

# How to Perform by Little cake

(an essential, worthless account of what I believe is possible ON STAGE,  
typed sporadically on my phone in no specific order and missing many  
important details, oh well)

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## **ORGANIZE::**

Make an outline or list to organize your thoughts; this is number one! Keeping a performance journal of all your materials, ideas, sketches, song-lists and artifacts will balance you in the stressful moments of show-preparation. Look to your papers! Take notes!

## **BACK OUT (IF NEED BE)::**

This is not for the faint of heart and not everyone is a natural! If you can't get comfy on stage and you've tried for years, you may be a better candidate for our much-needed audience. These days with so much at-home entertainment it can be increasingly difficult to fill any concert hall or house show. We need you, watchers and listeners, appreciators, sensitives, fanatics.

## **WARM-UP::**

Stretch your body. Dancing and movement are essential components to a good performance. You may get sore- please don't break your neck, but a little whiplash never hurt anyone.

## **BASICS OF WRITING ANY PIECE::**

This may seem off-topic, but performing is just writing in fast motion! Here are some musings on writing, capturing ideas, and putting them in a shareable form. Once you have the title or subject of a song or project (or, from another angle maybe just the chords and melody), you're halfway there. Brainstorm some topics in ten words or less:

- things you might say to a friend
- things you might say to yourself
- things you might do...
- something reflective!
- a joke you might make
- a text from someone
- a party of 8 overheard at a restaurant
- something funny you heard on the radio
- a memory
- some poetry, obviously
- an errand on your to do list
- a question you've had on your mind
- a thought, worry or regret

## **PUBLISH AND SHARE::**

Get your idea “out there”. As soon as it’s something someone else can detect, it’s art! Hooray.

- Post on Facebook
- Post on Instagram
- Post on Twitter
- Go do a poetry reading
- Go do an open mic
- Upload to Soundcloud
- Record Voice Memos
- Type notes on your Iphone
- Use a pen and paper
- The list goes on...

## **THEMES AND REPETITION::**

People love to predict sound, which is partially why people love dancing to a beat for instance, which is a kind of music that reliably has something you can count on. Add something that repeats or comes back many times in your performance.

## **NOTICE THE AUDIENCE::**

Look to the audience for inspiration! Notice when they interact, how they are feeling. Join their conversation, or just pretend to! Mime a conversation similar to their’s. Of course you must do this without hurting anyone- be kind and apologize if you’ve overstepped your bounds.

## **INWARD FOCUS::**

While using the audience and interacting with them for inspiration is super helpful, it’s also good to look inside yourself and try to exist there for part of your performance. React to your emotions and your thoughts because they are a hefty part of you the audience deserves to experience.

## **JITTERS::**

Dealing with nerves is a toughie- I still haven’t found enough ways to manage my pre-performance excitement, but here are a few tips:

- Timing your Breathing. Inhale for 5, exhale for 5 (the numbers are up to
- Slowing your Breathing by adding time to each Inhalation and Exhalation so that your heart rate relaxes and provides you with a little more stability for your performance.
- Find a quiet place to be alone before the show.
- Drink WATER

### **KARAOKE:::**

Favorite karaoke track? Practice it and improvise on it. Karaoke is the world's most accessible performance avenue. Bring your show to the next level by adding this to your set. Better yet, bring a track that EVERYONE KNOWS and tease the audience, holding back from singing the actual chorus, letting the track itself shine. More ways to use Karaoke tracks to help you perform:

- screaming
- singing better than the original
- low voice
- high voice
- stumbling over words
- making new words
- invent a new language
- dance moves
- love the strangers around you

### **OBJECTS AND PROPS::**

Bring what you love to the stage. Got props? Objects? A large bag? Pop it all in and carry it to the show, along with your lunch. Grab takeout and bring it to the show! Audience members are interested in your actual lifestyle and want pieces of it, so flaunt it baby. Don't got stuff? Head to a Dollar Tree and buy whatever is in the seasonal section.

### **JAM WITH THE SOUNDS OF THE WORLD::**

Open your mind to cool sounds! Open other peoples' minds to your cool sounds! Invent some new ones; try them out on the microphone, on your instruments, using feedback from an amplifier, or simply using your voice and body.

### **AUTHENTICITY::**

Be Honest. Bring your inner torments to the stage and to the audience. Believe me, they want to see! Let them in on your process. Reveal what inspires you. Tell us what frightens you about performing, or about other things! This is YOUR chance to be the spotlight, so don't hold back, be mousy or shy.

### **REALNESS::**

It's okay to break character and laugh at yourself. It's all part of improvisation and playing off each moment as honestly as possible. Especially if no one else is sharing the stage, you have the freedom to let your guard down and be expressive. Use the full range of space available to spread out and feel good.

### **BUILD AND PRACTICE::**

Every skill requires practice to get better, so book as many stage opportunities as you can. Tired of the same old spots? Buy a venue with a bunch of folks and put shows on there with fellow artists. Build community however you can forever and you'll find your shows will be miraculous. Reach out to friends who also love performing and find a way

to provide ongoing stage-access for all! It's never too late to add someone to a performance: for example, maybe a chef-buddy of yours can cook sauce on stage while you perform! Never forget: ANYTHING can be a performing art! Cooking, answering the phone, standing in a puddle, etc.

### **COMMUNICATE::**

Learn the lyrics by heart and act them out. Raise your eyebrows, smile, wave your arms, wiggle fingers, stick out your tongue, whatever! Take your time and really feel each move. No need to linger on any gestures or expressions; if you don't feel like emphasizing, don't. Quick faces are just as good as slow ones, short as good as long. Don't discriminate and don't be picky! Any face is better than no face, but please, don't force it! If you aren't a face-maker, find another way of conveying the character - perhaps the tone of your voice, body language, etc. can help you sway the mood.

### **DO YOUR BEST::**

Live life, generally speaking. Occupy yourself and do things you love (or things you are not sure if you love). If you don't get out, see the world and experience new things (whether they are fun or not, or on your terms or someone else's) you may endanger your drive to perform or make art. Don't hide away. Engagement is the key and you may just need to boost your engagement with the community before you decide to take your act to the stage.

### **CONFIDENCE:**

Don't ever worry about what people think of you and your style. Sure, your body looks awkward in certain positions, one side of your face is fat, and you may feel your clothes badly represent who you are. Just know that everyone feels that way at some point in their life and that none of it matters to your performance. Furnishing your performance with these various aspects of yourself will surely do the trick.

### **BREAK A LEG!**