

FROM THE EDGE

*A periodic Newsletter of
the High Country Barbershop Chorus,
White Mountains Arizona Chapter*



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Manifestations of musicality

"I've been thinking and experimenting a lot with notions of musicality, not particularly as expressed by what the director suggests in terms of musical direction, but in terms of what the individual singer can contribute.

Here are some thoughts about it.

There are a lot of issues related to ensemble that are the province of the singers. They need to have an ensemble attitude, singing with their ears attuned to the others singing their part. Each part should sound like one voice and so each singer has the responsibility to be a blended part of that voice. That can be practised in small groups and extended to include everyone in the chorus singing a particular part - a great way to encourage the musicality necessary to blend one's voice, contributing, not overpowering or hiding out.

Singing word sounds the same as the others in your part is also an element of ensemble musicality and worthy of focussed work in small groups, then in the whole.

Barbershop features many situations where two parts or three parts sing together with the same word sounds while another part sings something different. Sometimes there are two duets, each duet singing the same word sounds that are different from the other duet. Making this work is a good individual focus.

Any part singing one against a trio has special responsibilities to sell their part alone and make it significant and beautiful. In fact there are songs where a melody is sung as a part alone, a bass, for instance carries a rhythm different than

the others, and the other two parts duet. Almost any combination occurs and needs particular attention musically with each singer taking on the task of featuring the musical elements of his part.

Arrangements feature parts in swipes, and every swipe or echo has a musical reason for being which the individuals singing it can take on as their musical responsibility.

Voices sound different when they are expressing the music through a "heart filter" so to speak. When the emotions inherent in the musical line, the run of the harmony, the sense of the lyric, the feel of the rhythm are felt deeply and expressed fully by an individual singer, a musical treatment of the song is present and able to move the listener. This ought to become the goal of every performer - a goal to refine exquisitely into the future that extends from the time that there is enough command of words and notes to do so. Often perfection in notes and words becomes our goal and the imperative for their musical expression, always an individual musical responsibility, goes unconsidered and undone, leading to the absence of musicality and abrogation of the power to move the listener.

Musicality in many things is the province of the singer who will likely benefit from the musical wisdom and "direction" of the man up front."

Charlie Metzger

Director, Gentlemen of Fortune
Greater Vancouver Chapter
Home of "Realtime"

Taken from the "Directors forum on line,"

Submitted by our Director, **Doc Dockendorf**

From the Director: Doc Dockendorf



As I write this, it is the end of Thanksgiving week, and something happened to me yesterday that has given me pause to consider. If your family is like ours,

on **Thanksgiving**, you gave thanks around the dining room table, as the turkey, and all the fixings waited patiently to be consumed. If you are like us, you gave thanks for family, health, love, and friends. In looking back, I failed to give thanks for a myriad of other things, which I will try to rectify with this article.

First, I need to explain what happened yesterday. Jackie was cleaning out a closet, and in doing so collected a pile of no longer used purses, some pants of mine that no longer fit (perhaps you noticed my waist has grown), and other odds and ends that we decided to donate to charity. I called the number of **Mission of Grace**, which is the thrift store that supports the **Love Kitchen**. To my surprise, the voice that diligently told of the hours that they were open, what to do with any donations, and where to leave them, was the voice of **Dean Baseley**. When I got to the store to drop off my donation, I mentioned to the lady that it was weird listening to Dean's voice. She replied that they did not know how to change the message on the phone. I laughed that it was a coincidence that I had donated the phone she spoke of, and could

most likely change the message for her. But in hind-sight, I think it is appropriate that Dean's voice is on that phone. He was such an integral part of the operation of that facility that his voice lives on, as the memory of Dean lives on. This all started me thinking about things that I am thankful for. It has been nearly a year since Dean passed away, and I am thankful that I knew Dean, that he sang with us, and that he was such an integral part of the chorus. I miss him deeply, but am thankful to have known him.

I am also thankful for many other things. Like the family the chorus represents to me; for **Larry**, who had successful surgery to remove a cancerous prostate, for **Charlie**, who waits for his surgery to remove an operable cancerous tumor in his colon, for **Candy**, who has undergone more than anyone should ever have to go through, but is getting better since her bone-marrow transplant, for **Jim**, who has been at her side through it all while having issues of his own, for **Jerry**, who found out his high PSA was not due to cancer, for **Bill**, for finally being able to see clearly with corrected eyes, to **Jim**, whose shoulder is slowly getting better, for **Tom**, who shows up each week while having trouble breathing, for **John**, who had a serious bout with a lung infection, for **Jane**, who gave us all a scare last week, but, I'm told, is back to normal, for **Phil**, who went through a bout with E-coli most likely from the spinach alert, for **Jack**, who accidentally tried to amputate his thumb, (Continued on Page 4)

Harmony University: Everett Peterson



Singing Through Your Passagio*

*(Italian for “passage” referring to the two natural vocal “breaks” in the vocal range when transitioning from chest to head voice, then again

from head voice to falsetto.)

I have sung my whole life, but barbershop singing has made me a better singer and attending Harmony University the past two summers has been an important part to furthering my understanding of what it takes to be a better singer. I’d like to share just a few highlights of what I’ve learned. The whole Harmony University experience was both valuable and enjoyable, but the best teacher for me both summers was Royce Ferguson, former tenor with the gold medalist quartet “Revival”, and currently director of the silver medal Westminster Chorus from southern California.

Royce used the world famous operatic tenor Luciano Pavarati’s definition of singing to discuss the challenge of singing through the passagio. Pavarati said, “Singing is like a figure 8.” As the singer reaches the passagio, visualized as the point where the two lines of the “8” cross, there is vulnerable feeling while transitioning from one vocal register to the other (chest to head voice to the higher falsetto and back). The key while singing higher while approaching your passagio is to “lighten and lengthen” the sound. The key while going down is to “shift gears smoothly” as you add more head or chest voice. Royce mentioned the

analogy of the recent Nissan commercial where the lady is successfully applying her make-up while her car is smoothly shifting through the gears.

You could imagine the “8” lengthening as you sing up or down the scale to connect up the vocal mechanism and allow smoother transitioning between the individual singer’s vocal registers, while at the same time matching and complementing the sound of the other parts.

He suggested the following relationship between the harmony parts:

The bass creates a harmonic “ladder” or foundation for the sound while the tenor and baritones “grab the harmonies that are already there.” Royce told the tenors to reach down into the voice for all the sound, and not just “ride on top”. When the bass, baritone and tenor are “locked” in harmony, it PROPELS the lead.

Finally, the idea of producing a *connected* sound has been valuable. Try to produce an organ pipe sound with your voice by imagining that you can hinge your head to the side and just “let the sound go”. Since we obviously cannot do this, the next best thing is to imagine a high dome ceiling inside our head like a church cathedral, or perhaps better yet, a parachute that balloons to a full arch as we push air into it while singing. Imagine pushing the parachute up and back as the pitch goes up (especially for tenors and leads, and sometimes baritones) and imagine pushing the parachute up and forward as the pitch goes down (especially for baritones and basses). Our support mechanism can sometimes “lock”, preventing the full connected sound needed (Continued on page 4)

(Everett Peterson, from page 3)

to “push the parachute” in our heads. Royce suggested using a physical “vibrato” created by pushing rapidly on our upper diaphragm just below the rib cage with the fingers of both hands while singing a pitch to connect up the sound from the diaphragm all the way through the vocal folds, the high dome “parachute” of our soft palate, and out through the resonators for a free, connected sound that will match the resonance of the other parts. Once the connected sound happens, stop the physical vibrato and see if the sound stays connected.

I want to thank the board and the chorus for giving me the opportunity to attend Harmony University, and I hope many of you will have the opportunity to attend in the future.

Everett Peterson - Tenor Section Leader

(From the Director, from page 2)

for **Denny**, whose blood is re-charged regularly, for our President **Bob**, who travels back and forth from Phoenix each week to lead us, while at times lethargic from who knows what cause, and to each of the rest of you who have had various issues that I have either forgotten, or did not know, about.

Finally, I am thankful for being able to stand in front of you each week, and for those of you that faithfully show up each week to help us achieve the vision of making great Barbershop music for the community. I thankfully look forward to 2007 and all that it holds for us. Thank you all!

DOC

**FWD, White Mountains Arizona Chapter:
High Country Chorus**

Officers

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VP Membership	Ron LaMar
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	Jim Murphy
Music Librarian	Dennis Shankland
Sunshine Chairman	Jim Murphy
Bulletin Editor	Jerry Schrunk
Web Master	Jerry Schrunk
Chorus Photographer	Conrad Monroe

December Birthdays

Dec 03	John Welker
Dec 10	Jim Porter

**Official November Census Number
From the Barbershop Harmony Society
Web Page**

35

Invite your neighbor to come and sing with us!

Christmas Barbershop in Snowflake, **by David Wheeler**

Since joining the High Country Barbershop Chorus last June, I have tried to bring barbershop to Snowflake. The Christmas Sing on December 19 will be a great opportunity to attract singers from Snowflake and Taylor who may want to join the chorus.

We will be performing on Tuesday, December 19, which is our normal practice night, arriving at 6:30 p.m. The Main Street LDS Chapel was constructed with a rounded choir loft which should add to our ability to hear each other and project the sound to the audience without requiring sound amplification. The dress will be class B, Tux without coats, and Santa hat for Jingle Bells. This will be a treat event to bring your families to.

We have arranged for Eva's to stay open after the show. Eva's is a great family restaurant with Mexican cuisine.

Please plan to participate and show Snowflake and Taylor communities what Barbershop is all about.

David

Words of Wisdom to Kids from Bill Gates

Love him or hate him, he sure hits the nail on the head with this! To anyone with kids of any age, here's some advice.

Bill Gates recently gave a speech at a High School about 11 things they did not and will not learn in school. He talks about how feel-good, politically correct teachings created a generation of kids with no concept of reality and how this concept set them up for failure in the real world.

Rule 1: Life is not fair - get used to it!

Rule 2: The world won't care about your self-esteem. The world will expect you to accomplish something BEFORE you feel good about yourself

Rule 3: You will NOT make \$60,000 a year right out of high school. You won't be a vice-president with a car phone until you earn both.

Rule 4: If you think your teacher is tough, wait till you get a boss.

Rule 5: Flipping burgers is not beneath your dignity. Your Grandparents had a different word for burger flipping: they called it opportunity.

Rule 6: If you mess up, it's not your parents' fault, so don't whine about your mistakes, learn from them.

Rule 7: Before you were born, your parents weren't as boring as they are now. They got that way from paying your bills, cleaning your clothes and listening to you talk about how cool you thought you were. So before you save the rain forest from the parasites of your parent's generation, try delousing the closet in your own room.

Rule 8: Your school may have done away with winners and losers, but life HAS NOT. In some schools, they have abolished failing grades and they'll give you as MANY TIMES as you want to get the right answer. This doesn't bear the slightest resemblance to ANYTHING in real life.

Rule 9: Life is not divided into semesters. You don't get summers off and very few employers are interested in helping you FIND YOURSELF. Do that on your own time.

Rule 10: Television is NOT real life. In real life people actually have to leave the coffee shop and go to jobs.

Rule 11: Be nice to nerds. Chances are you'll end up working for one.

If you agree, pass it on!

If you can read this - Thank a teacher!

If you are reading it in English -Thank a soldier!

Submitted by Doc Dockendorf

FROM THE EDGE Dec. 2006

Calendar of Events			
Date	Event	Time	Comments / Location
Dec. 12, 2006	Music Committee Meeting	6 PM	Practice Hall
Dec. 16, 2006	Christmas Performance	12 PM	Show Low Senior Center
Dec. 16, 2006	Christmas Performance	1:30 PM	Walmart
Dec. 19, 2006	Christmas Performance	7 PM	Snowflake, LDS Chapel, Main St.
Dec. 26, 2006	No Chapter Board Meeting Tonight	None	No Meeting this Mo.
Dec. 26, 2006	No Rehearsal this evening!		
Jan. 21-28, 2007	Int'l Mid-Winter Convention		Albuquerque, NM
Jan. 13, 2007	Chapter Officer Installation Dinner	6PM Social 7PM Dinner	Torreon Club House
Feb. 14, 2007	Singing Valentines Day		
Mar. 24, 2007	Chorus Workshop	8:30 AM to 5 PM	Practice Hall Lunch will be provided
April 27-29, 2007	AZ/SN/SU Div. Convention		

*High Country Barbershop Chorus
c/o Jerry Schrunk, Newsletter Editor
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