



# Reprise: A Hopelessly Brief Introduction to the Incredibly Rich History and Ongoing Appeal of the Magnificent Hobby of Singing Barbershop Harmony

**Jesse M. Heines**  
Professor Emeritus, Dept. of Computer Science  
**University of Massachusetts Lowell**  
Tenor, Gentlemen Songsters Chorus *and* Fireside Quartet

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## Measuring of Your Enjoyment of the Barbershop Style


*LIRA Presentation by Jesse Heines, April 24, 2019*

As you listen to each version of each song, circle the number that represents how much you enjoyed listening to that version.

*Note: There are no specific criteria for evaluation. Simply rate your own personal enjoyment.*

Song #1	<i>I did NOT enjoy</i>				<i>Neutral</i>				<i>I did enjoy</i>	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1A. Original	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
ⒾB. Popular	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1C. "Church"	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1D. "Cool"	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
ⒾE. Barbershop	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

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## Barbershop Style – Song #1

- A song you all know
  - the original film version
    - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_5Q4ogstDVE&t=30](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_5Q4ogstDVE&t=30)
  - the most iconic popular version
    - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cAu3a7CMA84&t=87>
  - “taking it to church” [*kudos: music prof. Gena Greher*]
    - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vePIVcno8Vo&t=11>
  - a “cool” version [*kudos to Gena again*]
    - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oO150w6iFwQ&t=35>
  - the classic barbershop version
    - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZqLVCB7toQw>
    - Keepsake, 1992 International Quartet Champions

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## Barbershop Style – Song #2

- A song many of you know
  - the original Luther Vandross version
    - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wmDxJrggle8>
  - the unique barbershop version
    - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B6FwopHVII8>
    - Signature, 2017 & 2018 Int'l Quartet Runners-Up



## Barbershop Style – Song #3

- Just in case you thought only slow ballads were suitable to the barbershop style
  - the original Queen version (1981 live)
    - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aA2IRoPFInO&t=59>
  - the Signature Quartet version (2016)
    - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5IGk3bSHgk>



## Barbershop Style – Song #4

- One last example
  - the original Billy Joel version
    - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dcnd55tLCv8>



# Barbershop Style – Song #4

- One last example

- the original Billy Joel version
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dcnd55tLCv8>
- the Fireside Quartet rendition
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CatIFNHumN8>
  - arrangement by Winnisquam, NH, Regional School District Music Director **Kirk Young**



<b>Song #3</b>	<i>I did NOT enjoy</i>	—	—	—	<i>Neutral</i>	—	—	—	<i>I did enjoy</i>	
3A Original	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
3B Barbershop	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<b>Song #4</b>	<i>I did NOT enjoy</i>	—	—	—	<i>Neutral</i>	—	—	—	<i>I did enjoy</i>	
4A Original	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
4B Barbershop	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

When finished ...

Add your scores for 1B, 2A, 3A, and 4A: \_\_\_\_\_

Add your scores for 1E, 2B, 3B, and 4B: \_\_\_\_\_

So what do you now think of the barbershop style?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## What characteristics of the barbershop style do you hear?



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## What characteristics of the barbershop style do you hear?

1. Four-part, a cappella harmony
2. Solid voicings with the bass generally on the root or fifth of the chord
3. Frequent barbershop seventh chords
4. Circle-of-fifths chord resolutions
5. Embellishments
6. Just intonation and emphasis on match, blend, ring, and lock

*David Wright (April 2000)*

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## What is Harmony?



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## What is Harmony?



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## What is Harmony?

- **Monophonic**
  - parts sung in unison
- **Homophonic**
  - parts move together, but on different notes
  - “chordal” music
- **Polyphonic**
  - each part has melodic interest on its own and a distinctive rhythm

<http://www.medieval.org/emfaq/misc/homophony.html>

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## What is Harmony?

### Intervals in the Key of A

A4      A5      A6      A.octaves

Tonic      Fifth      Tonic      Fifth      A.fifth

Tonic      Third      Tonic      Third      A.C#      Fifth      Seventh      Fifth      Seventh      E.G#

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*Go to EasyABC ...*



## What is Harmony?

### Chords in the Key of A

Four musical staves in treble clef, key signature of two sharps (F# and C#), and 4/4 time signature. Each staff shows a sequence of notes and a corresponding chord diagram. The notes are: Tonic (A), Third (C#), Fifth (E), Tonic (A), and Major.Chord (A-C#-E). The second staff shows: Tonic (A), Flat.Third (Bb), Fifth (E), Tonic (A), and Minor.Chord (A-Bb-E). The third staff shows: Tonic (A), Third (C#), Fifth (E), Seventh (G#), and Major.7th.Chord (A-C#-E-G#). The fourth staff shows: Tonic (A), Third (C#), Fifth (E), Flat.Seventh (Gb), and Dominant.7th.Chord (A-C#-E-Gb).

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*Go to EasyABC ...*



## How Do Intervals Work?

- To sound a tone an octave higher than any other tone, you double its frequency
  - The A below middle C (A4) is 440 Hz
  - The A above middle C (A5) is ... ???

A musical staff in treble clef, key signature of two sharps (F# and C#), and 4/4 time signature. It shows two notes: a whole note on the second line (A4) and a whole note on the second space (A5), illustrating an octave interval.

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## How Do Intervals Work?

- To sound a tone an octave higher than any other tone, you double its frequency
  - The A below middle C (A4) is 440 Hz
  - The A above middle C (A5) is 880 Hz
  - The next A (A6) is ... ???



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- To sound a tone an octave higher than any other tone, you double its frequency
  - The A below middle C (A4) is 440 Hz
  - The A above middle C (A5) is 880 Hz
  - The next A (A6) is 1760 Hz



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## How Do Intervals Work?

- Thus, the tone differences are **multiplicative**
- Now, there are 12 semitones in a scale from “do” to “do,” which is an “octave”

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- If we set the ratio of the lower tone to 1 and the upper tone to 2, you would think that the ratio difference between each tone would be ... ???

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- If we set the ratio of the lower tone to 1 and the upper tone to 2, you would think that the ratio difference between each tone would be the 12<sup>th</sup> route of 2, or 1.059446

$$\sqrt[12]{2}$$

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<http://www.phy.mtu.edu/~suits/scales.html>



## How Do Intervals Work?

- Thus, each interval has the same frequency difference
- And that's the way a piano is tuned



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## How Do Intervals Work?

- This tuning is called equal temperament
  - First proposed in 1636 by French theologian, philosopher, mathematician, and music theorist Marin Mersenne

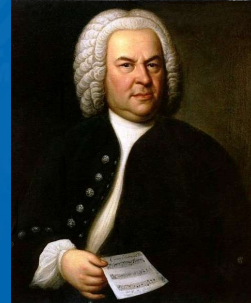


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## How Do Intervals Work?

- This tuning is called equal temperament
  - First proposed in 1636 by French theologian, philosopher, mathematician, and music theorist Marin Mersenne
  - Accepted in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century at the urging of J.S. Bach so that he could write music in any key and still be reasonably, *but not perfectly*, in tune



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## How Do Intervals Work?


In perfect tuning, called *just intonation*, intertonal differences are based on *integer ratios* to the tonic (fundamental) tone

**3/2**

**4/3**

**5/3**


**8/5**

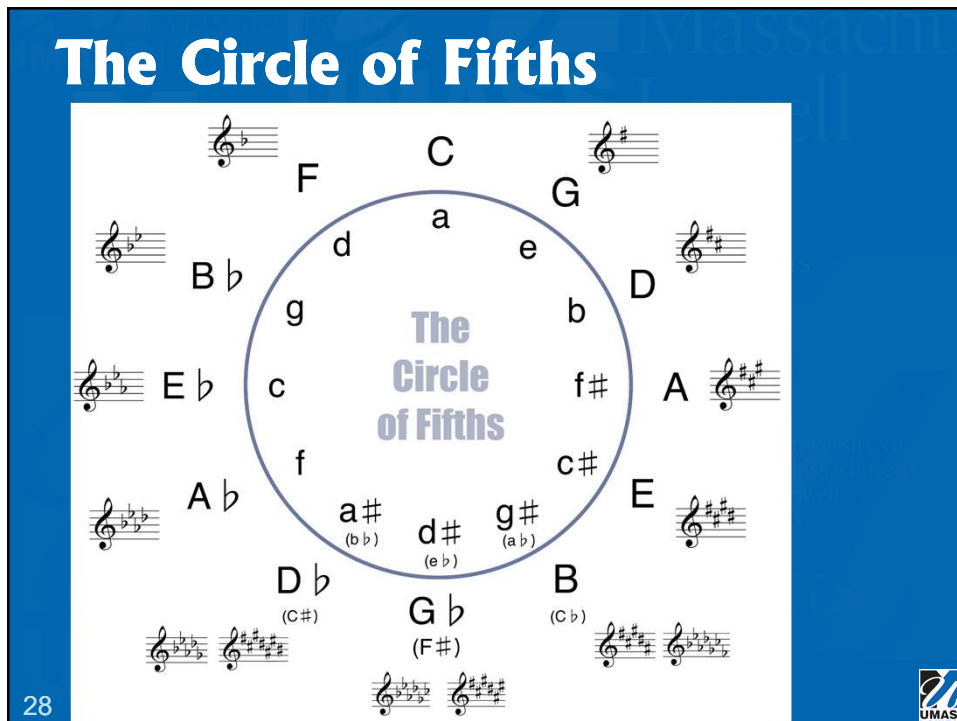
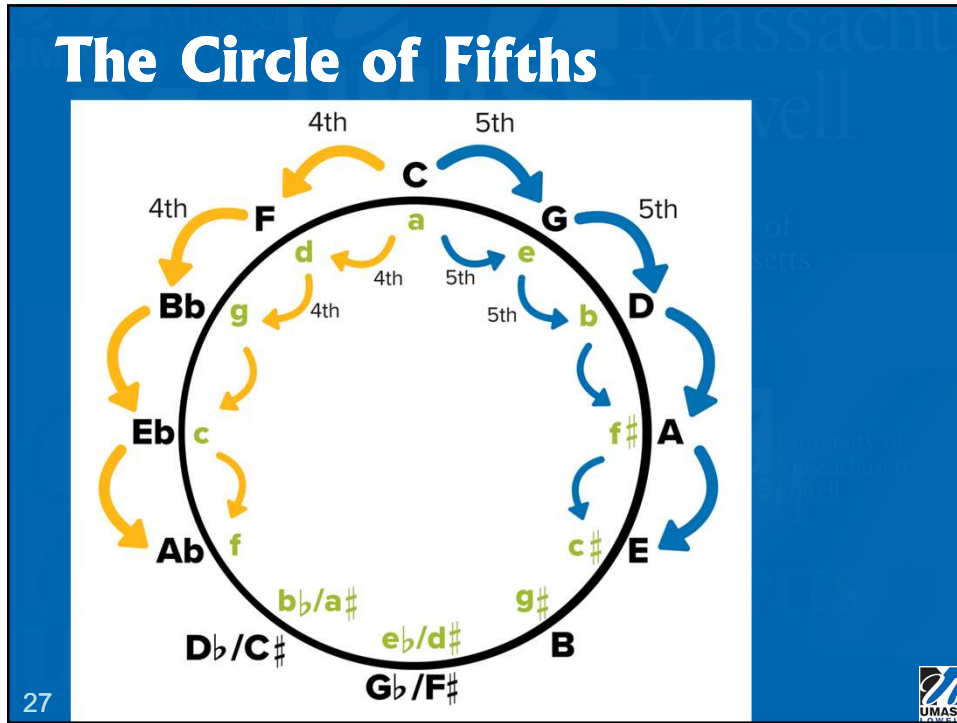
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## How Do Intervals Work?

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Interval	Just Intonation Ratio	Equal Temp. Ratio
Unison	1	1.00000
Minor Second	25/24	1.04167
Major Second	9/8	1.12500
Minor Third	6/5	1.20000
Major Third	5/4	1.25000
Fourth	4/3	1.33333
Diminished Fifth	45/32	1.40625
“Perfect” Fifth	3/2	1.50000
Minor Sixth	8/5	1.60000
Major Sixth	5/3	1.66667
Minor Seventh	9/5	1.80000
Major Seventh	15/8	1.87500
Octave	2	2.00000

26 <http://www.phy.mtu.edu/~suits/scales.html> 



## The Circle of Fifths



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## What Makes It Barbershop?

1. Four-part a cappella harmony, harmonic variety, few passing tones

David Wright, Future History of Barbershop (characterizing)  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KtGI62i\\_8XM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KtGI62i_8XM)

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## What Makes It Barbershop?

1. Four-part a cappella harmony, harmonic variety, few passing tones
2. **Melody in second tenor, first tenor above, bass usually solid chord tones, baritone fill**

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## What Makes It Barbershop?

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3. **Embellishments continually converging to homophonic chords**

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4. Freedom with the song

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2. Melody in second tenor, first tenor above, bass usually solid chord tones, baritone fill
3. Embellishments continually converging to homophonic chords
4. Freedom with the song
5. Chords tuned to lock and ring
  - just intonation

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## Where'd It Come From?

- Work songs sung by Negro slaves in the fields
  - Also sung by prisoners, especially chain gangs
- Characterized by lead-ins, call-and-response
- A cappella, improvised harmonies



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- Work songs sung by Negro slaves in the fields
  - Also sung by prisoners, especially chain gangs
- Characterized by lead-ins, call-and-response
- A cappella, improvised harmonies
- Developed into gospel



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## Where'd It Come From?






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Who's in this picture?



## History and Commentary

- **The Beginnings (to 0:39)** 
  - The Edison Quartet, 1903 
- **Formation of SPEBSQSA, the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America** 
  - O.C. Cash radio interview in 1948
  - O.C. Cash letter of April 6, 1938:  
“In this age of Dictators and Government Control of everything, about the only privilege guaranteed by the Bill of Rights not in some way supervised and directed, is the art of Barber Shop Quartet singing.”
  - First convention/contest: 1939

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## History and Commentary

- The Red Caps “Incident”

- Starting in 1923, the New York City Park Dept. ran annual singing contests in Central Park

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## History and Commentary

- **The Red Caps “Incident”**

- Starting in 1923, the New York City Park Dept. ran annual singing contests in Central Park
- The 1941 winners were the Grand Central Red Caps, all railroad porters
- Mayor La Guardia wanted them to enter in that year’s Society contest



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## History and Commentary

- **O.C. Cash, the society’s founder, refused**
  - In fairness, of course many organizations practiced discrimination in those days
- **But note the irony, given the music’s roots**
- **Result: Protests and Society resignations**
  - Al Smith, NY governor & presidential candidate
  - Robert Moses, the NYC Park Commissioner

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## History and Commentary

- O.C. Cash, the society's founder, refused
  - In fairness, of course many organizations practiced discrimination in those days
- But note the irony, given the music's roots
- Result: Protests and Society resignations
  - Al Smith, NY governor & presidential candidate
  - Robert Moses, the NYC Park Commissioner
- The Society excluded blacks until 1963, when the convention was held in Toronto and the province of Ontario threatened to prohibit it if discrimination continued

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## History and Commentary

- Formation of the Sweet Adelines
  - First convention/contest: 1945 



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## History and Commentary

- Formation of the Sweet Adelines
  - First convention/contest: 1945
- Formation of Harmony, Inc.



- “In July 1958, ... about 150 women [withdrew from Sweet Adelines to start] a new organization based on democratic principles and **open to all women, regardless of race, creed, or color.**”

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[http://www.harmonymembers.org/docs/historybook/6\\_2.pdf](http://www.harmonymembers.org/docs/historybook/6_2.pdf)





## History and Commentary

- Affiliated international societies
  - BABS **British** Association of Barbershop Singers
  - BHA Barbershop Harmony **Australia**
  - BHNZ Barbershop Harmony **New Zealand**
  - BinG! Barbershop in **Germany**
  - FABS **Finnish** Association of Barbershop Singers
  - **Dutch** Association of Barbershop Singers
  - IABS **Irish** Association of Barbershop Singers
  - MBHA **Mixed** Barbershop Harmony Association
  - SABS **Spanish** Association of Barbershop Singers
  - SNOBS Society of **Nordic** Barbershop Singers
  - SPATS Southern Part of **Africa** Tonsorial Singers

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## History and Commentary

- Formation of choruses and more  
  - First official chorus contest in 1954
- Collegiate and Senior Quartet Contests







## The LIRA Quartet!

♩ = 100      ♩ = 50

Tenor  
8 When it's sleep - y time... down... south...

Lead  
8 When it's sleep - y time... down... south...

Bari.  
When it's sleep - y time... down... south...

Bass  
When it's sleep - y time... down... south...

51 [Go to MuseScore ...](#)

## Barbershop Royalty

- The Buffalo Bills (1952 Int'l Champions)  
on the Perry Como Show in 1958

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## Barbershop Royalty

- **The Buffalo Bills (1952 Int'l Champions)**
  - 1,510 performances on Broadway
  - 1 major motion picture
  - 728 concerts
  - 675 radio shows
  - 672 club & hotel appearances
  - 626 conventions
  - 216 television shows
  - 137 state fair performances
  - 15 record albums



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## Barbershop Royalty

- **Buffalo Bills, 1950 Int'l Quartet Champions**
  - "Singing is just sustained talking."
  - [https://youtu.be/nOODFttQo\]c#t=55](https://youtu.be/nOODFttQo]c#t=55)
  - "Ice Cream" and "Sincere"
- **Classics as Sung in Contests**
  - Old School, 2011 Int'l Quartet Champions
    - <https://youtu.be/uRu3CZfteyY#t=20>
    - "Little Town in the Old County Down" and "I Want a Girl" (at 4:10)
  - Realtime, 2005 Int'l Quartet Champions
    - [https://youtu.be/rfIM9NFh\]Ak#t=15](https://youtu.be/rfIM9NFh]Ak#t=15)
    - "Come Fly With Me" and "Birth of the Blues" (at 3:00)

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## Barbershop Royalty

- **Judging Criteria**
  - Singing, Performance, and Musicality
- **Pop Song Cover**
  - Signature
    - <https://youtu.be/8RXXQsXvO1Q>
    - “A Change is Gonna Come” (Sam Cooke cover)
- **Comedy**
  - “Lida Rose” by the Buffalo Bills and Shirley Jones
    - <https://youtu.be/BLEEGnA8vQ8#t=13>
  - Storm Front’s Version, 2010 Int’l Champions
    - <https://youtu.be/vWCNIIIkbFw#t=30>

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## Barbershop Royalty

- **Chorus: “Seventy-Six Trombones”**
  - Music Man Film Finale
    - <https://youtu.be/hdd6qOpW4DM#t=220>
  - Ambassadors of Harmony
    - 2009 Int’l Chorus Champions
    - <https://youtu.be/QmDGntpZC3I#t=154>
- **Chorus: “This is the Moment”**
  - Masters of Harmony
    - 1999 Int’l Chorus Champions
    - <https://youtu.be/GDib1vYVIGQ>

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## Barbershop Royalty

- **Something You Wouldn't Expect**

- Acoustix, 1990 Int'l Quartet Champions
  - <https://youtu.be/kgIWth784uU>
  - "Stars and Strips Forever"

- **Sheer Perfection (IMHO)**

- Crossroads, 2009 Int'l Quartet Champions
  - <https://youtu.be/u7mGiSZpdpk#t=30>
  - "Lucky Old Sun"

- **The Holy Grail of Barbershop**

- Boston Common, 1980 Int'l Quartet Champs
  - <https://youtu.be/Vg4cFVWvzls#t=150>
  - "That Old Quartet of Mine"

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*Appearing:*  
May 10th, 6:00 PM  
Congregation Shalom  
North Chelmsford



*From the Hearth*

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**thank you**

Slides available at: [jesseheines.com/lira](http://jesseheines.com/lira)  
Email Jesse at: [jesse@jesseheines.com](mailto:jesse@jesseheines.com)



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April 24, 2019

