



The Orange Spiel

News Of The Jacksonville Big O Chapter



<http://www.BigOrangeChorus.com>



Volume 41 Issue 8

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

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A TIME TO REBUILD

We no longer have enough members to put on a decent performance. We've had some untimely deaths. We've had some losses to internal politicking. We've had some losses to finding something else to do on Thursday nights. We've had some losses to waning interest, not remembering how much fun we had before the COVID mess. We've even had some losses of people who think they're getting too old. After a year and a half of enforced separation, many throats have become rusty.

We have a world class director (and friend) waiting in the wings, until we can return to a certain minimum of "core" singers, committed to showing up for rehearsals and performances, with a proper balance between the parts. We can then get back to perusing excellence. But we can't just go on hiatus and hope the problem resolves. Guests and new prospects need to experience at least some of what we do to want to join in with us.

To that end we are returning to weekly, live, chapter meetings and doing what we love to do, singing. We will be working online and elsewhere to invite anyone who likes to sing to come and check us out. We will be starting with polecats and tags, which should be easier for new attendees to navigate as well as being indicative of the lush harmonies of our style.

In the meantime, we must redouble our recruitment efforts. This cannot be a spectator sport.

WANTED!!

MEN WHO LIKE TO SING!



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

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For more detailed,
timely information
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Orange Zest

EDITORIAL

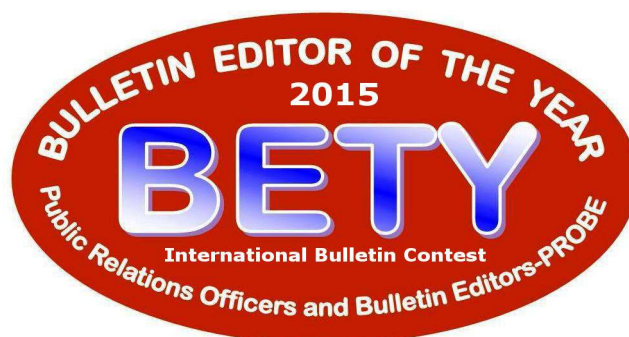
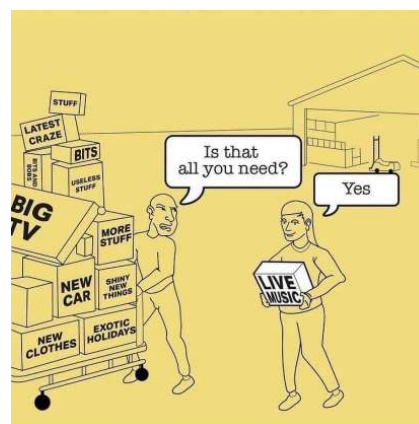
These are trying times for the chapter. We can all (and I mean ALL) get busy and work on growth so that we can get back to being the championship chorus we have been in the past and want to continue being, or we can dwindle away to nothingness. It should be an easy choice. But it's not, is it? Action is required. Wouldn't you rather be a part of why we made a successful comeback instead of reminiscing about the old days when there used to be a Big Orange?

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.

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



THE DICHOTOMY OF PERSPECTIVES FROM BHS AND HFI — IS THERE ANY TRUTH TO EITHER OF THESE?

BHS VS GARY PLAAG DISMISSED

by HFI Board of Directors
from email

Valued HFI Donors,

To this point, Harmony Foundation International has refrained from any public comment concerning the federal lawsuit filed by BHS (which falsely purported to include HFI) against Gary Plaag. Like you, the Foundation would very much like to see an end to the issues that have been created by the Barbershop Harmony Society's attempted hostile takeover of the Foundation and the misinformation that the Society continues to disseminate. We are very sorry to have to reach out to you to clarify the half-truths that President Donehower shared this past Monday. However, we have been besieged with messages from donors and members expressing confusion, concern, and calls for clarity. Thus, we want to take this opportunity to share just a few of the points about the judge's ruling that were omitted in Mr. Donehower's statement.

1. To set the record straight, the Court **granted** Gary Plaag's Motion to Dismiss and dismissed BHS's 77 page Complaint despite the enormous legal fees BHS spent on the case.
2. The Court **rejected** BHS's attempt to unilaterally "amend the [Foundation] Bylaws and pack the Foundation Board" and "take control of the Foundation's Board of Directors."
3. The Court stated: "As the court has concluded above, the sixteen individuals (elected by BHS) were never properly elected."
4. The Court found that BHS's "contentions are premised on the assumption that the Foundation Board is controlled by the [BHS elected HFI Board], **an assumption that the court has rejected.**"
5. It appears that BHS is attempting to artfully craft their public relations messaging in an attempt to reframe a significant legal defeat into some kind of win or mandate that just isn't there.

Last spring's hostile takeover attempt by BHS has clearly affirmed that an arm's-length governance relationship between the Foundation and the Society is critical to the preservation of the Foundation and the assets entrusted to it by the generous donors who have been contributors over the years.

While the Foundation is grateful for the directors and

(Continued on page 4)

JUDGE ADDRESSES BHS/HFI RELATIONSHIP

by BHS Board of Directors
from email

Society can gain control by appointing HFI trustees; lawsuit directed to state court

U.S. District Court Judge William M. Conley this morning issued a 17-page opinion and order that affirms the relationship between the Barbershop Harmony Society and Harmony Foundation International.

"It is significant that a federal judge indicates the Foundation is not separate from the Society," BHS President John Donehower said. "Further, Judge Conley points to HFI's fiduciary responsibility to BHS while also upholding the Society Board's authority to appoint Foundation trustees."

The opinion and order paves the way for the Society Board to appoint six new trustees to the Foundation's nine-member board. Three would be in place this summer; three others would begin their terms in January.

While Conley dismissed the legal case involving the Society and Foundation citing procedural grounds, Donehower said the opinion and order clarify the path forward for the two organizations.

Conley's opinion and order indicates:

- A trust agreement between the Society and Foundation is legitimate;
- The Society is the beneficiary of the trust, which was created by BHS and HFI;
- The Foundation's 2009 bylaws are indisputably valid;
- And, in alignment with those bylaws, the Society Board elects Foundation trustees from among candidates submitted by an HFI nominating committee and, if the Society Board chooses, from among individuals the BHS Board nominates from its own floor.

The lawsuit, filed in December, cited then-Foundation Chair Gary Plaag as the defendant.

"Judge Conley sends a strong message that legiti-

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BHS VS GARY PLAAG DISMISSED (continued)

(Continued from page 3)

officers insurance that covered the cost of Gary's legal team, we sincerely hope that the Society does not elect to move toward pursuing the case beyond this dismissal and incurring further associated costs. However, the Foundation Trustees will remain vigilant in their fiduciary responsibilities to protect the assets our donors have placed with the Foundation. Further, as has always been the case, HFI continues to be willing to sit down with BHS to collaboratively discuss a mutually respectful and acceptable path forward.

In the meantime, HFI will continue to support BHS at the local, regional, and national levels, as well as continue efforts to cultivate and steward our new partnerships with AIC, our Districts and Chapters, and our exciting Power of Harmony youth anti-recidivism program. Should you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact Dr. Perry White directly via email at pwhite@harmonyfoundation.org. He would be happy to hear and discuss your thoughts and concerns.

JUDGE ADDRESSES BHS/HFI RELATIONSHIP (continued)

(Continued from page 3)

mate members of the HFI Board will 'dwindle to

zero,' if the Foundation continues to operate under a false assumption of independence," Donehower said.

The judge notes the lawsuit could proceed in state court, although Donehower said he hopes Conley's guidance enables the two parties to work together without having to refile the case.

"Judge Conley could have issued a simple 'case dismissed' judgment," Donehower said. "Instead, his 17-page document seems intentional in pointing to the Society's primary role with HFI and its control in the appointment of Foundation trustees."

Society attorneys are completing a thorough review of Conley's opinion and order and will provide counsel to the BHS Board about next steps and options.

SHUT UP AND SING

*In Loving Memory of Royce Parish (10/10/1924-7/10/2016)
Bass of "The Knights of Harmony" (1959 Intl Quarterfinalists, SWD)*

Music by: Terry S. Chapman, 5/16/2020

Lyrics exasperatedly hurled at Terry by: Royce Parish, 8/5/2014

with annoyance

Tenor Lead

Shut up and sing! Shut up and sing!

Bari Bass

Sing! Shut up and sing! Shut up and sing!

Shut up and sing! Shut up and sing!

Composer's note: Royce Parish was the Bass of the Knights of Harmony, a popular chapter quartet in the SWD during the 1950's and 1960's. In 1959, the Knights of Harmony were 21st place in the Intl contest, beating out the Suntones, the Nighthawks, and the Four Rascals that year. By 2014, Royce had been a member of the Big D Chorus in Dallas TX for many years, and when this tag's composer was being a bit "long-winded" on his first night as the new Musical Director of the Big D Chorus, Royce expressed his annoyance with Terry's unwanted music theory lecture with Royce's endearing signature phrase, "SHUT UP AND SING!"

FROM THE SPPBSQSUS PRESIDENT'S DESK

by Arnie Dolt
from email

My Fellow Preservationists,

I am delighted that membership in our organization is continuing to increase, albeit a tad slowly. Additionally, I'm really pleased that interest in creating new geographic Lodges is also on the rise. That's all great news, indeed. But... as a sixty-plus-year participant in this hobby, I am saddened by the ongoing exodus of singers from a barbershopping involvement.

Over the past several months, I have been invited to participate on a number of Zoom meetings with established barbershop entities from around the country. Many of them have sought help with declining membership issues. Others, quite frankly, are struggling for survival. These groups have contacted me because, apparently, they'd somehow become aware of the initial dramatic growth of our Friends In Harmony Lodge #1 here in San Antonio, and, perhaps, with our reputation for success in consistently attracting new men, of all ages, who like to sing. The question that I'm most often asked is... "Will you please share the secret of your recruiting efforts?"

These folks are often incredulous when I emphasize that we NEVER RECRUIT! I explain to them that big corporations recruit... the military recruits. But here at Friends In Harmony, our members are encouraged to simply give the GIFT of an invitation to come and have FUN in the life-changing experience that we offer. Yes, I do, in fact, consider it a gift... A BIG GIFT!!!

The result is that we continue to maintain a Lodge with well over a hundred active singers. Sure, we've managed, over the years, to welcome back some former barbershoppers who, for one reason or another, had left the hobby. But the vast majority of our membership has come from men who are receiving their very first introduction to singing four-part, a cappella harmony.

I see huge parallels between our local Friends In Harmony situation, and that of our entire international organization. Looking to the future, we can't be successful if we are content with deriving our membership growth by merely attracting singers who have become disenchanted, and who have abandoned their previous affiliations. Don't misunderstand... we absolutely want to establish an environment that welcomes these gentlemen into our culture of music,

fellowship, and fun. Like you and I, they'll undoubtedly be thrilled with our philosophy of preserving the old songs, and singing them in the traditional barbershop style! But I'm sure that you'll also agree... the key to our long-term success will come from our ability to attract, and to introduce, countless new singers to the joy of creating ringing barbershop chords.

That's exactly why I am so focused on expanding our base of Lodges. Our vision for a dynamic fraternity of barbershop harmony preservationists depends on it! Please know, my friends, that I will do all in my power to assist you in your efforts to charter a group in your area. I can't wait for the day when you, too, can offer the GIFT of an invitation to come and enjoy the fun at your Lodge!

Together is my favorite place to be...



EVIDENCE THAT YOU SHOULD PROBABLY BE TAKING PRACTICE "MICRO-BREAKS," IF YOU WANT TO MAXIMIZE LEARNING.

by Dr Noa Kageyama
from bulletproofmusician.com

I took piano lessons for many of my childhood years. And though there was never any question that violin was my main instrument, there were quite a few things about the piano that I really liked.

I mean, not having to worry about intonation was freaking awesome. And being able to play more than 2 or 3 notes at a time? And really loudly at that? That was also pretty cool.

But as satisfying as it was to play a single note or chord, and have it sound pretty darn good despite my very mediocre piano skills, the challenge, of course, was stringing multiple good-sounding notes together.

Because, I mean, sooooo many notes! Two hands! Doing completely different things! Ack!

Of course, on some level, I suppose it's all kind of the same, whether we're talking about piano, violin, clarinet, percussion, or voice. Because no matter the instrument, making music is not about making one note sound good, but about *connecting* notes in a meaningful and compelling way.

Taking single, discrete, motor actions (a single note), and linking them together into a longer and more complex sequence of movements (a phrase). Which is a process known as "binding" in the neuroscience literature. And apparently, how the brain does this has been a bit of a mystery – though a recent study provides some pretty intriguing clues.

So how *does* the brain actually string together single actions into sequences? And why should we care? Like, does this have any practical implications for how we should structure our daily practice?

A simple motor sequence

A team of researchers (Buch et al., 2021) recruited 33 right-handed individuals to participate in a sim-

ple learning study.

Each of the participants was asked to sit in front of a computer screen and type out a particular sequence of numbers – 41324, for what it's worth – on a number pad with their left hand, as quickly and accurately as possible.

They were given 36 10-second blocks of time to practice this number sequence, with a 10-second break between each practice block.

In other words, when the practice block began, the numbers 41324 would appear on the screen, and they'd practice typing out 41324 as quickly and accurately as possible until 10 seconds had passed, at which point the numbers on the screen would be replaced with x's, and they'd sit there and look at the x's, until the numbers reappeared and the next 10-second practice block began.

While engaged in this practice activity, the participants were all hooked up to an MEG (magnetoencephalography) device, which is a type of brain imaging technology that detects and records neuromagnetic activity within the brain on a millisecond-to-millisecond basis, allowing researchers to map this activity to specific parts of the brain (here's a short video on how MEG works <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BLfwZ1NPNKY> if you're looking for a way to procrastinate on practicing).

And what were researchers looking for?

"Neural replay"?

Well, one of the theories that has been proposed to explain this binding process, is that of "neural replay." Where during pauses in our practice, the brain basically reactivates the same neural circuits that are activated when physically performing the skill – only much faster. Kind of as if our brain were fast forwarding through the sequence of motor movements a bunch of times to reinforce what it just did.

So the researchers were curious to see if they would find evidence of this sort of neural activity during the 10-second practice breaks.

And did they?

Learning occurred when?!

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PRACTICE "MICRO-BREAKS" (continued)

Takeaways

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Well, they found a couple things.

First off, typing out 41324 is not a super difficult task. And most participants got the hang of the task pretty quickly, with about 95% of their learning gains taking place within the first 11 or so practice blocks.

And when researchers took a closer look at the rate of improvement during this early learning period, they found that most of the gains in performance occurred not *during* the practice blocks when participants were actively typing out the numbers, but *between* the practice blocks, *when they were resting*.

I know – that's a little surprising, right? Because this suggests that the break or periods of "waking rest" between practice blocks were as integral a part of learning as the practice itself.

But as one of the NIH researchers involved in the study noted¹ – "It seems to be that most, if not all, of early learning occurs over these rest periods and virtually nothing is detected during the practice intervals."

And why might that be?

Neural replay seems to be a thing

Well, this goes back to that theory about neural replay.

And when the researchers looked for evidence of this in the MEG data, they found that indeed, during the 10-second rest breaks between practice blocks, the brain appeared to reactivate or "replay" the same neural circuits associated with performing the task physically – just 20 times faster.

A speed which suggests that this was all happening in the background, and isn't related to imagery or mental practice, which generally isn't time-compressed in this way, and takes about the same amount of time as performing the skill itself.

So what are we to do with all of this?

Well, when it comes to the consolidation of motor skills (i.e. getting skills into "muscle memory"), previous research has established that getting good sleep is an important factor in this process (btw, here's a great video of violist Molly Gebrian summarizing some of the research on sleep's role in learning <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f6jXZSA9Lw>).

But today's study suggests that integrating "waking rest" into our practice could be a really important factor to consider as well.

There isn't enough research out there yet to know *exactly* what the optimal formula for rest and practice might be for maximal learning, so it doesn't mean that we must always integrate a 10-second pause into our practice after every 10 seconds of practice. Because that would probably be pretty annoying.

But I do think it'd be worth experimenting with tiny micro-breaks throughout a practice session, between groups of practice repetitions.

Like, instead of hammering away at a difficult passage over and over and over until you're satisfied with it, maybe...

- Allow yourself just a few repetitions or a few minutes worth of repetitions to see if you can get the problem passage to sound just right.
- And then, whether you've solved the problem or not, take a nice, deep, meditative, one-breath micro-break (no sneaking a glance at your phone notifications!).
- And then test out the passage again to see if the improvements stuck, or try it a few more times to see if you can get closer to the solution.
- And then take another micro-break, and so on, until you've reached the end of your allotted practice time or finished your to-do list for that session.

You'll undoubtedly have to experiment with the spacing and duration of these microbreaks in your practice so that it feels helpful, and not a frustrating interruption to your practice flow. And there's a big difference between these within-session micro-breaks, and those longer practice breaks that you take between practice sessions, where you get sucked into a YouTube rabbit hole, only to emerge hours later, no longer in the right headspace to get anything productive done...

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PRACTICE "MICRO-BREAKS"

(Continued from page 7)

But whatever sort of microbreak schedule you end up settling on, what I like about this particular practice hack, is that regardless of the potential learning benefits, the idea of a microbreak is probably a good one to explore anyway, from a purely physical perspective. Because microbreaks are a nice way to release muscle tension and avoid that tendency to get progressively more tense and wound up as our practice session progresses.

So at first glance, reducing the number of repetitions you engage in during practice might seem like a counterproductive learning strategy, but if integrating a few short pauses into your practice sessions every few minutes could accelerate learning and also help to prevent pain and injury, it certainly seems like a hack worth trying!

HOW TO SING VOWELS CORRECTLY

by James Mann
from becomesingers.com

You might think that the correct production of vowel sounds while singing is unnecessary because you might have heard one or two famous singers who intentionally mispronounced certain vowel sounds and sang as if they were stuttering. And so, you surmise that if they could get by with mispronounced vowel sounds without losing their popularity, you too could get by and become popular like them.

Of course, you can become a famous singer with sheer luck, talent, and good looks. Yet, if you want to hone your singing skills further, you need to deal with the basics of good singing, and you need to know how to sing vowels correctly. The cornerstone of an excellent singing voice is correct vowel sounds (<https://www.becomesingers.com/techniques/singing-diction-advanced-singing-techniques>). But learning how to enunciate vowel sounds well when singing can be a bit tricky.

The way you pronounce vowels in speech is often not the same as how you pronounce them while singing. The reason is that vowels are pronounced using the front of your face and other articulators like tongue, teeth, and lips when you talk. But when you sing, the vocal tract and the tongue work together to shape the vowel sounds.

How Do Correct Vowel Enunciation Work in Singing?

When you sing a song, you will notice that around 99% of your singing depends on vowel sounds. So, producing the vowel sounds well is crucial to good singing. Moreover, when singing contemporary songs, you usually form your vowels by adequately positioning the articulators to create brighter sounds.

If you listen to pop/rock, you will notice that singers tend to make brighter vowel production, although they make their vowel production according to their stylistic choice. They vary vowel sounds by altering the positions of articulators to achieve better vocal sounds and singing styles.

You can brighten your vowels by not rounding your lips too much, especially if you will enunciate the “o” and the “u.” You also do it with a bit elevated and forward-arching tongue, complemented by a large

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HOW TO SING VOWELS CORRECTLY
(continued)

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mouth opening, specifically if you want to say “**ah.**”

The vowel sounds are formed by adjusting your soft palate, tongue, jaw, and lips. Moreover, all these adjustments do affect the vocal tract's shape. They also provide every vowel a distinct color and sound.

Vowel Techniques When Singing

To improve your production of vowels, you need to know how to produce vowel sounds properly. It will also help to be cognizant of the following techniques to learn how to create the vowel sounds properly:

Pure Vowels

Vowels are considered pure vowels if the articulators mentioned above remain in one place when you execute the vowel sound. In classical music, pure vowels play a critical role in the singing of classical pieces. Moreover, they play a crucial role in mainstream and popular music.

With pure vowels, you can make your singing more radiant and brilliant. Pure vowels, of course, are not inherent in the American language. The reason is that the American language does not pronounce most vowels well. In fact, the most commonly used vowel sound in the American language is the **schwa** sound. You would hardly hear a pure “o” or “a” in that language. Most Americans also talk nasally, and they enunciate vowels as if they are chewing gum.

For this reason, pure vowels are foreign to Americans. Some examples of pure vowels are monophthongs. In music, the five primary pure vowels are “**ah, eh, ee, oh, and oo.**” The key to the correct production of these five vowels lies in the formation of the articulators. It will also help if you reduce the tension in your lip when you pronounce these primary vowels.

Jaw, Tongue, and Lip Placements

As mentioned above, singers form their vowels by adjusting the articulators like tongue, soft palate, lips, and jaw. These articulators readily adjust whenever we try to enunciate a vowel sound, and their adjustments affect the vocal tract to produce

distinct vowel color and sound.

Remember that vocal clarity starts with proper vowel production. We usually listen to a song and get swept by how the singer pronounces the lyrics' words. But if we fail to understand the lyrics of the song, we become frustrated.

Thus, if you want to sing well, you have the responsibility of pronouncing every vowel and word clearly. Yet, you can't do this if you don't know how to produce vowel sounds well.

When you sing, for example, a lyric with the word “Father,” you need to pronounce the syllable “Fa” with a dropping jaw. Otherwise, your listeners will hear “further” instead of father. Always bear in mind that all communication is lost if the audience doesn't understand the lyrics.

Diphthongs and Triphthongs

You will find many diphthongs and triphthongs in the English language. When singing these diphthongs and triphthongs, you need to treat each vowel separately. You can sing the first vowel most of the time and only add the second and third vowels at the ending of the vowel sounds. Make sure that your mouth stays in a single position when you enunciate these vowel sounds.

In the English language, there are around nine diphthongs. You can check out these nine diphthongs to familiarize yourself with them. On the other hand, there are six triphthongs in the English language. So, make sure you are familiar with them if you want to produce them well.

Shaping Vowels When Singing

When you sing, you will find three vowel shapes that you need to know. First, there is the **tongue up**, wherein you pronounce the vowel at the back while your tongue is up. There is also the **tongue down** where in your tongue is low and forms a concave shape such as when you say **Ah**. There is also the **tongue back** with your lips positioned forward as producing the **OO** sound. You can create other sounds like **AY ER** and **OO** with a bit of variation in your tongue's placement.

The way you shape your vowel sounds is crucial to keeping your throat open when you sing. As mentioned above, an open throat is vital to singing be-

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HOW TO SING VOWELS CORRECTLY
(continued)

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cause, with an open throat, you can hit the high notes without straining your vocal cords.

Short and Long Vowels

If you are going to sing songs in the English language, it will help to know the different vowel sounds of that language. If you are singing in Spanish, of course, you will only have five vowel sounds. But in English, there are much more vowel sounds. Moreover, there are long and short vowel sounds.

You need to be familiar with these vowel sounds if you want to sound good when singing an English song. There are around five long vowel sounds in the English language: the **ei** as in fate, **i** as in meet, **ai** as in kite, **ou** as in rose, and **ju** as in cute. The short vowel sounds, of course, are the following: (**æ**) as in mat, (**ɛ**) as in met, (**ɪ**) as in mitt, (**ɒ**) as in lot, and (**ʌ**) as in shut.

Resonant Space

When singing, you usually resonate your voice differently. Sometimes you resonate your voice at your head's back where your vocal tract goes into the pharynx. The tongue's root moves forward and releases the jaw's base while your soft palate spreads during your first vocal break. Your soft palate then narrows down and rises onto the high range.

If you want to create a resonant space, you need to control your soft palate well. The soft palate, of course, comes with many functions when you sing. It can alter and manage your resonant space. It can also moderate nasal airflow.

Through practice, you can learn how to use your soft palate well to breathe in via your nose then breathe out via your mouth. When you breathe in through your nose, you will feel an open feeling at the back. Then, you also experience a closed feeling as you breathe out via your mouth. The soft palate can also move sideward or upward and alter the resonant space of your voice.

To gain access to your soft palate, you can start to yawn at your mouth's back. When you yawn, you lower your larynx likewise while allowing your dia-

phragm to engage. The imitation of the yawning mode is a great way to achieve resonant space.

Vowel Modification

Producing pure vowels will give you optimal results. Yet, there will be times when you need to alter the pure vowel sounds to make you sound better. You can lower your jaw a bit or close it a bit to change some vowel sounds. You can also unround or round your lips or move your tongue a bit forward or backward when you sing. You will notice too that singers who want to belt high notes usually lower their jaw when singing high notes.

Understanding the Vowel Diagram and Terminology

One of the best diagrams that you can check out is the Daniel Jones vowel diagram. Jones charted the tongue's position during the production of different vowels and came up with this diagram. For example, in that diagram, it is indicated that the tongue is at the back when you say "cool" and in the forward position when you say "treat" (i). This diagram, therefore, indicates whether your tongue should be back, forward, closed, unrounded, or rounded.

Daniel Jones' chart will help you figure out where to situate your tongue whenever you produce certain vowels. As such, you will benefit from learning this diagram.

Conclusion

Correctly singing the vowels is tricky for most singers. Yet, the way you sing them can determine the outcome of your rendition of a song. Therefore, it will be best before performing a music piece to study with care the vowel sounds in the lyrics. Figure out how you can improve your vowel sound.

As mentioned above, the cornerstone of quality singing also depends on how you produce those vowels. So, it will help to learn the abovementioned techniques to create the right vowel sounds. Being cognizant of the correct vowel production will indeed improve how you sing and bring out your best when singing.



HOW TO SING WITHOUT STRAINING YOUR VOICE - NIGHT AFTER NIGHT

by Brad Chapman
from blog.discmakers.com

Be prepared for the road, and you'll love every minute of it. As a vocalist, this means you have to learn to care for your instrument and sing without straining if you want to be in this for the long haul.

As a gigging vocalist, you've got a different box of tools you need to care for than the rest of the players in your act. When your schedule has you playing a couple of shows a month, your voice may easily recover in time for shows and rehearsals with no problem — even if you are yelling for high notes. But let's say your new record comes out and things start progressing and you become very popular.

Now more and more fans want to see you as often as possible. If you did any yelling on the record, it is going to be hard to repeat that over and over again during the multitude of weekly shows. With recording sessions, you may have the luxury (in some cases) to rest your voice and go back and record when you've recovered. Live performing doesn't allow for that. And if you do start to grow your act and start amassing a crew, more and more people will depend on you to be able to perform.

The care and feeding of your voice

1. Stop yelling when you sing

Take great care of your voice. Let me emphasize: do not yell to get your high notes. That rarely carries the right emotion for the lyric anyway.

2. Learn belted head voice

Learn "belted head voice" from a vocal coach or vocal producer so you can hit your emotionally charged high notes and give tonight's audience what they want, and then be able to do it again for tomorrow's audience. You have to recognize that there is always another audience hungry for your performance and expecting to hear your magic. If you lose your voice, it's very frustrating for everyone involved.

3. Use in-ear monitors

In-ear monitors are the best for keeping you from yelling and straining your voice. They allow you to hear yourself so well that your technique can be

better managed and you can avoid the straining that causes problems. If you can't hear yourself, you'll have a hard time not being flat or sharp. When I was in my first loud rock bands in the '60s, we didn't even know what monitors were for. I can't even imagine what the audience was hearing. Unfortunately, ignorance can kill your career before it even gets started.

One of my touring clients, Kevin Cronin of REO Speedwagon, no longer yells, and he's been singing for over 40 years of touring. He never loses his voice and he never has to call me for any vocal therapy. The same is true for all my touring clients, because they've learned the proper technique and trained their voices over time, before hitting the road.

4. Take care of your instrument

Become as fanatical, as a vocalist, as the other musicians in your band are about their instruments. They know their instruments and how to take care of them. They pack them in road cases and polish and maintain them. They know to carry extra picks, strings, drum heads, etc. Of course, we can't replace broken vocal cords, but we can treat our voices in a way that maintains them from show to show.

Be aware and try not to talk too much during the day. You may have interviews to do or have a day job, but try to stay quiet. Do your warm-ups every day, whether you're performing or not. Cooling down exercises are valuable to do after the show (just as is done with race-horses). Your vocal cords won't be as stiff the next day.

5. Ideal monitor speaker placement

If you don't have in-ear monitors, then work with the live sound engineer on placing the monitor cabinets in the best possible places for the way you move around the stage. Rod Stewart used to have monitor speakers in the front and on the side of the stage so no matter where he went, he could hear himself very well.

But the more monitors, the more chances of feedback, so again, I recommend in-ear monitors, even if they're inexpensive ones. They work a lot better than stage monitors ever will and they don't have to be wireless.

6. Do cardio exercises and steam, daily

Do cardiovascular exercise every day, and if there are steam rooms in the city that you're in, take advantage and use them. Or just use a basin with boiling water and a towel over your head. This reduces

(Continued on page 12)

HOW TO SING WITHOUT STRAINING (continued)

(Continued from page 11)

some of the swelling in your vocal cords. Learn a tongue-roll exercise that you can do, while the other musicians are doing instrumentals. It's to your advantage for your career to do these things in order to help keep the swelling down and the stiffness out of your vocal cords.

If you fight with your voice,
you'll always lose

When you are yelling, you're closing your wind pipe almost all the way (that's where the sound/frequencies come from), and then, pushing air as hard as you can to get sound out. The vocal cords are being blasted by this air pressure that your vocal cords are resisting. You don't need to be a doctor to realize you're going to put a lot of wear and tear on your vocal cords very quickly doing this. What we all need from you as a singer is for you to have stamina, and stamina doesn't come from muscle. Stamina comes from taking good care of your vocal cords (which are mucous membranes). They can't take tough pressure over and over and over again without you losing your voice.

My mantra is: "If you fight with your voice, you'll always lose." Have fun on the road. It's great to build relationships with your fans, but save some of your energy and your voice for the next show and the fans who will be there for it. Otherwise, you could be one of those singers in an extremely expensive ENT doctor's office in the middle of a tour and having to cancel shows.

I can't say enough about how awful that is for everyone involved. Be prepared for the road, and you'll love every minute of it. I know from many years as a touring vocalist, and now as a vocal pre-producer/voice therapist, that you'll enjoy your shows more, and you'll continue to grow your fan base if you do.

If you can't handle me
randomly blurting out
song lyrics that relate
to what you just said,
we can't be friends.

MAGIC CHORAL TRICK #364 WORD SOUNDS

by Janet Kidd
from betterchoirs.wordpress.com

I've written before about the concept of getting rid of, de-emphasizing or mumbling unimportant words or syllables – but when my chorus was being coached by music judge Kathy Greason, she had an eloquent term for describing this.

Word Sounds. She asked my chorus members to just sing word sounds rather than enunciating the actual words, or the syllables that make up those words.

Our listening understanding of Word Sounds is rather like those texts we see on Facebook – where the words are printed upside down or backwards, but we still have no problem reading them.

When we listen analytically to natural speech patterns, most of what we hear is just Word Sounds. In fact, when we hear someone speaking and enunciating everything really clearly, it comes across as not only unnatural, but also as slightly condescending or judgmental. We get so caught up in listening to every syllable that we tend to miss the meaning of what's being said.

Most of the songs we sing were written to be immediately accessible, in the language and cadence of our times. Meticulous enunciation is not only unnecessary, but can be an emotional barrier for the audience. If they are being distracted by the accentuation of syllables that would normally be swallowed in speech, it takes a moment for the brain to discount their emotional usefulness.

If the songwriting is good, the music matches the flow of a natural delivery of the lyrics.

Strong song delivery finds the most meaningful word or syllable of the phrase and communicates that one thing very clearly – while allowing the rest of the lyrics to flow in such a way that they point to that meaningful word or syllable.

By the way – just as a rule of thumb, I say that all articles, prepositions and any words or syllables on a pick up beat need to be just Word Sounds, and not enunciated.

THE BALANCED VOICE PART 1: INTRODUCTION

by Liz Garnett
from barbershop.org

After the long hiatus, the opportunity to hear voices singing live in real time – both solo and ensemble – has found me reflecting anew on what I most value in what I'm hearing. This is partly a response to remedial needs, to hearing voices that are in varying degrees out of practice, and having to re-imagine the ideal they need to find their way back to. But it's also simply a function of the opportunity to listen with fresh ears after a year and more's diet of processed recorded sound.

Bringing these reflections to written form has taken longer than I thought it might – my notes on the subject started back in the Spring – and has also spread out into a series of linked posts which will appear over the next few weeks in between other items more tied to specific events. Today's post will explore the global ideas that shape my reflections, the second and third will break it down into a range of elements that contribute to it, and the last will return to the holistic level, to consider the kind of structure and relation between those elements implied by the various metaphors in play.

So, as my title has already signalled, *balance* has emerged as the guiding metaphor for these thoughts. On the face of it, this could imply a sense of moderation, of compromise, though that is not at all what I mean. To quote an earlier articulation of my sound ideal, from back before the covid era, this is a note from the Thinking Book back in October 2019:

The sound I desire: poise, balance, clarity,
flexibility, generosity – clarion call, oracular,
prophetic, true

Here, balance is only one of a number of attributes, many of which have a much more positive and distinctive mode of expression. My feeling was then, and still is, that the first set of qualities is what allows the second to come into being.

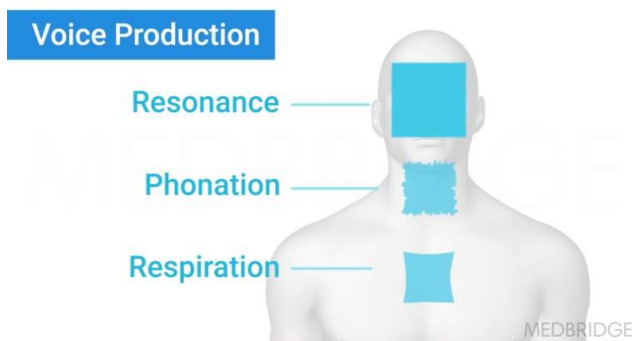
This makes more sense in the context of two other metaphors which made extended bids to become the overriding concept for this series of posts:

- the integrated voice
- the connected voice

The idea of integration brings with it a sense of coherence, of disparate elements coming together to make a whole that transcends the parts. It also has the sense of integrity, which chimes with the adjective of a voice (and by extension, an expression) that is true. There are ties here with the concept of authenticity, in the sense of congruence between values and behaviour associated with believability in performance. Somehow I prefer integrity to authenticity; it has a stronger ethical dimension – it is not just a matter of being true to yourself, but that self having a firm moral foundation.

The idea of the voice being connected is commonly used as a metaphor to describe the aspect of technique that involves the relationship between respiration/support and phonation. A lot of voices have become disconnected in this technical sense over lockdown, and we are all having to do a lot to reconnect body with sound. But the word connection also brings connotations of meaningful social contact. A connected voice can be thought of one in which sound acts as an effective conduit for expression, or one that has a vibrant and effective relationship with other voices in an ensemble. (Actually, relationship with the ensemble is another fruitful meaning for the integrated voice too.)

Useful as these ideas are, I keep coming back to the idea of balance, though. It is on the face of it a less vivid metaphor, but it's one that keeps giving. It works analytically as a way to consider all kinds of different aspects of singing – vocal/technical, sonic, and psychological – and I'll look at this in the next two posts of this series. It also works holistically as a way of conceiving the relationship between those analytical elements, which I'll move onto in the last one.



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Thanks in advance!!

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

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



Big Orange Chorus

Jacksonville, Florida, USA

FREE YOUR VOICE

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

The easiest way I have found for a singer to inhale is explained below. Some of it appears earlier in this book as 'Author's checklist for releasing the natural voice'. You should also refer to photographs in the chapter about the jaw, tongue, and larynx.

- Drop your jaw hinges. Drop them to where they feel they are about to unhinge. Always keep this comfortable, never forced. Let your jaw drop open as if gravity is weighing it down. Do not push it down to where muscles are stretching or tensing uncomfortable. Let your jaw fall down and hang open. I say 'let' because you mustn't force it to open too wide. Let it hang open roughly one inch and let it be relaxed. If this is not comfortable, manoeuvre and release your neck easily until the jaw position feels more comfortable. Another idea is to imagine a shelf about one inch below your chin and let your chin rest of it heavily. Feel like your jaw wants to fall and that the hinges are well 'oiled'.
- If your are not sure your jaw is open enough, keep it relaxed as you let your head fall back and it will open more. Stay open as you bring your head back to its normal position.
- A relaxed jaw should not be lopsided. Check in a mirror.
- While letting your jaw and mouth hang open, check your posture. It is easy for the relaxed 'slack-jaw' feeling to cause some drooping or sagging in your neck and spine. Stay upright, feel broad, and relax your shoulders.
- Let your tongue relax and lay loosely in its natural resting position. For some people, the tip of the tongue rests behind the lower front teeth; for others, the tip rests on top of the lower front teeth. Look in the mirror as you do this. Notice how much surface area you see of your tongue? Good. Now manipulate your tongue muscles to be tense or say 'ah' to the doctor. Much less tongue surface area will be visible. For breathing, I always prefer to see plenty of tongue surface area, whereby your tongue resembles a downward slope to your lower lip. Your jaw should feel like the bed upon which your tongue sleeps. Practice singing keeping that tongue as relaxed as possible - without compromising enunciation - and keeping that surface area visible in the mirror.
- From the slack-jawed and slack-tongued position, allow the inhale to 'drop' in or 'fall' in. Don't make it, allow it. Use a mental image of downward motion in your lower torso. Let the air 'fall' in through that loose, natural space in your mouth and throat. Don't suck it in, just let it fall in.

Continued next month

FREE SINGING TIPS

by Yvonne DeBandi
from a2z-singing-tips.com

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

FREE SINGING TIPS

by Nicole LeGault
from a2z-singing-tips.com

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

FREE SINGING TIPS

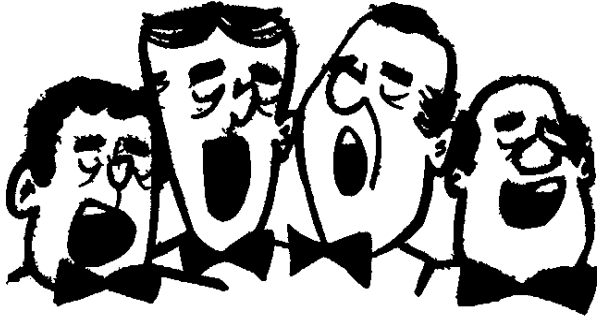
by Mick Walsh
from a2z-singing-tips.com

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

FREE SINGING TIPS

by Teri Danz
from a2z-singing-tips.com

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



QUARTET CORNER

Our quartets are practicing social distancing or re-grouping.

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.



VOCAL HEALTH TIPS

by Tom Riggle
from Down Our Way

Some of this will come from Mike Slamka, lead singer of the 2009 International Champion quartet Crossroads. I was privileged to attend session with Mike during a Dixie Lakeside Harmony weekend in Huntsville, I believe it was.

Stay hydrated! Caffeine, alcohol (even beer!) and some prescription and OTC drugs will dehydrate the vocal folds. Binge watering at the last minute doesn't work and, in fact, can thin out your mucus and damage your vocal chords. So, don't count on drinking a lot of water the day before singing. Make drinking water an everyday part of your life.

Be mindful of how much singing, or even speaking, you do. Stop doing that when you feel tired. Smoking or vaping is particularly irritating to the vocal folds.

Avoid excessive coughing or throat clearing. Remember Kathy telling us that when she was here.

Avoid excessively acidic foods.

Avoid competing with a noisy environments like restaurants, parties, machinery, county fairs, highways, a chicken coop full of red chickens and such. (ask me how I know about the chicken thing).

Mike Slamka told us that the only thing he will eat within 30 minutes of singing is apples. He usually won't eat anything for 3 to 4 hours before singing, but apples are good for the voice. You may recall the potion that Jim DeBusman recommended for throat issues contained apple cider vinegar – that is consistent with Mike Slamka's comments about apples.

By the way, we know that singing, itself, is good for your health in about 8 different ways. Just don't overdo it.

Big Orange Chorus

REHEARSAL SCHEDULE

Thu	05 Aug	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	12 Aug	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	19 Aug	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	26 Aug	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	02 Sep	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	09 Sep	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	16 Sep	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	23 Sep	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	30 Sep	Shepherd of the Woods

BIRTHDAYS

Joe Williams	03 Aug
Dave Schubert	07 Aug

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
Pat McCormack	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
he'll bring another good man
who likes to sing.

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 September is 26 August.
Items without a byline are from the Editor.

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

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

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

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



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