



HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD PREPARE FOR GUITAR PERFORMANCES

PERFORMANCE PREP

- Parents/older students, set up performance opportunities at home – invite friends, family members etc. to hear you perform. Students should use these “mini performances” to practice their stage etiquette along with their pieces.
- Practicing to perform is much different than daily practice. When we practice performing, we do not stop to fix mistakes; maintaining the flow is of utmost importance. We focus on telling our musical story and engaging our audience. It is important to assure our young ones that mistakes may happen and are always forgiven.
- Be sure your piece is memorized and well prepared.
- Arrive early to your performance venue so that you can check the tuning of your guitar. Seek out a guitar instructor to assist you if need be.

STAGE ETIQUETTE

- Common performance practice includes a bow both before and after the piece. 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!
- Take time to settle in on stage before playing. Adjust your guitar footstool if you are using one, check the volume of your amp. etc. If using a music stand, be sure that it is not blocking your face to the audience.
- 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.
- Guitarists 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.
- Maintain a good playing position – imagine your shoulder blades are held up by strings and hold your head high!
- During your performance, 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!

CONCERT ATTIRE

- Boys: dress pants, dress shirt, dress shoes. Ties and bow ties are optional.
- Girls: longer skirts or dresses or dress pants, 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.
- **BE COMFORTABLE!** Performance clothing should be non-restrictive.

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.

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:

- Effective practice is goal oriented. Once a piece can be played in its entirety, it is important to focus on specific measures and transitions that cause issues. Identify these areas and practice them until they become easy and flow like the rest of the piece.
- Try mental practice – hear the song in your head. Using your imagination, feel your fingers grasping the pick and setting the strings in motion. Alternatively, if you do not use a pick feel your fingers against the strings.
- A Good ATTITUDE is key. Remember to tell yourself each time you practice that playing the piece is the EASIEST thing for you to do; it is completely natural. Believe this, and it will be so!