



## BABS Gold Medal Quartet

# Helpful Hints For Your Championship Year



**SING BARBERSHOP**

It's the Harmony that makes the difference



# Congratulations!

## Helpful Hints for your Championship Year

Congratulations on becoming the latest British Association of Barbershop Singers Gold Medal Quartet, we hope you have a most enjoyable and successful year.

Being the national champions brings with it certain responsibilities and commitments, we would hope that you will help in the promotion and development of barbershop singing in the UK and look for ways to extend the fast growing reputation of this style of music.

There is an outline diary of events further on in this document, which you should make your self aware of and place in your quartet diary.

Soon after winning you will be contacted by the BABS Music Services Director, who will check on your willingness to represent BABS at the Barbershop Harmony Society's International Quartet Contest next year.

*Have a great Year!*

**The BABS Board of Directors**

## Diary Dates

So here's a list of the most likely bookings which tend to be offered to the current Gold Medal Quartet. Check out the dates now and place them in your diaries, to avoid committing a vital date elsewhere.

<b>Event</b>	<b>When</b>
Harmony College	August
BABS Autumn Meeting	September
BABS Quartet Prelims	November
LABBS Convention	Late Oct/Early Nov
BABS Convention	May
International Convention	Late June/Early July

### **REMEMBER THAT SOME OF THESE BOOKINGS ARE NOT GUARANTEED BUT MORE LIKELY THAN NOT!**

Apart from these 'annual' events where the gold medal quartet is normally in evidence, many other invitations will/should be received and will no doubt depend on your previous networking activity/friendships/geography/chorus inclusion and general availability, not forgetting your own personal views on how much work you wish to commit to.

## Now What?

One or more of your quartet may have been here before with previous 'champions'. If so, or if you think we're trying to teach you 'how to suck eggs' you obviously already know the ropes!

If however you are virgins in this gold medal game, please read on for a few useful tips which may help you to avoid some of the potential hazards. We would like to thank Cambridge Blues for allowing us to use their original notes as the basis for this document.

At the end of your year, we would appreciate any updates, additions and observations which you think may help the next Gold Medal Quartet, please contact the BABS Music Services Director with your thoughts.

email: [musicservicesdirector@singbarbershop.com](mailto:musicservicesdirector@singbarbershop.com)

## ***Contest DVDs***

The contest performance DVDs that you receive from the Judges, are for personal use and educational purposes. These should not be placed on YouTube nor other public sites.

There are significant copyright issues and any quartet that makes their convention performance available on such sites is strongly advised to ensure that they have the necessary permissions. This is a matter for your quartet, not BABS. Breaches of copyright can attract financial penalties and it is important that the implications of such public circulation is understood.

## ***An Important Job***

Remember, there will be many members who will not have been at Convention to see you win. Make sure that as many people as possible know of you, they may just like to have you on their show.

Provide a suitable photograph and article covering your success to Harmony Express email: [news@newharmonyexpress.co.uk](mailto:news@newharmonyexpress.co.uk) as soon as possible. This publication is sent out to all BABS members, to non-barbershop organisations in the UK and to barbershoppers all over the world. An online version is also available to view - so to promote yourselves - get writing!

## ***And then?***

You may be wondering what happens now. The answer is Nothing - At least not immediately! You may even experience some feelings of anti-climax, for the world won't change, nor will the traffic stop and apart from congratulatory calls from friends and the thrill of wearing that purple ribboned medal non-stop. Everything will carry on as normal, just as if you hadn't achieved your lifetime's barbershop ambition.

'Time' is what prevents everything from happening at once. Accordingly, the day that you start to 'come down to earth' will probably coincide with the first sign that someone on this planet other than your immediate family is aware that you're the new 'British Quartet Champs'.

## Quartet Management

You won't need any advice from us on time management but suffice to say that your championship year should not be treated with any less importance than an average business strategy. For example, make sure that your contact man really does have the time for managing the coming year!

Believe us, unless you've already done it, you will have no concept of the potential volume of administration involved, particularly if you wish to adhere to all the courtesies and niceties which should be seen by others as 'conduct becoming'.

With regard to the quartet's financial management, and accepting that you will already have existing disciplines in place, keeping in mind that you may wish to embark upon the recording and release of your first CD, to split the finance from general administration in an effort to spread the workload is not a clever idea as the two functions are inextricably linked.

You can realistically expect a turnover of £5,000 or more in the first 12 months from CD sales, bookings etc. It follows that any previous rather casual money-box approach to financial control may need to be structured more formally if only to prepare for possible questions from the Inland Revenue in the future.

## Voice Care

No doubt you are all experienced singers who have rehearsed twice a week via quartet and chorus for years and experienced no adverse effects on your voice production.

It does well to remember however, that in the coming year, you will perform and rehearse more frequently than you could ever have imagined and you will, oh yes you will, experience a few problems in achieving continuity of voice quality.

Just realise you're not Supermen! And look after yourselves.

## Marketing

If you've not got a web site, then arrange to get one organised. Purchasing a Domain Name is fairly simple. If you already have a site, make sure it is kept up to date and is featured on the BABS web site and all your documentation.

You need to prepare a proper bio of the quartet and its members for PR purposes, for show bookings and programmes.

If you feel that you have the time to keep them fresh and active, then get the quartet up on Facebook and maybe set up a Twitter account. However, you do need to do this regularly with commitment.

You would be well advised to arrange for some good quality photographs of the quartet in a couple of suitable poses (maybe one formal - one casual) to satisfy the many requests you will receive for both barbershop and non-barbershop audiences. Ensure you get copyright agreement and usage rights from the photographer.

## Show Fees

Far be it for us to offer advice to you on the fees you apply for your services. Nevertheless, there is a long held view which you should try to uphold, that whilst everyone accepts the need for fund raising, you should endeavour to cost yourselves in a reasonable fashion when performing to barbershop audiences.

Private functions on the other hand are fair game. If you ask and someone accepts then everybody's happy.

Ever mindful of the fact that every booking has a cost, (petrol - food - hotel?), you should guard against the financially negative booking. Just imagine if each of you had a £20 un-recovered cost for a booking, (which is not difficult), that's an £80 loss. Do 5 barbershop bookings in a year and that equates to £400 loss. It is suggested that you agree an appearance fee, plus reasonable expenses.

As far as your official functions are concerned, such as Prelims and Convention, a certain level of expense will be reimbursed by BABS. You should discuss this with the relevant personnel prior to each event.

## ***BABS Commitments***

Don't expect to be given too much warning regarding specific responsibilities. As BABS endeavours to expand the reputation and awareness of barbershop harmony, as part of its Strategy for Growth and Development, you may be asked to represent BABS through the media or at specific events. Help with expenses will be made on these occasions.

In addition, as well as taking part in sessions at Harmony College, you will be expected to help with mike-warming and cooling spots at Prelims.

At your farewell UK convention, you will probably be asked to appear on one or two of the shows and may also be asked to mike-warm in the semi-finals but (for obvious reasons) will be expected to mike-cool the finals.

## ***Releasing a CD***

The decision to produce a CD is the natural evolution of your success and there can be no better way to create a lasting memory of your work. But it doesn't happen by itself, so be sure of what you all want to do and plan each part of the process very carefully.

Retain maximum control over the final outcome and you must be clear in your minds as to what you are trying to achieve, both musically and aesthetically, otherwise you will merely create a compromise between the styles of various opinions.

When costing, remember to allow for the MCPS charges (Mechanical Copyright Protection Society) which will depend on quantities/tracks etc. But as a guide this will cost approx. £300 for an initial order of 500 CDs. You are also allowed, legally, a 'reasonable' quantity, free of MCPS charges, for promotional use.

Once the CD is produced, the BABS Harmony Store will be happy to promote and display the item in the store. Finally, as with any other product, your potential customers won't buy it if they don't know it exists and that's where your work really starts!



## *International Convention*

Soon after winning you will be contacted by the BABS Music Services Director who will check on your willingness to represent BABS at the International Convention. He will also need full details of the quartet and which one of you will be the contact man for communications with the USA both for the Contest and for any shows that you may take part in.

Final confirmation from the Barbershop Harmony Society Board, will not be available until the end of the year. However if all the qualifying conditions have been met it is almost a given that an invitation will be received and you will have the opportunity to represent BABS at International Convention next year.

But one of your first concerns will be 'how much will BABS contribute to our expenses?'. The BABS Board of Directors and Trustees naturally retain some discretion in the allocation of funds but as a guide, you will receive a £2,500 grant from BABS Harmony Foundation to help defray some of the costs of the trip.

Despite this generous donation and dependent on any holiday intentions which you may wish to tag onto the convention, this will involve considerable cost and therefore, fund raising activities should be considered earlier rather than later.

Remember, this will be the fastest 12 months in your life, so do it now! Or you'll be buying Christmas presents before you can raise an eyebrow, let alone a fund!

Apart from the convention itself, the World Harmony Council usually puts on a major Jamboree Show as a charity event featuring some big names together with lots of non-American contestants/visitors. Inclusion to this event is by invitation only and depending on the scores in the contest, BABS may fund a second quartet who would also be entitled to request an invite to perform in the Jamboree.

You would be well advised to contact last years Gold Medal Quartet to get the most recent information on International, to prepare you for what to expect.

If you have any questions at all please contact the BABS Music Services Director; [musicservicesdirector@singbarbershop.com](mailto:musicservicesdirector@singbarbershop.com)



## Scrapbook

One of the most useful pieces of advice is too obvious for words, because we all like to keep mementos of an occasion, but do work on your scrapbook right from the start. Remember, when you get home from convention, you're already too late to collect the brochure you left in the changing room, or the poster you forgot to 'borrow' from the wall! And you'll be surprised just how much material you'll collect.

## Quartet Development

Finally - we would merely suggest that, instead of regarding your gold medals as the end of your efforts, treat them as the beginning of a new journey of personal development for the quartet.

Your objective should clearly be to develop into a better all round 'provider of entertainment' at the end of your championship year, than you were when you became the British Champions.

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