



The New MexiChords Barbershop Chorus

The **SERENADER**

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

E-Newsletter



Editor: Fred Green poolvacman@gmail.com ■ December 2025 ■ An Occasional Publication As the Need Arises

## THE SECRETS TO STAYING ON PITCH

by Craig Antony Lees

Craig Antony Lees is a contemporary vocal coach, choir director and arranger. He is a senior lecturer on the Popular Music Degree Program at Leeds College of Music and also holds the post of "Musician in Residence" for the West Yorkshire Playhouse program for young people. Craig is a director of The British Voice Association (BVA) and recipient of the Sing For Pleasure Young Conductors Scholarship' (2015) Find out more at: [www.livingvocally.com](http://www.livingvocally.com).

Craig Antony Lees' vocal group from Leeds College of Music has moved onto the finals of the BBC's Pitch Battle TV competition.

We ask him to reveal the secrets to the group's success...

### The technique of pitching

You are in a 'Pitch Battle' against other groups – is there actually a way that you can practice pitch?

Absolutely; being able to pitch accurately is an essential skill for any singer. Personally, I practice using a tuning fork (tuned to an A). Whenever I have a spare moment I practice pitching different notes, intervals and chords from the A note. A bit old fashioned I know, but it works for me!

What is something you've learned about pitch by doing this that all singers can apply?

Don't underestimate the power of your vowel shapes! When singing in harmony (as we do a lot in the show), it is really important to consider the vowel shapes you are using. As a group, we can all be singing the right notes and the right lyrics, but if someone's vowel shapes are slightly darker or brighter than the rest of the group it can really throw the blend and the pitching.

### How performance can affect pitching

You are under bright lights, on a stage in a pressure situation – does this have a bad effect on all the singing work your group has done – or does it make it better?

As a group, I think we actually perform at our best when under pressure. There were some amazing choirs and vocal groups in the show that we had to compete against in order to progress through to the final. This meant that we had to come out fighting! Our time on stage is all a blur to me. I just focused on communicating each and every lyric, both to the judges and the audience at home.

What has been the biggest challenge in fine tuning your vocal performances?

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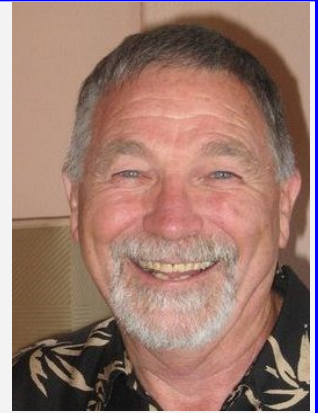
The show has forced us to hone in on the subtleties of our performance. It can be tempting to belt out a song at the top of our lungs because this is what we feel will be most impressive. However, sometimes the softest vocal sounds and dynamics can have the greatest impact. As singers, it is important that we remember that it's all about the music, not our ego.

What was something that went better than you thought it would?

At the end of the show we had the privilege of singing with that week's celebrity judge, Will Young. It was an amazing moment for us but in all the excitement I feared we may have made some slips in our timing and pitch. However, watching it later was actually one of the strongest moments in the show for us. I guess it goes to show what you can achieve when you just get lost in the moment.



**FROM OUR DIRECTOR:  
“BIFFLEISMS”**



Hello, fellow harmonizers! As always, I hope this finds you well.

By the time you read this, we will be very close to the Christmas shows. Please make an extra effort to invite all your friends, family, neighbors, and such as the show is FREE and will be REALLY GOOD. Be proud of your chorus and your place in it and share the good news to all and sundry. Enchanted Mesa Show Chorus will be a terrific addition to our presentation and we – YOU - deserve a big audience for this!

Go over the parts of the songs that you are least solid on. A rising tide floats all the boats. Or a chain is only as strong as its weaker link. Or a stitch in time saves green stamps. Whatever.

After the shows, we have two meetings left in this old year. Don't miss these if you can. J We'll go over rep, polecats, our favorite tags, etc., and generally have a good time singing together. It's the secret to a long and happy life. Ask anyone!

Again, please mark your calendars for all the events we have in December. We're singing six times in 21 days, so gird your vocal folds and get prepared to share in the joys of the season with your fans.

And, please, respond promptly to Ruth's queries about attendance at these. It helps keep her hypertension under control.

Again, here's the list:

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| Naturalization Ceremony      | Dec 5, 10 AM                                 |
| Alegria performance          | Dec 6, 7 PM                                  |
| Tech rehearsal for shows     | Dec 11, 6:30 PM                              |
| Show I                       | Dec 12, 7 PM                                 |
| Show II                      | Dec 13, 2 PM (Afterglow to follow at Bill's) |
| The Neighborhood Performance | Dec 15, 7PM                                  |
| Cottonwood Mall performance  | Dec 26, 2:30 PM                              |

Please note: These are NOT call times, they are start times for the events. As always, consult any issue of the Que Pasa? for details of all performances.

Hope you all had the Thanksgiving of your dreams. Now, let's take that into SHOW WEEKEND!

See you Tuesday, Champs.

Bill



For anybody else that's getting coal for Christmas, maybe we can link up and get the grill going or something.

Christmas Tree O Christmas Tree  
Your Ornaments are History!



WHY DID THE RED-NOSED REINDEER HELP THE OLD LADY CROSS THE ROAD?  
IT WOULD HAVE BEEN RUDOLPH HIM NOT TO. ...

## The New MexiChords "Lineup" as of 1 December 2025

### DIRECTOR

Bill Biffle

### BARITONE

Hudson, Hal  
Koury, Ruth  
Randall, Ron  
Strohl, Bill

### BASS

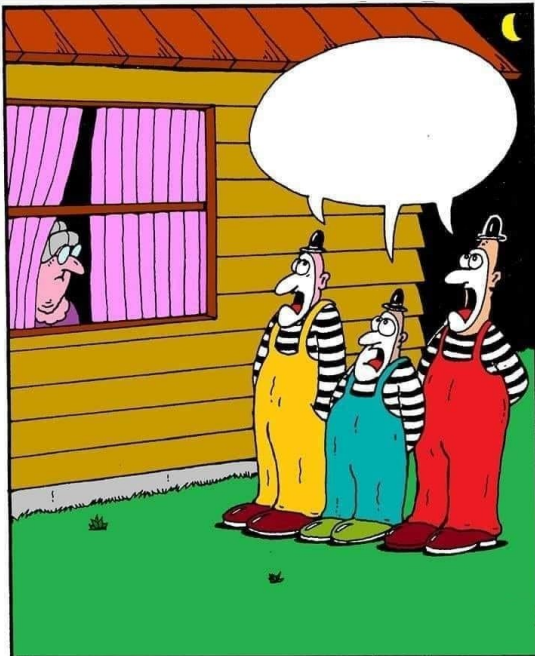
Butler, Larry  
Grady, Richard  
Green, Fred  
Lobaton, Jay  
Maxwell, Nick  
Montgomery, Clint  
Porter, Doug  
Quintana, Jerry  
Ring, Dave  
Taylor, John  
Twiggs, Leo

### TENORS

Baker, Charlene  
Berardinelli, Bev  
Browning, Jo  
Green, Debbie  
Meyer, Cam  
Ratcliff, Hal  
Yates, Janet

### LEAD

Andrews, Tina  
Cardillo, Joe  
Cole, Tom  
Courtney, Bob  
Green, Eric  
Iwinski, Joe  
Lash, Mike  
Leverett, Juliette  
Miracle, John  
Nelson, Arlo  
Parsons, Walt  
Preston, Judy  
Stavert, Xannie  
Taylor, Lynn  
Turner, Mary  
Vertrees, Joe



The mime Christmas carolers performed a heartfelt rendition of "Silent Night."



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](http://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

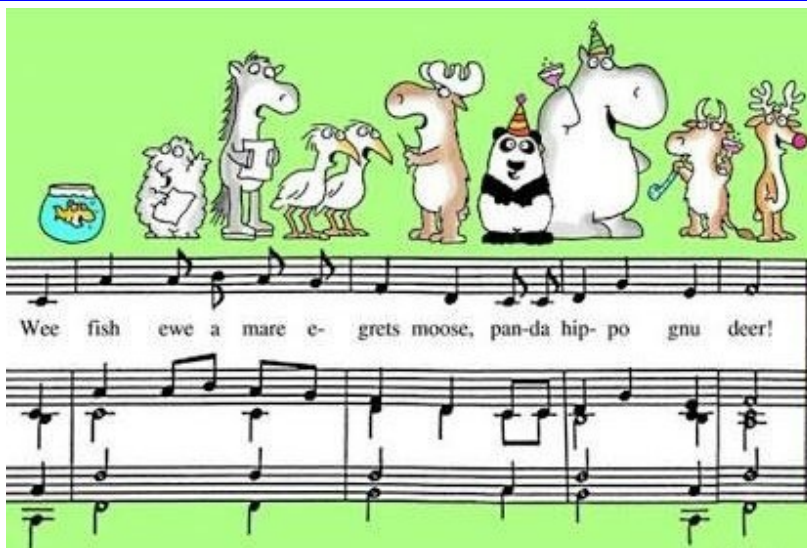
**When?** Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m.

**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 December!

|                |        |
|----------------|--------|
| Janet Yates    | 10 Dec |
| Charlene Baker | 12 Dec |
| Leo Twiggs     | 31 Dec |



# The New MexiChords Calendar

## Upcoming Chorus Events

### 2025

- 5 Dec - Naturalization Ceremony, 10am, ABQ Convention Center, 401 2nd St NW
- 6 Dec - Alegria Performance, 7pm, 901 Cottonwood Cir, Bernalillo
- 11 Dec - Tech Rehearsal (chorus only), 6:30pm, SJMC, 2626 Arizona St NE
- 12 Dec - Holiday Show, 7pm, St John's Methodist Church, 2626 Arizona St NE
- 13 Dec - Holiday Show, 2pm, St John's Methodist Church, 2626 Arizona St NE
- 15 Dec - The Neighborhood Performance, 7pm, 900 Loma Colorado Blvd NE, Rio Rancho
- 26 Dec - Giving Machine Performance, 2:30pm, Cottonwood Mall, 10000 Coors Bypass NW

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

[www.NMChords.com](http://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*

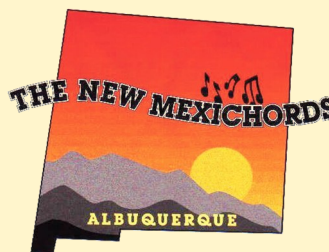
*Colorado*

*Most of Utah*

*eastern Idaho*

*southern Montana*

*northern New  
western por-  
Dakota, Ne-  
Kansas*



*Mexico  
tions of South  
braska, and*

***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 December](#)

Why didn't Han Solo enjoy his steak dinner? It was Chewie.

Did you hear about the guy who froze to death at the drive-in? He went to see *Closed for the Winter*.

We all know about Murphy's Law: Anything that can go wrong will go wrong. But have you heard of Cole's Law? It's thinly sliced cabbage.

I had a happy childhood. My dad would put me in tires and roll me down hills. Those were Goodyears.

What invention allows us to see through walls? Windows.

My creditors keep calling me to give me compliments. They say I have an "outstanding balance."

What's the least spoken language in the world? Sign language.

What sound does a witch's car make? Broom broom!

What do you call 50 pigs and 50 deer? 100 sows and bucks.

What do you call a fish with no eye? A fsh.

My son's fourth birthday was today. When he came to see me, I didn't recognize him at first. I had never seen him be four.

A guy walks into a bar, and there's a horse serving drinks. The horse asks, "What are you staring at? Haven't you ever seen a horse tending bar before?" The guy says, "It's not that. I just never thought the parrot would sell the place."

How does the man in the moon get his hair cut? Eclipse it.



### **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](mailto:subscribe@newmexichords.groupanizer.com)  
To be removed, send your email address to [unsubscribe@newmexichords.groupanizer.com](mailto:unsubscribe@newmexichords.groupanizer.com)