The New MexiChords Barbershop Chorus

The SERENADER

E-Newsletter

Celebrating 73 Years of Barbershop Harmony in Albuquerque
Chartered September 14, 1952 - Incorporated October 2, 1953

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HOW TO INCREASE YOUR VOCAL RANGE

by Suzy Woltmann

Whether you dream of becoming a singer like Beyoncé or crooning like Jonathan Groff, expanding your vocal range is one of the most rewarding (and challenging!) aspects of learning to sing. Just as it's possible to teach yourself to sing, so too is it possible to learn how to improve your vocal range without shelling out the big bucks for a vocal coach. Let's dive into the science, strategy, and soul of vocal development.

How to expand your vocal range

1. Refine your breathing

Most vocal limitations come from poor breathing technique—so, relax, plan out your breaths, use your diaphragm, and allow your ribs to expand with each inhale.

2. Know your vocal registers

Understanding your vocal registers (chest voice, head voice, and mixed voice) allows you to navigate your entire range with confidence and style. While chest voice lets you access a deeper sound and head voice brings you higher, your mixed voice is where the real magic happens—it's the sweet spot that allows you to sing with both power and agility. Here, voice teacher Andrew Byrne explains different ways to use different registers to expand your vocal range.

3. Always warm up

Start each practice session with vocal activation exercises such as:

· Humming patterns for resonance engagement
· Lip trills for breath coordination
· Gentle sirens to encourage vocal flexibility

These will help prevent vocal strain as you seek higher highs and lower lows.

4. Strive for slow and steady progression

Expand your singing range gradually with semitone increments. It's less dramatic than immediately attempting Ariana Grande's whistle notes, but your vocal cords will thank you for the patience.

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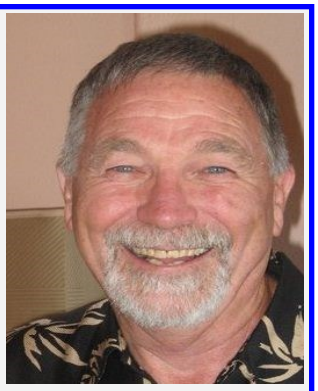
5. Mix up your approach
Expanding your vocal range is as much mental as it is physical. To keep systematic scale practice interesting, mix up your approach with major scales, minor scales, arpeggios, and interval training.

6. Modify your vowels
As you climb higher in pitch, you'll likely need to modify your vowels. That bright "ah" may become more of an "uh" sound in your upper register; allow your pronunciation to shift rather than holding onto the ghost of the unmodified sound. Think continuity over replication.

7. Practice every day
Ready to embark on your journey of vocal expansion? Start with 15–20 minutes of focused daily practice and build from there—and who knows? You might soon find yourself treading the boards of Broadway or commanding a sold-out stadium.

(Be sure to read next month's article, "How to Perform When You're Nervous")

Group Performance at the Annual Youth Harmony Camp at Valley High School. Directed by Tony Sparks and made up of participating members from the Enchanted Mesa Show Chorus, On Q, the New MexiChords Barbershop Chorus, Duke City Sound, and Youth Camp attendees. Vocal training and instruction was provided by the Newfangled Four quartet from Southern California.



FROM OUR DIRECTOR:

"BIFFLEISMS"

Hello, brothers and sisters in song! As always, I hope this finds you well.

Well, summertime is finally in full swing and we are off and running. You all did a great job at The Neighborhood at Rio Rancho, Wednesday, June 17th. Those folks love us and always rave about our performances. Thanks, especially, to all four quartets for singing in the show and being a part of our Spring show in full. It was fun!

The following Tuesday we had a great session with the New Fangled Four coaching us and, following that, we really sang Georgia well on the session-ending show on Saturday. We had about half the chorus there, but those of you who could make it acquitted yourselves very well. I was proud of you!

By the time you read this, we will have dispatched another national anthem performance for the Albuquerque Isotopes baseball club. These are always fun – for us and our family and friends. Thanks, Ruth, for putting together these great opportunities to show the outside world what they're missing by not singing with us!

Thanks, also, to Delta Quadrant for ramrodding our "annual" chorus picnic, to be held July 19th at last report. Please make plans to bring you and your family out to this. It'll be a day of good eats, good drinks, plenty of informal singing (we can put our rep, polecats, and tags to work) and – maybe most important – building community as a group. Let's get to know each other better. It'll make everything we do together better!

And last, don't set this in stone just yet, but we're working on a great idea for a big Oktoberfest thing in, well, October. If this flies, it'll be another really big annual event for us, getting us back to three focus points - the May shows, Oktoberfest, and the Holiday shows. I really feel like the summer season could use an attention fixing goal, and this might just be it. Details are forthcoming as they develop.

Thanks for reading. See you Tuesday, Champs.

Bill

Our weekly meetings are on Tuesdays, 6:30pm, at **St John's United Methodist Church, 2626 Arizona St NE, Albuquerque, NM 87110**

The church is located one block North of Menaul & one block East of San Pedro.

You can see an online location map here:

https://goo.gl/maps/9nGS8mcvRKQYFgBE8

The New MexiChords Lineup

DIRECTOR

Bill Biffle

BARITONE

Koury, Ruth
Randall, Ron
Strohl, Bill

BASS

Grady, Richard
Green, Fred
Hill, Tom
Lobaton, Jay
Maxwell, Nick
Porter, Doug
Quintana, Jerry
Ring, Dave
Taylor, John
Twiggs, Leo

TENORS

Baker, Charlene
Berardinelli, Bev
Fothergill, Jana
Ratcliff, Hal
Yates, Janet

LEAD

Andrews, Tina
Cardillo, Joe
Cole, Tom
Courtney, Bob
Green, Eric
Kahn, Meryl
Leverett, Juliette
Miracle, John
Nelson, Arlo
Parsons, Walt
Preston, Judy
Stavert, Xannie
Taylor, Lynn

L-r: Charlene Baker, Asst Director, Fred Green, 22-yr member, Jana Fothergill, newest member

Arlo Nelson, happy birthday #84

Do you love to sing? Tired of entertaining only yourself in your car or the shower? C'mon out and see how much fun it can be to sing with a group of others!

See us at:

www.NMChords.com

Our chorus and quartets love to sing for our audiences and to share our love of barbershop. You are invited to join with us to enjoy an evening of camaraderie and great barbershop harmony. Don't miss out on the fun. Come and see what it's all about!

What? Weekly Chapter Meeting & Rehearsal
When? Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m.
Where? St John's United Methodist Church, 2626 Arizona St NE, ABQ 87110

Here's a barbershop shout-out to our members with birthdays in July!

Jana Fothergill 11 Jul

Walt Parsons 16 Jul

Lynn Taylor 19 Jul

Bob Courtney 30 Jul

L-r: Charlene Baker, asst director, Janet Yates, 5-year member, Meryl Kahn, new chorus member

The New MexiChords Calendar

Upcoming Chorus Events

2026

4 Jul - Naturalization Ceremony, 9am, Expo in the Fairgrounds, 300 San Pedro Dr NE
16/17 Oct - Oktoberfest, Albuquerque Country Club, Holiday Concert, Details TBD
11 Dec - Naturalization Ceremony, 9am, Expo in the Fairgrounds, 300 San Pedro Dr NE
18 Dec - Holiday Show, 7pm, St John's Methodist Church, 2626 Arizona St, ABQ
19 Dec - Holiday Show, 2pm, St John's Methodist Church, 2626 Arizona St, ABQ

Stay up-to-date with us by visiting our "Shows & Events" page on the website at:

www.NMChords.com

We are a local chapter of the Barbershop Harmony Society (BHS) and a member of the Rocky Mountain District (RMD), which includes parts of the following States/Areas:
Wyoming
Colorado
Most of *Utah*
eastern *Idaho*
southern *Montana*
northern *New Mexico*
western portions of *South Dakota*, *Nebraska*, and *Kansas*

The Serenader is ***your*** newsletter and vehicle for sharing information, stories, and news about the chapter, chorus, quartets, and the people in them. To make it interesting and a fun read, I would encourage all of you to provide articles for publication, photos of quartets in action, our members, chorus on the risers….. Anything that you find interesting and would like to see in the newsletter to share with others. — The Editor

Your Chuckles for July

Two men were in a kayak. One started a fire inside to keep warm. The boat melted immediately. Goes to show you that you can't have your kayak and heat it too.

A pair of jumper cables walk into a bar. The bartender says, "I'll serve you, but don't start anything."

What's brown and hangs in a bell tower? The lunch bag of Notre Dame.

What did Cinderella say when her pictures didn't arrive? "Someday my Prints will come."

When geese fly in a V formation why is one line always longer than the other? There are more geese on that side.

I used to be addicted to brake fluid, but now I can stop anytime.

The biggest lie I tell myself … "I don't need to write that down, I'll remember it."

Why do I have to press 1 for English when they're just gonna transfer me to someone I can't understand anyway?

Of course I talk to myself. Sometimes I need expert advice.

Oops! Did I roll my eyes out loud?

Why do fish live in salt water? Because pepper would make them sneeze.

I got an email explaining how to read maps backwards … It was spam!

What does a house wear? Address …

Why did the king go to the dentist? He needed a crown.

Our Mission:

The members of the Albuquerque Chapter of the Barbershop Harmony Society dedicate themselves to:

- **Continually seek the joy to be found in singing well in the barbershop style**
- **Promote the benefits of our hobby at every available opportunity**
- **Provide our community with high quality musical entertainment, and**
- **Foster continual musical growth and fellowship among the members**

To be added to our fan list, send your name and email address to subscribe@newmexichords.groupanizer.com
To be removed, send your email address to unsubscribe@newmexichords.groupanizer.com