

Choosing Music for your Chorus or Quartet

Handout – HCNW 2016

Why Is Music Selection So Important?

It Defines Your Personality as a Group

- - Who are you and what are you saying to your audiences?

It Sets You Up For Musical Success OR Musical Challenges...

- - Audiences will respond best to music that shows off your strengths.

Each Selection is a Building Block of a Performance Set

- - Do you have all of the elements you need?

Checklist for Music Selection (Marge Bailey, MMA)

- ✓ Strong barbershop flavour?
- ✓ Interesting melody line?
- ✓ Chord voicings are strong?
- ✓ Each voice part performing in her optimal range most of the time?
- ✓ Smooth/singable part lines for all?
- ✓ Strong musical peak?
- ✓ Strong intro that set up the story line?
- ✓ Strong tag the reinforces the ending?
- ✓ Good potential for dynamics?
- ✓ Effective tempo possibilities?
- ✓ Potential for effective choreography?
- ✓ Manageable key changes, if present?
- ✓ Clear message / tells an interesting story?
- ✓ Message appropriate to the performing group?
- ✓ Physical/energy demands match the chorus/quartet's abilities?
- ✓ Rhythmic and dynamic patterns match those of the words?
- ✓ Rise and fall of the melody fits the story told in the lyrics?
- ✓ Embellishments add interest and do not hinder the performance?
- ✓ Challenges in the voice part match strengths of the unit?

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What Do You Need In A Repertoire?

Repertoire Building Blocks

- ✓ Openers
- ✓ Closers
- ✓ Barbershop – for Competition and Performances
- ✓ Swing (Uptune or Ballad)
- ✓ Showstoppers (Driving Uptunes, Over-the-top ballads)
- ✓ Novelty or Comedy
- ✓ Solos (not too many)

Other Considerations

- ✓ A balance of uptunes and ballads – emotional range
- ✓ Mostly recognizable music for your audience
- ✓ Special occasion songs (i.e. anthems, Happy Birthday, holiday music)
- ✓ Diversify the musical genres (bbs, pop, jazz, gospel, etc.)
- ✓ Try to avoid what other groups in your area are already singing

Assembling Your Performance Set

1. The Opener – upbeat, exciting start, impressive
2. The ‘Hammer’ – reinforces the opening impression
3. *<emcee>*
4. A Ballad or Swing Tune
5. *<emcee>*
6. Another Uptune
7. A Comedy or Novelty Song – A solo, or comedy
8. *<emcee>*
9. Another Uptune
10. *<emcee>*
11. The Second Last Song – a showstopper, perhaps
12. The Closer – usually an uptune, something that creates energy in the audience, something with a great tag!