

Showmanship For Quartets

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Choreography in quartets is more of an extension to natural body English, with only occasional poses or gestures defined to form an effective tableau or create a 4-part move. This is because quartet performances have a naturally more intimate feeling than a chorus, as we can mentally “include” ourselves in a group that small, where feeling included during a chorus performance is much more difficult.

“Moves” that worked well en masse may look rather staged or plain silly in a quartet. Gestures should be big, but natural/relaxed – more attitude than technical precision. Body language should continue from start to finish of performance and planned choreo should flow naturally in and out of that “background” body movement.

Use subtly choreographed moves to enhance or help your sound – where support may be needed, or to emphasise the use of a different vocal character. Body stance can be used to make the quartet grow or feel more intimate, reflecting the moods of the song.

Performance

Stage presence should be rehearsed as much as the music. Get out and expose your nerves as much as possible. Imagine being in the venue every time you practice so it won't be an added distraction on the day. Visualisation is good for all aspects, as it enhances self-confidence.

Confidence is mostly born out of sufficient practice and faith in your abilities (and your quartet). Recognise your own nervous behaviour backstage and devise methods of handling your actions so that your nerves don't adversely affect your team.

Timing on stage is a large part of “stage presence”. Be in control of the audience at all times. Don't let the applause die out – break before that, so that the audience feels you are directing the applause and are in control of the performance.

If you don't rehearse an emotional performance you are taking an unknown element on stage with you. Practice “getting into it” – you'll get better at it and find it easy to achieve on stage, rather than an added distraction, something more to think about. Also, you will know that you are showing unit emotion if you've practiced in a circle or with mirrors.