

CONTENTS

Preface	1
Introduction	1
Chapter 1: Jargon	1
Chapter 2: Preparing Songs	3
"Ed The Dog" Lead Sheet Example	5
Chapter 3: Chord Voicings	6
Chapter 4: Scat Singing	6
Major & Dominant 7th Voicings	7
Blues Voicings	8
The II/V7/I Progression Voicings	9 & 10
Scatting by Ear (No Knowledge of Harmony)	12
Scatting with Knowledge of Harmony	13
Chapter 5: Scales and Chords for Scat Singing	15
Chapter 6: Ear Training	16
Chapter 7: Tips	16
Chapter 8: Pitch Pipe	16
Ten Preparatory Patterns	17
Ear Training/Interval Chart	18
Intro to the Scale Syllabus	19
Scale Syllabus	20
Nomenclature	21
SOLOING by Jamey Aebersold	22
Practice Procedure For Memorizing Scales/Chords to Any Song	23
Song List for Beginners	24

Additional CD Practice Tracks:

Track 11 - Bb Major Scale/Chord	25
Track 12 - Major Scales, Four Bars Each, All 12 Keys	25
Track 13 - Major Scales, Sixteen Bars Each, All 12 Keys	26
Track 14 - C Dorian Minor Scale/Chord	26
Track 15 - Minor Scales, Four Bars Each, All 12 Keys	26
Track 16 - Dominant 7th Scales/Chords, All 12 Keys	27
Track 17 - <i>Achin' And Breakin'</i> - Slow Blues in F	28
Track 18 - Blues in Bb	29
Track 19 - II/V7/I In Two Keys	30
Track 20 - II/V7/I In All 12 Keys	31

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PREFACE

This book is not about how to acquire a good voice, nor is it about any certain style of music (with the exception of the "Scat" chapter). Its purpose is to help you through problems that are unique to vocalists in the music business today. Look at it as a guide that can aim you through certain situations where before you might not have had a clue as to what to do. Let's look at some problems and how to deal with them.

INTRODUCTION

We have all experienced or noticed embarrassing situations between vocalists and members of a band. If you are a musician who has learned to sing or a vocalist who has studied theory (in the jazz or commercial area) you probably know a good deal about music. Many singers learn by ear and expect the members of the band to figure everything out for them. This is fine if you have a band that will accommodate you. But very often you are at the mercy of what they can't do and they are at the mercy of what **you** can't do.

By understanding a few problems and how to fix them you can prepare for and solve many awkward situations. The more organized and prepared you are for the job, the more respect you will get from the band. This will help your reputation and could be the reason you even get work or not. You will be respected because you care enough to be organized. This book is for the vocalist that needs a little direction and for the vocalists that feel alone in the world of instrumentalists.

Chapter 1: JARGON

It's incredible some of the faces I see when the members of a band start saying things like "Double time the 'rhythm bridge, 'then do fours.' Take the 'head' then 'vamp.' 'Lay out' for bass, then 'D.C.'" If you want to see someone get an ulcer really fast, watch the vocalist after a conversation like that. What a mess! You're trapped. If you don't know what they're talking about, you feel stupid. If you ask them what country this language is from, they'll think you don't have a clue as to what they mean. There is a jargon that many musicians use. Some people have their own terms and only they know what they mean. But by and large we all use a few standard words.

BARS - Measures. Every song has a pre-set number of measures. Most standard tunes are 32 bars long. This does not include a possible intro (see "intro" on next page) or ending.

BLUES - (A) This could mean a style of music, "Chicago Blues." (B) It most often means a harmonic 12 bar musical form that many tunes are based on. The chords of a tune may be altered a million ways, but they can usually be traced back to a 12 bar blues form. (See section on chord voicings for a standard blues form). Check out Volumes 2, 42, 57, and 88 of the Aebersold Play-A-Long series for the most common forms.

BLUESY - The blues scale type sound, which doesn't necessarily mean the "Blues form." (Blues scale in "F" - F, Ab, Bb, B, C, Eb, F. Blues scale in "C" - C, Eb, F, F#, G, Bb, C).

CHANGES - The song's harmony; the chord changes of a song.

THINGS TO TRY

- 1) Try scatting something like *Happy Birthday* (without the words) over and over using different syllables each time you go through it.

⊙ Recorded Exercise #2: Happy Birthday

- 2) Scat *Happy Birthday* over in each of the 3 styles of the singers you picked to transcribe. Example: scat like Ella Fitzgerald would scat *Happy Birthday*, then Dizzy Gillespie, then Al Jarreau, etc. Learn their styles.
- 3) Make up your own syllables by imitating instruments. This is how scat singing started originally.
- 4) Trade syllables back and forth with someone. (Trade 4's or 2's).

⊙ Recorded Exercise #3: Trade Syllables

Not all scat singers are just scat singers, in fact most aren't. Many are vocalists or instrumentalists. Unfortunately they don't scat on every record they make, so you have to sort of sniff around to find them. Here is just a small list of some different singers. Remember everyone interprets their own way, but they all have listened extensively.

- 1) **The Carmen McRae/Betty Carter Duets Live At The Great American Music Hall.** *It Don't Mean A Thing If It Ain't Got That Swing*. Great American Music Hall Records, GAMH-2706.
- 2) **Bobby McFerrin, Spontaneous Inventions.** *I Hear Music*. Blue Note, BT851 10.
- 3) **James Moody Sweet And Lovely.** *Get The Booty* (with Dizzy Gillespie). Novus, 3063-Z-N.
- 4) **The Woody Herman Big Band Live At The Village Vanguard.** *Lemon Drop* (George Rabbai). Concord Jazz, CJ-191.
- 5) **Best Of Lambert Hendricks And Ross.** *Everybody's Boppin'*. Columbia, KC 32911.
- 6) **Compact Jazz Ella Fitzgerald/Louis Armstrong.** *Stompin' at the Savoy*. Verve, 835-313-2.
- 7) **Eddie Jefferson, The Main Man.** *Confirmation*. Inner City, IC 1033.
- 8) **Maynard Ferguson Live From San Francisco.** *Bebop Buffet, Salt Peanuts* (Denis DiBlasio). TBA Records, TBC D8077.
- 9) **Together Again For The First Time: Mel Torme and Buddy Rich.** *Ella Be Good*. Century Records, CRDD 1100.
- 10) **Ella In Rome Birthday Concert.** *Saint Louis Blues*. Verve, 835-454-4.
- 11) **Clark Terry at the Montreaux Jazz Festival.** *Mumbles*. Polydor, 24-5002.
- 12) **Eddie Harris Trio, Eddie Who.** *Ambidextrous*. Timeless, SJP 244.
- 13) **Mark Murphy Sings.** *Cantaloupe Island*. Muse 5078.
- 14) **Al Jarreau, Look To The Rainbow.** *Take Five*. Warner Brothers, 2BZ 2052.
- 15) **Chet Baker, The Touch of Your Lips.** *The Touch of Your Lips*. Steeplechase 1122 & others.

- Step 3) Slowly and in time play and sing the pitches at the same time. 5 times.
 Step 4) Slowly sing the pitch then check it with the piano. 5 times.
 Step 5) Sing the pitches in time and tape yourself You should with practice be able to sing any root or guideline by yourself. 5 times.
 Step 6) Scat around the pitches.

The benefit of repetition can't be stressed enough. This method brings you through the form of the tune 25 times. This is just the beginning of getting a certain line in your ear.

⊙ **Recorded Exercise #9: Scat Around Roots**

If you can hear the roots, chords, scales and guidelines as easily as the melody, you'll have a good grip on the tune. Remember scatting around the melody? Well, after using this melody you will be able to hear roots, chords, scales and guidelines as strongly as you hear the melody. Look at these sounds as melodies of their own.

You can create you own guidelines by adding other notes besides 3rds and 7ths, depending on which way you want the line to go, up or down. By the time you get to this point you should really be able to scat through the harmony.

It's better to spend a lot of time on one tune then a little time on a lot of tunes. Get to the point where you can scat the root, chords, scales and guidelines alone without a band behind you, then you'll have it. And to check and be sure, tape yourself and listen back, don't be overly critical of yourself.

⊙ **Recorded Exercise #10: Scat Using All Techniques**

Chapter 5: SCALES AND CHORDS FOR SCAT SINGING

If figuring out chords and scales are new to you there are many excellent books that can get you started. Jamey Aebersold's Vol. 21 "Getting It Together" play-a-long is an excellent source for getting acquainted with the sounds of different scales and chords. I'm including Jamey's "Scale Syllabus" elsewhere in this book to give you a chance at understanding what a jazz player must do and what a scat singer must do in order to scat on equal terms with an instrumentalist. The "Scale Syllabus" shows the scale choices, scale name, how the scale is built (most important), scale in the key of "C" (you must transpose to the key needed) and the chord in the key of "C" (you must transpose the chord also).

Don't be overwhelmed at the choices. In cases where there are more than 2 choices you will 9 times out of 10 use just the first two choices in those sections (Major, Dominant and Minor). Use this "Scale Syllabus" to figure out the chords and scales to the tune you want to learn to scat on. Put the chords and scales of your tune to the different "Preparatory Exercises" so you can further get the sound of the chord and scale in your head (this is what an instrumentalist does).

EXAMPLE of Properly-Prepared Lead Sheet:

Ed The Dog (Title)

Calypso (Style) (Tempo) $\text{♩} = \text{mm } 100$

(Key) $F\Delta$ (Time Sig) $4/4$

(Chord Changes)

A 1 $F\Delta$ $Eb\Delta$ $F\Delta$ $Eb\Delta$
 Ed the dog, Ed the dog,

5 $F\Delta$ $Eb\Delta$ $F\Delta$ $Eb\Delta$
 He's the dog, good dog.

(Double Bars)

B 9 $F\Delta$ $Eb\Delta$ $F\Delta$ $Eb\Delta$
 What a dog, groo- vy dog,

13 $F\Delta$ $Eb\Delta$ $F\Delta$ $Eb\Delta$
 He's the dog, good Ed.

C 17 $A-$ $D7$ $G\Delta$
 He's real big,

21 $A-$ $D7$ $G-$ $C7+5$
 he eats ev'- ry thing.

D 25 $F\Delta$ $Eb\Delta$ $F\Delta$ $Eb\Delta$
 Ed the dog, Ed the dog,

29 $F\Delta$ $Eb\Delta$ $F\Delta$ $Eb\Delta$
 What a dog good dog.

(4 Measures Per Line)

(Fantastic Lyrics)

Chapter 3: CHORD VOICINGS

Having a basic knowledge of chord voicings can help greatly in learning a tune. If you can play just the 3rd and 7th of the chord in your right hand on the piano, and the bass note (root) in your left hand, you'll be able to accompany yourself. Being able to identify the bass note, the 3rd and the 7th of a chord enables one to hear the chord quality. This not only helps you in singing the song, but it also sets up guidelines to help you to scat sing.

The chords on the following pages are grouped together in 2, 3 and 4 note voicings. If this is new to you, start with the 2 note voicings before going on. Play the root of the chord with your left hand and the other notes in your right hand. Try to keep the right hand notes near the center of the keyboard.

It may also be a good idea to have these voicings pages opened right next to the song you're playing so you can have it for reference.

Chapter 4: SCAT SINGING

The only way to get the feel of scat singing is to listen extensively. I have never known anyone who has ever learned scat singing from a book. Like all music, you have to go to the source to really understand the language. All I'm doing is explaining scat singing in a way that you can understand it. Everyone learns scat singing they're own way, but everyone who does it well has either consciously or unconsciously gone through the following steps.

A. Syllables

"Syllables" are the actual sounds you make with your mouth and voice. The only way I know to get the use of syllables is to simply LISTEN and STEAL THEM FROM RECORDINGS. In high school I used to simply memorize scat solos by Ella Fitzgerald, Eddie Jefferson and Clark Terry, not just the melody, but the syllables, attacks and inflections verbatim. I would scat to the recording until it sounded like one voice. This process is called TRANSCRIBING; it's what jazz players have been doing for years. People who neglect to do this usually beat 2 or 3 syllables to death; their time, feel and phrasing are nonexistent, and their pitch is all over the place.

⊙ Recorded Exercise #1: "Bad" Scat

To do it right you have to study what is going on in recordings. If this step isn't first and foremost, don't even try it. If you transcribe 3 scat solos exactly (inflections, syllables, phrasing) you will have enough information to keep you going for a while. Make each example a different singer. It takes REPEATED LISTENING to do it exactly. Only repeated listening will ingrain the SOUND in your ear. STEAL THE SYLLABLES. Syllables that have a good "pop" in the front of them usually begin with the letters B, D, G, J, K, P, Q, T and V. Examples - BEE, BOP, CHEE, DOP, DOO, TEE, TOO, VEE, VAM, VOM, DI, KA, PE, GA, etc. Don't give this too much thought, it's too analytical. Just copy the recordings and you will notice these letters predominate on the attacked notes of a line.