

2006-07 ON-SITE REVIEW PROGRAM REVIEW FORM

Name of Organization/Artist: Seattle SeaChordsmen (Barbershop Harmony Society)

Title of Event: **Winter Program entitled: "That Christmas Feeling"**

Date/Time of Site Visit: **December 16, 2006, Saturday, 3:04 pm**

Location: **Ballard High School Theatre, 1418 NW 65th St. Seattle, WA**



1. Describe the event, performance, program or exhibition

This was a Christmas holiday musical performance by a Seattle-based barbershop group called the SeaChordsmen with guest male and female singing groups from the Seattle area. All songs were Christmas numbers sung in the barbershop musical style in quartet to larger chorus sizes of at least 31 members. Male singers were dressed in bow tie suits with shiny black patent shoes, and female singers in sequined red vests and black pants for the holiday spirit. A master of ceremony kept the audience entertained while stage sets were changed and choruses prepared for their program numbers. The pace was set well between songs, groups, and intermission. Audience participation was encouraged by singing leaders and set into the program just after intermission (a creative programming touch!).

2. Quality and Community Impact (*may refer to any of the following: Technical Skills—i.e. the content, choreography, score, or exhibit; Relationship of the Work to the Mission of the Organization; Creative Innovation; Presentation of Performance, Exhibit, etc.—i.e. performance or exhibit design; direction; production design; etc.; Ability to Fill a Niche in Community—i.e. offering something not previously widely available in the community, etc.; Educational Nature of Programming—i.e. program notes, introduction or narration, pre/post discussions or lectures, etc.; Community Support—i.e. involvement of community members in performance or organization, sponsorship or partnerships noted, etc.*)

The Seattle SeaChordsmen and barbershop guest groups were received well by a nicely rounded out audience. Older supporters and lovers of barbershop style chorale singing were present along with younger people enthused to hear and experience this music style. An information table in the lobby manned by staff of the "Harmony Explosion Northwest 2007" summer camp for youth, opened an educational opportunity for young people to learn and participate in a barbershop performance to be held at the Pacific Lutheran University in July, 2007. I spoke with the directors of this camp. I was quite impressed with the history, growth and mission of camp organizers to involve young people in the singing arts. It is significant to note how the SeaChordsmen gave a generous supportive check of \$1200 to this camp for scholarships.

The program was varied between audience participation singing a delightful rendition of the "Twelve Days of Christmas" with twelve SeaChordsmen holding up signs to help everyone sing each verse, to performance of group numbers. The Sweet Adelines Seattle Shores (female group), and the Harmony Kings from Federal Way sang songs like "Santa Baby" and "Frosty the Snowman." Both male barbershop choruses performed together to the delight of the audience with songs like "Jingle Bell Rock" and "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas." The variety and holiday song choices were delightful and fun.

The SeaChordsmen generously supported the Seattle barbershop community with public acknowledgement to the Federal Way Harmony Kings and with financial support to the Seattle Shores to

help them with travel expenses to an international competition in 2007. Sponsorship and partnering with other musical groups shows strong commitment by the SeaChordsmen to their craft.

3. Facility (*Suitability of the performance or exhibition space; Public Spaces and Amenities; Accessibility, etc.*)

The Ballard High School Theatre is a spacious, accommodating space for a performance such as this. Plentiful parking was available behind the high school building and on the street near the front entrance. Being on a main thoroughfare, the high school is an easy venue to find if someone has never been to it before. The auditorium inside was less well marked but close to the main entrance to the building.

Theatre stage acoustics and lighting were good, audience views of the stage excellent from any seat, seating was comfortable, and ease of access for audience members excellent. Amenities were well directed by signage and located close by. The lobby was somewhat crowded at intermission for the auction set up by the organizers, which indicated an excellent audience turn-out for this late afternoon Saturday program.

4. Audience (*Size of Audience; Demographics; Age of Audience; Relation to Community; etc.*)

The auditorium was almost full for this performance (I was impressed with the number of people who came to this event, considering the post- wind storm, power outage conditions still found in the Seattle area). Audience demographics consisted of a predominantly Caucasian ethnic and racial composition, with the average age of 65 years. As I looked at the crowd, I could see many white-haired individuals, both male and female, scattered throughout. An occasional family was in attendance with children dressed up for the holidays, ranging in age from six to seventeen years. As for family demographics, there was a predominance of couples over single individuals and families with one or more children.

During intermission I noted several people of Far Eastern descent walking around the lobby. Otherwise, the audience was almost entirely older and racially homogenous.

5. Other Considerations (*Diversity of Participants—i.e. age, ethnicity, special populations; Marketing—i.e. promotion at event, program, etc.; Coordination—flow of event, event staff and volunteers, etc.; Additional Comments.*)

I was very warmly welcomed by volunteers and event organizers. A feeling of strong community, family, and friends created a wonderfully open atmosphere for anyone familiar with the barbershop community and most especially, anyone new to it. The commitment, dedication, creativity, and cooperation shown by the SeaChordsmen and their guest singers, shows outstanding support, integrity, and joyfulness for a musical endeavor that greatly contributes to the artistic education, learning and enjoyment of all who participate here in the Seattle area.

The printed program nicely provided information about sponsors, performers, event organizers and the Chapter President Pete Gasparrelli. I appreciated the effort that went into its production.

I strongly recommend funding be given to the SeaChordsmen to continue their artistic and educational endeavors.

SITE REVIEWER: _____

DATE: 12/29/06