

# MINDSET OF A SUCCESSFUL QUARTETTER

## Barbershop Parts Study - Playlist Observations

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Quartet	Information & Listen Fors
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>The Buzz</b> SAI Queens</p>	<p>1) "After Today" - Remake of the Acoustix version (BHS champs early 90's.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attention to coming in and out of unison, solos and vocal gymnastics in all parts.</li> <li>• Smoothness with which parts hand off the melody to one another, beginning with a very melodic bass.</li> <li>• Color of the releases in all singers, along with a very consistent lift that does not sound contrived at all.</li> <li>• Vocal flexibility - These are all gals in their mid to late 50's...all parts. While you can hear the maturity (and the benefit of having that experience), you can also hear a vibrance that comes only with vocal freedom.</li> </ul> <p>2) "If I Were a Bell"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexibility and lightness (an ease with the vocal approach.)</li> <li>• Strong sprinkle of personality and FUN in it.</li> <li>• Notice the smoothness of the tenor and how she "tucks into" the chords and how she takes on the solo part more like a lead rather than an ensemble (as they all do in this quartet), which are very tightly voiced (notes close together to each other)</li> <li>• The chromatics around 1:40 are accurate and balanced well through all voice parts.</li> <li>• Again, the handoff of parts in shared melody is seamless. They ring, they buzz, hence their name. Listen for the chords to sound rich and full. Conventions in barbershop like bell chords, lead-ins, echoes, etc. are handled with aplomb and consistency.</li> </ul> <p>3) "Back in Business"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This quartet is well-versed in all aspects of our craft. What they do particularly well is showcase one another and show off their individual strengths without getting in the way of anyone else.</li> <li>• You'll be able to keep your toe tapping to the tag. The bass is doing double duty with both the rhythm and an excellent job of coining overall. Bell Chords again!</li> <li>• When it gets a bit rangy for one or more voice parts (lower or higher) notice how this quartet handles balancing the chords so there is still a smooth transition and melodic consistency.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Rumors</b> SAI Queens</p>	<p>"There's A Meetin' Here Tonight" - One of SAI's all-time favorite quartets. The baritone is the director of Rich Tone Chorus of Texas (multiple International Championships and a judge in two categories), Dale Syverson. She and Peggy (the Bass) have a couple of crowns each. The tenor is operatically trained. They were always very entertaining with lots of variety.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Another melodic bass with a lot of presence without being overbearing. Note how she lightens and adds head voice in her upper register, which is seamless. Intonation is also excellent.</li> <li>• Dale's baritone is the classic baritone that you would not know you'd miss until you did! Note how she handles the different registers she's asked to sing.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Growing Girls</b> SAI Queens</p>	<p>They won when they were in their 20's, and the first Swedish Quartet to win International Quartet Contest (1989.) This recording is on their 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Depth and breadth of texture in each voice. The character and versatility in these voices come in droves and there is a great sense of internal meter.</li> <li>• The lead deftly moves into mixed register to bolster some excellent and clarion highs. The baritone is right there with her, so notice their interplay and the baritone's support.</li> <li>• Well-supported and consistent tone with the day in this live performance!</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Speed of Sound</b> SAI Queens</p>	<p>2015 Queens of Harmony - This quartet and 2014, The Love Notes (both Young Women in Harmony Champions and SAI International champions) were a turning point to a more contemporary sound.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finessed and textured approach (vs. perceived power and more focused tone, e.g. "rip a tag" or "slam a post")</li> <li>• Ring, Ring, Ring - Vowels matching is impeccable which aids the internal synch. This all makes them VERY consistent in tone. Intonation is also very good.</li> <li>• This all makes them VERY consistent in tone. Intonation is also very good.</li> <li>• All parts have a lovely mix of color on the ends of their phrases along with lifting naturally without pressing.</li> <li>• Devices and embellishments are handled deftly while all parts mind their "individual cone" while never overshadowing the melody line.</li> </ul>

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<p><b>GQ</b> SAI Top 3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellent modern quartet</li> <li>• All individually excellent singers.</li> <li>• Ring is in and out due to not lining up all vowel shapes exactly</li> <li>• Smoothness sometimes suffers in this challenging arrangement (which is also cool and updated).</li> <li>• Breaks appear in the “wall of sound” as the words and phrases do not connect as consistently or as fully, making the balancing a bit more difficult.</li> <li>• Diphthongs inconsistent, however each voice does strive to cone and offer appropriate balance.</li> <li>• Spunk and commitment to both tone and performance. (Check them out on YouTube.)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Nightlife</b> BHS Champs</p>	<p>Nightlife won in 1996 and “Stars Fell on Alabama” was their contest ballad. You can listen to the later male quartets that follow to hear some of the evolution on the men’s side.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A physics thing: Male quartets don’t have to work as hard tuning as they have more “room” on the notes in the lower register to slot them in.</li> <li>• Their Ah vowels are better than their Ee and Ih vowels.</li> <li>• Coning is fantastic all around.</li> <li>• They also do well with sing-able consonants.</li> <li>• And Brett Littlefield - that bass!</li> </ul>
<p><b>Max Q</b> BHS Champs</p>	<p>Max Q is comprised of very experienced barbershoppers, both in quartets and high-level choruses. The lead, Tony DeRosa (from Voctave and other groups) is a 3-time champ but the first two were in Baritone. He naturally, then, has a great intuition for his own personal cone (in the lead part in this instance).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They are clean, easy and very attentive to each other.</li> <li>• Dynamic contrasts and finesse with their approach.</li> <li>• The tenor is present but not strident.</li> <li>• This quartet does a great job opening to the primary vowels.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Gas House Gang</b> BHS Champs</p>	<p>Quintessential and legendary barbershop quartet. You’ll recognize Dr. Jim Henry’s bass. Most active in the 90’s before the untimely death of the baritone and bass’s brother Rob Henry. (If you want a good cry, watch <a href="#">this video</a> where Rob’s son comes onstage and sings with Gashouse Gang.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notice in this bass solo how basses are not just a pedal tone or the lowest part. At high levels, there is a demand for a smoothness AND as many different textures that a lead would use.</li> <li>• The harmony parts consistently “escort” the bass into and out of his feature with the echos and embellishments. The balance has to be different here with the melody in the bass part, but the job, nonetheless is still to cone with the lightness in the higher ranges and breadth in the lower.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Four Voices</b> BHS Champs</p>	<p>“Lazy Bones”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outstanding and well-developed, well-trained voices in this quartet.</li> <li>• In this live performance, note the incredibly smooth vocal lines in EACH part. The connection is truly notable.</li> <li>• Seamless connection of the tenor especially through his registers and when dipping under the lead.</li> <li>• All voices clearly understand the barbershop sound.</li> <li>• More particular to BHS, there is incredible attention to articulation. In each part here, you can notice the meticulous attention to turning the diphthongs and providing full value to both the primary and secondary vowels.</li> <li>• Artistic approach to both the onset and release of each word while connecting them well.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Crossroads</b> BHS Champs</p>	<p>Jim Henry on Bass again.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is NO sense of frantic energy in this up-tune, just the driving and consistent vocal lines in all parts.</li> <li>• No audible breaths.</li> <li>• Brandon Guyton (also the baritone in Four Voices) is a premium baritone. You can’t always discern his part as he slots it in with perfect attention to cone.</li> <li>• The lead perfectly elevates the ensemble in that you never hear him overpowering but the melody always present.</li> <li>• The lead also fully understands the textures required in his highest highs and lowest lows to remain present and artistic.</li> <li>• They also tune wonderfully and ring constantly.</li> </ul>

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<b>Ringmasters</b> BHS Champs	<p>First Swedish quartet to win BHS. All accomplished, versatile, and trained musicians, this is a modern quartet (won in 2012, had won the collegiate championship in 2008). The tenor is on this melody.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notice the ease in their vocals, especially as compared to some of the older champions.</li> <li>• Even though it's an "easier" sound, forward motion and presence doesn't suffer at all..</li> <li>• Each voice has its own color and character but the attention to ensemble allows it to work.</li> <li>• Their vowels and more difficult consonants like "r" and the plosive B's and P's and the sibilant t's and s's are more typical of the heightened articulation in BHS and HI vs. SAI.</li> </ul>
<b>Vocal Spectrum</b> BHS Champs	<p>"As Long as I'm Singin'"</p> <p>There is so much awesomeness going on in here, it will have to suffice to say that this is a perfect example of fully supporting a featured part and transitioning through the very barbershop embellishments that characterize some of the most fun we get to do as vocalists.</p>
<b>Gas House Gang</b>	<p>"Lullabye (Goodnight My Angel)" – Billy Joel tune</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This quartet's intonation is so clear and present, you never worry or wonder about any chord.</li> <li>• In this arrangement, listen for the balance of the really close chords, especially where the baritone and lead are involved. Superb balance.</li> </ul> <p>(Also check out Vocal Spectrum's version of this same tune: <a href="#">Click here</a> Definitive. Artistic. Incredible. Listen to this about 50 times, you'll be a better singer if you pay attention.)</p>
<b>Panache</b> SAI Queens	<p>8-part mixed arrangement - One of the all-time favorite leads, Pam Pieson's quartet Panache singing with Acoustix.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A lot craft to be had here!</li> <li>• Extreme artistry and finesse with which endings of their phrases are released.</li> <li>• No one is over-singing or overpowering.</li> <li>• Vowel matching and textured entries into each word make this an excellent study in smoothness and the right amount of color providing for a very artistic live performance.</li> <li>• Tenor of Panache, Geri Pappageorge, has incredible range and has competed in several parts with three crowns. This epitomizes the "float" and ease that the tenor voice part calls for!</li> </ul>