



The Orange Spiel

News Of The Jacksonville Big O Chapter



<http://www.BigOrangeChorus.com>



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November 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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SUNSHINE DISTRICT FALL CONVENTION

Our last district contest was in 2017 and had 42 on stage. We came in second place with an average score of 82.9. Then there were a few lean years and Covid. Rebuilding has been an effort, but our toes are back in the water. Last month's contest we had 23 on stage and came in second place with an average score of 74.8.

The top five finishers (of 9 choruses and 19 quartets) were:

Choruses

Heralds Of Harmony	90.3
Big Orange Chorus	74.8
Miamians	74.3
Orlando Harmony	69.2
Orange Blossom	68.6

Quartets:

Three And A Half Men	93.5
Tonal Fusion	79.2
Suite Life	77.1
Local Edition	74.5
Time Of Our Lives	73.3

Senior Quartets:

Right On Q	72.0
TBQ	63.2
Geezaires	57.8

Most Improved Quartet:

4 For 4	72.8
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WANTED!!

MEN WHO LIKE TO SING!



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

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

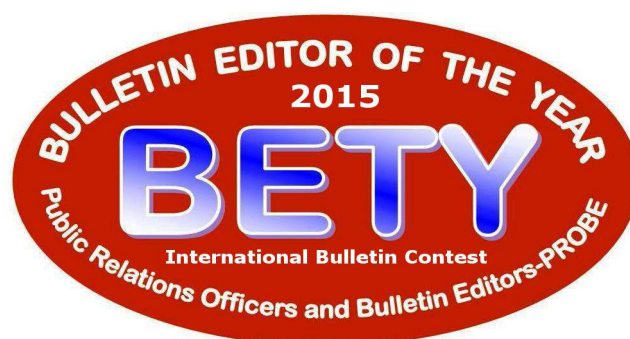
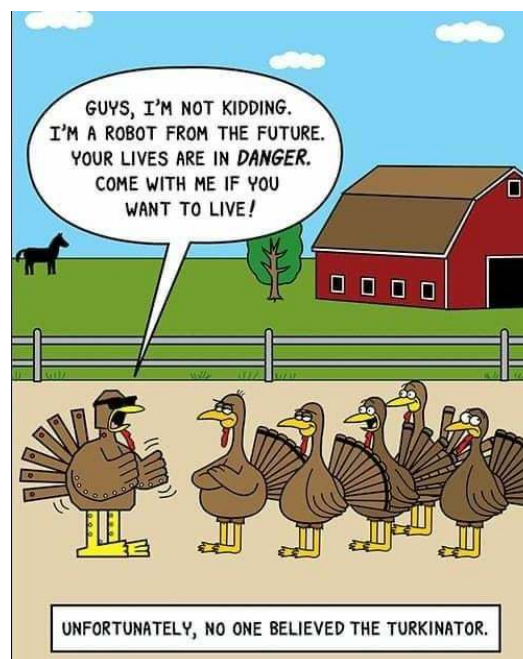
EDITORIAL

We did well at contest. Now it's time for 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 singer, improving just a little, each and every day, will result in huge advances for the chorus.



VOCAL WARM-UPS FOR BETTER SINGING AND A BIGGER RANGE

by Audrey Hunt
from spinditty.com

Warm-Up Your Voice by Humming

Humming is an excellent beginning warm-up because it stretches the vocal cords like a runner stretches the legs. Some things to keep in mind as you hum are:

- **Keep the lips loose and relaxed.** Avoid pressing them together. You want to feel the vibrations occurring in the lips as you hum.
- **Open your mouth as if you are singing the vowel "ah."** Then, slowly bring the lips to a gentle close for the humming position. This will keep the space open inside the mouth to provide resonance as you hum.
- **Good vocal training** begins with properly executed humming exercises that help your vocal cords to resonate freely. The vibrations generated by the hum are the fastest way to relax your facial muscles, and when tension exists in your face and tongue, your singing tone will also have tension. This can eventually ruin your voice.

A Five Step Vowel Warm-Up

Every word you sing contains a vowel. Positioning your mouth the right way is crucial to fine singing.

The open vowels are: Ah, Eh, Ee, Oh, and Oo.

1. Begin with the 'Ee' vowel and sing the Ee in a relaxed but energetic tone, sustaining the tone for five seconds. Using good breath support, repeat and hold for 10 seconds. Be sure to keep the open mouth position the entire time.
2. Repeat this exercise using a different tone.
3. Repeat the same exercise using 'Oo,' then 'Oh,' 'Eh,' and 'Ah.'
4. Sing these vowels in any order you like. You'll stretch your voice and increase your range as you warm up.
5. When learning a song, start with singing just a vowel all the way through. Do this before adding the lyrics.

When you're ready, sing the following exercise. Adjust your voice as needed and stop when the tone becomes too high. <https://youtu.be/TVCPyL0urp4>

10 Tips for a Great Vocal Warm-up

1. **Warm-ups vary.** While specific vocal warm-ups may work for just about any singer, this is certainly

not the case for all introductions. Also, another thing to consider is the way each warm-up is sung. This is a critical consideration in maintaining good vocal health.

2. **Repetition is key.** I have decided to share some of the warm-ups my students use. Keep in mind the importance of discipline. Repetition is the mother of learning. So sing through vocal exercises several times each day.
3. **Avoid particular food and drinks.** Do not sabotage your singing by consuming dairy products, caffeine, ice-cold water, or beverages.
4. **Posture is crucial.** Be sure to warm up your body before doing vocal warm-ups. The entire body is your vocal instrument, and it must be free of all tension, particularly in the shoulder, face, and tongue areas. Watch your posture and stand up straight with the body weight balanced on the balls of the feet (not the heels). This will help in keeping the spine straight.
5. **The neck is a critical area.** It houses the spinal cord, nerves, blood vessels, and our vocal mechanism. Also, the neck supports our head, which weighs an average of 20 pounds.
6. **Hang arms loosely.** I am often asked, "What do I do with my arms?" My answer is to allow them to hang loosely at your sides with your fingertips lightly touching your upper thighs. Remember that when it comes to your arms, less is more.
7. **Sit properly.** We don't always stand when we sing, so it's essential to sit correctly. Sit in such a way that your back is supporting you. When singing in a choir, switch your position from one posture to another every 10-15 minutes. This will keep your back from becoming fatigued.
8. **Tighten your buns.** Another tip that has worked well for me is to tighten your buns when standing. This will strengthen your abs and lower back muscles and help you maintain good posture.
9. **Planted feet and unlocked knees.** Your feet should be planted on the floor about shoulder-width apart and the knees unlocked (slightly bent).
10. **Breathe** by using the diaphragm (belly breath) for a well-controlled tone.
11. **Drink plenty of water.** Sip on room temperature water during the singing and throughout the day.

Why Warm-Up Your Voice?

Picture this: you're attending a concert featuring

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VOCAL WARM-UPS FOR BETTER SINGING
(continued)

(Continued from page 3)

your favorite singer. The show is going well, and now the singer is performing your favorite song. You're admiring the ease with which the singer goes from low to high notes when something goes wrong suddenly. The voice cracks and the beautiful tone is destroyed. The singer has trouble recovering, and you feel embarrassed for the singing star.

Has this happened to you? Could this vocal strain have been prevented? Absolutely. How? By preparing your voice *before* you sing with a program of correct warm-ups. This is the best insurance policy against vocal mishaps.

And not all vocal warm-ups fit every singer. You can easily strain your voice by trying to sing too high or too loud.

The exercise must help overcome and correct vocal problems and bring warmth and flexibility to the voice.

One of the most prominent mistakes singers make is how they warm up their voices. I've seen this happen for 35 years with vocalists from all genres and styles. Singers who sing for a living absolutely *must* warm up their voices properly. The success of the show or recording session depends on what type of warm-ups are used.

Therefore, learn the most effective warm-ups and make it a habit to stick to them. Just make sure every warm-up is designed for your distinct voice.

Avoid Lip Tension With This Exercise

Begin with a short lip trill, supported by air from the belly. Repeat the trill 4-5 times and extend the duration slightly with each trill. Try not to purse your lips. Pretend that you are blowing bubbles under the water. If you find this difficult to do, it is a sign that your lips carry too much tension.

Keep practicing until your lips begin to trill naturally and without effort, and if you find this exercise difficult, you may need to take an enormous breath to help the lips vibrate without effort.

Too little breath pressure will prevent the trill from starting, while too much breath pressure will cause the trill to blow apart (stop). To keep the trill going when singing scales, the breath pressure must remain optimal and relatively steady.

Tame the Tongue for a Better Sounding Voice

For a richer singing tone, your tongue must remain relaxed. The tongue is a massive muscle. When the tongue holds too much tension, the voice becomes tense.

So learn to lay the tongue flat in your mouth (except for forming consonants and vowels). This article will teach you how to relax your tongue, lips, and jaw.

When you learn to relax your tongue while singing—what an astounding difference there will be.

Tongue Trill

What is the tongue trill? If you can roll your r's, you can do the tongue trill. Purring like a cat also works well.

To execute the tongue trill, try flapping your tongue against the roof of the mouth (the hard palate). Hold the sound steady and keep the breath connected for the count of 5 - 10. As your endurance improves, you can practice these tongue trills for more extended periods.

Once you have learned the trills, practice them on a full scale. Support the trills with plenty of air.

Watch the video below to see how this is done.
<https://youtu.be/FzMVVps18dM>

Drink Plenty of Water During Vocal Warm-Ups

Your throat and vocal bands require moisture during singing. You want to prevent dryness to the voice, and the best way to do this is to drink your water. Keep a bottle or glass of room temperature H2O handy and have a sip or two often.

Notice I suggest "room temperature" water. Why? Cold temperature restricts the vocal folds. This is the last thing we want to happen when we sing.

When the vocal folds are restricted, then so is our tone. We lose the warmth and flexibility that is so vital to good singing. So drink up, my friend. Water is free!

Keep These Important Tips in Mind

Some important things to keep in mind:

- *Seeking an instructor.* An entire book can be written about vocal warm-ups alone. There are hundreds of exercises available. Some are right

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VOCAL WARM-UPS FOR BETTER SINGING (continued)

(Continued from page 4)

for a particular singer, while others can be all wrong. Singing the wrong warm-ups can even be *damaging* to the voice. I recommend seeking a *qualified* vocal teacher.

- **Children.** Children must sing light exercises and not adult warm-ups. And young men going through puberty is another whole dimension of vocal training and must be left to the highly skilled instruction of an expert. I sometimes recommend that boys this age should *not sing at all* until they are through puberty.
- **10-20 minutes.** Effective vocal warm-ups for singers and vocalists should be around 10-20 minutes at each session. I hope you enjoy these introductory exercises.
- Some vocal warm-ups may be challenging to sing, but they should never feel uncomfortable. Something is wrong if you experience a sore throat or hoarseness following your warm-up session.
- Use your warm-up sessions to test your vocal technique and skills. Concentrate on breath control above all.
- Warming up your voice before singing can help prevent vocal nodes.
- Stay within your vocal range and avoid straining to hit those high notes.
- Jaw tension can keep you from reaching higher notes.

Lastly, don't forget that the most important thing you need to be a singer is a *desire* to sing. You may encounter obstacles. Keep singing anyhow, and let your passion fuel your discipline. Follow your dream.



THE WALL OF SOUND

by Brody McDonald
from choirbites.com

A problem I face in rehearsal is that of muddy ensemble sound. This is most commonly noticed in homophonic passages, where the chords don't ring as clearly as I want. Poor synchronization of word sounds is often the culprit. I use this process (borrowed from barbershoppers) to clean up the vocal lines. It's called THE WALL OF SOUND, because it creates a strong, uninterrupted sound from the choir. Vowels are bricks and consonants the mortar. In a strong wall there must be much more brick than mortar; the mortar must completely connect the bricks.

Step 1 - Model in unison: Sing the passage on one mid-range note that is accessible to the choir (in octaves for mixed choirs). Sing it as you wish to hear it. Have the choir then sing it back to you on that unison note. Listen carefully for the treatments of consonants and vowels, including diphthong turns. Make sure the choir is following your timing in all ways, and that the pitch doesn't bend or scoop at all. Make them tunnel forward with a constant stream of sound. The goal is to become one voice. If needed, slow the tempo down to hear the timing of word sounds, then gradually speed up until you hit performance tempo.

Step 2 - Spread to a chord: After the word sounds are synchronized across the choir in unison, assign each section a note in a chord in the key of that section. Example: F Major-basses/F, tenors/middle C, Altos/F, sopranos/A. Sing the passage on this static chord, working synchronization as you did in the unison. The goal is to create a constant, ringing sound where vowels are matched, singable consonants ring with true pitch, and plosives click together. Again, vary the tempo as needed to make sure everyone is moving together cleanly. If this is too ambitious, start with the cleanest section, then add others one at a time for quality control.

Step 3 - Resume parts: Have sections sing their original notes but in the new style of the static chord. The goal is to now hear THE WALL OF SOUND. Variation of tempo is valuable in this stage, to ensure everyone's word sounds are synchronized.

There are other considerations to maximize chords in THE WALL OF SOUND, but that's another bite.

HOW TO PRACTICE FOR MORE CONSISTENT PERFORMANCES

by Dr Noa Kageyama
from bulletproofmusician.com

Ever wonder why it is that you can play a tricky passage perfectly five times out of five at home? But on stage, the one time you need things to go right, everything suddenly becomes more hit or miss?

It can be tempting to redouble your efforts and aim for 10 perfect reps out of 10. Or try to keep the notes in your fingers by playing the tricky passages over and over while warming up before the concert. Or continue to play silently backstage, until the very last moment before you walk onstage.

Spinning plates...

It can feel like being that guy on TV who keeps all the plates spinning up in the air. Scrambling frantically from one to the next, trying to touch everything every few seconds to make sure nothing comes crashing down.

Of course, it's exhausting to try to keep all those plates spinning indefinitely. And you don't have the time or energy to practice everything in multiples of 10 consecutive "perfect" repetitions (whatever that means anyway).

So the good news is that you don't have to run frantically from plate to plate.

It turns out there's a way to tweak how you practice, that could help you play more accurately and with greater consistency when it matters.

And what might that be?

A third type of practice?

Learning can be a rather curious thing. Have you ever gone into an exam thinking that you knew the material only to discover in horror that you didn't know nearly as much as you thought?

It can be the same in the practice room. The rapid improvement you hear when learning a new skill by repeating the same passage over and over is deceptive.

We have a tendency to confuse the rate of acquisition – or how fast we improve during practice – with learning. A better measure of learning is how much of that skill is still retrievable, an hour, day, or week after a practice session.

We've explored several key practice strategies that can help increase this kind of stable learning in previous articles. Like deliberate practice vs. mindless repetition. Interleaved vs. blocked practice.

A third paradigm is variable vs. constant practice.

An accuracy study

One of the classic studies in this area (Kerr & Booth, 1978) compared two groups of 8-year olds who practiced tossing beanbags to targets at various distances over the course of 12 weeks.

One group practiced tossing beanbags to a target 3 feet away ("constant" practice group).

The other group practiced tossing beanbags to targets 2 feet away and 4 feet away ("variable" practice group).

At the end of the study, when the kids were tested on their ability to hit the 3-foot target, the ones who practiced from 2 and 4-feet – *but never from 3-feet* – actually demonstrated significantly greater accuracy on the final test than those who practiced at 3 feet the entire time.

Wait...what? Was this some sort of weird fluke?

The illusion of learning

Nope!

Subsequent studies have replicated such results, and suggest that practicing the same skill over and over in exactly the same way does help to improve your performance *during practice*, but really just creates the *illusion* of rapid learning.

Meanwhile, if you want to demonstrate a high level of skill and mastery when it's time to *perform* and develop skills that are more long-lasting, practicing multiple variations of the same skill (i.e. louder, softer, more vibrato, less, etc.) is the more effective strategy. Even if you may not appear to improve quite as rapidly during practice.

Because ultimately, this variable practice approach appears to create more robust motor programs. Which will enable you to be more flexible and play your best whether the acoustics are dryer than you expected, the pianist is playing slower than they did in rehearsal, or your hands are freezing cold.

Ok...but how robust are these gains, really? As in,
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HOW TO PRACTICE FOR MORE CONSISTENT (continued)

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how long do the benefits of variable practice last?

Loooong-term retention

In a 2006 study (Memmert) 32 college students were asked to practice shooting free throws.

Everyone started by taking a shooting test to establish a baseline of their shooting abilities.

Then, each participant went through a 90-minute training session where they either shot 160 baskets from the free throw line (**constant practice group**) or 160 shots from a number of different positions (**variable practice group**).

And would there be any difference between the groups?

Two performance tests

When tested *immediately* after the training session, the constant practice group performed better than the variable practice group. No surprise, right?

However, the researchers surprised the participants a year later by having them return to the lab for another test. And this time, the results were reversed.

Despite not practicing free throws for a year, the participants who took their free throws from a variety of locations a year ago shot more accurately than those who practiced only from the free throw line.

So what are we to do with this?

Take action

Well, one key takeaway is to remember that rapid improvement can be deceptive. In that the progress you appear to make during the acquisition phase of a skill isn't necessarily a reliable indicator of how much deep, durable, retrievable learning is taking place. As Itzhak Perlman once said, "things you learn quickly you forget quickly."

Doing lots of repetitions in a row might be satisfying and feel like you're putting in the time and making rapid progress – but don't confuse the temporarily high "accessibility" of the correct motor program with the "underlying habit strength" of that motor program. So instead of practicing with a metronome at just one speed, try practicing slower and faster than the

target tempo. Louder and softer. With vibrato and without.

The goal is a type of practice that neurophysiologist Nikolai Bernstein called "repetition without repetition." Where you change things slightly from one repetition to the next within a range of variations.

Does this make practicing a little more challenging in the moment? Perhaps – but I think that's kind of the point. Because this type of challenge will help you develop skills that can serve you well in any situation, not just when you're playing alone in the familiar comfort of your practice room.

Plus, a little challenge can be good! I think you'll find that the particular kind of challenge provided by repetition without repetition actually makes practicing more engaging and much funner than regular old repetition.

If practice is boring...

In fact, if you have difficulty staying focused in the practice room, it can be a sign that your practice strategies aren't keeping you engaged and challenged in the right sorts of ways.

And if performances remain inconsistent and unpredictable even as you're increasing your practice time, this could be related to a practice strategy mismatch as well.



HOW TO USE BARBERSHOP LEARNING TRACKS

from barbershop.org

Hello singers, and welcome to the world of barber-shop style learning tracks! These recordings come in batches of five different versions, all for the same song: a full performance mix as well each of the four voice parts in isolation, all perfectly matching the sheet music.

Even if you are a strong music reader, our learning tracks are a powerful tool and can even make practicing fun! Our structured approach carefully scaffolds music learning into smaller, achievable chunks, and most importantly, it works.

The most common strategy singers use to learn music is to play recordings over and over, singing along until they have “mastered” their part. Other singers know they are so highly visual that they don’t even bother trying to use recordings, waiting until they attend a full rehearsal and sight-read from the risers.

The problem: science tells us this way of learning music does not work effectively, and worse yet, this auditory-only path will ingrain multiple note and word errors... *without the knowledge of the singer.*

People are not exclusively one style of learner. We tend to live “mostly” in a style, but all people are a blend of auditory learners (30%), visual learners (65%), and kinesthetic learners (5%).

If you prepare intentionally using all three areas, the speed of learning, note accuracy, and retention dramatically increases for the learner. Give this system a try one time and you will be a believer!

We would like to acknowledge the two barber-shoppers who developed and championed this way to use learning tracks, starting in the 1980s. Thank you Jay Giallombardo and Chuck Greene.

Happy learning track preparation!

To get started, You will need:

- Sheet music (digital or physical)
- Pencil, pen, highlighter
- The full mix learning track

PLUS:

- Your part-specific learning tracks (Tenor, Lead, Baritone, Bass)
- An undistracted location
- Pan the stereo balance to the left (your part) or the right (the other 3 parts)
- Remove one of your headphones or earbuds to hear only the left side (your part) or right side (the other 3 parts) of the stereo mix
- Sitting at a table or standing is fine; Standing is suggested in later steps
- Elevated music to ensure your gaze is straight ahead, replicating real performance and better body alignment
- Don’t multitask your attention (while you drive, while you work at the computer...). Once you have gone through all the steps, practicing as you multitask is fine... but learn your music first

How to learn a new song with
learning tracks in 8 easy steps

1. Play the **full mix** 3 times as you listen and follow along in the sheet music
2. Play your **part mix** 3 times as you listen and focus on the pitches as you follow in the sheet music
3. Play your **part mix** 3 or more times while you sing 'ooh' to learn notes in isolation
4. Play your **part mix** 3 times as you Lip sync words to learn words in isolation
5. Play your **part mix** 3 or more times as you sing and connect your words to notes
6. Play the **full mix** 3 or more times as you lightly sing words and notes, connecting your part to the other 3
7. Play your **part missing mix** 3 or more times while you sing, learning to hold your part without support
8. {Optional} BONUS STEP: Play each of the other 3 **part mixes** 3 or more times as you sing (duet) against each of them

It’s possible to do all of these steps and learn an entire song with no word or note errors in an hour or two!

Step 1: The Big Picture - Play the Full Mix

See, hear, and feel the message of the song by using the visual cues of the sheet music (visual learners), the sound of the full performance (auditory learners), and the touch of the words moving left to right (kinesthetic learners).

Listen to the full mix and follow along with the sheet

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USING BARBERSHOP LEARNING TRACKS (continued)

(Continued from page 8)

music, focusing your gaze on the text while you physically move your finger below the text the entire song. At this step, don't sing, hum, or make any sounds. Enjoy the song as an audience member.

Heads up: Strong sight-readers, fight the urge to skip this step.

Do this 3 times, then...

Step 2: The little picture - play your part mix and listen

Grow your awareness of your part by using the visual cues of the sheet music, the sound of your part mix, and the touch of the pitches going up and down.

Listen to your voice part mix in isolation - Tenor, Lead, Baritone, or Bass. Put in your left earbud (or pan to the left) and listen to your specific part. In this mix, the other three parts are missing. Follow along with the sheet music, focusing your gaze on the WRITTEN PITCHES. Physically move your finger by zig-zagging up and down, left to right underneath the written pitches. Don't sing, hum, or make any sound. As you follow your part in isolation, notice (and perhaps mark) anything you think is difficult. Enjoy the song as if you were in a choir, surrounded by other people singing your part with you.

Heads up #1: Singers may discover moments that "part alone" sounds very odd in isolation - especially at a key change or the baritone part. This is normal.

Heads up #2: Look at the music, even if you feel you don't "read" music. While your deeper understanding of rhythm and notation may not fully be understood today, EVERYONE can see the graphical representation of higher notes (up), repeated notes (same), and lower notes (down) on the page, as well as reading the lyrics.

Heads up #3: Strong sight-readers, continue to fight the urge to sing along.

Do this at least 3 times, then...

Step 3: Learn your notes

Practice the PITCHES in the song, using the visu-

al pitch cues in the sheet music for pitch, the sound of the learning track, and the touch of the pitches going up and down.

Use the individual track in isolation to follow along on the sheet music with your gaze on the WRITTEN PITCHES in the sheet music. However, this time very gently **sing** "ooh" along with the track. Sing at a light volume so you can clearly hear the recording over your singing.

Rather than drilling the entire chart, break this down into smaller steps.

Sing "ooh" over the entire chart with no stops 2 - 3 times.

Practice your identified tricky spots you did not sing accurately. Focus and drill these little 2 - 4 measure chunks until you can't get them wrong... anywhere from 5 - 15 times!

Return to singing the entire song on "ooh" without stumbling on the drilled tough spots with no stops 2 - 3 times.

Heads up #1: It's critical to sing pitches as accurately as possible. Take time to get your notes accurate from the start, as having well tuned chords makes our singing much more enjoyable for all.

Heads up #2: If some of the pitches are out of your vocal range, you have a few options.

If you are part of a **chorus**, have a conversation with your leaders about resting (lip-syncing) or switching to another voice part at these moments.

If you are in a **quartet**, it is extremely common to switch parts on a note or passage. Another option is to change the arrangement (including the key up or down) to better fit the voices in your group.

Heads up #3: You may find it difficult to sing a passage with the same robust vocal production used by the singer on the learning track. Singers may choose to sing lighter (or even falsetto) on a pitch that is modeled full voice on the learning track.

Most learners find this step is where they spend the most time in the learning process, and it pays the biggest dividends later! Do this as many times as needed for you to sing all the pitches perfectly in context, then...

Step 4: Learn your words

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USING BARBERSHOP LEARNING TRACKS (continued)

(Continued from page 9)

Practice the WORDS in the song using the visual text in the sheet music, the sound of the learning track, and the touch of the words moving left to right.

Use the individual track in isolation, and follow along in your sheet music, with your gaze and touch now focussed on TEXT. Instead of singing, now it's time to lip sync (silently mouth) the words in perfect rhythm and timing to your part. That's right: breath, move your jaw and tongue, form the vowels and consonants, and in every way act like you are singing but don't move air or make a sound! IMAGINE as you lip-sync you are singing each word, rhythm, and note perfectly as the track plays.

Heads up: In sports, business and music, seeing your perfect performance in your mind's eye is one of the most powerful ways to learn, and often MORE effective than actually doing the activity. Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NPL) may feel a little weird if you have never done it, but it works!

Do this at least 3 times, then...

Step 5: Learn your words and notes together

Connect the words and pitches together, using the visual cues of the sheet music, the sound of the learning track, and the touch of the sheet music.

Use the individual track in isolation, but now decide what would be most helpful for you to follow... it may change between text, pitch, or rhythmic notation. Sing all words, rhythms, and notes with the goal of being "boringly" pitch and word-perfect from start to end. Sing gently and quietly enough so that the recording is louder than you are singing. As in previous steps, you may need to drill a small section several times, as the addition of words with associated pitch can impact accuracy.

Heads up: Fight the urge to use "all" of your voice at this step. Continue to use your light and accurate voice with your focus on note and word accuracy.

Do this at least 3 times, then...

Step 6: Sing in a Choir

Connect your part to the other three parts, using the visual cues of the sheet music, the sound of the learning track, and the touch of the sheet music.

Return to the **full mix track**, and continue to follow along on your sheet music, but now only the moments you need it. Look away from the music when you feel confident. It would be best to stand at this stage.

Heads up: We have learned singers may become confused when the other voice parts are added. You may have to return to a previous step to get over the distraction.

Do this at least 3 times, then...

Step 7: Sing in a quartet

Connect more deeply to the other three parts in relation to your part using the sound of the learning track and feel of performing.

Return to the individual track in isolation, but now take out your left earbud and put in the right earbud (or pan to the right speaker side) so you can ONLY hear only the 3 other parts. That's right: your part will be completely missing! You MAY need to break this down into 3 smaller steps.

Follow the music and sing the entire chart with no stops at least 3 times... sing through mistakes and confusion, noting where you are having difficulty.

Focus on your identified tough spots in the previous step. Drill these moments until you can't get them wrong! It's possible that you may have to add both earbuds (or pan the stereo mix to the center) to help you hold your part. After you have success, return to the right channel with your part missing to be sure you can hold your part with no assistance.

Sing the entire song without stumbling on the drilled tough spots with no stops at least 3 times.

Like the earlier steps, sing words, rhythms, and notes with the goal of being pitch and word-perfect from start to end, but now add more of your voice, expression, and emotion. It would be best to stand at this stage.

Heads up #1: This is for many singers wildly uncomfortable and they MIGHT be unsuccessful early on. However, this step will grow confidence, tuning, part awareness, and listening skills more than any other step. Learning to sing your part alone may happen quickly, or may take months. Just keep working at it, and move back a step when you need help.

Heads up #2: Many singers add small stylized
(Continued on page 11)

USING BARBERSHOP LEARNING TRACKS (continued)

(Continued from page 10)

scoops or pitch adjustments to add expression to their performance. This is often on the first or highest note of a phrase. While this is perfectly acceptable and common in popular music, this removes the opportunity for a full four-part chord in our style. Continue to make your best effort to be accurate on all pitches.

Do this as many times as needed.

Step 8: Sing all duets (OPTIONAL)

If you are hoping to be unshakeable on your part, play each of the other 3 part mixes in isolation and sing (duet) against each of them. Your awareness of how your note fits with each of the parts will grow immeasurably, especially when you sing a unison, perfect fourth or fifth, and octave with each part. You will find in performance this information is helpful and comforting, giving you a musical anchor at these moments.

Suggested order of duets

- **Tenor:** First with lead, then bass, finally baritone. *You may struggle with the baritone/tenor duet.*
- **Lead:** First with bass, then tenor, finally baritone.
- **Baritone:** First with lead, then bass, finally tenor. *You may struggle with the tenor/baritone duet.*
- **Bass:** First with lead, then baritone, finally tenor.

Heads up #1: If you are new to barbershop, you may find you can hold your part perfectly in the four part version, but some of these duet moments can feel VERY strange and difficult to hold your part. It's worth it, but will take time to grow this musical muscle!

Heads up #2: You may not have success with the Tenor/Baritone duet early on because of the percentage of imperfect intervals, especially tritones! Sing the other duets and come back to this duet later.

*Don't look back,
you're not going that way*

HOW TO TRAIN YOUR VOICE TO SING

by James Mann
from becomesingers.com

Singing is all about manipulating instruments. And in my list of instruments, the voice box has a top position. How best you sing mostly determined by how best you use your voice and the limits you are ready to push to become a better singer. It is an undisputed fact that some singers are better than others. Your voice is the key to singing, and it can be trained to reach its peak. There are numerous vocal and singing techniques, which have developed over the past hundreds of years. With each passing day, people are learning new ways to control their voices to produce different sounds.

Purposes of Training Your Voice

You need to train your voice to know the range and capabilities of your singing voice and prevent developing bad singing habits or worst, risk damage to your vocal cords. There are several easy vocal exercises for beginners and professional singers that will help you master your voice.

Different Types of Singing Training

There are different ways that you can train your voice, with each way requiring a specific approach. They are;

Warm-ups Exercises

During singing, your vocal cords vibrate many times in a single second. Warming up your vocal cords helps prevent straining and injuring them. To warm up your voice, start with basic breathing exercises. Inhale and exhale with your mouth, until your lungs are empty. After that, you can start singing long easy tones in a comfortable range.

Breath Control Training

Proper breathing allows you to hold notes together longer and also reduce the likelihood of damaging your voice. Select a tone that is easy for you and in a single breath, begin singing it in a soft and low volume. Build up your volume gradually, until you reach your maximum comfortable volume then revert to your softer volume.

The most crucial tip on teaching yourself to sing professionally is learning how to control your breathing. Holding back your breath is one of the most common mistakes that many people do while singing. You have

(Continued on page 12)

HOW TO TRAIN YOUR VOICE TO SING (continued)

(Continued from page 11)

to allow air to flow freely through the body. If you feel that you have an insufficient supply of air, all you need to do is learn how to breathe differently. The secret is breathing from the diaphragm instead of the chest.

Doing a simple exercise using diaphragmatic breathing is one method of learning how to sing better. All you have to do is to place one hand on the chest and the other on the diaphragm and then you take breaths steadily. The hand on the chest should not move while the hand on the diaphragm should move inwards and outwards slowly as the diaphragm moves.

Voice Projection

Some of the basic things a singer needs to know are how to project his voice to the audience as a pleasing and attractive sound. And this can happen only if you do vocal exercises, breathing exercises, learn breath control with deep breathing and breathing from the diaphragm, develop the strength of your vocal cords by doing voice exercises, etc.

Pitch Exercises

Mastery of pitch is one of the essential aspects of singing well. You can improve your pitch by practicing arpeggios and scales. Use a keyboard or piano to identify notes that are within your range and practice each scale in every single key by moving up and down using your vowel sounds. The keyboard or piano enables you to stay in tune. Always keep in mind that pitch is key to successful singing.

Vocal Scales Training

Before you start practicing scales, ensure that you warm up adequately. Practicing scales can push your voice to its limits regarding pitch and can result in an injury of your vocal cords. In practicing your scales in singing, you should progressively move to higher notes by semitone every other week. As the saying goes, practice makes perfect, keep practicing your scales frequently and you will eventually find yourself capable of singing in registers that were previously impossible.

Incorporating Singing Techniques Into Music

Here, you need to put the techniques you are learning into practice. You need to sing the music just on a single vowel or on some simple sounds such as

'rrr' or 'sss.' When switching from one pitch to the next, you need to make the process effortless so that your voice just slides from a pitch to another fluidly. Repertoire Exercises

Although scales and exercises help in building up your voice and develop proper singing techniques, practicing songs makes your voice entertaining. When choosing a song to practice ensure that you pick songs that are not outside your range or are too hard for you at your current level. Try to adjust the key and sing with it first if the song you tend to sing is very high in keys or it's out of your tessitura (comfortable vocal range).

Good Singing Posture

Another aspect of good singing is a good posture that will help in the free flow of air through your body allowing you to sing freely and powerfully. Of course, if you are taking private training, your coach will surely teach all these methods to train your voice. But, for your info, these tips and exercises are also available in the singing lesson exercises offered in computer compatible CD courses.

Singing With Emotion

The other step to take in your pursuit of learning how to sing is to understand how to emote. Emoting refers to the display of emotions and the capability of evoking emotions from the audience in addition to making them active by the performance. Emoting is part of the performance, and if you do not know how to emote, there is something you are missing.

So next time you want to know how to train your voice to make a good singer, just follow the above steps, and you will be on your way towards perfection.

How Can You Teach Yourself To Sing?

Many people have at one time asked themselves the question of how can I teach myself to sing? This is due to the inability of many people to have access to funds to pay for their singing lessons, or they are unable to let other people watch them when they are practicing their singing.

There are also some easy to follow tips that will teach you how to improve your singing. Through adhering to these tips, you will be able to captivate your audience with your tone and powerful vocals in a matter of no time.

Most of the people think that singing is an innate talent and present only in a lucky few. This is a totally

(Continued on page 13)

HOW TO TRAIN YOUR VOICE TO SING (continued)

(Continued from page 12)

wrong conception. In fact, if someone has some amount of inborn talent for singing it can only be considered a bonus. The rest of the singing part is hard work, commitment, passion and the will to take proper singing lesson exercises.

As regards talent, it is a very gray area not worth discussing especially when people misuse it or not use it. This is amply proved by television shows like American Idol where supposedly talented singers come up and do an awful job and are totally taken aback when the judges expel them from the show. You will also find a lot of timid and shy people who can sing fairly well but are doubtful about their own talent for singing. Both the categories of people need to know that they have to work hard to develop their talent and use it to its full potential.

Best Way to Teach Yourself To Sing (Especially For Beginners)

There are different ways of developing your voice and improving your singing quality. Singing lesson exercises can be had with a one to one training with a private coach if finances are not a problem for you. Remember that these classes cost a bomb and once you start you may need to finish the course to see some effect. However, one to one teaching is definitely worth it because the teacher takes exclusive care to see that you develop your singing skills and tailors the coaching to your specific needs. On the other hand, to identify a good vocal trainer is not all that easy and they are very much in demand.

Singing CD / DVD Programs

Another option would be to select a singing course that has been converted to CD lessons by good vocal tutors. There are quite a few options by famous professional singers who have developed self-learning singing courses that include, booklets, CD s and videos with which you can train yourself at your own pace. This is by far a more economical option when compared to a private tutor, and it also gives you the freedom of time. So if you are committed and patient, go for it.

Conclusion

The practice has an ambiguous meaning attached to it. It does not always refer to the taking of formal practice lessons; it may also refer to a little experimenting, having fun with singing at any time. This means you can sing while cooking while driving to work or at any other favorable time; however, you are cautioned against overdoing it. If you overdo it, you may end up straining

your voice which is something that you do not want.

The use of a mirror is also encouraged in learning how to sing. Standing before a mirror while practicing will assist you to make the necessary adjustments needed such as your poise, which improves your singing.

Additional Tips:

Drink water: Just like any other machine, your vocal cords need lubrication. Drinking enough water during singing practice to keeps your vocal cords wet and well lubricated. This prevents your voice from becoming croaky.

HARMONY FOUNDATION INTERNATIONAL

from an HFI letter and harmonyfoundation.org

We recently received a check for \$568.50. When donors make financial gifts to Harmony Foundation, they have the choice to dedicate portions of that funding to their District, Chapter, and/or Brigade while at the same time helping Harmony Foundation support the other barber-shop programs through our grant cycle as well.

Here is the list of contributing donors for gifts received January 1 – June 30, 2023.

Alexander, John & Margaret
Gipp, George & Cathie
Henry, Sue
Sobolewski, Mike & Jan
Stump, Bob & Fran

Harmony Foundation believes that singing improves lives, and we seek philanthropic partners who wish to share the gift of singing as a means of making lives more enjoyable, satisfying and meaningful. We provide funding for music education programs for students in middle and high school and college, as well as outreach programs in communities, to promote, develop and advance opportunities for lifelong singing.



POLLUTED VOWELS

by Brody McDonald
from choirbites.com

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**BETTER VOWELS
IN AN INSTANT**

by Brody McDonald
from choirbites.com

Vowels, vowels, vowels. Choir directors are all about vowels. Vowels are all about shape. The biggest problem I encounter with vowels is that they lack height. Another problem is that they lack structure. Here are some tips to help both problems.

AW-ROO - your new best friend. AW-ROO came to me from Jean Barford, a champion Sweet Adeline barbershop singer/director. Just slowly say "AW-ROO." You should feel as if you are making the shape of a cheerleader's megaphone, only facing backwards. The larger end (AW) is in the back of your throat. The smaller end (ROO) is in the front with your lips. The theory behind AW-ROO is that all vowels are inside that megaphone/cone. Larger vowels (EH, AW, AH, OH) are in the AW space and smaller vowels (EE, IH, OO) are funneled through the ROO space. AW-ROO is tall and round - just what we want! Just saying AW-ROO can remind your choir to guard against "spreading" their vowels. Anything outside that cone is forbidden!

VOWEL BLOSSOM - This is my code for when singers take an especially long time to open their mouths from a closed consonant to a target vowel, thus creating a sound like an old record player getting up to speed. Say the word "swatch" in slow motion and you'll feel a vowel blossom. These often occur when singers are attempting a crescendo. They increase space and volume at the same time, rather than forming a firm, structured vowel and increasing the volume independently. The first step to eliminating vowel blossoms is to acknowledge their existence. The next step is...

INSTABANG - another barbershop gem, and the cure for vowel blossoms. It refers to the process of getting quickly from the formation of a consonant back to a large, open, pure vowel formation. BANG! Snap that vowel open in an instant: INSTABANG, as in, "Come on, choir - instabang those vowels!" (Notes: this was coined before Instagram, but that can't hurt for tying this concept in with young singers. If you are afraid of any giggles, you could also change the word to INSTAPOP.)

FREE YOUR VOICE

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

(continued from last month)

The Face
Strategies and Exercises

- Be careful when overly rounding your lips for vowel sounds and pushing them forward off your teeth. (Some people call it the embouchure, likening it to the lip shapes created by players of certain instruments) Refer to the photographs below. Every singer is different. Something that works for one does not always work for another. A little lip shaping can be very helpful for vowels like 'oo', 'oh', and 'er'. Just be aware that too much places strain on your jaw, tongue and larynx, and will darken and 'cover' your sound by restricting front/nasal resonance. Additionally, thrusting the lips forward too far into a rounded shape can make facial expressions look decidedly unnatural. Many barbershop harmony singers were taught for years to thrust their lips forward and found them at all times. I find it detrimental for my 'ah' and 'eh' and 'ay' sounds. I am not a fan of it for 'ee' sounds either. But I will not totally rule out the approach. As I said, every singer is different. Find what is comfortable, unforced, and sounds free and consistent to a trusted ear. A subtle shaping can help, but remember that vowel sounds do not originate in the lips.

Note: When some singers raise their cheeks slightly and sing with a few, loose jaw, they may look like they are pressing their lips forward off their teeth. I have had an observer comment to me that he thought I was creating the 'embouchure' with my lips. However, it was purely incidental. I made no conscious attempt to push my rounded lips forward. Instead I was focused on comfortable raising my cheeks and the imaginary lines from the corners of my mouth to my ears.

(to be continued next month)

**FREE SINGING TIPS**

by Yvonne DeBandi
from a2z-singing-tips.com

P = Prepare your instrument before singing. Singers are very much like athletes. Take care of your body/instrument by stretching out the vocal muscles and relieving the body of unnecessary tension before singing.

FREE SINGING TIPS

by Nicole LeGault
from a2z-singing-tips.com

P is for Projection. Projection is the art of pushing the sound (via the air) up, and forward, and away from you. Singers, actors, and public speakers do it. "Reach for the back row". Remember that even when your voice is going down in pitch and in volume, the projection always moves up and forward and away – because it is your directly related to your airflow.

FREE SINGING TIPS

by Mick Walsh
from a2z-singing-tips.com

P. Preparation is very important. Like an Athlete always make sure you are properly warmed up and prepared both mentally and physically before you begin any singing regime. If you were to run a hundred yards straight off the bat without warming up, you would probably pull a muscle. Same with singing. Gently, warm up your voice and think positive thoughts before you begin.

FREE SINGING TIPS

by Teri Danz
from a2z-singing-tips.com

P- Placement -- Knowing (not guessing) where pitches are placed is critical to being in control as a singer. You can actually have your body help you in remembering where pitches are placed. If you are on stage and can't hear/have no monitors etc..., knowing placement will allow you to stay on pitch no matter what happens around you.



QUARTET CORNER

Our quartets have re-formed.

What is YOUR quartet doing? Don't have one? Find three other guys and start one! Can't find a match? Drop me a line and I'll run a list of guys looking to quartet up here in the bulletin. It's one of those really fun things that you don't fully understand until you've done it.

It's never too early to be thinking about Singing Valentines. Quartets are always needed, officially formed or pickup. It's only a few easy songs. Learning more than one voice part to these songs can help make you easier to fit into a quartet.



CHAPTER QUARTETS



On Point

Taylor Gaspar tenor
Daniel Pesante lead
Timothy Keatley bari
Alexander Burney bass

Four More Guys

Dan Kulik tenor
Ken Moyer lead
Jason Dearing bari
John Alexander bass

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	02 Nov	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	09 Nov	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	16 Nov	Singout TBA / SotW
Thu	23 Nov	Thanksgiving Day
Thu	30 Nov	Shepherd of the Woods

Thu	07 Dec	Cypress Village
Thu	14 Dec	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	21 Dec	Singout TBA / SotW
Thu	28 Dec	Christmas Break

BIRTHDAYS

Dale Martin	09 Nov
Jim Hughes	11 Nov
Ken Moyer	24 Nov

PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

Tue	28 Nov	Heyday Stratton show
Thu	07 Dec	Cypress Village show
Sat	02 Feb	Icemen game (AAFM)
F/S/S	22-24 Mar	SUN District Spring Convention
Sat	18 May	Jacksonville Festival of Choirs

...more to come

NAME BADGE ETIQUETTE

Hey guys! Wearing of our name badges is an important task. Not only does it identify you to others, it provides for a casual greeting to all your friends. A name badge opens up all kinds of communication skills that can lead to getting off on the right foot with others.

It also lets everyone know that you are ready to make friends and become productive in, greasing the skids, so to speak, in securing friendships from the initial point of meeting.

Lastly, if you are prone to forgetting names, a name badge can help you remember your own name when you forget it. This probably applies to many of our older members, whom you are probably one. Just wear the name badge please, especially when attending our meetings.

**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.**

RECENT GUESTS

Jeff Fullmer	Doug Schultz
Ryan Himes	Ron Geno
Mike Ryan	McKayle Callan
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
Shamus McIner	Carl Kircher
Sirlister Smiley	Rob Taylor
Peter Gugisberg	Toby Max
Sean Lubbers	Bob Mandzi
Dominic Lambarti	

WELCOME**NEWEST MEMBERS**

Kenneth Moyer	June
Richard Chapman	July
Taylor Despars	September
Dan Kulik	September
Steve Moody	September
Margaret Phillips	September
Lee Hillman	October
Ken Huang	October

2023 DIRECTING TEAM



Daniel Pesante
Front Line
Director

PHOTO
NOT
AVAILABLE

Timothy Keatley
Assistant
Director

2023 OTHER CHAPTER LEADERS



David Walker
Uniform
Manager



Les Mower
Chorus
Manager



John Alexander
Bulletin
Editor



Frank Nosalek
Webmaster &
Technology



Ken Moyer
Equipment
Manager

EDITOR'S NOTE

Article and column submissions are solicited.
Help make this a better bulletin. Send me stuff!
The deadline for November is 24 October.
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 SINGERS ON THE RISERS
BE A SINGER-BRINGER**



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