

PRACTICING FOR PERFORMANCE

Attentional Scripts for Focus

Run-Throughs & Performance Simulation

The 5 Checks 

Randomization and Chunking

Goal-Oriented and Reflective Practice

Mindset

Attentional Scripts for Focus

Create a plan for what you will think about as you perform your piece

Practice thinking about your plan until it is second nature

Notice non-useful thoughts and direct your attention back to the present

Try focusing on singing the melody in your head as you play.

Try tracking the smallest rhythmic subdivision in your piece

Think of a mood, story, or image to help you get into the emotion you want to be portraying with your piece

Notes

Performance Simulation

Do daily run-throughs with no warm-up to simulate performance, at a time when you are at your worst.

Do not do run throughs until all sections are learned and connected cleanly together

Start 2–6 weeks before a concert depending on difficulty

Keep going if there are mistakes so you can practice recovering. Do not stop to correct errors.

Record your runthrough

Watch/listen with the score. Take notes on what you would like to change and use them to guide your practicing.

Perform in concert clothes (shoes/dress/suit) so they feel normal

Use an elevated heart rate to simulate adrenaline (jumping jacks, brisk walk)

Notes

The 5 Check Method

Create a list of the hardest spots in your piece or program - 5-10 sections.

Cycle through each hard spot once in a random order.

If you feel your performance of the spot was good, give yourself a check

Keep going until you get 5 checks for each spot.

If you do not like your performance of the spot, ERASE ALL THE CHECKS and start over. (cue evil laugh)

Notes

“To achieve great things, two things are needed: a plan, and not quite enough time.”

Leonard Bernstein

Randomization and Chunking

Break the piece into sections, 4-16 measures.

Give each section a number OR

Make a copy of your piece and cut out the first measure that is the beginning of each section OR

OR use a flashcard app with e screenshots of your score

Generate a sequence using random numbers and perform the sections in that order OR

Draw your cut up measures out at random and perform in that order.

Notes



Goals and Reflections

Set goals for your practice, section, piece, mindset or something else

Monitor your performance as you play your section/piece

Analyze/reflect on what went well and what could be better

Rinse and repeat

Set specific goals like “Play with expression and no hesitations”

Notes



Mindset

Ask: "What do I want to share with the audience?"

Keep it in perspective: it's only one performance

Analyze/reflect on what went well and what could be better

Picture a friendly audience who is rooting for you

Reflect on what you love about the piece before performing

Notes

You have a grave responsibility to bring messages of the great composers to the people. You can play the piano and they cannot. Through you, through your eyes they can experience it-- the expression, the thrill of the great music. It's hard work."

Van Cliburn

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