

Riverblenders Chorus – Mankato, MN

The present Mankato Chapter of the Barbershop Harmony Society (formerly the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of BarberShop Quartet Singing in America) is the result of an effort by the Jefferson Lords Quartet (Barry Clapper, Norm Erickson, Bruce Gray, and Jerry Kirby) along with Dick Van Krevelen and others to create a chapter in January, 1973. A previous Barbershop Chorus chapter existed in Mankato from about 1949 to 1954.

1973

January An organizational meeting at West High School on January 14, with 12 men present Fran Frank selected to be president.

Attendance of 8-23 over next few months

Dick Van Krevelen, Barry Clapper, Bill Lydecker, Tim Bothoff, and Frank Stowell named as directors.

May Phil Knautz accepted post of Musical Director.

June First performance at Blue Earth County Historical Society Museum .

September First Board of Directors meeting; license application signed by 30 men and sent to Society headquarters by LOL District President, Jim Richards.

October First guest night with 28 guests and a visit from Minnetonka Chorus who sponsored the Riverblenders

1974

February Charter application completed with 35 members.

March Charter awarded. First contest appearance with 32 on stage. Chorus finishes 2nd, as Rochester wins its 8th consecutive championship.

May Second place to Greendale in LOL Small Chapter Chorus Contest

Charter Night Show, with Gay Nineties, Roadrunners, and Jefferson Lords quartets, and Minnetonka Chorus.

November "Harvest Moon Harmony Night" Show in St. Peter with Minnesota Valley Sweet Adelines Chorus, Happiness Emporium, Harmony Galore Four, and Notiques quartets. Ed Wirtz & Dale Lammi are assistant chorus directors.

1975

January Chapter bulletin is named "River Ramblings" in contest entered by about 10 members.

August First Brainerd outing, attended by 15 members and ladies.

November "Barbershop All Year Round" Show with the Vigortones, Music Makers quartets. First show with two performances.

1976

August First church services sing - 3 Sundays.

November "Salute to America " Show with Happiness Emporium, Roadrunners, Saturday Review quartets. Ed Wirtz, Dave Balke, Warren Hettinga assistant directors.

1977

Summer Church services singing on five Sundays.

August Special show with Suntones quartet.

November r "Mr. Music", an Irving Berlin show with Dealers' Choice and the Saturday Review quartets.

1978

January Membership reaches 75

Summer Church services singing on seven Sundays.

July Chorus performance for National Gymanfa Ganu (Welsh Singing Festival) in Minneapolis . **September** Chapter sponsors new chapter at Prior Lake .

November "Everything's Coming Up Roses" Show with Sound Gallery, Ragtime quartets.

1979

Summer Church services singing on eight Sundays.

September Bill Thornton of Dealer's Choice and Bob Calderon of El Paso agree to be music coach and SP/choreographer coach, respectively.

November " New York , New York " Show with Grandma's Boys, Roadrunners quartets.

1980

May Chapter hosts District International Preliminary Quartet, District Small Chapter Chorus, and Division Chorus and Quartet Contests.

September First cabaret-style show, at Waldorf.

October Chorus wins District Championship at St. Paul .

November "Together Through The Years" show with Minnesota Valley Sweet Adelines Chorus and chapter quartets. Warren Hettinga, Ed Wirtz, Barry Clapper, & Dave Balke are assistant directors.

1981

January Chapter sponsors new chapter at Albert Lea.

April Performance for National Music Educators Conference in Minneapolis .

May "A Little Traveling Music" Show with Side Street Ramblers, Knights of Harmony quartets.

June Membership reaches 87.

July International Chorus Contest in Detroit : 11th Place with 73 men on stage.

August Board accepts Phil Knautz' request for leave of absence. Warren Hettinga appointed as new Music Director.

1982

May "I Love The Ladies" Show with Chicago News, Gay Nineties quartets.

Wirtz, Clapper, Knautz assistant directors.

June LOL Mini-Harmony College at Gustavus.

September Chorus Labor Day Weekend performances at Walker .

1983

January Knautz and Hettinga named co-directors.

March Chapter hosts Southwest Division Contest - largest contest (11 choruses, 12 quartets) ever.

May "Over There" Show with Most Happy Fellas, Ring of Gold, Downstate Express quartets.

November Ring of Gold disband, after last show at Waseca.

1984

March Tenth Anniversary Celebration Dinner. All former members invited for evening.

April Special performances with Mankato Youth Symphony Orchestra in Mankato and St. Peter.

May "Decade of Fun" Show with Ham 'N Wry, Road Runners quartets.

June Special performance for " Americana " weekend at Renaissance Fairgrounds, Chaska.

November Richard Dick (sound) and Judy Odde (SP) agree to coach chorus.

1985

May "Under The Big Top" Show with Boston Common.

July Magic quartet gives seven performances in tour of BABS clubs in England and Wales.

August "Riverblenders' Roundup" at Shoreland Country Club in St.Peter, replaces Brainerd outing.

1986

February Downstate Express disbands.

March 10th Division Chorus Championship at contest in Mankato . - Performance at East

High School Choir Festival.

May "Music Man" Show with Diamond Jax.

August Knautz resigns as music director, replaced by Hettinga with Clapper as associate director. Coaching retreat at GAC with Darryl Flinn.

1987

May "You Ain't Heard Nothing Yet" (Al Jolson) Show, with KC Connection, Magic quartets.

1988

February Carl Dockendorf becomes SP coach.

May Chapter hosts LOL Spring Convention and Contests, along with Division Contest - "Harmony Heritage" show with Benchmarks and Knights of Harmony.

Summer Package shows at New Ulm, Mankato , Winthrop, Hayfield, Nicollet, Arlington

1989

April 15th Anniversary celebration **May** \$1000 grant from Arts Council for coaching "Pirates of the Queen's Revenge" show, with Chicago Chord of Trade

Summer 43 church services on 9 Sundays

1990

April Bob Calderon returns as SP coach

May "Riverblenders in Concert" show, with Broadway

August 17 members and wives tour Great Britain . 6 singing evenings with BABS clubs, 1 with Welsh choir, 1 with Scottish church group. **September** Hettinga resigns, replaced by Knautz.

November \$1440 Arts Council grant for coaching

1991

May "College Days" show, with Vaudville

August Lincoln County Fair - Tyler , MN .

September Knautz and Hettinga submit resignations, to be effective after show and fall contest, respectively.

December Golden Note Awards to Norris Lokensgaard, John Foster, Herb Martens, and George Nelson

1992

February Mankato sings on Albert Lea Show

May Show State of the Art & Bank Street Quartets, guest chorus Albert Lea .

1993

April "School Daze" show, People's Choice, Gay 90's and Band of Gold. **Summer** Package shows - Odin and Lakefield.

August Brainerd Bash reinstated and Downstate Express reunited.

1994

April 20th annual show - "USO Revue" with "Imagination", Night Life, Magic, Front Porch Harmony and East Side Harmony.

June Sang for the South Central Technical College graduation with guest speaker, "Jerry Lewis"

August Gene Foeller resigns as an assistant director to direct the Faribault chapter.

1995

April "Whistle Stop Barbershop" - show, with "Great Stage Robbery", Magic and East Side Harmony

December Phil Knautz, director emeritus, receives "Golden Note Award".

1996

April - "Grande ole Barbershop" - show - Mankato East High School State of the Art Downstate Express Special Edition East Side harmony Magic Sing Along with Don Miller Blue Ox Band Directors - Karle Erickson, Barry Clapper, Don Miller, Phil Knautz

1997

April - "Keep America Singing" - show - Mankato East High School FRED East Side harmony Magic MSU College Quartet Sing along with Don Miller Directors - Peter Benson, Barry Clapper, Phil Knautz, Don Miller

1998

April - "Just Dreamin" - show Mankato East High School Checkmate Hot Zone East Side harmony Harmony Store Sing along with Don Miller Directors - Arvid Zenk, Barry Clapper, Phil Knautz, Don Miller

1999

April - "Those Riverboat Days" - show Mankato Easy High School Downstate Express Trademark Nightlife East Side Harmony Magic Harmony Store
- Michaels Minstrels
Directors - Arvid Zenk, Don Miller, Phil Knautz (Director Emeritus)

2000

April - "Music From The 50's, 60's 70's" - show Mankato East High School Harmony Works

Gay Nineties East Side Harmony Magic Riverfront Sing a long with Don Miller Directors - Arvid Zenk, Don Miller, Phil Knautz (Director Emeritus)

2001

April - "Feelin Fine" - show Mankato East High School The Kindred Spirits The Bauman Brothers Magic Riverfront Sing along with Don Miller Directors - Jim Wirtz, Doug Peterson, Don Miller

2002

April - "Phantom of the Barbershop & A Salute to America" - Happiness Emporium (International Champions) - Break Point (District Champions - director Jim Wirtz

2004

April - "Comedy 2 - Night" - show Mankato East High School Chordiac Arrest Sound Fortune Riverfront Harmony Soul Purpose Sing a long with Don Miller Directors - Jim Wirtz, Doug Peterson, Don Miller

2005

April - "Travelin the USA" - Down State Express & Sweet Ads Northern Lights - director Jim Wirtz

MAGIC was 25 years old and still going strong!

2006

April - "Girl of My Dreams" featuring Storm Front

2007

April "Parade of Quartets" featuring Bandwagon, Gold Rush, and Escalade

2008

February - Jim Wirtz resigns as musical director.

April - "This Joint is Jumpin;" with the Gay Ninties and Sound Image

2009

April -- "Remember Radio" show with Main Street Station and the Benson Family Singers

2010

April - "It's Only Make Believe" featuring Vocality, The Benson Family Singers, and the Norell Family

Derek Glenna, Director

2011

May - "A Night at the Auditions" featuring Vallee de Croix

Derek Glenna, Director (of both the Riverblenders and Vallee de Croix)