

Jane Doe
Content Literacy
Michelle Page

“Jitters, Shakes and Awful Mistakes”

A text set on performance anxiety

- 1.) Carlson, Nancy. Harriet’s Recital. Minneapolis: Carolhoda Books, Inc, 1982.
*8 years old - 2nd or 3rd Grade (reading level according to the Fry method).
*Children’s Book, 28 pages

This children’s book is about Harriet and her dance recital. I really liked this text for younger children because it walks young kids through the kinds of worries that many of us go through right before we walk on stage. She worried about falling down, ripping her costume, forgetting the dance. For anyone, but especially young kids who have not had much performance experience, this can be a really scary experience and reading about someone else having the same worries could really help alleviate that fear. It also had some characters that were very supportive. I really liked that her parents and her teacher helped Harriet to be more comfortable on stage. Hopefully this would encourage kids to look to their parents and teachers for that kind of support. Finally, close to the end of the book Harriet is pushed on stage and forced to face the fear. Deep breaths and a bit of trying made all the difference and I think that is just the message a young performer needs to deliver a wonderful performance.

- 2.) Berenstain, Stan and Jan. The Berenstain Bears Get Stage Fright. New York: Random House, 1986.
* 9 years old - 3rd or 4th Grade (reading level according to Fry method).
* Children's Book, 29 pages.

This children's book is about the Berenstain bears and how one of our beloved bears gets a lead part in the school play and she practiced and practiced, but was still nervous about getting on stage in front of so many people! The day finally comes and the curtain opens and she is so scared..but excited...and before she knows it she is going through everything and it is all going well and she gains more and more confidence! I just really liked this interpretation of stage fright. It can be very nerve racking for our young performers to get up in front of such a large group of people and feel confident. But do often the scariness of performance is also exciting and a fun experience even though we are scared and that is what this book really embodied! This is a great book and a really simple reading level in a classic children's book – even good for those older students who aren't above kids' reading!

- 3.) Dylan, Bob. Stage Fright (Lyrics)

* 11 years old - 5th or 6th Grade (reading level according to the Fry method).

* Lyrics, 1 page

These are the lyrics to Bob Dylan's "Stage Fright." It was a song he performed that talks about someone with stage fright who is trying to perform. It talks about not letting anyone else see the fear in your eyes, feeling like your mouth is dry and you sweat. It is all things that can affect someone with stage fright. However it also gives some hope to people who have a performance anxiety. It talks about getting through this just one more time and when you are done there will always be one more time you can do perform again. For the students who are more musically inclined, I think this might really help to get a message across to them; some students just learn better through music. I also think it is great that a renowned performer like Bob Dylan would address an issue like stage fright that affects so many famous performers.

4.) Gallwey, W. Timothy. The Inner Game of Tennis. New York: Random House, 1977.

*12 years old - 6th or 7th Grade (according to the Fry method)

* Book, Chapters 2,3,4,6,8,10.

This may be an odd book to add, but it is so relevant to performance anxiety in music as well. How often have you or someone you know gotten up on stage or in front of a group and you argue with yourself? This book deals almost exclusively not with the actual game of tennis, but the inner game in your mind that you have to win in order to be a winner on that court or on the stage. The chapters I listed above are really specific to this. It talks about the two selves and how one of you tells you what to do and the other one actually does it. The problem is finding the balance between that negative voice telling you you're stupid and that you can't do and how you should make it better, and the other part of you believing it and doing something to actually make it better. Whether you are the stage or playing a game of tennis, you do the same kind of arguing. The rest of the chapters deal with what to do once you've found a bit more of that balance between those little shoulder angels in your head. This also discusses methods of focusing yourself and then the games you play in your head even when you are not on the court. I personally think this book might be a bit beyond 7th graders, but I think it wouldn't be bad to have them read it for their own self-esteem and self-image arguments that are already raging in their pubescent brains. It is a really excellent source of quieting that self-doubt so you can actually do what you came to do - perform!

5.) Carlson, James. "Relieving the Performance Anxiety Syndrome." Gopher Music Notes. Pp 4-5, 1980.

*12 years old - 6th or 7th grade (according to the Fry method)

* Article, 2 pages

This is an article by our very own Doc Carlson. He talks about how in his experience he has seen so many students like the one in the article opening that just don't know how to react to performance and the nervousness that goes with it! He gives suggestions to

performers and teachers about how to prepare yourself for an upcoming performance. Being prepared, finding music early, having options, being comfortable with the performance area, etc. are all very practical suggestions he makes to the worried performer. I included this piece because I think it has a to-the-point message of what really needs to be done to counter performance anxiety and says so in such a way that is readable to younger students and still engaging for the more advanced reader such as a music teacher. The other reason I included this piece is because I think it is excellent to have some kind of personal connection with the author of this article. If I used this with my students it has more of a ring of importance when I can share my experience with my students and attest to the article's author's reliability

6.) Leisner, David. "Six Golden Rules for Conquering Performance Anxiety." American String Teacher. 1995.

* 14 years old - 8th or 9th Grade (reading level according to the Fry method).

*Article, 5 pages

This article gives a brief description about what it is like to experience performance anxiety and how easy it is to become distracted and to start doubting your own performance. However, this article goes on to deliver 6 simple rules that help to conquer your performance anxiety. For early high school students staying focused during a performance can be really difficult, not to mention the fact that at this age we are all so worried about what we look like and what the cute guy in the front row thinks about our performance instead of being on stage and focusing on what we are doing. These rules are simple reminders that you need to be prepared, be non-judgmental, be on stage and not in the audience and to enjoy the performance. If you take these six rules into consideration this will really help you feel better about your performance. I think the reading level is perfect for the group of students that are really vulnerable to audience input during the performance and have the largest amount of stage fright in both large group and individual performances.

7.) Triplett, Robert. "Jitters, Shakes and Awful Mistakes."

*14 years - 8th or 9th grade (according to fry method)

* Article, 2 pages.

This article was copied and given to me in my music methods course (hence the lack of information in the bibliography). This article is a really great resource for nervousness before a performance. I like the language it uses and how it sort of makes everything sound less scary because he writes in an almost childish way. He also has some really interesting methods for relieving that strife. For example the one case he tells a girl who constantly shakes when speaking to shake her paper and she ends up transferring that nervous energy to her paper and stops shaking herself. I like this article and included it because it has a lot of these off the wall techniques that I think could really help a lot of young performers through their next big day.

8.) Latham, Lynne. "Stage Fright Management." *Children's Music Workshop*. 2006.

1 December. 2008.

< www.childrensmusicworkshop.com/resources/articles/stagefright/index.html >

* 15 years old - 9th or 10th grade (according to Fry method)

*On line Article, 3 pages

This article mainly focuses on preparation of yourself for the performance. The first part of the article discusses the parts of a performance that make us feel nervous about it. Preparation is the biggest part. If we have not practiced enough it does make it easier to feel panicked about a performance. This article also discusses both the internal and external pressures we feel as a performer. We all have self doubts on stage and so the article addresses this as well as the external pressures that teachers, peers and parents place on a student before a performance. Then finally it gets to some things we can do about these pressures. It discusses the benefits of visualization, directed breathing and good health habits before a performance. The better shape our body is in before a performance, the better off we will be as a performer! This article really stresses the idea that we as teachers make our students realize that this one performance is not the end of life as we know it and that they should try to enjoy performance!

9.) Dias, Georgia. "Stage Fright, what is and what to do about it." *The Alexander Method*. 18 February. 2007.< www.bodyandmind-at.nl > 1 December. 2008.

* 16 years old - 10th or 11th Grade (according to the fry method).

*Website article, 4 pages.

This is one method of taking care of stage fright. The Alexander method is a method of gaining control over your body by becoming more aware of your body and your consciousness. The article gives a brief description about what the body does in reaction to the stress of performance and then walks you through the Alexander technique of relieving some of that body tension by mastering the mind and body through meditation. This method gives a person the tools to use the adrenaline rush of performance to free our tension and therefore use a more natural free breath to aid our performance rather than hinder it by tensing. This is an excellent method for young students to use to not only focus the mind for the upcoming performance, but also relaxing the body which is naturally tense from carrying tons of books around, the pressure of classes and extracurricular as well as social pressures, etc. Many famous musicians and conductors use this method to prepare them for performance and focus/relax their everyday lives.

10.) Kenny, Dianna T. and Margaret S. Osborne. "New Insights from young Musicians." *Advances in Cognitive Psychology*. Volume 2. Issue 2-3. 2006: 103-112.

*18 plus - Undergraduate College (reading level according to the Fry method)

*Article/study charts, 10 pages

This article was a really cool addition to this text set because it covers in depth the psychology aspect of performance anxiety. It also had a lot of visual aids that made the article make a lot more sense. The article itself is very complicated and very scientific. However, the main use that I would have as a high school teacher would be to have my

students use the study charts that go along with the article. There are two tables. The first table has you answer 26 questions on how you feel before and during a performance. You circle a number on a scale from -3 to 3. The maximum score is 156 with the higher score indicating a greater level of performance anxiety. The second table asks questions what kind of thought process do you tend to use when you think about performance anxiety. Some questions ask questions referring to somatic and cognitive features (ex. My heart beats fast when I perform in front of a group OR I worry about my performance ability). Other questions ask about the performance context (ex: I would rather play in a group than as an individual). The last kind of questions discuss performance evaluation (ex: I worry my teacher will not like my performance). With this kind of information in mind it is easier to determine what kinds of things you can do to alleviate some of this anxiety. For example, if you are nervous and your heart starts beating fast, maybe you need to do some relaxing techniques such as meditation to conquer that anxiety. If you are a performance evaluation person you need more preparation time and a solid success to build on for further performances, etc. If you can use these charts to help you really pinpoint the kind of anxiety and the extent of that anxiety you can conquer it more efficiently. This article really helps you to understand the processes behind the charts and helps you make use of them for your own performance anxiety needs.