

Join the 10-Performance Club!

by Faith Farr

When my students learn a piece they particularly enjoy, I encourage them to join the 10-Performance Club. Over many months we plan and prepare for 10 different performances of the same piece—e.g. at studio recital, for their school class, at church, a specially planned family concert (e.g. Christmas Eve for grandparents), hospital visit, talent show The performance needs to feel like a concert—planned in advanced, get out your instrument and play through only once, with an audience. (It does not count if the student simply has a great day of home practice and calls out, “Mom, Dad — come listen — I can get through my piece!”) The certificate I give them after the 10th performance is not the only reason to do ten performances.

Why join the 10-Performance Club?

The 10-performance club offers students a glimpse into the world of the professional

performing artist. Although most student performers are presenting their piece for the first time, the performing artists we hear in our concert halls and on recordings have performed their piece dozens and hundreds of times before, over years and decades. Even for a “world premier” the performer will have done dozens of small private performances before taking their piece to the official world premier.

Although most students practice just until they get their piece “right,” the performing artists we hear in our concert halls practice until their piece “can’t go wrong.”

Students are often on the brink of mastering the technical challenges of their piece; performing artists are so comfortable with the technical challenges that they can put all their concentration and enjoyment into the musical expression they communicate with the audience.

Students who participate in the 10-per-

formance club feel their piece develop until it “can’t go wrong,” master the technical challenges more thoroughly with each performance, and discover how a piece can blossom into a joyful musical communication with the audience. Once students have participated in the 10-Performance Club, they usually have a higher standard of how their piece should be prepared before they are ready to perform it even for the first time. The 10-Performance Club is one way students learn what teachers mean by a truly “polished piece.”

Faith Farr teaches at her home studio and at MacPhail Center for Music. She self-publishes Foundations for Music Reading, a music reading curriculum for young players. With Brian Wicklund she co-authored American Fiddle Method for Cello published by Mel Bay. ♪



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Farr Publications
4 Sunshine Lane, North Oaks, Minnesota 55127
651-484-0522 fax: 651-483-5362
e-mail: faith@farrpublications.com
www.farrpublications.com