



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

WHAT'S INSIDE

Title	Page
Chapter Quartets	1
Editorial	2
Daily Vocal Warmups After Waking Up	3-5
How To Make Practicing Feel Less	5-6
How To Make Your Voice Sound Better	7-9
We Are In The Listening Business	9
Coaching Conductorless Rubato	10
Best Vocal Cord Strengthening	11-12
Here Are 9 Quick Vocal Tips You Can	13
Music And Hearing Aids	14
Free Your Voice	15
Free Singing Tips	15
Quartet Corner	16
Chapter Quartets	16
Upcoming Schedules	17
Birthdays / Guests / New Members	17
Directing Team / Other Leaders	18
Chapter Officers / Music Team	19

CHAPTER QUARTETS

by Michael Testa
from Facebook

Most of us will never see the international stage unless we buy a ticket... but the chapter quartets - the ones that sing at chapter meetings and shows, local holiday celebrations, nursing homes and memory care facilities, schools and youth summer camps, and on and on - play such a critical role... not only in the success of our society, but in spreading the joy of music to the world.

As a member of one of those chapter quartets, I have been deeply inspired by every person to cross the international stage - whether they were in the quartet that came in first, 60th, or anywhere in between.

If you're in a quartet, whether you choose to compete or not, I hope you are equally inspired and will continue to bring joy of music to your communities. Seek out every opportunity you can to sing for people, and do so authentically. I promise, people will love you for it and it will make you feel great.

If you are not in a quartet, I hope you will seek one out. Singing in a chorus is great fun and everyone should do it, but there is nothing like ringing chords with three other people who become close friends. It might sound bad when you first get together. Stay with it. When you finally figure it out, there are very few things more rewarding.

Let's let this be the legacy of the 2023 international contest, and honor all the amazing quartets who crossed the stage by forwarding some of the excitement, encouragement, and inspiration we feel to others. I hope to see lots of quartets at all of our district conventions this fall!



WANTED!!

MEN WHO LIKE TO SING!



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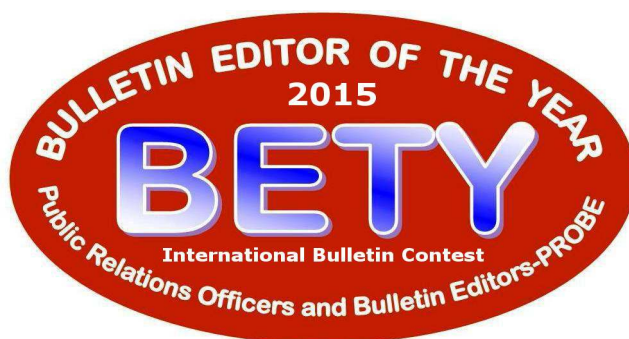
EDITORIAL

We got new members, put together a spring/summer show, and performed at two venues. We expect to do it at least one more time in the near future. We have selected a new competition package and expect to present it at the fall convention. We have started looking at Christmas show songs. We are moving ahead, sounding good, and ready to move up to bigger and better things. Come join us!

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.



DAILY VOCAL WARM UPS AFTER WAKING UP

by Katarina Hornikova
from how2improvesinging.com

Are you looking for effective daily vocal warm ups after you wake up in the morning?

Does your voice sound croaky, rough or breathy in the morning?

Maybe it does, maybe it doesn't.

But in any case, I will share with you a set of daily vocal warm ups after waking up so that your voice feels alive and happy to go through the vocal demands of the day.

So, let's just get into it. Here is a 7-step morning vocal routine for a better voice, which combines vocal, breathing, movement and mind exercises.

Step 1 Steaming

The very first thing I do every morning when I wake up is steaming.

I admit I am not a morning person, so I am still half asleep the first few minutes after waking up.

Steaming gives me a chance to slowly wake up and provide my voice with some moist goodness at the same time.

Steaming for 5 minutes is all it takes.

If you don't have a vocal steamer, hot shower will do the same trick.

Step 2 Meditation

I am not a person who easily meditates.

I tried it a few times when I was younger and my mind just could not stay in one place for a few minutes.

Meditation made me more frustrated than calm so I stopped trying until recently.

I tried a very short meditation during which I focus on my breath.

When I use the steamer, I breathe the steam anyway so why not to do breathing meditation at the same time, right?

Count the breaths or feel how the air enters and

leaves your nose or mouth.

Feel how the hot and moist air hits your tongue and throat.

The time you spend on meditation does not have to be long – really, just 2 minutes is all it takes to ground your mind and voice.

Step 3 Breathing Exercise

Right after I focused on my breath during a breathing meditation, it just makes sense to continue with another breathing exercise.

There are so many good breathing exercises that deepen your breath, wake up the breathing muscles and increase awareness of all the breathing movements to provide a better support for your voice.

Examples are:

- hissing,
- suspending the breath,
- breathing on sh,
- releasing the abdomen,
- breathing into your back and many more.

Step 4 Dynamic Stretches

In the past, I used to do stretches for my neck and shoulders, but the latest research tells us that stretching actually doesn't have many benefits to our muscles or performance.

Dynamic stretches are different.

Dynamic stretches are sets of repetitive movements that take a joint or several joints through a full range of motion.

They are meant to get your body moving, and that is what we need especially in the morning.

Dynamic stretches are also good for people who have a sedentary life style.

You can make your own set of dynamic stretches.

The main point is that you do several repetitions of the same movement going through the full range of motion.

So, here are some examples that are beneficial for you voice:

(Continued on page 4)

DAILY VOCAL WARMUPS
(continued)*(Continued from page 3)*

- head rotations,
- head circles,
- shoulder rolls,
- arm circles,
- opening and closing of your chest,
- hip rotations,
- spine rotations and many more.

Watch the video to see examples of dynamic stretches.

Now, moving onto daily vocal warm ups.

Step 5 Daily Vocal Warm Ups –
Humming

Simple humming. Simple but with focus and awareness.

Find a comfortable pitch and hum around that pitch while finding the best resonance and clearest tone you can make at that time in the morning.

Move your jaw and tongue, play around with your voice and find that place in your voice that feels the best.

Use the breath that you found in the previous steps.

Try to keep the tone stable not wavery or unsteady.

Once you have that ideal note, go up and down a semitone.

The point of this exercise is to find the best resonance with minimal vocal effort.

Don't rush through this process, take your time.

Become aware of the position of your vocal tract and all of the participating structures.

This is a very basic exercise but if you don't have time to do any other vocal exercise, this is the one you definitely want to do.

Here is another set of daily vocal warm ups.

Step 6 Daily Vocal Warm ups –
Fricatives

This is a type of an SOVT exercise or semi-occluded

vocal tract exercise.

Choose one voiced fricative, which is a sound that has a natural narrowing in the vocal tract.

This narrowing helps vocal folds to work with optimal effort as the air pressure from this narrowing is reflected back at the vocal folds.

This positively affects the way they vibrate, their shape and function.

Examples of voice fricatives are:

- z as in zebra,
- zh as in measure,
- v as in vacuum, and
- th as in this.

So, choose one voiced fricative and start at a comfortable pitch.

Fricatives use a lot of air so make sure you are using the breathing muscles that you have awaked in the previous steps.

Find a stable sound with a lot of vibrations in your face.

Then take the sound for a slide.

Focus on the stability of the tone, on an even airflow, on the resonance of the sound.

Don't push as you ascend in pitch.

If you feel the need to push, stop and slide down instead.

Do several repetitions or try a few different fricatives.

Last but not least, another set of daily vocal warm ups on vowels:

Step 7 Daily Vocal warm Ups –
Vowels on Major Triads

Our final step in waking up the voice is to do vocal exercises on vowels.

Chose your favourite one.

The pattern is 1, 3, 5, 3, 1 and repeated three times.

This exercise wakes up the range and slowly accesses both the lower and upper range and moves your voice in small intervals.

(Continued on page 5)

DAILY VOCAL WARMUPS (continued)

(Continued from page 4)

Simple but effective.

Focus on the clarity of the vowel as you ascend in the range.

Focus on the resonance and ease of production.

You don't want to push, you want to produce a sound with minimal effort but maximal efficiency.

Watch this video for demonstrations of daily vocal warm ups introduced on this page:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5MfwiGHuX-Y>

HOW TO MAKE PRACTICING FEEL LESS LIKE A CHORE

by Nod Kageyama, Ph.D.
from bulletproofmusician.com

Do you ever find yourself dragging your feet or procrastinating when it's time to practice?

Maybe you tell yourself that you'll practice after lunch. Or after dinner. Or after you empty the kitty litter. Or after you do a quick search for articles on how to practice more effectively.

Once you get started, it's not so hard to keep going, but why can it be so hard sometimes to just start? Is there any "cure" for practice inertia aside from simply making yourself start through sheer force of will?

Our memory is not so reliable

“Remembered utility” is a term used to describe our evaluation of how pleasurable or painful a past experience was. And we tend to use this information to make decisions about what to do in the future. For instance, if we had a horrible experience on our first day of swimming lessons, we are probably going to be more inclined to avoid swimming lessons in the future.

The interesting thing, of course, is that our memory of such experiences is not 100% reliable and is vulnerable to a rather peculiar bias – sometimes called the “peak-end rule.”

The peak-end rule

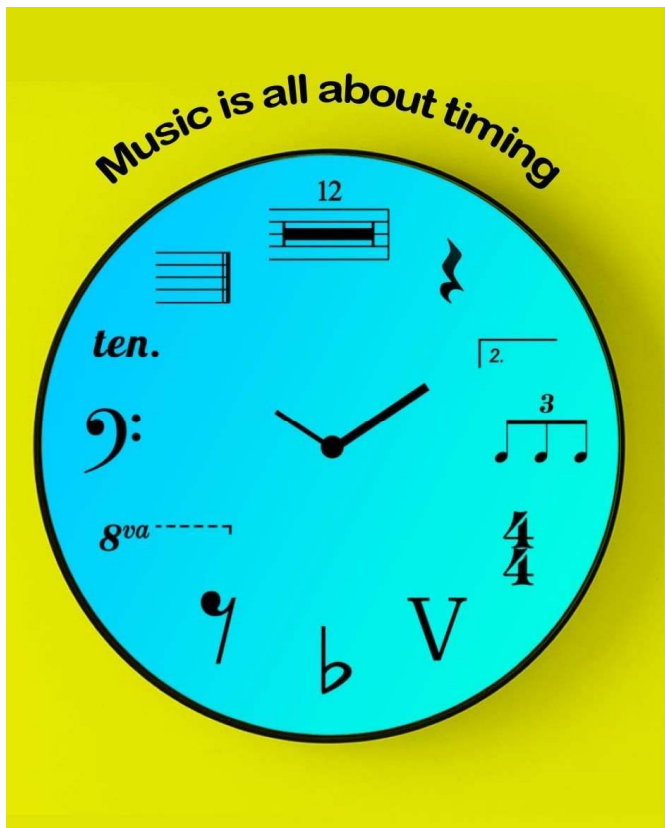
The peak-end rule states that our evaluation of past experiences tend to be based on a) their most intense point, and b) how they end.

In a 1993 study, Nobel laureate Daniel Kahneman and colleagues asked a group of people to stick their hands in uncomfortably cold water, but in two slightly different circumstances.

In one condition they had to keep their hand submerged in 14°C (57.2°F) water for 60 seconds (which apparently, is not so fun). In another condition they were asked to stick their hand in 14°C (57.2°F) water for 60 seconds, plus an *additional* 30 seconds while the temperature was gradually raised to 15°C (59°F).

Apparently 15°C still sucks, but it's noticeably less painful than 14°C.

(Continued on page 6)



HOW TO MAKE PRACTICING FEEL LESS LIKE (continued)

(Continued from page 5)

If our brains were rational, we'd choose the 60 seconds of pain rather than 60 seconds of pain + 30 more seconds of slightly reduced pain, right?

But our brains are not completely rational, because when given a choice of which one of those scenarios to repeat, 69% of the participants chose to repeat the longer one! Apparently, their perception of the experience was skewed by how their experience ended, rather than on the entirety of the experience.

Does this apply to studying?

The same phenomenon has been observed in other areas, from colonoscopies to waiting in line. So, a researcher at Washington University (Finn, 2010) was curious to see if the peak-end rule might apply to studying challenging material.

As in, would students study more if the end of their study session felt less painful?

Three lists of words

44 undergraduate students were told that they were going to study and be tested on three lists of words. Meanwhile, the participants *weren't* told that one of the lists was longer than the other, and that there was no third list (the reasons for which will become clearer in a moment).

Half of the participants studied and were tested on the short list first (30 extremely difficult Spanish-English translations), followed by the longer list (30 different, but equivalently challenging Spanish-English translations *plus* an additional 15 moderately difficult words placed at the end).

The other half studied/tested the long list first, and then the short list.

Which did you prefer?

After participants studied and were tested on both tests, they were asked a series of questions designed to gauge their experience of the two tests. Such as, "For the third study list today, you can pick which type of list you would like to repeat. Would you rather study a list of new words that was more like List 1 or like List 2?"

Or, "Which list was more difficult to learn?, "Which

list do you think it took longer to learn?", and "Which list was tougher for you to cope with?".

Short list vs. long list

Participants performed better on the test for the short list, so in a perfectly rational world where test performance would predict one's preferred study method, the short list ought to be the preferred list.

However, 73% of the participants preferred the *longer* list (this is the one which had as many challenging items to study as the short list, but ended with an additional 15 easier, but still challenging items). Most of the participants also rated the longer list as being less difficult (70%), and less tough to cope with (71%). Their sense of time was also distorted, with 70% of the participants thinking that the *shorter* list took them longer to learn.

In other words, a challenging study session that was longer, but *ended with slightly easier material* was preferable to a shorter study session with challenging material throughout.

So what are we to do with this?

Take action

Like eating our veggies before dessert, it seems that saving our easiest or funnest practice tasks for last may help us perceive our practice session as having been less of a chore (and maybe make it easier to get ourselves to practice again).

The peak-end rule could perhaps be applied to rehearsal settings as well, where you could end things on an up note (ha!) by working on things that feel less draining or difficult.

And in a lesson, being sure to end with an experience that feels encouraging, or easier, or fun, could help foster a more positive memory of the lesson – even if it was a particularly challenging one for the student.

And in case the peak-end rule also relates to reading blog posts about practicing, here is an article describing how watching cat videos might actually be a productivity booster.

http://www.livescience.com/51257-watching-cat-videos-good-for-health.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+Livesciencecom+%28LiveScience.com+Science+Headline+Feed%29

HOW TO MAKE YOUR VOICE SOUND BETTER

by Suzy Woltmann
from backstage.com

Whether you're recording in a studio or belting it out live, the ability to hit mellifluous melodies and dulcet declarations is key to enticing and engaging your audience. If you're an aspiring voiceover artist or vocal performer, learn how to improve your voice here.

What makes a good voice?

Generally, having a good voice means that you have control over your vocalizations, a palatable timbre, good enunciation, solid vocal support, and a clear personality.

What counts as good when it comes to voices is incredibly diverse. Most people wouldn't deem Gilbert Gottfried's blustering screech—used to portray characters such as Aladdin's parrot sidekick, Iago, and the Aflac duck mascot—traditionally good, yet it made him one of the most iconic voice actors of all time. Still, there are certain qualities that make voices from Gottfried's to Mariah Carey's more palatable than others. They include:

Control

Vocal control means that you're able to control your voice, including its pitch and volume. Although it might seem at first listen as though Gottfried's voice is out of control, he actually carefully crafted his voice by using both technical prowess and intuition. If you can master the basic foundations of vocalizations and apply that mastery to your speaking or singing, then you have enough vocal control for your voice to be good.

Timbre

The tone quality of a voice also dictates if it sounds good or bad. A good voice can either stick with one timbre or navigate between several, but will use the right timbre for the right notes. For example, an aggressive, even timbre might be a better fit for lower notes, while an airy, light one might be better for higher notes.

Clarity

For any kind of vocal work, having clear enunciation helps you deliver the linguistic message. Of course, the Sias and Bob Dylans of the world might have the artistic license to murmur their way through avoiding crisp enunciation; but until you're at their level, aim for clarity in your speech and song.

Support

Having the proper vocal support means engaging your core and diaphragm so that air flows properly through your chest and onto the vocal folds. This allows you to enhance your voice's intensity, duration, and volume.

Personality

This final element of a good voice is something the Gottfrieds, Fran Dreschers, Björks, Louis Armstrongs, Miley Cyruses, and James Earl Joneses have in spades. Having a good voice that sounds generic can only get you so far. You "need to narrow down what you present to its essence," according to Lis Lewis, a voice coach who has worked with performers including Miguel, Rihanna, Gwen Stefani, Britney Spears, and Jack Black. "Instead of a little of this and a little of that, you must show the world one strong complete package that makes a clear statement—one style," she writes. "While you are developing your audience and your fan base you need to have a clear, strong vision of who you are and what you represent.... The audience needs to know who you are and recognize you." Spend some time considering what makes your voice unique, and then see if you can consistently represent that style.

How to improve your voice

Making your voice sound better is a matter of studying it, singing or speaking clearly, supporting your breath and vocalizations, and lots of practice. Actionable steps you can take to achieve this include:

1. Record and listen

Record your voice and then listen to it several times. Take note of any flaws such as mumbling or your voice breaking, as well as your voice's variation and speed. It might be difficult to discern your voice's unique personality yourself, but you can play the recording for friends and ask for their input.

2. Determine your voice type

Voice type is determined by vocal weight, or how heavy or light a voice is; tessitura, or the range that allows for a voice's best timbre; bridge location, or the space between vocal registers; and anatomy, or the ways that resonance and articulation take place physically in the body. To find your vocal range, start by playing and singing C4—the closest C to the exact middle of a traditional keyboard. Sing each note going down until you hit your lowest comfortable note, and then each note going up until you hit your highest comfortable note. These notes indicate the boundaries of your vocal range, which determines your voice type.

(Continued on page 8)

HOW TO LEARN BETTER FROM FAILURES
(continued)

(Continued from page 7)

3. Consider weaknesses and strengths

Think about your current voice: How can it be improved by, for example, speaking more clearly, slowing down, or building vocal support? Are there any positive elements you can lean into? Remember that your strengths might be different than someone else's, and that a strength for one person might be a weakness for another. For example, some vocal fry can be grating, while others can make a voice great—think of Britney Spears or Georgia Hardstark.

4. Hydrate

Keep your vocal cords hydrated by drinking two liters of water a day. You can also use a humidifier at 30% to 50%, or luxuriate with a personal steamer.

5. Avoid vocal fatigue

Avoiding vocal fatigue lets your voice sound clearer and smoother. The top causes of vocal fatigue, according to voice teacher Arden Kaywin, include:

- Belting or pushing your voice too high
- Smoking and drinking alcohol
- Talking too loudly
- Keeping a tense jaw
- Pushing breath down your larynx too hard
- Lacking support in your diaphragm

6. Practice breathing techniques

Try breathing techniques to improve your breath control.

- Keep your lips slightly open and breathe in and out gently to become aware of the way that your diaphragm and lungs move with each breath.
- Breathe in deeply for four seconds; hold for four seconds; release for four seconds; and then hold for another four seconds. Repeat this exercise until you're calmed, centered, and fully focused on your breath.
- Stand in a natural position with a straight back and place your hands on your chest. Breathe in for a count of four, and then release for four seconds while making an "ssssss" sound (think of a snake). Once you hit four seconds, stop breathing out. Repeat while trying to increase the time spent exhaling.

7. Do vocal warmups

Prepare your voice by spending 15–20 minutes doing vocal warmups.

- Stretch each arm up and over the other side of your core to open up your diaphragm.
- Do vocal slides using increasing intervals and volume.
- Blow raspberries with your lips to reduce the resistance on your vocal cords.
- Fake a yawn while keeping your mouth closed.

8. Work on vocal control

To get better at vocal control, find your resonance—or the way that your mouth shape creates certain sounds.

- Sing scales and see where you're forced to strain, and then repeat the scales while flexing your core and pectoral muscles until you can sing all notes without significant strain.
- Hum your highest note all the way down to your lowest note to warm up your vocal cords.

9. Optimize vocal support

"Optimal support comes from a consistent, expanded engagement of the abdominals, pelvic floor, and lower back muscles," according to Kaywin. She recommends breathing deeply and gently engaging your core for full vocal support.

10. Practice

Fine-tune your vocal tone by trying out different tone types and then refining the one that fits best from there. Maybe you find that a more guttural timbre fits you better, or perhaps your type is more ethereal. Once you have a grasp on your timbre and type, you can work on leaning into it and bolstering it with your unique personality.

How to make your voice sound better when recording

Making your voice sound better when recording involves technical elements such as recording space and equipment, on top of doing thorough voice prep.

1. Record in a good space

The space you record in greatly impacts the way your voice sounds on recordings. "As a voiceover artist, the room in which you record is the most important factor to consider," voiceover pro Jamie Muffett told Backstage. While recording studios should be properly soundproofed, if you're recording at home, soundproof the space with acoustic foam, sound panels, or even blankets before recording to ensure that your voice sounds its best.

2. Use quality equipment

(Continued on page 9)

HOW TO LEARN BETTER FROM FAILURES (continued)

(Continued from page 8)

Once your space is established, your next step is to use the right equipment. For clear, crisp audio, you should have:

- Professional XLR condenser mic: External microphones such as Audio-Technica, Rode, and Neumann are great options for optimal sound quality.
- Audio interface: To convert analog into digital signals in a way that makes your voice sound its best, look for interfaces that have solid input and output configurations, such as Universal Audio, Audient, and PreSonus.
- Studio headphones: Editing your own recordings? If so, you'll want studio headphones such as those made by Sennheiser, Audio-Technica, and Beyerdynamic, which use neutral tuning and can attenuate background noise.

3. Place the equipment properly

To sound better when recording, place the mic six to 10 inches in front of you—any closer than six inches and you also risk a muddled booming sound, and any further than 10 and your voice will sound echoey and distant. Since you want your voice to be poppin' and not your plosives, place the microphone slightly (about 10 degrees) away from your mouth.

4. Time it out

It's best to only record when you're fully warmed up, rested, and have avoided activities that cause vocal strain. If you're feeling off, consider postponing the recording session until you feel confident that your voice sounds its best.



WE ARE IN THE LISTENING BUSINESS

by Brody McDonald
from choirbites.com

Let's face it people, we are in the listening business. In order to be great singers, we have to listen all the time. And I'm sure you understand there is a big difference between listening and hearing. Hearing is just the main physical activity where sound is processed into your brain. Listening is actively processing that sound for content.

To what should you be listening? How about...

- The director
- The tonal center
- The singers around you
- The vowel shape (formant)
- Entrances and cutoffs
- Music you love
- Music you don't love
- Music you don't know
- Music you on which you are currently working in your choir
- Other groups like yours
- Multiple versions of the same song: multiple ensembles performing the same song in the same style or the same song covered in different genres
- Static noises around you like the refrigerator, the air conditioner, the beep beep of a truck backing up, or even the fire alarm. Can you harmonize with them?
- Groups better than yours for inspiration
- Groups worse than yours for perspective

I used to sing in a barbershop quartet, and we were coached by a woman named Jean Barford. Before she would coach us, she would listen to CDs of champion quartets. She told us she was calibrating her ears.

That's what listening is. We take in information through our ears, analyze it, and use the processed data to improve what we do. We're not just calibrating our ears, we're calibrating our musicianship. We're calibrating ourselves.

**Practice is where you learn
your part.
Rehearsal is where you make it
art.**

COACHING CONDUCTORLESS RUBATO

by Liz Garnett
from helpingyouharmonise.com

I spent a rewarding afternoon on Thursday with a quartet who had contacted me for advice about how to manage rubato in an ensemble without a conductor. They formed from within a choir they all sing in so are accustomed to using the visual signals from their musical director to coordinate them, and were finding the lack of this external guide one of the major challenges of singing in quartet, especially in music that isn't strictly in rhythm.

We split the process into two distinct stages: how to rehearse, and how to perform. The former is where the group develops a shared understanding of musical shape and a shared awareness of each other in the ensemble. The latter needs a repertoire of interpersonal cues to transfer those understandings into the performance situation.

We started off, logically enough, with the rehearsal situation, and the first thing we did was to have the quartet sing in box formation, i.e. all facing in to each other. This allowed them not only to hear more of the overall sound, but also to make eye contact so they could share their experience of the music much more directly from within the act of singing.

We then had a discussion of how they make decisions about musical flow. The general guideline here is that whoever has the melody is in the driving seat, as that is the heart of the song that an audience connects with most directly. There is not absolute power, though: there needs to be room to negotiate a delivery that works for all parts.

With this in mind, we had each of the harmony parts duet with the melody, and then also duetted the other three pairings so that everyone had had a chance both to work directly with each other and to hear what everyone else was doing. What I love about this process is not only the way the teamwork develops within each pairing, but also how the acuity with which people listen develops just as rapidly.

We then moved onto the performing situation, and started off by adjusting their formation to bring it more into an arc than a straight line – as if they were standing around a single microphone and needed to be roughly equidistant from it. This immediately gave them access to much more eye contact than they'd had previously, and allowed them to access the teamwork they'd developed while singing directly to each other. The initial question as to

how much to look at each other and how much to look out at the audience resolved itself very intuitively once they started singing, shaped by their shared understanding of the music.

We then focused in on how to start together, and they discovered how breathing together coordinates them naturally. They really needed no input from me on this at all except to point out what they'd done so effectively and to encourage them to practise it a few times to gain confidence in the process. Practising starts is always a good idea anyway: the transition from not-music to music is the most hazardous moment of a performance, and if you know you can negotiate this bit safely, it sets you up well for the rest of the piece.

Our final exercise was to take a faster, wordy passage and sing it to a staccato 'dit'. It's a fun exercise – you get some good laughs along the way when it all falls apart on the first couple of attempts, then a feeling of achievement as it comes together. And then the musical rewards of an astonishingly cleaner, precise sound when you put the words back in.



"And here's what one of the world's greatest songs sounds like when I sing it."

BEST VOCAL CORDS STRENGTHENING EXERCISES

by James Mann
from [becomesingers.com](https://www.becomesingers.com)

Whether you use your vocal cords to earn a living or not, they are very important, so you should do vocal cords strengthening exercises, in order to keep them in top condition.

Do you know what types of vocal exercise you can use to strengthen your vocal cords? In order to improve your voice, whether for singing or speaking voice, you should perform stretching exercises regularly. These types of exercises can do something to improve the strength of your vocal vibration when you sing or speak.

If you can stretch out your vocal cord better, you'll make them tighter when you perform these best exercises. By doing this, you can have a more powerful sound in your voice. Good singing can be attained through constant practice in due time. This means that you have to undergo a thorough training in vocal cord strengthening exercises, also called vocal folds by doctors.

The strengthening process for your vocal folds requires repetition of vocal exercises for sometimes; so, you have to repeat the steps daily in order to get positive results for your singing voice.

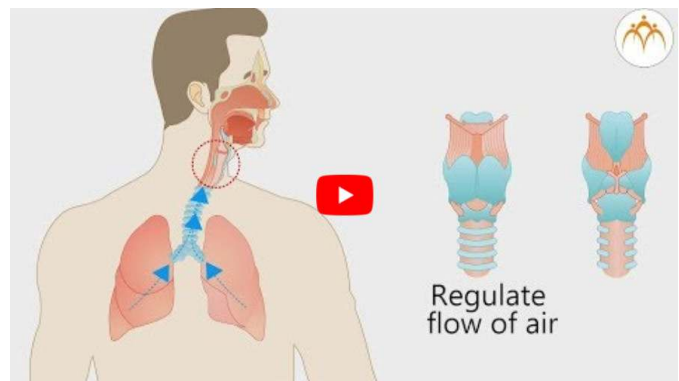
Understanding Your Own Vocal Cords

First, you need to understand what size vocal cords you have. If you have thick vocal fold, you will have a lower, richer sounding voice. If, on the other hand, you have thinner vocal cord, your voice will sound higher. How easily your **vocal fold** vibrate, in conjunction with what sort of vocal cords you have to begin with, creates your singing voice. You cannot change the size of your vocal cord. Once you understand that, you can concentrate on improving your voice through these vocal cord exercises (<https://www.becomesingers.com/techniques/develop-better-vocal-cord-closure>).

Your vocal cords are similar to an instrument. If you can learn to play an instrument, then you make your vocal cord work the same way. It is just like playing the guitar, a piano or a violin. In the instrument, you control the strings with your fingers or the bow in the case of the violin

and in just the same way you control your voice with proper breathing and proper enunciation.

Let's take a look at how our whole vocal system (**vocal fold**, tongue, lips, and soft palate) works together to produce sound while we sing. (<https://youtu.be/B-UM1p8GNeg>)



Best Vocal Exercises That Will Strengthen Your Vocal Cords & Vocal System

So, what sorts of exercises should you do exactly? Well, the key is to do stretching exercises or you can say vocal warm ups, which will help you to improve the vibration when you sing or speak and make the vibration stronger. That means that you can tighten your vocal cords, by using practicing exercises and give yourself a much more **powerful voice**. You can take help from voice coach.

While you may think that singing exercise is the main way to improve your singing skills and voice, but many experts disagree. You really should stretch to use less air while you are singing. You need to learn to only use the exact amount of air that you need for each note. If you can control that, you can develop a much more **controlled singing voice**.

1) Tongue Exercises

According to some research, it should include tongue related exercises and warm up too. A scientist in France believes that the hypoglossal muscle, a muscle in the tongue, plays a large part in the strength of your **vocal fold** and voice. In order to exercise your tongue muscles, you need to start by totally relaxing your tongue. Just let it lay flat in your mouth. Then the two sides of your tongue need to be curled inward so that there is an open slot down the middle of your tongue. That muscle movement is the one that is believed to influence the strength of the vocal cord.

(Continued on page 12)

BEST VOCAL CHORDS STRENGTHENING
(continued)

(Continued from page 11)

2) Breathing Exercise 1: To Strengthen Your Larynx

Try to practice breathing exercises from your diagram for strengthening of your larynx (voice box) and improving your singing voice. Sitting and standing straight are good posture that you have to practice for this type of exercise. Put your hands on your stomach in order to feel the movement, then breathe in deeply as you can through the nose.

Take 5 seconds before you breathe out slowly while your hands are moving on your stomach. **Control your inhaling and exhaling process** in order to maintain a smooth and better vocal style use this vocal techniques. As per advice from the Ohio State University Medical Center, breathing with the use of your abdominal muscles should be performed in order to control your breath.

You can improve your awareness in your breathing habits when you sit straight in the chair, place a hand over your abdomen and inhale. At this point, your stomach will extend outward. After doing that, start exhaling, and you'll feel that your stomach is retracting inward.

3) Breathing Exercise 2: Breath From Your Diaphragm

Do not breathe from your lungs. Breathe deeply from your diaphragm. The long breaths which you take from your diaphragm (as if from your stomach/belly breathing) enable you to hold your high notes for a long time and complete your song without unwanted breaks.

Five to ten minutes of deep breathing exercises every day will go a long way to get better control of your voice. It is also important to learn when to exhale. When you practice your singing, understand where the pauses are to exhale slowly without affecting your song effectively. All famous baritone singers have succeeded only through breath control and voice control.

To help you with this, look down when you breathe. If your stomach is going in and out when you breathe, then you are breathing correctly. If your shoulder or upper chest alone is moving, then your breathing is incorrect. Remember that this deep breathing alone will help you to hold the endnotes until the BGM (background music) starts.

Note: Of course the most essential requisite for a professional singer is breath control. Imagine how it would be when you are singing a fantastic song and halfway through find yourself breathless and unable to hold the note. So, regular breathing exercise and warm up is a must to sing better. While practicing breathing, hold high notes for as long as possible so that it slowly becomes a habit. Secondly, understand the song and learn where you can take breaths and where you can exhale without missing a note.

4) Soft Palate Exercises

The use of your soft palate can significantly improve and enhance your singing. You might ask what a soft palate is. Open your mouth and look into the mirror, you will see a small piece of flesh hanging down at the back of your throat. With a little effort, you can see it move also. That is the soft palate. (<https://youtu.be/z0q1QiMN1-s>)



Raise & Open up the Soft Palate: The soft palate is the small piece of flesh hanging at the back of your mouth. Opening this wide helps in free airflow, and your voice will vibrate more. Your breathing becomes better, your voice richer, you get more “vibrato” in your song, and the **vocal fold** are not strained heavily.

If you practice hard enough, you can learn to use the soft palate to your advantage. When you open up this part of your throat, it results in free and increased airflow improving your voice quality and depth. An added benefit is that you start getting more “vibrato” in your singing, giving your song more feel, dynamics and strong voice.

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

HERE ARE 9 QUICK VOCAL TIPS YOU CAN USE RIGHT NOW!

by Roger Love
from rogerlove.com

Drop Your Jaw

Most people simply do not open their mouths enough to let the sound come out unobstructed. I do not mean that you should smile and go very wide. I want you to simply drop your jaw down a bit and not keep your teeth so clenched together. This will send more sound waves into the cheek area before exiting with a more resonant and full quality.

Wean Yourself Off Whispering

When you whisper, you force a tremendous amount of extra air over the vocal cords making them dry and irritated. This can actually do more damage to your cords than screaming or shouting.

Stop Tightening Your Abdomen

Too many people hear the word “support” from singing coaches and think it means to create pressure in your abdomen as a means to somehow push more sound out. The truth is, when you lock your abdominal muscles, you are actually stopping air from getting back out of your body and making beautiful noises. The key is to relax your abdomen and create no pressure at all.

Stop Smoking

Beyond the obvious health reasons to quit smoking, cigarettes can also destroy your singing abilities. Inhaled cigarette smoke passes directly through the vocal cords and dries up a lot of the natural moisture they need to function. When you then try to make sound, your dry cords can get red and swollen. Over time, the damage to your voice can be irreparable.

Imitate Great Singers

The best way to develop a unique style is to spend time learning to imitate great singers. Pick a different singer every week and try and “become” that voice. Play their music over and over, singing along as you try to sound exactly like the artist. Then, record yourself singing along and play it back while carefully listening to any differences. If you don’t sound the same, identify where you diverge from the singer and why. Then sing along and record yourself again. Follow this system until you become a great imitation of the original artist. Then pick another singer and start all over again. As you add more artists to your imitation repertoire, you will learn to naturally mix and

match those imitated sounds and create a unique vocal style that is old and new, familiar and fresh, and it will ultimately help you achieve the next levels of success.

Warm Up Your Voice

A runner would never start a race without stretching before. Give your voice some stretching, too. Do a few minutes of vocal exercises every day to expand and strengthen your singing range.

Use Melody

When you sing a song the melody is important. Why is it that most people are singing boring songs. They stay on one note, they have no interesting dynamics, and they bore the listener. I say, pretend you are singing while you are speaking. Move it around, shake it up, swoop, dive, soar. Let your voice be as interesting as you are?

Learn Diaphragmatic Breathing

It is very easy and much healthier for the body. Just put your hand on your abdomen, near your belly button. When you inhale, pretend that you have a balloon in there and let it expand. When you exhale, let your abdomen fall back to its normal position. This method is easy but incredibly effective for enhancing your vocal quality.

Tea With Honey and Lemon Is a Bad Idea

Black tea with honey and lemon is a recipe for bad singing. Have you noticed how your fingers look like prunes when you take a long hot bath? Drinking scorching hot tea can take a similar toll. The temperature of liquids can change the size and shape of tissues it comes in contact with and your vocal cords are no exception. If the tea has caffeine in it, you may unnecessarily speed up the production of mucus and spend your performance trying to clear your throat. The citrus in the lemon can cause you to salivate more, also leading to overproduction of phlegm. And finally, the honey is so thick it can cause moisture problems and reduce your singing abilities.

Drink More Water

There are two holes in the back part of your throat—one for food and water and the other for air. When you drink, the water goes down the liquid hole. The problem is, the vocal cords live down the air hole. It is actually impossible to drink water directly to your cords. So, you need to have enough water in your bloodstream for your vocal cords to get properly hydrated. To do that you should drink about one-half gallon of pure water daily.



MUSIC AND HEARING AIDS: FINDING SOLUTIONS

by Anya Wassenberg
from ludwig-van.com

Hearing aids are effective devices for navigating everyday life with hearing loss; when it comes to music, results are less straightforward.

A 2020 study revealed that about two-thirds of hearing aid users have trouble listening to music, including distortion, poor sound quality, and a flat, inexpressive sound that cuts in and out.

Hearing Aids And Music

Hearing aids come with built-in limitations that affect how they process music. They are designed with a focus on speech. In environments where there is both music and speech, even the most sophisticated programs may not be able to separate them efficiently.

- A device that allows users to manually switch between music and speech often works best in those situations.

The frequency spectrum, as well as the dynamic range, differs from speech vs music.

Speech:

- approximately 250-8,000 Hz, with most falling somewhere around the middle between 1,000-4,000 Hz
- dynamic range is about 50 dB

Music:

- approximately 50 Hz (a deep bass) to 16,000 Hz (the overtones of a cymbal or bell)
- dynamic range is about 120 dB

Hearing loss itself differs from person to person, while the solutions are not necessarily tailored to individuals. Sometimes, simply removing the hearing aids and listening naturally can greatly improve the quality of the experience.

Other easy solutions may include:

- A high quality sound system that will produce a clear signal;
- An equalizer that allows you to adjust different frequencies.
- Volume can increase distortion, so putting a piece of tape over the hearing aid to reduce it can help for live performances.

Many concert halls, such as Koerner Hall and Roy Thomson Hall provide assistive listening devices free

of charge (although they require advance booking).

Through a process of trial and error, many people are able to come up with a combination that lets them listen to music the way it should be heard. Much of the research indicates that it can take years for the brain to adjust to the new mode of input via hearing aids. It's a process that varies from person to person, and can't be rushed.

Playing An Instrument

Naturally, the difficulties listening to music transfer directly to those who want to perform it as well. When it comes to playing an instrument, there are two factors that may come into the picture, according to experts.

- Larger instruments, or those that play in the bass range, may be easier to hear.
- Instruments that produce more harmonics — in technical terms, those with half-wavelength resonators, such as strings and saxophones — may be a good choice. The theory is that more auditory information makes it easier for hearing aids to process.

Multichannel compression is a good choice for speech programs. For music, however, they flatten the balance between harmonic frequencies, and distort the nature of the sound. Since hearing loss can vary so widely from person to person, being able to custom program listening software seems to be the key to improving the situation.

A possible solution

Analog and digital hearing aids tend to produce very different listening experiences when it comes to music.

A 2023 article in [Canadian Audiologist](#) suggests that the analog-to-digital converter in hearing aids is at fault. Industry tweaking of the converter component can result in allowing too much background noise into the mix.

New technology that adjusts the circuitry to optimize higher decibel levels seems to have solved the problem, and a small experiment was conducted through the Musicians' Clinics of Canada, involving professional musicians with hearing loss. The results were encouraging, with up to a 60% difference at high input levels. Distortion was greatly reduced, and the music could be heard as a clear signal.

The research is ongoing.

FREE YOUR VOICE

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

(continued from last month)

Articulation (continued)

- When forming words, in general the tip of your tongue should stay at or near your lower front teeth. Yes, different sounds and pitches require different tongue involvement, but the point is to operate the tongue at its front end and keep the back of it from bunching or bulking up.
- For any consonants that involve your tongue touching the roof of your mouth, try to make that contact on the hard palate instead how you form the 'K' sound. Imagine the breath that follows it carries a vowel sound. If you form it like 'kah', your tongue will make contact with your soft palate, which is too far back. Now try it as if it is 'ki' (with the same vowel sound as in 'kit'). For this version, your tongue will make contact with your hard palate. Better and easier. Even with the 'ing' sound, which usually makes the tongue touch the soft palate, think of it bring at a far forward as possible.
- Adapt how crisp or heavy or light your articulation should be according to the genre, the venue, the acoustics, the sound system and so on. But adapt without compromising that all-important flow of sound.
- Repeat over and over "The tip of the tongue, the teeth, and the lips". Here are a few tips to make this exercise effective:
 - the words indicate where the focus must be
 - try to keep your outward breath flow consistent, even when forming hard consonants like 't'
 - extend the vowel sounds and join them together
 - over-articulating will disrupt your breath flow, so make the consonants work with/on the breath and not become pressurized or explode out
 - maintain a loose jaw, so the front of the tongue may dance
 - the more nimbly and effortlessly you can do this exercise, the better for your singing
 - apply these approaches to music where you must deliver words quickly - you will find it works beautifully to maintain a flowing legato line

(to be continued next month)

FREE SINGING TIPS

by Yvonne DeBandi
from a2z-singing-tips.com

M = Mirror. Training in front of a mirror can help a singer discover many things about their instrument, as well as confirm that other actions are being done correctly. Be sure to rely on a mirror during vocal training, but be able to leave the mirror to face an audience.

FREE SINGING TIPS

by Nicole LeGault
from a2z-singing-tips.com

M is for Music. It is my opinion that a singer is only as good as the song that he/she is singing. You must choose your material wisely; you would be surprised at how it alters people's perception of your voice

FREE SINGING TIPS

by Mick Walsh
from a2z-singing-tips.com

M. Music theory. When I began in Musical Theater back in London, it was imperative for singers to be able to sight sing. Nowadays, even on the top West End shows, singers learning new material are given CD's with the songs already recorded . I think this is a little sad as it's killing a skill which is A) not that hard to learn and B) a definite advantage when learning new songs. You don't have to be a Mozart so don't be afraid to learn Music theory. It's easier than you think.

FREE SINGING TIPS

by Teri Danz
from a2z-singing-tips.com

M= Mouth sounds -- Using mouth sounds such as a creek or a cry, give your voice more resonance and presence. In your chest voice, knowing how to use mouth sounds properly is critical -- especially in getting to record quality. Many singers mistakenly put their sound in their nose. Practice putting the sound in your mouth by placing it all the way in your nose and then forcing the sound into your mouth. FEEL the difference. Your body can assist you with correct placement.



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

amazonsmile

You shop. Amazon gives.

Amazon has dropped the Smile program, where they would take a percentage of our purchase prices and donate that to our selection from worthy non-profits (like us, the Big O). Their new plan is to only donate to those entities that THEY deem worthy.

FlipGive

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

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

Thanks in advance!!

Big Orange Chorus

REHEARSAL SCHEDULE

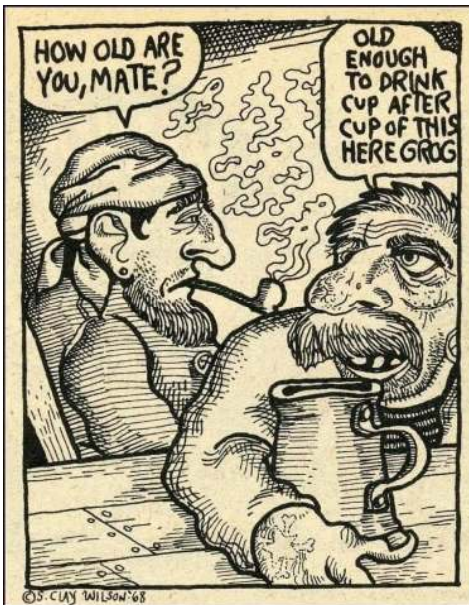
Thu	03 Aug	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	10 Aug	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	17 Aug	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	24 Aug	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	31 Aug	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	07 Sep	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	14 Sep	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	21 Sep	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	28 Sep	Shepherd of the Woods

BIRTHDAYS

Dave Schubert 07 Aug

PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

Thu	17 Aug	Singout TBA
Thu	21 Sep	Singout TBA
F/S/S	13-15 Oct	SUN District Convention
Sat	17 Feb	Icemen game
F/S/S	22-24 Mar	SUN District Convention



RECENT GUESTS

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
Elias Dandar	Dean Lang
J Brown	Bill Mumford
Marge Phillips	Shamus McIner
Sirlister Smiley	McKayle Callan
Rob Taylor	Peter Gugisberg

WELCOME

NEWEST MEMBERS

Les Mower	April
Ray Parzik	August
Ed Fitzgerald	September
Dale Martin	March

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.

2023 DIRECTING TEAM



Jay Giallombardo
Guest
Director



Daniel Pesante
Front Line
Director

2023 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 September is 24 August.
Items without a byline are from the Editor.

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

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

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

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



John Alexander, Editor
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