



**Gymnastics**  
Australia

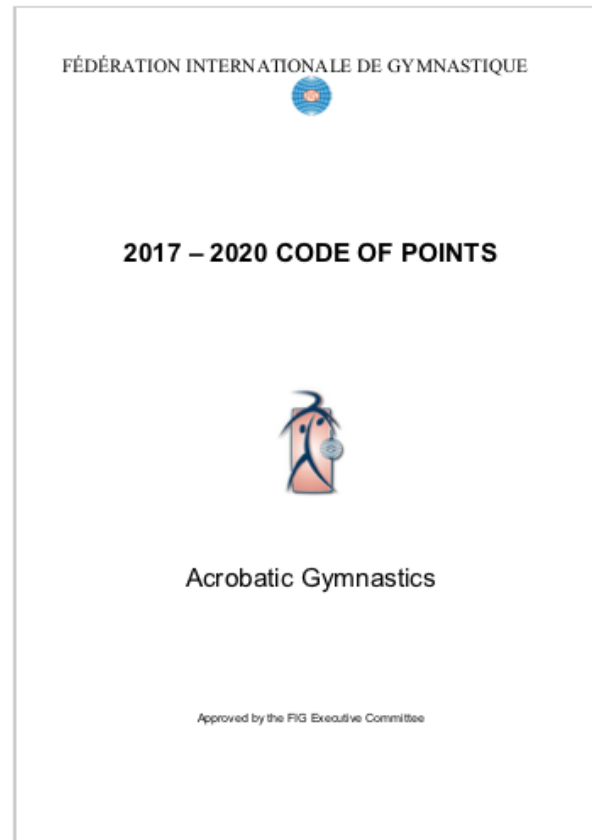
# Judging artistry for acrobatic gymnastics

# Judging artistic merit for Acrobatic Gymnastics (Acro)

You will need the following resources handy:

FIG Code of Points – relevant articles for judging artistry.

Artistry judging sheets



Artistry Judging Guide 2017-2020

Judges Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Exercise: Bal / Dyn / Comb / Final      WP / MP / MXP / WG / MG

Judges Name: \_\_\_\_\_

na. / ID / exercise:	← Poor		Satisfactory		Good		Very Good		Excellent		Perfect →		Score
Partnership	1	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.9	2		
R'ship / Connection	1	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.9	2		
Expression	1	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.9	2		
Projecting emotion, character, attitude, Feeling	1	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.9	2		
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<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>8.0</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>9.0</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>10.0</b>		

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# Purpose

This module covers how we judge artistry of acrobatic gymnastics exercises at competitions.

## Learning outcomes:

By the conclusion of this module you will,

- Explain the intent of the reward system for artistry;
- recall the 5 criteria used in the assessment of artistry within exercises;
- identify when attributes of a routine are demonstrating each of the 5 criteria of artistry;

## Relevance:

This module is relevant to the following levels of judge education:

- Intermediate
- Advanced

Level	Exe	Art	CJP	DIFF	
1	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	Advanced	
2					
3					
4	Intermediate		Intermediate	Advanced	Advanced
5					
6					
7		Advanced		Advanced	Advanced
8	Silver			Silver	
9	Advanced	Intermediate		Advanced	Advanced
10					
Int	Advanced		Silver	FIG Brevet	

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# Acrobatic exercises (also called ‘routines’)

## General principles

Our exercises are made up of elements of difficulty (also called ‘skills’), choreographic dance and individual elements.

To be an artistry judge, you must understand the attributes that make up an ideal performance.

- Artistry is concerned with the **choreographic structure** and **design** of an exercise, and the **variety** of content including the selection of elements of difficulty. It also includes the **relationship** between partners, movement and music.
- An artistic performance **reflects** the unique qualities of the pair or group’s **style, expression** and **musicality**. It is the ability to transcend all of the requirements of the sport to touch the audience and judges.
- An exercise is presented to spectators and judges. It must establish an **identity** particular to each pair and group and be enhanced by gymnastic attire that complements the choreography.

## Judging Artistry

**Our job is to rank the performances, with a score out of 10 using a method of reward**

Artistry will always be **subjective**.

The current FIG Code of Points has very little detail published about what makes great artistry. With these rules it is possible to justify most scores – which of course can leave everyone confused about how to get a high score.

And yet, the audience can recognise the difference between good routines and great routines – and of course this leads to frustration if the score they get doesn't separate these differences in quality.

Internationally, we're not seeing scores get past 9.5 – and we can't solve that problem here in Australia.

So what we must do, is **use the rules** we have to come to a **common understanding across**

**Australia** so that our artistry scores can be understood.

# Artistry criteria

**There are 5 criteria considered when judging artistry**

Click each aspect to explore what is included within it. When you have looked at all aspects, click next to continue.



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## Performance

Broadly speaking, this criterion is the **how** of the exercise.

**How** well the gymnasts do every aspect of their exercise.

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# Quick Quiz:

TRUE OR FALSE? Click to answer:

Artistry judges only look at the dance – the parts in between the skills

TRUE

FALSE

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## Performance

Is the act, process or art of **performing** by using amplitude, space, pathways, levels and synchronisation

We use the word **choreography** to describe the mapping out of the body's movements, both gymnastic and artistic, over space and time, as well as in relation to the other performance partners.

When we consider and rank the performance of an exercise we have to look at the **whole package** – the elements, the positions, the links, the relationships demonstrated.

Let's look at each component in more detail:

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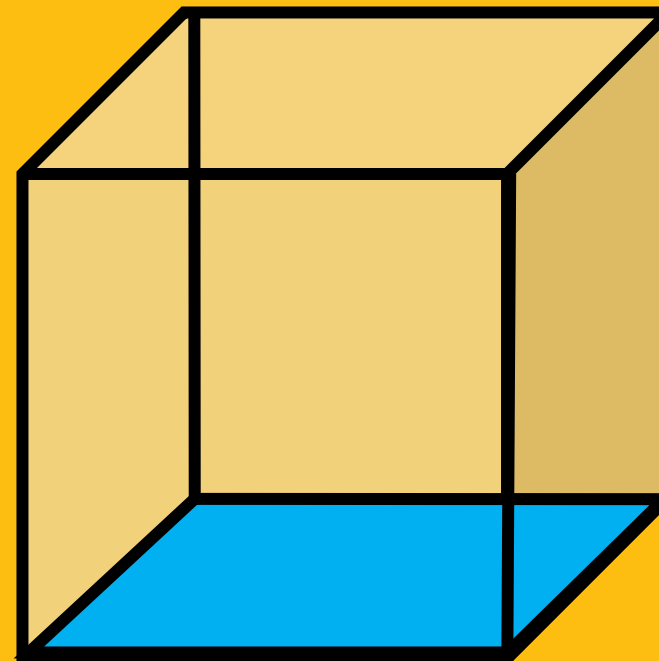


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## Performance – Use of space

Consider the space the gymnasts have available to them – it is a **cube**.

Reward those who demonstrate use of the levels within the cube as well as coverage around the floor.



- High – above head height
- Medium – standing height
- Low – leotard touching the floor.

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## Performance – Use of space

Watch for element selection:

- ✓ do they have elements showing highs and lows?

Watch for what levels are used during the linking choreography:

- ✓ on the floor?
- ✓ on feet?
- ✓ lifts up high?

Watch for the pair/group's coverage of the floor area:

- ✓ are the elements spread around the floor?
- ✓ does the dance carry them around their space?

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## Performance – Amplitude

Movements must be performed with amplitude, using the **maximum** amount of space possible, or be performed using subtlety and nuance as indicated by the music.

Look for those gymnasts who are:

- ✓ moving and dancing on their **toes**;
- ✓ Holding their body with tall tight **posture**;
- ✓ Making their movements ‘fill’ their space – stretching, exaggerating, emphasizing their movements.

Let’s now look at examples:

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## Performance – Amplitude examples:

Explore each example by clicking to view. When you have seen them all, click next.

Example 1

Example 2

Example 3

Examples  
4 & 5

Example 6

Example 7

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## Performance – Pathways

Consider the variety in directions the gymnasts use to travel around their space.

- Do they move in predictable straight lines?
- Do they move using curves, zigzag or in ways that create patterns between them?
- Do they surprise you with the directions they use?

Explore each example by clicking to view. When you have seen them all, click next.

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Example 2

Example 3

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## Performance – Synchronisation

A special aspect that sets acrobatic gymnastics apart from other gym-sports, is the way gymnasts can be in synchronised harmony with each other.

Synchronisation must be considered in 2 ways:

- 1) Partners matching in their **timing** of their movements; and
- 2) Partners matching in their **positions/shapes** of their movement.

When watching for synchrony, when the timing is done well, any mistakes with positions becomes more visible.

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## Performance – Synchronisation

Watch for moments of synchronisation done well.

- Do they dance and move at precisely the same time as each other?
- Are their bodies positions in the same way? Look for the details, head position, finger positions, toes and feet positioning.
- Are they showing the same ‘lines’ through arms, legs, shoulders, hips?

Explore each example by clicking to view. When you have seen them all, click next.

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Example 2

Example 3

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## Performance – guide to reward:

*Use of space, amplitude, pathways, synchronicity*

0.0-0.1 – At least 1 of the above aspects of performance is demonstrated by the gymnasts.

0.2-0.3 – All of the above aspects of performance are demonstrated by the gymnasts.

0.3-0.5 – All the above aspects are demonstrated with 1 aspect standing out as done well.

0.6-0.7 – Most of the above aspects are clearly done very well throughout the exercise with some aspects outstanding.

0.8-1.0 – The performance qualities were outstanding across all of the aspects.

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## Expression

Expression is making the audience understand your thoughts or feelings, character or attitude.

Expression goes hand in hand with musicality, as it's not just emotion for its own sake – but rather, it's the **matching** of the emotion, feelings and characters as dictated by the selected music, by the gymnasts.

The pair/group must demonstrate the ability to **project the emotion of the music** throughout their performance.

This expression is to be demonstrated through their face and body movement.

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## Expression – Body expression

Look for gymnasts who are using their body to express emotions, feelings, characters. This could be seen as:

- ✓ Tempo of the body's movements reflect the tempo of the music
- ✓ Playful themes and happy moods performed with staccato movements with full extension.
- ✓ Serious or fierce themes performed with strong and powerful movements

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## Expression – Facial expression

The most expressive part of a gymnast is their face.

Expressing an emotion does not mean simply showing a smile. Showing happiness and joy through a performance is great, but it's not the only emotion.

Reward those groups who are demonstrating the emotions, feelings or attitudes of the music throughout their exercise.

In general, facial expression of partners must be similar. When the base is very intense and serious, and the top is always smiling, there is a big disconnection and this must not attract as much reward as if it had matched.

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## Expression – Congruence

When you watch the expression being displayed, is the expression logical and does it match, partner to partner?

Example 1 - congruent

Example 2 – not congruent

Example 3 – acted expression

Example 4 – genuine expression

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## Expression – what we DON'T want:



Here's a quick list of what FIG Technical Committee have explicitly stated they want to

### DISCOURAGE:

- overly dramatic – we are SPORT and not the ballet nor are we the circus, we are not on stage in a play – we are not actors.
- Facial expressions shown, for the sake of showing an expression. But they do not match **Example 2** ryline or theme being performed.
- Do not want excessive “sexy”. This is particularly important consideration when you are watching the expression ‘match’ the music. If the music selection is sexual, the expression is not good if **Example 3** also is not to be rewarded if it is...

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## Expression – guide to your reward:

0.0-0.1 – Expression is attempted once, by at least 1 partner.

0.2-0.3 – Expression is attempted by at least 1 partner, more than once in the exercise.

0.3-0.5 – Expression is clearly present by all partners most of the time. Mostly it is congruent and logical.

0.6-0.7 – Expression is done very well, both face and body throughout the exercise, by all partners in a way that matches.

0.8-1.0 – Expression was an absolute standout in this exercise and was done brilliantly.

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## Partnership – Relationship:

The code of points describes partnership as:

- ✓ There must be a **logical relationship** and **connection** between the individuals within their partnership.
- ✓ Partners should have the ability to go beyond their own relationship to **touch the audience**.

When you are looking to reward partnership, there are 3 factors to consider.

1. Is the partner selection logical?
2. Are the partners at a complimentary level?
  - Do they **LOOK GOOD TOGETHER**?

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## Partnership – logical relationship:

Often this aspect can be correctly judged based on how the group come to their start position.

In acro, we must be aware of the look our sport gives the general public audience, where child protection is critical and everyone’s business. Logical relationship is the area were this can be rewarded (and not rewarded) as need-be, to communicate this back in the score.

A logical relationship is one where the maturity of the partners is similar, the gymnastic training and capability levels are similar and they look appropriate dancing together.

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## Partnership – logical relationship cont.:

Illogical relationships are those where

- ✗ the partners are an adult and child partnered together;
- ✗ The size difference is significant, giving clear advantage: as the base is big and strong compared to a very slight, small top. [Example](#)
- ✗ The physical ability of the partners has an experienced gymnast paired with a novice, who clearly struggles to keep up. This may be seen as very limited choreography for the novice and the experienced gymnast is the ‘star’.

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## Partnership – Connection:

Words used to describe visual connections include

- ✓ ‘they have chemistry’
- ✓ ‘they look like they could be sisters’
- ✓ ‘they are performing as one’



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## Partnership – Connection cont.

There are many ways connection can be demonstrated. These different ways overlap with other aspects of artistry:

- ✓ Their expressions are logical, congruent and **real** – they come from their heart.
- ✓ They move **with** each other, intentionally, like they have grown up together.
- ✓ They're amplitude and lines **match** and they are in time together.
- ✓ Each gymnast's quality of performance level is **equal** (not one clearly better than the other).

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## Artistry criteria

**There are 5 criteria considered when judging artistry**

Click each aspect to explore what is included within it. When you have looked at all aspects, click next to continue.



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## Partnership – Connection examples

Click the examples below and rank them only in terms of their partnership. One you have viewed them both, click the answer button to reveal our preferred rank.

Example 1

Example 2

Click to reveal the answer

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## Partnership – Connection examples

In the 1st example there were limited moments of connection demonstrated. They did the same dance moves as each other, but they did not do them truly together. There was limited eye contact with each other. The top was much smaller and younger than her bases. They looked like 3 individuals doing the same routine.

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> example, the three girls looked and moved at precisely the same time, with their choreography showing interaction, expression outwards and to each other and they performed as one group, not three individuals.

**These should be ranked with the 2<sup>nd</sup> example with higher partnership score than the 1<sup>st</sup> example.**

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## Partnership – guide to your reward:

0.0-0.1 – Partnership had significant problems with either logical relationship, connection or both.

0.2-0.3 – Partners demonstrated some connection but also performed as individuals and/or their relationship was not truly logical.

0.3-0.5 – Relationships between partners were reasonable with connections demonstrated throughout the exercise.

0.6-0.7 – Relationships are logical with clear connections demonstrated throughout the exercise.

0.8-1.0 – Partnership was an absolute standout in this exercise they were perfectly matched and complimented each other with regards to maturity, physical-gymnastic ability and quality of movement.

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## Creativity

The FIG code of points describes creativity as:

*To display imagination, originality, inventiveness, inspiration;*

*Variation in : composition , entries, exits and elements.*



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## Creativity – Elements

The ability to be inventive and creative in acro is endless, we have **more elements** than any other code of gymnastics with endless combinations, yet we often see exactly the same elements performed.

To encourage coaches to push for variety, we **must reward** variety when it is seen.

This can be challenging to understand, until you have watched many exercises and gain an understanding of the composition special requirements of the levels you judge.

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## Creativity – Elements

Those levels with compulsory elements can never achieve the highest rewards in this category. However, they can show creativity with other aspects where they can create a personal identity.



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## Creativity – Composition & Choreography

Choreography is defined as the mapping out of the body’s movements, both gymnastic and artistic, over space and time, as well as in relation to the other performance partners.

How do the gymnasts move around the floor?

- ✓ Do they use jumps, leaps, rolls in ways combined with variations in shapes and positions of fingers, arms, shoulders, hips, legs, toes?
- ✓ Are their movements intricate, complicated and clearly require repetitive practice to get them ‘right’?
- ✗ Or; is it simple, predictable and the same movements repeated?

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## Creativity – Composition & Choreography

When you look at the exercise, look for the composition – the even spread of elements of difficulty around the space and time:

- ✓ Are the elements **evenly distributed** with ‘wow’ elements throughout?
  - ✗ Or are the difficult elements all at the start, or
- ✓ Does the choreography balance the elements of difficulty?
  - ✗ Or is the majority of the time taken with elements of difficulty? Does the exercise have all the elements in the first half and then dance the remainder of the time?

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## Creativity – Entries and exits

Watch for creative ways of building pyramids and elements of difficulty, as well as for creative exits from elements as well. Look for them in both group elements and individual elements.

Reward when you see gymnasts use choreography put them into their elements, and take them out again.

Watch out for smooth transitions.

It's important to note, the popularity of a creative entry or exit is not relevant to it's reward.

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## Creativity – Inspiration & inventiveness

Does the exercise stick with you for its inventiveness?

Do the acrobats do things in unique and different ways?



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## Creativity – guide to your reward:

0.0-0.1 – Some creativity is demonstrated in either element selection, entries or exits, choreography or composition.

0.2-0.3 – Creativity is clearly demonstrated more than once in the exercise.

0.3-0.5 – Creativity is used throughout the exercise across  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the aspects (element selection, entries and exits, choreography and composition).

0.6-0.7 – Creativity is done very well in all aspects most of the time.

0.8-1.0 – Creativity was an absolute standout in this exercise and was done brilliantly throughout.

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## Musicality

Gymnasts express the music throughout the performance:

- ✓ **Match** movement and form to the rhythm, melody and mood of the music being played.
- ✓ **Synchronise** with music beats.
- ✓ Vary the magnitude or speed / tempo of movements with music.
- ✓ Use expressive movements that are **influenced** by melody, variations in rhythm and mood or combinations of these.

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## Musicality – Express the music

To truly understand and judge musicality correctly, we must understand **music genres**, recognise cultural music and styles and keep an open mind as to how the interpretation of the music selected can be demonstrated.

Your opinion about the music, whether it's what you would prefer to listen to, or not, is not relevant.

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## Musicality – Express the music

What is significant, however, is whether the choice of music is **appropriate for sport**. This could be both the lyrics used in the song, the meaning of the lyrics and/or the unspoken lyrics (i.e. when an instrumental version of a song with lyrics is used, and those lyrics or theme is inappropriate).

The FIG code of points highlights the following as inappropriate:

- ✗ sexual,
- ✗ offensive,
- ✗ aggressive,
- ✗ promoting violence.

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## Artistry criteria

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## Musicality

This is best understood through watching examples.

- Example 1**
- Example 2**
- Example 3**
- Example 4**

**Example 1:** Fun happy music, Latino style.

**Example 2:** Serious, fierce music with dramatic changes. Their placement of pyramids matches the music and their choreo changes tempo when the music does.

**Example 3:** Tribal sound, trance style of music. Their dance style is quirky and unusual and match the tempo changes.

**Example 4:** Soft, floaty dream-like music. Style of dance matches with displays of friendship and wonder.

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## Musicality – Theme and mood

Look for how the gymnasts' style of movement matches the theme and mood of the music.

- ✓ Is the music upbeat and happy? Does their movement and dance style match?
- ✓ Does the music have a change within it, where the pace, rhythm and beats change... does the movement change to match this?
- ✗ Is there a mismatch or does the style of movement not correlate to the music used?

Example 5

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## Artistry criteria

### There are 5 criteria considered when judging artistry

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## Musicality – guide to your reward:

0.0-0.1 – movement is linked to the music style, rhythm and beats at least once in the exercise. This could be as simple as starting with and ending with the music.

0.2-0.3 – The exercise demonstrates attempts at musicality, that make sense at times – you can see their intention with regards to the music. .

0.3-0.5 – Musicality is clearly present by all partners most of the time. Mostly movement is congruent to the music throughout the exercise.

0.6-0.7 – Musicality is done very well, throughout the exercise, by all partners in a way that matches.

0.8-1.0 – Musicality was an absolute standout in this exercise and was done brilliantly.

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## Conclusion

We have now covered the 5 criteria that must be considered when judging artistry

You should now be able to;

- explain the intent of the reward system for artistry;
- recall the 5 criteria used in the assessment of artistry within exercises; and
- identify when attributes of a routine are demonstrating each of the 5 criteria of artistry;

To get you started with applying these rules to whole exercises, [click this box](#) to view some contrasting examples of style, showing both high quality and weak artistry. When you watch each, practice using the judging guide to reward the aspects you see demonstrated.