

# ***OUTSTANDING IN FRONT***

**Student Workbook**



**BARBERSHOP HARMONY SOCIETY  
CHORUS DIRECTOR DEVELOPMENT  
COMMITTEE**

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# **OUTSTANDING IN FRONT**

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# Conducting Technique

## The Basics

### POSTURE

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### THE PREPARATORY BEAT

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### THE DOWNBEAT

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### THE CUT-OFF

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### RUBATO

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### BEAT PATTERNS

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# Conducting Technique

## Beat Patterns

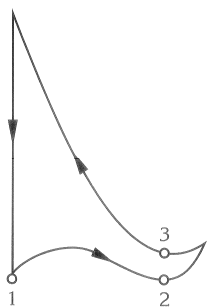
*Note: Each bounce and dip, shown by a circle on the diagrams below, is called an **ictus**. The **ictus** shows clearly where the beat is and emphasizing them makes your conducting easier to follow.*

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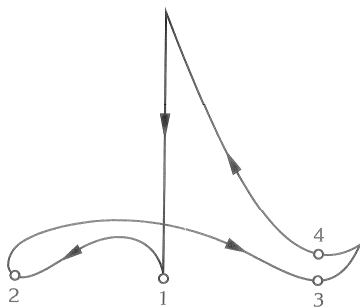
**two-beat pattern**

For songs that have two beats per measure, or are fast enough to be directed in cut time, use the **two-beat pattern**. Bring your right arm down and to the right for beat one, then up and in for beat two (much like outlining a backwards “J”).



**three-beat pattern**

For songs that have three beats per measure, use the **three-beat pattern**. Bring your right arm down for the first beat, move your arm to the right for the second beat, and bring it back up to where you started for the third beat.



**four-beat pattern**

For songs that have four beats per measure, use the **four-beat pattern**. Bring your right arm down on the downbeat (beat one), left on beat two, a longer beat to the right on beat three, and up on beat four.

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## Elements of the Warm-Up

### Things a Warm-Up *should not* be:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

## Things a Warm-Up *can* be:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

**When constructing a warm-up, consider exercising the voice beyond mere vocalization:**

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**Create your own warm-ups that involve two or more of the following:**

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# Leadership

## Building a Functional Team: Lighten Your Load and Direct Happily Ever After

*So often, directors leave directing because they are burned out. In actual fact it is more of a question of one person trying to do too many things. What if it was possible to have the director do the things that he loves best and find people to lighten his load? How could this take place in a chapter where the director is the do it all guy? Here are some possible roles/positions to include on your music team, through delegation.*

1. **Section leaders** - \_\_\_\_\_

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2. **Assistant directors** - \_\_\_\_\_

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3. **Performance leader** - \_\_\_\_\_

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4. **Trained assistants** - \_\_\_\_\_

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5. **Quartets in the chorus** - \_\_\_\_\_

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6. **Music theorists** - \_\_\_\_\_

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# Leadership

## Relationships

*Effective leadership in the barbershop chorus is largely a function of relationship. The important elements of relationship include genuineness, respect and empathy in an atmosphere of caring and joy in the pursuit of achievement. Please discuss and consider the following points:*

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
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2. \_\_\_\_\_  
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3. \_\_\_\_\_  
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5. \_\_\_\_\_  
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## Leadership

### Individual Voice Coaching Lesson #1

*All of our singers want to sing better and improve their voices. Directors can organize and lead vocal coaching in small groups to bring this about. Involving many singers in singing, listening, and vocal coaching sends the message that their opinions are important too.*

Here is one possible method that will make a positive difference.

1. Invite 5 or 6 men to volunteer to attend a special vocal class 30 minutes prior to rehearsal.
2. Thank them for coming and value their commitment to improvement.
3. Invite them to sing a simple song in unison (like Happy Birthday).
4. In turn have each of them sing the first couple of bars.
5. Ask them if they hear differences? They will be able to hear the differences in the human voices.
6. Explain that this session is to maximize the potential in each voice. Later sessions are available to bring about unity in the sections.
7. Ask for a volunteer to sing the song. Here is the key component! Have the other men in the vocal session listen for what they **like** about his voice. This accomplishes two things, first the other singers are involved in the listening component of singing; and second, they will develop their own vocabulary about explaining the positive components of the male voice. The invited listeners will be only too willing to point out what needs to be fixed and you as a leader will need to focus the listeners to concentrate on **what is positive**.
8. Have the singers tell him what they like about his voice. You repeat it again and you can add what you heard if they missed something important. After a singer has heard all the good things (which he has, in many cases, never been told before), have him sing again. In 99% of the cases he will sing better and do more of the things that he has just heard.
9. Ask the listeners "Is it better?" It is always better because the singer is more relaxed and has focused on what he does well.
10. Ask the singer if there is one component of his voice that he would like to work on what it would be. He will likely be able to state it. He might say sing a longer phrase, to sing with more resonance, more energy, etc.
11. Give him permission to just do it. Get feedback from the others and congratulate him for his courage and willingness to improve.
12. Invite him to use the new voice production when ever he sings.

#### Key points

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## **Developing a Section Team** *(optional)*

The Director and Assistant Director should be involved in the formation of the Section Teams and the choosing of their leaders. Team leaders and assistants should be chosen for their positive leadership style and their various people skills and music skills.

The section leaders are the natural leaders of their respective sections. They may not have the best voices or the best teaching skills, or the greatest knowledge, but it does mean that with their voices, skills and knowledge, they are the ones that the chorus members look up to. Ideally, they demonstrate that they are the natural leaders in the section.

In addition, every section, depending on the size of the section and the skills of its leaders, needs a group of assistants to take on the various tasks of the Section Team.

The tasks may include:

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- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

The Director and Assistant Director, ideally, will be able to move from section to section to assist.

Section time needs to be scheduled regularly and predictably for the Section Team to accomplish its many goals. Twenty minutes each week might be a useful goal

# Vocal Technique

## Improving Our Singing

*Every chorus sounds a bit different from every other, but good sound is based upon certain basic principles to which every chorus aspires. These principles apply to the ensemble and also to part sections and can form the basis of a coordinated approach to working on chorus sound.*

### The Basic Foundation

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- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### Setting the air flow

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### Sing with “UH” in all the vowels

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### Remove all tension

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### Always a lifted feeling of happiness in the face

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### Constant air flow through all ranges

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### Habits to build

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- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### Tips to start

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- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
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- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Vocal Technique

### Creating a Unit Sound

*Directors often hear a fuzzy sound or lack of clarity or individual voices in a section. This detracts from the barbershop sound and entertainment value. Our task as musical leaders is to resolve these issues in a positive and productive way.*

Here is a possible method that we can demonstrate in our directors' classes that participants can take home and use. An example might be that you hear a lack of unity in the lead section.

1. Ask 6 or 8 men in the lead section to sing the phrase you are working on.
2. Ask the chorus members to raise a hand if they hear individual voices. Likely they will.
3. Ask the leads to sing again, this time asking the basses to listen for vowel match, ask the baritones to listen for flow in the phrase, and the tenors to listen for energy at the end of the phrases. Ask the rest of the leads to listen for accurate pitch intervals.
4. Ask each section to vote using their thumb. Thumbs up means excellent, thumbs to the side means OK, thumbs down means needs work.
  - “Basses, how was the vowel match?”
  - “Baritones, how was the flow?”
  - “Tenors, how was the energy?”
  - “Leads who were not singing, how were the pitch intervals?”
5. Ask the leads to sing again. Sections listen again and vote. Because the leads have had an opportunity to listen to each other and have received feedback from the other singers they always get better; maybe not perfect all the time but significantly better.
6. The key feature of this approach is that the director acts as the facilitator, enabling the leads to apply their own learning. The leads will improve because they are motivated to get the thumbs up. The rest of the singers are actively engaged in listening, which helps when it is their turn.

### Key Points

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- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

# Vocal Technique

## Developing Your Model for Sound

### The Goal

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- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### Vowels

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### Posture

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### Consonants

- \_\_\_\_\_
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- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### Breath Management

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- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### Pitch

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- \_\_\_\_\_
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- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### Muscle Tone

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- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### Elision

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- \_\_\_\_\_
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### Resonance

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### Process

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# Leadership

## Individual Voice Coaching Lesson #2

*If a singer has attended a Voice lesson #1 and agrees to come early again this is a sign of readiness for further improvement. This is a great opportunity to build trust and vocal skills.*

A possible scenario:

1. **Thank him for coming** and being a part of improvement.
2. **Invite the man to sing**, first with others and secondly when he is ready on his own.
3. **Have others tell him what they like about his voice.** As a director tell him what you like about his voice too. So often we jump in to fix things and overlook the positive.
4. **Ask him if there is anything he would like to work on.** He will likely be able to tell you what needs improvement, then you have his permission to assist with enhancing his skills. All the while he has been singing you have been observing areas that would assist him. Posture, deep abdominal breathing, body alignment, lack of tension, lowered jaw, tongue relaxation, voice placement, facial expression are a few of the basics to check first. Prioritize the issues and go after the most important issue first. Posture and breathing can often fix pitch issues.
5. If you have heard tension you might ask him, “Would you like to try something that would assist you in singing a freer tone?” **We need to ask for permission.** This will build trust because we have asked for his input. This all takes time but is worth it. Building trust through vocal coaching will go a long way to building a strong relationship with the chorus members.
6. **Using physical movements and gestures** to bring about the desired change is in many cases more successful than a long description of anatomy and physics of sound. Listed below are some starting points.

Observation of the singer	Suggestion for enhancement of the sound
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	

*The key point is to **acknowledge the positive change** and be aware that changing behavior as adults is the most difficult thing that we do.*

- 7. Thank the singer** for his willingness “to go where no singer has gone before”.
- 8. Invite him to come back again** as the development of the voice is a journey of many small steps. When he masters these skills there are more thing to learn.

## **Holding a Productive Section Rehearsal**

*(optional)*

*In order to hold a productive section rehearsal, it is useful to keep your overall goal in mind, to prepare well (spend the time well), use your resources well, and reflect afterwards about the best way to follow up the experience.*

1. **The Destination** – There are many possible goals for a section rehearsal. Many are held to learn notes and words, but our experience is that rehearsal on notes and words is almost always best left as a side benefit to other things. Often the most useful goal is to work towards improving some aspect of singing that needs work. If your section is clear about the skills that are needed to sing well, accomplishing these skills one by one will build confidence and pride along with better singing and incidental repetition of notes and words.
2. **The Preparation** – Knowing the singing and performance goals of the chorus, one can develop a long term plan to make improvements in the section. Before the event, select one goal for the session, choose an appropriate song to use as a vehicle, prepare any materials you need, and brief your assistants on anything you would like them to do.
3. **The Rehearsal** – If the group is asked to stand in a certain formation (a circle works well for most groups), a certain formality is achieved and a useful routine established. Begin immediately as planned, indicating that being on time is important. Work your plan maintaining a friendly, action-oriented attitude. Always remain respectful, encouraging, and focused on the task. End on time as well.
4. **The Assistants** – You have assistants who can take one or two aside for special purposes or lead smaller groups. Have the singers work with each other in smaller groups, perhaps, with the assistants monitoring the action. One of the assistants can keep track of time and another tend to record keeping.
5. **The Debriefing** – Reflect afterwards with your assistants. What might be done more effectively? Have the singers improved in their skill? What will be the plan for next time?

Sometimes the Director might want to consult with the Assistant Director or address a particular section. Organize with him to take 30 to 60 seconds in these circumstances and let the section leaders inspire or encourage or instruct their sections during the pause in the rehearsal. Perhaps think of it as cheerleading or celebrating success periodically during the rehearsal.



## Directing a Tag

### SLEEPY TIME

When it's sleep - y time down south.

This musical score is for the song 'SLEEPY TIME'. It is written for a piano and voice. The key signature has one flat (Bb) and the time signature is 4/4. The melody is in the treble clef, and the bass line is in the bass clef. The lyrics are 'When it's sleep - y time down south.' with a long line following 'south.' indicating a continuation of the melody. There are four numbered measures (1-4) above the staff.

### WHO'LL DRY YOUR TEARS

Who'll dry your tears when I'm gone? Who'll dry your tears when I'm gone?

This musical score is for the song 'WHO'LL DRY YOUR TEARS'. It is written for a piano and voice. The key signature has one flat (Bb) and the time signature is 4/4. The melody is in the treble clef, and the bass line is in the bass clef. The lyrics are 'Who'll dry your tears when I'm gone? Who'll dry your tears when I'm gone?' with a long line following the second 'gone?' indicating a continuation of the melody. There are six numbered measures (1-6) above the staff.

### GIVE ME YOUR HAND

Give me your hand to hold in mine And

This musical score is for the song 'GIVE ME YOUR HAND'. It is written for a piano and voice. The key signature has one flat (Bb) and the time signature is 4/4. The melody is in the treble clef, and the bass line is in the bass clef. The lyrics are 'Give me your hand to hold in mine And' with a long line following 'And' indicating a continuation of the melody. There are four numbered measures (1-4) above the staff.

I will give you my heart, my heart.

This musical score is the continuation of the previous section for the song 'GIVE ME YOUR HAND'. It is written for a piano and voice. The key signature has one flat (Bb) and the time signature is 4/4. The melody is in the treble clef, and the bass line is in the bass clef. The lyrics are 'I will give you my heart, my heart.' with a long line following 'heart.' indicating a continuation of the melody. There are four numbered measures (5-8) above the staff.

### ***Materials for You and Your Chapter***

- Basic Directing Techniques Video - #4029
- Directing a Barbershop Chorus Manual - #4053
- A Pocketful of Tags 1, 2, and 3 – #6024, #6025, #6026
- Improving Vocal Techniques Through Warm Up - #4068
- Effective Choral Warm Ups Video - #4960
- Building a Better Chorus - #DVD
- Society Planning Calendar - #4344
- Music Leadership Team #4042

### ***Suggested Reading in Conducting and Rehearsal Technique***

- Althouse, Jay and Russell Robinson. *The Complete Choral Warm-Up Book: A Sourcebook for Choral Directors*. Los Angeles, California: Alfred Publishing Co. Inc., 1995.
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