

## **Region 10 Let It Fly!!! – September 2014 -- Becki Hine**

### **Look Great! Sing Great!**

#### **Basics of looking great:**

##### **1. Posture/Alignment**

Posture can show the audience many different characteristics: Confidence, stage command, cocky or proud, apologetic, nervous.....

##### **2. Facial Involvement**

Faces tell the emotion of the song, and to what extent the singer displays that emotion. Fabulous vs. Frightening, wistful, sentimental, happy, ecstatic, angry, hopeful, deer in the headlights, I think I'll paint the ceiling beige.....Faking it or sincere

##### **3. Physical Involvement**

The body should be used to support the music, and to add visual dimension to the performance. There are many incorrect ways of using the body: Utilizing only head, only arms, only thighs, chin up or misplaced, excessive hands. In order to own the visual plan and communicate the message of the song effectively, the entire body should be utilized, full body singing.

##### **4. Costume**

Our costumes can also share how we feel to the audience. What does your costume say about you? Well-fitting or not, pressed or wrinkled, character costume, comfortable in it, binding, don't like it, feel like a rock star?

##### **5. Hair**

Hairstyles help the singer to display a polished look for a performance. What does your hairstyle say about you? Stage-worthy, appropriate for the costume, like the unit, distracting, too casual, too dressy, just plain messy, feel like a rock star?

##### **6. Make-up**

How we present ourselves as singing ensembles to the public is important. Make-up can help us to look polished and professional, or can help build a specific character. What does your make-up say about you? Well-applied and blended, clown-like, powdered, like the unit, appropriate for venue?

Looking great takes homework. My friend Tim was telling me recently about a convention he attended where the keynote speaker was a well-respected author and speaker. He is highly intelligent and very well known in his field of expertise. When he delivered his speech, though, his hair was messy, his belt buckle was just a little off center, and his tie was just a wee bit messy-looking. Tim was distracted from listening to the message in the speech because the speaker was just messy and not professional-looking. That look would have worked well in a more casual atmosphere, but this was a professional occasion.

#### **FREE POINTS FOR LOOKING GREAT!**

On the contest stage, the 30% portion of the Showmanship category in Sweet Adelines International is preparation. This is the plan for the visual part of your performance, the homework you do ahead of time in order to look great on stage. We should give all of our audiences our best preparation for every performance.

**Entrance/break/exit:** When you take the stage, you should know exactly how you will enter the stage, exactly what you'll do in between songs, and exactly what you'll do after your second song and how you'll exit the stage. Stuff happens, and you may not execute your plan perfectly, but you should definitely have a plan, and you should have rehearsed that plan.

**Costume:** Your costume should be well-fitting and appropriate to your songs, image, or character. The costume should point up your face, and should be pressed if the fabric needs that to look great. I judged a quartet where one of the singers had lost a lot of weight. The singers chose to wear a tight-fitting sleeveless gown, which showed sagging skin on her arms and lumps here and there under her dress. She looked great in the face! Of course everyone celebrated her amazing weight loss, but the extra skin was very distracting and took away from the performance. That quartet did not look great. A more appropriate costume would have created a beautiful picture and a great look to enhance their great singing.

**Make-up/Grooming:** Your hair and make-up should be appropriate to the costume and character, and needs to have a uniform look with the other singers. If you're wearing a dressy costume, you need a dressy hairstyle, instead of the hairstyle you wear to the gym. Stage make-up was created to enhance our expressive features, which are our eyes, cheeks, and lips. We won't all look exactly the same in our choruses and quartets, but our make-up should be applied in a uniform manner and should help the audience to see your expressive features, which allows you to sell the message of your songs.

**Choreography:** Your planned choreography should enhance the musical plan, and should be appropriate to the ensemble. Choreographed moves can show character, image, and personality. The difficulty level of the plan should also be appropriate to the ensemble. There are no free points for having difficult moves.

**Creativity:** Use some!

### **Basics of singing great:**

1. Posture/Alignment
2. Facial Involvement
3. Physical Involvement
4. Breathing
5. Breath Support
6. Placement of sound
7. Diction
8. Brain

### **See it on video:**

1. A level physicality with C level singing
2. A level singing with very stiff bodies
3. C level singing with C level physicality
4. A level singing with A level physicality

### **Try it.....all of these, plus more, have appeared on the contest stage:**

1. Good posture/good singing
2. Bad posture, hunched shoulders, chin overextended, stance too wide

3. Prim and proper, stiff
4. The worm-overdone physicality
5. Bored to death

## **NO FREE POINTS FOR PERFORMANCE!**

The 70% portion of the Showmanship category is the performance, the communication of the visual and musical product. This is your time on stage and how well you use that time. This is the time we spend in front of our audiences on shows and gigs. This is the part where the audience can be influenced by us.

**Vocal Skills:** We're singers. That's what we do. We do some dancing, but when we book gigs in our communities, we book ourselves as singers.

**Energy:** Energy propels every aspect of the Showmanship category. Your performance should have an appropriate level of energy, and it needs to be consistent throughout the performance. We've already seen examples of performances where the energy level was inappropriate (out of control, or too low).

**Poise and Command:** Back to the basics of looking and singing great. Stage command cannot exist without good posture. You don't necessarily have to feel great to have this, but it sure does help. If you feel great in your costume and you're well-rehearsed (you've covered the 30% portion of the category), you will exude confidence, which translates into stage command.

**Entrance/Break/Exit:** The execution of your plans is evaluated. If you didn't plan on tripping over the edge of the risers on your exit, but you did trip, perhaps you handled that with poise! Hopefully, you looked great whilst tripping.

**Characterization:** You may not be creating a specific type of character, like a clown or a ballerina or a pirate, but your songs do have some type of character. Flirty, bossy, angry, sassy, happy, heartbroken, and all singers should portray that same character and with the same depth of emotion. Unity in characterization looks great on stage!

**Physical Expression:** We've already experimented with various levels of physicality, and how that can affect great singing. As performers, we have our entire bodies to use to influence our audiences. Though each singer uses his or her own individual physical expression to enhance their own performance, the singers should have a uniform commitment to how much they use their bodies.

**Choreography:** The visual plan should be performed with energy and character, and executed as a unit.

**Unity:** Unity in facial sell, level of physicality, depth of emotion portrayed, energy level, characterization, commitment to visual plans, all can create a very powerful picture for an audience.

**Audience Rapport:** Audiences love a sincere performance, when we look great and sing great, and they will respond with their love in the form of applause. And isn't that something we all love as performers?

**Pitch Pipe Technique:** Most of us do not have perfect pitch, and so we use a pitch pipe so we know where to start singing our songs. Since we use this on every song our audiences see us sing, it makes sense that we should figure out a way to do a great job of taking pitches.

**Posture:** Good posture/body alignment can help you to sing well, because your body is in a good position for the various pieces and parts to work well for great singing.

Look great, sing great, and you will feel great! Go out and conquer gigs! Be awesome!