

VISUAL COMMUNICATION CATEGORY

OUTLINE OF CONTENT

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VISUAL COMMUNICATION CATEGORY

INTRODUCTION

The ultimate goal of any barbershop performance is the communication of music. The three other scoring categories address the quality and artistry of the musical product, while the visual communication category assesses the quality and artistry of the visual product. Studies have demonstrated that the majority of communication is processed and received through visual elements; for this reason, the ability of performers to visually express the emotion, story, and message of a song is a significant part of successful connection with an audience. Ideally, visual communication enhances and supports the music authentically and naturally, so that these elements are intertwined and inseparable to create a total entertainment experience. With effective visual communication, the performer is able to enhance what the listener hears by reinforcing it with what the viewer sees.

The visual communication judge watches and listens to a performance evaluating the degree of communication established with the audience. The assessment considers how artistic and believable the visual demonstration of the song appears. Although multiple visual elements can contribute to successful audience connection, they are inseparable and blend together to create an artistically satisfying experience. For this reason, the visual communication judge's assessment is done in a holistic and global fashion.

The visual communication judge rewards a performance wherein:

- Reasonable proficiency in the basics of good vocal production has been achieved so that a proper foundation for audience connection is present.
- The execution of the visual plan is successful in communicating the message of the song so that the result is an artistic, believable visual presentation. Characterization, physical expression, energy, body alignment, stage presence, unity, and audience connection are all elements that contribute to visual communication. A true connection with an audience is made when the visual plan enhances all aspects of the performance and the singer is able to perform beyond the plan.
- The performer has made creative and appropriate choices in designing a visual plan that will enhance and support the communication of the songs. To this end, various stagecraft tools are available such as choreography/staging, costume, props, makeup and hairstyle. An effective performance will include not only planning in this regard but also successfully bringing the visual plan to the stage.

ELEMENTS OF VISUAL COMMUNICATION (0-100 points)

VOCAL SKILLS

The goal of this category is to evaluate the visual communication of the musical product. Since the quality of vocal production contributes to the musical outcome, vocal skills are an integral part of the performer's ability to appeal to an audience. If the musical output in and of itself does not inspire an audience connection, no amount of visual proficiency will by itself engage an audience. For this reason, the visual communication judge demands the same attention to the details of good vocal production as the other three judging categories.

ENERGY

Energy is the life force of the visual communication category since it propels all aspects of the musical performance and adds a special shine to the visual performance. Energy is the unseen element that transports the performance from the stage to the audience, taking it beyond routine into magic. The presence of this invisible dynamism results in a visceral experience that can contribute to greater audience connection.

Performers who exhibit natural, free, and energized physicality that enhances the music can captivate an audience. Conversely, energy displays that include tension, frantic or dull visual expression and inconsistent levels of intensity across an ensemble can result in the audience's inability to truly appreciate and connect with the musical and visual presentation. Accordingly, a performance well-grounded in effective energy techniques that create audience connection will be recognized and rewarded by the visual communication judge.

CHARACTERIZATION

Characterization delivers a song off the pages of the musical score and brings it to life for an audience. This can be achieved by each performer connecting to and personalizing the song either by adopting a "character" or by singing as themselves. It involves defining the story line and journey for the song and creating a dramatic persona or role for the stage. Effectiveness is assessed based on the achievement of believable and authentic performance. The creation of the characterization plan can occur either after or before the musical and lyrical interpretations are designed; often, the characterization plan influences the musical and lyrical interpretations themselves.

Creating a characterization plan establishes the performer's path for connecting to a song; by doing so it can provide greater clarity for the individual performer and achieve unity within the ensemble. When devising the characterization plan, questions to consider include: Who is telling (singing) the story? Does the character remain the same throughout the song or does a transformation take place? To whom is the message directed? Why are they telling this story - what compels them and what might be at stake? What is the message and what is the emotional journey? It is also useful to outline how long the performer might maintain the characterization during a performance, for

example, from entrance to exit or only during one song. Ideally, the performer will maintain the characterization until the identification with the character reaches a satisfying conclusion. Once characterization has begun, it is not advisable to “break character” for even a moment until the predetermined point of the performance. “Breaking character” can disturb the emotional involvement on the part of the audience and disrupt the audience/performer bond that the performer has worked so diligently to create.

Once a characterization plan is established, physicality and facial expression can be explored to assist with communicating the story to the audience. Tools such as choreography, staging, costuming, hairstyle and makeup can be used to further define the character. For maximum effectiveness, all these elements should be congruent with and enhance the characterization. In addition, care should be taken when creating characterizations so that any deviations from good vocal production are kept to an absolute minimum. For instance, slumped shoulders and downcast faces can convey many emotions, but they can also inhibit proper vocal production and ultimately interfere with effective audience connection.

The paramount goal is to achieve believable and authentic performance. As such, all performers are encouraged to commit 100% to the execution of the characterization plan to ensure that what is presented to an audience gets beyond being a “visible” plan. Greatest impact is achieved when all members of the ensemble participate fully and commit themselves to creating the character by giving up thoughts of inhibition. In this way, the ensemble presents a unified and more complete and believable character that can have a dynamic impact on the audience. When the performer skillfully creates strong characterization, those very characterizations serve to draw the audience emotionally onto the stage and into the performance.

PHYSICAL EXPRESSION

While the term “choreography” is used to describe *planned* movement, “physical expression” describes the *unplanned*, authentic body movement that occurs during a performance. Appropriate, *natural* body movement is one of the indications to the audience that the performer is comfortable and involved in the performance. This in turn supports the audience member’s ability to engage with the performance. Effective physical expression is evident when the performer is connected to the music and story, allowing their body language to support the musical performance so naturally that it cannot be recognized as separate from the music.

How the body is used to express the musical product is a key element in communicating with the audience. Since the body is also the vocal instrument, attention to alignment and attention to maintaining the integrity of the instrument during movement is important to both the musical and visual outcomes. A performer can strive for an energized, relaxed and free stance, allowing arms and hands to fall relaxed and naturally at the sides. Such a stance conveys stage command and also

allows for spontaneity in the performing style. Any non-planned use of arms and hands will ideally flow naturally, freely, purposefully and fluidly as a form of the performer's expression of the music and story. The communication of the musical message may be hindered if rigidity, stiffness, unenergized or unnatural body language and gestures are on display possibly creating confusion and distraction for the audience.

Facial expression is a major component of physical expression as it is the best tool available to the performer for visual communication. The face can convey a wide variety of moods and emotions ranging from joy to sorrow. Appropriate and natural facial expression reflects the message of the song; inappropriate and inauthentic facial expression confuses, distracts and sends mixed messages to the audience. Unlike face-to-face interactions or video screen close-ups, theatrical performance requires more intensity and animation to reach an audience that might be quite a distance away. Subtle facial expressions in theatre are not as impactful, since the performer's job is to communicate with the entire audience, not just the judging panel. However, this does not require exaggerated, insincere animation. Genuine and authentic emotional performance is generated from the inside out, emanating from the eyes, reflected in the facial expression and ultimately enhanced by body language and physicality that clearly conveys the song's musical and lyrical message to the audience.

UNITY

In Sweet Adelines International the performing group, whether it be chorus or quartet, performs as a single entity. Just as the individual voices and voice parts come together to create 4-part harmony and a unified musical product, the visual aspects must be presented in a unified fashion in order for communication to be successfully achieved. Unity does not, however, require that all performers appear as clones of each other within the performing unit. Our ensembles consist of performers of all abilities, shapes, colors, sizes and sensibilities. All of our members are encouraged to bring their own unique selves to the stage to contribute to the overall visual picture. Audience connection is enhanced when performers eliminate visual distractions which might take away from the main focus, which is the visual communication of the performance. Planning and executing a unit performance is an integral part of effective visual communication.

In the preparation phase, items such as costuming, makeup, hairstyle, choreography, staging and riser positioning are some of the tools utilized to enhance the characterization, musical and visual presentation. Every tool chosen is part of an indispensable closely-knit whole and is selected to achieve a closer integration of music and story. Creative possibilities are endless. For example, with respect to costuming, an ensemble may elect to wear identical costumes OR thematically similar costumes OR period pieces to match their characterization and musical selection. Similarly, a choreography example might include an ensemble effectively choosing for the front line, a section, or even a single individual to do certain appropriate choreographed movement alone. In many instances, the appearance of unity can be enhanced by having the remainder of the chorus either simulate the motion assigned to the front row or perform

the same motion on a smaller scale. Keeping in mind that the eye is pleased by balance and symmetry, an attention to the overall visual balance aids the performer in creating the desired unit look. It is NOT mandatory for every member to execute any planned or unplanned movement in a robotic, replicated fashion to indicate precision excellence.

In the execution phase, unity is evident when the musical message is clearly delivered by the ensemble with uniform energy and physical display. Clarity in purpose, intent and musical message evident in the body language and facial expressions assist with taking the plan off paper to create a performance that connects with the audience. The visual communication judge rewards the effectiveness of the unit in a performance based on the successful integration of all performance elements to communicate the musical message.

BODY ALIGNMENT

Effective visual communication occurs when the performer's physical presentation captures the audience's attention compelling them to remain engaged throughout the musical performance.

The body is the singer's instrument. The manner in which one stands and uses their instrument while singing is of great importance. A musical performance can be greatly enhanced when this instrument is allowed to be free, grounded, and energized while standing and moving. When singing, if the body parts are in alignment, a performer's vocal production, breathing, balance, and singing are impacted and, in this way, body alignment contributes to the communication of the music.

In addition, body alignment can contribute to the execution of the characterization of a performance. The singer has options to engage their instrument in certain ways to convey the story line and emotion of a song. For example, to believably communicate the emotion of extreme happiness, the accompanying body language would be upward, buoyant, energized and joyful. For vulnerability, there might be a physical stillness. The ultimate goal is the communication of the song to the audience, and strategic body alignment choices can prevent any disconnect that might occur, for example by dropping heads, sagging shoulders and sunken chests.

Body alignment also contributes to the audience's impression of the performer's confidence and command of the stage. When standing tall, energized and moving freely, the impression for the audience is that of a professional and engaging performer. A performer's poise and self-assuredness are evident when the body alignment and facial expressions reflect this message to the audience. In this way, body alignment is a powerful tool that assists in the communication of the song to an audience.

STAGE PRESENCE

Stage presence is a quality that attracts the attention of an audience. It refers to the charisma, style, sizzling energy and personality of a performer. When a singer radiates stage presence, the performance catapults out to the audience and captivates them.

Typically, this occurs when a performer appears extremely comfortable performing on stage.

The performer has the power and the responsibility to take the stage and create an atmosphere for the audience. The performer's role is to open the lines of communication by presenting themselves with certainty and composure. The audience responds by mirroring the presence of the performer. If the performer's visual plan involves establishing a certain tone for the audience, stage presence assists with the creation of this mood. Communication of the song can happen when the audience is at ease, interested and engaged; if the performer appears nervous and timid, the audience may be distracted from the performance itself and instead focused on concern for the performer. The goal is to evoke an emotional response from the audience, and to achieve this, a poised and confident attitude leads the way for the performer.

The more comfortable the performer feels on stage, the better able they are to infuse themselves into the musical storytelling, which in turn assists with a more convincing, believable performance. This comfort level comes from a high level of preparedness for the performance, as well as experience performing in front of an audience. It is common for performers to experience nervousness and feel a certain amount of healthy apprehension before facing an audience. A successful performer will make constructive use of nerves and focus on entertaining the audience. The unspoken message to the audience is, "I am here to entertain you."

AUDIENCE CONNECTION

For true audience connection to take place, it is desirable for performers to exhibit natural, believable, organic sincerity on stage with their voices, faces and bodies. The audience becomes engaged when the performer is gripped by the music being performed and is able to put heart into their voice and meaning into their physical expression. By doing so, the performer transcends technique and the plans as they exist on paper. A truly inspired performance is one where the performer lets down their defenses, allowing the audience to see their authentic self. This genuine display can occur regardless of the mood or character required by the visual plan. A good actor plays a role with such sincerity that the character becomes believable and feelings in the storytelling appear to be real and in the moment. When such an artistic performance is given, the audience response is to become a participant in the musical experience, one in which they share the emotional message of the character and music being presented.

Audience connection is a circular phenomenon. The performer creates a mood; the audience responds to the mood and to the performance. The performer, sensing the positive response, feeds more energy and vitality into the performance, eliciting a heightened response from the audience! It is the performer's responsibility to initiate this experience and to respect the process when the audience responds in kind. When judging the visual communication category, the judge will evaluate the creation and retention of audience connection during a performance. As an objective part of the

audience, the judge senses when audience connection has been effectively established and can distinguish between the “hometown favorite” reaction and a sincere, unbiased audience response to a praise-worthy musical performance. When some flaw in the performance prevents establishment of audience connection or interferes with the maintenance of the connection, the visual communication score is impacted and will reflect the degree of disconnect. The visual communication judge’s highest reward can be given only when true audience connection is established on entrance and maintained throughout the performance.

MUSICALITY

Authentic visual communication is an integral part of the musical performance. Musicality is achieved when the intent of the music is brought to life by the performance choices and the musical delivery. The essence of true musicality is the performer’s ability to use emotional experiences and genuine theatrical abilities to perform in a way that pulls the audience into a magical experience.

CREATIVITY

Creativity is the act of turning original and imaginative ideas into reality and/or the ability to take existing knowledge and put it into a novel context with new results. There are many opportunities for performers to incorporate creativity in their performances and to display the ensemble’s unique personality or style. Examples include, but are not limited to, visual plan elements such as choreography, staging, costumes, non-singing moments, etc.

Originality is refreshing and uniqueness is welcomed by the audience. Sweet Adelines are encouraged to explore brand new ways to deliver these authentic and real musical performances that the audience craves. Groundbreaking and innovative ideas are memorable and contribute to the growth and evolution of the art form. As part of the artistic process, invoking creativity could require courage and may result in venturing outside comfort zones. This discomfort, however, is an opportunity for growth as performers and a chance to explore new performance horizons instead of mimicking other performance examples.

It is important to note that not all creative ideas, even if unique and original, are in and of themselves effective in a way that enhances the musical presentation. A “new” idea doesn’t always equate with a “good” idea. The visual communication judge recognizes when creative performers use all visual and non-visual elements in a manner that reinforces the message or character of the music. Creativity that is appropriate to the music, to the barbershop style and to the performing group will be recognized and rewarded by the visual communication judge.

STAGECRAFT

Stagecraft are the theatrical tools that are created to assist the performer in bringing the music to life on the stage. When used creatively and effectively, the audience is unaware of each of the following technical elements as individual items and instead enjoys a total performance experience. Designed in advance, the visual plan incorporates these stagecraft elements.

Choreography/Staging

Since physical display complementing the music is an essential part of visual communication, the manner in which the performers move on the stage is an important consideration. An available tool in this regard is planned movement, either in the form of choreography or staging. Choreography refers to moves that are designed to embellish characterization or “dance” to the music. Staging refers to the planned travel around the stage; performers may move on/off the risers or around the stage itself to create pictures or tableaux that provide mood or character enhancement.

Both the designed plan and the execution of the plan are evaluated by the visual communication judge. The judge assesses how the musical presentation is elevated by the choreography and staging, so that if executed flawlessly, the plan itself would be an asset. Choreography and staging are considered effective when they are successfully integrated into the total performance. For example, the plan itself might be very strong, however the implementation of the plan may negatively impact the singing and as such, the audience connection is impacted. In considering the execution of the plan, a unified approach to the visual presentation is desired since carrying out the planned moves with a common intention results in minimizing distractions for the audience. In this way, the audience is musically and visually drawn into the performance and is not left wondering how or why some elements of the visual presentation are detracting from the experience. Effective choreography and staging flows naturally and easily into the performance, enhancing the music performed so that what the eye sees reinforces what the ear hears.

Costume

Costumes may be selected to denote a theme, to illustrate a song or the name of the performing group, or to reflect the personality of the performer. When designing the ensemble’s costume, considerations include presentation of a unit appearance, fit, character, the performing group and stage appropriateness. The same costume may be worn during more than one appearance as a contestant, including successive sessions of one competition or a competition in a subsequent year. The costume chosen may be suitable to both songs in a contest set or it may specifically apply to just the first, but it should not conflict with one or both songs. For example, a clown costume is suitable for two clown or circus songs but could be in conflict if the second song is an Irish ballad.

While most performers reinforce unity by choosing costumes that are uniform in both color and style, it is possible to depart from this sameness while maintaining the unit appearance. When costuming is not identical, care must be taken to ensure that the reason for the difference and the meaning of the costume plan will be obvious to the audience. When this is not the case, the audience and the visual communication judge may become

so involved in trying to determine the connection that they are unable to enjoy the performance. Shoes may be uniform in style, color, and heel heights for a unit look, or groups may choose to use similar styles that will not create a distraction for the audience. Any differences in costume such as hemlines and heel heights become unnoticeable when animated, involved facial expression keeps the audience's attention focused on the performers' faces.

An important aspect of costuming considered by the visual communication judge is fit. How well a costume fits is important to the performers, as this could potentially impact their comfort level on stage, as well as result in insufficient room for the breathing mechanism to function properly. In addition, costumes that do not properly fit performers can present a visual distraction for the audience; at times this distraction can be of such magnitude that the viewer is unable to respond to the performance.

The effective costume points up the faces of the performers rather than directing the viewer's attention elsewhere. Any accessories should always complement the costume rather than providing a point of visual focus or distraction for the viewer. In selecting color and fabric, the performer might consider how it will be affected by the intense stage lighting used in Sweet Adelines competitions. When colors or textures are combined, differences that may not be apparent under normal lighting sometimes become very noticeable under stage lights. When colors or textures are combined, the visual communication judge evaluates their compatibility and the effectiveness with which the combination is implemented so that emphasis remains on the performers' faces.

In selecting a costume for the chorus director, many options are possible. It may be the same style and color as that of the chorus; it may be the same style but of a complementary color; it may be the same style but, when colors are combined, a reverse of the combination (e.g., chorus in red with white accent, director in white with red accent); it may be the same color but a different style; or it may be a different color and different style. The visual communication judge evaluates based on the overall effect.

Makeup/hairstyles

Makeup and hairstyles may also be used to create a mood, scene, or character. The spotlight in a Sweet Adelines performance is on the performing unit and not on any single individual. To reinforce the unit appearance, the performer strives to apply makeup in such a manner that supports the overall picture and minimizes distraction.

Communication with the audience includes the use of the eyes, eyebrows, cheeks, and mouth. The primary purpose of stage makeup is to define facial features so that the audience can see and respond to the performers' facial expressions. Stage makeup is an important part of the stagecraft, whether the costume be a sophisticated gown or that of a specific character. The intensity of stage lighting tends to fade color. The performer can compensate for this by increasing the vibrancy and intensity of stage makeup. Although there is no "rule" that performers must wear red lipstick, experience has shown that a true red is least likely to fade under stage lights. The shade of makeup should result in a natural-looking complexion under stage lights. Again, the audience connection is of primary importance, and any techniques employed to minimize or enhance individual features must remain in harmony with the finished unit look rather than becoming

obvious to the viewer. The visual communication judge bases the evaluation of makeup on the overall effectiveness of the performers' makeup, not on the colors, product or techniques used.

Grooming and hairstyles are tools to enhance characterization, performer personality, and can work in conjunction with the costume choices to create a desired look— casual hairstyle with casual dress, elegant hairstyle with formal dress, period hairstyle with period dress, etc. Uniform hairstyle for chorus or quartet members is not necessary; however, some degree of similarity provides an additional means of enhancing unit appearance.

Props/Stage Decoration

Handheld props and stage decorations can be a creative way to enhance characterization and storytelling, augmenting the entertainment value of a performance. The inclusion of these visual devices is considered effective by the visual communication judge when they add to the musical presentation and do not detract from the focus on the singers. In addition, careful planning and execution is thoughtfully done so that a professional appearance is the result. These tools are permitted in all contest sessions. The visual communication judge rewards the performance where the music and the characterization are enhanced by the successful integration of these visual devices or props.

Non-Singing Moments

Barbershop performances include singing moments and non-singing moments. To enhance audience communication, we use our entire time on stage to create a mood, emotion, character, or scene. Elements we use that do not include singing are entrance to stage, taking the pitch, accepting applause, exit and any non-singing moments that occur during the performance. Some of these may include comedic, emotional, character, or rhythmic pauses. For non-singing moments to be effective, a plan should be in place.

a. Entrance

The entrance is the first impression the audience has of the performer. The performer has the opportunity to establish audience connection by setting the mood for the performance right from the start. An energetic and confident entrance with sincere smiles conveys an implied “thank you” for the applause and “we are glad to be here” attitude. An entrance that is inspired by character, mood, or setting will help to establish that feeling for the audience.

Occasionally a chorus sets the scene by striking a pose or depicting a tableau that prepares the audience for the presentation to come, but which does not involve actual eye contact. When this occurs, the visual communication judge's evaluation is based on the effectiveness of the entrance and the degree of success achieved in preparing the audience for the entertainment to come. The timing of the entrance is important to consider ensuring the desired impact on the audience is achieved.

The visual communication judge begins evaluating a quartet after the emcee has announced the contestant, the lights come up and the first member of the quartet appears. The visual communication judge begins evaluating a chorus after the emcee has announced the contestant, and with or without a curtain, the stage lights come up.

b. Break

The break is that brief period of time between the end of the first song and the beginning of the second. During this interval, the show continues with sincere, gracious and confident acknowledgment to the audience, with the performer conveying an implied “thank you again for your applause,” or may continue in character during the applause. The visual communication judge rewards the performance when all facets of the break are smoothly and effectively carried out so that audience connection is maintained.

c. Exit

An effective exit is one that is well timed. At the conclusion of the final song, the performer again acknowledges the audience in a style compatible with the music just performed. The acknowledgement allows the audience to remain in the mood established by the music, and may transition into a stronger, more confident acknowledgement. As the applause reaches a plateau, the quartet turns and leaves the stage with the same confident attitude demonstrated during the entrance or in the mood of the character, still in command of the stage. The chorus director and chorus members maintain natural radiant smiles and a confident attitude until the curtain closes or the stage lights go down, or they may choose to remain in character. A character inspired exit for either quartet or chorus can be effective, provided a unit delivery is maintained.

d. Pitch Pipe

As a cappella singers, most ensembles use a pitch pipe to locate their beginning notes. The visual communication judge is the only member of the judging panel who evaluates the pitch-taking procedure, and the evaluation is confined to assessing the ease and smoothness with which pitch is taken. If for some reason a firm pitch is not established on the initial attempt, the visual communication judge bases the evaluation of the second and even the third attempt on the performer’s ability to maintain poise and composure and to keep the audience comfortable.

Most quartets still use the traditional pitch pipe because it is easier to slip into a pocket or conceal in some other manner than is the electronic pitch instrument used by some choruses. A pitch pipe retained in the performer’s hand during the performance may become a visual distraction for the audience.

Judges in the sound, music, and expression categories do not evaluate the taking of pitch, so neither penalties nor rewards are incurred in those categories. However, when pitch is not securely established, any or all of those judges may note resulting problems, and those problems will be reflected in the scores.

Some performers prefer to take pitch off stage, before the entrance or before the curtain opens. Successfully omitting the pitch-taking procedure is neither rewarded nor penalized by the visual communication judge. A faulty start, however, can result in a lower score in the sound, music, and expression categories because pitch was not firmly established. If the performer loses composure because of an insecure start, the score in the visual communication category will also be affected.

The entrance, break, and exit can all be used to create a mood, scene, or character. Whether it be the walk-on or some sort of staged scene, the visual communication judge rates the effectiveness of each of these non-singing moments.

Lights

The contest requirement for uniform lighting ensures that all contestants are judged under as nearly the same conditions as possible. Where available, a follow-spot may be used for quartet entrance and exit. Use of special lighting may be permitted for the non-competition songs included in the performance package sessions of Sweet Adelines International competitions; in those instances, contestants are notified in advance of lighting options. The choice of lighting, when available, can assist with mood creation and when used creatively and competently can enhance the audience experience.

CHORUS DIRECTOR

From the greeting to accepting applause, the performance of the chorus director is an influencing factor in the effectiveness of the overall communication of the chorus presentation. The director visually inspires chorus members by providing a model for body alignment, facial expression, emotional projection, sincerity, energy and attitude. The director can play an active part in planned choreography or staging by turning to face the audience. This can be effective if chorus members can successfully continue to perform without direction and without affecting musical unity. An impactful visual plan will ensure that the degree to which the director is featured is done with an attitude of sharing the spotlight with the chorus. In the case where the director is completely integrated into the visual plan and doesn't actually conduct, the effectiveness of the performance is evaluated by the visual communication judge.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

DISABILITIES

Performers with disabilities are not singled out when evaluating a performance. As with all other aspects of this category, the visual communication judge adjudicates how every member is integrated into the ensemble to create a strong unified presentation. The use of assistive devices (canes, walkers, stools, wheelchairs, etc.) in and of themselves are not a visual concern. Effective communication with the audience occurs when distractions are minimized.

NON-SINGING MEMBERS

It is expected that all individuals appearing on stage as members of a competing chorus or quartet will be singing at the times required by their voice part. Sweet Adelines competition rules require that only the director(s) and performing members of a competing chorus may appear on stage. A penalty may result if the presence of a “non-singing” member detracts from the musical performance.

CROWNS

Sweet Adelines competition rules require that crowns in the style of a Sweet Adelines International Quartet Champion be neither worn by nor presented to any contestant other than the quartet winning first place in the international quartet competition. However, a contestant may wear a crown like object as a part of their costuming (ex. medieval, circlet, diadem, wreath, cone hat, etc.).

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

As in all creative endeavors, everything that can potentially be covered by a rule has not yet been conceived. Penalty considerations come into play in those instances where the audience might be negatively impacted. All creative endeavors potentially come with risk and/or reward. Ingeniously clever planning, effectively implemented, can add the finishing touch of success necessary to transform a good performance into a great performance.

SCORING THE CATEGORY

The primary responsibility of a Sweet Adelines International judge is to determine the level of proficiency demonstrated by each competitor in the category and to place each competitor in the proper ranking relative to other competitors in the competition. In doing so, the judge assigns numerical scores that accurately represent the level of each performance in the category. The composite numerical scores of the entire judging panel establish final placement of all contestants and are the basis for determining winners of the awards. The visual communication category combines elements of preparation and performance so that 100 points are available for each contest song in a performance. The visual communication judge assesses all the category elements in a holistic and global fashion. The ideal Sweet Adelines International performance creates an experience so real, so alive, that both performer and audience are caught up in its spell and all else is forgotten in the magic of the song.

Judge _____

VISUAL COMMUNICATION

Contestant's Name _____ Contestant # _____

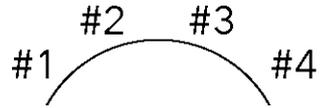
Contest: Region # _____ Chorus Region # _____ Quartet Date _____

Int'l Quartet Semifinals Int'l Chorus Semifinals Int'l Quartet Finals Int'l Chorus Finals Harmony Classic

JUDGING CRITERIA (0-100 points)

PERFORMANCE ELEMENTS

- Vocal Skills
- Energy
- Characterization
- Physical expression
- Unity
- Body alignment
- Stage presence
- Audience connection
- Musicality
- Creativity
- Stagecraft



PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

SONG # 1 _____ SONG # 2 _____

score
song 1

score
song 2

SCORING LEVELS (for one song)	
94 - 100	A+
86 - 93	A
80 - 85	A-
74 - 79	B+
66 - 73	B
60 - 65	B-
54 - 59	C+
46 - 53	C
40 - 45	C-
34 - 39	D+
26 - 33	D
20 - 25	D-
0 - 19	F

Director _____

Judge _____

**TOTAL
SCORE**