

TAG WRITING TIPS

Excerpts from the **2018 Region 13 Arrangers Workshop at HCNW** session
"The Art of Writing Tags" by Paul Olguin

Stand-alone tags are a great way to share your love of Barbershop with Barbershop Friends and also for outreach to the general public as part of a community singing program to encourage new and old friends to become Barbershop Friends.

Are you thinking about entering a tag in the **First Ever Region 13 Arrangers Workshop at HCNW Tag Writing Contest**? Here's your 1st set of Tips from Paul Olguin to help you on your way:

(1) Tags are symmetrical – they are an even number of measures usually divisible by 4. Lots of good tags are just 4 measures long!

(2) A tag usually conveys a universal message of love, fellowship, wonder or other emotion.

(3) A tag is fun to sing for the singer and often contains a "tiddie" that features a particular part.

Here's an example of a 4-measure tag that shares a parent's thoughts of a son or daughter away from home in service to our country that ends with a Tenor tiddie, arranged for women's voices:

Where Are You Tonight?

Words and Music by Janice Wheeler

Arranged by Janice Wheeler

The musical score is for a 4-measure tag in 3/4 time, key of D major. It features two parts: Tenor Lead and Bari Bass. The lyrics are: "Litt - tle boy, where are you to - night? Lit - tle boy, (girl)". The Tenor Lead part has a melodic line with a tiddie on the word "night?". The Bari Bass part provides a harmonic accompaniment. The score is numbered 1 through 4, corresponding to the four measures of the tag.

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Are you "hearing" a tag of your own? Your Barbershop Friends would love to sing it with you!

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Stand-alone tags provide an opportunity for singers to practice listening and vocal skills important to producing the characteristic Barbershop Sound.

Are you thinking about entering a tag in the **First Ever Region 13 Arrangers WorkShop at HCNW Tag Writing Contest**? Here's a 2nd set of Tips from Paul Olguin to help you on your way:

(1) Tags can be composed of classic Barbershop chords and familiar progressions singers recognize from songs they've sung.

(2) A tag lyric can be carefully chosen to provide an opportunity to work on matched resonance from vowel to vowel through the turn of a diphthong, or tackle managing those pesky consonants.

(3) A tag is fun to sing for the singer and often contains a "tiddlie" that features a particular part.

Here's an example of a tag that includes some classic Barbershop chord progressions and a lyric with several target vowels and lots of "r's" to manage that ends with a Bari tiddlie, for women's voices:

We Long to Ring Some Good Old Barbershop Chords

Words & Music by Paul Olguin

Arranged by Paul Olguin

The musical score is written for Tenor Lead and Bari Bass in 4/4 time, key of B-flat major. The Tenor Lead part is on a treble clef staff, and the Bari Bass part is on a bass clef staff. The lyrics are: "We long to ring some good old bar-ber-shop chords, bar-ber-shop chords! loye those chords!". The score includes four measures of music, with the first measure starting with a treble clef and the second measure starting with a bass clef. The lyrics are written below the notes, with "loye" being a misspelling of "love".

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Most tags have a melody that serves as inspiration. The melody is often sung by the Lead part, but not always. Tag melodies can start with four-part chords, a part solo, a unison or harmonized pickup, etc.

Are you thinking about entering a tag in the **First Ever Region 13 Arrangers WorkShop at HCNW Tag Writing Contest**? Contest details are at www.harmonycollege.org. Here's the 3rd set of Tips from Paul:

(1) Tags entered in the Tag Writing Contest can be built around your own original melody or one from a public domain song (generally, songs first published before 1923 are now in the public domain). You can find lists of public domain songs at www.pdinfo.com.

(2) A tag can include a "hanger" in any part, sometimes with a "hand-off" to a different part.

(3) A tag is fun to sing for the singer and often includes a special embellishment or "tiddlie" that features a particular part.

Here's an example of a tag based on a public domain song that starts with a unison pickup followed by a Lead hanger that is handed off to the Tenor, ending with a Bass slide, arranged for women's voices:

SWEET ADELINE TAG

Arranged by **Janice Wheeler**

The musical score is for a four-part tag titled "Sweet Adeline Tag". It is arranged for women's voices: Tenor, Lead, Bari, and Bass. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is common time (C). The melody begins with a unison pickup of the notes G4, A4, Bb4, and A4. The Lead part then has a hanger (a long note) that is handed off to the Tenor. The Tenor part has a hanger that is handed off to the Bari. The Bari part has a hanger that is handed off to the Bass. The Bass part ends with a slide. The lyrics are "Sweet A - de - line!" and "A - de - line!".

Inspired by the 1903 song, "You're The Flower Of My Heart Sweet Adeline"

Music by **Harry Armstrong** Words by **Richard H. Gerard**

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Are you "hearing" a tag of your own? Go ahead – write it down or record it – full mix and each of the 4 parts -- and enter it -- Your Barbershop Friends would love to sing it with you!

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Are you thinking about entering a tag in the **First Ever Region 13 Arrangers Workshop at HCNW Tag Writing Contest**? Contest details are at www.harmonycollege.org. Here's a 4th set of Tips from Paul:

(1) One of the most important factors in tag singing is to choose a tag that is written so it requires a reasonably short learning process and falls within a comfortable singing range for all parts -- so singers can be successful.

(2) Success, of course, is always satisfying, so a tag that can be quickly learned and is fun to sing is always in demand! Here's an example of an easy-to-learn 4-measure tag and how it could be extended to 8 measures:

TAGS

Words and Music by Janice Wheeler

Arranged by Janice Wheeler

Musical notation for a 4-measure tag. The Tenor Lead part is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. The lyrics are: "Tags, Tags, we want Tags!". The Bari Bass part is written in bass clef with the same key signature and time signature. The lyrics are: "Tags, Tags, we want Tags!". The notation includes rests and notes for each measure, with the final measure being a whole note.

Write Down That Tag!

Words and Music by Janice Wheeler

Arranged by Janice Wheeler

Musical notation for an 8-measure tag. The Tenor Lead part is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. The lyrics are: "Tags, Tags, we want Tags! More Tags!". The Bari Bass part is written in bass clef with the same key signature and time signature. The lyrics are: "Tags, Tags, we want Tags! More Tags!". The notation includes rests and notes for each measure, with the final measure being a whole note. The first four measures are identical to the previous tag, and the next four measures extend the tag to 8 measures.

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