

Publications FAQ: Music Catalog Changes

The Barbershop Harmony Society has decided to begin moving all of our music publications toward a published-only model. The recent [Hal Leonard unpublished-to-published transition project](#) has provided the opportunity to begin curating the vast number of unedited, unvetted charts currently classified as “Unpublished” and streamline the catalog to be much more representative of what we offer as official BHS sheet music. The Hal Leonard project also gives us a template process to apply to other publisher’s copyrights, allowing us to eventually transition all third-party owned copyrights over to the Published Catalog using the same process in the coming months and years.

We have put together this Frequently Asked Questions page to help answer basic questions that you might have as we continue to move forward with this project. If your question is not addressed here, please reach out to BHS Arranger & Repertoire Manager Scott Harris directly at sharris@barbershop.org to discuss any questions or concerns that you may have.

Why is this happening? We’ve always had an “Unpublished” catalog.

In accordance with music publishing best practices, all commercially available arrangements must have a formal print license. BHS is long-overdue in bringing our publically available sheet music up to this industry standard. Our previous method of making "Unpublished" arrangements available with only an accompanying permission-to-arrange license is not common for a music publisher, and is not sustainable as we continue to grow as the premiere barbershop music publisher.

Of the approximately 1,800 Hal Leonard-controlled unpublished arrangements that have sold in recent years, about 400 titles have been selected to be transferred to the BHS Published catalog. Titles beyond the initial 400 will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to be considered for publication. Remaining titles will be made available via our Special Order process.

What about titles controlled/administered by publishers other than Hal Leonard?

For now, those titles will continue to be made available as “Unpublished.” However, BHS will be eventually moving toward a published-only model for all titles available through the marketplace (shop.barbershop.org). Hal Leonard is currently the only publisher that we have a contractual obligation to transition the unpublished titles that they control. However, this transition will serve as a model to address additional copyright holders/administrators to continue moving toward a published-only model.

What should I do if my chart wasn’t included in the initial group of Hal Leonard arrangements to be added to the BHS published catalog?

Given the volume of titles, it is nearly impossible to catch all arrangements worthy to be transferred to Published. In fact, we are confident we missed some! If your chart was not included and you think it would benefit the catalog, please submit your arrangement to A&R Manager Scott Harris at sharris@barbershop.org to be reviewed and considered for publication. Be sure to include the unpublished BHS Stock number if applicable.

Keep in mind that your arrangement may very well continue to be available in the “Unpublished” catalog for a time if it is controlled by an entity other than Hal Leonard.

How are arrangements being selected for publication?

If it is a quality arrangement, has been selling, and we receive a print license for it, it will be transitioned to the Published catalog. There may be duplicate arrangements currently in the Unpublished catalog that are similar in approach and difficulty to an already Published arrangement of the same song and those may be designated to Special Order so as to not confuse the customer. There is also a chance that a particular title may be denied for clearance and would be removed from the catalog, which would then be considered a Special Order arrangement.

What happens to arrangements that aren't being added to the published catalog?

Titles not transferred to the Published catalog will remain in the Society library; however, they will no longer be available for purchase on the BHS website (shop.barbershop.org). If someone wants a specific arrangement that is not available for sale, they will be able to identify it on the publically viewable Special Order spreadsheet and request clearance by securing a custom license for use of the arrangement. The BHS Copyright and Licensing department will continue to assist with those clearance requests as always.

What do you mean unpublished will only be available via a “Special Order”?

Special Order titles will include the following:

- * contest medleys which are elaborate/difficult to clear;
- * highly customized arrangements for specific ensembles;
- * arrangements that are unsolicited/unedited;
- * song titles that are already over-represented in the published catalog;
- * arrangements that were denied a commercial print license.

While these arrangements aren't generally suitable for the published catalog, they will continue to remain available as Special Orders and accessible to those that wish to clear them on a custom basis. This will help ensure that customers are able to find the barbershop music they want more efficiently in the Published catalog, and still have access to previously available specialty charts.

How will people buy these charts if they can't order directly from the website?

All charts not being published may be special-ordered directly from the BHS Copyright and Licensing Department (library@barbershop.org). You can see which charts are available through this process by viewing the Special Order spreadsheet on our website at shop.barbershop.org

How much will it cost a customer to clear a Special Order arrangement?

The current clearance fee is \$75.00 USD plus the copyright holder's license fee and any per copy fees that are applied. Medley clearance fees are much higher and will be quoted on a case-by-case basis by the Manager, Copyright & Licensing. If a clearance is cancelled by the customer at any time after submitting their request form, there will be cancellation fee of \$50.00 USD charged to cover labor and materials.

Will I get paid arranger commissions on music purchased through the Special Order process?

Special Order arrangements are not eligible for arranger commissions, as has been long-standing BHS policy. However, you are more than welcome to sell your arrangements independently if you secure a print license directly from the copyright holder to do so.

How will I make money on my custom arrangements?

Custom orders and commissions will still be sought after by quartets and choruses, but will no longer be automatically added to our catalog. Our recommendation is to price your arrangement commissions in such a way that you are compensated fairly by the group that hires you to arrange for them. You may then submit that arrangement to be considered for publication through the BHS Marketplace or sell it on your own by obtaining a print license from the copyright holder.

How do I get a new arrangement published?

BHS is always looking for new, creative, and accessible barbershop arrangements with broad appeal to singers of every level. If you feel that your arrangement fits that criteria, you are welcome to submit it to A&R Manager Scott Harris at sharris@barbershop.org to be reviewed and considered for publication.