**PRESENTATION CATEGORY**

**I. THE ART OF PERFORMANCE**

One significant goal of any art form is communication. In a barbershop performance “Presentation” is communication via the transformation of a song into an entertaining experience for an audience. The presentation of a song is the performer’s gift to the audience; whose experiences, memories, and imagination transform that gift into an emotional experience. The performer’s 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 Presentation Judge evaluates the entertainment value of the performance within the Barbershop style. Vocal and visual elements of the presentation, in the context of the song choice/s, will be evaluated for their contribution to the overall entertainment effect of the performance.

In summary, the Presentation Category adjudicates and encourages the Art of Performance.

**II. PRESENTATION CATEGORY DESCRIPTION**

**A. Characteristics of the Barbershop Presentation**

**1. 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 presentation, the barbershop style of music remains a key feature of the PRESENTATION Category Description performance. This does not preclude the innovative use of these other art forms, in appropriate balance with the barbershop style.

**2. Audience Rapport**

 The degree to which the audience will allow themselves to be entertained is dependent upon the degree to which they are receptive to the performer and the performance. It is the performer’s responsibility to engender receptivity, engagement, or connection with the audience.

**3. Creativity**

There is significant freedom for the performer to explore a style unique to the performing unit. 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. Each performing group must find its own style and sell that style to the audience.

**4. Artistry and Expressiveness**

a. 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 Presentation Judge’s sense of the degree to which the audience could be entertained.

b. For the large majority of barbershop performances (i.e. ballads, up tunes, easy beat swing, etc.), believable delivery and impact, facilitates the emotional “buy in” of the audience, enhancing the 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 presentation 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 Presentation adjudication.

c. Barbershop vocal and visual interpretations, as well as song choices, allow considerable artistic freedom. For more sophisticated artistic performances, it is the performer’s responsibility to connect and engage in a clear and effective manner. (See Position Papers, Chapter 9 of the Contest and Judging Handbook.)

**5. From the Heart/Believability**

a. 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. PRESENTATION Category Description b. Songs or arrangements that are especially suitable to the performer can add to the believability of the presentation, and hence the entertainment value.

**6. Integration with Other Categories**

The effectiveness of any presentation will be affected by the performers’ skills and abilities in all aspects of barbershop performance, many of which are also evaluated by the Music and Singing Categories. The Presentation Judge must recognize when the performance impact is being affected positively or negatively by an element primarily judged in another category and must make note of that element’s impact from the Presentation Category’s perspective.

**B. Presentation Techniques**

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 etc. Often, one of the musical elements will predominate, depending on the song. 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.

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 presentation of the song. The Presentation Judge evaluates the quality of the performer’s 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.

**C. Visual/Vocal Balance**

During a performance, the audience and the Presentation Judge interpret the presentation through their eyes and ears simultaneously. To optimize the effectiveness of the presentation, the performers must integrate the vocal and visual aspect in a purposeful manner. For a given song, either aspect of the presentation - vocal or visual – may predominate per the performer’s intent. As a result, the judge takes into account the appropriate balance between vocal and visual elements and the resulting effectiveness of the entertainment value.

**D. Comedic Performances**

Comedic structure can be different or even diametrically opposed to standard musical forms. Comedic presentations 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 judged by the PRESENTATION Category Description Presentation Judge as to how they contribute to the overall effectiveness of the comedic presentation and the entertainment value.