

Choosing music for competition is one of the most challenging decisions facing Sweet Adelines International's quartets and choruses. First, competitors must thoroughly understand the criteria for strong barbershop arrangements set out in the Judging Category Description Book. Add to this the importance of selecting arrangements appropriate to the group's skill level, and the decision becomes even more daunting.

This folio is designed not only to provide good competition arrangements at the easy level, but also to help competitors recognize the characteristics of strong, singable barbershop arrangements that can be performed successfully by groups whose skills are still in the early stages of development. The arrangements are ordered by level of difficulty, from easiest to somewhat more challenging. These are not simple arrangements—they are interesting and creative, and each one offers challenges appropriate to the easy level. While the selection of appropriate music does not guarantee a successful performance, these arrangements will provide performers the opportunity to demonstrate what they do best without faltering due to challenges they are not yet equipped to handle.

Included with the folio are learning tracks for each arrangement, designed to provide a demonstration of correct notes and words for each part within a basic interpretive plan. Performers need not follow exactly these breathing and interpretive plans and are encouraged to create a plan that works best for their group. Also included are written suggestions for a successful delivery of that plan. These learning tips point out challenges and opportunities in balancing and tuning chords, interpreting phrases to allow for an artistic delivery of the message of the song, and ideas for simplifying the teaching process to maximize your success with these songs.

This folio is the product of many minds working together. Several talented arrangers not only submitted arrangements for publication, but were willing to alter those arrangements when needed to make them stronger and more appropriate for the easy level. Without them, there would be no folio. Dale Syverson spent many hours proofing the arrangements, overseeing the production of the learning media and writing the accompanying learning notes. Amy Leacock and Sharon Babb played significant roles in the development of the learning notes. Amy also created very accurate learning tracks for each part. Chris Leacock provided his considerable skills in recording and mixing the tracks for our learning media. Carolyn Healey, Marge Bailey and Lynnell Diamond worked hard selecting the arrangements and ensuring their quality and appropriateness for the easy level.

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