



*Detroit-Oakland-Grosse Pointe Chapter
S.P.E.B.S.Q.S.A. Inc.*

80 Years of Singing Tradition!

Gentlemen Songsters Chorus

Guest Information



2018 Detroit-Oakland Chapter Officers

President	Keith Opal
Secretary	Craig Roney
Treasurer	Mike Matson
VP Music & Performance	Jim Kunz
VP Chapter Development (Membership)	Joe Queen
VP Programs	George Burkett
VP Marketing & PR	
Board Member at Large	Doug Joppie
Board Member at Large	Geoff d'Allemand
Board Member at Large	Peter Brandt
Board Member at Large	John Marsh
Immediate Past President	Terry Webner
Other Positions	
Bulletin Editor	Tom Uicker
Chorus Director	Steve Sutherland
Chapter Contact	Tom Uicker
District Delegate	Dave Montera
Chorus Manager	Roger Boyer
Show Chairman	Joe DeSantis
Webmaster	Steve Sutherland
Music Librarian	Rick Vuylsteke
Assistant Musical Directors	
	Jim Kunz
	Dave Montera



Hi!

We are delighted that you have an interest in barbershop singing and, more specifically, in our Gentlemen Songsters Chorus of the Detroit-Oakland-Grosse Pointe Chapter of the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barbershop Quartet Singing in America, Inc. (SPEBSQSA, Inc) That's a mouthful but it really means the Barbershop Harmony Society.

To help you get acquainted with our musical offerings we have put together this short booklet. It explains our organization, our music program, and our chorus membership policy and how you can qualify. It also lists people who can help you get acquainted with barbershop and get you started singing those great barbershop chords.

We hope this information will inspire you to look further into this terrific hobby of ours. We think you will soon see why we all love it so much.

We are glad that you want sing with us; we welcome you with open arms and good close harmony!

Sincerely,

Gentlemen Songsters
Music Team & Board of Directors



What are We Looking for in a Singer?

Basically, we are looking for men who enjoy singing and can enjoy ringing chords. We don't necessarily expect professional singers. In fact if you don't read music we have ways to help you learn your music (just



use our learning CDs mentioned in the Learning Music section). We need men that can carry a tune or harmony part, can match a pitch, and are willing to work together with the chorus on our improvement of singing techniques and our stage presence. If you can sing along with the radio, chances are, you can sing along with us.

What Part Do I Sing?

In barbershop singing, there are four voice parts: Tenor, Lead, Baritone, and Bass. You may find the ranges sung by these various parts somewhat different than other choruses or choirs you have sung with. For example, most of the time our Lead singers carry the melody and not the Tenors.

On your first evening with us one of our members will assist you with proper section placement. He will also introduce you to an experienced singer in your assigned section who will help you get acquainted with the music, our meeting format and with other chorus members.

He will be glad to get you introduced to the sound and feel of quartet singing too if you would like to try your hand at it.



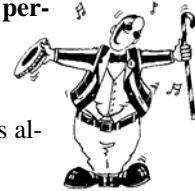
Performing Chorus



We, like most other musical organizations that strive to do their very best, have established standards for membership in our Performing Chorus. The standards include attendance, uniform fee requirements, choreography and voice proficiency. These standards are continually being raised as we work toward higher musical goals.

We expect prospective members to be able to correctly sing the melody or a harmony part, to be able to match vowel and word sounds and to sing in tune with other voices.

We also expect prospective members to be able to perform choreography as designed by our Stage Presence coaches.



Having a desire to improve your performance skills is always a welcome attribute.

Voice Placement Testing

Our voice placement test will check your vocal range on one of your first visits with us. We do this so you will feel vocally comfortable within one of our sections and so that you can be an asset to us by singing within your vocal range.



Jim Kunz
Music Vice President
Assistant Director
(248) 885-4050

Rehearsal Schedule

The chorus rehearses every Monday night (except holidays) at Royal Oak Middle School choir room in Royal Oak from 7:30 until 10:00.

Sometimes when we get close to one of our big events, we will extend rehearsal time to 10:30. We will also hold a special rehearsal session, usually on a Saturday. We may bring in outside coaching for these special rehearsals or we may use our own experts inside the chorus. Either way, we ask that every member participate.

Yearly Chorus Events



Our chorus works around several major events every year, plus numerous minor ones. One of the major ones is our annual show which takes place on the **second or third weekend in September**. We hold it on Saturday with an evening show and an After Glow. This is our major fund raiser for the year and we expect all active chorus members to participate and sell tickets.

Two other major events that we expect all active chorus members to participate in are our District and International Preliminary contests.

The District Chorus competition usually falls on the **forth weekend in April** and the International Preliminary competition falls on the **third weekend in October**. The winner of this competition earns the right to represent our district (Pioneer) in the International Contest against the other districts' winners.



The International Contest falls on the first full week in July and our district sends it's number one chorus each year. This is held in a different major city each year. It is hard to imagine the thrill of appearing on the International stage before 8,000 people. Be sure and ask one of the men that has been there! Even when we aren't the chorus representative for our district, many members attend as a spectator.

Spaced around our major events, are many other important performances. Other than our show, these are our contact with the non-barbershop public. These performances include singing at many community functions, at paid bookings such as banquets, at shopping centers, for service organizations, retirement homes, and caroling at several hospitals, Greenfield Village and the Detroit Zoo around Christmas time.

Special chapter meetings are set up by the Program Vice President (a member of our board of directors) and many times are held on Friday evenings. These include such events as inter-chapter quartet contests, evenings of woodshedding and social camaraderie, visits by feature area quartets, and a ladies' night in which we have a dinner dance to honor our "better half".

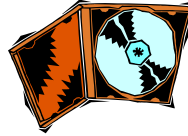
Learning Music & Choreography

First of all, don't panic. You can have as much time as you need to learn the music we are singing!

One of the ways to learn new music, whether you read music or not, is to bring a **digital recorder** to the rehearsal, record the songs you are learning, then take the recording and your music home and practice.

When we present a new piece of music we use a part-predominate CD and a boom box to teach the new song to the chorus during a section rehearsal. The goal is to be able to sing the song that evening as a chorus.

Each year, a part-predominate CD is distributed to the chorus members. It contains all new show songs. We also have several versions of the learning tracks on our Members-Only section of our web site including a 4 part mix, part-predominate, and part missing versions.



On our director's section of YouTube you will find video demonstrating our choreography on new and existing songs. Links to these videos are on our Members-Only section of our web site.

Learning Tracks



Steve Sutherland
Director
(734) 455-4488

As mentioned above we make part CDs with your voice part predominate and part missing, and the other three voices in the background. (Singing along with those other three parts may even start you craving a chance to sing in a quartet!) Our director handles the creation of our learning media and then distributes it to the chorus. See our Director, or your section leader to get a copy for your part.

Once you are a member, you will have access to our Members-Only section of our web site that contains all the learning tracks PLUS a 4-track stereo mix of all songs, not available on the CD. Teaching videos for the songs with choreography are there also.

Music Library

Our music librarian gives all members a set of music of our current repertoire which you may keep even when we move on to new music. You can pick up a guest book of our music before you become a member.



Rick Vuylsteke, Librarian
(248) 879-8503

Music Team Leadership

The music team is responsible for the musical programs of the chapter and for setting the goals and future direction for the chorus. The team is headed by the Music Vice-President and the Director and includes assistant directors, the section leaders and other key members of the chorus.



Steve Sutherland
Director
(734) 455-4488



Jim Kunz
Assistant Director
(248) 885-4050



Dave Montera
Assistant Director
(248) 851-5035

Section Leaders

A key member of the Music Team is the Section Leader for each voice part. Our Section Leaders are the men that can answer questions about part problems. Also, any suggestions about music go through them. These men conduct the section rehearsals, and help build each section into a unified sound.



Tenor Section Leader
Jim Kunz
(248) 885-4050



Lead Section Leader
Jay Peterson
(248) 557-7465



Baritone Section Leader
Joe DeSantis
(248) 399-8963



Bass Section Leader
Herb Hebner
(734) 261-6539



Lead Section Leader
Keith Opal
(734) 476-5717



Baritone Section Leader
Tom Uicker
(248) 559-7082



Bass Section Leader
Dave Montera
(248) 851-5035

Coaching

Vocal Coaching

Our Vocal Coach provides the Director and Assistant Directors with information regarding the sound and interpretive production of the chorus. This input includes analysis and evaluation of note accuracy, pitch accuracy, vowel sound matching, voice section balance, word enunciation and many other items critical to the production of excellence in vocal sound.



Lynne Peirce
Chorus Coach
Singing

Stage Presence Coach



Sue Spires
Chorus Coach
Stage Presence

Our stage presence coaches put together all of the "fancy dancing" and body language that we use with our songs. It is up to them to invent and teach the moves that help us convey the message in each song.

Our head stage presence coach is Sue Spires. We borrow her from the Sweet Adeline organization.

Our internal stage presence coach is Herb Hebner.

For help with stage presence instructions see Herb Hebner. You will also find instructional videos demonstrating choreography on our Member's section of the web site.

There is also a document defining the terminology we use.



Herb Hebner
Stage Presence Coach
(734) 261-6539



Our Quartets

We are a barbershop quartet society but all that has been shown so far is chorus information. A fun part of being in this society is the chance to sing with three other guys and if you have an interest, a quartet is a wonderful experience. The amount of time you devote to quartet singing is up to you. It can be as little or as much as you wish.

Find three other voices on your own or ask for help from our Quartet Activities Chairman. He can point you to help with your voice matching concerns and coaching.



Coda Honor Evenin' Gentlemen



Forum Shoppers Night Shift



Today's Special

Quartet Activities

Quartet activities are encouraged by the Music Team. One of the best ways to improve your barbershop singing abilities is to sing in a quartet. If you want to get into a quartet ask quartet activities coordinator. He will help line you up with three other guys that just may be looking for the part you sing. (Even though this is a quartet society, you don't have to sing in one to be a member! But we think that once you've experienced the thrill of being one of four voices in a quartet, there will be no holding you back!)



If you need a coach to help your quartet get started, talk to any of the music team members, and they will find someone in the chorus that can help you.



Jim Kunz
Quartet Activities
Music Vice President
(248) 885-4050

Membership & Dues

Membership is easy and the benefits of membership are great. Detroit-Oakland is one of more than 820 chapters of the Barbershop Harmony Society active across the United States and Canada. It is located in the Pioneer District (primarily Michigan). Annual dues help fund operations at the international, district and local levels. In addition to our convention and performance activities, the Society provides a wide array of vocal development materials, programs and opportunities for both chorus and quartet singing.



Craig Roney
Chapter Secretary
(248) 348-0323

Membership Application and Name Badges

Our Chapter Secretary will give you a membership application and have information about joining our chapter. Your membership application will be turned in to him along with a payment for your membership.

You've probably noticed that our members wear a name badge. Our chapter secretary will order one of our pin-on plastic name badges for you when your membership application is sent in.



Craig Roney
Chapter Secretary
(248) 348-0323

Group Email List

Our director maintains a group email list. This is used to send out weekly lesson plans for the rehearsals as well as critical information about pending performances such as uniform and times.

Make sure you give your email address to the director.



Steve Sutherland
Director
(734) 455-4488
sps1@comcast.net

New Member Orientation

New member orientation is important to us. We realize that there are many details about our activities that need to be covered.

Our man in charge of orientation will meet with our newer members and any interested men before an upcoming event and explain all of the details.

If you have any questions, please ask!



Joe Queen
Membership VP
(734) 347-1953

Uniform/Makeup Chairman

Our uniform chairman will arrange for you to get each of our performance and casual uniforms.

We ask a \$50 deposit before issuing our formal uniform. This may be refunded or used to cover cleaning costs when and if the uniform is returned.

He is also in charge of our stage makeup that we use on occasion. He will provide you with a list of what you should purchase..



Tom Uicker
Uniform & Makeup
Hi-Notes Editor
(248) 559-7082

Hi Notes Newsletter Editor

Approximately every other week, we publish an informational newsletter that details upcoming performances and events. This publication is invaluable when it comes to reminders that seem to be too easily forgotten. It is available in print at our rehearsals and from the main page of our web site. If you have any questions about details, ask our editor.

Chorus Manager

Our chorus manager is the contact man for scheduling chorus bookings and making performance and financial arrangements for the chorus. He collects all relevant information and presents it to the Music Team for consideration. All performance requests should go through him.

You will find a list of our scheduled performances on the chapter calendar on our web site.



Roger Boyer,
Chorus Manager
248) 302-6631

Public Relations

Public relations for our chapter and chorus are handled by our Public Relations Coordinator. He takes care of the task of advertising our chapter and chorus functions.

Young Men In Harmony

The purpose of the YMIH program is to encourage and actively promote the joyful experience of singing, especially in the four-part barbershop style among young male singers and their teachers. This man's job is to find ways for our chapter to promote this love of music in our schools and colleges.

Gentlemen Songsters Performance Repertoire



Each performing chorus member is responsible for both the music and stage presence for the following songs. The songs will be used to build various length shows that we have scheduled throughout the year.

2019 Show and Performance Package (part CDs available)

2019 Show——

After You've Gone
Buddies Medley
Everybody Loves A Lover
Fortune In Dreams
King of the Road
Lean On Me
On A Wonderful Day Like Today
Sloop John B
That Old Quartet of Mine
There Used To Be A Ball Park
They All Laughed
You've Got a Friend in Me



Repertoire——

Aquarius
Armed Forces Medley
Can You Feel the Love Tonight
Give My Regards to Broadway (contest song)
Heart
Hello Mary Lou
Lion Sleeps Tonight
Make 'em Laugh (contest song)
Only You
Take Me Out To The Ball Game
Under the Boardwalk



Detroit-Oakland-Grosse Pointe History

The Detroit #1 Chapter

On Sunday, July 30, 1939, a group of twenty men met in a cottage at Lake Orion, Michigan. At that meeting the Detroit Chapter was organized and a charter was applied for. Our chapter claims to be the first chapter organized east of the Mississippi River, although this is contested by the Wilmington, Delaware, and Chicago, Illinois chapters. However, no charters were issued by the Barbershop Society until 1941. The Detroit #1 Chapter is believed to be the first chapter chartered east of the Mississippi since one of the Society members in charge of charters was a Detroit Chapter member!

The second meeting of the Detroit Chapter was held at the Book Cadillac Hotel in Detroit with about 50 men in attendance. In this group were visitors from other parts of the state that then went on to form chapters in their own cities..

First "Parade of Quartets"

On June 8, 1940, the Detroit Chapter held the Society's first "Parade of Quartets" at the Book Cadillac Hotel's Ballroom. This was the first of a string of shows that lasts to this day. They put eight quartets on stage that evening. We are the longest running show in our entire Barbershop Harmony Society.

Since then...

The Detroit chapter had a rich history in competition representing the Pioneer District (originally known as the Michigan District) many times at International competition and have been the Pioneer District Chorus Champions many times.

Oakland County Chapter #9

The Oakland County Chapter was the ninth chapter chartered in Michigan on November 7, 1941 and was later responsible for making our Barbershop Harmony Society an International society. They were the chapter that sponsored the Windsor, Ontario Chapter in March of 1944.

Oakland County has also had a rich history in competition going head-to-head with the Detroit Chapter. They too represented the Pioneer District many times at International and have also been the Pioneer District Chorus Champions many times.

Two Chapters Become One - The Detroit-Oakland Chapter

In 1986 the Detroit Chapter and the Oakland County Chapter merged into one chapter with the Oakland County Chapter surrendering its charter. The newly formed chapter was named the 'Detroit-Oakland' Chapter and the next spring went on to win the District Chorus Contest.

Grosse Pointe Chapter

Founded in 1945 by a group of men who wanted to get together and have fun singing good old fashion barbershop harmony. They welcomed all men who wanted to share a love of singing Barbershop Chords. They had a rich history, boasting of a Pioneer District Championship, and several members in the Barbershop Hall of Fame . They participated in many community events and raised money for local charities.

Grosse Point Comes On Board

In 2019, the Grosse Pointe Chapter merged with the Detroit-Oakland Chapter forming what we now consider a powerhouse group.

Currently...

We enjoy competing in the two Pioneer District contests every year. We are the 2013 Pioneer District Chorus Champions. We also put on a fantastic annual show in September as well as performing at a multitude of civic and private functions around Detroit and its suburbs.

We take great pride in who we are and with your help what we can yet accomplish.



Detroit-Oakland-Grasse Pointe Chapter Gentlemen Songsters

Visit our web site at: <http://DetroitOakland.org>

We're on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/DOCGentlemenSongsters>