

Meet the HOTS Chorus



The Harmony on the Sound Chorus is a chapter of Sweet Adelines International. It is part of the North Atlantic Region #1, which includes all of New England and extreme southeastern Canada. The chorus was founded in 1964 by a group of women who wanted to get together to sing and socialize. Three years later in 1967, they took the next step and applied to Sweet Adelines for a Charter under the name Stamford YankeeMaid Chorus.

In 1999 the chorus filed for a business license with the State of Connecticut and began operating under the name Yankee Maid Chorus, Inc. Now operating as Harmony on the Sound Chorus, Inc., it is a non-profit corporation, utilizing a ten-member Management Team to govern its activities. Systems of governing and parliamentary procedure are based on the Sweet Adelines International Standard Bylaws and the chorus Standing Rules.

Throughout its forty year history, the chorus has moved around Fairfield County, holding rehearsals in Stamford, New Canaan, Norwalk, Wilton, Fairfield, and Easton. Currently it is based in Trumbull, Connecticut at St. Joseph's Manor, 6448 Main Street. With approximately 100 members from over thirty towns in Fairfield, New Haven and Lower Litchfield counties, as well as New York State, location is essential for retaining members and acquiring new members.

Sweet Adelines International, a non-profit music education organization for women, was founded on Friday, July 13, 1945, when Edna Mae Anderson of Tulsa, Oklahoma, brought a few women together in her home. The group was named Sweet Adelines on August 13th. Today the organization has more than 30,000 members in more than 600 chapters in North America, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Mexico, and six countries in Europe. The mission of the organization is to advance the musical art form of barbershop harmony through education and performance. An important part of Sweet Adelines International is the yearly competitions that occur at the regional and international levels. They are an effective way to hone the musical and performance skills of choruses and quartets. Members look forward to the gatherings because they get to take part in friendly competition, and they get to catch up with acquaintances from other choruses.

In keeping with the mission of Sweet Adelines, Harmony on the Sound is very involved in competition. The Chorus has won the Region #1 Chorus Championship multiple times and has competed internationally in London, Washington DC, St. Louis, Cincinnati, Fort Lauderdale, Reno, Minneapolis, Nashville, Orlando, Indianapolis and Honolulu. In order to stay at the top level, the members continuously work on their vocal abilities both in and out of rehearsal. They also continue their education by attending regional educational conferences twice a year.

Harmony on the Sound is currently under the direction of Master Director Karen Sweeters, who is also a certified Sweet Adelines International judge in the category of Expression. The competitions are judged in three other categories as well – Music, Sound and Showmanship with each quartet and chorus singing two songs. Each song is given a score up to 100. The number scores are broken down into groups, with each group being assigned a letter score. Karen is the fourth director to lead the chorus over the years. With her vision and leadership, it has risen to an “A- level” and is therefore in a position to be very competitive at the international level.

The original purpose for which Sweet Adelines was organized in 1945 was educational, to teach and train its members in musical harmony and appreciation. One goal was to “create and promote barbershop quartets and other musical groups”; another goal was to give musicals. . .public and private performances for. . .learning and general appreciation of all the things pertaining to music.” The chorus remains true to the original goals of the parent organization by reaching out to the community through performances, and by sharing their knowledge of the art form by holding free music and voice classes and by holding guest nights.

Ranging in age from approximately 30 to 85, the HOTS chorus members find participation in the chorus to be tons of fun, not only because of the thrill of singing close harmony, but also because of the opportunity to “strut their stuff” in front of the many appreciative audiences. The chorus performs several times a year for local organizations. It also puts on a yearly show as its major fundraiser. The unique style of the chorus lends itself to creating original musical plays written by the members. These programs have humorous themes that tie together the many songs performed. Because the HOTS Chorus is very community minded it also performs for charitable organizations without collecting a fee on occasion.

There are several active quartets, as well as a small group within the chorus. The quartets get together and practice their craft on their own as they prepare to represent the chorus in competition and performances. The small group, Matinee, is also available for performances. They appear at local schools to teach the art of a cappella, four-part harmony barbershop style to the students. These small ensembles are either hired directly, or assigned to the performance by the chorus Performance Manager.