

## **UNISON**

You should sing the chords in unison. One contrasts with the other. Unison should be sung using more air than you would use in the quartet sound. Two voices are enough. Unison should be sung with no "edge" on the voice. The sweetest words you ever heard were whispered. Make this a musical whisper. Oh. . . get closer to the mike.

## **SPREAD THE CHORD**

Open it up so it covers a wide area. Use every inversion and suspension you can think of. Then, use the simplest chord as a surprise. You are free to use the upper notes in the chord, so leave out the tonic, unless it is the melody note. Choose a MA 9th chord, and put it where it fits and enjoy it --- don't fear it. Sing each chord so well it "says its name" --- "I'm a D 9th" or "I'm a G6". If you make the chord so complicated it doesn't "say its name," change that chord. Rehearse chords without background and without tempo. Hear each chord as long as it takes to get it right. Then you have heard it right. When you do it in tempo, expect each chord to sound like that. After you have learned the notes, then you start learning how to make them "ring".

## **MOVING NOTES**

You should invent places in the arrangement for a voice to be moving while the others hold their notes. Each time that a moving part changes, the other parts should accent that change. It becomes a series of emphasized chords. The listener will be pulling for you to make each chord exciting.

## **NO PIANO**

Never use the piano playing the exact notes you are singing. Real harmonizing requires the singer to sing a note differently. If it is a minor third in the chord, then becomes the major 7th in the next chord, the voice must change that note to make it harmonize in each chord. A piano cannot do that.

## **LONG TONES**

Your quartet should hold those seven-beat notes for the full seven beats and maintain the full intensity and the full volume. Rehearse it that way. If you rehearse half-heartedly, you'll perform half-heartedly.

## **OTHER STUFF**

We used "staggered quarters" often (3 notes in two beats) and we always sang them a little behind the beat. The major 7th with the 9th was one of our favorite chords. Don't have the low part sing the tonic notes. The bass viol will be playing that so the low voice is free to do other stuff.

Some fans refer to our chords as "Color Chords." If you imagine the 1, 3, and 5 of the chord being the primary colors, red, blue, and green, then the upper harmonies could be pink, olive, teal, purple, and lavender, etc. You can sing the rainbow of colors. It's a fact of life. Quartets are breakable. It is a surprise when they stay together. You may spend more time solving disagreements than rehearsing. Arguing is useful when it results in a decision: but, if the same guy is starting all the arguments, he is telling you he is not happy where he is. If you don't have a happy group, you won't have a group long enough to prove anything.