

JUDGE'S COMMENTS---POST CONVENTION 2005  
April 2, 2005

Judges: Marilyn Rose  
Jo Lund  
Dixie Dahlke  
Barb Nielsen

RMT Members:

Carol Ludwig,-Outgoing Director Co.  
Sarah Newhard- Education Co.  
Kathleen Long- Events Co.  
Linda Brown- Incoming Director Co.

Marilyn: The two contests were really good contests---there was NO cringe factor, which speaks very well for your Region!!! The lowest scoring contestants, you can tell that something is going on with them, and they are trying and have lots of places to go.

Jo---I found that most quartets had good song choices, they were choosing mostly BBS songs, in general. There were suitability issues, and I noted that if it was too difficult for them, or if it was not quite BBS material, that there were better selections available. That's a good thing!! In the choruses, less good song choices and a little bit more risks are being taken. Some times it worked, but mostly it wouldn't. It is only 30% of this category, but good BBS gives better chances to ring chords. In both contest, I was lacking a dynamic pallette, and Marilyn will go into that...I found some oversinging at times, but in general, you are doing a ggod job in this region. It would help your C level choruses to learn how to interpret a ballad in the ad-lib presentation---the score sheets are all saying the same things. I find that except at the very, very top choruses, that the rhythm gets a little "regular"—no jazz push, no playing with the rhythm. As long as you don't drop a beat, play with that tempo to add fun....within reason of course.

Dixie-- I did not get a lot of dynamics—my dynamic flexibility is in the artistic performance and there are voices capable of adding that artistic flexibility which adds to the dynamics. I didn't hear it, but in the pythagorean mode, major triads, BBS 7<sup>th</sup>, and dominant 9<sup>th</sup> will still ring easiest and best, especially if the sections are locking and ringing. It sounds gorgeous when it happens. We need to train our bodies to respond to the vocal chords when approaching these chords, and vocal production needs equalization with the presentation. I hard a lot of hard consonants which shorten the vowel sounds---lifting on the pulse of the vowel will make it ring. I wrote a lot on listening skills, and told people to "listen in"---I think our choruses are capable of this. And in the cases where people were not singing with the voices around them, the directors were not in the way. Singers need to learn this skill to "listen in". In some cases, I could hear that baritones were not locked into the lead delivery when it was enhanced. There were some choruses in the mid range that have the ability to balance the bass sound when they are singing full out..they need to work on that. I did point that cluster chords are either locked or some degree of out of tune. We need to make sure that singers are aware of what is coming out of them. It's about locked chords.

Barbara: There are two things I'd like to be sure to mention---energy properly channeled will add to the musical product---a lot of muscle singing was going on, which caused a lack of lock and ring—the use of the bearing down muscles means that vocal production is still something that needs to be addressed in the choruses.

We want that word "stamina" so that lock and ring are on the score sheets. The vocal production drives the musical energy, and stamina will be there consistently over time. Visual energy would be the next thing to tackle. To sell the audience, you pull that music ability together. Do rhythmic breathing, etc., in chorus.

Marilyn---Mine is similar----the majority of the leads (quartets and choruses) need to deveolp proper vocal skills, which includes unity, and stamina and consistent vocal energy---except for the top choruses, I wrote those comments on almost every one. The vowel matching, and that might be part of the accents, need attention and work.

Need to work vowel to vowel, ---it's gets choppy at times. Read the song as a whole and sing it that way. Need to sing vowel to vowel and not let consonants effect. They need a lot more attention on how to sell the story. At imes, there was no indication that the contestants knew what they were singing about. Dynamics, most of the contestants need to develop a broader range of good dynamics.

Sarah reported that we have Kim Hulbert and Sylvia Alsbury are scheduled to come to Region 19 and we will incorporating your comments in with their plans. And that we are using the Mass Sing Book for selections so that all attendees will be coached.

Carol mentioned our Director Retreat with Janet Ashford and the great information she shared regarding the basic "Barbershop" requirements and details that make it Barbershop style.

Sarah also voiced plans about expanding the performances of the Quartet chorus (the judges were impressed with the fact that we have one), providing opportunities for members to sing in a chorus formed for a regional educational event, and smaller schools where members have a chance to work on vocal skills, our mentor program, our focus on our choruses that score under 400 points.

We also shared our efforts to step up our quality control program, for choruses and quartets. And our efforts to have more of our registered quartets competing. The judges reminded us that if we have registered quartets that do not compete, we should be requesting a tape of a performance.

The judges were impressed that we offer Private Arm Waving, PVT's and Quartet coaching at all regional meetings, and a Novice Quartet contest at our Fall TIME.

There was some discussion about how much the judging panel enjoyed the Ocean City area, and were treated very well. We also discussed some of the sound problems that caused a few challenges, but we got passed them.