The Orange Spiel

News Of The Jacksonville Big O Chapter

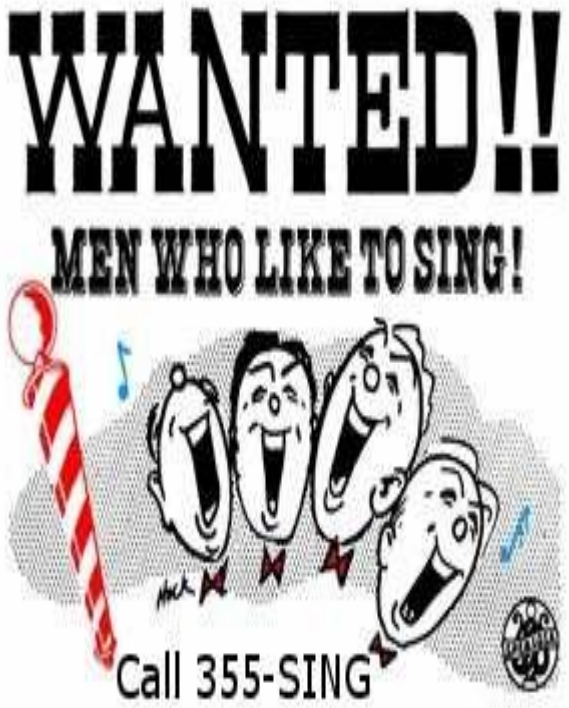
http://www.BigOrangeChorus.com

Volume 40 Issue 12 *December 2020*

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



HOW THE ARLINGTONES GAVE A "CONCERT IN THE PARKING LOT"

from barbershop.org

Like many busy choruses, the Arlingtones of Arlington Heights, Illinois, found themselves at loose ends when the pandemic required suspension of normal chapter activities.

For a group accustomed to singing more than two dozen gigs each year, the timeout has been rough.

"It isn't our style to just rehearse on Zoom or in-person without a goal in sight," says chorus manager Jerry Reed. "I'm always looking for opportunities for us to perform, whether it is a service club luncheon, doing the National Anthem at a sporting event, or singing at Memory Cafes."

Some careful planning and innovative thinking allowed the chorus to perform a complimentary gig they called "Concert in the Parking Lot" for residents of a low-income retirement facility.

To provide maximum protection for the residents and ourselves, our chorus purchased special masks that are specifically designed for singers, plus we were socially distanced. Our sound system allowed the audience to sit at least 25 feet away and hear us without any problems," says Jerry.

Note especially the pavement markings where the singers stand—good physical separation is deliberately and thoughtfully engineered into their event planning.

In light of the current public health emergency, we are all wondering when we might be able to safely sing together again. Just as we understand that voices united in song can make a positive and meaningful impact on ourselves and those around us, we should also recognize that we must work together to prevent the spread of

(Continued on page 3)

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

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

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

EDITORIAL

It's been a while since we were able to perform. So, we've lined up a Christmas Show and we're working on several more. They'll be masked and distanced (and outdoors). Let's make plans to be there. It'll be fun, and it's what we do. The set list has been out there (Orange Zest) for some time. Are you ready?

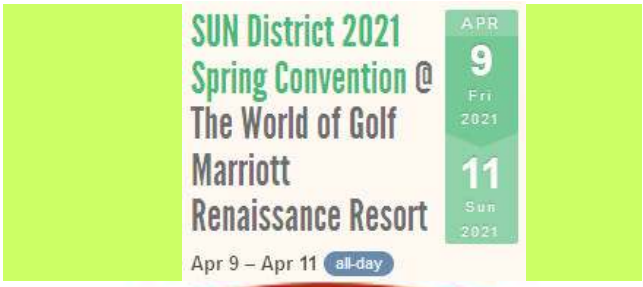
Those who have opted for COVID or other reasons to not be attending rehearsals during this troubling time, please keep in mind how much fun we have had singing together. If you get out of the habit of joining with us or start a new habit on "our" day, we could lose each other. At least, keep singing.

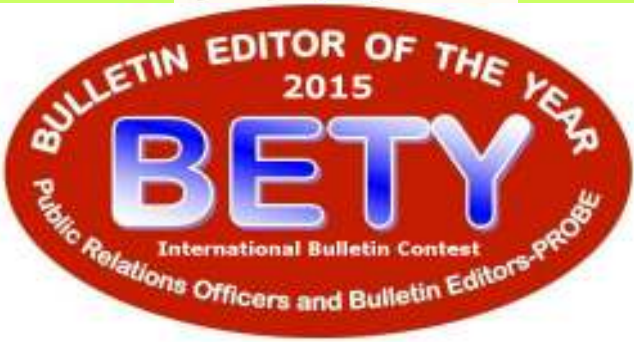
We have some positions (both board and committee) that need filling. If you can help, as a leader or a helper, please see Jason.

We need more members. Please invite friends, acquaintances, and even strangers to come as a guest. Many of those who try what we do, will enjoy what we do. Let's not be a well-kept secret.

Continue looking for gigs (both paying and not). We enjoy performing, more people will see and hear us, and some of them might want to join in the fun.

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





HOW THE ARLINGTONES GAVE A CONCERT (continued)

(Continued from page 1)

COVID-19.

The COVID-19 Interim Guidance For BHS Ensembles And Singing Communities (https://www.barbershop.org/landing-pages/covid-19-resources-for-barbershoppers#interim-guidance) includes background information around COVID-19, discusses how the choral ecosystem has responded in light of the science behind the virus, guidance for all singing communities, including quartets and choruses, and considerations around insurance.

See it and more resources for virtual rehearsals, drive-in meetings and more on our COVID-19 Resources for Barbershoppers page (https://www.barbershop.org/landing-pages/covid-19-resources-for-barbershoppers).

MAGIC CHORAL TRICK #392 LOW REGISTER BUBBLING WARM UP

by Janet Kidd
from betterchoirs.wordpress.org

Many thanks to my friend Jill Woodley for revitalizing my enthusiasm for warming up the voice by bubbling.

She told my chorus that she's discovered that bubbling (or doing a lip trill) for the length of an entire song, sung in your low register works the best.

Although I've always realized the value of the technique I'm not sure I've ever done it for the full length of Billy Joel's The Longest Time – a fittingly appropriate reminder for the recommended duration of the exercise.

And bubbling it in a low register kept everything so relaxed that our voices warmed up significantly faster. (Yes – this is a rangy song, but easily manageable if the first note is right near the bottom of your range)

However, for the folks who simply cannot bubble in a relaxed, easy way I've tried a very gentle Zzz instead – and as long as the Zzz is kept light and very legato it works almost as well.

I've done this now with several of my groups in their Zoom rehearsals. Three minutes on Zoom seems like an eternity, but that amount of low bubbling was enough to get almost everyone to a self reported warmed up level of 7 or 8 out of 10. Sometimes I just had them bubble through a simple song multiple times (you don't have to use Billy Joel's song)

We tested for warm up level by singing through You Are My Sunshine to see how everything was feeling.

After that it took only another minute or so of bubbling or lightly Zzzing a simple two or three note exercise for people to start reporting that their voices were warmed up to a 9 or 10 out of 10.

All in less than 5 minutes!!

SINGING WITH AN 'OPEN THROAT': VOCAL TRACT SHAPING

PART 2

by Karyn O'Connor
from singwise.com

A singer should begin with good bodily posture. He or she should stand up straight, with the shoulders back, the chin level and the head in a comfortable speaking position. The front of the neck should not be stretched, but loose. This posture will help put the jaw into the proper position for voice training, which, in turn, will improve vocal fold function. Breath support will also be improved.

Posture can be monitored using a wall, with the head looking straightforward. Maintain the slight, natural curves in the small of the back and in the neck. This will offer the correct head posture for singing in all registers.

During training or performances, it is also best not to keep the head turned to either side for any length of time. Although there may be some performance situations in which the head must remain turned (e. g., in musical theatre, in order to make eye contact with the audience while sitting at a piano, etc.), it is best to keep the head facing straight during all singing demands whenever possible.

If the singer must (or chooses to) sit while singing, it is important to keep the back straight, not hunched, in order to allow for better breath support. This is a big challenge for singers who play the guitar while seated, because they tend to lean over their instruments, curving the spine and bending the neck forward.

It is important to maintain proper chin posture, even when singing very high or very low notes. A chin that is comfortably positioned will ensure that the jaw remains properly aligned for optimal voice training. The head should be held neither too high nor too low but remain in the communicative position of normal speech. This consistent posture helps to create a more balanced voice training session and, eventually, a more pleasing performance.

There is a tendency amongst singers to employ low head positions during the execution of low notes and high head positions during the singing of high notes. However, the chin must not crane forward (jut out) or elevate for ascending pitch nor lower or tuck in for pitch descent, as these positions are unfavourable to the singing voice.

Raising the chin or head does not free the larynx. Nor does using the head to reach for high notes enable the vocalist to sing those higher pitches. Instead, tension is created, and accessing the upper register becomes more difficult, if not unlikely.

Likewise, a low head position presses the submandibular muscles downward on the larynx, creating tension and discomfort. This is a situation whereby singers depress the larynx with the jaw or chin, burying their chins into their larynxes, thinking that they are getting more color or darkness in the voice. However, the result is a non-resonant, 'hooty' and 'dark' quality that is not only unpleasant, but also fails to carry in a concert hall. A depressed larynx technique makes for an extremely limited vocal production that can never be heard to the extent of a fully resonant tone. For some singers, burying their chins into their larynxes seems to bounce their resonance off their sternums (chest bones). However, the audience does not hear the same sound in this posture.

The only way to produce healthy darkness in the voice is with the 'rounding of the vowels' that is achieved by using the oval mouth shape. (The concept of 'rounding the vowels' is covered in more depth in the section on vowel modification, in Vowels, Vowel Formants and Vowel Modification.) This lengthens the vocal tract and allows for a rounder and warmer colour to come into the singer's vocal production. (I also discuss correct mouth shaping in more detail in other sections of this article.)

In singers whose throats are 'closed', the sidewalls of the throat will sometimes 'collapse', where the neck muscles will curve inward, creating a half moon shape on each side of the neck, which means that the pharynx is collapsing.

FACIAL POSTURE

The quality of tone in the singing voice is directly affected by one's facial posture because of its effects on the interior posture of the throat. There is an acoustical relationship between correct facial posture and healthy tone that is balanced between higher and lower overtones. (See formants.)

(Continued on page 5)

SINGING WITH AN 'OPEN THROAT' (continued)

(Continued from page 4)

Some singers pull down their cheeks, (or allow them to droop), and cover their teeth completely while singing, making singing difficult and 'hooty'. If the facial posture is pulled down, which also lowers the soft palate, then the singer must work twice as hard with breath pressure to blow the soft palate out of the way. The result is usually a pushed and unpleasant tone, with high notes that are flat in intonation.

A healthy facial posture is established when breath is taken. The cheeks should gently rise under the eyes. This action moves the uvula away from the back of the tongue, lifts the soft palate and prevents drooping of the cheek muscles. The cheeks should be sunken a little at the back molars, which opens the back wall of the pharynx, at inhalation. Finally, the jaw should be 'collected' gently back in order for the larynx to release downward. Using a mirror to self-supervise this facial posture exercise is helpful.

Having the zygomatic muscles follow patterns associated with pleasant facial expressions - be careful that you do not create a full smile, however - achieves an uncontrived adjustment of the entire buccopharyngeal (mouth-pharynx) cavity. It avoids unnatural attempts to create internal space where it is not possible to do so.

Without 'lift', the singer's voice does not carry properly in a concert hall or opera house because the Singer's Formant cannot be achieved. Lifting the cheeks under the eyes - not smiling, but assuming a pleasant expression - brings the soft palate up and brings ring into the voice, and therefore carrying power. Some vocal instructors may call this technique 'lifting', and may have their students practice singing with a pleasant expression on their faces. When the facial posture is lifted, high overtones - those which are necessary for the development of the Singer's Formant - come into the singer's vocal production.

THE SOFT PALATE

The action of the soft palate (velum) is a major focus of students wishing to 'open the throat' for singing.

During inhalation, when a singer is preparing to sing, the soft palate automatically rises, allowing more space for airflow. (This action can be observed by looking into a mirror while opening the mouth and inhaling.) For this reason, deep breathing is sometimes a successful device for relaxing the throat and preventing rigidity.

The key is to learn to maintain this initial elevated position while singing, not allowing the soft palate to lower substantially. Sustaining a high soft palate is particularly important while singing in head voice - in the upper passaggio and range above the staff. In upper range, the fauces elevate even more, with the soft palate following suit, just as happens in high-pitched laughter.

During singing and speaking in English, the velum is lowered only for the formation of nasal consonants. To suggest that the velum be held low during nonnasals is contrary to the laws of acoustics. If velopharyngeal-port closure is lacking during nonnasals, undesirable nasality intrudes. There is nearly universal agreement among phoneticians, speech therapists and teachers of singing that nasality, apart from intended, intermittent nasal phonemes, is unacceptable timbre.

The techniques of 'lifting' and imagining the neutral vowel 'uh' in the throat before bringing the tone into focus - both of which are outlined in the How To - And How Not To - Achieve An 'Open Throat' section - both encourage the lifting of the soft palate during inhalation and the maintenance of this initial elevated posture during singing.

LARYNX

Please note that the buccopharyngeal (mouth-pharynx) resonator plays a feedback role in laryngeal action, so the focus of the singer should be on the articulators not on the larynx itself. Attempting to exercise direct laryngeal controls causes the articulatory mechanism to malfunction and often leads to vocal health concerns.

The ideal position of the larynx during singing within lower and middle registers is relaxed and low. This position is achieved with every complete breath renewal. In other words, when a singer is preparing to sing (i.e., inhaling), the larynx naturally lowers. Gently place a hand on your larynx then inhale. As air enters the lungs, the larynx can be felt moving down a bit. (This action can also be observed in a mirror.)

(Continued on page 6)

SINGING WITH AN 'OPEN THROAT' (continued)

(Continued from page 5)

Because of the increase in energy demanded, the larynx naturally adopts a slightly lower level for singing than for speech. It is the student of voice's goal to maintain this lowered position during singing in all parts of the range. As vocalizing begins, the larynx should not move upwards, although it will rock or 'tilt' (pivot) slightly when the head register is approached and entered.

Allowing the larynx to rise invites numerous problems with tone balance, registration, blending, discomfort, etc.. Higher pitches require more space, and an elevated larynx shortens the resonator tract, making higher notes more difficult to sing. With a high larynx, getting into the upper passaggio and the high vocal range is usually difficult because the folds can't pivot properly for the correct register changes to occur. The vocal folds also do not close properly. No part of the vocal tract, then, is in the correct position for healthy singing to occur.

Singing with a raised larynx will also produce a thin, innocuous timbre that lacks warmth and depth, as well as volume. A high larynxed technique generally produces what is often called a 'boys choir' sound.

Furthermore, poor technique, such as using too much breath pressure, may cause the larynx to rise and create a 'squeezing' of the throat, especially as pitch ascends upward into the head register, rather than a healthy 'ring' in the voice. Training to sing in a range or tessitura that is not natural for a singer's voice can also create issues with the position of the larynx. A lyric baritone, for example, will not be able to sustain a tenor tessitura with a lower larynx position. The result will usually be a squeezed or tight throat, which can be damaging (e.g., causing irritation to the vocal folds and possible injury). The singer is trying desperately to 'lighten up the voice'. This concept of lightening the voice needs to be taught with a deep body connection (breath support). The only way a large voiced singer can lighten up his or her tonal quality is to connect deeper to the body.

Some teachers advocate placing a hand just above the laryngeal prominence - (the laryngeal prominence is colloquially known as either the Adam's apple or Eve's apple) - after inhalation and holding the larynx in that lower position using the hand while singing, especially while ascending the scale. This is an injurious technique, as it may lead to bruising, as well as malfunction, of the larynx because it is being manually restrained from the outside and forced to remain in one position regardless of the pitch being sung or the linguistic requirements, (including vowels), of the text. Never in any kind of vocal training should the larynx, or any other part of the vocal tract for that matter, be physically or manually forced to 'behave'. Instead, training the larynx to remain relaxed and low should be approached safely (gently) and correctly, beginning with an examination and retraining of the other components of the vocal tract that may be affecting the position of the larynx, as well as the singer's breath management. (Again, the focus should be on the articulators, not the larynx itself.)

If the teacher has the student gently place his or her hand on the larynx while vocalizing, without attempting to manipulate or obstruct its movement from the exterior, for the purpose of having the student monitor the action of the larynx, such a practice is appropriate and safe. In fact, some students who are typically unaware of when their larynxes are rising until they feel extreme discomfort in the throat region gain more awareness of the vocal mechanism by either watching the movement of the larynx in a mirror or gently, (placing no physical pressure on it), monitoring it with their fingers.

If the larynx rises in the upper middle register, usually caused by a lack of the laryngeal tilt or 'rocking of the larynx' that must happen in the upper middle register and above in order for head voice to be accessed, tone will become thin and tight sounding. Head voice occurs as a result of the laryngeal tilt and if that tilt does not happen, then the singer will experience extreme difficulty in the upper passaggio. The singer can either think the vowel deeper and wider as he or she goes up, or alter the vowel enough to allow for this process to occur. (I will discuss vowel modification in greater depth in the second part to this article, to be posted in mid June of 2009.) Different singers respond differently and one might respond to the vowel alteration, while another might respond to the laryngeal tilt concept. Besides the laryngeal tilt, a singer may be instructed in the pre-vomit reflex - what the Italians called the vomitare - which will ensure that the laryngeal tilt will occur properly.

Equally unhealthy to the singing voice is a depressed (overly low) laryngeal position, as it can

(Continued on page 7)

SINGING WITH AN 'OPEN THROAT' (continued)

(Continued from page 6)

cause pathological problems for the voice. While the larynx does need to be relaxed and low during singing, a depressed larynx is both incorrect and damaging. The larynx should never be forced down, such as with the root of the tongue. It is crucial that the singer learn a slightly low larynx production without overly depressing the larynx with the root of the tongue.

If taught with the nasal resonance and the 'NG' tongue position - with the 'NG' formed with the middle of the tongue and the tongue tip in its correct resting place - the slightly lowered larynx makes for a healthy, warm, and balanced vocal tone that includes both higher and lower overtones.

THE LIPS

There are some teachers and choir directors who instruct their students or choir members to pucker their lips while singing. Pulling downward on the upper lip to cover the upper teeth alters the shape of the articulation system, and forces all vowels to become distorted. Try puckering your lips, as in the [u] position while singing the vowel [i] ('eeh'), and take note of how terrible it sounds. It destroys the chiaroscuro relationship among the harmonic partials, overly darkening the tone, and the vowel itself no longer sounds like an [i].

Furthermore, this technique creates tension and tightens the back of the throat. It affects buccopharyngeal (mouth-pharynx) space, creating less space for resonance and reverses the role of the zygomatic muscles, as they can't lift the cheeks, and thus the soft palate, when they are being pulled forward and down. It is also unnatural, looks strange, and creates phonetic and acoustic distortion.

During speech, lip postures vary somewhat from person to person. However, the lips should never be brought forward to sing as a fixed position. For both speaking and singing, the shape of the vocal tract is in constant flux, and there is no one ideal position of the mouth or the lips for either. If the upper teeth are visible during speaking, they should also be visible during singing.

THE JAW

Jaw tension is a very common complaint amongst singers, and it is often caused by incorrect posture of the jaw during singing and speaking. This tension, which will likely adversely affect vocal health over time, is a symptom of poor technique that will also manifest itself in an unpleasant, imbalanced tone.

The correct jaw position is slightly down and wrapped back. In Italian, this ideal singing posture is referred to as 'raccogliere la bocca', which translates as 'to collect the mouth'. It refers to the avoidance of excessive jaw dropping or jaw-wagging during singing, both of which are techniques that may cause the temporomandibular joints to pop out of their sockets. The natural processes of vowel and consonantal definition are inherent components of the historic raccogliere la bocca concept. These principles maintain harmonic balance, especially when singing in the speech-inflection range.

The jaw should be relaxed at all times during singing and speech. When singing, the jaw should be allowed to drop, but not push forward or down too far. It should feel as though it is hanging loosely and comfortably from its 'hinges' feeling space in between our back teeth. As the jaw lowers, the singer should keep the elevation of the zygomatic fauscia, which is accomplished by a pleasant facial expression.

The mouth should be opened only wide enough to get a full, resonant tone, but no wider. The idea that powerful singers open their mouths as wide as possible is a myth, as I will explain momentarily. Although singing requires opening the mouth wider than speaking does, exactly how wide depends not only on the specific vowel or consonant being sung, but also on the pitch and volume (dynamic intensity) of the note. To help facilitate correct jaw placement, singers can experiment to find the optimal mouth size for each sound that they sing. The size of the opening should be comfortable, change appropriately for the vowel being sung, and help you to produce optimal resonance and maintain diction.

One very common technique that many vocal instructors and choir directors teach involves dropping the jaw excessively. Choir members are generally encouraged to open their mouths widely because it is thought, though incorrectly, to help them singer louder and make their voices heard better by the audience by creating a more open space for resonation. However, forcefully dropping the jaw from the temporomandibular joint does not produce more space in either the pharynx or the larynx. Instead, dropping the mandible

(Continued on page 8)

SINGING WITH AN 'OPEN THROAT' (continued)

(Continued from page 7)

actually narrows pharyngeal space and forces the submandibular musculature to press downward on the larynx.

A mouth that is opened too widely creates a throat that is too closed. This technique of extreme jaw lowering contradicts, and will not be in line with, what is known about normal acoustical function. A jaw that is too low actually places tension on the larynx, lowers the soft palate and inhibits the effective closure of the vocal folds, which is the opposite of the desired effect.

Furthermore, dropping the jaw produces radical changes among relationships of the formants, in both low and high registers, causing a reduction in or elimination of the harmonics (upper partials) essential to balanced vocal timbre. When these formants are absent, the voice lacks resonance and thus carrying power. Less volume is produced, and the tone that is heard by the audience is often lacking the warmth of proper resonance balancing.

Some choir directors and vocal teachers also believe falsely that a larger buccal (mouth) opening will assist their singers with diction. Contrary to their thinking, excessive jaw dropping upsets natural phonetic processes, as a singer can't clearly articulate or pronounce words when the mouth is shaped in such an unnatural way, making clear diction impossible. A uniformly dull voice timbre is produced. Vibrancy is measurably reduced, and vocal brilliance is eliminated, regardless of the voice's intrinsic beauty.

Some choir directors who teach this technique actually aim to have their singers produce uniformity of timbre so that no individual voice stands out in a choir. This requires stripping the more resonant voices of the healthy overtones that make them stand out favourably. However, excessive jaw dropping - leading to an overly large buccal opening - is an unhealthy approach to achieving blending within a group of singers. Such a mandibular posture induces undesirable tensions in the submandibular region (muscles located below the jaw), and invites numerous problems with tone and registration. Furthermore, it produces what is widely known as the 'choir boy' sound - an immature vocal timbre that is lacking in presence and power, and that no adult singer should be asked or expected to produce.

Some teachers will even instruct their students to physically and forcefully hold down their lower jaws while singing, such as when they are told to make a perpendicular shield of the three middle fingers, then place them between the upper and lower teeth to keep the mouth opened as wide as possible. In addition to creating tension, pulling down on the jaw encourages the elimination of upper partials that ought to be present during all singing, but especially solo singing. There is no phonatory task in speech (in any language) that requires the extent of jaw lowering perpetrated by the three-finger-insertion method.

Furthermore, it creates tension, discomfort and pain, which may lead to chronic problems such as TMJ syndrome, a disorder which may include symptoms such as acute or chronic inflammation of the temporomandibular joints, pain, dysfunction (e.g., 'clicking' during chewing or speaking) and impairment (e.g., 'locking' of the jaw joints). A mandible (jaw) that is dropped from its socket - which is what happens when the mouth is opened too widely - is not relaxed. Dropping the jaw excessively, whether in a futile attempt to relax tension or to introduce additional depth or roundness by strengthening the first formant, invites TMJ.

We have two temporomandibular joints, one in front of each ear, connecting the lower jawbone - the mandible - to the skull. The joints allow movement up and down, side to side, and forward and back for biting, chewing, swallowing, speaking and making facial expressions. Although the jaw drops when the mouth is opened widely during laughter, it does not become unhinged, whereas in a fully distended yawn, or during vomiting, it does. If you were to place your fingers gently on your temporomandibular joints and pretended to chew, you would feel a small amount of movement of this joint. However, if you were to lower your jaw or push it forward beyond its normal range of motion, you would feel strong action of the joint as it comes out of its socket. This is the point where the jaw has been forced down too far, creating tension. You don't want to ever get to this point while singing, as maintaining such a position for a period of time will cause a large amount of tension at the laryngeal level.

In laughter, the mouth cavity and the vocal tract are indeed both enlarged, the fascia of the cheek region (mask) is elevated, the velum is raised, and the pharyngeal wall is expanded. In such a natural event, the

(Continued on page 9)

SINGING WITH AN 'OPEN THROAT' (continued)

(Continued from page 8)

jaw lowers considerably, but it does not drop out of its temporomandibular socket. Only in vomiting or strenuous regurgitation does the jaw lower extensively. Regurgitation involves an unfavourable rearrangement of pharyngeal space, and shuts off the phonatory mechanism - (the passageway for air, and thus the ability of the vocal folds to produce the voice, is shut off). The more that one assumes the buccopharyngeal vomiting posture, the more one diminishes the space of the pharynx (throat). Therefore, the lowered-jaw technique that some teachers espouse in an effort to improve voice resonance is both unnatural and stress inducing.

Some teachers have their students keep their jaws in relatively the same dropped position during all vowel changes. Often teachers and choir directors believe that it is simpler to instruct their singers to assume one mouth and pharynx posture though which all vowels must then be produced. However, since locking the jaw in one position does not promote the changing acoustic events of phonation, this technique distorts all the vowels through the entire range, destroying both diction and resonance balance. When singers attempt to maintain the same very wide 'oval' shape regardless of the vowel being sung, it is often referred to as the 'locked jaw' (or 'jaw locked open') position.

If the mandible is retained in one low position, all vowel sounds share a common quality of distortion. Holding the jaw in one lowered position produces uniform vowel and timbre distortions, which is in conflict with acoustic phonetics and the physiology of phonation. The changing postures of the lips, tongue, jaw, fascia of the zygomatic region, velum and larynx determine flexible articulation. No one of these contributors, including the jaw and tongue can be held in a set position without inducing strain and distorted voice quality. It should be recalled that there is no single ideal position for the mouth in singing; vowel, tessitura, and dynamic intensity are the determinants. The jaw must not be held in a static position.

There is no fixed resonator position in speech or in song. The jaw must be permitted mobility, allowing flexible adjustments for rapid phonemic and pitch variations, not retained in low or distended positions. The historical international school advocates assuming speech postures in the speech-inflection range (si canta come si parla, or 'one sings as one speaks'). In upper range, the mouth opens more, but the integrity of the vowel, (determined by the postures of the jaw, lips, tongue, velum and larynx), is still maintained, and the jaw never comes out of its joints. Many singers suffering from TMJ or jaw tensions recover from these conditions once proper phonetic postures are reestablished.

Healthy middle voice function cannot be achieved if the mouth is overly opened or the jaw locked in an open position. (Lower male voices seem to fall into the trap of over-opening and locking, and produce what is called in some circles the 'baritone bark'.) When the jaw is lowered, pharyngeal space is actually reduced. Furthermore, the tone that is produced is often thin or 'one-dimensional', as the balance of overtones is often affected.

There is a tendency for many singers to push their jaws forward, especially for higher pitches, or allow it slide forward when singing the [u] vowel sound. The forward jaw technique refers to a jaw position that is too low and then is thrust forward, often out of its sockets. Many students of voice develop a tendency to thrust the jaw forward out of the temporomandibular joints in an attempt to hear their own sound better inside their heads.

Placing the jaw in a distended posture, however, invites acoustical and phonetic distortion - voice timbre becomes drastically distorted - as well as malfunction of the vocal instrument. This mandibular posture produces several negative results. First, when the jaw is placed in a forward position, undesirable tension in the submandibular region (muscles located below the jaw) is induced. Second, the vocal folds approximate (close or come together) poorly, which causes breathiness and prevents the folds from functioning efficiently and healthily. Third, the tongue gets pushed back into the pharynx, filling up the primary resonator with tongue mass, creating a gag reflex at the tongue root and producing a throaty sound. Fourth, this technique elevates the larynx, which contradicts what the singer is trying to accomplish. With the larynx functioning in a high position, only a thin, immature sound is produced. A large 'break' in the voice (also due to the poor adduction of the vocal folds) is also produced. Fifth, normal velar (soft palate) elevation is inhibited, so the soft palate assumes a low position, often resulting in a nasally or thin tone.

(Continued on page 10)

SINGING WITH AN 'OPEN THROAT' (continued)

(Continued from page 9)

There is also often not a healthy separation between jaw and tongue function, which makes the tongue tense and legato (an Italian word meaning 'tied together', suggesting that the transitions between notes should be smooth, without any silence between them) lines impossible to execute. The breath is often choked off by the root of the tongue, making the breath line unhealthy and inefficient. The large amount of tension at the root of the tongue also distorts vowels.

Since the back wall of the pharynx is closed, there also cannot be healthy resonance present in the voice, since most of the healthy high overtones are cut out. It is impossible to produce a healthy sound with the jaw protruding forward.

The mouth cannot be overly opened and still achieve vocal protection. Yet the jaw must be out of the way enough toward the upper passaggio for the correct register flips to occur. When a singer is out of balance, often from the hyperextension of the jaw (jaw thrusting forward out of its socket), the upper passaggio range is problematic.

Some students of voice who experience tensions in the jaw due to incorrect positioning of it find it helpful to work with a mirror. Feeling the jaw move slightly down and back and feeling the gentle chew of the jaw can correct this problem, and can also assist the singer in finding the correct function of the jaw. Also, placing the palm of the hand gently in front of the chin while singing may help the student to become more aware of when the jaw is moving forward. (The student needs to be careful not to restrict the natural and healthy movements of the jaw with the hand, though.)

When a singer needs to relax jaw rigidity, vowel sequences that are in accord with normal tongue and jaw postures can be useful. It may also help for a singer to allow the jaw to drop open as he or she forms his or her words instead of using his or her muscles to forcefully open the mouth. This is known as 'lengthening the jaw'.

THE TONGUE

Most singers, and even many vocal teachers, don't give enough consideration to the role of the tongue during singing. However, the position and shape of the tongue are critical elements of good vocal health and optimal acoustical resonance - the results being governed by the extent to which the tongue controls events of the resonator tube (the vocal tract), and by the tongue's effect on laryngeal efficiency.

Incorrect positions of the tongue are a leading cause of numerous technical and vocal health problems, including undesirable (dull, muddy, harsh or tinny) timbres, distorted vowels, unclear diction, and a depressed larynx leading to discomfort in the throat and an inability to access the head register.

For optimal results, the tip of the tongue should rest behind the lower front teeth during singing. The tip of the tongue should move from this ideal position only briefly in order to form certain consonants. The middle of the tongue should form an arch that must be allowed to move in order to shape the vowels as it naturally would, raising for closed vowels, such as [i], and lowering for more open vowels, such as [a]. The shape of the arch will change for different vowels, but the tip should remain in its 'home' position while singing all vowels. It will move quickly out of this resting place only for the production of consonants, but should return quickly.

Inhalation is also best executed with the tongue in this position in order to prepare more efficiently for singing. When singers inhale loudly - when they are 'noisy breathers' - it is often because the roots of their tongues are slipping back into their throats, closing off the passageway for air and choking the breath. Simply returning the tip of the tongue to its forward position during inhalation is generally enough to help a singer breathe more silently and efficiently.

You can examine your tongue position while looking into a mirror. With the tip of the tongue in its correct resting position behind the top of the lower front teeth, roll the tongue slightly forward in an arched position. Your tongue may not want to behave in this way, particularly if you are accustomed to allowing it to push back into the throat because it produces the exact opposite effect of the gag reflex. However, with practice, you will realize the brilliance of the sound that can be produced. Be sure not to roll the tongue too forward, though.

Using this position is not difficult, and the rewards are great. When the mouth space appears to be smaller due to its being filled with a forward and arched tongue, the back of the throat (pharynx) is actually much more open. When the tongue assumes a

(Continued on page 11)

SINGING WITH AN 'OPEN THROAT' (continued)

(Continued from page 10)

healthy, relaxed, arched posture (e.g., the 'NG' position, formed with the middle - not the back - of the tongue elevated), there is not likely to be tongue tension or throat soreness, and the open acoustical space will create a more pleasant vocal sound. Many technical problems, including those related to vocal registration, will often disappear.

Trying to use other tongue postures in an attempt to achieve more resonance does not allow for the proper shaping of the vocal tract and creates tongue tension.

Some teachers with a poor understanding of the physiology of the voice may instruct their students to artificially depress the tongue (i.e., with a tongue depresser) while looking in a mirror, and may even have them attempt to do so while vocalizing. However, flattening the tongue does not produce more space in the throat, nor more acoustical space for resonance. If the tongue is flattened in an attempt to find more acoustical space in the throat, the mass of the muscles at the back of the tongue (the tongue root) is forced into the pharynx (the back wall of the throat), the very part of the throat that the singer is attempting to open. The primary resonator - the pharynx - becomes filled with the tongue mass, and the voice sounds as though it is being muffled, and has a 'throaty'.

This 'flat tongued' approach creates an unpleasant tone that sounds large, harsh and forced, as well as poor enunciation, as the integrity of the pure Italian vowel sounds become sacrificed. Clear transitions from vowel to vowel are impossible. Healthy nasal resonance disappears, register changes, particularly as the singer ascends the scale, are impossible because the vocal folds are unable to pivot in a healthy manner. Loss of high notes (along with the ability to transition into head voice register) is a particularly common symptom.

One very critical vocal problem, especially for the mezzo-soprano, is that of over-stretching the throat space in the middle register. This feeling of an overly huge throat space often results from depressing the root of the tongue, which places pressure directly on the vocal folds, preventing them from approximating completely, and resulting in a large and problematic register break at the transition between the lower registers. The solution to this problem is to have the singer think less space in the middle register so that she can stretch in the upper passaggio and above. (I will be discussing vowel modification and vocal cover or protection in a follow-up to this article, to be posted in mid June of 2009.)

This practice of singing with a flattened tongue can be very abusive and lead to vocal damage such as vocal hemorrhage, nodules, polyps or bowed or scarred vocal folds, as a great deal of breath pressure is required in order for the voice to rise in pitch. This excessive and constant breath pressure irritates the delicate vocal folds, leading to hoarseness and an inability to phonate healthily.

Breath support often also needs to be addressed, as 'flat tongued' singers typically don't breath low enough in the body, usually because their breath gets choked by the tongue root, as I explained above. Their quick breaths are too high in the body. The tongue can be released, making low breathing more possible, by placing the tongue between the lips and taking a slow, nasal breath. With the tongue trained to be in a more forward position, it cannot bunch up, and the singing breath will generally drop much lower into the body.

A flat, low or retracted tongue posture, sometimes called a 'false cover' - see the section below for a better explanation of the technique of vocal covering as it specifically relates to tongue posture - can be corrected though studying with the 'NG' tongue position, as healthy nasal resonance (not nasality) can completely release tension at the root of the tongue. If the tongue gets bunched up in the back of the throat during singing, exercises involving arpeggios or scales with the tongue in the correct 'NG' position (relaxed, with the root of the tongue out of the throat and the sound being shaped with the middle, not the back, portion of the tongue, and the tongue being forward and arched in the mouth space) will usually correct the problem.

This concept can be applied to repertoire by slowly moving from the 'NG' to a vowel, lifting the soft palate away from the tongue-root in order to expand and invite the upper overtones. Once the vowel feel is established then this feeling may be kept for a line of text. At first the singer will sometimes feel uncomfortable and report an overly bright or harsh sound inside their heads. This is mainly due to the fact that the singer has a history of listening instead of feeling, which creates a false colour in their internal hearing. With practice, though, the warmth will come into the

(Continued on page 12)

SINGING WITH AN 'OPEN THROAT' (continued)

(Continued from page 11)

sound as the larynx and tongue separate in function. When the tension at the root of the tongue releases, then the singer can realize free flying tonal quality and complete freedom of the vocal mechanism. The color comes into the vocal production as the tongue releases.

For my students with tongues that persistently slip back into their throats, I sometimes have them try singing with their tongues sticking out between the lips - wrapped over the lower lip. The students will sing a 'ba' sound during three-note exercises or short scales or arpeggios. (They must beware and avoid the tendency to also allow the lower mandible to move forward along with the tongue, as this will create tension.) While a singer's tongue would never protrude this far during ordinary speaking or singing demands, assuming this forward tongue position for training exercises prevents the tongue from bunching up in the throat. For many students, this allows them to experience for the first time the feeling of the relaxed, open throat while singing, especially in the head register. Most can finally find freedom in and above the upper passaggio, accessing full head voice for the first time without strain or a thinning of the sound. Once they get a sense of how it feels to keep the tongue out of the way in order to allow the throat to open properly, they then attempt to achieve this same freedom of the throat with the tongue position that is appropriate for each vowel and consonant. For many students, this simple exercise is successful at quickly retraining their retracted or depressed tongues.

ENTER THE BHS YULETIDE FAVORITES QUARTET CONTEST FOR A CHANCE TO WIN A $100 MARKETPLACE SHOPPING SPREE!

from barbershop.org

This holiday season, spread holiday cheer and compete for a $100 BHS Marketplace store credit for your quartet.

How to enter the contest:

1. Sing and record a video with all four parts singing your favorite song from our Yuletide Favorites Vol. I Songbook (see special deal below) in any voicing (TTBB/men's, SSAA/women's, or SATB/mixed).

You may record the video in person, or virtually using an app.

2. Submit your video to Facebook using the BHS hashtag #yuletidefavs2020. If you don't have a Facebook page, you can submit your video using this form.

Submissions are due to by midnight, Friday, December 18th.

3. Share your video with your friends via social media, and encourage them to submit their own videos!

4. BHS we will awarding a $100 Marketplace store credit to each winning quartet for each classification (TTBB/men's, SSAA/women's, and SATB/mixed)!

Eligibility requirements:

Your quartet must be registered at the Free, Basic, Standard, or Premium levels. If you've not registered your quartet, you can sign up for free today.

Get 30% OFF BHS Yuletide
Songbooks and learning tracks!

This beloved 19-song collection of holiday classics in the barbershop style is now available for SSAA (high-voices) and SATB (mixed-voices), along with the original TTBB addition. High-quality learning tracks are also available for all voicings. This is the perfect holiday resource for any ensemble!

Enter PROMO CODE yuletide30 to receive 30% OFF any Yuletide Favorites Vol. I Songbook, Learning and Singalong Tracks.

Note: this coupon is only good for Yuletide products. If you wish to purchase additional products, please create a second order.

Code valid through 12/31/2020.

Shop Now:

https://shop.barbershop.org/search.php?search_query=yuletide1

DONATING TO HARMONY FOUNDATION INTERNATIONAL

by Rick Morin

Many of you are aware of the Harmony Foundation International (HFI) organization. This organization has been a proud supporter of barbershop fundraising and support for many years. The funds donated to them are used to sponsor multiple events, including our Youth programs throughout the Society.

Members who donate to HFI, can designate up to 15% to be returned to their chorus or district for their general use. We currently have 8 members who have been donating to HFI over the past year, and their portion to the chorus has been received.

In October, we received a check for $1,009.50 for the period of July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020. This was received from 8 members / family friends of the chorus. They are:

John and Margaret Alexander
Jay and Helen Giallombardo
George and Cathie Gipp
Sue Henry
Steve and Libby Mullens
Howdy and Teresa Russell
Mike and Jan Sobolewski
Ken and Melissa Tureski

If you would like to support barbershop signing and your chorus, please consider signing up for one of their levels of support.

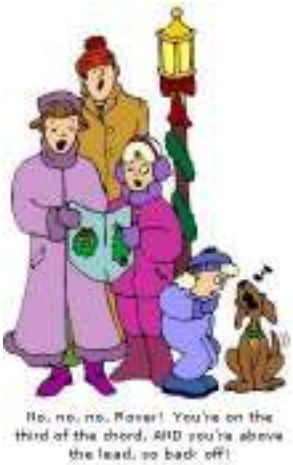
- Key Voices – Up to $119 annually
- Ambassador of Song – Starting at $10 per month for an annual gift of $600 to $999
- President's Council – Starting at $83.34 per month for an annual gift of $1,000 and up

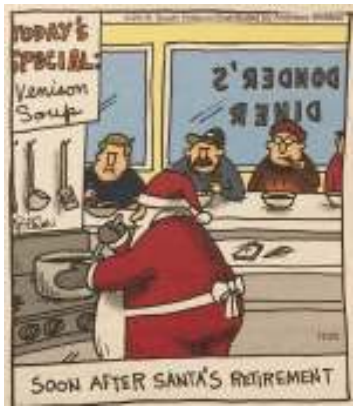
Please visit these two links for more information.

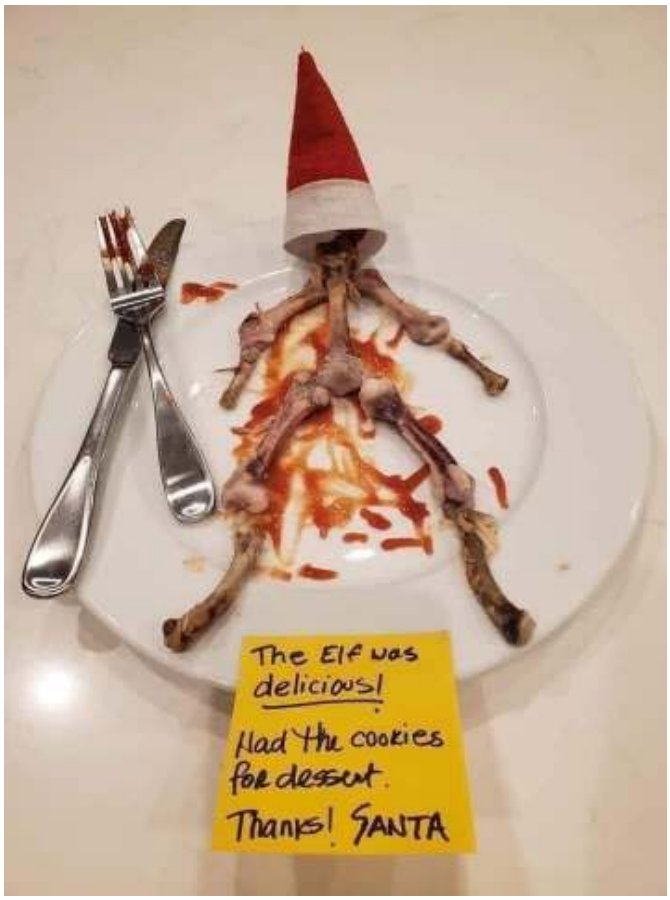
https://www.harmonyfoundation.org/donors-choice

https://www.harmonyfoundation.org/annual-giving

Again, thank you very much to our generous donors, and maybe we will see your name on the list in 6 months!







amazonsmile
You shop. Amazon gives.

Here's a simple way to financially support the Big Orange Chorus, at no cost to you! If you shop on amazon.com you can sign up for the Amazon Smile program, and designate the Big O as your charity of choice. Then anytime you make a purchase on Amazon (Smile), they make a donation to us! No cost to you, and a donation to us: win win!

To sign up, visit smile.amazon.com/ch/59-1981228 and sign in to your Amazon account.

From then on, any Amazon purchase you make (at smile.amazon.com) will help the Big O.

Thanks in advance!!

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!!

Editor's Note: The latest version of the Amazon app (both android and iOS) now has an option to activate smile in the app, so that you can get the charity donations for purchases made in the app (if you enable it). Open the app and find 'Settings' in the main menu. Tap on 'AmazonSmile' and follow the on-screen instructions to turn on AmazonSmile on your phone.

CHAPTER QUARTETS

On Point

Dillon Tidwell, tenor
Daniel Pesante, lead
Timothy Keatley, baritone
Alex Burney, bass

Slice!

Terry Ezell, tenor
Eric Grimes, lead
Jason Dearing, baritone
Ryan Feeney, bass

No Name Yet

? tenor
? lead
? baritone
? bass

BIG ORANGE CHORUS
Est. 1980

FREE YOUR VOICE

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

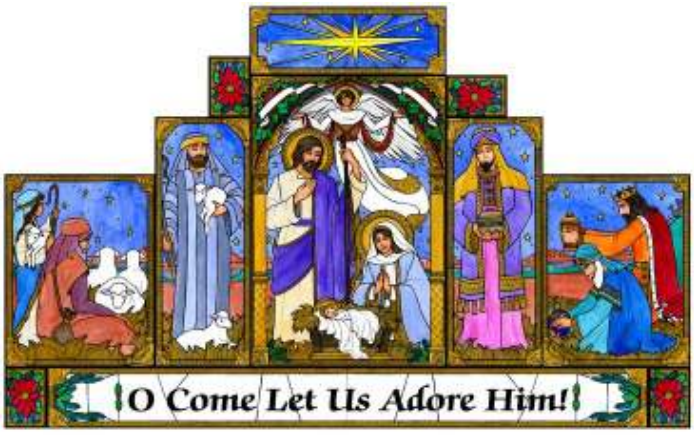
While physical fitness is not a prerequisite for quality singing, some improvement in your body's strength, stamina, and efficiency can help.

If you are looking for exercise that supports good singing, look no further than Yoga and Tai Chi. You do not have to follow them religiously, nor is there any need to be an expert, just do something. Regular practice promotes better posture, better carriage, personal calm, confidence, and deep healthy breathing.

Swimming is also excellent. It is low-impact exercise and it promotes cardiovascular fitness and even rhythm. In addition, sitting in a pool with the water up to chest level can be fun for gentle, casual singing. The buoyancy of the water supports your entire torso and frees your muscles.

Almost any exercise that helps you to be stronger and use oxygen more efficiently is good for your singing. However, it is best to avoid heavy contact sports. Injury can be inconvenient if it makes you miss a performance and downright devastating if it causes permanent physical or neurological damage. Be very careful with exercises that cause you to strain or hold your breath, such as intensive working out with weights. Being stronger is certainly a noble pursuit, and can help your carriage and stamina, but straining or holding your breath can cause vocal damage. Always breathe. Expert trainers will advise you to breathe, and how to do it, when working out with weights.

My general experience has been that I sing with better quality, consistency, and stamina when my entire body is in better health.



FREE SINGING TIPS

by Yvonne DeBandi
from a2z-singing-tips.com

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

FREE SINGING TIPS

by Nicole LeGault
from a2z-singing-tips.com

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

FREE SINGING TIPS

by Mick Walsh
from a2z-singing-tips.com

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

FREE SINGING TIPS

by Teri Danz
from a2z-singing-tips.com

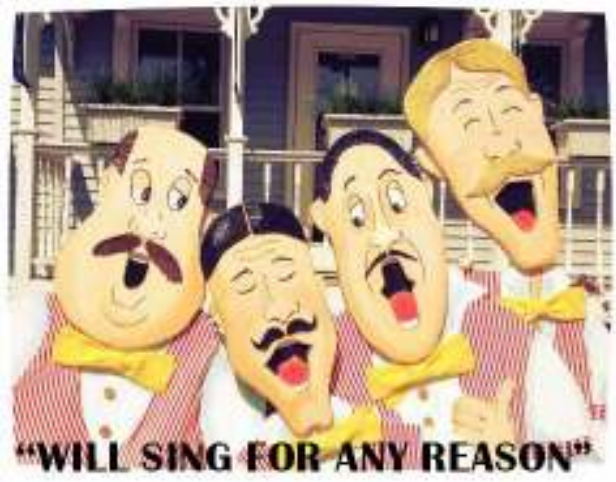
H= Hydration - Stay hydrated. Drink lots of water (no lemon). It takes energy and lubrication to sing.

QUARTET CORNER

Our quartets are practicing social distancing.

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 MEMBER STATS

The following are our current membership statistics:

type	active	lapsed
Lifetime 50-Year	1	0
Lifetime Regular	0	0
Regular	16	1
Senior 50-Year	4	0
Senior Legacy	1	0
Senior	11	0
Youth 1st year	0	0
Youth	4	0
Total Membership	37	1

PAST DUE MEMBERS

The following members are listed separately on the BHS website as past due or within two weeks of due. They will automatically be removed from the society roll at 30 days overdue.

Eric Grimes

COMING DUE MEMBERS

The following members are coming due in the next 60 days.

Marc Cammer
Bill Conway
Matt Lawrence
Dave Schubert
David Walker

REHEARSAL SCHEDULE

Thu	03 Dec	St Mark's Episcopal
Thu	10 Dec	Holiday Break
Thu	17 Dec	Holiday Break
Thu	24 Dec	Christmas
Thu	31 Dec	New Year
Thu	07 Jan	Holiday Break
Thu	14 Jan	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	21 Jan	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	28 Jan	Shepherd of the Woods

PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

Fri	04 Dec	Christmas Show
??	?? Dec	Christmas Show(s)
Sat	10 Apr	SUN Spring Conv (cancelled)
Sun	14 Feb	Singing Valentines

BIG O BUCK$

BIG O BUCKS SCHEDULE

Sun	13 Dec	Jags v Tennessee Titans
Sun	27 Dec	Jags v Chicago Bears
Sat	02 Jan	Tax Slayer (Gator) Bowl

...more to come

See Mike Sobolewski to help fund your experience

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.

BIRTHDAYS

Ryan Henry	12 Dec
Tommy Arteaga	21 Dec
John Alexander	31 Dec

RECENT GUESTS

Chuck Cashin	Jim Akers
Willy Vidmar	Mike Morgan
Dale Pratt	Hudson Pratt
Dan Newsom	Trans Maynard
Asrul Dawson	Bill Caruso
Ethan Erastain	Alex White
Tristan Arthurs	Mark Murillo
Josve Jorpe-Silva	Roger Erestaine
Jon Greene	Jim Harper
Ron Blewett	Dave Scott Sr
G Lane	Brandon Edwards
Joe McLean	Adom Panshukian
Christian Cornella-Carlson	

WELCOME

NEWEST MEMBERS

John Kauffman	Feb
Ryan Feeney	Oct
Joe Williams	Oct
Ian Le	Sep
Hunter Stanford	May
Tom Frutchey	Apr
Dillon Tidwell	Apr
David Scott	Feb

2020 DIRECTING TEAM

Jay Giallombardo
Front Line
Director

vacant
Assistant
Director

Chuck Griffith
Director
Emeritus

2020 OTHER CHAPTER LEADERS

Dave Walker
Uniform
Manager

vacant
Chorus
Manager

John Alexander
Bulletin
Editor

Frank Nosalek
Webmaster &
Technology

vacant
Show
Chairman

Mike Sobolewski
Big O Bucks
Coordinator

EDITOR'S NOTE

Article and column submissions are solicited.
Help make this a better bulletin. Send me stuff!
The deadline for January is 26 December.
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!

2020 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jaon Dearing
Chapter
President

John Alexander
VP Music &
Performance

Mike Sobolewski
Chapter
Secretary

Rick Morin
Chapter
Treasurer

vacant
VP Membership &
Chapter Development

Alex Burney
VP Marketing &
Public Relations

Terry Ezell
Immediate
Past President

2020 MUSIC TEAM

John Alexander
VP Music &
Performance

Terry Ezell
Tenor
Sec Ldr

Eric Grimes
Lead
Sec Ldr

Jason Dearing
Bari
Sec Ldr

John Alexander
Bass
Sec Ldr

Jay Giallombardo
Front Line
Director

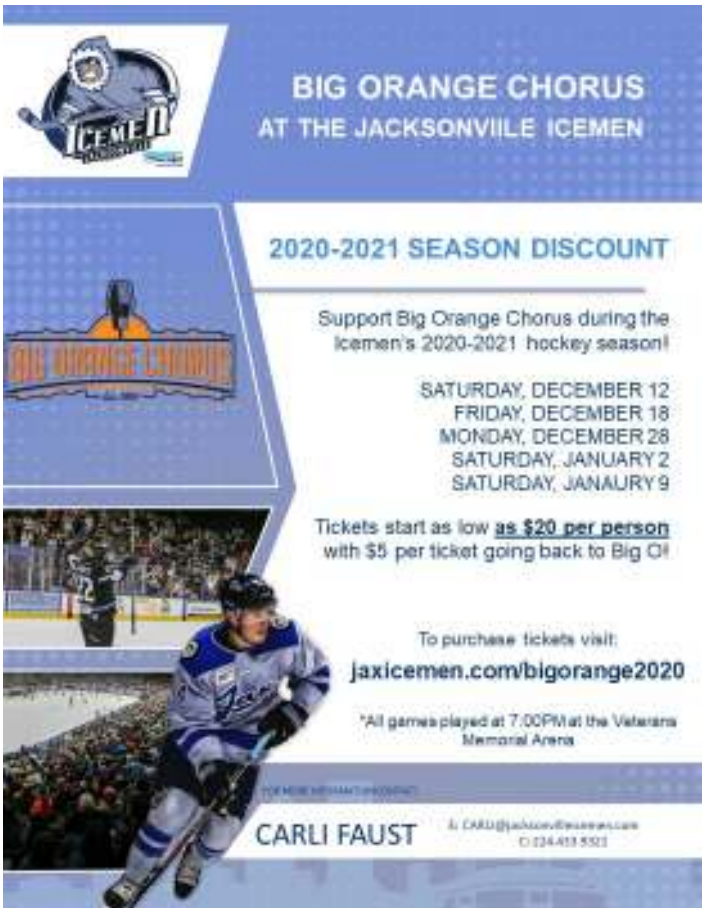
Mike Sobolewski
Presentation
Coordinator

IMAGINE 80 MEN ON THE RISERS
BE A SINGER-BRINGER

The Orange Spiel
News Of The Jacksonville Big O Chapter

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

«FirstName» «LastName»
«Address1»
«City» «State» «PostalCode»



A deal has been worked out with the Jacksonville Icemen hockey team. For any tickets sold through this link, we will get $5. There is no commitment needed from the chorus at all. They are trying to get people in the seats, and they realize that a lot of their non-profits are hurting for money. This is a win-win for all groups. Please pass this on to your friends, and lets try to raise some money for the chorus.

<<=====