

# Arranging Barbershop Harmony

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SECOND EDITION

Carole Prietto

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*For Paula Mauritzen, my first and best teacher.*



*What is crucial is getting them off to the right start when they know nothing*

—ANONYMOUS

# Introduction

The only thing more fun than singing four-part harmony, barbershop style is creating four-part harmony, barbershop style. This book is an introduction to arranging of barbershop harmony, focusing on arranging for high voices (SSAA). The intended audience is beginners just starting out in arranging and intermediate arrangers looking to take their music to the next level. It has grown out of my own experience, my own self-study in arranging, my experience as a scholarship recipient in the former Sweet Adelines International Music Arrangers Program, and teaching many beginning and intermediate Sweet Adeline arrangers in the U.S., Canada, Great Britain, Australia, and New Zealand. In writing it I wanted to:

- Incorporate the best current teaching from both Sweet Adelines and the Barbershop Harmony Society, including new learning about the African American origins of the barbershop style, the arranger's role in furthering diversity and inclusion in our organizations, and the importance of inclusion in the songs we choose to arrange.
- Incorporate material on the judging systems from both Sweet Adelines and the Barbershop Harmony Society. The BHS has now opened its membership to singers of all genders so their judging system and chord vocabulary are covered in the book.
- Discuss arranging current popular songs, in addition to arranging for the contest stage.
- Discuss the business of arranging, especially copyright. Now more than ever a knowledge of copyright basics is essential to managing a catalog.
- Tap into the power of the Internet. Online resources now exist for sheet music, for performances of virtually any song or artist, for ear training, music notation and music theory. The popularity of mobile devices has given us apps for any aspect of music learning. Social media allows arrangers all over the world to have ongoing discussions about the craft of arranging. Links to online resources will be found throughout the book, and in the Resources chapter at the end.

While the book is intended for those just starting out in arranging, it does assume that the arranger has note reading skills in both clefs and is familiar with chord symbols. In September 2019, Sweet Adelines launched a new Arranger Certification Program (ACP). The material in this book will help in preparing for the tests which make up Level 1, as well as the intermediate work of Level 2.

Second edition updates:

- All links have been checked; a few new ones have been added.
- Changes to the formatting of the links, to make the book more accessible to readers using screen readers.
- Since the first edition was published, Sweet Adelines International has instituted a Song Assessment initiative, with the goal of furthering inclusiveness in our repertoire. There is a new discussion of Song Assessment and the Song Evaluation Database.
- The section on manuscript preparation has been greatly expanded, with additional discussion about notation software. Two of the major notation software packages – Sibelius and Dorico – now have iPad apps; Sibelius has an iPhone app as well. Staffpad, originally developed for the Windows Surface platform, is now available for iPad. These new apps mean arrangers have a wealth of choices for notation software and are no longer limited to traditional desktop applications.
- New information on copyright outside of the U.S.

I hope these pages help you in your own journey as a barbershop arranger. Please let me know what works, what doesn't, and any additional material that you would like to see.

Carole Prietto

July 2023



# Foundations of Arranging

This chapter will discuss the building blocks for barbershop arranging: some basics of music theory, the chords which make up the vocabulary of barbershop harmony, and an introduction to voicing and voice leading. Let's begin by discussing the characteristics of the barbershop style.

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## Characteristics of Barbershop

- Four parts, known as tenor, lead, baritone, and bass, with melody in an inner voice – the lead part
- Unaccompanied
- Consonance
- Overtones (or “lock and ring”)
- Tri-Tone Energy
- Harmonic movement around the Circle of Fifths.
- Distinct use of creative devices, influenced by African American musical styles

These things are the basis for everything we do in barbershop: why we sing certain chords and not others, how and why we voice chords in the way we do, the creative devices we use in our arrangements, how and why we balance our sound in the way we do, why certain songs work better than others as barbershop songs. Let's take a closer look at each one.

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### Four parts, unaccompanied

The basic fact of four parts with no accompaniments means that the singers have to provide all the forward motion. In barbershop there's no rhythm section or instrumental backing to fill in white spaces and keep the music moving. Often, the embellishments in our songs are there to provide that musical and rhythmic propellant. Melody in the lead part

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### Consonance

Put simply, consonance refers to sounds which are pleasing to the ear. The strongest barbershop chords have a strong sense of consonance; the weakest ones do not.

## Overtones

The physics of barbershop harmony is an enormous topic. Put simply: any time you play or sing a tone, you are in fact producing more than one sound. First, there's a fundamental tone, vibrating at a specific frequency. In addition to that fundamental sound, the pitch A has a series of overtones, also known as the harmonic series. The tones of the harmonic series are mathematically related to the fundamental frequency. When overtones produced by the lowest tone (usually in the bass part) are reinforced by notes and overtones produced in the upper parts, the result is an audible overtone, also known as ring. The strongest chords in the barbershop chord vocabulary will have tones that reinforce these overtone patterns, making them more conducive to ringing chords.

## Tri-Tone Energy and Harmonic Movement Around the Circle of Fifths

We noted that consonance is a characteristic of the barbershop style. Does that mean dissonance has no place in barbershop? Not at all.

First, what is a tri-tone? The tri-tone is the interval between the perfect fourth and the perfect fifth. In the key of C, the interval of C to F makes a perfect fourth. The interval of C to G makes a perfect fifth. The interval between the two, C to F# (augmented 4th) or C to Gb (diminished 5th), is the tri-tone. It's called a tri-tone because it's made up of 3 whole-step intervals. Start on C and go up one whole step (D), then another one (E), then another one (F#/Gb). C to F#/Gb is a tri-tone. Sung as a melodic interval (melodic = one note at a time, like a melody), the tri-tone is very difficult to execute. Sung harmonically (harmonic=both notes together, like a harmony), it is highly dissonant. By itself the tri-tone does not, and cannot ring. However, the tri-tone interval is found in a number of places within the barbershop chord vocabulary, especially in our strongest barbershop chords.

Chord	Spelling (tri-tone interval in red)
Barbershop 7th	C7 = C, E, G, Bb
Barbershop 9th with omitted root	C7(9) = C (omitted), E, G, Bb, D
Half-Diminished 7th chord	C half-dim7 = C, Eb, Gb, Bb
(Fully) Diminished 7th chord	This chord has two tri-tones Cdim7 = C, Eb, Gb, Bbb C and Gb = tri-tone Bbb = A on the keyboard. Eb and A = tri-tone
Minor 6th chord	Cm6: C, Eb, G, A

Consider one of our classic vocal warmups.

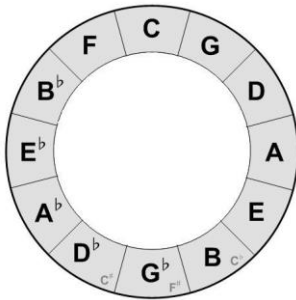
The musical notation shows a classic vocal warmup in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The Tenor Lead part (treble clef) has notes G4, A4, Bb4, C5, and D5. The Bari Bass part (bass clef) has notes C3, D3, Eb3, E3, and F3. The lyrics are "me may my moh moo". Above the Tenor Lead staff, the chords F, F7, Bb, C7, and F are indicated. The Tenor Lead part has a fermata over the final "moo" note.

The “may” chord has Eb in baritone and A in tenor. The “moh” chord has E in lead and Bb in tenor. Both of these are tri-tones. In both cases, the tri-tones lead to a major triad, which does not have tri-tones. That “pull”, from the tension found in the tri-tone to the resolution in the chord that comes after is what makes the barbershop style. Tension and resolution is not unique to barbershop, but it’s very much a part of the barbershop style. Watch [Kirk Young, BHS Music Judge, demonstrate Tri-Tone Energy](#) (Starts at 11:18 in the video). This demonstration was given at Harmony University in 2017.

The BHS Contest and Judging Manual notes:

*Songs that feature circle of fifths movement exhibit what is known as tritonal movement, which creates energy and tension. As a result, these songs will have a high frequency of barbershop 7th and 9th chords and provide the characteristic sound of barbershop. (BHS Contest and Judging Manual – Music Category)*

Tri-tone energy combines with another characteristic of the barbershop sound, that of barbershop 7th chords moving around the Circle of Fifths.

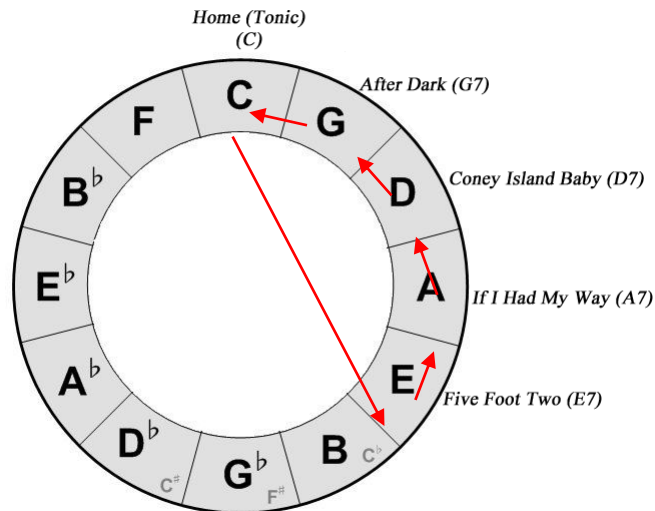


The Circle of Fifths is a tool for understanding how different keys relate to each other. The video [Dave Stevens, What Are We Trying to Preserve](#) is an excellent discussion of barbershop 7ths moving around the Circle of Fifths. **Watch the video.** It’s not enough to see the chord names on paper; you need to hear the relationships of the chords. Watch all the way to the end, including the section on Franz Liszt!

In the video the chords are

- Home Base, or **tonic** . Songs tend to start at the tonic, move away from it, and work their way back to the tonic. Dave plays **C major**
- **After Dark chord** (1 chord away) - After dark, when **EV**-'ry thing is still - **G7**
- **Coney Island Baby chord** (2 chords away) - Goodbye, my Coney Island **BA**-by - **D7**
- **If I Had My Way chord** (3 chords away) - If I had my **WAY** - **A7**
- **Five Foot Two, Eyes of Blue** (4 chords away) – Five foot two, **EYES** of blue - **E7**

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### Creative Devices and African American Roots of the Barbershop Style

An early book on the barbershop style, *Barbershop Ballads and How to Sing Them* by Sigmund Spaeth, argued that barbershop had origins in European musical styles. Recent research by Professor Lynn Abbott of Tulane University, Dr. Jim Henry, Dr. David Wright, and others has shown that barbershop harmony in fact began as an African American art form and that many of the embellishments we associate with barbershop such as backtime, call and response, echo, patter, and swipes, come from African American music. The [BHS website](#) and the BHS's publication, *The Harmonizer*, have excellent resources for more information about the African American roots of the style. See especially:

- Jim Henry, "The Historical Roots of Barbershop Harmony". *The Harmonizer*, July/August 2001
- Kevin Keller, "The Hallmark 7th Chord". *The Harmonizer*, July-August 2009
- David Wright, "The African American Roots of the Style (And Why It Matters)" *The Harmonizer* Jan-Feb 2015
- David Wright, [Harmony University Online: History of Barbershop](#)

All back issues of *The Harmonizer* are available in the BHS members area. See also: Lynn Abbott, "Play That Barber Shop Chord": A Case for the African-American Origin of Barbershop Harmony. *American Music* Vol. 10, No. 3 (Autumn, 1992), pp. 289-325. Available online at [JSTOR](#).

## Theory Basics

**Note names** - Some parts of the world use American terms for note names; others use British terms. This book will use the American terms.

<u>American</u>	<u>British</u>
16th note	semiquaver
8th note	quaver
quarter note	crotchet
half note	minim
whole note	semibreve

If you've had formal training in music theory, you will probably know all the material below and more. If you haven't had formal theory training, this section provides some basic theory that will help to understand how barbershop harmony works.

**Half step** – Distance from any key on the keyboard to the very next key, up or down. On the keyboard, C to C# is a half-step; A to Bb is also a half-step. There are no black keys between the notes B/C and the notes E/F. These are also half-steps.

**Whole step** – Distance of 2 half-steps, such as C to D. Because there are no black keys between B/C, a whole step above B is C#. Because there are no black keys between E/F, a whole step above E is F#

**Interval** – The distance between two tones. There are two parts to naming an interval.

- **Number** – the number of letter names taken up by the interval. Example: If you start at C, in order to have an interval of a 3rd, you must have some kind of E. C is 1, D is 2, and E is 3..
- **Quality** – major (M), minor (m), perfect (P), augmented (aug), or diminished (dim). Finding the correct quality involves counting half-steps.

## Interval qualities - Starting Note of C

Interval	Note	Number of 1/2 steps	Other name
Perfect Unison, or simply Unison (P1)	C	0	
Minor 2nd (m2)	Db	1	Half-step
Major 2nd (M2)	D	2	Whole-step
Minor 3rd (m3)	Eb	3	
Major 3rd (M3)	E	4	
Perfect 4th (P4)	F	5	
Augmented 4th (aug4)	F#	#5	Tri-tone
Diminished 5th (dim5)	Gb	b6	
Perfect 5th (P5)	G	7	
Minor 6th (m6)	Ab	8	In some contexts, augmented 5th (G#)
Major 6th (M6)	A	9	In some contexts, diminished 7th (Bbb)
Minor 7th (m7)	Bb	10	
Major 7th (M7)	B	11	
Perfect Octave, or simply Octave (P8)	C	12	

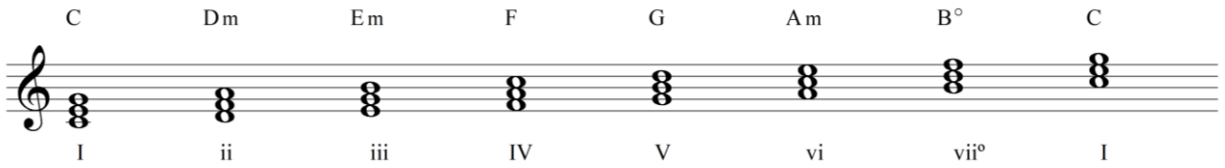
**Major scale** – The tones of the major scale are made up of a pattern of whole (W) and half-steps (H) which looks like this:

The image shows a treble clef staff with a major scale starting on C. The notes are C, D, E, F, G, A, B, C. Below the staff, the intervals between notes are labeled: C-D (whole step), D-E (whole step), E-F (half step), F-G (whole step), G-A (whole step), A-B (whole step), and B-C (half step).

**Scale degrees and names** - Each tone of the scale is given a number, known as a scale degree, and a name.

Scale tone	C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C
Scale degree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8 (1)
Name	Tonic	Supertonic	Mediant	Sub-Dominant	Dominant	Sub-Mediant	Leading Tone	Tonic

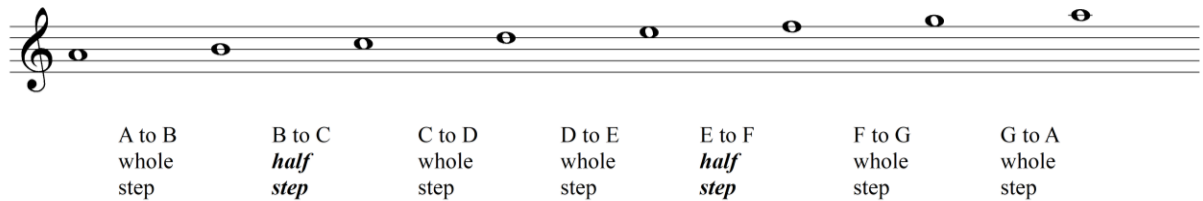
Triads can be built on each of these scale tones. Triads are made up of a Root (the lowest tone and the one which gives the chord its name); some kind of 3rd (major or minor) and some kind of 5th – usually perfect; occasionally augmented or diminished. In a C major triad, for example, C is the root, E is a major 3rd, and G is a perfect 5th. Each triad is given a Roman numeral to indicate both its **degree** (which scale tone is the root) and its **quality** -- major, minor, or diminished.



- Major triads based on scale tones 1, 4, and 5 are **major**. These are shown with an upper case Roman numeral.
- Major triads based on scale tones 2, 3, and 6 are **minor**. These are shown with a lower case Roman numeral.
- The major triad based on scale tone 7 is **diminished**. It is shown with a lower case Roman numeral 7 followed by a small superscript circle.

The pattern of major, minor, and diminished chords is the same for all major scales. These are the **diatonic** triads, meaning they are the triads which use only the notes that belong to the key signature.

**Minor scale** – There are three different forms of the minor scale; I’ll focus on one, the natural minor. When I use the term “minor” or “minor scale” I’m referring to the natural minor. Here is the key of A minor, which has no sharps or flats. Like the major scale, the minor scale has a characteristic pattern of whole and half-steps.



As in the major scale, scale tones for the minor scale have a scale degree and a name.

<b>Key of A minor</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>A</b>
<b>Scale Degree</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8 (1)
<b>Name</b>	Tonic	Supertonic	Mediant	Subdominant	Dominant	Sub-Mediant	Leading Tone	Tonic

As with the major scale, triads can be built on each scale tone of the minor scale. Each minor triad has its own quality – major, minor, or diminished.

A musical staff in treble clef showing the triads for the A minor scale. The triads are: Am (A2, C3, E3), B° (B2, D3, F3), C (C3, E3, G3), Dm (D3, F3, A3), Em (E3, G3, B3), F (F3, A3, C4), G (G3, B3, D4), and Am (A3, C4, E4). Below the staff, Roman numerals are listed: i, ii°, III, iv, v, VI, VII, i.

- Minor Triads based on scale tones 1, 4, and 5 are **minor**
- Minor triads based on scale tones 3, 6, and 7 are **major**.
- The minor triad based on scale tone 2 is **diminished**.

**Relative minor and major** -- Each major key has a corresponding minor key which has the same key signature, known as the **relative minor**. The relative minor corresponds to scale tone 6 of the major scale. Similarly, minor keys have a **relative major** which corresponds to scale tone 3 of the minor scale. Here are the key signatures for all the major keys, with their relative minor.

**Major and Relative Minor – Flat Keys**

A musical staff in treble clef showing key signatures for flat keys. The notes are: C major (no sharps/flats), F major (1 flat: B), Bb major (2 flats: B, E), Eb major (3 flats: B, E, A), and Ab major (4 flats: B, E, A, D). Below the staff, the relative minor keys and their key signatures are listed: A minor (No sharps/flats), D minor (1 flat: B), G minor (2 flats: B, E), C minor (3 flats: B, E, A), and F minor (4 flats: B, E, A, D).

A musical staff in treble clef showing key signatures for flat keys. The notes are: Db major (5 flats: B, E, A, D, G), Gb major (6 flats: B, E, A, D, G, C), and Cb major (7 flats: B, E, A, D, G, C, F). Below the staff, the relative minor keys and their key signatures are listed: Bb minor (5 flats: B, E, A, D, G), Eb minor (6 flats: B, E, A, D, G, C), and Ab minor (7 flats: B, E, A, D, G, C, F).

## Major and Relative Minor – Sharp Keys

C major  
A minor  
No sharps/  
flats

G major  
E minor  
1 sharp: F

D major  
B minor  
2 sharps: F, C

A major  
F# minor  
3 sharps: F, C, G

E major  
C# minor  
4 sharps: F, C, G, D

B major  
G# minor  
5 sharps: F, C, G, D, A

F# major  
D# minor  
6 sharps: F, C, G, D, A, E

C# major  
A# minor  
7 sharps: F, C, G, D, A, E, B

### Root Position and Inversions -

Triads are made up of a root, some kind of 3rd, and some kind of 5th. Four-note chords such as the barbershop 7th are made up of a triad with a 4th tone added to it.

- If the root is on the bottom, the chord is in **root position**
- If the 3rd is on the bottom, the chord is in **1st inversion**
- If the 5th is on the bottom, the chord is in **2nd inversion**
- Four-note chords, such as the barbershop 7th, can have a 3rd inversion . If the 7th, or other added tone, is on the bottom, the chord is in **3rd inversion**

Inversion is not the same as voicing. If the root is at the bottom of the chord, the chord is in root position no matter how the notes above it are voiced. The same is true for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd inversion.

Gm
Gm
Gm/B $\flat$ 
Gm/B $\flat$ 
C7/G
C7/G

Both are in root position. The root (G) is at the bottom of the chord
Both are in 1st inversion. The 3rd (B $\flat$ ) is at the bottom of the chord.
Both are in 2nd inversion. The 5th (G) is at the bottom of the chord.

**Primary and secondary chords** – In major keys, the primary chords are I, IV, and V. In minor keys, the primary chords are i, iv, and V. The others are considered secondary chords. (NOTE: The Sweet Adeline music category defines primary chords as major triad, barbershop 7th, and barbershop 9th).

**Diatonic / Chromatic** – Diatonic refers to notes contained within a key signature. Chromatic can refer to (1) notes which fall outside of a key signature (2) a series of notes moving in half-steps.

**Enharmonic** – Two different names for the same tone or the same chord. For example, C# is enharmonic with Db; G# is enharmonic with Ab. The minor 6th, the dominant 9th, and the half-diminished 7th chords are all enharmonic with each other, because all three chords have the same four tones.

**Dominant** -- (1) Scale tone 5 of the major or minor scale (2) a particular chord voicing, made up of the major triad with a minor 7th tone above it (C-E-G-B $\flat$ ). This voicing is known as a **Dominant 7th**. In barbershop we also call it the Barbershop 7th. In chord symbols, it's shown by the number 7 with no prefix (C7)

### Secondary Dominant

The Sweet Adelines Judging Category Description Book notes:

*The most interesting barbershop songs are those whose melodies imply a wide variety of chord progressions utilizing the dominant-to-tonic resolution. Application of the dominant-to-tonic resolution is a particularly significant characteristic of barbershop harmony, including frequent use of secondary dominant 7ths (SAI Judging Category Description Book – Music Category)*

The BHS Contest and Judging Manual notes:

*Songs that feature circle of fifths movement exhibit what is known as tritonal movement, which creates energy and tension. As a result, these songs will have a high frequency of barbershop 7th and 9th chords and provide the characteristic sound of barbershop. (BHS Contest and Judging Manual – Music Category)*

Because secondary dominants are key to defining the barbershop style, understanding them is important. **Secondary dominants are dominant 7th chords which are not diatonic to the home key.**

We saw earlier how you can build triads on all the degrees of the major scale. If you add one more note on top of those triads, you will get a 7th chord. In any major key there will be only one dominant 7th chord that is diatonic to that key. It's V7 the dominant 7th chord, based on scale tone 5.

**Diatonic 7th Chords**

Cmaj7    Dm7    Em7    Fmaj7    G7    Am7    Bm7(b5)    Cmaj7

IM7    ii7    iii7    IVM7    V7    vi7    vii7(b5)

We can make dominant 7ths out of other scale tones, but to do that we must add accidentals to them.

- The ii7 chord (Dm7) can be made into a dominant 7th chord (II7) if we add an accidental, F#. That II7 chord is a dominant of some other chord. In this case, D7 is dominant of G (V). In Roman numerals that's expressed as "V7/V", the dominant 7th of a chord based on V.
- The Em7 (iii7) becomes an E7 (III7) chord by adding the G#. That III7 chord is also a secondary dominant. It's the dominant of A (vi). In Roman numerals, its V7/vi, the dominant of the chord based on vi.
- Similarly, Am7 (vi7) becomes an A7 chord (VI7) if we add the accidental, C#. It's the dominant 7th (V7) of D (ii). In Roman numerals, it's V7/ii.

**Diatonic 7th Chords**

Cmaj7    Dm7    Em7    Fmaj7    G7    Am7    Bm7(b5)    Cmaj7

IM7    ii7    iii7    IVM7    V7    vi7    vii7(b5)

**Secondary Dominants**

C7    D7    E7    F7    G7    A7    B7

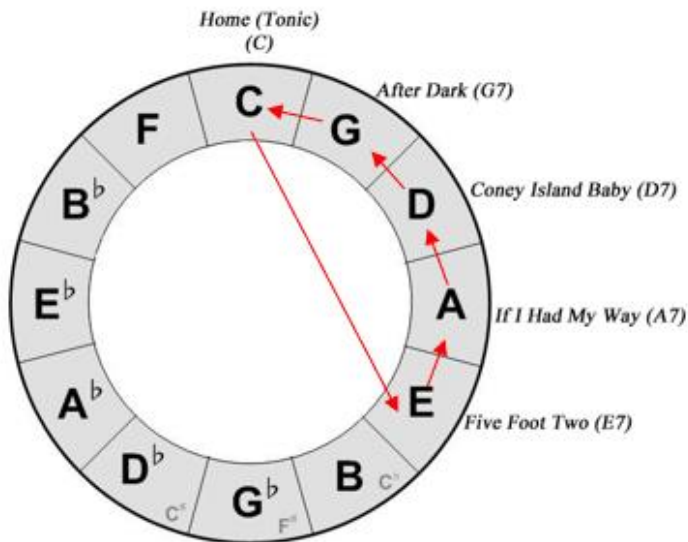
I7    II7    III7    IV7    V7    VI7    VII7    I7

(V7/IV)    (V7/V)    (V7/vi)    not    (V7/I)    (V7/ii)    (V7/iii)    (V7/IV)

not a secondary dominant. All the others are secondary dominants

The same principles apply in all the major keys.

Look again at the [Dave Stevens example](#). When he plays *Five Foot Two Eyes of Blue*, the chords are : C | E7 | A7 | D7 | G7 | C. The E7, A7, and D7 chords are secondary dominants.



Another way to think of secondary dominants. They are chords from *outside* the key whose function is to bring the music to a chord *inside* the key.

Why is the IV7 chord not a secondary dominant?. Here's the explanation, from Jeffrey Evans' book, [Exploring Theory With Practica Musica, p.135](#)

*You can convert any of the triads in a key into secondary dominants, except the IV chord in a major scale or the VI chord in a minor scale. Why can't those chords function as secondary dominants? Because there's no scale note a perfect fourth above them. For example, the IV chord in C is built on F, and a perfect fourth above F is Bb, which is not in the C scale. So there's no note in the C scale that could use F as its dominant.*

**Implied harmony** -- Any song has an underlying harmony which is suggested by the melody. Implied harmony refers to the harmonies and chord progressions suggested by the composer's melody.

**Harmonic rhythm** -- Frequency of harmonic changes over time. A song with few harmonic changes is said to have a slow harmonic rhythm. A song with more harmonic changes is said to have a faster harmonic rhythm. Don't be misled by the use of the word "rhythm" – harmonic rhythm has nothing to do with note values such as half, quarter, 8th, etc. Whether harmonic rhythm is slow or fast, what is especially important is the ability to hear harmonic rhythm. If you play guitar or piano by ear, you've probably had the experience of hearing that a chord you've been playing has to change at a

certain spot. That's harmonic rhythm. You might add chords or embellish the melody, but your ear and your fingers know that there are some changes that must happen at certain places in the song.

**Harmonic pillars (pillar chords)** -- Some harmonic changes are required; they are the ones which underly the melody of the song. These required harmonies, the places where the underlying chord must change, are known as **harmonic pillars** or **pillar chords**, and they are places where the chord root changes. Understanding these primary harmonies (root changes) is the basic foundation for a barbershop arrangement. Primary harmonic changes usually occur on strong beats of measures. In 2/4 and 3/4 time they generally happen on the downbeat. In 4/4 time, changes usually occur on beats 1 and 3.

# Barbershop Chord Vocabulary

The Sweet Adelines chord vocabulary recognizes 11 chords.

- **Triads**
  - Major Triad
  - Minor Triad
  - Augmented Triad
- **Seventh Chords**
  - Dominant (Barbershop) 7th
  - Major 7th
  - Minor 7th
  - Diminished 7th
- **Ninth Chords**
  - Dominant (Barbershop) 9th
  - Major Triad with added 9th
- **Sixth Chords**
  - Major 6th
  - Minor 6th

The Barbershop Harmony Society also recognizes these 11 chords, and includes a few others.

- Diminished Triad
- Half-Diminished 7th
- Augmented 7th
- Dominant 7th with flatted 5th

## **Doubling**

Because we sing four parts, three-note chords such as triads must have a doubled tone.

- Major triad - Double the root.
- Minor triad - Any tone can be doubled. Root and 3rd are strongest, but 5th is also acceptable.
- Augmented triad – Any tone can be doubled. Strongest is to double the lowest tone.

Four-note chords have no double. All four tones must always be present.

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## Triads

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### Major Triad

**Spelling:** Root, Major 3rd, Perfect 5th (1, 3, 5)

**Voicing:** Strongest with bass on root and root doubled. Bass can double with any of the upper parts, but upper parts don't double with each other.

	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>C</b>	C	E	G
<b>C#</b>	C#	E#	G#
<b>Db</b>	Db	F	Ab
<b>D</b>	D	F#	A
<b>D#</b>	D#	Fx	A#
<b>Eb</b>	Eb	G	Bb
<b>E</b>	E	G#	B
<b>F</b>	F	A	C
<b>F#</b>	F#	A#	C#
<b>Gb</b>	Gb	Bb	Db
<b>G</b>	G	B	D
<b>G#</b>	G#	B#	D#
<b>Ab</b>	Ab	C	Eb
<b>A</b>	A	C#	E
<b>Bb</b>	Bb	D	F
<b>B</b>	B	D#	F#

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## Minor Triad

**Spelling:** Root, Minor 3rd, Perfect 5th (1, b3, 5)

**Voicing:**

- Bass on root if minor triad is the primary harmony.
- Bass on 3rd when the minor triad is substituting for its relative major (for example, C-E-A-C substituting for C-E-G-C. This is a common substitution. This chord is sometimes referred to as a "substitute 6th" chord, because it's the same as a major 6th chord without the 5th.

	<b>1</b>	<b>b3</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Cm</b>	C	E $\flat$	G
<b>C#m</b>	C#	E	G#
<b>Dbm</b>	D $\flat$	F $\flat$	A $\flat$
<b>Dm</b>	D	F	A
<b>D#m</b>	D#	F#	A#
<b>Ebm</b>	E $\flat$	G $\flat$	B $\flat$
<b>Em</b>	E	G	B
<b>Fm</b>	F	A $\flat$	C
<b>F#m</b>	F#	A	C#
<b>Gbm</b>	G $\flat$	B $\flat\flat$	D $\flat$
<b>Gm</b>	G	B $\flat$	D
<b>G#m</b>	G#	B	D#
<b>Abm</b>	A $\flat$	C $\flat$	E $\flat$
<b>Am</b>	A	C	E
<b>Bbm</b>	B $\flat$	D $\flat$	F
<b>Bm</b>	B	D	F#

## Augmented Triad

**Spelling:** Root, Major 3rd, Augmented 5th  
(1, 3, #5). Augmented 5th: Perfect 5th raised 1/2 step

**Voicing:** Bass can be on any tone

	1	3	#5
<b>Caug</b>	C	E	G#
<b>C#aug</b>	C#	E#	Gx
<b>Dbaug</b>	Db	F	A
<b>Daug</b>	D	F#	A#
<b>D#aug</b>	D#	Fx	Ax
<b>Ebaug</b>	Eb	G	B
<b>Eaug</b>	E	G#	B#
<b>Faug</b>	F	A	C#
<b>F#aug</b>	F#	A#	Cx
<b>Gbaug</b>	Gb	Bb	D
<b>Gaug</b>	G	B	D#
<b>Abaug</b>	Ab	C	E
<b>Aaug</b>	A	C#	E#
<b>Bbaug</b>	Bb	D	F#
<b>Baug</b>	B	D#	Fx

## Diminished Triad (BHS only)

The Diminished Triad is accepted by the BHS, not by Sweet Adelines.

**Spelling:** Root, Minor 3rd, Diminished 5th (1, b3, b5).

Diminished 5th: Perfect 5th lowered by 1/2 step.

	<b>1</b>	<b>b3</b>	<b>b5</b>
<b>Cdim</b>	C	E <sup>b</sup>	G <sup>b</sup>
<b>C#dim</b>	C <sup>#</sup>	E	G
<b>Dbdim</b>	D <sup>b</sup>	F <sup>b</sup>	A <sup>bb</sup>
<b>Ddim</b>	D	F	A <sup>b</sup>
<b>D#dim</b>	D <sup>#</sup>	F <sup>#</sup>	A
<b>Ebdim</b>	E <sup>b</sup>	G <sup>b</sup>	B <sup>bb</sup>
<b>Edim</b>	E	G	B <sup>b</sup>
<b>Fdim</b>	F	A <sup>b</sup>	C <sup>b</sup>
<b>F#dim</b>	F <sup>#</sup>	A	C
<b>Gbdim</b>	G <sup>b</sup>	B <sup>bb</sup>	D <sup>bb</sup>
<b>Gdim</b>	G	B <sup>b</sup>	D <sup>b</sup>
<b>G#dim</b>	G <sup>#</sup>	B	D
<b>Abdim</b>	A <sup>b</sup>	C <sup>b</sup>	E <sup>bb</sup>
<b>Adim</b>	A	C	E <sup>b</sup>
<b>Bbdim</b>	B <sup>b</sup>	D <sup>b</sup>	F <sup>b</sup>
<b>Bdim</b>	B	D	F

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## Seventh Chords

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### Dominant (Barbershop) 7th

**Spelling:** Root, Major 3rd, Perfect 5th, Minor 7th (1, 3, 5, b7)

**Voicing:** Strongest with bass on root or 5th

	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>b7</b>
<b>C7</b>	C	E	G	Bb
<b>C#7</b>	C#	E#	G#	B
<b>Db7</b>	Db	F	Ab	Cb
<b>D7</b>	D	F#	A	C
<b>D#7</b>	D#	Fx	A#	C#
<b>Eb7</b>	Eb	G	Bb	Db
<b>E7</b>	E	G#	B	D
<b>F7</b>	F	A	C	Eb
<b>F#7</b>	F#	A#	C#	E
<b>Gb7</b>	Gb	Bb	Db	Fb
<b>G7</b>	G	B	D	F
<b>G#7</b>	G#	B#	D#	F#
<b>Ab7</b>	Ab	C	Eb	Gb
<b>A7</b>	A	C#	E	G
<b>Bb7</b>	Bb	D	F	Ab
<b>B7</b>	B	D#	F#	A

## Major 7th

**Spelling:** Root, Major 3rd, Perfect 5th, Major 7th (1, 3, 5, 7)

**Voicing:** Strongest with bass on root.

	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>CM7</b>	C	E	G	B
<b>C#M7</b>	C#	E#	G#	B#
<b>DbM7</b>	Db	F	Ab	C
<b>DM7</b>	D	F#	A	C#
<b>D#M7</b>	D#	Fx	A#	Cx
<b>EbM7</b>	Eb	G	Bb	D
<b>EM7</b>	E	G#	B	D#
<b>FM7</b>	F	A	C	E
<b>F#M7</b>	F#	A#	C#	E#
<b>GbM7</b>	Gb	Bb	Db	F
<b>GM7</b>	G	B	D	F#
<b>G#M7</b>	G#	B#	D#	Fx
<b>AbM7</b>	Ab	C	Eb	G
<b>AM7</b>	A	C#	E	G#
<b>BbM7</b>	Bb	D	F	A
<b>BM7</b>	B	D#	F#	A#

## Minor 7th

**Spelling:** Root, Minor 3rd, Perfect 5th, Minor 7th (1, b3, 5, b7)

**Voicing:** Strongest with bass on root or 5th

	1	b3	5	b7
<b>Cm7</b>	C	Eb	G	Bb
<b>C#m7</b>	C#	E	G#	B
<b>Dbm7</b>	Db	Fb	Ab	Cb
<b>Dm7</b>	D	F	A	C
<b>D#m7</b>	D#	F#	A#	C#
<b>Ebm7</b>	Eb	Gb	Bb	Db
<b>Em7</b>	E	G	B	D
<b>F#m7</b>	F#	A	C#	E
<b>Gbm7</b>	Gb	Bbb	Db	Fb
<b>Gm7</b>	G	Bb	D	F
<b>G#m7</b>	G#	B	D#	F#
<b>Abm7</b>	Ab	Cb	Eb	Gb
<b>Am7</b>	A	C	E	G
<b>Bbm7</b>	Bb	Db	F	Ab
<b>Bm7</b>	B	D	F#	A

## Diminished 7th

**Spelling:** Root, minor 3rd, diminished 5th, diminished 7th (1, b3, b5, bb7)

Diminished 5th: Perfect 5th lowered by 1/2 step.

Diminished 7th: Minor 7th lowered by 1/2 step.

**Voicing:** The diminished 7th is a symmetrical chord, meaning that all the intervals which make up the chord are the same -- all minor 3rd intervals. Because the chord is symmetrical, the bass can be on any tone and any tone can be considered the root. However, the tones are not interchangeable. When using the diminished 7th in chord progressions there will be a correct note for the bass. Context and your ear will tell you where the bass should go.

	<b>1</b>	<b>b3</b>	<b>b5</b>	<b>bb7</b>
<b>Cdim7</b>	C	Eb	Gb	Bbb
<b>C#dim7</b>	C#	E	G	Bb
<b>Dbdim7</b>	Db	Fb	Abb	Cbb
<b>Ddim7</b>	D	F	Ab	Cb
<b>D#dim7</b>	D#	F#	A	C
<b>Ebdim7</b>	Eb	Gb	Bbb	Dbb
<b>Edim7</b>	E	G	Bb	Db
<b>Fdim7</b>	F	Ab	Cb	Ebb
<b>F#dim7</b>	F#	A	C	Eb
<b>Gbdim7</b>	Gb	Bbb	Dbb	Fbb
<b>Gdim7</b>	G	Bb	Db	Fb
<b>G#dim7</b>	G#	B	D	F
<b>Abdim7</b>	Ab	Cb	Ebb	Gbb
<b>Adim7</b>	A	C	Eb	Gb
<b>Bbdim7</b>	Bb	Db	Fb	Abb
<b>Bdim7</b>	B	D	F	Ab

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### Half-Diminished 7th (BHS not SAI; enharmonic with dom9th and m6)

While the half-diminished 7th chord is not officially recognized by Sweet Adelines, it's important to note that the half-diminished 7th is enharmonic with two chords that Sweet Adelines does recognize, the minor 6th and the rootless dominant 9th. The same four tones can make up any of these three chords.

	<b>1</b>	<b>b3</b>	<b>b5</b>	<b>b7</b>
<b>C half-dim7</b>	C	E <sup>b</sup>	G <sup>b</sup>	B <sup>b</sup>
<b>C# half-dim7</b>	C#	E	G	B
<b>Db half-dim7</b>	Db	F <sup>b</sup>	A <sup>bb</sup>	C <sup>b</sup>
<b>D half-dim7</b>	D	F	A <sup>b</sup>	C
<b>D# half-dim7</b>	D#	F#	A	C#
<b>E<sup>b</sup> half-dim7</b>	E <sup>b</sup>	G <sup>b</sup>	B <sup>bb</sup>	D <sup>b</sup>
<b>E half-dim7</b>	E	G	B <sup>b</sup>	D
<b>F half-dim7</b>	F	A <sup>b</sup>	C <sup>b</sup>	E <sup>b</sup>
<b>F# half-dim7</b>	F#	A	C	E
<b>G<sup>b</sup> half-dim7</b>	G <sup>b</sup>	B <sup>bb</sup>	D <sup>bb</sup>	F <sup>b</sup>
<b>G half-dim7</b>	G	B <sup>b</sup>	D <sup>b</sup>	F
<b>G# half-dim7</b>	G#	B	D	F#
<b>A<sup>b</sup> half-dim7</b>	A <sup>b</sup>	C <sup>b</sup>	E <sup>bb</sup>	G <sup>b</sup>
<b>A half-dim7</b>	A	C	E <sup>b</sup>	G
<b>B<sup>b</sup> half-dim7</b>	B <sup>b</sup>	D <sup>b</sup>	F <sup>b</sup>	A <sup>b</sup>
<b>B half-dim7</b>	B	D	F	A

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### Dominant 7th With Flatted 5th (BHS only)

**Spelling:** Root, Major 3rd, Diminished 5th, Minor 7th (1, 3, b5, b7). Start with a Dominant 7th chord and lower the 5th by 1/2 step.

This is considered a rare chord in the BHS vocabulary.

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### Augmented 7th (Dominant 7th with Augmented 5th) (BHS only)

**Spelling:** Root, Major 3rd, Augmented 5th, Minor 7th (1, 3, #5, b7)

Start with a Dominant 7th chord and raise the 5th by 1/2 step

This is considered a rare chord in the BHS vocabulary.

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## Ninth Chords

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### Dominant (Barbershop) 9th

**Spelling:** The dominant 9th is a 5 note chord, consisting of the four tones of the dominant 7th and an added major 9th tone. Root, Major 3rd, Perfect 5th, Minor 7th, and Major 9th (1, 3, 5, b7, 9).

#### Voicing

Because barbershop has only four parts, we must omit a tone. The most common tone to omit is the root. If the root is omitted, the strongest voicing has bass on the 5th. Another, less common, voicing, is to omit the 5th. When the 5th is omitted, the strongest voicing is bass on the root.

- The 3rd, 7th, 9th must be present.
- The fourth tone can be either the 5th (no root) or the root (no 5th).

In chord symbols, 7(9) is a way to indicate the rootless dominant 9th.

	<b>1 (omit)</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>b7</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>C7(9)</b>	C	E	G	Bb	D
<b>C#7(9)</b>	C#	E#	G#	B	D#
<b>Db7(9)</b>	Db	F	Ab	Cb	Eb
<b>D7(9)</b>	D	F#	A	C	E
<b>D#7(9)</b>	D#	Fx	A#	C#	E#
<b>Eb7(9)</b>	Eb	G	Bb	Db	F
<b>E7(9)</b>	E	G#	B	D	F#
<b>F7(9)</b>	F	A	C	Eb	G
<b>F#7(9)</b>	F#	A#	C#	E	G#
<b>Gb7(9)</b>	Gb	Bb	Db	Fb	Ab
<b>G7(9)</b>	G	B	D	F	A
<b>G#7(9)</b>	G#	B#	D#	F#	A#
<b>Ab7(9)</b>	Ab	C	Eb	Gb	Bb
<b>A7(9)</b>	A	C#	E	G	B
<b>Bb7(9)</b>	Bb	D	F	Ab	C
<b>B7(9)</b>	B	D#	F#	A	C#

## Major Triad with added 9th

**Spelling:** Root, Major 3rd, Perfect 5th, Major 9th (1, 3, 5, 9)

**Voicing:** Strongest with bass on root.

	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>CM9</b>	C	E	G	D
<b>C#M9</b>	C#	E#	G#	D#
<b>DbM9</b>	Db	F	Ab	Eb
<b>DM9</b>	D	F#	A	E
<b>D#M9</b>	D#	Fx	A#	E#
<b>EbM9</b>	Eb	G	Bb	F
<b>EM9</b>	E	G#	B	F#
<b>FM9</b>	F	A	C	G
<b>F#M9</b>	F#	A#	C#	G#
<b>GbM9</b>	Gb	Bb	Db	Ab
<b>GM9</b>	G	B	D	A
<b>G#M9</b>	G#	B#	D#	A#
<b>AbM9</b>	Ab	C	Eb	Bb
<b>AM9</b>	A	C#	E	B
<b>BbM9</b>	Bb	D	F	C
<b>BM9</b>	B	D#	F#	C#

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## Sixth Chords

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### Minor 6th

**Spelling:** Root, Minor 3rd, Perfect 5th, Major 6<sup>th</sup> (1, b3, 5, 6).

The minor 6th has the same four tones as the rootless dominant 9th and the half-diminished 7th. The difference between the three is not spelling or voicing. The difference between the two is context and the chord's relationship to the other chords around it.

**Voicing:** Strongest with bass on root

Chord	Root	Minor 3rd	Perfect 5th	Major 6th
<b>Cm6</b>	C	E $\flat$	G	A
<b>C#m6</b>	C#	E	G#	A#
<b>Dbm6</b>	Db	F $\flat$	A $\flat$	B $\flat$
<b>Dm6</b>	D	F	A	B
<b>D#m6</b>	D#	F#	A#	B#
<b>Ebm6</b>	E $\flat$	G $\flat$	B $\flat$	C
<b>Em6</b>	E	G	B	C#
<b>Fm6</b>	F	A $\flat$	C	D
<b>F#m6</b>	F#	A	C#	D#
<b>Gbm6</b>	G $\flat$	B $\flat\flat$	D $\flat$	E $\flat$
<b>Gm6</b>	G	B $\flat$	D	E
<b>G#m6</b>	G#	B	D#	E#
<b>Abm6</b>	A $\flat$	C $\flat$	E $\flat$	F
<b>Am6</b>	A	C	E	F#
<b>Bbm6</b>	B $\flat$	D $\flat$	F	G
<b>Bm6</b>	B	D	F#	G#

## Major 6th

**Spelling:** Root, Major 3rd, Perfect 5th, Major 6<sup>th</sup> (1, 3, 5, 6)

**Voicing:** Strongest with bass on root

The complete major 6th chord is somewhat rare in barbershop because it has a very "modern" flavor. Much more common is to use the 6th without the 5th, sometimes known as the "substitute 6th chord". This construction has the same tones as the minor triad in first inversion.

Chord	Root	Major 3rd	Perfect 5th	Major 6th
<b>CM6</b>	C	E	G	A
<b>C#M6</b>	C#	E#	G#	A#
<b>DbM6</b>	Db	F	Ab	Bb
<b>DM6</b>	D	F#	A	B
<b>D#M6</b>	D#	Fx	A#	B#
<b>EbM6</b>	Eb	G	Bb	C
<b>EM6</b>	E	G#	B	C#
<b>FM6</b>	F	A	C	D
<b>F#M6</b>	F#	A#	C#	D#
<b>GbM6</b>	Gb	Bb	Db	Eb
<b>GM6</b>	G	B	D	E
<b>G#M6</b>	G#	B#	D#	E#
<b>AbM6</b>	Ab	C	Eb	F
<b>AM6</b>	A	C#	E	F#
<b>BbM6</b>	Bb	D	F	G
<b>BM6</b>	B	D#	F#	G#

## Voicing and Voice Leading

### What is Voicing?

**Voicing** refers to the way a chord stacks up **vertically**, bottom to top. Voicings can either be

- Closed – all parts are within an octave
- Spread to the 10th – Interval of a tenth between the lowest and highest tone (bass and tenor in measure 2 of the example below)
- Open – Chord is spread more than a 10th

Closed voicings ring well. Spread-to-the-10th voicings ring well. Open voicings are harder to ring for SSAA, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't ever use them. In fact, good arrangements will make use of all of three kinds of voicing. Melody lines are constantly moving up and down, and voicings have to change to accommodate that.

Closed - voicing  
within an octave

Spread to the 10th.  
The tenor note is a 10th  
away from the bass note.

Open voicing - more than a  
10th between lowest tone and  
highest. There should be no  
more than an octave between the  
bass and the rest of the chord.

When voicing chords, it's important that the bass be on the correct tone – root or 5th in most cases. For the other parts, there is some flexibility in how chords are voiced. For example, all of these are acceptable voicings for a Bb7 chord.

T-7	T-7	T-3	T-1
L-1	L-3	L-5	L-7
Br-3	Br-5	Br-7	Br-3
Bs-5	Bs-1	Bs-1	Bs-5

Where the lead is, along with the principles of strong voicing and good voice leading, affect how the chord is voiced. Baritone can be above or below the lead. Bari below the lead is generally easier for to lock and so it's considered preferable in SSAA voicing, but baritone above is acceptable if the music demands it. Note that in the 3rd chord the interval between baritone and bass is a 7th (Bb in bass, Ab in baritone). For strong SSAA voicing you don't want more than an octave between the bass and the rest of the chord.

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## Why Does Voicing Matter?

In a word: Overtones

Overtones happen because of properties connected with physics of sound. Physics of sound is a huge subject. We will touch on the basics here. Sound is produced when air is made to vibrate, whether by vibration of a reed, as in a clarinet or saxophone, by plucking a string as on a guitar, or by singing a tone. Any time you play or sing a tone, you are in fact producing more than one sound. First, there's a fundamental tone, vibrating at a specific frequency. That fundamental frequency gives us the basic sense of a note sounding a specific pitch. In addition to that fundamental tone, the sound contains additional frequencies corresponding to harmonics (overtones).

The harmonic series for a single pitch is: 1-1-5-1-3-5-b7-1-2.

(Starting from a single pitch of C, the tones are C-C-G-C-E-G-Bb-C-D)

When overtones produced by the lowest tone (usually in the bass part) are reinforced by notes and overtones produced in the upper parts, the result is an audible additional tone, also known as ring.

When chords line up so that the overtones reinforce each other, we hear overtones and we say that the chord is in tune. In the history of Western music, there have been many tuning systems. There is much debate among barbershoppers about how to tune chords, and which system (Pythagorean or Just Intonation or a combination of the two) works the best. For the arranger, the important points are:

- Basses sing a lot of roots and 5ths because those are the foundational tones on which overtones are built.
- The physics of stacked overtones means that the classic "spread to 10th" voicing, 1-5-1-3, is especially conducive to overtones.
- Typical SSAA voice ranges are such that in general, closer voicings are easier to lock and ring.

Voicing is more than just lining up the chord vertically, because chords do not happen in isolation. Chords go together to make up measures, phrases, and ultimately, songs. Here is where we must take into account a related factor: **voice leading**.

## What is Voice Leading?

Voice leading refers to the **horizontal movement of each individual part line**.

Voicing is a **vertical** concept: "How does this particular chord stack up bottom to top?"

Voice leading is a **horizontal** concept: "How does the baritone part (or tenor part or bass part) go?".

The lead, of course has to go where the melody line goes. For the harmony parts, basic considerations include:

- Flow of the melody line
- Choice of bass on root or 5th
- Choice of baritone above or below the lead - While it's true that SSAA voicings are more solid with baritone below lead, it's important not to apply that principle too rigidly. Baritone above lead is acceptable if the melody line and good voice leading require it.
- Choice of closed, spread to 10th, or open voicing – because melodies are constantly moving up and down, voicings have to change in order to accommodate what the music is doing. We tend to speak of voicing as where to put the bass part, but in reality:
  - **Voicing affects all parts, not just the bass.**
  - **Voicing and voice leading are inter-related.**

Faced with several possibilities for voicing a chord, which one do you use? It depends!

- What chord type are you harmonizing (major triad, minor 7th, etc.) and what are the basic voicing rules for that chord type?
- Where is the lead note? The lead melody note usually can't be changed, so that's a critical piece of the puzzle. Go back to the example of the Bb7. If you have to voice a Bb7 chord and the lead is on Bb, then you can't put the bass there – it's already taken! The next strong option is bass on the 5th.
- What is happening around that chord? – what's being sung before and after? Where is the musical line heading?

Good voice leading comes down to a few basic principles.

- Keep parts within singable ranges.
- Don't move parts any more than necessary.
- Avoid awkward intervals and large jumps.

A final note: Be kind to the baritones! One of the clichés of barbershop arranging goes: lead takes the melody, bass takes the root or the 5th, tenor is a 3rd above, and baritone takes what's left over. But arrangers would do well to follow the advice of Dr. Liz Garnett, who says:

*However, I'm increasingly of the view that this stereotype ... has the effect of letting arrangers off the hook. There is no cultural expectation on us to produce singable, musically coherent lines for baritones to sing, and so we stop short of solving all the technical problems that arranging presents. Classical harmony and counterpoint demands control over both vertical and horizontal parameters of the music, so barbershop's obsession with harmony to the exclusion of voice-leading is arguably just a cop-out. Just because some of our geekier friends pride themselves on being able sing whatever illogical nonsense we throw at them doesn't mean we shouldn't look for musical elegance in all four parts. (Liz Garnett, ["Soapbox: The Baritone Part"](#) – Helping You Harmonise, May 9, 2009)*

In arranging there are always tradeoffs.

- What's the most appropriate chord? Most appropriate does not always mean strongest.
- What voicing (vertical) will also produce good voice leading (horizontal) so that the harmony parts (including the baritone) are singable and the chords flow smoothly from one to the next?

Arranging is about choices and compromises – finding the solution that works for both the horizontal (voice leading) and the vertical (solid voicing) and for the expressiveness of the music.



# Music Preparation: Getting Your Manuscript Ready for Singers

Steve Tramack, an arranger and music judge in the BHS, defines the 3 roles of an arranger as:

- Creator
- Editor
- Critic

There's a 4th role that happens when you get music ready for singers: Music Preparer. The care you've put into your arrangement should be reflected in a clean, clear, professional looking manuscript. First, your manuscript is your calling card and your resume; it's what presents you and your ideas to the world. Second and more importantly, singers, directors, and coaches are looking to your manuscript to understand the musical intent behind the arrangement. Ideas presented clearly on the page make for more efficient rehearsal and ultimately better music. Communicating clearly requires that the arranger be aware of good notation practices that apply to any style of music, as well as conventions that apply specifically to barbershop. The arranger then has to know how to achieve the best results using notation software.

The member section of the BHS website contains a notation guide which illustrates all the conventions of notating barbershop music, as well as a "notation cheat sheet" which summarizes the basics of fonts, text and lyric placement. If you are a BHS member, be sure to download this excellent resource. Sweet Adelines is currently updating its Arrangers Guide; the updated Guide will have a newly revised section on manuscript preparation which will be helpful as well.

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## Music Notation Software

It's essential that arrangers learn to use music notation software. There are many choices; the major ones are:

- [Finale](#) – Windows and Mac
- [Sibelius](#) – Windows, Mac, iPad, and iPhone
- [Dorico](#) – Windows, Mac, and iPad
- [Musescore](#) – Windows, Mac, and Linux
- [Notion](#) – Windows, Mac, and iPad

Check the websites for each program to get current information and pricing. The Scoring Notes blog maintains a [product guide](#) where you can find out current versions of Finale, Sibelius, Dorico, and Musescore, see which operating systems are compatible with a product, and get links to tips and tutorials.

All of them are good; the tips in this section will apply no matter which package you use. But do find a notation package that works for you and learn to use it. Notation software allows you to change your music much more freely, without scratching out or re-copying. It makes transposition easier and faster. Your finished music will be correctly spaced and formatted, and easier to read for the singer.

How to choose? The best way is to try them. All the major programs offer a free trial; all of them have YouTube channels, Facebook sites, and other sources for online help. Download the free trial, check out the tutorials available online, and try the programs out. That's the best way to find the one that's the best fit for you. A full-fledged tutorial in notation software is outside the scope of this book, but here are some links to online resources.

- [Conquering Finale](#) – Hosted by Jason Loffredo. The single best source for learning Finale.
- Finale Quick Reference – [Windows](#) / [Mac](#)
- [Sibelius tutorials](#) – from Avid
- Dorico [blog](#) and [YouTube channel](#)
- [Dorico Quick Reference](#) – covers both Windows and Mac
- The [Scoring Notes](#) blog and podcast include tips and tutorials for the major programs, especially Finale, Sibelius, Dorico, and MuseScore.

You might be saying: But they're expensive! Unfortunately, the pro levels of the program are expensive. There are ways to address the costs.

- Try MuseScore. MuseScore is an open-source program, completely free, and MuseScore version 4 (latest as of April 2023) has many notation/engraving improvements.
- Look at the intermediate-level programs. They will be significantly cheaper than the pro level programs, and have a corresponding lower level of functionality; however they can handle many of the demands of barbershop arranging. With an intermediate version you can learn the program and later move up to the pro level if you wish. You'd pay the upgrade price, not full retail. Examples of intermediate programs are:
  - PrintMusic (Finale) – PrintMusic is only available for Windows. If you use the Mac and want a Finale product, your only option is pro-level Finale. Finale Notepad does not have enough functionality for barbershop arranging; I don't recommend it.
  - Dorico SE and Dorico Elements (Dorico)
  - Sibelius First and Sibelius Artist (Sibelius)
- Watch for sales, especially during the holiday season. Beginning on Black Friday (day after Thanksgiving in the US), you'll often find excellent deals on both new purchases and upgrades.

If working on a mobile device is important for you, then your options are Sibelius, Dorico, and Notion.

- Sibelius is available for iPad and iPhone.
- Dorico is available for iPad.
- Notion Mobile is available for iPad, Android, Chrome OS, and FireOS.

Check the websites for more details.

Finale does not have an iPad app of any kind. Musescore does not have an app that does music notation. The Musescore app, for iOS and Android, is a score reader not a notation application. You can look at files created by Musescore users, but not create scores.

Full disclosure: I started using Finale in 1999, and all the music examples in this book were done with Finale. In 2022, I switched to Dorico, and I've been very happy with it. One of the reasons I switched was, I wanted the flexibility of working on an iPad. I now have Dorico both on the desktop and iPad, and Dorico for iPad has turned my commute to work into productive arranging time. I still have Finale, because I have over 20 years of work in that program that I want to keep accessible. However, my new arrangements are done with Dorico. I'm not a spokesperson for any company or any product; just a satisfied user of two of them. I keep up with developments in music notation software by regularly following the [Scoring Notes blog and podcast](#).

No matter what program you use, you still need to know the conventions for music notation and barbershop. Read on!

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## Manuscript Templates for Barbershop Harmony

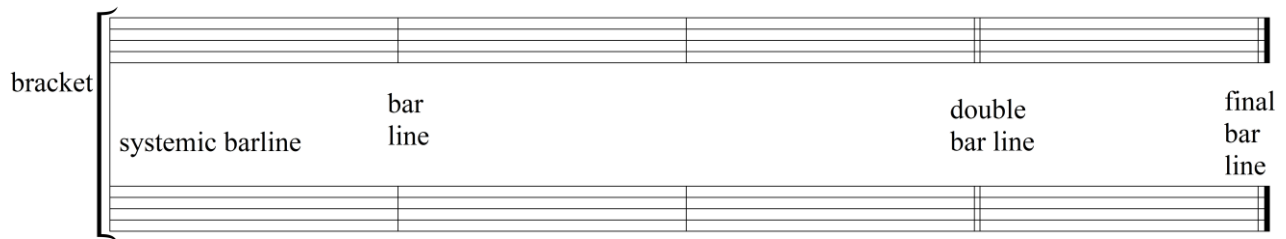
Templates are helpful because they take care of many settings needed for barbershop arranging.

- Finale comes with templates for SSAA and TTBB. In addition, the member section of the BHS website contains Finale templates.
- Sibelius comes with a template for TTBB, not SSAA. The member section of the BHS website includes Sibelius templates.
- Dorico comes with a TTBB template that uses four staves instead of two; no template at all for SSAA. In addition, the transposing bass clef used in SSAA barbershop is not available in intermediate versions of Dorico (SE and Elements). Dorico SE and Elements can read the transposing bass clef, but it's not possible to create scores that have it; for that you need pro-level Dorico. I've developed [barbershop SSAA and TTBB templates for Dorico](#) and made them available for free download. They will work in SE and Elements.
- Musescore includes templates for both SSAA and TTBB.

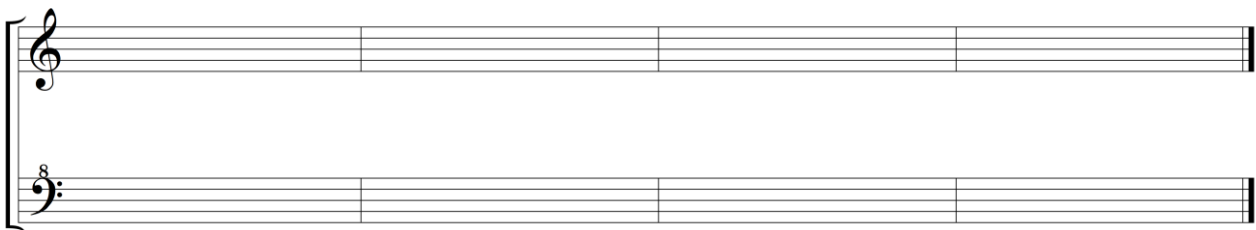
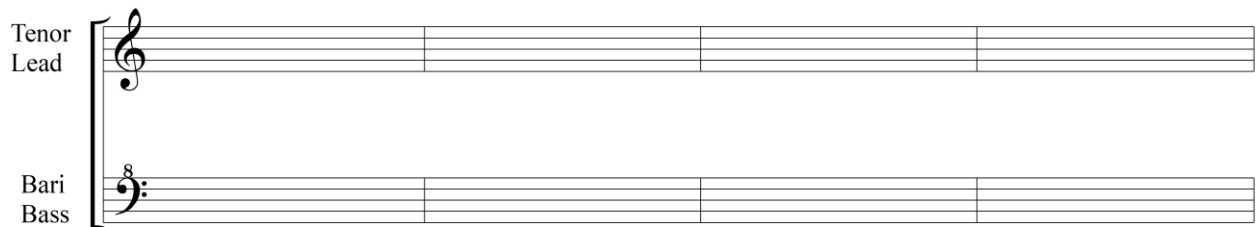
If your program doesn't come with a template, check the documentation for instructions on how to create one. Templates that come with the program can be modified to fit your needs, as well.

## Staves, Systems, and Bar Lines

Barbershop uses two staves, joined by a bracket (not the brace used in piano music) The top staff uses the treble clef. The bottom staff uses the bass clef. Bar lines divide the music into measures. Double bar lines are used to indicate key or time changes, and to mark sections of music (verse, chorus, tag, etc.). A final bar line appears on the last measure. Bar lines do not extend into the area between the staves. A system is all staves joined by a systemic bar line. The systemic bar line is the line at the far left that links the two staves. The example below shows a single system.



The first system is indented and part names are written next to the staves. Tenor and Lead are written next to the bass clef; bari and bass are written next to the bass clef, as shown. Succeeding systems are flush with the left margin; the part names do not show.



## Clefs and Stem Directions

Barbershop uses treble clef for lead and tenor parts. Tenor notes have stems up; lead notes have stems down. Bass clef is used for baritone and bass parts. Baritone has stems up; bass has stems down.

High and low voice barbershop use transposing clefs, in order to make parts easier to read.

SSAA (high voice) barbershop uses regular treble clef and transposing bass clef – a bass clef symbol with the number 8 above it. The 8 above the clef signifies that the baritone and bass parts are sung an octave higher than where they are written.

### Clefs and stem direction -SSAA (high voice)

The image shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff is labeled 'Tenor' and 'Lead' and uses a regular treble clef. The bottom staff is labeled 'Bari' and 'Bass' and uses a bass clef with the number '8' written above it. Both staves contain a single chord with stems pointing in opposite directions: up for the Tenor and down for the Lead; up for the Bari and down for the Bass.

Regular treble clef - Tenor stems up, lead stems down  
 Transposing bass clef - parts sung one octave higher.  
 Baritone stems up, bass stems down.

TTBB (low voice) barbershop uses regular bass clef and a transposing treble clef – treble clef symbol with an 8 below it. The 8 below the clef signifies lead and tenor parts are sung an octave lower than where they are written.

### Clefs and stem direction -TTBB (low voice)

The image shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff is labeled 'Tenor' and 'Lead' and uses a treble clef with the number '8' written below it. The bottom staff is labeled 'Bari' and 'Bass' and uses a regular bass clef. Both staves contain a single chord with stems pointing in opposite directions: up for the Tenor and down for the Lead; up for the Bari and down for the Bass.

Transposing treble clef - parts sung one octave lower.  
 Tenor stems up, lead stems down  
 Regular bass clef - Baritone stems up, bass stems down.

SATB (mixed voice) barbershop uses regular treble and bass clefs, with no transposition in either.

### Clefs and stem direction - SATB (mixed voice)

Tenor Lead

Bari Bass

Regular treble and bass clefs, with no transposition.

This book focuses on arranging for SSAA (high voice), and all the examples are in SSAA format.

## Beams, Flags, and Triplets

Beams, flags, and triplets -- Beams, flags, and triplet symbols go above the note for stems-up notes; below the note for stems-down notes.

Beams

Flags

Triplets

## Slurs and Ties

- Slurs connect notes of **different pitches** and indicate which notes have the same word sound. Slurs connect to notes at the stem.
- Ties connect notes of the **same pitch**, and indicate that a single pitch is held. Ties connect to notes at the notehead.
- Both slurs and ties appear above the note for stems-up notes, below the note for stems-down notes.
- The commands for slurs and ties will be different in notation software. Check the software's documentation for instruction on how to create both symbols.

Slurs - connect notes of different pitches

Ties - connect notes of the same pitch

In beamed 8<sup>th</sup> notes, slurs are placed above or below the beam. Use a single slur line to connect multiple slurred notes.

Place slurs above or below the beam as shown.

When more than two notes are slurred, use a single slur to connect them.

### Meter (Time Signature) and Key

Time and key signature appear on the first measure, immediately following the clef symbol. They always appear in the order shown: clef, key signature, time signature. For 4/4 time, it is acceptable to use either numbers or the common time symbol

Tenor Lead

Bari Bass

Numbers

Tenor Lead

Bari Bass

Common time symbol

For cut time, use the cut time symbol

Musical notation for Tenor Lead and Bari Bass. Both staves are in cut time (indicated by a 'C' in a circle). The Tenor Lead staff is in the treble clef with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The Bari Bass staff is in the bass clef with the same key signature. Both staves contain a whole rest in the first measure, followed by a double bar line.

Key signature appears at the start of every system. Key changes appear at the spot where the new key starts and at the start of every system after that. Changes of meter appear only at the measure where the meter changes.

Musical notation illustrating key and meter changes across systems. The notation is divided into three systems, each with a Tenor Lead staff (treble clef) and a Bari Bass staff (bass clef).  
 System 1: Measures 1-4. Starts with a key signature of two flats and a 4/4 time signature. At the start of measure 1, the time signature and key signature are shown. At the start of measure 3, a key change to two sharps (F# and C#) is indicated. An arrow points from this key change to the start of System 2.  
 System 2: Measures 5-8. Starts with a key signature of two sharps. At the start of measure 6, a time change to cut time (C in a circle) is indicated. An arrow points from this time change to the start of System 3.  
 System 3: Measures 9-12. Continues with the key signature of two sharps and cut time. The notation ends with a double bar line at the end of measure 12.

When changing key, do not use natural signs to cancel out sharp and flats unless changing to the key of C Major or A minor.

Example 1

Starting key                      New key - no naturals  
to cancel out old key

Example 2

Starting key                      New key C Major -  
use natural signs to cancel

When a key change occurs at the start of a system or at a page turn, use a cautionary key signature to tell the singer that a key change is coming. Use a double bar before a cautionary key signature.

cautionary  
key sig.

new key

When a time signature change occurs at the start of a system or at a page turn, use a cautionary time signature. Use a double bar before a cautionary time signature.

cautionary  
time sig.

new time  
sig.

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## Rhythm and Pitch

---

### Complete measures

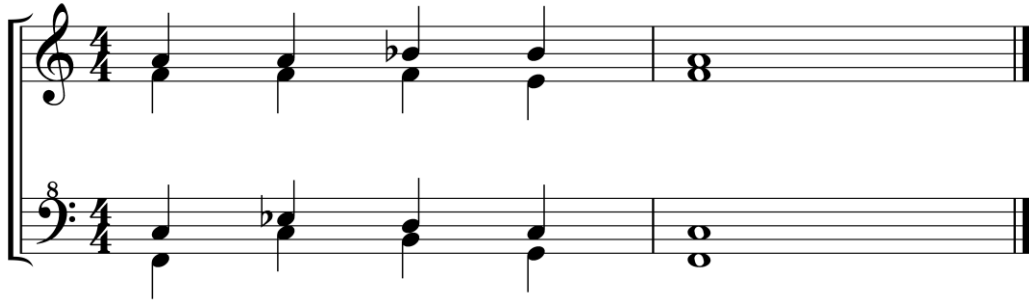
Every measure must have a combination of notes and rests equal to the number of beats indicated by the meter. For example, in 4/4 time, there are 4 beats to a measure. All notes and rests in all parts must add up to exactly 4, no more and no less. The only exception is a pickup measure at the start of the music.

incorrect  
1/2 beat missing

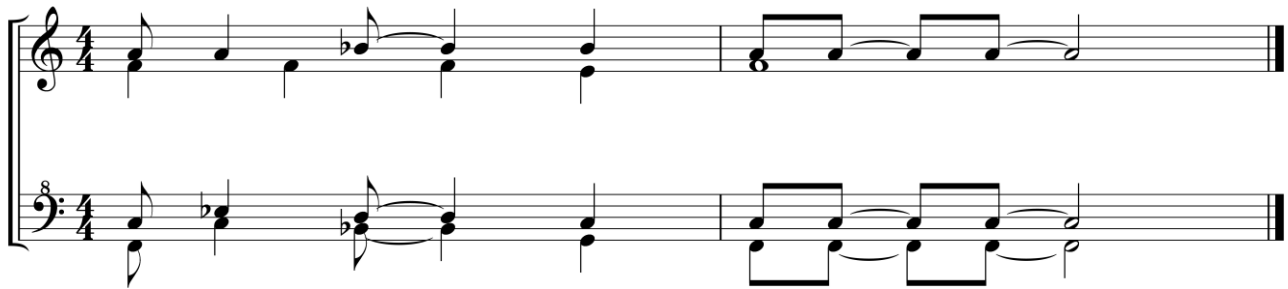
correct  
all notes and rests add up to 4.

## Chord Alignment and Rhythm Spacing

All chords should line up vertically.



In passages with embellishments, chords should still be vertically aligned.



## Accidentals

An accidental is a change to a note's pitch (sharp, flat, or natural) that occurs outside of the key signature. Accidentals appear to the left of the note, on the corresponding line or space.

- Accidentals are in effect for one measure. The only exception to this is when notes are tied over a bar line.
- If an accidental is on a note tied over a bar line, the accidental from the start of the tie still applies. If the same accidental appears in the following measure, it must be applied again.
- An accidental affects all notes in a given part. When the same accidental appears in both treble and bass clef, use the accidental in both places.



Accidental-  
affects all notes  
in this measure  
unless changed  
with sharp/flat/  
natural

Previous accidental still  
applies. Tied over a bar  
line so the natural is  
still in effect.

If applying the  
accidental in a new  
measure, it must be  
applied again.

- In chords with multiple accidentals, the accidentals should not collide with each other. For intervals of a 6<sup>th</sup> or less, the lower accidental goes to the left. For intervals greater than a 6<sup>th</sup>, accidentals line up vertically.

interval less than 6<sup>th</sup> - lower accidental on the left

interval more than 6<sup>th</sup> - accidentals line up vertically

### Courtesy Accidentals

A courtesy accidental is a sharp, flat, or natural sign with parentheses around it. It is a reminder to the singer that an accidental from the previous measure no longer applies.

Accidental

use courtesy accidental to show that the note is returning to the unaltered pitch.

### Chord Spelling

Spell chords correctly, using appropriate sharp, flat, or natural signs. In spelling chords, the arranger must take into account both the spelling of the chord and the key signature.

Key-Eb

D7                      B7                      C#7                      F#7

Lead-3rd of D7 is F#, not Gb. Bass-natural sign because of the key

Tenor-3rd of a B7 is D#, not Eb. Bari-5th of a B7 is F#, not Gb. Bass/lead-natural signs because of the key

Bari-3rd of C#7 is E#, not F. Lead-5th of C#7 is G# not Ab

Tenor-3rd of F#7 is A#, not Bb. Bass-5th of an F#7 is C#, not Db. Bari-natural sign because of the key.

For diminished 7ths and other chord which use double-flats, it is acceptable to use the enharmonic equivalent – for example, A for Bbb in a Cdim7 chord.

### Enharmonic Spelling

- Enharmonic means two different names for the same note on the keyboard, such as C# and Db, or F# and Gb.
- When adjacent chords use enharmonic spellings, use a dashed bracket to show that the two notes are the same. Dashed brackets go above stems-up notes and below stems-down notes.

Enharmonic spelling in tenor.  
Bb is root of a Bb chord.  
A# is 3rd of an F#7 chord.  
Dashed bracket above the tenor notes.

Enharmonic spelling in bass.  
Dashed bracket below the bass notes.

If space permits, it is acceptable to write the words “same note”, or write the actual note equivalent, above or below the bracket. Be careful that these words do not get in the way of actual lyrics, and don’t use them if they make the music too crowded. The bracket by itself is sufficient.

same note

Bb=A#

## Consolidate Rests

When adjacent parts share a rest of the same length, consolidate the rests. Software will have settings or commands to do this. Don't manually move rests, hide them, or leave them out.

The image shows two musical staves for Tenor Lead and Bari Bass in 4/4 time. The left example shows two measures where each part has a quarter rest in the first measure and a quarter note in the second. The rests are not consolidated. The right example shows the same two measures, but the rests are consolidated into a single measure with a half rest, followed by a quarter note in the second measure.

rests not consolidated.

rests consolidated.

## Use the Fewest Notes to Show a Duration

This guideline will sometimes conflict with other guidelines about clarity of beats. When in doubt, make the beats easier to see for the singer.

The image shows two musical staves in 4/4 time. The first staff shows two measures: the first has a quarter rest followed by a quarter note, and the second has a quarter note followed by a quarter rest. The first measure is labeled 'incorrect' and the second 'correct'. The second staff shows two measures: the first has a quarter note followed by a quarter rest, and the second has a quarter rest followed by a quarter note. The first measure is labeled 'incorrect' and the second 'correct'.

incorrect correct

incorrect correct

## 8th Note Beaming

Eighth notes should be beamed in groups. A convention seen in older sheet music is, putting flags on every note. This practice is now obsolete.

The image shows two musical staves in 4/4 time. The first staff shows a sequence of eight eighth notes, each with a flag, labeled '8th notes not beamed - incorrect'. The second staff shows a sequence of eight eighth notes beamed in groups of two and four, labeled '8th notes beamed - correct'.

8th notes not beamed - incorrect 8th notes beamed - correct

Beaming is closely related to meter. There are many rules concerning eighth note beaming and its relationship to meter. Here are a few general guidelines.

Simple meters are meters that subdivide a beat into 2. Examples of simple meters are 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, and cut time. In 2/4, 4/4, and cut time, 8th notes can be beamed in groups of 2 or groups of 4.



8th notes beamed  
in groups of 4

8th notes beamed  
in groups of 2.

In 3/4 time, beam in groups of 2.



6/8 is an example of a compound meter. Compound meters subdivide the beat into 3. In 6/8, beam eighth notes in groups of 3.



Clarity in notation is especially important when writing syncopated rhythms. Here are some guidelines.

Preserve the perception of the meter.



Incorrect -- 3 8ths beamed together  
makes 4/4 look too much like 6/8.  
Beat 3 is difficult to spot.

Correct. Beaming reflects  
4/4 meter and beat 3 is  
easily visible.

Down beats should be clearly visible.



Incorrect -- downbeats for  
beats 2 and 3 are not visible.

Correct - Every downbeat is visible.

In 4/4 time, think of the measure as being divided into two units of two beats. Each half of the measure should have 2 beats in it. This is sometimes known as the “Invisible Bar Line” rule, and it helps to determine where to put in tied notes.

1 **incorrect**

1 1/2 beats      2 1/2 beats

2 **correct**

2 beats      2 beats

The invisible bar line rule is relaxed for very simple rhythms. Any of these is acceptable.

Swing 8ths – Swing 8<sup>th</sup> feel should be notated using regular 8<sup>th</sup> notes and the swing symbol. Do not use triplets.

Swing 8ths - technically correct, but don't notate them like this.

Notate swing by using regular 8th notes and the swing symbol.

### Major 2nd Intervals – Higher Note on the Left

When notating intervals of a Major 2<sup>nd</sup>, the higher note always goes on the left.

Tenor above lead  
Higher note is on the left

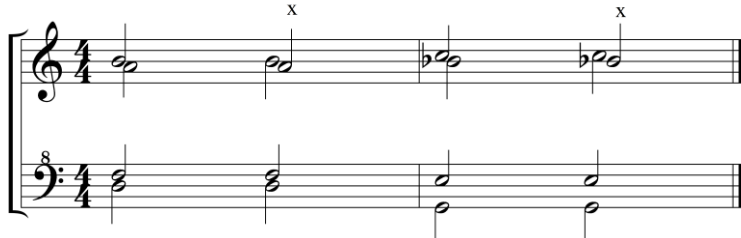
Lead above tenor.  
Higher note is **still on the left**

Higher note lines up with the stems in the other staff.

## Use X to Show Tenor Below Lead

Put a lower case letter “x” (no quotes) above the tenor note. Because the “x” is not a standard musical symbol, the arranger will have to create it in the software. Don’t use free text to create it, because it will not be attached to the note. In the example below, note:

- Higher note always goes on the left.
- Placement of the accidental in the second measure – to the left of the two notes, on the line or space corresponding to the note that has the accidental. It’s on the “B” line so it affects the “B” note.



## Tempo Markings

For songs sung in tempo, use metronome markings to tell the singer the intended tempo. Place metronome markings above the top staff, at the spot where you want the indicated tempo to start.



When doing metronome markings be aware of the meter. In 2/4, 3/4, or 4/4 time, the quarter note gets the beat, so the metronome mark should reference a quarter note. In cut time, the half note gets the beat, so the mark should reference a half note.



A few additional guidelines about tempo marks.

- Tempo text goes above the top staff.
- Barbershop tends to prefer English terms to the traditional Italian ones. It’s acceptable to use the word freely instead of rubato. Rit. and ritard are generally understood; it is also acceptable to use the word slower instead of rit or ritard.

- Rubato vs. ad lib. In Rubato, there is still an implied meter – notes may be sped up or slowed down but there is still the sense of a meter. Ad lib is complete absence of meter. Barbershop ballads are done in a more rubato style.
- If a song changes tempo, use appropriate text and tempo markings at the point where the tempo changes.
- Use your software’s music fonts to create tempo marks; don’t use free text. Each program will have its own way of creating tempo marks and other expressive markings. Check the software’s documentation.

### Musical Pauses – Breath Mark, Fermata, Caesura

- Breaths – Singers need places to breathe! Breathing spots can be indicated either with rests, or with a breath mark. The breath mark looks like a comma and goes above the staff, at the spot where the breath is needed. Don’t use the typewritten comma – the breath mark is a musical symbol and it will be part of the software’s music font.
- Fermata (aka “Bird’s Eye”) – Used to indicate an indefinite hold.
- Caesura (aka “Railroad Tracks”) – Used to indicate an indefinite pause.



### Dashed line for melody transfer

When the melody moves from the lead to another part, use a dashed line to show the transfer of melody.



## Roadmaps

### Measure numbers and pickups

Pickup measures are not numbered; measure numbering begins with the first full measure of music. When creating pickup measures in notation software, don't use an incomplete blank measure. Use the software's pickup measure command, so that the spacing of the pickup is correct and measures get numbered correctly.

The image shows two staves of music. The top staff is for Tenor Lead in 4/4 time, and the bottom staff is for Bari Bass in 4/4 time. Both staves start with a pickup measure (a half rest) followed by two full measures. The first full measure is numbered '1' and the second is numbered '2'. Text annotations explain that the pickup measure has 'no number' and the measure count 'begins with first full measure'.

### Repeats

There are many ways to indicate repeated passages. First and second endings, D.C. and D.S. signs, and Coda signs lead to complicated flipping of pages back and forth, making the music harder for singers to navigate. It's easier for singers if the arrangement starts at the beginning and goes to the end without complicated repeats.

The basic repeat symbol can be used for short vamp sections.

The image shows a single staff of music in 4/4 time. It begins with a repeat sign (two vertical lines with dots) followed by four measures, each containing a half rest. The staff ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

### Musical Form

It's important to communicate the form of the arrangement to the singer. This can be done either with text symbols (Intro, Verse, Chorus, Interlude, Tag, etc.) or with rehearsal letters (Boxed letter A, B, C, etc. at major points in the music). Use a double bar to show a new section of the music.

### Text Symbols

**Intro**

Tenor Lead

Bari Bass

1 2 3 4

5 6 7 8

**Chorus**

9 10 11 12

Detailed description: This section contains three musical systems. The first system is labeled 'Intro' and features two staves: Tenor Lead (treble clef) and Bari Bass (bass clef). Both staves have a 4/4 time signature and contain four measures of music, each with a single dash representing a text symbol. The measures are numbered 1, 2, 3, and 4. The second system is labeled 'Verse' and also features two staves: Tenor Lead and Bari Bass. Both staves have a 4/4 time signature and contain four measures of music, each with a single dash. The measures are numbered 5, 6, 7, and 8. The third system is labeled 'Chorus' and features two staves: Tenor Lead and Bari Bass. Both staves have a 4/4 time signature and contain four measures of music, each with a single dash. The measures are numbered 9, 10, 11, and 12.

### Rehearsal Letters

Tenor Lead

Bari Bass

1 2 3 4

**A**

6 7 8

**B**

10 11 12

Detailed description: This section contains three musical systems. The first system is labeled 'Rehearsal Letters' and features two staves: Tenor Lead (treble clef) and Bari Bass (bass clef). Both staves have a 4/4 time signature and contain four measures of music, each with a single dash representing a text symbol. The measures are numbered 1, 2, 3, and 4. The second system is labeled 'A' and features two staves: Tenor Lead and Bari Bass. Both staves have a 4/4 time signature and contain four measures of music, each with a single dash. The measures are numbered 6, 7, and 8. The third system is labeled 'B' and features two staves: Tenor Lead and Bari Bass. Both staves have a 4/4 time signature and contain four measures of music, each with a single dash. The measures are numbered 10, 11, and 12.

---

## Lyrics

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### Lyric placement for each part

- Lyrics for all parts -- below the lead notes
- Lyrics for lead-specific lyrics in an embellishment -- below the lead notes
- Tenor-specific lyrics -- above the tenor notes
- Baritone-specific lyrics -- above the baritone notes
- Baritone and bass shared lyrics (bari and bass singing the same words and the same rhythms) – above the baritone notes
- Bass-specific lyrics (bass singing words or rhythm different from bari) -- below the bass notes.

When using notation software, use the software's lyric function, not free text, so that lyrics will be attached to notes. The specifics of how that is done will vary greatly among notation programs. Check the program's documentation for instructions.

---

### Spelling, Hyphenation, and Word Extensions

- Spelling and hyphenation always follow the dictionary. Arrangers should use whatever English dictionary is standard in their home country.
  - Word extensions are solid horizontal lines, level with the bottom of the letters in the word, that extend from the end of the word or syllable (or any punctuation that follows the word or syllable) to the end of the next note head.
  - When notes are tied over in the melody line, use word extensions to indicate that the word or syllable is sustained.
- 

### Baselines for lyrics

In typography, the baseline is the invisible line upon which most letters "sit". All lyrics in a given part should be on the same baseline.

incorrect

These words are not on the same base - line

correct

All words should be on the same base - line

Lyric example:

All parts singing together.  
Lyric in lead only.

Bass word because of the echo.  
Other parts share lead lyric.

Tenor Lead

Bari Bass

Love that \_\_\_ sound      Love that \_\_\_ beat \_\_\_      Love \_\_\_ the rhy- thm \_\_\_ so \_\_\_      We're

Love

Tenor different than lead. Each part gets its own words.

step-pin' out \_\_\_\_\_ now \_\_\_\_\_

step - pin'      step - pin' a - round \_\_\_\_\_

step-pin out \_\_\_\_\_ now      step-pin' out right now

Bari/bass words/  
rhythm are the  
same.  
Lyric in bari  
only.

now \_\_\_\_\_  
Bari different from bass. Each part  
gets its own words.

## Page Formatting and Fonts

### Page Size and Scaling

- North America -- U.S. letter size (8.5" x 11") is common. Concert size (9" x 12") also works very well, as it gives notation software more options for laying out systems. When printing from PDF, files created in Concert Size will be automatically scaled to fit on 8.5"x11" paper.
- For countries outside of North America that use metric paper sizes, A4 comes close to the dimensions of U.S. letter. Arrangers outside of North America should use whatever paper size is standard in their home country
- Use portrait (vertical) orientation.
- Software allows for the page size to be scaled up and down. Make sure the page is scaled to 100%, so that the music is a readable size. This is especially important as more singers read their music on mobile devices.

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## Music Fonts

Use traditional engraver-style music fonts for the greatest clarity. The default music fonts used by the major notation programs vary; all are acceptable.

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## Text Fonts

The text font recommendations below are based on the BHS Notation Guidelines.

Title – Arial, 24pt, Bold, fixed size. Use all capital letters. The title is centered at the top of the page.

# TITLE

If the song title includes parentheses, use Arial, 12pt, Bold, fixed size for the parenthetical part of the title

(HERE AM I)  
**BROKEN HEARTED**

Or

**CHRISTMAS SONG**  
**(CHESTNUTS ROASTING ON AN OPEN FIRE)**

as sung by / from the movie (optional) – Times New Roman, Italic, 10pt, fixed size.

Barbershop harmony, SSAA voicing - Times New Roman, Italic, 10pt, fixed size.

Both of these lines are centered, below the title.

*as sung by / from the movie*  
*Barbershop harmony, SSAA voicing*

It's helpful to say "Barbershop harmony" so that singers know this is a barbershop arrangement when viewing on platforms like Sheet Music Plus, which sells music in many genres and styles. Use the term "SSAA voicing" instead of "women's voices" or "female voices". SSAA is more inclusive of gender diverse members.

Composer and arranger credits -- Times New Roman, 12 pt., fixed size.

Use "Words by" and "Music by" to indicate lyricist and composer.

Use "Arrangement by" to indicate the arranger. Use ALL CAPS for names. They are placed flush with the left and right margins, as shown in the examples.

Words by NAME

Music by NAME  
Arrangement by NAME

---

Words and Music by NAME

Arrangement by NAME

---

Words, Music and Arrangement  
by NAME

Copyright notice - Times New Roman, 10pt, fixed size, centered at the bottom of the page. Check your software for the method to insert a copyright symbol. The copyright notice should always appear on page 1 of the music, not on a separate page, or on any succeeding pages. Use the exact wording provided by the copyright holder. Copyright notices can be long. Leave room for whatever text is needed.

Copyright © xxxx

If the arranger has arranged a song in the public domain, the copyright statement should read:

Arrangement Copyright © YYYY Arranger Name

If the arranger has written and arranged an original song, the copyright statement should read:

Copyright © YYYY Arranger Name

Lyrics – Times New Roman, 12 pt. **not fixed size**. Using proportional spacing for the lyrics will greatly improve the page layout. For more on the difference between fixed and non-fixed text size and why it matters, see [this post from the Scoring Notes blog](#).

Example - Page 1 Formatting

**TITLE**

*as sung by/from the movie/musical  
Barbershop harmony, SSAA voicing*

Words and Music by NAME

Music by NAME  
Arrangement by NAME

Tenor  
Lead

Bari  
Bass

Musical notation for measures 1-4. The Tenor Lead part is on a treble clef staff and the Bari Bass part is on a bass clef staff. Both are in 4/4 time. Each measure contains a whole rest. Measure numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4 are placed above the Tenor staff.

Musical notation for measures 5-8. The Tenor Lead part is on a treble clef staff and the Bari Bass part is on a bass clef staff. Both are in 4/4 time. Each measure contains a whole rest. Measure numbers 5, 6, 7, and 8 are placed above the Tenor staff.

Musical notation for measures 9-12. The Tenor Lead part is on a treble clef staff and the Bari Bass part is on a bass clef staff. Both are in 4/4 time. Each measure contains a whole rest. Measure numbers 9, 10, 11, and 12 are placed above the Tenor staff.

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## Page 2 and following pages - Page Header and Page Numbers

Page 2 and subsequent pages have a header consisting of the song title and the page number. The title is centered at the top of the page. Use Times New Roman, Italic, 12 pt., fixed size.

For even numbered pages, place the number on the top left corner.

2

*Title*

13 14 15 16

For odd numbered pages, place the number on the top right corner.

*Title*

3

29 30 31 32

---

## Rhythm and System Spacing

Notation software uses rhythm spacing formulas that assign horizontal space to notes based on their duration. Spacing is proportional, which means that notes of a longer duration get more horizontal space than notes of a shorter duration. The software also accounts for space needed by other musical elements -- clefs, key and time signature, rests, lyrics, symbols, accidentals, etc. While the software will do a good job with spacing in most cases, the arranger's eye and judgement are needed as well. Here are a few basic tips.

- Number of measures in a system: The songs we sing in barbershop tend to use 4 bar phrases, but don't force 4 bars onto a system. The goal is to have enough room that lyrics can be read easily but not so much that notes and lyrics are overly spread out.
- Number of systems on a page: It's typical to have 3 systems on page 1 and 4 systems on other pages. It's acceptable to put more systems on a page if they will fit, but avoid overcrowding. White space makes the page readable for the singer.
- The last page does not need to have systems all the way to the bottom. Two or three systems instead of four is OK. Avoid having a single system on the last page.
- Leave enough space between the treble and bass clef that lead and baritone lyrics do not collide with each other.
- Leave enough space between systems so that there is room for tenor and bass lyrics and white space between the systems. The singer should be able to easily see which notes and words belong to which system.
- As much as the music will allow, spacing between treble and bass clef, as well as spacing between systems, should be consistent. Software will have settings to help automate this process.



# Putting It Together: The Arranging Process

Up to this point, the focus has been on theory of barbershop harmony, chord vocabulary, and notation. It's now time to apply this knowledge to a real song. If you've never arranged a song you might be wondering: how do I get started?. Here I'll outline the steps -- what to do when you're ready to make the leap from theory into real arranging.

Ready? Let's go!

---

## Step 1: Pick the right song!

I'm a firm believer that there's nothing better for staying motivated than arranging songs you love. That said, you have to walk before you can run. Songs with very modern chords will either not be good candidates for a barbershop arrangement or will be difficult to execute for a beginner because they will require extensive chord substitution. Look for chord symbols that are similar to the types of chords in our vocabulary. The simpler the chords and chord symbols, the better for a beginning arranger. Songs with a very wide range for the melody will also be much more difficult. Keep the range of the melody line with about an octave to start.

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## Step 2: Find the sheet music created by the song's publisher

Work from publisher's sheet music whenever you can. Arranging solely by ear is much harder; don't make it harder than it needs to be!. The piano accompaniment and chord symbols are the best guideposts, especially for arrangers in the beginning stages. Save the "ear" method for when you're more experienced. There are plenty of Internet sites that have guitar tabs and chords to popular songs. Don't rely on them, however. They are not always accurate. Use sheet music that comes from the publisher.

Pro Tip: Music publishers will often create both a "Piano/Vocal/Guitar" version which will be more complex, and a simpler "Easy Piano" version. If the chords for the song you want to arrange are more complex, try using the "Easy Piano" version of the sheet music instead. It will have a simpler accompaniment, with simpler chord symbols. In effect, a professional arranger has done the work of simplifying the song for you. If you try an "Easy" version and the chords are still very modern and outside our chord vocabulary, you've picked a song that's too difficult. Try another song!

For older songs, the Internet has made vast amounts of music available to purchase, listen to, and download. [SheetMusicPlus.com](http://SheetMusicPlus.com) and [SheetMusicDirect.com](http://SheetMusicDirect.com) are the largest sources. Sheet Music Plus sells music both in print and digitally; Sheet Music direct is digital download only. Sheet Music Plus sells [vintage sheet music](#) at reasonable prices. Ebay and Amazon sell vintage sheet music as well.

When working with an older song, it's important to find the original sheet music if you can. Songs written in earlier eras sometimes contain racist language that would be unacceptable today; publishers changed lyrics over time as public tastes changed so that the sheet music would remain marketable. While the Hal Leonard/Alfred compilations of songs from various decades are helpful to have, be aware that the lyrics you find in those compilations might not be what the composer actually wrote.

Many academic and public libraries have sheet music collections which have been digitized and made available online. Links to a few of them are in the Resources section. When searching online sheet music sites, how much information you will see about a given song will vary. If a song is public domain in the U.S. you are more likely to see cover art and downloadable music. If a song is still under copyright you might see basic bibliographical information such as author, title, and publication date but won't be able to view or download the actual music. In that case, your next step is to contact the library directly. Depending on the library's policies, you may be able to get a copy sent to you or you may have to visit the library in person. If you have to visit a library in person, contact the library ahead of time to find out about access to their sheet music collection.

YouTube is a great source for historic performances, all available for free listening. The streaming services -- Apple Music, Google Play, Pandora, Spotify, etc. -- have older songs in their catalog as well. Another good resource is [The Great 78 Project](#), which is part of the Internet Archive.

### **Step 3: Get familiar with the song.**

Once you have the sheet music, get thoroughly familiar with the song.

Listen to the original. Get familiar with the melody, the lyrics, the chord movement, and what attracted you to the song in the first place. Listen to the hooks. It's OK to listen to covers of the song, and the Internet makes them easy to find. What I do not recommend is, looking at other arrangements, especially other barbershop arrangements. You want to arrange the song, not someone else's arrangement. Play through the sheet music a bunch of times and listen for the harmonic movement. Once you're thoroughly familiar with the song, move on to Step 4.

For an excellent discussion of this step, see Chapter 9 of *A Cappella Arranging* by Deke Sharon and Dylan Bell (Hal Leonard Books, 2012)

### **Step 4: Create a lead sheet**

A lead sheet consists of the melody line and any chord symbols from the sheet music. Write down the melody line and chord symbols from the sheet music, in the original key. Don't put chords to anything just yet! There's still another important step.

## Step 5: Select the key

The most important factor in deciding on a key is the range of the melody line. As a rule, lead range for SSAA Bb below middle C to C an octave above middle C.



Transpose the key so that as much of the lead line as possible falls within the lead range. When inputting chord symbols into your notation software, be sure you are using your software's chord function, so that any chord symbols you've assigned should transpose if you have to raise or lower the key. Some sheet music download sites allow the user to choose a key when selecting sheet music. If you're getting your sheet music from a download site that has this functionality, experiment with playing the sheet music in different keys before you download and print it. Remember: the goal is to get the melody line into the range of the average lead singer as much as possible. Not all sites offer this functionality, but it's very helpful when you can find it.

For more experienced arrangers, very high or low spots in a melody line can be dealt with in a variety of ways:

- Choice of key, including the use of different keys for different sections of the song.
- Moving melody up/down -- be selective when doing this so as not to render the melody unrecognizable.
- Melody transfer. If the song is to be contestable, remember that too much melody in parts other than the lead will make for a weak contest vehicle.

## Step 6: Begin to Arrange

Once you've studied the sheet music, created a lead sheet, and selected a singable key, then and only then are you ready to begin arranging the song. A few general tips:

1. Play, and play some more! I strongly recommend arranging at the keyboard first. Music software can play back, but it's no substitute for getting your hands on the keyboard and getting progressions into your fingers. Getting them into your fingers will get them into your ear as well. This will take time, but it's so worth it! There's a definite relationship between fluency at the piano and quality of arranging. If your piano skills are not strong, the best way to improve them is by playing.

2. Get regular feedback from an experienced arranger. Ideally the feedback happens live at the piano, so that your mentor can play examples of what's right and wrong and explain any areas of confusion. But it can be done over the Internet, too, either by sharing files via email or live via Zoom, Skype, etc. Whether in person or long distance, regular feedback is important.
3. Find singers to sing your charts. Even if it's just a pickup quartet, hearing your work sung will tell you what does and doesn't work better than any book or course. And when it works, there's nothing like hearing a chart sung and liking what you hear.

## The Arranging Process: Five Foot Two, Eyes of Blue

So that you can see the process at work, the next section will walk you through the steps, applied to real songs. I'll be demonstrating two examples. The first is a passage from the song that we've discussed elsewhere in the book, *Five Foot Two, Eyes of Blue*.

### Step 1. Choose a song

*Five Foot Two, Eyes of Blue*. For this example, I'll use the opening of the chorus, which shows the movement of chords around the Circle that [Dave Stevens talks about in his video](#).

### Step 2. Find the sheet music, and note the original lyrics.

Finding the original sheet music is important. First, it will have the original lyrics. For songs as old as *Five Foot Two*, first published in 1925, lyrics could have inappropriate references to racial and ethnic groups which were changed over time as a way to keep the song marketable. Sheet music covers from that time, while often beautiful, can have highly stereotyped images that would be considered offensive today.

Even if a song doesn't have problematic lyrics in terms of race, it may have other language which we would consider inappropriate today. The first verse of *Five Foot Two* opens with "I just saw a maniac, maniac, maniac wild, and tearing his hair." The second verse begins, "Love made him a lunatic, lunatic lunatic, gee". That language wouldn't be appropriate today. The Sweet Adelines Song Assessment process only labels a song inadmissible for racial issues, and from a perspective of race, *Five Foot Two* doesn't pose any problems. But there are lyrics in this song, especially in the verses, that the arranger will want to consider changing, to make the lyric more acceptable for a 21st century audience. The chorus of this song is an excellent teaching tool to show chords and chord movement typical of the barbershop style, but I did not include the entire song because I didn't feel that the verses were appropriate for today's singers. [View the original sheet music online](#).

Here's the original sheet music cover to *Five Foot Two, Eyes of Blue*. This cover is not problematic.



Here is the original sheet music for the opening of the chorus. I'll be walking through this section of the song.

The image shows the original sheet music for the opening of the chorus of "Five Foot Two, Eyes of Blue." The music is written for voice and piano. The chorus begins with the lyrics: "Five foot two, eyes of blue, But oh! what those five foot could do, Has an-y-bod-y seen my girl? Turned up nose,". The sheet music includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part features a prominent bass line and a treble line with chords. The sheet music is published by "GOOD OLD TIMERS" and includes a promotional message at the bottom: "A FOLIO CONTAINING 75 OF THE 'GOOD OLD SONGS' WE ALL LOVE—SUCH AS 'IN THE GOOD OLD SUMMERTIME,' 'WHERE DID YOU GET THAT HAT?' 'ON THE BANKS OF THE WABASH' 'SIDEWALKS OF NEW YORK' 'COMPAGNES' 'LITTLE ANNIE RODNEY?' 'SAY AU BEVOIR BUT NOT GOODBYE.' ✓ SONG FOLIO AS WELL AS A DANCE FOLIO, AND ONLY 50 CENTS FROM YOUR DEALER, OR DIRECT. BE SURE TO GET IT — YOU'LL NOT REGRET IT!"

Note the chord diagrams. They are for ukulele, a popular instrument in 1925 when this song was published. We can work out the chords using the piano part. It's always a good idea to look at the piano accompaniment in addition to any chord symbols, as chord symbols do not always match what the piano accompaniment is doing.

### Step 3: Create a Lead Sheet

Next, create a lead sheet – melody and chord symbols, in the original key of the song. You’ll want to input the entire song. For demonstration purposes, I’ll just include a short passage. You don’t have to include the Roman numerals; I’ve put them in here to reinforce the Circle movement described in the Stevens video. These are the chords in the original key of the sheet music.

1  
I  
Eb

2  
III7  
G7

3  
VI7  
C7

Tenor Lead

Five foot two, eyes of blue, but oh what those five

Bari Bass

4  
II7  
F7

5  
V7  
Bb7

6  
I  
Eb

7

foot could do, Has anybody seen my girl?

### Step 4: Select a key.

The most important thing in determining the right key is the lead melody. For this song, Eb is clearly too high. Look at “anybody” – you would not want to take leads as high as Eb unless it was a special case with a lead singer and quartet that you knew could handle it. For most singers, Eb in the lead part is much too high.

Dave Stevens does the song in the key of C, and that key does work well for SSAA voicing.

**I**  
C

**III7**  
E7

**VI7**  
A7

1 2 3

Five foot two,

**II7**  
D7

**V7**  
G7

**I**  
C

4 5 6 7

foot could do, Has an - y - bod - y seen my girl?

For this short passage, the key of Bb works, too. To know if it works for the whole song, you would input the entire song, verses and chorus, then transpose and see where the lead line sits – what is the lowest note and what is the highest note. You want to keep the lead line between Bb below middle C and C above as much as possible. Here is same passage in the key of Bb.

**I**  
B<sup>b</sup>

**III7**  
D7

**VI7**  
G7

1 2 3

Five foot two,

**II7**  
C7

**V7**  
F7

**I**  
B<sup>b</sup>

4 5 6 7

foot could do, Has an - y - bod - y seen my girl?

## Step 5: Start to Arrange

For this demo I'll use the key of Bb.

### m.1.

What's the harmonic pillar? Bb

What kind of chord is it? – Major Triad

How to spell a Bb Major Triad? Bb-D-F-Bb

For major triads, we want bass on the root of the chord (Bb) and because it's a triad we need a doubled tone. We double the root (Bb) and put bass on the root (Bb) for the strongest voicing. We start by putting the bass on the root, which is the strongest.

I  
B<sup>b</sup>

1  
Five foot two,

Now that we have lead and bass, we need the baritone and tenor. Because this Bb chord is a triad we need to double a tone. The doubled tone can be in any of the upper parts. Putting it in the tenor is the simplest solution.

I  
B<sup>b</sup>

1  
Five foot two,

That leaves the baritone, to complete chord – in this case, completing the chord by trading notes with the lead.

I  
B<sup>b</sup>

1  
Five foot two,

**m.2.**

What's the harmonic pillar? - D7

What type of chord is it? Dominant (barbershop) 7th.

How do you spell a D7 chord? D-F#-A-C.

Because it's a four-note chord, we don't have any doubles; all four tones have to be there.

Strong voicing for a dominant 7th chord is that bass can be either on root (D) or 5th (A). Three of the four lead notes are on the root tone of the chord (D), so we can't put the bass there. For the "of" note, the lead is singing F# so it's possible to put the bass on D. But don't forget about voice leading! We don't want to move the bass more than we have to. The solution here is to put bass on the 5th (A) for all four chords.

**III7**  
D7

2

eyes of blue, but

The baritone and lead can trade D and F#, similar to what they did in m.1

**III7**  
D7

2

eyes of blue, but

That leaves the tenor to sing the remaining tone – C. Tenor on C for all four notes. Note the accidental, F#. It applies to both lead and baritone so should be applied in both places.

**m.3-4.**

What's the harmonic pillar? -- G7

What kind of chord? Barbershop 7th

How to spell a G7? G-B-D-F

The strongest voicing for a barbershop 7th chord is bass on root or 5th. However, the melody line is going back and forth between the root of the chord (G) and the 5th of the chord (D). What to do with bass? Up until now the bass hasn't had to move much at all, but here we have to move the bass

a bit more. This is fine, as long as the voicings are strong and moves are logical. When the lead sings the 5th (D), the bass will sing the root. When the lead sings the root (G), the bass will sing the 5th.

VI7  
G7

3 4

oh what those five foot could do, Has

Lead and bass are trading root (G) and 5th (D). What to do with the 3rd (B) and the 7th (F)? Remember your voice leading. We want to have the smoothest part lines we can. The solution here is, baritone will take the F and tenor will take the B. While the bass does have to do more of a jump, the interval is a perfect 5th (G-D), which is an interval the bass sings frequently and one that will be easy to hear. Note how sometimes the baritone is above the lead, sometimes below. That's OK, if the melody line and good voice leading require it.

VI7  
G7

3 4

oh what those five foot could do, Has

Note the accidentals in these two measures. The first F natural in the baritone has parentheses around it – it's a courtesy accidental, to remind the singer that the F# from the previous measure no longer applies. The B natural in the tenor applies to both measures; the natural sign must be applied twice because accidentals are only in effect for one measure. There is no parentheses around the tenor accidental because it's a real accidental – B natural is needed to make the proper chord.

### m.5

What's the harmonic pillar? – C7

What kind of chord? Barbershop 7th

How to spell a C7? C-E-G-Bb

Strongest voicing of a Barbershop 7th chord is bass on either root or 5th. We saw in measure 3 how the bass moved between the root and 5th. We'll do that again in m.5.

**II7**  
C7

an - y - bod - y

Why put the bass on G when the bass could go on C for all four notes? Because of better voice leading in the baritone and tenor. Baritone goes on E straight across; tenor goes on C and Bb, like this.

**II7**  
C7

an - y - bod - y

**m.6 – an instance of CHORD SUBSTITUTION**

What's the harmonic pillar? F7

What kind of chord is it? Barbershop 7th

How to spell an F7 chord? F-A-C-Eb

Bass can be on root or 5th. At m.6, the lead is singing the root note (F), so the bass has to go on the 5th – C

The baritone had an Eb all the way through m.5. Good voice leading says: keep the baritone right where it is - Eb

Lead melody on F

Only one note left and only one place it can go – Tenor on A.

**V7**  
F7

6

seen my

What about the MY chord? Up to now we've had one pillar chord for a measure and all the melody notes were contained within the pillar chord so they harmonized easily. At "my", we have a melody note, G, that is not contained in an F7 chord. Here we must **substitute** another chord. There are a number of rules for chord substitution. The most basic one is to simply plug in the melody note and see if you get a barbershop chord. We'd leave all the harmony parts right where they were at "seen", just have the lead sing G instead of F. The resulting chord is C-Eb-G-A. That can be analyzed two ways: C minor 6th OR (in this case) F dominant 9th with root omitted. F-A-C-Eb-G; omit the root; put the A at the top of the chord.

V7  
F7

6

seen                  my

And finally, **m.7.**

Voice this chord the same as the first chord in m.1

I  
B $\flat$

7

girl?

The entire passage looks like this.

The musical score is presented in three systems, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats).

- System 1 (Measures 1-2):**
  - Measure 1: Chord I (B $\flat$ ). Notes: G $\flat$  (treble), B $\flat$  (bass).
  - Measure 2: Chord III $^7$  (D $^7$ ). Notes: D $\sharp$  (treble), F $\sharp$  (bass).
- System 2 (Measures 3-4):**
  - Measure 3: Chord VI $^7$  (G $^7$ ). Notes: G $\flat$  (treble), B $\flat$  (bass).
  - Measure 4: Chord VI $^7$  (G $^7$ ). Notes: G $\flat$  (treble), B $\flat$  (bass).
- System 3 (Measures 5-7):**
  - Measure 5: Chord II $^7$  (C $^7$ ). Notes: C $\flat$  (treble), E $\flat$  (bass).
  - Measure 6: Chord V $^7$  (F $^7$ ). Notes: F $\flat$  (treble), A $\flat$  (bass).
  - Measure 7: Chord I (B $\flat$ ). Notes: B $\flat$  (treble), D $\flat$  (bass).

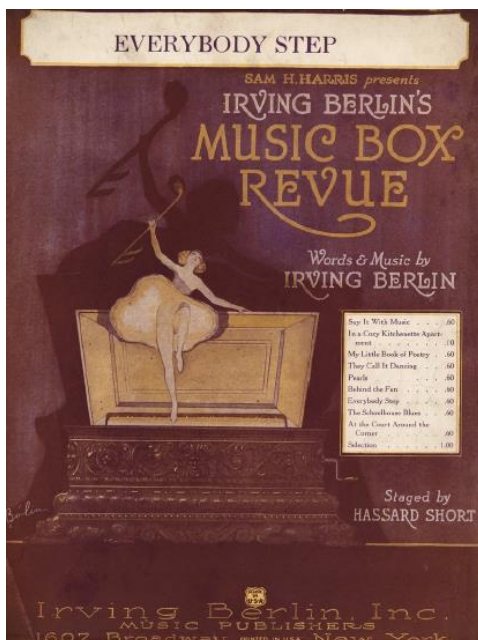
Let's talk a little more about voicing choices and voice leading, especially as they affect measures 5-7. When deciding on voicings, you must consider voice leading, both for the chords that come before and the chords that come after, and where the musical line is heading. The end of the passage was on a low note, so I used lower **voicings** in order to make the **voice leading** in the harmony parts move naturally toward that lower lead note. If the "girl" note in measure 7 was high B $\flat$ , different voicing choices would be possible. The final note is much higher, which changes both the voicing and the voice leading that leads up to it. For a tag, or a big climax in the song, these would be appropriate choices. The chords are exactly the same: C $^7$ , F $^7$ , F $^7$ (9), and B $\flat$ . They're just voiced differently because the melody line is moving to a different, higher place.

The image shows a musical score for the song "Everybody Step". The score is written in G major (one flat) and 2/4 time. It features a treble and bass clef. The lyrics are "an - y - bod - y seen my girl?". The score is divided into three measures. The first measure is labeled "II7" and "C7". The second measure is labeled "V7" and "F7". The third measure is labeled "I" and "Bb". A red box highlights the second and third measures, indicating the transition from the V7 chord to the I chord.

That, essentially, is the process – getting familiar with the song and the implied harmonies, coming up with harmonies that fit the chord movement and sing well. Going through it chord by chord makes the process seem more mechanical than it actually is. But at the beginning stages, you are learning about the barbershop chord vocabulary, chord spelling, principles of strong voicing, and principles of voice leading, etc. As you do more and more arranging, the process of building chords and understanding the harmonic movement will become second nature and then you’ll be able to focus on the more creative parts of arranging.

## The Arranging Process: Everybody Step

Here is the original sheet music cover to Everybody Step, published in 1921 (public domain in the U.S.). This is a contest uptune that I’ve arranged; it has been assessed by Sweet Adelines and has a rating of admissible.



Here is the original sheet music for the passage I'll be discussing. This is the start of the verse. It has some interesting examples of substitute chords and possibilities for embellishments.

Soon you'll hear a tune That's gon-na lift you out of your seat

It could be sweet-er- but then the me-ter was writ-ten es-peci-ly for you feet

The original key is C; I've taken it down a whole step to Bb.

1 <sup>B<sup>b</sup></sup> 2 3

Tenor Lead

Soon you'll hear a tune that's gon - na lift you out of your seat.

Bari Bass

4 <sup>B<sup>b</sup> B<sup>b</sup>7</sup> 5 <sup>E<sup>b</sup></sup> 6 <sup>F7</sup>

It could be sweet - er but then the met - er was

7 <sup>C7</sup> 8 <sup>F7</sup>

writ - ten es - pec - ial - ly for your feet. Gon - na

The key of C would have worked; the reason it's in Bb is to leave room for key changes later in the arrangement. The actual arrangement starts in Bb; goes to B, then ends in C. I'll discuss the key changes below. This is the first "A" section of the verse; it repeats and this passage is sung again with a different lyric, beginning with "gonna fly a way up high". For this demo, I'll focus on this opening section.

Look at the first system, measures 1 through 3. The harmonic pillar is Bb; however there are some melody notes that aren't part of a Bb chord:

Eb and C at "hear a"

Eb and C at "gonna"

G at "you".

Db at "of".

All of these will need substitute chords.

We'll begin by filling in chords for the notes that do harmonize with a Bb chord. I won't spell them out one at a time as in the first example; by now the spellings should be obvious. It's a triad so root should be on bass; the triad needs an appropriate double, which is the root. Measure 4 also begins with a Bb chord, but it also has Bb7 so I'll treat that separately.

Here's measure 1-3 with all the Bb chords filled in.

Now look at "hear a" in m.1 and "gonna" in m.2, both Eb and C. When doing Five Foot Two, we saw one type of substitution:

- **Plug in the note and see if you get a chord in the barbershop vocabulary, i.e. one of the 11 chords.**

For these two spots, that strategy won't work – Eb and C, paired with a Bb triad don't make barbershop chords. So the next substitution strategy to apply is:

- **Barbershop 7th chord whose root is a perfect 5th above or below the implied harmony.**

Yikes! What does all that mean?

The implied harmony here is Bb

A perfect 5th above Bb is F; a barbershop 7th built on F would be F7: F-A-C-Eb

A perfect 5th below Bb is Eb; a barbershop 7th built on Eb would be Eb7: Eb, G, Bb, Db

We can clearly see that F7 contains both the C and the Eb that we need, so F7 is the correct choice.

F7 is a dominant (barbershop) 7th chord, which means the bass can be on either root or 5th. I put the bass on the root for both – why? If you look at the 2nd one, the lead is singing the note C, which is the 5th of a dominant 7th chord. Since the 5th is taken by the lead the bass goes on the root. The lead isn't singing the 5th for the first one; the bass could go on the 5th. I put it on the root for smoother voice leading in the bass line. I used the same approach at both m.1 and m.3. At both spots, the second chord has to be bass on root; the first one is preferable to have bass on root for better voice leading in the bass.

Now let's move on to m.3, the melody note G at "you". Here, the "plug in note in" approach does work. The chord before is Bb. If we leave the harmony parts right where they are, the lead note G will make Bb-D-G-Bb, or Gm triad with a doubled 3rd. Gm is the relative minor for Bb Major, and this exact substitution is a common way that the minor triad is used. For triads, doubled 3rd is strong, as is bass on 3rd.

Note the different voicings of the Bb chord, to accommodate different melody notes.

Finally, the Db at “of”. There are a number of ways to treat chromatics, but here the “plug the note in” approach works. Our harmonic pillar is Bb. If we plug in the lead note, we get Bb-Db-F-Bb, or Bb minor triad with root on bass. Note where the harmony parts are at “your”, and leave them right there for the “of” chord.

B $\flat$  Gm B $\flat$  B $\flat$ m B $\flat$  B $\flat$

lift you out of your seat.

The entire passage looks like this.

Tenor Lead

B $\flat$  F7 B $\flat$  F7 B $\flat$  Gm/B $\flat$  B $\flat$  B $\flat$ m B $\flat$

Soon you'll hear a tune that's gon - na lift you out of your seat.

Bari Bass

Now let's move on to the second half of the verse.

B $\flat$  B $\flat$ 7 E $\flat$

lift you out of your seat. It could be sweet - er

F7 C7 Gm F7

but then the met - er was writ - ten es - pec - ially for your feet

At “seat”, m.4, you have a Bb chord followed by a Bb7 chord. The Bb chord is simple enough; just continue the voicing used in the previous measure. But what about the Bb7 chord? To solve this, we need to look not just at measure 4 but measure 5, where the lead line goes to a much higher place. In places like this, where parts have to navigate larger intervals, it’s better to have them move up by smaller steps, if possible.

**m.5, “IT”** – The chord is Eb major triad. Bass is on the higher E and tenor is an octave above that. Baritone on G.

The image shows two staves of music for measures 4 and 5. The top staff is the vocal line, and the bottom staff is the piano accompaniment. Measure 4 is labeled with a '4' and contains the lyrics 'seat.' The chords above are Bb and Bb7. Measure 5 is labeled with a '5' and contains the lyrics 'It'. The chord above is Eb. The vocal line in measure 5 has a large interval jump from the previous measure to reach the high Eb note.

Now that we know where we’re going, how will we get there? One approach is to simply move the tenor to Ab to make the Bb7 chord.

The image shows two staves of music for measures 4 and 5, similar to the previous example. The top staff is the vocal line, and the bottom staff is the piano accompaniment. Measure 4 is labeled with a '4' and contains the lyrics 'seat.' The chords above are Bb and Bb7. Measure 5 is labeled with a '5' and contains the lyrics 'It'. The chord above is Eb. The vocal line in measure 5 has a large interval jump from the previous measure to reach the high Eb note.

Notice what this does to the voice leading, especially for the tenor, who has to jump by a 5th to get to the high Eb at “It” in m.5. This is not preferable.

Another approach is, have the baritone take the Ab and put the tenor on D, like this:

This approach addresses the voice leading in the tenor, but now things are a little trickier for the baritone, having to go from D to Ab, and from below the lead to above. Going above and below the lead is what baritones do all the time. The tritone interval is tricky, but good baritones will be able to handle it, and this approach keeps things simple for the lead, who doesn't have to change notes.

Is there another approach? Yes -- have the lead move to the Ab, the bari on F and tenor on D.

This approach keeps the tenor on D, and removes the awkward interval for the baritone.

Which would I choose? I would not choose #1, because of voice leading in the tenor. #3, the one with Bari on F, is an acceptable choice, but not the one I chose when I did the arrangement. The one I chose when I arranged the song was the second one, with the baritone on Ab.

Why the second one? In addition to the changes in the chords, there was yet another consideration. At m.4-5 there is an 8th note tied to a whole note – a long sustained tone which needs something to keep the forward motion going. This is a good spot for an **embellishment**. An embellishment is any treatment that deviates from all four parts singing at the same time. Here, I used an **echo**, where one part holds on a word and other parts sing complementary words. I left the lead on their note, holding the word “sweet”, while the other parts did the echo.

Another echo is possible for the downbeat of m.5: harmony parts sang 3/4 of an Eb chord; the lead fills in the with the word “It” on the second half of beat 1.

B<sup>b</sup>                      B<sup>b</sup>7                      E<sup>b</sup>

hear    a    tune    so                      sweet

out of your seat. \_\_\_\_\_                      It could be

hear    a    tune    so                      sweet

On to m.5, where we have a new harmonic pillar, Eb. The melody goes back and forth between Bb and C.

E<sup>b</sup>

sweet

It could be sweet - er

sweet

To harmonize this, we don't need to change the voicing that we have at downbeat of beat 1. The chords alternate between Eb and Cm with bass on 3rd. In a minor triad, bass on 3rd and doubling the 3rd are strong. It's the same relative minor substitution that we saw at “lift you out of your seat”.

E<sup>b</sup>            Cm    E<sup>b</sup>    Cm    E<sup>b</sup>

sweet

It could be sweet - er

sweet





The first half of the verse, in its entirety, looks like this.

Musical score for the first half of the verse, showing Tenor Lead and Bari Bass parts with lyrics. The score is in 4/4 time and B-flat major. It consists of three systems of music.

System 1: Tenor Lead and Bari Bass. Lyrics: "Soon you'll hear a tune that's gon - na".

System 2: Tenor Lead and Bari Bass. Lyrics: "lift you out of your seat. hear a tune so sweet It could be sweet - er".

System 3: Tenor Lead and Bari Bass. Lyrics: "but then the met - er was writ - ten es - pec - ially for your feet".

In the actual arrangement, you'll see one other change I made at measure 7, a slight change to the melody line. "Written especially for your feet" didn't seem to flow well; I wanted something that would "swing" better. Instead of "written especially for your feet", I used "written for your dancin' feet". There were no changes to the basic chords.

Musical score for the second half of the verse, showing Tenor Lead and Bari Bass parts with lyrics and chord changes. The score is in 4/4 time and B-flat major. It consists of one system of music.

System 1: Tenor Lead and Bari Bass. Lyrics: "but then the met - er was writ - ten for your dan - cin' feet". Chord changes are indicated above the staff: C7(9) at measure 7, Gm at measure 8, and F7 at measure 9.

In addition to the more left-brain aspects of recognizing the harmonic pillar, building chords, understanding substitutions, etc. there's a right-brained side as well – what's the story being told with the song and how you will use creative devices in order to tell that story.

## Embellishments

Embellishments are any treatment which takes the music away from four parts singing at the same time. They are used to add interest and forward motion. The examples below come from my arrangement of Everybody Step.

### Echo

*accel.*

47 Step, step, step - in' a - round

48 step - pin' out

step - pin' out

### Background syllables / duet

m.31 -- background syllable (can be ooh, doo, ah, or any similar syllable)

m.32 -- lead/tenor duet while bass/bari hold on ah

31 ah

The clar - i - net - ter

32

could not be bet - ter.

ah

8

8

There are several examples of embellishments in the passage below.

**Swipe** – see “great”, m.36. Swipes can move upward or downward.

**Melody transfer** (to bass at m.37-38 and back to lead at m.39; dotted lines indicate the changes).

**Patter** – Also at m.37-38; the upper parts are singing words not related to the bass words.

## Key Changes

### Dominant 7th of the new key

There are a variety of ways to do key changes. The most common way is, **find the dominant 7th of the new key and get to that in a logical way.**

- When doing whole or half-step key changes, look for common tones between the old and new keys.
- A common tone might be an enharmonic equivalent.

**Example 1: Half-Step Key Change, Eb To E**

Dominant 7th of E = B7

$E^b$        $B7$        $E$

Eb and D# are enharmonic - common tone between old and new key.

**Example 2: Half-Step Key Change, E to F**

Dominant 7th of F = C7

$E$        $C7$        $F$

E is a common tone between old and new key

**Example 3: Whole-Step Key Change, Ab to Bb**

Dominant 7th of Bb = F7

$A^b$        $F7$        $B^b$

$A^b$        $F7$        $B^b$

C and Eb are common tones: C in bari/bass; Eb in lead.

In Example 3, note the difference in voicing between the first two bars and the second. Play them and compare how they sound. Both are correct, but the sounds have a different flavor. The first one has more of a sense of "lift" into the new key, and, depending on the harmonic flow of the music, might be preferable.

In these three examples, The transition chord is based on the flatted VI chord.

- From the home key, find the 6th. (In Example 1, Eb is the home key; the 6th is C).
- Lower that note a half-step (In Example 1: Half-step down from C is B)
- Make a dominant 7th out of that tone (B7)

The bVI7 chord is both a secondary dominant in the old key and actual dominant in the new one. This is a common pattern in half and whole step key changes.

All of these examples show the transition to a new key by using just one chord. In arranging actual music, you might need more than one chord to accomplish the change of key. When developing key changes think not only of the right intervals (dominant 7th of new key) but of smooth voice leading and voicings that give the singer's ear the sense of "lift" which makes it clear that new key is coming.

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### Up A 4th / Down A 5th

Liz Garnett, writing about key changes as described by David Wright, described it this way.

*'Up a 4th' as David put; I'd think of it as down a 5th, as the examples he gave were generally presaged by I7 to take us gently and seamlessly into the subdominant key for a passage of bass melody. The observant reader will notice that this is technically an instance of the first type, but David listed it separately, probably because it has a different expressive feel. Rather than giving the music a shot in the arm (secondary dominant transformed into actual dominant), it aims to smooth the way into the new key so we don't really notice ... (Dr. Liz Garnett, "David Wright's List of Key Changes" [Helping You Harmonise, October 14, 2018](#))*

### Example 4: Down a 5th – Eb to Bb

C7      F7      F7(9)      F7      B $\flat$

## Intros and Tags

Intros and tags are special challenges because the arranger has to take on the role of a songwriter and there's a real art to writing good original material. Here are some general tips for intros and tags.

### Intros

- Does the song need an intro? For pop songs with well-known lyrics and instrumental hooks, an intro will probably seem out of place – four measures of "ooh" or "doo" on a riff from the song will suffice. For older songs, if the verse sets up the song well, then you don't need an intro. If the verse begins in a way that assumes a scene has already been set, then an intro will be needed.
- Every song is unique. Perhaps the melody of a verse works but the lyric doesn't – it's uninteresting or outdated in some way, so that new lyrics are needed. If the verse has a good lyric but a melody line that's difficult to sing, don't be afraid to change it. (changing the chorus is another matter, especially if the song is very well known).
- Perhaps you've decided to throw the verse out completely and start the arrangement with the chorus. Yes, that's allowed – *Cuddle Up A Little Closer* is an example of a well-known contest arrangement that starts with the chorus and then repeats the chorus several times; without using the verse at all. If you've planned the arrangement in that way, then you'll need to write an original intro.
- If you're writing an original intro, **begin with a compelling story**. What's the scene you're trying to set up? What's the mood you're trying to convey? That will be the basis for your lyric. If you're arranging a medley, the intro needs to establish the idea that connects the songs together.
- Once you have an idea for what you want to say in the intro, the next step is, **write the melody line**. Don't just string chords together. Barbershop is 3 parts harmonizing around a melody – you have to have melody before you can have harmony. Look at the rest of the song – is there a phrase or a chord progression that can be the basis for an intro?
- Once you have a melody you can begin to put chords around it. It's good to start the intro on a tonic chord so that the singers can have a solid tonal center. If the intro has a pickup, a dominant 7th (V7) chord leading to a tonic is fine. If the chorus begins on a tonic chord (they often do) then ending the intro on a (V7) chord will provide a strong transition to the chorus. Depending on the range of the song and how you've planned the arrangement, you may need a key change to transition from the intro to the verse or chorus. David Wright's arrangement of *South Rampart Street Parade* has 3 key changes in the intro alone. Beginners, don't try that at home! There's no "rule" for how long an intro should be, but it should use 4-bar phrases.
- Contest arrangements often have intros with a big, powerful climax. If that kind of an intro suits your arrangement, it can be exciting for both singers and audience.

### Tags

- Tags can be as simple as repeating a line from the chorus; more often they are freely composed by the arranger. Tag singing and tag writing are a whole "sub-genre" within barbershop. Just go to [BarberthopTags.com](http://BarberthopTags.com) and you'll find thousands of tags. This site can be

useful for getting tag ideas, and for studying how really good tag writers do it. At the end of the day **your** arrangement has to have **your** tag, not someone else's. Intros are the setup to an arrangement – "tell them what you're going to tell them". Tags are the wrap-up: "tell them what you've told them".

- A good place to start for tag writing is, re-state a line from either the lyric or the chorus, and look for ways to add some variation to it, whether that's rhythmic variation or different textures (echo or patter instead of homorhythmic). When starting to write tags, one strategy that's worked for me is: block out the number of measures I think I'll need for the tag, then create simple harmonic rhythm based on the Circle of Fifths, one change for each measure. A measure of I, then a measure of III7 or VI7, then one measure for each 7th going back to the tonic. This basic harmonic movement, plus what has come before in the body of the arrangement, often helps in creating a new melody that leads back to the tonic in a singable way. It's a good way to get unstuck; will get your brain going and make it easier to find something that does work. As with intros, once you have a melody, the melody will suggest interesting chords.
- Posting – One part holds a single note out while other parts make chords around it. It's commonly done, and exciting for singers and audiences. Just remember (1) All chords must still be complete (2) Don't make posts so long that ordinary singers can't sing it. Unless you're actually arranging for Tim Waurick, don't write posts that only he can sing! Posts can be in any part, and the note that posts can move from one part to another. The only limit is your skill and creativity.
- Length – Tags should be proportional to the length of the overall song; they don't have to be the same length as the intro. If you have an 8-bar into and a 12-bar tag, that's fine, as long as the overall form of the song makes sense to the listener.

## **"Barber-Pop": Arranging Today's Popular Songs**

Barber-Pop refers to arrangements of the pop songs of today, as opposed to songs from the 19-teens, 1920s or 1930s.

The name implies an idea that "barbershop" and "pop" are at opposite ends of a spectrum. If you think about it, that's not really true. Everything we sing is "barber pop" because barbershop harmony has always taken its repertoire from popular song. Much of our contest repertoire comes from what is sometimes called the Great American Songbook: the American popular song hits of the first half of the 20th century. The difference is not pop song vs barbershop. All barbershop is made up of popular songs that have been adapted to a certain style of close harmony singing.

Song writing has evolved greatly since the days of Tin Pan Alley. The classic popular song form of a 8-16 bar verse and a 32-bar chorus has gone by the wayside. Songs are much more freely composed, and today's music is heavily Influenced by technology, such as sampled sounds and loops. Often the implied harmonies are repeating patterns of 3 and 4 chords. Newer vocal styles such as a cappella, rap, hip hop, have produced new songwriting styles and new vocal sounds. In all of this, our

barbershop organizations have given barbershop a fixed set of rules based on a much older style of songwriting.

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### Barbershop vs. Pop

Barbershop	Pop
Four parts, unaccompanied	Solo with instrumental accompaniment
Melody in an inner voice (lead)	Solo. If there is an ensemble of singers, the melody is likely to be in the highest part
Homorhythmic (vertical chords with all parts singing words most of the time)	More use of backing vocals that sing neutral syllables.
Preference for certain kinds of chords, especially barbershop 7ths.	More triad based; greater use of chords outside of our chord vocabulary such as suspended chords. Lack of barbershop 7th chords is probably the biggest reason why most current pop hits don't make it as contest vehicles. They lack barbershop 7th chords and don't have melodies which suggest them.
Preference for progressions that move around the Circle of Fifths.	Often based on a simple three or four chord progression which repeats.
Chord-driven	Rhythm-driven. Greater use of instrumental hooks such as guitar riffs or drum fills.

Less chord variety and greater use of instrumental hooks present challenges in how to treat the song and how to keep it interesting. Rhythm and embellishments are keys to addressing it – greater use of devices such as solo with background syllables, patter, and bell chords. Creative use of neutral syllables is important. The arranger may have to use more than four parts to capture a song well. This will limit an arrangement's use to choruses

It's important to consider the likely expectations of the audience. When audiences hear a song they know from the radio they will be disappointed if the arrangement doesn't sound like what they know. The key to arranging current pop songs is knowing when the barbershop rules apply and when they don't. One important barbershop element that you should incorporate whenever possible is barbershop voicing – bass on roots and 5ths, correct doubles for triads. If the song has major triads, melody is in the lead part, and bass singing the foundational tones the song will have a barbershop sound, even if it doesn't meet the strictest criteria for a strong barbershop song.

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### What makes a good barber-pop song?

Not all pop songs make good arrangements. You've probably seen the [video from Axis of Awesome](#) about how it's simple to write a pop hit, you just have to write a four-chord song. As an arranger, you can work with a four-chord song, but you can't work with a one-chord song. Pick songs that

have musical substance. When selecting pop songs, it's important to pick the right one, just as it is for contest songs. The criteria are not all that different than criteria for contest songs.

- Does the lyric tell an interesting story?
- Does the song have a singable melody?
- Does the song have, or suggest, good harmonies? Lots of rap and hip-hop has spoken lyrics, and you can't put harmony around spoken words.
- The more harmonic variety the better, and better yet if the song has barbershop 7th chords.

Too much reliance on guitar licks, drum patterns, and the like makes for a song that won't translate well to barbershop.

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### Mashup vs Medley

The difference between a mashup and a medley is how the songs are presented. In a medley the songs are sung one after the other. In a mashup, the songs are sung at the same time. This means the progressions have to match exactly. With mashups, just as with medleys, the arranger is creating a new song. As with a medley the result has to work as a song, with a defined beginning, middle, and end, and the lyrics of the songs have to tell complementary stories.

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### Above all – be true to the song

The worst thing you can do in arranging current pop songs is, force them into the style – put barbershop 7th and 9th chords in where they clearly don't belong, change progressions to match the classic barbershop chord movement. Barbershop arrangers are essentially cover artists – we're taking a familiar song and adapting it to our particular style of singing and arranging. There's a fine line to walk. On the one hand, what will make the song fun to sing and enjoyable for an audience? On the other hand, we don't want to trash the things that made the song great to begin with.

Dr. Liz Garnett sums it up well.

*And the general distinction between 'what is good barbershop?' and 'what is good art?' still remains – the ideal is to do something that ticks both boxes, but not every example achieves that. We are quite often presented with an arrangement that has achieved good barbershop but has compromised distinctive flavours in the original in the process. Or a song that captures the original well, but doesn't readily accommodate the high-stakes emotional arcs that barbershoppers like to invest their contest repertoire with. If you want to make me really grumpy, compromise on both counts at the same time. Take an interesting song, squeeze barbershop harmonies into it that distract me by their difference from the original, but still leave me in doubt as to whether it's really barbershoppy enough for contest purposes. (Dr. Liz Garnett, "On the Liberalising of the Barbershop Style" [Helping You Harmonise, February 16, 2019](#))*

## When Is An Arrangement Finished?

### The arrangement

- Song in the right key
  - Unless your intent is feature a certain part, range of the lead melody determines the key.
  - The right key puts the melody line within the range of the average lead singer as much as possible.
- Chord construction
  - Chords appropriate to the implied harmony of the song
  - Triads with correct double; four-note chords have all tones present.
  - Even in embellishments, chords must be complete, harmonious, and appropriate to the song. No non-chords, discords, or incomplete chords,.
  - For contest songs, no chords outside the barbershop vocabulary. Eleven chords are common to both BHS and SAI systems; BHS recognizes 4 additional ones. Whichever system applies to your situation, there should be no chords outside of the approved vocabulary.
  - Check the spelling of every chord, to ensure your spellings are correct and that you've voiced the chords you intended. Notation programs have a chord analysis function that can help with this
- Voicing and Voice Leading
  - Correct placement of the bass note
  - Baritone above or below lead, as appropriate to the melody line and good voice leading
  - Uses a combination of closed, spread to 10th, and open voicings as appropriate for the melody line and good voice leading.
  - Part lines within the generally accepted ranges for each part.
  - Logical part movement with no awkward skips or leaps.
- Do the singers have places to breathe? Plan for rests or breath marks in appropriate spots, both to denote musical phrasing and to give singers a place to take a breath. Words of wisdom from David Wright: "If the singer has to leave words out to take a breath, that's the arranger's fault"
- The Ear Test – Listen to the entire chart, start to finish. Does anything stick out as ugly? If so, look at it again. Be careful, though, and don't let your inner critic take over to the point where you start changing *everything*.

### The manuscript

- First page: Correct song title, composer and arranger credits, and copyright information.
- All pages and measures numbered
- Music spacing
  - Room on each system for lyrics to be easily read.
  - Enough room between the staves so that words for each part aren't crowded.
- Correct lyric placement for all parts
- Lyrics correctly spelled and hyphenated, and in a font that can be read easily.

The manuscript should be both correctly formatted and visually appealing. As you're proofing the chart, look at the manuscript itself, in addition to looking at the arrangement. Whatever program you use, learn to use all of its page layout features so that you can make the manuscript look as good as possible.

Finally -- Take your time! Doing all the checking described here can't be done in a hurry

*"There are seasons ... the seasons of nothing, starting, grinding, and finishing."*

--Rowena Harper

# Contestability and the Music Category

Sooner or later, you will want to try your hand at arranging a song for the contest stage. Doing so requires a high skill level in chords, voicing, voice leading, creative devices, etc. as well as a knowledge of the requirements for acceptable contest songs. It's important for arrangers to understand the rules, just as it is for singers. For both singers and arrangers, the rules will vary depending on which organization is sanctioning the contest.

The Barbershop Harmony Society (BHS) and its affiliates use a judging system with three categories: Music, Singing, and Performance. Harmony Incorporated also uses the BHS three-category system. The official definitions for each category are set forth in: Barbershop Harmony Society, [Contest and Judging Manual \(C&J\)](#).

Sweet Adelines International (SAI) uses a judging system with four categories: Sound, Music, Expression, and Visual Communication (formerly known as Showmanship). The official definitions for each category are set forth in the Judging Category Description Book (JCDB). Sweet Adeline members may download a copy from the members area of the [Sweet Adelines International website](#). The downloadable version cannot be printed; purchase a print copy from the International Sales section of the SAI website. Members must log in to the site in order to get member pricing.

In both systems, the Music Category judges the strength of the arrangement and the skill level of the performer in executing the arrangement. Music judges do not have a copy of the arrangement in the pit; they score the arrangement as performed and judge solely based on what they hear.

The two systems are similar in some ways, different in others. What follows is a broad comparison of the two, based on my study of them. I am not a judge in either organization so the discussion here should not be considered official in any way. I encourage you to read the manuals for both systems, get thoroughly familiar with the rules that apply for your situation, and take any questions concerning the category to a Sweet Adeline or BHS Music judge. If you are a Sweet Adeline and studying for tests in the Arranger Certification Program (ACP) or Director Certification Program (DCP) don't rely entirely on what you read here. Be sure to get the JCDB and study it, as that is what the test questions will be based on.

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## Chord vocabulary

Eleven chords are common to both systems

- Major Triad
- Dominant 7th
- Dominant 9th
- Major 6th
- Major 7th
- Major 9th
- Minor Triad
- Minor 6th
- Minor 7th
- Augmented Triad
- Diminished 7th

The BHS chord vocabulary recognizes some chords that Sweet Adelines does not.

- Half-diminished 7th
  - Diminished Triad
  - Augmented 7th (Dominant 7th with Augmented 5th)
  - Dominant 7th with flatted 5th
- 

### SAI and BHS: Common Elements

- In both systems, the best barbershop songs feature the barbershop 7th, barbershop 9th, and major triad predominantly. **Neither system gives a hard number for how many of these chords a song should have.**
  - In both systems, the music judge looks for harmonic movement around the Circle of 5ths.
    - SAI looks primarily for dominant to tonic resolution
    - In BHS other kinds of movement are acceptable.
  - Both systems judge suitability to the performer, and in both systems there are no "degree of difficulty" points. Performers who sing a very difficult arrangement do so at their own risk.
  - Both systems address the inter-relationship of the music category to the other categories. Read the judging manuals for this specifics on this.
  - The music category is not the first tie breaker in either system. In the SAI system the first tie breaker is Sound. In the BHS system the first tie breaker is Singing.
- 

### SAI and BHS: Differences

- Role that form plays in evaluating a strong barbershop song. SAI category puts much more emphasis on the popular song writing style of Tin Pan Alley, especially the presence of a chorus with a regular rhyming pattern in the lyric such as AABA.

- Homorhythmic treatment (all four parts singing together) vs. embellishments. While both systems define homorhythmic singing as a part of the barbershop style, the BHS system tends to allow for more leeway for non-homorhythmic treatments.
- Sweet Adeline contest rules limit the performer to 7 minutes of singing time. BHS has no time limits, which allows for longer songs, with more creative devices.
- The BHS music category allows for **very occasional** use of out-of-vocabulary chords, if they're handled in a musically appropriate way. Sweet Adelines requires that all chords in a contest arrangement be within the 11-chord vocabulary as defined by Sweet Adelines.
- In BHS, there are no category weights. The music judge gives a single score ranging from 0-100 which takes in all the elements of the category. In SAI, the category is broken down into 30% song and arrangement; 70% performance; however the performer receives a single score from 0-100.

## BHS and Theme

Unique to the BHS music category is the idea of a musical theme. Here is the complete discussion of theme, taken from the BHS *Competition and Judging Manual*, Music Category:

### *Theme*

*1. The theme is the principal musical statement of the song. It may be based on the song's lyrics, rhythm, melody, or harmony, or a combination of these elements. The theme may vary from one part of the song to another, and there may be more than one theme present simultaneously. The theme may also be a parody of one or more of the song elements.*

*2. When visual comedy is the primary performance theme, the Music judge will still evaluate the use of musical elements.*

*3. The Music judge evaluates the performer's choices of appropriate voicings and embellishments when used to enhance the song's theme and delivery.*

*a. If lyrics are the theme, the Music judge evaluates how well the arranger and performer enhances the message by highlighting the lyric's critical words and phrases.*

*b. When rhythm is the theme, the successful performance features precision, clear articulation, appropriately chosen and well-defined tempos and tempo changes, and accurate execution of rhythms.*

*c. Melody can be the musical theme when its shape and contour are of such beauty and dimension that it becomes more dominant than the lyrics and other musical elements that support it. The Music judge evaluates how well the performer features this element through the use of melodic shape and contour, volume levels, word color, vocal quality, inflection and pace.*

*d. Harmony can be the musical theme in those rare cases where it is more important than lyric, rhythmic or melodic elements. This is usually when the melodic construction and harmonic*

*rhythm allow substantial opportunities for harmonic embellishment. When harmony is the theme, the performance should demonstrate a high level of in-tune, locked and ringing sound.*

*4. While embellishment may not be the theme, it can become a featured musical device for portions of a song. Examples include, but are not limited to, patter, bell-chords, backtime, and call-and-echo. The Music judge evaluates the effectiveness of these embellishments in developing the theme and in creating unity and contrast.*

## Selecting Contest Music

- Chords
  - Primarily in a major key
  - Has chords that fall within the barbershop vocabulary. A strong song either has, or suggests the major triad, barbershop 7th and barbershop 9th – the more the better. Songs can have minor chords, but the song shouldn't have an overall feel of the minor mode.
  - Harmonic movement that follows the Circle of Fifths.
- Melody line should fall within the range of the average lead singer, with few awkward skips or leaps.
- Form – Does the song have a chorus with a regular rhyme pattern such as AABA? This is a requirement in the SAI music category; less so in BHS music category.
- Lyrics
  - Do they tell an interesting story?
  - Is the subject matter appropriate for today's singers and audiences?
  - Are there dated lyrics which may need to be re-written? Are there stereotypical lyrics which need to be eliminated? This is especially important for Sweet Adelines, as all songs sung on the contest stage must go through the song assessment process and be rated as admissible. Performing inadmissible material will result in disqualification.
  - Does the song have climactic moments, or will you need to build in a climax?
  - Does the verse work as an intro or will you need to write an intro?

# Done With Dixie: Inclusion and Music Selection

Barbershop harmony takes much of its repertoire, especially its contest repertoire from the Great American Songbook, the American popular song hits of the first half of the 20th century. While this repertoire has many great songs, with harmonies that work especially well for barbershop, it is also true that some songs from this era have lyrics which reflect prejudiced attitudes toward African Americans and other racial and ethnic minorities.

Both the Barbershop Harmony Society and Sweet Adelines have exclusion of African Americans as part of their history. While the formal exclusion of African Americans no longer exists in BHS or Sweet Adelines our repertoire has been slow to change in some respects. In particular, we've hung onto "Dixie" songs – songs such as Swanee, which are about longing to go back to Dixie where "mammy, mammy's waitin' for me prayin' for me down by the Swanee". One reason for the popularity of Dixie songs was that they were seen as the epitome of the barbershop style. From a purely musical standpoint, it's hard to disagree – the chords, harmonic movement, and singable melody lines, are all strong examples of the barbershop. However, many songs from the era of Tin Pan Alley were written at a time in America when it was considered acceptable to see blackface on the covers of sheet music, on stage, and on screen; acceptable for song lyrics to include racial and ethnic stereotypes. The idealized picture of the South painted in songs like Swanee is both false and painful for African Americans who have slavery as part of their heritage.

In recent years both Sweet Adelines and the Barbershop Harmony Society have taken, and continue to take, broad organizational steps to address diversity and inclusion within barbershop. The Barbershop Harmony Society has recognized, and apologized for, the exclusion of African Americans from membership in previous years. The BHS' *Everyone in Harmony* initiative emphasizes diversity and inclusion, stating:

*... We must unequivocally turn away from any cultural vestiges of exclusion. We must become radically inclusive and diverse, across cultural, ethnic, racial, sexual orientation, social, economic, and generational lines. (Barbershop Harmony Society, [Everyone in Harmony Strategic Vision, July 3, 2017](#), accessed on BHS website, March 25, 2023)*

The BHS has written about the racism in its past in the Harmonizer. See Matthew Beals, [“Honoring the Grand Central Red Caps”](#). Harmonizer, November-December 2017.

The complete run of the Harmonizer can be found in the members area of the BHS website. The BHS website also includes extensive information about the [African American roots of the barbershop style](#). For details on the African American origins of barbershop, see these articles:

- Jim Henry, “The Historical Roots of Barbershop Harmony”. *The Harmonizer*, July/August 2001. Jim Henry summarizes the major findings of his doctoral dissertation on the African-American roots of barbershop harmony.
- Kevin Keller, "The Hallmark 7th Chord". *The Harmonizer*, July-August 2009, p.24-25.
- David Wright, “The African-American Roots of Barbershop (and Why It Matters)”. *The Harmonizer*, January-February 2015, p.10-15.

Sweet Adelines has recognized, and apologized for, the formal exclusion of African Americans which took place from the mid-1950s to the mid-1960s. Watch the [State of the Organization Address by then-International President Paula Davis, from October 2016](#) (Starts at 18:38)

The Sweet Adelines website states:

*Sweet Adelines International openly recognizes our racist history, a past that saw the organization ban membership for women of color from 1958 to 1966. It is an ugly truth we acknowledged at our 2016 convention, and since then we have worked — in videos and in *The Pitch Pipe* — to educate our members about this truth and how we are working to use the history as a catalyst for our inclusion and equity work of today. We believe it's important to be clear about what happened in the past, because racism and discrimination were unacceptable then and they are something we will not tolerate now. (Sweet Adelines International, [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#), accessed June 25, 2023)*

The Sweet Adelines Mission Statement and Guiding Principles state:

*We celebrate our differences as essential to the rich harmony that unites us. As we recognize barbershop's African American origins and learn from our exclusionary past toward women of color, we reject discrimination and unwaveringly strive toward greater awareness, openness and understanding of each other. (Sweet Adelines International, [Mission Statement and Guiding Principles](#), accessed March 25 2023)*

Sweet Adelines has published educational articles both in the Pitch Pipe and on the web about both the racism in the organization's past, and about Diversity Equity and Inclusion moving forward, including:

Corinna Garriock, [“Inclusive Music Selection”](#). Pitch Pipe, October 2016

Elizabeth Davies, [“Toward A More Inclusive Sweet Adelines: Harmonizing the World in the 21st Century”](#). Pitch Pipe, July 2018

[“Telling Our Story: A Historical Account”](#). Pitch Pipe, July 2018

[“Building A Diversity Garden”](#). Pitch Pipe, January 2019

Sweet Adelines has also established a process to educating members about the songs that they are singing, the Song Assessment Tool (SAT)

*The SAT was designed to aid in achieving Sweet Adelines International's Guiding Principles of Diversity & Inclusion and Culture of Belonging, by providing ensembles with a tool to learn about the songs they are singing and to highlight inclusion aspects to consider in selecting their repertoire. The SAT is now also utilized as an official evaluation method of a song's appropriateness for public performance by groups or individuals representing Sweet Adelines International. (Song Assessment Tool Home Page, in Sweet Adelines website, members area, accessed March 25, 2023)*

The [Song Assessment website](#) contains extensive resources for learning about the Tool, the SAT submission form and instructions on how to fill it out, and resources for song research. In addition Sweet Adelines has produced a series of [YouTube videos on the song assessment process](#). Songs that have been assessed are contained in the Song Evaluation Database (SED); the SED grows continuously as more songs and arrangements are evaluated. In Sweet Adelines contests, all songs sung on stage are now required to have been assessed and rated as admissible; contestants who do not follow this directive will be disqualified.

Our barbershop organizations have a shared goal to make all singers feel welcome so that they can feel the joy of singing four-part harmony, barbershop style. If the goal is more diversity and inclusion in our singing, then surely our choices in what songs we arrange should be part of the solution. The experience that drove the point home for me came in 2015 when I applied for a scholarship in the Sweet Adelines International Music Arrangers Program (IMAP). I had to submit three songs: a contest uptune, a contest ballad, and a free choice song. The uptune I chose to arrange was *Birth of the Blues*. The sheet music I used came from a collection of 1930s songs published by Hal Leonard, and it did not have any problematic lyrics, or so I thought. While arranging the song I came across the original sheet music. I was shocked by the lyrics in the song's introduction. In the Hal Leonard sheet music that I had been using, the lyric was "Oh, they say some people want to know." The original introduction said, "Oh, they say some darkies want to know ... " I didn't want to arrange a song that used a racial slur. After a lot of thought about what to do, I chose to arrange the song (with changed lyric) as part of my IMAP entry, but not to ever make it available for singers. I never have, and I never will. The experience made me realize the responsibility I have as an arranger to pick songs that are appropriate for all singers. Why didn't I choose a different song? Because at the time I didn't think there were better choices. Today, I'm much more informed about the wealth of great material to be found in the Great American Songbook. I know without a doubt that there are lots of undiscovered songs with great stories and lyrics suitable for all, just waiting to be arranged and sung.

Becoming truly diverse and inclusive starts with changing our repertoire; changing our repertoire starts with changing our choices in the songs we choose to arrange. In a widely-read Facebook post, Joey Minshall coined the hashtag #donewithdixie in writing about her own decision to no longer arrange songs about Dixie and the Old South. She wrote:

*... It is entirely possible to choose good, strong barbershop contest (and other performance) material that doesn't require you to tell a story about pining for 'home' in a romanticized version of life in the American 'Old South' (nor require listeners to understand that story and, presumably, pine along with you); that doesn't conjure up images of Al Jolson in blackface singing about his longing for 'Dixie'; that doesn't include any hankering to get back to 'Dixieland', neither its jazz, nor its razzamatazz; that doesn't tell of yearning for mammy, her cookin' or her lovin' arms.*

*Not only is it entirely possible to choose good strong barbershop contest material that doesn't celebrate 'dear old Dixie', it is entirely desirable. That is, it's entirely desirable if you embrace the vision of a future for our beloved barbershop art form in which people of colour feel completely at home, comfortable, part of, valued and welcome. (Joey Minshall, Facebook, August 17, 2017)*

I couldn't agree more, and I wish to be the change that I want to see. I encourage you to think about these issues and make informed choices about what songs you arrange for our singers. In addition, I encourage all Sweet Adeline arrangers to learn about the Song Assessment Tool and participate in the song assessment process by submitting arrangements for evaluation.

# Copyright Basics

Copyright is a complex, often confusing subject, but it's one that arrangers must be familiar with because much of the time we are arranging songs that belong to someone else. If you want to distribute your work for others to sing, you must understand how copyright works. Ignorance of copyright law is not an excuse, copyright holders take their rights seriously, and fines to infringers are steep.

Please note: The discussion below is for informational purposes only. While I have taken steps to make this section as accurate as possible, I am not an attorney and this is not legal advice. Copyright questions concerning barbershop arrangements should be referred to a qualified attorney in your U.S. state or home country, to the Music Manager at Sweet Adelines International, or the Copyright and Licensing Manager at the Barbershop Harmony Society.

The information here pertains primarily to U.S. law. Arrangers from countries outside the U.S. should consult copyright resources in their home country.

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## What is Copyright?

Copyright gives the owner of a copyrighted work the exclusive right to control the use of that work for a period of time. Copyright is more than the right to make copies. It is a bundle of rights which includes:

- The right to reproduce the work, either in paper copies or recordings
- The right to display or perform the work publicly. A song is considered to be publicly performed whenever it is heard by the public, whether in live performance, on a recording, or on radio or television.
- The right to distribute the work
- The right to prepare derivative works. Arrangements in four-part harmony, barbershop style are an example of a derivative work.

Copyright works at a variety of levels: individual court decisions, [national copyright legislation](#), and [international treaties](#). In addition, the various rights covered by copyright are licensed in different ways. Use of songs in sound recordings, film or video, on the Internet, and at public venues such as your chapter show all have different requirements and different fee structures. To keep the discussion simple, I will focus on aspects of copyright that deal with creating arrangements of copyrighted works.

In many respects, songs are like any other piece of property. Rights to songs can be bought, sold, or assigned to someone else. Hal Leonard and Alfred Music are two examples of companies which are both music publishers in their own right and agents who represent many other publishers for the purposes of printing and distributing sheet music and granting licenses. Tresona Music is a company which licenses music for a variety of uses, on behalf of a number of large music publishers, including both Hal Leonard and Alfred. In the United States, ASCAP, BMI, and SESAC are examples of Performing Rights Organizations – they collect and distribute licensing fees on behalf of copyright holders.

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### **Who Owns The Copyright for a Song?**

In most cases the first copyright owner is the person who wrote the song; there are special rules for songs with multiple authors. There is one exception to the first-owner rule: if someone creates a work in the course of their employment, the employer holds the copyright, not the individual.

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### **Do I Have to Register My Arrangement With the Copyright Office?**

In most countries, including the U.S. and Canada, formal registration of copyright is not required for a work to have copyright protection. In order for a work to have copyright protection it must meet two basic criteria:

- Fixed in a tangible medium of expression. This can be hard copy sheet music, a recording, or a computer file.
- Originality. The work must be the writer's original work and not copied from another source.

If you have written an original song, you automatically hold a copyright on the song, and you have the same bundle of rights that a commercial publisher has. You can arrange that song, and you hold the copyright on that arrangement.

If you arrange a song in the public domain, you hold a copyright on your arrangement but not the underlying song.

If you arrange a copyrighted song, you do not have a copyright on your arrangement. The copyright holder controls the rights for arrangements and other derivative works.

## How Long Does Copyright Last?

Copyright term varies, depending on the laws in your home country. Under current U.S. law, copyright lasts for the life of the author(s) plus 70 years. For works with more than one author, current copyright term is 70 years after the death of the last author. In the U.S., the life + 70 term only applies for works created after 2002. For older songs, copyright term in the U.S. depends on a variety of factors.

- Published or unpublished
- Year of publication
- Whether a song was registered with the Copyright Office or not. Registration was required in the U.S. until the 1976 Copyright Act.
- Whether that registration was renewed.

Over the course of American history copyright laws have changed a number of times and in different ways. Copyright term in America was at one time a fixed term based on date of publication with a possible renewal term; over time this has changed to a term extending to 70 years after the author's death. In addition to copyright term for works created now, the law has to deal with the backlog of works created in past years, under different sets of laws. Every time the U.S. laws changed, Congress put in transition rules to ensure that every work got the greatest amount of protection for the longest period of time. As a result, determining copyright term and public domain in the U.S. is anything but straightforward.

The Cornell University [guide to copyright term in the U.S.](#) is a helpful summary of copyright term.

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## What is Clearance? What is a License?

Songwriters can sell their copyright to a music publisher in return for continuing royalties; money generated from licensing is divided between the publisher and the songwriter. The owner of a copyrighted work grants permission for others to use the work, usually for a fee. Song owners make money when people pay for the right to use their songs in various ways.

The terms "permission", "clearance", and "license" mean essentially the same thing, that the copyright holder has granted permission to use the song in some way.

A license is a temporary grant of permission. The copyright owner maintains all copyright ownership and has the right to put any conditions they wish on the terms of the license. They are not obligated to grant a license, nor are they obligated to give the reason why if they turn down a request. In most cases, copyright owners set their own fees, and they can charge whatever fee they want.

Limitations that can be imposed include, but aren't limited to:

- Time limitations, such as one year, three years, or whatever time period they wish. Three years is common. After the time limit expires, the license is no longer valid and the song is not legal to sing. To continue singing it, a new license must be obtained and any fees must be paid again.
- Licensing songs for sale in some countries but not others.
- Licensing songs for a single chorus or quartet, a practice that has become more common in the barbershop world in recent years. Each chorus or quartet gets its own license and pays its own licensing fee.
- Requiring that the arranger submit a copy of the arrangement before granting clearance. This is required under the contracts that Sweet Adelines and BHS have with the publishers. Copyright owners can require changes to be made if they think the arrangement has strayed too far from the original song, either in the melody or the lyrics.
- Specifying that the arranger's name not appear on the music, only the composer and lyricist.
- Authorizing only certain individuals to create arrangements of a song.
- Performance limitations, such as singers not being allowed to portray characters from a movie or musical in performing the arrangement.

I have experienced all of them at one time or another.

Both you and anyone who commissions an arrangement from you need to be aware that clearance might not be granted, or granted with stipulations attached. The copyright holder owns the song, and legally they also own your arrangement. It's their song and their rules. If you want different rules, your choices are: write and arrange your own songs or arrange songs in the public domain.

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### **What is Public Domain?**

When the copyright term for a song ends, the song enters the public domain, meaning no one owns the copyright on the original song and arrangers are free to create arrangements without having to seek permission. If you arrange a song in the public domain you do own the copyright on your arrangement, but you do not own the copyright on the underlying song.

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### **When Does a Song Enter the Public Domain?**

There's no single answer because public domain laws vary around the world. Under an international treaty called the Berne Convention, copyright must extend for the life of the author plus at least 50 years. Countries can stipulate a longer period and many countries, including the U.S., have done so. If a song has more than one author, copyright term is 70 years from the death of the last author. The Berne Convention has existed since 1886; the U.S. didn't sign on until 1989. When the U.S. became a signatory, the basic copyright term changed to life of the author plus a fixed number of years -- currently life plus 70 years in the U.S..

As of January 1, 2023, songs published in 1927 and earlier are public domain in the United States. The date changes on January 1 every year. However, songs that are public domain in the U.S. might not be public domain outside the U.S. For example, I have an arrangement of Irving Berlin's song *Everybody Step*, published in 1921. Sections of this arrangement were used in the section on the arranging process. Because of the song's publication date (1921) *Everybody Step* is public domain in the U.S. I own the copyright on my arrangement of it and can sell it in the U.S. for whatever terms I wish. In addition I can legally use excerpts from it in this book. However, because Irving Berlin died in 1989, all of his works, including *Everybody Step*, are still under copyright outside the U.S. and will be for many years (2059 for countries with a term of life +70). Singers from outside the U.S. need to license *Everybody Step* in their home country in order to sing it legally.

For more when works go into the public domain in countries around the world, see the [Wikipedia article "Public Domain"](#)

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## What is Fair Use?

The [Stanford University Copyright and Fair Use](#) website notes that "Fair use is a copyright principle based on the belief that the public is entitled to freely use portions of copyrighted materials for purposes of commentary and criticism." In the U.S., Fair Use became a part of the copyright law in 1976. Section 107 of the 1976 Copyright Act states:

*The fair use of a copyrighted work ... for purposes such as criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching ... scholarship, or research is not an infringement of copyright. In determining whether the use made of a work in any particular case is a fair use the factors to be considered ... include: (1) the purpose and character of the use, including whether such use is of a commercial nature or is for nonprofit educational purposes (2) the nature of the copyrighted work (3) the amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole; and (4) the effect of the use upon the potential market for, or value of, the copyrighted work. (U.S. Copyright Act, 1976, quoted in Stephen Fishman, J.D., *The Copyright Handbook: What Every Writer Needs to Know* [Nolo Press 2017], p.249)*

Courts look at the facts of each case and how the four factors apply in that particular situation. Applying fair use in any given situation is difficult because it's subjective, and can only be decided by a court of law.

For an excellent overview of what Fair Use is and is not, listen to this episode from the Scoring Notes Podcast: ["The Rights Stuff"](#). The hosts, Philip Rothman and David MacDonald, discuss copyright with a practicing attorney. The entire podcast is excellent, but the discussion of Fair Use is especially valuable. Scroll to 45:25 for the discussion on Fair Use.

Fair Use is a part of U.S. law and does not apply outside the U.S.

## What is Fair Dealing?

Fair Use is a copyright principle from U.S. Law, and it applies **only in the U.S.**

Countries in the British Commonwealth, such as the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, observe a copyright principle called Fair Dealing, which is not the same as Fair Use in the U.S. Fair Dealing laws vary from country to country. Below are links with introductory information about Fair Dealing in various countries. I am not an attorney; arrangers with questions concerning Fair Dealing in their home country should consult a qualified attorney in that country.

### United Kingdom

- British Library – [Fair Dealing Copyright Explained](#)
- GOV.UK, Intellectual Property Office – [Exceptions to Copyright: Fair Dealing](#)
- University of Edinburgh, Information Services – [Copyright Exceptions and Fair Dealing](#)
- University of Nottingham – [Exceptions to UK Copyright Law](#)

### Canada

- Government of Canada, Justice Laws Website: [Fair Dealing](#)
- [Fair Dealing in Canada: Myths and Facts](#)
- [Six Factor Test](#) – University of Victoria Libraries
- [Fair Dealing Flowchart](#) – University of Waterloo
- [Fair Dealing Week 2023](#) – Collection of Fair Dealing resources from Centennial College

### Australia

- Australian Government, Australian Law Reform Commission: [Fair Dealing Exceptions](#)
- Australian Copyright Council – [Introduction to Copyright in Australia](#) and [Fair Dealing: What Can I Use Without Permission](#). See also: [Music and Copyright](#)
- [Explainer: What is Fair Dealing and What Can You Copy Without Permission?](#) – by Nicholas Suzer, Queensland University of Technology
- [Fair Dealing and Fair Use: How Australian Copyright Differs from the USA](#) – From lawpath.com.au

### New Zealand

- Copyright Licensing New Zealand – [Fair Dealing in New Zealand](#)
- Copyright Licensing New Zealand – [What's Fair Use and Does It Apply in NZ?](#)
- Parliamentary Counsel Office, New Zealand Legislation, New Zealand Copyright Act – [Acts Permitted in Relation to Copyright Works](#)

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## Other Copyright Links

- Sweden – Intellectual Property Office, Copyright – [English](#) / [Swedish](#)

- [What Is the European Union Copyright Law?](#) – from songtrust.org
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## How Does An Arrangement Get Cleared?

- You can ask the barbershop organizations to request permission on your behalf.
  - For Sweet Adelines, the member section of the website has an online form to fill out. You'll need to know the song title, composer name(s), publisher, and how many copies are needed. The Music Manager at headquarters will contact the publisher on your behalf. If the publisher grants permission, you'll receive a form with title, composer credits, and copyright information that must go on the first page of the arrangement, along with the clearance fee. You'll send back a copy of the arrangement and any required fees. Fees can be paid through the member section of the website. The website also has a downloadable form that can be used to request a custom license for a specific group.
  - For the Barbershop Harmony Society, contact the Copyright and Licensing Manager. You'll fill out an [Arrangement & Reproduction Request Form](#). There is no fee to initiate the process. You'll need current copyright information, the name of the group requesting the arrangement, and the number of copies you'll need. If permission is granted, you'll get paperwork giving the needed credits and copyright information for page 1 of the arrangement, and you'll be responsible for the clearance fee. The clearance will apply for a single chorus or quartet, for a limited time.

The contracts that BHS and SAI have with the publishers specify that any song cleared by the organization must be sold by the organization, not by individual arrangers.

BHS and Sweet Adelines often cannot license songs for use outside of the U.S. and Canada. If you are outside of North America you'll need to work through the copyright entities in your home country to obtain clearance.

- You can contact the publisher directly and request permission. Some publishers have a place on their website where you can initiate the request online.

Whether you work through the barbershop organizations or contact the publisher yourself, the first thing you'll need to do is determine who holds or administers the copyright for the song. In the U.S., the best places to verify the current copyright holder are the websites for the three performance rights organizations. You may need to check all three.

- [ASCAP](#) – American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers
- [BMI](#) – Broadcast Music, Inc.
- [SESAC](#) - Society of European Stage Authors and Composers. SESAC represents American artists as well as European ones.

If you are outside the U.S., you'll need to search for the performance rights organization(s) in your home country. On Wikipedia you'll find a list of [performance rights organizations around the world](#).

If you plan to arrange a medley, note that every song used in a medley, no matter how large or small, must be cleared, which often means multiple publishers are involved. If a single publisher denies permission, that will invalidate the entire request. Even if permission is granted, there's a good chance the license fee will be costly.

For songs in the public domain, no clearance is needed. You are free to arrange and adapt the song in any way you wish. Be sure that the song you are arranging is in the public domain in your home country.

Clearing arrangements yourself is time-consuming and expensive, with no guarantees that clearance will be granted. Working through the organizations means someone else is handling the paperwork and logistics, but it's still time-consuming, expensive, and not guaranteed to work. There is an alternative, known as ArrangeMe, which has become the go-to place for both arrangers looking to get arrangements cleared and singers looking to procure music.

## What is ArrangeMe?

ArrangeMe is a service run by the Hal Leonard Corporation. It is the [successor to the service known as SMP Press](#). Here's a description, from the [ArrangeMe website](#):

*ArrangeMe, owned and operated by Hal Leonard, is the global platform designed to enable songwriters, composers, and arrangers to sell their arrangements of popular songs, public domain works, and original compositions through the world's most-popular sheet music retailers ... The ArrangeMe platform works with songwriters, composers and arrangers in conjunction with the world's largest music rights-holders to make the world's music available to musicians of all instruments, styles, and skill levels ... Through licensing agreements with music publishers including Universal Music Publishing, Sony Music Publishing, Downtown Music, Kobalt Music, BMG/Chrysalis, Concord Music, and many others, ArrangeMe allows for composers and arrangers to not only publish their own original compositions, but also their own arrangements of over four million popular, copyrighted titles. By working together with arrangers, songwriters, consumers, and publishers, ArrangeMe ensures all parties involved in the creation of music*

*are rewarded fairly for their work, and that the music sold through ArrangeMe is readily available to any musician in the world.*

With ArrangeMe, Hal Leonard has done all the work of securing worldwide clearance for a catalog of over 4 million songs. If a song is listed in the ArrangeMe catalog, all the arranger has to do is arrange, insert the copyright language provided by Hal Leonard, and upload. Arrangements uploaded to the ArrangeMe platform are available for sale on both [SheetMusicPlus.com](http://SheetMusicPlus.com) and [SheetMusicDirect.com](http://SheetMusicDirect.com). Titles in the ArrangeMe catalog are cleared for worldwide sale, a benefit for singers outside the U.S., who no longer need to purchase an arrangement, then pay to clear it again in their home country before they can sing it. For copyrighted songs, arrangers receive a 10% commission on every sale. Commissions are paid monthly, as long as you sell at least \$20U.S. worth of music. There is no cost to become a member.

ArrangeMe allows uploads of public domain and original songs as well. The commissions are higher (50%) and the composer / arranger retains all rights to their work. To be eligible for the public domain catalog, the work has to be in the public domain everywhere, not just in your home country. Check the ArrangeMe website for more information.

While the ArrangeMe copyrighted songs catalog is huge, there are limitations.

- ArrangeMe will not license medleys, mashups, collections, or any other combination of two or more copyrighted songs.
- The copyrighted songs catalog, while very large, doesn't contain absolutely everything. Songs that are controlled by songwriter estates (Cole Porter, George Gershwin, Irving Berlin, etc.) may be incompletely represented or not represented at all. Lesser known songs from the Great American Songbook may not be there.
- Songs do get removed from the ArrangeMe catalog from time to time. If that happens, all arrangements of that song are immediately removed.
- ArrangeMe's licensing terms do not allow arrangers to create exclusive arrangements. Anything sold on ArrangeMe must be available to the general public; arrangers may not put an arrangement up on ArrangeMe, then take it down when a particular group has purchased it. Groups wanting an arrangement specific to them should request a custom license, either directly from the publisher or through the Copyright and Licensing Department at BHS.
- Songs cleared using ArrangeMe must be sold on the ArrangeMe website. Arrangers can provide links to the music on ArrangeMe; they cannot sell directly.

ArrangeMe is, in spite of the limitations, the fastest, cheapest, and easiest way to make arrangements available to singers all over the world.

If you or a group for whom you are arranging needs clearance for a song not in the ArrangeMe catalog, either SAI or BHS can facilitate a request for a custom license.

## Arranger Fees: What is Allowed and What is Not

What is allowed:

- Arrangers can charge a work-for-hire fee to a group that commissions a new arrangement. Arrangers can set their own prices, and can negotiate a price with the chorus or quartet.
- If a group wishes to purchase an existing arrangement of a copyrighted song, the only fee that is allowed is a per-copy fee, from which the arranger receives a small percentage.

What is not allowed:

- Arrangers cannot charge an arranger fee, a copyright fee, or any other kind of fee for any sales of arrangements of copyrighted songs after the initial commission.
  - Arrangers cannot charge a fee for “unlocking” access to music on ArrangeMe.
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## Preview Copies

- For original songs and arrangements of public domain songs, sending previews is permissible and you can set whatever pricing and terms you wish.
- For arrangements of copyrighted songs, it’s illegal to send out unlicensed preview copies. BHS, Sweet Adelines, Sheet Music Plus, and Sheet Music Direct offer online preview – how much you can see varies from site to site. In the ArrangeMe program, there is no way to sell a single piece of music, as Hal Leonard imposes a 10-copy minimum on purchases of choral music.

# Marketing and Promotion

Once you have arrangements available for singers, it's worthwhile to think about how to market your work and your services. Your customers should be able to find your music and buy your music easily. A functioning website with links to purchase your charts, is one of the best ways to do this. There are many website providers; search on Google for prices and features. In addition to a website, consider registering a domain name. I've purchased and registered the domain name [caroleprietto.com](http://caroleprietto.com), and it's a lot easier for customers to remember a domain name than a longer web address. Many website hosts also offer domain name registration. Search Google under "domain name registration" to find providers who offer this service.

Business cards can be helpful in promoting your website when you're at barbershop events. Digital printing is now cheap enough that cards can be done in full color. There are many online outlets for designing and printing business cards; check Google for providers.

A [PayPal](#) or [Venmo](#) account can make it easier to get paid, both by individual customers and by services like ArrangeMe. Check the websites for more information.

The best promotional tool of all is your music! Prospective buyers like to hear a song sung, and they are more likely to buy an arrangement if it has good learning tracks. Commissioning tracks from a track maker can be expensive, but they're not something you have to pay for out of your own pocket. If a chorus or quartet commissions an arrangement from you, there's a good chance that they'll commission tracks for it as well. Similarly, groups will often commission tracks of existing arrangements when no tracks exist. If you are just starting out in arranging, it can take time to build up a library of tracks, but it's worth it because the 4-part mixes can be used as demos. On my website I link to track makers who have done tracks for my songs, so that customers know where to look. When I have a vocal performance of a song, performance, I'll include a sound clip Sheet Music Plus and Sheet Music Direct so that singers have a preview. Sheet Music Plus and Sheet Music Direct limit sound clips to 30 seconds in length, but even a short clip is better than none.

Social media is another promotional outlet. Facebook discussion groups are a great way to connect with potential customers. Be aware that clearance obtained through ArrangeMe allows buyers to purchase sheet music, but does not include a mechanical license (sound recordings) or a synchronization license (video or Internet streaming). Those rights must be licensed separately.



# Collected Wisdom from the Best Arrangers in Barbershop

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## Adam Scott's 10 Mistakes Beginning Arrangers Make, and How to Avoid Them

(Facebook Barbershop Arrangers Group, June 5, 2016)

### 1. Arranging your favorite song first.

Why? You won't be very good at first. Remember it takes 10,000 hours to make an expert in any subject. Assuming you're painting the Sistine Chapel on your first go is a little naive if we're being honest, and many a budding arranger has quit because they couldn't find their Michelangelo right off the bat. Aim to do that chart you really want to do at least 10 charts into your craft. Most arrangers I know aren't keen on people singing their oldest pieces anyway.

### 2. Picking a song with no guts to it.

Duke of Earl won't shop. Like, ever. Find music of substance. Seek out songs with great harmony in them. They'll give you more options in the end.

### 3. Arranging a song that has a few really solid versions already is a trap

*If I Had My Way, Sweet Georgia Brown, Come Fly With Me* have already been done. Many songs have *The One* already done. There can be a trap in arranging with someone pretty much whispering in your ear. Kind of the same thing we do when listening to a quartet sing *On The Street Where You Live* that isn't Vocal Spectrum.

### 4. Going out of order when filling in parts

If you sing tenor or bari avoid writing the melody and moving anywhere but bass next. The bass needs to be on predominantly roots and fifths to avoid weak sonority. Yes, I realize there are exceptions, but too many weak voicings and your music tunes poorly and your overtones are non-existent.

### 5. Kitchen sink arranging

It's tempting to toss every tchotchke into an arrangement. I wanna use a bell chord, this sweet key change, and... gets you into too much stuff. Like Darth Vader. Can we paint the villain any more clearly? Dressed in black, long cape, mask, deep voice, really physically tall and imposing. Simplify. Get out of the way of the song. Gradually introduce devices rather than right up front. Development is more exciting than business. Compare a quartet that sings everything at forte. Matt Swan calls this "Embellishment for embellishment's sake." Putting every trick into one arrangement.

## **6. Arranging outside reality**

Ask yourself “who is this for” before putting proverbial pen to paper. Even if it isn’t for or to anyone at the moment, if you picked the style and even had a quartet in mind (aka, this sounds like a chart ‘Round Midnight would sing, or OC Times, etc.) you’ll arrange for actual ranges and make saner choices rather than relying on Finale/Sibelius, which can obviously play anything. Dr. Val Hicks gave me a great piece of advice when I was first starting to arrange. He said he arranged for groups specifically. One, they were flattered when he handed them music because it was tailored for their ranges. Two, it was certain the group then had a song no one else was singing. Three, the arranger knows the strengths and weaknesses and personality of the group. It’s the difference between a suit off the rack and a tailored, perfect fit.

## **7. Writing original intros/verses**

I don’t dwell on this, but simply put, barbershop takes popular songs and arranges them in a particular style. Sometimes we get it right and craft wonderful original materials. Often, though, these original pieces don’t quite fit the song to come later, have disjunct themes, or just don’t work well. A great song may be well known but it has a disadvantage when an audience has to sort through an original intro it may not be familiar with. The fact there are so few lasting original pieces shows that from the very beginning we were most comfortable singing stuff we already knew.

## **8. Moving too fast for, or ignoring the latent pillar harmony within the song itself**

This deals with going against the harmony in the song itself. Sometimes a surprise chord, or a curveball cadence is just what the doctor ordered. Shoe-horning chords in where chords do not naturally belong gives a feeling of discomfort or uneasiness. They can feel like a mistake or hiccup to your audience.

## **9. Looking at either Horizontal or Vertical but not both**

Yes, the chords need to line up and work, but don’t be a chords guy at the expense of your poor baritone. They’re not infallible. Think through how many simple Don Gray charts you’ve sung through. Don has a knack for making the easy, sensible choice rather than the ‘cool, flashy’ choice. It’s tempting to write what you want, singer be hanged, but really excellent groups keep the songs that work. Don once advised an arranging class at Apple Corps “Don’t write anything you couldn’t sing.” This assumes you have the range, of course, but make sure you don’t have any awkward leaps, unnecessarily high range, or other oddities in your individual lines.

## **10. Being afraid to start**

This last piece of advice comes from Tony Bove. We all were novices at some point. Get over your fears. Don’t be afraid to try arranging. Whether or not you arrange 1,000+ arrangements a la Walter Latzko or Ed Waesche is irrelevant. You learn so much musicianship from arranging and you will get better at it. Start with shorter songs. Start with Public Domain, 1900-1920s pieces and learn what works and what doesn’t. Study the polecats with new eyes. Look at the published pieces from the BHS. Study your favorite works and find out what rings your bell. Then analyze and find out why.

## More on Common Mistakes of Beginning Arrangers

*(Barbershop Arrangers Facebook Group, July 16, 2018)*

William Christopher: Unnecessary tags. Tags that may sound cool on their own, but don't fit the integrity of the piece. As if it sounds like the tag as written and then the song was written just as an excuse to sing the tag.

Adam Bock: This might be more of an Intermediate Mistake, but my biggest gripe is variation for its own sake. If you're going to treat the second (or whichever) iteration differently, make it very different. Direct repetition is usually far preferable to just voicing the same chord differently.

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## Ken Potter's 10 Tips for Taking Your Arrangements to the Next Level

*(Barbershop Arrangers Facebook Group, January 15, 2019)*

1. Study more theory.
2. Learn some keyboard skills to play through more complex arrangements.
3. Learn chord substitutions.
4. Arrange many versions of a melody for practice.
5. Study other arrangers charts.
6. Do some transcription, even though it can be tedious. I started with the Boston Common.
7. Do a chart and then record your own learning track of it.
8. Use your imagination.
9. Study your classical voice leading and counterpoint.
10. Send your charts to other arrangers for critical comments!

*(If you can only do one of these, work on #2 – better keyboarding leads to better arranging! – CP)*

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## More from Liz Garnett

*([“Miscellaneous Barbershop Arranging Thoughts”](#) Helping You Harmonise, July 17, 2016.)*

**Voice diminished 7ths closely.** The diminished 7th chord has the greatest harmonic charge of any chord in the barbershop vocabulary. With its two tritones, its sonority is rattly and edgy, and with its structure of equal intervals its narrative connotations are full of ambiguity. (Having said that, it does usually resolve where we expect it to - but it always has the potential to surprise us.). If you have all that inherent musical energy at your disposal, the last thing you want to do is deploy it in an open voicing that gives all the energy away. That would be like getting a really tightly coiled spring to power a clockwork machine, and then unwinding it before fitting it. It also makes life hard for the singers. Wide-spaced chords need placing carefully, with a certain delicacy of touch. But high-energy chords need singing with oomph and intensity. So - with a wide-voiced dim7, which do you choose?

Do you balance the chord, but sing it with the wrong expressive feel, or do you go for the narrative shape and take your chances with balance and tuning?

No wider than a 10th is what I'd suggest for diminished 7ths, and, so long as they're not too low in tessitura, within an octave usually shows them to the best effect.

**When the melody goes elsewhere, keep the leads on roots and 5ths.** Looking back, I see this is actually exactly the point I made in my post about arranging in tune all those years ago. It's still true, though, and I'm mentioning it again because it makes everyone's lives easier, for several reasons. First, there's the point about balance I made before (and, indeed, above). Leads are used to coming through the texture to be heard, as this is what you need from a melody. Thus, when they are not on tune duty, the music will balance best if they have the notes that, from the perspective of harmonic structure, want to be strongest in the chord.

This point has two corollaries. On the positive side, everyone else is used to tuning to the leads, so if they have a line built on the harmonically strong parts of the chord, they will act as a glue to bind the chords together. If the leads are voiced well, everybody else can sing better.

On a less positive, but realistic, side, leads aren't terribly practised at singing awkward intervals, and lines based on roots and 5ths tend to be simpler and thus less likely to expose their weaknesses than the kind of lines that baritones handle routinely. Even if you don't care about the feelings of leads, if they are feeling anxious it won't sound as good, and time spent on tricky, fiddly bits is time wasted for everyone.

# Resources

Websites are current as of July 2023

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## Books and Articles

- Lynn Abbott, [Play That Barber Shop Chord: A Case for the African-American Origin of Barbershop Harmony](#). *American Music* Vol. 10, No. 3 (Autumn, 1992), pp. 289-325. Can be purchased from JSTOR.
- Barbershop Harmony Society - Titles available for purchase from Harmony Marketplace
  - [Arranging Barbershop, Vol. 1: Getting Started](#) (Barbershop Harmony Society, 2023). An update to the BHS manual published in the 1980s. This book is the first of 4 volumes.
  - [Music Fundamentals for Barbershoppers](#)
  - Physics of Barbershop Sound – [print](#) / [download](#)
  - *Theory of Barbershop Harmony* – [print](#) / [download](#)
- Barbershop Harmony Society, articles from [The Harmonizer](#), complete back run is available from the BHS website members area
  - Matthew Beales, "Honoring the Grand Central Red Caps" *The Harmonizer*, November-December 2017, p.18-23
  - Jim Henry, "The Historical Roots of Barbershop Harmony". *The Harmonizer*, July/August 2001. Jim Henry summarizes the major findings of his doctoral dissertation on the African-American roots of barbershop harmony.
  - Kevin Keller, "The Hallmark 7th Chord". *The Harmonizer*, July-August 2009, p.24-25.
  - David Wright, "The African-American Roots of Barbershop (and Why It Matters)". *The Harmonizer*, January-February 2015, p.10-15.
- Barbershop Harmony Society, *Notating Barbershop Arrangements* (2015). Available from BHS website, members area.
- [Berklee Press Titles](#)
  - Allen Bargfrede, *Music Law in the Digital Age* (2nd edition, Berklee Press 2017)
  - Jonathan Feist, *Berklee Contemporary Music Notation* (Berklee Press, 2017).
  - David Kusek and Gerd Leonhard, *The Future of Music: Manifesto for the Digital Music Revolution* (Berklee Press, 2005).
  - Mark McGrain, *Music Notation: Theory and Technique for Music Notation* (Berklee Press, 1990)
  - Matthew Nicoll and Richard Grudzinski, *Music Notation: Preparing Scores and Parts*. Edited by Jonathan Feist (Berklee Press, 2007)
  - Paul Schmeling, *Berklee Music Theory*, Book 1 and Book 2 (2nd edition, Berklee Press, 2011)
  - Andrea Stolpe, with Jan Stolpe: *Beginning Songwriting: Writing Your Own Lyrics, Melodies, and Chords* (Berklee Press, 2015)
- Jason Blume, *This Business of Songwriting* (Revised 2nd edition, VNU Business Media Inc., 2013)

- Diane Clark and Billy J. Biffle, *So You Want to Sing Barbershop: A Guide for Performers* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2017)
- Liz Garnett, [Helping You Harmonise](#) Informative blog from a barbershop arranger, coach, and scholar in Great Britain
- Tom Gerou and Linda Lusk, *Alfred's Essentials of Music Notation: A Practical Dictionary* (Alfred Publishing Company 2009).
- Elaine Gould, [Behind Bars: The Definitive Guide to Music Notation](#) (Faber Music Limited, 2016)
- *Guidelines for Manuscript Preparation: for Composers, Arrangers, and Engravers*. Compiled and edited by Gayle Giese and Pick Edmondson (Warner Brothers Publications, 2002).
- Jim Henry, [The Origins of Barbershop Harmony : A Study of Barbershop's Musical Link to Other African American Musics as Evidenced Through Recordings and Arrangements of Early Black And White Quartets](#) (Ph.D. dissertation, Washington University in St. Louis, 2000). Purchase from ProQuest Dissertations. Purchase of the dissertation will not include the audio CD that was included with the original manuscript. The musical examples are transcribed in the text and fully cited in the bibliography. Purchase will cost around \$40U.S.. If you live near a university library or large public library, ask if they subscribe to ProQuest dissertations and whether you can get access through them.
- Thomas Forrest Kelly, [Capturing Music: The Story of Notation](#) (Norton, 2014). About early music and how music notation evolved during the Middle Ages. Written for a non-academic, nicely illustrated. Print book has a companion CD; Kindle edition includes audio.
- M. William Krasilovsky, Sydney Shemel, John Gross, and Jonathan Feinstein, *This Business of Music: The Definitive Guide to the Business and Legal Issues of the Music Industry* (10th edition, Random House, 2007).
- [Music Printing History](#) – All about different technologies that have been used to get notes onto the page, from the Middle Ages to today.
- Willard Palmer, Morton Manus, and Amanda Vick Lethco, [The Complete Book of Scales, Chords, Appoggios, & Cadences](#) (Alfred Publishing, 1994)
- [ScoringNotes](#) – Blog and podcast with breaking news, tips, and tutorials in the world of music notation programs and music notation practices; also a good source for developments in music apps for mobile devices. Operated by NYC Music Services, a music preparation company based in New York City.
- Deke Sharon and Dylan Bell, *A Cappella Arranging* (Hal Leonard Books 2012)
- Sweet Adelines International, articles in *The Pitch Pipe*
  - Corinna Garriock, ["Inclusive Music Selection"](#). Pitch Pipe, October 2016
  - Elizabeth Davies, ["Toward A More Inclusive Sweet Adelines: Harmonizing the World in the 21st Century"](#). Pitch Pipe, July 2018
  - ["Telling Our Story: A Historical Account"](#). Pitch Pipe, July 2018
  - ["Building A Diversity Garden"](#). Pitch Pipe, January 2019

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## Software and Apps

There are many software packages and apps, for any aspect of music training. In putting this list together, I focused on applications which are available for a wide variety of platforms and a variety of price ranges.

- [Auralia](#) Ear Training - Windows, Mac, and iOS devices
- [Dorico](#) Notation – Windows, Mac, and iPad
- [EarMaster](#) Theory – Windows, Mac, and iPad
- [Finale](#) Notation – Windows and Mac
- [IGrandPiano and IGrandPiano Free](#) Lots of apps will put a keyboard on your mobile device. This is one I especially like, available for iPhone, iPad, and Android. IGrandPiano Free gives a few basic piano sounds, including a grand piano. Paid version gives access to lots of additional piano sounds. Both the free version and the paid version are available in the app stores. The app is designed for IK Multimedia’s family of MIDI keyboards, but will work without them.
- [MusicTheory.net](#) - Free online theory course and paid apps for iPhone and iPad: Tenuto and Theory Lessons
- [Musition](#) Theory – Window, Mac, and iOS devices
- [MuseScore](#) Notation – Windows, Mac, iOS, Android, and Kindle Fire. Free and open source. ‘
- [Notion](#) Notation – Windows, Mac, iPad, Android, ChromeOS, FireOS
- [Noteflight](#) Notation -- Web-based; for all platforms.
- [Politonus](#) - Ear Training apps for iOS. 3 levels; all are paid apps, no free versions.
- [Practica Musica](#) - Theory and ear training – Windows, Mac, and iOS devices
- [Sibelius](#) - Notation – Windows, Mac, and iPad
- [Staffpad](#) Notation – Takes your handwriting and converts it to music notation. Now available for both Windows Surface devices (purchase from the Microsoft Store) and iOS (purchase from the App Store). Requires active pen and touch.
- [Suggester](#) - Theory app for iOS devices. Lay out many different chord options for a given key, play them by selecting. Especially good for learning about secondary dominants. Basic level is free; small charge to fully unlock the app.

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## Theory, Music History, and Ear Training

- [BasicMusicTheory.com](#)
- Jeffrey Evans, *Exploring Theory With Practica Musica* (Ars Nova Software 2013). Online textbook; available as a free download from iBooks for iOS devices or [read on the Ars Nova website](#). Can be used as a companion to the Practica Musica software (see “Software and Apps” below) or by itself. An excellent introduction to music theory and history, with or without the software.
- Jim Fleser, *The Chord Wheel: The Ultimate Tool for All Musicians* (Hal Leonard Publishing). Print version is distributed by Hal Leonard, [available from SheetMusicPlus.com](#) Also available as an iPhone app (iPhone only, not iPad or Android)
- [Happy Birthday, Well-Tempered Clavier](#) – from JSTOR Daily November 9, 2022. Has an interesting and concise discussion of tuning systems.
- [MusicTheory.net](#) - has free online content and two companion apps for iOS devices, Tenuto and Theory Lessons

- [Teoria](#) - Tutorials for note reading, intervals, scales, chords, and harmony.
- [Theta Music Trainer](#) Music Theory – Web based courses and apps for IOS, Android, and Kindle Fire

## Copyright

- [ASCAP](#)
- [BMI](#)
- [U.S. Copyright Office](#) – Part of the Library of Congress
- [Copyright Law of the United States \(Title 17\)](#) – Complete text of the U.S. Copyright Law, from the Library of Congress Copyright Office
- [Copyright Circulars from the Library of Congress](#) – Copyright information geared to a general audience.
- [Cornell University, Copyright Information Center](#)
- [Dear Rich: An Intellectual Property Blog](#) - Excellent blog on copyright, patent, and trademark law, with questions from users answered by a practicing attorney
- [Evolution of Copyright in Music](#) – Podcast from Northwestern University, Pritzker School of Law. An interesting discussion of how new technologies have shaped the copyright law, starting with piano rolls and ending with today's digital distribution.
- Fair Dealing sites
  - United Kingdom
    - British Library – [Fair Dealing Copyright Explained](#)
    - GOV.UK, Intellectual Property Office – [Exceptions to Copyright: Fair Dealing](#)
    - University of Edinburgh, Information Services – [Copyright Exceptions and Fair Dealing](#)
    - University of Nottingham – [Exceptions to UK Copyright Law](#)
  - Canada
    - Government of Canada, Justice Laws Website: [Fair Dealing](#)
    - [Fair Dealing in Canada: Myths and Facts](#)
    - [Six Factor Test](#) – University of Victoria Libraries
    - [Fair Dealing Flowchart](#) – University of Waterloo
    - [Fair Dealing Week 2023](#) – Collection of Fair Dealing resources from Centennial College
  - Australia
    - Australian Government, Australian Law Reform Commission: [Fair Dealing Exceptions](#)
    - Australian Copyright Council – [Introduction to Copyright in Australia](#) and [Fair Dealing: What Can I Use Without Permission](#). See also: [Music and Copyright](#)
    - [Explainer: What is Fair Dealing and What Can You Copy Without Permission?](#) – by Nicholas Suzer, Queensland University of Technology
    - [Fair Dealing and Fair Use: How Australian Copyright Differs from the USA](#) – From lawpath.com.au

- New Zealand
  - Copyright Licensing New Zealand – [Fair Dealing in New Zealand](#)
  - Copyright Licensing New Zealand – [What’s Fair Use and Does It Apply in NZ?](#)
  - Parliamentary Counsel Office, New Zealand Legislation, New Zealand Copyright Act – [Acts Permitted in Relation to Copyright Works](#)
- [Legal Encyclopedia – Patent, Copyright, and Trademark](#) – from Nolo Press
- [List of Countries’ Copyright Lengths](#) – from Wikipedia
- [Nolo Press Titles](#) – Nolo is a publisher of law books geared toward the consumer market, focused on U.S. law.
  - Stephen Fishman, *The Copyright Handbook: What Every Writer Needs to Know* (Nolo Press 2017)
  - Stephen Fishman, *The Public Domain: Find and Use Free Content for Your Website, Book, App, Music, Video, Art, and More* (Nolo Press 2017)
  - Richard Stim, *Getting Permission: Using & Licensing Copyright-Protected Materials Online & Off* (Nolo Press 2016).
  - Richard Stim, *Music Law: How to Run Your Band's Business* (Nolo Press 2018). The chapter on copyright is an excellent basic discussion of copyright matters.
  - Richard Stim, *Patent, Copyright & Trademark: An Intellectual Property Desk Reference* (Nolo Press, 2018)
- [Public Domain Information Project](#)
- [Public Domain Sherpa](#) – Online guide to public domain, written by an attorney
- [The Rights Stuff](#) – Podcast from Scoring Notes. The hosts discuss copyright with a practicing attorney. Has an excellent discussion of Fair Use.
- [SESAC](#)
- [Stanford University Library, Copyright and Fair Use](#)
- [What Musicians Should Know About Copyright](#) – From the Library of Congress

### Historic Recordings

- [Cylinder Audio Archive](#) From Davidson Library, University of California, Santa Barbara.
- [The Great 78 Project](#) Community project for preservation, research, and discovery of 78rpm records. Part of the Internet Archive.
- Many old recordings are available on YouTube as well as the online streaming services (Apple Music, Google Play, Spotify, etc.).

### Selected Sheet Music Collections

- [Sheet Music Consortium](#) - Hosted by the UCLA Library; provides access to sheet music collections at more than 30 libraries all over the world
- Duke University, Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Library – [Historic American Sheet Music](#)
- [IN Harmony: Sheet Music from Indiana](#) – Created by Indiana University; includes collections from Indiana University Lilly Library, Indiana State Library, Indiana State Museum, and Indiana Historical Society
- Johns Hopkins University Library – [Lester Levy Sheet Music Collection](#)

- Library of Congress Online Sheet Music Collections
  - [Early American Sheet Music](#)
  - [Music for the Nation: American Sheet Music, ca. 1820 to 1860](#)
  - [Civil War Sheet Music](#)
  - [Music for the Nation: American Sheet Music, ca.1870 to 1885](#)
  - [World War I Sheet Music](#)
  - [Library of Congress Celebrates the Songs of America](#) – includes [biographies](#) of many American composers and songwriters
- UCLA Library – [Archive of Popular American Music](#)
- University of Maine, Digital Commons, [Vocal Popular Sheet Music Collection](#)
- Barbershop Harmony Society, Old Songs Library – not available online; BHS members can contact BHS and request a title search.

## Song Research

- [African American Roots of Barbershop](#) - from the Barbershop Harmony Society
- [American Civil War Museum](#) – Educational resources concerning African Americans
- Joe Becco, [Reconsidering Dixieland Jazz](#) – Syncopated Times, July 2021
- [Brief history of Tin Pan Alley](#) – From acousticmusic.org
- [Brief history of Vaudeville](#) – From acousticmusic.org
- [Cafe Songbook](#) – Songs, songwriters, and performers of the Great American Songbook. Not comprehensive, but a good source for the songs it covers. Includes information on composers and lyricists, origins of songs (i.e. written for a particular show, etc), song background, and links to performances.
- Rebecca Hersher, [Why You Probably Shouldn't Say Eskimo](#) – from National Public Radio, April 24, 2016
- [History of Blackface](#) – Covers the history of Blackface and racist Black stereotypes in minstrel shows, Vaudeville, Broadway, radio, film, and television.
- [How the term "Dixie" came to define the South](#) – Story from CNN, June 27, 2020
- [Internet Broadway Database](#) – Excellent resource for Broadway shows and people connected with them, including songwriters.
- [Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia](#) – Ferris State University
- [Mason and Dixon Draw a Line](#) – From the History Channel. So many songs about the South mention the Mason-Dixon Line. But where was it and who were Mason and Dixon? This is a good, short summary of the history behind the Mason-Dixon Line.
- [Musicals 101.com](#) – “Cyber-Encyclopedia of Musical Theater, Film, and Television”
- Carla M. Ponti, [The Musical Representation of Asian Characters in the Musicals of Richard Rodgers](#). Ph.D. dissertation in Music from UC San Diego. From ProQuest, published as open access.
- [RadicalCopyEditor.com](#) – Thought-provoking blog about using language to break down stereotypes and bias.

- Alyssa Taubin, [The American Musical in Black and White: How Race Relations in the United States Directly Affected the Development of Musical Theater](#) – from Howlround Theatre Commons
- Sabina Thalheim, [A Hundred Million Messages: Reflections on Representation in Rodgers and Hammerstein’s Flower Drum Song](#). M.A. thesis, Ohio State University, 2013
- [Three Documentaries You Should Watch About the Tulsa Race Massacre](#) – Story from National Public Radio, May 30, 2021
- [Thirty Everyday Phrases That Perpetuate the Oppression of Indigenous Peoples](#) – From radicalcopyeditor.com
- John W. Work, [American Negro Songs and Spirituals](#) – Digital copy from the New York Public Library. Helpful book for researching Negro spirituals.

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## Songwriters

- [Irving Berlin](#) – official site
- [Cole Wide Web](#) – Cole Porter official site
- [George and Ira Gershwin](#) – Official site
- Great American Songbook Foundation, [Hall of Fame Honorees](#)
- [Songwriters Hall of Fame](#)