



Big Easy Beat

Volume 1, Issue 2

DID YOU KNOW: Bourbon Street isn't named after the alcohol, but rather it's named after a royal family, the French House of Bourbon.

New Orleans, Louisiana, Tuesday, July 26, 2022

Satchmo Lounge Tuesday Event

Tag Party and Contest, Satchmo Lounge, 9-10pm!

Let's try something new, nerds, and have some fun in the Satchmo Lounge with an old fashioned tag contest! Bring your best tag to impress the judges (judges TBD. Or not. We have no idea. Regardless, you will be judged.) Awards will be given out for misc categories: Funniest Tag, Saddest Tag, Best Parody, Tags about your favorite instructor, a Tag that incorporates the word "onomatopoeia". And possibly more. No prizes, just bragging rights! And really, the real prize is the friends we make along the way <3 So pick any tag and come win the hearts and minds of your peers. Originality is encouraged. Have some fun.

Coming home from contest weekend like...



(Courtesy Barbershop Memes, find them on Facebook)

MUSIC CITY'S UPTUNE THAT DIDN'T HAPPEN



By Eddie Holt - BHS/HU Staff
We in the Music City Chorus here this week at HU have been touched by all the kind words from many of you congratulating us for our performance in Charlotte earlier this month. You've been so kind and gracious, and we're so grateful! There's just too much to share of our journey these past few years through the pandemic and especially the past few months as we've prepared for contest, but we'd love to clear the air and take a few minutes to share the story of a deeply flawed, broken contest uptune that was rescued at the 11th hour by a fearless hero.

For many choruses, gearing up for the International Contest typically involves a spring chorus retreat weekend getaway to put the finishing touches on the contest set. Out of town coaches are procured, flights are booked, cabins/venues rented, music memorized, the risers are set up, and bodies are readied for a few intensive days of musical transformation, growth, and bonding.

MCC was semi-ready with a memorized yet shaky uptune with gaping holes in the story line and moderately funny-at-best (and that's being generous) gags that were in desperate need for some heart and cohesive story lines. "Don't worry, David McEachern'll fix it," we convinced ourselves. Besides, we had a ballad that was in a fairly decent place, ready for the next level of performance and musicality. Ready? Let's. Do. This.

And then the unimaginable happened. Our performance Jedi,

the great and very Canadian Dave McEachern, had a bag containing his passport stolen from his vehicle the week of retreat. As such, it would be legally impossible for him to leave the country in time to attend the retreat. To say the music team, especially the creative team, Rich Smith and I (Eddie Holt) took the news poorly is the understatement of the year. It was devastating how the uptune was in need of serious saving. There are reasons for this we could go into on another day, but nonetheless, our situation was dire. There are other reasons we had found ourselves in this position, but that's a story for another day. Sigh.

Reeling from the news, a handful of us on BHS staff convened after an all-staff meeting on Tuesday to quickly go over our options for a performance coach that might be able to drop what they're doing on a moment's notice and come to our retreat by Friday afternoon just three days later. We began tossing out potential names, running into wall after wall.

Then, in a moment of clarity, the name Rick LaRosa popped up, followed by a moment of immediate silence as we contemplated everything that could possibly happen. After all, this same person ripped apart the Toronto Northern Lights' Vegetable Medley a mere months before the 2013 contest. This in the mind behind many of some of the most successful barbershop chorus sets in early 2010s and on occasion, some of the more controversial in their own way (By all means, ask your neighbor who may have been

there and they'll ya aaaaaaall about it.) Comedy is a game of risk/reward, so one has to know what they're getting themselves into when you walk through that door. Rick is the kind of guy that walks through that door fearlessly.

But I digress. I'll get to the point of this article. Friday night at retreat rolls around, an extremely jet lagged Rick LaRosa and Jordan Travis are in attendance, and we're fired up to show off our musical wares. We started in with the ballad, and things are popping, Jordan's working his usual magic, lights are going off in our all heads, wisdom is being dropped as though (*checks young person notes) it was 'hot', changes were being made, and we were starting to make substantial improvements in our musicianship and sensitivity to the phrases in ways we never have before. Very exciting! Jordan is a MASTER.

Then it's time for the uptune Our opening salvo, our level-setter. We set ourselves physically, then nervously launched into the routine, and performed our hearts out as best as we can, hit the tag, then basked in the relatively polite yet clearly concerned applause of our judges. We would learn later that once we finished, Jordan let out a worried sigh, then looked over at Rick and quietly say, "... I... don't know how to fix this." Rick stoically nodded in agreement, "Yeah. This just isn't working." Watching this reaction from my position on the front row, I made awkward eye contact with several other members of the music team and my creative writing partner Rich Smith, and it became apparent the uptune was in worse shape than we had initially realized. And with McEachern not there to help guide us to a place of success, we know an emergency meeting was in order.

We spent a little more time on the ballad that evening, establishing new principles to apply through the set, and once our Friday session was over, we convened for an emergency Music Team session in one of the cabins sometime around midnight with Jordan and Rick. We spent the next few hours spinning our wheels, throwing out ideas, some good, mostly bad, contemplating which parts needed dropping, perhaps new funnier gags that needed introducing. Then sometime around 2am, Rick (who had been relatively quiet the entire time) spoke up. "Guys, I got it. I got it. Don't worry about it, I got it, go to bed, I'll write up some ideas, this is gonna be great don't worry about it. Go to bed, I'll have something in the morning. I got this"

Blank stares. Concerned looks. A few shrugs. But mostly, too many bleary eyed music team members too tired to put up much of a fight at 2am, groaning under the weight of exhaustion. So we reluctantly dispersed to our own cabins to try and find a way to shake off our anxiety enough to get at least a few hours of sleep.

The next morning at 8am, the chorus was meeting in the breakfast dining room to carb load for what would be the busiest day of retreat. The Music Team was hunched over our trays, silently picking at our eggs and bacon around 8am, when Rick LaRosa walks in with his opened laptop, clearly exhausted himself, and plops his laptop in front of us at our round table. We gathered around the screen and leaned in. "OK, enjoy! I'm gonna grab something to eat," Rick said tiredly, listlessly, looking towards the buffet of standard breakfast fare and shuffled his way over to grab a tray.

We each put down our forks and leaned in closer to the screen to see what Rick had done exactly to our uptune. What happened next can best be described as two very palpable, distinct reactions.

Reaction 1) "What is this? What have you done, Rick? DUDE. YOU CAN'T DO THIS, WHAT IS HAPPENING?" The intro was gone. Two full pages of music was scrapped and trashed, two entirely NEW pages (sans any actual music notes to sing, just lyrics) were added with space for new gags and bits. The intro ended up being dropped somewhere in the middle of the song (??), a new tag was proposed. Rick had thrown a grenade right in the middle of our uptune and he'd blown the entire thing into something almost unrecognizable.

(This was followed by the second reaction:)

2) "Oh. Ohhh. Wow ok. Dang. Ok this actually works. *silence, continued reading* This is funny. *eyes widen, we flip ahead to new pages, reading* "THIS WORKS. Holy crap, ok this makes sense now."

I don't know how he did it, but all of a sudden our uptune had... heart. At the very least it now had a cohesive story, but most importantly, it had a narrative that connected it thematically to our ballad and somehow made something resembling sense in the larger context of our set. There was now room for jokes, and gags, and bits that flowed with the overall story in a way that became so crystal clear with good pacing and time for the audience to understand what was happening.

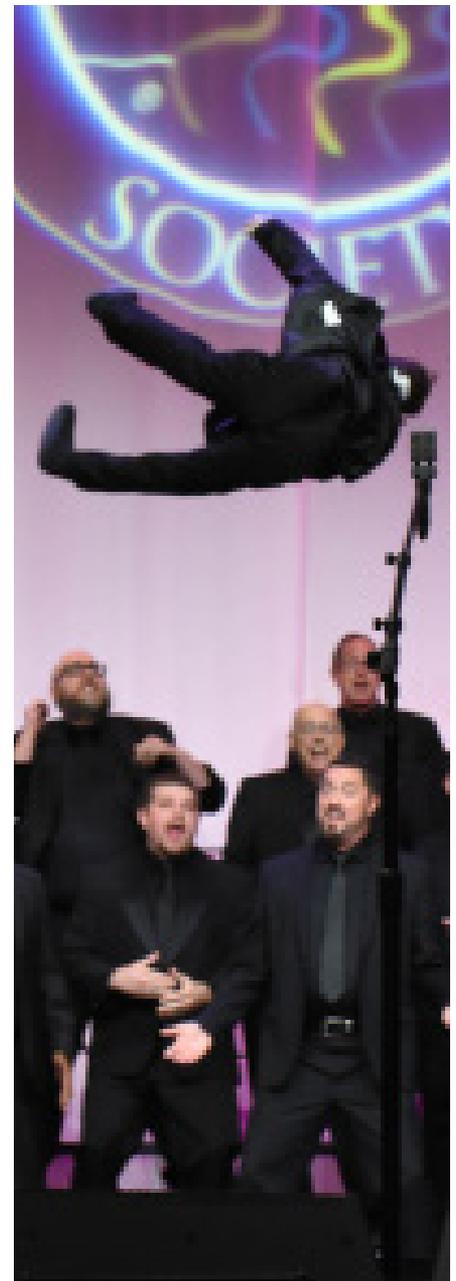
There were still some gaps to fill, such as the ever-so-important intro, and luckily for us we have a world-class arranger in Rick Spencer who was able to quickly conceive of the now-recognizable "WE'RE BAAAAACK" opening salvo that came completely from his mind and helped set the tone for the rest of our set. He scribbled out the arrangement by hand while sitting in a chair off to the side of where the risers were set up. He emailed the spots to the guys, everyone pulled out their devices to start learning new music.

We spent Saturday learning new brand

music, new gags, all while convincing all our shell-shocked riser guys that "this is just how it is, sometimes, we adapt, we pivot. This has precedence, remember the Northern Lights Vegetable Medley? This has happened before, we can do this!"

The guys bought in. They trusted us, and the trusted the process. And by the end of the evening on Saturday night, we had an entirely new uptune that started to really make sense and come together.

And without the groundwork laid out by Rick LaRosa on that terrifying Friday night (Saturday morning?) from 2-4am, none of it would have been possible, and we cannot thank him enough for the sheer fearlessness and creativity that allowed us to build on that and make something really special for the chorus and the audience. ■



SOCIAL MEDIA CORNER

What's happening at #HUNOLA



My Favorite Quartet 17 hrs · ...
HU is in full swing! We've got @davidrumfellow and David singing tags with us (Lullabye and Goodnight)! #HUNOLA



barbersopharmonysociety Loyola University New Orleans ...
Vocal Warmup
Tony Colosimo

56 likes
barbersopharmonysociety THE 1st GENERAL SESSION IS UNDER WAY!! Wish you were here!

Follow us on Facebook/IG. Share your HU experiences. #HUNOLA

MONDAY PHOTO RECAP



I Can't Wait to See You Again

July 25, 2022

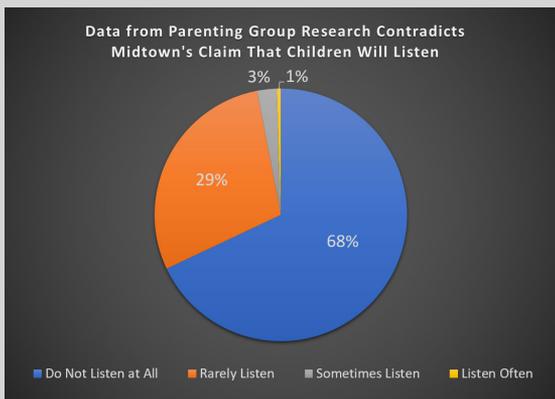
Tag for mixed voices / SATB

Written and arranged by
HU2022 Tag Writing Class

freely

Andat = Bb

IN OTHER NEWS



THROWBACK UNDER INVESTIGATION FOR ROADHOUSE ARSON

A restless crowd packed in especially tight at the Spectrum Center in Charlotte noticed it was gradually getting smokier and hot during Throwback's Finals set performance of *Burning the Road House Down*, causing growing panic in the audience. Exits were quickly identified, and thanks to emergency workers, all audience members evacuated unscathed. "We're pretty sure a fiddle sparked the initial blaze," stated unnamed area attendee fleeing to a nearby exit. "We're burning it down," stated Throwback from the stage, ominously, as they observed the screaming throngs. "There's no stopping now. There'll be nothing left but ashes."

VOTE PASSES TO JUST STOP MOVING THE LINE

PARKSIDE TO BEGIN STANDING ON DOCK OF BAY

C&J VOTES TO MAKE INCORPORATION OF CLARINET A MIC TEST REQUIREMENT