



Interview with New Member Darius Sander

MVEer asks: Darius, we all loved your **Cudahy High School** quartet, **The Degrees**, on the Spring Show in May this year. Now, you've mastered the set for our October District contest as a bari. We are so pleased you are our newest member. What is your musical background, what are your college plans, and weren't you a tenor in **The Degrees**?

Darius replies: I've been in two musicals in high school. I've done another community musical which was in West Allis. I participated in WSMA (*Wisconsin School Music*

Association) since my sophomore year of high school until my senior year, and I made it to state every year.

MVEer asks: Besides your music, do you have other hobbies or interests?

Darius replies: I'm also a DJ. I'd consider myself to be very tech savvy and also financially. I like to interact and integrate electronics in my everyday life.

MVEer asks: Darius, tell us a bit more about your family and where you work?

Darius replies: I have a lesbian mother whom I love very much, and my father passed away about 3 Christmases ago. I currently work at Wal-Mart and have been for almost a month and I'm already considering quitting!

MVEer says: Darius, we love your humor and good-natured spirit. You make our chorus better.



The Degrees: L to R:
Darius Sander, Mark Bitzan, Sean Stillman, Brett Gish.

Darius concludes: I'd also like to thank my teacher **Brent Johnston** and my mentor **Brian Plehn**. I really have grown to love this chorus and it's held me sane. MVE has done nothing but inspired me to be a better musician and has given me the motivation (especially my mentor **Brian Plehn**) to strive only for greatness musically. Thanks for the warm welcome!

We ARE the Story – **Randy Will**, MVE VP
of Marketing

Undoubtedly, you all have taken note of our new Logo Banner up front during recent rehearsals.

Further, you've hopefully also noticed – or if you're an MVE vet, have once again seen – our famous Tag Line, "**Storytelling Through Song.**"



Where did this come from, you ask? And...what does it really mean to the MVE, and to each member?

As with many MVE traditions, the inspiration for this self-descriptive phrase originated with our legendary director, **Russ Foris**, as recounted by **Mike Lietke**:

*"Russ preached that **each individual performer had to be the musician and own the music.** From that came the much-lampooned, but beloved revolutionary concept of seeing how much of high-A performances we could deliver with zero or minimal direction.*

*...His firm and benevolent structure [guided] us to make sure we served the music first. I know there are other Pteam members who can claim **ultimately, we discovered our best performance style was one that told honest stories to the audience - often times humorous - but always with heart and truth.**"*

Russ' philosophy that each member "own the music" - also phrased "Ya gotta walk & chew gum at the same time!" (envision mustache wiggle here) - inspired the marketing team to adopt our Tag Line some ten years ago – not because it's a "best practice" or "cool," *but because it is who we are and what we do.*

This phrase remains our inspiration and goal for every member even now. Josh & the P-Team continually coach us to adopt our "inner story," which we are then encouraged to exhibit through our singing and performance.

Really – how great is it to break out of your daily grind, and express your innermost self through our own special art form? That's the best part of being in the MVE!

Personal testimonial: In my 16-year tenure with this august group, without fail, an audience member from one of our shows has approached me afterward and commented, "Man, you guys sure look like you're having fun up there!" That is our reputation, our hallmark, our brand (you're welcome Josh).

Each member's personal engagement in their performance matters! So, let's have fun up there - and continue to build on our history-making reputation as ***Storytellers Through Song!***

Multiple October Fundraisers: Texas Roadhouse on Monday, October 27, Chili's, and Scrip! – Jake Umhoefer



The Monday after our District Contest (October 27) there is no chorus practice but there is a fundraiser eat-out at the **Texas Roadhouse** in New Berlin (15425 Rock Ridge Rd, New Berlin, WI 53151 Ph:(262) 784-7427 Hours: 4:00 pm – 10:00 pm)

Also, beginning October 1 and ongoing through the end of the year we are set up with several local **Chili's Grill & Bar** locations for fundraising. This means if you want to go on a random Friday for lunch, or Sunday afternoon, or Saturday night -- go for it! They will all qualify. During this whole time, we will get a 15% kickback on all food and alcohol sales. We will also have an official gathering at the West Milwaukee location south of Miller Park on **November 15th**.



A Service of Great Lakes Scrip Center®
opportunities in chorus.

And be sure to read the information in my emails on shopping with **scrip** to have rebates from thousands of merchants. I will be talking more about these

October 2014

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|---------|--|---------|---------------------------------|-----|--|---|
| Sept 28 | Sept 29 7pm Regular Rehearsal 6:15 Early Birds | Sept 30 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5 | 6 7pm Regular Rehearsal | 7 | 8 6:30pm Board Meeting | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| 12 | 13 7pm Renée Porzel Coaching | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| 19 | 20 7pm Family & Friends Contest Performance | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24  | 25 Land O' Lakes District Contest |
| 26 | 27 No Regular Practice, but eat out at:  | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | Nov 1 |