

## Volume 52 No. 2

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### A Celebration of Life

#### Mary L. Duwe, CPF, Master Coach

A group of us were dining at the Red Lobster in Rochester as a barbershop quartet called *Genetix* sang several of their favorite songs. While singing a song called *You Raise Me Up* a woman in the restaurant started to wipe her tears. When they were finished singing she approached them and thanked them for the beautiful song. She told them her father was presently in a coma at the Mayo clinic dying of an inoperable brain tumor. She said, "I felt like you were raising my father up as you were singing." The woman proceeded to share with the quartet that her father had been a barbershop singer as well.

I have an inside view of this story of celebration as these four men are very close to me. My husband Dan Duwe, my son Josh Duwe, Gary Thiel, their chorus director and his son Robb Thiel sing together in a quartet called *Genetix*. Family is valued by each member. These four men were very touched by the woman's tears of love for her father and expression of gratitude for their song. It was a perfect example of how a song can touch and heal the human heart.

While they were in conversation about her father's condition she asked them if they would take the time to sing to her dying father. The Mayo clinic was only a short cab ride away so the quartet made arrangements to go to the hospital the next day. The quartet members

also belonged to a competition chorus called the Northern Gateway Chorus. The chorus was scheduled to compete the following day. The quartet members made plans to leave the festivities soon after the results of the competition were announced, feeling it was a privilege and an honor to be asked to share this gift of song and celebrate this woman's father's life.

The following day was indeed a celebratory day for the Northern Gateway Chorus. They won a first place trophy in their division as well as a trophy for the most improved chorus. The chorus also achieved the highest singing score in the history of their participation in the competition. This was quite an achievement for Gary Thiel, who was the chorus director, as well as all the members of the Northern Gateway Chorus. However, a more important performance lay ahead.



The quartet members gathered after the chorus competition, remembering their commitment to their fellow barbershopper at the Mayo clinic. They made their way to the clinic, not knowing if this woman's father would even *hear* the music they were about to perform. However, upon arriving in his room they discovered he had awakened from his coma just in time to listen! Words do not describe their joy of this one small miracle.

The quartet sang *You Raise Me Up*. Each singer expressed himself authentically from his heart: *the celebration of a life well lived*. Josh said, "It was the most difficult and most rewarding performance I have ever done. It touched me at the center of my soul."

This is the part of the story that really touched the singers' hearts. The quartet started their next song called *Java Jive*, a very uplifting tune, and the old time barbershopper began to sing with them. He remembered all the words. It was a moment of joy that touched the hearts of everyone in the room. At that moment there was little difference between what the singers were giving and what they were receiving: the celebration with song now flowed both ways.

The barbershop motto, "keep the whole world singing," had new meaning that day in late October 2007 as they finished their performance with *Can You Feel the Love Tonight?* Through the smiles and the tears of family and new friends the old songs once again rang a chord to celebrate life itself.

Thank you Dan, Josh, Gary and Robb for reminding us.

- It is in giving that you receive.
- Every life you touch matters.
- When you bring life to others ...yours is renewed.
- Talent alone is never enough
- Life is for living, engaging and sharing what you have.
- Never minimize your contributions to the lives you touch daily
- There is no limit to how far your influence will extend with an act of love.



*Editors Note: A Celebration of live first appeared in the HOH Newsletter shortly after the Convention in Rochester last fall. More about Mary:*

**Mary Duwe**, a veteran advisor, Certified Financial Planner®, and Master Coach, brings a depth of experience and desire to help others improve their lives and businesses. She has practiced as a successful financial planner since 1984 and is licensed in securities, life insurance, and real estate. Mary has a BS in Psychology and received her coach training from CoachU. She continued her training with the Graduate School of Coaching, Legacy Learning (Franklin Covey Coaching) and has completed the Emotional Competence Inventory Accreditation (EIC). As an experienced Emotional Intelligence Development Coach, Mary works with others to reorient their lives and their businesses for greater success, meaning, and fulfillment. Contact her at [mary@mitchanthony.com](mailto:mary@mitchanthony.com) or [mary@maryduwe.com](mailto:mary@maryduwe.com) or by phone at 715-693-8002.

for members of the Northern Gateway Chorus, you can do it now. Point your web browser at:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NorthernGatewayChorus> and sign up.

An email group can be an easy way to email to all the members at once when there is something to say.

Membership in this group is restricted to NGC members only, so you will have to register. If you don't have a Yahoo account, they're free and easy to get.

-Joe Larson

**ALL THE STUFF THEY EXPECT US TO REMEMBER A Barbershopper's Nightmare.**

-submitted by Norm Barnard

After 15 years of improvement, culminating with our recent third place ranking in the Land O Lakes District of the Barbershop Harmony Society, let's take a look at all the stuff we have learned during that time frame and remember that we need to apply this to do list every time we rehearse or perform.

Are you ready?

First on the list are the notes. They need to be off paper ASAP.

Followed closely by the words.

The adherence to correct pitch.

Shoot for the top of the note you are trying to achieve.

This will tend to keep the pitch where it belongs.

Congratulations

BOB PROCOSH

2007 Director's Award

JOHN WHITE

2007 President's Award

**Northern Gateway Chorus Email Group**

If you would like to get on an email mailing group that is

Keep the sound forward,  
don't swallow it.

### *NIGHTMARE continued-*

Raising the soft palette can  
accomplish this.

Try to learn how to do this or  
learn what it feels like when  
it happens.

Posture – stand erect, no fig  
leaf holders nor butt  
grabbers.

No hands in your pockets.

Stand like there is a string out of the  
top of your head holding you up.

Correct vowel shape.  
Maintain a vertical sound  
chamber not horizontal.

Drop the jaw slightly to  
facilitate proper vowel shape.

Establish a vowel target and  
agree upon it.

Match your vowel to the guys  
around you.

Sing within the ensemble.

Give the vowel its fair value.  
We ring chords on the  
vowels.

From the Baritone tip sheet  
on the Internet:  
Extend the duration of  
vowels AND... reduce the  
duration and percussiveness  
of consonants.

Match your tonal quality to  
the section.

Strive to achieve proper  
tongue placement.

Tip just touching the gum  
line at your lower incisors.

Mouth open as if you have a  
hard boiled egg in the back  
of your throat.

Breathe from the diaphragm,  
not the chest.

The breath becomes more  
important than the note.  
(This was told to me once by

a coach, who knew what he  
was talking about. Keep  
alert, you'll see what he  
meant by it.)  
Don't dump half of that  
breath you just took on the  
first note.

Keep forward motion to the  
song you are performing.

Keep thinking of what's  
coming next.

Finish the words you are  
singing, putting those  
consonants in place.

In many instances it is good  
to put the ending consonant  
on the beginning of the next  
word.

Give a little lift to the end of  
a phrase. This allows for  
continuation of sound and  
can help with forward  
motion.

Do something to finesse  
notes throughout a song to  
add some interest to the  
performance. Grow on long  
notes. Vocal inflections on  
certain notes within the song  
can assist in telling the story  
set forth by the lyrics.

Baritones, watch your  
descending thirds.

Leads, watch any thirds you  
encounter.

Basses, be more lead like.

Tenors, you're the glitz, the  
sparkle. No need to over  
sing.

Watch your director. No  
excuses. Peripheral vision  
acceptable.

Strive to be the best you can  
inside your space on the  
risers.

Trust your chorus/quartet  
mates to do their jobs while  
you handle yours the best  
you can.

Don't stretch that neck trying  
to reach high notes. Keep the  
mechanism relaxed.

Don't tuck that chin trying to  
reach low notes. Keep the  
mechanism relaxed.  
Avoid chop at all costs,  
unless otherwise  
orchestrated by the  
interpretation.

Keeping it legato throughout  
for every song you perform.  
ie: perform the song,  
don't just sing it.

Energize and energize again.  
Perhaps with each phrase,  
perhaps with each word.

Sing with that warm fuzzy  
feeling.

Listen carefully, this is a  
listening event.

Well, there you have it. Not  
too much to remember I  
hope!

HEY! This is easy. Right?

## **Just Intonation**

*-by Joe Larson*



Barbershop music is  
traditionally described as four  
part a cappella music in just  
intonation. What the heck  
does that mean?

I'm sure everyone is okay as  
far as the "four part" goes,  
and most people know that  
"a cappella" means that it's  
done without  
accompaniment, with voices  
only. But "just intonation"  
was a puzzler for me until I  
figured it out.

You have to think "just" as in  
"Justice," not as in "just  
passing by."

If you've been singing with a chorus for a while it's a good bet you've heard about "intonation." That's how you describe singing in tune – or not singing in tune, as the case may be. Good intonation means that everyone is on the same tonal center, singing together in key. If you end up a song lower than you started it, your intonation suffered somewhere along the way. There are things you can do to fix that, but that's not the topic today.

There are different kinds of intonations. My favorite text book, The Science of Sound, by Thomas D. Rossing, (Addison-Wesley, 1990) describes three different kinds: Just, Pythagorean, and Equal or Tempered. That last one is the way a piano is usually tuned.

So what makes an intonation "just?" In short, just intonation is a way to produce more harmonious sounds. Rossing refers to Pythagoras of ancient Greece, and quotes Galileo and others to support this, but the bottom line is that combinations of pitches sound better when the pitches are whole number ratios of each other.

For example, the common major triad C-E-G is a combination of three pitches that are in the whole number ratio of 4:5:6. The major third C-E has a ratio of 4:5, and the minor third E-G has a ratio of 5:6. Together they sound pleasing to the ear.

We humans think these whole number combinations of notes sound better than combinations that don't have whole number ratios. You can experiment with this: try singing a chord with a group, and sing your note slightly flat or sharp, and see how it affects the overall result.

Oh, wait. You've probably already done this and heard this before. Unless everyone sings their pitches right on the button, you will hear the discord. But when it's done right, you can hear the overtones and the sound opens up and the chord rings.

That's why directors tell us to sing "on top of the notes." It doesn't mean to sing the notes sharp, it means that we need to stay up and stay locked into the tonal center. If one guy or group of guys flats a note, the other excellent musicians in the chorus or quartet will quickly adjust to keep the overall sound pleasing, but the end result will be that everyone flats.

Now, when everyone flats together you can still produce a pleasing and consonant ringing chord. But to get there, somebody had to goof up in the middle of a note, which robbed that note of its ring.

Just intonation is how to do it right, to produce the most harmonious sounds. But there's a rat in the woodpile of just intonation. The rat is that the just intonation system is pretty much stuck in one key signature at a time. It works fine and sounds great when there are only unaccompanied voices, but it falls apart when you use an instrument like a piano.

Following through on the math is beyond the scope for this article, but it leads to some interesting places. For a quick example, in the just intonation system the notes G# and Ab are not the same, even though they are the same note on a piano.

You could tune a piano so that it played "just" intervals for the key of C, but as soon as you tried to play in a different key it would sound horrible. As it turns out, the

notes and ratios that made such beautiful combinations in the key of C don't work the same in any other key. You would have to retune the piano for every different key. That's why pianos are usually tuned in "even tempered" intonation, where the ratios between all the notes are the same, regardless of the original key. It's a compromise, and it works okay for the most part. The chords sound okay on a piano, but they're not as good as when you sing them and ring them right.

How close is the piano? I did some figuring based on the piano's C major C-E-G triad, and found that the pitch ratios came out to 4.00 to 5.04 to 5.99 instead of 4:5:6. It's close, but it "just" doesn't ring like voices do.

So, when you are trying to use a piano to learn your part, you need to be aware that the notes on the piano do not exactly match the notes you need to sing. Oh, the piano is close enough to get you on the right track with respect to learning a song. But you need to leave the keyboard behind and listen up when you get down to making those glorious four part ringing chords.

There's a simple chart in the Barbershop Harmony Society's publication, "Improving Vocal Techniques Through the Warm Up" that shows the differences between the notes in the tempered scale and the similar notes in the just scale.

To ring a chord in just intonation, you need to sing some of the notes in the scale a little off from what the piano is doing. Using the key of C for example:

- You need to sing the D a little higher than the piano note,

- You need to sing the E a trifle lower,
- You need to sing the F a little lower,
- You need to sing the G a little higher,
- You need to sing the A lower,
- You need to sing the Bb for the seventh chord significantly lower,
- And you need to sing the B significantly lower.

Except for B and the Bb seventh, the differences are very slight, but you can hear them in the results.

Finally, you might notice that the E, or third, needs to be sung a trifle lower than the piano chord. If that's so, how come the director is always yelling at us to get up higher on the thirds?

Rossing actually mentions this. He says, "Many choral conductors prefer the third in a chord slightly raised... to avoid any suggestion of 'flattening' the chord, a particular nemesis of choirs."

We all know what that's about.



Men: The International Blood Drive is coming up fast. May I encourage you all to get involved? To the best of my knowledge we have two LOL chapters registered so far, from Appleton and Stevens Point. This is another opportunity for our local chapters to get out into the community and support a worthwhile project. This is an easy one... get registered and plan to give a helping hand on May 10. It might be no more than assisting the folks who show up... sing a song or two.. and remember, these folks will be in a line so the audience will be changing through the day... singing the same songs ... no problem.

Here is where you can go to get all the necessary info: [http://www.barbershop.org/web/groups/public/documents/pages/pub\\_id](http://www.barbershop.org/web/groups/public/documents/pages/pub_id) Once you're on the team, let me know. It would be nice if we, in the LOL, could be the leader of the pack on this project.

*-submitted by Dan Schobert*



## Northern Gateway Chapter Officers 2008

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*David Quick*

### Music VP

*Nate Peplinski*

### Chapter

### Development/Membership

*Jack Edgerton*

### Program VP

*Joe Larson*

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## More About Genetix

Not only does Genetix get a splash on our opening page of this issue, there is more news regarding one our own popular quartets.

Assuming I get this issue to our membership in time, Genetix will be the opening act for Tonic Solfa at a Muscular Dystrophy Association funder raiser event at the Creske Auditorium in the Mosinee High School on February 23.

The headliner group, Tonic Solfa, is an a cappella foursome with a unique and entertaining sound. You can learn more about Tonic Solfa at their web site, [www.tonicsolfa.com](http://www.tonicsolfa.com).

Tickets are \$15.00 at the door and \$12 in advance. Advance sales are available at the Mosinee High School and at Lee's Piggly Wiggly in Mosinee.



## Put the PR in Performance

*-submitted by Dan Schobert*

**Don't overlook the PR tool that can mean the difference between growth and failure, enhance the pleasure of participating in the hobby, generate revenue and put you on the map.**

*(Excerpts from the Barbershop Harmony Society web page regarding Public Relations)*

This wonder tool? A quality performance package that

*generates increased public awareness.*

If public relations is doing something good, then getting credit for it, then certainly the best thing to do get credit for is your high-quality, broadly appealing entertainment ability.

After all, singing is what we do! We can pound our chests about great adult-education programs such as Harmony College, COTS, *et al.*; we can point to our involvement in community charities, youth outreach and other service activities; we can get mystical about the fraternal bond music build among members - all true, and worth mentioning.

But the rubber meets the road when we open our mouths and sing for people. *Every other PR function exists to provide opportunities for us to sing and spread the sound of barbershop harmony* -- which is how preservation and encouragement take place.

Many people don't know what barbershop harmony is, or may have a mistaken impression. *The only way to teach them is to show them.*

## You are what you sing-and how you present it

A critical element of barbershop's appeal as an entertainment form is our insistence on well-paced presentation that is appropriate for all age groups. We can be better than a lot of the trash on TV and cable - in fact, we have to be! Blue or suggestive humor is neither sophisticated, what the audience expects, nor necessary. For instruction, consider that the Walt Disney

companies have built a multi-billion dollar empire by maintaining absolutely squeaky-clean family entertainment values. No one could ever call their theme parks, films, television or interactive products dull.

Your bearing as you stand in front of an audience tells them what they can expect from the organization as a whole. If your spokesman fumbles around disjointedly while the rest of the singers snicker and shift about, you send two messages: 1) you don't know what you're doing; and 2) you don't respect the audience enough to know what you're doing.

## Clothes make the man?

Image goals vary from chapter to chapter, quartet to quartet. Without delving into the question of stripes-and-straw-hats versus tuxes (both looks are valid, historically stylistic and appropriate), a few costuming factors remain constant:

- Clean, in good repair, well-fitted
- Appropriate to the musical content of the performance
- Appropriate to the venue, event and client. Again, tuxedos probably won't go over well at an outdoor picnic in the summertime. Unless specifically requested, those clown suits probably won't be appropriate for a wedding or funeral!

**Editors Note:** I think that the Northern Gateway Chorus and its affiliated quartets met and exceeded good Public Relations goals at our 2007 Harvest of Harmony. Good job men!

## CHAPTER VISION

*To continue to be a highly respected male choral organization, dedicated to:*

- *Maintaining the Barbershop tradition.*
- *Pursuing vocal improvement.*
- *Seeking opportunities for community involvement.*
- *Recruiting new members and retaining current members.*
- *Promoting personal development.*
- *Entertaining our audiences.*
- *Preserving the joy of Barbershop singing.*

## CHAPTER MISSION STATEMENT

*The Stevens Point Chapter shall dedicate itself to striving for performance excellence, by continually improving the vocal and visual quality of its musical presentations.*

*The chapter shall strive to attract the kind of new members who will contribute their energy, talent, and a strong desire for excellence.*

*The chapter leadership, reflecting the interests of the membership, shall commit itself to maintaining an effective organization that ensures opportunities for improved singing, for quartet participation, and for promoting the Barbershop music style.*

## From Out of the Past

Does anyone know who these guys are?

Quartet name?

Name the members too!

Don't look for help from your editor, I only know who one of them is.



# PLAN FOR FUTURE EVENTS

**Feb 14 (Thur)  
Valentine's Day**  
**May 2-4 (Fri-  
Sun) L'OL Spring  
International  
Pre-lims - La  
Crosse**  
**May 17 (Sat)  
Packerland Div. 1  
- Contest -  
Appleton**  
**Jul 2- 8(Wed-  
Tue)  
International  
Convention -  
Nashville, TN**  
**Jul 4th (Fri)  
Riverfront  
Renezvous (be  
sure to sign up  
for pizza sales)**  
**Oct 4th (Sat)  
Harvest of  
Harmony -  
Stevens Point**

**Oct 24-26(Fri-  
Sun) L'OL Fall  
Contest -  
Appleton, WI**

Stevens Point  
Barbershoppers  
Norm Barnard,  
Editor

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RETURN SERVICE  
REQUESTED

