

## TUNE into the MUSIC

### **CHOOSING MUSIC:**

#### *Tips for Music Selection:*

- Sing the simple well
- For contest, choose songs which will highlight strengths
- For show or repertoire, choose a song or two will serve the purposes of skill building

#### *Consider:*

- Past successes and challenges
- Personality of the chorus
- Timeline before performing
- Highest and lowest notes in each voice part
- Director and Music Staff have a consensual like of the song and lyrics
- Intended or targeted audience (contest, chapter show, friends/family,)

### **Song structure (form):** clear and recognizable

*Ex. Chordbusters March: Intro, chorus, interlude, chorus reprise, tag*

*Note: Sections of songs usually have an even number of measures*

*Arrangement's total measures usually divisible by four*

### **Melody line**

1. interesting, memorable, a strong "hook"
2. matches the current skill level of chorus
3. mostly within one octave (or an octave and a third)
4. builds to a high point with a message
5. has singable intervals appropriate for current skill level
6. predictable patterns but not monotonous
7. tessitura suitable to current singers

### **Harmonization/voicings**

1. correct harmony as implied by the melody
2. mostly major triad, dominant 7th and dominant 9th chords -
3. smooth voice leading
4. some points of interest (e.g. high point/posts/tags)

### **Things which add to a song's difficulty level**

1. multiple or difficult key changes (medleys)
2. jumpy melody line (ex. Sweet Georgia Brown)
3. accidentals (sharps, flats, naturals) in the melody line
4. long arrangements which require more stamina
5. number, degree of difficulty of embellishments, e.g. bell chords
6. bari line is predominately above the lead
7. message which is difficult for group to relate to
8. too many open chords
9. extreme range issues (Get Me to the **Church on Time**)
10. tempo changes (Swanee)
11. repetitive phrases
12. chromatic passages (Sweet Georgia Brown)
13. number, degree of difficulty of rhythmic passages, syncopation

### **What do *you* think?**

- Judges tire of hearing the same arrangements - try to be unique!
- Difficult songs are rewarded.
- It's better to sing a long phrase than give in and add a breath.

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### **TIME LINE**

#### *General Tips for Timeline*

- A song of average difficulty takes about 6 weeks to get off paper
- An average song for an average chorus will be ready to perform within 4-6 months
- An average song for an average will be ready to *compete* within 10-15 months

#### *Consider*

- How many new songs to introduce at one time
- Choosing songs which you believe will have "staying power"
- Songs which will enhance the variety within the repertoire

### **What do *you* think?**

- It's considered "cheating" to repeat contest songs multiple years.
- A repertoire of 10-15 songs is adequate.
- A director should choose all contest songs.
- A chorus should have deadlines for getting off the music.

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## TEACHING METHODS

Discovery Period - the time during which you identify **FRIENDS** and **FOES** of the song, and determine **BASIC INTERPRETATION**.

### **FRIENDS:**

1. Octaves between parts
2. Repeated measures or patterns
3. Hook of the song
4. Rhyming words
5. Form
6. P-tuning for each voice part
7. Embellishments

### **Foes:**

1. Awkward intervals
2. Key changes
3. Extreme range issues
4. Wide-spread voicings
5. Baritone above lead for extended phrases
6. Intricate rhythms
7. Embellishments

### **Determine:**

1. Basic breath plan
2. Ultimate tempo, learning tempo, tempo changes
3. Basic dynamic plan
4. Ad lib plan - bring the message to life

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## ACCURACY CHECKS

- **Which** songs?
- **When** in the life cycle? How long?
- **Who** does the checking?
- **What** is checked?
- **How** is the check done?