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Musician, Singer,
Artist, Storyteller





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A Well-Rounded **JAZZ VOCALIST**

Skills to acquire

A well-rounded, accomplished jazz vocalist is a musician, singer, artist and a storyteller. There are many skills to acquire and focus on in your practice. Here are some skills to keep in mind.

1. Play in time, in tune.
2. Practice regularly to develop your repertoire, your instrument, and your skills in improvisation, jazz rhythm and articulation.
3. Have a large repertoire of tunes in all styles. Have charts (lead sheets or arrangements) for the songs you sing, written clearly, in your key. Know the keys you like to sing your songs in.
4. Have several ways to express different emotions musically.
5. Have basic keyboard skills.
6. Be aware of performance traditions in jazz, i.e. the form of the song, how to set the correct tempo, how to communicate musical ideas to your fellow musicians.
7. Be aware of the other jazz artists in your community as well as the venues where jazz is played. Be respectful of other artists and musicians.
8. Have knowledge of the history of jazz including the seminal composers, instrumentalists, and vocalists who have created and contributed to this art form.
9. Control destructive tendencies such as being overly critical of yourself and others. Maintain good health.
10. Desire mastery of your instrument. This is a life-long practice for all musicians.

Mastery

Mastery of Your Instrument includes:

1. Tone
2. Range
3. Intonation
4. Flexibility
5. Endurance

Mastery of the Musical Language Includes:

1. Keys
2. Time signatures
3. Scales and modes
4. Grooves
5. Chart writing
6. Transcription

Mastery of the Musical Elements Includes:

1. Tone: producing different sounds
2. Time: what happens when I play "on top" of the beat, when I lay back, when I play on the beat?
3. Melodic line/phrasing
4. Grooves: what is a bossa nova, what is a rhumba, what is a funk groove, a shuffle, swing, straight eight ballad, 16th note feel, 12/8 groove?
5. Storytelling and subtext



Developing your **OWN STYLE**

**Even if I've never met you
I know things about you already.**

1. You want attention.
2. You want people to listen to you,
3. To watch you,
4. To come see your gigs,
5. To book you for performances,
6. To buy your recordings,
7. To respect you,
8. To understand you,
9. To love and accept you,
10. And to validate your experiences.

Maybe not all of these things apply to you, but probably many of them do. These exercises will help you identify what your goals and desires are, and leave you with some practical skills to keep on improving your performance and achieving your goals.

You set the goals you wish to achieve. Only you can decide what you want and, if you're alive and awake, you'll be constantly reassessing and modifying those goals. What's right for you at one time may not be what is right for you at another time. This is the essence of being creative. If someone else is determining your goals or you are not specific enough, you can be an excellent musician, entertainer, business person, but you will not be an artist. Being an artist involves expressing your own uniqueness.

**Some skills that you will need
to develop as an entertainer are:**

1. Accurate self-evaluation
2. The ability to observe and see things concretely
3. The ability to visualize so you can try out ideas in your head
4. Enough technical expertise to know what can be done
5. Enough technical skill at your craft to accomplish your goals.

To develop as an entertainer and an artist you also need:

6. The willingness to “be in the moment” to take advantage of opportunity
7. The desire to share and explore feelings and ideas
8. The willingness to hang out in the “not know” chair
9. Energy, focus and vision.

In addition it's also helpful to have these organizational skills:

10. Knowing how to get and keep gigs.
11. Knowing how to get music together. , i.e charts, arrangements, etc.
12. Figuring out how to practice what you need.
13. Time management.
14. Marketing and self-promotion.
15. Writing a set list.
16. Ability to control destructive tendencies like fear, depression and anxiety.

Jazz is about personal expression.

Even though you are all musicians and all interested in performing, your tastes, background, thoughts and emotional responses are entirely different from one another. These different qualities are the things that make you unique and are what you have to offer as an artist. Some people are “feelers”, and are primarily interested in communicating emotion. Some are thinkers, and are more interested in communicating ideas. Some like to let off steam, some like to relax. Although you are a complex person, as an artist you will not be all things to all people. And, as you change and grow, so will your artistic expression. This exercise is a starting point.

1. What kinds of music and what artists do you enjoy listening to? List 5 performers that you listen to regularly and when you listen to them. At home relaxing, doing a physical activity, having friends over, practicing? Describe what you like about them.
2. Where do you go to listen to music? List 5 venues that you have been in to hear live music in the past year. Who went with you? Describe who was in the audience?
3. List and describe 5 venues that you would like to perform in. (nightclub, concert hall, church, etc.) Be specific about where. (Plush Room, Yoshi's, Sweetwater, Warfield, your local watering hole.)
4. What is your primary goal as a performer? Do you have political ideas that you want to express? Do you want to educate your audience? Do you want to provoke your audience into some kind of action? Do you want your audience to feel something specific, such as inspired, romantic, energized? Do you want them to get up and dance? Do you want to explore musical ideas?
5. Who do you want your audience to include? Think age group, tastes, background, interests, gender, etc.
6. What do you like to play? List 10 songs that you would like to play.

7. Describe your style as a performer. Are you a working class rocker, upscale crooner, athletic brazen hussy, casually elegant vamp, gangsta, well-dressed intellectual? Choose 3 words that you might use for marketing your "style." Cool, calm, comfortable; hot, sweet, and oh so young; etc.

**Try this exercise adapted from the book
"Getting Noticed, A Musician's Guide to Publicity and Self-Promotion."**

Take a pencil and paper and find a quiet place where you won't be disturbed.

At the top of your paper write something like this: "I'd like to be seen as..."

Now, list the qualities and attributes you'd like to have. It doesn't matter whether you have them, or are likely to acquire them. In brainstorming you don't try to be realistic. And don't worry about being silly, nobody's going to see the list but you.

Maybe you've always wanted to play rock and roll on a stage swirling with smoke-machine fog and elaborate special effects, you want to be a rock star. Or maybe you'd really like to be at the NorthSea Jazz Festival playing "out jazz" in a pair of worn-out jeans with the hottest cats around. Or maybe, you'd like a steady gig at one of your favorite clubs in your own home town. Or maybe you want to play in a small cabaret in New York City dressed in a beaded gown. These ideas, wishes hopes, and dreams should be on your list.

Does your music lend itself to sophistication, or uncontrolled frenzy? Would your audience expect you to be disciplined or unrestrained. Should you be refined or macho? Do you see your self as an innovator or are you carrying on a tradition? Do you jump, twist and shout when you play, or is your music quiet and understated.

This list will be unique to you. The idea is not to create a false image, but to work with the one you already have, to refine it and become aware of it.

Think about your audiences, the ones you have and the ones you'd like to have. Consider the people who book you. Think about your music, your talent, your general approach to life, your business goals. Write down all the ideas that pertain to the way you'd like to be seen. This will be your image list. Keep it. You'll use it from time to time.

Where are you today?

This is not a “me-bashing” exercise. This is a map for setting your goals, improving your performances and developing concrete ways to achieve the performance you want to create. BOTH our strengths and weaknesses are part of the performer we are today. We need to identify strengths as well as weaknesses, and concentrate on both. As a performer, evaluate your progress in these 4 areas.

Appearance:

Including costumes, comfort on stage, energy, physical fitness, eye contact, and staging: all the elements the audience “looks at.”

Material:

This is your musical repertoire. Is it varied? Does it reflect you: your technical abilities, your interests, and your feelings? Do you have appropriate material for the kinds of gigs you do and the kinds of gigs you would like to do? This includes “patter,” how you introduce yourself and your songs to the audience. Material is the theatrical “meat” of your performance.

Musicianship & Skills

This includes your ability to execute your ideas, your technical mastery as a musician and actor. This also includes vocal attributes such as tone quality, pitch accuracy and security, rhythm, phrasing: the elements that we “listen to.”

Style:

This includes all of those qualities difficult to describe; emotional delivery, ability to make us “believe,” ability to entertain and engage us on a personal level. Style often is a result of how well we know ourselves and understand what we are trying to project. Consider the “style” of performers you admire. Describe the “style” of 3 well-known performers.

Now, list your strengths. How can you improve upon those strengths?

Weaknesses? How can you improve on those weaknesses?

How would you market your performances and your music?

Purchase several magazines. Some of them should be music magazines like JazzTimes, Downbeat, Pulse, etc. One should be a fashion magazine like GQ, Vogue, Elle, one a lifestyle magazine like Town & Country, Food & Wine, Martha Stewart, etc., and one should be relevant to a hobby that you enjoy such as fly fishing, motor car racing, computing, gardening, making paper maché Easter decorations or traveling.

Observe how marketing affects the type of ads that you see. In the music magazine how are your favorite artists portrayed? Which ads are attractive to you. What colors, images are they using? Which ads might prompt you to try the product, buy the CD, go to the show. What styles, colors, etc. project something you'd like to say about yourself?



3 Little Words

ABOUT YOU

Choose 3 words that describe you to use for marketing and promotion. Here are some examples

Intelligent
Vivacious
Mercurial

Charming
Funny
Classy

Powerful
Sexy
Authentic

Obnoxious
Pompous
Self-absorbed

Bubbly
Sincere
Accessible

Interesting
Unique
Off beat

Accomplished
Avant-garde
Exclusive

Experienced
World-wise
Unflappable

Warm
Classic
Elegant

Feminine
Mysterious
Sensual

Relaxed
Captivating
Alluring

Masculine
Powerful
Dangerous

Smart
Sophisticated
Witty

Satanic
Demented
Reckless

Energetic
Fun
Stylish

Fresh
Innocent
Youthful



What will I

SING?

Choosing a song

When you first hear a song you hear it as part of the audience. You respond to it as part of the audience. So you love it. Should you sing it?

It takes time to really learn a song, get a chart together, figure out an approach and arrangement, teach it to the others in your group, and try it out with an audience.

Here are some things to consider when choosing a song for your program.

1. Does this song suit your image, your stage personality, your age? Do you feel authentic and comfortable speaking the lyrics?
2. Can you imagine a set of circumstances that go with this song?
3. Does it spark strong feelings in you?
4. Can you accomplish the tune technically? Is it within your range and abilities?
5. Does it say something you want to say to your audience?
6. Is the song suitable for the place, audience, and size of the band? Is it suitable for the other players in your group?
7. Does it fit with the other material you're presenting?
8. Are you original? Can you make this song unique or are you copying the artist you heard do this song?
9. Will the song still feel relevant to you in 6 months?

*When you make music
you are acting as a philosopher.*

*You can either do that
consciously
or you can do it unconsciously,
but you're doing it.*

-----John Cage

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The Art of

JAZZ SINGING

Common standards

There is a standard repertoire that is shared by all jazz musicians. Most professional jazz singers know hundreds and hundreds of tunes. These standard tunes are part of the history of jazz. In your repertoire you should have tunes of all types: latin, ballads, swing in several tempos. Here is a list of over 100 well-known standards. Choose 20 to 30 songs that interest you in differing styles, and learn to sing them.

Title	Composer	Lyricist	Style
Ain't Misbehavin'	Waller, Fats		Swing
All Of Me	Simons		Swing
Am I Blue?	Akst, Harry	Drake, Grant	Ballad
Angel Eyes	Dennis, Matt	Earl, Brent	Ballad
Anything Goes	Porter, Cole		Swing
April In Paris	Duke, Vernon		Ballad
As Time Goes By	Hupfield, Herman		Ballad
At Last	Warren, Harry	Gordon, Mack	Ballad
Autumn Leaves	Kosma, Joseph	Mercer, Johnny	Ballad
Besame Mucho	Velazquez	Skylar, Sunny	Latin
Bewitched	Rodgers, Richard	Hart, Lorenz	Ballad
Blue Moon	Rogers, Richard	Hart, Lorenz	Swing
Blue Skies	Berlin, Irving		Swing
Body and Soul	Green, Johnny	Heyman, Edward	Ballad
But Not For Me	Gershwin, George	Gershwin, Ira	Swing
Bye Bye Blackbird	Henderson, Ray	De, Sylva	Swing
Cheek to Cheek	Berlin, Irving		Swing
Christmas Song, The	Torme, Mel		Holiday
Come Fly With Me	Van Heusen, James	Cahn, Sammy	Swing
Come Rain or Come Shine	Arlen, Harold	Mercer, Johnny	Ballad
Crazy	Nelson, Willie		Ballad
Cry Me A River	Hamilton, Arthur		Ballad
Day In The Life Of A Fool	Bonfa, Luiz	Sigman, Carl	Latin
Days of Wine and Roses	Mancini, Henry	Mercer, Johnny	
Do Nothin' Till You Hear From Me	Ellington, Duke	Russell, Bob	Swing
Don't Get Around Much	Ellington, Duke	Russell, Bob	Swing
Embraceable You	Gershwin, George	Gershwin, Ira	Ballad
Fly Me To The Moon	Howard, Bart		Swing
Foggy Day, A	Gershwin, George	Gershwin, Ira	Swing
Georgia On My Mind	Carmichael, Hoagy	Gorell, Stuart	Ballad
Girl From Ipanema, The	Jobim, Antonio	DeMoraes	Latin

Title	Composer	Lyricist	Style
God Bless The Child	Herzog, Arthur	Holiday, Billie	Ballad
Good Morning Heartache	Fisher, D	Drake	Ballad
Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas	Martin, H	Blane, D.	Holiday
Here, There and Everywhere	Lennon, John	McCartney, Paul	Pop
Honeysuckle Rose	Waller, Fats	Razaf, Andy	Swing
How About You	Lane, Burton	Freed, Ralph	Swing
How Deep Is The Ocean	Berlin, Irving		Ballad
How High the Moon	Lewis, Morgan	Hamilton, Nancey	Swing
I Can't Get Started	Duke, Vernon	Gershwin, Ira	Swing
I Could Write a Book	Rogers, Richard	Gershwin, Ira	Swing
I Get a Kick Out Of You	Porter, Cole		Swing
I Got It Bad	Ellington, Duke		Ballad
I Left My Heart In San Francisco	Cross, D	Corye	Ballad
I Only Have Eyes For You	Warren, Harry	Dubin, Al	Ballad
I Remember You	Schertzing, Victor	Mercer, Johnny	Ballad
I Thought About You	Van Heusen, James	Mercer, Johnny	Swing
I Wish You Love	Trente, Charles	Beach, Albert	Latin
I'll Be Home For Christmas	Kent, Walter	Gannon, K.	Holiday
I'll Be Seeing You	Fain, Sammy	Kahal, Irving	Ballad
I'm Beginning to See The Light	Ellington, Duke		Swing
I'm In The Mood For Love	McHugh, Jimmy	Fields, Dorothy	Ballad
In The Mood	Garland, Joe		Swing
It Don't Mean a Thing	Ellington, Duke		Swing
I've Got the World On A String	Arlen, Harold	Koehler, Ted	Swing
I've Got You Under My Skin	Porter, Cole		Swing
Just Friends	Klenner, John	Lewis, Sam	Swing
Just The Way You Are	Joel, Billy		Pop
La Vie En Rose	Louiguy	David, Mack	Ballad
Lady Is A Tramp, The	Rodgers, Richard	Hart, Lorenz	Swing
Look Of Love, The	Bacharach, Burt	David, Hal	Pop
L-O-V-E	Kaempfert		Swing
Love is Here To Stay	Gershwin, George	Gershwin, Ira	Ballad
Lover Man	Davis, J		Ballad
Lullaby of Birdland	Shearing, George	Weiss, George	Swing
Lush Life	Strayhorn, Billy		Ballad
Man I Love, The	Gershwin, George	Gershwin, Ira	Ballad
Mean To Me	Ahlert, Fred	Turk, roy	Ballad
Misty	Garner, Erroll	Burke, Johnny	Ballad
Mood Indigo	Ellington, Duke		Ballad
Moon River	Mancini, Henry	Mercer, Johnny	Waltz
Moondance			
Moonglow	Hudson		Ballad
Moonlight In Vermont	Blackburn		Ballad
More I See You, The	Warren, Harry	Gordon, Mack	Ballad
My Favorite Things	Rodgers, Richard	Hammerstein	Ballad
My Foolish Heart	Young, Victor	Washington, Ned	Ballad

My Funny Valentine	Rodgers, Richard	Hart, Lorenz	Ballad
My Romance	Rodgers, Richard	Hart, Lorenz	Ballad
Nearness of You, The	Carmichael, Hoagy	Washington, Ned	Ballad
New York, New York	Kander, John	Ebb, Fred	Swing
Night and Day	Porter, Cole		Swing
On A Clear Day	Lane, Burton	Lerner, Alan jay	Swing
One Note Samba	Jobim, Antonio		Latin
Over The Rainbow	Arlen, Harold	Harburg, Yip	Ballad
Quiet Nights (Cocovado)	Jobim, Antonio		Latin
Route 66	Troup, Bobby		Blues
Satin Doll	Ellington, Duke	Strayhorn, Billy	Swing
Scotch and Soda	Guard, Dave		Pop
Send In The Clowns	Sondheim, Stepehn		Ballad
Shadow of Your Smile, The	Mandel, Johnny	Webster, Paul	Ballad
Skylark	Carmichael, Hoagy	Mercer, Johnny	Ballad
Someone to Watch Over Me	Gershwin, George	Gershwin, Ira	Ballad
Speak Low	Weil, Kurt	Nash, Ogden	
Stormy Weather	Arlen, Harold	Koehler, Ted	Ballad
Summer Wind	Mayer, Harry	Mercer, Johnny	Ballad
Summertime	Gershwin, George	Heyward	Ballad
Sunshine of My Life	Wonder, Stevie		Pop
S'Wonderful	Gershwin, George	Gershwin, Ira	Ballad
Take the "A" Train	Strayhorn, Billy		Swing
Teach Me Tonight	De Paul, Gene	Cahn, Sammy	Ballad
There Will Never Be Another You	Warren, Harry	Gordon, Mack	Ballad
These Foolish Things	Strachey	Marvell, Holt	Ballad
They Can't Take That Away	Gershwin, George	Gershwin, Ira	Swing
Time After Time	Styne, Jule	Cahn, Sammy	Ballad
Unforgettable	Gordon, Irving		Ballad
Very Thought of You, The	Noble, Ray		Ballad
Watch What Happens	Legrand, Michel	Gimbel, Norman	Latin
Way We Were, The	Hamlisch, Marvin	Bergman, A&M	Ballad
Way You Look Tonight, The	Kern, Jerome	Fields, Dorothy	Swing
What a Difference A Day Made	Grever, Maria	Adams, Stanley	
When I Fall in Love	Young, Victor	Heyman, Edward	Ballad
When Sunny Gets Blue	Fisher, Marvin	Segal, Jack	Ballad
Where Or When	Rodgers, Richard	Hart, Lorenz	
Willow Weep for Me	Ronell, Ann		Ballad
Witchcraft	Coleman, Cy	Leigh, Carolyn	
Yesterday	Lennon, John	McCartney, Paul	Pop Ballad
You Go To My Head	Coots, Fred	Gillespie, Haven	

The Art of

JAZZ

Writing a friendly lead sheet

Rehearsal time with the band is often limited. A clear and simple lead sheet is the best way to communicate with musicians quickly and use your rehearsal time to its best advantage. It isn't necessary to know exactly how you want the final performance to go. You can make notes on these lead sheets and keep updating them as you hone the arrangement that works best for you.

Things to include:

1. Title
2. Style and tempo
3. Composer
4. Special instructions
5. Rehearsal marks (A, B)
6. Clear signs (coda, etc.)
7. Measure numbers
8. Chords, melody and lyrics that are easily readable.

② Medium Swing

① *Blue Skies*

③ Irving Berlin/ 1927

④ 1st X bass & voice only till B

⑤ A

⑥ Fm Fm(Δ) Fm7 Fm6 Dbm

1 Blue Skies, smil - ing at me. No - thin but
Blue birds, sing - ing a song. No - thin but

⑤ blue skies do I see. from now on.
blue birds from now on.

⑤ B

10 Nev - er saw the sun, shin - ing so bright, nev - er saw things, go - ing so right.
No - ti - cing the days, hur - ry - ing by, when you're in love, my how they fly.

⑤ C

18 Blue days, all of them gone, no - thing but
blue skies from now on.

⑥ Cm7(b5) F7(b5) Bbm7 Eb7

26

⑥ Bbm7 Eb7 Bbm7 Eb7 Ab

30 ritard



She's got **BIG EARS**

Learning a song

There are many reasons why when you hear a tune you may say to yourself "I just HAVE to sing that song." As a result, we often start right in singing without really learning the tune first. When one musician compliments another they often say "she's got big ears." Here's a method I use for learning a new tune. In a surprisingly short time you'll find you have a good command of your new song and you'll be developing "big ears."

Step one:

To learn a new song, LISTEN. That may sound really obvious to you, but I mean really listen without singing along, and listen no fewer than 10 times. By that time you'll have the tune in your inner ear.

Step two:

Write out the lyrics. Put them aside for now.

Step three:

If you have a lead sheet or sheet music to the tune begin singing along very softly while you are watching the melody go by. Don't sing the lyric but just some gentle humming or la-la. You are just paying attention to where the melody is going and listening to the chords at the same time. Don't worry about how great or "ungreat" you may be sounding. You are also setting up a "map" in your inner ear and for the muscles that you will be using to accurately reproduce the pitches you are hearing. Pay attention to and note any peculiarities of the song. Is there a half-step in the melody that you didn't hear before? Look for anything that might surprise you, or particularly delight you.

*Music should go right
through you, leave some of itself
inside you, and
take some of you with it when it
leaves.*

-----Henry Threadgill
Zen Guitar

Step four:

Start singing along a little louder now. You're still not singing the lyrics but just some combination of scat or la-ti-dah that is comfortable for you. You'll notice that you have a pretty good command of how the music is working and where you have "trouble spots." These are places where you are unsure of how the melody goes, or you have technical challenges like range breaks. You can work on these sections individually. It's important to not learn things "wrong" so that an incorrect melody or an interval becomes a habit for you. It will be hard to "unlearn" later. Take the time now to figure out if you know the melody cold, and if the tune is in the proper key for your voice. You may find you will change the key again after you add the lyrics, but now is a good time to just listen to the sound of your voice. See if you can sing the melody without any accompaniment. See if you can sing it in your head. Have fun with the melody until you feel that you know it really well.

Step five:

Sing quietly so you can listen to yourself as you sing. Are there any words that are difficult for you to sing? Take a moment to see if you are pronouncing the vowel correctly. Pay attention to the "little" words like 'of', 'and', 'the' and 'a'. Are there any words that need special attention such as "quiet" which you don't want to sing loudly, or "strong" which you don't want to sing weakly? How about a word like "caress" which you want to caress when you sing it. Experiment with singing these special words until they sound like you want them too. Something I find is a lot of fun on a new tune, or even one I've sung over and over, is to emphasize certain words randomly just so I can hear the line in a new way. Often I'm surprised by what I hear and it refreshes a song for me. If I'm having trouble making something sound natural, I stop and say the line (like I MEAN IT) and then try to sing it like I say it. Sometimes, I tape the lyric while I'm speaking it and see if I can sing to my spoken lyric. Remember we are playing music, with 'play' being the operative word, so just experimenting or 'playing around' will help you discover new things about the song, and will also go a long way into helping you develop that "individual style" that we are all looking for.

Step six:

Masterful singers are artful storytellers. Go back to your written lyric sheet and say the words out loud. Read it as if you're speaking the words to someone else. Speak as conversationally as you can. Pay attention to how the words fit in your mouth. Are there any ideas or words that are difficult for you to say? Does the lyric make sense to you? Next write out the lines of the tune in your own words. Think about the overall emotion that you wish to express and state it in words that are alive and vibrant. Rather than just say "I'm sad," say "I'm crushed," or "it cut like a knife." Instead of "I'm happy," how about "I'm walking on air," "I'm glowing with love." Choose words that describe vividly the overall feeling of your song.

Step seven:

Now, take some time imagining a story that is described in this tune. Master singers are artful storytellers who make us feel that they are sharing some personal bit of themselves with us. Remember in every story there is a beginning a middle and an end. In even the saddest song there is a moment of lightness, in the lightest song some moment of reflection. To engage an audience and keep them following the story with you you want to "pass through" an experience.

Step eight :TROUBLE SHOOTING!!!

TROUBLE SHOOTING!!! Its easy for all of us to want to give up, get frustrated and blame ourselves. You'll hear from yourself "I just can't do this," "I'll NEVER be able to do this," or my personal favorite "Maybe I should take up dental hygiene as a career and forget singing." Before you give up however, here are some tips gleaned some other singers and years of experience.

Problem #1001

I can't hear this. I keep singing the wrong note in the same place every time yet when I'm singing a capella I know the notes with no problem.

Possible solutions...

Maybe the chord that is being played for you is the wrong chord. (Believe me this happens.) Maybe the band is playing a Cm7b5 and your melody note is a 5, right next door. So you keep hearing something wonky when you try to sing. It's worth looking into what is being played when you sing, particularly if you keep singing the wrong thing time after time, even after you practice. The point here is the problem is not always you, so look around your musical environment to get some help. If the musical environment is fine and the problem is you then try the next hint for problem #5006.

Problem #5006

I never hit this note right. The whole song is in the right key except this note.

Possible solutions...

Look at what's happening right before the note that is giving you problems. Is there a little word like 'the' or 'a' that you are swallowing and not singing., leaving you not 'set-up' for the next note? Are you unclear of the melody leading to the note that is giving you problems? Are you opening your mouth and letting the word out, or are you afraid and tightening your jaw or pulling back on air because you think you might make a baaaad sound? Frequently the problem you are struggling with is not 'the note' but what leads up to it.

Problem #7033

I have NO air, I can't breathe, it's a wonder that I'm alive.

Possible solutions...

Amazingly, often the problem is that the singer is not emptying the lungs before taking another breath. This leaves you with a lot of "dead" air in the lungs and so you feel "out of breath." Different length lines need different amounts of breath. Before you can take a good "in breath," you need to be empty. So use what you've got, don't take more than you need, and don't hold your breath and then gulp a big one before the line. If you're not breathing out you should be breathing in.

Spend some of your practice time every day in working on your "BIG EARS."



Hey, What's GOIN' ON?

Telling A Story

Subtext

Situations in life that are the most interesting are ones in which there is a great deal of drama. We are feeling strong emotions, and we feel there is a lot at stake. For example, think of the types of conversations that you find yourself wanting to eavesdrop on, or the situations that you witness, or participate in, when you can't tear yourself away. Those words "you'll never guess what he said then," or "I wouldn't tell anyone but you, but." These are the same stories and situations that your audience is interested in. When you really care about what's happening and what you're saying, you're able to transmit that involvement to the audience. We rarely hear music written about just an ordinary day, with ordinary things happening, about which we have no particular feelings. However, sometimes a performer makes us feel that way. Particularly when they recite the lyric as if they had memorized it. The subtext is the story behind what you are singing. It reflects who you are, where you are, who you're talking to, how you feel about them, how you feel about what you are saying, and what you want to happen in this particular situation. The subtext has all prior information about your relationship with this person or persons.

*There is a world of
accumulated feeling
back of the trite,
dramatic expression,*

"I am going away."

-----Theodore Dreiser

Why develop a subtext?

1. To give us a sense of the whole. If we sing only from moment to moment, it doesn't always add up.
2. To galvanize our concentration. There are frequently distractions which take us away from what we are trying to say.
3. To get rid of the inessentials. In a 3 or 4 minute song, we can't possibly say everything we feel about any one subject. In order to make a clear picture for our audience, we have to have a clear picture for ourselves.
4. To express our own individuality, and add our own viewpoint what we are saying, and to make a song "our own."
5. To stimulate a belief in what we are doing.

Who's singing and to whom?

Each one of us has many aspects of ourselves that come into play when we relate to different people and to different situations. We act differently when we are in our work space than we do when we are with our close friends. We may be very confident in some situations, and extremely shy and uncomfortable in others. These are some of the things to consider when answering the question: who is singing and to whom?

1. Who are you talking to?
2. What is your relationship to the character or characters to whom you are speaking? Consider attitudes such as joyful, passionate, confiding, trusting, nervous, furious, curious, playful, suspicious, etc.

What's happening?

The dramatic situation

What circumstances or situation led you to singing this song? Are you seducing someone? Are you declaring undying love? Are you declaring undying hatred? Are they getting ready to leave town, marry someone else? Are they driving you crazy? How? Do you think you'll die without them? If it's not an intense feeling or interesting dramatic situation, why should the audience listen?

What do you want to happen?

The singer's intention

Intention is the singer's "point of view;" how the singer wants the situation to turn out. Intention is a verb. The same song can be changed dramatically, depending on the intention of the singer. For example, you might sing a sad love song with the intention of saying good-bye forever to a lover who has hurt you. You might sing the same song with the intention that your lover will feel sorry for how they have hurt you, and attempt to influence them to stay with you.

Intention is the part of the sub-text that is frequently unclear to the listener. Try to express your singer's intention in a simple sentence with vivid words. For example, your intentions might be to "melt your lover's heart of ice, Or to "crush your lover's resistance to your pleas," to "put stars in your lover's eyes," or to "sweep them off their feet." Try to use vivid words in your description. (Vivid or alive words that substitute for feeling sad might be: feeling "crushed," feeling "torn apart," feeling "washed-up," feeling "cast-adrift."

Some "alive" descriptions

That's funny	That tickles me, that cracks me up, we howled with laughter.
I'm happy	I'm walking on air, I went bonkers, I'm spinning, he knocks me out.
How about	Snug as a bug, wound up like a top, what a worm!, heart of stone, heart like ice, cut me like a knife, cry me a river, oozing malice, slithering into the room, floating through the door, glowing with love, etc.

Consider These Three Ideas:

1. Who is singing and to whom am I singing?
2. What's happening, and
3. What do I want to happen?

Answering these questions will bring you a long way toward understanding what you want to say in your song, how you want to say it, and toward an understanding of how to communicate your ideas to your audience in a personal and an engaging manner.

A List of Emotions

Afraid:

abandoned, alarmed, anxious, apprehensive, cautious, concerned, desperate, fearful, frightened, hesitant, horrified, hysterical, nervous, panicked, petrified, scared, shocked, threatened, terrified, timid, troubled, worried

Angry:

apathetic, bitter, contemptuous, cross, cruel, defiant, disobedient, enraged, fuming, furious, hateful, heated, hostile, incensed, indignant, infuriated, irate, jealous, livid, mad, mean, outraged, raging, raving, resentful, spiteful, stubborn, unforgiving, vengeful

Confident:

amazed, ambitious, brave, calm, certain, convinced, courageous, determined, empowered, enthusiastic, exhilarated, hopeful, independent, loyal, positive, proud, respectful, secure, strong, triumphant, trusting

Doubtful:

bewildered, bored, cautious, confused, despairing, distant, distrustful, dubious, hesitant, evasive, indecisive, indifferent, insecure, powerless, preoccupied, puzzled, skeptical, suspicious, timid, torn, uncertain, uninformed, wavering

Happy:

calm, carefree, cheerful, comfortable, complacent, contented, ecstatic, elated, enthusiastic, exalted, excited, festive, glad, grateful, inspired, joyous, jubilant, lighthearted, optimistic, peaceful, playful, pleased, relaxed, relieved, satisfied, serene, thrilled

Hurt:

abandoned, crushed, disappointed, disillusioned, disregarded, heartbroken, helpless, offended, shocked

Interested:

absorbed, amazed, ambitious, attracted, awed, concerned, curious, eager, earnest, engrossed, enthusiastic, excited, involved, fascinated, inquisitive, intent, intrigued, sympathetic, pitying

Irritated:

annoyed, exasperated, frustrated, goaded, grumpy, impatient, offended, provoked, shaky, tense, upset

Loving:

accepting, admiring, adoring, affectionate, awed, close, compassionate, considerate, fond, humble, passionate, pitying, sharing, tender, understanding, warm

Sad

cheerless, defeated, depressed, despairing, dismal, dreary, dull, gloomy, grieving, helpless, hopeless, lonely, low, melancholic, miserable, moody, pessimistic, regretful, remorseful, somber, sorrowful, sulky

Shamed:

disgraced, dishonored, embarrassed, helpless, humiliated, mortified, regretful, remorseful, uncomfortable, weak

Guidelines for writing a subtext

1. What's this song about? For example: finding love, losing love, finding love finally, finding it for the first time, going home, leaving home, saying good-bye, saying hello, etc.
2. In a simple sentence, express the singer's intention in saying these words. Intention is a verb. For example, your intention might be to win back your lover, or expressed in "alive" words, "to melt your lover's heart of ice". Or an intention might be to arouse your listeners in a patriotic or a religious way, as in "to stir their hearts," or "set their hearts on fire."
3. Who are you? Sometimes an artist will play another role to make a point. For example, in songs such as Randy Newman's "Sail Away," or a song like "Something Cool," or "Guess Who I Saw Today." Even if the character is you, describe who that you is.
4. Who are you speaking to?
5. What is your relationship to the character or characters to whom you are speaking?
6. How do you feel about what you are saying? Consider attitudes and emotions such as joyful, worried, uneasy, cynical, incredulous, passionate, sharp, confiding, trusting, nervous, impulsive, furious, indifferent, blase. Use "alive" words for your attitude. Think about the physicality of these attitudes. How do you look when you're heart-broken, jumping for joy, on the prowl, how do you move?
7. Where is this scene taking place? What are your physical surroundings?
8. Why are you and the character involved in this situation? What happened right before this song started? What do you want to happen next?
9. When is the scene taking place? What year, month, day, time, time of life.
10. Write out a subtext. Use alive words. Start with a main intention for each section. then, go through your song line by line, observing and noting intention, the unspoken thoughts and feelings. This is so that as you learn the words to the song you will also be learning the intentions. The inner and outer line work together from the beginning. Make each line natural.

"Emotion is the genuine feeling from correct art. Understand the character, know what the inner action is, establish relationship to the other character(s), and find an appropriate reference from your own experience."

Advice to the Players



Preparing a song *for* **PERFORMANCE**

Skills to acquire

Jazz is an interactive and spontaneous art form. It requires that the musicians have finely tuned listening skills so that they can react to one another and the music “in the moment.” Each musician brings his or her own distinctive experiences and skills into the mix. Jazz performances are expressions of your own unique thoughts and feelings and when it’s said that you make a performance of a song “your own” we are referring to your interpretation of a song. Great jazz singers make you feel that they are telling you the story from their own experiences and that they are truthful. Even if the experiences are not theirs personally there is still an honest portrayal of the emotion behind the story. All the musicians on the bandstand are there to support the musical vision of the song. The singer is the leader but all members of the band contribute to and create the ultimate performance. This interaction on the bandstand is also a defining feature of a jazz performance. The musical experience begins with the song.

1. **Choose a song** you want to sing. Look carefully at the lyrics and choose something that you would like to say, something that interests you, or evokes a strong emotion in you.
2. **Decide on a key** that best suits your voice. You may find that you will change the key later when you know the song well but for now just ascertain a comfortable range for yourself.
3. **Prepare lead sheet** with the melody and no lyric so you can refer to it while you’re working on your tune.

4. **Learn melody**
 - a. Note the repeating patterns and the shape of the melody.
 - b. Note the form of the tune: A,A,B,A; A1,A2,tag;etc.
 - c. Sing melody with just bass notes.
 - d. Listen to the chords as you sing the melody
 - e. Sing the melody with no accompaniment
 - f. Listen to the accompaniment and think the melody
 - g. Dance the melody
 - h. Be able to start the song from any point, such as starting at the bridge.
 - i. Think about the dynamics of the melody, where does it want to get louder, where softer, where harder, where softer.

5. **Learn the lyric**
 - a. Write out the lyric on a sheet of paper in big print
 - b. Say the lyric without singing as if it were a story or poem
 - c. Note where the words run together and where the natural pauses are so you can sing in complete sentences. What words are stressed and what words are unstressed?
 - d. Note the different kinds of phrases there are, such as descriptions, questions, and declarations.
 - e. Tell the story of the song in your own words.
 - f. Paraphrase each line of the song and notice how your emotions and thoughts change
 - g. Prepare a subtext for the song including who is singing, to whom are you singing, where are you, what happened directly before you started singing this song.
 - h. Think about the overall mood that you want to convey. A song might be a "happy" song but there are many kinds of happiness, i.e. carefree, delirious, overjoyed, contented, amused, charmed. (List of emotions.)
 - i. Try saying the song in rhythm.
 - j. Think of each line of the song as a question you're answering or as a response to someone.

6. **Sing the song a capella** (without music) to establish for yourself the groove and the tempo you want to sing in.

7. **Now sing the melody of the song without the lyric** and convey the emotions with just the sound of your voice. Consider how you use tone and dynamics to get your meaning. Where do you want to vary the melody? Usually just small changes in the melody can add to the interest. You don't need to reinvent the entire song.

8. **Now sing the song with the lyric with all your intention** and planning that has come before. Try to sing in complete sentences and leave space between thoughts. Breathing in the appropriate places will start to become evident now. When do you need big breaths, when just small breathes? Where is it natural to breath? If you don't take a breath when you are saying a line you probably wont want one when you are singing the line either.

9. **Now you are ready** to begin the arrangement for your song that will include deciding on the instrumentation, the introduction, the tempo and feel and the form.

10. See Creating an Arrangement.



Listening to an **ARRANGEMENT**

Listening to an Arrangement:

1. What is the overall mood of the piece?
2. How does the intro help to create this overall mood?
3. How long is the intro?
4. What is the groove of the tune? (Ballad, swing, bossa nova)
5. What is the instrumentation?
6. What is the song form?
7. How do they create variety in the piece? Rhythm breaks, kicks, modulations?
8. How do they end the song?
9. How does the vocalist create variety and make different sections sound different?



Creating an

ARRANGEMENT

An arrangement has:

1. a beginning, a middle and an end.
2. suits the mood that you are trying to create
3. has variety and surprises
4. holds together musically.

Musical devices to use in an arrangement

1. reharmonization, pedal points
2. vamps, interludes, verses
3. rhythmic figure and “kicks” or “stops.”
4. changes in rhythmic feel (in 2 or in 4, swing to bossa, etc.)
5. tempo changes (rubato to ballad tempo to ritards, etc.)
6. changes in key signature, modulations.
7. dynamics, soft and loud passages
8. solo sections, breakout band sections (just bass and voice or piano and voice)

Questions to ask yourself

1. what is the instrumentation I'll be using?
2. what tempo will I play at and what is the “groove?”
3. what overall mood am I trying to create:
· dreamy, energetic, buoyant, swiny, soothing, danceable, playful?
4. what is the form of the tune including solo sections, etc.
5. what is my introduction and how does it lead me into the song and set up the mood I want to create?
6. how will we create variety in the song?
7. what is the ending?



So Now it's

SHOWTIME

Programming

To Begin: What is your goal for this concert? What do you want the audience to walk away with? Do you want to inspire, entertain, educate, astound, mesmerize, befriend, flirt with, surprise, dazzle the audience? Pick a few words and think about how these words translate into a performance. How do they relate to the music you choose, how you dress and relate with the audience. What will make you feel you've had a successful concert? How will you incorporate these goals in your planning of your concert?

I recommend 13 tunes and an encore to create a program that lasts an hour and 10 minutes or 9 tunes for a 50 minute set, depending on the number of soloists and the length of songs. You should have songs of varied lengths and moods to keep the audience and yourself, engaged.

In your program you want to include a feature for each member of your band. Featuring different musicians on tunes insures the set doesn't progress predictability. Instrumental solos do not need to always be in the middle of a song. A song could start with drums for example and feature a drum solo. Or start with vocal and bass only, or drop out to 2 instruments. There are many ways to vary the arrangements of your songs, and to give everyone an opportunity to shine and keep the audience interested.

Think about separating your program into 3 or 4 parts, each one with a starting point, high point and transition. Plan the places where you will speak (often at the transitions) and also the places where the music flows into the next tune without stopping to talk. In my experience many singers and instrumentalists talk too much and it interrupts the flow of the music. Remember, you are doing a musical performance. Imagine if you went somewhere for dinner and in between each dish the host gave a lengthy speech about what you about to eat. Same for the audience. Allow them to appreciate what's happening without constant explanation. Don't be afraid to stay in a mood for a while. If you are in a quiet part of the show let it BE quiet.

*"The road of life twists and turns
and no two directions are ever
the same.*

*Yet our lessons come from the
journey, not the destination."*

Don Williams, Jr.

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www.mzjazz.com

To start, make a list of all the possible songs you are considering for your show separated into styles, tempos, feels, or whatever makes sense to you.

Next make a list with the numbers 1-13 and encore, or 1-9, and begin by filling in particular spots. Sometimes it is easiest to decide how you are going to begin and end the show and fill in the other spots around that. Rather than considering each song separately, think of the concert in terms of segments and transitions. Each segment has a beginning, middle and end. There is no “right” way to program a set and you will probably experiment with the order many times until it feels right to you.

Here are some ideas for programming your concert.

The welcome and getting settled.

The opening: This is your chance to make a first impression. When you come out on the stage the audience will be checking you out visually; how you look, what kind of energy you bring to the stage, what the band looks like. Choose something that you enjoy singing and that allows you to settle into the room, the sound and the experience. The opening is a welcome and a chance to “set the tone” of the performance. For example, if you’ve invited friends to your house for an event, the “opening” corresponds with you opening the door and welcoming them in. What do they see when they come in to the room? Is it quiet and peaceful, is it lively and loud, are you uptight and nervous or are you focused on their comfort and enjoyment?

This first segment is all about getting to know you and getting to know your music. Band introductions and any biographical information fits here. This segment might be 3 songs or last 10 to 15 minutes.

(Transition)

Dinner is served.

In segment 2 you can begin getting to “the meat” of your performance. You can introduce more challenging material, have extended solos, do heart wrenching ballads, sing in foreign languages, show off a little (or a lot), play songs in odd time meters, add humorous material, etc. This segment might be 5 songs or 25 to 35 minutes, shorter for a shorter set. Talking in this segment will be mostly directed at song set up and directing the audience’s attention to soloists.

(Transition)

Coffee in the other room.

Segment 3 should begin with a dramatic (sonic) change from the end of segment 2. If you are going to break down the band to one or two players and do a few songs that way, now would be a good time to introduce that element. If you ended segment 2 with a ballad then I would start here with something fresh and a slow build to another high point. This segment might be 3 or 4 songs and last about 20 minutes.

(Transition)

Saying goodnight.

Segment 4 is the wrap-up. You've been through a variety of musical experiences and emotions. The final song, or songs, can reflect the philosophy of your group or of you and the tone of your evening. It can be wildly "up tempo" and exciting or it can be a gentle heartfelt ballad or anything in between. You can have each member do a short solo or have no solos. Do what you do best here and bask in the applause. This is the segment for your thank yous and final band intro. Remember to keep your comments brief. These thank-yous are merely acknowledgments, not need to "Thank the academy." This segment might be 1 or 2 songs and last 5 to 10 minutes.

Encore

Not every show will have an encore but if you do it's "a little something extra." Your show is over, no need to impress. Leave your audience with the feelings and the thoughts you want to impart. The encore should be about you. Do something you enjoy and say goodnight.

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Now, time to meet and greet.

Be sure to provide a place for your audience to sign-up for your e-mail list. Providing a guest book for people to sign is also nice and reminds you of who attended your concert. Take the time to meet with your fans and truly enjoy the afterglow. You earned it.



It's More Fun, **TOGETHER**

Group Dynamics

Playing music is usually a group effort and presenting yourself as an individual within a cohesive musical group can be a challenge. Playing for an audience involves not only what they hear but also what they see and feel when they are attending your performances.

Here are some notes I made for myself when I attended a student recital at the Jazzschool one evening.

To feel professional you need to look professional.
These guys look like my gardeners.
Is this a group? Do these people even know each other? No eye contact, no camaraderie.

I started to think about some things that would have made that show more cohesive, involved the audience, made the players feel more connected and present and more fun for everyone.

YOU Look Mahvlous

From your appearance others make quick judgements and come to many conclusions about you. I hope this comes as no surprise . If I invite you to my home for dinner and you show up messy, unshowered, unaware of how you look to me I won't be as open and receptive to you as I would be if you looked like you gave some thought to your appearance. I feel the same as an audience member. As a performer, think about how you want to be perceived and aim for that. Easy, laid back, gangsta, rock maniac, cool jazz dude? Dress with some intention.

Groups add something new to the mix. Your dress is part of your visual show. The Village People were very successful at creating different characters that were part of a group, also the Spice Girls or Dixie Chicks. Miles Davis was very aware of his group look. Also John Coltrane. How do you create a cohesive look and remain individuals.

*When you work with great musicians,
they are always a part of you..
Their spirits are walking around
in me, so they're still here and
passing it on to others.*

-----Miles Davis

Clothes make a statement!

Part of your brand is your image. Take some time to look at photos of musicians you admire and take note of how they are dressing. Think about the kind of response you are looking for from your audience? What are you wearing when you feel confident? The visual aspects of your show go a long way toward engaging your audience.

Who's the star?

I want to hear every band member play, I just don't want to hear them in the same order, on every tune, and on and on. I want to be surprised, enticed, entertained. When you are the soloist, step up to the spot light and "do your thing." When you are not the soloist, stand back, give our attention and energy and focus to the soloist and don't slouch. If you're not interested in your bandmates playing, why should I be? And whatever, don't stand around dinking with your instrument.

Variety: the spice of life

One way to showcase a particular player is to begin the tune with a solo. Any player can start a tune and then be joined by one or more. In every set everyone can have one important feature and a few minor ones. These devices keep the audience interested and also keep band members interested. You should always know you're going to get a chance to show your stuff and be ready to support your bandmates when it's their turn to shine. As a group identify the strengths of each player and be sure to showcase that at least once in every set.

It is also very effective to break the band down into different configurations. Keeping things fresh and moving the focus around the bandstand makes for a more exciting and engaging show.



Hear Ye,

HEAR ME

Ever wonder why they say “live and in person?” Those are two attributes that people long for when they go out to a performance. First, “live,” means you’re present and engaged and that you can see, hear and relate to everything that’s going on around you. Second, “in person” means that you’re prepared and willing to share your thoughts, feelings and imagination openly with your audience.

Why talk?

If the main focus of your performance is on the music, why talk? When your show begins, the audience members have arrived from many different places. Some have been out dining and chatting about their day, some might have hired a baby-sitter and rushed through traffic to get to your show, others may be out-of-towners who ended up at your show by chance. One reason to talk to an audience is to begin to shut out the outside world and bring everyone’s attention to the present moment, and to you, the main attraction.

Unless you’re a well-known entertainer you’re a stranger to the audience. Conversation about yourself and the members of your band lets the audience see something about you that they wouldn’t know if they were listening to your CD. Ever notice how many people say “I went to see the band,” and not “I went to hear the band?” Or how many concerts are named “An evening with...?” Concert performances are an opportunity for the audience to hang out with you. And for you to hang out with them.

And in the center ring...

Talk can direct the audience's attention to where you want it to be. If the next tune is featuring your percussionist playing an exotic gourd, tell the audience from whence came this exotic gourd, or where in the world they play it, or how you first heard it, or on and on. Everyone's attention will be focused on the percussionist before you begin the tune.

Your music may need some introduction. If you're doing original material, or music that comes from other cultures, or old music with a new "take," the audience will be more engaged if they know what they're listening to. Many theatrical performances have extensive program notes. Your patter is the program notes for your concert.

Talk can buy you time when the guitarist needs to tune, the trumpet player dropped all his music off the stand, you need to catch your breath, you want to change moods or your set is going too fast.

Right this way..

Talking with the audience is a great way to take everyone on a journey and set a mood. We all love to hear the words "Once upon a time..."

You are completely under my power

Would you like to sell your CD's? Do you want people to sign your mailing list? Do you want to announce where you will be playing next? Do you want to direct attention to your merchandising table? All of these things are easy to do with just a few well chosen words to the audience.

When you're programming your set, decide where you'll want to talk and do some thinking about what you will say in advance. Write yourself some brief notes about what you want to talk about. If, when you're on the stage, inspiration hits, you can always fill in. If you're dumbstruck for some reason, thinking about what you want to say before hand will save your sanity when your mind goes suddenly blank. Some forethought can save you the embarrassment of blurting out something you wish you didn't, or the dreaded "uh, uh," or "this is one of my favorite songs." So?



Live(ly) PERFORMANCE

Some skills for performing

1. Knowledge of material
2. Control of the body
3. Awareness of the visual
4. Ability to focus
5. Ability to galvanize energy
6. Awareness of the audience
7. Ability to “be in the moment”

Knowledge of material

Mastering the musical language is a lifelong pursuit for all musicians. Knowing the material includes knowing the lyric, knowing the melody, and knowing the chord changes that constitute the harmonic structure of the song. It includes also having a clear idea of your character's intention, (subtext, etc.), being familiar with the style you are singing in, listening to other versions of the song you are singing, and identifying and mastering the technical demands of the song. In addition it includes knowing the name of the composer and lyricist, listening, practicing and listening some more. Knowing a song includes singing the melody without words, being able to say the words without singing, and on and on. Knowledge of material gives you new ideas and makes you feel confident in your ability to express yourself uniquely.

*You've got to be able to hold a lot of
contradictory ideas in your mind
without going nuts.*

*I feel like to do my job right, when I
walk out onstage*

*I've got to feel like it's the most
important thing in the world.*

*I've also got to feel like,
well, it's only rock and roll.*

*Somehow you've got to believe both of
those things.*

-----Bruce Springsteen

Control of the body

Does your nose itch uncontrollably when you get on the band stand? Does your hair keep falling in your face? Are you too nervous to breathe causing your voice to sound like a little mouse? Do you have odd mannerisms, like pulling at your clothes? Uh oh, now everybody is uncomfortable because you are communicating your anxiety. Control of our body is something to think about in practice. Look in a mirror when you practice. Live performance is a communicative art and as artists we want to communicate our intention, not our subconscious anxiety. Be aware of your body when you practice and when you perform.

Awareness of the visual

Unless you are in a recording studio, people are looking at you when you perform, and making many assumptions about you. Your sincerity, your ability, your comfort, your experience, your intelligence and your income level are all “out there” for everyone to assume. (Of course, they may not be right, but nonetheless, they are making assumptions.) Our personal appearance matters: it sends a message. Make sure that you are sending the message that you want to send. Are you smiling broadly in a sad song? Are you jumping around while the piano player is playing his solo and stealing attention? Are your clothes appropriate to what you are trying to say about yourself? Be aware of the visual and make it work for you. Communicate what you wish to communicate.

Ability to focus

You had a fight with your lover, the waiters are clanging glasses, the piano player has invented an entirely new set of changes for your favorite song that you've never heard or even knew existed, and the guy in the front row is wearing a neon tie and fondling the knee of the lady at the next table. Can you pay attention to what you are trying to do? Knowledge of material comes in really handy here.

Ability to galvanize energy

Hey everybody! Look at me!! I'm doing it!!!!

Awareness of the audience

Ever been in the presence of someone who is constantly looking over your shoulder at themselves in a mirror? Singing is communication, like talking. The audience wants to know that you know that they are present and included in what is being said. They want to be spoken to, not at. Consider this in your performance

Ability to be "in the moment"

Music is a "time art." Live music exists only in the here and now, and in the memories of the participants. We want the audience to give up their personal concerns and come along with us. That's why we want to cultivate these abilities:

- to play
- to be playful
- to feel
- to live in the moment
- to be aware of and to express our emotions
(while maintaining our connection to mundane concerns like, what is the next tune?)

Take responsibility for being the leader. Knowledge of material comes in really handy again here. Create with intention. Create with attention. Create with intention.



Unrehearsed Performances

"SITTING IN"

"Sitting in" refers to an unrehearsed performance you give at an open mic or jam session or as a guest of other performers on their gig. It is a great way to meet other musicians and to check out the venues in your area where you might perform. A successful outcome will depend on how well you are prepared in advance.

1. As American Idol says: "It's all about tune choice." Perhaps you've just heard an unbelievable version of "Sophisticated Lady" and you're dying to try it. Perhaps you've always wanted to sing "Lullaby of Birdland" at a REALLY fast tempo. I can (almost) guarantee you that you will wish you'd had another thought. An unrehearsed performance puts everyone on the spot. In order for you and the musicians to shine, choose a song that plays to everyone's strengths. If you spend a little time listening to the band you will hear the type of material that they choose for themselves and what they play well. It's helpful to have a list of songs in various styles and in your key that you can choose from when you're sitting in. Songs and feels that are familiar but not overdone work well in this situation and it's good to have a few standards in original keys you can sing if the band is less experienced with transposing keys.

2. Make sure you know the tunes you've chosen as your "sitting in repertoire" very well. There are many distractions when you are playing in an unfamiliar environment with an unrehearsed group and you will be expected to lead the band. You will need to tell the players in advance the tune, the tempo, the rhythmic feel and the form of your tune.

- a. **Intro:** A common intro for standard tunes is often the last 4 or 8 bars of the tune faster tempos often have an 8 bar intro and slower tempos, 4 bars. A bossa nova can frequently begin with a vamp intro. (A vamp intro is 2 or 3 chords that repeat, generally for 4 bars but they can be extended indefinitely.)

b. **Form:** Here are some musical terms that musicians use to describe the form of a song.

i. **AABA:** means the song plays and A section, then another, goes to the bridge and then the last A. Many standard songs from the “American Songbook” use this common 32 bar form. Make yourself familiar with the form of your song.

ii. **Other terms:**

1. The “head” is the melody of the complete song form, 1 time through.
2. A section: first section of a tune. This refers to our song form such as AABA, etc.
3. B section: generally the bridge of a song.
4. Tag: repeating the last section of a tune usually 2 or 3 times.

3. **Leading the band:** You are the leader. You are in charge. Sticking with the form is a very important part of leading the group. Unexpected musical ideas might be very welcome within the form but when a singer jumps around from A sections to bridges to wherever no one is able to follow. A usual way of going through a tune would be:

- a. Sing the entire melody through once.
- b. Then the song repeats for solos either by you or by other players.
- c. Keep track in your head where you are in the song so that when it is your turn to come in you know where you are in the form.
- d. Keep visual contact with the players. It may fall to you to direct who is soloing next or they may decide among themselves.
- e. When the last player is finishing his solo, signal that you are coming back in with eye contact, raising your microphone or stepping to the center or the stage again.
- f. Generally you will sing the song to the end now taking a tag or slowing down on the ending. Be clear about what you are doing. You can lead the band with your voice and also with your body movements. Looking in terror at the pianist isn't the best choice here.
- g. Be flexible. This is unrehearsed so ‘big ears,’ and “big eyes” are important here. Listen, react and be aware of what's going on around you.

4. **Hand gestures:** Everyone can see you. Unless you are trying for some dramatic effect ala James Brown, it isn't necessary to telegraph your musical intentions too broadly or too soon. Clear communication is the goal here. Some commonly used hand and body gestures are:

- a. Pointing to the top of the head meaning: I'm going back to the “top” or beginning of the tune.
- b. Pointing to the bridge of the nose meaning: (Yep) I'm going back to the bridge.
- c. Gesturing the hand in a “you're crazy” sort of circle (not while pointing to your head) meaning: Go around again (often used for a tag.)
- d. Making a fist: (Not I'm going to punch you but) meaning: this is the last time through the tune.

Your body language will supply a lot of the information that the other musicians are reading. Experienced players will know the form of the tune and will be looking to you for indications of your intentions. Don't wave your arms around aimlessly or make listless gestures. Beginnings, endings and transitions are all accomplished in time so be aware of where you are in the rhythmic feel of the tune. That means knowing where you are in "the count," such as 1-2-3-4. When signaling endings, etc., phrases will usually start on the "1."

5. **Bringing a chart:** For organized jam sessions and open mics you will usually bring your own charts. (You may bring a chart with you also if you think you might be invited to "sit in.") All the rules of clear chart writing apply here. 5 pages of sheet music or multipage charts not taped together will make for an unreliable performance from both you and the band. Remember this is an unrehearsed situation so have a clear chart, in your key, geared to the performance level of the accompanying group.

Some tips:

1. Develop a repertoire of tunes you sing when you are sitting in. A few songs in various styles that you know well and can count on to show you off to your best advantage. Choose songs appropriate to the venue and the occasion for which you are singing. Depressing ballads are often more fun to sing than to listen to and getting a good response from the audience is part of what makes sitting in fun. (I'm just saying...)
2. An important part of sitting in is meeting new musicians and developing your fan base. Remember to be a "class act," by listening respectfully to others, meeting people and accepting comments graciously. You know.
3. Search out open mics and jam sessions in your area. Most gigs come about by being out and about, meeting other musicians and meeting fans. Until you are well known to others in your community you probably won't get a call gig by sitting in your armchair. Support live music.



First musical

JAZZ PROJECT

Choosing Material

There are lots of approaches to beginning any CD project. This is only one. Use any of the ideas independent of the others, pick what works for you and cast the rest aside.

1.

Choose a few words that describe the type of CD you want to make. Romantic, groovin', swingin', danceable, musically challenging, avant gard, groundbreaking, incendiary. Think about what you want to happen to the audience when they hear your CD (get cuddly, get up and dance, step on the cat, practice more, meditate, get energized, save the rain forest, etc.) Be specific. This is only one CD of a whole series you will be doing in the future.

2.

Think about what you are going to do with this CD when it is done. Do you want radio play, more gigs, and a bigger audience (of course you do.)? However, not every radio station is going to play your music so what particular radio station(s) do you have in mind. Where do you want to play? Who is playing there already and what are they playing to get there? This is research into your market. Just look, listen and observe.

3.

Think about yourself. What is unique about you? Ask friends and family how they would describe your music. Ask them for suggestions as to what their favorite songs are that you do. What do they like when they come to hear you? Don't ask what they don't like although some will have to tell you anyway. Here you're just looking for audience response.

4. _____

Choose 5 CDs that you've always loved. They do not need to be in your style. Listen to them carefully and describe what you like about them. Consider the sound, the mood, who they feature, what they feature. When do you play these CDs? For a party? For background?

5. _____

Make a list of every tune you might even remotely consider. No censoring at this point, just a big old list. Next divide the tunes up into styles, or feels or tempos. Think about your answers to the first 4 questions and begin eliminating the material that doesn't fit your concept for THIS project.

6. _____

Decide how much recorded music you want to put on the CD. Somewhere between 55 and 70 minutes is standard. If you are going to record tunes about 3.5 to 5 minutes in length, you will want to choose about 13 to 15 tunes to record. Keeping in mind your overall concept or mood for this record, look for a group of tunes that express that mood but have variety. Even if you are creating a romantic record with a mellow mood you will want some contrast in the tunes you choose. Different keys, differing styles, differing tempos, but all within the concept you have chosen. For instance, if you have chosen to create an energetic record that shows off your virtuosity on your instrument, include the styles and pieces that show you off. This is a good time to go back to some of your most favorite CDs and reexamine what it is you like or admire about them. All artists borrow from one another at least some of the time. It is not necessary to "reinvent the wheel," but if you feel like it, go ahead and try.

7. _____

Express your uniqueness. What makes you YOU is what you have to offer. Sing what you like. Play what you like. Create a recording that you would like to listen to. Enjoy the process. Make a statement. Listen and be guided by what you think is "good." If this is your first musical project, remind yourself that it is not your last.



The Art of

JAZZ SINGING

PROFESSIONALISM

“Professional behavior” is a reflection of how you feel about yourself and your place in the world. It’s probably also a short list of all the things your Grandma told you, (or should have told you), about how to behave with others.

Be on time

Everybody else’s time is just as valuable as yours. I’ve removed a musician’s name from my “call list” even when I thought they were great musicians and great people. I didn’t want to be kept waiting, or have my client kept waiting, or have the audience kept waiting.

Dress Appropriately for the occasion

Every professional musician should own the appropriate dress for the gigs that they do. Most jazz musicians will be called on to have ‘formal attire,’ from time to time. Although your Uncle Louie may have been just about your size, his old suit on you won’t make you look like you a top-flight professional. And, plunging necklines and mini-skirts may be great for the club gig, but won’t get you asked back to an elegant dinner party (or maybe not as the chanteuse.) “Bed to streetwear,” which is favored by many of us in the comfort of our homes, really makes you look like a slob when you’re on a gig.

Be Prepared To Do Your Job

Are you prepared to sing or play? Do you know the material you’re about to present? Do you have all the equipment you need, in good working order? Do you have your microphone, mic cord, mic stand, music stand, light? Do you have any charts and music that will be needed for the band? Are you ready to play?

Be cheerful

So many things, big and small, can and do go wrong everyday. Trouble finding a parking space? Don't like your playing tonight? Don't like my playing tonight? Touch of indigestion? Nobody wants to be around a crabby, needy person. On the bandstand or on a gig is not the time to whine and complain.

Don't Gossip

Everyone's a critic. As artists we are constantly evaluating our skills and performances and comparing them to what we see and hear around us. This behavior helps us to grow and learn. To belittle our fellow artists is to constrain our own growth and development and to create an atmosphere that is not conducive to creating a supportive environment.

Be a Personality

Everyone on the team needs to be a contributor. Own the gig. Don't phone in your part because you're tired of the tunes, or just generally unenergetic that day. Find new tunes, take some lessons, practice more. Take on your share of the work of keeping the musical community vibrant and thriving. Go out and support your fellow musicians by attending their gigs, check out new artists. Discover yourself as an artist; stand up for yourself.

Don't Undercut Your Fellow Musicians

Maybe you have a good "day" job and make plenty of money and you like to sing and play for fun. Try to remember your fellow musicians; the one's you study with, the one's who've dedicated their lives to playing music. If you offer your services for free or way under market value soon there won't be professional musicians. Ask for a fair wage and then live up to the standard you set.