

Leads

WHAT IS A LEAD?

The lead usually sings the melody. The lead range is similar to the alto range in SATB music (G below Middle C to D an octave above Middle C). The lead has the responsibility of singing with musical authority. The ideal lead voice has clarity, brilliance, depth, maturity and a sense of style. The lead needs to be able to sing smoothly throughout her range, always making the sound interesting, expressive and colorful. Leads must be especially aware of proper diction and vowel production, as the harmony parts should match the lead's example.

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

VOCAL SKILLS OF A LEAD

A good mix of head and chest tone on octave above Middle C

An open throat and "arch" in the roof of the mouth, using an "inside smile" at the back

Finding and maintaining the tonal center

Maintaining resonance

Maintaining freedom of jaw, throat and tongue

Maintaining a high, wide chest and use of abdominal lift and expanded ribs for support

Developing a large capacity for air and breath management skills

SINGING TECHNIQUES OF A LEAD

Use plenty of air behind the tone. "Spend" the air as you use good posture and support.

Sing with energy, vitality, and authority.

While maintaining a smooth vocal line, sing deliberately. Don't neglect any words or syllables. Help the harmony parts to sing with you by vocally leading them.

Maintain open, full resonators, "inside smile", high arch in mouth and abdominal lift.

LEAD PERSONALITY

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

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

Leads are lovely.

Leads think they are in charge.

Leads think their musical line is the best.

Leads go to the basses party and hope there is enough for all.