

Dictionary of Barbershop Terms

A & R

Analysis and Recommendation, often called Aggravation and Ridicule.

Afterglow

A cast party after a show.

After-Afterglow

A smaller, more private party that takes place after an afterglow.

AHSOW

Ancient Harmonious Society Of Woodshedders.

Ambigesturous

The ability to perform the choreo moves from either side of the risers.

Barbershop 7th

A flat 7th chord used frequently in barbershop arrangements. Example: C - E - G - Bb

Barbershop Brats

Children of barbershoppers, which often become members, a precious commodity.

Barbershop Squat

A physical stance at the end of a song that looks amateurish and hokey.

Barbershop Widow/Widower

The spouse of a very active barbershopper, who doesn't participate in the hobby.

Barber Speak

A method of speaking a song as if one was singing the part

Barberteens

Teenaged children of barbershoppers, the smartest of all.

Barbertots

Young children of barbershoppers, also a precious commodity.

Bell Chord

Notes sung on successive beats as in "Bye Bye Blues" by the Suntones.

Belt

When a woman takes her chest voice up into her head voice range = Sing loudly.

Bipartite/Tripartite

Able to sing multiple voice parts.

Bisectional

A person that can sing more than one voice part...hopefully, not simultaneously.

Blead

A fifth voice part consisting of part lead and part baritone, usually sung by a member who has been absent for a while.

Borneo Barbershop

An exercise where the bass is sung an octave high OR the tenor an octave low.

Breathing Dips

Singers who breathe where they are not supposed to.

Bust a Chord

Singing.

Car-Toy

The cassette tape or CD one carries in the car to learn ones part. Directors use this method to describe a phrase of a song they want a section to work on in the car with repetition.

Cascade

A musical device where a unison note spreads to form a chord, also called "waterfall".

Chameleon

A person who can sing all four parts.

Chestnut

An old familiar favorite song.

Chinese Seventh

The second inversion of a 7th chord, where the tenor note is under the lead note. (It's not necessarily or even common that the tenor is below the lead, but rather that the root of the chord is just above the 7th. That usually puts the tenor a step above the lead. Then it's just a first inversion (or third inversion, depending on how you look at it).)

Chorditorium

A convention afterglow where non-qualifying quartets can strut their stuff.

Chordus Interruptus

When the director stops the chorus just before a paint-peeling tag.

Chordworship

Holding a chord longer than necessary just to enjoy it.

Chorus Dips

Singers who do exactly the opposite of what the director asks.

Coning

Adjusting volume inversely with pitch to balance a chord.

Cookie

A pitch-pipe.

Crank

Sing loudly.

Crow

A self-confessed non-singer who performs mundane chores nobody else wants to do. See Invaluable.

Diction Dips

Singers who exaggerate the hard consonants.

Diphthong Dips

Singers who over-emphasize the diphthongs.

Edge

Beginning of the music score

Eagles

A politically correct term for "Crows".

Ear Candy

An audible overtone or harmonic that produces an especially pleasing chord.

Fettucine Singing

Sliding between notes when clean intervals are dictated.

Fifth Wheel

Uninvited singing along with/near a quartet, considered poor manners.

Float

Blending a part into a chord gracefully, usually tenor.

Gang Singing

A collection of singers that are not an organized unit.

Garbage Part

A negative term for the baritone part.

Glimmer

An after, after, after-glow.

Groaner

A bad joke, story, or pun.

Grundy

Same as Scissors Movement.

Gut-Buster

A robust up-tune.

Hang Ten

Standing on the risers with ten toes over the edge.

Honker

a person who sings loudly and/or in a garish manner, often a bass singer.

Hospitality Room

A party room at a convention for informal entertainment, socializing, and stale pretzels.

Hum Spot

The placement of one's voice that makes the mask resonate.

Kibber

An endearing term for a barbershopper that prefers to Keep It Barbershop!

Laser Lungs

A singer, usually a tenor, who sings high notes very loudly and out of balance.

Lead Dodging

The art of woodshedding the baritone part, also called Lead Avoidance

Leaner

A person that does not have the courage or ability to sing on his/her own, or is not well rehearsed in the music.

Line Singing

Each part gets into a line and rotates singing as a quartet

Mic Testers

A quartet or chorus which sings at the beginning of a contest to ensure the sound systems performance.

Oh Yeah...

An utterance from the chorus, when the director says "for the 2000th time, you're supposed to get soft here".

Oh Yeah Song

A song with an unfamiliar verse and a very familiar chorus. Refers to audience's comments as chorus begins.

Onion Skin

A minute adjustment in pitch.

Opus Interruptus

When the hotel security guard stops you in the middle of a song, usually at 3am, Sunday morning.

OUT-OF-SPOTS

Singing without music in front of you

Overtone

A harmonic produced by proper intonation, tuning, and vowel formation.

Patter

A verbose variation on the theme of a refrain as in "Down Our Way", also jokes and stuff between songs.

Peeling Paint

Locking and ringing a chord.

Pick-up Quartet

Any four singers, not an established quartet, singing a song they commonly know.

Ping

Focused, bright ringing sound.

Polecat

Referring to a collection of common songs for any/every Barbershopper, such as Heart of My Heart or Let Me Call You Sweetheart

Post

A note, long in duration, sung usually by a lead singer, around which a tag is formed.

Riser Rat

Any chorus member who is not in the front row.

Round Robin

An activity wherein four or more woodshedders sit in a circle and progressively rotate voice parts.

Scissors Movement

Two voice parts that cross each other, while the other two voice sustain, leading to an inversion of the chord.

Shoulder-Raiser

A listeners physical reaction to a singer who doesn't quite reach his/her note.

Singlish

A method of singing a song as if one was speaking the part, phonetically connective.

Skunk Song

A melody essentially useless for woodshedding purposes, because of an existing familiar arrangement.

Slab

To sing slowly through a measure chord by chord, also called blocking.

Singing Around

After a contest or show quartets travel around singing in various places or rooms

Spank

Great vocal execution as in "Boy that lead spanks!"

Tag

The ending of a song often added as an afterthought and can be sung independently from the song.

Tag Quartet

Four singers begin a song and one by one are replaced by a new singer, tagged out if you will.

Tear-jerker

A tender, sentimental ballad that evokes emotion.

Tiddly

A musical embellishment, usually by a baritone.

Toe-Tapper

An up-tune with great rhythmic pulse.

Train Wreck

When one or more parts sing a wrong note and the resulting chord sounds like a railway calamity.

VLQ

Very large quartet or mini-chorus, if you will.

Wall of Sound

Seamless, continuous vocalization.

Whomp-Ping Ratio

The ratio of resonance to ping in the voice.

Woodshed

To improvise your part in a song

Yawner

A very boring and poor performance of a song.

Yodel-Chord

A phenomenon in woodshedding, where two voices land on the same note and simultaneously move to the missing part.