

The **DOUBLOON** – 2007

Issue Number 01

Editor - Dave Gansar

Tuesday, January 02

Chapter President - Beryl Laufer

Visit our Web Page: www.mardigraschorus.org

Let's update our calendar -

Tuesday, January 2nd and 9th – Regular Meetings

Christ The King Lutheran Church Fellowship Hall - 1001 West Esplanade, Kenner

This arrangement also gives us the opportunity to meet **Mrs. Lynne Smith**, Director of the Church choir, who may be interested in trying her hand in directing the **Mardi Gras Chorus**.

As usual, meetings are scheduled to start at 7:15pm. Make a note.

Thursday, January 11 - IRREGULAR

Rehearsal 7:15pm, Monroe Hall, Ochsner. Guests welcome.

Thursday, January 25 - IRREGULAR

Rehearsal 7:15pm, Monroe Hall, Ochsner. Guests welcome.

Saturday, January 13 – Installation and Awards Banquet

GNO Chapter, Barbershop Harmony Society – \$15.00 per includes Tax, Tip, etc.

Asian Super Buffet – 3900 Williams Blvd, Kenner – Open 5:30pm

Wednesday, February 14 – VALENTINES DAY

Reserve the Day.

Tuesday, February 20 – MARDI GRAS

Fill the street with song

Table Snorkeling (tay' bul snawrk' ling) - n. Frantic gesticulations when one bites into hot food and has to take in air to cool it off.

The Five Steps Necessary to Produce Quality Tone

by **Bud Miller**, Music VP, Cherry Hills NJ -- part 1 of 5

submitted by Milt Weisman, editor/publisher, Cherry Hill NJ Tru-Notes

There are five basic areas that require attention if a singer is to have a chance to produce the best tone possible, relative to his God-given talent. They are:

- Body alignment, or posture
- Proper abdominal-costal breathing.
- Singing on the breath, or attack.
- Singing tone that has sustaining length.
- Release of tone.

In this first lesson, we are going to deal with number 1, body alignment. If body alignment is not the most important of the five areas, it is at least one we have to deal with first, simply because without the ability or the will to do it correctly, the other areas are impossible to master.

To attain proper body alignment, we are searching for a dynamic relationship or coordination between the body parts that allow for a freer and more efficient use of the body. We have always been taught that "good posture" for singers is a standing posture, with the body erect, the head straight, the chest slightly forward and the shoulders low and relaxed, feet

shoulder-width apart with the weight slightly on the balls of the feet, heels touching the floor. This posture does not imply, however, a rigidity in positioning the body, as in a "military way". In most of us there is lacking a natural chest poise and body poise, a power of relaxing certain parts of the muscular system while a due control is exercised over other parts. If we control some parts, we seem to want to control them all.

We are now going to develop a concept of a "preparatory set" which we will use at all times when singing. These are the physical and mental adjustments a singer makes when he is preparing himself to start a vocal phrase, because it is at this particular moment, at the intake of air and the attack, that excessive tensions in the vocal apparatus are built up. To promote poise under the stress of performance, the mind must take control, and make appropriate choices. Many factors are anticipated such as pitch, tone quality (consonant, vowel, and volume), and the ensuing interpretation. Everything in singing is mental. The formation of mental images, during which time we anticipate what we are going to do, "compels our sound-producing mechanism to adjust in a most minute and delicate manner; it sets in motion a most complex series of muscular contractions balanced to a remarkable degree of precision which results in the imagined sound". In other words, what we cannot conceive in our minds, we will not execute vocally.

Physically, we mentally anticipate what we are going to sing. We want to:

Let the neck be free - head forward and up, not down or back.

Allow the body to lengthen up and widen out - this results in a high chest and an expanded rib cage. It is very important to remember that this position of the chest must be maintained throughout each song. *Do not let it collapse at any time.*

Allow the shoulders to relax down and back a little.

Allow the hips and pelvis to tuck under and forward.

Allow the knees to flex slightly.

As you free yourself from excessive rigidity and tenseness you will find that the verbs chosen above are correct. You do not hold your neck free. You release the tensions and allow it to be free. You do not force the hips and pelvis under and forward, you let the body elongate by releasing tension. As the body elongates, the hips naturally tuck under slightly and come forward a bit, thus aligning the body.

We live in a society filled with tension, stress and all the accompanying problems of a complex, tough world. Nothing could be more detrimental to relaxation and good singing. Rather than working so hard physically to execute the fundamentals of good singing, we must learn to engage and activate the mind and put the body on cruise control. Let us get control of our mental images and thereby learn the ultimate control we own over our physical and vocal apparatus

Woowad (wew' wad) - n. Giant clumps of stuck-together rice served at Chinese restaurants

Dear Editor:

Thank you for your help in getting me the Doubloon and sending me the Roster. I am learning a lot by your articles on how to improve your singing. Today I was practicing all the suggestions in your article. However, I had a little accident. I wanted to first get the feet right. So I put most of my weight on the balls of my feet as suggested. Then I tried to get my mouth and tongue in the right position. I couldn't tell if it was correct so I decided to look into a mirror. The mirror was a little low so I had to lean over more (but still on the balls of my feet). But here is where the accident occurred. I leaned over so much I lost my balance and my head smashed into the wall above the mirror. When I yelled "Ouch" I noticed in the mirror I had the correct mouth formation. Even though my head hurts I am grateful that I was able to follow thru with the instruction.

Sol (Popsy).

Zipcuffed (zip' cuf) - v. To be trapped in one's trousers by a faulty zipper.

From the Editor,

To the Gentlemen of the Chorus:

In regard to the great vocal aids that we have been providing one per Doubloon issue, it certainly is becoming a lot of words. Let me suggest that you start a file now before the lessons get out of hand (this issue would be page 6). This is good information and provides a great "self-help" series for those men who want to improve and be part of the greater chorus the Mardi Gras Chorus is going to become.

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