

2013 Contest – Region 11

Comments from the Judges' Pit...

Region 11 – QUARTET TRENDS

SOUND Category – Sheri Strawther

- **BREATHING:** Continue to focus on consistent support
- **BBS BALANCE:** Over-singing heard at times
- **ENERGIZED VOCAL LINE:** Overall more focus needed
- **DYNAMIC FLEXIBILITY:** especially need energized softs to add drama and excitement to the sound
- Vocal skills have obviously been a strong focus and there has been fine work in these areas overall. Most singers need to focus on consistent breath support and vocal energy to build their unit sound.
- Harmony accuracy problems – especially interval tuning – is a concern for many singers. Lack of breath support – especially ascending intervals – is affecting overall accuracy. Chords are not instantly locking and tuning.
- Starting without a strong pitch can be difficult. Taking a pitch can help establish the tonal center and help all singers to have a more confident start.

MUSIC Category – Lynnell Diamond

- **VOCAL SKILLS:** Good work in this areas for the majority of the competitors
- Most competitors, with one exception, chose music that is appropriate for barbershop competition. However, for several competitors, the demands of the chosen songs were beyond their skill capabilities.
- Encourage competitors to invest in the competition folios published by SAI that provide good music choices appropriate to specific skill levels.
- One universal area that's weak in this region is an understanding of the necessity for a high musical energy level in the barbershop style. Many competitors seemed either too hesitant or too laid back in their presentation style.

EXPRESSION Category – Karen Sweeters

- There was a lot of good singing on that stage. With a greater percentage of B scores, you can be happy about the quality of performances displayed.
- There was a real lack of diving into the story of the song. The lyrics provide all the clues and indicators for personalizing the lyrics – which gives you dynamics, inflections and emotional energy.
- Lack of forward motion – there was a lot of phrase-by-phrase approach so there was a lack of energy and drama to give the performances life – so many of them felt passive and unemotional. Tapping into the story line would help that.

SHOWMANSHIP Category – Ruth Ann Parker

- **VOCAL SKILLS** and **ENERGY:** keep working here
- **POISE & COMMAND:** not always
- **CHARACTERIZATION:** not firmly established for the most part. Many groups still need help understanding characterization
- **AUDIENCE RAPPORT:** precision & confidence will draw your audience in even further
- **CHOREOGRAPHY:** you're ready for even more creativity
- A place to start is build upon your vocal presentation by adding more energy, conviction of lyrical message from each and every singer. Your work here is evident, but this area requires more consistency throughout. The quartets had many fine elements present, but not always working together to bring a solid unit message to the audience. Apply all your theatrical skills to selling that one characterization. Some "concentration" facially translates to technical and mechanical performances. Strive more to unify the physical passion to totally transcend the footlights.
- **Costumes** – many casual outfits vs. **STAGE** costumes. I was surprised to see so many casual costumes, sometimes coupled with very stagy jewelry
- **Makeup/grooming** – many needed intensity on eyes, cheeks/lips; lots of fly away hair
- Many groups sabotaged themselves by showing signs of insecurity (looking in at members of quartet for reassurance)

More comments from the Judges' Pit...

2013 Contest – Region 11

Region 11 – CHORUS TRENDS

SOUND Category – Sheri Strawther

- Obviously this region has done much good work on all areas of vocal skills! Fine singers in all choruses. Now, continue to focus on consistent breath support for stronger vocal energy overall.
- Synch issues happen frequently because of lack of breath support. Strive for instant chord accuracy.
- Interval tuning is a concern for many groups. Ascending intervals seem to be a common problem because of lack of support.
- More focus on all areas on artistic sound is needed. More dynamics flexibility is especially needed to create excitement and drama in your sound.

MUSIC Category – Lynnell Diamond

- With one exception, the music selected was appropriate for barbershop, but many competitors chose songs that are too difficult for them.
- The work on vocal skills in the region is apparent in the several high B scores earned. What is needed in all these performances is more genuine connection and communication of the passion and/or excitement of the songs. Almost all uptunes need a more strongly pulsed tempo, especially the ones that are intended to be in the backbeat.
- Continue to emphasize tuning and unity, and make every effort to be sure all choruses purchase the appropriate competition folios from SAI to access music appropriate to their skill levels.

EXPRESSION Category – Karen Sweeters

- Observations from today's performances – good performances all day.
- Only a few choruses came with energy to perform a story. It fizzled in important places – like the high points – no build up. It came in fits and spurts. Needs to be consistent. Need "chutzpah".
- The opening of many performances felt tentative and careful. Few came to take the stage.
- Only one chorus came to tell a story (not the top 5).
Everyone else came to sing a plan! Looking at the words, the character, singing those words – her story – why is she singing them? Then taking the dynamics and inflections to the music to humanize and personalize the story is a necessity!

SHOWMANSHIP Category – Ruth Ann Parker

- **VOCAL SKILLS:** Keep this always in your planning!
- **CHARACTERIZATION:** an area to focus on!
- **CHOREOGRAPHY:** Good, well thought out places.
- **POSTURE:** good posture adds such confidence.
- **MAKEUP & GROOMING:** Some groups needed more blending on the blush.
- Lots of concentration facially (which occurred mostly on ballads) translates to technical presentations. Even more physical passion would provide each chorus with the unit consistency need throughout all performances.
- There was precision and confidence demonstrated from each Director. Great job here!
- Trust your vocal skill work so you can live the lyrical message and bring stronger characterization. For the most part, you brought a polished unit to the stage. Employ a fuller approach using the entire body to insure mass passion into all you do.

2013 Contest Scores

PLACE	CHORUS	SCORE
1	Celebrity City	595
2	Santa Monica	586
3	Verdugo Hills	576
4	Agoura Hills Harmony	576
5	Golden Sands	530
6	Voices United	519
7	Central Coast Celebration	511
8	L.A. South Towns Show	478
9	Antelope Valley Showcase	474
10	RiverOaks	440

PLACE	QUARTET	SCORE
1	Cachet	599
2	Caprice	575
3	Cheers!	566
4	After 8	561
5	Prestige	541
6	Nova	512
7	Ooh La La	489
8	KMPR	486
9	Head Over Heels	454
10	Hot Topic	451