

How to Learn Exam and Performance Confidence

1. Know the composers you are playing. Listen to their other compositions, watch YouTube renditions of your pieces, know a little bit about their life to understand the style of the era.
2. Play to as many people as you can. Video yourself. Play to a pet, some soft toys, to a doll who is the imagined examiner.
3. Learn to be a performer. Practice once a week in your performance clothes, including hairstyle and shoes for the four weeks before your performance or exam.
4. Think of your practice room at home as the examination venue or performance stage. Think of your piano as a different instrument. Tidy away personal effects. Give the room a new title, such as your super room or something positive.
5. Every time you go into your room, walk in with steady confidence, sit yourself down, feel calm, and play your programme in order. Do not stop for any glitches or musical 'typos', but take a mental note of where they are. These will be your to-fix areas for your practice session.
6. Teach yourself to feel the power of the music leading you on a wonderful journey. Do not rush, but enjoy each note. Really listen to the harmonies, feel the emotional mood changes, respect yourself and your dedication to your art. There are thousands of people who would love to be able to do what you can do. You are an achiever par excellence.
7. Think how much effort and skill the composer put into the piece, and that you have the marvellous ability to be able to transform the composer's hard work into sound. The composer wrote the piece to be played. For you!
8. Be a technical wizard. Love your scales because they are your tools of trade. Treat them well. Learn about the muscles that do the work, know about the tendons and nerves that are in your hands.
9. Enjoy conquering the difficult passages. Be patient with yourself. Have a plan of action to follow. One valuable tip is to over practice. Go further, do more than your teacher expects.
10. Know about how an acoustic piano works. Know how its sounds are made, how dynamics are possible, and the functionality of the pedals. Be amazed.

RESOURCES

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