

Directing a Barbershop Chorus

Methods, Techniques, and Philosophies



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Preface

This book is not the work of any one man and therefore does not represent any single philosophy of chorus directing. Rather, it is a collection of essays on many subjects of importance to directors of all skill levels, reflecting the views and experiences of several knowledgeable people.

Within these pages you will hear the voices of several men, but principal among them are Dr. Greg Lyne, director of music education and services, and Bill Rashleigh, music specialist, of SPEBSQSA, Inc. Here you will find much of their philosophies of effective barbershop chorus directing. Those of us who have accepted the most important job in barbershopping, that of the front-line director with all of its challenges, are fortunate to have the wisdom of Greg and Bill to aid us in this work.

Bill Biffle
Vice Chair for Training
Chorus Director Development Committee
SPEBSQSA, Inc.
February, 1999

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I

Why are you directing?

A leader, teacher, musician, friend; a woodshedder, tag singer, communicator, and performer: these are the roles, functions, and responsibilities of the Society chorus director. To be a chorus director is asking a lot of one person. It asks that one blend all those characteristics into a whole person able and willing to guide singers in their quest for success in their hobby.

It is not an easy task. Weekly rehearsals are a challenge. Planning the musical year is a chore. Staying positive can be difficult. Chorus members often forget much of what they were taught in previous weeks. Upcoming performances and other demands reduce rehearsal time. Techniques go unperfected; frustrations mount.

It's an important task. Directors can make a positive difference in singers' lives. Directing is a tremendous responsibility. Be grateful for the opportunity that directing a chorus offers.

When one considers all the challenges of directing, however, it is easy to wonder why anyone would want to do it. After all, you could be fulfilled as a Barbershopper by singing in the chorus or in a quartet, or by participating in another capacity.

Why do you direct? What is the reason that you continue to work with and lead your chorus every week, every year? If you haven't thought of this before, the question is really worth exploring. There are no right or wrong answers to this question. There must be something motivating you to direct a barbershop chorus.

Take a few moments and consider the question. Then, in the space below, write down the answer in a single sentence.

"I direct a barbershop chorus because..."

Perhaps your answer refers to the joys experienced when a chord is in tune. Perhaps you enjoy giving something back to the Society and to the members who participate each week. Perhaps it "fills your bucket" to be a part of making great music. Perhaps you love leading others. Perhaps you don't think anyone else can do it as well as you can. Any of these answers is valid. The point is to assess why you are directing and continue to review your answer periodically.

Once you have a better understanding of why you are directing, decide what your mission is for the chorus members. What do you want your chorus members' experience to be every

week? What if you were to poll the members and ask them what they think about their barbershop experience? Would they say that after every rehearsal they are exhilarated, exhausted, frustrated, delighted, fulfilled? Would they wish that the next rehearsal would come as soon as possible? Would they want to make sure they didn't miss a minute of next week's meeting?

The answer should serve as a filter for your rehearsal planning. If your mission is for the members to sing better and have more fun while doing so, perhaps working on one phrase for an hour doesn't accomplish your mission. *You should relate your behavior directly to the mission and reject any action that doesn't help accomplish it.*

The director has the challenge of maintaining a mission for the chorus while dealing with contest schedules, performance schedules, holidays, vacations, etc. It is easy to lose sight of the mission when you have a performance next week and you are still teaching notes. Hold steadfast to your purpose, despite all interference. Maintain your equilibrium in spite of the difficulties you encounter. If you have a clear vision of your mission for the chapter, it is your job to hold on to it and enlist the support of others in achieving it.

I.1 What does it take to be a director?

Some traits that all successful directors share are:

- ▶ Conducting skills
- ▶ Leadership skills
- ▶ Communication skills
- ▶ Musical skills
- ▶ Responsible musical judgement
- ▶ Commitment to making quality music
- ▶ Enthusiasm for rehearsal and the effort it takes
- ▶ Ability to inspire
- ▶ Self-motivation
- ▶ Positive energy
- ▶ Respect for the ensemble
- ▶ Dedication to the artform of barbershop and excitement about its possibilities
- ▶ A knowledge of the history and heritage of barbershop
- ▶ Thirst for self-improvement

I.2 Leadership characteristics of successful directors

Successful directors possess certain basic leadership skills that allow them to work at their most efficient level. These traits encourage their singers to respond favorably to their leadership and their direction. Let's examine some leadership characteristics that successful directors possess in abundance:

- ▶ High energy level. Leaders enjoy working at a high energy level. They love to rehearse. They bring eagerness to a rehearsal. They keep expectations high for themselves and for their singers.

- ▶ Positive approach to life. Leaders constantly seek ways to bring enjoyment to the rehearsal and the music-making process. They are able to view things in a positive light. A leader never dwells on the negative.
- ▶ Optimism. Leaders see within every problem an opportunity for progress and growth. They seek to find ways to make things better, rather than viewing things as "wrong."
- ▶ Self-confidence. Leaders approach life as any successful person would -- with confidence. They even carry themselves as a successful person would. They know that to inspire confidence in others they must show confidence in themselves.
- ▶ Good listening skills. Leaders listen. They listen a lot! They value what people are saying to them. Moreover, they value people. When people talk to them leaders are not in a judging mode -- they are in a receptive, listening mode. They receive and process the information rather than only reacting to the information.
- ▶ A sense of responsibility. Leaders do their homework. They are prepared for rehearsals. They find ways to teach concepts. Your chorus needs and expects consistent leadership from you.

Work hard. Study well. Enjoy the process. You'll probably never have a greater opportunity to positively affect the lives of so many people than as a barbershop chorus director.

2

Developing as a director

Directing requires a multitude of specialized skills including musical skills, people management skills and conducting skills. All of these, and others, must be steadily improved over time if we are to be successful directors. This manual covers a variety of topics of value to the director, but many opportunities for learning are only available elsewhere. Below are listed some important opportunities for growth that will benefit every director.

2.1 Chorus Directors Workshop Intensive (CDWI)

The Chorus Directors Workshop Intensive (CDWI) is a powerful one-day educational experience for chorus directors in which they receive one-on-one training and development in one or two skills of their choice.

Each workshop experience is part of a long-term development program for the participating director, who can expect in each succeeding workshop to build on what he has learned in the past.

Certified CDWI trainers conduct the workshop. These are experienced and effective chorus directors who have demonstrated the ability to apply their own directing and teaching skills to the CDWI format.

2.1.1 Defining characteristics of the CDWI

- ▶ The CDWI is offered in a location convenient for the chorus directors to drive.
- ▶ The CDWI is scheduled in a single day, with no need to stay overnight.
- ▶ Chorus directors are personally invited by the trainers to participate.
- ▶ The CDWI is personally designed for each director based on his vision, goals, and requests. It is not based on preconceived ideas the trainers may have about what the director needs, or what he ought to want.
- ▶ The CDWI employs a training model, rather than a teaching model. It seeks to effect a significant change in one or two skills, by providing the opportunity for repeated reinforced practice of those skills during the workshop.
- ▶ The CDWI employs a faculty-student ratio of two trainers to a maximum of five directors. This ratio is consistent with effective personalized training.
- ▶ During the CDWI, the participant directs a live chorus, which provided an effective training environment.
- ▶ To provide clear and immediate feedback, participants are videotaped while directing, and review their performance on videotape with the faculty member as part of the training process.

- The CDWI brings chorus directors in the same geographic region together, which facilitates the sharing of resources and mutual support following the workshop.

For more information about the CDWI or to find out how to participate in one, call your district vice president for chorus director development (DVP/CDD.)

2.2 Harmony Education Programs (HEP Schools)

Harmony Education Programs usually consist of weekend schools offered by districts for their members. Classes such as directing techniques, vocal techniques, interpretation, theory, barbershop history, etc. are offered. They also provide an opportunity to discuss common problems and to share success stories with other directors.

To learn when your district will offer a music educational opportunity, call your district vice president for music and performance (DVP/M & P).

2.3 Chapter Operations Training Seminars (COTS)

Yearly, the Society offers Chapter Operations Training Seminars in each district. The primary purpose is to help the chapter leadership, including the director, learn how to develop into better leaders and administrators. Specific classes for directors are offered. Like Harmony Education Program schools, COTS provides an opportunity to meet with other directors to discuss philosophies and rehearsal strategies.

2.4 Harmony College/Directors College

The Society offers a week long seminar called Harmony College. This hallmark of music education has been the leading school for the Society for more than 20 years. More than 65 different classes in all aspects of our hobby are offered, including theory, arranging, show production, lighting, stagecraft, costume and makeup, vocal techniques, vocal pedagogy, creative interpretation, quartet coaching, and many more.

Directors College, held concurrently with Harmony College, has its own curriculum. Areas of discipline include theory, directing techniques, sound management, leadership, performance and rehearsal techniques, as well as general sessions where group observations and discussions occur.

There is no finer opportunity for continuing education than attending Harmony College/Directors College. Every director, every Barbershopper, is highly encouraged to attend.

2.5 Coaching for you as a director

It is common to bring in a coach for the chorus (see Chapter 19, Working With a Coach). The coach usually reinforces vocal techniques, the visual package, and performance aspects prior to an event. Using this idea, consider bringing in a coach to help you as the director. Choruses will generally rise or fall in quality to meet the skill level of their director. The better the director -- the better he has mastered the skills involved in directing -- the better the chorus will be.

For a coach, seek someone who can objectively address some of the elements that may be inhibiting your growth to the next level of excellence. Sources for these types of coaches are certified CDWI trainers, directing techniques faculty from Directors College, or an

experienced director in your district who is willing to help. Contact your DVP/M & P for suggestions.

2.6 Concerts

When was the last time you attended a non-barbershop concert? A director can learn a lot about conducting and techniques by watching other directors. Go to concerts. Attend another director's rehearsals. Learn to be a critical observer regarding rehearsal techniques, time management, people skills, conducting skills, etc. If you get the chance, talk with the director and ask why he selected the music he did, why he rehearsed it in the manner he did, why his singers are positioned on the risers as they are. Observe many rehearsals, stay active watching others conduct. You will be a better director for doing so.

2.7 Videotape

As part of the application procedures to the higher levels of Directing Techniques at Directors College, students are asked to videotape themselves conducting and rehearsing a chorus. While this is sometimes intimidating, the videotape can provide a tremendous amount of feedback through which a director can self-improve. The camera doesn't lie. It shows all the good and not-so-good things a director is showing his chorus. Once you become comfortable looking critically at yourself, your ability to improve will grow.

Send a videotape of a portion of your rehearsal to another director whom you trust. Ask him to call or write to you about the things he sees that keep you from being as effective with your chorus as you'd like. This outside set of eyes and ears can be invaluable in your quest for improvement as a director.

2.8 Professional courses

College and university music departments offer conducting classes, theory classes, voice classes, etc. Such courses can provide for a broader base of musical knowledge for the director. Consider these options for musical growth in addition to the educational opportunities offered within the Society.

2.9 Other resources

There are many fine books and videotapes on the topics of rehearsing and conducting available through libraries and university bookstores. Take advantage of these resources to guide you and inspire you. Consult the bibliography for additional resources.

3

Chorus directors as leaders

As the chorus director, you are in front of the chapter's members more than any other person and, unlike chapter officers and committee heads, you are most likely to remain in your post year after year. As the chapter's most constant leader, you are the anchor for the organization in many ways and your position brings with it a high level of responsibility and accountability. It also provides a great opportunity to contribute to the organization's success in ways far beyond the application of the musical skills you bring to the table as a director. In fact, once you are certain that your own ambitions and expectations mesh well with those of the chapter, you are in the best, long-term position to help the chapter fulfill its aspirations.

You can help your chapter pursue its dreams in many ways, and your level of success will depend largely on your skills in working with others. Regardless of your chapter's personality or size, you must be able to:

- ▶ Help the chapter plan
- ▶ Build teams and be willing to serve on them
- ▶ Motivate yourself and others
- ▶ Adapt your personal style to the group's needs and preferences
- ▶ Communicate effectively.

3.1 Planning

Help the chapter's officers and committee heads set goals and objectives, and develop a plan that will get them there. Together with the chapter VP/Music & Performance, select arrangements that will challenge your members while allowing them to make good, solid music. You, your VP/M&P, and your VP/Program will create meeting schedules that include appropriate rehearsal time and other music activities that contribute to the chapter's objectives. You will assist the VP/Chapter Development in recruiting new singers, the lifeblood of any chapter. You will support the VP/Communications in his job of providing publicity that will help the chorus fulfill its expectations in terms of its size, quality, and performances. Schedule time with all of these officers to monitor your success at fulfilling members' expectations and achieving your chapter's goals.

3.2 Teamwork

For the planning to succeed, you must build strong teams that work. Teams -- especially the music team -- will help lighten everyone's load. Teams help the organization focus on specific objectives and build consensus. They contribute to communication and understanding. They foster camaraderie, improve productivity, and increase members' commitment. You can help teams serve most effectively by showing a sincere interest in their work, contributing to their ideas, and supporting their decisions.

3.3 Motivating

As chorus director, you must practice your motivational skills with individual members and with the group. People, especially volunteers, don't respond well to threats and ultimatums. Successful motivators work hard at enlisting the members' help in fulfilling their shared vision.

Leaders of volunteers rely on many tools. For example, they learn which "primary drives" are likely to be the most important to each individual: opportunities to lead, opportunities to achieve, or opportunities to socialize, then they provide recognition accordingly. They also actively look for opportunities to reinforce members' pride in the organization and help them satisfy these feelings as often as possible through teaching them to sing well.

3.4 Adapting your style

You are unique; you have specific technical, and musical skills that address the chapter's needs. You have a style of working with others. Many opportunities exist for you to become even more enlightened about teaching and leadership styles. You have a chance every week to enhance your skills.

Every good leader has the ability, willingness, and desire to do the following:

- ▶ Examine and question the status quo when the situation calls for it.
- ▶ Help formulate, establish, maintain, and enforce standards for the good of the group.
- ▶ Do as you expect others to do and thereby serve as a role model for all that is important to the chapter and its members.
- ▶ Help others express their feelings and beliefs in a safe environment that is free from the potential for threats, intimidation, or ridicule.
- ▶ Show concern for others in all aspects of everything you do.

Knowing yourself, your material, and each situation will help free you to have the enthusiasm, sincerity, and poise you need to lead effectively. Be considerate, support and encourage creativity, and treat others with courtesy.

3.5 Communicating

Effective communication brings to life everything you have learned about leadership. An effective communicator spends at least 60 percent of his time listening, 30 percent helping others express their views more clearly, and only about 10 percent of his time telling others what he thinks, what to do, or how to do it.

A good leader listens with care and listens fully. Be a listener. Show patience as the speaker expresses himself. When you listen, occasionally provide feedback that shows you are really listening. When you don't understand the message, carefully choose the words, body language and facial expressions you display as you ask questions. Let them know your intent is to discover, learn, and benefit from their constructive comments. Earn their trust by remaining open, non-defensive, and non-judgmental to their comments. Lend support to those items with which you agree. You have listened to them; now they will listen to you.

As a communicator and a leader, practice setting aside those emotions that others might perceive as negative. Don't feel threatened when others express their emotions. Effective communication starts and ends with a positive attitude. Express your good intentions and foster and encourage the same in others.

4

Conducting skills

Conducting is non-verbal communication. To be understood, conducting gestures must be clear, concise and consistent. Conducting is more than just arm-waving. It shows an attitude, intent, and demonstrates the personality of the music. This chapter reviews the basics of conducting and examines some points of good conducting technique.

4.1 Posture

The basic posture or stance of the conductor should be one that demonstrates energy, that commands attention, projects a sense of confidence, and shows an aura of leadership to the ensemble. The posture assumed by the conductor is similar to that of a well-trained singer. It is erect, relaxed and allows for complete freedom of movement. The chest is held comfortably high with the shoulders slightly back. Be a model for your singers. Stand with a singer's posture that evokes good singing.

4.2 Right hand and arm

The right hand (for a right-handed conductor) usually defines the meter. Most often, in the beginning stages of learning conducting, the right hand is responsible for showing a pattern that indicates the meter of the music.

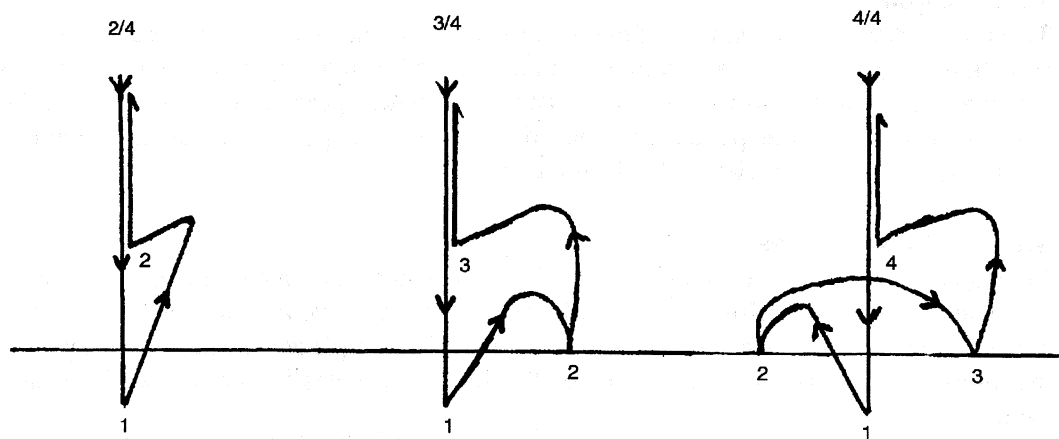
Many directors use strict patterns; others employ a modified pattern or free approach. Regardless of the type of pattern used, there are three aspects of conducting that all good conductors must be able to demonstrate:

- ▶ Preparatory beat
- ▶ Downbeat
- ▶ Cutoff

All gestures, particularly of the right hand, should clearly show the following:

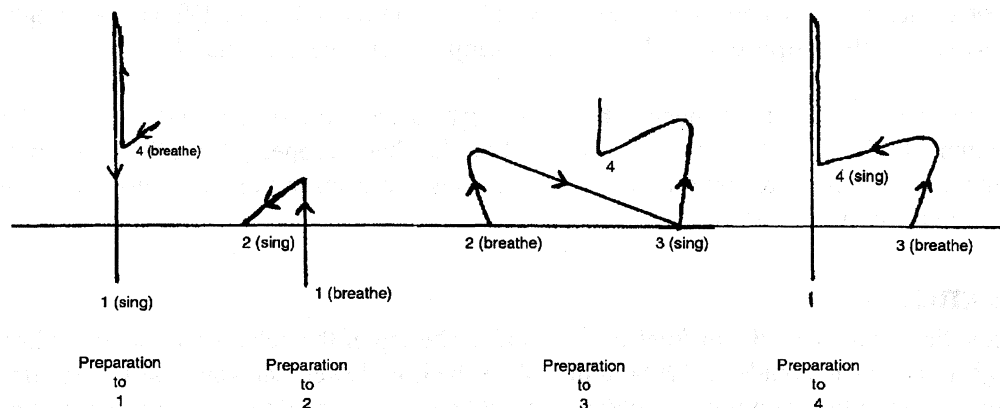
- ▶ Tempo (reflected by the speed of the arm movement)
- ▶ Meter (reflected by the pattern of the arm and hand)
- ▶ Dynamics (reflected by the relative strength between the beat pulses)
- ▶ Mood (reflected by the contrast within the pulses)

In barbershop music, we most commonly use one of three different patterns, 2/4, 3/4, and 4/4. These patterns are shown below. Note that the first and last beat of each pattern is identical.



4.2.1 Preparatory beat

This gesture is the signal for the singer to breathe for the upcoming phrase. It also should indicate the character of the music, the mood, the tempo, the degree of intensity and the vocal tone desired. Without a clear preparation, the chorus will be unable to execute the beginning of the phrase with accuracy. The preparatory beat should usually be the previous beat of the pattern. For example, if the phrase begins on beat one in 4/4, the preparatory beat should be beat four. If the phrase begins with a pickup on the fourth beat (again, in 4/4), the preparatory beat should be that part of the pattern which shows the third beat. Practice making your preparatory beat clear and specific and your chorus will begin with confidence. The example below shows the preparation gestures for entrances in a 4/4 pattern.



4.2.2 Downbeat

This is the principal beat of any pattern and is the basic frame of reference for the singer as far as synchronization is concerned. The downbeat passes, slightly, through the horizontal plane formed by an imaginary line across the lower rib cage or upper abdominal area of the director. By passing through this horizontal plane, the downbeat is differentiated from subsequent beats in the pattern.

4.2.3 Cutoff

This is the indication for cessation of the sound. Cutoffs should be clear, concise and, without superfluous movement. Extra movement will be distracting and may cause synchronization problems. The cutoff is usually accommodated toward the upper center of the body in the upper center of the beat pattern and the primary conducting hand moves in a counter-clockwise motion (when viewed by the director).

4.2.4 Mixing patterns

Mixing of patterns occurs most often when changing tempos within a song. For instance, in the song, "Story Of The Rose (Heart of My Heart)," the first two measures might easily be conducted in 3 and then the pattern might change to a 1 (a simple down beat) for the last two measures of the phrase. This is justified by the dotted half notes for the words, "love" and "you."

In the song, "Wait Till The Sun Shines, Nellie," the chorus might be started using a two pattern and change to a four pattern for clarity in a ritardando (rit.) or crescendo (cresc.). The decision to adapt a change of conducting pattern might occur in the phrase, "Sweethearts, you and I." On the word, "I," the change to a four pattern will show a crescendo to the downbeat on the word, "Wait..."

It is important to be comfortable with patterns so you can easily mix them as required to show your intentions to your singers.

4.3 Left hand independence

The left hand (for a right handed conductor) primarily shows dynamics, sustains sections while other sections sing an echo, and cues secondary entrances. It requires practice to develop the left hand so it becomes independent of the right hand. Use the left hand sparingly and have a specific purpose for it. Do not let it simply mirror the right hand.

Marking those places in the music where you wish to use the left hand will assist in the development of this skill. After you have used the left hand properly for a time, you will become increasingly more comfortable using it to convey aspects of volume, character of the music, degree of accentuation, etc.

4.4 Dynamics

Imagine that there is a cube in front of your body. The top of the cube is an imaginary line no higher than your shoulders. The bottom of the cube is no lower than your waist. The sides of the cube are in line with your shoulders. It might also be referred to as a "power cube" or "power box." Most of your conducting gestures should be contained within this imaginary box. You will find that your power to show confidence and strength to your singers happens most when your hand and arms are within this imaginary box. You will also find that your chorus is less likely to be confused as to what you want from them when your hands, your upper body and your facial expressions are all easily visible to them.

Dynamics are contingent, primarily, on the size of the pattern and the intensity (degree of pull) between the pulse points. The larger the pattern, generally the fuller the dynamic level. The smaller the pattern, the softer the passage. Practice, in front of a mirror, showing the patterns at different dynamic levels so your intentions are clear. Remember to work within your "power box." It will make you a more effective director.

4.5 Freestyle conducting

Freestyle (rubato) conducting is used when the meter of the song, or a section of a song, is not in strict tempo. We use this style most often in ballads. The usual technique is to show a downbeat followed by lesser, secondary beats on key words in the phrase. For instance, if the phrase "I want a girl" were to be conducted freely at a slow tempo, you might beat a downbeat on "I" and smaller beats on "want" and "girl." This would indicate that the other word ("a") is to be sung relatively more quickly and without emphasis. In this example, too, "girl" would be held longer than it would be if the phrase were sung in strict rhythm.

Try conducting various phrases both in meter and then in freestyle. Determine where the stress points change. Typically, when sung in rhythm, the stress points maybe on the stronger beats. In freestyle, the stress points may fall upon the more important words.

4.6 Basic body language

Everyone utilizes certain principles of non-verbal communication in everyday life. We communicate not only with words but also with gestures, facial animation, posture, and many other non-verbal signals. In a musical performance, the conductor can do much to control the energy with which a chorus sings, the mood of the phrase, the tone quality employed, and more, by being aware of the messages he imparts through his body language. A proud, upright, carriage will elicit energy and attention from the singers. A slumped, casual one will create the opposite. Look like you want them to sound. Show them by your every posture and movement that a committed, engaged, involved approach to singing will produce better music.

Mirror the emotions of the phrase on your face and you'll more likely get the desired response from your singers. Show energy, love of what you're doing, and enthusiasm to your chorus and they will reward you by giving the same feelings back to you. The teaching process, the performance, and the music itself will benefit when you use all of your physical skills to communicate with your singers.

4.7 Questions to ask about your conducting

- ▶ Do I videotape rehearsals to see if I'm showing my intentions clearly to the chorus?
- ▶ Do I practice in front of a mirror to prepare to direct my chorus?
- ▶ Am I comfortable using patterns in my conducting?
- ▶ Do I show clear and concise preparation for each attack?
- ▶ Are the beats in each pattern clear and definite?
- ▶ Are my cutoffs clear and concise?
- ▶ Is my freestyle conducting clear and precise?
- ▶ Do I sing with the chorus? If so, will I stop it now and never start again?

- ▶ Do I mouth all, most, or some of the words? If so, can I reduce the frequency with which I do this?
- ▶ When I show vowel shapes to the chorus, are they formed correctly?
- ▶ Do I maintain rhythmic integrity in my conducting? Do I keep the beat steady?
- ▶ Does my left hand function independently from my right hand?
- ▶ Does my non-verbal communication (body, hands, face, etc.) indicate and complement the intended mood?
- ▶ Does my face show them the love I feel for the music?

4.8 Other conducting tips

- ▶ Avoid large, continuous conducting gestures. Rather, use a more refined gesture that communicates more specifically what you desire.
- ▶ Don't allow your conducting to get frenzied or out of control.
- ▶ Keep your conducting generally low. Center your conducting in the center of your body (your "power box").
- ▶ Work on showing a lift and buoyancy in each gesture. Heaviness of gesture will drive the pitch down, coax a heavy, unmusical tone from your singers and encourage choppiness in the singing.

5

Running an effective rehearsal

5.1 Benefits of a well-planned rehearsal

A director's chief responsibility is to motivate his singers to make appropriate choices that will lead to musical insights and growth for the chorus. Consistent motivation depends on creating and recognizing many small successes in each rehearsal. These successes will come from the director's finding many approaches to rehearsing which keep the singers involved in the rehearsal process.

Successful rehearsing is a product of planning. Find ways to teach concepts the singers can sense and feel. Look for opportunities to help the singers get involved and in touch with what the music is saying. Rehearse with the goal of touching the singers' hearts and minds. Successful directors are imaginative. They don't just issue instructions, they inspire the singers, through analogy and imagery, to sing and perform in new and different ways.

Rehearsal time is a gift. Every successful director appreciates the opportunity for musical growth a rehearsal can afford. It is a time for positive comments and teaching techniques. Ways to improve should be shown to the chorus enthusiastically and energetically. Be honest and quick to praise when improvements occur. Let your singers know "where we are, where we're going, and how we are going to get there."

5.2 General rehearsal techniques

Involve the chorus in the changes and improvements you make in rehearsal and be aware -- and make them aware -- of their part in the process. When rehearsing, build the habit of asking yourself questions such as, "How are they standing? How are they responding to what we're doing? What's the feeling in the room?" Train yourself to rehearse in the moment, in the now. Be constantly aware of how your chorus is reacting to the learning process, the pace of the rehearsal, the tone of your voice and body language. If the singers are not involved and actively participating in the learning process, what things can you do to get them involved?

Make each rehearsal a "we" process. The days of the dictatorial director are gone. It's simply not effective. When speaking to the chorus, use the words "we" and "us" often. Avoid using the word "I." Put the emphasis on the group and group successes. Use phrases such as "Could we...?", "What might happen if we were to...?", "What would you think of trying...", "Can you imagine what would happen if we were to...?", and "Wouldn't it be something if we could...?" Phrases such as these allow the singers to be an active part of the learning and growing process.

Successful rehearsing is largely a matter of doing, not talking. It's a matter of experimenting for you and for them, a matter of getting the singers to "feel" and internalize when it's "right" and when it's "better." The director's role is to reinforce and encourage positive achievements, to reward the group for its attention and for expending the effort needed for better singing.

An effective director is also a dramatist. He treats his time in front of the chorus as an actor might treat his time on stage -- with a sense of importance and with careful preparation. Just as an actor consciously works to create a dramatic scene, so should a director work to create an atmosphere for learning. Like a good actor, an effective director delivers his messages and comments in an animated and convincing manner.

Speak concisely and to the point. Excessive talking by the director adversely affects the pace of a rehearsal, and dulls the singers' energy and their willingness to take chances.

Keep your rehearsals fast paced and full of activity. Keep your singers busy and active. Would stepping in place help to keep this phrase in tempo? Would lifting the hands, palms up, encourage the tone to stay enlivened? Would bouncing a small imaginary basketball encourage a little more lift in the pulse of the phrase? Would imagining pulling the hand through water allow the singer to sing in a more legato, connected fashion? What ideas do you have? What would you like to try? The key word here is "try." "Let's try this." Using your imagination, and encouraging the singers to be imaginative, too, allows the group to be involved in the problem-solving process. Isn't that what we as directors want our singers to do, to be involved in working toward and reaching a common goal?

Don't be afraid to experiment in the rehearsal. Remember that the key word is "try." Only by attempting new and creative ways to make the singers better will you discover better solutions to the problems you hear and see.

We've said that an effective director brings a positive outlook to the rehearsal. He knows that people respond best to positive approaches. But, just how does a director get positive toward the rehearsal? Well, for a start, he brings a very real enthusiasm to the prospect of rehearsing. He likes the feelings associated with being positive and he rewards himself by having those feelings. And he knows that if, for some reason, he's not feeling positive just now, he just works that much harder at feeling positive so that he can bring only positive things to the rehearsal. And here's the best part, he does this because he has such high regard for his singers and because he wants them to enjoy the good feelings that happen in a positive rehearsal. These good feelings make the music better and it makes the singers better singers and better people.

The director who appears to rehearse with ease and efficiency does so because he has prepared well and because he rehearses in a purposeful manner. He has a plan and he achieves his goals. His rehearsals are enjoyable, worthwhile and rewarding both for him and for his chorus.

5.3 Preparing for rehearsal

- ▶ The director will always be thoroughly familiar with the music to be rehearsed. It is important that the director know what the song is about. Try paraphrasing the text. Read the text aloud. Be certain of every pronunciation. Learn what you can about the composer, about the time the song was written, and some background on the piece.
- ▶ Sing each of the voice parts. Be prepared to sing any part of any line with confidence.
- ▶ Determine the major climax of the piece. Find the points of musical interest in the song.
- ▶ Find the points of textual and/or dynamic climax.

- ▶ In your mind's ear, practice hearing each of the sections producing exactly the right tone quality to sing each phrase musically and in perfect tune.
- ▶ Practice conducting the piece in front of a mirror. Live with the piece and allow it to become a part of you. Know it inside and out.
- ▶ Spend some special time on the more difficult segments of the song. Try to find ways to help the singers learn these segments more easily.
- ▶ Mark your music to help you teach the piece and let your markings help guide you through the rehearsal process.

5.4 Rehearsing efficiently

- ▶ Arrive early for each rehearsal. Use the time before the rehearsal to mentally prepare for the evening's work, to visit with the members and to be available to the members for whatever they might need. Remember to greet everyone you see by name and to be positive with everyone to whom you speak.
- ▶ Start rehearsals on time and capture their attention immediately.
- ▶ List the rehearsal schedule with specific times, on a marker board. This will help keep you on track and will let your singers know that there is an order and purpose to the rehearsal.
- ▶ Every rehearsal should contain vocal and physical warm-ups. Fifteen minutes or so is usually sufficient to get the voices, minds, and bodies ready for a good rehearsal. The outstanding director will incorporate aspects of voice building in the warm-up and throughout the rehearsal.
- ▶ Each singer should have his own music. Encourage them to make written comments in their music to remind them of things they need to know to rehearse efficiently and learn quickly. Breath marks, symbols to call attention to difficult places, and interpretation remarks are just some of the things each singer should have marked in his music.
- ▶ Teach your chorus to be flexible. Don't always start at the beginning of the piece. Start in the middle of the song, or even in the middle of a phrase.
- ▶ Teach your chorus to memorize quickly. Most singers hold on to the music long after they really need to. Provide many opportunities to "hold your music down so we can sing this from memory."
- ▶ Don't spend too much time with one section of singers. Keep everyone involved in as much of the rehearsal as possible.
- ▶ Never sing with the chorus. You can't hear them when you're singing and it detracts from the clarity of your directing.
- ▶ Go to the primary aspect needing attention. Try to find an immediate fix.
- ▶ Always listen to the chorus.
- ▶ Teach yourself to listen for specifics. Learning to hear all that's going on is a process that takes time. Focus closely on what you are hearing so that your comments are meaningful and to the point. Make the corrections that will make the most improvement first.
- ▶ When you demonstrate vocally to the chorus, bring your best voice, vocal technique, and musicality to the task. Always be a good example of the music you expect them to make.

- ▶ Bring your sense of humor to every rehearsal.
- ▶ If you're not making progress on a song or portion of a song, change gears. Go to something else. Changing the stimulus encourages increased concentration.
- ▶ Make eye contact with each singer individually. This will allow you to communicate with them while they are singing and will allow them to understand that you value each of them and their contribution to the chorus.
- ▶ Sing through an entire segment of the song or through the entire song frequently. Stopping too often to make corrections robs the rehearsal of pace and energy. Give them a sense of the whole whenever possible. We're Barbershoppers. We LIKE to sing songs.
- ▶ Give precise and clear directions as to where you wish to start, "Page 3, second system, pick-up to measure 52, '...and there is.'" Speak clearly and distinctly when you give directions.
- ▶ Record or videotape your rehearsals. This is one of the best tools to help you progress as a director, and it lets the chorus know how much you're interested in growing as a director. Be critical, but kind as you evaluate yourself. Be aware of the ratio of talking to singing. Be attentive to your tone of voice and choice of words. Are you always positive, energetic, open, caring, and involved?
- ▶ Let an assistant direct the chorus often. While he directs, you can be listening critically. You'll be surprised at the detail you can hear when you're not involved in the physical activity of directing.
- ▶ Talk very little. Allow the chorus to sing a lot. The singers came to the rehearsal to sing.
- ▶ Keep them constantly aware of "what we're doing." Always let them know why you stopped them, why they're going back over a phrase, or why they're singing through all or a portion of the song. Let them know there's purpose to your process.
- ▶ Rehearse for many successes. Plan them, see to it that they happen, and let the chorus know when they occur.
- ▶ Practice smiling and looking pleasant when you work with the chorus. Avoid appearing detached or negative while listening critically.
- ▶ Change their placement on the risers often. It only takes a minute, especially if you've trained them by doing it often. Rehearse in a circle on the floor. Rehearse in quartets. Rehearse in scrambled formation. Split them up into two or three small choruses. Have mini-contests between the mini-choruses on a phrase or a song. Moving the guys around keeps their energy level high and different standing arrangements allow them to hear the chorus in different ways. This type of activity gives variety to the evening and makes the rehearsal more enjoyable.
- ▶ Don't rehearse too long without a break, but keep the break short. Generally an hour segment or so of rehearsal is all they can do with good concentration. Fifteen minutes is usually enough for a break. Know the capabilities and limitations of your chorus.
- ▶ Plan some short breaks (30 seconds to one minute) during the rehearsal to let the singers relax. Then get back to rehearsing.
- ▶ Don't spend too much time on one song or one segment of a song. Generally, 20 minutes is enough for one song. Try to rehearse a minimum of five songs per rehearsal.

- ▶ Keep the rehearsal moving. Don't get bogged down. Achieve a success and move on.
- ▶ Work the hard segments of the song. The easy segments will take care of themselves.
- ▶ Do everything possible to allow the music to "sing." This means encouraging the singers to be confident, free, and willing to contribute vocally to every song.
- ▶ Teach to what you see. Learn to "read the chorus" by observing their degree of involvement, concentration, energy, etc. Adjust your teaching based on your awareness of their degree of personal involvement.

5.5 Secrets of masterful rehearsing

- ▶ Tell your singers often how much you appreciate their contributions to the chapter and to the chorus.
- ▶ Praise the chorus often and regularly.
- ▶ Be positive.
- ▶ Don't scold the chorus or treat them like children.
- ▶ Speak to your singers with respect and refer to them as "singers" or "musicians."
- ▶ Use the words "thank you" and "congratulations" frequently and sincerely.
- ▶ Don't blame your singers for mistakes. There are no mistakes, only many opportunities to make the music better.
- ▶ Singers will rise to the expectations you set. Expect them to perform at a high level and learn quickly. Expect them to come on time and be prepared and have fun. They will meet your expectations.
- ▶ Approach each rehearsal for what it is, a new opportunity for growth and learning. Bring zest and vitality to each rehearsal. Your singers will love you for it.
- ▶ Be a life-long learner. Know that every rehearsal is an opportunity for you to be better. Learn to enjoy examining the previous rehearsal. Think of five ways you can make the next rehearsal better. Write them down.
- ▶ Keep a journal of your progress and the things you try that work. List also the things that don't work. Re-read your journal often.

6

Developing tone

Every chorus should have as its goal the development of a free, vital and resonant tone quality. A free and flexible tone quality does not happen by accident. It will only be created if the director assumes responsibility for encouraging and teaching his singers to employ solid vocal techniques in every rehearsal. The fundamental principles of good vocal techniques need be stressed and employed at every opportunity if they are to become habitual with you and with your singers.

Although you will find that you have a wide range of vocal abilities in your chorus, all chorus singers must be taught how to sing better. Each singer, from the most trained to the most novice, can only succeed musically when the vocal instrument and musical mind has been developed and trained to perform at higher levels of efficiency. It is your responsibility to see that this is encouraged on a weekly basis.

Basic elements of good singing should be presented in the warm-up. Here the chorus director can concentrate on various aspects of vocal production and evaluate the progress of the ensemble. Here, also, he can be critically attuned to vocal problems and to faulty singing technique. All vocal exercises must be chosen with purpose and designed to aid the ensemble at its current level of vocal understanding. Purposeless or perfunctory vocal exercises are not helpful to the singer or the ensemble and would be better avoided altogether.

The effective teacher and model of proper singing technique will look for knowledge in many places. There are many excellent books on vocal technique, several of which are listed in the bibliography in the back of this manual. (One excellent reference is *Improving Vocal Technique Through the Warm-up* Stock No. 4068.) Every director also should consider studying voice privately to gain a better understanding of good vocal technique. In addition, search for knowledge everywhere: ask questions of people for whom you have respect; attend concerts, recitals, workshops and clinics. The director who wants to learn will find many ways to develop his understanding of tone and vocal technique.

6.1 Posture

The singer must be in a proper physical position to make a musical sound. The singer must look like a singer in order to be successful as a singer. It is the director's responsibility to ensure that all singers employ a singer's posture whether on the risers or seated in chairs.

Good posture must be constantly encouraged and modeled. If you slump, so will they, and a slumping posture will always result in poor tone and a loss of breath support. This will cause poor intonation and uninspired singing.

Good posture encourages a mental aliveness and an involvement in the singing process. It allows singers to feel better about their contribution to the ensemble. All singers must utilize a proper singing posture if they are to enjoy the rewards that good singing offers.

To help them achieve a good posture, ask them, while standing, to place their hands on their hips with one foot slightly in front of the other. The feet should be placed a comfortable distance apart. The knees should be slightly flexed, not locked. The singers' bodies should be in an upright position but not rigid.

Have the singers stretch their arms above their heads as if reaching for the ceiling, allowing the chest to rise to a high position. Maintaining this upright carriage, bring the arms to a comfortable position away from the sides of the body. Keep the shoulders free from tension.

The head and neck will rest comfortably in line with the body. Keep the chin in a natural position, without tension. Now, ask them to feel this state of readiness for singing -- upright carriage, arms comfortably to the side, no tension in the neck or shoulders.

While holding music, remind singers to "carry the music" up and away from the body. This encourages free singing and allows the breathing mechanism to function properly. As directors, we will insist upon this principle because we know that it encourages singers to sing better.

In rehearsal, plan for times when the singers can relax. When singing, however, always insist upon a proper singing stance. Remind them to keep the spine lifted up and out of the hips. Encourage the shoulders to be slightly back and down. Use phrases like "stand tall," "look like a singer," and "keep the sternum up" to remind your singers of their responsibility to maintain a singer's posture.

It is easier to maintain a good singing posture when standing than when seated. Because of this, we should encourage standing during a majority of the rehearsal. Singers who have difficulty standing for an entire rehearsal always have the option of sitting in chairs placed at the ends of the risers. If you occasionally allow your singers to rehearse in a seated position, insist that they maintain the posture of the standing position with both feet on the floor, one slightly ahead of the other. Remind them to use a high chest position with no tension in the arms and neck. The singer's back must be away from the back of the chair when singing in a seated position.

6.2 Respiration

Correct breathing for singing takes place when the breath is taken low in the body. Referred to as intercostal/diaphragmatic breathing, the body naturally takes in breath in this manner when sitting or in a lying position. While standing, clasp the hands behind the head. Notice the breathing that takes place naturally. Note that the abdomen protrudes upon inhalation and retracts upon expiration. Now, experiment similarly while seated in a chair. Place the hands on the hips with the fingertips lightly touching at the lower part of the backbone. Expand around the waist so the fingertips separate.

As the singer inhales deeply, he will take in air through both the nose and the mouth. Again, check for the expansion of the abdominal area and ensure there is no lifting of the shoulders. (Such lifting of the shoulders and throwing out of the chest is known as clavicular breathing. We do not use such breathing in the singing process.)

Try taking proper breaths rhythmically:

Count aloud: 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 1 and 2 and 3 and 4
inhale deeply *inhale deeply*

Count aloud: 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 1 and 2 and 3 and 4
breathe quickly *breathe quickly*

Ensure that a full breath is taken on each count. The breath should be taken quietly, that is, without gasping. Monitor the shoulders and chest to ensure that no clavicular breathing is taking place. Take the breath in tempo. Now, try the exercise again, this time with pitch:

Sing: 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 etc.

6.3 Support

With a good posture, take a deep breath while placing your hand to the triangular boneless area between the ribs. Pant slowly and then quicken the pace. Keep the ribs expanded throughout and the chest and shoulders still. All movement should be felt in the triangular area in the front -- out upon inhalation and in when exhaling.

Now, take a singer's breath with the hand on the triangular spot below the ribs and blow a few short puffs on a single breath. Try this several times, gradually increasing the number of puffs each time. Notice how energetically the diaphragm is made to work.

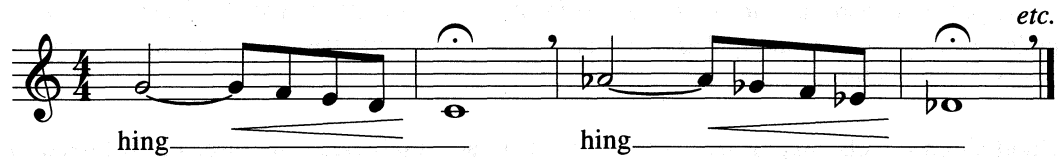
Now transfer the concept to singing using the following exercise:

yah ha ha ha ha

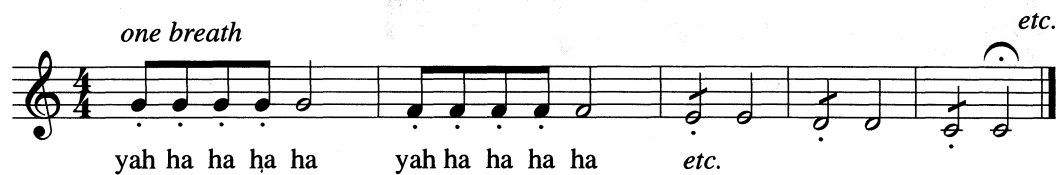
Next, try buzzing loose lips. Take a deep, well-developed breath and practice making the lips

flutter as children might do when making sounds of cars and trucks. Check that the breath allows the fluttering to remain constant and there is no lifting of the chest or shoulders upon inhalation.

Try the next exercise with a stable, underlying breath support:



Staccato exercises are good for encouraging proper support. Try these next exercises to feel as if the breath is "set:"



6.4 Freedom in neck, throat, jaw and facial muscles

The next aspect of good vocal production has to do with maintaining freedom in the neck, throat, jaw and facial muscles while utilizing correct posture, breathing and support. Without appropriate freedom in these areas, the singer cannot produce freedom and flexibility in the tone.

Most tension comes about from the use of high, clavicular breathing or by allowing tension to exist in the swallowing muscles of the throat. To encourage freedom in the singers, have the men gently massage each other's neck and shoulders.

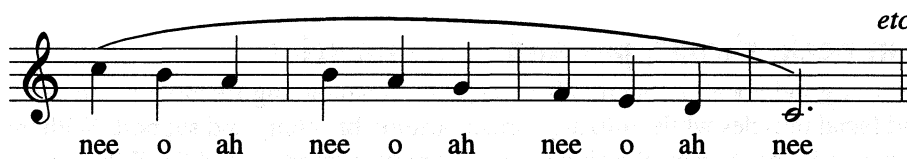
Next, have them roll the head very slowly and gently in either direction. Attempt to keep the neck totally free from tension. Use only enough energy to allow the neck to move slowly and carefully.

Gently stroke the sides of the face with the fingers using a downward motion. Gently tap the forehead and scalp with the fingertips. Release tension from the neck by gently stroking the front and back of the neck.

Maintaining a free, open throat, intone the sounds of an affirmative "mm-HMM." Keep the jaw loose and dropped low with the lips lightly touching. Now, try sighing from an upper pitch to a much lower one, using a downward *glissando*. Assure that there is no tension in any part of the vocal apparatus and that an open, relaxed throat is encouraged.

Now, put your hand about two inches in front of your mouth. Sense the "warm air" as it moistens the palm of your hand as you sing. This exercise will assist your singers to sing with a free, open mechanism.

Good singing feels easy. It isn't, however, easily accomplished. The director will need to constantly encourage vocal freedom and ease of tone, produced low in the body and supported, yet free. Try these exercises to encourage a tone that is free from tension and properly produced:



6.5 Resonation

6.5.1 Principles of resonation

When a tone is produced freely and easily, it allows for all of the cavities in the head to resonate, thus allowing the tone to have fullness, richness and carrying power. When a voice possesses brilliance, that voice possesses a resonating tone.

The principle resonating cavities that contribute to the sound are the pharynx or throat and the mouth. The nasal cavities may also vibrate, but sympathetically. When resonating chambers are used correctly, with proper support and freedom, the singer is able to realize his full voice.

Singers speak of creating "space" in the mouth. This space acts as an amphitheater, or sounding board, for the tone, allowing full resonance. We will often speak with our singers about creating enough space and freedom inside the mouth to accommodate the vowel or the tone. The singer who attempts to create a vocal tone with a narrow opening, or slit, in the mouth cannot create adequate space for maximum resonance.

6.5.2 Physical requirements

The space must be created without inducing undue tension. Always keep a loose jaw and tongue; otherwise, a tension will be heard in the tone. A downward, scale-wise progression of five pitches singing "yah," "mah," or "bah," will be helpful in encouraging this freedom.

All sounds singers make must be tall, upright, and vertical. A singer who sings with a horizontal, thin, flat mouth shape cannot create a vocal tone of beauty or substance. Directors need to accept this principle and teach to what they see. If they observe horizontal-type singing, they will need to address the problem. While singing a particular vowel, have the singers stretch an imaginary rubber band horizontally. Listen to the sound. It is thin, "spread" and lacking in focus. Now, stretch and lift the imaginary rubber band apart vertically. Notice the dramatically improved tone that the singer makes. The "height" of the vowel and the depth of tone and degree of "focus" in the sound is immediately apparent. We'll always ask our singers to sing with "space" and to always use a vertical approach to singing simply because it sounds better when they do.

Check the position of the tongue. Since the tongue can allow for space at the back of the throat, we want it always to be flexible. On all vowels, the singer must keep the tip of the tongue lightly touching the inside of the lower gum ridge. Do not press the center of the tongue down while singing. Instead, allow it to float naturally to the position required for each vowel. Again, an absence of tension is the goal.

Another key ingredient in establishing a good, resonant tone is to encourage the singer to be in touch with what is happening to the soft palate. The idea is to keep the soft palate lifted. A teacher might say, "lift the upper jaw." Though this is not, strictly speaking, possible to do, the image does encourage the right sensation. Each tone should be produced with enough "lift" of the soft palate to accommodate the height of the vowel. Now, let's try a humming exercise helpful in creating resonance. Keep the jaw relaxed, the teeth slightly parted and the lips lightly touching.

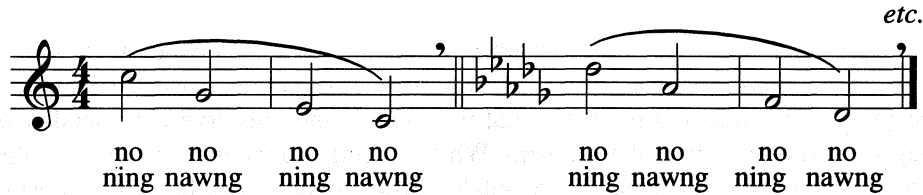
Now, hum the following triad:



Notice how the lips vibrate and tingle. This suggests that good, free resonance is taking place.

6.5.3 Exercises

Here are a few other exercises to encourage a free, resonating tone:



Notice that, when singing properly with enough space for good resonance, the sound may be said to "roll around" or "spin." When this space is present, resonance can be created.

The singer can control resonance in two of the resonating areas mentioned before: the pharynx and the mouth. The third resonator, the nasal cavities, cannot be controlled.

Directors should encourage their singers to take their voice and their vocal development seriously. Encourage your singers to vocalize and practice singing every day.

In rehearsal and performance, directors need to be constantly interested in the quality, not quantity of the singing. Capable directors never allow their singers to push or force their voices.

Good vocal health is maintained through proper diet, good hydration (singers drink lots of water) and a disciplined life-style. Encourage a healthy body and mind in your singers. This will contribute to healthier singing.

These few pages on singing technique are introductory at best. The thoughts contained here can serve as a springboard to a lifetime of development as a singer and a teacher of singing techniques. Share your insights about good singing technique with your chorus musicians in every rehearsal. Expect them to make good vocal choices and beautiful sounds and they will.

7

Some basic considerations of pitch and intonation

7.1 Pitch

All choruses must be able to reproduce the pitches that are represented on the printed page with acceptable intonation and vocal tone. To achieve an acceptable level of intonation, a chorus must be taught to discriminate between pitches and to produce at will the pitches necessary to create a sound that can be said to be in tune. The ability to sing in tune is based upon the ability to hear inwardly (in the "mind's ear," as it were) and to produce a tone that is congruent with other singers within the ensemble.

A correct sense of pitch in musical performance consists of effectively discriminating between two successive pitches (horizontal thinking) and adjusting individual pitches in relation to others of the chord in which it's a part (vertical thinking.) Some singers find these tasks easy to master; most do not.

Developing basic sight singing skills helps develop a more discriminating pitch sense. Through sight reading exercises, the singer can gain a better understanding of the relationship between pitches and the function of various scale degrees and their relationship to one another. A chorus should do some sight reading on a regular basis. Excellent sight reading principles and examples can be found in *Music Reading 1 and 2* (Stock Nos. 4041 and 4045.)

It is helpful to drill the chorus on pitch matching skills. First, sing isolated single pitches on various vowels and have the chorus reproduce them. Over time, add pitches until they can repeat patterns containing several pitches. It may prove useful to use a keyboard instrument for this. Start patterns by singing (or playing) triads (1st, 3rd, and 5th scale degrees). After they master these, progress to patterns incorporating leaps involving tones other than those in the triad. Developing ear training and sight singing skills takes time. Be patient, but do ask that your singers become involved in developing a heightened degree of pitch acuity.

7.2 Intonation

Intonation is usually discussed in terms of the intervals between two or more pitches. There are many systems of tuning, each of which has its unique advantages and disadvantages. We will look briefly at just two methods of tuning with which the successful director of a barbershop chorus will wish to be familiar.

A piano is tuned utilizing a system known as equal temperament. In this system, the octave is divided into twelve equal half steps. Our melody singers, the leads, choose notes that are very close to those found on the piano. This system of tuning, while perfectly valid for many styles of music, does not, however, work well for all intervals in barbershop music. Barbershop harmony singers employ a second system of tuning known as "just" intonation.

While we will not try to completely explain this system here, it is important to know that our harmony singers attempt to sing the interval between their note and the melody note with the most in tune singing possible, that is with the fewest number of audible beats. Such singing produces a cleanliness of intonation.

Beats are produced when two pitches whose frequencies are closely related but not identical are sounded simultaneously. Beats are the audible manifestation of interference or dissonance in the sound. In just intonation, as in most systems of tuning, unisons have a frequency ratio of 1:1 and octaves, a ratio of 2:1. These ratios suggest that unisons and octaves will sound "clean," that is that no beats will be heard when the interval is sounded in tune.

Singers can be trained to listen for beats in intervals of unisons, octaves and fifths (the so-called "perfect" intervals) and can learn to make subtle pitch adjustments to minimize beats in the sound. Practice to sing sustained unisons, octaves and fifths without beats will encourage chorus members to become more sensitive to the importance of good intonation in singing.

These subtle pitch adjustments allow for the "ring" we associate with in-tune barbershop singing. An accomplished barbershop chorus director will constantly seek to achieve a certain sense of "in- tuneness" by tuning the perfect intervals of the chord first (unisons, octaves, and fifths). Then, he will ask the other harmony singers to make the necessary adjustments to achieve the maximum "ring" and "aliveness" associated with our style of singing.

Ringling chords are not dependent solely on pitch accuracy, however. Word sound similarity and volume relationships between the parts also play a key role (see Chapter 9, Voice Balancing, for more on this subject). However, choosing the most correct pitches for a ringing, clean sound must be of prime importance to the successful chorus singer. To achieve this goal, the director must continually stress to his chorus the importance of singing in tune and give his singers the opportunity to practice this important skill.

7.3 Practical tips for improved intonation

- ▶ Encourage your singers to sing on the high side of the pitch, even slightly sharp.
- ▶ While rehearsing, stop at predetermined points and "freeze" the chord so everyone can listen and tune. Then proceed on and "freeze" any successive chords needing attention. Freeze "important" chords (those with longer note values) to help establish "tuning anchors" and the shorter notes between will become better in tune, too.
- ▶ Occasionally practice having the singers "sing inside yourself," that is making no sound until the director gives a signal to "sing aloud." If the chord is in tune at that point, the singers will be thinking good intonation.
- ▶ Ask the voice parts to sing alone to check horizontal intonation. Ask the leads to sing the melody. Does it sound in tune? Do they finish the phrase in key?
- ▶ Have the harmony parts sing in duets and trios with the leads. This isolation of each part is very helpful in establishing accurate pitch references in the singer's ear.
- ▶ Don't berate the chorus about pitch. Instead, involve them in the process of singing in tune in an enjoyable way -- it's more fun for everyone, and more effective.

8

Some thoughts about rhythm

One of the most fascinating and intoxicating elements of music is rhythm. When performed at a high level of artistry, musical performances with strong rhythmic elements can make you tap your feet, snap your fingers, clap your hands, and even get up and dance. Since the beginning of time, people have danced to the inherent rhythms of music.

Music that contains awkward or inappropriate rhythms, however, can elicit the opposite response, making audience members uncomfortable and confused. Performances that are lacking in proper use of rhythm are bland, uninteresting, and even chaotic. Examples of inattention to rhythmic features include unstable rhythms, rhythmic inaccuracies, irregular phrase lengths, inappropriate length of the pick-up notes of a phrase, and many others. Even pitch is adversely affected by inattention to rhythmic detail.

There are five elements of rhythm as we use the term here:

1. The pulse (or beat) of the music
2. The duration (or length) of notes and rests
3. Tempo (how fast the music progresses)
4. Meter (the number and type of beats in each measure)
5. Phrasing (the means by which the musical structure becomes intelligible to the listener)

While tempo and meter are important, they will not be discussed in depth here. Let us just state that it is important that the tempo selected be appropriate for the song and that the meter will usually be regular and steady. For more discussion of these elements, see Chapter 10, Developing an Interpretive Plan.

In this chapter, we'll briefly discuss three of these elements and apply them to the barbershop style: pulse, duration, and phrasing.

8.1 Pulse

The sense of pulse in a piece of music serves many functions. It sets up a regularly recurring event, in time, that is predictable to the listener. A consistent pulse allows for sub-rhythms to be created. Pulse gives the music a sense of direction, even drive, and can create and sustain energy through the song. It sets up a framework from which to deviate for purposes of musical stress and effect. Pulse is an internal sense of reference set up by external factors.

Barbershop music, being a cappella, is often difficult to sing with a regular pulse. Without instrumental accompaniment, it is easy to allow the pulse between beats to quicken or slow. As barbershoppers, we must rely on the internal pulses felt in the individual singers to accomplish a musical presentation of a rhythmic song.

Chorus directors need to instill this innate feeling of pulse in their singers. You can give your members a sense of internal rhythmic pulse by creating situations in which they can

experience rhythms. For example, you could get your singers to clap on strong pulses in the song. How about splitting up your chorus and having one group clap on strong pulses and another group clap on weak pulses? Try getting your singers to march in place. Encourage your singers to sing their part on a neutral syllable and experiment with accenting, or pushing, strong (or weak) pulses. Have them place their hands on the shoulders of another singer and, while singing, lightly tap out the strong pulses. Elements of this type of active teaching need to be incorporated into your rehearsals every week so that your singers begin to internalize the importance of pulse.

8.2 Duration

Duration, the length of sound or the silence between sounds, is also crucial to the concept of pulse. A predictability of the duration between each pulse creates a sense of consistency and flow of rhythm. Failure to address the proper duration of rhythms can lead to a rushed tempo, a sluggish tempo, sloppy rhythms, a lack of synchronization, and a host of other problems.

Rushing or dragging the tempos is characteristic of volunteer singers. Conversely, the sense of solidarity that comes from precise rhythmic synchrony and a steady tempo adds to the quality of every musical presentation.

8.3 Phrasing

Smaller rhythmic and melodic units, when joined together in a musical fashion, become larger units known as musical phrases. The efficient director works not only on the smaller units, but also works to combine them into a larger scheme known as the musical phrase. Small details, once polished, must be incorporated back into the whole. As these phrase units begin to flow together, the song can begin to take on elements of shape, contour, and purpose.

Ask your singers to show phrase direction by lifting their arms slowly (as if pulling through water) from the sides of their body. How about asking the singers to move an arm in front of their body to show the rising (lift) and falling (relaxation) of the musical phrase? Have them move their hands in an arc over their heads to embody the shape of the phrase, and apply that to their performance. Have the singers begin in a seated position, stand as the phrase rises to its climax, then slowly sit back into the chair as the phrase comes to repose. Develop other ways to involve your singers in understanding the importance of singing music that takes on a shape, contour, and phrase direction.

8.4 The importance of rehearsal drill

Directors must be willing to drill for rhythmic accuracy. Drill is a part of the rehearsal process. Rhythmic cleanliness will not be much improved by simply "singing through the song." A chorus director is willing to break down and drill the smaller units of the song. Only then can he fit these smaller units into a larger, musical whole.

9

Balancing voices

To achieve excellence in the sound of a barbershop ensemble, it is necessary for the singers to achieve a particular balance among the four parts. Chords incorrectly balanced will disrupt the unity and intonation of a barbershop ensemble.

9.1 The rules of proper balance

Four basic rules govern the proper balancing of a barbershop chord:

- ▶ The melody should always predominate.
- ▶ The lower the voice part, the louder it should be, relative to the others.
- ▶ The higher the voice part, the softer it should be, relative to the others.
- ▶ The root and fifth should be louder than other tones in the chord.

9.2 Establishing the ensemble volume

It is the responsibility of the melody singers to establish the dynamic (volume) level of the phrase as dictated by the mood implied by the lyric and music, and as expressed in the interpretive plan. The task of balancing the chord is solely the responsibility of the harmony voices.

All voices must balance to the most limited voice part in the ensemble. For example, the lower the basses sing, the more restricted they are in their ability to produce volume. If the other sections of the ensemble override the basses, it will be impossible for them to balance the chord effectively.

All volume levels must be created within the framework of the balance rules. No one voice, or section, can increase the ensemble volume alone.

9.3 How balance affects intonation

The root and fifth tones of any chord produce overtones that relate well, harmonically, to the notes of chord being sung. We say that these overtones (harmonics) are "consonant." That is, they contribute to the consonance and clarity of the sound. The third and flatted seventh tones (and, for that matter, any other tones other than the root and fifth) generally produce overtones which are not consonant with the chord being sung. These tones create unwanted dissonance in the sound. Therefore, they must be sung softer, relative to the root and fifth, to allow maximum clarity and consonance in the sound. For this reason, chords sung out of balance sound out of tune--even when the singers are singing the correct pitches.

9.4 Training the chorus to balance properly

For your chorus to learn to sing in proper balance, the members must be allowed to hear when the balance is right -- and when it is wrong. Spend some rehearsal time intentionally unbalancing chords and then balancing them correctly. First, balance and tune the root and

fifth (usually sung by the leads and basses). Tune the interval and clarify the vowel until you get the "hollow," or "clean," sound that these intervals produce when they are sung correctly. Add the other notes, then ask each harmony section, in turn, to gradually increase its volume until it is clearly singing too loudly. Ask the singers to assess the quality of the ensemble sound as the balance changes. Did the sound get muddy and full of noise? Did the chord sound more out of tune as the balance got progressively worse? Next, have them decrescendo until their note is obviously too soft. Is the sound empty and weak? Using exercises such as these, your singers can learn to know when the balance is right.

9.5 Other considerations for lead singers

When the lead section relinquishes the melody to another voice, it becomes a harmony part, and must balance to the melody and allow it to predominate. This happens most often at tags.

When the melody contains a low, sustained third or seventh (which produce dissonant overtones) these tones must be sung somewhat softer to allow for maximum clarity in the sound. The characteristic of these tones is such that they will still be heard, and the melody will still be audible, even at softer volume levels.

10

Developing an interpretive plan

The interpretation of a vocal text requires that the singer organize, assemble and transform a mass of raw information (ideas, images, concepts, feelings) into a persuasive, disciplined phonatory act which will convey aesthetic meanings. Unless the singer possesses a profound intellectual awareness of the words, much of the textual content, great poetry or prose, within a song is lost.

Ralph Appelman, in his book, *The Science of Vocal Pedagogy* states: "It is a singer's sensitivity to text that lifts his singing from mediocrity to inspired song; the words must not only be understood, they must become beloved. This aspect of diction falls within that part of semantics that embodies images and feelings. With these tools of expression, the singer emotionalizes and intensifies speech sounds, and he enables the listener to realize the meaning of the text."

In most performances, the singer has but two or three minutes, not only to present the composer's and arranger's work, but to emotionally involve the listener.

10.1 What kind of song is it?

To create an appropriate interpretation plan, it is first necessary to decide what the dominant element in the song is, the rhythm or the lyric. If it was originally a dance tune or if it is clearly a high-energy up-tune, then the rhythm is almost certainly the main element. If it's a ballad with a deeply emotional story line, then it's almost surely a lyric-dominant song. Put another way, is it the rhythm or the lyric that creates the emotion for the performer and the audience? After this decision is made, the interpretive plan can be created.

10.2 Building a plan for a lyric-dominant song

The first question is, should the meter and rhythm be fairly steady or shall we sing the song (or portions of it) in free style? Try the first option first. While the barbershop ballad has been sung very freely for years, it makes good musical sense to maintain at least the "feel" of the original meter and rhythms, even in ballads. The composer wrote the tune with a tempo in mind. Have a very good reason to ignore it.

If you choose to sing the song completely freely, don't succumb to the temptation of singing several notes very rapidly followed by a complete stop. This "run and stop" ballad interpretation is just not musical.

At any rate, there should be a sense of forward motion and completeness of phrase in every presentation. Remember that the song's the thing. Don't lose the song in the pursuit of the story.

Here are some steps to help you build an interpretive plan for a lyric dominant song:

- Read the text and determine the story line of the song.

- ▶ Determine the exact thought behind each lyric phrase.
- ▶ Insert breath marks in the music. Generally, each complete thought should be stated without interruption for a breath.
- ▶ Determine the climax of the song. Good songs have the melodic climax and the lyrical climax at the same point. If this does not seem to be the case with the song you're examining, you must look for ways to compensate for this weakness. The climax is not always at the end of the text, but rather at that place where the most meaningful impact of the story line is felt. Express the climax with a volume and tone color that is appropriate to the mood. This may not always be the loudest part of the song. Dynamic levels throughout the song should effectively prepare for the volume at the climax. For example, if the climax is very full, it would be better not to detract from that by choosing volumes in other sections of the song that are larger than the climax.
- ▶ Determine other dynamic levels. The volume and tone color (and tempo, for that matter) should always reflect the mood of the lyric. The beginning and end of connecting phrases should have like volumes, except for special effects, which should be used rarely.
- ▶ Determine which words of each phrase best convey the overall thought and mood of the phrase. Use some technique to help you emphasize those words. Try underlining the subject, verb, and direct object of a sentence with a straight line. Underline the adjectives (they enrich the mood, idea, or drama) with a crooked line.
- ▶ Read the text aloud and determine the sense of each sentence and the mood the words evoke. Stress the words that best convey the mood or thought. Allow these natural stresses to be conveyed by the music with either vocal emphasis or the duration of the note. Always strive for a naturalness and clarity. Choose the stressed words carefully. Simply changing the stressed word in a phrase will change the entire thought. How does the meaning of the following sentence change as each word is stressed?"Are **you** going to **sing** in the **hall** **tonight**?"

Here are some ways to treat individual notes and phrases that will help convey the meaning of the lyrics and the mood of the music:

- ▶ Duration
 - ▶ Use fermatas (held notes)
 - ▶ Slightly alter the note values
 - ▶ Use tenuto (slightly elongated notes)
 - ▶ Use ritardando or accelerando (retard or speed up the phrase)
- ▶ Volume
 - ▶ Crescendo (gradually get louder)
 - ▶ Diminuendo (gradually get softer)
- ▶ Accents (short, sudden increases in volume)
- ▶ Rhythm
- ▶ Syncopation
- ▶ Timbre (vocal color)
- ▶ Pauses (usually short)

- ▶ Staccato (short, detached notes)
- ▶ Glissando and portamento (artistically sliding between notes)
- ▶ Spoken word
- ▶ Visual plan to enhance the interpretation

10.3 A checklist for lyric-dominant songs

- ▶ Learn the words and music exactly as the composer wrote them by singing the melody in unison.
- ▶ Agree on the general thought of each phrase.
- ▶ Determine stress words.
- ▶ Underline subject, verb and direct object with straight line.
- ▶ Underline those words that enrich the mood, idea, or add drama (adjectives) with a crooked line.
- ▶ Determine the type of stress to be used with each word (duration, volume, etc.).
- ▶ Read the text aloud using the stresses chosen. Don't pause too long between phrases. The thought must be carried through the entire song.
- ▶ Maintain the basic flow of the rhythm, even when singing with rubato, or free style.
- ▶ After the arrangement is memorized and the interpretation of the song is agreed on, lower the key by a third or so and solidify the interpretation by singing the melody in unison until it is firmly learned.
- ▶ Go back to the proper key and maintain the interpretive plan while singing parts.

10.4 Building a plan for a rhythm-dominant song

If the principle characteristic of the song is the rhythm, choose a tempo that allows the rhythm patterns chosen by the composer to be accurately sung -- then sing them as written. The rhythms were chosen for a purpose and should be considered as important to the realization of the composer's intent as are the notes and words. Deviate from them rarely and then only for the best of reasons.

The tempo you choose should allow the song to "feel" right. Is this an easy rhythm tune, a driving up-tune, or something in between? Sing the song in a steady tempo and let it connect with you. It shouldn't drag or feel rushed. Trust your musicianship to select the "right" tempo for the song.

After you decide on a tempo, don't deviate from it except for a very good reason. The fewer tempo changes and the fewer stops in the music, the better. Again, let the song tell the story. It knows what to do.

After you have learned the rhythms, can sing them accurately, and have chosen a general tempo, allow the mood created by the melody and rhythm to dictate a general volume level. Then, look for logical places to grow or lessen from the base volume level. As the melody line climbs, the volume will probably want to increase. As the melody descends, the volume may want to lessen. Changing the dynamics in a musical and logical manner will give the song further life and interest.

Find the climax of the song and decide how to treat it. Remember that the climax shouldn't always be the loudest part of the song. Sometimes a soft volume can effectively express it.

Generally, as in ballads, each phrase should start in volume about where the previous phrase ended. Avoid sudden volume changes except to express a special mood change or to create a surprise effect. Use such disruptive devices very rarely. Our job is to invite the audience to participate with us in the making of the music. Do not startle them with sudden volume or tempo changes unless some element of the song strongly suggests such a treatment.

In every easy swing or up-tune, allow the tempo, rhythm and dynamics to create, sustain, and enhance the mood of the song.

10.5 Arrangement devices

In every arrangement, the arranger chooses devices that affect the interpretive plan. Back times, bell chords, echoes, high or low voicings, etc., all will dictate a need to examine the interpretative plan. The arranger might indicate a tempo change for the second chorus, for example (a strut or stomp). Be sensitive to the interpretative plan that the arranger had in mind when he chose the device. You'll find that the song will sing better if you do.

II

Why you should know music theory

As a chorus director, you are a teacher of music. To be effective, you must know the basics of vocal production, how to build a good singing tone, and how to direct clearly so that your singers can understand how you want them to sing. But, this is not enough. To be truly effective, you should also know some music theory.

Generally, you need not be the sole teacher of to your chorus. Demonstration quartets, section leaders, assistant directors, learning tapes, and homework should all be employed to help teach the correct notes to your singers. However, when you do detect wrong notes during a rehearsal, you should be able to analyze the music quickly to determine where the problem lies and ask your section leader to demonstrate the correct notes or sing them yourself.

Proper volume relationships between the notes in a chord (balance) are essential for correct tuning and maximum clarity in the barbershop sound. (See Chapter 9, Balancing Voices, for more information on this subject.) The root and fifth of each chord must be predominant and the third and flatted-seventh relatively softer to create the maximum opportunity to tune and expand the barbershop sound. If you do not know the basics of music theory, you will not be able to correct balance problems quickly. And, of course, you always need to know what key and meter a song is in. For these reasons, and more, you should be a student of music theory.

This manual is not a music theory textbook. The Society has the books listed below available for the study of theory, available by calling 800-876-SING (7464). In addition to these, you can find outside methods of studying music theory. If there is a college or university nearby, you may take basic theory classes there. A private music teacher can be engaged for lessons in theory, as well. However you gain the knowledge, knowing the basics of music theory is an essential part of being an effective chorus director.

Theory texts available from SPEBSQSA, Inc.:

- ▶ Music Fundamentals (Stock No. 4034)
- ▶ Theory of Barbershop Harmony (Stock No. 4037)
- ▶ Arranging Manual (Stock No. 4031)

12

Learning styles/teaching methods

It's important for every director to be aware that there are several learning styles that chorus members may employ. Sometimes the learning style that is employed by a member is not his most productive style -- sometimes it is. A working knowledge of the various styles, as well as a facility with teaching methods that can accommodate the various learning styles, makes any teaching task much easier. This section will address learning styles in general and then give more specific examples of how different teaching methods can be used to make music and craft learning easier.

12.1 Learning styles: the two sides of the brain

Left Brain Learning Styles	Shared Hemispheres	Right Brain Learning Styles
<p>Auditory -- listener, thinker, analyzer. Wants to understand before experiencing.</p> <p>CAUTION -- learner can block if over-loaded. Learner will frequently continue to ask questions to seek understanding before even attempting the task. This is a delaying tactic.</p>	<p>Visual -- watcher, mimic, hearer. Wants to see (vicariously experience) before either understanding or experiencing.</p> <p>CAUTION -- learner can be overly distractible. Also mimics can give the appearance of having learned when the performance that they give to demonstrate understanding is only a superficial reflection of what they just heard</p>	<p>Proprioceptive -- feeler, intuitive, doer. Wants to experience before understanding.</p> <p>CAUTION -- learner may never get to understanding. Frequently the learner is satisfied with the experience and feels no need to seek more depth of knowledge.</p>

12.1.1 Definitions

- ▶ Understanding -- "knowing why" -- what the listener, thinker, analyzer THINKS is the goal. This is a booby prize because understanding may never include "doing."
- ▶ Experiencing -- "doing" -- what the proprioceptive learner wants to do BEFORE, or instead of understanding. This is also a booby prize because it may never include "knowing why."
- ▶ Knowledge -- what the learner gets with both understanding and experiencing. This is the real prize because you know why you are doing what you are doing!

12.2 Matching teaching methods to personality types

Teaching Methods	Watchword	Leans Toward	Example
Command (real task)	do as I say...	auditory	"Sing an 'O' with mouth in a really round position -- lips away from (off) the teeth."
Follow the leader (real task)	do as I do...	visual	"Sing an 'O' that looks like mine."
Guided Imagery (imaginary task)	do as if...	proprioceptive	"Sing an 'O' as if you are creating enough space in the back of your mouth to contain an orange."
Group (synergistic)	do it while...	could be any	"Sing an 'O' while standing back to back in a square."
Focused awareness (focus)	as you do, focus on...	proprioceptive	"Bend at the waist and sing an 'O.' What do you feel that is different? Slowly stand up and try to keep the same feeling."
Reciprocal (develop feedback)	you do, they tell you if...	proprioceptive	"Lead and bass sing a line of a song on 'O,' tenor and bari tell them when it's matched."

Teaching Methods	Watchword	Leans Toward	Example
Guided discovery (ask questions to which you know the answers)	What did you notice? What can you conclude?	all	"Lead sing an 'O,' bass sing an 'Ah.' Now bass change gradually toward 'O.' Everybody listen: a) what did you notice? b) when did it match best? c) did you have to change as much as you thought you would? d) how could you use this method to clean up a chord that doesn't ring?"

12.3 Connecting the two sides of your brain

Seek to require all types of learners to go out of their "comfort zones" and use parts of their brains they usually don't use when learning. The analytical learners rarely identify musical sections by subjective criteria such as "they sound the same." Proprioceptive learners rarely identify musical sections by whether they are the same as or different from other sections. Mimics rarely identify musical sections at all, they just repeat what they have heard (usually accurately) without actually "learning" the music they just sang.

12.3.1 What side of the brain do the "average" singers of each part seem to use?

Tenors

Do some of your tenors tend to be more proprioceptive? Love to woodshed notes? Are great tuners but sometimes don't really ever learn the music? Have them identify patterns such as unity and contrast in their own part. Are some tenors secure with learning the notes on the printed page but only approximate the pitches? They are still analyzing the notes with their left brain and are afraid to let go and experience them with the right brain. Encourage these singers to focus on something other than the task at hand. Guided imagery (i.e., singing the notes out of the top of their head or "in the mask") might help them.

Leads

Do some of your leads tend to be mimics? Do they forget the words sometimes because they "copied" your follow-the-leader example so efficiently that they don't feel they need to look at the music anymore? If this is the case, the director should always demonstrate accurately to assist this type of learner. Precise learning tapes and teaching quartets are a must. Encourage mimics to analyze the music by asking them to recite the words without singing.

Baritones

Do some of your baritones tend to overanalyze or fixate on the technical elements of the music or the vocal skills used to sing the music? This is caused by left brain dominance. Guided imagery or focused awareness tasks can help make the transition. Encourage them toward whole brain thinking.

Basses

Do you have any basses who know the words but still have difficulty mastering the song? They too can be mimics who learn their part quickly, but not thoroughly. Try the tenor tactic mentioned earlier.

If you know the learning style preference of the members of your chorus, you can tailor your presentation and your reinforcement to maximize their retention. Be aware that each section of the chorus may contain several learning styles and it is therefore important that the director to use as many teaching methods as possible.

12.3.2 Quick ways to identify learning style preferences

- ▶ If they are pedantically devoted to detail, they might be listener, thinker, analyzers.
- ▶ If they absolutely have to see the music while it's being taught, they might be listener, thinker, analyzers.
- ▶ If they hum along while you are singing it to them, they might be proprioceptive learners.
- ▶ If some members of the section consistently sing the same sequence of notes incorrectly, they might be mimics and they just copied somebody's "not quite right" version.
- ▶ Leaners are proprioceptive. If they were mimics, they could do it themselves. If they were listener, thinker, analyzers they would tend to tell the guy next to them he's singing the wrong notes.

By identifying your chorus members' learning styles, you can achieve greater insight into the teaching methods that will best serve them.

I3

Teaching new music

13.1 Barbershop method

The barbershop teaching method is based on the concept that barbershop music is not a style of four-part harmony, but one in which three parts (tenor-bari-bass) harmonize with a known melody. To have all four parts learn the melody first assists in the part learning that follows.

Before learning the melody, the tonal center needs to be established.

- ▶ Leads sing the tonic or tonal center pitch.
- ▶ Basses match the leads an octave lower.
- ▶ Baritones sing the fifth of the scale below the leads.
- ▶ Tenors sing the major third above.

This chord must be built section by section, in order, and always tuned to the tonal center of the song. Remember that the only note that sounds the same as the piano is the key note (tonic). The others should be tuned so that they sound as "clean" and clear as possible.

Then, proceed to teach the song.

- ▶ Select a short segment of the song to teach (introduction, verse, first half of the chorus, etc.)
- ▶ Ask everyone (leads, tenors, baritones, basses) to sing the lead part together. Words may be used, but a neutral syllable such as "loo" or "lah" works better because the singer can concentrate on the notes alone.
- ▶ Repeat the segment several times until all are secure on the melody.
- ▶ Each harmony section (bass, baritone, and tenor) then sings its own part, in turn, while the other three parts sing the melody, until all three harmony parts are learned.
- ▶ At this point, all parts should be sung together to ensure that each singer is secure with his individual notes. If a neutral vowel has been used, read through the words, in the rhythm of the note values, sustaining the vowel sounds. Then add the words to the music.

By this time, everyone should know the melody and be singing in tune with it. Finding the melody in tune with the tonal center is an exciting experience for singers. Learning it step-by-step gives each person confidence and no one part has to be idle while others work on notes.

13.2 Quartet method (1+4+4+1)

The quartet teaching method is one of the fastest ways to teach a song, but it requires involving a quartet in advance of the teaching session. One capable singer from each section form a quartet to learn the music before the chorus rehearsal. This teaching quartet should be made up of those who sing most accurately and with the best quality. The following procedure is used after the teaching quartet has learned the music:

- ▶ The quartet performs the song for the chorus.
- ▶ Each quartet member then stands in front of his section.
- ▶ Begin with a short segment of the song: half of the refrain, one phrase, half of the verse, etc.
- ▶ The quartet sings the selected segment four times in the following manner:
 - ▶ One quartet member at a time sings the words while the other three use a neutral syllable, like "loo" or "lah." (A good sequence is: lead sings the words first, then the bass, then baritone, and finally the tenor.)
- ▶ During these first four run-throughs of the selected segment, the chorus members look at their notes and actually sing along, but without making sound (mouthing the words silently.) This silent participation is one of the most important parts of this teaching method. The chorus follows all the disciplines of singing, but makes no sound.
- ▶ Then, each section of the chorus joins the quartet in turn. Follow the same order as above. During these run-throughs, the chorus sings words or neutral syllables (following their section leader.)
- ▶ Everyone sings the words and music together. Everyone has been through his part nine times now, hearing it once, four times by silent participation and four times actually making sound. You will be amazed at how easily they have learned their parts and how good it sounds.

Remember this formula: 1 + 4 + 4 + 1

- ▶ The quartet sings through the segment to be learned.
- ▶ Each member of the quartet sings words, in turn, while the other three sing a neutral syllable. Chorus members use silent participation.
- ▶ Chorus sings, copying the words or neutral syllable of the quartet member on their part.
- ▶ All sing words together at least once. You will probably want to sing it two or three times.
- ▶ Move on to the next segment of the song and start the 1 + 4 + 4 + 1 sequence again.

At the next rehearsal, let the quartet refresh the chorus's memory with each quartet member in front of his section. Then, let the entire chorus sing the song. Use the quartet to demonstrate any sections of difficulty to the chorus. This method can also be used for reviewing any song in your repertoire.

If your quartet does not read music well, there are hundreds of songs available on learning cassettes that can assist them in perfecting a new song before they teach it to your chorus. These learning cassettes are available through the Society, and may be ordered by calling 800-876-SING (7464).

13.3 Rote method

The rote method is "call and response" singing. The teacher sings a short passage and the section sings it back. This is done with all four parts in sequence, usually in the sequence of lead, bass, baritone and tenor.

13.4 Sight reading method

All choruses should be encouraged to sight read. Here are some basic rules to help your sight-reading sessions go well:

- ▶ **Don't stop.** Set a prescribed goal (the verse, the chorus, etc.) and encourage the singers to keep singing even though mistakes are made. Keep going to the chosen goal.
- ▶ Ask your singers to **look ahead**. Suggest they use the half notes and whole notes to look ahead to the next note so they are prepared to sing the right note when its time arrives. Teach them to prepare for page turns early by looking a little farther ahead than usual at the bottom of each page, turning quickly, and continuing.
- ▶ **Sing out.** The purpose of sight reading is to give an impression of the segment of the piece and find out where the most difficult spots are. It is easier to sight read if the singers are encouraged to sing with confidence.

Remember to let the singers know the objective. For example, "We are going to read from measures 1-16. Then we will stop." Whatever happens, do not stop until you reach the objective. Be patient and, despite the mistakes, let them experience sight reading without fear of interruption for technique issues like vowel problems, balance problems, etc. They must be free to sight read without fear, if they are to develop confidence.

After they have concluded the segment, note the parts that didn't go well and give them an opportunity to sing the passage again. Challenge them to solve their own problems. If they identify problems for themselves, they will be more likely to correct them.

For variety, mix the methods. Use the quartet method to teach one song, sight read the next, teach a tag by rote, then use the barbershop method for another song. Variety will keep interest high.

13.5 Completing the learning process

Most learning is lost shortly after the teaching process because it is not yet committed to long-term memory. You can expect that the singers will forget 50 to 75 percent of what was taught from one week to the next. Therefore, an organized system of interesting repetitions is necessary to commit the new knowledge to long-term memory.

Identify the most difficult segments. Review them, using one of the methods described earlier. Ask the chorus to sing the segment twice with the music and once without. Have them sing segments of the song on different neutral syllables. Change their standing position so that they can hear different voice parts around them. Work from the end of the song backward, by segments: first the tag, then the chorus, then the verse, and finally the intro. Continually seek variety in the methods you use to reinforce learning. A skilled teacher will devise many ways to prevent repetition from inducing boredom.

13.6 Section rehearsals

After the music has been introduced and the singers have a general concept of the song, only appropriate rehearsal time and drill of the musical elements can lead the song to maturity. Many choruses have found that section rehearsals are an effective way for the singers to gain increased familiarity with the music.

Section rehearsals can encourage part independence, section unity, and create a sense of community and spirit within the section. Only effective musical leaders within the chapter will be able to run effective sectional rehearsals. The musical director will want to spend time with the section leaders discussing the goals, teaching methods and the musical standards to be expected in the section rehearsal.

Since the barbershop style is dependent upon tuning to the melodic (lead) line, many choruses find that dividing the leads into three smaller groups is beneficial. This allows a group of leads to join the basses, baritones, and tenors in their respective section rehearsal. This provides a melody line for each harmony part to hear. It is also possible to have section rehearsals without the leads, for purposes of part independence and sectional unity. Such section rehearsals are most beneficial when the melody line is well-known by the harmony singers, so that they can "hear" (audiate) the lead line as they rehearse their respective parts.

Section rehearsals are most effective when there are clear specific tasks and goals to be accomplished. Generally, they should not exceed 20 minutes.

13.7 Developing a repertoire

Choose songs wisely. Learn them well. Continue to polish them. Discard the selection only after the song has fulfilled its usefulness. When you consider the effort and time it takes to master a song, you realize the waste it is to discard it after only one or two performances.

Of course some events, such as an annual show, call for learning one or two special numbers. Choose these songs carefully. They should be simple, straightforward and easy to learn. Spend your precious rehearsal time primarily learning and polishing songs that will fill an important function in your repertoire. A competent scriptwriter can structure a loose dramatic plot line around your existing repertoire. Always sing your best material for your public. They will thank you with their applause and by buying tickets again next year.

Develop a system for integrating new songs into the repertoire as old ones go stale. This will keep the repertoire fresh and give your singers the challenge of learning of new music.

It is reasonable to expect that a chapter might learn six to twelve songs per year. But, in every case all songs must be performed at the highest musical level possible. Under no circumstances should a chorus perform material in public that is poorly rehearsed or that they are incapable of singing in good quality. The art form and our Society deserve no less. (For more information about choosing songs for your chorus, see Chapter 14.)

14

The life of a song: from paper to performance

This chapter will track the life of a song from its initial selection to your final bow at the first performance. By examining this process, you can make the learning happen more quickly, enhance the enjoyment of the preparation process, and more effectively bring to the audience the composer's intentions through performance.

This process is the essence of "what we do and what we're about." When you compare the amount of time spent on the performance preparation with the actual time performing, you realize why the preparation process is so important.

Tim Lautzenheiser, in his book, *The Joy of Inspired Teaching*, suggests:

"With the ongoing and heated dialog concerning the controversy of musical competition, ratings, and rankings, adjudication procedures, etc., we must all make a clear distinction in our profession: the goal is to teach the understanding and appreciation of music, the reward comes via the accolades along the way. The goals are intrinsic. The rewards are extrinsic. Music is intrinsic; therefore, the goals are far more significant than the rewards.

"...the real measure of success comes from the process of learning which took place in preparation for the rewarding performance; therein lies the attainment of the goal. When the discipline of personal growth is the focus of the rehearsals, the students will see music as a language of individual expression rather than a sport of measured achievement. When that transition is in place, they become faithful participants and consumers for a lifetime and we have become teachers who brought them an art which will afford a new level of understanding in every facet of their future (pp. 19-20)."

14.1 Selecting music

Selection of appropriate repertoire for your chapter may be the single most important task for you as a director. You'll achieve greater success with each new song you introduce to your chorus by answering a few simple questions.

- ▶ Is it in barbershop style?
- ▶ Does it provide multiple performance opportunities or can it only be performed in limited circumstances?
- ▶ Is it an up-tune or easy rhythm song? Continually look for good rhythm songs. Make at least six out of 10 songs in your repertoire rhythm songs, either up-tunes or easy beat toe-tappers.
- ▶ Is it a novelty or comedic songs that will provide variety to your repertoire?

- ▶ Is the story line of the lyric easy to understand and communicate? Is it appropriate to the chorus? Does it fit the personality of your chorus?
- ▶ Does the music intrigue you as a director? Select material that will challenge and satisfy your musical instincts.
- ▶ Do you like the song?
- ▶ Will your singers like the song?
- ▶ Is the song within the capabilities of your chorus singers?
- ▶ Can you sing the melody line in tune without difficulty? Can your leads do the same?
- ▶ Can your section leaders read the arrangement and sing a majority of it right the first time?
- ▶ Is there any part that is too difficult, too high, too low, that is outside of the comfortable singing range of your singers? Is the tessitura (where the voice part predominantly lies) too high or low for any part?
- ▶ Are there awkward leaps in any voice part?
- ▶ Are there sudden harmonic shifts in the music which will be difficult for the singers to hear and perform well? Are there other difficulties within the song which will present problems for your singers?
- ▶ Will the song be familiar to your audience? Audiences like songs they recognize. They'll enjoy participating in the music with the chorus.

If the song satisfies all the above criteria, and you and your music team likes it, try it out on the chorus. Have a demonstration quartet learn it and sing it for your chorus.

14.2 Sources for arrangements

14.2.1 Published SPEBSQSA Arrangements

There are approximately 1,000 arrangements in the Society catalog available from Harmony Marketplace or from your chapter secretary. These published arrangements are grouped into four categories:

- ▶ **Barbershop Classics Series.** These arrangements combine former classifications: Songs for Men, Harmony Heritage, Archive Series, "J" Series and Show Tunes.
- ▶ **Gold Medal Series.** These are arrangements as sung by Society champion quartets or choruses.
- ▶ **Harmony Explosion Series.** This was formerly the Young Men In Harmony series. These arrangements are specially designed for younger singers. However, many of these arrangements will be popular with your chorus and with your audiences, too.
- ▶ **Free 'N' Easy Series.** Each spring, your chapter VP/M&P is sent at least two arrangements and a demonstration tape of public domain songs. All SPEBSQSA members have the right to make copies of these, free of charge.

14.2.2 Other sources include:

- ▶ **Music Premiere.** This is a package of newly published music and demo tapes. Subscribers will receive six songs in the spring and six songs in the fall containing some

of the finest arrangements in the world of barbershop. Every chapter should consider subscribing to the Music Premiere subscription series for its chorus.

- ▶ **Barbershop Chorus and Symphony.** If your chorus or quartet has an opportunity to perform a program with an orchestra, there are several excellent choices. To get a current list, call the Harmony Marketplace. Current packages include: "Music of Irving Berlin," "George M. Cohen Medley," "The Music Man Medley," "Battle Hymn of the Republic," "Barbershop Medley," "Yuletide Favorites," and "A Barbershop Christmas."
- ▶ **Unpublished Legal Arrangements.** The Society also houses an extensive collection of unpublished arrangements, legally authorized by the copyright holders. The listing of these is found in the Society Arrangements catalog.

14.3 A method of preparing to teach a song

- ▶ Learn all four voice parts. Sing them through until you are comfortable singing all parts. If you cannot sing some of the notes in the bass or tenor range, demonstrate them an octave above or below.
- ▶ Do some research on the piece. Discover something about the history of the song. Who wrote it? What circumstances surrounded the composition of the song? What other familiar songs did the composer write?
- ▶ Develop an interpretive plan. Identify the moods of the song. Write descriptive emotions at each phrase, or group of phrases. Find adjectives that will help you communicate the intent of the composer to your chorus. If it is a show tune, consider using a solo or a quartet to heighten interest in both the learning process and in the performance of the song.
- ▶ Determine the best order to teach segments of the song. Should you start with the tag, or the chorus? Maybe the verse is particularly difficult or easy; should you begin with that segment? Decide whether it is more important to begin with the easy, familiar part to give the chorus success early, or to start with the tougher segment to get it mastered quickly.
- ▶ Determine the method of teaching the song, i.e., quartet method, by rote, barbershop method, etc. Which one or combination of these methods will you use? Can you find four members who will help you teach a segment or two with the quartet method? Can your chorus sight read the piece? Could you use one method for one segment and another method later in the piece?
- ▶ Determine difficult places, trouble spots, balance or tuning spots. Study the four voice parts to identify sections that present problems in tuning, balancing, or singing musically. Isolate these portions and determine how they can best be taught. Be prepared to address these portions with suggestions of quick, achievable fixes. Perhaps you can develop some warm-up exercises that will address these tricky spots that will transfer later to the learning of the song.
- ▶ Decide on the basic tempo of the song. Should it stay in one tempo for most of the song or are there places where the music or lyrics demand a tempo change? Should it be in strict meter or would slight alterations of meter make musical or lyrical sense? Determine where the musical line demands a breath. Should the breaths be quick or slow? Would a longer pause be effective to tell the story of the lyrics? What volumes are appropriate for the mood of the song? Knowing your interpretative plan in advance will save a lot of

rehearsal time. Is your interpretive plan logical? It is natural and musical? Is it devoid of musical gimmickry?

- ▶ Practice conducting the piece in front of a mirror to show your intentions visually to the chorus. The clearer you can be with your physical conducting skills, the less time need be spent talking and the more time can be spent singing. Are there any challenging spots for you as a director? Can you visually show, through your conducting vocabulary, exactly what you want the chorus to do? Are you able to illustrate how you wish them to sing? If you can, you will save rehearsal time.
- ▶ Determine how you will "take pitch" for the start of the song. Is the first chord a difficult one for the chorus to find or tune? If the first chord is minor, when should the minor third be sounded. Finding an easy way to teach the tune-up chord will save time and eliminate frustration.
- ▶ Determine and mark starting points in each segment. Where can you begin without having to go back to the beginning? Find tonic triads, or V7 chords that begin phrases. This simple preparation technique will save large amounts of rehearsal time.
- ▶ Determine specific goals for each song in every rehearsal. Let the chorus members feel good about what they accomplish. Create a positive attitude about learning new music. They will become more excited about learning if they feel they are accomplishing something right away.
- ▶ Determine how you will "sell" this song to the chorus. Find the "hook" in the song. If the tag rings, teach it first. If the musical or emotional climax is especially exciting, teach it early in the learning process. Get excited about the song personally. Enthusiasm is contagious.
- ▶ Determine how you might use the assistant director or section leaders in the teaching of the song. Can you use the music team in the teaching process? Perhaps you have an assistant director who is particularly good at interpretation or staging. Can you include him in some of the preparation? He may have to direct this song sometime in the future. If he is a part of the creative process, he will do a much better job of directing the song when that time comes.
- ▶ Determine when the learning of the piece should take place. Is this an easy piece that could come toward the end of the meeting, or should the teaching process be divided into two segments? If it's going to be a tough "sell," consider introducing it early in the evening, when energy and enthusiasm is high.
- ▶ Base your next rehearsal on how the last session went. Recognize that the chorus will forget much of what was learned in the first session. Plan interesting, fun repetitions of segments for the next rehearsal. Using a different method to review a segment can reinforce the correct notes and interpretation and keep the learning process fun.

14.4 The teaching/rehearsal process

14.4.1 Using positive reinforcement

Positive reinforcement is essential to the learning process. But it's easier talked about than practiced. Sometimes the problems we hear take precedence over hearing what the group is doing right.

Much of our training teaches us to hear things that are wrong, then provides us the techniques

to solve those problems. While addressing individual and ensemble problems is certainly a major function of our jobs, the manner in which this is done has a tremendous effect on the ensemble and, subsequently, the music as well.

Let's try an experiment: "Don't think of pink elephants!" When you read that phrase, you probably conjured up in your mind the vision of one or more pink elephants anyway. This is a natural thing to do. If this is the case, imagine what your chorus members think of, naturally and subconsciously, when you make statements like, "Don't go flat!" They will have the tendency to think and do the very thing you have asked them not to do. The mind doesn't react to the "don't." It only hears and reacts to "flat."

Always use the positive way to correct the problem. "When we energize the tone with lots of warm air, leads, the line stays really well in-tune." Or, more simply, "Energize that line, leads, and it will stay in-tune." "Keep the tone in your head, basses, and generate more air flow. You'll produce lots more resonance to help us all stay in-tune." Using positive phrases will allow the singers to achieve positive results.

Here are three skills that can be developed to address this difficulty:

- ▶ Develop the skills of hearing what they do right and acknowledge it often.
- ▶ Demonstrate what you want them to do right rather than emphasizing what they did wrong.
- ▶ Phrase your corrections to reinforce correct behavior.

Develop the skills of hearing what they do right and acknowledge it often.

As mentioned before, all of our training teaches us to hear what is wrong and to fix it. We spend a majority of our rehearsal time fixing things: a phrase treatment, a vowel unification, an interpretative nuance, etc. Our experience and training prepare us to address these issues. In order to acknowledge what they do right, the first challenge is to be able to accurately hear that. This is a difficult skill to develop because it seems to be in direct conflict with our training. As an experiment, in your next rehearsal, try this: Before you allow yourself to fix one thing, honestly identify and acknowledge three things that they did correctly.

When you do that, the behavior is much more likely to be repeated than is behavior that you penalize. By hearing and acknowledging correct behavior, no matter how insignificant, you are reinforcing the behavior you want.

This can be as simple as: "Tenors, a nice job on balancing those higher notes, thank you." "Basses, you stayed right with the beat and that helped clarify our precision, thanks." "Baritones, what a gorgeous tone you just produced, do that again." "Leads, that was a wonderful vowel you just sang; let's have everyone sing it just that way." You might be asking yourself, "Why should I reward them for behavior I already expect?" Because it works. Learning good behavior is contingent on repeated positive acknowledgment, until self-discipline becomes the motivation.

Noting these types of behavior doesn't take anything away from your ability to "fix" all the problems you are hearing; that is your job. No one would ever suggest that you accept anything less than what you believe your ensemble is capable of producing. However, the manner in which you elicit what you want will encourage, or discourage, repeated positive behavior.

Demonstrate what you want done right, rather than emphasizing what is wrong.

The opposite is a widely used technique. The strategy is that if they hear what they did wrong, they will be able to distinguish the difference between that and what we want them to do right and choose the correct manner. It doesn't always work that way. Look at the odds: they sing it wrong, then you demonstrate it wrong, then demonstrate it right. They have heard it incorrectly two out of three times. They heard it wrong when they sang it. They heard it wrong when you sang it the way they did, and finally they heard what you wanted. This technique can easily reinforce the negative behavior you are trying to correct and increases the chances that it won't be fixed at all.

This is a tough habit to break, especially if you are used to exaggerating their behavior for humorous effect. The challenge is to demonstrate only what you want them to do and thereby increase the odds of their doing so. It takes practice and discipline on your part, but it really works.

Phrase corrections to capitalize on reinforcing correct behavior.

As we have discussed, phrases such as, "Don't go flat," "Don't breathe there," "Don't sing loud there," etc., ask the chorus, subconsciously, to think about the very thing you don't want them to think about.

A director must develop a vocabulary to say things in a constructive manner, such as: "Let's sing that phrase a little higher at the end," "Let's carry the sound through there to help keep our forward motion," "Half that volume," etc. There are many roads to the same destination. Search for the one that will capitalize on the positive.

How can you monitor your skill development in this area? Videotape a rehearsal with the camera focused on you. Review the tape and analyze your performance. How does your behavior measure up to the points discussed above? If you don't have a video camera, use a tape recorder. Either way, be honest about your habits and deal forthrightly with your progress. You and your chorus will be glad you did.

14.5 The polishing phase

The closer to the performance you get the more an environment of self-improvement should be developed. Give short and precise instructions, framed within those parts of the music which are being done well by the group. The closer the song gets to the performance, the more important it is to stop quickly, clarify a vowel, rebalance a chord, or retune, then get right back to making music out of the notes. Work to help the singers feel good about their efforts and to solve their own individual problems.

Begin to show the chorus that you trust them to sing the way you have taught them in rehearsal. Give them the freedom to succeed, and in doing so you will give the music a chance to live. Don't wait until the performance to try to achieve the excitement and implicit trust in the process of making music together. Learn when to get out of the way of the music.

14.6 The performance

The day has finally arrived. Whether it is the annual show, a cabaret, a church performance, a performance package for a local convention, a contest, or whatever, performance is the showcase of our efforts. It is the culmination of the hours of work and the unveiling of our musical product.

The director must allow the chorus to sing in performance. Little if anything can be changed or fixed in the midst of a performance. The chorus members will most likely fall back to the habits they have developed during rehearsals. Adopt an attitude of "All is well. You guys will do great. Won't this be fun? Let's show them how well we can perform." This will reduce the anxiety of nervous performers considerably. Show them you have confidence in them and they will have confidence in themselves.

If you have prepared them well, they will perform well.

15

Auditioning singers

Each chorus needs an audition procedure to qualify an individual for potential membership in the chapter. Whether this procedure is simple or complex will depend on the musical aims of the chapter and your musical goals for the chorus. As a minimum, each singer should be able to demonstrate the ability to consistently match pitch with an acceptable tone. Depending on the chorus's standards for membership, the singer may be asked to demonstrate a multitude of other skills: ability to hold his part in a quartet, harmonize by ear to a known melody, show his knowledge of one or more chorus repertoire songs, demonstrate an ability to learn and perform choreography, show emotions on his face and with his body posture, and any number of other tests. You and your chapter leadership must decide what level of skill you will require of future members. This standard must then be applied uniformly to each applicant.

Under all circumstances, there should be an initial voice placement given early in the guest's experience with your chapter, preferably on his first visit.

15.1 Initial voice placement

First, make the guest feel welcome and as comfortable as possible in a new, unfamiliar situation. After he's been greeted at the door and has signed the guest book he should be introduced to the chapter VP/M&P or some other representative of the music team. This team member may provide information about musical expectations of the chapter and some materials about the hobby, your chapter, and the Society.

The next step will be for the music team member to conduct a preliminary vocal assessment. This procedure will simply establish the guest's ability to match pitch with an acceptable vocal tone and to determine the section in which he will be most comfortable.

A simple and relatively non-threatening way to do this is to have the music team member sing a scale with the guest, rather slowly (say, one beat per second), on a neutral syllable. Joining with him in this way will help alleviate his fear of failing the "test" while allowing the auditioner to determine the guest's ability to match pitch, and to assess his tone quality, breath control, and general vocal skill level.

Begin the scale on the lead's middle line, B \flat , and sing a descending scale, urging him to relax and not force the lower notes. Then begin again on the B \flat and sing upward. Encourage him to allow the voice to flip naturally into falsetto and to relax and sing as high as he comfortably can. After he has reached the limit of his usable range, thank him for having the courage to participate in the exercise and make appropriate, positive comments on his ability.

If, at this point, he seems unable to match your pitches, ask him to take a guest book, sit out front, and listen and observe for an evening. He may make a great contributing member of the chapter, but will probably not be in your performing chorus.

If his tone quality is that of a bass and he can sing the bass clef low F (just below the staff) without strain and with good quality, he's a bass. If not, examine the other possibilities by asking a few simple questions. What singing has he done? If he's a former or current Barbershoppers he'll know his voice part. If not, and if he's not a bass, he's simply a lead for the first night. The reason for this approach is that barbershop tenor is a vocal style that's almost unknown outside of our style. A man who sings tenor at church or at school will probably not know how to blend, tune, and balance the barbershop tenor part without experience. Therefore, he should start his journey in the lead section.

Well then, may he not be a baritone? Probably not the first night. Our baritone part is not much like the baritone parts of other kinds of choral music, either. Our baritones are, in fact, second tenors who can hear the harmonies well enough to sing this part with good tuning and balance. If the prospective member is a good ear singer or reader, he'll find the baritone section soon enough. Remember that it's the first night. If you take proper care of him, he'll be back and you can find out in subsequent conversations whether he needs to make a section change.

15.2 Vocal audition

15.2.1 Why hold an audition?

After the guest has been at a prescribed number of rehearsals and has indicated interest in joining the chorus, apprise him of what your chapter's more formal audition entails and encourage that he consider auditioning for the chorus. When the guest is ready, schedule an audition.

Whatever audition procedure is used, the difficulty of the process should be carefully chosen to fit the musical standards of the chapter.

The music director and section leaders usually conduct the audition. The audition should be conducted privately in a place conducive to a relaxed atmosphere. The use of a piano will prove helpful. Most choruses find that an audition should be given no sooner than the third week and no later than the sixth week of a prospective chorus member's attendance.

You'll need a form that includes all of the information you wish to secure in the audition. Some basic information might be name, address, telephone number, age, vocal training and experience, voice type (including range, quality of sound, pitch sense, specific vocal characteristics/vocal problems, etc.) and any other information you desire.

15.2.2 Audition procedure

First, have the candidate sing a song he knows using his most expressive and beautiful vocal quality. Note the consistency of tone throughout the range, his vocal quality, ability to sing in tune, the general range demonstrated, his general musicality, general breathing technique, and any other elements that indicate his ability as a singer.

Next, test the voice using two or three simple vocal exercises which demonstrate vocal flexibility, voice color, tone quality, breathing techniques, etc. Sample exercises are found elsewhere in this manual and in *Improving Vocal Techniques Through The Warm Up* (Stock No. 4068.)

Next, test for ability to discriminate pitches. You may wish to sing or play a sequence of three

or four unrelated pitches and ask him to replicate it. Another method to check pitch sense is to strike a number of unrelated pitches on the piano (in his comfortable vocal range) and ask him to "match" the various pitches. Most applicants will want to sing the pitch back too quickly and, consequently, their performance may suffer. Ask him to listen carefully to the pitch, hear it in his "mind's ear," and then sing it back to you.

There are other ways to test your applicants. Some choruses ask each applicant to demonstrate his ability to hold his part on a repertoire song in a quartet or in an octet. Other chapters ask each applicant (even a lead) to harmonize to a known melody to determine how well his "ear" is developed. (If you use this test, use simple, familiar songs such as "You Are My Sunshine," "My Bonnie Lies Over The Ocean," or other songs that are well known and easily harmonizable.) Some choruses require that their singers be capable of expressing the lyric of a song visually and facially. Others devise a simple test to determine the applicant's ability to learn choreography.

Whatever its elements, the formal audition should last no longer than 10 to 15 minutes and must be well planned and executed. At the close of the audition you may wish to discuss such matters as attendance requirements, expectations and any other items of chorus policy established by your chapter.

15.2.3 Follow-through

Results of the audition should be provided to the applicant immediately after the audition. The choices are:

- ▶ "Congratulations, you passed."
- ▶ "Congratulations, you passed, but we'd like for you to continue working on..."
- ▶ "You are encouraged to re-audition at a future time for the following reasons..."

Auditions allow the music team members to learn the vocal capabilities of the singer and to place him in a section and in a riser position where the singer can reach his vocal potential. During the audition, don't overlook how the applicant carries himself, how he speaks and other aspects of his general demeanor. In addition to his vocal abilities, you will need to know such things as his level of self-confidence, his personality, his aspirations and fears, and many other non-vocal things so you may help him to grow and contribute as much as possible to the chorus.

Finally, it is always better to encourage a "re-take" than to let a weak singer into the chorus. It is entirely possible that many who audition will not "pass" on the first try. Again, it is important for each chapter to determine musical standards that fit the goals and expectations for its individual musical program.

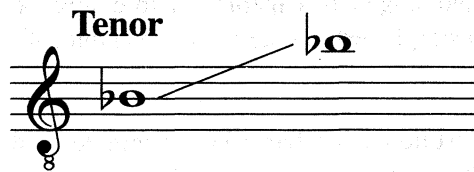
It is important that not only range, but also tone color be considered when assigning a voice part to a singer.

15.2.4 Characteristics of specific voice parts

Tenor

Listen for purity in the sound. Listen for lightness and elegance in the tone. In our style, tenors sing primarily in falsetto. Do not put heavy voices or voices with heavy vibrato into the tenor section. A good tenor voice will possess clarity and "ping" in the voice, particularly in the f^1 - $A \flat^1$ range. Avoid voices that have large "register breaks" as they ascend into the upper range. Since precise tuning is especially critical for harmony parts, an ability to harmonize by "ear" will be very helpful for your tenors.

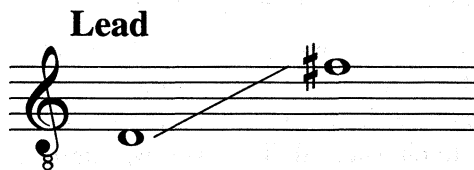
Tenor range: $B \flat$ to $b \flat^1$



Lead

Listen for an even warmer, richer sound than one might look for in the tenor voice. The lead singer will bring a warm sound to the lower register and will possess a consistency of tone from the top to the bottom of the range. While the lead singer will have a certain compelling quality to the voice, he'll also demonstrate the ability to sing with lyricism and artistry. Listen for a certain "personality" in the lead voice quality.

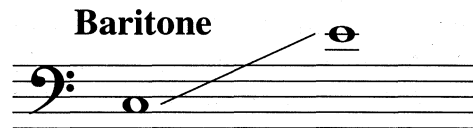
Lead range: D to $f \sharp^1$



Baritone

The barbershop baritone possesses a keen pitch sense and flexibility in handling pitches with dynamic control in the upper range. While the baritone may use a "head voice" in the upper range, he will also sing with beauty and body in the lower range. In true baritone voices, you may hear even greater richness than you might in the lead voice. Listen for sensitivity to pitch and a good singing quality in baritone voices. Like the tenor voice, an ability to harmonize by "ear" is vital to a good baritone.

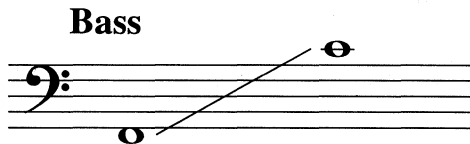
Baritone range: C to e¹



Bass

The bass voice supplies the foundation in barbershop singing. Bases will possess an unusual richness and focus in the lower range. These lower pitches will be produced with ease. Since bases are asked to perform the widest range of any voice part, bass singers need to demonstrate the ability to sing richly in the low register and without undue weight toward the upper part of their range. All bases should sing a low F with acceptable volume and quality and without vocal strain.

Bass range: F to c¹



The importance of a careful and systematic approach to auditioning voices cannot be over-emphasized. A well-designed and thoughtful audition can alleviate much of the stress associated with the process and, most important, will place the singer in a voice part where he can make the best contribution to your chorus and achieve his greatest growth as a singer and musician.

16

Arranging the chorus on the risers

All choruses will want to experiment with various standing arrangements, since each variation will make a noticeable difference in the sound of the ensemble. While moving the men around can be somewhat time consuming, it's important for you, as director, to know the way you prefer your chorus to be positioned. Before we discuss a variety of possible positions, let's consider some basics.

- ▶ All the singers should be positioned so that they can hear both themselves and, as much as possible, the total ensemble, too. In this way, they will be able to sing well as individuals and contribute as fully as possible to the success of the chorus.
- ▶ The voices toward the center one-third of the chorus will contribute most of the sound the audience hears. That is not to suggest that the voices on the outer thirds are less important, but merely that the listener picks up the sound of the central third of the chorus particularly well.
- ▶ Singers with like voices (in resonance, weight, and tonal placement) will sound better when placed beside each other. Voices that are unlike will "war" with each other. The sound that results will be "rough" (containing dissonances or "beats") and will make the process of singing inordinately difficult for both singers. Placing singers next to others with similar voices will make blending the ensemble easier and will allow each singer to make a greater contribution to the chorus with less effort.
- ▶ Placing singers with more resonant voices toward the center of the chorus will increase the power and richness of the ensemble sound.
- ▶ It's usually not good to place baritones and tenors together. This is due to the difficult interval that occurs when they sing the harmony notes (major third and flatted seventh) in a barbershop seventh (Mm7th) chord. The interval between these two notes is three whole steps. This interval (called a tritone, diminished fifth, or augmented fourth) is very difficult to tune. So, keep leads and basses together, with the tenors and baritones beside one or the other. You'll find this makes it easier for your harmony singers to tune.

The question becomes "Do I want them to stand in sections (all of one part together) or scattered across the risers (in "shotgun" formation)?" There are advantages and disadvantages to both.

16.1 Standing in sections

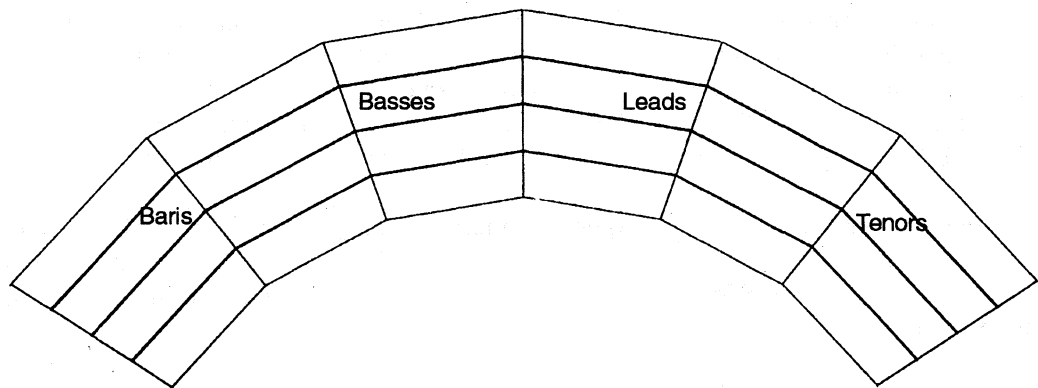
Since barbershop singing is, by its very definition, homophonic and chordal, we seek a kind of core or substance to each voice part. Particularly this is the case for the lead (melody) part and the bass part, which provides the foundation to the barbershop sound. Accepting this premise, it makes sense to consider placing the voices in sections on the risers, as this will emphasize the special responsibilities of each part.

Standing in sections, the singer hears his part all around him. Supported by the sound of others singing his part, he will be encouraged to contribute his utmost to the ensemble sound. He'll sing more of the right notes with better intonation. Standing in sections will also make it relatively easy to achieve a good blend within the section, especially if voices of like characteristics are grouped together.

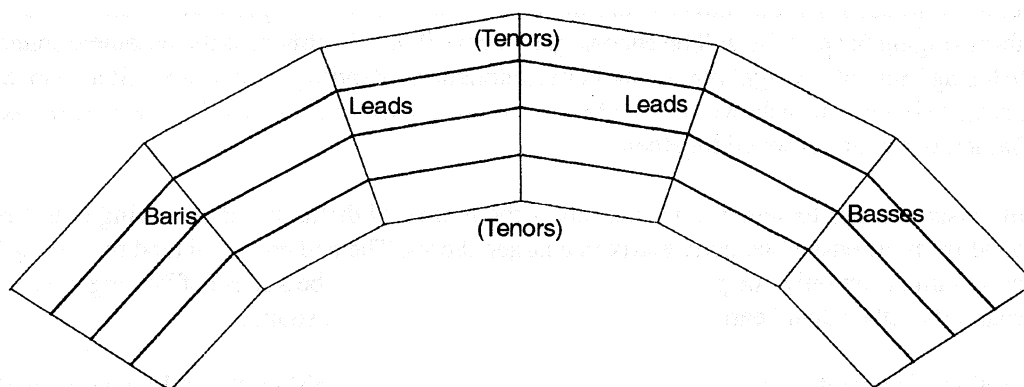
One disadvantage to standing in sections is the increased difficulty of achieving a unified sound from the ensemble, particularly in a larger chorus. The audience will tend to hear each part coming from only one place on the risers. Thus, there may be a sense of hearing the parts separately rather than hearing a unified, barbershop ensemble sound.

Another disadvantage to standing in sections is that it diminishes the individual singer's opportunity to hear his voice as a part of the barbershop ensemble. When surrounded only by basses, a bass singer may not fully enjoy being a part of our four-part harmony style as much as he might when he can easily hear all of the other three parts.

If you have your chorus stand in sections, where should each section stand? Remembering the relative volume to be heard from those standing toward the central part of the chorus, you might want to place a weaker section there. Bear in mind, however, that the barbershop style demands the melody (lead) line must always be predominant. The bass part, with its task of providing the foundation of the chord, should be the next most predominant and the baritones should fill out the chord without being too apparent. Finally, the tenors should supply brilliance and color with their upper harmony part. With these precepts in mind, move your sections around on the risers to achieve a proper balance of parts. Try:



If you have a relatively small number of tenors, less than 5 or 6 percent of your performing chorus, you might place the tenors in the center either in the rear or front:



A similar arrangement, but with the baritones in the center rather than the tenors, will boost an otherwise weak baritone section and diminish a relatively strong tenor section. Or try the leads in the center with either the baritones or tenors in the front or rear. As you can see, the possibilities are numerous. The key is to experiment with your chorus to achieve the best balance possible among the parts and the most homogenous, blended sound, both within each section and for the entire ensemble as well.

Obviously, the mirror image of any of these standing patterns may work, too.

16.2 Standing other than in sections

A second option is to scatter the voice parts across the risers, sometimes called "shotgun." A standing arrangement where singers do not stand next to or among singers of their own voice part encourages each singer to develop a greater sense of independence and intonation. Many singers like the ensemble sense they get from this positioning on the risers. They can hear all the parts and enjoy the entire barbershop experience, even though they're members of a large chorus. Each man gets to contribute his own vocal characteristics to a unified whole.

However, less secure singers will experience more difficulty singing proper pitches when standing in this way. And, without the security of hearing their part around them, some singers will sing less confidently, thereby diminishing their volume and the size of the chorus's sound.

It may be more difficult to achieve section unity when the singers are scrambled in this way, too. The various characteristics of each voice may be more apparent to the audience without the blending that can occur when the men stand in sections. This makes careful placing of the individual voices, given the differing vocal characteristics and individual strengths of your singers, even more important.

16.3 Standing in quartets or in threes

Another way to scatter the singers would be to have your men stand in quartets. This would allow each singer to experience his voice adding to the ensemble sound in a more traditional, barbershop way and may contribute to a more blended ensemble sound. Of course, if your chorus only has a few tenors, then this feeling of quartets is impossible to achieve for everybody. Try placing your singers in this formation (insofar as it is possible) and see how your chorus sounds. Do you like it? Do your singers like it?

One last standing arrangement is called the "theory of threes." This is based on an acoustic theory that holds that any group of three instruments sounding together (including voices) blends better and produces more fidelity than do other combinations. Try placing your leads in threes (taking care to balance the timbres as noted above) in various places on the risers. Intersperse the basses in threes among the leads and add the baritones and tenors, again in threes, in a similar fashion. Do you like this sound? Do your singers like it?

Since an obvious difficulty surfaces when one of the three is absent, this works best when you have your riser chart set for the annual show or a contest. You need to be able to predict with a high degree of reliability exactly who will be on stage when you perform.

16.4 Put the resonant voices toward the center

Whatever method you choose, sections, scrambled, quartet, or in threes, try putting the more resonant voices toward the middle of the chorus with the average resonance at the third points and the least resonant toward the outside. Do you like the sound of your chorus with the more resonant voices at the center of the chorus?

Vary the standing positions often in rehearsal to develop your own system that best pleases you and your chorus members. Note that any change of standing positions will change the stimulus of the singers, usually resulting in a change of concentration and an improvement in the quality of sound. Even placing chorus members on the risers alphabetically will change the sound, maybe for the better. The improvement will diminish over time, so change the stimulus again. Value the chorus members opinions about where they stand. If they express concerns, move them.

In summary, the principle objectives for any standing arrangement will be to achieve maximum power with minimum effort, a homogeneous blend in the ensemble, and a proper balance among the parts. Take into consideration the relative strengths and weaknesses of the individual sections in your chorus, the relative independence of various voices, the individual vocal characteristics of each singer, and your preferences for the sound of your chorus. Experiment with various standing arrangements during rehearsal. Make the process fun and the men will enjoy the variety and sense of adventure that results.

17

Planning the rehearsal and the musical year

To be a successful barbershop chorus director, you must plan each rehearsal and plan for the musical year.

17.1 Planning the rehearsal

17.1.1 Elements of a good rehearsal

Most directors get about 1-1/2 hours of rehearsal time with their chorus (as separate from the chapter meeting time). To be successful, this time needs to have several elements:

- ▶ Variety: sing at least five songs each night, but spend no longer than 20 minutes on any one song.
- ▶ Opportunities for success: don't rush through the good parts. Let your men know when they've been successful. Plan opportunities to thank them for their work. Let them know that you care when they get it right. Your approval is one of the most potent rewards they get.
- ▶ "Ah-Ha's": Plan to teach them something new each week. Let them savor and take pride in every learning experience.
- ▶ "Ha-ha's": Take time to laugh with them, even when it's at your mistakes. You don't have to be a standup comedian, just take the time to recognize that something funny has happened and share a laugh, a "ha-ha," with them.
- ▶ Ah's: Plan for a time to share a special moment together. Music in general and barbershop in particular is based on the sharing of emotions between the performer and the audience -- and among the performers, too. When the lyric commands that a feeling be felt, feel it together. Enjoy the chords. Share some "a-a-a-a-h-h-s" together.

Structurally, you must schedule time to:

- ▶ Teach new music
- ▶ Rehearse songs memorized but yet not performance ready
- ▶ Polish and maintain repertoire
- ▶ Have section rehearsals
- ▶ Teach vocal technique, chorus craft, etc.
- ▶ Teach and maintain choreography

The last three (section work, craft, and choreography) might not be in the rehearsal portion of the evening, but, even so, you will find that there's barely enough time to accomplish what you want to do. The only chance you have is to make a good plan and stick with it.

17.1.2 An evening rehearsal plan

- 7:00 The Old Songs
- 7:01 Warmup
- 7:15 Rehearsal I: (45 minutes)
 - 7:15 Introduce new song (20 minutes)
 - 7:35 Polish song [off paper this week] (20 minutes)
 - 7:55 Perform repertoire song (5 minutes)
- 8:00 Choreography or Section rehearsals
- 8:30 Break/Business
- 9:00 Program (tag singing, woodshedding, quartet singing, etc.)
- 9:15 Rehearsal II: (45 minutes)
 - 9:15 Polish Song II [off paper] (20 minutes)
 - 9:35 Maintain repertoire (5 songs x 5 minutes each = 25 minutes)
- 10:00 Keep The Whole World Singing

Obviously, any combination or order of elements will do; the important thing is to have a plan. This will help give attention to all the things you need to accomplish, keep the rehearsal moving, and provide the variety you want, too.

List the schedule for the evening (the songs you are going to work on and the time to be spent on each) on a marker board in front of the chorus. They will respond better when they know for sure that you have a plan. If it matters to you, it will matter to them.

17.2 Planning the year

Most choruses have a few big dates around which the year revolves. These may be an annual show, a December holiday show, a contest, or other events. Each of these events requires that your chorus be ready to perform by a date certain. To accomplish this task, it is vital that you plan. If there are 15 rehearsals before the annual show and you have six new songs to learn, choreography to put with three songs, and seven existing repertoire songs to polish and maintain, you must know what you're going to be working on at each rehearsal. Only through careful planning can you be certain that the chorus will be ready when the curtain goes up.

To make a journey of a specified length in an appointed time, you must know how far you have to go each day. The same is true with a rehearsal schedule. One procedure that works well is to use a simple spreadsheet to allocate the available time to the tasks required. You can assess the difficulty of each new song, the time required to re-learn or maintain the existing repertoire, and other time required for choreography, sectionals, etc. Then, you can apportion the available time in a logical way to ensure that each task gets its share of the time available.

Here is a sample spreadsheet:

SONG		2-Feb	9-Feb	16-Feb	23-Feb	2-Mar	9-Mar	16-Mar	23-Mar	Total
Alexander's Band	New	20	20	20	10*	10		20	20	120
Slow Boat to China	New	20	20		20	20*	20	10	10	120
Georgia	New	20	20	20	20	10*	10	20	10	130
Nellie	New			20	20	20	20*		10	90
Maggie	New					20	20	20*	20	80
Please Don't Talk	Rep	10		10		10		5	5	40
Shenandoah	Rep	10	10	10	10			5	5	50
Irish Blessing	Rep	10	10		10		10	5	5	50
Old Mill Stream	Rep		10	10			10	5	5	40
Total Time		90	90	90	90	90	90	90	90	720

*=Song memorized. No music will be allowed on risers after this date.

In this example, we have decided that "Georgia" needs the most time to teach to the chorus (130 minutes) with "Alexander's Band" and "Slow Boat To China" next at 120 minutes each. "Nellie" and "Maggie" should go well, so we've allocated less time to each of them. The repertoire songs are rated and scheduled similarly.

You may also indicate on the sheet when the songs are to be memorized. If you do this, don't let anyone use the music for that song on the risers after that date. If they haven't memorized the song yet, ask them politely to stand at one end of the risers while they sing. No one likes to be singled out in this way, however positively you do it, so they will learn the song by the next week in most cases.

Giving the men the rehearsal schedule in advance will allow them to prepare and, yes, they will prepare if they see you are this organized. Try it. It works.

Planning will make your life easier. It will let your men know how important this task is to you and they will come to rehearsal better prepared. So, by whatever method, plan your rehearsals and your year for success and the men will respond positively. You'll sleep better, too.

18

The music leadership team

Most successful chapters have discovered that the use of a music team can help achieve their goals, both musical and otherwise, and produce many other benefits, too. After a chapter has developed its mission statement (refer to *Chapter Management Guide*, Stock No. 4000), the music team can be instrumental in achieving the music goals contained in the mission and can create more effective communication between the chapter leadership and the chapter members. The planning and implementation of the yearly musical plan (including music selection, contest planning, instructional programs, etc.) will be more easily accomplished, additional musical talent and leadership may be discovered and developed. Membership retention problems will be lessened with a more effective musical program, and more guests will want to join this exciting organization.

The music committee is responsible for the chapter's entire musical product. Usually chosen by the music director and the vice president for music and performance, the committee might include assistant directors, section leaders, the chorus manager and music librarian. Depending on the size of the chapter, other team members might include a production director (responsible for stage aspects of performances), specialists in vocal production and visual performance skills, and coordinators of other areas such as auditions and repertoire.

The music committee may consist of only a few key members who are part of a larger music team. The chapter president should serve as an ex-officio member of the committee. You will want to decide how many members will comprise your music committee. Regardless of the number, it is important that the committee contains enough members to support open and honest discussions, yet not be so large that decision making becomes clumsy.

Most committee decisions must be reached by the consensus that results from open and frank discussion. Such discussion greatly helps to clarify issues and helps ensure that everyone is informed on all issues. Respect and mutual trust among the members are essential to promote a healthy exchange of ideas. Because of the need to address personal matters such as health problems or issues regarding standards, expectations, discipline, etc., music committee meetings should be open only to committee members.

The music committee should meet regularly. Many of our successful choruses have found that weekly meetings of the music committee are beneficial; others meet monthly. Regardless of the frequency of meetings, it is important that the music committee serve as a support system for the music director in his task of assuring that the musical goals of the chapter are met.

There are many ways the music team may be used effectively during the rehearsal and chapter meeting. With the director's concurrence and guidance, it is the responsibility of the VP/M&P to assign tasks to team members. One or more team members may be responsible for:

- Initial voice placement of guests and prospective members

- ▶ Auditions
- ▶ The warm-up (Stock No. 4068)
- ▶ Section rehearsals
- ▶ Tag singing (Stock Nos. 6024, 6025, 6026)
- ▶ Craft classes (Stock No. 4034)
- ▶ Exercises in the *Inner Game of Music Workbook* (Stock No. 4095)
- ▶ Quartet activities
- ▶ Woodshedding activities (Stock Nos. 4040, 6021)
- ▶ Musical and performance orientation of new members

There is much more to be said about the effective use of the team approach to musical success. For more information, refer to the *Chapter Management Guide* (Stock No. 4000) and the *Music Leadership Team Manual* (Stock No. 4042).

19

Working with a coach

Successful choruses throughout the Society have learned that there is much to be gained by asking outside experts, known as coaches, to assist them musically, vocally and in areas of successful performance. There are many excellent coaches within the Society. Depending on the methods used and the effect they have on the individuals, new habits can be formed, voices can be improved and lives can be changed.

Some coaches are skilled at enhancing the dramatic effect of a performance. Others are very good at interpreting the musical elements of a song. Others excel in teaching good singing techniques. Many coaches can help in more than one area. Find coaches who serve your chorus's needs and who will help your chorus improve, not in one or two sessions, but over an extended period of time.

To avoid misunderstandings, ask in advance if there is a fee for the coach's services. It is always proper to reimburse the coach for his expenses. Above all, always treat him with great regard. He's giving his valuable time to help you improve.

Talented coaches are everywhere. Many certified judges and certified chorus directors are good coaches. Each DVP/M&P has a list of qualified coaches. Ask people whom you respect for recommendations. In this age of cars and planes, virtually any coach with whom you might wish to work is accessible to you, regardless of where you live.

The coach has the responsibility of being honest in his evaluation of your chorus. He also has a responsibility to be kind and encouraging. If you don't seek honesty and a frank, yet thoughtful appraisal of your chorus, don't ask a coach to work with you. His job is to help you and he can only do this when you and your chorus are willing to do the things that will help you get better.

A coach should understand the purpose and philosophy of barbershopping. He should be open, enthusiastic and positive. He should be able to teach and communicate effectively, gearing his approach to your needs and abilities. He should challenge your thinking and the abilities of your singers and create confidence in your and the chorus's ability to make the changes he requests.

A coach should be familiar with available musical arrangements and may suggest songs that might work well for your chorus. He should be familiar with the contest judging categories. He must patiently and pleasantly guide your singers through a systematic program of solid fundamentals designed to improve their abilities.

The chorus and the chorus director also have a responsibility to their coach. Every reasonable effort must be made to follow the coach's suggestions. The singers and the director must always be open-minded and willing to make changes.

A good coach brings much to a chorus and the chorus director. You will want to work hard to please him in exchange for his time, effort and skill. Express your appreciation to him often. If you've invited a coach in and he's not fulfilled your expectations, you are not obligated to invite him back. However, once you've found a good coach, do all you can to keep him.

Do seek assistance from coaches. They can help set a positive direction for your chorus and help you develop as a director. Chorus members always respect the director who willingly accepts comments and suggestions from a coach. When a chorus director demonstrates that he is open and receptive to growth, this sends a powerful message to every chorus singer.

20

Planning for a successful performance

A successful performance for any artist is not a matter of chance. Careful and knowledgeable planning must go into any public presentation if we are to offer a high quality product to the audience and showcase our hobby properly.

The elements of successful programming will not be presented here. The Society handbook, *Successful Performance for the Quartet and Chorus*, (Stock No. 4055) available from Harmony Marketplace, 800-876-SING (7464), goes into detail about this important subject. Some important topics covered are:

- ▶ Types of Performances
- ▶ Performance Objectives
- ▶ The Musical Plan
- ▶ Variety
- ▶ The Spokesman
- ▶ Professionalism
- ▶ The Business Side

As a successful chorus director, you must be knowledgeable about and have a full understanding of the elements of a successful performance. We recommend this essential publication to you.

20.1 General performance notes

(Borrowed from the Sante Fe Springs, California Chapter, Masters of Harmony)

Confidence comes as a result of preparedness. Your critical moments for success happen when you're under pressure. You need "PPUPP" -- Peak Performance Under Peak Pressure.

You must also speak to the hearts of your listeners. You can do that only if you open your own heart. The trick is doing so when under pressure. Performance anxiety is the single obstacle -- some people sweat, some get dry mouth and many get other symptoms as well. There is nothing wrong with any of these things so long as you're in control. These things will happen, so just know how your body operates and be ready.

Many people think they want to get rid of the butterflies, but you shouldn't; you want some adrenaline working for you. You need that excitement to show your heart to reach their hearts. In other words, you want to "make the butterflies fly in formation!" Use the nervous tension to work for you, and you'll be better than you ever thought.

The late baritone of the **Roaring 20's** quartet, Ron Riegler, had this advice about stage fright: "Don't worry about making mistakes. What in life could possibly be worth that personal anxiety? You've rehearsed the act and are prepared, so just think about the correct things you're supposed to do and then go out there on stage and **do it!**"

20.1.1 Some pre-performance considerations

- ▶ Shave as closely as possible; no strong fragrances.
- ▶ A white t-shirt and white briefs should be worn under stage costume.
- ▶ No wrist watches on stage.
- ▶ Drink lots of water -- hydrate!
- ▶ Use no alcohol before a performance. It dries out the throat and will also take the excitement out of your music. Caffeine also dries out the throat, so drink coffee in moderation. The intake of any mood changing substance should always be avoided.

20.1.2 Standing on the risers

- ▶ Feet should be in line with the shoulders, toes slightly spread, and the outside foot slightly forward; weight on the balls of your feet.
- ▶ Arms should be relaxed at the side, but elbows slightly back; hands motionless; fingers slightly cupped. Avoid licking your lips.
- ▶ Front row members should step away from the risers about one foot. Second row, toes on the edge. Third row, in the middle of the risers. Fourth row, heels toward the back of the riser. Standing this way optimizes the depth upstage to downstage.
- ▶ While curtains are open, have a continuous, pleasant, sincere and exciting smile; faces should be turned out to the audience until the director turns to face the chorus.
- ▶ When singing, always keep your focal attention on the director unless he turns out to the audience (in which case you look there as well), or a stage presence move temporarily requires you to look somewhere else. Concentrate on looking where you're supposed to, but NEVER up at the lights, into the wings, or at another chorus member. If something falls down, burns up, or the curtain gets stuck, just smile bigger and use the event as an opportunity to prove to everyone just how professional you are!

20.1.3 Stage presence

- ▶ If you miss a move, just smile bigger and pick up with the next one. Do not grimace and/or move late, or try and slowly "sneak" your hand (or whatever) into the proper position. That just draws attention to yourself. Don't be the dark light bulb on the marquee! Concentrate on your performance. If your neighbor messes up, don't watch him, (If you do, you'll probably miss your next move!)
- ▶ The entire time you are on stage there should be strong stage presence involving the face. It should never be expressionless, but always convey the mood of the moment. In order to project mood to the audience (for them to see and feel it), there must be much more expression on your face than normal. All of your facial muscles need to be involved -- the cheeks, eyes, brows, and forehead -- with the mouth forming pure vowel sounds. (Incidentally, with the eyes, a slightly increased opening shows excitement; a slightly decreased opening shows tenderness.)

- ▶ The places the judges notice most are those when you're not singing -- between phrases and between songs -- and when you're not moving during an up-tune. These are the spots where your concentration must be heightened in order not to let down. Use each breath to refresh and energize your face, whether to an exciting smile or other mood appropriate to the song.
- ▶ After the curtain closes, no shrieks of joy. It's not professional. Act like you've been there before.

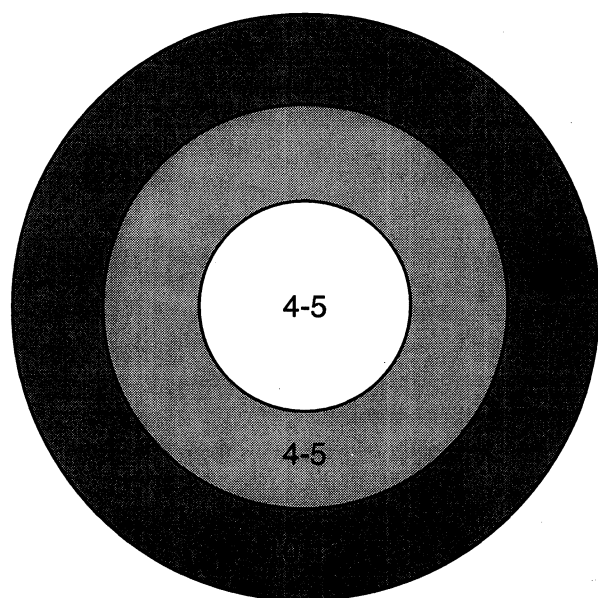
21

Leading your chorus

Your chorus is unique. Your members are human beings of all ages, levels of commitment, who have varying amounts of time available for a hobby. They are all volunteers who have chosen to spend their time enjoying a hobby that involves music and fellowship. They are not your employees or students in your classroom. The purpose of this chapter is to give you a greater understanding of how to encourage and lead your men to greater musical accomplishments; to gain skills necessary to enlist their involvement instead of commanding it.

Men join and stay in our Society for a variety of reasons, but research indicates that a majority of them join because of their interest in music and stay because of the fellowship that evolves over the years. These are men who have a variety of educational levels, job responsibilities, family commitments, personal interests, etc

Below is a diagram of three circles within one another.



Let's look at the significance of the numbers within the circles. In this example the active membership is twenty men -- your chapter size may vary, but the ratios will stay about the same.

Of these, there is an inner circle of four or five men who are the leaders. They are usually board members, certainly the director. They organize, administrate, promote, and "run" the chapter. By definition, they are leaders.

At the next level of involvement, the middle of the three circles, are four or five men who,

if asked, will help. They won't usually volunteer, but they will assist with a project. They recognize that the people in the middle circle, the leaders, can't do everything, so they help out, but they do not assert themselves as active leaders.

At the last -- and largest -- level of involvement, the outer circle, are the men who come out once a week, enjoy the fellowship of the chapter, learn the repertoire, or just want to sing the old songs and perhaps a tag or two. They enjoy their involvement at their current level and have little or no interest in the administrative side of the chapter.

The point is that all of your members are different. You must approach them with this knowledge in mind. You must tailor your teaching and your leadership to the different levels of commitment of your members. If you try to make them all care about the hobby and chapter equally, you will be doomed to a life of frustration as a director. Know your men, challenge them individually, teach them effectively, and love them collectively.

You and your music and administrative teams have the responsibility of meeting the needs of all of the members regardless of their level of commitment. Certainly the more your personal philosophy and mission for the men match the reasons the members are attending the meetings, the more successful you will be at meeting their individual needs. There are three philosophies occurring simultaneously: your philosophy as director (your attitude towards barbershopping, your chapter, and its members), the philosophy of the individual member (why he joined and why he stays), and the philosophy of the chapter (the chapter's mission statement or purpose for its existence). The closer these three philosophies align, the more likely success will be met regarding members' needs.

Evaluate your chapter and its members to ensure that you are contributing to their success. Seek the counsel of others within the chapter to help meet the needs of each of the men who takes the time to be a part of the hobby and your chapter.

22

Why take your chorus to contest?

Why, indeed? Why put yourself and your singers through the stress of competing? You probably won't win. Why go at all?

There are lots of reasons. The convention weekend is, certainly, more than a contest -- it's a convention, too. Your singers will get to meet and mingle with men from other chapters, sing in lobbies, halls, and stairways, observe and learn from other choruses' performances, witness the trials and joys of quartetting, and get away from the cares of life for a weekend.

You are demonstrating that you want to improve as a director and, thereby, to help your chorus improve. Competing at regular intervals and being scored by a panel of judges gives you an undeniable measurement of that improvement. Attending and learning from the evaluation sessions that follow the contest gives valuable information you and your chorus need to continue to improve year by year. But, the principal benefit of competing occurs in the weeks and months before the contest. Preparing for contest provides a focus and intensity to your rehearsal time that nothing else can. This focus and intensity will hone both your singers' skills and your own in a way that you can't duplicate. No other performance -- not your annual show, performances around town, singing for your families, jamborees -- nothing else offers the "now or never" atmosphere of a contest. The intensity surrounding this event gives you a unique opportunity for growth.

Certainly you shouldn't devote your entire rehearsal every week to the two contest songs. You will want to select two solid barbershop songs that are well within your singers' capabilities and concentrate on raising the level of performance of these songs in the weeks before the contest. You will ask others to listen to and work with your chorus. Everybody's concentration level will increase. The men will spend extra time on performance skills for these two songs with the knowledge that the skills learned in this period of concentrated effort will transfer, eventually, to your entire repertoire.

But there's more in it for your chorus than just making fantastic progress as a performing organization. The whole contest experience choosing music -- learning it, rehearsing intently, adding the choreography, bringing in outside coaches, traveling to another town, being together at the site, putting your all on stage -- will prove that the journey, not the destination, is the goal. The competing is over in a matter of minutes. The lessons you learn in the process last a lifetime.

Working hard for contest, if the hard work produces progress, can bring your chorus together in a unique way. Properly handled, the knowledge that there is no second chance to achieve your goal, at least until the next contest, will give your chorus a feeling of responding to challenge, and a building of community, that can only be found under the intensity of contest conditions.

Well, what if you win? Just work harder for next year to win it again with higher scores. What if you lose? Impossible! You can't lose. Not if you think of the process as a unique opportunity for learning not that you're better than others are, but that you're better than you were last year.

If you look only at the ranking on the score sheets, you probably will finish ahead of some and behind others. What does this teach you? Just that you're further along the road to realizing your full potential than some are, and not as far along as others. You can always be a winner. How much progress have you and your chorus made since the last contest? Resolve to get some help and work smarter in the future. You'll see even more progress next time.

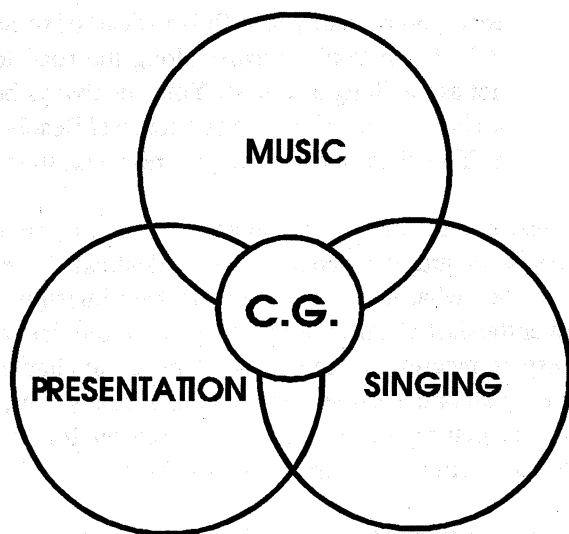
It would be unwise to rely solely on contest scores for an assessment of your progress. Performance venues vary. The scoring levels of judging panels are not identical. Other conditions change. Well, if not the contest scores, what then? Ask yourself these questions: Are your audiences at home growing more enthusiastic? Are your men selling more tickets to the annual show? Are they bringing guests to meetings? Are they showing up at chapter meetings early and staying late? If the answer to all of these questions is unequivocally "yes," then you can be certain that your chorus is getting better. A primary reason for this improvement is likely to be your dedication to preparing for and going to contest.

Why don't more of us take our choruses to competition? Do we simply fear failure? Are we afraid that our skills as a director will be tried and found wanting? Do we think the scores they receive will embarrass our men? If the honest answer is yes, or even maybe, then it's time to look in the mirror and ask the hard question. How do we get better as teachers and leaders so that our men can enter the contest with realistic expectations, a reasonable chance of feeling successful, and a firm belief that one way to gain real growth is through serious competition?

Remember, "Hard work is fun when progress is apparent." And nothing makes us work harder -- and have fun -- like preparing for a contest.

23

Understanding the judging system



Our contest and judging system involves three scoring categories -- Music, Presentation, and Singing. A Contest Administrator serves as the chairman of judges. At the center of the above diagram is Common Ground (C.G.), which contains primary elements of the style that lie within the domain of all of the judging categories.

The judging system helps to promote the kinds of choices by performers that will preserve our barbershop style for future generations. There is an emphasis on freely produced, resonant sound; on an authentic performance from the heart; on the overall effect rather than the individual devices; and on arrangements and songs that are singable by the performers.

23.1 Introduction

An audience member experiences the art form of barbershop music as a whole. Thus, even while evaluating a performance from a particular perspective, an audience member will experience the total performance. Each of the three categories Music, Presentation, and Singing -- is a particular perspective from which a judge views the total performance. To some extent, then, all judges will judge the total performance and certain elements of a barbershop performance--the common ground elements -- will be evaluated by judges in all three categories.

Each category judge will determine a single quality rating or score, on a scale of 1 to 100. The judge will determine whether the level of the performance is excellent (A-level, from

81-100), good (B-level, from 61-80), fair (C-level, from 41-60), or poor (D-level, from 1-40), and award an exact score based upon an evaluation of all the elements in the performance -- including the common ground elements -- that have an impact on his category. The judge will evaluate the overall effect or value of the performance.

If no quality rating is appropriate owing to an unequivocal and definite violation of the rules, the judge will forfeit his score, awarding a 0.

23.2 The Common Ground

There are five elements:

1. **In the barbershop style?**

All judges are responsible for preserving the barbershop style.

2. **Ring, in-tune sound?**

Since barbershop harmony is a style of vocal music characterized by consonant four-part chords for every melody note, to which the harmony parts are enharmonically adjusted in pitch in order to produce an optimum consonant sound, in-tune singing is a concern of all.

3. **In good quality?**

The use of similar word sounds sung in good quality helps to produce the unique full or expanded sound of barbershop harmony. Performances should be characterized by a natural, resonant, full-voiced presentation, though tenors may not be singing full voice.

4. **Suitable to the performer?**

All judges will evaluate the suitability of the music to the performer, though the orientation of judges will differ from category to category. Performers are encouraged to choose music that they enjoy singing, and that features their strengths. There are no benefits in choosing difficult or easy music -- only in choosing music that your ensemble can perform well.

5. **From the heart?**

Performers should strive to commit themselves to contribute something to the audience in an authentic, sincere, and heartfelt manner. Within the parameters of the judging system there is sufficient freedom to bring a multitude of individual styles and performance preferences to the contest stage. Judges will evaluate the particular performance as much as possible without regard to prior performances and without preconceived ideas of how the music "should" be performed.

23.3 The Music category

Music is defined as the song and arrangement, as performed. The Music judge is responsible for adjudicating the musical elements in the performance. He judges the extent to which the musical performance displays the hallmarks of the barbershop style, and the degree to which the musical performance demonstrates an artistic sensitivity to the music's primary theme.

The primary hallmark of barbershop music is its consonant harmony. Thus, the quality of any barbershop performance depends largely on the presence, accurate execution, and artistic delivery of the consonant harmony traditionally identified with the barbershop style.

Indirectly, the Music judge evaluates the work of the composer and arranger. The song must be appropriate to the barbershop style, and the various musical elements should work together to establish a theme. The sensitive handling of musical elements -- melody, lyrics, harmony, range and tessitura, embellishments, tempo, rhythm, and meter, musical construction and

form -- demonstrates musicality. A strong musical performance is one in which everything provided by the composer and arranger is skillfully delivered and effectively integrated in support of the musical theme. This requires that the music be suited to the performers, and that the performers understand the music. The music judge will accept any treatment that is musically plausible. The theme may also change from one part of the song to another. Whatever the theme, the Music judge evaluates how the musical elements of the song and arrangement support it.

23.4 The Presentation category

Presentation is a "sharing," including the thrill of transforming a printed song into an emotional experience and sharing it with an audience. Words and notes are the composer's and, subsequently, the arranger's gift to the performer. The presentation of the song is the performers' gift to the audience. Within that presentation, the performers have the freedom to explore individual style as part of a unified performing group provided the individual expression does not override the bounds of good taste or contemporary standards of barbershop.

The Presentation judge evaluates everything about the performance that contributes to emotional impact upon the audience. Effect and believability are the benchmarks used to evaluate a performance and its impact. Impact means the transference of an emotional experience to the audience; it may be gentle and barely perceptible or it may be enormously powerful; but, to be measured favorably, it must be believable and appropriate.

The Presentation judge evaluates the entertainment value in a barbershop performance. Visual and vocal interpretation serve to explain the emotional content of the song as it is understood by the performers and to stimulate the audience's participation in the experience. The Presentation judge evaluates how effectively the performers bring the song to life -- that is, how believable is the illusion of the story/message/theme in its visual and vocal setting. He will respond to both the visual and vocal aspects of the presentation, but he will principally evaluate the interaction of these aspects as they work together to create the image of the song.

23.5 The Singing category

One ingredient that clearly identifies barbershop music is its unique sound. The best barbershop singing combines elements of technique and emotion to create an artistic result: the transformation of a song into an emotional experience for everyone.

Primarily, the Singing judge listens for the pleasing effect of in-tune singing from voices that are free and resonant and exhibit no signs of difficulties. He expects to hear the ensemble as a unit, free from distractions by individual differences of quality or delivery. Furthermore, enhanced by the choice of harmonies, voices, and voice relationships characteristic to barbershop, the ensemble sound can achieve a sound that feels greater than the sum of the parts: a "lock" or "ring," or the feeling of "expanded sound." The ring of a barbershop chord will always be the hallmark of the style. Any listener to a barbershop performance expects to be thrilled by the sound of a ringing climax, or awed by the purity and beauty of a soft and elegant expression of a song. Great barbershop singing demands mastery of vocal and ensemble skills to create barbershop musical artistry.

The Singing judge evaluates the degree to which the performers achieve artistic singing in the barbershop style. This is accomplished through precise intonation, a high degree of vocal

skill, good vocal quality, and a high level of unity and consistency within the ensemble. Mastering these elements also creates a feeling of fullness, ring, and expansion of sound. When artistry is present, these elements are natural, unmanufactured, and free from apparent effort.

23.6 Conclusion

The contest and judging system is designed to evaluate and encourage musical improvement in every chorus that participates in Society contests. For more information on the judging fraternity, contact your DVP/C&J or consult the *Contest & Judging Handbook* (Stock No. 4060.)

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Ten steps to a better singing and performing chorus

The following concepts were extracted from a master class presented by the Masters of Harmony with Dr. Greg Lyne at the Indianapolis Convention in July, 1997. The approach and the expectations presented here may prove beneficial for all chorus directors in our Society.

Singer's Posture

Always sing with one foot slightly in front of the other, weight comfortably forward, chest comfortably up in a proud position, shoulders resting comfortably down and a little back, head in line with the body. Stand tall. Controlled relaxation is the goal, an attitude of readiness for anything. Everything in perfect equipoise!

Active Face

Always sing with an involved face. Lift the cheek muscles a little, raise and lift the upper lip a little, energize the eyes a lot, get involved facially. No tortured looks, just energize the facial muscles.

Vowels that look right

Make an "oh" vowel look like an "oh" an "oo" like an "oo," etc. Keep all the vowels vertical -- not horizontal. Notice that a slight animation of the upper lip (a "lift" off the teeth) can contribute to increased resonance.

In-line singing

Make all the vowels sound similar to each other. That is, no single vowel should "pop" out at the listener. They should all have a similar character. While an "ah" is certainly distinct from an "oh" or an "ee," it should not be vastly different in the way it's placed, vocally, or in its inherent resonant characteristics. This is achieved by consistent vocal production, consistent placement, and a consistent approach to the musical line. At its best, there should be a continual, uninterrupted resonance (ring) throughout the entire vocal line, through the full range of word sounds and pitches.

Focused Singing

The sound is simply focused into a resonant point, about where the point of the unicorn's horn would be. Start the chorus with their hands held wide, shoulder high and have them sing a unison pitch while slowly bringing the palms together in front of them. Have them listen to the "focusing" of the sound. This is related to No. 4, above. They will feel the tone placed behind the eyes or a little higher. The tongue position is critical. The tongue should be relaxed with the tip touching the lower gum ridge. This should be carefully taught and carefully monitored. Tongue tension is counter-productive.

Know the characteristics of your part.

There are many ways to relate the different roles of each part to the unified whole. I like the car analogy: The chorus is a finely tuned, extremely expensive racing machine (say, a Lamborghini). The basses are the engine: smooth, velvet, powerful, unrelenting in its supply of effortless, masculine power. The baris are the transmission: shifting from gear to gear in a smooth, effortless motion. The leads are, of course, the drivers. They are in control of both the speed and direction of this well constructed machine. And the tenors are, well, how about the paint job? Brilliant yellow, fire engine red?

Of course, any descriptive approach to part characteristics (foundation from the basses, dignity from the baris, personality from the leads, shimmer or sparkle from the tenors works very well.

Bring the whole singer.

Bring all that you have to offer to every experience in life, including the rehearsal. Be in the moment, be attentive, be alert, be energetic, contribute to the whole. "Be all that you can be."

Expect to grow.

Expect every rehearsal to bring personal and corporate growth. Come with the expectation of learning. Come expecting the musical leadership to have something to teach you. Treat time spent not gaining new knowledge as time wasted. Mean to improve.

"I'm talking to you!"

Not to the man behind you, not to the man on either side, not to the man in front, but to you. Every comment is meant for you. Be prepared to change instantly when the musical leader asks for a change. Don't think he means someone else. He means you! Do it now! Only you can change the way the chorus performs.

Look, act, be successful!

When you're a little down, your back or feet hurt, or you wish you were somewhere else, try acting the way you'd like to feel. Stand up straight, smile, elevate your chest, look someone in the eye. If you look successful and act successful, success will follow. Take charge of your experience and make it be something wonderful!

25

A short history of the barbershop style

The beginnings of barbershop music, as with any style of folk music, are lost in the past. Casual and spontaneous singing was associated with the barber and his shop in 16th century England and was probably transplanted, along with a great many other British customs, to the New World by way of the American colonists.

While singing around a piano in the parlor was certainly a feature of American life in the colonies, by the 17th century the singing of slaves, principally in the South, probably laid the most certain foundation for the type of singing barbershoppers do today. Several sources indicate that by the second half of the 19th Century the concept of quartet singing in the style that was to be called "barbershop" was extremely popular with the African-American community. In fact, the first non-professional quartets whose existence is certain were African-American quartets in the 1870s.

By the mid-1800s, the tradition of quartet singing was firmly established with all segments of the population. Popular professional quartets existed, as did published quartet songbooks. Minstrel shows, with improvised quartet arrangements, helped extend the influence and growth of the style.

Following the Civil War, the popular songs of the Gilded Age, with simple, easily sung melodies, hastened the growth of the style. These melodies contained a relatively large number of whole and half notes that allowed harmony singers room to make the harmonic moves which later were to be called "snakes" or "swipes." Songs such as "My Wild Irish Rose" (1899) and "You're The Flower Of My Heart, Sweet Adeline" (1903) are good examples of this type of song. Making music in the home was commonplace, as families gathered around the parlor piano and sang the popular songs of the day.

An important quality of the songs of the late 19th century was that their melodies tended to lie between the fifth scale degree below the tonic note and the fifth scale degree above the tonic. These "sol to sol" songs allowed the melody to be sung by the second tenor, allowing the top tenor room to harmonize above the melody. The range of these melodies also gave the bass singer plenty of room to maneuver below the melody as well. This "melody in the second voice" continues to be one of the predominant characteristics of the barbershop style to this day.

This was also the time of the first recorded music and among the most popular recordings were those of professional male quartets. Quartets such as the **Peerless, American, and Haydn** quartets were highly popular, as were the thousands of amateur quartets of the early 1900s. Lodges, churches, clubs, companies, and police and fire departments often sponsored these quartets. Street singers, porters, shoeshine boys, and others joined barbers in "cracking up chords" in what was called "lamp post," "curbstone," and simply "close" harmony.

By now the music they sang had usually come from the publishing houses in Tin Pan Alley in New York. Writers like Irving Berlin, Ernest Ball, George M. Cohan, and Harry and Albert von Tilzer wrote thousands of songs that quartets liked to sing. Some of the favorites were "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling," "Wait 'Till The Sun Shines, Nellie," "I Want A Girl Just Like The Girl That Married Dear Old Dad," "Alexander's Ragtime Band," and "Give My Regards To Broadway."

Quartets were also a staple of the vaudeville stage. This popular form of variety show developed during the 1890s and featured entertainment by quartets such as the **Avon Comedy Four**. Vaudeville houses sprang up across the country and the influence of this highly visual type of performance impacted barbershop for almost 50 years. Other influences on this distinctly American form of music were Ragtime, the Chautauqua, and jazz. (Louis Armstrong said that he learned to play jazz harmonies by singing tenor in a barbershop quartet in New Orleans in his youth.)

During the early 1900s, the town barbershop continued to be a favorite male gathering spot. Quartet singing often occurred within its walls and the style of improvised harmonizing practiced therein gradually became known as "barbershop" (Mm7/dominant 7th.) The first printed reference to barbershop as an adjective to describe this style of music is in an article written in December 1900 by an African-American critic from Chicago called "Tom the Tattler." Another early printed reference is in a song from 1910 named "Play That Barber Shop Chord." The chord it referred to is, of course, the flat seventh chord, or "barbershop" seventh.

With the advent of the movies and radio, group singing in general and barbershop quartet singing in particular began a rapid decline. As people became more captivated by these new forms of entertainment, live amateur quartets became more rare. The new, more sophisticated and rhythmically complex music lent itself more to dancing than to singing. The barbershop quartet began to disappear.

This fact was noted and lamented by two gentlemen from Tulsa, Oklahoma: O. C. Cash and Rupert Hall. In March of 1938, they became acquainted while stranded by weather in Kansas City. After an evening of casual quartet singing in the Muehlebach Hotel, they decided to do something to help them continue to sing this kind of music. Upon their return to Tulsa, they invited some friends to attend a meeting.

Within a year, several chapters of the organization that would be called SPEBSQSA were formed and the first annual convention and quartet contest was held in 1939. These two men tapped a very strong vein of sentiment for this style of singing and, by 1950, there were almost 27,000 members of the new organization in 620 chapters across the United States and Canada.

Chorus singing soon developed to complement quartet singing. By the late 1940s, the Society

was helping to educate chorus directors and developing arrangements specifically for choruses. Some districts began to hold chorus contests in the early 1950s and the first International Chorus Contest, after a trial run in Detroit the previous year, was held in Washington, D.C. in 1954. The hometown heroes from the D.C. chapter were crowned the first "SPEBSQSA International Chorus Champion."

Today, barbershop choruses are an integral part of our Society. Many Society members seldom sing in quartets and obtain immense satisfaction from participating in their chapter chorus. Many consider the district and international chorus contests and chorus performances on annual shows to be the most entertaining and enjoyable venues for barbershop. SPEBSQSA would certainly be a smaller, less diverse, and musically poorer organization if chorus singing were not encouraged. The health of this important part of preserving and propagating the style lies in the hands of you, our chorus directors.

For more information about the history of barbershop singing, consult *Heritage of Harmony*.

26

Introducing barbershop to music educators

26.1 Why worry about youth?

Some 55,000 music teachers are members of Music Educators National Conference (MENC). We can rejoice that many outstanding music teachers are actively educating our youth about music.

In recent years, we've witnessed an increasing number of these teachers coming to us with questions about barbershop music, the Society, Harmony Explosion camps, attending Harmony College, forming quartets in the schools and much more. This is a most promising time for us to introduce music educators to barbershop singing.

We also receive many questions from our own SPEBSQSA membership asking how best to approach music teachers:

- ▶ "How can I let them know about this great style of music?"
- ▶ "What questions will the music teachers ask of me?"
- ▶ "Are there materials available to help me visit more effectively with music teachers?"

We're learning from our members, and through direct contacts with music educators, that many teachers really do wish to learn more about barbershop singing. And we've seen some success stories wherein a school choral program is markedly enhanced when some barbershop singing is a part of the curriculum. We also have learned that young men do love to sing barbershop.

We've also determined that there are some teachers who may not be as eager to learn about barbershop singing as we'd like them to be. Should this be the case, we need to accept it and not push. The very best influence upon encouraging a music teacher to become interested in barbershop harmony is another music teacher's testimonial as to its positive influence. There is nothing so powerful, in spreading the good word of our Society and our style, as a teacher espousing the virtues of barbershop singing to a colleague.

26.2 Getting a foot in the door

Music teachers are busy people -- concerts, festivals, programs, workshops, in-service meetings, faculty responsibilities and classroom management expectations, to say nothing of rehearsal schedules. If music teachers fear that we are pushing something on them, or that they'll have to assume even more responsibilities, they will not respond favorably. We should never impose our enthusiasm for barbershop music on any music teacher who has not already indicated an interest in learning more about our style.

To alert music teachers to our interest in supporting singing in the schools in general, and

supporting the activities of the local music programs, begin attending junior high and senior high choral activities in your vicinity. Become visible at their music theater productions, at festivals and at concerts. After the performance, tell the teacher you enjoyed the concert, and that you appreciate the performers' work. Let the teacher know that you value music, and its importance in young people's lives.

It's likely that the music teacher will ask you about your enthusiasm for singing and your musical interests. This would be a good time to mention barbershopping. Tell the teacher about the Society, your chapter or quartet. Also, inform the teacher of our Society's mission statement. It tells what we're about, and should really appeal to music educators as our mission is the same as theirs.

Then, when a teacher does indicate in interest in our style, here are some good ways you might consider in providing an effective introduction to our style:

- ▶ Send the name and address of the teacher to Society headquarters, attn: "Youth Outreach." We will send a complimentary packet of materials to the teacher: a booklet introducing SPEBSQSA, some music suitable for young men's voices, a catalog of arrangements available through the Society, and other educational materials.
- ▶ Purchase the *Youth Outreach Resource Guide* (Stock No. 4074).
- ▶ Invite the school's singing group to perform on your chapter show.
- ▶ Provide complimentary tickets for both the teacher and students to attend your chapter show.
- ▶ Offer to assist as ushers, runners, backstage personnel, etc., at a school choral festival or other musical event.
- ▶ Invite the teacher and students to attend an open house at your chapter meeting.
- ▶ Add the teacher's name to your chapter mailing list.
- ▶ Provide a scholarship for a teacher to attend district HEP School, Harmony College or Directors College.
- ▶ Provide music and music learning tapes for the teacher and students.
- ▶ Provide a scholarship for the teacher and a quartet of students to attend a HARMONY EXPLOSION Camp
- ▶ Provide a subscription to the Music Premiere series.
- ▶ Sponsor a quartet in the MBNA America Collegiate Barbershop Quartet Contest.

26.3 Making your presentation

Sometimes, the teacher might even extend an invitation for you, your quartet or your chorus to give a demonstration of barbershop music to the students at the school. Now, I need to share with you something very important. Your demonstration must be of high quality.

That means that the singing must be of high quality -- quality singing technique, quality performance technique. In every case, the vocal technique must be of high quality. If it is not, you lose credibility. While students are sometimes impressed with something new that may be less than quality singing and quality performance, teachers never are.

Here are some ways to put your best foot forward if an opportunity to do a demonstration of barbershop singing at a school (or even a music educators convention) comes your way:

- ▶ Make certain your spokesman can speak the language of music with the teacher and the students. Notify the Society office of the invitation. We may be able to provide a member of the music department staff in conjunction with an upcoming staff visit to your district, or recommend another knowledgeable Barbershopper/music educator who can present an informed session about barbershop singing to the teacher and students.
- ▶ Notify your district music and performance vice president of the upcoming presentation. Ask him to help provide capable clinicians to make an effective presentation. This will also allow him to publicize and support the event.
- ▶ Contact a quartet that sings well to assist with the presentation. If you can't get an international champ, try for a quartet that has represented your district at the international contest. Failing that, consider making a video or audio tape presentation.
- ▶ When making any presentation, make certain that we're showing off our best. Video and audio performances of only our best quartets and choruses should be used.
- ▶ Make certain the presentation is well-timed, well-rehearsed and allows some time for questions. All presentations must be professional and musically excellent.
- ▶ The Society office has an outline that has been used for more than 50 presentations at MENC conventions. It is available upon request and can serve to assist you in your efforts.

26.4 Young people are our future

Today is an exciting time for us. We have the very real possibility of creating an awareness of the joys of barbershop music to youth and to music teachers across North America. It is important that we recognize that there are many effective ways to get the word out. You can be helpful to us in these efforts, but it is of utmost importance that our contacts with music teachers not only illustrate our belief in the joys of singing, but that our message is always delivered in the most professional manner.

For further information about introducing young men to barbershop harmony, music teacher education, or the MBNA America Collegiate Barbershop Quartet Contest and activities with college students, contact the Society office. With your help, we can do a great deal to "Keep The Whole World Singing"... forever.

27

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Music director contract and letter of agreement

Parties and term

This agreement is made between a Chapter of the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America, Inc., a non-profit organization, and an individual performing in the capacity of music director

1. This contract is in effect for a period of one year beginning _____.
2. This contract is subject to review by the chapter board and all revisions thereof become effective when co-signed.
3. Sixty days written notice shall be given for cancellation or termination of this contract by either party.
4. The terms and conditions of this agreement may be amended by mutual consent on the part of the chorus director and the chapter board.

Relationship of the director to chapter board of directors and committees

1. The director shall have major voice in decisions affecting music matters. All committees shall give all due consideration to the director's recommendations and advice on music selection, arrangement selection, staging, stage presence and costuming.
2. The director may address the chapter board at any time through the vice president for music and performance, the music team, the president, or any other officer or member of the board. It is not necessary for the director to attend board meetings, although his presence will always be welcomed. One exception to this policy is that the director shall be involved in decisions affecting participation at contests. Final decisions on these matters, however, will be made by the various committees, and, ultimately, by the chapter board.

Responsibilities of the director

The director shall work for the betterment of the chapter and specifically to do the following, unless prevented by legitimate personal reasons:

1. Attend all regular and special rehearsals of the chorus. The director shall be musically prepared for and attend all regular rehearsals of the chorus, except in cases of emergency or illness and for designated vacation time and agreed upon absences. Sufficient notice (typically at least two weeks) of any other necessary absence must be given to the board of directors, through the president, so that other arrangements can be made.
2. Attend and direct all authorized performances of the chorus. The director shall make every effort to be available for chorus performances, particularly any major singing engagement. Requests for chorus performances shall be presented to the director to determine availability before notice is given to the chapter members. The director shall attend the technical rehearsal and the dress rehearsal prior to major shows and performances.
3. Attend SPEBSQSA training sessions for music directors.
4. Be a member of the music team and attend all regularly convened team meetings.
5. Work with the music team in selecting music for the chorus.
6. Prepare and execute the weekly chorus rehearsal schedule, working with the music and administrative staff within the framework of annual goals.
7. Work in conjunction with the music team to present a three year music program to be approved by the board.
8. Work with the music team to audition and accept or reject prospective chorus

members on a musical basis.

9. Become involved in coaching quartets if asked by specific members involved and time permits.
10. Encourage and develop assistant directors. Official appointment of assistant directors will be made by the director and music and performance vice president, with ratification by the board/membership. Allot time each week for the assistant directors to work with the chorus.

Responsibilities of the chapter

1. Provide all the funds required by this agreement, paid to the director and others in a timely manner.
2. Provide all such aids as may be reasonably requested by the director for his use in performing his duties, including, but not limited to, music, practice hall facilities, sound equipment, etc.
3. Cooperate fully with the director at all times during the term hereof for the betterment of the chapter.

Payment

The director shall receive compensation for the performance of his duties.

1. Payment of all local, district and Society dues and assessments are as now or may become effective during the term of the contract.
2. Payment of a fee in the amount of \$____ for each regular or special practice sessions of the chapter.
3. Payment of a fee in the amount of \$____ for each public performance of the chapter in which he directs the chorus.
4. Payment of enrollment costs for any SPEBSQSA sponsored school, including local, district and national schools at which attendance is required by the contract, and any SPEBSQSA sponsored school or training session the director may elect to attend which will contribute to the enhanced performance of his duties.
5. Payment of all expenses required for attendance at any training session described above including, but not limited to: mileage at the rate of \$____ per mile, room at the rate of \$____ per day and meals at the rate of \$____ per day, except sessions with set room and board package rate which shall be paid at the set rate in lieu of the above.
6. Purchase of performance costumes and uniforms when possible.
7. When the chapter chorus is competing, all of the chorus director's expenses for round trip transportation to competition site, single accommodation and convention registration.

Accepted for the chapter by: Officer

Date

Signature

Accepted by director

Date

Signature