



The Orange Spiel

News Of The Jacksonville Big O Chapter



<http://www.BigOrangeChorus.com>



Volume 42 Issue 10

October 2022

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

WHAT'S INSIDE

Title	Page
Harmony Platoon	1
Editorial	2
How To Sing Well	3
Breathing Exercises For Singing	4-10
10 Reasons We Sing Flat	10-12
Wish You Could Memorize Better?	12-14
Free Your Voice	15
Free Singing Tips	15
Quartet Corner	16
Chapter Quartets	16
Upcoming Schedules	17
Birthdays / Guests / New Members	17
Directing Team / Other Leaders	18
Chapter Officers / Music Team	19

2023 Harmony Platoon: \$29 for all 2023 events



2023 MIDWINTER HARMONY PLATOON
DAYTONA BEACH, FLORIDA
February 8-11, 2023

2023 Fall SWD Convention

2023 Summer RMD Harmony College and 2023 Fall RMD Convention

2023 Spring and Fall FWD Convention
(perhaps even FWD Spring Division Contests)

2023 Fall Evergreen District Convention

Barbershop Quartet Challenge

Experience the JOY and EXCITEMENT of quartet singing & friendly COMPETITION

HP Contests will be at the HQ Hotels

Compete in any or all of the Look-of-the-Draw contests at any platoon

No song draw; sing any of the five song options.

- Learn, at least, all four (4) of these "MODERATE DIFFICULTY" songs. Learn them COLD, to compete in the contests. You are guaranteed to sing with prepared singers.
- These are NOT EASY. You will have to WORK to BE PREPARED to sing all five.

Register now for access to tracks and charts for:

Title	Arranger	Contestable	Track Artist
A Little Street Where Old Friends Meet 1961 Santones; classic barbershop chords	Sam Breedon	Yes!	Tim Waurick
Who Told You 1980 Boston Common; arrangement by a legend	Lou Perry	Yes!!	Tim Waurick
Bye Bye Love Yes, the Every Brothers all-time hit!	Tom Gentry	Show	Tim Waurick
So In Love Did you know Cole Porter was this cool?	David Harrington	Show	David Harrington
If I Had My Way (optional difficult song) Helped bring GOLD to 2004 Gotchal	David Harrington	Yes!!!	David Harrington

\$29 USD gives you:

- CHARTS and all LEARNING TRACKS for all 5 songs (every part predominant and full mix).
- More QUARTET SINGING than you ever did at a convention (*before Platoon came along*).
- A quality QUARTET CHALLENGE that is exciting, fun, and memorable.
- NEW FRIENDS from all over your district (and beyond) who can't wait to sing with YOU!
- Deluxe color-coded Harmony Platoon LANYARD to locate other HP singers ALL WEEK.

Payment*:	www.Paypal.com	*\$29 to donsalz@rosye.com (use Friends & Family option) Email the following information: Name and singing part.
Info:	Don Salz	donsalz@rosye.com – email works best Phone – (916) 813-2959 NOTE: phone replies may be delayed due to travel and sanity. www.harmonyplatoon.org

WANTED!!

MEN WHO LIKE TO SING!



Call 355-SING

2022 Board of Directors

President:
Jason Dearing

Immediate Past Pres:
Terry Ezell

VP Music & Performance:
John Alexander

VP Membership:
Ed Fitzgerald

VP Marketing & PR:
Frank Nosalek

Secretary:
Mike Sobolewski

Treasurer:
Rick Morin

Music Director:
Jay Giallombardo

2022 Music Team

Music Director:
Jay Giallombardo

Assistant Director:
vacant

Music VP:
John Alexander

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

Presentation Team:
Mike Sobolewski

Vocal/Perform Coach:
Daniel Peasante

Music Librarian:
vacant

2022 Committees

Big O Bucks Coordinator:
Vacant

Webmaster:
Frank Nosalek

Chorus Manager:
Les Mower

Uniform Manager:
Dave Walker

2022 Committees

Pole Cat Program:
vacant

Community Outreach:
vacant

Show Chairman:
vacant

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

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

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

EDITORIAL

The summer shows were outstanding. We have the possibility of reprising the show for another venue or two. Stay tuned.

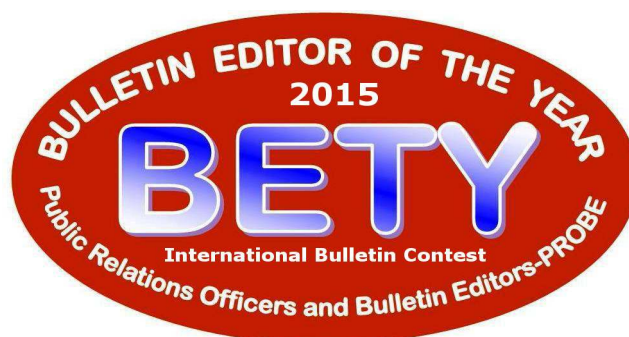
We did a joint show with JU last month and have plans to do another one in late February.

Let's see if we can get more people interested in coming to our rehearsals. Ask anyone you know who likes to sing. Invite friends, acquaintances, and even strangers. Singing is fun. Singing well is even better. Performing in public shares that fun with lots of people. Everybody wins.

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

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

this is what happens when we drain
pumpkins of their spice, think twice
before u order that latte



HOW TO SING WELL

by Ken Taylor
from askavocalcoach.com

Many people that stumble upon this site are searching for how to sing well. For those people, I have a bit of bad news. If searching is what you spend the majority of your time doing, I hate to tell you, but it's likely that your efforts will end up fruitless.

Why would I say such a thing?

Well, if you're spending most of your time searching, you don't have near enough time to practice and develop habit. You see, with something like singing, application of what you've learned is infinitely more important than learning more and more (actually, learning more without taking the time to own a skill can slow you down).

So how does one learn to sing well?

Singing is a skill. To improve your technique, you must first learn what to do, then do it until you own it. But the price of ownership is great.

The only way to "own" a skill is to do it over and over not just until it's perfected, but until you do it perfectly without even having to think about it. This takes time, focus, persistence, and possibly the most difficult, a willingness to fail an infinite number of times until you get it right.

I think the age of the internet is both a blessing and a curse. It's a blessing because it makes it easier for me to help give people just like you the exact skills you need to live up to your potential as a singer. But, it's a curse because it provides us with endless distractions that get in the way of us applying what we learn, one of the most common being searching for more info before we own what we've already discovered.

Analysis by paralysis is a common term found in the info marketing business, but I think it applies equally as well for singers looking up info. What good is learning everything you can about singing from the internet if you never apply it? So, let's talk about how we can avoid this fate.

Success always starts with a plan. I suggest you plan to work on your voice every day, focusing on a small detail or two until you own it. Be willing to fail over and over until you get it. Then, stack the next small detail on top of that... then another.

I'll say this again because I believe it's so important... Accept that repeating failure is a necessary detour along the road of your success. Actually, I'd argue that

being willing to fail is less like a detour and more like getting on the interstate, because it speeds up progress. This is true because so many people are so afraid to fail that they never try... if you jump right into being willing to make mistakes, you'll grow infinitely faster.

Now that you've read what seems like a mini novel on how to learn to sing, you may be asking, "What can I do *technically* to learn how to sing well?"

Well, that's the type of material I post all over the internet on a regular basis. You can search around this site for more pointers, or you can simply Join our Facebook Community Page (<http://www.facebook.com/singingtips>). Here, I'll share articles and tips on various aspects of vocal technique as well as answer any questions you may have.

Best of luck to you in all your vocal endeavors!



BREATHING EXERCISES FOR SINGING: 360 RING OF BREATH

by Katarina Hornakova
from how2improvesinging.com

Let's do some breathing exercises for singing!

Shall we?

You've probably heard about the diaphragm and its importance for breathing when singing.

That is great but do you know other body parts that participate in proper breath control?

Some of you are saying (I can hear you): "*Chest muscles.*"

Yes!

And that's where it usually ends.

Do you know that your back also moves during inhalation?

What about your sides? Or pelvic floor?

Many singers tend to focus just on the diaphragm. But that's not the only muscle involved in breathing.

In this blog post, let us discover all the muscles and body parts involved in the inhalation phase of the breathing cycle.

So how to breathe when singing?

I am going to introduce you to breathing exercises for singing that will help you uncover what it feels and looks like when you inhale efficiently for singing.

I like to call it The 360 Ring of Breath.

Posture

O.K. Posture.

You've heard it many times: "*One way to improve your singing instantly is to work on your posture.*" It's true.

I know it sounds basic but good posture for singing is often ignored.

It is easy to set up the right posture but may be challenging to **maintain this posture while singing**. Once we shift our focus from standing tall to other aspects of singing (sound production, breathing, etc.),

we lose good posture. Therefore, it is important to spend time and create the habit of maintaining good posture.

Here is a little secret:

Really outstanding singing is all about having your entire body properly aligned to ensure that your vocal cords can move freely without any tension.

Here are a few tips to help you:

First, assess your posture when singing.

Ask yourself and observe:

- *Where is your head in relation to your body?*
- *What about your chest and shoulders? Do they feel free or stiff?*
- *Is your spine tall and straight?*
- *How do your knees feel?*
- *Where are your feet?*

Here are some tips to find a good position for your body:

1. Stand up. Your feet are shoulder width apart with weight distributed evenly. You can put one foot forward if that is better for you but do not swing your body from side to side when singing.
2. Relax your knees and hips. Do not lock your knees otherwise you can fall during singing. You don't want that to happen to you! Relaxed knees allow you to be flexible and energized. Align your pelvis with the rest of the body.
3. Bring your chest up but do not stand like a soldier. Your shoulders are wide and down but not stiff. Your body feels tall and free! Imagine that your head is leading your whole torso in the up-sight position. Follow the head and everything else will get aligned in a nice vertical line.

It is easy to say and much harder to actually do.

Use a mirror to check your position.

Initially, try to keep this position for 5 minutes; later increase the time to 7, 10 ... minutes.

You may feel tired at the beginning because you are using muscles that you are not used to working.

Practice the position when you are not singing – just to get used to it.

The next step is to maintain good posture during

(Continued on page 5)

360 RING OF BREATH
(continued)

(Continued from page 4)

breathing exercises for singing.

Then try to maintain it during short singing exercises.

The next step ... you get the idea. Move one step at a time.

The more you do it, the more automatic it will become.

Here is another entire blog post about posture for singing (<https://tips.how2improvesinging.com/how-to-sing-well-singing-posture/>).

The Hands-Up Technique

Here is a little trick to find good posture quickly:

Lift your arms over your head. Notice how your chest has also lifted up (even without inhaling).

Stay in this position, breathe normally, and observe your body.

Then bring your arms slowly down while keeping your chest up and open.

Breathe normally. (The tendency is to hold your breath so be cautious about your breathing.)

I like to call this little trick “The Hands-Up Technique”.

Do you know the song from the 80’s sung by a duo called Ottawan? It’s a song from the disco era and it’s called “Hands Up!” It’s a fun song and I remember this song every time I “get into the correct position for singing”.

The goal of the Hands-Up Technique is to **keep your chest raised and open** (your sternum, the flat bone in the middle of the chest, is raised up and forward).

The tricky part (again) is to maintain this chest posture during breathing exercises for singing, during singing practice and eventually during singing, without creating any tension in your body.

I find it helpful to just **think “hands up” to maintain the position**. Or observe your body position (chest) in the mirror.

If this is difficult to do at first, take baby steps.

Sustain the posture for 1 minute. Once you can do that, increase it to 3 or 5 minutes, etc.

Eventually, good posture will become a habit.

Inhalation: Breathing Exercises for Singing

So now, our bodies are well aligned and our chest is open.

Let us now explore all body parts that participate in inhalation and feelings associated with the movements of inhalation.

It is a good idea to focus on inhalation and exhalation separately as there are many body parts involved in this process.

Before we start I have a word of warning though:

When new singers focus their attention on inhalation, they initially tend to hold their breath or manipulate it in an unnatural way.

After a few attempts, they become discouraged and they claim that learning to breathe for singing is not necessary. They feel that overthinking the process takes the automatic nature of breathing away and they revert to “normal” breathing, which is more suitable for speech.

However, breathing for singing and breathing for speech are different (to read more about this topic, please visit this page <https://tips.how2improvesinging.com/breathing-for-singing/>).

It is true that initially it may feel like your breathing is uncoordinated and out of sync but Rome wasn’t built in a day.

Coordination of all the muscle groups can be challenging at first.

So please be patient with me and you.

In this article, my intention is to explore how the body opens to accept the breath naturally.

I repeat – naturally.

It’s not rocket science but it takes self-exploration.

(Continued on page 6)

360 RING OF BREATH (continued)

(Continued from page 5)

Let's explore one motion (body part) at a time so you can become aware of all the details and feelings.

Later, we can put the motions all together in one quick dynamic system.

When each body part is moving in a coordinated way with the rest of your body, an invisible "ring" of breath is created around the mid to lower section of your body. In reality, there is no ring around you. Your body expands in all directions.

I like to call it The 360 Ring of Breath.

Watch this video (<https://youtu.be/bRE3umgjkM>), where I demonstrate step-by-step how to achieve the 360 Ring of Breath.

The following exercises are not the "end" result. They serve more as a tool to develop the final product, which is a quick and silent breath.

The word "silent" is an important attribute of inhalation.

If you hear your breath during inhalation, it means that your instrument is not open enough and there is some resistance to the airflow (somewhere along the vocal tract).

The other attribute of inhalation is "quick".

During singing, we often do not have much time to inhale for a prolonged time so the breath has to enter the lungs quickly.

Moreover, the inhaled air has to be sufficient for the sung phrase.

And one more attribute of inhalation: effortless.

As I said previously, initially inhalation may feel uncoordinated and awkward but it should never feel effortful.

Remember that words like fluid, smooth, and flowing best describe breathing.

If you catch yourself pushing, tensing or tightening, stop and try again.

The body parts we are going to explore are:

- Abdomen (belly),
- Sides of the body and lower ribs,
- Back,
- Pelvic floor.

During self-exploration, I want you to pay attention to every detail. Observe yourself in a mirror (or you can record yourself).

Scan your body and feel. Become aware of movements and sensations:

- *What body parts are moving?*
- *What direction are they moving to and from?*
- *Do you feel any tension?*

Abdomen

Let's start with the abdomen (belly).

Lie down on your back on the floor or in your bed and breathe normally. Put one hand on your upper abdomen above the belly button and one hand on your lower abdomen below the belly button.

Relax and observe. Feel the movements of your hands.

Do not try to push anything out or in. Just relax.

Your abdomen is moving out (up when you are lying) on inhalation and moving in (down when you are lying) on exhalation. This movement is not exaggerated; it is fluid and free of any tension.

What you feel and observe is your diaphragm hard at work. (Therefore, people call these simple exercises diaphragmatic breathing exercises for singing.)

Let me explain.

You cannot directly feel your diaphragm.

What you are feeling is the effect of the diaphragm moving downward on inhalation and pushing down on the inner organs of your belly.

Because your abdominal muscles are relaxed, the abdominal wall is able to move out as a result of inner organs being pushed out.

During breathing, the most visible movement is the

(Continued on page 7)

360 RING OF BREATH (continued)

(Continued from page 6)

movement of the abdominal wall.

Therefore, you may have heard people saying: *“Breathe into the belly.”*

The phrase really means to use “diaphragmatic breathing” or allowing the diaphragm to descend fully. (The name “diaphragmatic breathing” is also not completely accurate because we use the diaphragm for breathing at rest, during speaking or singing. We use the diaphragm all the time so calling breathing for singing “diaphragmatic breathing” does not make much sense.)

The diaphragm descends only a few centimeters (contrary to a popular belief) so the phrase *“breathe into your belly”* is anatomically inaccurate.

Of course, the air never enters the belly because the air is contained in the lungs!

The downward movement of the diaphragm creates more space in the lungs and therefore, air enters the lungs.

You did not have to put any effort into getting the air into your lungs.

And if you are really relaxed, the inhalation is quiet because your airways are open and there are no obstacles in the way.

Now, stand up and try to achieve the same relaxed belly movement as during lying down.

Keep your abdominal muscles relaxed and allow them to move fluidly in and out.

Breathe in for the count of four and then exhale for the count of 4.

Key points to remember:

- Do not flop or push your belly out on inhalation (no need to use effort)
- Do relax your abdominal muscles somewhat to allow for the movement to happen (when you are standing or even moving, your abdominal muscles are naturally engaged somewhat otherwise you would fall to the floor)
- Keep your airways open so that the breath is quiet

If you have trouble releasing the abdominal muscles, explore the breathing on all fours – your belly drops down with gravity.

Ribs

Now, let’s turn our attention to the lower ribs and sides of your body.

(Remember, your chest is open and up.)

The lower ribs and the sides of your body move sideways on inhalation.

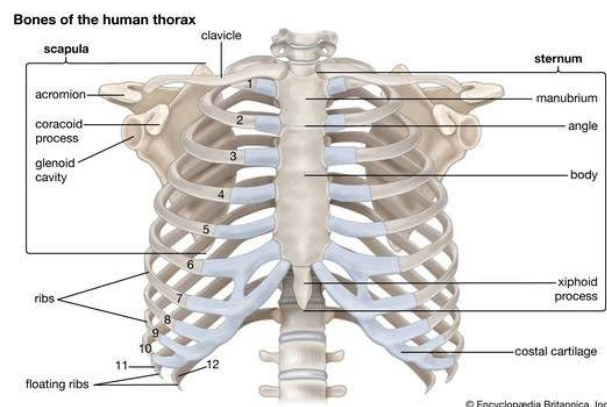
As you may know, people have 12 pairs of ribs.

The first seven ribs are attached to the breastbone (the flat bone in the middle of your chest) and to the spine at the back. These ribs are not as flexible as the next five pairs of ribs.

The 8th, 9th and 10th pairs of ribs are attached to rib number seven in the front and to the spine in the back.

And the 11th and 12th pairs are “floating” ribs, which means that they are not attached to other ribs at the front of the ribcage. They are attached only to the spine at the back.

This anatomical position makes the last five pairs of ribs more flexible.



What does that mean for singing?

It means that much of the movement in the ribcage during inhalation is possible at the lower ribs and sides of your body.

This is where singers should focus most when exploring inhalation.

(Continued on page 8)

360 RING OF BREATH (continued)

(Continued from page 7)

This part of the body is very important for creating the 360 Ring of Breath.

To explore this movement, put your hands on your lower ribs (at the sides of your body) while standing up.

To find your bottom ribs, find the low edge of your breastbone and follow the hard bony structure (your 10th rib) downward and sideways.

Place your hands on the sides of your body above your waist and hips.

Now inhale. You should feel your hands move sideways. Your body becomes wider.

Imagine sending air into your hands placed on the lower ribs.

Focus just on this part of your body. As you inhale, you want to make your waist wide.

As an alternative, you can place a thera band (elastic band used for yoga or pilates exercises) around your lower ribs and inhale. You will feel the elastic band stretch slightly in all directions as your lower ribs move sideways.

Again, you do not need to exert any effort or push anything.

Breathe in a relaxed manner and observe how your body responds.

Your breath is fluid and quiet.

Inhale for the count of four and exhale for the count of four.

Key points to remember:

- Do not push anything out, don't use effort, and don't hold your breath
- Mentally focus on the sides of your body and make your body wider
- Keep your airways open so that the breath is quiet

If you have a hard time moving your lower ribs sideways, lift one arm up and reach around with your other hand to this side of your body. Try to breathe into your hand. Feel how your hand

moves sideways.

Back

Many singers are not aware of or forget that their backs are also expanding during inhalation.

This movement is very slight but expansion of this part of the body plays an important role in creating the 360 Ring of Breath.

To maximize the space inside the ribcage, we want to expand the mid-section of your back.

This is where your ribcage is most flexible.

Place your hands on the mid-section of your back.

Inhale and feel how your hands move away from each other.

The movement is small so you need to pay attention to details.

You can watch yourself in the mirror or record yourself.

Imagine you have a tight shirt that you want to rip open your back but without moving your shoulders or chest.

Focus on your back and feel how it expands during inhalation.

Use your imagination to "send the air" to these anatomical spaces.

Feel, feel and feel.

Explore your sensations and repeat the exercise while standing up.

Inhale for the count of four and exhale for the count of four.

Key points to remember:

- Relax your body. Even if you have trouble moving your back, do not force, tense or push any muscles.
- Don't overfill your lungs in an attempt to feel the expansion in the back
- Let the breathing muscles do what they do best – let them do the breathing for you naturally.

If you have trouble moving your back, sit down on a

(Continued on page 9)

360 RING OF BREATH (continued)

(Continued from page 8)

chair and bend over slightly at your waist. Place your forearms on your legs to support the torso. Breathe in and feel the back expand in this position. Then slowly move to the upright position and repeat the same sensation during inhalation.

Pelvic floor

The pelvic floor is formed by muscles at the bottom of the abdomen attached to the pelvic bone.

Many singers have no idea that they can use their pelvic floor for singing.

Well, the truth is that the use of the pelvic floor is an advanced technique.

If you are a mother (and have the knowledge of Kegel exercises from pre-natal training), yoga or pilates user, then you probably know about the pelvic floor and where to find it.

For the rest of the world, here is a quick trick to find yours:

The easiest way to find your pelvic floor is when you pee.

Next time you need to go to the washroom, hold it. Discover the sensations at the bottom of your abdomen.

This is where your pelvic floor is and this is what it feels like when the pelvic floor is engaged.

Then, as you pee, stop the flow and again – feel the sensations.

This is your pelvic floor at work!

This may not make sense for you right now but let me explain.

By relaxing the pelvic floor, you are making more room in your abdomen for the inner organs. This in turn makes room for your diaphragm to descend fully during inhalation.

During exhalation, the contraction of the pelvic floor muscles helps the abdominal muscles to create pressure in the abdomen and therefore participates in controlling your exhalation.

The pelvic floor elevates and moves the inner or-

gans upward, which helps control the amount of air passing through the vocal cords.

Simple?

Let's use the pelvic floor during breathing.

Initially, it may be difficult to drop the pelvic floor and inhale at the same time.

So here is what you do:

First, drop the pelvic floor, and then start inhaling while keeping the pelvic floor relaxed.

Exhale.

Drop the pelvic floor, inhale.

Repeat.

As you get better at coordinating the movements, you can drop the pelvic floor and inhale at the same time.

Eventually, the coordination will become so natural that every time you inhale you will also relax your pelvic floor.

Inhale for the count of four and exhale for the count of four.

Key points to remember:

- Keep breathing naturally, no need to manipulate the inhalation
- Your airways are open and the breath is quiet

Got it?

Here is one of my YouTube videos, in which I am sharing a very simple but powerful method to achieve the 360 Ring Of Breath: <https://youtu.be/xZ9SnvJqgQ>

Inhalation: The 360 Ring of Breath

Now it's time to put all the "moving parts" together in one coordinated motion:

- Abdomen,
- Sides of the body and lower ribs,
- Back,
- Pelvic floor.

Now (after lots of self-exploration and practice), you are aware of the role of individual body parts during

(Continued on page 10)

360 RING OF BREATH (continued)

(Continued from page 9)

inhalation. Start practicing inhalation while engaging all of them at the same time:

- Your body is tall. Your chest is up and open.
- The abdomen is relaxed and therefore moves out as you inhale.
- Sides of your body and lower ribs are moving sideways and your body widens during inhalation.
- The back expands during inhalation.
- The pelvic floor drops (relaxes) when you inhale.
- Your airways are open and your inhale is quiet.

Inhale for the count of four and exhale for the count of four.

It may be mentally difficult at first.

You'll need to shift your focus but eventually, you'll be able to breathe with a fluid and coordinated motion.

It will take some practice and patience.

The final goal is to shorten the inhalation phase.

Inhale for the count of two and exhale for the count of six. Then, inhale for the count of one and exhale for the count of eight (while maintaining good posture, open chest and silent breath.)

And that's it.



10 REASONS WE SING FLAT, AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT

by Adam Scott
from barbershop.org

Few things frustrate us more than flatting. We sing a phrase or two, then sound the pitch only to hear that we have already gone flat. Well-intentioned comments such as "sing on the upper-side of the pitch" or "half steps going up are big, half steps going down are smaller," seem to be musical band-aids. Sagging pitch is a lagging indicator, not a leading indicator. Any of the following 10 factors can be a root cause of pitch problems - and more often than not, several could be working against the pitch at any given time. In no particular order:

1. Body alignment issues. Even small alignment issues can affect vocal production and, by extension, pitch. Even if you know the proper singing alignment, it can be difficult to consistently put that knowledge into practice. If alignment is an issue for you, try writing a reminder at the top of every page of your sheet music. If you are a perpetually slouching singer, try to sing while standing on one leg. (You may need to use a free hand to balance on a nearby chair.) It is, after all, difficult to slouch on one leg, and in time the proper upper body alignment will become second nature when you sing on two feet. In short, practice how you perform and perform how you practice.

Think of correct body alignment as a straight line: your ears over your shoulders, the tops of the shoulders over the hips, the tops of the hips over the ankles.

2. Heaviness in the sound. For many of us, singing above middle C feels, to use a baseball analogy, like approaching the warning track. We become acutely aware that we need to flip to falsetto. Rather than making the kind of hasty transition that causes you to lose the pitch, try lightening up (thinning out the vocal folds) and mixing in falsetto before you have to. Transitioning to falsetto earlier in your register goes along way in keeping strain and heaviness out of your sound. When your voice is free, you will find it much easier to maintain pitch.

3. False/poor start. Many choruses complain that they go flat on the very first few notes. The onset of sound has a great deal to do with success in the initial phrase. Always breathe through the same vowel shape of the word that comes after the breath. This takes less effort, avoids shifting around, and gives a cleaner, more accurate onset.

(Continued on page 11)

10 REASONS WE SING FLAT (continued)

(Continued from page 10)

4. Mismatched vocal choices. Each vowel has its own spectrum of where it's placed in the mouth. The [i] sound (as in "teeth") is a very bright sound, where the [o] sound heard in the word "boat" is produced farther back in the mouth. The word "love" can have many different outcomes: should it be closer to a schwa [ə] or more like an oh [o] or even a more British feel with a titch of ah [a] in it? No one choice is necessarily right or wrong, but mismatched vowels will create conflicting overtones that blur the edges of the sound, causing a bead in the pitch.

5. Inefficient breath management. Many singers use up too much air during the first part of a phrase, leaving inefficient or inadequate breath for the last 10%. Musical momentum can be lost, and pitch will often suffer. The goal is to have the breath evenly distributed over the phrase. If the airflow is insufficiently managed, with either the breath being front-loaded or by over-inflation, pitch will frequently be a casualty. Starting a phrase with too much air can cause as many problems as starting with too little. Like a jogger, a singer should manage airflow evenly over a phrase to keep the muscles firing evenly, resulting in more secure intonation over the life of the phrase.

6. Insufficient initial muscle memory. Initial muscle memory has to do with learning a new song. Have you ever had a song that almost always slips out of key, but when you try it in another key you can suddenly keep the pitch? Muscle memory is definitely a factor, and the key change forces your mind and body to make different vocal choices. (Sing "Heart of My Heart" up a whole step in Bb and you'll find that vocal choices are suddenly new and varied. Even the emotion and direction may change.)

If you are complacent about pitch while you learn your song, your muscle memory will lock it into the wrong key. You will have a significant uphill battle if you attempt to retrain to the original key. Many choruses that have grown to the next level find that when they return to older repertoire, their old habits are there waiting for them. Often, these choruses must eliminate old repertoire entirely.

7. Insufficient overall muscle memory. Can you sing a major sixth right now? (Hint: The first two notes of the melody of "My Wild Irish Rose" is a major sixth.) Pitch will rarely be an issue if your

mind knows each exact interval and your body has committed each interval to muscle memory. This is part of why singing with a top-level quartet or chorus is such a thrilling experience. Many members of top groups have excellent muscle memory, which helps them micro tune every interval no matter the song or the key. This is overall muscle memory.

8. Oversinging. Oversinging is still a problem in many of our singers. When you are singing beyond control, you can and should expect pitch to be a casualty. Dr. Chris Peterson's remedy is, "Don't sing louder than beautiful."

Consciously resist the urge to match or mimic a near-by singer, even (and perhaps especially) if he is a great singer. His voice is not your voice, and imitation can introduce a myriad of problems, including tension and fatigue, with pitch issues becoming a byproduct.

9. Standing too close to other singers. Recent choral research shows that when singers perform about two feet apart at the shoulder, there is less tendency to oversing and a greater ability to hear the overall ensemble sound. Some choruses like Westminster Chorus and Central Standard are adopting this model. Though this requires that you have enough riser space for all of your singers, better hearing and better singing lead to better pitch.

10. Not tuning perfect 4ths/5ths. Have you ever frozen a chord, checked the pitch and discovered you're low? The knee-jerk reaction might be to immediately tune that chord. But generically telling everyone it needs to be higher is less effective than finding the fifths and tuning them first. Instead of freezing a chord that isn't tuning, freeze the interval, isolate the perfect fifth (or perfect fourth, it's inversion) until that interval locks, then add the other parts back into the chord. This is often why it is useful to duet parts with the lead or the bass. Remember, in barbershop music, the bass is the most likely part to be singing roots and fifths.

Conclusion. In closing, don't be afraid to ask for help. If you feel vocally tired at the end of the night, do an assessment with yourself or ask a trusted vocal coach for help. Our talented arrangers choose their keys very carefully. Ask one what songs fit your chorus best. Our coaches are in large part very giving of their time. Even choruses at the top of their game are getting consistent coaching. In many cases, such as when the Ambassadors of Harmony and The Vocal Majority coach each other, coaches are happy to assist their likely competitors.

When a chorus habitually flats its music, it is indicative of other musical and vocal problems in the ensemble.

(Continued on page 12)

10 REASONS WE SING FLAT (continued)

(Continued from page 11)

Be fanatical about staying in key. Dare or challenge each other or other sections. What habits do our singers cultivate when pitch is on our radar? We all love it when the song ends where it should.

Last, consider how pitch affects membership. The better we sing, the more polished our product, the more likely we'll attract new singers who love how those chords ring. It's a membership initiative you can't buy in any other way.



Wild pumpkins drained of their spice by illegal poachers. Please demand ethically sourced #PumpkinSpice lattes.



WISH YOU COULD MEMORIZE BETTER? WHY A LITTLE BIT OF "VERBALIZATION" MIGHT BE THE MISSING INGREDIENT

by Dr Noa Kageyama
from bulletproofmusician.com

Let's try a little mental memory challenge. Read the following letters to yourself, slowly: **NCTECCOVD**

Now, close your eyes, and see how many you can recall.

Maybe a handful?

Now read through the *same* letters, just organized differently: **OCTNOVDEC**

Easier, no?

It's not like you became a better memorizer in the last few seconds – you simply recognized a familiar pattern in the second grouping of letters that made recall way easier.

Indeed, researchers have long recognized that identifying patterns and structure is a key ingredient in being better at memorization.

A famous chess study, for instance, found that when briefly shown images of chess positions for a few seconds, and then asked to recreate the position of all the pieces on the board, an expert chess player demonstrated much better recall than a novice and amateur player. However, when the pieces were "scrambled," and placed in positions that would be unlikely (or impossible) in a real game, the expert was no better than the novice and amateur at recreating the placement of chess pieces.

Is it possible that the same could be true for memorizing music as well? That great memorizers don't necessarily have inherently better memory, but are simply more effective at identifying patterns and structure among the notes on the page?

A memorization study

A pair of Indiana University researchers (Timperman & Miksza, 2017) recruited twenty violinists and violists for a memorization study.

To make things fair, they gave everyone the same task – to memorize a short 18-measure etude. The etude was sight-readable and not too technically de-

(Continued on page 13)

WISH YOU COULD MEMORIZE BETTER? (continued)

(Continued from page 12)

manding – but it was complex and long enough that it would take some deliberate effort to commit it to memory.

So then the musicians were split up into two groups, each with a different approach to memorization.

Rote memorization vs. repetition and analysis

One group of musicians (the **repetition-only** group) was simply asked to play through the etude 10 times. And then, after a 30-second break, the music was taken away, and they were asked to play as much of the etude as they could, from memory.

The other group of musicians (the **repetition+analysis** group), was also asked to play the etude 10 times, but then they were given 6 minutes to complete a written worksheet with prompts about the etude's musical character, and its harmonic, structural, and rhythmic features. After completing this brief written analysis, or "verbalization," the score was taken away, and they were asked to play the etude from memory just like the other group.

So did this little 6-min speed-analysis exercise lead to better recall?

Initial results...

Nope, not really!

The **repetition+analysis** group did manage to recall slightly more of the etude than the **repetition-only** group – 49% vs. 43% – but this difference was *not* statistically significant.

So at first glance, regular 'ol memorization through repetition appears to work just fine. And the extra 6 minutes of score-study and analysis was perhaps a waste of time.

But then again, what really counts is not how much you remember today, but how much you remember *tomorrow*, right?

24 hours later...

So to gauge the impact of score-study/analysis on longer-term learning, participants were asked to

return 24 hours later to see how much of the etude they still could play from memory.

And this time, wouldn't you know it, there *was* a significant difference between the two groups.

While the **repetition+analysis** group still remembered a respectable **38%** of the etude, the **repetition-only** group managed to recall just **18%** of the etude.

So a little bit of written analysis or "verbalization" *does* make a difference! So what was on this score-study worksheet that made such a big difference in their memory?

What was on the worksheet???

Here are the prompts that the researchers asked the musicians to respond to:

Please provide the information requested below.

- Discuss the musical character of the etude:
- Discuss the musical high points:
- Discuss characteristic phrase structures of this etude:
- Discuss characteristic rhythmic motives of this etude:
- What keys or tonal centers are present in this etude:

Narrative analysis

- Please provide a detailed analysis of the etude beginning in measure 1 and working to the end:

So what are the main takeaways from all of this?

Takeaways

Takeaway #1: Look for patterns

Sitting through hours of private theory lessons, pre-college classes, and theory courses in school, I often wondered why I needed to know anything about inversions, cadences, or the difference between a half-diminished and fully-diminished seventh chord.

Well, as it turns out, it's not just something schools make you take so they can fill out your course schedule. It's about picking up some tools that help us better see the underlying structure and form and patterns that make music work. (And if you missed the podcast episode with my college music theory teacher Brian Alegant and violist Molly Gebrian a few months back, check it out [here](#). Turns out music theory doesn't have to be as dry and dull as we tend to think it is.)

Where the more of a piece's building blocks you can

(Continued on page 14)

WISH YOU COULD MEMORIZE BETTER? (continued)

(Continued from page 13)

discern and appreciate, the less arbitrary and note-y it will probably seem in your head. And the easier it will be to “chunk” it all into memory.

Takeaway #2: Use your words!

Leon Fleisher once asked a chamber music group to describe what they were trying to convey in a particular passage. And when they offered only a general, vague description of the character of the passage (“happy”), he pushed them to elaborate on the description, and give it much more specificity and vividness.

He explained that if you can’t verbally articulate what you’re going for, it’s a sign that you don’t have a clear enough idea of what you want. And if you don’t know what you want, you’re probably not going to get it.

Indeed, the process of crystalizing abstract thoughts into words certainly seems to be a vital part of developing the character of a piece. But the IU study also speaks to the role of verbalization in *memory* too, and illustrates, in the words of the researchers, “the importance of developing a **conceptual** understanding of to-be-learned music and not relying on procedural memory alone to give memorized performances.” (emphasis mine).

Take action

Working on a new piece that isn’t quite memorized yet? Try whip out a blank sheet of paper, open up your score, set a timer perhaps to keep you from spending too much time on this in one sitting, and jot down some answers to the same prompts above that the students in this study used. See if that forces your brain to work a little harder – and leads to better recall as you deepen your knowledge of the piece beyond “muscle memory” alone.

Not exactly a theory wiz? That’s ok – I think it’s still worth giving it a shot. Watch [this entertaining TED talk](#), where Ben Zander deconstructs a Chopin Prelude for a non-musical audience, which illustrates how even a very basic outline of a piece’s structure can make it more meaningful to both performer and listener.

And if one of the authors’ names sounded familiar, it’s because Peter Miksza’s research has come up a couple times here on the blog before (like [this post on practice strategies to accelerate learning](#)). He was one of my very first podcast interviews too, which you can check out [here](#) (we chat about the value of informal vs. deliberate practice, improvisation, and more).



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

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

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

Thanks in advance!!

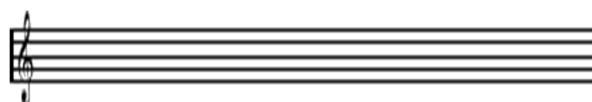


Here’s a simple way to financially support the Big Orange Chorus, at no cost to you! If you shop at any of the more than 400 merchants or like to purchase eGift Cards, FlipGive will give us back from 1% to 20%, depending on the merchant.

To sign up, visit <https://www.flipgive.com/f/570688> and start shopping.

Thanks in advance!!

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



FREE YOUR VOICE

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

The Jaw

Strategies and Exercises

Always breathe when doing these exercises.

As mentioned earlier, drop the hinges of your jaw to where they just start to 'unhinge' and let the breath 'drop' in. Do this:



Jaw dropped open from its hinges.



Jaw dropped open – side view.



Jaw not opened enough.



Jaw opened too far (for me, anyway).



Jaw opened unevenly.

If you are anything like me, and many others, you will have jaw tension at various times of the day. Mine is often particularly bad when I am driving or concentrating. The tension could be obvious like clenching or less obvious like the jaw being held still and rigid. This causes the muscles to remain tense and also affects your breathing.

Consciously allow your jaw to hang open loosely from its hinges at any and all times. Let the breath fall in and out. Walk around and drive around doing this. It is a most beneficial habit to form.

Do you grind your teeth in your sleep? See a medical or dental professional. The muscle actions and tension are not healthy for singing. Simple solutions are available. If you are serious about your singing, you will do something.

(to be continued next month)

FREE SINGING TIPS

by Yvonne DeBandi
from a2z-singing-tips.com

E = Elasticity of the Vocal Folds. The vocal tone is created as airflow bursts through the cleft of the vocal cords causing them to vibrate/oscillate. The vocal folds can lose elasticity due to misuse, lack of use and/or increase of age. Be sure to train your voice with vocal exercises on a regular basis to keep your voice in shape.

FREE SINGING TIPS

by Nicole LeGault
from a2z-singing-tips.com

E is for Emotion. If the emotional content of the song you're singing is powerful enough to move you, then allow that emotion to affect the sound of your voice. If it's not, then you must reach inside your heart and connect with a similar experience of your own.

FREE SINGING TIPS

by Mick Walsh
from a2z-singing-tips.com

E. Enjoy. Singing is fun. It's actually very hard to be depressed when you are singing and there is lots of evidence all over the internet to support this theory. Most people find their weekly singing class very therapeutic, so relax, let go of your inhibitions and ENJOY!! E is also for England where I come from.

FREE SINGING TIPS

by Teri Danz
from a2z-singing-tips.com

E = Eat for Energy -- Proteins are essential for maintaining energy in singing. Singing takes energy. Many performers lose energy halfway through a set and then end up efforting, pushing and stressing their vocal cords.

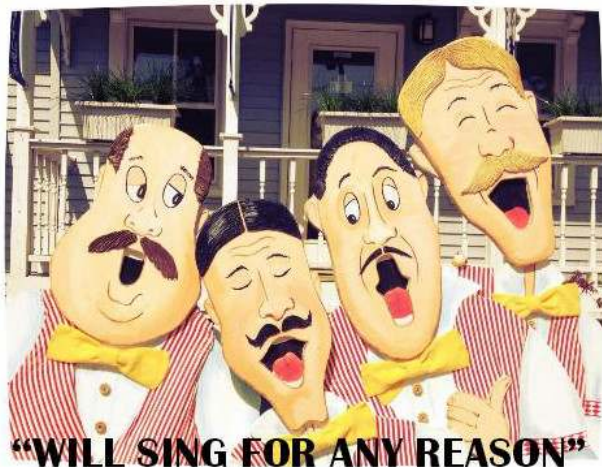


QUARTET CORNER

Our quartets are regrouping.

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



No Name Yet

? tenor

Mark Roblez lead

Jason Dearing bari

John Alexander bass

No Name Yet

? tenor

? lead

? baritone

? bass



Big Orange Chorus

REHEARSAL SCHEDULE

Thu	06 Oct	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	13 Oct	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	20 Oct	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	27 Oct	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	03 Nov	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	10 Nov	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	17 Nov	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	24 Nov	Shepherd of the Woods

BIRTHDAYS

Cyrus Dillinger	23 Oct
Ken Tureski	29 Oct

PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

Fri	21 Oct	Sunshine District Convention
Sat	22 Oct	Sunshine District Convention
Sun	23 Oct	Sunshine District Convention
???	?? Dec	Christmas Show
Sat	25 Feb	Ice men Game

...more to come

⇒ **BIG O BUCK\$** ⇐

BIG O BUCKS SCHEDULE

...more to come

RECENT GUESTS

Asrul Dawson	Bill Caruso
Ethan Erastain	Alex White
Tristan Arthurs	Mark Murillo
Roger Erestaine	Ron Blewett
Jon Greene	Jim Harper
G Lane	Brandon Edwards
Joe McLean	Adom Panshukian
Christian Cornella-Carlson	
Michael Reynolds	Kyle Batchelder
David Brown	Thomas Barhacs
Pat McCormack	David Brown
Richard Breault	Justin McGhie
Sean Henderson	Doug Owens
Chris Redman	Steve Moody
Jeff Fullmer	Doug Schultz
Ryan Himes	Ron Geno
Mike Ryan	Dale Patricu
Gary Weddel	Stephen Gramza
Conner Barber	Craig Dopp
Julian Bryson	Bob Lemons

WELCOME

NEWEST MEMBERS

Les Mower	April
Ray Parzik	August
Ed Fitzgerald	September
Emily Dearing	August
Curt Shepherd	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



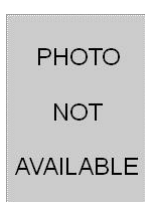
Les Mower
Chorus
Manager



John Alexander
Bulletin
Editor



Frank Nosalek
Webmaster &
Technology



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 24 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!**

2022 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Jaon Dearing
Chapter
President



John Alexander
VP Music &
Performance



Mike Sobolewski
Chapter
Secretary



Rick Morin
Chapter
Treasurer



Ed Fitzgerald
VP Membership &
Chapter Development



Frank Nosalek
VP Marketing &
Public Relations



Terry Ezell
Immediate
Past President

2022 MUSIC TEAM



John Alexander
VP Music &
Performance



Terry Ezell
Tenor
Sec Ldr



Eric Grimes
Lead
Sec Ldr



Jason Dearing
Bari
Sec Ldr



John Alexander
Bass
Sec Ldr



Jay Giallombardo
Front Line
Director



Mike Sobolewski
Presentation
Coordinator

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



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



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