

Barbershop for Choral Singers

Elena Robinson

How is barbershop different from Choral music? Should you sing differently as a barbershopper? Understand what makes barbershop “barbershop,” and discuss some common terms that you can expect to hear as you begin your musical journey.

Four Part A Cappella Harmony	<p>Sopranos carry the melody in choral music but leads carry it in barbershop. This can present challenges since the frequencies of the soprano range carry further and are easier to hear by the audience.</p> <p>Barbershop voicing is the same for males and females, where choral voicing is different for men and women.</p> <p>Bass: The lowest harmony part Bari: Same range as lead, but harmonizes to fill chords Lead: Soprano 2 range and typically carries the melody Tenor: A high harmony in the soprano range, must sing lighter than traditional choral music</p>
Barbershop Chords/Resolution	<p>There are 11 commonly used chords to arrange barbershop music. These chords are chosen because they the frequencies in them ring the most! Some chords are included for practicality of chord progression when using the circle of 5ths.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11 Chords of Barbershop: https://www.sunshinetracks.com/chords.pdf Circle of 5th in music: https://youtu.be/2s97PqO_cR4
Lock & Ring/Expanded Sound/Overtones	<p>This terminology refers to the overtones heard when the wavelengths of a chord are in true alignment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lock & Ring is sometimes used in conjunction to a feeling when chords produce overtones but the sound is not identifiable. Expanded sound refers to the overtone series actually heard when a chord aligns. Both terms mean that the harmonics of the individual notes sung have reinforced each other to produce overtones <p>Try it: Blow a note on your pitch pipe while humming the note. The pitch will beat faster until it's in tune and you will hear one smooth note. This is an example of frequencies aligning.</p>
Wall of Sound	<p>The “wall of sound” is unification of vowels and consonants to deliver a seamless sound to the audience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vowels and consonants are important and must be presented at the same volume to create a wall with no dips in the sound. Traditional choral music uses consonants to end words, barbershop uses them to connect words and express emotion. Aligning vowels is more important at lower skill levels to start locking chords. As your skill increases, you will start noticing the shift to the importance of consonants. In the end, both are equally important to deliver your musical message.
Embellishments	<p>Embellishments typical in barbershop arranging are (not limited to)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Echoes (call and response)- primary lyric with a repeat in another voice part Contrary Motion Swipes – A 3-5 chord progression where two parts pass through an octave in opposing motion Peel off – chord starts on a unison or two parts and moves to a 4 part chord

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swipes (slurs) • Melody handoff • Bell Chords • Key Changes • Intros & Tags <p>What barbershop embellishments can you hear in Rönninge's performance of "Zing, Went the Strings of My Heart"? https://youtu.be/8pU9pVL9eig</p>
Coning/Balance	<p>Traditional choirs sing equally matched. Barbershop uses coning to maximize the volume of the overtone.</p> <p>Basses are the foundation of the cone and should always sing with the most strength. Bari/Lead may need to change their coning based on where they are in the chord in order to balance the sound.</p> <p>Tenor should be sung into the overtone and not with the power of a traditional soprano,</p>
Vocal Production	<p>Good vocal production is good vocal production no matter what style of music you are singing!</p> <p>Your best voice is the voice that blends well with others. Don't try to match someone else's sound, make the best sound you can possibly make!</p>

On the Hunt

Work in small groups and use the Sweet Adeline's International YouTube page to find 3 examples of the elements of barbershop. Be prepared to play a portion of your selected example and discuss your observations.

For Further Study:

The 11 Chords of Barbershop <http://www.sunshinetracks.com/chords.pdf>

Tuning the Barbershop Way, Andrea Day <https://andreaeday.wordpress.com/2013/11/27/tuning-the-barbershop-way/>

An examination of the Barbershop Style, David Wright <http://www.barbershop.org/about-us/history-of-barbershop/roots-of-barbershop-harmony/an-examination-of-the-barbershop-style/>

The Harmonic Series in Music, Assaff Weisman <https://youtu.be/JDFa8TSn6vY>

<https://www.musictheory.net/>