

Common Balance Problems

Occasionally one voice or voice section will appear to be over-balancing the rest. These are some, but hardly all, balance issues by voice part.

Tenor

Frequently the Tenor voice or section sings with a heavy quality, lending too much weight to the top of the chord. A Tenor or Tenor section whose quality does not complement that of the lower voices will generally appear to be out of balance. Conversely, when the Tenor line goes below the Lead line momentarily, Tenors may fail to make the vocal adjustment required to fill the chord completely.

Leads

Leads often sing their part with equal weight and intensity, no matter what their position in the chord or in what portion of their range the note lies. The resultant problem depends on the capabilities of the other voice sections. If the other sections are strong, the Leads will probably appear to be in balance on higher notes and under-balanced on lows. If the other sections are weak, the Leads will probably appear to be in balance on lower notes and over-balanced on highs. Leads must remember that the approach to singing in the barbershop style requires more depth of tone and more volume on lows and a light, more lyrical tonal quality with less relative volume on highs.

Baritone

The most common Baritone balance problem is similar to that of Leads, except that Baritones tend to sing most comfortably and, therefore with the most strength in the middle of their voice range. The Baritone cannot rely only on his position in his overall range to indicate the volume or intensity required. His balance is also contingent upon his proximity to the Lead note and whether he is above or below the Lead. Baritones frequently sing many consecutive notes of the same pitch, while the Lead moves between positions above and below the unchanging Baritone note. It is the job of the Baritone to adjust his balance within each chord, even though his note remains the same. When he sings below the Lead, good balance requires that he sing with more depth of tone than would be used by the Lead on that same pitch. When he is above the Lead, good balance dictates that he sing with a lighter tone than would be used by the Lead on the same pitch.

Bass

The most common Bass balance problem is the inability to balance low tones properly. Because of the vocal range of the Bass part, it is necessary for the Basses to sing with more depth and volume as they descend in pitch. Conversely, the upper part of the Bass range requires use of the head register for proper resonance.