





HARMONIZING BRILLIANCE

THE ART AND SCIENCE OF MUSIC SELECTION IN SHOW CHOIR COMPETITIONS

BY ED BAUER

In the intricate world of show choir competitions, where melody meets movement, the significance of music selection cannot be overstated.

It is a delicate dance between artistic expression and strategic planning, requiring directors and designers to navigate the vast ocean of musical possibilities. In this comprehensive exploration, we delve into the multifaceted nuances of music selection, emphasizing the need for a cohesive theme, alignment with the choir's abilities, and a meticulous consideration of judging criteria.

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Setting the Stage: The Power of a Unified Theme

Creating emotional resonance with the audience is critical to a show's success. As noted by Melanie Green and Timothy Brock in their research on narrative coherence published in the *Journal of Communication* (2000), a clear theme contributes to the overall coherence of a performance. A well-chosen theme provides a narrative structure, weaving a story that captivates judges and spectators alike.

Music selection is a key component. A study by Patrik Juslin and Daniel

Västfjäll (2008) in the *Journal of New Music Research* suggests that music has a profound impact on emotions. Selecting music that resonates well with a show's theme amplifies the emotional connection between the performers and audience. Great music also stays with the audience long after the curtains close. A study by Elaine Schubert and Charles Wolfe (2006) in the journal *Psychology of Music* highlights the role of memorability in music. A themed performance paired with the right music has a higher likelihood of being remembered, leaving a lasting impression on judges and increasing the choir's competitive edge.

Matching Music to Choir Talents: The Art of Strategic Selection

Your choir's unique vocal strengths are a critical factor in choosing the

best music for a show. This includes evaluating the choir's proficiency in executing complex harmonies, rhythms, and stylistic elements inherent in the chosen repertoire. In short, the music should play to your choir's unique strengths. Meanwhile, music that complements the strengths of the choreography enhances the visual appeal of the performance. So what, specifically, are judges watching for?

1. Vocal Quality

According to the National Association for Music Education (NAfME), vocal quality is a critical judging criterion. Directors must select music that allows their choir to showcase a range of vocal techniques, ensuring the ensemble's ability to deliver a performance that is both technically proficient and emotionally resonant.

2. Choreography and Movement

The American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) emphasizes the importance of choreography and movement in show choir competitions. Music selection should align with the choreographic vision, allowing for seamless integration of movement and enhancing the overall visual impact of the performance.

3. Artistic Expression

Judges often evaluate the choir's ability to convey emotion and tell a story through their performance. The right music selection plays a pivotal role in allowing performers to express themselves artistically and connect with the audience on a deeper level.

4. Overall Impact

The Show Choir Nationals judging criteria underscore the significance

of overall impact. Music serves as the backbone of the performance, and directors must select pieces that contribute to a cohesive and impactful presentation.

Practical Strategies for Music Selection

1. Thematic Brainstorming

Begin the music selection process with a collaborative brainstorming session. Involve choir members, choreographers, and other key stakeholders to generate theme ideas that resonate with the group's collective vision.

2. Genre Exploration

Explore a variety of musical genres that align with the chosen theme. Consider how different genres can contribute to the emotional arc of the performance CONTINUED...



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and showcase the choir's versatility.

3. Choir Feedback

Gather feedback from choir members regarding their favorite genres, styles, and musical preferences. This ensures a more inclusive decision-making process and increases the likelihood of a performance that resonates with the entire ensemble.

4. Artistic Collaboration

Collaborate with choreographers, lighting designers, and costume designers during the music selection process. An integrated approach ensures that all elements of the performance align seamlessly, creating a harmonious and visually stunning presentation.

5. Audition Process

Consider conducting auditions or vocal assessments to identify the strengths and unique qualities of individual choir members. Use this information to inform the selection of music that highlights the ensemble's collective talents.

In the dynamic interplay of show choir competitions, music serves as the thread that weaves together melody, movement, and emotion. The process of music selection, guided by a cohesive theme and a deep understanding of the choir's abilities, is an art form that directors and designers must master to create performances judges and audiences will remember. The power of music lies not only in its notes and rhythms but in its ability to transcend, connect, and elevate the human experience.

Thank you, esteemed directors and dedicated boosters, for your unwavering commitment to the art of show choir. Your dedication enriches the lives of performers and spectators alike, bringing joy and inspiration to the stage. As we embrace the holiday season, may the melodies of your choirs continue to echo the spirit of unity and

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celebration. Wishing you all the joy and peace that your music has brought to countless hearts, and a new year filled with harmonious achievements and artistic triumphs.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Ed Bauer has been in publishing for over twenty years. He was introduced to Show Choir by his daughter and he is forever grateful to her for this wonderful gift.

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