

# **CURTAIN TO CURTAIN:**

## **Command & Stage Presence**

### **WHY IS COMMAND & STAGE PRESENCE IMPORTANT TO US?**

- Professionalism and the sophisticated modern audience.
- Our goal is to capture audience, put them at ease, and keep them entertained.
- In competition, part of the showmanship category.
- As performer, your experience will be more enjoyable.

### **CONSIDER THE ENTIRE PERFORMANCE: THE “FIVE ELEMENTS”**

#### **ENTRANCE**

- All performers greet the audience with huge, sincere smiles indicating that they are thrilled about the opportunity to entertain.
- A strong connection with the audience established from the moment the curtain opens or lights go on, or when quartet hits the stage.
- High energized physical posture (for quartet, confident stride from the unit).
- Well-timed audience greeting followed by a fluid entry into the first performance piece.

#### **PITCH PIPE TECHNIQUE**

- To take pitch or not to take pitch? That is the question. There really is no question – if it will set you up for a strong, confident, in-tune start to your song/performance then YES!
- No points given for not taking pitch. However points can be lost if as result of taking/not taking pitch your performance is shaky or otherwise negatively affected.
- What is assessed by audience? Showmanship judge? Fluidity & timing and how it is incorporated into the performance.
- Plan who will blow pitch, when it will be blown, how and where the pitch pipe will be stored and again removed for the next song.
- The manner in which the pitch pipe is blown can also assist with the setting of the mood.

### TRANSITIONS / TIMING AUDIENCE APPLAUSE

- The “non-singing” parts of your performance – key is that you are still performing! Planning and rehearsing this supports the professionalism of your performance.
- Must keep the audience connection/interest. Don’t want them to use this break in the music as time to leave to use the restroom!
- Remember, you are still on stage and you are all visible! Avoid adjusting your costume, scratching your face etc. Maintain the energized posture, involved face and be attentive to what is happening.
- Keep the transitions fluid. For quartet, if you are between songs, move with purpose from one place to the next, and ensure your posture is confident and energized.
- Applause Acceptance :
  - Gauge your audience while you are accepting applause and use their level of response as the cue for moving to next element of the performance. In chorus, the director will control this. In quartet, usually a member is assigned to cue the quartet.
  - Assess the crest of the applause wave. You do not wish to be standing in “applause acceptance” mode when the applause has started to wane or ended; this leads to a gap in the flow and can create audience & performer discomfort.
- Setting the Mood : The transition period can also contribute to your performance by creating the atmosphere/mood for your next song. Facial expression, body posture, speed and timing can all assist the performer in preparing the audience for a ballad or uptune performance. It can be jarring to the audience if a conflicting message is provided during the transition/set up of the next song.

### EMCEE

- Consider the manner in which the speaker approaches the microphone and addresses the audience; Energy, posture and manner of speech can maintain the audience connection.
- When addressing the audience, remember to vary the tone of your speech and maintain eye contact with the audience.
- Practice good microphone technique.
- Plan/script what you will say in advance and rehearse this! Plan for audience response (for example if you are hoping for laughter!) and time accordingly.
- Remember that you are there to entertain the audience and keep them at ease. Do your best to know your audience demographic before a performance and plan your material accordingly. Never include offensive or inappropriate material/subject matter in your script.

- Non-speaking members are still in performance mode and should be attentive, engaged and energized while taking a “back seat” to the emcee. Pay attention to what is happening – you never know when you may need to improvise! If you don’t appear interested in what your emcee is saying to the audience, the audience won’t be interested either! Remember, the audience takes their cues from you the performer!
- Emcee spot should flow with the rest of the performance and getting in and out of the emcee spot should be seamless.

### EXIT

You are almost done! You want to leave a positive, lasting impression so be sure you are still performing until you leave the stage!

- The same confident, energized manner with which you took the stage is the ideal way to leave your audience. Maintain eye contact, have gracious smiles and leave the audience feeling like it was your pleasure to have entertained them!
- If you are unhappy with your performance, or the audience response, or one of your riser or quartet-mates, don’t let the audience know! An otherwise wonderful audience experience might be tainted with a hasty retreat from the stage, or faces that reveal discomfort or unhappiness with the performance.
- If appropriate, you can show some creativity and incorporate the character or theme from your performance into the exit.

### “CURTAIN TO CURTAIN: THE WHOLE ENCHILADA”

- A successful performance includes the whole package: solid musical plan, solid visual plan, confident performance, attention to the details (costumes, grooming) pacing, and awareness of your audience.
- Become aware of the message your body is sending (body language).
- Have a plan! Rehearse the plan!
- It takes practice and experience to develop command and stage presence.
- You can fake confidence and it can eventually become genuine!
- Approach performance as a wonderful experience you owe your audience; Focus more on the audience and “giving it away”.