

Presence and Speaking Checklist  
Conducting Masterclass, 2018  
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Preparation

- Prepare with detail and intention.
- Develop positive and disciplined thinking.
- Train your mind to redirect negative thoughts.
- Do not unreasonably magnify the negative and minimize the positive.
- Learn and practice primal/abdominal breathing to maintain a stable core.
- During practice sessions, focus with concentrated energy, not effort.
- Create a subtext for your piece.
- Visualize the subtext and project it into the hall with physical and mental awareness.
- Practice the musical aspects of stage performance with body awareness.
- Be aware of how the orchestra may react to your style of communication.
- Memorize and practice text delivery.
- Remember why you are there!

Physical aspects of presence preparation

- Take care with your physical appearance. Wear appropriate clothes, shoes, etc.
- Learn to walk on stage with intention and connect with the audience, immediately.
- Don't look down/at the floor.
- Look out to the audience and smile; invite the audience to come to you.
- Be aware of your arms and hands and what they are doing as you speak.
- Are body movements helping or hindering/creating strength or weakness?
- Allow movement to express your thoughts, but don't wander about the stage.
- Maintain strength, but not tension, in the torso.
- Practice bowing.

The day of performance

- Create a calming routine, conducive to creating a focused and energized performance.
- Float above the fear, redirecting negative thought at all times.
- Notice anxiety, allow it to happen on a physical level, breathe deeply and carry on with positive self-talk.
- Meditate or take time to center yourself appropriately before walking on stage.

On stage

- Dress appropriately.
- Trust how you have prepared for the performance.
- Allow right brain function to dominate/allow your imagination to soar.
- Redirect negative self-talk by staying in the moment.
- Interact/communicate with your fellow musicians and the audience.
- Perform, smile and enjoy yourself!

### An expressive voice is a present voice!

- Prepare spoken text well in advance of the performance.
- Practice spoken text to create 'being in the moment'.
- Map out phrasing, breathing, word accents and vocal modulation.
- Body awareness - check body posture and alignment. Are you free of stress and tension?
- Be aware of your arms and hands and what they are doing as you speak.
- Good abdominal breathing – free and supported with energy.
- Check body for tension and misplaced effort – jaw, neck, upper body, and legs.
- Speak in phrases and pause for breath in long sentences.
- Accent important words and pronounce final consonants.
- Slow down! Your audience needs to be able to compute and absorb your words and message.
- Speak with projection, clarity, and confidence.
- Modulate your voice according to the message you are communicating.
- Maintain a smooth/legato speech pattern.
- Use eye contact as you communicate. Smile with your eyes.
- Speak your truth and deliver with confidence.
- Speak with focus and intent. To practice this: hum and maintain this position without nasality.
- Avoid harsh glottal attack on initial vowel sounds.
- Don't allow the breath to rise in the upper body, causing the voice to become constricted (gravel like sound produced when the vocal folds rub or bang against each other).
- Avoid shouting, screaming, and loud, unsupported laughter and speaking.
- Avoid talking in noisy environments, as this can cause constriction and/or general vocal fatigue.
- Enjoy communicating and expressing yourself through your voice!

### Maintain good health

- Eat and exercise to stay healthy – avoid processed food, and soda drinks as this can cause GERD.
- The quality of your voice matters – hydrate! It is vital for the vocal folds to be lubricated with water so they can function efficiently.
- Don't smoke, and avoid smoke filled environments.
- Avoid dry and polluted environments.
- Take care of your voice if you are sick. Steam with a vaporizer if you are suffering congestion due to a cold or flu.

### Resist

- Throat clearing and coughing are extremely traumatic to the vocal folds and should be kept to a minimum. If you feel like clearing your throat, swallow instead. Throat clearing will only shift mucus around, not get rid of it.
- If you are sick and coughing constantly, use a cough suppressant.
- Glycerin throat lozenges are very helpful if your throat is very dry.
- Don't take antihistamine medication unless necessary, as it will dry out the throat.

### Do

- Enjoy communicating and expressing yourself through your voice!