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news from the Barbershop Harmony Society

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APRIL 10, 2025

BARBERSHOP NEWS

Stay focused. Stay strong. And sing.

Barbershop harmony is a haven. It's a beacon of light on our darkest days. It's a place, and a time, and a space where we come together. Interim CEO Steve Denino shares some thoughts during these uncertain times.

READ HIS MESSAGE

UN-RETIREMENT FOR THE UN-CONVENTION

Champs deliver — two decades later!

A landmark quartet, 2001 champs **Michigan Jake** changed so much about the way we sing barbershop today. Their mastery of rhythm, innovative charts, and oh-so-clean sound set a new standard which influenced everyone who followed.

Good news: you can hear them LIVE! Head to Nashville, May 23–26 for the UN-Convention and discover how rhythm was born! **This show will not be livestreamed** — be there or be square 4/4.

GET TIX

FRIDAY • APRIL 11

How will you celebrate National Barbershop Quartet Day?

TULSA WORLD

The Only Newspaper in Tulsa With Complete Associated Press Leased Wire Service

TULSA, OKLAHOMA, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 11, 1928 — 8 PAGES

No, No Folks—You're Wrong! That Was Musical History in the Making

Tulsa's Barber Shop Singers Turn Up Trumps in Quest for Kalter

By Clifton Cash
Of The World Staff

A LITTLE group of barber shop singers who met in a Tulsan parlor one month ago, to "sing for the fun of it" have

Nationally Known Men Are Members of Tulsa Group Which Is Now Ready to Sing Anywhere

Nationally known men are members of the Tulsa barber shop quartet which is now ready to sing anywhere in the United States, according to Owen Clifton Cash, who is the leader of the quartet.

The concert organization, Tulsa Chapter, Society of Barber Shop Singers, was organized in Tulsa a month ago, with membership limited to 25. Barber shop singers from all over the country

Sidewalk Crowds Gape And Wonder—But Nobody Cares

AN ATTEMPT WAS made to raise a little money by the barber shop singers on Tulsa's Main street at 11 o'clock last morning. Only a few people were

Some say it was an accident, some say it was fate. Either way (or perhaps both) the movement we now enjoy as the Barbershop Harmony Society (founded as the Society for The Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America (SPEBSQSA)) can be credited to a meeting in Tulsa organized by Owen Clifton Cash on April 11, 1938.

Decades later, we celebrate that day with a tip of the straw hat and a sounding of the pitch pipe. How about you?

Watch the BHS social channels on Friday for special video releases, photo galleries, and graphics you can share to proclaim your pride as a Barbershopper!

NEXT GEN @ HU

New people, new sounds

Singers under age 25 find their own place with new friends from around the world at Harmony University. The Next Gen All-Voices Chorus will be directed by the legendary Debbie Cleveland and is sure to raise the bar yet again in sheer joy, not to mention smashin' chords.

DETAILS & REGISTRATION

HARMONIZER HIGHLIGHT

Speaking of swing...

Swing for the very afraid

The legendary Michigan Jake took everything learned from barbershop singing and ran with it.

Barbershop singers are masters of rhythm and swing. Yet most barbershop arrangements cause half the boy, living-on-beat-and-swing-and-rhythm-and-music-it's-more-about-feel-than-theory-feel the best part? You can learn it.

LET'S GET TECHNICAL

Swing is rooted in triplets—those three-note groups in jazz, blues and classical music where one note gets two-thirds of the beat. Most of us are more familiar with duple rhythms, swing can feel a little weird at first.

There's the tricky part: on the page, two eighth notes look no different than two eighth notes in a march or a fiddle tune. But swing breaks those visual cues. The two eighth notes aren't identical, but one is stretched while the other is quick. Notice how the dotted-eighth note (the longer one) in each triplet is tied to the second tone in the triplet, while the second eighth tone has swing it felt, the first eighth tone is tied to the first note of the triplet, while the second would be shifted to the right, closer to the following triplet. Notice how the tie is the graphic labels:

Some composers notice this by writing swing in 12/8 time, where the triplets are represented. But let's be honest: most barbershop arrangements aren't written in 12/8. That's why most swing music is written in 4/4 time, and rather than notation, Some times you'll see swing notated like this:

However it is indicated, swing should be felt and remembered. Swing is a feel, and it's important to sign to actual swing in your singing. Listen to recordings of swing and put your quartet or chorus swing music in your rehearsal mix.

A Bell Rhythm. Forget the sheet music—start by moving. Put on a swing tune and tap your foot, or sway body-wrapped. Snap, clap, or tap on beats 2 and 4. Tap your foot. Sway a little. Feel the rhythm before you sing it. Imagine your body and your brain, and your voice, as a bell. Let it ring large at first, then let it settle into a steady, gentle swing.

A Listen/Hear/Sing-in-unison. You wouldn't learn to cook without tasting, or to play basketball without the same two. Listen to the legends—Ella Fitzgerald, Frank Sinatra, **The Mills Brothers**—and sing along. Notice

*Donny Rose, a barbershop singer and music teacher in Bellingham, Washington, is the author of the book, **Barbershop Harmony** and a regional director at Harmony Foundation International.*

barbershop harmonizer | March/April 2011 | The Harmonizer | 21

Michigan Jake owned it. You can, too! As Donny Rose tells it, swing can feel like a mystery, but it's more about feel than theory. And the best part? You can learn it! Find out how in the March Harmonizer, in mailboxes now and online always.

SONG OF THE WEEK

Hold You A Little Too Long
by Paul Olguin
arr. Theo Hicks

Who says they're not writing 'em like they used to? This 2020 original composition by Paul Olguin has the classic lyrical charm of the Great American Songbook, and an oh-so-barbershoppy chord vocabulary. You'll be humming along and anticipating the next tender chord from the first listen.

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Preview the tracks on SoundCloud

FEATURED PERFORMANCE

Great Lakes Chorus - You'll Be In My Heart (Kate's Lullaby)
2024 International Chorus Contest - Cleveland

BHS ENERGIZES YOUNG SINGERS
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