



Submitted

Razzmatazz, the quartet who describes itself as "pure entertainment," will make its debut this year at the Parade of Harmony barbershop music concert.

thrilled to learn that the audience wanted us back and complained when we weren't on the bill," Egan says. "We love doing the show for many reasons: The audience is great; the chorus is great; and the sound system is great."

Rave is an award-winning member of Sweet Adelines International, the female barbershop society that boasts 30,000 members. In addition to Egan, who sings tenor, members are Peggy Sue Henshey, lead, of Ohioville; Nancie Jaicks, bass, of Mars; and Lisa Beckett, baritone, of Aliquippa.

The song lineup they have planned for New Kensington includes jazz, swing, contemporary, standards and old-fashioned barbershop numbers. "Variety makes it fun," Egan says. "People should expect an uplifting, high-energy, spine-tingling live performance,

especially if they've never been exposed to a cappella harmony before. They will be entertained."

Entertainment certainly is the specialty of Razzmatazz, who like following a straight barbershop number with a novelty bit that has been known to leave its audience in Amish-made stitches.

"They sing well and have humor we don't have around here. These guys are home-spun," Rusty Crytzer says, adding that he and a few members of the chorus saw Razzmatazz perform last year and thought "We've got to get them."

The quartet describes itself as "pure entertainment." They purport to live by the motto "Two wrongs don't make a right, but three lefts do." And they offer this challenge: Don't

play stupid with us; we're better at it.

"If you love to laugh, if you know what it means to laugh until your cheeks hurt, if you need a break from the humdrum, you've got to see Razzmatazz," says member Don McElroy, who sings bass.

The group, which also includes tenor Bill Gable, lead Rick Ashby and baritone Ed Ludwig, in 1997 won the Funny Bone Comedy Quartet Contest at the Buckeye Invitational in Ohio.

"If you've never seen us, you should expect to enjoy interesting barbershop music with clever parody material, mixed with slapstick humor. It's more fun than brain surgery," McElroy says.

They have two sets planned for the New Kensington show, including the sure-to-be

tear-jerkers "Let's Take a Buggy to Blue Ball" and "Mississippi Squirrel." Their '50s medley includes classics such as "In the Still of the Night" and "Little Darlin'."

Razzmatazz is serious about its love of barbershop singing.

That is fueled by the interesting and tight harmonies of the a cappella vocal lines, McElroy says.

"The magic of the unaccompanied voice resides in its incredible flexibility," he says. "It is unquestionably unique to each individual, with the widest range of sounds, qualities and rhythms of any instrument. Put four of them together well, and the sound and the feeling can be amazing. There's nothing like that first time you ring a chord with three other people. It can just give you chills!"