

## Mental rehearsal for Building Confidence (by Johnson, 2003)

1. “Start with Centering.” The musician must form a clear intention of what he plans to achieve in this rehearsal. For example, the learner may imagine that he is playing a Bach Fugue cleanly with solid rhythm. He must imagine the physical location, sitting on the bench at the organ at which the performance will be taking place. With the eyes closed, he should focus on breathing deeply from the diaphragm and relaxing all the muscles in his body. Next, the musician must become aware of his center and state a significant process cue, such as “solid rhythm” or “clear articulation.”

2. “Focus on your Visual Reference Point.” This may be looking at the score on the music desk, or, if the musician is visualizing himself playing from memory it may be looking down at the keyboard. At this time, it is possible to rehearse from both an internal and external perspective. With an internal perspective one can imagine the muscle movements involved, the feel of the fingers against the keys, noticing in vivid detail the feel of wood, ivory or plastic keys. A musician can also rehearse from an external standpoint, such as watching a movie of his performance. The musician should imagine the audience’s perception of him looking confident and playing well.

3. “Have a Multisensory Experience.” The musician must imagine the feel of his muscles, the feel of the keys, the bench, etc. Sometimes even smells can come into play, such as the smell of the wood at the console. The individual must vividly hear the sounds of his successful performance.

4. “Imagine what you would like.” At this point, the musician imagines himself in an optimal performance. If everything is not perfect, he must simply keep moving and do his best.

5. “Correct your mistakes.” A performer may notice muscle tension when playing a certain passage. He should use this time to become aware of the tension and release it. If the musician imagines missing a pedal note, he must stop, rewind and imagine playing the note correctly. This should be repeated several times until the musician sees himself performing the passage successfully many times.

6. “Layer your Segments.” The musician should imagine each part of a performance in ten minute segments. For example, the learner might first imagine himself

prior to the performance, warming up, or relaxing in another room. In the next segment, one might imagine walking out to the performance area and successfully performing the first piece. Next, the musician might spend ten minutes positively rehearsing the next piece and so on.

7. “Be Creative and Have Fun.” Musicians must imagine achieving an optimal performance in a variety of settings, playing a wide variety of pieces