

HERITAGE OF HARMONY

a Harmony College Show

"Heritage of Harmony"

Production notes

General

"Heritage of Harmony" was written to serve as the official show for the SPEBSQSA., Inc. 50th anniversary. It may be presented long after then, however, since it is the story of barbershop harmony's origins and growth. It is a show which any chapter can present proudly.

As with any production, your chapter should use all the theatrical elements you have at your disposal to make "Heritage of Harmony" the most exciting and interesting production possible for your audience. These elements include scenery, props, costuming, lighting, stage presence, supplemental choreography, vignettes, pantomimes, or any other entertainment device you can imagine.

Following these general remarks, we have given you some more specific thoughts on the show and some production ideas. There are many more ideas that you can and should come up with on your own.

One good idea-producing process that can be used is brainstorming. Divide the chapter into groups. Assign each group an entire scene. Let the group write down as many ideas as they can on how to stage their scene. Tell them to use all the theatrical elements they can think of and not to throw out any ideas because it is impractical. The group which comes up with the longest list can be awarded a prize or some type of special recognition. Once the lists are complete, the Show Committee can take them, extract the good ideas and use those which work with the total show in mind.

Suggestions have been indicated in the script on who should perform each song: chorus or quartet. These are only suggestions; flip these around to suit your own situation. Remember, however, that mixing chorus and quartet performances offers variety for your audience, gives a brief respite to the performers and provides opportunities to encourage quartet participation within the chapter. Also, do not overlook the possibility of using solo voices with chorus "loos" in the background. Double quartets are another form of variety, two of these are indicated in the script.

Remember, the audiences at your show could stay home and *listen* to barbershop records. They have come to witness a theatrical experience which includes both sound and sight; don't cheat them. Feature our unique product—barbershop harmony—and complement it with a solid visual performance.

Cassette learning tapes for all the music in this show are available for purchase from the Society's order desk. The stock numbers are : tenor (4661), lead (4662), baritone (4663), bass (4664) and the set of four (4660). These tapes may not be copied.

Concept

Before you begin to undertake this show or even read the script, you should understand the structure and meaning behind "Heritage of Harmony."

During the thought process and research phase it became obvious that several ingredients were very important to the creation, development and continued success of barbershop harmony. Among these were: prevailing social and economic conditions, the fellowship created by harmony, and the songs themselves.

To capture these three important elements and keep the show from becoming a boring history lecture, the author hit upon the ideas of using three performing elements on stage.

The chorus members deliver lines in present tense which reflect the attitudes and feelings of the particular year or era that is represented at that moment on stage. This gives a feeling of realism rather than historical information. The chorus "actors" share their feelings or information with the other chorus members who react appropriately. Instead of a group of singers, singing old songs we have a group of involved men relating their direct feelings in words and music.

The second element is a symbolic quartet, called the Everyman Quartet which appears eight times throughout the production. This quartet shows how the barbershop quartet was an integral part of several forms of entertainment and social activities. By using the same quartet every time an unspoken hint is made of the bond formed by a quartet.

The third element is the show's host. He serves to link the other elements and provide continuity. He also imparts the background information and guides the show forward through its time-line. Even though his material is scripted, he should casually move about the stage and deliver his message intimately to the audience. This will require that he memorize his lines and be able to deliver them in a warm, believable manner.

The three separate elements never really intermingle with each other. The quartet reacts naturally to one another, the chorus reacts appropriately to the speakers within, and the host reacts to the other elements and to the audience. Thus each group has a uniqueness, yet each contributes to the whole of the show.

The music speaks for itself and is really the cornerstone of the production. Through lyrics and our unique style, the songs are also telling a story which is more powerful than prose alone. The Everyman Quartet opens the show with "You're The Flower Of My Heart, Sweet Adeline" and reprises this several times. This song, to many the most famous barbershop quartet number ever sung, serves as an unofficial theme song for the production.

The show had its "off Broadway tryout" at the 1986 Harmony College. The script which follows these notes is a revision from that performance. Songs were shortened, dialogue was rewritten and other slight modifications were made based on the experience gained in that performance.

Staging and sets

While the use of three performing elements just talked about provides some built-in visual interest, there are other possibilities for giving this show even more scenic variety.

The chorus can be staged on traditional risers if absolutely necessary. A better presentation of the chorus, however, would be to spread them out a bit on the stage and let them stand, or some sit, on platforms of differing sizes, shapes and heights. These platforms can be constructed or may be available at your theater for free use or inexpensive rental.

This more free style approach will contribute to the illusion of the chorus portraying the men of the given era. These platforms do not have to be so scattered that they will adversely affect the chorus' musical performance. Talk this over with the chorus musical director then rehearse in this formation and everything should be fine. Consider using backdrops behind the chorus for extra visual impact. Some of the time periods are passed through with one song and it would probably not be feasible to change backdrops every time. A Gay '90s, mainstreet or city park might work nicely for a good portion of Act I. Act II might lend itself to a bigger city backdrop to give the feeling of 20th century sophistication and loss of small town America. Study the script and see how other backdrops or set pieces such as benches, trees or bushes, lampposts or other items might enhance the scene and give a three dimensional look.

The Everyman Quartet provides other staging possibilities. Remember, this quartet will be the same four men throughout the show to emphasize the barbershop quartet serving many historical roles yet remaining the same basic social concept throughout the years. To help this idea, always stage them in the same area when they perform. Down Right or Down Right Center is the suggested area. This leaves Center Stage for the chorus, quartets and double quartets and Down Left and Down Left Center for the host.

Each time the Everyman Quartet is performing, a simple little set can be used with them. In their opener they can be around a park bench and/or old-fashioned lamppost. In the minstrel scene, four wooden chairs in a straight line against a curtain or a flat painted with 1800s ads would be appropriate. In the woodshedding scene a barber's chair in front of a flat, painted to look like a barbershop would fit in nicely. Just a placard with an old quartet name placed on an easel might do for the vaudeville scene. At the beginning of Act II the quartet could be back at the park bench. For the Muehlebach Hotel scene an overstuffed armchair and potted plant could create the atmosphere of a lobby. "The Music Man" scene could be played in front of a flat, painted like a pool hall window or door. The idea is to create a suggestion of a scene yet allow the pieces to be moved on and off quickly. Set pieces can be mounted on wheels or flown in and out to speed the process.

The host will need no scene to work in, but will move about freely and casually in a suggested Down Left and Down Center area.

At Harmony College a nice effect was created at the opening of the show by placing a scrim behind the Everyman Quartet. It was a park scene and a bench and lamppost were in front of it. The chorus was in place behind the scrim. When the quartet was singing "Sweet Adelines," lights were only on them. As the chorus joined the singing, their lights came up and they could be seen through the scrim. Then the scrim was flown and the transition between quartet and chorus became a dissolve.

There is one last, but very important point about staging a show of this type. Timing and packing are critical. There can be no dead spots or the production will slow down and become dull. Each song must begin immediately after the monologue which sets it up. Pitches must be blown unobtrusively and tune-ups should be hummed quietly under talk. You may even find that tune-ups are not necessary if all the singers concentrate on the pitch being blown. In any case, the director should give the down beat as soon as the set-up is delivered. The movement of scenery cannot hold up a show either.

Acting

There is not really a great deal of acting in this show. We are confident that any chapter can accomplish the show in this respect. Let's examine the three performing elements one by one.

The script lists 15 different speaking parts. None of these are over a few sentences and with a bit of coaching and encouragement 15 of your chorus members can become stars and feel as though they have even a bigger part of their annual show. If you really don't have 15 capable men (give it a try first) then you can lower the number needed to nine by letting men double roles between Act I and Act II. With a change of costume (which, as you will see later, the chorus will be doing anyway) the audience will not even notice or care.

A chorus actor must understand his character by examining his lines and seeing where he fits in the show. Is he a man from the 1930s down on his luck, an 1890s family man, a 1960s Barbershopper or what? Once he understands his character he should practice delivering his line(s) naturally. He will be talking to the rest of the chorus so his tone will be friendly and conversational, yet animated. Since these characters will not be directly miked they must project their lines for the audience's ears.

The rest of the chorus members must react to the speakers within their group. Act happy, agreeable, disgusted, or anything else the speaker's line calls for. These reactions should be physical (faces, posture, gestures, etc.) and vocal (as long as the sound does not interfere with more of the line or the next speaker). These reactions, like lines themselves, must be rehearsed. Remember the chorus does not react to the host or the Everyman Quartet. In fact the chorus should freeze if light is directly on them and another performing element is speaking or singing. If they are on stage but no light is on them, the chorus may just stand quietly.

The Everyman Quartet requires four men who can act a bit and sing average or above. Again, they are probably available in your chapter. For small choruses who cannot afford to lose four singers from the chorus (the Everyman Quartet members should never appear in the chorus) then recruit a quartet from a neighboring chapter. These guys don't have to be international medalists, just four guys with a bit of savvy and average voices.

There are a few lines to be delivered by the Everyman Quartet—again not many. In the woodshedding, vaudeville and Muehlebach Hotel scenes there is a chance to develop some characterizations within the quartet. These should be obvious from the script. The lines assigned to the Everyman Quartet can be traded around. This will accommodate matching a physical type or a voice better with a character. The opening scene around the lamppost should be performed with sincerity and dignity—no drunk impersonations.

It might be a nice technique to begin and/or end each of the Everyman Quartet scenes from a theatrical freeze. A freeze is when each actor starts or ends in an exaggerated, completely motionless position. The effect is a snapshot or painting.

The host needs to be someone who is very at ease and personable on stage. Remember, he is chatting with the audience. He must stick fairly closely to the script and at least give the cue lines accurately so that the next performers can begin immediately after his last line. The host can and should react to the chorus and Everyman Quartet lines but not to the point of upstaging them.

In summary, the acting assignments in this show are not difficult but should be taken seriously. The proper reactions, along with the believability of the characters will go a long way in making this show a success.

Guest quartets

However, remarks from the quartet such as, "We'd like to thank the Mid Valley Chapter for having us on the show," or "It's great to be in Florida" can damage the believability of the show. Send the guest quartets a script well in advance with their spot marked. Also, send them these paragraphs you have just read that explain the importance of their cooperation. Remember, guest quartets are work for you and your show. You have a right and a duty to tell them how they fit into the production.

"Heritage of Harmony" runs about 2 hours and 15 minutes (this includes a 15-minute intermission) as scripted. This is plenty long, so make sure your guest quartets know their time frames and stick within them. The first guest quartet is scheduled for about 12 minutes and the second for 15-20. This includes encores. (Encores are not recommended as a good performance policy.)

Costumes

Costuming is a very important part of this show. It will help set the time frame, characters and story. Most of the costuming can probably be put together by the Barbershoppers but a few items will not be commonplace. See if the theater where you are performing will lend or rent costumes inexpensively. Check with your local community theater group for costume loans. Hunt thrift clothing stores for useable or easily

made-over items. If you need to rent some costumes see if you can talk down the price because you are renting several items and will give the costume house a free ad in your program.

The host should look respectable and will probably come off best in a nice tuxedo. A nice suit might also work (but it is not as stagy). A barbershop vest, bow tie and straw hat would work, but he will look like some of the chorus members.

Within the chorus an array of costumes from the time period covered within the act is very important. This means the entire chorus will change costumes between Act I and Act II. Act I basically covers the time from 1870 until 1910. Act II covers from 1911 until today. Make sure there is a variety of costumes from these time periods.

Each speaker from within the chorus should be wearing a costume which matches his character. These are indicated in the script. Be careful with Man 1 in his Elizabethan garb. This should not be so elaborate that it sticks out like a sore thumb throughout Act I.

The Everyman Quartet costumes are very important to their changing roles. Here are some suggestions. At the beginning of the show, for the woodshedding scene and during their first and last appearance in Act II, they should be dressed in turn-of-the-century clothing—the stereotypical quartet costume: vets, arm bands, straw hats or derbys, bow ties and spats. The four should not be dressed the same but should not clash with one another. For the minstrel scene, tails and top hats would be ideal. If this is not possible, dress them alike in late 1800s wear. Tambourines as hand props would be a nice touch. There is a fairly quick change from the opening scene to the minstrel scene so the same dark slacks and white shirts for both scenes would be wise and would allow for a simple coat and hat change. The vaudeville costumes are described in the script. This standard costuming was fairly typical of many vaudeville groups. The Muehlebach Hotel scene would look good played in full-cut double-breasted business suits, typical of the late 1930s. "The Music Man" scene could play in either 1910s working clothes, or the vest-type costume used in the quartet's first and last appearances.

Do not leave costuming to the last minute. It is too important to throw together. Get all the costumes on the men in plenty of time to make changes, if necessary.

Lighting

Properly designed and executed stage lighting accomplishes three goals: it illuminates the action on stage so the audience can see, it creates mood and it directs attention. All these are very important with "Heritage of Harmony." Of course, every stage differs in size and available instruments, but here are some general guidelines and suggestions.

The host can be handled simply and effectively with a follow spot. This will allow him latitude to move about and it will focus attention on him when necessary.

The Everyman Quartet's lighting can be fairly straight forward also. Since they basically work in the same area every time they appear, their lighting can be established with four or five fixed instruments (fresnels or lekos). These should be gelled with a No Color Pink to reduce some of the harshness. They can all be on a single dimmer to allow flexibility of mood setting with bright or softer lighting (bright on the minstrel, woodshed, vaudeville, Muehlebach Hotel and "Music Man" scenes; softer on the Act I opening, Act II opening and closing for the quartet).

The chorus will be a larger area to light, but they too are mostly stationary. They can be lighted with strip lights, fresnels and lekos. For an average 40 man chorus, two rows of strip lights and about ten fresnels should be sufficient. As is the case with most modern sets of strips lights, the strips should allow for

independent circuiting of the colors. These colors are determined by the gels placed in front of the lamp. We suggest red, blue and white (no gel). This provides a general wash when the chorus is singing, as well as providing some subtle mood changes during ballads. The fresnels are gelled with a No Color Pink and provide general fill for the chorus. As a general rule or point from which to start, uptunes can be lighted with full bright (white) instrumentation. Ballads benefit with warmer (dimmed) lighting. Some songs may lend themselves to lighting transitions within (e.g. "Bye, Bye Blues"). The three gelled strip colors provide an opportunity to give some colorization (red, blue, lavender) but be careful and try these out with the performers wearing their costumes. This will prevent light color, against fabric color mismatches.

If your theater has a white cyclorama or backdrop available, some nice colored backgrounds can be created by shining gelled strip lights or fresnels against it. A very powerful mood can be created by using a colored background and silhouetting the chorus (little or no front light on the chorus) against the background.

You may wish to use a follow spot to help pinpoint speakers from the chorus. During the "Minstrel Montage" and the "Heritage Medley," follow spots would be excellent for highlighting quartets, double quartets and soloists stepping out from the chorus. In "That Old Quartet Of Mine" you will want to go from a full chorus lighting to a spot light on the quartet when that transition is made.

For the songs performed solely by quartets and double quartets follow spots should be adequate with no chorus lighting to distract.

The two guest quartets may have their own lighting cues. If they do, make sure the lighting director has them before the technical rehearsal. He can review the cues even though the guest quartets will most likely not be at the technical rehearsal.

Sound

As with lighting, sound reinforcement will differ with stages and available equipment. Following are two suggestions you may wish to consider.

The Crown Company of Elkhart, Indiana manufactures a microphone called the PCC-160. This is a small light-weight microphone which sits on the floor of the stage and does an amazingly good job of accurately picking up sound from anywhere on a medium size (or smaller) stage. This one microphone can serve the chorus, quartets and hosts. A forerunner to the PCC, the PZM microphone is also a very usable mike. It requires a plexiglass shield to block noises from the rear. These floor mikes eliminate obvious microphone stands on stage which can destroy the scenic illusion. Even guest quartets should be able to work around a floor mike—giving them more freedom of movement.

A second choice would be to hang several omni-directional microphones over the main stage and several more set on the floor and angled just over the edge of the stage. These microphones will have to be run through a sound mixer and balanced. Have someone knowledgeable set the microphones, adjust them during the technical rehearsal and ride gain during the show. Consider using a wireless mike or a lavalier mike on the host.

Music

To establish a good pace, overall flow and timing for the show we recommend that you abbreviate some of the songs. These are indicated in the script. If you like, learn the whole song for other performances but observe the suggested cuts for this show. The songs affected include, "You're The Flower Of My Heart, Sweet Adeline," "I Want A Girl," "Put On Your Old Grey Bonnet," "By The Light Of The Silvery Moon," and "My Melancholy Baby."

Also note that the Everyman Quartet sings the first 28 measures of the "Minstrel Montage," then the chorus picks it up. On the other hand, the chorus sings the first 12 measures of "That Old Quartet Of Min," a lead sings through measure 16 and a quartet (with the lead soloist as one member) finishes the song.

For both the "Minstrel Montage" and the "Heritage Medley," soloists and quartets should be selected from the chorus to carry some of the songs. These spots are indicated in the "Minstrel Montage."

The "Heritage Medley" can be a very powerful number if performed correctly. It must be done with spirit and variety. Analyze the songs and determine which ones quartets can step out and perform. Pick a double quartet song or two in the medley. Also look for a couple of songs that a soloist can perform with the chorus "ooing" in the background. Remember, the Everyman Quartet needs to sing the final "Sweet Adeline" passage in the reprise to "Don't You Love To Hear The Old Songs." Another tip on the medley is to check and see if pitch is being maintained. This can be done while a quartet has stepped out to sing, or during applause which may occur between songs. If the pitch needs to be corrected, the easiest place to accomplish this is at the end of six specific songs. These songs are: "Cuddle Up a Little Closer, Lovey Mine," "Meet Me In St. Louis, Louis," "Harrigan," "In My Merry Oldsmobile," "Sweet Rosie O'Grady," and "In The Good Old Summertime." The last chord of each of these songs is a sustained, major chord. Have all the singers swipe up or down a half step while holding the chord and the pitch will be adjusted. This can be done by the chorus or by a quartet or double quartet singing the song. Of course, this needs to be practiced during rehearsal so signals and timing can be established and continuity within the medley is not destroyed.

During the "Music Man" segment the Everyman Quartet can actually sing the "ice cream" chords as was done in the play and film if they know these. If not, the scene will play just fine as it is.

Remember that the great music is the keystone of this production. If it is performed well and the packing is sharp and everyone on stage is exuding enthusiasm, then this show can be nothing but successful.

Conclusion

Please take all the preceding suggestions as just that. Your personnel, theater and audiences will dictate how you present the show. If you make changes, make them with intelligence and love.

Announcements before or after the show or during the intermission should be eliminated. Let your show program be your message board.

Special Curtain calls would be anti-climactic to this show. If you wish to give your guest or feature quartets one more spotlight here's a suggestion. Let them sing one of the songs near the end of the "Heritage Medley" like "Yankee Doodle Boy," "In The Good Old Summertime" or "Sweet Rosie O'Grady." The audience will acknowledge them then. They should stay on stage with the chorus for the rest of the medley. This will need to be rehearsed.

This show was extremely well received when it was presented at Harmony College in 1986. There was nothing done there that your chapter and chorus cannot accomplish. They had only six days to prepare the show. With advanced planning and hard work your production will thrill your audience.

We have a lot to be proud of with our Society and our style of music. This show was designed to reflect that pride and really show why we are unique. If you have any questions about the show, do not hesitate to contact the international office by mail or telephone.

There are too many people to thank who helped with this show. The staff of the Music Department at the international office are to be singled out for their dedication and support as is the cast and crew from the first performance at Harmony College. Now it belongs to you and your audiences to enjoy.

"Heritage of Harmony"

written for SPEBSQSA, Inc.

- Gary M. Stamm, 1986
Used by Permission

Heritage of Harmony

Note: The attached production notes for this show should be thoroughly read and understood before undertaking this production.

Act I

(House lights fade and pool of light comes up on quartet down right, in front of a curtain or a scrim. They are dressed, not alike, but circa 1900. This quartet, the Everyman Quartet will appear many times throughout the show. They symbolize the barbershop quartet throughout its history. Their setting now is a street corner, under a gaslight. As soon as the light hits them they begin singing the chorus of, "You're The Flower Of My Heart, Sweet Adeline," Society publication 8049. At the end of the bass echo in measure 18, they skip to measure 22, "You're the . . ." and continue on through measure 24. Then they go back to the beginning of the verse. After the echo "so dear" in measure 4 the show's host comes out to down center or down left and begins speaking to the audience. The quartet does not acknowledge the host and completes the verse on the neutral syllable "ooh" under the host's monologue.)

(Host)

Four men, harmonizing a familiar song. They're a barbershop quartet. You've probably heard them before and maybe you've wondered what barbershop harmony is all about. History books don't usually mention the story of the barbershop quartet. Instead they talk about places and events and what happened when. But history books aren't the only things which record people's feelings about their lives. Songs do too. And it's through these songs, and the people who sang them, that we can follow the barbershop quartet through the years. Join us on a journey from the earliest barbershop roots over 100 years ago, through the golden era of harmony, to its virtual extinction. We'll also witness the founding of the organization whose 50th anniversary we celebrate this year. And we'll see how that organization gave four part harmony a rebirth and has kept it alive.

(At this point the quartet has reached the end of the verse and continues back into the chorus of the song on the words. The curtain opens and a chorus is on stage. They are in groups of 4 to 7 all over the stage at different levels created by platforms of differing heights. They are dressed in a variety of costumes that depict various eras the show will cover—see the production notes. The chorus begins singing the song also, and continues through the end. The host leaves the stage, as he will do during most musical numbers, so as not to distract. As soon as the chorus joins the singing, the lights go off the Everyman Quartet and they leave the stage.)

You're The Flower Of My Heart, Sweet Adeline (Society Catalog No. 8049)

(The lighting for "Sweet Adeline" has been a rather warm, low key, almost silhouette effect. On the applause it comes to full and the chorus launches enthusiastically into the next song.)

I Want A Girl" (Society catalog No. 7005)

(Sing measures 1-32, then skip to measure 79 and complete the song.)

(After applause, lights dim to silhouette on chorus and host comes back out and speaks to audience. While he is speaking, chorus members should remain still. A spot will hit each speaker as he talks. The chorus members do not react to the host, but do react appropriately when one of their group speaks to them.)

(Host)

It was great songs like that which became barbershop standards; but how did it all start?

(Man 1)

(A chorus member dressed in 17th century English garb takes right off from host's last line and speak enthusiastically to the chorus around him.) Let me tell you good fellows, my Lord called for his lute and we joined him with our instruments. Together we made barber's music and my Lord was well pleased.

(Host)

(Laughs) Samuel Pepys, *(pronounced Peeps)* and Englishman, made that noble statement in the 1600s. All kinds of things were going on in barbershops back then, besides hair cutting. There was teeth pulling, blood letting—with leeches, no less; amputations and probably a little music by the costumers while they were waiting—maybe even some singing. But more than likely the real barbershop roots lie in North America. By the mid 1800s music and entertainment were an important part of our lives.

(Everyman Quartet has come on stage, dressed as minstrels)

(Tenor, Everyman Quartet)

Tell me Mr. Interlocutor, how's your wife doing with her two wooden legs?

(Bass, Everyman Quartet)

Oh, she just lumbers along.

(Host)

It was the age of the minstrel show—corny jokes and lots of songs. *(Everyman Quartet has pitch already and launches into minstrel montage—they will sing through measure 28. Then the chorus will take over, with quartets and speakers stepping out from the chorus as indicated in the music.)*

Minstrel Montage (Society catalog No. 7636)

(Host)

The idea of men singing popular music was not restricted to the minstrel shows.

(Man 2)

(Dressed in 1870 suit he speaks to chorus) The Lake Chautauqua Assembly is sponsoring a traveling program. These tent shows will offer lectures, dramatic readings and vocal quartets.

(Host)

Everybody seemed to be singing the songs of the day. Minstrel and Chautauqua quartets gained professional fame, but it was the four guys on a street corner or . . . yes, maybe in the barbershop, that seemed to enjoy it most. Give them a pretty melody and they could do the rest.

(Quartet has arrived down center and sings.)

Put On Your Old Grey Bonnet (Society catalog No. 8089.)

(Sing only the first verse, the chorus with it's second ending—measures 47B and 48B—and the reprise through the end.)

(Host)

Some historians think that barbershop harmony, jazz and spirituals all developed from the same roots. Southern blacks would improvise their harmonies around songs like, Little 'Liza." A black quartet, the Hamtown Students, and four singing Negro barbers from Jacksonville, Florida are two of the earliest barbershop quartets known. It's difficult to say for sure where the real beginning lies. More than likely it's a combination—an evolution. One thing is certain, by the 1980s America was ripe for this new style of music. Life was becoming a bit easier and there was more time for leisure and social activities—and for a little complaining about the high cost of living.

Man 3)

(Dressed in 1890s costume, he puts down a newspaper he is reading and talks to chorus) Boys, I don't know what this world's coming to. Beefsteaks are up to 10¢ a pound, a new suit cost me four dollars and my landlord said he's going to raise my rent to \$10 a month. *(Chorus grumbles)*

(Man 4)

(Also dressed in 1890s attire) You've got your mind on all the wrong things. The best in life are free. Just give me a summer afternoon, a peaceful lake, a rowboat and . . . a pretty girl. *(Chorus happily agrees)*

(Host)

Ah, romance—a two-part harmony that's always been around. It sounds like we have all the ingredients for a love story and a song to harmonize (*Chorus goes right into song*)

Row, Row, Row (Society catalog No. 7103)

(*Everyman Quartet dressed again as in first scene are in their down right position—perhaps in barbershop set.*)

(Host)

Barbershop harmony, or close harmony as it was often called, was all improvised in the early days. A stout-hearted fellow would lay the melody out and three others would try to fit in notes that sounded good.

(Everyman Quartet lead)

Hey fellas have you heard this one yet? (*He takes off singing the melody of, "You Tell Me Your Dream."*)

Other three begin woodshedding—truly must be woodshedding—until host begins talking; then they fade, singing quietly under talk.)

(Host)

The notes weren't always perfect but this informal, unrehearsed harmonizing—it was later called woodshedding—was the only way it was done back then. The Barbershop quartet, however, soon became a structured unit with each voice part serving a definite role. (*As he talks the quartet demonstrates on "My Wild Irish Rose" as published in "Just Plain Barbershop." The lead sings the first 8 measures, the bass the second 8, the tenor the third 8 measures and the baritone sings the fourth 8 measures. All four voices sing the tag. While each voice part has its solo the other three should hum their parts. The chords at measure 8, 16, 24 and 32 must be held long enough for the host to get in his line.*) The lead singer sings the melody. (*First 8 measures*) A bass provides the bottom foundation. (*Second 8 measures*) . . . A natural harmony above the melody is sung by the tenor. (*Third 8 measures*) . . . and the baritone sings whatever note is needed—sometimes below and sometimes above the melody—to complete the chord (*Fourth 8 measures*) . . . and barbershop quartets add what is called a tag—usually a repeat of the final lyrics with one last chance to create those beautiful chords. (*Quartet sings tag.*) And while those joyous tags were being sung what urgent message filled the newspapers?

(Man 3)

(Reading a newspaper speaks to others) Listen to this ad. "Tho love be cold, do not despair—there's Ypsilanti Underwear." *(Laugh reaction)* Say, here's an ad for those new horseless carriages.

(Man 4)

I heard that a Minneapolis fella was arrested for exceeding a ten mile an hour speed limit in one of those things.

(Man 3)

Too dangerous, they'll never last. *(Looks at paper again.)* Look here, it says Carrie Nation is wrecking saloons in Kansas.

(Whole chorus does audible gasp at last remark, curtain closes)

(Host)

Amused) Yes, new fangled notions were popping up, but the boys were still singing of simple times in simple settings.

(A quartet is in place and sings)

Down By The Old Mill Stream (Society catalog No. 8526)

(On applause fade,curtain opens on chorus and they go right into next song.)

Wait 'Til The Sun Shines, Nellie (Society catalog No. 8050.)

(Sing only the chorus and tag, measures 17-54.)

(Host)

The 1890s to the 1920s was the golden era of barbershop harmony. How interesting that this was also the golden age of vaudeville. They were a natural for each other. No vaudeville bill was complete without a quartet. You could still find the four local fellas harmonizing the hit songs of the day but there were other groups making real show business names for themselves. The quartets were usually labeled "four-acts" and often combined slapstick comedy with their harmony. Character impersonation was a comic convention of the period and at least one member of the quartet would impersonate an ethnic character while the other three took on different personalities. There was even a traditional entrance.

(Tenor and bass of Everyman Quartet comes on stage. The tenor is dressed in loud, mismatched colors, red socks and pants that end four inches above his shoes. The bass is dressed in period tails. As soon as they are on stage the baritone, dressed in period vest, bow tie, etc., rushes on stage yelling.)

(Bari)

Keep him away from me, or I'll kill him!

(Lead)

(Also dressed in period clothes, coming on stage right behind Bari) Water, water! Give me water! Tenor, who has been holding a bucket filled with a bit of water behind his back throws it in lead's face. Lead reacts surprised to audience laughter and picks up another bucket that has been sneaked on stage and comes to edge of stage and addresses audience.) You think that's funny?

(He winds up and throws contents of bucket—which turns out to be confetti or rice at audience. Everyman Quartet breaks into laughter and exits. The host smiles, shrugs his shoulders and continues.)

(Host)

The real legacy of the vaudeville quartets were the delightful songs they performed. They could croon a lovely ballad, knock you out of your chair with a real rouser, or, of course, get your toes a tappin' with a delightful soft shoe rhythm. *(Double quartet has come on stage and begins song.)*

By The Light Of The Silvery Moon (Society catalog No. 8090.)

(Sing only the first verse, the second chorus and the tag. Measures 1-16, 51-72.)

(Host)

Many of the vaudeville quartets were quite famous. There was the Avon Comedy 4, the Broadway Quartet and the Casion Comedy Four, just to name a few. A young fella by the name of Al Jolson was a member of the Casion Four. The vaudeville craze carried into the 20th century along with some old-fashioned notions.

(Man 5)

(Dressed in turn of the century street wear, holding newspaper, he speaks to chorus.) Here's the first good law I've heard of in 1908. New York City has made it illegal for women to smoke in public. *(Chorus murmurs agreement.)*

(Host)

(With a grin) Try getting by with that today! Actually, women then, as now, were very much admired and loved. Again, it is through song that this point is made so well in a barbershop standard. *(Chorus goes right into next song.)*

My Melancholy Baby (Society catalog No. 7056.)

Sing only the chorus and tag, measures 17-58.)

(Host)

New exciting things were beginning to happen in the world at the beginning of the 20th century.

(Man 6)

(To Man 5) I just got a job in Mr. Ford's new motor car company. He's going to sell an automobile for \$850.

(Man 5)

Say, that's a lot of money. But . . . what the heck; I'm going to get me one.

(Host)

(While Man 5 and 6 freeze, host delivers this aside to audience.) He should have waited. By 1926 the price was down to \$310 because of Mr. Ford's assembly line concept.

(Man 6)

I just spent my money on one of Mr. Edison's new talking machines. I understand some of the vaudeville quartets are making cylinders for 'em.

(Man 5)

What'll they think of next . . . *(He jokes)* . . . pictures that move and talk? *(They both laugh uproariously)*

(Host)

There were many surprises in store. A lot of the old ways were going to run head first into new ideas. Would our old friend—barbershop harmony—survive? Vaudeville, a showcase for barbershop, was beginning to face a challenge. A new form of entertainment called the musical comedy was establishing itself on a famous New York street—named Broadway. *(Chorus goes right into next song)*

Give My Regards to Broadway (Society catalog No. 8084)

(Curtain closes on applause. Host steps out.)

(Host)

Broadway shows had a lot to offer with their big name stars, chorus lines, elaborate sets and costumes. But so did the typical vaudeville bill with its variety of singers, comedians, dance acts and of course, the ever popular barbershop quartet. Ladies and gentlemen, we'd like to take you back to how it might have been. Imagine, if you will, that you are in the Orpheum Theater in 1901. You've just shelled out 25¢ for a ticket and for that kind of money the show better be good. The master of ceremonies steps into the spotlight and says . . . *(He steps out of his spot and it goes off. A new spot opens up a few feet away and he steps into this new spot. He clears his throat, then speaks in a grand style, assuming the role of the vaudeville emcee)* Ladies and gentlemen, you are about to witness fine entertainment and we ask that you refrain from throwing overripe fruits and vegetables. *(Bigger)* the Orpheum Vaudeville Theater proudly presents one of our features acts . . . *(Name of first featured quartet.)*

First featured quartet (10 to 12 minute act, in front of curtain).

Intermission

Act II

(The audience has returned after the three minute warning. House lights dim and curtain opens on the chorus on stage. Stage lights up full. They are dressed in various 20th century costumes: WWI outfits, early 1900s, Roaring '20s, Depression '30s, Business '30s, perhaps a couple WWII, '50s, '60s, '70s and even current barbershop outfits. They go right into number.)

Hello, My Baby (Society catalog No. 8046)

(On applause, Everyman Quartet light comes up and they begin singing, "You're The Flower Of My Heart, Sweet Adeline" at chorus. The host comes out at about measure 19. Quartet "loos" under the host's next speech, then fades out and leaves after their light is off.)

(Host)

The telephone drew our world closer together and quickened the pace of life. So did the automobile, and the age of aviation was right around the corner. Still, people were finding time to relax with a song. But larger, global problems were beginning to weight on our shoulders.

(Man 7)

(In 1914 street wear) I understand a federal income tax is being established. *(Everyone in chorus groans)*

(Host)

(Grins, then sobers to audience) Actually, the global problem was a world war and soon the United States and Canada were dragged into the struggle. Many lives were lost, but an armistice was signed in 1918 and again we could take up a tune and have a little laugh at ourselves. *(Chorus right into song)*

How 'Ya Gonna Keep 'Em Down On The Farm? (Society stock No. 7190)

(Host)

But the war had changed us. We were no longer an isolated nation. Communications were speeding from place to place in seconds. A new medium called radio was beginning to occupy our time. We could hear all the music and entertainment we wanted.

(Man 8)

(In Roaring '20s attire) Isn't that new dance the cat's meow? The flapper I met last night really knows how to cut a rug in front of the Philco.

(Man 9)

(Also in '20s attire) Yes indeed. But I go right down to the speakeasy for my music. Oh you kid, since prohibition it's vo-de-o-do.

(Host)

It was the roaring '20s. Gangsters were doing a big business in bootleg liquor and flappers were doing the shimmy and the black bottom. And there was another popular dance sweeping the land.

(Double quartet, who have arrived on stage, go right into next song)

Charleston (Society catalog No. 7218)

(Host)

Prohibition seemed to have a bit of a negative effect on barbershop singing. Occasional off-key, bathtub-gin vocalizing left listeners cold. People were also finding new interests. Radio and movies were taking up their leisure time. New songs were written for dancing or to be listened to, not sung. In the midst of all this, barbershop harmony began to fade. And there were other problems on the horizon.

(Man 10)

(Dressed in early '30s street wear to man next to him.) Times are tough. Since the big crash I've had to scrape to keep my family from goin' hungry.

(Host)

North America was hit by the great depression—millions were jobless and homeless. But it was our music that helped us over our gloom. Songs such as, "Smile, Darn Ya Smile" and "On The Sunny Side Of The Street" looked at the bright side of life. One favorite tune gave an emphatic farewell to the Depression.

(Chorus goes into next song)

Bye, Bye Blues (Society stock No. 8401)

(Host)

Barbershop harmony had been all but forgotten. Even vaudeville had disappeared. Here and there four voices could be heard locked in harmony but the universal interest was waning. *(Light pool comes up on two*

men—from Everyman Quartet—in '30s business suits. They are in a freeze.) So it was when a Tulsa tax attorney, Owen Cash, and an investment banker, Rupert Hall, met by chance in the Muehlebach Hotel in Kansas City in 1938. *(Two men break freeze and mime conversation.)* During a casual conversation, Cash discovered Hall's mutual interest in barbershop harmony so they rounded up two more men in the hotel and began to sing. *(Other two from Everyman Quartet have joined and they all sing Sweet Adeline chorus softly under monologue.)* This incident got Cash thinking and he soon drafted a letter to 14 of his friends. He invited them to a song fest at the Tulsa Club, on the evening of April 11, 1938.

(Cash)

(The quartet has stopped singing and three have left Cash alone in the spotlight. He begins to read his letter.)

"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 Barbershop Quartet Singing. Without doubt we still have the right of peaceable assembly which, I am advised by competent legal authority, includes quartet singing."

(Host)

Cash's invitation lit a fire. Twenty-six men attended that first meeting, a second meeting saw 70 and by the third week 150 men were again singing good old barbershop harmony. A reporter put the story on the news wire and soon Cash was flooded with calls from all over the country wanting to know how they could get organized. In his whimsical manner, Cash founded the organization with the name that would . . .

(Cash)

. . . outdo all the alphabetical organizations and agencies that President Roosevelt can dream up.

(Host)

It was first called the Society for the Preservation and Propagation of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in the United States. Since this was too difficult for people to remember, it was soon changed to a much simpler name . . . *(He winks and smiles)* . . . The Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop quartet Singing in America. Right from the start, they were singing and creating barbershop classics.

(Chorus sings)

Coney Island Baby/We All Fall Medley (Society catalog No. 8095)

(Host)

SPEBSQSA (*Say each letter. Do not pronounce as an acronym.*) grew rapidly into the 1940s. Canadians wanted to join in the fun and before long it was truly an international organization.

(Man 11)

(Dressed in quartet outfit and speaking to other chorus men) You know, I attended the first national convention and quartet contest in 1939 and this year, 1956, marks my 16th in a row.

(Man 12)

(Dressed in a chorus outfit he speaks to Man 11) I'll bet it was exciting when choruses began competing for championships a few years ago.

(Man 11)

Yes, it was. But even more exciting is the spread of our harmony. Do you know we're up to 25,000 members. And all the time the singing is getting better and better.

(Host)

It was also in the '50s that one of the Society's most famous members, Meredith Willson, put barbershop on Broadway—the very medium that had contributed to the decline of four part harmony in the 1920s.

(Everyman Quartet has come back on stage in straw hats and tradition barbershop attire. Harold Hill character has come on stage also. His line is directed at quartet and they mime stock quartet movements as if singing "Ice Cream" from "The Music Man".) It was Willson's Professor Harold Hill—The Music Man—who said . . .

(Man 13—Harold Hill)

Folks, from now on you'll never see one of these men without the other three.

(Host)

And that was the cue for the famed Buffalo Bills quartet, the Society's 1950 champions, to let out with barbershop harmony on the Great White Way. Every night one of their songs proved to be a show stopper.

(A quartet has entered from the other side and sings song)

Lida Rose (Society catalog No. 7688)

(Host)

In 1957 SPEBSQSA moved to its permanent headquarters on the shores of Lake Michigan in Kenosha, Wisconsin. The music continued to develop and improve. In 1964 the Society adopted a charitable service project to help speech and hearing handicapped youngsters. The '70s saw new music programs and continued growth. *(Chorus goes right into "We Sing That They Shall Speak." Just Plain Barbershop or Society order No. 7509. They sing it one time only, as a chorus member steps out at Measure 2 and delivers standard voice-over. Then they key change into "Keep America Singing." Next speeches are delivered over that music. Again, chorus can "ooh," starting at measure 5, so as not to be overbearing.)*

(Man 14)

(Current barbershop wear) In 1971 a program entitled Young Men In Harmony was begun to introduce school age young men to this unique form of American music.

(Man 15)

(Current barbershop wear) Each summer our annual convention draws nearly 10,000 people together to sing, have fun and crown new quartet and chorus champions.

(Man 14)

Barbershop music has been featured on national radio and television programs by such hosts as Arthur Godfrey, Jackie Gleason, Phil Donahue, Ed Sullivan, Mitch Miller and Fred Waring.

(Man 15)

Organized barbershop singing has spread to countries throughout the world.

("Keep America Singing" ends and host returns.)

(Host)

No matter where on earth barbershop chords may spread, the keystone of the unique sound will always be the quartet. Perhaps that's because the special bond that exists between four men often grows into a special brand of entertainment. And that's certainly the case with our featured quartet. Please welcome (Name of second featured quartet.)

Second featured quartet (15-20 minute act)

(Host)

It's quartets like that which keep the barbershop spirit alive. And a man gets as much from a quartet as he gives in entertainment to others. New songs are often written to fit the barbershop style and one such song has a message that almost tells the whole barbershop experience by itself.

That Old Quartet Of Mine (Society catalog No. 7144)

(Entire chorus begins song and sings through the word "melody" in measure 12. They "ooh" as a lead steps out and sings the words through measure 16. Then three other men join behind him and finish the song as a quartet.)

(Host)

Today, nearly 35,000 men in over 800 chapters in the United States and Canada comprise the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing In America. For 50 years we have been preserving a unique form of singing. But just as importantly we have been preserving the songs of America that have helped us endure wars, depression, and civil strife. The songs you've heard tonight are part of the barbershop story but so are many more. We can't sing them all but we'd like to pay tribute to as many as possible because the music is our heritage. Barbershoppers will continue to sing it with pride for the next 50 years and on and on because it is what we love.

Heritage Medley (Society catalog No. 8091)

(This medley should be presented with enthusiasm and variety. Use chapter quartets and double quartets soloists—with the chorus "oohing" in the background—guest quartets, etc. to keep it moving and well paced. At measures 12-16 of the reprise to "Don't You Love To Hear The Old Songs" the Everyman Quartet should be spotlighted to the side or front and sing the "Sweet Adeline" phrase in the same setting and posture that they began the show. They should stay on stage through the end of the show. See the production notes on this song. This is the finale and should not be followed by any other song or announcements.)

Final curtain

Remember there are many more notes on the staging, lighting, costuming and other important production aspects in the production notes. Please read them.