

Region #34

September 2011

BARITONE: The Chameleon Harmony Part of Barbershop

The baritone part occupies a unique place in the barbershop sound. The baritone and lead in combination are the entire middle of every chord in the barbershop contest song. (The only exception to this being the infrequent voicing of the tenor below the lead). This unique relationship with the lead requires that both bari and lead sing equally solid and complete vocal lines.

A good baritone...

- ...resonates her high notes as well and completely as her low notes
- ...tries to "lose" herself in the sound of her quartet (chorus), especially her lead (section)
- ...sings her part with melodic confidence
- ...knows the lead line almost as well as she knows her own, enabling her to anticipate her relationship to the lead within the cone as she sings
- ...keeps her sound three dimensional at all times
- ...uses her register break to good advantage, positioning her vocal line and color to fill between lead/tenor (lighter) or lead/bass (fuller) with the appropriate sound
- ...realizes the importance of equally strong head tone and chest tone, ultimately being able to mix registers throughout her range
- ...is skilled at the full range of BBS embellishments...from finesse to power
- ...understands the tuning issues and relationship between baritone and each of the other three parts
- ...realizes the need for constant vocal energy
- ...realizes the importance of vocal flexibility
- ...doesn't need to sing loud to sing with energy
- ...maintains the dimension of her sound:
 - ...moving through the register break, ascending and descending
 - ...moving through dynamic changes, especially decrescendo
 - ...moving through difficult intervals, ascending and descending
 - ...at any tempo and using any rhythm
- ...thinks her part IS the melody.