



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

WHAT'S INSIDE

Title	Page
Sunshine District Fall Convention	1
Editorial	2
How Can I Get Over My Performance	3
Expanding The Singer's Box Of Sounds	4-6
Singing Out Is Inspected	6
On The Value Of Stating The Obvious	7
How To Increase Your Range	8-11
The Practice Strategy That Could	11-13
Financial Support	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

SUNSHINE DISTRICT FALL CONVENTION

The district is finally back after COVID. There were only a few choruses and quartets that competed (we decided we weren't ready, yet), but it was still fun.

Tampa won the chorus contest with an 85.5 and will be representing Sunshine at International. Greater Pinellas, Orlando, Gainesville, and Central Florida also competed. We got a surprise request to be the chorus "mic tester." With only a couple of weeks to prepare, we picked two songs and did it. Our "courtesy score" was well below what we were accustomed to but, had we competed, we would have come in second. Reasonable. We expect to be better prepared for the Spring Convention.

The World According to AARP won the Senior Quartet contest, and will be representing Sunshine at Mid-Winter. Above Sea Level also competed.

Exclusive won first place in the Quartet contest, with Daybreak and Party Central taking second and third. Smash Hit, The Fabulous Four Fingered Five, Neat, Dewey Singum and Howe, Skirt and Ties, and The Vocal Chords also competed.

The afterglow was much better this time. We just needed more quartets singing while the competitors were still getting their reviews.

There was much singing out in the halls. Even one of ours (Cyrus) was "directing." See [youtube.com/watch?v=Ch7Nxe6XcJo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ch7Nxe6XcJo)

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.

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

For more detailed,
timely information
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publication:
Orange Zest

EDITORIAL

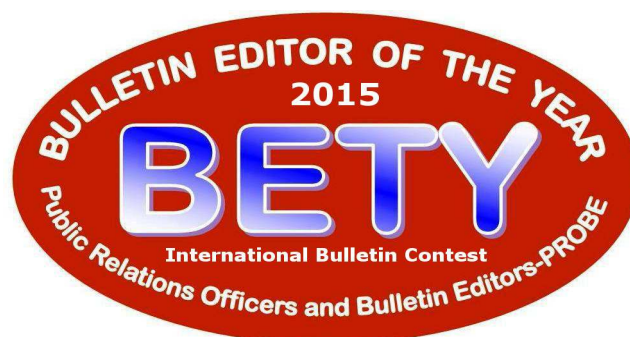
The summer shows were outstanding. We have the possibility of reprising the show (or parts thereof) for another venue or two. Stay tuned.

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.



HOW CAN I GET OVER MY PERFORMANCE ANXIETY?

by Ken Taylor
from askavocalcoach.com

Are you wondering how to get over performance anxiety while singing? If so, you have come to the right place.

There are several techniques you can employ that will help you get over this mental barrier and get the best performance possible.

In this article, we'll cover some of them including pre-performance rituals, deep breathing exercises, and redirecting negative thoughts.

Once finished, you may also enjoy this article – How to Sing with Confidence (<https://singingsessions.co/how-to-sing-with-confidence-tips>).

Redirecting Negative Thoughts

If you're a singer and you suffer from performance anxiety, you're not alone. Performing in front of an audience can be terrifying, but this mostly comes from a deep desire to be liked and accepted.

This was once a really big deal back hundreds of years ago. If the pack didn't accept you, they wouldn't protect you and you wouldn't have as high of a likelihood to survive.

Fortunately, a bad performance today won't lead to death, but it may feel like it sometimes. Haha.

That said, virtually all performers get that bit of nervous energy right before they go on stage. But instead of being crippled by this, try using it to your advantage. Instead of having that nervous energy feed your negative thoughts, why not have it build your positive thoughts.

Get excited about your performance. Visualize yourself performing well, and the audience responding well to it.

The more your turn this negative into a positive, the more ready you'll be.

Deep Breathing Exercises

If you have performance anxiety, deep breathing exercises are an excellent way to calm yourself.

Breathing deeply not only calms your body, it calms the mind. Plus, as a singer, it has the added benefit of

carving a good path of proper breathing for our performance.

When you do this, your mind is prepared to sing, and you will not be weighed down by the anxiety you feel.

It's a proven fact that deep breathing exercises can help you get over performance anxiety while singing. So give it a try and see if it helps you!

Pre-Performance Rituals

Pre-performance rituals have the effect of reducing anxiety and helping you to maintain order in an otherwise chaotic situation.

I think half the reason why this helps is it gives your mind something to focus on and helps you get in the zone.

However, this is not a quick fix, and it is unlikely to improve your performance. In fact, your performance will only improve when you can perform your pre-performance rituals regularly.

But, you can start thinking about what this might look like for you now. The goal of this ritual is to keep you in a "ready to perform" head space.

For me, I might listen to certain music that calms my mind, then an inspiring song before I go out on stage. I might stretch, and visualize the performance going the way I want. I may even jump up and down, trying to work more energy into my body.

But that's me. The question is, what would help you be ready to go out on stage?

In Conclusion...

The more your turn this negative into a positive, practice deep breathing, and get comfortable with your pre-performance ritual, the more ready you'll be to perform.

That said, each of these ideas takes practice. And the only way to practice it is to perform more.

So get out there and try these techniques and see how they work.

**If it's not worth doing well...
Why do it?**

EXPANDING THE SINGER'S 'BOX' OF SOUNDS

by Karyn O'Connor
from singwise.com

The singing voice can produce a remarkable variety of sounds. So why is it that the breadth of sounds made by many aspiring singers is so limited?

I have a theory.

And an analogy. (As some of my students can attest, I love a good analogy!)

The Speaker's 'Box' of Language Sounds

Growing up, I was educated bilingually in English and French. As I moved through the high school then university levels, I also studied German, Spanish, and Hebrew. I earned an undergraduate degree in psychology and French (with a focus on literature and linguistics) from a bilingual university. I have always been fascinated by world languages, and learning them has always come easily to me.

When I was starting my family and planning to home-school, I decided that I would raise my future children to be bilingual so that I could share the French language part of my culture with them and preserve it in me, (which proved to be easier said than done while living in an area where only English is spoken).

I did a lot of reading about multilingualism. Amongst the many fascinating things that I learned was that while all babies, no matter where in the world they're born, start out perceiving and making the same sounds, by the age of six months, they begin to lose the ability to recognize and produce sounds that they don't hear on a daily basis. This is a phenomenon called perceptual narrowing or perceptual reorganization. For practical reasons, the brain begins to filter out those "superfluous" language sounds that aren't being used contrastively in their native language because they're deemed unnecessary for the babies' language development.

As a result, the sounds that infants and toddlers learn to make become ones that they can fit into a smaller "box" of potential language sounds that are available to them. Perceptual narrowing explains why it's difficult, if not impossible, for some individuals to pronounce certain phonemes (speech sounds) not heard or used within their native tongue and why developing a perfect accent in a foreign language becomes increasingly less likely as they get older. If they don't regularly hear those speech sounds around them from infancy, they don't attempt to recreate them, so they

eventually lose the ability to.

The Singer's 'Box' of Vocal Sounds

Something similar happens in singing. We start out with vocal instruments that are capable of incredible variety in terms of dynamics, colours, textures, qualities, pitch, and range. They intuitively know how to coordinate to make an impressive array of healthy, vibrant sounds.

Then, somewhere along the way – whether as we're forming our early speech habits or attempting to "train" our singing voices (into submission) – that broad collection of possible vocal sounds begins to shrink. Over time, we stop perceiving the sounds that we don't hear regularly in the music that we listen to or have a regular use for in the music that we sing, as well as those that we deem "unacceptable" (either as a whole or within our preferred musical genre). We actively reject those sounds that we judge to be wrong, unpleasant, inferior, or impractical. Should we find ourselves accidentally making them again, they would sound alarmingly foreign to us.

As a result, we begin to play with a smaller set of sounds that can fit into a smaller "box" of technical and artistic options available to us – the "box" that holds the technically practical or stylistically "acceptable" sounds that we use on a regular basis in our singing.

By rejecting and eliminating certain sounds, however, we unwittingly limit ourselves as vocal technicians and artists.

It's Time for a Bigger 'Box'



For a time, we might convince ourselves that we're satisfied with our limited collection of sounds. They serve their purpose, and we can "get by" with them.

Then one day, we might find ourselves yearning to produce a wider variety of colours, textures, dynamics, and pitches. Perhaps we desire to explore a different genre, or we realize that our diminished bevy of sounds is holding us back.

But we don't remember how to vocally produce those sounds. After years of not making them, we forget how they should chime inside our heads and

(Continued on page 5)

EXPANDING THE SINGER'S BOX (continued)

(Continued from page 4)

feel inside our bodies.

We might build up the courage to try to make some new or forgotten sounds but then immediately reject them. We might call them “wrong,” “terrible,” “embarrassing,” or “useless.” However, they may very well be the key to unlocking a whole new set of sounds and techniques that we can add to our collection – sounds that will enable us to sing with greater skill, emotion, and stylistic versatility.

Exploration is Key

One of my goals as a voice teacher is to help my students rediscover those sounds that they’ve stopped perceiving and making. I want them to begin making enough forgotten and neglected sounds that they’ll soon need a larger “box” to carry them all in.

As singers who want to create more vocal sounds, this is what we can do:

1. Listen actively to other singers who are making sounds that we appreciate and want to learn. When we’re wanting to learn to create new sounds, we need to actively listen for them and pick them out of the crowd of other sounds. Perception - awareness of the existence - of a given sound is the first step. It allows us to recognize and acknowledge the possibilities.
2. Mimic those sounds that we hear. Without overthinking it and without trying to consciously manipulate or micromanage the individual components of our instruments – (easier said than done, I realize) - we can listen to the other singer and immediately echo back what we hear. Just as babies and toddlers gain phonemic awareness and learn words by repeating after their speech models, singers can learn vocal sounds by repeating after our vocal models. We begin with a clear mental concept of the sound that we wish to produce, and that mental concept guides our physical instruments to adjust accordingly. The result of our early sound matching may (and likely will) be imperfect, especially if we consciously or unconsciously interfere with the instrument’s ability to coordinate effectively. However, we must be careful not to instantly reject the sound. Instead, we must listen for the potential within it. (Consider how, oftentimes, the words being spoken by a toddler can only be understood by the parents. Yet, with time and practice, the speech sounds be-

come more differentiated, and articulation produces greater clarity.)

3. “Reverse engineer” the sound if we can. Sometimes, it isn’t enough to simply listen and attempt to recreate a given sound, quality, or technique; we would also benefit from some mindfulness and active learning. We may wish to try analyzing what the singer is doing functionally and technically. Which vocal register is the singer in (e.g., chest voice/M1 or head voice/M2)? Does the sound or quality have some “cackle,” “moan,” or “cry” in it? Is the vowel bright and “forward,” or is it dark and “back?” Is it speech-like or modified? “Does it sound “gritty” or “clean?” If it’s gritty, is it vocal fry that we’re hearing or some other distortion technique? Does the larynx sound low, neutral, or high? What are the elements of technique that are coming together to create that sound? Reverse engineering a vocal sound requires some understanding of technique and how the vocal instrument functions.
4. Make primal sounds. Primal sounds – crying, sobbing, sighing, moaning, groaning, growling - have the power to functionally unlock our voices and add an extra layer of emotion to our singing. They’re sounds that might be found deep in the bottom of our “boxes” because we don’t access them often for singing purposes, but they are nonetheless useful, (even though they may not sound pretty). Oftentimes, if we listen analytically to the sounds that our vocal models are creating, we can hear elements of primal sounds at their core.
5. Don’t judge our execution of the new sound prematurely. We probably won’t create those forgotten and neglected sounds perfectly the first – or the fiftieth - time. We first need to evaluate the underdeveloped sounds that we’re making from the perspective of function (coordination) and ask ourselves if we’re on the right track functionally. Then, we need to allow those sounds time to develop further. Just like learning a new language - or any new skill - we must experiment, make adjustments, and practice mindfully (i.e., with focus, intention, and body awareness). If we give up on them too soon, we may be depriving our voices of options that could prove useful and liberating.
6. See where we can practice using the sound in the context of vocal phrases and songs. Once we have developed some ability to make the sound, quality, or technique that we’re learning, we need to find opportunities to use it and develop it further. We can start with the song in which we initially heard it then find other places where it might make artistic sense to apply it. This is

(Continued on page 6)

EXPANDING THE SINGER'S BOX (continued)

(Continued from page 5)

the stage in which we begin to think more like artists equipped with a new brush stroke technique, medium, or paint colour.

I find that one of the hardest things for many singers to do is give themselves permission to make unfamiliar sounds... and resist the urge to reject them immediately if they're imperfect or unpleasant. They're so uncomfortable with the idea of "sounding bad," especially in front of others, that they refuse to allow themselves to take calculated risks as vocal technicians and artists. They cling tightly to their "boxes" because the contents are familiar and "safe," even though they're limiting.

If there is something deep inside us that's begging for more variety and versatility in our singing so that we'll be able to express ourselves more fully, we need to give ourselves permission to explore. Let's make ugly, weird, and forgotten sounds without apology. In so doing, we'll begin to rediscover the unrestrained voices that we were born with. And our "boxes" of available sounds will begin to overflow.



SINGING OUT IS INSPECTED

by Brody McDonald
from choirbites.com

Like many of you dear readers, I struggle with trying to get my less-experienced singers to SING OUT. So many of them sing like they talk, without engaging any of the many muscles that must work in coordination to create a vibrant, healthy tone.

Today was another day of "that's good, but could you please sing louder?" Desperate to try another angle, I realized: "I am directing from an iPad. I'm going to hit the app store and get a decibel meter."

I downloaded a free decibel meter app, and as soon as it loaded, it was air-played to the smart board for all to see. "This is a decibel meter," I said. "A decibel is a measurement of loudness. This app will show us how loudly we are singing."

In order to get everyone to understand the baseline of sound, I let the meter run and we explored the following sound levels:

- A quiet room
- Me singing alone
- Me singing loudly
- The choir singing a scale together with piano
- The choir singing a scale together without piano
- The choir singing a scale together loudly without piano
- The sopranos, boys, altos each singing a scale individually without piano

As they saw the decibel meter in action, they started tracking numbers, and soon a sense of competition filled the room. Who wants to be the section that is "last" on the decibel meter ranking? No one.

The result was that the singers WERE singing out, WERE singing louder. We all know that louder does not equal better, but I believe that singers must sing out before they can sing better. It's like shooting a basketball - it has to get above the rim before we can worry about aiming the ball through the hoop!

Using a decibel meter isn't the answer to all undersinging problems, but it's one tool I found to be very effective in my rehearsal today. The saying holds true: Improvement doesn't come from what's EXPECTED, but what's INSPECTED.

Here's a link to several decibel meter apps, both iOS and android, free and paid:

<https://www.healthyhearing.com/report/47805-The-best-phone-apps-to-measure-noise-levels>

ON THE VALUE OF STATING THE OBVIOUS

by Liz Garnett
from helpingyouharmonise.com

The musical directors of BABS had the opportunity on Saturday to hear a presentation from vocal health expert Julian Nicholl at our periodic MDs forum. Julian has that combination of specialist knowledge and kindness that gives you confidence the voices he cares for are in good hands; I particularly liked the way he recognised that while we all have the same basic vocal mechanism, everybody's life circumstances - and thus needs - are individual.

At this point, I realised that my original title, 'On stating the obvious' sounded a bit dismissive towards Julian's presentation, so I've gone back and tweaked it to better capture the reflections that followed.

One of his key points was that the things you need to do to nurture vocal health are exactly the same things you need to nurture any other aspect of health: get enough sleep, exercise and hydration; eat nourishing foods in adequate but not excessive quantities; engage in activities that promote positive emotional states and reduce stress, etc. And this is, in one sense, kind of obvious: a healthy lifestyle gives you the best chance in anything you do.

But it's obvious because it is fundamental. Just because you probably knew that already, doesn't make it any less important. And it doesn't mean that we don't need reminding.

It struck me that vocal coaching often seems to have this quality of giving information that the recipients already have, and can as a result come over as either redundant or patronising. But my observation is that the more fundamental the information, the more impact it has as an intervention. There is rarely much point in getting into the minutiae of tongue position or soft palate until you've shed extraneous tension in neck and shoulders, connected your feet to the floor and released the breath.

This is largely because the information is easy to understand but the behaviours it implies are much more challenging to embed. To automate a bodily habit takes a lot of repetition, particularly when it involves un-automating a less helpful one already well-established. (As Steve Jamison once put it: understanding is the booby prize.)

And I guess it is something to remark upon because it goes against our expectations in other areas of learning. Especially as adult learners, we think of learning as progressive, as increasing in depth and complexity as our knowledge expands. We don't expect to keep having + and - signs explained to us once we've started to learn calculus. To constantly be told to 'go back to basics' feels like we're being kept back in the beginner's class when we've been up in the improvers or advanced for some time already.

(Incidentally, that is one of the reasons I prefer the term 'fundamentals' over 'basics'. Basics sounds like the simple stuff you move on from, whereas fundamentals remain there supporting everything else for all time.)

One of the challenges for the coach, then, is how to keep the most important elements of our craft front and centre of our work with singers without the singers zoning out because they're not learning anything new.

Part of this lies in keeping our teaching methods refreshed. New learning activities and different ways of expressing the same idea can help people re-engage and discover new things about themselves and their craft. They keep the teacher fresh too; I don't want to hear myself just saying the same thing all the time any more than anyone else does, and the creativity of the coaching process lifts me as well as the people I work with.

Lying behind this creativity is the fact that the information may be the same, but the way it interacts with this particular singer and their needs on this particular occasion is always unique. Whether you're working with individuals or large groups, the trick is to find the particular bit of obviousness to state that will help them achieve their aims from where they are today. And when you find it, the transformation of the sound, and the increase in ease and comfort of creating it, means that the statement of the obvious is experienced as 'Ah, of course, that's just what was needed!'

Stating the obvious, that is, becomes valuable when tailored to context. In the abstract, it may just sound like platitudes. Possibly you knew that already...

HOW TO INCREASE YOUR RANGE

by Brett Manning
from singbetter.net

QUESTION from READER

Tell me how to strengthen the voice to make it more powerful etc? how to use good breath control to not lose your breath whilst singing etc? how to decorate the notes in singing to make it blend nicely? I've read the one when you were saying how to help assist vocal range- but what about how to increase the vocal range?- what are the steps and techniques taken to do this? thats your specialty in teaching by reading your site=) congratulations on having a 5 octave vocal range too!

MY COMMENTS

Whew! You've obviously been thinking about this for a while (and saving up your questions). I like this set of questions because, believe it or not, if you answer one, you have fixed nearly all the others.

OK, I'll pick one (or two) for now so this doesn't turn into "War and Peace" by Brett Manning.

It's interesting that one of your questions is the MOST often asked question we get ALWAYS. AND it's a question that people will read the ANSWER to and immediately ask the same question AGAIN.

You said..."I've read the one when you were saying how to help assist vocal range- but what about how to increase the vocal range?"...

I get some version of this question so much that I've concluded that this is what you might call a very "illusive" issue. Mind you, it's NOT difficult...just illusive. Once it "clicks" in your brain and you understand it, it just seems so simple.

The bad news is...it's somewhat like riding a bike. You can't learn to ride a bike by reading a newsletter or even 25 newsletters.

Except that SOME people have done just that. Same with increasing your voice range...you could POSSIBLY learn it from a newsletter, but it would be unlikely...because it involves muscles moving (tiny ones that you can't even see) and precise coordination, taught mainly by listening and repeating what you hear...first in exercises, then in actual singing.

The most LIKELY way you'll increase your voice range is by going right now and getting the course that is designed to teach you exactly that: the "SINGING SUCCESS Systematic Vocal Training Program".

It's called a "Systematic" course because that's what it takes to increase your range.

Someone would consider you out of your mind if you went around asking "I need some helpful hints on becoming a proficient Medical Doctor in time for an operation next month."

But nobody flinches before asking "Give me some hints on increasing my range." Maybe I AM THE ONE that's out of MY mind because I keep giving these people tips on how to increase their range. So here are some more of my "out of my mind" tips on increasing your voice range...but I'm warning you...if you want to actually experience a "breakthrough" you need a SYSTEM.

Voice Range Tip #1: You must learn to get the wrong muscles out of the way.

We have a system of exercises that do just that. They are in my course and they are "listen, then do" exercises. I don't know of a way other than to "trick" the wrong muscles into dis-engaging (by my strange -sounding exercises).WHAT wrong muscles? Under chin...gently place your entire hand over your entire throat so your chin is cradled between your thumb and pointing finger. Pretend you're trying to hide your throat from sight but just barely touch it so you can feel movement.

Now SWALLOW. Do you feel things moving? Of course you do. Over 3 dozen muscle groups go to work just to make sure you swallow correctly.

They all make sure food goes down this pipe and NOT THAT pipe. They are also designed to work for about as long as a swallow lasts (maybe 2 seconds), then rest otherwise.

Unfortunately, they like to help out when you sing too...especially when you go to higher and higher notes.

I say "unfortunately," because they can do NOTHING to help. They just use up energy and increase the tension around the muscles that ARE needed to sing.

Remember, they are designed to work for a second

(Continued on page 9)

HOW TO INCREASE YOUR RANGE (continued)

(Continued from page 8)

then rest. But when you start singing, you have likely felt them engage and stay engaged until they literally wear you out.

WHY do they do this stupid thing? Because they think you need help.

Voice Range Tip #2: You must teach the actual SINGING muscles NOT to over-exert themselves by staying in "first gear" as you sing higher.

Your most natural sounding voice is the one you use to speak. When you sing in a "normal" tone, you will start in that voice. It is likely your "chest" voice. It's called that because most of the resonating happens in your chest.

(Resonating is a word that roughly means "multiplying the intensity and color of sound vibrations by directing them into some sort of chamber.")

In your most normal sounding voice, you've learned to make a nice, strong sound by letting the tone vibrate mostly in your chest. You didn't think about it. It's just how most people learned to speak, cry, and sing. It's a very open, rich, full sound. It sounds "firm," not "mushy."

Your little tiny noise-making muscles (called vocal cords), are generally vibrating along their entire length when you are in your chest voice. They are also maintaining their full "thickness" in chest voice.

Vocal cords are amazing muscles. They can do tricks. Three of those tricks are used to take you easily over a good wide range of notes (3 or more octaves).

Trick #1--They change notes along the bottom of your range by contracting like any other muscle in your body...the tighter they contract, the higher the rate of vibration as air passes between them from your lungs.

But, like any muscle, they reach a limit to how tight they'll go without injuring themselves.

At that point of crisis, they do one of two things...

Least satisfying...They protect themselves while maintaining their ability to sing higher than that crisis point by suddenly dumping their tension,

swinging apart slightly, and producing an airy "false voice" called falsetto. We call it "false" because it sounds so unlike that rich chest voice you were producing just a few notes lower.

When you go into falsetto, you experience great physical relief. You go from high tension to nearly no tension. You go from struggling for the next note to easily reaching the next note. The trouble is...

You seldom like the fact that your sound changed so drastically and lost the "power" you had down low. Emotionally, it's a let-down.

It makes you write emails to people saying "How can I increase my voice range?"

On the other hand, you might learn to do this...

Trick #2—Most satisfying...If you've trained them, your vocal cords will do their next 2 tricks and will JUST AS EASILY "shift into the next gear" rather than "flip" into falsetto.

Your cords will begin to thin out (Trick #2), changing their mass so that they vibrate at a higher rate WITHOUT having to tighten more. (Imagine changing to a thinner guitar string but keeping the tension exactly the same...it would produce a higher note.)

Unlike falsetto, they DON'T pull apart, so the tone they produce still has a "firm" sound rather than that airy, false sound. You eventually enter what is called "head voice" because the resonance moves from your chest cavity to your head cavities. I'LL SAY IT AGAIN...THIS IS NOT THE SAME AS FALSETTO BECAUSE THE CORDS REMAIN TOGETHER, PRODUCING A CLEAR, RATHER THAN AIRY TONE.

If you are training with the right system, your body will learn to FADE more resonance into the head cavities and out of the chest cavity. This produces what we call "mixed voice" and it is NOT the same as either chest or head.

It's a mixture of the two.

It will produce a gradual change as you go higher and sounds like JUST MORE NOTES FROM THE SAME BIG VOICE.

When you hear someone who has a wide, strong voice range, THIS IS WHAT THEY ARE DOING, even if they don't know it. You probably didn't think "Wow, they know how to mix their registers!"...instead you just thought "Lucky dog! He can sing higher than I can and still sound great!"

(Continued on page 10)

HOW TO INCREASE YOUR RANGE (continued)

(Continued from page 9)

The assumption is usually that you have all you're going to get, range-wise. Go to just about any university in America and the vocal performance staff will listen to your voice and tell you whether they like your tone and such. But they will never say "You need another octave of range, then you'll be reaching your full potential."

What they will say is "You should be able to add at least one note of range during your 4-5 years here...at least we hope so." What they mean is "We hope you'll stay here during those years since you'll be paying us \$40k-70k per year, depending on how much ivy hangs on the bricks outside."

For those of you that may find these words a little offensive, let me soften them so that you can keep subscribing to this newsletter. In the next paragraph, I'll tell you what you want to hear:

"Sorry, no one can increase their range. It can't be done. (In fact, all you guys out there who have used my course to increase your range...stop singing right now...you're upsetting people.)"

There. Does that sound better?

OK enough said. If you want to increase your range, like the questioner said, that's my "specialty." My system works, so go get it: Here's the website again.

Trick #3---By the way, what is Trick #3 that your vocal cords will do? Once they have taken you as high as they will go by thinning out, they will actually close a portion of their length off (like fretting a guitar string). This will result in even higher notes (like whistle tones...Mariah Carey's calling card) because the LENGTH of the vibrating surface has been shortened.

QUESTION #2 SAME READER... DIFFERENT QUESTION

You said..."how to use good breath control to not lose your breath whilst singing etc?"

Again, a wonderful question...not because no one else thought to ask it...but because LOTS of people ask it.

I would say that when a singer has the thought..."I need to get some help with my voice." Their next

thought is VERY often..."I need someone to help me learn to breathe."

This is because it is what we have always heard from anyone "in the know" about voice instruction...breath control...breathe from your diaphragm...etc.

I've dealt with this in many newsletters before, but let me say again...YOU KNOW HOW TO BREATHE OR YOU'D BE DEAD RIGHT NOW!

Seriously, let me look closer at this man's question...

AHA!

He added something very helpful to his question about breath...he wants to know how to "not lose breath whilst singing..."

Now we're getting somewhere.

The good news is that the answer to this question is not so complicated. Let me simplify how you think of breathing. You are just filling 2 sacks with air and then squeezing them out over your vocal cords.

If you're having trouble, there are just a few things to check, barring some medical problem.

WHEN THE SACKS (YOUR LUNGS) GET FILLED

Are you letting your stomach move out of the way of the bottom of the sacks? If not, you won't start with enough air to get you through a number of notes without having to breathe in again.

You can check this very simply. Just breathe in a nice, deep breath and picture yourself breathing that breath into your stomach. If you do that, your stomach will move outward, out of the way.

Congratulations, you just breathed the exact way you need to for singing.

There are teachers who think my approach is a bit flippant. But I assure you, it's not. It's just that I believe that studying breathing FIRST is out of order.

We teach you to let your VOCAL CORDS to be the controller of the air supply, allowing what it needs to pass and in the meantime breathing normally.

There are dozens of philosophies on breathing...Do you "let" the air out, do you "hold" the air back, do

(Continued on page 11)

HOW TO INCREASE YOUR RANGE (continued)

(Continued from page 10)

you "push" the air out, etc? We will be discussing breathing more in our upcoming Online Video Lesson-of-the-Month Series.

***Be watching for that, by the way. It's in the works!

WHEN THE SACKS GET EMPTIED

The most common problem with running out of breath has little to do with breathing! That problem has to do with allowing too much air to escape while you're EMPTYING the sacks.

If your cords are coming together with a nice firm seal, it takes VERY little air to make a strong, firm tone!

But if you are going into falsetto or if you haven't found your chest voice at all (some women have this problem), you will be letting excess air escape while singing. Just count on running out of breath sooner than you want to.

QUESTIONS ARE OFTEN RELATED

You also asked about "powerful tone". Again, when you do what it takes to increase your range without resorting to falsetto, you also keep your breath longer...and...

You end up with a "powerful tone" instead of that mushy falsetto tone.

These issues are like dominoes in a row.

I hope that helps.



THE PRACTICE STRATEGY THAT COULD "BULLETPROOF" YOUR MEMORY UNDER PRESSURE

by Dr Noa Kageyama
from bulletproofmusician.com

I took piano lessons for several years as a child. But I didn't get very far because I had a rather peculiar approach to learning.

Due to my principled objection to the existence of other clefs, I never bothered to learn bass clef. Anytime I got a new piece, I just memorized the left hand part first. And then I played off the music while looking only at the treble clef.

Kind of ridiculous in hindsight, but then again, I was a stubborn kid.

And apparently, the apple does not fall far from the tree. Because when my daughter was taking piano lessons, she had her own unique approach to learning.

Unlike me, she was open to learning both clefs. But in an interesting twist, she refused to look at the music. So she simply poked around on the keyboard for the right combination of notes until it sounded right.

If you can imagine giving a beginner typist a blank keyboard with no letters printed on it (isn't that the awesomest thing ever?), you'll have a pretty good idea what we experienced in our home every day.

Needless to say, it drove my wife (a pianist) crazy. Whom I'd often hear yelling "LOOK AT THE MUSIC!!!" from various corners of our apartment.

But then I came across a memorization study which made me wonder if our little one was actually onto something.

Could some version of this practice-without-the-score strategy actually have benefits when it comes to performing more securely from memory? And under pressure in particular?

Stress and memory

There's a pretty robust literature which shows that stress and anxiety disrupts memory. Whether it's taking a stressful math test, speaking in front of an audience, or giving a performance, we are prone to memory slips when the pressure kicks in.

(Continued on page 12)

THE PRACTICE STRATEGY THAT COULD
(continued)

(Continued from page 11)

But are memory issues under pressure inevitable? Or could there be a way to strengthen memory, and make it more stress-resistant?

A team of researchers (Smith et al., 2016) noticed that most of the research in this area hasn't been all that concerned with what specific memorization strategies their participants used, so they put together a study to dig a little deeper.

Two memorization strategies

The researchers recruited 120 participants, and randomly assigned them to one of two groups – a **study group** and a **retrieval practice group**.

30 nouns

Everyone was first presented with a list of **30 nouns** to memorize.

The **study group** then **re-studied** the 30 nouns.

Meanwhile, the **retrieval practice group** skipped right to practice tests. With no further study or review, they tried to recall as many items as they could remember from the initial presentation.

30 photos

Next up was a collection of **30 photos** to memorize. Once again, the **study group** had time to re-study the 30 photos.

The **retrieval group** again skipped right to a practice test where they were asked to recall as many photos as they could.

Nouns and photos combined

Then, the **study group** was given a chance to review the original 30 nouns and 30 photos combined.

Meanwhile, the **retrieval group** attempted to recall as many of the 30 nouns and 30 photos as they could from the original presentation, with no opportunity for review.

A short distraction, and one last study/practice test session

Finally, after a short distractor task, the **study group** reviewed all 60 items one last time, while the

retrieval group tried once again to recall as many items as they could.

And did these two approaches to studying lead to any differences in memory performance?

Adding it all up

Before we take a look at the results, let's do a quick recap.

All in all, the **study group** had **three** opportunities to study or review the material.

The **retrieval group** on the other hand, had **zero** traditional study sessions. They received **one single presentation** of nouns and photos, and with no further opportunity to review the material, were tested on their memory of the original presentation of words and photos from the very start.

On paper, that's an awfully lopsided advantage of study time for the **study group**. But how much would this matter when tested 24 hours later?

Memory tests under stress

When participants returned to the lab for testing, half of the participants – 30 from the **study group**, and 30 from the **retrieval group** – were asked to give a speech and solve math problems in front of 2 judges and 3 peers, so as to make them a little anxious and increase their stress levels.

Five minutes into this stressful task, they were asked to recall either the nouns or photos that they learned the previous day.

And twenty minutes later – which is about when the stress hormone cortisol reached its peak – they were asked to recall the other set of items that they learned the previous day (i.e. if they were tested on nouns on the first test, they were asked to recall photos on this test, or vice versa).

Memory tests with no stress

The other 60 participants were also asked to recall the nouns and photos they learned the previous day, but they did so at 5 and 25 minutes into completing a totally non-stressful task.

Results

As you can imagine, stress did have a negative effect on memory – *but only for those who studied in the traditional way.*

(Continued on page 13)

THE PRACTICE STRATEGY THAT COULD
(continued)

(Continued from page 12)

When stressed, the **study group** did worse on the memory test. Despite all of their study time, they were only able to recall **7** items when stressed, compared to **8.7** items when not stressed.

But the participants who did **retrieval practice**, seemed to be unaffected by stress. When they were tested during the stressful task, they were able to remember an average of **11.1** items. Which was essentially indistinguishable from their fellow retrieval practitioners' recall performance when *not* stressed (**10.3** items recalled).

Even cooler...

Being able to strengthen memory under pressure is cool, but did you notice how the **retrieval practice group's** memory score when stressed (11.1) was better than the **study group's** score when *not* stressed (8.7)?

It's like **retrieval practice** enabled participants to perform better in the worst-case scenario than regular studying enabled participants to do in the best-case scenario.

Why wasn't studying more helpful?

The authors cite a convergence of research, from neuroscience to cognitive theory, noting that retrieval practice seems to strengthen memory more effectively than traditional studying, as it creates multiple pathways to retrieval.

Sort of like if Hansel and Gretel had left not just a trail of breadcrumbs, but also a trail of pebbles (of either the Fruity or Cocoa variety, but maybe Fruity better for visibility, Cocoa for taste?). And left a string tied to a tree at the entry of the forest. And used a map and GPS too.

The idea being, more retrieval attempts results in a greater number of distinct ways to access the same information.

What does retrieval practice
look like for musicians?

When I was a kid, I never thought about memorizing a piece until it was totally learned. I saw memorization as a task that you engaged in during the "polishing" stage of learning a piece, when you

were getting it ready for performance.

But how might things change if we saw memorization as an integral part of learning a piece from Day 1? Not as some add-on at the end of the learning process?

Some musicians already approach learning in much this way. Where they spend the first week or two semi-memorizing new pieces in a basic sort of way. So that they can play it from memory, however imperfectly and haltingly, from a very early stage.

A 2007 study (Chaffin) for instance, tracked a concert pianist's practice as she learned Debussy's *Clair de Lune*, and found that she made a deliberate effort to emphasize memory from the very beginning, even if it meant "muddling" along in a start-and-stop-and-pause-and-think-and-start-again kind of way at the outset.

Whether it's semi-memorizing an entire piece or simply making teeny tiny daily attempts at recalling even a single phrase or two, integrating some memory component into daily practice does make a lot of sense...

After all, despite how disorienting my daughter's practicing was to listen to, now that I think of it, she never did seem to have any issues with memory on stage!



How to enjoy a nice quiet Holiday with your family this year.



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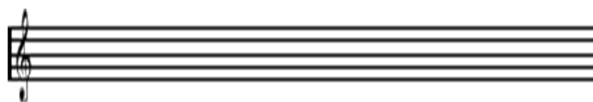
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Thanks in advance!!

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.



Happy
THANKSGIVING

FREE YOUR VOICE

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

The Jaw: Strategies and Exercises (continued)

- 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.
- Allow your jaw to hang open, then tilt your head back while leaving the jaw hanging. Feel the jaw hinges stretch gently. Maintain that position for 30 seconds. Bring your head back to its normal position and maintain that feeling of a loose jaw. Retain that sensation when singing.
- A loose jaw and a legato line have a great deal in common. Let your jaw feel heavy whenever possible. Practise letting it fall open instantly and heavily to each vowel sound in a line of music. during your personal practice it is okay to feel like you are overdoing this to the point where you think words are not entirely clear. Overdoing it helps establish a habit more quickly. In this exercise, sing consonants with a flip of your tongue only. Use the tip of your tongue, form every consonant sound toward that tip, and let it return instantly to a resting position.
- Sometimes you do not need to lift up that heavy jaw when changing from one syllable to the next. All you may need is a flick of the tongue tip and to allow the jaw to remain resting. Practise singing 'la-la-la-la...' in the mirror letting only your tongue move. Move your jaw around while doing this, as described in the next point. Try other versions such as 'na-na-na...' or 'lee-lee-lee...' or 'day-day-day...', etc.
- Grip your shin with your forefinger and thumb. As you sing, gently wiggle the loose jaw up and down and sideways. Gently. It should always feel easy to wiggle.
- Loosen jaw tension during rehearsal with a slight chewing motion.
- Drop your jaw. Place your finger on your chin. Sing a scale or line of music to 'yah-yah-yah...' without your finger being moved around. Do it again with your tongue sticking out.
- Learn to isolate movement in each lip. In front of a mirror, drop your jaw and try to move your upper lip up and down in total isolation. Be careful that you do not squint or 'scrunch' the muscles beside your nose. It may take time before you discover the muscles of the upper lip. Then do the same exercise trying to move the lower lip in isolation. Be careful not to move your jaw or to tighten it.
(to be continued next month)

FREE SINGING TIPS

by Yvonne DeBandi
from a2z-singing-tips.com

F = Free your natural voice. Don't be a slave to any music style -- even your favorite one. Learn to sing with your full and natural voice by developing your vocal strength and coordination. Then add stylistic nuances to achieve any singing style you desire.

FREE SINGING TIPS

by Nicole LeGault
from a2z-singing-tips.com

F is for Facial Muscles. For homework, observe your favorite singers in live action. Take note of how they drop their jaw for some sounds, and lift their cheeks up for others... The shape of your mouth will greatly affect the tone and volume of the sound you are creating.

FREE SINGING TIPS

by Mick Walsh
from a2z-singing-tips.com

F. Freehold New Jersey is where I teach. You can contact me on 732 685 2069 if you are interested in voice lessons. F is also for fear. Don't be afraid to try new things. As long as you are gentle with your self and listen to your body it's very unlikely that you will do any serious damage whilst working with a professional coach.

FREE SINGING TIPS

by Teri Danz
from a2z-singing-tips.com

F= Fatigue -- Fight fatigue. As a singer, this is a huge enemy. Fatigue will sap you of technique and have you working against yourself. Many singers strain their vocal chords, push their range, get hoarse, and get a variety of other problems when they get tired. The antidote is rest and self-care.

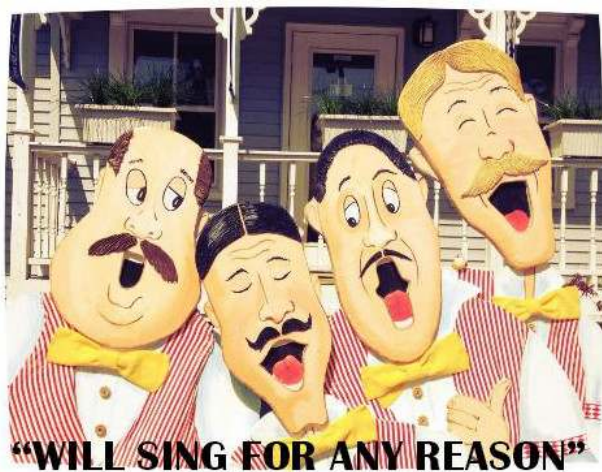


QUARTET CORNER

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	03 Nov	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	10 Nov	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	17 Nov	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	24 Nov	Thanksgiving Break
Thu	01 Dec	St Augustine Gazebo
Thu	08 Dec	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	15 Dec	Christmas At The Cabin
Thu	22 Dec	Christmas Break
Thu	29 Dec	New Year's Break

BIRTHDAYS

Tomas Arteaga	12 Dec
John Alexander	31 Dec

PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

Fri	11 Nov	Brookdale South (proposed)
Sun	13 Nov	Our Redeemer (proposed)
Thu	01 Dec	St Augustine Gazebo
???	?? Dec	Christmas Show
Thu	15 Dec	Christmas At The Cabin
Sat	25 Feb	Icemen 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
Emily Dearing	Sean Henderson
Doug Owens	Chris Redman
Steve Moody	Jeff Fullmer
Doug Schultz	Ryan Himes
Ron Geno	Mike Ryan
Dale Patricu	Gary Weddel
Stephen Gramza	Curt Shepherd
Conner Barber	Craig Dopp
Julian Bryson	Bob Lemons

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



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 December is 24 November.
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
2429 Southern Links Dr
Orange Park FL 32003



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