

Performance Preparation

What do I need to know and be able to do, so I can invite the audience to be with me while I'm being with them, so that I can tell this story to take them on a journey for some reason?

What is my process for discovering what I need, my process for doing it, and my criteria for assessing whether I have done so?

What is the time actually needed to do it to my satisfaction, including rest and recovery time?

All information is good and helpful

Two kinds of Critic

Constructive Critic

Constructive criticism is helpful feedback about what you're doing that helps you go toward what you want. It's information. The desire to be increase skill, be more effective, more precise, and to discover what's possible is to be celebrated.

Non- Constructive Critic

Unhelpful criticism has right/ wrong thinking, and value judgements.

When we judge ourselves or others, or when we have an unhelpful critical thought, we tighten between head and spine, interfering with our coordination and stop doing the next constructive thing. When that happens, we can ask to coordinate to renew our wish to do what we're doing.

Recognizing and celebrating the dance of desire, plan, execution and execution is essential to learning as you complete the *entire* process: desire, plan, reward/ celebrate.

Three stages of Performance Preparation

Learning and Study

Practice

Rehearsal

For each one of these stages of these do:

Threshold Exercise as warm up and cool down

Performer Questions

Learning and Study

I use the word *study* to mean a detailed investigation and analysis of a subject or situation; devoting time and attention to acquiring knowledge .

Study and learning gets you ready to practice.

Learning and Memory

We are embodied thinkers. The psycho-physical self works on both an “inside-out” as well as an “outside-in” basis. Your thoughts change your movement, and vice versa. You can, therefore, work from both ways. If you learn new skills and material by guiding your whole system into better functioning you will improve your mood. This is key for learning and memory. Stress hormones inhibit learning and memory. Conversely, positive emotion increases LTP (long-term potentiation: a persistent strengthening of synapses based on recent patterns of activity) thereby making learning faster, deeper and easier to call up. These studied, rehearsed pathways become myelinated, so they are intelligent, intentional impulses.

When we are studying or developing a skill, *we sometimes mistake tightening for focus*. This causes a distortion of our good, natural design, compromising our coordination, and leading to a direct decrease in effectiveness.]

However, when we get ready to do something we care about, we experience excitement or stimulation. **The decision that we want to do something has a direct physiological effect on our system, and we become primed to perform.**

Components of Study:

Music

Listening, appreciating the composition, drama etc.

What does the score tell you dramatically- dynamics, harmonic movement, etc.

Research any motivic material, see how the music tells the story

Learn the music dispassionately and coordinated (no matter what the drama of the scene is.)

Text

Translate literally and poetically

Think the meaning as you speak and sing through the text

Let the meaning emerge as you do the movement

Performer Questions (From Cathy Madden)

Human Factor Questions:

Who am I?

Who else is onstage with me?

Who is my audience?

Circumstances of Performing Questions:

Where are you performing?

What time will it be?

What is in your environment?

What is the likely sequence of events- before, during and after your performance?

Significance Questions:

Do you attach any importance to who you are for this performance?

To you audience?

To any of the circumstance?

Desire Questions:

What do you want? For the performance, the day, the next four years, your life?

Is there anything in my way? (There needn't be, but if there is it is important to address it)

The Action Question:

What are you going to do to get what you want?

This is for Performer as Self, for a character you do the process again.

Find juicy verbs that give you a clear action that makes sense to you- if you don't actually want to "stab" your scene partner, you have to replace that with a yes plan- "I'm pretending to stab them by putting my prop sword into their armpit to create an illusion so I can tell this story."

This carries into the entire enterprise, if you have obstacles to the performance you need to address them, and find out how to make a "yes" plan.

Practice

Practice is the application or use of an idea, belief, or method.

Practice gets you ready to rehearse.

What am I practicing? Notes? Rhythms? Text?

Keep it simple and clear, so you have clear goals that can be measured. Gather information with curiosity and appreciation.

Two main approaches:

Large strokes

Move in bigger brush strokes until you need to get more specific. When something needs a closer look, move in.

Smaller details- language, rhythm, etc.

Make some games out of some of the tricky bits- dance the rhythms, make vocalises out of awkward passages etc.

Include the audience in practice process. Welcome to them to be there while you are in process, so you can all be together in an extraordinary way.

Rehearsal

Rehearsal gets you ready to perform.

Include the audience in rehearsal process.

The two previous steps (study and practice) are prerequisite to rehearsal.

Rehearsal is about working with others, developing the performance process, discovering how organize yourself and navigation the circumstances to help you do your job.

Peripersonal space

If you wave your arms all around you, all the space you've passed through in every direction- this is how your brain maps your body. It keeps track of everything inside of this and what moves into it- there are specific brain cells for this. It is an actual electromagnetic field, a bubble of space that the brain includes as part of you in its map of your body. You can navigate it, share it and mingle it.

Great performers can expand their peripersonal space. When we perform with others, we blend our peripersonal space.

Ensemble work

Ensemble means together, as one. Everyone is essential and necessary to do the performance.

Rehearsal includes inviting each other to be with one another.

Key to this is coordinating together, and having routine that says "We're ready to do something special." This can be a hello song, a warm up, or game where you are doing something to tune

into each other in a common action that is PLAY- throwing a ball, passing the energy with hand squeezes, etc.

Using the coordination experiments below, you can prime your whole system for optimal functioning learning, recall, and performance, tuning yourself for the task at hand.

Experiments and Rehearsals

1 Sing the 1315171 vocalise, making it increasing a tonal while relentlessly asking to coordinate, regardless of what you hear and what you think of it.

2 Practice bracketing the non-constructive critics (send them to the Bahamas...)

3 Practice inviting people to be with you in a variety of situations- the store, in rehearsal, on the phone- include them in your peripersonal space.

5 Theme Song

Pick a theme song you can use to get ready to perform. Something that puts a spring in your step, gives you a bit of sass or swagger, or something that gives you a giggle.

Practice hearing it in your head when you walk, write, and study.

Here are some ideas:

Stevie Wonder – I Was Made To Love Her

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9pYux5-d1Es>

I Like It Like That by Pete Rodriguez

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NLL7cZisJtc>

Sexual Healing by Hot 8 Brass Band

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dpLeBKABZps>

Swedish Chef – Meatballs

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sY_Yf4zz-yo