



Attacks and Releases

Official News Publication of the Illinois District, a state of close harmony

Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America, Inc.

IDAH Makeover

by Craig Rigg

The old girl is getting a few wrinkles and some gray hair, so IDAH decided its time for a make-over. The changes were cosmetic, but the underlying value and dignity still remain and show promise for many more years.

From the marrow-freezing early days in the chilly silo of Urbana's Hilton to the caverns of Peoria's Holiday-Downtown-City-Centre-Inn-whatever-it's-called, IDAH (the Illinois District Academy of Harmony), took a turn March 13 toward Bloomington, this time at the Double Tree hotel located right off I-55. While the numbers didn't reach the 200-plus groups that met when IDAH was first born, a respectable number of barbershoppers showed up for some one-on-one help in improving their craft.

I say one-on-one because three-quarters or so of those in attendance received coaching either in a chorus or in a quartet. Three small choruses received intensive, two-hour sessions with some of the finest music minds in Illinois and beyond. Fifteen quartets also polished their acts with the assistance of a host of coaches.

The facilities were first-rate. Almost everything was located on one floor even though a few quartets had to traverse a flight of stairs to reach their coaching



Mark Hale works with the **Brotherhood of Harmony** as director Matt MacFayden (right) takes in the advice

rooms. The meeting rooms for the choruses suffered a little from close proximity; no hotel's sliding curtains are ever good enough to prevent sound spilling over to adjacent rooms. The classes each had rooms sufficiently private and yet close to the main area. The food service consisted of an amply-

stocked boxed lunch and a full-course evening meal. In all, the Double Tree facilities were just about perfect for this size of group. However, had more non-chorus/quartet students attended, some of the rooms would have been pushing capacity.

The day started with a general session, at which chief organizers Don Smit and Jeff Bowyer outlined the plan for the day. Don and Jeff have been working well together with plans to get more men to music schools, whether it be parts parties or IDAH. Then came one of the main attractions of the weekend: **Masterpiece** quartet from the Far Western District was the guest clinicians. With lead Mark Hale, who directs the gold-medal **Masters of Harmony** chorus, taking charge, the quartet taught the student body an updated Society Free n Easy arrangement of Sleep Kentucky Babe. Using a modified quartet-method, **Masterpiece** soon had the attendees singing the song not only note-correct but also mood and inflection correct.



Top: Tom Woodall demonstrates a vowel sound to members of Bureau County's chorus
 Bottom: Wayne Wright stresses a phrasing issue to members of the Greater Rockford chorus

IDA H CHORUSES

Lake County **Brotherhood of Harmony**
 Bureau County **Covered Bridge Chorus**
 Greater Rockford Barbershop Chorus

IDA H Quartets

Memories for Life
 Heartland Harmony
 Exit 190
 Off the Record
 Cruise Control
 Sound Opportunity
 Chord Sellers
 True Blue
 Ovation
 Gadzooks
 Catch-22
 Solid Ground
 Upside Downers
 Convertibles
 Midtown Sound

This old chestnut from our musical past soon turned from just a gang-sing/chord-worship vehicle into a song with delicacy and haunting harmonies.

For the rest of the day, the choruses and quartets immersed themselves in the coaching experience. Fortunately, because of the single-day format, the number of coaching sessions was limited, which meant that the groups weren't inundated with contrasting, even contradictory coaching suggestions. The "less is more" philosophy prevailed. Any group who has been through multi-day coaching sessions (former IDAHS as well as Harmony College) can attest to the strain that comes from trying to absorb too much, too fast.

IDA H Coaches

Dave Boo
 Mark Kever
 Mike O'Donnell
 Tim Woodall
 Bob Cearnal
 Rich Knight
 Ron Rank
 Tom Woodall
 Jay Giallombardo
 Terry Ludwig
 Joe Sullivan
 Wayne Wright

Masterpiece

Mark Hale
 Brett Littlefield
 Ron Menaker
 Alan Gordon

While the bulk of the student body was working in collective groups, a few brave individuals signed up for specific courses in vocal production, barbershop history, chapter development, and show production. Of these four offerings, vocal production, taught by Dan Signor, drew the largest crowd, as rightly it should. Dan put his group through a variety of vocal training experiences but also took time to demonstrate subtle differences in singing style through videos of competitive quartets and choruses. He and his students even joined forces with one of the chorus coaching sessions to witness theory being put to practice.

Down the hall, Steve Shannon brought his years of expertise to help about half-a-dozen men learn more about growing a chapter, primarily in numbers and satisfaction. Next to his room, the master showman Syl Wetle worked with a small group to plan, promote, and stage more effective music presentations. These two sessions covered the heart and soul of our barbershop organization.



Top: Terry Ludwig listens to **Chord Sellers**
Bottom: Rich Knight encourages **Off the Record**



Top: Dan Signor advises vocal production students
Bottom: Steve Shannon (right in black) and his class discuss ways to rejuvenate chapters

Sadly, the smallest of the classes was on barbershop history. Grady Kerr, who came from Texas, passed along some fascinating lore, a little about the Illinois District and much more about the Society, to a student body of one! Too often, barbershoppers seem to shy away from history courses, but the work of David Wright and of Grady Kerr should remind all of us that barbershopping has a heritage that in some ways clarifies the way we are evolving as a singing organization. Kerr brought with him some priceless Society mementos as well as graphic and audio materials. If you're not familiar with Grady Kerr's work, go to the Association of International Cham-

At the evening show, QCA representative Joe Sullivan presented \$100 checks to the first 10 quartets that had registered for IDAH:

- Memories 4 You
- Upside Downers
- Heartland Harmony
- Catch-22
- Exit 190
- Ovation
- Sound Opportunity
- Chord Sellers
- Midtown Sound
- Solid Ground

pion's website www.aicgold.com and click on his video tributes to long-ago champion quartets "AIC Videos on YouTube." These video productions have become one of the highlights of every international convention. You'll also find there his heart-felt video tribute to Illinois District legend Buzz Haeger.

Perhaps the only drawback to the day-long session was the down-time between the last general session and the evening meal. Perhaps everyone needed a rest before the food and the show, but with nowhere to go and no rooms to crash in, 150+ men just sort of milled around in the hotel, several of them at the bar. Steve Shannon held a brief tag singing session, and Dan Signor played some more of his video collection of top choruses and quartets, both men's and women's.

Though we had to share facilities with a next-door Girl Scout confabulation (more for the adult organizers than for girls), the evening meal and show rounded out a great day of barbershopping. Because of time, all of the coached quartets and choruses did not demonstrate what they had learned. Fifteen quartets and three choruses would have extended the show far beyond the scheduled 8:30 closing time. However, Bloomington's **Sound of Illinois** chorus did manage to tux-up about 60 singers to put on a brief show as a reminder of their representing the Illinois District in Philadelphia this summer. Following them came our district champion **Off the Record**, and to round out the evening **Masterpiece** demonstrated why they are one of the top quartets in the Society.

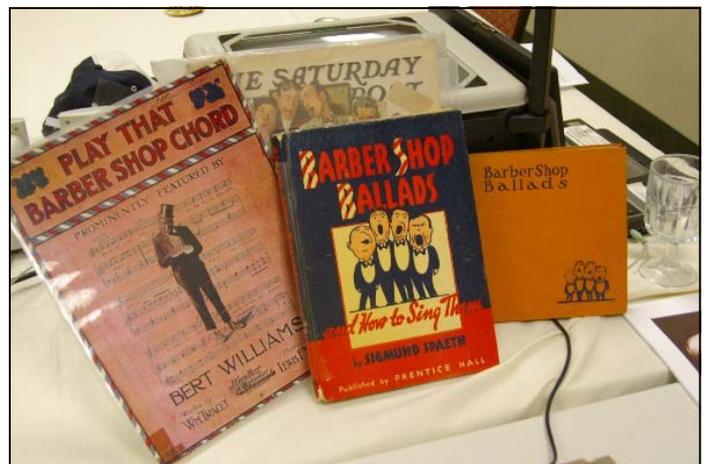
Surely, Jeff and Don are already planning next year's IDAH, in all likelihood at the Double Tree in Bloomington. They've made efforts to update our version of Harmony College, and they're sure to come up with even more innovations for next

year. IDAH isn't growing old gracefully: she, like fine wine, just keeps getting better with age.

Kerr displayed these cherished medals (on loan from the Society) from the first quartet contest back in 1939.



Grady Kerr (right) explaining some historical background to Jim Brotheridge (center) and Dick Johnson (left)



Kerr's collection of barbershop memorabilia





Bloomington's **Sound of Illinois** chorus delights the after-dinner crowd



Off the Record



Everybody has to learn the notes sometime — some singers polish “Sleep Kentucky Babe”

IDAH coordinators Don Smit (left) and Jeff Bowyer (right), who incidentally just happens to have some raffle tickets for a stained glass barber-shop *object d'art* that will be on display at the spring convention



Masterpiece

An IDAH Perspective

by Bob Squires

How do you measure success? For those in attendance at IDAH 2010, it came in waves. For some, it seemed to be a tsunami. For others, they were crashing breakers. And yet for others, it lapped at their feet.

For many of you out there, you didn't even get wet! Not even the mist of a tag or a few drops of an echoing chord. That's too bad. For me to tell our non-attendees that you really missed another great district musical event would be like shouting over the roar of another crashing wave.

Some of you have never heard of IDAH. Those of you who have heard could care less. That's too bad. Too bad for you and too bad for your chapter. Your chapter will remain musically unchanged and unchallenged for another year. Ideas will go unattended. Musical progress will creep along at the same snail's pace. Attitudes will lie dormant. You can't even smell the ocean and the music it makes. That's really too bad.

One of the many goals your district board is committed to support includes providing its members with opportunities to grow musically on both individual and chapter levels. One of the major opportunities lies in our annual district wide music school called IDAH, the Illinois District Academy of Harmony. Other musical and educational opportunities can be found in venues such as our Chapter Officer Training schools, the Quartet Promotion activities, chapter director development through CDWI's and various clinics and workshops throughout the year.

The success of these programs depends on the support of its members. That's you ! Those chapters, their quartets and their choruses that have attended these schools in the past know and understand the many benefits provided by the excellent staff of instructors and talented coaches. They return home with renewed vigor and the skills both musical and technical that will provide musical and educational growth for their chapters.

Over half of our district chapter -- that's 54 percent -- chose not to attend IDAH 2010. They didn't get wet. They didn't even smell the ocean. They were the losers. IDAH is not for quartets and choruses that want to compete. The classes that were offered were not chosen at random just for something to do on a Saturday afternoon..

I would guarantee that the quartets, the choruses and the class attendees left Bloomington with the skills that will make them better performers in their home communities and with ideas that will help attract new members to their chapters. How about you? Will it be another year of same old, same old? IDAH returns again in 2011. Come on in. The water's fine !

Historically Speaking

A Call To All Chapters

by Bob Squires

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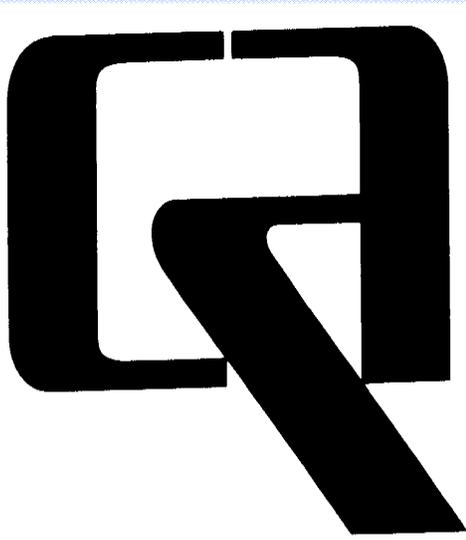
Even though 2013 is a few years away, the time is now for every chapter to start preparing for the Barbershop Harmony Society's 75th anniversary.

If you have not done so already, I would ask every chapter to put together its chapter history. A written record of each chapter should be a priority for every chapter board. Hopefully, your chapter records will have been preserved by someone with a passion for keeping those records in order.

Your chapter history should include a copy of your chapter charter, along with a list of chapter board members through the years, including a history of chorus directors. Photos of your board members, directors, chorus directors and chapter quartets should also be included. Ideally, someone in the chapter should attempt to put together a time line of significant chapter events that have occurred through the years.

I would like to include several chapter histories for a display at our spring and fall conventions. If your chapter already has a chapter history display in place, or if your chapter would like help in putting together a project of this type, please give me a call or send me an email. I will help in whatever way I can. District records may include several historical records for your chapter.

Don't wait. Start planning now.



The Illinois District Quartet Champions Association (QCA) will be selling the remaining Illinois District Champions CD sets at the Illinois District 2010 Spring Convention in Peoria. Look for the QCA display at the convention registration table at the Pere Marquette. The sale price is only \$5 for the two-CD set. Proceeds will be used by the QCA to support and promote Illinois District quartetting. This may be your final opportunity to own a part of Illinois Barbershop history.

Interleaved YIH Contest Huge Success

by John Jeide

The 2nd Annual YIH Contest at Huntley High School on Sunday, February 7, 2010 proved an experimental concept to be great, especially on Super Bowl Sunday.

The 2010 **YIH** contest consisted of high school students, both boys and girls groups, in quartets or ensembles (no mixed groups). The **Arlingtones** began this segment of competition of barbershop music in 1997. In 2006, they welcomed the girls to join the contest venue. The contest followed the regular sequence we use for our Illinois District Barbershop Harmony Society. All of the boys groups, ensembles followed by quartets, competed with BHS judges. Then the girls competed with lady judges from Sweet Adelines.

The bane of all barbershop contests is the “bad” jokes. We have the choice of jokes or silence while the judges perform the paperwork section of their job and prepare for the next group.

The staff from Region 3 Sweet Adelines and the YIH committee from Elgin Chapter of BHS met after the 2009 contest and agreed to try the “interleaved” or alternating arrangement of contestants. It would require the same personnel doing the same tasks. The timing of those tasks is all that changed.

The contest started with last year's girls champion quartet **Have you heard of the cone?** from Huntley HS. Then the first girl's quartet took center stage and the SAI judges (Carol Thompson, Lynda Keever, Sherry Berkley, Sybil Perkins) started their evaluation. As **Quadrophobia** finished singing and exited the stage, the first boys quartet was waiting for their turn.

After about one minute, **Billy and the Kids** arrived at the microphones, and it was time for the BHS judges (Greg Caetano, Bob Squires, Wayne Wright) to do their thing. As **Billy and the Kids** finished, left the stage, and returned to their seats in the audience, the **Jaw Droppers** were waiting at the bottom of the stairs for their chance to shine.

We only had eight quartets from two high schools (Barrington and Huntley) this year. Woodstock dropped out at the last week due to conflicts with the Super Bowl.

Before a 10-minute break was announced, evaluation forms were distributed to the students and their teachers and tutors. These forms will be forwarded to the Harmony Foundation in Nashville and used as a basis for funding the Youth In Harmony effort at the chapter level. Twenty-six high schools were invited to participate, but only four chose to do so.

Emcee Bill Miller had the house lights dimmed and the ensemble section of the contest started using the same process. Six groups from Huntley, Grant, Elk Grove and Barrington then entertained the appreciative audience. The last two ensembles were both girls, so Bill was able to use only two of his long list of jokes. *Too bad.*

Rush Street, 2008 BHS Illinois District Champs, and **Chi-Town Sound**, 2008 SAI Region 3 Champs, then wowed the crowd with about 25 minutes of wonderful sound.

Then it was time for the winners to be announced. The SAI staff presented for the girls. Finally it was time for Bill Ward (Northern Illinois YIH Chairman) and me (John Jeide, Elgin Chapter YIH VP) to present the awards and checks to the winners.

(**Interleaved**, continued on next page)

Quartets:

Four of a Kind – Barrington -- 1st (invited to Peoria April 17th District contest)

The Parting of the "C's" - Huntley -- 2nd

Billy and the Kids – Barrington -- 3rd

Ensembles:

Men in Blend – Barrington – 1st

Grant Barbershop Ensemble - Grant – 2nd

The groups arrived at Huntley HS at 1 p.m. and were directed to their warm-up rooms. At 1:45 the contestants were assembled in the auditorium and given the rules and regulation for the contest. The actual contest started at 2 p.m., and the stage was empty by 4:30. This was over an hour shorter than the 2009 contest with the same number of groups performing.

Comments from attendees indicated that it was more like a “concert” than a “contest.” We will be sponsoring the 2011 contest on the second Sunday afternoon in February at Huntley HS. We have already contacted three more schools promoting barbershop singing. We used a sneaky method. We delivered "Singing Valentines" to the principal and music educators at the school. Our thanks to Gregory Grey and James Estes for their support with the YIH effort.

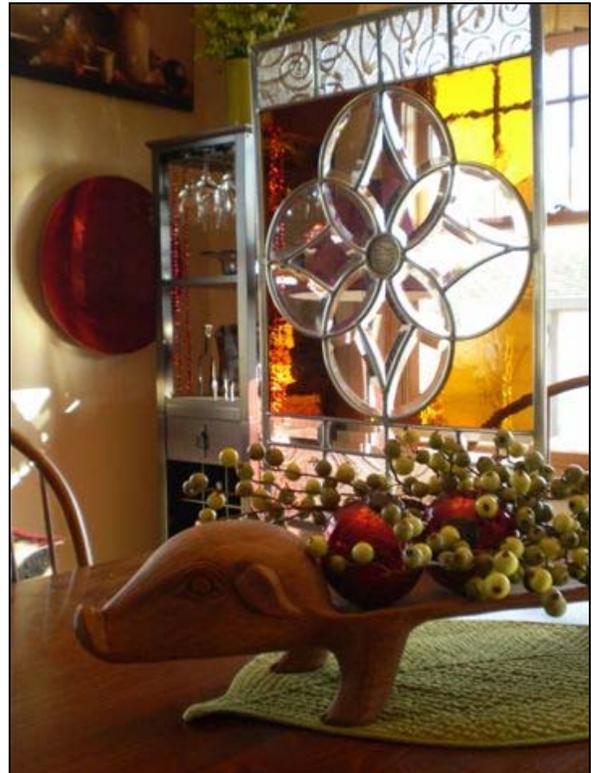
Keep the Whole World Singing!

Strained glass art raffle

Benefactor: The Illinois District. More than 150 men who attend IDAH in Bloomington on March 13 got the chance to get their raffle tickets early. No doubt, that wouldn't have happened if not for the imaginative ideas and creative talents of Marsha Bowyer.

Last year Marsha, wife of Jeff Bowyer (Coles County Past President and Illinois District Co-VP Music and Performance) made a beautiful piece of stained glass art. It was taken to the Illinois Spring Convention/Contest, and the raffle earned more than \$1,300, which was promptly earmarked (expenses for coaches and performers) for the resurging IDAH program. Hopefully, that amount will be exceeded this year.

Marsha's creation is completed for the 2010 Peoria Convention (April 16-17), and Jeff is already selling tickets (1 = \$5, 2 = \$10, 7 tickets = \$20) by mail. The winner need not be present at the drawing to win -- the piece will be shipped. All proceeds will benefit IDAH (Illinois District Academy of Harmony).



Black vocal harmony

While surfing the 'net one afternoon, we came across this site:

<http://indianapublicmedia.org/nightlights/black-vocal-harmony-groups-of-the-1930s-and-1940s/>

Warning: You may have to key in the hyphens for the title of the program if your cut and paste method doesn't work.

What followed was an enjoyable hour of music, with strong connection to the barbershop movement. Following is the text that promoted the program:

"The highly successful **Mills Brothers** inspired a large number of African-American singing ensembles in the decades of the Great Depression and the Second World War. Using only their voices and sometimes sparse instrumentation (guitars or tipples, which were a 10-stringed kind of ukulele), these groups combined jazz, pop, and gospel to produce recordings and styles that anticipated the rise of R & B, rock n roll, and doo-wop in the 1950s.

"We'll hear the **Spirits of Rhythm** (featuring legendary hipster and scatter Leo Watson), the **Golden Gate Quartet** (who helped pioneer the jubilee gospel sound), the **Four Vagabonds** (an important transitional group between the jazz-jive vocal groups of the late 1930s and the black R & B groups of the 1950s), **Cats and the Fiddle**, the **Ravens** (their 1947 recording of "Ol' Man River" included a bass vocal lead by Jimmy Ricks that served as a harbinger of the doo-wop movement to come), and more. There's more on black vocal harmony groups here, and you can also watch the **Golden Gate Quartet** doing "Hit the Road to Dreamland" with Mary Martin and Dick Powell (from the 1942 movie *Star Spangled Rhythm*).

"Anybody who listens to rap can't help but notice how the **Golden Gate Quartet** and the jubilee gospel quarteting sound of the 1930s and 1940s are part of today's urban hip-hop sound."

If you like jazz of any kind, this site presents a plethora of programming for the jazz enthusiast.



Jeff and Marsha Bowyer(left) pose with Bob and Nellie Zinkel (South Cook Chapter), the winners of the 2009 barbershop stained glass piece designed and crafted by Marsha.

B-flat singing

by Tom Woodall

Though I know most of you, there are a few men I've not met -- yet. I hope that changes soon.

I'm a 47-year Illinois District member, director of the Coles County Chorus, quartet winger, long time certified judge, and recently appointed to be the Quartet Promotions Chairman for the Illinois District.

We've had a couple of nice events in the past six months. Last August, we hosted the Parts and Partners Party in which 41 men and 26 wives took part. Last September, at the fall convention/contest, we sponsored a Sing With A Champ event and had some 25 guys from around the district come and enjoy meeting new singing friends and ringing some chords with the champs from years gone by.

On Saturday, April 17, we will try a brand new event A "Half Hour of B-flat Singing." Will you PLEASE pass this information along to the men in your chapter. If you will be in a competing chorus, I'm hoping that your chorus director and president will see their way clear so as to avoid the 9:00 to 9:30 a.m. time window (some choruses schedule Saturday morning rehearsals) so that your guys can take part. This event is open to all Illinois District singers — no costs — just some good old-fashioned fun.

Thank you in advance for helping to support and encourage more quartet singing in Illinois.

SATURDAY, APRIL 17TH 9:00 A.M. PERE MARQUETTE HOTEL PEORIA
A HALF HOUR OF B FLAT SINGING AN OVERVIEW

While in the Pere Marquette Hotel, men will stop at the site (hallway, or perhaps just inside the door of the ball room next to the registration desk) where guys pick up badges and prepaid contest tickets. A large poster will be positioned with a list of at least 30 barbershop songs (mostly Barberpole Cat-type) displayed. Singers check in with me (the starter) and I'll put them in a foursome to sing the next song (we'll have some music, but would rather not use it unless absolutely necessary) on the list.

They may sing the entire song (depending on how many guys we have waiting, or they may get bumped after eight bars). Then they are eligible to be placed in another quartet, within a minute or two. We blow a B-flat pitch periodically, hoping to keep that key feeling for 30 minutes.

The purpose of the event is:

1. to create fun and fellowship with other men (some of whom you won't know)
2. to provide an opportunity for chorus singers, who may not currently be singing, or ever have sung in a contest quartet; of course, current contest quartet men are eligible
3. to create a little excitement in the weekend so that it isn't just singing/listening to contest performances.

WE ARE NOT TRYING FOR SOME GUINNESS BOOK OF RECORDS THING and there are NO JUDGES, NO ENTRY FEES, NO PRIZES AND NO REAL SPECTATORS (unless someone wants to watch) — JUST SINGERS WHO'D LIKE TO RING SOME CHORDS.

Who's your top 50?

While I was driving during a winter's snow storm, a casual spin of the radio dial (or was it a random button push) brought up my local public broadcasting station. On the air was a program touting National Public Radio's new series "Fifty Greatest Singers." The presumption of the show title begs heated argument, but that evening, the featured singer was the great gospel singer Mahalia Jackson. It didn't take this listener long to be reminded of Jackson's awesome vocal talent and how NPR got this one right.

Out of curiosity, I checked out NPR's website and discovered information about the program format. Apparently, 135 world-wide singers have been nominated to this prestigious list, with the 50 top singers to be revealed as the year goes by, probably about one a week throughout 2010. Following are the 135 nominees:

Mildred Bailey	Twinkie Clark	Toots Hibbert	Al Jolson
Enrico Caruso	Khaled	Camaron de la Isla	Howlin' Wolf
Frank Sinatra	Beny More	Al Green	Mahalia Jackson
Uum Kulthoum	Neko Case	Maria Callis	Joni Mitchell
Rosa Ponselle	Lydia Mendoza	Lauryn Hill	Judy Garland
Miriam Makeba	Renata Tebaldi	Edith Piaf	Otis Redding
Chavela Vargas	Pol Plancon	Eddy Arnold	Solomon Burke
K.D. Lang	Barbra Streisand	Mohammed Reza	Ella Fitzgerald
Yousou N'Dour	Iggy Pop	Patsy Cline	Luther Vandross
Charles Trenet	Etta James	Connie Smith	Bob Marley
Marian Anderson	Oumou Sangere	Asha Bhosle	Lata Mangeshkar
Bing Crosby	Montserrat Caballe	Kongar-ool Ondar	Nellie Melba
Hibari Misora	Sam Cooke	Fairiez	Paul Robeson
John McCormack	Roy Orbison	George Jones	Johnny Cash
Joao Gilberto	Busta Rhymes	Billie Holiday	Freddie Mercury
Leonard Cohen	Joe Bataan	Kitty Wells	Whitney Houston
Aretha Franklin	Donny Hathaway	Carlos Gardel	Meredith Monk
Notorious B.I.G.	Ethel Waters	Alton Ellis	Ray Charles
Salif Keita	Louis Armstrong	Bob Dylan	Vicente Fernandez
Isaac Hayes	Estrella Morente	Robert Plant	Stevie Wonder
Elvis Presley	Bjork	David Bowie	Scarface
Johnny Hartmann	Hank Williams	Amalia Rodrigues	Milton Nascimento
Sandy Denny	Placido Domingo	Sarah Vaughn	Van Morrison
Nina Simone	Radmilla Cody	Celia Cruz	Willie Nelson
Elisabeth	Dianne Reeves	Chet Baker	Marvin Gaye
Thomas Mapfumo	Tom Waits	Yossele Rosenblatt	
Janis Joplin	Ahmad Zahir	Fred Astaire	
Martha Wash	Eva Cassidy	Fela Kuti	
Beniamino Gigli	Dolly Parton	Karen Carpenter	
Dennis Brown	Jeff Buckley	Ruben Blades	
Morrissey	Elis Regina	Marion Williams	
Musrat Fateh	Gilberto Gil	Alim Qasimov	
Erma Franklin	Chuck D	Slick Rick	(50 Greatest ...
Chuck Berry	Atilla The Hun	Harry Belafonte	continued next
Irma Thomas	Nat King Cole	June Tabor	page)
Claudio Villa	Nick Drake	Feodor Chaliapin	

What's the point of present this long list of "great" singers? How many of them do you recognize? How many of you question the sanity of the nominators for some of these singers? Who's missing from the list? What crazy thoughts run through your mind seeing certain singers adjacent in the list: Bjork—Hank Williams—Placido Domingo; Atilla the Hun—Nat King Cole; George Jones—Billie Holliday?

If you want to get an education in world music, visit this site

www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=114013402

and click on the profiles for each of nominees. There, you will hear a short 30-second sampling of one of the singer's more famous songs. In many cases, you'll also be directed to some video footage of the performers, some of it vintage.

Since we are a singing organization, perhaps we ought to acquaint ourselves with great singers and figure out what makes them great, by any definition. If nothing else, you'll get a musical education and you'll probably have a harder time whittling down your list to 50.