



Learning from Performances

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As a dancer, waiting in your beginning position for the music to come on can seem like hours—just anticipating the next two minutes of your life, how you could hit everything seamlessly, or how disastrous a certain part could be. The music starts, yet soon comes to an end where you hit your ending pose with a sigh of relief. No matter how the performance went, there is a lot to learn from it.

One of the biggest tools needed to learn from a performance, is a video recorder. This way, the performance can be reviewed several times. It is important that everyone watches the video at least twice, once to watch themselves (because that is a pretty natural thing to do) and one time to view the entire routine as a group. When you view it as a group the team will be able to break it down and see the sections that looked better than others, the parts that were a struggle to get through and the portions that looked spot on. From here, evaluate how you can fix these problems, whether it is a timing issue or a drop in the energy level. Keep note of the section and be prepared to go through that specific part so the routine can flow better from beginning to end. In addition to finding mistakes in a video, everything that worked well can be seen. Transitions and spacing may have gone more smoothly than another time, figure out why and try to keep it that way. See what made the difficult lifts or technical skills flow with ease, and keep working with it the exact same way so these potential places of stress can be stress free.

Another tool that can be incredibly useful is a score sheet. This is an exact record of what went on in the performance. While going over the score sheet, try not to just dwell on what needs work, look at the compliments as well. Even though you may receive a compliment, there is no reason to settle! If complimented on a difficult skill, be sure that that specific skill will be complimented each time the routine is performed. If there is a compliment about the choreography, remember what made that special so when asked to choreograph again, this technique can be in your choreographic arsenal. Go through your score sheet and find out what can be improved. These little tidbits of information can help out a ton!

Maybe the judges found an error that no one has ever seen before, so take that into serious account. The judges and the score sheets are amazing tools for you to use because they have an outside opinion and have only seen your routine one time. Look at the scores themselves, and if a judge gave you 9.5 out of 10, figure out why and always know that you can push yourselves harder to reach that perfect 10. If you received a perfect score in a specific category, you know not to change it! After the performance, there is a lot of room for change, even if every dancer felt comfortable with their performance. Be careful that this does not happen though, if each member is comfortable with the routine, find a way to bring it a step up and continue challenging them.

Always strive for bigger and better things. Use the tools given to you and analyze each performance, but also remember that no one will see your growth along the way, just the finished product.