

CHOOSING CONTEST MUSIC

When choosing contest songs, it is advisable to match the song to the skill level of the chorus or quartet singers. These tips are for choruses/quartets that score B- level and below.

You need to know these facts about each singer/section:

Full range

Comfortable notes (tessitura)

Bad notes (passaggio/register changes)

Breathing capabilities

Tempo/rhythm capabilities – can they sing backbeat? A driving tempo?

Ability to match and ring vowels; know the strong/weak vowel choices

What is the image/attitude/personality?

Things to note in arrangements that could affect performance and scoring in all categories

Notes outside of their performers comfort zone

Notes that cross over the register breaks and the frequency of these notes

Jumpy part lines

Rangy, open chord structure (2-octave spread)

Melody contains difficult intervals

Melody shifts to another part

Odd intervals in all parts

Many accidentals

Chromatic passages

Tonal center not present for more than several measures

Fast rhythm

Backbeat/syncopation

No place to breathe

Lots of short vowels

Lots of hard, percussive consonants

Wordy sections

Baritone high/lead low for extended passages

Parallel motion

Close interval relationships that require advanced tuning skills

No natural dynamic (emotion) plan

Topic not appealing