

SINGER RECRUITMENT PROGRAMS

The whos, whats, wheres, and hows of making programs work for your chorus.

DEFINITION

Who = who are we marketing to

What = what does the program look like to your prospective guest

Where = where do we find these singers

How = rehearsal structure suggestions

SHORT TERM COMMITMENT PROGRAMS

- Holiday Singers/Caroling
- Show Only
- Contest Only

HOLIDAY SINGERS/CAROLING

Who: Any woman who loves to sing and likes caroling

What: A short term commitment learning a set of holiday songs with an opportunity to perform them in the community multiple times.

Where: Social media announcements, invitations to local church choirs, past members who may need a chorus “fix”

How:

- Plan the first hour of weekly rehearsals to be dedicated to holiday singer practice so that guests know that they will be rehearsing from 7-8pm for 3-4 weeks prior to your first performance opportunity.
- Select easy-to-sing holiday music, have special folders that contain only the holiday repertoire. Treat the first rehearsal night like a guest night with voice placement, riser buddies, social time after singing.
- Schedule performing opportunities at local nursing homes, schools, First Friday events, shopping malls. Be prepared to provide the performance dates in your marketing material and at your first rehearsal.
- Allow singers to perform at all or just a few of the sing outs. The more you sing out, the more likely your guest will be hooked on singing in public and want to return after the holidays.
- Follow up – send a holiday card to the guest from the chorus after the last performance, thanking them for joining you and inviting them to come back.

SHOW ONLY

Who: Any woman who loves to sing, but isn't interested in contest (or able to afford a contest weekend)

What: A membership in a chorus with a lower out of pocket expense by negating the costs of attending regional competition.

Where: Social media announcements, invitations to local church choirs, past members who may have left because of added costs of membership

How:

- Structure chorus rehearsals during contest season so that there is a clear break in programming so that those not participating in the competition chorus can easily depart. If your rehearsals are 3 hours long, dedicate at least 1 hour to performance repertoire before transitioning to contest music so the trip to rehearsal is worth the effort for your show only members.
- Plan performances through out the year so that show only members feel engaged during the contest season. Look for opportunities for small groups to sing at local nursing homes, schools, senior centers between Jan – Apr.

CONTEST ONLY

Who: Women who love the thrill of competition but other commitments keep them from being able to attend rehearsal consistently

What: An opportunity to continue participation with their friends without the additional work of 10-12 songs to learn and rehearse at home.

Where: Social media announcements, invitations to local church choirs, past members who may have left because of availability, members of choruses that are not competition minded

How:

- Structure chorus rehearsals during contest season so that there is a clear break in programming so that those not participating in performances know exactly when to arrive for contest prep. Set a date when contest music rehearsal will begin so contest-only members know when they need to plan to attend rehearsal.
- Help your part-time members be prepared by sending out contest learning material in advance.
- Try alternate rehearsal nights for contest music – Maybe 1 Saturday per month all day practice on contest, weeknight rehearsals focused on craft and performing repertoire.

SINGER EDUCATION PROGRAMS

- So You Want to Sing in a Choir/Chorus
- Barbershop for Beginners
- Free Voice Lessons

SO YOU WANT TO SING IN A CHOIR/CHORUS

Who: Women who are looking to return to singing but aren't sure where to start.

What: An opportunity to join a community of people who also like to sing.

Where: Social media announcements, invitations to local church choirs, fliers shared with schools to send home with students in chorus, joint performance with local schools.

SO YOU WANT TO SING IN A CHOIR/CHORUS

How:

- Discuss voice parts (both traditional SATB and barbershop TLBB) and how to identify which part they think they will sing. Demo with members of the chorus singing in their natural range and ask guests to join the section they think they sound the most alike.
- During warmups, discuss proper posture and alignment for singing. Make singers aware of breathing mechanism terminology (lungs, ribs, intercostals, diaphragm) and how we use them in singing. Talk about registration and the proper use of head/chest mixed voice in ensemble singing. Select warm ups that work those principles.
- Walk through following music, emphasizing that one doesn't have to be an expert note reader. Show how to follow a part line while the section sings. A powerpoint projector and a laser pointer are great tools for showing while doing.

SO YOU WANT TO SING IN A CHOIR/CHORUS

How:

- Teach about blending and how we don't want to hear individual voices but a combination of all the voices in a section. Demonstrate with the existing chorus, having someone stick out and then "fix" themselves. Have her explain what she did to blend into the sound.
- Spend time on how to learn with learning tracks (most people who sang in school have never used learning tracks before). Break into sectionals where each section listens to a learning track while following the sheet music and then works one phrase at a time to repeat what they heard.
- Rehearse the section learned in the sectional, working on singing skills like breath management, diaphragmatic inhalation, registration (head/chest voice mix)
- Assign homework – do some singing daily to maintain good vocal health, next rehearsal have the next section of the song learned, highlight your part in the music.

BARBERSHOP FOR BEGINNERS

Who: Women interested in singing barbershop – possibly after seeing the chorus perform.

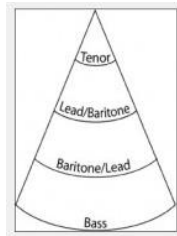
What: An opportunity to sing a capella with other women their age.

Where: Invitation during a performance, social media announcements, invitations to local church choirs, fliers shared with schools to send home with students in chorus, joint performance with local schools.

BARBERSHOP FOR BEGINNERS

How:

- Check out resources from the BHS at <https://www.barbershop.org/intro-to-barbershop-what-is-barbershop/> and SAI at <https://sweetadelines.com/aboutus/barbershop101/>
- Explain the Basics of barbershop: Simple melodies, 4-part harmony, without instruments, with the melody carried in the 2nd highest voice part (Lead), a high tenor harmonizing above that, a bass singer singing fundamental harmonies (mainly roots and fifths) and a baritone filling in above and below the melody.
- Talk history: *Continuing academic research confirms that the musical tradition that we call “barbershop” takes its roots in the African-American improvisational traditions of the late 19th century, notably in the South, particularly New Orleans.*
- Barbershop cone:



BARBERSHOP FOR BEGINNERS

•The basics for singing barbershop (from SAI website):

1. You need to be able to sing in tune.
2. You need to be able to hear those around you and blend your voice with theirs as our organization emphasizes ensemble singing, not a solo-building group.
3. You need to be able to eventually hold your own – that is you will need to be able to sing your own part when surrounded by those who don't. In a barbershop ensemble, there are many times when you are singing while standing by someone who isn't your part.
4. You will probably want to begin a normal warm-up routine at home before you practice. This will be good for your voice and depending on what you choose to do for warm-ups, you can specifically work on many different skills at once (i.e., flexibility, range, breath control, dynamic [volume] control, etc.).
5. In order to keep your level consistent and/or improve, you will want to make sure you have a plan for practicing the songs at home, either with the help of learning tracks or not. It's just like exercising the body – if you do it on a regular basis, you will reap the benefits, and if you don't, you'll definitely see the decline.

BARBERSHOP FOR BEGINNERS

How:

- Teach beginning barbershop skills through Tags. Teach tag to full chorus. Try push out tags – if guests aren't jumping in, switch to PULL IN tags where those singing pick their replacement. Break into double-quartets, spread around the room and have a "Tag Master" teach each small group a new tag they perform for the rest of the group.
- Select an easier arrangement that really rings to teach the group. Break into sectionals to learn a section, combine 2 sections to work on independence amidst distractions, then bring the whole group together to work on the song and barbershop skills.

FREE VOICE LESSONS

Who: Women who want to learn to sing.

What: A group voice lesson similar to what they may have experienced in school

Where: Social media announcements, invitations to local church choirs, fliers posted in the community.

It is important to remember that attendees are coming to learn how to sing, not how to sing barbershop. Lessons need to be focused on vocal music education with a little barbershop sprinkled in – not the other way around.

FREE VOICE LESSONS

How:

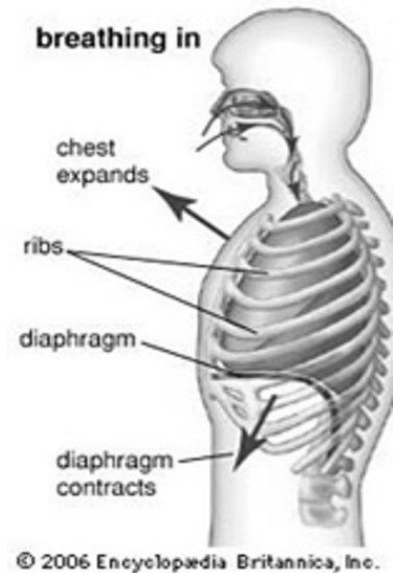
- 4 week program with a different topic focused on each week.
 - Week 1: Respiration (inhalation & exhalation)
 - Week 2: Phonation (creating tone)
 - Week 3: Resonation (quality of tone)
 - Week 4: Registration (head vs. chest voice vs. mixed)

It is important to reinforce with your students that exercises are additive – jumping ahead to more challenging exercises won't make one a better singer. It's better to linger on simpler tasks and really master the technique before progressing.

FREE VOICE LESSONS

•Respiration

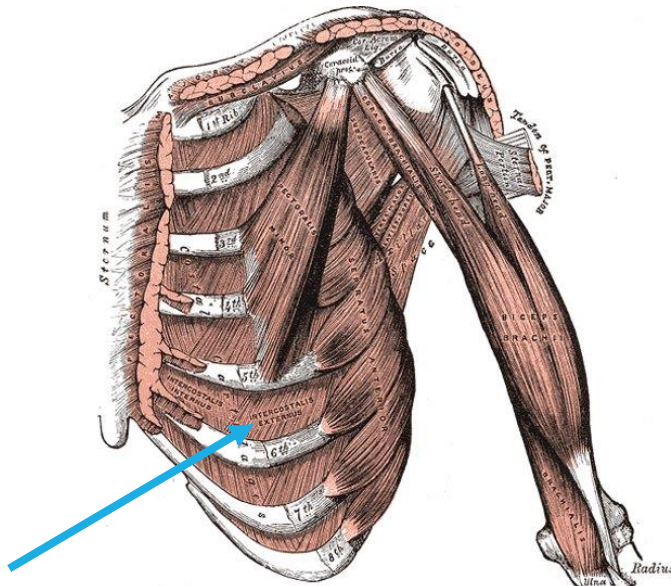
- Key muscles are diaphragm, Intercostals, Ribs, Lungs
- Important to know that active muscles contract from the point of origin to the point of insertion, other muscles are in a relaxed state.



FREE VOICE LESSONS

•Respiration

- When we inhale the external intercostals contract, pulling the ribs out which causes the lungs to expand and the diaphragm to flatten so that air can enter the lungs.
 - The diaphragm is a passive muscle – you can't move the diaphragm, it moves because the ribs expand and lungs press on it.
- When we exhale, the internal intercostals contract, pulling the ribs back into neutral position which cause the lungs to deflate and the diaphragm to rise back to it's neutral arched position



FREE VOICE LESSONS

- Respiration Exercises (see pages 1-4 of vocal exercise handout).
 - Pant like a dog – place your hands above your hips so they are resting on the lowest ribs to feel the action of the ribs going in and out. Progressively pant faster to build muscle strength in the internal & external intercostals
 - Sip & Expel – this exercise increases breath management skill by slowly increasing the amount of time one expels air from the body on a variety of voiced and unvoiced syllables. It is important that the student works on expelling all air in even amounts through the counts and doesn't push the remaining air out at the last second. The goal is to learn to manage breath use & pressure to maximize the length of singable phrases (and hold longer tags).
 - Sip & Sing – each of these vocalizes are intended to take the breath management skill learned in sip & expel and apply them to singable tone. As singers reach the extremes of their range or work on longer phrases, more air is needed to maintain quality sound. Using vocalizes to improve this skill makes the transition to singable text smoother.

FREE VOICE LESSONS

•Phonation

- Exercises – connect the respiration exercises with pitch. Notice how much air it takes to get the vocal folds to create sound at different points of ones range. Sing soft and loud tones to see how much breath is required to create the softest pitch vs. a loud pitch

FREE VOICE LESSONS

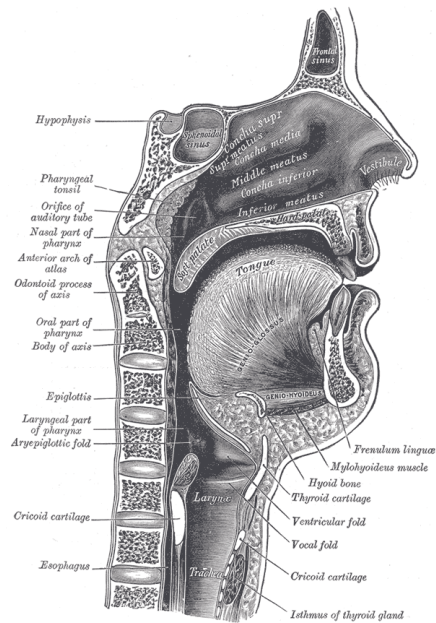
•Resonation

- Definition: the prolongation of sound by reflection; reverberation. Vibration of air molecules and reflections of soundwaves within a void. The structure must be hollow, have volume and have an opening where soundwaves can exit.
- In other words: Resonance is vibration moving through the spaces above your vocal folds which result in a unique tone caused by the shape and size of your vocal tract.

FREE VOICE LESSONS

- The resonating cavities for singing include:

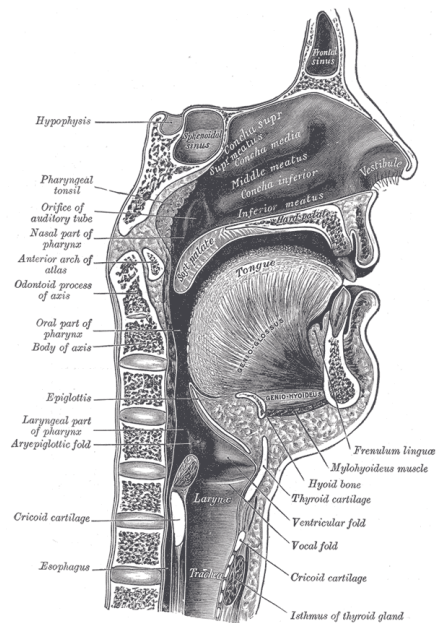
- Larynx (laryngopharynx)
- Throat (oropharynx)
- Mouth (oral cavity)
- Sinuses (nasopharynx)



FREE VOICE LESSONS

- The detractors of resonance are

- Tongue tension
- Lowered soft palate
- Neck tension
- Raised shoulders
- Hyper extended legs



FREE VOICE LESSONS

•Resonance exercises:

- The best way to learn to open up resonators is to know what it feels like when they are closed.
- Say "Beep beep" like the Road Runner cartoon – make it super nasally. Try to do the same thing, holding the pitch, while pinching your nose – a muted sound should come out (or possibly no sound at all). This means your soft palate is down, cutting off the sinus resonators and pushing all vibration to the nose. Repeat the exercise with the nose plugged and lift the soft palate so you create sound. This is a bright, resonant tone.
- Honk like a Mack truck – it should "feel" like you are making sound in the back of the throat. Likely your soft palate is nice an high, but you've added tension to the tongue and throat muscles.
- Raise your hand by your head and pretend it's a radio dial – as you twist your hand forward, add more brightness to the tone until you're fully nasal. As you twist your hand back, lower the soft palate and sing in the back of your mouth. Find the midpoint place where you have both brightness and darkness fully blended – this is the optimal singing position.

FREE VOICE LESSONS

•Register

- Definition: A series of consecutive homogenous sounds produced by one mechanism, differing essentially from another series of sounds equally homogeneous produced by another mechanism.
- In other words: a register is a series of pitches produced in the exact same manner

FREE VOICE LESSONS

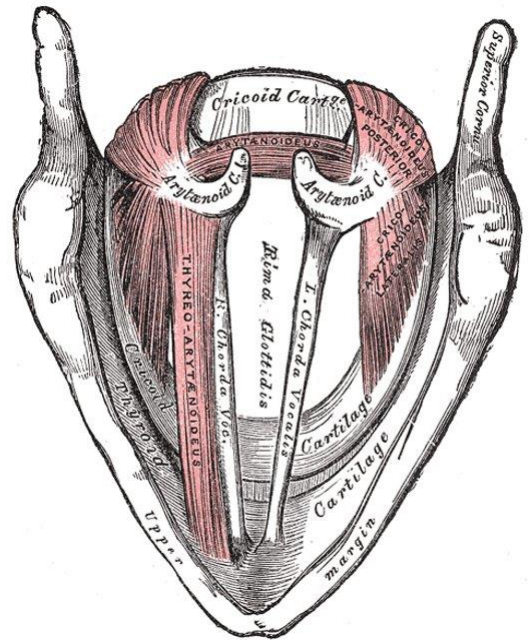
- Registration
 - The navigation between registers – the movement from head voice to chest voice and the mixture of the two.
 - Based on singer sensations
 - Transition points differ for each singer but are generally within a 3-4 note range
 - Change from one register to another is influenced by the larynx
 - Goal is to make the transitions seamless with no change in timbre.

FREE VOICE LESSONS

- Female Registers
 - Chest
 - Mixed/Middle
 - Head
 - Whistle/flute (auxiliary register)

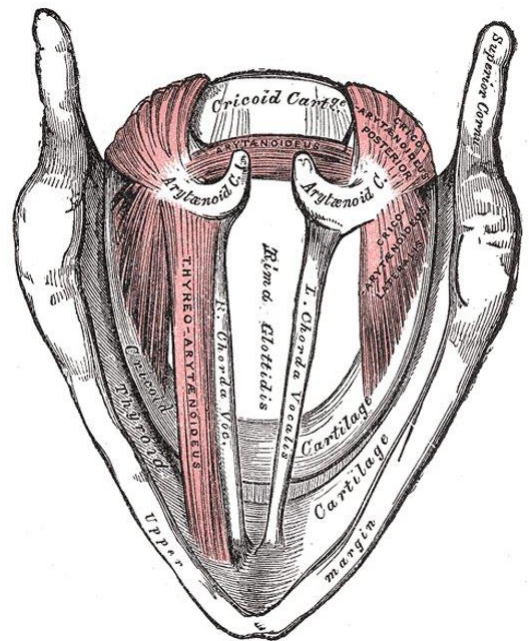
FREE VOICE LESSONS

- Chest Register
 - Vocal folds are full and broad
 - Folds vibrate over their entire breadth and billow from side to side in a waving motion
 - Technical term: Thyroarytenoid dominance



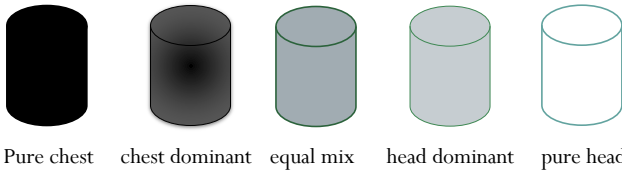
FREE VOICE LESSONS

- Head Register
 - Vocal folds are elongated and stretched thin
 - Fold vibrate only at the edges of the folds
 - The Crico-thyroid stretches the folds.



FREE VOICE LESSONS

- Mixed Register
 - Each tone of the compass receives a little of the color of the opposing registers
 - Manuel Garcia



FREE VOICE LESSONS

- Vocal folds in action



FREE VOICE LESSONS

- To smooth out a "break" in registration
 - Sing an interval of a Major 3rd, sliding from the first pitch to the second on an "oo" vowel.
 - Singing softly engages the head voice, singing loud engages the chest voice
 - Sing an interval of a Perfect 5th, sliding from the first pitch to the second on an "oo" vowel.
 - Singing softly engages the head voice, singing loud engages the chest voice

FREE VOICE LESSONS

- To aid a singer using too much chest voice in their mix (or no mix at all), ask them to repeat exercises taking 10% off the volume until you hear a clear change in tone quality.
- Note: For singers who have been doing current musical theater and pop music, singing in mixed voice will feel "wrong" and foreign. You must continuously encourage them that the head mixed tone quality is beautiful and not weak sounding.

QUESTIONS?