

BARBERSHOP HARMONY VOICE PARTS AND BALANCE

Barbershop harmony is a style of a cappella music characterized by consonant four part chords for every melody note. The voice parts are tenor, lead, baritone, and bass. The melody is consistently sung in the second voice down, the lead (2nd tenor).

RANGES

Male: (Note: Tenor and Lead parts are sung one octave lower than the written score.)

Tenor: From middle C up to C above middle C.

Lead: From Eb below middle C up to F above middle C

Baritone: From C below middle C up to E above middle C.

Bass: From low F up to middle C.

Female: (Note: Baritone and bass are sung one octave higher than the written score.)

Tenor: F above middle C up to G above high C (one octave above middle C).

Lead: Middle C up to E above high C.

Baritone: Bb just below middle C up to high C.

Bass: F below middle C up to G above middle C.

BALANCE

To facilitate overtone production and solid chords, the lower tones (usually containing roots or 5ths of the chord) should be produced with slightly more volume. The melody line should always be heard. Sensitive tenor and baritone tuning within that structure is critical.

The ideal balance of singers in a barbershop chorus is:

40% Basses

30% Leads

20% Baritones

10% Tenors

The overall ensemble experience will benefit if each Music Educator will—prior to the festival---assign voice parts to his/her students according to this description. Otherwise, on-the-spot adjustments may be made by the clinicians.

Please note that the only requirement for participating in this festival is the ability to match pitch. Without that, the entire ensemble suffers.

We hope the students will experience the joy of feeling the chords locking and ringing!

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