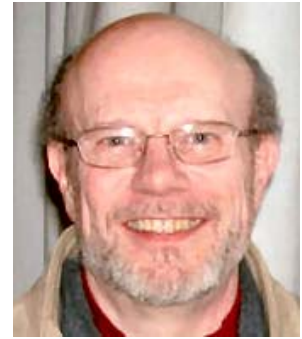


Hal Maples

Hal was raised hearing classical music, and sang a solo of "Away in a Manger" before 200 people at Westminster Presbyterian Church in St. Louis at age four. He was raised by a British/Australian Mother who was an accomplished classical pianist, and a Father from the Ozarks who played guitar and sang, and who could sing from memory any song you could name that played on the radio during the 1920's '30's and 40's, and many you never heard of. Hal Began teaching himself guitar chords on his Dad's 1928 Gibson Concert guitar at about age 12, and loved to listen and play and sing along with recordings of The Kingston Trio and The Limelighters.



In High School, Hal played guitar and sang with a rock group called The Cerfs. They played at school dances, parties & weddings most of the Beatles current repertoire, and everything from Elvis to Rick Nelson to Bo Diddley and the Beatles. He attended Miami University of Ohio for two years, and as a student at the University of Cincinnati played guitar and sang with The Bill White Quintet, a group who capitalized on the current Herb Alpert and the Tijuana Brass/Baja Marimba Band craze, playing for private functions. He completed a B.A. in Business Administration in 1968.



Hal sang bass in church choirs through high school and college some times filling in as a tenor. He was introduced to barbershop harmony when a fellow choir member invited him to come to a rehearsal of The Southern Gateway Chorus, the Cincinnati-Western Hills Chapter of the SPEBSQSA. The group was then perennial District Champion of the Johnny Appleseed District. Hal sang bass with the chorus in 1967 and most of 1968, and then received a call from Uncle Sam in October. Strangely enough, the Southern Gateway Chorus was to become International Champs *after* Hal left them. Oh well!

After two years active duty in the Army, Hal and his young family moved back to the St. Louis area in 1971.

A few months later, he received a call from a member of the Daniel Boone Chorus inviting him to a rehearsal, and Hal was soon re-enrolled as a SPEBSQSA member, singing bass, & sometimes jumping in and helping the tenor section.

In 1972, unbeknownst to him, someone told someone Hal might make a pretty good quartet lead. A quartet called The Men of A-Chord (John Ericson – T, Jerry Coen – B, Don Campbell, Bs) were losing their lead, Wes Pine, asked Hal to try out. He was so excited he learned most of their repertoire in about a week. They won the St. Louis Area Quartet Competition and competed in one District Contest.



They were coached by

Roger Blackburn, creator of "Barbershopping in Brass", who then played trumpet with the Houston Symphony, and who was impressed when he heard the group sing. The quartet had the privilege of performing several arrangements Roger did for them. The quartet disbanded when John Ericson moved to move to Omaha.

In 1973, Hal was approached by another quartet from Illinois, called the Federal Reserve Notes (Dennis McCann-Bs, Rich Pilch-B, Al Mueller-T) whose Lead singer (George Bagot) needed to drop out. Hal acquired a dual membership in Collinsville sang lead with this quartet in Illinois District from late 1973 until 1976. The group became St. Louis Area Champs in 1974, placing 4th in District Competition.





show.

The next year they received some great coaching from George Holzschner and Mac Huff, and they won the *District Championship* in 1975. A lengthy round of shows on the road followed. Hal also sang with the Collinsville Mississippi Valley Chorus during that period.

In 1976 life situations and Hal's varied musical interests led him to leave barbershopping behind. In the years that followed, he would perform in several shows as a member of the Riverview Gardens Community Chorus. In 1976 the chorus did four performances of a show honoring the Bicentennial that included songs from the past 200 years and included a performance by Hal of "Casey at the Bat". Other shows done by the community chorus included a 50's review, and an "Old Radio"

In 1980, Hal sang as a chorus member in a production of "Die Fledermaus" presented at Florissant Valley Community College. In 1983 he also performed a role in a concert performance of a new opera, "The Dragon", presented at Southern Illinois University.

From 1980 to 1985 Hal played guitar and sang as a member of the Don Nevins Trio, who played every Friday and some Saturday nights at Maggie O'Brien's in downtown St. Louis. During that time, this group also performed 50's revivals for class reunions.

For the next several years Hal devoted much of his energies to his business career, and became deeply involved in creative writing. Music was kind of on the shelf for a while.

In 1993 Hal began composing some of his own music. His devotion to music and creativity led him to pursue his long-time dream to be free of the corporate world. In 1994 he negotiated his departure from his corporate management position and started his own business. He wrote several instrumental and vocal pieces, which he shares through his website for DreamRiter Productions. (www.dreamriter.com).



In the year 2000 Hal began receiving calls from an old friend, Dennis McCann, inviting him to visit a rehearsal of The Ambassadors of Harmony, the renamed St. Charles barbershopping chapter, who were now perennial Central States District Chorus Champions and International Medalists. Hal finally decided to attend a visitors' night in February 2001. After 25 years away from a cappella singing, Hal was hooked again. People who were his peers in the 70's were still kicking, and those who were kids back then were suddenly his heroes – namely Jim Henry, who directs the chorus and sings bass with the Gas House Gang – and Jim's brother Rob, who sang baritone with the same group until sadly losing a battle with cancer in 2003; as well as a new acquaintance, David Wright who "writes some of the

best arrangements that have ever happened." He was emotionally blown away by the music he heard, by the welcome he received, and by the tremendous talent that was present. He auditioned 4 weeks later, and was soon singing bass with one of the best choruses in the world. Since then he has sung with the Ambassadors as they earned six District Championships and five International medals, winning the International Championship in 2004, and the Silver Medal in 2007. He is Assistant Bass Section leader for the Ambassadors.

He started doing some a cappella arranging after rejoining the Ambassadors, and finds it a joyful outlet. A list of his arrangements is available at <http://stardust.dreamriter.com/arrangements/>.

For the future, Hal just wants to keep singing. "I'd love to sing in a really good quartet again, and to continue to write music and compose arrangements that groups will want to sing. My dream is to be the best singer and musician I can be. It's an honor to be associated with the talent that's present in The Ambassadors of Harmony."