

# TRAPSHOOTING GUIDELINES

Side By Side: July 2009

**Key:**

C = Carolina in the Morning  
 I = I'm Sitting on Top of the World  
 S = Sunny Side Up  
 W = We'll Meet Again

TRAP	DESCRIPTION / SIGNIFICANCE	ERRORS / HAZARDS / OPPORTUNITES	SUGGESTED "FIX" (SKILL)	REFER TO MEASURE
<b>1. Do</b>	a. note blown on pitchpipe to start song b. basis for all (Pythagorean) tuning and pitch retention	a. inaccuracy/tuning b. loss of overall pitch	<b>If song has lots of "do" notes:</b> a. drill song while blowing pitch (do) b. have other section/s sing or hum "do" while the section with lots of "do" sings the "do"-heavy parts	a. C = F b. I = Ab/Bb c. S = Ab/Bb d. W = Eb
<b>2. Octaves</b>	a. usually the first large interval singers learn to "hear" (tune) b. 8va "match" is easier to hear than most other intervals	a. inaccuracy/tuning b. loss of overall pitch	determine which pairs of sections have groupings of repeated 8vas and drill those passages	S = m.73-84
<b>3. A. Ti-Do (mostly tenor) B. Re-Do (mostly bass)</b>	common leading tones	a. inaccuracy/tuning b. loss of singing space	sing 8va then move to ti/re and back to 8va. Be sure to begin and end with a "locked" 8va	a. How We Sang Today; first 2 chords tenor ti-do, bass re-do b. I = m.60-61 (lead ti-do, bass re-do)
<b>4. Range</b>	determine this for each part	a. inaccuracy/tuning b. too much head tone can be tiring (and lead to thin sound & flattening) for the untrained singer c. too much time spent on the lowest notes a singer can reach can lead to a fuzzy or pressed sound and balance problems	a. know each section's best highest and lowest note ("comfort zone") b. choose music that is largely within the "comfort zone" of each section of singers	ANY song

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<b>5. Tessitura</b>	a. the average pitch of each vocal line b. can frequently changes during a song	a. inaccuracy/tuning b. loss of ring or resonance c. balance problems	a. analyze each section's/singer's skillful range and pick music that is mostly in that area b. helps to think of each section's range in thirds: upper, middle & lower	a. W = low tessitura b. S = higher tessitura
<b>6. Danger Range</b>	the area of range from 1/2 step below the register break to approx. a 5th lower than that (for each part)	a. inaccuracy/tuning b. feels easy c. singers get lazy d. loss of lift/tilt in sound e. dark/covered sound	a. learn to fully maintain lift/tilt throughout range b. Watch for vocal lines that stay in danger range for extended periods of the song. These areas will tend to flat and be out of tune.	W = almost entirely danger range for all parts; can create warm sound if singers are good at keeping ring in their sound; will create dark, possibly fuzzy sound otherwise
<b>7. Too "Black"</b>	a. notes crowded together on each line b. staves too close together on the page	a. wrong notes b. inaccuracy/tuning c. synch errors d. tempo inconsistencies (due to the singers trying to figure out the details of their vocal lines)	a. rewrite notes further apart (or blow up when copying) b. cut and paste putting fewer staves on each page - farther apart	"Indiana Andy"
<b>8. Notes per Nano-second</b>	fast uptune with numerous notes per measure	a. wrong notes b. ponderous tempo c. synch errors d. inaccuracy/tuning	a. needs high degree of horizontal vocal line delivery - smooth effortless legato at fast tempo b. try kinesthetic techniques to improve legato delivery	"Liar Medley"

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<b>9. Jumpy Vocal Line</b>	frequent/repeated intervals of a third or larger	a. loss of horizontal flow b. dumpage c. loss of singing space d. loss of tempo e. synch errors f. inaccuracy/tuning	a. maintain lift throughout vocal line b. refer to the "elevation" technique suggested in "rocking notes" c. keep the breath flow constant throughout the vocal line	C = m. 25-26 (lead and bari)
<b>10. Awkward Voicing</b>	a. lots of bari above the lead (sometimes a men's arrangement) b. lots of voicing spread to the 10th and beyond to 2 octaves (almost always a men's arrangement)	a. balance difficulties b. stamina problems - bari if head tone is not well developed - lead if chest tone not well developed and lifted	a. ask arranger if s/he has that song in S.A. voicing b. develop the vocal skills to manage the balance issues c. find another arrangement of that song d. sing a different song	"Beside An Open Fireplace" (an S.A. arrangement done by a skilled arranger that still has these problems)
<b>11. Featured Vowel(s) / Target sound(s)</b>	a. OH/AH/AW feel "larger" to the inexperienced singer b. all others feel smaller	a. overall loss of singing space (to the inexperienced singer) when she sings the "small" vowels b. inaccuracy / tuning c. an opportunity to enhance	a. do "space-sharing" vocaleses that move from a "large" vowel to a "small" vowel and back again b. consider choosing songs that have repeated vowels/target sounds that you can resonate skillfully	a. C = large b. I = large & small c. S = large & small d. W = small
<b>12. 1/2 - 1 Step Rock/Moves</b>	small interval(s) moving up or down, esp. repeatedly	a. wrong notes b. loss of singing space c. inaccuracy/tuning	use the singing space "elevation" of the upper note and "tilt" the pitch down from there for the lower note	W = m. 9-11
<b>13. Part Pulling</b>	a. differing simultaneous vocal line patterns (i.e., one part straight while others move) b. can be any combination of straight to moving parts	a. wrong notes b. inaccuracy/tuning	define the interval patterns in each part and drill (in like pairs/groupings when possible)	a. W = m. 9, 33 (3:1) b. I = m. 6, 12 (1:3); m.25 (2:2); m.26 (2:2, including double rock to unison), m. 37 (3:1, larger moving intervals)

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<b>14. Cross Relation</b>	in two successive chords: one part takes a note step a 1/2 step above or below a different section in the chord immediately previous (or an 8va +/- a 1/2 step)	a. inaccuracy / tuning b. loss of lift in sound (more common in choruses than quartets)	a. every note must get its own singing space b. important to sing in synch to help maintain singing space	C = m.34-35 (bari F# to lead G); m. 35-36 (bari E to lead F); m. 43-44 (bass Bb to tenor A)
<b>15. Trade Off</b>	a. 2 successive chords b. occurs mostly between lead/bari, occasionally between lead/tenor	inaccuracy/tuning	a. drill in groupings of the paired parts b. should have the same sound for the same interval in succeeding chords	a. I = m.8 (lead/bari on "only"...2 chords) m.21 (lead/bari "sitting on"...3 chords) b. C = m25-26 (...15 chords)
<b>16. Hand Off</b>	two parts handing off the same note in successive chords	note must be identical in every regard: pitch / singing space / matched vowel	have the note in question held by the singer in chord #1 as a check for accuracy as the singers taking that note in chord #2 move to that same note	a. C = m11 (bari to bass) b. I = m.35 (bass to lead, also melody transfer)
<b>17. "Demented" Notes/Chords</b> A. Key Change (by definition, usually a "collection" of accidentals) B. Multiple Dementia (in one chord or several chords in succession)	accidentals	a. inaccuracy/tuning b. loss of overall pitch	a. use Pythagorean tuning to "plot" the degree of lift needed b. watch for and work areas where there are clusters of +8 or more and increase lift as needed for accuracy c. to build your skills at tuning, choose arrangements that are minimally "demented"	a. I = m. 27 b. "Alexander's Ragtime Band" (Beck/Bescos)
<b>18. Off Beat Pickups</b>	many or repeated phrases NOT beginning on a stress beat (i.e., 1 or 3)	unwanted stress (and usually heaviness) on unstressed beats in the measure resulting in a feeling of double-downbeats	maintain lift through pickups, breathe "above" the pulse	a. I = almost through the entire song b. also "Sweet Adeline" and "When I Leave the World Behind"

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<b>19. Glide</b> A. Y-words/syllables  B. W-words/syllables	a. the "ee" that precedes the target vowel of words that begin with Y  b. the "oo" words that precedes the target vowel that begin with W	a. loss of singing space b. inaccuracy/tuning	"think" the space backwards from the nice tall target and give the glide the same tallness	S = m.1-7 (your, -way)
<b>20. Vanish</b>	the second half of a diphthong (follows the target)	since all vanishes are "smaller/shorter" than the target sound they follow, there is potential for diminished singing space	a. maintain singing space from target through vanish b. begin practicing this with OHoo and AHoo since it's usually easier to establish the large singing space on one of the "larger" vowels	S = m.1-7 (make, -way, day)
<b>21. Dumpage</b>	descending interval executed without lift and/or support	a. loss of singing space b. vertical delivery c. inaccuracy / tuning	a. maintain lift on all notes in a vocal line b. "tilt" into descending notes	a. C = m.15 (tenor) b. I = m.27 (all parts) c. I = m.31 (bari); m.35 (lead) d. W = m.2 (bass)
<b>22. Notes with Holes in Them</b>	a. half notes b. dotted half notes c. whole notes	a. synch errors b. loss of tempo	a. work with metronome to help ingrain the pulse of a steady tempo b. "lean into" these notes: more energy and a sense of internal beat subdivision	I = m27-28
<b>23. The Chord "Squeeze"</b>	a chord progression that diminishes in range overall from top to bottom	a. loss of singing space b. inaccuracy / tuning	a. it's generally the part or parts being "squeezed" that will lose their singing space b. drill the integrity of the singing space in relation to the other moving parts and diminishing intervals	C = 16

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<b>24. R &amp; L as Vowels</b>	a. pitched consonants b. unattractive when held	a. loss of singing space b. inaccuracy / tuning c. synch errors	treat these pitched consonants the same way you would a vowel; if a word element carries pitch, it needs singing space	I = 25-26
<b>25. Peak Note in a Vocal Line</b>	single highest note in a part's vocal line	a. loss of singing space b. inaccuracy / tuning	be sure every note in each vocal line gets an equal amount of singing space	a. I = m. 43 (lead and bass simultaneously) b. I = m.13 (lead & bass with added difficulty: bass/bari unison)
<b>26. "Walking" Vocal Line</b>	a. a vocal line that moves in a scale-like pattern b. can occur in any vocal line	a. can diminish singing space when ascending b. a point of interest (a type of "embellishment") in the vocal line	a. should be emphasized (intentionally imbalanced) for its "melodic" value/interest b. is always present in a contrary motion embellishment (overt or hidden)	I = m.53 (bass)
<b>27. Contrary Motion (a type of "walking" vocal line)</b>	a pattern (for 2 parts) of notes, usually 3-chord series, that move away or toward each other (with an 8va between the 2 parts as the middle interval)	a. loss of singing space (esp. if the contrary motion is one of the "squeezing" variety) b. a very interesting (and frequently used) type of embellishment	a. maintain singing space throughout embellishment b. dynamics usually implied by the direction of the movement of the parts involved (parts come together = descrescendo, parts move apart = crescendo)	a. C - m.51 (tenor/bass, overt) b. I = m.65 (lead/bass, hidden), m. 66 (tenor/bari, hidden)

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<b>28. Major 2nds</b> A. Mid Range - adds warmth/width to the sound (usually lead/bari) B. Upper Range - adds excitement to the sound (usually lead/tenor)	smallest "legal" interval (2 notes one whole step apart) in contest barbershop	a. loss of singing space (one or both parts) b. inaccuracy / tuning	a. drill consistent singing space in individual vocal lines b. learn to listen for shared singing space c. balance: this interval is sung with both parts equal in volume d. bass involvement found only during walking vocal lines and overt embellishments	l = m. 43 (lead/bari); m. 60 (bari/bass, walking vocal line for bass); m.67 (tenor/lead)
<b>29. Bass Unison with:</b> A. Bari B. Lead	a. bari takes on character of bass sound b. bass takes on character of the lead (melody) sound	a. loss of singing space b. inaccuracy / tuning	both parts involved must share the same singing space	a. l = m.11 (bass/lead); m. 13 (bass/bari) b. S = m.79 (bass/bari) c. W = m.6 (bass/bari)
<b>30. Ur/er/ir/or</b>	a "short" syllable that sings like "R"	a. loss of singing space b. inaccuracy / tuning	a. treat these syllables as vowels with accompanying tallness b. poses more difficulties when it's the final syllable in a word or when it's held c. refer to "R" as a vowel (Refer to No. 24)	a. C = m.5-6 (finer); m.17 (whispering) b. l = m.23 (world) c. S - m.46 (wonderful)
<b>31. Moving "oo" Against Words</b>	differing syllabic patterns; the non-lyric vocal line feels less rhythmic	a. note errors b. loss of tempo c. synch erros	drill "non-lyric" parts in steady tempo (uptune); determine ad lib rhythm patterns within phrase to target the movement of the "non-lyric" parts	C = m.37-38

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<b>32. Numerous "X" s</b>	indication that the tenor is below the lead	a. note errors b. hesitation in reading the vocal line causing tempo/synch errors	a. be sure to mark each tenor below lead chord with an "X" above the chord b. drill the lead and tenor separately, then together	"We Are Family"
<b>33. Double Lip Consonants</b>	a. m, b, p	a. loss of singing space b. inaccuracy / tuning	a. keep upper lip lifted in the natural posture of the singers smile b. use the bottom lip for most of the movement of articulation	S = m.21-24 (b,m); m. 25-28 (p)
<b>34. Soft Palate Consonants</b>	"hard" g, ng, and any consonant that sounds like k (k, "hard" c, ck, q, x, etc.)	a. loss of singing space b. inaccuracy / tuning	a. these consonants require the meeting of the back of the tongue and the soft palate b. to maintain singing space while articulating, the soft palate must stay in the lifted position required by the pitch being sung while the back of the tongue moves up	a. I = m.23-35 (ng x 7) b. S = m.73-84 (k, ng, g) c. W = m.31 (ng x 4)