

PERFORMANCE LEVEL GUIDELINES

SOUND CATEGORY	SOUND CATEGORY	SOUND CATEGORY
<u>A+ LEVEL (94-100)</u> 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 and always present Seamless vocal lines appear to float on a pillar of energy Artistry and finesse epitomize the barbershop style Performance completely transcends technique	<u>A LEVEL (86-93)</u> 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 and flowing Strong sense of barbershop style with artistry and finesse Performance consistently transcends technique	<u>A- LEVEL (80-85)</u> 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
<u>B+ LEVEL (74-79)</u> Strong vocal skills demonstrated Minor tuning problems affect chord accuracy Synch problems occasionally affect chord accuracy Minor errors in vowel production and resonance match Balance generally consistent throughout performance Vocal lines generally well energized and supported Artistry beginning to emerge over technique	<u>B LEVEL (66-73)</u> 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 and generally overrides artistry	<u>B- LEVEL (60-65)</u> 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
<u>C+ LEVEL (54-59)</u> 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 and resonance match Balance inconsistent due to vocal limitations Energy sporadic, with lack of consistent support Fleeting glimpses of at vocal artistry	<u>C LEVEL (46-53)</u> 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	<u>C- LEVEL (40-45)</u> 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
<u>D+ LEVEL (34-39)</u> Vocal skills weak, but brief glimpses of beginning work General lack of chord accuracy with many wrong notes Vertical alignment rarely achieved Vowel match generally not achieved Cone-shaped balance rarely achieved Energized vocal line impacted by weak support Vocal artistry cannot be evaluated at this level	<u>D LEVEL (26-33)</u> Vocal skills poor - need to focus attention here Major accuracy and/or tonality problems Consistent major synch errors Individual voices rather than musical unit Barbershop cone not recognized Energized delivery lacking due to poor breath support Vocal artistry cannot be evaluated at this level	<u>D-LEVEL (20-25)</u> No apparent understanding of vocal skills Chord accuracy rarely achieved due to wrong notes No apparent effort to sing together as a unit Blend impossible due to lack of vocal skills No understanding of barbershop cone No evidence of vocal energy Vocal artistry cannot be evaluated at this level

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MUSIC CATEGORY	MUSIC CATEGORY	MUSIC CATEGORY
<u>A+ LEVEL (94-100)</u> Highly creative arrangement of strong barbershop song Complete mastery of vocal skills demonstrated Tuning of all chords is instant and impeccable Interpretive plan captures essence of barbershop style Interpretive plan flawlessly executed Artistry and finesse epitomize the barbershop style. Performance completely transcends technique	<u>A LEVEL (86-93)</u> Creative arrangement of strong song Exceptional mastery of vocal skills demonstrated All chords instantly tuned into locked, musical unit Interpretive plan fully supports song and arrangement High level execution of interpretive plan Strong sense of barbershop style with artistry and finesse Performance consistently transcends technique	<u>A- LEVEL (80-85)</u> Strong song, arrangement shows some creativity High level of proficiency in vocal skills demonstrated Chords usually tuned into locked, musical unit Creative interpretive plan appropriate to song Strong execution of interpretive plan Strong sense of barbershop style usually evident. Performance usually transcends technique.
<u>B+ LEVEL (74-79)</u> Good song, arrangement shows some creativity Strong vocal skills demonstrated Minor tuning problems affect chord clarity Synch problems occasionally affect chord alignment Interpretive plan well designed for song and performer Minor flaws in execution of interpretive plan Artistry beginning to emerge over technique.	<u>B LEVEL (66-73)</u> Good song, well arranged Vocal skills strong, but not habitual Chord clarity inconsistent Minor synch problems affect chord alignment Good design for interpretive plan Focus on technique interferes with delivery of plan Some achievement in artistry and finesse evident	<u>B- LEVEL (60-65)</u> Good arrangement of acceptable song Vocal skills generally good, but inconsistent Frequent minor intonation and tuning problems Frequent internal synch problems affect chords Plan good, but some lapses in forward motion Delivery of plan controlled, lacks freedom Focus on technique inhibits artistry
<u>C+ LEVEL (54-59)</u> Good arrangement, presents challenges for performer Work on vocal skills apparent, but still in progress Consistent minor tuning problems impact chord clarity Sense of musical unity apparent, but inconsistent Interpretive plan evident Interpretive plan needs to be internalized for unit delivery Mechanical delivery overrides attempts at artistry	<u>C LEVEL (46-53)</u> Song and arrangement good, but may be difficult Vocal skills understood, but application inconsistent Tuning errors and some wrong notes impact chords Frequent synch errors, but some sense of unit apparent Interpretive plan sometimes apparent Delivery of plan needs stronger support and stamina Vocal problems make artistry difficult to recognize	<u>C- LEVEL (40-45)</u> Good arrangement, too difficult for performer Vocal skills weak, but beginnings of work apparent Consistent tuning and accuracy errors affect chords Consistent lack of chord alignment Interpretive plan sometimes difficult for performer Stronger vocal skills needed to deliver plan effectively No apparent attempts at musical artistry
<u>D+ LEVEL (34-39)</u>	<u>D LEVEL (26-33)</u>	<u>D-LEVEL (20-25)</u>

<p>Musical demands of arrangement exceed abilities Vocal skills weak, but brief glimpses of beginning work Many wrong notes cause major tuning problems Infrequent glimpses of identifiable, aligned chords Energy level weak and inconsistent Occasional hints of interpretive plan Stronger vocal skills needed to support musical plan</p>	<p>Arrangement not suitable for performer's abilities Vocal skills poor - need to focus attention here Major note accuracy problems make chords indistinct Consistent synch problems obscure four-part chords Energized delivery non-existent No interpretive plan clearly evident Stronger vocal skills needed to execute a musical plan</p>	<p>Arrangement beyond abilities of performer No apparent understanding of vocal skills Wrong notes consistently sung Chords not defined due to synch and vocal problems No apparent understanding of barbershop style Interpretive plan beyond performer's capabilities Stronger vocal skills needed to explore interpretive plan</p>
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PERFORMANCE LEVEL GUIDELINES

EXPRESSION CATEGORY	EXPRESSION CATEGORY	EXPRESSION CATEGORY
<u>A+ LEVEL (94-100)</u>	<u>A LEVEL (86-93)</u>	<u>A- LEVEL (80-85)</u>
<p>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>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>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>
<u>B+ LEVEL (74-79)</u>	<u>B LEVEL (66-73)</u>	<u>B- LEVEL (60-65)</u>
<p>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>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 and generally overrides artistry</p>	<p>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>
<u>C+ LEVEL (54-59)</u>	<u>C LEVEL (46-53)</u>	<u>C- LEVEL (40-45)</u>
<p>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>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>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 and support Attempts at style lack musicality Nerves impair successful emotional communication</p>

D+ LEVEL (34-39)

Vocal skills weak, but brief glimpses of beginning work
Unity impaired by inadequate vocal skills
Lack of open resonance and target vowel production
Interpretive plan ineffective due to lack of vocal skills
Lack of vocal energy in phrase delivery
Emotional communication not evident
Need to focus on strengthening vocal skills

D LEVEL (26-33)

Vocal skills poor - need to focus attention here
Consistent major synch problems
No evidence of unit approach to vowel production
Singers lack vocal skills to execute interpretive plan
Energized lyric and phrase delivery non-existent
Musical problems prevent emotional communication
Need stronger vocal skills to raise performance level

D-LEVEL (20-25)

No apparent understanding of vocal skills
Consistent lack of vertical unity
Consistent lack of vowel alignment
No evidence of interpretive plan
No evidence of energized lyric delivery
High level of audience discomfort
Need stronger vocal skills to raise performance level

PERFORMANCE LEVEL GUIDELINES

SHOWMANSHIP CATEGORY	SHOWMANSHIP CATEGORY	SHOWMANSHIP CATEGORY
<u>A+ LEVEL (94-100)</u> Complete mastery of vocal skills demonstrated Superb command of the stage Strong theatrical skills used to project character of story Audience totally captivated throughout Energized visual performance breathtaking! Impeccable visual plan supports and enhances music Performance completely transcends technique	<u>A LEVEL (86-93)</u> Exceptional mastery of vocal skills demonstrated Total command of the stage Complete involvement in character of story High degree of audience rapport High level of energy exudes joy of performing Strong visual plan reinforces musical plan Performance transcends technique most of the time	<u>A- LEVEL (80-85)</u> High level of proficiency in vocal skills demonstrated Poised and confident stage persona Character and personality well defined and projected Strong rapport with audience High degree of energy consistently demonstrated Visual plan works well to enhance musical plan Fleeting moments of technique evident
<u>B+ LEVEL (74-79)</u> Strong vocal skills demonstrated Confidence apparent, and usually in command Some flaws in unit delivery of visual plan Character of song maintained throughout Consistent level of audience rapport High level of energy with minor lapses in unit Creative visual plan generally supports music	<u>B LEVEL (66-73)</u> Vocal skills strong but not habitual Comfortable on stage and generally in command Need to improve unit delivery of visual plan Moments of identification with character and story Audience not completely drawn into performance Inconsistent energy level within group Good visual plan does not interfere with music	<u>B- LEVEL (60-65)</u> Vocal skills generally good but inconsistent Stage command inconsistent in group and performance Need higher energy level in delivery of visual plan Some evidence of personality and characterization Audience has little involvement in performance Energy level shows peaks and valleys Minor flaws in design of visual plan
<u>C+ LEVEL (54-59)</u> Work on vocal skills apparent, but still in progress Some moments of command Inconsistent stamina in execution of visual plan Lack of consistency in personality and characterization Audience rapport not clearly established Energy sporadic, but frequent attempts evident Some attempt at creative visual plan	<u>C LEVEL (46-53)</u> Vocal skills understood, but application inconsistent Need more confidence to project past footlights More stamina needed to deliver visual plan Little attempt at characterization or identification Audience communication not securely established Energy level falls short of crossing footlights Visual plan evident, but some conflict with musical plan	<u>C- LEVEL (40-45)</u> Vocal skills weak, but beginnings of work apparent Insecure and tentative stage persona Execution of visual plan weak due to lack of stamina No projection of personality or characterization Little evidence of attempt at audience communication Infrequent glimpses of energized delivery Visual plan does not consistently support music
<u>D+ LEVEL (34-39)</u> Vocal skills weak, but brief glimpses of beginning work Nerves detract from performance Lack of unit execution for visual plan No clearly defined personality or character No attempt at audience communication Energy level weak and inconsistent Visual plan limited and sometimes inappropriate	<u>D LEVEL (26-33)</u> Vocal skills poor - need to focus attention here Nerves consume performance Serious lack of visual and musical unity No evidence of character identification Musical problems prevent effective audience rapport No demonstration of positive energy Visual plan vague and lacks support for music	<u>D-LEVEL (20-25)</u> No apparent understanding of vocal skills No evidence of effective stage presence Little evidence of attempt at visual unity Characterization and personality not explored High level of audience discomfort evident No attempt at energized delivery Little evidence of unit visual plan

PERFORMANCE LEVEL CHARACTERISTICS

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 helps 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 or to align chords. There is no apparent understanding of vocal energy, artistry, or the barbershop style.
MUSIC	A	The “A” level performance uses its mastery of vocal skills to present a song that seems made for the 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 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 ability 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 place for interpretive 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.
SHOWMANSHIP	A	The “A” level performance, with its mastery of vocal skills, takes visual storytelling to the 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 vocal skills.
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