

THERE IS NO HARD REPERTOIRE

UNDERSTANDING STRESS ON STAGE



WHAT WE ARE GOING TO TALK ABOUT



About Performing



Your Body Under Stress

Embrace your body's reaction to stress



Mental Practices



Exercises to get you ready!

ABOUT PERFORMING

Why are we doing this to us?



ABOUT PERFORMING

- Why do musicians perform music?
- Ask yourself a series of **five „Why“ Questions!**
 - Satisfies a need for Appreciation, need to Impress, to be loved
 - Gives us something to live for and to work towards
 - Performance is a special form of self-expression and fulfillment, creating experiences that only exist in a particular moment in time and then resonate only in our individual and collective memories
- Music is a social art form. It is meant to be shared!

YOUR BODY UNDER STRESS

Embrace your body's reaction to stress



YOUR BODY UNDER STRESS

- For years we've learned: Stress is the Enemy
- Do you believe that stress is harmful for your health?
- Study shows:
 - 43% of people with a lot of stress and the belief that stress is harmful had a higher risk of premature death
 - BUT: Those who did not view stress as harmful had a lesser risk of dying

Marquette University
e-Publications@Marquette

College of Nursing Faculty Research and
Publications

Nursing, College of

2012

Does the Perception That Stress Affects Health Matter? The
Association with Health and Mortality

Abiola O. Keller

Kristin Litzelman

Lauren E. Wisk

Torshelika Maddox

Erika Rose Cheng

See next page for additional authors

Follow this and additional works at: https://epublications.marquette.edu/nursing_fac

Part of the Nursing Commons

YOUR BODY UNDER STRESS

- Rethink your Stress Response as helpful
 - Your pounding heart is preparing you for action to get more oxygen into your brain
 - Stress Response is helpful for your performance, your concentration and your readiness
- Physical Stress Response will Change:
 - From: Heart Rate goes up, blood vessels constrict (which is why chronic stress is associated with cardiovascular disease)
 - To: Heart Rate goes up, but blood vessels stay relaxed → Same as in Moments of Joy and Courage
 - How you think about stress matters
- When in stress: This is my body helping me raise to the Challenge

YOUR BODY UNDER STRESS

- Stress makes you social → Oxytocin
 - Oxytocin primes you to do things that strengthen close relationships (the „cuddle hormone“)
 - Makes you crave physical attention, more empathetic, wanting to help and support people you care about
 - When released, it motivates you to seek support and care for each other
 - Nudging you to tell somebody how you feel instead of bottling it up
- Stress Response has a built in mechanism to build up stress resilience
- Caring creates Resilience, you create the biology of Courage
- Go after what it is that creates meaning in your life and then trust yourself to handle the stress that follows!

MENTAL PRACTICE TECHNIQUES

IT'S ALL IN YOUR HEAD!



MENTAL PRACTICE

- Old Thoughts vs. New Thoughts
 - Turn negative fears into positive memories
 - „I must not blackout on stage...“ → „I trust myself, I played it a thousand times!“
 - „I am afraid to play wrong notes...“ → „Some wrong notes are human!“
 - „I hope everything goes well...“ → „I concentrated on the music, from beginning until end!“

MENTAL PRACTICE

- Dealing with competition
 - Everybody loves cake and I make the best Strawberry Cake there is!
 - But some people prefer chocolate cake
 - My job is to bring my Strawberry Cake onto the stage!
 - What is my Strawberry Cake?
 - I have a beautifully warm and round sound
 - I have a deep understanding and clarity of the music
 - Audiences do not compare, they have an infinite capacity to love performances!



MENTAL PRACTICE

- The Performer's Mindset
 - Convince yourself, that everything you do is easy! No acrobat goes onto the rope line thinking „Damn ... this is actually quite hard, am I insane?!?“
- If you go on stage thinking that you do something difficult, you enable stress!
- What you do is fun, is easy and people are gonna love it!
- Disconnect yourself emotionally from mistakes
 - quickly move one after a mistake
- There is no hard repertoire!
- Turn your Fears into Excitement!
 - 'Today, here, now' – Stanislavski
 - You are only competing with yourself

MENTAL PRACTICE

- Write down and analyze what needs to improve:
 - Technique
 - Self Conscience and Security
 - Concentration
 - Body and Health
 - Stage Presence
 - Happiness and Excitement
 - Social Strenght
- You don't practice one thing, you practice **ALL** things!
- Write down your most memorable stage experience!

TECHNICAL EXERCISES

Coping with the symptoms on a practical level

TECHNICAL EXERCISES

- Body exercises: Get rid of Adrenalin through movement!
 - <https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/exercising-to-relax>
- **Progressive Muscle Relaxation**
- Be as prepared as you can be!
 - Repertoire not too difficult
 - Amount of Material
 - Lack of Time
- No last minute changes
 - Your body remembers what it has always been doing. Long term practice needs long term change. In stressful situations your body might remember the former fingering!

TECHNICAL EXERCISES

- Slow metrical practice
- Tempo practice (20% below and above)
- Concentration Practice
 - Play through the piece in your head with your eyes closed!

QUESTIONS?

- Further Research:
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RcGyVTAoXEU>
 - <https://www.health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/harnessing-the-upsides-of-stress>
 - <https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/understanding-the-stress-response>
 - <https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/exercising-to-relax>
- *Effective Practice* by Ricardo Iznaola
- *The Inner Game of Tennis* by W. Timothy Gallwey