

# The Quartet Teaching Method for learning barbershop arrangements

**Faster than sight-singing! More powerful than guessing! It's The Quartet Teaching Method, and it'll get your chorus off the paper in one night.**

The learning tracks available on [www.barbershop.org](http://www.barbershop.org) utilize the "quartet teaching Method". You can do this in your chorus, too, using a quartet of strong singers who sing accurately and with good quality. The quartet learns the new song on its own (perhaps using the learning tapes themselves), and then teaches it to the chorus.

The quartet teaching method is a 10-step procedure. The quartet stands in front of the chorus, with the quartet lead directly facing the lead section, the quartet bass directly in front of the bass section, and so on. The song will be sung 10 times, in the following order:

- The quartet performs the song for the chorus. Chorus members read along in the sheet music and listen to the quartet without singing. This is called silent participation, and is a very important part of the method. Silent participation permits the chorus members to hear the right notes the first time, without being confused by their own mistakes.
- The quartet lead sings the song with the words. The other three quartet members sing their notes on a neutral vowel "too" or "lah." The chorus continues to read along in silent participation, without singing.
- The quartet bass sings the song with the words. Again, the other three quartet members sing their notes on a neutral vowel, and the chorus continues to read along in silent participation.
- The quartet tenor sings the song with the words. The other three quartet members sing on a neutral vowel, and the chorus continues silent participation.
- The quartet baritone sings the song with the words. The other three quartet members sing on a neutral vowel, and the chorus continues silent participation.
- The chorus has now heard the song sung in its entirety, and heard how each part sounds in relation to the others. Now, they get to sing it themselves. We will repeat the same basic procedure, but this time, each chorus section will sing along with each quartet part in turn.

The quartet members continue to stand in front of their respective chorus sections, and...

- The chorus lead section sings the song with the words. The other three chorus sections sing their notes softly on a neutral vowel. Backing chorus members should sing softly to allow the lead section to put out a strong melody, and should concentrate on hearing their parts in relation to the melody line.
- The chorus bass section sings the song with the words. The other three chorus sections sing their notes softly on a neutral vowel.
- The chorus tenor section sings the song with the words. The other three chorus sections sing their notes softly on a neutral vowel.
- The chorus baritone section sings the song with the words. The other three chorus sections sing their notes softly on a neutral vowel.

At last, the moment we've been waiting for...

- The entire chorus sings the song with the words. Having heard and their individual voice parts sung in relation to the other parts, this step is a snap! You'll probably want to sing it through a few times, because it sounds so good.

You may use the quartet method on the entire song, or take it piece by piece: intro, verse, refrain. Either way, apply the formula 1 + 4 + 4 + 1:

**1 Quartet sings, chorus in silent participation**

**4 Quartet parts one at a time, backing parts on neutral syllable, chorus silent**

**4 Chorus parts one at a time, backing parts on neutral syllable**

**1 All parts on words**

In subsequent rehearsals, you may choose to run through the song using the quartet method, to refresh the singers' memories and work out difficult sections