

CHIMO CHIRPS



March, 2008. Bulletin # 12

Meetings - Monday night at the Saskatchewan Abilities Council, 2319 Louise St., Saskatoon, SK. 7:00 p.m.

Web Site: www.harmonize.com/saskatoon

Musical Memories – by Ken Stephenson

When I was asked to write about my ‘Musical Memories’ I thought WOW what a memory test !

Yes, I guess you would say that music has always been a part of my life, except for a few blips along the way such as getting an education and raising a family. My mother and father of course were very instrumental in the encouragement of our love for music. They both had musical training in piano and voice in the Toronto area. Going west meant some isolation but they were quickly involved in the music scene in churches and communities.

I loved to listen to the Texaco N.Y. Opera on Saturdays, and then my dad would love to give forth with a rousing rendition of ‘The Holy City’. I would try to duplicate it as I sang as a Mario Lanza or Nelson Eddy. I had a captive audience of attentive cattle as I rounded them up for home. Singing on the tractor also was a favorite pastime. There was some brief talk about voice lessons but then the depression hit. My mother was the pianist for the church and all school concerts. I remember one Christmas concert when as an eight year old, I was scheduled to do a duet with an eight year old girl, and I had to put my arm around her at the finale – YUK !

Most Sunday evenings we would gather around the piano with mother playing and singing alto (bari) and dad and the two boys would be harmonizing – how sweet it was. I seemed to have a penchant for wood shedding and could sing tenor. On our way to and from school on the old horse and buggy my brother Harold

and I would sing the ‘old songs’ and I would break into harmony which would pull him off the lead and he would shake his head in frustration. Unfortunately our harmonizing ended when he was killed while in the Air Force.

Later I got married and we moved around Regina, to Great Falls, Montana and Saskatoon. I sang in three church choirs briefly as we moved around. I was quit sure there were Barbershop chapters in Regina and Great Falls but I never heard a word about their activities such as shows and the like. There’s a saying “barber shopping is a best kept secret”. Shortly after arriving in Saskatoon a former music director Frank Strange, Ray Penny and myself, a SPEBSQSA representative and others put the wheels in motion and a Barbershop Chapter was formed - The Chimo Chordsmen. In October 1972 success was achieved and we staged our first show in the fall of 1973 with our sponsors the Regina Wheatland Chorus.

Since that time we have performed from Bemidji, St.Paul, Minn., Fargo & Bismark N.D., Clear Lake, Man., Rosetown, Prince Albert, Kindersley, Regina and many other venues.

In addition to the 35 years of Chorus singing, a great thrill and many experiences took place when I was asked to serve on the Land of Lakes District Board, which I did in two stints for seven years. What a wonderful time of music and administrative work for our North West Division. Our division had 13 chapters but now unfortunately has dwindled down to only six.

The pinnacle of my involvement with Barbershop Harmony was the formation of our quartet “Voice Male” It’s lots of work but has greater rewards. We won ‘Gold Medals’, smiles and applause every time we performed from Yorkton, Clear Lake, Elrose and the Saskatoon area. What a wonderful 35 years my friends. I loved the camaraderie and mostly just singing barbershop together. Thanks for listening.

Ken

The Low Self Esteem Support Group will meet Thursday at 7 p.m. Please use the back door.

More on SP

Everyone uses facial expression and body language in their daily interaction with others. It’s important therefore to apply these same natural and simple communication methods on stage, rather than something artificial. The movements that are being taught by our coach should not be intended to be the same for each person. Complete freedom is intended to maintain individuality. The best way to understand this is that everyone uses basic fundamentals of expression and yet they are all different – naturally! These effects make for an entertaining performance. It’s best to put some animation into it and to avoid stiff, stylized or inappropriate movements.

All parts of the body are indicators of expression. It’s not just the head, eyes, arms and face, but also the fingers, the wrist, the elbows and the shoulders. Even the lift of an eyebrow can bring a reaction from the audience, which points out the importance of what we’re trying to say.

The language of the hand is universal. Note that everyone recognizes that the hand with palm facing down, blesses; the hand with palm facing up, supports; with palm forward it rejects; vertically it divides. The clutching hand means greed or possessiveness and the fist indicates a threat or reinforcement.

The wrists, elbow and shoulders are called the thermometers, since their use indicates ‘how much’ but not necessarily ‘what kind’ of expression. These combinations should tell plainly what is intended. The shoulder is of vital importance since the elevation indicates how strongly an emotion is felt. It is said that no real emotion is possible without some elevation or movement of the shoulders. The shoulders multiply a hundredfold the expression of the eyes and the mouth in revealing emotion.

Understanding expressive gestures are so important to the visual presentation. The best gesture is that which is least apparent, but beware of meaningless gestures. There is nothing more deplorable than a gesture without a purpose. A gesture should always precede the word. Lastly, in the case of quartet performance, maintain eye contact with an area or individual in the audience for at least a phrase before moving on.

These are modified excerpts which is taken from material by Delsarte’s “Laws of Expression” who lived in the middle 1800’s. He researched and taught through classroom lectures “Applied Aesthetics”



What feeling is this chap expressing?

Did you ever wonder – what hair color do they put on driver’s licenses of bald men ?

SHOW NEWS

During the remaining few weeks before the show there is really only one concern, and that is ... **Learn your words and music!** All other matters have either been previously announced or will be included in this page.

For example, your wardrobe information was announced at a recent Monday night, and is repeated here as a reminder.

Show - First Half:

The Chorus will wear their “informal outfit” which includes the maroon T-shirt, your own black pants, black shoes & socks. We will also wear the flat-top skimmer hat. Most of you have your own but those that don't can pick up another skimmer hat from our wardrobe guy, Carl Bungay. It won't matter whether the hat band is red, or coloured ... they will all be OK.

Those quartets who are participating in the show, are encouraged to wear your own vest, or your own unique costume to fit-in with the quartet song you have selected for the show. Your “quartet outfit” will fit right in with the maroon T-shirt everyone else is wearing.

Show - Second Half:

During “intermission” the Chorus will switch to the “formal outfit” namely, the black tuxedo. This includes the frilly white tux shirt, black bow tie, tux jacket and pants, and black shoes, etc. Please be sure that your shoes are shined, tux pants look pressed, and the white shirt has been cleaned.

By now most of you will have sold your package of show tickets. A few have already asked for more so that's a good sign. The rest of you are reminded that our ticket sales success is up to you. So - sell, sell sell! The very successful ad fundraising campaign is basically over, so please turn in any remaining cash or cheques to Ken Stephenson who is the Co-ordinator of our advertising campaign. Congratulations to all of you who have participated in the campaign.

The C.D.A.C. auditorium is ready and waiting, and the Headliners have airline tickets in their hands. I'm sure our chapter quartets are working diligently to be ready for show time.

So things are pretty well in hand. In the next *Chirps* bulletin in April, I'll publish last minute instructions about when and where to go; when our extra practices will be scheduled; times and places for the dress rehearsals, etc, etc. So keep this *Chirps* page for reference and stay tuned for next month's Show News bulletin to get the rest of the story.

In the meantime - **Learn your words and music!**

The stage set-up will be as follows. We'll use five of our own sets of 3-step risers. The chorus will get onto risers from both ends and from one opening in the rear. We may have some tall stools available at both ends to be used by anyone who needs them. Several small tables will be placed on-stage (behind the risers), to be used for quartet props, or for the various instruments needed by the “Jug-Band Six”.

Jay Wilson, the person we used for the past several years has again agreed to be Show MC. He will introduce the chorus at the beginning, and will introduce the quartets as their turn comes up. Each quartet will move forward from their chorus position, sing their song, and return to riser position when they're done. There will be a minute for each quartet to set-up behind the risers while the MC speaks.

We hope to have many past chorus members and former Music Directors and Chapter Presidents in the audience on show night. The MC will be acknowledging their presence and may have a few comments to make to the audience at that time about this year being our 35th anniversary show.

Of course, our **Fallcreek** guest quartet will be performing their 20-30 minute segment right after intermission, but just before the break the **Marion Graham Boys Choir** will come on stage to perform a 4-song segment. They will close the first-half with an interesting medley of “My Coney Island Baby”. Some of you may have heard the ‘Boys Choir’ sing this medley during the *TeleMiracle* event. They certainly included plenty of choreography into their performance and will be a nice feature to our show.

One final bit of info - while Fallcreek quartet opens the second-half, all chorus members will be seated in the audience in the front rows of the auditorium, just like last year. When the Boys Choir comes on stage, we'll also move into the audience to hear them.