



DEALING WITH PERFORMANCE NERVES

PREPARATION

- Choose a piece you know you can play
 - Something simpler or slower?
 - All technical corners should be secure and comfortable as possible
 - Know the piece as well as you possibly can
 - Know what you want it to sound like
 - Know the piece as a whole – think beyond a piece being in various sections
 - Research the style of the music and the background of the composer and the piece's place in his output
- Mentally play the piece to an imaginary audience
- Play to family members and friends
- Practise introducing the piece so that this part of the 'performance' doesn't detract from the actual playing
- Play through the piece SLOWLY before the actual performance – nerves will make you play too fast

THE PERFORMANCE

- Prepare your music carefully on the music stand
- Adjust the stool height and position
- Hear the first couple of bars in your head
- Count yourself in at the correct tempo – two whole bars
- Remember to breathe!
- Once you start, distance yourself from what is happening – let your body do the work and don't interfere by being over indulgent or romanticising the sound in your head. The music should flow from you if all the correct practise has been done.

DEALING WITH UNEXPECTED ISSUES

- Don't dwell on any errors or slips – keep thinking forward and what's coming next
- Under no circumstances disturb the flow of the music – an audience will forget any slips very quickly
- If you have a catastrophic breakdown, stop, reset yourself and explain you are going to begin again. Don't apologise!
- Avoid giving visual clues to any errors you make – screwing your face up, tutting, commenting, staring at your hands or the audience, smiling, laughing, crying...
- All errors will sound massively exaggerated to you – the audience most of the time will be barely aware of them.