

MUSIC CATEGORY

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MUSIC CATEGORY

The primary focus of the music category is the performance of a song arranged in four-part harmony, barbershop style. The music judge evaluates the musicality of the performance, the quality of the song and arrangement, and the degree to which the performance meets the requirements of the barbershop style.

She rewards a performance when:

The song and arrangement are accurately performed and within the vocal capabilities of the performer.

The musical performance is appropriate to the lyrics, to the harmonic and rhythmic content, and to accepted standards of musical artistry in the barbershop style.

The song is lyrically and melodically appropriate to the barbershop art form and has been arranged with harmonization and voicing consistent with the characteristics of the barbershop style.

While any song can be arranged in the barbershop style, i.e., melody not in the top voice, a strong bass line, and utilization of complete (four-toned) chords, the extent to which a song adheres to the barbershop style is determined by the following characteristics unique to this form of music: chord structure, arrangement, the cone-shaped sound, untempered tuning, delivery, and interpretation. These are integral factors which contribute to the “lock and ring” characteristic of the barbershop style.

For purposes of evaluation, the music category has been divided into two major areas: the barbershop song and arrangement and the performance of that arrangement.

SONG AND ARRANGEMENT (0-30 POINTS)

A song is the combination of lyrics, melody, and harmony implied by that melody into an aesthetic entity. A good barbershop song meets the lyric, melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic criteria characteristic of the barbershop style.

People have been singing what came to be known as “barbershop harmony” since around the turn of the 20th century. The Barbershop Harmony Society organized in 1938 and Sweet Adelines extended the art form to women when it formed in 1945. In the early years, barbershop harmony was associated with the “old songs” because barbershop music is based on the American popular song. Just before the turn of the 20th century, American popular song took on and consolidated certain native characteristics—verbal, melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic—that distinguished it from the popular song of other

countries. It became a discrete musical entity. American popular songs written between 1890 and 1940 easily fit the parameters of what came to be termed “the barbershop style.” The date that a song was composed or published is unimportant; the significant factor is its stylistic characteristics.

Music, like art, never remains stagnant. A study of music history shows the evolution of any specific style, be it baroque, renaissance, impressionist, or 20th century. A style generally evolves to a point that no longer resembles the original, and a new style emerges. In popular music we’ve seen styles that include big band, doo-wop, rock and roll, and the latter even has its own subdivisions including light rock, classic rock, and hard rock. While barbershop harmony has seen its own evolution, it is not intended that it will ever evolve into another musical style, be it *a cappella* or even four-part harmony. The characteristics that make the barbershop style of four-part harmony unique need to remain constant to set it apart from other forms of unaccompanied vocal music.

MERIT AS BARBERSHOP COMPETITION MATERIAL

The relative strength of a barbershop song, apart from the arrangement, is determined by the degree to which it meets the criteria outlined in the discussion below.

FORM

Single Song Arrangements

In the song, form refers to the overall pattern or structure of the song itself, not the arrangement. Until the latter part of the 20th century, American popular song was written in extended song form, or what has come to be referred to as “popular” song form. In this structure the verse generally consists of two segments of eight measures each (16 measures), and the chorus generally consists of four, sometimes five segments of eight measures each (32 or 40 measures). Additionally, the chorus generally demonstrates melodic unity such as A-A-B-A, A-B-A-C, or A-B-A-C-A form.

The strophic form, typical of hymns and folk songs, with many short verses/choruses sung to the same melody, lacks the melodic variety to be considered strong for barbershop competition. The through composed form, typical of operatic recitative, and even found in some recent popular songs, is inappropriate for barbershop competition.

The most important element in form is the presence of eight-measure increments. Either the verse or the chorus may occasionally contain an additional eight measure section (for the 24-measure verse or the 40-measure chorus, but most verses consist of 16 measures and most choruses consist of 32 measures. Occasionally an arranger adds a 2-measure extension to one of these segments, and the music judge will evaluate the extension based on its effectiveness as performed.

In the arrangement, form or composition also addresses the structure of the arrangement—the manner in which the song has been “packaged” by the arranger into a

barbershop style presentation. Typical composition includes an introduction, a verse, a chorus, and a tag. These sections and their sequence may vary depending on the nature of the song. The chorus is the only element that must always be present. An intro sets the scene musically and/or lyrically. Sometimes the verse satisfies this requirement and an intro is unnecessary. The verse usually provides additional musical and lyrical preparation for the story; however, in many acceptable arrangements the verse is either omitted or used as an interlude between two choruses. The chorus *is* the story; it cannot be omitted. The tag functions as a musical coda, and most arrangements do require a tag unless the composer has provided a tag incorporated into the song itself.

Melodies for the added intro and tag are often composed by the arranger. Sometimes the arranger writes lyrics for these sections and sometimes key words or phrases are extracted from the author's lyrics. Any section(s) added by the arranger should be stylistically similar to the song and should contain an identifiable melody line. These criteria also apply to verses or interludes composed by the arranger.

The overall composition, when complete, must adhere to good musical form. Most intros are 4 or 8 measures in length, as are most tags. Most interludes provide 8 or 16 additional measures, depending upon the balance of the composition. Added sections will extend, but should not destroy, the musical form characteristic of the American popular song.

Medley Arrangements

Criteria established for evaluating the composition of single-song arrangements are also applicable to arrangements that contain two or more songs or segments of songs. Overall composition must still meet the standards of good musical form and musical unity must be preserved.

For unity to exist, the songs included in a medley should be similar in theme and/or musical style and they should be presented in a sequence that provides for build to a musical high point. A return to the initial theme always helps to achieve musical unity, particularly when an intervening section presents a contrasting mood or idea.

Transitions between songs or sections of songs must also remain within the boundaries of good musical form so that the overall structure is musically valid. Small sections of many songs in a medley can cause the overall composition to be disjointed and the medley will lack musical unity by merely becoming a list of songs rather than a complete composition.

MELODY

The melody of the barbershop song is singable, musically interesting, and has a high point that coincides with the climactic point of the lyrics. Melodies that contain a minimum of wide interval jumps are most adaptable to presentation in the barbershop style.

Since the predominant flavor of barbershop harmony is the major mode, the melody should be constructed primarily from tones of the diatonic major scale and the harmony implied by that melody should be consistent with the harmonic characteristics of music in the barbershop style. Sometimes the melody of the verse, or even the bridge (B section of an A-A-B-A form) is based on the harmonic minor scale, but the chorus resolves to the major mode.

Changes

Occasionally a melodic change can be shown to have occurred over time through common usage. In this instance the arranger should incorporate the melody note(s) familiar to the listener. With rare exceptions, a melody change should be reserved for the composer. If extensive melodic alteration is required, the song in question is probably not the best vehicle for a barbershop arrangement. It is usually permissible to change a melody note by taking it up or down an octave to avoid awkward jumps.

Implied Harmony

The most interesting barbershop songs are those whose melodies imply a wide variety of chord progressions utilizing the dominant-to-tonic resolution. Application of the dominant-to-tonic resolution is a particularly significant characteristic of barbershop harmony, including frequent use of secondary dominant sevenths. Songs that utilize subdominant-to-tonic resolution as the predominant flavor are more reminiscent of church music (amen cadence) than music in the barbershop style. If a melody requires consistent use of subdominant-to-tonic resolution, the song is probably not typical of strong barbershop material.

LYRICS

The lyrics of a barbershop song are similar to the words of a poem in that they demonstrate metric unity and an obvious rhyming structure. The contrasting *unacceptable* form is more like prose, where phrase length is not uniform and no rhyming structure exists. This latter lyrical form is called "through-composed." Many art songs and some theatrical songs are based on this lyrical structure. Also, the lyrics of a barbershop song are set to the melody so that each syllable has its own melody note as opposed to the melismatic melodies found in operatic arias.

The combination of music and lyrics is the total message of a barbershop song, and these elements must complement each other. It is especially important that the lyrical and musical high points coincide. An arrangement that builds musically as well as lyrically to the "punch line" of the story will present a saleable, satisfying message. Good musical form generally dictates that the high point occur at the end of the third (or next-to-last) eight-measure section of the chorus, or at the beginning of the fourth (or final) eight-bar section. On rare occasion the high point can be found in the tag. While the message of a barbershop ballad is in the lyrics, the message of a barbershop uptune is conveyed by the tempo, rhythm and lyrics.

Unacceptable Lyrics:

Competition policies established by the International Board of Directors prohibit the use in competition of songs with religious or patriotic lyrics. Religious songs include hymns and other songs written to create an awareness of and reverence toward a supreme being. Patriotic songs include national anthems and other songs written to inspire patriotism and allegiance to a particular country. Performance of a song considered religious or patriotic will result in a penalty, ranging from a score of zero in the music category to a score of zero in all categories. The music judge is responsible for enforcement of this policy. Many songs from Broadway musicals, such as “Yankee Doodle Boy” or “Get Happy” are not considered religious or patriotic because they were written primarily for entertainment purposes rather than for inspirational values. Competition policies also require that songs be sung in English, though no penalty will be assessed for the occasional foreign language word or phrase found in American popular song, such as the words *parlez vous* in the lyrics of “How ‘Ya Gonna Keep ‘Em Down on the Farm?”

Questionable Lyrics:

Barbershop harmony is considered “G-rated” (suitable for all audiences) entertainment, and lyrics performed in contest should adhere to that standard. They should not conflict with generally accepted moral and ethical standards. Since the manner of presentation—both visual and vocal—can affect the evaluation of this aspect, the music judge will seek a presentation appropriate to the lyrics that is neither suggestive nor offensive. (Note: Even in non-contest settings, all performing groups are expected to be mindful of subject matter, lyrics or presentations that may offend members and/or audiences.)

Political Correctness:

The music judge’s evaluation does not include the issue of political correctness. Many songs written in earlier eras deal with issues now considered sensitive, despite the fact that these songs and their subject matter, when written, were not considered offensive. It is the performer’s responsibility to determine whether or not the message of a song, by current standards, would be considered offensive.

Lyric Alteration:

Musical integrity generally requires that the work of an author or lyricist be performed as it was written. However, there are valid reasons for minor lyric alteration and no penalty will be assessed by the music judge if the reason for change is obvious and if it is handled with good musical taste. Most popular songs are written “in the vernacular,” using words and phrases common to the time but which may have no significance or an entirely different connotation at a later time. Lyric alteration in such cases may enable the listener to understand the original intent. The key words are “in good taste,” and the music judge will evaluate lyric changes accordingly.

Parodies:

The parody, generally a humorous set of lyrics used as a replacement for the original lyrics, will be evaluated by the music judge in the same manner as if the original lyrics had been presented. Again, "good taste" is the issue. The music judge will not address the legality of parody lyrics. It is the responsibility of the performer to obtain permission from the copyright owner to perform parodies.

ARRANGEMENT

Harmonization

Barbershop music is essentially tonal, triadic harmony primarily in the major mode. The music judge seeks a song appropriately harmonized and arranged in the barbershop style. No reward can be given by the music judge when (1) a song that would be more appropriately harmonized in another musical style has been forced into a barbershop setting, or (2) the song has been appropriately harmonized in a style other than barbershop.

The basic framework of the barbershop style requires the following:

1. Eleven chords as outlined here:
 - a. Those based on the major triad
 - (1) Major Triad
 - (2) Dominant Seventh (also called barbershop seventh)
 - (3) Dominant Ninth (or minor sixth, depending on voicing)
 - (4) Major Sixth (or minor seventh, depending on voicing)
 - (5) Major Seventh
 - (6) Major Ninth
 - b. Those based on the minor triad
 - (1) Minor Triad
 - (2) Minor Sixth (or dominant ninth, depending on voicing)
 - (3) Minor Seventh (or major sixth, depending on voicing)
 - c. Symmetrical chords
 - (1) Augmented Triad
 - (2) Diminished Seventh
2. The melody is carried primarily by the lead voice, while the highest voice sings a harmony part.
3. The lowest voice sings a strong chord component
4. No chord tone is omitted.

The diminished triad and the minor ninth are not acceptable. With the exception of the 5-tone dominant ninth when a chord component (usually root or fifth) is eliminated, we do not use chords "with a" or "without a" (the minor triad is sometimes erroneously called a sixth without a fifth).

~~The majority of chords in the strongest barbershop arrangements will be the major~~

triad, dominant seventh, and dominant ninth. This structure supports and enhances the overtone-producing characteristics of the barbershop style. Frequent use is made of the dominant seventh/ninth in a secondary position where it functions as the dominant to a scale tone other than the tonic.

In a strong barbershop arrangement, resolutions progress in a sequence established by the Circle of Fifths. For example, the familiar song "Five Foot Two," if sung in the key of C, begins with the C triad, progresses to E chords (V7 of iii), progresses to A chords (V7 of vi), moves on to D chords (V7 of ii), then on to G chords (V7 of I) and resolves to C or the tonic.

The major ninth chord should only be used when that tone is the melody and change to a substitute chord would involve awkward voice leading. An example of acceptable use is the hook line of "Once Upon a Time," provided the performer does not choose to hold these weaker chords.

The major seventh chord may also be used when that tone is the melody and change to a substitute chord would involve awkward voice leading. However, acceptable substitute chords are frequently available. The major seventh chord can also be used when that tone is a passing note in a single-part swipe. The major seventh is one of the chords characteristic of modern harmony, and songs that require frequent use of the major seventh are more appropriately harmonized in the closely-voiced modern style.

The major sixth chord contains the same tones as a minor seventh chord, but when the fifth and sixth tones are adjacent it is named major sixth. Frequently the minor triad can be used in place of the major sixth unless this creates a jumpy part line that is difficult to sing accurately. The major sixth is the other chord that is characteristic of modern harmony, particularly when the fifth and sixth tones are in the lowest voices. In barbershop arrangements the adjacent tones are usually found in the middle voices.

Once used sparingly or only in passing, the minor triad has gained wider acceptance. However, the minor triad still does not enable the "ring" characteristic of the barbershop style, and songs entirely in the minor mode are weaker for that reason. The minor triad may also be used as a substitute for its relative major.

The augmented triad is another chord used primarily when the melody is on the raised fifth scale tone. Like the major seventh, this tone is also appropriately used in passing in a single-part swipe.

Most barbershop uptunes convey a happy or joyful message and, as such, are appropriately harmonized using primarily the three strongest chords. However, barbershop ballads involve a wide range of messages – some are happy, even joyful, some are nostalgic, but many are sad. The composer's melody generally paints a picture that conveys the tone of the message. The arranger, in selecting the framework for the lyric and melodic lines, chooses chords that help to paint the desired message. Often this will require more frequent use of "color chords" such as the minor sixth, minor seventh, and

diminished seventh, because they help to paint the desired picture. It would be incongruous to use bright, happy chords to harmonize a message conveying sadness or despair.

Even with appropriate use of secondary chords to portray the song's message, the majority of chords in a strong barbershop arrangement will still be a combination of the three strongest barbershop chords—the major triad, dominant seventh, and dominant ninth.

Harmonic Progressions

The chords selected to harmonize the melody should closely follow the implied harmony and should point up that melody rather than causing it to become obscured. Some melody lines offer the arranger a choice of chords or chord progressions, and appropriate variety in harmonization can add interest to an arrangement that might otherwise be repetitious. The music judge cannot reward for passages where the arrangement strays so far from the intended chord structure that harmonization becomes inappropriate. Originality in harmonization can be rewarded only if the resulting chords or progressions remain in keeping with the song and its implied harmony.

An important characteristic of the barbershop style is that all melody notes must be harmonized by inclusion of the melody in one of the eleven chords listed previously. Nonharmonic tones, passing tones, and non-chords are outside the scope of barbershop harmony. When the melody note is not a part of the chord indicated on the sheet music, the barbershop arranger must find a suitable substitute chord.

Voicings

The chords that characterize barbershop harmony and those considered secondary have been listed. In evaluating an arrangement, the music judge considers not only the chords themselves, but also the manner in which chords are voiced. She cannot reward for consistent weak voicing of strong chords. A strong bass line is one of the factors that enables the lock and ring characteristic of the barbershop style, and the music judge seeks chords voiced to reinforce that strength.

Relative Strength: In most cases, strongest voicing is achieved when the root of the chord is in the lowest voice part. Chords voiced with the fifth in the bass are strong in some cases and weak in others; this voicing is strong in the dominant seventh and dominant ninth, but weak in major and minor triads where it should only be used in passing. Voicing of the relative minor triad with the third in the bass is strong because the minor third interval functions as an implied root of the relative major key. Voicing the third of any other chord in the bass is weak, as is voicing the sixth, seventh or ninth tone of any chord in the bass. Weaker voicings may be permitted when used in a progression to stronger voicings, or when used infrequently or in passing; they should not occur at points of resolution. Since the augmented triad and diminished seventh are constructed of equal intervals, any tone can function as the root.

Triads: Because only three tones are present in the major, minor, and augmented triads there must be a doubled tone to create four-part harmony. Unless an obvious reason exists for assigning two voice parts to the same pitch, the doubled tones should be separated by at least one octave. Strongest voicing results when the root is doubled or when the third is doubled in a minor triad used as a substitute for the relative major. Doubling the fifth is weak in every instance, and the 6/4 (second inversion) voicing where the bass occupies one of the doubled fifth tones in the major triad is particularly weak. This voicing should be used only when smooth voice leading prevents doubling the root. The third of a major triad should never be doubled.

Remaining Chords: The remaining eight chords have at least four tones and all four must always be present; no tone may be omitted and no doubles are permissible. The dominant ninth chord contains five tones, so one must be omitted. Strongest voicing results when the root is omitted, but the fifth may successfully be omitted for a special effect or when required by smooth voice leading. No other tone of the dominant ninth may be omitted.

If the performer cannot sing the chords that are written and remain accurate in pitch, consistent in vocal quality, and in good barbershop balance, the music judge will point out that the fault lies with the performer rather than with the written arrangement. She may suggest the contestant select an arrangement more suited to the vocal capabilities of the performing group.

The tenor usually sings the highest note of the chord, the bass the lowest, and the lead and baritone sing the two notes in the middle, frequently crossing each other. When the melody either goes too high or too low to permit strong voicing in a normal manner, alternate voicings may be used. A high melody, for an isolated note or two, may remain in the lead while the tenor voice fills a position under the lead note. A high melody may only be given to the tenor for a very short time because melody in the top voice is characteristic of modern harmony. A high melody for an extended passage may be transposed down an octave and given to the bass. Low melody, for either an isolated note or an extended passage, may be given to the bass. These alternate melodic voicings must still result in the strong chord structure characteristic of the barbershop style. It is up to the performer to sing the arrangement in such a way that the listener can easily follow any melodic transitions.

The best arrangements incorporate an interesting combination of open and closed voicings. Single-octave voicing should not be predominant in a strong barbershop arrangement. Simply transposing an arrangement for male voices to one for female singers will create voicings that may prevent the “lock and ring,” the predominant feature of barbershop harmony.

Meter

Songs appropriate to the barbershop style are characterized by simple, symmetri-

cal meter, usually 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, cut time, or common time. Another meter appropriate to the barbershop style is 6/8, and 12/8 is an acceptable meter for swing-tempo delivery or the slow rock-tempo section of an arrangement, sometimes referred to as “stomp” tempo. Frequent meter changes and asymmetrical meters such as 5/4 or 7/4 are not within the scope of the barbershop style.

Creative Devices

Creative devices are musical devices used by the arranger to add musical interest or to achieve the continuity that would be provided by instrumental accompaniment.

Swipes, Echoes, and Other Embellishments: The music judge will reward for creative and appropriate use of any of these devices. Excessive use can be a liability rather than an asset, because they may cause musical separation rather than unity and they may upset the balance of musical form or implied meter. She will evaluate the use of swipes, echoes, embellishments, and other similar devices based on their effect on the overall musical presentation.

Solo Passages: Music in the barbershop style is four-part harmony. Pickups, lead-ins, or short solo passages can sometimes eliminate awkward voice leading in the harmony parts, or they can simply be used for special effect. It may fit the mood of a song to have one voice sing words while the other three provide background, and this is permissible for very short passages if the effect is appropriate to the melody and lyrics and if the “background” still creates acceptable, four-part chords.

Patter: Music in the barbershop style is homophonic which, literally translated, means “same sound.” Homophonic music consists of a melody line sung by one voice part and harmonically supported by the remaining voice parts in a structure that results in vertical chords, with the same lyrics simultaneously sung by all voice parts. While patter backgrounds usually provide the harmonic structure characteristic of homophonic music, they do not meet the lyrical criteria and the extended use of patter is not a strong choice for a contest performance.

Bell Chords: A “bell chord” is a musical device that utilizes sequential entry of voice parts so that when all four have sung a complete chord results. Skillfully handled, these can be an exciting addition to the presentation.

Instrumental Effects: Occasionally the music judge will encounter a situation where, in attempting to create an instrumental effect, the arranger has included a passage with vocal-effect sounds such as “doo wah” substituted for words by either three or four voice parts. Use of this device for more than one or two measures should be reserved for a non-contest presentation.

Modulations: Most barbershop songs include at least one temporary or implied

modulation, which helps to add the harmonic variety desirable in a good barbershop arrangement. In the A-A-B-A form, it is usually found in the B section. A permanent modulation, indicated by a new key signature, is a device frequently encountered in barbershop arrangements. Most modulations raise the key either a half step or a whole step, giving a “lift” to the arrangement at an important musical point. In a medley, the modulation may introduce a new song. An effective modulation is always preceded by adequate harmonic preparation, achieved by using a sequence of chords that culminates with the dominant seventh of the new tonic. Any reward given by the music judge will be contingent upon the technical propriety of the modulation and the skill with which it is performed.

PERFORMANCE (0-70 POINTS)

VOCAL SKILLS

A section on Vocal Skills has been provided at the beginning of this manual. In the music category, vocal skills affect the performance in these areas: chord accuracy, interval accuracy, tuning, chord clarity and, in a chorus, section unity. The performer’s level of vocal skills can also enhance or detract from the planned phrasing and dynamic levels.

HARMONY ACCURACY

Correct Notes

Harmony accuracy can be achieved only when all members of the performing group are singing the correct notes. This is a basic requirement of the music category, and the music judge evaluates the arrangement that is performed, not the arrangement written on paper. In a chorus, this includes accuracy within each of the four voice sections.

Fine Tuning

Even when the notes that appear on the written page are sung, incorrect chords, inaccurate chords, and out-of-tune chords can still occur. For the characteristic lock and ring associated with the barbershop style, the use of Pythagorean tuning within an untempered scale is required (See Section III-E for a detailed description of this important element).

Inappropriate Doubling

Rules regarding doubled tones are enforced by the music judge. When two parts of the ensemble sing the same note in unison or an octave apart, resulting in a three-tone chord when a four-tone chord is required, the harmony accuracy is adversely affected. However, no penalty is incurred for the deliberate and appropriate use of unison, duet, or triad harmonization.

BARBERSHOP STYLE

The best barbershop arrangements are only ink on paper until the performer brings them to life. The performer is the channel through which appropriate tempo, effective dynamics, musical phrase lines, and stylistic devices are conveyed to the listener. The following elements contribute to defining the barbershop style of performance as perceived by the music judge.

Tempo

Tempo is the speed or pace at which music is performed. The barbershop style uses two contrasting approaches to tempo – strict adherence to an established tempo, as in an uptune, and a *rubato* or *ad lib* delivery, as in a ballad. These two approaches may be used separately or in combination, but skill is required when choosing the approach or combination of approaches that fits each individual barbershop song or arrangement.

An up-tempo song, or “uptune,” should be sung in tempo. It may be appropriate to a particular song to present the intro and/or the verse in the *ad lib* style, but once a tempo is indicated and established it should be maintained and should remain consistent. The established tempo can be effectively broken in certain instances, such as a ritard to set up the tag, a change to rubato for repetition of a section previously sung in tempo, or a break to a rock (12/8) tempo for a section. The performer might even use a steady accelerando to gradually increase tempo. Skillful use of any of these devices can add musical interest to a presentation, but their overuse can destroy the desired musical unity and cause the presentation to seem disjointed. The issue is never the number of times tempo can be changed, but the manner in which transitions are made and whether they are performed without disrupting the overall forward motion. The music judge will evaluate each performance based on whether or not the devices add to or detract from the total musical effect.

A ballad is usually performed in the *ad lib* or *rubato* style, but an implied meter must still be identifiable even though some measures or phrases will be sung at a faster pace than others. The metric pulse should still make the measure or phrase unit obvious to the listener. Although other forms of choral music generally adhere to strict tempo in ballad delivery, music in the barbershop style is characterized by the artistic departure from strict tempo for effective ballad presentation. Some ballads may also be effectively performed with a slow, swing tempo delivery. In this type presentation the challenge for the performer is to ride the wave of established tempo, almost as if a dance band were providing the accompaniment.

Other types of songs suggest specific tempos. A march, for example, should be presented at a tempo that facilitates marching. A waltz requires a tempo to which one can waltz. Dixieland jazz, as opposed to songs about Dixie, is performed within a fairly narrow range that can be described as moderately fast 4/4. A song that is of a specific type should be performed in the tempo characteristic of that type song. When a song is performed at a tempo other than generally identified with that type song, the music judge will evaluate whether the different setting is musically effective. Like originality in

arrangement, a different treatment can be rewarded only if the difference is musically valid. The music judge will evaluate the propriety of the tempo used to the song presented and the effectiveness of the delivery.

Rhythm

Rhythm is the patterns of varying note values within each measure of the established meter. In common time, for example, the rhythm may simply be two half notes, or quarter-half-quarter, or even dotted quarter-eighth tied to eighth-quarter-eighth. The emphasis or lack of emphasis on certain beats of the measure is a function of rhythm.

Emphasis on the primary or downbeat is characteristic of the march, the waltz, and presentation in *ad lib* delivery.

Jazz and ragtime music, frequently used for barbershop arrangements, are characterized by emphasis of secondary beats and by syncopation. The most common problem encountered by the music judge when the performer attempts a syncopated delivery is the robbing of time value from the primary beat and resultant distortion of meter. When emphasis is on the secondary beat, the primary beat must still be given its full time value so that the overall meter is retained and tempo maintained.

Musical Unity

Musical unity results when all members of the ensemble are singing vowels correctly and simultaneously, and are singing chords in tune and at the same time. Ensemble singing requires particular attention to synchronization to achieve musical unity. When the group is not singing as a unit the chords will appear to the music judge to be indistinct, incomplete, fuzzy, out of tune, and lacking in clarity.

When evaluating a quartet performance, lack of musical unity can be more easily identified because discrepancies between the four voice parts are more obvious to the listener. In evaluating a chorus performance, errors in synchronization may result from several causes, including inaccurate interval singing, lack of synchronization within and between sections, and an unlike approach to vocal production.

Phrasing

A phrase is a division of the musical line, somewhat like a clause or sentence in prose. A song relates a story from beginning to end, and artistic phrasing maintains the continuity of that story. A good barbershop arrangement indicates logical phrasing that is congruent with the lyric and melodic phrase structure of the song. It is the performer's responsibility to take advantage of the arranger's phrase design.

Because music in the barbershop style is performed without instrumental accompaniment, a consistent sense of forward motion of the musical line is required. Occa-

sional periods of rest are necessary for vocal effects and/or relief to the ear of the listener, and to build toward an effective climax of the musical line. Within each phrase, however, artistic delivery requires a smooth, ongoing sense of connection to the song as a whole.

Some of the most common problems encountered in phrasing are:

Plodding Phrases: The listener will lose interest in phrases delivered laboriously, because the presentation lacks the necessary forward impetus. Phrases must be delivered at a pace that is natural and appropriate to the lyrics. The singer needs to remain cognizant that each phrase with its artistic nuances is part of the total song, not its own entity.

Choppy Phrases: Choppy delivery can result when singers give equal emphasis to words and syllables of unequal importance, because they lack breath support or because of excessive jaw motion. Choppiness can also result from a conducting style that lacks flow or that stresses each beat. Any of these can result in loss of fluid phrase delivery.

Patterned Phrases: When an identifiable pattern of phrasing emerges, the listener's attention is drawn to the pattern rather than to the song itself. These patterns can include sustaining the first chord or chords of each phrase, or rapid phrase beginnings that gradually ritard. This type of interpretation is usually unintentional, resulting from failure of the performer or chorus director to give sufficient attention to artistic delivery of the song as a whole.

Dropped Phrases: Preservation of phrase flow and the sensation of forward motion require that phrase ends be sustained through the logical, musical point of release. When the performer fails to accomplish this, forward motion is disrupted. Dropped phrases frequently result from poor breath management, weak breath support, or weak vocal skills. The singer should remember that breath is the start of a musical phrase, not a reward for getting to the end of the phrase.

Isolated Phrases: When the performer sustains phrase endings longer than is musically appropriate, the natural starting point for the next phrase is delayed, resulting in loss of the desired forward motion, disturbing the implied meter.

The overall phrase design must lead to the musical high point of the song. Any phrasing ideas can be individually valid when analyzed out of context. Artistic phrasing, however, remains within the context of the total song so that the overall design emphasizes the entire story, not just the individual words or phrases. In this area the music judge and the expression judge work hand in hand to evaluate the musical and lyrical phrasing. Flaws in either category will generally affect the other.

Dynamics

~~Dynamics refers to the variation in volume levels within the performance. The~~

appropriate use of dynamic levels is one of the means through which musical artistry is achieved. Almost all of the music sung in the barbershop style requires substantial variation in volume levels. In fact, artistic dynamics is one of the characteristics of barbershop harmony. The barbershop performer will find that most songs afford the opportunity to utilize all levels of dynamics, from pianissimo to double forte, and the subtle variations between these extremes.

The most frequent problems encountered by the music judge when evaluating dynamics are:

Insufficient Contrast: The major portion of any song usually requires variations at moderate volume level, with extreme softs and extreme louds reserved for instances that demand special treatment. Performance at a static dynamic level is as uninteresting as a speech delivered in monotone. The music judge seeks a performance that effectively incorporates all appropriate dynamic levels.

Patterned Dynamics: When the performer uses an identifiable pattern of dynamic variance, the listener's attention is drawn to the pattern rather than to the story. The music judge cannot consider alternation between loud and soft volume levels merely for the sake of achieving dynamic contrast as appropriate use of dynamics.

Ineffective Dynamics: For dynamic contrast to be effective, the dynamic levels attempted must fall within the range of vocal capabilities of the performer. Effective delivery of softs requires energy, intensity, and tones that are projected with good vocal energy and support. The requirements for effective delivery of louds are the same. In both cases, musical quality must be preserved. The music judge evaluates the performer's use of dynamic levels appropriate to the music, but when these levels go beyond the performer's capabilities so that louds become unpleasant or softs lose support, the music judge is unable to reward the performer for artistic use of dynamics.

Inappropriate Dynamics: Abrupt changes in dynamic level are rarely justifiable. A change in volume need not be slow, but it should be smoothly executed. Volume levels must also be appropriate to the music the performer is attempting to relate. Like phrasing, dynamic levels should be planned in the context of the total presentation so that attention is drawn to the song's high point.

Greater dynamic levels can generally be achieved by a chorus than by a quartet, but the music judge, like the sound judge, listens for quality singing, not merely quantity or volume. Larger choruses are generally able to achieve higher volume levels than smaller choruses, but the music judge must evaluate the range of dynamics utilized by each. A small chorus that demonstrates the ability to effectively incorporate all dynamic levels possible for its size will receive a higher score for that single aspect of performance than a large chorus using no significant variation in dynamic levels.

Musical Energy

All performing groups seek to generate excitement. When the technical requirements of the music category have been fulfilled, there remains a need for that special ingredient designed to provide additional satisfaction for both listener and performer. This involves not only vocal energy, but also strong mental commitment to the song and arrangement. Added vitality helps the performer to convey any mood, any characterization, any dynamic level, any rhythm, or any message.

MUSICAL ARTISTRY

The planned performance—the combination of tempo, rhythm, phrasing, and dynamics—will be totally effective only when the performer adds “heart” to the delivery. Musical artistry can only be effective when the performance adequately fulfills the requirements of the music category.

True expression is an integral part of an artistic performance. When a performance lacks the warmth and sincerity conveyed by the true artist, it becomes mechanical. The listener wants to experience a performance rather than a rehearsal. The music judge seeks a performance that demonstrates an artistic, energized projection of tone, whether that tone be full and joyous or lightly whimsical or deeply emotional.

The ultimate in musical performance is achieved when the performer reaches out at the beginning of the performance, takes the audience in the palm of her hand, and holds it there until the performance has concluded, keeping each listener totally spell-bound by the emotional impact achieved. Musical artistry occurs when all other aspects of the music category have been achieved. The performer then has the freedom to present a magical experience that is aesthetically satisfying and memorable for both performer and listener. Such a presentation of inanimate words and notes will result in beautiful, living, barbershop music.

SUITABILITY TO PERFORMER

The music judge evaluates the relative suitability of the song/arrangement to the chorus or quartet. She considers the vocal capabilities of the ensemble and the skill demonstrated in performing the arrangement. The singers must be able to execute the part lines accurately and demonstrate vocal ranges sufficient to handle the extreme highs and lows while remaining in balance (see sound category). The performer also needs to demonstrate sufficient vocal energy, support and musical stamina to handle the phrasing, dynamics and musical characterization required to convey the interpretive plan effectively.

SCORING THE CATEGORY

The primary responsibility of a Sweet Adelines International judge is to determine the level of proficiency in her category of each competitor's performance and to place each performance in the proper ranking in relation to other performances in the competition. The judge assigns numerical scores that accurately reflect the level of each performance in her category. The composite numerical scores of the entire judging panel establish final placement for all contestants and are the basis for determining the winners of awards.

No scoring consideration is given to whether or not the music judge is familiar with the song or arrangement performed. Her score is based on trained, musical judgment. If all contestants used the same arrangements scores would still vary based on the quality of performance and suitability of the arrangements to each group.

An arrangement is judged on the basis of its merit as presented by that performer in that specific contest performance. If the arrangement fails to meet the basic requirements of the music category, it will be scored accordingly, depending on its degree of departure from the basic requirements of the barbershop style.

The music category has been divided so that the 100 points available for each song performed are allocated as follows:

Song and Arrangement	0 – 30 points
Performance	0 – 70 points

In judging the song and arrangement, the music judge makes an evaluation based on the criteria discussed in the section of this category regarding the barbershop song and arrangement. She considers the composition, lyric/melodic congruity, use of creative devices, harmonization, chord progressions, voicings, and suitability to the performer, along with how well the chords and voicings chosen by the arranger succeed in painting a musical picture appropriate to the song. An arrangement that completely fulfills these criteria will warrant the maximum score possible, 30 points. It should be noted that musical creativity can be demonstrated as effectively by simplicity as by elaboration. Musical creativity refers to the arranger's ability to capture and enhance the spirit of the song, be that simple or intricate. Musical creativity is also demonstrated when the arranger has used the right amount of embellishment to enhance the performance capabilities of the song.

The performance portion of the category includes those elements that transform the written arrangement from paper to living music. They include harmony accuracy and the ingredients that comprise the barbershop style — tempo, rhythm, musical unity, phrasing, dynamics, and musical energy.

The component of musical artistry can only be rewarded when all other aspects of the category have been met. This is truly the "icing on the cake" — that final special ingredient.

A flawless performance would permit the music judge to award the maximum score possible in this portion of the category, 70 points.