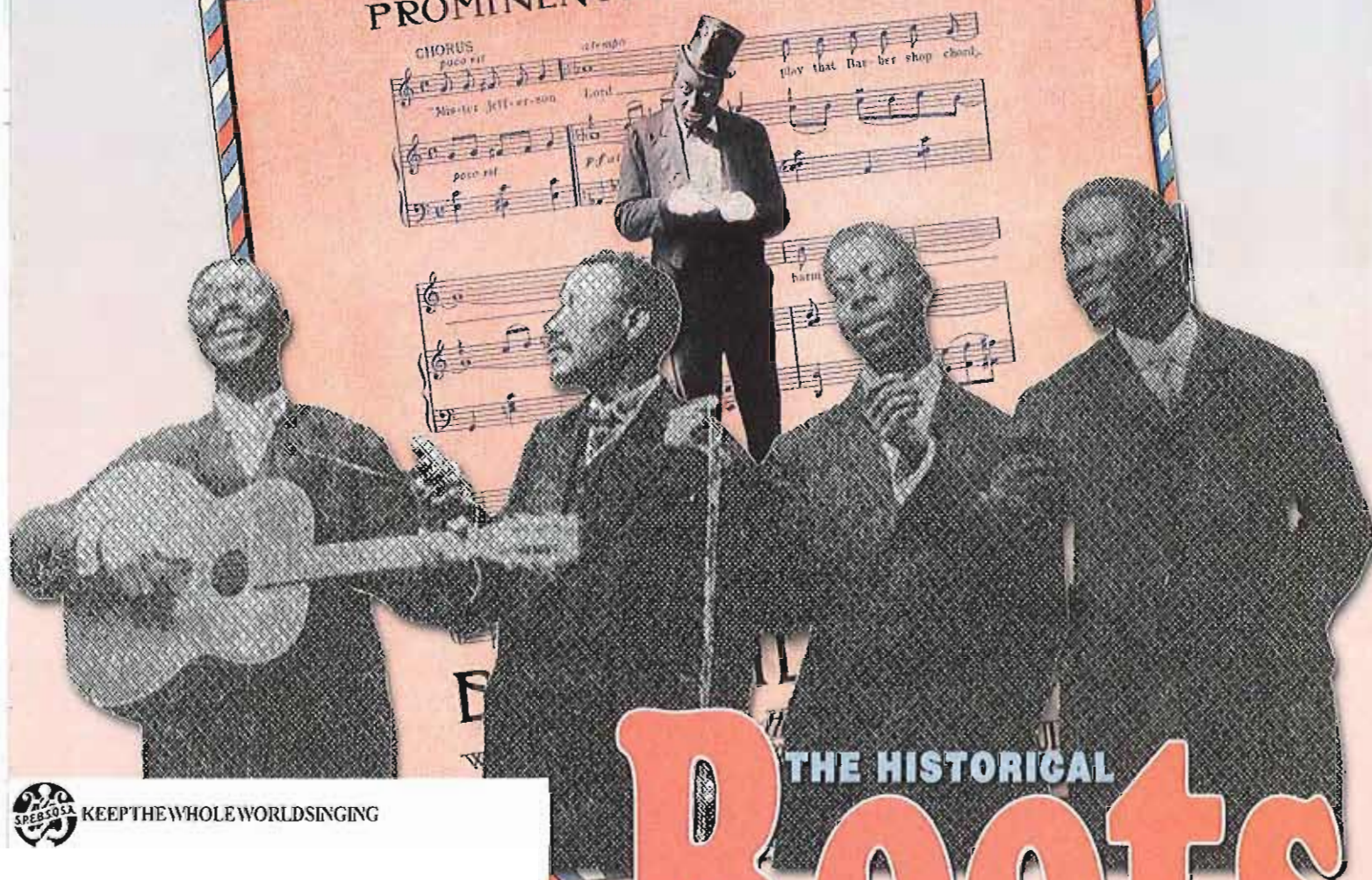


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OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE BARBERSHOP HARMONY SOCIETY

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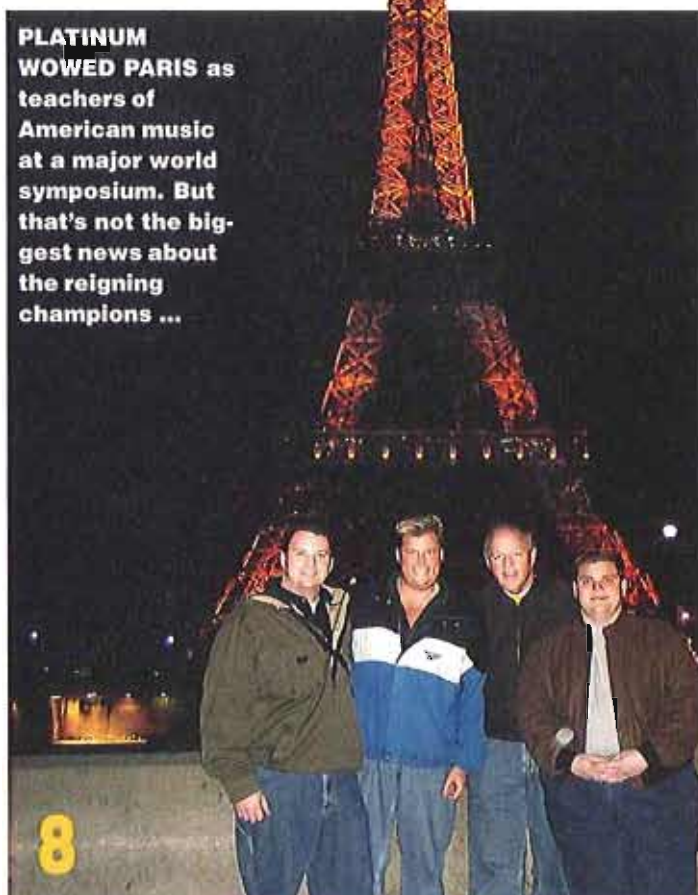
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1910

Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America



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Society growth: help us answer the right questions

I can't help but wonder why more young men don't become a part of our hobby. I also wonder about those who last a couple of years and then disappear. What "was in it for them" when they began, and why didn't that keep them in the Society?

The pressures young men face today are considerably different than those faced when I began barbershopping nearly 35 years ago. But I do see young men who find our style and friendship interesting. What

can we do for them and other potential young brothers in harmony? We must answer two critical questions: (1) How do we attract new, young members, and then, (2) How do we keep them?

To answer the first question, we need to consider several things about the potential member. For example:

- Has he been bitten by your infectious enthusiasm for the hobby?
- Did he receive a friendly invitation, come for the music, and stay for the fellowship?
- Did he like the chance to learn something new?
- Was he just keeping busy while he waited for that "right someone" to come along?

- Had he heard positive things about the style when he was growing up and decided to give it a try?
- Had he never heard anything about the style but was just trying to find an outlet where he could sing and perform?
- Does the chapter have a glorious history of competition, and he's excited about winning? (Few members obtain this reward, however,

especially a gold medal.)

Reasons for joining could include all of the above and many more. I wish I knew all the motivations young men and other men have when they join. Can you help us learn more?

If we ever fully understand the many reasons why people join, we still must ask: Why do some new members leave?

- Did they find a chapter of cliques where a newcomer is not fully accepted until he's "paid his dues"?
- Did they find that there are more hidden expenses than they were led to believe when they joined? No hobby is truly inexpensive; however, our non-competitive chapters demand relatively little financial commitment. But membership in our highly competitive chapters involves many expenses besides dues. (By the way, did you know there are a number of options available to new members to help defer the payment of some of the initial dues?).
- Did they join a competitive group that won? Are they now satisfied and decided to move on to something else?
- What if they didn't win? Are they disappointed about the chapter, having possibly built up false hopes?
- Are they leaving temporarily due to life circumstances, or are their needs and desires no longer being met by the chapter?

Again, we don't know all the answers to these questions, and I'm sure we don't even know all the questions. What are your thoughts?

Think back to your own initial experiences with your chapter and see if it doesn't help you understand some of the challenges of retaining new members:

- Did your chapter orient you to all the things expected of you when you joined?



How do we attract new, young members? Why do many of them last a couple of years and then disappear?

- If not, what have you done to improve the process for new members?
- Did you learn that many of your chapter members gather together after the weekly chapter meeting to do some more informal singing and get to know one another?
- Did you know you were expected to sell tickets? How about those show ads? How else does your chapter expect you to contribute your fair share?
- Did you find out that your chapter was one of more than 800 chapters around the United States and Canada who do this kind of thing every week?
- Did you learn that there are a set of songs called Barberpole Cat songs that nearly all members learn to sing and are sung in the halls at conventions and other gatherings?
- Did you learn about those district conventions where you can gather with others to have singing fun and fellowship?
- Did you learn about that great big international convention where 10,000 people gather annually to have a good time, hear great singing and sing themselves?
- Did you learn about the Society's history? Who is O.C. Cash and Rupert Hall? When did they first get together?

There are a lot of questions, and I hope most of you learned the answers shortly after joining. If you continue to have more questions, how can we help to answer them? If you have ideas as to how to attract more potential members, let us know. If you think we aren't asking the right questions, we want to know that, too.

In other words, if you have ideas, don't feel that no one's listening. We can't apply every good idea at once, but there's no knowing when or from whom that next brilliant idea or down-to-earth insight will come. If you have email, please drop me a line at cwatson@columbus.rr.com (my snail mail address is in the gray box to the right). We will listen and, who knows, you might just wind up with some reward.

Thanks for your attention,

Chuck Watson

THE HARMONIZER

WWW.SPEBSQSA.ORG/HARMONIZER

July/August 2001



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SPEBSQSA Vision Statement

The Society is to be an ever-growing fraternity of barbershop-style singers, leading the cause of encouraging vocal music in our schools and communities.

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The official charity of SPEBSQSA, coordinating the Society's charitable mission to "preserve our musical legacy through support of vocal music education in our schools and communities." Call 1-800-876-7464 x8447 for donation, gift-planning, grant or sponsorship information.

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Is your greatest performance yet to come?

About *The Harmonizer* ... a dirty trick is for our editor, Lorin May, to pass a working copy around Harmony Hall for some of the staff to scan and proof before he sends it off to the printer. That means, when I get my magazine, I don't get to see it for the first time. It's old news. When I received the last issue, I set it aside (why not? I'd already read it) for later. Later was a plane ride back from a particularly fun barbershop convention in Seneca Land.

I felt like a big idiot sitting there in a crowded plane, reading my new *Harmonizer*, and being transported out of my seat as I re-read that great issue. The story about my quartet, **Harmony**, winning the Senior's gold medal was a fun and heartfelt re-read; the stories about barbershop weddings were touching; the spread on the Sing! a cappella show definitely kicked it up a notch. But what really did it for me was the enormous rush of emotion and memory when I re-read the feature called "The song of the contest".

I remember being embarrassed by my reaction to the effect of the greatest "oh yeah!" song ever. When **The Gas House Gang** finished that beautiful verse, then lit into "Bright Was The Night." "Oh, my dear God!" I said out loud, holding my head and sinking down into my seat—Meredith thought I'd surely had a stroke!

And "That Old Quartet Of Mine" was a breathless moment of a different kind. I had the best seat in the house (I was judging that contest), and the audience reaction to **The Boston Common's** epic performance was the single, greatest, most powerful audience reaction that I ever felt for any performance I've ever seen. I can still feel it.

I've always been a sap for overtones and musical perfection. In addition to the **Rural Route 4's** "Apron Strings," I remember feeling the same way about "Sweet Adeline," as performed by **The Ritz**—and being completely satisfied in my soul that neither song would ever be done that well again.

My first international convention was 1965, so I didn't get to see them medal, but thinking back to **The Nighthawks** and "Brother, Can You Spare A Dime," I was reminded that my kids actually wore out the 78 rpm recording of **The Nighthawks**.

Then I thought about the breathless moments when a great chorus performed me right out of my seat and into that special place where time stands still and no breathing or heartbeat is required.

I hope something always reminds you of the breathless moments you have enjoyed in this magnificent hobby of ours. Ask one of your fellow Barbershoppers to tell you about his best barbershop moment, then watch his eyes light up. Chances are, it will involve a quartet—probably his own.

When we swap stories or breathless moments and share the folklore of our barbershop lives, a good thing would be to remember who it was that got you involved. Who helped you join up? Who has helped enrich your life's experience?

An even better thing to do might be to make a promise to yourself that you will enrich the life of someone else this year by helping them become one of us. Part of your own folklore, if you will. Wonder what it would take for you and me and all 32,000 of us to help just one fellow become a member this year. A quick and easy way to double our membership, don't you think?

Given the good music, the great friends, and all of the breathless moments, it's a wonder we don't have over 100,000 members. It's a curiosity, isn't it?

Let's Harmonize,



I was holding my head and sinking down into my seat. Meredith thought I'd surely had a stroke!

Remember Lou Perry/stamp out crudeness

The passing of a legend

I would like to thank Val Hicks for his great article on Lou Perry in the May/June *Harmonizer*. I don't know of anyone else who could have known so many interesting things about Lou and written about them so well.

I was in that Harmony College class in which Val filled in for Dave Stevens and we all came to know Lou. Whenever I sing "That Old Quartet of Mine" in a quartet or chorus, I never fail to remember Salt Lake City in 1980 when the Boston Common brought the quartet finals to a halt and ten thousand people stood up and cheered!

DICK ELLENBERGER
Jupiter, Fla.

Haven from crudeness

Count me in as one of the many in thanking the Society "for being a guardian of our values." In my chapter, even the crusty war veterans epitomize our code of ethics to "deport ourselves ... in such manner as to reflect credit upon the Society" and also "accept for membership only congenial men of good character."

I also share Darryl Flinn's concern about non-barbershop style elements pervading the contests. Some chorus performances look like a Las Vegas revue to me. Yes, that's entertainment, but I don't call it barbershop.

CARMAN GENTILE
Eureka, Calif.

I laud Darryl Flinn for bringing up "non-barbershop music in a barbershop contest". Regardless of the intellectual epistles regarding the "evolution" of the style, when songs are being presented that do not give the *sound* of barbershop harmony, then we are fast approaching the erasing of the style which, I recall, we are dedicated to preserve.

THOMAS E. EWALD
Davidsonville, Md.

Great cover!

Just got my *Harmonizer*, and thought I would fall over laughing. Congrats on (in my humble opinion) the best *Harmonizer* cover ever.

MARK HOLDEMAN
Ft. Worth, Texas

Triple kudos for May/June issue

The May/June issue's cover was outstanding!

"Let's make beautiful music together" is the single greatest piece of writing *The Harmonizer* has ever contained! Yes, I mean ever! (I've read every *Harmonizer* published since 1952.) Roger Payne is way "under par" with this incredible piece of work.

The insert on Harmony Foundation was exquisite. It has inspired me to amend my will.

DOUG ELLIS
London, Ontario



"All winners"? It's called a contest for a reason

Regarding "Get the most out of competitions" (March/April), how can a Contest & Judging chairman say, "Don't worry about winning, rules, who is on the judging panel, who will make the top 10 and all the other concerns that mean little in the long run"? It's absurd!

There may be a measure of fun, the audience may have an enjoyable experience and something may be learned, but that is not the main thrust of a *competition*! We go to show what we have learned and try to outdo those with whom we contend. Many who lose come away devastated, and that experience is not very rewarding. How can a loser feel like a winner does?

REV. HENRY PALMIERI
Mechanicsville, N.Y.

Who's this "FERD" quartet?

Since I have been in printing for my adult life, proof-reading, especially in years gone by, was a must. Couldn't help noticing the boo-boo on page 17 of the May/June *Harmonizer* in the "FERD" ad. As they say in barbershopping, "It's okay to make a mistake."





BOB LERNER
West Hartford, Conn.

Many caught FRED's "mistake"—a reference to their inability to get letter cards in the right order. We predict their next ad headline will be "DERF". — Ed

FRED considers their mixed up card routine a trademark—and others feel the same.



Keep (a fifth of) the whole world singing

Add China to the list of nations discovering barbershop music. At the request of the provincial governor of Hebei Province in China (near Beijing), a mixed quartet recently spent several days teaching barbershop to a championship-level mixed chorus composed of musical educators and directors. In April 2001, a teaching quartet of Kim Orloff  and Jerry Orloff , Brian Beck , Holly Beck , (left to right) spent a few days in intense training and performance, and found quick converts to the barbershop sound wherever they went.



With a performing repertoire of 15 songs, including barbershop versions of two-well known Chinese folk songs, the quartet also taught the Chinese chorus three songs in barbershop style. (That took some fast improvising on Brian's part, when he discovered that all the music had to be translated into a Chinese notation style.)

The Chinese chorus pledged to include barbershop-style songs in their future repertoire, and to reach the barbershop style to other singing groups in the province. They also expressed a desire, once they become more experienced, to "join the inter-

national organization." The Chinese chorus plans to form men's

quartets, and best one will visit an upcoming SPEBSQSA international convention.

Others fell in love with barbershop as well. The quartet's interpreter, Li Yihu ("call me 'Steve'"), turned out to be an excellent singer, and not only interpreted during the sessions but sang bass. He's now putting together a barbershop quartet of his own. When the Orloffs and Becks visit Shijiazhuang in October and November with a mixed chorus of American barbershoppers, "Steve" has made arrangements to perform with them.

Society quartets fare well in non-society competitions & honors



Freestyle continued the Society's strong showing among contemporary a cappella audiences, finishing third in a very competitive evening that included regional winners that mostly specialize in pop and jazz styles. The May 5 show in San Francisco metro area included many male and female barbershoppers in the audience, including what appeared to be most of Bay Area Metro chorus.

The Sweet Adelines quartet *So Rare* also appeared, making this the second time in finals history that two of the eight contestants were Barbershoppers, and the three years out of the last four that barbershop has won or placed (*Metropolis* 1st place 1998; *City Lights* 3rd place in 1998; *The Perfect Gentlemen*, 2nd place in 2000, and Freestyle).

Winners were a male/female jazz sextet of mostly professional session singers from Los Angeles, Sixth Wave. Freestyle sang an original arrangement called "Freestyle At The Sweepstakes," plus songs from their usual chapter show package: "We Three," "Paper Doll" and "Mistakes."



The Contemporary A Cappella Society announced its winners in this year's CARA competition (Con-

temporary A Cappella Recording Awards). Not only did Society groups win all the barbershop categories, but *The Gas House Gang's* recent Christmas album took high honors in a category that is normally dominated by big-name, professional singing groups. (Not that you can tell by listening, but did you know that the most successful vocal-rock group of all, Rockapella, started out as a barbershop quartet at Brown University?)

- **BEST CHRISTMAS SONG:** The Gas House Gang, "Go Tell It On The Mountain" (Runner up: Rockapella, "Silver Bells")
- **BEST CHRISTMAS ALBUM:** Rockapella: *Christmas* (Tie for runner up: The Gas House Gang: *Some Children See Him*; GLAD: *Voices of Christmas*.)

Barbershop harmony winners were:

- **BEST BARBERSHOP ALBUM:** PLATINUM, *Be Our Guest* (Runner up: Michigan Jake, *For The Record*)
- **BEST BARBERSHOP SONG:** Michigan Jake, "I'm Beginning To See The Light" (Runner up: 12th Street Rag, "12th Street Rag")



Meet your new museum curator



Gina Radandt often jogged past Harmony Hall and wondered what went on inside the beautiful mansion. Now, as curator of the Society's museum, she's deep into parts of the archives and collection unfamiliar to many.

In just the first few weeks, she's already worked with the crew of The Learning Network as they filmed a segment for the documentary, "Bridge to One World," expected to air this fall. She's created an exhibit celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Schmitt Brothers championship that will travel to Nashville for the international convention. And, she's met with the Society Archives Committee as they set goals for the coming term.

Gina splits her time between the Society—working Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays—and the Kenosha Public Museum, where she is curator of collections. She earned a master's degree in history with a specialization in museum studies from U.W. Milwaukee. She interned extensively at the Milwaukee Public Museum, worked for the Butterfield's and Sotheby's auction houses, and as a tour guide in Scotland.

Now, she enjoys reading, collecting antique jewelry, jogging and golfing. And, she and her fiancé, Greg, are restoring an 1850s Victorian Italianate home. Talk about living history!



THE SOCIETY ARCHIVES COMMITTEE needs you. If you've got old barbershop recordings from 1923 and earlier, contact the Society Archives Committee. This busy group of fine looking men preserves all things barbershop—and they're getting closer to having every barbershop recording ever made. You can either donate the recordings or let them make a tape recording. Contact Jack Baird with quartet, record label, song title and date (if possible). 10445 S. Kostner Ave, Oak Lawn, IL 60453 or jackbaird@aol.com.

PBS special to feature barbershop

Film crews from the Teaching Learning Network have been shooting a story about barbershop harmony to air on the PBS series "Bridge to One World." The story will feature both SPEBSQSA and Sweet Adelines International. The Society segment was funded through a grant from Harmony Foundation.

The program will focus on the origins of barbershop harmony and its place in music today as practiced by members of the two organizations. The crew began its work at this year's the Midwinter convention, where they interviewed key Society leaders, got footage of our top five quartets, the seniors quartet champion, and a high school quartet champion.

In April, the TLN crew worked with Sweet Adelines to record their portion of the story. In May, TLN visited Harmony Hall to shoot archival material. The program is scheduled to air sometime in the fall of this year. A specific date has not yet been determined. Watch for announcements of the broadcast date.

What a Webcast!



Thanks to the underwriting of the Association of International Champions (AIC) and the expertise of the Society staff's über-geek, Scott Hoge, we have some impressive numbers:

- 38 hours of live Internet broadcast time during the Nashville convention
 - Broadcasts of the chorus and quartet competitions, Sing!, World Harmony, and AIC shows.
 - Unlike last year, enough bandwidth for everyone who wants to tune in on the Society's website.
- Thanks Scott and the AIC!

New Harmony Foundation guide can boost chapter income

Many chapters are looking for new sources of income. You might be well positioned to apply for a public grant or a local sponsorship. But how does one go about that?

Harmony Foundation has just published a new tool entitled: "Grant and Sponsorship Seeking Guidelines for Barbershoppers." You can find this 17-page booklet at spebsqsa.org/Docs/. This booklet gives the basics of grant research and preparation, and sponsorship preparation. It was assembled by Barbershopper Jack Greenfield, a successful grant writer in the Tampa, Florida Chapter and Gary Stamm, Executive Director of Harmony Foundation.



CONVENTIONS INTERNATIONAL

2001
SING/NASHVILLE
June 30-July 8

2002
PORTLAND
June 30-July 7

2003
MONTREAL
June 29-July 6

2004
LOUISVILLE
June 27-July 4

2005
SALT LAKE CITY
July 3-10

2006
INDIANAPOLIS
July 2-9

2007
DENVER
July 1-8

MIDWINTER

2002
RIVERSIDE, CALIF.
January 20-27

2003
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PLATINUM wows 'em in Paris

Represents Society and America in world music festival

— From Gary Lewis, tenor

This past March, PLATINUM was honored to appear in Paris, France. We were part of a world music festival sponsored by the Maison de Cultures du Monde, a nationally funded organization specializing in world cultures. To our knowledge, it was the first time barbershop quartet music had been performed in Paris. We were amazed at the Parisian's interest in our genre. The language barrier seemed to disappear as we performed for the appreciative audience.

One of the most memorable mo-

Oh, and another thing ...

At the close of the year 2000, Tony, Kevin, and I received a heavy-hearted phone call from Joe. After sharing a conference call, it was decided that PLATINUM would not book any shows beyond the July 2002 International in Portland. There are no philosophical differences and no personal conflicts. Joe expressed an interest in leaving the quartet to devote more time to his family and home life. With obvious understanding from us, he offered to help Tony, Kevin, and I find a suitable replacement. But how can one replace Joe Connelly? PLATINUM without Joe Connelly just would not be PLATINUM. The wise decision was to preserve the integrity of the original foursome.

We are looking forward to one more year of creating memorable experiences for ourselves, our audiences, and our fans. If you'd like to see PLATINUM before our retirement, please visit our web site at www.ptplatinum.com. Our complete show schedule is listed along with contact/ticket information.

ments of our weekend was watching two young children in the front row of our Saturday night performance. They really enjoyed the comedic aspects of our show package, and when we sang our closer, "Bye Bye Blues," the children waved bye-bye through the whole song. It is amazing how a simple American phrase like "bye-bye" can transcend national boundaries and cultural distinctions.

PLATINUM has enjoyed a terrific championship year. We've been all the way from Seattle to Paris, and everywhere in between. From the end of February to the middle of April, we completed a stretch of eight weekends in a row, including our visit to Paris. We've met some wonderful people, and created many special memories to last a lifetime.

Over the past two years, PLATINUM has averaged 28 show weekends per year. Although it has been difficult to be away from home, we are thankful to have been given the opportunity to share our love for this wonderful art form. Awesome Joe Connelly, the only three-time international quartet champion, has been fulfilling a performance schedule similar to that of PLATINUM's for the past 20 years. I am deeply honored to have been able to share the past few years singing with Joe. He is, in my opinion, the best lead there ever was, or ever will be.



THE MEMBERS OF PLATINUM only had time for limited sightseeing during their short stay in Paris—and the audiences at Maison des Culture du Monde certainly didn't get their fill before the quartet left them. Soon, we get to understand how the French felt ...



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David Leeder
Presentation judge, coach



Lay the groundwork for interpretation

To properly interpret a song, you must go beyond your feelings about the music and try to get into the audience's head and heart—interpretation is the care and feeding of the audience. What you feel isn't as important as what you can get the audience to feel. You must give information about the story and develop meaningful, natural transitions from one thought or emotion to another. Your focus is communication, on being the "humble servant of the music" and "the faithful messenger of the composer."

1. View the auditory and visual aspects of your performance as one and the same

When most groups talk about their "interpretation plan," they primarily discuss what the audience will hear. This is partly because we have traditionally called what is heard "interpretation" and what is seen "stage presence."

However, audiences don't see your performance that way: either what they see and hear makes for a great performance or it doesn't. You can't have strong interpretation but flat stage presence, or vice versa—you either sold the song to the audience or you didn't. Unless the visual and auditory elements are in place and in synch, your audience won't be satisfied. Therefore, as a performer, you must seamlessly blend these two elements into a powerful presentation.

This article primarily addresses the auditory aspect of interpretation; many times, however, this "interpretive plan" will create the stage presence needed to create a complete, satisfying performance.

2. Play close attention to song selection

The music you choose to sing will ultimately determine your personality with the audience. Choose songs that emphasize the strengths of your skill level and talents. There is no reward for effort in a train wreck. Choose wisely.

3. Is the song really "you?"

What do you wish to do with the song? That's a good question, but a better question is, "What do you want the song to do for the audience?" The song is a vehicle for you to convey some thoughts, ideas, emotions or shared moments. It might simply serve as an escape from daily cares for your audience. Have you tailored the song to your strengths and your message, or have you simply tried to perform it the way another quartet or chorus does it? (Attempt the latter at your own peril!) Does this song fit your

ensemble's personality? Does it reflect how you want the audience to remember you?

4. Choose a musical theme to sell the song

The musical theme is the principal *musical statement* of the song and arrangement. What are you trying to sell in a particular section: Lyrics? Rhythm? Melody? Harmony? Comedy? A medley? Or are you trying to sell a combination of themes, such as a lyric-driven verse with a rhythmic treatment of the chorus/refrain? You need to know which musical statement you're trying to sell, and you need to stick with it until the song calls for a change in theme. Just remember that too many changes can disrupt the audience's ability to follow your song. Don't try to go Rhythm-Lyric-Rhythm-Lyric in the first five measures!

5. Identify the emotional theme (what's it about?)

What will be communicated to the audience in emotional terms? What do you want the song to convey, or more important, what emotion do you want the audience to feel? Use a short, simple sentence: "This is a song about love." "This is a song about going home." "This song builds excitement." "This is about the love of one's mother." All would be super answers—but not if they all apply to the same song! Use the song's *single* theme as a filter for everything you do to interpret it.

6. Begin your interpretation at the end of the song

Answer this question: "At the end of the song, I want the audience to feel ____." Notice that the question was not, "How will I feel?" The illusion about how your ensemble feels is important, the audience's feeling at the end of the song is the focus. Seek the strongest emotion possible. "Nice" or "Okay" or "Feeling sorry for me" are not good answers. "Tremendous love for their mothers," "a deep yearning to go home," "to stand up and cheer," "a quiet, tender love," or "a deep sadness," "to march off to war for their country"—all would be great answers.

Now that you know what the end should look like, you can begin interpreting the rest of the song with purpose, design, and the intention to "serve the music."

You'll be a stronger performer if you plan carefully and are aware of the needs of the audience. When you focus on yourself, focus on being the messenger and giver of the music.

4 men, 5 cities, 1 moment of history

No virtual tags just yet, but these guys showed the tech world what's possible

Imagine using the Internet to sing with anybody in the world, anytime. Imagine virtual "tag party rooms," where you could meet old friends and sing with them right then, regardless of location.

That future drew a little closer last November, when four Barbershoppers participated in a demonstration of new technologies for Internet 2, the "next generation Internet" currently under development by a consortium of research institutions and the federal government.

Thank Bob Dixon, an Ohio State researcher who initiated and engineered the project. He approached Barbershopper Greg Economides, a member of the Bryan/College Station Chapter who works in Educational Broadcast Services at Texas A&M. Greg prepared *The Continentals* for a live performance—from four different cities and delivered to an audience in a fifth city. And it all happened in real-time, live, over the Internet.

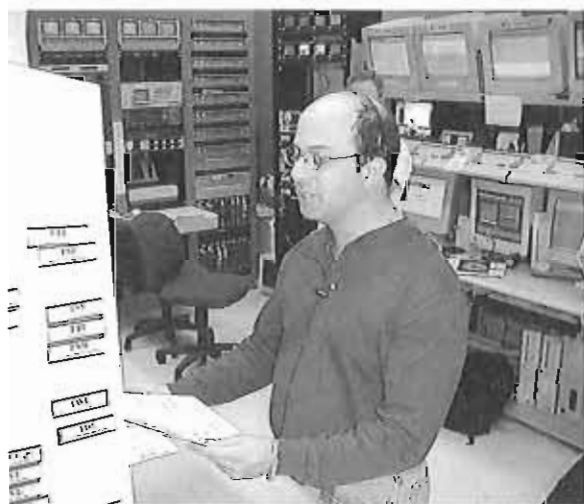
It was all part of Dixon's powerful demonstration at an Internet 2 conference in Atlanta last November. The challenge: to provide high-speed, real-time interactivity across huge distances. The perfect demonstration: the close synchronization of harmony and meter that is the heart of a barbershop quartet performance.

With "Beer Barrel Polka," "In The Good Old Summertime" and a customized "Internet 2" parody in hand and on learning tapes, the quartet rehearsed via the web a few days before the demonstration.

The result: magic.



Brian Lynch
E-business
strategist for
SPEBSQSA
BLynch@
spebsqsa.org



SINGING THOUSANDS OF MILES away from the other three parts, quartet "musical director" (and bass) Greg Economides helped use barbershop to give a glimpse into the power and speed of the next-generation Internet.



Meet The Continentals

Tenor: Brent Gerber, at North Dakota State University
Lead: Jo Knox, at the University of Alaska Fairbanks
Bari: Kent Bradshaw, at Syracuse University
Bass: Greg Economides, at Texas A&M University

The demonstration began with each singer singing a note, as his live video image was displayed separately on the overhead screen, reported Bob. "Then we put it all together in a quad screen, and you sang an absolutely beautiful chord that filled the entire hall. I heard people actually gasp in awe when the sound and video hit them at the same time.

"The crowd cheered on and on, far beyond what they did for any act there. I was mobbed by congratulators immediately thereafter. Many women came up and hugged me and said how much they loved the concert, and that barbershop quartets are the new Killer Application for Internet 2.

"Another person told me how incredible it was to actually have everyone on their feet singing the I2 song loudly and enthusiastically. These are mostly serious scientific and engineering people, who are not prone to sing in public. But you had them all so fired up that they just did it without reservation."

*Serious scientists
were so fired up that
they were on their
feet, loudly singing
the "I2" song.*

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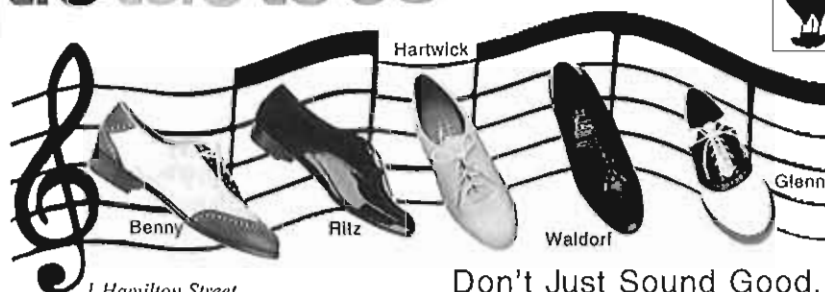
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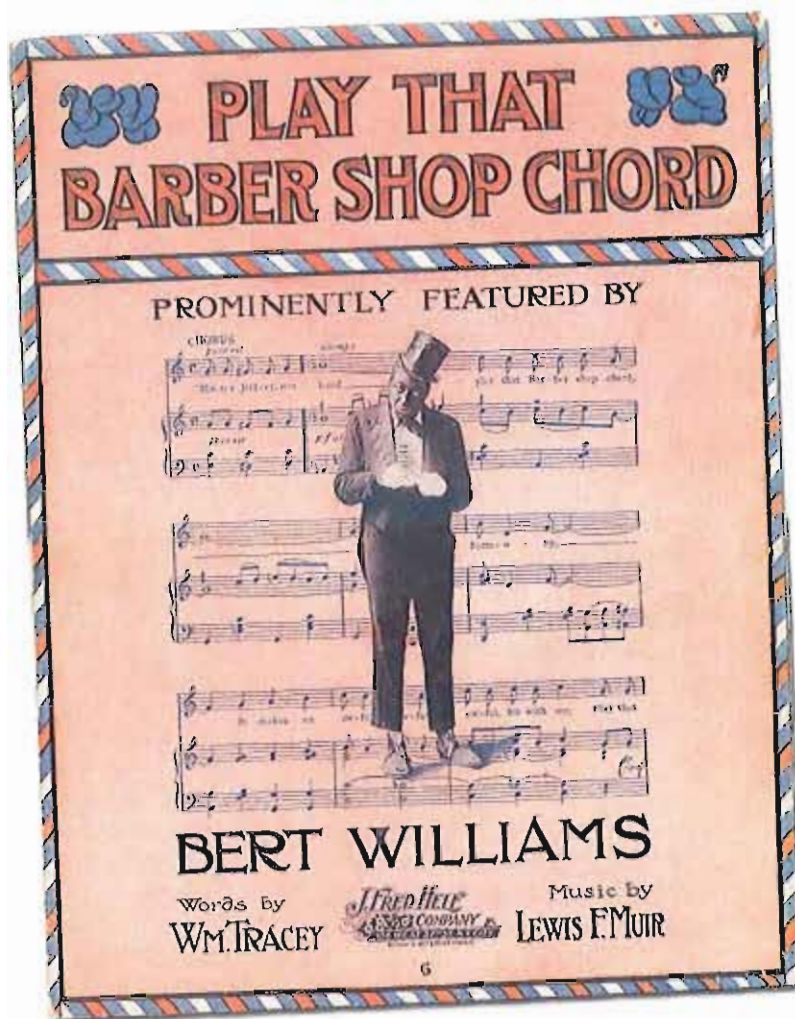
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This 1910 score had long been the earliest known musical use of the term "barber shop". (Note black minstrel performer Bert Williams on the cover.) Now the oldest reference dates to 1900—a black music critic's lamentations about black barbershoppers.



THE HISTORICAL Roots OF BARBERSHOP HARMONY

If you're a Barbershopper, the odds are good that a certain Norman Rockwell print is hanging on some wall in your house. You know the one I mean. First appearing on a 1936 *Saturday Evening Post* cover, the scene depicts four men, one with lather on his face, warbling a sentimental ballad: the quintessential barbershop quartet.

Barbershop quartets often are characterized as four dandies, perhaps bedecked with straw hats, striped vests and handlebar mustaches. These caricatures of the barbershop tradition are not only a quaint symbol of small-town Americana, but have some historical foundation. Barbershop music was indeed borne out of informal gatherings of amateur singers in such unpretentious settings as the local barber shop.

But modern scholarship is demonstrating with greater and greater authority that while the stereotype seems to have successfully retained the trappings of the early barbershop harmony tradition, it breaks down on one key point. If you visualized the characters described above as you were reading, you probably pictured them—like Rockwell did over sixty years ago—as white men. And therein lies barbershop music's greatest enigma: it is associated with and practiced today mostly by whites, yet it is primarily a product of the African-American culture.



Jim Henry
Music Ph.D. and
bass of The Gas
House Gang
(1993 quartet
champ) jim@
gashousegang.com

Historical evidence

The African-American origins theory is not new. Several of our early Society members and recent historians have made the assertion, or at least suggested an African-American influence upon barbershop harmony. But it was a non-Barbershopper, Lynn Abbott, who in the Fall 1992 issue of *American Music* published, "Play That Barber Shop Chord: A Case for the African-American Origin of Barbershop Harmony," presented the most thoroughly documented exploration into the roots of barbershop to appear up to that time.¹ In that writing, Abbott draws from rare turn-of-the-twentieth-century articles, passages from books long out of print, and reminiscences of early quartet singing by African-American musicians, including Jelly Roll Morton and Louis Armstrong, to argue that barbershop music is indeed a product of the African-American musical tradition.

Among Abbott's recreational quartets, W.C. Handy, for example, offers a memory that is quite telling of the racial origins of barbershop music. Before he became famous as a composer and band leader, Handy sang tenor in a pickup quartet who, he recalls, "often serenaded their sweethearts with love songs; the young white bloods overheard, and took to hiring them to serenade the white girls." The Mills Brothers learned to harmonize in their father's barber shop

The African-American origin theory, in a nutshell

From the evidence gathered by Lynn Abbot and other historians and other supporting evidence, we might glean the following plausible, albeit overly simplistic, scenario of the black origins of barbershop music.

1. Starting in the 1880s and 1890s, blacks harmonized recreationally the popular songs of the day as well as spirituals and folk songs, improvising harmonies according to long-standing African-American musical practice.
2. From these sessions arose certain idiosyncratic musical qualities that are the hallmarks of what we now consider the barbershop style.
3. The idiosyncrasies of the sound made it ripe for imitation by white minstrel performers, who used blackface, Negro dialect and musical inspirations to parody the black culture. It should be noted that black minstrel shows also included the unique musical style.
4. The sound became so popular that white professional quartets, often consisting of minstrel performers, brought the sound into the burgeoning recording studio scene. Black quartets, on the other hand, were rarely recorded, and when they were, their recordings were not given the mass distribution enjoyed by white artists. These white close-harmony recordings included the old minstrel songs, but also newly written songs that did not necessarily refer to stereotypes of African-American culture.
5. A hybrid form of the music arose, resulting from two main factors: (1) whites were singing it and infused it with some of their own traditions and (2) the limitations of the recording process at that time forced quartets to shed inherent vocal traits and affectations that would not reproduce well on the early recording equipment, or, perhaps, would not have been acceptable to the public. As a result, certain so-called "low-brow" elements of the black version of barbershop music were lost.
6. Due to the popularity of these recordings, people—especially those in the white communities—came to associate the peculiar close-harmony sound with the white quartets that recorded them, thus sealing the stereotype.

in Piqua, Ohio, and several well known black gospel quartets were founded in neighborhood barber shops, among them the New Orleans Humming Four, the Southern Stars and the Golden Gate Jubilee Quartette.

Early musicians associated barbershop music with blacks ...

Among Abbott's findings are specific early musical references that suggest that barbershop was once acknowledged as African-American music. Here's just a sampling of the findings:

- The illustration on the cover of Irving Berlin's 1912 composition, "When Johnson's Quartet Harmonize," features an African-American quartet.²
- Geoffrey O'Hara's attempt to accurately transcribe what he had heard sung by early African-American barbershop quartet singers resulted in the publication of "The Old Songs,"

which we still sing today as the theme song of SPEBSQSA. The first refrain of O'Hara's version proceeds on to "Massa's in de Cold, Cold Ground," complete with its reference to "the cornfield" and vocal imitations of farm animals and a banjo, all conventions of early black vocal music.

- The earliest white quartet recordings are rife with minstrel show conventions which included negro dialect and other parodies of the African-American culture, suggesting an African-American association with the music.

... and the earliest known reference to barbershop music is associated with black quartets

Finally, the earliest known references to the term "barbershop," as it refers to a particular chord or brand of harmony, link it with African-American society.

As early as 1900, an African-American commentator with the self-imposed moniker "Tom the Tattler" accuses barbershop quartet singers of "stunting the growth of 'legitimate,' musically literate black quartets in vaudeville."⁴ The 1910 song "Play That Barber Shop Chord," which before Abbott's discovery of the Tattler's commentary was considered the earliest reference to the term "barbershop," also associates the genre with African-American society.⁵

The song tells of a black piano player, "Mr. Jefferson Lord," who was given the plea by "a kinky-haired lady they called Chocolate Sadie." The fact that the barbershop chord in this case is not articulated by a quartet, but rather by a single pianist shows that by 1910 the flavor of barbershop harmony had already taken on a life of its own beyond the boundaries of its usual host.

It is unknown exactly when or why barbershop music became associated with whites. Abbott cites African-American author James Weldon Johnson who, in the introduction to his *Book of American Negro Spirituals*, published in 1925, offers a hint at how the association might have shifted:

*It may sound like an extravagant claim, but it is, nevertheless a fact that the "barber-shop chord" is the foundation of the close harmony method adopted by American musicians in making arrangements for male voices. ... "Barber-shop harmonies" gave a tremendous vogue to male quartet singing, first on the minstrel stage, then in vaudeville; and soon white young men, where four or more gathered together, tried themselves at "harmonizing."*⁶

There is additional support for the effluence of barbershop music from black neighborhoods into the white mainstream, as suggested by Johnson, in its parallel with other forms of African-American music. Ragtime, for example, was wrought by African-American musicians, whose syncopated rhythms and quirky harmonies (which, by the way, are the same as those found in barbershop music) became the backbone of the white-dominated Tin Pan Alley. More recently, musical genres such as rock-and-roll and country-and-western,

While many barbershop chord structures run counter to Western classical conventions, they're a natural part of African-American musical traditions.

though clearly rooted in the African-American musical tradition, are now commonly associated with whites.

Musical support for the "African-American origin" theory

Lynn Abbott's scholarship regarding barbershop music's roots is unparalleled and his arguments are utterly convincing. He limits his scope, however, to historical data and primary-source recollections, and chooses not to delve into the inherent musical qualities that demonstrate the ways in which barbershop music reflects the African-American musical tradition. In my recent doctoral dissertation, "The Origins of Barbershop Harmony," I address this important link.⁷ Using more than 250 transcriptions and recorded examples of early African-American and white quartets, I illustrate how the most fundamental elements of barbershop music are linked to established traditions of black music in general and African-American music in particular. The scope of this article allows me only to summarize my findings, focusing on the following musical characteristics: (1) call-and-response patterns, (2) rhythmic character and (3) harmony.

Call-and-response

The call and response pattern is one of the most fundamental characteristics of black music. Though it has many variations, call-and-response can most simply be defined as a type of responsorial song practice in which a leader sings a musical phrase which is either repeated or extended by a chorus of other voices. It is heard in spirituals, gospel, the blues, Cab Calloway's "Hi-De-Ho" songs and rap, to name a few genres.

The barbershop musical lexicon abounds with examples of African-American-based call-and-response technique. Indeed, some of the most recognized barbershop tunes such as "You're The Flower Of My Heart, Sweet Adeline," "Bill Grogan's Goat," and "Bright Was The Night" are made up almost entirely of call-and-response pat-

terns where each musical phrase is sung first by the lead and repeated by the other three parts.

The very first song to be sung at that fateful 1938 meeting in Tulsa that christened the SPEBSQSA was "Down Mobile," whose ending—at least as transcribed by Sigmund Spaeth in his 1940 book *Barbershop Ballads and How to Sing Them*⁸—is a classic example of call-and-response. The following year, in 1939, the *Bartlesville Barflies* would win our first "international" competition with a medley that included a call-and-response rendition of "By the Light of the Silvery Moon."

Rhythmic character

Upon listening to nearly any form of African-American music, sacred or secular, one is immediately drawn to its unrelenting regularity of the pulse. Above this basic pulse might be found any variety of uneven rhythmic patterns. Tilford Brooks explains that the element of rhythm in most black forms of music can be contrasted with that of music in the European concert tradition in that "the former makes use of uneven rhythm with a regular tempo while the latter employs even rhythm

with accelerandos, ritards, and different tempi."⁹ This metric sense is so ingrained in the music of the African Diaspora that it is stressed "even in the absence of actual instruments."¹⁰

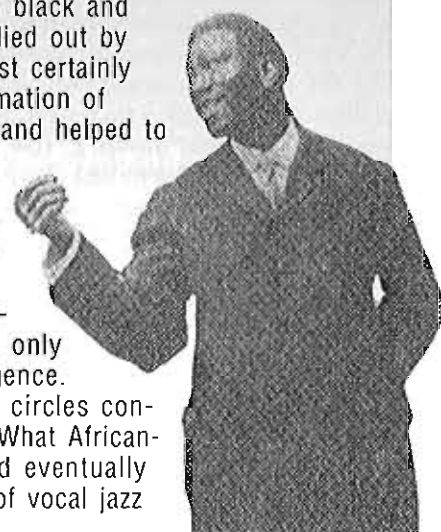
The African-American a cappella quartets devised a method

whereby the feeling of percussion and meter is created through vocal means. The technique employs a class of devices—called "rhythmic propellants" by recent barbershop theorists—which are designed to maintain the metric pulse through held melodic notes and rests. Like call-and-response patterns (which themselves can be considered types of rhythmic propellants) the rhythmic propellant is fundamental to the barbershop style, and most Barbershoppers will recognize the prevalence of these devices in the songs they have sung or listened to.

Perhaps the most common rhythmic propellant in barbershop music is the "echo." The echo is closely related to call-and-response pattern and usually occurs at the end of a musical phrase while the melody is holding a note. To keep the pulse going under the held note, one or more of the harmony parts

Why do so few African-Americans sing barbershop today?

The answer to this question may lie in the early history of SPEBSQSA. Barbershop music, both in black and white society, had almost completely died out by the late 1930s. Its demise would almost certainly have been continued if not for the formation of SPEBSQSA, which preserved the style and helped to spawn and sustain barbershop clubs first across the country and eventually world-wide. Because SPEBSQSA—citing the pre-civil rights norms of fraternal organizations such as the Shriners and the Elks—disallowed African-American membership until 1963, only whites were benefactors of this resurgence. Barbershop music in African-American circles continued its decline to virtual extinction. What African-American barbershop groups remained eventually shifted their interest to various forms of vocal jazz and gospel.



Even the first refrain in the publication, "The Old Songs," proceeds on to "Massa's In De Cold, Cold Ground," complete with references to conventions of early black vocal music.

will repeat the last word or words of that phrase.

One need only look at the phrase endings in the song, "Keep the Whole World Singing," to find clear examples of echo technique. Other rhythmic propellants clearly of black origin and commonly found in barbershop music include instances where one or more parts sing strict downbeats under syncopated rhythms; counter-melody or "patter" (take, for example, the lead patter that accompanies "Down Our Way"); "fills" (basses are especially popular choices to fill this role; every time you've heard "bum bum bum," "my honey," or "oh, lordy" you've experienced fills); "swipes" (where the chord changes or moves to a different voicing under a held melody note—recall, for instance, the phrase endings in "My Wild Irish Rose"); and the ever-popular "riddlies" (baritones are particularly adept at performing these little flourishes to color a held chord, and become quite agitated when you try to rush them through it).

Harmony & the tell-tale blue note

Perhaps the most characteristic element of black music, the one that pervades every one of its incarnations, is the so-called "blue note." Relative to the Western major scale, two blue notes are commonly identified: the lowered third and the lowered seventh notes of the scale.¹¹ The blue note is a testament to a culture's ability to retain musical traits over great spans of time and distance. It is an anomaly by Western standards. No form of Euro-centric music gave rise to it. It is this blue note and the scale that derives from it that offers the strongest argument in favor of the "African-American origin" theory of barbershop music.

In order to support this claim, a little technical background is required. I apologize in advance to the academic musicians who will no doubt cringe at the generalizations I am about to make for the sake of simplicity and space con-

siderations.

The barbershop seventh

The single most telling hallmark of the barbershop style is that curious sonority we call the "barbershop seventh" chord. The barbershop seventh chord is described as a "major-minor seventh" chord be-

cause it results from taking a simple, three-note *major* chord and adding to it a *minor* seventh above the root, i.e., the lowest note of the chord).¹² If we were to build seventh chords on every note of the major scale, the only one that would yield this sound would be the fifth note of the scale, sometimes called the dominant. For this reason, many musicians call this chord a "dominant seventh," and give it the Roman numeral shorthand V7.

In Western classical music, this dominant seventh chord anticipates a harmonic return back to the tonic chord (called Roman numeral I because it is built on the first note of the scale, the key note). We call this motion a "falling fifth" because the progression from the dominant to the tonic is down a perfect fifth. So in the key of C, the major-minor seventh chord built on the fifth note of the scale (G) will tend to lead back to C. (Go backward down the musical alphabet counting each letter: G-F-E-D-C—five total letters.) The major-minor seventh chord as heard in classical music is almost always used to suggest this dominant function.

In African-American music, however, we may hear the major-minor sound built on, and functioning as, any number of chords other than the dominant. A major-minor seventh chord built on the subdominant (i.e., the fourth note of the scale, Roman numeral IV), for example, is a common occurrence. The natural seventh of this particular major chord is a major seventh. Yet in African-American music one will often hear it sounded with a minor seventh, thus giving it a major-minor or

"dominant" sound. The major-minor seventh chord in this instance, however, is clearly not conceived as a dominant seventh chord because it does not progress in the falling fifth manner discussed above. Rather, it moves as it would if it were a simple version of IV.

Three distinctly African-American traditions merge to seal the deal

So how did above anomaly come about? It is the result of three African-American musical traditions all coming together: (1) an approach to music that is primarily horizontal rather than vertical, (2) a particular penchant for improvisation and (3) the blues scale. Let's use the chorus of "Shine On Me" (in the key of C for the sake of simplicity) to illustrate how it works:

1. The implied chord on the word "shine" in the second phrase (after the lead sings "in the mornin'") is a IV (subdominant) chord. It would classically be written as a simple major chord (F-A-C) without a seventh, and proceed to the V (or V7) chord (G-B-D-[F]). In the case of this song we do find the IV chord moving to the V chord two words later on the word "me."

2. If a quartet were singing this with a somewhat classical flavor, the tenor and bass probably would sing in octaves on the root of the chord (which, you'll recall, is built on the fourth scale degree, F). A singer in the African-Ameri-



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can quartet tradition, however, would be the thinking of his part not only in terms of how it stacks up against the other parts, but as a line unto itself. The improviser in him would add little flourishes ("tiddlies," if you prefer) that would no doubt incorporate blue notes. In this instance, he would likely pass down from the fourth-scale-degree root (F) through the blue (flatted) third (E-flat) of the scale.

3. The resultant F-A-C-Eb quality will sound exactly like a major-minor seventh chord. Since it was not conceived as a dominant chord, however, but simply an improvisation upon a IV chord, it will proceed onto the V as originally intended, not down a fifth as common practice would dictate. Thus in terms of function, this particular F major-minor seventh is not really a major-minor seventh at all. It is a simple IV chord with the lowered scale degree "three" from the African-American blues scale added to it. The influence of the African-American musical tradition to this basic barbershop idiom is unmistakable and argues forcefully in favor of the "African-American Origin" theory.

What's next?

While barbershop has been an ever-changing musical art form, certain hallmarks of the style seem to have remained implacable for well over a century. Call-and-response patterns, rhythmic propellants and "barbershop seventh" chords are among the many distinctive features of the barbershop tradition that, when considered alongside the entirety of found historical evidence, root the genre in the African-American musical tradition. The road that leads back to barbershop, however, is still fraught with holes that need to be filled. Thus, while the performer in me looks excitedly to what our 21st century singers will add to barbershop's future, the historian in me prays for more scholars who will dedicate themselves to its rich and enigmatic past.

Notes

1. Lynn Abbott, "Play That Barber Shop Chord: A Case for the African-American Origin of Barbershop Harmony," (*American Music*, 10 [Fall 1992], pp. 289-326). Wilbur Sparks review of the Abbott's article is found in the January/February 1994 edition of *The Harmonizer*.
2. Irving Berlin, "When Johnson's Quarter

Harmonize" (New York: Waterson, Berlin & Snyder Co., 1912).

3. Geoffrey O'Hara, "A Little Close Harmony" (Boston: Boston Music Co., 1921).
4. On page 308 of his article, Abbott includes the following quotation from "Tom the Tattler," Indianapolis *Freeman*, December 8, 1900. It is valuable not only as the first known reference to the term, but also in the insights it offers regarding the musical constituents of early barbershop harmony:

A noticeable advancement along the lines of the profession is the passing of the barber shop quartette with its barber shop harmony. It doesn't take much of an effort of memory to recall the time when all quartettes sang their own self-made harmonies, with their oft-recurring "minors," diminished sevenths and other embellishments. This barber shop harmony, although pleasing to the average ear, and not altogether displeasing to the cultivated ear, is nothing more or less than a musical slang. It violates—at times ruthlessly—the exacting rules and properties of music. All forms, phrases and progressions of music go down before it. What does [sic] the barber shop exponents of harmony care for such delicacies as the forbidden progressions of perfect fifths and octaves? What do they care about chord progression in its correct form? Their chief aim is to so twist and distort a melody that it can be expressed in so-called "minors" and diminished chords. The melody is literally made to fit their small stock of slang-chords, instead of the chords being built around the melody.

5. Lewis F. Muir and William Tracey, "Play That Barber Shop Chord" (New York: J. Fred Helf Company, 1910). Abbott discusses the song on page 312 of his article.
6. This quotation, found on page 299 of Abbott's article, is from James Weldon Johnson and J. Rosamond Johnson, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals* (New York: Viking Press, 1925), 36.
7. Completed at Washington University in St. Louis in May 2000; the complete title is *The Origins of Barbershop Harmony: A Study of Barbershop's Musical Link to Other African-American Musics as Evidenced Through Recordings and Arrangements of Early Black and White Quartets*.
8. Sigmund Spaeth, *Barber Shop Ballads and How to Sing Them* (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1940).
9. Tilford Brooks, *America's Black Musical Heritage* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1984).
10. Richard A. Waterman, "African Influence on the Music of the Americas." In Sol Tax (Ed.), *Acculturation in the Americas* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952), 216.
11. It is important to keep in mind that the degree to which these pitches are bent is not absolute, but may fall anywhere within a half step.
12. If you play every other white key on the piano starting on G and ending on the F above it (to the right of it) you will hear a major-minor seventh chord.

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"Easy as 1-2-3" follow-up

Chapter growth: It's *not* about you

How did your chapter do during last fall's "Easy as 1-2-3" recruitment campaign? If your chapter was like many others, you simply held a special "guest night" and now your chapter is bigger and stronger than ever, right?

Didn't think so.

If the point of 1-2-3 didn't sink in the first time, here it is again: Do *something*. Do *anything*. If you can't come up with something that really attracts new members, we have a whole raft of *proven* recruiting ideas that have worked for other chapters. Society and district membership experts were and are still ready to help you implement your plan.

I'm not one of Kenosha's recruiting experts, but I know the guys who are—and I know some really sharp district experts, too—and you ought to be kicking yourself if your chapter passed on their expertise and settled for the "zero growth" status quo. Yes, "guest night" is technically a recruitment method, assuming you've bothered to learn how to do that right. If not, perhaps your guests often feel something like this:

Guest: Wow, that's great music you guys were singing ...

Host: Well, while we're taking a break, let me introduce you to the guys. Over here is—

Member 1: —Ah, fresh meat!

Guest: Hi, my name is—

Member 1: You sound like a tenor! We need more tenors to boost our Singing scores at District ...

Guest: Your what? ... Anyway, my name is—

Member 2: Did I hear 'tenor'? Ooh, do you think you can learn "Smile" by next week?

Guest: —Bob. And sorry, but next week is my wedding anniversary, so—

Member 1: And tonight's my 40th anniversary, and look where I am! You're not one of those hen-pecked types, are you?

Guest: No, I'm quite—

Member 2: Good! I'll get your learning tapes and sheet music.

Member 1: And I'm the costume guy. Got your checkbook?

Guest: Look, I was just hoping to sing a bit and maybe learn a few—

Host: Hold that thought! Time to get back on the risers!

Okay, so maybe this exaggerates what goes on, but that's pretty close to how some guests feel: wanted but overwhelmed. Joining a chapter is like getting on a moving train, and there's a steep learning curve and a lot of unfamiliar practices and concepts. No, you don't want to leave anyone in the dark about what's involved, but consider this: Guests first need to *want* to jump on your moving train. Remember, many of the things that motivate us as members can actually turn off the uninitiated.



SEE THE WHITE SHIRTS? They're guests singing on Langley, B.C.'s Christmas show. Over a dozen of them have since joined the chapter.

If your recruiting efforts have been largely unfruitful, let's look at your motives: You're inviting guys because you want to build your chapter, you want people to be as excited about the hobby as you are, so you want to show guests what you do every week ...

Aha! There's one problem: you *You YOU!* You're building a recruiting program around *your* needs, whereas successful programs are designed around *his* needs. Let's look at three recent successes.

Give guests a chance to love the music and the hobby

By simply following a plan outlined in Society resources, the Langley, British Columbia Chapter roped in more than a dozen new members, with the promise to gain many more in the future.

The planning began in the summer. As recommended, the chapter developed a brochure, organized learning tapes, ordered music and set a goal of having 100 men in their Christmas Chorus. The campaign offered a no-cost, no long-term commitment and a chance for men in the community to perform in a concert after five weeks of rehearsing.

The participants were told that the proceeds of the concert would go to help underprivileged families and children in the community. This charitable aspect made it easy for chapter members to approach potential singers, and the word quickly spread—singers came from other choral groups just to help out.

Before this event, the chorus averaged 45 men at a chapter rehearsal. The first night of the Christ-



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Many of the things that motivate us as members can actually turn off the uninitiated

mas practice saw 107 men in the rehearsal hall! This continued for the five weeks, with some dropping out but others coming in their place. Naturally, once they heard the wonderful harmonies, several decided to stay on. Other men said now that they knew about Barbershop, they would return at a future date. Eleven of those men joined the chapter by March, while several others seriously considered joining.

That isn't all. The concert also involved a local high school choral group, a children's choir, as well as other local talent such as a Celtic group and an award-winning ukulele ensemble. The young men in the high school music program were so enthusiastic about the barbershop sound that three 16-year-olds immediately joined the chapter, and two of their friends joined shortly thereafter. The chapter can't wait to assemble another Christmas choir this year.

The Christmas Chorus is also a great example of Tip #3.

— Courtesy of Danny Tryon at dtryon@sprint.ca

Match the method to your chapter's strengths

No official word on the number of members who've joined, but nonetheless, Cleveland's West Suburban chapter pulled off nothing less than a publicity coup. They hosted a well-publicized barbershop "March Madness" competition during the same two weekends as NCAA basketball "March Madness." Quartets were paired against each other in a public setting, judged by non-Barbershoppers, and the winner moved to the next round.

Frank Koenig, membership chairman of the Tower City Chorus, came up with the idea and found that a local shopping mall was delighted to host the competition. And why wouldn't they? The mall staff knew that people loved competition, they loved music, and the event piggybacked nicely on the NCAA's marketing blitz.

The mall staff created publicity signs in the mall and a huge quarter competition board that listed the quartet pairings. A local radio station made daily

announcements of the competition.

The first round of competition was held on March 24, with hundreds of enthusiastic spectators. The sounds of chords ringing drew more people, and soon the whole concourse was filled with cheering fans. The mall publicity manager and a writer from the local newspaper served as judges. A local TV station provided spot coverage.

The finals were held on March 31, with **Final Edition** from the West Suburban Chapter vs. **Catfish Bend**, a college quartet from Bowling Green State University. The West Suburban chapter performed while the judges decided the winner: Catfish Bend.

Afterward, a number of quartets found a corner to sing to their new fans. Parents could be seen holding young children by the hands, their children's eyes wide and mouths hung open, listening to a quartet perform. At both events, literature was passed out, including promotions for upcoming annual shows and membership information.

Not every chapter can pull off such an event. It takes a good PR man to get the ball rolling, a good emcee to pull off the event, and a sympathetic PR partner like the one at the mall. More important, it needs to be done in areas where there are enough good quartets to be entertaining to the mass public. (Each of the eight competing quartets was considered solid by Society standards.)

March Madness is also a great example of Tip #3.

— Courtesy of Mike Vislosky at MVISTA@aol.com.

Package the "product" in terms already familiar to outsiders

Simply offer a guy who "sings in the shower" an absolutely free opportunity to learn to sing in the barbershop style, and he will give it a try. That's the philosophy behind the successful rebuilding effort of the Buffalo chapter, with

36 new members and still counting.

Imagine running a newspaper ad asking who would like "membership in the Barbershop Harmony Society." No one would know what you were talking about. But advertise

"free barbershop singing lessons," and there's an ad people will understand.

A few years ago, Buffalo's membership had dwindled from 100 to a "struggling" handful. Duane Crawford, Sal Sciandra and Will Ceier decided to try a new approach they hoped would save the chapter.

Here's how it works: Potential members attend one evening class per week, held in conjunction with regular weekly chorus rehearsal so they can mingle and sing tags with chapter members during breaks and after class. A diploma is presented to the student, and he gets to sing in a quartet with the members. He is invited to join or continue to attend weekly rehearsals. At no time is he pressured into joining the chapter. He usually asks about joining.

The idea is to help potential members acquire basic skills and confidence before they hit the risers, and it seems to have worked. In five years, 64 men have attended 14 classes. Thirty-six joined the chapter and 31 are still active. Seven or eight of these newer members have held or now hold offices ranging from board membership to president. This success has prompted the Seneca Land District to ask class instructor Duane Crawford to teach this program to chapter membership VPs at their "Pow Wow" educational weekend this month.

Singing lessons are also a great example of Tips 1 and 2.

Courtesy of Bob Tiffany at bobtiffany@yahoo.com.

Bottom line

Once you see recruitment from the outsider's perspective, the picture gets much clearer. Do something! Start by visiting www.spcbsqsa.org/membership.

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See whose life you changed this year

What is done with the money your chapter contributes to the Harmony Foundation General Fund? The generic answer: Most of it funds grants for SPEBSQSA Charitable Mission projects, which preserve our musical legacy through support of vocal music education in our schools and communities. It also funds the six Harmony Explosion Camps across the Society.

Below is an example of the *real* answer to why so many of you contribute so generously. The following is a letter from an elementary school music teacher in Michigan, who received a Harmony Foundation grant to help build a vocal music program in the under-funded schools where she teaches.

"I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for providing Hamtramck's elementary schools with the grant. You cannot possibly imagine how you have brightened the lives of 1,500 children. Music has brought happiness, laughter, confidence, pride (both student and parental) and a mode of self-expression to their world.

"It was amazing to see how much the children retained—especially since so many of them come from deprived backgrounds or are new immigrants who do not even speak English. Through your grant, I was able to purchase many CDs that opened the doors to a world of knowledge for the students, which I never could have afforded to do on my own.



THANKS TO YOU and your donations to Harmony Foundation, thousands of children now have music in their lives. Without you, many schools would scarcely have a music program.

"When I stated in this position three years ago, absolutely nothing in terms of materials existed, because, after the 1960s, vocal music didn't exist in Hamtramck in the elementary schools due to funding. So, needless to say, without your help I would still be piecing things together and limiting my spending to strictly the absolute necessities, because everything was coming out of my personal income. Fortunately, when I began teaching vocal music, I had some things donated by retired school teachers, and some things I had from my personal library and collections.

"Once again, thank you. I think that I have been able to show the entire community from board members and superintendents, to parents, principals and teachers, that music has a definite place in the schools. I honestly don't know if I could have succeeded without your help. I have been notified that I will be given a room of my own at one of the schools for the start of the 2001-02 school year, and I think that it has a lot to do with the success of the program. Everyone has been pleasantly surprised, but what is most important is that the children love what we do in music class."

Sincerely,
Sylvia Karpinsky



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The Coles County (Illinois) Chorus finds one way to fulfill that pledge by taking part in the annual Lenten concert hosted each year in a different area church. Free-will offerings collected are used for local needs identified by each community's ministerial association. The one-hour performance traces the life

and resurrection of Christ with sacred music sung by the chorus, quartets and soloists. This

year, the group's sixth, wives, daughters and female friends were invited to join in the concert held at Wesley United Methodist Church in Charleston, Ill.



"IT'S THE FIRST time we've ever received a donation like this!" gushed Dawn Mark, director of the Marksmen Chorus from Jackson Elementary, in Batavia, New York. The Holland Land Harmonizers Chorus donate a portion from their annual show proceeds every year. Their donation gave the boys' chorus new music and gave all a chance to sing holiday songs together.



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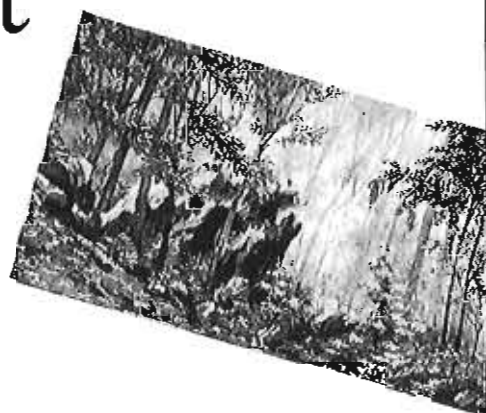
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Perhaps Florida's second most famous dynasty

Florida must be some sort of staging ground for family dynasties. No, this has nothing to do with November's drama involving a governor and a president named Bush. We're talking about that other Florida dynasty—you know, the Delaney and Sobolewski one?





Okay, maybe you don't know. Here's the scoop: Last October, the Sunshine District crowned a new champion from Jacksonville: **Endeavor**. (Trey Allen, Sean Milligan, Ken Delaney and Kenny Sobolewski.)

Not to be outdone, this April, a Jacksonville Sweet Adeline quartet called **Escapade** became Region 9's quartet champion. (Paula Bartie, Linda LiBrandi, Faye Delaney, and Jan Sobolewski.)

Notice any similarities? (Okay, notice any similarities *besides* the fact that both groups have a penchant for eight-letter, three-syllable quartet names that begins with "E"?) Check out the surnames: Faye Delaney and Jan Sobolewski are mothers of Ken and Kenny respectively. In addition, both mother-son pairs sing the same voice part in their respective quartets—the Delaney's on baritone and the Sobolewski's on bass.

As far as anyone knows, this is the first time in



TOP: Ken Delaney , Trey Allen , Sean Milligan , and Kenny Sobolewski 

BOTTOM: Faye Delaney , Paula Bartie , Linda LiBrandi , and Jan Sobolewski 

barbershop history there have been *two* mothers and *two* sons in reigning championship quartets.

Both quartets will be competing in their respective international competitions. Endeavor competes in July in Nashville and Escapade will compete in Portland in October.

Board member discovers another useful application for barbershop

On the way home from a board meeting in Kenosha, I was just south of downtown Chicago when I heard a siren and saw the flashing lights of one of the area's finest.

"How are you this morning, sir?"

I replied "Great, it's a beautiful morning."

He said "It is a great morning for a drive, but you were going 67 in a 55 mph zone. May I see your license?" I complied.

"Where are you traveling from?"

I replied, "Kenosha, Wisconsin."

"Great wrestling town," was his quick reply.

"Also a great barbershop quartet town," I replied, "and the headquarters for the Barbershop Harmony Society is there. I'm on my way home from a board meeting."

"Do you sing?" he asked. "Yes, I do," was my reply.

"How would you like to get out of this ticket?" A lot of thoughts went through my head at that moment. "Would you like to get out of this ticket?" he repeated.



"Yes." (No idea of what was coming.)

"If you'll sing a song for me right now, I won't write you a ticket. I'm serious."

When it sunk in, I said "My Wild Irish Rose" is a song Barbershoppers love to sing. And I sang!

I sang with gusto, with dynamics, with inflection, and certainly "from the heart." He joined in on the last phrase.

We kidded about the lyrics, and he even sang a bit of another song to me. He then said, "Have a great day, Mr. Lewis. Drive carefully—and slower—and keep singing." I thanked him, again "from the heart."

I resumed my journey home—but within the speed limit. A few miles further, I noticed the same officer had a van pulled over. I smiled and thought, "I wonder if the driver of the van is a singer ..."

—by—

Roger Lewis, Society executive vice president,
law-abiding citizen



AMERICA'S MOST RECOGNIZED GOVERNOR, Minnesota's Jesse Ventura, did an impressive Veteran's Day gig with the Great Northern Union chorus during half-time of a November 19 Vikings game. The governor did a voice-over tribute during the second verse of chorus's performance of "America The Beautiful". In front of the chorus, an Air Force drill team twirled its guns, and behind them an ROTC chapter unfurled a 50-yard flag. During the final "America, America," the governor removed his Navy Seal hat and placed it over his heart.

It was a stunning presentation, and well over 50,000 fans drowned out the final chords with enthusiastic cheers—just like they'd done before the game, when the chorus performed the national anthem.

Something to shout about in Oregon

How would you judge the presentation of barbershop in an advertisement like this? Why don't you tell the barbershop Presentation judge—Reid Stewart—who created the ad? As for *The Harmonizer* staff, we think it's a great ad on several levels. (And Reed Sampson, the candidate Singing judge among us, was even willing to overlook the facial tension and unsquared shoulders that indicate poor singing form.)

The ad is more than funny—in one fell swoop it grabs the reader by the collar and says "Notice Me!", reaches across demographic boundaries, shatters stereotypes about the style, and tells the reader, "Come to our show and you're going to have fun."

The concert got quite a turn-out, although the Senate-aires were hoping for an even bigger audience in upstate Portland this June. The chorus was on the short list to perform the national anthem during the NBA playoffs—after all, they'd really wowed the same crowd earlier this year (below) in an arena that knows something about production value. But as fate would have it, the Trailblazers home playoff appearances totaled (ahem) one this year, so the opportunity never materialized. But you can bet our Salem brothers will be invited back next year faster than you can say, "Technical on Wallace!"

*Saturday, June 2nd
Willamette University
Smith Auditorium
7:30 PM*

The SALEM SENATE-aires
*under the direction of Steve Morin,
present their 30th annual concert featuring:*

THE SENSATIONS
from Louisville, KY (former international champions)

Sold Out
2001 Evergreen District Champion quartet

*Don't Pull the Conspiracy
outrageous comedy*

*Rated among the top ten male choruses in the world, this group of
will use the proceeds of this performance to assist them
by to compete in the International Championships on
July 4th, 2001 in Nashville, TN*

*Seats (\$12, \$15) will be available at the door or by calling
1-800-939-5669*



A non-singer in the Society? It's not such a strange idea after all



In early 1997, I was diagnosed with a problem in my left ear called *hyperacusis*. When I sang, spoke too loudly or stayed in a loud area,

I experienced shooting pains that would last up to an hour.

It was difficult to give up singing—an activity that had been a big part of my life since I was a small child. I was an active member in the Des Moines Chapter (as bulletin editor) and chorus (holding my own in the bass section). Also, I had sung in church choirs under my wife's direction since 1969. Yet wanting to be involved in barbershopping and church, I had to do something to fill the void.

Church was the easy part—I began to run the sound system. I filled the hole in barbershopping more gradually. At that time, I edited the Des Moines Chapter monthly bulletin. A few months later, I was asked to edit the Central State District *Serenade*, a bimonthly publication. The following year, I was asked to edit the *PROBEMoter*, the publication for PR officers and bulletin editors. I also continued to teach district COTS classes for bulletin editors.

Despite not singing at district conventions, I got to attend all of the contests, and as editor and photographer, I was assigned the front row, center seat. What a deal—the best seat in the house!

Even if you have to give up singing, you can still stay in the hobby. Editing is not the only job that a non-singer could do; whether a chapter or district officer, committee chairman or member, every man has talents that are beneficial to others.

Stay involved, share your expertise, enjoy the quartet and chorus contests—promote barbershopping. Your life will be more fulfilling and other Barbershoppers will thank you for being a part of their lives.

—John W. Petterson



PHOTO BY BILLY GIBSON, THE KOKOMO PERSPECTIVE

his hands down “best national anthem” in a recent column listing the “best” in high school basketball. Hockney's comments? “I love the way they start with a snippet of ‘On the Banks of the Wabash,’ then go into the ‘Star Spangled Banner.’ They harmonize better than any that I have heard. When I see someone walk into a gym with a red bowtie and matching suspenders, I know we are in for a treat.”

SIMPLY THE BEST. Ever really listen to the singing of the national anthem before sporting events? Well, Dean Hockney, veteran and sports editor for the *The Kokomo (Indiana) Perspective*, does. And it was none other than a barbershop quartet – The Men of Note – who won

FIFTY (50!) YEAR MEMBERS

Men who reached 50 years of Society membership between July 1, 2000 and June 30, 2001.

Kruse, Dean Cedar Rapids, IA	Rohal, John Rootstown, OH	Crawford, Willis Midlothian, VA	Cokeroff, Gene Miami, FL
Dohrer, Harold Elk Grove, IL	Steurer Sr, Paul Akron, OH	Gramley, William Falmouth, ME	Mensinger, Russell Camanche, IA
Barnes, Ken Weslaco, TX	Schell, Gustav Columbus, OH	Lenz, Donald Drexel Hill, PA	Brennan, David New Market, AL
Adolfson, Larry Bellevue, WA	Nixon, Rodney Amherst, OH	Olson, George Morris Plains, NJ	Kidder, Don Vacaville, CA
McDonald, Robert Tempe, AZ	Stockhaus, Glenn Willoughby Hills, OH	Ritzel, Charles Baltimore, MD	Gibson, John Milwaukee, WI
Swezey, Mike Hayward, CA	Tinianow, Dr. Lewis Trotwood, OH	Seay III, Robert Baltimore, MD	Steel, Thomas Martinsburg, WV
Grant, Warren Oceanside, CA	Strahl, Russ Brandon, MB	Kelly Jr, John Hatboro, PA	Jeffers, Ernest Sequim, WA
Larson, William San Diego, CA	Wolf, Raymond Green Bay, WI	Brooks, David Bedford, NH	Fields, Matt Kingston, PA
Steitz, Leevengoio Oak Hills, CA	Ellingham, Leroy Kenosha, WI	Williams, James Shelburne, MA	Webb, David Charles Town, WV
Strange, Buford Apple Valley, CA	Domack, Julian Madison, WI	Flom, Donald Scotia, NY	King, Fred Baltimore, MD
Wilke, Robert Goleta, CA	Van Tassel, Glenn Sarasota, FL	Lanza, Frank Warwick, RI	Dunning, Robert Lynn, MA
Morgan, Arthur Buena Park, CA	Davenport, Alan Detroit, MI	Hood, Keith Gromley, ON	Mays, Harry Brampton, ON
Herman, Shelley Burbank, CA	Spidy, George Palmetto, FL	Kelly, Jack Toronto, ON	Stitt, Charles Bath, NY
Allen, John Buffalo Grove, IL	Sabin, Arthur Falls Church, VA	Pember, Frank Scarborough, ON	Johnson, Charles Vero Beach, FL
Isaacson, Robert Arlington Hts, IL	Doster, Robert Baltimore, MD	Crisp, Edward Dorchester, ON	Ross, Ford Davie, FL
St Denis, Denis Mt Prospect, IL	Dove, Arthur Whiting, NJ	Down, Elmer Oshawa, ON	Harper, Bill Ontario, CA
Darby, Richard Winona, MN	Magee, Safford Audubon, NJ	Collins, Plummer Warren, PA	Dunnnett, William Cincinnati, OH
McDonough, Jerry Peoria, IL	Oyler, Jack Duncansville, PA	Turner, Ernest Shreveport, LA	Bradbury, William St Catharines, ON
Feezor, Don Buffalo Grove, IL	Pantelich, Michael Lebanon, PA	Lipford, Sonny Fort Worth, TX	Watts, Paul La Grange Pk, IL
Hines, Kenneth Rock Falls, IL	Walker, Kenneth Reading, PA	Driggers, Cecil Daytona Beach, FL	

SWIPES 'N' SWAPS

Classified ad bargains for Barbershoppers, published as a service to readers—all copy subject to editorial approval. Rate: \$25 per column inch.

DIRECTORS WANTED

Wanted: Director for Ridgewood, NJ Chapter The Cavaliers of Harmony. Won 2000 small chorus division contest. Meet Monday evenings in Paramus. 30 men in attendance regularly. Call Bob Kevis 201-440-8585 x757 (day) or 201-387-0615 (Evenings).

Pittsburgh North Hills Chapter, an established 50-man chorus, actively singing in the community, in competition, and in annual shows since 1963. Present director wishes to retire and turn over well-trained chorus to capable

barbershop leader. Contact: Paul McDunn at 412-486-2149 or pgmcdunn@aol.com.

Director needed for a chapter of 70-80 members in beautiful retirement area of Naples, Fla. Partial year assistance during winter months will be considered. Contact Tom Harlow: 800-423-2962.

Three antique barber chairs: 1 from 1840, wood, pre-hydraulic, separate foot rests. 1895 Koch Columbia one of first wood hydraulic; wood top, and porcelain bottom. Set of 2 1930 Koken chairs. Call Evan 305-632-4008

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THE TAG

Joe Liles, Tagmaster

Mac was a small man who wrote big tags

This month I honor a man who left a rich legacy of singable arrangements and educational materials. Those who knew him have memories of him teaching us tags and how intent and driven he was to help quartets sing better.

Malcolm (Mac) L. Huff (1930-1995) was a Music Services assistant for our Society from 1969 to 1978. He'd previously directed the Evansville, Indiana, chorus for 15 years and sang bass with the **Funtastic Four**, 1961 Cardinal District Champion. He was a judge in the Arrangement category, taught voice, coached, wrote songs and tags and created a lot of great arrangements. He left his work with the Society in 1978 and moved to San Antonio where he

directed the **San Antonio Chordsmen** for several years.

Every time you sing the Barber Polecat song, "Sweet And Lovely," you are singing a Mac Huff arrangement. He arranged Frank Marzocco's beautiful song, "Hear That Swanee River Cry" and collaborated with Norm Storks on "Little Girl," and "Strollin' Down Harmony Lane." Many of you have sung his fun tag, "I Love To Sing 'Em." I started to put that very tag into this very issue, until I spoke with his widow, Jo Anne, who still lives in San Antonio. She said her very favorite Mac Huff tag is "The Joy Of Life."

It was written for her, as were a number of his tags—including "My Jo Anne." You'll enjoy this one, I'm sure.



THE JOY OF LIFE

Tenor Lead

Bari Bass

1 The joy of life — is be - ing in love, is

2

3

4

5 be - ing in love — with you, is be - ing in

6

7

8

9

10 love, in love with you.

11

12

13

14

love, in love with you, in love with you.

love, you.

Written by Mack Huff, 1974

*A page from
our scrapbook...*

What a thrill to be able to host the NIGHTINGALES, our young friends from Russia, at the International Convention in Nashville. Getting to know them has been one of the great blessings of our lives. Added bonus: They're shorter than US!!



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date _____		membership number (if applicable) _____		chapter name (if applicable) _____	
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second guest name _____			second guest nickname for badge _____		
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card account # _____		expiration date (MM/YY) _____			

☐ Check here if any physical needs require special accommodation for you to fully participate in the convention; convention staff will contact you to make arrangements.

Registration package includes a convention badge, reserved seating for Friday and Saturday Night shows, Saturday night Allerglow, and admission to the Seniors Quartet Contest. registrations @ \$50 \$ _____

Mail with payment (checks: payable to SPEBSQSA) to: SPEBSQSA, 6315 Harmony Lane, Kenosha, WI 53143-5199. If you register for more than one person, please attach *complete* information for each person on a separate sheet. A housing application and information regarding events and tours will be mailed to you when you register. All show and tour tickets may be picked up at the convention registration area. When you receive confirmation, please keep it as your receipt. **Registrations may be transferred to another person, but they are NOT refundable. No phone orders, please.**

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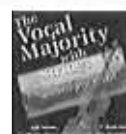
"VOICES" - 84-min.
documentary @ \$20



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Vocal Majority
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ACOUSTIX
"New Science of Sound"



Vocal Majority
"How Sweet The Sound"



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