**10 Tips for Improved Stage Presence**

**As a consultant who specializes in live performance and screened talent for a major talent buyer in a former life, a question I’m often asked by singers is, “How do I improve my stage presence? What do I do?” Most execs, when asked about stage presence, say something like, “You know it when you see it” which does not help you. Instead, I’ve compiled a list from being fortunate enough to observe some of rock’s greatest performers up close during my career. Musical talent and looks aside, here are ten things the best performers do onstage that make them great front men/women.**

**1. Cover the stage.** Large or small, that whole stage is yours: use it! Downstage. Take a stroll Stage Right. Back to center. Upstage. Are people in the forgotten seats? Play to them. Downstage–maybe head Stage Left. Hang out there for a few. Back to your mark at center. If there’s a loft or balcony, look up. Is there Industry in the loft? Surprise the hell out of ‘em by acknowledging them like any other audience members. They may not respond, but that’s OK, it’s your stage not theirs. Go back and see the people Stage Right. Mix it up. Adjust your pace with the tempo of the music. If you play guitar and venture too far from your mic, give yourself time to get back for your next vocal part.

**2. Claim your space and fill it.** Gesture broadly; don’t be half-hearted about it. (This is vital for large stages, or when venue capacity is 10,000 or more, or when there’s a wide distance between you and the audience.) For a smaller stage or more intimate venue, gesture less broadly but use your body language to claim your space. Think “Tall”. This is what American Idol judges mean when they say “own it.”

**3. Feel the lyrics.** …and make the audience feel them too. Often the best concert moments are during a sad song when the singer hits the zone so deep, he finishes with wet eyes. When American Idol’s Simon Cowell says “it’s about ‘creating a moment’” this is part of what he’s talking about.

**4. Don’t be afraid to make a fool of yourself.** If the song calls for a fun mood, have fun!

**5. Connect with people.** Look them in the eye. Touch people’s hands. High Fives work well and things of that nature.

**6. Sing to someone.** Dance with someone, if there’s good crowd control and security. (Dancing with one person onstage is good. Accidentally bringing the whole audience up onstage with you is not.)

**7. Work it on out.** Think of the venue as a football field. The goal post is the back of the house, and the energy in the room is your football. As singer/quarterback, your objective during the set is to keep advancing that energy toward the back of the room.

**8. Keep the energy up.** Audiences are fickle. You snooze, and you lose ‘em.

**9. Play to the back of the house.** And the front. And all sides. Resolve to leave no one in the house unrocked. Trapzoid effect!

**10. “Thank you and goodnight!”** Tell them who you are, thank ‘em warmly for coming out to the show, and get off the stage.