

PERFORMANCE CATEGORY

I. THE ART OF PERFORMANCE

One significant goal of any art form is communication. A barbershop performance refers to how the artist communicates his/her 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/s, are evaluated for their contribution to the overall entertainment effect of the performance.

II. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BARBERSHOP PERFORMANCE

Barbershop Style – Barbershop is a musical art form, and therefore the type of entertainment with which we are concerned, must principally be 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. This does not preclude the innovative use of these other art forms, in appropriate balance with the barbershop style.

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.

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.

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, enhancing entertainment value. 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.

From the Heart/Believability – 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.

Integration with Other Categories – The effectiveness of any performance will be predicated by the performers' skills and abilities in all aspects of that performance, many of which 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 elements' impact from the Performance Category's perspective.

III. PERFORMANCE ELEMENTS

A. 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/communication.

B. 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 presentation. Believability is at its greatest when mannerisms, body language, gestures and facial features enhance the true message of the song.

III. 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.

IV. COMEDIC PERFORMANCES

Comedic structure can be different or even diametrically opposed to standard musical forms. Comedic performances can be similar to non-comedy in that they may span a wide range of emotions: from subtle humor intended only to gently tickle the audiences' funny bone to wildly hilarious acts intended to produce nonstop belly laughs. The timing of actions and reactions and visual or vocal punch lines used to accomplish the comedic effects are evaluated based on how they contribute to the overall effectiveness and entertainment value of the performance.