



The Orange Spiel

News Of The Jacksonville Big O Chapter



<http://www.BigOrangeChorus.com>



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

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TEENS EXPLAIN WHY THEY LOVE BEING IN A BARBERSHOP QUARTET

By Chris Lamphere
From Cadillac News

The idea of a "barbershop quartet" for many conjures up an image of old men in straw hats and striped shirts standing on a street corner warbling songs that went out of style more than 100 years ago.

At least that's the impression that James Carey had before he learned about the modern a cappella scene.

Carey, who is director of the Great Lakes Chorus group and a member of the 2017 Michigan barbershop quartet champions, Upper Deck, said people may be surprised how much the art form has changed in recent years.

"It was always an old guy's thing," Carey said. "But today, we're stronger than we've ever been with our youth involvement."

Popular a cappella groups such as the Pentatonix, as well as viral videos of quartets performing spine-tingling renditions of Top 40 hit songs, have led to a surge of interest in barbershop singing among young people.

Here in Michigan, which is called the Pioneer District because it was the first chapter of the national Barbershop Harmony Society to be formed in 1940, there are around 40 barbershop quartets that perform on a regular basis, Carey said.

One of those groups is the Shoreline Quartet, which is comprised of four Cadillac youths, Catie Carey (James' daughter), Cole Carey (James' son), Caleb Downey and Mark Simons.

Cole became interested in singing with his father when he was around seven years old.

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WANTED!!

MEN WHO LIKE TO SING!



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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

We are continuing to sing together while we focus on rebuilding. We are getting our voices back in shape after more than a year. We are getting our brains back in gear. We are going back to basics as we work toward being able to return to performing at a level of which we can be proud.

There are minimum numbers of singers we need to have as well as a proper balance between the parts in order to move ahead at full speed.

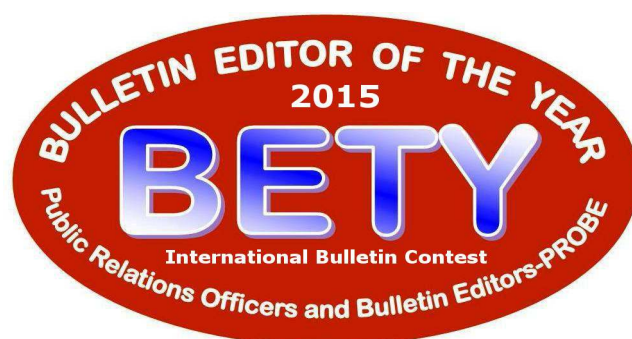
Now is the time for former members to return and for prospective members to join in on the ground floor as we move forward together. The goal continues to be to return to the level where we were before and continue beyond.

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.



TEENS LOVE BARBERSHOP QUARTET
(continued)

(Continued from page 1)

"I've been doing it ever since," said Cole. "The difficulty of the songs made it interesting ... you have to be able to learn a part and sing it without being distracted by what everyone else is singing, but you have pay attention to what the rest of the quartet is doing at the same time."



"It's a very technical form of music," concurred Mark, who joined the quartet a few years ago at the invitation of Cole, who was in the same Footliters community theater group.

"There is a lot of theory and cool chords," Mark said. "There's a challenge in blending in with the other three people you're singing with."

"What makes it hard is that you're all singing something different," said Catie, who joined the quartet a couple of years ago at her brother's urging when a youth league opened up in the district competitions.

"I would sing at churches where they (her father and brother) would perform and fill in sometimes," Catie said. "I always liked singing. I thought, 'oh, this looks kind of cool.'"

Cole also implored Caleb to join the group.

"I told him, 'I want to sing with you,'" Cole laughed. "He didn't know what that meant at the time, but he does now. He's a really great bass."

"I was never really into singing," Caleb said. "Then my voiced changed (became deeper); it's developed a lot within the last year."

Caleb agreed that the challenge of singing barbershop-style is one of its appeals.

"You have to trust you're singing the right part," Caleb said. "It's just cool. I really like it."

One of the things that makes barbershop singing "cool" to young people is the type of music that they're singing nowadays.

While you'll still hear a group now and then sing early 20th Century classics like "Down By The Old Mill Stream," the range of music performed by modern groups runs the gamut, from Doo Wop and jazz to pop and hip hop.

"The repertoire is definitely modernizing," said Caleb, who added that movies like "Pitch Perfect," and groups like the Pentatonix and Home Free are changing the perception people, especially young people, have about barbershop singing and a cappella singing, in general.

"It's just fantastic!," said one member of the Cadillac Area Youth Chorus, which is a group of singers from around the state that rehearse at the First Presbyterian Church in Cadillac; Cole is the director of the group.

When asked if they felt barbershop singing and a cappella performance was becoming more popular among young people, the consensus was that it definitely was, largely as a result of how much attention the art form has received in recent years.

James Carey said capitalizing on the interest that youth are now showing in barbershop singing has been a mission of the Barbershop Harmony Society and the Pioneer District in the last several years. They've done this through outreach campaigns, sponsorships for music training, and other initiatives.

"We realized that if we don't fill the bottom of the bucket with kids, it will die on the vine with the old people," James Carey said.

Part of getting more kids involved in barbershop singing is holding competitions, and next week-end, one will be coming to Cadillac.

The annual Bush League Novice Quartet championship will be held Aug. 13-14. This statewide quartet competition has a long history dating back to 1940s.

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TEENS LOVE BARBERSHOP QUARTET (continued)

(Continued from page 3)

To wrap up the weekend on Saturday, there will be a fundraising concert for the Cadillac Schools Choir programs at 7 p.m. at the Cadillac High School Auditorium. The concert will feature an ensemble from the award-winning Great Lakes Men's Chorus from Grand Rapids, as well as the 2017 and 2019 Michigan State Champion Quartets — Upper Deck and Silver Edition. In addition, the Cadillac Area Youth Chorus and Shoreline Quartet will sing.

The show will be held at the Cadillac High School Auditorium beginning at 7 p.m. The cost to attend is \$10 for adults, \$8 for seniors, and \$5 for students. Tickets are available at Willow Market, Brinks Framing, Java and will be available at the door on the night of the show.

**I've always wondered if
songbirds get a little
annoyed at hummingbirds,
because they won't learn the
lyrics.**

MAGIC CHORAL TRICK #388 FORWARD PIGEON, BACKWARD PIGEON

by Janet Kidd
from betterchoirs.wordpress.com

This is part of the alignment regime that I use several times every rehearsal.

Most of us, because of the way we spend our days, hunched over computers or standing till everything aches, are unaccustomed to what great align-

ment feels like.

And because it's essential to align the vibratory things (the vocal cords) over the top of the hole (the windpipe) for maximum resonance, most of us have some serious retraining to do.

Here are the basics:

- Feet shoulder width apart. Many singers think their shoulders are actually wider than they are
- Relaxed, easy knee
- Hips lined up over ankle bones. Boogey hips – feel that they can move easily
- Shoulders lined up over hips

And then there's....

- Ears lined up over shoulders. This is the one that feels most unnatural for our internet device times.

So that people can have an easy way to get a sense of this I ask my singers to first jut their heads forward. I call this "Forward Pigeon". Chin is still parallel to the floor.

Then I ask them to pull the chin way back, which of course displays every single chin we happen to own. I call this "Backward Pigeon". Chin is still parallel to the floor.

I have them repeat Forward Pigeon/Backward Pigeon a few times, so that they become aware of the radically different positions for the head.

Then I ask them to do a modified, more relaxed version of each – finishing with "Relaxed Backward Pigeon"

Generally, "Relaxed Backward Pigeon" places the ears in the correct position, directly over the shoulders, chin parallel to the floor – which is where the head needs to be for maximum singing resonance.

They can keep tabs on where their chin is sitting as they sing, by placing a thumb lightly on their chin and having their extended pinky finger (same hand!) touching the chest – and keeping that hand position constant.

Until people get used to the feeling of this position they'll need to keep checking themselves for tension and for shifting out of alignment.

WALKING THE DOG

by Brody McDonald
from choirbites.com



I used to have a dog. His name was Marcus, and he was a black miniature schnauzer. That's his picture. Marcus and I got into the habit of taking long walks when he was younger, and during those walks I listened to a lot of things - podcasts, radio shows, and music on which my choirs were working. My a cappella group, Eleventh Hour, was allowed to suggest songs for consideration in our set. I loaded all those suggestions into a playlist, and when I walked Marcus, I would listen... with one goal in mind: musical intimacy.

I set the playlist so that each song would play on repeat. At the start of the dog-walk, I'd start listening to a song over and over again. If I liked the song enough that I could listen to it on repeat through the ENTIRE dog-walk, it would move into serious consideration for arrangement.

I have often stressed to my a cappella groups/choirs that if they are performing a piece of music, they need to be intimately familiar with the end product. There's so much to be learned from listening to a polished, professional performance of the piece you are preparing. Since everyone is busy, I now suggest that my singers do what I did: build a playlist of the material on which you are working, and listen to it - over and over. On dog-walks. In the car. While doing homework. In the shower. I don't care when or how or where, just listen to it a lot. On repeat.

And listen for more understanding each time. Go deep.

Form, style, dynamics, tuning, diction, rhythm, balance, and so much more become obvious when one is familiar with the polished end product. Architects not only create blueprints, but renderings of the final project so that everyone involved can see what they are building. Cookbooks contain photos of completed dishes... nailed it!

As musicians, we must become intimate with the music we are striving to create, so we know best how to direct our practice efforts. When we are intimate with the music we are striving to perform, errors of execution are much easier to spot in the crucial early stages of learning.

Think inside the breath. Without breath, there is no vocal music. As you breathe, so shall you sing. If you breathe for your musical phrase, you shall sing musically. For within the breath, there is musical life. And when you can breathe musically without thinking, you shall eliminate all distractions from your musicianship. Breathe because you wish to add life to the music. It requires much deeper thought.

Ken Potter, Director,
Northwest Sound, Bellevue, Washington

DIFFICULTY GETTING TO SLEEP? TRY "SERIAL DIVERSE IMAGING" - A CRAFTY WAY TO TRICK YOUR BRAIN INTO GOING TO SLEEP

by Dr Noa Kageyama
from bulletproofmusician.com

I don't know if it's street noise, the dog trying to take over my pillow, age, or some combination of things, but in recent years, I've found myself having more difficulty sleeping through the night.

Sometimes I fall right back to sleep so it's no big deal. But there are other times when my brain is just too alert, making it difficult to shut off all the thoughts in my head, and fall back asleep.

There was a time when I'd just get up and do some work instead of staying in bed. Because getting stuff done at 4am does feel super hard-core and productive.

But there's a ton of research out there which suggests that not getting enough sleep can actually sabotage our goals in many aspects of our lives. It can inhibit our ability to learn and make gains in the practice room and classroom, make it more challenging to make good food choices, and in the long run, even put us at a higher risk of dementia.

Of course, knowing how important it is to get good sleep just puts more pressure on needing to sleep. Which makes it harder to get back to sleep!

So what can we do?

Well, I came across a new strategy several weeks ago, which I didn't really know what to make of, but was weird enough that I figured I'd give it a try.

The first time I tried it, I actually surprised myself by how fast I fell back asleep if that's possible. It was almost disorienting. I chalked it up to a fluke.

I remained a bit skeptical even when it worked like a charm the next time I tried it. And the time after that. But the darn strategy just kept working.

The research and theory behind this technique is still in the very early stages. But with reports of difficulty getting to sleep on the rise during these pandemic times, and school and various new stressors right around the corner, now seemed like a good time to explore this sleep hack in case you might find it helpful as well.

So what is it exactly?

A bit of background...

The technique is called serial diverse imagining, and we'll get into the details of it in a minute, but before we do, it helps to know a bit of background...

So ultimately, our brain is responsible for putting us to sleep. But it's not a process that we have direct, conscious control over. Like, we can't just will ourselves to sleep on cue.

However, the cognitive scientist who developed this technique, Luc Beaudoin, observed in a thought-provoking 2013 paper, that there do seem to be certain types of mental activity that are *more* conducive and *less* conducive to falling asleep. Three types, to be exact.

Three types of "mentation"

He called some types of mental activity (i.e. thoughts and images) "**insomnolent**," in that they make it more difficult for us to fall asleep. Stuff like worrying about our future, problem-solving, mentally rehearsing a difficult conversation we need to have, thinking about sleep and how not getting enough of it is going to wreck tomorrow, and so on.

Then, there's mental activity that doesn't necessarily keep us awake, but doesn't really help us get to sleep either (i.e. "**asomnolent**" mentation).

And finally, there's mental activity that Beaudoin categorizes as "**prosomnolent**." This is the stuff that seems to actively accelerate or facilitate falling asleep. And what exactly does this type of mental activity look like?

Ah, yes, so this is where things get interesting.

Where traditional strategies fall short

Most sleep-enhancing strategies are focused on keeping our brain engaged in something more neutral, like meditating on our breath, so that we don't have the cognitive bandwidth to engage in worries, problem-solving, or other thoughts and images that stress us out or keep our mind racing.

But Beaudoin notes that meditating on your breath is really more accurately described as a "**counter-insomnolent**" strategy than a prosomnolent strategy. In that breathing meditation doesn't really bring on sleep. It just aims to neutralize the unhelpful

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DIFFICULTY GETTING TO SLEEP?
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thoughts that keep you awake, by keeping your brain too busy to think them.

But that's not necessarily ideal, right? Because while meditating may prevent you from worrying about the lesson you have tomorrow, it's still an actively focused sort of state that takes a fair amount of effort. Which is not quite the same as being asleep.

The role of coherent vs. incoherent thoughts

As Beaudoin thought about this paradox, it occurred to him that the thing that all these insomnolent, sleep-preventing mentations have in common, is that they involve engaging in thoughts that are *coherent*. And involve making some sort of logical sense of things.

But have you ever noticed how weird and *incoherent* your thinking often gets right before you fall asleep? Where maybe you start having super random thoughts, or brief dream-like flashes of non-sensical images and unrelated memories from your past?

Beaudoin wondered...what if this phenomenon isn't something that just happens to coincide with falling asleep? What if this type of incoherent, non-sensical mental activity actually *induces* sleep?

How our brain decides it's ok to sleep

Beaudoin explains that it's almost like the sleep/wake switch in our brain needs to know it's safe to go to sleep before letting us zonk out, so it kind of "reads the room" as it were, or scans the activity in our cortex (i.e. the "thinking" part of our brain), to see if it's doing things that suggest we ought to stay awake, or if it's doing things that suggest it's ok to pass out for a bit.

Like, if it senses that your brain is trying to make sense of the discrepancies you're seeing between what is on your Google Maps app and the roads and exits around you, it's clear that now is not a good time to go to sleep. No matter how exhausted you might be.

But if you're sitting in the back row of philosophy class at 8am, having been up until 5am playing Mario Kart with your buddies, your professor's soothing monotone, combined with the random bits and pieces of various concepts that seem incoher-

ent and make no sense to you may give your brain a false sense of safety, until suddenly, you're unconscious.

Is sense-making the key factor?

So the theory, is that if you're involved in mental activity that's oriented around coherent thoughts, and an attempt to try to make sense of things, the sleep/wake part of your brain is going to intuit that it's not safe to go to sleep.

So what might happen if you purposefully engage in incoherent, non-sense-making thoughts and images? Could this be the holy grail, where not only is your mind blocked from engaging in worrying and the sort of sense-making thoughts that keep you awake, but also enables you to access your brain's sleep/awake switch more directly? Letting it know that it's safe to shut things down for the night, by essentially mimicking what it does right before falling asleep?

Super-somnolent strategies

Beaudoin calls these "*super-somnolent*" strategies. Because they not only prevent you from engaging in unhelpful mental activity, but also accelerate sleep. So a double win!

And this is where serial diverse imaging (aka "The Cognitive Shuffle") comes into play.

A sleep study

Beaudoin and a few colleagues ([Beaudoin et al., 2016](#)) recruited 154 university students who reported having some difficulty shutting off their brains while trying to get to sleep.

They all completed questionnaires to measure their level of alertness before going to bed, how much effort it usually took them to get to sleep, and their sleep quality. And then they were randomly assigned to various groups and asked to use different types of sleep strategies.

The group we're interested in used an imagery-based mind-wandering strategy. As these participants lay in bed, they turned on an app that was programmed to recite a word or short phrase describing an object or scene that they would try to visualize. And every 8 seconds, the app would prompt them with a different object or scene, thereby encouraging participants to keep shuffling continuously through new random images in their head (hence, the name "cognitive shuffle").

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DIFFICULTY GETTING TO SLEEP? (continued)

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And what happened?

Results

A month later, everyone retook the questionnaires, and sure enough, there was a significant improvement in all three areas – quality of sleep, ease of getting to sleep, as well as their mental state before going to bed!

Caveats

It's important to note that this strategy is not the be all and end all for all sleep issues, because sleep issues have many different causes. So it's not going to work perfectly all the time, or for every single person, but I think it's definitely worth a try. And if you're interested, instructions are below!

The Cognitive Shuffle strategy

1. As you're lying in bed, think of a random, emotionally neutral word that has at least 5 letters. Beaudoin used the example word BEDTIME, so I've actually just been using that.

2. Anyhow, starting with the first letter, "B," think of a word that begins with B, and visualize that item. Like imagine a Bear. And then a Banana. And then Bacon. And then Bread. And then Butter. (ok, I will confess that it's lunchtime as I write this, so my mind is trending in the direction of food).

3. If you can't think of another word starting with B, or just get kind of bored with it, feel free to move on to the next letter in your "seed" word BEDTIME – in this case, the letter E. So you'd imagine an Elephant. An Egg. An Escalator. And so on.

4. If you get to the end of your word and are still awake, just pick a new seed word, and repeat the process.

For complete details on how to do this, here's Beaudoin's complete instructions:

The Cognitive Shuffle Do-It-Yourself Instructions

<https://mysleepbutton.com/support/do-it-yourself-cognitive-shuffle-sdi/>

I'm rather partial to the DIY version myself, but the app version is cool in a different way. If you'd prefer to try the app version, you can get that here:

mySleepButton iOS version

<https://itunes.apple.com/WebObjects/MZStore.woa/wa/viewSoftware?id=740251957>

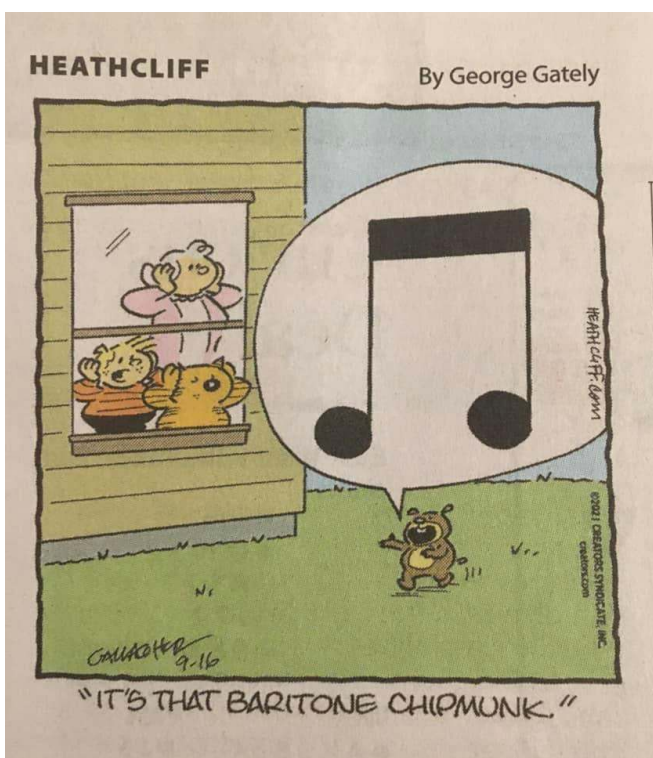
mySleepButton Android version

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.cogsciapps.mysleepbutton>

And because if you're having difficulty sleeping, it's important to consider other factors as well, here are Beaudoin's sleep tips:

Tips for Getting Better Sleep and Dealing with Insomnia

<https://mysleepbutton.com/support/msb-sleep-tips/>



THE BALANCED VOICE PART 4: THE NATURE OF BALANCE

by Liz Garnett
from helpingyouharmonise.com

My previous two posts in this series enumerated a variety of elements that need to be balanced in the singing voice, and we now have a good body of material to act as exemplars while we consider what we mean by the term 'balanced'.

The archetypal image that comes to mind is a set of scales, with two weights suspended either side of a fulcrum, which come into equilibrium when equal in weight and distance from the centre. Or, of course, when the difference in weight is compensated for by a counter-balancing difference in distance. Even this simplest source metaphor carries within it the idea of a degree of flexibility – it's not just equal quantities of things either side of the centre, it's about their relationship to one another.

Another image, which I heard at a presentation on vocal technique some years ago (I forget, to my shame, by who), is of a ping pong ball balanced on a jet of water. This is what comes to mind whenever I think of *poise* in the voice, and it somehow invites one to think about the poise of the head on the body in the same terms as the relationship between folds and airflow. Once again, the elements to be brought into balance are disparate in nature, but are maintained in equilibrium by a balance of forces.

Both of these images, useful as they are, capture only one dimension to be balanced at once. The picture at the top of this post (click on it to enlarge) is from Dag Jansson's book *Leading Musically* and is how he envisages the relationships between the various dialectics of the conductor's role. He talks about them in terms of 'forcefields' within which the conductor and ensemble operate: 'The overall mastery of leading musically relies on the *momentary understanding of what matters* within each of these fields, and for any deliberate position taken, be ready to embrace it's antithesis' (p. 238, emphasis in original). The point of balance is not compromise but existing between apparently contradictory opposites; the antitheses are the fixed points between which the strings of activity vibrate.

(By the way, if you've not read Jansson's book, I highly recommend it, both in general and at this

moment on our collective musical journeys. At a point when I was feeling out of practice as a conductor on the return to live rehearsals, I found it a really helpful source in finding my way back into living inside the music in real time.)

Jansson's intersecting forcefields in turn have brought the image of a gyroscope to mind. Here the balance of opposing forces creates the sense of poise in multiple dimensions, and is, moreover, useful. It doesn't just spin there like a child's top looking interesting, it helps you find your direction. The voice doesn't just spin a beautiful line of sound, it carries meaning.

The equivalent metaphor from the biological sciences would be homeostasis: the balancing of what Lisa Feldman Barrett refers to as your 'body budget' for optimal functioning.

The key thing with all of these metaphors is that the image is dynamic. You can't just put it there and leave it, but have to stay with the experience in the moment. Even with the simplest balance scale, the opposing forces that create the illusion of stability remain in play throughout the process – as any slight jiggle of the hand from which it is suspended will show. It's more like floating in water than lying on a bed.

Hence, a balanced voice (and by extension a balanced ensemble) is by necessity an active voice, it's a voice that is alive and present. You can produce a reasonably well-rounded, competent-sounding voice on autopilot, but you need to get your gyroscope spinning to find those transcendent qualities that bind singer and listener into an experience of shared truth.

MUSICAL SUPERLATIVES



Biggest Treble Maker



Best Laugh



Biggest Flirt



Center of Attention



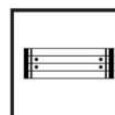
Most Shy



Most Likely to Succeed



Best Couple



Most Talkative



Best Dancer

5 WAYS TO AVOID OVERSINGING

by Adam K Robererts
from backstage.com

The dreaded screlt. Like an uninvited party crasher, this unsavory contraction of scream and belt sometimes shows up at musical theater auditions without warning. But more often it's an insidious visitor, detectable from a mile away when you know the signs to look out for. Whether the product of well-intentioned, sing-out-Louise parental coaching or natural pipes of steel that have yet to be brought under volitional control, there are many reasons why screlting just isn't a good idea. For one, it isn't ever truly necessary to storytelling or characterization. On top of that, chronic screlting can lead to vocal pathology.

But learning how not to oversing can be a process that feels easier said than done. To get you started, here are five tips to launch you on the path of getting rid of that screlt once and for all.

1. Make a plan for approaching the peak.

Although it's true that screlts can emerge seemingly from nowhere, greeting those in their path like an out-of-left-field slap to the face, they much more commonly arise from growing effort and tension that precede them, the result of inadequate breath management or insufficient support. Think of scaling a particularly tricky mountain, only to have your legs turn to jelly the minute you reach the summit. The same thing occurs when you've pushed through a particularly challenging vocal passage, instead of having taken the time to carefully pre-plan your ascent from a technical standpoint. In the case of the screlt though, your musical legs still have to keep going. Rather than giving in with a victorious rest at the mountaintop, your voice continues to push even harder to screlt that sustained money note.

Don't forget, push is a dirty word when it comes to the voice. Never do it. Always pre-plan your approach to a belted note or passage, and stick to the plan.

2. Throttle back and trust the lift.

If we think of flying in its simplest terms, we can identify two primary things that keep the plane moving aerodynamically toward our destination: engine power and lift. When oversinging, it's frequently the case that our engines are set to near-maximum power, making it almost impossible to achieve con-

trol over what results from our vocal mechanism. It can be a scary thing to throttle back on the engines of our voices and allow the natural lift of the airstream to support our desired notes and tone. But with solid training, a singer can learn to create the right amount of airflow and become equipped to manage it in such a way that the lift and engines work in tandem.

Remember, effective breath support does not equal engines at full throttle. Good support means channeling the right amount of energy to undergird the vocal sounds you're desiring to make in healthy ways.

3. Delegate excess vocal energy to other aspects of your performance.

One symptom of oversinging can be that too much energy is being focused on the vocal aspect of one's performance. Instead of delegating energy across various dimensions of the moment (characterization, physicality, connectedness, tactics), oversinging often emerges from too much onus for an energetic performance being placed on the voice alone. This is certainly not to say that we should deprive the voice of the energy necessary to sing powerfully and healthily, but too frequently the vocals seem to be the only aspect of a performance receiving such attention.

In most cases, I suggest that performers conceive of vocal auditions for musicals primarily as acting auditions. Clearly, it's important that the casting director becomes acquainted with your voice and what it's capable of. But shifting one's focus to conceive of the moment as an acting audition can be especially helpful in channeling all of that good, passionate energy into multiple dimensions of a sung dramatic moment, thus freeing the voice from the burden of totality.

4. Work consistently toward vocal flexibility.

In developing a program for training the singing voice, it's important to include exercises and vocalises that focus on the goal of creating additional flexibility in the voice. Flexibility can take the form of switching more effortlessly between registers, being able to navigate tricky arpeggiated passages, or ironing our sirens and glides. Just as increased flexibility in the body results in the ability to achieve more impressive extensions as a dancer, so too does increased flexibility as a vocalist afford one greater access to an extended range and successful register blending.

Think once more about the airplane's wings. They're engineered with flexibility to allow for lift. Like these wings, the vocal mechanism mustn't be stiff and immobile if we expect it to function as designed.

(Continued on page 11)

5 WAYS TO AVOID OVERSINGING (continued)

(Continued from page 10)

5. Call, don't yell.

One of the most ubiquitous techniques for teaching belting is the "call," whereby the singer learns to belt by conceiving of calling across a room, canyon, or other space. Voice teachers in the musical theater world often spend many hours of their days coaching students to discern the difference between this call and a yell or shout, and certainly to differentiate it from a scree. By learning to call within a particular pitch spectrum, and then to extend that call, the singer can learn to belt without strain, fatigue, or oversinging. More often than not, the contemporary belt is actually a relatively light phenomenon, capable of expressing shades of characterization without putting undue pressure on the voice or resulting in a scream.

So, the next time you find yourself preparing for a musical theater audition, remember: to scree is human, to belt is divine.



HOW TO PROTECT YOUR VOICE WHEN SINGING

by Rebekah Klemp
from tmrgsolutions.com

As singers, it's important to take preventative measures to not hurt our voice and throat and to protect them in the long run. Having worked with many students and observed many lessons and coachings, I have seen first-hand how easy it is for students of all abilities and skill sets to fall into harmful habits.

Healthy practices for taking care of your voice are often understated and rarely talked about as much as they should be. It's very important to learn how to take care of your voice in order to sing more easily and naturally, and to avoid long-term damage.

Warm up

As with any instrument, warming up is essential and is often taught at the very beginning of instruction. Vocalists, however, should be taking *extra* care to make sure they are fully warmed up before jumping straight into a practice session or performance.

Warming up is especially important for vocalists because for us, our bodies aren't just controlling the instruments, our bodies *are* the instrument. Warming up is perhaps the easiest way to prepare our voice for a productive and safe practice session. It's a controlled form of singing that doesn't put stress on the vocal cords.

It's similar to how an athlete would stretch before completing a workout. Without a proper warm-up, you could pull a muscle or get tendinitis. Singing scales, buzzing your lips, or sliding your voice up and down through your full range are great ways to warm up! If you need extra guidance, YouTube is a great source with tons of helpful videos and examples.

Use your diaphragm properly

When singing, it's important to remember that the power and sound should be originating from your diaphragm. This can feel odd and unnatural at first if you're not used to it, but believe me when I say that this will be a huge help to you in the long run.

Many singers will try to use their throat instead, which can lead to a hoarse and scratchy voice, and inflamed vocal cords. When your throat tightens in an attempt to create sound, the vocal cords constrict and aren't conducive to a relaxed airflow.

If you have a hard time singing with your diaphragm consistently, it's a good idea to focus on that when doing your warmups. After some time, you'll learn to naturally sing without a constricted throat. You won't have to make such a conscious effort, and your vocal cords will thank you.

Stay hydrated

This is a simple trick that can (and should) be done both in and out of the practice room. I've always carried a bottle of water with me—to every lesson, every practice session, every performance, and even in eve-

(Continued on page 12)

HOW TO PROTECT YOUR VOICE
(continued)

(Continued from page 11)

ryday life. Our bodies are made up of over 70% water, and hydration is necessary for every bodily function—especially singing.

Being dehydrated stretches so much further than just a dry mouth. There are so many small parts involved in singing from the lips and tongue all the way down to the diaphragm. All of these parts need to be in prime condition in order for the voice to function at its best, and lacking hydration is a common issue that can cause damage on many levels.

Some signs of dehydration include a scratchy or dry throat, excessive coughing or clearing of the throat, thirst, or a darker colored urine. You may even find that it required more effort to use your voice. The effects of dehydration vary, but they all prevent good and healthy singing. Keep a close eye out for these signs and if they occur, remember to hydrate a little extra.

It's recommended to drink at least 8 eight-ounce glasses of water every day. Remember that things such as exercise, caffeine, and alcohol can also reduce your bodies fluids. Remember to adjust your water intake accordingly.

Avoid singing when you are sick

Sometimes, in cases of performances or important auditions, singing when sick is pretty unavoidable. If you, like I, have had to perform when feeling under the weather, you know how uncomfortable it can be. It really isn't fun.

Singing when you're sick is not only uncomfortable, but it can slow down your healing process and make it take longer until you feel better. Obviously, there are exceptions to the rule, as previously stated, but it's important to rest your voice when sick whenever possible.

A scratchy or inflamed throat is not conducive to relaxed, natural singing, and can not only damage your vocal cords, but can also lead to the cementing of bad habits. You may find yourself adjusting your carefully-formed healthy and natural singing habits to try and make singing less painful or uncomfortable. This could lead to bad practices in the long-term that would then need to be fixed.

This rule is especially important if you find that singing is painful. Pain is our body's way of telling us

that something is wrong, and therefore we need to listen closely. If something doesn't feel right, stop! Give your vocal cords a rest and try again another time.

Vocal rest involves not singing, minimal talking, and *no* whispering. Whispering is especially bad for your vocal cords and should be avoided. The less you use your voice, the more quickly it will be able to heal. Vocal rest can vary greatly in length, so do what feels right for you.

Get a good vocal coach or teacher

If you really want to make sure you are forming healthy habits to take care of your voice, it may be best to just hire an expert to help you out. Every singer and every voice is different, and therefore it is difficult to learn everything from a YouTube video or an article online.

A teacher would be able to watch and listen to you sing and point out the things that you are doing well and what things still need work. They also serve as a second pair of ears to make sure that your voice sounds natural and not tense. Finding a good teacher may just be the extra push you need to open up your body to the healthy habits that will help your voice prosper in the long run.

Conclusion

If you haven't already noticed, there are many small things and habits that can be harmful to your voice, and there are many things that you can do to ensure that your voice stays in optimal shape over the course of your singing career. Properly taking care of your voice may not be easy at first, but with time and practice and patience, you'll find that these "rules" become habits, and those habits will change your singing for the better. Be kind to your voice and your voice will be kind to you!



CLEARING UP THROAT-CLEARING

by Joanna Cazden
from joannacazden.com

“Don’t clear your throat—it’s bad for your voice.” Every serious voice user hears this advice. But what can you do, when your throat tickles or drips or you’re nervous about a show? How can you resist?

The urge to clear your throat can arise for several reasons, most of them false-alarms. Here are some tips about how to avoid unnecessary throat-clearing, and how this will, in fact, help your voice. First, some background. The voice box—in medical lingo, the larynx(LAA-rinks)—has a bigger job to do than just making sound. Its fundamental role is as a valve that protects the airway. Your vocal cords are constantly on-guard, ready to open or close the top of your windpipe.

Too much smoke, dust, or fumes in the air? The larynx coughs or holds your breath, keeping the bad stuff out of your lungs. Too much phlegm inside the bronchial tubes, collecting debris from an infection? You expell it by slamming the vocal cords hard and then pushing air—and crud—out of the valve.

Throat-clearing is a smaller version of a cough: your vocal cords lightly clap or rub together. This is normally triggered when we swallow the wrong way, or have true post-nasal drip, but it’s more vigorous than what’s needed for vocal vibration. When there really isn’t anything to clear out, it becomes a useless habit, or worse.

Repeatedly slamming your vocal cords together can irritate them, leading to callouses (vocal nodules) or swelling (vocal edema). More often, repeated throat-clearing just makes you slightly hoarse or uncomfortable. And that leads to—you guessed it—more urge to clear.

Now, if you clear your larynx heavily and repeatedly, it will create phlegm and “prove” you were justified! But *if the clearing was not productive (wet) the very first time, you didn’t really need to clear at all.*

Because your body is so motivated to keep the airway clear, your vocal cords can get over-sensitive. Dry weather or air conditioning, slight irritation from acid reflux or allergies, or just using your voice without good technique (like the low-

pitch, glottal-fry style that’s been in the news lately), can all make the vocal cords unhappy. Like a baby, they fuss but don’t tell you why. Your throat gets itchy and scratchy and you don’t know what else to do.

How to break the vicious cycle? Get savvy about how you respond to false alarms, when clearing will just make things worse. And take better care of your voice pro-actively, so the urge-to-clear doesn’t arise in the first place.

- Keep water near you at all times, and *whenever you feel the tickly desire to clear, take a sip of water instead.* This sensory interruption decreases irritation over time, turning the vicious cycle into a positive one. Cold or ice-water is especially good at “distracting” your throat. (No, it doesn’t hurt your voice at all.)
- Develop more consciousness of when and why you clear your throat. If your voice sounds low-pitched or weak just before you clear, practice using a more energetic speech style to stay out of the “danger zone.” This will take more energy commitment from your whole body, but your larynx will be happier, and throat-clearing will decrease.
- If you tend to clear a lot at the end of the day, take more voice-rest breaks, and see a coach about your technique and pacing. Also get some help if you clear a lot on the phone. (Most people are too loud on cellphones, but too soft on land-lines.)
- A vague feeling of phlegm or “something’s in my throat” can be a leading symptom of acid reflux irritation, long before you experience regular heartburn. Cut back on coffee, alcohol, and heavy meals before bedtime; try a quick-acting antacid before long meetings; and arrange for a throat exam with an ear-nose-throat specialist (laryngologist).
- Invest in a few sessions with a voice coach or therapist, to tune-up your technique.

Above all, treat throat-clearing as a signal, not as a mysterious bad habit. Listen more carefully to your throat symptoms, and you’ll soon sound—and feel—much better.



THROAT TIGHTNESS

by Joanna Cazden
from joannacazden.com

Student question: I feel tightness, almost a pinching dry feeling in my throat, when I sing. What could that be and what can I do about that?

There are several possible reasons, so you may need to try a few adjustments and see what helps.

Sometimes feeling dry means that your throat IS dry! The cells at the surface of your throat have air moving past them all day long, from normal breathing. If the air around you (climate or indoor environment) is dry, the throat feels it.

When you sing, your mouth stays open longer than normal, and you take bigger “gulps” of air when you inhale between phrases. So any dryness you might feel gets even more intense. Drinking plenty of water helps, but using a humidifier, facial “steamer,” or just breathing the steamy vapor from a cup of tea may help more quickly.

The quickest test is to sing in the bathroom when it's steamy from a shower or bath, and notice if your throat feels better. If this kind of dryness is a constant problem, talk to your doctor about possible nasal congestion, and look for “oral dryness” products near the toothpaste section of your drugstore (Biotene makes a good mouthwash, spray, and gum that help throat cells stay moist).

If the pinching-tight feeling is stronger than the sense of dryness, you may be straining your voice—singing too high, too loud, and/or too long. Listen to your body, because it's giving you a signal to back off! You can't force your way past that kind of limit. Instead: give your voice some rest, and take some pressure off. Work with a good teacher to improve the posture of your neck and jaw, and to manage your breathing more effectively, so that you don't strain.

Sometimes, throat tightness or that dry-irritated feeling is an indirect signal that your neck muscles are working too hard or are out of balance. This can be helped with massage, acupuncture, or physical therapy.

Finally, a tight-dry-sore feeling can be related to chronic sinus infections, allergies, acid reflux, or can be a side effect of other medications you may be taking. These are things to discuss with a throat doctor (laryngologist) who understands singers' needs and problems.

So try the simple things first: humidity, neck relaxation, and less pressure when you sing. If these don't solve the problem, see a doctor.

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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.

FREE YOUR VOICE

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

Exhaling

- When exhaling, maintain the slack jaw and the relaxed tongue, in the same position as for inhaling. The space in your mouth and throat should stay loose and free throughout the entire process.
- Breath must flow out at a consistent rate. Every time. I cannot emphasize this enough. Not doing so is a cause of many problems. Watch out when you sing high pitches and soft volumes. It is easy to fall into the trap of reducing or restricting the outward flow for these. This causes strain on your vocal mechanisms and an unpleasant tone.
- Breath flow out should be enough to ever-so-slightly warm the front of your face. Think of it as the warmest air you can produce and that it floats out like a cloud of breath in cold weather. If you wear glasses, think of it as enough to slightly fog or mist the lenses of those glasses. for the majority of the time when singing, you should not need pressure much greater than that. Allow the air to rise up the front of your face. Another image is to imagine a lit candle is a few inches in front of your mouth. as you exhale, you should not make the flame flicker suddenly or violently. Either it should barely flicker at all or it should be consistently leaning away from you at a slight angle.
- As breath flows out, and later as sound flows out, think of the breath flow rising like steam or vapour into the cavities of your skull. do not push the breath out in a column of air. Allow it to rise and fill the head cavities. The diaphragm and abdominal muscles will subtly control the flow for you.
- Gently move your head and neck around. Check that your jaw remains loose.
- While exhaling and singing, maintain the mental image of downward motion in your lower torso. This is a mental image only; do not muscle anything.
- Maintain the same free space for breathing in, breathing out, sighing out, and singing out. Do not consciously engage any muscles or effort. let it happen.
- Allow your throat muscles to be soft and supple all the time, including when you are running out of breath toward the end of a phrase. Breaths must fall in through this soft and supple set up. Phrases must begin like this. Phrases must end like this with the same suppleness as you began them. Keep these areas loose when singing, when not singing, for high notes, and for soft volumes.
- The epiglottis must not be used as a 'pressure valve' for controlling the breath flow.
- Never push you lungs to empty. If you are running out of breath, attempting to push to the end of a phrase will cause tension and make the inhale that follows tense and labored also. Maintain the looseness in your throat, do not increase breath pressure, and stay calm. It is better to allow a split-second top-up breath to fall in than to run out completely or strain.
- Never collapse your torso when exhaling.

FREE SINGING TIPS

by Yvonne DeBanti
from a2z-singing-tips.com

R = Raise the Soft Palate. Creating a larger space inside your mouth by raising the soft palate, or fleshy part of the back of our throat, helps achieve a deeper more well rounded singing tone.

FREE SINGING TIPS

by Nicole LeGault
from a2z-singing-tips.com

R is for Range. You are not born with your range, you can increase it. If you cannot touch your toes, try every day to touch your toes - and you will touch your toes. Your range can be stretched in the same manner (using proper technique!!!) and likewise, if you don't use your full range regularly, it will shrink back.

FREE SINGING TIPS

by Mick Walsh
from a2z-singing-tips.com

R. (actually, R &R) . Rest and recreation are great for the voice. Try to get a full 8 hours sleep every night and fill at least 20 minutes of your day with cardiovascular work outs. Even if it's just climbing the stairs instead of taking the elevator. Do something to get your heart pushing oxygen around your system. Always consult your doctor before you embark on any vigorous cardio regime.

FREE SINGING TIPS

by Teri Danz
from a2z-singing-tips.com

R = Riding the Air -- Riding the air is a concept and a set of actions that are extremely helpful for singers. Riding the air means holding up the air in your body so that you are supported, then sending/directing the sound up and over in a line to a point (imagine) across the room. Part of this is a mental image, part is a body muscle memory stance and the last part is mouth placement (riding along the palate).



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.

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

REHEARSAL SCHEDULE

Thu	07 Oct	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	14 Oct	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	21 Oct	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	28 Oct	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	04 Nov	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	11 Nov	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	18 Nov	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	25 Nov	Shepherd of the Woods

BIRTHDAYS

Cyrus Dillinger	25 Oct
Ken Tureski	29 Oct

PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

...more to come

⇒ **BIG O BUCK\$** ⇐

BIG O BUCKS SCHEDULE

...more to come

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	Richard Breault
Justin McGhie	Emily Dearing
Sean Henderson	

WELCOME

NEWEST MEMBERS

Les Mower	April
Ray Parzik	August
Ed Fitzgerald	September

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



vacant
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 November is 26 October
Items without a byline are from the Editor.

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

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

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

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



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