



The decibel level began to grow, causing me to lean deep into the instrument in hopes I might be able to hear my tuning over the ruckus.

Last month I was asked to tune the piano for the choir concert in Atlantic City for the NJEA (New Jersey Educators Association). The concert took place in a large exhibit hall where sound traveled easily and grew quickly. I was tuning the concert grand piano in front of the risers where the choir would be standing when I noticed high school students in choir robes start to enter the hall. Lead by the choir directors, they moved through the audience chairs and made their way toward the risers. The decibel level began to grow, causing me to lean deep into the instrument in hopes I might be able to hear my tuning over the ruckus. The head director appeared at the side of the piano and I looked up to converse. "The choir is rehearsing in about five minutes, are you almost finished?" He asked with concern. I explained that I am only about halfway through my tuning and was told that I would have more time when agreeing to do the tuning. He furrowed his brow and nodded "well, the piano needs to be tuned." He rejoined the other choir directors and announced to the students to "be quiet for the tuner" and to "please stop talking". For this I was appreciative, but in the back of my mind, as someone with a lot of performance experience, I started to ponder more constructive things that could have been said.



When you are about to perform music, it is important to be relaxed and focused. If stage fright or thoughts unrelated to the performance are prevalent, it will be difficult for you, the performer, to succeed. Take a few minutes before stepping on stage to breath deeply, close your eyes, and stand in a position that promotes confidence (hands on hips like Superman or arms in the air above your head in a “V” for victory). This will prepare the body to effectively interact with the audience.

The mind is a much more challenging game. Instead of trying to clear unwanted thoughts, focus on the task at hand. Run through the song line by line. Hear it as if it was audible. Go through a section that has been difficult to master one more time, slowly but confidently. Image performing any choreography paired with the music or actually practice it if space allows. All of these things can be achieved without any sound or disruption to the surroundings.

I hope the next time you perform, you will try out some of these techniques. They have been passed down for many generations, performer to performer; I cannot take credit.

Telling the students to stop talking and be quiet was effective in spurts, but it did not last. I can only imagine the difference if they had been practiced in preparing for a performance as I have described.

When you are
about to perform
music, it is
important to be
relaxed and
focused.

\$5 OFF YOUR NEXT TUNING

For every person you refer me to that I complete work for, I will give you a \$5 credit toward your next tuning as my thanks. This only applies to private piano owners and not to institutions (Churches, Schools, Piano dealerships, etc.).