



ICCA judges said Vocal Point brought "fire" to the stage with their energy and emotion.

A cappella accolades

Vocal Point takes third, wins outstanding arrangement award at ICCA

4:28 p.m., April 28, 2014--The semester ended on a high note for Vocal Point, the University of Delaware's premier co-ed a cappella group, which took home third place overall at Varsity Vocals' International Championship of Collegiate A Cappella (ICCA) this weekend after competing in the final event at the Town Hall in New York City on Saturday.

Vocal Point advanced to the ICCA finals, which featured just eight a cappella groups from around the world, after winning their ICCA quarterfinal and being named the ICCA South regional champions earlier this year.

Their journey to finals was reminiscent of an NCAA March Madness bracket, with the original competition pool narrowed from hundreds of audition videos down to 300 by Varsity Vocals last fall, and subsequently smaller and smaller groups at quarterfinals and regionals from January through March to find the best of the best.

"This has been an extremely exciting year for Vocal Point," said Jon Smith, music director of the group. "Our hard work and determination have certainly paid off and we are so proud to have represented the UD Blue Hens on a regional, national and international level."

Vocal Point earned a final score of 379 points for their performance, just four points from second place winners the ScatterTones from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). Pitch Slapped, a co-ed group from the Berklee College of Music, swept first with 431 points.

The judges were impressed with Vocal Point's emotion and stage presence, and one judge called their energy "fire."

"Great connection with the audience," said one judge. "Story told – wow!" Added other judges, "Good connection to the song, bringing new emotions into it," and "I could see each of you releasing 150 percent energy. Excellent."

Smith also received the Outstanding Arrangement award for the entire set, which featured his original arrangements for the group's 12-minute set of *I Had Me a Girl* by the Civil Wars, with solos by Colin Daingerfield and Denise Natoli; *Dark Side* by Kelly Clarkson, sung by Christina Aloisio; and *My Songs Know What You Did in the Dark (Light Em Up)* by Fall Out Boy, sung by Smith. Other special awards can be found on the Varsity Vocals results webpage.

Smith added that the accomplishment is unique given the diversity of the student group.

“We have a wide variety of majors represented in Vocal Point, including neuroscience, history, political science, communications, fashion, nursing, dietetics, biochemistry and business,” said Smith of current members Aloisio, Daingerfield, Natoli, Natalie Cardillo, Ted Cherney, Michael Cohen, Eric Ficarra, Ashley Foster, Hannah Futterknecht, Kameron Ghanavati, Brett Herskowitz, Samantha Hitchell, Julie Peacock, Matthew Pisciotta, Mike Rosenberg and Billy Wales.

The group also gained public recognition in the a cappella world for their ICCA journey, with an interview in a post by the A Cappella Blog and a feature on *acaholicsanonymous* that analyzed their performance.

But winning accolades at ICCAs was just the start of a whirlwind weekend that capped off a busy year for Vocal Point.

Just two hours after the ICCA competition concluded, Vocal Point’s album, *Momentum*, was released on iTunes and loudr.fm. The group has dedicated much of the last year to completing the album, which was produced by the Vocal Company.

Vocal Point also earned a spot earlier this month on *Voices Only 2014, Vol. 1*, a selective, two-volume scholastic a cappella compilation that features top collegiate and high school recordings, for their rendition of Sara Bareilles’ *Chasing the Sun*, sung by Futterknecht.

The group closed out the weekend with their annual spring concert, held Sunday in Loudis Recital Hall in the Amy E. du Pont Music Building on UD’s Newark campus less than 24 hours after their ICCA finals achievement. There, they performed their competition set one final time for family, friends and fans, and bid farewell to graduating members Smith, Aloisio, Ficarra, Herskowitz, Rosenberg and Wales.

Article and photos by Kathryn Meier