

Choosing Music For Your Quartet

The Selection Process

1. List your musical goals
2. Identify your quartet image and the types of songs which work in with that character
3. Review your repertoire and list strengths and weaknesses, dropping songs which no longer display your quartet in the right light, either in vocal style or its ability to inspire an audience
4. List each potential song and give it marks for each category. Get preview copies and recordings (same arrangement) if you can. Look at what each song will add to your quartet's music skills: dynamic, phrasing, rhythm, smooth vocal tone, emotional message delivery. Narrow it down to 4 according to how well they rate in the categories below, then take a vote.

“Rating” New Music

The characteristics of each voice in the quartet can affect music choice. Individual ranges and blend between parts can affect your choice where there may be large separation between two parts (usually lead-tenor or bass-baritone). The abilities of the quartet as a group and individually need to be taken into consideration when looking at music. Some of the “features” you might want to rate a song against include:

- Contest Suitability
- “Fit” with other repertoire
- Ranges
- Melodic line movement and relationship to other parts
- Embellishment / Interpretive promise
 - Vertical chord movement vs Patter
 - End of phrase chord movement / key changes
 - Echoes and slides
 - Where is the climax?
 - Non-lead melody
 - Words
 - Strong ending for uptune
- Difficulty rating
 - Rated by international
 - Fast / wordy uptempo?
 - Melody based on the Doh / incidence of accidentals
 - Athletic voice leading
 - Tempo / rhythmic intricacy
- Audience appeal
- Cost

It is important to identify what a song will do for you
so that you get the most out of learning it!