

Senior Talent Competition Guidelines

**Sponsored by the Church of God USA Missions
Division of World Evangelization
Cleveland, Tennessee**

Statement of Purpose and Objectives

Senior Talent seeks to achieve the following:

1. To recognize and involve Church of God Seniors who demonstrate talent, skill, and accomplishment in art, music and writing.
2. To motivate Seniors to utilize their talents in worship and in the evangelism ministries of the church, consecrating their talents for the purpose of Christian witness.
3. To provide evaluative data on performances which may serve as a guide for continued development of skills and talents for the glory of God.
4. To promote personal proficiency and growth in spiritual development, academic improvement, performance of Christian music, and proficiency in art and writing.
5. To provide opportunities for Seniors to interact socially in Christian fellowship.
6. To develop a sense of accomplishment, ministry and communication for Christ through their talents.

Levels of Competition

State/Regional Competition: The program on the state level will be directed by the state/regional director of USA Missions. If the director feels that competition prior to the National level is needed, he can initiate that competition for any category or categories he deems necessary. However, if a category is offered beyond the scope of categories in this booklet, there will be no National competition for that category.

National Competition: The International USA Missions Division will arrange and supervise competition on the National level.

Participation

Entry Requirements for each Participant

1. Age 50 and above on the day National competition begins.
2. A registered (*paid*) delegate for the entire jubilee.
3. A regular attendee of the Church of God.
4. Can only represent the Church of God which he/she regularly attends.
5. State winners are to be officially entered in National competition by their state director.
6. If the state winner in any category is unable to participate at the National competition, the runner-up shall be eligible to compete per approval of state director.
7. Can only enter a specific category once but can enter other categories in same division or other divisions. (*Example: Someone enters two poetry writings will only be allowed to submit one before competing at state level. On the other hand, if someone enters one poetry and one short story this would be acceptable, because it is two different categories.*) This requirement is for all divisions.
8. State winners of the art and writing divisions must submit same piece, they cannot change to a different piece at National competition.
9. Each entry of the art and writing division must be the original work and idea of the participant, and must not have been entered in previous state and National competition.

Standards of Adjudication

What standard of performance may an adjudicator reasonably expect of a participant or group of participants? The following comments are—of necessity—highly generalized. It is not our purpose to set up arbitrary standards of performance, which must be achieved by all participants in order to receive certain ratings. Rather, each performance must be adjudicated individually and in the final analysis each adjudicator must decide what rating each performance deserves.

Brief descriptions of the type of performance which might be awarded the respective ratings in competition are given below. These descriptions are offered, not as an attempt to pre-adjudicate any performance, but merely in hope that they will provide background to assist the participant in understanding the adjudication process.

Superior – 4.5 through 5.0

This rating represents the finest conceivable performance, worthy of distinction of being recognized as among the very best. While the adjudicator might find some minor points to criticize and make some helpful suggestions for further improvements, remarks would generally be complimentary for outstanding work.

Excellent – 3.5 through 4.4

This rating reflects an unusually worthy performance, but not one worthy of the highest rating due to minor defects. Yet, it is a performance of distinctive quality. The participant or group of participants with an excellent rating usually show the result of sound fundamental training, but the performance lacks the polish and finesse to qualify for a superior rating. It is relatively easy for an adjudicator to comment on such a performance because the weaknesses stand out clearly against a generally first-rate background and suggestions are usually focused on something specific and helpful.

Very Good – 2.5 through 3.4

This rating is awarded for a very good performance, but one that is not outstanding. The performance shows accomplishments and marked promise but is lacking in one or more essential qualities. The rating indicates much room for improvement in several of the fundamental items listed on the Adjudicator's scoring sheet. There would probably not be adequate space as well as time to record each separate error as it occurred. The participant would have some basically fine qualities, and there should be ample opportunities for the adjudicator to make suggestions for sound improvement in those fundamental factors in which the performance revealed weaknesses.

Good – 1.5 through 2.4

This rating describes a performance that shows some obvious weaknesses. These may simply reflect a lack of preparation time. This rating represents a performance which is generally weak and uncertain. There are numerous errors and the performance reveals basic weaknesses in most of the fundamental factors listed on the scoring sheet. The adjudicator will probably not devote much space to pointing out specific errors in the performance. Comments, however, will likely be encouraging and contain helpful suggestions for improvement.

Satisfactory – 1.0 through 1.4

This rating indicates a performance which reveals much room for improvement. It indicates a performance in which participants reveal almost a complete lack of preparedness and understanding. In some cases, this may be due to participants attempting to perform in a category which is far too advanced for their ability. In others it may be due to an accumulation of careless and bad performance habits, which only tend to become accentuated and more noticeable as the individual or group matures. The adjudicator will point out any commendable features and the basic weaknesses in the performance and will make suggestions for improvement. These comments should encourage the participants to work toward improvement so that they may qualify for a higher rating in the future.

Explanation of Adjudication

Scoring the Participant

Each participant is evaluated according to certain specific factors listed on the score sheet in which we have included on each description.

Tallying the Score

After the adjudication has been completed, the score sheets are used to prepare an adjudicator's summary. On this summary, the score sheets from all the adjudicators for a particular participant are averaged together to determine the single rating for the participant. The tally person will convert the rating of each participant into a category.

The reason for this mathematical adjustment is obvious. Without a tempered chart, there probably would be no superior ratings; and most participants would rate proportionately lower.

For example, without the tempering effect, in order to gain a superior rating, a participant would have to score five points on each factor throughout the performance in the opinion of each adjudicator. This would be unlikely to say the least. With the tempered chart, there will be a few superior ratings, and all other participants will score in equal proportion.

Determining the Final Rating

The final decision on the rating to be earned by the participant is made by the panel of adjudicators. The prepared adjudicator's summary of each participant's performance, with the corresponding score sheets attached, is then returned to the adjudicators for a final analysis.

Since some relativism is involved in the scoring process, it is the privilege of the adjudicators to view the outcome and then alter any original scoring, if retrospection deems it necessary and feasible. The factor of relativism may cause one or more of the adjudicators unknowingly to become extreme in either direction. In fact, it is impossible to establish a proper median (i.e., an equal number of scores above and below the middle point of all the scores) until all participants have participated for the adjudicators. Hence, the provision for final deliberation assures the most accurate decision possible from the panel of adjudicators as a whole.

Determining the Final Winner

The participant with the highest score in any given category, after the adjudicators have completed their deliberation, is the winner of that particular category. In the case of numerical ties, the adjudicators will determine, through deliberation, which of the participants involved in the tie is to be the winner. The decision of the adjudicators is final and no explanation to anyone is needed to justify the decision.

Adjudicator's Evaluation to the Participant

There is space on each score sheet for the adjudicator to write comments and suggestions to the participant or group of participants as a current evaluation of their performance and as a guide for their development in the future.

Within a few weeks after state/regional and National levels of competition, the USA Missions Division will mail a copy of the written comments and evaluations from each adjudicator to the talent participants. Through this procedure, the adjudicators have an opportunity to communicate any observations they wish to make concerning strengths, weaknesses, and areas that need attention. Potentially, this adds a learning experience to the Senior Talent program.

Creative Art Division

Classification and Description of Categories

The creative art division has ten categories of participation.

1. Crochet/Knitting Weaving

Art of creating fabric by use of needles or loom.

2. Dry Media

Any two dimensional work, including but not limited to drawing, done with dry media such as pencil, pastel, conte crayon, charcoal, crayon, etc. or combination done on paper or other flat surfaces.

3. Embroidery/Needlepoint/Cross-stitch/Applique

Art of adding decoration, embellishment, etc. to fabric for a finished design.

4. Handcraft

Any handmade item with artistic emphasis that does not fit into any other category. Ceramics must be labeled "handmade or from a mould". Awards will be made at the discretion of the adjudicator.

5. Oil/Acrylic Painting

Any oil based or synthetic based (such as acrylic or alkyd) painting done on a two-dimensional surface such as canvas or hardboard.

6. Photography

Any image created by the use of camera, whether film or digital. Image must be printed on paper no smaller than 8x10 inches.

7. Quilting

Stitching through layers of fabric and quilting so as to create a design, such as quilts, wall hangings, table runners, clothing, etc.

8. Sculpture/Carving

Two or three dimensional sculptural work created by carving or modeling. May be figurative or non-figurative. Excludes ceramic vessels with carved surfaces.

9. Wet Media Painting

Any water based media such as transparent watercolor, opaque watercolor, water based tempera or any combination of these done on a two-dimensional surface. Includes acrylic thinned down to the consistency of watercolor done on paper.

10. **Woodwork**

Wood pieces formed by the use of mechanical aids such as saws, sanders, etc. This includes furniture, musical instruments, tools, toys, etc. whether functional or decorative.

Listed below and ***where applicable*** are the factors used on the adjudicator's score sheet to rate your performance and you need to be familiar with them:

- Effectiveness of composition – Harmony, visual balance, rhythm, proportion, repetition, contrast, line, shape, color, texture
- Creativity - Imagination, individuality
- Craftsmanship and Technique – Technical proficiency, attention to detail, neatness of work, appropriateness of material/medium

Not Acceptable

All general items categorized as a floral arrangement.

Music Division

Performance Requirements

1. Participation is limited to the performance of Christian music. All styles of Christian music carry the same weight with the adjudicators. It is the quality of the performance that is judged. Christian music allows the competition to be more distinctive; it is directed toward the fulfillment of the objectives of the Senior Talent program.
2. In the State/Regional and National competitions, participants in each category of vocals or instrumentals (solos, ensembles, choirs) will perform one selection.
3. Sound tracks may be used in any category but must be on a CD, no cassette tapes will be accepted. Also, the CD needs to be a single track and no multiple tracks. (WARNING: If the adjudicators determine background vocals or duplication of the solo instrument on the tape distracts or interferes with the performance, points may be subtracted from the score.)
4. A participant in the National competition is disqualified if he/she fails to appear at the designated time and place for his/her performance.
5. Vocal participants may hold a microphone while singing in competition. (WARNING: Proper microphone technique is very important when a vocal participant selects to hold the microphone in competition.)
6. Maximum performance time for solos and ensembles is five minutes. Maximum performance time for choirs is ten minutes.
7. Performance must be "live". Pre-programmed sequencing is allowed. However, if the adjudicators determine that the sequencing distracts or interferes with the performance; points may be subtracted from the score. Only the "live" performance will be adjudicated.
8. The same participants in a specific category at state level must be the same participants at the national level, no replacements.
9. Conductors are not required to be age 50 but must be a registered paid delegate.
10. All performances are recorded (audio & video) and by entering you are agreeing to have your performance recorded and duplicated for sale with all rights retained by the Church of God.

Classification and Description of Categories

There are six categories in the Music Division with a total of 15 areas of participation. Classification and description of categories and the respective areas of participation are described in the next few pages.

1. Vocal Solo Category

Classification

- Vocal Solo-Male
- Vocal Solo-Female

Description

The vocal solo category includes two areas of participation. The first area, vocal solo-male, is defined as one singer – male, accompanied or unaccompanied. The second area, vocal solo- female, is defined as one singer – female, accompanied or unaccompanied.

The soloist is usually accompanied by piano, organ or both; but any instrument or combination of instruments may be used as accompaniment. The accompaniment is not adjudicated. Only the vocal performance is evaluated in the vocal solo category. Nevertheless, a good strong accompaniment will enhance the solo performance. Evaluation of the soloist begins with entry on stage and ends with exit.

Voices are classified according to range, sex and somewhat according to quality. From high to low the basic classifications are soprano, alto, tenor, and bass. Soprano and alto designate respectively high and low female voices. Tenor and bass designate high and low ranged male voices. The most ordinary range for a female voice is that of a mezzo (or half) and lies between a true soprano and alto. The parallel male voice between that of tenor and bass is known as baritone. These constitute the six basic voice classifications to be used in classifying soloists in the vocal solo category.

Listed below are the factors used on the adjudicator's score sheet to rate your performance and you need to be familiar with them:

- TONE - quality, beauty, control
- INTONATION - pitch level, accuracy level
- DICTION - naturalness, purity of vowels, clarity of consonants
- TECHNIQUE - breathing, posture, rhythm, accuracy of notes
- INTERPRETATION - phrasing, style, tempo, expression
- MUSICAL EFFECT - fluency, vitality, artistry, memorization
- LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY - easy, medium, difficult
- OTHER FACTORS - stage presence and appearance, choice of music

2. Vocal Ensemble Category

Classification

- Vocal Ensemble

Description

The vocal ensemble category is defined as 2 to 12 singers, including duets, trios, quartets, quintets, etc.; accompanied or unaccompanied with one or more singers to each vocal part. Vocal ensembles may be all male, all female, or mixed. The vocal ensembles may perform with or without a conductor. As in the vocal solo category, only the singers will be evaluated; however, a strong accompaniment is most beneficial. This category requires that more than one part be sung. This does not exclude unison or reduced-parts sections, but the main emphasis of the musical arrangement is upon harmonic blend. For example, a duet might utilize two parts; whereas, a group of ten voices will probably want to utilize four or more parts.

Listed below are the factors used on the adjudicator's score sheet to rate your performance and you need to be familiar with them:

- TONE - quality, beauty, control
- INTONATION - pitch level, accuracy level
- DICTION - naturalness, purity of vowels, clarity of consonants
- TECHNIQUE - breathing, posture, rhythm, precision
- BALANCE - blend, harmonic parts, dynamics

- INTERPRETATION - phrasing, style, tempo, expression
- MUSICAL EFFECT - feeling of ensemble, fluency, vitality, artistry, memorization
- LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY - easy, medium, difficult
- OTHER FACTORS - stage presence and appearance, choice of music

3. Choir Category

Classification

- Local Church Choir
- Statewide Choir

Description – Local Church Choir

The local church choir category consists of 13 or more singers with or without a conductor. Choirs may consist of all males, all females, or mixed. Accompaniment is optional. Only the vocal performance of the group will be evaluated and not the accompaniment. A local church is permitted to enter only one choir in National competition.

Description – Statewide Choir

The statewide choir category consists of 13 or more singers with or without a conductor. Choirs may consist of all males, all females, or mixed. The singers can be made up from various choirs within the state or region. Accompaniment is optional. Only the vocal performance of the group will be evaluated and not the accompaniment.

Listed below are the factors used on the adjudicator’s score sheet to rate your performance and you need to be familiar with them:

- TONE - quality, beauty, control
- INTONATION - pitch level, accuracy level
- DICTION - naturalness, purity of vowels, clarity of consonants
- TECHNIQUE - breathing, posture, rhythm, precision
- BALANCE - blend, harmonic parts, dynamics
- INTERPRETATION - phrasing, style, tempo, expression
- MUSICAL EFFECT - feeling of ensemble, fluency, vitality, artistry, memorization
- LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY - easy, medium, difficult
- OTHER FACTORS - stage presence and appearance, choice of music

4. Instrumental Solo – Keyboard Category

Classification

- Piano
- Electronic Keyboard
- Accordion

Description

The instrumental solo–keyboard category consists of solo performances in three areas of participation. The three areas include: piano (acoustic piano, harpsichord and celesta), electronic

keyboard and accordion. Participants in the electronic keyboard area may choose to perform on multiple electronic keyboards.

Listed below are the factors used on the adjudicator's score sheet to rate your performance and you need to be familiar with them:

- TONE - quality, beauty, control
- TECHNIQUE - precision, use of pedals, note accuracy, finger dexterity, rhythm
- INTERPRETATION - phrasing, style, tempo, contrast, mood
- MUSICAL EFFECT - fluency, vitality, artistry, memorization
- LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY - easy, medium, difficult
- OTHER FACTORS - stage presence and appearance, choice of music

5. Instrumental Solo – Non-Keyboard Category

Classification

- Strings-Bowed
- Strings-Plucked
- Woodwind
- Brass
- Percussion–Definite Pitch
- Percussion–Indefinite Pitch

Description

The instrumental solo-non-keyboard category includes six areas of participation: **strings- bowed** (violin, viola, cello, double bass, etc.), **strings-plucked** (acoustic or amplified guitar, banjo, mandolin, harp, lute, autoharp, etc.), **woodwind** (flute, harmonica, piccolo, clarinet, saxophone, oboe, English horn, bassoon, contrabassoon, melodica, etc.), **brass** (trumpet, coronet, French horn, tuba, sousaphone, baritone, euphonium, trombone, bass trombone, etc.), **percussion-definite pitch** (timpani, kettledrums, glockenspiel, orchestra bells, tubular bells, chimes, xylophone, marimba, steel drum etc.), and **percussion-indefinite pitch** (drums, acoustic or electric, cymbals, triangle, gong tam-tam, congos, tambourine, woodblocks, temple blocks, castanets, maracas, claves; any combination of indefinite pitch percussion instruments may be played by one player, etc.)

This category covers all instruments except those classified as keyboard. It must be stressed firmly that the adjudicators will rate the soloist's performance and not the accompanist's performance. If the accompaniment embodies a group of players, the soloist must clearly be the soloist and not simply part of the accompaniment or ensemble. The participant must perform on only one instrument. There is one exception to this ruling: A participant in the percussion–indefinite pitch area may perform any combination of the indefinite pitch percussion instruments. A participant in the percussion–definite pitch area must perform on only one instrument, with the exception of timpani.

Listed below are the factors used on the adjudicator's score sheet to rate your performance and you need to be familiar with them:

Strings

- TONE - beauty, control
- INTONATION - accuracy of pitch
- TECHNIQUE - bowing, facility, fingering, rhythm
- INTERPRETATION - expression, phrasing, style, tempo
- MUSICAL EFFECT - fluency, artistry
- LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY - easy, medium, difficult
- OTHER FACTORS - stage presence and appearance, choice of music

Woodwind

- TONE - beauty, control
- INTONATION - accuracy of pitch
- TECHNIQUE - articulation, auxiliary
- INTERPRETATION - expression, phrasing, style, tempo
- MUSICAL EFFECT - fluency, artistry
- LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY - easy, medium, difficult
- OTHER FACTORS - stage presence and appearance, choice of music

Brass

- TONE - beauty, control
- INTONATION - accuracy of pitch
- TECHNIQUE - articulation, auxiliary fingering, breathing, embouchure, facility, rhythm
- INTERPRETATION - expression, phrasing, style, tempo
- MUSICAL EFFECT - fluency, artistry
- LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY - easy, medium, difficult
- OTHER FACTORS - stage presence and appearance, choice of music

Percussion

- TONE - beauty, control
- TECHNIQUE-RUDIMENTS - rhythmic accuracy
- POSITION - body, hands, instrument
- INTERPRETATION - balance, dynamics, expression, phrasing, tempo
- MUSICAL EFFECT - fluency, artistry
- LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY - easy, medium, difficult
- OTHER FACTORS - stage presence and appearance, choice of music

6. Instrumental Ensemble Category

Classification

- Instrumental Ensemble

Description

The instrumental ensemble category is designated as 2-12 players (handbells-unlimited number of players) with any combination of instruments with only one area of participation. The participants may perform with or without a conductor. When performing without a conductor, precision is imperative for the group of participants. Listed below are the factors used on the adjudicator's score sheet to rate your performance and you need to be familiar with them:

- TONE - quality, beauty, control
- INTONATION - pitch level, accuracy level, tuning
- TECHNIQUE - fingering, precision, rhythm, breathing or bowing, choice and execution, articulation, embouchure
- BALANCE - blend, harmonic parts, dynamics
- INTERPRETATION - phrasing, style, tempo, expression
- MUSICAL EFFECT - fluency, vitality, artistry, memorization
- LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY - easy, medium, difficult
- OTHER FACTORS - stage presence and appearance, choice of music

Creative Writing Division

Classification and Description of Categories

Classification

- Poetry
- Short Story

Description

The creative writing division has two categories of participation:

- **Poetry** is a rhymed or unrhymed verse of not more than 16 lines which develop a central theme or image.
- **Short Story** is a fictional piece of not more than 2000 words which utilize setting, plot, and characterization to reveal an implied theme.

Listed below are the factors used on the adjudicator's score sheet to rate your performance and you need to be familiar with them:

Poetry

- Impact – overall effectiveness
- Originality – creativity and imagination
- Use of Language – alliteration, assonance, effectiveness of phrasing, care in diction, precision in word selection, intensity of phrase construction
- Control – precision of line construction, effectiveness of rhythm (either classical or natural), ease in flow of lines, evidence of mastery of poetic technique and discipline
- Imagery – ability to create word pictures, appeal to imagination, senses and intellect, symbolism
- Theme – message or meaning of poem
- Participation Requirements – participant information, typewritten, double spaced, correct category, line limitation

Short Story

- Impact – overall effectiveness
- Characterization – believability of characters, insight into human behavior
- Setting – unity, appropriateness to theme, development
- Plot – feasibility, unit of action, appropriateness to theme
- Mechanics – grammatical usage, spelling, punctuation
- Theme – evidence of abstract thought, clarity, subtlety of presentation, significance
- Use of Language – symbolism, alliteration, assonance, effectiveness of sentence structure
- Participation Requirements – participant information, typewritten, double spaced, correct category, word limitation

