

November/December 2001

THE HARMONIZER

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE BARBERSHOP HARMONY SOCIETY



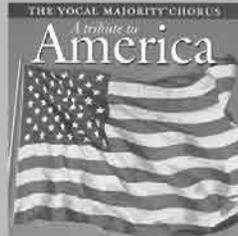
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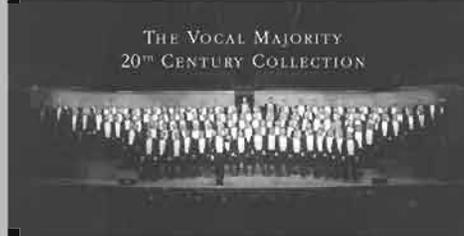
UNITED VOICES

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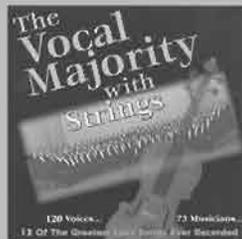
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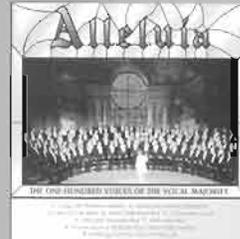
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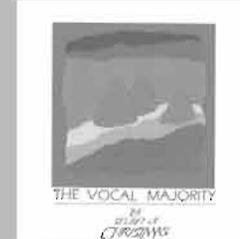
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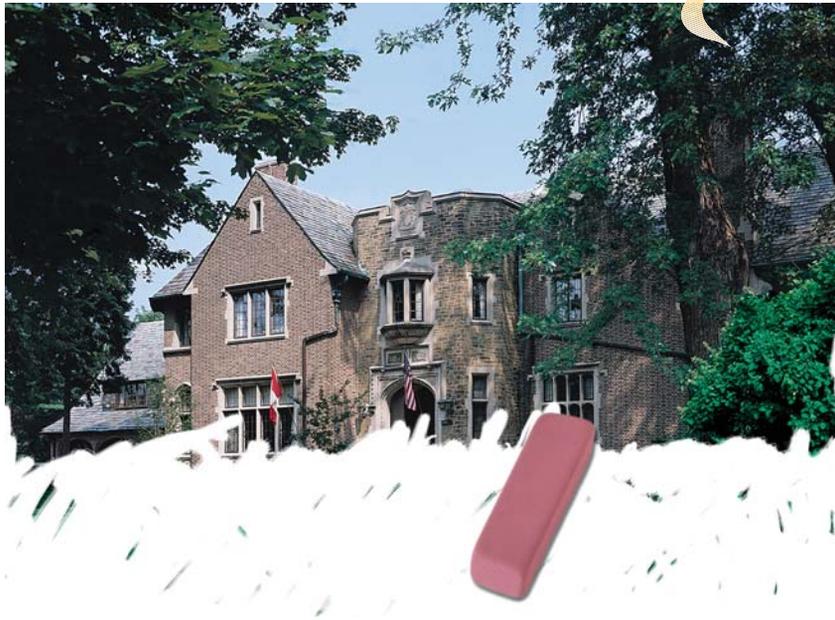
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THE HARMONIZER

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE BARBERSHOP HARMONY SOCIETY

November/
December
2001
VOLUME
LXI
NUMBER
6

HARMONY HALL ISN'T going away, but traditional barbershop is, according to famed arranger Burt Szabo. He tells how basic characteristics of barbershop—even some that we supposedly all agree on—are disappearing from the contest stage.



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



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I had a dream, dear ...

The dream was so vivid, but really, it was the silliest thing. I dreamed that I was a long-time member of SPAMNIBS—The Society for the Preservation of A cappella Music, Not Including Barber Shop.

In my dream, we had the most unique thing going for us. I dreamed we sang doo-wop, rock, Broadway, all of the '50s and '60s gems, and we just loved to sing jazz and big band swing numbers. I recall that everything we sang was in that very up-to-date, a cappella style.

As my dream unfolded, I could sense among our “in-crowd” a restlessness with our purpose or our reason for being, and would you believe ... we began dabbling in barbershop harmony! I could see our most important groups, our heroes, and our musical leaders as they began arranging and singing the old songs. “How ridiculous is that,” I thought, “to sing these old songs with simple melodies, understandable lyrics, and harmonies that could be sung by the common man?”

The saddest part of my dream was that we were hearing from all over North America that our folks would hire groups to perform on their “not including barbershop” shows, and that those same groups would take the money, then proceed to perform a preponderance of old-fashioned barbershop harmony. How tragic! They must not have known that we were specifically selling a non-barbershop show. Our audiences didn't know how to react and our members seemed somehow disappointed.

The next part that I remember was knowing about an informal group within SPAMNIBS (they were called “NIBBERS”) who were looked on as conservative prudes or even radicals. In my dream, some of the former “giants” who were known guardians of the “NIB” style, were shunned and castigated by the “in-crowd.”

But then ... my dream suddenly got happy when I saw the SPAMNIBS leaders re-write the rules with the promise of tightening up the “NIB” style. They agreed by definition to penalize any and all ringing chords. Maybe in my next dream, I'll find out the rest of the story.

After I awakened, I rejoiced for my beloved Barbershop Harmony Society, for the recent restatement of the description of our style and for the integrity of our performers, arrangers, and judges.

I thought about our unique style and wondered: If it is the “old songs” and our unique style of harmonizing them that has been the catalyst to change lives, to create an unspeakably wonderful fellowship and to provide the joy, the fun and the achievement we share as a barbershop family—is it worth preserving? A pretty important question, don't you think?

Let's harmonize
(a good old-fashioned
barbershop song)



*Is it worth
preserv-
ing? A
pretty im-
portant
questions,
don't you
think?*

THE HARMONIZER

WWW.SPEBSQSA.ORG/HARMONIZER

November/December 2001



Volume LXI Number 6

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.



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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More origins evidence

More support for black origins of barbershop theory

In the July/August issue of *The Harmonizer*, Jim Henry explores evidence suggesting African-Americans originated barbershop quartet singing. (The article was brought to my attention by my brother, Daniel, a member of the **Baystatesmen Barbershop Chorus** of Norwood, Mass.) I'm aware of another early example of close harmony quartet singing identified as a black musical idiom.

Ethelbert Nevin (1862-1901) may be largely forgotten today, but in his time he was a fabulously successful American composer of "salon" (light classical) music. In 1899, Nevin composed a piano piece entitled "At Home," which describes a June Night in Washington, D.C. A poem used as an epigraph includes the following: "Outside the garden / A group of Negroes passing in the street / Sing with voices that swim like great slow gliding fishes".

The piece consists of a lilting 6/8 interrupted by an interlude in African-American style. One section is marked "Banjo" and another is marked simply "Quartet." The range of the writing is unequivocally that of male voices. The tune is mildly syncopated by the pattern: eighth, quarter, eighth. The harmonies lack the chromatically altered tones that we associate with barbershop harmony. It is possible, however, that Nevin may accurately reflect an earlier, simpler style of male quartet singing.

If any reader should wish to examine it, it is included in my anthology *American Piano Classics* (Dover ISBN 0-486-41377-2).

JOSEPH SMITH
New York

NoDoz in print

ell, thanks a lot; I started reading the "Road to Nashville" at bedtime, and of course hadda stay up until I had devoured the entire thing! Super idea.

JIM BAGBY
Bari, Rural Route 4



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Thanks for two great years; there's much left to do

As I write my last column as Society president, it's been nearly a month since our world changed dramatically. Sadly, we lost one Barbershopper, Colonel Canfield D. (Bud) Boone, a relatively new member of the Centreville (Virginia) Chapter. Our hearts and prayers go out to his family. Our thanks and prayers also go to the many workers who have tried to bring order back into this chaos, including at least one New York policeman who is a Barbershopper.

It's hard to know just how many of us were indirectly affected by the events of that tragic day, knowing family or close associates who may have been more directly affected. I know that each of you, in your own way, will see to it that music brings us together as we pick up the pieces. Music is what we have to offer and do very well, and, as we've seen, music heals many wounds.

It's hard to believe that nearly two years have gone by—what a tremendous thrill (and a lot of hard work) it's been to be your president. My only wish is that we had been able to make more progress on our way to becoming a larger Society. In fact, we've taken a step back. However, at the same time we've lost members, we've

started a number of new chapters.

Our goal was 100 new chapters by the end of this year. We have chartered more than 30 new chapters and have nearly 40

licensed sites. That's progress, but not what we'd hoped for. What happened? We didn't work hard enough getting new sites. I cannot place any blame on our headquarters staff, which has worked hard to get new sites. However, it takes a lot of cooperation from regular members to make it happen.

Have you done your part in obtaining new members? Have you looked around to see if there is a need for a new chapter nearby? It takes *you* to make it happen. It's also not a one-year effort, but requires a constant awareness and a desire to *Share the Dream*. Thanks to all who have been in there pitching to get new members and chapters.

During the past year, we've been able to take pride in the broader role of Harmony Foundation in "Keeping The Dream Alive" by channeling funds into our communities in support of the music development of youth. We're not alone in this effort, and as the largest men's singing organization in the world, we're making a difference.

It was indeed a thrill last January to hear the efforts of one major youth program in Florida that produced good harmony among the schools and resulted in an outstanding high school quartet contest. Those champions blessed us with their presence again in Nashville. And, this was just one of many programs around the United States and Canada that has been underwritten by Barbershoppers to yield outstanding results.

At this time, Judy and I would like to wish all a very happy holiday season and the best wishes for a Happy New Year. Thank you all for your help and comments during the past two years. May God bless you.



It's hard to believe that nearly two years have gone by—what a tremendous thrill it's been.

Chuck Watson



Rock groups make barbershop retro-hip

“It’s Hip to be Square.” That Huey Lewis and the News song describes what seems to be a trend these days: Barbershop quartets entertaining with top stars in today’s music scene.

Case in point:

Too Square, a quartet in the Wilkes Barre (Pennsylvania) Chapter, performed on the same bill as the Stone Temple Pilots at a rock concert

held Aug. 4 in Latrobe, Pa. Lead Walter Griffith, tenor Ed Asbury, baritone Jack Muchler and bass Tom Roberts performed six sets of four songs each.

Then there was what Mike Conklin of the *Chicago Tribune* (Aug. 17, 2001) described as “Four white guys in their 60s, dressing in black tuxedo pants, white

dress shirts and red vests, bringing down the House of Blues by singing ‘Oh, Please Mr. Columbus Turn the Ship Around’—a cappella.” Those four white guys were members of Milwaukee’s **Shear Delight**: tenor John “Bo” Gibson, lead Frank Marzocco, Dick Grahn, bass, and Ron Schilling, baritone. They made history as the first barbershop quartet to sing in the Chicago House of Blues. And they did it for 1,300 mostly screaming women.

EVER HAD WOMEN SCREAM while you perform? They do when you’re opening for Russell Crowe.



STONE TEMPLE PILOTS invited Too Square to sing for their audience.

Turns out Russell Crowe—the Oscar-winning actor who also has a band named 30 Odd Foot of Grunts—asked for a barbershop quartet to join the warm-up acts for one of the band’s August performances at Chicago’s House of Blues. Shear Delight got the call because they were one of the only quartets that directory assistance could find in the area—and they actually answered the phone the Sunday morning the call came. The House of Blues manager booked them sight unseen and they were a big hit. In fact, Crowe asked the group to come back for a second night.

“It was crazy. They were yelling, ‘We love you’ and all kinds of things to us. If I was 30 years younger, I would’ve jumped into the crowd,” Marzocco told the *Tribune*. “Every time we mentioned [Crowe’s] name, they got even more excited.”

These quartet performances brought barbershop harmony to a new audience in unusual settings. See, it *is* hip to be square!

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New Martinsville, WV	Licensed 4/24
Bradford, PA	Licensed 2/16
Grand County, CO	Chartered 4/25

Convention update

It is not yet a done deal, but we're working on having **The King Singers** with us in Portland. They are interested in putting on a workshop on Monday afternoon and a concert on Tuesday night. If you haven't had the opportunity to witness their vocal mastery, you won't want to miss this show. Stay tuned and be ready to get your order in as soon as tickets go on sale.

Portland has a light-rail system all through its downtown area and convention attendees will be able to use this rail system *free* during our convention week. This will allow you to move at your own pace to many convention hotels, to the Convention Center and also to the Rose Garden, site of the contest sessions. There will still be busing to these venues from any outlying hotels.

Look for full details about the convention in the January/February 2002 issue of *The Harmonizer*.

Champions inducted into hall of fame

Barbershop harmony gained another measure of true recognition with the induction of SPEBSQSA 2001 champions **Michigan Jake** and the Northbrook **New Tradition Chorus** into the Vocal Group Hall of Fame. Sweet Adelines champions A Cappella Gold and the Melodeers chorus were also inducted. Barbershop champions will be inducted each year.

There was positive sentiment among the other inductees, too. "I've always thought barbershop should be recognized," said Dave Mahoney, one of the original Four Aces.

Ceremonies were held at the VGHOFF in Sharon, Pa., Oct. 4. Formal inductions were conducted in the afternoon, and that evening the new Hall of Fame members staged an outdoor concert. The show lasted more than three hours, and featured a wide range of music. Michigan Jake was given two slots on the show—the only group to have that opportunity.

Mary Wilson of the Supremes was the emcee for most of the induction ceremonies, assisted by co-host Greg Loescher of *Goldmine* magazine. Wilson also opened the evening show with an a cappella rendition of "The Star Spangled Banner." Other groups

inducted included, The Pied Pipers, The Weavers, The Chordettes, The Four Aces, The Four Freshmen, The Lennon Sisters, The McGuire Sisters, Gladys Knight & The Pips, The Lettermen, Smokey Robinson & The Miracles, The Vogues, The Bee Gees, The Eagles and The Oak Ridge Boys.

Without question, one of the highlights of the event was hearing the original Chordettes perform their signature song, "Mr. Sandman." The ladies also sang some great barbershop harmony on "Runnin' Wild" and "Wait 'Til The Sun Shines, Nellie."

The Vocal Group Hall of Fame now features a separate Barbershop Hall of

Fame, located in its own building directly across the street. The barbershop facility was opened in August.

Sharon is on the western border of the state, halfway between Pittsburgh and Cleveland. VGHOFF, 98 East State St., Sharon, PA 16146; phone 800-753-1648; and on the web at www.vocalhalloffame.com



Michigan Jake and The Lennon Sisters mugged for the camera backstage at the Thursday night concert.



CONVENTIONS INTERNATIONAL

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

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2003
ALBUQUERQUE, N.M.
January 19–26

2004
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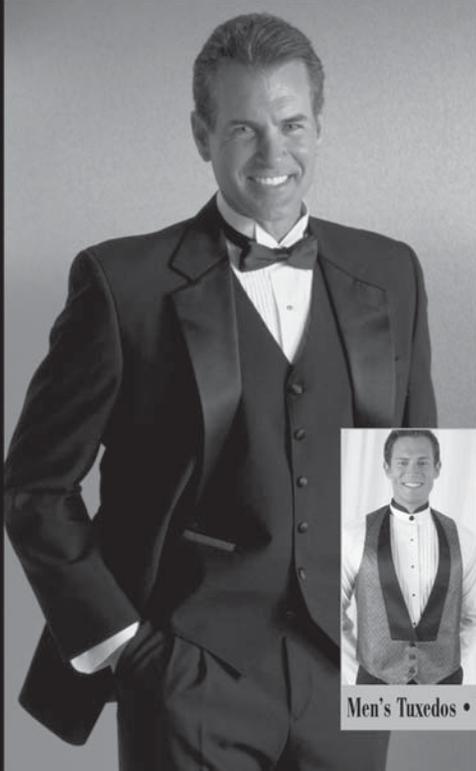
If you're recording audiotapes, you'll need a mechanical license. The 2001 statutory rate is 7.55¢ per song, per copy. The rate is expected to rise next year. For video recordings and filming—even if you're giving the tapes away—you'll need a synchronization license. There is no standardized fee for this license; they can range from 10¢ per copy to \$300 or more just for use of a song.

Most publishers collect these fees through the Harry Fox Agency in New York. For detailed information, go to the Society website www.spebsqsa.org/arrangements/copyright and download the "Copyright Laws & SPEBSQSA" brochure or call 800-876-7464.

Get chapter accident insurance

In February, a brochure was sent to all chapters outlining low-cost insurance for chapter members to be provided by the chapter. All U.S. and Canadian chapters are eligible. The policy includes accident medical expense and accidental death and dismemberment coverage, including dental. Premiums are due annually and there is no deductible. The cost is \$1.60 per member plus a \$5 administrative charge per chapter. The chapter must cover all eligible members. To request another brochure/application or for more information, contact Frank Santarelli, director of finance and administration at 800-876-SING x8450, or fsantarelli@spebsqsa.org ■

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HARMONY HOW-TO

Bill Biffle, Harmony College
"Tune it or Die" instructor



Learn how to carry a tune in a bucket

Or, the principles of singing in tune and locking barbershop chords

Singing truly in tune is a lofty goal, but it's one of the most important skills any musician can master. All music—but especially our music—must be pristinely in tune to be really good. Below are some tips that will help you achieve better intonation.

The first—and most important—step is to become a better singer. Your voice is your instrument. If you don't have adequate control of it, you simply can't sing in tune. Learn to make a well-supported, freely produced, fully resonant tone throughout your full range at every volume level. How? Take voice lessons. If you wanted to learn to play the oboe, you would probably find a teacher. Your voice presents the same challenge. Just because you've been using it your whole life doesn't mean that you have the skill to make the fine adjustments required to truly sing in tune.

Here are a few "tricks of the trade" every singer should know.

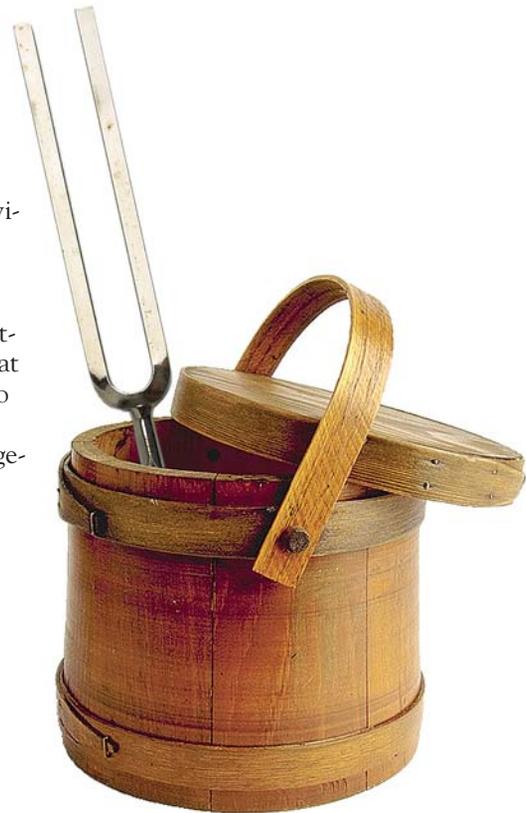
- Choose solid barbershop songs and arrangements that have a good percentage of barbershop seventh chords.
- Choose music that's well within the capabilities of the singers in the ensemble.
- Sing with an engaged, active, "lifted" face.
- Maintain the placement of your tone in a high, forward place. This, together with a steady flow of air that's free from muscular interference, will give essential "ring" to your tone.
- Sing clear, recognizable vowels and match them within the ensemble.
- To the extent you can, without creating undue vocal tension, match the tone quality (timbre) of the voices.
- Lift the pitch of every root and fifth (in the chord being sung, not in the key of the song).
- Sing each repeated pitch slightly higher than the previous one.

Leads

- Listen primarily to your part while singing, concentrating on maintaining the key of the song. Practice this at home by singing your line while stopping frequently to check the tonal center (key) against a pitch pipe.
- Mark every "do," "re," "la" and "ti" in the entire arrangement. Lift the pitch of each of these notes slightly.
- Lift the pitch of all raised accidentals.

Basses

- Mark every fifth in the chord that's in your line. Sing



these pitches slightly higher than you're used to. (Again, this is the fifth of the chord being sung, not of the key the song is in.)

- Sing your line like a melody, lifting and connecting each the note.

Baritones and tenors

- Sing all fifths and roots of the chord slightly more fully than the other notes.
- Slightly lighten your tone and lessen your volume as the notes go higher.

Other helpful stuff

- Get in shape. Singing is an athletic act. If you tire, you'll sing out of tune.
- Hear in your "mind's ear" the pitch before you sing it. At the least, do

Before you learn an arrangement, think:

- Can the lead(s) sing the melody all the way through, finishing in the proper key?
- Does any part contain lots of awkward leaps?
- Does any part contain notes that are too high or too low to be sung easily?
- Are there any sudden shifts in the "key feeling"? (Check out the chorus of "Always"!)

this at the start of every phrase.

- Break the tyranny of "high" and "low" notes. There is, after all, nothing inherently high or low about any note. On the piano they're "right" and "left" notes. On a violin, they're "in" and "out." Try pointing down to "high" notes and up to "low" notes.
- Learn to truly listen as you sing. Build your awareness of the sounds that you and the rest of the ensemble are making. It's a learned skill; learn to do it.

Last, seek continual improvement as a singer and as a musician. Sing as well as you can every time you sing. Better singing produces better intonation.

Go and sin no more. ■

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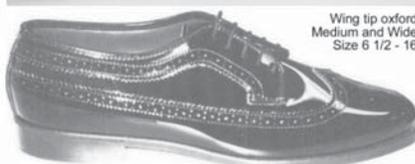


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Why we sing, reason #61: To embarrass our kids ...

... or not. In any case, it's time to get your Singing Valentines program off the ground

stood there on the badminton court frozen in my stance. The racket dropped from my hand and I could feel my face turning a lovely shade of tomato red. I could've easily been sliced up and put in a salad. The birdie from my badminton game dropped to my feet unnoticed as four tuxedoed men, followed by half my high school, strode into my gym class.

Closing my eyes, I thought back to my morning. My father had given me a ride to school like always, but today it had been different. Today he wasn't wearing his usual button-up shirt and khaki pants. He wasn't carrying a million papers and didn't have his stethoscope tossed on the passenger seat. Today he was all done out in a tux, and I thought I saw a little makeup here and there.

Now he was standing in my gym class with three of his barber-shop buddies, each sweet note dancing in the air above my head. I thought to myself "I will never forgive him for this one" as he winked at me and continued his song "Heart of my Heaaaaaart ..."

When he'd finished his serenade, he chuckled to himself as a Polaroid was snapped and a rose presented. Then, just as suddenly as they came, they left, their polished shoes clicking on the cold gym floor. I tried to go back to my badminton game unnoticed, but a million people flocked around me and I was trapped on all sides. I tried to camouflage my face behind my bright red rose, but they attacked.

"Tooooooovahh!!!" someone screeched a distorted form of my name. "Oh my gosh, that was like the cutest thing ever Tov," another girl proclaimed. "Hey Burstein, wasn't that your dad?" the gym teacher asked. The questions poured out, and I got the nerve to look at the people who'd encircled me.

What I saw amazed me: People looked at me, their faces sticky from falling tears. Guys looked on in awe, and teachers from surrounding classrooms had left their rooms to come hear the end of the song. My song.

I didn't feel so odd after that, and eventually my gym class returned to their nets and rackets. But the rest of the day I was approached by people about that song. Teachers and students from every grade came up to me to tell me a story about their dad or to tell me how much it touched them to see such a wonderful gift or just to say they thought it was sweet.

I began to feel pretty special and on top of that—I realized it wasn't just me who got a gift. My father's singing had touched so many people that day it was amazing. I was proud of my little Polaroid of my father, me, and his barber-shop quartet. And quite honored to have their voices ringing off the gym. But I still think I should use this as an opportunity to issue a warning: Dad, just wait till I get you back!

—Tovah Burstein 15-year-old daughter of Sandy Burstein, proud bass



Here's the Polaroid taken just after the "incident."

Hearts & Dollars ... Singing Valentines fill chapter coffers

Some chapters may net more income from their Singing Valentines program than they do from their annual shows. There's certainly far less expense associated with the Singing Valentines program.

Now is the time to dust off this year's records, get the chairman and committee activated and prepare for Thursday, Feb. 14, 2002. Here are a few reminders for both veteran and first-time programs.

- Be sure the chapter has a copy of the Singing Valentines Manual (stock no. 4058 / \$10).
- Register your chapter at www.singingvalentines.com.
- Select quartets and get them rehearsing. If you are using non-registered quartets, i.e. groups formed just for the occasion, audition voices to combine singers into the best possible foursomes.
- Plan advertising and promotion well in advance. Look for free radio and TV air time to promote your program.
- Be sure to get photos of deliveries to important community figures and politicians; alert the media to those deliveries.
- Re-establish contact with florists and candy suppliers.
- Order any other supplies needed for the program.
- Arrange for special phone lines for orders, if needed.
- Determine whether you need to lease cell phones or if members will volunteer to use their own. Communication is vital on delivery day.
- Determine reimbursement for mileage and gas for drivers.
- Plan a post-delivery party for all the people involved.

Singing Valentines need not be a hassle. But in order to avoid problems, you must plan well and well in advance. Any unusual deliveries or particularly emotional Valentines make great stories for *The Harmonizer*, especially when accompanied by a top quality photo. It's the day for love, so love what you're doing, and your customers will love you. ■

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A long wait ...

They were confident, but they weren't counting on anything

As I inched along the aisle, kicking knees and almost hitting a girl with my camera bag, I knew I was failing at my attempts to be subtle. But I didn't care—I had to get in position for the one last shot I really wanted. I wanted to click the shutter on a well-known face after Roger Lewis uttered those critical words:

“And your silver medalist is ...”

I said nothing as I settled into an empty seat in front of **New Tradition Chorus** director Jay Giallombardo and his family. Inside the crowded auditorium, people were milling about as they waited for the last performing chorus to be announced. In this section, nearly everyone was wearing white—either a crisp pseudo-military jacket or, among family members, a white “Eight is Enough” T-shirt.

A lot of history was behind that slogan.

The “Eight” referred to the number of consecutive silver medals Northbrook's New Tradition Chorus has earned in international competition, not to mention five bronze medals before that. The chorus had come as close to the gold as two and four points, but hadn't yet cracked the **Masters of Harmony/Vocal Majority/Alexandria Harmonizers** winning rotation. The “Enough” on the shirts referred to the frustration of consistently being that good, yet never winning the contest outright.

All the buzz I'd heard leading up to the contest led me to place my bets on Northbrook—that's why I spent the morning following the chorus around with a camera. But I had Jim Bagby following Alexandria this morning as well, just in case. Now, I was wondering whether either of us would write a story about the champion, after watching the **Toronto Northern**



JACKETS OFF, to keep their uniforms wrinkle-free during the long ride to the contest site, chorus members maintained their focus. Each man's military dress uniform included his name badge, “NT” patches, and a ribbon for each appearance he'd made on the International stage. Each uniform also included an additional gold ribbon, for the medal each man expected to take home.

Lights positively slay the audience with the most dramatic ballad and funniest parody of the contest. The white suits in this section saw that performance, too. I knew I wasn't the only person sitting here who wasn't certain the silver streak would end at eight.

“We're going to do what we always do”

When I met up with the chorus at the hotel ballroom earlier that morning, the mood was upbeat and relaxed. As the men put on their uniforms before their vocal warm-up, I chatted with a few chorus members about how they felt.

“Really good. We're ready,” was a typical response. There was confidence in their eyes and voices when



Lorin May
Editor of *The Harmonizer*

they said it, but also a reluctance to say much more than that. No one seemed inclined to make bold predictions or predict audience reaction, and there wasn't a single word about the judges the whole morning. If they were thinking about that type of thing, they weren't talking about it. Every word, every moment together was focused on the things they could do something about.

After a long vocal warm up, Jay entered the ballroom and addressed the chorus.

"Today's a great day," he said softly but enthusiastically. "We're going to do what we always do."

That was pretty much the whole pep talk. No big speeches or chest-thumping to be seen from him or any member of the chorus. For the next while, they ran through a variety of sections and did some full run-throughs, heard a reminder or two about what they'd rehearsed, and—who would've thought—just did what they always do. Hardly an adjustment. Other than some instructions about not being thrown off by the acoustics of the arena, they were given nothing special to

remember—just a reminder to perform on stage the same way they were performing at this moment.

The instructions were followed. I watched them perform the set multiple times in the hotel ballroom before watching their actual performance from the wings. I saw no change—up or down—in the energy level, the facial expressions, or the vocal timbre. It was as fun to watch the tenth time this morning as it was to watch the first time. The music was as precise and stirring as the twirling guns, and I still couldn't get over how cool 139 guys looked in those military uniforms.

The only difference with the on-stage performance was that instead of a smattering of applause in the ballroom, the response was a deafening roar. It was the roar of thousands who appreciated not only a great performance, but a crowd that in large measure hoped this would finally end a streak of silver medals that was getting a bit old.



A FEW MEMBERS went out of their way to wish their friends in the Alexandria Harmonizers good luck as they passed in the halls before performing. When it was Northbrook's turn in the "on deck" position (below), they did a mostly silent run-through of their set.



"Thanks, but we've heard that before"

After the performance, I followed the chorus back to get its portrait taken. The mood was no different from before the performance—upbeat but anything other than overconfident. If anyone was predicting their eventual placement, I didn't hear it. Eventually they were ready for the two shots taken of every competitor: one with and one without the trophy placed in front. I took out my notebook in anticipation of recording comments or murmuring that I supposed would come when the trophy was placed in front.

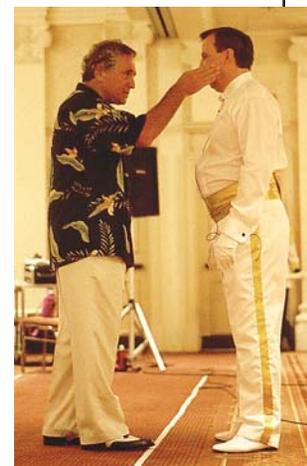
Not even a peep. The trophy sat in front in total silence before and after the camera clicked. I got the feeling that no one wanted to jinx the performance.

My suspicion was confirmed after they finally broke formation and I approached one younger member. "The buzz I hear backstage is that you outdid Alexandria," I told him. His facial expression didn't change.

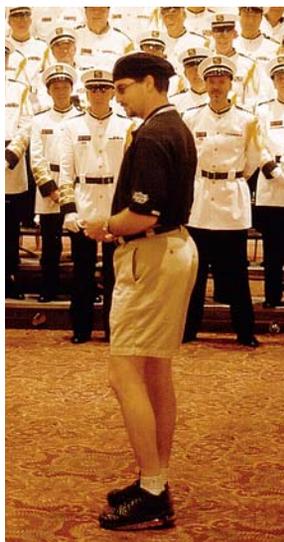
"They're defending champions," he replied, unmoved. "We may have to out-sing them by 30 points to win by a couple of points."

At first, the response struck me as a bit cynical, albeit understandable. Then I looked at the ribbons on this uniform, which indicated this was his third performance on the international stage with the chorus. That meant he was there in Anaheim, where he got to hear the crowd gush in the halls after their "Les Miserables" package. Again and again, friends and strangers told them it was their year and they'd probably won the gold. That gushing continued until the announce-

LEGENDARY COACH DON CLAUSE, who had bowed out of the Society spotlight for several years, returned to prominence in a highly influential role as the New Tradition's main coach.



THE VOCAL MAJORITY was performing or helping out everywhere you turned in Nashville, and the VM's incomparable "Beatnik Mike" Borts likewise represented his chorus at Northbrook's pre-contest warm-up. He delivered a Haiku: "Yah, eight is enough / This is the year for Northbrook / Turn silver to gold."



ment that the performance was good enough for their seventh consecutive silver medal. They finished two points—1/15 point per judge, per song—out of first place.

The look now on this young man's face spoke volumes: *Thanks for thinking we gave a gold-medal performance, but we've heard that before.*

Weren't you supposed to do something?

That's why I wanted to be near Jay when the second-place winner was announced. Whatever the result, I figured the picture of him would capture the emotions of the whole chorus.

After the last chorus finished, we were treated to a stirring performance by The Vocal Majority. Then, Roger Lewis finally came on stage to announce the medalists. An entire section of white shirts sat up in attention.

"Your fifth-place bronze medalist ... **The Great American Chorus!**" The section joined in the applause and offered some attaboys for their fellow Illinois District competitors. I double-checked all my camera settings one more time.

THE BACKSTAGE VIEW wasn't the best seat in the house, but it did drive home one point to the eyes and ears: This chorus performs exactly the same way it rehearses.



The trophy stood in front of the chorus in silence, before and after the camera clicked.

"Your fourth-place bronze medalist ... **The Ambassadors of Harmony!**" More applause from the white shirts. I set the focus on a lady who was the same distance away as Jay.

"Your third-place bronze medalist ... The Alexandria Harmonizers!" Whispered comments rippled through the white coats. Two of Northbrook's eight silvers were to Alexandria's gold. Not this year. I put my finger on the shutter and got ready to turn and shoot.

"Your silver medalist ... the Toronto Northern Lights!"

Click!

A loud scream went up from the Toronto section and murmurs again rippled through the white coats. Jay hardly flinched. *Wait a minute—weren't you supposed to do something?* His wife looked like she could hardly contain a premature explosion. His son rested his elbows on his knees and plugged his ears as if to hold in the steam that wanted to erupt out.

Come on, Jay! Certainly you don't think you took sixth? What are you thinking about?

Then he quickly stood up and immediately sat down for no good reason. *Aha, there's the pent-up energy.* I wound the camera and decided to forget about subtlety. I stood to shoot.

"And your 2001 International Champion ... The New Tradition Chorus!"

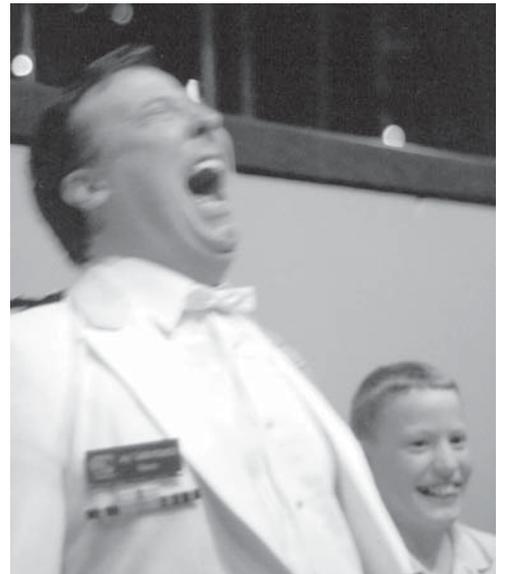
The ensuing scream said it all. It wasn't the scream of a few moments of pent-up emotion—it was years of frustration from near misses vanishing forever, with euphoria filling the void. It was the sight of a monkey leaping off one man's back, a signal that "Got a second?" jokes had gotten their last snicker.

The scream photo turned out to be blurred by movement, but it was worth at least a thousand words toward expressing what it felt like to no longer be the best chorus never to win it all. Nearly two decades of hard work could be summed up in two of the most beautiful words these men had ever heard:

International Champion. ■



AND THE SILVER MEDALIST is ... not the New Tradition. Even after hearing Toronto announced, Jay Gialombardo would not celebrate until he actually heard "Gold Medal" and "New Tradition" pass through Roger Lewis' lips. When those words came, the emotions were unrestrained.





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WEEKS AFTER WINNING the international chorus contest, The New Tradition Chorus had already tackled another goal—recording its new Christmas CD.

Enjoy the journey

Winning contests is great, but the path to achievement can be a reward in itself

TOM NICHOLSON

In Nashville, the **New Tradition Chorus** achieved its long-sought-after goal of winning the chorus championship. Placing second consistently was never as gratifying as many might think. After all, second is pretty good and eight second places is consistently pretty good. But our goal was to perform at a high enough level to win decisively. The question was how to do it. During our long campaign toward the gold, we evolved as a chapter. We tried a lot of different ideas, but these are some that got results.

Savor the little victories. In the early days, winning was our primary goal. That single-minded focus caused some members to overlook sources of satisfaction along the way. We changed our focus to “Enjoy the Journey.” We strived to make each practice, run-through, or performance better than the last. This gave us little victories each time we rehearsed or performed.



Rich Nelson
Award-winning editor of the Northbrook chapter bulletin, *Harmony Gazette*

Focus on positives, not negatives. We recognized that performing excellence depends as much on mental focus and discipline as it does on physical singing skills. We incorporated ideas from Olympic gold medalist Lannie Bassham’s book, *With Winning in Mind*. Some of those concepts include “Self-image and performance are always equal,” and “To change your performance, you must change your self-image.”

Negativity was replaced by positive reinforcement, from our director on down. It’s a simple thing, going from “You guys are flat.” to saying to yourself, “I always

sing on the high side of a note unless the position in the chord forces me lower.” In the heat of final preparations for Nashville, music director Jay Giallombardo was consistently positive in his musical leadership as we absorbed more and more detail about the performance plan.

Learn to sing better. We constantly cultivate our identity as singers. Our chorus warm-up has changed drastically. We went from ten minutes of vocalizing to 30 minutes, including a review of good singing techniques. This included reminders each practice of singing posture, breath support, vowel matching, certain problem vowels, desired voice placement, incorporating resonators and vowel compliments.

This was very beneficial because most of us initially see ourselves as average singers. We need to be constantly reminded of the things that a professional singer would do automatically. This improves the physical singing skills, as well as our self-image as singers.

Find a common emotional reference. To ensure that all members perform a song from the same perspective, we often listen, with eyes closed, to a narration of the conditions and emotions that led to the creation of the song. This enables us to use a common field of reference, which then can be interpreted by our own emotions as we strive to reflect a unified message.

A solid emotional plan was critical in selecting our



contest set for Nashville, as it has been in past years. We decided to go back to the "Soldier Package" of 1993. Sixty percent of the current chorus was not on stage in Calgary, so for many this was a new package. As we planned this year's performance, we were concerned about being able to re-capture that moment at the end of "Baby's Prayer At Twilight" as it happened in Calgary in 1993. We opted instead for a powerful version of "White Cliffs Of Dover." "Something About a Soldier" would go first with all its spit and polish; the ballad would conclude the set with its powerful emotion and vision for the world. We had the package.

Get solid outside help. Over the past several years, we've been able to benefit from some of the wonderful coaches in the Society and owe a great deal to them. These coaches helped us increase our skills by encouraging us to keep learning and helping us see the barbershop craft from new perspectives. Ev Nau ensured that SP matched the phrase of the song. Jim Casey, through individual and group singing lessons, showed us how to maximize resonators and to sing within the unit sound. Steve Jaimison gave us new techniques for generating energy and introduced the concept of complementary vowels. Don Clause, the man with the golden ear, fine-tuned phrases and interpretation to enhance audience enjoyment. Gerry Geis introduced us to new techniques

of getting inside the character of a song. Greg Clancy reminded us of our past accomplishments in presentation and inspired confidence in us that "if we win singing, we'll win the contest."

This year, as in the past, we also reached beyond the Society for coaching help. Mark Raymond is a Chicago-area rifle corps coach who helped us develop new rifle and flag routines. Mark joined the chapter and coached our front row, as well as performing himself. When the rifles first flew in rehearsal, a great roar went up from the chorus. We knew the audience would explode when this presentation was combined with the music.

Improve chapter administration. Several recent presidents pushed the chapter to new levels in specific areas. Back in 1995, President Mike Barry motivated us to sell more tickets to our shows, which improved our financial condition and increased the satisfaction we received from sharing our music with more people.

In 1997 and '98, President Stan Spencer broadened our perspective of a successful barbershop chapter to include what he called the three M's: Music, Membership, and Money. This focus helped to keep our eyes on the big picture—Who are we today? Who do we want to be tomorrow?

Work as a team. The chapter has many jobs to be done, both creative and

administrative. The tendency in many volunteer organizations is for a dedicated few to take on way too much work. Back in the mid-'90s, our music team transformed the musical leadership of the chapter into a true teamwork process. That approach has spread to several areas of chapter administration, including our presentation team (while we get wonderful coaching on executing a plan, virtually all of our presentation plans are developed in-house), uniform team, show committee, and membership team. These are all big jobs that take the combined efforts of several dedicated people.

Maintain continuity in leadership.

Incoming officers start attending all board meetings immediately upon being elected, giving them two to three months to become familiar with present board programs and attitudes, before they actually take over on Jan. 1.

Nourish your support network.

Our Sweet Traditions women's auxiliary consists of spouses, girlfriends and friends of the chorus. It has made a huge difference to the spirit and finances of the chorus. The money they have made through their bake and craft sales at our concerts has provided the money to (1) purchase our own risers; (2) obtain a very good quality sound system, which we use during practice; (3) acquire digital recording equipment used to create learning tapes.

This year in Nashville, as at many previous international contests, the Sweet Traditions put on a pep rally for the chorus to express their support. These pep rallies are one of our strongest traditions surrounding our participation in international contests. We are very proud of the Sweet Traditions and appreciate their unwavering support.

Focus on membership growth. Following the principal of the "three M's," we put as much emphasis on sustaining and growing membership as we do on our Music program. In addition to routine new member recruiting, we hold several special events a year. Last summer, we compiled a list of about 60 present and former members who were sitting on the sidelines for one reason or another. That fall, we had a reunion night that brought back several dozen New Tradition alumni for a rehearsal and a night of fun. Many of these men re-joined the chorus and

Motivation

Perhaps the most frequent question members hear is, "How do you stay motivated to continuously perform at a high level, year in and year out?" How do you motivate or encourage regular attendance, thorough learning of your part (outside rehearsal), individuals working to improve their singing?

The chapter leadership recognizes that barbershopping is a hobby. Excellence requires hard work, but for people to attend every week and invest the kind of effort they do, it has to be enjoyable. Every week, we work to make that rehearsal a positive, satisfying experience in its own right. Good music and positive feedback are a hard combination to beat. Add some talented musical leadership and the positive feedback is virtually self-fulfilling.

For another thing, we are constantly preparing for something. There aren't any periods that lend themselves to slacking off or getting out of the habit of coming to practice. Each year, we have a spring show, a holiday show, district contest and the international contest. Then there are usually two or three performances around Christmas, and other performances during the year. We also have at least one weekend retreat, and perhaps a CD recording. Members' focus is constantly on a forthcoming event. If you miss a practice, you get the uneasy feeling you've missed out on something. We don't learn a new song just for the sake of learning it. We learn it because we are going to perform it at an upcoming event.

competed with us in Nashville.

We embraced and implemented the Sweet Adelines' "Ready, Set ... Grow!" program and it worked extremely well. It worked well because we set up start dates at the beginning of the year and recruited for them. This gives prospects a chance to experience the barbershop-style singing in a non-threatening environment. Our retention of those who have gone through the program has been very good.

We are fortunate to have a terrific member running the program in Rob Calhoun. Rob is an orchestra teacher and is skilled at imparting knowledge without intimidation. The bottom line is that we are feeding new members into the chorus who have gone through several weeks of barbershop fundamentals, and are able to hit the risers running.

Know how to introduce new music. We try to provide the tools so that riser time is not spent learning notes and words. High-quality learning tapes and music scores are provided prior to con-

Placing second consistently was never as gratifying as many might think. After all, second is pretty good and eight second places is consistently pretty good.

ing on the new song. This enables members to be prepared to focus on phrasing, interpretation and blending with their neighbors.

There used to be a major focus on getting off the music—"No music on the risers after the third week." That has shifted to encouraging continued use of the music, not as a substitute for learning notes and words, but to take notes on performance details during rehearsal, so that these too can be more quickly committed to memory. One aspect of our commitment to excellence is the commitment to detail that it requires.

Have fun while you work. Make

tests and performances. These are the typical part-predominant format similar to the Society tapes. They also demonstrate the expected interpretation, dynamics and balance. They are much more than just notes and words. We might do a run-through reading the music, but generally we try to give out the tapes and music a week or two prior to actually work-

no mistake, singing in this chorus is a heck of a lot of fun. A long-time Chicago area Barbershopper relocated closer to our chapter in Northbrook a few years ago and decided to sing with us because we were much closer to his new home. Not realizing he changed choruses because of the move, I asked him why it took him so long to join us. His answer was, "I would have done it sooner if I'd realized you had so much fun."

On rehearsal nights, the fun doesn't stem from social chatting. We try to cover that during our 15-minute break and during other events. Our idea of fun is seeing an audience touched by the emotion of a song. The fun is in touching people's lives in a way that only music can. The fun is striving to produce the best sound we can as a team.

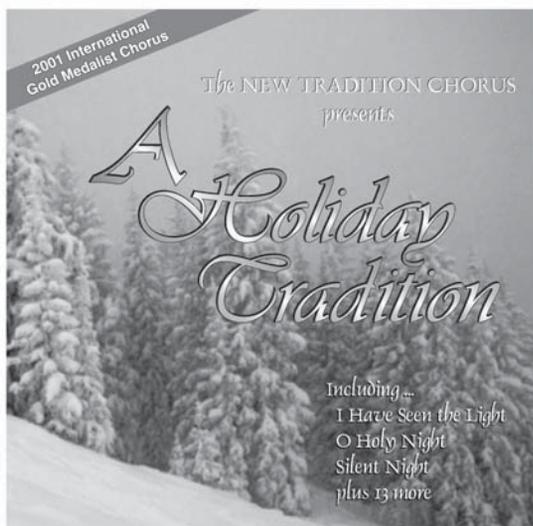
"Team" is the key word here. The applause is for what the team has accomplished, not an individual. Yet in order to reach that accomplishment, each individual has taken more responsibility upon himself for the team sound, as well as chapter responsibilities.

It was obviously the thrill of a lifetime to be on stage in Nashville when the curtain went up Saturday evening for our acceptance package. The key to our sustained success is finding and enjoying the thrills along the way. ■

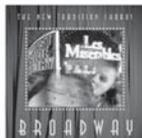
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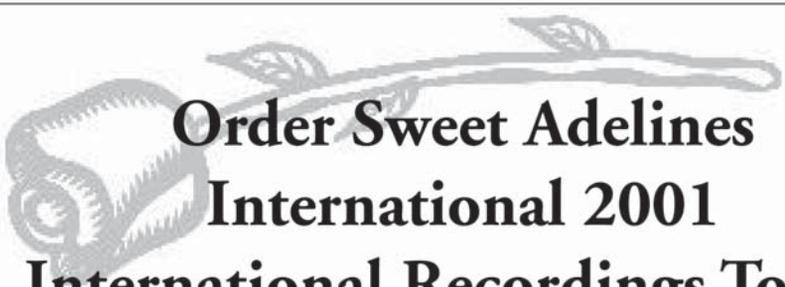
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PHOTO: TOM NICHOLSON

This June interview captures Jay Giallombardo's thoughts before joining an exclusive fraternity as only the fourth quartet gold medalist to direct a gold medal chorus

Jeff: Barbershoppers all over the world would like to know what it must be like to fire your chorus back up after coming in second eight times in a row. What do you tell them?

Jay: Some do respond to a fiery let's-go-get-'em speech. Others respond more as to what we have selected to sing for a given event. Our musical leaders respond when having some ownership in the preparation of the members. So, all these things must be done to keep the chapter focused on the particular goal at hand.

Fortunately, we have a well-rounded program at Northbrook, which includes two chapter shows per year at Christmas (four performances) and in the Spring (three performances), many other engagements, and recordings. Contest is most important to us and takes a strong focus in planning and preparation. The membership works very hard April to July to present our "unique" packages.

Mostly, it's little things along the way that encourage people to stick with it. I can be pretty demanding, but I always attempt to be positive and recognize

accomplishment. So far, the guys have stuck with me.

Jeff: Of the eight times you have come in second, which was the one you really thought you had won?

Jay: I think we won every one of them! And I am serious. Others have said we "won" two or three. Of course, the gold medal winners are quite convinced that second was our rightful spot!

Jeff: Which one of them was the hardest loss for you and for the chorus?

Jay: I don't think of second as a loss. As for not taking the gold, I would say Miami and Anaheim were tough because they were so close, four and two points respectively out of 2800 or so. I nearly lost it looking at the tearful faces of those who wanted, so badly, for us to take first place. But we wish the victors well and will try all the harder the next time.

Jeff: What do you honestly feel is the common denominator among all those eight consecutive silver medals?



Jeff Selano
Singing judge,
bass for Riptide

Jay: I believe the chorus membership exhibited an attitude to strive for excellence for each package. The attitude encompassed that winning was possible, but it wasn't the primary focus. We learned to focus and worked on improving musical skills and emotional delivery. The desire to win, to continue to improve, and to be inspired by the possibility of winning certainly had a motivating effect, but the striving for excellence and reaching the audience in performance was at the forefront of our minds for every performance.

Jeff: The famous Grandma's Boys got their start as four high school kids hanging out singing together. How did you get your start?

Jay: Grandma's Boys formed in 1968 as a pickup quartet that had formed as a result of our high school production of *The Music Man*. We got together to sing at a Memorial Day Singfest for one of the local communities. When school was out for the summer, I suggested that we go to the 1968 international convention in Cincinnati. The quartet sang in the lobbies, hallways, and "ringy" washrooms, and we sang every night at Purdy's Corral whenever there was a lull in the action. When we returned home, we learned the song "Grandma's Boy" as a theme song and adopted the name. In August, we sang another outdoor barbershop show where we met Bob (Moose) Haeger, brother of Buzz (tenor of **The Four Renegades** fame) who was emceeding the show. He encouraged us to compete in the fall Illinois District competition. We did and, much to our surprise, won the competition, first time out. That put us on an 11-year journey to the international championship.

Jeff: Many were mesmerized by the Toy Soldier set in Cincinnati. How did that terrific package come together?

Jay: In July of '77, inspired by the highly visual performances of **139th Street Quartet** and **Most Happy Fellows**, I wrote and arranged both Toy Soldier songs, and John and Hank developed most of the choreography. We performed the uptune that April on an afterglow (without costumes). Needless to say, after the afterglow audience erupted in a standing "O" at 1 a.m., we knew we had something unique. We then learned the ballad, "All The Little Toy Soldiers" and honed the package in full costume on a couple of show performances in June.

At the '78 convention, in the second round, we unleashed the set on the unsuspecting crowd. I can still hear the roar that went up after the uptune. The crowd would not let us start the second song. The applause went on for what seemed like an eternity (40 seconds, as I was told by one avid fan). We finally did sing the second song and received a long-sustained standing ovation on our exit. Needless to say, it was a pretty good hit! Ironically, we laid an egg in the finals and lost to **Bluegrass Student Union** by a mere 39 points. Secretly, I think we were glad to be able to come back and do it again in '79, this time in the finals, to leave no doubt.

Jeff: Taking in the whole convention, what's your greatest memory of winning in 1979?

Jay: I'm proud of the fact that we won five of the six rounds in '78 and '79. I remember great elation, a sense of relief, the accolades, and admiration of our many fans. That year, the quartet finals were Friday night, so we had all day Saturday to enjoy the win at the convention. It had been a long haul since our formation in 1968. It was most rewarding to have our dreams come true in winning the championship. We had a wonderful year with countless shows and several TV performances. For every show, the chapter would request a cameo of the Toy Soldier set. We were happy to oblige!

Jeff: Who thought up that crazy "I Had A Dream" song? How did it come together?

Jay: That piece actually came from the Injunaires, a 12-man vocal group from the Dartmouth Glee Club where Jeff and Hank attended in the early '70s. I created a four-part arrangement and we recorded it on our second album. It was great fun and epitomized our particular brand of lunacy as our afterglow closer.

Jeff: I heard that Grandma's Boys didn't get invited to sing the following August at Harmony College. Why?

Jay: Whoa ... where did you dig up that little tidbit? Sadly, it is true. This was a highly politicized time. The Society suffered from a coach/judge conflict of interest issue, there were camps and factions, there were the "Kibber" zealots. [*KIB=Keep It Barbershop. Ed.*] We'd get to a show and inevitably some nudnik would come over and say, "Don't forget to Keep It



WITH EIGHTEEN MEDALS in international competition, Giallombardo will likely try for his 19th medal in Portland—as a quartet competitor. He recently started singing bass with perennial quartet finalist Excalibur. In addition to four bronze, eight silver and one gold medal as director of The New Tradition Chorus, he won a bronze, silver and gold medal as bari of Grandma's Boys, and two bronze medals as bass of Chicago Chord of Trade.

I nearly lost it looking at the tearful faces of those that wanted, so badly, for us to take first place.

Barbershop.” We’d smile and say sure and go out and do our regular show. Usually, the audience was standing at the end, so we never heard much after from the Kibbers.

Most Kibbers think that they are helping to promote barbershop. They often don’t realize that foisting their narrow perspective of barbershop on others does not promote good fellowship and harmony. Performers are forever testing out material on audiences. We were trying to do our best to entertain the audience. Unfortunately, the quartet was singled-out for some retribution by the director of music services, Bob Johnson, who broke a long-standing tradition of having the current champs sing at Harmony College. Somehow, Bob seemed to have acquired the mistaken impression that we were out to undermine barbershop.

No doubt that we offered some innovative show material at the time, but by today’s standards it seems pretty ordinary stuff, for the most part. I do believe we had to pay the price for our musical beliefs. But, I’m proud we stood our ground, as I believe we opened the door a bit for other quartets to follow our model.

Jeff: What’s your musical background?

Jay: My dad was the hymn leader at our church, which included only a cappella congregational hymn singing (no organ, no choir). So I was part-singing at about age eight. I enjoyed singing a different part for each stanza of the hymn to the amazement (or annoyance) of the people around me. From about age 10-15 my interest was in folk music with duos, trios, and quartets. I played guitar and a little bass. At age 15, I heard the ’62 convention film at a local movie theater, and I was hooked.

As I was taking music theory in high school, I started writing and arranging barbershop. I immersed myself in vocal group recordings, barbershop, Mills Bros., Hi-Los, and the Four Freshman. I would “lift” many of the charts and tags from the available barbershop recordings and bring them to my high school buddies to sing. I continued formal musical studies at Boston Univer-

sity (bachelor of music education, ’72) and Northwestern (masters of composition/theory, ’73). I taught high school choral music for three years before becoming a freelance musician (full-time barbershop coach, arranger and performer).

Jeff: You have penned so many arrangements that have become a permanent part of the landscape. Regardless of arranger, what is your favorite arrangement of all time and why?

Jay: I admire the works and writing styles of many arrangers. Larry Wright, Buzz Haeger, Mike Senter, Jay Wright were the first arrangers I emulated in the ’60s. I also admire many arrangements of my contemporaries, but like any arranger, I must admit preference for my own stuff. Each piece has its own virtues, and once complete, takes on a life of its own at the “voice” of the performers. Among my favorite arrangements are: “Anthems/Ode To Joy,” “I Heard You Singing,” “Jazz Baby,” “Tribute To World Peace,” “What Child Is This,” “When I Fall In Love,” “When The Toy Soldiers March On Parade,” and “William Tell Overture.”

Jeff: Where do you think we are headed as a barbershop singing society?

Jay: We have moved away from rigid stylistic standards to a more open and historical perspective of barbershop. This is a good trend. Although there are forces that tend to want to restrict that evolution, natural musical expression works against this. There are some general characteristics of the barbershop style that remain constant and do define the kind of music we sing: 1) Four-part consonant harmony, 2) Tenor above the melody, 3) Traditional chord vocabulary 4) Interesting embellishments to enhance the song.

As long as we keep a general view of the style, we will never stray too far. There are natural forces that tend to keep the style centered. Simply put, the “centering” force is traditional harmony

and a singing style that focuses on tight “lock and ring” qualities. Compare contemporary a cappella groups, gospel and doo-wop, with even non-contestable barbershop singing and the difference is clear and obvious to most. The desire to stand in a foursome and strive to ring a few simple chords will never be lost.

There is a difference in singing for your own fun and attempting to entertain the broad tastes of an audience. I believe the Society should continue to cultivate the vision to recognize these different perspectives and provide encouragement for a diversity of activities.

Jeff: Where do you think we will be in 50 years?

Jay: Well, I’ll be 101 and still kickin’. By then I should have 59 silver medals!

I believe the Society will continue to thrive as long as we embrace the notion of style in its general, non-technical form. I would hope we would evolve to a point where the judging system relinquishes a larger degree of control over style to more natural forces and filters that are commonly used in the real musical world: “the test of time.” In the ’70s, the judging system was given a task of “guardianship” of the style in the fear that the style would be lost. General characteristics of the style is the right



GRANDMA’S BOYS, 1979 international champion, were Jay Giallombardo (B), John Miller (B), Hank Brandt (L), Don Barnick (T).

“degree” for adjudication.

I would like to see more evolution in chorus singing and in the adjudication of chorus singing. Choruses are still seen as big quartets. It is actually a totally different medium, currently with vast, untapped potential.

I hope that we will never equate contests with shows. Contests are unique snapshots of the best of show perfor-

mance. The do-or-die intensity of a contest performance can never be matched in a show. A show is like a track meet with lots of different events. A contest is the 100-meter dash, all out, winner take all. I hope we never lose that aspect.

Jeff: You have been known to “push the envelope” when it comes to the barbershop style. What does the phrase “Keep it Barbershop” mean to you?

Jay: A metaphor might be helpful here: Barbershop is a productive valley ringed with high protective mountain borders. Leave the valley and you are in another land. “Pushing the envelope” means that you are “hiking in the hills and on the mountain trails”; when you are done with the journey, you come back to the center of valley. Musicians need to go to the edges sometimes for variety’s sake and rejuvenation; there they can also get a better picture of the valley.

As for the slogan “Keep It Barbershop,” I believe this was the result of a well-intentioned motive gone astray. “Keep It Barbershop” puts the definition of the style in the hands of a very few who say, “This is what barbershop is by the way we define it.” It ignores our decades of history and the broad musical perspective of others who can define barbershop for themselves. It also ignores a large part of the barbershop culture who do not particularly embrace the style as defined in the ’70s and ’80s. Lastly, we should always be suspect of any concept that can be reduced to a mere slogan!

Jeff: Who have been your two greatest influences during your years as a Barbershopper?

Jay: I have been fortunate to have a number of strong male influences in my life. First is my father, three-time NCAA All-Around Gymnastic Champion (Papa Joe now is 84), who instilled in me a championship attitude of hard work and perseverance.

Musically, it was Mac Huff. When Mac Huff was quartet promotion specialist for the Society, I had a special mentor/protegé relationship with him. Mac passed on to me a considerable amount of knowledge of barbershop performance technique. He coached Grandma’s Boys for three years, and he invited me to coach quartets at Harmony College and to teach a coaching class. Mentoring is so important for the

development of any young individual. I believe our musical leaders today have a special calling to be mentors to those in barbershop.

Jeff: If you had to guess what your legacy will be on this great musical style and art form, what would it be?

Jay: A father once said to me, “I tried to get my son in barbershop. He wasn’t interested until he heard Grandma’s Boys!” The gentleman with his wife in an elevator at an international convention said, “We were there in Minne-

apolis when you did the Toy Soldier song. That was the greatest thing we have ever seen!” Or the lady who said, “I was in Calgary ... when the little boy was given the flag ...”. And then I watched her as her eyes welled up all over again, overwhelmed with emotion and unable to finish her sentence. The Calgary performance was over eight years ago, yet people still remember and react as if it were yesterday. That’s enough of a legacy for any performer. If there’s more thought, that will be for others to say. ■

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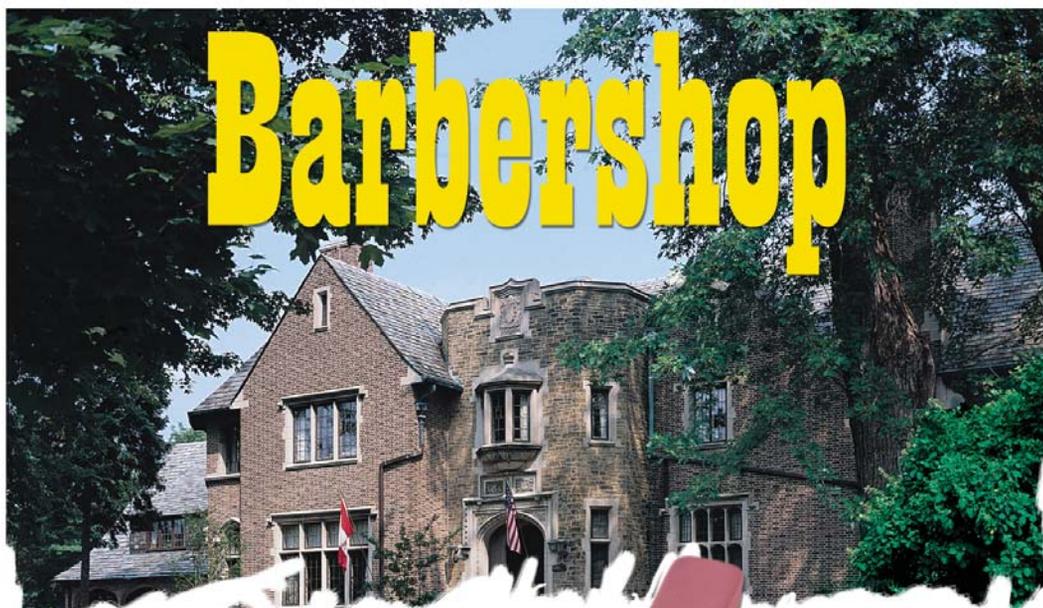
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Photo: Peggy Sirota

Is the foundation of

Barbershop



Being Erased?

I read with great interest Music Category Specialist Roger Payne's explanation of the Music category in the May-June 2001 issue of *The Harmonizer* and admit I am still mystified. It's a perfectly clear description of the current philosophies and emphasis of our Music judges; the perplexing part is why those trends would be considered a good thing.

The new Music category:

One step forward, two steps back

The old Arrangement category indeed had its flaws, but the Music category that replaced it has some gaping holes. Payne says that current emphasis in the Music category is on "how much wonderful barbershop music the performer wrings out of the arrangement." The problem? If too much emphasis is given to a strong performance, then a group that is high in

skill can sing an arrangement that is low in essential barbershop characteristics and still win a medal.

Another problem is that Music judges now wear two hats and judge in two broad areas: (1) the song and its arrangement and (2) performance. This duality of purpose is not only perplexing to competitors and listeners, but assures that neither half of the judging task is being addressed adequately by the judges.

Have you ever tried wearing two hats at the same time? This remark may infuriate some Music judges, but a very high performance level too often obscures weaknesses in a song or arrangement. Haven't we all heard such performances of borderline or questionable material? Several come to mind, including "Jeanie With The Light Brown Hair," "Alley Cat," "You Are My Sunshine," "Do You Hear The People Sing?," "California, Here I Come," "The Way You Look Tonight."

Perhaps it's all wonderful *choral* music, but how well do these selections exemplify the *barbershop* style? I believe

the failure of the Music category to answer this question satisfactorily exposes a serious weakness that is urgently in need of attention. Listen to recent contest recordings and decide for yourself.

The current Music category places heavy emphasis on barbershop characteristics "expected to remain inviolate over time." What does this mean? Simply, that those characteristics, most of which are noted in Payne's sidebar, "What a Music judge generally looks for," are expected to be not only present, but unmistakably and fundamentally inherent and obvious, and will saturate the music heard from the contest stage. Let's examine some of these "inviolable characteristics" whose definitions are increasingly watered down or ignored by many arrangers and Music judges, plus a neglected characteristic that deserves the highest prominence.

Ever-present melody

Since the first four fellows sang together in that long-ago tonsorial parlor, they harmonized to a melody. Most Barber-

Burt Szabo
Noted barbershop
arranger



*Because we now
sing from com-
posed arrange-
ments rather than
by ear, today's sty-
listic evolution is
of a far different
nature than that
of 60 years ago.*

shoppers still consider melody to be a paramount feature of the style. Some melodic alterations became traditional and have long been accepted. Minor changes of pickup notes, or changes to eliminate some awkward melodic intervals, have likewise become unreservedly accepted, including under the Arrangement category.

Today, however, under the guise of historical accuracy, we hear lengthy portions of music containing no discernible melody. Or, we hear a newly created melody—sounding much like jazz improvisation—which is only loosely reminiscent of the original. Certainly, some rare examples of this may be found on pre-Society recordings and even on early Society recordings. But when did such wholesale recomposing move into the mainstream of the barbershop style?

The reader may be interested in recent comments by two Music judges:

- *"I don't really assert that preserving melody has anything to do with the barbershop style."*
- *"I think we are in the process of a ... much needed devaluation of melody as it pertains to the barbershop style. For many years it has been put on much too high a pedestal, in conflict with the basic nature of our style as it developed on the street corner."*

Kind of scary, isn't it?

Consonant harmonies that employ the barbershop chord vocabulary

Early ear singers sang consonant harmonies, easily tunable and ringable chords that generated clouds of overtones. Today, the ever-increasing use of less consonant sounds—major seventh chords, minor seventh chords (some with flattened fifths), suspended fourths—renders our music less stylistically barbershop than it used to be.

Some members applaud this movement with the trend of 21st century a cappella music. But doesn't this tacit acceptance of dissonant sounds taint the style of the music that Barbershoppers love to sing? Aren't we in danger of losing something precious when the Music category allows this to happen? Others

say change is unavoidable, as barbershop music has always been evolving.

Let's review this matter of evolution. Consonant harmonies come from the ear singers (woodshedders) of the 1910s, '20s and '30s—long before the Society was formed in 1938. It was then perfected by Society quartets of the '40s and later. The so-called evolution by trial-and-error ear singing came to an end when arrangers started moving notes around on manuscript paper, and we all began to sing from composed arrangements. Because of this shift, today's style evolution is of a far different nature than that of 60 years ago.

I believe the best barbershop arrangements have always been, and hopefully will continue to be, those that sound more "ear related" than "eye related," and more stylistic than those contrived in the fertile imaginations of highly skilled—but over-zealous—arrangers.

I recently reviewed an arrangement prepared for contest by one of our Society's premier arrangers. In only 88 measures of music, there were more than two dozen instances of incomplete chords, unnecessary doublings and outright non-barbershop chords, plus several measures of unharmonized (unison) melody. Is this where our music is head-

ing? Let us hope not.

Appropriate and artistic choice of voicings, chord progressions and implied harmonies

Arrangements intended for contest performance still depend on solid root/fifth-based voicings, with a minimum of third/seventh based voicings. Hopefully this will always be so. However, more and more leniency is being allowed by Music judges regarding chord progressions and implied harmony.

With ear singers, "I Want A Girl" always sounded like "I Want A Girl," no matter how creative they were with swipes, bell chords or key changes. Now, many arrangers seem to violate the implied ear harmony recklessly and, if I may say so, irresponsibly. They are desperate to find sounds other than those favored by Barbershoppers for more than three-quarters of a century, all in the name of creativity.

Some prominent arrangers say that the song's implied harmony is too restrictive and does not allow them to musically express themselves. This abandonment of implied harmony means we now hear songs in competition that do not wear the mantle of barbershop comfortably.

Many melodies of the '30s and '40s and later may not easily fit the barbershop style, given the more modern harmonies chosen by their composers. Nevertheless, many barbershop arrangers try to harmonize those songs with chords

Have we solved recent judging flaws or only concealed them?

I eagerly await the judging of fall contests. The Contest and Judging Committee has made grand statements that the troublesome feature "Common Ground" among the three categories has been eliminated. However, upon reading the new material, I believe that Common Ground is very much alive and well, but masquerading under assumed names.

It remains to be seen whether the questions and concerns surrounding our Society's judging practices will be addressed in the fall round of contests, and whether any of the three categories will truly be charged with preserving the identifying hallmarks of the barbershop style, or whether the transformation of the barbershop style into an all-encompassing a cappella style will continue unabated.

It appears that SPEBSQSA, Inc. is being bested by other organizations in attempting to preserve the barbershop style of music. Many of the songs and arrangements heard in Nashville would have been negatively scored if heard in a Sweet Adelines or Harmony, Inc. competition. Most female contestants would not even consider taking them into a contest because they know such songs and arrangements would surely lose many points as they would be considered poor examples of the barbershop style.

that consummate musicians like Gershwin, Rodgers and Hart, Kern, Arlen and others never used with their songs. The melodies are encumbered with an unlikely harmonization in order to expand the contest repertoire—again under the guise of historical accuracy and creativity. Is this another example of “non-barbershop creep”? What does this foreshadow for barbershop contest music of the future?

Chord progression

Chords have moved and resolved according to predictable patterns for centuries due to acoustic principles and the inherent tendencies of some intervals in those chords—particularly the minor seventh and the tritone. Codified as “The Circle of Fifths,” these natural chord progressions have been used since the days of Bach and were used by most American popular song writers until the 1950s, when rock music upset the long-entrenched concepts of harmonic movement. But note: the harmonic style of barbershop music was solidly in place long before the 1950s. Almost all music after the middle of the 20th century was more or less disregarded by ear singers for very obvious reasons.

Now, barbershop music is being transformed by those who ignore our traditions, by those who bend and twist later popular music to their will by forcibly imposing ill-fitting chord progressions upon the melodies, by making use of more chord successions—sequences of harmonies that do not move in conventional ways and which sound vaguely foreign to the barbershop ear.

You can hear such non-Circle of Fifths chord successions in some of the over-long and pointless tag exercises that serve only to display an arranger’s skills in manipulating harmony and lyrics. By the way, the elevation of the tag to a position of supreme importance is in direct contradiction to the once well-understood notion that the song is the most important part of a barbershop arrangement. In Dave Stevens’ words: “The one vital, *primary* single factor that looms above all others in importance is the musical vehicle ... the barbershop song” (*Barbershop Arranging Manual*, p. 27).

Our definition of “dissonance” keeps shifting

It’s been said by music historians that sounds which are at first dissonant (incomplete, unharmonious) to our ears become, after repeated exposure, consonant (complete, harmonious). At one period in the early development of harmony, only the perfect fifth and perfect octave were considered consonant; thirds were dissonant. After a couple of centuries, the ear accepted them as consonant.

At first, major-minor seventh chords (our barbershop seventh chord) were uncomfortably dissonant. With the passage of time, these chords became accepted as consonant, pleasant sounds. And it’s a good thing, too, since barbershop music without seventh chords is inconceivable.

During the 20th century a variety of major seventh chords, poly-chords, ninth, 11th and 13th chords, and chords with suspended fourths became part of the vocabulary of classical, jazz and popular music. Barbershop ear singers have resisted these sounds for reasons all too familiar. The occurrence of these harmonies in too much barbershop show music and their occasional appearances in contest music are perfect examples of the “non-barbershop creep” that is infiltrating and contaminating the barbershop style. It does not bode well for the future of barbershop music.

Other a cappella styles are wonderful—just don’t call them barbershop

Is it possible that the Music category chooses to accept the weakening of the “inviolable characteristics” of the style in order to accommodate the desires of some to facilitate its transformation into a different kind of 21st century a cappella musical language? I must point out that there is no such thing as “21st century a cappella style.” Contemporary a cappella music embraces such a variety of melodic, harmonic, rhythmic and lyric features as to have virtually no style of its own. It is jazz, salsa, rap and much more. The music is identified by an “anything goes” attitude—anything goes as long as someone can perform it.

I have no problem with contemporary a cappella music on that score. Much of it is darn good—some is outstanding—and most of it is highly entertaining. But, will the new century bring us jazz-barbershop, reggae-barbershop, Latino-barbershop, Afro-barbershop, rock-barbershop and all the rest? I think we must agree—it won’t be good old barbershop.

The “old” Arrangement category, which some performers, arrangers and judges so gleefully condemn, indeed had some faults that needed addressing. But unlike the “solution,” it did have the overriding aim to preserve a style of musical expression that was solidified before the founding of SPEBSQSA and that many felt was in danger of slipping away bit by tiny bit. It is noteworthy

that the latest version of the Music category description contains neither the word “preserve” nor “preservation.”

The forgotten “inviolable characteristic”

The list of “inviolable characteristics” is in dire need of one addition that just might assure that the cherished traditions of barbershop harmony will be enjoyed for another generation or two. Because the barbershop style arose and flourished as catch-as-catch-can “ear music,” I believe it should be incumbent upon our judging system, and specifically upon the Music category, to attempt to preserve this now-vanishing feature of the style.

There must be harsh penalties for departing from the barbershop style when:

- an arrangement loses or seriously frays the delicate thread connecting it to the ear music of our predecessors.
- an arrangement showcases compositional technique at the expense of implied harmony.
- the song and/or the implied harmony have been severely modified to make them fit one another.

To do anything less will only hasten the demise of barbershop music in the early years of this century. I probably won’t be around to mourn its passing, but won’t it be a shameful tragedy if the simple purity of “ear barbershop” is surrendered forever because we have not been vigilant enough in preserving one of its most defining features? ■

UNITED VOICES

The horror of the events of September 11 didn't really bring the world's barbershoppers together—it reminded us of how close we already were

Like all peace-loving people throughout the world, Barbershoppers were shocked and deeply saddened by the horrific and tragic events of Sept. 11, 2001. We would later learn that one member of our own barbershop family was killed in the attack on the Pentagon. As we struggled to understand the unexplainable, Barbershoppers around the world responded with expressions of condolence, with prayers and other personal actions and, above all, with love. But we must not forget that our friends throughout the world lost citizens of their respective countries, too. Reports were that as many as 62 nations lost sons and daughters. And, although the attacks were carried out in America, their impact stunned the world.

The fellowship of barbershop harmony singers has probably never been stronger than right now. What a wonderfully American, joyous and uplifting musical art form our beloved Society brings to all who hear us sing.

The response of Barbershoppers extended beyond words and feelings. Hope and determination and resolve grew stronger in the days that followed the attacks. In America, Barbershoppers lifted their voices in harmony to support relief efforts and to promote unity within their respective communities. Music—barbershop harmony—was heard throughout the country, even in Manhattan, near the area that has come to be known as “ground zero.” We believe that spirit is what we should truly honor. What follows is only a small sampling of what various chapters did.



Reed Sampson
Public relations
manager for
SPEBSQSA

NEW YORK CITY

Saturday, Sept. 15, members of the **Coastal Chordsmen Chorus** of Bridgeport, Conn., made a trip to New York City to sing, and were joined by members of the **Big Apple Chorus**. Six men and two women came from Connecticut; seven men from New York joined them. The Coastal Chordsmen's commitment to the relief effort included a fund-raiser at Tomlinson Middle School for a Fairfield, Conn., for a family that lost its father in the tragedy.

Eight days later, 37 members of the Big Apple Cho-

In memory of Col. Bud Boone

We lost a barbershop brother and a true American hero in the September 11 attack on the Pentagon. Colonel Canfield D. (Bud) Boone was a relatively new member of the Centerville, Virginia Chapter and had really taken to our wonderful hobby. His wife, Linda says, “Bud loved barbershop so much.” She has advised Centerville Chapter President Chuck Harner that the family does not need financial assistance. She has requested that anyone caring to make a donation in Bud's memory send a contribution to one of these charities:

Harmony Foundation, for the *Keep a Melody Ringing Memorial*, 6315 Harmony Lane, Kenosha, WI 53143

The American Red Cross, PO Box 37243, Washington, DC 20013

Survivor's Fund, c/o Community Foundation for the National Capital Region, 1112 - 16th Street NW, Suite 340, Washington, DC 20036

rus, plus wives and friends, augmented by “Bill the trumpeter” (all the way from Boston) spent nearly seven hours, on foot, in a non-stop marathon of inspirational song, trudging from 14th Street downtown to but a block or so from ground zero on West Street. There were 14 separate performances. Their audiences ranged from as few as two firemen at one of the fire houses that had been decimated by the tragedy, to thousands of New Yorkers at the Greenwich Street barricade, at the solemn wall of remembrance at St. Vincent Hospital, and at the remarkable memorial site at Union Square Park.

A longer account of these events, as related by chorus member Raymond Yeh, can be seen on the Web at spebsqsa.org/harmonizer.

VIRGINIA

The **Alexandria Harmonizers** took part in a com-

munity memorial service, singing for an audience that held American flags and lighted candles. Speakers included members of Congress. The choir from T.C. Williams High School also took part in the program. The Akron (Ohio) Chapter was joined by the ETC Youth Show Choir in a salute and tribute to the victims. Funds were collected for the relief effort.

ILLINOIS

Thursday, Sept. 21, the Northbrook Community Network presented "An Evening of Unity and Reflection." The program included community leaders and students reflecting on the events of Sept. 11. The 2001 champion **New Tradition Chorus** participated, performing several patriotic songs and concluding with "God Bless America," where the audience joined the chorus for the refrain.

As has been reported across the nation, joining in that song had a cathartic effect on all who were present, performers and audience alike. In a letter following the event, event organizer Marcia Doniger said, "Because of you, our evening was one of joy and reflection. Your music lifted our spirits at a time when many felt it almost impossible. The New Tradition Chorus will always be remembered as part of our healing process. As far as we are concerned, you will always be first place in Northbrook."

Saturday, Sept. 30, the New Tradition Chorus presented its swan song performance as retiring chorus champions at the Illinois District Fall Convention. The planned program was set aside in favor of a patriotic presentation. The chorus sang its international contest set, followed by three patriotic selections. There were six standing ovations, including one that began during the second refrain of "Proud to be an American" and continued for more than a minute after the

Ground zero: A Barbershopper's first-hand account

Tuesday, Sept. 11, 2001

I am a genuine eye/ear witness. I saw it all. My apartment is one block from ground zero. I was watching out the window when the second plane hit. My building was rocked.

Lower Manhattan is shut to the world, but I have phone and Internet access. I ventured down to the street, one block from the World Trade Center. The streets are about one to two inches thick with gritty white ash and paper trash. It looks like a volcano zone with ash covering everything.

The street is mostly deserted, except for baffled firemen and a few policemen, who don't know what to do. There are ambulances parked in front, but no crews to be found. The people outside are aimless. No crying, no panic, no hysteria, no looting. Mostly deserted (evacuated). The front door of my apartment building was blown out and is shattered in the lobby. The lobby is two inches deep in ash.

The air is thick with gritty particulate stuff that stings your eyes, but aside from smelling smoky, it doesn't seem to be poisonous. Every few minutes, there is a small explosion, which may be gas lines or other stuff lighting up.

From one block away, I can see the base of the south WTC tower. All that is left is some black structural steel, perhaps three to four stories high, leaning northbound like the Tower of Pisa. The WTC was silvery-white. What remains is a blackened foundation. The visibility doesn't allow one to see what must be an unbelievable mound of rubble from 108 stories of building collapse. There are a few large girders strewn around the block that fell out of the sky. There are no injured to be seen. Presumably they have been evacuated, or are buried.

There has to be 50,000 buried within a few hundred yards of here. Surely some of them are still alive. Ironically, the sun is trying to peep through the smoke and soot.

Mark Bower, Big Apple Chorus, New York City

Dozens of letters of support came from barbershoppers throughout the world

Harmony Hall received dozens of cards, letters, calls and Emails from around the world in the days following Sept. 11. For example, a customer and member of BING! (Barbershop in Germany!), called the Harmony Marketplace and, as luck would have it, spoke with our newest Society employee. He said he simply needed to tell her, an American, that he had gone to the U.S. Embassy in Berlin and placed flowers at the gate.

Barbershoppers elsewhere called simply because they wanted to talk to talk with an American, someone whom they already considered a friend. Here is a sampling of other messages received.

All members of the ladies barbershop chorus, Champagne Cork, from Cork City, Ireland, send their condolences and deepest sympathy to all members

of SPEBSQSA and Sweet Adelines following the terrible terrorist atrocities of Tuesday last in New York and Washington. We feel we have been drawn closer to you through barbershop singing, which we all enjoy so much. Our government has declared tomorrow, Friday, a day of national mourning in solidarity with the American people. We suggest that your motto "Keep the Whole World Singing" was never as relevant as it is now, and we pray that God will give each one of you the courage to live that motto to the best of your ability. We sing with you and for you: "God Bless America."

*Clare Hunt, Director
Carolyn Corbett, Chairperson,
On behalf of, and at the request of
Champagne Cork
Cork City, Ireland*

Today is a National Day of Mourning in Canada for the victims of the terrorist attacks on America and the families impacted by this tragedy. As a resident of our nation's capital, I will stand with thousands of Canadians, our government leaders, the Ambassador of the United States of America and his staff, Americans who are working and visiting here, members of the international diplomatic corps and communities, and their families, on Parliament Hill as we pay tribute to those who lost their lives in the Sept. 11 attack on the USA, the families of the victims, the rescuers, and Americans world-wide. Our national capital area is adorned with American flags. Today you cannot buy an American flag in any city or town in Canada because the vendors are all sold out! Be assured that Canadians stand with their



A BIG APPLE CHORUS member pauses outside a fire station that lost 13 fire fighters. Chorus members performed throughout the city.

end of the song. Members of the Illinois District Quartet Champions Association joined the chorus and a color guard in front of a large America flag to lead the audience in the closing rendition of "God Bless America."

TEXAS

The Vocal Majority did a show Sept. 19 to raise funds for the American Red Cross Disaster Relief Fund. They sold 1,600 tickets in three days and raised nearly \$27,000. The VM is also donating profits from a CD called "A Tribute to America," which was created for the purpose of raising funds in this time of need.

American brothers. May I, on behalf of Barbershoppers across Canada, express condolences to you and your families. May God grant peace to the victims and their families. And may God bless our two great nations. Our prayers are with you.

*J.R. Digger MacDougall
Ottawa, Canada*

This has indeed been one of the saddest weeks I can ever remember. Yesterday I was at the Ministry of Culture having a meeting with Alexander Demchenko. He asked that I convey to everyone within the Barbershop Society, especially to Big Apple, Twin Shores, Metropolis and all others who participated in this year's American/Russian Barbershop Festival, his abso-

MINNESOTA

Barbershop harmony played an important role in the Voices Across America effort for the Red Cross Relief Fund. In Bloomington, Minn., at the Mall of America, more than 100 SPEBSQSA and Sweet Adeline singers joined groups across the country at 2 p.m. Central Time with a rendition of "The Star Spangled Banner" and the "Battle Hymn of the Republic." This was followed by performances of choruses and quartets with 90 minutes of heartfelt music. Four Star Collection came directly from the airport to participate in this effort and Simply Magic, another Sweet Adeline quartet, also joined in. SPEBSQSA quartets, **Random Sample Tune-by-4** gave spirited performances as well. The program included the **Good Times Chorus** of Bloomington, Minn., the **Northstar Chorus** with the **Minneapolis Commandores** and the **Great Northern Union** from Hilltop, Minn.

PENNSYLVANIA

The Lancaster Red Rose Chapter led a concert Tuesday, Oct. 2 to benefit the Salvation Army and the American Red Cross. The chapter chorus, two chapter quartets, a local jazz trio, and a local opera singer came together for "Songs for America." The concert was billed as "a concert of patriotic and spiritual music for remembrance, inspiration, and hope!" Some 200 people attended and donated \$1,370 for the two charitable organizations.

lute shock and sadness concerning the tragic events this week in New York and Washington, D.C. Major General Victor Afanasiev, Chief of the Ministry of Defense Military Orchestra Service of the Russian Federation also sends his deep condolences. The entire Russian staff at IFAI sends everyone their condolences. Yesterday, President Putin declared three minutes of silence in Red Square for all the victims and their families and friends. Exactly at 12 p.m., all activity in Red Square ceased, the bells of the Kremlin rang out in remembrance of all those who were lost. Many Russians came and after the minutes of silence quietly laid flowers in Red Square.

*George Gordon
International Fine Arts Institute
St. Petersburg, Russia*

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Midwinter: more intimate, great shows and warm weather at a time you want it

The place to be this Jan. 20-27 is Riverside, Calif., site of the Society's 2002 Midwinter Convention. This is a charming city about one hour due east of Los Angeles. Its many charms includes the downtown pedestrian mall, a delightful area for pedestrian-only traffic and just two blocks from the Holiday Inn Select (convention headquarters), and immediately adjacent to the Mission Inn Hotel.

The mall area is a delightful combination of shops, including places like Pandora's Books, the Photography Museum, Mission Galleria Antiques, Tamale Factory, Godiva Chocolate shop and the fabulous Mission Inn. If you are staying in this hotel, you will understand the charm when you walk in the front door. If you are not staying in that hotel, you must take a walk through it. It is traditionally one of the places to go in California during the Christmas season to see the unbelievable light displays that they have throughout the hotel. They have promised to keep the light displays on during our convention.

Shows and the seniors quartet contest will all take place in the Municipal Auditorium, which is only

four blocks from the headquarters hotel and just two blocks from the Mission Inn Hotel. The Marriott Courtyard Hotel is the other hotel we will use, and we will provide bus service from that hotel to the auditorium and back Friday and Saturday nights. It is approximately 1.7 miles from the Marriott Courtyard Hotel to the auditorium and 2 miles from that same hotel to the Holiday Inn Select.

We have an exceptional treat this year in that on the Saturday night show, in addition to gold medalists Michigan Jake and silver medalists Uptown Sound, four-time gold medalists, the Masters of Harmony, will rock you out of your seats. You won't want to miss that show or any part of the convention for that matter.

The Midwinter Convention is always a great, fun time to see super shows and to visit with old friends and even make some new acquaintances. So make your plans now to be there. Register by calling 800-876-7464 x8462 or by using the registration form in this issue of *The Harmonizer*. We'll look forward to seeing you there. ■



John Schneider
Events Manager
for SPEBSQSA

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January 20-27, 2002

Midwinter 2002 Convention – Riverside, Ca.

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<input type="checkbox"/> 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 Afterglow, 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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They got children singing the old songs again. Your chapter can do it, too!

What does it take to “Teach the Children to Sing”? Do you need a 100-man chapter and a championship chorus? The **Traverse City (Michigan) Chapter** doesn’t think so, nor does the **Greater Ozarks (Arkansas) Chapter**. In fact, they know it doesn’t.

These two chapters alone have given the gift of song to thousands of elementary students in their communities with help from Harmony Foundation grants.

In 1996, an initiative spearheaded by SPEBSQSA, involving MENC, Sweet Adelines International, The American Choral Directors Association and Chorus America, produced a song book titled, “Get America Singing ... Again!” This book contains 42 songs that touch our patriotic, folk, ethnic and popular roots. The goals were to establish a common song repertoire that Americans of all ages would know and could sing and to promote community singing.

Shortly after the publication of the song book, the Greater Ozarks Chapter became inspired: What if they could get the book into the hands of the young people in their schools? They soon found out that the teachers were very interested and willing to cooperate. Thus, their project, “Get the Ozarks Singing ... Again!” was born. The chapter, led by project coordinator Jim Nugent, applied for and received a Harmony Foundation grant. The program was so successful that they later received a second grant to extend the program into new schools.

Over in Traverse City, Barbershopper Al Bonney heard of the Greater Ozarks project and said, “We can do that.” Before long, “Get Northern Michigan Singing ... Again!” became a reality. Not only did the chapter turn to Harmony Foundation for a grant, they also tapped the Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation and truly made the project a community effort.

The project addressed two basic problems. First, students were leav-



OVER 9,000 STUDENTS in Northern Michigan were touched by music provided by Barbershoppers of the Traverse City Chapter.



Gary Stamm
Harmony
Foundation
director

ing the sixth grade without knowing many of the standard American songs that are part of our national heritage. And, because of budget cuts, children in the upper elementary classes were losing out on vocal music programs. Therefore, the project objectives were to:

- Support the teachers’ initiative to create a body of songs that students leaving the sixth grade would know and could sing together.
- Develop a program the Traverse City Chapter could continue to support in future years so subsequent classes could benefit from the curriculum addition.
- Allow the children to experience the joy of hearing their own voice join with others in a vocal ensemble.
- Show the children that adult men’s singing is cool!

The chapter purchased 1300 of the song books and delivered them to 30 elementary schools prior to the Christmas holiday break. January through March, **The Third Coast**, a Traverse City seniors quartet, presented musical programs to more than 9,000 students in the



schools. These visits showed support for the new songs and showed the students the fun men can have singing close harmony. Finally, in May, the chorus sponsored two massed sing events, where the students sang the songs they had learned from the book. They also heard songs performed by the **Cherry Capital Barbershop Chorus** and a high school boys' ensemble.

The result was that the children had a great time and their teachers are still raving about the project. Here are a few of their comments:

- "I think that singing together with all the schools was a wonderful experience to encourage music study. Seeing adult men singing encourages a life-long activity."
- "Excellent, music book provided, vocal presentation, and actual participation—our school is forever grateful."
- "Great to have male role models for our students, who sometimes get the notion that singing is a girl thing."
- "To look around and see the joyful faces of the kids as they raised their voices in song—how powerful!"

You can do it, too!

Chapters throughout North America can likewise help fulfill our Society's charitable mission, "to preserve our musical legacy through support of vocal music education in our schools and communities." You can purchase a

video and a CD containing documents, plans, grant requests and teacher communications from Harmony Marketplace for \$15, plus shipping and handling (stock number 4100). Contact Al Bonney at albonney@pentel.net for additional details.

We truly are making a difference—hundreds and thousands of young people at a time—through your donations to the Harmony Foundation General Fund.

November and December are crucial for Harmony Foundation and our Charitable Mission. We receive approximately 50 percent of our total gifts to support the annual mission in these two months.

Here's what you can do in the next few weeks to make sure we have a successful year, and that we can continue the important work we are doing as

Barbershoppers.

- Respond with a contribution when you receive your Harmony Foundation General Fund Campaign mailer.
- Use the gift envelope in this issue to make a gift to the general fund or *Keep a Melody Ringing* Endowment Fund.
- Make sure your chapter sends a generous gift to the general fund.
- Encourage your quartet to send a gift to the Foundation—possibly one of your holiday performance fees. ■

FYI

Grants deadline

The next deadline for Harmony Foundation grants is May 1. Applications and guidelines can be downloaded from the harmonyfoundation.org or call 800-876-SING



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Poor movie? Just take the money and run

Did you catch this summer's Jessica Biel/Freddie Prinze, Jr. flick? You know, that baseball/romance movie, "Summer Catch"?

You didn't? You're not alone. The movie was panned by critics and ignored by audiences, but don't blame the barbershop quartet. "Casablanca" this movie was not, but the producers got one thing right: If you're going to make an authentic baseball movie, you've gotta have a barbershop quartet singing the national anthem.

It didn't hurt that director Mike Tollin is a big fan of barbershop. A casting call was sent out in the Wilmington, N.C. area, where the movie was being filmed. Tollin and the casting director wanted real Barbershoppers, but they weren't primarily auditioning for vocal talent. From among members of the **Cape Fear Chordsmen**, they picked out Dave Bowen, Arnold Cosby, Dave Hogin, and Bob Stockfish, based primarily on their appearance.

These good-looking guys were told that they were now a quartet, and from then on they got treated like roy-



The quartet warms up just before a shoot.

alty. (That's Hollywood for you.) They were paid well, and each guy got his own trailer with a red star on the door for the two-day shoot. The quartet also got to sing a special song for another barbershop fan, studio exec Frank Capra, Jr.

The movie is no longer in theaters, but you can catch the guys' performance when it comes out on video. No one can stop you if you fast-forward through the non-barbershop parts.

Ushered into heaven with a smile on his face



Carole T. Fulmer will tell you, "God uses ordinary men for angelic tasks. His messengers even sing in quartets."

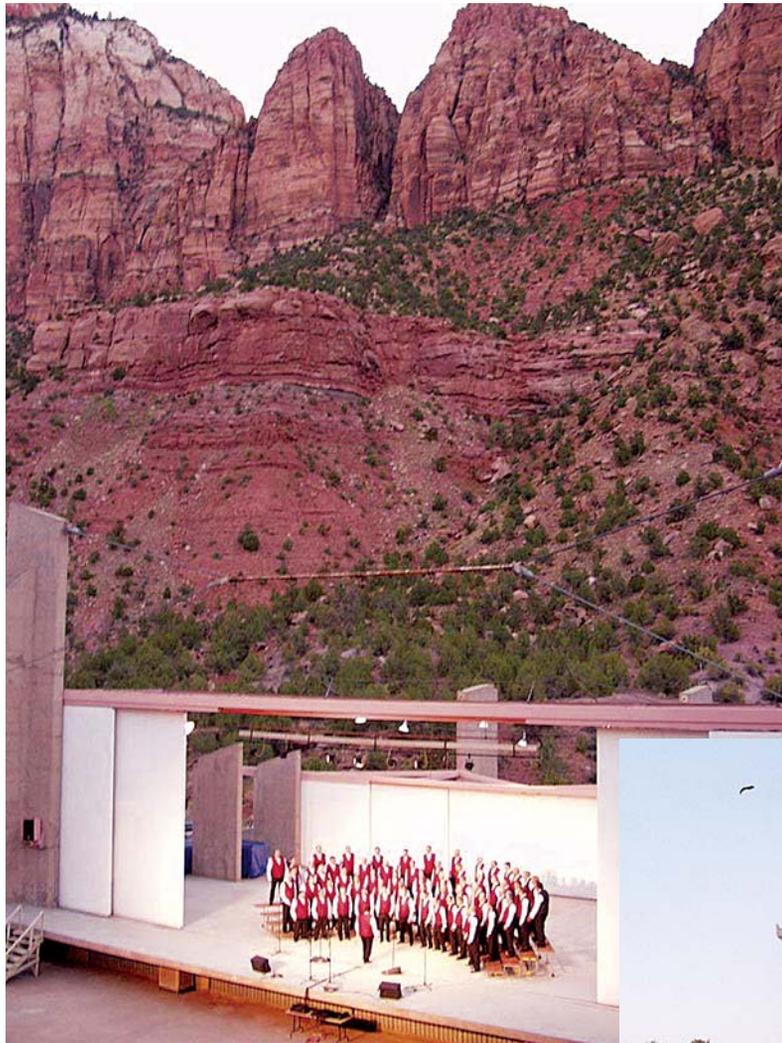
Carole's husband, Frank, was dying. A friend, member of **The Spring Street Four**, offered to bring

the quartet to the hospital that Sunday to sing for Frank once more. Carole resisted the idea, unsure her husband would live the two days until Sunday, unsure Frank's condition would allow the visit.

But Sunday came and so did the quartet. "When the quartet enters (the hospital room)," Carole said, "Frank reaches to shake hands with the men with a beautiful smile on his face and tears in his eyes. He knows them—he has been having difficulty recognizing people—and now he is radiating joy.

"There is no question, a miracle is happening. As their singing fills the air, his smile intensifies. Slowly, he relaxes and the pain drains as his spasms decrease.

"That day, I was given the most valuable gift imaginable. Frank lapsed into unconsciousness with a smile on his face. I can visualize him being ushered into heaven by this angel choir."



Great backdrops, not for sale

Everyone knows that a great backdrop can enhance the overall effect of performance. Here are two of the best we've seen in a while.

Zion National Park's Tanner Amphitheater in southern Utah provided a spectacular backdrop for the Wasatch Front (Utah) Chapter (**The Saltaires**) Labor Day festival. Harmony rang from the canyon walls during performances by chorus and the featured quartets: **Maxim, Senior Class Reunion, Bamberger Express** and 2001 international collegiate champion, **Reprise**.

66 West is framed by the Lincoln Memorial during its performance in the second annual a cappella festival Sept. 23 in Washington, D.C. It was the first public event to be held on the National Mall after the Sept. 11 terrorist attack. Quartet members are (from left) David Hughes (D), Brian Ammerman (B), Ray Johnson (J) and Jeff Salino (S). The Kings Chorders also represented barbershop harmony at the festival.



CHAPTER ETERNAL

Society members reported as deceased between July 1 and September 30, 2001.

Central States
Cummings, Joe
Lincoln, NE
Jacques, Paul
Iowa City, IA
Meats, Marvin
Mc Pherson, KS
Oehlerking, Eldon
Lincoln, NE

Dixie
Daniel, Harold
McDonough, GA
Dunkin III, Robert
Chattanooga, TN
Fuller, Robert
Greenville Area, NC
Leeper, John
Grand Strand, SC

McClure, Floyd
Hickory, NC
Wickman, Richard
New Bern, NC

Evergreen

Day, George
Snohomish County, WA
Gray, Ralph
Olympia, WA
Hedges, Don
Frank Thorne
Hood, Don
Canby, OR
Latham, James
Federal Way, WA
Staffen, Burt
Bellevue, WA

Swanson, Robert
Frank Thorne

Far Western

Barrett, John
Irvine, CA
Dana Point Harbor, CA
Butler, Henry
Sun Cities, AZ
Butler, Henry
Prescott, AZ
Hahn, Gordon
Frank Thorne
Maud, Laurence
Canada Del Oro, AZ
McKim, Robert
San Jose, CA

Newton, Robert
San Gabriel Valley, CA
Riley, Dick
Whittier, CA
Smith, Frank
Monterey Peninsula, CA
Frank Thorne
Anderson, Roy
Frank Thorne
Kemerer, George
Frank Thorne

Illinois

Anderson, Philip
Lombard, IL
Gindler, Harold
Collinsville, IL

Jacobs, Robert
Lake County, IL
Ramsey, Lee
Harrisburg, IL

Johnny Appleseed

Anderson, Richard
Pittsburgh
North Hills, PA
Barden, Richard
Pittsburgh
North Hills, PA
Contini, Nick
Tuscarawas County, OH
Canton, OH
Kern, Richard
Defiance, OH

Miller, Mayard
Greater Uniontown Area, PA
Strayer, Roy
Johnstown, PA
Trikones, James
Upper Ohio Valley, OH

Land O' Lakes

Comnick, Russell
Park Rapids, MN
Cooper, Richard
Kenosha, WI
Swanson, Carl
Milwaukee, WI
Vos, Arthur
Kenosha, WI



True West Balladeers

Find your niche and make the most of it



There're no tales of gunfights surrounding OK Chorale, but the Far Western District quartet has been named *True West Magazine's* "True West Balladeers."

The magazine, located in Cave Creek, Ariz., is an international publication that chronicles the early American West. OK Chorale created its performance material around the characters of Wyatt, Morgan, and Virgil Earp and Doc Holliday. They have selected songs that were sung in the late 1800s or that specifically tell the story of places, people and events of that era.

The scripts and costumes have been approved by the magazine's editors. According to a press release, the quartet's dedication to telling the accurate history is what prompted the magazine to create "True

West Balladeers."

"We love to sing four-part harmony, and we love history," explained John Fynmore, tenor. "When we made the decision to combine the two, we spoke with the people at *True West*, and they were very pleased with our concept."

"This is very exciting to have an a cappella quartet that is dedicated to telling the stories of the Old West," said historian and magazine owner Bob Boze Bell. "The quartet's clever and entertaining approach to history, especially Arizona's colorful past, is truly unique."

Fynmore is joined in the quartet by Allen Fossenkemper (L), Galen McClain (B), and Dan Davenport (B).



Beach Bum Barbershoppers?

Picture it: a day at the beach listening to 14 quartets and seven choruses from all over New York State and Canada—representing SPEBSQSA, Harmony, Inc., and Sweet Adelines—in a seven-hour free concert on the shores of Lake Ontario in Rochester, N.Y. That sort of barbershop celebration happens every July when the annual "Barbershop at the Beach" concert is held. Keith Clark from the Rochester Chapter started it all 11 years ago; now members of three Rochester barbershop societies work together to make it a ringing success. ■

CHAPTER ETERNAL

Mid-Atlantic

Beehler, Robert
Dundalk, MD
Boone, Canfield
Centreville, VA
Creveling, Lewis
Columbia-Montour
County, PA
Dukes, Kenneth
Rockland, NY
Epperley, Donald
Suffolk, VA
Heilman, Samuel
Lebanon, PA
Moyer, Gary
Reading, PA

Northeastern

Aiken, Donald
Plattsburgh, NY
Cunha, Fred
New Bedford, MA
Mondi, Dominic
Beverly, MA
Perkins, John
Troy, NY
Raymond, Sherwood
Hartford, CT

Sullivan, C. Thomas
Beverly, MA

Ontario

Shackleton, John
Sarnia, ON
Smith, Robert
Grimsby, ON
Twiddy, Clare
Quinte Regional, ON

Pioneer

Cameron, Stuart
Sault Ste. Marie, ON
Mackowiak, Casimer
Petoskey, MI
Pendell, Peter
Swan Valley, MI
Pendell, Peter
Gratiot County, MI
Shannon, Wesley
Lansing, MI

Rocky Mountain

Esperson, Clinton
Salt Lake City, UT

Seneca Land

Colella, Frank
Buffalo, NY

Kervink, Allen
Buffalo, NY
Lang, Jack
Crawford County, PA
Shaffer, Shurl
Venango County, PA

Southwestern

Anderson, Verdell
Town North Plano, TX
Kemp, Bobby
Big "D", TX

Sunshine

Boyce, Arthur
Englewood, FL
Corbett, L. Harold
St Petersburg, FL
Crossley, Stanley
Sarasota, FL
Kervink, Allen
Citrus County, FL
Manning, Dean
Polk County, FL
Ray, Robert
Martin - St. Lucie, FL
Rodriguez, Edward
Orlando, FL
Shannon, Wesley
Naples, 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.

Director wanted

Fremont, NE. Pathfinder Chorus is seeking a musical director for this perennially top-five Central States Chorus. 50 men in attendance regularly. A very active chapter with a 3-performance annual show, numerous singouts and other chapter activities. Thirty minutes from Omaha, or 50 minutes from the Lincoln metropolitan areas. Fremont is a warm and friendly community of 25,000 outstanding Barbershop Fans. Send resume or letter of inquiry to Ray Meister, 121 South William Ave., Fremont, NE 68025 or call: Ray Meister at 402-727-1829 or rmeister@teknetwork.com.

Director needed for well-established 35-man barbershop chorus in Colorado Springs, Colo. Candidate should be a highly-motivated, enthusiastic person with excellent, all-around knowledge of the barbershop craft. Chorus rehearses Tuesday evenings, 7 pm. Call Charlie Snyder, 719-576-9153 or email woody@grwfyn.com for further information.

Director needed for a 28-yr-old established chapter of 40+ in beautiful resort town of

Hilton Head Island. Excellent admin and strong community following. Contact Bernie Bookman at 843-671-2052 or bbbookman@yahoo.com.

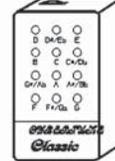
Chattanooga, Tenn., chapter, Choo Choo Chorus, a 55-man chorus that regularly puts 35 to 40 men on stage for contests, needs an experienced director to replace our current leader, who is retiring from his duties at the end of December. Our chorus consistently places in the top ten at the Dixie District. This is a paid position. Chattanooga is in the top ten cities in the country for outdoors living activities and the top twenty cities in the country for the lowest cost of living. If interested please contact Dan Bruns at 423-751-6430 (day) or 423-493-1880 (evenings) or debruns@tva.gov.

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THE TAG

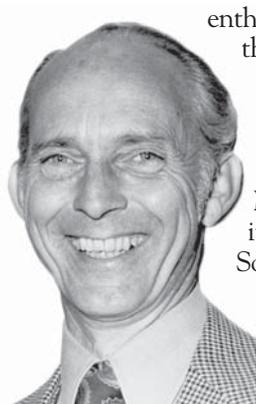
Joe Liles, Tagmaster



One of the best from one of the best

Rainbows have fascinated mankind ever since the first sightings. Folk lore sprung to the fore and numerous stories about pots of gold and pleasurable experiences are associated with rainbows. In the Bible, Genesis chapter 9, it speaks of the rainbow as a symbol of God's promise to never destroy the earth again by flood.

Droplets of water or ice crystals in the air divide the "white" sunlight into seven glorious colors, bringing a most pleasurable sight to the eyes. Now, is it such a coincidence that the barbershop seventh chord brings pleasurable sounds to the ears? Why ... I don't think so. Just maybe the dominant seventh chord is the Barbershopper's rainbow!



Enough of the sunlight, now to the Moon-light ... Earl, that is. Earl Moon (1928-1996) shed light on what it means to arrange a song for a singer. Some arrangers emphasize the arrangement, and that is certainly a viable option under some circumstances. Earl's arrangements, however, emphasized the song and were performable by most all singers. Barbershop singing was a passion that started in high school and continued through his days in the Navy, and became a lifelong activity.

Earl met and married Millye in 1949, directed several barbershop choruses, including Santa Monica, San Fernando, Downey, and Whittier, winning district championships and achieving medalist status. He was a quartet singer and when any of his choruses or quartets needed material, he would arrange songs for shows and contests. His first arrangement, of several hundred, was of "Cecilia." Those who were in his presence were mesmerized by his stories and his teaching of tags and songs.



Earl's arrangements will continue to bring pleasure as long as there are singers. Millye is presently helping us put together a complete collection of Earl's creations for our Old Songs Library. We miss his physical presence, but he left us a heritage of incredible vocal rainbows. Here is a tag in his remembrance. ■

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Tenor Lead

1 2 3 4

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Bari Bass

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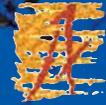
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