



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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YOUR VOICE IS BEAUTIFUL

from Livewire

The healthiest, happiest discussion has been taking place lately on Facebook. "What's your favorite thing about your voice?"

Responses have ranged widely:

- **Technical/measurable:** breadth of vocal range, high notes, low notes.
- **Emotional impact:** "I love to feel the emotions of the composer and songwriter."
- **Personal development:** "I love that I have a ton of room to grow."
- **Artistic expression:** "A medium to express what I truly feel inside through a musical artform."
- **Fitting in:** "I'm not a lead/solo type voice ... but give me a someone to blend with and you'd think we were related."
- **Community:** "It lets me sing with the greatest people in the world."

Barbershoppers study voice, try to improve their voices, and compare themselves with other voices. In the coming season of gratitude, take a moment to remind yourself: **your voice is beautiful.** Enjoy your uniqueness.

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
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.

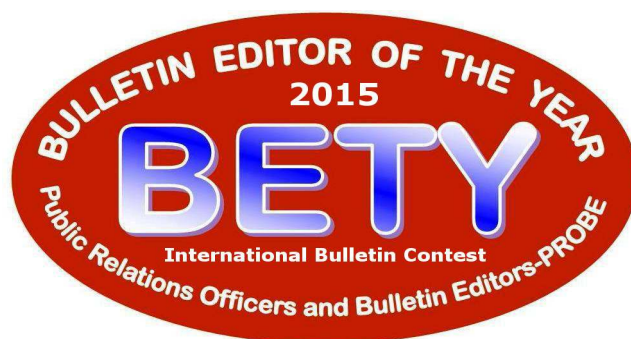
Now is the time for former members to return and for prospective members to join in on the ground floor as we move forward together. The goal continues to be to return to the level where we were before and continue beyond.

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.



HOW TO DETERMINE YOUR PITCH PROFILE

by Adam K Roberts
from backstage.com

“I can’t carry a tune in a bucket.” It’s a phrase I’ve heard time and again from singers throughout my career as a vocal coach. It’s also usually untrue. The reality is that there are several reasons that a given individual may have challenges while working to stay on pitch. Collaborating with a voice teacher to determine your pitch profile—and what to do about it—may be just the key to dropping some tunes in that bucket after all.

Based on my experience, there are five pitch profiles. They’re outlined below, with tips and tricks for working through each one. Of course, the critical first step to take in the process is to work with a qualified voice teacher or vocal coach who can help identify your specific challenges. Here are the five profiles.

1. Tends toward singing flat.

If your tendency is to sing flat, you’re consistently singing below the frequencies you’re attempting to reach. As with the other profiles, the possible causes of under-pitch singing are numerous. Some common causes include [oversinging](#) (often coupled with taking in too much air), vowel choices that are too dark for the style of the song, and placement that’s in need of adjustment. If you’re aware that you consistently tend toward singing flat, try lightening and brightening your tone and vowel choices as a first remedy. You might also consider imagining the notes as slightly higher in frequency than what your ear seems to be telling you.

2. Tends toward singing sharp.

In my experience, a propensity to sing sharp is perhaps the rarest of the profiles. If you’re sharp most of the time, it means you’re overshooting the frequencies of the pitches you’re aiming for. Sharp-singing tendencies can sometimes be a little more difficult to correct, because figuring out the cause can prove somewhat tricky. Frequently, this can be a matter of overexcited energy, for example when a loss of breath control gets the best of a performer in nervous situations. More often, though, it’s a matter of auditory perception. In the latter case, a specially tailored ear training regimen may be the answer.

3. Tends toward “pitchy-ness.”

In the singing world, we generally use the term “pitchy” to describe a performance that was sometimes on pitch, sometimes flat, and sometimes sharp, but always within relatively close proximity to the desired notes. This profile is one of the more common ones, and a solid regimen of ear training—and lots of pa-

tience on the part of both student and coach—can often yield good results. Sometimes, performers with a predilection for pitchy-ness require a little more individual coaching on each song they encounter, to ensure that their vowels and placement are zeroing in on the center of each pitch, as opposed to hanging out in the general vicinities of those pitches.

4. Tends toward unpredictability.

This is probably the most challenging pitch profile to address because it can often take quite a bit of time to diagnose the reasons behind the performer’s unpredictability. Think of this profile as a mashup of the other four, but without a common thread that seems to suggest when a performer might sing sharp, flat, pitchy, or on pitch. With a great deal of dedication, determination, and private instruction, however, positive results can often be attained. Folks who consistently tend toward unpredictability of pitch typically require individualized attention on every song they perform, in addition to a commitment to years of ear training. But for those who are especially passionate and dedicated, the hard work can often pay off.

5. Sings on Pitch.

For the on pitch vocalist, little pitch matching intervention is required. Of course, regular coaching and repertoire work is still important in order to maintain a healthy, sustainable voice and to ensure consistency. Remember, no one sings at the exact frequency of every pitch 100% of the time. So even a performer who doesn’t face the challenge of tending toward one of the other four profiles should still maintain a solid ear training regimen.

“Perfect pitch” is a term that’s often used by those outside the professional music world to indicate their opinion that someone has a great voice. In reality, though, “perfect pitch” is used within music circles to indicate the ability to identify a specific pitch (for example, “The refrigerator’s hum is a B-flat”) simply by hearing it. Remember: no one sings perfectly all the time. But with a lot of elbow grease, patience, and dedicated training, many people have successfully achieved their goals.

So if pitches feel like curveballs to you, remember that with a lot of work and coaching they might not always seem to come out of left field.

MAGIC CHORAL TRICK #389 3 FAST ACTING TIPS FOR MORE MUSICAL SINGING

by Janet Kidd
from betterchoirs.wordpress.com

Although I've written about all of these before, I thought it would be useful to describe them again in the context of creating a more musical performance.

The development of musical artistry takes a lifetime, but there are some shortcuts. Like these...

The Propellant Dot

For more musical lift in the sound, a greater awareness of pulse and a sense of musical meaning that drives the song forward.

Although I originally created this phrase to apply to dotted quarter notes it also works beautifully with half notes. Not only does it create 'musical lift' on the second pulse in both the dotted quarter or the half note, but it also cleans up synchronization issues in any half note at the end of a phrase.

Here are my suggestions to my singers:

- love the pulse on the dot
- more emotion on the dot
- open the vowel, the heart or the mouth cavern - just open something on that second pulse. I've taken to calling it the mouth 'cavern' because the image is so evocative, and discourages singers from just dropping the jaw.

I found that if I simply said "Give me more on the dot" my singers thought I wanted more volume. There was a tendency to bear down on it, creating unwanted tension - especially amongst my super achievers. Though a slight lift in volume is a by-product, that's not where I wanted their attention.

Because this creates more rhythmic awareness, I find that the eighth note following the dotted quarter is more likely to be sung in time and less likely to be inappropriately accented. However, I still occasionally have to remind my singers to sing that eighth note with the mouth in a completely neutral relaxed state.

The Propellant Dot has proven very easy to teach to all my singers in all of my groups, and the musical result has been almost instantaneous.

The Whole Back End

I've always spent a lot of time on clean vowels, but perhaps even more was spent getting my singers to execute diphthong resolutions together. And even when the diphthong was turned well and together, I found that the result sounded a little contrived. In addition to that, at a time when I wanted my singers to remain emotionally connected to the lyrics, their brains were working overtime remembering exactly which and how many vowels made up the diphthong, or the triphthong.

Yes, in a perfect world all of my singers would go home and drill and drill the warm up exercises on this. But life intervenes and not all the singers can get that work done. And for diphthong resolutions there needs to be 100% buy in for the result to be clean.

I came up with a very simple and elegant fix.

Target vowel.....Whole Back End of the word, sung briefly, on the cut off or attached to the next word.

'Night' would be. Nah.....ight

'Home' would be Hoh.....ome

'Name' would be Neh.....ame

In each case the target vowel is reiterated as it would naturally be spoken as part of the diphthong resolution. To prevent an accented, clipped release I tell them that the back end of the word is their last chance to love that target vowel. It still does take a little drill, but much less than the hours I've spent on drilling diphthong resolutions that had no emotional connection to the lyric.

I find this helps my singers' brains stay freer to think and feel the emotion of the song.

Cello Bowing

After telling my singers about the drag effect of rosin on a cello bow's movement over the string I had them mime bowing their own cello, with their right hands, feeling the isometric pull across the string as they bowed in each direction.

Then I introduced them to down bows - the bowing used for strong beats, from left to right - from the frog of the bow to the tip. And to up bows - for up-beats, from right to left - from the tip of the bow to the frog. The essential thing is that they needed to keep 'feeling' the contact of the bow on the string at

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MAGIC CHORAL TRICK #389
(continued)

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all times.

After they'd sung and bowed a musical phrase a few times, they were very responsive when I used the gesture as part of my directing.

I would suggest having singers experience the physical sensation of 'air bowing' for themselves before using this as a directing technique – perhaps in warm up. I often use this in rehearsal.

Cello Bowing is great for legato line, for sustaining vocal integrity, for feeling the strength of a downbeat or the up bow pull towards the next downbeat. It's also a great gesture for indicating a phrase that I want carried over to the next with no break or breath.

I find that if I 'air bow' as if I'm really feeling the drag of the rosined bow across the strings my singers intuitively understand the legato line, and react to it without me having to say anything.



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Thanks in advance!!



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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.



Palm trees wave, are you listenin'?
In the pool, water's glistenin',
A beautiful sight, we're happy tonight
Livin' in a FLORIDA Wonderland.

Gone away is the blizzard,
Here to stay is the lizard,
A warm sunny day, we like it that way,
Livin' in a FLORIDA Wonderland.

On the beach we will have a picnic,
Turtles, sand and seagulls and sun.
Christmas dinner is an old tradition,
It's Grouper and Stone Crabs by the ton.

Later on, we'll perspire,
As temperatures rise, even higher,
A warm sunny day, we like it that way,
Livin' in a FLORIDA Wonderland!

WHAT TO DO WHEN EVERYONE THINKS YOU'RE GREAT - BUT YOU FEEL LIKE A FAILURE

by Dr Noa Kageyama
from bulletproofmusician.com

Live with someone long enough, and you get a pretty good sense of what kind of person they are. What kind of movies they like. Whether or not they take out the trash. How respectful they are of your stuff in the fridge.

We live with ourselves for our entire lives, so sooner or later, we come to form a pretty clear idea about the kind of person we are too. How introverted/extroverted we are, what we're good or bad at, and other important things like what kind of jeans we look best in.

Psychologists call this a self-concept, and though our sense of self is somewhat fluid, we are motivated to confirm our sense of self, whether it's negative or positive. As such, the events of our life tend to get interpreted through the filter of our self-image.

Have you ever known someone who was super talented, bright, capable, or otherwise awesome, but consistently underachieved because of their inner Eeyore? Where no matter how many successes they had, they just couldn't see or believe what others saw in them? Where they couldn't accept those successes, and paradoxically, may have experienced even *more* self-doubt after successful experiences?

Maybe you are that person?

What makes it so difficult to accept our successes at face value, while we seem to have no trouble at all taking in and dwelling on all our faults, shortcomings, mistakes, and other signs that we are a total failure?

When success doesn't sink in

Self-esteem is a tricky thing, and we're probably all a little guilty of emphasizing it a bit too much over the last few decades, but being too dismissive of our successes and achievements isn't helping anybody either.

The problem, when we adopt a negative – and inaccurate – self-concept of ourselves, is that we tend to get stuck there. Partly because when an individual with a negative self-image has a successful experience, they respond to it very differently than someone with a more positive self-image. Specifically, they have difficulty taking in the success and using that new data to *revise* their self-image upwards. In-

stead, they tend to reject the feedback, chalking it up to a fluke, or people just being nice, feeling bad for them, and so on.

So their self-concept stays skewed in the negative direction. And when we believe that we're not good at something (even when the truth is that we *do* have the requisite ability), we're likely to experience more anxiety, and make attempts to avoid the thing we think we're bad at (which gives us fewer opportunities to practice and get better at it, which means we stay bad and create a self-fulfilling prophecy).

We might also engage in self-handicapping (like not really studying diligently for a test because we think we're not going to do well anyway – another self-fulfilling cycle). We are likely to give up sooner too when we face the inevitable speed bump.

So at the end of the day, our negative self-concept gets in the way of us becoming who we really are. Of doing more public speaking. Or running a marathon. Or starting an ice cream cronut sandwich business. Or taking on more performance opportunities and going into them with more confidence.

Generalizing from success is important

Meanwhile, folks with a more positive self-concept are better able to take in their success, leading to more positive expectations for successful performances in the future, and often, more *actual* successful performances in the future, whether it's grades in school or athletics.

So if we are the kind of person who sees only our shortcomings, and struggles to accept successes and build trust and faith in our abilities, what are we to do? How can we get better at seeing the potential that everyone else seems to see in us?

Words do matter

A trio of researchers at The Ohio State University (Zunick et al., 2015) conducted a series of experiments to test a technique designed to help people with negative self-concepts more effectively accept and benefit from success experiences.

Borrowing from research in the area of “linguistic framing,” they theorized that by tweaking the language we use in processing our successes, we can make a difference in whether the experience ends up helping us or not.

Because despite what your kindergarten teacher said about sticks and stones vs. words, language

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WHAT TO DO WHEN EVERYONE THINKS (continued)

(Continued from page 6)

does matter. Saying “I cracked a note,” for instance, impacts us very differently than saying “I’m a terrible horn player.”

The full paper is worth a read, but essentially what they did, was (1) have each participant experience some success on a performance task, (2) complete either the experimental technique or a control task, and (3) see what sort of impact this had on their expectations of future success.

The experimental technique was called “directed abstraction,” and looked something like this:

“Explain WHY you were able to achieve such a successful performance. Begin by completing the sentence stem below. ‘I was able to achieve a successful performance because I am...’”

The control group on the other hand, responded to a slightly different prompt:

“Describe HOW you performed as you did in this situation. What did you do?”

It’s subtle at first glance, but the two are quite different, no? The first implies a successful performance, presupposes that this had something to do with *who* they are, and requires a more abstract, generalized answer. The second, does not imply success, nor does it prompt them to link task success with their identity, and asks for a more concrete answer.

The effect of directed abstraction

The experiments confirmed that following a successful performance, individuals who see themselves negatively do indeed have more difficulty accepting success and generalizing this to the future.

However, the directed abstraction exercise changed things. Apparently, thinking through their experience in this way led the negative folks to be more optimistic about future performances (unlike their fellow Eeyores in the control group who did not experience any change in their sense of competence).

And even more intriguingly, this technique also contributed to greater persistence in the face of difficult challenges – an important ingredient in experiencing more successes in the future.

Take action

Directed abstraction looks like a promising technique, but a word of caution, especially if you are doing this with a student!

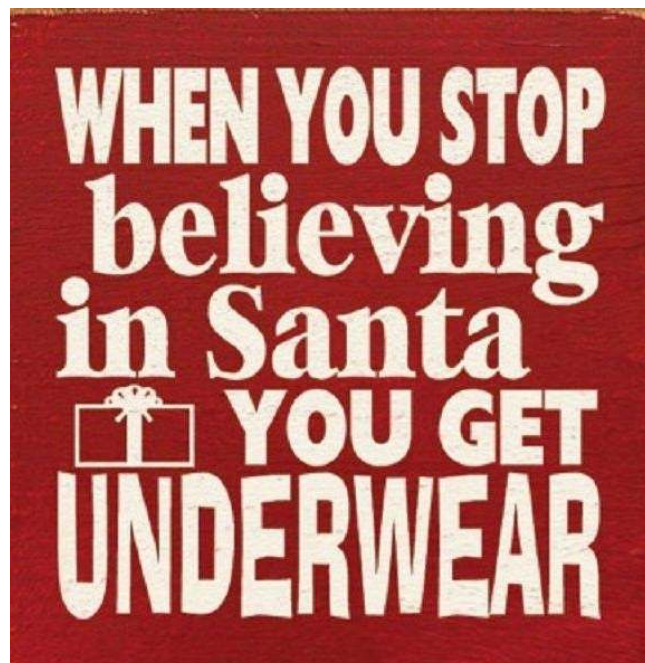
The effectiveness of the exercise depends on whether your student genuinely thinks their performance was successful or not. No performance is a total success or failure, but if they are totally convinced that they’ve just laid an egg, this is not going to work. If anything, it could be counterproductive.

Likewise, if they think they’ve had a successful performance, but in fact, it was a complete disaster, there’s probably no benefit in creating an inflated sense of self that has no basis in reality!

Quiz time!

Want to take the self-competence assessment used in the study? The researcher only used 8 of the questions here, so it won’t be exactly the same, but it’ll give you an idea. Besides, who doesn’t like self-quizzes?

Self-Competence Scale-Revised
<https://uquiz.com/kIho6S/>



HARMONIZING

by Ted Norton
from MusicEdTed.com

It seems like there are some people who can harmonize to a melody and some people who cannot. Some feel they can only sing the melody and struggle when they have to sing a harmony part. Why is this? They haven't learned the skill of harmonizing.

Harmonizing Advantages

There are great advantages to being able to harmonize even when your goal is to only sing melody or intend to sing only written arrangements. Harmonizers will tune chords better and recognize when they are on a wrong note more easily. It also makes one aware of the total sound and thus improve the balancing of their singing volume with that of other singers. Plus, it's a lot of fun. So how can we develop this skill of harmonizing?

Learning To Hear Chords

The foundation for harmonizing is to hear chords. (Some people that only sing melody seems to hardly hear the other parts.) So to develop an "ear" for harmony sing a lot of harmony parts. In this regard, learning the harmony parts to the barbershop "Barberpole Cat Songs" is a great start, as the harmonies are so straight forward. Singing standard Tags will also help.

But as you sing a harmony part, you need to think about the whole group sound, the chord - as that will move you along in your harmonizing skill. We always hear what we are singing the most so we need to focus on the whole chord rather than just our part. This is not easy for some so keep at it. Be patient with yourself as it is the key to harmonizing. You may not think it possible at first, but you can direct your thought to what another singer is doing and follow his part as you are singing your own.

Though an understand of chords and chord progressions is very helpful, it is not really essential. Even more important is sensing whether a chord is major or minor or a barbershop seventh.

It will be particularly helpful if hearing the full chord sound is a problem, to learn different parts to the same song. That will gives you a better feel for the chords involved.

General Rules

Frequently people use a general rule for harmonizing. "When you feel a new chord is implied, move up or down as little as possible". This works well for Tenors and some for Baris, but probably not as much for Basses, although it is sometimes useful for Basses too.

As you sense the chord changing, don't be surprise if you find that you are on a tone that is common to both chords and so you should not move at all. That's not at all uncommon. As a illustration, think a tenor line to "My Wild Irish Rose" which might go, Fa, So, So, Fa, Mi. where the chord changes between both So's but the note doesn't.

Unique Tips For Each Part

Each part (specifically in barbershop) tends to have different patterns. Knowing these general patterns can be very helpful in harmonizing. That's where singing a lot of a particular part is so helpful.

Basses - They tend to move in bigger jumps because so often they should be on the root of the chords. That means that they frequently jump from "Do"(1) to "So"(5) or from "Do"(1) to "Fa"(4) as they are the most commonly used chords - The I (1) chord to the V (5) chord and the I (1) chord to the IV (4) chord.

Basses don't always have to sing the roots of the chords and in fact as we said above, the chord may change but the note can remain the same or even follow the "as little as possible" rule.

Tenors - The "as little as possible" rule works best for this part, frequently moving only in half or whole steps. Sometimes they can follow a third above the melody. Frequently the Tenor is on the 3rd or the 7th of the chord UNLESS the melody is on one of these notes.

The tenor is the part you would harmonize if your were only duetting with the melody so unless you have some other preference, start your harmonizing adventure with Tenor.

Baris - Baris frequently fill in what's left of the chord. They especially need to be aware of when the melody is sort of high or sort of low as their main task is to avoid the melody since their ranges are about the same.. When the melody is high, go for the lower choice. When it's low, go for the higher choice. As with the Tenors, they frequently are on the 3rd or 7th of the chord.

In every case, the key is to concentrate on the whole group sound and think when the chord seems to want

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HARMONIZING (continued)

(Continued from page 8)

to move. As we said, get lots of experience singing harmony. It is probably best to concentrate on one part for a while and then move on to another part. That will give you a better feel for the part. Don't feel you need to perfect one part though, before going on to another part as understanding what others are doing will help you in the specific part you are currently singing. Any understanding of chords and chord progressions will help immensely but as we said above, that's not



THE WALL OF SOUND

by Brody McDonald
from choirbites.com

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

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

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

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

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

BREAKING OUT OF COMFORT ZONES

from singwise.com

Some artists seem to have never struggled with self-confidence. They've never felt constrained by inhibitions or confined by 'rules.' They take artistic risks and push the boundaries of interpretation and style. They thrive in the spotlight.

And then there is the majority. They wrestle with self-doubt and fears of inadequacy. They wonder if what they have on the inside is worth sharing with others - with strangers, in fact. They prefer to play it safe... because 'safe' has already been tried and because 'safe' doesn't seem to carry with it the same risks of criticism, misunderstanding, etc..

Popular wisdom contends that in order to find out who we truly are we must go way out beyond the edges of our comfort zone. For some individuals, simply setting foot in a voice studio for the first time is more than enough to create in them uncomfortable feelings such as vulnerability and panic. They do it, anyway. They do it because they understand that stepping outside of their comfort zones will lead to personal growth and is the only way to achieve their goals and make their dreams happen.

There are those who are already performing but are still playing it safe (e.g., with choice of repertoire, vocal range, style, vocal effects, etc.). Perhaps they are being limited by their underdeveloped technique. Or perhaps they are stagnating as artists - technically capable of painting with a much broader spectrum of colours and textures but failing to use many of those colours for fear that the resulting work of art will not be well-received by the listening audience. They may, in fact, have an undeveloped sense of who they are as vocal artists, (which is not the same as knowing who they are as vocal technicians). 'Safe' is the waiting room in which they sit while trying to find themselves and 'experimentation' is the magazine that they peruse with great interest... but promptly return to the magazine rack when their names are called. Rather than becoming excited at the grand ballroom of possibilities that trying something new and scary can open up, the singer may convince himself/herself that the door may merely open up to a janitor's closet.

With all the e-mails and personal messages that I receive from singers around the globe who are at varying stages in their vocal development and careers, I feel as though I've been able to get a fairly

comprehensive look at the psychology of singing. Many singers feel trapped in their comfort zones, unable to break free because their thinking has remained unchallenged and unchanged. Whether it was a negative reaction to their singing early on, a cruel teacher with inflexible ideas about what a voice should sound like, introversion or shyness, etc., we are all products of our hardwiring (e.g., personalities), cultures, and cumulative experiences. While no two singers or their backgrounds are alike, there are some commonalities that many share when it comes to moving outside their comfort zones.

That's the funny thing about artists. We tend to be highly sensitive (and sometimes insecure) people. When we receive negative feedback about our latest creation, it hits us right in the heart and soul of who we are because that external work of art is a reflection of who we are on the inside - of what we have to offer the world. Poor reviews have the potential to destroy us on the inside because we allow them to hold so much clout (influence) when it comes to our self-worth. Likewise, when our song or performance receives rave reviews, we are elated - overjoyed because this culmination of all our time, hard work and creative energies has received confirmation that it is indeed 'good.' And for the professional vocalist, this feedback, whether positive or negative, is critical. After all, we do not sing only for ourselves. Our audience, which purchases our music and tickets to our shows, is our bread and butter and a good part of the reason why we work so hard to master our craft and mold our creativity into something that pleases. (Of course, we do also sing for the intangibles that we receive out of the act, such as personal and artistic satisfaction, positive emotional and physical benefits, intimacy and connectedness with the One being worshipped, etc..)

So, how does the singer break out of his/her comfort zone as a vocal artist? The following are exercises that I've borrowed from the method acting classes that I teach and that I use in my voice studio.

In your imagination, venture to a place that I like to call the "Magic What If Land." In this place, anything can happen. There are no expectations of proper conduct. There are no rules to follow, and therefore no rules to break or consequences for breaking them. There is no audience to judge the sounds that you make, and you are completely free to be whatever it is you have the potential to be. Now ask yourself:

- What if you were a Neanderthal or wild animal, grunting and communicating merely with primal

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BREAKING OUT OF COMFORT ZONES (continued)

(Continued from page 10)

sounds and body language?

- What if you were that other singer whose voice is so unrestrained in its ability to convey emotion (yet controlled at the technical level)?
- What if you were to exaggerate the natural qualities of your voice or be overly dramatic in your expression and phrasing?
- What if you were a voice over artist, relying solely on your voice to build a character, convey intention, etc.?
- What if, while in the privacy of your practice space, you were to make a sound that is aesthetically offensive to your own ears? With no one listening, what would the risk be (any vocal health concerns aside)?
- What if you were to sing that higher-than-your-usual-high note without flinching - without squeezing and otherwise throttling the sound? What if you were to sing it like a Gospel diva or call up your inner operatic tenor or soprano, just for fun? What if your voice soared freely?
- What if you were to try singing that song that you are convinced doesn't really suit your voice, but sing it like it does?
- What if you absolutely hated the experimental sounds coming out of your mouth? What harm resulted from making a sound that you didn't like?
- What if you loved the new sounds or could hear their potential for becoming practicable (viable)?

Ofentimes, how far you venture outside of your comfort zone depends on how safe you feel making unpleasant, unmusical, off-key, unfamiliar sounds. (This is why I always encourage singers to carve out a space for their practice times where they can feel free to vocalize without worries of disturbing anyone else or making embarrassing sounds.) If you are willing to shake off all inhibitions in a private setting and take your singing into uncharted territory - to places where it will likely never need to go in a public performance - you'll be able to strike a healthy and artistic balance between the two extremes of inhibition that makes

for a very uninteresting vocal performance and poor musical taste with a lack of refinement in your performance.

One exercise that can help singers break out of their comfort zones is listening to another singer whom they enjoy and breaking down one of their songs into its individual vocal lines. Line by line, the singer would copy (mimic) the sounds, the dynamics, the 'textures,' etc. of the other vocalist. This may not ultimately be how the singer will choose to colour those vocal phrases to make the song his/her own, but it is an exercise in making sounds or qualities that he/she would otherwise not make because he/she hasn't yet explored them. Very often, singers are surprised that their voices can actually make those sounds and be as expressive as those other singers whom they admire.

Some of us will never be the type to voluntarily jump out of a plane and plummet to the earth at terrifying speeds trusting only in the safety of the nylon parachute strapped to our backs - trusting that it will open (not malfunction) and carry us safely to the earth far, far beneath us. And we will not be able to breathe a sigh of relief until the ordeal is over and the adrenaline has started to wear off. Riskiness is a matter of one's perspective and one's experience level, however. The veteran skydiver, acknowledges the risks associated with skydiving, but makes preparations (e.g., checking his/her parachute) prior to jumping, and therefore keeps the risks to a minimum. He/she experiences the exhilaration of falling through the clouds and viewing the world from a unique vantage point. The rookie jumper, on the other hand, might be so overwhelmed with fear that he won't experience the exhilaration until after his feet are on solid ground. For this reason, the new singer or relatively new performer should remember the following:

- Tether yourself to something solid first, before stepping out on that limb. The most solid foundation that a singer can build is a consistent, effective technique. Having a consistent technique that enables you to make the sounds that you desire generally leads to having more confidence that the voice will 'cooperate' when it matters most, which in turn will relieve most nerves.
- Don't take unnecessary or uncalculated risks. When I was an elite gymnast learning a new skill on the balance beam, I started first by practicing that skill on a line on the floor. Then, I moved to a wider, slightly elevated surface (a practice beam), gradually reducing the amount of mats and other devices of protection. In some cases, I involved my coach, who would 'spot' me and ensure my safety. Only when I was confident that I was ready

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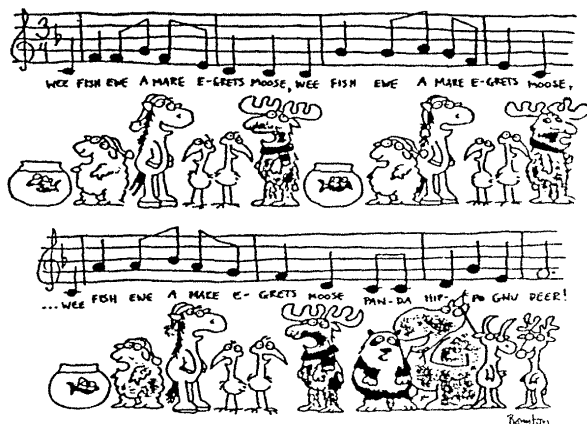
HOW TO FIND YOUR NATURAL SINGING (continued)

(Continued from page 11)

did I perform the skill unassisted with the beam raised to Olympic height. A new skill was not considered 'competition ready' until it was being landed consistently in practice. There were no guarantees that I wouldn't still fall off the beam in front of the judges and audience at a competition - a mistake that would have cost me several points and likely any shot at an all-round medal - but by ensuring that I had properly prepared myself, that risk was greatly reduced. If you do not feel as though a particular skill or sound is performance ready, keep it in the studio or practice room until it is. There is a difference between stepping out of one's comfort zone and stepping off a curb into a busy street.

- Do all of your requisite 'noise making' in the studio or practice space, not on the stage. The stage is not the place to try out a new sound for the first time. It is the place to skillfully present that new sound. All experimentation should happen during the singer's practice sessions. What you present to the audience should be a polished, confident sound, even if that sound is unconventional or unique.
- The more performances you have under your belt, the more comfortable you will feel being in front of an audience.

On the June 29, 2015 episode of So You Think You Can Dance, team leader Twitch counselled a dance contestant who was having a crisis of confidence at the Las Vegas round of auditions. He told her, "Whether it goes well, or whether it doesn't, you owe it to yourself to have this experience." The same is true of singers. Whether it is an audition, a performance or a new sound, you must find it in you to take that leap of faith at some point. As an (aspiring) artist, you owe it to yourself to take that experience, run with it and see where it leads you.



NEED A VOCAL WARM-UP? TRY USING YOUR FAVORITE SONGS.

by Matt Ramsey
from discmakers.com

While a vocal warm-up is always a good idea before a rehearsal, gig, or recording session, it doesn't have to only include scales and vocal exercises.

Let's face it, you might not always have access to a fantastic vocal warm-up. You may be on your way to a gig, your battery may be dying on your phone, or you may not have chosen your favorite vocal warm-up routine yet.

And even though we all know it's best to do a vocal warm-up with vocal exercises to improve your singing voice, many singers, and even many voice teachers, may not know that you can use songs to warm up your voice before a performance.

Using songs as a vocal warm-up

Now, there are several benefits to using songs to help warm up your voice. All vocal warm-ups are going to thin out mucus secretions that hang out on your vocal chords and they're going to increase blood flow to your vocal cord tissue and help you sing better.

Warming up your voice is also going to help you eliminate the breaks and the strain that come when you try to sing something totally cold.

And finally, singing songs, and lyrics especially, help warm up the resonators and articulators in your voice that are responsible for enunciation, registration — being able to sing from your lower registers up to your higher vocal registers — and can even help you remember lyrics better.

My advice is to break this warm-up into three different parts — which means you'll be choosing three different songs to warm up your voice before a performance.

Song #1: Your chest voice

In the first part, or the first song, choose a song that is going to help you exercise the lower part of your vocal range — we call this the chest voice. What we're looking for here are songs that live and sound fantastic in the bottom part of your vocal range — no high notes for you, just yet.

If you're a guy, think of singers like Johnny Cash, David Bowie, or Bill Withers. If you're a woman, think of

(Continued on page 13)

NEED A VOCAL WARM-UP? (continued)

(Continued from page 12)

songs by singers like Amy Winehouse, Tracy Chapman, or Lana Del Rey. Of course, these are just suggestions — find examples from the music that you love. I want you to look for songs that really exploit that resonance in the bottom part of your voice. That's such a crucial part of getting everything opened up and feeling great.

Song #2: Choose a song that starts to stretch your voice

In the second part of your vocal warm-up, or the second song, think about choosing songs with just a couple of high notes in them or just one short section that has a few high notes. Think 80 percent within your comfortable vocal range and 20 percent outside of that range.

Now, this type of song is sometimes difficult for beginners to figure out and choose for themselves. Many new singers will choose songs that are too easy or songs that are way too difficult. So, as a voice teacher, I like to give a few examples.

If you're a guy, look for songs similar in make up to "(Sittin' On) The Dock of the Bay" by Otis Redding. What's so cool about this song is that most of it stays in the lower part, or the chest voice, of most male voices. So you've got the verse, "Sittin' in the morning sun / I'll be sittin' when the evenin' comes" — very easy to sing.

However, the bridge is where things get interesting, where we have that G4: "Look like nothin's gonna change / Everything, still remains the same / I can't do what ten people tell me to do / So I guess I'll remain the same."

You'll notice that most of it stays in a very comfortable range, and just in that bridge section is where we have our high notes.

If you're a lady, look for a song that matches the example of Rhianna's "Stay." It's a beautiful song that, for most of it, stays comfortably in her chest voice. "All along there was a fever..." It's that strong, chest voice area for most women. But at the end, she has a section, "Want you to stay, ooooh." She has a few notes where she's accessing the top part of her voice.

You know yourself, choose a song that's appropriate for you.

Song #3: Go into your head voice

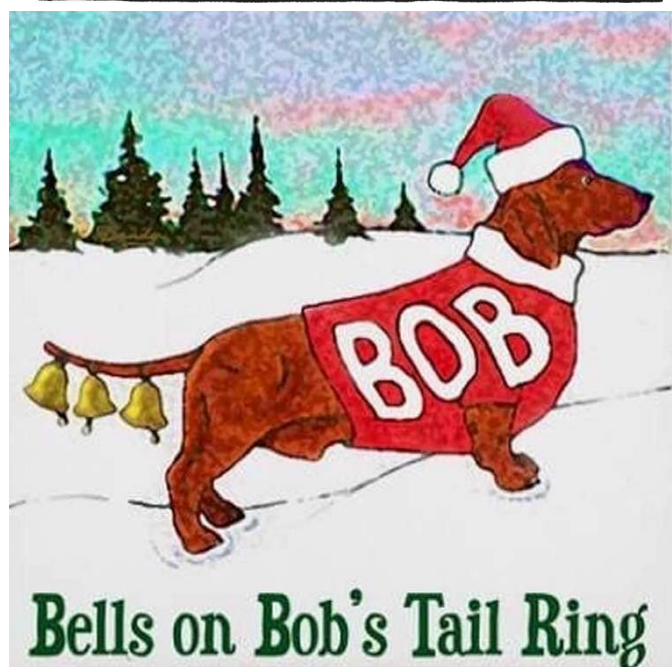
At this point, your voice should be pretty warmed up and you've even started singing songs that have higher notes in them in the top part of the vocal range, or what we call the head voice.

In the last part of your vocal warm-up, pick a song that stays up in the top part of your vocal range for longer. If you're a guy, think of examples like Chris Cornell (Soundgarden, Audioslave) or Sam Smith.

If you're a lady, try songs by singers like Mariah Carey or Sara Bareilles. The point, again, is to choose songs that fit this level of difficulty for you.

Keep it short and simple

Keep in mind, you don't need to sing all three-and-a-half minutes of all of these songs in order to warm up your voice. Sometimes, it can be just as effective to select segments of these songs and practice them over and over and that in itself can be a vocal warm-up.



Octaves roasting on an open fire,
Major sixths nipping at your nose,
Major seconds being sung by a choir,
Chromatic alterations of the scale.

Diatonic scale. A turkey and some mistletoe
Major sixths make the season bright.
Major seconds with their eyes all aglow
Will drop a perfect fifth tonight.

There's minor sevenths on their way.
They've loaded lots of minor seconds on their sleigh.
And every minor sixth will want to spy
To see the supertonic prolonged over five.

And octave offering this simple phrase
To major sixths one to ninety-two.
Although it's been said many times, many ways,
Meet the Flintstones. To you!

Be the hit of your next office party! these are pretzels dipped in red and white melted chocolate and then dipped in black n white sugar sprinkles.



I ALWAYS
WONDERED WHAT
HE DID THE REST
OF THE YEAR, AND
NOW THE WHOLE
NAUGHTY-OR-
NICE LIST THING
SUDDENLY MAKES
SENSE



FREE YOUR VOICE

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

Breathing Exercises

- Lie flat on your back on the floor. When you breathe, feel how your abdomen rises and falls. This is where you should breathe for singing. In this position, your breathing is natural and placed right. Free your jaw and let your body melt into the floor.
- To improve diaphragmatic strength and control, stay lying on the floor on your back and place a heavy object or book on your abdomen. Keep your body relaxed and melting into the floor. Inhale to a count of 4 and exhale evenly to a count of 16. Repeat. do not attempt to keep the book or object as high as possible, but allow it to sink slowly and evenly with the movement of your abdomen. Then sing entire phrases in this position. You will know if your outward flow is uneven if the object on your abdomen wobbles or makes sudden movements.
- Stand with your feet approximately shoulder width apart. bend your knees into a half crouch and do not bend forward at the waist. Raise your arms as if hugging a tree. Keep your torso upright. Now inhale. Notice that the lower part of your torso is where you fill with breath. Perfect. Reproduce this action when standing straight and normally.
- Shape your lips as if they are wrapped around a drinking straw. Inhale through that imaginary straw. Again, you will fill up in the appropriate way. Use this exercise only as a training tool for building breath strength and stamina. Do not use it for performance because it is noisy and may cause tension in your lips and through your mouth, even in your neck.
- Inhale evenly over a count of 4 and exhale evenly over a count of 8. When you reach 8 your lungs should be near empty, but maintain good posture. Repeat several times. Be sure that your outward breath flow is even throughout, so you do not run out of breath before reaching 8 (making you slow the flow rate) and so you do not have so much remaining when you reach 6 that you must suddenly speed up to expel all the breath. this will take some practice. check regularly that you are remaining free throughout your body. Then inhale for a count of 4 and out for 12. Then in for 4 and out for 16. And so on. When performing this exercise ensure you follow all the breathing steps outlined earlier.

...to be continued next month...

FREE SINGING TIPS

by Yvonne DeBandi
from a2z-singing-tips.com

T = Tone Placement. Learning the facts about tone placement and resonance make a huge difference in the abilities of a singer. In simple terms, a singer has numerous body cavities (nasal cavity, chest cavity, etc.) and amplifiers (bones, ligaments, etc.) that act as resonators. Focusing the vocal tone through the proper resonating chamber with the proper support is important with regard to controlling and developing your personal sound.

FREE SINGING TIPS

by Nicole LeGault
from a2z-singing-tips.com

T is for Talent. Talent? I believe that talent is an illusion that only people who've practiced a great deal will ever possess. I have students who practice regularly, and students who don't – the difference is abundantly clear. Adhere to a structured practice regiment and you will be "talented" too!

FREE SINGING TIPS

by Mick Walsh
from a2z-singing-tips.com

T. Avoid Tea, Coffee, Alcohol, Ice Cream Milk, Soda, Peanuts, and chips just before you sing. These liquids only help to dehydrate your voice and the peanuts and chips leave debris all over your vocal folds ... Ewww! In reality you should avoid all of the above period and just drink lots of water (more on water later). However, us coaches understand that you're not training to become Monks so we do allow a little indulgence from time to time. Remember though, all things in moderation.

FREE SINGING TIPS

by Teri Danz
from a2z-singing-tips.com

T= Take feedback and direction. Be teachable. Sometimes other people can guide us when we don't know the way. Sometimes other people are dead wrong. Trust your intuition. Learn who to trust and then take what you like and leave the rest



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	02 Dec	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	09 Dec	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	16 Dec	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	23 Dec	Christmas Break (no meeting)
Thu	30 Dec	New Years Break (no meeting)
Thu	06 Jan	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	13 Jan	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	20 Jan	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	27 Jan	Shepherd of the Woods

BIRTHDAYS

Tommy Arteaga	21 Dec
John Alexander	31 Dec

PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

Wed	08 Dec	SotW (VLQ)
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...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	Doug Owens
Chris Redman	

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 January is 26 December
Items without a byline are from the Editor.

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

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

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

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



John Alexander, Editor
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Orange Park FL 32003



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