

November/December 2015

THE HARMONIZER

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE BARBERSHOP HARMONY SOCIETY

TWO BARBERSHOPPERS

TRACY AND MATTHEW JOIN A CAPPELLA'S BIGGEST CONCERT EXPERIENCE

WHAT
DID
THEY
LEARN
FROM
BARBER
SHOP?

AND
WHAT
CAN
BARBER
SHOP
LEARN
FROM
MODERN
A CAPPELLA?

VOCALOSITY

INSIDE: Ten best Leads of all time • The proposed new Performance Category • Main Street goes viral

The Best Way to Start the **HOLIDAY** Season!



featuring

Photo Lance Theby

the **Ambassadors of Harmony**

December 11-13 2015

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with Artistic Director and Conductor Barbara Berner

Vocal Spectrum

2006 BHS International Quartet Champions

with Special Guest Soloist

Lester Rector

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THE HARMONIZER

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE BARBERSHOP HARMONY SOCIETY

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2015
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LXXV
NUMBER
6

BEST LEADS OF ALL TIME? Our illustrious panel moves on from tenors to the melody part. Among so many great voices, we can confirm that there are some no-brainers who indeed made the list—and some pretty big idols of yours who likely did not.

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"You Fill My heart With Your Song"

2015 review—foundations and pillars for growth

In school, we often referred to the 3 Rs of Reading, 'Riting, and 'Rithmetic. Our world, through the weekly contact within the local chapter, may well include another set of 3 Rs:

- **Review.** Sit down and list your chapter 2015 accomplishments.
- **Reengage.** Verify the chapter mission/vision and the member goals for the year.
- **Recast.** Take a refreshed look at the members and culture of your chapter, as well as member wants and expectations that influence and begin to guide the 2016 plans!

Every member counts

Re-involve. Every member is a resource, so leaders must find out what *else* each has done, what applicable experiences would help the chapter to move forward, and what support activities *each* member may be interested in doing to help the chapter.



Every chapter probably can tell you with big grins what it is known for in its own backyard. The Society wants that success to spill over and over.

Manage meeting minutes. Have each week designed and using a "PAL" (Purpose, Agenda, Limit). Program variety is a key element of good chapter planning. Many chapter "itches" can be addressed over several weeks by a variety of singing activities, learning opportunities, and just plain fun! At the end of each meeting, there should be smiles and the "can't wait to sing again" aspects, and not something else.

Eggs in the basket. We may not all be equally ready or available (right now) to help lead, so be aware of points of failure, and *develop* a backup for critical chapter activities. Chapters and districts sometimes tend to allow single indi-

viduals (we love them) to solve problems alone, but that overlooks the opportunity to have capable team members learning and becoming viable backups and future leaders themselves.

All politics are local. Each chapter can plan the *next step* for local chapter success. Every chapter probably can tell you with big grins what it is known for in its own backyard. The Society wants that success to spill over and over into our "known neighborhoods" (for sure). But also, we want to build the success of each chapter in singing, with strong member involvement, and in strong community outreach and support.

Let's be more successful in getting the whole world

Singing Parallels

Music Planning	Chapter Planning, too
Message of the song	Desired chapter goals and member support!
Sing to the end of the phrase	Plan through the end of each event and build on that foundation.
Use common vowels	Get each member to focus and be engaged in chapter planning and the specific desired outcomes.
Relaxed vocal production	Develop a chapter culture that encourages open communication, getting all opinions and options on the table for consideration.
Enjoy the tag	Celebrate the successful plans for chapter growth and then get the all-member resonance in securing the overtone of achievement.
Engage and wrap your audience in your full sound	Build community pillars that share your music, support the outreach of singing, and bring in new guests and prospects.
Invest in Excellent Warm-up exercises	Continuously sharpen all of the membership and leadership skills right along with honing the musical abilities; start slowly and warm up with good outreach programs to improve the amount and quality of singing in your local community!

singing, and let them also enjoy our a cappella barber-shop style and enjoy the warmth of our friendships.

2016—your "oyster" is possible

Take a moment and write down two or three audacious, outlandish, and just plain "beyond our capabilities" kind of goals for 2016:

- What new skills are required to reach them?
- What barriers (elephants?) have the chapter board and the chapter members not yet discussed?
- What do new guests want when they come?
- What strengthened support mechanisms exist for our new members to lean on during the first year(s) with the chapter, the district, and the Society?

I continue to be humbled with the opportunity that each of us has to bring our music, our spirit, our message to our communities and audiences!

Let's seek new and *fun* ways in 2016 to *Share Your Music!* Do you have that new tag to each me?

dfuson@barbershop.org



Help music educators understand the “why”

For the past three years, we’ve used the Nov./Dec. issue of *The Harmonizer* to educate our members on what other leaders and/or organizations are doing to encourage lifelong singing. We encourage our barbershop communities to collaborate with these arts organizations because it is part of our mission.



Three years ago, we started on a journey to reach out to the music education and choral conducting professionals with the aim of helping these individuals in their pursuit of musical excellence. The “hope string” is that some of them would consider becoming musical directors/leaders within the BHS

someday. Part of our challenge is that when someone goes to college to pursue a degree in music education and/or choral conducting, there is very little curriculum or knowledge of our barbershop art form and the BHS organization.

We’ve created a YouTube playlist called, “What Music Educators Should Know About Barber-shop” at bit.ly/whybarbershop

We’ve created a YouTube playlist called, “What Music Educators Should Know About Barber-shop” at bit.ly/whybarbershop. These videos cover our music style, history, and performances which we hope will broaden our awareness to the vocal music professionals. Take a look at these videos on our BHS YouTube channel ... and share them! You might be surprised in the results. Go to bit.ly/whybarbershop.

Also, check out bit.ly/mustseebarbershop for essential viewing to introduce barbershop to anyone, and bit.ly/mustwatchcollegequartets for younger singers.

Marty

mmonson@barbershop.org



What's on Marty's daytimer?

- Nov 18, City of Los Angeles
- Dec 15, All Staff Meeting and 2015 Wrap Up, Nashville
- Jan 7-10, Northeastern District Leadership ED Academy, Worcester, MA
- Jan 15, Naples/Ft Myers Installation Banquet
- Jan 26-31, JOIN ME IN RENO, www.barbershop.org/reno/



What's Marty listening to?

- Pittsburgh International Quartet CD



What's Marty reading?

- The Legacy Builder, Rod Olson





BHS quartets help Alaska Airlines celebrate the inaugural SEA > BNA connection

Alaska Airlines is the newest kid on the block at Nashville International Airport and a barbershop connection brought two quartets to the official party at Gate B-8. The Sept. 24 inaugural flight was piloted by Captain Mike Rinehart, veteran pilot and bass in **Northwest Sound Chorus**, who brought along a quartet of chorus members just for the occasion. Nashville quartet **High Gravity** entertained the crowd in Nashville as the flight arrived ... then the combined groups performed a short set for the passengers. Plenty of local media were on hand for the occasion.

Catch video at <http://bit.ly/aanashville>.
Welcome to Nashville, Alaska Airlines!



Have your say about Society media

The words, images and video the Society releases to Barbershop Harmony Society members and barbershop fans every year add up to a lot. When you open Facebook, when you flip through *The Harmonizer*, when you see LiveWire in your inbox, are you seeing the stories and video content you most want to see?

We need your input!

Go to <http://bit.ly/bbsmediapoll> for the Society's media poll. We'll ask about your barbershop activities and your media reading/viewing habits, and

then we'll get your opinion on a slew of barbershop-related topics you may have already seen—and you can tell us which ones you want to see more often or less often. We'll also give you plenty of opportunities for open-ended feedback on Society communication, and invite you to share your ideas.

Again, go to <http://bit.ly/bbsmediapoll> to take the Society's online poll. (And if you're not comfortable with Internet polls, have someone input the answers on your behalf. Your staff thanks you for your input in making Society communications as relevant and interesting as possible!

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Jan. 15: Nashville early-bird pricing ends, housing reservations begin

BBe sure to get discounted pricing on registrations before January 15. That's



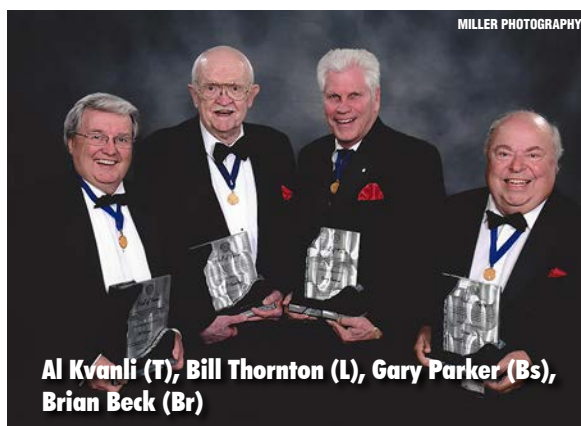
the same day our housing becomes available. Don't delay long, because our negotiated block rates are far lower than what you'll find on your own. Go to barbershop.org/nashville for more details.

2017 convention likely to move. Due to planned renovations to the primary contest venue, Minneapolis will not likely host the 2017 International Convention. Society staff is exploring a variety of alternatives that will meet the needs and expectations of our competitors and audiences. We will release additional information as it becomes available.

1973 International Quartet Champ Dealers Choice joins Society Hall of Fame

Dealers Choice, one of the only champs (and the last, depending on you ask!) to win an international championship in its debut year, was the single 2015 inductee into the Society Hall of Fame. The 1973 champ's winning performances in Portland marked a huge leap forward in quartet sound. The quartet recordings became the influential standard for decades, and the quartet's influence on the barbershop sound lives on today.

In the summer of 1972, only months after forming, the quartet attended Harmony College and served as "guinea pigs" for Mac Huff's then-novel vowel matching and vowel migration techniques. With the coaching of



Al Kvanli (T), Bill Thornton (L), Gary Parker (Bs), Brian Beck (Br)

Huff and Don Clause, in the next 11 months the quartet logged more rehearsal hours and performances than many groups do in five, perfecting their stand-out sound. The annual award for the highest scoring "international novice" quartet is named in the Dallas-based champ's honor.



Bill (left) with 129 & Counting quartet

Bill Schreiner wills Falcons to victories

Barbershopper Bill Schreiner is the Atlanta Falcons' secret weapon: the team is 20-5 when he sings the national anthem before games.

As the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* reports:

He recalls that he became a season-ticket holder in 1966 when "a group of four or five guys that worked at Lockheed said, 'The NFL is coming to Atlanta. Let's get tickets.'"

He still has two mezzanine-level corner season tickets, attends all of the games with his son and has signed up for seats in Mercedes-Benz Stadium, the Falcons' new home slated to open in 2017. "I've seen some pretty bad football, but we're still fans," Schreiner said.

Through the decades, he has performed the national anthem at 25 Falcons games—solo four times and in groups the other times—and has enjoyed keeping track of the team's improbably good record in those games. His first sang at a December 1969 game, which he recalls being dubbed the "Mud Bath" for the weather conditions, that the Falcons won 10-3 over the Vikings.

He was paged from the stands to sing before a 1977 victory over the Saints when the scheduled anthem singer didn't show up.

He sang at last year's game against Arizona, another win, but doesn't know if he'll be called upon this season.

Pop music's hottest quintet talks up choir and barbershop

The biggest a cappella group in the world, **Pentatonix**, is fast becoming one of the biggest pop groups in the world. With the Billboard #1 album this fall (and last year releasing the industry's best-selling Christmas album in 50 years), Pentatonix is showing that the cool kids are singers—and that they watch the Society quartet finals.

It all started with choir. Their National Public Radio interviewer said of their time together: "They began reminiscing about the amazing times they shared while participating in their school music programs ... but hearing their stories about rehearsing for all-state and sitting in practice rooms just singing together, truly warmed my heart and gave me hope that groups like Pentatonix can help keep music relevant in the classroom." Listen at bit.ly/ptxchoir.

And they dig barbershop. In an interview with *Billboard* magazine, PTX founder Scott Hoying wanted to clarify that the group remains grounded in all forms of a cappella geekery.

"We still watch the barbershop quartet finals," he said. (Fun fact: PTX bass Avi Kaplan and PTX producer/arranger Ben Bram say they met at an L.A.-area barbershop chorus rehearsal, presumably **Westminster Chorus** or possibly **Masters of Harmony**.)

Read the entire interview at bit.ly/ptxbbshop. ■



CONVENTIONS

2016

NASHVILLE
July 3-10

2017

MINNEAPOLIS
July 2-9

2018

ORLANDO
July 1-8

2019

SALT LAKE CITY
June 30-July 7

2020

LOS ANGELES

LEADERSHIP FORUM

NASHVILLE, TENN.
July 22-24, 2016

MIDWINTER

RENO
Jan. 26-31, 2016
SAN ANTONIO
Jan., 2017

HARMONY UNIVERSITY

Nashville, Tenn.
July 24-31, 2016



Improve musical performances via score study

Musicians are responsible for communicating the expressive potential of a musical work to their audiences; to accomplish this, they must first acquire an understanding of the score. Many successful directors and quartets find themselves studying a piece of music long before the first note is even sung. The process presented in my Harmony University class is one process of many. However, any process used by a director to study the music should lead to one goal: a personalized interpretation of the music.

1. Orientation

This allows the performer or director to gather important clues from the title of the piece, composer, lyricist, arranger, voicing, etc. It also allows the director to start laying out the “road map,” making note of time signatures, key signatures, repeated material, unfamiliar notation, vocal ranges, and so forth.

Is the piece appropriate for your ensemble? Of the many reasons for orientation, the main one is to assess whether the piece is appropriate for your quartet or chorus. Checking the ranges of the parts, for example, will help identify whether the piece will help or hinder your singers. A lead line that hangs around a high B-flat may not be the best for a lead section that can only reliably sing a G or an A-flat. A piece that has a lot of low E-flats may not be suitable for the bass in your quartet. Obviously, this means you have to know the voices of your ensemble fairly well ... but that’s a whole different topic!

Was this arranged for an ensemble like yours? Taking note of the arranger is an important detail as well. Each arranger has his or her own style that may or may not play to your ensemble’s strengths. Some arrangers are known for creating great charts that are also difficult to execute. One who produces a lot of contest arrangements may not have intended this particular arrangement to be sung in contest. Some arrange songs with only one specific group in mind, and the arrangement’s tessitura may be unsuitable for other singers. Consider finding the backstory of the arrangement; who did they write the arrangement for? What inspired them to arrange that song?

2. Reading

On your first detailed reading of the score, resist the urge to analyze right away. As you go through the score, use your intuition and imagination to let your *subjective*, non-analytic feelings of the music surface naturally.

This step is particularly important if, for instance,

you are reading through a song that has already been performed by a popular, high-level quartet or chorus. In rehearsals, it is all too common to find a group trying to mimic the popular group’s delivery by listening to its recording of the song. While such a review might help for learning words and notes, such behavior represents a lost opportunity to make the song your own.

Listen to your own impulses. A director or a quartet member will be more successful if he starts out with the goal to explore his own creative impulses. There’s no need to presume that a champ’s interpretation is a song’s only valid approach, or even the best approach.

It’s well within the capacity of many groups to deliver a song interpretation that is as good or better than what is found on an A-level group’s recording.

Once a director or singer has an idea about the piece without hearing or playing another version, then he has started to form some creative ideas of how to shape it to best fit his own ensemble.

3. Analysis

This step gets into the finer details of music theory. Melody, harmony, form, rhythm, voicing, texture, dynamics, and stylistic articulations are all crucial elements. Dissecting and understanding these parts of a piece will help you obtain a better idea of how to develop effective rehearsal techniques and direct artistic guidance.

For example, understanding what voices are on certain functions of the chord (root, third, fifth, seventh) will help your group understand issues of balance and tuning, where a lack of knowledge in that area may leave the director unaware of how to remedy certain problems in rehearsal.

Let the gathered information contribute to an informed creation of your interpretation. Try to dissect the score one element at a time, as trying to absorb all aspects in one read can be overwhelming.

Start with the melody. Does it have a wide range? Is it repetitive in nature or does it develop and change? Is it primarily diatonic or chromatic? Are the lyrics supported by the melody (perhaps a little text painting?) or is the marriage of lyric and melody a bit awkward? Once you have some of these questions, you can then make a decision about the expressive qualities the melody has (or doesn’t have).

After exploring one aspect technical aspect, move on to another. Is the piece primarily in major or minor? Are there key changes throughout the piece, and are they necessary? Do they add urgency to the



Theo Hicks
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tor, Circle City
Sound; lead of
2015 champ
Instant Classic
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piece, or do they come out of nowhere? Does the rhythm support syllabic stress? Is there a repetitive rhythmic motive that drives the piece? Do the embellishments of harmony voices make sense and add forward motion to the piece? These are all examples of questions you might ask through analysis. There may or may not be a clear answer to some of the questions you may have; however, the more clarity you can receive through this step, the more you can justify your interpretation from an analytical standpoint.

4. Interpretation

Many groups start at this step, which dives into the final performance of the piece. While this step is arguably the most important, it will be more effective when the other three steps have already taken place.

This step moves beyond recognizing musical elements and involves making subjective decisions about which specific musical aspects will be executed. The material—and the choices made—must be treated together as a whole, and must be delivered as a consistent flow of musical ideas.

Aim for balance. It's important to find a good balance between your imagination and creativity on the one hand, and the information delivered by the score on the other. Proper balance can be transformative; improper balance will create distortion and a manufactured product.

Your interpretations need to enhance the elements that the songwriter, lyricist and arranger have already put in the score. Anything more or less may work against the song. For example, say that you have an idea for a small but clever rhythmic alteration of a certain phrase. If your interpretation draws attention to a key lyric at the right time and doesn't unduly change the character of the song, it might work well. However, if your interpretation draws attention away from the lyric—or conceals, say, the arranger's beautiful chord progression or interrupts an important part of the melody—your interpretation will likely come across as unnatural and awkward.

Your motive should not be to change an interpretation only for the purpose of change—so that it's "different from the original." On the other hand, a change in interpretation

for a dramatic or practical purpose allows the group to perform the piece more naturally, and is therefore more willingly accepted by the listener.

Conclusion

Many musicians can be good at "winging it," or learning as they direct their ensembles. However, you may be robbing your fellow musicians and audiences of the creative potential that you would be able to deliver through effective score study. Score study can help you make informed decisions about how to approach the music in your rehearsals. Not only is score study important for the development of one's own musicianship, but it is the key to fully expressing the intent of the arranger and composer of the song. With score knowledge and an interpretive vision of the music, the director or quartetter is ready to lead, inspire, and create. ■

REFERENCE: Battisti, Frank L., and Robert Joseph. Garofalo. Guide to Score Study for the Wind Band Conductor. Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. (170 N.E. 33rd St., Ft. Lauderdale 33334): Meredith Music Publications, 1990. Print.



Photo Credit: Jeff Richards

"Central Standard needed a better method for storing data, communicating chorus info, tracking rehearsal attendance and tracking song learning status. These are the core functions that Groupanizer provides in spades. Upon looking at the functionality provided by the Groupanizer system it was a no-brainer for us to start using it.

Overall the majority of our members log into the site on a weekly basis. That to me speaks directly to Groupanizer's inherent intuitiveness and breadth of functionality.

The Groupanizer forum is a boon of knowledge for any admin who runs into an issue while configuring their site."

Philip Owen
Site Administrator
Central Standard

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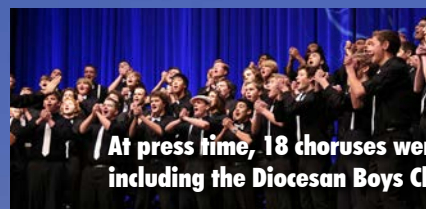


groupanizer.com/bhs



Harmonizing in Luxury

The Peppermill Resort will be putting on the ritz while we sing and play at the most intensely casual convention we've ever hosted—all under one roof



Harmony U Courses

How to make Barbershop music go viral! – Deke Sharon. Why did a Seniors quartet on an airplane and Main Street's pop song medley get millions of hits online while most of our contest videos get only a few looks? How to get barbershop to an external audience!

"Old and Wise" Now ... Once "Young and Crazy"! – Saturday Evening Post. The 2015 Seniors champs have spent decades in top quartets. They share road stories, the highs, the lows, rehearsal techniques, song selection, favorite songs and how to put on an entertaining show.

What's so special about Barbershop? – Dr. David Wright. Learn about the hallmarks that make our style so unique. It's more than a time period, homophonic four part chords or an arranging style.

Gold medal hour – Justin Miller and Westminster Chorus. Learn how they produce their sound, look, and brand! Topics include team leaders, music selection, contest vs. show preparation, and the challenge of a younger demographic!

Gold Medal Hour – Instant Classic. The road to gold is filled with family, hard work, and a willingness to change. Learn all the little things you can do with your quartet to grow to your potential.

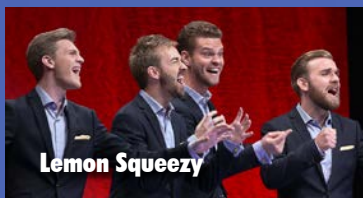
Register at www.barbershop.org/reno or call 800-595-4849
Rooms start at \$119/night—call 800-282-2444, use code AHARM16



Forefront



Main Street



Lemon Squeezy



Throwback

NOW THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT! All the 2015 quartet medalists will be in Reno, with extensive shows taking place on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday night, including full show sets. **EVER WANTED TO SING WITH WESTMINSTER CHORUS?** You will if you join the All-Chapter Chorus, with all of the 2015 chorus champs as "section leaders." Westminster will also perform its own set. Sign up at www.barbershop.org/reno.



ALL-CHAPTER CHORUS. 2016's chorus will rehearse and perform with 2015 champion Westminster Chorus



Instant Classic



Westminster Chorus

Swipes 'n' Swaps

"New director" ads are free in *The Harmonizer* (first 50 words) to Society chapters. Send to harmonizer@barbershop.org.

DIRECTOR WANTED

The Cape Harmonaires of Cape May, N.J. are in search of a new director. We are an entertaining chorus of 25 active singers that perform in 20 annual shows in the picturesque towns of Cape May, Wildwood Crest, West Wildwood, CMCH, Ocean City and Brigantine, N.J. Candidates should

have previous choral directing experience, preferably in the barbershop style, plus Broadway, jazz, patriotic, Gospel and swing. Compensation is negotiable. Contact Bob Rullo at 610-812-9453 or surfnw@comcast.net. www.harmonize.com/capeharmonaires/index.html.

Got Skills? The **Pathfinder Chorus**, Nebraska's Premier A Cappella Chorus, is searching for a talented and highly energized music educator to serve as Music

Director, providing musical and artistic vision, leadership, and inspiration—as well as the technical and teaching skills. The Pathfinder Chorus will offer a competitive compensation package, commensurate with aptitude and experience. For prompt consideration, please send biography, resume and supporting materials to james_nygren@yahoo.com. Visit www.PathfinderChorus.org.



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More than a tweak

Performance

~~The Presentation Category~~

The Presentation Category may soon be the Performance Category. The proposed name change would mark a major update in the way performances are scored and evaluated, with a renewed emphasis on what today's audiences consider most entertaining

If we look back on the history of the judging system, our major changes have come about every 20 years or so. After the initial implementation of the category system in 1950, the next major change was in 1971. The current categories we are judged by today started in the Fall of 1993. Almost on schedule, we are going to have one major change in our judging system in 2016. The Presentation Category (PRS) will be retired and a new Performance Category (PER) will be implemented, effective beginning in the Fall 2016 contests. The Singing, Music, and Contest Administrator categories will remain intact.

When the Society Contest and Judging Committee presented this proposal to the Society Board of Directors, the many questions and concerns that they raised boiled down to "why?" and "why now?"

Allow me to address "why now?" which will lead into "why?"

A history lesson: "Why now?"

As we look back into our past, the "Stage Presence" oriented categories had a high focus on uniformity. Uniformity of look, movement, precision, etc. Despite today's Presentation category no longer requiring this uniformity, the legacy of the prior judging systems is still with us today.

Within a few years after the introduction of the Presentation category in 1993, judges were already challenging that competitors needed to be more entertaining. Out of these discussions came the "Show Package Finals" pilots conducted at the end of the 1990s. Although that concept didn't stick, the concern about how we entertain never went away.

In the Category School of 2001, then PRS Cat-

egory Specialist (CS) Larry Clemons challenged the paradigm that quartets and choruses had to do certain things just because we had always done them that way. For example, a quartet walks on stage, accepts the applause, walks back, looks at each other, then looks back at the audience. Look familiar? The absence of patterned behaviors is not a reason to score high or low. If it works, great. If it doesn't, what doesn't work for that group for that setting? The next CS, Trep Treptow, began discussing the idea of "relevance" with the PRS judges. Is the way we present ourselves "relevant" with our public? Do we teach and reward behaviors that aren't relevant with our audiences? How do we educate our performers to be connected with the audience in a relevant and meaningful way?

Following that, Trep and Joe Hunter (incoming PRS CS) launched a "Real World Relevancy" test. In each district's Prelims, people who had little or no prior exposure to barbershop were invited to be guest judges during the Quartet Finals. Although there were a few failures in that simple exercise, most districts actually conducted these pilots. Each person was given a clipboard and paper with simple instructions: "Score and rank how you were entertained by each quartet." The ability to be scientifically rigorous in the research question was extremely hard, if not impossible. As a result, many assumptions had to be made. Yet, there were two clear messages learned in this study.

1. Often audience members did not agree with each other about what was entertaining.
2. In the contests where audience members did have some agreement among each other about

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the ranking of what was entertaining, their ranks were correlated with the PRS judges' scores and ranks.

For the last three Category Schools (2007, 2010, and 2013), the PRS category has spent significant time watching performances outside the barbershop genre, studying what was engaging about them, and then asking, "what could be brought into the barbershop style that would elevate the performance level?" During Marty Lovick's term as PRS CS and current PRS CS David Leeder's term, each focused on "The Art of Performance." At the 2013 Category School, David suspended the PRS Category Description for a day; the PRS judges scored "entertainment and performance quality," not what was expected of a barbershop quartet or chorus to do.

Last year, a study was published that showed the impact that cellphones had on body tension. As we bend our head and shoulders over, the body tension and pressure increases dramatically. It caused me to question how much body tension we generate by doing things that we perceive we need to do in order to "score well in PRS." I challenged the judging community to rationalize how we achieve vocal freedom and body alignment with the patterned behaviors we believe we are rewarded for (e.g., the barbershop squat, waving wheat as chorus members to make the judges and audience think we're engaged in the performance, flailing arms used to communicate the lyrical content, etc.).

Each CS and his Board of Review (BOR) discussed the issues. At our SCJC meeting at Pittsburgh, it became apparent that we all saw value in changing our belief system about what generates a highly engaging performance. After discussing a variety of ways that that could be done, we decided that the most effective way would be to change the category. (We could make the changes within the existing category construct, but then we wouldn't have your attention!) By changing the category name and description, it creates a distinct change in focus. Rather than taking an evolutionary approach within the existing category, which leads to great confusion amongst competitors and audience members during the evolution, a hard change creates a more revolutionary approach that drives attention and gets us to the end state faster.

A new category: "Why?"

Much of why has actually been answered above. In the end, we believe that there are higher levels of performance available for us, and that our current beliefs are getting in the way. Many of us have heard the expression "transcending technique to artistry." We

More information will be released as it comes available.

To talk about the proposed new Performance Category, chat with key Contest & Judging leaders at www.barbershop.org/performancecategorydiscussion

learn techniques to give us a foundation, to give us purpose, to help us overcome limitations in our own skills. Technique is important and has its place. But if we rely solely on technique, we never achieve artistic levels.

For those of us who have been around for 25+ years, we see and hear the dramatic change that the current category system has had on our performances, in all of our singers at all levels. We sing better, have better delivery, and perform better, without question, and it's dramatic at all levels.

Where the SNG and MUS categories have been able to evolve over time with the idea of "transcending technique to artistry," our performances have not evolved at the same rate. We still see patterned behaviors that go back many decades. They often visually distract otherwise engaging performances; they can interfere with freely produced singing and musical deliveries.

Our audiences should never have to say, "why do you do that?" If it works, then they should say, "that was cool!" When audiences and outsiders ask "why" then we should look from the outside in and challenge if we are "rewarding" the wrong things! We should also welcome successful new and innovative visual presentations that add depth and breadth to our style vs questioning "will the judges 'penalize' them?" The days of "DQing" or "penalizing" are long gone, but the paradigm still exists and it's time to change our mindsets on that as well.

Proposed implementation: Fall 2016

The SBOD will vote on giving its final approval on the documents at Midwinter but at this time are completely supportive of the new direction that C&J will be taking in an effort to raise our performance levels to new heights. The change is recommended to occur beginning in the Fall of 2016. Through the 2016 International contests in Nashville, we will continue to judge under the PRS CD. There will be parallel training efforts going on throughout 2016. At the Category School in July, 2016, all certified and candidate PRS judges will certify under the PER category. This school will provide the final alignment.

Joe Hunter is the Project Manager for this, and I will serve as the SCJC liaison for this change. Following this article, there will be communication about the specifics of what is changing and forums for questions and answers. There will be additional communication in 2016 providing more information.

SCJC believes that this change will also positively impact the singing and musical aspects of the performance, raising our barbershop artform to a higher level. ■

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Together, we make a difference for kids in the classroom.

We're happy that our singing brings joy to people's lives in so many different ways. Like when we recently performed at a benefit concert to help children succeed in the classroom. Of course, fundraising is elementary to our *Code of Ethics*, which states, "We shall render all possible altruistic service through the medium of barbershop harmony." Making the music that's making a difference. To us, it's as easy as ABC. Find out all the different ways we're bringing joy to others at barbershop.org/stories.

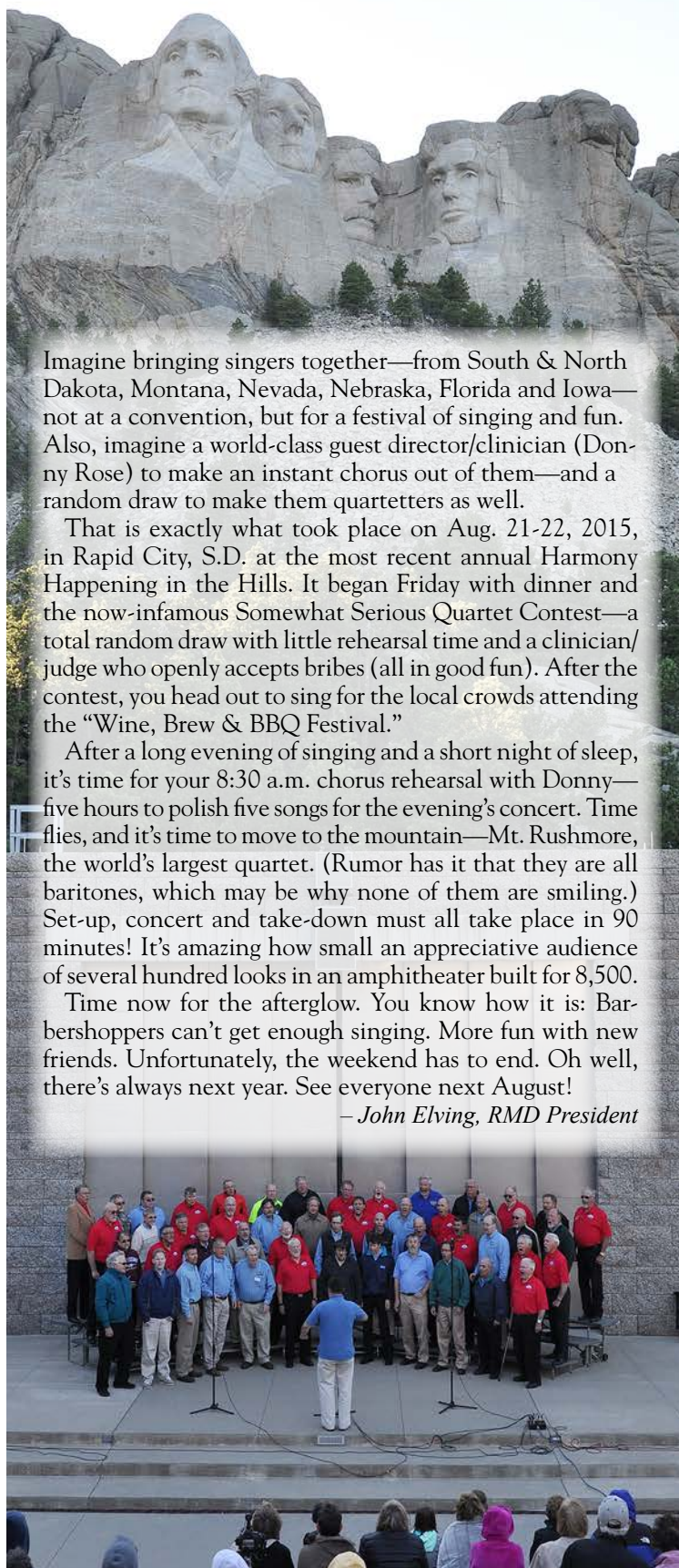


The Southern Gateway Chorus of Cincinnati, recently took part in the CHOIRS4CRAYONS Benefit Concert, helping to raise thousands of dollars to help children without basic school supplies succeed in school.



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Big chorus draw for world's largest quartet



Imagine bringing singers together—from South & North Dakota, Montana, Nevada, Nebraska, Florida and Iowa—not at a convention, but for a festival of singing and fun. Also, imagine a world-class guest director/clinician (Donny Rose) to make an instant chorus out of them—and a random draw to make them quartetters as well.

That is exactly what took place on Aug. 21-22, 2015, in Rapid City, S.D. at the most recent annual Harmony Happening in the Hills. It began Friday with dinner and the now-infamous Somewhat Serious Quartet Contest—a total random draw with little rehearsal time and a clinician/judge who openly accepts bribes (all in good fun). After the contest, you head out to sing for the local crowds attending the “Wine, Brew & BBQ Festival.”

After a long evening of singing and a short night of sleep, it's time for your 8:30 a.m. chorus rehearsal with Donny—five hours to polish five songs for the evening's concert. Time flies, and it's time to move to the mountain—Mt. Rushmore, the world's largest quartet. (Rumor has it that they are all baritones, which may be why none of them are smiling.) Set-up, concert and take-down must all take place in 90 minutes! It's amazing how small an appreciative audience of several hundred looks in an amphitheater built for 8,500.

Time now for the afterglow. You know how it is: Barbershoppers can't get enough singing. More fun with new friends. Unfortunately, the weekend has to end. Oh well, there's always next year. See everyone next August!

— John Elving, RMD President

Story Tellers

Send to storytellers@barbershop.org

Want to be a storyteller? Contact storytellers@barbershop.org or harmonizer@barbershop.org

Delivering Love in High School

It's already time to start preparing for Singing Valentines season. While these deliveries are often considered a great chapter or quartet fund raiser, the biggest memories often come from unplanned encounters along the way. Here's a great one.

On Valentine's Day, I was in a pickup quartet appropriately named **Heart Sent**. We had 15 paid deliveries that day, but the best of them was a high school gig that ended up being much longer than we had planned. All of the chance encounters that morning help illustrate what's so special about being a Barbershopper.

The day's special delivery started with the librarian at Union Mine High School. Dozens of students and several assistant librarians listened in and applauded each song.

Shortly after that, we met a boy who attended our recent Youth Harmony Camp and had started his own quartet at school. Then a music educator had her girl's chorus sing to us; when we asked to sing for them, the teacher sent for another class to watch as well. Outside, another girl stopped to ask us “professional singers” if we would listen to her girlfriend sing and coach her in her audition. Our tenor just happened to be a retired singing judge, so he gave her some hints.

Then the basketball coach appeared and hired us to sing for his wife just before tip-off of the big game that night.

In the theater, we met the drama teacher and Kirk, the student who formed the quartet, who asked if we could sing to his girlfriend. We went to her class, sang, and when the applause died down, the teacher asked us to sing to her; 20 more teachers joined to listen.

We took off to our other gigs, then returned at 7 p.m. for the basketball game and to sing for the coach's wife. When we started singing, the gym went pin-drop quiet and the huge applause warmed our hearts.

What a terrific day! Is there any better job than delivering love?

— Keith Eckhardt, Bellingham, Ore., Chapter-Mt. Baker Toppers (events took place when he belonged to Placerville, Calif. Chapter)

Annual tradition means Silent Night with tears

The Grove City Chorus of Spruce Grove, Alberta (a suburb of Edmonton), has sung at two regional hospitals each December for many years. Typically, 20 or more men split into two groups going floor to floor and ward to ward, and even into rooms with patient permission. We sing to the staff, and the response over the years has been very heart-warming.



We always sing "Silent Night," often with a verse or two in French and/or German. For several years we had a member, Tommy, who could also sing the verse in Polish. His group worked its way through the hospital until they reached the maternity ward. They met a young couple, newly arrived from Poland, who just had their first baby. The



mother's parents were from Poland as well, and when "Silent Night" was sung, and Tommy did his verse in Polish, there was not a dry eye in the place. We have since joked that they needed to mop the tears off the floor, there were so many. It was a special experience.

—Jim Cochrane, Grove City Chorus

Membership of TotemAires is growing!

The TotemAires, the Tacoma, Wash., Chapter, was founded 1946 by a group that included the brother of Dwight D. Eisenhower. Over the years, the chorus birthed champion quartets and strengthened other chapters, while at one time peaking at 90 members. By a year and a half ago, when I joined the chapter, we felt blessed to have 10 show up for a rehearsal.

How I wish someone would have told me about barbershop 18 years ago when I moved to the Tacoma area! Now, I tell anyone who will listen. When I became membership VP in 2015, I told the guys that we are not the future of this chapter; it would be the new members we brought in. I started calling prospective candidates and following up my phone calls. Follow up and consistency are important. And...we are growing! This summer, when one would expect attendance to be down, we had 20 to 27 men showing up for rehearsal.



Our chapter has had a booth at the Washington State Fair every year in the Education Pavilion. After a lackluster booth last year, we decided to go all out and give the booth some pizzazz. My quartet worked the booth two Saturdays and made contact with about 30 men who showed an interest in barbershop. We sang whenever we "felt a song comin' on" and even taught a few tags. When the fair ended, I called all of the guys we contacted and invited them to our "Sing, Sing, Sing" program. By the way, the majority of the men who were most interested were in their 20s, 30s, and 40s, with the two younger groups better represented.

—Ed Gentz, Tacoma TotemAires

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Two Barbershoppers in Deke Sharon's contemporary a cappella touring group discuss what's great about barbershop—and what Barbershoppers can learn from other music genres

How did you get involved with Vocalosity? And why kind of show will this be?

Tracy L.J. Robertson: It was an open audition, and that's where Matthew and I first met. They weren't only looking for experienced singers, but people with big personalities. This production is going to be more of a complete performance than most people are used to seeing in any show, let alone an a cappella show. It will draw from our personal lives, and there will be genuine communication of important ideas and feelings. A lot of acting, working the audience, a lot of different configurations of the men and women, extensive choreography and there will be many different genres and styles covering decades.

How has your barbershop background prepared you for your roles?

Tracy: We've both done a lot of contemporary a cappella in addition to our barbershop, but I exist because of barbershop. My parents

met through barbershop, and I think there are things that I understand harmonically that no body taught me, starting from being in mom's stomach while she was competing.

Matthew Bryan Feld: There's a reason Deke Sharon calls barbershop a cappella's martial art. Singing in a quartet helped me more than with any other ensemble I sang in, because it's only four guys. It's very difficult to have the breath support, the composure to perform not just vocally but also physically. That helped my ear a lot, strengthened my falsetto.

"I'm not saying you have to learn Barbershop to be a great a cappella singer ... but I am promising you if you do sing Barbershop, you'll be better than if you don't."

— Deke Sharon, "Barbershop: A Cappella's Martial Art" (www.casa.org/node/16772)



You're not singing in strict tempo, but if you're doing it right, everything is locking in. That's powerful. You're thinking of more than consonants, but also the change of a vowel, getting your tone in sync, mimicking three other people, changing that overtone series, all while changing pitch

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Tracy L.J. Robertson and Matthew Bryan Feld are two among many singers who comfortably occupy both the barbershop and contemporary a cappella worlds. Many other professional a cappella groups include past or present barbershop singers in their ranks, and many proudly share their barbershop pedigrees in their bios and regularly sing tags with their peers.

and volume. I gained a lot of mental stamina singing barbershop. The a cappella world can learn so much from it.

What hooked me was the tag, you see and hear and feel the harmony. You are in complete control of the sound. And it's all using the Great American Songbook, which is so much better than most of today's new music.

What have you learned outside the barbershop world that could benefit Barbershoppers?

Tracy: When I went to music school, I realized that in any genre, you can develop some quirks that are habits—muscle memory—and they have nothing to do with making art. Some of these barbershop quirks can take away from the message a little bit. There is a video of Deke Sharon where he's coaching a pretty high-level Sweet Adelines quartet. [<http://bit.ly/dekebbbscoach>] And he points out some habits and gestures that nobody but Barbershoppers do, and they don't come across as authentic. That video sums it up pretty well for me.

Matthew: It's possible to get too technical in the music. With music, you need to become free from your left brain. Artists need to prioritize expressing ourselves in what's happening in that moment rather than just trying to remember technique. Your job is to get people out of their heads, thinking about feelings and things they have no control over, which is how *you* feel and how you make them feel.

When you sing both contemporary a cappella and barbershop, do the styles begin to bleed together, intentionally or not?

Matthew: With me, it's probably had the opposite effect. I think you can appreciate the strengths of

barbershop better if you have experience with other genres. After I learned barbershop, I got deeper into other styles of a cappella and instrumental music. And now when I sing with Paul [Saca] and he wants to sing something more pop-like in the barbershop style, my reaction is to pull it back into more pure barbershop. I'm just really drawn to the harmony. It's important to be open to all styles of music. If you learn from the strengths and differences of other genres, the strengths of barbershop will stand out to you more. And your barbershop will sound better.

Tracy: I'm not sure where the balance is, between the need to preserve an art form and to allow musicians to actually be creative. I played bass in a drum line—that's an art form that some people are trying to put in a box. And that becomes ostracizing. Any art form that gets really specific about what you can and can't do can become a caricature of itself.

For some, barbershop is a form of expression. For others, it's for therapy—it takes them to a place that is familiar and comfortable in the world where so many changes are happening. So creativity and change can feel threatening, even if it's still solid barbershop.

But preservation is now helped by technology. You can see where it was, and you can go back to that

"It's important to be open to all styles of music. If you learn from the strengths and differences of other genres, the strengths of barbershop will stand out more. And your barbershop will sound better."

Want to share the stage with Vocalosity?

From the tour website: VOCALOSITY is the all-new live concert event from the creative mind of artistic producer Deke Sharon (Pitch Perfect, The Sing-Off) that takes a cappella to a whole new level! This fast-paced production features 12 dynamic voices singing some of today's chart-topping hits in brand-new arrangements too incredible to miss.

No genre of music is off limits in the world of a cappella and VOCALOSITY will explore them all—from tenth century Gregorian chant and classic choral, to barber shop quartet and bouncing doo-wop all the way to The Beatles and Bruno Mars. Combine that with movement and choreography from Sean Curran (Stomp original cast member) and you have an exhilarating evening of song unlike anything you've ever seen or heard, live on stage.

It's the aca-perfect concert experience!

VOCALOSITY came together through the passion of music director and artistic producer Deke Sharon, and the producing team of Work Light

Productions and IMG Artists. Deke, called the "father of contemporary a cappella," has built a career in a cappella as a singer, arranger, director and producer. VOCALOSITY is the culmination of everything he has learned over the past 20 years in this genre.

VOCALOSITY will debut in January 2016 before embarking on a 30+ city national tour. Each city is invited to host an online video contest for local a cappella groups, with the winner being selected by Deke to perform as VOCALOSITY's opening act in their city—a fantastic way to engage the local community and spread the joy of a cappella!

Universal Music Classics will release VOCALOSITY's debut album in January 2016 to coincide with the tour launch. Future tour dates are being planned and VOCALOSITY looks forward to visiting a theater near you!

www.vocalosityontour.com



without asking others to compromise their forward motion.

"There's a coolness factor, especially among younger music fans. I'm so stoked about barbershop becoming mainstream."

affected my understanding of music and art and how the world works.

Unlike in many other genres, you can not only

admire the best, but you can meet these people. Whenever I saw Gene [Cokecroft, Suntones tenor], he was always one of the sweetest, most compassionate people I ever met. I know I'm not the only one, but it felt very personal. He was the heart of barbershop. I learned so much from his love of music, love of singing, the chords, performing and being goofy, and being able to play.

Tracy: What's really changed about barbershop in recent years is the coolness factor. There's a real appreciation for barbershop, especially among younger music fans. I'm looking forward to seeing more trained musicians start applying themselves to barbershop—to see what happens in the hands of more and more people who have a deep sense of direction in the artistry—people who know how to make messages that are really hitting people. That's why I'm so stoked about barbershop becoming mainstream.

Any parting thoughts for our barbershop audience?

Matthew: Perform any chance you can. Don't just practice at home, but in front of people. Sing in the subway and on shows, in front of people, invite them to your house and have a gig there. If you want to learn technique, take a class. Do stuff that you're afraid to do, and do a lot of it. And listen to everything.

Try to get good at more than one thing—get good at an instrument, directing arranging. It's about being an artist. The more tricks you have in your bag, the more able you are to communicate. And never forget and to always have fun and have a sense of play. ■



Go back to what you said about what happens when an art form gets too specific. Do you have any barbershop examples?

Tracy: When I competed in Toronto (2013), I'd been away from barbershop for a while, and I met a lot of 20-somethings who were really up on all things barbershop—they knew every group, every part of every tag. That's great, but it was, for me, a little alienating.

It would be like hanging around people who were obsessed with competing to see who can make the best paper. Nothing wrong with that, but you want to tell them, "You know, you can use this paper to do things—to draw pictures, write letters, make something artistic."

Barbershop harmony is a medium. You should

use it to do important things—artistic things—that change how others feel. If you're doing barbershop for the sake of barbershop, you're in danger of letting the art form become a caricature of itself. What can get lost is the point: This is art, this is about communication, allowing yourself to feel free to express yourself in a way that society hasn't quite managed to fit in a box.

Any other "insider/outsider" views you can share with the barbershop world?

Matthew: The barbershop community is so open and warm and family-oriented—that is so powerful. That af-



Tracy L.J. Robertson was born to Barbershopper parents, joined the BHS at age six, and still quartets with his parents and sister. A graduate of the Berklee College of Music, he directed Berklee's acclaimed a cappella group Pitch Slapped and he competed with Epic Jazz in the 2013 International Collegiate Contest.



From the creative mind of artistic producer **DEKE SHARON** (*Pitch Perfect*, *The Sing-Off*) comes the all-new live concert event that takes a cappella to a whole new level!



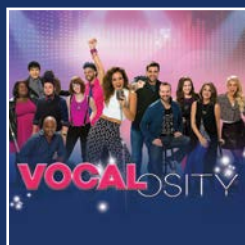
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10 BEST LEADS OF ALL TIME

Society Hall of Famer Lou Perry will be remembered for many things, including the insights of his wife, Ruth. Boston Common bass Terry Clarke recalls a conversation with Ruth about the qualities of a perfect lead. She told him there are three factors to consider: voice, heart and brain—"and them that's got all three don't need the other guys. They generally end up as soloists."

We might assume that Ruth was being a little facetious, but Clarke suggests there are few in the Society who do have all three. However, we here present an amazing list of leads who qualify. Not only a brilliant top 10 of mostly gold medalists, but another eight honorable mentions following more voting, discussion, still more voting and heated discussion and final voting by our sweat-soaked panel.

The top 10 tenors appeared in the May-June issue of The Harmonizer. We're now working on choosing baritones and basses for upcoming issues. The rules remain the same: panelists cannot vote for themselves, and all must eventually agree on the list before we release it to you.

This time we began with 32 lead nominees spanning the decades before trimming the list to 18 names. And if your first reaction is "how in the world could you leave out so-and-so?" we understand; some of our panelists asked the same question. The choices are presented alphabetically.

JOE CONNELLY. Everyone reached for superlatives in trying to describe the accomplishments of the Society's only four-time gold medalist. The late Gene Coccroft: "I never knew the human voice could make that much sound, sing that high or that low with vocal quality, especially in a harmony setting." David Wright: "Not just because he won four times, but because his beautiful voice is iconic." Don Barnick: "Great delivery of a song." Joe won his first championship in 1987 with **Interstate Rivals**, followed by **Keepsake** in 1992, **PLATINUM** in 2000 and **Old School** in 2011. Aside from his genes (dad Mike is a veteran quartet medalist) and his pipes, consider the dedication to craft and performance that has kept him at the top of his game through almost four decades. And what about his influence on other quartet singers?



Jim Bagby
Bari, 1986
champ Rural
Route 4
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Interstate Rivals (1987)
Keepsake (1992)
Platinum (2000)
Old School (2011)



Vocal Spectrum (2006)

ERIC DALBEY. The youngest on our list, just turned 31, Dalbey holds the singular honor with his quartet of golds at every level but Seniors: Collegiate, Society and chorus (**Ambassadors of Harmony**). Bill Biffle says the young Missourian has a voice "of incredible flexibility and range ... wonderfully beautiful—and stable—to

hang a great quartet sound on. Never faltered in the most difficult of challenges: think 'On the Street Where You Live.'" Cokeroff: "I marvel at Eric's vocal talent and skills, especially his ability to sing harmony as well as melody." He is a standout personality in a quartet full of them, and already is giving back to the Society through the C&J program.

TONY DE ROSA. The late, great emcee Dan Henry Bowser used to kid about certain performers, "Well, he's young, handsome and talented ... I hate him."

That would fit Tony since he was about 8 years old. And he just keeps coming. Brian Beck sums up De Rosa: "Right now, he's the best overall singer in the whole outfit, in my humble opinion." Those who note that Tony has won two of his three golds on baritone might argue that Beck never had a humble opinion in his life, and that one lead gold does not qualify him for this list. Setting aside that Tony has as many (or more) lead golds as most of the men on this list, 10 international medals singing lead and his championship-level singing with **Main Street** should alone answer the "isn't he really a bari?" question. Moreover, gold medal coach Randy Loos notes that De Rosa "has added a lot of vocal tools since converting to lead ... the subtleties of his singing can easily be missed."

BOB FRANKLIN. Already a Society Hall of Fame member with his 1961 championship quartet, **Suntones**, Franklin was one of two near-unanimous choices for this list. Our panel members, of all ages, stood in line to pay him honor. "He had elastic pipes," recalled Tom Neal. "Then and now, Bob set the standard for smooth, melodic, and



Keepsake (1992) - bari
PLATINUM (2000) - bari
Max Q (2007)
Main Street (6 bronze)



Suntones (1961)

was a great interpreter.” Wright: “The charisma in this man’s voice was crucial to the wide appeal of arguably the best barbershop quartet ever.” Cokeroff (who should know): “Nobody, but nobody, can tune as well as Bob. His phrasing skills are remarkable ... a dedicated vocal musician.” Barnick: “Great lead, great at singing harmony when not on lead.”

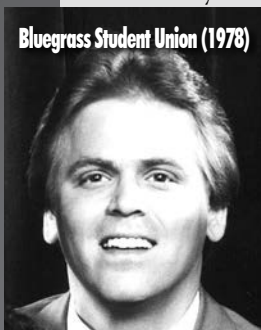
Personally, I’ll add that you’d think celebrating the 25th anniversary of your gold on the AIC show in your hometown, would be one of the greatest thrills for a quartet. All true—but when the **Rural Route 4** got that great honor at Kansas City in 2011, the bigger thrill was sharing the stage and backstage with Bob and the Suntones—who outsang us on their 50th!

DENNY GORE. No panelist was surprised when Denny’s name worked its way into the top 10. Over the years, veteran Society members will tell you about how certain quartets should have won, or even *did* win—everyone has a favorite. Gore was a gold medal lead who was never quite at the right spot at the right time, although he did replace the late Randy Chisholm in 1995 champ **Marquis**. Vagabonds and Center Stage both collected silvers among their medals. Biffle says: “Denny had the smoothest voice I have ever heard, with the possible exception of Connelly. The Vagabonds have the reputation in barbershop lore as perhaps the greatest quartet that never won, and Denny’s commanding lead was what made it.” Beck marvels over Gore’s great body of work.



Vagabonds, Center Stage, Marquis (replacement)

KENNY HATTON. Another singer recognized for a body of work and his quartet’s popular recordings. “Kinny Ray had lots of style and desire in his singing,” says Beck. “He has to be in the mix for longevity alone,” agrees Biffle. “As accurate a lead singer as we could want ... and the influence of Bluegrass on our style will recommend him, too, I think.” Cokeroff noted that many remarked on Hatton’s unorthodox vocal delivery. “Yet, close your eyes, listen and admire,” he advised. “BGSU left us a ton of songs they sang over the years, honing the harmony skills we love to listen to today.”



Bluegrass Student Union (1978)



Gentlemen’s Agreement (1971)
Suntones (replacement)

DRAYTON JUSTUS. The other near-unanimous choice for the top 10, this golden throat helped the GA go from their formation to gold in just over two years, and he later sang for several years with the Suntones. Wright described a “strong and appealing voice, with a musical vibrato and clear timbre that

commandeered the huge, exciting sound of the fabulous 1971 champs.” Barnick was taken with a “distinctive” voice.” Justus had the personality to climb inside a ballad or sell a rhythm song, and it carried over into other facets of his barbershopping life. He became a Society president and later a Hall of Fame inductee. Cokeroff: “He could sing all night. The more he sang, the better it got.”

RICH KNAPP. Think about the BC songs. Pick any of your favorites. First, you’ll probably hear the individual voices. They are distinctive, and one reason the quartet is in the Hall of Fame. But now hear that special sound, wrapped around the mellow tone of lead Rich Knapp. Says Wright, “the fullness and freedom of this great quartet hangs on Rich’s unique combination of vocal power and easy manner.” How many other leads can do that? Barnick remembers that Tommy Spirito of the **Four Rascals**, also from the Northeastern District, sang with “tons of heart” and was a major influence on Knapp.



Boston Common (1980)

JOE MAZZONE. If ever there were a voice from God, this soft-spoken son of Italy performed and worshipped with it. Wright called the lead of the 1974 champs “perhaps the most melodic, refined and lyrical voice in barbershop history, beautifully adorned with a charming but controlled vibrato.” “Wonderful,” Barnick said simply of Mazzone’s gift.

After Franklin and Justus, Connelly and Mazzone were the top vote-getters among all leads. Joe was the original lead of the **Good News!** quartet with Jerry Fairchild, Dale Deiser



Regents (1974)
Good News! Quartet

and Mo Rector, which for years hosted the highly popular gospel sing at the Society's international convention. The quartet later was succeeded by the **Happiness Emporium**.

MIKE SLAMKA. Another slam-dunk choice, and he keeps getting better. Let me go first: I've been a Slamka fan since I first saw Power Play perform "The Boy I Used To Be" when I was a Stage Presence (remember that?) judge. As I watched, I kept saying "this can't work ..." but it did. Mike can convey any emotion, in any style, at any range, with brilliant beauty, ease or power, as the music or lyric demands. Wright says: "Mike stepped up a notch with Crossroads to become, in my mind, the most versatile and compelling lead of recent times ... an amazing



set of pipes." Barnick is just brass tacks: "great voice to listen to, and to sing with." Cokerft: "I think he knows every song my quartet ever sang. When we occasionally have an opportunity to sing with him, it is glorious sound and so much fun. He sings vocally correct, always in tune and knows exactly what quality to use at the right time."

HONORABLE MENTION

There is no argument these gentlemen, representing our roots through our glory growth years to times not so long ago, all were brilliant leads. They just did not get as many votes as the top 10. Again, they are listed alphabetically:

JOE DANIELS, Sidewinders (1964)
DAVID HARRINGTON, 2nd Edition (1989)
DANNY HEYBURN, Easternaires
DAVE LaBONTE, Confederates (1956)
AL SHEA, Buffalo Bills (1950)
TOMMY SPIRITO, Four Rascals
BILL THORTON, Dealer's Choice (1973)
LARRY WILSON, Classic Collection (1982) ■

The illustrious, all-star voting panel



JIM BAGBY. Director emeritus of the **Heart of America Chorus**, past Society Board Member, Presentation judge, winner of the Joe Liles Lifetime Achievement award and bari of 1986 champ **Rural Route 4**.



DON BARNICK. 50-year Society member, tenor of **Grandma's Boys** (1979), bass of **Keepsake** (1992) medalist bari of **Riptide** (2005). Past chorus director, veteran coach, Harmony College faculty, Sound judge.



BRIAN BECK. The only man to reach the top 10 in all four voice parts; bari of **Dealer's Choice** (1973) and lead of **Side Street Ramblers** (1983). two-time senior quartet champ, top 10 tenor with the **Doo-Dads**. Created 500-plus barbershop, choral and jazz arrangements.



BILL BIFFLE — Past Sound and Singing judge, past Society president, lead trumpet of the Barbershop All-Star Dixieland Band 4-time district champ director, two-time district quartet champ, Master Director, Harmony University faculty member and popular coach.



TERRY CLARKE — Bass of Hall of Fame champ **Boston Common** (1983), Society member since age 14, And he figures he qualifies for this panel because he's been around long enough to recognize *original quartets versus programmed ones*.



GENE COKERFT. Participated in voting before passing away in July, the **Suntones** tenor is a two-time member of the Society Hall of Fame, one of the top 10 tenors of all time (May/June 2015 issue). Past director, coach, youth clinician songwriter, arranger.



JOE CONNELLY. Not allowed to vote for himself, this full-time vocal performance coach had already cemented his status as an all-time great lead as the Society's only 4-time gold medalist with **Interstate Rivals** (1987), **Keepsake** (1992), **PLATINUM** (2000) and **Old School** (2011).



BOB LINDLEY. 60+ year Society member has barbershopped since high school and was and bari of 1953 champ **Vikings**, for whom he did most of the quartet's arrangements.



RANDY LOOS. AIC associate member with **Grandma's Boys** (1979) champ) and bass of medalists **Sidekicks** and **Backbeat**. Director or assistant director of seven choruses, coach of the two highest quartet champs under the current judging system. He has served on both the Society and Harmony Foundation boards.



TOM NEAL. Joined the Society in 1951 and directed his Euclid, Ohio, JAD champs to the top 11 in 1962. He sang with the popular **Village Idiots** quartet on hundreds of shows from 1960-1975. He founded the **Singing Angels** children's barbershop chorus, and started the Barbershop Pioneers organization, now known as the Barbershop Quartet Preservation Society (BQPA).



DAVID WRIGHT. This prominent mathematician, professor, arranger, composer, director, coach, judge, historian and baritone is a Society Hall of Famer and associate director of the three-time champ **Ambassadors of Harmony**. A musical consultant and arranger for numerous champion quartets and choruses, he has taught at Harmony University for 30 years. He helped design the Music Category and was its first Category Specialist.

Going viral

Internet goes wild for Main Street's medley

Those who attended the International Convention in Pittsburgh remember Main Street's modern pop medley "These Will Be The Good Old Days Twenty Years From Now" as arguably the most talked-about performance of the week. It is now crushing on YouTube, having garnered nearly half a million views within a week of posting, as it was boosted by media outlets, social media, and blogs around the world. How did the beloved five-time medalist quartet come up with this innovative, side-splitting performance?

What's life been like for Main Street this past week?

The amount of attention and support has us both shocked and elated, not only for Main Street but for the barbershop artform. When you read the countless posts, tweets and articles written about the video, there has been nothing but positive reactions about barbershop music, and what a great thing that is! When you realize the majority of these comments are from non-Barbershoppers, it feels good to know we are being viewed favorably in the public eye.

Where did your idea of using pop songs in a medley come from?

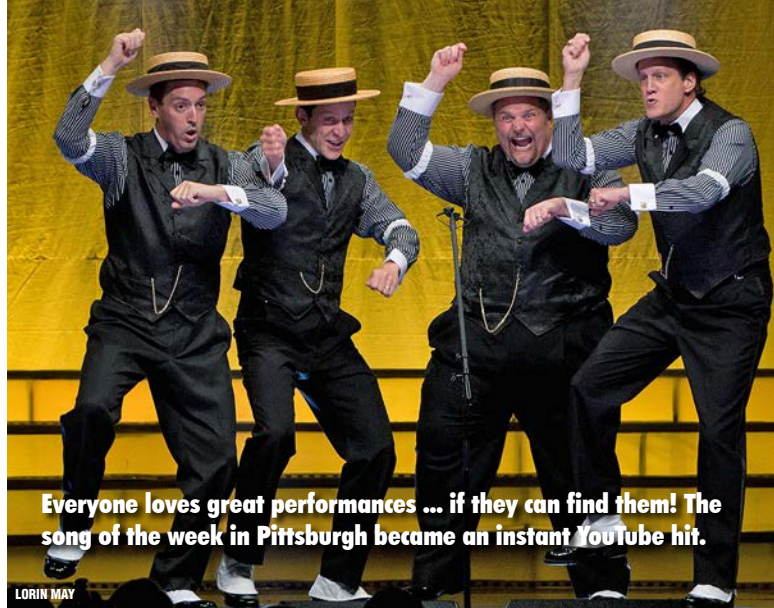
Tony De Rosa, our lead, had suggested the idea of Main Street singing pop songs in some form or another a few years ago. However we didn't really know how to make it work for Main Street, so the idea was shelved for future consideration.

It wasn't until earlier this year when Mike McGee (baritone) was watching a YouTube video of The Osmond Brothers singing a song on the Andy Williams show that sparked the idea. The quartet was singing a song called, "These Will Be The Good Old Days Twenty Years From Now," which contained a storyline that would be a great vehicle to theme a medley of popular music ranging from the 1980s to current day. The juxtaposition between pop music that is "cool and hip" against the stereotypical "square" barbershop quartet persona of Main Street was too good to pass up.

We presented the idea to arranger Clay Hine, who was instantly attracted to the concept. After lengthy research, we came up with more than 40 songs to be considered for the medley. Clay was able to whittle it down to eight tunes that he felt would lend themselves not only to the contest parameters, but also would be relevant to the demographic in the audience.



Mike McGee
Bari of 2015
International
medalist
Main Street
the5thwhl@
gmail.com



How long did it take you to learn the song?

The arrangement wasn't completed until June, about three weeks before the contest. We had to move fast to memorize not only the music, but the choreography, which was fairly complicated by quartet standards.

Mike had begun choreographing the medley before it was even completed to give us a head start. At one point, we were learning notes and polishing dance steps at the same time. However, we weren't concerned; Clay is a masterful arranger whose arrangements are creative but also very singable. We've also found recording video on our iPhones and instantly uploading to YouTube is a tremendous tool helping us refine our performance and critique what does and doesn't work.

Sometimes groups capture lightning in a bottle. Did you know you had a hit on your hands?

Initially we were excited about the concept; however, there may have been slight hesitance leading up to International because we weren't sure if the barbershop community would recognize the songs. Fortunately, the week before contest, we sang the medley in front of the **Toast of Tampa Show Chorus** and also at a local church concert. The audiences were very receptive at both performances, and it helped to instill confidence within the quartet. (Note: After the contest, one Music judge said, "I didn't recognize any of the songs, but the 7,000 people behind me were so loud, rolling with laughter I said to myself, 'This must be funny!'")

That same week we had a coaching session with comic genius Rick La Rosa who "plus-ed" the song with some subtle nuances, helping to focus the communication and execution of the theme to the audience. One major change that received one of the largest responses from the audience in Pittsburgh was modifying "Uptown Funk" from a boogie-groove uptune into an overly contrived barbershop ballad, bringing out our best impressions of ballad overacting in a quartet performance.

Clay Hine and Rick La Rosa are incredible artists in whose creative ideas, forward thinking and honest opinions we have the utmost trust. We are very thankful for their time and commitment to Main Street. ■

SWD mixed quartet contest has surprise ending

It was a well-guarded secret that the Southwestern District's first-ever Mixed Quartet Contest on Oct. 3 would include an historical first in any BHS contest—an *in-quartet* marriage proposal.

Dallas Big D Chapter music director Terry Chapman organized mixed quartet **Three Is The Loneliest Number** with Laura Jenks, Tim Bird and his girlfriend, Nikki Edwards. But Terry had an ulterior motive. He was looking for a unique way to propose marriage to Nikki—and with a lot of help and preparation, managed to keep her in the dark until he dropped to one knee.

The quartet had choreographed its second song with a rose and hand-held signs. But Nikki didn't know the others were displaying different signs for the performance, which now read:

- *Terry & Nikki started dating in April*
- *Terry's madly in love ...*



- *... and wanted to do something very special.*
- *Nikki has no idea what's about to happen ...*
- *... but Terry is proposing to her at the end of this song!*
- *This has never*

happened before at a BHS contest!

- *As the song ends, we need your help ...*
- *Please hold your applause until after he presents her the ring.*
- *Then watch history ... and herstory ... being made!*
- *Congratulations Terry & Nikki!*

The song went just as he planned; Terry dropped to one knee and popped the question to her excited shock and total amazement. The audience went wild. (Oh, by the way ... she said yes!)

The quartet placed 6th, won the audience, and was awarded with a spirited standing ovation and one of the most unique memories as Nikki and Terry begin their lives together.

— Grady Kerr

Polaris quartet is the result of how quickly the mentored youth become the youth mentors

Barbershop youth camps and clinics are terrific for mentoring the next generation of singers. But who could guess that the mentored would in turn so quickly become the mentor!



Charlie Lotspeich is a middle school choir director in Coppell, Texas. He attended Harmony Explosion camps in high school and, with the encouragement of Brooks Harkey, a devoted

supporter of youth programs, joined the **Vocal Majority**. Eventually his love of the barbershop lifestyle grew into a career in music education. Along the way, he picked up a fifth place collegiate quartet medal with **Phantom 5th** in 2013.

As a young teacher, Charlie incorporated some light, fun tag singing at the end of classes. He came across four youngsters with exceptional pitch-matching ability for their age, who



quickly absorbed all the barbershop he threw at them. Soon, he was rehearsing them twice a week, and **Polaris** was born.

"At the end of the school year I sat them down and discussed going to the district competition in the fall," said Charlie. "Each guy was wholeheartedly up for the task, and we continued to rehearse throughout the summer. Originally, I had planned to have the boys compete in the regular quartet contest because of the age restrictions of the collegiate contest. As fate would have it, the collegiate competition has undergone some changes and the minimum age requirement had been dropped,

allowing Polaris to compete in the Youth Barbershop Quartet Contest."

Polaris was the 28th quartet to compete at the Southwestern District contest that day, and the packed house gave it up for them! The quartet mingled in the lobby for hours, singing for anyone who would listen and passing their top hats, ultimately raising \$1,700 to advance to the YBQC championships next summer in Nashville next summer.

A life path directed into music ... a second generation of young singers grown from the seeds planted in high school ... and a performance to delight and move hundreds. That's the kind of intergenerational magic at the heart of our barbershop experience. We look to big things from the boys and from Charlie, and we're thankful for mentors like Brooks Harkey, whose influence extends further than we might imagine in the moment.

Jan/Feb 2016 issue: Crossroads wows ACDA/NAfME



Between events, the quartet walked a couple of blocks to Society HQ for an impromptu performance in the lobby. #bhshq #crossroadsquartet

group they had ever hosted at a NAfME event. Attendees agreed, and successfully lobbied to have Crossroads add an additional late-night gathering, where they tagged and taught dozens about barbershop harmony.

Our 2009 champion **Crossroads** continues to make waves in the choral music world. Most recently, they came to Nashville in October to present on the African-American Roots of Barbershop Harmony convention for the National Association for Music Education (NAfME). After that presentation and serving on the undercard in a couple of shows, they left as the toast of the convention.

Some event organizers called Crossroads the most impressive



In one of the biggest BHS Facebook posts of 2015, we present the the Lunceford quadruplets (3 girls and one boy, just like Vintage Mix). They don't sing yet, but they just won Halloween. #parentingwin #barbertots



Don Hewey, Emmy Brooks, Jeff Campbell, Patrick Campbell, Tim Campbell, Sean Campbell, Mike Rigiero

WORCESTER, MASS. CHAPTER WELCOMES AN ENTIRE FAMILY.

Recently, the Worchester Men of Song welcomed the chapter's youngest and newest member, Patrick Campbell, age 11. His membership certificate was presented by our most senior member, Emmy Brooks, who at 87 has been a member of our chapter for 65 years. Patrick joins his dad, Jeff, and brother, Tim, who have been with us for three years and his 14-year-old brother, Sean, a two-year member. Joining in the celebration were our Chapter President, Don Hewey and our Membership VP, Mike Rigiero. ■

CHAPTER ETERNAL

Society members reported as deceased between Sept. 1 and Nov. 1, 2015. Email updates to customerservice@barbershop.org.

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The Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America, Inc. (DBA Barbershop Harmony Society) is a non-profit organization operating in the United States and Canada.

Mission

The Barbershop Harmony Society brings men together in harmony and fellowship to enrich lives through singing.

Vision

To be the premier membership organization for men who love to sing.



THE TAG

Joe Liles, Tagmaster

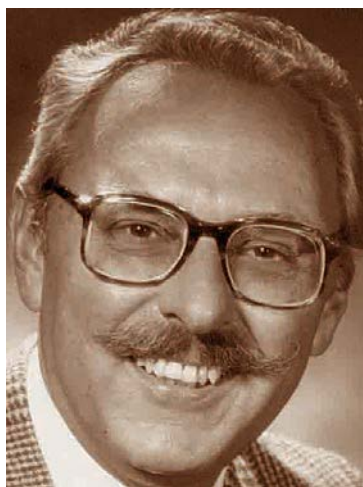


Great tag from Hall of Fame arranger

The Barbershop Harmony Society is fortunate to have so many talented musicians in its membership. One of those special persons is Dr. Burt Szabo. He is a 50-year member and has composed and/or arranged hundreds of songs for Barbershoppers. Many are published by the Society. Just check out shop.barbershop.org.

Burt taught arranging, music theory and sight singing for many years at Harmony College. He worked for the Society for about 10 years, 1982-1992, as the Music Publications Editor, writing manuals and educational materials.

What many people don't know is that Dr. Szabo has his own publishing business, "Choral Concepts" with a website, www.harmonize.com/



burt.szabo/, devoted to barbershop arrangements, school and church music. He also has taught numerous years at university levels. He is a long-time member of ASCAP both as a composer and a music publisher.

We all love to sing his creative tags, too. And here is one that is filled with some fun, tasty morsels for the ear. The first two measures start with unison and move through some nice close harmony, but an intriguing series of harmony follows in measures 3 and 4, finally resolving to tonic

in measures 5-6. Thanks for this one, Burt.

NOTE: Both the male and female version are available on the Free 'n' Easy section of www.barbershop.org/tags. ■

YOU FILL MY HEART WITH YOUR SONG

Words, Music and Arrangement

by BURT SZABO

Tenor melody

1 2 3

Tenor Lead

8

You fill my heart with your song, with your

Bari Bass

4 5 6

song, with your song. x

your with your song. song.

1993

JAN. 20-24
1220 MI.

SUN & SING
GRAND BAHAMA ISLAND

RISING STAR
AUCKLAND, NZ

JULY 13
7605 MI.

AHA
AUCKLAND, NZ

JULY 15-17
7605 MI.

AUG. 18-20
538 MI.

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NEW ORLEANS, LA

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