A- Level - Excellent

Strong foundation of vocal skills	More enthusiasm than musicianship
Musical energy somewhat contained	Evidence of musical messiness
High energy	Lovely singing but not entrancing
Defined character and projected at times to audience	Over-singing
Internal sync challenges	Technique driven
Involvement in message inconsistent	Manipulated emotion
Improved singing that doesn't pierce the fourth wall	Passionate distortion of vowels
Individual rather than unit at times	Voices popping out occasionally
More fun than skill	Trying too hard
Extremes of finesse and raucousness - no in between – not fully integrated	

Terms: *high, strong, consistent, appropriate, energetic.*

A Level – Near Perfect

Exceptional foundation of vocal/barbershop skills	Unrelenting barbershop style
Visual matches vocal	Freedom
Audience feels part of it	Energy abounds
Music beautiful but may be a bit contained	Cohesive performance
Truly unified ensemble; cohesive performance	Passionate performance
Captures the spirit of songs and exhibits love for barbershop	Joy, energy, creativity can overcome unity and musicality at brief moments
Effortless musicality	Strong audience buy-in
Delivers complex arrangements with vocal challenges, heartfelt messages, and ambitious choreography simultaneously and expertly	Finesse filled understanding of lyrical and musical journey delivered with vulnerable and fearless communication of story
Facial involvement but not always unified in purpose	

Terms: *phenomenal, exceptional, masterful, showcase worthy, precision, finesse, transcendent, unified, heartfelt, seamless, instant, consistent*

A+ Level Flawless

Experienced rather than heard	Skill, concentration, heart and soul
Intuitive skills and freedom	Technique disappears
Joy enraptures audience	Character driven
Unrelenting energy infused with authentic storytelling	Enthralling connection between director and chorus and audience
Magic when vocal with visual with vulnerable passion	Power of synergy of human voices delivering genius of composer, arranger, chorus, director
Synchronicity of singing heart's	Poise
Command	Mastery of style
Personal involvement	At one with composer, arranger, audience
Instinctive and intuitive vocal, barbershop, performance skills	

Terms: *captivating, moving, encompassing, transported, compelling, riveting, complete, essence, perfect, transcendent, dramatic, impeccable, total, risk-taking, epitome*

A LEVEL PERFORMANCE CHARACTERISTICS

SOUND: "A" level is characterised by open, free, and relaxed tone production that appears effortless, by a consistent wall of sound, and by chords that consistently lock in total accuracy. The unit sound shimmers with open, matched resonance and vowels seem to float on a stream of sound with no interference from consonants. Artistry, finesse and vocal energy abound, and use of appropriate vocal textures helps to paint a musical picture of the message conveyed

MUSIC: "A" level performance uses its mastery of vocal skills to present a song that seems made for the barbershop style. The arrangement combines skilful use of the implied harmony, which requires an interesting variety of strong barbershop chords, with creativity in musical embellishments. The performer utilises a wide range of dynamics and artistic, flowing phrases, or a combination of steady tempo, appropriate pulse, and rhythmic interest to captivate the listener.

EXPRESSION: "A" level performance, with its mastery of vocal skills, takes musical storytelling to its highest level through genuine involvement, character identification, and skilful use of dynamics, flowing phrases, vocal energy, stylistic delivery, and appropriate pace. The fully synchronised unit is characteristic of this level.

SHOWMANSHIP: "A" level performance, with its mastery of vocal skills takes visual storytelling to the highest level through physical energy and intensity that establishes a charisma that envelops the audience. Characterisation is strongly established, and the planned choreography or staging totally supports and reinforces the musical product. Attention to the details of costume and appearance fully supports the visual image portrayed. The stage was made for this performer!

