

Valentine's Day concert will benefit Harmony House

By AMANDA VEITH
For the Herald

For over 100 years, a cappella vocal harmonies have been entertaining people with understandable lyrics and easily recognizable melodies. The origins of this musical genre stems from African Americans in the 1900s.

This is when the Mills brothers learned to harmonize in their father's barbershop.

This style of singing remains quite common in the gospel music of the black church. Singing without instrumental accompaniment was dubbed "barbershop" during its revival period in the late 1930s when a man named Owen Cash decided it would be a pity for this art form to be forgotten.

In 1938, the "Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barbershop Quartet Singing in America" or SPEBSQSA, was founded by Mr. Cash. It was later renamed a simpler "Barbershop Harmony Society" and is a large part of today's barbershop musical community, with just under 30,000 members as of 2007.

In this area, back in the '80s and '90s, barbershop concerts were hugely attended. The local barbershop chorus, The Diplomats of Harmony, had 40 to 50 members. They practiced weekly at the parks and recreation building and all singers were welcome. They put on a couple of shows a year, and filled Memorial Auditorium for each show.

The ladies, the Sweet Adelines, had their own good-sized cho-

Hearts in Harmony barbershop quartet concert, a benefit for Chippewa Falls' Harmony House homeless shelter, 2-4 p.m., Sunday, Feb. 14, Heyde Center for the Arts, 3 S. High St., Chippewa Falls. Adults/\$7, seniors/\$6, under 21/\$4, 5 and under/free. Info: www.cvca.net or (715) 726-9000.

rus. Unfortunately, over the years, the number of members in these choirs dwindled as did the interest in barbershop music.

Thankfully for us, in the Chippewa Valley Performing Arts scene, the Heyde Center for the Arts strives to keep this and other rare art forms available to the community. They also support many local artists and provide low cost entertainment covering a variety of genres.

Join the Chippewa Valley Cultural Association for a special Valentine's Day event from 2-4 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 14 at the Heyde Center for the Arts. "Hearts in Harmony" features three local barbershop quartets, each of which has earned a presence in the Chippewa Valley through a series of performances and competitions.

Earlier in the day, these three barbershop quartets will deliver their infamous singing Valentines and gather at the Heyde Center to entertain an audience. The quartets that will be featured are the CHIPS (Close Harmony is Pretty Swell) Quartet, The State Street Quartet, and the After Dark Quartet.

The CHIPS Quartet formed in 1995 in the Eau Claire and Chippewa Falls area. The group consists of Jerry O'Brien (tenor),



Members of the barbershop quartets who will perform at Hearts in Harmony on Valentine's Day rehearse their program.

Randy Knaack (lead), Tom Arneburg (baritone), and Rod Bailey (bass).

The State Street Quartet has been performing in the area and was formed in 2000 by bass singer John Hanson. The other members include Terry Glanzman (tenor), Terry Hoepner (lead) and Mike Theiste (baritone).

The After Dark Barbershop Quartet has been performing in the Eau Claire area for more than seven years. The group members of the After Dark Quartet are Larry Griffin (lead), Tim Burgmeier (bass), Dick Knez (baritone) and Jerry Hanson (tenor).

Blurred Edges is a new trio composed of keyboardist/vocalist Jody Johnson, bassist Tim Seyforth, and guitarist/vocalist Randy Adams. They each bring different influences and broad interests that together tend to "blur the edges" between many styles of music.

Along with providing quality entertainment, the Hearts in Harmony show is a benefit for the newly established Harmony House of downtown Chippewa Falls. The Harmony House is an emergency homeless shelter owned and managed by Starting Points, Inc. The shelter opened its doors in January and has the capability to house 24 people for

up to 30 days. It offers services to the homeless and also those in danger of becoming homeless. It is a place where individuals can get immediate assistance and is a much needed addition to this community.

For more information about the Hearts in Harmony concert or to purchase tickets, contact the Heyde Center of the Arts at (715) 726-9000 or visit them at www.cvca.net. Admission is \$7 for adults, \$6 for seniors, \$4 for those 21 and under, with those 5 and under being admitted free. VIP tables are \$10 per person.

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