



## HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD PREPARE FOR PIANO PERFORMANCES

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### PRACTICE PERFORMING

- Parents, set up performance opportunities at home – invite friends, neighbours etc., create an audience of stuffed animals or toys for younger children to perform for. Children should use these “mini performances” to practice their stage etiquette.
- Practicing to perform is much different than daily piano practice. When we practice performing, we do not stop to fix mistakes. We focus on telling our musical stories.
- Parents, comment and ask questions. What mood is being created with the music – is this a joyful, melancholy, tranquil, or lively piece? Is there a story behind the music?

### STAGE ETIQUETTE

- Common performance practice includes a bow at the piano both before and after the piece. Children should practice walking to the piano 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 looking down at shoes, stand up tall again with a smile.
- Set up at the piano: children are encouraged to take a moment to make themselves comfortable before playing. The height and placement of the piano bench should be adjusted before playing.
- Breathe! Have your child take a deep breath before they play their first note. This helps to calm nerves and increase focus.
- Finish the last note of the piece completely before looking at the audience or rushing to get off the piano bench and off stage.

### CONCERT ATTIRE

- Boys: dress pants, dress shirt, dress shoes. Ties and bow ties are optional.
- Girls: long skirts or dresses or dress pants, dress shoes. Hair tied back and off faces. No bright nail polish or excess jewellery such as bracelets or rings that can become a distraction when performing.
- Performance clothing should be comfortable and non-restrictive for arm movement.
- Dress shoes: be sure to have your child practice walking in these ahead of time, especially if they have a heel! If the piece requires the use of the pedal, try practicing the piece with the performance shoes as they will feel different than socks.

## **NERVES**

- Assure your children that it is normal for one's heart rate and adrenaline to increase when performing. In PEP class, we discuss how to use these changes in our bodies to our advantage in helping us have greater concentration and focus during performances.
- Sometimes nerves will cause our hands to be cold. Bring mittens to the performance as it is much easier to play the piano with warm fingers.

## **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 as it can be a comfort for students to look at their music in the audience before they perform.

## **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:

- Practice with eyes on the music even if the piece is memorized. Sometimes we start to forget the small details in the music when a piece is memorized.
- Try mental practice – hear the music in your head while reading the music and not playing on piano.
- Slow practice will keep the fingers working well and the faster notes under control.
- Use your imagination! Create a story that goes with the music! This helps to keep it alive and interesting.