

Presence and Speaking Checklist

ICWF 2021

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Preparation

- Prepare with detail and intention.
- Think in terms of what you DO want, not what you DON'T want – manage your inner critic.
- Magnify the positive and minimize cognitive anxiety.
- Learn and practice primal/abdominal breathing to maintain a centered stable core.
- During practice sessions, focus with concentrated energy, not effort.
- Hear the sound and feel the piece generally before you play.
- Bring the stage demands to the practice room.
- Practice performing, let go of self-monitoring, evaluating and problem solving.
- Choreograph your mental routine.
- Create and visualize your subtext, projecting it into the hall with physical and mental awareness.
- Practice the musical aspects of stage performance with body awareness.
- Practice specifically for the demands of the performance.
- Practice taking risks in the practice room.
- Practice playing with 100% expression.
- Find permanent solutions to fewer problems at a time.
- Blocked versus random practice. Find what works best for you!
- Be aware of how the orchestra may react to your style of communication.
- Memorize and practice text delivery.
- Warm up, practice and record.
- 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, in second circle
- Keep your eyes off 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 specific movement to express your thoughts, and musical ideas.
- Maintain strength, but not tension, in the centered, primal torso.
- Practice bowing.

The day of performance

- Create a calming routine, conducive to creating a focused and energized performance.
- Float above fear, redirecting negative thought process.
- 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.
- Acknowledge and trust your performance preparation.
- Allow right brain function to dominate/allow your imagination to soar.
- Redirect negative self-talk by staying in the moment.
- Give yourself permission to let go.
- 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. Are they being specific?
- 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.
- Resist the breath rising into 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.
- Avoid smoking, 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 dry.
- Avoid taking antihistamine medication unless necessary, as it will dry out the throat.

Do

- Enjoy communicating and expressing yourself through your voice!