

Zara Samuel (2500872) Musical Performance Progress Workbook

This is my progress workbook for musical performance.

I came into this module already with a good skill set for musical performance as well as a high level of confidence.

When it came to reading from sheet music, I struggled a bit and I took longer to understand what I was supposed to sing in the beginning. I quickly learned to understand it however. I now know the sheet music needs both the vocal and piano parts for auditions. Now I can confidently know how sheet music for auditions should work as well as how to work with a pianist. Next time I need to work with a pianist, I'll be able to show them where the repeats in the music are and what tempo we'll be using.

In terms of my weaknesses, I believe I need to work on consistently lifting my soft palate and getting enough air into my lungs. I'd also benefit from consistently using my diaphragm to support my voice.

In this module, I'd also found out that my lower register is not as strong as my higher register. James' teachings showed me that a lot of the techniques I use for strengthening my upper register can also be used for strengthening my lower register. One such technique would be putting more of a nasal tone on the lower notes as well as figuring out where to breathe in the song and opening my mouth to be wider.

To better tackle my weaknesses, I looked into exercises that better train me to lift my soft palate and use my diaphragm.

I found using a nasal tone helped me to reach notes I was struggling with. For my songs specifically, the nasal tone as well as a flexible, open mouth and a yawning effect allowed me to reach those high notes.

In order to get more out of yawning exercises within my personalised warmup, I can create a stronger differentiation between the nasal /ah/ sound and the yawn /ah/ sound. This is something I struggled with in my warmup but with practice, I have improved and I intend to maintain this practice after the module has finished.

For acting while singing, I found my performance was strengthened through the use of the seven tensions. It also helped to have an understanding within myself of who the character I was portraying was singing to and what context they were singing within. I created a narrative within the song for me to portray.

I made sure to include lots of varied warmups within my own warmup. I had included stuff for breath control, diaphragm work, etc. This exercise taught me that there is a specific order for doing warmups that will make the experience as a whole much easier and will let me gain more from it. In my warm up, the breath exercises should go first, then the resonate exercises, then the humming and scales, then articulation (such as tongue twisters or consonant songs).

One thing I learned through my research is that lying down on the floor is very effective in my personalised warmup. This is because my body is aligned. I noticed that this fixed the way my neck was poised during the warmup—it was too high before. Lying down while I did my warmup fixed this problem.

I used the songs *Red Wine Supernova* and *I Know Things Now* for my performance.

Red Wine Supernova is a pop song by Chappell Roan about wanting the love of an avoidant girl regardless of her flaws. In terms of acting, the tensions were very useful in this song and I found that an increase in the different tensions I used added to the comedy as well as the dynamic nature. It also helped my performance to imagine who the character is talking to at different points in the song. It helped me to enforce points of contact that made the performance feel more grounded.

I Know Things Now is a song from *Into the Woods* (music and lyrics by *Stephen Sondheim*). The song follows Little Red Riding Hood through her experience with the Wolf. There is a great shift in tone through this song so the tensions were very useful for differentiating these.

This module has taught me the proper definition of a book musical— a musical where the songs push the narrative along. The emotions build so much they have to be released through song.

This module's shown me more about the history of musicals through the golden age and *Sondheim*. I understand the golden age is an era that highlighted the book musical and typically gave its characters happy endings.

I am very happy with how the performance went. I believe I projected well and made excellent use of the space. I'm also satisfied with my use of anchoring to help strengthen the notes. I quite enjoyed my decision to get closer to the audience during an unsettling moment in *I Know Things Now* and am very happy I took that risk. In practice, I had a habit of slipping into an American accent for this song and I'd been working through the module to stop doing that. For *Red Wine Supernova* I found the American accent helped me get the brighter sound since the American accent can be quite nasally.

I still need to work on lifting my soft palate for higher notes. There was a high note in *I Know Things Now* that I particularly struggled with and while I have noticed improvement, I still need to keep practicing in order to make that note smoother.

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