

FOREWORD

A New Generation of Barberpole Cats

In 1971, International President Ralph Ribble launched a new Society activity known as the Barberpole Cat Program, which became a standard repertoire for Barbershoppers worldwide. This common literature has helped many quartets start with an instant 12-song repertoire. It has given us perfect songs for our choruses to start chapter meetings singing songs, and helped Barbershoppers from different continents sing more than just a tag with a new barbershop friend at a convention. Many of these songs have been used as materials for Singing Valentine programs, TV spots, or contest vehicles – even by our international champion quartets! In short, it has been perhaps one of the greatest tools in barbershop culture.

The Barberpole Cat Program And Song Book has been the number one publication for more than forty years. The Barbershop Harmony Society has fielded requests for a sequel to this monumental songbook. There have been many attempts to make such a collaboration over the years, but have stalled over various reservations:

- Do we make arrangements of public domain songs in order to keep our costs low?
- Should we write new standards? (After all, barbershopper and composer Norm Starks wrote *Sweet and Lovely* in 1971.)
- How would we decide what is worthy of the new “canon”?

Let’s start by first stating that this songbook does not replace the original. No matter how good a sequel is, it rarely overtakes the original. We expect the original Polecat book to be considered the classic: the material that builds our musicianship, gets us acquainted with the barbershop chords, and is in easy access to the broadest possible audience of Barbershoppers.

The *Barberpole Cat Songbook Vol. II* is designed to bridge the gap between Polecat songs and music at a difficulty level that many of our Harmony Brigades sing. It is music for when you want to sing something everybody knows but can’t decide what to learn. As we’ve discovered with our Brigades, our membership is ready for common repertoire songs that are a little more difficult. This book is designed for the member who has “graduated” from the standard Polecat book. So, where *Down Our Way* and *Heart of My Heart* are simpler, one-to-two page songs, the contents of this book “up the ante” a little bit. You’ll find songs in this songbook you are already familiar with. Indeed, for many chapters, **Boston Common** tunes, or *Hello Mary Lou (Goodbye Heart)*

are basically *de facto* Polecats. We have your original works - like the Norm Starks piece - as well as tried-and-true favorites.

“Why isn’t _____ in this book?” Although we studied sales data over previous years, polled our top arrangers, and discussed this with the publications team, not every great song can work in a collection such as this. Indeed, there were some songs we did want to include but could not obtain the license required to be included in the publication. Those favorites are likely still in the catalog but could not be added to this compilation effort due to copyright holder restrictions. However, all songs in this book are available as singles from the Harmony Marketplace.

“Why aren’t there any tags in this book?” So many tag resources exist in barbershop and are already at your fingertips - everything from the Classic Tags book, tag apps, and websites which offer countless tags. We found it much too difficult to select only a few of our favorites to include in this publication.

“Are all the songs in this book contestable?” Just because a song is in this book does not clear it for contest. Although many are songs you will have heard on the contest stage, the old axiom of “ask before you sing” still applies.

“Is there a pin or other recognition for completion of this book?” The original Polecat book was designed as a training program. Along the way to earning the pin, a singer learned part independence, tuning, and other elements of basic musicianship. Far more than earning a pin or a certificate, he gained insights into barbershop culture: tags, quartetting, and the chapter experience. The *Barberpole Cat Songbook Vol. II* has no official pin or recognition at this time. This book is designed to enhance and deepen musicianship, using musical selections longer and slightly more difficult than the original Polecat book.

“Are there learning tracks for my part?” Yes. All learning media are made for each voice part. They will include a part-predominant teaching track for each song.

We hope you will enjoy this songbook for years to come!

Music Publications Department
Barbershop Harmony Society

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