



The MVEer Monthly

August 2017

August Calendar

Monday, July 31 (last practice before our Lake Park show at 7:15pm.)

➔ **Monday, August 7 – Lake Park Show** & afterglow at **Café Hollander** at **2608 N Downer Avenue**, Milwaukee, WI.

Tuesday, August 8 – Board Meeting at the Church at 7pm.

Monday, August 14 – rehearsal at 7:15pm

Monday, August 21 – rehearsal at 7:15pm

Monday, August 28 – rehearsal at 7:15pm



Musical Mondays at Lake Park

Our chorus performs along with several great quartets (**Midnight Croon, Quarter Notes, and One Minute to Midnight**) on Monday, August 7 at 6:30pm. [*The call time for performers is **5:45pm** dressed in black tux pants, black shirt, blue tie, but no jacket.*]

<http://lakeparkfriends.org/event/musical-mondays-vox-antiqua/>

We perform at the North end of the park on the **Lake Park Summer Stage**.

Best way for **guests** to come is to get there early and come in the entrance at the top (**red arrow**) of the map and bring folding chairs.

Best way for **performers** to come is to enter at Newberry Road entrance (**purple arrow**) and park along the



roads by areas 4 and 5, and then hike over to the Stage area. Note that the walking bridge between the Lake Park Bistro and the north end of the park is closed and barricaded, parking near Lake Park Bistro requires a bit of a journey west and then around back to the north end of the park.

All past MVE performers are asked to join us at the front for singing **Irish Blessing** during the show. Everyone is heartily invited to a post-performance afterglow at **Café Hollander** on Downer Ave. There we will thank **Josh Umhoefer** for his leadership, direction, and dedication over the past six years.

Reflections on Josh by Bob Fichtner

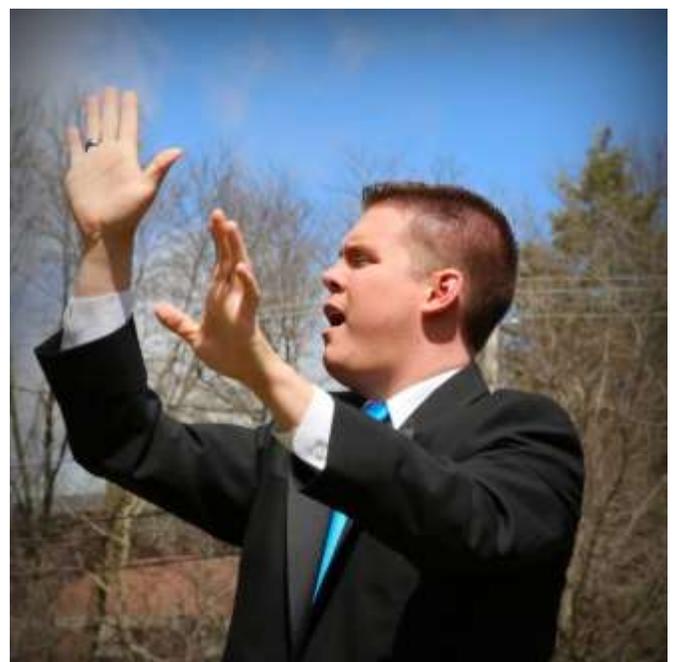


Knowing that Josh's time as our full time musical director is coming to a close, I spent some time reflecting on his tenure.

I've known Josh for some time now as a chorus member, quarteter, musical contributor, and director. His talent for bringing out the most of the music as a performer is so innate that it almost seems effortless.

His talent and passion were evident early on when he "Sang with the Champs" with **Platinum**. The quartet saw this skinny little teenage kid come up and ask for one of their most difficult songs and thought, "Yeah, right." The look on **Joe Connelly's** face after the first few notes was priceless - he glanced over at **Tony DeRosa** (baritone that Josh was subbing for) and his look said, "Oh sh!t, I'd better sing as if I mean it!"

But while it seems effortless, I can assure you - it is not. Yes, Josh is a natural talent. But he also works very hard to make sure he understands every word, phrase and story in each and every song. He wants to perform at the highest level and personalize the song's story and message to the audience. We all strive for



that at times, but Josh strives for it every time.

This reminds me of a phrase that **Jim Henry** spoke to us - *amateurs rehearse until they do it right, professionals rehearse until they cannot do it wrong.* And while Jim is not the originator of this phrase, it resonated with me.

Josh is very much a professional when it comes to performance. He set the example and it was one I strive to emulate. I don't always succeed, but his teaching, coaching, prodding, and sometimes earnest pleading would remind me to bring my "A" game every time.



We are all better singers and performers as a result of singing with and for Josh. We wish you well as you devote more time to the family business and certainly to hope to see you more often than not.

2017 in Las Vegas: Midwest Vocal Express, Midnight Croon, Ohana Means Family, The Committee, and more distantly, After Hours – Dick Marcus

Some drove, but most flew into a baking-hot desert surrounded by smaller mountains in the heat of July to sing for and with thousands of other barbershoppers. No one person can reproduce in words the cacophony of sights and sounds of Las Vegas to those who couldn't go this year, but this essay is intended to give a bit of the feeling. Let's move chronologically.

On **Tuesday, July 4th**, 22 youth quartets competed. This was a great success for MVE's own **Patrick McAlexander's** quartet **Ohana Means Family**, which won the silver medal. This contest was formerly the college contest, but is focused on those up to age 25. They moved up from their 4th place standing in last



year's Nashville barbershop ranking.



Winners of the Youth contest often do very well as they migrate to the adult quartet





contest. **The Musical Island Boys, Vocal Spectrum,** and **Four Voices** have all become International Quartet Champions after winning the collegiate or youth contest. In the photo, Patrick wears his silver medal and his **Music Judge Candidate** badge. Congratulations Patrick!

On **Wednesday, July 5th**, fifty-five quartets competed in the Quarterfinals Contest and MVE had two quartets represented. **Midnight Croon** (with **Josh Umhoefer, Tim Zielke, Jake Umhoefer,** and the tall guy on the right is **Cody Whitlock**).

They sang beautifully. MVE fans yelled Croon, Croon, Crooon!

Mike Lietke and his quartet **The Committee** (*photo on-stage on the bottom left*) also sang marvelously. Members are Tenor - Mike Lietke; Lead - Matt Carlen; Bass - Brett Mulford; and Bari - Kevin McClelland, all a part of the **Sound of Illinois** Chorus).



The Committee visited the MVE practice on Thursday, July 6th. You now know that they don't *always* wear tuxedos with orange ties with matching pocket squares!
#matchingpocketsquares ↓





Thursday, July 6th was “call time” for the Midwest Vocal Express chorus performers. Our first practice was in the **Bally’s Hotel and Casino**. We met “upstairs” in the Jubilee room from 7 to 10pm.

Everything was clicking. We knew the set; we just had to be more expressive and filled with positive energy.





Erik Anderson has lots of relatives in the Las Vegas area. Here are some that came early. There were even more later on.



One special treat during our practice that evening was the re-appearance of PH, **Stephen Vandenberg** (handing out chips) who now lives in Missouri and sings with the champion chorus, the **Ambassadors of Harmony**. Stephen brought us lucky *A of H* casino chips to carry on stage.



Now on to the Big Day, **Friday, July 7, 2017**, where we had **two** call times. The first was at 8 am at the **Paris Hotel** in the Vendôme room. Because there was a Vocal Majority banner there, we had a blast not just **Being MVE** but **Being the Vocal Majority**. Josh and then **Cindy Hanson** had us spread out so that each of us had our own square in the massive carpet.





Paris streets in the Paris Hotel

With the early morning practice over, most had time to watch some choruses competing early in the day. With our appearance (#26 out of 30) in the evening, our second call time for the day was at 5pm, back up in the Bally's Hotel, but this time on the 26th floor, called the Skyview 4 room.



Out in the broad hallway, the ladies got us ready with makeup and touch up. **Sarah Nagel** and her team got us ready in flash.



The make-up team (L to R) was Sarah Nagel, Hannah Fichtner, Jan Boston, Ann-Elizabeth Nagel, Pat Wozniak, DeAnne Haugen, Kelly Whitlock, Jenelle Lambert, and Barb Hanson.

Thank you team!



With our make-up applied, our last-minute rehearsals emphasized the start and ending of both songs: *A Whole New World* from *Aladdin* and *Naughty Angeline*.



A tradition perhaps dating back to **Bo Gibson** was to acknowledge all chorus members for which this was the first time singing at International with the Midwest Vocal Express. This year we had four handsome singers compete with the MVE for the first time.

They are L to R:

1. **Matt Record**
2. **Zach Rolfs**
3. **Jacob Lambert,**
&
4. **Patrick McAlexander**

This is not the first time on the International Stage for Patrick as he has been there with two other choruses and his Youth Quartet.

As time moved on with our touching up practice, we were directed to get into a bus to travel (not far) to the **Planet Hollywood** where the **Axis Theater** was.



All around the theater was a large shopping mall, called the **Miracle Mile Shops**, where the ceilings emulated skies and even at times, there were light and sound effects simulating rain!





We entered behind and below the **Axis Theater**, currently being used by Jennifer Lopez. The sound system far exceeded those of most theaters we've used before. The capacity was 7,000 seats.

Behind the stage we could see TV monitors for the **Great Lakes Chorus** just before us. When they were done, we entered the stage without curtains.



Most felt very comfortable singing on this wonderful stage. Josh got us to show our energy. We sang with clarity. We visualized both a *Flying Carpet Ride* and talking with Naughty Angeline before us. But, *** **Poof***** in an instant, our two songs, the applause, and even the humorous four professional photos of us counted down by the audience, 1, 2, 3, 4, and we were done!

After we heard that the **Masters of Harmony** (where our former director **Chris Peterson** competed) had edged out the **Vocal Majority** for the Gold Medal, we all knew where we wanted to go and that was at a 50th Birthday Party for **Ilana Ganswindt** at the Paris Hotel's Bier Garden.

The bestest birthday party ever!





Who's ready to conga?

As Gloria Estefan sang Conga:

Come on, shake your body baby,
do the conga
I know you can't control yourself
any longer
Come on, shake your body baby,
do the conga
I know you can't control yourself
any longer

Come on, shake your body baby,
do the conga
I know you can't control yourself
any longer
Feel the rhythm of the music
getting stronger
Don't you fight it 'til you tried it,
do that conga beat

Everybody gather 'round now
Let your body feel the heat
Don't you worry if you can't
dance
Let the music move your feet

It's the rhythm of the island, and
like the sugar cane so sweet
If you want to do the conga,
you've got to listen to the beat.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_sjUfAZDODI Click for
mood music for the **Bestest Birthday Party Ever.**

**The International BHS Contest in Las Vegas 2017
was a blast, a wonderful experience.**

**Gentlemen, let's do all we can to return to
International very soon. How about in 2018
Orlando, FL? Let's make it happen.**