

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Abdominal: refers to inhalation whereby the lower abdomen bulges outward, due to an exaggerated depression of the diaphragm.

Accelerando: gradually increasing the tempo.

Actuation: the process whereby the singing mechanism is set into motion.

Ad libitum (ad lib): changing the time of a particular passage at the discretion of the performer.

Afterbeat: used as a stylistic device in barbershop arranging. While a melody line is sustained on the beat by the lead or bass, the rhythm of the three harmony parts is executed on the after beat. This device can be used for a whole phrase or only a measure.

Amplification: a result of the increased resonance of the voice in direct relationship to the degree of freedom from tension or interference in the vocal mechanism, giving the impression of enlargement of the sound, whether loud or soft.

Articulation: the physical process involved in the method or manner of enunciating any utterance, either speaking or singing.

Artistry (musical): describes a performance that shows great skill and outstanding interpretive ability.

Arytenoid cartilages: a pair of tiny pyramidal cartilages, set on the cricoid cartilage of the larynx, to which the posterior ends of the vocal cords are attached. The arytenoids, being movable, are instrumental in adjusting the tension and degree of separation of the vocal cords.

Audible harmonics: those tones of the harmonic series that are within the range of human hearing.

Ballad: a simple romantic song usually set in narrative verse.

Bell chord: a stylistic device common to barbershop arranging in which each voice sings her part of the chord singly but in immediate succession of the others.

Blues idiom: written in quadruple time, moving at slow speed in a flowing style over an unvarying 12-bar bass. The 3rd and 7th of the key are often prominent, being played or sung somewhere between the major and minor form of the interval, and are known as "blue notes."

Circle of fifths: a method of modulation, from dominant to dominant, which conveys us circularly through all the scales, back to the point from which we started.

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Clavicular: referring to a type of breathing that employs a heaving, upward movement of the chest against the clavicle, or collar bone.

Climax: the highest or most intense point in the development or resolution of something.

Clock system: a barbershop term applied to the circle of fifths, defining proper chord resolution according to the hours on a clock.

Closed voicing: in barbershop arranging, assignment of chord tones to voice parts so that the notes being sung are adjacent to each other and all parts are within an octave.

Coda: the “tail” or “end;” in barbershop arrangements, called the “tag;” a few measures added to the end of a piece of music to make a more effective termination.

Composition: the art of building up musical ideas into larger, continuous forms.

Counter beat (back beat): used as a stylistic device of arranging; created by an accompanying set of lyrics with a different melody and rhythm especially written to be sung against a given melody, creating a counter-rhythmic effect.

Covered tone: refers to tonal quality. In its favorable aspect, it is acquired through the use of modification of vowels to prevent blatancy. In its unfavorable aspect the term means a tone that is constricted in production, resulting in a tone without “ping.”

Damping: stopping or decreasing the amplitude of a vibration by pressure on the vibrator. The term is applied to the appearance of the ends of the vocal cords in rapid vibration and occurs only in some singers; the phenomenon is not totally understood but is usually referred to as a “falsetto” and is more common to the male voice.

Dialect: a variety of a language that is distinguished from other varieties of the same language by features of phonology, grammar and vocabulary and by its use by a group of speakers who are set off from others geographically or socially.

Diction: in singing, the term includes pronunciation, enunciation and articulation.

Diphthong: a combination of two vowel sounds.

Dissonance: a simultaneous combination of tones conventionally accepted as being in a state of unrest and needing completion or resolution.

Distortion: to reproduce or amplify inaccurately by changing the frequencies or unequally changing the delay or amplitude of the components of the output wave. Vocally, it occurs when stress or interference is present in the vocal mechanism.

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Dominant harmony: chords built on the fifth degree of a scale. In barbershop arranging it implies dominant seventh (barbershop) chords instead of triads.

Echo: a repetition, or imitation, of a previous passage.

Embellishment: a tone or group of tones applied as decoration to a principal melodic tone.

Enunciation: in singing, the manner of pronouncing words clearly and distinctly.

Epiglottis: a thin, leaf-like extension of yellow elastic cartilage that ordinarily projects upward behind the tongue and just in front of the glottis. It folds back to protect the glottis during the act of swallowing.

Expiration: the act of exhaling.

Finesse: extreme delicacy or subtlety in action, performance, skill and discrimination.

Flexibility (vocal): the ability of the voice to adjust to quick and sudden changes and be capable of modification throughout the range of the tonal scale.

Focus: a term of imagery implying a concentrated point of tonal vibration; the opposite of a spread tone.

Form: the overall pattern of structure of a song or an arrangement.

Forward quality: a term of imagery describing a tone that seems to resonate toward the front of the head, nose and mouth.

Fundamental: that component of a sound wave having the lowest frequency and longest wave length and which usually determines the absolute pitch of the sound we hear.

Glottal stroke: glottis is momentarily and completely closed by premature action of the bands and then suddenly released, thus creating a sharp stroke.

Glottis: the opening between the vocal bands.

Harmonic: an overtone or upper partial.

Harmonic progression: the motion of one chord to another chord.

Harmonization: chordal structure as distinguished from melody and rhythm; the structure, relations and practical combinations of chords.

Heavy mechanism: laryngeal adjustment in which vocal bands are thick; the adjustment producing the heavy tones of the chest voice, suitable for *forte* singing and for the lower part of the range.

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Hyoid bone: a U-shaped bone lying horizontally above the thyroid cartilage of the larynx and closely attached to the latter by muscle and membrane. It also forms an anchorage for the base of the tongue.

Imagery: the reproduction in memory or imagination of the likeness of an actual auditory sensory experience, together with accompanying feelings. It is the preconception or mental expectation of sounds not actually present to the outer sense of hearing.

Implied meter: the definition of a primary beat that will identify the time signature of the song. In the *rubato* interpretation of a barbershop ballad, the light word accents or inflections of the phrasing should give definition to the meter.

Implied modulation: occurs if the general melodic flow of a phrase implies a change of tonal center without actually changing the key signature. There may or may not be chromatic changes in the melody. Very few songs remain in one key throughout but pass through one or more keys closely associated with the original.

Inflection: variations of the voice in pitch; in barbershop, inflection refers to the use of consonants to add emotion to the interpretation.

Inspiration: the act of inhaling.

Intensity: energy of a sound wave; an energized quality of tone or of sound. In singing, any tone, loud or soft, can have a degree of intensity. On the physical side, “intensity” refers to the degree of emotional content of the sound, which is induced by the breath pressure and can be present in both soft and loud singing, the latter involving greater breath pressure.

Intercostal: refers to rib muscles.

Interlude: a passage of some independence appearing between a theme and its repetition or between two parts.

Interpretation: the communication of mood and thought values. The interpretation of a song is the artistic representation of it in which the singer presents her own conception of its underlying meaning and mood.

Intonation: singing in tune.

Laryngitis: an inflammation of the larynx; doesn’t necessarily imply total loss of voice.

Laryngopharynx: the lower part of the pharynx behind the larynx.

Larynx: the organ that produces vocal sound. It is situated at the topmost ring cartilage of the trachea or windpipe and consists of adjustable cartilages, muscles and membranes that together operate the valve-like mechanism of the vocal cords.

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Lead-in: one to three notes of the beginning of a phrase sung without harmony, usually by the lead.

Legato: a basic style of vocal technique, consisting of a seemingly uninterrupted flowing vocal line with corresponding non-interfering articulation and pronunciation.

Light mechanism: laryngeal adjustment in which vocal bands are thin; produces light, flute-like tones, suitable for soft singing and for the upper part of the vocal range.

Measure: the division of time by which the movement of music is regulated; the division of beats into regularly recurring groups; grouping of beats so the primary accent immediately follows the bar line.

Melismatic: the extension and prolongation of a single vowel or syllable into an expressive but nonflorid vocalization, used to interpolate a melodic sequence.

Melodic motive: the briefest self-existent unit of melody that may include as few as two notes or may be a portion of a four-measure phrase.

Melodic unity: achieved through the development of one idea, one style and one feeling where sections have a sense of relationship and proportion to each other. In vocal music, this melodic unity will necessarily be influenced by the verbal inflections and imagery of the lyrics.

Metric pulse: the succession of accents in music; the rhythm of a phrase.

Metric unity: governed by lyrical accents and inflections and melodic form. In barbershop arranging and interpretation, consideration of proportion and a sense of relationship in all rhythmic aspects is necessary for metric unity.

Mode: a particular ordering of scale steps. The two modes used in barbershop arranging are the Ionian (our major scale) and Aeolian (our minor scale). The music of the world's peoples includes a vast number of different modes, each characterized by a different sequence of steps of various kinds.

Modulation: transition of key; going from one key to another by a certain succession of chords in either a natural or flowing manner, or, sometimes, a sudden and unexpected manner.

Nasopharynx: the part of the pharynx behind and above the soft palate, directly continuous with the nasal passage.

Nodules (nodes): tiny knotty swellings or growths of tissue on the glottis that interfere with phonation, usually caused by chronic vocal fatigue and repeated straining of the vocal cords.

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Oblique abdominal muscles: muscles forming the sides of the belly.

Open voicing: in barbershop arranging, a distribution of voice parts in which the highest part and lowest part extend beyond an octave.

Oropharynx: the part of the pharynx between the soft palate and the epiglottis, directly behind the mouth.

Overtone: one of the constituent higher pitch frequencies of a complex musical tone.

Overtone pattern: the series of harmonics produced in a tone above the fundamental; the pattern of relative strengths of certain partials in the harmonic series that can be visualized in acoustical spectra and heard as differences in the character of the timbre in voices and instruments.

Parody: a humorous set of lyrics used as a replacement for the original lyrics.

Passing tone: notes not belonging to the harmony but serving to connect those which are essential.

Patter: a rapidly moving segment of a song with many words. In the barbershop style, patter is often used in the harmony parts as accompaniment to a melodic passage of a more sustained character (i.e., two different sets of words sung at the same time).

Pharynx: the muscular and membranous passageway or cavity in the throat forming a junction between the nasal passageway, the mouth cavity, the larynx and wind-pipe, and the esophagus.

Phonation: the act or process of generating vocal sound at its point of production at the glottis.

Phrase: a musical thought analogous to the sentences of a literary composition; division of a piece of music into small units for some artistic or technical purpose, especially into units that can be sung in one breath; a unit, conventionally four measures in length, that is terminated by a cadence.

Pickup: a stylistic device in barbershop arranging used to embellish either the beginning of a song or the rests between phrases; usually consists of one to four syllables extraneous to the melody line and sung by the bass.

Phrenic nerve: nerve controlling the diaphragm.

Portamento: singing from one note to another by means of a continuous, gliding tone that passes through all the intervening pitches.

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Primary beat: the first beat of a measure; the beat immediately following the bar line.

Projection: the act of transmitting the voice through the atmosphere, from singer to listener. Vocal projection is directly related to the efficiency in resonance. This efficiency is a result of the proper concept of a clear, sonorous tone that induces the vocal cords to resist sufficiently against the breath to balance its pressure while the singer exerts the minimum of physical force.

Pronunciation: to utter or articulate words or sounds in the required or standard manner. It includes both enunciation and articulation.

Pure vowel: the five Italian vowels used as a basis for beginning vocalization; the basic vowels Ah, Ay, Ee, Oh, Oo, preferably vocalized with no double or diphthong sound.

Pythagorean tuning: a scale and tuning system appropriate for barbershop harmony.

Register: the classification of parts of the vocal range according to method of production, as head register, chest register; a series of tones of like quality within the compass of a voice, which are produced by a particular adjustment of the vocal cords.

Resonation: the intensification and enrichment of a musical tone by means of supplementary vibration. The effect of vocal resonance is to increase the initial tone phonated in the glottis. A resonant voice is so called when it has a pleasing quality that is rich in low and high overtones.

Rhythmic motive: the briefest, self-existent unit of rhythm which may include as few as two notes or may be a portion of a four-measure phrase.

Ritardando: delaying the tempo gradually.

Rubato: taking a portion of the duration from one note and giving it to another. In performance, intentionally and temporarily deviating from strict note values for interpretive effect.

Secondary chords: chords built on the second, third or sixth degrees of the scale; in barbershop arranging, chords other than the major triad, dominant seventh and dominant ninth.

Secondary dominants: chords that act as temporary dominants of degrees other than 1; primarily formed by raising the third of a minor triad one-half step, making it a secondary leading tone. Secondary dominants can appear consecutively as in the "circle of fifths."

Secondary position: a reference peculiar to barbershop voicing which states that the strongest position of a chord has the root assigned to the bass. Other positions of strength are the fifth in the bass of a dominant seventh and the third in the bass of the minor triad. Any other positions can be considered "secondary."

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Seventh chords: a four-tone chord outlined by a seventh and containing a root, third, fifth and seventh.

Soft palate: a membranous and muscular extension of the hard palate, forming a continuous surface with the latter in the roof of the mouth and serving as a partition that separates the mouth cavity from the nasal cavity.

Song form: a term used to identify smaller patterns employed in both instrumental and vocal composition.

Stanza: an arrangement of a certain number of lines, usually four or more, sometimes having a fixed length, meter or rhyme scheme, forming a division of a poem.

Strophic: having the same music for each successive stanza.

Style: refers both to the specific character of the music (opera, oratorio, lieder, art song, folk song, ballad, pop singing, barbershop) and to the singer's individualistic manner of interpretive presentation.

Stylistic: refers to a collection of techniques and a manner of assembling musical elements within an idiom of the world of music that contains endless varieties of style, i.e., plain chant, Renaissance motet, Schubert art song, barbershop, etc.

Subdominant: chords built on the fourth degree of the scale, generally producing triadic harmony.

Swipe: a barbershop style device which uses chord changes on one syllable (one or more voices moving to make the change) requiring the singer to use a slight *portamento* in the connection. The swipe may be as few as two chords or as many as an entire phrase (as in a tag).

Syllabic: having each syllable sung to one note only.

Syncopation: a temporary displacement of the natural accent in music.

Tension: the act of stretching or straining. (See Tonicity.)

Thoracic: having to do with the chest cavity. The thoracic cavity has a shape resembling a truncated cone and contains the heart, lungs and esophagus.

Through-composed: a poetic narrative song form in which each verse is set to new music and continuity of the accompaniment is provided, without repetition, throughout the entire composition.

Timbre: the distinctive resonance of a tone that makes it distinguishable from other tones of like intensity and pitch. Timbre depends chiefly on the number and character of the overtones present in a tone.

Tonal center: the tonic which forms a center of gravity from which the musical action



springs and to which it ultimately returns; i.e., “Do.”

Tonic harmony: chords built on the first degree of the scale, normally resulting in triadic harmony.

Tonicity: the normal elastic tension of living muscles, arteries, etc., by which the tone of the system is maintained.

Trachea: the main air or breath passageway between the larynx and the lungs; the windpipe.

Transverse abdominal muscle: deep abdominal muscle cooperating with the other abdominal muscles in exhalation. Its fibers run from side to side behind the oblique abdominals.

Tremolo: an abnormal pulsation of the voice, marked by a perceptible variation in pitch due to a lack of proper coordination of the vocal mechanism because of incorrect use of the breath or unnatural physical tension.

Triadic: having to do with three-part chords, a third and fifth built on a root. Four-part barbershop harmony requires that one of the three tones be doubled.

Vagus nerve: the tenth cranial nerve, consisting of motor fibers that innervate the muscles of the pharynx, larynx and heart and thoracic and abdominal viscera.

Vibration: the movement to and fro of the resisting vocal bands caused by the pressure of the air against them.

Vibrato: regular fluctuation in pitch, timbre and/or intensity. Vibrato is an integral part of good quality and should not be confused with tremolo.

Vibrator: that part of an instrument that turns the energy into oscillation. In the case of singing, the vibrator consists of the vocal bands.

Vocal cords: either of the two pairs of folds of mucous membrane projecting into the cavity of the larynx. (See “vocal folds.”)

Vocal folds: the lower pair of vocal cords, the edges of which can be drawn tense and made to vibrate by the passage of air from the lungs, thus producing vocal sound; also called true vocal cords.

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Vocal inflection: used by lead singers, especially, as a stylistic characteristic of their own personalized interpretive technique. The inflection can be an occasional slide on pitch or the delivery of appropriate consonants to dramatize word meanings and trigger more feeling and beauty in the flow of the vocal tone.

Voice box: the larynx.

Voicing: the distribution of the parts of a chord to specific voice parts.

Vowel formant: the characteristic resonant tone of a vowel sound, independent of the glottal tone that produced it.

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