

QUARTET OBSERVATIONS

SOUND : Bobbette Gantz

Vocal skills : overall the skills shown today were very strong.

Accuracy (notes, intervals, chords) : generally very good.

Accuracy (tuning / intonation, synchronisation) : these areas need additional attention from many quartets.

Barbershop blend (tone production, vowel production) : top groups match consistently but details of this affect tuning for many

Artistic sound : (energised vocal line, tone flow, dynamic flexibility, vocal style) : explore this area further

Performance evaluation : solid to superior vocal skills demonstrated at all levels. Lower scoring groups need to apply them more consistently. Top quartets need to trust their superior skills and start to add more artistic sound to their performances. Allow us to hear the musical message with even more vocal freedom. Be sure dynamic levels maintain full resonance. Keep softs open, rather than smaller, and resist adding press or tension to create louds. This region sings wonderfully in so many ways. It was pure joy to share the music of this quartet contest. I truly had the best seat in the house!

Barbershop cone : generally good.

MUSIC : Sharon Carlson

Song and arrangement : several arrangements were weak and therefore poor choices for quartet

Performance (vocal skills) : lovely with little exception

Barbershop style (musical unity and musical energy) : need work here

Performance evaluation : overall, many performances were careful and lacked vocal energy.

Phrasing was less conversational and more metered on ballads. Explore ad lib style.

Uptune tempo was rarely driven by the backbeat. Backbeat = barbershop.

Suitability for performer : mostly fitting for skills

EXPRESSION : Nancy Field

Technical elements (vocal skills, synchronisation and unity, word delivery, musicality) : overall, skills are well developed

Artistic interpretive plan : (forward motion, embellishments, dynamics, rhythmic elements) : these areas need additional attention.

Performance evaluation : excellent singing skills at all levels. High level of understanding of phrase design utilising greater vocal drama. Working dynamic ranges – flexibility, finesse

through dynamic patterns. Learning how to develop the vocal character and exploring “storytelling” rather than just singing phrases would be a great class.

EXPRESSION : Tori Postma

Performance (vocal skills) : such fine work being done in this area!

Performance (energy, characterisation, unity) : areas to work on

Preparation (costume) : lovely work here. Almost all were flattering and appropriate.

Creativity evident in Open Division.

Performance evaluation : the basics are well understood, some lovely costumes and all were stage ready with make up etc. Characterisation can improve. Quartets should explore a wider range of emotions, and strive to emote them as a unit. There was lots of “ careful” performing, where the singers are focussed on what they are doing, instead of trying to evoke an audience response. More energy and matched intensity levels are good tools to connect to the audience so focus on these skills. The singing skills were at a very high level. Good for you! Thank you for a delightful contest!

CHORUS OBSERVATIONS

SOUND : Bobbette Gantz

Vocal skills : superior skills in evidence at almost every level.

Accuracy (notes, intervals, chords) : generally very good.

Accuracy (synchronisation) : challenges here affected tuning for many

Barbershop blend (tone production, vowel production) : keep working on consistent match

Performance evaluation : the wonderful vocal skills exhibited by almost every chorus made this an exciting and truly delightful contest to judge. Keep building on this strength. Synch issues were a challenge for all but the top groups. Explore techniques to help clean this up as it adversely affects tuning. As you continue to work the technical aspects add even more artistry and passion to the sound. Choruses in the B+ level tended to be technically solid but needed the passion and energy to propel the scores into those elusive A levels. This is a wonderful region with a strong foundation in barbershop sound. It was a privilege to judge here.

Barbershop cone : mostly good.

MUSIC : Sharon Carlson

Song and arrangement : most arrangements were good contest material

Performance (vocal skills) : very strong skills

Performance (harmony accuracy) : quite good

Performance evaluation : impressive to see so many choruses singing at B- level and above. Lots of duplication in song choices. Many “controlled” performances needing to release themselves into their music rather than being so plan driven.

Suitability for performer : most were quite matched to skills.

EXPRESSION : Nancy Field

Technical elements : focus on vocal freedom, musical tension and embellishments, veedoping the vocal character.

Performance evaluation : today was a wonderful day of barbershop harmony. Wonderful singing and performing.

- Look to explore more freedom and finesse in higher achieving choruses, taking some risks, employing even more vocal drama.
- Phrase design understood (with the exception of one chorus) need now to venture into a believable storytelling and exploring and exploiting the various emotional levels within a lyrical message.

SHOWMANSHIP – Tori Postma

Performance (vocal skills) : well developed

Performance (energy, characterisation, unity) : areas to work on

Preparation (costume) : good work

Preparation (make up / grooming) : fine

Choreography : generally good plans

Performance evaluation : singing skills are so fine in this region – costuming is good – well designed and flattering to most. Areas to focus on for improvement : unity of intensity and emotion across the chorus. Some are just animating a few emotions – explore further. Characterisation – dig deeper and unify the emotions in the songs. There are always more depths to discover and learn to portray. Energy is the magic that ties it all together and connects to the audience. Many of your choruses understand and keep energy consistent but it is always worth reviewing and improving. What a lovely weekend – thank you region 31!