

REPERTOIRE PLANNING

Take a good look at your current chorus/quartet repertoire.

SONG TYPE		CURRENT REPERTOIRE	WISH LIST
1.	Opener: establishes rapport and singing "level"		
2.	Medium tempo uptunes / swing uptunes		
3.	Recognizable ballads / swing		
4.	Novelty or comedic songs: light and FUN		
5.	"Heavy" / serious ballads		
6.	Driving uptunes		
7.	Broadway, movie, pop tunes		
8.	Gospel / spiritual / religious		
9.	Solo features		
10.	Audience participation		
11.	Specialty: patriotic, seasonal, holiday		
12.	Closers		

WORKSHEET TEMPLATE FOR CONSTRUCTING AN OPTIMAL 7-8 SONG SET

Song Slot	Candidate songs
<p>1. The Hammer Fast driving up tune, with big tag. Recognizable to audience. Positive message; include the audience in the happiness <i>Target reaction: "Wow! Can these guys sing!"</i></p>	
<p>2. The Nail Contest quality up tune, with big tag. Show a little more about what you can do. <i>Target reaction: Remove the skepticism that you only have one trick to show. Convince them that they are going to love the whole set.</i></p>	
<p>3. The Slide Transition number –"slide" right into this song, without introducing it. Song has a regular beat (not a ballad). A toe tapper. Easy beat.</p>	
<p>4. Ballad "The Clock Stopper" <i>Target reaction: Oh, this is lovely. I could listen to this all night. I don't want this to end." [Thus, the clock stopper.]</i></p>	
<p>5. Diversity – Also called "Park" Can be novelty, comedy, or cute. Could be a song that has a solo. This is where you reveal more of the personality of the quartet, or where you show them a wider range of material.</p>	
<p>6. Bring them Back to Higher Energy Continuation of ideas in #5, revealing more chorus/quartet personality</p>	
<p>7. The Message Song Needs to be an uptune, and very engaging. This is the most critical slot in the lineup as you have to get the audience back to full attention and high energy, for slots 6 and 7. This slot is also the set up for the Firecracker song. Ideally, the song should make the mood transition, not a big intro from the emcee. <i>Target reaction: "Those guys really touched me."</i></p>	
<p>8. The Firecracker!! Your blockbuster song; a dynamite finish for your set. Leave them with your best. This <i>should</i> be an up tune, or a patriotic number, but can also be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your signature contest uptune that everyone is waiting for you to sing. • A really funny song that has them howling with laughter. • An upbeat novelty number that goes well beyond normal, and has them amazed! • Another rocking spiritual. <p><i>Target reaction: the audience should feel wowed and spent.</i></p>	

A TYPICAL CHORUS/QUARTET REPERTOIRE

Are You Lonesome Tonight (ballad): 1926. Music by Lou Handman, lyrics by Roy Turk, sung by many artists. It was most notably covered by Elvis Presley in 1960 (with the title spelled *Are You Lonesome To-Night?*).

Competition barbershop song #1 (uptune with visual plan)

Competition barbershop song #2 (ballad)

Get Happy (uptune): written in 1929 by Harold Arlen, who also wrote *Over the Rainbow*, *That Old Black Magic* and *One For My Baby*. Song most associated with Judy Garland. Slight religious tones.

God Bless America (patriotic): American patriotic song written by Irving Berlin in 1918 and revised/rewritten 1938. Kate Smith's signature song. Berlin wrote the song while serving the U.S. Army.

Good Old A Cappella (upbeat/doo-wop): 70s pop song; upbeat, fun, about our hobby.

Hello, Mary Lou (uptune): 1961. Gene Pitney wrote it, Ricky Nelson recorded it. Huge 60s hit.

Polecat or mass sing songs: SAI/BHS-centric, but nice lyrics that fit certain occasions.

One Fine Day (uptune): 1963; Carole King and Gerry Geffin. Intended for Little Eva but eventually went to The Chiffons. Carole King finally released her "official" version two decades later; her version reached #12 in the US.

The Star Spangled Banner (patriotic): National anthem so named by a Congressional resolution on March 3, 1931. Before 1931, the US National Anthem was *My Country 'Tis Of Thee*.

Sweet Adeline (ballad): 1896; Harry Armstrong composer. Barbershop standard.

ADVANCED CHORUS/QUARTET REPERTOIRE, part 2

All the songs from #1, plus...

Bohemian Rhapsody (novelty): 1975; Freddy Mercury. Long, difficult, novelty song with unusual words. Done well, it's a show stopper.

Eight Days a Week (pop): 1964. Written for the movie Help, mainly by Paul McCartney with parts composed by John Lennon.

It Is Well With My Soul (hymn/solo): 1873; words by Horatio Spafford, set to a tune by Philip Bliss. Long involved emcee work available to set up the story, which is quite emotional.

Sold (The Grundy County Auction Incident) (novelty): 1995; Richard Fagan and Robb Royer; recorded by John Michael Montgomery. Hit number-one on the country charts in the US and Canada. Novelty, uptempo song done "auction style."

A driving uptune with elaborate choreography...that you do well! Think gold-medal winning performances by Vocal Majority, Rich-Tones, Ambassadors of Harmony, or The Melodeers.

THREE LAME EXCUSES FOR NOT IMPROVING AS A GROUP (AND WHERE TO START LOOKING FOR HELP)

*written by Reed Sampson, 2003 BHS Society Managing Public Relations Director
and published in the May/June 2003 Harmonizer. This article has been updated to reflect current web addresses.*



1. We're not a competition chorus/quartet. So what? You can meet your *obligation* to be good entertainers without ever stepping on the contest stage. Your audiences deserve the very best you can give them.

2. We're a small chorus, so we can't sing well. The basic element of barbershop--a quartet--requires four people the last time I checked. You have 25 people in your chorus, so your point would be ...? It's about commitment to quality and entertainment value, not how many people are on the risers. It's about seeking ways to improve. It's about audience reaction to good singing.

3. We're not professional singers. *<Insert buzzer sound!>* How many barbershop choruses or quartets are? A barbershop group doesn't make its living at singing, but what happens on stage rightfully should be as professional as it can possibly be. You get the point, right? Our product is entertainment. Chapter meetings, contests and conventions provide opportunities for friendship, but our product is entertainment. The quality of your performance is what people remember when they leave a show. It determines whether people want to join your chapter or invite your quartet to perform elsewhere. If a restaurant serves one bad meal, the word spreads with amazing speed--the restaurant stands to lose a lot of business. How do your audiences feel when they leave one of your performances? Do they want a second helping or do they reach for the Maalox? No one intentionally sets out to give a poor performance. Yet if you do nothing to improve your overall performance level, you tacitly accept poor or mediocre performance. The tools to improve are all around us, but your group must also consciously choose to improve its overall singing and performance level. Without that, the programs just don't matter.

Here's a list of some options for your quartet or chorus [updated June, 2015]:

- **Harmony University:** harmonyuniversity.org
- **Harmony College Northwest:** harmonycollege.org
- **Standing Ovation Program:** barbershop.org/document-center/category/57-standing-ovation-program.html
In the Evergreen District/Region 13, contact Bobby Huber / bobbyhuber@comcast.net
 - **District/Regional Contacts:**
 - Mel Knight, EVG District Vice President for Music & Performance
 - Debra Aungst, Region 13 Education Coordinator
 - Anne Martiniuk, Region 26 Education Coordinator
 - **Individual coaches:** Region 13 has a list of available coaches / sairegion13.org/coachingconnection
 - **Web resources:** In addition to the programs listed above, the Society and Sweet Adelines International have an incredible amount of information for personal, quartet and chorus development on their websites. Society information is at barbershop.org/education.html and SAI's is on sweetadelineintl.org > *Members Only*. The information and resources are readily available and waiting for you.

Take advantage of these wonderful opportunities and programs to help you get the most out of your barbershopping experience and become a better singer in the process. You'll also improve your confidence, and there won't be any doubt about what you're serving your audiences.

MOMENTUM KILLERS

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- Emcee takes three minutes to read your entire bio during intro. Supply the emcee with a short and punchy intro!
- There's talking before or after your first song. Resist the urge at all costs.
- You're "winging it" at the mike. A spokesperson needs to rehearse what he is going to say in advance to ensure a smooth and clear message and eliminate rambling.
- You're telling stale, corny jokes. Good jokes make the rounds quickly and may already be stale by the time you first hear them. Be very choosy.
- The spoken breaks run long. Tape a practice performance and time spoken breaks with a stopwatch. If you feel yourself starting to squirm, the audience will probably squirm, too.
- You're reciting a composer's biography before singing a song. You're there to entertain, not teach a music appreciation class.
- You're telling the audience that you're about to make a mood transition. Give the audience credit...they'll figure it out 10 seconds into the number.
- You're setting up a song that tells its own story. Most good songs need no set-up. More singing, less talking = more momentum!
- You planned the encore before you earned it. Go out with a bang! Resist doing an encore unless you have something even better than the closer in your arsenal.

*These two excerpts on page 5 and 6 are part of a larger story published in the May/June 2003 The Harmonizer, titled **Putting Some MO in that Show from the Git Go!** If you are interested in reading it, you can find it online at: http://barbershop.org/harmonizer/Harmonizer_vol63_no3_mayjun2003.pdf*

NO STOOPID JOKES:

How To Write Awesome Emcee Material

Basic emcee skills

- Public speaking basics
- Mic technique
- “No mic” technique!

Preparation is half the battle (the other half is making sure you plan ahead)

- Plan/get a song order from the director or quartet and plan when you’ll speak
- Time your songs!
- Rough-out or write your script (depending on your comfort level) with this in mind:
 - **Do not sing/talk/sing/talk.** Group your songs and emcee work to break up songs or to set a new scene.
 - Look on the internet for interesting facts about the group you’re performing for, the occasion, the songs. Tie those facts into your introductions. Try this: songfacts.com
 - Think ahead: will you need to cover for a quartet coming down, the chorus getting on risers?

No stooopid jokes, please!

- Humorous, yes; comedian, no.
- It goes without saying that off-color and/or offensive jokes are out of the question.
 - Self-deprecating humor tends to go over easier than jokes or funny anecdotes. The audience wants to laugh WITH you (but not AT you. It embarrasses them!).
- **Stick to your speech purpose and find the humor from within that subject matter.**

Set yourself up for an excellent endeavor

- Wear something that fits, makes you feel good, and is comfortable:
 - “It’s better to look good than to feel good,” as the old *Saturday Night Live* saying goes. Knowing you took extra care with your outfit, makeup and hair helps!
- Be fed, but not full; appropriately “medicated,” and well-hydrated, but not too much!
- A note about notes: wear something with a pocket for your reminder sheet.

At the performance venue

- Check out the venue for mics, any obstacles you may face, where will the audience be?
- Clarify pronunciations, the group’s official name, if you’re going to be introduced or if you need to do it.

Plan for the unexpected

- What if the mic doesn’t work?
- What if you introduce the wrong song?
- What if the director says “get up there and say something!”?

Go forth and have fun!