

## **Singing Smart Bass - Peggy Gram**

*“Our female barbershop basses are responsible for singing a fully resonated, overtone rich part line, one that wraps itself around and weaves itself throughout the sound of the rest of the ensemble. This gives the quartet and chorus the maximum chance for continuous lock and ring of chords. She sings her part with melodic authority. Her role in understanding and executing the root of the many octave relationships with the other parts is a foundation in maintaining pitch stability.”*

### **Breathing**

- The sound produced will never be better than the quality of the breath taken. The breath must have lift, height, width and depth for the sound to fully resonate.
- Posture -- Head/body alignment -- a feeling of lengthening the spine and keeping the head over the shoulders, with the chin parallel to the floor

### **Warming up the instrument**

- Basses should maintain a sing-able range of two (if not three) octaves
- Strive to maintain the overtone space in the voice at all times

### **Technique**

- Right notes, with skillfully sung intervals
- Downward pitches feel as if they go out and away from the body.
- Upward intervals are light and remain in the mask
- Right words
- Right rhythms
- Smooth vocal line, melodically delivered
- Lift in all consonants – need space just like vowel sounds
- Handling register breaks
- Tuning

### **Bass Problem Areas**

- Ascending vocal lines
- Lack of lift in descending vocal line
- Large intervals
- Range extremes
- #’s as accidentals in sharp key
- #’s and naturals in a flat key
- More lift at register breaks

### **Synchronization**

- Breathing in tempo
- Target vowel sounds on downbeat
- Relentless tempo, regardless of vocal line difficulties
- Breath has value and tempo, just like notes
- Breath is a part of the phrase that follows, not reward for one completed
- Everything you sing/breathe sets up what follows

### **Making it Live with:**

- Forward Motion
- Embellishments
- Dynamics/Textures
- Inflection
- Relentless tempo

