



The MVEer Monthly

September, 2016

The Road to District!

Mon. Sept 6 – Labor Day

Mon. Sep 12 - 7:15pm

Tues. Sep 13 - 7pm

Mon. Sep 19 - 7:15pm

Mon. Sep 26 - 7:15pm

Mon. Oct 3 - 7:15pm

Mon. Oct 10 - 7:15pm

Tue. Oct 11 - 7:00pm

Mon. Oct 17 - 7:15pm

Sat. Oct 22 - 8:00am

No practice

REHEARSAL

Board Meeting

**REHEARSAL & GUEST
Night**

REHEARSAL

REHEARSAL

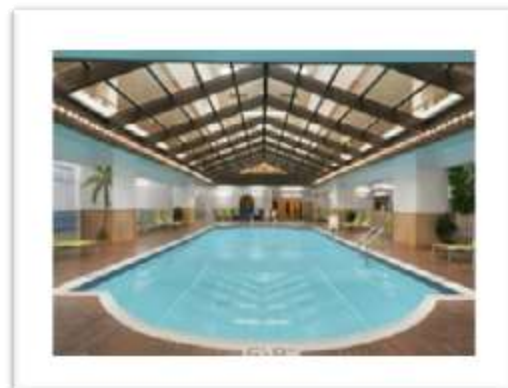
REHEARSAL

Board Meeting

REHEARSAL

LOL District Contest

2016 Fall Convention & District Contests, Appleton, WI, **October 21 - 23, 2016**
Convention Hotel, the Radisson Paper Valley Hotel (photos below), which is right
across the street from the venue at the Fox Cities Performing Arts Center (photos
on next page.



The Fox Cities Performing Arts Center:



What is "The New Performance Category"? One Judge's Take

By Mike Lietke

In late July, the Barbershop Harmony Society invited me to the first ever **Performance Category Judging School** in Nashville. As a then-current *Presentation* Judge, I had been preparing for months – yet many of us had the same questions you do as to what exactly is this Performance thing, and how is it different than Presentation.

Our 3 assignments to prep for category school:

1. Watch a Ted Talk discussion by Social Psychologist **Dr. Amy Cuddy**. It dealt in the involuntary changes in the body based on a person's body language and how that applied to their performance in social interactions such as a job interview (the link to this talk is near the end of this article).
2. Read "Acting Songs" by David Brunetti
3. Write a short essay containing three things that are different between the **Performance Category** and the **Presentation category**.

The first two assignments were easy. The third was an epic fail. There are documents online at <http://www.barbershop.org/competitions/contest-judging-system/> known as Category Descriptions. I grabbed my trusty version of the **Presentation Category** that was used up to that point as well as the proposed category description for the **Performance Category** and contrasted them side by side....

...And I came up sorely wanting. Only two larger differences in the descriptions themselves, but even they were not tectonic shifts.



I asked some mentors on the **Performance Board of Review** and they said not to be concerned as the gist will not be found in the exegesis of *Hammurabic code*. We are still in the business of ascertaining the entertainment value of a performance, and we have been at times over-valuing what we were used to seeing rather than challenging our performers to remove affectations that get in the way of their communications.

It comes down to this: *know* what you are communicating and *tell* us your story.

Anything that is not serving the story needs to go away. It is extraneous to the message. Whether it be a quartet singer using meaningless stock motion; or some performers merely coasting along on the wave of great singing but not communicating something of themselves; or a chorus director making the story about himself rather than the song....

...whether it is a lack of appropriate communication with the body; or conversely somebody pinning their hands to their sides afraid to move: things that bring on the appearance of affectation will not be considered as entertaining as those things that are organic and "real."

Movement is not evil. Movement without meaning is.

Stillness is not bad. Stillness without meaning is.

Many would like a laundry list of things you "can't do" anymore, but there is no such list. Nor is there a list of things that are looked upon favorably. If gesture or inflection or dynamic change comes from an authentic place of needing to communicate the story, it is to be celebrated. If not, it needs to be examined and changed.



Much more will be written and discussed about this, and I am certain this creates more great questions that you all have. Some great additional material is included below to help bring this home.

For Dr. Amy Cuddy's Ted Talk go to:

https://www.ted.com/talks/amy_cuddy_your_body_language_shapes_who_you_are?language=en#t-347148

Kevin Keller wrote a great article in the November 2015 Harmonizer and you can see it online here <http://www.barbershop.org/performancecategorydiscussion/> . You may also Google it.

And a tremendous class from **Harmony University** a few weeks ago that not only discusses Performance as a category, but includes great examples:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EGIVm4a1A5g>

Recent Visitors to the MVE



During Wisconsin State Fair, we had four visitors from the **Kids From Wisconsin** (<http://www.kidsfromwisconsin.org/>) as well as one of our music arrangers on our Good Times Medley.

From left to right, first is **Patrick McAlexander**, who is listed on **our Good Times Medley** as *arranged by Patrick McAlexander for the Midwest Vocal Express*. Patrick is a recent graduate of Vanderbilt University in Nashville and is now a EDI Engineer at <https://www.glassdoor.com/Photos/Epic-Systems-Corporation-Wisconsin-Office-Photos-E35163.htm> in Madison, Wisconsin (well, actually Verona, Wisconsin).

Attending our practices twice is keyboardist **Isaac Cuellar**, from Antigo, a member of the Kids from Wisconsin. Not pictured here, but Isaac came with lead singer **Grace**



Bobbler from Mequon on his second visit.

Third is **Brennon Brown** also from Antigo. Brennon is a singer (bass) and dancer, but this year is an Alternate. He handed out programs and sold "Sing" buttons at their shows (2 per day throughout State Fair days).

Next is **Zoe Gatz** from Elkhorn. Zoe is also a singer and dancer alternate this year.

Finally on the far right is **Doug Benishek** on drums. Doug is also from Antigo.

The Midwest Vocal Express has had some history with the **Kids from Wisconsin** and similar groups. Our lead **Matt McClelland** often assists us in choreography. He is an alumnus from a comparable group, **Up with People** from around the world. A few years ago, baritone **Aaron Davis** also was in Kids from Wisconsin.

