



WHAT IS BARBERSHOP

Life Changing Music
By Denise Fly and Jane Schlinke

DEFINITION

Dictionary.com

- the singing of four-part harmony in barbershop style or the music sung in this style.
- specializing in the unaccompanied part-singing of popular songs in which four voices move in close, highly chromatic harmony: a barbershop quartet.

BARBERSHOP HARMONY SOCIETY

It's music in a very pure form created with nothing but human voices coming together to create a rich and satisfying texture that is pleasing to the ears and invigorating to the soul. Whether you're an experienced musician or a brand new musician, barbershop levels the playing field and allows you to find your voice and be a part of creating something that is greater than the sum of its parts.

SWEET ADELINES INTERNATIONAL

In simple terms, barbershop harmony is vocal harmony produced by four parts: lead, tenor, baritone and bass. Finding the right part for your voice is the initial step. Any woman of average singing ability, with or without vocal training, will find a part that fits her range.

PART SINGING

VOICE PARTS IN BARBERSHOP SINGING

In simple terms, barbershop harmony is vocal harmony produced by four parts: lead, tenor, baritone and bass. Finding the right part for your voice is the initial step. Any woman of average singing ability, with or without vocal training, will find a part that fits her range.

There are certain things you may want to know depending on the part you will be singing. Most of us are familiar with the SATB or SSAA choral music, where the melody is usually in the First Soprano line, above all others. The voice parts in barbershop harmony for women have different names and functions than they do in other SATB or SSAA vocal styles.

LEAD, TENOR, BARITONE AND BASS

The **LEAD** voice generally sings the melody and is below the **TENOR** harmony; the **TENOR** part sings the highest note in the chord; the **BARITONE** part fills in the all-important missing note in a chord that may be above and below the melody; the **BASS** part supplies the harmonic foundation (root or fifth) of the chord. Similar to choral music, minimal vibrato should be apparent in barbershop singing. Wide and obvious vibratos tend to hamper the “lock and ring” that we look for in our chords

TENOR

G - C - F

TENOR is a harmony part sung consistently above the lead. The tenor should have a light, sweet, pure tone that will complement but not overpower or overshadow the lead voice. Light lyric sopranos generally make good tenors. The range for tenor is from G above middle C to high F on the top line of the clef. Occasionally you will have notes below the lead. When this happens, your tonal quality will need to change from being light and clear to being more full and round. Flexibility is the key and knowing when you need to change.

LEAD

A - C - C

LEAD is the melody and must be sung with authority, clarity and consistent quality throughout the lead's range. The lead sings with limited vibrato to add color and warmth to the sound. With too much use of vibrato, the chord will not “lock” or “ring” or produce the unique, full and “expanded” sound that is characteristic of barbershop harmony. The lead is responsible for conveying the interpretation, emotion and inflections of the song. The range is equivalent to a Soprano II and is from A below middle C, and C above middle C. On the rarer occasions when the melody line is in another part, which may be only for a few notes, the lead will need to be aware to lighten her vocal quality to allow the melody to shine wherever it is being sung. If you are in a quartet, the others will follow your lead. In a chorus, we all follow the director.

BARITONE

A - C - C

BARITONE covers approximately the same range as lead. The voice part is similar to the equivalent of an Alto I except that baritone harmony notes cross the lead notes. Primarily sung below the lead but sometimes sung above, depending on where the melody is situated, baritones must constantly adjust their balance to accommodate their position in the chord. They must have a good ear.

BASS

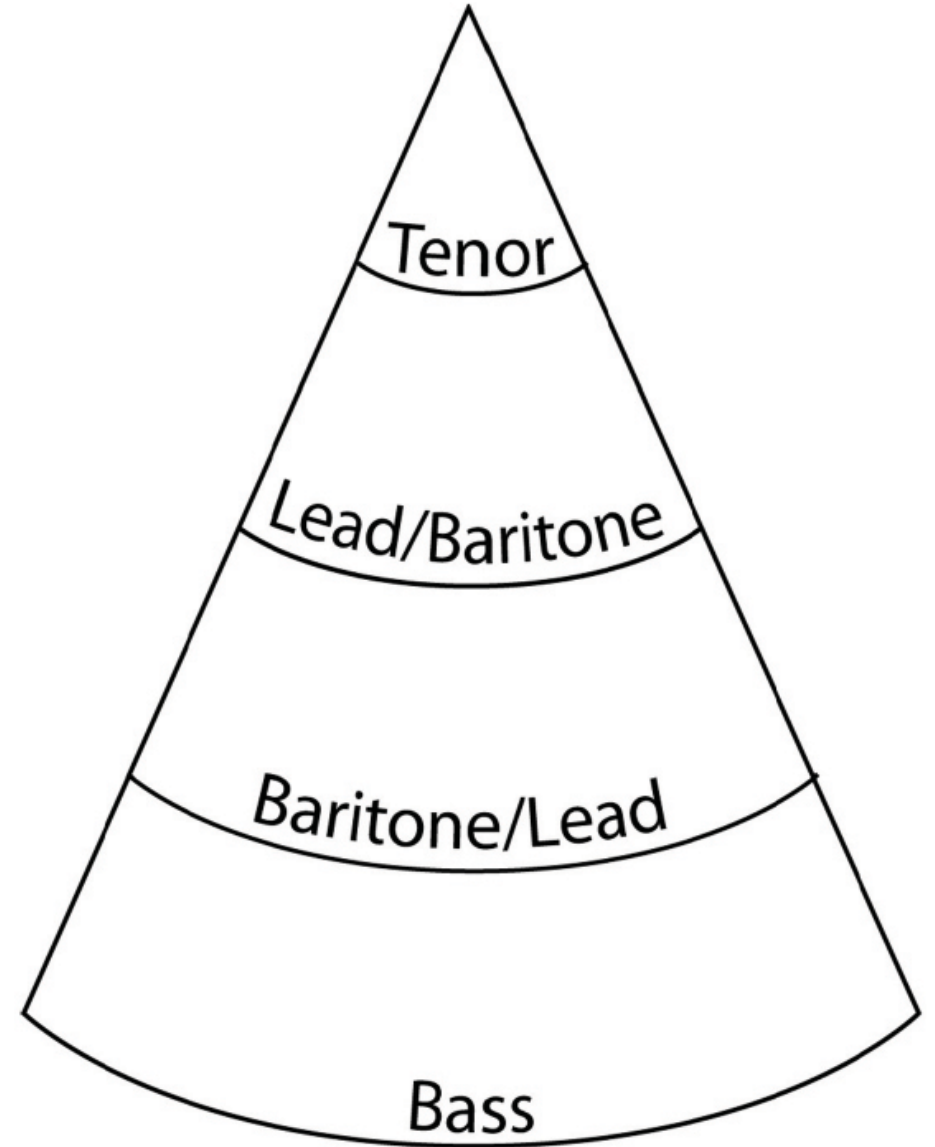
E FLAT - C - G

BASS is the lowest note in the barbershop chord. Singers should have a rich, mellow voice and generally sing the root and fifth of each chord. The bass sings a relatively straight, well-produced tone with a minimum of vibrato. The range is comparable to that of a contralto or Alto II in traditional choral music. The range is from E-flat below middle C to G above middle C. Similar to the baritone, this part is written in the bass clef an octave lower than it is actually sung. A bass sings with a heavier tone quality than the others and generally with more volume, to fill out the “cone.” The bass part provides the foundation of each chord.

THE CONE

THE CONE

Barbershop harmonies have a different balance than the traditional cylindrical balance of SATB or SSAA ensemble music. Our top voices sing with less weight and intensity than our lower voices



HERE ARE THE BASICS:

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.



THAT'S IT - GO SING

But wait, there's more



REAL DEFINITIONS

See Definitions Handout

OTHER THINGS YOU WANT TO KNOW

Resonance:

- Reinforcement and prolongation of a sound or musical tone by reflection or by sympathetic vibration of other bodies
- That quality of a vocal sound that is determined by its vibrating in a resonating cavity as in the pharynx, the mouth or the nose
- Sympathetic resonance: the effect produced when the natural vibration or frequency of a body is greatly amplified by reinforcing vibrations at the same or nearly the same frequency from another body
- The amplification and enrichment of tones produced by the voice
- Producing tones like diamond on black velvet: brilliance and sparkle in a rich, full, round, warm sound with real body and thrill

It's all about using air and creating space in the major resonators: the pharynx, the mouth, and the head.

THE AMOUNT OF RESONANCE IN THE VOICE IS DETERMINED BY OUR ABILITY TO KEEP THESE PARTS OF THE BODY OPEN, RELAXED, FREE WHILE WE SIN

MORE PLEASE

"X" above the staff: The tenor is below the lead. Adjust the vocal balance between the two parts.

Barbershop balance: The CONE-SHAPED sound.

Bass clef: Noted with a small 8 above the clef sign, indicates the notes are sung an octave higher than written. Bass and baritone parts are written in this clef.

Chorus: The chorus is the "story" of the song. It cannot be eliminated.

Do: The name of the key, the tonic. It is the note that is blown before you take a pitch.

Forward Motion: Connecting legato phrases with energized breath support. Avoid rushing or singing faster without connection to the lyrical or musical intent.

Hook: A melody or chord section that repeats, often the title of the song.

DEFINITIONS

Intro: Opening section of an arrangement. The intro sets the scene musically/lyrically.

Major 2nds: Also called "rubs". There is one whole step between the two notes. The balance between two parts for this interval requires equal dominance.

Octave: An interval eight notes apart, do to do, ti to ti etc. Two parts singing an octave apart. The bottom pitch calls for strength and the top note should be "high and light".

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.

DEFINITIONS

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

Tag: The last 4 to 8 bars of the song that functions as a musical coda. Sometimes an arranger incorporates the tag into the song itself.

Taking a pitch: There is a tutorial vodcast available through Sweet Adelines website. It is quite educational and thorough. You can find it in the Members Only Education Center.

Treble clef: Lead and Tenor parts are written in this clef.

Unison: All parts on the same note.

Verse: Usually provides additional musical and lyrical preparation for the story. Sometimes used as an interlude between two choruses. Often eliminated all together.

DEFINITIONS

Embellishments: In music, ornaments or embellishments are musical flourishes that are not necessary to carry the overall line of the melody (or harmony), but serve instead to decorate or "ornament" that line. In Barbershop they are the creative additions arrangers use to make a piece of music really special.

Instrumental Effects: A passage with vocal effect sounds such as "doo wah" substituted for words by either three or four voice parts.

Modulations: 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

Patter: A rapidly moving segment of a song with many words. It is often used in the harmony parts as accompaniment to a melodic passage of a more sustained character.

Solo Passages: Music in barbershop style is four part harmony. Pick ups, lead ins, or short solo passages are acceptable if the "background" still creates acceptable, four-part chords.

DEFINITIONS

Bell Chord: Each part sings her note singly but in immediate succession of the others.

Contrary motion: When two parts, most often tenor and bass move contrary to each other.

Double Duets: Two parts hold their note and the other two parts move, or do echoes, etc.

Duet: Two parts doing the lead in, echo or other style embellishment.

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

Hanger/Post: One part sustains a tone as the other three parts move.

Hidden Contrary Motion: When the movement occurs is a series of four part chords instead of at the end of a phrase.

DEFINITIONS

Octave jumps: Often an ascending move in the bass part. It has to be coned carefully.

Pick ups: A stylistic device used at the beginning of a song or the rests between phrases. It usually consists of one to four syllables extraneous to the melody line and sung by the bass.

Power swipe: Large interval move with great presence and drama. Often featuring the bass or baritone section.

Rolling Octave: The Bass vocal line moves through two or more octaves with other parts.

Rolling Trio: Three parts moving in parallel motion.

NANCY BERGMAN'S DESCRIPTION OF BARBERSHOP HARMONY

Four a cappella notes properly

1. STACKED
2. TUNED
3. BLENDED
4. BALANCED

Equals a RINGING CHORD which produces OVERTONES



OK, NOW THAT'S IT - GO SING

Mission — Have Fun