

SONGFEST 2020

Judging Guidelines

Thank you for serving as a Songfest judge! This document is intended to help you decide what you should be considering as you evaluate the group's performances.

Before reading the rest of this guide in detail,
we'd like to highlight for you:

FOUR THINGS TO REMEMBER

1. SONGFEST IS NOT A VOLUME CONTEST

- "Louder" isn't necessarily better or more enthusiastic.
- Volume is not the same as musical skill, harmony, or musicality in general.
- Shouting is not singing

2. SONGFEST IS NOT A CONTEST OF SIZE

- Bigger isn't always better. Or worse.
- In all categories, judge a group based on how well it uses the number of people it has (whether large, medium, or small)

3. SONGFEST IS NOT A POPULARITY CONTEST

- Do not be influenced by the crowd. Different groups have different numbers of supporters in the audience at each performance.
- DO feel free to be influenced, inspired, and/or excited by a group's on-stage performance!

4. IN SONGFEST, THE **GROUP** IS MUCH MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE INDIVIDUAL

- This concept applies in evaluating and scoring all categories.
- Solos and small group performances should influence a group's score FAR less than that of the overall group performance.
- Don't just look at the performers at the front of the stage.
- There is more on this in the rest of the guide.

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General Scoring Principles

For all categories:

- Use the full scoring range (don't give every group 8-10 in every category)
- A score of 5-6 is average, 1-2 is really weak, and 9-10 is exceptional
- Assess each category separately (don't be swayed by other category scores)
- If two groups have a similar level of performance, the higher score should go to the group which more fully incorporates and features their entire cast (as opposed to featuring soloists or small ensembles)

Categorical Considerations

Music

- Song choice (fun, clever, interesting, moving, inspiring, funny, etc.)
- Harmonies (more is generally better)
- Blend, tone, togetherness
- Precision (beginning/ending phrases together)
- Emotion (not to be confused with volume or size)
- Does the music further the story? (good) Or is it random? (bad)
- The GROUP sound (as opposed to soloists)

Choreography

- Overall visual effect (impressive, clever, funny, interesting, etc.)
- Togetherness, synchronization
- Complexity/difficulty/technicality
- Variety (different styles, seeing different performers)
- Helps with storytelling? (good)
- Emotion
- The GROUP performance (as opposed to soloists)

Sets and Costumes

- Overall visual effect (style, identifiable, interesting to see)
- Appropriateness (in general and for the group theme)
- Creativity, originality
- Resourcefulness
- Helps tell story (characters, changes, settings, etc.)
- Props included in this category

Theme

- Overall thematic effect (tie-in with overall Songfest theme)
- Story and dialogue
- Continuity, clarity (can you follow what's happening?)
- Cohesion of story, music, choreography, and sets/costumes/props
- Creativity (in topic choice, but moreso in the interpretation of that topic)
- Cleverness, humor, style, entertainment value

Enthusiasm

- Energy (not to be confused with volume), excitement
- Charisma, pride, spirit, unity, passion
- Confidence, dedication
- Facial expressions
- Fun-ness, entertainment value
- Intangibles
- Things not covered in other categories
- NOT the same as shouting, screaming, being crazy
- Applies to WHOLE GROUP, and not individuals