



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

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No Experience Necessary

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RECENT GIG PHOTOS



WANTED!!

PEOPLE WHO LIKE TO SING



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

EDITORIAL

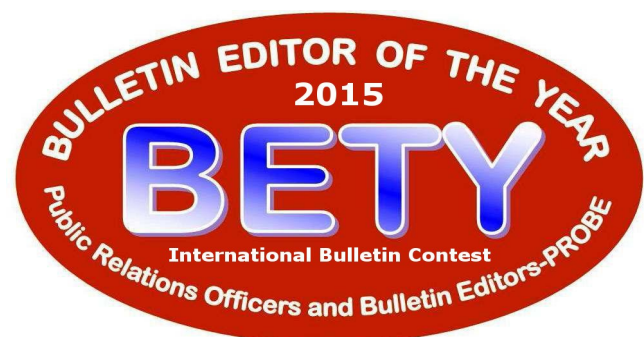
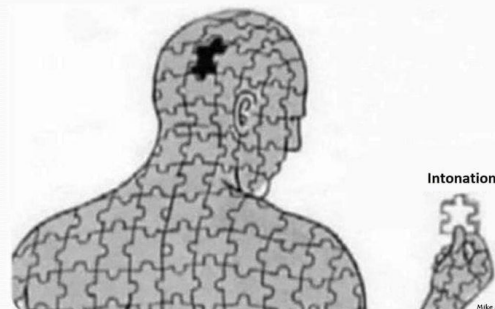
We just did another great show at another senior living establishment. We are moving ahead, sounding good, and ready to move up to bigger and better things. Don't miss an opportunity to hand out chorus/quartet business cards.

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.

Sometimes all a person needs is that one missing piece



HOW TO SING HIGH NOTES

by Ken Taylor
from askavocalcoach.com

If you're like many singers out there, you may be presently struggling with how to sing high notes.

You may have spent hours, days, months, or even years trying to reach those notes that are just outside of your range.

Bad part is, most people, even the ones that practice regularly, are at best getting slow and small results doing this.

Well, I have good news for you. The truth is, singing high notes without strain is not nearly as difficult as you may imagine.

The reason it's difficult for most people to grow their range is simply because they're going about singing the wrong way.

Reaching for higher and higher notes may over time increase your range by a note or two, but odds are that new found range will be clunky and inconsistent.

So, let's talk about a new and improved approach to expanding your range. I'll call it *Ken's How to Sing High Notes 2.0*.

The first thing we want to burn into our brains is this...

Singing Should Be as Easy As Speaking

That's right, singing should be as easy as speaking. Reaching for notes is a big no, no! If you're putting extra strain on your voice to hit a note, then you're trying waaay too hard!

So, how do we make singing as easy as speaking?

Well, the ideal speaking voice is smooth and connected, has a steady flow of air, and is full and free.

You don't have to press your speaking voice, so you shouldn't have to press your singing voice either.

Finally, a typical speaking voice comes from a balanced vocal mechanism. So let's break this all down a bit.

Steady Flow of Air:

Having a voice that is powered by a steady flow of air is crucial for singing higher.

You see, the air is the gas that powers our voice, and

you've *got* to have the right amount of air flow exiting your body while singing.

If you force too much air when you sing, you're going to create too much resistance underneath the vocal cords, leading to unnecessary pressure building up in the throat.

This leads to discomfort, causes your larynx to rise, and eventually forces your voice to crack.

Use too little air and your sound will become weak and putter out.

The flow of air is controlled by the diaphragm. Want to learn more? <https://askavocalcoach.com/articles/breathing-and-singing/>

Smooth and Connected Sound:

A smooth and connected sound is another important aspect of keeping a "speak singing" balance.

This goes hand and hand with operating off of a steady flow of air.

Actually, I'd argue keeping a smooth and connected sound is usually the product of a steady flow of air, with one exception – when we're singing staccato (separated or unconnected notes).

But even our staccato notes need to function off of that same steady flow of air. The air does not stop.

Think of the flow of air as a hose. If you have a put a kink in the hose, the water doesn't stop... it's still there waiting to come out.

Likewise, the water doesn't build up in strength, forcing the kink out of the hose.

The flow of water remains steady behind that kink, ready to come out when needed, but not forcing it's way through it.

Your voice should function the same way.

When singing staccato, you'll want to keep the air pressure moving forward, ready to sing the next words.

Don't stop the air pressure, but don't let it build up in the throat either. I suggest feeling that pressure in the front of the mouth (usually behind the lips).

(Continued on page 4)

HOW TO SING HIGH NOTES (continued)

(Continued from page 3)

Do this, and you'll continue that steady flow of air, as well as maintain a smooth and connected sound, even when you're singing staccato.

It's a beautiful sound.

Don't Press Your Voice:

Another important aspect of "singing like you'd speak" is you shouldn't have to press your voice.

Too many singers push their voice on notes that are more difficult.

I think this usually comes from misinformed people telling people to push the notes out.

Whatever the reason, pressing to get the sound out is a 100% sure recipe for unbalanced, range limiting singing, and should be avoided at all costs.

Singing with a Balanced Vocal Mechanism:

Finally, the reason why we want to sing like we speak is because we'll have a balanced vocal mechanism.

To me, this means a couple of things: we'll have a cord closure, and we'll have a level to lowered larynx.

Let's start off talking about cord closure.

Cord closure is the act of the vocal cords coming together to create the sound.

When the cords aren't fully zipped up, more air is able to leak out. This is bad for a couple of reasons.

One, it creates an undesired breathy sound, and two, cord closure is what helps regulate that steady flow of air we were talking about earlier.

Lacking good cord closure causes trouble because it'll force us to use unnecessary muscles to create the sound.

This causes unneeded tension that gets in the way of a free voice.

Next, we'll chat about the larynx.

The larynx, aka the voice box, is where the vocal

folds are located.

When the larynx is level, as it often is when speaking, our voice is in optimal position for singing.

However, it is very common for the larynx to hike as we sing, especially if our tongue is tense, or when we're singing higher.

For this reason, keeping a lowered to level larynx is imperative for free singing.

As the larynx rises – be it because of tongue tension, too much air pressure from below, or inefficient airflow – it throws the whole vocal mechanism out of place and makes cracking much more likely.

Releasing the "swallowing muscles" is a good step toward reversing a rising larynx.

If you need a bit more though, you can start singing in a hooty tone, which will also help release the larynx down.

Finally, spreading your vowels (ie smiling while singing high) also can cause the larynx to rise. So it's ideal to create taller, more narrow vowels shape wise.

Summing It All Up. . .

Singing high notes isn't about reaching higher and higher, forcing your voice to find a way to push the notes out.

Doing this will not only put unnecessary fatigue on your voice, but will also cost you more time in the long run when you have to reverse old habits.

When working on how to sing high notes, focus on singing like you'd speak.

Instead of pressing, maintain a steady flow of air while keeping the tone smooth and connected.

Then, make sure that you have cord closure (non-breathy sound) and a level to lowered larynx.

Once you learn to balance all these different aspects of singing, you'll slowly begin to discover your voice effortlessly soaring higher and higher.

Do this right and you won't see your range increase by a mere note or two, but potentially by an octave or more!

Happy Singing!

IS THERE A WAY TO MAKE SELF-IMPOSED DEADLINES WORK?

by Dr Noa Kageyama
from bulletproofmusician.com

Finding the motivation to practice diligently when you have a performance or audition a few days or weeks away is pretty easy. Stressful perhaps, but when we can feel our deadline rapidly approaching, motivation is not usually an issue.

Practicing diligently when your next performance or audition is many many months away, can be much more challenging.

It can feel like you have plenty of time, so you might find yourself procrastinating by deep cleaning the coffee maker or experimenting with different strings or spending way too much time working on minor issues.

Until one day your deadline is just a few weeks away, and things don't feel nearly as prepared as you thought they would!

Is there anything we can do to avoid this frantic last-minute practice cram-fest? And be better prepared when the day of the performance or audition arrives? Or is this just an inevitable reality for those of us who have natural procrastination tendencies?

What about creating
self-imposed deadlines?

The obvious solution might be to create earlier deadlines to aim for, so we're not cramming at the last minute. But if you've ever tried setting your own arbitrary deadlines, you know that it's often easier said than done! Self-imposed deadlines just never feel as urgent or as real as externally-imposed deadlines.

So does that mean they don't work?

Well, not necessarily! A 2002 study (Ariely & Wertenbroch) provides some clues on how we might be able to use a combination of self and externally-imposed deadlines to prepare more effectively for performances and auditions that are further out on our calendar.

A study!

A pair of researchers recruited 60 students, who were tasked with proofreading three 10-page

papers, and paid 10 cents for each error they found.

Unbeknownst to the participants the papers were written not by other students, but generated by this program (<http://www.elsewhere.org/pomo/>), designed to create text that is grammatically correct, but mostly meaningless.

Which resulted in passages like this:

"Art is part of the genre of narrativity," says Marx; however, according to Reicher[2], it is not so much art that is part of the genre of narrativity, but rather the collapse, and eventually the rubicon, of art. In a sense, if the neoconstructive paradigm of reality holds, we have to choose between post-semantic narrative and textual subcultural theory. Lyotard's critique of the neoconstructive paradigm of reality states that reality may be used to reinforce sexism, but only if Baudrillardist simulation is invalid; otherwise, Lacan's model of postsemantic narrative is one of "deconstructivist desublimation", and hence responsible for hierarchy.

Painful, right?

If you're in the mood for more, check out the Adolescent Poetry generator (<http://www.elsewhere.org/hbzpoetry/>). And if your quartet is looking for a name, you might give the Band Names generator (<http://www.elsewhere.org/bandname/>) a try. I gave it a whirl and got "Four Blind Mirrors." I thought that was rather profound, in an inexplicable sort of way.

Three groups, three different deadlines

Anyhow, participants were randomly assigned to one of three groups.

- Group A was given **evenly-spaced deadlines**, with one paper due every 7 days. Each day late would result in a \$1 penalty.
- Group B was given a **single deadline** at the end of 3 weeks, when all three papers would be due. They too had the same \$1 per day late penalty.
- Group C was allowed to **choose their own deadlines** at the outset – but on the condition that the deadlines would be binding and could not be changed (and also subject to the same \$1 per day penalty).

In theory, participants in this group could have set a single deadline of the final day, but wisely set deadlines in advance of the final day. *However*, their self-imposed schedules varied quite a bit.

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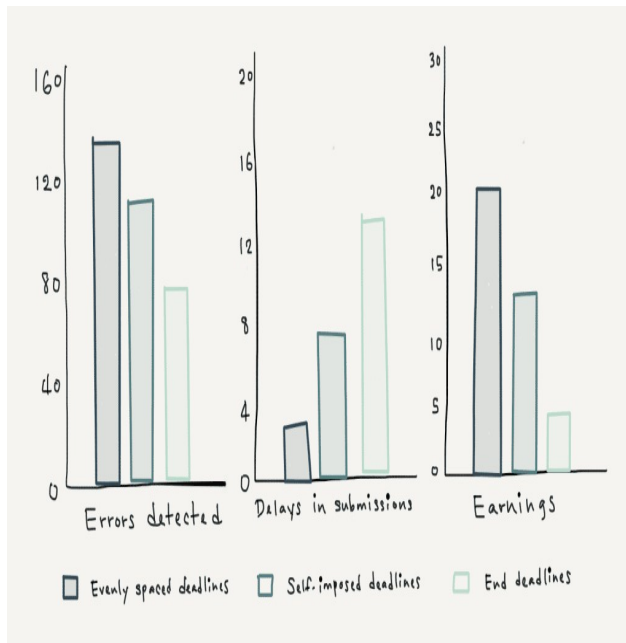
SELF-IMPOSED DEADLINES
(continued)

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Some set deadlines that were clustered closer together, while half of them set deadlines that were evenly spaced throughout the 3-week span.

So which of these strategies led to the best proofreading performance and follow-through?

And the verdict is...



Data from Ariely, D. & Wertenbroch, K. (2002). Procrastination, deadlines, and performance: Self-control by precommitment. *Psychological Science*, 13(3), 219-224.

As you can probably guess, Group A, with externally-imposed spread-out deadlines of one paper every 7 days, detected the most errors, had the fewest late submissions, and as a result, earned the most money.

Meanwhile, Group B, which had a single externally-imposed deadline with everything due at the end of 3 weeks' time, did the worst. They detected the *fewest* errors, experienced the *most* delays in submitting the papers, and earned the *least* amount of money. For comparison, Group A earned about 4 times as much money.

And how did the self-imposed deadline group do?

Did self-imposed deadlines work?

Group C, which was responsible for setting their own deadlines, had results somewhere in the middle of the two groups. Overall, they did better than Group B which had the single externally-imposed deadline at the very end, but not as well as Group A that had spaced-out externally-set deadlines.

But wait – do you remember how some of the folks in this group set deadlines that were grouped closer together, while half of them set deadlines that were more evenly distributed throughout the three weeks of the study?

Well, when the researchers looked only at the participants who created evenly-spaced **deadlines, the differences between the externally-imposed and internally-imposed groups largely disappeared!

In other words, it's not that self-imposed deadlines didn't work. They just had to be spaced more effectively (e.g. evenly, rather than clustered at the end).

So what are we to do with this?

Caveats

Well, proofreading nonsense paragraphs and preparing for a performance are different things.

And it's also not clear if there was something already inherently different about the participants who chose to spread things out more evenly relative to the participants who chose to cluster their deadlines closer together. Maybe they were already wired in a way that enabled them to spread their work out more effectively?

Regardless, I think there are still some useful takeaways that we can try to apply to our own preparation process.

Takeaways

For me, I think the findings of this study suggests that whether you're preparing for an audition, competition, recital, or any kind of performance, you'll probably benefit from creating and committing to smaller deadlines spread out more evenly throughout the preparation process.

For instance, the college audition process kind of provides a structure for this. Because instead of there being just one single audition, there might be a series of auditions, spread out over a 1-2 month span. A couple months before then, you may have

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SELF-IMPOSED DEADLINES
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screening tapes that are due, and recording sessions that you'll have to prepare for. And before that, there will be rehearsals with pianists, as well as lessons and studio classes.

Still, I think we can be more specific and intentional about these built-in deadlines. And add additional mini-deadlines into the structure too.

Combining external and
self-imposed deadlines

For instance, you might pinpoint a specific lesson date when you'll run through the first movement of a concerto. And another lesson where you'll play through the concerto with a pianist. A specific date when you'll aim to do your first practice recording, in advance of your actual recording session. And which studio class you'll use to do a run-through of which pieces from your audition list. And when you'll play what portion of which pieces for which friends.

So if you work backwards from the audition date, making commitments to specific deadlines along the way, you may very well be able to come up with some smaller deadlines to aim for in the next week or two.

But like the researchers did in the study, do be sure to create some sort of external accountability for yourself, even if the deadlines themselves are self-imposed. For instance, setting a deadline of running the first page of your concerto to see if you can get through it without the music a week from today is fine. But if there's no public accountability it'll be too easy to keep putting that off. Instead, ask a practice buddy if you can play through the first page of your concerto for them. Which will put it on both of your calendars as a real event, and make it just that bit harder to back out of.

7 STEPS TO BECOMING
A SELF-TAUGHT SINGER

by Gregory Lawrence
from backstage.com

If you're an aspiring singer with neither the resources nor desire to take formal lessons, you may wonder if it's possible to truly master the craft. The answer: yes. Here's everything you need to know to teach yourself to sing—including some pros and cons of professional instruction and expert advice on how to sing better.

Can you teach yourself to sing?

You can teach yourself to sing, so long as you keep an open mind while traveling on the well-defined path needed to fortify your instrument. "I believe strongly that yes, a person can teach themselves to sing," says songwriter, music teacher, and vocal coach Tony Gonzalez. According to Gonzalez, to become a self-taught singer, you need: "one, an indication of the right direction to grow vocally and, two, an ability to make room in your mind for growth."

Teaching yourself to sing vs. taking lessons

Accountability: One of the biggest benefits to taking vocal lessons is working with someone who gives you a well-defined path—and holds you accountable to stay on it. "If no coach or teacher is drawing a change out of you, then the impetus to make improvements relies entirely on you," says Gonzalez, "which might mean that you don't recognize on your own what needs to change." But this philosophical difference gives the self-taught singer benefits, too. "You're your own cheerleader and whip-cracker," adds Gonzalez. "The pressure to 'get better' relies entirely on your own sense of 'how much better' you should be getting."

Outside perspective: Having an "external ear to be your sonic mirror is perhaps the [biggest] benefit to having a teacher, as opposed to relying on your own ear," Gonzalez advises.

Cost: From a purely practical standpoint, you can save yourself a good amount of money by going without a vocal teacher.

How to teach yourself to sing

1. **Take care of your instrument.** Protecting your

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SELF-TAUGHT SINGER
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voice is imperative to longevity as a singer. If you're teaching yourself to sing, it's extra important to remember to take care of your own voice, since you won't have a vocal coach constantly reminding you.

- **Warm up and cool down:** "Don't barrel right into singing full-out straight away," says Gonzalez. Instead, be sure to always warm up your voice into proper shape. There are lots of different vocal warmups and cooldowns to try; Gonzalez's routine usually includes "some version of humming, some lip trills, a version of singing that's more staccato and separate, a version that's more smooth and connected, and working on incorporating my head voice into my mix more successfully." Ultimately, it's about discovering what connects you to your instrument the most, and then performing a cooldown version of the ritual to end your singing session.
- **Hydrate:** Drink water regularly, and be extra sure to hydrate before a practice session "in order to moisten all the tissues in your mouth," advises voice actor, producer, and instructor Marc Cashman.
- **Use proper posture:** While it may be easy to over-relax on this point—especially if you're teaching yourself—proper posture is of the utmost importance for healthy, strength-building singing. You want your body to feel as open as possible, allowing you to sing from the diaphragm rather than from the throat. "The proper posture for singing is, at the very least, to keep your upper torso aligned with your neck and head," says Gonzalez. "This path, [which allows] your air to release, from gut to windpipe to mouth, should be as unobstructed as possible for maximum air efficiency.

Gonzalez adds that it can help to "think of singing to the balcony of a theater as opposed to down toward someone on the floor." After all, once you teach yourself to sing, you may just find yourself performing for an audience! Gonzalez adds that it can help to "think of singing to the balcony

of a theater as opposed to down toward someone on the floor." After all, once you teach yourself to sing, you may just find yourself performing for an audience!

2. Learn different singing styles and techniques.

"There are six dominant styles of singing," explains voice teacher Andrew Byrne, who identifies the different genres as pop, rock, country, opera/classical, blues/jazz, and hip-hop/R&B. "Whether you're a southern belle wanting to be the next Kacey Musgraves or Carrie Underwood, or you're a song-and-dance man aspiring to the Broadway stage, it's important to familiarize yourself with all of music's various forms and genres," he adds.

Further, Gonzalez recommends giving yourself "a good spread on methods and techniques" in the "initial exploration into self-teaching." This numbers game of discovery "will give you a better chance of finding what works specifically for you."

3. Find your sound. Take the time to find your own personal sound and preferred technique. "The biggest pitfall to singing on your own is trying to sound exactly like someone on a record," says Gonzalez. Because so much of self-teaching involves researching and listening to others, mimicry can be tempting. Instead of copying someone else's sound, "give yourself the grace to know that your voice is only going to sound like the best version of yourself, and not somebody else," Gonzalez says. "Take pride that your voice is only yours and no one can replicate it. You'll find much more joy and fulfillment in the process of improving your technique."

4. Study. Research your style's nuances and tropes, listen to the greats of the genre, and delve into free educational content online or at your local library.

5. Practice. Gonzalez recommends practicing in a place with space that allows you to be as out, loud, and "you" as possible. "We automatically pull back or try to 'not bother people' when we know they can hear us, so try to be somewhere that you feel you can make noise and move around freely."

- **Stick to a regimen:** The biggest improvements will come with consistent practice, even if those initial steps start small. "Whether it's 15 minutes twice a week of concentrated practice...or four hour-long sessions per week, do what feels achievable and increase your 'workout' intensity as you begin to feel your stamina, attention span, and ability to detect nuance begin to develop," says Gonzalez. This routine will slowly but steadily build your **vocal strength and control**.
- **Record yourself:** Record your practice sessions and listen to them, noting any areas of concern

SELF-TAUGHT SINGER (continued)

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and opportunities for improvement.

6. Sing in front of people. Once you've put in the hours at home, it's time to take your voice to the streets. While you don't necessarily need the outside eyes and ears of a teacher or coach, "singing is an art form meant to be shared," says Gonzalez. "Whether it's singing for friends, at an open mic, in a small cabaret, or recording yourself in a video to share, the only way to have a measure of your progress and improvement is to see how it's received by outside ears. Being able to let go of self-judgment and to be vulnerable is especially important (and especially rewarding) at this stage."

7. Persevere. Keep practicing, learning, and performing to grow as a singer. The more time you put into your craft, the better a self-taught songbird you'll be.

Tips for teaching yourself to sing better

Step out of your comfort zone, a little at a time. Improvement comes with growth, and growth comes with challenges. "Try to sing something slightly higher, faster, or more sophisticated than usual," Gonzalez says. "Little by little, you'll demystify the things you used to find impossible to do by showing yourself that most singing is achievable if you let yourself find how first, and then slowly forge your way from there."

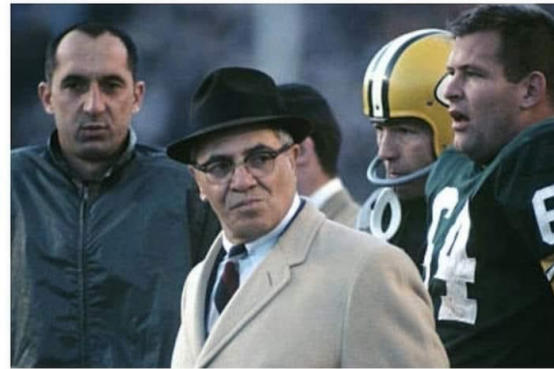
Break down your songs. Tackle songs one part at a time, rather than fully jumping into a piece. This will make the song more digestible and understandable.

Start with the lyrics: Gonzalez starts the process with lyrics: "Say them to yourself in rhythm (without singing) in a nice, comfortable, even volume. Then, lip trill your way through the melody to get your breath support figured out through the song."

Add in breath: "Finally, put your lyrics and breath control together in actually singing," Gonzalez says. "Take everything apart piece by piece until you feel like each individual part is in your control more and more."

Embrace failure. If good is the enemy of great,

perfect is the enemy of progress. "Singing, ideally, is never perfect," insists Gonzalez. "It's personal, emotionally driven, and so full of how we are on any given day that it would be a never-ending loop of disappointment to expect singing 'perfection.' Instead, decide to be courageous, step into exactly where you are vocally, and make sure people know who you are as a singer. You will only get better, even with failures, if you take the approach that every singing experience teaches you something about what to do better next time."



GENTLEMEN, WE ARE GOING TO RELENTLESSLY CHASE PERFECTION, KNOWING FULL WELL WE WILL NOT CATCH IT, BECAUSE NOTHING IS PERFECT. BUT WE ARE GOING TO RELENTLESSLY CHASE IT, BECAUSE IN THE PROCESS WE WILL CATCH EXCELLENCE. I AM NOT REMOTELY INTERESTED IN JUST BEING GOOD.

- VINCE LOMBARDI -



WHAT'S POPPIN'

by Brody McDonald
from choirbites.com



When I was young, the hot air popcorn popper was all the rage. It was one of those kitchen gadgets that became a must-have for every family in an era before microwave popcorn. The way the hot air popper works is simple: raw popcorn sits on a grate atop what is effectively a hair dryer pointed at the sky. Hot air blasts upward, causing the kernels to jumble around like balls in a lotto ping-pong ball selection machine. When the kernels get hot enough, they pop. Fluffy, popped kernels are then blown forward down the chute into the bowl.

The hot air popper is a great visual for singing for two reasons:

(1) The air is constantly blasting upward, creating activity and keeping the kernels (tone) in motion. They spin at the top back of the popper, like we wish to have the tone spinning and mixed in the pharynx with a lifted soft palate. This warms the tone before it moves forward.

(2) The heat of the air causes the kernels to go from a hard, inedible state to a larger, softer, edible-nay-delicious state, just as the presence of air in a singer's tone helps eliminate harshness and instills beauty. Only the popped kernels exit the popper.

I don't know if such visualizations ring true for everyone, but I use them a lot. Certainly they are just tools to give foundational technical advice in new ways to budding singers. They aren't life-altering by any stretch, but if this can help you in even one situation in one rehearsal, it's worthwhile.

And that friends, is the point of Choir Bites. Not to reinvent the wheel, but to constantly have thoughts / images that might some day be pulled out of your bag of tricks to a good end.

9 THINGS SINGERS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THEIR BODIES

by Peter Jacobson
from mindbodymusicsschool.com

1. Your whole body is your instrument, not just your vocal mechanism.

Your voice is part of a total system which also includes your mind and your entire body. Any method or technique of singing that doesn't address the whole human being has limited applications to developing one's full potential as a singer.

To become a better singer, in addition to trying to sing well, focus on using your entire Self well. It's your whole self instrument that supports everything you do.

2. The poise of the head on the spine directly affects your quality of sound.

The larynx hangs from the hyoid bone which is suspended from the mastoid processes on the skull. If the head is pulled down into the spine, the neck and throat muscles will tense and the torso will become rigid. This excess tension will constrain your breathing and vocal production.

The head is the "boss" of the body. Allow it to be delicately poised on the spine. This lets the vocal mechanism hang freely and the allows the muscles of the torso to work without unnecessary effort.

3. Pain and discomfort is caused by chronic tightening and shortening of muscles.

When a muscle is recruited by our nervous system it can really only do one thing – contract. However, if a muscle (or set of muscles) is always "on" and not allowed to release into its full resting length it can become chronically tense and inflamed leading to pain and discomfort.

Learn how to access the deep, support muscles in your body. In doing so, you can relieve pain and tension by allowing chronically tight superficial muscles to release into greater length and flexibility.

4. The more we micromanage our breathing, the less control we actually have.

Our respiratory system is incredibly dynamic, intelligent and responsive. When we "take" a breath using muscular effort or try to recruit specific muscles while breathing and singing, we can inter-

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9 THINGS SINGERS NEED TO KNOW

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fere with our natural breathing and vocal freedom.

Instead of trying to work on your breathing, investigate the habits that are getting in the way of your natural breathing and learn how to undo those habits. As you use less muscular effort to breathe you will be able to "allow" for a breath that will be perfectly suited for the needs of the music you are singing.

5. Gasping for breath is a sign of unnecessary tension in the vocal tract and body.

The habit of gasping during inhalation is an almost universal habit among voice users. In fact, it is quite rare to hear a singer that doesn't unconsciously gasp. Though common, this habit is not necessary to sing and can lead to a decrease in the quality of our breathing and vocal functioning.

Start paying attention to your inhalations to hear if you also gasp before you sing. You can avoid this unnecessary (and even harmful) habit by allowing the muscles of the neck and torso to release into greater length and width as you breathe.

6. We have 24 ribs (12 on each side) and they are designed for movement.

Our 24 ribs are spring loaded and designed for movement (to varying degrees). In our backs, the ribs are attached to our spine via many moveable joints. In front, they attach to our sternum via cartilage (similar tissue to your nose and ears). As Alexander teacher Patrick Macdonald says, "If you allow your ribs to move, as Nature intended, you will breathe properly."

Explore the 3-dimensional movements available in your 24 ribs. It can helpful to use your hands to feel where the movement is happening.

7. The lungs are housed in the upper torso and the diaphragm sits right below them.

3 key facts: 1. The lungs go as high as the collarbone (which you can see clearly in image at the top of this article). 2. There is more lung tissue in our back than in our front. 3. Right beneath the lungs sits the diaphragm, a large muscle that separates our upper and lower abdomen and moves up and down (as opposed to in and out).

Many singers are instructed to breathe low into their belly. This can a useful metaphor to encourage whole torso movement. However, it must be understood that the only place air touches is the respiratory tract. This includes the lungs, which sit MUCH higher than most singers imagine.

8. The diaphragm is not designed to be controlled directly.

Because it has no proprioceptive nerve endings, we cannot directly isolate and control our diaphragm. Additionally, the diaphragm is primarily a muscle of inhalation and since we sing on the exhale it is not necessary (nor possible) to support your sound with your diaphragm.

It is impossible to exert any direct control over diaphragmatic movement except through the natural act of reflexive breathing and the the controlled exhalation of singing. Therefore, it's best to leave you diaphragm alone when you breathe and sing.

9. By cooperating with your design you can find freedom and ease in your singing.

Understanding the basics of how your total mind-body-voice system is designed to work best can take you a long ways towards eliminating excess tension, freeing your body and liberating your voice.

Taking the time to learn about your whole self instrument is one of the best investments you can make in yourself and your singing!



MAGIC CHORAL TRICK #395 HICCUP WORDS

by Janet Kidd
from betterchoirs.wordpress.com

“Hiccup word” is what I have named the kind of word that we tend to shortchange time-wise and which then produces a hiccup effect in the musical line.

Most typically, these occur at the ends of phrases – as in this example. “Coast” and “tossed”

Farewell to Nova Scotia, the sea bound
“coast”.....For when I’m far away on the briny ocean
“tossed”

Words ending in and “st” or and “ssed” can be particularly prone to hiccupping

These words are sometimes thrown away like this because our singers desperately require oxygen, but more often it’s because they haven’t realized that they’re shortening the vowel and creating a bump in the vocal line.

For the singers who know what a tenuto line is I ask them to draw one over the note – but for most singers, asking them to maximize the vowel and minimize the consonant blend is what’s needed. Then we rehearse the word a few times on the notes they sing to that word until it’s cleaner and smoother.

Some hiccup words that occur inside a phrase – like the word “just”, can be connected to the next word with only the “s”, with the “t” dropped altogether

“JuhsLikeThat” (Hah!! Even a word like “like” can become a hiccup word – especially in an uptune)

In Barbershop, the word “Dixie” or “Dixieland”, that wretched “x” makes singers jam the backs of their tongues to the roof of the mouth, shutting off all sound and creating the mother-of-all-hiccups. I used to handle this by asking my groups to sing “Digzieland”. I found that that got results faster than asking them to lengthen that first “ih” vowel before the “ks”. If I encouraged them to think that “k” at all they’d soon revert to a tongue jamming “x”.

The real value here though is in the naming of this issue. Once my singers had fixed a few hiccup words they knew what to do the next time I pointed one out.

HOW SHOULD WE GO ABOUT LEARNING MUSIC?

by Liz Garnett
from helpingyouharmonise.com

I’ve had a number of conversations recently with people about different approaches to learning music. You won’t be surprised to hear that it’s a question that has multiple right answers, though the different approaches confer different advantages and so may prove more or less useful in different circumstances, and I’ve been finding it useful to reflect on these differences, both for my own benefit, and for the various other musicians I find myself supporting.

Start at the beginning

This is a classic approach for a reason. Learning the music in the same order that an audience will listen to it has an intuitive logic because your learning experience follows the same narrative journey that you will eventually be sharing with others. It is easier to make sense of the music when you encounter each musical event in its proper temporal sequence, and it is easier to internalise (and memorise if that’s your genre expectation) if you have this sequential structure in place from the get-go.

Start at the end and work backwards

The opposite way round is also a great approach, especially where the music has a strong sense of forward motion or narrative trajectory. If the first bit you learn is actually the last bit you’ll perform, you always know where you’re headed, and this gives a great sense of momentum to a performance. And since you’ll have known the later stages of the piece for longer than the earlier, you’ll perform them more fluently, so this approach avoids the problem of getting bogged down as you go along through difficulties with either technical or cognitive stamina.

Learn the tricky bits first

Many pieces of music have one or two specific technical or musical challenges, and it can be a useful strategy to target these from the get-go of your learning. This is partly psychological. It gives you much more confidence in learning the rest of it to know you’ve got the challenging bits sorted, and avoids the dispiriting experience of having a piece almost learned except for a couple of stubborn bits that keep it from being performance-ready. From a practical perspective it means you get more practice time on the bits that need the most practice.

(Continued on page 13)

LEARNING MUSIC (continued)

(Continued from page 12)

Learn the easy bits first

This is a strategy that is particularly useful for relative novices. If you don't have very much experience just yet, developing your skills with simpler material allows you to get a handle on the physical processes of producing and controlling sound and means you'll be encountering the more challenging bits with more experience under your belt and thus both more confidence and more cognitive capacity to tackle them when you're not having to focus so much on the nuts and bolts of operating your instrument (whether that instrument is a separate bit of kit, or your own body).

Learn the whole piece at once

When dealing with shorter pieces of music (relative to the norms of your genre and experience) that are technically and musically well within your grasp, it makes sense to work on the whole piece from the get-go. There will inevitably be bits that need more attention than others, but you'll identify these sooner with a whole-piece approach, and your concept of the overall structure and emotional shape will be stronger for having engaged with the whole from the start.

Learn it a section at a time

Longer and/or more demanding music needs breaking down into smaller chunks to give your brain space to absorb each bit without getting overwhelmed. Trying to cover too much at once is a good way to practice in mistakes and/or inadequate technique, which then takes an annoying amount of work to undo later.

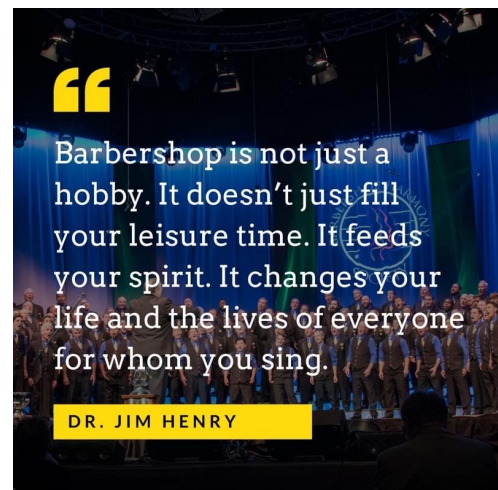
Finally

These approaches apply both to individual practice and the rehearsal strategies of ensembles. Obviously if you are in an ensemble, the approach the group as a whole takes will shape your overall experience, though you might also choose to take a consciously different strategy when by yourself if you feel it matches your particular needs at the time.

And of course the important bit is that you do spend time learning music between rehearsals. The problem with relying on the rehearsal time for

all your learning is not just that you find yourself holding back other people who have done individual work, it's that rehearsals are usually spaced at intervals just long enough to forget most of what you did between them, As my friend Drew Osterhout put it: a lot of the point of individual practice time is to interrupt the process of forgetting.

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



5 TIPS FOR AN EFFECTIVE SINGING PRACTICE ROUTINE

by Adam K Roberts
from backstage.com

“So, how do I practice?” It’s a question I hear frequently as a vocal coach and teacher. Although we spend a lot of time with clients addressing breath support, how to navigate register shifts, and all sorts of other technical considerations, it’s all for naught unless there’s a solid practice regimen in place. Although the scope of what constitutes a successful practice routine depends to some extent on the needs and goals of the individual (and would take more than a few articles to cover comprehensively), I’ve narrowed things down to five essential points to get aspiring vocalists started and keep veteran singers going.

1. Dedicate specific blocks of time to practice and stick to them. Before determining what and how to practice, you need to commit to *when* you’ll practice. Let’s face it: we live busy lives, and a performer pursuing a musical theater career will need to devote much more practice time to vocalizing than, say, an actor who might occasionally sing a couple of phrases for a role. Either way, it’s important to plan blocks of practice time and to treat them like any other important appointment (i.e., put them in the calendar). When we block off specific times to practice, we’re much more likely to follow through than if we say “I’ll find an hour in my schedule some time tomorrow.”

2. Bring a pencil (or whatever you use these days...) Take note: it’s time to make your music messy. No matter how much you try to convince yourself to the contrary, you won’t remember every vowel modification, placement choice, or acting beat that’s discovered during your practice sessions, so you’ll want to be sure to highlight, underline, circle, and otherwise be a scrupulous annotator. If you’re studying with a teacher or coach, it’s also a good idea to have a blank page at the ready, in case questions arise during your session to jot down for your next lesson.

3. Always warmup and cool down. Running late to your practice session? Don’t cut the warmup or cool down. They’re both essential to vocal health and an effective vocal workout. Find that you’re *always* running late to your practice sessions? Refer to the first tip above.

4. Include something fun and frivolous in each session. OK, maybe not *frivolous*. But you know that latest song you’ve been listening to on repeat and

would “never sing?” Or that showstopping number you’ll “never play” because you’re “not right for the role?” Now’s the time to bust them out! Set aside five minutes in every practice session to sing something purely for the fun of it. Not only will this give your brain a break but you’ll look forward to your practice sessions more if you let yourself cut loose and enjoy a one-person karaoke party. And who knows—you might even find that song you’d “never sing” actually makes a perfect addition to your rep book after all!

5. At the end of each practice session, plan the next one. Set aside the last five minutes of each session to plan the next one. Practicing without a plan feels daunting (and is far less productive), so you’re likely to feel more motivated to get down to work if you have a map already in hand to guide you. Each session should consist of a physical and vocal warmup, followed by a few vocalises (exercises designed to target specific technical goals), some work on your rep, and a cool down. Before you return to the real world, sit down and reflect on your priorities for your next practice session. Will you introduce a new warmup or maybe work on that really wordy passage in your latest patter song? Don’t hesitate to plan in such detail as to include specific amounts of time for each portion of your next session. This map isn’t intended to be set in stone, but to serve as a guide for each session. Remember to set specific goals!

So there you have it. Five essential tips for effective practicing. Remember: while practice may not *always* make perfect, one thing’s for sure: you’ll never know unless you do it.



I finally did it!



Bought a new pair of
shoes with memory
foam insoles.

No more forgetting the
first word when the pitch
blows!



FREE YOUR VOICE

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

(continued from last month)

Voice Placement & Weight (cont) Common Problems (cont)

- forward thrust of the chin or jaw
- listening to your voice in your head and adjusting to what you like to hear there
- over-singing
- lack of colour variation in the voice
- not knowing how to change

The 'Let It Out' Approach

A full and resonant sound requires a mixture of front and back resonance. The front nasal resonance (the 'mask') provides the higher frequencies in your voice that carry further and provide shimmer and ring. The back resonance provides the 'meatier' lower frequencies to fill out your sound and enrich it further. Too much front resonance can sound strident, thin and harsh. Too much back resonance can sound dark, heavy, and even swallowed.

Your best resonance is produced effortlessly. Your best vocal placement is effortless; often deceptively and surprisingly so.

Any pressure or strain will detract from your resonance.

The key to resonance is to relax. The goal is energy efficiency: to produce the most powerful and full sound you can with the minimum of effort. It is vital to remove unnecessary strain and rigidity from the muscles of your mouth, tongue throat, head, face, and neck.

Placement is about where you direct the outbound breath that carries sound before it leaves your body. Resonance is simply vibrations that create tone through and within your mouth, throat, and nasal passages.

(to be continued next month)



FREE SINGING TIPS

by Yvonne DeBandi
from a2z-singing-tips.com

Y = You Can Sing with Impact! Exercise your voice daily with contemporary voice lesson products. Don't Just Sing when You Can Sing with Impact!

FREE SINGING TIPS

by Nicole LeGault
from a2z-singing-tips.com

Y is for Yak and Yell. Once you have developed your skill with regard to using your voice without damaging it, use this technique in your daily life. If you speak a great deal, or need to project your voice in a noisy environment, or cheer at a concert, scream on a roller coaster, shout instructions at a sports event, argue with your family, etc... you must preserve your voice with skill - or it won't be there when you need it

FREE SINGING TIPS

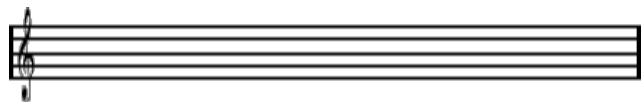
by Mick Walsh
from a2z-singing-tips.com

Y. Your voice is your instrument. Look after it and it will look after you long into old age. Treat it with respect and you will reap rewards.

FREE SINGING TIPS

by Teri Danz
from a2z-singing-tips.com

Y= You are the Messenger -- If you're on stage or in the studio and you have to be perfect, it never works. Focus on communicating the song, sharing that experience with the audience. It's easy to make mistakes when it's all about us (how great or not we are).



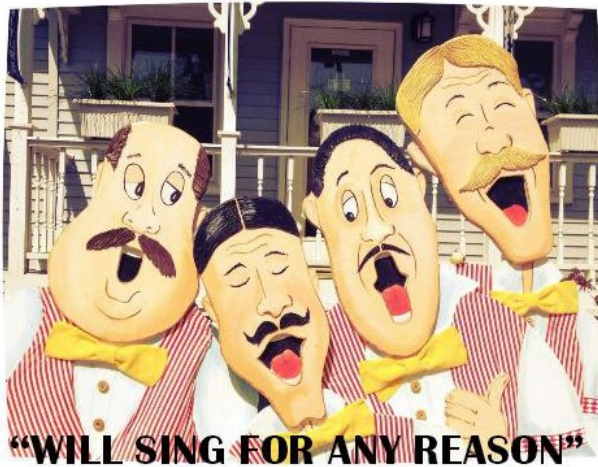


QUARTET CORNER

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	01 Aug	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	08 Aug	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	15 Aug	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	22 Aug	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	29 Aug	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	05 Aug	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	12 Aug	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	19 Aug	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	26 Aug	Shepherd of the Woods

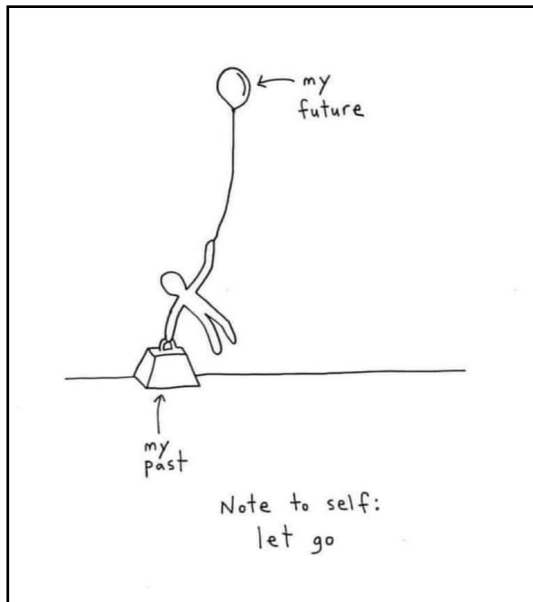
BIRTHDAYS

Dave Schubert	07 Aug
Lee Hillman	19 Aug

PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

F/S/S	18-20 Oct	Sunshine Fall Convention
Sat	07 Dec	Christmas Show
Sat	21 Dec	Christmas Party
Fri	10 Jan	Icemen (SSB)
Sat	01 Mar	Icemen (AAFM)

...more to come



I'll talk to anyone about anything,
but sooner or later I'll tell them I sing.
I'll invite them to visit on Thursday night
and if they like what they hear, they just
might become members and maybe
they'll bring another person
who likes to sing.

RECENT GUESTS

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
Jon Woodbine	Bob Crino
Cody Rios	John Rios
Peyton Rios	Kadin Rios
Ian Bula	Bill Woods
David Ferriss	Henry Rodriguez
Bill Woodbeck	Missy Reardon
Jerome Santuccio	John Hall
Miriam Hall	Emily Batt
Kurt Butler	

WELCOME

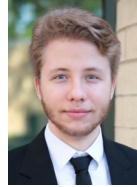
NEWEST MEMBERS

Taylor Despars	September
Dan Kulik	September
Steve Moody	September
Margaret Phillips	September
Lee Hillman	October
Ken Huang	October
Ron Blewett	January
Bob Crino	February
Bob Ice	February

2024 DIRECTING TEAM



Daniel Pesante
Front Line
Director



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 September is 24 August.
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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Jason Dearing
Bari
Sec Ldr



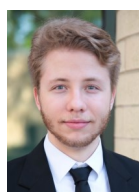
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**IMAGINE 80 SINGERS ON THE RISERS
BE A SINGER-BRINGER**



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



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