



# FACT SHEET

## **The History of Barbershop**

Barbershop music, with its close, unaccompanied four-part harmonies and ringing chords, is a unique folk art. It evolved in America in much the same way as other forms of vocal music. Although no one can say exactly when or where barbershop music began, the growth of the tradition was certainly aided between the 1860s and 1920s by the types of songs popular at the time – songs characterised by sentimental lyrics and uncomplicated melodies that could be harmonised with a variety of four-part chords.

## **Harmonise the World**

Sweet Adelines International is a musical force throughout the world. The international membership of nearly 27,000 women, all singing in English, includes choruses in most of the fifty United States as well as Australia, Canada, Denmark, England, Finland, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Japan, New Zealand, Scotland, Sweden and the Netherlands.

## **Sweet Adelines International**

Sweet Adelines International is a highly respected worldwide organisation of women singers committed to advancing the musical art form of barbershop harmony through education and performance. Active members belong to a chorus, and some members create and sing in quartets.

## **Sweet Adelines Australia**

Australia is Region 34 of Sweet Adelines International and is also known as the Southern Cross Region. The Region includes all states and territories of Australia. Sweet Adelines Australia currently has over 1200 women members singing in more than 30 choruses and quartets all around the country.

## **Our Purpose**

The main purpose of Sweet Adelines is to educate women of all ages in the art of singing four-part harmony, barbershop style. Sweet Adelines International offers the most comprehensive, quality education available anywhere in the world. Not only do members learn vocal production and music, they also learn choreography, stage production, costuming and much more.

## **What is Barbershop Harmony?**

Barbershop harmony is unaccompanied vocal harmony produced by four parts: lead, tenor, baritone and bass. It is different from any other kind of choral or group singing. One of the distinctive qualities is that the melody, sung by the lead voice, is below the tenor harmony. Another is its full rich bass sound, so different to any other women's choral music.

## **The Music**

A wide variety of songs are arranged in the barbershop style. The music includes special arrangements of today's ballads and upbeat songs, blues, popular show tunes, contemporary music and even jazz. Barbershop singers have performed their unique style of music in a number of popular venues from professional sports stadiums to Olympic ceremonies, with major symphonies, and on several national television shows.

### **Performance Benefits**

This style of music requires no instrumental accompaniment – singers can perform this immediate art form anytime and anywhere.

### **Health Benefits**

Many studies done over a number of years have focused on the health benefits of singing and the evidence is overwhelming – singing is good for you. It releases endorphins into your system and makes you feel energised and uplifted. Singing gives the lungs a workout, tones abdominal and intercostals muscles and the diaphragm, and stimulates circulation.

### **Choreography**

A barbershop chorus rarely stands still. Choreography enhances the music. Singers use facial expressions, arm movement and emotions to sing the message and pull the audience into the heart of the song.

### **The Voice Parts**

Finding the right voice part is the initial step. Experienced music educators help singers find a singing part that matches the tone of their voice and experience level. Lead is the melody and is sung in the range between A below middle C, and C above middle C. Tenor is a harmony part sung consistently above the lead. Baritone covers approximately the same range as lead. The baritone harmony notes cross the lead notes. Bass singers should have a rich, mellow voice and be able to sing the E flat below middle C easily

### **The Costs**

The costs of joining Sweet Adelines International are particularly in comparison to the costs of other comparable music activities. Average dues for chorus membership are \$35-\$45 per month which covers weekly rehearsals. Other costs that may be incurred include travel, costuming, makeup and competition registration fees.

### **Youth Membership**

Sweet Adelines offers a discounted membership option for females 25 years or younger. Youth members receive full membership privileges, and are required to pay only one-half of the regular international per capita fee.

### **Competitions**

Sweet Adelines members hone musical and performance skills at regional and international competitions. Judges give detailed feedback on performances, which can be used as a learning tool to improve performance of the individual as well as the group.

### **Young Women in Harmony**

Sweet Adelines International's *Young Women in Harmony* program teaches emerging singers the skills, joy and rewards of performing and singing four-part harmony, barbershop style. Young Women in Harmony delivers both musical excellence and education while giving young women a taste of show business.

### **Visit us online:**

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