



## The Sound of Friendship

### COMPUTER SCIENCE PH.D.S SING BARBERSHOP



The barbershop quartet, "Fireside," from left, Manoj Padki, Daniel Schwartz, Lecturer David Adams and Prof. Jesse Heines.

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By Sheila Eppolito

On Sept. 11, 2001, [Jesse Heines \(uml.edu/Research/IVPR/faculty/Heines\\_Jesse%20M.aspx\)](http://uml.edu/Research/IVPR/faculty/Heines_Jesse%20M.aspx) lost a dear friend.

Ten days later, his mother died.

"I decided it was time to start doing the things I'd always wanted to do," says Heines, "so I took singing lessons."

Heines, a [Computer Science \(uml.edu/Sciences/computer-science/default.aspx\)](http://uml.edu/Sciences/computer-science/default.aspx) professor, has always been musical. He played trumpet in high school and guitar in college. But he'd always wanted to sing with a group, so he signed up for voice lessons at Indian Hill Music School in Littleton.

For Computer Science Lecturer [David Adams \(uml.edu/Sciences/computer-science/faculty/Adams-David.aspx\)](http://uml.edu/Sciences/computer-science/faculty/Adams-David.aspx), singing started early in his childhood, when his mother used it as a way to control him and his siblings.

"My mom had us sing in harmony to keep us in line when we acted up — and we acted up a lot," he says.

The colleagues met at a computer science conference where Heines introduced his presentation on interdisciplinary teaching by singing, but their best collaboration may be as half of "Fireside," their barbershop quartet.

It's clear these men of science are also passionate about all things music, especially the voice.

"The voice can do just about anything, in any style of music, that any other instrument can," says Adams.

The two explain the physics of sound and the "lock and ring" effect of four voices combining together to create barbershop's trademark chords.

The quartet, rounded out by another Ph.D. and a Google software engineer, practices together weekly, and individually, as time allows. Heines, for example, listens to MP3 “learning tracks” for the songs the quartet is working on during his commute to work. And, yes, both men admit to singing anywhere and everywhere the opportunity arises.

But for all the exactitude, practice and precision, the main draw for both men is the camaraderie of working together as a team.

“Everyone brings something different. David, for example, can hold a note so long and steady, you could park a car on it,” says Heines.





For Adams, who spent years after his family musical sessions in church and college choirs, singing with others is preferable to going it alone.

“One time, after a practice, our quartet was in a 99 Restaurant getting dinner, and we decided to sing. The reaction by the wait staff and other customers was great,” he says.

But this quartet is also gaining attention in professional barbershop circles, especially the Northeast District Barbershop Harmony Society, which holds annual contests.

[Watch "Fireside" in action \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o21AViNOMIQ\).](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o21AViNOMIQ)

“Fireside,” a relatively new quartet by barbershop standards, came in sixth out of 23 quartets competing in the Barbershop Harmony Society Northeast District competition in Providence, R.I., in October. While a spot in the highly coveted international competition is only a dream at this point, these scientists by day, singers by night are in it for the long term. Stay tuned.

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