

## **Give Me That Barbershop Style**

### **Karen Breidert**

**What makes our style unique?**

- 1. Four-part harmony**
- 2. Harmony characterized by:**
  - a. Strong bass line**
  - b. Melody in an internal part**
  - c. Complete chords, no non-chords**
  - d. Mostly major triads, dominant 7ths and dominant 9ths with other chords used in passing and as demanded by the implied harmony**
  - e. Traditional harmonic movement and resolutions**
- 3. Melodies are memorable**
- 4. Rhythmic interest as a vital part of an uptune**
- 5. Clear form, sections like intro/verse/chorus are easily discerned by the listener**
- 6. Lyrics are clear and always understandable (and “g-rated”)**
- 7. Properly tuned chords and cone-shaped sound create overtones**

- 8. Requires great energy and physical involvement from the singer**
- 9. The artistic potential is unlimited since performers are not bound to the printed music**
- 10. It is emotionally satisfying to both the listener and the performer**
- 11. Emphasis on vowels rather than consonants, connected sound**
- 12. It is challenging to perform because:**
  - a. Great vocal skill is required – usually by amateurs**
  - b. All chords must be heard with clarity, requiring singers to sing with precision**
  - c. Requires unity of vowels, dynamics, inflections**
  - d. Synchronization required of four singers or more**
  - e. It is unaccompanied**
  - f. It is memorized**

## GUIDELINES FOR SELECTING MUSIC

- Singable melody and strong implied harmony
- Controllable singing range
- Chords enhance lyrics and rise and fall naturally to promote a dynamic plan
- Lyrics are interesting and easy to articulate
- Creative embellishments that fit your group's abilities
- Logical breathing spots that promote forward motion
- Introduction sets up story well and tag is dramatic or fulfilling
- Musical and lyrical high points congruent
- Key changes easily heard and sung
- Time Signature - Uptune must remain in tempo for most of the song. Ballad in ad lib style must still remain in the basic rhythmic framework.
- Medleys need to have continuity and be musically and logically satisfying

# **INTERPRETING A BALLAD**

## **Karen Breidert**

**READ IT ALOUD, AS A POEM**

**LEARN LEAD LINE**

**LISTEN FOR THE MESSAGE, THE HIGH POINT(S),  
THE STRONG CHORDS, THE BEAUTY OF THE  
MELODY**

**LEARN OTHER THREE PARTS**

**LISTEN FOR SWIPES, ECHOES, MOVES THAT  
CARRY ACROSS THE BAR LINE**

**LISTEN TO RECORDINGS BY GROUPS WHO  
HAVE PERFORMED THIS SONG**

**USE RESOURCES: OTHER DIRECTORS,  
QUARTET MEMBERS, JUDGES**

**TEACH TO A SMALL GROUP FIRST**

## BUILDING YOUR REPERTOIRE

### Karen Breidert

OPENER

SOLO

CLOSER

NOVELTY/COMEDY

CONTEST UPTUNE

GOSPEL

CONTEST BALLAD

COUNTRY/WESTERN

NON-CONTEST UPTUNE

HOLIDAY/SEASONAL

NON-CONTEST BALLAD

PATRIOTIC

SWING

REGL/INTL/INTERNAL