

# In the Groove

## Creating Unity in Tempo, Rhythm and Character

### Traps that affect our tempo and unity:

- Soft and Loud Dynamics
- Lower Notes
- Syncopation
- Slow, Un-rhythmic Breathing
- Range-y Vocal Line
- Many Words or No Words for a long period
- Tempo Changes
- Choreography

### Rhythmic Elements

1. Macrobeats – Stronger, heavier beats (walking)
2. Microbeats – Lighter, shorter beats (tiptoeing or running)
3. Melodic Rhythm – Repeated or on-going rhythm patterns in a piece of music

**Beat** – Regularly occurring pattern of rhythmic stresses (like the heartbeat of music). Includes both Strong and Weak beats.

**Tempo** – The speed and pace of the beat. This is one of the building blocks of music and a primary component/factor in successful uptune delivery.

**Rhythm** – Sometimes includes the Melodic Rhythm (the way you would say the words naturally). Uptune rhythm is the rhythm of the song if you took the words out. This includes syncopation and various rhythm patterns that must fit inside the tempo and beat as previously defined.

### Let's Get Physical!

!! In Warm-Ups (Physical and Vocal)

- Keep the pulse with different parts of the body: feet, hands, elbows, fingers, etc.
- Have fun with various rhythm instruments or household items to create rhythmic “orchestra”
- Choose Physical Warm-Ups in the same tempo as the song you are working
- Teach particular choreography movement in warm-ups with consistent tempo applied other than voices
- Use Vocal Warm-Ups to learn rhythmic patterns in songs
- Reinforce physical freedom while applying tempos and/or rhythms

### !! In the Beginning of the Learning Process of a Song

- Impose a constant, consistent external beat as you learn
- Step in time
- Telegraph
- Record with tempo underneath
- Sing the song on a percussive nonsense syllable (ex. “ta”)

### !! As Tempo Reminders and Reinforcement

- If tempo is rushed – Slow down to focus on feeling the subdivision of the beat applied to the downbeats
- If tempo is dragging – Direct the music in 1 or 2 beats to a measure. Let the singers direct themselves that way and feel the stressed beats themselves while they sing.
- Alternate lyrics and pulse/tempo – have singers sing their line while one section keeps rhythm. Alternate.
- Sing the entire tempo section softly. It releases possible muscle involvement and allows singers to listen to the unit more closely.

### Syncopation

Syncopated rhythms happen when we give accent to a normally non-accented beat. ALWAYS START FROM THE PULSE/STEADY BEAT WHEN TEACHING SYNCOPATION. The pulse/steady beat gives a point of reference to where the syncopation begins and ends. Using beat subdivision combined with the pulse to teach it provides rhythmic context.

**“I grew up doing sitcoms and theater  
and even playing with the Beach Boys -  
where you’re programmed to perform,  
your body gets into a rhythm and you know  
it has to perform”  
John Stamos**