

Region #17 Fall Harmony Weekend

September 2016

The Elements of the Showmanship Category and the Effect on Characterization

Performance:

Vocal Skills. Solid vocal skills must be in place to allow the audience to buy in to the performance. Poorly supported sound and out of tune singing don't let the listener stay involved in the music.

Poise and Command. Putting the audience at ease is the performer's first job, and characterization can help in achieving that command of the stage. By developing the personality of the song and exploring the possibilities, the performer can step outside herself, perhaps take on a different persona and become totally involved in the music.

Physical Expression. Exploration of character can foster more natural physical expression from the performers and help authenticate the performance with the viewer.

Energy. Energy is the force that keeps the musical and visual performance moving. Facial, physical and vocal energy are necessary to sustain the performance. Characterization is a strong tool to help keep the performers animated, energized and reflecting the same story.

Unity. Just as the other 3 categories are looking for vocal unity, so the showmanship category is striving for unity in all the visual elements. Further, we are looking for congruity with all the elements of the performance – music that's appropriate to the appearance of the group and their skills, costuming that fits and gives a uniform appearance, makeup that highlights the features, as well as choreography that brings the song to life and helps create a cohesive musical experience. Approaching the music with a defined character reference helps to unify all the nuances of the visual presentation.

Audience Rapport. The communication between the performer and the audience is a two-way conversation, with the audience responding to the emotion established by the performer. Use of characterization can help to foster this process.

Choreography. The showmanship category evaluates how well the planned choreography is integrated into the musical presentation, and whether it enhances the music. Certainly energy and unity are a part of this evaluation. The use of characterization helps the visual plan to be driven by the emotion of the song instead of just being moves just done in time with the music..

Preparation:

Costume & Make-up. Both these facets of the preparation area of the category are aimed at unifying the visual performance. Certainly costuming can have a huge impact on how an audience relates to the character being portrayed in the music. Developing character doesn't necessarily mean dressing to the particular song, but costuming without regard to the character being portrayed in the music being sung can severely limit the performer's ability to portray the character. Make-up is used to point up the facial features and make it possible for the audience to distinguish the emotions being portrayed by the singers. Sometimes character make-up is required to complete the costuming.

Choreography Plan. This encompasses all the planned movement for the song, exclusive of physical expression. A strong plan adds meaning to the music, helps the music come to life. It can help in achieving musical expression by adding vocal inflection associated with a particular move. Key moves will coincide with points of musical stress. The plan should complement the image and capabilities of the performing group. When characterization is integrated into the choreography plan it helps to bring meaning to the plan and make it come to life

Script by Peggy Gram/Marcia Pinvidic