



## HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD PREPARE FOR VIOLIN 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 practice. When we practice performing, we do not stop to fix mistakes. We focus on telling our musical story and engaging our audience.
- 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 performer, 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!

### 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!
- 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. It also provides an indication to your accompanist that you are ready to perform.
- Violinists 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.
- 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!
- Maintain a good playing position – violin up on your shoulder, bow between the bridge and the fingerboard and a space between your feet.
- 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!
- If your piece 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 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.
- Dress shoes: be sure to practice 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:

- Try mental practice – hear the music in your head with your eyes on the score.
- Slow practice will help to keep fast passages clean and accurate.