

Third International Chorus Gold - 1995

International Champion Chorus 57th Annual International Convention and Contests, SPEBSQSA, Miami Beach FL. July 2-9, 1995 Musical Director Scott Werner, Artistic Director Geri Geis, Associate Director Mike Wallen, Chapter President Chris Buechler

130 men awarded First Place Gold Medals, singing: "I'll Be Seeing You" (Arranged by Rob Hopkins, Verse Lyrics and Music by Eric Jackson) and "Sweet Georgia Brown" (Arranged by Ed Waesche)



The contest songs in 1995 paired the percussive, driving energy of the highly successful "Sweet Georgia Brown" with a new ballad, "I'll Be Seeing You," that mingled hope with longing and ended with positive expectation. The drama of these songs would be apparent from the moment the curtain opened on an intriguing scene—streetlights framing the stage, with the chorus members lounging in a variety of relaxed poses, some on a park bench, in black trousers, white shirt with open collar, and a brocade vest.

Darryl Flinn and Greg Lyne joined the Harmonizers at rehearsals in Miami Beach. At one point in the ballad, Greg said, "This is where you should tell the audience how you feel. Please put your hands on your hearts and unzip them just one-half inch." Later, before the chorus went on stage, Greg said: "The time is getting very close. Now I want each of you to put his hand on his heart and zip it all the way down!"

After the curtain opened, the whooping and clapping audience grew hushed as it viewed the tableau created by the chorus. The spell of the ballad was already evident. And the chorus began to sing..."Once in a lifetime, maybe..." The audience was caught up in the magic mood of the new story being told by the chorus. It radiated from the face of every chorus member. The performance of "I'll Be Seeing You" was described as the best ballad of the contest, perhaps the best ever. It was called exquisite" and "artistic." Ron Black, the Music Category specialist, said of it: "That's the only time I've heard a song take over the stage!" Another judge thought the song started with such incredible emotion and presence that there was no way it could be sustained. But in fact it was maintained throughout. That rendition plus an exciting (and sexy) performance on

“Sweet Georgia Brown” resulted in the announcement: “In First, and our new champion—the Alexandria Harmonizers!”

Harmonious Tagline. Mike Wallen – the second Associate Director under Scott Werner and later became Director of The Virginians in Richmond. He is a three-time Mid-Atlantic District Quartet Champion (Alexandria's Ragtime Band, Copyright '86, and Casino) on three different voice parts. He also sang in the 2009 District Seniors Quartet Champion Youth Reclamation Project. Mike is in the M-AD Hall of Honor.