



## HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD PREPARE FOR VOCAL PERFORMANCES

### PERFORMANCE PREP and MEMORIZING

- Parents/older students, set up performance opportunities at home – invite friends, other family members etc., create an audience of stuffed animals or toys for younger children to perform for. Students should use these “mini performances” to practice their stage etiquette along with their pieces.
- Practicing to perform is much different than daily voice practice. When we practice performing, we do not stop to fix mistakes. We focus on telling our story and engaging our audience. For singers, this is best achieved by looking at the top of audience members heads. **-Not** up at the ceiling or down at the floor. 😊 As you tell your story with your eyes and expressions, the audience will feel that you are singing right to them, if you aim for their heads!
- Drinking water and staying hydrated in the week leading up to a performance is especially important. The day of, is too late to hydrate! Our vocal folds are little thin membranes that need water to stay healthy and sound great!
- A part of this prep is your rehearsal with your accompanist. Be sure you are memorized and prepared for this time together. Know your plan for actions and expression. Know your “tempo” or speed of your song. As a singer, it is your job to speak up and tell your pianist how you would like for it to go. Above all, be respectful and say thank you. Accompanists work hard!

### PERFORMANCE DAY

- Be sure to eat enough the day of your performance. A hungry tummy makes for a tired singer. Food equals energy and we need energy to fuel our voices! For example, bananas have calming factor and are great energy.
- Some people need to avoid dairy because it can create excess phlegm or mucus and give the feeling of a “frog” in the throat.
- WARM UP at home. Most students will have exercises that they do each week with their teacher in lessons. Do some of these at home before you come so your voice has been used and is ready to sing. On that note, try not to over sing. If you spend the whole morning singing your song over and over again, by the time your performance comes you may find your voice tired or even hoarse.
- Bring water with you to sip while you wait for your turn!

## STAGE ETIQUETTE

- Common performance practice includes a bow both before and after the song. Performers should practice walking to the stage in a well-paced, confident manner.
- Bows: stand tall with feet together and arms by sides, smile for the audience then slowly bend at the waist thinking, “Did I shine my shoes today?” as you look down at your shoes. As you stand up tall again, you think, “Yes! I shined my shoes today!” This little question and answer will help time an awesome bow!
- A nice deep breath in through the nose and out through the mouth is a great way to take a moment on the stage and calm yourself.
- Singers should always take a moment to make sure their body is ready. Do a quick body scan. Plant your feet with some space between them. Even give your knees a little bounce to make sure they aren’t locked tight. How are your hands? Making fists or nervously grabbing your skirt/pants? Give your hands a little shake and reset before you begin your song.
- At our recitals there is a microphone. An adult will be there to make sure it is set to the correct height. Singers, stand in front of the mic with your mouth close to, but not touching it. Then do your best to forget it’s there. 😊
- As soon as you feel ready, look at your accompanist and give them a little nod and smile. This will signal that you are ready for the music to start.
- Set your tempo or speed. If it’s going too slowly or too fast, start to speed it up or slow it down. Your accompanist is trained to follow you!
- During your song, if something doesn’t go as planned, try not to show it on your face. Often the audience won’t even notice, unless you show it!
- If your song ends with the piano playing a little part after you finish, keep your eyes looking out and stay in the moment. The song is over only after the music stops.
- Take another bow and then **GESTURE TO YOUR ACCOMPANIST!** It is SO important to publicly thank your collaborator! This is usually done by taking your hand closest to them, palm up, and move your arm from your body out to them. It is also wonderful to look at them and smile! After all you just did something awesome **TOGETHER!**

## CONCERT ATTIRE

- Boys: dress pants, dress shirt, dress shoes. Ties and bow ties are optional.
- Girls: longer skirts or dresses, dress shoes. Hair tied back and off faces. No super bright nail polish or excess jewellery such as bracelets or rings that can become a distraction when performing.
- **MOST IMPORTANT:** Hair off your face. In order to communicate with your audience, they need to see your face and eyes. Also, if you wear glasses but have contact lenses, this is a great time to wear them!
- **BE COMFORTABLE!** Performance clothing should be non-restrictive.
- Dress shoes: be sure to have your performer practices walking and standing in these ahead of time, especially if they have a heel!

## **NERVES**

- It is normal for one's heart rate and adrenaline to increase when performing. You can assure your performer of this. In PEP class, we have discussed how to use these changes in our bodies to our advantage in helping us have greater concentration and focus during performances.
- While you sit waiting for your turn, a great exercise to practice is this:

*Blow all your air out through your mouth until you feel empty and then let your lungs naturally fill again. If you repeat this exercise, your heart rate will actually decrease and you will feel more calm.*

## **BRING A COPY OF YOUR MUSIC TO THE PERFORMANCE**

- Students are encouraged to perform their music by memory. It is still a great idea to bring a copy of the music to the performance even though you have handed it to your accompanist ahead of time. It can be a comfort for students to look at their music before they perform. Also, if something happened that the accompanist needed your song, you will have it!

## **MAINTAINING A PERFORMANCE READY PIECE**

When a piece is memorized and performance ready, it is important to know how to maintain it in the weeks leading up to performances. Here are some tips:

- Write out your words. This is an excellent way to keep them front of mind
- Try mental practice – hear the song in your head walking through your actions and/or expressions.
- Say your words out loud for a parent, grandparent or friend. This is a great way to stay memorized but also a way to think about your text and the message of your song.