

MUSIC CATEGORY

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. The Music Category

Music is defined as the song and arrangement, as performed. The Music category judges the suitability of the material to the barbershop style and the performer's musicianship in bringing the song and arrangement to life. The Music judge is responsible for adjudicating the musical elements in the performance, judging the extent to which the musical performance displays the hallmarks of the barbershop style and the degree to which the musical performance demonstrates an artistic sensitivity to the music's primary theme(s).

The primary hallmark of barbershop music is its consonant harmony. Thus, the quality of any barbershop performance depends largely on the presence, accurate execution, and artistic delivery of the consonant harmony traditionally identified with the barbershop style.

Indirectly, the Music judge evaluates the work of the composer and arranger. A basic prerequisite for a successful barbershop performance is that the song be appropriate to the barbershop style. The song is defined by the melody, lyrics, rhythm, and implied harmony. Performers should choose songs that adapt readily to the melodic and harmonic style guidelines

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set forth in the Music Category Description. Beyond this, the various musical elements should work together to establish a theme.

The sensitive handling of musical elements, such as melody, harmony, and embellishments, demonstrates musicality in a performance. A strong musical performance is one in which everything provided by the composer and arranger is skillfully delivered and effectively integrated in support of the musical theme. This requires that the music be suited to the performer and that the performer understand the music.

B. Relationship with Other Categories

The current BHS Contest and Judging System features categories designed to overlap with each other. Each category views the entire performance from its own unique perspective, and the same performance factors often influence more than one category's scoring.

The Singing category evaluates the technical and qualitative aspects of the performer's sound. Since these factors affect consonant harmony, they will also affect the Music judge, who evaluates the level of consonance in the performance. Singing that suffers from poor synchronization, intonation, or vocal quality will also negatively impact such Music areas as delivery and execution.

The Performance category evaluates how well the performer brings the song and arrangement to life through the interaction of both visual and vocal aspects of the performance. In addition to assessing the performers' artistry and believability, Performance judges adjudicate entertainment value and emotional impact, vocally and visually, within the context of the chosen entertainment theme. The factors creating these results will often affect the Music category since there is a strong correlation between the musicianship with which music is rendered as evaluated by Music judges and the generation of mood and believability as evaluated by Performance judges.

Both judges are listening for a clearly defined theme or themes, and the Music judge evaluates how well the group uses its own unique musical abilities to take advantage of the opportunities presented by the arrangement in light of the musical theme(s) chosen.

II. MUSICAL ELEMENTS

There are certain characteristics in a song or arrangement that help the listener recognize a song as having been arranged in the barbershop style. If any of the musical elements listed below are absent in the song or arrangement as performed, then the Music score will be lower as a result.

1. All songs must be sung without musical accompaniment or instrumental introductions, interludes, or conclusions. This does not preclude the use of a sound-making device for a special effect, as long as such cannot be construed as instrumental accompaniment. Hand-clapping and finger-snapping are permitted whereas vocal percussion is not permitted. (See Article IX.A.2.a)

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2. Barbershop is a four-part a cappella style. At no time should the musical texture exceed four parts. In a chorus contest, the spoken word, brief and appropriate, is not considered an additional “part” in this context. However, a soloist singing a fifth musical line, whether or not these same pitches are being sung by the chorus is considered an additional part. This applies even if the soloist is singing the same notes as one of the choral parts but with different word sounds, as occurs when the chorus leads are matching the soloist’s notes on a neutral syllable. (See Article IX.A.2.b)
3. The melody should be present and distinguishable and is most consistently sung by the lead, with the tenor harmonizing above the melody, the bass singing the lowest harmonizing notes, and the baritone completing the chord. (See Article IX.A.2.c)
4. Chord progressions in the barbershop style are based on the harmonic practice of dominant seventh (and ninth) chords resolving around the circle of fifths, while also making use of other resolutions. The song’s harmony must feature the natural occurrence of a variety of dominant seventh and ninth chords in circle-of-fifths progressions. This is most often achieved through having at least one featured occurrence of a dominant seventh (or ninth) chord built on II or VI, which then resolves through the circle of fifths (with or without additional deceptive resolutions) to the tonic chord, but it may be possible for this to be achieved in other ways. (See Article IX.A.2.d)
5. For barbershop contest performances, lyrics should be sung by all four parts through nearly all of the song’s duration. (See Article IX.A.2.e)

III. PERFORMANCE ELEMENTS

The Music category judges the performance of the song and arrangement and the performer’s musicianship in bringing them to life. The Music category also evaluates the suitability of the music to the performer. As stated in III.D of The Judging System (Chapter 4 of the *Contest and Judging Handbook*), performers are encouraged to choose music that they enjoy singing, and that features the strengths and minimizes the weaknesses of the ensemble. It may be risky for performers to choose a particular piece of music because another ensemble has achieved success with that music. Moreover, there are no benefits in choosing difficult or easy music, only in choosing music that your ensemble can perform well.

A. Consonance

1. The primary hallmark of barbershop music is its consonant harmony. Consonance is the degree to which an ensemble produces a good quality, locked, ringing unit sound. A high level of consonance is achieved through several factors:
 - a. A high Music score requires the predominance of consonant chords (chosen by the arranger). Barbershop (dominant) seventh chords and major triads are inherently the most consonant. See section III.A.7 and 8 for more information.

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- b. The consonance level is partially dependent on both the number and prominence of strong voicings (root position and second inversion) of consonant chords. See section III.A.8 for more information.
 - c. A high consonance level depends upon both good vocal quality and locked, ringing sound. Performances should be characterized by a natural, resonant, full-voiced presentation, though tenors may be singing not in full voice.
 - d. High consonance levels require precise synchronization, matching word sounds and resonance, appropriate balance, and accurate tuning of the chord sequence as performed by the ensemble.
 - e. The consonance level is diminished by the performance of chords outside the barbershop vocabulary, incomplete chords, or non-chords.
2. Voicings that place the melody above the tenor, or below the bass, for an occasional chord or short passage are allowed. On occasion, the melody may be carried by some part other than the lead. The Music judge's score will reflect any lessening of barbershop sound that may result.
3. The melody should clearly define a tonal center, and its tones should define implied harmonies that employ the characteristic harmonic patterns and chord vocabulary of the barbershop style in order to achieve a high degree of consonance.
4. Melodies that are easily sung by the performer are recommended over those that are extremely disjunctive or rangy. If the melody leads to performance difficulties the Music score will be lower.
5. The song should be primarily homorhythmic (note: this is the same thing as what was called homophonic in previous versions of this document); that is, all voices should sing the same word sounds simultaneously. This does not preclude the appropriate use of non-homorhythmic devices such as patter, backtime, echoes, and bell chords. The greater the use of non-homorhythmic material, the greater the need for clean execution, maintaining consonance.
 - a. Solo, duet or trio passages may be used only if they are brief and obviously musically appropriate. Solo with neutral syllable background may be used if brief and musically appropriate.
6. Lyrics should be sung by all four parts through nearly all of the song's duration. Lengthy non-lyrical passages such as those employing neutral or nonsense syllables, humming, or instrumental imitation, may reduce the potential for lock and ring. Passages of this type should be occasional, brief, and musically appropriate. The use of non-lyric sounds by all four parts, such as when imitating musical instruments, is also permitted with moderate frequency. The use of nonsense syllables as rhythmic propellants, especially in the bass part, is also permitted with moderate frequency. The Music judge evaluates the extent to which such devices support the theme as well as the extent to which the consonance may be affected.

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7. With rare exceptions, the music must use only chords in the barbershop chord vocabulary. Most characteristic is the major-minor seventh or dominant seventh chord, more often called the barbershop seventh. It and the major triad are the most featured chords in barbershop harmony. In addition, barbershop harmony uses the following chords: minor triads, incomplete dominant ninths, minor sevenths, minor sixths, half-diminished sevenths, diminished sevenths, major sevenths, major sixths, major chords with added ninth, augmented triads, augmented dominant sevenths, diminished triads, and dominant sevenths with flatted fifth. While brief and musically appropriate use of out of vocabulary chords is allowable, this may result in a lower score due to diminished consonance.
8. The extent to which the various chords in the vocabulary contribute to a quality barbershop sound depends on their frequency and duration.
 - a. Other than the major triad, the most prominent chord should be the barbershop seventh chord. Songs that favor the use of any other chords over the use of dominant seventh chords and major triads may result in a lower Music score.
 - b. The overall consonance potential is affected by the prominence, duration and frequency of use of the various chords in the barbershop chord vocabulary. The consonance potential, from highest to lowest is:
 - (i) Major triad and barbershop seventh
 - (ii) Dominant ninth with root omitted (or minor sixth or half-diminished seventh)
 - (iii) Major triad with ninth added and minor triad
 - (iv) Minor seventh (or major sixth)
 - (v) Major seventh, diminished seventh, barbershop seventh with flatted 5th, augmented triad, augmented dominant seventh, diminished triad, dominant ninth with fifth omitted
 - (vi) Non-vocabulary chords (any chords not listed in III.A.7)
9. The appropriate choice of voicings is essential for the creation of barbershop sound.
 - a. Barbershop harmony entails a predominance of strong voicings. The predominance of such voicings does not rule out the occasional use of divorced voicings or voicings that place the third or the seventh in the bass, if there is a valid musical reason for doing so.
 - b. Voicings that require delicate balance, such as a high seventh in the lead or baritone, or a divorced bass, should be sung with appropriate sensitivity.
 - c. Except for uses of the dominant ninth chord, the voicings should nearly always create complete chords. Exceptions are permitted for devices that involve fewer than four parts and, occasionally, where an incomplete chord is created by an echo, lead-in, or rhythmic device in the bass.
 - d. Dissonant non-chord tones should not be used, with the exception of the traditional appearance in the bass of brief scale-type passages.
 - e. The score will be lower when wrong notes are sung, thereby creating incomplete, inappropriate, or unacceptable chords. The same applies to dissonances caused by a pick-up being sung against a chord that is held over.

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10. The range of the parts should be such that all singers can produce good quality and good barbershop sound. What constitutes an acceptable vocal range will depend on the abilities of each performer. The voicing should not be so high or so low as to preclude the full-voiced, resonant sound that is characteristic of the barbershop style.

B. Theme (and Development)

1. The theme is the principal musical statement of the song. It may be based on the song's lyrics, rhythm, melody, or harmony, or a combination of these elements. Since songs can permit different themes, the music judge is prepared to accept any treatment that is musically plausible. The theme may also vary from one part of the song to another, and there may be more than one theme present simultaneously. The theme may also be a parody of one or more of the song elements.
2. When visual comedy is the primary performance theme, the Music judge will still evaluate the use of musical elements.
3. The Music judge evaluates the performer's choices of appropriate voicings and embellishments when used to enhance the song's theme and delivery.
 - a. If lyrics are the theme, the Music judge evaluates how well the arranger and performer enhance the message by highlighting the lyric's critical words and phrases.
 - b. When rhythm is the theme, the successful performance features precision, clear articulation, appropriately chosen and well-defined tempos and tempo changes, and accurate execution of rhythms.
 - c. Melody can be the musical theme when its shape and contour are of such beauty and dimension that it becomes more dominant than the lyrics and other musical elements that support it. The Music judge evaluates how well the performer features this element through the use of melodic shape and contour, volume levels, word color, vocal quality, inflection and pace.
 - d. Harmony can be the musical theme in those rare cases where it is more important than lyric, rhythmic or melodic elements. This is usually when the melodic construction and harmonic rhythm allow substantial opportunities for harmonic embellishment. When harmony is the theme, the performance should demonstrate a high level of in-tune, locked and ringing sound.
4. While embellishment may not be the theme, it can become a featured musical device for portions of a song. Examples include, but are not limited to, patter, bell-chords, backtime, and call-and-echo. The Music judge evaluates the effectiveness of these embellishments in developing the theme and in creating unity and contrast.
5. Parodies of Musical Elements
 - a. In lyric parodies, the Music judge evaluates the effectiveness of the new lyrics and how other musical elements of the performance contribute to the lyric parody.

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- b. Alterations of form, rhythm, harmony and meter can also provide for effective comedic performances. The Music judge evaluates how well the performer shows an understanding of the underlying song element in the delivery of the altered song element.
- 6. The Music judge notes the musical value of the lyrics. Effective song lyrics possess artistic and poetic qualities not found in ordinary prose. Amateurish lyrics often lack such qualities, being unpoetic or inelegant. The Music judge expects to hear rhyming lyrics in all sections of a song. Amateurish lyrics or the absence of rhyme, when it is distracting, will result in a lower Music score, particularly where lyrics are central to the theme.
- 7. In good music, the marriage of lyrics with other musical elements is natural and elegant. Lyrics should support the melody and be well tailored to the rhythm/meter. If this is not the case, the music may not develop in a satisfying way.
- 8. Construction and form refer to the horizontal (melodic) structure of the music, as opposed to its vertical (harmonic) structure. Construction and form should provide both unity and contrast in satisfying proportions. Too much or too little repetition of a musical phrase or section may result in a lower Music score due to unsatisfying development of the music.
- 9. The Music judge evaluates the performer's understanding and use of the song's construction.
 - a. The performer should shape the various phrases and sections of the song (such as introduction, verse, and tag) to deliver and develop the song's theme successfully.
 - b. The Music judge evaluates the artistry with which forward motion is maintained and the degree to which the horizontal flow supports the song's theme.
 - c. When a medley is sung, the Music judge will evaluate it as a whole, as is done for a single song. An effective medley will display coordinated sections, logically organized, integrated through a central musical theme or lyrical idea, and have musical balance and symmetry. The medley should leave the listener with no doubt as to why the songs were put together, and the theme should be apparent throughout the medley.
- 10. The Music judge evaluates the balance between unifying thematic elements and contrasting material. Generally, thematic song material should be the basis of added material. The level of embellishment should be sufficient to propel the song and sustain musical interest, supporting the theme and providing a satisfying proportion of unity and contrast.

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C. Embellishment

1. One of the hallmarks of the barbershop style is the use of embellishments of many kinds, such as swipes, echoes, key changes, bell chords, patter effects, and backtime. The music judge evaluates the performer's accuracy and musicality in executing embellishments to support the theme of the song. The Music judge's score is to some degree an evaluation of the arranger's skill in choosing and placing embellishments where they best support the theme of the song. Songs that are less satisfying because they are over-, under-, or inappropriately embellished will result in lower Music scores.
2. The Music judge evaluates the effectiveness with which the performer uses embellishments for their intended purpose, such as the use of rhythmic propellants to create forward motion or key lifts to heighten the level of intensity. The performers' ability to execute the embellishments may influence the Music judge's perception of the degree to which a particular song may be under- or over-embellished. Some embellishments, such as patter and bell chords, require precise synchronization to be effective. Embellishments in which all four parts are not singing the same words at the same time, such as backtime and patter, should be executed in such a way that the primary lyrics are heard and understood.

Occasionally, the music creates special opportunities for visual devices. Effectively performed, such occurrences may increase musicality, which results in a higher Music score.

3. While the melody is usually in the lead, brief use of tenor melody may occur in tags or when some appropriate embellishing effect can be created.
4. The arranger is expected to use the composer's melody as the basis for the arrangement's harmonization and embellishment. Altering the melody is a form of embellishment and may be distracting, especially when the melody is well known. Alterations that are made for the purpose of satisfying the standards of acceptable harmonic progressions and harmonic rhythm stated in II.4 are not permitted. Alterations are acceptable in the following circumstances:
 - a. Minor melodic alterations may be made to enhance the potential for increased consonance and singability, as long as the notes that are changed are not essential to defining the character or shape of the melody.
 - b. When an alteration of the melody is commonly known and accepted.
 - c. When, in a repeated section (verse or chorus) of a song, the arrangement alters or stylizes the melody. Stylized segments may occur during repeats of a song section as long as the stylization results in a passage suggestive of the original.

Alterations beyond these parameters, when they are distracting, will result in a lower Music score.

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5. Altering the composer's lyrics is a form of embellishment and may be distracting, especially when the lyrics are well known. Alterations are acceptable, for example, when the original lyrics would not be clearly understood by today's audiences.
6. The melody should easily accommodate the harmonization, and the harmonization should support the melody. Using alternative harmonies are a form of embellishment which might be distracting, especially when the implied harmony or harmonic rhythm feel distorted, and may result in a lower Music score. When the implied harmony is ambiguous, the arrangement may employ any harmonic progressions that are appropriate to the melody and that support the theme of the song. It is not necessary to adhere to the harmony found in the published sheet music.
7. The song's rhythmic patterns should allow room for swipes and echoes. Music that feels less satisfying due to the absence of swipes and echoes may result in a lower Music score.
8. Tags are an integral part of the barbershop style and should be adjudicated for how effectively they complete the song's theme. Multiple tags, or the absence of a tag, may result in a lower Music score if distracting.
9. Overly sophisticated and complex arrangements are incongruous with a relatively simple song performed in the barbershop style. When the level of embellishment is such that the performance is no longer primarily homorhythmic, or if the integrity of the song itself is obscured, the Music score will be lower, commensurate with the degree of distraction.

D. Delivery

1. Delivery refers to the musicality with which the elements of the song and arrangement are rendered. Good delivery reflects the singers' understanding of melody, lyrics, harmony, rhythm and meter, tempos, construction and form, vocal color, dynamics, forward motion, and their relative importance. The Music judge evaluates the musical artistry with which the performer integrates the song elements and employs embellishments and other appropriate means to allow the song to come to life.
2. The Music judge evaluates the degree of musicality displayed in the phrasing and delivery of the lyrics, especially in songs where the lyrics are central to the theme. The Music judge also evaluates how the momentum, flow, and contour of phrases support and define the lyric's climactic moments.
3. The Music judge evaluates the degree of musicality displayed in the performance of rubato and ad lib passages. Such performances should still fit comfortably within the song's meter. Distortion of form due to excessive rubato and ad lib may result in a lower Music score.
4. The Music judge evaluates the effectiveness and musicality of the performance of chords and voicings that are designed to highlight a word or phrase or generate a certain mood.

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The judge also evaluates the use of dynamic levels and vocal color to support the development of the song's theme.

5. The Music judge evaluates the musicality displayed in the execution of tempos and rhythms. Tempos that are too fast or too slow for artistic execution, or are not evenly kept, or the use of rhythms that are otherwise inappropriate to the song, may result in a lower Music score.
6. The Music judge evaluates the skill with which the performer uses the music's rhythmic devices, such as bass propellants, echoes, patter, backtime, push beats, and syncopations, to establish and propel the tempo. When these devices are well executed, the tempo and rhythm become extremely well defined and satisfying. When these devices are poorly executed, they can obscure the rhythm or impede the tempo.
7. Performers should strive to communicate the song itself in an authentic, sincere, heartfelt manner. (See III.E. of The Judging System (Chapter 4 of the *Contest and Judging Handbook*)).
8. The balance among voice parts should be such that the melody always predominates, although brief passages having ambiguous or non-existent melody are permitted in introductions, tags, bell chords, stylized segments during repeats, or improvisational-type passages of a song.
9. When the melody is transferred to a part other than the lead, that part should predominate and should be sung with melodic quality.
10. The song should use only standard meters such as 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, Cut time, 6/8, 9/8 or 12/8. Performances should demonstrate a clear underlying meter unless altered for comedic purposes.

E. Execution

1. Execution refers to the extent to which the ensemble performs accurately as a unit.
2. Well-executed music has accurate harmony and rhythm, steady tempos, clean synchronization, matched word sounds, and clear articulation. The Music judge evaluates the degree to which good execution is achieved in the performance.
3. Extremely complicated rhythms are not characteristic of the barbershop style and may cause execution errors resulting in a lower Music score. Beyond that, any rhythm that the performer can sing while maintaining quality barbershop sound is acceptable.

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IV. SCORING

A. Scoring Methodology

1. The Music judge's evaluation is based on the appropriateness of the music to the barbershop style and the musicality of the performance. The Music judge will adjudicate each performance based on a lifetime of listening experience and evaluate the particular performance as much as possible without regard to prior performances and without preconceived ideas of how the music should be performed. No reward is given for degree of difficulty; thus, when performers select a difficult arrangement, they do so at their own risk.
2. The Music judge's guardianship of the barbershop style serves as a screen or filter through which the music must pass. If the music is deficient in one or more of the basic criteria that characterize the barbershop style as defined herein and in I.A and B of The Judging System (Chapter 4 of the Contest and Judging Handbook), or if it contains serious deviations from the style, the Music score is lower commensurately. Based on criteria stated in the Music Category Description, it is still possible for Music judges to disagree when performances are "on the edge" stylistically.
3. The Music judge's evaluation of musicality is based upon the performer's sensitivity in delivering the theme of the song and their accuracy in executing its musical elements. Early in the performance the judge establishes an approximate score based on the general level of musicality. As the song unfolds, this score is continually adjusted to reflect the performers' consistency, their understanding of the various musical elements, the delivery and execution of the song's critical moments, the suitability of the music to the performers, and its adherence to the barbershop style. At the end of the song, the judge assigns a numerical score from 1 to 100.

B. Scoring Levels

1. The A level
 - a. A-level scores (81 to 100) are given to excellent performances that display the most consistent musicality. There are very few distractions, and scores are maximized when the performance strongly features the hallmarks of the barbershop style.
 - b. A performance earning a mid-range A score (around 90 points) features an outstanding mastery of the musical elements, resulting in an excellent performance. The harmony is wonderfully consonant, ringing, and pleasing, reflecting excellent intonation and proper balance. The embellishments artistically support the song's theme. The delivery is marked by superb musicality. The musical elements are executed with great accuracy. The song is sung from the heart and its theme is communicated throughout, resulting in the listener's total involvement. There are almost no distractions. The music is extremely well suited to the performers.

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- c. The rare and significant artistic performance at the upper range of A displays consistently artistic embellishments in support of a continuous theme presented with the highest degree of musicality.
- d. In a performance at the low end of the A range, occasional distractions can occur. The performers' technique may be somewhat distracting and the display of musicality somewhat inconsistent.
- e. Distinguishing differences between A and B levels often has to do with consistency and sensitivity of performance.

2. The B level

- a. B-level scores (61 to 80) are for performances that frequently demonstrate a good mastery of the musical elements. The music is generally well suited to the performers. The theme of the song is well communicated, but there may be moments where technique becomes apparent.
- b. In a performance in the mid-range of B (around 70 points), the harmony is generally consonant, with chords clearly distinguishable, and the embellishments tastefully support the song. The performance generally reflects understanding of, and sensitivity to, the music, with high musicality in its best moments. The musical elements are generally executed accurately.
- c. The upper range of B scores is for performances that have only minor distractions. Part of the performance may be at the A level, but the performers do not achieve the high level of consistency required for an A score.
- d. In the lower range of B performances, the performance is still good, but there may be several distractions and occasional examples of C-level performance. Part of the performance may also be of A-level quality.
- e. The difference between B and C levels is often a matter of consistency.

3. The C level

- a. C-level scores (41 to 60) are for performances that reflect an ordinary command of the musical elements, with flaws appearing often in the performance. The general level of accuracy is adequate, not offensive; most musical elements are definable, although some serious performance errors may occur. The song's theme is inconsistently supported by the performance. Distractions occur at many points in the performance. Some musical inconsistencies may result from an imperfect fit of the music to the performers.
- b. In a performance at the middle of the range (around 50), the degree of consonance may suffer rather frequently but most chords are distinguishable. The embellishments tend to support the song, although several may not. The delivery of musical elements may be mundane or mechanical, lacking sensitivity. Musicality is not demonstrated.
- c. At the top of the range, some elements of the performance may be at the B level, but other elements display inconsistency and an inability to sustain musical delivery.

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- d. At the bottom of the range, a performance reflects the lack of a clear theme, consistently mechanical delivery or significant flaws in execution.
- e. The difference between C and D levels is often that the C-level performance has acceptable delivery and execution and significantly more consonant sound.

4. The D level

- a. D-level scores (40 to 1) are for performances that suffer from poor command of the musical elements with fundamental problems throughout the performance. There are constant distractions. The music may be poorly suited to the performer. Poor (D-level) performances normally will be assessed a score of 40 instead of an exact score.
- b. In a performance in this range, the singing may have little consonance and, at times, be so out of tune that the intended harmony is unintelligible. The embellishments may often detract from the song, owing either to design or performance. The delivery may be incongruous with the music, reflecting a lack of understanding of its elements. Often, the musical elements are poorly executed, reflecting lack of preparation, ignorance, or extreme nervousness. The theme may be ambiguous; at worst, not discernible.
- c. Performances in this range normally occur because of a lack of skill, preparation, or understanding of the musical elements.

C. Use of the Score Sheet

- 1. The Music judge will determine a scoring range early in the performance and track the fluctuation of the score as the performance continues. On the score sheet, the judge notes the strengths and weaknesses that affect the score as the music progresses. Reference to the list of song and style elements may also be used. The judge's main suggestions for improvement may be summarized in the space for evaluation comments.
- 2. The final score is first written in the box on the scoring form (CJ-26) and then copied onto the judging form (CJ-23) in the box in the lower right corner.

D. Differences between Quartet and Chorus

- 1. Since barbershop is a quartet style, all of its musical elements should be characteristic of a quartet performance. Therefore, in adjudicating a chorus performance, the Music judge discourages elements that could not be performed by a quartet, such as chords containing more than four notes (produced either intentionally or by wrong notes being sung), devices or tags with extreme range requirements, or the extended use of staggered breathing that draws attention to the device itself. At no time should the musical texture exceed four parts. The spoken word, brief and appropriate, is not considered an additional "part" in this context. However, a soloist singing a fifth musical line, whether or not these same pitches are being sung by the chorus is considered an additional part. This applies even if the soloist is singing the same notes as one of the choral parts but with different word sounds, as occurs when the chorus leads are matching the soloist's notes on a neutral syllable.

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2. Choral singing presents greater potential for inaccuracy in the delivery of musical elements, especially certain rhythmic devices, key changes, and special voicings. For a chorus's performance to exemplify the barbershop style, each part should be sung with unity, without individual voices straying out of tune or synchronization.

E. Penalties Up To and Including Forfeiture

1. Any forfeiture by a Music judge would be as a result of a violation of Article IX.A.2.a-e or Article V.A.2 of the contest rules. Penalties (up to and including forfeiture) by the Music judge may be appropriate only as a result of the former.

- a. Use of instrumental accompaniment.

As specified in Article IX.A.2.a of the contest rules, songs must be sung "without instrumental introduction, interlude, or conclusion." An instrumental interlude between the two songs of a contest performance may result in forfeiture of both songs.

- b. Exceeding a four-part musical texture.

As specified in Article IX.A.2.b of the contest rules, "at no time should the musical texture exceed four parts." A chorus performance with passages exceeding a 4 part musical texture is subject to penalty up to and including forfeiture depending on the frequency and duration of this texture. The Music judge will consider intent when assessing this penalty and it will not be applied to choruses that are considered to be creating additional parts accidentally through the singing of incorrect notes.

- c. Melody.

As specified in Article IX.A.2.c of the contest rules, "the melody should be present and distinguishable and is most consistently sung by the lead, with the tenor harmonizing above the melody, the bass singing the lowest harmonizing notes, and the baritone completing the chord. Excessive passages with the melody not in an inside voice may result in penalties."

- d. Chord progressions.

As specified in Article IX.A.2.d of the contest rules, "The song's harmony must feature the natural occurrence of dominant seventh (and ninth) chords based on a variety of roots. Chord progressions in the barbershop style are based on the harmonic practice of dominant seventh (and ninth) chords resolving around the circle of fifths, while also making use of other resolutions. Songs lacking these characteristic chord progressions will receive penalties."

- e. Lyrics.

As specified in Article IX.A.2.e of the contest rules, "lyrics should be sung by all four parts through most of the song's duration. Excessive passages without words in all four parts will result in penalties."

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- f. Use of a substantial part of one song in performance of another song.

As specified in Article V.A.2 of the contest rules, “[w]ithin all rounds of a specific contest, a contestant may not repeat a song or a substantial part of any song. In the context of these rules, the term song may refer to a single song or a medley in which major portions of two or more songs are used. A parody of a song previously sung would be considered repeating a song.” It further provides that a “Music judge shall recommend forfeiture to the Panel Chair if a contestant repeats a song or a substantial portion from one of its songs in another song.”

2. The Music judge declares forfeiture by awarding a score of zero. Forfeiture results when one or more elements of the performance violate the contest rules. When a penalty or forfeiture of score has been applied, the judge should note the reason for such on the judging form on the line, “Penalties: _____ Reason: _____” and on the appropriate line(s) of the penalty grid on the scoring form. If some action, but not drastic action, is appropriate for a violation of Article IX.A.2, the judge may apply a smaller penalty.
3. All penalties of 5 or more points will be notated on the scoring slip. The judge will indicate the net score with penalty applied as the total score as well as the amount of penalty/penalties and applicable rule provision for the penalty. Any Music judge wishing to apply a penalty of 5 or more points in total must first conference with the other Music judges and the Music judges must agree to the level of rule violation but not discuss the actual points or the performance score.
4. Scoring reduction levels should be applied per the following guidelines:
 - a. 1-4 - An arrangement that doesn’t meet “enough” minimum expectations, but the audience thinks it is barbershop
 - b. 3-7 - Enough that a barbershop audience member may question parts of it, but the piece has barbershop character.
 - c. 5-9 - It makes a barbershop audience and a Music judge uncomfortable. This will be due to one or two overriding issues.
 - d. 10+ - Significant barbershop deficiencies according to the rules, but there is still barbershop texture to the arrangement.
 - e. Forfeiture - Nothing redeeming about this performance as it relates to contestable music and/or the hallmarks of the barbershop style. As described in The Judging System, Section II, there is “an unequivocal and definite violation of the rules” resulting in no quality rating being appropriate.

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PERFORMANCE CATEGORY

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I. THE ART OF PERFORMANCE

One significant goal of any art form is communication. A barbershop performance refers to how the artist communicates a message and vision via the transformation of a song into an entertaining experience for an audience. The performance of a song is the artist's gift to the audience, whose experiences, memories, and imagination transform that gift into an emotional experience. The performers' goal is to create a high level of entertainment through the performance. The means to that end are as varied as the personality, abilities, and creative skills of the performers.

The Performance judge evaluates entertainment within the barbershop style. Vocal and visual elements, in the context of the song choice and delivery, are evaluated for their contribution to the overall entertainment effect of the performance.

II. PERFORMANCE CATEGORY DESCRIPTION

A. Characteristics of the Barbershop Performance

1. Barbershop style

Barbershop is a musical art form, and therefore the type of entertainment with which we are concerned must be principally a form of music supported by artistic delivery and not simply a musical accompaniment of another form of art such as drama, dance, or comedy. That is, in a true barbershop performance the barbershop style of music remains a key feature of the performance. This does not preclude the innovative use of other art forms, in appropriate balance with the barbershop style.

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2. Audience rapport

The degree to which the audience is entertained is dependent upon the degree to which they are receptive to the performer and the performance. It is the performers' responsibility to engender receptivity, engagement, or connection with the audience.

3. Creativity

Within the bounds of good taste, great freedom is permitted for the individual, the performing group, and the fundamental style of music that is being performed. There is no "one way" to sing in general, or to sing barbershop in particular, just as there is no "one way" to stage a song in the barbershop style. Performers are encouraged to develop their own style and identity. Performances can be two entirely stand-alone works or can be a "package" that builds one song upon the other.

4. Artistry and expressiveness

Visual and vocal expressiveness serve to communicate the emotional content of the song and to engage the audience in the performance. The success a performer achieves is measured by the Performance judge's sense of the degree to which the audience is entertained. However, for some forms of comedy and fantasy, believability must be suspended for maximum effectiveness. Events that could be considered offensive to an audience, if taken at face value in a serious performance, take on a different character when presented within the confines of well-presented comedy (i.e., farce, parody, slapstick, etc.). Audiences instinctively understand this, so this should be reflected in the Performance adjudication. For more sophisticated artistic performances, it is the performer's responsibility to connect and engage in a clear and effective manner.

5. From the heart and believable

The entertainment value is higher for performances that are perceived by the audience to be from the heart. These performances are characterized by effective mood creation through the performers' visual involvement and vocal expressiveness. The use of natural, realistic, and appropriate body language, staging, dynamic levels and tone color can create performances that the audience will believe in and relate to. Performances filled with technicalities, or formerly accepted "barbershop" traits or mannerisms may be technically impressive but will likely not create emotionally realistic performances to modern audiences. The Performance judge determines how successful the performer is at achieving a "from the heart" and believable performance.

6. Integration with other categories

The effectiveness of any performance will be predicated on the performers' skills and abilities in all aspects of the performance—skills that are also evaluated by the Music and Singing judges. The Performance judge must recognize when the overall impact is being affected positively or negatively by an element that is also judged in another category and must make note of that element's impact from the Performance category's perspective.

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B. Performance

1. Vocal expressiveness is used to define and maintain the performer's chosen approach for the song and includes the use of musical tools, elements, and descriptors, such as forward motion, attention to meter, dynamics, and style descriptors such as legato, staccato, etc. Often one of the musical elements will predominate, depending on the song. These tools should be appropriately used in order to create a realistic and believable mood or emotion. These devices are not meant to be mandatory or visible tools that become the main functions of performing music. In an ideal performance the presence of these tools is transparent and in service of the mood creation and communication.
2. Visual expressiveness is communicated by the physical presentation of the story or determined approach of the song and may use devices in a manner similar to that of the vocal elements. The use of any props or other mechanical devices should support, rather than detract, from the performance of the song. The Performance judge evaluates the quality of the performers' visual expressiveness in terms of appropriateness, timing, precision (where appropriate), unity, naturalness, and believability as it contributes to the overall effect and entertainment value of the performance. Believability is at its greatest when mannerisms, body language, gestures, and facial features enhance the true message of the song.

C. Visual/Vocal Balance

Both the audience and the Performance judge interpret the performance through their eyes and ears simultaneously. To optimize effectiveness, the performer must integrate the vocal and visual aspects in a purposeful manner. For a given song, either aspect—vocal or visual—may predominate per the performers' intent. As a result, the judge takes into account the balance between vocal and visual elements and the resulting effectiveness of the entertainment value.

D. Comedic Performances

1. The performer may plan to include comedic moments during the performance designed to elicit a range of reactions from the audience, from gentle smiles to uproarious belly laughs. A wide variety of lyrical, visual, and musical ideas may be used to generate comedic moments.
2. A detailed review of comedic styles, concepts, and techniques, and how they might be utilized in a barbershop performance would be too lengthy to incorporate into this document. (See Position Paper X, Chapter 9 of the *Contest and Judging Handbook* for further discussion.)
3. The Performance judge will evaluate the performer's use of comedic styles, concepts, and techniques and their resulting comedic effect as part of the overall entertainment value of the performance.

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E. Scoring Methodology

1. The Performance judge simultaneously experiences the performance, like an audience, and analyzes it. Judges position themselves mentally and emotionally so that the two thought processes occur in an integrated manner.
 - a. The Performance judge measures the overall effect of the performance with a focus on entertainment value, and a score is determined based on the degree of entertainment value achieved. Events that affect the entertainment value, whether positive or negative, are noted for discussion with the performer at the evaluation.
 - b. The Performance judge identifies visual and vocal interferences and distractions that prevent the group from realizing its maximum effect and audience impact. Minor errors may or may not be relevant. The Performance judge holistically determines those events which, if changed, would result in a measurable improvement in the overall effect. The judge should be sensitive when attention is focused on an obviously featured technique and the underlying emotions of the song may have been given secondary consideration.
 - c. Performances that are truly integrated, entertaining, and artistic should be encouraged and should provide a more rewarding experience for the audience than those with accumulated technique or mannered/patterned characteristics.
2. Representation of the barbershop style
 - a. It is important for the Performance judge to evaluate all performances within the context of contemporary standards of the barbershop style. It is recognized, however, that barbershop is an evolving style of music within an ever-changing cultural context. Therefore, the judge uses awareness of societal and musical influences on the barbershop style as a backdrop against which to evaluate performances.
 - b. Performances that are relevant to the audience and their cultural expectations will likely be more impactful and should serve to enhance the entertainment value.
3. The Performance judge determines the score for a song or medley on a scale of 1-100 points. The lowest quality score is a 1. Forfeiture and penalties for rules violations are addressed in section I. below.
 - a. Each performance is judged on its own merits. Therefore, the Performance judge will not consider expectations related to other performances (by the same performer or anyone else). This does not preclude the positive impact of reference to performances or other events known to and appreciated by the audience, thus achieving an entertaining carryover effect.
 - b. The score represents the evaluation of the overall entertainment value achieved. There may be a substantial difference in quality between the vocal and visual components. Therefore, the Performance judge derives the score only from the overall effect, while properly evaluating the contribution of each component.
 - c. The skilled performer attempts to take the audience on a dynamic journey toward an emotionally satisfying conclusion. The Performance judge must be sure to remain aware of the ebb and flow of entertainment value and emotional impact throughout a song and arrive at an appropriate score at the conclusion of the performance.

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F. Scoring Levels

1. The A level

- a. Any A-level scores (81 to 100) reflect outstanding levels of entertainment. To achieve an A score the total effect must be judged as A. The vocal and visual components may or may not both be of A quality depending on their relative importance to the overall effect.
- b. The upper range of A scores (94 to 100) is assigned to truly exceptional performances. The applicable adjectives are all superlatives: superb, exquisite, breathtaking, captivating, hilarious, overwhelming, deeply moving, etc.
- c. The mid-range A score (87 to 93) is assigned to performances that exhibit unyielding excellence. The listener may be unaware of the vocal and visual techniques employed; they are caught up in the artistic effect of the total performance.
- d. At the lower end of the A range (81 to 86), the feeling of excellence is definitely present, but some minor interruptions are felt.
- e. Traits that distinguish between A and B levels of performance relate to the presence of subtlety and artistry. The A score implies an extremely high level of consistency in the delivery of entertainment value. In summary, the A score denotes excellence as opposed to competence.

2. The B level

- a. B-level scores (61 to 80) are indicative of performances that deliver competent and increasingly believable emotional or entertainment content. They will exhibit basic to very good musicianship, rapport with the audience, and performance skills.
- b. The upper range of B scores (74 to 80) indicates a substantial presence of excellence. Such performances keep the audience almost totally involved, and moved emotionally. Some instances of A-quality performance are demonstrated.
- c. In the mid-B range (67 to 73), the judge may find that most effects are appropriate and properly presented. These performances are often quite enjoyable and may be memorable, in spite of the presence of technical flaws.
- d. At the lower range of B scoring (61 to 66), nominal consistency is demonstrated but distractions may occur. The result is usually a competent but undistinguished performance.
- e. In a B performance, there is a grasp and use of barbershop techniques. In summary, the B score may denote competence and consistency in the use of performance skills or an unbalanced mix of A-level and C-level skills (vocal vs. visual).

3. The C level

- a. C-level scores (41 to 60) are given to performances that have weak to adequate entertainment value. The interest of the listener is frequently lost due to lack of musical or vocal consistency, poor execution, stage intimidation, or poor understanding of effective performance approaches.
- b. At the upper end of the C range (54 to 60), some consistency is displayed. These are acceptable performances despite distractions and interruptions.

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- c. Performances in the mid-C range (47 to 53) are marginally acceptable for public performance.
- d. At the lower end of the C range (41 to 46), the limited vocal and/or visual skills being exhibited produce performances that are weak in overall effect.

4. The D level

- a. D-level scores (40 to 1) are reserved for performances lacking entertainment value or conveyance of the song's emotional potential in either the musical or visual components. Poor (D-level) performances normally will be assessed a score of 40 instead of an exact score.
- b. The upper half of the D level is represented by performances where performance skills are severely lacking or absent but many of the notes and words are being sung.
- c. The lower half of the D level is represented by performances in which not only are performance skills lacking, but also most notes and/or words are being missed.

G. Use of the Score Sheet

1. The judging form for the Performance category is laid out in a manner intended to allow great facility in judging the performance.
2. Main working areas and tools
 - a. There is an overall grade-level scale at the top of the form, and a horizontal bar calibrated from 1 to 100 to assist the judge in arriving at the final overall score.
 - b. The qualitative scoring guides serve as a reminder of the distinguishing characteristics of the A, B, C, and D levels as described above.
 - c. The main body of the sheet is left open and unformatted, allowing the judge to adopt the judge's own preferred note-taking style and to record data for evaluation counseling. The suggested approach is to proceed down the page chronologically as the song unfolds. A description of the various performance events, lyric-line references, emotions, moods, audience impacts, and net effects become useful aids in determining the score and relating the progress of these factors throughout the course of the song.
 - d. The list of key concepts and performance elements on the left margin helps the judge focus upon vocal and visual attributes of the performance that make positive or negative contributions to the overall effect achieved.
 - e. Other spaces are provided that relate to Entrance - Intro, Attire, and Break – Acceptance - Exit. Spaces are provided to make reference to strengths and suggestions, reason for any penalty or forfeiture of score and amount thereof (if applicable), and the judge's score for the performance.
3. The final score is first written in the box on the scoring form (CJ-27) and then copied onto the judging form (CJ-24) in the box in the lower right corner.

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H. Differences Between Quartet and Chorus

An ensemble larger than a quartet typically has a director. The director should support and enhance the performance and not become a distraction to the audience, unless this is intended for comedic or other purposes. The role of the director in a performance may vary from featured to virtually unnoticed, but will be judged as part of the effectiveness of the integrated whole.

I. Penalties Up To and Including Forfeiture

1. Penalties (up to and including forfeiture) by the Performance judge may be appropriate only as a result of the following:

a. As specified in Article IX.A.3.a of the contest rules, songs must “be neither primarily patriotic nor primarily religious in intent...” Most anthems and hymns are examples of clear violations. Songs that merely make reference to national pride or a deity may be acceptable. Judgment calls are made for songs that fall in between these extremes. (See below and Position Paper V, Chapter 9 of the *Contest and Judging Handbook*.) Scoring reduction levels should be applied per the following guidelines:

- 1) Mild Violation: The performance is primarily patriotic or religious, due to an infrequent but definitive instance of devotion to a deity or nation. A penalty of 5 to 9 points would be applied and the violation will be noted on the scoresheet.
- 2) Moderate Violation: The performance is primarily patriotic or religious due to additional instances or combinations of artistic choices (such as staging or choreography) and lyrics that encourage the devotion of religious or national beliefs. A moderate penalty of 10-15 points would reflect this violation, and would be applied to the scoresheet.
- 3) Forfeiture: A performance that reflects the maximum penalty could be one where the inherent (as written) nature of the song is so primarily patriotic or religious, that the performer cannot make any artistic choices which would diminish the strong impact created by the content of the song. Forfeiture is indicated by awarding a zero on the scoresheet.

b. As specified in Article IX.A.1 of the contest rules, songs performed in contest must be “in good taste” and Art.IX.A.3.b provides for penalties up to and including forfeiture for “songs or action by a contestant that are not in good taste.” (See below and Position Paper III, Chapter 9 of the *Contest and Judging Handbook*.) Scoring reduction levels should be applied per the following guidelines:

- 1) Advisory only– The performance requires an evaluation discussion/comment but the overall intent or impact of the taste event was not significant. No penalty assessed, as the taste issue could be deemed inadvertent.
- 2) Moderate Violation – The performance clearly requires an evaluation discussion. This could be due to an instance or two of clear taste issues that could impact a portion of the audience. The degree of impact on the entertainment value by such a taste distraction(s) results in a reduction to the next lower scoring level. A penalty of 5-9 points would reflect this violation, and would be applied to the scoresheet.

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- 3) Serious Violation – The negative taste impact of the performance is seriously apparent to the majority of the audience (due to reoccurring/suggestive themes and/or staging done in poor taste), and represents a performance that lacks significant entertainment. This results in a penalty of 10-30 points, and would be applied to the scoresheet.
 - 4) Severe Violation - The impact is so severely negative that forfeiture of score is the only accurate representation of the level of impact, due to its impact on the entire audience. Examples of this could be the use of vulgar lyrics and staging, or demeaning language towards a specific demographic.
 - 5) In the rare instance, the Performance judge(s) needs to stop a performance if it is deemed extremely detrimental to the audience (regardless of demographic). In those cases, the PER judge(s) immediately informs the PC, who will stop the performance.
2. The Performance judge declares forfeiture by awarding a score of zero. If some action, but not drastic action, is appropriate for a violation of Article IX.A.3, the judge may apply a smaller penalty. When a penalty or forfeiture of score has been applied, the judge should note the reason for such on the judging form on the line: “Penalties: _____ Reason: _____” and on the appropriate line(s) of the penalty grid on the scoring form.
 3. All penalties of five or more points will be notated on the scoring slip. The judge will indicate the net score with penalty applied as the total score as well as the amount of penalty/penalties and applicable rule provision for the penalty. Any Performance judge wishing to apply a penalty of five or more points in total must first conference with the other Performance judges and the judges must agree to the level of rule violation but not discuss the actual points or the performance score.
 4. Article IX of the contest rules specifies: “All songs performed in contest must be arranged in the barbershop style...” Although the Music category is the category primarily responsible for adjudicating barbershop style issues, Performance judges also have a responsibility to preserve the style through particular attention to the artistic aspects of the style noted in paragraphs I.B.4., 5., 6., 9., 10., and 11. of The Judging System (Chapter 4 of the *Contest and Judging Handbook*). These aspects are adjudicated in terms of the quality of the performance but are not subject to penalty or forfeiture.
 5. Performance judges are also responsible for adjudicating Articles XI and XII of the contest rules. (For further information, see Position Papers, Chapter 9 of the *Contest and Judging Handbook*.)
 - a. Article XI.A.1 prohibits persons who are not members of the competing chorus or quartet from appearing on stage during the performance. An exception to this rule permits non-member chorus directors, who may appear with their chorus provided their appearance and performance is in conjunction with their role as a director. Notwithstanding the previous sentence, non-member directors may not sing with their chorus. Violations of Article XI.A.1 should be reported to the Panel Chair by indicating this on the penalty grid on the scoring form. The PC will take action to disqualify and declare the contestant ineligible.

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- b. Article XI.A.2 states “Actions by any contestant that are deemed suggestive, vulgar or otherwise not in good taste will not be allowed.” Staging is defined as the use of props or sets, the handling of props, the use of physical actions, or a combination of these. Unacceptable staging that is suggestive, vulgar, or otherwise not in good taste is subject to penalty or forfeiture. In addition to penalties and potential forfeiture by the Performance judge(s), the performance may be stopped by the Panel Chair per Article XIV.A.3. (See Position Paper III, Chapter 9 of the *Contest and Judging Handbook*.)
- c. Article XII states “Non-singing dialogue is generally not a part of a contest performance. However, brief comments made with supporting visual communications may be permitted more clearly to establish mood/theme, to assist the transition of packaged songs, or to add to the effect of closure of mood/theme.” Violations of Article XII are adjudicated in terms of the quality of the performance but are not subject to penalty or forfeiture.

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I. INTRODUCTION

One ingredient that clearly identifies barbershop music is its unique sound. It is the sound of barbershop that allows the transforming of a song into an emotional experience for the performer and audience. The best barbershop singing combines elements of technique and emotion to create an artistic result.

Barbershop singing shares elements of good singing with other forms of ensemble vocal music. Primarily, the listener expects to hear the pleasing effect of in-tune singing from voices that are free and resonant, exhibit no signs of difficulties, and are free from individual distractions.

When intonation, balance, vowel tuning, and freely produced tones are executed at a high level, the sound of the quartet or chorus can appear to be greater than the sum of the sound produced by the individual voices. We call this “expanded sound” or “expansion”. The terms "lock" and "ring" have also been used to describe the unique sound, even though their contemporary meanings have changed.

This presence of expansion will always be one of the hallmarks of the style. Chord selections, homorhythmic treatment, and efficient tone choices are driven by this stylistic element. Any listener to a barbershop performance expects to be thrilled by the sound of a ringing chord or awed by the purity and beauty of a soft and elegant expression of a song. Great barbershop singing demands mastery of vocal and ensemble skills to create the breathtaking effects of barbershop musical artistry.

The Singing judge evaluates the degree to which the performer achieves artistic singing in the barbershop style. Expanded and artistic singing is accomplished through precise intonation, a

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high degree of vocal skill that includes efficient tone production, and unified execution. Appropriate vocal expression completes the emotional delivery. Mastering these elements of good singing results in the unique sound that is barbershop harmony.

II. SINGING ELEMENTS

Let's take a closer look at some key elements that contribute to a successful vocal delivery of the barbershop style.

A. Intonation

1. Barbershop singers adjust pitches to achieve perfectly tuned chords, and yet sing a melodic line that remains true to the tonal center. Barbershop singers strive for more precise tuning than is possible with the fixed 12-tones- per-octave of the equally tempered scale of fixed-pitched instruments, such as the piano. Essentially, we use [just intonation](#)¹ for harmonic tuning while remaining true to the established tonal center.
2. Melodic intonation refers to the system by which pitches are chosen for the melody of the song. Barbershop melody singers tend to use notes that preserve the tonal center while simultaneously serving the requirements of both melody and harmony. Melody singers need to be aware of harmonic tuning as well as staying true to the tonal center.
3. Harmonic intonation refers to the pitches chosen primarily by the non-melody singers. Good ear singers will naturally tune a harmonic interval to be free of beats—that is, in just intonation. Just intonation reinforces those harmonics (overtones) that are common between any two pitches and creates combination tones (sum and difference tones) between any two pitches or harmonics. These added tones are the physical cause of barbershop chord “lock” and the expansion of sound. How well a chord “locks” is directly related to the accuracy of harmonic intonation.
4. Tonal center refers to the key feeling, or tonic, of the song. This key feeling should remain constant; maintaining precise harmonic intonation and melodic tonal center is the responsibility of all the singers in the ensemble. They all sense the forward progression of the harmony in addition to maintaining the tonal center. All singers, including the melody singer, tune to an anticipated melodic line that would maintain the tonal center. Singers of roots and fifths of chords own the greater responsibility to be in tune, both with the anticipated melody and the tonal center. Singers of thirds and sevenths of chords who are not on the melody will adjust their pitches to achieve justly in-tune chords.

¹ We had lots of discussion about could be included in the “wiki”. There is a strong desire to provide graphics and especially audio examples of just intonation maybe using some top quartets to provide the input. The thought is to have members of a top quartet provide a short section of a song and then have someone edit (maybe with Melodyne) so that folks could hear the difference between justly tunes and tempered chords. There could also be volume relationship examples and whatever else we think appropriate.

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B. Vocal Quality

1. The three descriptors of good vocal production are: well-supported, freely produced, and resonant. A resonant vocal tone that conveys the sensation of a single pitch, that is produced freely and without apparent stress by well-managed breath support, and that enhances (or at least does not detract from) the artistic impact of a song may be said to possess good quality.
 - a. Well-supported: the dictionary defines support as a foundation or base for something. Vocal support starts with proper alignment ([insert link for alignment](#)). A properly aligned body frame will reduce the stress and tension placed on other areas of the body, thus reducing tension in the voice. With a well-supported body frame, a singer may then focus on efficient breath management
 - b. Freely produced: healthy and consistent vocal fold closure is free from stress and tension. ([Insert link for things that cause vocal tension](#)). Virtually any unnecessary muscle tension may interfere with a freely produced tone, as could laryngeal position.
 - c. Vibrations that are created at the vocal folds pass into the vocal tract (the throat [pharynx], mouth [oral cavity] and nasal cavities) and are amplified or dampened by adjusting both the shape and position of the vocal tract and associated structures (soft palate, tongue, mouth cavity, lips). This process of filtering vocal sound, which affects the perception of the fundamental frequency and formants, is referred to as vocal resonance. While the quality and color (timbre) of a voice depend on the singer's ability to develop and use various vocal resonators, they should make healthy vocal choices which embrace and accentuate the best resonant qualities of their natural voice.
2. Additional factors affecting vocal quality:
 - a. In order to achieve a more authentic performance, the singer should maximize the most pleasing and artistic qualities of their individual voice. The singer should embrace the vocal qualities that are inherent and natural to the unique characteristic of that singer. While some concessions may be made in the interest of ensemble unity, these should not be at the expense of healthy singing.
 - b. Singing at a high volume can make individual overtones louder. However, doing so can affect the quality of expansion (by enhancing unpleasant overtones) or even distort a singer's pitch. Singers should use caution when singing with great intensity to ensure they are making healthy vocal choices appropriate for their skill level.
 - c. Performers are encouraged to choose music that suits their capabilities and that feature the strengths and minimizes the weaknesses of the ensemble. The singing judge evaluates the overall vocal performance. There are no benefits in choosing difficult or easy music—only in choosing music that the ensemble can sing well.
 - d. In barbershop singing, some vibrato, especially within the lead voice, can be very effective in enhancing the emotional content of the music. However, too high a

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vibrato rate and/or excessive pitch fluctuation, will affect expansion and ensemble unity.

- e. Tremolo is a rapid oscillation between two distinct pitches with accompanying loss of the sense of a central pitch. Lack of muscular coordination is a primary cause for tremolo. Tremolo is unacceptable in good singing.

C. Unity

1. Unity describes the net effect of ensemble-unifying techniques. Most a cappella vocal forms utilize some of the following: matched word sounds and timbre, volume relationships (balance), synchronization and precision, sound flow, and diction.

2. Word Sounds and Timbre

- a. The resonant characteristics of the vocal tract (link) determine an individual's voice timbre. The singer can control and change the shape of the vocal tract, thereby altering its resonant characteristics. Each vowel sound requires a unique positioning and shaping of the elements that affect resonance: the throat, mouth, tongue, jaw, and lips.
- b. Subtle adjustments of the vocal tract are used to achieve matched word sounds. Each vowel sound exhibits a set of formant frequencies unique to that particular vowel. The singer can develop awareness and sensitivity to these formant frequencies, to enable the word-sound match between voices to be finely tuned.
- c. The untrained singer may experience a natural tendency for the vocal timbre to darken at lower pitches and volumes and brighten at higher pitches and volumes. This tendency is called migration. To achieve a wider range of uniformity, the singer may modify vowel sounds at the extremes of the singer's range by making subtle adjustments in vowel sounds (formant frequencies) to create the impression to the listener that no change in timbre occurs throughout the singer's range. This is best achieved through proper vocal technique throughout the range, rather than artificially modifying the vowel sound. When done correctly greater consistency in expansion can be achieved.

3. Volume Relationships (Balance)

- a. The basic perception of the barbershop ensemble is that of a melody singer with harmony accompaniment that is unified with the melody.
- b. The most consonant intervals are between notes whose frequencies may be expressed as ratios of small whole numbers. These include the unison (1:1), octave (2:1), perfect fifth (3:2), and perfect fourth (4:3). The less-consonant intervals have frequency ratios of relatively large numbers, such as the major third (5:4) and harmonic minor seventh (7:4). Notes of intervals that are most consonant should predominate over those that are less consonant as this can lead to improved expansion. Some guidelines can be found here.
- c. Higher tones are easier to hear than lower tones. Thus, lower tones must be sung with more energy in order to be perceived as equal in volume to higher tones. Properly balanced tones are necessary for maximizing expansion.

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4. Synchronization and precision

- a. Each syllable has a primary vowel sound, or target vowel. Anticipatory consonants or vowels may precede the primary vowel sound, and continuant consonants, vowels, or diphthongs may follow the primary vowel sound. For optimal synchronization the primary vowel sound should be fully realized on the pulse beat for that syllable. Normally, anticipatory sounds occur before the pulse beat, during time borrowed from the previous note, or breath. Pitch changes between primary vowel sounds should be executed together in all voices otherwise both intonation and expansion may suffer.
- b. Most of the singing time is spent sustaining the primary vowel sound, with the anticipatory and continuant sounds lengthened or shortened appropriately to create a natural diction. Primary vowel sound length, when compared to all other sounds, will be adjusted by the singer to effect changes of mood and expression. Synchronization execution by the ensemble enables consistent expansion.
- c. Precision inaccuracies can trigger other problems. Singers can avoid perceived intonation errors by starting their individual notes at the same time. With a focus on precision, singers can achieve uniformity of the pulse beat.

5. Sound flow

- a. Resonance should be carried through all voiced sounds. Stopping and starting the voice increases the opportunity for precision errors detracts from the continuous flow of the music and leads to inconsistent expansion.
- b. The use of staggered breathing by a chorus to avoid breaks in the flow is not typical of the barbershop quartet style. Ideally, phrases should not be excessively longer than those that could be sung by an individual in one well-managed breath. Overlapping (parts singing through while another part breathes) is acceptable. These techniques should only be employed in such a way as to not draw attention to the technique itself.

6. Diction and articulation

- a. Diction is the choice of word sounds, or pronunciation, as well as the clarity of word sounds, or enunciation. Word sounds include primary and secondary vowel sounds, diphthongs, triphthongs, and consonants. Proper articulation is appropriate execution of those sounds, usually free of regional dialects and intelligible to the listener.
- b. Singers think words and phrases but do not sing words *per se*. They strive to provide the audience with a collection of sounds that they decode into understandable words. Part of the singer's job is to determine all the sounds in a lyric line, ensure that the ensemble matches these word sounds, then execute those sounds in a way that allows the audience to easily decode the lyric and enjoy the ensemble's enhanced expansion.
- c. Proper diction characteristics are clarity, accuracy, ease, uniformity, and expressiveness. Vowels make up a majority of all the sounds in vocal music; they should be true to the words being sung. Natural use of consonants is also very important to diction, as they carry the meaning of the words. They should not be overemphasized, dropped, or substituted inappropriately to attempt better sound flow.

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Singing them correctly helps to carry the voice, focus it, enhance its loudness, and supply emotion.

D. Vocal Expression

1. Artistic barbershop singing must provide for flexibility in self-expression, to allow for a variety of vocal emotions as implied by the lyric and music. An important difference between a mechanical musical instrument and the vocal instrument is the ability for the singer to deliver a genuine emotional impact of the lyrics and notes, and thus fully communicate the message of song to the listener.
2. Vocal expression involves the appropriate execution of various singing elements that when combined produce a personalized, meaningful expression of the song that is greater than the sum of the elements.
3. The following areas represent the most common approaches used to enhance an expressive vocal quality.
 - a. Enunciation - diction appropriate to the song is necessary to enable the listener to comprehend the words and to maintain the musical flow, so that the listener's attention is drawn to the lyric's meaning and message and not to its execution. However, a singer may use overly crisp diction causing every word to be heard, but in doing so create hard consonant sounds that tend to distract the listener from hearing the meaning of the words and lessen the impact of the musical phrase (unless intentionally done for some comedic or other effect).
 - b. Word sounds - appropriate vowels and diphthongs (matched and resonated in similar fashion) enhance the delivery of an expressive lyric line. They are important emotional components that can be utilized to impart emotional depth and meaning. The singer must be cautious of affected sounds that tend to destroy the flow of the message and the mood of the lyric. Overly mechanical treatment can also detract from the meaning and impact of the lyrics. For example, an ensemble can achieve technical accuracy of diphthong execution by agreeing upon a duration percentage such as 80/20, but at the same time create an apparent artificial delivery of the lyric because the transition is perceived to be too abrupt within the context of the song.
 - c. Tone color - the lyric of a song might suggest certain changes in vocal tone color for different words or phrases, even possibly changing dramatically within one phrase for special effect. The choice might be (and probably should be) different for an exciting mood than for a melancholy or dramatic one. Performers may even choose an exaggerated color for parody or comedic results.
 - d. Inflection - just as people do not speak in monotone, vocal music should not be sung without an appropriate vocal inflection. Vocal lines that are embellished tastefully with inflections will enhance the emotional feeling and lyrical intent of the song.
4. In order for all these techniques to be artistic, they must effectively communicate the emotional content of the song. There is a natural correlation between the performer's command of vocal skill, their vocal expression, and the generation of emotion. A lack of vocal skill can affect the quality of the vocal expression and will distract the audience. Conversely, great vocal skill allows the performer to generate many subtle variations and

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levels of emotion with far less apparent effort, which adds to the message and believability. Performances come across as honest, sincere, and genuine when the execution of vocal expression is delivered in a transparent manner.

E. Summary

In summary, several factors contribute to the reinforcement of the harmonic series, including the production of combination tones, other than the melody is sung primarily within the chord rather than in the top voice. The chord must be in tune.

There must be good vocal quality that promotes resonance and “ring” in the voice.

- The word sounds must be sung uniformly, i.e. the vowels should match.
- There must be good precision and synchronization of the word sounds.
- The volume relationship of the tones must be adjusted to produce optimal harmonic reinforcement.

In essence, the better the quality of the vocalization, the better the quality of the expansion. Songs and arrangements in the Barbershop Style (see Chapter 2 of this handbook) provide greater opportunities for us to experience expansion.

III. SCORING

A. Scoring Methodology

1. The Singing judge evaluates the performance of each song for the level of mastery of the singing elements. The elements are:
 - Intonation
 - Vocal quality
 - Unity
 - Vocal expression

The judge assigns an overall rating based on an appraisal of the degree of achievement of vocal artistry in the barbershop style.

2. The Singing judge awards a score from 1-100 points per song. Judges weigh the performance of the particular song against their cumulative listening experience and assign the score accordingly. The score is relative to a theoretically perfect performance. Judges strive for objectivity in scoring, yet any assessment of the overall artistry naturally includes a subjective point of view.
3. Each performer is compared against the judge’s base of listening experience, not against other performances in the same contest. Judges will note what elements influenced their score. More importantly, they will note significant ways to improve the performance.

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B. Scoring Levels

1. The A level

- a. A-level scores (81 to 100) are given to performances of the most consistent artistic barbershop singing. There are very few distractions owing to lack of singing skill; rather, the focus is primarily on expressive singing.
- b. A typical performance earning a mid-range A score (87-93 points) features few, if any, intonation errors, excellent vocal quality, consistent unity, consistent expansion of sound, and an overall perception of vocal expression and artistry that transcends technique.
- c. A performance at the upper range of A (94-100) would likely be a significant artistic experience for any listener, possibly transcending measurable elements to define its success. Performances in this range need not be flawless, as flawless performances can actually draw attention to the technique. Rather, the performance and experience are characterized more by the expressive artistic result and not the technique employed.
- d. In a performance at the low end of the A range (81-86), an occasional technical distraction can occur. The performer may show great skill but the "technique is showing." The performer may be inconsistent, having phrases of higher A mixed with phrases of a lesser level.
- e. The distinguishing difference between lower A and upper B levels is often the perception of artistry as the combination of great skills into one transparent whole.

2. The B level

- a. B-level scores (61 to 80 points) are for performances that frequently show skills of artistic barbershop singing, mixed with more distractions or lack of artistic unity.
- b. A typical performance in the mid-range of B (67-73 points) is only occasionally out of tune, frequently exhibits good vocal quality, is often a unit, has infrequent interruptions in expansion of sound and has apparent use of vocal expression. The performance may even have a short duration of A-level quality.
- c. The upper range of the B scores (74-80) is for performances that may demonstrate great skill across most singing elements—but not the mastery of them. The performance will be technically sound yet will likely have some distractions. Artistic expression will be present, but with limited agreement across the ensemble.
- d. In the lower range of B performances (61-66), skill errors may provide significant distractions in some phrases, but most of the performance is still good. Intonation and vocal quality are slightly better than satisfactory. Expansion of sound is inconsistent.
- e. The difference between lower B and upper C levels is often a matter of consistency of skill and blending into an artistic unit.

3. The C level

- a. C-level scores (41 to 60 points) are for performances that demonstrate adequate skills, with some signs of artistry but with notable inconsistencies in performance.

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- b. A typical performance in the mid-range of C (48-53) will have intonation problems. The vocal quality is satisfactory but not improper, and could be improved by basic vocal skills. Unity is impeded by word sound mismatches, faulty chord balancing, or even choice of material, and expansion of sound occurs as often as not. Some artistic moments would be evident.
- c. The upper range of C scores (54-60) is for performances that may be partly at the B level but show several distractions, inconsistencies, and inability to sustain the artistry.
- d. In the lower range of C performances (41-47), offensive intonation or vocal quality may be exhibited occasionally, and the perception of unity and expansion of sound is more infrequent.
- e. The difference between lower C and upper D levels is often that the C performance has acceptable quality and fewer unpleasant sounds.

4. The D level

- a. D-level scores (1 to 40 points) are for performances in which the elements of good singing are rarely heard. Poor (D-level) performances normally will be assessed a score of 40 instead of an exact score. Little is gained by an exact score in this range and specifics for improvement can be covered in the evaluation.
- b. The upper part of the D range is typified by performances that have rare moments of acceptable skills, which appear to be accidental or out of control of the performer.
- c. The middle part of the D range typically exhibits a major lack of vocal skill. Wrong notes may be prevalent. In-tune chords are rare. Vocal quality and tone color will most likely be poor or offensive. Dissonance is the norm. Individual voices will be consistently predominant, and the ensemble rarely sings as a unit.
- d. The lower part of the D range is almost never encountered. A significant performance error, such as poor pitch-taking or nerves, could reduce an otherwise mid-D performance to the lower end.
- e. Performances in this range usually occur because of a lack of skill, nerves, lack of knowledge, neglect, intentional focus on non-singing aspects of the performance, or significant lack of preparation.

C. Use of the Score Sheet

- 1. The scale and box are reminders of the judging ranges and the concept of the overall effect. Many may want to circle or flag a range on the scale, or a particularly appropriate phrase in the box, and use arrows down to a written comment below.
- 2. The element list is a selected list of ideas to circle or check off for later comments. Consider it to be for reference; it can serve as an abbreviation list for comments as well.
- 3. During the performance, the judge will identify only two or three of the most significant elements of the performance and several "fixes" for any of these elements. The judge will also point out where in the performance the best singing occurred and why, thereby giving the performer a chance to relate to the good experience firsthand.

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4. The Singing judge will determine, through practice, how much detail is necessary to trigger recollection of the performance and focus on the major items. Flaws in the smallest sense are not relevant; the judge will be looking at the broader perspective. The judge will find elements of the performance that, if changed, would most significantly result in improvement.
5. The highest scores will be earned by performances solidly within the barbershop style that offer the greatest opportunity to create stylistic and artistic singing.
6. The final score is first written in the box on the scoring form (CJ-28) and then copied onto the judging form (CJ-25) in the box in the lower right corner.

D. Differences Between Quartet and Chorus

1. The basic sound of barbershop is found in the quartet performance. Four voices achieving vocal artistry in the manner described above produce a sound unique to this art form. When one adds more singers to each part, a similar effect can be obtained but with significant differences. We have learned to recognize these differences and evaluate the chorus singing sound in its own unique form.
2. Choruses are more able to blend, or even hide, the differences of pitch and timbre between the singers than is possible in quartets. The net result can be less demand upon the individual singer while sustaining a unique and vital sound from the chorus. The vitality of sound still depends on the degree of agreement of voices within sections (parts), as well as the relationships between sections.
 - a. Wrong notes and more than four parts in a chorus performance have a muddy effect on the whole ensemble, or, at its worst, depart from the barbershop style. This results in lower scores.
 - b. The perception of a unit sound requires that individual voices not be heard. In a quartet, each person retains their own recognizable voice, whereas in a chorus, no individual tone color should be discernible.
 - c. Precision of the chorus takes on a new challenge as there are more possibilities for error. The preparation of the singers, as well as the skill of the chorus director, greatly affects this aspect.
 - d. Larger choruses can generate a larger quantity of sound than smaller ones, as well as a greater ability to bury the problems of any individual. However, the judging of choruses emphasizes the quartet-like cleanliness of the sound, not the volume. Volume of sound will not, in itself, have a positive impact on the Singing judge.

E. Penalties Up To and Including Forfeiture

1. Singing judges are solely responsible for adjudicating Article X of the Contest Rules. Any penalty or forfeiture by a Singing judge would be as a result of a violation of Article X.B. of the Contest Rules.
 - a. Article X.B. prohibits contestants from using their own electronic amplification, but does permit limited, brief, and relevant sound effects or electronic means of pitch taking. It also prohibits the use of recorded music or speaking, as well as use of

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technology to enhance the performance electronically. Violation of Article X.B. may result in penalties up to and including forfeiture.

2. The Singing judge declares forfeiture by awarding a score of zero. When a penalty or forfeiture of score has been applied, the judge should note the reason for such on the judging form on the line: “Penalties: _____ Reason: _____” and on the appropriate line of the penalty grid on the scoring form.
3. All penalties of five or more points will be notated on the scoring slip. The judge will indicate the net score with penalty applied as the total score as well as the amount of penalty/penalties and applicable rule provision for the penalty. Any Singing judge wishing to apply a penalty of five or more points in total should first conference with the other Singing judges and the judges must agree to the level of rule violation but not discuss the actual points or the performance score.

IV. INTEGRATION WITH OTHER CATEGORIES

The Performance category is principally responsible for evaluating entertainment value in a barbershop performance, which includes visual and vocal elements. The sound created by highly artistic singing can positively enhance the overall emotional effect of a performance. Conversely, elements of the sound that are not of good quality (such as tuning) could diminish the overall effect of the performance. Vocal expression is important to the Performance category as well, as entertainment value and emotional context can be enhanced with this element.

While the Singing category evaluates the technical and qualitative aspects of the performer's sound, these factors also affect the Music category in determining the level of consonance, consonant harmony being the primary hallmark of the barbershop style. Singing that suffers from poor synchronization, intonation, or vocal quality, or other sound problems will also negatively impact such Music areas as theme, delivery, and execution.

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I. MUSICAL COMPLEXITY/OVER-EMBELLISHMENT

A. Introduction

This paper aims both to clarify the position of the Music Category regarding what complexity and over-embellishment are and to provide general guidelines for how they can be recognized and adjudicated in performances of songs other than parodies.

B. Background

The Music Category respects the roots of our style in "ear" music and discourages performances that seem to be more a demonstration of arrangement devices than the performance of a song, which is defined by the melody, lyrics, rhythm, and implied harmony. At the same time, embellishment is a fundamental characteristic of the barbershop style, and relatively wide latitude is given to arrangers to embellish with a variety of devices, which help create musical interest, as well as provide for both unifying and contrasting thematic material.

Accordingly, the Music Category wishes to allow the arranger a reasonable degree of license and creativity in writing arrangements of varying levels of complexity, with varying approaches to

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thematic development that are suitable for contest use, while asserting that the primary theme must be based on musical elements: lyrics, rhythm, melody, harmony, or a combination of song elements.

C. Policy

Arrangements that are overly complex or over-embellished are the result of a level of embellishment that:

1. Obscures the song itself. A guiding principle for defining the barbershop style is that “Embellishments ... should support and enhance the song” (Section 4, The Judging System, I.B.8, of this handbook). When this principle is compromised, the Music judge may no longer be hearing the song itself but rather a catalogue of ornamental devices that do not support the basic song elements.
2. Produces a musical texture that compromises the requirement that barbershop music is “characterized by consonant four-part chords for every melody note in a primarily homorhythmic texture” (The Judging System, I.A.1, of this handbook).
3. Alters the composer’s melody beyond the parameters described in the Music Category Description, III.C.4. (See Section 5 of this handbook.) In addition, performing ability is an integral part of adjudicating whether or not the arrangement is overly complex or over-embellished. The performers’ abilities influence the Music judge’s perception of the degree to which a particular song is or is not over-embellished. Given a song with a high number of embellishments, a group performing at the A level may be able to perform it in such a way that the embellishments do not overwhelm the song or performance. The same arrangement performed at the C level may create the perception that the song is over-embellished. The judging system recognizes and provides a basis for scoring these two performances differently under the Music Category Description, Section III, and Introduction. Performing ability notwithstanding, the Music score will be lowered for song performances that are inherently over-embellished and overly complex. Outside of parody performances, guiding principles for adjudicating complexity and over-embellishment are:
 - a. Barbershop performers may take great liberties with the rhythms of a song. However, the arrangement should not modify lyrics, melody, and implied harmony to the extent that the song itself gets lost. The guideline in III.C.4 stating that stylizations should result in “a passage suggestive of the original” may be compromised if two or more of these three elements are modified. In particular, rewriting the melody with different harmony for much of a repeated song section will likely result in a passage that is not suggestive of the original.
 - b. The main statement of a song is generally in the chorus of that song. Accordingly, the Music judge is prepared to accept more modification of a verse, even in the first statement, than of the chorus. Abridging a verse to make it an introduction to the chorus is acceptable as long as it is musically appropriate.
 - c. Extensions are acceptable at the end of a song section, provided they contain an even number of measures and are artistically appropriate.

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d. The Music judge will reduce a score for distracting melody alterations in proportion to their incidence and/or impact on the overall arrangement. It is understood that the Music judge can only become distracted by altered melodies when the judge definitely knows the correct melody.

e. Regarding Music Category Description, III.C.4, it is understood that a repeated section usually means a verse or chorus, but sometimes the last A phrase within the first statement of an AABA section may be stylized effectively.

f. The arranger is expected to use the composer's melody as the basis for harmonization and embellishment a song. Melodic alterations might be distracting, especially when the melody is well-known. Alterations that are made for the purpose of satisfying the standards of acceptable harmonic progressions and harmonic rhythm stated in II.4 are not permitted. Alterations are acceptable in the following circumstances:

(i) Minor melodic alterations may be made to enhance the potential for increased consonance and singability, as long as the notes that are changed are not essential to defining the character or shape of the melody.

(ii) When an alteration of the melody is commonly known and accepted.

(iii) When, in a repeated section (verse or chorus) of a song, the arrangement alters or stylizes the melody. Stylized segments may occur during repeats of a song section as long as the stylization results in a passage suggestive of the original. Alterations beyond these parameters will result in a lower Music score.

II. FEMALE IMPERSONATION

In 1993 the Contest and Judging rules underwent significant revisions, including the elimination of a specific prohibition against female impersonation. It should be noted, however, that the elimination of this prohibition in no way was intended to imply that female impersonation is now generally acceptable as a performance option. Rather, it is a matter of taste. Under the current Contest and Judging System, the matter of taste is subjective and is adjudicated in the Performance Category. Female impersonation may be either offensive or entertaining, depending on many subjective factors.

The current contest rules recognize that it may be possible for a performance utilizing female impersonation to be staged in an inoffensive and tasteful manner. Performers should be aware, however, that our society in general, and therefore many Performance judges, has become sensitive to performances that may be offensive to some or many women. The use of female impersonation, therefore, represents a heightened level of risk in terms of the scoring of such a performance.

Risks are usually taken for the purpose of generating a reward. Some enhancement to the impact of a performance is possible through the clever, tasteful use of female impersonation. On the other

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hand, it is possible for a severe problem to occur, whereby a poor performance could result in a low quality score (as low as 1), audience scorn, and even damage to the overall mission of promoting barbershop singing to the general public.

III. TASTE

Performances containing bad taste, or which could be considered offensive, are not common in Barbershop contests. Performers are usually aware of the need to have positive audience engagement.

The test of whether a performance is distasteful or offensive is whether, in whole or in part, it would be offensive to today's audiences or society in general.

The Performance judge will assess whether the performance's impact offends contemporary society's standards of cultural currency and sensitivity. These rare performances may range from inadvertent offense to a complete disregard for the potential impact on the audience. Judicial discretion in analyzing these situations is paramount, and judges draw on their own life experience as well as their judicial education and training.

Performances that are considered in poor taste will be subject to penalty up to and including forfeiture by the Performance judge(s). In cases where there is not clear intent to be distasteful the judge may afford the benefit of the doubt to the performer.

If a performance raises questions or could meet the above criteria, the Performance panel will conference to discuss a possible action. (For guidelines see Performance Category Description, Chapter 6 of the *Contest and Judging Handbook*, Section II.I.1.b.)

IV. OBSCURE LYRICS

The first responsibility of any art form is to communicate. The use of obscure lyrics can make it difficult to carry out that responsibility and therefore may interfere with the delivery of emotional impact to the audience. This can conceivably result in a lower Performance score.

The audience should not have to work hard to clearly understand the message being communicated by a barbershop performance. Consider the following lyric lines: "The sky isn't blue for a red rosy hue is there in the air today" or "I was jealous and hurt, when your lips kissed a rose, or your eyes from my own chanced to stray." In isolation, with one of this type of line at a time the audience could probably glean the message and could be convinced by the surrounding material that their guess was accurate. But too much of this type of lyric would leave most barbershop audiences frustrated. An example of a song whose lyrics get in the way of communication is "Send in the Clowns." This song's obscure lyrics require a highly skilled performer to effectively communicate the meaning of this song to the typical audience.

The heartfelt performance is not just an attitude or emotion of a song or theme, but rather the lyrics must contribute to generating human emotions in the listener. If either the emotions or the

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words are unclear, obscure, or ambiguous, heartfelt delivery is affected, which will generally result in a lower-scoring performance.

Notwithstanding the above, there is nothing inherently wrong with folksy, artsy, or poetic songs. They can be magnificent, thought-provoking and emotional works of art. Many of these songs are not, however, typical of the material we have come to understand as "barbershop." The Contest & Judging System has a stated responsibility to preserve the barbershop style; therefore, contestants should choose material with lyrics they can effectively communicate on its first performance.

V. PATRIOTIC AND RELIGIOUS PERFORMANCES

A. Patriotic Performances

References to national pride or the military are generally acceptable in contest. The rule violation would come into play in a performance where the theme is primarily extoling a particular national government. Examples include performances of national anthems or similar songs (for example, O Canada, God Bless America, or I'm Proud to Be an American). Such songs shall be considered primarily patriotic, and that song's scores would be subject to a penalty up to and including forfeiture by the Performance judge.

This rule does not prohibit the use of songs of an historical national nature, or general characterization of any nation. There is a wealth of contest-worthy material that falls into the acceptable range, such as Yankee Doodle Dandy, My Old Kentucky Home, Over There, If There'd Never Been an Ireland and many more.

The rule also does not prohibit the use of satire, or other comedic political material or manner of performance.

The Performance judge, in determining the application of this rule, will assess whether a typical audience would reasonably determine a song as performed to be primarily patriotic.

B. Religious Performances

References to God, religion or prayer are acceptable as long as the performance is not primarily focused on extoling a deity. Many songs refer to elements of religion or prayer without the focus being primarily religious. These can be work or struggle songs, many rhythm, dance, show vehicles or those alluding to a "revival". Examples include Get Happy, Blow Gabriel Blow, Wind Beneath My Wings, You Raise Me up, etc.

The test of whether or not a song or performance is primarily religious is not based on religious language or whether a song is published in a hymnal. Many secular songs are often utilized because of their message of uplift and spirituality offering hope and encouragement to all people, some of which allude to positive values and the impact of a power greater than ourselves, while not meeting the guideline of being primarily focused on extoling a deity.

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The Performance judge will always be guided by the principle of primary focus and the likely impact of the performance of the song in its entirety on the audience. Where there is reasonable doubt that a performance would meet the criteria of being primarily religious, benefit must go to the performer and no penalty is justified. Otherwise the Performance judge shall apply a penalty, up to and including forfeiture. (For guidelines see Performance Category Description, Chapter 6 of the *Contest and Judging Handbook*, Section II.I.1.a.)

VI. SCORING DIFFERENCES AMONG JUDGES

The Contest and Judging System adopted by the Society in 1993 has moved the judging of contestants toward an evaluation of the artistic impact of a performance on the audience, as opposed to an analysis of the craft of creating effects. Therefore, the judge's individual perspectives have become more relevant, since the judge not only represents, but is a part of, the audience.

The audience that the judge represents may be defined as a mature, musically astute, experienced barbershop audience, whose primary focus is being entertained in the barbershop style. Any attempt to define all of the terms in the preceding sentence would be inappropriate, as it would run contrary to the natural diversity that exists within audiences and among judges.

Whereas scoring differences in the past may have reflected differing opinions on the technical effectiveness with which a performance was delivered, under the current judging system, differences among judges may now reflect the differing emotional impacts upon the judges that performances may have created.

Since each judge, like each member of the audience, has different life experiences and personal backgrounds, some performances may create differing types and levels of impact upon different judges and therefore be reflected in their scoring. For example, a performance intended to be a tribute to Jimmy Durante may not have as much impact on a thirty-year-old judge as on an older judge who can relate to having actually seen Durante's performances. Such a performance would have a similarly diverse impact on the audience, because of the age spectrum that exists. Many other examples could be given, but this same principle affects performances that include inside jokes, period material, or any other performance that has, as part of its content, an attribute not universally understood or appreciated by the audience.

Performing material or using a style of delivery that invites a mixed reaction among audience members relative to taste, empathy, comprehension, relevance, or some other facet, also invites the chance of a mixed reaction on the part of the judges. It is natural that this mixed reaction may be reflected in scoring, as it should be.

Certainly, the Performance Category intends to reward creativity in both concepts and delivery of concepts, but that creativity must "connect" with, and be appreciated by, the audience and the judges, to have emotional impact. Obviously, those performances that are universally enjoyed by all members of the audience will also have the best chance of being uniformly appreciated by all of the judges. Such performances will lessen the chances of divergent scoring.

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If divergent scoring is to be minimized, the responsibility rests both with the judges and the contestants. Judges must accept training on category standards and agree to implement that training to the best of their ability. Contestants must work their craft and artistic skills toward the goal of reaching every member of the audience to the greatest degree possible.

VII. MUSIC CATEGORY PROCESS FOR STYLE PROBLEMS

The Music Category uses its email forum to discuss style issues. We have a standing rule that music judges report style problems from recent contests to the category, which then holds a discussion. Factors include the relationship between performance and current category wording, matters of degree, appropriate amount of effect of the problem on adjudicated score, and any aspects of natural style evolution that may exist. The forum discussions keep Music judges current on the state of our thinking about style, and the category will continue to use this process as an integral component of our style guardianship role.

The progression typically follows this pattern:

- A. Questionable material is heard in contest. In real time, Music judges decide to what extent the material affects the performance and score.
- B. The performance becomes the subject of discussion, initiated either by a panel judge or an outside query, and is brought to the attention of the Category Specialist.
- C. The Category Specialist initiates an internal discussion of the performance and the style issues involved. All sides of the issue are openly discussed in the Music Category forum.
- D. A consensus is reached (if possible) on how this and similar material should be handled in the future.
- E. Individual judges align their adjudication to the Category consensus, with the understanding that this is the expected reaction when hearing this or similar material in future contests.

VIII. FREQUENCY OF THE BARBERSHOP 7TH CHORD

One of the defining hallmarks of the barbershop style is the barbershop 7th chord (major-minor 7th (1-3-5-^b 7)). The previous Arrangement (ARR) Category description stated that arrangements should have a minimum of 33% barbershop 7th chords by duration (at first it was 35% and later lowered to 33%). The Music Category Description continued this legacy requirement. The percentage was derived by taking arrangements that were considered solid barbershop and counting the frequency of 7th chords to the total number of beats.

The Music Category accepts a wider spectrum of songs for competition arranged in the barbershop style than the Arrangement Category did. Most of them still met this criterion. However, there were a number of songs that fell short of this requirement, even though the songs were clearly and solidly barbershop. Barbershop singers and audiences accepted them as barbershop. Judging these songs against this criterion created discrepancies in application as well as incorrectly assessing the true count of 7th chords. As a result, this criterion is no longer appropriate to assess stylistic suitability.

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The Music judge listens to the musicality of the performance through the filter of the barbershop style. The Music judge is in a position to address performance issues that are generated by the elements of the song and/or arrangement that may be stylistically weak. Through this, the intent of featuring the hallmark of the barbershop 7th chord is maintained without a need to quantify the actual count.

At the heart of the barbershop 7th chord is the tritone interval (augmented fourth). In a barbershop 7th chord, the tritone is the interval between the 3rd and flatted 7th (^b7). We find this relationship not only in the barbershop 7th chord but also in the traditional 9th chords used in barbershop (1-^b 7-2-3, 5-^b 7-2-3 of scale tones) as well as other chords such as the half-diminished 7th (1-^b 3-^b 5-^b 7). The role of the tritone is critical in barbershop. Songs that feature circle-of-fifths movement exhibit what is known as tritonal movement, which creates energy and tension. As a result, these songs will have a high frequency of barbershop 7th and 9th chords and provide the characteristic sound of barbershop.

Arrangements that have fewer barbershop 7th and 9th chords could result in several performance deficiencies. Arrangements that feature more minor triads and minor 7th chords could exhibit a lower consonance level. Quartets/choruses that do not possess high levels of tuning will have more problems and the score will likely be lower than an arrangement with a higher 7th count. Arrangements that do not have high circle-of-fifths motion will have less built-in tension. Quartets/choruses will have to work harder in order to overcome this weakness in the music. Delivery and thematic development will likely be lower, affecting both Music and Performance scores. From an audience perspective, arrangements that are low in 7th chord count may not be as appealing as songs that are higher in 7th chord count.

As the Music judge listens to a song/arrangement that is low in barbershop 7th and 9th chords, the judge will make a decision as to whether the arrangement is still characteristic of the barbershop style. Does it still create musical tension? Does it still provide opportunities for lock and ring? If it does, then it is acceptable. Arrangements that do not provide for these attributes will likely result in a lower Music score, and the Music judge will identify the weakness of a low barbershop 7th and 9th chord count as part of the reason.

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IX. STATISTICAL VARIANCES

There are many statistical tests available to detect “variances”. “Dixon’s Q Test” was chosen for its simplicity.

Steps:

- Calculate the range (R) from the highest and lowest values.
- Calculate the largest distance (D) from the most extreme value (high or low) to its nearest score.
- Calculate the ratio of $Q = D/R$.
- If that ratio is “statistically significant”, then it is a variance.

“Statistically significant” depends upon how many judges and the confidence that it is truly a variance and not by chance and chance alone. 90% confidence level was chosen.

Judges	Q (90%)
3	0.941
6	0.560
9	0.437
12	0.376
15	0.338

It is possible that 5 out of the 6 judges were extremely close (e.g. 71,70,71,71,70). A final score of 73 would flag as a variance in this example, but both C&J and competitors would accept this sort of variability in scores. As a matter of policy to avoid minor anomalies, the difference between the identified variance and the nearest score, higher or lower, has to be greater than four (4) points before an official variance would be generated.

EXAMPLE

MUS = 77, 68 PRS = 78, 77 SNG = 76, 77

- The total range (R) is $78-68 = 10$.
- The largest distance (D) is $76-68 = 8$.
- $Q = 8/10 = 0.800$.
- For a double panel (6 judges), the critical value is 0.560.
- Since $Q = 0.800$ is greater than the critical value of 0.560, we would conclude that the MUS Category has a variance.
- The difference between the lowest score (68) and next lowest score is $76-68 = 8$. This is greater than 4 so this song would flag as a variance for the MUS Category.

At the end of the contest round, the PC will provide the MUS category with all scores for that performance. After the MUS judges review their notes, the MUS judges could stand by their

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original scores or one (or both) MUS judges could modify their scores for either song in the performance per Contest Rules, Article VII.B.2.

A variance will also be generated for any song in which a single judge's score is more than 5 points from the average of that judge's category. For example, on a double panel a variance will be generated for any scoring difference of 11 or more points within a single category. This is the traditional computation used on the Scoring Analysis generated at the end of each contest session and indicated by an asterisk.

For a single panel a variance is also generated when the high or low score is at least 10 points from the middle score. This accounts for a limitation of Dixon's Q Test with a small sample.

The SCJC recognizes that from time to time, a score is provided by a judge that is too high or too low relative to the rest of the panel. This often happens when all of the category elements are not properly weighted or there were distractions that led to the result. In other cases, there can be disagreements between judges within a category. In any event, this process is available to enable judges to reflect upon the performance and all information before finalizing the official scores. The SCJC wishes to ensure that the competitors receive the scores they deserve and doesn't want a potential judicial error to affect competition status or advancement.

X. COMEDIC CONCEPTS AND TECHNIQUES

Barbershop audiences love to laugh, and the rush of having a huge comedic hit has driven many Barbershop performers to include comedic elements in their performances. While different things are found amusing by different people, most successful comedic barbershop performances exhibit hallmarks of good comedic concepts and technique. The Performance Judge will evaluate these, and their resulting comedic effect, as part of the overall entertainment value of the performance.

Here is a brief description of some of the more common concepts and techniques.

The Comic Premise: Comic situations arise from the juxtaposition of a ridiculous character in a normal world, or vice versa. The Comic Premise is the gap between comic reality and real-world reality. In barbershop performances, we often see a quartet with three seemingly normal characters trying to soldier on despite the antics of the fourth one, usually the goofball standing on the end. Other examples of a strong comic premise include "fish out of water" situations such as hillbillies arriving in the big city, or aliens coming to Earth to sing in a quartet contest. Barbershop choruses have earned laughs by singing about real human feelings, but playing the roles of aquarium fish, or vegetables, or plastic green army men. A strong comic premise provides the structure and theme to a skit or performance; without one, a series of jokes can seem random and empty.

Characterization: The strength of a comic premise often depends on the audience being able to easily recognize the characters and personalities being portrayed by the performers. Barbershop performances, and other forms of low comedy, often use easily recognizable Stock Characters: the Nerd; the Jock; the Yokel; and so on. Once the audience has an expectation of how a character might behave, comedy can be derived by delivering the unexpected. In a two-song

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performance, there is very little time to convey character traits, but suitable costuming, brief spoken words, or stereotypical gestures can often do the trick.

The Rule of Three: When presented with information, humans intuitively search for patterns; it helps us learn, remember, and understand. Comedy is derived from delivering the unexpected, so comedy writers set up their gags in three parts; three is the smallest number required to establish a pattern. The first two phrases (or looks, or gestures) are consistent with each other, which sets up an expectation for the next one. The third one takes a left turn, and that surprise creates the laugh. It's as easy as 1, 2, C!

Timing: The secret of great comedy; pace and delivery affects the success of a joke. A fast pace can improve some gags but ruin others, and the skillful use of "beats" can be a source of comedy in itself. A beat is a pause used to allow the audience to absorb and process the action, or to create tension and expectation before a punch line. Jack Benny and Victor Borge are famous for using the "extended beat", and in the barbershop world, the quartet FRED also made good use of this technique.

Setups and punch lines: These could be sung, spoken, or acted out physically. In any case, for a comedic moment to be successful, there has to be clear and clean communication, and there are several ways to accomplish this. Excellent enunciation of song lyrics, especially if they are parody lyrics that the audience has not heard before, is essential. Successful sight gags usually feature crisp gestures and movements, ie the visual equivalent of excellent enunciation. Punch lines, whether spoken or sung, are often best constructed with the funniest word of the punch line at or near the end. Also, a contrast between setup and punch line heightens the surprise; an intensely delivered setup followed by a deadpan punch line (or vice versa) is a common device. Once again, skillful comic performers use beats, and allow brief amounts of space in between looks or gestures; all the better to allow the audience to absorb and understand the action.

XI. DISTINCTLY SEPARATE CHORUSES

The SCJC seeks to establish a balance between providing opportunities for members to compete in more than one chorus, while at the same time ensuring fairness to all competing choruses. However, the concept of "fairness" has two divergent set of concerns:

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1. It would be unfair to the other choruses in a contest to allow the same group of singers to perform as two or more separate choruses while competing for the same contest award. For example, two separate chapters could each enter their chorus into one contest comprised of dual chapter members, which could then essentially be the same ensemble getting two opportunities at the same award. Likewise, that same unfair scenario could occur if a single chapter wished to create and enter more than one chorus (with mostly the same chapter members) into a contest.
2. It would also be unfair to prohibit a chapter from entering more than one chorus into the same contest if they were actually distinctly different ensembles. [The previous version of Article I.B.2 only allowed a chapter to enter one chorus per contest.]

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Recent changes to the Society membership policies now allow for (and encourage) chapters to establish more than one chorus. Therefore, the limitation for a chapter to enter only one chorus to compete had to be addressed, while at the same time protecting other competitors from one chapter “stacking” multiple choruses against them unfairly. Article I.B.4 uses the threshold of a 75% overlap to provide a balance of fairness thus addressing both set of concerns

1. While individual members can compete in more than one chorus, each chorus ensemble must still be distinct or “unique enough” so that each group of singers is only competing once for that award.
2. Chapters that are evolving additional choruses may initially contain several overlapping members from within their chapter. Each chorus (if it is “unique enough”) should be allowed to compete at the same contest against all of the other choruses. C&J would not be very encouraging of new choruses to form, if we were to expect that every new chorus would be required to charter as a separate chapter just to be eligible to compete.

Some have asked why this rule is necessary since many districts offer separate awards for men’s, women’s, and mixed (all voices) choruses. The reason is that many districts have established “overall” district championship awards as well as most-improved awards extended to choruses of all gender classifications. To help chapter and chorus leaders better understand how to comply with the rule, the following use cases are provided as examples of two ensembles that are close to the 75% threshold calculation. While all of these groups would be eligible to compete for separate awards – those just over the threshold would not be eligible to compete for the same award.

To help chapter and chorus leaders better understand how to comply with the rule, the following use cases are provided as examples of two ensembles that are close to the 75% threshold calculation. While all of these groups would be eligible to compete for separate awards – those just over the threshold would not be eligible to compete for the same award.

1. Two choruses with 20 and 40 members: 14 are in both. Eligible because the smaller chorus has 70% that are also in the larger chorus.
2. Two choruses with 30 and 50 members: 23 are in both. Not eligible because the smaller chorus has 76.7% that are also in the larger chorus.
3. Two choruses each with 13 members: 9 are in both. Eligible because the “smaller” chorus (either one) has 69% that are also in the other chorus.
4. Two choruses each with 13 members: 10 are in both. Not eligible because the “smaller” chorus (either one) has 76.9% that are also in the other chorus.

XII. ELECTRONIC ENHANCEMENT & SOUND EFFECTS

(Under Review)