

Overview

This is a unique program for an in-school educational program for middle and high schools in their area. It takes place on weekdays during normal school hours, mostly scheduled during regular choir class time.

Detailed Planning

They acknowledge that there is a big challenge in contacting schools to offer the program. Emails usually end up in Junk; USPS letters are often screened by the front office. Teachers who have taken advantage of the program are the best advocate and their endorsement of the experience can be used to promote it to others.

Many county or area school districts have Fine and Performing Arts Coordinators who can share information about the program to their teachers and might open new opportunities.

Marketing

By inviting the schools that participate in their outreach program to perform in their annual chorus show, they build a strong relationship with the schools, and focus on continual relationship building. In an effort to reach new educators, they often extend invitations to them to attend their show for free admission.

Day-Of Scheduling

Because this program is held in schools, during a class hour, they have to have a well-planned schedule. It starts with a short explanation of western vocal music and how it differs from barbershop harmony. They focus on class participation by teaching tags, allowing the class to sing together and, if time allows, form pickup quartets to sing tags. The focus of the day is to emphasize the good singing techniques already taught by the teacher; to build on the foundations they have already laid. They utilize video examples of chorus and quartets, both women and men to let the students see barbershop in action.

Personnel

When going into a school, the chorus selects members who can sing accurately in a quarter and teach their part with confidence and a fun and positive way. These are generally section leaders and/or members of quartets singing at B levels or higher. This is an advantage because these individuals are usually self-sufficient and dependable. The key is having a consistent team...if the chorus always has a steady stream of singers to choose from available, then smaller groups can be mixed and matched to fit into specific school requests.

History of Western Music and Barbershop Harmony

The story of music begins with the ancients who used music in mystic ceremonies, festivals, war dances, and work songs. Every civilization, ancient to modern, has used and enjoyed music in one form or another.

The barbershop harmony we sing is a combination of two cultures—European music and African music. The European music began with one-line melodies sung in religious ceremonies. It was called plainsong or Gregorian chant, and it was simply a melody of one note at a time. Over the course of many years, as the singers sang those one-note melodies, they realized that two of those melodies could be sung together, and that's how harmony began. We'll be teaching you some partner songs in a few minutes to show how that works.

Eventually there was music with several notes being sung at once and it went something like this: (Singers sing: Lead – G; Bass- D, Tenor-B). That was lovely harmony and was considered the proper way to harmonize music—they called it “highbrow.” When Europeans came to what is now the United States, this was the music they brought with them.

When Africans were brought to North America, they brought their musical tradition with them, which was much more free and experimental. They were interested in trying new things and improvising other harmonies. They were the ones who added this fourth note—(Singers repeat G, D, B, then baritone adds F). THAT'S the one that brings the goosebumps and makes the chord sound fun and exciting. That's called a dominant 7th chord, or as we like to call it—a barbershop 7th! So we have our African-born ancestors to thank for barbershop harmony, as well as other styles of music that use improvisation, such as jazz, the blues, and even rock and roll.

We think it became known as barbershop harmony because in those days the barbershop was a community gathering place for the men, especially for the black community. The barber not only cut hair, but he also pulled teeth and did minor surgery! While men were waiting for their turn, they would sing a simple popular tune of the day and friends would improvise harmony to go with it.

Some musical purists called this kind of harmony “lowbrow,” but it became very popular throughout the United States at the end of the 1800s and early 1900s. Barbershop quartets were popular acts in the old traveling shows that featured elaborate scenes. One scene might show a pirate ship, another a circus, yet another a park with a merry-go-round. A barbershop quartet could sing in front of a closed curtain and keep the audience entertained while the huge props that set those elaborate scenes were changed out behind the curtain.

In the 1920s and 30s recorded music was invented, and those traveling shows with their barbershop quartets began to die out. A group of men in Kansas City didn't want barbershop harmony to die out and in 1938 they created the Society for The Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America—it's now simply called the Barbershop Harmony Society—to keep it alive. A few years after that, their wives decided it wasn't fair for the men to have all the fun, and they created a society for women, called Sweet Adelines, named after a popular barbershop quartet song.

Today those organizations and other barbershop harmony organizations around the world have choruses and quartets who perform and compete, singing barbershop harmony.

Introduce YouTube videos

Trash songs

1 2 3 4 5

One bot-tle o' pop, two bot-tle o' pop, three bot-tle o' pop four bot-tle o' pop, five bot-tle o' pop,

6 7 8 9 10 11

six bot-tle o'pop, seven bot-tle o' pop eight! Don't throw your trash in my back yard, my back yard,

12 13 14 15 16 17 18

my back yard, Don't throw your trash in my back yard, my back yard's full! Trash bags and tin cans,

19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26

tin cans, tin cans, trash bags and tin cans, when will it end? There's trash in the ci - ty, there's

27 28 29 30 31 32

trash in the street, there's trash in the coun - try, keep A - me - ri - ca neat!