

# The Year In Review - 2015



The International Midwinter Convention and Contests was held earlier than usual this year in New Orleans, LA on January 10. **Harmony Grits** won the right to represent the Carolinas District in the Seniors Quartet Contest. Unfortunately due to a last minute family emergency, the quartet was not able to compete.



**Harmony Grits**

## Leadership Academy

The 2015 Leadership Academy was held January 7<sup>th</sup> in Hamlet, NC. In addition to the normal classes for chapter officers the Carolina District Leadership Academy included classes for directors and brings in outside professionals. This year we had two outside facilitators, Marty Monson, Barbershop Harmony Society CEO, and John Weigand, an executive leadership consultant who lead our Directors/Presidents class. Marty can be seen taking a picture of the group in the photo to the right. What he is trying to show is the sheer number of attendees for our little district. We are head and shoulders above any other district percentage-wise.

We had 117 men in attendance in 2015, not counting 12 faculty, including Marty. That compares to 112 in 2014. This was the fifth straight year with an increase in attendees – every year since the founding of the district. Fully 15% of our chapter members attended as compared to low single digits for most other districts. Twenty-four of 27 chapters sent delegates!



BHS CEO Marty Monson taking a picture of attendees.



Marty Monson installing the 2015 District Board.



## North Carolina Harmony Brigade 23<sup>rd</sup> Rally

The 130-man North Carolina Harmony Brigade met in Pinehurst, NC on January 16-17 for its 23rd Annual Rally. The Saturday night show featured *Let's Sing!* The Harmony Brigade Extreme Quartetting movement, started in the North Carolina, was recognized in May-June Issue of *The Harmonizer* with an article (below) about the first European Harmony Brigade event.



### Berlin hosts first European Harmony Brigade

Why should North America have all the fun? Here's a scene from Europe's first official Harmony Brigade event, held in Berlin, May 1-3. Like other Brigades, the event features wall-to-wall quartetting with dozens of Barbershoppers who had pre-learned 10 high-caliber barbershop songs. (What's different: these were 60 co-ed, mixed voices.) In addition to enjoying endless possible quartet combinations at all hours, attendees competed in a random draw quartet contest and created a superchoir for a public performance.

European Barbershoppers

enlisted the help of many Society Brigaders—John Loucks, Neal Siegal, and Larry Triplett in particular. Some Society members, including Brigade pioneer Charlie Rose, crossed the Atlantic for the event! Learn more at [www.european-harmonybrigade.org](http://www.european-harmonybrigade.org).

To attend one of nine existing North American Harmony Brigade-sponsored events or to start one in your area, visit [www.harmonybrigade.org](http://www.harmonybrigade.org). Learn more about the Dixie District's unaffiliated Confederate Harmony Brigade at [confederateharmonybrigade.com](http://confederateharmonybrigade.com).

This was a good year for the Carolinas District getting visibility in *The Harmonizer*. In addition to the article above, the *Golf Capital Chorus* (Pinehurst, NC) was included as part of the Storytellers section (right) in the March-April issue and the May-June issue featured an article by Lorin May about the 2014 Fall Festival in Charleston (included in full on the next three pages). Reprinted with permission.

## Story Tellers

Send to [storytellers@barbershop.org](mailto:storytellers@barbershop.org)

Want to be a storyteller? Contact [storytellers@barbershop.org](mailto:storytellers@barbershop.org) or [harmonizer@barbershop.org](mailto:harmonizer@barbershop.org)



### Golf Capital Chorus gives double support to active duty military

When the Pinehurst, N.C. Chapter—also known as the *Golf Capital Chorus*—learned that soldiers deployed to Kuwait needed replacement golf clubs for their recreation, the only chapter with “golf” in its name came to the rescue.

Chapter bari Larry Harter's daughter is a U.S. Army Colonel who commands a Kuwait military hospital. She told her father how much the soldiers enjoyed playing golf and using a soldier-built driving range before they had to return to combat—so popular that all the clubs were worn out. Chapter members asked friends, fellow golfers, and even golf courses and local retail merchants to help. Almost 300 golf clubs were collected along with golf bags and 2,000 range balls. The chapter paid shipping costs, then a few weeks later sent an additional 1,500 balls.



Additionally, the chorus recently turned its Singing Valentine efforts into a service project. Chapter quartets visit the loved ones of Fort Bragg soldiers in addition to their usual Valentine surprise performances. The Valentines are typically \$50 to the general public but are free to troops who are deployed.

—Larry Harter & Ray Linville



# NECESSITY

## is the mother of convention

**Determined to never host another low attendance, money-losing event, the Carolinas hosted a convention where ... wait, only 40 men were invited to compete?**

So how did the Carolinas get 360 attendees—from a district of 850 men—to come along for the fun? The answer has less to do with the art of festival planning, and a lot to do with how the Carolinas District created a new playbook that helps leaders address chapters' needs



Charleston, S.C. was chosen primarily for its ability to draw spouses and non-competitors

PHOTOS BY LORIN RAY

*After years of wrestling with two of its larger challenges (a money-losing convention, and chapters and families disengaged from district life), the Carolinas District addressed both with an outside-the-box November event (a “Fall Festival”) that turned out to be a big hit. Part of the solution lay in two of the district’s strengths: high-draw tourist destinations, and a number of retired Fortune 500 Executives who have established a “continuous improvement” mentality in what they describe as a “chapter-driven” district model.*

When you’re trying to attract the less hard-core members of the barbershop world to an event, it doesn’t hurt to host it in a city like Charleston, S.C. (After three days, I had half a mind to pack up the family and move there.) But this article is no travel log, and your district may or may not even have the draw, demographics, or desire to pull off an event like this.

But Marty Monson didn’t send me to beautiful Charleston to collect convention planning tips. He was intrigued by the *thought process* and *values* that led to such a radical—and, as it turns out, successful—departure from traditional district events. While the particulars may or may not be universal in application, many of the guiding principles may apply to nearly any chapter or district.

### **A hard shove into out-of-the-box thinking**

Leaders of the Carolinas District (NSC, or North/South Carolina) had plenty of reasons to question the traditional convention model. But the biggest catalysts were two-fold: the past NSC Spring International Preliminary Contest was hemorrhaging money, and NSC chapters told leadership that they didn’t want their choruses to go to two conventions a year.

The district’s traditional fall convention (now held in the spring) was solvent and well attended by the more competitive quartets and choruses (more on the less competitive chapters in a minute) but the spring preliminaries for the international contest drew sparse numbers. Yet, the district was required to host it, and had to absorb the prohibitive expenses of a required double judging panel and other overhead.

**Put down the pitchforks, pick up the spreadsheets.** *What is the point in making us host this money-losing contest?* That’s the conversation NSC leaders started having among other districts’ leaders and with the Society Contest & Judging Committee (SCJC) and Society Board. After a lot of collaborative work, districts now have permission to host only one convention a year if they choose. (Two important lessons from this: [1] The SCJC and Society Board are open to collaboration and [2] if you’re trying





**Saturday Night Dinner Show on the U.S.S. Yorktown**



I'm seeing wives of Barbershoppers I haven't seen in a long time. They want barbershop in smaller doses, and the contest tonight was more like a show.

— Cathy Benson *Wilmington, N.C.*



Charleston was the magnet that brought a lot of people here. And the format made the weekend less taxing on those for whom barbershop competition isn't their main reason for life.

— Paul Martin, *Fall Festival Chairman*



The 2- or 3-hour show last night, that's just right. Four, five, six hours of contests in a day, and I'm on overload. Today my husband is doing his thing, I'm doing my thing, and I've got a day to play. It's all about finding that balance.

— Marilyn Cluett, *Wake Forest, N.C.*

**All 10 groups in the district quartet finals qualified during the spring convention**



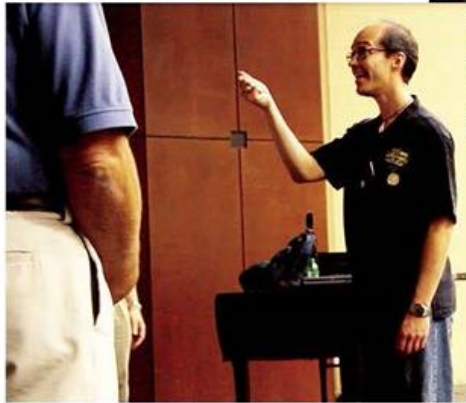
	Typical district convention	Carolinas District 2014 Fall Festival
<b>Dates</b>	Spring or fall contest windows, per rules pertaining to international qualifying contests	November, when hotel rates are lower; no international qualifying events take place, so spring and fall contest windows do not apply
<b>Contest events</b>	Varies by district. Many conventions host three contests: quartet semifinals, chorus contest, quartet finals. (Double or triple judging panel, per rules for international qualifying contests)	<u>District quartet finals only</u> (3-song sets with dialog, 2 songs judged for score), single judging panel allowed because only district quartet championship is at stake. (Chorus contest, quartet international qualification and district quartet semifinals take place during NSC Spring Convention with double panel)
<b>Non-contest events</b>	Usually limited due to heavy competition/rehearsal/eval schedules; many districts host Saturday night shows and/or afterglows after quartet finals; some host Sunday morning eval sessions	(1) Friday night quartet contest has show-like atmosphere with 3-song show packages and dialog; (2) Friday Night Afterglow; (3) extensive Saturday tours; (4) all-morning coaching/evals for competing and non-competing quartets; (5) all-afternoon coaching for choruses; (6) Saturday afternoon public performances for district quartets; (7) Saturday Night Dinner Show at U.S.S. Yorktown; (8) Sundays free for tourism
<b>Event city</b>	Heavily influenced by hotel/venue prices, travel distances, local chapter committee support	Primarily chosen for city's ability to draw spouses and non-competitors for tourism-related activities
<b>Event venues</b>	High consideration usually given to distance between hotel(s), contest venues, and chorus rehearsal space; this typically narrows available options within a given city	Quality and cost of venues prioritized over travel distances. Only Friday Night Afterglow was within walking distance of HQ hotel. Separate venues for contest, coaching, public performances, tours, and Saturday Night Show were each about five miles from headquarters hotel, each in a different direction. Transportation provided only for tours; attendees encouraged to rely on personal GPS devices to navigate area.
<b>Who attends</b>	Primarily competitors and officers; limited draw/attendance for spouses and non-competitors. Attendees typically must purchase full registrations.	Only 40 total competitors (quartet finals); more than 300 non-competitors, including several chapters receiving Saturday afternoon coaching; close to half of total event purchases are women. All events purchased ala carte.



**Lorin May**  
Editor, The Harmonizer  
[lmay@barbershop.org](mailto:lmay@barbershop.org)



Singing judge Eddie Martinez spent a grand total of three hours of his trip performing judging duties. He then spent all day Saturday coaching quartets and choruses, joined by the other two district quartet contest judges and by other coaches drawn from the Carolinas District. Every chorus in attendance was there for the express purpose of coaching ... and to enjoy Charleston and other Festival events.



**THE WEEKEND'S ONE AND ONLY CONTEST SESSION.** Friday night's event was at a low-cost venue—a church with a good sound system, low fees, and roughly the same seating space as the projected attendance. Note the judging pit: one contest administrator, three judges, and a practice judge—a configuration chosen to keep costs low. Each of the 10 finalist quartets (which qualified at the district's spring convention) performed a three-song package with dialog. The judges chose the district champ based on the two contestable songs; the audience chose which quartet would perform on the Saturday Night Dinner Show on the U.S.S. Yorktown.

to persuade one or both, it doesn't hurt to have the NSC—and its exhaustive data—on your side.)

**After a win, keep scoring.** Ironically, the Fall Festival means NSC is still hosting two annual conventions. But the removal of a once onerous financial requirement opened the creative floodgates. "We were allowed to have fun once we got around the need to have double panels at two separate events," said NSC President Bob Johns. "And we wanted to do something different."

#### **This chapter-driven district didn't want a second contest-driven convention**

NSC is culturally different from a lot of districts, and those differences are expressed in its "chapter-driven" governance model. The NSC House of Delegates not only has input in directing district affairs, but participates in the earliest stages of program and event planning and prioritization. By being "chapter-driven," the actions of the district board are to be for the good and betterment of the chapters. This "raise all boats" mentality means district leaders are called to take an active, hands-on role in the success and development of all of its chapters.

"The view from the bottom up is that

the district is there to help the chapters," said Brian Giersch from the New Bern N.C. Chapter, Southern Gentlemen Barbershop Chorus. "They're attending our chapter and board meetings to help us grow and self-evaluate."

Chapter polls play a prominent role in determining district priorities; chapters said they wanted quality judging input and coaching outside of and beyond a district contest eval session. There was essentially no chance the chapters would approve a primarily contest-driven fall event. The idea wasn't even considered.

#### **The competitors already have their own convention.**

If NSC hasn't been known for a lot of competitive powerhouses during its brief history, there are plenty of competitive singers working on it—and getting a lot of district-wide support. NSC's spring convention is built

District quartets spent Saturday morning receiving coaching, then on Saturday afternoon applied those lessons as roving performers at Charleston's large and popular Farmer's Market.



## The Spring Convention

The Spring Convention was held March 20-21 in Charlotte, NC. With the new contest format, four International Representatives were chosen and four District Champions were crowned.

Int'l Quartet Reps – ***Let's Sing!*** and ***Zero Hour***

Int'l Senior Quartet Reps – ***Harmony Grits*** and ***Final Countdown***

Senior Quartet Champion – ***Final Countdown***

Collegiate Int'l Reps – ***Riverside Ringers***

Novice Quartet Champion –

***The Young Ones***

Int'l Chorus Rep – ***Carolina Vocal Express***

Chorus Champion – ***Heart of Carolina Chorus***



***Let's Sing!***

Int'l Quartet Reps for 2015 Contest



***Zero Hour***

Int'l Quartet Reps for 2015 Contest



***Harmony Grits***

Int'l Seniors Quartet Reps for 2016 Contest



***Final Countdown***

2015 District Seniors Quartet Champion  
Int'l Seniors Quartet Reps for 2016 Contest



***Riverside Ringers***

Int'l Collegiate Quartet Reps for 2015 Contest





***The Young Guns***  
2015 District Novice Champion



***The Heart of Carolina Chorus – Central Carolina***  
2015 District Chorus Champion



***Carolina Vocal Express – Greater Gaston, NC***  
International Chorus Representative for 2016 Contest

## “Skinny” Harris Recognition

A special highlight of the Spring Convention was the District recognizing Melvin J. “Skinny” Harris. Here are President Bob John’s remarks.

Ladies and gentlemen:

Today we’d like to take a couple minutes to recognize a bit of our history by honoring a special guest of the district. We have with us a Brother in Harmony who became involved in barbershop here in Charlotte shortly after the chapter was chartered. Given Charlotte is our host it is fitting for us to recognize one of Charlotte’s own.

Charlotte is the third oldest active chapter in the Carolinas—chartered in February 1950 as part of the Dixie District. Melvin “Skinny” Harris joined Charlotte in January 1951. In his job as traveling salesman he was able to regularly visit all the Society chapters in his four-state area of the North and South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida.

As time went on he did a lot more for the district and the society than visit chapters. He dove into a leadership role at many levels: He was:

- Piedmont Division VP in 1962
- Dixie District Exec VP & BOTY in 1963
- Dixie District President in 1964 & 1965
- Society Board Member 1966-68

In 1968 he began what became twenty years as Society Judge - first, as a Harmony Expression judge and when categories changed he became an Interpretation judge. Starting in the mid-seventies he became Chairman of Judges. He was also DIX C&J chairman in 1974. On top of all this, Skinny directed the Charlotte chorus from 1976 through 1978.

The Dixie District Hall of Fame was established in 1994 and, recognizing Skinny’s significant contribution to the Dixie District, he was inducted in the 1995 class one of the first 6 inducted. Wow! What a résumé.

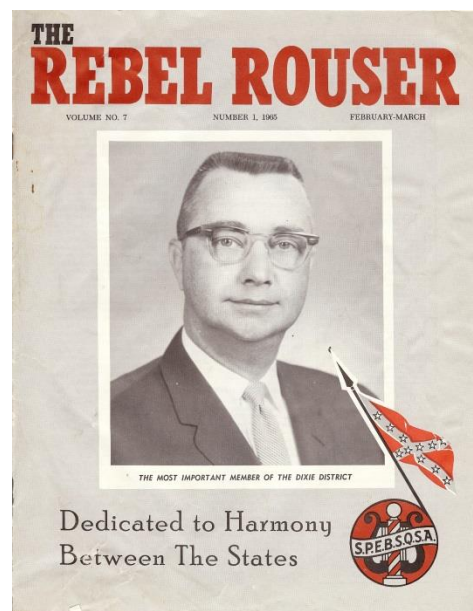
As a fitting memento to Skinny’s contributions to his chapter, his district and to the Society, our district historian Gary Smith was able to come up with a great photo of Skinny in the February/March 1965 edition of the Rebel Rouser and had it framed for this occasion.

Thank you, Skinny, for all you’ve done for Barbershop!

(Editor’s Note. We were saddened by the news that Skinny Harris passed away on October 28, 2015 at the age of 95.)



Bob Johns (left) and Gary Smith, Historian, present Melvin “Skinny” Harris with a framed copy of the Feb/Mar 1965 *Rebel Rouser* (below)





## Harmony Platoon

The Spring Convention also featured a new quartet-oriented event – Harmony Platoon. Here is how Bob Clark described the early history of “Platoon”.

I was asked to write a short paper regarding the creation of “Platoon” events in the Barbershop Harmony Society. To make any sense of Platoon, it is necessary to have an understanding of its big brother “Brigade”, so let’s start there.

The Barbershop Harmony Society (aka Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barbershop Quartet Singing in America, Inc.) was formed in 1938 to preserve the American art form of four part harmony singing. Early on, one of our founders, O C Cash proposed a contest to identify the world’s best Barbershop Quartet. From our beginnings to the present time, contests have been instrumental in providing incentives for men to sing well in quartets.

Through our history there have been organizations called Brigades at which dedicated barbershoppers gathered to relish four part harmony. Such an organization was created in North Carolina called the North Carolina Harmony Brigade (NCHB). Under the leadership of Charlie Rose, the NCHB evolved into a unique organization of talented dedicated men who were passionate about barbershop quartet singing. Initially limited in membership to North Carolina barbershoppers, the Brigade met annually for a contest in which individual preparation was essential, for the quartets were formed randomly of the attendees. The process became known appropriately as “Extreme Quartetting”.

Attendance at NCHB was by invitation only. Current members could invite guests who were given the opportunity to learn their part for twelve challenging songs. They were evaluated for two years, and if their performance was satisfactory, they would be invited to membership in the Brigade. I was first invited as a guest in 1996. Knowing the demanding standards of the NCHB, I worked hard to learn my part (bari) to all the songs. I knew all of the music better than I had ever learned any song previously---it was not good enough. I had to re-calibrate. The next year and ever after, I was prepared by knowing every word, every note, every breathing point, and every arrangement.

The Brigade weekend involved a show for the public that included performances by organized quartets and performances by a chorus made up of all the members of the Brigade. This chorus of 120-150 men was unbelievable. They rehearsed each song to be presented on the show (normally 12 songs) for 10 minutes. The results were breathtaking. The quality of the singing and presentation was far superior to the performance of choruses that I had been in that had practiced two songs for months. It was a revelation.

Once I became a member of the Brigade, I encouraged the good singers in my chapter to consider Brigade, and I invited them to get involve, work hard, and become Brigaders.

As more of our chapter member became Brigaders, the quality of our chapter chorus improved rather dramatically. I thought we could have a wonderful chorus if only we were all Brigaders. Many of our members simply do not have the skills, some would not commit to that level of work, and some have no interest. I thought perhaps a middle ground could be helpful.

Some of the principles of Brigade could apply in a less vigorous form:

- \*Each individual really learn the words, notes and arrangement to easy songs
- \*Each individual gain the ability to sing his part in a quartet
- \*Use the thrill of competition to bring commitment
- \*Have the event stand-alone---separate from chapter meetings—something special
- \*While it is competition, it must be fun
- \*Use notable non-chapter judges for credibility
- \*Make awards prestigious
- \*Relish and celebrate the fellowship that occurs



With these things in mind, I proposed to the chapter board in 2007, an event with Brigade principles for our chapter members only. This is much smaller than a Brigade, so I proposed calling it a "Platoon". The board gave its approval and we set about planning the event and selling its virtues to the members. We held the event on a Friday evening (not the regular meeting night) at a location that permitted adult beverages. We gave each quartet time to practice together before the competition. Each quartet sang two songs, the judges picked the top four for the finals, and a chorus of all competitors performed all the songs under the direction of our director. We ate pizza, drank beer, and generally had a great fun evening. The event was judged a success and it has been an annual event at the chapter ever since.

We improved the process each year. We reached out to local chapters and invited them to participate with us and taught them how to run a "Platoon" in their own chapters.

I began getting phone calls from around the country. I had a number of conversations with men from Arizona and Southern California. They were more interested in using the technique at the district level. I told them it should work and I believe it has.

The North Carolina Harmony Brigade model has spread in the United States and is now in the UK with more Brigades in the planning stage. The rigors of Brigade is only for the dedicated barbershopper, but every barbershopper could be a better performer by participating in events such as Platoon that help them sharpen their skills and create enthusiasm for quartet singing.

The Barbershop Harmony Society is a quartet organization. Chapters of the society vary widely in their likes and wants. The chapter chorus is attractive to many men who have little interest in singing in a quartet. That is OK. But my experience at Brigade has taught me that if you desire a good singing chorus, it is a good idea to have that chorus composed of men with the ability to sing well in a quartet. Anything that moves the chapter in that direction is helpful. Platoon moves the chapter in that direction.

The Platoon history continues from the [HarmonyPlatoon.org](http://HarmonyPlatoon.org) website.

*In 2012 the Far Western District (FWD) began a new quartet activity called Harmony Platoon. The event was held in conjunction with District and Division conventions. It typically began 24 hours prior to start of the general convention activity. Participants who paid the registration fee for Platoon received high quality learning tracks for four songs about two months prior to the convention. At the event they were assigned randomly to different quartets and competed in several contests, in addition to informal singing with a variety of combinations. ... No association with Harmony Brigade and Extreme Quartetting is claimed or implied. Some of the Brigade principles are used, however, such as requiring those attending to be totally prepared on the music. ... A major difference between Platoon and Brigade is the difficulty level of arrangements selected. Platoon songs will be of "Moderate" or "Medium" level of difficulty, so the Platoon is within the reach of the "average" member.*

Harmony Platoon events were held at FWD Spring and Fall Convention as well as at several Division contest in 2012 and 2013. The platoon concept spread to the Evergreen District 2013 Fall Convention and starting in 2014 Harmony Platoon events have been held at both International Conventions (Mid-Winter Convention in January and the International Convention in July). In fact the beginning of Harmony Platoon at Carolinas District Conventions was when Jim Gordon went to the 2015 Mid-Winter Convention in New Orleans to participate in and learn how to run a Platoon. Jim immediately brought the concept back to the Carolinas District with a very successful Harmony Platoon at the 2015 Spring Convention. Details of format of the Carolinas District Harmony Platoon can be found in the *Spring Convention* section.



## International Convention

Representing the Carolinas District at the International Contest in Pittsburgh, PA July 2-4, 2015 were:

*Zero Hour* placing 23<sup>rd</sup> in the Quartet Contest

*Let's Sing!* placing 45<sup>th</sup> in the Quartet Contest

*Riverside Ringers* placing 21st in the Collegiate Quartet Contest

*Carolina Vocal Express* placing 17<sup>th</sup> in the Chorus Contest



*Zero Hour*



*Let's Sing!*



*Riverside Ringers*



*Carolina Vocal Express*, Ben Mills Directing



All International Contest photos are by Lorin May, Barbershop Harmony Society





To say that the Carolina Vocal Express had a great year in 2015 would be a monumental understatement. After our outstanding debut in the NSC Spring contest in 2014, our challenge was to keep the momentum going since we would not be competing at International for another 15 months. We filled our rehearsals with some outstanding coaching from Theresa Weatherbee, Brent Graham, Gary Plaag, David Mills and others. We competed again in the Spring of 2015 in Charlotte, NC with a very “ambitious” presentation plan for ‘Love Me’. It really challenged us to become better performers and step up our game.

We made some modifications to the plan heading into International in Pittsburgh in the summer of 2015. The week in Pittsburgh for CVE was a whirlwind. We had 96 men on stage, most of whom had never performed on the International stage ever before and many that had never even attended an International competition before. So, needless to say, the logistics of keeping everyone informed and getting guys in the right place was a colossal task. Fortunately, men like Rex Partlow, Steve Curulla, Wally Miles, Matt Gorman and many others stepped up to make sure that it all went seamlessly. The young men in Riverside Ringers did an outstanding job on Tuesday evening in the Collegiate contest and many of the CVE guys were there to root on the quartet who also all sang with CVE on Friday morning. On Wednesday, Let’s Sing and Zero Hour both sang in the quarterfinals of the open competition and gave incredible performances. The support in the crowd from the CVE brethren was overwhelming. CVE had a rehearsal on Wednesday night and then one on Thursday afternoon at our assigned hotel.

We all gathered in our shiny fuchsia shirts on Friday morning, July 3<sup>rd</sup>. Our final few minutes together before boarding the bus to take us to the Consol Energy Arena in downtown Pittsburgh were really special. We talked about what the songs that we were about to perform meant to us and we decided that we wanted to share our joy and emotions with the audience. This was the time that the brotherhood and unity of CVE came shining through.

We had a delay once we arrived at the arena, and we waited in the buses for what seemed like an eternity. Once we were finally herded into the backstage of the arena, we had a few final moments to prepare our minds for the stage. Finally, we started loading the risers as screams from our family and supporters started coming out from the massive crowd. Then, the moment came, we were announced and the show was on! It was truly the best performance that CVE had ever given and then, in the blink of an eye, it was over and we were off the stage.

CVE finished in 17<sup>th</sup> place out of 28 amazing choruses from around the world. CVE scored an A-level chorus score of 81.3. This was the highest score that CVE had ever received and it was the best score and placement for any chorus in the brief history of the Carolinas District. The performance and experience in Pittsburgh will hopefully be just the beginning of a bright future on the International stage for the Carolina Vocal Express.

In the Fall of 2015, CVE sang at the Carolinas District Fall Festival. Ben Mills, retired as musical director of CVE and handed the reigns to Dale Comer. Ben led CVE from its birth in 2013 and really helped to form the chorus into what it is today. Ben will be sorely missed, but the future of CVE is still very bright. Look for amazing music and performances from the Carolina Vocal Express for many years to come! - Carolina Vocal Express



## The Fall Festival

The first Carolinas District Fall Festival was a huge success last year. Continuing the tradition of holding the event at a destination city the second Fall Festival was held in Savannah, GA at the Marriott Hotel on the riverfront of the Savannah River. The Fall Festival featured the same format as the previous year with the addition of a Riverboat Cruise on Thursday evening. *Supersonic* was crowned the 2015 District Quartet Champion and *Infinity* was second place and voted the Audience Favorite.



*Supersonic*  
2015 District Quartet Champion



*Infinity*  
Audience Favorite