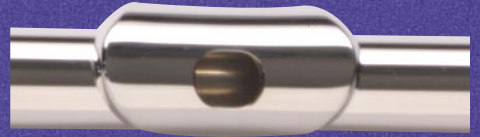




# YAMAHA

## Educator Series

WIND INSTRUMENTS



*Ann Marie Yasinitzky*

*Yamaha Performing Artist Ann Marie Yasinitzky has been a member of the music faculty at Washington State University since 1991 where she teaches flute, flute choir, music theory and history. She is flutist with the Solstice Woodwind Quintet, in residence at Washington State University, and has also performed in the Spokane Symphony, San Jose Symphony, Boise Philharmonic, San Francisco Midsummer Mozart Orchestra, and Oakland Opera Orchestra. She is the recipient of a Solo Recitalist Grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, and is featured on recordings released by Vienna Modern Masters, the Musical Heritage Society, Soul Note Records and Revelation Records.*

## Some Tips on Performing at Your Peak

*By Ann Marie Yasinitzky  
Instructor of Flute, Washington State University*

Most of us become musicians because we love to play music, but performing under pressure can be a nerve racking experience to say the least! It is important for students to understand that even the most seasoned professionals cope with some degree of performance anxiety. I have been an active performing musician for over thirty years and have learned a few tips that might be helpful for aspiring performers.

Realize that experience is the greatest teacher. The more you perform the better you will become at it. For this reason, young players should take every opportunity to perform and even create performing venues for themselves. Every time you perform for an audience of any size you will learn important lessons about how to do it better next time. If you have an audition or performance scheduled, play through your program twice for friends and family beforehand. You will be amazed to find out how well you know your program and how it feels to play it for an audience.

Preparation is the best confidence-builder there is! Know your music 250% because under pressure you may lose a certain percentage of technique due to nerves. One hundred percent isn't good enough. If you can go on stage and say to yourself, "I know this music cold," then you will be able to relax and perform better in that knowledge.

Attitude is everything when performing. Many excellent books have been written on this subject including the well known Inner Game of Music, The Art of Practicing, and A Soprano on her Head to name just a few. I highly recommend reading as much as possible on the subject because it is helpful to analyze our thinking and mental approach to performing. Beyond our mental attitude we need to be sure to get enough rest the night before and maintain a healthy diet. Avoid caffeine and too much sugar a few days before performing. Bananas contain natural beta-blockers, which help eliminate the primitive panic reflex in our bodies. Additionally there are many vitamin and herbal supplements that can help calm the body. Valerian root, vitamin b complex, calcium, magnesium, glutathione, inositol, and skullcap all have a calming effect. Many musicians like to meditate or pray before performing. Each individual is unique and different techniques work for different people.

Visualization is a technique used by Olympic athletes as well as musicians. An easy and effective way to try visualization is simply to imagine your performance ahead of time in as much detail as possible. For instance, if you are familiar with the hall you will be performing in, visualize yourself in that hall wearing your concert clothes and performing a perfect concert. Try to feel what it will be like. If you become nervous thinking about it, that's good because you are essentially practicing being nervous and preparing yourself for the experience. You can do this visualization while practicing or when



*Ann Marie Yasivitsky*

you are away from your instrument. Do it in a quiet place while you are alone. By visualizing, you are programming your unconscious mind in a positive way for a wonderful concert.

Some performers like to pretend that they are famous musicians or maybe their favorite teachers. Other musicians simply pretend that they are not nervous, which sort of fools the body into relaxing. If you feel nervous before a performance, simply accept it by saying to yourself, "I'm feeling a bit nervous but that's OK because it may help my performance have a bit more excitement and energy." Give yourself permission to feel nervous! And while we are on the subject of inner dialogue, remember to minimize the importance of the performance. Tell yourself that this performance is only one of many concerts that you will play in your lifetime. Some will inevitably be better than others. You will still have your friends and family no matter how you play on that particular day. Even if it happens to be a very important audition or concert, you are more likely to relax and play better if you look at it philosophically.

Always remember that the purpose of performing is to share your love of music with others. It is a generous and noble pursuit.

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