

## **Basses**

### **WHAT IS A BASS?**

The bass usually sings the lowest harmony notes. The bass range is closest to that of first tenor in SATB music (C below Middle C to F above Middle C). Basses must sing with authority, as the bass is the foundation of the barbershop chord. Basses often sing the root or fifth of the chord. The bass voice should be rich, mellow and strong, even on the lowest notes, and should complement the lead voice.

The following information was provided by a Sweet Adeline judge and coach, Shirley Kout.

### **VOCAL SKILLS OF A BASS**

Vocalize as high as possible as well as low.

Learn to keep soft palate open for singing high notes and for extra resonance on lows.

Keep larynx low and relaxed. Let it drop as you inhale.

Keep chin level with floor. Don't "reach down" for low tones or "reach up" for highs.

Keep throat, jaw, tongue relaxed and maintain feeling of a large, open throat. Keep tongue away from back of throat.

Keep "inside smile" to aid in accuracy.

Develop a range at least to C below Middle C and be able to vocalize an octave above.

Develop good breathing and breath management skills along with high, wide rib cage.

### **SINGING TECHNIQUES OF A BASS**

Match vowels with the lead and sing them at the same time.

Minimize consonants, maintain a smooth, legato vocal line.

Sing whole phrases as if all notes were on one tone.

Keep the feeling of "humming" as you sing. This will help keep the soft palate open and add more overall resonance.

Sing with plenty of air, energy, vitality, and focus.

### **BASS PERSONALITY**

Think about the basses you know and see if any of them fit these descriptors.

(If you know more characteristics we'd love to add them.)

Basses are best.

Basses want to be in charge.

Basses love to party, but don't worry about the plan.

Basses are rowdy.