

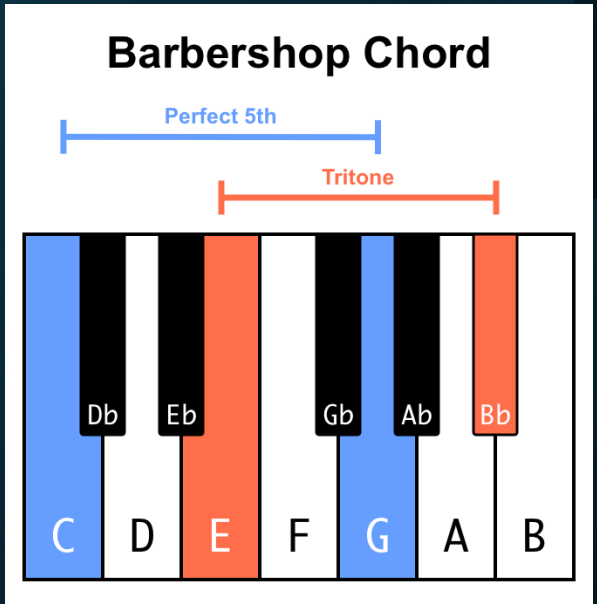
You’re a Barbershopper, Now What?

A Guide to Getting the Most Out of Your Barbershop Journey

Topics We Will Cover

- What is Barbershop?
- Preparing for Rehearsals
- Ways to Participate
- Member Center
- Learning about the Society
- Barbershop Events
- Donations and Merchandise

Know What Makes Barbershop, Barbershop



What is barbershop music?

- Sung in four-part harmony
- Without instruments (a cappella)
- With the melody carried in the second-highest voice part (barbershop “lead”), a high tenor harmonizing above that, a bass singer singing fundamental harmonies (mainly roots and fifths), and a baritone filling in above and below the melody
- Distinctively, barbershop music is written with its greatest emphasis on chord structure
- Strongly “barbershop” arrangements showcase full four-part chords for every note, with a minimum of doubling on octaves
- The signature “barbershop seventh” chord appears frequently in barbershop arrangements, and in contest-suitable music, might constitute more of thirty percent of the chords in a song. These chords help create ringing overtones that are a desirable feature of the barbershop sound
- Barbershop singing places heavy emphasis on carefully tuning chords in “just intonation.” “Just intonation" refers to a tuning system where intervals are based on simple whole-number ratios, creating very pure harmonies, while "equal temperament" divides the octave into 12 equal parts, allowing musicians to easily play in any key but slightly compromising the purity of certain intervals

Learn the Lingo



Afterglows - Party after a chapter meeting or show



Frank H. Thorne Chapter - An “international” chapter for those who are not active in a specific chapter



Barbershop seventh - The cornerstone chord of the barbershop style



Gang singing - Informal group singing. Sometimes, also slang for poor quality singing



Fifth wheeling - Joining in without invitation when a quartet is singing; a breach of manners



Harmony Hall - Barbershop Harmony Society headquarters in Nashville, Tennessee

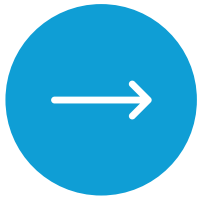
Learn the Lingo (continued)



Learning tracks - Place a single voice part in one channel, and other three parts in opposite channel



Overtones - Tones of higher pitch present in musical sound, whose presence determines quality



Post – A long, sustained note held by one voice while the other voices change notes



Swipe - Progression of two or more chords sung on a single word or syllable; hallmark of the barbershop style



Tags - The last few bars of a song - the coda, the wrap-up, the big finish



Tiddly - A brief embellishment heard in one voice part while others hold a chord

Listen to Barbershop

YouTube

Spotify

CDs

MP3s





Be Prepared at Your Chapter Rehearsal

- Come prepared by knowing your notes and words and listening to learning tracks
- Listen and absorb every minute's worth of training that you've traded an evening to obtain
- Be willing and be open to new concepts
- Record yourself
- Bring the tools you need for success:
  - Recorder — any smartphone will do
  - Water bottle — stay hydrated not only through rehearsal, but also through the day
  - Pencil — to keep track of the notes from the director

Get Social

- Follow BHS on Facebook https://www.facebook.com/barbershopharmonysociety
- Follow your District on Facebook
- Follow your Chorus on Facebook
- Follow BHS on YouTube https://www.youtube.com/@BarbershopHarmony
- Follow BHS on X https://twitter.com/barbershopnews
- Follow BHS on Instagram https://www.instagram.com/barbershopharmonysociety

Sing Some Tags

- Tags are the last few bars of a song
- The joy of tags is living in the moment
- Tags vary in complexity
- Tag singing culture is everywhere
- One of the unique pleasures of tag-singing is the tradition of teaching tags without sheet music
- Tag singing is for everyone!



5 ways to fit right into tag singing culture



Don’t fifth wheel. Let a quartet be a quartet -- four singers only. Don’t start singing along unasked. Listen, learn one of the parts, and wait your turn to ask if you can try it, too.



Be generous with tags -- ask others to join in. The flip side to the first rule; when you see someone hoping to sing, invite them to take a part in the quartet.



Be patient as a teacher, attentive as a learner. The great tagmasters recognize the skill level of the folks around them, and pick tags suited to their ability.



Learn a few tags that you can teach all four parts by rote. The more you can teach, the more you can sing.



Change parts. The more parts you can sing, the easier it is to sing and learn tags with strangers.



Tag Singing Resources

- Learn some quick tags and download a book of Classic Tags:
  - https://www.barbershop.org/music/free-music-and-tags/barbershop-tags
- Download a tag app for your smartphone
  - iPhone: Tag Master, Goodtags, Tagpole, OnlyTags
  - Android: Tag Master, Goodtags
- Spend some time browsing barbershoptags.com

Try Woodshedding

- True origin of the barbershop style. The lead singer sings a melody, and the harmony parts, bass, bari, and tenor “discover harmonies by ear” around that melody without reference to a familiar or written arrangement.
- Woodshedding is not a spectator sport, so be fearless. Because every woodshed song is an experiment, a fleeting moment, don’t worry what any listeners think -- this is strictly for the quartet singers themselves. Find a private place and go nuts
- There are no bad chords, just some more pleasing than others. The only rule of woodshedding is to enjoy. Perfection is secondary to living the experience
- Listen to the lead/melody; aim for four-part chords; avoid doubling; and if you don’t have to move off your note, stay there. Barbershop singing is made up of four harmonic lines, so if know what your part “usually” does in basic harmony, do that. The more barbershop you hear, the more you will absorb the common structures and progressions of your voice part
- Be gracious, be happy, and be ready to move on to the next song



Woodshedding Resources

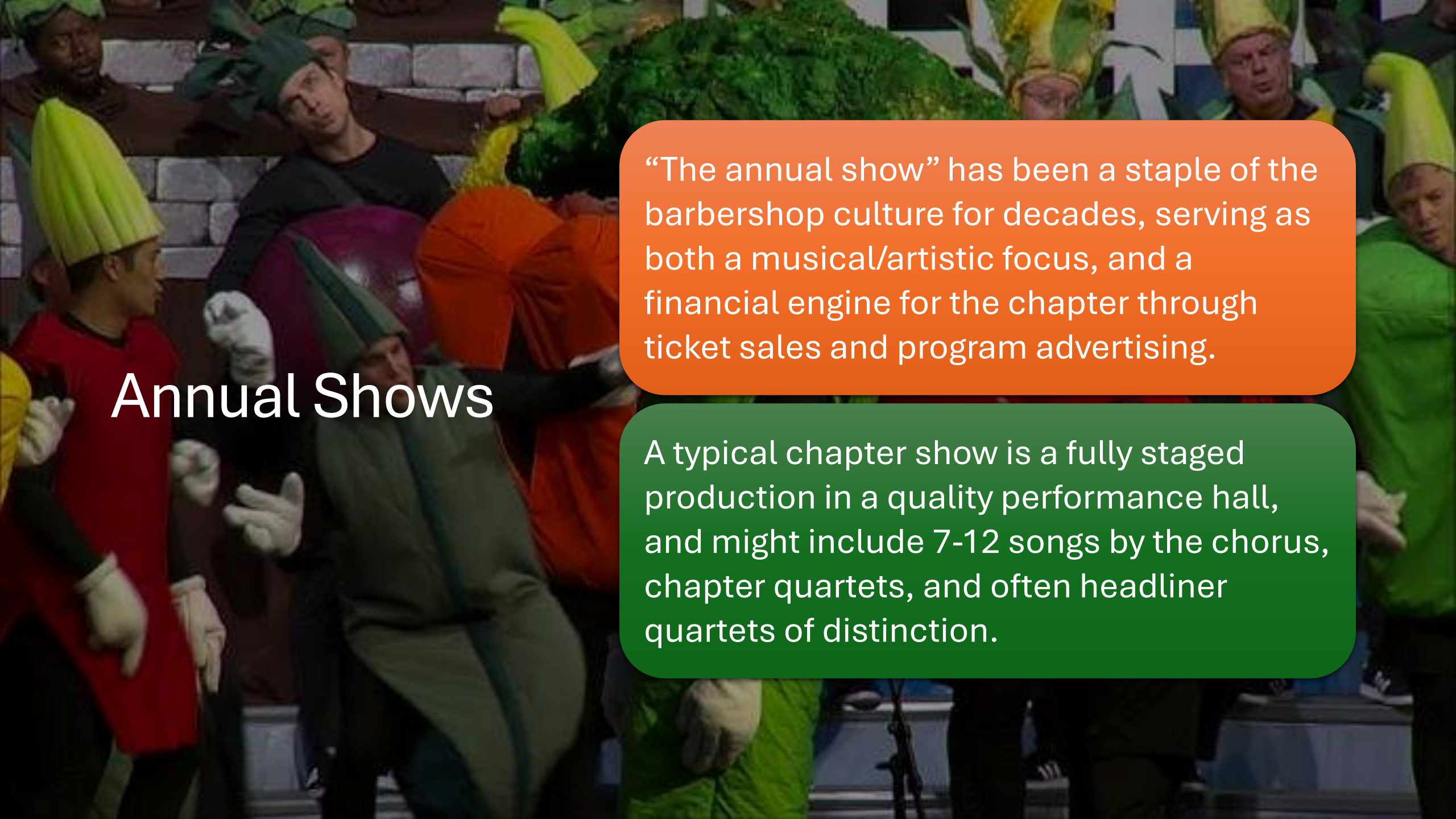
- Here are some great woodshedding resources from The Harmonizer magazine:
  - Discover “Discovery Singing” (pages 12-13)
  - Make up Chords as you go … on purpose! (pages 11-12)
  - 0% arrangements, 100% fun (pages 17-21)





Perform in a Show or Singing Valentines

- No matter the ensemble, your performance career usually consists of several distinct channels and audiences:
    - Major shows staged and produced by a chapter - the traditional “annual show”
    - Casual community performances and entertainment for hire
    - Barbershop festivals, outreach and convention activities
    - Barbershop contests
- And whenever you perform - be good, be sensitive to your audience’s needs, and never outstay your welcome!



Annual Shows

"The annual show" has been a staple of the barbershop culture for decades, serving as both a musical/artistic focus, and a financial engine for the chapter through ticket sales and program advertising.

A typical chapter show is a fully staged production in a quality performance hall, and might include 7-12 songs by the chorus, chapter quartets, and often headliner quartets of distinction.

Singing Valentines

- Four singers and a song can leave sweethearts speechless. The surprise factor and up-close performance of a Singing Valentine make it a particularly rewarding singing experience
- Ask early, ask often to get into a quartet
- As always, when singing in public, sing well. Know the music, rehearse it well, and perform it with consideration
- Sing a song, then get out while the emotions are strong and memories bright. Leave them wanting more!



Form a Quartet

- Among all these other activities, keep an eye open for compatible singers. You'll want to define compatible among several scales:
    - **Personally compatible.** You may be spending a substantial amount of time together. Be happy.
    - **Vocally compatible.** Do your voices blend in a pleasing way? Ask an additional set of ears to evaluate.
    - **Are your goals compatible?** A casual quartet and a district champion quartet can be vastly different in goals, time available, investments of time and money desired. Talk it out.
- Learn more at www.barbershop.org/quartets/



Learn from Coaches

- What to expect from a coach
  - Fresh eyes and ears
  - Different/broader perspectives
  - Additional skill sets
  - Train the trainers
- What not to expect from a coach
  - Miracles
  - Overnight transformation
  - Guaranteed increases in scores

Compete in a Contest

- In BHS competitions, there are three main Judging Categories:
  - The Musicality judge is responsible for adjudicating the musical elements in the performance, judging the extent to which the musical performance displays the hallmarks of the barbershop style and the degree to which the musical performance demonstrates an artistic sensitivity to the music's primary theme(s).
  - Performance judges evaluate how effectively a performer brings the song to life. They judge the entertainment value of the performance; the art of the performance.
  - In the Singing judges evaluate artistic singing in the barbershop style – listening holistically for ringing in-tune voices that use a free, beautiful and rich vocal quality, which is wonderfully unified and vocally expressive.



What to Expect from a Judge

- Objective, but compassionate scoring
- Reasonable discussions of your performance and ways to improve
- Questions about your approaches and preparation, with recommendations for study, coaching and further improvement
- Actual live coaching of the ensemble, when available, with judges providing brief, direct instruction of concepts noted in the stage performance



Participate in a Harmony Brigade



- Brigades are invitation-only, semi-auditioned events for capable quartetters
- Several months prior to a Brigade event, singers receive sheet music and high-quality learning tracks for eight to twelve songs
- Participants count on each other to be 100% prepared
- Brigade activities typically include lots of informal singing in quartets, a random draw quartet contest,
- All attendees also sing in the Brigade Chorus and present a public show
- Find a Brigade: http://harmonybrigade.org/

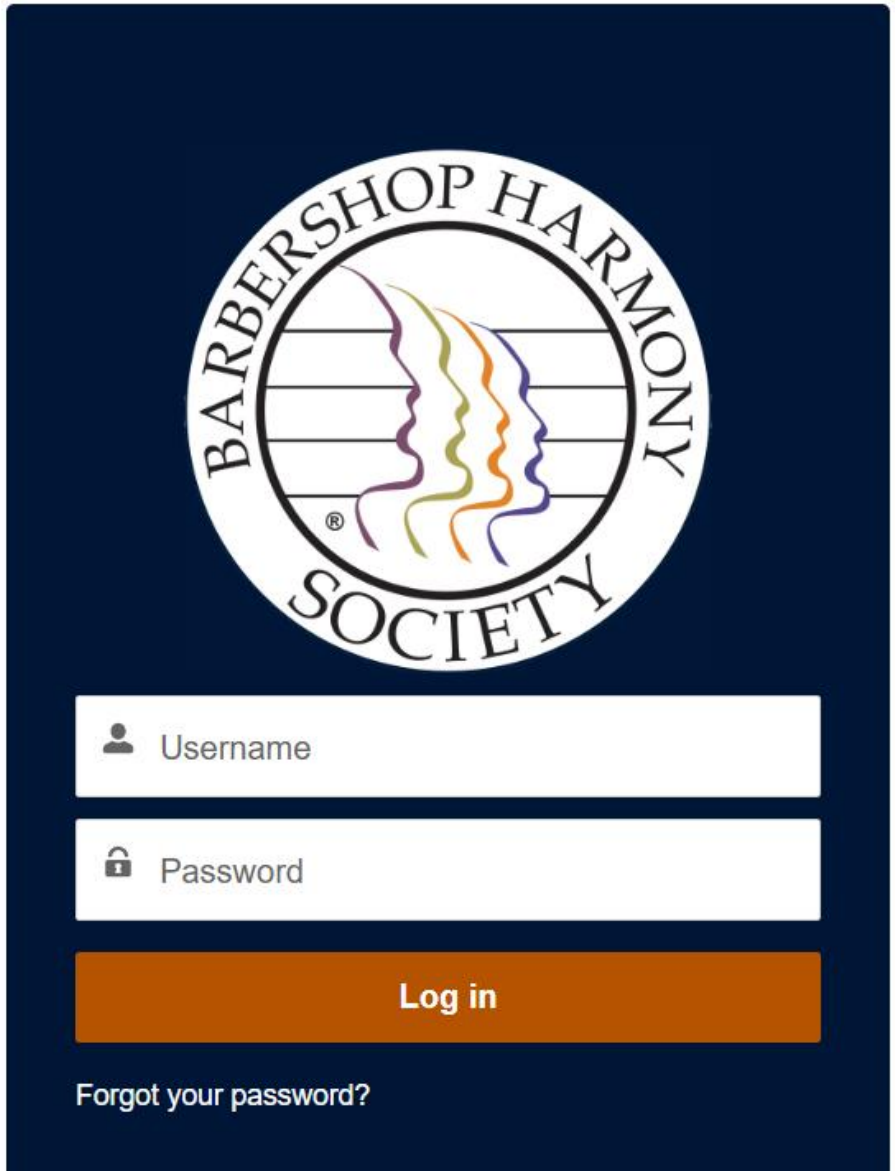
Become a Volunteer

- Get involved in chapter and district leadership
- Serve as a Member-at-Large
- Help with special projects
- Join a committee
- See an area where you can help and let someone know



Familiarize Yourself with Member Center

- Review and Update Your Member Information
- Access the Harmony University Library
- Find answers to FAQs
- Access The Harmonizer online
- Find choruses and quartets

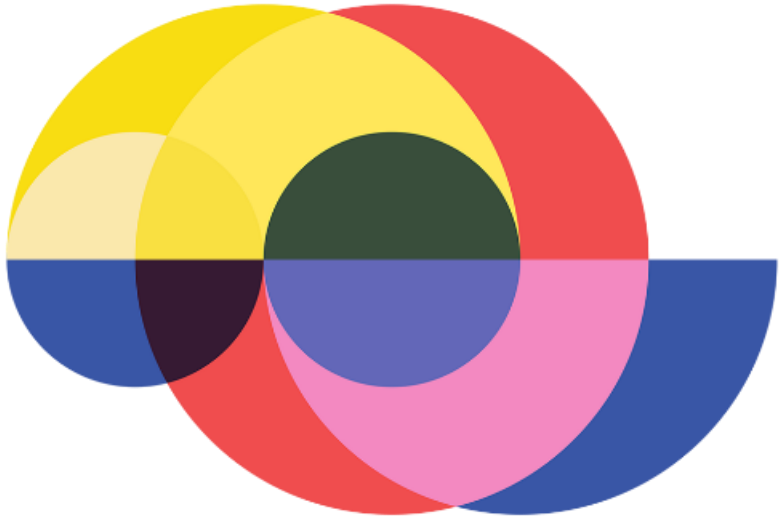


Learn about the Society

- Our Strategic Vision, “Everyone in Harmony,” adopted in 2017, calls for BHS to become a home for all singers, of all ages, all backgrounds.

- Everyone means EVERYONE – people of every age, of every background, every gender identity, every race, every sexual orientation, every political opinion or spiritual belief. Every person who loves to harmonize has a place in our family.

- Learn more here: https://www.barbershop.org/everyone#about-our-strategic-vision



Districts of The Society

Barbershop Harmony Society Districts

Each Chapter in the Barbershop Harmony Society belongs to a local District.
Districts gives Chapters regional support and provides festivals, education events, and contests to its members!

- 17 geographic districts

Leadership Academies

- Teach the marketing, management and leadership aspects of chapter life.
- Learn more here: https://members.barbershop.org/s/article/About-the-Healthy-Chapter-Initiative

District Officers and Committees

President	Executive Vice President	Secretary	Treasurer	Chapter Development
Communications	Information Technology	Contests & Judging	Education	Events
Marketing	Membership Development	Music & Performance	Youth in Harmony	Immediate Past President
		Members at Large		

Chapters in The District

A Chapter is the local foundation of the Barbershop Harmony Society. It provides a place for members to sing together, develop their musical skills, build friendships, and share barbershop harmony with their community.



Next Generation Barbershop

- Next Generation Barbershop helps singers up to age 26 discover a sound that's uniquely their own. With easy video entry and exciting destination events, our distinct programs for singers in grades 6-12 and post-high school offer ensemble options to fit your skills and interests: men’s, women’s, or all-voice quartets and choruses.

Stay in the loop on what is happening

- The Harmonizer (BHS)
- District Newsletters



Attend a Convention

District Convention

Regional gatherings, in addition to chorus and quartet contests, these often include educational activities, seminars, shows and leadership meetings.

Attend a Convention (continued)



International Convention

Hosts the Quartet Contest, NextGen Varsity Quartet Contest, World Harmony Showcase (separately ticketed), AIC Show (separately ticketed), Chorus Contest, Harmony University Classes

Attend a Convention (continued)

Midwinter Convention

Hosts the Next Generation Jr. Quartet Contest, Chorus Festival (Junior Chorus Festival and Seniors Chorus Championship), Seniors Quartet Championship

Go to Harmony University

Harmony University, a week-long school held each summer, brings together more than 700 Barbershoppers from around the world with a world-class faculty of vocal coaches, arrangers, choreographers, and educators to explore all facets of the barbershop hobby. HU offers special tracks for directors, quartets, and general barbershop singing. Continuing Education Units available for music educators.

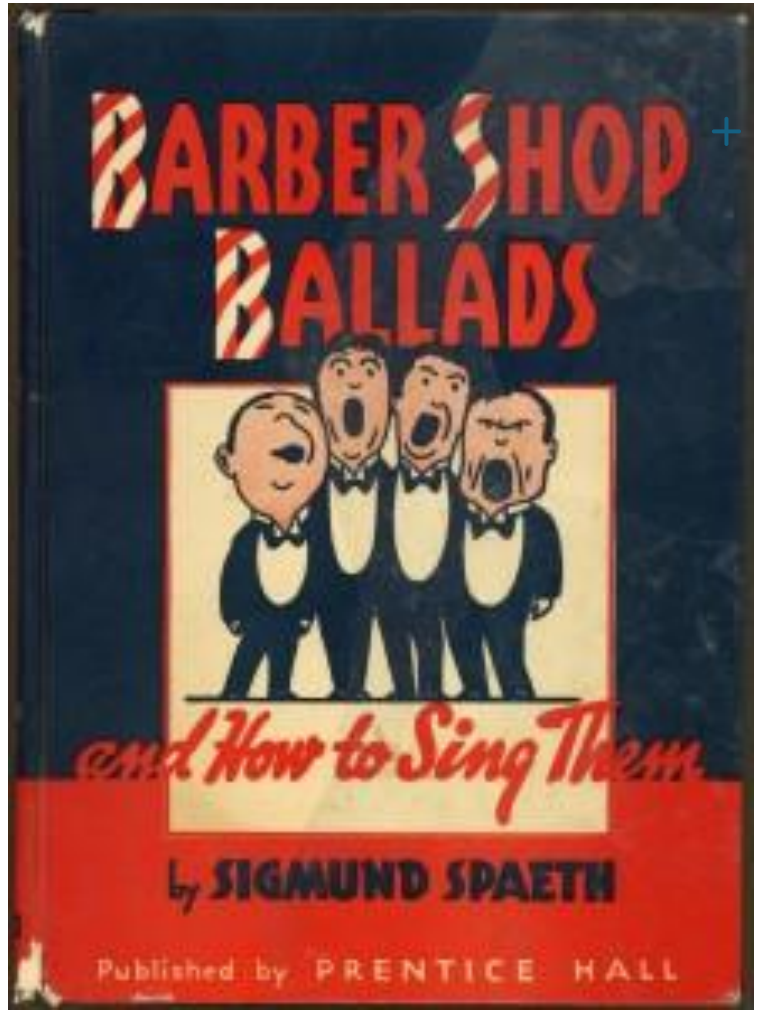


Buy some merch

Harmony Marketplace

- Profits from merchandise sales support Society programs. But more importantly, the Marketplace provides access to legal, copyright-cleared sheet music and learning tracks that make it possible for us to sing old classics and cutting-edge new music. It helps make global and permanent the sound of barbershop on recordings. Barbershop instruction books extend education resources worldwide.

- https://shop.barbershop.org/education/



Donate to Your Local Chapter or Harmony Foundation

Harmony Foundation International

Raises, manages, and distributes philanthropic funds that support barbershop harmony, music education, and the lifelong benefits of singing.