

PREPARING FOR PERFORMANCES

Classical Guitar Corner - Guitoberfest

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UNDERSTANDING PERFORMANCE ANXIETY

- Performance anxiety is normal and expected.
- Performance anxiety can be managed and actually used to perform well!
- You can get better at performing. Like all things, it takes practice. Preparation is the key.
- Performances need an audience and an audience needs performers. Both can work together to make each other better.

UNDERSTANDING PERFORMANCE ANXIETY

- We respond to pressured situations with increases of adrenaline in the bloodstream.
- Fight or flight response - we prepare an athletic, physical response for a threat
- Symptoms include: increased heart rate to supply more oxygen to the muscles, shortness of breath, blurred vision, butterflies in the stomach, dry mouth, sweaty palms/forehead, trembling, flushing, quavering voice, nausea, dizziness.
- High standards, perfectionism, need for control contribute to performance anxiety

PERFORMANCE STRATEGIES

- Breathing awareness
- Progressive muscle relaxation
- Normalizing anxiety
- Positive self-talk
- Mental practice and visualization
- Success imagery

PERFORMANCE PREPARATION

- Practice your performance in a familiar or low-pressure environment before the real thing.
 - Record yourself or play on a video call for a friend.
- Work up to more high-pressure situations.
- Separate practice time into two parts: **practicing** (isolated spots, drills for muscle memory) and **practicing performing** (run-throughs with full *mental awareness*).
- Practice with bright lights on, concert attire, and increased heart rate. Simulate actual performance environment.

PRE-PERFORMANCE ROUTINE

- Gentle warm-up on the instrument
- Monitor food intake and extra hydration
- Positive self-talk
- Deep breathing
- Controlling interaction with others
- Napping and conservation of energy
- What is your pre-performance routine?

PERFORMANCE GOALS

- Aim for a “flow” state. Enjoy it!
- Use every performance as a learning experience.
- Keep perspective. The sun will still rise the next day.
- Don't aim for perfection. Authenticity and expression are better.

SOURCES/SUGGESTED READING

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