

## Alexandria Harmonizers 70th Anniversary Throwback Thursdays

### No. 16 – 1979 Clowning Around

The first chapter annual show, a “Spring Tonic” (1951), was a combination of barbershop quartet parade and theme show, a pattern which, with few exceptions was followed by the Harmonizers thereafter. A theme show frequently uses a stage setting, stage characters, and limited dialogue to tie the songs together. The Harmonizers developed the theme show into an art, with elaborate costuming, cornball humor, and popular songs by the chorus and chapter quartets that had audiences clapping for more!

This show model extended from the Spring Tonics to a second show, the “Fall Extravaganza” (1980), followed by the holiday shows/dinner theaters of the 2000s. The Harmonizer practice to feature International medalist quartets (and choruses) on chapter shows continues to this day.

The 1979 Spring Tonic, *Barbershoppers in Toyland*, featured **Happiness Emporium** (1975 Intl Quartet Champ), **Nova Chords**, and **Friendship Fire Company**. As produced by **Michael Organ**, the opening curtain disclosed tiers of huge building blocks and a pair of dice, all disguising Harmonizers. Other Toyland species roamed through the audience disguised as bears, chipmunks, a skunk, dolls, soldiers, a drum, a frog, and even a chicken. On stage Raggedy Ann (**Jack McKendree**) and Andy (**Chuck Harner**) ascended to the seat of a ten-foot-high chair.



Mickey Mouse came to knock vigorously on a oversize Jack-In-The-Box, and out popped **Dave Wilt** who wisecracked his way through the rest of the act. (Note: The “Jack Act” was reprised in our Holiday Dinner Theater programs thanks to

**Scipio Garling and Terry Reynolds**). The best song in the show was “When The Toy Soldiers March On Parade” as led by a smartly costumed platoon of almost real toy soldiers. As *The Echo* put it: “The show had pace, color, fun, pathos, and fire.” How could anyone ask for more?

Featured Guest Quartets and Choruses by Annual Show Year:

1951 **Pittsburghers**;  
1957 **Confederates**;  
1960 **Schmitt Brothers**;  
1961 **Buffalo Bills**;  
1968 **Four Renegades**;  
1970 **Oriole Four**;  
1973 **Boston Common**;  
1974 **Gentlemen’s Agreement**;  
1981 **Chicago News**;  
1983 **Classic Collection**;  
1984 **Most Happy Fellows**;  
1985 & 1995 Exchange Shows w/**Southern Gateway Chorus** (Cincy OH),  
    **Rapscallions, Roarin’ 20s**;  
1987 **Vocal Majority** (Cony Hall);  
1987 **Blue Grass Student Union**;  
1989 **Sidekicks**;  
1990 Exchange Shows (Cony Hall) w/**Big Apple Chorus**, NYC Carnegie Hall:  
    **Blue Grass Student Union, Glasnotes, Growing Girls (SAI)**;  
1991 **Rural Route Four**;  
1992 **Gas House Gang**;  
1993 **Ambiance** (SAI);  
1994 **Acoustix**;  
1995 **Keepsake**;  
1998 **Power Play**;  
1999 **ROCKAPELLA**;  
2000 **Marquis**;  
2001 **Platinum**;  
2002 **Metropolis**;  
2003 **FRED**;  
2003 **Riptide**;  
2004 **Four Voices**;

2009 Joint Show w/**Pride of Baltimore, MAXX Factor** (SAI);  
2010 Joint Show w/**Westminster Chorus**, at GMU prior to BHS Intl, Philly,  
**Masterpiece, Musical Island Boys, O C Times, Old School, Ringmasters,**  
**MAXX Factor** (SAI), *Choir of the World Concert* CD;  
2011 **Chorus of the Chesapeake, Pride of Baltimore/Capri** (SAI),  
**Soundworks, Round Midnight**;  
2011 **Crossroads**;  
2012 **Old School, SAI: GQ, Shades of Jade**;  
2014 Joint Show w/**Ambassadors of Harmony** at GMU, **Crossroads, Vocal**  
**Spectrum**;  
2014 Joint Show w/**Pride of Baltimore** in Baltimore prior to SAI Intl, SAI: **Capri,**  
**BLING!, Frenzy, GQ, Growing Girls, Love Notes, Lustre, MAXX**  
**Factor, Ronninge Show Chorus, Speed of Sound, Spritzer, BHS: Lunch**  
**Break, Vocality**;  
2016 **Reen Family Singers, Vintage Mix**;  
2017 **The Fairfield Four, Howard University Gospel Choir.**