

Level 3

Ensemble Skills, Performance Anxiety and Communication

1) Discuss the group's observations and ideas about what ensemble skills are. (Internal and external awareness – senses involved; kinaesthetic, hearing, sight and rhythmic sense) What is worth listening to? (Predictive quality of the present sound?)

2) Work on starting to sing something together -- Make a physical gesture together -- Play a chord together if there are 2 instruments in the room. Panoramic vision, hearing, kinaesthesia and sense of rhythm.

3) Discuss blend of sound, intonation and gesture and repeat the experiments.

4) Performance anxiety and communication ideas:

Is it worth discussing this?

We tend to feel comfortable **if we are communicating something that has meaning for us, well**. This can be with a person, a pet, a small group of friends, the rest of the chamber group, the rest of the section, the rest of the orchestra, a small group of strangers or an enormous audience. Communicating well is, maybe, a definition of good performance – performance anxiety is a potential barrier to good communication but being excited about the performance opportunity is not.

Alexander suggestions:-

Be present

Notice your breathing panoramic vision and your primary control

Do not try to be or wish to be somewhere else

Do not be in the past

Do not be in the future

Notice your breathing, panoramic vision and your primary control

Do not use up your vital energy 'trying to perform or project'

Take energy from the audience

Notice your breathing, panoramic vision and your primary control

Communicate verbally with the audience before you play, if possible

Allow the music to speak to the audience, do not try to ignore the audience

Notice your breathing, panoramic vision and your primary control

Don't practice the programme before the concert (you already know it)

Do prepare yourself by warming up in a familiar way

Notice your breathing, panoramic vision and your primary control

Semi-supine

Accept *anything* that happens, it's ok

Don't listen to your internal dialogue and don't try to make it go away

Acknowledge the existence of the 'you' that could listen to the internal dialogue

Take energy from the audience and send it back to them

Don't try to focus on the performance before it starts, be in the present

Don't try to play well, endeavour to enjoy whatever is happening

Enjoy yourself, it is another chance to do what you really want to do

Notice your breathing, panoramic vision and your primary control

You don't have to be 'the best' to be worth listening to

If you are genuine you will touch most people

Performing is interactive, so be interactive, you are not on your own

Don't get stuck looking at your instrument, the music or your technique

Notice your breathing, panoramic vision and your primary control

Balance makes most things easier

Don't try to play in tune, let the notes make sense

Don't try to play 'loud enough to be heard', allow the resonance to fill the room

Anything might, or might not, happen

Allow yourself to be aware of how far your field of attention extends

Notice your breathing, panoramic vision and your primary control

You always play as well as you can at the time – Next time is another matter!