

Minneapolis Commodores CHORD-INATOR



OFFICIAL CHAPTER BULLETIN
"YOU BELONG HERE"

April, 2025

VOLUME 81, #2



TONY MASON

Mason's Musings FROM OUR PRESIDENT



From the "Things Not To Admit In Writing" Department: When I was much younger I thought that Ben Franklin literally discovered electricity (Spoiler alert: He didn't). I pictured him flying a kite, getting shocked, and then using that experience as a proof of concept to create the force that now powers every aspect of our modern life.

I thought that Volta and Faraday and Edison and so many others took Ben Franklin's "discovery" and just made it better. In my kid brain, Franklin was to electricity as Otto and Benz to Engines, Wozniak and Jobs to Apples, or Rockefeller and Carnegie to Monopolies.

Once I realized that there are vast differences between creation, invention, and harnessing, I got smarter.

Similarly, I used to think that the world must have been pretty quiet before the invention of recording equipment. As if the only music that existed before the world became modern and used electricity to record notes was the music of king's courts, monasteries, or orchestra halls.

Once I realized that music isn't solely modern-man made and isn't the domain of the few, but is a universal and primal force as powerful as fire, water, and electricity, I got smarter.

You know how I feel about this chorus and community. Being with you is (almost) all that I need to make me happy. And I know for sure that what we do is good for hearts and souls.

What I sometimes forget? When we raise voices together (or at least mostly together, most nights) we tap into this primal power. We harness song like Franklin harnessed electricity. And we experience a force that almost every human who has ever lived has shared.

At the risk of over-quoting Pete Seeger, may I quote him again? He captures what's at stake for those not actively "music-ing" who are slowly losing this shared experience:

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Chapter Officers

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Harly Lentz
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Emeritus Director	Paul Wigley

Section Leaders

Tenor Section Lead	Steve Grady
Lead Section Lead	Jamye Casperson
Bari Section Lead	Paul W / TJ Striblen
Bass Section Lead	Dave Casperson

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"Once upon a time, wasn't singing a part of everyday life as much as talking, physical exercise, and religion? Our distant ancestors, wherever they were in this world, sang while pounding grain, paddling canoes, or walking long journeys. Can we begin to make our lives once more all of a piece? Finding the right songs and singing them over and over is a way to start.

And when one person taps out a beat, while another leads into the melody, or when three people discover a harmony they never knew existed, or a crowd joins in on a chorus as though to raise the ceiling a few feet higher, then they also know there is hope for the world."

We come together. We harness power. We sing! There is hope for the world. It's GREAT to be a Commodore.

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Thanks for the Pictures In This Issue

*Jamye Casperson
Kari Johnson (Flagstone)
Sarah Wigley*



Markin' Time



The CHORD-INATOR is a bulletin that exists to record the events and history of the Minneapolis Chapter of the Barbershop Harmony Society. Given that it is not published daily, weekly, or even monthly, it will always be something that “looks back”. In this day of social media and instant news that makes it a bit of an anachronism. However, recognizing that fact and being mindful of what the CHORD is and what it isn't, provides us with an opportunity to keep our history alive and vibrant. We owe as much to those who left some rather giant footsteps for us to follow and to the organization we are all privileged to be members of.

The Commodores have started something new that enhances both our love of performing and giving back to the community. In addition to our regular summer schedule of park concerts that we do around the metro, we have added quarterly performances in Senior Living communities. Hmm, more performing and less rehearsing sounds like a winning combination to me. You can read about our first event in Eden Prairie starting on the next page as chronicled by our historian, **Dick Riemenschneider**.

Comments and Feedback



We always appreciate those readers who take the time to send in their feedback and comments about the CHORD-INATOR. Constructive criticism is always welcome:

- 1) A little tone deaf if you ask me. *L. Beethoven*
 - 2) I'm glad to see that no trees were harmed in producing this journal. *J. Muir*
 - 3) Relatively incomprehensible. *A Einstein*
 - 4) This Bulletin almost makes me regret the invention of moveable type. *J. Gutenberg*
 - 5) I can't tell you how much I like this journal. *C. Dickens*
 - 6) Sure to be a big hit at the Saint Helena Newsstand. *N. Bonaparte*
-



Commodores Perform at Flagstone Senior Living

A good time was had by all as the Commodores performed at Flagstone Senior Living in Eden Prairie on Tuesday, March 4. When the show started at 7:00 PM the snow also picked that time to begin to fall in earnest. Thirty Commodores were on stage and about one hundred residents of the facility were on hand for the event, as well as an unknown number of residents that watched on the in-house live stream. The low attendance by the Commodores was because of predicted snowfall and the associated bad driving.

The show started with MCX singing three numbers. When MCX was done the Commodores assumed their riser positions and MCX sang the intro to, "As Long As I'm Singin'", with both groups continuing the song at the first chorus. All told the Commodores sang 8 songs with chapter quartets Swipe, BOMP, Cinematix, and Ear Doctors adding to the show with **Ben Wangaard** standing in for bass **Morgan Baumbach** for Ear Doctors.

According to Commodores President **Tony Mason** commenting about the show: *"It wasn't precision perfect, but we gave the audience one of the most energetic, fun shows I can remember. After the show there were many comments, two in particular that I'm still smiling about:"*

- *"You guys know how to put on a SHOW!"*
- *"The music was great, but the best part? It was clear that each of you love this, and love singing with each other"*

Tony continued, *"That last one - that's what makes it GREAT TO BE A COMMODORE!"*

A Special Visitor

The Commodores welcomed a very special visitor to our regular Tuesday rehearsal on March 11 when longtime member, **Al Matchinsky** stopped by to brighten our day. It was truly great to see him.

Flagstone, Eden Prairie



The Minneapolis Commodores



SWYPE



MCX



The Ear Doctors and Just "One" More



Harvey Weiss and Buzz



Our esteemed Emcee Blake Wanger, never too far away from a microphone, garners some important advice from a fan.

Valentines Quartets - 2025



Park-Nicollet Health in Burnsville -
Mark Bloomquist, Dave Wall,
Bill Walkowski, and Oliver Nicholson

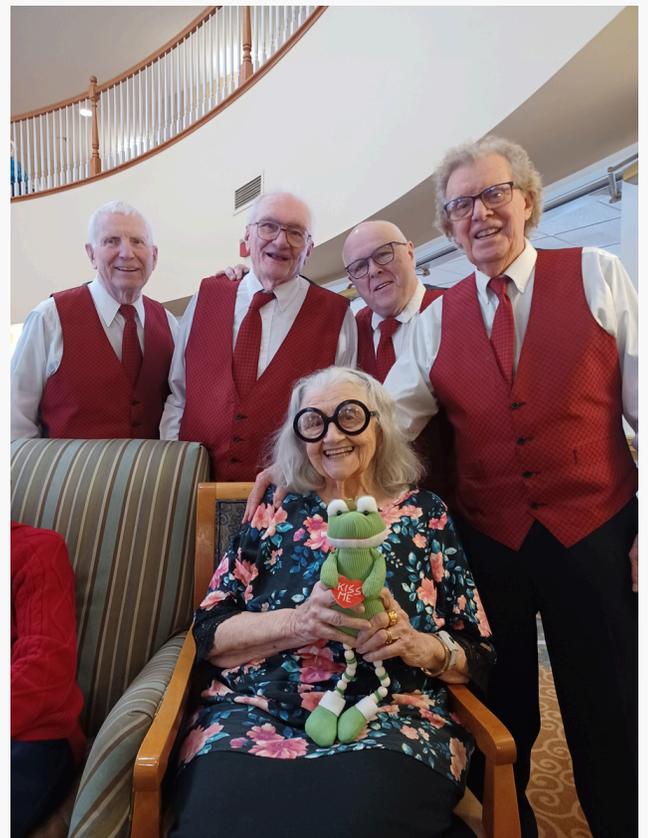


Allegra Printing

The Nut Chairman Delivers



Dan Williams, presents a check for \$10,000 representing the proceeds from the Commodores Annual Nut Sale, to President Tony Mason and Treasurer Andy Richards.



John Lloyd, Ken Glover, Don Bartels,
Harvey Weiss and his Aunt Doris

(Reprinted with permission, University of Minnesota Foundation))

Musical legacy

With musical theater at the heart of her own family, Sarah Wigley wants to help more U of M students study voice

By Kim Kiser

In November, Sarah Wigley closed *Oklahoma* at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign's Lyric Theatre. The production, which had been in rehearsal since September, featured her voice students along with dance and theater students.

Directing the musical also was an example of how her life has come full circle.

"Our whole family has done musical theater together since I was young," says Wigley, a clinical associate professor/contemporary voice specialist in the U of I's School of Music and resident director of the lyric theatre program.

Her father, Paul Wigley, a U of M alumnus, works with community theater companies and was choral director at Lakeville North High School. Her mother, Rebecca Wigley, also a U of M graduate, has been in community theater productions. In 1998, Paul directed a production of *Oklahoma* that featured Rebecca as Aunt Eller and Sarah, their only child, as Ado Annie.

"They loved musicals. I grew up watching the VHS tapes of *Carousel*, *The King and I*, and *Gypsy*," Sarah Wigley says. Her parents also took her to Minneapolis to see productions on stage.

In 2005, Sarah Wigley earned her undergraduate degree in voice performance from the University of Minnesota. She went on to work with the Minnesota Opera, Guthrie Theater, Minnesota Centennial Showboat, Skylark Opera Theatre, and Mystery Café.

"I was getting good professional work for being 21 or 22," she says.

But she also knew she wanted to do more.

(continued on page 8)



After earning her master's degree from Colorado State University, she was tapped for a musical theater professor position at the University of Northern Colorado.

Five years later, she was recruited by the University of Illinois, which was creating a new curriculum—a bachelor of musical arts in Lyric Theatre. She was hired as a vocal specialist and has been there for 11 years.

A teacher's challenge

Sarah Wigley says the best thing about her work is the students. It's also the most difficult. One reason: their concerns about the cost of attending college.

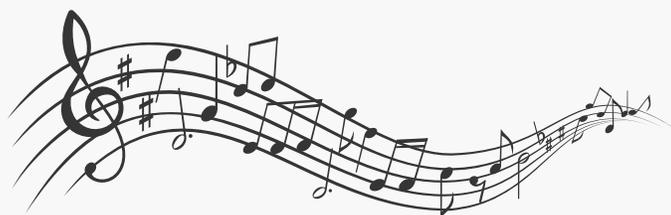
"I have many discussions with students and prospective students," she says. "The ability to give a scholarship makes or breaks them coming to our school. I see it happening every year."

She also remembers how important a four-year scholarship was to her when she was an undergraduate.

"It was a big deal," she says. "Now that I'm a professor, I realize how hard it is to get a scholarship based on talent."

For that reason, Sarah Wigley is using her inheritance from her uncle, Owen Wigley, '71, to make a gift in her estate plan that will establish the Wigley Family Music Scholarship in the College of Liberal Arts at the U of M.

"This is about allowing students to choose the school they want," she says. "It shouldn't be out of their reach."



Jim Richards Memorial Chord Candy # 151



Paul Paddock

'Who doesn't love some good **Elton John** in their lives? Here's a nice "love tag" based on his more intimate hit 'Your Song', which was his first international Top 10 chart single. The song was first released by Three Dog Night in 1970. John was an opening act for the band at the time and allowed them to record it, but they wouldn't release it as a single because they wanted John to have a go with it.

John's version was recorded at Trident Studios in London in January 1970 and appeared in April as the first cut on his self-titled second studio album. In 1998, "Your Song" was inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame and in 2017 was voted by the British public as The Nation's Favorite Elton John Song in a UK-wide poll for ITV.



Backup singers, take it easy under the melody, make it rich and sweet. The only non-rooted chord is the sultry inverted Gb9 with the 5th omitted in the 3rd measure. Range is nice and comfortable for all ranges, spanning from Gb in the basses to middle F for the leads and yes leads do cross over the tenors. You might even decide to take some liberties with the rhythm, since the melody is yours! Sing it in tempo or rubato. Enjoy!

Your Song

Song by Elton John
arranged by Paul Paddock

hoo My gift is my song and this one's for you.
you.



The Camera

(by Doug Johnson)



Technology is all around us, from our computers and TVs to car accessories and even signs on the highway. We might not always be thrilled about it, but it's here to stay. So, buckle up, because I'm here to help you understand the latest tech and how it can make your singing even better.

I'll cover a bunch of topics and break them down into easy-to-understand pieces. If you have any questions, just shoot me an email and I'll get back to you ASAP. If you don't have my email, you can also reach out to me directly.

One of the best ways to improve your singing is to record yourself and listen back. There are lots of apps that can help you with this, but one often overlooked tool is the CAMERA APP on your phone. (If you still use a flip phone, landline, or write letters, you can skip this section.)

We've all seen funny and annoying videos on social media, like dogs in the snow or babies stealing their mom's phone. How to cook a chicken dumpling in solar panel, or where to buy a computer for \$4.99 (stay away from that one.) But we rarely think of using our own phone's camera to help us sing. Surprisingly, the camera is a great tool for improving our singing skills.

Most of us know how to take selfies and videos on our phones, so we don't need to learn a new skill. All we need to do is take a selfie video while we're practicing.

The camera can help us with our posture and alignment, our facial expressions, our breath control, and find places where we tense up while singing.

The camera can also help us find vocal problems. Listening to the audio we can identify pitch problems, intonation issues, and other things that affect our voices. It's like having a secret singing coach in our pockets!

The camera is the coolest part of the phone. It's always there, easy to find, and the best part is, it's free!

(Continued on Page 11)

Here are some tips on using the camera:

1. ****Take a selfie video:**** Just take a regular selfie video while you're singing.
2. ****Watch it back:**** Watch the video back on your phone to see how you're doing.
3. ****Affirm and adjust:**** If you notice anything that's really great or needs tweaking, do it again.
4. ****Use it regularly:**** The more you use it, the more you'll find it useful.

- Be consistent! Use it every time you practice or rehearse. Set it up, turn it on, and sing. If you're in chorus rehearsal and it's allowed, take a selfie video during a challenging song or a confident song. Aim for at least 3-10 minutes of video during your practice sessions.

- Take a break and come back later. You can watch the video right away, but save it and review it later with fresh eyes. Wait an hour or even a day before watching it again.

- Focus on improvement, not perfection. Find something positive to say. If we only focus on what we perceive as "wrong" or "not perfect," we'll quickly discourage ourselves from using the camera or any recording device. Start by focusing on the things that have improved, look good, or sound good. If you liked your smile, if you heard a ringing vowel, if you breathed in just the right place, get out the camera and do it again to reinforce it. If you had a great hair day, save that frame and share it on social media. Soon you'll find yourself looking forward to watching the videos to see just how much you've improved and how your skills are getting better. You'll find some flubs and mistakes along the way as well. We all have bad days.

Remember, the reason we use tools is because it makes our life easier. The camera is a neglected tool that should be used more often.



*I hate it when I'm
singing a song and the
artist gets the words
all wrong*

Bill Albrecht's Craft Corner

Bill Albrecht, an accomplished Barbershop director, has graciously started to share some of his knowledge during our Tuesday rehearsals.

Two different sessions, Music Intervals, and Dynamics, are listed below.

Music Intervals

- minor 2nd (e.g. from a C up to a Db)
- Major 2nd (e.g. from a C up to a D)
- minor 3rd (e.g. from a C up to an Eb)
- Major 3rd (e.g. from a C up to an E)
- Perfect 4th (e.g. from a C up to an F)
- Augmented 4th (e.g. from a C up to an F#) Same pitch
- Diminished 5th (e.g. from a C up to a Gb) Same pitch
- Perfect 5th (e.g. from a C up to a G)
- minor 6th (e.g. from a C up to an Ab)
- Major 6th (e.g. from a C up to an A)
- minor 7th (e.g. from a C up to a Bb)
- Major 7th (e.g. from a C up to a B)
- Perfect Octave (8th) (e.g. C to the next-highest C)



Dynamics (When to sing softer or louder)

Softer

- On any Harmony parts
- On the 3rd & 7th of a chord.
- High notes in your range
- Leads sing softer when above Tenors
- Bari sings softer when above the Lead
- Music notations mp, p, pp
- Music notations of > or decr or dim
- Generally on Tenor and Bari parts.

Louder

- On the Melody parts
- On the Root & 5th of a chord
- Low notes in your range
- Tenors sing louder when below the Lead
- Leads sing louder when below the Bari
- Music notations of mf, f, ff
- Music notations of < or cres
- Generally on Lead and Bass parts

Abbreviations

- mp - mezzo piano, medium soft
- p - piano, soft
- pp - pianissimo, very soft
- decr - decrescendo, get softer
- dim - diminuendo, get softer

- mf - mezzo forte, medium loud
- f - forte, loud
- ff - fortissimo, very loud
- cres - crescendo, get louder



**Minneapolis Chapter
Quartet Contacts**

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EAR DOCTORS:

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HALL PASS:

Dave Casperson 651.247.6319

JUST ONE MORE:

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Upcoming Events

May 27.....Senior Living Concert

June 8.....BOTY & Friends & Family

July 15.....Concert - Minnetonka

July 16.....Concert - Lakeville

July 31.....Concert - Roseville

August 11...Concert - Maple Grove

August 12...Como Park - BBS Choruses

September 13....Annual Show (3 pm)

October 10-11....LOL District Convention

December.....Holiday Show (TBA)

**The Commodores meet
every Tuesday at 7 pm:
Oak Knoll Lutheran Church**

600 Hopkins Crossroad, Minnetonka 55305

**Guests are welcome but please contact us in
advance so we can meet you at the door**
(Neal Mortenson nmortenson@usfamily.net)

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commentaries under their byline, are the
sole responsibility of the CHORD-INATOR
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Society.