

The BARBERSHOP TAG!!

Arranging for Fun and Creativity

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WHERE TO BEGIN

“He who sit on the piano bench longest becomes finest arranger.”

Confucius/Nancy Bergman

- Have a desire to create, to experiment, to learn
- Have some musical knowledge, BBS knowledge, a good ear and a good eye.
- Know the definition of and the purpose of a barbershop tag. A TAG is an ending section, an embellishment that is added to the song and gives it a feeling of closure. It may be passionate, soft, dynamic, may contain the climax of the song, or the second climax.
- A tag should flow seamlessly from the song. Some find the tag to be the most compelling section of a barbershop song. The audience LOVES BBS tags.
- Have the desire to learn and follow basic Barbershop arranging tenets
 - Appropriate song or tag
 - Key selection – transpose melody and chord symbols to your selected key
 - Eleven basic BBS chords. There are two others frequently used – know them
 - Chord voicing, how to stack a chord, and voice leading
 - Embellishments
 - Musical Form - 4-8 bars – or longer!
- Know the order of arranging – where to begin, how to proceed
 - Select your song/tag – something not too difficult
 - Get the sheet music – use the correct melody, lyrics, and chord structure
 - Determine the key – sometimes different than the key of sheet music
 - Write in the chord names from the sheet music. These may need transposing, too. Write in the chords for the first line, or musical phrase
 - Get ready to arrange in BBS style:
 - Write the melody notes in first – could be a lead or tenor melody depending on tag. For a song, it would be the lead line. Do a musical phrase at a time

- Enter the basic bass downbeat notes – mostly the root. Look at the chord symbols for this. Realize that in the end, the bass may be on the fifth, not the root in major keys/chords and the third in minor keys/chords. Pencil in the bare skeleton of the bass lines, the downbeat, then using the information on chord voicing (The Eleven Chords) proceed with the rest of the measure
- Move to the tenor, as there will be some easy harmonization here. But, remember, tenors do not always have to change notes – they may be best going straight across
- Baritone – fill in the missing notes – the fillers
- Arrange a section at a time. When playing and listening for singability and accuracy, always start at the beginning to hear the flow of each voice. If you hear something that sticks out – look at it again.

AND NOW – the fun has just begun as there will be a lot of adjustments! Have an eraser close by.

- Look at your music vertically and horizontally
 - Vertically, the four notes in the chord should line up neatly. Stack the chord. Is it spelled correctly? Are there wrong notes in the chord?
 - Horizontally, each part should be logical and singable. If there are horrific jumps, awkward intervals, change your arrangement so each voice has a reasonable, simple line to sing. Remember the voice ranges of each part.
- Add Embellishments - Be true to the composer's original chord choices and then – embellish

Additional Information:

Nancy Bergman – Are You an Aspiring Arranger?

Nancy Bergman – The Eleven Chords

Nancy Bergman – Make Your Manuscript Meaningful!

ARE YOU AN ASPIRING ARRANGER? Self Evaluation

Circle those answers that apply.

- 1) **I have an ear for harmony.**
Only one ear. Two ears. It hurts when it's wrong. What's harmony?
- 2) **I've got rhythm.**
I'm a footpatter. I should've been a drummer. I have two left feet. I think I've heard that song...
- 3) **I listen to barbershop tapes/CD's.**
Occasionally. Often. I'm an addict.
- 4) **I can hardly wait for the next quartet/chorus rehearsal.**
The music goes thru my head, over and over..... I think about it occasionally between rehearsals. OH..... it's tonight?
- 5) **I like crossword puzzles.**
I enjoy the challenge of problem-solving. Once in a while. I'm too impatient for games.
- 6) **I read music.**
Sort of One clef Two clefs Pretty good Excellent What's a clef?
- 7) **I have keyboard skills.**
One finger One hand Two hands No hands
- 8) **I have studied music theory.**
Extensive Some A little None I was vaccinated but it didn't take.
- 9) **I have determination.**
I WILL. I might if it's not too hard. I dunno - I'm not very talented.
- 10) **I can handle criticism.**
No problem. Please be more tactful about my work. But I LIKE it that way.....
- 11) **I'd like to learn to arrange because:**
There are songs my qtte/chorus would like to sing.

I would enjoy learning more about our music.

I think I may be able to do it.

I want to be rich. I want to be famous.

THE ELEVEN CHORDS

MAJOR FAMILY

MAJOR TRIAD *

1, 3, 5 of the scale. A 3-note chord. Almost always doubles the root. Double the 5th when required for range or voice-leading; never on sustained chord. NEVER double the 3rd.

BARBERSHOP SEVENTH *

1, 3, 5, 7b - a 4-note chord. Never double anything.

MAJOR SIXTH

1, 3, 5, 6 - a 4-note chord. Never double anything.

MAJOR SEVENTH

1, 3, 5, 7 - a 4-note chord. Never double anything. AVOID when possible.

MAJOR NINTH

1, 3, 5, 9 - a 4-note chord. Never double anything.

NINTH CHORD

1, 3, 5, 7b, 9 - a 5-note chord. Eliminate the root (1). Occasionally used with the 5th omitted, but has an "unbarbershop" sound.

MINOR FAMILY

MINOR TRIAD

1, 3b, 5 - a 3-note chord. Double anything! (doubled 5th is weaker)

MINOR SIXTH

1, 3b, 5, 6 - a 4-note chord. Never double anything.

MINOR SEVENTH

1, 3b, 5, 7b - a 4-note chord. Never double anything.

SYMMETRICAL

DIMINISHED SEVENTH

1, 3b, 5b, 7bb - a 4-note chord. Never double anything.

AUGMENTED TRIAD

1, 3, 5# - a 3-note chord. Double one - preferably the root.

* MEAT & POTATOES OF BARBERSHOP

MAKE YOUR MANUSCRIPT MEANINGFUL!!

1. Use manuscript paper designed for our kind of music. Packages are available from Sweet Adelines sales for a reasonable price. We write the LEAD and TENOR on the treble clef. BARITONE and BASS are written on the bass clef ONE OCTAVE LOWER THAN SUNG. (This keeps them out of the space where the words go!)

Barbershop arrangement for male voices are written with the LEAD and TENOR on the treble clef one octave HIGHER than sung; BARI and BASS are written on the bass clef exactly as sung.

2. For the final copy of your arrangement, use a good black pen for easy reading and clear reproduction. You will want to learn to write computer manuscripts eventually, but this is not a necessity ... especially in the beginning. That is another complete learning experience.

3. The KEY signature appears at the beginning of each line. The TIME signature follows the key signature on the FIRST line only.

4. Keep your parts vertically aligned – straight up and down in the same chord. Lyrics should appear under the appropriate notes.

5. Write the same number of beats in each measure. All measures have the **same** number of beats UNLESS the time signature indicates a change.

6. Clearly mark parts of the arrangement, such as INTRO, VERSE, CHORUS, TAG, etc.

7. Include the TITLE and PAGE NUMBER on each page. Copyright information goes on the first page only, at the bottom. Name of composer(s) and arranger should appear below the TITLE of the song as a part of the heading.

8. Make every effort to use correct chord spelling, on a CHORD by CHORD basis. For instance, there isn't an A-flat in an E-major triad (E-G#-B).

9. When melody temporarily leaves the LEAD part, use a dotted line to follow it to the new melody part. Be sure to indicate the melody return in the same way.

10. When one voice holds a note and the other voices are singing lyrics, be sure to write the words beside each part that is to sing them.

11. A slur is used in vocal music when the same word or syllable is sung for two or more notes. Think of it as a "tie", since we do not "slur" – hopefully!

12. Clearly mark key and time signature changes with a double bar. If you choose to use a repeat, be sure it is correctly indicated in all the necessary places.

13. Include as much interpretive information as is practical in order to assist the singer.