

PERFORMANCE LEVEL GUIDELINES – SOUND CATEGORY

A+ Superior (94-100)	A Nearly Perfect (86-93)	A- Excellent (80-85)
<p>FOCUS AREA: PERFORMANCE MAGIC Complete mastery of vocal skills demonstrated Tuning of all chords is instant and impeccable Flawless delivery of vowels with matched resonance Barbershop balance is instinctive & always present Seamless vocal lines appear to float on a pillar of energy Artistry and finesse epitomize the barbershop style Performance completely transcends technique</p>	<p>FOCUS AREA: ARTISTRY Exceptional mastery of vocal skills demonstrated All chords instantly tuned into locked, ringing unit Vowels consistently produced with matched resonance Balance maintained at all dynamic levels and ranges Seamless vocal lines consistently energized & flowing Strong sense of barbershop style with artistry & finesse Performance consistently transcends technique</p>	<p>FOCUS AREA: MUSICALITY High level of proficiency in vocal skills demonstrated Chords usually tuned into locked, ringing unit Vowels usually produced with matched resonance Balance usually maintained throughout performance Vocal lines usually seamless and fully energized Strong sense of barbershop style usually evident Performance usually transcends technique</p>
B+ Very Good (74-79)	B Good (66-73)	B- Promising (60-65)
<p>FOCUS AREA: MASTERY Strong vocal skills demonstrated Minor tuning problems affect chord accuracy Synch problems occasionally affect chord accuracy Minor errors in vowel production & resonance match Balance generally consistent throughout performance Vocal lines generally well energized and supported Artistry beginning to emerge over technique</p>	<p>FOCUS AREA: CONSISTENCY Vocal skills strong but not habitual Solid sound overall, but chords not consistently locked Minor synch problems affect chord accuracy Most vowels matched and properly resonated Balance suffers at extreme ranges and dynamic levels Energy and support for vocal lines inconsistent Technique still evident & generally overrides artistry</p>	<p>FOCUS AREA: ACHIEVEMENT Vocal skills generally good but inconsistent Frequent minor intonation and tuning problems Frequent internal synch problems affect chord accuracy Vowels initially matched but not sustained as tuned unit Singers need better awareness of balance adjustments Vocal lines occasionally supported and energized Focus on technique inhibits attempts at artistry</p>
C+ Satisfactory (54-59)	C Fair (46-53)	C- Poor (40-45)
<p>FOCUS AREA: UNITY Work on vocal skills apparent, but still in progress Consistent minor intonation and tuning problems Consistent minor synch problems affect overall unity Frequent errors in vowel production & resonance match Balance inconsistent due to vocal limitations Energy sporadic, with lack of consistent support Fleeting glimpses of at vocal artistry</p>	<p>FOCUS AREA: ACCURACY Vocal skills understood, but application inconsistent Intonation and tuning errors, and some wrong notes Frequent synch problems impact chord alignment Vowels occasionally match in passing, not sustained Balance good in mid-range, but not at extremes Energy level weak, need for improved vocal stamina Attempts at artistry masked by vocal problems</p>	<p>FOCUS AREA: SKILL BUILDING Vocal skills weak, but beginnings of work apparent Consistent tuning and accuracy errors Consistent synch problems keep chords from aligning Vowels generally lack common approach to resonance Unable to maintain consistent, cone-shaped balance Vocal energy rarely demonstrated No discernible attempts at vocal artistry</p>
<p>D+ Weak (34-39), D Very Weak (26-33), D- Very Poor (20-25)</p>		
<p>Performances at the D Level are uncomfortable for the audience. Vocal skills are underdeveloped and chord accuracy is rarely demonstrated, making any real evaluation of the performance difficult. Artistic efforts cannot be appreciated as the performers' level of vocal and performance capability makes it nearly impossible to interpret and perform the music.</p>		

PERFORMANCE LEVEL GUIDELINES – MUSIC CATEGORY

A+ Superior (94-100)	A Nearly Perfect (86-93)	A- Excellent (80-85)
<p>FOCUS AREA: PERFORMANCE MAGIC Complete mastery of vocal skills demonstrated Highly creative song/arr. that showcases barbershop style Song, arrangement, and performer seamlessly integrated Tuning of all chords is instant and impeccable All elements synergistically unified Highly creative interpretive plan, intuitive & compelling Artistic delivery epitomizes the barbershop style Performance completely transcends technique</p>	<p>FOCUS AREA: ARTISTRY Exceptional mastery of vocal skills demonstrated Creative, strong barbershop song/arrangement Song/arrangement embodied by the performer All chords instantly tuned into locked, musical unit Outstanding musical unity Creative interpretive plan executed instinctively Strong sense of barbershop style with artistry & finesse Performance consistently transcends technique</p>	<p>FOCUS AREA: MUSICALITY High level of proficiency in vocal skills demonstrated Strong barbershop song/arrangement Song/arrangement showcases performer 's skills Chords usually tuned into locked, musical unit Well-unified musical performance Strong execution of creative interpretive plan Strong sense of barbershop style with consistent energy Performance usually transcends technique</p>
B+ Very Good (74-79)	B Good (66-73)	B- Promising (60-65)
<p>FOCUS AREA: MASTERY Strong vocal skills demonstrated Good song/arr. highlights hallmarks of barbershop Song/arr. may present minor challenges to performer Minor tuning errors affect chord clarity Strong unity, occasional synch errors affect chords Interpretive plan well designed, lacks vocal freedom Artistry beginning to emerge over technique</p>	<p>FOCUS AREA: CONSISTENCY Good vocal skills, but not habitual Good song/arr. highlights hallmarks of barbershop Song/arr. demands occasionally impact performance Occasional tuning errors affect chord clarity Good unity, minor synch errors affect chords Focus on technique interferes with delivery of good plan Some achievement in artistry and finesse evident</p>	<p>FOCUS AREA: ACHIEVEMENT Vocal skills generally good, but inconsistent Good song/arr. highlights hallmarks of barbershop Song/arr. presents some challenges to the performer Frequent minor tuning errors affect chord clarity Generally good unity, frequent synch errors Good basic interpretive plan impeded by skill level Attempts at artistry inhibited by skill level</p>
C+ Satisfactory (54-59)	C Fair (46-53)	C- Poor (40-45)
<p>FOCUS AREA: UNITY Work on vocal skills apparent, but still in progress Song/arr. meets the basic requirements of barbershop style Song/arr. mismatch to skills often result in errors Consistent minor tuning problems impact chord clarity Sense of musical unity present, but inconsistent Interpretive plan evident, energy inconsistent Mechanical delivery overrides attempts at artistry</p>	<p>FOCUS AREA: ACCURACY Vocal skills understood, but application inconsistent Song/arr. meets the basic requirements of barbershop style Song/arr. may be too difficult for current skills Tuning problems and some wrong notes impact chords Emerging musical unit destabilized by synch problems Interpretive plan sometimes apparent, lacks energy Artistry is elusive until technical elements improve</p>	<p>FOCUS AREA: SKILL BUILDING Vocal skills weak, but beginnings of work apparent Song/arr. meets the basic requirements of barbershop style Song/arr. overwhelms developing skills Consistent tuning problems, wrong notes affect chords Consistent lack of chord alignment/unity Interpretive plan is missing or too difficult, energy absent Artistry is elusive until technical elements improve</p>
<p>D+ Weak (34-39), D Very Weak (26-33), D- Very Poor (20-25)</p>		
<p>Performances at the D Level are uncomfortable for the audience. Vocal skills are underdeveloped, and chord accuracy is rarely demonstrated, making any real evaluation of the performance difficult. Artistic efforts cannot be appreciated as the performers' level of vocal and performance capability makes it nearly impossible to interpret and perform the music.</p>		

PERFORMANCE LEVEL GUIDELINES – EXPRESSION CATEGORY

A+ Superior (94-100)	A Nearly Perfect (86-93)	A- Excellent (80-85)
<p>FOCUS AREA: PERFORMANCE MAGIC Complete mastery of vocal skills demonstrated Exemplary performance of open, matched vowels Flawless unit word delivery Flawless execution of masterful interpretive plan Excellent use of barbershop style and vocal drama Strong emotional communication captivates audience Performance fully transcends technique</p>	<p>FOCUS AREA: ARTISTRY Exceptional mastery of vocal skills demonstrated Vowels and diphthongs fully matched and resonated Total unity evident in word delivery Excellent interpretive plan consistently performed as unit Artistic use of stylistic elements and vocal textures Strong character and genuine involvement in message Performance consistently transcends technique</p>	<p>FOCUS AREA: MUSICALITY High level of proficiency in vocal skills demonstrated Vowels consistently matched as a unit Consistent vertical alignment of word elements Minor flaws in execution of strong interpretive plan Strong sense of unit delivery in barbershop style High degree of involvement in character and message Performance usually transcends technique</p>
B+ Very Good (74-79)	B Good (66-73)	B- Promising (60-65)
<p>FOCUS AREA: MASTERY Strong vocal skills demonstrated Minor internal synch problems Occasional problems in vowel alignment Interpretive plan well designed, minor flaws in execution Artistry and finesse frequently evident Genuine involvement in communication of message Artistry beginning to emerge over technique</p>	<p>FOCUS AREA: CONSISTENCY Vocal skills strong but not habitual Internal synch problems with consonants and diphthongs Most vowels well matched, some consonant interference Good interpretive plan, but inconsistent unit delivery Some glimpses of artistry and finesse Inconsistent unit involvement in message Technique still evident & generally overrides artistry</p>	<p>FOCUS AREA: ACHIEVEMENT Vocal skills generally good but inconsistent Frequent internal synch problems with word elements Vowels initially matched but not sustained as unit Good interpretive plan, but stronger unit needed Artistry only evident as part of technique Emotional involvement overshadowed by technique Focus on technique inhibits attempts at artistry</p>
C+ Satisfactory (54-59)	C Fair (46-53)	C- Poor (40-45)
<p>FOCUS AREA: UNITY Work on vocal skills apparent, but still in progress Consistent problems with internal synch Vowels not aligned as a unit, consonants interfere Interpretive plan evident but not executed as a unit Sporadic energy with lack of consistent stamina Insufficient support for effective stylistic use Concern with technique overrides sincere involvement</p>	<p>FOCUS AREA: ACCURACY Vocal skills understood, but application inconsistent Frequent internal and external synch errors Vowels need unit approach to resonated production Interpretive plan emerges, but stronger support needed Vocal energy weak, choppy delivery results Stronger vocal skills needed to convey barbershop style Communication rarely reaches beyond footlights</p>	<p>FOCUS AREA: SKILL BUILDING Vocal skills weak, but beginnings of work apparent Consistent synch problems Vowels need free, unit approach to production Interpretive plan needs stronger vocal skills Phrase delivery choppy due to lack of energy & support Attempts at style lack musicality Nerves impair successful emotional communication</p>
<p>D+ Weak (34-39), D Very Weak (26-33), D- Very Poor (20-25)</p>		
<p>Performances at the D Level are uncomfortable for the audience. Vocal skills are underdeveloped and chord accuracy is rarely demonstrated, making any real evaluation of the performance difficult. Artistic efforts cannot be appreciated as the performers' level of vocal and performance capability makes it nearly impossible to interpret and perform the music.</p>		

PERFORMANCE LEVEL GUIDELINES – VISUAL COMMUNICATION CATEGORY

A+ Superior (94-100)	A Nearly Perfect (86-93)	A- Excellent (80-85)
<p>FOCUS AREA: PERFORMANCE MAGIC Complete mastery of vocal skills demonstrated Impeccable and unforgettable stage presence Magnetically compelling characterization & physical expression Audience totally captivated throughout Energized visual performance breathtaking! Impeccable visual plan supports and enhances music Visual musicality & artistry completely transcend technique</p>	<p>FOCUS AREA: ARTISTRY Exceptional mastery of vocal skills demonstrated Captivating stage presence and star quality on display Authentic characterization and physical expression High degree of audience connection High level of energy exudes joy of performing Visual plan design strongly enhances musical plan Visual artistry and musicality evident most of the time</p>	<p>FOCUS AREA: MUSICALITY High level of proficiency in vocal skills demonstrated Charismatic & effortless stage presence most of the time Characterization and physical expression well defined and naturally projected Strong connection with the audience High degree of energy consistently demonstrated Visual plan design reinforces musical plan Visual musicality mostly evident; fleeting moments of technique</p>
B+ Very Good (74-79)	B Good (66-73)	B- Promising (60-65)
<p>FOCUS AREA: MASTERY Strong vocal skills demonstrated & musicality emerging Strong stage presence and exploring personal charisma Strong visual unity with minor distractions Characterization and engaging physical expression maintained throughout Consistent level of audience connection High level of energy with minor lapses Creative visual plan design that generally supports music</p>	<p>FOCUS AREA: CONSISTENCY Vocal skills strong but still inconsistent Comfortable on stage and generally confident Good visual unity but need further improvement Moments of characterization and natural physical expression Audience connection is good but inconsistent Inconsistent energy level across ensemble Good visual plan design that does not interfere with music</p>	<p>FOCUS AREA: ACHIEVEMENT Vocal skills generally good but inconsistent Stage presence is evident but inconsistent in group & performance Need higher degree of visual unity to limit distractions Some evidence of characterization & involved physical expression Audience beginning to become interested Energy level shows peaks and valleys throughout performance Minor flaws in the design of the visual plan</p>
C+ Satisfactory (54-59)	C Fair (46-53)	C- Poor (40-45)
<p>FOCUS AREA: UNITY Work on vocal skills apparent, but still in progress Moments of confidence support beginnings of stage presence Inconsistent visual unity across ensemble Lack of consistency in characterization/physical expression Increasing attempts at audience connection sometimes successful Energy sporadic, but frequent attempts evident A visual plan apparent, but not always effective</p>	<p>FOCUS AREA: ACCURACY Vocal skills understood but inconsistent and more stamina needed Stage presence tentative and inconsistent Lack of ensemble approach creates visual distraction Little attempt at characterization or natural physical expression Some attempt at audience connection Energy level insufficient Visual plan evident, but may conflict with musical plan</p>	<p>FOCUS AREA: SKILL BUILDING Vocal skills weak and lack of stamina evident Stage presence is insecure Visual unity lacking and is completely individual in approach No projection of characterization or natural physical expression No attempt at audience connection Some attempts at performance energy Visual plan often conflicts with music</p>
<p>D+ Weak (34-39), D Very Weak (26-33), D- Very Poor (20-25)</p>		
<p>Performances at the D Level are uncomfortable for the audience. Vocal skills are underdeveloped and chord accuracy is rarely demonstrated, making any real evaluation of the performance difficult. Artistic efforts cannot be appreciated as the performers' level of vocal and performance capability makes it nearly impossible to interpret and perform the music.</p>		

SOUND	A	The “A” level is characterized by open, free, and relaxed tone production that appears effortless, by a consistent wall of sound, and by chords that consistently lock in total accuracy. The unit sound shimmers with open, matched resonance, and vowels seem to float on a stream of sound with no interference from consonants. Artistry, finesse, and vocal energy abound, and use of appropriate vocal textures help to paint a musical picture of the message conveyed.
	B	The “B” level performance lacks the mastery of vocal skills found at the “A” level. Tuning and synchronization errors creep into vocal lines, creating varying degrees of error in accuracy and unity. Artistry and vocal energy are sometimes evident, but not a consistent due to focus on technique.
	C	The “C” level shows varying degrees of vocal skill and a need for better support and stamina. Early diphthongs and consonants often impair vowel match, and lack of consistent support affects attempts at vocal artistry, barbershop style, and the ability to produce sustained and energized vocal lines.
	D	The “D” level performer may or may not have begun work on building vocal skills. There are varying degrees of major accuracy or tonality problems, and no effort appears to have been made to match vowels to align chords. There is no apparent understanding of vocal energy, artistry, or barbershop style.
MUSIC	A	The “A” level performance uses its mastery of vocal skills to present a song that seems made for barbershop style. The arrangement combines skillful use of the implied harmony, which requires an interesting variety of strong barbershop chords, with creativity in musical embellishments. The performer utilizes a wide range of dynamics and artistic, flowing phrases, or a combination of steady tempo, appropriate pulse, and rhythmic interest to captivate the listener.
	B	The “B” level performance often has “the horse before the cart” because the arrangements would be more successful with the foundation of the basic skills found at the higher level. The inconsistencies in tuning and musical unity, together with the inability to produce and sustain a fully energized vocal line, keep the performers from getting the most out of the arrangement. There may also be balance problems due to the range demands and vocal inconsistencies.
	C	The “C” level performance frequently appears to have concentrated on the interpretive plan before strengthening the vocal skills needed to perform that plan effectively. In a chorus, there are generally more than four notes in each chord. The arrangement may be beyond the present ability of the performer.
	D	The “D” level performance suffers from lack of attention to the basics of good vocal production. At this level, anything but the simplest of barbershop arrangements will present challenges the performer is unable to meet. The only road to a higher level is work on vocal skills.
EXPRESSION	A	The “A” level performance, with its mastery of vocal skills, takes musical storytelling to its highest level through genuine involvement, character identification, and skillful use of dynamics, flowing phrases, vocal energy, stylistic delivery, and appropriate pace. The fully synchronized unit is characteristic of this level.
	B	The “B” level performance attempts the interpretive ideas found at the higher level, but inconsistencies in vocal abilities often impair success. Plans are good, but consistent delivery as a total unit seems just beyond reach. Synchronization problems within words and at phrase endings are characteristic here.
	C	The “C” level performer often concentrates on the creative area of this category without attending to the detail found in the basic area that needs to be in a place for interpretative plans to be successful. The performer appears more concerned with delivering the plan than with genuine involvement and communication.
	D	The “D” level performance suffers from lack of attention to the basics of good vocal production. At this level, work on dynamics is ineffective because of the lack of support and stamina. Unity is fleeting. At this level, the only path to higher achievement is work on stronger vocal skills.
VISUAL COMMUNICATION	A	The “A” level performance, with its mastery of vocal skills, takes visual storytelling to its highest level through physical energy and intensity that establishes a charisma that envelops the audience. Characterization is strongly established, and the planned choreography or staging totally supports and reinforces the musical product. Attention to the details of costume and appearance fully supports the visual image portrayed. The stage was made for this performer!
	B	The “B” level performance often demonstrates ideas at the higher level that aren’t as effective here because vocal skills lack complete mastery. The visual plan sometimes interferes with supported vocal lines. Performer can’t consistently meet visual and vocal demands concurrently, and energy levels are inconsistent.
	C	The “C” level performer often concentrates on the choreographic plan without integrating it into the musical plan or realizing that “moves” are a whole-body effort. Visual sell is in and out because performers’ attention is on the mechanics. The visual plan needs to be considered as support for the musical plan.
	D	The “D” level performance, though sometimes enthusiastic, suffers from lack of attention to the basics of good vocal production. The performer needs to recognize that Showmanship is about selling, and that it is almost impossible to sell a product that needs major repairs. The performance is often characterized by nerves that border on fear, and the message communicated is discomfort. The only road to a higher level performance is work on the vocal skills.