



HasA

The Helen Astrid Singing Academy

Preparing for a Performance

Tips given by Helen Astrid

1. **Length:** - Know how long you want the programme to last though ordinarily you will be told. You should have exact timings for each song also. Usually the first half of a programme will be slightly longer than the second half. Also, the length of your programme may vary according to the time of day and venue, e.g. lunchtime concerts tend to be one hour without a break.
2. **Audience:** Who are they? How many people will attend? What will they expect? I always like to surprise my audience and give them something extra.
3. **Repertoire:** It's always best to sing things you love. Try and vary your programme as much as possible and try and keep a link with your choice of songs or poems used.
4. **Encores:** Always have at least 3 pieces, though don't expect to do them all. The rule of thumb is that if the applause is substantial after your second bow, then offer them one. Keep them short too!
5. **Engagement with audience:** They love to hear the soloist speak! Don't waffle, but a sentence or two at the beginning of each set or group of songs is a welcome idea.
6. **Theme:** Is your concert celebrating a special occasion? Are there any current affairs that you can link to e.g. sporting events, national holidays, Christmas etc.
7. **Venue:** Have in mind where you'll be singing. Be sure to know what the acoustics will be, where the audience will be sitting (or standing) and also where will your accompanist will be positioned.
8. **Sartorial matters:** Always dress up. Again, consider points 2 & 7. The audience love to see that you've made an effort. For ladies, always practice singing in the shoes you'll wear.
9. **Accompaniment:** Always consult your accompanist on repertoire. Discuss your ideas and ask if they would like to do a solo, if time allows. Become familiar with where they will be positioned.
10. **Rehearsals:** Preparation is key to a successful concert. Diarise all your rehearsals up until the day of the concert. On average, for a concert lasting one hour, you should aim to rehearse at least twice a week for a 6 weeks if possible.

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And finally...

Know your songs thoroughly before you meet your accompanist and don't expect him/her to note bash. On the day of the concert, only top and tail your songs/pieces (i.e. the beginning and endings) to save your voice, preferably at the venue so you get a chance to air your voice in the space.

Good luck and have fun!



"Sorry, I'm finished."