

# Top Ten Tips & Tricks for the Vocal Jazz Director

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(with Austin Byrd – collaborative jazz pianist at Mt. San Antonio College)



## MUSICAL TOP TEN

1. In the most important ways, jazz singing is physiologically similar to “bel canto” style singing: proper breathing and the pursuit of a vibrant, resonant sound are paramount. A few of the main differences between jazz and bel canto style lie in:
  - where the tone is placed (in jazz, usually with a shallow jaw)
  - the use of vibrato (as a tool at the end of phrases, rather than as a constant)
  - the pronunciation of end consonants (in jazz, often imploded or “softened explosive”)
2. Jazz is typically sung with a more forward placement, with active facial muscles and “lipsy-ness” (my made-up word). This alone will do more to improve the sound of a vocal jazz group than anything else.
3. As a general rule of thumb, with swing tunes, any quarter note which occurs on the beat should be articulated as *short but not too short – only slightly separated*. Meanwhile, eighth notes will typically be sung with length (rather than as bouncy or separated).
4. An active low bass part, for sonic reasons, will often be the toughest to tune amongst more than one singer. If a particular piece has a specific active low bass part, you may find it much more effective with only one singer on that part.
5. After the low bass part, the baritone and tenor parts are often the hardest to keep in tune, especially the more complex the chord. Holding the 7<sup>th</sup> of a chord (which frequently occurs in the baritone/tenor parts) against a high 13<sup>th</sup> may be comparable to standing on one foot for sixty seconds.... on hot coals.
6. In any chart with a tempo, ***short notes that fall on off-beats*** should generally be sung ***with length*** (short = long)
7. Singers who sing while doing something physical will feel the groove better. This is important even and especially in rehearsal. At the risk of creating choreography, I recommend groups ***not all do the same*** physical thing – so I recommend either snapping (fingers), slapping (their leg), or tapping (their foot).
8. Singing any ballad on counts (1 & 2 & Tee & 4 &) will almost ALWAYS be beneficial. Also, for any piece that is in tempo, practice with a metronome.
9. With a rubato piece, remember that the space in between the notes/phrases is equally (and sometimes more) important than the notes that are sung. The silence should be active!
10. Treat the rhythm section as a unit in itself, taking time to rehearse with them alone before placing them anywhere near the singers. Give them listening assignments as well. If the players are experienced enough, encourage them to play (or compose/arrange) a piece on their own.

## **LOGISTICAL/PHILOSOPHICAL TOP TEN**

1. Agree from *day one* that your goal is not simply *to sing the notes*, but *to get beyond* the notes – the point at which musicality starts to happen.
2. Also agree on day one that your students should always have a pencil in their folder, and should use it with reckless abandon. Then just reinforce it at the second rehearsal.
3. If you are able, use a sound system as often as possible. All microphones should be the exact same brand/model. Singing “off-system” is fine when first learning the notes, but understand that balance will **not** be the same as singing on-system – if only because your bass singers cannot sing with the same volume as one amplified bass singer.
4. If singing with microphones, use music stands and/or microphone stands to facilitate page turning.
5. Stress the importance of *listening to albums* to increase your students’ understanding of jazz. Take the time to listen in class, and have your students complete one listening assignment each week.
6. Encourage improvisation! Include Circle-Singing as a weekly reward – I have a set of exercises on my website to jump start this process for first-timers. For jazz improvisation, purchase *iReal Pro* to use in class, and purchase jazz play-a-long mp3s your students can check out for a week at a time. Consider assigning weekly “fun with improv” homework, encouraging them to experiment on their own with improv, then return to share with the class if they wish.
7. With tough harmonic passages, encourage your students to hear *how their part fits within the harmony*, rather than by simply learning their part intervallically. It is my belief that intervallic singing will not help your students’ musical ears to grow as quickly.
8. Place your singers in mixed quartets, rather than with their own voice-parts. (side note: when singers are first learning parts, this may not work too well!)
9. Sneak tiny nuggets of jazz theory into your rehearsals, or into your warm-ups. For instance, instead of warming up with major triad arpeggios, have them arpeggiate major 7, minor 7, and dominant 7 chords.
10. It is important for a director to be able to play all the parts simultaneously at the piano (always with low roots) – it is the easiest and most efficient way to allow your students to hear how the intricate harmony is supposed to sound.

## **RESOURCES FOR THE CURRENT/ASPIRING VOCAL JAZZ DIRECTOR**

### **SUMMER CAMPS (there are many!)**

[www.TheJazzHarmonyRetreat.com](http://www.TheJazzHarmonyRetreat.com)

(Designed 20 years ago for educators – in-person and online – beginner-friendly retreats led by Jeremy Fox, w/amazing faculty each year)



### **FESTIVALS**

An up-to-date list can always be found at <https://anchormusic.com/jazz-festivals/>  
But in California, some VJ festivals include Cuesta College VJ Fest, Santa Cruz Jazz Fest, Oceanside Festival, Fullerton College Festival, and the Mt. San Antonio College VJ Festival.

### **A FEW ARRANGERS' (& other Vocal Jazz) WEBSITES**

[www.säje.com](http://www.säje.com)  
[www.JasonsJazzStudio.com](http://www.JasonsJazzStudio.com)  
[www.JenniferBarnesMusic.com](http://www.JenniferBarnesMusic.com)  
[www.PeterEldridge.com](http://www.PeterEldridge.com)  
[www.DarmonMeader.com](http://www.DarmonMeader.com)  
[www.RosanaEckert.com](http://www.RosanaEckert.com)  
[www.wickedpigeonmusic.com](http://www.wickedpigeonmusic.com)  
[www.JazzHarmonyRetreat.com](http://www.JazzHarmonyRetreat.com)  
[www.JenniferBarnesMusic.com](http://www.JenniferBarnesMusic.com)

[www.MichMusic.com](http://www.MichMusic.com)  
[www.gregiasperse.com](http://www.gregiasperse.com)  
[www.m-pact.com](http://www.m-pact.com)  
[www.RealGroup.se](http://www.RealGroup.se)  
[www.highlinevocal.com](http://www.highlinevocal.com)  
[www.MicheleWeir.com](http://www.MicheleWeir.com)  
[www.timbrent.com/music](http://www.timbrent.com/music)  
[www.justinbinekjazz.com](http://www.justinbinekjazz.com)  
[www.JeremyFox.net](http://www.JeremyFox.net)

## **SPECIAL PLACES TO FIND MUSIC** *(besides the big publishers)*

### **Anchor Music Online Store**

[www.AnchorMusic.com](http://www.AnchorMusic.com)

*Owners Jessica and Matt Falker are shining a light on quality charts written by an array of writers not always represented by other publishers. Matt also writes fantastic charts for groups of all levels.*

### **säje**

<https://sajevoices.com/score-shop/>

*Speaks for itself.*

### **Amanda Taylor**

*Search for Amanda Taylor or Wicked Pigeon on **Sheet Music Plus***

<https://www.sheetmusicplus.com/en/category/arrangeme/074/wicked-pigeon/>

### **New York Voices Scores**

<https://newyorkvoices.com/shop/product-category/vocal-arrangements/>

*The NYV website is now a central location to find arrangements by Darmon Meader, and the rest of the phenomenal New York Voices writers. They also lead a popular summer camp.*

### **Anders Edenroth Score Store**

[www.andersedenroth.com](http://www.andersedenroth.com)

*For 35 years, Anders Edenroth has been one of the finest a cappella vocal jazz writers on the planet.*

### **Kerry Marsh Online Store**

[www.KerryMarsh.com](http://www.KerryMarsh.com)

*A hugely popular arranger with some wonderful charts, and he recently added a new "Discovery Series" for less experienced groups.*

### **MichMusic Online Store**

[www.MichMusic.com](http://www.MichMusic.com) and [www.musichabit.com](http://www.musichabit.com)

*A fantastic educator, who for years has written some quality charts for groups of all levels. Her Music Habit website is a wonderful place to find educational videos for vocal jazz directors.*

### **Jeremy Fox Score Store**

[www.JeremyFox.net](http://www.JeremyFox.net) and <https://www.sheetmusicplus.com/en/category/arrangeme/188/jeremy-s-fox/>

*The easiest way to find Jeremy's arrangements and compositions for vocal jazz and choral ensembles.*

**If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me via email at  
[Jeremy@JeremyFox.net](mailto:Jeremy@JeremyFox.net)**



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SATB With  
Rhythm Section

# Route Sixty-Six

Bobby Troup  
Arr. Jeremy Fox

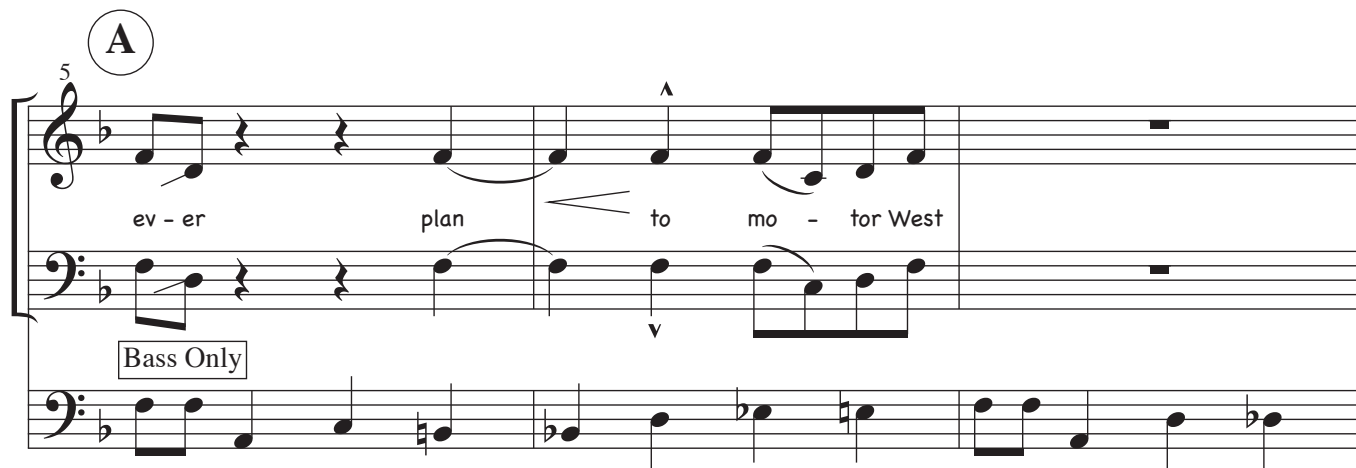
HARD SWINGIN'  $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 114$

**START** 



Musical score for the first system of "Route Sixty-Six". The score is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The tempo is marked "HARD SWINGIN'" with a quarter note equal to approximately 114 beats per minute. The score consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with the lyrics "If you" and features two accents (^) over the notes. The piano accompaniment includes chords F7, E7, Eb7, and D7, and features a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand.

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ENSEMBLE AT ANCHOR MUSIC PUBLICATIONS**



Musical score for the second system of "Route Sixty-Six". The system is marked with a circled "A" and a measure rest of 5. The vocal line includes the lyrics "ev - er plan to mo - tor West" and features an accent (^) over the note "to". The piano accompaniment includes a bass line labeled "Bass Only" and a melodic line in the right hand. The bass line starts with a dynamic marking "v".

8 (Bounce rhythm)

trav-el my way, take the high-way that's the best

11

Get your kicks

14

on Route Six-ty six!

Snare roll

It

17

winds from Chi - ca - go to L. A.

F7#9 Bb7 F7

20

More - than two thou-sand mile all the way

Bb7sus11

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23

Get your kicks

Fill 3 Gliss.

F6 Dmi7 Gmi7

Treble or Lower Voice Solo

26

Oh, now you

On Route Six - ty Six

C7sus11 C7 F F7/A $\flat$  B $\flat$  Bdim C7sus11 Bdim7 C7sus11

29 (C)

go thru St. Lou-ee, Jop-lin, Mis-sou-ri And Ok-la-ho-ma Ci-ty's look-in'

F7 Ami7b5 B $\flat$ 7 Eb7 E7 F7

32

migh-ty migh-ty pret-ty

You'll see A - ma - ril - lo,

B $\flat$ 7 F7



35

Gal - lop, New Mex - i - co, Flag staff, Don't

A - ri - zo - na

Dmi7 D7/F# Gmi7 C13

38

for-get Wi-no-na, King - man, Bar - stow, San Ber-nan - di - no, won't you

F6 F9/Eb D13(#9) D7b9 Gmi7 Fadd9

*f*

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41 **D**

*mp* get hip to this time - ly tip!

F7 Bb13 F6 F7

44

3

When you make that Ca - li - for - nia trip

B $\flat$ 7

47

Get your kicks On

F7 Dmi7 Eb9 D7(b9,13) Gmi7 G9

50

Route On Route Six - ty six!

Improv break

C7sus11 C7b9 F6

migh-ty migh-ty, you'll see A - ma -

F7 Bb13 Bb7(9,#11)

**START**

72 3  
And Gal - lop, New Mex - ic - o, Flag - staff, Win -

F7 Dmi7 Gmi7

75  
o - na! And King - man, Bar - stow San Ber - nan - di - no, won't

C7Alt F6 Eb7 D7 Gmi7 C7sus11

78 **G** Straight 16ths

you won't you won't you won't you get hip! to this

81 (Bounce rhythm)

time-ly time-ly tip Oh when you make that Ca - li - for - nia trip

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84

Get your kicks On

87

Route

*mp*

Swung 16ths

All I ask is you take a lit-tle trip with me on

C7sus11

C

90

Route

Six - ty six!

Yeah

F/C

D $\flat$ Maj7 C7Alt

F

Bass Solo

F13

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NOTE: FOR THIS ACDA SESSION, WE WILL CONCENTRATE on mm. 1-9 & 70-78.

# LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE

Available for your SATB or SSAA ensemble from [www.JeremyFox.net](http://www.JeremyFox.net)  
(Part tracks and instrumental backing tracks are also available.)

KEB' MO'/JENNY YATES  
ARR. BY JEREMY FOX

STRAIGHT 16TH ROCK ♩ = c. 90

SOPRANO ALTO

TENOR BASS

PIANO

mf (NOT TOO SHORT) mp

STEP A SIDE & LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE. YOUR LOVE SHOW IT'S A SHORT RIDE DOWN A

STRAIGHT 16TH ROCK ♩ = c. 90

SA

TB

PNO.

5 mf (AGAIN, NOT TOO SHORT) mp

LONG ROAD WHEN THE RAINS COME THE WINDS BLOW LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE WHER-EV-ER YOU\_

“Let Your Light Shine” Written by Kevin R. Moore © 2004 Kebnote Music (BMI)  
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9

SOLO

SA

TB

PNO.

G

(STRONG BASS THROUGHOUT)

12

SOLO

SA

TB

PNO.

F(add9)

G

16

18

SOLOIST MAY EMBELLISH MELODY AT WILL

3

SOLO

NOTE: SOLO MAY BE SPLIT UP INTO MULTIPLE SMALLER SOLOS

YOU SAY \_ YOU WAN-NA GET O-VER

SA

TB

PNO.

F6 D G

20

SOLO

WHAT ARE U GON-NA DO? WATCH THE WORLD GO \_ BY IN A

SA

TB

PNO.

*c(add9)*



23

26

SOLO

COR-NER ALL A-LONE I KNOW

SA

mp Hoo oo

T8

PNO.

27

SOLO

IT'S NONE OF MY BIZ NESS. BUT THERE'S SOMETHIN' I NEED TO SAY— IF YOU COULD

SA

Hoo oo Hoo

T8

PNO.

30

SOLO

SEE U THE WAY I SEE U YOU'D START FLY IN' ON YOUR OWN

SA

OO HOO OO HOO OH

TB

C(add9) G D(SUS4)

PNO.

34

35

SOLO

STEP A-SIDE & LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE LET YOUR LOVE SHOW IT'S A

SINGERS LEAN INTO BEAT 1'S DURING THE CHORUSES ETC.....

SA

LIGHT SHINE LOVE SHOW

TB

mf

PNO.

D Amin/G G Amin/G G

mf

SOLO

SHORT RIDE DOWN A LONG ROAD WHEN THE RAINS COME & THE

SA

SHORT RIDE RAINS COME

TB

(ARTICULATED LEGATO ON 16TH NOTES)

PNO.

Amin/G G F(adds) Amin/G G

40

SOLO

WINDS BLOW, LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE WHER-EV-ER YOU GO

SA

WINDS BLOW LIGHT SHINE

TB

PNO.

Amin/G G Amin/G G F(adds) D

43 44

SOLO

SA

TB

PNO.

*f* THIS WORLD IS REA-DY & WAIT-ING

46

SOLO

SA

TB

PNO.

FOR YOU TO BREAK ON \_\_\_\_\_ THROUGH IT'S TIME TO RE - COG - NIZE\_

(NOT TOO SHORT)

*p* RE - COG - NIZE

*c*(add9)

49

SOLO

RE - AL - IZE\_ YOU'RE THE ON - LY\_ ONE LIKE\_ YOU

SA

RE - AL - IZE YOU'RE THE ON - LY ONE

TB

PNO.

52

SOLO

OH. DON'T BE A FRAID

SA

STEP ON UP STEP IN- TO YOUR GREAT-NESS DON'T BE A FRAID

TB

PNO.

55

SOLO

THERE'S A PLACE THAT YOU WILL RISE UP TO:

SA

TB

PN.

*p* *mf*

(Tutti)

OH,

C CMA7

58

SOLO

NO ONE ELSE CAN DO WHAT YOU DO GET OUT THE WAY & LET YOUR

SA

TB

PN.

*f* *mf*

NO ONE ELSE

G D(SUS4) D

SOLO

LIGHT SHINE LET YOUR LOVE SHOW IT'S A SHORT RIDE DOWN A

SA

LIGHT SHINE LOVE SHOW SHORT RIDE DOWN A

TB

Amin/G G Amin/G G Amin/G G

PNO.

64

SOLO

LONG ROAD WHEN THE RAINS COME & THE WINDS BLOW, LET YOUR

SA

LONG ROAD RAINS COME WINDS BLOW

TB

F(add9) Amin/G G Amin/G G

PNO.

70

67

SOLO

LIGHT SHINE

WHER - EV - ER YOU GO

SA

LIGHT SHINE

RELAXED YET ENERGIZED

(OFFBEATS NOT PARTICULARLY ACCENTED & NOT TOO SHORT)

LAH DAT DAT DAT DAT DAT

mp

TB

PNO.

Amin/G G F(add9) D G

71

SA

(GRACE NOTES OPTIONAL)

(AH) AH OO WAH

LAH DAT DAT DAT DAT DAT AH

HA YA DA AH AH OH

p

TB

PNO.



74

SA

TB

PNO.

*f*

(BREATH RELEASE)

OH OH LA AY AH DA DA DA OO OH

LA AY AH DA OO OH

CMA7 CMA7 G

78

VOCAL/INSTRUMENTAL IMPROVISATION - SAMPLE IS PROVIDED HERE

SOLO

SA

TB

PNO.

WAY AH BA DA BA DA BA DA 'N DAH (BREATH RELEASE)

DA BA DA YA DA YAH DA BA

G(SUS4) G G