

Smoke and Mirrors - Being Your Own Vocal Coach

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Not everyone lives close to superstar voice instructors, but you can make tremendous progress with a recorder and a mirror (and other simple tools and techniques). Learn how to evaluate your own singing as well as a few tips and tricks to make better and faster progress. Fantastic skills for when your coach is just too far away.

How can you become a better singer between rehearsals? You're singing in a quartet or chorus. You may not get regular coaching. What are the keys to increasing your ability as a chorus or quartet singer?

1. Listen to great quartet singers who sing your part and learn from them
2. Be smarter than everyone else and put in the effort - do what others are unwilling to do
3. Work on your voice - Components of Vocal Technique
 - a. posture/alignment
 - b. respiration – breathing motion and breath management
 - c. phonation and registers – heavy mechanism and light mechanism
 - d. resonance – vowels and the vocal tract
 - e. diction – articulation of vowels and consonants
 - f. expression – phrasing and dramatic communication of the text
 - g. Exercises for building a better voice
 - i. Lip Trills/Tongue Trills
 - ii. Solfege
 - iii. Mah-May-Me-Mo-Moo
 - iv. "I Love to Sing"
 - v. Sirens
4. Understand Vocal Problems
 - a. Vocal problems: There are 5 basic problems we may commit when singing, and they are as follows:
 - i. Singing Out of Tune
 - ii. Lack of Rhythm Sense
 - iii. Running Out of Breath When Singing
 - iv. Soft or Weak Voice
 - v. Blur or Slurry Words When Singing

Apart from the above problems when singing, there are also some common undesirable vocal habits that many of us commit when we are singing. They are:

- b. Straining Your Throat
- c. Locking Your Jaw
- d. Raising Your Head
- e. Turtleneck Singing

5. Work on your music/part
6. Find your best target vowels, then incorporate them into your singing consistently
7. Wall of sound
8. Hold yourself accountable to rhythmic precision and pitch intonation
9. Use smart tools and techniques
 - a. Recording - Use a digital recorder/phone voice recorder/recorder on a computer (GarageBand). Record everything you sing and don't be afraid to listen and critique, in order to improve
 - b. Straw - Occlusion exercises
 - i. Other occlusion exercises:
 1. Fist
 2. Shhh, Shhh, Shhh, Shhhhhhhhhhhhh
 3. Lip Trills, Tongue Trills (greatest vocal exercise!)
 - c. Face mirror
 - i. What to look for?
 1. Strain/tension
 2. Jaw
 3. Vertical vs. Horizontal
 4. Lips
 5. Tongue
10. Master interval theory and scale theory (relationship between notes in a scale)
 - a. Scales/Solfege - W--W---h---W---W---W--h
Do Re Mi Fa So La Ti Do
 - b. Intervals - Major and Minor 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, Octave
 - c. Strong and Weak parts of chords

Contact Information -

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Director of Music -

- Choirs (Westside Voices, Soli Deo Gloria, and Concert Choir)
- Eagle Concert Band
- Eagle Beat Drumline
- IGNITE Worship Team



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