The true hand of friendship -

Life at The Brisbane River City Clippers has been a little different in recent months as both committee and members await the appointment of a replacement Musical Director. VP Music Dennis Palmer continues to provide leadership in this area. The good news is that a good prospect for this key position is on the horizon and it is the fondest wish of all at The Clippers that an appointment will be made before the next edition of In Harmony goes to print.

Further sad news for The Clippers was the passing of their Sponsor, and great friend, Tony O’Connor. Tony, a master musician in his own right was known nationally for his wonderful work. He will be sorely missed by people from all over the country. The Clippers would like to record their gratitude for Tony’s support in recent years and would like to express their sympathy to family and friends of the O’Connor clan, particularly to his brother Dan, a long time member of the chorus.

Despite these two major distractions, The Clippers have been carrying on as best they can with business as usual. In late May the chorus entertained at Queensland Parliament House Open Day marking Queensland’s 150th New South Wales. As is the habit of The Clippers they have also welcomed the opportunities to complete two more famous Sausage Sizzles at Bunnings’ stores in the last two Months.

To minimise the impact of being without a Director for so long Andrew Howson and Steve Griffin from the Blenders have both made the journey to Brisbane to fill the leadership gap at our weekly our rehearsals and all were very offered to the chorus during this difficult time.

By the time this edition of In Harmony is in print the Mini-Harmony College for the Sunshine region on Sat 17th July will have been run and sung. This event will be followed by the annual Christmas in July concert The Clippers always support at The Gap State High School on Brisbane’s north side.

With 2011 closing in The Clippers will very soon be engaged in advertising the National and Pan Pacific Conventions which are fast approaching. Very shortly on Radio 4BC the morning show will ring with harmony from The Clippers who will be promoting this coming event and searching for new members at the same time.

Keith Druery

Issue 117, July - August 2010
From the President -

The Sunshine Statesmen chorus is going through a revival. They have a new MD, Sarah, and a very active publicity officer, Bruce Laming, who I’m told is significantly responsible for the 16 new members to their chorus registered during the AAMBS 2010 Membership Drive. This outstanding achievement has earned The Sunshine Statesmen the very cool $1,000 awarded by AAMBS for the most new members registered between 1 Dec 2009 and 30 June 2010. Congratulations to President Tony Eccles and his team.

And the Winner Is …..

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The AAMBS’ 2010 Membership Drive has seen an additional 41 new members registered with at least 29 prospective members still being processed. For all the Clubs who participated in the membership drive, I thank you for the work above and beyond performed by your members in running a guest night or a ‘Sing in Harmony’ program. We now have 41 new members experiencing the fun and fellowship of Barbershop Harmony because of those efforts.

In its infinite wisdom last year, your AAMBS Board selected Storm Front to be our headline quartet at the Pan Pacific Convention in Brisbane in late September next year. As a final bit of International Convention news, Storm Front had the audience and even the judges rolling in the aisles with their clever, witty humour, while singing a parody of I’ve Grown Accustomed to Her Face perfectly - and they are the new International Gold Medal quartet! Whatever you do as a barbershopper, make plans now to attend the Pan Pac Convention and Harmony College. It's just over a year away!

Kind regards
Tom Smith
## Important Notes from the AAMBS Secretary

### Keep AAMBS up to date with your contact details

It seems as though some members are not keeping AAMBS notified of changes to their contact details.

When emailing the first edition of *In Harmony* to Secretaries, Presidents, MDs and members of the Club-at-Large, it appears that -- 21 members did not receive their emailed copy. If you are one of the illustrious members of AAMBS who did not receive your emailed copy, please ensure that I have your correct contact details - after all, I am not psychic and cannot guess when your details change.

If I don’t have this information you may miss out on some important information.

### Insurance Cover

A number of members continually email and ask me for proof of the current Insurance Cover to show to prospective performance venues.

A copy of the Insurance Cover document effective from 1 June 2010 to 1 June 2011 has been sent to each Club Secretary (as usual) and so your Club Secretary should have a copy in his files.

If any Quartet or Chorus needs proof of Public Liability Insurance Cover, you should get it from your Club Secretary or directly from the AAMBS Website page Downloads - Documents.

*Kevin White*

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## Your chance to have your say ---

### Rebadging our Association

I hope that you have been following the submissions regarding this important matter. If you haven’t, you are invited to pick up the thread by following this web link:


### Convention 2013

I have received some queries regarding the bidding process for the 2013 convention.

Council discussed this matter in the last telephone conference and information will be released to all Club secretaries soon. I am currently preparing a documents folder on the Convention website which will contain relevant information for potential bidders.

*Richard Gardam*

VP Conventions
The Statesmen Break Records

The Sunshine Statesmen Chorus is celebrating a record growth in membership this year. It now boasts close to forty men on the risers.

Much of the increase followed an no-obligation, free, six week voice coaching session that attracted over thirty participants, including five exciting young men in their twenties. The only cost to the visitors was $5 for CD and sheet music. The coaching was conducted by our new MD, Sarah Laws, and held on our usual rehearsal night and our normal venue to save costs. Voice parts were quickly assessed ‘like a GMH assembly line’, then we all learnt two new songs together, ‘When I’m 64’ and ‘Under the boardwalk’ in addition to introducing ‘My Wild Irish Rose’ to the visitors.

The final night was a concert format for everyone and their partners with name tags all round and lots of nice tucker. Despite the session being without obligation or pressure, more than half of our visitors decided to audition for membership with ‘My Wild Irish Rose’. Most are already kitted out and have done two or three singouts.

President, Tony Eccles, said that although the successful voice-coaching program has concluded, it’s never too late to join in, as voice-training, under Sarah Laws, is an ongoing program.

“We set out at the beginning of the year to crack the forty-member mark by the end of June and hit the magic fifty by August 28 at our annual concert,” he said, ‘and we’re on track.’

“As this is our twentieth year of harmony, what better time is there for former members to come along to a rehearsal at the Buderim Uniting Church hall any Wednesday night, and for new members to discover the pleasure of four-part, unaccompanied singing. Visiting barbershoppers are always welcome.”

For further information on the voice coaching program, ring Bruce Laming on 54442098 or by email: adaluma@dodo.com.au.

Members and visitors at a recent SunshineStatesmen coaching session

Bruce Laming
Publicity Officer

HAH is well centred - at last!

The Chorus is settled at our new practice venue at the RSL Rooms, right in the centre of Toowoomba. We have four sets of risers, courtesy of The Blenders, and separate rooms for section practices and a kitchen area for supper preparation. The ladies support in the supper preparation is greatly appreciated! Membership continues to increase and we have some members and visitors who travel up to 100km to attend practices. A recent new member’s night resulted in a number of new members, and chorus men now number around 40. The range of ages is from 14 (yes, that’s right!) to 70 plus.

Mike Ludwig, our Musical Director, travels the greatest distance—he makes regular trips down from Townsville. Under his directorship the Chorus continues to prosper and maintain its focus. We have also had the benefit of occasional vocal coaching sessions from Andrew Howson of The Blenders.

The Chorus is now quite well known in Toowoomba and the Lockyer Valley. We perform at gigs two to four times a month and have a reputation as a group of men that enjoy each others’ company and that sing together mighty well! Gig highlights have included our walk around at Queen’s Park, in Toowoomba, on Mothers’ Day, where we sang “for the love of it” and gave stemmed roses to the mums. Our other highlight would have to be at Downlands College, a Catholic residential college in Toowoomba, where we were the main supporting group at a music department concert. Our public profile was helped greatly by our running a sausage sizzle at Bunnings in April, and appearances at the Crows Nest Show and the local produce and craft Exhibition at Ma Ma Creek in the Lockyer Valley. And of course, we enjoyed our own social occasions, including Ross Fulloon’s BIG birthday bash!

Around 15 chorus men went to the Sunshine Region’s Mini-Harmony College held mid-July in Brisbane and had a fantastic time. As well as more Toowoomba and Lockyer Valley gigs, we are looking forward to the repeat of our highly successful and enjoyable weekend music camp at the end of August, and in early October, our next Singing Restaurant—this will be at Downlands College and we expect around 250 people attending.

Don’t forget – if you are ever in lovely Toowoomba please come along and sing with us any Thursday night from 7pm.

Singcerely
Greg Lewis, Secretary
**Festival Statesmen raise their score**

In May the chorus and our great friends from the Fleurieu and Harbourside choruses, went to Perth for our bi-annual get together with the Westcoast guys. Once again it was a very successful trip, the welcome we received and all the arrangements that were done to make our stay a pleasant one, not only for us but also for our wives and partners as well, were most appreciated. After what was our 4th meeting together, being able to catch up with those who have become friends was another pleasure. The only downside being the fact that our MD, Graham Whetter, was not able to make the trip, due to hospitalisation.

The workshops were successful and provided a good grounding for the presentation of the public concert on the Saturday night. This was a sell out and it was great to hear the enthusiastic response from the audience. We now have to put our heads together, to get ready for 2012.

In June the chorus participated in the Adelaide Eisteddfod. We competed in the Open Men's Chorus section. There were only two contestants in that section, The Festival Statesmen Youth Chorus and us. Seeing as how these young guys had achieved such great results in the National Convention in Hobart, we were pretty sure we would come second, which we did. BUT, what thrilled us was the fact that against their score of 92/100, we achieved 90/100. There's life in the old guys yet.

In July we are doing a full week of mid-day concerts at suburban Community Theatres. This will be a new challenge but we have invited the members of the other choruses, Fleurieu and Harbourside to participate. It is something we would like to do more often, but the tyranny of distance is a problem.

Yours in Harmony

Ken Withers

**It's all looking good in Ipswich**

Just like the saying ‘you can take the man out of the country but not the country out of the man’, the same is true for our art-form. At a recent unrelated chorus function, 4 guys stood as one and serenaded a lovely lady. A past member of the chorus (Craig Yeates on left) couldn’t resist and joined three members of the current executive to add the wonderful tenor to the tone. For one of the guys this was his first ever appearance in a quartet. Well done Mr President – salt of the earth.

Where are Miner Chords with their Fifty Men in Twenty Ten! We have just had another open rehearsal, the third for the year for which we received wonderful photo and print coverage in the Queensland Times. The efforts from our work will be revealed in the coming weeks as we qualify new members to the risers. The easy part is getting prospective members to rehearsal, the more difficult part is maintaining and retaining. Special thanks must go to our highly skilled MD, Mark McCann and to our energetic and talented VP Music, Terry Waters. It was Terry who came up with the 50 Men Challenge and as a chorus we are “Striving To Achieve”.

On the June long weekend we did one of our fundraisers at Bunnings and drew a lot of attention and, of course, dollars. We are now hoping to convert that interest to potential members. We are well underway in the planning for our regular July Theatre Night where we book out the local live theatre for a fundraiser and hopefully draw more members. It is a great opportunity to cross network with the other ‘Cultural’ Organisations in Ipswich. We are looking forward to enjoying “The Odd Couple” female version written by Neil Simon. Our biggest challenge for the year will be the ‘Remembrance Dinner Dance’ in November with the Ipswich City Big Band. The function will be in Laidley for an anticipated audience of over 300. It promises to be a great night and tickets will go on sale soon. Hospitality students from the Ipswich TAFE will be assisting as part of their educational assignment.

It is also time to start digging out the carols and slipping them in gradually to rehearsal. Miner Chords, as with most choruses, have already received their first requests. Gee, does the year go fast.

Finest Harmonies to you All

The Penne
Youth in South Australia

Well it has been a very busy first half of the year for the Festival Statesmen Youth Chorus. Starting up again in 2010, we have had our eyes looking forward to the Pan Pacific Convention in 2011 as well as local performances and competitions.

One of those local events was the annual Adelaide Eisteddfod which we entered the chorus in two categories. The lads competed in the Open Small Choirs category in which we received the Bronze medal with a score of 85% and the Male Voice Choir section, being awarded Gold with a score of 92%. The adjudicator’s feedback was very complimentary stating “Stunning” and “You’re heading for great things boys”. It was a huge achievement to be awarded these two medals against some of the best choral ensembles in Adelaide.

Medals aside, the stand out for the chorus (and the audience members in the venue) was FSYC joining with the Festival Statesmen in an impromptu song before the awards were handed out.

Another thing that has changed in our club is our size. Many of you will remember the 14 young guys who graced the stage in the Hobart competition. So far this year we have accepted 5 more guys, increasing our number by over 35%. Entering into another recruitment drive at the beginning of this term, we hope to continue to expand before the Pan Pacific competitions next year.

The Quartet movement within the Chorus is also still going strong. We now have 4 quartets from the chorus spanning from school to open quartets. This includes a new school aged quartet from Charles Campbell Secondary School as well as the three medal winning quartets from Hobart. Included in these is ‘The Fishbowl Boys’ who competed in the A-capella – Open section of the Adelaide Eisteddfod receiving the gold with a score of 98% and was awarded ‘The Choral Division Excellence Award’.

Since appearing in Hobart in September 2009, FSYC now has an official governing body to manage its affairs. I would like to welcome the FSYC board and invite you to contact Anne O’Dea at contact.fsyc@gmail.com if you wish to get in contact with us.

Trevor Anderson
President
Festival Statesmen Youth Chorus

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Diary Note -

next AAMBS Convention in your diaries?

2011 National and Pan Pacific Conventions
Brisbane
September 28 - October 2
Hosted by The Clippers

River Harmony
BRISBANE AUSTRALIA
Men in Harmony Celebrate a Quarter of a Century

On the evening of Friday, 11 June, the Men in Harmony chorus gathered with family and friends to celebrate a milestone in the life of the chorus – twenty five years of sharing barbershop harmony with the Western Australian public. Friends included representative groups from the other men’s and women’s choruses in Perth and the format was a wonderfully informal sharing of memories, stretching back over two and a half decades of fun and fellowship.

There were some brief formalities when President Rod Eagleton welcomed everyone and MC, Vic Richards, invited Bruce Okely and Andy Aberle to share a few memories of the old days with the crowd but, the emphasis was on singing and each of the chorus ensembles (including the new ladies chorus, A Cappella West) offered a tribute to Men in Harmony and sang a bracket. There was a delightful finale when Vocal Evolution (current Gold Medal chorus) joined Men in Harmony (inaugural Gold Medallists) in a rendering of You’ll Never Walk Alone followed by all former and current singers gathered on stage for I Still Call Australia Home – quite a thrill!

The occasion was also an opportunity for the men to pay a tribute to our wonderful ladies support group, Partners in Harmony, who have encouraged and supported us from day one, helping in fund raising, costumes, promoting shows, front–of–house duties and never ending suppers etc.  This time they joined in a lovely catered supper which provided the perfect forum for all that reminiscing. All in all, a wonderful and appropriate way to celebrate.

And what were we celebrating? In a nut shell, perhaps the introductory greeting in the commemorative leaflet sums it up:

Yes, twenty five years of sharing our four-part, unaccompanied, close harmony music with the Western Australian public – we think that’s something worth celebrating, so we hope you’ll forgive a little reminiscing!

Starting from scratch was daunting but exciting, few of us knew anything about this “new” singing style called “barbershop” but the novelty caught on, not only with singers but fans too. The Men in Harmony chorus spread the word Australia wide and formed, financed and mentored a national movement, which today, proudly takes its place in the world-wide vocal harmony fraternity.

Home here we’ve enjoyed two and a half decades of chorus fun and fellowship, many highs, even a low or two, but always new challenges and targets round the corner. Our “Down Under Chorus” was the first Aussie barbershop chorus to venture overseas in 1989. We later brought home medals from national competition (in reverse order) have tried a variety of music, on and off the risers, spawned another three WA choruses – and are still enjoying ourselves.

And we’ve enjoyed good company along the way with our friends from Perth Harmony Chorus with whom we’ve trod many boards and who, at times, have shared their skills in attempts to make us better singers. We remain in awe of their outstanding achievements.

We rejoice with the rest of the Australian men’s movement in the current surge of interest from young men across the country in our a cappella singing style. Close to home, it is being demonstrated by the lads from the Vocal Evolution stable who have brought awards back to the West.

So there’s much to celebrate and a bright future to contemplate – let’s continue “Keeping the Whole World Singing” – it’s good for us!”

Andy Aberle
Introducing Escapade

Thankfully we get to hear of the exploits of our Gold Medal quartets from time to time but rarely do we get to know our other AAMBS quartets. Perhaps I can start the ball rolling with this piece.

Having formed in March 2003, ESCAPADE is possibly the longest continuously registered and active quartet with an unchanged line-up in AAMBS. (Check that one out David Brown!)

Chris Gray (Tenor), Owen Buckley (Bass), Steven Griffin (Bari) and Mike Ludwig (Lead) have competed in regional and national competitions and have been honoured to have been placed in the Top 10 at AAMBS National Conventions in 2005, 2007 and 2009. We are really looking forward to the PAN PACs in Brisbane in September 2011.

But competition is not what we live for and the longevity of our quartet is grounded in two very strong principles. First, we are the very best of mates and our families are most supportive of our hobby and they get on really well together. Second, we continually strive to perform (not just sing) to a very high level in public just for the fun of it. This brings me to the real point of this article.

While singing at restaurants, public gatherings, concerts and aged care facilities, etc is always exciting and satisfying, I reckon ESCAPADE has come up with a first. Recently, we were invited to attend an evening session for MIBBINBAH. This is a special camp at Ewen Mattock Dam on Queensland’s Sunshine Coast for Indigenous Australian men (not secret men’s business) but a great program designed to strengthen the identity and capacity of men.

ESCAPADE sang its first song and before we finished we had one man backing us on Didgeridoo. The rest of the set went really well and was very enthusiastically and warmly received. Tag Master, Steve Griffin, then got the men involved in several tags before we headed down to the campfire for an evening of yarning.

The highlight here was a guy called Paulie who played didgeridoo and guitar and sang several of his own compositions in a country blues style. One hauntingly beautiful piece started with him telling a story of the old folk from the spirit world and this developed into a song called ‘My Special Place’. ESCAPADE is hopeful of negotiating with Paulie to gain access to the song because the opportunities to put harmonies to a work of this nature would be awesome. A little more singing from our quartet and the evening concluded with photos, greetings and salutations all round.

Quartetting is a fantastic experience made all the more special by doing different things with guys who are your brothers.

Mike Ludwig

How did you go with the Website?

Here are the answers to the questions which appeared in this year’s March/April Newsletter:

Which Chorus appears on the AAMBS Homepage? The River City Clippers

When is the next Council Teleconference meeting? It was .... Sunday 23rd May 2010 - 7.30pm EST

How do you contact your Region Chairman? Details for Regional Chairmen, and for AAMBS Councillors, are on the Contacts page

Who was the Gold Medal Seniors’ Quartet in 2005? Who’s Counting - Lead: Don Godfrey, Bass: John Shelton, Bari: Keith Lay, Tenor: John McMillan

What is Standing Order No 5? Regulations for Quartets
Training for Barbershop Leads
By Ian Miller, VP Music

Generally, right-thinking singers agree that the chords in barbershop singing should be, or at least attempted to be, tuned in just intonation. There appears, however, to be a difference of opinion regarding longitudinal tuning but with the common proviso that the melody should end up accurately on the intended pitch whether in the original key or another into which it was transposed.

Some say that the melody should be sung on the even-tempered scale. Others, that it should be sung mainly on the even-tempered scale but with slight adjustments, e.g. down when the melody note is on the third and especially minor seventh of the chord to obviate the necessity of the other parts shifting sharp so much to just-tune. More state that the roots of the chords are sung on the Pythagorean scale and that the other parts, including the melody part, just-tune to the root regardless of which parts are singing the root and the melody. Aaaaaaargh

What does all this mean for a lead wanting to sing with the maximum possible “ring” from the chords in a song? Let’s allow Jim Richards (the absolute guru on “The Physics of Sound” presented at almost every Harmony University since the year dot) explain.

“Suppose you were singing lead in a quartet singing "Five Foot Two" in the key of "C". The lead’s first note on "Five" would be "E" = 327.0375 Hz, because that would be in tune with the basses "C" on 130.815 Hz. On "eyes", the chord shifts to an E-7 chord with both the bass and lead sharing the root an octave apart. What E should they sing? I believe that both the lead and bass should strive to sing the "E" that is higher than the original "E" by about 22 cents. Why? If you don’t and the chords progress around the circle of 5th to the tonic by steps of perfect fifths, the tonal centre will be flat by that same 22 cents. By singing the higher "E" the tonal centre is preserved.

“Now do leads do this consciously? I don’t think so. We are talking very small adjustments here. Not only do we have to deal with the fact that to some extent we are all brain washed by having been submerged our whole life in equal tempered tuning and our "perfect fifth" root progression may be a tad shy of 2:3. Further, as barbershoppers, we are used to hearing melodies that return to a fixed tonic (at least the better singers do) and we strive also to have chords that are in tune. The only way it can happen is if ALL of the voices make adjustments.

“Some leads do it consciously; some do not. I happen to believe that most leads can indeed be "ear-trained" to hear the differences and sing the right pitches to make songs work in the intended key when they do not seem to be able to do this "naturally" on their own. Unfortunately, there are some for-real tone-deaf people out there who can never be "trained".

At some point in time an adjustment needs to be made, usually by the melody singer, for the group to stay true to the tonal centre (key). This can often happen when a note shifts in its chord-position from a 3rd (lower pitch) to a 5th (higher pitch) as a continuous tone. Leads that understand this shift, will make life easier for the harmony singers. Much of the time, we don't need the leads adjusting to the harmony parts, but those leads that know how to make the "shift" (by understanding their position in the chord) can become wonderful lead singers.

What this means is that the melody has to be learned in a specific way, allowing the adjustment to take place. So you can't learn a melody from note to note and expect good intonation. You have to learn each note in its relation to the key and often in its relation to the chord. Ah...ha! (you should be saying.)

Note:
A piano (tempered instrument) is tuned with 12 equal intervals over one octave. Each of these notes is also divided into 100 cents, hence the reference to 22 cents above. This means that the pitch of the note must be raised by 22% of the standard tempered interval. On the other hand Just Intonation is based on the ratio between notes. e.g. an octave is 2:1 (100%), a 5th is 3:2 (50%) and a 3rd is 5:4 (25%). This tuning will allow the maximum possible “ring” to a chord (generation of strong, common overtones): something that is not possible in the tempered scale.
“Barbershop singers adjust pitches to achieve perfectly tuned chords in just intonation while remaining true to the established tonal centre,” says Dr Greg Lyne in his definition of barbershop harmony.

**Do you know what that means? How good is your “just intonation”?**

Most of us are familiar with the sound produced by the notes on a keyboard. We recognise that when two notes are played together some combinations produce a pleasing sound (harmony or consonance) and others produce an unpleasant sound (a discord or dissonance).

We generally don’t stop to wonder whether the sounds might be MORE consonant if we varied the pitch of one of the notes just a little. And that’s a pity!

It’s a pity because all the chords (except octaves) on a keyboard are just a little out of tune. The keyboard is tuned to what is called the **Equally Tempered Intonation**. This allows a piano to play pieces in different keys and still sound in tune. It would be pretty hard to sell pianos if they could only play consonant chords in one key so the tuning modifications of Equally Tempered Intonation make commercial sense.

However, the pitches of the notes of a piano do not represent all the possible sounds that can be made. On a piano, each octave is divided into twelve equal steps of pitch. But our vocal chords allow us to slide up an octave gradually increasing the pitch until we reach the target note so we actually sing hundreds of different notes. The human voice doesn’t have the constraints of piano tuning.

Long ago, it was noted that if identical strings under the same tension were set into vibration, pleasing harmonies were created when the string lengths represented a simple ratio. For example, sounds that are an octave apart can be played if a string is reduced to half its length causing it to vibrate twice as fast. Anything that vibrates will cause pressure waves in the surrounding air and when those pressure waves hit our ear drums we perceive the result as sound; the more vibrations per second, the higher the pitch of the sound. Pitch is therefore described in terms of “frequency” – cycles per second or “hertz”.

When chords are perfectly tuned, the contributing notes combine to create notes of higher pitch that add to the harmony of the chord. In barbershop, we call this “expanded sound” or “making the chord ring”. And since we can’t really tune the chords PERFECTLY on the keyboard with its limited number of notes we prefer to use what is called **just intonation**.

In just intonation each note of the scale has a frequency that forms a simple ratio with the root note of the scale. The diagram compares the frequency of notes on the just and equally tempered intonation scales in the key of C. The table shows the ratio of frequencies of notes on the just intonation scale to the root note of the scale. An examination of this data shows that the second and fifth notes of the just scale are slightly sharper than these same notes on the equally tempered scale whereas the third, fifth, sixth and seventh are slightly flatter. The minor seventh (barbershop seventh) is significantly flatter.

The problem for barbershop singers, and particularly keyboard players, is one of getting used to the different sound of the tuned chords in just intonation. Equally tempered chords may sound livelier, sharper, and have a buzz to them whereas the just chords will have a ring when upper harmonics are created but the chord may seem to have less life as there is less “interference” between the notes.

The melody singers – usually the leads – should sing their part remaining true to the tonal centre or key of the music. This is the so-called “horizontal tuning”. The harmony parts then tune to the melody line in just intonation to create “expanded sound”.

...cont’d
This is referred to as “vertical tuning”.

So who is responsible for maintaining the tonal centre when your group is singing? Harmony singers would usually argue that they need to know (or be able to anticipate) the pitch of the melody note they are required to harmonise with, so if the lead singer can stay in key, then their task is made easier and they can sing more confidently. On this basis, the melody singers – usually the leads – sing their part remaining true to the tonal centre or key of the music and this is the so-called “horizontal tuning”. The harmony parts then tune to the melody line in just intonation to create “expanded sound”. This is referred to as “vertical tuning”.

However, it can also be argued that this method requires the harmony singers to make larger adjustments in pitch than would be required if all members of the group, including the melody singers, took responsibility for maintaining the tonal centre. So one might argue that "he who sings the root note has the responsibility for maintaining tonal centre." In this system you would identify for each chord the root singer and charge that person (or section of the chorus) with responsibility for maintaining the tonal centre for that particular chord in the song. Since the basses have more than their fair share of root notes they will have to accept much of the responsibility for maintaining the tonal centre.

But whichever system you use you have to ring the chords. If the root and fifth tones are sung accurately on the just intonation scale and predominate in volume then some measure of expanded sound will result even if other tones are not quite in tune.

Balancing the chords – Volume Relationships

The most consonant intervals are those with the smallest numbers in their ratios – unison (1:1), the octave (2:1), the perfect fifth ((3:2), and the perfect fourth (4:3). Other intervals – thirds, sixths, minor sevenths, ninths, etc. - are less consonant and produce harmonics that are dissonant with the harmonics of the root and fifth of the chord. They should therefore be sung more softly. This principal applies to all singing parts.

However, over-riding this consideration is the requirement that the melody should be clearly defined but not so loud as to sound like a lead soloist with a backing group. (In the special case where there really is a lead solo the total volume of the harmony parts should match that of the melody line.)

Higher notes are easier to hear than lower notes and this must also be factored in. This is a particular problem for the baritones who are sometimes singing below the leads and some times above them even in the same bar. The advice to baritones is “to sing loud enough to fill each chord without drawing the listener’s attention away from the melody line.” (Baritones, of course, find this advice rather hard to accept.)

In summary:

- The melody singer maintains a volume level in accordance with the interpretive plan for the song.
- Higher notes should be sung with less volume than lower notes
- The harmony parts must allow the melody to be easily distinguished.
- Fourths and fifths should be sung with relatively more volume
- Thirds, minor sevenths, sixths, ninths, etc. should be sung with relatively less volume

Well, it’s simple really. You just have to know which note in the chord you are singing, then listen to the melody volume and adjust your volume appropriately, bearing in mind that if you have a note higher than the melody note you should back off a little to let the melody come through. And do all this while singing accurately and with precision producing those target vowels perfectly.

In a chorus, it is necessary to take into account the total volume of the section but the numbers in the sections usually reflect the relative average volume of the notes the section is required to sing.

But don’t let any of this detract from the fun of singing with the other guys.

Doug Moody
MD - The Melbournaires

For further information go to

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Just_intonation
**An Alternative Approach**

**A Brief Overview** - To better understand the need for the fine tuning that enables correctly pitched Barbershop chords to “ring” you need to appreciate that for the equal temperament scale, which reflects the intervals on our modern piano, the frequency of each note in the chromatic scale is related to the frequency of the notes next to it by a factor of the twelfth root of 2. Our modern system of tuning, called equal temperament, is a compromise system of tuning in which every pair of adjacent notes has an identical frequency ratio.

In the Just Intonation scale, the notes are related to the fundamental by rational numbers and the semitones are not equally spaced. The most pleasing sounds to the ear are usually combinations of notes related by ratios of small integers, such as the fifth (3/2) or third (5/4). The Just scale is constructed based on the octave and an attempt to have as many of these “nice” intervals as possible.

This is why, when MDs are seeking to have a Chorus or Quartet “ring” chords, they need to understand the individual chords so that, in Barbershop, instead of parts sounding “buzzy”, MDs train the sections by careful practice to adjust the notes sung, by having them sung slightly sharp or flat, as the case may be, since for sustained notes, differences of several Hz can be quite significant!

Kevin White

**Chart 1**

### FREQUENCY COMPARISONS (cps) OF EQUALLY TEMPERED AND JUST INTONATION SCALE NOTES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interval</th>
<th>Just Frequency Ratio from starting point</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C – C (Octave)</td>
<td>523.3 / 261.6 = 2:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C – B (Major 7th)</td>
<td>490.6 / 261.6 = 15:8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C – B-flat (b’shop 7th)</td>
<td>457.9 / 261.6 = 7:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C – A (Major 6th)</td>
<td>436.0 / 261.6 = 5:3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C – G (Perfect 5th)</td>
<td>392.4 / 261.6 = 3:2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C – F (Perfect 4th)</td>
<td>348.8 / 261.6 = 4:3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C – E (Major 3rd)</td>
<td>327.0 / 261.6 = 5:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C – D (Major 2nd)</td>
<td>294.3 / 261.6 = 9:8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C – C (Unison)</td>
<td>261.6 / 261.6 = 1:1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chart 2**
Your Website -
Council, Regional and International Barbershop information and contact details as well as application forms, competition results, calendars and much, much more is available on the AAMBS Website—www.aambs.org.au

Your Newsletter Articles -
Deadline:
5.30pm EST on 15th day of each odd numbered month

Length:
Articles to be 150—500 words maximum and in Georgia 10 pitch font. All articles will be edited for spelling, grammar and length.

Photos:
Please remember to send photos as attachments - not embedded in your article

Your Events:
Promote of your Coming Events - send full details for inclusion in the AAMBS Calendar below and on the AAMBS Website

2010
Sept 3-5 - NZABS Harmony Masterpiece Convention, Founders Theatre, Hamilton NZ. Details: www.nzabs.org.nz

Sept 5-8 - NZABS Harmony University, Christian Youth Camp, 148 Waingaroo Road, Ngaruawahia NZ. Details: www.nzabs.org.nz

Sept 12 - AAMBS Council Teleconference


Nov 6 - SydneySiders Express Biennial Fund Raising Concert for the Children’s Hospital, Westmead. 7.45 pm Abbotsleigh School Auditorium, 1666 Pacific Highway, Wahroonga. Tickets: $25 each ($20 for school children and pensioners). Contact Tony 02 9913 2473 or www.sydneysiders.org

2011
Jan 25-30 – BHS Midwinter Convention, Las Vegas, Nevada USA

Jun 27-Jul 4 – BHS International Convention, Kansas City MO USA

Oct 7-9 – Irish Association of Barbershop Singers’ International Convention. Belfast, Ireland

Sept 28–Oct 2 – AAMBS 11th Annual Convention and Pan Pacific Convention, Brisbane Qld – Hosted by The Brisbane River City Clippers. Contact: info@panpac2011.org.au

2012
Jul 1-8 – BHS International Convention, Portland, Oregon USA

Oct 7-9 – Irish Association of Barbershop Singers’ International Convention. Dublin, Ireland

2013
Jun 27-Jul 4 – BHS International Convention, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Oct 4-6 – Irish Association of Barbershop Singers’ International Convention. Galway, Ireland

2014
Jun 29-Jul 6 – BHS International Convention, Minneapolis MN USA