

Alexandria Harmonizers 70th Anniversary Throwback Thursdays

No. 43 - 2017 Roots of Barbershop



The Fairfield Four

Levert Allison, Bobbye Sherrell, Larrice Byrd, Joseph Thompson

In 2017, the Harmonizers explored the historical roots of barbershop harmony in a series of outreach events in collaboration with the **Fairfield Four** and others. Known best for their appearance at the end of the film “O Brother Where Are Thou,” and on the subsequent soundtrack release, the **Fairfield Four** are still singing in the traditional African American a cappella gospel style they have been known for since the group’s inception almost 100 years ago. The group has received three Grammy Awards and were made Honorary Lifetime Members of the Barbershop Harmony Society (2016).

A uniquely American art form, barbershop shares a common ancestry with gospel music and spirituals. In May, the Harmonizers and the City of Alexandria co-hosted *Music Through the Ages: Gospel and Barbershop*. The **Fairfield Four** headlined the Durant Center show that showcased guest performances by the

Alfred Street Baptist Church Choir, City of Alexandria's Employee Choir, George Washington Middle School Choir, Jefferson Houston School Choir, My Father's House Christian Church Choir, Shiloh Baptist Church Choir, and Third Baptist Church Choir.

The Fairfield Four appeared again with the Harmonizers on the Saturday Night Show following the chorus' weeklong education immersion at **Harmony University**, held at Belmont University, Nashville in July.

The Alexandria Harmonizers presented their Fall Show, ***Rock My Soul***, featuring the **Fairfield Four** and the **Howard Gospel Choir** of Howard University in performances in Washington and Alexandria. Shared gospel songs included "There Must Be A City," "Roll Jordan Roll," and "Rock My Soul."

We were joined during the year by **Dr. Ysaye Barnwell**, an established nationwide musical leader in gospel circles, who invited us to share in the fun of a Community Sing in Washington at the Levine School. Later in the year we joined with the Male Chorus of the **Alfred Street Baptist Church** in sponsoring ***Sing For Joy***, an informal meet-up of local groups including the Alexandria Singers and the Hispanic Choir of the Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church.

Our shared experiences with the musical heritage of many area arts groups encouraged us to embrace diversity and inclusion in all we do.

Harmonious Tagline:

Marty Monson, CEO, Barbershop Harmony Society -

"We don't need to be identical to be together. Barbershoppers are awesome, accepting people, and we all seek a world of everyone in harmony. Our family, our friends, our faith, our singing, our freedom are the greatest gifts we have to connect everyone in harmony."