



## CORPORATE MATTERS

# BABS COMPETITIONS Acceptance of Female Singers

### **PREAMBLE**

The Articles of Association and Memorandum of Association dated 1 October 2009 which set out the objects of BABS as a Charity and the rules and regulations for the operation of the Association make no reference to the gender of the membership. However the current contest rules stipulate everyone on stage will be male with the exception of a female Chorus Director, who shall not be heard to sing. Note: BABS values and respects people of all genders, identities, orientations and expressions. Throughout the following the general terms “male and female, men and women” should be understood to include all people, without intent to exclude anyone.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **I. Changes to BABS contest rules to admit female singers**

#### **Why is this change being made now?**

Some years ago the BABS Board recognised the increasing interest in mixed voice barbershop singing and initiated a trial mixed voice chorus competition at Convention to assess demand. The first contest rules were intentionally not comparable with existing contest barbershop rules because the hope was to attract non barbershop singers to the genre. Having run the contest for 3 years the popularity is evident and sustainable. The Board believes it is now appropriate for the mixed voice chorus contest to be aligned in its operation with the single gender contest.

#### **When will the change to admitting singing female members take effect?**

Females wishing to compete may register as members of BABS, through a BABS Club, with effect from the Autumn Members meeting on September 16th 2018. The first opportunity for female singers to compete as members of BABS will be the mixed chorus contest to be held at Convention in May 2019. Entry to that contest will require each competing chorus to be an integral part of a registered BABS Club (new or existing); male singers in a chorus must be fully paid up BABS members and female singers must either be fully paid up BABS members or hold “dual” membership (at no additional cost) if they are registered members of LABBS or SAI Region 31.

#### **Can women register as members of the Don Amos Club?**

Women can already register as members of the Don Amos Club. DAC members receive many of the Association benefits but may not participate in Clubs or compete in BABS contests.

#### **How will this impact on LABBS or Sweet Adelines International Region 31?**

While all three organisations work to support barbershop singing in the UK through the informal collaboration of Barbershop in Harmony, LABBS and Sweet Adelines have their own objectives, culture, and governance. The expansion of BABS membership to encompass all people should not be interpreted as encouragement to leave LABBS or Sweet Adelines International. The objective is to offer more ways for more people to join and enjoy barbershop. It does not mean anyone should leave their existing Clubs.

## 2. Implications for Clubs

While in the future we anticipate Clubs may choose to admit all persons to Club membership, Clubs will not be obliged to alter their existing membership admission policies. Clubs may choose to host one or more singing ensembles: all-male and mixed voice.

Discussing and deciding: The process of determining future membership options for a Club is not a simple yes/no choice. Clubs will need to undertake their own assessment of their goals and aspirations.

### **Are all Clubs now open to women?**

It is for each Club to make their own decisions regarding membership. Each Club has the option to define its membership and support men's or mixed ensembles — or operate as a combination of these.

### **Recruiting and accepting members**

Your Club's decision, no matter what it is, will require consideration toward your membership and recruitment practices. Whether you ultimately welcome women as members to your Club or decide to preserve your all-male experience, evaluate your Club's current operations to ensure the environment is welcoming and not intimidating to prospective members, male or female. If you ultimately choose to expand your membership, the recruiting process remains the same!

### **If you already operate as a mixed Club**

Keep doing what you are doing! Share the current status of Club membership options for females - they can already join BABS. With effect from September 2018 they will be able to take to the competition stage as singing members of BABS, subject to your Clubs decision.

### **What should a woman do if she can't find a BABS Club that will include women as members?**

If there isn't a local BABS Club that operates as a mixed Club, you might wish to start one! Members of BABS are encouraged to found new Clubs around participation models that best serve them.

### **I'm excited about this change, and interested in both a mixed and all-male singing experience, but my Club has decided to stay men only. What should I do? –or– I am not excited about this change but my Club wants to move to a mixed environment. What should I do?**

The Club structure can accommodate more than one kind of performing ensemble. Resources and personnel permitting, it may be possible to begin additional ensembles within the Club. Additional models may evolve, as nearby Clubs individually and collectively determine their goals. We may very well see Clubs host multiple performing ensembles. Club A may end up retaining a men-only group, while Club B hosts its traditional men-only group plus a mixed voice chorus, and Club C is a mixed chorus that includes a few members from A and B, and so forth. Ideally, the most important part of all these models is to create satisfying musical and social experiences for everyone, and welcoming more singers from outside the existing barbershop sphere.

### **Can I start a mixed chorus in my Club?**

Yes, from September 2018, Clubs may welcome women as Club members and incorporate mixed ensembles.

### **My existing non-BABS chorus uses a name identical to an existing BABS chorus. Do we have to change to be part of BABS?**

Maybe not. Organized groups in BABS have both a Club and chorus name. BABS Club names must be unique and contain a geographic element. BABS chorus names are not required to be unique, and this is usually the more widely-known name, logo, and brand that the group is known by. If you have a concern, contact BABS Membership Services Director for assistance.

### **Will BABS Contest Judges receive any new guidelines/training in judging women singers?**

The BABS training programme is shared with LABBS judges and both Associations adopt the same methodologies for judging which are also applied to mixed voice contests.

## **How will the decision of BABS on mixed ensembles impact the World Mixed competition that has been held at the BinG! Barbershop Music Festival?**

The BABS mixed voice chorus competition can be a qualifying contest for nominations to the World Mixed Chorus competition held every two years at the BinG! Barbershop Music Festival in Germany.

## **Will an International mixed competition at BHS replace the World Mixed competition?**

So far BHS has made no proposal regarding an international mixed competition at the BHS International Convention. The World Mixed in Germany is set up for groups to represent their countries. In contrast the BHS International Contest invites competitors as representatives of their parent organisations. Therefore, the two events are not mutually exclusive.

## **Where do I find barbershop music for mixed ensembles?**

One source is the BHS Marketplace which offers some music for mixed voices: currently 96 arrangements (SATB).

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