

# **It's Wonderful to Sing...for Life**

**(item # 4430)**

Harmony College Show, 2001

## It's Wonderful to Sing. . . for Life

**Stage set with chorus risers, down stage to main curtain, suitable back drop and/or cyc lights**

*Flash house lights at 3 minutes*

*House lights fade to off*

*Main curtain opens*

*Lights up full on chorus*

**Chorus: (Energetic Opener)**

*(At end of song chorus freezes)*

*Chorus lights down to 20%*

*Single spot special on "Jim Bailey" (on risers)*

*Single spot special on speaker column stage left (whenever VOICE OVER is speaking)*

*Voice Over Announcer*

Meet Jim Bailey. *(slight pause)* That name doesn't mean anything to you but you probably know Jim's cousin, George, who lived in Bedford Falls. Come now, you remember his . . . wonderful life. After growing up he was just about set to go see the world when his father died. George was feeling so low he wished he'd never been born. A kindly angel by the name of Clarence showed him what the world would have been like without him. Interestingly enough, Jim, has a similar story. But that will have to wait. The barbershop chorus that Jim sings in is right in the middle of their big show. *(laughs to himself)* But of course you know that. That's why you're here.

*Chorus lights up full*

*Single spot special fade to off*

**Chorus: (Easy Beat)**

*Voice Over Announcer*

I should have mentioned that as your voice-over announcer I have incredible powers. Even though we're in the middle of this barbershop harmony show, I'm going to whisk you off somewhere else. Jim also sings in his church choir and last Sunday they did a wonderful job.

*(Chorus scurries around putting on robes, changing places, picking up hymnals, etc.)*  
*....during dialog*

**Backdrop changes to "church scene", church windows**

*Chorus lights down to 80%, wash cyc with reds & blues  
Light church window special*

Don't fool yourselves, just like Jim's barbershop group the members of his choir are all amateurs. They sing because they enjoy it and it gives them fulfillment. While a few of these amateurs are pretty accomplished singers with exceptional voices, most only have average abilities, just like you and me. But because singing brings them joy they have fun working in a group to do the best they can.

**Chorus: (Gospel or sacred number)**

*Main curtain closes*

*Chorus lights off, stage work lights on*

*Special off*

*Fixed Quartet pool, down stage center on*

**Remove church scene from stage, reset for guest youth chorus**

*Quartet enters stage right during voice over (perhaps one member could be dressed the same as Jim)*

*Voice Over Announcer*

In addition to his barbershop chorus and church choir, Jim also sings in a quartet. I know, I know. You're saying to yourselves, "that's not Jim in either of these quartets." You'll have to use a little imagination, folks, it's only a show.

**2 Quartets: one number each (or can have one quartet sing two numbers)**

*After 2<sup>nd</sup> Quartet exits stage left, Jim and a friend enter stage right chatting.*

*Fixed Quartet pool, down stage center, off*

*Fixed pool, down stage right, on*

*Bill*

Hey Jim, wait a minute.

*Jim*

Bill, I'm so busy lately that I meet myself coming and going. My work's stressful, I have family obligations, and on and on. There's just not enough time. Something's got to go. I think I'm going to give up my chorus, choir and even the quartet.

Bill

But you enjoy singing, Jim. How could you give it up?

Jim

Ah, it's not that big of deal. I could do without it.

Bill

I don't know, Jim, I think it's pretty important to your. . . "wonderful life." Besides Ruth says you're much more fun to be around when you're singing and I agree with her.

*(Changing subjects)* Say, I'm late for my community chorus rehearsal. Gotta go.

*Bill exits stage left, leaving Jim alone*

Jim

*(Lost in his own thoughts)* yeah, see ya. *(Grumbling to himself)* Ah, what the heck. My singing's not that important. Sometimes it's even a nuisance. In fact, I wish I had never been born. *(catches himself)* I mean, never had sung.

*(Man appears through center stage curtain and comes up to him.)*

*Follow spot on man follow to stage right.*

Jim

Who are you? *(Realizing)* Hey, wait a minute. Are you Clarence, that angel that my cousin George Bailey ran in to over in Bedford Falls?

**Fly in flat of woman and children**

Clarence

Maybe. Or I could be Glenda, the Good Witch of the North.

Jim

*(Jim shoots Clarence a look)* Wrong show!

Clarence

*(Pulling tufts of cotton off of night shirt)* They don't make clouds the way they used to. Of course I'm Clarence. After helping your cousin George, my wings got clipped again and I have to get my wings back by helping you. Look over here.

*Open curtain to 10 foot width during line*

*Fixed pool, down stage right, fade to 10%  
Illuminate scene, center stage as curtain parts*

*(A painted flat of a woman at piano talks to a young boy. In the background we hear a group of children singing. This is pre-recorded. After a few seconds of music, the singing fades under a woman's voice-also pre-recorded.)*

Woman

Jimmy, I'm afraid you're going to have to leave our little group. You just can't carry a tune in a bucket.

*Scene fades to out  
Fixed pool, down stage right up full*

Close curtain

**Fly out flat of woman and children**

Jim

That was terrible!

Clarence

You mean the fact that we couldn't afford to have live actors for that vignette? (*Jim shakes his head, no*) Oh, you mean that you were discouraged from singing. Well, it happens to tens of thousands of people. Someone innocently tells them that they can't sing, that they "can't carry a tune in a bucket"-oh, I hate that expression-and suddenly their life is changed, because they are ashamed to sing. But. . . at least you got your wish.

Jim

What? You mean . . . I can't sing?

Clarence

Never could.

Jim

You're kidding.

Clarence

See for yourself.

*Follow spot as Jim goes to center stage*

Jim

*(Jim tries to sing a note, but nothing comes out. He tries again, nothing.)* Well, maybe you're right. But, no big deal.

Clarence

*(Crosses to stage left)*

No big deal!? Do you realize that you sat silent and lonely in your pre-school while the other kids had fun singing. Your family sing-alongs around the piano fell flat because your enthusiastic voice was not part of it.

Jim

*(Interrupting)* All right, all right. You made your point. But wouldn't it have been more effective to show me more of my sorrowful past? Maybe you could have used a Ghost-of-Singing-Past.

Clarence

*(Clarence shoots Jim a look )* Wrong show! *(After audience reaction)* Give me a break! The producers of this show gave me a limited time frame to work in and a tight budget. *(He looks at Jim, who just shrugs as if to say, "I'm not impressed." Clarence sighs and realizes he's beaten.)* All right, all right. Take a look at this. *(curtain opens on Next Generation Chorus)* This was the great chorus that you might have had an opportunity to be part of, the (name of guest elementary or high school or other youth chorus or choir.)

*Main curtain opens*

*Stage work lights off, Lights up full on chorus*

*Fixed pool down stage left, fade out*

*(Jim and Clarence exit stage left)*

**YOUTH CHORUS**

**(2-4 songs)**

*Main curtain closes*

*Chorus lights off, stage work lights on  
Fixed pool, down stage left, up full*

**Reset stage to original setting**

*Jim*

*(Jim and Clarence have wandered back onto stage as curtain closes)* That was great, but it was kid stuff.

*Clarence*

Kid stuff!? Well, there are a few more things you should see.

*Fixed small "foggy" spot, center stage up full*

*(He points to a spot on the stage and a tight light pool comes up. Standing there is a woman.)*

**Ready shower stall**

*Fixed pool, down stage left, fade to 20%  
She moves to stage right  
Fixed pool stage right, up full*

*Jim*

Hey, that's my wife, Ruth. *(He walks to her.)* Hi Ruth, what's for supper?

*Woman*

What are you talking about, and how did you know my name?

*Jim*

Whatta you mean, Ruth. I'm your husband.

*Woman*

I've never seen you before in my life. And my husband's a great guy. He's always whistling or singing. Nothing like you.

*(She exits stage right with Jim following, trying to get her attention and once again joins Clarence.)*

*Fixed pool, down stage right, up full*  
*Fixed spot center stage, up full*

*Open curtain to 6'*

**Truck in shower scene**

*Jim*

*(Walking toward it.)* What the heck is that?

*Clarence*

It's your shower. It's been strangely silent without your voice. No more April Showers, Raindrops Keep Falling On My Head, Misty or . . . uh. . Desert Song.

*Jim*

Desert Song?

**Remove shower**

*Close curtain*  
*(Enter boy scouts stage right with camp fire*

*Clarence*

All right, all right, I got stuck. *(Changing subject)* But look there.

*Fixed pool, center stage, fade to 50%*  
*Fixed pool, down stage right up full*

*( There is a fake campfire with four or five "overage" boy scouts sitting around it, singing.)*

*Jim*

What in the world is that?

*Clarence*

Your boy scout troop. *(Apologizing)* Or at least what it would have looked like if we could have found some child actors. *(Regains control)* But the point is, the only thing you were able to enjoy at your scout campfires were the roasted marshmallows-and



believe me, you didn't need the extra pounds, even then.

Jim

Hey, insults aren't going to help your case.

*(Exit boy scouts stage right)*

Clarence

I'll bet this will, though. Let's take another look back at one of your more memorable quartet moments.

*Fixed pool down stage center, up full*

*(Jim and Clarence have moved to stage right as Quartet enters from Stage left)*

*Fixed pool down stage right to 20%*

Voice Over Announcer

*(As quartet makes it's way on stage)* Representing the East Bedford Falls Chapter, our next competitor, the Jim Dandies.

**Quartet: ONE NUMBER**

*(After song, quartet comes out from stage left and present medals. Jim steps inside quartet to get his medal put the presenter passes him up, as though he wasn't there. This begins while the announcer names the winner.)*

Voice Over Announcer

And the winner is, The Jim Dandies.

*(Quartet exits stage left and Jim and Clarence are left. Jim is obviously depressed.)*

*Fixed pool down stage center, off*

*Fixed pool down stage right, up to full*

Jim

*(Realizing)* Boy I did miss out on a lot. Singing has meant a lot to my wonderful life.

*(Pleading)* Can't I get it back? Can't I sing again?

Clarence

Well, there is one thing you could do.

Jim

Please tell me. What is it?

Clarence

Go to the magic mirror and say, "Mirror, mirror on the wall, who's the fairest of them all?"

Jim and Clarence

*(They give each other a look, then say in unison)* Wrong show!

Clarence

Well, people have to believe that singing is fun for everyone. That it's an important part of our culture. That it's not just for professional entertainers. They got to believe that we need to keep singing alive as a fun, recreational outlet for anyone who wants to enjoy some self-expression and socializing.

Jim

How can I do that?

Clarence

Maybe you can start by getting these nice people *(he gestures to audience)* doing some fun singing.

*(Jim moves to center stage, Clarence exits stage right)*

*Fixed pool, down stage right, fades to off  
Fixed pool, down stage center, up full  
House lights up 20%*

Jim

Yeah, yeah I can do that. Come on folks, whadda you say? Let's have some fun. All of you join in. And there are no buckets around here to carry our tunes in . . . just our hearts. How about, "I've Been Working On the Railroad".

**one or two community sing-along songs**

*House lights fade to off*  
*Bring on chorus*

*Jim*

*(He hums a couple of scales)* Hey, it worked! I have my voice back. Now I can sing with my quartet again. *(stops himself and speaks to audience)* Well, that is to say, we can once again suspend belief, and you can listen to a fine quartet and pretend that I am singing with it. You get the idea.

*(Quartet enters stage right, as Jim exits stage left)*

**Quartet:     one number**

*(Quartet exits stage right)*  
*(Jim enters stage left to stage left)*  
*Pool stage left up full*

*Jim*

Wow, that was fun! Well, it was virtually fun, since I was virtually singing, that is. *(he looks around)* Say, Clarence, where are you?

*Clarence* *(off stage)*

You no longer need me, Jim. But every time you here a pitch pipe blow or someone start a sing-along, you'll know that another angel got his wings.

*Jim*

That's fantastic. *(realizes)* Hey, I can join my regularly scheduled barbershop harmony show, already in progress.

*Main curtain opens*  
*Fixed pool stage left, fade to off*  
*Stage work lights off*  
*Chorus lights up full*

*(Jim joins the chorus for the next two numbers.)*

**Chorus:     (Perhaps a ballad and a novelty tune)**

*Single spot special on "Jim Bailey"*

(After song, Jim addresses the chorus.)

Jim

Fellows, you wouldn't believe what's happened to me lately! My life has changed. Do you know how important it is that people, especially young people, keep singing? (*The rest of the chorus freezes and only Jim hears the announcer.*)

Voice Over Announcer

Of course *they* do, Jim. The Barbershop Harmony Society-SPEBSQSA- adopted a service project several years ago called SingAmerica (*substitute SingCanada for Canadian shows*). Through grants and other support the Society has promised to keep singing alive in schools and communities as an important part of our culture and heritage. In fact, you are going to sing the SingAmerica theme song right now.

*Chorus lights up full*

*Single spot special off*

**Choruses: TEACH THE CHILDREN TO SING**

(the Next Generation Chorus joins them on stage for this number.)

Jim

(*After song*) It certainly is a wonderful life, when you can Sing . . . for life.

Voice Over Announcer

Sing . . . for life? Why that's the motto of Harmony Foundation, the Barbershop Harmony Society's charitable arm where donations for SingAmerica can be made.

Jim

(With a wink) Yeah, I know. (*The pitch pipe is blown-very noticeably-for the next song.*) Hey, a pitch pipe! Clarence got his wings.

Entire chorus

(*They look at Jim*) Right show!

**Chorus: (Reprise of tag from opening number, or a short closing up-tune.)**

*Curtain closes on first act*

*Voice Over Announcer*

**Announces INTERMISSION**

*Close Curtain*

*Chorus Lights Off, Work lights on  
House lights up full*