



Put-Together a Glorious Success!

by Jeremy Richardson

The First Annual Wilbur Sparks Memorial Put-Together Quartet Contest was a big success! A week before the contest, only three quartets had entered, but by the time the contest started, we had 18 entries!

Of course, this was the first time that Wilbur had not organized this event, and it was the first time I'd ever done anything like it. I set out to hold to tradition as much as possible. I held to Wilbur's tradition of drafting guys to sing in put quartets, and I even named a few that didn't name themselves. I like to think that Wilbur inspired me to come up with those names! The tradition was complete even down to Wilbur's scrap of paper where he would scribble down the names of the competitors.

The contest was held this year at our current regular meeting place, Plymouth Haven Baptist Church in Alexandria. This turned out to be a great venue for the contest. We used the stage and spotlights, and we set up chairs for the audience. As the contest began, I remember thinking, "Wait, we're not ready to start!" But, the show must go on, and we did just that. I introduced the Master of Ceremonies, Mike Everard, who assumed the role he usually does for this event. I soon found myself running around trying to make sure that the next quartet was always ready to go. Somehow they were always ready and waiting, and the contest went smoothly. Because of some shuffling, the program for the event was obsolete by the time the contest started, but isn't this the norm for a quartet contest?

Another of my goals for the contest was to get some guests to enter the contest. I was so intent on this that I drafted the first people I could find,

Winning quartet. "Loading Dock 4"

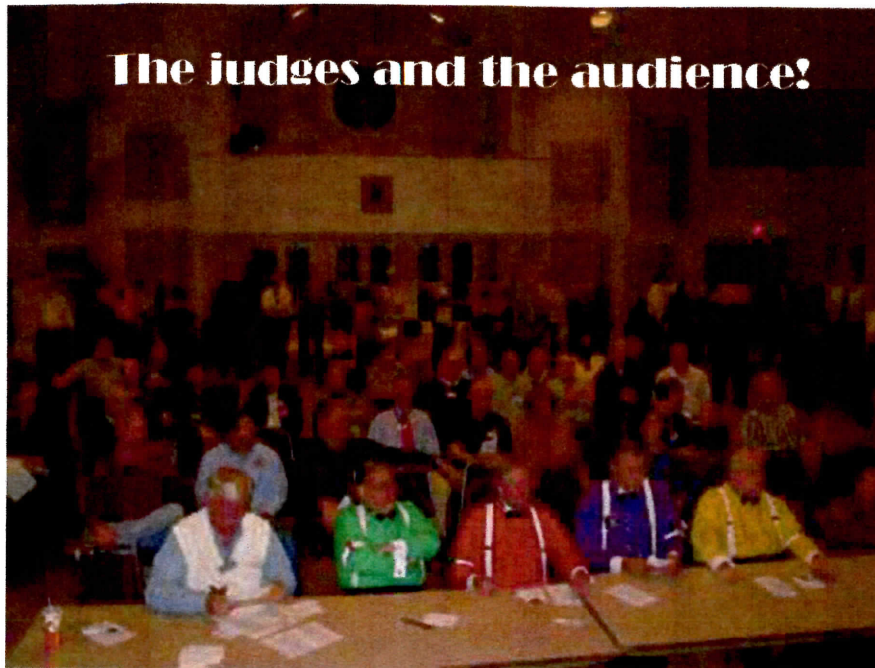


and put them together. The quartet was called Thor and the Singing Trojans, with Gary Plaag, Thor Young, Frank Ierna, and Steve White. After the contest, I had to disqualify the quartet I had put together, because I had forgotten my own rules! Thor and Frank, our two guests from the Tampa area, sing in a district level quartet in Florida (although Frank switched from bass to bari for the contest). I ended up with a put quartet containing three members singing the same part they sing in their registered quartets! I gave them an honorable mention since they did such a great job, winning the contest with their score. Do any of our chapter historians know if this is the first time we've ever had an honorable mention in the put-together contest?

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The judges and the audience!



The evening was filled with many laughs and a few special moments, from pies in the face, to dancing, to warm-up drills, to a tribute to Wilbur. Our judging panel consisted of five members this year, our Artistic Director Geri Geis and our guest quartet, SAGE. At the conclusion of the contest, as is tradition, our guest quartet performed for the audience. With a quartet like SAGE, the laughs continued for another four songs!

The final results of the contest are as follows:

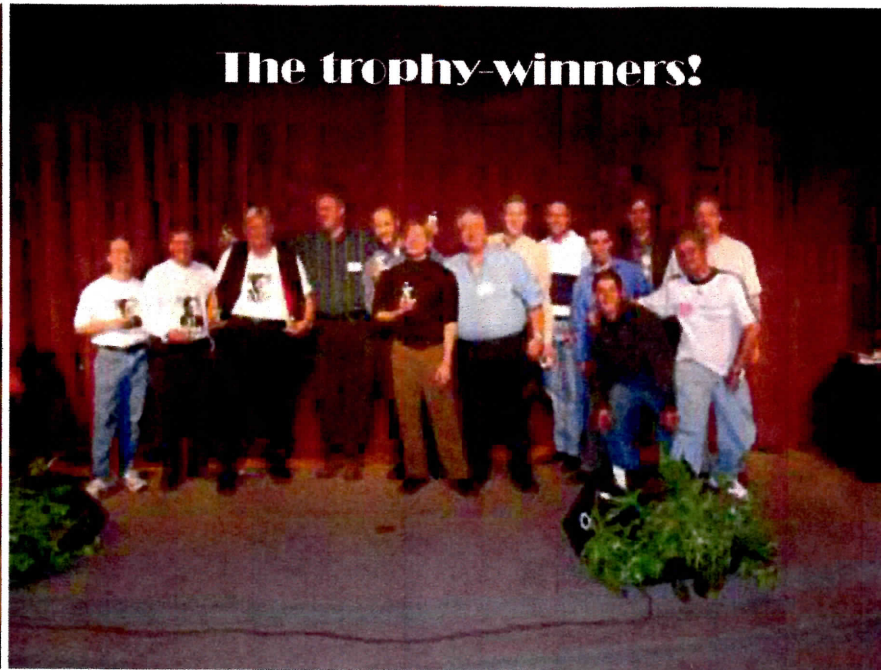
HM Thor and the Singing Trojans (Plaag, Young, Ierna, S. White)

1 Loading Dock 4 (Garling, Hoseth, Roehm, Ahmadi)

2 George Sings Bass (Wulf, Yates, Caldwell, Azzam)

3 Limited Glass Edition Looking Desperate (Azzam, Day, J. Hall, B. Jones)

The trophy-winners!



Thanks to everyone for making this such a special event. I want to thank our judges, Geri Geis and SAGE, Jack Pitzer for his help with organization and for serving as secretary for the judging panel, Mike Everard for serving as Master of Ceremonies, Jack McKendree for his help backstage, and TJ Jones for photography. Thanks to everyone who participated—let's see the rest of you on stage next year! Finally, thanks to Wilbur Sparks, who started this wonderful tradition 30 years ago.

On a personal note, this has been a wonderful experience for me. The Put-Together Contest is my favorite Harmonizer event of the year, and it has been my pleasure to see it continue this year. Stay tuned, because my next goal is to revive the tag singing contest!