

Never Apologize: Bardic Do's and Don'ts

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The audience is key

You are there because you want to move them.

They are there because they want to be moved, to feel, to form an emotional connection.

Everything you do to help create this connection is a Do.

Everything you do that hinders this connection is a Don't.

Select a piece

One that makes you feel something

Short is safe - Scadians will sit through 3-5 minutes of anything politely.

Funny makes evaluating your effectiveness easy - are they laughing?

But if you are in love with a melancholic piece, by all means go ahead. Just know that sometimes they stare morosely into the fire because they are having melancholic feelings, and sometimes they are bored.

Be heard: No connection if they can't hear you

Cough or grunt - feel those muscles? Keep them tensed.

Relax your throat.

Open your mouth.

Use more air if you need it.

Practice at volume - know if your range shrinks

Warm up before blasting.

Be understood: Hard to connect to "Mmrrpha mrpha mu."

Careful pronunciation/enunciation

Slow down.

Poets - SLOW DOWN MORE

Foreign language pieces - consider some kind of translation

Be practiced: Fewer errors, builds confidence

Scadians do not need a perfect performance to feel a connection and be happy

They won't even notice most small mistakes

They do need sufficient momentum to get "into" a piece, and too many errors breaks the momentum. So practice enough to be decent, technically.

If you're on a scenic car ride in the country and you hit a pothole, your trip isn't ruined.

Even if you hit two potholes, or three. But at some point, if the car is just shuddering down a dirt track and tossing you every which way, it's going to be hard to enjoy the trip.

Then practice enough to feel confident about your abilities.

If you forget a verse, realize you left out part of a story, etc.: Keep it going somehow (summarize,

amend, skip) or cede the stage

Use your body language: Louder than words

Whether you stand still or move around - be relaxed, or at least look relaxed

Or open, loose, poised, graceful, solid, stalwart, friendly, joyous - whatever word helps you put your body into a state that says you are happy to be here with them

If you stand still: Don't be stiff

If you move around: Don't be spastic

Make eye contact (or fake it - look at their forehead) and hold it

Introductions: Short or engaging

Either be brief (acknowledge high table, your name, title of piece) or get started on that connection

If you can make your introduction a mini-performance *that has a point*, go for it

Don't ramble

Don't apologize - you haven't done anything yet!

 Either you are good enough to perform - in which case you don't apologize for it

 Or you're not - in which case, sit down.

Don't ask them "if they want anything in particular?"

You can ask "if there are any requests" - silence means "no"

Compliments: Accept them

"That was so beautiful, I loved it!"

"Oh, no, I was awful! I made this mistake and that mistake..."

What are you saying?! You are telling this nice person they have lousy taste for liking your performance! You are insulting them after they complimented you. NO!!!

Prepare - no really, because you will be surprised and will need a pat answer - prepare a true statement that accepts the compliment.

"Thank you, I'm so glad you liked it."

"Thank you, I love performing."

"Thank you, I'm happy it made a good impression."

Or the all-purpose simple "Oh! Why, thank you!"

These can all be true even if you hated the way this particular performance went.