



## 2019 Judging Panel Regional Summary Observations

### Quartet Observations

#### Sound – Dale Syverson

What a privilege to judge this contest. The vast majority of your competitors (for scores) were at the B/ B- level – not an easy thing to accomplish! All these singers – simply by virtue of their scoring level – exhibited the ability (and hopefully desire) to keep on the path to higher scores. I love judging this category because it so clearly defines the hierarchy of importance at the top of the score sheet. (Sharon Babb's description). If they follow the clearly-defined path from the left to the right and top to bottom, success / improvement on some level is bound to follow. What a fine bunch of singers you have in Region 21.

#### Music – Cydney Wentzel

30% of the category – generally good.

70% of the category – good work on vocal skills shows. Some wonderful displays of rhythm. Add more dynamics and musical energy.

Most quartets are to be commended for choosing music that is appropriate to the contest setting and the barbershop style. Many quartets lacked a good understanding of using ballad phrasing to effectively tell their musical stories, and sang plans that were stilted rather than flowing. The top quartets displayed good dynamic variety and musical energy. Quartets scoring lower often needed to address harmony accuracy and/or musical unit (synchronization) issues.

#### Expression – Karen Sweeters

Really good work shows on Vocal Skills. Need for more dynamic textures for emotion.

Inflection needed to bring the words to expressive life.

What a wonderful quartet contest to have 12 of your 16 in the B level! Vocal skills on display.

The work that needs to be done in Expression now is:

1. Escaping the plan. Understand the purpose and motivation of the words (lyric) will color dynamics plans, inflections and musicality.
2. More finite unit work – going beyond the plan. The nuances of the expression of that lyric through the lead voice need to be absorbed and sung by all voices unifying the rhythm by infusing the appropriate word (vowel) with pulse and finding the heartbeat of the music.
3. Also – unifying the vocal production in vowels will enhance the unit.
4. Energy – emotional energy and drive the forward motion and bring energy to the voice and performance.

### **Showmanship – Renée Porzel**

Vocal Skills – good work here!

Characterization, physical expression and choreography – these areas are being explored but can be expanded more.

Costumes – beautiful gowns!

Creative – quartets need to explore ways to visually enhance their performances.

Such a wonderful contest! It is obvious that quartet education and training is one of the priorities of your region. Costumes were lovely and most fit well. Makeup was well done by most as well.

Some hairstyles quite casual for costume / stage. Physical Expression is an area of strength and characterization is emerging for many of these fine quartets. An area which needs attention is onstage energy and using it to support vocal skills. It needs to be present every second – and that is challenging. Your quartets – who were almost all in the B level – would benefit from learning about how their bodies need to be in motion more in order to fully energize their performance.

## **Chorus Observations**

### **Sound – Dale Syverson**

Again, what a fine group of singers in Region 21. Your dedication to good vocal skills is apparent in more than just the upper levels of scoring. The number of fine vocal role models you have helps, as well. In only a few instances did the song voice severely inhibit the singer success. Tuning and synch skills are still needed at every level – from simple interval accuracy to the fine tuning. It is always a challenge to educate at disparate skill levels yet you have the region educators to get it done. If possible, offer your top level performers and add vocal carrots of educational artistry.

### **Music – Cydney Wentzel**

Choose competition worthy pieces.

Explore more musical forward motion in phrasing.

Thank you for a great contest! Quite a few choruses are selecting music that is either not suited to their current level of vocal skills, or is not well suited for BBS competition. Higher scores are available in this category for solid BBS songs suitable to a chorus' vocal skill level. Often, choruses are not making the most of musical phrasing and forward motion phrase-to-phrase.

Many choruses have a good understanding of tempo and rhythm! They also utilize good musical energy to tell their wonderful stories.

### **Expression – Karen Sweeters**

Good chorus contest today!

Things to focus on:

Lower levels need the usual work in unity – refined vowel to vowel delivery – all voices singing the same lyrical plan.

Pulses – there was a good amount of singing “beats” instead of infusing vowels with the pulse to bring out musicality and unity.

Higher levels – more connection with characterization, infusing their plan with emotional energy. Attention to the first line of the song. Making sure energy is not superficial but infuses the music. More dynamic variety of texture and some inflection to bring the words alive – even as simple as the inflection of a question.

### **Showmanship – Renée Porzel**

Characterization, Physical Expression and choreography all need expansion and consistent energy.

Costuming – very good.

A very enjoyable contest which highlighted your regional attention to good vocal skills and performance energy. More attention is needed at most levels to using full body participation when doing choreography moves to fill them with character and emotion. Lots of creative choices being made visually and they are entertaining! Energy, which is consistent across the entire ensemble is an area for focus as groups continue to explore visually presenting their stories.

Directors – very good performers who help their choruses feel comfortable on stage.