

Backstage Coach Productions

Dance Education

BackstageCoach.com

PERFORMANCE TECHNIQUE 2

Performance Technique 2 includes more information on performance skills such as communication and expression, intention, improvisation, props, costumes, and performance experience.

COMMUNICATION AND EXPRESSION

- Having no expression and the same expression are really the same. A frozen “Six Flags” smile is an example of a forced façade that never changes. Remain animated by changing the emotions that register on the face.
- Choose a simple action verb that reflects the tone of your performance and express it with the entire body while moving. For example, joy, sadness, jealousy, greed, temptation, etc
- Creating a simple storyline to the piece may ground the movement and give it deeper meaning which will resonate in the performance.
- An authentic performance would include both the mind and the body communicating the same message.
- Sit in front of a mirror and listen to the music and make note of emotions you are experiencing throughout the dance. Now perform the dance without thinking of technique but with a focus on expression.
- Note the shift or change in the lyrics or tone of the music. Your facial/body expressions should match this change.
- Rehearse every nuance of your performance until you know it with such confidence that the muscle memory takes over. At this point, you will be free to communicate the purpose without having to think about the step that comes next.
- The audience will feel more comfortable and enjoy watching you if you are relaxed and expressive regardless of your technical ability. The human connectivity in feeling is more interesting than a skill.

PERFORMANCE INTENTION

- As a performer it’s your job to do your homework and research any background information about the piece that might give it greater meaning. Also, strive to understand the choreographer’s intention. Why are you dancing this dance?
- HOW dances can be made are as broad as the reasons WHY dances are made - - to tell a story, explore movement ideas, comment on a social condition or feature a theme. Each dance has a creative process of its own. As a performer, what are you communicating about the choreography? What do you need the audience to “get” about the work?

Backstage Coach Productions

Dance Education

BackstageCoach.com

PERFORMANCE TECHNIQUE 2

PERFORMANCE IMPROVISATION

- Dance is an ephemeral art form and no performance will ever be replicated exactly the same. Aim for consistency during the performance, but know that slight changes may happen in the moment and that is a part of live performance. Learn to adapt, think on the spot, and recover without performing out of character. Therefore, rehearse your piece without stopping and improvise in the moment when the need arises.
- Remember the audience does not know your choreography. Often a strong performer, who makes a mistake but remains in character, never takes the audience out of the moment and therefore the mistake is not noticed.

PERFORMANCE EXPERIENCE

- The more you perform the more you gain experience in interacting with other performers and the audience along with the props and sets in the stage space. Keep performing.
- Go watch performances outside of your immediate realm of known movement styles. You will be exposed to new ideas and techniques in the performing arts.
- Watch other people perform. What do they do that you like? Be inspired from it.
- Watch other people perform. What do they do that you don't like? Learn from it.

THE PERFORMER AND PROPS, COSTUMES AND MAKEUP

- When performing with a prop use it in a manner that suggests it is a natural extension of your body. I'm thinking about props like skirts, canes, hats, etc . . . Use these props in a creative way that supports the choreography; otherwise, the prop will become a distraction and often disorient you, the performer, as well as the viewer.
- Costuming and makeup not only reflect the theme of the performance, but also aids in the transformation from oneself to that of the character. This outside reflection projects itself internally and affects the act of performance.