

# The Harmonizer

BRINGING BARBERSHOP HARMONY TO LIFE • SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2023



## M I D T O W N

2023 International Quartet Champion



### NOTEWORTHY

HALL OF FAMERS RENEE CRAIG AND VOCAL SPECTRUM  
MANHATTAN KANSAS CHAPTER GIVES TO 11 SCHOOLS

### INSIDE

LOUISVILLE CONVENTION RECAP, ALL COMPETITORS  
FROM THE 2023 INTERNATIONAL CONTESTS



# NEW YORK CITY



## 2024 MIDWINTER

## JANUARY 9 - 14, 2024

## Three great ways to compete in a Seniors Chorus

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"The City That Never Sleeps".**

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skipping sleep at conventions for 86 years.**



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GENERATION  
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Contest, the  
Youth and  
Seniors  
Chorus  
Festival,  
and the NextGen  
Junior quartet contest.

**And did we mention it's in  
NEW YORK CITY?**





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SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2023 • VOLUME LXXXIII • NUMBER 5



Pacific Connection singers from New Zealand serenade a newly arrived bride & groom during Saturday Night post-Finals festivities.

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An all-time great convention week was the most international International of all time, with many of the best performances coming from overseas groups, for a total of nine nations represented on stage. We also saw by far highest-scoring Top 5 in quartet history, with all topping last year's silver medal score. It wasn't because of the judging—the performances were simply that good. Editor of *The Harmonizer*, Lorin May, adds to the historical record from this historical convention with his photos and realtime recordings.

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HAPPY TOGETHER

GOD BLESS AMERICA

SINCE I DON'T HAVE YOU

AND MANY, MANY MORE  
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## The Harmonizer

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### EDITOR

Lorin May

### OUR VISION

Everyone in Harmony

### OUR MISSION

To bring people together in harmony and fellowship  
to enrich lives through singing.

### OUR PURPOSES

To perpetuate the old American institution:  
the barbershop quartet and barbershop harmony

To promote appreciation of barbershop harmony

To initiate and maintain a broad program  
of musical education, contests, and appreciation  
in support of barbershop harmony and  
the allied arts

To establish and maintain foundations that  
support our vision

To initiate, promote and participate in charitable  
projects that support our vision

The Society for the Preservation and Encouragement  
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Barbershop Harmony Society) is a  
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# Barbershop is never just one thing

What we didn't know when we started singing barbershop

**O**ne great privilege of interviewing President John Santora and CEO Marty Monson is getting inside their heads on how much barbershop means to them. The snapshots published as the “Starting Pitch” column are about a tenth of the wide-ranging 90-minute conversations. Prompting them to discuss “What did you wish you had known when you first started barbershop?” threatened to run an entire afternoon. Distilled, their thoughts divided into four key points, summarized here, but arching over it all: “Barbershop is never just one thing.”

**MARTY:** Barbershop is always about finding three other voices and hitting a chord, and that's maybe the purest aspect. But it's not just the barbershop seventh chords. It's the smiles that you create with strangers or people you've known forever.

Our mission has not been solely focused on just barbershop harmony music-making. The BHS Mission says we bring people together—not in



John

Marty



harmony only, or in fellowship only—it says harmony *and* fellowship. It's dual. Come for the music, stay for the fellowship, but they're balanced. That's a key model to our success that has done a lot of good in 85 years.

**JOHN:** There's an infinite range of personalities across all chapters. They're all so similar, and all so different, but they're all open to welcoming people who want to sing. That culture of welcoming and acceptance cuts across all of our groups. That meant so much to me, as my career relocated our family several times. You move to a new city or country, and it helps you get your feet on the ground.

**MARTY:** I wish I would have known

I would actually be meeting some real heroes along the way—people who exude what it means to make a difference. I think about some Hall of Fame people I've met and the serious impact that these movers and shakers have had. We should offer a leadership class on the Hall of Fame to understand the historical elements: What are the challenges that they saw? Through them, they still had the tenacity, the perseverance, and the will to perpetuate and transform the Barbershop Harmony Society.

**BRIAN:** Learn early in your life that these are the good old days, with these greats. I knew Dean Snyder! Oh, my gosh! What a giant of a person to have known! I got to have lunch with him, got to sit at his knee and learn. There will be people 30 years from now who will say, “Wait a minute, you knew **Vocal Spectrum**? You sang for Jim Henry?” Cherish the now.

## Get in Touch

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## I CAN FIND HAPPINESS AS PART OF MANY DIFFERENT KINDS OF CHAPTERS

**MARTY:** All the chapters I've joined have been similar, and different: **Iowa City; Kalamazoo;** and the **Great Northern Union** of Minneapolis. They have the same common ground, yet they're all unique and different in their own identities and what they do. Over time, I've appreciated the uniqueness that each brings instead of placing everyone in the same sphere of expectation.

**JOHN:** These days, many high-achieving choruses are actively reaching out to more singers. They don't have to limit themselves to premium singers who have a superb voice the day they walk into the organization. There are more high-quality "Joe Barbershop" choruses that do their best to make sure that everybody has the tools and the training opportunities to become better.

**MARTY:** One big growth area has been groups redefining themselves around their total musical package, their total artistic impact on their community of audiences. It's not solely about that single moment on the stage with judges in front of you. And this applies across the entire spectrum of abilities, goals and just having fun.

## I CAN FIND HAPPINESS IN DIFFERENT MODES OF PARTICIPATION

**JOHN:** Our individual barbershop experiences are initially self-gratifying—come to a local chapter rehearsal on Tuesday night, ring a few chords, have one or two shows and a couple of singouts a year, and that's one level of participation. As someone grows in the culture, there are opportunities to participate in the local community. It might be as part of the entertainment infrastructure of their community, or assisting music educators in the community—things that take them beyond the rehearsal space one night a week. There's a level of personal achievement and gratitude that's kind of self-reinforcing from doing that as well.

OVER TIME, I'VE APPRECIATED THE UNIQUENESS THAT EACH BRINGS INSTEAD OF PLACING EVERYONE IN THE SAME SPHERE OF EXPECTATION.

**MARTY:** I wish I would have known or taken advice from my father about going to Harmony University. That one was a complete miss! It is a transformation from being a dabbler in barbershop to becoming a highly engaged Barbershopper. You walk into this safe barbershop bubble with no password or code. You are just welcomed in and given all the love and joy of not just barbershop, but just the joy of singing together and creating harmony. I wish I would have taken heed to that, or had an opportunity, perhaps, with my high school quartet. That would have just been over-the-moon crazy!

**JOHN:** Even though I've been part of some high-achieving chapters, I'm not even sure at this point how many chorus medals I have. I don't have a gold, but I have pretty much everything else. But getting into a chorus to win a competition, or to get a medal has not even been on my radar for 10 years. I joined the **Alexandria Harmonizers** to sing on the chorus trip to Normandy for the D-Day event in 2014. I've stayed for 8 years because I just love the culture.

On the other hand, I also stayed with **Patapsco Valley** because that's a small chorus where with my modest level of ability and talent I was able to make a contribution as a section leader, as an assistant director, and that was rewarding. Both kinds of chapter experiences have brought me joy.

## THE MORE I GAVE, THE RICHER I BECAME

**JOHN:** Until probably 10 years into my barbershop career, I didn't realize the universal willingness and desire to



### John is attending

Sept 13, Strategic Planning Committee Monthly Meeting

Sept 29-30, MAD Convention, York PA

Nov 8, Strategic Planning Committee Monthly Meeting

Nov 8-11, Harmony, Inc. Convention, Grand Rapids MI

### John is Reading

The Art of Possibility - Ben Zander & Rosamund Stone Zander





## STARTING PITCH

A conversation with our President and CEO

BEFORE BECOMING CEO, I HAD NO CONCEPT OR IDEA OF THE PADDLING UNDER THE WATER BY HUNDREDS OF VOLUNTEERS THAT CREATED THE ENVIRONMENT FOR A MEMORABLE CONVENTION AND CONTEST EXPERIENCE.

help other barbershoppers. That goes all the way from singing a tag and a hotel lobby at 2 o'clock in the morning to coaches and the judging community giving back so much to the organization. And amazingly, consider the chorus director of one chapter who willingly spends time coaching another chorus they will compete against! What love for the art and the people that takes!

**MARTY:** At my first few District & International conventions before becoming CEO, I had no concept or idea of the paddling under the water by hundreds of volunteers that created the environment for a memorable convention and contest experience. It has really impacted how I look at the strength of our volunteer network for delivering great barbershop experiences.

**BRIAN:** It's hard enough to get people to volunteer for chapter roles, but at least they can see their immediate impact in their own weekly community. Thank goodness for District officers! They work just as hard without that same level of gratitude or immediate feedback.

**JOHN:** All these different ways of barbershop-ping—as a singer, mentor, learner, servant—are not apparent on your first day in BHS. But what a rich mosaic of opportunity we enjoy! ■



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## Reader Feedback

Let us know what's on your mind: [Harmonizer@barbershop.org](mailto:Harmonizer@barbershop.org)

### Toward a more inviting culture

✉ Having read Jake Bartlett's article "Navigating the Afterglow" [Jan/Feb 2023 issue], I wish to share a recent experience I had at a BHS chapter's informal gathering at a microbrewery in Baltimore in late August. I'd say that there were 40-50 BHS members present. Not a single person invited me to sing with them.



Now before you think, "Well, maybe they didn't know you were a singer," I'll tell you that I'm an African-American (which makes me pretty noticeable in the barbershop community) who, in the last 18 months, has sung in two division conventions, the Festival at 2022's International Convention, Harmony College-East and two Harmony Brigades. I've also attended multiple informal events. Moreover, at least a half-dozen members of the host chapter know me by face and/or name.

I wish I could say that this was a unique experience, but unfortunately, it's starting to feel like the norm. After attending the International Convention in Charlotte last year, I wrote BHS leadership saying that I felt as if I'd been invited to someone's family reunion and left to fend for myself. And my experience at a division convention last year was pretty similar.

It's ironic to me that these experiences come amid a number of published articles and letters over the past few years bemoaning the Society's falling membership. From my perspective, that phenomenon is totally understandable. BHS members don't seem to be interested in expanding the breadth of their singing communities.

Why would people join an organization that's not welcoming? I LOVE barbershop singing, but I'm finding myself being more and more reticent about participating in BHS events outside my chapter. Being ignored sucks.

In many cultures, a visitor is honored and revered. I hope to see that become the norm in the BHS. ■

**Greg Christian**  
Washington, DC

In the July/August Chapter Eternal, David Smotzer was incorrectly listed as lead of 1984 International Champion Rapsallions. He was instead the tenor.



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# DOWNLOAD THE 2022 IMPACT REPORT



## 2022 BARBERSHOP HARMONY SOCIETY IMPACT REPORT

### Our Mission

To bring people together in harmony  
and fellowship to enrich lives through singing.

### Our Vision

Everyone in Harmony



[BARBERSHOP.ORG/ANNUAL-REPORTS](https://barbershop.org/annual-reports)





● BHS HALL OF FAME

# Vocal Spectrum and Renee Craig join BHS Hall of Fame

The 2006 champion inspired countless groups and set the bar extra high; all-around musical genius Renee Craig is the first Hall of Famer who didn't (couldn't) belong to the Society



Tim Waurick (T), Eric Dalbey (L), Chris Hallam (Bs), Jonny Moroni (Br)



**V**ocal Spectrum (2006 International quartet champ) and Renee Craig were inducted into the BHS Hall of Fame at the 2023 International Convention in Louisville. Still in high demand, Vocal Spectrum is one of the finest and most influential quartets in BHS history.

The late Renee Craig was a truly world-class talent as a performer, arranger, director, and coach. She is the first BHS Hall of Famer who was not a BHS member (she did not have the option) and the first woman to be so honored.

## VOCAL SPECTRUM

The 2006 champion joins 12 other Hall of Fame quartets that have had substantial impact during and after their competitive years. Still the highest-scoring youth champion after winning the college contest in

2004, two years later Vocal Spectrum won International gold. In two decades as a high-profile show quartet, the quartet's musical excellence and ever-youthful energy continues to introduce countless youth and others to barbershop harmony and to the Society.

Tim Waurick (T), Eric Dalbey (L), Chris Hallam (Bs), Jonny Moroni (Br) continue to raise the bar of vocal excellence, challenging all quartets to those high standards. Jonny is co-director of the **Ambassadors of Harmony**; Eric serves as a BHS Certified Singing judge; and as a learning track producer, Tim forever changed the landscape of how Barbershoppers learn music; he was inducted into the BHS Hall of Fame in 2022. All four are popular coaches at district schools and beyond.

## RENEE CRAIG

Renee Craig thrived in the professional music world, and as a long-time Sweet Adeline, her many arranging and performing innovations made a large and enduring impact on the entire barbershop world.

Although not a BHS member, she arranged many gold medal-winning men's charts, including "May I Never Love Again," "Everybody Loves A Lover," "Country Roads," "Back in the Old Routine," and "Tumble Down Shack in Athlone." Prominent BHS arrangers used Renee's arrangements as prototypes for charts such as "Lover Come Back," "What'll I Do," "I Have Dreamed," and "Royal Garden Blues."

She also coached men's ensembles and directed the BHS **Westchester Chordsmen** chorus. She sang lead in the landmark **Cracker Jills** quartet, directed the **Ramapo Valley Chorus** to three championships, and founded and directed the **Coronet Club Chorus**. Her personality and charisma were a model of performance.



**READ MORE ONLINE** Read more about all our BHS Hall of Fame members and quartets at [barbershop.org/history](http://barbershop.org/history).

### Richard Mathey passes away



A member of the BHS Hall of Fame 2009 class, Richard Mathey passed away on June 15, 2023. His direct and indirect impact on the barbershop world

was immeasurable. As director of choral activities at Bowling Green State University, he mentored hundreds of young men and introduced barbershop harmony to music educators across North America. Members of his Men's Chorus went on to win dozens of BHS International Quartet Medals.

### Music Musicality Category

The new Category name and concepts will be in place for Fall 2023 contests. In addition to the name change, the Category Description will add key concepts such as unity/contrast, tension/release, and thematic development. Guidance was added to judge common stylistic aspects such as swing rhythms and contrasting textures. For most performances, the scoring approach and levels will remain unchanged. The newer language will provide better guidance according to how judges have already been judging. The full Category Description will be coming soon!



### Gene Spilker and Larry Bomback elected to 2024 BHS Board

At its July meeting, the BHS Board of Directors elected two new at-large members. Gene "Doc" Spilker and Larry Bomback will be seated in January 2024 to three-year terms.

### ● MAKING A DIFFERENCE

## HOW YOUR CHAPTER CAN SUPPORT MUSIC IN LOCAL SCHOOLS

This past spring, the **Manhattan, Kansas chapter** presented \$750 grants to 10 local and regional high and middle schools in the area. These grants came from the net proceeds from our Christmas/Holiday Show.

Over the last 12 years, the chapter, including the **Little Apple Chorus** (men) and now the **Heartland Harmony Chorus** (women), has presented 44 grants of \$750 or \$500 to local and area schools for a total of \$29,500. In addition, the chapter has provided another \$13,800 for scholarships to high and middle school teachers to attend Harmony University, scholarships to vocal music students at Kansas State University, contributions to BHS & the Harmony Foundation, and other local arts programs. Including this year's contributions, the total since 2011 is \$43,800.

Can your chapter squeeze a few



The Manhattan, Kansas Chapter with the Riley County High School music program, one of 11 area schools to receive a \$750 check in 2023.

dollars from its budget to support a school in buying new music, help to improve a sound system or even buy choir robes where desired? I bet most of our chapters can find even \$100 dollars or more in their budgets or even "pass the hat" at several chapter meetings to collect some dollars and coins to help a nearby school.

– Harvey Kiser  
kskisers@cox.net

### ● THE REAL CHAMPS



## RINGMASTERS IS THE REAL DEAL ON NEW SWEDISH FAMILY SHOW

In Sweden, the premiere episode of SVT's new family program—translated as "Really?!"—featured BHS 2012 International Champion **Ringmasters**. The jury had a task: Which is the real barbershop group? Both the champs and the impostors were asked questions by the jury, then were able to brainstorm and ask for audience help. We will assume that they weren't allowed to ask the three groups to sing, or this would have been a very short episode!





● 2024 CONVENTIONS

# NYC & Cleveland: ring your tags here

Both Midwinter in NYC and Cleveland 2024 will include innovative and fun convention events that you've never seen before!

For a destination that truly has it all, nothing tops New York City. Every great show ... every cuisine ... every art ... and fantastic barbershop are all mere steps away at the 2024 Midwinter Convention, January 9–14. Registration

- Seniors Quartet Championship
- NEW: Seniors Chorus Championship
- Junior Quartet Contest
- Junior Chorus Contest
- Nightly shows featuring the very best of barbershop!

**Seniors Chorus Championship to launch at 2024 Midwinter.** Following



several years of experimentation, a new International-level contest aimed at singers age 55+. Each chorus must represent a registered BHS Chapter and District. A three-year pilot of the new contest will be adjudicated under standard BHS contest rules, and begin



## CLEVELAND ROCKS!

The party we had scheduled for Cleveland in 2021 is finally on the books for 2024! A great venue and facilities will host exciting first-ever opportunities. Watch your email inbox for details about how to enter the Comedy Quartet Festival, as well as how you can sing *for score* on the International Chorus stage under the direction of Greg Clancy and Justin Miller!



**REGISTER ONLINE** Get tickets and additional details at [barbershop.org/midwinter](http://barbershop.org/midwinter) and at [barbershop.org/cleveland](http://barbershop.org/cleveland).

TERABASS, PHIL SCALIA

# FIRST LOOK

The new BHS YouTube subscription will feature early access to new contest releases, plus the first peek at classic performances from the vaults.

**JOIN TODAY!**



YouTube



Now you can be sure to see all the best in barbershop as soon as it's released! **For just \$7.99 per month, you can unlock First Look**, a YouTube subscription option from the Barbershop Harmony Society.

First Look subscribers will enjoy premieres of **more than two hours of videos every month**—usually much more— at least **a month before it's released in public channels**.



# What's Happening



## Harmony University ▲

July 21-28, 2024

### New Orleans

Back at Loyola for the third year!

[barbershop.org/hu](http://barbershop.org/hu)



2024 International Cleveland – June 30-July 7



▲ 2024 Midwinter New York City  
January 9-14

2024 International Cleveland  
June 30-July 7

2025 International Denver  
June 29-July 6

## ● GENERATIONAL LEGACY



## TWO RIVERS' NEW OUTDOOR STAGE NAMED AFTER 1951 CHAMP SCHMITT BROTHERS

In 1951, hundreds of cars paraded from the train station in Manitowoc to Central Park in the small town of Two Rivers to welcome their hometown heroes, the SPEBSQSA champion **Schmitt Brothers** quartet. This past July, the city dedicated a lasting memorial to honor the four brothers—Jim, Joe, Paul and Fran Schmitt—to the harmonies of six barbershop quartets and four choruses.

The extended Schmitt family and friends raised more than \$122,000 for the naming rights to the stage. More than 325 Schmitt family descendants from nearly 20 states attended the celebration and gathered on stage to sing a Schmitt Brothers favorite,

"These Will Be the Good Old Days."

The three-hour Harmony Show presented many award-winning quartets such as YTNB, **Checkmate**, the **Vintage Mix Quartet**, **Coulee Classics**, **St. Croix Crossing** and **Happiness Emporium**. Four Choruses—including the **Plymouth/Oshkosh chapters**, **Northern Gateway**, **Fox Valleyaires**, and **Clipper City Chordsmen**—also took the stage. **The Crescendudes**, **Jukebox/Lake Effect**, and **Chill Factor** joined in the afterglow.

The event was emceed by 2004 International Senior Quartet Champion and

**Downstate Express** lead Bruce Odell, Land O'Lakes District President Jay Althof, and Barbershop Harmony Society CEO Marty Monson.

Throughout the day, the park was filled to capacity. Many took advantage of taking a photo while sitting on a park bench with a life-sized cut-out of the Schmitt Brothers, enjoying a Schmitt Brothers Barbershop Brew from the

Cool City Brewing Company, or having their copy of "The Schmitt Brothers" book signed by the author. ■





2023 International Quartet Champion Midtown



Headline



# LOUISVILLE

2023 INTERNATIONAL CO



2023 Next Generation  
Varsity Quartet Champion  
Full Effect



# Yum! CENTER

HOME OF THE  
**LOUISVILLE  
CARDINALS**

LE  
ONVENTION



International Barbershop Quartet Festival Champion Clever Girl



2023 International Chorus Champion Ambassadors of Harmony





*I didn't understand the basketball game, but ten-year-old me loved sitting in the nosebleed seats and watching our team's purple student section as they exchanged chanted barbs with the red section from a nearby college. Then during one timeout, purple suddenly shouted "Great taste!" and without missing a beat, red shouted back "Less filling!" As the exchange grew louder and faster, my laughing dad turned to me and said, "Beer ad." That memory came back to me last July as I stood fiddling with my camera settings between quartets and absorbing the late-week atmosphere in America's largest college basketball arena. The shared anticipation of a great performance was almost as fun as the performances—the loud Swedish chants or the fierce hakas that eclipsed even the hundreds of tiny flags ahead waving ahead of a **Midtown** performance. And then there was "Keith! ... Matt! ... Chris! ... Kyle! .... oooooOOO ... Trademark!" (Somehow, that never got old.) Was the upbeat vibe from the lobbies leaking into the arena or was it or vice-versa?*

*It's gotta be both. I could almost picture the Saturday night crowd going back and forth: "Great music!" followed by "Great people!"*

*The performances will live on via YouTube, but that magic atmosphere—well, you've just got to be there. The following is a pale attempt to recreate some of the week in real time, based on my pictures and the time stamps from my voice recorder.*

— Lorin May, editor of *The Harmonizer* ([harmonizer@barbershop.org](mailto:harmonizer@barbershop.org))

## MONDAY, JULY 3

**4:15 p.m.** On my way to take pictures of the Board meeting and take some Board portraits. Can't walk 10 feet without running into someone I want to talk to. Luckily, today I have time. But once the cameras and voice recorder are in my hands, it's hard to put them down until the Quartet Finals wrap up. **#StillBestWorkWeekEver**

**8:30** We had dinner across the river in Indiana in a crowded restaurant. Sat down at the only open spot and had a long dinner with two very interesting best buddies: a current police detective & city councilman and former WWE Wrestler, and the *other* guy was a multi-millionaire toymaker with an international thief ex-wife. They also may have just been jerking our chains while trying to top each other's tall tales. In their defense, the first guy was built like John Cena and the toy tycoon paid for our meals and we saw his blinged-out Corvette. Expecting to see more authenticity onstage this week. **#BarbershoppersAreReal**

## TUESDAY, JULY 4

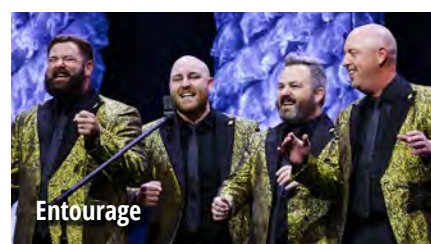
### Quarterfinals Session 1

**10:42** **Throwback's** honky-tonk uptune and "Run Away With Me"—flawless! They're here to win it! **#Would'veWonSilverIn2022**



**10:51** Mark Fortino [L] and Micah Jepps [T] of **Harmonium** have been at this together forever, and haven't lost a step. Their hair color is the only clue they aren't time-travelers from the '90s. **#DorianGrayTwins**

**11:03** That's Semifinals level stuff from **Praxis**—Francesco Logozzo and Kevin Clark are amazing





Quartet members listed as tenor, lead, bari,  
and bass regardless of standing order

**60. Center Ring (ILL)**

Craig Hall, Ben Dirks, Pat Henders, Andy Isbell

Chicagoland West Suburban, IL; Frank Thorne; St. Charles, MO; Sterling Rock Falls, IL

**59. Mischief (RMD)**

Elie Diaz, Adam Haggart, Andrew Gordon, Grant Goulding

Wasatch Front, UT

**58. Five Star (PIO)**

Cole Carey, Jamie Carey, Jeff Opperman, James Masalskis

Grand Rapids, MI

**57. Lady Barbalade (IABS)**

Hilary Harnett, Rebecca Gilbert, Clare Hayes-Brady, Ailbhe Hayes

Blingmasters, Bling Chapter, Ireland

**56. Summer Street (NED)**

Jordan Kugler, Anand Sitaram, Dan Allison, Ray Johnson

Frank Thorne; Greater Boston, MA; Natick, MA

**55. cityScape (CAR)**

Allen Reynolds, Howard McAdory, Paul Gilman, Jay Hawkins

Louisville, KY; Nashville, TN; Western Hills (Cincinnati), OH

**54. Tempest (SWD)**

Chris Kirkland, Daniel Cooper, Chuck Loesch, David Kaufman

Austin, TX

**53. The Essentials (FWD)**

Graham Pence, Ben Smurthwaite, Jason James, John Saylor

Brea, CA; Frank Thorne; Westminster, CA

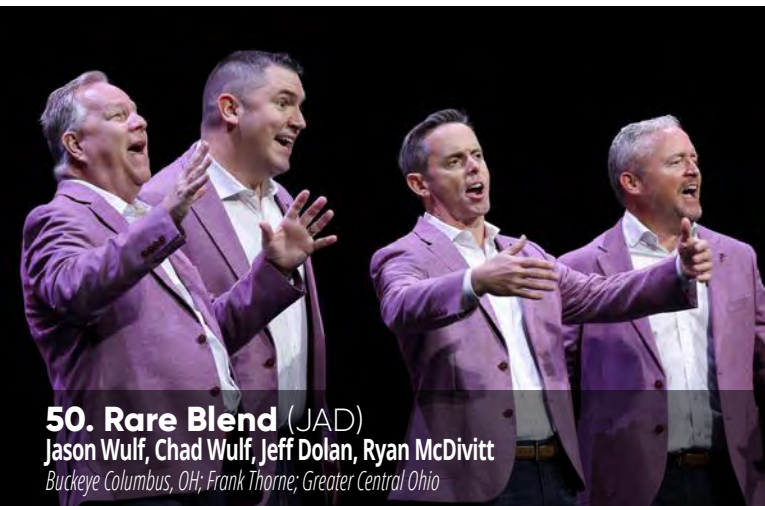




**52. Greenlight (NED)**  
 Louis Ades, Sebastian Massa, Will Rogers, Chris Cutler-Wood  
*Hartford, CT; Hell's Kitchen, NY; Portland, ME; Southern New England*



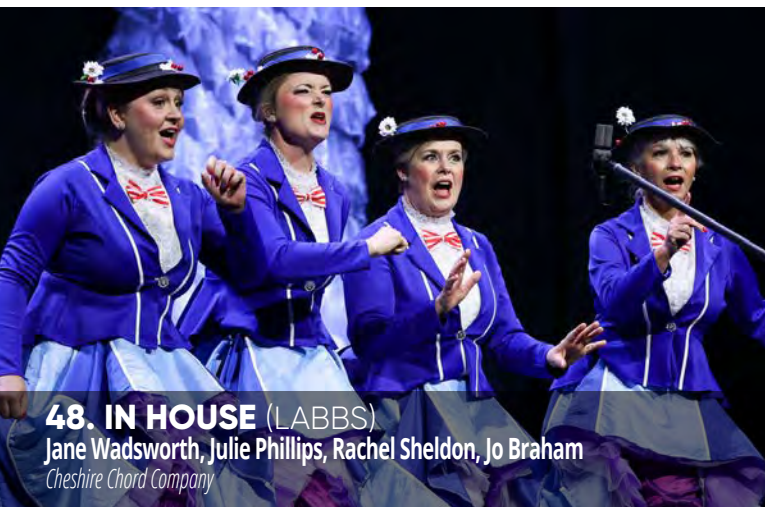
**51. TopGun (SNOBS)**  
 Ellen Ritke, Anna Rosenberg, Sofia Hagman, Susanna Balsvik  
*Northern Stars Chorus; Pearls of the Sound*



**50. Rare Blend (JAD)**  
 Jason Wulf, Chad Wulf, Jeff Dolan, Ryan McDivitt  
*Buckeye Columbus, OH; Frank Thorne; Greater Central Ohio*



**49. Madhattan (MAD)**  
 Max Mellman, Alexander Ronneburg, Spencer Wight, Richard Townsend  
*Frank Thorne; Greater Boston, MA; Hell's Kitchen, NY*



**48. IN HOUSE (LABBS)**  
 Jane Wadsworth, Julie Phillips, Rachel Sheldon, Jo Braham  
*Cheshire Chord Company*



**47. Hot Ticket (LABBS)**  
 Bethany Southworth, Oli Goodall, Isaac Gibbs, Joe Nelson  
*London, UK*



**46. Mom's Favorite (JAD)**  
 Jonathan Lang, Alyssa Lang, Mark Lang, Don Slamka  
*Frank Thorne; Hillsdale, MI; Independence, OH*



**45. MixTape (JAD)**  
 Dayve Gabbard, Jenni Sheets, Cy Wood, Brian O'Dell  
*Central Carolina; Dallas Metro, TX; Frank Thorne; Greater Central Ohio; Western Hills (Cincinnati), OH*



leads. And great songs ... that the Music and Singing judges seem to be discussing at length. Those were top-shelf vocals, but ...

#### #NotEnoughSevenths?

**11:13** I've always said more groups need to sing Nashville charts, so thanks to **Fleet Street** for so entertainingly picking up the country banner—specifically, “country drinking songs.”

#### #OneOfThoseWordsIsRedundant

**11:36** **Harmonic Thunder's** “Softly as I leave You” about the last words said to a beloved companion dying—wow! **#RippedMyHeartOut**

**11:44** Great lead from **The Essentials'** Ben Smurthwaite. **#AndWhatATag!**

**11:54** **5th Melody**—three sisters and a brother from New Zealand, and the best Southern Hemisphere group since **Musical Island Boys**—can't wait to see more from them! And the best audience haka since MIB, too. **#LockForSemifinals**

**12:04 p.m. Daily Special** destroys with “If Moon Was Cookie”—a Cookie Monster song delivered as an earnest ballad. [“Me eat with both hands. No need fork or spoon. Me chew it all up until there no moon.”] **#MakeltGoViral**

**12:13** Semifinals level performance by **Limelight**—wow, no giveaways that they are British. They sounded more American than even ... **Lemon Squeezy**. **#LockForSemifinals2**

**12:47** Another Semifinals-level performance with **Studio Talk**, and a Finals-level bass in Donovan Davis. I've never seen such a strong Quarterfinals. **#30QuartetsInSemifinals?**

**1:00** **Midtown** does “New York State of Mind” as a bebop uptune. Wow! And the ballad [“If I Say I'm Over You”]—if that's not a gold medal performance this year, I can't wait to hear what is. **#JustWaitUntilTheSemiFinals**

**1:09** This is a ridiculously stacked contest. At this rate, a great group like **Showpiece** won't make the Semifinals. **#40QuartetsInSemifinals?**

**1:11** Looking at this judging panel. Soon-to-be Board member Gene Spilker is here, and with all the Performance judges is Theresa Weatherbee, who finally gets to score her first International after being a Harmony, Inc. judge scoring with the BHS system since the '90s. **#FromThePit**

**1:26** **Wildfire**—just wow. Four A-listers, but if you ask me, bari Kevin Mendez is the MVP. That's saying something when you hear the other three. **#EspeciallyHarrisonCooke**

**1:36** Great debut by **Mixtape**, and the best visuals so far! **#4Ringers**

**2:00** We've already matched last year's comedy output and we're still in Round 1 of the Quarterfinals! Stephanie and Andrew Bartholomew of **Runway** brought the husband-wife comedy with “Fixer Uppers.” Andrew arranged some of **The Newfangled Four's** best hits, so you knew he'd nail it with his own quartet. **#ButMelodyHineArrangedIt**

**4:15** Was just introduced to the tenor of **Runway**, Carly Denton. She and her older brother Chris, bari of **Studio Talk**, are both singing at their first International. She's got her fingers crossed for bragging rights. [Studio Talk finished 24th



Fleet Street



Lemon Squeezy



InVoice



Pratt Street Power



Gimme Four



Runway







All Voice Chorus



First Class



Three and a Half Men



Secret Best Friends



Wildfire



Maple Reserve

at 82.2%, Runway finished 28th at 82.1%.]

#SiblingRivalry

## Quarterfinals Session 2

**5:35 Artistic License**—I still don't know how their storytelling and sound keep getting better every year. Glad they brought back "Everybody Wants to Be A Cat." #KeepGettingBetter

**6:08 BoomTown**, loved their set—always do. Easily earned a trip back to the Semifinals.

#SoDidAnother36

**6:27 Gimme Four**, I've long said they're the best rhythm quartet, but they could do six ballads for all I care if they were all like that last one.

#LoveLikeThis

**6:35 Loved Soundtrack's** "Mister Sandman"—I remember when a performance like that got you to the Semifinals. #39thPlaceThisYear

**7:00 The Newfangled Four** updated a couple of oldies, but they've never been better. Hope they finally medal! #AlwaysTheBridesmaidBut...

**7:51 Oh! My! Heavens! Lemon Squeezy**, what did you just do? Most treble groups couldn't nail a final chord that high! A new lead and bari, Victor switched to tenor, away since 2016, yet singing like champions! #ToastOfCleveland?

**8:01 Rick Taylor and Al Mazzoni of Legacy** are two more Dorian Grays. They look exactly like when they won silver with **BSQ** 25 years ago. Probably because of that Steve Martin and Telly Savalas "hair." #30YearsOfLooking55

**8:21 InVoice** has a famous bass def, but those lead/tenor duets were a thing of beauty.

#TheoHicksAnotherYou

**8:43** Speaking of great duets, **Lady Barbalade** from Ireland. Hilarious parody! Overseas quartets are feeding us new flavors of awesome.

#TomGentrysAnythingGoes

**8:55** Speaking of flavors of awesome, **First Class**

quartet. "T'Ain't Nobody's Business" is a great chart, and their facial expressions were a riot!

#ThreePeatSongInLouisville

**9:16 With Mom's Favorite**, Don Slamka [tenor of 2003 champ **Power Play**] is back singing with a dad [Mark Lang] and his two kids. Huge props to Jonathan for singing about a fifth higher than regular tenor to Alyssa's lead. #DonSlamkaSingsBass

## WEDNESDAY, JULY 5

### Quarterfinals Session 3

**10:15 a.m.** So many more National Anthems than usual. Stand for a couple, sit down for a moment and another comes out. Sit down again, another anthem comes out. And yet again. Great problem to have. #VeryInternationalInternational

**10:27** Great "Mary Poppins Lets Her Hair Down" set by the women of **IN HOUSE**. From when I was a kid until about 10 seconds ago, I thought there was a food called "tuppins" that you feed the birds. Just looked it up—it's "tuppence," or "two pence." What other childhood misunderstanding is next to drop? #DickVanDykelsn'tBritish?

**10:36 Argonauts**, "Drown in My Own Tears." Lead Andrew Forsyth, where have you been? Attempting a **Signature**/Daniel Cochran vehicle—you gotta either be very brave or very talented to try. #ItWasBoth

**10:46 HusAar**—that was fantastic! It's not just the Clementones! 15 years after the Swedish Invasion, the Danish invasion begins.

#LuxembourgIsNext?

**11:06 First Take**, "Santa Fe." Man, do they bring you to your feet! And the applause goes on and on and on ... and on. Probably the loudest and longest so far. #SongOfTheQuarterfinals

**11:29** Thank you **The Core** for a great rendition





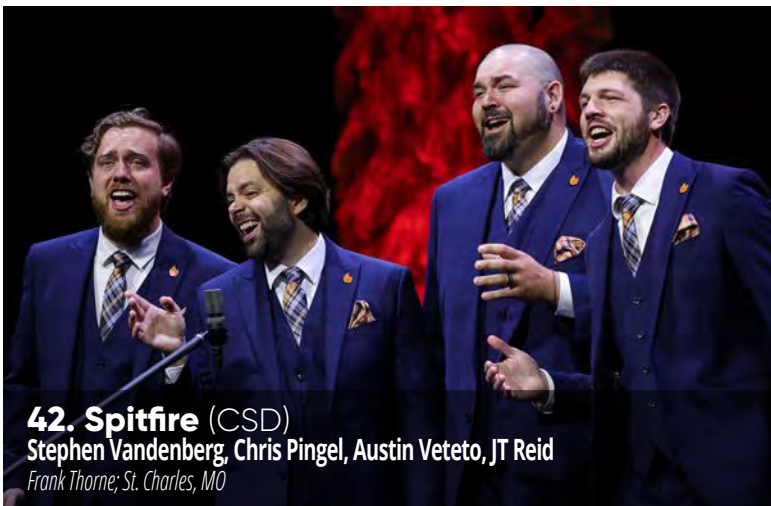
**44. Daily Special (NED)**

Isaac Swanson, Chad Putka, Ben Lewin, Cay Outerbridge  
*Greater Boston, MA; Providence, RI; Southern New England; Worcester, MA*



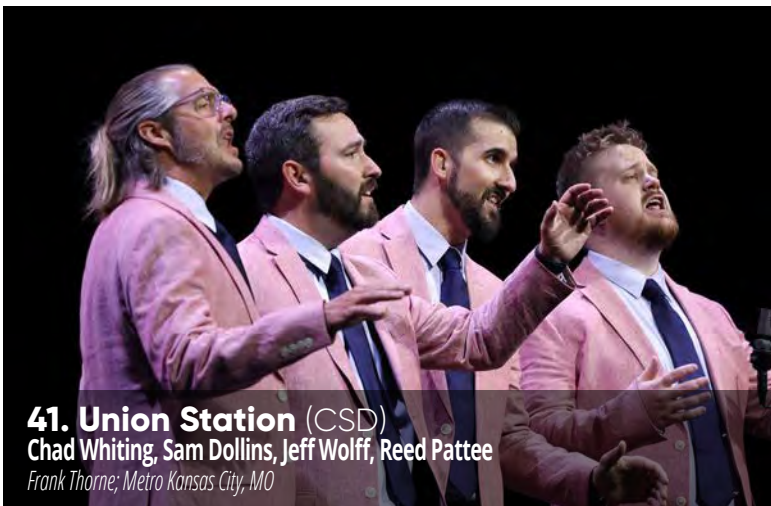
**43. Legacy (MAD)**

Rick Taylor, Bill Stauffer, Brian Mastrull, Al Mazzone  
*Alexandria, VA; Dundalk, MD; Frank Thorne; Hamilton Square, NJ; Patapsco Valley, MD*



**42. Spitfire (CSD)**

Stephen Vandenberg, Chris Pingel, Austin Veteto, JT Reid  
*Frank Thorne; St. Charles, MO*



**41. Union Station (CSD)**

Chad Whiting, Sam Dollins, Jeff Wolff, Reed Pattee  
*Frank Thorne; Metro Kansas City, MO*



**40. Detour (ONT)**

Mike McKim, Kevin Harris, Andrew Carolan, Steve Armstrong  
*Hamilton, ON; Toronto, ON*



**39. Soundtrack (NSC)**

Buck Hinman, Jay Lusk, Patrick Blaha, Michael Adams  
*Central Carolina; Frank Thorne; Greensboro, NC*



**38. The Collective (BHA)**

Dan Beckitt, Luke Stevenson, Lindsay Ondracek, Kelly Shepard  
*Brisbane, Australia*



**37. Showpiece (SWD)**

Madison Davis, Daniel Zeagler, Phillip Zeagler, Chip Davis  
*Greater Baton Rouge, LA; San Antonio, TX*





**36. Argonauts (EVG)**

Iain Haukka, Andrew Forsyth, Drew Osterhout, Mark Heathershaw  
*Portland, OR; Portland Metro, OR*



**35. Praxis (MAD)**

Francesco Logozzo, Kevin Clark, Lance Fisher, David Breen  
*Alexandria, VA; Caldwell, NJ; Frank Thorne; Greater Boston, MA; Hershey, PA; Nashville, TN*



**34. Harmonic Thunder (JAD)**

Jamison Calland, Nate Ogg, Will Baughman, David Parrett  
*Frank Thorne; Greater Kanawha Valley, WV; Nashville, TN; Northwest Ohio*



**33. Capitol Ring (FWD)**

Dallas Halvorson, Larry Halvorson, Kevin Palmer, Mike Stewart  
*Barbary Coast, CA; California Delta; Las Vegas, NV; Reno, NV*



**32. Coulee Classic (LOL)**

Colin Stevenson, Matt Curtis, Nate Peplinski, Allen Pruitt  
*La Crosse, WI; Stevens Point, WI*



**31. Trailblazers (BABS)**

Alex Sanctuary, Alastair Hay-Plumb, James Whittick, Simon Arnott  
*Meantime Chorus, London*



**30. Panda Ring (SWD)**

Patrick McAlexander, Zachary MacLaren, Daniel Laguros, Robby Black  
*Greater Indianapolis, IN; Houston, TX; Houston Metro Area, TX; Nashville, TN*



**29. Rule #1 (MAD)**

Michael Cawley, Ian Wolfe, Justin Ross, Joshua Whitney  
*Frederick, MD; Hershey, PA*



of “How It Ends”—from a show I’ve actually seen! [My son’s fantastic high school production of *Big Fish*, so don’t give me too much credit.] Your performance has me wondering why I haven’t paid more attention to Broadway.

**#RowW\$218PerTicket**

**12:10 p.m.** Overheard backstage during intermission: Eddie Holt and Dusty Schleier discussing which quartets are within striking distance of gold already. Sounds like they’re going to write them into **Music City’s** Swan set.

**#NailedAllFivePicks**

**12:33 Rare Blend**, did I just hear country again? If so, thank you. If not [it was Motown’s Sam Cooke!], don’t hate me because I live in Nashville and don’t know much country music. Or Broadway. Or today’s top 40. So many songs that sound new to my ears! **#IgnoranceIsBliss**

**12:42 Three and a Half Men**—wow, that group is tight! Josh Szolomayer is a champion-grade lead, and Chris Keough [Bs] is the least novice-sounding novice in contest history. Tony De Rosa is singing like the best bari ever—which he is—and his son, Joseph [T], looks like this week he’ll become a medalist while in his teens, just like his dad did. **#FifthGoldForTonyStartsHere**

**12:44** I hate the mass exodus after a big-name group performs. It’s like, hey, stick around, there are other great groups here. You just don’t know who they are yet. **#IfICan’tLeaveNeitherCanYou**

**12:45** I’ve probably filled my Semifinals ballot already, and we’ve still got 20-something more quartets to go. **#MyEarWasn’tWrong**

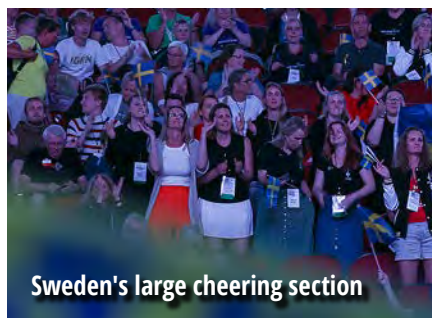
**1:05** 10 years on, **Yonge Guns** becomes **Maple Reserve** and shifts into another gear. Lead Greg Mallet sold that ballad perfectly, and “My Baby Loves to Dance” was their best version yet. Wouldn’t be surprised to see them singing Saturday Night. **#KindaGotOneRight**

**1:14 Trailblazers** from BABS was great, but they were clearly going for “fabulous.” Mission

accomplished. **#TrailBlazed**

**1:33 Trademark’s** “No One Ever Tells You”—great chart! That was definitely(?) Semifinals(?) I can’t tell anymore. With this many quality groups, that might be the last time we hear the name “Trademark” this week. **#Foreshadowing**

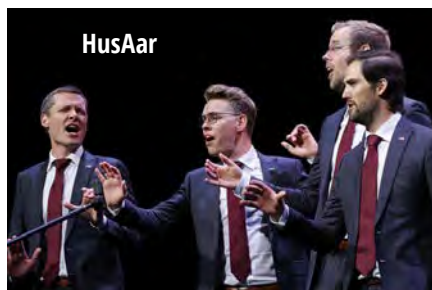
**1:44 Summer Street’s** bari complained that he lost his big moment because the side mics are gone. From a photo angle standpoint, I’m ecstatic! **#MicBlockingFaceSyndrome**



Sweden's large cheering section



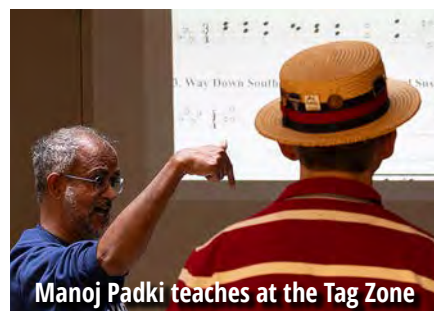
5th Melody



HusAar



First Take



Manoj Padki teaches at the Tag Zone



Music City Chorus methodically breaks every contest rule





**28. Runway (SWD)**

Carley Denton, Stephanie Bartholomew, Joseph Livesey, Anthony Bartholomew  
*Dallas Metro, TX; El Paso, TX; Frank Thorne*



**27. BoomTown (CSD)**

Zane Sutton, Caleb Fouse, Aaron Walker, Shaun Whisler  
*Frank Thorne; South Central Kansas, KS*



**26. 5th Melody (BHNZ)**

Jane Esera, Sina Esera, Solomon Esera, Theodora Esera  
*Pacific Connection*



**25. Harmonium (CSD)**

Micah Jeppesen, Mark Fortino, Michael Troyer, Marshall Crowl  
*Frank Thorne; Kansas City, MO; Metro Kansas City, MO; St. Charles, MO; Tulsa, OK*



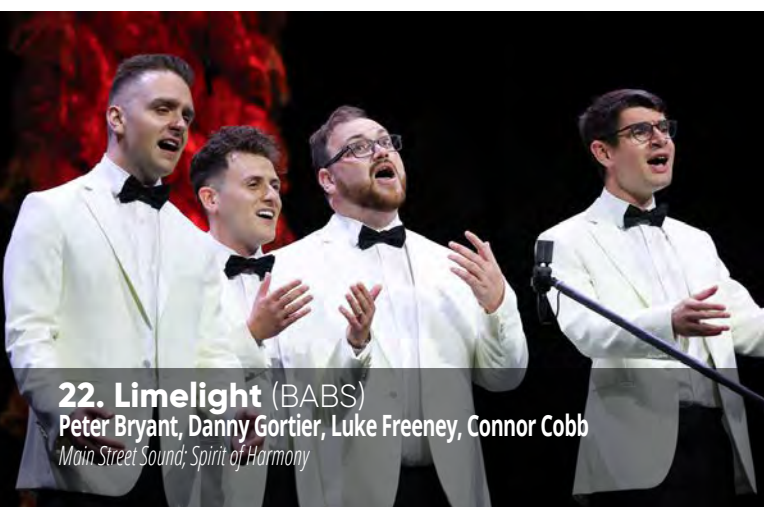
**24. Studio Talk (SWD)**

Kevin Wagner, Bret Morris, Chris Denton, Donovan Davis  
*Dallas Metro, TX; Frank Thorne*



**23. Trademark (JAD)**

Matt Cook, Keith Parker, Kyle Snook, Chris Gregory  
*Elyria, OH; Frank Thorne; Greater Indianapolis, IN; Nashville, TN*



**22. Limelight (BABS)**

Peter Bryant, Danny Gortier, Luke Freeneey, Connor Cobb  
*Main Street Sound; Spirit of Harmony*



**21. Entourage (DIX)**

DC Nash, Ian Galvin, Daniel Huitt, Jeremy Conover  
*Frank Thorne; Mount Pleasant, SC; Nashville, TN*



**1:46** Thank you emcee Richard Reeve for explaining fair dinkum, (“FAY-a DINK’um”) and other Australian slang. **#ItMeansLegit**

**2:50** This Quarterfinals score sheet is ridiculous. How is a group as good as **Entourage** only the Semifinals mic tester? **Limelight**, **Trademark**, **Harmonium**, **5th Melody**, **BoomTown** are all done? The first score below 80 is 38th place. [22nd place in 2013] It’s not because of scoring adjustments—it’s because 29 groups scored above last year’s Semifinals cut-off. **#PlethoraOfA-Listers**

## Next Generation Varsity Quartet Championship

**5:28** **Notable**—at least as funny as last year. **#ThoseFaces!**

**6:04** New Zealand might be getting a medalist tonight with **Promenade**—that “Scarface” was the most original thing I’ve seen in years. Who arranged that? **#LeadWillLynch**

**6:17** That’s medalist-level singing from **Golden Hour** and the Paschal sisters, our Junior Next Gen Champs with **Singing Double** [2020].

**#TwinSistersTwinMedals**

**6:47** Biggest applause of the night by far for “Speechless” by **The Quin-Tones**. If they don’t win this, they stole the show. **#AllGrownUp** **#Medalist**

**7:29** **Tofu Concern** sings like they’re in the Semifinals, even by this year’s impossible

standard. “Come What May” is probably the performance to beat. **#80Points+Silver**

**7:43** **Fashionably Late**. Great new group. Cue up their video singing “Wedding Bells” and tell me we’re not in good hands. **#NextGenLovesLastGen**

**7:57** **Momento**, another **St. Charles, Missouri Chapter** quartet group kills it. How many quartets did they qualify? **#TechnicallyFour**

**8:04** I keep waiting for a weaker quartet to show up and it never does. It’s not just the open contest. **#StrongestYearEver**

**8:13** **Suite Life** just sang “Once Upon a Time” and “Roll Them Bones.” **Keepsake** [1992 champ] and **The Gas House Gang** [1993] sang those at least a decade before most of these singers were born. **#WannaFeelOld?**

**8:24** **Evening Glow**—Jim Henry’s daughter, Gea, is making a name for herself. Quality quartet! Evening Glow is also what BHS members look like. **#AndSoundLike**

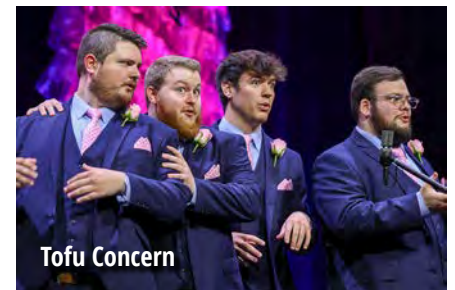
**8:33** **The Breakfast Club**—wow! Great English group. Didn’t know that a movie about ‘80s American high schoolers resonated with young 2020s Brits. **#BeansOnToastClub**

**8:38** I thought this was anybody’s to win, and then **Full Effect** comes out and smashes the strongest field ever with a **PLATINUM**-worthy “Cuddle Up.” **#OnlyVocalSpectrumScoredHigher**

**8:41** No doubt **Full Effect** is about to become our second youth champion from Cleveland, Ten-

nessee. They’re **Four Voices** [2002 champ] version 1.9. Way past the 1996 college champ version, already the same league as the 2000 13th-place International debut version. **#GuytonProtégés**

**8:57** In their Swan set, the **Clementones** have barbershopped a Danish pop song and they’re singing it in Danish. THIS is barbershop’s next phase—songs from all over sung by groups from all over in their own languages. **#NederlandselInvasie**





# Next Generation Varsity Quartets

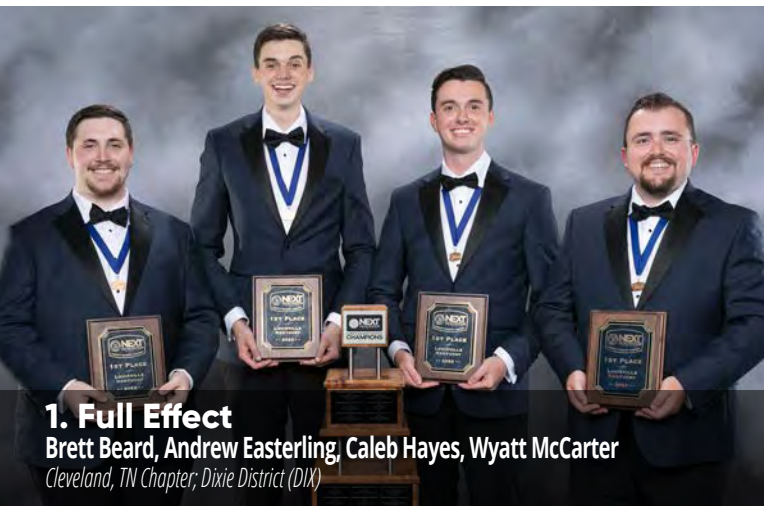


The most talented overall field in contest history showed off the great present and future of barbershop harmony. In the 31-year history of this contest, only 2004 Collegiate champion Vocal Spectrum (84.3%) has outscored 2023 champion Full Effect, whose 83.2% winning score would have been good enough for 14th place in this year's open contest.

Member names listed as tenor, lead, bari and bass regardless of standing order.  
Candid photos by Lorin May; portraits by Read Photography



2023 champion Full Effect



## 1. Full Effect

Brett Beard, Andrew Easterling, Caleb Hayes, Wyatt McCarter  
*Cleveland, TN Chapter; Dixie District (DIX)*



## 2. Tofu Concern

Donell Torres, Austin Stephens, Sam Rinkenbaugh, Marshall Crowl  
*Central States District (CSD); St. Charles, MO*



## 3. Golden Hour

Abbie Owens, Hannah Paschal, Emma Paschal, Taylor Daniels  
*Chapter at large; Florida State University; University of Florida*



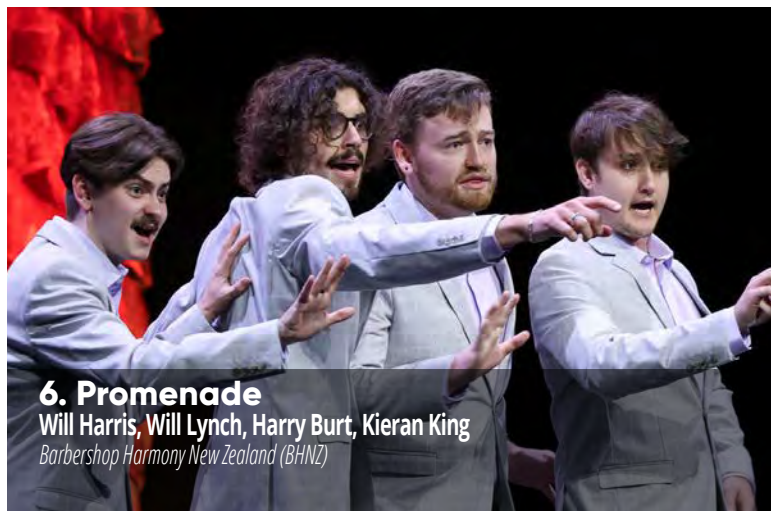
## 4. The Quin-Tones

Jacob Lapp, Julian LeFlore, Thomas Hunter, Chris Crawford  
*Caldwell Chapter; Mid-Atlantic District (MAD); Rowan University; Towson University*



## 5. The Breakfast Club

Sophie Warnes, Hannah Briggs, Nick Bryant, Jamie Braham  
*British Association of Barbershop Singers (BABS)*



## 6. Promenade

Will Harris, Will Lynch, Harry Burt, Kieran King  
*Barbershop Harmony New Zealand (BHNZ)*





### 7. Notable

**Jacob Gonzalez, Michael Keleshian, Emilio Pichardo, Ethan Miley**  
*Cal State Fullerton; Citrus College; Far Western District (FWD)*



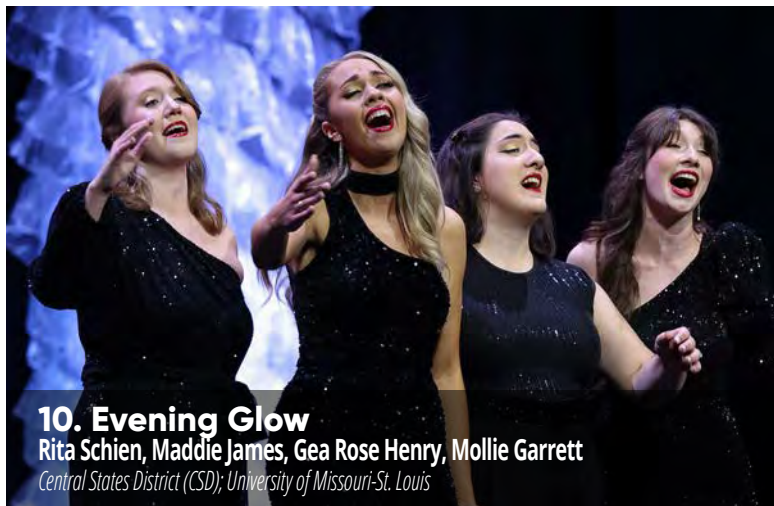
### 8. Average Intelligence

**Jonathan Lang, Giovanni Castiglione, Nick Denino, Jake Bavarsky**  
*Bowling Green State University; Buckeye, Columbus; Greater Central Ohio; Independence, OH; Johnny Appleseed District (JAD); Northeast Ohio Medical University; Ohio State University*



### 9. Momento

**Matthew Pointer, Jordan Carr, Parker Miller, Alexandar Johnson**  
*Central States District (CSD); St. Charles, MO; University of Missouri-St. Louis*



### 10. Evening Glow

**Rita Schien, Maddie James, Gea Rose Henry, Mollie Garrett**  
*Central States District (CSD); University of Missouri-St. Louis*



### 11. Suite Life

**Lex Goity, Cody Mathewson, Tripp Carter, Zach Gould**  
*Rollins College; Sunshine District (SUN)*



### 12. Spruced Up

**Kesney Faubion, Mitch Jacobson, Joseph Salmon, Keith Waldheim**  
*Denver Mile High Chapter*



### 13. Side Hustle

**Camden Espino, Ethan Albro, Antwun Puckett, Jason Hill**  
*Bellevue; Evergreen District (EVG); Far Western District (FWD); Frank Thorne; Las Vegas Chapter*



### 14. Synergy

**Matt Barris, Tejas Menon, Dhruv Menon, Eric McKee**  
*Barbershop Harmony New Zealand (BHNZ); Pacific Connection; Vocal FX*





### 15. Hoopla

Haley Patrick, Kyle Hottel, Santino Panzica, Michael Adams  
Central Carolina; Carolinas District (NSC)



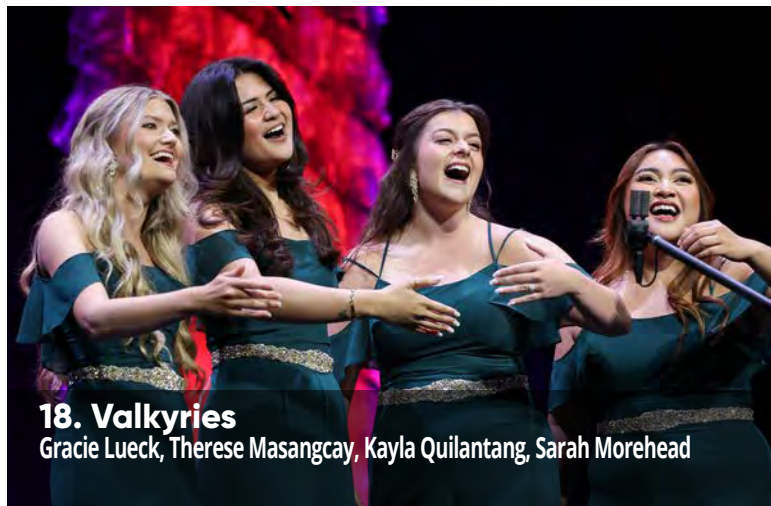
### 16. Top Shelf

Harrison Patri, Jeremy Ingraham, Christopher Rodrigues, Edward McNally  
Far Western District (FWD)



### 17. Fashionably Late

Michael Garrett, William Aiken, Grant Heineman, Gerald Shazor  
Johnny Appleseed District (JAD)



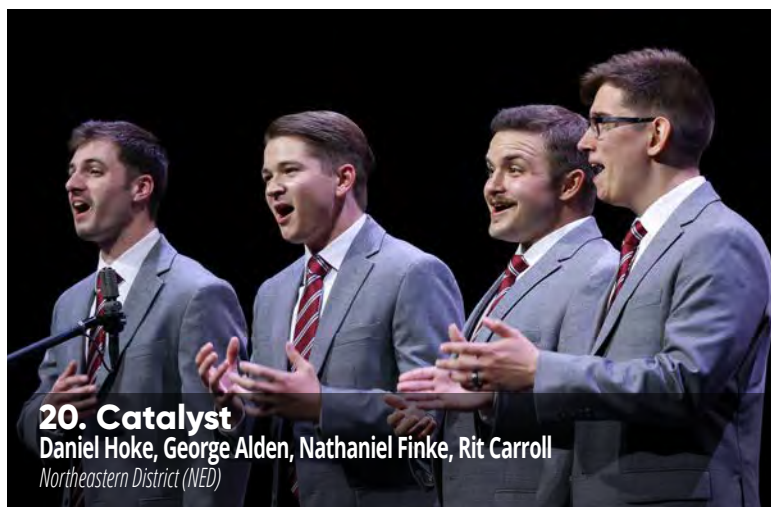
### 18. Valkyries

Gracie Lueck, Therese Masangcay, Kayla Quilantang, Sarah Morehead



### 19. Playground

Sam Schein, Adin Dove, Ian Trent, Ted Lewis  
Purdue University



### 20. Catalyst

Daniel Hoke, George Alden, Nathaniel Finke, Rit Carroll  
Northeastern District (NED)

## 2023 Contest Trivia from Bob Sutton

### Tony De Rosa

- His 4th-place bronze with **Three and a Half Men** extended his "most quartet medals" lead to 16 (three others have 11, including Sean Devine as of this year).
- The first singer to medal with five different quartets.

- He and son, Joseph, are eighth father-son quartet medalist combo.
- He is the only person to have a multiple of every International quartet medal.

### Sean Devine

- His fourth 5th-place bronze with

Throwback puts him in a five-way tie for 5th-place medals

### Throwback

- Second-most medals by one group ever, joining three other groups with seven (**Boston Common** earned eight)

### Jim Henry

- His 18th chorus directing medal ties him with Jay Giallombardo for the most ever.
- Jim's fifth directing gold medal is the third-most after Jim Clancy and Jim Miller. (Something about being named "Jim" helps?)





# NEXT GENERATION

BARBERSHOP

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APPROACHING!**

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**2024 Varsity  
Quartet Contest**  
at Cleveland International

**Deadline:**  
Nov 30, 2023

**2024 Varsity  
Chorus Invitational**  
at Cleveland International

**Deadline:**  
Nov 30, 2023

**2024 Junior  
Quartet Contest**  
at New York City Midwinter

**Deadline:**  
Oct 30, 2023

**NEW  
YORK  
CITY**  
2024  
MIDWINTER

Jan 9-14, 2024

**Cleveland**  
2024 INTERNATIONAL  
CONVENTION  
June 30-July 7, 2024

[barbershop.org/nextgen](https://barbershop.org/nextgen)





## THURSDAY, JULY 6

**8:30** Got to take portraits of a few dozen newly-pinned 50-year members at a breakfast this morning. Each spoke briefly. Careers have come and gone, family members have come and gone, and our singing and fellowship have been maybe the one constant in their lives over the past 50 years. [#WhatAGreatSociety](#)



Adrenaline



Chonk



The Kentuckians



50-Year Member Breakfast

**9:53** Stopped into the Town Hall and Harmony U classes to take pictures and listen for a while. Avail yourself of these. [#Underrated](#)

**10:30** At **Quorum's** Gold Medal Hour, they discussed their journey, including having to find a new baritone in 2018. The biggest laugh came during the Q&A, a question from KJ McAleese-jergins [bari of **Midtown**]: "Are there any people who auditioned for the baritone part that you regret not picking?" [#NoRegretsForEither](#)

### Int'l Quartet & Chorus Festival

**11:26** Humongous applause for **NONBIANCE**, a bunch of All-Stars paying tribute to SAI legend **Ambiance**. I didn't get all the inside jokes, but I do know that **Ambiance** had a ridiculously talented tenor and that Kim Newcomb was hilarious. [#ShellySweet-Rubenic](#)

**11:55** So many groups that never saw the International stage until now. There are dozens filing in and out for each group. [#StandingRoomOnly](#)

**12:02** **Smoke Ring's** lead soloist was jaw-dropping good—If she's not a professional singer, she could be. The Festival is worth it just for all its Stephanie Taglianettis. [#Week'sBestVocals?](#)

**12:12** Great stuff from the **Timberliners**, and earlier, **The Kentuckians**. Love these choruses and the energy in this ballroom. [#CrowdIsElectric](#)

**12:28** **B-Side**—another great New York City group. Nicholas Roberto is a great lead! [#GothamRoots](#)



Q'D UP

**1:20** **The Knees Bees, 3 am Edition**—two post-break-up songs. Lead Allison Phillips was so convincing that I felt guilty for all the things her fictional ex did. So apparently, Olivia Rodrigo and Billie Eilish songs can 'shop. Who's the arranger?

[#WillLynchAgain](#)

**1:29** **Mugshot's** Katie Loman—what a powerhouse! Second time today we've heard "Sunday Kind Of Love." [#TaglianettiAudioDoppelgänger](#)

**1:46** Didn't see that coming. **The Bored Friends** is a chorus of BHS Board and HFI Board and friends. [#SingingOffTheSamePage](#)

**1:55** **Clever Girl**—wow, that's high-level. Dozens streamed in just to see them. Well-deserved popularity—they'll go far. [#FestivalChamp](#)

**2:04** **R&D's** genius mic drop moment! Ryan Smith does a spot-on Bowser singing the "Peaches" song from the *Mario Brothers Movie*. Then he collapses on stage and they leave without finishing the song. Only possible on this stage. [#NotRemotelyContestable](#)

**2:14** You'd be expecting comedy with a name like **Chonk**, but totally serious set. Great group though, and heckuva lead in Aiden LaPointe. [#HeirsOfFrankTheDog](#)

**2:16** The Festival is like the love child of the International Contest and the Buckeye Invitational. Groups that didn't or couldn't qualify for International, plus a high-energy audience. [#ButSingingAtInternational](#)

**2:27** Loved "I'm Still Standing" from **The Alliance**. Famous men's chorus on the way to becoming a famous all-voices chorus. [#EltonJohn'Shops](#)

**2:38** **Adrenaline** is ... going places. Really strong! Huge crowd came in just to see them. [#SuperiorRating](#)

**2:48** **Q'D UP** just did that one song by ... was it Van Halen? ["Big Bad Bill (Is Sweet William Now)," a 1920s Tin Pan Alley song.] They probably chose it because it's set in Louisville, but Eddie Holt [T] probably knew about it because it's the only Van Halen song with a clarinet, and also probably their most wholesome cover song. [#EddieHAndEddieVHShred](#)



District president/staff working sessions



# Int'l Chorus & Quartet Festival



No qualifying score was necessary, but you'd never have known that from the high-level performances at the second International Chorus and Quartet Festival—nor from the applause from a large and lively crowd. The certified judges provided post-Festival evaluations, as well as rankings rather than published scores.

*Except for Festival winner Clever Girl, groups shown in order of appearance. Quartet members are listed as tenor, lead, bari, and bass regardless of standing order. Photos by Lorin May.*



**Clever Girl** (Superior) **Festival Champion**  
Neyla Pekarek, Ashley Tabares, Holly Janda, Taylor Daniels  
*Texas, Colorado, and Tennessee*



**NONBIANCE** (Superior)  
Kim Newcomb, Michaela Johnston, Melody Hine, Candra Rice  
*New York, New York*



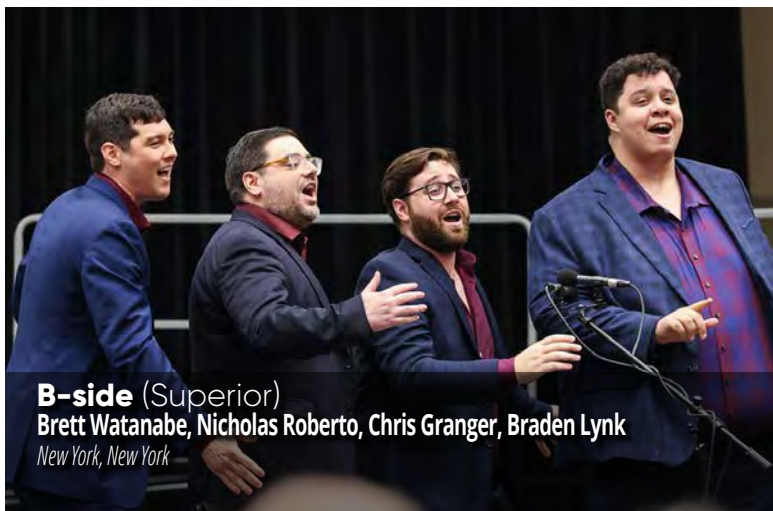
**Bridgetones** (Outstanding)  
Alisa Peters, Kelly Sophar, Dominic Pedotto, Kenji Matsuoka  
*San Francisco, California*



**Vine Street** (Outstanding)  
Brett Bellman, Alex Stenger, Andrew Wittenberg, Richard Gonzales  
*Cincinnati, Ohio*



**Smoke Ring** (Superior)  
Rebecca Eckes, Stephanie Taglianetti, Alexander Ronneburg, Gabriel Spector  
*New York, New York*



**B-side** (Superior)  
Brett Watanabe, Nicholas Roberto, Chris Granger, Braden Lynk  
*New York, New York*



**Fog Q** (Excellent)  
Stephen Leander, Neal Rogers, Dominic Pedotto, Ben Porter  
*San Francisco, California*





**Mixed Signals** (Superior)  
Emily Moriarty, Lindsay Ondracek, Luke Stevenson, Andrew Bird  
*Australia*



**The Knee's Bee (3am Edition)** (Outstanding)  
Allyson Lotz, Allison Phillips, Will Lynch, Nicholas Bratcher  
*Denver, Colorado; Los Angeles, California; Wellington, New Zealand; Christchurch, New Zealand*



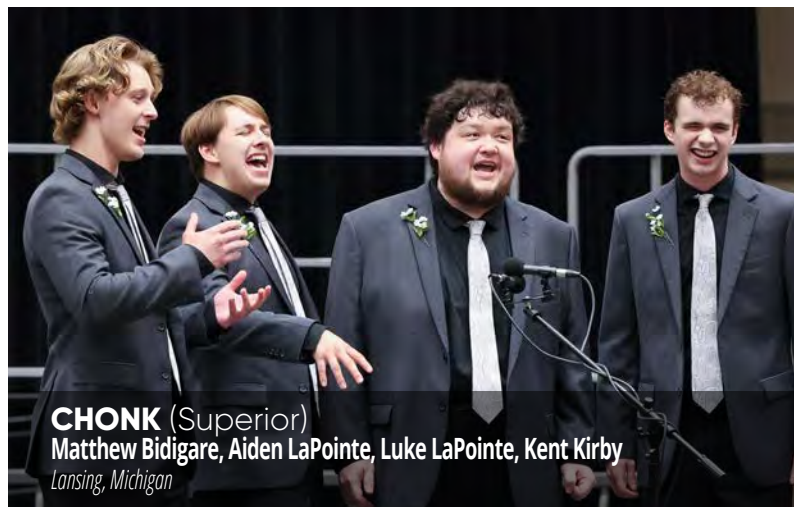
**Mugshot** (Superior)  
Maria Burri, Katie Roman, Robert Roman, Scott Fewell  
*Portland, Oregon*



**High Gravity** (Superior)  
Josh Moore, Mike Beck, Danny Becker, Steve Moore  
*Nashville, Tennessee*



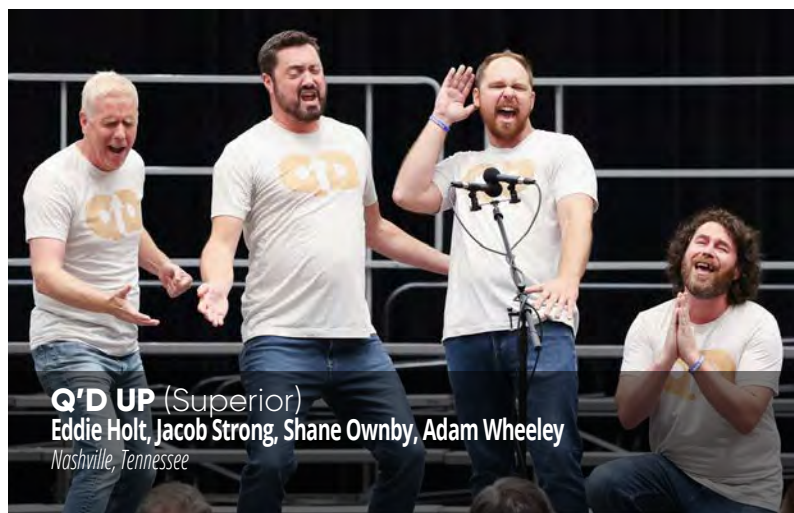
**R&D** (Outstanding)  
Dominick Finetti, Ryan McCall, Daniel Rohovit, Ryan Smith  
*Mushroom Kingdom*



**CHONK** (Superior)  
Matthew Bidigare, Aiden LaPointe, Luke LaPointe, Kent Kirby  
*Lansing, Michigan*



**Adrenaline** (Superior)  
Maggie McAlexander, Amanda Pitts, Jady Johnson, Kesney Faubion  
*Denver, Colorado; Providence, Rhode Island; Washington, DC*



**Q'D UP** (Superior)  
Eddie Holt, Jacob Strong, Shane Ownby, Adam Wheeley  
*Nashville, Tennessee*





**The Kentuckians Chorus • Kris Olson • Lexington, Kentucky (Eval Only)**



**The Timberliners • Tyler Wigginton • Broomfield, Colorado (Outstanding)**



**The Bored Friends • Larry Bomback • North America (Outstanding)**



**The Alliance • Jay Dougherty • Columbus, Ohio (Superior)**



**Heart of Carolina A Cappella • Dr. William Adams • Durham, North Carolina (Superior)**





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## Quartet Semifinals

**5:45** Two new songs from **The Newfangled Four** and two massive ovations! They changed “Bare Necessities” to “Insecurities” and tried to work through theirs, like Jackson’s inability to [“Dang It!”] deliver a punchline. But their “Joe Re Me” was a confusing, convoluted mess—intentionally—and it was genius! **#YouTubeGloryAwaits**

**6:06** “Cruella DeVille”—**HusAar** does **Vocal Spectrum** proud, including the 30-second tenor post. He almost collapsed, but he did it! **#RareVSCover**

**6:25** **Artistic License** does fewer up-tempo charts than most, but with how “Look Out For Love” went down, I’m hoping they decide to flex those rhythm muscles a whole bunch more during the Finals. **#ButTheirBalladsThough**

**6:41** **The Core** did a great audience sing-along from *The Sound of Music* [“The Lonely Goatherd”]. That was super fun, but the Singing judges are scrumming, probably about the yodeling and the audience singing. Was there a spot where the audience sang the melody and The Core was doing four-part backing?

**#OneWayToSingFifths**

**7:01** Wow, “Still Hurting” from **Midtown**—incredible range! Every soft, every loud, every power chord and quiet section—perfect artistry, pristine singing. They had you hanging on every note. Massive standing O still going. One of the best ballads I’ve ever heard!

**#It’sNotJustSpiderfarm #95.8%**

**7:04** Holy frijoles **Midtown** and “After Today”! This is where you’ve broken away from the pack. Best set this week by anyone by far!

**#WaitUntilSaturdayNight**

**7:13** **Clementones** are at the stage where they’ve proven they belong. Next step, they’ll be getting



The Kelly Brothers



Sweet & Sour

songs that belong to them. **#DanishInvasion**

**7:41** They introduced the judges, and Steve Scott stood up and waved for Adam’s intro and Adam for Steve. A few people picked up on it. Have we ever had siblings serving on the same International panel? **#GreatScotts**

**7:45** **Sweet & Sour’s** “It Had To Be You”—that husband/wife energy between Samantha and Merton Tramack was incredible!

**#SpousesInTheHouse**

**7:55** “Love You Like I’m Gonna Lose You”—Ian Kelly of **The Kelly Brothers** is still underrated.

**#ThenCameTheSecondSong**

**8:00** So right after I say that, they have Ian go full “diva on steroids” and turn “You And Me (But Mostly Me)” into a virtual solo act. For half the song, the others sang from behind a curtain. Lots of fun, but ... **#ProbablyHurtTheirSingingScore**

**8:02** A dozen times already, with two more days to go: “Keith! ... Matt! ... Chris! ... Kyle! ... oooooOOO ... Trademark!” **#BigScreenAd**

**#AudienceParticipation**

**8:12** That *Wizard of Oz* set by **Three and a Half Men** was pretty much perfect. Four straight bullseyes so far. **#FourNewClayHineCharts**

**8:18** There’s no way Kevin Stinson found that hat in his closet. **#InVoiceDoesHumor**

**8:33** Two great breakup songs by **Pratt Street Power**. How do they sing “Cry Me A River” every year and keep getting better? That’s impressive. **#Since2016**

**8:40** Am I mistaken, or have we heard as many



Jazz Band



Clementones



The Scott brothers



The Gordon family



Artistic License



The Newfangled Four





**20. Clementones (SNOBS)**

Erik Buchreitz, Oliver Runge Skovbo Hansen, Erik Fjendbo Lindstrøm, Malte Øster Barbaos; *The Danish Invasion*



Quartet members listed as tenor, lead, bari, and bass regardless of standing order

**19. Wildfire (SUN)**

Andrew Lujan, Stephen Goldman, Kevin Mendez, Harrison Cooke  
*Frank Thorne; Southern New England; Tampa, FL*



**18. Sweet & Sour (NED)**

Christina Tramack, Samantha Tramack, Merton Tramack, Joshua Tramack  
*Alexandria, VA; Frank Thorne*



**17. First Class (CSD)**

Wendy Pool, Stacy Schumacher, Kristin Drummond-Mance, Maria Christian  
*Frank Thorne*



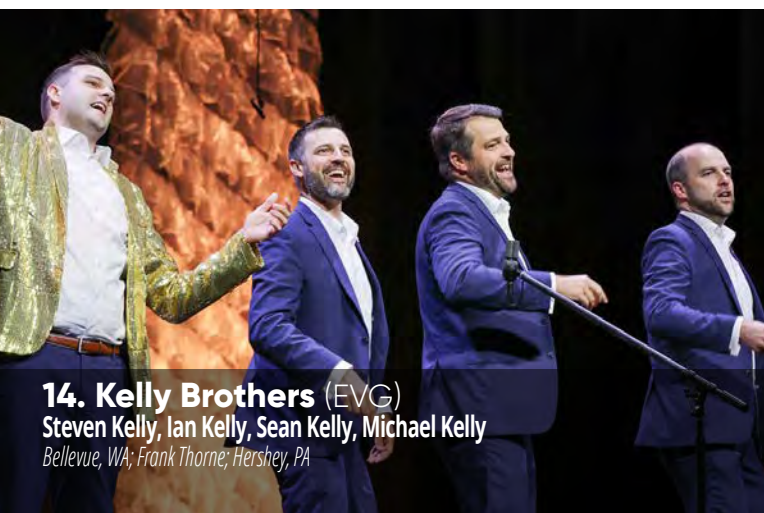
**16. Fleet Street (CSD)**

Matt Suellentrop, Aaron Zart, Michael Bass, Eeyan Richardson  
*St. Charles, MO; Lincoln, NE; Western Hills (Cincinnati), OH*



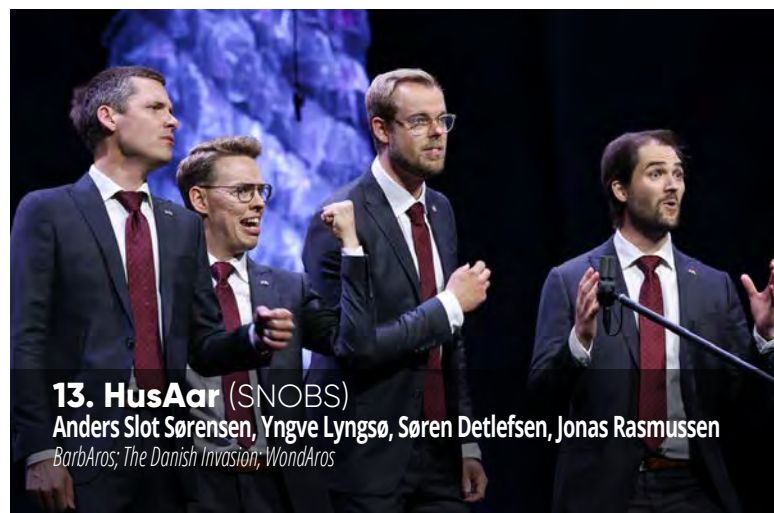
**15. InVoice (EVG)**

Jake Yoakum, Paul Carter, Dean Waters, Kevin Stinson  
*Portland, OR*



**14. Kelly Brothers (EVG)**

Steven Kelly, Ian Kelly, Sean Kelly, Michael Kelly  
*Bellevue, WA; Frank Thorne; Hershey, PA*



**13. HusAar (SNOBS)**

Anders Slot Sørensen, Yngve Lyngsø, Søren Detlefsen, Jonas Rasmussen  
*Barbaos; The Danish Invasion; WondAros*





**12. Secret Best Friends (MAD)**  
Kevin Juliana, James Isley, James Pennington, Will Daniel Simmons  
*Frank Thorne; Hershey, PA*



**11. Maple Reserve (ONT)**  
Chris Tanaka-Mann, Greg Mallett, Jonah Lazar, Reuven Grajner  
*Frank Thorne; Toronto, ON*

breakup songs this week as we've heard love songs? **#HopefullyNotRealLife**

**8:45 Fleet Street** is definitely claiming the "drinking songs" mantle. Not sure that "Let Me Drown" is country, though. [It's Broadway.] Maybe next year they'll specialize in breakup songs—heavy drinking tends to move things in that direction.

**#UnfortunatelyRealLife**

**8:53** "I Want You To Want Me" and "Two Of A Kind, Workin' On A Full House" by **Throwback**. Amazing! A **Cheap Trick** rock song from the 1970s and a Garth Brooks country anthem from the 1990s—these guys have been in a song-selection league of their own for 10 years plus. So far it's **Midtown** by a head, but too close to call for everyone else. **#BestSemifinalsInDecades**

**9:04** "Devil May Care" by **Lemon Squeezy** is in a different league. If we judged quartets by their

last chord, there's your winner. **#BlewMyMind**

**9:23 Maple Reserve**. Their second song, "Prepared," was just powerful. We've always seen them as more whimsical, but they've now done two strong "rip your heart to shreds" ballads.

**#ComedyWasGreatToo**

**9:46** No shockers about who's in the Finals—all have been there before except **Three and a Half Men**, and they were no-brainers. But the Semifinals is



**Outside the World Harmony Jamboree**

usually the best round of the week. **#ExceptIn2023**

**11:18** Took me an hour to get into the World Harmony Jamboree ballroom because the door only opened when I was chatting with friends all the way from Boston and Perth and Stockholm and Germany and ... Kentucky. This is what International is about: the joy of mixing with people from all over the world who speak a common language. **#IDon'tMeanEnglish**

## FRIDAY, JULY 7

### Chorus Session 1

**10:09 a.m.** Ripped out of *The Harmonizer* pages, **Heart of Carolina A Cappella** demonstrates how to be welcoming at an afterglow. Jenni Sheets was the central character onstage and contributed to Dr.

CHORUS PORTRAITS BY READ PHOTOGRAPHY



**34. The Pine Barons (MAD) • Richard Gray, Jr. • Cherry Hill, NJ**



**33. New Tradition (ILL) • Mitch Greenberg • Northbrook, IL**





**32. Midwest Vocal Express (LOL) • Bryan Ziegler • Greendale, WI**



**31. Forward Harmony (LOL) • Bryan Ziegler • Greendale, WI**



**30. Sound by Southwest (SWD) • Manny Lopez • San Antonio, TX**



**29. Heart of Carolina A Cappella (NSC) • Dr. William Adams • Central Carolina, NC**



**28. Fog City Harmonia (FWD) • Alisa Peters • Barbary Coast, CA**



Jake Bartlett's article. **#PleaseInternalizeIt**

**10:31** **Stockholm City Voices** was spectacular—and most of the audience was away at their chorus rehearsals. Definitely earned their reputation for showmanship, and their storytelling was top level. Gonna be tough to beat.

**#TightChorusContestToo**

**11:18** "Come Alive" by **Smorgaschorus** was great. They're a lot bigger this year—it looks like most groups so far are bigger than last year.

**#ScoreSheetConfirmsIt**

**11:50** Justin Miller's fresh from scratch-ish chorus may be starting with different ingredients than he had in L.A., but those amazing hands have **Vocal Summit** singing super clean and pretty. **#Top10Debut**

**Noon.** **Central Standard** plays against type, spoofing both **Ambassadors** and **Music City** in spectacular fashion. Great to see their fun side again. I guarantee that medals. **#76Trombones**

**12:23** Cool—that was a lot of father/son/grand-son pairs and trios in **Great Lakes Chorus** singing to each other in "Thanks For Being My Dad."

**#TuggingHeartstrings**

**12:39** Great rock and roll set from **Men of Independence!** Really authentic costumes, too. The guys who played hooky in my high school parking lot might still dress like that today.

**#ClassOfThe80s**

## Chorus Session 2

**2:55** I confess, their whole set, I was thinking, "Hey, the whole chorus is standing!" For **Parkside Harmony**, that's a big deal. Also a big deal: this year's sound and artistry. A BIG deal! **#SilverMedal**

**3:10** **Heavy Medal Chorus** is a great name—all



## 2023 records for the three-category judging era (1994-present)

- **Throwback** has a record 10 appearances in the top 10. (**Metropolis** and **Excaliber** have 8 each.) They have averaged 90+ at International a record five times. (**Signature** did it four times.) They have sung 60 songs for score; if Throwback competes next year, during the Semifinals they will likely overtake Metropolis (62) for the record.
- **First Take** topped the 3rd place scoring record by 17 points.
- **Three and a Half Men** topped 4th place record by 122 points and set a record for the highest quartet debut score.
- **Throwback** obliterated the 5th place record by 213 points,
- **Midtown's** "Spider Farm" set was the first to score a perfect 100 in a category (Performance) with a 97.0% average that smashed **PLATINUM's** 2000 record for the highest-scoring quartet song (95.9% for "Cuddle Up").
- **Midtown's** record-setting 95.6% Finals score was the same as **Ambassadors of Harmony's** winning score—the first quartet to tie or beat that year's winning chorus set.
- A record 37 quartets scored 80% average or higher.
- **Northern Stars** (SNOBS) was the first chorus to debut in the Top 5 since **Great American Chorus** in 2000.
- Four choruses debuted in the top 10 this year (**Northern Stars**, **Stockholm City Voices**, **Pacific Connection**, and **Vocal Summit**).
- **Heralds of Harmony** earned both their first medal and the first Sunshine chorus medal since 1966!
- **Parkside Harmony** now has exactly one of every medal except for gold. Artistic Director Sean Devine has collected 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th place medals in both the quartet contest and the chorus contest over the past five contests.
- Three choruses from Global Alliances finished in the top 10, the first time ever. The 11th- and 12th- place choruses also came from Global Alliances.

—Patrick McAlexander





27. Harbourtown Sound (ONT) • Jordan Travis • Hamilton, ON



26. Vocal Revolution (NED) • Cay Outerbridge • Greater Boston, MA

gold medalists from BinG! [Germany]. One missed opportunity: borrowing costumes from **Men of Independence**. **#BinG!Bling**

**3:21** Anthony Bartholomew, session emcee, reading the house rules: "If you start clapping after a false tag, we will stop the chorus and remove you from the auditorium. If you scream 'you bet' after a ballad, we'll cancel your membership. If you recognize the song, feel free to



Pacific Connection

join in ..." **#TwoOuttaThreeAin'tBad**

**3:28** Love **The Recruits** for a couple of reasons. First, A+ on those Dr. Seuss costumes and that great sound. Second, this is every music educator's dream: young men and young women singing together after graduation for the joy of it. **#OhThePlacesYou'llGo!**

**3:49** Loved the visuals for the **Midwest Vocal Express** "awkward wedding dancing" set. Not to brag, but I can be more awkward than that without practicing at all. **#JustAskMyKids**

**4:24** The Ty Wigginton era is off to a good start with **Sound of the Rockies**. **Midtown** did a cameo, and Nick Gordon tripped on his way off the stage. Was that intentional? **#ItWasn'tLastYear**

**4:23** **Atlanta Vocal Project** combines with **Heralds of Harmony** for contests, and their "Anything You Can Do We Can Do Better" had directors Clay and Tony—and then their districts—battling for supremacy. So many quartet champ cameos that you'd think this was a **Music City Chorus** set. [Well, Eddie Holt did help write it!] It was great to see all of **PLATINUM** [2000 champ] together for the first time in 20 years! **#104QtetMedalsOnStage**



Men of Independence



Vocal Summit



25. Great Lakes Chorus (PIO) • James Carey • Grand Rapids, MI





**24. Saltaires (RMD) • Adam Haggart • Wasatch Front, UT**



**23. The Men of Independence (JAD) • Gary Lewis • Independence, OH**



**22. SmorgasChorus (CSD) • Matthew Webber • South Central Kansas, KS**



**21. Circle City Sound (CAR) • Theo Hicks • Greater Indianapolis, IN**



**20. Singing Buckeyes (JAD) • David Calland • Buckeye Columbus, OH**





Quorum (2023)

**6:42** Brian Beck competed today with **Sound of the Rockies**, his 8th decade (!) on the International stage—every decade since the 1950s. **#AndStillTeachesVoice**

## AIC SHOW

**8:11** **Interstate Rivals** [1987 champ]—and they've STILL got it! The only quartet where all four won gold again, including two more for Kipp and three more for Joe! **#ChampsSpawningChamps**

**8:11** Wow to **Vocal Spectrum's** [2006] "Cheer Up Charlie," and "Golden Ticket." 17-year



Main Street (2017)



Forefront (2016)



OC Times (2008)



FRED (1999)



Signature (2019)

champ, and still the gold standard for singing.

**#2023HallOfFamers**

**8:20** I was laughing so much it was hard to take good pictures of **FRED** [1999]. They were classic contest songs so we knew what was coming, and it didn't matter. **#TheyGotRhythm**

**8:27** **Max Q** [2007] honors the 1973 champ with a full **Dealer's Choice** set. Betcha their first live practice was this week, and it was still amazing. **#SameAsWhenMaxQCompeted**

**8:48** With "One More Last Chance," bass Cory Hunt shows why he's the secret sauce for **OC Times** [2008] still-cutting-edge sound. **#YourTeddyBear**

**8:57** One of the all-time greats **Dealers Choice** [1973] is the only 50-year champ to put all four members on stage. They sing a tag and the standing O goes on and on forever—literally several minutes. **#GoldMedalMoments**

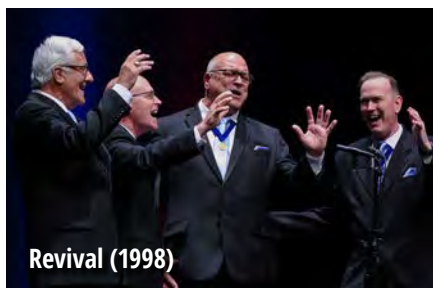
**9:24** Didn't know the Hughes Brothers of **Forefront** lost their dad during Charlotte 2022. That story and that last ballad hit hard.

**#DecadeAgoForMyDad**

**9:37** That "Finian's Rainbow" by **Main Street** would have made the **Suntones** [1961] swoon. If you're keeping score: so far, Tony De Rosa has sung lead onstage with **Max Q**, lead with **Main Street**, bari with **PLATINUM**, directed the **AIC Chorus**, and co-directed **Heralds of Harmony** ... all JUST TODAY. During the rest of the week, he rehearsed with all of the above, was the bari of



Max Q (2007)



Revival (1998)



After Hours (2018)



Dealer's Choice (1973)



AIC Chorus

the Fantasy Quartet that opened Quarterfinals, will sing three sets with **Three and a Half Men**, and if this year's like any other, probably coached a few groups, too. How can one person possibly do all that? **#TwinTonysConspiracyTheory**

**9:51** Who cares about **Revival** [1998]? Apparently everybody, despite the famous **FRED** joke. Brett Littlefield subs for bass Bill Myers. Huge applause, and lots of emotion from the 25-year champ.

**#SentimentalGentlemenFromSoCal**

**10:03** With "Mother Hubbard," **After Hours** [2018] is following the **Vocal Spectrum** trajectory—from "great champ" to "greater champ."

**#ButterOuttaCream**



Vocal Spectrum (2006)



Interstate Rivals (1987)





19. Sound of Tennessee (DIX) • Chad Guyton and Brandon Guyton • Cleveland, TN



18. Parkside Melody (MAD) • Melody Hine and Madeleine Larrimore • Hershey, PA

**10:19** “Midnight Train to Georgia”—wow! We are so lucky to have Daniel Cochran and **Signature** [2019] as part of Team Barbershop.

**#AndPaulSacaChannelingGeneCokecroft**

**10:33** **Quorum** [2022] knocked it out of the park! That last spiritual—great to see them show off Nathan Johnston’s solo voice. **#ThreeLeadsAndATenor**

**10:53** In the lobby, I told members of **Three and a Half Men**—the three that haven’t won a championships yet—that I’m looking forward to their

debut on the AIC stage in not too many years. Can tell this is far from the first time they’ve been told something like that this week. No, it’s not too early to call it. **#CaptainObvious** **#BecauseIHaveEars**

## SATURDAY, JULY 8

### Chorus Session 3

**10:19** Nice debut for **Fog City Harmonia**, the treble sibling of **Fog City Singers**. Young group

with a bright future. **#I’veGotMyPlan**

**10:27** **The Pine Barons**—wow, that’s a big group. Great ... debut? Have they been on this stage before? [Yes, 1981] **#OldSchoolSwagger**

**10:57** We’ve now heard “Devil May Care” several times [4] this week, and **City Lights Chorus** had a wonderful take. They came out nowhere last year, and they’re already one of the best groups here. **#2PIOChorusesThisWeek**

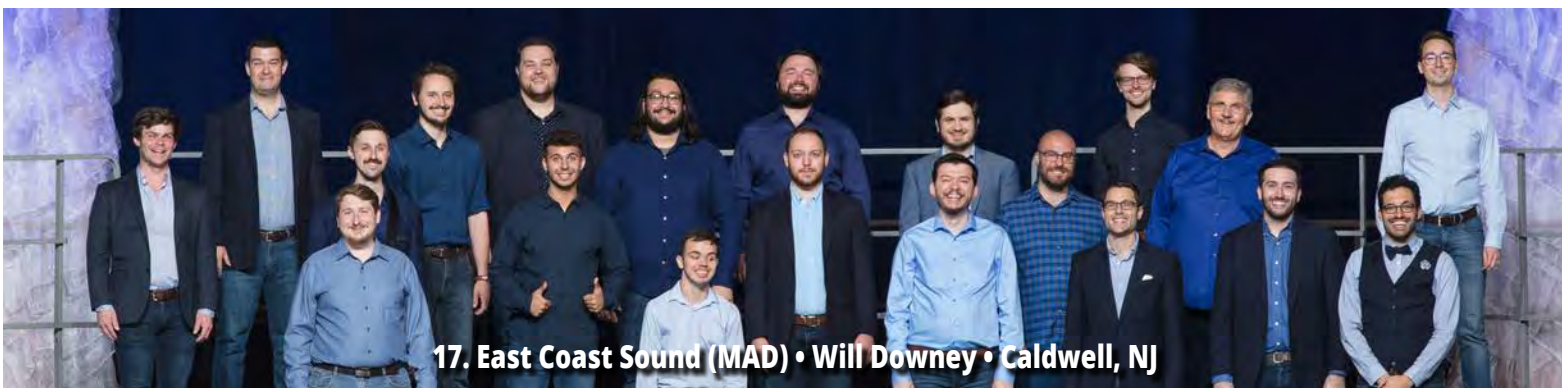
**10:59** Whenever I ask someone which quartet



Parkside Harmony



Heralds of Harmony



17. East Coast Sound (MAD) • Will Downey • Caldwell, NJ





**16. Voices of Gotham (MAD) • Keith Harris • Hell's Kitchen, NY**



**15. PDX Voices (EVG) • Rob Roman • Portland, OR**



**14. The Recruits (CSD) • Eric Dalbey • St. Charles, MO**



**13. Southern Gateway Chorus (JAD) • Jeff Legters • Western Hills (Cincinnati), OH**



**12. Heavy Medal Chorus (BinG!) • Norbert Hammes and Matthias Neuburger • Germany, The Goethe Institute**



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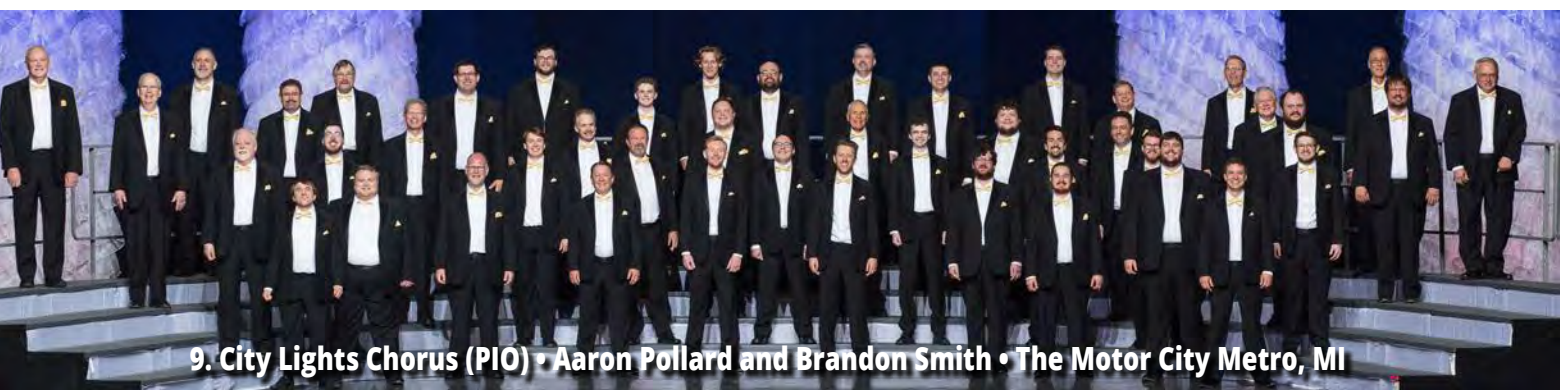




**11. Meantime Chorus (BABS) • Simon Arnott • Central London, UK**



**10. Vocal Summit (EVG) • Justin Miller • Portland, OR**



**9. City Lights Chorus (PIO) • Aaron Pollard and Brandon Smith • The Motor City Metro, MI**



**8. Pacific Connection (BHNZ) • Chad Va and Henrietta Hunkin-Tagaloa • Wellington, NZ**



**7. Sound of the Rockies (RMD) • Tyler Wigginton • Denver Mile High, CO**





6. Stockholm City Voices (SNOBS) • Tindra Thor • Stockholm, Sweden

will win tonight, they've said, "I have no idea!" Some years, that would mean nobody has smashed it on all their songs. This year, four or five groups sound like champions. Never seen that before. [#NotSinceTheEarly90s](#)

**11:10 Meantime Chorus** is like London's version of **Westminster Chorus**—young and super clean. "Trip the Light Fantastic" was ... fantastic. And trippin'. And light. Even a little bit "the." [#I'llStopNow](#)

**11:13** The Swedish, Danish, German groups are all nailing the North American pronunciation. But the Australians and New Zealanders do it, too, so maybe it's really an "English-singing-unless-you're-British" accent. **Meantime** instead leaned into the King's English. [#PahtOfTheChahm](#)

**11:54** Clay Hine gets the Joe Liles Lifetime Achievement Award. He's a rock star at pretty much everything in barbershop: arranger, director, quartetter, coach, you name it. His message: "Share the joy of barbershop with everyone," and "Barbershop should only be something that brings everyone together." [#WordsOfWisdom](#)

**12:08 Pacific Connection**—almost all Pacific Island-

ers, and I was so into it I accidentally took, like, 500 pictures. "Don't Forget Your Roots" literally brought me to tears! You're supposed to finish a show with a number like that—should we close up shop now? The **Ambassadors** are up next ... so, no. [#ButStill...](#)

**12:25** In "9 to 5" **Ambassadors** said they're tired of being second place. Pretty sure they've got this one in the bag. They dialed the creativity up to 11 again, and that was gold-medal sound. Which it was for the silver medals, too, but this time it'll probably stick. That uptune's gonna translate great to video, and that ballad ... wow.

[#StuffOfChampions](#)

**12:49** **Sounds of Tennessee** is no longer the little chorus that could. And all of **Full Effect** is in it!

[#ThatGuytonSound](#)

**1:05** Wow, **Northern Stars** was off the charts! It's safe to say we've never seen staging or costuming remotely like that on the International stage. It was like a fairy godmother from the '70s dumped a barrel of Elton John Dust all over Stockholm. Fantastic! [#TonyAwardForCostumes](#)

**1:09** Manny Lopez starts another great new



5. Central Standard (CSD) • Rob Mance • Metro Kansas City, MO



4. Northern Stars (SNOBS) • Rasmus Krigström • Stockholm, Sweden





**3. Heralds of Harmony (SUN) • Tony De Rosa and Clay Hine • Tampa, FL**



**2. Parkside Harmony (MAD) • Sean Devine and Vincent Sandroni • Hershey, PA**



**1. Ambassadors of Harmony (CSD) • Jim Henry and Jonny Moroni • St. Charles, MO**



**Mic Tester: The Timberliners (RMD) • Tyler Wigginton • Denver Mile High, CO**



**Mic Tester: Varsity Honors Chorus • David Zimmerman**



group in San Antonio, this time **Sound by Southwest**. Someone shouted “You Bet!” just before the applause. Security, please? **#IsItGettingOld?YouBet**

**2:02 Music City Chorus** must’ve created their set after combing through the contest rules, because I’m pretty sure they just broke all of them—polka band included. The best part was the slow build-up that ended with 80-something guys pulling out a mic and jockeying for the solo part. Loved the part when they bet on which quartet will win tonight. [And correctly picked all five eventual medalists for on-stage lampooning.] Then they tugged the heartstrings by bringing their families on stage to sing “Thank You For Being A Friend.” A wild, emotional ride! **#BlessedChaos**

**2:33** 1,455 competitors crossed the stage in the chorus contest. Well-deserved fifth win for the **Ambassadors** in the same city where they won their first. **#2004and2023Louisville**

## Quartet Finals

**6:05** Great set by **The All Voice Chorus** and Rasmus Krigström! Hard to believe their first rehearsal was days ago. Rasmus added his personal touch with a Swedish song translated



into English. Extra big group with singers from literally all over the world—and an extra “pingy-ness” to the sound. **#TheRasmusTouch**

**6:59 Maple Reserve** just became the first Ontario

District quartet in 55 years to sing on Saturday night. **#Sweet**

**7:39** What was that amazing second **Lem-on Squeezy** song? [“Oh-Ho-Ho-Ho (Got The

Quartet members listed as tenor, lead, bari, and bass regardless of standing order

### 10. The Core (JAD)

**Michael Nesler, Josh Van Gorder, Mike Hull, Steve Denino**  
*Buckeye Columbus, OH; Frank Thorne; Greater Central Ohio*

### 9. Pratt Street Power (MAD)

**Vincent Sandroni, Ed Schubel, Ben Hawker, Darren Schmidt**  
*Frank Thorne; Hershey, PA*

### 8. Artistic License (FWD)

**Julian Kusnadi, Rich Brunner, Gabe Caretto, Jason Dyer**  
*Barbary Coast, CA; California Delta; Placerville, CA*

### 7. Gimme Four (MAD)

**Paul Franek, Dave Ammirata, Joe Servidio, Will Downey**  
*Caldwell, NJ; Monclair, NJ*





**6. The Newfangled Four (FWD)**  
 Joey Buss, Jackson Niebrugge, Marcus Carline, Jake Tickner  
*Frank Thorne; Westminster, CA*



**5. Throwback (SUN)**  
 Dan Rubin, Sean Devine, Alex Rubin, Michael Skutt  
*Hershey, PA; Miami, FL; Sunrise, FL*

Quartet portraits by Read Photography



**4. Three and a Half Men (SUN)**  
 Joseph De Rosa, Josh Szolomayer, Tony De Rosa, Chris Keough  
*Frank Thorne; Tampa, FL*



**3. First Take (MAD)**  
 Alex Corson, Anthony Colosimo, Drew Wheaton, Andrew Havens  
*Alexandria, VA; Frank Thorne; Hunterdon County, NJ; Louisville, KY*



**2. Lemon Squeezy (SNOBS)**  
 Victor Nilsson, David Holst, Sam Molavi, Martin Jangö  
*Northern Stars Chorus, Zero8, Stockholm, Sweden*



**1. Midtown (MAD)**  
 Nick Gordon, Anthony Fortino, KJ McAleesejergins, Christian Diaz  
*Frank Thorne; Hell's Kitchen, NY*

Rhythm Of My Heart) arr. Rasmus Krigström]. Mind-blowing! That's in the same league as their "Devil May Care." **#SameArrangerSameScore**  
**7:51** "The Trolley Song"—long, long applause for **First Take**. They are getting a lot of love this week! If they win a championship tonight, that tag didn't hurt. Now that **Quorum** has won, it's between **First Take** and **Lemon Squeezy** on the "pull you to your feet" tags. **#NextLevel**  
**7:53** Did **Trademark** have any idea that the whole auditorium would be chanting their



names several times a session all week long? Best big screen ad ever. **#NowHireThem**  
**7:58** High tenor post by the BASS, Chris Keough, and endless applause for **Three and a Half Men**. Where does Tony De Rosa keep finding these perfect basses? **#ProSingingPeerGroup**  
**8:27** **The Newfangled Four** may have saved their best for last. Both songs were new to me ["Zazz" and "Stonehenge"] but they were wonderfully bizarre. Nobody's better at pre-song banter or setting up a joke. Huge laughs and crazy ap-



plause for both songs. **#Honorary6thPlaceMedalist**

**8:49** That, my friends, is what is called swinging for the fences! **Midtown's** standing O keeps getting louder and longer. That "Old McDonald's Spider Pig," or whatever they call it, just made them champions! They took a page from **Storm Front** and had their funniest guy play a perfect straight man while the others were the clowns. [No wonder—the 2010 champs' Jim Clark and Darin Drown coached it!] Only future champs get this kind of standing O. **#KJ'sGoldenPratfall**

**8:51** You gotta feel for **The Newfangled Four**. They aced all six comedy numbers, then **Midtown** comes up next and drops the mic with their first contest comedy song. I bet Newfangled's sets dominate YouTube again, though.

**#FewerInsideJokes**

**9:03** **Gimme Four** must've had two minutes backstage to cobble together that "better than a deformed spider" lyric. Bravo! Their performance easily tops 90% of the bronze medal performances I've seen over the years, but I've also never seen this much talent in a single year. If there were any justice, they and **Newfangled** would get medals tonight. **#ButAheadOfWho?**

## Post Finals

**10:37** Was too busy with photo stuff to record for a while. I'm sitting in the photo room right now watching **Midtown** get their champ portraits. What did I miss? The current Sweet Adelines and Harmony, Inc. champs [**The Ladies** and **Take Four**] had phenomenal performances. **Quorum's** Swan set was magical. And then during the medalist announcements, I had no idea where to point my camera for the medalist reaction shots until it was just **Lemon Squeezy** and **Midtown** left.

**#Took20KPhotosInLouisville**

**10:39** Tony De Rosa has not NOT medaled since 1991. And all four of those quartets ended with gold. During that time, every quartet that's debuted in the medals has finished with gold, **Midtown** being the latest. Both stats apply to **Three** and a **Half Men**. **#JustSaying... #I'llShutUpNow**



**10:42** Caught the last part of a conversation where one of the medalists came in saying one song got a perfect 100 from the whole category. I didn't have to ask which quartet or which song or which category. Get this: **Throwback** nails every song, beats **Midtown's** silver medal score from last year, and somehow finishes fifth—but only half a point behind **Lemon Squeezy's** silver!

**#HighestScoresTightestSpreadEver**

**10:43** Just wanna say that it's fun to watch how over-the-moon happy **Lemon Squeezy** is tonight. They couldn't be smiling bigger right now if they'd won gold. **#TwoGuysDebutedAtSilver**

**11:30** Having a great time in front of the Galt House watching **Pacific Connection** members sing and improvise songs. One of them tells me their members have origins in seven island nations, and hanging out and sharing and improvising harmonies around songs is just what they do. Doesn't sound too different from our artform's origins in Black Southern barbershops.

**#MusicalIslandSingers**

**11:35** A new bride and groom were dropped off in a limo to head to their honeymoon suite, and the **Pacific Connection** singers

improvised a couple songs for them. The show continued in the lobby, with all the taggers there joining in. Such a cool moment.

**#They'llNeverForgetit**



Pacific Connection

**11:50** A member of **Northern Stars** [Stockholm] told me something they realized just hours before this afternoon's set. At the very moment they were onstage performing their "Yellow Brick Road," Elton John was in Stockholm at his final stop on his career finale *Yellow Brick Road* tour.

**#TwilightZone**

**11:59** Gonna call this week a wrap. I need to talk to some people, sing a few tags, and look at people without a camera covering my face. The shows and contests were great, but I won't need my cameras or recorder for the next part—the off-stage fun that's the best reason to go to International. See all y'all in Cleveland! ■

**#KeepTheWholeWorldSinging**







## CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE: *PRESIDENT'S COUNCIL ANNIVERSARY*

With great joy and gratitude, we commemorate a remarkable milestone – the 20th anniversary of our leadership giving program, President's Council, launched by Harmony Foundation in 2004.

To honor this achievement, we are thrilled to announce an initiative that underscores our commitment to the growth and sustainability of our mission and invaluable program partners. M.B. Lumbard, a champion of enriching lives through singing, has generously pledged a \$150,000 giving challenge to HFI. **All new, reinstated, and increased Ambassador of Song and President's Council gifts will be counted toward the Lumbard Family Challenge.** This extraordinary endeavor has the potential to raise over \$300,000 in new support of life-changing programs!














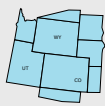





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The **Statesmen Spring Chorus Chapter** in Houston, TX seeks a skilled director to help us grow as singers and performers. Contact Richard Dove, [rdove007@sbcbglobal.net](mailto:rdove007@sbcbglobal.net), 832-541-3624; [thestatesmenchorus.org](http://thestatesmenchorus.org).

The **San Marcos, TX Chapter** has appeared in six International contests and serves the San Antonio metro area. The Marcsmen are looking for a skilled musical director. For inquiries, complete the form on [www.marcsmen.org](http://www.marcsmen.org) or contact Matthew Cassi, [board@marcsmen.org](mailto:board@marcsmen.org), 210-867-8175.

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## GLOBAL ALLIANCES

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- BHNZ (Barbershop Harmony New Zealand)  
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- BABS (British Association of Barbershop Singers)  
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- BinG! (Barbershop in Germany)  
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- Holland Harmony  
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- FABS (Finnish Association of Barbershop Singers)  
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- IABS (Irish Association of Barbershop Singers)  
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- LABBS (Ladies Association of British Barbershop Singers)  
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- MBHA (Mixed Barbershop Harmony Association)  
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- SABS (Spanish Association of Barbershop Singers)  
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- SNOBS (Society of Nordic Barbershop Singers)  
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- SPATS (Southern Part of Africa Tonsorial Singers)  
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## THE TAG

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# Great tag, song-free

**D**r. Jeff Taylor is a lifelong Barbershopper, having joined the **St. Catharines (Ontario) Singing Saints** at age 14. While at university, Jeff sang with the **Winnipeg (Manitoba) Golden Chordsmen**, as well as in a popular college quartet. He was a student of barbershop great Dr. Greg Lyne during his masters and doctoral days in the U.S. southwest.

Jeff has three International gold medals, two earned with the **Masters of Harmony** and one with the **Toronto Northern Lights**. He writes, "Since then, I have continued to love my work coaching teenagers through the valley of the shadow of adulthood, teaching music and humanities stuff. I got to sing for a



couple of famous conductors back when I was an active choir singer, and I have directed a few choirs too while also learning

the delights of making band music with wonderful young folks." Nice! Jeff recently retired as a Music judge after 30 years of service, having been certified since the current judging system came to be in 1993.

The first version of this tag was written in honor of the late Doug Maddox, long a leader in the Masters of Harmony and the Far Western District. **Lemon Squeezy**, who just won the International silver medal in Louisville, recorded the tag in its final form. You can find this on YouTube.

"Goodbye, My Friends" has plenty of crunchy chords, reflecting the fact that Jeff's musical expertise is not limited to the world of barbershop. Don't you wish there were a whole song that went with this tag? Hey, perhaps you could write one yourself! Till then, enjoy singing this highly creative gem. ■

## "Goodbye, My Friends"

TTBB voicing

Jeff Taylor (2015)

*slowly and freely*

Tenor Lead

Bari Bass

Good - bye, my friends, till we meet a - gain.

We'll meet a - gain. Good - bye, my friends. Good - bye, good - bye, my friends. Good - bye, my friends.

SSAA voicing

Jeff Taylor (2015)

*slowly and freely*

Tenor Lead

Bari Bass

Good - bye, my friends, till we meet a - gain.

We'll meet a - gain. Good - bye, my friends. Good - bye, good - bye, my friends. Good - bye, my friends.

SATB voicing

Jeff Taylor (2015)

*slowly and freely*

Tenor Lead

Bari Bass

Good - bye, my friends, till we meet a - gain.

We'll meet a - gain. Good - bye, my friends. Good - bye, good - bye, my friends. Good - bye, my friends.





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Thanks to the incredible generosity of our Sponsors and Donors, the Barbershop Harmony Society was able to bring over 100 young singers from across the U.S. to the Next Generation Barbershop events created by the Society at the Midwinter Convention in Daytona Beach. These young singers brought original arrangements, an eagerness to compete, and a love of ringing chords.

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*Georgia Spirit from Atlanta, GA rehearses for the Chorus Festival at the Daytona Beach Midwinter Convention.*



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