

# Unit Sound

## *The art of sharing space*

### Objectives

- Identify the elements: vocal, musical, and artistic, of a unified performance
- Illuminate common synchronization problems and their solutions

### Vocal Unity

- Match posture
- Breath
- Resonating space
- Words/Vowels
- Tone quality and color

### Musical Unity

- Pitch: section agreement, place in chord, P-tuning
- Balance/Dynamic
- Tempo/Rhythm

### Artistic

- Visual: choreography, face
- Internal dynamics, word inflections
- Emotional intention

### **Unit Sound**

This means that every singer is responsible for every nuance, every vowel formation, every emotion and projection of that emotion, every rise and fall of phrase, every move complete with energy, the satiny smooth delivery of lyrics, right notes, and correct pitch, and the mental and physical preparation to be and do her best.

To maintain this unit, we must, each one of us, be responsible singers, singing as one body, one body that moves together, one body that feels emotion together, one body that projects its image and its goals with unanimity, a strong, united voice.

Anything less may not be satisfying.

Put the "you" in Unit!

*Lorí Lyford*

## Unit Sound

### Primary Vowels

Ee (see) - pull tone from top of head

Eh (said) - hand down in front of face, remember to keep jaw loose

Ah (heart) - lift hand in front of mouth/face

Oh (go) - lasso the mouth with finger

Oo (moon) - pull tone from the lips

### Secondary Vowels

a (short, i.e. cat)

ih (sit)

uh (love)

ur (urge, girl)

ouh (should)

### Diphthongs

ah + ee (high)

eh + ee (say)

oh + ee (joy)

ah + oo (now)

oh + oo (so)

*Reminder:* Determine length of primary and secondary sounds for all diphthongs and glides

### Glides ("Prethongs")

ee + oo (you)

oo + ee (we)

oo + ah (why)

– Strive for even balance of resonance in ALL vowel sounds! –

### Other Tools for your Unit Sound Toolbox

- Bubbling
- Humming
- Physical sharing of space

## **Put the best YOU in the Unit!**

### **The power of synchronization**

HCNW, 2014

*with special guests: Pepper, 2014 Region 13 Quartet Champions*

Webster's defines unity as:

1. the state of being in full agreement
2. a way of combining the parts in a work of art or literature so that they seem to belong together

#### What is unit sound?

Unit sound occurs when tones are properly produced, accurately tuned, blended, and balanced (what we call "lock and ring"). Musical unity results when all members of the ensemble are singing vowels correctly and simultaneously, and are singing chords in tune and at the same time.

#### Other aspects of unity:

Unity strengthens characterization and emotional communication. Every technical and artistic element must be executed together in order to eliminate distractions and allow the listener to hear and understand the story.

Unity will be strengthened when the performers understand the lyrical message, deliver a unified tempo or pulse, cohesive interpretive plan, and unified dynamic plan.

#### The power of the individual:

Be it a chorus or quartet, YOU are critical to the success of the ensemble. Differences in any musical, vocal, visual, or artistic elements can be seen and heard by an audience. Energy is a critical factor in unity-be sure that you're not on auto-pilot, but allowing your energy to flow, and to connect to those with whom you are sharing the stage, as well as to your audience!

#### Vocal Skills:

Posture

Breath

Phonation

Resonation

Articulation

#### The grid:

Horizontal and Vertical synchronization

H: word sounds

intervals of part

dynamics

V: target vowels

Tempo/Rhythm/pulse

chord accuracy/balance