

Putting Together A Performance Package

Characteristics of an Effective Performance Package

- A cohesive presentation that flows seamlessly from beginning to end.
- Performance engages the audience throughout and they are “transported”.
- The audience understands everything that is taking place and is thoroughly entertained by all the elements.
- The presentation (music, theme, script) is appropriate for the specific audience/demographic.
- It is theatrical and professional in its approach.
- High quality performance (music, visual and talking).
- Emcee(s) is dynamic and engaging.
- Every decision choice made in the creation of the performance package is made with the audience in mind.
- Well rehearsed and prepared.

Typical Elements of a Performance Package:

- Music
- Theme / Script
- Emcee(s) / Actors
- Choreography / Staging/ Blocking
- Inclusion of props and set décor if appropriate
- Costumes / Make Up / Hair
- Sound system / microphones
- Lighting chosen to enhance atmosphere

Music Selection Considerations

- What drives the song selection for the package?
 - Theme/script?
 - Or existing repertoire?
 - Or?
- Are there limitations on music selections? For ex: contest music requirements.
- How long is the package and how many songs are required? Be sure to time the musical selections to ensure you are within the allotted time.
- Include a variety of music that will showcase the personality and vocal abilities of the ensemble.
- What is the audience demographic? Will they recognize your music? Is this a goal?
- What can your performing ensemble sing well? Do you have soloists?
- Do you have access to arrangements of the songs you wish to perform?

Theme Considerations

- An effective theme is one that has the audience engagement as its goal.
- Theme should be clearly evident to the audience.
- Ideally, theme is simple enough for the audience to follow, but not so simple that it's predictable.
- Goal of theme is to cohesively tie the package together.
- Consider the desired tone for the package.

Script Considerations

- In general, more singing/music and less talking.
- Effective script has a clear beginning, middle and end.
- Consider the demographic of the audience.
- Ideally, script is intelligently simple – easy to follow and at same time not too complicated.
- Avoids telling the audience “the next song is”.
- Flows seamlessly and easily.
 - Generally, a musical show should start with music & not talking.
 - Start with something BIG, lots of action, upbeat tempo, big sound.
 - Close with something that will leave best impact.
- Use humor if appropriate. Humor can be a powerful tool for engaging an audience's emotions.
- A consideration for the scriptwriter is the talent – who will be delivering the lines and can they pull it off? Always ask - What do you want to do? And can you pull it off?
- Emcee spot should flow with the rest of the performance and transition in and out of the emcee spot should be seamless.
- For a 15-minute package, you can typically include 4-5 songs, some talking and account for the audience response time.
- Estimate 15-30 seconds for applause and a transition.
- Include pitch cues in script and stage directions for singers/actors.
- What are the limitations (if any) on the performers (for ex., chorus on risers, quartet around a microphone) as this might impact script decisions.

Venue Considerations

- Determine the size of stage and the wings of performance venue.
- Number of risers needed.
- Assess lighting capabilities.
- Assess microphone capabilities (how many, where located).
- Is there a curtain?

Emcee Considerations

- The Emcee(s) plays a large role in maintaining the audience connection.
- Casting decisions should take into account those who can most effectively portray a character, speak clearly at a pace that is easily understood and actively engage the audience.
- How many Emcee spots will there be in the package, and how many Emcees will be required?
- Do you have the talent within your ensemble to effectively portray the scripted material?
- The physicality of the Emcee and comfort level with commanding the attention of the audience is important.
- Emcee should practice good microphone technique.
- Non-speaking members are still in performance mode and should be attentive, engaged and energized while taking a “back seat” to the emcee. If non-speaking members don’t appear interested in what the Emcee is saying to the audience, the audience won’t be interested either! Remember, the audience takes their cues from you the performer!

Choreography Considerations

- Does the choreography enhance the performance? Does it connect to the music, lyric, script?
- What feelings or emotions are created by the choreography? Does it create a mood? Further define a place, time or era?
- Does the movement further develop a character? Further the story?
- Does the dance/movement evoke a style? Is it creative?
- Is the movement engaging?

Staging/Blocking Considerations

- Detailing the “who goes where when” for a seamless show.
- Consider how the actors/Emcee’s are moving about the stage.
- When they move (during pitch/transitions) and to where.
- Our considerations for blocking include lighting, microphones, navigating the director/front row/risers.
- Understand where we want the audience focus to be (so shouldn’t be other movement distracting or detracting from the focal point).