



The Orange Spiel

News Of The Jacksonville Big O Chapter



<http://www.BigOrangeChorus.com>



Volume 41 Issue 7

July 2021

We meet at 7:00 most Thursdays at Shepherd of the Woods Lutheran, 7860 Southside Blvd, Jacksonville, FL
Guests always welcome Call 355-SING No Experience Necessary

WHAT'S INSIDE

Title	Page
Reinstatements are Easier Than Ever	1,3
Editorial	2
Life-Changing Lessons From A \$5	3-4
Discovering The Fifth	5
A Possibly Fine Quartet	5
A Test Of Three Practice Schedules	6-9
Technical Difficulty Is Not The Same	10-11
English Vs Singlish	11
Your Vocal Warmup Probably Isn't	12
Barbershop Is Back Midwinter 2022	13
Virtual Harmony University Is Back	13
Chapter Quartets	14
Free Your Voice	15
Free Singing Tips	15
Quartet Corner	16
Upcoming Schedules	17
Birthdays / Guests / New Members	17
Directing Team / Other Leaders	18
Chapter Officers / Music Team	19

REINSTATEMENTS ARE EASIER THAN EVER

from barbershop.org

Barbershop is definitely back, and we're seeing a rush of folks reinstating their memberships now that they are able to sing in their local groups again. We love that, and we're always working on ways to support that growth - like the elimination of the reinstatement/enrollment fee at the start of the year.

Let's take a peek behind the curtain: our business practice is to obtain chapter approval to put a person on a chapter roster once they have passed the 30-day grace period after their expiration date. With roughly 60 people a week contacting customer service to reinstate memberships that fell off during the pandemic, we're experiencing significant delays waiting for local volunteer leaders to approve those applications.

Ofentimes, the communication gets lost in email inboxes and it takes several inquiries from customer service to garner a response. And, every chapter officer who DOES respond says, "of course they are welcome back in our chapter."

Temporary adjustments to reinstating procedures

In order to make things as efficient as possible and get those people singing together as fast as we can, we're making a temporary adjustment to our reinstating procedures. For the time being, customer service will assume approval to reinstate a member back into their local singing community provided their membership expired during the last 18 months. Our representatives will still send an email to notify chapter leaders of the returning member but won't wait for a response to process the reinstatement.

This doesn't have an impact on new members wanting to join your singing community or people who have been long absent, so if you have necessary processes

(Continued on page 3)

WANTED!!

MEN WHO LIKE TO SING!



2021 Board of Directors

President:
Jason Dearing

Immediate Past Pres:
Terry Ezell

VP Music & Performance:
John Alexander

VP Membership:
vacant

VP Marketing & PR:
Alex Burney

Secretary:
Mike Sobolewski

Treasurer:
Rick Morin

Music Director:
Jay Giallombardo

2021 Music Team

Music Director:
Jay Giallombardo

Assistant Director:
vacant

Music VP:
John Alexander

Section Leaders:
Terry Ezell Tenor
Eric Grimes Lead
Jason Dearing Bari
John Alexander Bass

Presentation Team:
Mike Sobolewski
Bob Stump

Music Librarian:
John Kauffman

2021 Committees

Big O Bucks Coordinator:
Mike Sobolewski

Webmaster:
Frank Nosalek

Chorus Manager:
vacant

Uniform Manager:
Dave Walker

2021 Committees

Pole Cat Program:
vacant

Community Outreach:
vacant

Show Chairman:
vacant

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

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

I really hope y'all have been singing. We've only gotten together, physically, a few times in over a year, and not everybody showed up. Your voice is a muscle, use it or lose it. Warm ups are a must, singing songs (especially keeping our repertoire fresh), learning new songs (we've got a few on the list that it'd be good to already know when we do start back in earnest) these are all extremely important. We could even be trying to form new quartets.

We've started experimenting with Jamulus, a free-ware program that allows real-time, live audio jamming. We should be able to rehearse with everybody hearing each other, from home. Lots of choruses and bands are using it. Check it out.

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.

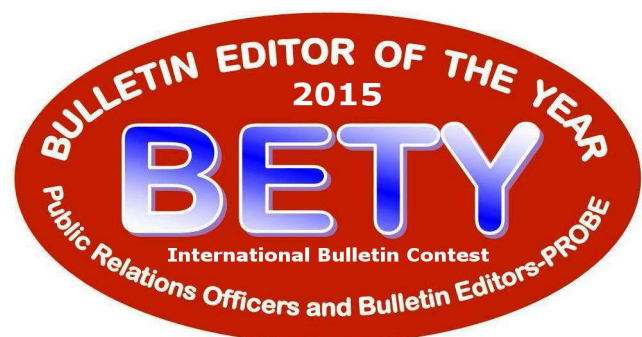
Please check in on our Zoom sessions, even if it's only to see each other and say, "Hi." It's important for us to connect with each other.

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.



REINSTATEMENT (continued)

(Continued from page 1)

(audition, costume, waiting period) those can still be carried out. Also, you can bypass the administrative wait altogether by using the Member Center to add your new and reinstating members entirely online!

Check out training for that and other helpful resources here (<https://www.barbershop.org/member-center-new-trainings-for-bhs-leaders>).

This is a temporary measure to make sure we are doing all we can to eliminate barriers to a quick return to the new normal!

Additionally, we've added an easy way for folks to get connected directly with their local singing community from our Member Center! An existing or prospective member can use this form (<https://members.barbershop.org/s/join-a-chapter>) to express interest in any of our chapters. That will automatically send an email to the chapter secretary on file including the name and email of the prospective member. With this one easy step, new members can learn more about your chapter, and reinstating members can ask you to start the process to get back on your roster.

Finally, please make sure that you have a chapter secretary listed for your chapter and their email is up to date. Both of these adjustments are active now, so chapter secretaries please check your emails to make sure you don't miss anyone.



LIFE-CHANGING LESSONS FROM A \$5 BLUE PLATE SPECIAL

by John Donehower
from The Harmonizer

You know, when most people sing "Sweet Roses of Morn," they revel in the barber-shoppy splendor of the chords and the ringability of the great old tune. When I sing it, I revel in the memory of a great old Barber-shoppper. One of the great heroes of the hobby, at least to me.

Gene Scholtes had been a member of the Dubuque, Iowa Chapter for as long as I'd been alive and was a fixture on the risers. He was one of the guys you could always count on to sing until the cows came home. He supported the chapter by singing on every show, regularly bringing guests, and for years, brought more sponsor dollars to the chorus than the rest of us combined. All he asked of us in exchange for his service to our art form was that whenever he wanted to sing a Polecat, we sang a Polecat. And his favorite was "Sweet Roses of Morn."

Gene, who passed a few years back, was a very gentle and soft-spoken man, and I had directed the chorus for a couple of years before I really started to get to know him. I'm ashamed to admit it, but up until then, I never really paid attention to him. Much of my time as a chapter leader was spent keeping the Alphas happy, putting out fires, and greasing squeaky wheels. Gene was a Beta. I don't mean that in an insulting way. He was just always there. He always seemed happy. But he never said much. I gave very little thought to what he wanted. I gave very little thought to him.

I had so much to learn as a leader... and as a human being.

45 minutes that changed everything

One day, out of the blue, Gene called and invited me out to lunch. I didn't really want to go, but he was uncharacteristically insistent. Admittedly, I went more out of obligation than want. But I'm glad I did. In just 45 short minutes at the Julian Diner, over the \$5 Blue Plate Special, Gene Scholtes changed the whole way I looked at the barbershop hobby.

Gene began by asking me questions about what I

(Continued on page 4)

LIFE-CHANGING LESSONS (continued)

(Continued from page 3)

loved about being a Barbershopper, what my favorite songs were, what I enjoyed about singing and what I wanted to do at rehearsals, and then, after I told him mine, he shared his. We had some things in common and were miles apart in others. He never questioned or challenged what I loved but did point out that, after being the director of the chorus for several years, I had never asked him, a faithful member, until that day, what he wanted to do at rehearsals. I had never asked him, or anyone else for that matter, what they loved to do as a Barbershopper. It was all about what I wanted.

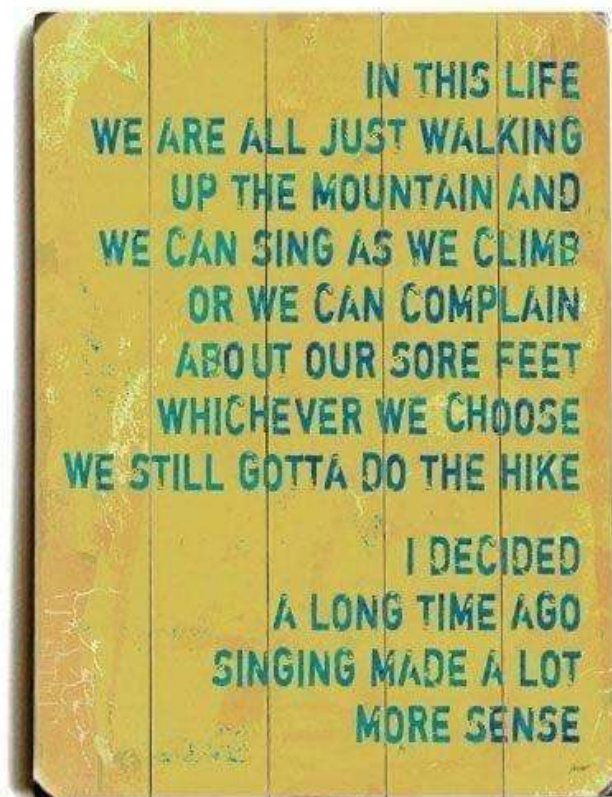
He talked about how every singer on the risers had “that one thing” that kept them coming back week after week, year after year, and about how singers leave, and don’t come back, when they aren’t getting enough of “that one thing.” He gently pointed out that the rehearsals I led each week often fed my “one thing” to the exclusion of others. As a director, I liked to drill and repeat and perfect. All too often, I was oblivious to the fact that not everyone wanted to do what I wanted.

Dick liked to get the interp just right. Dale was all about the ring. Bob liked learning new songs while Bill preferred to sing stuff he already knew. Lyle enjoyed tags. Merlin enjoyed pick-up quartetting. And Gene, well, Gene liked singing Polecats, especially “Sweet Roses of Morn.” Everyone liked some of the same stuff, and everyone liked something different. Gene was right. Everyone as their “one thing,” and the success of a group may lie in its ability to manage the wants and the needs of all of its members—not just the ones who talk the loudest.

Since assuming a leadership role in the Society, I’ve thought a lot about that lunch with Gene and what he had to say. Gene didn’t care about competing, but he would compete because he knew it was someone else’s “one thing.” He didn’t particularly care about learning new songs, but he worked hard at rehearsal so that someone else got “their thing.” He always strived to help other singers get enough of what they wanted at harmony night, and all he asked was that he got some of what he wanted too. Seems like a fair deal!

I think I learned three lessons during that lunch with Gene. First of all, that for the health of a chapter, or a Society, we need to pay more attention to the quiet members that don’t always say very much. Sec-

ondly, instead of doing fewer things perfectly, we should do more things joyously. And thirdly, and I can’t stress this enough, never eat the \$5 Blue Plate Special at the Julian Diner!



DISCOVERING THE FIFTH

by Jerry Frank
from Down Our Way

I say discovering versus inventing because music was always there. True it was hidden in a sea of sound but like a sculptor carving away the excess stone around a statue, we just have to carve away the noise to find the music. The Western style of music started with the octave. A doubling of frequency had the “feel” of sameness, making it an obvious place for a scale repetition. The second rule of the fifth note being three halves of the starting note requires a bit more thought. Where did this “honey note” come from?

I recently noted that adjacent octave notes when added produce a note that sounds really good with the octave notes. Keeping the arithmetic simple by using the “A” at 220 and the next higher octave “A” at 440 Hertz (cycles per second), The sum is 660 Hertz. This is the perfect mathematical fifth which the Tempered Scale tweaked to 659.26 Hertz to form a scale that preserved the octave by fudging the fifths of ALL the starting points (key signatures) of the Western Scale. Singing octaves then should produce a perfect Fifth above the higher octave note. This wonderful discovery made the second rule of the scale mandatory. No one could afford to ignore that delicious sound.

The only problem was that the rule number one and the new rule, number two were incompatible such that one of them had to be “tweaked”. The fifth obviously lost the battle because without the octave, it wouldn’t even exist.

Why do we care? Because the first concept behind barbershop music is the restoration of the magic of the perfect fifth. If we have the octaves tuned properly and sing the perfect fifth of either octave note, the reinforcement is obvious and ultimately satisfying. The octave of the perfect fifth will produce the fifth of the next octave.

Unfortunately, we can’t carry the perfect fifths on up the scale for more than a couple octaves since the perfection of the fifth would cause the scale to wander away from the (absolutely must be) perfect octave. We can only have both for the chord of the moment. Which means that we must tune to each other rather than to some fixed standard device. The obvious standard is the Lead singer. Some quartets have been successful tuning initially to their Bass but this usually changes once the song is underway. If any harmony part wanders off to a piano to find their note, be aware that he will never find it on a “properly” tuned pianoforte.

The fifth is not the only magic in barbershop but we need to perfect it before we attempt the rest of barbershop’s secrets.

A POSSIBLY FINE QUARTET

by Jerry Frank
from Down Our Way

The “laws” of probability are often demonstrated by the toss of a coin or the landing on red in roulette. What if we were to apply those concepts to a quartet? How likely is the “perfect” chord to just happen? Not a mathematically perfect chord but just close enough to impress the listener. If we simplify each quartet part to allow Low, On (close enough), or High, we have three possibilities: L, O, H. The probability of one part being “On” is then one chance in three or one third. The probability of another part being “On” at the same time is then one third of one third or one chance in nine occurrences. For all four parts to be “On” is only one chance in 81 chords. Since most songs consist of about 50 measures of about four chords, let’s say that we have somewhere over 200 chances to get it right. It looks like we can expect to get it right two or three times per song.

BUT: When you apply theory to the real world, other variables enter the picture. Theory is based on none of the events having a memory of previous events. A coin doesn’t know or care what has happened before the toss.

In the real world, each part can hear and tune to the other parts. On eighth note chords, the effect is minimal but on a whole note chord or a long post, the effect is startling. How many quartets have you heard that had an average song that ended with a great last chord? So, Okay, Where do we go from here?

Memory is the key to beating the odds. You don’t have to hear and tune each chord as it happens if you remember past successful attempts and repeat them. The difference between happenstance and greatness is the presence and use of memory built through practice. Practice builds consistency and memory gives each quartet the ability to beat the odds. No matter what your level of success may be, practice is the road to improvement.

The old joke rules: A lost man asks for direction. “How do I get to Carnegie Hall”. The answer: “Practice, practice, practice.”

A TEST OF THREE PRACTICE SCHEDULES, AND THE ONE THAT WORKS BEST (ESPECIALLY FOR OLDER LEARNERS)

by Dr Noa Kageyama
from bulletproofmusician.com

It's often said that kids learn faster than adults. And as I've reached the age at which I used to think adults were considered old¹, I've certainly felt increasingly like one of those well-used sponges that no longer absorbs quite as much water as it once did. =(

Of course, there is research which suggests that this may not actually be as true as it feels – but we do experience various physical and cognitive changes over the course of our lifetime. Like in motor performance, working memory, and selective attention, for instance.

So what does this mean for older folks still seeking to learn new things and continue to improve? Does it mean we need to practice differently as we get older? And if so, what would that even look like?

A coordination/timing task

A pair of researchers ([Beik & Fazeli, 2021](#)) recruited sixty adults between the ages of 60-75, to test the effect of different practice strategies on their learning and motivation.

The task was a pretty simple one. Basically, they were placed in front of a computer screen and given a giant, square, 1.5ft number pad. The computer screen would show them which numbers to press, and what tempo to press them at, and then it'd be the participant's turn to give it a try. So basically, it was like a super simple version of Dance Dance Revolution, but for the right hand, rather than the legs.

Three groups

To keep things simple, the pattern of numbers that participants were asked to press was always the same. The only thing that changed was the tempo, or the speed at which they had to press the number keys.

A third of the participants were assigned to the

“blocked” practice group, and asked to practice the first timing pattern 54 times (let's call it tempo A). Then they were asked to practice tempo B 54 times, and then tempo C 54 times. For a total of 162 practice repetitions.

Another third of the participants were assigned to the “random” practice group. Unlike the blocked group, which had a nice, predictable, orderly sort of structure, theirs was all jumbled up. For them, the computer kept switching up the order of the tasks, where they would never see the same tempo more than twice in a row. So their practice looked something more like tempo A, tempo C, tempo B, then B, C, A, C, C, A, B, A, B, A, C, etc.

The final third of the participants were assigned to the “learner-adapted” group. Their practice was a combination of blocked, “serial,” and random practice, where the type of practice they did, was dependent on how well they were doing and how many mistakes they were making.

So they would start with a little bit of blocked practice, to get comfortable with each task. And if they were doing pretty well, they would switch to serial practice. And if they made too many mistakes, no biggie, they'd go back to a bit of blocked practice, before giving serial practice another try.

But if they did well with serial practice, then they'd advance to random practice. And if they struggled with random, again, no big deal, they'd go back for some more serial practice, but with the goal being to eventually get to a high level of performance even with random practice.

The idea behind this type of adaptive practice was to try to keep the learner at a “sweet spot” of task difficulty, where optimal learning could take place. Where they weren't getting bored because the task was too easy, but they also weren't feeling overwhelmed because the constant switching between tempos made the task too difficult.

Wait! What's serial practice?

Ok, but quick sidebar – what's serial practice?

Ah yes! Serial practice is somewhere in between blocked and random practice. It's like random practice, where you keep rotating between different passages during the same practice session, but instead of rotating between passages in a random order,

(Continued on page 7)

A TEST OF THREE PRACTICE SCHEDULES (continued)

(Continued from page 6)

you would rotate between them in a specific order.

So in the case of this study, instead of one rep of tempo A, then C, B, B, C, A, C, C, A, B, A, B, A, C, etc. all randomized, it would look something like AAAAA, BBBB, CCCCC, AAAAA, BBBB, CCCCC, etc.

24 hours later...

Then, to see how effectively their practice “stuck,” participants were asked to return to the lab 24 hours later, to be tested on the skills that they learned the day before.

And which type of practice led to the best learning?

The results

During practice...

During the practice session, the blocked group did a lot better and their timing was more spot-on, than either the learner-adapted or random groups (average error for blocked=41.55ms, learner-adapted=60.74ms, random=72.38ms – where lower scores, means better performance).

But as you can probably guess, it was a different story the next day, when some forgetting had set in, there was no real warm-up, and it was time to put their skills to the test.

The retention test...

When it came to *retention* of the skills they learned, i.e. how effectively practice stuck, the learner-adapted group performed the best – with an average error score of 47.78ms, vs. 62.61ms for random, and a whopping 102.60ms for the blocked group.

So why does learner-adapted practice seem to work so much better? At least for older adults?

Why?

Well, to keep this post from getting too long, I’m leaving out some details of the study that are actually pretty relevant and meaningful. Like how the researchers also looked at the effect of these strategies on motivation. And whether there was a difference in these strategies when it came to developing more flexible skills that were adaptable to new tempo patterns that they hadn’t practiced.

But the most important thing I’m glossing over might be how the researchers looked at the differences between these strategies when learning similar skills, vs. dissimilar skills. Or in other words, when the task was easier vs. when the task was harder.

And the gist, is that there does seem to be something to this notion of a “challenge point,” where learning is best. Where if a task is too easy, and we’re getting it right every single time, then we’re not really learning much. But if a task is too difficult, and every repetition is a mess, then here too, we’re probably not learning much.

The idea is that one type of practice isn’t inherently “better” than another, but each is a tool that we can use to adjust the challenge point of our practice up or down. And keep our practice in that learning “sweet spot,” where things are challenging enough, that we’re making a few mistakes here or there, but not so many that we’re just reinforcing bad habits and getting discouraged. Kind of like adjusting the metronome to make things easier or more difficult for us.

So what are we to do with all of this?

Caveats

Well, before we get into that, a couple caveats. The main thing to keep in mind is that participants were asked to learn a pretty simple task. One that emphasized timing, rather than on the sort of small, intricate motor movements or coordination of multiple fingers/sides of the body that might be involved in playing an instrument. But still, conceptually, this seems to fit with other research in this area, so presumably it’d still apply to more complex skills as well.

The other thing to keep in mind, is that participants were between 60-75 years of age, so it could be that the results might be a little different if participants had been 6 or 16 years of age. But here too, there are other studies which have looked at this sort of thing with younger adults, with similar results, so it’s likely that the same principles would apply to younger learners as well.

(Continued on page 8)

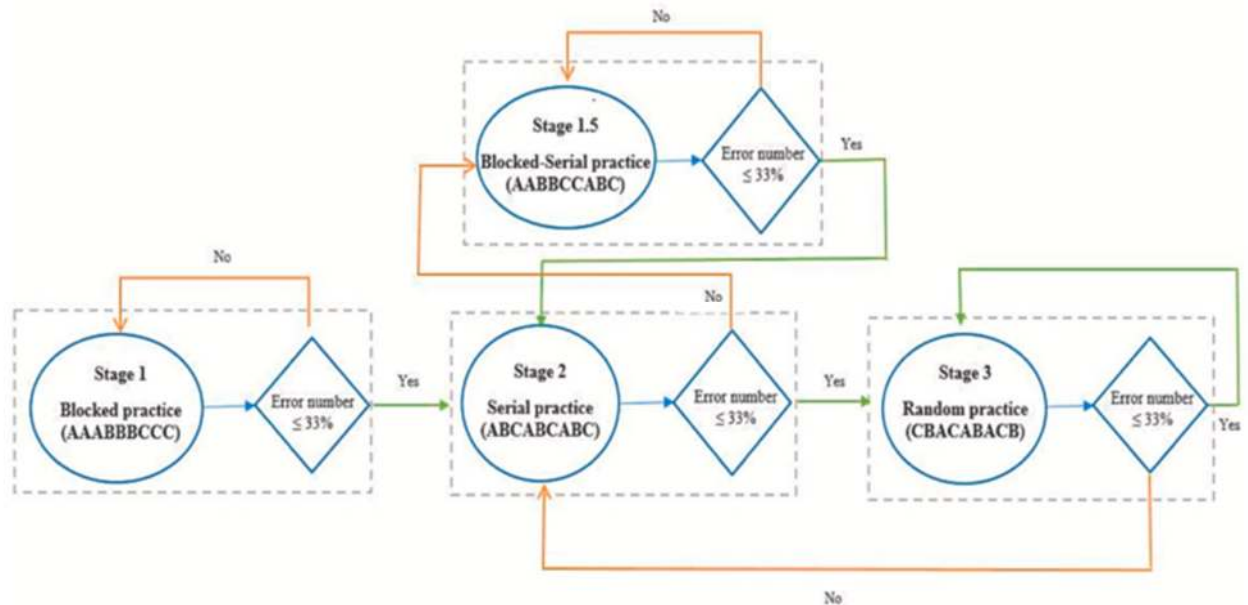
A TEST OF THREE PRACTICE SCHEDULES (continued)

(Continued from page 7)

The learner-adapted practice algorithm

So how can we apply these findings to practice?

Well, let's take a look at a flowchart from the paper, which shows exactly what the learner-adapted practice looked like:



In terms of interpreting what this means, it might help to know that practice repetitions were organized in groups of 9 repetitions, and “good enough to advance” to the next level was a “batting average” of 66% or better.

So everyone started off with 6 blocks of 9 practice repetitions on tempo A (54 total practice reps). Then, they moved on to tempo B for 6 blocks of 9 reps, and then tempo C for 6 blocks of 9 reps.

If they were able to get to a level where they were getting “perfect”³ scores on at least 6 out of 9 repetitions in each block, then they would advance to Stage 2. If, by the end of Stage 2, they were only getting 5/9 repetitions or fewer correct, then they stayed in Stage 1 to solidify their skills a bit more.

But if they were able to get at least 6/9 reps correct, they advanced to Stage 2. And if by the end of Stage 2, they were able to get 6 or more perfect reps out of every block of 9 tries, they moved on to Stage 3. But if not, then they took a step back and went to Stage 1.5 to work on their skills a bit more, until they could achieve the necessarily level of performance to move on to Stage 2, and then, eventually, Stage 3.

Takeaways?

So could you just take this formula and apply it to your or your students’ practice exactly as is?

(Continued on page 9)

A TEST OF THREE PRACTICE SCHEDULES (continued)

(Continued from page 8)

Well, sort of, I guess. But I think that might miss the point a bit.

Even though I think we'd all love it if there were just some neat and tidy formula that we could apply to every piece, passage, or excerpt, for me, the main finding of the study is that for learning to be maxed out, it's important to find the right balance between the difficulty of a task, and our current skill level.

So when you're just getting a new piece in your fingers, and you're months away from a performance, sure, being within 5% of what you want an excerpt to sound like, and getting it right 2/3 times might be totally good enough to promote yourself to serial practice, and then random practice.

But at some point, when you're closer to a performance, maybe a batting average of 2/3 tries isn't good enough. Especially if you often get it wrong on the first try, and right only on the 2nd and 3rd try.

And at some point, allowing yourself wiggle room of +/- 5% whether it's intonation, rhythm, or anything else, might be way too generous as well.

For me, the main takeaway is not the algorithm, per se, but the larger idea that it's important for us to be mindful of our learning sweet spot when practicing. And to monitor our practice, so we're neither making too many mistakes, nor too few.

And to use practice strategies like blocked, serial, random, or learner-adapted, to increase the difficulty of the task, either by allowing ourselves more consecutive repetitions to work something out, and get it sounding right more consistently. Or to interleave our practice repetitions a bit more, so we are upping the challenge, and pushing ourselves to practice getting things right with fewer warmup repetitions to feel things out and make those tiny adjustments that we won't get when we're on stage...

And where does deliberate practice fit into all of this?

Ah, good question! Today's study was about how to *structure* practice repetitions.

But if you started to wonder what we're supposed to do *between* or *within* the repetitions, then yes, this

is where deliberate practice and self-regulated learning factor into the equation, and help guide the smaller moment-to-moment details of our practice.

And speaking of deliberate practice, if practicing has always felt like taking 2 steps forward, 1 step back. Or if you consistently put in the time, but feel like the results just aren't there. Or if you're familiar with the idea of deliberate practice, but have had difficulty figuring out how to actually put this into practice, there's a course for that! If you're looking for that sort of thing, the new *Practice That Sticks* course might be just the thing that could help put a few more pieces together:

Practice That Sticks – a quick and to-the-point course on smart, effective, practice
(<https://members.bulletproofmusician.com/edu/practice-that-sticks>)

**DON'T BE WORRIED ABOUT
YOUR SMARTPHONE AND
TV SPYING ON YOU. YOUR
VACUUM CLEANER HAS
BEEN GATHERING DIRT ON
YOU FOR YEARS.**



The Sunshine District

Labor Day Jamboree

September 3-6, 2021



SOAPBOX: TECHNICAL DIFFICULTY IS NOT THE SAME AS HIGH STANDARDS

by Liz Garnett
from helpingyouharmonize.com

Today's opinion piece arises from a conversation about an arrangement I was helping an ensemble with recently. They liked the song but were concerned that the chart might be too hard for them. My view was that the arranger had placed quite a lot of unnecessary obstacles in their path.

Ah yes, came the reply, but that arranger is working with [an ambitious up-and-coming group] and sets the bar high.

I'm not saying what the chart was, or who the people involved are, as it's really not about them personally, it's about the ideas that emerged in this exchange. There are any number of other examples that I could be equally opinionated about, it's just this one sparked me to return to writing on a theme long-time readers will have seen before.

So, first, let's make the distinction between a challenge and an obstacle. They both require the performer(s) to put in more time and thought to learn the music than usual, and probably also to develop new practice strategies to handle them. The difference is in the result this extra effort produces. If it delivers a significantly heightened audience experience, then it was worth it and can reasonably be classified as a challenge. If it is something you have to put effort into climbing over just to get to the music as you might expect it, then it is an obstacle and you can be reasonably annoyed at the composer/arranger for placing it in your path.

The kinds of obstacles one routinely sees in a capella arrangements include (but are probably not limited to) the following:

- **Notational.** Writing things in such a way that makes them harder to read at sight, e.g. parsing rhythms such that it is not immediately visible where the boundaries lie, or spelling harmonies incorrectly.
- **Vocal idiom.** Writing lines that lie awkwardly on the voice. This may be simply from not singing through the lines to check if they're singable, or it may come from transferring an

instrumental line too literally. A lot of arpeggiated lines that are easy on guitar because the hand stays still with different fingers on different strings become very athletic on the voice. (Hint: this is what the bell chord is for.) Ideally, you want all your vocal lines to invite the singers to be communicative, but at the very least they shouldn't set them up to fail.

- **Ensemble.** Writing parts that are tricky to fit together, either through counter-intuitive rhythmic intricacies or awkward voicings. This one, like the previous, is one where your notation program may deceive you. Just because a machine can do it, doesn't make it automatically viable for human beings.
- **Structural.** Making it hard to perceive the form of the piece radically increases the cognitive load on the singer, especially in idioms where music is typically performed from memory. The most common problem here is mistaking variation for development, and presenting repeated material in a different arrangement each time it appears. Yes, you want to use your embellishment strategy to build narrative, but the return of the familiar is also an essential part of the musical experience, for listener as well as performer (see under 'Rondo').
- **Stamina.** Okay, so where do we breathe? Yes, that quaver rest is enough of a breath if I'm only singing the first page, but there are 12 pages of this thing. It's fast, and I'll be doing choreography too.
- **Miscellaneous other over-complications.** The one that leaps most readily to mind is notating rubato in performance as if it were syncopation and treating the execution on a particular recording as the definitive text to be arranged. By all means get inspiration for your arranging from particular performers, but do also leave space for the people who will be singing your chart to be expressive themselves. Also in this category is syncopating so much that the location of the beat disappears.

Now, the chart that sparked this post did not have all of these problems (though it had a fair few of them), but it's a safe generalisation that if an arrangement has one issue it will have several. (Hmm, possibly with the exception of poor spelling, which you sometimes see in the music of an experienced ear singer with little experience of notation, where the intuition born of practical experience shines through but the reading of

(Continued on page 11)

TECHNICAL DIFFICULTY IS NOT THE (continued)

(Continued from page 10)

it is hard work.)

And it's certainly in the dimension of over-complication where a number of these emerge as the symptom of working with notation programs and not having the experience of having to help nice, normal singers to get their heads and voices round it in limited rehearsal time. A good rule of thumb for any arranger is: if you had to pay people by the hour to learn this, would you write it that way? That makes you work out whether the artistic reward is worth the investment of human effort to achieve it.

I also think that spending some time working the old-fashioned way with pencil and paper is a good discipline to clarify your conception of rhythm, as you have to add it all up yourself rather than keep trying things out until it sounds like the recording you're working from.

Sometimes arrangers comfort themselves by thinking, well, the person making the tracks sang it fine, it must be singable. Note that the person recording your tracks didn't have to sing it from memory (structural), could use a click track (ensemble), can do it in several takes (stamina), and can tweak tuning and timing errors afterwards (vocal idiom, general over-complications).

In summary: technical difficulty in a piece of music may be a by-product of unusual artistic ambitious, or an appeal to virtuosity for its own sake. Or it might simply be unidiomatic writing by someone with insufficient real-world experience of the medium for which they're writing. When deciding whether you want to invest the amount of extra practice and rehearsal time technical the challenges will demand of you, you need to work out which of these it is.

ENGLISH VS SINGLISH

by Brody McDonald
from choirbites.com

Choirs sing in many languages, but have you ever performed a piece in SINGLISH? I am a barbershopper, and this term was first presented to me by David Calland, director of The Alliance Chorus. I'm not sure he came up with it (the barbershoppers who read this will likely chime in with a source, and I'd be glad of it), but it resonated with me.

By SINGLISH, David meant the following: when we sing, we are presenting a stream of sounds that are each decoded in sequence to the audience's ears as language. Therefore, S-AW-EE-T(ih) would process to "sight." This is essentially what Fred Waring did with his "tone syllables." I first remember seeing the strange transcriptions of these syllables in high school, wondering why we needed help pronouncing words IN ENGLISH that we already knew how to pronounce!

It is a common trap that one's singing is affected by their speech pattern/accent. I find my choirs in Ohio have difficulty singing in English - they produce flat, spread vowels and turn diphthongs too quickly. They chew on R's. This is why I say "You don't sing like you talk, and you don't dance like you walk."

In order to help break free of the gravity of speaking habits, the mindset of SINGLISH is invaluable. We're not singing in ENGLISH, folks... we're singing in SINGLISH. Don't approach this text as you would read it. Instead, dissect it into parts and then string together the appropriate singing version of those parts. Build, in a linear fashion, a stream of sounds that is beautiful to hear. SINGLISH not only sounds great, it forces the singer to consider what word sounds land where (and have what duration) in the rhythmic grid of time.

We're not singing in ENGLISH, we're singing in SINGLISH. SINGLISH is like the meticulously-planned, black-tie, super-polished, top-shelf version of English.

(A) *Quietly and simply*
p

Come they told me, (Pa - rum-pum-pum - pum - mm) -
 *** Kuh - m thay toh-l-dme (Puh - rum - pm - pm - pmm) (close to "m" at once)
 (2) (2)

Hrum - pum, h'rum - pum, h'rum - pum, h'rum - pum,

YOUR VOCAL WARMUP PROBABLY ISN'T EFFECTIVE— HERE'S HOW TO FIX IT

by Arden Kaywin
from backstage.com

Over the years as a professional singer and voice teacher, I've come to a new way of thinking about the vocal warmup. Earlier in my vocal development, I thought of my singing warmup in the way I think a lot of you do—as this thing I needed to do to get my voice up and running. I would do my warmup automatically, plowing through with the mindset that I just needed to get my voice warm so I could do the thing I really wanted to do: practice my repertoire.

But here's what I've noticed after all these years of performing and teaching. Using warmup exercises just for the purposes of warming up is a huge missed opportunity and a total waste of time. The mere fact that you're doing vocal warmup exercises is not going to make you a better singer—in fact, for a lot of you, it's probably keeping you stuck at the level you're at (I'll explain in a moment).

Today I challenge you to change the purpose of your warmup so that it's not a waste of time and not a missed opportunity, but rather it becomes something that will 100 percent make you a better singer.

So what *is* the purpose of warming up? The common answer is that it gets your body, breath, resonance, and energy moving for singing. But that's only going to help you sing better if your body, breath, resonance, and energy get moving in the right way. That is the purpose of warming up. Not to get your voice moving, but to get your voice moving in the right way. Here's the fundamental shift I want you to make in your mindset around warming up: There is no difference between warming up and practicing. The warmup is the practice. The practice is the warmup.

It's in the warmup that you set the foundations in your body and in your mind for the singing to come. In this sense, it really doesn't matter which vocal exercises you do to warmup. I'm always asked what are the best warmup exercises to do and really, any exercise can be beneficial or detrimental depending on how you do it.

That's what I meant when I said that for a lot of you, your vocal warmup may be keeping you stuck

at your current level. It's not that you're doing the wrong exercises or need new ones. You aren't progressing because you're not focusing on the *how* of the warmup exercises. Right now your warmup isn't practice. It's just warmup. The *how* wasn't part of the way the warmup exercises were taught to you and it isn't the focus of the way you do them now. You just end up warming up all your old habits, carrying that into whatever song you're singing, and getting frustrated because the song doesn't feel or sound as good as it could.

For instance, I start every lesson the same way. Whether you're an advanced singer with lots of technique who's been studying with me for a long time, or a brand-new student, I always start with lip trills. I do that because in my view, lip trills are fundamental to understanding consistent breath support. Since consistent support is the foundation of great singing, that's the first thing I want to set in a warmup. If you're not focused on the *how* when doing them, then you'll blaze through them semi-efficiently and miss out on reinforcing one of the foundations of your singing. In focusing on the *how*, we bring our attention and awareness to our breath support, reinforcing the muscle memory of what efficient support feels like in our body and warming that up.

When you are super present to the *how* of your warmup exercises, you set the foundations of your technique. The exercises stop being a mere warmup and instead become a practice that will have a huge effect on your ability to reach the potential of your voice much more quickly and with much less frustration.

How to warm up your voice in public.
<https://youtu.be/wYtwjgT0jTk>



"I love classic rock."

BARBERSHOP IS BACK WITH THE BIGGEST REUNION EVER!

from barbershop.org

Celebrate the return of live, in-person barbershop harmony in Pasadena, California January 11-16, 2022 at the Midwinter Convention!



- Thrilling Shows
- Youth and Quartet Festivals
- World premieres of newly commissioned songs
- International Seniors Quartet Championship

Together again with thousands of friends

VIRTUAL HU IS BACK EVEN STRONGER IN 2021

from barbershop.org

Last year was a successful scramble to adapt curriculum to a totally online format; this year, faculty and staff had a big head start. Bring your own ice cream to this can't-miss event!

Due to the great success in 2020, Virtual Harmony University 2021 (<https://www.barbershop.org/events/virtual-harmony-university>) is back and positioned to be the best Harmony University yet, with even more options to customize your learning experience.

New opportunities will allow more interaction, more questions, more hands-on training, and more learning. Like last year, you can choose to purchase a full registration or choose from several exciting options.

Purchase a full registration and get access to all three weeks of content: virtual choir, seminars, and electives. PLUS, get access to delayed viewing until September 1. (<https://www.barbershop.org/events/virtual-harmony-university/register>)

Be In Love!

Words by RUMI
13th century Sufi poet

Arranged by MANOJ PADKI

TENOR MELODY Wher - ev - er you go, — and what - ev - er you do, —

1 2 3 4

Tenor Lead 8 Wher - ev - er you go, ev - er you do, —

Bari Bass 8 Wher - ev - er you go, ev - er you do, —

5. 6. 7. 8. 9.

be in love! Be in love!

8 be in love. Be in love!



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!!



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.

For those of you who are signed up with Amazon Smile and have designated your charity as the Big Orange Chorus, THANK YOU! Since we registered and started getting "donations", we have collected \$141.74. That may not seem like a lot, but every little bit helps. Again, thank you for choosing to help the Big Orange Chorus!
Rick Morin, Treasurer

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
vacant, bass

No Name Yet

? tenor
? lead
? baritone
? bass



FREE YOUR VOICE

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

Common problems:

- Raspy, noisy breathing - either you have a respiratory problem, like a cold or asthma, or the air flow is being restricted some other way.
- Chest and shoulders being lifted or even heaved.
- Breathy, thin vocal tone.
- Strained and squeezed vocal tone.
- Glottal starts and stops.
- Running out of breath regularly.
- Heavy attack and expulsion of breath on the first syllable or two of a phrase.
- Heavy attack and expulsion of air on key words.
- Outward breath placed under pressure in the throat.
- Neck and jaw muscles tightening.
- Stiffness, rigidity or tension throughout posture.
- Posture 'braced' as if preparing for impact or 'rooted' to the spot.
- Unnaturally static posture.
- Slouching posture.

Inexperienced and untrained singers often make the mistake of chest breathing. When they inhale, the chest rises and expands noticeably. Usually the shoulders rise, also. This is an understandable problem because chest breathing is what humans do during everyday life. It is also what dancers do when they dance. But chest breathing is too shallow, weak, unstable and unsupported for a singer. The result can be a vocal tone that is breathy and thin, or one that is pinched and strained.

The most common mistake singers make in regulating their outward airflow is by using throat muscles, tongue muscles and the epiglottis. We use these mechanisms all day - think how many times you swallow - thus we are often not aware of them and their subtle movements. A singer must regulate the outward airflow while maintaining a loose and supple throat. A good teacher will notice any problems here immediately. To change their habits, some singers must retrain themselves deliberately for months, even years. I had to. It is worth it.

Another common problem is releasing breath too quickly, either by it escaping too loosely or by pushing it through too forcefully. Either way, much of the breath gets wasted. Regulate the outward flow without using the throat and without tensing the tongue, neck or shoulders. Consistency in the flow is key.

Starting or ending a phrase with a glottal stop is definitely not to be done, other than very rarely for special impact in performance. Regularly closing off your trachea is a hindrance to free breathing, literally.

FREE SINGING TIPS

by Yvonne DeBandi
from a2z-singing-tips.com

O = Open your mouth wider. Nine times out of ten this will help you achieve a stronger, more defined vocal tone.

FREE SINGING TIPS

by Nicole LeGault
from a2z-singing-tips.com

O is for Observation. Decide which vocalists you most admire, and then observe their technique. Visually, you will see how they use their physicality, and how they present themselves on stage. Audibly, you will hear what perhaps they are doing differently, and how you can improve your own technique.

FREE SINGING TIPS

by Mick Walsh
from a2z-singing-tips.com

O. Observe yourself in a mirror. We all pick up bad habits regarding our posture and stance. Watching ourselves perform gives us a much more objective view of anything we may be doing wrong. Go on, no one's watching, knock your self out!!!

FREE SINGING TIPS

by Teri Danz
from a2z-singing-tips.com

O=Open Stance -- An open stance to the audience is: holding up, standing straight, shoulders down, head and jaw relaxed, head straight forward, eyes open -- focused on a point, arms relaxed and wide. Watch Bono, Jagger, Aretha to get the idea.



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.



DONOR CHOICE FROM HARMONY FOUNDATION INTERNATIONAL

In recognition of donations to Harmony Foundation International, with a percentage of their Donor Choice going back to our chapter. We just received a check for \$456. The following is a list of those donors:

Alexander, John and Margaret
Giallombardo, Jay and Helen
Gipp, George and Cathie
Henry, Sue
Russell, Howdy and Teresa
Sobolewski, Mike and Jan

Art by Universal Uclick

MUSICAL CHAIRS

© John Atkinson, Wrong Hands

FOLK

ROCK

CLASSICAL ROCK

POP

JAZZ

CLASSICAL

PUNK

BLUES

METAL

GOSPEL

SOUNDTRACK

OPERA

NEW AGE

CALYPSO

INDIE

RAP

BLUEGRASS

EASY LISTENING

INDUSTRIAL

COUNTRY

REGGAE

SWING

ALTERNATIVE

© John Atkinson, Wrong Hands

© John Atkinson, Wrong Hands

© John Atkinson, Wrong Hands • gocomics.com/wrong-hands • wronghands1.com

MUSICAL CHAIRS

MUSICAL CHAIRS

© John Atkinson, Wrong Hands

FOLK

ROCK

CLASSICAL ROCK

POP

JAZZ

CLASSICAL

PUNK

BLUES

METAL

GOSPEL

SOUNDTRACK

OPERA

NEW AGE

© John Atkinson, Wrong Hands

CALYPSO

BLUEGRASS

INDIE

RAP

EASY LISTENING

COUNTRY

REGGAE

SWING

ALTERNATIVE

© John Atkinson, Wrong Hands • gocomics.com/wrong-hands • wronghands1.com

CALYPSO

BLUEGRASS

INDIE

RAP

EASY LISTENING

COUNTRY

REGGAE

SWING

ALTERNATIVE

© John Atkinson, Wrong Hands • gocomics.com/wrong-hands • wronghands1.com

Big Orange Chorus

REHEARSAL SCHEDULE

Thu	01 Jul	Zoom / Jamulus
Thu	08 Jul	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	15 Jul	Zoom / Jamulus
Thu	22 Jul	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	29 Jul	Zoom / Jamulus
Thu	05 Aug	Zoom / Jamulus
Thu	12 Aug	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	19 Aug	Zoom / Jamulus
Thu	26 Aug	Shepherd of the Woods

BIRTHDAYS

Bob Stump 29 July

PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

...more to come

⇒ **BIG O BUCK\$** ⇐

BIG O BUCKS SCHEDULE

...more to come

See Mike Sobolewski to help fund your experience

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
Roger Erastaine	Ron Blewett
Jon Greene	Jim Harper
G Lane	Brandon Edwards
Joe McLean	Adom Panshukian
Christian Cornella-Carlson	
Ray Parzik	Michael Reynolds
Ed Fitzgerald	Kyle Batchelder
David Brown	Thomas Barhacs

WELCOME

NEWEST MEMBERS

Les Mower April

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

2021 DIRECTING TEAM



Jay Giallombardo
Front Line
Director

2021 OTHER CHAPTER LEADERS



Dave Walker
Uniform
Manager

PHOTO
NOT
AVAILABLE

vacant
Chorus
Manager



John Alexander
Bulletin
Editor



Frank Nosalek
Webmaster &
Technology

PHOTO
NOT
AVAILABLE

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 August is 26 July.
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!**

2021 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Jaon Dearing
Chapter
President



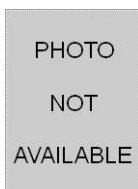
John Alexander
VP Music &
Performance



Mike Sobolewski
Chapter
Secretary



Rick Morin
Chapter
Treasurer



vacant
VP Membership &
Chapter Development



Alex Burney
VP Marketing &
Public Relations



Terry Ezell
Immediate
Past President

2021 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**



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



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