



The MVEer Monthly

March, 2012

Top events for March include coaching with **Rick Spencer** (Music Judge) on March 5, and the 2nd and 3rd Directing Candidates on February 27th with Josh Umhoefer and the last (yet unnamed) candidate on March 12th.



◀ **Rick Spencer** is the *Chief Operations Officer* of the Barbershop Harmony Society. Rick, a fabulous Tenor, has been a Barbershopper since 1989. Rick is a Music Judge, arranger, a much appreciated coach for many choruses as well as the MVE, a quartet singer with *International Bronze Medalist Quartets* Flipside, Redline, and is now with TNS, and he is a past chorus director. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Music Education and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Music from the University of Connecticut in 2001.

MVE Social Outings for March include Saturday, March 3 at Clifford's for Karaoke at 9:30PM and the Sharon Lynn Wilson Center on Friday, March 16. See Scott Ganswandt (siganswindt@sbcglobal.net) for ticket by March 1 for tickets to the King's Singers.

Rich Library of Repertoire for MVE Quarteters: Fifty or more arrangements and many recordings by parts are available from Bill Kibourne. See him at chorus or email: Bill.Kilbourne@mve.org.

MVEer asks: Brad, how can we learn our songs faster?

Brad answers: There is a technique that works every time. Listen 3 times to the recording of your part while looking at the music. Do-do it 3 times with your music listening to your part. Next mouth the words 3 times with the recording. Then sing the song 3 times with your part.

MVEer asks: Why does this work?

Brad answers: The words and notes are separate in our brains. By separating these steps, we slowly learn the tune first and then add the words on top. This technique is best described by Jay Giallombardo in his 2002 *Learning a Song* essay. [The MVEer reproduces this essay below]



Brad Charles

Song Learning Method (Easy, Accurate and Fast!) Copyright 2002 by **Jay Giallombardo**

The key to fast song learning is to use the brain efficiently. Notes and rhythms are learned in one area of the brain. Lyrics and learned in a completely different part of the brain. When picking up a new song, the brain is capable of reading notes, rhythms and lyrics all together by “cross-firing” rapidly from one brain area to the other. Though the brain can accomplish the task, it does not remember well when cross-firing.

Instead, a method that allows the brain to focus only on notes and rhythms, then separately on lyrics, uses brain power much more efficiently for purposes of memorization. Accurate song learning becomes easier and faster.

Method: balance the left and right channels of your stereo so your voice part on the learning recording is loud enough to be easily heard above the other 3 parts.

1. **Listening Step** — While following your voice part notes on the sheet music (if you do not read music, follow the notes visually by contour—do not read the words, follow the notes), listens to your part 2 to 4 times through depending on difficulty. Listen extra times to places that seem tough or that you do not see to match what you see on the sheet music. [The recording and the sheet music are pre-checked and should match—if you do find an error, please notify the music committee.]
2. **Doo-doo-doo Step** — Sing “doo-doo-doo” on your part 2 to 4 times through. Follow the notes with your eyes (as well as your ears)—do not look at the words. Learn to match the pitches and rhythms of the learning recording. Set the recording louder than your doo-ing” and let it lead your learning. Again, “doo” extra times on the tough places. If there’s a place too tough to get from the recording, see your section leader—do not “shrug-off” and rehearse mistakes. On the final doo-ing pass, set the sheet music aside and let the recording lead your ears to the right pitches and rhythms.
3. **Muscle Memory Step** — Stand and silently mime the song 2 to 4 times through with the recording. Breathe and support as if actually singing words and notes. Form vowels and consonants with lips and tongue as if you were singing a perfect rendition. Silently create the physical throat and larynx formations for accurate pitches and freely produced tone as if singing a perfect union duet with the recorded voice. On the final muscle memory pass, set the sheet music aside and let the recording lend your ears to the right muscle member patterns.
4. **Full Singing Step** — Put it all together and fully sing with the recording. Let the recording continue to lead your learning on the first run-through or two. Then, on the successive reps, gradually shift the channel balance on the stereo until you are tuning your voice to the other three parts quartet-style.

March 2012						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Feb 26	Feb 27 7PM <u>2nd Director Candidate</u> Audition - Josh U.	Feb 28	Feb 29	1 Deadline to register for King's Singers with Scott Ganswind	2	3 10AM QC & <u>MVE Social Outing</u> Karaoke 9:30PM Cliffords
4	5 7PM <u>Coaching with Rick Spencer</u>	6	7	8	9	10
11	12 7PM <u>3rd Director Candidate</u> Audition	13	14	15	16 <u>MVE Social Outing</u> — King's Singers	17 9AM Breakfast @ Harmony Inn & 10AM QC
18	19 7PM Rehearsal	20 6:30PM Board Meeting	21	22	23	24
25	26 7PM Rehearsal	27	28	29	30	31 9AM Breakfast @ Harmony Inn & 10AM QC

For ideas and suggestions for the April **MVEer Monthly**, please contact Dick.Marcus@mve.org.