

“UNITE to LOCK 'n RING!”

The person out front has the eyes and ears to identify unity or lack thereof. Identify, educate, repeat success, praise! Do again!

- *Is each singer devoted to the same tempo*
- *Is each singer breathing the same length of time*
- *Is each singer spending the same amount of time on vowels*
- *Is each singer understanding and singing rhythms clearly*
- *Is each singer aware of interpretive plan - executing it*

MUSICAL INFLUENCES on UNITY

VOCAL SKILLS - approach as a TEAM

- A. Promote tension-free singing
- B. Common phrases for skills - “singer’s stance”
- C. Bubble or Lip Trill: moves air, opens throat, brings sound forward

ACCURACY - tune as a TEAM

- A. Vowels
 - 1. Jim-speak *aka* Ihd Eek - “Ehd, Eed, Odd, Ohd, Ood”
 - 2. equalize height: I Can Be a Star
 - 3. equalize placement: “ng” or “mm”, bubble

SYNCHRONIZATION - all sounds moving together as a TEAM

- A. Vowels/diphthongs -
 - 1. “too - mAh - rrOH - OH- OO’s uh - nuh - ther - dEh - Eh - Eh - ee
 - 2. “la - la - la” and “yah - yah - yah” - tongue
 - 3. diphthong omission
 - 4. Oh and Oo - vowel formation with lips - quiet jaw

Activity:

- Johnny One Note

B. Tempo - identify and solidify

Activities:

- Dr. Beat - metronome
- patting, clapping, stepping, snapping
- staccato syllables - “doot” or “book”
- contagion

C. Breaths - identify type and solidify timing

1. suspended breath
2. QB - longer/faster/sooner
3. pause
4. tempo breath

Activity:

- *ssss in groups of 8*
- 5. stagger/personal breath plan

Activity:

- “We all live in a yellow submarine”

D. Rhythms - identify, solidify

Activities:

- clap
- book/doot
- attach a kinesthetic gesture

E. Consonants - reduce interference, maintain clarity

Activity:

- kinesthetic gesture to smooth out interruption
1. lip consonants - B, P, M - find traps in songs
 2. other consonants - keep inner space open

DIRECTOR'S INFLUENCE on Unity

1. breath preparation for ensemble
2. choreography participation
3. over-articulating
4. over-directing
5. posture, facial countenance, demeanor
6. frequency of changing interpretive plan
7. consistency of directing interpretive plan

HINDRANCES and CHALLENGES to unity

1. jumpy part lines
2. too high/low for part(s) to control or balance
3. phrase length demands
4. dynamic demands
5. bouncy or over-zealous choreography
6. stage fright
7. lack of understanding of plan
8. note and word insecurity
9. over-singing
10. difference in internal phrase emphasis
11. boredom

OTHER ACTIVITIES for ENHANCING UNITY

1. Mini choruses
2. Sing within your own neighborhood
3. Sing with eyes closed
4. Sing in a circle without the director
5. Sing on risers without a director
6. Coaching under glass
7. Jiffy quartet program
8. Kinesthetics for opening on breaths
9. Direct with the Director
10. Right vs. Wrong
11. Drop the Needle into — (choose the level you're striving to reach)
12. Praise, reinforce, repeat, celebrate
13. Repetition

Steps to being a more unified ensemble:

1. Assess and improve individual singers' approach to Vocal Production.
2. Build Section unity.
3. Build Chorus unity.
4. Create a "Singer Driven" culture: transform chorus from assuming the role of "receiver" of information to that of "owning" and demonstrating "independence" from the director.