

What is a “SuperSinger”?

A SuperSinger is a dedicated chorus member who recognizes this program as an opportunity for individual musical growth, embracing performance evaluation as a positive and necessary part of his/her chorus life. Once your chorus has adopted this format and you've submitted your very first recording, you've become a member of SuperSingers. Welcome! There are thousands of singers using this program!

What does an Evaluator Do?

A SuperSingers Evaluator is a chorus member with the individual member's interest at heart. She/he has agreed to dedicate several hours of valuable time evaluating an assigned group of singers. The frequency of this task varies according to the goals set forth by the chorus and/or music team.

Evaluators will monitor the progress of the same group of assigned singers until such a time that a rotation to another group is requested. It is highly recommended that evaluators work with the same group of singers for a minimum of two years.

The criteria for evaluating is set forth throughout this booklet. Should you have any questions regarding this program, please contact your assigned Section Leader, SuperSinger Program Chair and/or Director(s).

You will need...

SuperSingers Scoresheets

Reduced copies or word sheets of all music being evaluated

These will be available per _____, (Music Librarian).
One per member being evaluated, please.

Highlighter Marker(s)

These are used to point up specifically important areas of the song(s).

Lots of “TLC:

Tender Love Care is critical...along with an ability to express yourself on paper. People skills are equally as important as evaluation skills.

OK and KW

(OKAY) (KEEP WORKING)

PITCH TAKING

Pitch taking will be evaluated with an **OK** (okay) or a **KW** (keep working). In the instance of inaudible pitch-taking procedures, the FIRST note sung will be evaluated as the pitch note.

All singers are expected to score an OK on all songs being evaluated.

NOTES

Notes will be evaluated with an **OK** (okay) or a **KW** (keep working). Singing the CORRECT NOTES is a *minimal* requirement.

All singers are expected to score an OK on all songs being evaluated.

WORDS

Words will be evaluated with an **OK** (okay) or a **KW** (keep working). Singing the CORRECT WORDS is a *minimal* requirement.

All singers are expected to score an OK on all songs being evaluated.

Leveled Scoring 1-5

TUNING (Intonation)

Tuning (Intonation) requires the singer and the evaluator to use a very discerning ear. Correct notes, alone, do not guarantee harmony accuracy. When evaluating the singer's approach to clean interval singing, tuning is of utmost consideration.

When tuning difficulties are apparent, the following problems may be apparent.:

Harsh (excessively loud), *Unresonated tonal production* (soft palette is NOT lifted as it should be), *Incorrect Voice Part Technique* (head/chest tone usage and volume according to the BBSHP cone) and *Lack of Proper Breath Support* (unenergized vocal production).

DIPHTHONGS

Diphthongs are the *second* (or final) vowel sound of a vowel comprised of two vowel sounds, such as: *Day* (Deh-**ee**); *Clown* (Clah-**oohn**); (**Ah-ee**); *A-lone* (Ah-Loh-**oohn**); *Stole* (stoh-**oohl**). Ideal production results when the diphthong sound is audible enough to complete words with two-part vowel sounds within them. Properly produced diphthongs are sung with freedom and equal volume and energy of the primary vowel sound. Though diphthongs should happen quickly, they must be clearly heard by the evaluator without being turned too soon, resulting in a technical and overstated production of the word(s). Your evaluator will listen for consistency in this area and evaluate accordingly.

WORD FLOW

Word Flow is the connection of all words with the sound flowing from vowel sound to vowel sound while still maintaining the integrity of the consonants. Ploddy, choppy singing is the result of too much consonant emphasis and causes the singer to sing behind the established meter and rhythms. Synchronization problems will also be evident. A believable, heartfelt musical sound is the result of GOOD BREATH SUPPORT and the physical stamina required to use it.

Your evaluator will listen for consistency in word flow and evaluate accordingly.

PHRASE ENERGY

Phrase Energy addresses the singer's awareness of phrase endings/beginnings and meaningful words within phrases. Due to the individual skills of each singer, stagger breathing in non-assigned areas is considered acceptable; however, singing through assigned breathing areas, dropping energy at ends of phrases, failing to sing pick-up notes and not energizing held words within a phrase are all signs of a sound which will be lacking in musicality. More individual awareness and focus on energized phrase endings, assigned breathing areas, important (held) words within phrases, pick-up notes, etc...will add to the singer's score here.

Your evaluator will listen for consistency and evaluate accordingly.

VOWELS

Alike vowel sounds are critical to the overall accuracy of the chorus. Singers who produce the correct, properly-placed vowel sounds (tall, resonant and forward) will receive desirable scores here. Consistency in breath support, on-going sound and maintenance of proper singing space is the key. All vowel sounds should be produced using a relaxed tongue position, freedom of the jaw and loose, relaxed lips. Tension in any or all of these areas will result in a lack of resonance and, often times, harmony inaccuracies.

Your evaluator will listen for consistencies and evaluate accordingly.

Post-Evaluation Procedure

1. Make 3 copies of all evaluation sheets for:

1. *YOUR FILES*
2. *THE SINGER*
3. *THE SUPERSINGER PROGRAM CHAIR (master file book)*

2. Provide needed vocal assistance to assigned singers

All evaluators are responsible for assisting and/or finding assistance for singers within their assigned group. It is OUR responsibility to do whatever we can to help the singer achieve a higher score.

3. Use the Supersinger Program Chair as a Liaison

For any questions or concerns you may have regarding a singer's
recording, live performance or reaction to an evaluation, etc...

1

LEVEL ONE (*Unaccompanied singing too challenging at this level*)

PITCH/NOTES/WORDS – Cannot evaluate until notes/words/pitch are correct.

TUNING -- Monotone probability.

DIPHTHONGS – Cannot evaluate until notes/words/pitch are correct.

WORD FLOW – Cannot evaluate until notes/words/pitch are correct.

PHRASE ENERGY – Cannot evaluate until notes/words/pitch are correct.

2

LEVEL TWO (*The basics still present a challenge in certain areas*)

PITCH/NOTES/WORDS – These areas must be “OK” before doing others!

TUNING -- SOME ability (up to 50% of time) to harmonize is evident. Incorrect notes or unsure approach to intervals cause obvious tuning problems.

DIPHTHONGS – Those that ARE evident (25-50% of the time) are most often Unenergized (*dropped*) and/or overdone.

WORD FLOW – Very little (10% to 25% of time). Words are lacking connection due to over-emphasis of consonants, low stamina, lack of proper breath support. On-going energized singing is difficult to achieve at this level.

PHRASE ENERGY – Unenergized and/or loud, harsh approach. Seems to be little awareness of breathing pattern, pick-up notes or the need for energizing phrase endings and important words within phrases. Attacks and releases are often ahead of and/or behind.

VOWELS – Some (40%-60% of time) are properly placed. Singer may tend to sing with constriction (throaty), very bright (no resonance) or spend too much time on consonants (lack of breath support), which will not allow enough time for proper lock and ring through resonant vowel production.

Singers who are new to barbershop harmony are often in this level.

3

LEVEL THREE (*Mostly accurate. Breathing & stamina need work*)

PITCH/NOTES/WORDS – Are correct at this level.

TUNING -- Awareness of voice part and how it fits is now evident but not Consistent (60%-80% of time). There are still several intervals that need to be sung higher, etc...

DIPHTHONGS – Awareness of these (50% to 75% of time) is evident, though singer is likely to be turning these too soon or not maintaining open, free sound when executing.

WORD FLOW – Awareness of word connection starting to show now (40% to 60% of time). Definitely a combination of flowing and ploddy/choppy phrases. Consonants may be over-worked at times. Singer needs to add more breath support for better connection.

PHRASE ENERGY – Singer displays knowledge of plan for song (at least 60% of time). Phrases showing signs of vocal energy and some energized held notes are there. More breath support, physical stamina and resonance will raise level.

VOWELS – Singer demonstrates awareness of proper vowel placement (70%-80% of time). Consistency is the key. You may hear varying approaches to same vowel sounds throughout song.

Characteristics of Levels

4 **LEVEL FOUR** (*Vocal Production good! These singers can make learning CDs!*)

PITCH/NOTES/WORDS – Lots of obvious accuracy here!

TUNING -- Singer does a fine job here. Almost all intervals are tuned (85%-90% of time) There are still a few intervals that could/might be even finer tuned, though hard to find.

DIPHTHONGS – Awareness of these and how to execute them is most evident throughout (85%-90% of time). Still, more consistency in singing both vowel sounds of all diphthongs is still achievable.

WORD FLOW – Lots of work apparent here (75%-90% of time). This singer is musical *most* of the time. A few consonants may still be overdone and/or certain vowel sounds may not be *instantly* targeted, causing *rare* minor synchronization problems.

PHRASE ENERGY – A solid understanding and execution of the existing musical plan is evident (75%-90% of time). Singer demonstrates energized phrase endings, accurate phrase beginnings, good sense of established meter, selected rhythms and energized held notes most all of the time. One or two phrases and/or held words may drop slightly in energy and/or rhythmic breathing technique, causing very slight out-of-unit singing on a few rare occasions.

VOWELS – Very consistent presentation of proper vowel sounds (75%-90% of time) due to consistency in resonance and breath support. A broad (east/west) vowel offering tension in the sound may occur, though rare.

5 **LEVEL FIVE** (*Champion Caliber! Transcends Technique!*)

PITCH/NOTES/WORDS – Absolutely flawless!

TUNING -- Intervals are completely accurate and instantly tuned 100% of time!

DIPHTHONGS – All diphthongs are energized and executed correctly 100% of time!

WORD FLOW – 100% connected, energized and totally musical!

PHRASE ENERGY – 100% properly resonated vocal energy! ALL phrases and held words are energized. Attacks are on the target pulse 100% of time. Complete awareness of breathing pattern is evident. Stagger breathing is done without notice. Breath support and physical stamina is at a very high level.

VOWELS – 100% proper vowel production and maintenance of optimum open, free singing space is evident. Resonance and ring are obvious throughout.

“PLUS” vs “MINUS”

If you want to reward a singer in an area that is not QUITE the next level, but close to it, you are encouraged to use a **PLUS (+)** sign. Never EVER score using a Minus (-).

EXAMPLE: 3+...*not* -4

Confidentiality

We all deserve the privacy of our progress...lack, thereof. Be sure that evaluation results are not shared with anyone except the singer and the music team.

Levels Vary

Each of us has a different level of ability. Knowing our assigned singers and their individual skills and needs is very important. Be sensitive to the progress of the INDIVIDUAL and evaluate accordingly.

“Off Nights”

Everybody has “bad days”. As an evaluator, make a point of touching base with your singers each week. Try to become aware of illnesses, moods, stresses, etc...that may affect a singer’s performance. E-mail is a very convenient way to do this.

Equipment Quality

The quality and type of recording equipment used can play a big part in what we hear or don’t hear. If a singer submits consecutive poor quality recordings you might suggest that new equipment is purchased or borrowed. Do your best to evaluate what’s given to you, but if it’s not possible to do give an accurate evaluation, the singer will need to do whatever is necessary to provide you with a better recording.

Constructive Comments

There is no need for anyone to “qualify” an assignment to be an Evaluator. Avoid being too critical in an effort to justify the appointment.. Strive to emphasize the POSITIVE and give constructive advice at all times.

Prioritize

Evaluating with the OVERALL in mind is very important. Listen for OVERALL CONSISTENCIES which seem to cause difficulties for the singer.. Help the singer to prioritize what needs immediate attention and HOW to achieve it. Too many corrections can be overwhelming and defeat the purpose of the program.

OUR INTENTION...

...is to HELP each singer find ways of improving INDIVIDUALLY. This program is NOT designed to qualify singers for the “right to perform”. This program is to be used as a tool for Music Teams and Singer to improve without pressure. All recommendations we make must be achievable and realistic per the individual member’s ability.



SuperSingers Word Power

7.

Apparent

- Distinct* ----- "There's distinct effort for consistency"
Evident ----- "It's evident that you are working hard..."
Noticeable ----- "Your vowels are noticeably improved"...

Appreciate

- Cherish* ----- "You sing as if you cherish each chord"
Enjoy ----- "Your consistency was enjoyable to hear"
Prize ----- "What a prize voice!"

Caliber

- Merit* ----- "Your effort deserves great merit."
Quality ----- "Strive for more _____ for even better quality."

Consistency

- Congruity* ----- "Yes! There's a congruity in those phrases!"
Coherence ----- "Strive for more coherence to the plan"
Conformity ----- "Even more conformity to the others around you..."

Correct

- Amend* ----- "If only WE could amend a few of those trouble spots...."
Rectify ----- "Let's get together and rectify these...."
Remedy ----- "A remedy is available. Call me for help!"

Flat/Out-of-Tune

- Underpitched* ----- A few of those intervals are slightly underpitched
Strive to sing "on top", esp. at phrase endings, etc...
Less weight on your consonants will give you more vocal freedom.....

Confidence

- Certainty* ----- "Better support will give you more certainty"
Assurance ----- "Sing with even more assurance."
Conviction ----- "Yeah! Now you're singing with conviction!"

Emphasize

- Accentuate* ----- "Accentuate your breathing effort...."
Underscore ----- "Underscore your awareness of dynamics by...."
Stress ----- "Stress even better breath support...."
Feature ----- "Feature your diphthongs even more..."

Energy/Energize

- Strengthen* ----- "Strengthen your lows with resonance...."
Vigor ----- "Your vigorous effort is commendable...."

Effort

- Attempt* ----- "Attempt at dynamic changes is good...now...."
Endeavor ----- "Good phrase flow is an endeavor. Congratulations!"