



The Orange Spiel

News Of The Jacksonville Big O Chapter



<http://www.BigOrangeChorus.com>



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

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WALKING THE DOG

by Brody McDonald
from choirbites.com

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

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

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

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

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

WANTED!!

MEN WHO LIKE TO SING!



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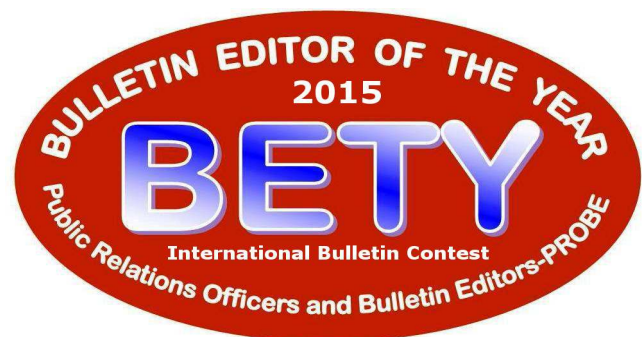
EDITORIAL

We got some new members, put together a spring show, and performed at two venues last month. We expect to do it at least one more time in the near future. We have selected a new competition package and expect to present it at the fall convention. We are moving ahead, sounding good, and ready to move up to bigger and better things. Come join us!

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.



"PRODUCTIVE FAILURE": WHY EARLY FLOUNDERING LEADS TO BETTER LEARNING

by Dr Noa Kageyama
from bulletproofmusician.com

My parents would sometimes take me on drives in the countryside, with the intention of getting lost and finding their way back home. It always worked out fine with my dad at the wheel, but it seems that I did not inherit his good sense of direction. Because given a choice, I will tend to take the exit or fork in the road that takes me further away from home.

So, I was that early-adopter nerd who printed out MapQuest maps in both directions anytime I had a driving trip planned. And who to this day pops out of the subway in NYC looking slightly frazzled until I can figure out which direction is which.

Being lost is no fun, but the upside of getting lost a lot, is that you discover a lot of new things and places that you otherwise wouldn't have.

As it turns out, a similar phenomenon occurs in teaching and learning. And research suggests that we may be hindering our students' learning by trying to be too helpful.

Wait – how's that now?

The traditional model

Generally, teaching looks something like:

1. Explain how to do something (lecture)
2. Show students what it looks like in action (demonstration)
3. Fix their off-target attempts, to help them minimize "failure," and reward them for their successes (feedback)

This sequence tends to emphasize getting to the correct answer as expeditiously as possible. It's how schools are often set up. It's how many of us were taught. And it's how we parent as well.

The tell-show-do model makes a lot of sense – but there's little room or time for exploration, floundering around in the dark, and discovery.

And growing evidence suggests that the experience of being lost may actually **enhance learning** in the long run. Even though at first, it all looks like a hot mess.

Wait – how could that be? Isn't the goal of learning to minimize mistakes and failure?

"Productive failure"

A pair of researchers ([Kapur & Bielaczyc, 2011](#)) conducted a study of "productive failure" to see if early floundering would lead to better learning than the traditional teaching approach ("direct instruction").

They took two 7th grade classrooms, and gave them a 30-minute, 9-question pretest to see how much they already knew about how to calculate average speed¹.

And then their learning experience began to diverge.

Direct instruction group

The **direct instruction class** began learning about average speed with a lecture.

The teacher **explained** the concepts, worked through some **examples**, encouraged **questions**, and had students solve **practice** problems.

Then they **reviewed** the problems and discussed the solutions.

For **homework**, they were assigned similar problems in their workbook.

The problems ranged from simple to moderate in difficulty, but were essentially plug-and-chug-type questions. Here's an example:

- Jack walks at an average speed of 4 km/hr for one hour. He then cycles 6 km at 12 km/hr. Find his average speed for the whole journey.

They repeated this lecture-practice/homework-feedback process for 7 class periods.

Pretty typical-sounding process, right?

Productive failure group

The **productive failure class** was split up into small groups, and each was tasked with solving two complex problems like below:

- Hummingbirds are small birds that are known for their ability to hover in mid-air by rapidly flapping their wings. Each year they migrate approximately 9000 km from Canada to Chile

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PRODUCTIVE FAILURE (continued)

(Continued from page 3)

and then back again. The Giant Hummingbird is the largest member of the hummingbird family, weighing 18-20 gm. It measures 23cm long and it flaps its wings between 70-80 times per minute. For every 18 hours of flying it requires 6 hours of rest.

- The Broad Tailed Hummingbird flaps its wings 100-125 times per minute. It is approximately 10-11 cm long and weighs approximately 3-4 gm. For every 12 hours of flying it requires 12 hours of rest.
- If both birds can travel 1 km for every 550 wing flaps and they leave Canada at approximately the same time, which hummingbird will get to Chile first?

They were given these problems with **no teacher support** or guidance, but simply allowed two class periods to try to solve each problem (4 classes total).

There was also **no homework**, though they did receive extra problems to work on individually when the group problems were complete (2 class periods).

After 6 sessions of working on their own, the class spent their final class session sharing their solutions and strategies with the teacher and each other.

Only then did the teacher *finally* explain how to solve these problems the “correct” way, and help the students go through their previous work, fix their mistakes, and ensure they could arrive at the correct answer.

Ultimately, the productive failure group spent 7 class sessions working on calculating average speed, just like the direct instruction group. But they spent most of these classes floundering on their own, and doing many things wrong. It was only during the 7th and final class that they learned the correct way to approach these problems.

So did all this floundering help, or hinder their learning?

Then, the post-test

To find out, both classes were given a 35-minute, 5-item post-test. Which consisted of:

- 3 simple problems (like the ones the direct instruction group worked on)

- 1 complex problem (like the one the productive failure group had to do)
- and one type of problem that neither of them had done (basically, answer the question and pick which graphic best represents the answer)

Early stages of learning

As you can probably imagine, the **direct instruction group** did waaaaay better than the **productive failure group** in the early stages of learning.

The **direct instruction group** averaged a score of 91.4% on their homework.

Meanwhile, the **productive failure group** performed miserably on their unguided attempts to solve the complex problems. Only 2 out of the 12 groups (16%) arrived at the correct solutions. And when they had to work on the problems individually, their average score of 11.5% was even worse.

But a very different picture emerges when you look at the groups’ performance on the post-test.

Later stages of learning

On the final test, the performance between the two groups flipped, and the **productive failure group** outscored the **direct instruction group** by a significant margin.

On the simple problems, the productive failure group earned an average score of **84.8%** (vs. 75.3% for the direct instruction group).

And on the complex problem, the productive failure group earned an average score of **59.7%** (vs. 42.4% for the direct instruction group).

But isn’t failure and floundering and mistake-making bad? Why the heck did this work?

Short term performance vs. long term learning

Students often ask for help before trying to solve problems on their own. And teachers are accustomed to providing help.

I mean, it’s certainly faster and more efficient in the short term to offer the right fix, technique, etc., rather than withholding the right answer or strategy and letting the student struggle, search, and look in all the “wrong” places.

However, in much the way that spaced, random, and

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PRODUCTIVE FAILURE
(continued)

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variable practice lead to worse performance in the short term, but better performance in the long term, it seems that the goal of productive failure is not to get the correct answer faster and more easily via shallower learning (“unproductive success”), but instead, to cultivate a deeper understanding of the fundamental principles and various ways of arriving at a solution even at the expense of short-term performance.

Ownership and engagement

In addition, the productive failure approach also seems to increase *engagement* in the learning process. Here are some quotes from teachers who were involved in the study:

- “I was not only surprised by the kinds of ideas and methods students developed to solve the problems but also their ownership of their ideas...I mean, during the consolidation, I could see that they really wanted to know why their methods did not work, or how someone else’s method was better, and how the “correct” way of solving the problem was better...”
- “...in our usual lessons, they simply accept what we tell them, our explanations and stuff, this is how to do it and they just take it...but here, they were not ready to just take our explanations so easily, they wanted to defend their ideas and not give up without a fight sort of...I mean, not a fight but you know there was this engagement in understanding why, why, why...”

Take action

How might you apply this concept to your teaching? Or even your own learning, for that matter?

One example that comes to mind is fingerings and bowings. I remember one of my early formative teachers withholding fingering recommendations when I was still quite young, encouraging me to come up with some on my own.

I felt totally lost at the time, and the idea of having to pull fingerings out of thin air was completely foreign. I thought I was supposed to do whatever was printed in the music, or whatever she gave me. I felt lost for a while, and I came up with some pretty funky fingerings, but over the years, I came to take great pride in thinking up my own clever fingerings and bowings designed to enhance the character of a phrase, or make challenging passages easier and more reliable under pressure.

HOW TO SCREAM SAFELY

by Andrew Byrne
from backstage.com

One of the biggest challenges for an actor’s voice is a role that requires a lot of screaming. While the high emotional stakes of these parts can be very fulfilling, it’s important to make sure such vocal demands are approached safely.

Why Screaming Can Cause a Sore Throat

Let’s take a moment to talk about what a scream is: When we shout, our vocal cords are pushed together, which increases pressure. The throat muscles that perform this action are explosively powerful, but over the course of a long rehearsal, they can quickly get fatigued. The vocal cords will then begin to swell, resulting in hoarseness. To avoid this result, try these screaming tips.

How to Scream Without Hurting Your Voice

1. Use less air

Yelling is an instinct that is designed to work with no preparation. Therefore, the mechanism of the scream is designed to work best with very little airflow. It may seem that taking a big breath before yelling would make sense, but that’s not the way it works. The more air we have in our lungs, the faster it wants to rush back out, which increases vocal strain. So to shout in a more vocally healthy way, blow out most of your air right beforehand; it may surprise you how efficient your vocal instrument is.

2. Open your throat in advance

Our throats are ringed in muscles known as constrictors; these muscles are designed to help us swallow food and liquid properly. They are not intended as muscles of phonation; if screaming is making you vocally tired, you are probably engaging your throat constrictors in an improper fashion. The two throat motions that reduce constriction are a silent laugh and a silent sob; depending on the emotional content of your scene, try creating one of these shapes in your throat before shouting.

3. Make extra noise in your soft palate

Bloodcurdling screams often have a “rattle” in them, i.e., a noise other than the sound made by the vocal cords. If you have to produce a scream

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HOW TO SCREAM SAFELY (continued)

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like this, the rattle should be produced in your soft palate, not your throat. To find this additional sound, you can think of the end of the German word "ach"; you should feel it at the upper back part of your mouth. If you add this sound on top of a scream, the effect can be both terrifying and vocally safe.

4. Stabilize your neck

A good scream technique requires a steady neck. Try interlacing your fingers and placing your palms on the back of your skull. Gently but firmly press your head back toward your palms when you scream. You can also place a fist against your forehead; try yelling while pressing your head forward against your fist.

5. Put your back into it

Back muscles are the extensors of our body, and part of their job is to decelerate movement. Most of us scream with too much respiratory force, so your back helps you balance out that tendency. Any pulling motion with the arms will engage your back; try some arm movements that feel natural and strong to you, and use them as you scream.

6. Bend your legs

If you watch sports, you will see that athletes often take a position where their knees are bent and their hips are flexed; think of a tennis player waiting to return a serve or a baseball player about to steal a base. This position provides a mechanical advantage for explosive movement. A scream is explosive in a similar way; try bending your knees and letting your body hinge at your hips when you yell.

7. Warm-up and cool down

Never scream on a cold throat. If you are a singer, you should do a vocal warmup before yelling. If you don't sing, do some voice and speech warmups, or at least some slides through your range on a hum or an "ng" sound. After the show, do a cooldown for your voice; I prefer descending scales or slides on "oo" and "ee."

AN EASY WAY TO DISCOVER YOUR SINGING VOICE

by Audrey Hunt
from hubpages.com

Get Ready to Sing

Is it possible to go from speaking to a full-on singing voice? Yes, it certainly is. And once you learn to free your natural voice, you can take your singing to the next level and develop a rich, fantastic sound.

This lesson is for beginners (or the curious). You will see how easy it is to initialize your singing voice.

You Have Everything You Need to Become a Singer

Your body has every tool needed to help you to sing:

- Vocal cords for speaking and singing.
- Breathing apparatus (Diaphragmatic Muscle).
- Resonating system to project singing.
- Mouth (lips, tongue, teeth) for shaping words.

An Exercise to Find Your Singing Voice

This simple exercise can be done either in a standing or sitting position. Use good posture to keep your spine straight.

Avoid raising the chest and shoulders when taking a breath.

The sound you are about to make is much like chanting. It may even remind you of the "om" sound used in meditation. Feel free to add an "m" to the word "huh" (hum) or use "om".

1. Speaking the word "huh" or "om", repeat six times. (huh, huh, huh, huh, huh, huh).
2. Repeat this exercise sustaining the "uh." (huuuuuuh). You'll find that more air is needed to do this. So "tank up" by inhaling more air from the belly. Let your air out sparingly as you exhale.
3. Repeat again holding the "uh" sound a bit longer. Be aware of any vibrations you may feel in the nose, cheeks, or hard palate. If necessary, keep repeating until you feel vibrations in these areas.

These vibrations indicate the resonators are at work amplifying your sound.

Good Vibrations Equal Good Singing

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AN EASY WAY TO DISCOVER (continued)

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Make the most of your singing by using your resonating chambers. Connect with one of these three areas:

- Throat
- Mouth
- Nasal passages.

These areas vibrate to enhance your singing tone. Consider them as speakers for your voice.

Nasal Vibration Exercise (Mask)

- To feel nasal vibrations begin by singing the word "sing" using a relaxed tone.
- Sustain the "ng" to help feel strong vibrations in the mask.
- Try other words ending in "ing."
- Hum, using a relaxed sound.
- Sustain the "ng," bringing the back of the tongue in contact with the hard palate.

The Siren Vocal Exercise

This siren exercise is an excellent warm-up for the voice and helps singers with the following:

- It extends the vocal range, giving you a broader sound and more freedom to sing high notes with freedom and ease.
- Smooths out the vocal "break." If you've ever heard your voice crack in the middle of a song, you've experienced the natural break in the voice as it moves from one register to the next. The siren exercise provides the right amount of ease and air to smooth the gap.

To begin the siren exercise:

<https://youtu.be/rHm0pHHTlsg>

1. Completely relax your entire body.
2. Beginning on a low note, mimic the sound of a siren using the vowel "ee" or "oo."
3. Bring the note up (sliding one note to the next) as high as possible. You will sing through 'the break' and continue to falsetto or your highest message.
4. Stay in your highest sound for a second or two, then slowly return to your starting note.

Use plenty of air for this exercise to prevent dam-

age to the vocal cords, and use a soft but supported sound. If the higher notes are not easy and comfortable, refrain from going too high.

The Singer's Breath

Using the Breath Properly

- The longer you hold a note, the more air you need. This is why you hear so much about the importance of breath control for singing.
- A pleasant, controlled voice is a voice that controls the amount of air needed for every phrase of music.
- When you go from speaking to singing, your singing sound rides on the breath.
- This air doesn't come from your chest; it comes from your belly, known as the diaphragm.
- The belly breath provides plenty of air for holding on to the sound you produce.
- The more you know about breath control and how to use it during singing, the better your sound will be.
- Release the air slowly to help sustain the sound longer.

Learn how to access the belly breath
(diaphragmatic breathing)

<https://spinditty.com/learning/TheMiracleofBreathing>

Row Your Boat

Now it's time to sing the first three words, "Row, Row, Row Your Boat." Notice that the sound of "Row, Row, Row" are all on the same pitch...they all sound the same.

Be aware of your breathing. Inhale plenty of air before singing, and let your air out slowly as you repeat each "Row."

Sing through the entire song, taking a breath at the end of each line (there are only two).

Easy, quick, introductory, vocal warm-up for singers
<https://youtu.be/YCQ8RMgh1iQ>

Phrasing

The breath serves the thought, and each thought (or phrase) has an intrinsic length.

- Each new thought has a new breath.
- Short thoughts have short breaths.
- A medium thought needs a medium amount of

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AN EASY WAY TO DISCOVER (continued)

(Continued from page 7)

air.

- Long thoughts require long breaths.

Your voice is a musical instrument. Develop diaphragmatic breathing until it becomes natural.

Yawning

A simple yawn will open the back of your throat and release your initial singing voice.

- Relax all your facial muscles and yawn.
- As you yawn, release your voice with a gentle sigh.
- Repeat this relaxing exercise using these "Ee, Ah, Eh, Oh, and Oo" The mouth will change position on each of these primary vowels.
- Repeat once more and hold the yawn longer before sliding down to release your voice.

The Vocal Cords Need Constant Moisture

Your Voice Is Like a Gold Nugget

Discovering your unique voice is like finding gold:

- At first, you hear some sound emanating from you.
- Like searching for a gold nugget, you release a tiny sparkle of sound properties permeating from somewhere in your throat cavity. It may be a strange sound, and you're unsure if you're singing or making different noises.
- Then, like a gold nugget, you carefully remove the debris (doubt and fear of singing) on the chance you might find a vocal nugget.
- Next, you clean and polish your vocal nugget just the right way with proper exercises, and like discovering gold, you find your singing voice. It's been there the entire time. All you needed to do was polish it up to uncover the sparkle.

Wrapping it All Up

What you have learned in this lesson is how to free the natural voice. These lessons must be practiced daily until voicing your sound becomes automatic.

- You are a human instrument and, as such, need to develop and strengthen your voice.
- When you go from speaking to singing, your singing sound rides on the breath.
- Air doesn't come from your chest; it comes from your belly, known as the diaphragm.
- The belly breath provides you with plenty of needed air for holding on to the sound you produce.
- The more you know about breath control and how to use it during singing, the better your sound will be.
- Air is moved from the lungs toward the vocal folds (chords).

You were born with every singing tool. If you can speak, you can sing.

Sing with joy!



BEST DEEPEN VOICE EXERCISES TO IMPROVE YOUR VOICE

by Joanna Hamawi
from becomesingers.com

A man's deep voice is one of his most attractive features. It can make you feel more powerful, influential, attractive, and even dominant. Is it possible, though, to develop a deeper voice through physical means alone, without the need for medical intervention?

If you've seen the new "Elvis" and are familiar with the lead actor, Austin Butler, you're likely aware of the rumors circulating about his voice change and the claims that his current voice is fake. His voice was much higher in pitch before he starred in "Elvis," and it dropped significantly afterward. The actor insists his newfound deep voice is genuine and entirely authentic. And it's all thanks to the nearly two years spent filming and practicing his Elvis impersonation, and especially on mirroring his voice and accent.

So, it's safe to say that with the right training, vocal exercises, and, most importantly, consistency, you can indeed develop a deeper voice. So, let's examine how you, too, can obtain a deeper vocal range.

How To Make Your Voice Deeper

There are several ways to deepen your voice naturally. By employing techniques that focus on diaphragmatic breathing, relaxing your muscles, and doing exercises such as blowing bubbles, humming, yawning, and sighing, you can definitely develop the deep voice you need for singing or speaking.

Before diving into the exercises and methods needed to achieve your deep voice, the single most important factor to remember is to stay consistent and maintain a regular practice schedule. Performing these exercises once or twice a week will not change the pitch of your voice; you have to focus and work diligently every day to start seeing results.

There is one more crucial step you need to take before you start working through these exercises, and that is to record your voice. If you want to properly hear the changes in your voice and how you progress, it's best to record yourself reading lyrics from your favorite song or lines from a book you own into your phone while using your natural

speaking voice. Then, record yourself once you've consistently performed the exercises we will mention shortly and feel like you've reached your target voice. This will let you accurately compare the changes in your voice and track your progress.

Exercises to Deepen your Voice

There are numerous exercises and techniques that help you achieve a deeper voice. The following exercises are the ones that, in our experience, have proven to be the most useful:

1. Diaphragmatic Breathing (or abdominal breathing)

This exercise is designed to strengthen your diaphragm and teach you how to use it most effectively and efficiently as possible. This will allow you to fully engage your diaphragm and increase lung capacity to achieve a fuller, deeper voice.

The most important thing to pay attention to in this exercise is where your breath comes from.

1. Stand up straight or sit down in a comfortable position. Close your eyes and relax your shoulders and arms.
2. Place one hand on your chest and the other on your stomach to feel it expand as you inhale.
3. Take a slow, deep breath through your nose while placing one hand on your chest and the other on your abdomen. Feel your belly expand as you inhale.
4. Hold your breath for a couple of seconds.
5. Slowly exhale through your mouth. As your belly goes back in, the hand should revert to its original position.

For optimal results, repeat this exercise for 5-10 minutes at least twice a day.

2. Humming Through a Straw

This method, which has been practiced for hundreds of years, is excellent for strengthening and stretching your vocal cords.

Simply fill one-third of a glass with water and blow a steady stream of air into the glass through a straw.

Start by blowing bubbles into the water in the glass. Then, while continuing to blow bubbles, begin to hum, gliding up an octave from the lowest note you can reach.

This technique will help exercise and strengthen your vocal cords. Do this exercise for 5 minutes daily, and

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BEST DEEPEN VOICE EXERCISES (continued)

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repeat as often as you like.

3. Stretching Your Neck Muscles

The purpose of these neck exercises is to relax your neck muscles and prevent your neck from becoming tense. If you want to have a deeper voice, you need to relax your vocal cords, which will be impossible if your neck is tense. You can relieve the strain on your vocal cords and improve your voice by stretching and strengthening your neck muscles.

4. Neck Stretching Exercise

You can do this exercise either by standing up or sitting down. Just make sure that your neck is in line with your spine and keep an upright posture.

1. Start by slowly inhaling and moving your chin to the left over your left shoulder. Hold for 3 seconds while you exhale.
2. Repeat the same thing on the right side.

Perform 5 reps at least twice a day.

5. Neck Strengthening Exercise – Isometric Front and Back

The goal of this exercise is to prevent your forehead from moving either forward or backward.

1. Start by placing both of your hands flat on your forehead.
2. Push your forehead forward against your hands using the muscles in your neck as resistance.
3. Push for around 5 seconds, then release.
4. Clasp your hands together behind your head and push backward this time, making sure to keep your forehead in place.

Perform 5 reps on each side at least twice a day.

6. Deep Chanting

Think of Matthew McConaughey's chest-thumping scene in "The Wolf of Wall Street." This technique not only helps you relax and reduce stress, but it also loosens up your vocal cords, allowing for better resonance and expanding your vocal range.

You can do this exercise either by standing up or sitting down.

1. Feel free to hum any tune of your choice, just make sure to use your lowest voice register and aim for the lowest notes you can reach.
2. Start thumping on your chest on beat while humming or chanting your tune.

Do this exercise for 2-4 minutes. And do it at least once a day.

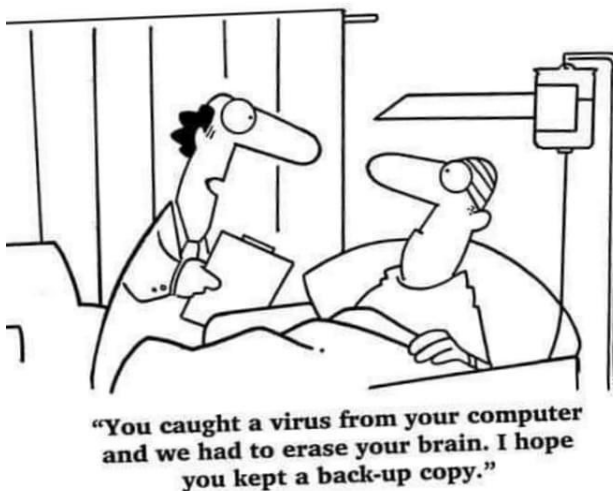
These are some of the best exercises we've come across for naturally deepening your voice, which you can do whenever you want in the comfort of your own home.

Just remember to stay hydrated by drinking room temperature or warm water to keep your vocal cords nice and relaxed.

Conclusion

If you want a deeper voice without having to undergo voice-deepening surgery or hormonal treatments, the methods and exercises we discussed today are your best bet. However, keep in mind that you are attempting to alter your vocal tone after years, if not decades, of habitual use. So, if you want to see any changes in your voice's pitch, it is crucial that you do these exercises daily. It could take a few weeks, or it could take months before you see any changes. The most important thing is to stay persistent and keep an open mind.

As you progress through this experiment, remember to record yourself at least once a week, if not more often, to hear how your voice is developing and compare the differences between the start and the end of this experiment.



Voice Pedagogy for Aging Singers (Including the Author)

by Robert Edwin
from nats.org

My annual “Rainbow of Hope” benefit concert on November 13, 2011, had a decidedly patriotic theme to it since it took place on Veterans Day weekend and was near the tenth anniversary of the September 11, 2001, attacks. Many of America’s best loved songs were featured: the “Star Spangled Banner,” “God Bless America,” a George M. Cohan medley, Woody Guthrie’s “This Land Is Your Land,” and Larson’s “A Tribute to the Armed Services.” The program peaked when I invited World War II Navy veteran, Henry Holt J. on stage. One month shy of his 90th birthday, Henry sang the beautiful Navy hymn, “Eternal Father, strong to save.” I then joined him in a rousing two man rendition of the Wilhousky arrangement of “Battle Hymn of the Republic.” The audience was on its feet as we held out the final “amen.”

I’m proud to say Henry Holt Jr. is a student of mine. He’s been a regular for over ten years and is my “poster child” for longevity in singing as well as a personal vocal hero. If I am still alive at age 90, I not only hope to be singing, but singing as well as Henry is.

Now that the leading edge of Baby Boomers has turned 65, voice pedagogy for the aging singer is sure to become a hotter topic in NATS. I have an even more personal and vested interest in the subject ever since that little red, white, and blue Medicare card went into my wallet in June of 2011. If some of us are on Henry’s schedule (and my family genetic history says I might be), we could have as much as 25 years of performing ahead of us.

So what keeps us going? The strategies and techniques used to implement and maintain healthy, efficient, and artistic singing practices with Henry and other aging singers are not radically different from those we would use to teach younger voice students. All singers need to continually address the individual aspects of the singing system, the “tensions,” as I like to call them: body position, respiration, audiation, phonation, resonance, articulation, and emotion. What is different for older singers is yet another “tension,” that one being expectation. Dr. Robert T. Sataloff, in a 2000 “LaryngoSCOPE” article, provided us with a veritable laundry list of challenges that aging can present, including deteriorating bodily functions that affect accuracy, speed, endurance, stability, strength, coordination, breath-

ing capacity, nerve conduction velocity, heart output, and kidney function. He further tells us that muscle and nerve tissues atrophy, and the chemicals responsible for nerve transmission change. Ligaments atrophy and cartilages turn to bone (including those in the larynx). Joints develop irregularities that interfere with smooth motion. The vocal folds themselves thin and deteriorate, losing their elastic and collagenous fibers. This makes them stiffer and thinner and may correlate with voice changes often noted with aging. The vocal fold edge also becomes less smooth.

Fortunately, Dr. Sataloff follows this not so cheery picture with a message of encouragement and hope: “It appears possible that many of these functions can be maintained at a better level than expected until very near the end of life, perhaps allowing a high quality singing or acting career to extend into or beyond the seventh decade.”

Henry came into my studio at the end of his seventh decade, and now, beginning his ninth decade, wants to continue to perform in public for as long as he can. Let me share with you briefly some of what we do in the studio to help make that happen. We begin with body position. To check and reinforce posture, we lift our arms over our heads, thus elevating the rib cage. Since Henry and I know the force of gravity wants to push us over and down, we do this exercise to remind us where optimum alignment should be. So far, gravity has not been victorious. Students less attentive to good posture yet physically flexible, often spend a good portion of the lesson with their arms above their heads while vocalizing. The respiration check involves placing the hands around the bottom of the ribs, with the fingers on the abs in front and the thumbs on the lower back. Inhalation and exhalation that move the ribs and lower torso sends us to the next “tension.” Excessive movement in the upper body, shoulders, and neck keeps us on this “tension” until we get it right. Posture and breathing will be influenced by the singer’s physical condition, and age is no excuse for being inactive. With older singers, general muscle tone will have an even greater impact on how much vocal efficiency can be recovered and/or maintained. Therefore, I occasionally need to remind Henry to put down his remote, get out of his comfortable chair, and go for a walk! After that, he’s more likely to want to go to the “vocal gym,” that is, my exercise CD. Audiation, also known as the auditory feedback loop, has to do with how we hear and monitor sound. Fortunately, Henry’s loop is well tuned and accurate. He has no pitch matching issues and knows what his voice sounds like both internally and externally. I keep changing the patterns of vocalises to keep him on his toes so that he is not rote responding to familiar intervals. Pitch problems in singers of all ages can often be traced to poor audiation. However, sometimes the problem is that they can hear the pitch, but can’t sing the pitch because vocal fold activity is not at an optimum level. Henry has diminishing vocal fold efficiency, so the “tension” called phonation gets special attention at our lessons. The question is always, how much of his range limitation is due to naturally deteriorating vocal fold and abdominal muscle tone versus lack of a daily and systematic practice routine?

(Continued on page 12)

VOICE PEDAGOGY FOR AGING SINGERS (continued)

(Continued from page 11)

The cliché, “If you don’t use it, you lose it” is true for all ages, since we know now that muscles begin to lose strength, coordination, flexibility, and endurance after 48 hours. Henry knows he sounds better when he practices regularly and especially when he engages his upper register or m2 (still unfortunately called “falsetto” by many who should know better). Initially, Henry was reluctant to “sound like a girl” (WWII vets are tough guys). That was until I told Henry about my personal charge from renowned voice teacher and therapist, Oren Brown. Shortly before he died in his 90s, Oren asked me to continue his ongoing battle to legitimize “falsetto” use for better vocal health. Henry was impressed enough to try it and has used it at almost every lesson.

We only know what we can do if we try to do it and fail or succeed. Right now, the more Henry exercises throughout his entire vocal range, the better he sounds. I like him to avoid as much as possible using age-related deterioration as his “get out of jail” card. Will he get his G 4 back? Probably not, but he wants to try to keep his “money notes” from descending too far down.

Also, Henry’s vibrato slows down when he doesn’t practice or when he over phonates his sound. For that matter, so do 16 year old Kalyn’s and 11 year old Stella’s. The myth of the old person’s vibrato continually needs to be challenged. Vibrato pulse should be under the singer’s control as should our next “tion,” resonance.

Resonators can only amplify what comes from the vocal folds. If the acoustic signals are not particularly vibrant, resonators will have little to work with and resonance will be compromised. This is much more of an issue for classical singers than rock singers, since the classical style requires a fuller tone quality. Henry is a classically trained singer so he wants that fuller timbre. Doing resonator-changing exercises—the “wicked witch” sound with lowered soft palate and high nasal-ity on one extreme—and the cowardly lion sound with raised soft palate, significantly lowered larynx, and widened pharynx on the other extreme heightens Henry’s awareness of his resonant choices so he can establish the chiaroscuro balance he wants.

Ironically, older adults with dentures face similar challenges as do kids with braces. Muscular conditioning of the tongue, soft palate, lips, etc. via fast moving exercises can be very effective in addressing the issue of clean and precise articulation. Once again, Henry comes through with flying colors with regard to mobility of the articulators. We do a five-note up and down scale exercise that starts with the jaw on a “ya, ya, ya, ya . . .,” and works its way up and inward via the lips (“ba, ba . . .”), the teeth (“ta, ta . . .”), the tongue (“la, la . . .”), the soft

palate (“na, na . . .”), and the throat (“ha, ha . . .”). We turn around and come out the same way we came in.

Mechanistic singers who may have relied heavily on micromanaging voice production and less on story telling usually have a difficult time fully engaging the emotion component. Henry has grown in his ability to connect actor to singer, but still tends to place more value in tone quality than expression. It is an ongoing issue with many of my students, old, young, and in between. Older singers, however, may have an advantage over youth when it comes to incorporating emotion, since age, because of the life experiences that accompany it, often allows older singers to bring a level of emotion to a performance that is not possible in youth. At least that’s what I tell Henry when he’s doing a less than inspiring performance.

Looking around the Contemporary Commercial Music world alone, Henry and I are in fairly abundant company. Many household names are still active performers: Neil Diamond, Bob Dylan, and Paul Simon all turned 70 in 2011. Paul McCartney, who shares my 18th of June birthday, is almost there. Barbra Streisand and Aretha Franklin are both 69. Patti LaBelle is 67 while Cher is 65. Jerry Lee Lewis is 76, Little Richard is 79, Charles Edward Anderson, better known as Chuck Berry, is 85. Interestingly, it took Tony Bennett 85 years to have his first #1 hit record on the Billboard chart. Perhaps we should also include in this group Plácido Domingo at 70, since he sang with John Denver, as well as Marilyn Horne at 78, since she sings duets with 84 year old Barbara Cook.

Age has certainly taken a bit of a toll on Henry. He simply cannot do what he did when he was a younger singer, so things such as key changes and careful choice of repertoire can be very effective in dealing with his aging issues. Adjustments can also be made in phrasing by the judicious use of commas, which will allow for more opportunities to breathe without compromising the piece.

Expectations for those of us singing in the autumn and winter of our lives need to be based on our current vocal abilities. We can fondly revisit the past in our minds, but we must sing in the present. For Henry Holt Jr. and other aging singers, looking to the future also seems to be a really good idea as well. Henry and I are working on our 2012 summer duet.

**Practice is where you learn
your part.
Rehearsal is where you make it
art.**

HOW MODERN SINGING WAS INVENTED

by Zaria Gorvett
from bbc.com

There was hysteria in the air at 81st Street Theatre in New York. Deep within the building, behind its white neoclassical arches and away from the steady chatter of crowds of adoring fans outside, a new kind of celebrity singer was walking onto a black-and-silver stage.

It was February 1929, and just a few months earlier, Rudy Vallée had been an obscure graduate best known to the listeners of WABC radio in New York. He wasn't considered particularly good looking: one biting critic later called him "a young man whose eyes are too close together and small to be called handsome". His singing style, too, was highly unusual.

But that night, as Vallée began the opening lines of a characteristically sentimental song, the crowd exploded with rapturous applause. The venue had achieved record-breaking sales, mostly with women: so many had turned up, the police had to be called to contain them. His was no longer just a voice for radio.

As it happens, the evening did more than catapult Vallée to global stardom. The singer was one of the first singers to practice the art of "crooning". This new style was a kind of soft, intimate singing, often likened more to lullabies than to the belting operatic or classical performances audiences were used to in the early 20th Century. Today the term is less well-known, but the style is still as popular as ever. In fact, this was the birth of modern singing as we know it.

A matter of projection

For much of the Middle Ages, singing may have sounded distinctly odd. Though the echoes of these ancient voices have been lost forever, there are hints in the historical record that the style of the day was somewhat 'nasal', to match the tones of the woodwind and string instruments popular at the time.

By the 17th and 18th Centuries, a number of famous European singers were castrati – men who had been castrated as children, and consequently never experienced the voice-deepening effects of puberty. Their powerful, 'metallic' voices were the dominant sounds at concerts, churches and palaces for generations, often moving audiences to

tears and standing ovations. However, eventually genital mutilation of this sort came to be viewed as unethical and the castrati's distinctive sound went out of fashion. Their 'angelic' singing vanished – and somebody had to fill the void.

"They had had such extraordinary voices, being a large male body just with a tiny childlike larynx, they had incredible vocal facility," says John Potter, a singer and author based in the UK. In their place emerged conservatoires and music schools, "where people learnt to do extraordinarily complicated things, loud things."

The idea that singing should be studied soon became well established, and soon technique came to be valued above all else. The best performers, it was agreed, had clear, dramatic voices. Flourishes such as vibrato, which involved rapid oscillations in pitch, became ubiquitous. "That hadn't really happened much before that," says Potter. "Before the 18th Century, people more or less sung as they spoke, as far as we can tell." This included their regional accents: if you were from the British Midlands, this is what you sounded like as a singer, he explains.

"We do see a major shift during the period," says Allison McCracken, a professor of American studies at DePaul University, Chicago, and author of *Real Men Don't Sing: Crooning in American Culture*. Criteria emerged for what constituted a good singer. "Often the qualifications were that they would be able to project, that they would be able to enunciate in certain ways, and that they would have what we would consider a trained voice."

For example, one of the most venerated singers of the late 19th century was German soprano Lilli Lehmann. In the manual *How to Sing*, she provides minutely detailed instructions for aspiring professionals, such as how to keep a breath vibrating in the mouth to achieve a certain note.

However, while tastes for different styles of singing have been continually evolving, all professional singers before the 1930s had one thing in common. In an era before artificial amplification, they had to be loud. That was the only way for their voices to fill a large concert hall.

A transformational technology

This changed with the carbon microphone, which was thought up simultaneously by three inventors in the 1870s. These early devices used carbon granules sandwiched between two metal plates to convert sound into electrical signals.

(Continued on page 14)

HOW MODERN SINGING WAS INVENTED (continued)

(Continued from page 13)

The technology was an immediate hit and became an essential part of radio and telephone technology. It also led to a public and bitter feud over whose version came first, including accusations of theft and plagiarism.

Meanwhile, the technology was being quietly improved. By the 1920s, microphones were so good, they could be used to broadcast reasonable-quality audio around the world. The popularity of radio boomed – and the way people sung started to change.

"The big advantage was that you didn't have to project your voice in the back of a hall," says Potter. "So you could just sing in a much more natural way. And you get the colours of your own personality coming through."

Enter the first crooners. This group of charismatic, mostly male performers pioneered a style of soft, seductive singing, typically involving romantic lyrics, that rapidly became wildly popular with young women. It was "said to be peculiarly devastating in its effect on the heart of the emotional flapper", wrote one journalist in 1929. Unlike their contemporaries, these musicians sounded as though they weren't performing at all, but rather whispering sweet sentiments directly into the listener's ear.

This new type of singing was assessed by different criteria, centred on conveying feeling, says McCracken. Technical considerations like projection or hitting high notes became less salient. "What becomes most important is that they sound sincere." Crooners weren't allowed to be anonymous voices performing for an audience. They had to seem authentic – and for that, they needed personality too.

An unwelcome development

Like all cultural innovations, crooning had its critics. Traditionalists were horrified, with one cardinal publicly condemning the style as a "degenerate form of singing" and "imbecile slush" – even going so far as to criticise its perpetrators as "whiners and bleaters defiling the air". Established musicians and conservatoires weren't thrilled either: crooners were accused of lacking skill and corrupting the youth.

However, the crooners weren't finished, and the march of technology enabled musicians to push the style still further. The 1930s saw the development of

directional microphones, a variety that pick up sound from a particular direction, minimising background noise. Singers who got close to those microphones discovered the 'proximity effect', which created an even more intimate tone, says McCracken. "People really liked that sound."

With these new singing techniques came a new kind of celebrity. "Rudy Vallée was really the first pop idol," says McCracken. And along with this new lofty status came another invention: the adoring superfan. "The fan letters to him basically say, 'I don't know why I'm in love with the voice, I don't understand why this is happening to me.'"

The term crooning eventually fell out of fashion, but the trend still lingers in popular music today. "Anyone who's using popular music in order to communicate their emotions is crooning," says McCracken. "They're using microphones, they're singing love songs to a popular audience... that's what crooning is."

We might imagine that people have always sung like Taylor Swift, or the contestants on Eurovision. But for most of history they didn't. Singing as we now know it was invented in the 1920s.

Ubiquitous as the style now is, in those early days it seemed like a fad. One critic predicted, rather hopefully, that crooning would soon go the way of "tandem bicycles, mah jong and [miniature] golf". Given that all those things remain popular, he wasn't wrong.



FREE YOUR VOICE

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

Tongue Strategies and Exercises (continued)

- Say tongue twisters repeatedly. Some examples are listed below. Use your tongue as little as possible to say them clearly. Mastering tongue twisters teaches subtle, nimble and quick isolation of different tongue muscles. Even though these are spoken activities, do the same things as you should when singing: keep a loose jaw and keep a consistent flow of air through the words. Do not over-articulate the consonants; the breath flow must be consistent throughout as the consonants emerge on or with the breath instead of against it. More in the next section on articulation.
 - Red leather, yellow leather.
 - Red lorry, yellow lorry.
 - Eleven benevolent elephants.
 - Good blood, bad blood.
 - Unique New York
 - Betty Botter Bought a bit of better butter.
 - The sixth Sheik's sixth sheep is sick.
 - Worldwide Web.
 - Sant's short suit shrank.
- there will be more about placement and frontal resonance in a later chapter. For now, remember that unnecessary tongue tension reduces resonance.
- Be aware that manipulating your soft palate also moves the base of your tongue. When a singer reaches an appropriate skill level with the tongue issues listed here, then I encourage him/her to experiment with the soft palate position. But ... in miniscule amounts. A millimeter at a time. If it feels difficult or causes fatigue, that singer should ease off.

(to be continued next month)

Someone called the Kentucky Derby "Amish Nascar" and my day hasn't been the same.

FREE SINGING TIPS

by Yvonne DeBandi
from a2z-singing-tips.com

K = Know your limits. Don't sing too high or too low. Don't sing to the point of vocal fatigue. Never strain or push your voice. Doing so will not result in a higher or lower singing range, or a stronger voice, only a voice that has suffered undue stress

FREE SINGING TIPS

by Nicole LeGault
from a2z-singing-tips.com

K is for Karaoke! Karaoke is a great stepping stone between practicing as a beginner, and auditioning for a real gig. You're a star on stage with a professional P.A. system, and there is no pressure at all not to make mistakes!

FREE SINGING TIPS

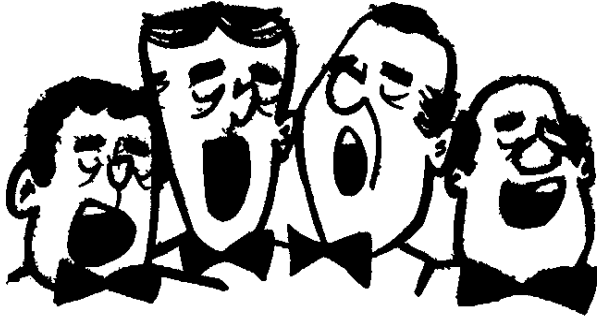
by Mick Walsh
from a2z-singing-tips.com

K. Karaoke. I LURVE Karaoke. Once I'm up there you literally have to drag me off. Karaoke files make great backing tracks for you to practice with as well. A great site where you can download Karaoke files and the software to play them on is: <http://www.vanbasco.com>.

FREE SINGING TIPS

by Teri Danz
from a2z-singing-tips.com

K= Keep Your Eye on the Ball -- Don't get discouraged if your voice isn't where you'd like it to be. It takes time to develop your instrument. Singing is a complex performing art and everyone who's successful has done the work at some time or another. Keep going and you'll keep growing.



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

amazonsmile

You shop. Amazon gives.

Amazon has dropped the Smile program, where they would take a percentage of our purchase prices and donate that to our selection from worthy non-profits (like us, the Big O). Their new plan is to only donate to those entities that THEY deem worthy.

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Thanks in advance!!

Big Orange Chorus

REHEARSAL SCHEDULE

Thu	01 Jun	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	08 Jun	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	15 Jun	Moosehaven
Thu	22 Jun	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	29 Jun	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	06 Jul	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	13 Jul	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	20 Jul	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	27 Jul	Shepherd of the Woods

BIRTHDAYS

Jay Giallombardo	10 June
John Humble	11 June

PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

Thu	15 Jun	Moosehaven show
F/S/S	13-15 Oct	SUN District Convention

...more to come



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.

RECENT GUESTS

Roger Erestaine	Ron Blewett
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G Lane	Brandon Edwards
Joe McLean	Adom Panshukian
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David Brown	Thomas Barhacs
Pat McCormack	David Brown
Richard Breault	Justin McGhie
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Doug Owens	Chris Redman
Steve Moody	Jeff Fullmer
Doug Schultz	Ryan Himes
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Conner Barber	Craig Dopp
Julian Bryson	Bob Lemons
Jim Hughes	Chris Loken
Elias Dandar	Dean Lang
J Brown	Bill Mumford
Marge Phillips	Shamus McIner
Sirlister Smiley	

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NEWEST MEMBERS

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Ray Parzik	August
Ed Fitzgerald	September
Dale Martin	March

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Interim
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Frank Nosalek
Webmaster &
Technology

PHOTO
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AVAILABLE

vacant
Show
Chairman

EDITOR'S NOTE

Article and column submissions are solicited.
Help make this a better bulletin. Send me stuff!
The deadline for July is 24 June.
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*.

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a chapter meeting.
Let them know they
belong here!**

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



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