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 SING WHEN NERVOUS

(EXPERT GUIDE FOR PERFORMERS)

by Joanna Hamawi

If you're a performer struggling with stage fright, you're not alone. Many artists experience anxiety before taking the stage, and it can be a challenging experience. However, there are practical steps you can take to transform this fear into a powerful and memorable performance.

Overcoming stage fright is totally possible with just a few tips and tricks that'll help you deliver the performance of a lifetime. In this article, we'll share tips and tricks that will help you conquer stage fright and deliver your best performance yet.

How to sing when Nervous

To sing confidently despite feeling nervous, it helps to do breathing exercises, avoid caffeine and stimulants in general, meditate, stay hydrated, picture yourself delivering an amazing performance, and be highly prepared for your show. With a positive mindset and approach, you can deliver an unforgettable performance that even you weren't expecting.

First and foremost is to acknowledge that stage fright is more common than people realize and that it affects many celebrities and performers like Harry Styles, Adele, and Rihanna. However, you should never let the feeling of nervousness deter you from pursuing your dreams.

The first step is to make sure you are FULLY prepared. Just like with any other art form, the best results come from thorough preparation. Make sure you know the words of your song and have a firm grasp of their meaning by practicing it repeatedly. This will allow you to concentrate on giving a moving performance rather than stressing about the details.

Second, it's extremely important to warm up your vocal cords before you start. By loosening your muscles and expanding your vocal range with warm-up exercises, you'll be able to sing with more ease and control. Vocal warm-ups might include anything from lip trills and tongue twisters to simple humming.

Third, close your eyes and visualize yourself singing with complete assurance, hitting every note, and receiving a standing ovation BEFORE you take the stage. Visualizing is an effective tool for controlling anxiety, so you'll feel more certain and ready to give it your all after performing this exercise.

The fourth piece of advice, which may seem too basic, is to simply relax. Try performing mindfulness exercises and focusing on the present moment. Take deep breaths, relax your body and mind, and try not to overthink.

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With this technique, you can silence your thoughts and feel less anxious before going on stage. And finally, try to keep a positive mindset and remember why you love to sing. Try to recall the excitement and pleasure you feel when you sing and the joy you give others. Remember that it's normal to be anxious and that mistakes aren't the end of the world.

If you're still feeling nervous before going on stage, try shifting your attention elsewhere. Distract yourself by listening to relaxing music, talking to friends, or reading a good book.

Ways to Overcome Performance Anxiety

Anxiety while Singing: Keep in mind that feeling nervous before going on stage in no way reflects poorly on your singing ability or preparation for the performance. You should tell yourself again and again that if the most successful artists on the planet can feel nervous and afraid before performing, then so can the rest of us. The good news is that there are methods to help you overcome your stage fright and give a fearless performance in front of an actual, live audience. Let's check them out:

Preparation: If you feel unprepared for your performance, it's natural to experience a mixture of anxiety and fear before you go on stage. You must practice your songs until they become second nature to you and no longer need conscious effort on your part. Make sure you know the song inside and out, both musically and lyrically.

Perform Breathing Exercises: Try to relax as much as you can and do some breathing exercises. If you're sitting, place your feet flat on the floor and rest your arms on the armrests of your chair. If you're standing, make sure your feet are about hip-width apart. Calmly count to five while taking five slow, deep breaths. While you count to five, take a deep breath in with your nose and let it out slowly and softly through your lips. Do this for at least 5 minutes or as long as you think is required.

Avoid stimulants like caffeine: Caffeine, especially when consumed in large quantities, can cause over-stimulation, which can lead to a rapid heartbeat, headaches, anxiety, stomach cramps, panic, and other unpleasant side effects, all of which can work you up and make your stage fright and anxiety even worse. So, try to avoid drinks like coffee, energy drinks, sodas, and teas, and try to opt for room temperature water instead.

Convince yourself you're excited, not scared: Both fear and excitement stimulate the hypothalamus in the same way, leading to the same physiological response. Hormones like cortisol and adrenaline, released in response to stress, raise blood pressure and heart rate and cause rapid breathing. As your brain has a similar reaction to both anxiety and excitement, you should try to trick yourself into feeling excited about the performance.

Don't worry about messing up and enjoy yourself: For singers, the fear of performing in public can cloud their ability to enjoy their art, which is extremely frustrating, especially when you're just trying to do something you love. So just enjoy yourself, don't take things too seriously, imagine you're playing for your friends instead, and give yourself permission to mess up. Even the top names in the music industry aren't immune to making blunders. Making a mistake now and then is very natural. If it happens, just laugh it off! In fact, doing so will make you appear more confident and comfortable with yourself, giving the impression that you don't give a hoot about what the audience thinks, which is precisely what we want.

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Meditate: The physical and mental advantages of regular meditation practice are significant. Meditation will help you feel less stressed, sleep better, have fewer stomach issues, and have less muscular tension, thanks to its relaxing effects. Try to include meditation in your daily schedule. You'll feel better immediately, and the gradual reduction in anxiety will help in your eventual triumph over your stage fright.

Fixate on something or someone: If scanning the crowd's faces during your performance makes you anxious, divert your gaze to anything else, or concentrate on a specific person. It could be a random object in the room, a vacant seat in the back row, a dimmer on the stage's rear wall, or the face of a friend or a family member in the audience. If seeing a familiar face helps you relax, make that person the sole person in the audience for the entire duration of your performance. Locate what makes you feel most at ease, whether it's an object or person. Finding what you're looking for doesn't take more than a few seconds.

Break down any other alternative methods: Don't eat anything for at least two hours before your performance, if not longer. That way, you won't have to worry as much about becoming sick on stage if you start to feel nauseous right before you perform.

Prepare your set list by starting with the easier songs in the beginning. That way, when you're ready, you can move on to the more difficult songs, using the easy ones as "practice songs" along the way. Be sure to seek opinions from close friends and family members in the days, if not months, leading up to the performance. Maybe you think (or people have led you to think) that your singing skills are up to par and made you believe you can sing like Adele when, in reality, you can't. Make it a habit to get honest opinions from those closest to you. You'll feel a huge surge of confidence just before your performance after they reassure you that your voice is the real deal and you can put your fears to rest.

Many public speakers and performers say that visualizing their audience naked helps them relax and feel more confident before going on stage. So feel free to try that trick. Keep in mind that everyone there is just looking to have a good time. They are not there to judge you, and they have no interest in your failure. So just relax and enjoy yourself.

FAQs

Can anxiety make it hard to sing?

Yes, anxiety can hinder a singer's ability to sing by triggering physiological symptoms like trembling or shaking, a rapid heartbeat, sweaty hands, and shallow breathing. In addition, anxiety can cause distractions and self-doubt by causing mental barriers for the performer, which leads to low self-esteem and bad performance.

How do I stop my voice from shaking when I sing?

If your voice shakes while you sing, practice relaxation techniques like deep breathing, meditation, and stretching. Perform vocal warm-up exercises before you go on stage to loosen up your vocal cords, which can help you sing without damaging your voice. If you're dealing with anxiety on a daily basis, it's best to seek the assistance of a vocal coach or therapist.

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At what age do singers lose their voices?

Because vocal ability is affected by many factors, including genetics, vocal technique, lifestyle, and health, there is no set age at which singers lose their voices. However, around the age of 65-70, physiological changes to the vocal cords and muscle weakness might make it harder to sing.

Conclusion

To sum up, it's not easy for singers to get through performances when they're feeling nervous and anxious. And it's important to remember that it's only human to become a little shaky before a big performance and that even the most experienced performers have felt the jitters before taking the stage.

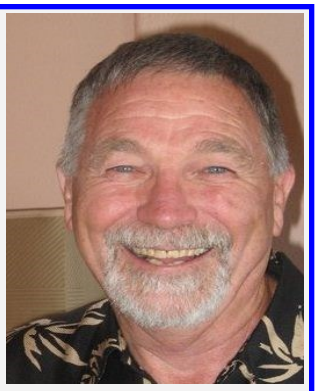
However, you can overcome your fear and provide a stellar performance by adopting the correct frame of mind, warming up correctly, practicing relaxation methods, and making sure you have your whole set memorized.

Try to get some moral support from someone you trust, and most importantly, believe in yourself and your abilities as a singer. It's possible to overcome performance anxiety and provide an outstanding, life-changing performance with hard work and determination.

So, get out there, and don't be afraid to give it your all. Don't allow stage fright to keep you from having fun and showing everyone what you've got!

GQ quartet took 1st place at the International Quartet competition last month in St Louis, MO. They are the first all female quartet to win in the 80-year history of the Barbershop Harmony Society's annual contest. Congrats to ***GQ*** !!

Fellow New MexiChords member, Jay Lobaton, performed in St. Louis with the Next Generation alumni chorus.



FROM OUR DIRECTOR:

"BIFFLEISMS"

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

Summer is fleeing fast. Darn it! But, we're having a good one, aren't we? A great picnic – thanks to Delta Quadrant for all the good work. And to those of you who could make it for, well, making it. There's sentiment around to do another social event of similar magnitude after the first of the year. Indoors, I presume. Stay tuned, as they used to say. Do they still say that? They must, because I just did.

Our annual retreat (I think we should start calling it our Advance – we ain't retreating from nuttin'!) is coming August 8. Going to be a valuable and enjoyable day. Our clinician, whom some of you know from past events such as this, Steve Scott, is a major player in the barbershop and greater choral music world. I'm really happy that Consider Yourself, Gang That Sang, Georgia, Kentucky Babe, and our other repertoire are rounding into such fine fettle. This will give Steve some solid material to work with. And, of course, we'll get a good dose of basic vocal, choral, and musical work, too. If you have any questions about the event, consult the exhaustive materials that Ruth has put together about it. As always, her work is outstanding and very helpful. Thank you, again, Ruth for all you do on behalf of the order.

Finally, the big Oktoberfest show on October 17 is really rounding into shape. BBP and HDD are well started and look to be fun for all to sing. And the country club has really stepped up to make this happen. They will host the entire thing – provide flyers, pay the band, decorate the hall, provide the food – German, of course – and assume complete financial responsibility. All that we have to do is spread the word, sell tickets, show up, and SING. It looks to be a real blast and my hope is that we can make it an annual event. So start talking this up with your family and friends now, please. Ticket prices haven't been set, but they'll be below $30, we hope. Non club members can get in with a ticket or they can pay at the door with a credit card. Easy peasy. Gonna be a great way to end the summer months on a very high note.

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

Summer Pic-a-nic

On Sunday afternoon, July 19, the New MexiChords gathered for what we hope will become an annual tradition for a picnic, socializing, and singing. It was organized and hosted by Joe Vertrees and the Delta Quadrant quartet.

Great food, games, and story-telling were had by all. And when a summer rain entered the picture, we gathered under the roofed area and sang…. What else, but barbershop songs!!

Duke City Sound

Our Albuquerque brothers in harmony, Duke City Sound (DCS), competed in the Barbershop Harmony Society's International Competition held this year in St. Louis, MO. We are proud of them and the work they put in to accomplish this level of performance. The photo below was taken at the competition with the chorus being presented with a plaque by Clint Woodward. Our congratulations to DCS for a job well done!

"Being a musician isn't a hobby, it's a way of life. Take away music from any musician and you're left with just a shell of a human being. They'd be alive, but not truly living."

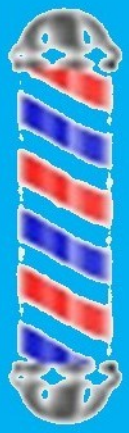
Just remember ...

☆☆☆☆☆

SOME POLES MATTER MORE THAN OTHERS

☆☆☆☆☆

Exercise your right to sing



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
Vertrees, Joe

Our Quartet Activities

As part of our Summer Fest activities the *ABQ Quartet* performed at Fonzy's Barbershop here in Albuquerque. The owner/barber of the business even joined the fun sitting in a barber chair! Singing Barbershop in a Barbershop is always a treat!!

Members of *ABQ* are left to right, Hal Ratcliff - tenor, Richard Grady - bass, Joe Vertrees - lead, and Bill Biffle - baritone

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

Choir Genius v.4 is Coming Soon!!

It's been more than three months since I've said much, if anything, about our upcoming upgrade from CG3 (Groupanizer) to the new CG4 (Choir Genius). But fear not…. I have been working diligently to make it all come together.

Once it's ready to "go live" you will automatically be sent an invitation from the program. Before that happens I plan to send each of you an email with your personal username and password with information on how to find and do things in this new version. You'll find that it is similar to Groupanizer, but there are a few new things, too. What would be the reason to create an upgraded version and leave it like the old one? Right??

The new CG4 will have abilities that we may not need or might find that we can use at a later time. Be that as it may, I will continue to be your go-to person if and when questions arise with the program.

On the next page you will find a list of the features that will be available with CG4 and a chart comparison of CG3 vs CG4.

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More info about CG4:

The cost of this software will be $264.00 per year. Once we go live with the program, the balance of our current registration for CG3 will be applied to CG4. So, we won't lose any money with the conversion to CG4. The features available to us will be:

Membership & Community database, with no limit on the number of people we can add.

Music library including unlimited storage for uploaded sheet music and audio files.

Mobile app with audio player for iOS and Android.

Automated business processes, with many hands-off notifications.

Riser Placement / seating chart creator.

Unlimited document storage.

Member mailing lists.

Bulletins / Newsletters.

Master and personal calendars; subscribe with Google Calendar or iCal.

Attendance tracking (RSVP will/won't attend).

Basic public site.

Security features including **SSL Certificate, Daily Backups, Audit logging**.

Mobile app integrations for rehearsal such as Chorus Class.

The **Choir Genius app**, which is free of charge for iPhone and Android users.

Here is a chart showing a comparison between CG3 and CG4 features. There are elevated levels of licensing with more features and higher costs, but the CG4 Conductor License provides all that we need and more.

There will be a few areas in CG4 that will need to be "tweaked" after we go live, but I will be monitoring and making changes as we go. Please access your account after you receive the automatic invitation from CG4. If you have questions or problems, please let me know. It is my goal to make this new version as user-friendly and better than CG3 as I can.

Thanks for your help and support in making our chapter work and run as smoothly and efficiently as possible.

Sing-cerely,

Fred

differences between the product levels of CG4, and CG3.

Features	CG Classic (CG3)	CG4 Conductor License
Members & Contacts	✔	✔
Historical membership tracking	-	✔
Parent & Child Accounts	✔	-
Company & Employee Accounts	-	-
Dashboard	✔	✔
Sell Merch/Basic store items	✔	-
Automatic recurring billing	-	-
Stock tracking	-	-
Sell Memberships	-	-
Sell donations	-	-
Sell tickets/check-in guests	-	-
Order creation for accounts	-	-
Member Invoicing	✔	-
Add a record of manually received payments	-	-
Basic calendar	✔	✔
Attendance tracking	✔	✔
Leave of Absence tracker	✔	✔
QR code check-in	-	✔
Volunteer management	-	-
Timeslot signup	-	-
Rehearsal programs	✔	**coming soon**
Notifications	✔	✔

The New MexiChords Calendar

Upcoming Chorus Events

2026

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 August

My financial advisor told me to diversify into precious metals. So I bought a brand new set of premium iron golf clubs.

A mobster named Artie was arrested for strangling people at the grocery store for a token payment. The headline reads "Artie Chokes Three for a Dollar in Produce Section".

Chocolate comes from cocoa which is a tree … that makes it a plant which means … chocolate is Salad!!

How are stars like false teeth? They both come out at night.

What do you call an alligator that's always causing trouble? An insta-gator…

What word becomes shorter when you add to letters to it? Short.

How many months in the year have 28 days? All of them.

Ten people tried to fit under a small umbrella, none of them got wet. How did they do it? It wasn't raining!

What's the difference between outlaws and in-laws? Outlaws are Wanted.

Never buy anything made from Velcro. It's a total rip-off …

Which appliance is the worst to have on a boat? The sink.

I haven't tried yoga, but I have tried bending over to pick up my keys, so I'm pretty sure I'd hate it.

I hate when I go to the kitchen looking for food and all I find are ingredients.

What do you call a bee that can't make up its mind? A maybe…

Is it ignorance or apathy that's destroying the world today? I don't know, and I don't care….

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**

Stay informed of our upcoming shows and events. You will receive our monthly newsletter by sending your name and email address to subscribe@newmexichords.groupanizer.com
To be removed, send your email address to unsubscribe@newmexichords.groupanizer.com