



Whether you are a seasoned competitor, or brand new to an IABS Contest there are many things you can and should do to maximize your opportunities to score high points!

Music Selection

Whether you are performing in a quartet or a chorus – you should always choose songs which are suitable to you as a performer, Why ? Well the latest hotshots might have some great talent, some great coaches or both! Groups can occasionally select music which is so complex and challenging that before they have started to perform in contest the odds are stacked against them.

Consider the musical theme, melody and harmonic implications..... emotional content and of course jazz versus traditional rhythms..... we have only just scratched the surface.

The alternative view is that simple music sung and performed particularly well, will always score much, much better..... just food for thought!

Singing Well

Always strive to sing in tune, wow that seems such a simple one, but it is amazing how often an acapella singing group, fail to maintain both tonal centre and an overall sense of in tune singing. Consider both the range for the melody and the extent to which the harmony parts are singing near or beyond their personal ranges for quality. Think about how often the basses cannot sing the lower notes (especially if the performance has unexpectedly changed to a lower key!!) or alternatively are you expecting your tenors to sing notes that only the angels can dream of!!

Always aim for Freely produced and fully supported vocal production, this will be recognized and always rewarded.

Performance Issues

If your group has a “personality” that is supported by the songs you have chosen to compete with, you almost certainly have improved your scores. However complex visual and musical themes can prove very challenging to a group that is inexperienced or still developing musically. You might have a goal of bringing a story to life and setting it to the music you are performing..... If you and your group regularly perform for the general public you will have a great sense of live performance.

You should work hard to make every member of your group perform continuously and maintain the theme that has been identified, the best performances exhibit great strength in both unity and contrast within the performance.

In summary

There are some foundations that any musical performance should be built upon, these are believability, naturalness, un-manufactured, musical and emotional, exciting and enjoyable, members of the audience should enjoy rather than endure the performance.....

Whatever happens on stage, you are part of a fantastic live music making organization and as we all pursue improvement, we are also making a difference to everyone who enjoys our music making.....

Good Luck in the contests – remember to have some fun yourself!