartets out on Tuesday Feb 14, one quartet out on Monday Feb 13, and one quartet in recording virtuals on Sunday Feb 12. Rough numbers show 57 in person deliveries and 18 virtual deliveries with total gross receipts just over \$5,000. Expenditures for flowers, candy, cards, and radio advertisements have yet to be tallied, in addition to some other pending items.



Virtual Quartet - Mark, Dale, John, Mike

# WANTED!!

## MEN WHO LIKE TO SING!



Humble Quartet - Gregg, John, Ken, Dale

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## 2023 Board of Directors

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Jason Dearing

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VP Membership:  
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Mark Roblez Lead  
Jason Dearing Bari  
John Alexander Bass

Presentation Team:  
Mike Sobolewski

## 2023 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

Last month, we had a successful Singing Valentine program as well as singing for Armed Forces Appreciation Day at the Jacksonville Icemen game.

This month, we will be preparing for our Spring Show as well as several gigs for senior living establishments.

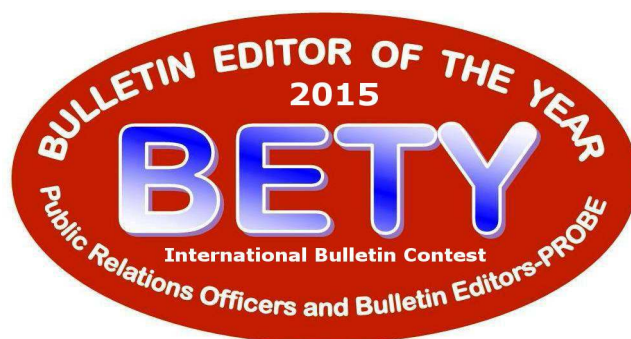
Let's see if we can get more people interested in coming to our rehearsals. Ask anyone you know who likes to sing. Invite friends, acquaintances, and even strangers. Singing is fun. Singing well is even better. Performing in public shares that fun with lots of people. Everybody wins.

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.

**Successful musicians  
aren't musicians  
who've never failed.  
They're musicians  
who've never quit.**

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**SINGING VALENTINES**  
(continued)

(Continued from page 1)



Sobo Quartet - David, Mike, Mike, Mark



Bass Quartet - Ed, Rick, John, Tom



Brian Quartet - Terry, Brad, Dave, Brian



Classic Charm - Faye, Susan, Jan, Paula



## HOW TO IMPROVE SINGING WITH PRACTICE

by Ken Taylor  
from askavocalcoach.com

It's not overly uncommon for students or any growing vocalist to ask me 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 on how much to practice, what to focus on, and how to practice more efficiently.

So let's get to it!



<https://youtu.be/dQco7w2Stfc>

### The Process – How to Practice Singing?

Below, I'm include what I believe to be one of the most effective practice structures a singer can use.

First, start off by balancing your voice with a warm up. Then, break the song down into smaller chunks. Practicing in small chunks helps you stay focused and execute these sections more accurately.

After you've done that, put the sections of song together piece by piece. Make sure you're continuing to execute what you were practicing in smaller chunks.

Continue this until you are singing the whole song perfectly.

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

### The Vocal Warm Up

When practicing, always start with a warm up.

The purpose of a warm up is to build the proper coordination and balance for singing. It's 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).

### Practice the Song in Smaller Chunks

The most effective way to practice anything is breaking it down into smaller pieces.

When you start practicing your song, you want to break it down into smaller sections.

You may choose to break the song up into sections and practice a verse, chorus, or bridge at a time.

Or, if you're working on something harder, you may even want to break it down further, practicing only a couple of lines at a time.

The benefit of working in these smaller sections is it allows you focus on perfecting every element.

Elements like the inflection you use, the stylistic elements you add, the tone, the phrasing, the texture. The list is endless.

Once you perfect your first smaller section, move onto the next one, then the next. *This* is how you practice to perfect 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.

(Continued on page 5)



## HOW TO IMPROVE SINGING (continued)

*(Continued from page 4)*

It can't all be done at once. You can only focus on one thing at a time.

Said different, you can't focus on all of the various different elements you want to add vocally in a song while singing the whole song 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 the smaller chunks of the song practiced and perfected, it's time to put them back together.

Start with the first verse and add few lines at a time. Doing this allows you to focus on the new lines, making sure they are solid.

But also, singing through it from the top of that verse helps you engrain the front part of that verse, ensuring it stay strong.

Once the whole verse is coming together well, it's time to move onto the chorus. then the next verse and so on.

Then, all you have to do is all together and your song should be sounding pretty epic.

This method of practicing a 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.

Happy Singing,  
Vocal Coach Ken Taylor

P.S. – Like this article? We'd like to invite you to join our Sing Fam Community. There, you can ask questions, join livestream Q&As, and get access to our app with free vocal training and warm ups.

P.S.S. – I've included an older video where I talk about the ideas I mentioned in this article. If you can get past the poor video quality, you may find it helpful.



<https://youtu.be/PMTAqU7P00I>



## ON VOICINGS FOR MIXED BARBERSHOP CHORUSES

by Liz Garnett  
from [helpingyouharmonise.com](http://helpingyouharmonise.com)

I am returning to this theme as a lot of people are grappling with the challenges of making a genre developed for and within single-sex ensembles work with mixed groups. Having interacted with a number of different ensembles in various capacities in recent times, I wanted to collate what I've learned from them about the difficulties they've faced and the solutions they have found.

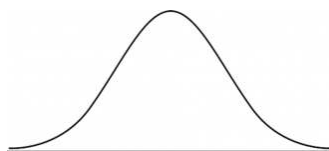
First, though, it is worth thinking through why mixed barbershop can prove tricky, before looking at the consequences for lived experience, and what we can do about it. This may turn into more than one post; it has the feel of a question that expands as you think about it!

So, let's start with the human voice. Your range is delimited at the bottom end by the size of your larynx: the longer your vocal folds are, the lower your range can extend. The top end can be extended with practice, and all healthy adults can reasonably expect to get it up to about 3 octaves above their lowest note (though it takes a certain level of dedicated practice to keep the full range). Most people who sing regularly have a useable range of about 2-2 ½ octaves, assuming that we avoid using the extremes for performance purposes as we tend to lose quality there.

The size of your larynx, like your height and your shoe size, is determined by a combination of genetics and developmental experience (childhood nutrition etc) – that is, we can't control it. And one of the development things we can't control is the effect of puberty on the voice: all people experience some change, but those with male bodies have a much more dramatic change. As well as larger skeletons and increased muscle mass, young men also experience much greater laryngeal growth than young women.

This is a round-the-houses way of saying that, on average, men have lower voices than women. Which we knew, but it's worth thinking through the mechanics of this: it's not just a musical convention, it's a feature of biology. Not all men have lower voices than all women, of course: there is considerable variation within each sex, and considerable overlap between them. (Indeed, there is rather more overlap than much classical SATB writing might lead us to believe, and without it we wouldn't even be considering mixed barbershop a viable possibility.)

Let us assume a normal distribution bell curve for vocal ranges within each sex.



I've not actually seen concrete research documenting this, but it is clear through experience that a few people have unusually high or low voices, rather more have quite high/low voices, and a lot are kind of middling, perhaps tending a bit on the low side or a bit on the high side. So, whilst it is possible that the actual curve for vocal ranges might skew a bit one way or the other, it's going to be close enough to normal distribution for the classic curve to be useful for this analysis.

And traditional barbershop voicing maps well onto this, with one high part, one low part, and two middling parts occupying the middle ground. We tend to skew a bit to the high side in how we divvy people up into parts, as for acoustical reasons we want more voices at the bottom end than at the top, and as the bass is usually the most rangy part, it's suitable for the reasonably low as well as the unusually low voices.



And this works within the bell curve for each sex, with the centre of gravity of each about a 5th apart. One of the things that's great about women's barbershop, incidentally, is the way it uses the lower voices well. A lot of female basses spent their school years feeling uncomfortable because the music they were expected to sing sat too high for them. Fortunately, classical choirs are becoming more accommodating to female tenors now, so lower-voiced women are better served than hitherto.

(Whilst male and female groups both have a similar-shaped bell curve of available ranges, the absolute ranges of the two types of ensemble, and thus how one best writes for them, are not the same, as discussed in a couple of posts last year. There are acoustic as well as vocal factors in the difference between higher and lower voiced barbershop, but for today's argument, the key point is that both forms of single-sex ensemble are optimised for the distribution of vocal ranges in their constituent populations.)

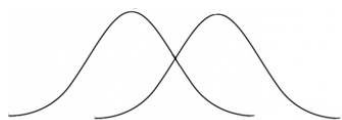
Now let's look at what happens when you combine these two bell curves into a mixed ensemble. If you are a classical group, there's a clear split between the SA world of the women and TB world of the men

*(Continued on page 7)*

## ON VOICINGS FOR MIXED BARBERSHOP (continued)

(Continued from page 6)

(though as noted above, vocal outliers from each curve are these days – helpfully - more likely to be classified by actual vocal range than by sex).



For barbershop, though, if you try and pitch things for a middle-ground between

the two groups, the shape of the graph works against you. You'll not be short of basses, as those who were middling in the male-only curve now occupy that part of the texture. Meanwhile, you'll be over-supplied with tenors as a lot of the middling-high voices from women's barbershop who would sing lead or baritone move up to the top part. Meanwhile, you get a dip in the population in the middle bit where lead and baritone parts live, leaving both parts either underpopulated, or filled with people singing outside their best range.

I've presented this as a theoretical exercise, but it describes the real-life situations of various choruses I have encountered. I have come across groups which are bass- and tenor-heavy because singers people migrated to the parts that best fit their voices, and also groups where many of those singing lead and baritone were singing out of their best range. (Usually this involves pitching things on the low side so that the guys don't overstrain but the women are growling; as with the Harmony Brigade scene, it is apparently preferable to inconvenience women than men.)

When groups pitch things up enough that the female singers aren't quite so out of their best range, you then find that the lower basses amongst the men no longer feel that they have a home. This is both an identity problem, and a musical waste not to use that lovely low resonance when you have it. The same can be said of the higher female voices; whilst one can criticise the classical world for pushing sopranos unreasonably high for much of the time, it would be a pity never to use the top end where the voices can fly free.

We have considered why mixed barbershop presents vocal challenges that are quite distinct from the single-sex forms of the genre. (In a nutshell, the standard distribution of vocal ranges for a single-sex group is a camel, but for mixed groups is a dromedary.)

We have also considered some of the impacts of

this structural feature. It affects individuals singers, as quite a few in any mixed chorus are likely to end up singing out of their best range. It also affects the group as a whole, through the impact of people singing outside their best range on the sound, and/or through difficulty populating the parts in an optimum balance. That post didn't mention the expressive impact of singing out of range, but it's something I've touched upon before more than once.

In the light of these obstacles, it is probably worth reminding ourselves of some of the benefits that the mixed form offers to compensate for these difficulties. It may be stating the obvious to point out that people like doing things in mixed-sex groups, but I suspect that this is the major driver for the growth of the form. There are also musical benefits though, for example the distinctively lustrous sound you can get when you have both male and female voices combined on a single line. There are opportunities to explore a wider pitch range, and therefore also timbral palette too.

It's also worth noting that when mixed barbershop groups work as project choirs (as many do), getting together every so often to participate in specific events, rather than regular week-in-week-out choruses, the impact on individuals is less of a problem. If your regular fix of singing is in a group where you can sing in your best range, it won't do you too much damage, either vocally or emotionally, to sing out of range occasionally in return for the extra things that a mixed group can bring to your musical life.

Still, the musical and vocal challenges remain, and people are being creative in finding ways to transcend them. Here are some of the solutions I have encountered so far:

1. Sing music in more than 4 parts. This is no good for barbershop contests of course, but great for show tunes, and can really exploit the wider total range of the ensemble. My 8-parter project from 2020 was throwing my weight behind this principle.
2. Map the ranges of all singers in the chorus and commission a chart to fit them. Endeavour chorus did this recently – have a listen out for it at BABS Convention in May. Interestingly, the result ended up with somewhat wider voicings overall than you'd get in typical barbershop arrangements. The top three parts remained reasonably tight, but the basses sometimes moved further away than you'd usually have space to. From an acoustic perspective you want the in-

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# ON VOICINGS FOR MIXED BARBERSHOP (continued)

(Continued from page 7)

terval between bass and the next lowest note to be the widest in a chord, so ringability remains good. However, in optimising for a particular mixed group, we now have a chart that would be unlikely to work for a single-sex ensemble.

3. Distribute lines differently within the group to suit the available ranges. Iain Hallam has taken a really imaginative approach to this with one of Bristol A Cappella's songs. He gave the original Lead line to a small cadre of singers for whom the melody lay comfortably and convincingly within their best ranges. He then doubled the higher parts of the melody with the rest of the altos and the lower parts with the rest of the tenors, giving each part the respectively higher and lower passages of the original baritone line the rest of the time. They ended up with a clear sense of narrative/timbral continuity from the singers involved in the Lead line throughout, but with a wider range of colour on the melody as the doublings changed. And everyone ended up singing in a range that was comfortable for them.

Of course the big question turns out to be to what extent these solutions are still 'barbershop' by the definitions guarded so carefully throughout the mid-late 20th Century. One could imagine the Kibbers of yesteryear having a conniption at the adaptations to arrangement techniques that are evolving to customise the genre to a new ensemble form. But it's not such a major change to the genre as inventing the barbershop chorus was in the first place and we seem to have weathered that well enough. And since the genie is out of the bottle, it strikes me as healthier to engage creatively with making the genre work for mixed voices than to insist that it has to remain exactly the same as it was when optimised for single-sex ensembles.



# FUNCTIONAL FREEDOM OF THE VOCAL INSTRUMENT

by Karyn O'Connor  
from singwise.com

My favourite passage in vocal pedagogy texts - and the pedagogic idea that has become the most transformative for me, both as a voice teacher and singer - is what Cornelius read writes in *The Free Voice* (p.18):

*"The undeviating purpose of training is functional freedom, not, as is commonly believed, beauty of tone quality. An artist desires above all to communicate, and the benefit to be derived from a healthy coordinative response is that it provides absolute spontaneity of expression. With the attainment of functional freedom, the singer then becomes able to express what he has to say the way he wants to say it, not the way he has to. He has been released from the strictures imposed by 'tone consciousness.' Functional freedom alone is able to fully release sensitivity, insight, emotional and intellectual depth, and musical perception."*

As singers, we want to sound good. Most of us are, in fact, preoccupied with the kinds of sounds that we're making and we're hoping that our audiences find them pleasing, moving... and maybe even a little bit impressive.

Is there anything wrong with having desirable aesthetics as a training goal? Of course not! Singing is, after all, largely about sound. When we're listening to recordings of our favourite singers, we're struck by the tone, timbre, and textures of their voices and how potently their vocal sounds manipulate our emotions. They may even give us goose bumps or bring us to tears.

However, as a functional voice teacher, I know that some singers sound good **DESPITE** their technique, not **BECAUSE** of it. Some singers are able to produce acceptable sounds even though their instruments are locked and fighting against a great deal of physiological and acoustical interference, including undesirable tensions. Some sounds that seem, on the surface or at first listen, to be 'good,' may actually be produced in an inefficient and/or unhealthy manner that is unsustainable as a technique over time. But most singers struggle for years to achieve a given vocal aesthetic and never fully achieve it.

I believe that many singers find themselves unable to produce the kinds of sounds that they deem de-

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## FUNCTIONAL FREEDOM OF THE VOCAL (continued)

(Continued from page 8)

sirable or professionally viable because they're not focusing on 'first things first.' They attempt to superimpose their desired aesthetic on an existing technique (coordination) that is not serving them well to begin with. They take an instrument that is not functioning well and then expect it to make the right sounds. Reid also writes:

*To make beauty of tone the direct object of study is to put the cart before the horse. In the first place, no one can know the true textural quality of a given voice until functional freedom has been attained. Therefore, without functional freedom the natural beauty of the voice is unknown. Thus, the only conclusion to be reached is that the teacher who strives for tonal beauty as a direct object of study either has prescience, or is merely imposing his own aesthetic evaluations onto his students. Success in achieving pure tone quality will only come with the release of wrong tension, which is the meaning of vocal freedom." (The Free Voice, p.18)*

When a singer is focused primarily (or only) on creating the target sound, he or she is placing the cart before the horse. We cannot find our natural or unique sounds, nor achieve what we're truly capable of as vocal technicians, when our instruments are not functioning freely enough to produce those sounds effectively. We may be able to create a poor imitation of the desired aesthetic, but at some point, our lack of functional freedom will betray us. Those sounds are never quite 'perfect' and we'll spend years being 'almost there.' So we need to first address the lack of freedom of our instruments that is preventing us from being able to find and unleash our true, full, and natural vocal sound. And as our instruments begin to become freer and less impaired by unwanted tensions and other interferences, we'll then start to hear our real sound emerge, along with an ever broadening array of textures, colours, and qualities that would otherwise not be accessible to us if our instruments were still fighting within themselves.

My primary objective as a voice teacher is to help my students achieve functional freedom. When their vocal apparatuses are functioning freely, they'll be able to make the kinds of sounds that they wish to make whenever they wish to make them, instead of being limit to a 'default' sound. They can't make those sounds with any degree of healthiness or sustainability, however, if their in-

struments are 'stuck'. So, my first responsibility is helping singers learn to position and 'play' the various components of their vocal instruments in ways that are mechanically advantageous and functionally conducive to achievement of their singing goals, including their aesthetic vision.

When singers are very tone conscious and aesthetics driven, they tend to be impatient and lack trust in the process of voice training. They want to achieve the target sound NOW! They don't always have the patience for, or see the wisdom in, first taking the time to free their instruments. But in the long run, voice training is far more productive, efficient, and successful when the horse is placed before the cart.



## HOW TO MINIMIZE INTRUSIVE THOUGHTS WHEN YOU'RE PRACTICING

by Dr Noa Kageyama  
from [bulletproofmusician.com](http://bulletproofmusician.com)

*"Argh...I really ought to do the laundry. But do I have to? Maybe I could just wear dress socks tomorrow and put it off one more day..."*

*"Hmm...I should probably email IT about my ID card not working in the copy room..."*

*"Are we out of kitty litter?"*

You know that voice in your head that acts as a reminder service? Nagging you at random moments about all the half-finished tasks in your life?

These are called "Zeigarnik intrusions," and can be helpful in some situations. But often, they are just pesky mental distractions that can make it difficult to practice or study as productively as we'd like.

Might there be a way to shut off these intrusive thoughts, so we can focus more effectively on the task at hand?

Our brain's unconscious goal striving

Spoiler alert – the answer is yes, but before we get into the nuts and bolts of how, why does our mind do this to us anyway?

Well, it's been reported that the average student has 15 ongoing projects at any given point in time (Little, 1988) – from writing a paper, to looking for the right opportunity to ask the cute barista for their phone number.

Obviously, it's not possible to work on every one of our goals all at the same time, so it appears that some part of our mind keeps incomplete projects simmering on the back burner, looking for opportunities to complete these "open loops."

This isn't all bad, as it may contribute to those Eureka! moments where we are suddenly struck with an insight that helps us solve a problem.

But this background simmering can also get in the way of us performing up to our full abilities and being more focused on the task that's actually in front of us. After all, our brain has limited cognitive resources, and we can't be fully engaged and productive on our scales, if we have half-written papers and baristas and laundry and emails and kitty litter

on the brain.

So how can we reduce these intrusions on our focus and productivity?

Implementation intentions

Implementation intentions are a specific technique that involve making specific plans for **when**, **where**, and **how** you will complete an ongoing project.

The strategy has received a lot of research support in the last couple decades when it comes to achieving goals and changing habits. And researchers at Florida State University (Masicampo & Baumeister, 2011) wondered if this technique could also combat these Zeigarnik intrusions, enabling us to wipe our mental scratchpad clean of open loops, and increasing our focus.

To plan or not to plan...

So they recruited 73 undergraduate students, who were randomly assigned to one of three different groups.

One group (the **no-plan group**) was asked to think of two important tasks or errands they needed to complete in the next few days – but for which they hadn't yet planned out when, where, or how they were going to get them done.

A second group (the **plan group**) was also asked to think of two important ongoing tasks/errands they needed to complete. But unlike the first group, they were asked to create implementation intentions, by providing details on exactly *when*, *where*, and *how* they planned to complete these tasks.

A third group (the **control group**) was simply asked to describe two tasks that they had *already* completed in the last few days.

A reading task

Then, all participants were asked to read the first 3200 words of *The Case of the Velvet Claws*, by Erle Stanley Gardner.

During the reading task, participants were periodically interrupted and asked if their attention was on-task or off-task at that moment.

Rating focus

After they finished reading, participants rated themselves on (a) how well they were able to focus on

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## HOW TO MINIMIZE INTRUSIVE (continued)

(Continued from page 10)

the story and (b) to what degree they were distracted by thoughts about the tasks they had written about earlier (1=*not at all*; 7=*very*).

They also answered 8 questions about the passage they read, to see how much of the reading they actually absorbed.

So did implementation intentions help increase focus?

The results

Yes!

With an average score of 5.56 (where 1=*not at all* focused; 7=*very* focused), the participants who were asked to make specific when/where/how plans (i.e. **plan group**) were indeed able to focus more effectively than the **no-plan group** which scored a 4.61.

The **plan group** also had fewer intrusive thoughts (1.77) than the **no-plan group** (3.00).

The **plan group** also absorbed more of the reading passage, with an average score of 6.94 out of 8 questions correct, vs 6.13 for the **no-plan group**.

Additional nuggets

There were a few additional findings that might be helpful to note.

Additional finding #1: plans must be specific

Apparently, simply brainstorming the actions you *could* take towards completing a task doesn't cut it. The plan must be *specific* (i.e. when, where, and how you will complete the task).

Because in a follow-up study with 80 undergraduates, one group of participants wrote down the actions they *could* take towards completing an unfinished task, but didn't commit to any particular one. While another group did commit to a specific plan.

And when asked to what degree they were still thinking about the task that hadn't yet been completed some time later, the participants with no specific plan continued to experience more intru-

sive thoughts about the incomplete project than the participants which did have a specific plan.

Additional finding #2: there must be an intention to follow through

The researchers also found that in order for an implementation intention to be effective at increasing focus (and performance) on the task at hand, you also have to be serious about your intention to follow through on the plan! It doesn't work if you simply make up some random plan that you have no intention of implementing.

Because in another follow-up study, 97 undergraduates were given a specific strategy for how to complete a task – but only one group specifically committed to using that strategy.

This committed group of students proceeded to solve more word puzzles (9.55 puzzles on average) than the group which didn't commit to the strategy (6.55). And researchers found that this was true specifically for those who *actually followed through* on their commitment to utilize the plan they committed to. Those who committed to the strategy but didn't utilize it failed to experience the same benefits.

So...what are we to do with all of this?

Take action

Well, the next time you're trying to practice, and you find a bunch of random unfinished tasks ping-ponging about in your head, take a few seconds to jot these tasks down, and for each, create a simple, **specific plan** of:

- **when** you intend to complete the task
- **where** you intend to complete the task
- **and how** you intend to complete the task

And make sure it's a realistic plan that you intend to follow through on!

Take it a step further

Want to kick things up another notch? There is a personal productivity system called Getting Things Done (a.k.a. GTD) that actually reflects many of these findings. Conceptually it's pretty straightforward, though the execution can admittedly be a little less straightforward. Then again, as the creator David Allen notes, we have complex lives, and sometimes complex problems require complex solutions.

I've yet to become a total GTD ninja, but Getting

(Continued on page 12)



**HOW TO MINIMIZE INTRUSIVE**  
(continued)

(Continued from page 11)

Things Done is one of my favorite books, and there are legions of folks online who have found it liberating and helpful, even if you only adopt some of its principles.

Here's a great 15-minute quick and dirty summary of GTD if you are curious to explore this further: GTD in 15 minutes (<http://hamberg.no/gtd/>)

**5 TIPS FOR AN EFFECTIVE SINGING PRACTICE ROUTINE**

by Adam K. Roberts  
from backstage.com

“So, how do I practice?” It’s a question I hear frequently as a vocal coach and teacher. Although we spend a lot of time with clients addressing breath support, how to navigate register shifts, and all sorts of other technical considerations, it’s all for naught unless there’s a solid practice regimen in place. Although the scope of what constitutes a successful practice routine depends to some extent on the needs and goals of the individual (and would take more than a few articles to cover comprehensively), I’ve narrowed things down to five essential points to get aspiring vocalists started and keep veteran singers going.

**1. Dedicate specific blocks of time to practice and stick to them.**

Before determining what and how to practice, you need to commit to *when* you’ll practice. Let’s face it: we live busy lives, and a performer pursuing a musical theater career will need to devote much more practice time to vocalizing than, say, an actor who might occasionally sing a couple of phrases for a role. Either way, it’s important to plan blocks of practice time and to treat them like any other important appointment (i.e., put them in the calendar). When we block off specific times to practice, we’re much more likely to follow through than if we say “I’ll find an hour in my schedule some time tomorrow.”

**2. Bring a pencil (or whatever you use these days...)**

Take note: it’s time to make your music messy. No matter how much you try to convince yourself to the contrary, you won’t remember every vowel modification, placement choice, or acting beat that’s discovered during your practice sessions, so you’ll want to be sure to highlight, underline, circle, and otherwise be a scrupulous annotator. If you’re studying with a teacher or coach, it’s also a good idea to have a blank page at the ready, in case questions arise during your session to jot down for your next lesson.

**3. Always warmup and cool down.**

Running late to your practice session? Don’t cut the warmup or cool down. They’re both essential to vocal health and an effective vocal workout. Find that

(Continued on page 13)

## 5 TIPS FOR AN EFFECTIVE SINGING (continued)

(Continued from page 12)

you're *always* running late to your practice sessions? Refer to the first tip above.

### 4. Include something fun and frivolous in each session.

OK, maybe not *frivolous*. But you know that latest song you've been listening to on repeat and would "never sing?" Or that showstopping number you'll "never play" because you're "not right for the role?" Now's the time to bust them out! Set aside five minutes in every practice session to sing something purely for the fun of it. Not only will this give your brain a break but you'll look forward to your practice sessions more if you let yourself cut loose and enjoy a one-person karaoke party. And who knows—you might even find that song you'd "never sing" actually makes a perfect addition to your rep book after all!

### 5. At the end of each practice session, plan the next one.

Set aside the last five minutes of each session to plan the next one. Practicing without a plan feels daunting (and is far less productive), so you're likely to feel more motivated to get down to work if you have a map already in hand to guide you. Each session should consist of a physical and vocal warmup, followed by a few vocalises (exercises designed to target specific technical goals), some work on your rep, and a cool down. Before you return to the real world, sit down and reflect on your priorities for your next practice session. Will you introduce a new warmup or maybe work on that really wordy passage in your latest patter song? Don't hesitate to plan in such detail as to include specific amounts of time for each portion of your next session. This map isn't intended to be set in stone, but to serve as a guide for each session. Remember to set specific goals!

So there you have it. Five essential tips for effective practicing. Remember: while practice may not *always* make perfect, one thing's for sure: you'll never know unless you do it.



## EVERYBODY'S DOING IT

by Brody McDonald  
from choirbites.com

It's a typical rehearsal. The choir is divided along the standard normal distribution curve. There are singers who are physically engaged and almost unnervingly attentive. There's a bulk of the singers who are ranging from above average to "almost there." There are a few singers who are... not quite with us.

Before we go any further, let's assume good intent. Of course everyone has a bad day. Maybe those singers who are off-course are having bad days. Maybe they are confused but embarrassed to ask questions. For the purposes of this bite, we aren't going to question motives. We are simply going to address behaviors.

There are many behaviors that set up success as a choir singer. Good posture, proper breath management, vowel formation, impeccable diction, the visual tracking of music, appropriately marking the score, and paying attention to the director are among them. That's a lot of stuff to do! Frankly, it's difficult. No wonder singers can sometimes either miss out on one of these components or find it difficult to do them all well. Nonetheless, it's imperative that everyone tries.

One thing that I have found effective is to ask the choir, "If everyone in here was doing things they way YOU are doing them, would the choir improve, stay the about the same, or get worse? In other words, what if we traded this choir for 50 of YOU?"

Of course I could say "great job" to some of the singers (and I do), or "everyone please fix X, Y, and Z," (and I do) but by listing the many ways a singer must be involved in rehearsal and then asking THAT QUESTION... it's a different vibe. It's non-threatening. It inspires introspection and self-evaluation. It brings focus to the fact that every singer has value, and their contribution matters. It also highlights each singers' responsibility to the group as a whole, again in a non-threatening way.

Another way to approach this is to ask "What if I (THE DIRECTOR) approached this rehearsal the way YOU are? Would you get more of what you need or less? I'm on this team. What level of engagement do YOU expect from ME?"

Everyone has a job to do. What's good for ONE is good for ALL, and everybody's gotta do it.



**LET'S GO TO THE MOVIES**

by Brody McDonald  
from choirbites.com

Every movie has music that enhances certain scenes. An activity I call GOING TO THE MOVIES is a great way to help students inject emotion into their performance.

First ask, "Who remembers a time where music amplified the emotional impact of a movie scene?" Hands go up. Then I ask, "For what movie would this piece be the soundtrack? What story would this music enhance?"

Next, ask them to write a short narrative that describes a scene from a movie that the music would enhance. They may draw from their own experiences or make up something completely fictional. The student should not search for a scene in an existing movie; they are to write this scene from scratch.

The third step is to read the assignments and compare them to your vision for the song. Do these movies convey the emotion you wish to convey? If so, great! If not, remind them that no one is "wrong." You might read to the class the movie that you feel best matches your vision, or a movie you wrote as the director to illustrate your take on the music.

Once we did this for Norman Dello Joio's "Come To Me, My Love." (Lyrics in parenthesis.) The student with the most impactful movie described an old man standing on his porch at night, missing his deceased wife (Come to me in the night. Come to me in the speaking silence of a dream). He lovingly recalls images of her face (with soft and rounded cheeks and eyes as bright as sunlight on a stream). He begins to sob as emotion overwhelms him (Come, come back in tears... my love of finished years). As he regains composure he looks to the stars, hoping to rejoin her soon (and whisper low, as long ago).

The last step is to now perform the piece while the singers mentally VISUALIZE THE MOVIE. This is a powerful moment, and it's important to let the choir know it's ok if they take a temporary hit in technical accuracy in service of emotional development. What movie? Theirs? Yours? The best in the class? Experiment. Sometimes everyone watching their own movie is more powerful due to personal connection. Sometimes everyone watching the same movie is more powerful due to unity of vision. But the music is almost always more powerful WITH the movie than without.

If it's not worth doing well...  
Why do it?



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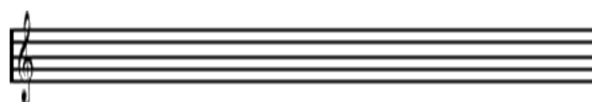


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Thanks in advance!!

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

### Tongue Strategies and Exercises

First get your tongue into good position. Find the position in your mouth that feels comfortable and produces your best sound. You will definitely need a coach or a trusted ear to help identify your best sound.

- Drop your jaw open, as described earlier. Let your tongue rest in a loose and completely unforced position. Look in the mirror. You should see plenty of your tongue's front surface area, as if the front of it is like a ramp sloping down to your lower lip. If you do not, you are tensing the rear of your tongue. A natural tongue position should be with the tip resting behind the front lower teeth or even on top of them.
- When you sing with your most natural voice, you should be able to see in a mirror plenty of front surface area of your tongue. A relaxed tongue is not flat like a table, but has a convex curve all the way to the tip. Be very wary of flattening the tongue, or dropping it down, or retracting it, or launching it. Tiny adjustments here and there may, and will, occur, but dramatic changes are a danger sign. Experiment with the resonant sensations with each vowel sound, so that each feels like it is vibrating and penetrating the same spaces of your head. You may even find that the strongest resonance on some vowels occurs when you do not drop the back of your tongue as far as you have done previously. For example, I once sang my 'ee' vowels with deliberate internal mouth space and my tongue depressed. However, I sounded covered, dark, muddy and forced. Now my tongue surface area is easy to see, my jaw is loose, the sides of my tongue may be lightly in contact with my upper middle molars, and my sound is cleaner, more focused and stronger. Experiment yourself.
- As you sing extended notes, watch your tongue in a mirror. If it flattens so far that you can see your uvula (the tissue dangling at the rear of your mouth), it is possibly too tense. If the length of your tongue has a deep valley or furrow along its middle from front to back, it is possibly too tense.

(to be continued next month)

## FREE SINGING TIPS

by Yvonne DeBandi  
from a2z-singing-tips.com

I = Increase your breathing capacity and control by doing breathing exercises every day. Be sure to avoid patterned breathing. Singers must negotiate phrase lengths of all different sizes, so it is important to be versatile

## FREE SINGING TIPS

by Nicole LeGault  
from a2z-singing-tips.com

I is for Imagery. When you are describing through song an event, an emotion, an experience, your surroundings, specific people, etc... you must have a clear vision in your mind's eye of the images you are describing. If you neglect to do this, the words will seem to have no meaning.

## FREE SINGING TIPS

by Mick Walsh  
from a2z-singing-tips.com

I. Imagination is the singers greatest asset. Use it wisely. Eliminate all negative thoughts and think positive. If you imagine that you can do something then you almost certainly can. The opposite also applies. If you are having trouble with a song try imagining you are the singer who sings it. Unlike guitar players or other musicians (and yes, singers are musicians) we do not have fret boards, keys or buttons to press so we must develop our imagination to hit the right notes, in the right key, at the right time.

## FREE SINGING TIPS

by Teri Danz  
from a2z-singing-tips.com

I= Initiate -- Look for opportunities to sing. They are out there. Be like a tiger, watch for opportunities and do the work to be able to take them.



## 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	02 Mar	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	09 Mar	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	16 Mar	World Golf Village
Thu	23 Mar	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	30 Mar	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	06 Apr	Jacksonville University
Thu	13 Apr	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	20 Apr	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	27 Apr	Shepherd of the Woods

**BIRTHDAYS**

Ed Fitzgerald	02 Mar
Terry Ezell	07 Mar
Ray Parzik	13 Mar
Rick Morin	15 Mar
Bob Thames	15 Mar
Soren Dillinger	30 Mar
Jan Stenback	31 Mar

**PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE**

Fri	17 Mar	Sunshine District Spring Conv
Sat	18 Mar	Sunshine District Spring Conv
Sun	19 Mar	Sunshine District Spring Conv
Thu	06 Apr	Tenor/Bass gig JU
...more to come		

**RECENT GUESTS**

Roger Erestaine	Ron Blewett
Jon Greene	Jim Harper
G Lane	Brandon Edwards
Joe McLean	Adom Panshukian
Christian Cornella-Carlson	
Michael Reynolds	Kyle Batchelder
David Brown	Thomas Barhacs
Pat McCormack	David Brown
Richard Breault	Justin McGhie
Emily Dearing	Sean Henderson
Doug Owens	Chris Redman
Steve Moody	Jeff Fullmer
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	

# WELCOME

**NEWEST MEMBERS**

Les Mower	April
Ray Parzik	August
Ed Fitzgerald	September

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  
Guest  
Director



Daniel Pesante  
Interim  
Director

## 2021 OTHER CHAPTER LEADERS



David Walker  
Uniform  
Manager



Les Mower  
Chorus  
Manager



John Alexander  
Bulletin  
Editor



Frank Nosalek  
Webmaster &  
Technology

PHOTO  
NOT  
AVAILABLE

vacant  
Show  
Chairman

## EDITOR'S NOTE

Article and column submissions are solicited.  
Help make this a better bulletin. Send me stuff!  
The deadline for April is 24 March.  
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](http://www.bigorangechorus.com/newsarchive.htm)  
More specific and timely performance information  
is in my weekly sheet, *Orange Zest*.

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

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Presentation  
Coordinator

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



John Alexander, Editor  
2429 Southern Links Dr  
Orange Park FL 32003



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