

The Official Publication of the MountainTown Singers - 2017 Edition

# OVERTONES



Shawn York

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The Mt Pleasant Chapter of SPEBSQSA Inc. (DBA MountainTown Singers) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization and is affiliated with the Barbershop Harmony Society





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## CREATING A BETTER WORLD THROUGH LIFELONG SINGING!

**OVERTONES** is the annual publication from the MountainTown Singers. It is provided to assist readers to understand the scope of the organization, its purpose, mission and values. Please enjoy this publication and feel free to check out our Facebook page and Website for more information.

We wish to thank all of the generous advertisers in this publication. We value the relationships we have with them and are so appreciative of their investment in our community by supporting the MountainTown Singers.

We assist organizations that serve our purpose of improving the lives of people through singing. We focus on groups including the area senior population and young singers from schools across the state.

We also thank our families and friends that encourage and support our passion!

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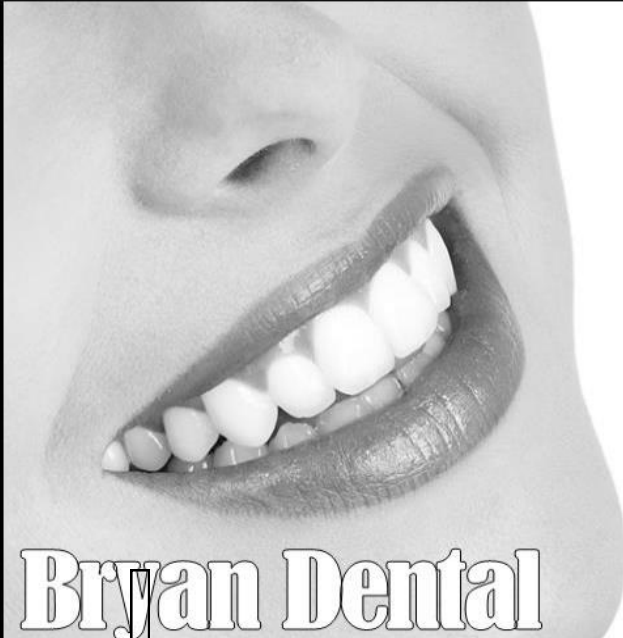
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# Pioneering a New Leadership Model

Our Mt. Pleasant chapter is one of a handful of chapters in the over 700 chapter Barbershop Harmony Society that has been granted special permission to add "Community-at-Large" members to our Board of Directors. Our Community Directors enjoy the same voting rights and voice as our other "membered" Directors. We appreciate what they add to our organization.



Sherry Knight is an associate vice president of university communications at Central Michigan University. Knight directs CMU's marketing, public relations and internal and external communications efforts. She is responsible for advancing CMU's brand and identity and oversees communications with audiences such as prospective students, the campus community, alumni and donors.

Prior to joining CMU in 2012, Knight owned an executive communications firm based in Saline, MI. Her background includes roles in corporate PR and journalism.

Sherry and her husband Jim, Assistant Director of Athletics for Marketing and Communications at CMU, reside in Mt. Pleasant with their daughter Lauren, a sophomore neuroscience/pre-med major at CMU.



**Sherry Knight**

## Chapter Leadership - 2017

President - Joe McDonald

Secretary - Jim McMahan

Treasurer - Dave Rayburn

VP Membership - Steven Marks

VP Youth in Harmony - Jeff Rayburn

VP Music & Performance - Jim Whitten

VP Communications - Barry George

Board Members at Large

Dean Deliyianides

Tom Ennis

Sherry Knight \*

Freddie Phillips

(\* denotes community board members)

**Musical Director - Kyle Howard**

Asst. Directors - Jeff Rayburn & Jim Whitten

Chorus Director Emeritus - Dr. David Gillingham

Chorus Manager - Barry George

Webmaster - Tom Ennis

Overtones Publisher - Joe McDonald

*MountainTown Singers (MTS) bring joy to others through our performances and advancement of the art of Barbershop Harmony.*

*MTS is a competitive a cappella group that provides experiences that express our members' sense of compassion, fun, and camaraderie.*

For information regarding advertising placement or patron sponsorship, contact the Publisher,

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Cell phone 989-560-6181



# MountainTown Singers Span Four Generations



For nearly 80 years, the Barbershop Harmony Society has served thousands of quartets and choral ensembles from 12 to 150, in large and small communities across North America. The MountainTown Singers (MTS ) is one of those over 600 ensembles.

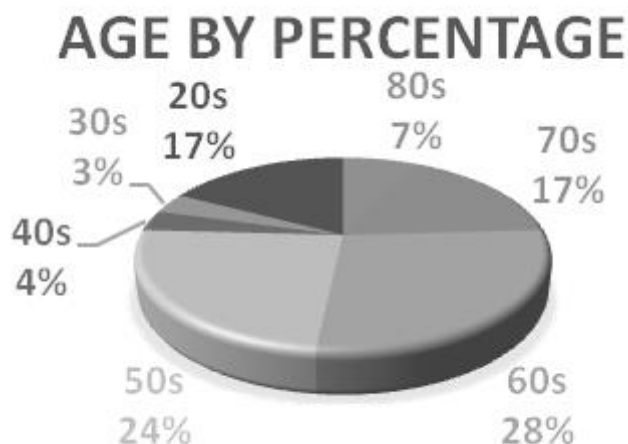
What is quite apparent when you see the MountainTown Singers perform is the diverse range of ages in the group.

MTS considers itself an "Intergenerational" organization. There are numerous benefits to intergenerational singing that you might not realize

Research shows children need four to six involved, caring adults in their lives to fully develop emotionally and socially. The problem today is that children often get too much peer socialization, too much mediated contact through computers and texting, and not enough one-on-one, personal time with mature adults. Likewise, active, involved older adults with close intergenerational connections consistently report much less depression, better physical health, and higher degrees of life satisfaction. Young and old can fulfill the role of student and teacher for each other, and it's not always the older person who does the teaching.

Speaking of old and young and everyone in between, let's take a moment to explore the ages of MTS, founded in 2005 by a bunch of guys in their 40s and 50s and opened

to guys of college age. The make-up of the group in April of 2017 can be viewed in the illustration below.



In an ensemble that spans four generations, repertoire selection can be very challenging. The musical leadership strives to select music that with which everyone can connect, and then balance this with what the group ENJOYS singing. They have found that every age CAN connect with songs from all eras...but it certainly makes it an easier sell to the audience if the song is familiar.

The MountainTown Singers believe that meaningful intergenerational interaction improves the lives of young and old alike. The transformational impact of singing, not only on singers, but on the community as a whole is a powerful message. Very few choirs succeed at bringing together singers of different age ranges, much less across several generations. Imagine what can happen in the choral world, and our own community, when boys, seniors and everyone in between join together in song.

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# Youth Outreach



*"Literally, the only thing wrong with this camp is, it ends" Micah W.*



Each July the MountainTown Singers host an annual MountainTown Harmony Explosion Summer Vocal Music Camp on the campus of Central Michigan University. Young singers come from across Michigan to experience the opportunity to learn proper vocal technique, experience a cappella music in the barbershop style, make new friends, and perform on stage.

The choruses are led by accomplished clinicians and supported by experienced teaching quartets. Each chorus, male and female, prepares two songs and come together in a combined group for two others. Songs are distributed in advance of camp. In addition to the sheet music the campers receive part specific learning tracks for each song.

The 2017 camp includes two gold medal quartet singers and a seven time camp clinician. The camp quartets are championship singers as well and experienced stage performers. "Glamour" is based in Ohio and "Frontier" is a Michigan quartet with a long history with our MTHX camp.

*"This camp introduced me to the world of barbershop, and I love it. The people involved are incredible" Jenny K.*

*"I love the camp so much! It feels like I have family here and I barely know these people." Emily M.*



2017 Camp Clinicians



Brian O'Dell



Erin Cook



David Zimmerman

## GLAMOUR



Stacey St. John

Gretchen Holloway

Deidra Elkins

Dominique Parsons



Chris Cordle

Cody Harrell

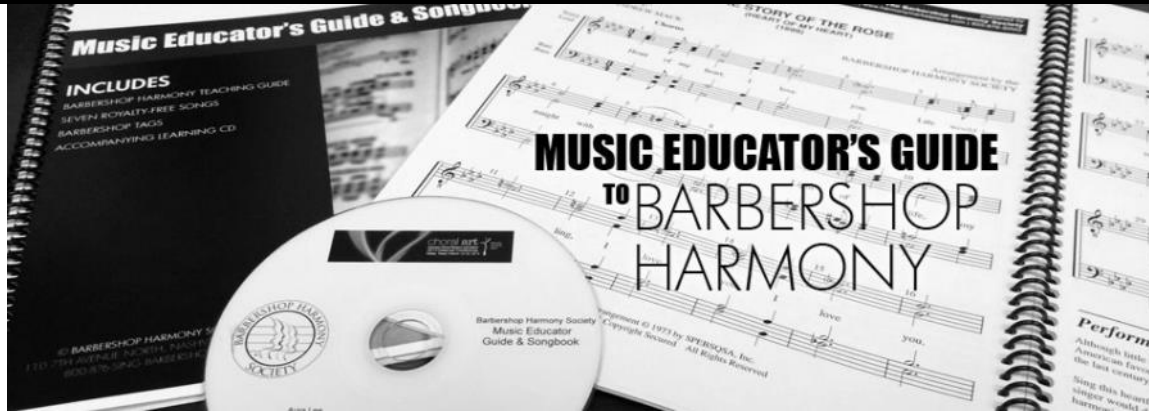
Aaron Pollard

Brandon Smith



# Resource Guide

## Free Music 4 Educators!



The Barbershop Harmony Society has many great resources available to assist music educators in teaching barbershop harmony in the classroom! From warm-ups, to tags (codas), to entire songs which you may photocopy and distribute to your students for **FREE!** An educator will find everything they need to teach a uniquely American art-form to students in middle school, high school, and even college!

Visit: [www.barbershop.org](http://www.barbershop.org)



## Who is the Barbershop Harmony Society?

The Barbershop Harmony Society is the world's largest all-male singing Society, with 22,000 members across North America. Affiliated men's and women's organizations in more than a dozen countries bring the total number of active singers to more than 80,000 worldwide.

Through active programs in music education, publishing, performance, and outreach, the Society preserves and extends the reach of a uniquely American close harmony musical art form whose roots lie in African-American improvisation and European harmony traditions.

Founded in 1938 as the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet

Singing in America, Inc. (SPEBSQSA), the Society now expends \$1.3 million annually in support of community and school programs that bring the fellowship, fulfillment, and excitement of vocal music to a new generation of singers.

The Society relocated its headquarters to the heart of Nashville in 2007, and has established powerful relationships in the civic and education communities. Belmont University in Nashville is home for the Society's flagship annual education event, Harmony University, and in 2016 and 2017, the Barbershop Harmony Society was recognized by the Nashville Business Journal as one of its Best Places To Work.

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# New Era for MTS

Kyle has an extensive background in the performing arts. He has been an actor in community theater, playing **Tevey** in *Fiddler on the Roof*, and **Sky Masterson** in *Guys and Dolls*, as well as smaller featured roles, and chorus work. He has also worked as a stage manager for both the Chattanooga Opera Company and Chattanooga Ballet, served as the music director for the Chattanooga Theater Centre's Youth Theater Program, and has even worked as a background extra in the movie "42", starring Chad Boseman and Harrison Ford.

Kyle "Doc" Howard became the musical director of the MountainTown Singers in December of 2016. Prior to that time he had been a member of the chorus, and then, one of the co-directors.

Kyle holds a B.S. in Music Education from Bryan College in Dayton, TN. He has worked as a music teacher at every level from kindergarten to high school. He has taught general music, music theory, choir, and band. In addition, he has served as a choir director in various churches.

Kyle grew up in music. His father was the minister of music in his family's church, and his mother was the organist. In high school Kyle was a member of the band program, and won the John Philip Sousa Band Award in his senior year. During his college days, his work study was in the music program, where he gained valuable insights into program planning as an "insider" on the music planning committee. Kyle won the senior music award as a college senior, as well.

Kyle has been married to Bambi Hallows Howard since 1986. They have six children, two daughter-in-laws, one son-in-law, and one brand new grandson.

## Collaboration Brings Excitement

So, why do three groups with common ideals and skills get together for a single event? They do it to express their passion for ensemble singing to another generation of singers. The groups came together at the invitation of the **MountainTown Singers** (MTS) for a single performance during MTS's annual Harmony Explosion Camp in July of 2016. The show, another in a series of shows titled Acappellapalooza, is presented annually by MTS. Once the preparation and rehearsals were complete, the stage lights on, and the show in-the-books it was discovered that a real synergy was present, and more collaboration was in order.

The two invited groups, Crossroads Harmony Chorus of Reed City, and Heart of Michigan Chorus of Shepherd, are each affiliated with Sweet Adelines International. They are separate organizations that occasionally come together for performances or contests.

In addition to having shared performances, the three groups are linked on a personal level. Jim Whitten, an MTS member, is the director of Cross-

roads, and the three groups share several husband-wife singers and brother-sister pairs as well.

Chartered in 2004, **Crossroad Harmony Chorus** is a group of talented women is a mixture of all ages, interests and occupations. Singers from Reed City, Evart, Cadillac, Big Rapids, Hersey, Marion and other area communities are represented in this unique musical ensemble. The ladies of Crossroads Harmony are all members of Sweet Adelines International. They perform at public, private, civic and charitable events and present their own shows each





Genre - Barbershop (Sweet Adelines International)

Home town - Reed City, MI

Meet - Tuesdays 6:00 pm

Location - St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Director - Jim Whitten - Contact (231) 734-6940

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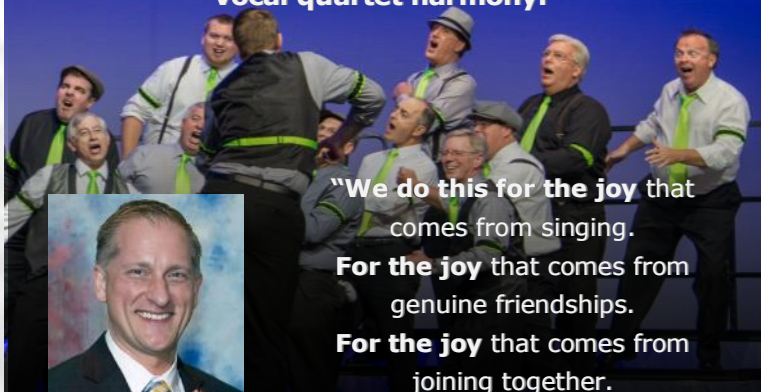


year. In addition, they enjoy teaming up with local school and community musicians to provide great entertainment for music lovers in West Central Michigan. Ticket sales, donations and advertising revenues from local businesses and community supporters allow them to bring their music to their friends and neighbors.

The **Heart of Michigan Chorus** was founded in 1955, just 10 years after the first Sweet Adelines chorus was chartered. Comprised of women of all ages, from teens to women in their golden years, The Heart of Michigan truly embraces Michigan's heart. They meet at Shepherd High school in Shepherd, MI during the school year, and often meet at the air-conditioned St. Louis Baptist Church (located in the geographic center, or heart, of Michigan) during the heat of summer. Members range from as far north as Mt. Pleasant, south as Ithaca, east as Big Rapids, and west as Breckenridge. The chapter has remained competitive and active in their communities, putting on a yearly fall show, giving community performances, and raising funds to give music scholarships which allow interested high school students the opportunity to attend summer programs such as Harmony Explosion and Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp.

# For the Joy

Barbershoppers have always been more than just hobbyists. From the earliest days, our Code of Ethics has declared "The Society aspires to preserve for its members and for all future generations of prospective members the sacred right of men to seek haven from the burden of their daily cares through indulgence in old-fashioned vocal quartet harmony."



Marty Monson, CEO  
Barbershop Harmony Society

"We do this for the joy that comes from singing.

**For the joy** that comes from genuine friendships.

**For the joy** that comes from joining together.

**For the joy** that comes from making a difference in people's lives. "



## HEART OF MICHIGAN

### Womens Chorus

GENRE - BARBERSHOP

HOME TOWN - SHEPHERD MI

MEET - MONDAYS 7:00 PM

LOCATION - SHEPHERD MIDDLE SCHOOL

DIRECTOR - PAULA HARPER

CONTACT BAMBI HOWARD (423) 903-3913



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# You Can Sing Too!

**The MountainTown Singers use technology and talent to help every singer improve and succeed.**

Chorus members do not need to read music to participate in and enjoy success in the group. The chapter utilizes some modern tools and practices that allow everyone to learn music effectively between rehearsals. Most members are able to memorize new songs introduced to the chorus in a few weeks time.

Musical leadership is the key. MTS is blessed to have a core group of members with musical training who are always willing to contribute and teach. Learning how to sing properly and comfortably is part of our culture. The director and assistant directors are regularly in front of the group, but several others help behind the scenes. Additionally, the group employs coaches and clinicians on a regular basis to help improve the chorus.

You can sing and enjoy the fellowship and community service of this fine group too. Many current members will tell you that they weren't sure they would fit in when they first decided to visit the chapter on a Wednesday night. They were simply curious. Some become involved, others don't, but they all agree that MTS is a great bunch of welcoming gentlemen.

---

**The chapter is continually seeking men with an interest in singing and encourages them to visit our meetings and events. We meet most Wednesday evenings in the CMU school of Music beginning at 6:30pm.**

***All Are Welcome!***



When asked, Jeff Rayburn will tell you that he joined the Barbershop Harmony Society at age 6. He recently received his membership renewal from the Society listing 42 years of service. Actually Jeff joined at age 16 and has never looked back. He is one of the founding members of the MountainTown Singers. *"Not only does music enrich my life in ways words can't describe,*



*but the camaraderie and friendships I have made over the last 42 years has been immeasurable to my well-being!"* said Rayburn. ***"These guys have become my second family, my brothers in song!"***



Jim Dunn was one of the first students to attend our summer camp. His experience at camp and his interest in science brought him to CMU where he earned his undergrad degree in bio-chemistry. He was recognized as a McNair Scholar at CMU and has since earned his masters degree at Ohio State University.

*"I came to CMU hoping to find a group that would let me keep singing in my life even though I wasn't a music major"* said Dunn. *"MTS gave me just that and so much more than I could have ever imagined. Being a part of this chorus has given me support and confidence that has bled through to every part of my life."*

***"MTS has given me a family of brothers that I will remember wherever I go in life."***

In January of 2013 a hesitant Dennis Williams accepted an invitation from one of our members. He had only recently sung in a Christmas chorus for the first time and he just liked to sing around the house.



Here is what he has to say about being a MountainTown Singer. *"This great group of gentleman has been fun to be with every week and the opportunity to add my voice in song is pure joy". I cannot read music, but the learning tracks on MP3 teach me all I need to know. I learn the rest at practice. "At age 60 I have finally found a way to express myself musically."*



# 2016 ANNUAL REPORT

**2016** turned out to be a transitional year for the MountainTown Singers as the chapter worked through unexpected turnover in the critical position of Musical Director. The year began with interim co-directors until a new director was hired in February. Over the following few months it became clear that the new director was not going to be the right fit for the chorus and the group once again returned to interim co-directors.

Assistant directors, Jeff Rayburn and Jim Whitten led the chorus into the fall season, the fall barbershop contest, and the Christmas season, with the assistance of member, Kyle Howard. The search for the next musical director took place during the fall.

Kyle was hired as the Musical Director in December of 2016. Howard is a music educator and an eager student of barbershop style performance. His biography for Kyle can be seen on page 4 of this publication.

July featured the 6<sup>th</sup> annual **MountainTown Harmony Explosion Camp** at Central Michigan University. 47 young singers experienced three days of vocal training, focused rehearsals and social interactions. Top clinicians Jacob "Puck" Ross and Erin Cook were assisted by teaching quartets, The Con Men and the Singamajigs.

Included within the camp schedule was the chapter's Accappellapalooza 5" show. The Friday evening event included the first ever collaboration with area Sweet Adeline choruses. The Heart of Michigan and Crossroads Harmony Chorus groups joined the MountainTown Singers and the two camp quartets to present a wonderful show that was enjoyed by the Harmony Explosion campers and the general public. The camp concluded with a spectacular show of barbershop by the campers and camp quartets in the Staples Family Concert Hall on Saturday evening.

The MountainTown Singers' summer season was spent honing the contest set for October under the leadership of Rayburn and Whitten and the coaching of Cindy Hansen. The group also performed at the St. John's summer concert series and a made a group of other public appearances.

November and December featured a number of appearances utilizing the chorus' holiday music repertoire in area assisted living facilities. The chorus also led the singing for the annual Christmas Sing in downtown Mt. Pleasant the first week of December at the invitation of the City of Mt. Pleasant.



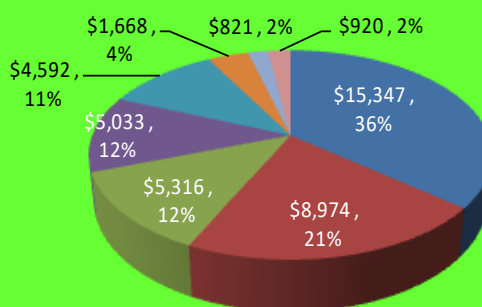
## Financial Snapshot

### Chapter Income



Youth Camp	\$ 15,586
Raffle Sales	\$ 13,931
Overtones Ad Sales	\$ 6,720
Paid Performances	\$ 4,310
Social Fund	\$ 1,636
Member Dues	\$ 630
Donations/Grants	\$ 554
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 43,367</b>

### Chapter Expenses



Youth Camp	\$ 15,347
Raffle Prizes	\$ 8,974
Performance	\$ 5,316
Outreach & PR	\$ 5,033
Member Training	\$ 4,592
Staff	\$ 1,668
Operations	\$ 821
Social Fund	\$ 920
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 42,671</b>

## 2016

Beginning Fund Balance	\$ 2,608
Fund Reserve - HX Scholarship	\$ 1,354
Revenue Over (Under) Expenses	\$ 694
<b>Year End Fund Balance</b>	<b>\$ 4,656</b>



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# Children Are Natural Musicians

A Hungarian film titled "Sing" recently won the Oscar for best short film. "Sing" tells the story of young Zsófi, who joins a renowned children's choir at her elementary school where "everyone is welcome." Soon after joining, Zsófi is told by her teacher Erika not to sing, but only mouth the words. On the face of it, she accepts her teacher's request stoically. But later in the movie, her anguish and pain become obvious, when she reluctantly tells her best friend what happened.

The movie goes on to reveal that Zsófi isn't the only choir member who has been given these hurtful instructions. The choir teacher's defense is, "If everybody sings, we can't be the best." I have been a professor of music education for the past 28 years, and I wish I could say that the story of a music teacher asking a student not to sing is unusual. Unfortunately, I have heard the story many times.

In fact, research shows that many adults who think of themselves as "unmusical" were told as children that they couldn't or shouldn't sing by teachers and family members.

## **All children are musical**

Children are natural musicians, as they readily sing, dance and play music from the time they are infants. People ask me all the time how they can tell if their child has musical talent. I assure them that their child – indeed every child – has musical ability that can be developed into a satisfying and lifelong relationship with music.

However, as they get older, some children begin to get messages from peers, family members, the media and (unfortunately) music teachers that they may not be very musical – that they don't have "talent."

## **The 'talent' mindset**

Shows like American Idol have promoted the notion that singing is a rare ability reserved for the talented few, and that those without such talent entertain us only by being ridiculed and weeded out.

This "talent mindset" of music runs counter to what psychologist Carol Dweck calls the "growth mindset" that is considered critical for learning: Students who view their success as a result of hard work will persevere through challenges, while students who believe their success lies with some innate ability – like "talent" – are more likely to give up.

My own research found that if children have a negative view of themselves as singers, they are much less likely to participate in music of any kind.

These self-perceptions of a lack of musical talent can then become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Research shows that adults who dropped out of music as children may lose their singing skills through lack of use and opportunity.

Kids who love music but do not think of themselves as musical could miss out on many of the social and cognitive benefits of music participation, on the experience of feeling connected to others through song. These benefits have nothing to do with talent.

## **Get children singing**



How can we send children the message that singing is for everyone? I argue that change could begin both at home and at school.

For example, if you are a parent, you could sing the music you loved growing up and not worry about how good you sound. Having an adult in the home committed to music and singing without shame may be the most powerful influence on a child. You could sing with your kids from the time they are little, sing with the radio, sing in the car or sing at the dinner table.

As for my fellow music teachers, I ask that you encourage all of the children in your classrooms, schools and communities to sing whenever and wherever they get a chance. The sad truth is, when we, the musical experts, discourage a child from singing, it can deliver a fatal blow to the child's musical self-image.

Music teachers need to teach in a climate of collaboration and participation where all voices are heard and valued – not one of audition and competition where only the best can sing.

The movie "Sing" is actually titled "Mindenki" in Hungarian, which means "Everybody." That's the uplifting message that Zsófi and her choir mates teach Miss Erika in the end. Singing is not reserved for the few: Either everybody sings or nobody should.

*Steven M. Demorest is Professor of Music Education at Northwestern University*

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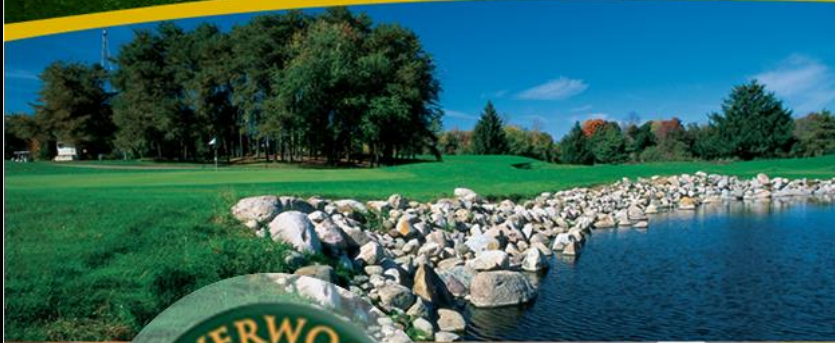


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