



"SOUND" SINGING

Quartet Techniques for
Mastering the Sound Category
Touché Quartet
touchequartet.com

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I. "Sound" Singing Defined

- The focus of the Sound Category is the evaluation of **UNIT SOUND**
- Unit sound occurs when the ensemble's vocal tones are:
 - ✓ Properly produced
 - ✓ Accurately tuned
 - ✓ Blended
 - ✓ Balanced
- This results in "sound" singing – singing chords that "lock and ring"

II. Sound Category Judging Criteria and Unit Sound Elements

JUDGING CRITERIA

UNIT SOUND (0-70 points)

VOCAL SKILLS

Posture
Breathing
Phonation
Resonation
Articulation

ACCURACY

Notes
Intervals
Chords
Tuning/Intonation
Section/Part Accuracy
Synchronization

BARBERSHOP BLEND

Tone Production
Vowel Production

BARBERSHOP BALANCE

ARTISTIC SOUND (0-30 points)

Energized Vocal line
Tone Flow
Dynamic Flexibility
Vocal Style

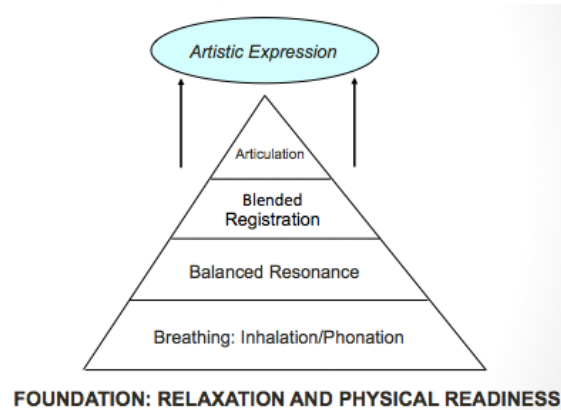
III. What Does an "A" Sound Score Look Like?

- ✓ Exceptional mastery of vocal skills demonstrated
- ✓ All chords instantly tuned into locked, ringing unit
- ✓ Vowels consistently produced with matched resonance
- ✓ Balance maintained at all dynamic levels and ranges
- ✓ Seamless vocal lines consistently energized and flowing
- ✓ Strong sense of barbershop style with artistry and finesse
- ✓ Performance consistently transcends technique

From the Sweet Adelines "Performance Level Guidelines" for the Sound Category

IV. Vocal Skill Development

- Reasonable proficiency in the basics of correct singing must be achieved
- Hierarchy of vocal skill development



V. Blending Skills

- Personal Skills
- Ensemble Skills
- NO OVERSINGING ... EVER! It kills blend!

VI. The "Balancing Act"

- Know your place in the chord
- Understand your place in the cone of sound
- Understand how to sing the "cone of your personal range/vocal line"
- Understand how quartet standing position can impact vocal synergy
- ALL CHORDS MUST BE BALANCED – even the fast ones!

VII. Touché's Favorite Skill Builders

- Vocal Skills
 - ✓ Stemple Exercises
 - ✓ Roland Wyatt "Guideposts to Singing"
 - ✓ "Warm Me Up!" app
 - ✓ Jamie Wigginton "Pro Singer's Warm-Up"
 - ✓ "Sing, Baby, Sing" (all editions)
- Blending Skills
 - ✓ Fred Waring 16 American Vowels Exercise
- Accuracy
 - ✓ Jean Barford "Book" Exercise
 - ✓ Unison Singing
 - ✓ Duetting
- Balance
 - ✓ Chord Analysis
 - ✓ Coaches!



Stemple Exercises

By Dr. Joseph C. Stemple, Vocal Pathologist
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Contributed by Jean Barford, Master Director

Most vocal exercises are to help the vocal folds (strengthening, flexibility, etc.). These exercises are different in that their purpose is to strengthen the fifteen muscles around the vocal mechanism. These exercises help to make all the muscles equally strong, therefore, allowing the vocal folds the freedom to vibrate with much less tension.

The following exercises were developed by Dr. Stemple for female voices. Male voices should choose pitches about a fourth below the ones listed here.

I. WARM-UP

Sustain the sound "eeeee" for as long and as softly as possible on the musical note "F".
GOAL: 45 seconds with an uninterrupted tone flow

II. STRETCHING

A. Slowly glide from your lowest note to your highest note on the sound "oh" as softly as possible.
GOAL: No voice breaks

B. Slowly glide from your highest note to your lowest note on the sound "oh" as softly as possible.
GOAL: No voice breaks

III. POWER

Sustain the notes, one at a time, middle C, D, E, F, and G for as long as possible on the sound "oh" as softly as possible.
GOAL: 45 seconds with an uninterrupted tone flow

Each exercise should be done two times each, two times per day, and as softly (like a whisper) as they can be done. **The softer, the better.**

For the best effect, these exercises need to be done everyday, but good habits begin at the rehearsal. Take the time to do them completely each rehearsal and before any performance.

These exercises may also be used as a "cool down" after a rehearsal or performance where much is demanded of the voice.