

Musicality & Expression

Musicality

The 3 + 3 rule:

Basic 3 - These elements must be mastered in order to add the Special 3.

Words - Understand the meaning of each word and what it means in the phrase. Sing the words how they should sound to the audience, not how you are used to saying them. Learn the inflections of the syllables so it sounds proper for the language and style of the music.

Rhythm - Understand the hierarchy of the beat in the style of music. Be very accurate about when a note or rest starts and how long it lasts.

Know the performance practice of the style of your song, whether the eighths are straight or swung, and whether the dotted rhythm is literal.

Pitch - Study the melodic structure and approach to each notes. Vocal adjustments depend on whether intervals are small or big, and if they continue an ascending or descending line. Knowing the approach for each note helps to keep the pitch accurate. Try singing to a tuner with the name of the note.

Special 3 - Use all these tools to shape your phrases.

Dynamics - Add as many levels of volume to your song as you think are appropriate. (pp p mp mf f ff) Find opportunities for crescendo, diminuendo, cresc-dim, and dim-cresc. Add dynamics even on important syllables with accents, or softness.

Articulation - Have fun with adding a dimension of staccato, marcato or legato. Consider the word and the phrase to add emphasize and interest. What's most important is creating a sense of line that expands through time, rather than chopping it up.

Timing - Within the parameters of the tempo of the song, attention may

be brought to specific areas of emotional interest by speeding up the beat or slowing it down.

Sforzandos can be interpreted as a way to play with time. Some beats may be early or late depending on the style of the song.

Expression

The face + the body

Face - Facial expression comes from being honest with the emotions of the song, rather than thinking about yourself.

Eyes - learn to smile with your eyes, not your cheeks when you sing. Use your eyebrows and eyelids as ways to express.

Cheeks & Jaw - learn to relax the cheeks and jaw to free your tone and allow the expression of the eyes to be the focus.

Body - The body needs to reflect the same emotion as the face, not contradict it.

Arms - The arms can take up a lot of stage space. Use them to get them away from the body as appropriate to your song. Use the whole radius of movement, from high and low, to out and across.

Back & Shoulders - Add flexibility in your spine and movement in your shoulders. Avoid raising the shoulders and keeping them tense. Instead, move them and then relax them. The back can arch and curve and sway side to side. Movements can be subtle or exaggerated as appropriate to your song.

Legs - The legs can add level changes and cover stage space. Don't be afraid to take over the stage. Match the mood of the song with how you stand and move around