

Performing Tips

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Bring Out Your Voice!

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Useful tips for singers in preparation for, and during a performance:

- **always, always, ALWAYS** warm up your voice before performing - avoid shortcuts. Be warmed-up before any LHSS event.
- **enter and exit the stage with confidence** - your performance starts as soon as you walk on stage, and lasts until your last step off stage. Your audience will warm to your welcoming demeanour. Maintain good posture. It will lead to better singing and not allow body language to suggest you are under confident, scared or apologetic.
- **avoid fidgeting or apologetic gestures** for any reason while you're on stage including brushing away hair and playing with the hem of clothes - you may feel nervous but don't show it.
- **personalise your performance** - where appropriate when introducing yourself. Add your reason for singing the song(s) you have chosen. Make it interesting. By the same token, don't feel you have to introduce every song if you are singing a few.
- **dress appropriately** - you want to make a lasting impression, for all the right reasons!
- **sing your song(s) convincingly**- know the character who is singing the song or referring to and understand the lyrics - act it out! As they listen, the audience will enjoy a meaningful visual interpretation of the song. When determining the character take into consideration the events leading up to the song, the age, gender and emotional stage of the character. Your character must be seen from the moment the first note is played, not from the first note that is sung. Think about what you are singing when you sing it. The audience will follow you and 'meet' you in the song.
If you can't relate to the lyrics, you may need to choose a more appropriate song.
- **Have eye contact with the audience so they connect with you and your song.** Alternatively, if you feel uncomfortable with this (a singer new to performing for example) tell the students to look above the audience heads.
- **avoid unnecessary focus on the microphone** - when you take it in and out of the stand do it seamlessly. Don't let the microphone or the lead (if there is one) get in your way. Hold your microphone correctly. If you do require a mic, a few basic skills and knowledge will go a long way. The microphone is to work for you, not against you.

- **handle the microphone correctly** when not using it (in instrumental breaks and before and after you sing for example) and position it in front of you - don't relax the arm & hand so it faces the audience. Don't swing the microphone or lead. Don't cover microphone cap with hand or face it towards foldback speaker as it creates foldback sound. Remove it and replace if from the mic stand with ease
- **Stools, microphone and microphone stand can be used as props.** Sit on the edge of stool with a straight back. Watch the position of legs. When holding the microphone, swap hand 2 – 3 times throughout the song. Where it would work, the microphone stand can be in front of the performer and held with one or two hands. You most probably would need to vary these hand positions throughout the song, and where appropriate in the song, take the microphone out of the stand and reposition yourself.
- **learn the art of continuing to sing and appearing undisturbed when things go wrong** - and they will. Make it a CONFIDENT mistake. Don't pull a face or bite your bottom lip. If you forget the words make them up and keep going, NEVER stop.
- **drink plenty of water** preferably at room temperature (not chilled) leading up and after a performance - don't allow dehydration to get the better of you.
- **Take the lead with an accompanist** – you may be backed by a guitarist or keyboards player. Initially you will need indicate your required tempo (timing) by beating it beforehand. You will need to quicken or slow the tempo whilst singing if necessary-DON'T rely on the accompanist to establish tempo. Most importantly, the accompanist will follow you at all times so don't stop for any reason and always keep on going-the accompanist will follow you, therefore don't wait for them to follow you!
- **Indicate to sound person if you need changes to volume levels.** If you feel the sound (microphone or backing music) should be louder or softer, indicate to the sound engineer using gestures that they will understand.

BONUS TIPS:

- even if you aren't a great singer, you can improve your performance by being technically sound in terms of vocal technique, and by appearing to enjoy yourself
- the first time you sing in public can be pretty nerve-wracking! Be aware, it may take a few performances before the nerves don't take over technique and effect the voice. The more practice performing before a big event, the better

Most importantly, always try to enjoy yourself – performing will become easier and easier.