



Northwest Sound Men's Chorus Operating Procedures Manual



2012 Division II Chorus Champions

*Bellevue Chapter, Barbershop Harmony Society
Bellevue, Washington
<http://www.nwsound.org/>*

Northwest Sound Men's Chorus
Operating Procedures Manual

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The NEW Northwest Sound: A Rich Heritage; a Vibrant Future

“Ποταμοῖσι δις τοῖσι αὐτοῖσι οὐκ ἂν ἐμβαίης, ἕτερα γὰρ ἐπιρρέει ὕδατα,” wrote the Greek philosopher Heraclitus. “Into the same river, you cannot step twice, for new waters are continually flowing.”

THE WATERS:

When we look at Northwest Sound today, it is obvious that we are about to step into a new river. Challenges and opportunities converge all around us. We are at the heart of a region known for high-level musical talent. Northwest Sound meets in the center of that region, easily accessible to a multitude of resources. Northwest Sound is large enough to be able to develop in any direction it chooses. In our music leadership, we have representatives of 11 of the past 20 District champion quartets. Among our senior members, we have representatives of three international medalist quartets. We have Northwest Sound members who have won gold, silver, and bronze International chorus medals. We have coaches in our chapter that coach other choruses throughout the Society. Among our friends and neighbors, we can count recent and past International Quartet champions and Senior International Quartet champions, along with some of the finest coaches in all of the Society a short drive away from our rehearsals. We have among us Society and District visionary leaders and the appropriate level of finances to allow us to achieve our dreams.

It is clear that we have most of the resources that any chorus might ever hope to have. The final step is to create a crystal clear focus, a vision of what we will become.

THE VISION:

A vision provides inspiration and direction. A vision captures the future in today's terms, allowing growth to its fulfillment. In short, a vision encompasses our dreams.

When observing ourselves in the future, maybe five years away, the vision of Northwest Sound circumscribes the following eight pillars:

Committed Members – We have become a band of brothers, committed to creating art through vocal expression. There is no weak link among us; we all lift each other to create music. Everyone prepares for each rehearsal, and no one dares miss a chance to share with each other for the brief hours we have allotted to Northwest Sound each week.

A Strong Foundational Organization – Northwest Sound is a chorus first, supported by an organization that seamlessly provides all the operations a chorus needs. Everyone has an important role to play, and each member fulfills his duties diligently. We now have the freedom to enjoy the music that we are creating.

A High Membership Skill Level – Each Northwest Sound member has become a better singer and has enjoyed the journey to become such. We understand clearly what we can do to help produce a more artistic presentation for our audience.

Rehearsals Are Both Work and Fun – We are exhausted at the end of each rehearsal, but we never understand how the time went by so quickly. It was not because we spent any time on mundane tasks like learning words, notes and breaths. We learned them outside of rehearsal time, well before Northwest Sound began rehearsing the song for the first time. Rehearsal time is almost sacred, not to be wasted.

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Each week is a new opportunity to increase our performance level, whether the song is new, or a well-known repertoire piece.

Continual Growth – There is a place for everyone in Northwest Sound. Whether you are the new guy just learning, a young stud with a booming voice, or an accomplished senior quarteter, everyone has a place, because everyone can either learn or teach. Sometimes it is hard to find parking if you do not show up an hour early, because that is when a lot of the fun starts. From the moment a guest shows up until he graduates to the eternal chapter, he is growing from singer, to musician, to performer, and finally, to artist, all within the Northwest Sound barbershop framework.

Artistic Music – Barbershop is the core of what Northwest Sound does. Realizing that variety creates interest and that our goal is to entertain, we embrace other vocal art forms and perform many such pieces. In everything Northwest Sound does, quality is the key. We have allied ourselves with other quality groups and routinely combine to present varied musical packages to a wide audience base. Northwest Sound is known for our repertoire of privately arranged signature songs that we are proud to present to our appreciative audiences.

A Competitive Heart – While competing may not be Northwest Sound's only goal, it is an important part of our growth, and it has provided us with benchmarks along the way. We always present artistic performances, both on the contest stage and off. We have just returned from another International contest where we were in the once-elusive top 10 again. We expect to be there each year we compete. Northwest Sound may choose to take a year off now and then to develop some new artistic ventures.

A Culture of Respect – We work diligently developing a culture of respect within Northwest Sound. During rehearsal time, we pay strict attention to those leading the activities, to maximize our efforts and enjoyment of the ensemble time. We care sincerely for our brothers in our chapter and in those chapters around us. We respect other choruses and they respect us.

THE MISSION:

Our vision is distilled into the following mission, which serves to both summarize our dreams and drive our actions:

Northwest Sound is a brotherhood of men united in a cappella harmony, predominately in the barbershop style, to provide joy and entertainment to all who hear and participate. Northwest Sound seeks to achieve the highest level of artistry in all of our presentations so that we might properly preserve our musical heritage by bringing it to life for ourselves and for our audiences in today's setting. Through our music, we endeavor to lift those who need lifting, cheer those who need cheering and serve those who need serving.

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NORTHWEST SOUND Five Points of Our Chorus Culture

I. Individual Work

ACTIONS & ATTITUDES:

30+ min./day, 5+ days / week

Notes & Words

The "Plan"

Breaths, Dynamics, Articulation, Phrasing, Rhythms, Metrical Feel,
"Groove," etc.

The "Voice"

Tonal Quality, Intonation, Control of Vibrato, Range, Mixture of Chest &
Falsetto, Palette of "colors," etc.

Weekly Changes

Examples – added a breath here, changed the tag, everyone sings with the
leads here, etc.

Other Homework

Engagement

I own a piece of the chorus

My brothers rely on me

SUPPORT THE VISION:

Artistic Music

Our level of artistry is defined by the amount of time we are able to work at that
level. Time spent fixing the "basics" robs us of time spent honing our artistry.

Continual Growth

The chorus grows when individuals grow.

Individual growth must come from work, both during rehearsal and outside of
rehearsal.

Rehearsals Are Both Work and Fun

Rehearsals are most rewarding when we are able to achieve NEW things.

To achieve that, we must be able to retain and expand upon what we learn each
week.

Committed Members

Individual Work is the single biggest way to demonstrate commitment to the
chorus.

A Culture of Respect

Respecting your chorus brothers means showing up prepared and pulling your
weight.

High Membership Skill Level

Consistent Individual Work is the single best way to improve your skills.

A Competitive Heart

Success comes from being the most prepared, and being the most prepared comes
from consistent work as individuals and as a chorus.

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II. Focus

ACTIONS & ATTITUDES:

Focus / "Flow" / Energy

I am "in the zone."

I always strive to perform at 100% while I'm on the risers – even during technical work – I make this my "default"

I strive to "let" music happen vs. trying to "make" it happen.

I am focused on what's happening up front

I utilize the time while others are being coached

I do not distract my chorus brothers by:

Conducting business during rehearsal

Talking on the risers

I am constantly working on my own growth, during work on chorus growth

I am never just singing to sing

I am constantly looking for ways to do a little better during each repetition.

SUPPORT THE VISION:

Artistic Music

The amount of work that can be accomplished when individuals are able to focus and get "in the zone" is incredible.

Continual Growth

Focused work is far more effective in creating growth than unfocused work.

Rehearsals that are both work and fun

When the chorus is focused, we achieve more and are able to more fully utilize our limited time.

Additionally, the amount of energy that we put into the chorus is magnified when we are in this state.

Committed Members

Although it is sometimes difficult after a day of distractions, the discipline and commitment required to achieve focus are well worth the effort.

A Culture of Respect

Not engaging in behavior that distracts others demonstrates respect.

Talking, creating noise, etc. doesn't just affect you, it affects everyone.

High Membership Skill Level

Focus magnifies our efforts at honing skills.

A Competitive Heart

Success comes from being the most prepared. Spending the effort to routinely become focused and "in the zone" during rehearsals allows for "peak performances" to occur much more often.

III. Positive Atmosphere

ACTIONS & ATTITUDES:

Positive Atmosphere

I feel pride in my chorus, section, row and wedge.

I'm careful about the impression that I create with my words and actions, taking care that they reflect positively on myself, my brothers, and the chorus.

"I've been there before."

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I make a strong effort to be supportive of my chorus brothers.
I don't tolerate negativity.
Our brotherhood is open to all cultures, races, creeds, ethnicities, etc.

SUPPORT THE VISION:

Artistic Music

When the atmosphere is positive and the environment is safe, we are able to be more vulnerable and achieve greater artistry & growth.

Continual Growth

We achieve more when we are positive than when we are negative.

Rehearsals that are Both Work and Fun

Shared pride is an incredible motivator.

Committed Members

Although it is sometimes difficult to remain positive, the discipline and commitment are worth the effort.

It takes much more positive energy and behavior to counteract the impression created by a much smaller amount of negative energy and behavior.

A Culture of Respect

We must recognize the impact that we have on others within the chorus, the District, and our community, and strive to always create a positive impression about ourselves and our chorus.

High Membership Skill Level

We all benefit when everyone is able to grow in a positive, non-threatening environment.

A Competitive Heart

With our success will also come a spotlight, and an implied leadership role. We should endeavor to earn our place.

IV. Feedback & Assessment

ACTIONS & ATTITUDES:

Regular Assessment & Feedback

I welcome assessments & feedback because:

They allow me to receive individual feedback that allows me to grow

They give me an opportunity to demonstrate progress

They create pride at what I've accomplished

They instill a feeling a shared accomplishment – I can rely on my chorus brothers, and they can rely on me.

I help to create a Positive Atmosphere / Safe Environment, and I enjoy the benefits of others doing the same

I feel that the leadership and chorus are genuinely concerned about me and want to give me the tools to improve myself

SUPPORT THE VISION:

Artistic Music

We must highlight strengths and minimize weaknesses, so we must strive to consistently understand our strengths and weaknesses.

Continual Growth

Feedback and measurement of progress are essential to sustained growth.

Rehearsals That are Both Work and Fun

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Rehearsals are rewarding when synergy is created by everyone pushing in the same direction – shared sacrifice and shared reward.

Committed Members

Assessment and feedback are essential for individuals to understand how to direct and focus their energy.

A Culture of Respect

The chorus must maintain a positive atmosphere and safe environment so men are able to reap the rewards of being willing to be vulnerable.

High Membership Skill Level

Assessment and Feedback provide information that allows individuals and the chorus to hone skills and define what is the “biggest bang for the buck” in their individual work.

A Competitive Heart

Success comes from being the best prepared.

V. High Expectations

ACTIONS & ATTITUDES:

High expectations of myself

I own my own growth.

I am constantly improving – Today's 100% is tomorrow's 90%.

I will “do what it takes”

I will only sing with good quality – I won't be a “hero.”

I am able to focus on two skills simultaneously.

Examples: I can sing smoothly and in rhythm, I can “perform” with good vocal quality, etc.

I make an effort – not excuses.

High expectations of others

Everyone is growing.

Each guy is learning and growing, regardless of current skill level.

Mastery is not a “place” but a “path”.

It comes from embracing the process/path of growth, rather than from embracing the ideal of “good enough”

SUPPORT THE VISION:

Artistic Music

When everyone embraces these concepts we can achieve much more.

Continual Growth

Our achievements are limited by our expectations.

Rehearsals That are Both Work and Fun

High expectations of ourselves are hard work, but the payoff is incredibly fun.

Committed Members

It is important that we have the commitment to demand a lot of ourselves. It is also important that we gently, respectfully demand a lot of our chorus brothers.

A Culture of Respect

High expectations should begin with ourselves.

High Membership Skill Level

Our achievements are limited by our expectations.

A Competitive Heart

Our achievements are limited by our expectations.

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Scope

The Operating Procedures Manual (OPM) contains comprehensive resource material to introduce new members to the Bellevue Chapter and Northwest Sound (NWS) Men's Chorus of the Barbershop Harmony Society (AKA Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barbershop Quartet Singing in America, Inc).

Objectives

This manual covers a broad content of operational procedures. The OPM primary objectives are listed as follows:

- Provide members the standards and performance expectations established for the Northwest Sound Men's Chorus.
- Present a variety of vocal, visual, and performance tips to benefit all singers.
- Provide a brief history and organization of the Barbershop Harmony Society, Evergreen District and the Bellevue Chapter.

General Information

Revision and Distribution

Periodic revision of this publication is the responsibility of the NWS board of directors (hereafter, Board) and music committee.

Style and Format

The style and writing of this manual (including grammar, abbreviations, acronyms, punctuation and capitalization) follow guidelines established by the Society's Public Relations Officers & Bulletin Editors (PROBE) Style Manual and Style Guide for Writers. The format and general typography follow guidelines established by the Society's Chapter Management Guide.

Editorial License

Upon approval by the board and music committee, the OPM editor may change or augment the wording herein for readability and clarification of intent or meaning. The OPM editor may also make recommendations for improvement when ambiguity, duplication or overlap exists.

Organizational Hierarchy

The new member handout and FAQs at appendix A, has some basic information listed as Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) to assist new members with their transition into the Northwest Sound Men's Chorus. The new member's checklist at appendix B has the names, e-mail addresses, and titles of the Northwest Sound Board and Music Team.

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Administration and Policies

1. Administration

1.1 Board Meetings

The Bellevue Chapter holds monthly Board meetings on the first Wednesday to conduct business and manage day-to-day chapter operations. All members are encouraged to attend.

2. Chapter Expectations

All members of the Northwest Sound Men's Chorus must also be active members of the Bellevue Chapter. This means more than just singing well and becoming proficient at choreographed moves. It means that each man understands and accepts that a great deal of time, effort and commitment will be required of him.

The Northwest Sound Expectations is located in appendix C. These expectations are introduced to each applicant during the application/auditions process and are developed so that each man will know what is expected of him as a member. You may or may not have questions concerning the statements during the applicant interview process that follows the vocal and visual auditions. In any case, before being accepted into membership, you acknowledge and abide to a series of chapter expectations as follows:

The Northwest Sound Men's Chorus is "dedicated to musical excellence," which means striving to become the very best men's singing organization in the world. Every member must be dedicated to achieving absolute excellence in choral sound, production and showmanship.

The Northwest Sound will always be first class in everything they do. Being a first class organization means never accepting anything less than the highest quality in how we perform, how we look, where we meet, how we administer our chapter and, most importantly, how we conduct ourselves in public when representing our chorus. Our standards are high and they will be enforced.

Annual dues for new and active members (not transfers or dual memberships) are \$221 of which \$70 is for Chapter Dues, \$115 for Society Office in Nashville, TN and \$41 for the Evergreen District plus a onetime \$10 enrollment fee. Seniors and students are entitled to a discount. The chapter secretary and treasurer can assist you with information regarding transfers, dual memberships, student and senior discounts.

As indicated above, the Northwest Sound has an "Active Members Only" policy. In addition to singing well and executing choreographed moves correctly, each man is also expected to serve on, or act as the chairman of, no less than one committee, or be accountable for no less than one position of major responsibility within the chorus. Regardless of how large the chapter becomes, there are more than enough jobs to go around. Each member is also expected to be active in the recruitment of quality new members, as membership is everyone's responsibility.

The Northwest Sound expects each member to maintain a positive attitude while at rehearsals and at other functions where other chorus members and/or non-members are in attendance. This is not to say that you cannot have an opinion or make a suggestion. This does mean, however, that the chapter will not permit any form of public negativity. If you feel there is a problem that needs to be addressed or if you have a complaint, you will be required to bring it to the attention of a board member-at-large — in private, and preferably in writing — for purposes of discussion and resolution by the board.

The Northwest Sound expects each member to read and abide by the chapter's Codes of Standards and Dress, as well as other policies and procedures that may be promulgated from time to time by the board.

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The Northwest Sound requires each member to be able to follow the music director, his assistants and/or coaches; memorize the chorus music; memorize and accomplish the stage presence motions; attend rehearsals on time; and accept the responsibility of singing with the chorus at its public appearances.

Participation as a chorus member, with the privilege of singing in public appearances and in Society competitions, will not be allowed if a member's attendance at chapter rehearsals prior to these events does not meet the recommended factors established and made public by the music director, music committee, or the board. Exceptions can be made, on an individual basis and for good cause shown, only by the music committee.

Prior to any performance, and at the discretion of the music director or music committee, a proficiency in notes and lyrics may be required through the use of a tape recorder or participation in a quartet. In addition, special demonstrations of stage presence may be required. It must be understood that all members appearing on stage for any performance by the chapter do so at the discretion of the music committee and/or music director

3. Membership Policies

3.1 Active Membership

The Bellevue Chapter has an Active Members Only policy. This means that members are expected to attend all rehearsals and performances of the Northwest Sound. While it is recognized that 100% attendance is not possible for everyone, a member whose attendance falls substantially below the chorus average is subject to a review of the reasons by the music committee. The committee reports its findings and recommendations to the board and the board may rescind an individual's active status in the performing chorus if attendance is unsatisfactory.

Those who are not able to be in the performing chorus, for one reason or another are to be considered inactive members. Members are either in the performing chorus or not; they cannot pick and choose to sing in a contest or performance. Special circumstances can be handled on an individual basis.

3.2 Renewal

Members will renew their membership through the Barbershop Harmony Society <http://www.barbershop.org/> Members Login, or mail in, or through the chapter secretary.

3.3 New Membership Process

A prospective new member is voice placed by a member of the music team on or about the 3rd visit.

The VP of Chapter Development gives a guest a brief orientation of the chapter once the perspective member shows interest in joining the chapter after the 3rd visit.

After the third visit, a guest receives a more detailed orientation from the VP, Music and Performance. Prospective member arranges a vocal audition with the music team for the performing chorus (see section 4.3). When prospective member passes the vocal audition, he fills out a membership application and pays member dues in full.

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4 Music and Performance Policies

4.1 Music Committee Authority

The Music Committee has the authority to (a) pass or fail applicants and (b) determine the performance competency of the members of the chorus. The Committee may, by formal action and written notice to a member, exclude such member(s) from participating in any performance, show or contest.

4.2 Issuance of Music and Learning Tracks

The following pertains to the issuance of new sheet music and audio recording media:

- a. Unless otherwise approved by the music committee, applicants who have passed their vocal audition will receive sheet music, and may download learning tracks from the website at <http://www.nwsound.org/> and choreography videos if available.
- b. Repertoire music shall be made available to members and guests at no cost.

4.3 Auditions

Unless otherwise adopted by the board, the vocal standards of the Northwest Sound Chapter and the Northwest Sound shall be determined by the music committee. Specific application and implementation of these standards may be delegated by the music committee to subcommittees and/or individuals.

An applicant for membership in the chapter may request to be auditioned on his fourth visit to a regular Northwest Sound rehearsal, provided that at least three visits occur on consecutive weeks. The auditions coordinator may make occasional exceptions to this schedule when an applicant demonstrates unusual enthusiasm and musical ability.

4.3.1 Vocal Auditions

To ensure that an applicant's singing skills meet or exceed minimum vocal requirements, the Music Team has established the following audition process

- a. An audition coordinator schedules a vocal assessment session for each applicant. Results serve in determining whether (or not) the next step in seeking membership should be taken.
- b. Those who "Pass" their vocal assessment can select and memorize one song from our current chorus repertoire for use in their quartet audition. Prior to scheduling the audition, a Music Team member will assess the applicant's preparedness.
- c. Quartet auditions utilize members of the Music Team as quartet participants and evaluators, and take 15 to 30 minutes. Limited coaching will take place, especially for borderline cases.
- d. After the audition, Music Team members confer privately to establish "Pass" or "Not Pass" and prepare recommendations for the applicant.
- e. For those who "Pass", the appropriate section leaders will brief them on things to improve, and identify sources of help.
- f. For those issued a "Not Pass", options will be discussed which typically include 1) private voice lessons, 2) voice matching, 3) seek a member's help in overcoming key issues, or 4) improving skills by singing in a quartet.
- g. Individual's "Not passing" on the first attempt shouldn't feel discouraged. It's usually a case of not appreciating the level of preparedness needed for auditioning in a quartet setting. More often than not, that individual will pass on the second or (possibly) third attempt. He may attend rehearsals while he works on his deficiencies, but shall not sing or rehearse with the chorus. When he feels sufficiently prepared, he should then contact his section leader. The section leader will evaluate the applicant's progress and schedule (or not) another.

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4.4 Qualification for the Performing Chorus The audition procedure outlined previously is designed to assess the potential of a singer to be a member of the **Northwest Sound**, but does not guarantee a spot on the risers in the performing chorus. Inherent in our aspiration of “Musical Excellence,” is the dedication of each singer to try to improve himself at every opportunity to sing and look better each time he performs, whether it is during a rehearsal or in front of an audience. Excellent ways for a member to monitor his own vocal progress is recording himself during rehearsal and then constructively evaluating himself later. He should also regularly spend time in front of a mirror checking vowel shapes and appropriate, active facial expression and involvement. Any or all of the qualified singers may be required to re-qualify for the performing chorus from time to time as considered necessary.

4.4.1 Vocal Qualification The Music Team shall, as it deems necessary, conduct vocal qualifications by either of the methods described below.

a) (Especially valuable during the song introduction phase) Submit recordings employing NWS’s internet submission tool and four part (singer’s part missing) track option. Evaluators must be able to distinctly hear all four parts (preferably) “in balance”. Each submittal is to be accompanied by a detailed self-evaluation using the format provided.

b) Record standing off the risers away from others singing your part. Submit as in a)

c) Quartet qualification (reserved for the better singers) involves real time critique and coaching

In all cases, items mentioned for correction by the evaluators, are expected to be addressed during home study. Eliminating problems and achieving quality may be supported by special section rehearsals, individual voice lessons, “voice matching”, quartet activity, and section leader monitoring.

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5 Codes of Standards and Dress

The **Northwest Sound**, though made up of amateur singers, aspire to conduct themselves in as professional a manner as possible at all times. The men joining the chorus understand this and agree to act accordingly. The following code has been prepared to give members both advice and specific information as to the conduct expected.

5.1 Standards Code

5.1.1 General Conduct

Conduct yourself in such a manner as to bring credit to the **Northwest Sound**. Others will judge your individual actions as a statement from the chapter.

5.1.2 Public Behavior

Be positive in praise of other chapters and quartets and avoid boasting about the accomplishments of the **Northwest Sound**. Be particularly careful at contests and conventions, as what you say is easily overheard and passed along. Recognize that people will tend to look at our members and observe them very closely. Be conscious of this — that you are at all times “on stage” - and go out of your way to be friendly and project a positive image.

5.1.3 Relations with Other Members

Exhibit a spirit of friendship and harmony toward all members of the **Northwest Sound**. Exert extra effort to become acquainted with other chapter members, as cliques are counterproductive. Be careful not to exclude new members or those you do not know well from your socializing. Remember, we all have one thing in common: our love of barbershop harmony.

5.1.4 Chapter Involvement

It is the duty of each member to aid and assist the **Northwest Sound** by using his talents to help the chapter. Volunteer your services whenever the need arises; do not wait to be asked.

5.1.5 Attendance and Punctuality

Members should make every effort to be in attendance at all chapter meetings and functions. Be punctual and stay until the end. Rehearsals start promptly at the scheduled time and you should plan to arrive early in order to ensure punctuality. Allow adequate advance time for chapter business, personal needs and mental warm-up.

5.1.6 Learning Obligation

It is each individual's responsibility to learn words, music and choreography as quickly and completely as possible. Devote time at home during the week for any necessary study or review. Do light vocal warm-ups while en route in the car before rehearsals and performances.

5.1.7 Riser Etiquette

Maintaining focus on the director at all times is fundamental to getting the most out of every rehearsal. Effective listening, therefore, requires that every singer be in an environment that is free from distraction and disruption. Here are several guidelines to ensure effective rehearsals.

Take your place on the risers immediately when the chorus is called.

Focus your undivided attention on the director, assistant director or coach giving instructions. If there are multiple people up front during a song (such as presentation coaches), keep your eyes focused on the primary director unless otherwise instructed.

When the director stops directing, stop singing and listen.

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When the director is working with a section other than your own, **do not talk**. Listen and pay attention, as in many cases the instruction given others will be educational and helpful to you.

Comments on the risers, whispered remarks and wisecracks or well-intentioned advice, distract the chorus. Consequently, there should be no talking by anyone while on the risers (exception is granted to section leaders when necessary). If something truly needs to be said and cannot wait until the break, you should raise your hand. The person up front will then decide whether or not to entertain the comment. The flow of the meeting will guide this decision.

Late arrivals are a distraction to the director and the chorus. So please be on time. If you are late and rehearsal is in progress, pause at the end of the risers until an appropriate break in rehearsal activity occurs and then immediately and unobtrusively take your place on the risers. Avoid walking in front of the director.

5.1.8 Alcohol and Drugs

Alcohol and other drugs dull the senses and adversely affect one's reflexes. Consequently, the chapter cannot tolerate the use of alcohol or other mind-altering substances prior to Northwest Sound performances or rehearsals.

5.1.9 Individual Health

Your health and your voice are important to the chapter. Avoid harsh or very loud singing, particularly before shows and contests. We need each voice to be clear, relaxed and ready to perform at its highest level.

5.1.10 Illness

There comes a time when illness or injury, however trivial, requires that members use common sense by staying home to avoid spreading germs or risking further injury by standing on the risers. The most practical thing a member can do is rest and get well.

In general:

A member should, under no condition, feel pressure from the director or any other chapter leader to attend rehearsals when he is not in the best of health.

There is no occasion when a member of the performing chorus should be sitting out front unless conducting specific chapter business.

If a member cannot stand on the risers due to some physical ailment (sprained ankle, severe back or leg pain, dizziness, shortness of breath, etc.), he should sit to the immediate left or right front of the chorus during the rehearsal. He can still sing his part and be in full view of the director, coach or administrator as one with the chorus.

Sitting in a chair alongside the chorus may also apply to anyone who is recovering from an illness or surgery, but may still not be strong enough to spend the full rehearsal on the risers. Singers who are recovering from bronchitis or flu may fall into this category.

5.1.11 Discipline

Section leaders may appropriately deal with choral or disciplinary situations arising within their sections. However, it is also the responsibility of all members to do what they can to ensure that chorus discipline and decorum are maintained at all times while on the risers. No members should be conducting business during chorus rehearsals except for those greeting guests. Officers and committee members accept the time demands necessary to do their jobs outside of rehearsal. Members doing tickets for shows and other

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activities should plan their business activity before and after rehearsal. Rehearsal time is sacrosanct.

5.2 Dress Code

5.2.1 Personal Grooming

Personal grooming is important to the chorus image. Shave as closely as possible and maintain a trim haircut. If worn, mustaches and beards should be neat and tidy. Because we work hard and are frequently in close quarters (e.g., on the risers), be extra fastidious in the maintenance of your own personal hygiene.

5.2.2 Informal Attire

The following guidelines are established for use by members when wearing chorus attire with the Northwest Sound logo.

Whenever a chorus member wears an article of clothing with the Northwest Sound logo or displays a Northwest Sound name tag, he is representing the chapter. The remainder of a member's attire shall thus meet the standards one would expect from a well-dressed individual.

The Northwest Sound jacket shall be worn free of any medals, ribbons, pins or other devices not related to the chapter or the Society.

The Northwest Sound polo shirt may be worn with the Northwest Sound nametag. While attending recognized Society functions, a registration nametag may also be worn.

The care and upkeep of your informal chorus clothing is the member's responsibility.

5.2.3 Class A Uniform

The Class A uniform for the Northwest Sound shall consist of a formal black suit with a black dress shirt, gold vest and ties (long and bow), gold handkerchief, black socks and black dress shoes. If necessary, suspenders may be used to provide additional comfort and support.

The care and upkeep of the Class A uniform is your responsibility. Keep your suit, black shirt, and black shoes looking sharp at all times. Be sure that your suit is clean and pressed at all times. You are required to pay the cleaning and upkeep expenses for your uniform. Take care to protect your suit from makeup, cigarette burns, dirt and grease, etc. Store it properly in your wardrobe bag after use.

Do not make substitutions or changes in the uniform without obtaining specific authorization from the wardrobe manager. For example, it would be inappropriate to wear white tennis shoes, even on the fourth row where they probably would not be seen. If you have a special circumstance, discuss it with the wardrobe manager.

5.2.4 Class B Uniform

The Class B uniform for the Northwest Sound shall consist of a black polo shirt bearing the Northwest Sound logo embroidered on the left breast. It shall be worn with putty trousers (Eddie Bauer khaki, pleated-front, relaxed-fit), a black leather belt with brass buckle, and polished black dress shoes. This uniform may be modified from year to year.

It is suggested that the uniform be worn by the chorus as a unit under the following conditions:

On the primary performance day at all Society shows, conventions or contests when the chorus is making an appearance as a unit. This would include any public appearances such as rehearsals, meetings, traveling to performance site, and for the balance of the day after any such performance.

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On the primary performance day of any guest appearance on any barbershop or Sweet Adeline's chapter show, including appearances before or after the show proper, at rehearsals or afterglows.

When visiting other barbershop group meetings. This would also apply when other barbershop groups visit a Northwest Sound rehearsal en mass.

At any other occasion or event where it is felt that a display of uniform appearance would be to the advantage of the chorus.

It is specifically recommended that the uniform not be worn by the chorus as a unit for most non-barbershop functions where we are paid guest performers, thus saving our "uniform" appearance for our actual performance on stage.

Nothing herein is meant to discourage individual members from wearing this uniform or any of its components of their choice at other times for the purpose of "showing the flag" in public.

The care and upkeep of the Class B uniform is your responsibility, keep it looking sharp at all times.

5.2.5 Use of Chapter Logo

Unless specifically authorized by the Board, the Northwest Sound logo is not to be affixed to individual items of clothing or applied to distinctive personal objects. Thus, chapter-issued name badges may be worn on clothing and chapter-approved bumper stickers may be placed on vehicles. However, it would be inappropriate to apply the logo onto a non-chapter approved shirt (or onto a non-approved color of shirt), or to manufacture items bearing the logo without prior Board approval.

5.2.6 Wearing of Society Medals

(Reserved for future use)

6 Chapter Quartets

6.1 Definition

A chapter quartet is one in which all four men are active members of the Northwest Sound Chapter. Because chapter quartets further the traditions of the Society and add to the ability of the Northwest Sound to present entertaining and high quality performances, the chapter shall seek ways to provide them with support and encouragement.

6.2 Financial Assistance

6.2.1 Compensation

Chapter quartets, as part of their participation in the chapter, may be asked to sing as part of a chorus presentation. However, if a chapter quartet sings more than two songs as part of a paid chorus performance, the quartet ordinarily shall be offered some financial compensation. The amount shall be established well in advance of the performance.

6.2.2 Honorariums

When chapter quartets achieve significant distinction in Society contests, such as becoming district champions or international finalists, they bring to the Northwest Sound an increased level of musicianship, honor and prestige. In recognition of the special value of having distinguished quartets in the chorus, the chapter shall be particularly mindful of reasonable needs that they might have and should try to give assistance whenever possible.

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7 Chapter Programs

7.1 Awards

7.1.1 Chapter Awards Program

The Bellevue Chapter has an Awards Program to recognize outstanding performance and contribution by chapter members. Awards are presented each year, usually in January, at the chapter's annual awards and installation banquet. (See a description of the Chapter Awards Program below.)

7.1.2 Chapter Awards Program

Provisos

Unless otherwise specified, the awards identified below are all plaques inscribed with the Northwest Sound logo.

Any Board action or change, which affects the Chapter Awards Program, shall be communicated to the Awards Committee Chairman. The following list identifies the award, criteria and process for selection, and person designated to present the award:

Name: Barbershopper of the Year (BOTY)

Criteria: Presented to an outstanding person for exemplary service and significant contribution throughout the year to the Northwest Sound Men's Chorus. The recipient is ineligible to receive award again for five years. **Selected by:** The Board. **Presented by:** Board member or current Barbershopper of the Year.

Name: President's Award(s)

Criteria: The chapter president presents plaques or mementos of his choice to members who have been most helpful and supportive to him during the year. The number of awards is at the president's discretion. **Selected by:** President. **Presented by:** President.

Name: Northwest Sound Award

Criteria: Given to the Member who is always there getting things done, whether or not he is asked. The recipient cannot be an officer, Board member, or committee chairman. **Selected by:** The Board or contributing designee. **Presented by:** Board member or contributing designee.

Name: Rookie of the Year Award

Criteria: Award to the person who has been a member less than a year and has exemplified what it is to be a contributing chorus member. **Selected by:** The Board or contributing designee. **Presented by:** Board member or contributing designee.

The Chapter Board of Directors may add to this list of awards as they feel needed. The attempt is to recognize those individuals or groups who have made significant contributions to the success of the Chapter and Chorus throughout the year. These awards may be presented at any time so as to make the presentation a positive impact for all involved.

7.1.3 Chapter Barbershopper of the Year

A past recipient of the Barbershopper of the Year Award who is on the committee to select the current recipient shall be an "active" member.

Award recipients shall be chosen for achievement throughout the year, not for one-time acts that may be worthy of some other form of recognition.

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The current Barbershopper of the Year, after leading the selection of the new BOTY as described below shall provide to the Awards Committee chairman a list of all recommended candidates for the BOTY Award as well as any justifications considered by the Committee. In turn, the Awards Committee chairman, after excluding the name of the new BOTY, shall pass the list of runners-up to the president. At his discretion, the president may provide some form of recognition to one or more runners-up as he sees fit. This proviso is intended to provide a way to give formal recognition to BOTY runners-up who generally go unrecognized for their contributions to the chapter throughout the year.

Since it is not customary for a member to receive more than one award, the Awards Committee Chairman shall coordinate with the president and the person(s) making the selection whenever the situation arises. These parties shall assess the selection process and determine if the proposed recipient is justified in receiving multiple awards.

8 Wardrobe Procedures

8.1 Acquisition

Following Board approval of a membership application, the new member will be given uniform information. The member will then be contacted to arrange a time and place for a uniform fitting.

8.2 Maintenance

Custody of the Class A uniform will be maintained by the individual member. This will include washing of shirts and socks, as well as cleaning when necessary. It is the responsibility of the member to notify the wardrobe manager of any needed repair or other problems that may arise—such as missing buttons, missing articles, or weight loss/gain. Members will be responsible for the custody and maintenance of their casual chorus attire. Further information on general grooming and attire can be found in the Codes of Standards and Dress.

8.3 Responsibilities at Performances

8.3.1 Before the Performance

All members should wear white crew neck T-shirt (if desired) to protect the suit from perspiration.

Wedding rings may be worn but watches and other jewelry items that might become visible should be removed.

To the extent possible, valuables should be kept locked in your car.

8.3.2 After the Performance

Hang your suit properly on the suit hanger, with the creases of the pants together.

Account for all accessories (bow tie, jewelry, etc.) and assure they are in your possession when you leave.

Do not leave T-shirts or anything else behind in the dressing area.

Leave the hanging bag partially open to let it air out.

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9 Other Chapter Policies

9.1 Solicitation of Funds

Unless otherwise approved by the board, solicitation of funds from chapter members is prohibited. This policy, however, shall not preclude the sale of tickets for public barbershop performances or the sale of Northwest Sound and Barbershop Harmony Society (previously SPEBSQSA) merchandise. The sale of show tickets by quartets or representatives of other chapters, during Northwest Sound rehearsals, shall be limited to the distribution of flyers and, if time permits, a brief verbal announcement.

10 The Organization

10.1 The Barbershop Society

The Barbershop Harmony Society was initially formed in 1938 under the name Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barbershop Quartet Singing in America. In 2004 the official name was changed to the Barbershop Harmony Society.

10.1.1 A Brief History

Barbershop harmony was spawned in the 1840s and developed during the early beginnings of the entertainment and recording industry. It sprouted when minstrel shows and the traveling concert were institutions, popularizing the songs that lent themselves easily to four-part harmony. It reached its peak during the glorious days of vaudeville and burlesque, and few vaudeville bills were without a quartet.

The Barbershop Harmony Society, however, was born in April of 1938. As the story goes, two Tulsa acquaintances, tax lawyer O.C. Cash and investment man Rupert I. Hall, met by accident in Kansas City, Missouri. These two Tulsans hailed each other in the Hotel Muehlebach and their talk drifted to music. They found a mutual interest in the older, sweeter harmony songs and the memories and traditions revived by singing those songs.

Cash outlined to Hall the dream of organizing a barbershop quartet club. Hall promised that, when he returned to Tulsa, he would call Cash and “get this thing started.” He arranged for the original meeting at the Tulsa Club and drafted this invitation:

“In this age of Dictators and government control of everything, about the only privilege guaranteed by the Bill of Rights, not in some way supervised or directed, is the art of Barber Shop Quartet Singing. Without a doubt, we still have the rights of ‘peaceable assembly’, which, I am advised by competent legal authority, includes quartet singing. The writers have for a long time thought that something should be done to encourage the enjoyment of this last remaining vestige of human liberty. Therefore, we have decided to hold a songfest on the Roof Garden of the Tulsa Club on Monday, April 11, at six-thirty p.m.”

This was signed by Rupert Hall (“Royal Keeper of the Minor Keys”) and O.C. Cash (“Third Temporary Assistant Vice Chairman”) of the Society for the Preservation and Propagation of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in the United States.

The third meeting of this group really started America’s rush to singing. About 150 men attended this meeting at the Alvin Hotel. As the gang singing started, someone noted a traffic jam outside the hotel. While police tried to straighten out the problem, a reporter for the local newspaper heard the singing, sensed a great story, and attended the meeting.

The wire services caught the story and spread it coast-to-coast. Soon, Kansas City, St. Louis, Oklahoma City, Grand Rapids, St. Paul, Chicago, New Orleans, New York City, and smaller places from the Gulf of Mexico to Canada, had group meetings to sing barbershop harmony. The Society’s goal to “Keep the Whole World Singing” has now succeeded in spreading its chords to England, Sweden, Australia, New

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Zealand, and many other countries around the world.

10.1.2 The Origin of Barbershop Songs and Arrangements

Barbershop singing, like jazz and the spiritual, is a truly American style of music. It is chromatic four-part harmony sung by four unaccompanied voices. The melody is sung by a part known as Lead, while a Tenor part is sung above the melody and a Bass part is sung lower. A Baritone sings either above or below the Lead, whatever is necessary to complete the chord. This combination gives barbershop harmony its very distinctive four-part sound.

Songs written between 1890 and the late 1920s provide one of the best sources for barbershop harmony. The melodies of that era were designed to be sung by amateur singers. The rhythms are simple, are not pitched too high or too low, and do not use awkward intervals. Also, the singer can immediately “hear” the implied harmonies generated by the melody. By contrast, songs written from 1930 to the present generally have more complicated melodies, rhythms and harmonies, making them incompatible with barbershop harmony; only the occasional tune is adaptable.

A large selection of these 1890 to 1930 songs can be found in the Society’s “Old Songs Library.” Housed within the Society Office in Kenosha, Wisconsin, this library has a collection of 460,000 pieces of sheet music, most of which were published between 1840 and 1940. The music library, complete with a full-time librarian, is second in size to the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.

Another source for songs comes from a special group of contemporary songwriters. Names like Einar Pedersen, Joe Liles, Bob Godfrey, Dan Wilson, Paul Olguin and Dr. Val Hicks top the list of men creating original words and music that fit the barbershop style.

The Society is also fortunate to have its own cadre of music arrangers—people who put chords to a melody. You will see songs with names on them like Don Gray, Dr. Greg Lyne, Earl Moon, Lou Perry, Lloyd Steincamp, Dave Stevens, Dr. Burt Szabo, Ed Waesche, David Wright, and Aaron Dale, men blessed with advanced musical knowledge and a love for barbershop harmony.

10.1.3 Purpose

The Society’s vision, as described in its international by-laws, is: “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.”

10.1.4 Organization Management within Our Society

This purpose is furthered through the efforts of hundreds of volunteers serving as officers on three levels: Chapter, District, and International. Each January the respective administrations make a massive turnover in officers. Let’s examine the various levels.

10.1.4.1 Chapter

This is the basic unit in the Society. The foundation of our Society is the **CHAPTER**. The chapter functions to provide an organized setting in which to enjoy fellowship in song. Each is incorporated under the laws of its respective state or province as a non-profit, tax-exempt corporation for educational and charitable purposes. The officers on the chapter board of directors are, at a minimum, president, vice president for music and performance, vice president for chapter development, vice president for public relations, vice president for marketing, secretary and treasurer. There are frequently additional Board members-at-large and several committee positions.

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10.1.4.1.1

The Northwest Sound was organized in 1985 as a competition and professional show oriented chorus. We host a minimum of two shows a year locally and travel throughout the Pacific Northwest entertaining audiences at shows, conventions and corporate meetings. We have been Division II and District champions on many occasions and have competed at the International level many times. We consistently rank as one of the top men's choruses in the world.

10.1.4.1.2

The Bellevue Chapter and Northwest Sound Men's Chorus is family oriented. Family members and friends are encouraged to visit us, join us, and help us when possible. They have been a real backbone of our success in competition.

10.1.4.1.3

The chorus rehearses every Wednesday in support of our multiple activities throughout the year including:

- International, district, and divisional contests.
- Shows, "sing-outs", and other performances.
- Quartet activity-internal quartet contests and Valentine's Day fund raiser.
- Retreats-additional rehearsals throughout the year, often with guest directors, voice coaches or choreographers.
- Social times-Summer camp outs, annual dinners, and after event desserts.

10.1.4.1.4

The Chapter elects an executive board each year in October. The board serves one year (January-December) and they meet once a month. Chapter board meetings are open to all members.

The chapter board members hold the following positions:

President

VP, Music and Performance

VP, Chapter Development

VP, Marketing and PR

Secretary

Treasurer

Board Member At Large

Board Member at Large

Board Member at Large

Immediate Past President (IPP)

10.1.4.1.5

Membership in almost any organization requires that there be some type of dues or fees to help the organization meet their goals. This is also true for the Barbershop Harmony Society and Northwest Sound Chapter. In our organization, however, these fees are often returned to the member in some form of service or other provisions. Listed below are the dues /fees required by all members of the Northwest Sound (subject to change from year to year). The first year of membership must be paid in full in one lump sum. Annual dues thereafter can be paid on a schedule that the member establishes with the Society, i.e. all in a lump sum, by credit card on a one time basis or monthly withdrawal fee, or by a bank withdrawal card. Discuss these options with the chapter secretary.

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10.1.4.1.6

Annual Dues

	Regular	
Society Dues	\$ 115.00	Effective: January 1, 2013
District Dues	\$ 41.00	
Chapter Dues	<u>\$ 70.00</u>	
Total	\$ 226.00	

10.1.4.1.7

MEMBERSHIP IN THE CHAPTER DOES NOT AUTOMATICALLY MEAN YOU ARE A MEMBER OF THE PERFORMING CHORUS. There is an audition and education program members must pass in order to qualify to sing in the performing chorus on shows or contests. The music vice president and the music team administer and manage the qualification program. Once you become a member of the "Performing Chorus", you become eligible to obtain a chorus uniform. Chorus uniforms cost about \$250.00 including all the accessories.

If you desire to join our chapter, you will be asked to participate in vocal placement on your first visit, so we have you placed in the right section. Guest books, learning mp3 recordings are posted on the chorus web site at URL <http://www.nwsound.org/> under the Members Login section in the file Repertoire, on a case-by-case basis CDs may be provided, other learning aids will be provided to you as you progress through the membership application process.

We aren't looking just for "Joiners." We desire men who are willing to make a long-term commitment to our growth and musical success. We encourage our guests to visit us a few times before making that decision and commitment to join. Our membership vice president will meet with you to complete the application process when you are ready. In addition to the application, you will be given an informational package containing more information about the Society and some music sheets of "Polecat" songs, songs which are common to every barbershop singer throughout the society.

Again welcome to our family...if you have any questions about our chapter, district or Society, please feel free to ask any of our board members or chapter leaders.

10.1.4.2 Division

The primary purpose of the Division designation is for contest and judging purposes. The **DIVISION** level of organization has no official management structure; however there are members from each division represented on the District Operations Team. Division I is all of British Columbia; Division II, covers the greater Seattle Area and Western Washington; Division III is Alberta and Northern Montana, Division IV, Central and Western Oregon, and Division V, Eastern Washington, Idaho and Western Montana. There are a total of 57 Chapters in the Evergreen District with almost 1,700 members. Chapter Choruses compete annually for the right to move onto the District level competition. District winners qualify for competition at the International level.

10.1.4.3 District

The present geographical boundaries of the Society include all of the United States and a major portion of Canada. The Society is divided into 17 districts that vary considerably in geographic size and numbers of chapters and individual members. Each district has a board of directors which establishes policy for their district and offers overall administrative review and assistance to their respective divisions (a smaller administrative region within a district), chapters and members. The governing body is the House of delegates, with one representative from each chapter. Each district publishes a newsletter or magazine.

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10.1.4.3.1

There are 17 geographical districts in the US and Canada. These districts cover all 50 States and 10 Canadian Provinces. Districts range in size from 28-86 chapters, in membership from 1,200-4,300. An elected Board of Directors who oversees the affairs of their District manages the Districts. The District also has an appointed Operations Team supporting Music Education, Young Men in Harmony, Conventions, Contest and Judging, Administrative Leadership Development, Chorus Director Development, Membership Extension, and Marketing and Public Relations.

10.1.4.3.2

The Northwest Sound Chapter is a member of the Evergreen District that covers 1.9 million square miles of Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Alaska, British Columbia, Alberta. The District is divided into 5 Divisions for management and control purposes.

10.1.4.4 Society

Society Headquarters under the direction of a Chief Executive Officer is located in Nashville, TN. The Society has a paid professional staff of leaders focused on music education, society business administration, marketing and public relations, membership development and event. Society Headquarters manages the daily organizational operations of approximately 25,000 individual members in about 800 chapters in the United States and Canada with affiliate organizations worldwide. There is an elected Board of Directors to manage the affairs of the Society. The Board of Directors consists of elected officials from 17 geographical districts that make up the Society in addition to a President, Vice President, Executive Vice President, Treasurer and Immediate Past President.

The Society is the hub around which the wheel of harmony revolves. It arranges for the publication and distribution of music, publishes the official Society magazine (The Harmonizer), produces videotaped instructional material, conducts annual quartet and chorus contests, publishes manuals on chapter operations and other educational literature, supervises the harmony education program to better enrich the membership, and stocks an array of distinctive merchandise for sale to the membership (clothing, gifts, etc.).

The officers on this level are the Society Board, comprised of the officers, president, executive vice president, treasurer, executive director (CEO), immediate past president, and eight board members each representing two districts, and three at large members selected by the Society Nominating Committee. This group meets four times per year and is elected annually.

The coordinating center for all officers and entities is the Society office currently located in Nashville, Tennessee is equipped with all the operations necessary to run an association. An executive director administers it with the aid of a full time, paid working staff. Some staff people travel the entire continent, encouraging and preserving barbershop music. Society web site information can be found at <http://www.barbershop.org/> or call (800) 876-SING.

The international influence comes from subsidiaries outside the continental U.S. and Canada and includes: AAMBS (Australian Association of Men's Barbershop Singers); BABS (British Association of Barbershop Singers); BinG (Barbershop in Germany); DABS (Dutch Association of Barbershop Singers); FABS (Finnish Association of Barbershop Singers); IABS (Irish Association of Barbershop Singers); NZABS (New Zealand Association of Barbershop Singers); SABS (Spanish Association of Barbershop Singers); SNOBS (Society of Nordic Barbershop Singers); SPATS (Southern Part of Africa Tonsorial Singers). An especially appreciated ladies Allied organization is SAI (Sweet Adeline's International).

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10.1.5 A Most Interesting Hobby

Society members lead double lives: by day, working at their jobs; by night, becoming barbershoppers who stage shows, entertain throughout the community, compete in contests, participate in fun activities, edit newsletters, judge contests, write songs, coach quartets and choruses, direct choruses, sing in quartets, and provide leadership as chapter, district and Society officers. The place all this activity begins is at the chapter. Barbershoppers gather at weekly meetings to sing, spend an evening with friends and share their talents in organizing events. It is also the time chapter members use to rehearse for performances and competitions.

The Society offers many outlets to employ and display a man's talents; or you may wish to learn about a new area like arranging, show production, quartet singing, and judging or chapter administration. There is truly something for everyone in the Society. As a member, you are eligible for many benefits:

- Subscription to "The Harmonizer"
- Membership group insurance program
- Merchandise unique to barbershopping
- Information on the Unified Service Project, Harmony Foundation
- Convention videos
- Records and tapes of top quartets and choruses
- Publications on singing techniques
- Directories of chapters and quartets
- Recognition awards
- Harmony Education Program: schools and manuals
- Harmony College: in-depth classes on coaching, arranging and proper singing techniques.
- Directors' School: in-depth training for chorus directors and their assistants

Involvement is the key to barbershop experience and success. People devote years of work to the Society. In return they are rewarded with lifelong friendships, personal satisfaction for a job well done, joy in serving others through song, and wonderful memories of fellowship and sharing.

10.1.6 Barbershop: A Way of Life

Barbershop has also become a way of life for the entire family of many of our members. Wives and significant others are often extremely active with projects like designing and making costumes, applying makeup, supporting the chapter with various fundraising activities, being enthusiastic cheerleaders, etc.

Moreover, there are literally hundreds of father-son combinations in the Society. We are very proud of our clean music, humor, and general behavior. Barbershopping really is quite a wholesome family activity, and you never have to wonder if it would be "all right" to take your daughter or your mother to a barbershop event!

10.2 The Evergreen District

The Evergreen District (EVG) includes the states of Oregon, Washington, Alaska, Idaho, Montana and the Canadian Provinces of British Columbia and Alberta. The EVG consists of five divisions: Division I, Division II, Division III, Division IV, and Division V.

There are over 1,600 male singers in the almost 57 chapters of the EVG. The Society's International Convention has been hosted on several occasions in the EVG: Most recently in Portland, OR (2012).

Past International Quartet Champions from the EVG include "The Most Happy Fellows (1979)" and "Real Time (2005)."

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Our District also has numerous Seniors International Champions.

10.3 The Northwest Sound Chapter (Northwest Sound)

10.3.1 A Historical Perspective

The Northwest Sound Men's Chorus is an all-male barbershop chorus consisting of approximately 85 men. It was chartered in 1986 as the Northwest Sound Chapter of the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barbershop Quartet Singing in America, Inc. As such, it is part of the one of the largest non-profit groups in America with over 25,000 members.

The chorus is devoted to singing America's unique barbershop style of music that originated in the late 1800s when for entertainment, men congregated in barbershops or on street corners to sing in close harmony. Its repertoire includes the classic songs of the early 1900s as well as many modern compositions. From patriotic numbers to religious songs, to love songs, to up tunes to ballads, its repertoire is sure to include something to please any ear.

The chorus performs for many civic and charitable functions throughout the Northwest Sound area. The principle financial support is attained through annual dues, annual shows, Singing Valentines and paid performances for conventions, etc.

The chorus also prides itself in its achievements of winning the Evergreen District Chorus championship eight times. As district champions, we compete on the International stage against the top twenty-seven choruses in the world.

Chorus membership consists of men from the Pacific Northwest area. Diversity is one of our strong points with the ages of its members ranging from about 10 years to the 80s, with vocations ranging from students to accountants, doctors, engineers, executives, managers, mechanics, retirees, teachers, and technicians.

We rehearse every Wednesday evening at 7:00 p.m. at the Bellevue First Methodist Church at 1934, 108th Avenue NE, Bellevue, WA. If you like to sing and want to be a part of an award winning, friendly singing group, call 206-229-7464.

10.3.2 Music Directors

The Northwest Sound started in 1985 as a small chorus of 40 men "dedicated to musical excellence." The chorus has had several directors over the years: Bob Brock, Bobby Gray Jr., Denny Steirs, Stu Turner, and our current director, Donny Rose.

10.3.3 The Music Team

This is a candid look at how the Northwest Sound determines and enforces the musical standards of the Northwest Sound.

Every Wednesday night, after the regular weekly rehearsal has ended, a group of select Northwest Sound members go into a separate room and shut the door. Twenty to 40 minutes later they reappear, going their separate ways into the night.

At one time or another most every chapter member has had to wonder, "What goes on in that room, and why do the meetings last so long?" The mystery is no doubt heightened after an occasional chapter member has politely asked to sit in on the meeting, only to be told "no!" After all, board meetings are open to chapter members, why not this one?

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The weekly gathering of the music team of the Northwest Sound has long inspired speculation, some might even say fear and trepidation, but this article will attempt to provide a little illumination on the subject. First, to clarify terminology, the music team is an umbrella term referring to all those who, in an organizational sense, are accountable to the chapter's vice president for music and performance. Thus, team members include such positions as music librarian, tape librarian, makeup coordinator, etc. The music team is the entity to which the board has given oversight responsibility for the chapter's entire musical program.

The music director and the vice president for music and performance choose the team members jointly. The current organization and composition of this body are the result of an evolutionary process spanning several years. Every person on the team has a specific job title, and, collectively, they represent all those responsible for the quality of the chapter's musical and theatrical product.

In addition to the music director and vice president for music and performance, the team consists of the four section leaders, the production director (who is responsible for on-stage aspects of all performances), and two coordinators who oversee specific areas: presentation (formerly stage presence) and repertoire. The chapter president is an ex-officio member of the team, and regularly attends as an observer.

The meeting itself is chaired by the vice president for music and performance, who begins by going through a list of topics he has written down throughout the week. Generally, there are anywhere from five to 15 items, ranging from simple informational announcements ("The auditorium needs us to conform with union requirements."), questions about individuals ("How did [Sam] do tonight in his audition?"), strategy questions ("When should we introduce the new song?"), planning questions ("Should we have another recording session in the spring?"), and occasionally some chorus personnel questions ("Is it true that [Rod] is having trouble with notes? What can we do about it?").

As each item is raised, any member is free to say whatever he might wish. Frequently, one topic will lead into others, and a general conversation may ensue. When the vice president for music and performance has finished with his list of topics, any member is able to raise new issues or voice a concern. Matters from the general membership are frequently brought to the committee's attention in this way. Most all team decisions are reached by consensus, and formal votes are rarely needed or taken. The music director, of course, ultimately makes many decisions, but the very process of open discussion greatly helps to clarify issues, as well as ensuring that everyone is kept informed of development.

One of the most important characteristics of the team is the respect and mutual trust that has been developed among the members, most of whom have served in their respective roles for many years. As a consequence, total candor is possible, and healthy exchanges of ideas regularly occur. The reason meetings are generally closed to non-members is to preserve and facilitate this openness. In addition, from time to time, some very personal matters need to be discussed such as serious health or disciplinary problems.

The music team is also charged with the responsibility of determining and enforcing the musical standards of the Northwest Sound. Sometimes sensitive matters are addressed and very difficult decisions reached. The process frequently takes a long time, as every effort is made to explore workable alternatives and arrive at results that are, in the last analysis, in the best interests of the chorus and the Society.

The way the music team of the Northwest Sound functions may well be somewhat unusual in the world of a cappella singing in the barbershop style. But its structure, combined with the many talents of its members, has enabled the chapter to remain true to its founding motto: "Dedicated to Musical Excellence."

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10.3.4 Officer Installation and Annual Award

At the start of each year (usually in January) the chapter convenes the annual awards and installation banquet at a venue of choice. A notable dignitary, usually a current or past district or international officer, is invited to install the incoming board and discharge the outgoing board. Following the installation, annual awards are presented to deserving recipients for outstanding achievements during the previous year. Formal dining, dancing and camaraderie are part of the celebration.

10.4 Conventions and Contests

The Society is organized at four convention contest levels consisting of: International, District, Division and Chapter.

10.4.1 Division Contests

On different weekends during April and May of each year, the five divisions making up the Evergreen District hold a quartet and chorus contest. The purpose is to qualify competitors for the district contest to be held the following October. A panel of certified judges provided by the Society judges the contest, and both the quartets and choruses qualify by attaining a certain score, rather than by their place in the contest.

10.4.2 District Convention and Contests

The Evergreen District Contest and Fall Convention are usually held in October. All the quartets and choruses that have qualified in their respective divisional contest compete for the district championship. The winner of the chorus contest will also go on to represent the district the following July at the international chorus contest. By contrast, the district quartet contest is strictly a district event and has nothing to do with international competition. Once a quartet wins the title "District Champion," it is not eligible to enter the district quartet contest again without a personnel change of at least two men and a name change—the criteria for a "new" quartet.

10.4.3 International Prelims and Spring Convention

This event, generally held in March, is intended to qualify quartets which will represent the district at the international contest the following July. There are also separate contests for small choruses and college & high school quartets. In the regular quartet contest, any quartets able to achieve a predetermined minimum score (currently 76 points per song per judge) will advance. If no quartets are able to achieve the minimum score, then the highest scoring quartet will represent the district, as long as that quartet has scored above an average of 65 points per song per judge. Otherwise, no representative will advance.

10.4.4 International Convention and Contest

The international chorus contest brings together representatives of the 17 geographic regions and certain foreign countries for "head-to-head" competition in order to be crowned "International Chorus Champion" and gain the recognition of being the best chorus in the Society.

At the international quartet contest, the over 50 qualifiers from the district spring prelims and eligible foreign countries continue the elimination process toward an international quartet champion. During convention week, all the quartets sing in a quarterfinal round and the top 20 are selected for the semifinals. These 20 are further reduced to 10 finalist quartets. On Saturday night, the 10 finalists again compete (each time singing two songs not previously sung by them in the contest), and the top five are selected as international medalists—bronze medals for places five, four and three; silver medals for second place; and gold for the first-place "International Quartet Champion."

10.4.5 Judging Categories

The Society's judging rules have been developed over many years, and quartet and chorus performances are now judged in the areas of Music, Singing, and Presentation. However, all the judges evaluate five elements of the performance deemed to be the "common ground" of barbershop singing: (a) in the

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barbershop style, (b) consonant, in-tune sound, (c) sung in good quality, (d) music which is suitable to the performer, and (e) music which is sung from the heart. There are from two to five judges assigned to each of the specified categories, depending upon the level of competition.

10.4.5.1 Music

The Music judge is responsible for adjudicating the extent to which the musical performance displays the hallmarks of the barbershop style, and the degree to which it demonstrates an artistic sensitivity to the music's primary theme. Indirectly, the Music judge evaluates the work of the composer and arranger. The song must be appropriate to the barbershop style, and the various musical elements should work together to establish a theme. The sensitive handlings of musical elements—melody, lyrics, harmony, range and tessitura, embellishments, tempo, rhythm and meter, musical construction and form—demonstrate musicality.

10.4.5.2 Singing

The Singing judge listens for the pleasing effect of in-tune singing from voices that are free and resonant and exhibit no signs of difficulties, and evaluates the degree to which the performer achieves artistic singing in the barbershop style. This is accomplished through precise intonation, a high degree of vocal skill, good vocal quality, and a high level of unity and consistency within the ensemble. Mastering these elements also creates a feeling of fullness, ring, and expansion of sound.

10.4.5.3 Presentation

The Presentation judge evaluates everything about the performance that contributes to emotional impact upon the audience. Effect and believability are the benchmarks used to evaluate a performance and its impact. Impact means the transference of an emotional experience to the audience; it may be gentle and barely perceptible, or it may be enormously powerful. However, to be measured favorably, it must be believable and appropriate. In short, the Presentation judge evaluates how effectively a performer brings the song to life, measuring how believable the illusion is of the story/message/theme in its visual and vocal setting.

10.4.6 Conventions vs. Contests

We are conscientiously trying to call these events "conventions" rather than "contests" because of the myriad of non-contest activity that goes on during convention week. But we are really big on contest, though! Why? Well, it's sort of the American way. As children, we were trained to do our best—to win at marbles, softball, school grades, choir and band contests, and now it is quite an achievement to win a barbershop contest. We are also better people for going through the discipline necessary to compete in barbershopping, and, for sure, better singers and performers as we pay close attention to the techniques of our art and craft—even to the point of using expert coaches who help train us.

10.4.7 Attending the Convention

Anyone can attend a barbershop convention! Families and friends are encouraged to attend conventions at any time. As an added attraction to the summer meetings and contest, the host city offers special tours and attractions for convention attendees. All international conventions are considered family events and are purposely scheduled around the 4th of July holiday. The summer international convention is big business. Hundreds of men and women are directly involved in the operation of all activities, and planning starts two years in advance. Attendance ranges between 6,000 and 8,000.

10.5 Philanthropic Endeavors

10.5.1 Unified Service Projects

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10.5.1.1 Harmony Foundation

The Society has formed a separate organization known as the Harmony Foundation. The Foundation solicits and manages a trust and endowment fund supporting the mission and vision of the Society. A separate Board of Directors manages the Foundation. Donors can choose a variety of programs under the Foundation umbrella to donate cash, trusts or endowments as they choose.

10.5.1.2 Preserving Vocal Music

The Society is leading the way in preserving vocal music in our communities and education systems. To do so, the Society adopts various United Service Projects funded by the Harmony Foundation to support the tradition of singing. The Northwest Sound are enthusiastic supporters and participants in these projects.

10.6 The Society's Code of Ethics

We shall do everything in our power to perpetuate the Society.

We shall deport ourselves and conduct the Society's functions in such a manner as to reflect credit upon the Society and its members.

We shall conform in all respects to the bylaws of the Society and the rules from time to time promulgated by its Board of Directors.

We shall accept for membership only congenial men of good character who love harmony in music or have a desire to harmonize.

We shall exhibit a spirit of good fellowship toward all members.

We shall refrain from forcing songs upon unsympathetic ears.

We shall not use our membership in the Society for personal gain.

We shall not permit the introduction of political, religious or other similar controversial issues into the affairs of the Society.

We shall by our stimulus to good music and vocal harmony endeavor to spread the Spirit of Harmony throughout the world.

We shall render all possible altruistic service through the medium of Barbershop Harmony.

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Appendix A: New Member Handout and FAQs



Director, Don Rose

*Northwest Sound Men's Chorus, Bellevue Chapter,
Barbershop Harmony Society, Bellevue, Washington*
<http://www.nwsound.org/>

Welcome: On behalf of the Bellevue Chapter and award winning Northwest Sound Men's Chorus, welcome to our regular Wednesday night chapter meeting and chorus rehearsal. We are glad you came to visit and expect that your evening will be filled with harmony and fellowship. We want this evening to be a special event for you; so don't hesitate to SING OUT if you need assistance!!

What is the intent of this Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document? Provide you with a few answers to your basic questions on the Northwest Sound Men's Chorus and singing with us.

Where and when are rehearsals? Rehearsals are held every Wednesday evening 7:00 to 10:00 PM in Benson Hall at the First United Methodist Church in Bellevue. Rehearsal location address: First United Methodist Church, 1934 108th Avenue Northeast, Bellevue, WA.

Who is the point of contact for Sing-Sing, new comers or visitors? The Northwest Sound Membership VP, Mr. Don Ferguson is the central contact. Phone number is 206-229-SING and email address is fergie.lead@gmail.com

What are the important web sites for Northwest Sound Men's Chorus information?

Northwest Sound Website: <http://www.nwsound.org/> (Information about our chapter)
Evergreen District Website: <http://evg.groupanizer.com/> (Information about our District)
Barbershop Harmony Society Website: <http://www.barbershop.org/> (Information about our Society)
Learning mp3 recordings are posted on the chorus web site at URL <http://www.nwsound.org/> under the Members Login section in the file Repertoire.

What is the communications means of Northwest Sound?

Our chorus communicates as a group using Yahoo Groups. To get signed up, send a blank e-mail to: nwsmembers-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

As a member, you will want to be included in the section discussion group for the part you sing. Contact your section leader and they will give you the e-mail link to sign up to join them.

How do I purchase the chorus uniform?

You will want to purchase the Northwest Sound class A uniform/suit as soon as possible. We use the suit throughout the year. Contact Paul Renhard and he will give you the current information on purchasing what you need.

What is the Northwest Sound repertoire throughout the year? Though our primary repertoire is barbershop music, the chorus will also sing other four part harmony a cappella music from a variety of sources. Learning mp3 recordings are posted on the chorus web site at URL <http://www.nwsound.org/> under the Members Login section in the file Repertoire.

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What is the each person's learning obligation? It is each individual's responsibility to learn words, music and choreography as quickly and completely as possible. Devote time at home during the week for any necessary study or review. Do light vocal warm-ups while en route in the car before rehearsals and performances.

What is riser etiquette? As members of NW Sound we commit to treating our rehearsals as if they are performances, so we practice what we execute on the live stage.

Maintaining focus on the director at all times is fundamental to getting the most out of every rehearsal. Effective listening, therefore, requires that every singer be in an environment that is free from distraction and disruption. Here are several guidelines to ensure effective rehearsals.

Take your place on the risers immediately when the chorus is called. Focus your undivided attention on the director, assistant director or coach giving instructions. If there are multiple people up front during a song (such as presentation coaches), keep your eyes focused on the primary director unless otherwise instructed.

Late arrivals are a distraction to the director and the chorus. So please be on time. If you are late and rehearsal is in progress, stand at the end of the risers until an appropriate break in rehearsal activity occurs and then immediately and unobtrusively take your place on the risers or wait until invited by the Director to take your place. Do not walk in front of the director.

No Crossing: Under no circumstances should we ever cross in front of the Director while getting on the risers. If crossing to the far side of the risers, walk behind the Director or circle behind the risers.

When the director stops directing, stop singing and listen. When the director is working with a section other than your own, do not talk. Listen and pay attention, as in many cases the instruction given others will be educational and helpful to you.

Chorus member comments on the risers, whether whispered remarks or wisecracks or well-intentioned advice, and all actions distract the chorus. Consequently, there should be no talking by anyone while on the risers (exception is for section leaders when necessary). If something truly needs to be said and cannot wait until the break, you should raise your hand. The person up front will then decide whether or not to entertain the comment. The flow of the meeting will guide this decision.

Have Fun – by enjoying the great stuff the Director has to offer. Save your fun with your neighbor until the break, or after rehearsal.

Listen, Don't Fix: Often when there's a pause, chorus members try to correct their own mistakes or those of other neighbors. Although this may seem important, RESIST. You will miss important comments from the Director that affect everyone in the chorus. Bear in mind that the Director fixes all of the problems eventually.

Listen, Don't Sing: When the Director is demonstrating how to sing a particular passage, do not sing with him. He's usually doing that to demonstrate micro-differences in pitch, nuances of vocal quality, or in some cases, notes or words. If you sing with him, you keep yourself and everyone else from hearing him, and instead, you become the example. That keeps us from learning from the expert.

When the Director is speaking to the chorus, don't pass the time singing or reviewing your part. It makes it difficult for all of us to pay him proper attention and to learn, because we're instead paying at least some attention to you.

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When the Director is working with another section or sections, don't sneak-sing your part with them. You may think no one will notice, but it's guaranteed the director will notice, and be distracted by it.

Listen, Don't Hum or Sing: When the pitch pipe is sounding, don't hum the pitch. It keeps you and everyone else from hearing the pitch accurately.

What is the Barbershop Harmony Society? Northwest Sound is a men's chorus affiliated with the Barbershop Harmony Society (BHS). BHS is an international society that organizes and encourages four-part a cappella singing for men in the barbershop genre. Information about BHS is available at www.barbershop.org.

What are some of the calendar events or time periods significant to Northwest Sound? Northwest Sound does two shows per year – a holiday show in December and a summer show usually in June. In addition to these performances, the chorus regularly competes in Barbershop Harmony Society conventions/contests locally (Division II and Evergreen District) and internationally. The competitions are a valuable tool that helps refine and hone our quality and skills. We regularly bring in top quality coaches to help us prepare for shows and conventions, our schedules should remain flexible to these excellent opportunities to better each person and the chorus.

Thank you for making Northwest Sound your chorus, we are glad to have you with us.

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Appendix B: Northwest Sound Men's Chorus - NEW MEMBER CHECKLIST

New Members Name: _____ Date: _____

E-Mail: _____ Ph #: _____ Singing Part: _____

Initial Chorus Contact Title _____

The following is a list of officers & chorus leadership personnel:

____ 1- President/Bass Section Leader-Bob Thomas bobjanice@comcast.net

____ 2- Membership VP-Don FERGIE Ferguson fergie.lead@gmail.com

____ 3- Secretary -Ray Steckler singer.ray@earthlink.net

____ 4- Treasurer -Chris Powell chrispo@microsoft.com

____ 5- Uniforms/Lead Section Leader -Paul Renhard prenhard@comcast.net

____ 6- Librarian(chorus sheet music)-Brian Ayers briann0915@q.com

____ 7- Baritone Section Leader -Chuck Caplan ccaplan44@comcast.net

____ 8- Tenor Section leader -Dan Keating dpkeating@comcast.net

____ 9- Director-Donny Rose purfling@aol.com

____ 10- Music Team VP-John Ludeman johnludeman@hotmail.com

You can go to our members' only page to access our music, chapter roster, find other members in your section, and learn how to submit on-line recordings & access learning media.

To access our members' only website, go to: nwsound.org, Click on MEMBERS LOGIN, click down arrow and pick GUEST, password is HARMONY. Scroll to the bottom of the page and follow the instructions on how to become a member of our online e-mail groups.

Also, in your new music books you will see KEEP THE WHOLE WORLD SINGING and the IRISH BLESSING. These are sung at every meeting and would be very helpful to learn.

Society information can be found at: www.barbershop.org

to view Evergreen District information, go to <http://evg.groupanizer.com/>

Note: The "Skipper Hall Fund" has its own board of trustees and is available for music and coaching expenses.

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Appendix C: Skipper Hall Fund

SHF was created specifically to address the chorus' long-term financial viability. This is expressed in pure endowment, where only the interest from invested funds can be spent. It will take a number of years to build pure endowment up to a significant amount in order to assist the chorus from year to year.

In addition, SHF is able to hold monies separate from the chorus' annual operating budget for particular projects (e.g., chorus enhancement fund) as designated by donors ... precluding the possibility of using these funds for other than that designated.

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Appendix D: The Northwest Sound Men's Chorus GUEST FORM

WELCOME TO OUR WEDNESDAY NIGHT HOME!!

On behalf of the Bellevue Chapter and award winning Northwest Sound Men's Chorus, welcome to our regular Wednesday night chapter meeting and chorus rehearsal. We are glad you came to visit and expect that your evening will be filled with harmony and fellowship. We want this evening to be a special event for you; so don't hesitate to SING OUT if you need assistance!! In order to get to know you better, please complete the form below:

Please Print

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

HOME PHONE: _____ CELL: _____

E-MAIL: _____

SPOUSE'S NAME: _____

How did you find out about the Northwest Sound?

- ☐ Personal invitation by a member. If so, who: _____
- ☐ At a performance. If so, where: _____
- ☐ Phone Book
- ☐ Web-site. If so, please add web site: _____
- ☐ Internet. If so, please add internet site: _____
- ☐ Newspaper Ad-What Newspaper: _____
- ☐ Other? Please Explain: _____

What is your past singing experience?

- ☐ Barbershop Chorus/Quartet? Name of Chorus: _____
- ☐ Community Chorus?
- ☐ Church Choir?
- ☐ College Choir?
- ☐ High School Choir?
- ☐ Other?

What part do you sing? ☐ Tenor ☐ Lead ☐ Baritone ☐ Bass

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Appendix E - Craft and Performance

1 Craft and Performance

1.1 Fundamentals of Singing on the Risers

1.1.1 Decorum

Because of the number of men in the chorus, it is obviously not possible to permit people to talk whenever they might wish. Even whispers to a neighbor cause distractions to those in the immediate area and break the concentration and focus on the director. As a result, the **Northwest Sound** has a “no-talking-on-the-risers” policy.

1.1.2 Attentive Stance

When singing, your feet should be in line with your shoulders, with your outside foot slightly forward and the weight up onto the balls of your feet. The feet should not be exactly parallel and the toes should be slightly spread. Your eyes should always be focused on the director, unless the choreography requires otherwise. If you are using music, keep it up at eye level so that you can see the director. If you are not holding music, your hands should hang naturally at the side; they should never be in your pockets. Have your carriage and posture in an “up” position, not slouched, and “reset” yourself at the end of stage presence moves.

1.1.2.1 Alignment and Energy. By Nikki Blackmer

1.1.2.1.1 Alignment

Alignment, also called posture, is step one in good vocal production. Directors and coaches do not discuss alignment very often as they are focused on other aspects of the barbershop craft of music. As singers, we must rely on self-management to ensure our bodies are properly aligned as we sing.

Our bodies are our instruments. How we hold our instrument is of vital importance. Poor alignment is like bending a flute: that will definitely change the sound!

Good alignment begins with your feet parallel on the ground, shoulder width apart. Your knees should be relaxed, bendable, and moveable. Your buttocks should be relaxed! Any tension in the body will directly relate to tension in the sound. If you are squeezing your buttocks, your sound will be impacted. Your rib cage should be lifted and held high, and shoulders should be slightly raised and rolled back but relaxed: no slumping shoulders, but not military shoulders either. Make sure your neck is relaxed and moveable; you should feel a slight elongation of the back of the neck. Your jaw should be tension free. The back of the roof of the mouth where air from the nose enters the throat (soft palate) should be lifted with the tongue forward. A smile in the eyes will bring the sound up into the resonators.

1.1.2.1.2 Energy

When a director says, “I need more energy!” it could potentially mean many things so we have to use our best interpretive skills to understand exactly what kind of energy they mean. However, here are some tips that will help you.

Spin: whenever we have a long note (i.e. the lead part at a tag) the note needs to “spin.” More exactly, the note, though it stays the same pitch, needs to have an increase of intensity, excitement, and air. It’s not necessarily an increase in volume but more of a rolling boil of excitement within the note. If you simply hold the note and don’t spin, it will go flat. We all know there’s nothing worse than a hanger that goes flat! While we’re singing that long note, we have to treat each millisecond of it as new and different from

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the last millisecond by adding interest, and excitement. Don't forget that adding emotion to the note will help spin it!

Forward Motion: adding vocal excitement and interest to the voice at the end of the phrase so that the breath is hardly noticed by the audience. Seems pretty simple – but often it's quite difficult to do!

Forward Motion can be considered like this: singing the length of the phrase until the absolute last second before releasing it to catch the quickest and smallest breath possible. An exception to the quickest breath possible would be an interpretive delayed breath; however, the silence planned there makes forward motion at the release of the previous phrase even more crucial.

Energy: let's face it, sometimes we show up to rehearsal without our A-Game. We're tired from the day and have a million things on our minds. We're distracted, and that carries over into our sound. Your director or coach hears that distraction as a lack of energy – and they ask for more! Your job is to immediately let go of everything else in your mind, and give 100% to the chorus (or quartet!). You must engage your body and core. Check that your body is properly aligned, not tense, and ready to perform. You must "turn on" your face, and sing every word like the treasure that it is. You must use the air you inhale to fuel the sound. Most of all, you must commit to being there and making the best sound possible!

1.1.3 Active Face

Singing is more than just a passive experience. It must involve the whole body. While extraneous movement of the hands and feet can cause distraction, movements and changes of expression in the face—and, to a lesser extent, slight movement of the head and upper body— not only enhance the sound, but look impressive to the audience as well. When singing, have your entire face always doing something, ideally to reflect the particular emotion conveyed by the lyrics.

1.1.4 Volume Relationships

The higher you sing, the softer it should be, relatively (i.e., at any given overall chorus volume level). This is particularly true for baritones when their notes are above the leads. On high notes, take the pressure off and just let the sound "float" out—contrary to the human tendency to try and "muscle it." Conversely, the lower you sing (in whichever part), the fuller your sound with relative volume should be.

1.1.5 Smoothness

Everything we sing is done in a smooth, connected way—not choppy. Indeed, the faster we sing, the smoother it must be (again, just the opposite of the normal tendency).

1.1.6 Uniform Vowels

Critical to our form of music is that each word sound must blend with the other voices. This is done by stressing uniform mouth shapes for each of the different vowels. What makes this a little easier is that each vowel looks like its respective sound. Thus, an "Oh" (as in boat or grow) should look like an "O" by having the lips completely rounded. You should be conscious of what your lips are doing whenever you form a word. When singing, the facial muscles must exaggerate the vowel shape that would normally be used when talking; the lips must also protrude slightly and act like the bell of a trumpet. Vowels need to be formed in a "vertical" manner, with the sound then projected out in front of you; vowels should never be made in a "horizontal" fashion, with the sound going out to the sides.

1.1.7 Vowel Shapes

Singing uniform vowels is critical to the proper execution of ensemble word sounds. Refer to para. 1.1.7.1 for the Northwest Sound Vowel Sound Execution version 1-6, by Scott Davi.

A good way to help you make the correct vowel shapes is to take a piece of music that you are now singing and mark the vowel targets above all words which are held—i.e., sustained for any appreciable

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length of time. Sing the correct vowels, perfectly, whenever you come to those particular words.

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1.1.7.1 Vowel Sound Execution...

The basis for each "Phonetic Target Vowel"...

The most resonant vowel sound in the family

The least influenced by surrounding word sounds

The least influenced by different accents and speech patterns of the singers

Target vowels are listed in order of the height of the arch of the tongue

The target vowel of every syllable you sing will be one of the nine "Target Vowels"

Version 1-6

By Scott Davi

No	Phonetic Target Vowel	Vowel Ref word	Vowel "Family" Spellings	Family Example Words
1	ee	See	ee	See, Gr(ee)n, Peer
			e	We, We're, Here
			ie	Pier
2	ih	Sit	i	Sit, (l)ndigo, Mitt, Tin, Win
3	eh eh-e*	Set Take*	e	Set, R(e)d, Met, Send, Lend, Hey, Help
			ea	Head, Tear
			a*	Take, Tame, Made, Cave
			a	Say, Care, Ware, Stare
			ai	Air, Fair, Rain
4	a	Sat	a	Sat, T(a)n, Hat, Rat, Mat, Cat
5	uh	Sun	u	Sun, Mud, Fun, But, Month
			a	Or(a)nge
			o	Love, Won, Ton
6	oo e-oo*	Moon Mule*	oo	Moon, Soon
			ou	You, You're
			u*	Mule
			u	Tune
			ue	Bl(ue)
7	oo	Book	oo	Book, Look
			u	T(u)rquoise, Surge, Full
			i	Bird
			o	Word, World
			e	Term, Heard
8	aw aw-e* aw-e*	Saw I* My*	aw	Saw, Raw, Pawn, Lawn
			a	Cart, Smart
			au	Taught
			ea	Heart
			i*	I, Side, Ride, Sign, Line
			ie	Pie, Tie
			y*	My, Fly, Rhymes, Ty
			o	Br(o)wn, Now, Song, Spot, Rod, Shot
			ou	Bout, Sound, Round, Fought
9	o-oo* o	Go* Joy	o*	Go, G(o)ld
			o	For, Joy
			ua	Quart
			uo	Quote
			e	Sew

*Diphthongs

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1.2 Resonance. By Nikki Blackmer

Resonance, in its plainest form, is the ability to amplify sound. When sound is created by the vocal folds, the result is a type of buzz. We then use the soft and hard tissues of our head, to change that buzz into the pretty vowels and consonants we are fond of. People think the nose is the primary resonator. While the nose plays a big part in resonating (there are lots of cavities for sound to enter) we also use our sinuses in the cheekbones, forehead, between the nose and eyes, and behind the nose, our soft and hard palates, our teeth, jaw, tongue, lips and larynx to resonate sound.

What do I do with all of this information?

As singers, we can think of resonance as basically two different things that we want to balance in the end. First, there's what I call forward resonance. If we sang with only forward resonance, the sound would go solely into the nose – creating a pointed, ping-y, and nasal sound. Second is what I call space. If you sang with only space, the sound would be directed into the back of the throat, resulting in a woofy, covered, damp sound.

Excellent singers use both forward resonance and space. In essence, they sing with a lot of space in their throats, and a lifted soft palate, meanwhile directing sound into the cavities behind their nose.

Two tricks for finding balanced resonance:

1. Try talking the approximate pitches of the song like Julia Child. Notice how there is a lot of space in the sound, but the sound seems to travel vertically up behind the nose and out the forehead.
2. Snort. Go ahead – no one is around – snort really loud, and feel where the snort space is. Now, put your singing into the snort space. Notice how it is open and free in the back, but tall and projected in the front?

Tips for finding forward resonance:

1. Bend over at the waist and sing – and notice how the sound falls more forward into the nose.
2. Sing on an “N” or “NG” and notice how the sound goes more forward into your nose.

Tips for finding more space:

1. Lift the soft palate as high as possible with a yawn sign in, and direct the sound into the dome created.
2. Imagine filling the space around the back of your head with sound.

Resonance should not be used as a catch all word – and if someone asks you to sing with more resonance, ask them to clarify whether they are looking for more ping, ring, or point in your sound (meaning you need forward resonance), or whether they need a bigger, rounder, warmer sound (meaning you need a little more space).

Resonance is one of the hardest concepts in singing to fully understand...and while I know this article does not address everyone's struggles with this issue, I hope it serves to clarify some of what you have heard.

1.2.1 Tips for Expressive Singing. By Nikki Blackmer

When a performance has complete command of the technical elements of singing and then adds true emotional communication, making the audience unaware it is hearing anything other than a beautiful song, straight from the heart, the performers have achieved the ultimate: true musical expression. Here are some things to try to help identify the key elements in a song's emotive message:

- a. Write out the lyrics in script. Pay attention to how long it takes you to write the words, and what words seems to tug at your heartstrings. Those will be important words.

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b. Notice the musical plan. Regardless of the words, notice what shape the musical line takes, what notes are held a long time, what notes are high, or what musical embellishments are present. Composer and Arrangers use these musical elements to highlight the story.

c. Sing the melody line on a neutral vowel, and notice where the melody seems to be effortlessly drawn out.

d. See if the important words, long notes, high notes, and interesting musical embellishments line up. These will become musical climaxes that help to give the piece ebb and flow.

Using these tips, try to make a musical and interpretive plan. Every piece should have the shape of an arc, where the highest point is at or near the end. There are words, notes and phrases that can be moved through, and others that need to be extended for emotional impact.

An emotional story should be imprinted upon the words and music. Draw on personal experiences as guides for the emotions you think you would feel during the song. If personal experiences are not possible (for whatever reason) then substitute something else.

Use your face and body to convey the message of the song. If you sing a happy song with a blank face, you are not helping to sell the emotional story. Likewise, if you have extraneous body movement, a solemn song would be interfered with.

Lastly, realize that only after the basic technical elements of performance are achieved is it truly possible for a passionate performance with complete commitment to the lyrical and musical message to be attained. However, strive to master the basics so that you can move someone with what you sing.

1.2.2 Principles of Good Singing. By Ron and Jo Black.

Breath management without tension

Breathe high, through the mask

Eyes are shining

Jaw, lips, tongue, larynx are relaxed (massage)

Use quantity of air, not pressure

Body remains in motion all the time

Posture is proud and alert

Breath to stop singing (do not stop singing to breathe)

No pressure

No weight in the tone

Depth and brilliance are equally important

Vowels are tall and in the mask

Sing all word sounds in the same resonators

Lip and jaw migration are minimized

Vowel sounds are 90% formed in the resonators

Sing able and voiced consonants get more length, start sooner

Non-voiced consonants get more air

Sing to the bass overtones for foundation of lock and ring

Never sing "LOUD"

Never sing "soft"

Always sing the emotion

Always sing with destination

In rhythm songs, derive all consonants from the rhythmic subtext.

In ballads, derive all consonants from the lyric and emotion

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1.2.3 The Most Often Asked Musical Questions

This is a primer for incoming members and a listing of accepted principles for the **Northwest Sound**.

What is the posture of this chorus?

The body should be in line and prepared before a note is sung. Proper body alignment affects the mind and spirit, and consequently the tone.

Allow for relaxation in the upper body by allowing the neck and head to move easily from side to side.

The jaw should be relaxed and “unhinged,” as if your jaw is resting on a shelf. Never tighten the muscles in the throat, neck or jaw. Relaxed muscles allow the tone to resonate freely and without strain.

The shoulders do not rise upon inhalation. Set the upper torso (chest) in a lifted position so that the diaphragm can do its job.

Elongate the space from the top of the spine to the top of the head. Feel as if there's a string lifting you at the top of your head.

Keep your feet and legs aligned with your body by having them even with your shoulders. The outside foot should be slightly forward and your weight on the balls of your feet. Never sing “on your heels.”

Vowels - are they important?

Yes! Concentrate on them, as they will always be of primary concern to us. Keep the tip of the tongue down and against the lower gum ridge at all times except when it must move to create certain consonants. Then, and only then, use the tip of the tongue to lightly touch the consonants.

Shape the vowel in the mouth. An “oh” should look like an “oh”, an “oo” should look like an “oo.” The mouth must be active to sing proper vowels.

Sing the primary vowel (vowel target) immediately. Sustain that vowel as long as you possibly can.

Does the director sometimes expect the face to be animated?

He always expects it to be animated. Keep your face and body enlivened. Every moment you sing should show energy and involvement. Act—show emotion!

May I sing in a choppy, bumpy manner?

Yes—but only when we tell you! So far we're working only on smo-o-o-oth singing. We don't want “cobblestones” in our music, so it's necessary to take out all “bumps.” Allow one sound to flow smoothly into the next. Work on connecting one sound to the next.

Do you like “T's” “P's” and “S's”?

Not too much, because these sounds do not contain pitch and tend to stop the flow of tone. However, we do like “m's” and “n's” and “ng's” and “v's” because they are singable consonants. Practice energizing (singing through) these, and practice minimizing those that are “not singable.”

When I breathe, does my mouth need to remember anything?

Yes. As you breathe, tell your mouth to form the upcoming vowel and keep the tone focused at the top of your mouth midway between the front and back..

When do I quit singing, and how?

Music is made up of phrases, or musical/lyrical thoughts. In singing, we sing to the end of each phrase,

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making certain that the final word is completed—i.e., that musical tone is maintained as long as possible and not cut short. Moreover, we never “just stop” singing. Do not allow the pitch to drop or the tone to stop abruptly. Maintain “life” at the end of phrases, but be careful not to accent the weak syllables of words unnecessarily.

Sometimes the chorus sings very softly. Would this be a good time for me to rest?

Not at all. In fact, when singing softly you'll want to work harder to ensure that the tone is projected, energized and “spinning.” Rest after the rehearsal!

Do you know I've done solo work?

Yes, and we're all very proud! Here, however, we work hard on contributing our respective voices to the chorus and yours should “fit” with the others. We don't want voices that shake, warble, cut or bellow, but we are interested in having the best qualities of your voice join with the others.

How do I breathe?

Stand straight in the barbershop posture (see above). Expand your sides like a barrel when breathing in but do not raise your shoulders. Control the expulsion of breath by maintaining a firm diaphragm and abdomen. This will allow you to use as much breath as needed to produce good tone but not so much that you run out too soon.. Do strive to keep a constant quality and volume of air underlying your tone. Get a full, 100% breath from deep within you every time you breathe.

Some of the guys speak of staggered breathing. What is this?

Sometimes when we sing extended phrases, the singers are permitted to “stagger” or individualize their breathing. This means that they may breathe when necessary, but only in unobtrusive spots and at places when their neighbors might not be breathing. When doing this it is important that you “sneak out” to breathe, and (of even more importance) that you “sneak back in” again at a lesser dynamic level in the middle of another word. The main thing, though, is for you to sneak, but without letting anyone else catch you being sneaky!

What is this thing called “resonation”?

Resonation is also known as good tone. A good tone has freedom and ring to it. It happens when you fill all of the cavities in your head with sound. Focus the sound in the top of your mouth, midway from front to back. Stand with proper posture (see above), keep your mouth, jaw, and neck relaxed. Control your breath by firmly controlling your abdomen and diaphragm muscles. A free, spinning tone will have resonance and richness to it. An uninspired or hard tone will not contain any of those special qualities we associate with a pleasing, resonant tone.

Is it a good idea to sing louder the higher I sing?

No. The higher you progress in your range, the lighter you'll want to sing. Use a free, “headier” quality and “round out” the tone as you move up the scale. However, when you sing lower in your range, you'll want to increase your volume in order to “fill” the tone.

Should I hum the pitch when the pitch pipe is blown?

NEVER, never hum the pitch because it is possible that singers around you might choose your pitch, which could be flat, rather than the one that's blown. The safest way is for every singer to hear the same pitch.

Do you really do physical actions (moves) in the chorus?

Yes. We try to present as interesting a visual package as we do a musical one. When you have a move to do, don't just do it—get completely involved! Make any gesture look artistic and convincing.

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Do the singers stand on the risers all night?

We'll always take a short break in our rehearsals, but we don't sing seated in chairs. When we're "on the risers," a positive, focused mental approach to singing is expected. You'll have to concentrate, because one must expend both mental and physical effort to sing well.

Are we expected to work on our music and our singing outside of rehearsals?

Yes. This chorus learns quickly and you'll have to work regularly on your own in order to keep up. More importantly, you'll want to work at home in order to improve!

Being in the chorus sounds like a lot of effort. Is it?

Yes, it is. Come prepared to work, as work pays off and people will respect you for your efforts. You'll also find that you sing better than ever before and it will give you a tremendous sense of personal achievement and satisfaction.

It is easy to read through these questions and responses. It is not so easy to assimilate the principles and be able to perform them successfully on a consistent basis. Practice will help, though. Try working in front of a mirror. Listening to recordings of other fine choruses and quartets will also help. But what will help most is a desire on your part to constantly improve. Good luck, and good singing!

1.2.4 The Energy Cube

The Energy Cube is used to receive and control the energy you use to perform on stage.

Before the start of a performance, we have little energy back stage.

When the curtain opens, the appreciation, the acceptance (shown by the applause), and the energy from the audience rises up and is transferred to the chorus.

To perform is to offer the audience your gift; return their energy back in a condition better than when you received it.

At the end, your inner "candle" should have totally consumed and extinguished itself; nothing should be left behind.

1.2.5 Transfer of Energy

Put your hand on the middle of the back of the man in front; front row onto the man to the inside.

Focus your presence down through the chorus, inward from the sides to the center man, and then out from him to the director and the audience.

Then, without touching one another, re-do the song, feeling the same power transfer — down through the chorus, in from the sides and out.

1.3 Basic Presentation Terminology

1.3.1 Focal Points

1.3.1.1 Regular Chorus Position (RCP)

The normal position on the risers, with the head and eyes focused on the director in the center conducting position. If the director is facing the chorus, the eyes are always on him unless the choreography dictates otherwise.

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1.3.1.2 Down the Tiles (DTT)

The head and eyes are turned perpendicular to the edge of the stage, so that the head and eyes are looking straight at the audience. This is “looking down the tiles.” The entire body can also be turned to face DTT (with the toes pointing directly at the audience).

1.3.1.3 12:00 O'clock

If the room were set up like a clock, with the director standing in the center and the top of the clock at the middle of the audience, everyone would look at a spot roughly in the center of the auditorium. For the Northwest Sound, unless the choreography otherwise requires, this focal point is used whenever the director is turned away from the chorus.

1.3.1.4 10:00 O'clock

A focal point roughly at the 10:00 o'clock position, again halfway back in the auditorium. Men on the extreme stage left (looking at the audience) would normally not look beyond DTT (a position to the left of 12:00 o'clock, but not as extreme as 10:00 o'clock would be).

1.3.1.5 2:00 O'clock

The correlative of 10:00 o'clock, but looking to the right side of the auditorium (with the men on the extreme right side not going beyond DTT).

1.4 Standard Movements

1.4.1 Reset

Re-energizing and snapping of the body “up” when returning to regular chorus position (RCP).

1.4.2 Press

Moving from RCP by straightening and shifting weight more onto the outside foot, normally done slowly toward the director with lots of energy.

1.4.3 Lift

Fully extending and stretching the body at the end of moves, particularly by raising the chest.

1.4.4 Swell

Expanding and slightly raising the upper torso of the body, used to enhance ballads and soft parts of songs.

1.4.5 Spread

When the entire chorus leans to a side, often with an arm movement, with the weight being shifted to the foot in the direction of the lean. A “split spread” occurs when the two halves of the chorus go in opposite directions—frequently to the “outside” (i.e., toward the audience, away from the “inside” center of the chorus).

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1.4.6 Heel Sway

Moving heels one at a time, back and forth, by pivoting on the balls of the feet, frequently done with hands behind back.

1.4.7 Step Together

Moving one foot and then bringing the other one up to it. This can be done to the left or right and/or to the inside or outside of the chorus. If one additional step is taken in the same direction, it is called a "step together step." For ease of remembering, if rows are going to be moving in opposite directions (whether feet or hands), the Northwest Sound normally try to have rows 1, 3 and 5 begin their moves to the right, with rows 2 and 4 starting to the left.

1.5 General Performance Notes. Adapted from an article by Doug Maddox & Bill Roth. Confidence comes as a result of preparedness. Your critical moments for success happen when you're under pressure.

You must also speak to the hearts of your listeners. You can do that only if you open your own heart. The trick is doing so when under pressure. Fear is the single obstacle—some people sweat, some get dry mouth and many get other symptoms as well. There is nothing wrong with any of these things so long as you're in control! These things will happen, so just know how your body operates and be ready.

Many people think they want to get rid of the butterflies, but you shouldn't; you want some adrenaline working for you. You need that excitement to show your heart to reach their hearts. In other words, you want to "make the butterflies fly in formation!" Use the nervous tension to work for you, and you'll be better than you ever thought.

The late baritone of the Roaring 20's Quartet, Ron Riegler, had this advice about stage fright: "Don't worry about making mistakes. What in life could possibly be worth that personal anxiety? You've rehearsed the act and are prepared, so just think about the correct thing you're supposed to do and then go out there on stage and DO IT!"

1.5.1 Pre-Performance

- Close shave if possible; no strong fragrances.
- T-shirt (if desired).
- No beeping watches.
- Registration badge and personal ID inside of jacket (for contests).
- No alcohol before a performance. It dries out the throat and will also take the "excitement" out of your music.

1.5.2 Standing on the Risers

Feet should be in line with shoulders, toes slightly spread, and outside foot slightly forward; weight on balls of your feet.

Arms should be relaxed at side, but elbows slightly back, hands motionless, and fingers slightly cupped. Avoid licking lips.

While curtains open, have continuous, pleasant, sincere and exciting smile; have face turned out to audience until director turns in to direct.

When singing, always keep your focal attention on the director unless he turns out to the audience (in which case you look there as well), or a stage presence move temporarily requires you to look somewhere

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else. Concentrate on looking where you're supposed to, but NEVER up at the lights, into the wings, or at another chorus member. If something falls down, bums up, or the curtain gets stuck, just smile bigger and use the event as an opportunity to prove to everyone just how PROFESSIONAL you are!

If your nose or anything else itches, smile bigger, but don't scratch! If you have to cough or sneeze, spray the guy in front of you, but don't raise your hand to cover your mouth.

1.5.3 Presentation

If you miss a move, just smile bigger and pick up with the next one. DO NOT grimace and/or move LATE, or try to slowly "sneak" your hand (or whatever) into the proper position. That just draws attention to you. Don't be the dark light bulb on the marquee! Concentrate on your performance. If your neighbor messes up, don't watch him. (If you do, you'll probably miss your next move!)

The entire time you are on stage there should be strong involvement in the face. It should never be expressionless, but always convey the mood of the moment. In order to project a mood to the audience (for them to see and feel it), there must be much more expression on your face than normal. All of your facial muscles need to be involved—the cheeks, eyes, brows, and forehead—with the mouth forming pure vowel sounds. (Incidentally, with the eyes, a slightly increased opening shows excitement; a slightly decreased opening shows tenderness.)

The places the judges catch you are those when you're not singing—between phrases and between songs—and when you're not moving during an uptune. These are the spots where your concentration must be heightened in order not to let down. Use each breath to refresh and energize your face, whether to an exciting smile or other mood appropriate to the song.

After the curtain closes, NO shrieks of joy. It's not professional.

1.6 Larry Ajer's Basics

Larry Ajer always encouraged us to reach higher and become better performers, and to bring the beauty of the music and our performances to our audiences. The following are some of Larry's basic teachings that still ring true today.

1.6.2 The Mental Image

A mental image occurs within the various voice parts as follows:

1.6.2.1 Basses

Basses — Are the Foundation that holds the chorus in place.

Have no cracks, no breaks, no missing ingredients; never a hole, always constant.

Support the other three parts.

1.6.2.1.1 How to be a great bass - Some bass singing tips from champ Bill Meyers.

Submitted by Bill Myers, bass of Revival, 1998 International Champions

The bass singer delivers the essence and character of the barbershop sound. I just love to sing along with recordings featuring good, quality bass singers and from there develop my own style of singing bass. It's fun and you learn a lot from the experts. You learn how to sing intervals with ease and accuracy, how to balance chords and how to sing with quality all up and down the scale. Why wouldn't any bass singer want to sing along every day with the best we have? It's difficult to pin down just three of my favorite barbershop bass singers, but here's a start. These three are also genuinely nice guys and fun Barbershoppers to be around. What a wonderful combination!

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Jim Henry - Here's a guy who puts more of his personality in the music he creates than any other barbershop bass I know. I respect his commitment to a quality sound all up and down the scale. Jim gives enough of his ego away to complement his quartet with just enough sound to blend and match to perfection. Yet his dominant bass color is always evident when The Gas House Gang (1993 champion) sings. I sing bass with him by tape every day.

Don Barnick - Really not a bass singer, by his own admission, but probably the very best at making the vocal apparatus work for the job; he was a gold medal tenor with Grandma's Boys in 1979. However, using all of his resonators, Don was able to command the rich, quality, up-front ping in the bass sound all up and down the scale with the 1992 international champion Keepsake. You will not find a finer example of one using what the good Lord gave him to work in his favor. I sing bass with him by tape every day.

Rick Staab - One of the all-time greats. Here's a guy who was born with a golden bass voice. He'll be the first to tell you, "It was a gift from above." I think he sang a bad note once in 1977. Not sure which note it was, but at least one. Always, always, with quality and richness, always resonant, always accurate. Just the kind of bass singer most leads pray for. His voice was made to order for the legendary 1978 champion Bluegrass Student Union. Ah, I remember them well! I sing bass with him by tape every day.

Bill's ten tips for better bass singing:

- Sing every note with a quality sound
- Sing with full face vowels
- Sing every day
- Vertical "Ahh" on the inside of every vowel
- Every five seconds, energize
- Get a coach
- Step into the picture the lyric creates
- Sing on top of the air
- Resonant, warm spin in the sound
- Always be working on a new song

Bill Myers teaches "How To Be A Great Bass" at Harmony College.

Additional resources

Here is a new, voice-specific discussion list for those most important Barbershop harmony singers, the 'foundation' folks, the Bass singers: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/BBSBasses/>

This list is for information, techniques, assistance, and pointers that Basses can use to improve their performance and increase their fun quotient in Barbershop

1.6.2.2 Leads

Leads — Bring to the audience the Familiarity and Warmth of the song.

- Are always there.
- Sing right on the edge of the downbeat.
- Must have perfect enunciation.

1.6.2.2.1 How to be a great lead - Some tips from a world champion lead. Submitted by Joe Connelly, three-time quartet gold medalist.

When the audience is leaving the auditorium after a show or contest, what will they be humming? The melody, of course (music judges excluded, for reasons we can't explain here.).

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It is the lead singer's job to execute (no pun intended) each melody line with precision and flair. It is this "recognizable line that is familiar to audiences and puts them at ease.

Although this makes the lead part the easiest to learn, it also means that the lead singer is the most vulnerable. When you sing melody, you can run, but you can't hide.

So, what does it take to be an awesome lead singer? Let's take a look at three of my personal favorites, and observe what I consider to be their most outstanding qualities. (Keep in mind that these all-time greats were blessed with phenomenal harmony-part singers who helped support and showcase their talents.)

- **RICH KNAPP**-- 1980 International Champion Boston Common. Rich embodies the very best of singing naturally and believably from the heart. Listeners fall in love with his no-nonsense delivery. We can all learn from Rich to trust our feelings and emotions when we perform each and every song.
- **KEN HATTON** -- 1978 International Champion Bluegrass Student Union. Never before or since has there been a lead singer who commands the stage with more vocal energy and visual excitement than Kenny. His stage personality also evokes a positive rapport with any audience. We can all learn from Kenny to sing and perform every note with intensity and a commitment to be the best.
- **BOB FRANKLIN** --1961 International Champion Suntones. Bob is the consummate professional showman. He is always prepared and always disciplined in his performance. He is also extremely adept at singing harmony when called upon to do so. We can all learn from Bob to be aware of our vocal role in every tune we present to an audience, and to strive to perform it flawlessly.

Top Ten Habits of Highly Effective Lead Singers

- Learn basic barbershop chord structures to be aware of proper balance.
- Diligently study successful leads' strengths and adapt them to your own voice and personal style.
- Plan ahead for maximum mental focus in each rehearsal and performance.
- Be fully prepared in every aspect of your music.
- Be consistent -- sing each song the same way every time.
- Practice singing the melody against a continual fixed tonal center -- an electronic pitch pipe works great.
- Always rehearse as though in front of an audience.
- Develop a physical exercise plan that works for you.
- Drink a lot of water every day to keep your body and vocal cords hydrated.
- Find a great bass, baritone and tenor whom you trust musically, and who in return, have faith in you to lead them onward and upward.

Additional resources: Link for Lead Support Group -<http://groups.yahoo.com/groups/bbshoplead/join>

1.6.2.3 Tenors

Tenors — Present the Illusion in barbershop.

Are the “lightness” of the barbershop sound—the charm, the glitz on top.

Imagine looking over the rest of the music.

Sing over the top of everything and bring it to the audience.

Is the bow on the package; without you it's just another box.

1.6.2.3.1 How To be a Great Tenor - Don Kahl helps you improve your tenor-singing techniques.
Submitted by Don Kahl, tenor, Rural Route 4, 1986 International Quartet Champion

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Describing how to sing great tenor is a bit like demonstrating how to dry one's back without using one's hands. You pretty much learn by doing and not by reading. Does reading an article in a golf magazine help your game? There are, however, some tips that are translatable to your tenor-singing techniques.

Sometimes, in our attempt to conserve enough air to maintain support through a phrase, we don't achieve preparatory breath well in the first place. Make the breath part of the release while forming the next intended target.

Barbershop performers are always behind the focus of the ensemble sounds we create. Listen carefully.

Shift body weight at appropriately frequent intervals. Maintain shoulder posture, and keep chin and Adam's apple in a comfortably low position.

There is no such thing in justly-tuned barbershop tenor singing as a half step. Tenors need to work diligently to sing in tune with the lead. Be alert to the need for lifting or settling certain intervals as you rehearse and perform.

The chord that the audience perceives as ringing is because of instantaneous adjustments. A tenor and his lead can never duet too much.

Imagineering or looping one's performance is excellent for creating a consistent and positive frame of mind. Run through your entire performance in your mind. The more you prepare yourself the more confident you'll be. Rehearse not just enough to get it right, but enough to never get it wrong. Every tenor I ever heard, to a greater or lesser degree, was and is one of my favorites. But there are three men who are at the top of my personal list. Each of these men was blessed with consistently accurate melody singers. (Tuning is less a problem when the melody is well sung.) Two of these men may not be as well-known as the third, but they are giants to me and taught me well.

- Gene Cokecroft was flawless as he sang with the Suntones, and he has an unbelievably beautiful voice. For his unfailing artistry in every performance, he tops my list.

- Ed Rooker sang with the Central States District's legendary Merry Mugs quartet in the early days in my barbershopping life. The happiness that filled Ed's eyes when they performed has been a beacon to me during some of my most stressful performances.

- Dale Radford possessed a crisp, lyrical and clear, almost Irish tenor quality. I recall his voice atop more than one Southwestern District foursome. Watching him taught me much of what I now describe as instant match ability. But, as I said earlier, and I mean it, every tenor is my hero. To Gene Cokecroft, Dale Radford and the late Ed Rooker, my everlasting thanks for what you taught and gave me. Now, if anybody wants to know even more firsthand how we pass on the gospel of great barbershop tenor singing, come to Harmony College someday, and I'll see you in class.

Don's eight tips for better tenor singing

- Breathe to consume air, not to conserve air
- Finish phrases with a breath
- Listen harder
- Move feet to stay fresh
- There are no half-step intervals
- Duet the melody

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- Rehearse until error-free -- then do it again
- Loop your performance

1.6.2.4 Baritones

Baritones — Create the Beauty of the barbershop sound.
Make barbershop worth listening to, but only if sung correctly.
Provide the sweetness, softness and roundness of the song.
Sing with a touch of fluff, but always with absolute precision.
Sing rounder and richer on the lower notes, but no sloppiness at any time.

1.6.2.4.1 How to be a great baritone - An oxymoron, perhaps... but it's worth exploring. **Submitted by Ron Knickerbocker, The Regents, 1974 champion**

There are only two things one must do to be a great baritone: use proper vocal production and understand (and obey) the baritone's job description. For purposes of this discussion, let's pretend we all produce sound correctly and focus on the job. A quartet baritone or baritone section in a chorus has three basic responsibilities:

- Tuning Chords
- Balancing chords
- Staying out of the way. (Some people, mostly basses, feel that the bari has a fourth job -- making the bass sound good -- but I won't address the impossible here.)

In both tuning and balancing it is critical to know what part of the chord you are singing. For mathematical reasons, fifths should be sung a tad sharp, and minor (barbershop) sevenths need to be tuned a bit flat. Thirds should be sung sharp, because we habitually sing them way too flat. As a general rule, it is easier to tune to the bass than to the lead.

A bari's balance responsibility is dictated by two things. The first is where your note is with respect to the melody. Bari notes above the melody need to be sung somewhat softer (how much softer depends on how far above the melody your note is), while notes below the melody should be sung relatively louder. Some coaches maintain that balancing isn't necessary as long as your quality matches that of the lead. I agree that a bari can sing a bit more loudly if he matches the lead well, but the melody must still be predominant. Thus, balance is no less important than it used to be thought, just a little easier to do. The second factor in balancing chords is the part of the chord you are singing. As a general rule, sing roots and fifths more loudly than other parts of the chord.

Staying out of the way means the bari must do whatever he can to enhance the musical flow. Maintain vowel integrity, energize singable consonants and soften hard consonants. Most of the time it is desirable to substitute softer consonants for the hard ones, like using d instead of t. The substitutions must be subtle, however. Don't hit the listener over the head with the fact that you are using a different consonant.

Most rules have exceptions, but if you adopt these general suggestions, you will be well on your way to becoming a great baritone. Now, if we could only find a bass that deserves you!

RON'S 10 TIPS FOR BETTER BARIS

- Produce sound correctly.
- Balance to the lead, but...
- Tune to the bass.
- Know what part of the chord you are singing.
- Sing thirds and fifths a little sharp, AND....
- Sing minor (barbershop) sevenths a bit flat.

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- Balance to the melody.
- In general, roots and fifths should be a little louder than other notes in the chord.
- Extend the duration of vowels
- Reduce the duration and percussiveness of consonants.

1.7 Keeping the Voice Healthy (Adapted from "A Road to Better Singing" by Dr. Paul Mayo)

Drink at least a glass of water every hour, especially when doing a lot of singing. While most other fluids are also acceptable, alcohol tends to dehydrate the body. Moreover, it takes almost three hours for fluids to fully reach and benefit the larynx, so begin your liquid intake early in preparation for rehearsals and performances.

Speak in your correct range. Speaking at too high or too low a pitch can be injurious to your voice (especially speaking too low).

Speak with breath support. Start all sounds with a gentle abdominal lift inward.

Speak and sing with good posture and alignment.

Avoid yelling, screaming or hysterical laughter. All are harmful to the voice.

Avoid clearing your throat or unnecessary coughing. Both are very stressful on the vocal mechanism. If something in your throat needs correcting, the best thing to do is simply swallowing. It is nature's way of removing foreign substances and helps keep the vocal folds moist.

Different people react differently to certain foods and liquids. Milk and dairy products, for example, seem to cause excess vocal mucus in some people, while tea, coffee and lemons dry up the throat in others. But, contrary to barbershop folklore, there are no hard and fast rules here. Just know what things adversely affect you, and then avoid them before performances.

Avoid smoking and get proper rest.

Learn correct breathing techniques.

Warm up and sing daily.

1.8 Daily Regimen for Vocal and Physical Health (Adapted from a primer by Stan Sharpe.)

In the quest for musical excellence, it is of vital importance that we are in the best possible vocal and physical health. The following suggestions and information will help you reach your goal of becoming a better singer:

1.8.1 Breathing Exercises

Do deep breathing exercises every day before vocalizing. To accomplish this, take the biggest breath you can and let it out as slowly as possible. Do this at least ten times before vocalizing, and it will give you a head start toward vocalizing with more clarity and confidence.

1.8.2 Quick Breaths

Work yourself up to the spot where you can do at least 200 puff breaths without experiencing back pains. This builds your diaphragm muscle and gives you support, especially on soft passages. Puff breaths are done by inhaling and exhaling through the nose, taking in 1/10 of a breath and then releasing with a short, firm tensing of the diaphragm. Do this about 100 times a minute; then raises the rate up to 140 times a

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minute.

1.8.3 Dieting

If you need to lose weight, go on a diet. Many chapter members are already on a diet and are experiencing lack of fatigue on the risers and better breath support. Walking is an excellent way to shed those unwanted pounds and build stamina. Try to walk at least one to two miles every day or every other day.

1.8.4 Vocalization

Use the **Northwest Sound** warm-up tape (**future**) and vocalize every day. Doing this will give you much more control, extend your range, and give you total control of your vocal apparatus. It will also build confidence and make you a happier singer.

Vocalizing is purposeful sound making apart from song singing. There are several reasons why you should do it every day:

Vocalizing develops breath and tone-making coordination.

Specific vocal exercises allow for isolation of vocal characteristics needing attention or building, such as resonance, range, “break” area, volume, vibrato, control, etc.

Specific vocalization can cure functional voice problems such as hoarseness, tension, pain around the vocal tract area and more general problems brought about by misuse of the voice.

Vocalizing strengthens, tones, and coordinates all parts of the body used in singing or speaking, including lungs, diaphragm, other abdominal muscles, and tissues of the vocal tract itself.

1.8.5 Vocal Exercise

Based on volume range of 1 to 10 (maximum volume), the exercise is to be done at a volume level of 1 — never louder. The benefits are: building endurance, strengthening the 15 muscles that surround the vocal mechanism, strengthening the bridge between the chest voice and falsetto, and strengthening all the support muscles in the stomach to give total support in all ranges and volumes.

1.8.5.1 The Warm-Up

Vowel sound is “E” on the pitch of middle C. Sing the “E” at a volume level of 1 for at least 45-60 seconds, if possible. Do the exercise twice. Time yourself to see just how much work you have to do. Fifteen seconds is poor; 30 seconds is average; 45 seconds is very good; 60 seconds is excellent.

1.8.5.2 Stretching

Start at your lowest pitch on the vowel sound of “Oh” and slide slowly up the scale. Go as high as you can, remembering to keep the volume level always at 1. The goal is to do the exercise without any break in your voice as you slide from the bottom to the top, Repeat it. Then slowly slide from the top to the bottom. Also do this twice.

1.8.5.3 Power

The vowel sound is again “Oh.” Put one finger in your ear. The objective is to sing each of the following pitches at a constant volume level of 1 for at least 45 seconds. Do each pitch twice: F below middle C, G, A, Bb, and C.

1.8.5.4 Cool-Down

Repeat the warm-up.

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1.8.6 Remedy for Sore Throat

Drink water.

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Appendix F: Choreography Handbook. By Kendall A Williams

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Appendix G: Glossary of Terms

CORE/ENCORE: CORE refers to the consistent voices that create the unit sound we strive to achieve...Encore refers to the voices that support the CORE to provide the full choral ensemble sound. The Director identifies specific voices to fill each group. Knowing where you are in each group is essential to our musical success.

INSIDE THE MOUTH: Singing without over pronunciation of each word. Sometimes referred to as "mush mouth" because the lips hardly move. Tongue movement controls the tones and words only.

VERTICAL SINGING: Mouth shape is tall and narrow. Soft palate is lifted. Back of throat is open. Sometimes associated with "Dr. Greg"

UNIT SOUND: Matching voice color, tonality and placement with the other singers in the section.

THE CONE: Tone is brighter/lighter on high notes, more full and bass-like (not swallowed) on lower notes. Sometimes associated with "David Harrington"

FORWARD SINGING: Voice placement is more toward head tone as opposed to a swallowed, dark, opera-like sound.

STAND & DELIVER: Moving freely, reacting to others around you, having fun.

OUT OF THE FABRIC: Voice sticking out. Opposite of unit sound.

LIFT AT END OF PHRASES: Slight volume increase to propel you to the next phrase. You must reserve sufficient breath support to accomplish this.

STAGGERED BREATHING: Finding spots in a phrase to breathe without interrupting the flow of the music. Sometimes requires dropping a whole word.

LARRY AJER: Singing from the heart. Leads tell the story. Bases provide the foundation. Baritones provide the beauty. Tenors provide the sparkle.

IN TUNE SINGING: Consistent tonality results from singing with controlled energy and being mindful of where sustained notes and thirds occur in the song.