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Smart Music Choices for Quartets

Help your quartet pick good music you can sing well.

By Joe Liles

Too many quartets choose music they *wish* they could sing. This mistake can effectively prevent a quartet from being as good as it can be.

Always choose music within the capabilities of the performers. Each voice in a quartet has its range limitations. Each person has his skill limitations in rhythmic and note accuracy. An example of a quartet choosing wisely can be found with **The Rural Route 4**, 1986 champs. The best low note for the bass was A flat. G was still a possibility, if he had to sing it, but they carefully chose music in the voice range of their singers. Arrangements with low F's were not done.

As vocal capabilities and skill levels improve through coaching, practice, smart singing, etc., you may, with due regard, stretch the limits slightly. Always keep the goal in mind of giving a quality performance.

Every quartet, or someone in the quartet, should subscribe to the Music Premiere Program. In it you will find a large variety of selections covering skill levels from easy to difficult. You receive a demo tape by an outstanding quartet and music to review. This helps you determine the suitability to your quartet. Also, high quality learning tapes are available to help you learn the notes and provide a vocal model for each part.

If you wish to sing in public, you must consider songs/arrangements that will be entertaining. Each must have some appropriateness to your show package. Too many ballads can be boring for the audience. Sometimes we indulge *ourselves* with chord worshipping and ballads. Consider the audience. To be entertaining, the show package should have a generous portion of songs with a beat; uptunes, easy beats, lilting, maybe a little syncopation, etc. It's also a good idea to include one novelty song.

Where do you look for these arrangements? The Society has more than 900 published songs. The Old Songs Library has more than 1,000 unpublished arrangements. There is a catalog for each source.

Finally, choose arrangements you think you will enjoy singing. If *you* enjoy them, chances are your audience will also. Treat your quartet *and* your audience with respect.

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