



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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SOME CHRISTMAS SHOWS



WANTED!!

MEN WHO LIKE TO SING!



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

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For more detailed,
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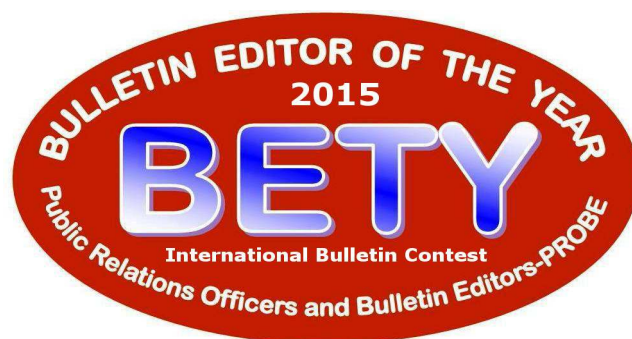
EDITORIAL

It's been a year of growth and music. We've performed at competition and at many gigs. 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 Mike.

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



UNLOCKING HIGH NOTES - ACCESSING YOUR MIX

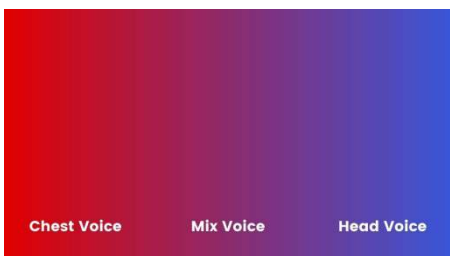
from singinglessons.co

A big part of learning how to sing better is unlocking your mix voice.

Most singers start with chest voice, then flip to head voice. And there's nothing in between.



Your mix helps connect your chest and head voice, giving you a consistent sound throughout your entire vocal range.



Unlocking the mix in your own voice takes time as it involves a high level of accurate execution of several different parts of your voice. But once you unlock your mixed voice, you've opened a whole new world of possibility as a singer.

So let's explore a bit more about mix voice and how you can find it.

What is a Mix Voice

Mix Voice or the Mixed Voice (same thing) refers to the fuller sound we use when singing in our upper part of our vocal range.

Our mix allows us to transition from that heavier to a lighter coordination more freely, giving us the illusion of taking chest voice up into the stratosphere.

The mix voice can take on several different tonal and dynamic qualities, which is part of what makes it so elusive.

A full, leaned in mix can be REALLY big, but we can also have a lighter, heady mix. It can be forward and pingy, or round and boomy.

Here are a few very different examples of mix.

<https://youtu.be/He5NctQPXK8>

<https://youtu.be/2Vv-BfVoq4g>

<https://youtu.be/OpQFFLBMEPI>

How can there be so many different sounds for a mix voice? Well, while the resonance and depth of coordination may change, all mix singers transition between head and chest voice and back without breaking.

So yeah, we can still adjust the shaping and compression (or lean, or pressure) we use when singing in a mix.

It's the consistent sound throughout the vocal range that gives the impression that we're singing in one sound, even though we may be transitioning between different parts of our voice.

As mentioned before, developing your mix can be a process. But, sometimes we can sneak ourselves quickly into it too.

Let's Try and Sneak You Into a Mix Quickly

One of the easiest ways of finding a mix is shedding out typical vocal habits and just speaking. Allowing yourself to speak, doing so higher and higher without adding pressure or effort often times will allow you to find a mix coordination.

I go into more detail in this video... see if it can help quickly trick you into your mix.
<https://youtu.be/8heOzMsA268>

7 Singing Tips to Help You Access Your Mix and Sing Higher

Hopefully the above video helped you experience what your voice feels like when it easily creates a high pitched sound. If so, use that as a reference point. You often don't need more than that.

If you couldn't find that place that allowed the sound to come out easily, I'm including 7 tips below to help you access and ultimately find more balance to your mix.

1 - Sing with a Steady Flow of Air

Keeping a steady flow of air as you sing should

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ACCESSING YOUR MIX
(continued)

(Continued from page 3)

always be one of the top goals. But when we're singing high notes, it's even more important since balance is necessary for singing higher pitches.

That said, two common issues I see when we sing high notes is pulling back or over-attacking high notes.

Both of these alter airflow and create imbalances, make us work harder, and keep us from our best sound.

So keep a steady flow of air as you sing through all your range, especially the upper range. This will help put your voice in the position of being able to unlock your mix.

2 - Release Tension in the Tongue

Tension often times finds its way into the voice when singing higher, often because of hesitation or anticipation. Ironically, singing higher notes is easier when you allow space and airflow to do the work – not tension.

Releasing tension in the tongue can be a bit of a process – but a little massage under the chin either down the middle of the tongue (shown on left) or the back corners of the tongue (shown on right) can help you identify and release tongue tension.



Doing this helps prevent you from over working and putting unnecessary squeeze on the voice.

3 - Sing with a Narrow Shaping

As mentioned before, narrowing the shaping of the vocal tract, especially the throat, helps you access high notes.

If the throat area widens, it can cause a pulling apart of the cords, which makes that more delicate mix

coordination nearly impossible to access.

One of the easiest ways to sing with a more narrow shaping is to narrow the corners of the lips when you sing. Almost always when we narrow the lips, we narrow the vocal tract as a whole.

This isn't always the best or most precise tool to use for narrowing, but it is the one that gives you easy and immediate feedback. In the beginning, it's all about knowing that you're doing it right. So play with it.

4 - Keep the Sound Speech Like - Not Under or Over Pressured

Keeping the sound more speech like allows you to prevent yourself from getting locked into weird, tension-filled shaping.

It also prevents you from singing with too much pressure, which is a common issue when trying to access a high note.

If you want to be a great singer, you must keep a balance of release and resistance of airflow.

Doing this allows you to sing loudly and fully in that middle voice and upper range.

5 - Keep the Larynx Balanced & Neck Area Free of Tension

The larynx, aka the voice box, houses the vocal cords (not vocal chords, remember lol) and its positioning plays a key role in achieving proper vocal control as well as accessing more vocal range. When we sing high notes, it's common for us to engage our throat muscles, leading to the larynx rising.

This elevated voice box placement places strain on the vocal instrument. This strain can cause the voice to crack, but even if it doesn't, it strangles higher notes and makes it impossible to sound good.

If you want to sing a high note perfectly, the larynx must be stable. For most, the easiest way to help lower the larynx back to neutral is to add some "dopey" or "bloomy" tone while singing those higher notes.

Do this in a way that keeps your neck and throat area free from tension and you'll be well on your way.

I explain this in more detail in the video below – This video is part of an online lessons series I created years ago called Grow My Range. You can access

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ACCESSING YOUR MIX
(continued)

(Continued from page 4)

the remainder of the Grow My Range series by joining the Patron membership of our app.
<https://vimeo.com/howtosing>

6 - Bring a Bloomy Head Voice Down into Chest [Vocal Exercises]

If you want to sing better in what's called mixed voice, you'll want to get really good at this singing exercise. It's a bloomy, top down "Woo" on a descending octave arpeggio. Then, it turns back up, then back down the octave.

This scale helps you get used to negotiating that transition from head to chest voice.

<https://soundcloud.com/singing-lessons-app/head-voice-exercise-4-female>

https://www.reverbnation.com/singinglessonsapp/song/33106039-head-voice-exercise-4-male-woo?fb_og_action=reverbnation_fb:unknown&fb_og_object=reverbnation_fb:song&player_client_id=j29dsi7kl

What you want to focus on in this exercise is connecting the airflow all the way down through each note. We also want to maintain that bloomy sound, while also keeping the tone forward as we sing.

7 - Find a Light Edge Closure Slide Going Up [Vocal Warm Ups]

Sometimes we focus so much on breath support that we over do it and make singing harder than necessary. Too much focus on support often leads to too much pressure.

Pressure itself isn't bad. In fact, we need pressure to create sound. But too much of the wrong type of pressure causes uncomfortable squeeze, closes off the voice, can lead to a sore throat, and even to vocal damage.

That said, you'll want some warm up exercises in your practice routine that help you find a light and right coordination. I think one of the best solutions for this is a groggy slide.

The groggy slides help you find the right balance of cord and airflow, and often times can be used to help you find connection throughout your entire vocal range.

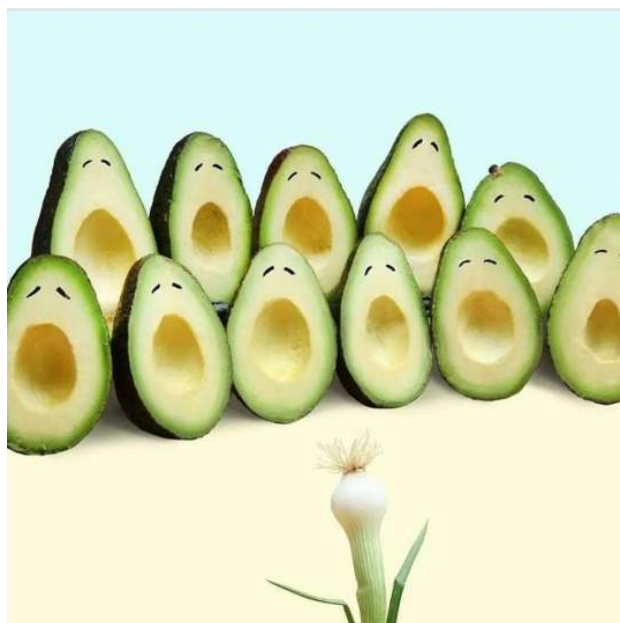
For this, I like little octave slide vocal exercises. It sounds like this (play track below).

Groggy Slide Demo

http://singinglessons.co/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/How-to-Sing-Article-Groggy-Slide-Demo.mp3?_3

Just a quick heads up – the most common way people get this exercise wrong is by adding too much squeeze. It should feel more release of air like a sigh while creating this groggy sound, not a bunch of squeeze.

I know this exercise doesn't really use our singing voice, but it will help you sing better. It also helps for people who aren't fully tone deaf, but who may still struggle with accurately matching pitch.



MAGIC CHORAL TRICK #372 - FIVE STEPS TO BECOMING A BETTER CHORUS SINGER THIS YEAR

by Janet Kidd
from betterchoirs.wordpress.com

I sat down to write a new one of these – but realized that all of this is still valid. And since it's buried almost 100 posts deep, I thought reposting it might be useful....

1. Use technology. Record yourself – then listen to the recording and assess what you could be doing better. Like our speaking voices, our singing never sounds the way we think it does – so we don't know what we're working with until we hear ourselves recorded. Please try not to be discouraged – almost nobody likes what they hear initially when they first record themselves. Work regularly with a chromatic tuner and a metronome. Care about improving your ability to sing in tune, and in time.

2. Do some vocal technique – even 5–10 minutes every day. Legato exercises on one clean target vowel at a time <https://betterchoirs.wordpress.com/2011/11/22/magic-choral-trick-5-target-vowels/> – something simple, like half scales, up and down: C D E F G F E D C, then D flat E flat F G flat A flat G flat F E flat D flat, then D E F# G A G F# E D... Also – recognize that your body is your instrument, and treat it well.

3. When you're given learning tools – learning sound files, or choreography notes or video – please, please, please use them.

4. When you have a concern or complaint, mention it ONLY to someone who can do something about it. Dissent about even relatively minor things can infect a chorus quickly, even fatally, if complaints are passed around from one willing ear to the next – with no intent to follow up and fix the problem. It takes courage to actually take steps to shift this mindset – and to take an issue directly to the person assigned to handling that facet of chorus life. Practise your bravery (Thanks to my sister Maeve for this phrase, which she invented to encourage her sons)

5. Give more of yourself than is expected, and your chorus experience will be richer than you expected.



FISH LIPS AND RABBIT TEETH

by Brody McDonald
from choirbites.com

I was in a rehearsal with Dr. Hank Dahlman of Wright State University, when I heard him give this instruction on shaping a vowel (I believe it was the EE vowel). "Fish lips and rabbit teeth!"

I've discussed flaring the lips before. I've mentioned shaping the OO vowel like a kiss and things of this nature. But I had never heard this phrase before: FISH LIPS AND RABBIT TEETH. Made sense to me – a rounded tone that still had frontal resonance. So, I put it in my little bank of stuff that might become a blog post today, which has now turned into my Choir Bites repository.

So I started to write this post, and I figured I would search "fish lips and rabbit teeth" on Google. After all, so many of these "bites" I am generating are certainly woven into the fabric of choir-dom, right? Sure enough, I found this interesting web link: <https://sway.com/mi3nDdLwFwHyNV5a>

This certainly looks like a neat way to put some vowel shape guidelines out for beginning singers, either through a link in Google Classroom or perhaps projected on the Smart Board and gone over in class. Certainly these descriptions are "sticky" enough for young singers to latch on to. Another tool at our disposal!

I also found that someone is making interesting t-shirts at this site: <https://www.keepcalmomatic.co.uk/p/keep-calm-and-rabbit-teeth-fish-lips/> - I mean, why not?

So, I thank Dr. Dahlman for the original impetus behind this bite, and I thank whomever made this presentation (I can't find a credit anywhere on it). And of course, I thank all of you for reading.



ON MANAGING PERSISTENT MISTAKES: PART 1 PREVENTION

by Liz Garnett
from helpingyouharmonise.com

There was an interesting conversation recently in a Facebook group for chorus directors about the challenge of a singer who was consistently getting some notes wrong. They were able to sing the right notes correctly in section, but reverted to the wrongly-learned version when back in the full ensemble.

The director who raised the question framed it in terms of the dilemmas of expectation-setting and qualification for participation in performances. They didn't want to be the kind of group who excluded people, but equally the errors were disturbing other singers and obviously had an impact on the quality of performances. The ensuing discussion included a lot of wisdom about setting up systems to manage quality control in the context of individual development. The shared goal was to support people to succeed.

There was less discussion though about the nitty-gritty of coaching and rehearsal strategies to deal with this kind of problem and as it was a scenario that will be shared by a lot of groups I wanted to give that a bit of specific attention.

There are two sides the question. The first is how to minimise the chances of learning wrong notes in the first place, the second is how to go about correcting them when they happen anyway. Both, if you are working with human beings, will be needed.

So, firstly, how to reduce the chances of people learning things wrongly. This divides into three stages: how you as director prepare yourself and the team for rehearsal, how chorus members learn their music, and how you structure your early rehearsals of it.

The Prep

As director, you can't prevent people making errors, but you can anticipate quite a lot of the obvious errors they might make, and head them off at the pass. As you learn the music (<http://www.helpingyouharmonise.com/prepnotes>), notice where you stumble when you sing through each part, as those are likely to be the spots that your singers trip up on too. If you use section leaders to assist in the rehearsal process, it helps also to workshop the music with them, and likewise discover what they

find are the trouble spots.

Armed with this information, you can then start figuring out strategies to support your singers. If there is a tricky interval, or a counter-intuitive rhythm, you can invent a warm-up exercise that uses it so that your singers have had the chance to get the hang of it before they encounter it in context. Or you might want to extract a bar or two with the tricky bits in and teach that first, slowly, by ear before introducing the rest of the song, so you know you've got the main challenge covered before they dive into the full piece.

Teaching people the right version before they've had the chance to create a wrong version won't of course prevent them making other mistakes you didn't anticipate. But it still saves you a lot of time and trouble.

The Individual Learning Process

The detail of this will depend on the specifics of how your group typically goes about learning music, but as the group that started this discussion is in a tradition that generally uses a combination of sheet music and recorded learning tracks, we'll use that as our case study.

First thing is make sure that the learning materials (http://www.helpingyouharmonise.com/learning_tracks) are themselves accurate. Not a problem in this instance as far as I know, but worth stating as it wastes so much rehearsal time when they're not. Then you need to delve a little deeper into how people are using them. If they are singing along absently-mindedly while they drive or do the ironing, that is a great way to get an approximate result and practise mistakes.

There are some excellent structured methods (<https://www.barbershop.org/using-learning-tracks-effectively>) to using learning materials that significantly increase the speed and accuracy of learning, and it is a good idea to give some attention in rehearsal to their use, rather than just sending people off with learning materials to muddle through as best they can.

A good rule of thumb is that if you are listening to the tracks (<http://www.helpingyouharmonise.com/helpfultracks>) without looking at the sheet music, you should only listen and not sing along. This is partly because if you are trying to take learning input through the same channel as you are using yourself (sound) your own sound is interfering with the perception of the learning input. Even if you

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MANAGING PERSISTENT ERRORS 1 (continued)

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don't read music, keeping your eyes on the dots will keep you straight on the lyrics, and it's surprising how much the visual shape helps cement things in memory even when the specific meaning of the symbols isn't understood.

It's also a very pragmatic way to manage attention. If you are looking at the sheet music, you are paying proper attention to the task in hand and will be less likely to make and practise absent minded errors.

Introducing the Music

Some groups give music out say a month in advance of working on it and expect everyone to arrive having learned it in their own time. This works if your singers all have the skills to learn things accurately by themselves, but if you are facing accuracy issues in rehearsal, then you need to build in a more structured and gradual approach so that you catch errors early and stop them getting practised in.

I know one director who will not issue the learning materials for page 2 of a new piece until page 1 is being sung accurately in rehearsal. It slows things down initially, but saves time making corrections later. It also gives a clear message about expectations (<http://www.helpingyouharmonise.com/lemov3>) which impacts on what people do between rehearsals and how they go about it.

Section time is also valuable. It is a good principle that section practices shouldn't be about learning notes, but they are excellent for checking them. Working in small chunks here is also useful as it focuses the attention onto the detail; if you are feeling under time pressure to cover a lot, you are more likely to let small errors slide.

I also like pair-work: people taking it in turn to sing to each other, and picking each other up when they hear something that doesn't sound right. You may need your musical leaders on hand to resolve the question when non-readers disagree on the detail, but it's a really high-ratio (<http://www.helpingyouharmonise.com/pacing>) exercise that also build bonds within the group as well as increasing accountability.

The key to all these activities is that they aim to minimise the number of mistakes made in the first

place, and then also reduce the number of times any mistake is repeated without intervention. The things you do at the outset lay down the neural pathways for learning, so anything you can do to make sure things are learned correctly at the start will make keeping it correct much easier. And every time a neural pathway is activated, it grows stronger, so you want to catch mistakes early and prevent them being reinforced.

Okay, this is getting long, I thought there was a lot in there. We'll continue with the second half of the question - what you do when, despite your best efforts, people have learned and practised errors - in another post.

ON MANAGING PERSISTENT MISTAKES: PART 2 - CURE

by Liz Garnett
from helpingyouharmonise.com

In my last post, I reflected on ways to support singers in learning their music accurately, to save everyone the frustration of having to unlearn and relearn, which is much harder. But of course, as you are working with human beings, you will still encounter times where people have learned something wrong. And, like the scenario that prompted these posts, the problem is often not getting people to correct their errors, but of keeping them corrected.

I have been thinking about this from two perspectives. The first is how to interrupt the behaviour pattern that includes the mistake(s). A persistent error is persistent because it has been practised, and if you want to replace that pattern with something else, you need to prevent them strengthening that neural pathway any more. In Alexander Technique terms, this is called Inhibition (<http://www.helpingyouharmonise.com/musickingmoment>).

The simplest way to bring this into the choral rehearsal is to ask someone who is making a habitual error to stop singing for that specific moment when running the music at tempo, either in rehearsal or private practice. This does several things: first, it prevents them further reinforcing the mistake; second it helps them develop a measure of conscious control over things they had been running on autopilot; and third it gives them space to hear other people around them singing that bit correctly. As a useful side-effect, it means that if a performance comes

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MANAGING PERSISTENT ERRORS 2 (continued)

(Continued from page 8)

up before they have fully mastered the correct version, they are able to participate without making audible errors.

The second aspect is how to build the new pattern securely enough that it can replace the original one. What is needed here are activities that develop depth of engagement with the music. As our case study demonstrated, it is often not enough merely to learn the replacement version with your section, as when you get back into the full texture, the stimulus of the full texture will trigger the original, wrong version instead.

So, we need to do things that will produce a more active learning mode. Duetting (<http://www.helpingyouharmonise.com/duetting>) is always a good answer. In this case, it specifically mediates between the context of your single line and the whole texture, making you explore not only the relationship between your part and all the others, but also their relationship with each other. Doing this with everyone is always a valuable rehearsal activity, but it would also be valuable as a small-group exercise to help individuals in remedial work.

Activities that make you change elements of what you're singing also promote active control over your craft, rather than just singing along with your past self. Monotone the passage to isolate rhythm, or sing the passage to a neutral syllable to isolate pitch. Getting more creative: sing every word with a t as its initial consonant; miss out every syllable with an 'o' vowel in it; sing only when you have a note in the tonic chord; sing only the first beat in the bar.

These are all fun things to do in rehearsal, and exercise the Inner Game principle of Will (<http://www.helpingyouharmonise.com/innergame3>). If you can do several silly things on purpose, you have the control to do something correct on purpose, and by being silly will have reduced the anxiety that was getting in the way of doing it correctly. Clearly, if you are used to these kinds of games, then applying them to error-correction will be much easier, so don't wait until things go wrong to start playing!

In the bigger picture, all these approaches are about building musicianship. The persistent error

is a symptom of a certain narrowness of awareness and understanding, of clinging to your part as you have learned it as the centre of your singing experience. Developing the capacity to hear and understand more of what is going on around you, and the flexibility to update your concept of the music in response both to feedback and what you are hearing takes time, but is inherently pleasurable and brings a depth and richness to the experience for singers and listeners alike. That it also makes persistent errors less of a problem is almost just a useful benefit in this wider context.

To make errors is normal; indeed, if nobody is making mistakes, nobody is learning. But the goal is not to keep making the same old mistakes, but to aspire to new, more interesting, more creative mistakes, for that way artistry lies.

off the mark.com

by Mark Parisi



THE BEST WAY TO BREATHE FOR REDUCING STRESS?

by Dr Noa Kageyama
from bulletproofmusician.com

Whether you're feeling your anxiety spiral backstage before a performance, or you're dealing with crazy holiday traffic and airport delays, or stressing about whether the turkey is going to be fully cooked and ready before the guests arrive while balancing multiple dishes with different temperature requirements and limited oven space, you know how people like to remind you to breathe when you're stressed out?

The research suggests that this is indeed good advice, and we've looked at studies before which illustrate some of the benefits (like here <https://bulletproofmusician.com/does-just-breathe-really-help-us-lower-anxiety-or-is-it-just-a-total-cliche/>).

But there are so many different ways to breathe!

There's diaphragmatic breathing, box breathing (aka tactical breathing), alternate nostril breathing, 4-7-8 breathing, mindfulness breathing, resonance breathing, and any number of other techniques that probably pop up on every day on your Instagram or TikTok feed.

Does it really matter which breathing technique you use? Or are there some ways of breathing that are more effective than others?

Is there a best one?

I'm not aware of any studies that do a head-to-head comparison of the *full* range of different breathwork interventions out there (though there's this 2023 meta-analysis that kind of goes in this direction <https://doi.org/10.3390/brainsci13020256>).

But there is a recent study (Balban et al., 2022) which compared three contrasting breathing exercises along with mindfulness meditation to see which might have the greatest effect on mood and anxiety.

And what did they find?

A breathing study!

The researchers recruited 108 participants, who were asked to wear a popular heart rate-monitoring device on their wrist, do some daily breathing or mindfulness exercises, and complete a series of mood and anxiety assessments every day for 28

days.

The participants were semi-randomly assigned to one of four groups.

- 24 participants were in a **mindfulness meditation group**, where they basically monitored their breathing and were asked to refocus their attention on their breath and forehead whenever they found their mind wandering.
- 30 participants were assigned to a **cyclic sighing group**, which is a breathing exercise that emphasizes long slow exhales, relative to shorter inhales.
- 21 participants were assigned to a **box breathing group**, which involved inhales, holds, and exhales of the same exact length of time.
- And 33 participants were assigned to a **cyclic hyperventilation group**, which emphasized longer inhales, relative to shorter exhales.

As you can imagine, they didn't stick with the program every single day, but overall the groups did pretty well. Specifically, the mindfulness meditation group averaged about 6 minutes of meditation on around 18 of the 28 days. And the breathwork groups averaged 6-ish minutes of breathing exercises on about 20 of the 28 days. (BTW, this difference in adherence was not statistically significant, in case you were wondering. □)

So were there any differences in mood or anxiety ratings between these four groups?

What did the researchers find?

Anxiety

Well, when it came to anxiety, both the mindfulness and breathing groups experienced a similar reduction in anxiety after engaging in their meditation or breathing exercises. As in, there wasn't any particular method that seemed to reduce anxiety more than the others.

That said, I do wonder if there might have been a difference if participants were more stressed out. Participants completed the exercises during the normal course of a day, so it wasn't like they were especially stressed out at the time. So maybe there would have been some different findings if they assessed their anxiety and tried the breathing exercises right before a stressful test or performance for instance? Anyhow, at least in this study, all four exercises seemed to produce a similar reduction in anxiety.

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THE BEST WAY TO BREATHE (continued)

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Negative affect

Like with anxiety, the different meditation and breathing techniques all had some effect, with all four groups reported feeling less negative after completing their exercises. And here too, there wasn't much of a difference between the groups.

Positive affect

However, when it came to positive affect or mood, there were some notable differences.

On one hand, the meditation group did experience somewhat of a boost in positive mood – but the breathing exercises led to a bigger improvement in positive mood than the mindfulness meditation.

And out of the three breathwork methods, **cyclic sighing** was the one that stood out, with these participants having the biggest increase in positive mood over the course of the study.

Interestingly, the cyclic sighing participants' normal everyday breathing rate also slowed down more than those in the mindfulness group. And there was also a significant negative correlation between change in breathing rate and change in positive affect. Meaning, the folks who experienced a greater slowing in their breathing rate and a larger decrease in the number of breaths they took each day, were the ones who tended to report the greatest increase in positive mood and affect.

And, unlike the meditation or other breathing groups, there seemed to be a cumulative effect for the cyclic sighing group too. As in, the more consistently participants did the cyclic sighing exercise from day to day, the more they tended to benefit.

And why does breathing, and cyclic sighing in particular seem to have a greater positive effect?

Why does this work?

Well, there are a number of potential explanations. And the authors describe several neurological, physiological, and psychological mechanisms in the paper. If you'd like to dig into it a bit further, two of the co-authors of the study share some more details [here](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IBJ2z4PxVt0&rel=false&width=640&height=360) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rBdhqBGqiMc&rel=false&width=640&height=360>

watch?

[v=IBJ2z4PxVt0&rel=false&width=640&height=360](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IBJ2z4PxVt0&rel=false&width=640&height=360)
(with David Spiegel) and [here](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rBdhqBGqiMc&rel=false&width=640&height=360) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rBdhqBGqiMc&rel=false&width=640&height=360>

(with Andrew Huberman).

So what are we to take away from all of this? And most importantly, how exactly do we do this cyclic sighing thing anyway?

Take action

If you're already really comfortable with, or have had great results with a particular breathing method, I'm guessing it's fine to continue with this – at least when it comes to regulating anxiety.

After all, in this study, there wasn't much of a difference in anxiety reduction between cyclic sighing and box breathing.

However, when it comes to reducing anxiety *and* getting into a better headspace and emotional state, it does seem like cyclic sighing is worth a try.

You can watch one of the co-authors demonstrate the technique [here](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rBdhqBGqiMc&rel=false&width=640&height=360) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rBdhqBGqiMc&rel=false&width=640&height=360>), but the gist is:

- Take a nice easy breath in through your nose, and near the end of your breath, take in another short inhale to top things off...
- And then take a nice slow extended exhale, breathing out your mouth

So with the Thanksgiving holidays coming up this week, maybe try setting aside a minute or two every day to practice a little cyclic sighing. And then, when an unexpected bit of stress presents itself, try a single repetition or two and see if that helps you to lower your stress a bit and even boost your mood a touch.

It may not sound like much, but you might be surprised at how much a difference a few seconds of breathing can make!



HOW TO SING A PATTERN SONG

by Alicia Lutes
from backstage.com

Although they may seem like an artifact of a bygone era, the legacy of patter songs can still be heard today. Like contemporary rap, the patter song is fast-paced and filled with tongue twisters. Here's everything you need to know to perform a perfect patter.

What is a patter song?

Patter songs are comedic tongue twisters filled with information. They often serve as emotional breaks in comic operas and musicals. Listen to Gioachino Antonio Rossini's "La Danza" to get an idea of the frenzied pace of a patter song.

While they reached heights in the operatic canon... the origins of patter songs go back to at least the 16th century in the western canon," explains Paul Chwe MinChul An, a multi-disciplinary performer at the Met Opera, LA Opera, and POPera. He adds that the form has long been "a memorable way of either driving the plot forward, as well as giving insight to the emotional fray within the scene."

It's probably the 19th century's musical duo W. S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan and their 19th century operas with which the form is most closely associated. The duo were masters of the craft, as evidenced by the patter song's inclusion in projects including "H.M.S. Pinafore," "The Pirates of Penzance," and "The Mikado." (The line "now I'm the very model of a modern major general" from a "Penzance" patter song https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hlTisI_HSgw even appears in Lin Manuel-Miranda's "Hamilton." https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DcD9ADx_Rh4)

Today, patter songs feel a bit retro, which is likely why Steve Martin's performance of a patter song during the third season of "Only Murders in the Building" was so well-received: <https://youtu.be/Piv19tK4IH4>

How to perform patter songs

Skills required to perform a patter song

Patter songs showcase a set of skills that not all performers have, but they should always be working towards: namely, timing, comedic chops, and verbal dexterity. These songs are also great if you aren't a more traditional singer—though that always helps—as you don't necessarily always need to be on key or have a good vocal tone to perform them well.

Timing: Patter songs can often be "high octane" and "really hard to perform and learn, especially if scansion doesn't track," An explains. Scansion is how you find the rhythm of a line of verse, usually via the visual graphing of the meter and pattern within the verse/song, to figure out and time the lyrics to the music.

Comedy: Since patter songs are meant to make the audience laugh, it's imperative that performers understand humor and physical comedy.

Verbal dexterity: The tongue-twisting nature of patter songs means that performers must have good vocal control. An upside of this is that learning how to patter provides great exercises for refining one's diction and clarity across all means and manner of performance, both physical and mental.

Step-by-step guide to performing patter songs

- **Do your research:** Watch other performances to prepare yourself, paying special attention to each singer's rhythm, diction, and physical movements.
- **Warm up:** Whatever warm up exercises (<https://www.backstage.com/magazine/article/vocal-warmup-cool-down-exercises-for-singers-71468/>) you do vocally, make sure they're the first thing you do before you sing. Move those muscles, practice some tongue twisters, and perform a speedy speech to ready your voice.
- **Practice, practice, practice:** If you're not practicing, you're doing yourself a disservice. Repetition will make singing a patter song that much easier. Bonus points if you record your sessions for further analysis!
- **Work with a vocal coach:** Working with a vocal coach or teacher can help you improve your diction, pace, and performance abilities.

Tips for performing patter songs

Analyze the song: If you decide to tackle a patter song, it's important to break the song down into digestible parts, whether that's story first, words first, or melody first. Whatever you choose, make sure it leads you to a more holistic understanding of the song you're about to perform. There's still a story there, after all, and your performance of it needs to make that clear and give the audience a lift. As An puts it, "it's helpful to organize the lines just like one would do with any scene—with arc, accents, [and] pivots."

Get physical: The physical challenge (<https://www.backstage.com/magazine/article/how-to-talk-fast-76221/>) of these songs cannot be understated. It

(Continued on page 13)

HOW TO SING A PATTERN SONG (continued)

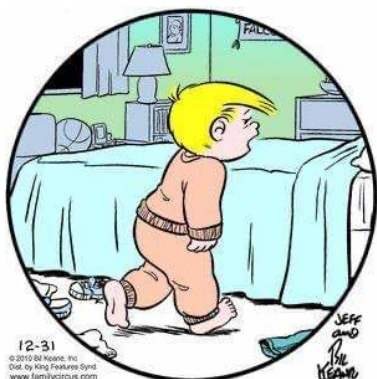
(Continued from page 12)

may seem silly to say it, but it's true: the more physically fit you feel, the easier it will be to perform a patter song, as the verbal and physical dexterity required can sometimes feel downright acrobatic. Tongue twisters, light cardio, stretching, and facial massages will all make a difference in your ability to endure a patter performance.

An, who is currently acting in a double bill show "filled with patter songs," says that they make for a very physical evening. "There's one particularly long and difficult one," he says. "I had a hell of a time learning it, and the director... broke down each line with little physical gestures. First to aid the memory, but they worked so well [story-wise] that we ended up keeping them for the show!"

Keep the rhythm: The rhythm of a patter song should keep both performer and audience on their toes. "When the text is set in an awkward way where the natural rhythm of the text is at odds with the notation of rhythm it can be very difficult," An says. "They are like speed bumps in a racetrack."

If you want to know your stuff, knowing what and how a patter song works is crucial for any and all musical theater artists—be you a writer, director, or performer.



"That's it, I'm tired. I'm gonna call it a year."

An optimist stays up
until midnight to see the
New Year in. A pessimist
stays up to make sure
the old year leaves.

HOW TO IMPROVE SINGING- TWO SIMPLE EXERCISES THAT WILL CHANGE YOUR VOICE

by VoiceLsnOnline
from hubpages.com

If you are an aspiring vocalist then you have probably heard from many different sources the importance of vocal warm-up exercises. Just like an athlete must practice his or her sport to become accomplished, so must vocalists practice daily to become accomplished at singing.

The vocal exercises that you use in these warm-ups are essential to the development of your voice. Not only does the act of practicing or warming-up matter, but HOW your practice matters even more!

In order to be an accomplished singer, you must be practicing and rehearsing correctly in order for your voice to perform at the highest quality later. If you are uncertain whether you are practicing or warming-up correctly, there are two simple exercises that will help you evaluate if your vocal warm-ups are being done correctly and helping you learn how to improve singing.

Vocal warm-ups are absolutely necessary to become the best singer you can be! Simply practicing is not enough, however, to ensure that your voice will improve. A basketball player could shoot free-throws all day long, but if he is using incorrect form or standing in the wrong position, then all of that practice goes to waste when it comes time to perform in a game.

Vocalizing is no exception. When you strive to learn how to improve singing, then vocal exercises are the place to start. Ensuring that you are practicing these exercises appropriately is key to your success as a vocalist and will make all the difference when you go to perform!

To be sure you are practicing vocal exercises correctly- always remember these three key elements:

1. Is your body in the correct position? As vocalists, our body as a whole is our instrument. We need to be sure that our body as a whole is ready to vocalize and we can do that by performing necessary stretches and assessing whether we are in proper alignment as we prepare to practice.
2. Are you sick or dehydrated? There are few things more dangerous for your voice than to attempt to sing in any capacity (practicing or performing) when your vocal chords are in a compromised state. Being dehydrated or being ill are two very

(Continued on page 14)

TWO SIMPLE EXERCISES
(continued)

(Continued from page 13)

dangerous states for your vocal chords and vocalizing in any capacity during this time should be avoided if possible!

3. Have you thoroughly assessed HOW the exercise should be performed. As you will learn further on in this article, you can vocalize almost any vocal exercise, but vocalizing the exercise correctly is going to be the key to your singing success. Be sure that you understand the complexities of each exercise before you perform it and consult with other vocalists or your vocal instructor to ensure that you are executing the vocal exercise correctly.

How to Improve Singing- Exercise One

If you are trying to learn how to improve singing then vocal exercises are going to be the first step in your journey. As you assess your singing voice and where you may need to make improvements, there are two specific vocal exercises you can use as foundational measures for the state of your singing voice.

The first vocal exercise is a basic fundamental exercises used by most vocalists at one point or another. To execute this exercise you must first vocalize the sound "ing." For example: vocalize the last three letters of the word "singing." This "ing" sound will create a nasal vocalization in the back of your mouth and throat up through the sinus passage. You should feel a slight "buzzing" sensation in your sinus cavity, but the sound should be clear. This is the foundation for the exercise. To continue, hum the "ing" sound and move through your scales with that vocalization.

This exercise is key because it is the most basic of exercises to determine your range and singing ability. If you cannot move through your scales while making this sound and maintain a smooth, clear, consistent vocalization while doing so, then additional practice is in your future. You will not be able to have a clear singing voice if you cannot execute this exercise precisely.

How to Improve Singing- Exercise Two

The second exercise that we will use to assess your singing ability is a smooth lag-otto. Being able to navigate through your scales while making vocalizations such as "me-me-me" or "la-la-la" is relatively easy for most novice vocalists. This is a very easy vocalization to practice incorrectly however, as pac-

ing and technique can be very difficult to master.

For example, a large temptation for new vocalists is to maneuver through their scales vocalizing the notes in a very staccato manner. Practicing in this manner, however, will cause you to cut off your notes when attempting to perform certain songs. When we talk about practicing in a smooth lag-otto, that entails trailing the notes together in a single smooth vocalization. By practicing in this manner, you will better be able to perform smooth transitions between the registers in your voice and move into your higher register with ease.

See These Two Exercises Demonstrated Here to Help You Learn How to Improve Singing
<https://youtu.be/JkuJUdC6EfI>



FREE YOUR VOICE

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

(continued from last month)

RHYTHM

Give up the idea that you must *make* rhythm happen and *make* it exciting. Feel the rhythm through your body and *allow* it to flow.

By all means, in the learning stage you should break rhythms down and learn them by slow, careful, and deliberate repetition. By all means, when you start singing at the desired tempo, use a metronome to be sure you are accurate without speeding up or slowing down. Just remember that these approaches are for learning only. When you have learned and mastered the rhythms, you must release those mental patterns that you used for learning them and begin feeling the rhythms in the music and how they fit with your natural way of singing.

Use your body and not your brain. The body is excellent at rhythm. The brain is terrible at it. The harder you think about rhythm and try to intellectualize it, the harder it becomes. Let your body move in your own unique way. Lose all self-consciousness. Those who are best at rhythm show it naturally through their whole bodies.

It is very easy to over-emphasize rhythm. The most common ways are to accent downbeats heavily and to close off words early to separate them in the hope this will make the rhythm more distinct and exciting. However, such a 'pounding' or 'chopping' approach rarely makes the rhythm more exciting, unless the singer is a skilled vocal percussionist. The key elements are a continuous flow of breath and a continuous flow of sound. It is possible to have a connected flowing sound *and* clear rhythm.

Occasionally, a more staccato approach is appropriate or provides momentary contrast, but all too often it is used too much and results in a broken, jerky sound.

Be sure that every syllable in the rhythm has a tone and pitch to it. When singing faster or more complex rhythms, it is easy to break the tonal flow and not sing a proper note on some shorter syllables. The rhythm serves the line.

(to be continued next month)

FREE SINGING TIPS

by Yvonne DeBandi
from a2z-singing-tips.com

Q = Quit smoking. Quit talking too loudly. Quit talking too much.

FREE SINGING TIPS

by Nicole LeGault
from a2z-singing-tips.com

Q is for Quench. When I'm recognized in public as a vocal coach, a lot of people ask first: "What should I drink"? I tell them that if they're singing properly, it doesn't matter much what they drink. I prefer to avoid caffeine, because I don't like the crash that follows the artificial stimulation. Avoid hard liquor, it burns going down and the fumes may irritate. Avoid dairy products, they may help generate phlegm. Other than that, just try to remain hydrated and fueled – I like to drink spring water and fruit juice. When consuming carbonated beverages, be sure that you can keep your burping under control! It can be embarrassing, especially during ballads.

FREE SINGING TIPS

by Mick Walsh
from a2z-singing-tips.com

Q. Quiet time. I always start my classes with quite, diaphragmatic breathing. Gently winding down from all the stresses of the day. Focus on getting your breath down from the chest and into the diaphragm area. If you have a puppy or a kitten watch how they breathe. Their tummies rise and fall gently, with no stress or pressure. Breath in for a count of 7 then out for 11, This fools the body into becoming very relaxed, very quickly. This is a great technique to try if you are waiting for an interview or an exam. Don't do this when driving though as it can lower blood pressure and increase your vehicle insurance should you crash!!

FREE SINGING TIPS

by Teri Danz
from a2z-singing-tips.com

Q= Quit Pushing -- Feeling powerful in singing and being powerful in singing are two entirely different things. While efforting -- pushing chest, singing louder to hit pitches, creating and pushing sound from the throat -- may feel powerful, it actually sounds worse. It's easy to go off pitch, sound strident (even painful), hurt your voice, crack etc... when you sing in this way



QUARTET CORNER

Our quartets have re-formed. We need more.

What is YOUR quartet doing? Don't have one? Find three other guys and start one! Can't find a match? Drop me a line and I'll run a list of guys looking to quartet up here in the bulletin. It's one of those really fun things that you don't fully understand until you've done it.

It's never too early to be thinking about Singing Valentines. Quartets are always needed, officially formed or pickup. It's only a few easy songs. Learning more than one voice part to these songs can help make you easier to fit into a quartet.

CHAPTER QUARTETS



On Point

Taylor Gaspar tenor
Daniel Pesante lead
Timothy Keatley bari
Alexander Burney bass

Four More Guys

Dan Kulik tenor
Ken Moyer lead
Jason Dearing bari
John Alexander bass



FlipGive

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

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

Thanks in advance!!

Big Orange Chorus

REHEARSAL SCHEDULE

Thu	04 Jan	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	11 Jan	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	18 Jan	Sing Out / SotW
Thu	25 Jan	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	01 Feb	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	08 Feb	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	22 Feb	Sing Out / SotW
Thu	29 Feb	Shepherd of the Woods

BIRTHDAYS

Alexander Burney	03 Jan
David Walker	21 Jan
Mark Roblez	31 Jan

PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

Wed	14 Feb	Singing Valentines
Sun	25 Feb	River Garden show
Sat	02 Mar	Icemen game (AAFM)
F/S/S	22-24 Mar	SUN District Spring Convention
Sat	20 Apr	Honor Flight gig
Sat	18 May	Jacksonville Festival of Choirs

...more to come

RECENT GUESTS

Jeff Fullmer	Doug Schultz
Ryan Himes	Ron Geno
Mike Ryan	McKayle Callan
Dale Patricu	Gary Weddel
Stephen Gramza	Curt Shepherd
Conner Barber	Craig Dopp
Julian Bryson	Bob Lemons
Jim Hughes	Chris Loken
Elias Dandar	Dean Lang
J Brown	Bill Mumford
Margie Phillips	Shamus McIner
Sirlister Smiley	Rob Taylor
Peter Gugisberg	Toby Max
Carl Kircher	Dante Alcantara

Got my New Years Eve Ticket



WELCOME

NEWEST MEMBERS

Daniel Pesante	March
Kenneth Moyer	June
Richard Chapman	July
Taylor Despars	September
Dan Kulik	September
Steve Moody	September
Margaret Phillips	September
Lee Hillman	October
Ken Huang	October

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.

2024 DIRECTING TEAM



Daniel Pesante
Front Line
Director

PHOTO
NOT
AVAILABLE

Timothy Keatley
Assistant
Director

2024 OTHER CHAPTER LEADERS



David Walker
Uniform
Manager



Les Mower
Chorus
Manager



John Alexander
Bulletin
Editor



Frank Nosalek
Webmaster &
Technology



Ken Moyer
Equipment
Manager

EDITOR'S NOTE

Article and column submissions are solicited.
Help make this a better bulletin. Send me stuff!
The deadline for February is 24 January.
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 SINGERS ON THE RISERS
BE A SINGER-BRINGER**



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