

The Las Vegas Chapter of the Barbershop Harmony Society

The

NUCKET

E-newsletter * November 2023

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silverstatesmen.com

Events for 2023

- 11/9 – Veterans program at Veterans Tribute Career and Technical Academy
- 11/11 – Veterans Day performances – at assisted living facilities and senior residences
- 11/30 – Christmas performance at Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church
- 12/8 – Christmas Show at Windmill Library - Free Admission
- 12/10 – Christmas Show at Clark County Library - Free Admission
- 12/21 – Smith Center for Pre-show of Nutcracker Suite

Events for 2024

- 1/13 – Summerlin Library Show “Songs of Love and Songs We Love To Sing” - 7 pm \$20 per person
- 2/14 – Singing Valentines - Book early!
- 6/9 & 16 – Summer shows at Windmill Library and Clark County Library. Free admission!

Spotlight on Members



High Stakes: How We Got Here By Camden Espino

Howdy, dear reader. This article is a personal account by me, Camden Espino, the lead of High Stakes. We're a barbershop quartet here in Las Vegas under the Silver Statesmen Chapter—some may say the youngest quartet in town (and I would not disagree with them). I have been singing my whole life, beginning in church with my parents, and eventually growing into musical theatre in my high school and college days. A little over two years ago to the day as of writing this, on October 14, 2021, I found myself walking into a Silver Statesmen chorus rehearsal after googling “barbershop quartet members needed Las Vegas.” I had moved back in with my folks after graduating from NYU with my bachelor's degree in theatre that summer, with no job prospects lined up, no outlet for singing, and zero knowledge about what would become of my life.



On a brisk October evening I would meet Alex Baskin, a trained singer with degrees in music and vocal pedagogy at the bachelor's and master's levels and Jason Hill. Jason was a lifelong *barbershopper* in the Evergreen district, singing with quartets such as *Harmonic Impulse*, *Mosquito Fleet*, *The Jaybirds*, as well as the *Kitsap Chordsmen*, *Bellevue Northwest Sound*, and *Voices, Inc.* before taking some years off being a working man. After a decision for a change of scenery, Jason moved down to Las Vegas. After reaching out to barbershop buddy Brandon Hall, he was referred to Antwun Puckett (remember this name, it'll come up again!) and the Silver Statesmen. On Jason's second time coming to rehearsal, I walk in.

Alex, Jason, and I came together, being some of the youngest guys in the room, and we sang a tag at the break of rehearsal, "Lonesome Rose." This single tag started the spark to form a new quartet, with Alex bringing in his longtime choir friend Kevin Brekke, an entertainment engineer and manager at the Freakling Bros. Haunted Houses, where I would serendipitously start my first acting job in Vegas the very next day. This quartet would become *Trim and a Shave*, with Alex on bass, Jason on baritone, myself on lead, and Kevin on tenor. *Trim and a Shave* would go on to join the Silver Statesmen on their Christmas performance in Boulder City, as well as the 2022 *Love Is In the Air* show. However, *Trim and a Shave's* forward momentum would be cut short just one week before prelims in Stockton, when personal and interpersonal circumstances led to Alex leaving the group. May came and went, and *Trim and a Shave* was, as far as we knew, finished.

During June of 2022, Jason, Kevin, and I were thinking of who could fill in our fourth spot when we remembered Kurtis Harrold. Kurtis was a lifelong barbershopper here in Las Vegas, singing with quartets such as *Friday Matinee* and *WOW!*, and being involved with the Silver Statesmen and the Gamble-Aire Choruses. Kurtis had filled in for Kevin on a paid Valentine's Day performance earlier that year and we knew he was a great tenor. We introduced him to the group, and we changed our name to something more in line with our Vegas identity. And we became *High Stakes*. Jason slid down to bass, Kevin slid down to baritone, I stayed on lead, and Kurtis was our new tenor.

High Stakes would get back into full swing leading up to District in Fresno in 2022, alongside our collegiate quartet, *Side Hustle*. which consisted of Jason on bass, Antwun Puckett on baritone (remember? I told you he'd come in again!) Jason's Evergreen buddy Ethan Albro on lead, and myself on tenor. Both *High Stakes* and *Side Hustle* had great showings at the District contest, placing 7th and 13th out of 33 quartets, both finalists (*Side Hustle* having just one weekend of rehearsals).

High Stakes would keep moving forward into more performances in front of audiences, making regular appearances at Don't Tell Mama, Piano Bar on Fremont, and in Kenny Davidsen's Bowtie Cabaret at the Tuscany Casino. The paid gigs around town started to roll in for us, eventually singing for Mayor Carolyn Goodman at an event in February. After prelims in Burbank at the end of March 2023, *High Stakes* came to a crossroad.

May, it seems, always brought us to a place of reevaluation for the quartet, and 3/4 of the group wanted to shift more towards competition focus. After much deliberation and discussion, we decided to introduce Antwun into the quartet as our new baritone. Antwun had grown up in Vegas barbershop since he was but a wee lad and Kurtis had hair, and sang with such quartets as *Split Decision*, *The Cross City Harmonizers*, and *WOW!*, as well as the Silver Statesmen, The Gamble-Aires, Voices of California, and later Westminster Choruses. Today, this is the current lineup of *High Stakes*.

Since then, Antwun and I have taken *Side Hustle* to the NextGen Varsity Finals at the International convention in Louisville 2023 with Ethan and FWD District champion tenor Dallas Halvorson, with our same vein of sparse rehearsal time (Jason couldn't make it with us due to scheduling conflicts). Kurtis and Antwun have taken their quartet, *'Til Morning Comes*, to finals at prelims in Arizona. And for *High Stakes*, we have now just come back from a tremendously fun weekend singing at District in Gilbert, AZ, and are ready to continue singing on shows with the Silver Statesmen, getting in front of audiences and making a name for ourselves here in Las Vegas, and working to hone and improve our craft going into the next competition to represent Las Vegas.



We are immensely grateful for the unwavering support of the Silver Statesmen, for without them, *High Stakes* simply would not have come into being, and I would not have met some of my truest, closest friends. We'll see you onstage!



From our Director: Gordon Lankenau

A gauntlet of wandering thoughts . . .

First, a big THANK YOU to those members that made the trip to Gilbert, AZ a couple weeks ago for the FWD convention. I'm proud of you for representing the chapter and even prouder to be the one in front of you on stage. Bringing home the Plateau AA Champion plaque again was definitely a plus for the trip. Couldn't have accomplished this feat without you.

The judges' review sessions were informative, reinforcing and clarifying awareness of the chorus' need to actively participate with voice, body and face, anticipating starts and stops, connecting phrase ends with consonants (like we've been doing), and improving our breathing techniques for a better supported vocal production. Lastly, all judges stressed the importance of every performer knowing the message the text conveys, then presenting it with unity as a group.

Now here is the plan moving forward. As we continue preparing our Patriotic, Holiday, and Love song repertoire for all of our upcoming shows and performances, you can plan to experience new approaches to our repertoire, taking us well beyond notes and words, influenced by Gary Bolles. As a former judge, coach and instructor at decades worth of Harmony College classes, Gary has agreed to share his wealth of knowledge to improve our presentations through an increased awareness of the message each song demands of all singers. Thanks, Gary. This is going to be valuable to the chorus. I am excited to see how this will affect us and our presentations.

In addition, to improve our understanding of vocal production and barbershop craft, please be open to a variety of new warm-ups as we rotate through several contributors, including *High Stakes* bass, Jason Hill.

So, as you can see, many good things have developed through discussions taking place at conventions, during the drive to or from an event, even at afterglow following our weekly rehearsals. The willingness and enthusiasm exhibited by several members over the past several months to be a part of changes that improve the chapter has not gone unnoticed. Be ready to contribute what you can.

Sing-cerely,
Gordon

Our Mission Statement:

"To share our passion for music, to preserve the art form known as Barbershop singing, to enrich the lives of our members, community, and audiences through performance and to bring people together in Harmony and fellowship."

The **Silver**
Statesmen



MIDJANUARY 9–14 • NEW YORK CITY 024 WINTER CONVENTION

[The 2024 Midwinter Convention](#) has it all going on — and all under one roof!

[Book your room now at our headquarters hotel](#), the Sheraton New York Times Square—convenient to the famed [Crossroads of the World](#), Broadway theaters, dining, entertainment, and mass transit.

The [BHS group hotel rate](#) is a bargain, too, so jump on those rooms right now.

On the lighter side

When I say the other day, I could be referring to any time between yesterday and 15 years ago.

I remember being able to get up without making sound effects!

I've been hiding from exercise! I'm in the fitness protection program!

I got myself a senior's GPS . . . not only does it tell me how to get to my destination, it tells me why I wanted to go there.

I enjoy a glass of wine each night for its health benefits. The other glasses are for my witty comebacks and flawless dance moves!

You should have fun when you sing. Like each other and share in the joys of making great music because you don't know when you won't be able to do so again.



Plateau AA Champions



Come Sing With Us!!!

What: Weekly Chapter Meeting and Rehearsal

When: Thursdays 7-10 pm

Where: Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church
10265 Bermuda Rd. Las Vegas 89183



Our chorus and quartets love to sing for our audiences and to share our love of “Barbershop”.

You are invited to join us to enjoy an evening of camaraderie and great barbershop harmony. Don't miss out on the fun! Come see what it's all about.



"CHRISTMAS IS COMING"

FREE Admission

DECEMBER 8, 2023 - 7 pm

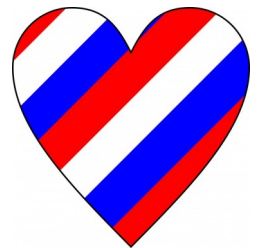
Windmill Library
7060 W. WINDMILL LN

and

December 10, 2023 - 2 pm

Clark County Library
1401 E. FLAMINGO RD

"Songs of Love and Songs We Love to Sing"



January 13, 2024

Summerlin Library Theatre

1771 Inner Circle Dr. Las Vegas 89134

2:00 pm

Tickets are \$20

For more information, go to our website at:

silverstatesmen.com