

AREA 2 2025 EDUCATION CLASSES

Class Schedule

Thursday, April 24, 2025

7:30 p.m. – 10:30 p.m.

TIME	CARLISLE	CONCORD	MIDDLESEX EAST & WEST	MARLBOROUGH	SHERBORN
7:30 – 8:20 p.m.		Angie Morton Yoga For Singers	Katie Taylor, Lynn Blakeney and Morgan LaCroix Music Team Roundtable		Cary Burns The Mature Voice: A Case Study
8:30 – 9:20 p.m.	Robert Ross You Be The Judge		Katie Taylor, Jess Leigh Diversity And Inclusion Roundtable	Jen Wheaton How The Voice Works	
9:30 – 10:30 p.m.			Katie Taylor, Jess Leigh, Lynn Blakeney, Morgan LaCroix Tag Time With Roulette		

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Class Schedule (cont.)

Friday, April 25, 2025

9:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

TIME	ASHLAND	CONCORD	MIDDLESEX EAST & WEST	MARLBOROUGH	SHERBORN
9:30 – 10:20 a.m.		Liz LeClair TED Talk Sessions In Rehearsals	Robert Ross Getting Close and Personal with Your Story	Jessi Nasto How Do You Get To Carnegie Hall?	Katie Taylor Conducting Skills For Novice Directors
10:30 – 11:20 a.m.	Roulette Quartet Master Class	Jill Reid Motivated Movement		Renée Tramack Coaching Under Glass	
11:20 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.	<p style="text-align: center;">Lunch Grab & Go Lunch Concession – Lower-Level Hallway Bring your lunch into the Carlisle Room to sit, eat and socialize</p>				
1:00 – 1:50 p.m.			Morgan LaCroix Caring for the Voice/Voice Therapy	Cary Burns How Chords Work	Lynn Blakeney Through The Looking Glass
2:00 – 2:50 p.m.	Steve Armstrong A Look Inside The Music	Angie Morton Calming Your Nerves			Jill Reid The How And Why Of Performance Plans

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Class Descriptions

THURSDAY – April 24, 2025:

Diversity And Inclusion Roundtable – Katie Taylor and Jess Leigh

Harmony, Inc.'s core values are rooted in inclusion and empowerment. How we support these values begins with us. Creating an inclusive culture in our chapters takes thought, time, and important – sometimes challenging – conversations. Join us in this roundtable discussion to spark inspiration and ideas you can apply to your chapter and everyday lives. Bring your thoughts, questions, and an open mind!

How The Voice Works – Jen Wheaton

Ever wonder how it is that we can make the sounds we make? How does breathing work with the voice? How does it change notes? All of these questions and more will be answered in this class centered around the anatomy and function of our vocal mechanism.

The Mature Voice: A Case Study – Cary Burns

Five years ago, I became the director of a senior men's barbershop chorus. At the time, they could not tune any chord. Two months ago, we competed at the BHS Senior's International Contest and became the 7th-place senior chorus in the Barbershop Harmony Society. In this class, I'll explain how we did it, and we'll discuss the issues that senior singers face.

Music Team Roundtable – Katie Taylor, Lynn Blakeney and Morgan LaCroix

With years of experience in music and creative teams and performing at an A-level within their chorus, Katie, Lynn, Morgan, and Jess can share what it takes to build musical excellence within your chapter. Discussion on goal setting, music team jobs and descriptions, warm-ups, rehearsal practices, riser testing, setting expectations, and more. Feel free to ask questions and also share what works well for your chorus at our round table discussion!

Tag Time With Roulette – Katie Taylor, Lynn Blakeney, Jess Leigh, and Morgan LaCroix

Come and learn some tags. Or come and sing tags that you already know with Roulette. This is great fun for everyone!

YOGA For Singers – Angie Morton

Alignment-based yoga applies very well to singers. Singers' yoga will help to warm up the body, releasing tight spots helping you create a better singer's posture and create more space in the body.

You Be The Judge – Robert Ross

We will watch selected performances and discuss how YOU would score and provide feedback based on the current Performance Category description. What made the performance great? Come ready to contribute to the discussion.

FRIDAY – April 25, 2025:

A Look Inside The Music – Steve Armstrong

Examine performances by Toronto Northern Lights line by line to understand why they worked so well.

Calming Your Nerves – Angie Morton

You're getting ready for the stage, whether contest, a show or just singing in front of your own chorus. Your heart starts to beat faster, your breath becomes rapid, your body starts to tense from the neck to the shoulders and into the abdominals and hips; oh, and don't forget the stress sweats. As you do your warm-ups you can either breathe or swallow but not both, so you're either going to choke or pass out. As you walk onto the stage, you feel your body start to shake and you think you might just throw up. Does any of this sound familiar? Everyone has stage fright at some point in their lives. Join us for this interactive class on ways to calm your nerves before a performance, during intermission or even while on stage.

Caring For The Voice/Voice Therapy – Morgan LaCroix

This class will be 50 minutes of vocal therapy exercises to keep your voice healthy and debunk long-standing myths about vocal injuries and their remedies. Come prepared to share your vocal cord stories and learn ways that you can care for your cords both preventatively and when you are struggling.

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Class Descriptions (cont.)

FRIDAY – April 25, 2025 (cont.):

Conducting Skills For Novice Directors – Katie Taylor

Open to directors, assistant directors, and music team members, as well as to general membership, this class will get volunteer directors the chance to stand up in front to conduct and get feedback from music educator and 4-time International gold-medalist director of Northern Blend, Katie Taylor. Learn about effective use of patterns, musical cues, connecting with your singers, leading with love, and how “less is more” can be your friend!

Getting Close And Personal With Your Story – Robert Ross

Explore the possibilities that your sensory memory has to connect to your lyrics and musical expression. Working at ways to be more vulnerable and allow your audience to get a glimpse into your heart. We will see video examples of this at high levels and will discuss how you can do the very same.

The How And Why Of Performance Plans – Jill Reid

Have you ever received feedback along the lines of “the message wasn’t consistent/unified”? If so, this session is for you! In this session you will learn about the steps involved in the development and implementation of a cohesive, authentic ensemble performance plan designed to maximize members’ retention.

How Chords Work – Cary Burns

In this class we will “geek out” on chords! What are chords? How are they constructed? Why do arrangers put certain chords in certain places? What chords are in the barbershop contest chord vocabulary? What do the different chords sound like? How are chords used to enhance a story? This class is designed for both those with music theory knowledge and those without. Come geek out with me!

How Do You Get To Carnegie Hall? – Jessi Nasto

Ok – we have four parts – now what? From individual practice to quartet rehearsal, let’s hang out and talk about how to practice in an effective and meaningful way. Tips, tricks, and mindset – this is an interactive class to help quartets optimize their time rehearsing together.

Coaching Under Glass – Renée Tramack

This is a hands-on class for those aspiring to become coaches, become better coaches, or just learn what goes on in a coach’s mind during a coaching session. This is a live interactive session in which a coach will coach a group, ask the students to coach the group and provide guidance on how to go about coaching and prioritizing during a coaching session.

Quartet Master Class – Roulette

Roulette, born in 2019, has been on an amazing journey with winding roads, bumps, and also incredible views!! Come chat with them and learn about how they make their foursome work! Discussion about music choice, coaching from within, effective rehearsal techniques, coaching, independent work, goal setting, friendships, and more. Bring your questions along and let’s chat! Oh - and singing will happen too!!

TED Talk Sessions In Rehearsals – Elizabeth LeClair

Planning "micro education" moments to sneak educational snippets into every rehearsal. Rehearsal time is precious, so let's make every minute count! Explore topics and guidelines on developing a list of subjects to enhance the skill levels of your chorus singers.

Through The Looking Glass – Lynn Blakeney

As performers, we are always worrying about what others will think, leaving us to fear being "real" or "vulnerable." The same goes for when we look in the mirror... we are our own worst critics. This class will be super interactive in discussing the fears and worries that hold us back. Then, together, we will work on how we can "shatter the glass" and give the audience our most authentic selves!

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Educator Biographies

Angie Morton – is a Harmony, Inc. certified Administrative Judge. She is a third generation barbershopper and has been around barbershop for most of her life. She currently sings bass with A Cappella Showcase. It is a passion for her, but also a large part of her life, to serve as Harmony, Inc.'s Administrative Coordinator. Angie is also the current Vice President of the Mixed Barbershop Harmony Association and a Barbershop Harmony Society Administrative Judge Candidate. She is also a 250-hour certified yoga instructor and Reiki Master. In her spare time, she loves to be outside in the sunshine, especially at Harmony Ranch, her happy place, reading a book and soaking in the sun, warmth and sounds of nature.

Cary Burns – is a 36-year barbershopper and a sought-after coach, arranger, presenter, and clinician. He became a Musicality Judge after promising his barbershop mentor, Lou Perry, that he would continue the legacy of giving back to the Barbershop Harmony Society. Cary directs three ensembles: The Tempe Community Chorus, a 140-member all-voice chorus; The Desert Aires, a senior men's barbershop chorus; and Wicked Pitch of the West, a women's contemporary a cappella chorus. Cary has a passion for giving to the barbershop community. He is known for fostering a sense of belonging and inclusivity, as well as his unwavering positivity in every interaction. Inspired by "Everyone in Harmony," Cary returned to school and graduated Summa Cum Laude with a degree in Sociology.

Elizabeth LeClair – has had music in her life from a very young age, starting piano lessons in first grade, and considers herself a lifelong learner. Singing and participating in marching band and chorus in high school, she did not find barbershop until her early 20's. In addition to being a member of the Sounds of the Seacoast for nearly 25 years, she has been a certified Musicality Judge for 11 years and is currently the proud Musicality Category Specialist for HI. She is also a charter member of the hybrid chorus, Music City Sound, from Area 6. She has sung in many quartets, and is thrilled to be singing with her niece, Rose, in a new Area 2 quartet, "It's Her Fault." In her work life (who has time for work?!?), she is a certified critical care nurse, having worked in the ICU setting for most of her 30-year career, where she mentors student nurses in their senior practicum experiences. She and her husband, Jeff, live in their log home in the woods of New Hampshire, among their gardens and fruit trees, and the chicken coop.

Jen Wheaton – has been a member of Harmony Inc. for 25+ years. She has earned two quartet championships, with Ringtones! in 2010 and Spot On in 2013. She is currently active in three quartets (one Harmony, Inc. and two mixed BHS), and four choruses (only currently singing in Land of Sky Chorus in Asheville, NC). Jen has been a certified Singing Judge in Harmony, Inc. since 2013. In civilian life, she has specialized training in posture correction, TMJ disorders, and laryngeal massage. Jen is a lifelong learner and truly enjoys sharing her passion for learning with others.

Jess Leigh – has been a member of Harmony, Inc. for nearly seven years and joined Northern Blend Chorus in late 2018 where she sings both baritone and lead. She enjoys singing lead with Roulette (2024 International Quartet Champions) and found her comfort in the barbershop genre with the support of her quartet mates and chorus sisters. She loves her job in Student Affairs at her local community college where she's been employed since 2006. Jess is a mom of two, Brandon (21) and Samantha (8) and a very happy partner to Terra. As a proud member of the LGBTQ+ community, Jess strives to be a voice within and surrounding Harmony, Inc. for equity, diversity, and inclusion and looks forward to the future of this wonderful organization.

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Educator Biographies (cont.)

Jessi Nasto – is Harmony Incorporated's newest certified Singing Judge, and she couldn't be more excited to give back to the barbershop community in this role! She studied classical vocal performance at The Boston Conservatory and the Crane School of Music, but her love for singing doesn't stop there. With a background in musical theatre, she's spent plenty of time both onstage and behind the scenes, bringing music to life in all kinds of ways. Jessi discovered her love for barbershop at the age of 25 when she joined Northern Blend Chorus, where she has been a dedicated member since their first championship win in 2010. She serves as a section leader, music team member, and board member, helping to shape the chorus and chapter's success. She also currently sings with Vivàce, a competing quartet, and was crowned a Harmony Queen in 2015 with LiveWire. Barbershop is a family thing for Jessi – she and her husband, Tony, love coaching together and have worked as clinicians for youth barbershop events. They also compete together in MBHA Champion mixed quartet, Arranged Marriage. Daughters Nova (13) and Atlas (6) keep them on their toes, and who knows?, maybe their next barbershop quartet is already in the house!

Jill Reid – Originally from Gander, NL, Jill has spent the last 25 years living in Nova Scotia with her family. She holds BA degrees in English and Education, which she regularly utilizes in her Performance coaching. A proud member of the ScotianAires Chorus since 2008, Jill is the current Performance Team Lead. A certified Performance Judge with Harmony, Inc. since 2018, she loves helping ensembles discover the most-effective way to connect to their music.

Katie Taylor – is a 28-year music educator, teaching music theory, drama, chorus, and band lessons to middle school kiddos in Watertown, NY. She is a 38-year member of HI, and was inspired by barbershop to go into music education. Katie also won quartet championships in 1996 with For Heaven's Sake (bass), 2008 with U4X (tenor), 2015 with LiveWire (lead) and 2024 with Roulette (baritone). She has brought Northern Blend Chorus to four gold medals in 2010, 2017, 2022 and 2024 as their frontline director. Katie makes learning trax for barbershoppers and choral music groups (Taylor Trax) and gives private voice lessons from her home in person and online. She also loves to coach! She has been on faculty at Harmony University various times, and she taught, coached, and directed the Frauenchor at BinG (Barbershop in Germany). She has been a clinician at dozens of youth camps and has participated with her school choirs at BHS Midwinter festivals in 2019, 2020, and 2023. Katie is very happily married to her incredibly patient and loving husband of 28 years, Ricky, and together they have two awesome grown sons, Gavin and Zach. They also have five cats, a tortoise, and a bearded dragon, and they own their own business, Taylor's Surface Prep. Katie is NEVER bored.

Lynn Blakeney – is a 36-year member of Harmony, Inc., as well as a certified Performance Judge since 2017. She is bass co-section leader and visual chairperson of four-time International Champions, Northern Blend Chorus. She has been fortunate to win three quartet championships as a lead with Upstate Rhythm (2001), tenor with LiveWire (2015) and most recently in 2024 as a bass with Roulette! She has also sung lead with For Heaven's Sake since 2011! She lives in Evans Mills, NY with her husband Jim and has a son, Joshua, as well as a bonus son and daughter.

Morgan LaCroix – has been barbershopping for 30 years, and celebrated 25 years in Harmony, Inc. in 2022. She currently is in the baritone section in Northern Blend Chorus. Morgan has been teaching music to elementary students for over 15 years and has had the pleasure of offering choir to grades 3 to 6 for many years. She has been the clinician for many Harmony Explosion camps, and she coaches various barbershop ensembles in the Montreal area. Oh yeah, she's Canadian, but don't hold that against her, she's very nice and lots of fun! Singing tenor has been very rewarding for Morgan, she has been fortunate to win three championships on the voice part, After Hours in 2000, Foreign Exchange in 2011 and now Roulette in 2024. In her personal life she has a gorgeous fur baby, Matty the cat and she has found love with a new special someone, Adrian Walker and his twin 5-year-old boys, Hugo and Finn.

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Educator Biographies (cont.)

Renée Tramack – Renée is a second generation, 43-year barbershopper, a member of Harmony, Inc., and the Barbershop Harmony Society. She certified as a Singing Judge in 2011 and is a past Singing Category Specialist for Harmony, Inc. She directs the 2014 and 2018 International Chorus Champions, New England Voices in Harmony and has earned two International Quartet Championships, with Showcase in 2009 and Taken 4 Granite in 2016. She also certified as a Singing Judge in the Barbershop Harmony Society in 2023, and loves to work with individuals and groups to help them sing with a free and natural voice.

Robert Ross – began his Barbershop career back in high school, singing in a quartet in the Kiwanis Music Festival in London, Ontario. Robert has been a member of Toronto Northern Lights for 16+ years. Robert served as the head performance coach and has won numerous international medals with the chorus including Gold in 2013. Robert has performed all over the world including China, Sweden, Germany, England, The Netherlands, USA, and Canada. He is the Bass of Ripple Effect, the three-time Ontario District MBHA Quartet Champion and the 2018 third-place World Mixed Quartet Champion. While most recently becoming the first Ontario District Mixed Quartet Champion in 2019, and Ontario District representatives to the BHS international contest in 2022. Robert was also the assistant director of the Simcoe Gentlemen of Harmony, and serves as the VP Youth-in-Harmony for the Ontario District of the Barbershop Harmony Society. He also serves on the board of directors for Sing Canada Harmony. Robert is proud to be the Performance Director for the incredible Harbourn Sound. The newest venture in his barbershop career is singing Lead in the quartet, Northern Pursuit. Robert is a sought-after coach for quartets and choruses all over the globe, and has served on faculty for different Harmony Colleges and Harmony University. He was also the 2018 winner of the Larry Dale Coach of The Year Award. He enjoys working with all levels of performers to use their own organic feelings to build genuine, heartfelt, and believable performances, allowing them the chance to honour their music and to take the audience on an emotional journey. Robert has achieved a major goal in barbershop by becoming a Performance Judge in 2019 for the Barbershop Harmony Society.

Steve Armstrong – has been involved in barbershop singing for nearly 50 years, joining the Oshawa Horseless Carriages when he was just 13 years of age. Steve began his early directing career at the age of 19. By the age of 32, Steve had directed both the Scarborough Dukes of Harmony and the East York Barbershoppers into international competitions. Following that, Steve was a co-founder of the Toronto Northern Lights and directed them to 14 international medals, including the International Chorus Championship in 2013. He earned his Bachelor's Degree in Music Education from the University of Toronto in 1984. Steve has been a member of three Ontario District Championship Quartets (Flipside – 1988, Jukebox – 1996, and Detour – 2022), all of which have competed at the Barbershop Harmony Society's international competitions. In addition, Steve has been a Society Judge for over 38 years, served as Music Category Specialist from 2017-2019 and as Chair of the Society's Contest and Judging Program from 2020-2024, and is a certified Musicality Judge. He has served on the judging panel of several international competitions, as well as many overseas contests. An accomplished barbershop arranger, coach and instructor, Steve's skill and experience have been sought after by many quartets and choruses. He has coached throughout the barbershop world, and he has taught at the Society's Harmony University, as well as schools for other barbershop organizations. In July of 2024, Steve was honored to be inducted into the Barbershop Harmony Society's Hall of Fame. Steve lives in Oshawa with his wife, Lori and son, Joel, where they attend the local Salvation Army church.