

Important Considerations re Singing Tenor

Voice Quality:

- Light, free, bell-like
- No pinched or squeezed high notes; give these notes more width and use the upper rib cage for support
- No vibrato please
- Keep soft palate high and back space open on all vowels and voiced consonants
- Develop good, free, upper range to high C
- Solid use of “inside” smile
- Feel strength in bridge of nose

Accuracy:

- Pitch center/Octaves both outside and inside
- Singing into the overtones of the lead voice
- Tuning scale step three/third of the chord/7ths too—good ear required
- Work on singing accurately both at medium and soft volumes, with a light tone and with no vibrato
- Become a part of the lead voice; tune to her note
- Let vowels naturally migrate toward a more neutral sound as tones ascend
- Voice should complement that of the lead
- Sing the cone of your range
- Sing each repeated note a bit higher

Balance:

- Those “X” notes and major seconds above and beneath the lead—sufficient balance and broadening of tone to sing in the lead position
- If you can’t hear all three parts underneath you, you are too loud

Strategies:

- Use “Whoop Whoop” (like an emergency siren) to project voice high, light, forward
- Shake hands on high notes
- Octave locks with bass
- Duet with lead and baritone, each separately

Important Considerations re Singing Lead

Voice Quality:

- Solo voice
- Good mix of head and chest voices—sing smoothly through the range
- Maturity
- Personal style
- Voice is interesting, expressive, distinctive
- Freedom, support, resonance
- Good diction & vowels

Accuracy:

- Knows Pythagorean tuning theory and applies it to her melody line
- Expert at accurate interval singing—joyously upward; reluctantly down
- Sings pretty, using inflection and keeping the pitch “true” A
- She always leads

Balance:

- Assures that the melody is clearly heard
- Needs to balance three other parts
- Must broaden when melody falls below baritone, especially below middle C
- Sings the cone of the Lead range

Other considerations:

- Importance of inflection, style
- Singing vowel-to-vowel with clear diphthongs and consonants
- Confidence, self-belief
- Mood, characterization, conversational delivery--with body language to match
- Loving the song; creativity in expression, charisma to make it contagious
- Consistency in tonal center, interpretation, dynamics, rhythm, emotion, inflection
- Willingness to risk being vocally and emotionally vulnerable

Strategies:

- Sing every day; sing with recordings
- Study and emulate other good lead voices
- Sing each repeated note a bit higher

Important Considerations re Singing Baritone

Voice Quality:

- Sister to the lead
- Similar in resonance and quality
- Know lead part very well
- Always match the timbre of the lead voice, especially on tags
- Singing lead “backwards” and “inside out” with lyrical feel
- Part may occasionally swap with Lead
- Match lead’s timbre on tag
- Head and chest voices of equal strength and quality
- Vocal flexibility

Accuracy:

- Keen ear
- Sharp on many tones, especially repeated ones
- Find octaves and fifths—lock these with the related appropriate part
- Work with tenor to fine-tune chords

Balance:

- Work to sing like a tenor when above the lead; like a bass when below. Your coning prowess allows the chords to ring
- Mark all notes above the lead
- Maintain your place in the cone on every chord; constant attention to adjustment of quality and intensity
- Know the proportional distance of your note between the lead and the bass and fill appropriately
- Mark all doubles; you will sing softer if you double a part
- Bridge the gap and make both lead and bass sound good
- Always in background to Lead--but barely
- Fill the chord: Float like a butterfly; sting like a bee

- Float on doubles; buzz on 7ths
- Float above the lead
- Work to connect the bass and lead qualities
- Sing the cone of your range

Special Considerations:

- Stay in tempo—often behind because of part gymnastics
- Sing with melodic confidence
- “Climb inside” the other parts
- Control the dynamics with the tenor

Tuning:

- Fine tune with the tenor
- Tune the 3rds, 7ths, 5ths, major 2nds
- Practice the major 2nds with Leads
- Sing each repeated note a bit higher

Important Considerations re Singing Bass

Voice Quality:

- Good control of lower contralto range
- Resonant and focused
- Musically present

Accuracy:

- Excellent sense of pitch
- Avoid “attacking” high notes
- Allow the mechanism to adjust as you move through your range

Strategies:

- Volunteer to sing often
- Sing strong and complement the lead voice
- Sing hearty; sing like a lead on your high notes, like a bass on low; don't sing cone backwards.
- Sing faster to get to the target vowel
- Mark with a highlighter everything above the A. above middle C, and remember to lighten your quality as you ascend above it.
- Sing aggressively, and don't be afraid to make mistakes

Special Considerations:

- It's not how loud you sing, but how you sing loud
- Must have excellent sense of pitch.
- Breathe in tempo; must be relentless about tempo, regardless of difficulties of vocal line
- Sing each repeated note a bit higher.
- Breath is part of phrase that follows, not as a reward for the one just completed.
- Since you are rarely on 3rds or 7ths, do not attempt to tune to other parts; however, you must be in pitch, the best interval singer, the truest of the troupe!
- Sing the cone of your range
- Sing a smooth vocal line, singing whole phrase as if all notes were just one tone. Lift the soft palate more for high tones
- You are a partner with the lead

