

GLOSSARY OF BARBERSHOP TERMS

Accidental – a sharp (#) which makes the note slightly higher, flat (b) which makes the note slightly lower, or natural, placed next to a note in a particular bar which changes the pitch of the note.

Afterglow – the name for an informal singing (and drinking) session which takes place after a show or other barbershop event.

Arranger – someone who arranges a song in the barbershop style.

BABS – the British Association of Barbershop Singers – the men's barbershop association in this country which holds an annual Convention in May.

Backbeat – a song in which you emphasise the 2nd and 4th beats in a bar, rather than the 1st and 3rd.

Barbershop style – 4 part close harmony characterised by a lead line (the melody) with a high harmony part above the lead (tenor) and two lower harmony parts (baritone and bass).

Board – the elected committee which is responsible for the administrative business of the chorus (e.g. membership, costumes, subscriptions, fundraising, organising performances etc). The work of the board is coordinated by the Chorus President.

Buddy – a member of the chorus who will look after a new member and help the new member become acquainted with the day to day procedures within the chorus.

Chartering – when a chorus becomes a full member of Sweet Adelines International.

Chord – a group of notes (in barbershop harmony, usually 4 different notes) which when sung in tune produce a harmonious sound.

Choreography – visual presentation accompanying the singing to enhance the message of the song.

Chorus position – the correct stance for singing, facing the Director.

Coach – someone who helps the chorus improve certain aspects of the performance e.g. singing or choreography.

Cone/Coning – the art of maintaining the proper balance between parts in a chord.

Contest ballad – a slow song which can be sung in barbershop contests e.g. If I Give My Heart to You. Ballads are typically sung in "ad lib" style rather than sticking to precise rhythms.

Contest uptune – a faster song which can be sung in barbershop contests e.g. Angry Bill Bailey medley.

Convention – an annual singing event. Regional Convention takes place annually on the second weekend May in region 31 and is the opportunity to compete for the quartet and chorus awards and medals. International Convention takes place in the autumn

and anyone can attend. However only the first place quartet and chorus from Regional Convention or wild card entrants can compete at International level in a particular year.

Costume – a stage costume to wear during performances Choruses and quartets typically wear identical costumes, including shoes and jewellery, to create a unit look.

Diphthongs – groups of (usually) two vowels e.g. now = nah-ooow, I = ah-ee. Turning the diphthong correctly is one of the most important elements in tuning and synchronised singing.

Downbeat – a song in which you emphasise the 1st and 3rd beats of the bar, e.g. a marching song. Also used to refer to the first beat of a song or bar.

Dynamics – lounds and softs. Sometimes described using a scale of 1-5. On a piece of music **ff** = very loud, **f** = loud, **p** = soft and **pp** = very soft. Also important are terms like **crescendo** (getting louder) and **diminuendo** (getting softer).

Energy – to sing with energy is one of the targets of good vocal production. You will often hear the Director asking for more energy – this doesn't mean singing loudly but means making sure the sound is alive and connected. It also means making sure the sound doesn't fade before the end of a phrase through lack of breath support.

Faculty – educators. They may be vocal teachers or specialists in a certain category (e.g. showmanship). There are "International Faculty" and "Regional Faculty" appointed by the International organisation or region respectively.

Focus – projecting your voice forward. Goes with Resonance to make the ideal singing style that has a pleasant, rich sound but also has clarity and can ring (see Musical terms below).

Harmony Rag – the magazine issued to all members of Region 31 consisting of articles written for the members by the members. Published 4 times a year.

IES – International Education Symposium, held every July in the USA. The last IES was held in July 2008. From 2010 there will be "Global IES" which will be held in the US, Europe and in the Pacific Rim. All members are welcome to attend. Classes are run by International Faculty members.

Inside Smile – smiling while lifting eyebrows but without opening your mouth, which has the effect of lifting the **soft palate**.

International Website – the place to find information about Sweet Adelines International, membership, education and news: www.sweetadelineintl.org

Key note – each piece of music has a key signature and the key note is the first note of the key, or "do". For example, if the key is F the key note ("do") would be F. Learning tracks may give the key note then the start note – the note that your part starts on.

LABBS – the Ladies Association of British Barbershop Singers, another organisation for women's barbershop in the UK. Like BABS they organise annual conventions.

Master Director – the director of a chorus that has scored more than 600 points at regional or 1200 points at international competition.

Mid-sized Chorus – a chorus with between 31 and 60 members. Also called a Division AA chorus.

Mirror position/Down the tiles – standing so the singer is facing squarely at the audience (as if you were looking “down the tiles” on the floor) as opposed to Chorus Position where you are facing the Director.

Music Team – usually consists of the Chorus Director, Assistant Directors, Section Leaders and Choreography/Visual Team.

Musical terms used mainly in barbershop music – swipe (chord progression moving from one note to another, usually on one word), pickup (one or more parts start the phrase before the other parts), overtones (creation, by perfect tuning and vowel matching, of another note usually heard above the highest note of the chord), ringing chords (when chords are perfectly matched the expanded sound created can be said to ring).

Off the paper – to be able to sing your part without looking at the sheet music.

Pitch – the key note of the song, or the note you are meant to be singing.

Pitch pipe – a small circular instrument which gives pitch when blown – the disc is marked with the different key notes. Can also be an electronic device.

Region 31 – the UK and Netherlands Region of Sweet Adelines International, also known as the Quartet of Nations. We have our own regional song called “Quartet of Nations”, written by Jenny Lawson of Surrey Harmony Chorus. Learning tracks for this song are on the regional website.

Regional Website – a place to find information about Region 31 events, choruses and quartets: www.sweetadelines.org.uk

Resonance – to sing with a full sound or with resonance is vitally important to create a beautiful tone.

Restate – to make a small step forwards and upwards with energy in a song to emphasize a phrase or special moment. This term is used a lot by choreographers.

Rhythm – the varied length of notes and the beat that you hear in a song.

Risers – the special staging which we stand on during rehearsals and performances.

RMT – the Regional Management Team. 8 members in each region who are responsible for the smooth running of the organisation in that region and who liaise regularly with choruses and with the international headquarters.

Scale (major) – a series of 8 notes (do, re, mi, fa, so, la, ti, do) starting with the key note.

Section Leaders – there are 4 sections in every barbershop chorus (tenors, leads, baritones and basses) and the section leaders are responsible for making sure that members of their section learn the songs correctly and sing with the appropriate style for their section. They run section rehearsals and offer help and support to members in their section.

Section rehearsals – where all the members of a section get together to practice notes and words and vocal technique. This may take place on a separate night or during weekly chorus rehearsals.

Singouts – performances. These can be public or private functions, small or large.

Singing for evaluation – at regional contest if a chorus or quartet does not wish to compete for a formal ranking or award they can opt to sing for evaluation which means they receive a written critique but not a mark or placing.

Small Chorus – A chorus with between 15 and 30 members. Also called a Division A chorus.

Soft Palate – the soft part of the inside of your mouth at the top, towards the back. The part that lifts when you yawn. Lifting the soft palate is important for creating **resonance**.

Sweet Adelines International (SAI) – the USA based organisation for promoting barbershop singing among women worldwide. Over 27000 members. Main aim is education in barbershop style. Colloquially known as “International”.

Synchronisation – aligning the beginning and ending of each word, vowels, tempo, tuning and dynamics so that the overall effect is not ragged but is crisp and **in synch**.

Tag – the ending of the song, usually containing exciting chords and chord progressions.

Tempo – the speed of the song. **Accelerando** (accel.) = getting faster. **Rallentando** (rall.) or **ritardando** (rit.) = getting slower.

The Pitch Pipe – the official magazine of Sweet Adelines International which all members receive 4 times a year. It is produced in the USA and contains articles of interest to all barbershop singers.

Traffic Pattern – the designated path followed by choruses and quartets on competition day which leads from the entrance of the competition venue to the backstage area. Progress through the traffic pattern follows a strict timetable.

Walking-out costume/outfit – a more casual outfit (possibly just a t-shirt or top) often worn at regional events or for travelling, to create a corporate identity.

Warm-ups – each rehearsal starts with a physical and vocal warm-up: exercises which are devised to enable the singer to rehearse more effectively and to learn and refine vocal skills.

Windows – the space you look through when standing on the risers, formed by the space between the heads of the 2 singers in front.

Woodshedding – the art of singing barbershop by ear without a written arrangement.

Workshops – organised on a regional level once or twice a year. Faculty may be regional or international. Classes may cover all aspects of barbershop singing or may be focused on a specific area, such as quartet singing or recruiting new members.

Young Women in Harmony or YWIH – young singers aged 25 and under.