

Judges: The following are definitions of the criteria to be evaluated in the Vocal Performance and Visual Performance categories as well as a guide to assigning point values within these categories. There is also an explanation of how to assign value within the Subjective Rank category.

Vocal Performance

Balance and blend

Are the harmony, melody and rhythm parts balanced?
Do they sound like a unified ensemble?
Are voices balanced across parts and within parts?

Arrangement

Difficulty
Creativity (too many "doo"s or repeats? Clever textural changes? Too much repetition?)
Arranged within a range appropriate for singers' voices (avoids muddiness at low end, screeching at high end)
Is it musically, lyrically and rhythmically interesting?

Interpretation

Is the performance true to the style of the arrangement? Is the interpretation of the arrangement musically, lyrically and rhythmically interesting? Does it work in a live a cappella format? Does it convey appropriate emotion? (Please note: Do not compare the group against the professional groups they cover. Avoid preconceived ideas of how the music "should" be performed.)

Rhythmic Accuracy/ Vocal Percussion

Rhythmic precision, tempo consistency, or effective use of non-metered time
If using vocal percussion:

Contribution to the musicality of the performance
Use of advanced techniques

Intonation

Pitch accuracy and consistent tuning. Centered pitch.

Tone Quality

Control of vibrato/straight tone where appropriate
Vocal color and tone appropriate to the music
Well-supported, freely produced, resonant where stylistically appropriate, volume appropriate
Breathing does not draw attention, or as stylistically appropriate

Dynamics

Are dynamics musically interesting, appropriate and well executed? Are phrases shaped?

Diction

Matched word sounds (vowels, consonants, diphthongs)
Stylistically appropriate diction

Solo interpretation

Contribution to the musicality of the performance, quality of soloists

Visual Performance

Visual Cohesiveness	Do they appear as a group? Is the movement, or lack thereof, appropriate to the overall perceived aims of the group and maintained effectively throughout the performance?
Effectiveness of Presentation	Is there audience connection? Eye contact? Emotional credibility? (Believable or forced?)
Energy/Stage Presence	Are they comfortable and energized on stage?
Appropriateness of Movement	Does the movement suit the song? Does it enhance the music or interfere with it?
Creativity of Movement	Do they stand out from the crowd? Is creative energy evident?
Transitions/Blocking	Are the transitions smooth and brief, or as stylistically appropriate?
Professionalism	Is it evident that this performance was well thought out and rehearsed? Is the overall effect professional? Is this a performance that people would pay to see? (Note: Individual groups are encouraged to maintain their own style. If this style is casual, however, it can still be regarded as professional inasmuch that the casual style appears well-planned and well-rehearsed.)

Subjective Rank

Before totaling their scores, each judge should independently rank their own choices for the top three groups, with a rank of 1 awarded to the best group. This rank corresponds to a particular point value, which is then awarded to the group as "bonus points" for convincing the judge of their rank prior to the tabulation of the scores.

Numerical Rank

The numerical values that appear on the group adjudication sheet correspond to the following definitions:

On a 1-10 scale:

- 10 – exceptional, professional level
- 9 – excellent, no distractions
- 8 – very good, only a few minor problems
- 7 – very good, with more minor or a few major problems
- 6 – good, noticeable problems but not distracting
- 5 – average
- 4 – below average, a few distracting problems
- 3 – below average, with more than a few distracting problems
- 2 – poor
- 1 – very poor

On a 1-5 scale:

- 5 – excellent, no distractions
- 4 – very good, with only a few minor problems
- 3 – average, with a few distracting problems
- 2 – below average, with more than a few distracting problems
- 1 – poor