



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.