

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 skilfully 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 Contest Rule 11(b))

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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 Contest Rule 11(g))
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 Contest Rule 11(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 Contest Rule 11(d))
5. For barbershop contest performances, lyrics should be sung by all four parts through nearly all of the song’s duration. (see Contest Rule 11(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. 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 not be singing 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.5 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.
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 have 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 (1 to 40) 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.
- b. In a performance at the middle of the range (around 20), 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.

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 Contest Rule 11 or 12. 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 Contest Rule 11(b) 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 Contest Rule 11(g), "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 Contest Rule 11(c), "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 Contest Rule 11(d), "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 Contest Rule 11(e), "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 Contest Rule 12, “[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 contest administrator 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 Contest Rule 11, the judge may apply a smaller penalty.
3. All penalties of 5 or more points will be notated on the scoring slip. 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.